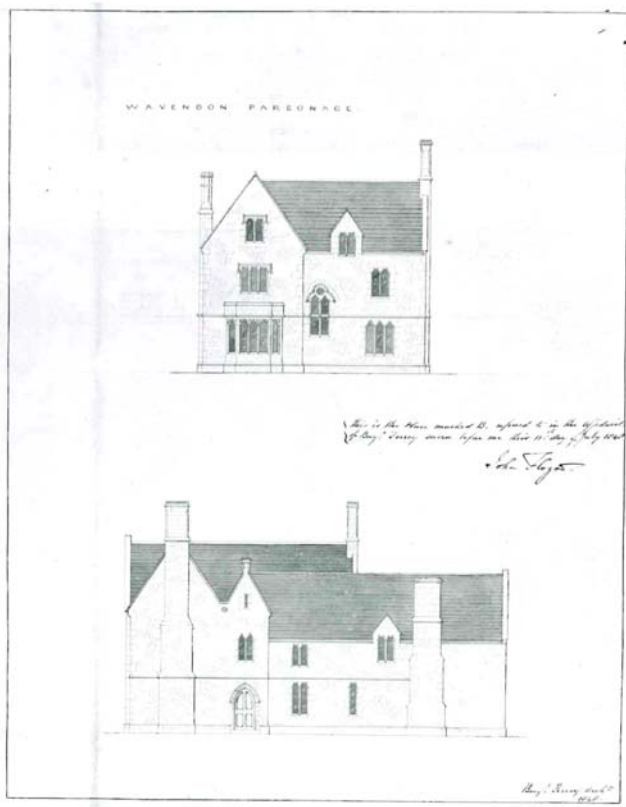


Chapter Four

The 1840s: In a state of transition



As the first years of the reign of Queen Victoria got under way, architects across England continued, of course, to do the best they could, using the methods and ideas they were used to and changing their working methods only when professional and technological innovations made it inescapable. They did however have plenty of scope for experiment, for the decade saw a considerable increase in the number of new parsonages: both the Oxford and Norwich diocesan collections have more applications for new houses in the 1840s than in the earlier three decades put together.¹ A number of architects were already established as specialists in parsonage design, and their work across a lengthy period of time gives us an insight into how their minds were working. A good example is that of George Wightwick (1802–72). Wightwick is probably best known to us as the young man who acted for a short period in 1826–7 as pupil, amanuensis and reader of evening stories to the aging John Soane, and, consequently, as the purveyor of some of the best stories about him; he was also a competent draughtsman, having worked on John Britton and A. C. Pugin's *Public buildings of London* and published his own views of Roman antiquities.² As an architect he was less memorable, but not unimportant because of the many surviving works and drawings that he left behind him from a long and critical period of work between establishing his practice in Plymouth in 1829 up to about 1851, when his work was considered not to be authentically mediaeval enough for modern church builders.³ His houses illustrate what happens when a talented and engaging character is doing his best in an age of architectural hiatus, between one established style and the next.

Wightwick's work varied between Tudor-gothic and classical-Georgian without any apparent chronological sequence; unfortunately there is little record of mortgage application drawings for his parsonages, so we do not have the full picture that we do for other architects; and dating some of his work is difficult. The houses themselves, and his drawings at the Royal Institute of British Architects Library Drawings Collection, are often the best we have to go on.⁴ In common with other architects, he drew working drawings without any graphic indication of the proposed materials; in his case, his gothic detailing took the form of applied surface relief and was not a part of any structural organisation. Much ornament was executed in uniform grey cement, and did not vary from place to place. The choice of

4.1

The rectory at Wavendon, Buckinghamshire, designed by Benjamin Ferrey in 1848. Ferrey was one of the most prominent architects to be directly influenced by A.W.N. Pugin, his work achieving increasing competence and subtlety during the 1840s. See also fig 4.21.

detailing at St Dominick's (1843) (fig. 4.2) near the River Tamar in Cornwall, for example, adjacent to a remarkable parish church that has a delicate jettied and pinnacled spire, and close to the mediaeval Cotehele House, is little different from that at Probus (1839), a characterless settlement just east of Truro.⁶ Wightwick designed pointed front doors, but other openings were square-headed and invariably with cement hood moulds. His gables were set at 45 degrees, with the gable set over raised haunches presumably intending to disguise the gutter ends and creating that shouldered effect so typical of Tudor-gothic design. These gables sat low over the upper floor, so that upper floor windows projected up into them, and Wightwick very

4.2

The entrance (north-west) elevation of the rectory at St Dominick, west of Cotehele, Cornwall, designed by George Wightwick in 1843.

The architect did not appear to have been inspired by the delightful, and delicate, mediaeval church next door. The castellated upper storey of the porch was added later and the architect's Tudor-gothic 'shoulders' at the base of the gable have been removed.



often decorated them with blind lancets or trefoiled insets. At Liskeard and Pelynt (1843) he devised a chimney gable where a central chimney disappears into the gable parapet mouldings from below, and then emerges from them above; the mouldings themselves resemble bargeboards cast in cement (fig. 4.3).⁶ At Pelynt he also experimented with a type of dormer window which appears more than anything classical, and he provided each of the external doors with its own shouldered gable porch. The plans were generally central-corridor types.

In general, Wightwick used classical-Georgian architecture for his more substantial or public buildings, although there were exceptions.

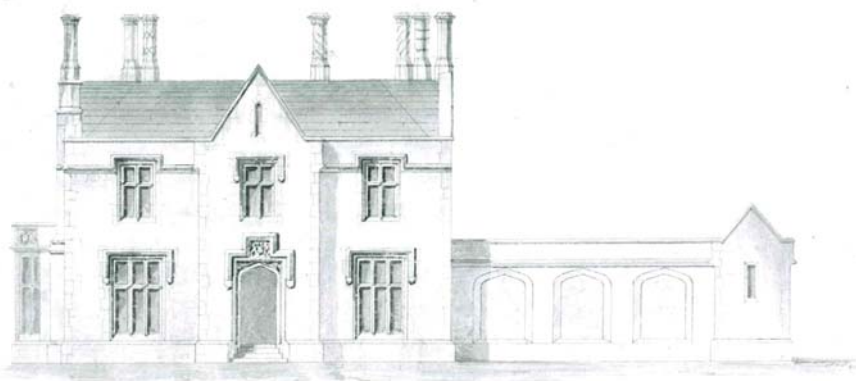


4.3

Wightwick's vicarage at Pelynt, west of Looe, Cornwall (1843). Although slightly altered the house retains some of its architect's eccentricities, including chimneys that merge at the gable with cement-covered pseudo-bargeboards and unusual dormers.

He designed some small parsonages in the classical-Georgian style, for example at Wedron in 1838 and at St Ives.⁷ Decorative detailing in these two houses was reduced to the minimum – consoles supporting flat projections above windows, and in the case of Wedron, a pediment over a projecting porch.

Wightwick is typical of architects of his period who when attempting a Tudor-gothic building essentially attached pattern-book detailing onto a neutral background: before the early 1840s, there is no expression of constructional logic in the exterior of a building in anything but a clumsy way, such as those haunches which look as if they are moulded from a single material. And so one has decorative features all over the place, a leading characteristic of the Tudor-gothic style, and almost no variations in plan from convention. An architect like Wightwick might be followed by that of William Donthorn (1799–1859), whose drawings are also in the RIBA collection. He too was a prolific architect of parsonages from the 1820s to 1852, although in a sense he represents a later stage of their development, one which shows the increasing use of Puginian devices without them being allied to any overall new approach: one might bluntly say that he was the same type of architect as Wightwick, but that he had the fortune to be more in touch with the latest fashions. His parsonages, like Wightwick's, were generally but not invariably Tudor-gothic, although he used less render and considerably more carved stone; and his detailing, whilst not authentically historical, became increasingly more severe and more consistent than Wightwick's ever was. Although he did use the standard plan types – for example, the back-corridor plan that we have already seen at the executed version of the Italianate parsonage at Moulton St Michael in Norfolk of 1831, and the L-corridor plan, at Oundle in Northamptonshire – his particular contribution to the plan type was to help establish in his many buildings the conventional use of the staircase hall that Pugin had introduced in his parsonages.⁸ A curious early plan for the parsonage at Thrapston in 1837, which incorporates parts of an older building, has a minimal staircase hall reached by a corridor.⁹ At Fontmell in Dorset (1844) and at Weybridge in Surrey (1848) however, this stair hall is large enough to be used as a room and placed at the front centre of a symmetrical elevation, but the plan is in other respects unremarkable (fig. 4.4).¹⁰ Then, at Dummer in Hampshire, of 1850, a large and impressive house, a central front door



leads into the left-hand corner of a stair hall which is as large as at least two of the principal rooms, and which seems to contradict Donthorn's characteristically strictly symmetrical facade.¹¹ At a late project, a remodelling of an existing building at Rushbury in Shropshire in 1852, another large new central staircase hall was created out of the old fabric.¹² This rectory also abandons the last traces of the old Tudor-gothic shouldered gables which had persisted in Donthorn's work as far as the Dummer house, and the top of the wall is at long last built out Pugin-fashion – sideways under the gable as it descends below the eave, and not upwards to create a parapet. Principally, however, the development in Donthorn's plans seems to reflect the increasing importance of the hall in the planning of the house; it may also be a conscious imitation of those plans, such as Pugin's pinwheel houses, where the staircase hall also acts as the hub of a relatively small house. With prominent designs such as these appearing all over the country, it was hardly surprising that new fashions eventually filtered down to provincial builders.

Technical precision

But there were factors other than stylistic ones that soon influenced the way architects in general worked and designed. The first is a greater theoretical awareness, appropriate for an era of rationalisation

4.4
Fontmell rectory by William
Donthorn (1844): the entrance
elevation. Note the very
typically Tudor-gothic
shouldered gable above the
porch [RIBA Library Drawings
Collection, Donthorn
[Fontmell] 1].

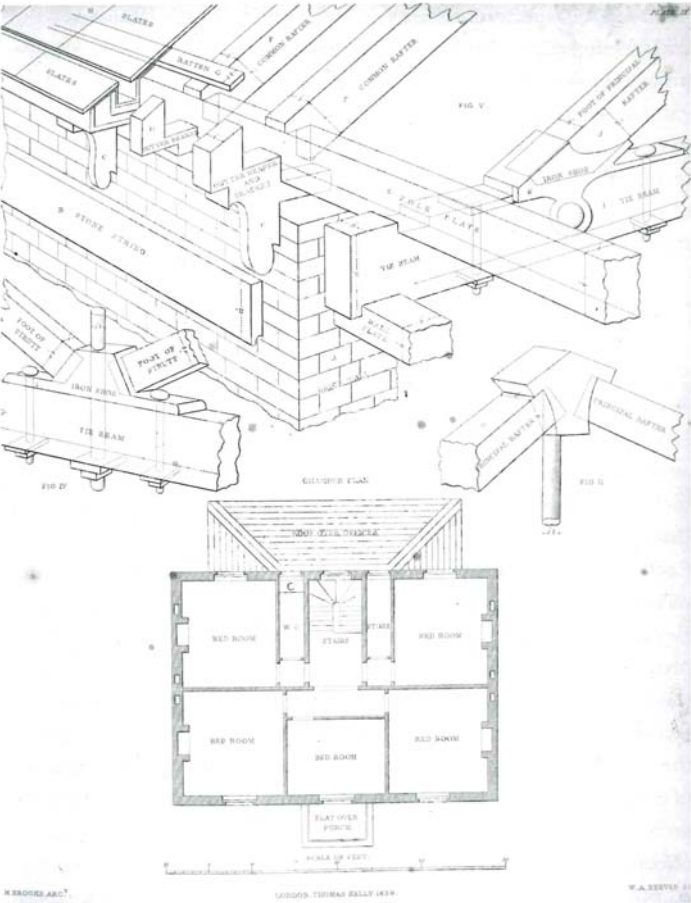
and classification. By the late 1830s architectural writers no longer recommend choosing a different style for a house on the basis of its size or status; it is as if by emphasising the idea of 'principles' in architecture, designers began to realise that future decisions would come about from the form and construction of the building itself, rather than being attributed by metaphor from philosophy or literature. Over the ten years that follow Loudon's *Encyclopaedia* one notices a change of tone in architectural writing as architects settle down to attend to the technical issues facing them and to start to see how they might be expressed in a building. An illustration of the extent to which practical necessities were making inroads into traditional commentaries is provided by Joseph Gwilt, whose *Encyclopaedia* of 1842 was published soon after Pugin's *The true principles*, although the author took pains to point out that his own work had been in preparation for some nine years.¹³ His conclusion on the subject of use and beauty lies in a quotation from Archibald Alison's *Essay on the nature and principles of taste* of 1790:

I apprehend that the beauty of proportion in forms is to be ascribed to [fitness] and that certain proportions affect us with the emotion of beauty, not from any original capacity in such qualities to excite this motion, but from their being expressive to us of the fitness of the parts to the end designed.¹⁴

There had always been 'principles', but now it was their increasing specificity and application to architecture which characterised the period. By the end of the 1830s the exact character of these new technical 'principles' was beginning to concern academics. In 1842 T. L. Donaldson's *Preliminary discourse* – in effect, a precis of his forthcoming first lecture series at University College, London – summarised that 'A recurrence to first principles was never more essential than at this moment. For not only our own school, but those of our continental neighbours have reached a most critical period. We are all in fact in a state of transition'.¹⁵ He would have known of Pugin's arguments – he could hardly have failed to have done – and because of the frequency of cases where architects, builders and their clients conflicted over building standards, costs and failures, he would have known too that the architectural profession was under pressure

to achieve higher standards of construction. But of course he had no way of knowing where this ‘transition’ was leading.

At this period a large number of technical architectural publications make their appearance; they include books such as S. H. Brooks’ *Designs for cottage and villa architecture*, of 1839, which was predominantly a detailed construction manual, and distinctly non-judgmental about style (fig. 4.5). But one single recent publication for architects would have given Donaldson an insight into a world of professional competence which is not that dissimilar to that of the



4.5
S. H. Brooks’ *Designs*, probably published in 1839, concentrated on the technical solutions, rather than the stylistic language, of new buildings: books like these were already a long way removed from the pattern books of the previous decade. Brooks wrote that ‘every building ought to exhibit that peculiar style which is indicative of the particular uses for which it is erected’ (page 30).

early twenty-first century. We have already come across extracts from the lengthy introductory essay to Alfred Bartholomew's *Specifications*, first published in 1840 and then again in 1846; but the bulk of the book is given over to providing technical advice, and gives us a clear picture of the rapidly increasing awareness amongst architects both to the technical and constructional innovations, but also to the legal and professional ones which were beginning to govern their profession. Bartholomew, whose brief editorship of the *Builder* was cut short by his premature death in January 1845, began his career as a writer on the fireproofing of dwellings. The *Specifications* was primarily intended for architects now required to provide detailed drawings and specifications when signing a contract at the outset of a building project, a subject we will return to shortly.¹⁶ The introduction is valuable here too, for it projects over the whole book a philosophical as well as a practical justification. Bartholomew was aware that technical literature 20 years beforehand had been in 'a coarse state of vagueness' and his approach to his subject was that of technical suitability based on his practical experience since that time:

It is the architect's business, to produce the greatest convenience strength duration and beauty, out of the funds which are entrusted to his care.¹⁷

From this premise, the book proceeds to its second part: lists of extensive building specification clauses for all aspects of construction, including sample detailed specifications for various building types.¹⁸ One of these is for 'a small rectory' (in Essex, with a living valued at £400 per annum), and another for a large one (£800 p.a.).¹⁹ The smaller rectory specification begins with a list of 11 drawings – plans, sections, elevations, and interior and exterior details – that the architect must provide. Well over a hundred clauses specify the works required, from the demolition of the old house to the hanging of the bells. The 21 sections on bricklaying include not only the method and extent of the masonry, but also the requirement for the contractor to dispose of excavations and waste.²⁰ Bartholomew has not forgotten that the architect may have been required by Queen Anne's Bounty to reuse old bricks in his new building, and there is a clause allowing this. Another one requires the bricklayer to provide half a rod of best stock

brickwork as a basis for extras; and another specifies the proper method of forming brick funnels at the feet of soil pipes. The house will have two marble chimney pieces with slabs, valued in whole at ten guineas.²¹ A comparison with a typical architect's specification of the time will give some indication of the radical scope of Bartholomew's recommendations. The carpentry and joinery clauses of any typical specification of the time were generally amongst the longest items in it, but any reference to the auxiliary elements, rather than merely to primary ones such as sashes, architraves, doors and so on was very limited. James Pritchett, writing his specification in 1841 for the parsonage at Bossall in Yorkshire referred, for example, to the provision of 'grounds' for the door architraves, and 'proper bearers' for the deal staircase treads.²² Bartholomew, no doubt with the experience of 101 on-site squabbles, left nothing to chance: the contractor was 'to provide and fix all requisite shores, struts, stints, puncheons, oak-wedges, ties, cletes, beads, stops, fillets, tilting-fillets, backings, blocks, linings, casings, furrings, and rolls'.²³ Further sections give sizes for wallplates, joists and sleepers; and the £400 p.a. rectory has 'countess' slates throughout, whereas the £800 one employs the larger 'duchess' size over its south attic windows.²⁴ The latter also had artificial stone ornament outside, and five ceiling roses, called 'enriched flowers with frames...each value 5s' within.²⁵ The provision of the up-to-date building technology of the time can, of course, be precisely ascertained here too. There are to be cast-iron air gratings around the base of the exterior walls for damp proofing; elsewhere, Bartholomew provided instructions for isolating brick piers from ground-floor sleepers by lead; for internal wall battening; and for waterproofing stucco ('of best new quick pure Parker's cement').²⁶ The smaller house is to have 'the very best pan water-closet apparatus' – he recommended Findon's patent – and the larger house is to have two, with wash hand basins, all fitted up 'with inch fine Spanish mahogany'.²⁷

Until recently, specifications submitted with applications to the Bounty might well have consisted of a single sheet of instructions. At the time of writing, Bartholomew would have seen examples similar to that made by Peter Thompson in the same year of 1840 for his proposed parsonage in Sutton, Norfolk, of which the principal drawing was a sheet of paper less than 17" wide by 12" high, onto which were squeezed a pair of simple outline plans at an eighth of an inch

to the foot, a single sketchy elevation enlivened by some scrawled greenery, and a list of rooms with their overall dimensions (see fig. 2.47).²⁸ It is rare at this time to find a detailed, priced specification as part of a Gilbert's Acts application; W. Hambley of Holloway provided one to accompany his otherwise unexceptional application for his curate's house at Theydon Bois as early as 1839; and during the same period Richard Carver in Taunton, of whom more later, usually did this.²⁹ The fact that most architects, surveyors or builders did not at once adopt Bartholomew's methodical and thorough clauses in their entirety – indeed, when I was being trained in the 1980s it was still something of a struggle to ensure that everything was properly written down – is a fine testament to the irrationality of the architectural profession. As late as 1871 it was left to the Bishop of Winchester himself to add a water closet to a plan drawn by the great George Edmund Street to a plan for a parsonage at Purbrook in Hampshire.³⁰

From the 1820s up to the 1840s architects were faced not only with increased expectations of technical proficiency, but also with demands for more consistent administrative procedures. The methods of approving applications to build new parsonages provide plenty of examples of how this developed into a further wing of the general movement of the period towards increased centralisation, and indeed to what is sometimes called governmentalisation – that is, the expansion of a public bureaucracy which increasingly imposes itself on the transactions of daily life. A note found with a file of 1816 for a new house at Merton, south of London, reveals that the Bounty was already issuing applicants with printed instructions drawing their attention to the basic requirements of Gilbert's Acts, in particular the need to have their estimate verified by a surveyor, and to provide an 'undertaking on the part of a Surveyor or other respectable Workman, to do the Work in a good substantial and Workmanlike manner, according to the Plan and Estimate, for the sum stipulated'.³¹ Christopher Hodgson, the secretary to the governors of the Bounty from 1822, published in 1826 a useful guide for incumbents and their agents who wanted to rebuild. *An account of the augmentation of small livings by the governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne*, to give it only part of its long title, began with a description of the Bounty itself, providing a history of the first fruits and the tenths drawn from earlier sources. Hodgson demonstrated the will of the governors to meet their obligations by explaining that they

were prepared to increase vastly the sums they had originally put aside for providing mortgages, hinting at the very good business it had already become. He provided the texts of the original and currently relevant legislation; and he also gave a detailed description of the required procedure for obtaining a grant for house-building under the augmentations legislation of 1803. Unlike Gilbert's Acts, this later act placed the procedure clearly under the jurisdiction of the Bounty, rather than of the local bishop, thus allowing Hodgson to define what the governors expected. He wrote sharply that

As the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty are very particular and strict with regard to the plan, specification, estimate, undertaking, affidavits, and other documents mentioned in these instructions, it will save trouble to all parties, and be creditable to the Surveyor, if pains be taken by him in preparing the same in a correct and proper manner; and the Incumbent is particularly requested to examine the same minutely, and to satisfy himself before he transmits the same to the Bounty Office, that they are drawn out nearly as circumstances may admit, and duly authenticated, according to these directions, and afterwards to see that the works are performed according to the specification and undertaking; and to give notice to the Secretary of the Governors if the same shall not be so performed.³²

In any case, it was evidently possible by 1840 for the Bounty to approve an augmentation for the building of a new house, but demand that this new house be then mortgaged under the Gilbert's Acts to pay for the services of a curate, so the building would in practice have to be approved under the requirements of those acts in the first place.³³ There are examples of letters amongst the various parsonage files in the record offices of correspondents apologising for having earlier omitted required documents or otherwise not complied with the regulations.³⁴ Various applicants across the country were late with their paperwork, started without permission, requested variations mid-way, or otherwise set the cat amongst the well-ordered pigeons at Dean's Yard. Hodgson reminded his readers that the Bounty would not allow for 'grates, stoves, coppers, or other articles usually accounted fixtures', which explains why some estimates price these separately, together with other minor

items such as bells, and some pieces of ironmongery.³⁵ This demand for precision seems to have aroused some panic amongst applicants – for example, the vicar of South Newington in Oxfordshire took the trouble to ensure that the Bounty would not object to his last-minute substitution of wallpaper for paint.³⁶ Hodgson's book of 1826 was completed by a list of benefices, indicating which had received augmentations, by how much, and in what year, thus making it the first comprehensive work of reference on the subject. From this date onwards a process at work in other areas of society – the preparation and publication of properly compiled information as a first step towards implementing reform – arrives in the field of the provision of new parsonages. Editions of Crockford's *Clerical directory*, which was first published in 1842 and henceforth appeared annually, indicated by an asterisk which of the listed benefices had a parsonage house 'fit for habitation'. Although the list does not appear to be entirely accurate – occasionally one finds an example of a parish where the parsonage is marked as being unfit, whilst other evidence suggests that a house had been recently built – the decision to include this information is a reminder that the Bounty, and the church authorities in general, intended the directory to remind parsons that a fit residence was not only desirable, it was also possible if the rules were correctly followed.

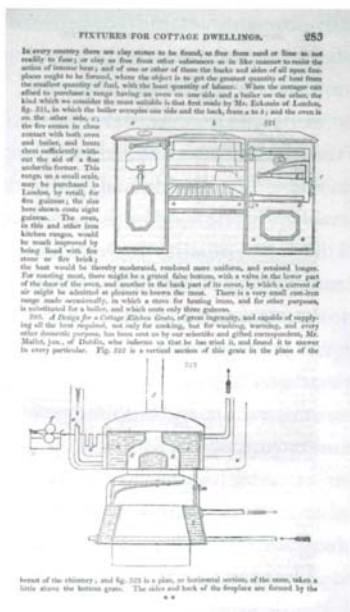
Alongside the condition that applications be made in a consistent and thorough way came the introduction of standard forms to be completed. When the Gilbert's Acts' legislation was first deployed in the 1810s the bishop appointed his commission and received his reply on a plain sheet of paper, often the same one. From 1840 there were printed forms available, and the bishop's clerk had only to fill in the names and the places as necessary, although it clearly took time for these to reach all regions: in Norwich the first recorded form appears in 1844, but in Bath and Wells not until 1846.³⁷ The increase in the amount of form-filling required continued throughout the nineteenth century: comparisons can easily be drawn between changing standards where a parsonage is built with a mortgage, and then rebuilt or remodelled sometime later. The very early application for the substantial sum of £200 to extend Rustington vicarage in Sussex by a stair hall and three new rooms on each floor, for example, of 1804, consists of a handful of papers; when the Reverend John Cheale's early twentieth-century successor, J. Louis Crosland, wanted a

grant of £25 to add a bathroom and a few other very minor changes in 1915, he was required to submit a large stack of documents.³⁸ This process is one that begins with Hodgson's idea of order, and with Hodgson's book. And the grasp that Hodgson had over his office was remarkable. He was appointed secretary in 1822 and combined this office with that of treasurer in 1831; he then proceeded to rule over the proceedings of the Bounty for another 40 years, living beside the shop in an arrangement that blurred the distinction between his private and personal life.³⁹ A 'congratulatory certificate' attached to the index of volume 24 of the minutes of the board of governors on the occasion of Hodgson's laying the first brick of what in effect became his private apartments at 3A Dean's Yard in August 1846 gives something of the flavour of the regard in which he was held by the six assistants who signed it: it testifies to their 'high regard for your person and appreciation of the great kindness which induced the exertion recently made to secure the useful and comfortable additions to the office'. The following year a further office extension was built not only beside but also above Hodgson's new residence, so the two were certainly architecturally intertwined (see fig. 1.1).⁴⁰

The business going on within was by now considerable. Towards the end of the decade, in April 1849, Hodgson recorded that the Bounty had granted 1,498 mortgages, worth a total of £733,760.5.11; the sum of £60,000 was being made available for new mortgages each year.⁴¹ It was in that meeting that he noted that the low price of corn was badly affecting the ability of parsons to pay their instalments; by way of avoiding any future threat to the stability of the fund he proposed that the governors continued to lend the same amount – for 'the object of providing fit houses for the Residence of Incumbents of Benefices is universally acknowledged to be the most important' of its uses – but that it should be spread over a greater number of applicants.

Hodgson's demand for standards that were higher than had been traditional in the historical way of commissioning and building houses was not an artificial imposition: by reading the technical sections of, for example, Loudon's *Encyclopaedia*, one can easily discover that the incumbents themselves, and their families, would have reasonably expected new plumbing and kitchen arrangements including various manufactured and patent devices to be incorporated into their new houses (fig. 4.6). A small early nineteenth-century

house might typically include a scullery and a pantry in addition to its kitchen; towards mid-century an outside court with a range of different uses was common. Even Thompson's modest house at Sutton, mentioned above, had a glass room, a store, a scullery and piggery, a knife room and a coal house in addition to a pair of what he called 'vespasians' (privies), and a stable block with separate fodder and chaise stores.⁴² Architects could have some fun with these requirements: we have already seen Arthur Browne's application for Hepworth with its assortment of stylish and rustic buildings (see fig. 1.25); and in 1846 Samuel Sanders Teulon was able to exploit a minor extension project at Potton in Bedfordshire to design a stable block with a most curious and decidedly un-gothic round window.⁴³ A remodelling of a larger house in 1837 by Carver of Taunton included a complex and comprehensive range of kitchen offices, including a coal house, shed, scullery wash and bakehouse, dairy, larder, butler's room, servants' hall, wine cellar, a china and store pantry, a beer cellar, and a shoe and knife house, in addition to further storage provided by the basement of the house.⁴⁴ Each of these areas required equipment or fitting out of some different



4.6
The latest kitchen equipment, illustrated in Loudon's *Encyclopaedia* (book 1, chapter 3, page 283). In book 3 Loudon presented a highly sophisticated plan by a Mr Mallet for a large new kitchen.

kind; again, the parsonage files unfailingly provide useful detailed examples of the growth of the Victorian back-stairs.

Everything that was to be provided had to be drawn; and to some extent the drawings themselves provide a commentary on changing attitudes. One interesting fact is that the room titles labelled on drawings show that it was not unusual to have the drawing room on the upper floor of a house even in an isolated country location, perhaps where the lower rooms might have been susceptible to damp; another is that during the first half of the nineteenth century, a dining room seems often to have been called an 'eating room' in East Anglia. The drawings provide a commentary of their own in other ways, too. The earliest submissions are only very rarely attractive as drawings; and the less 'architectural' elements of the scheme, the kitchen yard or offices, are often left out of the elevations or obscured by planting.⁴⁵ Joseph Stannard's imposing classical-Georgian elevation for the new vicarage at Sutton in Cambridgeshire ignored the large office and stable blocks flanking it.⁴⁶ Not for nothing had Pugin often ridiculed modern architecture by showing a variety of round-the-back boiler sheds and functional additions which had somehow escaped the attention of the architect when viewing the house from the front. Mark Thompson, he of the splendid Boxford rectory in Suffolk, had sometimes submitted his applications in the form of one tidy page, including a minute watercolour illustration (see figs 1.23, 2.5).⁴⁷ Rather more professional and neat drawings in coloured ink, with watercolour, became more common in the mid 1830s. Occasionally these have perspectives attached, such as on the application for the new rectory at Badlesmere in Kent, by George Russell French of Chancery Lane, London, in 1836 (fig. 4.7).⁴⁸ Another attractive drawing in the



4.7

Part of the application drawing for Badlesmere rectory, between Faversham and Ashford, Kent. The house was designed by George Russell French in 1836, during the Tudor-gothic era of William IV [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DCb/DC/B1/1].

Canterbury collection for that period is the small and careful design for a strange, asymmetrical plain classical-Georgian house for Stockbury by R. C. Hussey, in 1834, before the architect had been redeemed by the gothic revival (fig. 4.8).⁴⁹

The standard of draughtsmanship in the country generally improved during the 1840s, and even dull drawings are increasingly neatly and finely prepared. Mid-century applications can have fine drawings: the set prepared by Teulon in 1849 for Tathwell in Lincolnshire is particularly attractive, and furthermore the architect drew the house in both his submitted perspectives with the kitchen offices highlighted in the foreground, showing the effect of first Loudon's and then Pugin's teachings. There is amongst them a dairy with a charming spirelet, a far cry from the hidden or invisible kitchen blocks of earlier decades (fig. 4.9).⁵⁰ William Bennett, 'builder of Portishead', submitted in 1851 a fine and complex drawing for his alterations to the parsonage in the town: it is a great deal more sophisticated than any 'builder' would have presented 20 years beforehand.⁵¹

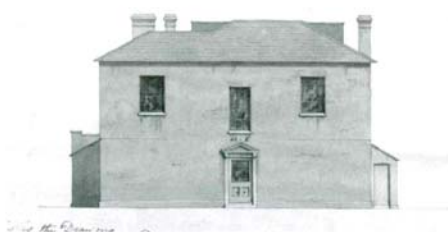
One interesting example of the value of drawings is the way in which architects or surveyors drew the remains of the houses that they

4.8

The rather haunting asymmetrical elevations for Stockbury, between Sittingbourne and Gillingham, Kent, by the future goth R. C. Hussey in 1834 – already working for Thomas Rickman and two years before taking over the partnership. The gothic revival evidently offered a solution to curious arrangements like these [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DCb/DC/S35/1].



Elevation of the Garden front



Elevation of the Street front

were replacing or remodelling. That meticulously drawn parsonage at Abbotskerswell, near Exeter, drawn by S.H. Turner in 1837, is perhaps a late example of a purely picturesque attitude towards the beauty and history of the old building, inspired by the newly accurate illustrations of the topographical publications of the previous decade (see figs 1.7–10). Amongst the collection of the Bath and Wells diocese there are a comparatively large number of accurate plans of old parsonage buildings and the way in which they are incorporated into the new house indicates that architects there saw them as a building resource which needed to be treated with some respect: the form of the old building is retained quite distinctly in relation to the new one, the thorough reuse telling us that the bishop was aware that the low incomes of his benefices would not allow demolition. Occasionally the drawings of an old building tell us about how a small house had been extended in the past. At Weston-on-the-Green in Oxfordshire an application for an unexceptional two-storey extension shows quite clearly that an old cottage, three rooms long and one room deep, had already been extended at some earlier point by simply doubling its depth to provide a decent drawing room and a store (fig. 4.10).⁵² Similarly, perhaps, the Oxford diocese seems in early days to have had an occasional policy of building a completely new house that greatly resembled its predecessor, such as at Deddington, in 1822.⁵³

The next stage chronologically is the unsympathetic way in which an existing structure was remodelled to form the basis of a different type of house: the alterations and additions at Teffont Evias in Wiltshire by William Moffat in 1842 provide a good example of this: the old building was merely just so much masonry that had to be reused (see fig. 2.58).⁵⁴ Then came a most sympathetic and careful reworking of the old building into a significant part of an entirely different one, which was characteristic of the better gothic revival architects: there was a lovely example at Milton, just north of Sittingbourne in Kent, by William White of 1855 – sadly gone (fig. 4.11); and there is another at Melksham, in Wiltshire, of 1877 by Street.⁵⁵ Here the new and the old were both separately expressed and yet merged on the exterior of this house, which has, accordingly, a complex plan (fig. 4.12).⁵⁶ And finally, well beyond the general scope of this survey, there comes the final romantic stage towards the end of the century where the old building is recognised as an important survival in its own right. The drawings

4.9 (right)

Handsome is as handsome does: the kitchen and back offices of S. S. Teulon's design for Tathwell, near Louth, Lincolnshire, receive pride of place in this application drawing of 1849, exemplifying both how Pugin and Loudon's attitude to the significance of these areas in domestic design as well as the professionalisation of architects' working methods gained ground across the country [Lincolnshire Archives, MGA 338].



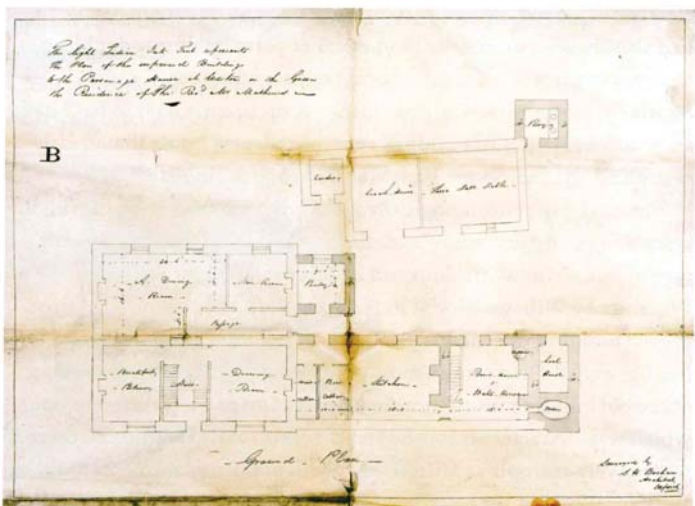
4.10 (below)

Organic growth: this old house at Weston-on-the-Green near Bicester, Oxfordshire, had clearly been doubled in width before this application was submitted in 1823 by the architect S. H. Benham to add kitchen offices and a privy [Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. dioc. papers b.106/4].



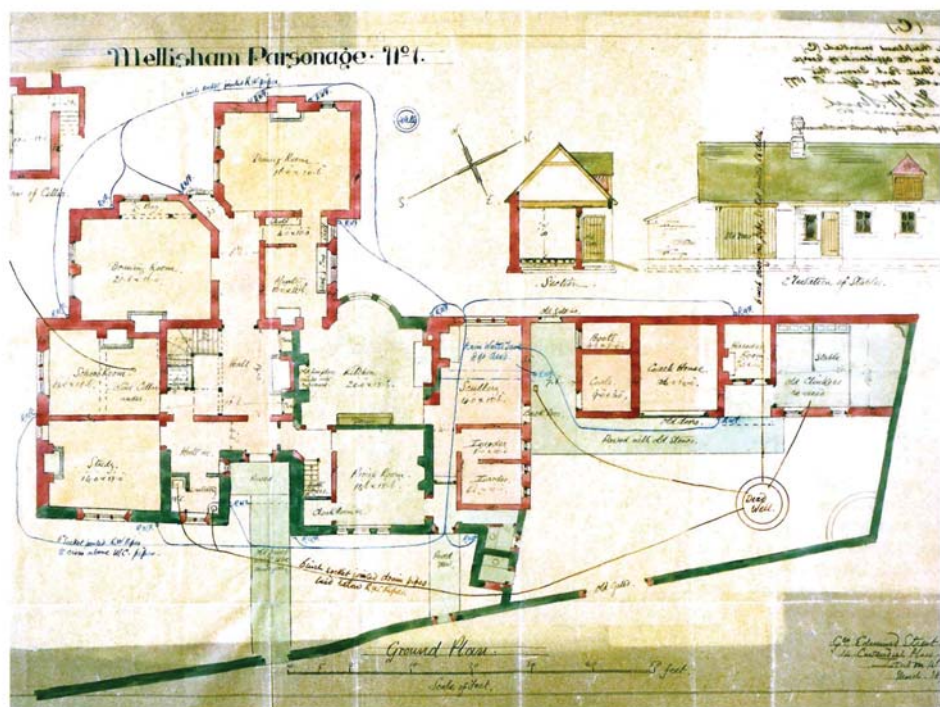
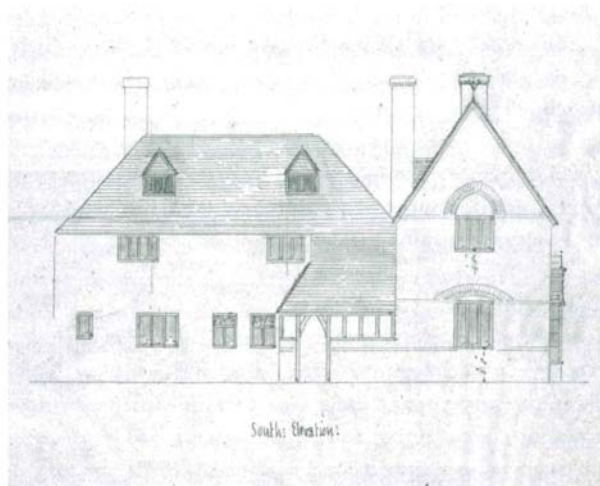
4.11 (opposite, above)

This design by William White of 1855, for additions (right) to an old parsonage at Milton near Sittingbourne, shows a sensitivity for context which is remarkable for its period [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DCb/DC/M15/1].



4.12 (opposite, below)

The great George Edmund Street, of Law Courts fame, adapting in 1877 the remains of the small old vicarage at Melksham, Wiltshire, into the kitchen (with bow window) and parish room (below it) of a much larger house. The new reception rooms, including a study and school room, fan out along the south-western (left) side [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D1/11/246].

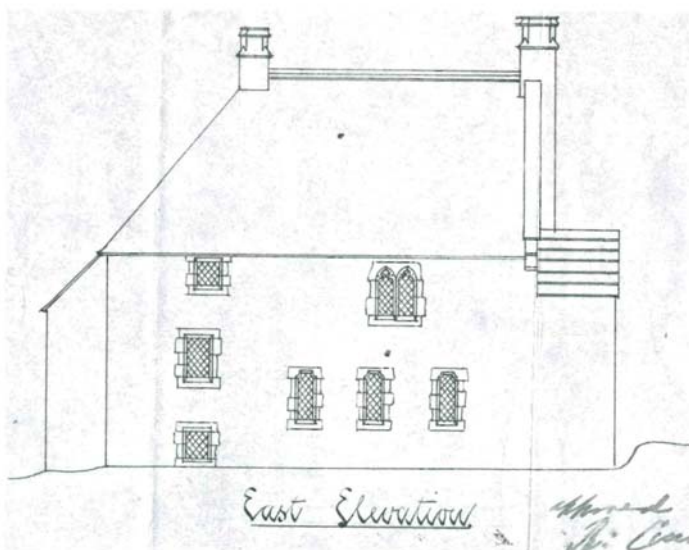


by Lacy W. Ridge of 1891 for the restoration of the mediaeval rectory at West Dean in Sussex show the old building as a distinct block, to which a new house has been added (fig. 4.13).⁵⁷ The dean's report of 1821 had described this building as 'very much dilapidated', and had urged repair, but it had taken another 70 years for it at last to become again the residence of the rector.⁵⁸ Those sympathetic to the English arts and crafts movement will no doubt feel a little relieved that no one had acted on the dean's advice immediately.

The man for the job

Perhaps in many ways the most significant change illustrated by the parsonage records across the country is the way in which the eighteenth-century surveyor or builder became transformed into the modern professional architect; or, indeed, the modern building contractor. The phrasing of the declaration signed by the incumbent's agent itself gives an insight into the way in which building professionals saw themselves and their duties. In the first place, the agent made a declaration which described his professional status: in the early years this was predominantly 'surveyor' and often 'builder', or a specific building-trades craftsman such as carpenter; towards mid-

4.13
The restored east elevation of the thirteenth-century rectory at West Dean, near Eastbourne, Sussex, drawn in 1891 by Lacy W. Ridge, former president of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, as part of his proposal drawings for a sizable extension. The old house had only two rooms on each floor and as can be seen here remained intact in Ridge's sensitive scheme [West Sussex Record Office, EPI/41/77].



century the 'surveyor' begins to disappear in favour of 'architect', and 'builder' is rare for all but the simplest houses. Lugar, unquestionably an 'architect' in modern parlance, described himself on his affidavit for the house at Yaxham as 'a skillfull and experienced Workman or Surveyor'; and, engagingly, William Hinsbey of Norwich declared on his application for Bramerton in 1838 that he was an 'artist and surveyor'.⁵⁹ All this is, of course, consistent with the history of the development of the modern architectural and building professions, and yet there is one aspect of these declarations that deserves further study. Having stated their professional description, the agents then went on to testify to their own experience and to the validity of their work. As two very different characters put it:

Peter Thompson of Osnaburgh Pl, New Road in the County of Middlesex Builder and Surveyor maketh oath and saith that he has been accustomed to survey and value and to superintend the building and repair of Houses and other Buildings... and that the paper writings hereunto severally annexed marked No. 1 – No. 2 – and No. 3 and a paper writing hereunto annexed marked B contain a Plan and Specification of the work proposed to be done...and a true and correct estimate according to the best of this Deponents judgment and belief of the expence of the same...⁶⁰

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin of Ramsgate Kent architect maketh oath and saith that he has been accustomed to survey and value and to superintend the building and repair of Houses and other buildings...and that the paper writings & accounts severally annexed marked separately A B C and D contain a true state of the condition of the said buildings and a plan and specification of the work proposed to be done...and a true and correct Estimate according to the best of this Deponent's judgment and belief of the expense of such work...⁶¹

In other words, however he described himself the agent was taking upon himself responsibility for the estimated *cost* of the new work; at any rate, if the real cost overran, it would be too late to apply for an increased mortgage. Where an architect himself acted as builder, this affidavit served in effect as a building contract, and this seems literally

to have been the case at least in the earlier applications. It is surprising, given the legal risks that an architect was undertaking, that there were not more situations in which the house was designed by an architect but the affidavit and estimate provided by a builder. I found very few cases of this: they include one of 1840 at Litton in Somerset, where the documents are signed by Clement York, a local builder, but the drawings are marked 'A.J. Beloe, archt. of Chilhampton'; and another is nothing less than G.E. Street's first parsonage, at Wantage in Berkshire, of which more later, and which was signed off by John Belcher in 1849, even though the specification states at the outset that the work is to be carried out 'from the designs and under the superintendence of George Edmund Street'.⁶² This seems a great deal more suitable to the architect's new position as an independent professional. At Portesham in Dorset the surveyor who designed the building, T. H. Harvey, signed the affidavits in 1843, but the builder, Thomas Dodson, signed the estimate, and also a commitment to build in 'a good substantial and workmanlike manner'.⁶³ There is a particularly interesting application in the case of the large new rectory at Hardingham in Norfolk, where the responsibility was divided up between several people, each signing a separate declaration: the old building was examined by Richard Whitaker, surveyor and builder of Cambridge; the new house was designed by Joseph Stannard, specifically acting as architect; the plans and specifications were submitted by George William Minns of Norwich as builder; and a simple plan and specification for the barn, stable and cowhouse was signed off by William Elsy, a local bricklayer. This comes close to a modern situation in which building professionals are aware of the risk of litigation if they stray from their own field of expertise, but it is apparently unique in its demarcation of responsibilities amongst the Bounty and Ecclesiastical Commissioners' files.⁶⁴ The law – of 1777 – was clearly framed for a situation in which the designer and the executor were the same person. In Pugin's case, he acted to a certain extent as *de facto* business partner of his building contractor, George Myers, on the projects which they built together: they agreed the price they submitted, and Pugin almost entirely refrained from working with other builders, to the extent that in the case of the Lanteglos rectory he refused to have anything further to do with the project once the drawings had been handed over, never visiting the site. Possibly these arrangements were common.

And yet even with the development of the architect as a disinterested designer, he continues for the most part to sign the estimates. It should be remembered that the whole of the first part of the nineteenth century is characterised by changing responsibilities between the professionals of the building world, a process that has been well recorded elsewhere.⁶⁵ The way in which an architect's responsibilities contracted from an interest in a building's profit into the provision of a professional service which gives advance approval of building rates and quantities on behalf of his client was only one aspect of an overall change which was essentially concerned with ensuring that the client could know what his financial investment would be before a building went on site.⁶⁶ Contracting in gross freed the architect from the responsibility of measuring executed work with the aid of published tables, an activity which was open to abuse, inaccuracy, and disputes about the quality of work, and which required considerable manpower.⁶⁷ By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the alternative was for the architect to provide one or more contractors with detailed measured drawings and specifications from which a price could be agreed in advance of the contract being signed. Large-scale public events had encouraged the change. The *Fourth report of the commissioners of military enquiry of 1806-7*, which was concerned with public expenditure on army barrack blocks, had been satisfied of the advantages to the public of such a system.⁶⁸ John Nash's Buckingham Palace *débâcle* – in which the British public found that they had paid for an overpriced and inefficient design – highlighted the dangers of accelerating costs when prices and quantities were not agreed in advance; and, in order to protect the architect from suspicion of acting in a contractor's interests against those of his own client, members of the new Institute of British Architects were almost from its inception forbidden to 'carry out any measuring except on work they themselves were superintending'.⁶⁹ When the minutes of the Board of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners mention in 1843, as a minor item, that a Mr Clutton of Parliament Street has been appointed to act as surveyor in the matter of the Gravesend rectory, it is the first recorded appearance there of a surveyor in the modern sense, a person who makes an independent assessment of the value of land or the fabric of a building neither as architect nor as builder.⁷⁰ Defining exactly who did what was a major preoccupation of this era, and as the existence,

and the central theme, of Bartholomew's *Specifications* make clear, pricing in advance and the signing of a comprehensive building contract required the preparation of exhaustive written and drawn documents.⁷¹ The years 1834 – the foundation of the Institute – to 1840 – the publication of *Specifications* – mark something of a watershed in the development of the modern architectural profession.

The new professionals

A look at the careers of any of the leading architects who specialised in parsonage design in this period and immediately afterwards provides valuable evidence of the changing nature of their profession; by looking in further detail, it is also possible to see that the very process of administering the new demand for parsonages itself created new types of career. Three architects are worth closer attention in this respect: William Railton, Benjamin Ferrey, and Ewan Christian, who worked successively for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in Whitehall Place. William Railton, the oldest of these, was born in 1801. A former pupil of William Inwood, he became a fellow of the Institute of British Architects in January 1835, a matter of months after it was founded. He was proposed for membership by two of its founders: by Donaldson, from whom we have heard above, and by Henry Kendall, famous for his church of St George at Ramsgate of the mid-1820s, but also the designer of a small parsonage at Selham, which is remarkable perhaps only for its tiny and pretty freestanding dairy.⁷² It is in fact hard to find information about Railton, perhaps because of the sticky end to his career occasioned by his misfortunes with his parsonages. Its start was, however, promising. At the end of 1835 he entered the competition for the design for the new Houses of Parliament, and was awarded fourth prize for his entry, which was sober and castellated, and not unlike the architecture of the recent collegiate buildings in Cambridge by William Wilkins with decorative gateways at the centres of unrelieved flat walls with pointed windows (fig. 4.14).⁷³ Although his best-known design, the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square, was classical, the greater part of his work was in the same rather thin gothic style of his Westminster entry.⁷⁴ A good example of this applied to a medium-sized house can be found at Grace Dieu, the home he designed for Pugin's friend Ambrose Phillips near Loughborough in 1833, which is a plain, very horizontal building with



4.14

William Railton's competition design for the Houses of Parliament, 1835, showing his proposed Old Palace Yard with entrances for the King, Lords and Commons. He won fourth prize, and was complemented by the judges on his layout [The National Archives, ref. WORK 29/64].

apologetic gables on prominent shoulders and little ornamentation (fig. 4.15). In January 1838 he heard that the Bishop of Ripon was intending to build himself a new residence and wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners asking permission to submit proposals for it; thereafter his name crops up in connection with that house – for which he was selected following a competition in which Salvin and James Clephan also participated – and with the palaces at Stapleton (for the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol) and of Riseholme (for the Bishop of Lincoln).⁷⁵ He does not appear to have held an official position as the architect to the Commissioners at this time and indeed the Ripon job got off to an inauspicious start when he had to ask his own bank to hand over the first instalment to the building contractor after being unable to convene the Commissioners in time to issue the payment. So in fact it was as a veteran of the various scandalous manoeuvrings between the prelates as they struggled to outdo each other in the provision of grand new residences at public expense that he was commissioned to design a series of parsonages based on model types.⁷⁶

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were composed of both senior churchmen and politicians, took the matter of parsonage design very seriously; there is considerable record of it in their minutes, although in fact they were responsible for the design of very few of them: a schedule published in mid-1845 shows that they had so far approved a mere 57. In Dean's Yard Hodgson and his small staff were dealing with many more and with the minimum of a bureaucratic apparatus;



4.15
Grace Dieu Manor, between Loughborough and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, seen from the south-east. The main house is by Railton and was built in 1833-4; Pugin extended the chapel porch upwards to form a tower in 1837; a few years later he added the service wing seen here on the right.

the Commissioners on the other hand passed lengthy resolutions on the matter, and in 1845 handed the matter down for further discussion by a select committee of five; other committees, such as those dealing with finances, and the appointment of surveyors and architects, were also involved. This was in part because the Commissioners had demanded from the first complete control over the design of the houses. In 1842, in their first recorded discussion of the subject, they resolved that 'in every case in which the Commissioners make a grant towards the building of a House of Residence for the incumbent of any living, such house be erected and completed entirely under their direction and control, and to this end all benefactions to meet such grants be paid over to the Commissioners before any contract is entered into for the building'. This resolution came following a discussion on some suggestions of Railton's: that he should prepare a standard

parsonage house type from which only minor deviations would be allowed; that a standard building contract would be 'kept ready printed' for the execution of all the works 'by one contractor and for one sum'; and that he, Railton, would handle these houses for a fixed charge rather than for his usual charge of £5 per cent.⁷⁷ A few months later, the Board accepted that 'Every house proposed to be purchased must be surveyed by the architect of the Commissioners, and every new house must be built according to his designs and under his exclusive superintendence; the Commissioners entering into the necessary contracts'; they also made various decisions regarding policy when meeting benefactions intending for the provision of new parsonages.⁷⁸ The next decision on the subject was even more restrictive. The Commissioners appear to have been annoyed that they had agreed to the building of larger houses than Railton had originally designed, but that incumbents had then been unable to pay for them; and then they had had to ask for the plans to be reduced again, causing 'confusion and unnecessary expense'. The Board decided to fix the number of reception rooms at three – 'two sitting rooms, 16×14, a study about 12 or 13 feet square, kitchen, scullery, and usual offices of corresponding dimensions, and six bed Rooms' – and the costs of any alterations, including the addition of stabling, would have to be met directly by the incumbent himself.⁷⁹ The extent of the Commissioners' interference is the more remarkable bearing in mind the fact that 'as a general rule' they paid for no more than half the cost of a new house in the case of a parish in public patronage, and only two-fifths where there was a private patron.⁸⁰

The designs that Railton came up with were dull in the extreme. For two parsonages in or close to London, at Muswell Hill and Rotherhithe, he designed plain central-corridor plans with conventional gable-and-bay front elevations.⁸¹ Another four houses have almost identical back-corridor plans, the only variation amongst them being the study by the front door, which had either an internal or external chimney.⁸² The unusual care with which Railton presented his constructional cross-section drawings, and the special attention given to the design of the front door and porch, contrast markedly with his characterless elevations of notionally classical-Georgian houses decorated with minimally Italianate chimneys, flat string courses formed from bands of raised stucco, shallow gables with

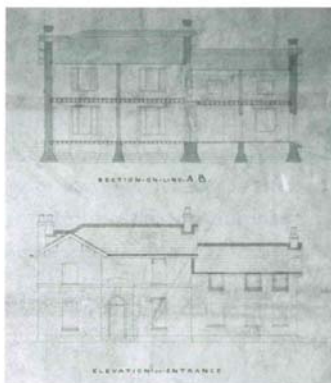
projecting rafters, and a modest pediment above the front doors. This stylelessness was not Railton's own invention – a contemporary application for a curate's house at Derry Hill near Calne in Wiltshire submitted in 1843 by a pair called John Guthrie and B.B. Jones suffers from just the same artless dreariness.⁸³ There are others, too. In an Italian landscape, with Italian sun, houses like these might have just worked; in gloomy England they were depressing (fig.4.16).⁸⁴

Amongst the critics of Railton's work were the writers of the *Ecclesiologist*, the journal of the Cambridge Camden Society – an organisation that had been established at the end of the 1830s by a group of undergraduates to appreciate and promote mediaeval gothic architecture and to revive it for modern church-building. In their June 1843 article on parsonages they issued the following condemnation:

We have now two [parsonage designs] before us, which we regret to see approved by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, one of them in the ordinary nondescript style of the day, the other professedly Gothick; but it will sufficiently shew how entirely the architect has mistaken the very principles of his art, to state that the ground plan, and in fact the whole design in the two, is identical. A square dripstone over each of the windows and the door, the insertion of a few mullions, a trifling additional elevation given to the roof, and a high roof placed over the porch, is apparently in the opinion of this artist all that is necessary to convert an Italian (if we may so call it) into a Gothick edifice.

Now it is clear that the very first principles of good architecture are here violated.⁸⁵

4.16
St Barnabas' parsonage,
Bristol: details of the nominally
classical-Georgian elevation
from Railton's contract
drawing in the RIBA collection.
All his parsonages were very
similar to each other [RIBA
Library Drawings Collection,
Railton (1)].



The Ecclesiologists might have suspected what Railton admitted during the course of an interview two years later: that he designed in this way because he believed the results to be cheaper than a true gothic building.⁸⁶ Agreeably for the gothic party, his attempts at resisting the new style coincided with his protracted and painful downfall as architect to the Commissioners. A number of his parsonage houses began to have problems even whilst they were under construction, and as a consequence the process by which these were investigated and discussed by his employers – interviews, committee and sub-committee meetings, and proposals, motions and decisions – provides a wonderful example of the value of early Victorian parsonage records in depicting the professional life of the architect of the period. The first sign in the Commissioners' files that things were going wrong was in the case of the house for Mr Smelgar, incumbent at St James' church, Mathon, in Herefordshire (fig. 4.17). Not only were applicants for grants towards houses required to pay their part of the costs up front to the Commissioners; they also had to pay an inspection fee of five pounds in advance of the architect's first visit to the site.⁸⁷ Since the Commissioners' secretary insisted that Railton minimise his travelling expenses by combining visits to sites in the same region there was often a delay at the outset at the project, and Smelgar was clearly annoyed by it.⁸⁸ He had also wanted a gothic house, and Railton had ignored this because of his belief that gothic was more expensive.⁸⁹ When Railton's plan finally arrived, at the end of July 1844, Smelgar wanted changes, but Railton encouraged him to sign his approval of them to save time, and said he would make the alterations later.⁹⁰ Smelgar was greatly disappointed that his architect was to provide him with a wine cellar but not a beer or cider one – space for the latter two was 'one of the most necessary and ordinary comforts' of a modern home, he thought – and he now personally faced the extra cost of adding these subsequent to the signing of the contract.⁹¹ Smelgar thought the bricks of bad quality too, and, he seems to have added for good measure his belief and that of people in his locality that the Commissioners were shielding Railton from criticism by people such as himself because Railton had in some way a personal connection to the Commissioners' staff.⁹² It appears also that Smelgar or his builder, McCain, complained that McCain had had to pay Railton personally a fee on being awarded the contract, which must

4.17
Mathon vicarage,
Herefordshire, designed in
1844 by Railton for Mr
Smelgar – the first of several
unsatisfied clerical clients.
This house was designed in
Railton's economic version
of gothic that violated 'the
very first principles of good
architecture'. Few of his
parsonages seem to have
survived in their original form.



have implied to Smelgar that Railton was in everybody's pay but his.⁹³ Railton's replies to these charges, in an interview in July 1845 with members of a select committee established by the Commissioners, give an interesting picture of the changing state of professional methods. He explained that he had not taken any improper fee – rather, that consistent with correct contemporary practice, tendering contractors would agree to paying a surveyor a fee of 20 guineas to take out quantities from their plans and specifications and thus provide a secure

basis for submitting their prices; and that the successful contractor eventually pays the bill.⁹⁴ He described the old system of tendering without quantities as ‘very dangerous’.⁹⁵ Smelgar’s suspicions had no doubt been aroused because the surveyor here was Railton’s own employee Thomas Morris, whom Railton trusted to do the job well; and Morris had received his cash from the builder whilst actually present in Railton’s Regent Street office.⁹⁶ His questioners sought reassurance: ‘But is it the universal custom of the trade that a respectable Architect has his own Surveyor who takes out the quantities and who must be paid by the successful competitor?’ ‘Yes’, Railton replied, later adding ‘Every respectable builder knows it’.⁹⁷ The committee members acquitted Railton of improper soliciting of fees when they finalised their report later the same day, although they now wanted the fee to be paid through their offices rather than Railton’s; they also found nothing to criticise in the actions of their assistant secretary James Jell Chalk, who, as it happens, had indeed been responsible for introducing Railton to the Commissioners in the first place.⁹⁸ They did however criticise the rigidity of Railton’s plans, and offered to pay for Smelgar’s beer and cider cellars.⁹⁹ However Smelgar’s was only one of a series of ‘remonstrances or complaints’ that had arrived at Whitehall Place.¹⁰⁰ Railton was summoned for a further interview on 26 June 1846 and faced no fewer than 144 questions from three angry Commissioners, the bishops of Oxford, Worcester, and Gloucester and Bristol, who represented some of the most aggrieved incumbents and questioned him most aggressively.

At Upleadon near Bristol there was ‘no Cesspool or drain’; nor was there ‘a Coalhouse, or Place for a Gig’. At Saul in Gloucestershire the architect had over-certified, allowing the builder to be paid for work he had not carried out. At Bridlington Quay the wrong timber had been used; at Mathon the offices were too small. In one case a Captain Duncombe had offered to raise the quality of building work by making a personal donation, and Railton had profited by this by taking a percentage on the extra costs. At the end of this painful interrogation, a Commissioner – most probably Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford – rose up at the end to give the architect a lecture on the prestige he obtained by working for the board, and why this should compensate for the lack of greater financial gain from it:

the Payment of the Architect employed by this Commission is, first, the Number of the Houses which ultimately may come to him; Secondly, the Distinction he acquires on being Connected with our Board; it is the very Thing for a young Man starting in business, we all of us by Experience in our own Dioceses [know] that Architects of a very high Character are ready to give gratuitous Services to our Diocesan Societies merely for the sake of such a Connexion; therefore we cannot shut our Eyes to the Fact that Connexion with us at Head Quarters would be the making of any young Man of Character, Skill, and Talent in your Profession; it is not fair to strike that out in estimating how much the architect is to be paid. The Architect of a public Building who gets a great deal of public Work takes that Office for lower than he would if his whole Living was paid for from that Building, therefore there is a great deal in the Argument.¹⁰¹

The committee members consequently reported back to the next full board meeting that they 'cannot but express their strong Opinion, drawn from their careful examination of Mr Railton, that the existing arrangements of the Commissioners as to the erection of Parsonage Houses need immediate alteration'.¹⁰²

Of all the disasters to date, that at Upleadon was much the worst, and considerably exaggerated by the fact that the vicar, Andrew Sayers, seems to have been both aggressive and paranoid. His contractor, W. Robertson, was an experienced parsonage builder for Railton, having worked on five other similar houses in the region: those at St Barnabas in Bristol, Cherhill, Knowle Hill, and St Paul's Newport in Monmouthshire, but also that at Saul where Railton had been accused of over-certifying.¹⁰³ Sayers in fact fell out with Robertson as his house was going up when Robertson allegedly overcharged Sayers for some work he was doing elsewhere.¹⁰⁴ Sayers then started finding fault with the new house. He asked Robertson for a copy of Railton's specification so that he could check that the house was being constructed as the architect had agreed, but got a 'saucy' refusal from Robertson, who walked off the site leaving the house unfinished in the autumn of 1845 but claiming the balance of the contract sum, just over £60.¹⁰⁵ Sayers wrote complaining letters to the Commissioners, and they promised that a surveyor would be sent down to investigate.¹⁰⁶

To Sayers' further annoyance, Railton sent his ally, Morris, who reported on New Year's Eve at the end of 1846 that most of the outstanding items were minor ones: that 'the skirting of the water closet must be secured'; that the problems with the drains were solvable; that the contractor had not cheated Sayers over the quality of materials; and that Sayers himself was hostile and rude.¹⁰⁷

Sayers asked for a copy of this report, and Chalk refused; Sayers then responded by refusing Robertson access to the house until he got it.¹⁰⁸ The next thing that happened was that Sayers turned up at Whitehall Place in late February 1847, armed with a letter of introduction from his own bishop to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop having warned Sayers beforehand to mind his language and not to overstate his case.¹⁰⁹ Events took on a farcical character as Sayers' new curate Mr Farmar, who had just recently started living in the disputed house, posted large pieces of allegedly defective timber, lead and brick to the Commissioners who were thus invited to see for themselves the 'shameful' quality of the work that Railton and Robertson had cooked up between them, and added to a further list of complaints that 'almost every chimney in the house smokes'.¹¹⁰ These heavy lumps of building materials severed from the house were plonked down on the table in front of Railton a week later as he yet again faced angry questioning about his professional practices.¹¹¹ Railton patiently explained how often he or his surveyor would personally inspect a site (four times), and also that a contractor might conventionally at his own risk substitute materials for those specified by the architect; but it seems that the business with the tiresome Sayers and the embarrassment of the pieces of defective building material arriving in the Commissioners' offices had fatally tarnished his reputation. The architect Ambrose Poynter was sent over to report on Upleadon during the summer; and soon afterwards Wilberforce announced to the Commissioners that he would call for a suspension of the resolution obliging Railton's employment 'so as to leave it open'.¹¹² It is in fact clear from the minutes that houses by other architects were then already going ahead, although they still had to be subject to Railton's approval.¹¹³ Then Railton had a fatal final run-in with the Bishop of Oxford. He was appointed architect for a new house at Little Milton, indirectly under Wilberforce's patronage and in his diocese, in May 1848.¹¹⁴ Wilberforce was having nothing of it. A week

later the Commissioners humiliated their architect by deciding that in future he would have to submit plans to Chalk, who would himself deal with the incumbent. Railton, offended, wrote a letter demanding that he should have details of all complaints that had been made against him; the Commissioners claimed that they had not intended 'to cast any reflection upon Mr Railton', and refused.¹¹⁵ From then on, Railton wrote several letters asking for his outstanding accounts to be paid, and the Commissioners, tiring of this, finally sacked him ungraciously at the end of November.¹¹⁶ There then followed an unedifying dispute, familiar to practising architects of all generations, which dragged on for over a year about Railton's outstanding fees and whether or not he should be permitted to carry on works that he had already started – Wilberforce being emphatic that in any case he should be prevented from undertaking the work at Little Milton.¹¹⁷ In the end, and following what would now be called arbitration through the Commissioners of Woods and Works, Railton was paid off and allowed to make his own copies of his designs. For a man of so much promise, Railton had a remarkably unhappy and short career. He had also lost the patronage of one of his most important private clients at the end of the 1830s when Pugin had supplanted him as architect to the extravagant Ambrose Phillipps; and his public commissions which had begun with so much glory, with the Nelson Monument competition and the prestigious attachment to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, dissolved into acrimony and embarrassment. It seems hardly surprising that the poor man effectively retired from architecture in his early 50s; and his death in 1880 went unrecorded by the *Builder*. The reputation of Chalk, the Commissioners' clerk who had been involved in the affair, was on the other hand untarnished: in 1850 he went on to succeed Murray as secretary.

The business of Railton's departure must have upset the Commissioners, because they told a Mr Edmund Pritchard of Rose Cottage, Peckham, who had heard of Railton's going and wanted his job, that they 'do not at present contemplate making any such appointment'.¹¹⁸ The following month, however, Wilberforce appointed Ferrey to take on the Little Milton project that seems to have been the cause of some of the unpleasantness; and Ferrey's proposed alterations to Railton's design were conditionally approved very

soon afterwards.¹¹⁹ Ferrey was then later offered the job of reporting on Roos' design for the Beresfords' parsonage at Kilndown, the house which occasioned the scenes recorded in Chapter One above.¹²⁰ Although there is no record of any appointment as official architect to the Commissioners, the minutes note that already by June 1849 his opinion was being requested in the case of other plans 'as usual'.¹²¹

Born in Christchurch in Dorset and about ten years younger than Railton, Ferrey had joined the office of William Wilkins in 1833, and had worked there on the designs for what is now the National Gallery (fig. 4.18).¹²² He had earlier established his link with A. W. N. Pugin's immediate circle, sharing Pugin's house in Bloomsbury; he drew for the final volume of the *Examples of gothic architecture* an illustration of the deanery in Wells and in 1834 he entered a partnership with T. L. Walker, another of A. C. Pugin's former pupils.¹²³ As diocesan surveyor for Bath and Wells, to which he was appointed in 1841 and which he retained for the rest of his life, he was in a position to advise the bishop on the granting of approvals for new parsonages in the diocese; perhaps it was due to his influence that the technical standard of applications made in this diocese rises markedly during the 1840s. At any rate, it is interesting to notice that in several cases one of Ferrey's church restoration projects in Somerset adjoins an almost contemporary parsonage by a local architect. His obituary in the *Builder* lists 28 English parsonages as having been designed by him, although one of these – Wheatley in Oxfordshire – was actually designed by E. B. Lamb, and the list omits at least two, Wavendon in Buckinghamshire, and Midsomer Norton in Somerset.¹²⁴ The obituary also points out that his first major client, for works at Baynard's Park in Surrey, was the Reverend Thomas Thurlow – the same man who had commissioned the grand, half-gothic, half-classical-Georgian Boxford rectory from Mark Thompson back in 1818.

Ferrey was originally a conventional Tudor-gothic architect, as his partial, and unsympathetic, gothicisation of Compton Valence parsonage in 1839 shows (see fig. 2.59).¹²⁵ Many of his parsonages were based on conventional plans: this was the case at Tarrant Hinton in 1843, an L-corridor type, where the architectural detailing, although more sophisticated than four years previously, is nevertheless still Tudor-gothic (fig. 4.19).¹²⁶ As the 1840s progress, Ferrey's work becomes a great deal more sophisticated in appearance, even if little



4.18
Benjamin Ferrey, in a portrait published with his obituary notice in the *Builder* (volume 39, 4 September 1880).

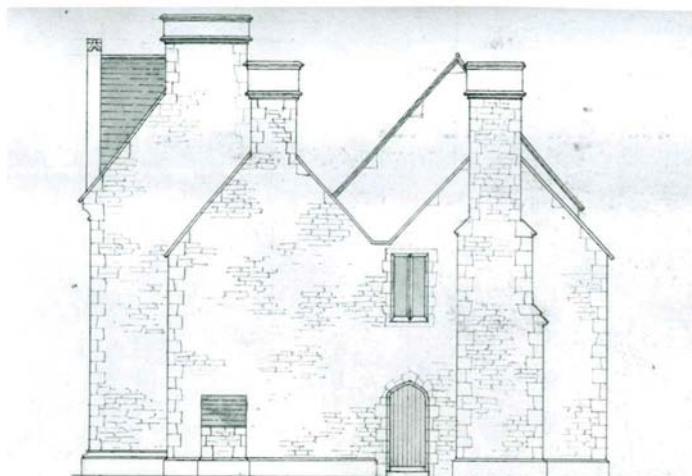
4.19

Ferrey at Tarrant Hinton, between Shaftesbury and Wimborne Minster, Dorset, in 1843: this more convincingly Tudor design came four years after his crude work at Compton Valence (fig. 2.59), possibly demonstrating either the influence of his friend Pugin or simply the growing ability of architects to identify and copy real Tudor work [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D28/6/12].



development is made on the plan. He is recorded as having made only one design for a parsonage in his own diocese, for Midsomer Norton vicarage in 1844; and it is basically a central-corridor type, although he has divided the building into two parallel ranges, each with its own gable, and added engaging picturesque touches such as the little oven with its own roof that projects from the kitchen by the back door (fig. 4.20).¹²⁷ The entrance elevation of his parsonage at Wavendon in Buckinghamshire of 1848 is however very similar to that of Pugin's recently finished rectory at Rampisham, a building Ferrey may well have known through his friendship with its architect and indeed his familiarity with south Dorset. The detailing is refined; but the plan is again a standard L-corridor plan, and thus his elevation lacks Pugin's large stair window on the entrance side.¹²⁸ In fact, the game is given away by the large pointed window on the centre of the garden elevation which reveals the conventional location of the staircase: although Ferrey had avoided a conventional Tudor-gothic facade on that side, he had betrayed his own timidity within (figs 4.21, 4.22).

A little later, Ferrey achieved a marrying of the L-corridor plan with an arrangement of rooms that suggests that he had by now appreciated the potential of a pinwheel house. At Mentmore (1851) there is no large central hall beyond the inner stair hall, but the three



4.20
Midsomer Norton, Somerset
(1844), apparently the only
parsonage by Ferrey in the
Wells diocese where he
was diocesan surveyor. The
prominent parallel ranges
with gables were becoming a
feature of the gothic revival.
Note the little roofed bread
oven on the otherwise largely
blank back- door elevation
[Somerset Record Office,
D/D/Bbm/93].

major rooms; study, drawing room and dining room, are arranged in an approximation of a pinwheel, the change in axis between them signalled on the outside, from the front, by the projection of the drawing room wall beyond that of the study.¹²⁹ The gesture is a modest one, however; up to mid-century at least, Ferrey is primarily an example of an architect who imitated Pugin's style in his parsonages, but without any radical change to their layout; and it seems to be inevitable that it is experiments in plan, rather than in elevation, which above all else have determined an architect's place in history.

Nevertheless, Ferrey is important here because of the nature of his professional career. There had been diocesan surveyors throughout the centuries, but never before had there been one able to impose a certain order into the design and building of parsonages across the diocese, in accordance with an unprecedented rate of technological and administrative change. Ferrey, too, was an Institute man: he became a fellow of what was now the Royal Institute of British Architects in January 1839, proposed by P. F. Robinson, one of its original vice-presidents; by Charles Barry; and by Thomas Cundy junior.

And Ferrey, in turn, proposed for fellowship in 1850 an architect who more than any other individual turned the design of parsonages into a lifetime's industry: Ewan Christian (fig. 4.22). According to a



4.21

The garden elevation of
Ferrey's rectory at Wavendon,
Buckinghamshire, now on the
edges of Milton Keynes (1848).
The pointed window lights the
staircase, which is thus in the
conventional position for a pre-
Pugin L-plan house. See also
fig. 4.1.

lengthy appreciation published some years after his death in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Christian designed some 380 parsonages (and 40 further episcopal and other clerical residences) during his long career, which stretched from 1841 to the week of his death, aged 80, in 1895.¹³⁰ As a teenager he had been articled to Matthew Habershon for whom he drew examples of Tudor timberwork; and in the early months of 1836 he worked, ironically as it turned out, for Railton.¹³¹ His first parsonage was at Preston in Lancashire, in 1845, so the great majority of his work lies outside the scope of this book. He is however an enormously significant figure in marking the change that had come over the architectural profession in respect of parsonage design from the early years of the century. Christian makes his first appearance in the minutes of the meetings of the board of the Commissioners in relation to a very minor matter where he was asked to survey on their behalf at Wolverhampton at the end of 1850, and it appears that his formal appointment the following year was not recorded there at all – perhaps the last echoes of the Railton dispute were still being felt.¹³² In 1853, his report on the Beresfords' Kilndown house put Ferrey's judgment in a very unflattering light, and perhaps the incident confirmed the Commissioners' high opinion of him, rather as earlier incidents had adversely affected Railton to the benefit of Ferrey.¹³³ Christian moved his own practice to the offices of his employers, at 10 Whitehall Place in London; when the Commissioners later needed more space he moved to 8a, at the rear of Clutton's office, and remained at hand, and in the same post, for the rest of his life.

Christian is well known today mainly as the architect of the National Portrait Gallery, behind Trafalgar Square, a late building not at all characteristic of his work. His architectural style is not greatly remarkable nor easily definable but for a certain preoccupation with Puginian themes which he retained for much of his career. In 1848 he designed for the Reverend D. Barclay Bevan a house (not in fact a parsonage) called Casterton Grange in Westmorland that is designed around a top-lit central staircase hall, with radiating rooms on the ground floor, and which has an entrance front remarkably similar to the garden elevation of Pugin's Grange in Ramsgate; it has a four-storey square-plan tower to the right of



Ewan Christian
Portrait by John

4.22

Ewan Christian. From the memoir published in the *RIBA journal*, 30 September 1911.

a bargeboarded, gable-and-bay elevation (fig. 4.23).¹³⁴ It must surely be a conscious reference to the Ramsgate house. As befits a busy and productive man, Christian relied on conventional layouts, although occasionally he often added to these a Puginian staircase hall type without any apparent chronological development: he designed a vicarage with one of these early in his career, at Acton in Suffolk, where the hall takes up the full width of the house and the two principal reception rooms are simply arranged in a row on one side of it; and he used a similar plan in conjunction with a Queen Anne elevation at a late house of 1880 for St Edmund's, Salisbury.¹³⁵ The Acton house, like the Casterton one, has decorative bargeboards, a favourite characteristic of his. Interestingly, he reverted to Tudor-gothic for his large private house at Woodbastwick, Norfolk, in 1886 – perhaps a search for an English way of building related to the contemporary enthusiasm for Queen Anne. As with many other unfashionable High Victorian architects it is salutary to be reminded that his houses were not seen at the time to be as plain as they seem to us now: an admiring client wrote tellingly that 'my own house...is as pretty as if it were not comfortable, and as comfortable as if it were not pretty; and the two together is all one wants – except an occasional visit from the architect'.¹³⁶ But it is as an administrator and setter of standards that Christian is important to us here. By the 1850s his drawings and presentations were meticulously prepared and his specifications resembled those prescribed by Bartholomew himself. Like Bartholomew, in fact, he had a 'terse and abrupt manner'.¹³⁷ From his desk in the stable yard at Whitehall he could preside over the administrative machine, but he also applied his standards to the variety of other activities within and without his profession that mark him out to us as a representative of his period. His daily working schedule was carefully planned to allow him to visit a great number of projects within a very short period of time, and, like Pugin, he used the railway journeys themselves as opportunities to work. He was also a member of the committee of honorary consulting architects to the Incorporated Church Building Society; in 1880 he became a member of the RIBA's first board of examiners in architecture; and he served as president of the institute from 1884–6; he was the Royal Gold Medallist for 1887; and he also contrived to teach at Sunday school for 35 years. Ewan Christian clearly showed that it was possible to build a successful and prestigious

career in which the design of parsonages was perhaps as important for him and his clients as the design of churches.

Bath and Wells

A study of the records in any of the diocesan archives provides an opportunity to see how national developments affected the architecture of the provinces: in particular, one sees how Puginesque ideas – including higher and more consistent standards of detailing, staircase halls at the centres of houses, and the separate expression of rooms externally through distinct ridges – very soon spread about the country.

No doubt the particular character and experience of the various bishops that approved or rejected local applications for mortgages played some part in the process. At Bath and Wells there were three bishops during the period of this study and each must have brought with him a distinct approach even if all of them eventually suffered from considerable infirmity in their old age, for the bishops of this prestigious diocese held the position until their death. Richard Beadon, appointed in 1802, had himself considerable first-hand experience of pluralism and knew exactly what it was like for a parson to be residing away from his parish. A fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and a former public orator of the university, he had held on to the incumbency of two parishes in Essex as well as the positions of archdeacon of London and prebend of Mapesbury even after being appointed Bishop of Gloucester; only when the transfer to Bath and Wells came 13 years later did he give them all up. Evidently a modest man of kindly and liberal disposition, he eventually became infirm, dying in Bath at the age of 87 in 1824.¹³⁸ His successor, although also a sometime fellow of a Cambridge college, could not have been more different. George Henry Law was a high Tory who as Bishop of Chester from 1812 countered the social threat brought about by the industrial change that was transforming his region by establishing schools and supporting changes in factory and educational reform; later, and after some personal intimidation at his palace in Wells, he vigorously opposed the Poor Law amendment measures of 1834, and he was the only bishop to support Peel's attempts at limiting factory working hours for children. Before arriving at Wells he had experience of the workings of the Bounty, because he served for two years, from 1822–4, on a committee that advised its governors on augmentations.



And finally with Richard Bagot, who succeeded Law in 1845, one sees the early impact of the theological and artistic reform that was to sweep the Church of England. Bagot was transferred to Wells after getting into hot water as Bishop of Oxford. He had been sympathetic towards Tractarians in the early days – J. H. Newman apparently referred to him as ‘my pope’ – but as for many others Tract 90 of 1841 turned out to be more than he, or his official position, could allow, and his attempts at negotiating between conservatives and radicals resulted in his being shunned on both sides. With the conversion to Roman Catholicism of Newman and others in 1843 his judgment would have appeared more than usually suspect. He successfully pleaded with Peel to inherit Law’s post, but on arriving at Wells seems to have had a nervous breakdown that effectively incapacitated him. When one considers the political overtones of the stylistic debate of the 1840s and 1850s – culminating, of course, in the famous Government Offices *débâcle* of Palmerston and Scott, and of which more in the chapter that follows – it is not difficult to see how incumbents and their architects might have geared their applications to suit their bishops to some extent. And indeed here at Wells the neat division of the era into three – one aging Regency gentleman, one vigorous Tory reformer, and one weak Oxford sympathiser – provides what is almost a caricature of the process that England’s ecclesiastical life was undergoing.

The Gilbert’s Acts’ collection from the Bath and Wells diocese, now at the Somerset Record Office, includes 91 files for the years between 1800 and 1850 inclusive, and in only a few cases, principally the early ones, are the plans missing. The diocese covered the tenth largest area (out of 22) in England in the mid 1830s, placing it somewhere towards the middle.¹³⁹ It had 441 benefices, the eighth largest; and it also had the eighth largest net income amongst the sees.¹⁴⁰ Its centre was in Wells itself, the town which Pugin had himself so often enthused over, and which contained, with Glastonbury, some of the finest surviving mediaeval domestic architecture that he and his father’s men had recorded.¹⁴¹

The first outstanding characteristic of the diocesan collection is that architects were encouraged to reuse existing buildings in their entirety; and, unlike in other areas, the architects were not embarrassed about the reuse, giving it some prominence both in plan and elevation.

4.23 (opposite)
Casterton Grange, near
Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmorland:
Ewan Christian’s house of
1848 was not a parsonage
but was built for a clergyman
with a parish elsewhere. The
architect borrowed directly
from the garden elevation of
the Grange (see fig. 3.31).
The tower was originally
topped with a pyramidal slate
roof.

4.24 (below)

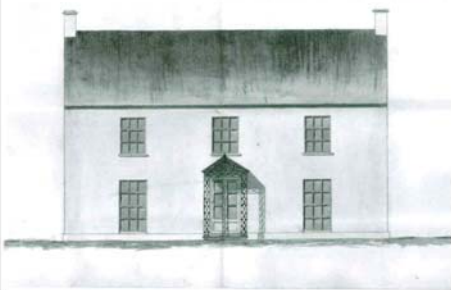
Abbas Combe, between Shaftesbury and Yeovil, Somerset. The ground floor of the old house runs along the top, converted into a servants' hall, larders, kitchen and brewhouse (with a new oven and copper); the new house below, to the front, provides three modern, regular reception rooms [*Somerset Record Office, D/D/Bbm/62*].

4.25 (below, right)

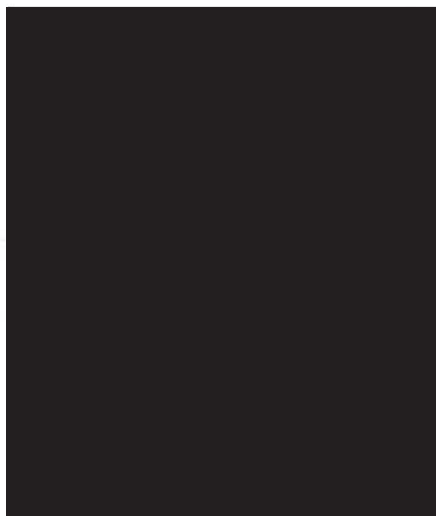
The ambitious Richard Carver at the start of his career: an unremarkable design for the rectory at West Quantoxhead, north-west Somerset, 1815 [*Somerset Record Office, D/D/Bbm/40*].

There is an interesting example of 1833 at Abbas Combe where the designer, a carpenter and builder called Richard Read of Salisbury, simply attached a new L-corridor house to the old block, which was, like many others, long and low; a passage running along what had been the outside wall of the old house, and the back wall of the new house, separated the two, a surprisingly modern solution (fig. 4.24).¹⁴² The old house was to become the brewhouse, kitchen and servants' hall; possibly the incumbent, Thomas Fox, had a strong personal attachment to it, because, as he pointed out in a letter to the bishop, it had been his own family home; he had himself succeeded to the advowson on the death of his father in 1820. In other examples, retained old houses are made into the back parts of a new back-corridor plan.¹⁴³ At Charlecombe, for example, the old house has a new Tudor-gothic gable-and-bay type elevation grafted onto it; in others, reception rooms, or minor additions or alterations sufficed to bring them up to date.¹⁴⁴


A further characteristic at Wells is the dominance of a comparatively small number of architects over many of the applications, and the near absence of London designers. The most prolific of the former was Richard Carver, an architect from Taunton, who designed or re-



modelled at least seven houses between 1815 and 1846. Carver, a former pupil of Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, was county surveyor between 1832–46, in some ways therefore the lay equivalent of Ferrey. The rising standard of Carver's work provides a mirror for developments nationally. At West Quantoxhead in 1815 he produced a simple design for the alteration of an old house, adding a kitchen and kitchen court to the back of a simple classical-Georgian house, to which he added a pretty trellis around the front door (fig. 4.25).¹⁴⁵ 17 years passed before Carver's name again appears on a mortgage application, this time for Cutcombe in 1832. This house marks the first appearance of one of his planning idiosyncrasies: an L-corridor plan where the staircase part of the L is widened, so that it becomes a kind of staircase hall deep within the house: in this case he provided there a broad spiral staircase (fig. 4.26).¹⁴⁶ The vicarage at East Brent was a large, symmetrical Tudor-gothic house; it had the full complement of kitchen offices referred to above (fig. 4.27).¹⁴⁷ Carver had by now become county surveyor and he used the title in his affidavits; he was also the architect of Chard town hall, and various other large buildings, and perhaps his self-importance is reflected in this stylish set of drawings. By 1839, the date of his house at Westonzoyland, his only classical-Georgian parsonage,



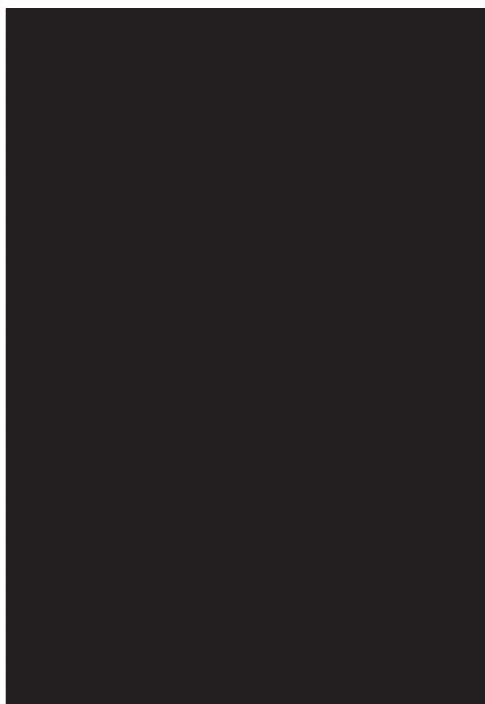
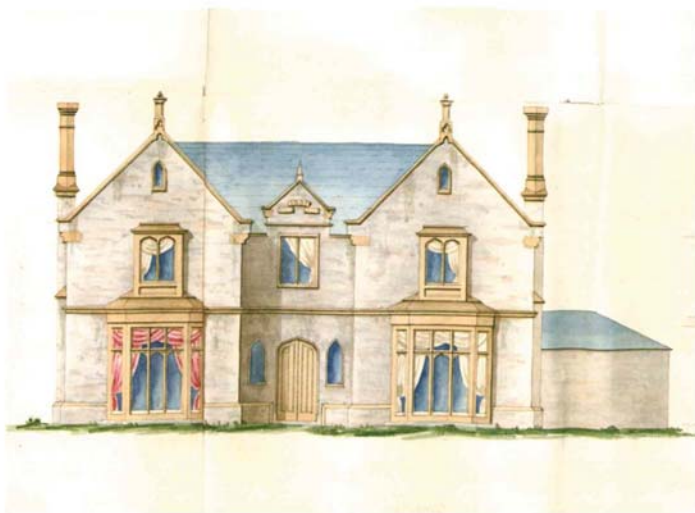
4.26
A broad spiral staircase – an unusual feature in contemporary parsonages – in the centre of the L-plan vicarage at Cutcombe, south of Minehead. By Richard Carver in 1832 [Somerset Record Office, D/D/Bbm/60].



4.27
East Brent vicarage, south of
Weston-super-Mare:
the proposed remodelling by
Carver in 1837. The greater
part of the ground floor of the
house is taken up by kitchen
offices. The entrance hall to
the left is flanked by the dining
and drawing rooms (above and
below, respectively); there are
a study and school room to
the lower right-hand side of the
main block. All the rest is
service area [Somerset Record
Office, D/D/Bbm/71].

his applications are accompanied by well-organised and detailed estimates with a price for each clause, suggesting that he was acting as contractor as well as designer.¹⁴⁸ Only five years earlier a house that had cost half as much, designed by a surveyor called Churchhouse, had been accompanied by Somerset's last single-sheet specification.¹⁴⁹

Two other architects submitted more than a couple of applications: Maurice Davis junior, of Langport, and Jesse Gane, a builder from Evercreech. Davis' work is often colourful and stylish: his first application, for the rectory at Sparkford, is accompanied by a pretty watercolour that shows the curtains through the glass of the front room windows (fig. 4.28).¹⁵⁰ One has a feeling here and elsewhere that Davis was perhaps wasted in Langport. The house he designed two years later at Hinton St George was basically a back-corridor type, but he divided the passage into a series of vestibules of different shapes for variety, an engaging device and something that few others seem to have thought of (fig. 4.29).¹⁵¹ His three remaining projects are largely unexceptional, but his addition to the vicarage at Merriott is interesting because it consists of a substantial stair hall as well as a



4.28 (above)
Maurice Davis junior's
elevations - with curtains -
at Sparkford rectory, between
Shaftesbury and Bridgwater
(1837) [Somerset Record
Office, D/D/Bbm/69].

4.29 (below)
Further evidence of Davis'
theatrical style: the corridor
of the curate's house at Hinton
St George, near Crewkerne
(1839), is divided up into a
series of vestibules en filade.
The major rooms run, in back-
corridor-plan fashion, along
the right-hand side of the
house: drawing room, library,
and dining room (from top to
bottom) [Somerset Record
Office, D/D/Bbm/76].

dining room, and as such it is representative of a phenomenon that was appearing all over the country (fig. 4.30).¹⁵² Wherever one looks one sees them, and they were inserted even where the original plan made it difficult, for example at the plain central-corridor house designed by Mark Thompson in 1821 at Hartest in Suffolk, which we encountered long ago, and where a new stair hall was carved out of the centre, creating an L-corridor plan but with a generous open space at its centre in 1854.¹⁵³ At Butleigh, back in Somerset, Francis Penrose cut a substantial chunk out of the centre of an old house in 1846 to provide a large stair hall, signifying it with a window on the entrance front.¹⁵⁴ New houses of the period, such as that at Compton Dando, have these large stair halls in them too, clearly demonstrating the new fashion (figs 4.31, 4.32).¹⁵⁵ And another new stair hall was designed by Jesse Gane when he enlarged the early Tudor-gothic parsonage at Dinder, in so doing turning the charming small thatched house by Charles Wainwright into a building that was a great deal drearier.¹⁵⁶ Gane also



4.30

Merriot, between Yeovil and Chard, extended by Davis in 1851. The old house ran in an irregular L shape around the bottom and right-hand side of the plan, and Davis added a large drawing room but also an imposing Puginian stair hall. Stair halls like these were now being implanted into old houses across the country [Somerset Record Office, D/D/Bbm/109].

designed one other extension to an old house, and a new parsonage of his own, neither particularly distinguished.¹⁵⁷

London architects made few inroads into the design of parsonages here, but the few that did so may have made some impact. Sampson Kempthorne, practising from 36 Clarges Street, Piccadilly, is best known for having been the architect to the Poor Law Commissioners in the mid-1830s, and for employing George Gilbert Scott as his assistant. The vicarage he remodelled at Cheddar in 1839 had a very irregular plan, and he added a few gothic touches to what was largely an old house.¹⁵⁸ Francis Penrose – he that inserted the large new stair hall and dining room at Butleigh – worked from 4, Trafalgar Square, and one imagines Railton's Nelson's Column slowly going up before his eyes as he drew. Two years after Butleigh he designed an interesting rectory, a variation on the L-corridor type, with convincingly gothic detailing outside, in an imposing setting at an isolated site for the parish of Alford with Hornblotton.¹⁵⁹ The third interloper is perhaps the most intriguing: Edward J. Andrews, of 47 Upper Bedford Place. This address is just the other side of High Holborn from Ferrey's offices in Bedford Street, and perhaps Ferrey knew him and recommended him for the job. His rectory at Compton Martin of 1841 is in a strange Tudor-gothic style, with an irregular and pretentious version of a back-corridor plan but with a large entrance hall, and turrets and buttresses at the corners (fig. 4.33).¹⁶⁰ The imposing entrance front is symmetrical, with back stairs and a store hiding behind the grand windows to the left of the front door; the main garden front is picturesque and irregular. It is perhaps an attempt at copying and downscaling a much larger Tudor-gothic country house, and it is hard to believe that even by then Ferrey thought much of it.

The Whichcords at Canterbury

The seat of the primate provides another window into the way in which architectural changes spread across the country. The extent to which the archbishop himself was involved in approving schemes is unknown, although of course his own signature like that of his junior colleagues appears on commissions and other documents. It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves who the archbishops were during our period. The first was Charles Manners Sutton, a former dean of Windsor, who had been appointed thanks to royal support over the



4.31 (above)

The parsonage of 1848 at Compton Dando, south of Bristol, by Samuel Tripp. A prominent two-light gothic window indicates that there is a newly fashionable stair hall within.

4.32 (right)

The interior of the stair hall at Compton Dando.

4.33 (opposite)

The rectory at Compton Martin between Bristol and Wells by the London architect Edward J. Andrews, 1841. The style, although sophisticated, is most unusual and perhaps represents an effort to take the Tudor-gothic in a new direction.





preferred candidate of William Pitt, the prime minister (fig. 4.34). A grandson of the third Duke of Rutland, one of his earliest appointments had been to the family living at Averham cum Kelham, well before it had had the generous but stylistically confused additions designed by William Patterson in 1838 that we have seen in Chapter Two. Politically, he opposed Roman Catholic emancipation but supported relief for Protestant dissenters. He was in his fiftieth year when he was appointed to the post in 1805, and he stayed there until his death in 1828, a long tenure.

His successor was William Howley, a 'high and dry', distant, cold man who had supported George IV against Queen Caroline on the former's accession, a fact which no doubt contributed to his promotion to Canterbury on Manners Sutton's death; he was opposed to both Roman Catholic emancipation and to political rights for dissenters (fig. 4.35). He was an academic and had been Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford from 1809. He seems to have brought something of the starchy flavour of a distant lecture hall to his ministry: a former curate from his diocese looked back nearly 60 years later on his own ordination ceremony at Howley's hands at Lambeth Palace in December 1833 and remembered that 'there was nothing solemnizing or impressive in his mode of conducting the ordination': there is probably no other bishop that so well personified the desiccated character of the church and its ceremonies immediately before the Oxford Movement began to make its impact.¹⁶¹ Appropriately, too, for the era, he spent much of his time around the board tables of Dean's Yard and Whitehall Place, often chairing a meeting a week at both, and sometimes a very long and wearisome one. It was he that came with the lord chamberlain to Kensington Palace at 5 a.m. on the morning of 20 June 1837 to wake the young Queen Victoria on her accession: no wonder she preferred to place her confidences in Lord Melbourne. Howley was at last succeeded after his death in February 1848 by an altogether more sympathetic character, John Bird Sumner, who had been born in Kenilworth in 1780 (fig. 4.36). He studied at Eton College and King's College, Cambridge, and was sent by the latter to the valuable living of Mapledurham in Oxfordshire.¹⁶² His first preferment came in 1828, when the Duke of Wellington appointed him Bishop of Chester, and his early ministry was marked by a distinctly pragmatic touch, which he first demonstrated when he

unexpectedly voted for Roman Catholic emancipation, and which was to stand him in good stead during the various internal squabbles of the church in the late 1840s. He was also industrious, unlike many of his fellow bishops, and arrived at Canterbury with the reputation of having built 200 new churches and many schools in his former see. Following that first appointment by a Tory prime minister, he was elevated to Canterbury by a Whig, Lord John Russell. Described by his colleague Wilberforce as 'good, gentle, loving, and weak', he remained at Canterbury until his death in 1862.¹⁶³

The Canterbury diocesan collection contains many unusual buildings, and we have already seen quite a number of them. In total, there are records of far fewer applications than at Bath and Wells, and for comparatively few entirely new ones: only five new houses from the 1820s; ten from the 1830s, and 12 from the 1840s.¹⁶⁴ One imagines that Howley, in particular, had little interest in it. One of the earliest documents there is a design by Thomas Dearn, the author of the two books called *Sketches in architecture* of 1806 and 1807, and much else, for the vicarage at Cranbrook in west Kent, the town where he himself lived. The original elevations have disappeared, and the plan is in very bad condition, but from it we can see that the house had an unusual symmetrical design, basically a central-corridor type but with a stair hall in place of the corridor, and a cross-passage running along the centre of the house which divided the two reception rooms from the kitchen and offices.¹⁶⁵ It does not however exist in exactly that form any longer, because like many other parsonages in the county it was partially rebuilt by the Maidstone architect John Whichcord, who with his son, also John, dominated the applications to build or rebuild in the diocese, making at least 13 applications between the mid 1830s and 1852 for new houses and other alterations.

The work of the Whichcords (the son joined the father from the mid 1840s) varied tremendously in quality and originality, never really seeming to develop in any particular direction. John Whichcord senior (1790–1860) was born in Devon but settled in Kent in the early 1820s as a result of working in the office of Daniel Asher Alexander on the design of Maidstone gaol. His earliest buildings were largely in a stripped classical style derived from his prison work. The Oakwood hospital of 1830 to the west of Maidstone sports a continental air: a five-sectioned symmetrical facade has a pedimented five-bay centre

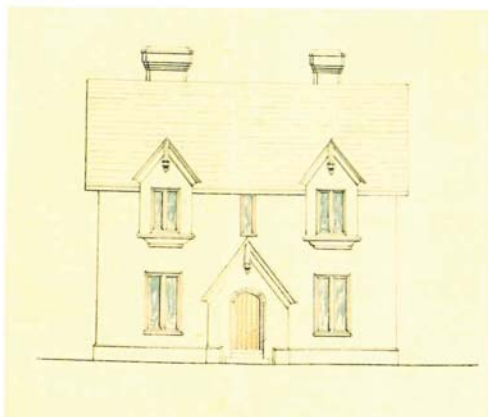


4, 34-6 (above, from top)
The three archbishops of
Canterbury for the period:
Charles Manners-Sutton
(archbishop from 1805-28),
in a portrait attributed to John
Hopper from the last years of
the eighteenth century.
Aristocratic. *Lambeth Palace*.

William Howley (1828-48),
portrayed by Sir Martin Archer
Shee in 1841. High and dry.
Lambeth Palace.

John Bird Sumner (1848-62),
by E. U. Eddis in 1851.
Evangelical. *Lambeth Palace*.

with a projecting loggia; the rest of the building is almost completely unornamented, with the exception of a cornice and horizontal string courses.¹⁶⁶ The style is consistent with his other works of this period, which included churches and workhouses. Some of Whichcord's designs were then gothic, but his classical architecture was designed with considerably more conviction; either way, most of his early parsonage work is dry and uninteresting, and only the occasional detail stands out, such as a row of pretty rustic columns at an extension at Smarden in 1835.¹⁶⁷ At Cranbrook, Whichcord merely rebuilt Dearn's kitchen offices. At Harrietsham in 1838 he attempted a staircase hall, replacing the 'ancient timber structure'.¹⁶⁸ At Warehorne in 1839, he designed a crude Tudor-gothic rectory (fig. 4.37); the following year, at Newchurch, he designed a crude classical-Georgian one, and one that with a great deal of blind windows signally fails, as we heard in Chapter One, to exploit the potential of the entrance elevation of its back-corridor plan.¹⁶⁹ A house of 1843 at Sissinghurst, for which there are unfortunately no records of a mortgage application, suggested that he too might have been familiar with Parker's *Villa rustica* of 1833: although there are here no blatant Italian mannerisms, the front, east elevation of the house, is elegantly composed of three bays on two storeys, the central bay recessed slightly; there is a verandah unifying the ground-floor openings, and also obscuring the perennial problem of the conflict between the need for an imposing central bay on the one hand, and the common arrangement of a narrow corridor central between two principal reception rooms on the other.¹⁷⁰ It can at any rate be said that there is a suggestion here that Whichcord was watching contemporary fashion carefully, even if he was not very good at imitating it.



1843 was the year in which Pugin embarked upon the design of the Grange at Ramsgate, and the house was externally complete by the end of the following summer. It seems very possible that Whichcord saw it, because a parsonage design of 1847 at Barham, about 15 miles south-west of Ramsgate in east Kent, reflects some aspects of its design.¹⁷¹ The house was built on a secluded site well to the north of the church; and its combination of plan and elevation indicates the extent to which Whichcord was experimenting with recent ideas, for he has merged here a conventional central-corridor plan with a Puginesque elevation in a not entirely resolved way.

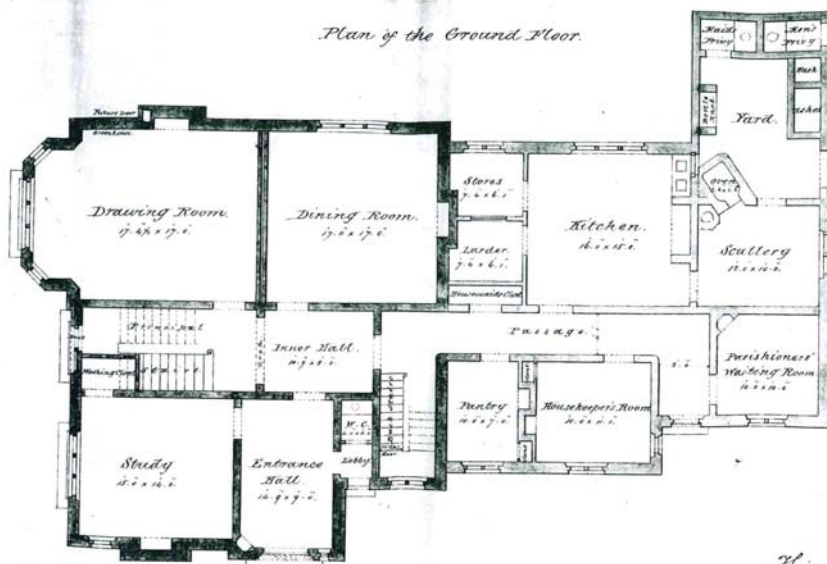
At Barham, the principal elevation is to the south, and the entrance elevation to the east. It has a cross between a central-corridor and an L-corridor plan, arranged so that part of the corridor with the stairs in is at the centre of the garden front (fig. 4.39). Whichcord tried to imitate Pugin's Ramsgate house by putting an elevation with a gable and a bay on this garden side rather than (as was more common) on the entrance front (fig. 4.38).¹⁷² Indeed the fact that the central bay of this garden front leads into the central corridor has been obscured in two respects. Firstly, the French window into the corridor is matched by further, larger, French windows either side; secondly, the corridor French window is in fact partly false, being taken up on the right-hand side by



4.37 (opposite, bottom)
Crude Tudor gothic, by John Whichcord for Warehorne on Romney Marsh, Kent, in 1839 [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DCb/DC/W24/1].

4.38 (left)
Barham rectory, Kent, designed by the Whichcords in 1847. The architects have used a gable-and-bay elevation for the garden, as opposed to the entrance front, which was unusual before the construction of Pugin's Grange in nearby Ramsgate.

Plan of the Ground Floor.



*This is to
refered 2*

4.39

Barham rectory. The Whichcords' plan is an unusual hybrid between the L-corridor and central-corridor types, and the elevations are an anglicised, uncontroversial adaptation of Pugin's Grange in Ramsgate. Ground-floor plan. Main block, clockwise from bottom right: entrance hall, study, stairs, drawing room and dining room [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Dcb/DC/B13/1].

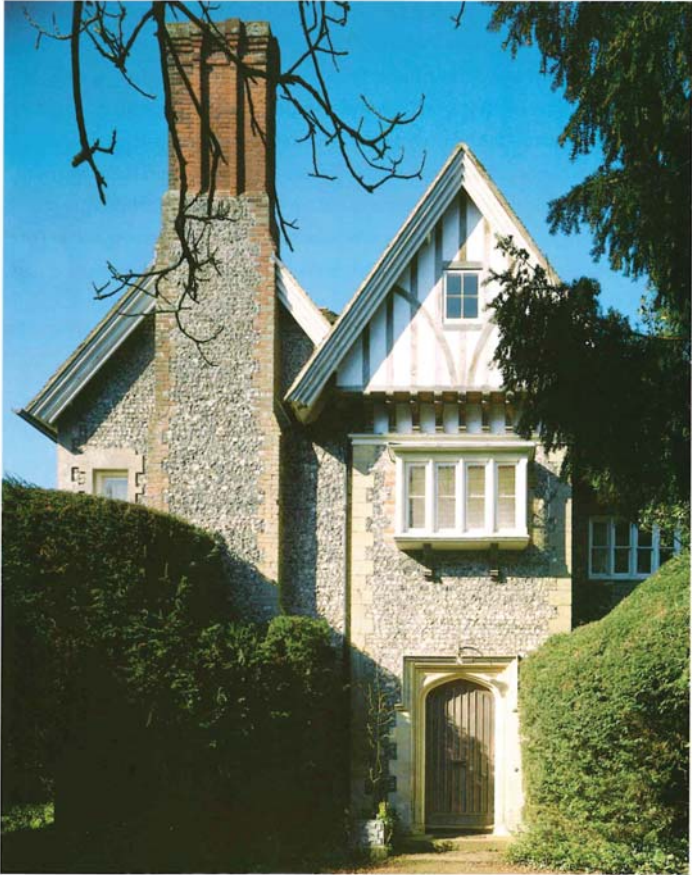
a 'washing closet' under the stairs, reached from the adjacent study. The entrance elevation is also to some extent a conventionalisation of Pugin's design, for the porch lobby is turned into a major, full-height bay (fig. 4.40). The chimney alongside however still provides the dominant vertical, as it did at for example the Rampisham rectory. The design of this house strongly suggests Whichcord had seen the outside of the Ramsgate house but not managed to get inside it and to see how its exterior related to its plan. The detailing of the Barham house also indicates to what limited extent the architect was prepared to or could adopt those of Pugin's ideas he could easily see. The house is built of knapped flint but has regular cemented quoins. He has preferred to use a more familiar 45-degree gable to Pugin's characteristic 60 degrees, but like Pugin he has used bargeboards, exposed and moulded eaves sprockets, and, mainly, casement windows. The entrance-door bay is composed of picturesque features derived from English vernacular architecture, most notably a projecting flat-roofed timber window bay at first floor, with a half-timbered

gable above, an example of the way in which conventional architects were inclined to anglicise Pugin's French-looking designs.¹⁷³ Whichcord's windows have flush frames with few mouldings, and the four-pointed front door with a hood mould, moulded spandrels and a ribbed embrasure is the only truly 'gothic' part of the house. This at least implies the learning of a Puginian lesson, for generally Tudor-gothic houses applied gothic ornament anywhere for picturesque effect. Amongst those architects who abandoned the Tudor-gothic for the gothic during the period in which Pugin established his reputation, it seems possible that there were some who had learnt that gothic ornament was superfluous if it did not '*have a meaning or serve a purpose*', or who had themselves come to that conclusion in any case.¹⁷⁴ But neither Whichcord, senior nor junior, seems to have continued to learn from that or any other lesson. The later houses are as uninspired as the earlier ones. The next three parsonages they designed, at Nonington, Postling and Newenham, are in dull classical-Georgian styles, with conventional plans.¹⁷⁵ Or did this signify a conscious attempt to get away from the dangerous implications of an architecture associated with a famous Roman Catholic propagandist? Pugin was a notorious character in Kent, even amongst people with no connection to architecture.

The Barham house has a further interest for us because of its connection with the Ovenden family who lived at Broome Park, the splendid seventeenth-century mansion nearby (fig. 4.41). John Whichcord's client was Charles Ovenden, but Charles' older brother Ashton had previously served at the parish as curate, and, following a successful career as a devotional writer, which led to his becoming (to his own considerable surprise) Bishop of Montreal, he wrote a book of copious reminiscences, describing there the situation at Barham as he remembered it in his youth.¹⁷⁶ Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, it is clear that Ashton Ovenden was appalled at the condition of the church as it had been, and proud of the changes that had come over it in his own lifetime: a telling example that he gives is that when he had attended a school in Ramsgate in his youth there had been in the town but a single church, the mediaeval St Lawrence's; 70 years later, there were seven.¹⁷⁷ Later, he had been a pupil at Harrow School with the future Cardinal Manning.¹⁷⁸ Soon after completing his studies at University College, Oxford, in 1827 he

4.40 (right)
The Whichcords anglicised an otherwise Puginesque design at Barham by adding half timbering and a projecting gable onto the entrance front.

4.41 (below)
Broome Park, near Barham, from an undated postcard that shows the front of the house before its remodelling for Lord Kitchener [National Monuments Record, BB84/2777].



was appointed to the curacy of Barham, of which the Bishop of Rochester was the non-resident incumbent, holding the position *in commendam*. Like many non-residents, the bishop evidently did not feel obliged even to visit his parish and the responsibility in practice fell entirely to the young curate.¹⁷⁹ The principal advantage of this posting, which had no parsonage house at all, was that Ovenden could live in some splendour with his father at Broome Park, although he soon tired of walking the mile and a half to the church early on Sunday mornings. He estimated the population at 1,100 in 1833, and from these he slowly succeeded in building up a worthy audience for his enthusiastic sermons. In addition to holding services conscientiously, he set about cutting down the old box pews within the church, including the snugly-curtained Ovenden pew which had its own stove.¹⁸⁰ Ovenden seems to have been a most remarkable hypochondriac, and after fewer than five years at Barham he departed for a seven-year rest, which eventually led to his becoming a writer. His brother Charles arrived in 1838, and put up with the long daily walk into the church until he commissioned Whichcord to build the new house in 1847. It is when one puts the history of the parsonage rebuilding projects alongside the many clerical reminiscences such as these, and their extraordinary details, such as Ovenden's recollection of 'Lustration Day' at school in Ramsgate, the one day of the month when boys had a wash, in the days before cleanliness was next to godliness – that one truly begins to see a truly broader picture of mid-century Victorian clerical and village life.¹⁸¹

Changes amongst the older generation

Across the country as a whole one sees architects adapting their work to suit the new fashions; for the greater part they incorporated the changes that London architects were now promoting; sometimes they, like the Whichcords, often retreated from it. A look at some of the middle-ranking domestic architects of the period can show to what extent certain central ideas were now becoming common currency, and also, in the earlier examples, the way in which some of those ideas had existed but failed to make an impact until Pugin brought them together.

Lewis Vulliamy was born in 1791, a year later than John Whichcord senior, and thus he was between ten and 20 years older than most of the

architects who established themselves later as primarily gothic designers. He had been articled to Robert Smirke and built mainly in gothic styles but also in Greek, Italian, and others, throughout his career. The original planning of two of his rectories can now only be derived from applications subsequently made by other architects to alter them, a further example of the unexpected value these records have. The brick rectories he built in Bethnal Green in the East End of London in 1840-2 are in a hybrid style of his own devising.¹⁸² That at St James the Less, in St James's Avenue off the Old Ford Road, presents a gabled front to the street, with arched sliding-sash windows; on the ground floor there is an asymmetrical brick arcade within the depth of the wall, with the front door in the leftmost arch, and the central and right-hand ones blank (fig. 4.42). The side elevation has two barely projecting brick bays with arched windows in them, giving the impression of being remnants of an older and grander structure: there is a touch here of John Britton's mysterious Winwall House in Norfolk, although more as it appeared in real life than as it had looked in Britton's published illustration of 1826 (see figs 2.17, 2.18).¹⁸³ The church itself was Romanesque, and thus the house represents a blending of the round-arched style with that of the speculators' brick terraces of the neighbourhood. The rectory at the east end of St Peter's church, further west between the Hackney and Bethnal Green roads, was similar but more modest. It too had shallow bays on its side elevation, but these are for plain, orthogonal, sliding-sash windows. The entrance was again positioned asymmetrically on the gable end, but no attempt was made to give this any particular dignity.¹⁸⁴ Internally, the staircase rose on the north-east corner of the house, with the principal rooms facing west towards the church.¹⁸⁵

With a larger budget, however, Vulliamy was able to develop the elevational mannerisms of the Bethnal Green rectories into a coherent architectural style. The red-brick Tudor-gothic rectory that he built at Burston in Norfolk has been much altered and is badly mutilated, but its original form can be seen in T. H. Wyatt's application to extend it in 1862, and it was somewhat crude and ungainly.¹⁸⁶ The rectory at Balsham in Cambridgeshire survives in good condition, as do the drawings for it which are in the Ely diocesan collection at Cambridge (fig. 4.43). It was designed in 1839.¹⁸⁷ This building also employs the shallow projecting window bays and the square section corner

buttresses of the Bethnal Green designs, as well as the flint and brick banding of his St Peter's church, but to these are added bargeboards, oriels, hood moulds and Tudor chimneys. The plan is merely the variation of the central-corridor type that has its principal entry via a porch on one of the long elevations: there is no staircase hall as a room.¹⁸⁸ It is however remarkable that Vulliamy expressed the main bulk of the house as an L-shape by roofing it in that fashion, even though the plan would suggest otherwise: and that is the interesting feature of it. In 1839, Pugin had only just begun his work and so there cannot be any suggestion that the idea was derived from him; Vulliamy had himself grasped that the building could gain variety by expressing a logical and structural roof form, and by bringing up the walls into gables, even if he had not made the connection between that form and the plan of the structure below. In fact Vulliamy did not use shouldered Tudor-gothic gables, so his houses tend to look a little later (and more sophisticated) than they are. It suggests that like Bartholomew he was familiar with the ideas of Robison, or of those like him, who heralded the importance of the structural expression of the roof.¹⁸⁹

Exactly the opposite occurs at the same in the case of Henry Roberts, another architect who by mid century had become an established if unexciting practitioner. Working drawings in the RIBA collection for Glebe House, Southborough, dated 1836, show a small villa with three principal rooms on the ground floor; the kitchen is in the basement.¹⁹⁰ These rooms are laid out in an L shape with a small staircase hall in the corner of them; they are in fact arranged with their long axes in pinwheel fashion, but the staircase hall is scarcely more than a passage and is not explicitly expressed on the exterior; and the low pitch of the roof severely blunts the effect that it might have had there. The exterior of the building indicates the contemporary struggle to resolve an asymmetrical plan with a classical historical style: Roberts essentially took two thirds of a classical elevation, the central bay with a pediment (above the library) and the flanking bay to the left of it (within which is concealed the stairs), but lopped off the right-hand side. His first surviving parsonage design was for the incumbent of Elvetham church in the parish of Hartley Wintney in 1839 in Hampshire and was also in a classical-Georgian style, its small pediment and chimney above the front door somehow giving one a suggestion of the western front of the church of St Martin's-in-the-





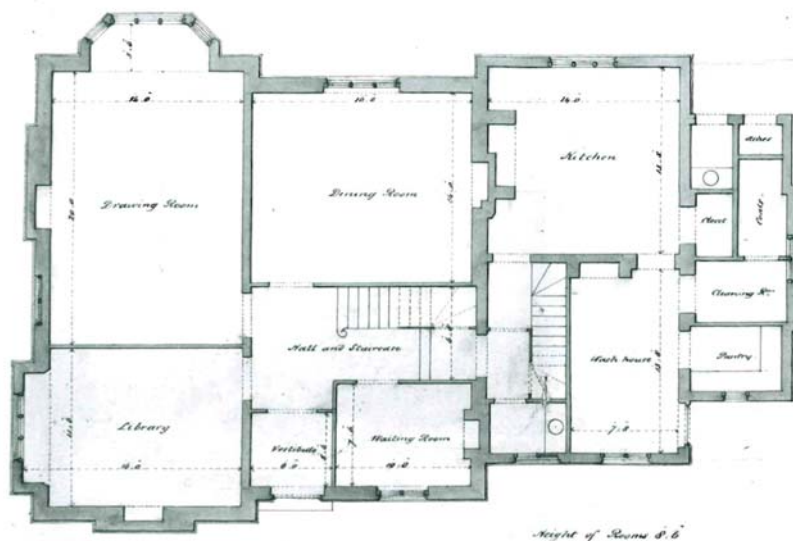
Fields in London; sadly, it fronts only a conventional central-corridor plan.¹⁹¹ By contrast, the church which Roberts designed at much the same time there was Romanesque.¹⁹² However in 1846 he reutilised the Southborough layout, with refinements, in his Tudor-gothic parsonage at Norbiton in Surrey (fig. 4.44).¹⁹³ A library and drawing room, planned cross-axially to one another, which formed one bar of the L, and the third room, the dining room, completed the layout in pinwheel fashion; part of the volume of the stair hall, however, was given over to a waiting room, and there was still no expression of it on the outside. The kitchen here was above ground and reached through the stair hall; externally, it was expressed as a separate volume. The detailing was conventional Tudor-gothic, with gables over parapet shoulders and a strongly dominant horizontal emphasis. Looking at all this it seems that although Roberts was prepared to investigate new plans and was using a pinwheel plan simultaneously with Pugin, he did not share Pugin's ability to see the impact of the plan on the appearance, or the concept, of the building as a whole; nor did he apparently show any reaction to Pugin's published writings on style or materials.

4.42 (opposite)

The rectory of St James the Less, in Bethnal Green, London, by Lewis Vulliamy (1840). The design is oddly atavistic, suggesting the remains of a Romanesque structure that has been built over.

4.43 (above)

The entrance elevation of Vulliamy's rectory at Balsham, south-east of Cambridge (1839). The layout is of the standard central-corridor type – a fact which is concealed by its exterior appearance [Cambridge University Library, Ely Diocesan Records G3/39 MGA/40].



4.44

Norbiton parsonage, Surrey, by Henry Roberts (1846): this is almost a pinwheel plan, with reception rooms rotating around a central staircase, but Roberts has shrunk from the full implications of the design by casting the overall house in the form of largely unrelieved box. Clockwise from bottom left: library, drawing room, dining room. The detailing – Tudor-gothic – was old-fashioned, too. The house has been demolished [Surrey History Centre, 472/23/2-4].

The reaction

There is some evidence that architects working on Anglican parsonages in Staffordshire and Leicestershire, where Pugin's rural building most probably had its greatest impact, actively avoided the gothic style with which he and the Roman Catholic church were now clearly associated. There was, for example, an angry Anglican reaction to missionary activities being carried out in and around the Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, by Pugin's friend and patron Ambrose Phillipps, who built his monastery there; and, in Staffordshire, where the Roman Catholic revival sponsored by the Earl of Shrewsbury was much in evidence, one finds examples such as the parsonage at Lapley in Staffordshire which was designed in a plain Georgian style by an architect who both before and afterwards practised elsewhere in variations of the Tudor style.¹⁹⁴

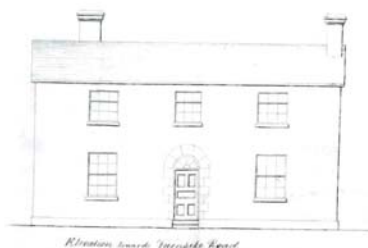
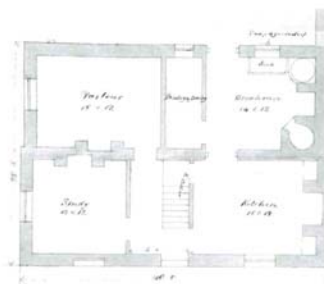
We first met William Parsons (1783–1855) in Chapter One when he had a run-in with the Bishop of Lincoln over the cost of the new house at Thurmaston.¹⁹⁵ Parsons was a major practitioner in Leicester, and designed public buildings of all kinds as well as many parsonages

almost exclusively in the county and the adjoining areas. An early vicarage of 1825 at Diseworth in Leicestershire shares the split-personality of Thompson's earlier Boxford: it is Tudor-gothic at the front, and classical-Georgian at the rear.¹⁹⁶ The style of the additions Parsons made in 1829 to the rectory at Galby, which we have already seen in the opening chapters above, was a fancy Regency gothick.¹⁹⁷ At the Aylestone and Thurmaston parsonages, both approximately ten years on from Galby, his style was still Tudor-gothic – as befits the reign of William IV – but it had also become both more substantial, and also more reserved.¹⁹⁸ Yet when the bishop had objected to the cost of the Thurmaston house, Parsons evidently rejected the possibility of building in a cheaper, unornamented, Georgian style. In 1847 he designed a series of almshouses at Bitteswell in Leicestershire in the form of semi-detached cottages with a central gable above the two front doors (fig. 4.45). Built close to the area Philipps was studding with Pugin buildings, Parsons chose a very minimal and sober form of Tudor-gothic, a far cry both from his flamboyant Galby style, and from the stucco and bargeboarding of Thurmaston of 1838. No villager would be likely to confuse these plain buildings with Pugin's version of gothic: they were clearly 'Old English', the protestant style associated with Henry VIII and Elizabeth. The same changes occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of the Roman Catholic revival. Edward Blakeway Smith (1804–75) of Stanton Lacy in Shropshire built parsonages both before and during Pugin's ascendancy.¹⁹⁹ We have already heard about his simple Georgian cottage of 1832 at Brampton Bryan, the one that had some gentle Tudor touches added, perhaps to indicate an awareness of current fashion.²⁰⁰ At Stokesay in 1839, however, he designed a conventional classical-Georgian house, of urban plan and pattern in spite of its rural site, with no Tudor touches, and resorted to a blind window on the entrance front to avoid asymmetry; then at Wheathill as late as 1852, he designed another conventional classical-Georgian rectory with a central corridor plan (fig. 4.46).²⁰¹ It seems that Smith no longer considered Tudor, or Tudor-gothic, as being a merely fashionable way of building, either because it had now to be done in a more thorough fashion; or, conceivably, because it carried high church or Roman Catholic connotations. It is noticeable that there was considerable Tudor or Tudor-gothic parsonage building in the area going on in the mid 1830s, but by the



4.45 (above)
William Parsons' almshouses at
Bitteswell, near Lutterworth,
Leicestershire. The architect
has made these buildings
of 1847 robustly Tudor in
contrast to the gothic
structures designed by Pugin
for Roman Catholics nearby.

4.46 (right)
Stokesay, Shropshire,
by Edward Blakeway Smith of
1839. His houses increasingly
moved away from the playful
Tudor he had experimented
with earlier in the decade
[Herefordshire Record Office,
HD/44 1839].



1840s classical buildings had the upper hand. Thomas Nicholson of Hereford, for example, designed at New Radnor just outside the county a conventional central-corridor house which was essentially Tudor-gothic in composition, but the external detailing is carefully, and safely, classical-Georgian.²⁰²

More ambitious architects might have wanted not only to appear to disassociate themselves with Pugin's architecture but more intelligently also to prove that classical architecture could be both flexible and imaginative in response to the principal challenges of the new young goths. The career of Ignatius Bonomi (1787–1870) seems to suggest that. In his early days in practice, which began in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Bonomi at first accommodated both the classical and the Tudor-gothic. His lodges at Lambton Castle, of c1815, were Greek, but his work of the mid-late 1820s at the Castle itself was gothic.²⁰³ The Hermitage, in Chester-le-Street, was 'faintly Tudor'.²⁰⁴ However the house he built for himself and his sisters in 1828–9, Elvet Hill just outside Durham, was originally a remarkable gothic house.²⁰⁵

The house was designed as a castle-like residence, not exactly gothic but certainly not Tudor. It was two floors high with a flat roof; there were angled buttresses at the corners, and the windows were traceried – in most cases, simple depressed-arched tracery of the kind seen in mediaeval collegiate architecture, but in the drawing room it was more complex and cusped. One bay of the eastern elevation had a further central buttress. There was originally a two-storey oriel on the north side, triangular in plan and perhaps an attempt at recalling the complex windows at Thornbury Castle in Gloucestershire illustrated in the third volume of the *Architecture antiquities*.²⁰⁶ The plan was essentially designed in the form of two adjacent squares, one slid forward from the other. The western square contained Bonomi's offices, and the principal entrance to both house and offices. The main staircase was located in an approximately square room in the centre of this block. Above there was a servant's bedroom, and one other staircase. The second, eastern, square contained the lower and upper principal rooms, one at each corner. In the lower floor, access to the principal rooms was via a 'hall waiting room' in the south-west corner; above, a central corridor led to the centre of the block from the landing on the west side. It is an original plan, and not a very convenient one in

that it required a large amount of circulation space to reach all the rooms; its eccentricity is perhaps characteristic again of an architect's first house for himself. At all events, Bonomi did not remain there very long. The house was locally nicknamed 'The Rising Sun'.²⁰⁷

Bonomi's parsonage architecture of the 1840s – as Pugin's chapel and other work was rising at Ushaw nearby – was however classical, and sophisticatedly so. The almost contemporary parsonages at Loftus in Cleveland (1843) and Wilton (1844) are both three-bayed, two-storeyed classical houses with low roofs, sash windows, a columned porch, an ornate cornice, and quoins: they are elegant, accomplished Italianate houses quite removed from the classical-Georgian prototypes of earlier decades (fig. 4.47).²⁰⁸ Nor do they as much as hint at the English picturesque version of the rural Italianate of houses like Nash's Cronkhill. They are urbane and disciplined. At Loftus the three bays at the front have regular windows, with a porch at the centre bottom; however, at Wilton, the asymmetrical plan is marked externally by a blind window above the front door, and by an altogether irregular side elevation. Bonomi was trying to show here that classical architecture is in fact capable of making the external expression that the plan demands without having in any sense a naive character to it. He had evidently rejected the claim that only gothic architecture could do that.²⁰⁹ In that respect he provides a contrast to his local colleague, John Dobson in Newcastle, who had designed one of the first real Tudor-gothic revival parsonages when he had added to the pele tower at Embleton in 1828. Dobson's early gothic, at for example St Mary's Place in Newcastle, had often been very superficial and unsatisfactory; but as time went by he designed imaginative and authentic Tudor houses, such as Sandhoe House of 1846–7, and the tiny and charming keeper's cottage for the Whittle Dene Water Company of 1849.

The clearest way of summarising the transformation in the English domestic architecture of the 1840s as it is exemplified by the new parsonages is this: only the very laziest designers ignored the changes that were coming across the profession. Plans, styles, and professional conduct were now developing with tremendous speed. There has been no other single decade in English architectural history when the design of something so small as a house with two or three reception rooms changed so much.



4.47

Wilton parsonage, 1844.

The entrance front has a neat dolls'-house appearance, but on the sides Bonomi chose an unusual irregular pattern of fenestration as if to demonstrate that neo-classical architecture could also be functional.