

## Chapter Three

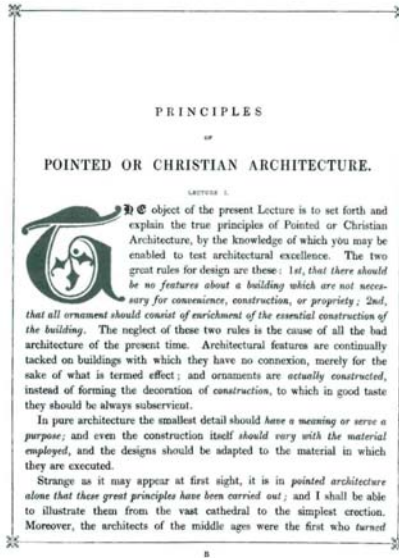
### *The cusp: A peculiar character*



The influence of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin on English architecture from the late 1830s onwards has been so vast that it often appears that architectural historians have had difficulty in doing it justice. A rare exception comes from Andrew Saint: 'His true pupils', he has written, 'were the whole rising generation of English architects'.<sup>1</sup> And yet his influence came much quicker than is often thought, and was not limited to the gothic revivalists, or to his admirers late in the nineteenth century. Traditionally described as an eccentric obsessive, a driven visionary, and an ornamental designer of unusual talent, Pugin's reputation in architectural history has, ironically, been unsuitably served by those who present him primarily in sympathetic biographical terms: his own personality was so full of fascinating contradictions that the original, substantial nature of his achievement has been obscured. Most importantly, he must be seen in the context of the buildings he designed – the ones he really designed, not the many that are wrongly attributed to him – and, furthermore, those buildings must be compared with the conventional ones of his period. In the early 1840s he fed into the confused professional world of the early Victorian architect a whole series of coherent ideas, theoretical, practical, and visual. And as a result, by the end of his life in 1852, the picture described in the opening chapters of this book had changed altogether; for the ways in which the English parsonage is transformed across our period are precisely those which Pugin himself had introduced or suggested.<sup>2</sup> It is not merely the stylistically authentic Victorian church that owes its existence to him, nor even the rich free gothic styles and forms of the later gothic revival: it was the detached small family house that had no consciously applied historical style or inherited layout, but rather had been designed anew to reflect the period in which it was built. It was the first time that this had happened in English architecture since the late middle ages.

The extent to which Pugin is a problematic figure is reflected by the difficulty that even his champions have had in promoting him since his revival by Nikolaus Pevsner and his pupil Phoebe Stanton in the mid twentieth century. In 1943 Pevsner published an article in the *Architectural review* called 'a short Pugin florilegium' which promoted its subject as a functionalist.<sup>3</sup> Pugin had indeed determined, in 1841, that '*there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety*' (fig. 3.2), and, furthermore,

3.1  
Rampisham rectory from the south-west. Pugin's adherence to his 'true principles', a method described today as 'realism', did not generally result in pretty elevations, but this house is an exception. It survives almost exactly as the architect designed it.



that 'the smallest detail should *have a meaning or serve a purpose*'.<sup>4</sup> In *An apology for the revival of Christian architecture*, he rejected historical copyism as 'absurd', and called for buildings to be designed 'in accordance with their actual purposes'.<sup>5</sup> And yet this was a man who made many thousands of designs for historicising ornament and mediaeval-style craftsmanship, in itself an activity quite unequalled amongst English designers, and who covered most of the Palace of Westminster with it – an activity so entirely removed from his 'functionalism' that it had to be marginalised into five short pages in Stanton's *Pugin* of 1971 where it sat with the decorative schemes for what she called 'rich men's houses' and was well separated from the greater part of his architectural career.<sup>6</sup> There was, conversely, a fashion a few years ago of presenting Pugin as a highly talented designer of gold and silver ornaments, of glass, of fabrics, papers, tiles, clothes, books and furniture, who happened also to be the designer of some rather disappointing buildings which have neither the charm of the Tudor gothic, nor the panache, nor the budget, of the high gothic revival.<sup>7</sup> And then there is a recently revived idea from the 1930s,



which corresponds to the current fashion for seeing architectural terms as if they were a branch of literature, according to which Pugin the thinker and letter-writer seized upon the spirit of his time and uncontrollably expressed its romantic longings with towers and stained glass, a character quite unrecognisable from the proto-modernist of Pevsner and Stanton.

The only way to deal adequately, in so far as one can, with Pugin's work as an architect is to go back and look at the facts of his career, which as it happens is at its most original and remarkable in the field of ecclesiastical residences, large and small. In the first place, he overcame one of the basic impediments of Tudor-gothic architecture – the failure to look at and accurately record English mediaeval architecture. As a teenager he accompanied and assisted his father, A. C. Pugin, on drawing expeditions. We know for sure that he was an accurate draughtsman of real and imagined historical artifacts of astonishing ability, and with little or no parallel in English artistic history in terms of the extent of his output. Working without a break, from home or whilst travelling, he drew many thousands of details of buildings that he had seen, and he evidently had a phenomenal ability to recall them. When allied to the vigour with which he pursued the realisation of these decorative designs with the innovative craftsmen and manufacturers of his day, this accomplishment alone must surely be one of the principal reasons for the success of the gothic revival, because the coming generation of designers, in particular William Butterfield, made full use of them.<sup>8</sup> Until the mid 1840s, the English Tudor-gothic designer had a repertoire of perhaps 20 lame patterns, loosely based on mediaeval tracery; now he had more than he could conceivably use in a working lifetime, even if he chose a different one each day. Pugin's output as an architect working almost entirely on his own was immense; his total list of residential schemes, large or small, realised or not, amounts to over 80.<sup>9</sup> That is in addition to his well-known ecclesiastical architecture, his work for the Palace of Westminster which was continuous from 1844 almost until his death in 1852, and his writing, which together occupied every moment of his day from the early morning until the late evening.<sup>10</sup> He designed only two Anglican parsonage houses, but these form part of a set of six similar designs for small family houses which together were to have tremendous impact on English architecture; and he designed eight



new Roman Catholic presbyteries, a new building type of his day, and a further two large clergy houses similar in scope to Anglican bishops' palaces. All this made him a highly prolific designer of priests' and parsons' houses in the 1840s, an important fact for our survey.

But in addition to his proficiency as a designer of ecclesiastical residences Pugin plays a pivotal role in the story of the English parsonage because in every respect he did things differently from his immediate contemporaries. His layouts were new; his choice of style and his attitude to Englishness was different; the scope of the architectural language he used was distinct and was applied to every detail of a house; and the way in which he set his houses into their landscape was different too. We have ahead of us the complex task of seeing how exactly these innovations spread across the country, and transformed the parsonage; but in order to do that we need to see in what way exactly Pugin designed houses that were entirely different from those he found all going up around the country as he started work.

That said, this study of Pugin does need to include some reference to the theoretical concepts with which he described his work, even if only to see how parsonage architects who read about him and his ideas might find concepts there that they would relate to and be interested in. His writing from 1836 onwards attracted wide attention well before his buildings did. His original use of these concepts is in itself interesting, and provides a commentary on how others of his period were preoccupied with similar ideas, and how they differed from him. Furthermore, it often seems that his success in altering the course of the development of English domestic architecture was, paradoxically, at first as much to do with the language he borrowed in order to present it as to do with the actual form of his buildings themselves. His new churches attracted attention; his houses, for the most part, did not. Hearing an appealing use of words and ideas, critics and potential clients may choose, as they have always done, an architect regardless of what his actual buildings look like. And it should always be remembered that Sir George Gilbert Scott, probably the most influential of Pugin's progeny, was converted to gothic architecture on reading Pugin's writings, rather than actually seeing a Pugin building.<sup>11</sup> In fact, much of Pugin's published technical theory and his various exhortations for reforming the way of building were not original, even if he expressed them in an engagingly novel and

lively way; but in the end it was his consistency in applying them in his executed designs for houses that brought about the transformation in domestic architecture that faced the parsonage builders of the 1840s.

### **The beautiful and the true**

Pugin's *The true principles* of 1841 famously ends with the cry 'Let then the Beautiful and the True be our watchword'.<sup>12</sup> The use of the word 'truth' and praise in terms of 'honesty' to justify architectural expression had evolved throughout the eighteenth century: although 'truth' has been traditionally considered more significant to Continental than to English theory, its appearance in contemporary English sources shows that by Pugin's time it had already become an established, if inconsistent, concept in architectural circles.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1821 Francis Palgrave had written in the *Quarterly review* that 'from architecture, the earth derives its moral physiognomy' perhaps meaning not only that architecture expresses morality, but referring to the truthfulness with which that form expresses the actual geological nature of the earth itself; and in Willson's letterpress accompanying the first volume of A. C. Pugin's *Examples* in 1831, the specimens represented in the plates are likened to 'collections of personal memoirs, original letters, wills, or other documents of genuine history; whilst books of modern architectural designs rather resemble fictitious narrative, or historical romances'.<sup>14</sup> Many architects must have become familiar with these concepts.

In introducing his technical manual of 1840 called *Specifications*, written at the time when Pugin had already launched his lecturing career as 'professor of ecclesiastical antiquities' at St Mary's College, Oscott, the architect and Hebrew scholar Alfred Bartholomew found specific biblical authority for the language of these moral arguments about architectural integrity and reproduced God's own awful warning to stuccoers in the original language. The translation familiar to his contemporaries reads 'One built a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar' – an announcement explained, to those who looked it up in the book of Ezekiel, by its continuation: 'Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall' (fig. 3.3).<sup>15</sup> 'Low, very low, is the abasement which the extensive use of external stucco has brought upon English architecture', Bartholomew added later; for he attributed excellence in architecture to purity of structure,

The opening epigrams from  
Part 1 of Alfred Bartholomew's  
*Specifications* (1840).  
The Hebrew is translated by  
the Authorised Version as  
'One built a wall, and, lo, others  
daubed it with untempered  
morter' (Ezekiel, chapter 13,  
verse 10).

## PART I.

AN ESSAY ON THE DECLINE OF  
EXCELLENCE IN THE STRUCTURE AND IN THE SCIENCE OF MODERN ENGLISH BUILDINGS;  
WITH THE PROPOSAL OF REMEDIES FOR THOSE DEFECTS.

"What" "Bath will become in a few years" "may be easily conceived." "These new mansions" are  
"built so slight, with the soft crumbling stone found in this neighbourhood, that I should never sleep  
quietly in one of them, when it blowed (as the sailors say) a cap full of wind: and I am persuaded, that  
my hind Roger Williams, or any man of equal strength, would be able to push his foot through the  
strongest part of their walls, without any great exertion of his muscles."—HUMPHREY CLINKER.

"Benche alcuni Architettori in diuersi luoghi d'Italia han fatte alcune fabriche di muro semplice,  
lasciandoui i luoghi delle pietre ulue, & da li ad un tempo, poi ei han posto li suoi ornamenti: tuttauia  
per non esser tai cose ben legate ne' muri: ma quasi attaccate con la colla; si uede in molti luoghi  
esser caduti de' pezzi, & ogni giorno minacciar ruina."—SERLIO, lib. iv. cap. 9.

וְהָיָה בְּנֵי הָאֵלֶּים שֶׁבָּנוּ חֹמַיִם

EZEKIEL, cap. xiii. ver. 10.

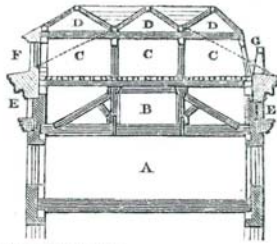
and stucco, notoriously, had been used to cover up jerrybuilding.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the essence of his writing was the expression of the structural truth of a building in its form and method of construction. In revering Christopher Wren for the structural solution of the dome of St Paul's cathedral – 'Wren had more science in his head and heart, than a thousand Sir John Soanes in their whole souls and bodies' – he illustrated that he believed that a structural frame did not necessarily have to be visible, but it had to provide the governing principle.<sup>17</sup> He quoted with approval the Scots scientist John Robison: "the structure of a roof may therefore be exhibited with propriety, and made an ornamental feature...the roof is in fact the part of the building which requires the greatest degree of skill, and where science will be of more service than any other part" (fig. 3.4).<sup>18</sup>

This visible, structural purity is for Bartholomew the great advantage of gothic architecture: 'In Pointed Architecture, all is structural'.<sup>19</sup> Hiding the necessary parts of a modern building is an unnecessary dishonesty; of chimneys he wrote that 'All that expense which is frequently so absurdly, and with such ill-success, expended in the concealment of chimney-shafts, should be rather used in ornamenting, and in rendering agreeable, members so necessary to the comfort of domestic buildings'.<sup>20</sup> In his attitude to 'truth', Bartholomew provides us with a very clear example of how a general idea was beginning to claim for itself a series of particular scientific and rational definitions.



great trusses being required above the attic for the support of the roof, or for the binding together of the edifice, the covering of the building may be made in several small spans, supported from the great trusses below, not indeed rising higher than if there were windows in the frieze, and not appearing to crush the building with an overwhelming weight.

He who is weak enough to deform his buildings under any pretence whatsoever, with windows in their friezes, must, whatever be his ability, prepare himself for the repute of possessing bad taste, mean judgment, and want of ingenuity.



A. Best Chamber, &c.  
B. Great Trusses.  
C. Attic Story.  
D. Low Roof over the Attic Story.  
E. Frieze of the External Entablature.  
F. Attic Windows.  
G. Windows behind a Blocking-course.

Loudon had already been here. In 1806 he had written with his engagingly catholic approach to architectural styles not only that ‘the principles of good taste...are always in unison with those of good morality’ but had also made an explicit link between ‘truth’ and architectural design.<sup>21</sup> In the course of a discussion of his principles, he remarked that ‘the opposite of symmetry is disparity or disproportion; which being inconsistent with use, fitness or truth, is always displeasing in the extreme’.<sup>22</sup> By the 1830s he had himself become more specific: astonishingly so, for the subject that inspired him was, of all things, the practice by architects of building technically redundant drip moulds above the windows of their gothic elevations where the depth of the mullions or eaves already provides sufficient shelter. He was moved to mention this untruthful practice twice in his *Encyclopaedia*.<sup>23</sup> The source he gave there for his choice of the word ‘truth’ was an unexpected one to anyone who had forgotten that Loudon was an agriculturist at heart: the *Epistle to Lord Lowther On Building and Planting*, for which he gave the date as 1776 – “From truth and use all beauties flow”.<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere he made general references to the ‘honest’ use of ornament: ‘when a house is so small that it cannot be reasonably supposed to possess such appendages as a chapel and a dining-hall, it becomes a piece of contemptible affectation to finish its exterior with members which are naturally applicable to those appendages alone; and the only cause, therefore, which good taste can sanction in

such a case, is, to treat the subject as what it *is*; writing an honest and obvious character with correct detail, and as much of the picturesque as circumstances will permit'.<sup>25</sup> Bartholomew's *Specifications* transformed these incidental observations into an architectural system, one that enlisted the precedent of gothic architecture, but which fell short of proposing any particular style.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Bartholomew's avoidance not only of promoting a style but even discussing any of them in the ruminative philosophical terms of earlier decades was itself an important step towards accepting the influences of building method over a building's appearance.

### **From corruption to redemption**

The Tudor-gothic styles of the fashionable housebuilders of the 1830s did not impress scientific writers like Bartholomew any more than their closely-related classical-Georgian predecessors had done. It was not until methods of professional practice changed, and proprietary technological improvements required a certain definite standard of specification and construction or installation, that new and more exacting building processes became commonplace. There was, for the time being, insufficient incentive for the architect to think through the structural and constructional implications of his design and its details. As Tudor-gothic houses spread across the country, however, their technical imperfections became better known, and by the end of the 1830s and the beginning of the next decade there is evidence of impatience with them. At the same time the style was increasingly decried by some architectural theorists for its impurity – and indeed for its pragmatic, compromising 'Englishness', the common basis for all styles from the Tudor through to the Jacobean. By 1843 the encyclopaedist Joseph Gwilt particularly disliked the Elizabethan style now popular for country houses; it contained, he wrote, an 'imperfectly understood adaptation of classic forms to the habits of its day in this country...[and it was] full of redundant and unnerving ornament'; although, as far as its Englishness was concerned, 'Neither... are the English, as a people, susceptible of high feeling in respect of the production of art'.<sup>27</sup> For Bartholomew, it was a style 'founded in ignorance and corruption'.<sup>28</sup> Both critics were rallying against the widespread desire amongst house builders to amalgamate the comforts of modern living with the reassuring imagery of

traditional English architecture which the Elizabethan style offered; it was only when popular attitudes to gothic architecture changed that their voices started to be heard.

At the Geffrye Museum in London there is a pair of Ackermann chromolithographed prints by John Absolon of 1840 entitled 'Marriage' and 'Single' (fig. 3.5). The latter shows a bachelor idling his time in agitated, fruitless fashion beside a fireplace in a windowless room. 'Marriage', however, shows the happiness of a young couple in a cheerful sitting room lit by a window which shows the spire of the mediaeval gothic church in the background. The conviviality of the grand Elizabethan style was almost impossible to portray at the scale of a small private house, so the artist decided to juxtapose the ancient in the form of a church and the new of the domestic interior to achieve a similar effect. In doing so, he was illustrating an idea which had already surfaced in the work of writers. The early novels of Charles Dickens, appearing at this time, and reaching a huge popular audience, include several significant uses of these images. The final chapter of *Oliver Twist* (completed in 1839) opens with the marriage of Rose Fleming and Harry Maylie 'in the village church which was

3.5

A pair of chromolithographed prints entitled 'Single' and 'Married', by John Absolon, published by Ackermann & Co in London in 1840. A distant view of a church, here seen through the window of the happy pair in 'Married', was at this period a convenient motif to express the reassuring and respectable qualities of traditional English architecture [Geffrye Museum].





henceforth to be the scene of the young clergyman's labours; on the same day they entered into possession of their new and happy home'; and Mr Brownlow, having adopted Oliver as his son, removes 'with him and the old housekeeper to within a mile of the parsonage-house, where his dear friend resided', thus gratifying 'the only remaining wish of Oliver's warm and earnest heart'.<sup>29</sup> *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) is illustrated, by Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), with a scene of children playing in a churchyard, the church's old tower visible in the distance and apparently located at the centre of the final homes of all the novel's heroes (fig. 3.6).<sup>30</sup> And the penultimate chapter of the highly didactic *The old curiosity shop* (1841) describes not only the death of Nell's father upon her gravestone but also the fondness of the heroic old school-master for dwelling 'in the old churchyard' (the vile Quilp, the city dweller, was by comparison 'buried with a stake at his heart at the centre of four lonely roads').<sup>31</sup> In earlier nineteenth-century literature there had more commonly been an alliance between gothic architecture and gothic horror rather than a happy end for the spotless protagonists of an improving novel.<sup>32</sup> One is impressed by a feeling at around 1840 that the gothic church and the churchyard have been converted into images of comfort and decency, ones that are simpler, and purer, than the grand Elizabethan manner. The idea that the parson's house might be consistent with the style of the church is one matter arising here; it is another, and it is a new one, to suggest that the style itself bestows some kind of propriety on its inmates.



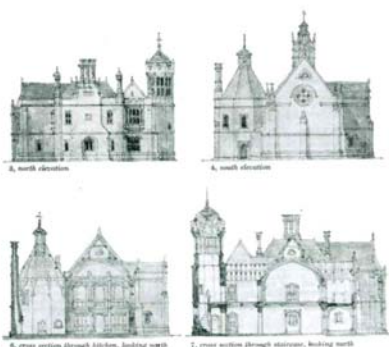
### 3.6

The rural idyll - again dominated by an old church tower - that closes Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9). Drawn by Phiz (Hablot K. Browne).

## The coup de foudre

It seems likely therefore that at this time it was not only Pugin's theoretical emphasis on moral and religious rectitude (in his *Contrasts*) and structural integrity (in *The true principles*) that made him so attractive a figure. Others were discussing these issues too. But neither Bartholomew, nor Gwilt, nor any of the other writers who deployed these terms was a talented designer who could illustrate in practice, often with very small budgets, what sort of architecture might result from them. Pugin was different: he drew and designed incessantly; since he had been a child he had filled sketchbooks with imaginary views of palaces, cathedrals, castles and manor houses.

In 1833 he designed an imaginary 'Deanery', a scheme that is comparatively well known since in 1951 it provided Phoebe Stanton with the opportunity for a detailed analysis of his skill at the age of 21.<sup>33</sup> The house was set in the close at Salisbury, immediately to the west of the cathedral, and was supposed to have been built in 1471: the architecture of the building indicates Pugin's fluency in the appropriate English style (fig. 3.7). The plan is based around a corridor that takes the form of a T: the great hall is above the horizontal bar of the T, and this latter thus also acts as a screens passage (fig. 3.8). Some interiors were drawn in great detail; their main features were oriel windows and fireplaces. The kitchen, located between the great hall and the octagonal stair turret, took an English, medieval, form derived from the abbot's kitchen at Glastonbury.<sup>34</sup> Sleeping chambers are arranged either side of the corridor leading away from the screens; the dean has



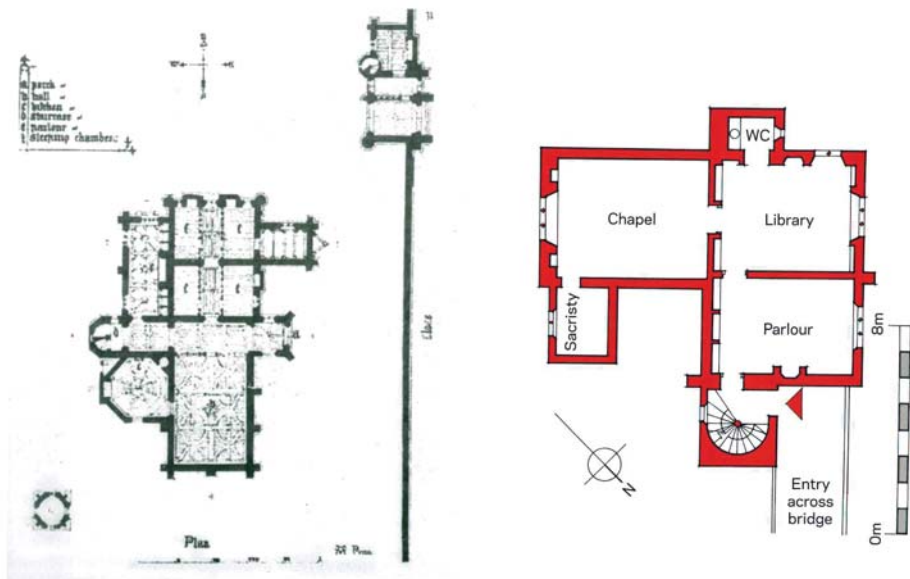
3.7  
A.W.N. Pugin's 'Deanery'.  
Elevations from Phoebe  
Stanton's 'Pugin at twenty-  
one', *Architectural review*,  
September 1951 (page 188).

3.8 (below)  
The plan of Pugin's 'Deanery'.  
From 'Pugin at twenty-one'  
(page 188).

3.9 (below, right)  
The first-floor plan of  
St Marie's Grange, Alderbury,  
near Salisbury, Wiltshire,  
based on the drawing made  
for Alexandra Wedgwood's  
'Domestic architecture',  
1994 (page 44).  
This arrangement of three  
consecutive rooms, reached  
by a bridge and terminating  
in a chapel and sacristy,  
was possibly unique for a new  
house of the period. Pugin was  
probably inspired by Walter  
Scott's *Kenilworth*.

his rooms above, although no first-floor plan was provided. No house Pugin had actually seen would have looked or been planned like this.

Two years later he had designed his own house, St Marie's Grange, at Alderbury on the Southampton road out of Salisbury, and there he had devised a house consisting on its principal floor of three inter-connecting rooms arranged in the form of an 'L': a parlour, a library and a chapel (fig. 3.9). The spiral staircase which linked the three floors was attached to the parlour, and there was no corridor, so to reach the chapel one had to walk through both the other two rooms. Although built on an open site alongside a river, with the potential for views north to the cathedral and town, Pugin designed the house in a remarkably introspective way with small windows facing the landscape. The best view, in fact, would have been from the water closet in a tower on the south side. In many ways this strange house is an architect's typical first home for himself, for it incorporates many strong ideas in their most literal way. The sequence of interconnecting rooms, each one giving way to another and having a different character, was very probably derived from the suite in which Amy Robsart is kept hidden at Cumnor Place, in Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* (1821), a story which





Pugin knew well, not least because of his having designed scenes for a ballet based on it in 1831.<sup>35</sup> Amy's rooms were quite claustrophobic in character, with no suggestion in Scott's description of them of any outside prospect; and the way in which one room is placed beyond the next gives, in the novel, an effective impression of a trapped human being whose choices are limited to variations in interior decoration. A second and more exotic influence was telescoped by Pugin down from the scale of castles and monasteries to that of a small private house. St Marie's Grange was entered through a drawbridge placed right up alongside the Salisbury road and which led directly to the stair tower: he seems to have copied this from a plate in one of his favourite books, his father's copy of the first volume of Charles Nodier's *Voyages romantiques et pittoresques dans l'ancienne France*, of 1820, which described in passionate and romantic language the surviving remains of mediaeval Normandy (figs 3.10, 3.11).<sup>36</sup> It is very likely that he was also influenced by other plates in the book. Several of Nodier's illustrations show scenes set in front of proscenium-like arches, such as one of the church at Caudebec-en-Caux, and another amongst the ruins of the abbey at Jumièges. Pugin copied the effect on a tiny scale in his own house by emphasising the openings between rooms, clearly illustrated by his sketch for his chapel, seen from the library.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, like much else that Pugin designed, the Alderbury house in its original form had

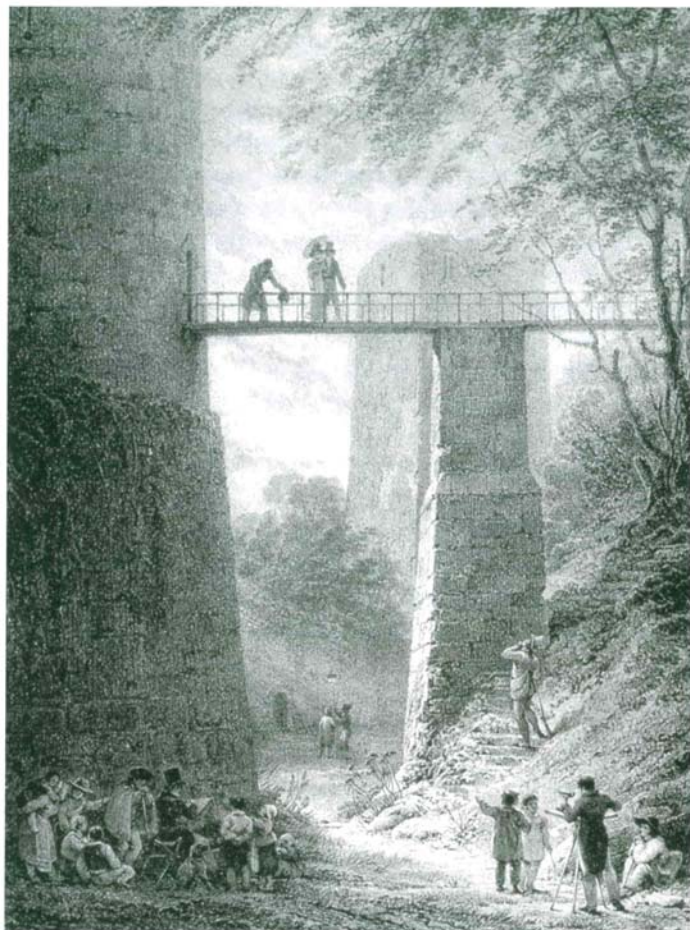


3.10

Pugin's watercolour of St Marie's Grange (c1835) as seen from the Salisbury road: entry was across a bridge to a door at the foot of the tower. This was the appearance of the house during his own residence there [RIBA Library Drawings Collection, AWN Pugin V2/ 106B].

### 3.11

A view of Château d'Harcourt at Lillebonne in Normandy from Charles Nodier's *Voyages romantiques et pittoresques dans l'ancienne France* (plate 32). The young Pugin participated in a surveying trip to Normandy like the one illustrated here, and he borrowed the idea of the narrow bridge for his own first house at Alderbury.



the same exaggeratedly vertical proportions that Nodier's illustrators had tended to emphasise in their work. He had accompanied his father on the trip to illustrate Britton's *Architectural antiquities of Normandy* in the early 1820s, and the combination of that visit with Nodier's romanticising plates had surely made a deep impression on him. The results at St Marie's Grange were so unconventional that Pugin soon left – it seems likely that his young wife found it inconvenient if not unhealthy – and indeed he was required to remodel it in 1841 when

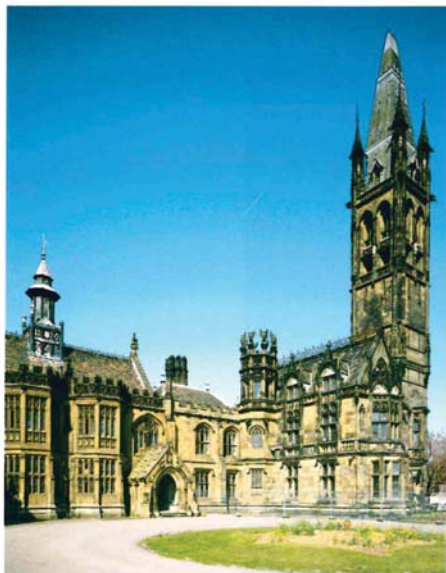
he came to sell it. What exactly he did to it then is unclear, because a further remodelling of the later mid-nineteenth century has largely obscured his alterations, but it seems likely that he built a stair hall in the crook of the 'L', thus solving at once the intercommunication problems.<sup>38</sup>

It was very soon after he had left the house for Chelsea that he designed his first presbyteries, in 1837 and 1838, not long after the publication of his famous *Contrasts*. Interestingly the commissions arrived just as he started his career as a country house architect, which began with an invitation to design substantial additions to the mediaeval hall at Scarisbrick in Lancashire (fig. 3.12). Here he had recently replaced Thomas Rickman and John Slater as architect for Charles Scarisbrick, a rich and reclusive collector of ecclesiastical and other mediaeval antiquities, and his style there was not dissimilar to the Tudor-gothic of many of his contemporaries – even if his draughtsmanship was undoubtedly a good deal better.

When designing to a small budget, however, Pugin was required to aim for a more simple kind of architecture. No doubt his first commission for a Roman Catholic presbytery, at Derby in 1837, brought him fast back to earth. His house was to stand immediately east of the new church of St Mary that he had designed at Bridge Gate, facing St Alkmund's Anglican church and just north of the city centre. St Alkmund's was itself about to be rebuilt by H. I. Stevens in a most unhistorical Tudor-gothic style; Pugin's St Mary's, on the other hand, designed together with his presbytery, was a convincingly authentic exercise in 'Perpendicular': a sensitive Anglican critic thought it was 'almost painfully beautiful' by comparison with Derby's other modern churches, the pain being that it was Roman Catholic, and not Anglican.<sup>39</sup> It is very probably the building that first established Pugin's reputation: after seeing the church as it went up, Wiseman described him as 'an architect of acknowledged merit', although by then he had in fact designed very little.

The church was oriented north-south with its 'west' porch at the southern end on Bridge Gate, and Pugin was apparently commissioned to design a pair of houses that would flank it along the street. To the left there was to be a large and richly ornamented but otherwise simple house, the purpose of which was always unclear, and which was essentially a central-corridor plan type consisting of a pair of major





3.12 (above)  
The entrance front of Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire, remodelled and extended by Pugin from 1837 onwards; his son E. W. Pugin later added the right-hand wing and tower.



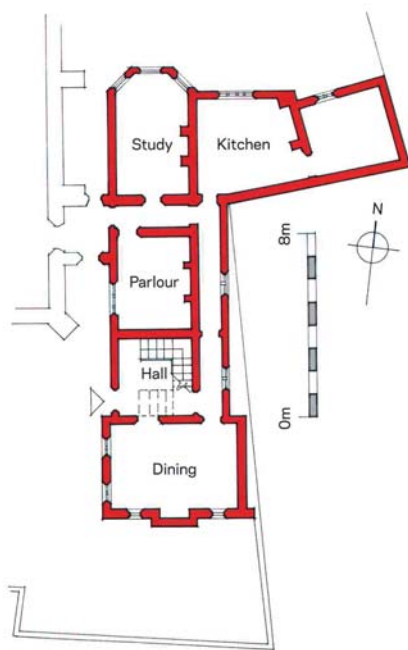
3.13 (above, right)  
The ground-floor corridor added by Pugin to Scarisbrick Hall: the complex series of walkways above have a nautical air.

rooms only on each floor. It was never built.<sup>40</sup> To the right, the east, Pugin was to design his first presbytery, and on a budget that evidently allowed for nothing more than a cheap brick finish and minimal decoration. Indeed, it seems that even this modest house took some time to materialise, because Pugin's builder, George Myers, was being asked as late as 1839 to adapt an adjacent existing building for the priest's use.<sup>41</sup>

The site for the house was extremely awkward – a narrow strip of land scarcely 20 feet wide to the east of the church, which widened to about 40 feet on a line approximately level with the second bay of the nave. A conventional architect would have placed a central or L-corridor house either at the very southern end of the site,

or alternatively back where the plot widened: in the former case it would have faced the street, like any generous double-fronted town house; and in the latter case it would have been protected from the noise of the street and have enjoyed a secluded garden front. Pugin chose neither of these obvious solutions. He extended the porch that emerged from the church's south-eastern corner into a winding corridor that reached the eastern edge of the site before turning south to reach Bridge Gate. In the crook of this L-shaped corridor he placed a parlour, a stair hall some ten feet square, and, at the street end of the corridor, a dining room. Beyond the corridor to the north he placed a study, and, as the plot widened, a kitchen and scullery (fig. 3.14).

The unusual nature of this layout cannot be stressed too much. In contrast to the plan of St Marie's Grange there was now at least twice as much circulation space than there would have been in a conventional house. The parlour window was jammed up against the south-east corner buttress of the church and the study faced towards the chancel,



### 3.14

The ground-floor plan of St Mary's presbytery in Bridge Gate, Derby, apparently as executed and based on Pugin's own plan, now in a private collection. A conventional plan, by contrast, might have placed this house away from the road and in a garden made up from part of the churchyard, probably at its widest point to the east or north. Pugin's drawing was published in the *Architects' Journal*, 4 July 1990, page 29.

but no room on the northern side of the house had any access to the adjacent churchyard; the kitchen and the dining room were almost as far apart as it was possible to be; and the dining room, the only part of the house that was easily visible from the street, was designed so that its long side wall, rather than the architecturally more important end wall, faced the street.<sup>42</sup> Nothing about its layout suggests any desire for conformity or indeed convenience. This odd building has long disappeared but there are perspective drawings and at least one good clear photograph – a luxury for those who search for records of Pugin's demolished presbyteries – and we can see that the whole of the house was faced in cheap brick with minimal stone dressings (fig. 3.15).<sup>43</sup> He designed a simple ogee moulding at the heads of the windows, and inserted a decorative cartouche into the dining-room chimney that faced the street. Elsewhere he used conventional Tudor-gothic styling, for example building out the dining-room gable that faced the church with broad haunches above the eaves line. One wonders how much exactly he had to do with the actual execution of this building as his diary and correspondence fail to mention it.

Before the 1850s there were no clear instructions as to how Roman Catholic clergy should conduct their households, and there is no record of Pugin receiving detailed programmatic instructions for the clergy houses he built: very few of these houses had been built since the Catholic Relief Act of 1791, an important legal turning point in the history of English architecture.<sup>44</sup> We can assume that those who paid for the buildings, rather than those who were to live in them, determined the architect's brief. In the case of many of Pugin's small presbyteries and other institutions the primary paymaster, or at any rate the major fundraiser, was his patron, the Earl of Shrewsbury; the earl required of his beneficiaries that Pugin got his own way in spite of the fact that at least one, Catherine McAuley of the Order of Mercy, disliked Pugin's buildings and often said so. We can assume that Pugin felt that he was here entering into uncharted territory – there was to be no nursery, no drawing room for the ladies, no extensive kitchen offices to facilitate entertaining – and furthermore grasped the opportunity of designing a house where the activities in it could be subservient to his romantic idea of how the restored Roman Catholic clergy should live.





3.15

A 1942 view of the presbytery from Bridge Gate, Derby, with windows taped as a precaution against blasts. The building was demolished after the Second World War, and parts of it salvaged to create a liturgical south-west porch for the church [National Monuments Record, A42/875].

### Corridors and cloisters

It is a mistake, though, to think that this romantic idea led to a romantic type of house. What Pugin had done as early as this first presbytery was to turn circulation space from a necessity into a significant part of the design of the house as a whole – and it was exactly this that was to become the basis for the remarkable series of designs for presbyteries and parsonages that followed the house in Derby. He had, it soon emerged, a very small number of distinct architectural ideas, but they were entirely different from convention, and as time went by and he had more opportunities to exercise them, they began to take on a greater degree of sophistication; and it eventually became clear that whether or not he had intended it at the outset – and I would guess that to some extent he was aware of it, however subliminally – these design innovations not only turned out to echo other preoccupations of religious society but also to encourage and develop them. The use of long corridors is one of these.<sup>45</sup>

The evidence is everywhere. An intriguing sketch of the late 1820s, when he was still a teenager, shows a plan of a bedchamber with corridors running along two of its adjacent walls, the two meeting at the landing of a flight of stairs; one of the two corridors terminates in a spiral stair. It is an irrational amount of circulation space to serve a single room, and so both corridor and room must have been conceived of together.<sup>46</sup> Corridors, cloisters and complex junctions at their interstices were always for him the source of much enjoyment. An early imaginary scheme for 'the Hospital of Saynt John', dating from the 'Deanery' year of 1833, included a long covered way which he titled a 'cloister', but which was in fact almost redundant in terms of practical planning.<sup>47</sup> The 'Deanery' itself, as we have seen, had a most unusual circulation pattern; and the plan of St Marie's Grange essentially turned the rooms into sections of corridor. One wonders whether the fact that his patron Shrewsbury lived when in England at Alton Towers at Staffordshire, an enormous house then growing steadily larger on a somewhat organic plan involving lengthy promenades between formal reception rooms, might explain why he never seems to have objected to paying for Pugin's apparently wasteful planning.<sup>48</sup> We shall investigate later to what extent these corridor plans reflected Pugin's deterministic instinct in the design of the functions of his buildings. What is more significant right now, as the very young architect dreaming of turreted palaces is required to design cheap houses for the poor clergy, is what this new approach to circulation space can do for little money. He learned practical lessons from his work at Scarisbrick Hall, where he wrapped corridors and staircases around existing wings, soon discovering the richness of space that could be achieved very cheaply at the junctions between them; with the born architect's grasp of three-dimensional space, he experimented there with bridges and skylights, creating effects – particularly where the first floor corridor leads onto the gallery of the great hall – that have something nautical about them, recalling his own enjoyment of boats and the sea that he recorded in his sketch-books alongside his architectural drawings, if not of stage machinery (fig. 3.13).<sup>49</sup> A simple 90-degree junction between corridors can look impressive if each arm of the corridor is terminated in an arch; the more junctions, and the more arches, the better. The corridors soon develop a distinct architectural language of their own.

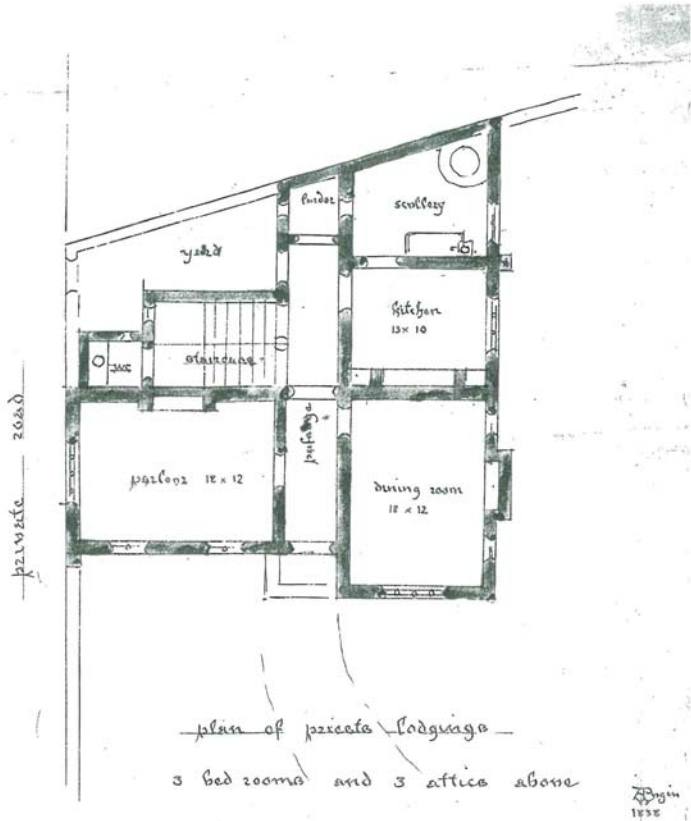
His early buildings soon illustrate how these ideas could be realised on a small scale. In 1838 he designed two very modest presbyteries, at Keighley in Yorkshire, alongside his church of St Anne's; and at Uttoxeter in Staffordshire, for his church of St Mary. Both houses have had considerable alterations made, but his drawings survive.<sup>50</sup> At Keighley he came closest to a conventional Tudor-gothic house, with an L-corridor plan and a gable-and-bay entrance elevation with big haunches at the base of the gable. Only the strongly vertical elements, such as the tall 60-degree gable and the attenuated lancet windows, mark these out from the work of the average Tudor-gothic architect. But inside the situation was rather different. The corridor marched back through a proscenium-type gothic arch not to a garden door but to a larder; and the staircase at right angles to it was comparatively broad and imposing relative to the size of the two-reception room house (fig. 3.16).<sup>51</sup> One can see from Pugin's drawing how much importance he gave to this tiny space. There was a large newel post between the flights of stairs. The position of the doors to the parlour and dining room either side of the front door is staggered, which means that to look out into the corridor from either of the two rooms is to be faced by a series of arched openings leading to spaces of different proportions. All these devices are on a tiny scale, and their effect is so small that they were almost negligible in reality; but the drawing unmistakably illustrates Pugin's interest in them. At Uttoxeter the house is, essentially, a simple although asymmetrical central-corridor one turned on its side – the long axis of the two rooms faces the adjacent church, not the street, like the unexecuted grander house at Derby – but Pugin provided a little gothic corridor which he called a 'cloister' that linked the hall with the church (fig. 3.17). He also devised a back extension that would be reached through the rear of the two main rooms, providing a bedroom off the first floor library, in a device reminiscent of the plan of St Marie's Grange.

As time went by, Pugin organised his original use of circulation space into definable types. His two biggest clergy houses, at Birmingham (designed in 1840) and at Nottingham (probably late 1841) were organised around quadrangles. These were by no means a simple imitation of the circulation of a mediaeval cloister plan. On the very restricted urban site in Bath Street, Birmingham, Pugin designed his Bishop's House around three sides of a courtyard; the fourth side,



3.16 (right)  
 Even in early and small buildings Pugin exaggerated a theatrical sense of moving through a building by lengthening corridors and views which often terminated in some mundane part of the plan - here, the larder. Keighley presbytery, 1838 [RIBA Library Drawings Collection, A. W. N. Pugin [73] 2].

3.17 (below)  
 Pugin's presbytery at Uttoxeter, Staffordshire: a 'cloister' links a house that has an otherwise unremarkable plan to the architect's St Mary's church immediately to the right. This elevation has been greatly altered [Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California (870366)].



which was the street front, consisted of an enclosed corridor on the ground floor only with the entrance door. As a general form perceived from the street, this house thus resembled a fifteenth or sixteenth-century *hôtel* such as those Pugin saw on his annual sketching tours to northern France and Flanders, and went on drawing for the rest of his life (figs 3.18, 3.19). Those houses would have admitted the visitor directly to the central courtyard, whence he would have made his way directly or almost directly into the main hall. Pugin's Birmingham house did no such thing, even though the great hall was located immediately above right of the entrance door (figs 3.20, 3.21). Here the visitor wound his way up to the left, and then up again to the right, and thence right again into a tightly-wound stair that continued up in a turret to the floor above. Once here, he would continue to wind his way around the edge of the court along a corridor until reaching the great hall at the end of it. In other words, one walked almost as far as it was possible to walk across two storeys, passing the bishop's private and public chambers, and all along a corridor scarcely five feet wide, in order to reach the public room closest to the front door. Anything more different from the centralised, formal axial planning of the bishop's palaces altered and extended for example by Blore in the 1830s,

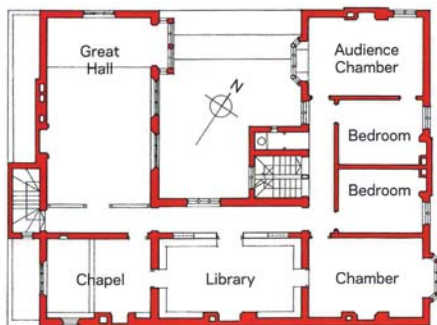


3.18  
The Bishop's House, Bath Street, Birmingham, from the west, photographed in 1958 not long before its demolition [National Monuments Record, AA58/4257].



### 3.19 (above)

The north-eastern front of the Bishop's House. The bishop's private chambers were on the first floor of this side of the building; all visitors to the great hall at the front facing the cathedral were required by the layout of the building to pass his door. The restrained patterning of the brick and the design of the tabernacle with the saint at the far right-hand corner of the building illustrates how effectively Pugin could model simple and cheap materials [National Monuments Record, AA58/4260].



### 3.20 (right)

The Bishop's House, Birmingham: ground and first-floor plans (1840).



at Lambeth and St Asaph, with their grand central staircases leading directly to large public rooms, can scarcely be imagined. The demolition of this extraordinary building for road widening in 1960 was a scandal; the lessons it could have taught us about the changes in early Victorian architecture must be largely lost, since Pugin, needless to say, seems to have written next to nothing about his ideas for the building.<sup>52</sup>

The plan of his second large clergy house, attached to the southern side of his church of St Barnabas at Nottingham, was a great deal simpler: a corridor continued through the sacristy near the south-east corner of the church and wove its way around three sides of a small internal courtyard (fig. 3.22). In a very rare reference to one of his residential buildings, Pugin defended this house, which had been attacked by the *Ecclesiologist*, in a letter published in the *Tablet*. The *Ecclesiologist*, no doubt looking at the outside of the building rather than appraising its plan, had described it as ‘mere builders’ gothic’, to which Pugin retorted that it was ‘a simple, convenient residence without any pretensions whatsoever’.<sup>53</sup>

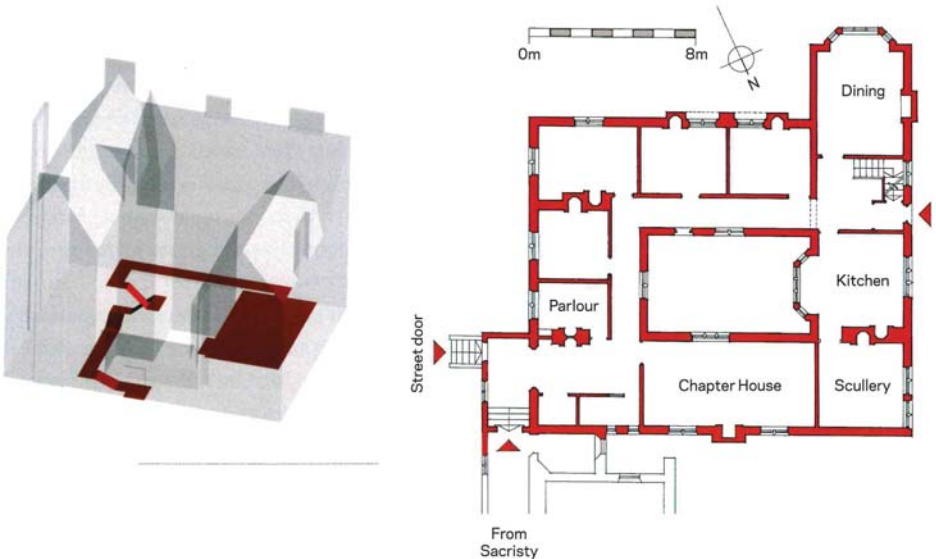
The Keighley house had made much of the junction between corridor and stair; a house that came a little later, the presbytery for his

### 3.21 (below, left)

The Bishop’s House, Birmingham: the building’s extraordinary layout required a visitor to wind their way through most of the building in order to reach the great hall which was located almost adjacent to the street door. Drawn by Francis Fawcett.

### 3.22 (below)

The clergy house, Nottingham: ground-floor plan (late 1841). The house was arranged around a courtyard which at the north-east end extended into the sacristy and church. See also figs 3.52-4.



church of Our Lady and St Wilfred at Warwick Bridge east of Carlisle, made a great deal more of it (fig. 3.23).<sup>54</sup> Its very unusual plan exploited the potential of a pair of crossing corridors on a tiny scale (fig. 3.24). An entrance passage led inwards from the porch, and continued to a cross-passage running from north-west to south-east. The kitchen was divided from this passage by a timber screen, creating something of the effect of a screen's passage on a miniature scale; the two principal rooms, a library and sitting room, were reached from this cross-passage to the right.<sup>55</sup> The cross-passage was redundant in practical terms, since it would have been possible to reach all the rooms by continuing the entrance corridor a few feet further into the centre of the house. It was thus there to create a tiny cloister, providing the priest with a framed view of the eastern end of the church, through pointed windows, every time that he left his library (fig. 3.25). Possibly Pugin considered a future covered link between the two.

His other later presbyteries are simpler, although not without their oddities. At Woolwich (1842), he designed a simple house of the Uttoxeter type, without the rear extension but with a long cloister route through to the sacristy beyond, at the liturgical eastern end of the adjoining church (figs 3.26, 3.27); and at Brewood in Staffordshire (1843) he designed a small and relatively conventional house on a tight central-corridor plan, but which was itself linked visually not only to his adjacent church but also to the little school and schoolmaster's house which were eventually built behind (fig. 3.28). In Rylston Road, Fulham (1847), he designed a small house around a pair of cross-corridors, which meet at the foot of the stairs; the house is perhaps most interesting because of the delicacy of its carved ornamentation, in the only residential project that Pugin designed for a woman patron (figs 3.29, 3.30).<sup>56</sup>

### **Pugin's first parsonage**

In 1845 Pugin designed two Anglican parsonages which form part of a set of at least six similar schemes designed during the mid 1840s. In both cases he found his clients through his close friend John Bloxam at Magdalen College, Oxford, a member of a group of Puseyite sympathisers who had received Newman's Tract 90 enthusiastically but who were placed in an awkward position by their spokesman's defection to Rome in 1843. The first of these two, Frederick Rooke,

was a graduate of Oriel College who was appointed curate at the parish of Rampisham with Wraxhall in Dorset in January 1843 and was instituted rector on 15th April 1845. A month later Pugin was in the village, attending to alterations to the church but also before long designing a new house for the incumbent who at 28 was five years younger than himself.

He had by this time designed at least one, and possibly as many as three, medium-size houses comparable in scale to Rooke's requirements. The first was his own house, which he called 'St Augustine's' but which after the completion of the adjacent church has always been called the 'Grange', in Ramsgate; the second was a house for the Liverpool merchant Henry Sharples, on the Woolton Road at Childwall, named 'Oswaldcroft'; and the third was an early scheme for Captain J. H. Washington Hibbert, at Bilton, south of Rugby in Warwickshire. The Grange was designed in the autumn of 1843;<sup>57</sup> Oswaldcroft very probably emerged from discussions with Sharples some time after the beginning of 1844,<sup>58</sup> and of the Bilton design it can only be said with any certainty that the surviving perspective, dated 1844, implies rather than proves this to be another similar house.<sup>59</sup> So the only clear precedent for Pugin's first parsonage was his own house in Ramsgate, and furthermore since he had moved into it in August 1844 he had had the better part of a year in which to assess the results before meeting Rooke the following spring. There is no period more critical for an architect to assess his own work than the first few months of living in his own house; and one is struck too by the fact that Rooke, like Pugin, went on to father a great number of children; the Rampisham house was perhaps also planned from the start to provide space for them. Interestingly, in a letter to Bloxam of October 1843, Pugin referred to designing a parsonage for the first time – it is not clear for whom – and his immediate reaction was 'I suppose the *nursery* must be a prominent feature'.<sup>60</sup> The presence of a crowd of children so greatly distinguishes a parsonage from the Roman Catholic presbyteries that Pugin had been designing up to that point that it was perhaps because of it that he seems to have rejected the types of plans he had devised to date for ecclesiastical dwellings. Instead, he reproduced for Rooke the plan of his own house with nothing but a small number of modifications.



### 3.23 (right, top)

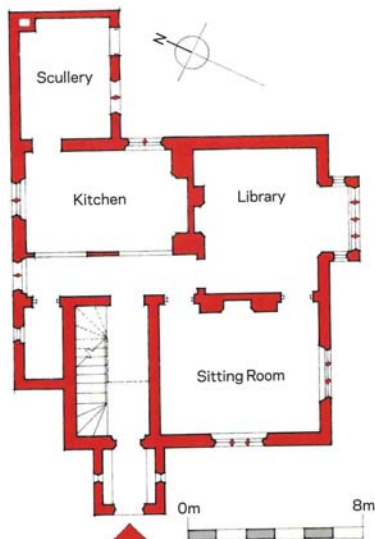
The church of Our Lady and St Wilfred with its adjacent presbytery at Warwick Bridge, east of Carlisle, Cumberland (1840). The angle between the buildings reflects the type of scene that Pugin used to sketch from his imagination as a child. The presbytery door here is placed, characteristically, so that it could be seen from the church porch.



### 3.24 (far right, above)

Warwick Bridge: ground-floor plan (1840). Pugin exaggerated the amount of corridor required even in small houses such as this one.

Here the cross-corridor that runs at right angles to the stair hall is redundant in practice. Its purpose must have been to provide a visual link between library and church. It also imitated in miniature the layout of his 'Deanery' scheme of 1833.



### 3.25 (right, middle)

Warwick Bridge: the view from the cross-corridor towards the east end of the church.



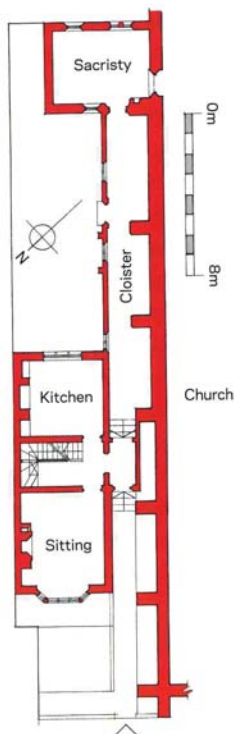
### 3.26 (right, bottom)

St Peter's presbytery, New Road, Woolwich (1842). The street front of Pugin's narrow house is now overshadowed by the substantial extension by E.W. Pugin to the north-east (left).



### 3.27 (far right, below)

St Peter's presbytery, Woolwich: ground-floor plan (1842). Much of the site is taken up by the long cloister running south-east from the street to the sacristy.



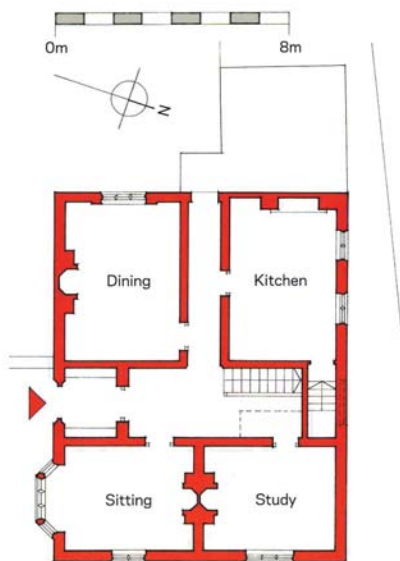


3.28 (left, above)  
The school (left) and schoolmaster's house at Brewood, based on a drawing by Pugin but executed by others. Their location was very probably determined by the architect with the view from the back door of the presbytery in mind.



3.29 (left, below)  
St Thomas of Canterbury presbytery, Rylston Road, Fulham, designed in late 1847. The lower right-hand window (to the study) has been blocked in, probably when the road was widened to remove a narrow outer yard.

3.30 (below)  
St Thomas of Canterbury presbytery, Fulham: ground-floor plan. A late and conventional plan but one which echoed the Derby arrangement by having its main rooms parallel to the axis of the street and up against it.



### **The Grange: introducing the pinwheel**

At Ramsgate he had designed a remarkable home which was entirely different to the conventional house types of his day in several respects (fig. 3.31). The most important of these was the layout (fig. 3.32). A small porch on the north side of the house leads into a square staircase hallway, about 12 by 15 feet. Immediately ahead is a small fireplace.<sup>61</sup> To the right, a door leads into the drawing room; further along the same wall, a second door leads to the library, which was Pugin's study and drawing office. Off to the left, beyond the stair hall, was the door to the dining room. Each of these three rooms had its main axis at right angles to the adjacent one, creating what might be called a 'pinwheel' plan (fig. 3.33). Since the house was itself reached through a roundabout route from a side alleyway, and thence through a tiny gatehouse, and since the stairs continued the line of progress in an anti-clockwise direction, the whole of the house could be said to be forming part of a spiral-shaped route, with, as at the Birmingham Bishop's House, a circulation route like a tightly coiled spring.

We already can see that this was quite different from the houses of the 1830s that we have seen to date, although looking through the many houses going up at the time I can see that it is not absolutely without precedent. There were other houses with a hub formed by a staircase hall by 1843, although they are rare. John Whichcord, from Maidstone, had designed a house like this at Harrietsham in 1838: one enters under the staircase into a square hallway, and the three principal reception rooms are arranged in succession along the left hand side and straight ahead.<sup>62</sup> This might be called simply an L-plan type, as opposed to an L-corridor (fig. 3.34). At Elmstone, not far away, Edmunds of Margate produced a similar example in 1840, but with only two rooms organised around a stairhall.<sup>63</sup> There are further isolated examples throughout the country. At Stevenon in Berkshire, Wallace designed a house very similar to Whichcord's in 1841.<sup>64</sup>

The L-plan house was not a new idea; but it seems at first surprising that it should be so rare, for in addition to the advantage of the spacious hallway there is the fact that one of the three main rooms is no longer cut off in that odd way in the crook of the entrance corridor and stairs. An L-plan house is in fact fundamentally a

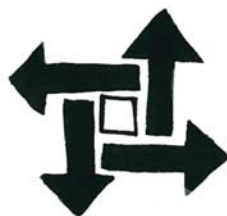
different type of house from the standard types we have already seen: its two main facades wrap around adjacent fronts, so it is no longer a house that has merely a 'back' and a 'front'. It illustrates a different way of thinking, one that comes as a harbinger of the Victorian mid-century, when a house is perceived as a three-dimensional object, carved from a single mass, as it were, and designed to be seen at angled views and not merely straight on. By applying it to their parsonages, architects were to some extent grasping at the characteristics of a large country house and telescoping it down to a tiny size. In the East Anglian collections there are isolated examples from earlier years: there is a very crude drawing for a rectory at Felsham in Suffolk from 1814, although this plan is slightly different in that the kitchen replaces one of the three rooms arranged in the L, and in addition there is a library isolated from the other principal rooms on the other side of the stair hall.<sup>65</sup> A house by Whiting of 1826 at Creeting is closer to a typical L plan: the three reception rooms are here arranged exactly in the L shape, but the staircase is brought into the depth of the house; although it is in the form of a generous spiral, it does not exactly create a staircase entrance hall. Interestingly, Whiting tried, not very successfully, to draw the outside of this house as if seen from the corner in the form of a perspective, so he was certainly aware of the implications of the L plan as far the general exterior massing was concerned.<sup>66</sup> By 1840, however, we have at Sutton in Cambridgeshire a typical house of this sort, designed by Joseph Stannard the younger.<sup>67</sup> In all cases, these novel plans were camouflaged by facades which suggested a conventional central-corridor or L-corridor plan within. Whichcord's was an asymmetrical classical-Georgian house; Stannard's was also classical-Georgian, but symmetrical and with a projecting central bay under a pediment. On the other hand Wallace, whom we have already seen at his most theatrical at Stottesden and Stourmouth, gave his Steventon house an understated Tudor-gothic front.

There is however a further early L-plan parsonage of the period in which Pugin was working which also has a facade that gives no hint of what is happening behind it, but which has something of a surprise within. This house of 1842, at Ruckinge near Romney Marsh in south-west Kent, is by an otherwise unknown surveyor of Dymchurch called James Elliott who produced a house with a





3.31  
The south, garden, elevation of  
St Augustine's, now called the  
Grange, Ramsgate, designed  
by Pugin in 1843.  
Photographed shortly after  
restoration in June 2006.

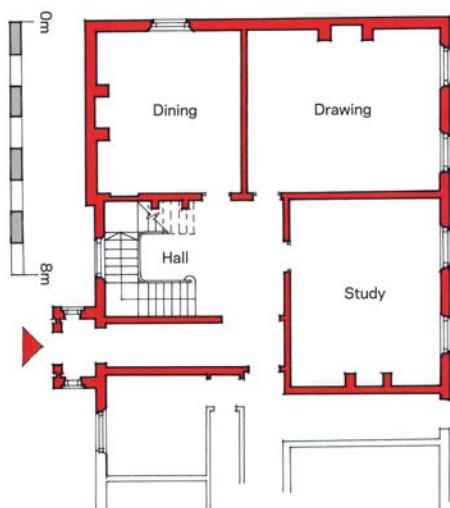


### 3.32 (left, above)

The Grange, Ramsgate: ground-floor plan (1843). This was the first pinwheel design. Pugin regretted that his library – the room in which he worked – did not project south beyond the plane of the dining-room wall. The dynamic layout is however already evident.

### 3.33 (above)

A diagrammatic representation of the pinwheel plan type. Rooms are arranged in rotating fashion either clockwise or anti-clockwise around a central stair hall; the long axis of each room is at 90 degrees to that of the adjacent room, giving a dynamic quality to the house. Drawn by Assaf Krebs.



### 3.34 (left, below)

A typical L-plan house, based on the proposal by John Whichcord (senior) of 1838 for Harrietsham rectory, east of Maidstone, Kent [Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Dcb/DC/HB/1]. Unlike a pinwheel, the L-plan type fits three principal rooms into a simple, usually rectangular, layout with no attempt to express the arrangement externally.

pinwheel plan almost identical to Pugin's (figs 3.35–8).<sup>68</sup> Elliott's drawings include a roof plan which further illustrates the fact that he had grasped that the organisation of the rooms in this way could also be expressed externally. And yet he did not do it. His house originally had a rather dim series of Tudor-gothic elevations, with one of those symmetrical and turreted central porches inspired by King's College chapel, and with no distinction made between the kitchen and store windows to the left of it and the dining-room windows to the right (figs 3.36, 3.37). There is little here to compare with Pugin's astonishing, almost brutal entrance at the Grange (fig. 3.39). We have no evidence that Pugin saw it, for he did not mention Elliott or Ruckinge in his correspondence, and his diary, which in any case is generally merely a laconic record of destinations, is missing for 1843.

So the pinwheel itself was not Pugin's invention and no doubt other examples can be found. A different and early plan using a similar device, for example, is that of the large and eccentric house at Boxford in Suffolk designed back in 1818 by Mark Thompson with a castellated Tudor-gothic front and a relaxed classical-Georgian back. This too has three pinwheel reception rooms, and there is a comparatively large stair hall, but this hall is not located at the hub of the rooms – and Thompson had gone to great lengths to hide these adventures behind his stern and almost flat front (see fig. 2.4). Pugin's house at Ramsgate is a fundamentally different type of house from any of these. The relationship between the plan and the front of the house is a clear example of how. We have seen how architects have played with entrance elevations; sometimes, indeed it was the only thing they did play with in their designs for these houses. Pugin's however merely presented to the visitor an almost blank aspect, decorated mainly by the large stair window but dominated by the windowless side elevation of the drawing room to the right, and the back of the kitchens to the left. This dramatic new unity between plan and form appears to be uniquely his. It allowed him to express on the outside of his houses not only the location of each of the principal rooms, but also to give that expression some constructional logic, in particular in the form of distinct chimneys and separate ridges to each of the three sections, a perfect illustration of the central messages of *The true principles*. It also created a dynamic interior in which anyone walking through a room and out into another would have to change the direction of their walk by

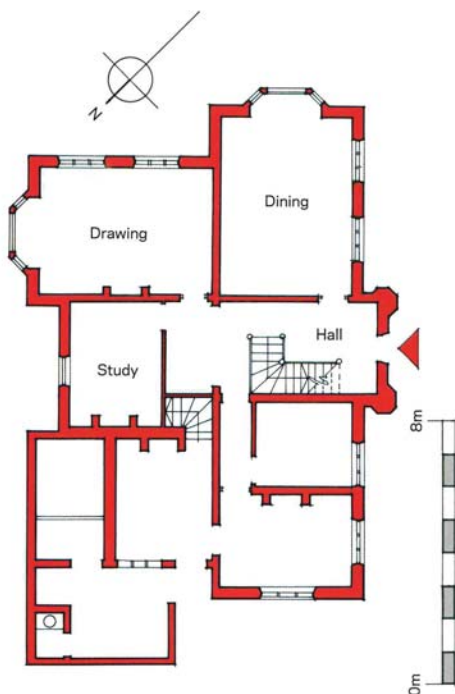
90 degrees, mid-perambulation, which means that even a small house provides a continuously changing vista; and of course the movement of people up and down the stairs at the centre of the plan intensifies this. It was this layout that he chose to repeat for his Liverpool house and possibly also for his early Bilton scheme, and then eventually for Rooke at Rampisham.

### **Rampisham**

The former rectory at Rampisham is now the most complete survival of any of Pugin's houses, and it provides a wonderful opportunity to assess his approach to parsonage building. Because it is also a very beautiful house, and more expensively built (for £1,734, by his regular building partner George Myers) than his earlier presbyteries, it is an important landmark in his career and it cannot have failed to impress those of his professional contemporaries who saw it and admired him. Furthermore Pugin's mortgage application documents have survived in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, the only example we have of a complete set of autograph drawings and specifications for any of his houses (fig. 3.40).<sup>69</sup> The plan is much the same as at Ramsgate except it is reversed, with the principal rooms running clockwise from the left-hand side of the entrance. The architect had by now experienced the pinwheel arrangement, and he liked it. He was evidently not deterred by the fact that the open character of the hall and its gallery above meant that noise from children or servants travelled easily across the house, even though people moving between bedrooms were exposed to visitors at the front door, precisely the problem that the L-corridor houses had solved.<sup>70</sup>

What was, then, in its favour? One advantage was certainly visual, and testifies to Pugin's training as a set designer and his youthful experience as a Covent Garden stage hand, which according to an observation in his 'Autobiography' had enabled him to acquire 'the thorough knowledge of the practical part of the stage business which has so materially served me since' – a reference surely as much to his ability to manipulate effects of light and shade as to the construction of simple proscenium-type views.<sup>71</sup> At Rampisham Pugin made one important change from the Ramsgate plan and oriented the house so that the great window over the stairs faced south-east, rather than north-west. The pinwheel arrangement thus allowed the sun to





### 3.35 (above)

The ground-floor plan of Ruckinge parsonage, on Romney Marsh south of Ashford, Kent, based on the drawing of 1842 by James Elliot [*Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Dcb/DC/R14/1*]. This is unmistakably a pinwheel, even if the house has none of the three-dimensional coherence of the Grange.

### 3.36 (right, top)

Ruckinge, Kent, by James Elliot. The external appearance of the house, seen here from the south-east, does give some indication of its pinwheel plan.

### 3.37 (right, middle)

The entrance (south-west) elevation at Ruckinge. When the original decoration was complete it would have been more obvious that the porch is one of several of the period that was derived in a very general way from the chapel of King's College, Cambridge.

### 3.38 (right)

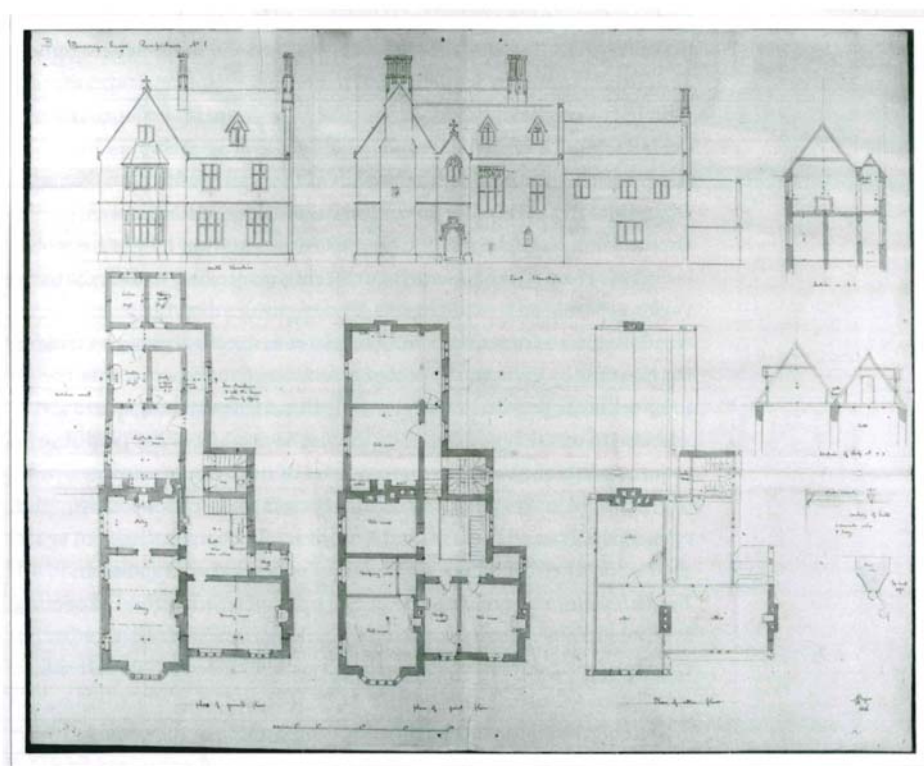
The entrance at Ruckinge: unmistakably a real stair hall rather than a corridor.





3.39 (left)  
The entrance front of the Grange, Ramsgate, now dominated by the post-1860 glazed corridor that replaced Pugin's original enclosed entry courtyard. Even allowing for the fact that the back-corridor plan had already produced functional elevations in contemporary houses, this was an entrance facade unlike any other. Visitors arrived alongside the back wall of the kitchen and scullery (far left). Photographed in June 2006.

3.40 (below)  
Rampisham rectory, between Dorchester and Yeovil, Dorset: Pugin's drawing to accompany his application of 21 March 1846. It is thanks to the Bounty's methodical application procedures that this rare record of Pugin's work has survived; generally he made only a single drawing for a builder [Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, D28/6/11].



permeate deep into the house, giving the public parts of it a perpetually changing quality which has no parallel in the narrow corridor plans of his contemporaries, and which highlights the way in which the rooms lead off from one another, all of the doors and openings naturally lit and in different and varying ways.

But a more tangible reason for Pugin's adoption of the pinwheel form which he perfected at Rampisham was that it allowed him to express his ideas about construction in a coherent way at the scale of an entire house, so that the actual form of the building was as resonant of his ideas as were the mere details of it. The pinwheel plans allowed him to create distinctive wings out of each separate room, in accordance with his demand that 'An architect should exhibit his skill by turning the difficulties which occur in raising an elevation from a *convenient plan* into so many *picturesque beauties*'.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, this plan is actually representative of the details of its constructional method, in the sense that every part distinctly describes the way in which it is held together and forms part of the whole.<sup>73</sup> Each major space requires a separate roof which stresses the individuality of that room, or pair of rooms, from the outside; this is further emphasised by allowing each pinwheel room to break forward from the plan of the wall of the room that is adjacent to it, as evidently he wished he had done at Ramsgate.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, by maintaining a continuous roof height his work is distinct from that of 'picturesque' architects seeking to differentiate various rooms for visual pleasure. By designing a disposition of windows on an entrance front that relates to the organisation inside – for example by giving unexpected prominence to the service stairs – it is possible to demonstrate externally the internal arrangements, and also to create a type of facade that is the product of the planning requirements of its era quite irrespective of historical precedent (fig. 3.1). And just as the constructional principle is telescoped up to the scale of the general form of the house, it is telescoped back down again to provide a key for designing the new details that are exposed in it. By preferring an overhanging eave to a parapet, the method of roofing is exposed. By creating decoration by cutting from materials, rather than by gluing or joining them, the physical nature of that material is revealed.

Furthermore, the open hall at the centre of the house provided a public backdrop to events within. A conventional parsonage was



essentially a number of compartments linked by minimal circulation space; here the hall and the sequence of rooms leading off it gave a certain drama to the events of the day. There is no mediaeval precedent for a room of this type: a relatively small room used only as a double-height circulation space cannot be furnished for sitting or eating, and is not a modern descendant of a mediaeval hall. It is possible in this room to see how the pinwheel type was a development of Pugin's consistent preference for exaggerated corridor sequences. There had been a hint of it in the relatively large stair hall at Derby; and in other projects throughout the 1840s he inserted rooms like this, sometimes going as far as arranging the direction of the flights in order to lengthen unnecessarily the walking distances to upstairs rooms.<sup>75</sup> But in many ways it is the Rampisham rectory alone that stands at the centre of the whole of this book: it was the perfectly conceptualised new Victorian parsonage. The whole way of building had been thought out afresh and was here perfected for the first time: on the one hand the layout, the architectural language, the tectonic logic and consistency of its construction, the creation of an architecture which inspires the sometimes mystical experience of living in a building that responds to the changing day. On the other, there is the order and the completeness of the complex as a whole, with its pantries, its scullery and its larder, its coach house, its laundry, and its sophisticated water system (it had an underground tank fed from the roof): everything here suited exactly the moment it was designed for. The ideas for all these whether technological or philosophical were in the air in the 1840s; it took a genius to bind them together.

Pugin repeated the plan, or rather a slight variation of it, in the late autumn of 1845 for his second rectory, that at Lanteglos, the site of the historic parish church for the Cornish town of Camelford located a short distance to its north. The house is somewhat less interesting than that at Rampisham, not only because it has been badly mutilated, but also because Pugin relinquished control over its execution (fig. 3.42). It was too far away from London for Myers to manage economically, and as Pugin himself pointed out, it was cheaper for the rector to find local builders.<sup>76</sup> Here his client was Bloxam's brother-in-law, Roger Bird, who had become rector in 1845. Bird applied for and received a mortgage for the house from the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, but the drawings and other application documents have disappeared.<sup>77</sup>



3.41

The stair hall at Rampisham.  
The whole house is suffused  
with delicate and varying  
patterns of light.



On the other hand, Pugin's correspondence on the subject, which was directed to Bloxam rather than Bird, does at least throw some light onto his design intentions. He described the house as being 'very plain' but with a 'respectable character'; and he pointed out that he was locating the house on its site in 'the best position for warming and lightening the house with the sun': the staircase window now faces north again, and the principal rooms almost due south. Rather surprisingly, he also asked, apparently not sarcastically, whether Bird wanted the house built 'well or cheap'.<sup>78</sup>

Apart from reallocating the function of the three principal reception rooms, and providing an interior lobby to further separate the study, where parishioners would enter, from the private part of the house, Pugin repeated the Ramsgate-Rampisham formula. But because of the execution by local builders with, evidently, experience of conventional Tudor-gothic, what remains of the house has a disappointing quality: one can imagine what Pugin would have said about the blind windows and make-believe arrowslits (fig. 3.43).<sup>79</sup>



### More about corridors and pinwheels

The long corridor routes and the connections between the different elements of them had clearly long been a dominant characteristic even of Pugin's small houses. In general, the corridor-plan types provided a place for procession: at the Bishop's House in Birmingham, the route from entrance door to great hall provided a lengthy processional way that was not only as long as possible, but also shielded the upper parts of the house from the street and unwanted attention. In institutional plans, such as the cloisters he designed for his convent at Handsworth and elsewhere, the processional way is the dominant part of the plan (fig. 3.44). At a convent of 1844 onwards alongside the Nottingham clergy house, his nuns were required to walk the entire length of the ground floor, rise through the stairs, and then walk the whole length of the floor back again to reach the most intimate part of the cloister which is, in fact, located immediately above their heads when they stand at the front door. The weaving of corridors around rooms also seems to express the different shapes and forms of construction in each room. Pugin wanted to make this happen.<sup>80</sup>

3.42 (above, left)

Part of the surviving fabric at Lanteglos near Camelford, Cornwall, a rectory designed by Pugin in 1846 but executed without his supervision. This is the east side of the house, showing the ground floor window of the study next to the entrance. The building has been substantially mutilated.

3.43 (above)

The kitchen chimney on the south side of the house at Lanteglos. It is hard to imagine that Pugin would have countenanced the inclusion of these blank, vaguely gothic windows resembling arrowslits.

The magnificent cloister staircase at the Convent of Mercy, Handsworth, Birmingham, is almost all that remains of Pugin's 1844 extension to his original building. It is remarkable that so much of his attention was concentrated on creating complex corridor spaces such as this one. Photographed by the author, February 2006.



His interest in religious processions can be demonstrated by his illustration of them in several of his published etchings: they can be seen in the mediaeval plates illustrating 'Contrasted parochial churches' and 'Contrasted college gateways' in both the 1836 and the 1841 editions of *Contrasts*, and in his view of Magdalen College, Oxford, in *The true principles* (figs 3.45, 3.46).<sup>81</sup> Figures in his views of modern urban scenes are, by contrast, in many cases seen to be standing about without purpose, or hurrying in an undignified fashion. The corridor schemes suggest that Pugin adopted the processional way as an architectural demonstration of Roman Catholic life, and the incorporation of long routes into buildings was therefore consistent with his call both for 'convenience' and for 'propriety'.

In the case of the pinwheel-plan houses, Pugin's practical aims are less evident. Perhaps he saw the pinwheel type as a way of impressing the processional form on domestic life: the need to walk across changing axes in these houses certainly complements the dynamic character of their graphic form. In his own house, the staircase balustrade mimics the pinwheel pattern of the plan; it is a form



FIGURE 3.40  
PUGIN (1836), CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW, RAMSGATE

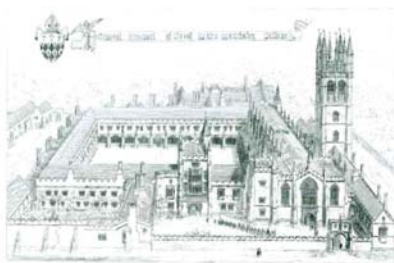


FIGURE 3.41  
PUGIN (1841), CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW, RAMSGATE

unmistakably suited to the architect's own almost boundless energy. Pugin presided over little family processions to and from the house's chapel, as well as between the hall and dining room, which he described in letters to friends.<sup>82</sup> He clearly hoped that Rooke would do the same. He provided his client with a tiny oratory on the upper floor, decorated with a pointed gothic window, but carefully avoided labelling this room on the drawings which he submitted to the bishop of Salisbury for approval, presumably realising that the horror of Puseyite heresies might damage his client's application for a mortgage, if not his reputation (figs 3.40, 3.47). In common with Pugin's own house in Ramsgate, the rectory at Rampisham has no direct door to its garden: like the inhabitant of one of the Roman Catholic presbyteries, Mr Rooke was evidently required to process the long way round. The adoption of a suitable plan must surely indicate something new: that the parsonage was, according to Pugin's vision, no longer merely a comfortable home for a 'retired' cleric and his family, but a stage for the public presentation of his role as the spiritual father of a community. This must have been Pugin's aim at Rampisham and Lanteglos.

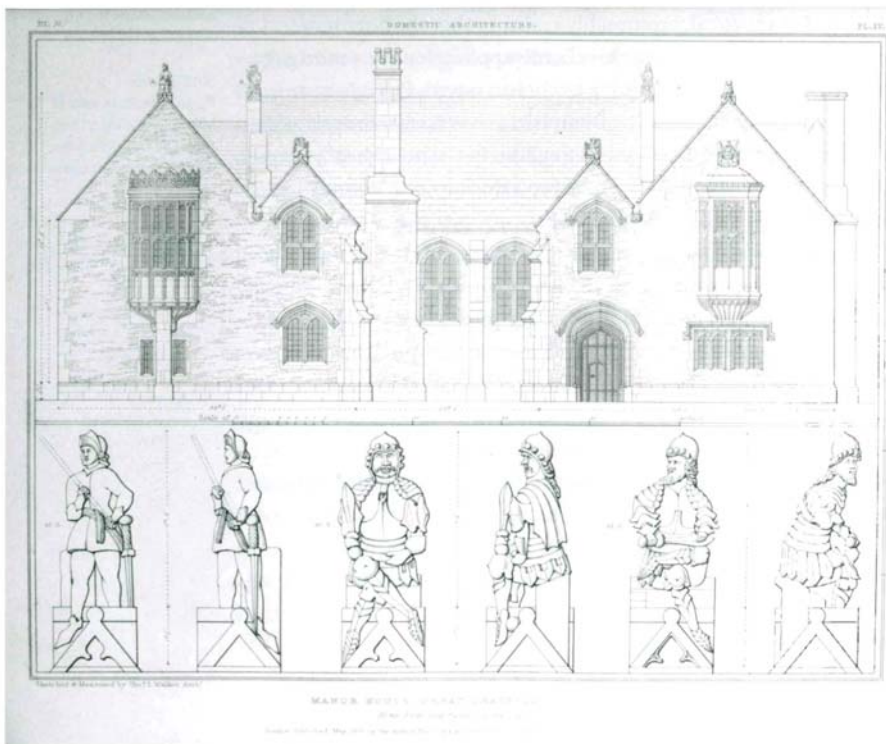
## Englishness

Inspired by topographical writers such as John Britton, Tudor-gothic architects had grappled with Englishness, and tried to copy the distinct decorative features of mediaeval churches. Pugin had a different approach to it. It was not only the planning of his parsonages that was consistently original. He employed for them a decorative style that

3.45 (above, left)  
Contrasted parochial churches, from Pugin's *Contrasts* (1836 and 1841). The plate shows Nash's All Soul's, Langham Place, and St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. Several of Pugin's book illustrations contrast orderly religious processions with the aimless groups found in contemporary streets.

3.46 (above)  
Pugin's idealised view of Magdalen College, Oxford, from *The true principles*, 1841. Another procession is under way.





likewise had no true historic precedent, but which in this case testifies to his own deep appreciation of mediaeval work in different ways. We have seen many times how an architect might apply, very probably in Parker's Roman cement, or something similar, decorative details broadly copied from gothic tracery, at best glimpsed in a Britton publication, onto the face of their houses; and we have heard of the various imitations of King's College chapel. Pugin never did anything like this. In the first place, he used a very limited number of specific design features that he had derived from the accurate measured drawings that he, his father, and his father's assistants had carefully drawn, mainly during the 1820s. In the case of Rampisham, the two gables above its porch seem to come from the then-ruinous late fifteenth-century manor house at Great Chalfield, which was drawn by T. L. Walker for the third and posthumous volume of the Pugins' *Examples of gothic architecture* in 1836 (fig. 3.48). A further example comes from father's *Specimens* of 1821: in several houses from his 'Deanery' onwards and including the tower-like presbytery at the Alton Hospital (fig. 3.49), he designed a chimney reminiscent of that at the Jew's House in Lincoln. That in itself was interesting: this was the house that Britton did not consider to be a candidate for the oldest house in England and yet Pugin used it more than once, including for a presbytery in Reading in 1840.<sup>83</sup> And having seen the straight-headed, traceried windows with mouchettes at the mediaeval rectory at Marlow, by the Thames, on a visit in connection with Charles Scott-Murray, his client at Danesfield House, he started including these in his designs: the first one appeared almost immediately, for the stair windows at Oswaldcroft and Rampisham.<sup>84</sup> He often used a type of detail or architectural feature that other architects failed to see as important: the castles of Ludlow and Kenilworth provide many examples of mediaeval or late Tudor building techniques which found an echo in his own work. Many of Pugin's stone details such as battered stone bases, fireplace locations and mouldings, window details and window arrangements, can be traced back to these two buildings (fig. 3.50).<sup>85</sup> He was proud of his knowledge of English historical architecture, claiming he had 'not only visited every Cathedral and Abbey church in England and several thousand parochial churches, but [had] also inspected [not] in a cursory and superficial manner, but with deep thought, making careful drawings and notes of the same'.<sup>86</sup>

#### Opposite

##### 3.47 (above, left)

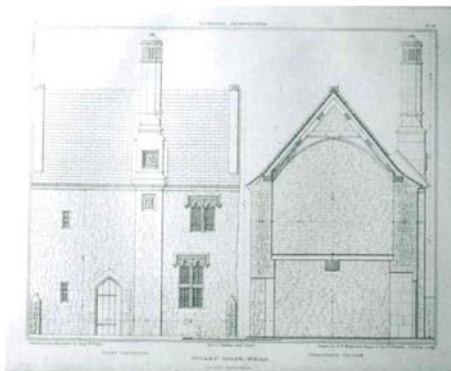
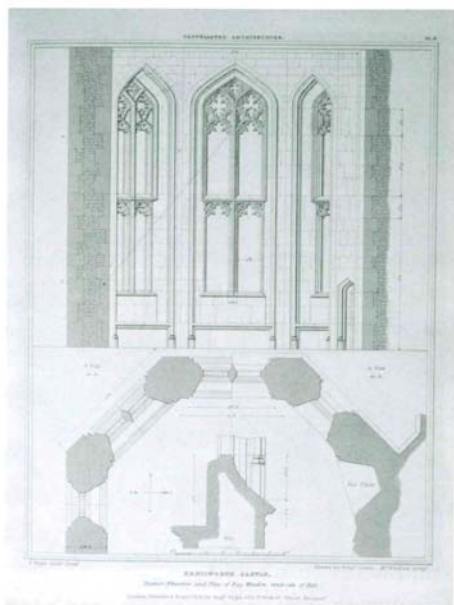
The entrance (south-east) front of Rampisham rectory. The oratory is clearly identified by its gothic window – a rarity in Pugin's domestic architecture – but the architect was careful not to label the room as such on the plan he submitted to the bishop and the Bounty (see fig. 3.40).

##### 3.48 (bottom)

The restored elevation of Great Chalfield Manor, Wiltshire, drawn by T. L. Walker for the third volume of the Pugins' *Examples* (1836–40; plate 30). The double-gabled bays of this beautiful late mediaeval manor house provided Pugin with the authority for his own use of the motif, for example Rampisham.

##### 3.49 (above, right)

The presbytery at Pugin's St John's Hospital (1839) on the Earl of Shrewsbury's estate at Alton, Staffordshire, was situated in a tower at the west end of the chapel. Its chimney, seen here to the right, rises from above a window in a manner reminiscent of that at the Jew's House in Lincoln (see fig. 2.19).



### 3.50

An engraving of details from the hall at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, from the second volume of the Pugins' *Examples* (1831-6). The stone moulding around the windows take the form of a continuous bead with a circular section. Possibly it was the origin for Pugin's distinctive door architraves (see fig. 3.57).

### 3.51

The Vicars' Close at Wells, Somerset, from drawings by Pugin for the final volume of the *Examples* (plate 2). Few of these houses actually resembled this restored view at the time. They were very probably the oldest small town houses that Pugin saw in England, and yet he never copied their form when designing a modern house.

So even where there is no direct evidence that he saw a well-known historical building, there is every reason to suppose that he may well have done. It was generally the geometry of the structural form rather than the decorative detailing that he copied, and the external expression of the pinwheel rooms, each defined by its own gable and ridge, allowed him to practice the modelling of simple materials at which he excelled.<sup>87</sup> These tall gables, so much taller than those of the Tudor-gothic architects, had the further advantage of making the attics considerably more spacious than they had been for those who had to sleep within them, and were therefore not only a functional solution but one which could be advertised on the front of every building. But for the most part, his decorative approach is indefinable historically. He never copied the external form of the houses of the Vicars' Close in Wells, which he loved and had drawn, although he could well have done if he wished for the comparably small houses on narrow sites at Utttoxeter and Woolwich (fig. 3.51).<sup>88</sup> If anything, his houses have about them the quality of the early seventeenth-century vernacular of the bay-windows of the terraced houses in the historic



market town of Stamford. What all this shows is that Pugin had discovered a new approach to the search for Englishness that architects and critics yearned for: he imitated the inherent structural character of English historical buildings which was derived from their means of construction and some of their basic geometry, rather than their applied decoration or their elevations. Had one taken all of Loudon's practical advice but ignored everything that he had to say about style, one might have ended up as Pugin did – if only one had had Pugin's artist's eye for composition and his genius for abstracting the character, rather than the features, of historical building. It is what one would expect from the author of *The true principles*, who called for 'the decoration of *construction*' to replace the construction of decoration.<sup>89</sup>

Pugin had found Britton's illusive House One – not in a single historical house that contained the seeds of an authentic, reborn domestic architecture, but the essential spirit of the ancient buildings he liked as a whole, a spirit which also had in it something of an English character of restlessness, perhaps even something aggressive.<sup>90</sup> These buildings are, with the exception of the Rampisham rectory, never pretty. He turned this into a coherent style of his own devising, a vernacular language which instead of adopting the fancy-dress tones of historical ornament spoke in the down-to-earth tones of the late mediaeval workman. It is in fact hard to describe most of his domestic architecture as properly 'gothic'. It seems possible that this new kind of Englishness appealed to his contemporaries at more of a subconscious level than an immediate and obvious one. His irregular window patterns; his rows of gables; his wall buttresses that merge with the adjoining wall planes; these would have been familiar to those that looked at historical architecture without them knowing precisely where they came from. It is interesting that he himself drew remarkably few examples of English historical domestic architecture, especially in comparison to the volumes of drawings he brought back from his travels abroad. And even if his buildings have an Englishness about their general form (although it is often hard to say what, exactly), they undoubtedly have a Frenchness too, especially in their tall vertical proportions, influenced by the devices he copied from his beloved Nodier volume and that had made their first appearance in the Alderbury house. He himself said nothing about stylistic influence, preferring to draw the domestic architecture of northern France,



Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, and telling his friend Benjamin Ferrey that he was especially delighted with the domestic architecture of Nuremberg.<sup>91</sup> It was ironic that English domestic architecture was deployed in this new way by someone who had almost nothing to say about it: and it reminds us that architectural history is made by those who build, rather than by those who theorise.

### **Inside and out**

These original planning and styling devices were by no means the only things that Pugin was doing differently from his contemporaries. His houses were always different from those of other architects because he used a comprehensive and consistent language of masonry and in particular timber detailing that was different from theirs. We have seen how much survived the transition from classical-Georgian to Tudor-gothic in the 1830s and 1840s. One element that remained constant was the external surfaces of walls: a homogenous brick, stone or plaster. Another was detailing of internal joinery. Here and there a more fanciful architect might decorate a door or a ceiling with a tracery quatrefoil or other supposedly gothic touch, but for the most part doors, architraves, skirtings, plaster cornices and ironmongery were exactly the same in the earlier classical houses as they were in the later Tudor-gothic ones. In the Lanteglos house, finished internally by local builders, one sees precisely the same classical-Georgian plaster and timber detailing as one would anywhere else in the country.<sup>92</sup>

Pugin did everything differently where these were concerned too. On his external walls he developed characteristic treatments which in themselves mark the transition from Georgian to Victorian. He almost never used plaster as an external wall surface, inexplicable exceptions being in the case of two service wings, one at Grace Dieu, the house of his friend Ambrose Phillipps, and another for his colleague, the Birmingham ironmonger John Hardman. He did not go in for decorative effects across the face of a wall, always preferring a single material of homogenous colour for the whole of the face of a wall, excepting only window mullions, frames and quoins.<sup>93</sup> He nearly always used English bond for his brickwork: I found no examples of English bond amongst the parsonages or indeed other houses of his contemporaries up to the 1840s. But most remarkably he derived the overall form of the external envelope of his buildings through the

three-dimensional treatment of the basic materials he was obliged to use: not in a modelled, sculptural way but rather as if he had responded to the prophecies of men like Palgrave and Scrope, for his architecture was defined by the physical characteristics of materials drawn from the ground. At the Bishop's House in Birmingham, he arranged the chimney shafts and the corners of the buildings, the oriel windows and the projecting bays, into rich sculptural forms which belie the cheapness of the materials (fig. 3.19). No other architect seemed yet to have grasped how different the plastic quality of brickwork can be from that of shapes moulded from plaster or carved into stone.<sup>94</sup> At the Nottingham clergy house he returned to the idea of an arrangement of chimneystacks arching over a window first seen in the 'Deanery' scheme of 1833, marrying it to a tripartite form seen, for example, at the short sides of the mediaeval barn at Glastonbury (fig. 3.52). The resulting chimney projection forms a gable; the plane is cut back to admit two ground-floor windows. A further unconventional feature of this house is the pair of large mullioned windows in what must have been the scullery at the north-west corner of the ground floor: the northern one of the two directly abuts the crosswall, a very odd and unprecedented



3.52

A chimney on the south side of the clergy house at Nottingham, designed by Pugin in the early 1840s. Its design was perhaps inspired by details of mediaeval masonry such the tripartite buttresses of the barn at Glastonbury abbey.

### 3.53 (below)

The west and principal entrance front of the clergy house at Nottingham. The far left-hand ground-floor window seems to have been added as an afterthought, no doubt because of concern that the scullery within would be too dark. The result is almost a corner window.

### 3.54 (below, right)

A photograph by Samuel Bourne, taken sometime between 1870–80, of the south-east corner of St Barnabas, Nottingham: the clergy house is visible to the left. A cloister runs along the front, parallel with the street, connecting the sacristy and church with the house. This view demonstrates Pugin's skill at composing complex masses [Nottingham Local Studies Library and [www.picturethepast.org.uk](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk), image NTGM010629].

detail that to a modern eye shows a progressive sense of structure (fig. 3.53). All windows have plain square-headed lights; there is no decorative carving beyond hood moulds with label stops on the east and west front doors, and a monogrammed cartouche commemorating R. W. Willson on the chimneystack on the south side.<sup>95</sup> Internally, there is only one ornamental fireplace, and no finished exposed timberwork in the ceilings except in the corridor leading to the sacristy. A view of the house from the south-east side of the church confirms that this sculpted form is a coherent part of the compositional massing of the whole ensemble (fig. 3.54).

Pugin stated at the beginning of *The true principles* that ‘all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building’.<sup>96</sup> Enrichment, according to his description, means cutting away from the body of the structural work, expressing the physical nature of the material. The chamfering of the arrises of structural timber, derived from the use of the mediaeval (and later) adze for structural timbers, is the cheapest way of achieving an ornamental result in accordance with this principle; it does not require any lengthily acquired expertise; furthermore, he exposed the grain of the timber by avoiding paint.<sup>97</sup> He used chamfering patterns from the first, at St Marie’s Grange: the major timber ceiling ribs are chamfered, and in one case, the exposed angle is further moulded with ogees; window embrasures are chamfered, and although it is difficult to gauge which are primary and which were added during alterations, some stone door stops may also have been. Chamfering provided the system of decoration for





every building that followed. The chamfering of the frames of timber windows first proposed for an unexecuted lodge designed for Scarisbrick, probably in 1837, was first realised a few years later in the convent he designed at Handsworth in Birmingham.<sup>98</sup> These have deeply chamfered edges along each of the external sides of the frame, and the chamfer is scooped upwards about half an inch before the joint: this produces a scallop shape. The same scooped chamfer appears at Handsworth on the structural members of timber doors, on banisters, the edges of fireplace surrounds and on the various members of the open roofs. Stone door embrasures are chamfered, the cut arris terminating towards the foot not in a scoop but in a pyramidal projection that reconciles the splay to the orthogonal plan of the base of the jamb (fig. 3.55). He used open roofs of different types – in some cases, for example at his ‘St John’s Hospital’, his almshouses at Alton, he used a sequence of different types of ceiling along one of his corridor routes – and this too gave him an opportunity to demonstrate not only how a ceiling related to the actual form of the roof, but also how to express the decorative qualities of the materials used (fig. 3.56).<sup>99</sup> He often mirrored this along his corridor routes by providing different types of window all the way along. In his own house at Ramsgate, there are no two identical pairs of window jambs on the ground floor apart from the pair in the dining-room. The joists and other members of these open roofs are decorated in different ways, although many of them employ 45-degree chamfering.

Most importantly – and this marks a significant break with Tudor-gothic – he abandoned the irritating ‘shoulder’ at the bottom of a gable. In a Tudor-gothic house, the junction between the top of the wall at the eave and the gable was masked by a parapet which rose above the eave, which gave the shouldered effect; at best, this parapet was a kind of raised haunch. The gable then appeared detached from the structure of the wall in an odd way, and it was a problematic detail because rainwater tends to sit at the junction of the gable and the parapet. In Pugin’s houses, the gable descends *below* the eaves, and the wall below is built out sideways to cover the end of the gutter; he generally added an ornamental termination to the bottom of the eave itself. The rainwater problem was logically solved. This simple distinction, which alone easily distinguishes gothic revival proper from Tudor gothic, is itself a clear demonstration of the structural form of the roof.







3.55 (opposite)  
The porch at Rampisham.  
The small triangular chamfered projections either side of the base of the opening are a typical Pugin detail.

3.56  
Part of the cloister route at St John's Hospital, Alton, leading between the principal door and the chapel.  
These cloister routes often had a variety of different roofs, giving them a narrative quality. The pair of arches at the junction with the next arm of the cloister was a characteristic Pugin feature, and provided logical variety with minimal cost.

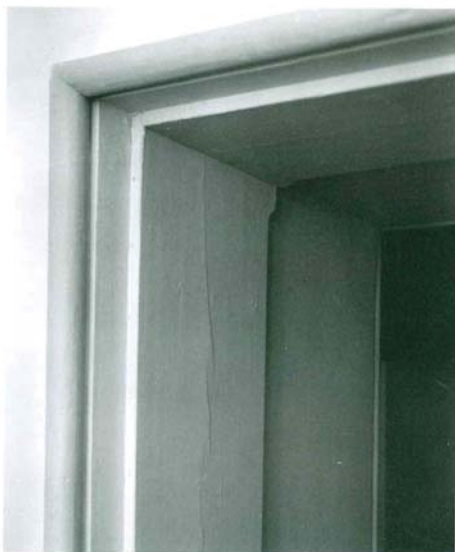
Having chamfered wall surfaces and constructional timber members on the outside of his buildings he did it within, too. By the early 1840s he had devised a consistent language for panel members and architraves which appears in all his houses, large or small, and, furthermore, it was consistent across all the rooms of a house so that a servant's bedroom in the attic would have the same doorcase as the reception rooms on the ground floor. His architraves were a simple 1.25" timber beading, a device he invented; possibly he was inspired here by the half-round stone beading around openings in the hall of Kenilworth castle (fig. 3.57; see fig. 3.50). It is a way of saying that the

consistency of the architecture of the house is more important than the conventional hierarchies of the social life within, a remarkable statement and a clear indication of a scientific and tectonic mind at work. In the case of decorative plasterwork, he simply avoided it: his rooms never have plaster cornices; there is no ornament such as those thin imitation tracery patterns one occasionally sees on the ceiling of the grander Tudor-gothic houses; and instead of the deep hard plaster skirting familiar in a classical-Georgian house, Pugin used narrow timber strips, four inches high, and cut at an angle along the top. The one mediaeval prototype for Pugin's most simple style of interior design is the early fifteenth-century parlour of the abbot's lodgings at Muchelney abbey, a tall, spare whitewashed room with moulded ceiling joists on stone corbels, a richly carved fireplace, and a pair of ornate straight-headed traceried windows (see fig. 2.22). This if anything was Pugin's House One interior – and yet, and yet: there is no evidence that he ever saw it.

When one thinks how an architect like Carter, at that monstrous Tudor-gothic parsonage in Louth, was obliged to devise all manner of curious and illogical details, such as crazy tracery and ungravitational overhangs, one realises that what Pugin was doing was an illustration that one need not invent, or stick things on: the basic requirements of the constructional envelope of a building provide all one needs to express any particular emotion one may feel. The buildings are entering into the lives of their residents; they seem to expand and

3.57

Pugin generally used the same type of architrave for all his rooms, major or minor. It took the form of a 1.25" beading, a form possibly derived from the stone beading he had seen at the hall of at Kenilworth Castle (see fig. 3.50).



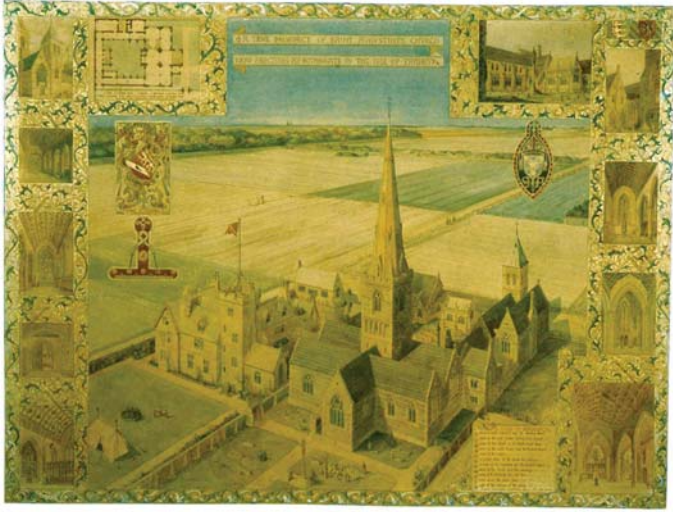


contract through the raising and lowering of ceilings, through the prominence or modesty of the constructional materials, through the variation of the sizes of rooms, the variations of ceiling type, and of window jambs along a route, in response to the activities of people within. This is the birth of a new type of architecture: it is hard to quantify the immediate effect it had on the average parsonage builder, but it must at least have begun to suggest whole new possibilities for design. Until Pugin there had been no distinct house type for the parson, firstly because a building had not in the past been expected to join in the daily life of its inhabitants, and secondly because the parson's social ritual was not really distinct from that of the minor gentry or middle class amongst his neighbours. In his brief discussion of residential architecture in his book *An apology*, published in 1843, Pugin wrote that that 'Our domestic architecture should have a peculiar expression illustrative of our manners and habits...the smaller detached houses which the present state of society has generated, should possess a peculiar character'.<sup>100</sup> His ecclesiastical residences have exactly that.

There is a further aspect of Pugin's houses which is important in the contrast it makes to the work of his contemporaries: he was entirely uninterested in landscape design. We have heard how at least until the mid 1830s, the design of a house was considered as being to some extent the response to its location; this central theme in picturesque design had been a familiar one since the days of Sanderson Miller, and Loudon had often repeated it. There is not so much as a hint of it in Pugin's work: in many of his drawings the landscape was shown to be flat. In his plans, he always showed the quadrangles of his courtyard buildings as blank rectangles. His perspective drawings for the Grange show a plain lawn to the south of the house; beyond this, immediately above the chalk cliffs facing the English Channel, he designed a garden which was memorably described by John Hardman Powell: 'The Garden was masculine in design, "no arbour for catterpillars to drop on you" but beds well dug out of the chalk, the best of Kent soil carted there, reservoir in centre, and various novel fences to break great gales' (fig. 3.58).<sup>101</sup> The 'catterpillars', I am sure, are derived from the comic routine of Nicholas Nickleby's mother, who reminisces about 'an exquisite little porch with twining honey-suckles and all sorts of things, where the earwigs used to fall into one's tea on a summer evening'.<sup>102</sup>



Pugin's perspective design of the Grange and St Augustine's church, drawn for the Royal Academy in 1849 when the house was complete and the church under way. In strong contrast to romantic or 'picturesque' designers, Pugin had no interest in landscape. Thanet is, admittedly, flat; but no one would guess from this view that his house sat dramatically atop a cliff [private collection].



Pugin did not care for garden things. The lack of a garden door at the rectories, as at his own house, has been mentioned above.

On the other hand, the siting of some of his small presbyteries does show a certain willingness to engage with the surrounding built landscape. At Warwick Bridge he could have sited the presbytery on the generous plot wherever he wanted to in relation to the church. He chose to angle it slightly so that the front door of it was inclined so that those going in through the west door of the church would be aware of it; in so doing he echoed some of his earliest sketches of imaginary scenes where he seemed to have a liking for this type of setting (see fig. 3.23).<sup>103</sup> He very probably added the porch wing to the crude Tudor-gothic presbytery by Derick and Hickman at Banbury in Oxfordshire so that the entrance to the house would similarly be visible from the street side of the church (fig. 3.59). At Marlow Pugin located the west door of his Roman Catholic church so that it would have been directly visible from the front door of the neighbouring *Anglican* rectory (but for the garden wall). All this contrasts with the practice of conventional Tudor-gothic architects: in nearly every case we have seen, the front door of a parsonage would be located away from the church; indeed, at Walkeringham, our first example, the front door faces in the other direction, at the end of a lengthy drive.

There could be no clearer evidence than this that Pugin's houses were intended to link their priests visibly, as well as architecturally, to the church that represented their community. So although his structural and constructional message arrived precisely as the architectural profession was becoming more complex and more demanding technically – indeed, Thomas Leverton Donaldson, first professor of architecture at University College London, wrote in 1842 of the present day that 'Perhaps there was never a period in this Country when construction was generally better understood' – it also became known exactly as the early success of the Oxford Movement resulted in a whole army of young clergymen taking up incumbencies across England who were both morally committed and financially able to build a house that would be a lasting testimony to their dedication to their churches, and that would unmistakably speak of truth and consistency.<sup>104</sup> It was because of this that the new parsonage of the 1840s and 1850s came to exemplify a fundamental and lasting change in English domestic architecture.

3.59

It seems likely that Pugin interfered with the design of the presbytery alongside Derick and Hickman's church of St John, Banbury, Oxfordshire, as it was going up in the late 1830s. The addition of a cross-corridor section with its entrance facing the street, seen here at the left of the house, aligned the front door with the church porch in a typically Puginesque manner whilst extending the amount of circulation space within.

