

## Chapter Five

### *The 1850s: A kind of pattern house*



In many ways it is not only the parsonage houses themselves that change so radically during the 1840s but also the significance of them to architectural history in general and the way in which we record and remember them. These little houses start to play an important role in the broader history of the gothic revival, becoming part of one of the most popular episodes in English architecture. Once William Butterfield's house at Coalpit Heath comes along in 1844 one has the sense of rejoining the familiar narrative of the nineteenth century. The curious hiatus encountered in conventional histories of the third and fourth decades, almost devoid of the great names of the profession, is over. Suddenly, it seems, there is at least one distinguished small building in every village. The ambitious architects of the revival used their parsonage designs to experiment with the ideas that Pugin had raised in different ways, and the story of the houses becomes to a great extent the story of those individuals and their search for architectural expression. These men designed a very large number of parsonages between them, and henceforth the most logical way to discuss the houses is as part of the history of each architect's work, rather than as subject in their own right. The revolution had happened.

The Bounty continued to approve parsonage designs for mortgages until the early years of the twentieth century; usually about half of the parsonage files in diocesan records refer to approvals given after 1850. It would be possible to continue to ramble through the rest of the century, and perhaps one day it will be done. Many of these documents are fascinating in their own right: one goes on seeing here the work of unsung architects who specialised in the field; the youthful efforts of the famous of the future; and the most minor of the projects of the great London-based designers which their biographers and critics have had little time for. Every record office contains surprises. There is a set of drawings in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office from 1877 of a small extension by John Pollard Seddon, for Chirton, near Devizes, a mere addition of a rear wing for a kitchen, dining room and offices, but one which transforms a plain central-corridor house of an earlier period into a tiny, effortless free-style villa, too humble and too vernacular to be 'Queen Anne' but of course actually styled with enormous care by a leading designer (fig. 5.2).<sup>1</sup> Here and there a provincial builder can be found running up the same type of house that he, or his father, had been building since the beginning of the century;

#### 5.1

An early parsonage by George Gilbert Scott: Weston Turville, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, of 1838. His first attempt at designing a parsonage had been for his father at Wappenham in Northamptonshire; he later described the rectory there as 'very ugly'. He no doubt would have said the same about this one.

Chirton parsonage, near  
Devizes, Wiltshire (1877)

by John Pollard Seddon.

A charming vernacular design  
from an accomplished gothic  
church architect [Wiltshire &  
Swindon Record Office,  
D1/11/250].



Back Elevation

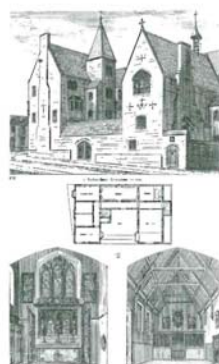
and there are plenty of designers that never wanted to go gothic, or like Bonomi at Loftus and Wilton picked up the gauntlet that Pugin had thrown down by designing classical houses in a much more sensitive and original type of way; but the emphasis of the story is already elsewhere. The inescapable fact is that at mid-century, the generic types of plans and elevations that characterised the opening decades of this story all but vanish. The hybrids disappear too. A house designed by the young Raphael Brandon in the middle of 1850, for Leighton Buzzard, tells us everything we need to know about what has replaced the old conventions: it has a large central staircase hall, with three reception rooms radiating around it; it has a bold three-dimensional form rather than a front and back with sides; and the style is competently and consistently gothic.<sup>2</sup> So the best way to conclude the chapters that have been written is to take a general view of what was done with the ideas that had already been raised, to note the experiments that were being made, and to watch the alliance that is very soon formed between the designers and the internal reformers of the Church of England. The adoption of a particular set of architectural ideas by those with the money, the energy, and the patronage to implement them on the one hand marks the posthumous success of Pugin's architectural experiment; but on the other, it is a



reminder that architects alone will never have the power or the influence to change ingrained patterns of building.

It is possible to show that designers all over England started to incorporate elements of Pugin's buildings in their own work, and yet it is extremely difficult to show that the new leaders of the gothic revival were directly aware of what he was doing. Pugin published no plans of his presbyteries and parsonages. In 1842 he did in fact illustrate the principal floor plan of his Bishop's House in Birmingham in an influential Roman Catholic journal called the *Dublin review*, in the second part of a pair of articles that he subsequently published in 1843 as a book called *The present state of ecclesiastical architecture in England*; but it is difficult to believe that this alone would have attracted a great deal of response: at any rate, the complex circulation system, the most remarkable characteristic of the plan, is scarcely discernable from it (fig. 5.3).<sup>3</sup> He was prevailed upon to make what was for him a very unusual finished colour perspective of his house in Ramsgate for display at the Royal Academy in 1849, but there is no sign of the house's unusual plan there (see fig. 3.58).<sup>4</sup> We do know of a few isolated occasions on which his work was seen (or to be more accurate, was probably seen) by influential designers. When, for example, George Gilbert Scott was working on the restoration of St Mary's, Stafford, in the early 1840s, he 'came to Cheadle ... & admired every thing *exceedingly*', according to a letter to Pugin from Lord Shrewsbury.<sup>5</sup> At the time, Pugin's remodelled presbytery in the town was probably under construction.<sup>6</sup> A few years later, in 1846-7, Scott designed Christ Church, a small church in Vale Square, Ramsgate, and only a few hundred yards from the Grange, and it is inconceivable that he did not walk over and see the house at least from the outside.

But avowed acceptance of Pugin's work by his contemporary professionals was never likely to be comfortable. In a period when an ambitious and newly-qualified young high churchman could be stoned by his parishioners for wearing a mediaevalising surplice – as happened to the unfortunate new incumbent at St Columb Major in Cornwall in the mid 1840s – it is clear that openly associating with the work of a prominent Roman Catholic was problematic.<sup>7</sup> The fact that references to Pugin's work are so rare during and immediately after his working period could mean either that he was ignored, or, just as probably, that architects with healthy Anglican connections did not



5.3  
Pugin's own plan and views of the Bishop's House, Birmingham, from *The present state of ecclesiastical architecture in England* (1841-2), plate 11. He evidently did not advertise the unusual nature of his plans.

want to mention him. William White, the architect of a number of distinguished gothic parsonages in the decades ahead, including as it happens the new one at St Columb Major, gave in 1851 and 1853 talks to fellow ecclesiologists about the design of small and medium-sized houses and illustrated his talks with drawings of what were very clearly Puginian principles without mentioning the name 'Pugin' as much as once.<sup>8</sup> His own architecture was pointedly drawn from the relaxed vernacular of authentic mediaeval buildings – his delightful scheme soon after for remodelling the vicarage at Milton in Kent has a long, low front that owes a great deal to the early fourteenth-century vicarage at Muchelney in Somerset (see fig. 4.11).<sup>9</sup> And yet the staggering amount of Puginesque work that suddenly went up from the late 1840s onwards suggests that architects had seen what Pugin was doing. Provincial or minor architects were now trying out isolated mannerisms that somehow they must have seen or heard of, and a look into the parsonage records of any diocesan collection will confirm that these tendencies were beginning to form an irregular pattern nationally. Furthermore, in London the prominent architects of the period were now using Pugin's principles as the basis for the design of their smaller houses, and the work that emerged forms part of the definitive canon of the English architecture of the high and late Victorian eras, at least as much as the churches and the country houses which now for the first time in generations shared the same consistent architectural language.

### **Imitation**

Some architects simply copied Pugin's work: of these, the two Hansom brothers from Leicestershire were so successful that in many cases their buildings are mistaken for that of their mentor. Neither Joseph Aloysius, famously also the inventor of the Hansom cab, nor his brother Charles designed Anglican parsonages, for they were Roman Catholics. They worked both separately and in partnership with each other (from 1854-9), and Joseph Hansom was for a short time the partner of Pugin's quarrelsome son Edward.<sup>10</sup> The brothers' many institutional buildings are similar to Pugin's; at Ratcliffe College in Leicestershire Charles Hansom continued in 1849 to build Pugin's quadrangle of 1843 onwards in an almost seamless way, in the days before an architect could claim copyright on his design. They were

thought to be cheaper as architects than Pugin was, and possibly also less trouble;<sup>11</sup> the latter was probably referring to them when he said that certain rivals ‘*steal their brooms ready made*’.<sup>12</sup> When Charles Hansom received a compliment for his ‘understanding of detail’ and ‘harmony of composition’, Pugin wrote angrily ‘By george it is too Bad. a man who entices the men away to work what is done, I should like to see him locked up till he drew out a niche’.<sup>13</sup>

There is one case where we know that Joseph Hansom stole a job from under Pugin’s nose, and since it is a Roman Catholic church with a presbytery attached it is of some interest to us. Pugin told John Hardman in June 1848 that ‘Hansom, the *other Hansom* [*i.e.*, Joseph] has written to me to resign the *york church* in his favour!!! I do not even know if there is a site to build it on’.<sup>14</sup> This is St George’s in York (fig.5.4). The plan is unremarkable, for the site is very small, but the simple exterior and the internal detailing have been largely composed from elements drawn directly from Pugin’s own work. With its 60-degree gable to the west side, a homogenous brick wall surface, plain square-headed windows with irregular stone quoins, very limited decoration and an irregular fenestration on the staircase side, the house is



#### 5.4

The presbytery of St George's Roman Catholic church, York, designed by Joseph Hansom in 1848 and subsequently altered. The houses of Pugin's imitators were generally flatter in appearance and more horizontal in their proportions than the real thing.



distinguished from one of Pugin's mainly by its horizontalising string-course between the ground and first floors; for Pugin, ever inspired by the vertical proportions of Nodier's romantic prints, did not like horizontal string courses.<sup>15</sup> It is fascinating to see that although Hansom copied Pugin's simple skirtings throughout the house, he thought that the half-round timber architraves, one of Pugin's inventions, were fit only for the servants' rooms at the top of the house; the principal room doors have bolder composite mouldings not dissimilar from conventional ones.

The Hansoms' work is usually somewhat lifeless compared to Pugin's, mainly because one looks in vain there for the oddities and exceptions that characterise the latter's work. Other Catholic architects copied more imaginatively. William Wardell is mainly well known for his career in Australia, but before he left England in 1858 he designed a small number of presbyteries with some distinctly Puginesque elements. Wardell described Pugin as 'our own great master'.<sup>16</sup> The presbytery at the church of the Holy Trinity, Brook Green, in Hammersmith includes a truly Puginian device and one that was rarely imitated by other parsonage builders. He linked the house to the back of the church by a long corridor that wraps around the edge of the site boundary, emerging to form the spine of a back-corridor type of plan (fig. 5.5). The drawings for this are with Wardell's other papers in New South Wales, an example of how far from home one can find parsonage or presbytery drawings. For many years local



5.5  
The presbytery of Holy Trinity, Brook Green, Hammersmith, Middlesex, is linked to the outer sacristy of the church by a lengthy cloister: a Puginian gesture from his admirer William Wardell. A detail from an original plan held in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Australia [ML ref. PXD 380 f. 14a].

anecdote attributed the church and the other Puginesque buildings of Hammersmith's 'Pope's Corner' to Pugin himself.<sup>17</sup> It would be interesting to see whether Wardell took with him to Australia Pugin's influence in the realm of domestic architecture as well as that of the ecclesiastical.<sup>18</sup>

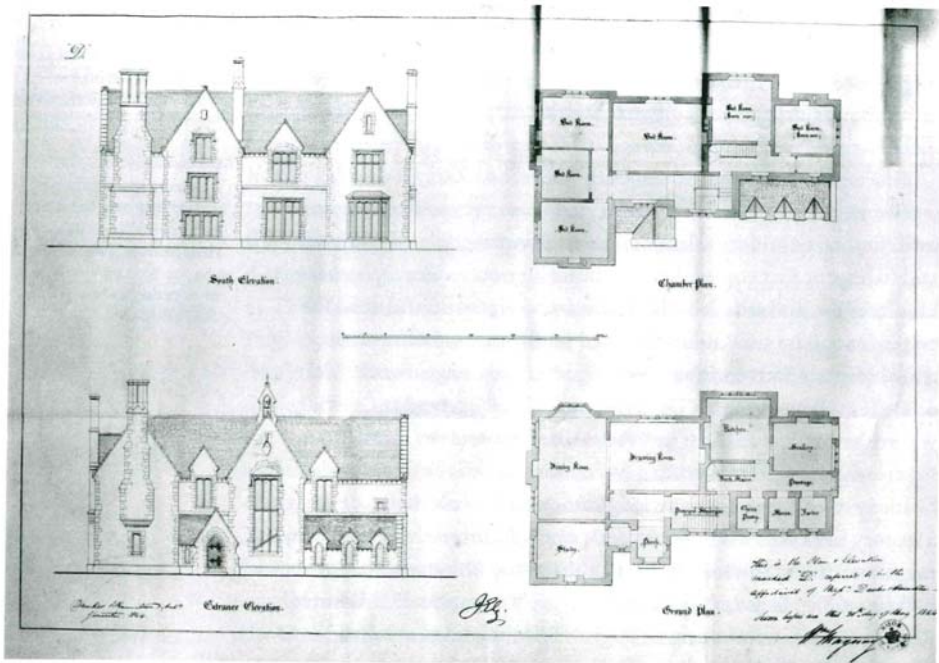
There are others, not Roman Catholics, who clearly imitated Pugin's work and in doing so were transformed from very ordinary architects into competent and stylish ones; and there were some who cannot be said to have at first copied directly, but who were evidently rooting in his direction, and who later both borrowed blatantly and were the better for it. Samuel Daukes designed in 1840, early in his career, two absolutely conventional Tudor-gothic parsonages for the Hereford diocese: at Brinsop, on an L-corridor plan, in 1840; and at Colwall, where the house was the symmetrical, back-corridor type (figs 5.6, 5.7; see also fig. 2.55).<sup>19</sup> In May 1844 (when the plan of the Grange was still unlikely to be common knowledge amongst professionals) he designed a rectory for Toft cum Caldecote, Cambridgeshire, which has three major rooms in pinwheel fashion, although without a central staircase hall (fig. 5.8).<sup>20</sup> Some years later he designed a house called Horsted Place in Sussex in imitation of Pugin's Bilton Grange as it had been eventually built, around a long and broad central gallery; he used Pugin-esque detailing, incorporated fittings designed by Pugin himself, and Pugin's builder Myers executed it. It is certainly often thought to be the most impressive building Daukes ever produced (fig. 5.9).<sup>21</sup>

5.6 (below, left)  
West elevation, Brinsop vicarage, near Hereford: a pre-Puginian Samuel Daukes design of 1840 [Herefordshire Record Office, HD8/15 1840].

5.7 (below)  
A typical back-corridor type ground-floor plan: Colwall rectory, near Great Malvern, Herefordshire (Daukes, 1840): see also fig. 2.55 [Herefordshire Record Office, HD8/15 1840].







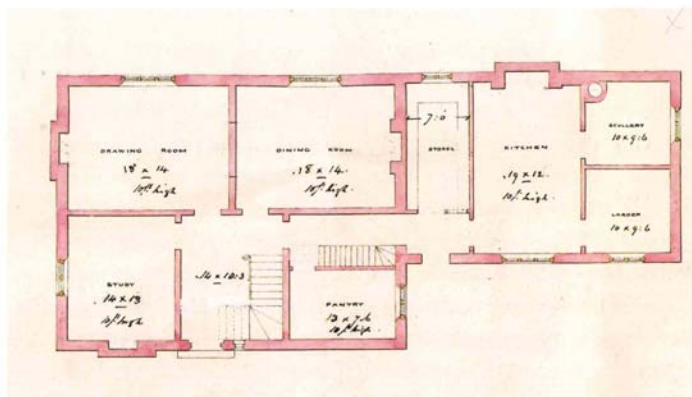
5.8 (above)  
Daukes' proposed ground-floor plan for Toft cum Caldecote rectory west of Cambridge, designed in May 1844 when Pugin's Ramsgate house was almost complete. This is quite a different type of house both organisationally and stylistically from his pre-Puginian Brinsop and Colwall of only four years beforehand. Although there is no central staircase hall, the principal axis of each of the three wings revolves in pinwheel fashion [Cambridge University Library, Ely Diocesan Records G3/39 MGA/50].

5.9 (right)  
Horsted Place, near Uckfield, Sussex, designed by Daukes in the early 1850s and built by Pugin's builder George Myers. By this stage Daukes had evidently become a competent Puginesque architect.



## Inspiration

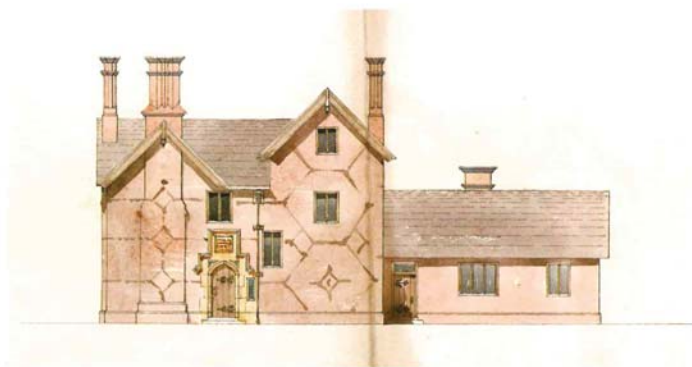
Much more interesting is the extent to which established architects in England took hold of Pugin's ideas almost immediately for Anglican parsonages of their own, and experimented with his ideas to produce houses with plans and exterior forms which were unprecedented in their own work. Anthony Salvin, born in 1799, had been in practice since the mid-1820s and had already acquired a reputation as an architect of competent, if dull, country houses in Elizabethan styles, including the eccentric parsonage of 1827 at Northallerton which has already been mentioned.<sup>22</sup> In 1848 he designed a gothic parsonage for his church of the Holy Trinity in Finchley, which unmistakably adapted Pugin's rectory designs (figs 5.10, 5.11).<sup>23</sup> Around an



5.10 (left, above)

Anthony Salvin's design for the parsonage at Holy Trinity, Finchley, Middlesex.

Although this is more of an already popular L-plan, rather than a pinwheel, Salvin has turned the entrance lobby into a substantial stair hall in imitation of a Pugin arrangement [London Metropolitan Archives, ACC 1083/3].



5.11 (left)

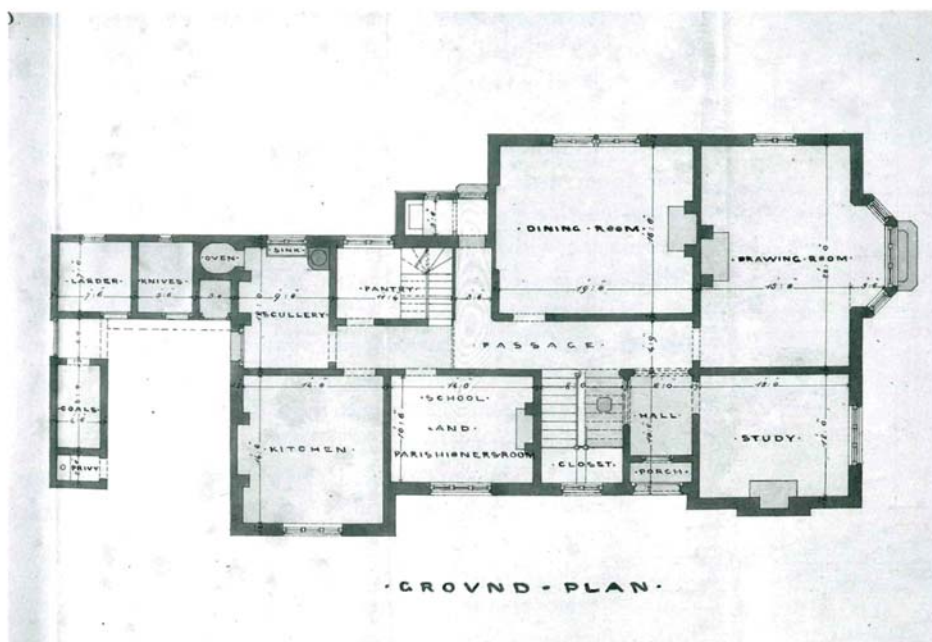
The entrance elevation at Finchley. This is again 'modified Pugin' on a small scale, with more English-looking lower gables and brickwork patterns. The window positioned at the bottom right of a gable seems to imitate a similar one at Ramsgate (see fig. 3.31) [London Metropolitan Archives, ACC 1083/3].

approximately square staircase entrance hall he placed a study, a drawing room and a dining room in the same order as they had been at Lanteglos. The house is not exactly a pinwheel, because the drawing room and dining room share the same long axis; but although he likewise did not imitate Pugin's pair of stair windows on the entrance front, he applied at least two of his mannerisms: he took the decorative dropped hood-mould for the front door from that at Rampisham, and above it he located a small window between the bottom of the adjoining gable and its adjacent wall, a strange detail that Pugin had used at Ramsgate for the short passage between the two principal upper-floor bedrooms (see fig. 3.31). Soon after, T. H. Wyatt (1807–80) provided two wonderful examples of the rapid incorporation of Pugin's work into that of respectable London architects. A member of the architecturally prodigious Wyatt family – he was the brother of the better-known Matthew Digby Wyatt, and the second cousin once removed of Sir Jeffry Wyattville – he had practised as an undistinguished designer of neo-Elizabethan buildings for some 15 years before receiving the commission in 1852 (the year of Pugin's decline and death) to design a vicarage at Alderbury near Salisbury, the very village where Pugin had built his first home. The results, dated 13 April 1852, are fascinating. Wyatt took Pugin's parsonage model and converted it into a much more English-looking house (fig. 5.12).<sup>24</sup> The plan is reversed from that of Rampisham and Lanteglos (fig. 5.13; see also fig. 3.40); and like Hansom at York he did not have the nerve to explore the full implications of Pugin's work; indeed, like Hansom he copied Pugin's architrave detail for backstairs areas only. The three

5.12  
A blatant example of a Pugin pinwheel house imitated and anglicised, this time by T. H. Wyatt at Alderbury, close to Pugin's own first house St Marie's Grange. The horizontal string course and the ornamental brickwork turn a pinwheel-type elevation into a structure more recognisable as an English house [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D1/11/112].







reception rooms were arranged in the form of an L around his hall and stairs, but these, whilst taking up the same space as one of Pugin's stair halls would have done, were more compartmentalised; possibly Wyatt wanted the upper floor to be more cut off from the front door. For the entrance elevation he took a series of Puginian motifs such as the chimney-gable end of the study wall to the right of the front door and the great staircase window to the left of it. From this point on, however, he conventionalised, or perhaps simply anglicised, Pugin's designs. His back stairs were hidden around the other side of the house, so that their window did not appear on the front elevation: this was similar to the Grange, but unlike the other pinwheel houses where they were visible on the front; and by adding a string course and various brick diaper patterns to the front of the house he gave it a much more horizontal emphasis than Pugin liked to do. On the other hand, some of the brick patterning seems reminiscent of that at St Marie's Grange.

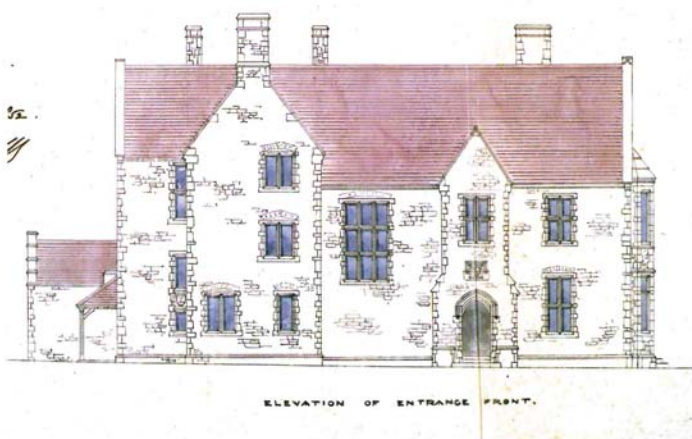
Exactly six weeks later, Wyatt submitted a design for another Puginesque parsonage, for the Wiltshire village of Upton Scudamore,

#### 5.13

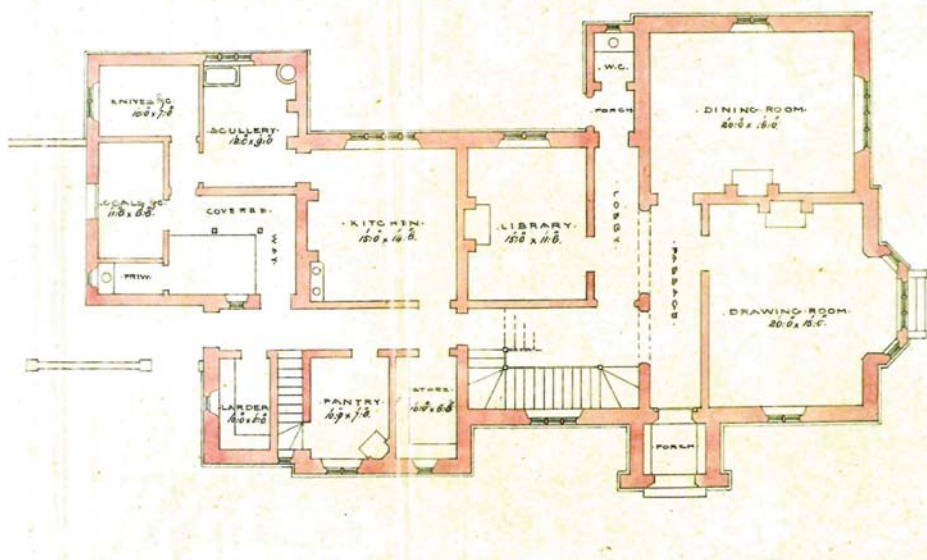
Wyatt's plan at Alderbury: this is an L-plan rather than a pinwheel layout, as the rooms lack the dynamic rotating quality of one of Pugin's own designs; the stairs, likewise, are at the centre of the house but are compartmentalised and thus less prominent [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D1/11/112].

between Trowbridge and Warminster. He was a little braver this time (figs 5.14, 5.15).<sup>25</sup> The decorative brick patterning had disappeared, and the stair window had grown to be a more striking part of the composition. A tall gothic porch signals the front door and a Pugin-esque bay window is visible around the corner, marking the drawing room. Inside, the area given to the stairs is a great deal more spacious than in the Alderbury design, and a pair of parallel corridors linking the front door with the garden porch (and the water closet) establish a richer, more layered space than previously. It does not seem to me to be plausible that Wyatt could have designed these houses without seeing at least the Rampisham house, not far away to the south-west. He had at first copied Pugin's ideas; then, having first put them into practice, he began to adapt them and play with them. It seems likely that the situation with Salvin had been similar. In Wyatt's later projects these Puginian experiments come and go. He remodelled Vulliamy's clumsy house at Burston in 1862 by inserting a large central staircase hall into the middle of it, which required rebuilding a great deal of the rest; but ten years later he produced a gothic house with an old-fashioned central-corridor plan at Horringer with Ickworth, further testimony to the contemporary fashion amongst artistic people for simplification.<sup>26</sup>

The deanery at Lincoln was designed by the country-house architect William Burn when he was almost 60, perhaps at the peak of his



5.14  
Another Puginesque elevation  
by Wyatt of 1852, this time  
six weeks later at Upton  
Scudamore near Warminster,  
Wiltshire [Wiltshire & Swindon  
Record Office, D1/11/113].

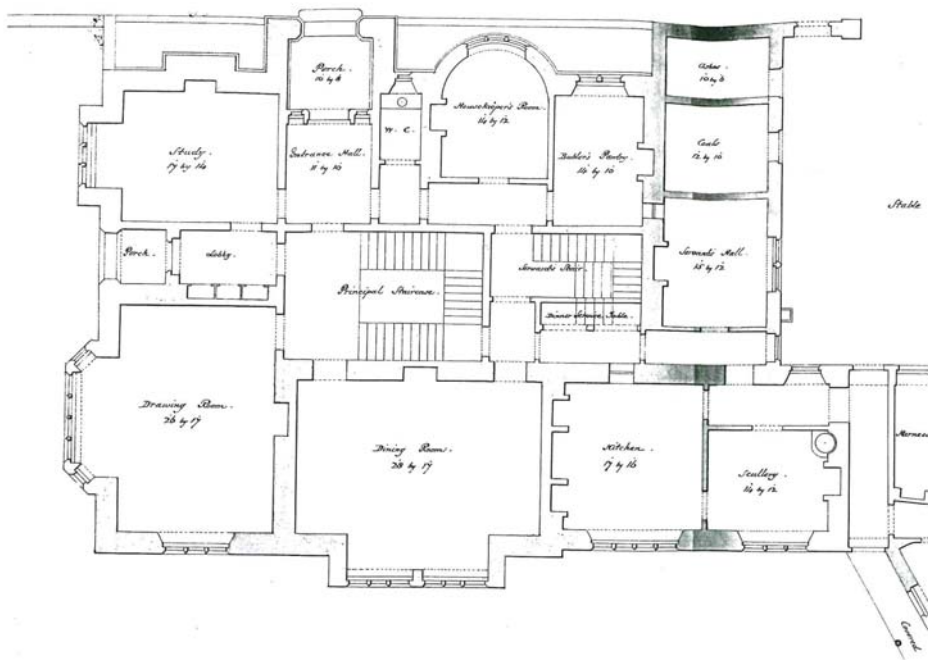


reputation if not any longer of his powers.<sup>27</sup> It was an expensive building: the Bounty awarded a mortgage of £2,500 in March 1846, and a few months later agreed to raise the sum to £3,000 'should the Dean require it'. He did.<sup>28</sup> The house went up in 1847 to the north-east of the cathedral, and its entrance facade faced north (figs 5.16, 5.17). It is a dour building with very little ornament; it survives today with the loss only of its kitchen-office wing.<sup>29</sup> A pair of gables large and small mark the entrance, in the Pugin fashion derived from Great Chalfield Manor; and, as at Rampisham, the larger of the two is relieved only by a chimney; at this house, however, the entrance door gable steps forward slightly from the principal mass of the block. This porch leads into an entrance hall: to the right is the dean's study, and to the left, a service corridor runs behind the entrance front to serve a water closet, a butler's pantry and the housekeeper's room, leading to the back stairs (fig. 5.18). Continuing straight ahead from the entrance, one reaches a central, top-lit stair hall. Immediately ahead there is a dining room, its long axis perpendicular to that of the entrance route. To the right there

#### 5.15

The plan at Upton Scudamore. With the liberation of the main staircase into the volume of the hall, and the appearance of a back-stairs window on the front elevation, it appears that Wyatt is becoming bolder in his application of Puginian ideas. Perhaps the rapidly declining architect was on his mind [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D1/11/1.13].





is a drawing room. The substantial office wing to the east was reached though a door under the stairs. The house layout exhibits all the sophistication for which Burn became recognised in the planning of a complex modern house, but it also carries echoes of Pugin's pinwheel type houses, and in particular the best known of them, the Grange. Looking at the house from the eastern end one can see that Burn chose to emphasise the blocks in front of and behind the staircase by giving each its own gable, a true gothic-revival trait that distinguishes houses of this type from the persistent Tudor-gothic of an architect of the same generation such as Edward Blore, who liked to cap his houses with a single roof.<sup>30</sup>

Elsewhere one can see similar examples of a Puginesque house by other established architects at a late stage in their career. Charles Fowler (1792-1867), a largely classical architect, provides one excellent example. At the parsonage of Bovey Tracey in Devon of 1850 the west, garden, elevation is of a gable-and-wall type in the Tudor-gothic style that was by now familiar (fig. 5.19). The house has a narrow, central staircase hall, but the principal rooms on the ground floor do radiate around it in imitation of Pugin's pinwheel houses that were by now all complete (fig. 5.20). Some of the detailing is clearly derived from Pugin's work: windows have substantial but plain stone mullions, and depressed lancets on the principal floor; and backstairs joinery has Puginesque detailing, with timber beads for architraves to office rooms, and a chamfered newel.<sup>31</sup>

For some years now, architects would copy very closely certain aspects of Pugin's designs whilst ignoring others: there is a fine example of this at Southwater in Sussex, where the London architect Joseph Clarke, well known for church restorations, designed a house that copies the double-gabled entry to the Rampisham house, although he married this to a conventional central-corridor plan (fig. 5.21).<sup>32</sup> Another design from the 1850s that takes one characteristic at the expense of others, and of logic, is a bizarre plan submitted for Highcliffe, Hampshire, in 1859 by Henry Parsons, district surveyor for South Lambeth, in which the front elevation is taken up by a winding cloister-like corridor which makes its way along from the front door to a staircase in a projecting bay.<sup>33</sup>

5.16, 5.17 (above)  
The deanery at Lincoln by William Burn (1847), immediately north of the cathedral cloister. The building was designed a short time before Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield became Burn's articulated clerks.

5.18 (below)  
The ground floor of the deanery at Lincoln. Pugin's influence is clear from the disposition of the rooms around a central stair hall [Lincolnshire Archives, MGA 315 1847].



5.19 (top)

Bovey Tracey vicarage, Devon, by Charles Fowler (1850): Fowler's gothic designs had become considerably more sophisticated since his archdeaconry at Exeter (see fig. 2.36).

5.20 (right)

Bovey Tracey, Devon. The rooms in Fowler's design of 1850 imitate Pugin's pinwheel plans, although the staircase hall creates less of an impressive space. Clockwise from top right: study; drawing room; dining room [Devon Record Office: Exeter Diocese, Faculty Petitions].

5.21 (opposite)

Joseph Clarke designed the parsonage at Southwater, near Horsham, Sussex in 1853 incorporating Puginian devices such as the double-gable bay at the porch. Clarke was a prolific and competent restorer of churches.







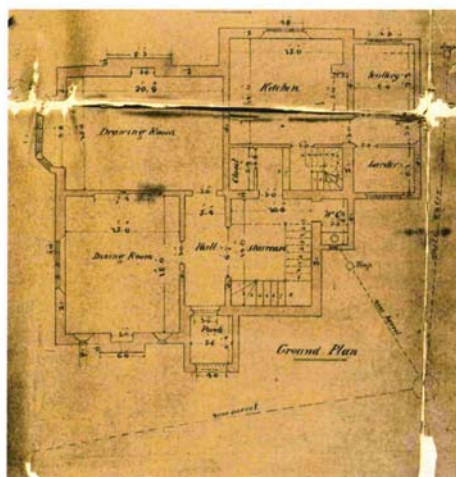
### Politics and architecture

The real impact of Pugin's changes could only come once high-profile and ambitious architects began to use them as a basis for experimentation over a period of time long enough to create a strong new architectural image that could be readily identified and adopted; and since the most dramatic and pervasive architectural influence in the mid-nineteenth century was in the field of church design, lasting change was also dependent upon the adoption of Pugin's ideas by leading church architects. The critical moment was the patronage (to varying extents) of a set of approved church architects and their ideas by the *Ecclesiologist*, the publication of the Cambridge Camden Society that was read by supporters of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England. The *Ecclesiologist* promoted the building of new churches according to authentic mediaeval models, and it is very probably because of an old problem – that there were so few known mediaeval parsonages – that the journal, often so thundering and opinionated, had for some time nothing to say about their design. The first real appearance of the parsonage came in the second volume of the journal, in June 1843, accompanied by the apologetic comment that the subject would have been raised earlier but 'there were other matters of still greater importance which called for our more immediate and undivided attention'.<sup>34</sup> There followed a rather predictable castigation of contemporary parsonages for their similarity to vulgar modern villas, and then, after a quotation from Wordsworth ('A reverend pile/ With bold projections and recesses deep')<sup>35</sup>, a short paean to the humble solidity of ancient houses, which exemplified the 'hospitality, humility, contentment, and devotion characteristick of the pastoral office'.<sup>36</sup> It is an old-fashioned comment, not only because it ignores the constructional, technological way in which new houses were beginning to be designed and discussed by professionals, but also because it is reminiscent of the language of the despised villa designers of the early nineteenth century who had presented buildings in terms of the sentiments and 'principles' appropriate for different types of residence. One realises with passages like this how vast the gulf is between architecture and the use of words: the goths of the Cambridge Camden Society hated the architecture that their parents' generation had favoured, and yet they used the same type of language in order to describe the houses they wanted as their predecessors had done.

The writer of the article had grasped at least part of the message of Pugin's *The true principles* because he says of one design he dislikes that 'it is clear that the exterior ought to be adapted to the requirements of the internal arrangements, instead of the latter being made to accommodate, and in a manner *pack into*, a preconceived uniform shell'.<sup>37</sup> And yet in 1843, with Pugin's first pinwheel house not yet designed and his reputation as an architect resting on a handful of small, cheap buildings mostly in the Midlands, it is obvious that there is no new strong stylistic image to hand. And so we hear of the parsonage that 'it ought to be distinctly religious in character, and to stand in protest against the luxury and worldliness of modern domestick buildings', and nothing of what it ought to look like instead.<sup>38</sup> The writer pointed to various surviving mediaeval parsonages that met with his approval: since they were mostly located within a few miles of each other between Stamford and Peterborough, at Barnack, Uffington, and Market Deeping, it appears that little progress had been made since the days of John Britton, whose historic buildings are often located in groups in a single area, implying that the finding of them was more a matter of serendipity than of anything else. *The Ecclesiologist's* choice of examples on this occasion probably reflects day trips for Cambridge undergraduates.

There were, in fact, no references to new gothic parsonages in its pages until Pugin had completed at least seven Roman Catholic presbyteries; they finally came in the form of a notice without architectural description in July 1845 of the completion of new houses at Coalpit Heath, Brasted and Toft;<sup>39</sup> the following year there was a single reference, to Marchwood parsonage by Henry Woodyer: this had 'that peculiar character which ought to distinguish a parsonage', without illustration of what this might mean.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, the editors of the journal may not have been fully aware of what their own subscribers were up to. A list of members elected in May 1843 appeared in the same issue as the lengthy article quoted above: it included Thomas Hellyer, an architect at Ryde in the Isle of Wight.<sup>41</sup> In 1847 Hellyer submitted a design for a delightful small house for the parish of Kingsclere Woodlands near Newbury in Berkshire that was modelled on Pugin's pinwheel houses: it had a comparatively large stair hall with a prominent window at the front of the house, and its two reception rooms were set at right angles to each other on one side of it (figs 5.22, 5.23).<sup>42</sup>





5.22 (above)  
The Puginesque plan at  
Kingsclere Woodlands,  
between Basingstoke and  
Newbury, Hampshire, by  
Cambridge Camden Society  
member Thomas Hellyer  
(1847). The house has been  
demolished [Hampshire  
Record Office, 16M70/19].

5.23 (above, right)  
Hellyer's entrance elevation  
for Kingsclere Woodlands:  
a tiny version of one of Pugin's  
pinwheel houses [Hampshire  
Record Office, 16M70/19].

One entered through a porch alongside a tall gable wall, and the brick surfaces were decorated with a great deal of fancy diaper work. Very short notices, however, followed in February 1848 of three parsonages by the partnership of Mallinson and Healey (whom we have seen doing late Tudor-gothic, at Shinfield the year before; see fig. 2.65) at Low Moor and Wyke in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and at Swinfield near Newark.<sup>43</sup> Each was in a different style, and the reviewer noted that he preferred the middle-pointed style of Wyke, but considered the 'Debased' third-pointed style of Swinfield unsuccessful.<sup>44</sup> Four months later, there is another short but this time favourable notice of 'two Pointed parsonages', Monkton Wyld in Dorset and an unexecuted scheme for Buxted in Sussex, by R. C. Carpenter.<sup>45</sup> When covering a subject, even an important one, that was beyond the realms of historical authenticity, the journal had little to offer its readers.

Late in the 1840s the subject was pursued in earnest by the Architectural and Archæological Society for the County of Buckinghamshire, which was founded in January 1848. The Society's inaugural meeting was not only reported in the *Bucks herald* for 3 February of that year, but in the august pages of the *Ecclesiologist* itself; in time, it could count William Butterfield, E. B. Lamb, George Gilbert Scott, and John Britton's sometime collaborator Charles Boutell amongst its members.<sup>46</sup> A particularly active member of the society,

the Reverend A. Baker, gave a paper entitled 'Hints for Improvement in the architectural character and arrangements of Parsonage Houses' in April 1849.<sup>47</sup> The *Ecclesiologist* did not give the text of Baker's remarks, subsequently pronouncing them 'exaggerated'.<sup>48</sup> It did, however, later report in some detail on comments Baker had received about them from 'an eminent church architect' which were read out at a subsequent meeting of the society: these dealt with entry and dining arrangements, the necessity for the parson to be close to his flock, and the superfluity of Baker's blatantly Puginising proposals for an oratory and a cloister; but in general, the anonymous but eminent architect was approving. The parsonage was to be '*real, simple*, and religious, as you have well said'.<sup>49</sup> We can only speculate whether the words '*real*' and '*religious*' in this context would have meant the same thing for all of the society's members. Inspiration for genuine change was not going to come from the pens of the propagandists of the ecclesiological movement: it could only come from the drawing boards of the architects whom they trusted.

### Scott

Could George Gilbert Scott have been that eminent church architect?<sup>50</sup>

It is a not insignificant fact that parsonages were amongst the very few small houses of any kind that the greatest and the busiest of the architects of the gothic revival were ever able to turn their attention to: in fact, of the architects mentioned in detail here, the only one who did design a comparatively large number of small houses that were not parsonages was William Butterfield, who for example built several cottages in the village of Baldersby in North Yorkshire. Scott came from a clerical family – at his birth, his father was vicar of Gawcott near Buckingham – and according to his obituary in the *Builder* he designed 23 English parsonages, some for members of his family.<sup>51</sup> He was also a friend of Benjamin Ferrey, designer of so many parsonages himself, and with whom he went on a memorable tour of Italy in 1851.<sup>52</sup> How much time did they spend speaking of Pugin? Scott's *Recollections* leave one in no doubt of his debt to him and to his architectural ideas. He further professed his debt to 'the great reformer of architecture', in his *Remarks on secular and domestic architecture*, and it seems improbable in the light of his comments there that he had not by now made himself familiar with Pugin's unconventional small and

medium-sized house plans.<sup>53</sup> We have already seen that he troubled in early years to make the cross-country journey from Stafford up into what is now often called 'Pugin-land', Lord Shrewsbury's estate in the north-east of the county.<sup>54</sup>

Scott is distinguished from the new gothic architects of his generation, such as the younger of those who subscribed to the Buckinghamshire society, by his having been in practice as an architect well before his 'conversion'. In 1838 he had designed a simple central corridor-plan type parsonage in classical Georgian style at Weston Turville (figs 5.1, 5.24).<sup>55</sup> Later work emerging from the office of Moffatt and Scott was Tudor gothic, and the planning sometimes original: the parsonage at West Knoyle, designed in 1842, is an asymmetrical variation on the central corridor plan; although still Tudor gothic, it has only the narrowest of shoulders at the base of its







gables (fig. 5.25).<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately I have found no plan for the parsonage at St Giles, Camberwell, designed in 1843 soon after Scott enlisted to the new gothic cause and now demolished; such few photographs as exist show that with its flush-framed, square-headed traceried windows it is in stylistic terms at least a candidate to be the first Puginesque building of the Church of England.<sup>57</sup>

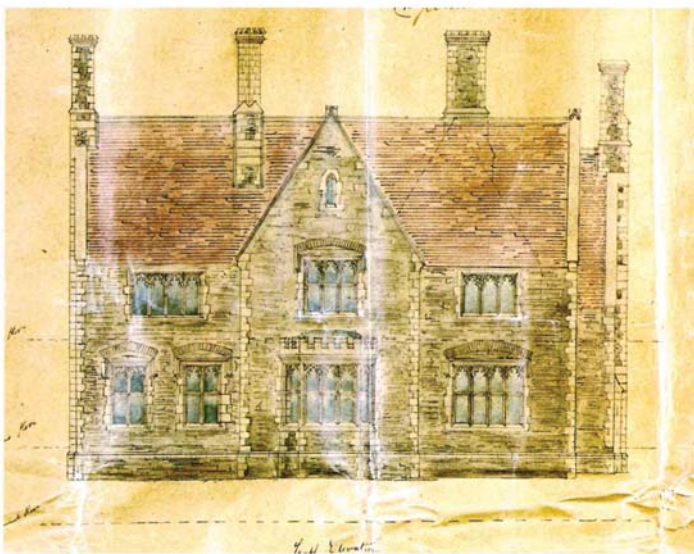
Scott's gothic detailing was usually confident but it was often also unexciting where he was working on a small scale. He undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the *Ecclesiologist's* search for authenticity, and his interest in English historic detailing can be deduced from his sketchbooks in the Royal Institute of British Architects collection. He drew for example both the surviving mediaeval house at Lanercost Abbey in Cumberland and the former prior's lodging at Wenlock Priory in Shropshire, which Pugin apparently had not (see fig. 2.23).

#### 5.25

The parsonage at West Knoyle, north of Shaftesbury, Wiltshire, was designed during the period of the Scott and Moffatt partnership, but here it was the latter who signed the plans in 1842. By looking at the bases of the gables it is clear that Tudor-gothic has almost turned into gothic here.

It is, however, his continuing interest in Puginesque planning that makes him so interesting. A parsonage at Great Haseley, of 1847, illustrates an early stage in this development (fig. 5.26). The house's principal front, to the garden, places the dining room, the drawing room and study in a row, rather as one would expect from a typical Tudor-gothic, back-corridor parsonage of the period or immediately before: the obvious difference is that the detailing is a great deal more authentic, and consistent with the materials used.<sup>58</sup> The rooms are distinguished by different windows but otherwise create a formal elevation which is almost symmetrical in its massing. Within, however, there is a different type of house altogether. The porch leads into a central, double-height staircase hall, and the doors to the three principal rooms lead off much as they do in one of Pugin's pinwheel houses. In a slightly later project, the house for St Mary, Stoke Newington, of 1856, Scott managed to leave a trace of this arrangement in a very small and simple plan.<sup>59</sup>

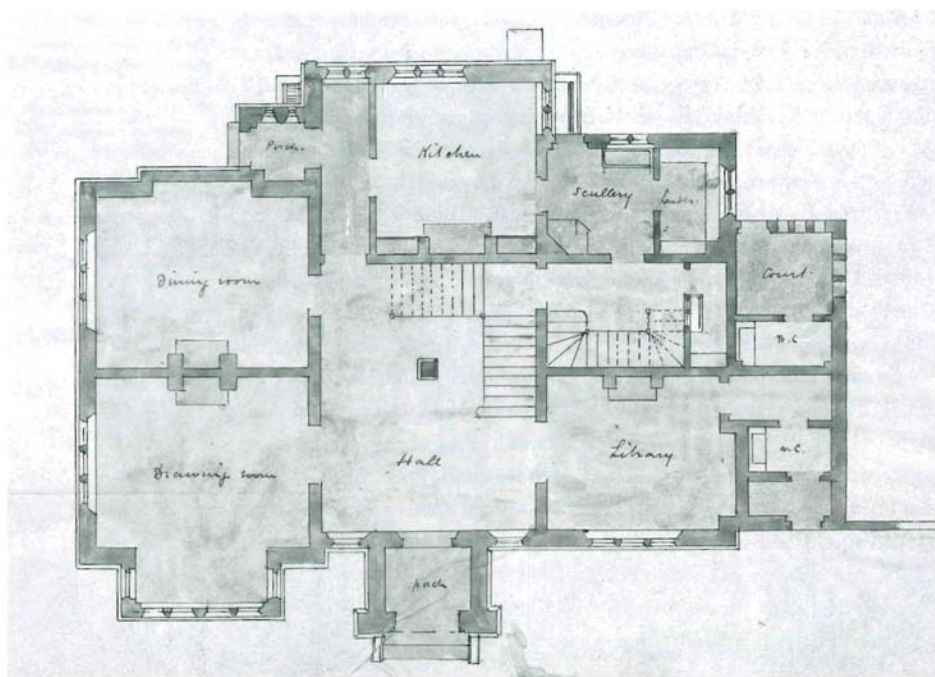
Remarkably, Scott's later plans adopt Pugin's pinwheel planning almost in its entirety. By 1863, at Tydd St Giles in Cambridgeshire and for his brother John, he was still experimenting with large staircase halls whilst attempting an original plan: in this case, three corridors



5.26  
Scott's parsonage houses are unfailingly interesting. This one at Great Haseley, south-east of Oxford, of 1847 combines the type of elevation that is associated with a back-corridor plan with a pinwheel and a double-height hall [Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. dioc. papers b.103/7].

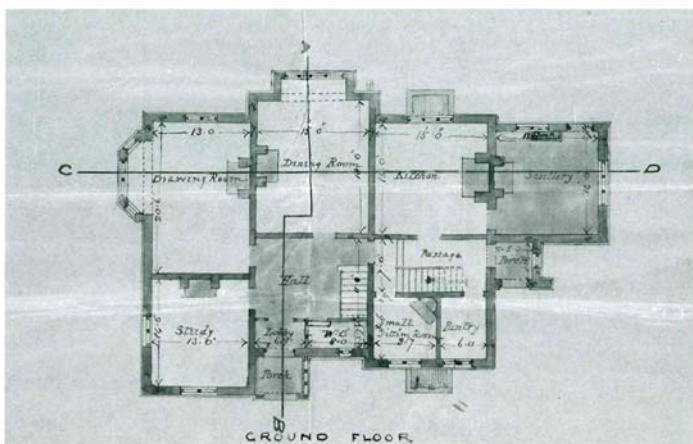






5.28  
A further experiment with the pinwheel from the Scott office, this time for the parsonage at Christ Church, Ealing, Middlesex. This time the stair hall is the largest room on the floor [London Metropolitan Archives, ACC 1083/2 (cc no 1704)].

that there has been something of a revolution since the days when the parishioner was required, as he or she had been long ago at Walkeringham, to slip in through the back door. Now they would see the parson's domestic arrangements in their full intimidating splendour whatever door they came in.<sup>62</sup> Finally, four years later, when building for a further member of his family at Hillesden, Buckinghamshire, his office finally produced a plan that closely resembles that of Rampisham (fig. 5.29). The axes of all three rooms leading off from the stair hall are in fact parallel, but the similarity is unmistakable.<sup>63</sup> The elevations here are in a vernacular, half-timbered style with clusters of brick chimneys, almost presaging the Queen Anne revival, but a bold Puginesque stair window dominates the entrance front (fig. 5.30). This series of designs indicates a number of interesting points: in particular, it shows that Scott was turning Pugin's plans over in his head for about 25 years; and it also shows that as time went by, and the architects he employed in his office managed to sway their



5.29

Scott's office at its most Puginesque in 1870: a central hub-type hall at Hillesden, near Buckingham [Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. dioc. papers c.1479].

master towards a more vernacular and more mixed way of styling buildings, his enthusiasm for the original purity of the staircase hall type simply grew. The Hillesden design was almost certainly mainly the work of one of Scott's assistants, for example George Gilbert Scott junior or John Oldrid Scott, then established in their father's office. Scott junior, and his immediate circle, were enthusiastic admirers of Pugin's.<sup>64</sup>

### Bright young men

One of the intriguing aspects of Pugin's work is that architects who admired it found different ways of expressing their interest; in a sense, it is that variety of responses that establishes the importance of what he had done over a comparatively short period. In the case of the work of the young architects associated with the ecclesiological movement it appears that at first, at any rate, it was Pugin's insistence that authentic historical architecture had been both varied and expressive of use that captured their imagination. In *The true principles* he had written that 'Each part of these [mediaeval domestic] buildings indicated its particular destination'; and 'the architects of the middle ages were the first who *turned the natural properties of the various materials to their full account, and made their mechanism a vehicle for their art*'.<sup>65</sup> The colourful variety of shapes and forms that suddenly emerged from the mid 1840s illustrates both of these axioms to the full.



5.30  
Hillesden parsonage.  
The house is scarcely gothic at  
all: an intriguing contrast to the  
Puginesque plan within.

R. C. Carpenter was Pugin's contemporary – he too was born in 1812 – and Pugin knew him: he was one of the few architects of the period of whom there is at least some evidence that he may have seen Pugin's Ramsgate house.<sup>66</sup> His first authentically gothic parsonage came in 1843, at Brasted in Kent (fig. 5.31).<sup>67</sup> This house bears more of a superficial similarity to genuine mediaeval domestic architecture than the work of his contemporaries: its long low ranges and something of its stylistic detailing appear to have been derived from the rear elevation of the former prior's lodging at Wenlock Priory, or possibly again that mediaeval vicarage at Muchelney. In general, Carpenter employed a style which combined a flat, plain wall face with rich decorative detailing.<sup>68</sup> His most distinct planning device was a return to the back-corridor plan, and he did this by arranging the house in the form of two distinct parallel ranges: one faced the garden and



contained the principal rooms, and the other contained the corridor, the stairs and the offices. He expressed this division very prominently on the narrow elevation: each of the two ranges has its own tall gable. This was not completely unprecedented – there are, after all, plenty of classical-Georgian houses composed of two parallel blocks with separate roofs – but to make a feature of this on an entrance or major front is unusual. There is a rare example in the new rectory at Holford in Somerset, designed in 1832 by Richard Down & Son, but it was certainly contrary to the practice of the great majority of classical-Georgian and Tudor-gothic architects.<sup>69</sup> In contrast to Scott, Carpenter seemed uninterested in Pugin's own planning devices, preferring instead to express the layout of the house with this pair of parallel ranges. The advantage this arrangement gave him was that he could line up the three principal rooms along the garden front so as to show

5.31

Richard Cromwell Carpenter's first authentically gothic parsonage, at Brasted near Sevenoaks, Kent (1843). Here he established his characteristic planning principle of two parallel ranges.



off the difference between them by the use of differing fenestration, thus demonstrating Pugin's requirement that the building should use natural means to express the differences between the rooms' functions. At Brasted he actually brought the front door out onto one of the principal long sides, but at Monkton Wyld in Dorset, built to accompany his church of 1849, he placed it where logic determined – below the gable of the service range to the left-hand side of its tall, narrow, and somewhat intimidating entrance front (fig. 5.32).

For this house he derived the required 'Englishness' by again borrowing from Great Chalfield Manor in neighbouring Wiltshire:



5.32  
The entrance front of the parsonage at Monkton Wyld, west Dorset, by Carpenter (1849). The left-hand range contains the hall, stairs, and rear areas; the principal rooms facing the garden front are in the right-hand part.

his father appears to have been, as we have seen above, a subscriber to the third volume of Pugin's *Examples* which illustrated it. This time he took something of its general form rather than its popular double-gabled porch, for his house is arranged on the garden front between two stone gables, both of which are decorated with ornate traceried bays; and the major chimney of the house is placed on this elevation (fig. 5.33; see fig. 3.48).<sup>70</sup> In trying to reconcile the principal front of a modern house with this mediaeval precedent, Carpenter faced a difficult problem. The Manor is a hall house, with a single large room at its centre; Monkton Wyld parsonage on the other hand has the entirely different and modern back-corridor plan that required the garden elevation to be divided into three. Inside, Carpenter experimented with Puginesque minimal joinery, even developing for his ground-floor corridor a skirting that, like some of the architraves, was a composite made from Pugin-like beading. In spite of the grandness of its rooms, and the richness of the detailing, the house is an unresolved one in that one feels that the individual elements of the facade do not combine coherently; but it is a useful experiment in combining the new and the old to produce a fresh and distinctly Victorian type of architecture. As such it attracted the attention of the *Ecclesiologist*, which looked both at it and the architect's unexecuted scheme for Braxted in Suffolk, before concluding that historical English architecture had little or nothing to offer the modern designer: 'Most of the specimens we have seen, which aim at anything better than late Third-Pointed, seem rather timidly to avoid glaring faults, than boldly to seize the spirit of the earlier style. Nuremberg should be more studied by our architects'.<sup>71</sup> Pugin, we know, would have agreed.<sup>72</sup>

Carpenter made a further attempt at a large modern parsonage, and this time in a more relaxed way, at Kilndown in west Kent (fig. 5.34). This parsonage, which was completed in 1855 and which replaced the recent structure by Roos which had proved so unsatisfactory for its incumbent, is likewise a back-corridor type of house and is essentially the mirror image of Monkton Wyld, on a more modest scale. It is again divided into two parallel ranges, and again presents the visitor with a pair of gables, major and minor, about the entranceway, but this time the front door below the service wing gable is obscured by a short external cloister, imitating another Puginian trait (fig. 5.35).<sup>73</sup>





Ewan Christian had criticised the entry arrangements in Roos' house as 'mean and dark', and it perhaps it was as a result that a Puginian 'cloister' was added to the entrance side of the new house; its function is in fact to provide an entrance hall, because otherwise the front door would have led straight into the end of a long and comparatively narrow corridor.<sup>74</sup> At any rate, this cloister softens the entrance front in a way which, whilst it may not please purists, certainly provides a friendlier first impression than Monkton Wyld. Financed by the Beresfords and managed by A. J. Beresford-Hope, the chief benefactor of the ecclesiologists, this was an expensive building designed to advertise the prestige of the gothic revival as much as was their own church nearby; and although Carpenter limited himself to his usual flat wall planes with repetitive tracery, he provided a highlight in the form of a deep and more ornamental bay on the garden side.<sup>75</sup> This was his last parsonage; in addition to these three buildings he had designed a further seven.<sup>76</sup> At Cotes Heath in Staffordshire, and at Little Cornard in Suffolk, in 1846 and 1847 respectively, he attempted open staircase halls, and indeed the latter house has something of a pinwheel-like arrangement of rooms with a study, dining room and drawing room rotating around a comparatively small entrance stairway, a surprise within a house that externally is styled in an almost Tudor style.<sup>77</sup>

Carpenter died young in 1855; William Butterfield on the other hand lived to the age of 86, and worked at least until the age of 80, his last known designs being made in 1895. He therefore provides an almost exact chronological parallel to Ewan Christian. Pugin knew him well – he was 'one of our best customers', he told Hardman – and later correspondence reveals that Butterfield relied directly on Pugin for decorative work at least until 1851.<sup>78</sup> It appears that in his architectural work he was, similarly, attracted by the sculptural and formal potential of materials rather than by any imitation of Pugin's plans and layouts. In common with well-known architects such as T. H. Wyatt, and established provincials like John Whichcord, Butterfield's first approach to Pugin's architecture seems to have been the desire to anglicise it. Like Wyatt, he at first applied more horizontal proportions to his designs than Pugin had done; and like Whichcord, he eventually added what must have been seen as traditionally English details: timber bays, sash windows and even the half-timbering which appears in his work from the Alvechurch parsonage of 1855 onwards,

5.33 (above, left)

The garden front at Monkton Wyld. Carpenter borrowed from mediaeval houses, such as the well known fourteenth-century manor at Great Chalfield, Wiltshire (see fig. 3.48), but adopted its basic elements to suit a back-corridor plan. The timber struts on the left have been inserted recently to support the bay window.

5.34 (above, right)

Another fine Carpenter parsonage, this time at Kilndown in west Kent (1855), seen here from the garden (north) front. The house replaced the disastrous one by Alexander Roos described in Chapter One.

5.35 (below)

A view of the entrance cloister at Kilndown. The pointed window indicates the position of the staircase. The plan of the house is similar to that at Monkton Wyld but on a smaller scale.

5.36

The vicarage by William Butterfield in the village of Baldersby St James, near Thirsk in Yorkshire, where his patron was Viscount Downe of Baldersby Park. In this case Pugin's ideas were adopted and anglicised with English-looking half-timbering. A photograph of 1966 in the National Monuments Record [AA80/1035].

and in the various village houses at Baldersby towards the end of the decade (fig. 5.36).<sup>79</sup>

In common with Carpenter, Butterfield did not develop any new distinctive plan types and he too preferred houses which placed the three reception rooms in a row, allowing him to vary the external appearance of each and thus easily distinguish it from its neighbour. This was already the case at his first, at Coalpit Heath in Gloucestershire, in 1844, the year in which the Grange was largely completed (fig. 5.37). This house is often thought of as the first domestic building by an architect who designed right from the beginning of his career in a way that reflects Pugin's influence.<sup>80</sup> In one of many variations of the back-corridor type of plan, he placed the three major rooms along the length of the entrance elevation, but, like Carpenter at Brasted, he brought the corridor through to the front of the house between two of the three rooms.<sup>81</sup> The staircase was hidden towards the back of





the house. The major decorative architectural elements of the exterior of the house – the external chimney, the buttresses, the tall gables and the flush stone window surrounds – were characteristic of Pugin's style, regardless of the fact that they were not local to the area.<sup>82</sup> Butterfield also experimented with internal detailing and internal joinery, no doubt inspired by the many of Pugin's geometrical patterns that he was so familiar with. Like Carpenter, he preferred in the 1840s to use comparatively flat patterns for stone window surrounds, tracery, and joinery, and the use of bold geometrical patterns such as mouchettes and ogees, but he varied this with a great deal of chamfering inside and out; the metalwork he himself designed is usually simpler and flatter than Pugin's work. He also reintroduced the Georgian use of brick for window and door quoins, lintels and cills, where Pugin had nearly always used stone.<sup>83</sup> Although in his long career he does not seem to have aimed for a standard set of details, as Pugin did, he certainly designed every detail for each house just as he did for a church.

The basic planning arrangements of the Coalpit Heath house were redeployed henceforth throughout Butterfield's career. The differing functions of the main rooms in this layout were expressed by varying



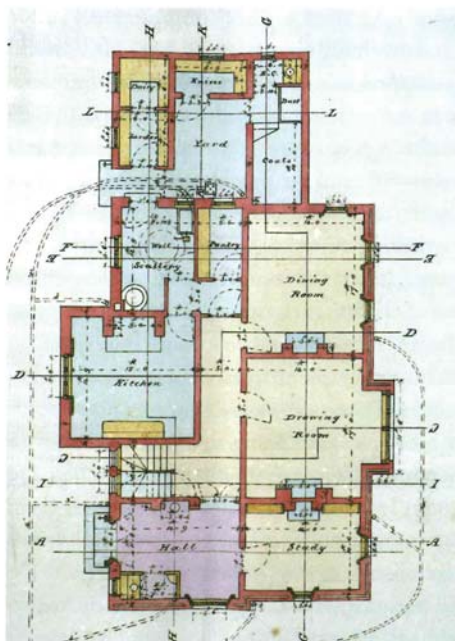
5.37  
Coalpit Heath parsonage of 1844, now on the northern outskirts of Bristol and photographed in 1987. Butterfield seems to have been the first of Pugin's significant admirers who was a gothic architect right from the start [National Monuments Record, A45/6076].

Butterfield was not greatly influenced by Pugin's plan types, but he did adopt his predecessor's use of different types of window to indicate different rooms – here (left to right) library, drawing room and dining room. This is Alvechurch, near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, of 1855. Photographed in April 2004.

the design of the vertical bays on the exterior beneath a continuous ridge: at Alvechurch in 1855, for example, the bays increase in size, and massiveness, from west to east, from library via drawing room to dining room – in other words, the definition of the uses within is more blatant than was Pugin's standard practice (fig. 5.38). Butterfield did use a stair hall, pinwheel-type plan at least once, at Bamford (1862), but this was an isolated occurrence rather than a progression.

The parsonage of 1871 at Landford (figs 5.39, 5.40) was essentially a reversion to a conventional back-corridor type.<sup>84</sup> Designed in the year after Scott's remarkable Pugin-revival plan at Hillesden, however, Butterfield's design also shows a remarkable nostalgia for the simplicity of Pugin's own designs. There are comparatively few window openings; the entrance elevation, on the opposite side now from the main rooms, is dominated by a great stair window, a gothic door, a water-closet window and little else; and the simple pairs of gables on the east and west sides, and even the pattern of a cross worked into the brickwork, are all reminiscent of the freshness of the 1840s. Isolated specifically Puginesque details occur, such as the square bay window of the Great Woolstone parsonage of 1851 which, although largely of timber, echoes that of the Bishop's House in Birmingham or





5.39 (left); 5.40 (below);  
Butterfield's rectory at  
Landford, Wiltshire (1871):  
a powerful design that  
scarcely depends on gothic  
imagery beyond the imposing  
front door. The planning,  
however, was conventional: a  
back-corridor plan allowed him  
to place his three major rooms  
in a row, with the drawing room  
at the centre, and thus express  
their different characters  
along the outside [Wiltshire &  
Swindon Record Office, D1/  
11/206].





at Warwick Bridge (fig. 5.41).<sup>85</sup> In general, as Paul Thompson has observed in his monograph, Butterfield appears to have been inspired by Pugin's use of brick as a comprehensive building material; and he concentrated his attention to the exploitation of this building material through the use of subtly differing planes, such as at Avington in 1847, and eventually through colour.<sup>86</sup> Unsurprisingly therefore it is in his creation of three-dimensional forms through the paring of a material by complex patterns of chamfering, for example in his fonts and other smaller-scale ornamental designs, that he comes closest to Pugin; the clergy house at All Saint's church, Margaret Street in London, designed in the late 1840s, owes its Puginesque vertical proportions only to its tiny site (fig. 5.42). But then Pugin's influence can be found now wherever nineteenth-century architecture was evolving.

George Edmund Street, born in 1824 and thus a younger architect than Butterfield and Carpenter, likewise began to design parsonages during the period when Pugin's professional career was at its zenith; and he enjoyed, according to his son, 'intimate relations' with Benjamin Webb, founding secretary of the Cambridge Camden Society.<sup>87</sup> The design for his parsonage at Wantage was completed in November 1849, soon after he had left the office of George Gilbert Scott and following the display of the perspective of St Augustine's church and the Grange at the Royal Academy; its plan was based around a large and almost square staircase hall.<sup>88</sup> The house replaced one which had horrified W. J. Butler, its incoming parson, in 1846: his predecessor had been simultaneously dean of Windsor, and had preferred to live there, leaving behind in Wantage a house that was ancient, thatched, and dilapidated, and was also 'the coldest [Butler] had ever lived in'.<sup>89</sup> Street's gothic house was, by contrast, a comfortable modern residence (fig. 5.43). The principal rooms were not however arranged around the hall in pinwheel fashion: the drawing and dining rooms were located to one side of the hall, and the study at the other; and the staircase window on the front elevation was at ground floor, rather than intermediate, level. Street gave written instructions in his accompanying specification that 'particular attention [was] to be given to making the Bond of the Masons on the exterior naturally irregular', and he used flush stone window surrounds, rustic buttresses, a stone bay window, and other Puginian devices (see fig. 1.4). The house was Puginian too in its 'convenience': the original incumbent, writing later

to Street's son, described it as 'one of the most convenient and pleasant of dwellings, and it has been a subject of never failing surprise to all who have seen it and inhabited it, that a house so bright and attractive could have been built for so small a sum of money as it actually cost'.<sup>90</sup> Given the derision often heaped on the little houses of the formative stages of the gothic revival, it is important to remember that they gave a great deal of pleasure.<sup>91</sup> There is a free, and rather camp design of 1852 for a parsonage at Cuddesdon in Oxfordshire in which the three major rooms and the large kitchen are arranged irregularly three sides around a stairhall; it is noteworthy that the oratory is not only prominent on both front and back elevations but it also clearly labelled as such on the plans – a sign of the impact of the Oxford Movement since Pugin had had to be so discreet with his at Rampisham six years earlier (fig. 5.44).<sup>92</sup> It is a long narrow house that gave Street an opportunity that could illustrate Pugin's remark in *An apology* that 'If our present domestic buildings were only designed in accordance with their actual purposes, they would appear equally picturesque with the old ones!'<sup>93</sup> Similarly, when Street remodelled a small thatched cottage parsonage at Barford St Michael three years later, he left the long straggling house much as it was, adding a fashionable large staircase hall at the centre of it.<sup>94</sup> The design of his small houses subsequently however showed little developing interest in the genre: the plan of the Denstone parsonage of 1862 is complex and unresolved, arranged about a central corridor which winds around the three principal rooms to reach a rear stair hall. The thinking is Puginesque, but the execution strangely restless. In common with Butterfield, Street's interest in Pugin's work appears to have been largely limited to exploiting the planar qualities of building materials; of arranging principal rooms in a row so that they could be easily read from the front; and of trying to break away from conventional planning. He certainly did this at Melksham in Wiltshire in 1877, where he converted what appears to have been a fairly ramshackle collection of rooms into an expensive picturesque house of great charm (see fig. 4.12).<sup>95</sup> Behind the austere facades is an organic plan centred on a new staircase hall in the heart of the house, which leads on to a drawing and dining room either side of an indirect corridor out into the garden. Street separated the flight of stairs from the rest of the hall by a row of columns, and provided the remaining part of the room with a great fireplace, embedded into the



5.41 (above)  
Butterfield's parsonage at Great Woolstone, Buckinghamshire, now within Milton Keynes (1851). The strongly orthogonal bay window is reminiscent of several by Pugin, including those at Warwick Bridge (fig. 3.24) and the Bishop's House, Birmingham.

5.42 (right)  
The clergy house at All Saints' church, Margaret Street, London, by Butterfield, photographed in May 1990.

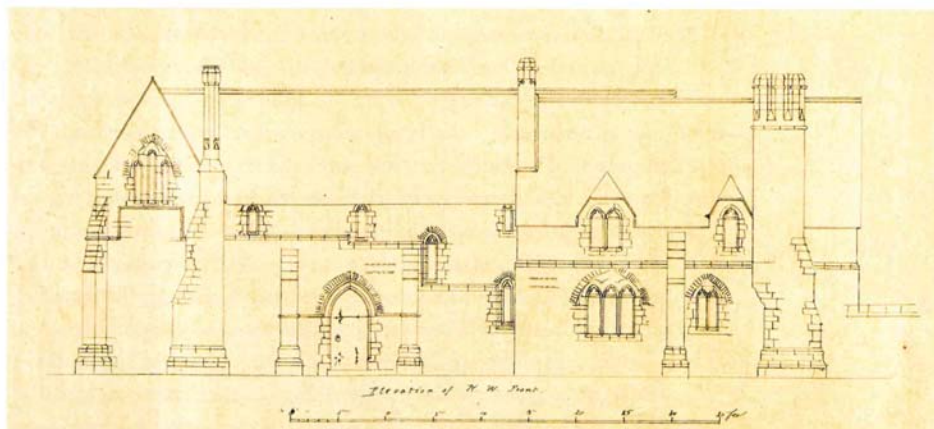
5.43 (opposite, above)  
The vicarage designed by George Edmund Street in 1846 for the leading

Tractarian, the Reverend W. J. Butler, later dean of Lincoln, at Wantage, Berkshire (now Oxfordshire).

5.44 (opposite, below)  
Street's architecture was rarely camp, but this is an exception: Cuddesdon vicarage, near Oxford, 1852. The oratory is top left in the elevation. The house was built close to the palace of Samuel Wilberforce, bishop of Oxford, for Alfred Pott who established the Anglo-Catholic Cuddesdon College on the bishop's behalf two years later. Street also reordered the church [*Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. dioc. papers c.1789*].







pre-existing fabric: it appears that he was trying to do what Pugin never did, to make the staircase hall into some kind of furnishable, useable room. He also exploited the picturesque potential of the remains of the old parts of the house, retaining some parts of exterior walls, and furnishing them with new uses and new windows. In both these respects he was clearly foreshadowing later events: this is a romantic building that already has the flavour of the late century about it. It is an interesting project, furthermore, because it indicates something of a shift in Street's attitude to existing buildings. In a recent remodelling project, at Purbrook in Hampshire (1871), he had demolished the old part of the house altogether and retained only the office wing at the back.<sup>96</sup>

In mentioning Street, it is impossible to avoid a medium-sized family house that was neither designed by him, nor a parsonage, and yet because of its great fame it is unavoidable. Philip Webb had worked in Street's office, and his Red House in Bexleyheath of 1859 for William Morris provides an example of the direction in which the Puginian ideas adopted by both Street and Butterfield were leading: it employs Pugin characteristics such as a homogenous walling material and the use of brick modelling instead of applied ornament or carving; internally it has a broad hall, and a staircase that acts as a hub, linking two major passages on both floors. On the other hand, it employs Butterfieldian sash windows, brick pattern-making, and curious forms such as round windows and pointed doors (figs 5.45, 5.46).<sup>97</sup> Sheila Kirk's recent study of Webb's work has drawn attention to the conscious debt that Webb owed Pugin, in particular in respect of the latter's aim of creating an architectural language from the physical properties of materials, and from constructional method.<sup>98</sup> Photographs of the house typically show the decorative, free-style, south and east elevations, rather than the bleaker north, or more severe west. In fact this last front is in several respects similar to many others of the 1850s, and it is a harbinger of much work of the coming decades at least as much as the more famous parts of the building; that small extension at Chirton, by Seddon, referred to above owes a great deal to it (see fig. 5.2).

The work of eccentric and flamboyant gothic architects such as Samuel Sanders Teulon provides a useful conclusion to this description of what happened next. In Teulon's case, not only did he design a

number of parsonages, he also provides something of a bridge between the work of the Tudor-gothic and gothic-revival architects because at the start of his career he had worked for the Tudor-gothic architect George Porter (c1796–1856). Porter had employed a vigorous symmetrical Tudor-gothic style, at for example the Watermen's Company's Almshouses at Penge in 1840–1, enlivening a dull plan with bold verticals (fig. 5.47). This style appears to have influenced Teulon's early parsonages, which share the latter characteristic. He designed quite a few schemes in the mid 1840s of varying quality but invariably beautifully drawn and often with one or two stylish idiosyncrasies. At Winston vicarage in Suffolk he produced an already old-fashioned combination of a central-corridor plan with a gable-and-bay elevation, but it did have crowsteps.<sup>99</sup> A year later, in 1845, he designed a back-corridor plan for a large rectory at Hollesley, also predominantly Tudor-gothic in manner (although it had haunches rather than shoulders at the bottom of the gables); he included windows that poked through the chimney stacks, providing a detail of this in his application drawings.<sup>100</sup> He settled on this style for a while, often providing perspectives to judge the effect; there are several more examples in the RIBA collection.<sup>101</sup> The first buildings that follow on from the zenith of Pugin's career indicate however an idiosyncratic attempt to remodel a Tudor-gothic composition in such a way as to express the internal functions. At the parsonage of 1849 at Tathwell in Lincolnshire, the seven-bedroom house with the substantial kitchen court and stable yard that we have seen in the previous chapter (see fig. 4.9), he designed a house with an original and complex plan: the entry route leads anticlockwise through porch, vestibule and hall and continues up the stairs in a spiral (fig. 5.48).<sup>102</sup> The three principal downstairs rooms are arranged in an L around the stair hall, and the stair itself is expressed on the outside by a large mullioned window. What is remarkable about this house in comparison to Pugin's work, however, is the fact that Teulon has retained characteristic elements of Tudor-gothic: gables sitting above parapet shoulders, a brick pinnacle, and a central gablet decorated with a lozenge. One finds there too the mannerisms of the previous generation of picturesque parsonage builders – a mullioned bay window to the drawing room, a window in a chimney shaft – but the architect has begun to mould these into a coherent style which is derived from the plastic form of these elements



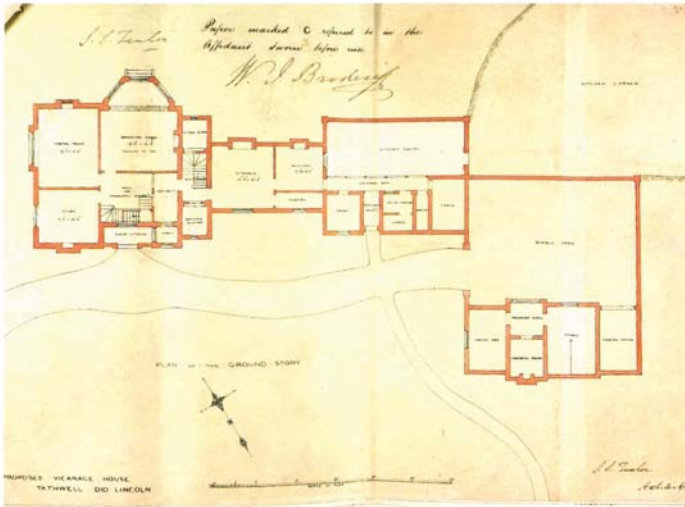


5.45 (above, left)  
Red House, Bexley Heath,  
Kent by Philip Webb (1859);  
the west front. The house's  
distinct character may well be  
the result of a successful  
mixture of motifs from Pugin,  
Street and Butterfield in a  
single building. Photographed  
in November 1998.

5.46 (above, right)  
Red House; the entrance  
(north) front. Photographed in  
July 1990.

5.47 (right)  
The Watermen's Company  
almshouses at Penge, Surrey,  
by George Porter (1840-1).  
Porter's lively and confident  
version of the Tudor-gothic  
style evidently influenced his  
pupil Samuel Sanders Teulon.



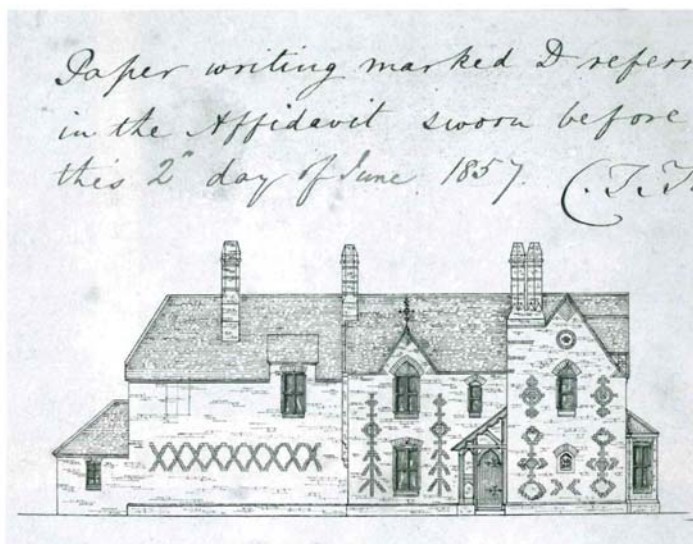


5.48  
Tathwell, south of Louth,  
Lincolnshire, by Teulon (1849).  
The entrance route spirals  
anticlockwise from the entry  
door to the upper floor –  
a Puginian device in an L-plan  
house. The external detailing  
was idiosyncratic. See fig. 4.9.  
[Lincolnshire Archives,  
MGA 338].

rather than their detail. In a sense, Teulon is the mannerist architect of the gothic revival, working with the forms themselves in an original way by resolving the use of materials to the Tudor-gothic styling, rather than the other way around; it is a shame that Gottfried Semper, in England after 1848, is not known to have turned his attention to Teulon. The Tathwell house marks an important intermediate stage between pre and post-Pugin work in a way that suggests knowledge of Pugin's work, but is also original. And yet in even slightly later houses Teulon reverted to simple old plans. Steeple Barton vicarage of 1855 has an L-corridor plan, albeit with a large central hall;<sup>103</sup> and so does West Grimstead, of 1857. This house, like Wyatt's Alderbury vicarage located close to St Marie's Grange, has a Tudor-gothic gable-and-bay elevation animated by strange brick patterning of almost pagan appearance (fig. 5.49).<sup>104</sup>

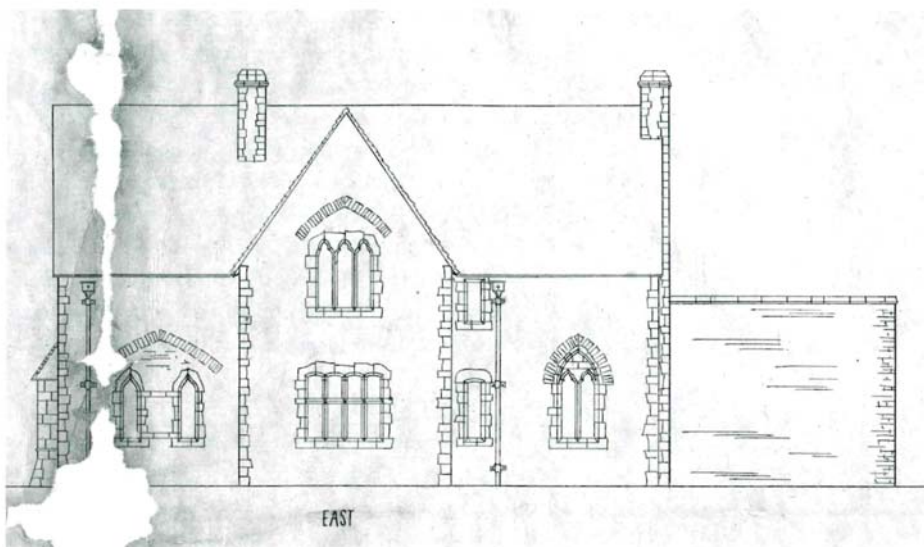
The two other leading eccentrics of the time remained in many respects Regency architects too, piling up their wild detailing on plans which represented only slight experimentation. Henry Woodyer designed at least seven new or mainly new parsonages up to the end of the 1850s, and attracted the attention of the *Ecclesiologist* for the one at Marchwood in Hampshire.<sup>105</sup> This was the house that had that 'peculiar character' which the magazine left undetermined, although it added

A simple house with brick decoration of almost pagan appearance: West Grimstead, just to the east of Alderbury, Wiltshire, by Teulon (1857). Teulon's work was often very strange and not particularly gothic [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D1/11/131].



gnomically that 'its dining room [was] adapted to receiving poor people'.<sup>106</sup> Presumably the implication of the *Ecclesiologist's* comments is that the dining room, rather than the study, was arranged so that parishioners could reach it without going through the main entrance of the house. If this was considered desirable, it would explain why many houses had their dining room, rather than their drawing room, furthest from their kitchen, a recurrent feature in many contemporary parsonages. The house was extended by William White in 1862, so its original layout has been obscured.<sup>107</sup> A slightly later house by Woodyer at Coldwaltham in Sussex was essentially a typical back-corridor plan, but with the sequence of principal reception rooms varied in form and in their fenestration in the way that Butterfield was designing them (fig. 5.50). The lengthy specification for the house includes small freehand sketches showing Pugin-like chamfering of the exposed joists, a useful indicator of the way in which Pugin's details were passed on: no doubt the builder, William Smart of Arundel, used them later in projects where there was no architect to instruct him otherwise.<sup>108</sup> At Cove in 1845 Woodyer designed a brick house with diaper patterning and large picturesque chimneys in what was basically a variation of an L-corridor plan, except that the front door



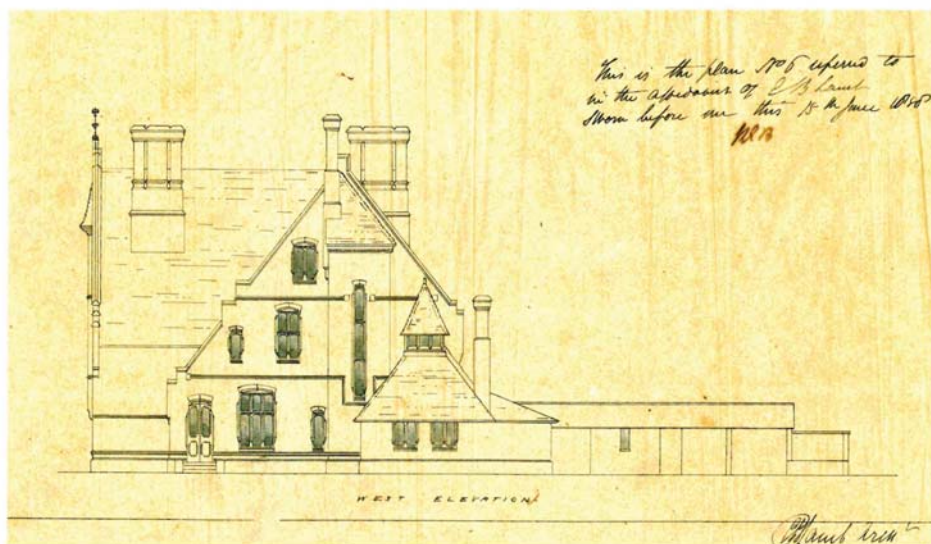


was in the stair part of the L rather than at the opposite end, thus forming a very modest staircase hall.<sup>109</sup> The real concession to the gothic revival was that the house was split into two parallel ranges, so the double gable on the end wall, with its imposing bay window on the drawing-room side, provided the requisite expression of the form and structure of the house from outside. E. B. Lamb, possibly the best-known of the other 'rogue' architects, in many respects remained a Regency gothic architect throughout his life; his parsonage at Wheatley, Oxfordshire, of 1850, adopts only timidly a staircase hall, no larger than 13 feet by 10 feet, from the Pugin repertoire; another of his houses, at Copdock in Suffolk (1858), strung the main rooms out along a large hallway, but the stairs were relegated to the side (fig. 5.51). In both these houses his style although mainly gothic was eclectic and picturesque; it stayed that way throughout his career.<sup>110</sup> Why have these eccentrics always been relegated to the second division of the gothic revival, in spite of the English penchant for the picturesque? Was it because the planning of their small houses was conventional? Even William White's splendid parsonages have escaped the interest they deserve, and the reason might well be that their internal layouts, behind their richly fashioned exteriors, were rarely original or unusual.<sup>111</sup>

#### 5.50

The east elevation of Henry Woodyer's parsonage at Coldwaltham, between Horsham and Chichester, West Sussex (1848). The use of the back-corridor plan enabled gothic-revival enthusiasts to arrange the principal rooms in a row with changing types of windows to suit the different uses of the rooms. In this case they indicated (from left to right) the drawing room, dining room, and study (with the traceried window)

[West Sussex Record Office, EPI/41/72 part 2].



5.51

Copdock rectory, near Ipswich, Suffolk, by Edward B. Lamb (1858). Lamb's unusual composition and idiosyncratic detailing are not usually as successful as this. Just as the irregular entrance elevations of back-corridor plans heralded the emergence of the asymmetrical gothic-revival house, the back and side elevations of high gothic houses begin now to hint at Queen Anne or arts and crafts designs [Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, FF1/24/1].

### Higher things

It was Jane Austen's Mr Elton who introduced us to the sorry state of the village parsonage in the 1810s, and the serious discrepancy between its physical condition, and the social standing of its residents. By the 1840s, the whole process of the arrival of a new type of parson, and a dignified house to suit, was already being described by novelists. Writing from personal experience in mid decade, Anne Brontë introduces us to Mr Weston, the young clergyman who comes to redeem her heroine Agnes Grey from the life of drudgery that has befallen her since her father, a parson himself, lost his money in unwise investments and died bereft of all. He also comes with 'certain reforms' to redeem his new parish from the likes of Mr Hatfield, a cold, snobbish rector of the old school.<sup>112</sup> Early in the story, Mr Weston has '*no home*' – Brontë's italics, and there to stress the importance that her heroine has attached all her life to a comfortable and secure house.<sup>113</sup> At the end of the tale, we can guess that they are both happily settled in a comfortable parsonage with his wife and children, for at the time of writing one of the first things that a new reforming clergyman would turn his attention to was the provision of a parsonage that matched his station.

In Chapter One we also had a glimpse of Mr Miller, sitting in his study at Walkeringham, and toasting some muffins before the fire. By mid century there were plenty of clerical writers with ideas for how he should be better spending such spare time as they might have allowed him. In 1845, a popular devotional writer called W. E. Heygate, one of many to criticise the squarson, the hunting, shooting, fishing parson who sat on the local magistrates' bench, quoted the words of George Herbert on a parson's daily life with approval: "The furniture of his house is very plain, but clean, whole and sweet...His fare is plain and common, but wholesome, what he hath is little".<sup>114</sup> To this, Heygate added the following recommendation of his own:

There is a straightness and an harmony, and a symbolism, which should cling to every external portion of the priest and of his house. A priest's dress, a priest's house, a priest's table, a priest's conversation, should all be sacerdotal.<sup>115</sup>

One of the characteristics of the new architecture was that every detail had to be consistent with the whole; there was no longer any back elevation, or any shabby workmanship that could be covered up with stucco; and one of the characteristics of the new religion was that there was to be no hiding from it in any room of the house. In the privacy of his den a newly-ordained young parson might soon find it hard to ignore voices like that of the best-selling author and preacher Ashton Ovenden, whom we met at Barham in Kent. Following Heygate, Ovenden wrote in 1857 that

now I speak of the minister's *Study*. And should not this be almost a sacred spot? Here, if he would feed his people with food convenient for them, he must lay in ever-increasing stores of mental and spiritual food. The public fountain will soon fail, if there is no hidden source from whence the supply may flow in...The Clergyman's Study should be hallowed also to increasing prayer.<sup>116</sup>

And as for the house as a whole

The Parsonage should be a kind of pattern house. There should be an air of neatness, sobriety, and cheerfulness about it, but nothing like



extravagance, or needless display. It may well be questioned whether some of our Parsonages of the present day are not of too pretending a character — whether they are not, in many cases, both too large and too luxurious...a lordly Parsonage is not only inconsistent with our character who comes not to be ministered unto but to minister, and hurtful to our own Spirit as men of another world; but it will have this bad effect too — it will repel rather than invite, our humble parishioners to come to us. They will feel that he who lives in so rich a mansion can hardly desire their company.<sup>117</sup>

Have we found something else that Pugin did for architecture? Did he make a kind of building that tried to determine the behaviour of those that live there? If so he, and his admirers, were simply providing the clerical revival with the visual imagery they wanted and needed to make their campaign a success. Architectural determinism is out of fashion nowadays; but if we too disapprove of it, we cannot of course blame architects, for they derive their language from what they see and hear all around them. The bossy building is the fault of the English who tend to see architecture in terms of something else: keeping up with the Joneses; sentiment; literature; politics; morality; sociology; economics; religion. Anything but what a building actually looks like. And so however brilliant and original it was, the architects' new passion for raising houses rationally, expressively, and consistently would have been nothing had it not provided the imagery sought by the swelling wave of educationalists and moralists; by the reforming writers and political poets; by the early dawn and the cold showers of the rebuilt public schools. Everything must be consistent with everything; everything must speak of the truth; nothing must be hidden. As with Pugin, as with Philip Webb and the others, every last detail down to the furniture and the silver and glassware on the table is designed to convey the same message as the house itself — a brilliant, exhilarating idea! So appropriate for the reforming parson bringing morality and education into a poor, straggling, illiterate village.

The days of a comfortable, unpretentious house like Miller's at Walkeringham, a practical investment, are gone.

The Pastor's Home! we must now leave him there. That home may be sweet and peaceful. It may be endeared to him by a thousand ties.

The hours spent there may for many years have been full of enjoyment and full of usefulness. But it is not his resting-place. He must never forget that he is but a stranger and a pilgrim here. His real, his true Home is above. He must live on earth as one hastening onwards to the many mansions of his father's house.<sup>118</sup>

A parsonage had ceased to be an ordinary home in a village, a little better appointed perhaps than its humbler neighbours, but an ordinary home just the same: a house that met the practical needs of living comfortably; two or three fine rooms; a hearth; a kitchen court; a stable; a cellar for beer and cider as well as for wine. It had become a spiritual necessity, a devotional aid; to cross its doorstep was to set foot on the road to salvation. The symbols were there from the doorknobs to the cutlery. But will the Regency hedonism of our own time also lead on to such an invigorating future?