

## THE BUILDING OF HATFIELD HOUSE

By LAWRENCE STONE

Of all the great houses of the late 16th and early 17th centuries none is better documented than Hatfield House. The material has been catalogued and accessible to serious scholars for nearly half a century, and considerable use has already been made of it.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto, however, no attempt has been made to give a full account of the progress of the building in all its vicissitudes and, in consequence, a number of the most important architectural problems have remained unexamined and even unnoticed. Unrivalled though they are in the wealth of information they provide, the surviving papers are unfortunately incomplete in one vital respect; not a single architectural plan or drawing has come down to us,<sup>2</sup> and as a result some of the most intriguing problems of responsibility still elude our grasp. Nor are there any weekly accounts of the clerk of the works, such as we possess for the contemporary building of Wadham College, by which progress can be followed almost day by day.<sup>3</sup> What there is, however, is vastly more than has survived for any other building of the age, about the construction of some of the most important of which, such as Audley End, we know virtually nothing. We have a series of letters to and from the principal officers in charge of the works, a number of contracts with the craftsmen, repeated surveys of the existing state of the building and estimates of the future programme, an almost complete series of six-monthly building accounts, and a very large number of detailed bills.

Right up to the last five years of his life Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, had no intention of building himself a great country seat. His father, Lord Burghley, had soon perceived that Thomas, the heir to the title, was no more than a good-natured fool, and as early as 1589 he had begun the partition of the estates. Robert, who was being carefully groomed to succeed his father as the leading political figure of the day, was left all the Hertfordshire property, including that extra-

<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive account is by H. A. Tipping, *English Homes, Period III*, vol. II, 1922, pp. 305-352. Almost all the documents are preserved at Hatfield, and I am deeply indebted to the Marquis of Salisbury both for generous facilities for study and for permission to make use of this material. In this article the following abbreviations are used:—

SPD, JI: *Public Record Office, State Papers Domestic, James I.*

*Hatfield House, Private, and Estate MSS.* :

A = Accounts

D = Deeds

Box G = Box G

B = Bills

G = General

Box U = Box U

S = Salisbury MSS (bound volumes of official MSS which are being calendared by the Historical MSS Commission)

Pet = Petitions

<sup>2</sup> In 1636, in the inner room of the 'Evidence House' at Salisbury House, there were still preserved one great plot on paper and seven other plots and rough drafts of the old and new houses at Hatfield (A 160/9).

<sup>3</sup> cf. T. G. Jackson, *Wadham College*, Oxford, 1893, ch. II-IV.

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South Front of Hatfield House  
(Photo Precision Ltd., St. Albans)



South Porch of Hatfield House  
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ordinary Elizabethan show-piece, the house at Theobalds. With this huge palace, situated so close to London, he could easily fulfil his obligations to entertain his royal mistress or master. For it must be borne in mind that these enormous houses of the late 16th and early 17th century were based on the custom of the royal progress. The range of state apartments and the mass of subsidiary lodgings were designed for the accommodation of the court on one of its ceremonial summer tours. Some, such as Audley End, were vast enough to house most of the courtiers and civil servants, besides the Prince and his personal attendants. Others, such as Hatfield, were limited to accommodation for royalty and the greater courtiers. In both cases, however, the scale of building was greatly in excess of the normal requirement of even the largest private household. Thus at Hatfield the family lived on the ground floor of the east wing, where they are to-day, while the first floor of the east wing contained the King's apartments and the west those of the Queen, the two linked by the Long Gallery.

The second driving force behind these buildings was the spirit of emulation between courtiers and politicians jostling for prestige, position, and favour. As a result building activity tended to go in bursts, as a set of courtiers mortgaged the family fortunes in a competition for architectural grandeur. In the first decade of the 17th century all the great court figures were building. The Howard clan set the pace with Northampton House at Charing Cross, Greenwich House, and Audley End in Essex, and the Earl of Dorset was building at Knole. But Robert Cecil was not far behind with Chelsea House, Salisbury House and the New Exchange in the Strand, Cranborne House in Dorset, and finally Hatfield House in Hertfordshire.

As has been said, this last was no part of Cecil's original building programme. With Theobalds in his possession, even he saw no justification for another palace near London. In the first six years of the 17th century he had therefore directed his attention elsewhere. As his elder brother Thomas had been left Cecil House to the north of the Strand, Robert got Simon Basil, the Surveyor of the King's Works, to superintend the building of a new town house on the south side of the street. Substantially finished by 1602, large-scale extensions and alterations were begun again in 1605 and continued till 1612.<sup>1</sup> In 1607 Cecil bought up more property to the south of the Strand and conceived the idea of building a new Exchange to rival that in the City. The scheme in itself was a sensible one, for the Strand, the main highway linking the Court, the administration, and the law-courts with the City and the Inns of Court, was clearly ripe for development. Work was begun in June, 1608, and went forward at a tremendous pace under Simon Basil's

<sup>1</sup> L.C.C., *Survey of London*, XVIII, 1937, ch. 18.  
H.M.C. *Salis. MSS*, XI, *passim*; XV,

37, 54; XVII, 359, 426.  
B 28, 51, 63; S 143 f. 115-6; 195 f. 40;  
A 160/1; Box G/13.

general supervision.<sup>1</sup> As a result Britains Burse, as it was called, was formally opened in April, 1609, and the first shopkeepers were in occupation by the late autumn.

The third building upon which Robert Cecil was engaged in 1608 was Cranborne House in Dorset, which he had bought in the last years of Queen Elizabeth. In or before 1608 Cecil embarked on large-scale extensions of the existing house, including two wings at either end and probably also open loggias to the north and south. Here there is mention of 'the surveyor', apparently William Arnold, being in charge of the building operations, though he seldom visited the house, and as a result work tended to be delayed.<sup>2</sup>

It is against this background of building activity that Hatfield House has to be seen. The son of Lord Burghley, who had built Burghley House, Theobalds, and Cecil House in the Strand, brother-in-law of Lord Cobham, who had extended Cobham Hall and built Cobham College, political friend and rival of the builders of Knole, Audley End, Northampton House, and Greenwich House, Cecil had from earliest childhood lived in an atmosphere of architectural ostentation and had personally begun building the moment opportunity offered. But it was not till 1607 that the possibility of really large-scale activity arose.

In that year James I's increasing predilection for Theobalds as a hunting-lodge made it prudent and, it was hoped, profitable, to offer the house and parks to the Crown. James was duly grateful and in the preamble of the act of exchange declared that he intended a 'Princely recompense'. This took the form of some seventeen manors spread over twelve counties, and included the old royal palace and park of Hatfield.<sup>3</sup> Cecil might reasonably conclude that the enormous sale value of the other properties would amply pay the cost of pulling down the old palace and building a new one near the old site, and this he immediately proceeded to do.

The first and in some ways the most important problem is to identify the architect of the new house. But the evidence makes it clear that there was no such person, in the sense of a single individual exclusively responsible for planning and design. Instead we have a confused picture of collaboration (or competition) between a number of people. As has been seen, the Surveyor of the King's Works, Simon Basil, was concerned with the Earl's other London buildings. There is at least a presumption that he had some share in their design, and it would be only natural for Cecil to turn to him when considering his plans for the last and most ambitious of all his undertakings. It is not surprising therefore to

<sup>1</sup> Basil signed the accounts, recruited the masons, and arranged for the supply of building stone (B 29).

<sup>2</sup> S 128, f. 153. This reference cannot be to Basil, who is always spoken of as *Mr* Surveyor. William Arnold visited Cranborne in July, 1609,

and was paid £5 for "drawenge of a plott for Cranborne House", and 16 months later he contracted to build the terrace and kitchen (A 160/1).

<sup>3</sup> S 143, f. 112.

find Basil mixed up with Hatfield from the beginning. In 1607, precisely when we do not know, he and the Earl's gardener, Mountain Jenings, visited Hatfield to look the site over. He was down once more in December, 1608, to survey the state of the buildings and assess costs, and again in March, 1609, to try to work out possible economies. A year later Cecil sent him down to survey progress and investigate the reasons for the ever-mounting costs that continued to soar far beyond the estimates. In January, 1611, he was again at Hatfield to confer about future costs. And in that year his supervision of the work was so close that he personally appointed the joiner to do the wainscotting in the great chamber.<sup>1</sup>

From all these scraps it is clear that Basil was regularly used by the Earl in a consultative and even a supervisory capacity, but there is nothing to suggest that he took an active part in planning. On the other hand the Earl was clearly in the habit of turning to him for expert advice, and it is more than likely that the designs were submitted to him.

The man who was primarily responsible for the original design can be proved to have been Robert Lemyinge (or Liming), a carpenter.<sup>2</sup> The evidence hardly leaves any room for doubt on this subject. In November, 1607 soon after work had begun, Cecil gave him £40 'in guift towards my cherges about building and surveying of Hatfield'. The receipt is endorsed 'in surveying for and plotting of Hatfield howses', and it is probable that the surviving plan of the old palace is Liming's work.<sup>3</sup> Now this is a very large sum of money indeed (the modern equivalent, in so far as such a figure has any meaning, would be well over £500), and not at all the sort of reward given to the ordinary land surveyor. The presumption therefore is that this huge gratuity was for his creative work in designing the house. Liming and the Earl's official, Thomas Wilson, together drew up the original estimate of costs, and in August, 1607 there is a reference to Liming's 'platt for the point of the great chamber'.<sup>4</sup> Liming lived at Hatfield throughout the whole five years of the building operations, acting as clerk of the works in close supervision of the workmen at a wage of 12s. a week.<sup>5</sup> Letters of his in 1609 and 1610 prove conclusively that he regarded himself as the man responsible not merely for the soundness of the construction<sup>6</sup> but also for the design. Of a drastic economy proposal of 1609 Liming commented that it 'will be very deformed for the uniforme of the build, both within and without, which I will never agree to'.<sup>7</sup> A little later he wrote that he was 'about the drawing of an upright for the front of the gallery he agreed with the chaplain about 'a mould of the lights of the chapel

<sup>1</sup> B 21, 25, 27.

SPD, JI 57/82; 53/65, 79; 63/88 (1).

<sup>2</sup> He usually signs his name Lemyinge, but he is often referred to by others as Liminge or Lyming, and his death is thus entered in the parish register of Blickling. Consequently he is

usually known to modern writers as Liming.

<sup>3</sup> B 14/4, 15.

<sup>4</sup> S 143, ff. 114, 115.

<sup>5</sup> A 160/1; Box G/13.

<sup>6</sup> SPD, JI, 66/42.

<sup>7</sup> *op. cit.*, 45/69.

windows, and he drew up 'plots' of the gardens for Cecil's approval.<sup>1</sup> Finally in October, 1612, when the building was finished, the second Earl gave him a princely reward of £100 'in consideration of my pains about his Lordships works at Hatfield'.<sup>2</sup>

Who was this Robert Liming, to whom the Earl of Salisbury entrusted the design of his greatest undertaking? Unfortunately the details of his earlier career elude us. We do not even know what part of the country he came from, though the fact that in 1612 there was a John Lyming living at Deene, in Northamptonshire, may be suggestive.<sup>3</sup> The Hatfield papers are very scanty before 1607, so we do not know when he first entered the Earl's employment; his earliest recorded work is some carpentry for Theobalds almshouses in 1607, and it is as a carpenter that he is still described at this stage. Indeed Wilson suggested that he should act as contractor for the carpentry work at Hatfield, though in the end the idea was dropped.<sup>4</sup>

After the completion of Hatfield House in 1612 Liming moved elsewhere, but returned from time to time for specific jobs. In 1615 he made three visits to Hatfield 'to plot the church there', from which it is probable that he is the designer of the Jacobean Gothic Cecil chapel,<sup>5</sup> and in 1624 he submitted an estimate for a new kitchen and cellar for the Earl's other Hertfordshire house at Quixwood.<sup>6</sup>

By now, however, he had more important work on hand for Sir Henry Hobart, the Lord Chief Justice. In 1616 Hobart had bought the manor of Blickling, Norfolk, and not long after he began to build a big new house for himself, to which the finishing touches were being put in 1627-28. On 8 January, 1628, the parish register of Blickling records the burial of 'Robert Liminge the architect and builder of Blickling Hall'.<sup>7</sup> The attribution of Blickling to Liming in his last years enables us to identify his characteristic style and to distinguish those elements at Hatfield which are his from those perhaps of another, and more distinguished, architect, namely Inigo Jones.

That Sir Henry Hobart should have chosen the architect of Hatfield House for his new building is not at all surprising. More strange it is that Robert Cecil, accustomed as he was to patronising the most eminent London artists and craftsmen of the day, should have picked on this apparently obscure carpenter. That he was still a practising carpenter is proved by the Theobalds bill, though his familiarity with 'plots' and surveys indicates that he had some architectural

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, 66/42, 58/9, 67/62.

<sup>2</sup> B 653.

<sup>3</sup> Brudenell MSS, O. XXII. 4. I am indebted to Mr G. Brudenell for permission to examine his family papers.

<sup>4</sup> B 21.

<sup>5</sup> S 143 f. 114.

<sup>6</sup> A 15/1. The chapel was built in 1618 by Francis Carter, mason, at a cost of £669 (S 143, ff. 142, 132). The probability that Liming was

the designer is strengthened by the identity of the columns of the arcade with those of the screen passage at the House.

<sup>7</sup> G 3/2.

<sup>8</sup> *Country Life*, 67, 1930, p. 814. The other evidence of Liming at Blickling is a design for a banqueting house signed by him, which is still preserved there (J. Lees-Milne, *Tudor Renaissance*, pl. 97).

practice behind him. All the same it remains an odd choice, even if Liming's designs were submitted to the scrutiny of the more experienced Simon Basil.

But Basil and Liming do not exhaust the range of participants in the original plans, much less the later alterations; there are also the patron himself, Robert Cecil, and his *homme d'affaires* Thomas Wilson. From the start Wilson was put in charge of the financial arrangement for the building. 'The expenses of Hatfield may lie entire upon me', he wrote in August, 1607, after some bickering with the Earl's steward over responsibility,<sup>1</sup> and thereafter, until he gave up the job in 1611, he remained in financial charge; he hired the workmen, signed the contracts, and paid the money. All bills were signed by Liming and his foreman, John Shawe, and they were then paid by Wilson. He lived in Salisbury House in the Strand, where he dealt with the shippers and contractors, and at regular intervals he rode down to Hatfield with money to pay the workmen.<sup>2</sup> He was a party to every enquiry into costs and estimates, to every survey of work done, to every scheme for reduction of expenditure.

Lastly there was Robert Cecil himself. The role of the patron in architectural planning naturally varies with the capacity and interests of the individual. There can be no doubt whatever that Cecil's father, Lord Burghley, played a very active part indeed in the development of both Burghley House and Theobalds, and the same is true of Robert's friend the ninth Earl of Northumberland, the rebuilder of Syon House. Before the latter began he bought a 'Book of Architecture' for 30s. 6d. and made a tour of the most celebrated modern buildings. In 1603 he wrote to Robert Cecil that he was about to 'go and see Copthall, for now that I am a builder I must borrow of my knowledge somewhat out of Tibballs, somewhat out of every place of mark where curiosities are used'.<sup>3</sup> It is certain that Cecil's role, if not so decisive as that of Burghley and Northumberland, was a far from passive one, for we have ample evidence from the many letters to him from Wilson and others of his keen interest in his buildings. And when Arnold was planning the rebuilding of Cranborne House, we are told that he was closeted with the Earl for an hour every day.<sup>4</sup>

In April, 1607, the Earl personally chose the site of the new house at Hatfield, on the highest point of ground to the south-east of the old palace. As he explained in a letter to Sir Thomas Lake, 'I . . . looked upon Hatfield, where it pleased my Lord Chamberlain [Earl of Suffolk] my Lord of Worcester, and my Lord of Southampton to be contented to view upon what part of ground I should place my habitation'.<sup>5</sup> There are repeated references to designs and proposals being referred

<sup>1</sup> S 143, f. 116.

<sup>2</sup> SPD, J1, 57/82.

<sup>3</sup> H.M.C., *6th Report*, p. 228.

H.M.C., *Salis. Mss.*, XV, pp. 382-3.

<sup>4</sup> Essex Record Office, Petre MSS, D/DP. Q 13/3/11 (I owe the reference to the kindness of Miss Nancy Briggs).

<sup>5</sup> SPD, J1, 27/7.

to him for approval, and an excellent illustration of his role as final arbiter is to be found in Wilson's letter of 21 August, 1607. 'Lymming is confident in his platt for the point of the great chamber where he designed it, which we will dispute when your Lordship comes to Windsor'.<sup>1</sup> The series of letters which have survived makes it clear that Cecil closely scrutinised not merely the finances but also the design of the building. On occasions, as we shall see, decisions of his at a late stage caused radical alterations in the building programme and the design of the house, even involving considerable demolition.

All this is a far cry from the ancient, and still lively, legend of Robert Cecil acting as his own architect. Instead we have a more natural but more complicated picture of the interaction of the ideas and wills of four men: the designer and clerk of the works, Robert Liming; the eminent professional adviser, Simon Basil; the financial administrator, Thomas Wilson, with architectural opinions of his own; and lastly the patron himself, Robert Cecil, looking at Liming's drawings, listening attentively to all this advice, even calling in outside help, and then taking the ultimate decisions.

Before discussing the progress of the building and its architectural problems it would be as well to explain the organisation of supplies and of workmen. In 1607 to 1609 Cecil was building actively in four places, at Cranborne, Salisbury House, the Burse, and Hatfield, and there was obvious need for some administrative centralisation to ensure a smooth flow of supplies and men to all these sites. This was a time of tremendous building activity all over the south of England, and skilled workmen were very scarce. Cranborne, Salisbury House, and much of the Burse were built in stone, and serious difficulties were encountered in finding the necessary masons. To get labour for the Burse, on which no less than 116 masons and 11 carvers were employed in August, 1608, the Contractor, Mr. Sowthes (one of the King's masons), and Simon Basil had to make a personal tour of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire.<sup>2</sup> In view of this shortage and of the great cost of building in stone it is hardly surprising that Cecil decided to copy Theobalds and use brick with stone dressings at Hatfield. He was not prepared to compete with Audley End.

No detailed accounts have survived to enable us to calculate the total labour force engaged at Hatfield, but there can be no doubt that it ran into hundreds. Only the unskilled labourers, engaged in digging foundations, pulling down the walls of the old palace, levelling the courts and gardens and so on, were recruited and paid directly. These were supervised by Liming's assistant John Shawe and by Liming himself, who also controlled all the other building operations. The rest of the work was done on a contract basis, with master craftsmen in charge

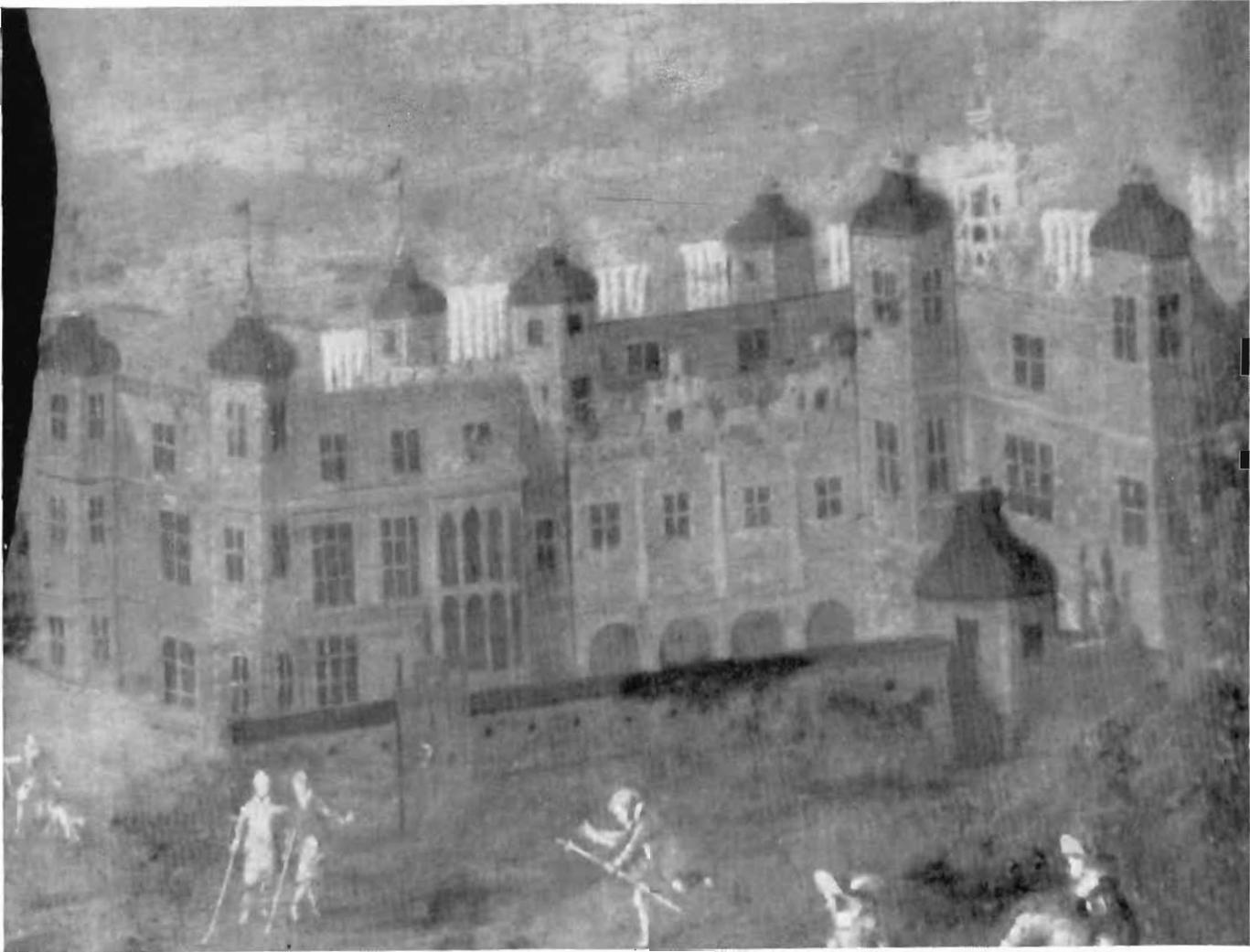
<sup>1</sup> S 143, f. 115.

<sup>2</sup> B 29.



Blickling Hall, Norfolk

*(Photograph by kind permission of the National Buildings Record)*



Detail of picture of the 2nd Earl of Salisbury by G. Geldorp, 1626 (Hatfield House)  
*(Photo Precision Ltd., St. Albans)*

who hired and paid their own workmen and presented their gross bills to Liming and Thomas Wilson. Thus all the masonry was carried out by Edward Collin, the carpentry by William Wode, the joinery by Jenever, and the bricklaying by Jeremy Talcot. Of these leading craftsmen the most important were naturally Collin and Talcot, but there is nothing to suggest that either was more than an executant carrying out a contract job. Only Jenever had any share in design, for he was presumably responsible for the details of the joinery and he certainly drew 'plots' of the wooden chimney pieces. Unlike the others, the joiners did not work on the site but in the London workshops, whence the finished articles were sent down to be fitted up. For example, the back panelling of the gallery was made in a hurry in 1612 by twelve London joiners working according to measurements supplied by Jenever.<sup>1</sup> In this respect they were more like the decorative trades than the other main building operatives.

In an enterprise of this scale both speed and economy depend upon an even flow of materials to the site. Robert Cecil was therefore fortunate that the two main building materials, brick and timber, were obtainable from local sources. The theory that most of the brick was reused material from the old palace is not borne out by the documents. These old bricks were used for some of the garden walls and for rubble filling to level the courtyards and make the new approach road, but that was all.

The bricks for the new building were made on or near the site at Hatfield itself, suitable clay being apparently readily available. The organisation of this brick supply did not run too smoothly, owing to the enormous quantities involved. So far as we can tell, between one and three million bricks were used every year for at least four years.<sup>2</sup> The brickmaking season was fairly short, being confined to the summer months and ceasing in early October. For the first two years the brickmakers were direct employees, who were supplied with free fuel from Hatfield woods. In March, 1609, Wilson decided that it would be cheaper to work on a contract basis, and Eustace Kellie was engaged to supply bricks at 11s. 6d. a thousand, paying 6s. 8d. a load for wood from Hatfield woods. The wood was to be cut by the Earl's workmen, but the brickmakers would have to fetch it.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end the brickmakers began using coal brought from London, both to save wood and perhaps also costs.

Apart from the minor item of tiles, which came from Woodhall park at a cost of 11s. a thousand *plus* 3s. a load for transport, the only other locally supplied material was timber. Oak for the main timbering

<sup>1</sup> SPD, JI, 52/17; S 143, f. 122.

<sup>2</sup> In October, 1609, Liming said there were 1,100,000 bricks on hand which would last till the next year (SPD, JI, 66/42). It was estimated that 2½ million more bricks were

needed for the 1610 building season (SPD, JI, 53/65) and between Christmas, 1610, and October, 1611, 700,000 bricks were made (Box G/13).

<sup>3</sup> Pet. 2418; S 196, f. 130.

and for laths was mostly bought from Sir Robert Wroth at Westley wood and Tewin warren. Sir Robert sold the standing trees at over £1 each, leaving the Earl's men to cut and carry them to Hatfield.<sup>1</sup>

All the other materials for the building had to come from elsewhere, some of them hundreds and even thousands of miles away, and were funnelled through the great port of London. Unloaded at Tower wharf, Wiggins's quay, Chester's quay, Galley quay and Cock's quay, they were taken to a yard and warehouse in Redcross Street, where a scrivener, Henry Doughty, was responsible for checking the goods in and out.<sup>2</sup> From there the materials, of which the most important in bulk were stone and coal for lime-burning, were sent down to Hatfield by local carriers. There were some dozen of these, each of whom in the busy season at the height of summer picked up a fresh load every two or three days. The loads were small, at most about 40 feet of stone<sup>3</sup> or 20 sacks of coal, and it is a revealing commentary on the current state of the road from London to Hatfield that the average winter loads were not much more than half those carried in the dry season from June to August.

After brick, the most bulky and costly building material was naturally stone, which was needed for the dressings, paving, and south front at Hatfield, and also for the buildings in the Strand. In 1601 stone for Salisbury House had been obtained from a wide variety of sources, uncut stone from Oxford (presumably Headington) quarries, wrought Kentish stone from Lady Sidney at Penshurst, and Caen stone, which had been imported for repairs to old Saint Paul's, from the Bishop of London.<sup>4</sup> Even greater diversity of sources is found for the still more urgent operations of 1607 and after. A good deal of stone for all these buildings was reused material from the ruinous walls and gatehouse of the former monastery of Saint Augustine at Canterbury, which the Earl had acquired by grant and purchase between 1605 and 1607.<sup>5</sup> Despite protests from the inhabitants, who were apparently resentful of the destruction, demolition went forward in the summer of 1608; 520 tons of stone were acquired in this manner and shipped to London *via* Sandwich.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from this Kentish supply, the bulk of the stone for all the buildings came from Normandy. The fine white stone from Caen had been used in England from the 12th century onwards, and it is not surprising to find it still in high demand in the early 17th century. The contract for the stone was placed with a London merchant, Robert Bell, who merely between October, 1606 and January, 1608 delivered at Tower Wharf some 800 tons of stone at a gross cost of £640. This

<sup>1</sup> B 25, 36, 38, 69; A 160/1. There is an early bill of £10 for charges for providing timber out of Ireland, but nothing seems to have come of this scheme, presumably because Sir Robert Wroth's timber came available soon after (B 23).

<sup>2</sup> B 28, 24; A 160/1; Box G/13.

<sup>3</sup> Caen Stone worked out at about 16 ft. a ton (B 38).

<sup>4</sup> H.M.C., *Salis. MSS*, XI, 343, 358, 362.

<sup>5</sup> D. 102/40.

<sup>6</sup> SPD, JI, 35/61, 36/12, 36/35; B 29; S 143, f. 115.

was a very high price and Bell felt a little nervous about presenting so stiff a bill. He explained that the stone would have been cheaper 'but that to make expedition to provyde ston for your honners severall buyldings we were forsed to Buy a quarry & hier workemen to digge out the ston, which was very chargable, & allso ther was lost & spoylte at Caen the last great frost About fowerskore ton',<sup>1</sup> Even so the cost of the stone at the waterside was only £275, the remaining £365 being the freight costs to London. Between April, 1609, and November, 1610, another 995 tons were imported, the cost of the stone being £285 and the freight £462, besides an extra £13 for a horse presented to the governor of Caen to obtain his goodwill.<sup>2</sup> The stone was shipped in a host of small vessels carrying between 12 and 50 tons each, many of them owned by Dutchmen. Indeed the tiny scale and exorbitant costs of transport in the 17th century are vividly brought home in these accounts. Little or no technical or organisational improvements had been made since the Middle Ages, and the result was to impose a crippling burden on all economic activity.

Besides these two principal sources of supply, minor quantities of stone were obtained from a variety of other sources. Ancaster stone was provided by the Hatfield master-mason Edward Collin, which suggests that he may have been a Lincolnshire man.<sup>3</sup> Blue slates of the best quality were sent up from Plymouth by the local Admiralty official, James Bagg, and a good deal of Purbeck stone was quarried and sent to London for use in paving. Eighty-two very large slabs arrived in January, 1609, and William Hammond wrote triumphantly of this conquest over transport difficulties: 'The carriage of them at this time of the year from the quarry to the waterside up the steep hills they were to pass, was held in the country from whence they came a difficulty (till it was done) not to have been overcome by the industry of man'. Even now transport troubles were not at an end. Though shipped on 4th December, the cargo was held up by bad weather and was not delivered in London till 25th January.<sup>4</sup> Other black paving stone came from near Berwick and was shipped ready squared and polished. It was got on the seashore below the tide line, and was carried to the ships on men's backs. There was some talk of using an agate-coloured stone from a newly-discovered quarry in the Earl of Northumberland's lands, within three miles of a port, but it seems that nothing came of the suggestion.<sup>5</sup> An 'element of the exotic in the stone used at Hatfield is provided by the fine white marble used in the fireplaces. This came from the Carrara quarries in Italy and was shipped *via* Leghorn by an English merchant.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A 8/3.

<sup>2</sup> G 12/11.

<sup>3</sup> S 143, f. 115; B 36.

<sup>4</sup> SPD, JI, 36/39; S 125, f. 19.

<sup>5</sup> S 125, ff. 44, 51. Northumberland was

getting building stone for Syon House from Brotherwick and Coquet Island, and paving stone from Walbottle (*Northumberland County History*, V, p. 323).

<sup>6</sup> B 38; A 160/1.

The only other materials of any significance were nails for the timbering and lead for the roof. The former came from the still flourishing Sussex iron industry, being bought from Robert Courtup, a blacksmith at Framfield,<sup>1</sup> and the latter from the Derbyshire mines. At first there was some uncertainty whether to use lead or copper. The sergeant plumber was consulted, who advised that copper would be 7*d.* a foot dearer, and so it was decided to use lead. Thomas Wilson advised the Earl to get his lead direct from Derbyshire and ship it himself, rather than to buy it from merchants in London. He suggested that the Theobalds plumber should go to Derbyshire to make the arrangements, and the Earl's friend, Sir Walter Cope, advised an approach to Lord Cavendish for help in making local contacts. By this means Wilson optimistically hoped to get the lead for £9 10*s.* a fodder instead of the £15 at which it was selling in London, but he never in fact achieved this figure. He managed a reduction to between £11 2*s.* 6*d.* and £13 10*s.*, plus the cost of carriage from the wharf to the warehouse in Redcross Street.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from this account that the organisation of supplies for the building of Hatfield House was one of considerable complexity. Materials had to be obtained from a very wide area and transported to London. There they had to be stored and fed to the building works as required. And it is a tribute to the efficiency with which Thomas Wilson organised this side of arrangements that in Liming's many letters only once does he complain of shortage of materials. This is in the autumn of 1610 as the south front was going up, when he made an urgent appeal for more stone to keep the masons employed. But the fault was hardly Wilson's since a sudden change of plan during the winter had made unexpected new demands on the supply of stone.<sup>3</sup> In general the documents illustrate the extreme difficulty of arranging a smooth flow of materials owing to the primitive nature of 17th century transport, and prove the success with which the difficulties were overcome.

Both the plan and the elevation of Hatfield owe much to Lord Burghley's building at Theobalds.<sup>4</sup> The use of brick with stone dressings, the idea of big square blocks at the corners, joined by a lower section, the architrave, frieze, and cornice running round the first and second floor levels, the balustrade and the flat roofs, the little domed turrets and the gilded lions on the roof-line, the central clock tower and the open loggia, all derive from this earlier palace, where Liming had worked and the Earl of Salisbury had lived.

But even if these basic items were all agreed upon, it does not mean that the plans were rapidly approved. Though Cecil was busy choosing the site for his new house in April, 1607, work did not start before

<sup>1</sup> B 24.

<sup>2</sup> G 3/11 ; S 143, f. 115 ; A 160/1.

<sup>3</sup> SPD, JI, 58/9 ; 53/79.

<sup>4</sup> J. Summerson, 'Theobalds : a lost Elizabethan Palace'. *The Listener*, 31 March, 1955.

August. And even then Liming and Wilson were still arguing over the ground plan, in particular over the site of the great chamber. The reference to this dispute is very obscure, for Wilson writes that pending a decision 'the foundations may go forwards for all the rest, and that (as a thing standing apart from all), may be added at any time if your Lordship shall so please'.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to see how a great chamber could be tacked on to the existing structure without disfiguring the general appearance, and yet there is no great chamber on the ground floor. The suggestion that Wilson is here referring to extensions to Salisbury House in the Strand is very implausible, as there is nothing to suggest that Liming had anything to do with this work. An alternative explanation, for which some additional evidence is available, is that the original plan of Hatfield lacked the great rambling extensions to the wings that give it its very peculiar ground plan, but that Liming envisaged some such extensions from the first.

Not very much was done in this first season's work other than to clear the site, dig out the cellars, and raise some of the foundations up to ground level. Next spring work went forward with fresh impetus, and the main and partition walls were erected up to or above the first floor. At the same time a large unskilled labour force was turned on to the task of pulling down the old palace to the west of the new buildings.<sup>2</sup> It was during this year that the first major change of plans took place. Unfortunately we have no correspondence for this period, so that it is very difficult to reconstruct precisely what happened. What the records tell us is that when the Earl was at Holdenby new plans were adopted which involved pulling down two main load-bearing walls each 58 *ft* long, one of which was already 27 *ft* and the other 14 *ft* high. At the same time a partition wall was pulled down 'whereas a pare of staires came up neare the ould Chapell'. The bricklayer's bill up to 1610 also included an item for making two chimneys and two doors in 'the new Chappell' and 'worcking up a wale in the ould Chapell where a sumer laye'.<sup>3</sup>

From these scraps of information it is certain that a major change of plans took place, involving the destruction of two main walls and an abandonment of the original site of the chapel. The references to an old and a new chapel in the bricklayer's accounts leave no room for doubt on this point, but it is far from clear where the 'old chapel' lay. The problem is complicated by the fact that a further alteration to the chapel was decided upon in the winter of 1609-10, and some of the undated entries in the bricklayers' accounts may refer to this second change of plan.

One possibility is that it was intended to preserve the former chapel of the old palace as a detached block, and that work was done with this

<sup>1</sup> S 143, f. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, 143, f. 117.

<sup>3</sup> B 26, 27; A/9 24.

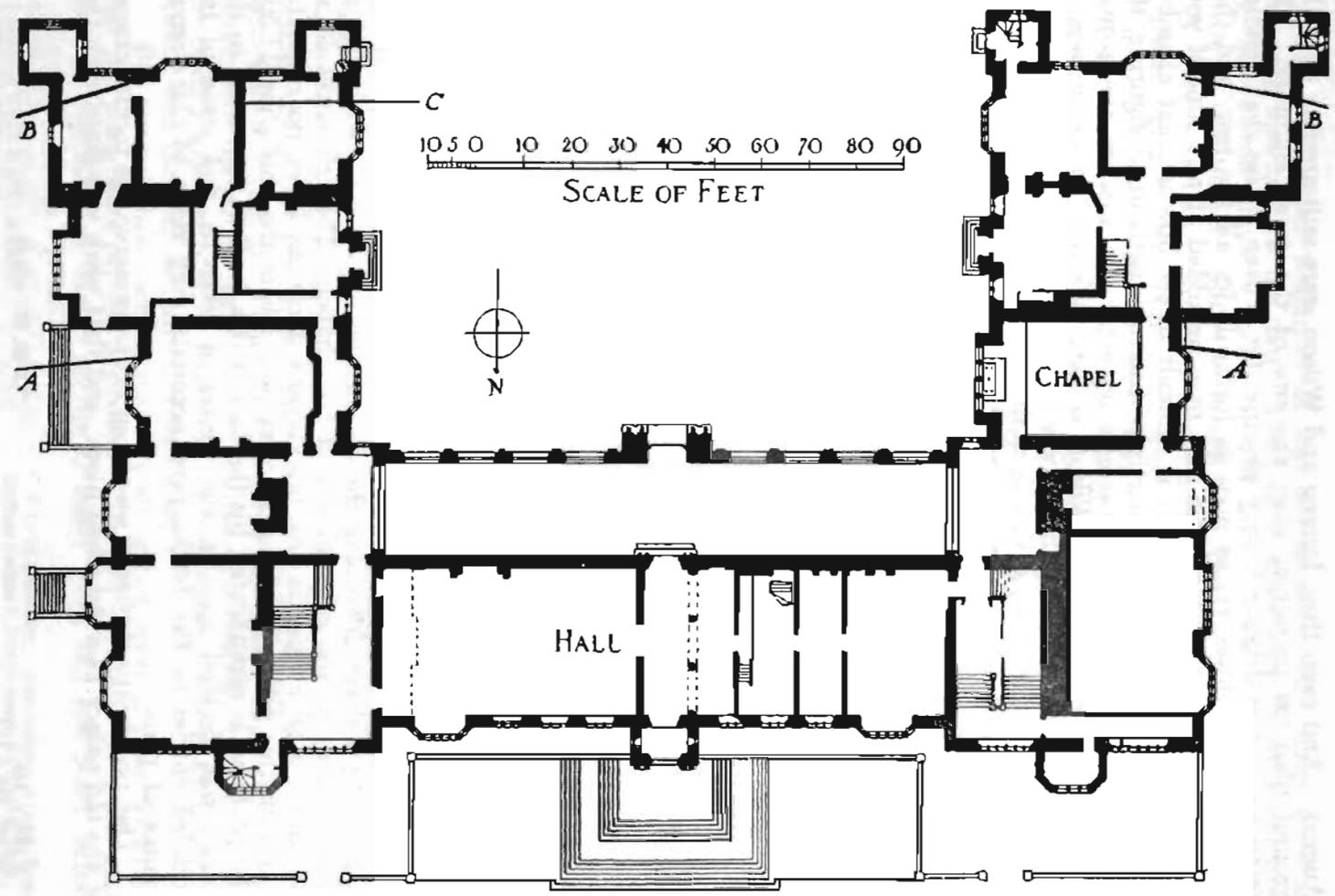


Fig. 1. Plan of ground floor of Hatfield House

object in mind, but was now abandoned. There is, however, another explanation, though it must remain a mere hypothesis, which accords with these entries and also solves one of the architectural puzzles of Hatfield. The oddity about the ground plan lies in the expansion of the ends of the two wings into large oblong blocks three rooms deep (fig. 1). This expansion of the ends of the wings is unknown elsewhere. Not merely does it create an extraordinary irregularity of plan in the outer faces to east and west, but it also largely obscures the basic structure of the house, which consists of two high square blocks at either end, linked by a lower section in the centre and with wings running out at right angles. All this strongly suggests that the expansion of the wings was an afterthought (and not a very happy one at that), and that in the original design the wings were of the conventional narrow width (fig. 2), like those of Sir Thomas Cecil's house at Wimbledon, Surrey, begun in 1588.<sup>1</sup> If this is so, the 58-foot of destroyed main walls ran on the lines A-B in fig. 1, and the chapel may have been intended to be at the end of the east wing.<sup>2</sup> The new wall in the old chapel would be the present cross-wall C in fig. 1, below the 'sumer' or beam that was to support the cross-wall above the chapel on the first floor. It is extremely improbable that the twin towers at the ends of the wings were part of the original design, where they would have been much too close together. There may have been intended only a single tower at each side, towards the inner court, or more probably no tower at all but merely little turrets on the tops of the wings at the corners, as at Audley End.

The change in the site of the chapel can be attributed to a decision to leave the whole of the east wing clear for the private apartments, looking out over the terrace into the great ornamental garden. The new site was probably chosen in imitation of the plan of Wimbledon House. However, it is undeniably awkward, since access on both floors to the whole of the west wing is possible only by traversing the chapel. The desire for a general expansion of the size of the house probably arose out of the death on 19th April, 1608, of the 1st Earl of Dorset from apoplexy at the Council table. Robert Cecil succeeded him in his most lucrative office of Lord Treasurer, and it was probably this unexpected accession of dignity and wealth that inspired the change, in the same way that Lord Burghley's accession to the Treasurership in 1572 had led to a similar expansion at Theobalds.<sup>3</sup> A further inducement may

<sup>1</sup> J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, fig. 7, pl. 22A.

<sup>2</sup> Mr John Summerson has suggested to me that the original walls may perhaps have been in line with the east and west walls of the two main blocks to the north, that is between the existing walls and those in fig. 2. I do not favour this view, partly because the length of destroyed wall would then only need to be 52 feet instead of 58, and partly because the increase of space in the new plan would hardly have been worth the trouble and expense of alteration.

The reference to the stairs near the old chapel remains a puzzle, since the existing stairs going up to the first floor in the middle of the wing are said to be a 19th-century addition.

<sup>3</sup> The Earl of Salisbury was appointed on 6th May. King James and the Court were at Holdenby in the second and third weeks in August, which must have been when the alterations were carried out. (J. Nichols, *The Progresses of James I*, 1828, II, p. 203).

have been the realisation that the difference of some three feet in the width of the two wings would have been very noticeable when looked at from the south but, by making the extensions of different depths, this discrepancy is successfully concealed from view. This difference in width is very puzzling, and it is difficult to advance any reasonable explanation for it. One possibility, however, is that the old chapel was not at the south end of the east wing after all, but at the north end in the space marked D in fig. 2. The additional width of this wing would then be explained by the need to allow space for a reasonably long chapel together with the corridor behind it giving separate access to the other rooms beyond.

After this alteration building proceeded swiftly throughout 1608, and most of the walls were well beyond the first floor when winter put a stop to further activity. The works were covered with straw to protect them from the frost, and the Earl's advisers had time to straighten out the accounts.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1609, however, there arose a new crisis in the history of the building, this time due to a financial panic. What Cecil had been told about the probable cost of his enterprise we do not know, but he now realised that the expenses were soaring far in excess of estimates. Owing to a reckless indulgence in land purchase and building, the Earl's general expenditure was running far ahead of even his enormous income. Venal though he was, he could not squeeze enough out of his official positions to stand the strain, and already his debts must have been approaching the £40,000 level that they were soon to reach.<sup>2</sup>

In March, 1609, Simon Basil was sent down to Hatfield to suggest economies in the building, and on 25th May Liming drew up his estimate of possible savings on the official, and absurdly optimistic, estimate of £8,146 needed to finish the building.<sup>3</sup> Suggestions, all of which were evidently made with extreme reluctance, included omitting the architrave, frieze, and cornice of stone designed to run twice round the inner court (Pl. XV); the 'tafferils' or open strapwork scrolls over the windows, and the lions holding vanes over the gable ends; and the Purbeck marble paving in the kitchen area. More serious were two other proposals, of which the first was to cut off the six towers on the north and south fronts and roof them over level with the rest of the house; it was of this proposal that Liming rightly remarked that it 'will be very deformed for the uniforme of the build, both within & without, which I will never agree to'. The second was a suggestion for simplifying the ornament on the south front, the precise nature of which is not clear and which will be discussed in detail later on.

Four days later there was produced a final list of possible economies, drawn up after a general conference of the chief workmen before Simon

<sup>1</sup> B 25.

<sup>2</sup> In the year September, 1608, to September, 1609, his borrowings exceeded repayments by

£15,400, and by 1610 his total indebtedness reached £42,395 (A 160/1; S 141, f. 352).

<sup>3</sup> B 27; SPD, JI, 45/69.

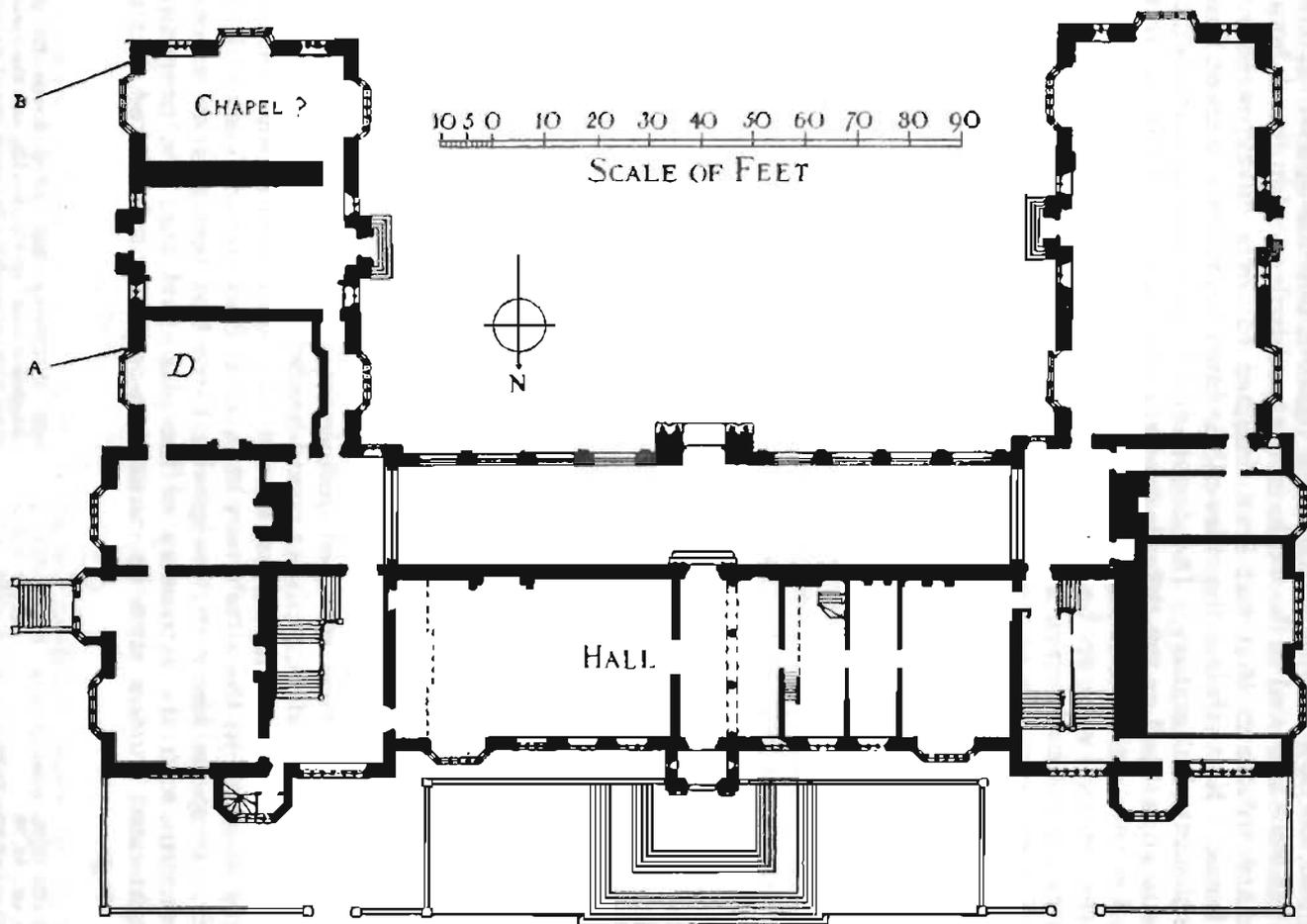


Fig. 2. Suggested original plan of ground floor of Hatfield House

Basil and the Earl's officers.<sup>1</sup> The suggestion about the towers was here dropped, no doubt owing to Liming's vigorous objections, and the chief savings were achieved in the works in the east garden and in the elaborate ancillary structures that had been designed to cover all approaches to the house. Nevertheless the sides of the inner court were marked down for substantial alteration. The double architraves, friezes, and cornices were to go, as well as the tafferils over the windows, and £120 was to be saved in the 'garnishment of the front'. Inside the house the elaborate plaster ceilings were to be simplified, and expenditure on the wood-carving on the hall screen and elsewhere was to be halved. Meanwhile building was virtually at a standstill and all but twenty of the labourers were paid off.<sup>2</sup> A fortnight later Robert Cecil himself came down to examine the position, but it was not until 28th July that the revised building programme was drawn up and signed. Unfortunately this document is missing, but we know from other evidence that it ordered those economies in the stonework decoration of the inner court which were mentioned in the earlier recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

Work began again at once in an attempt to make up for lost time. Despite a lot of rain in August, Liming reported confidently in October that he would be able to get most of the roof on before the onset of winter.<sup>4</sup> By now, however, Robert Cecil had begun to regret his cheese-paring of a few months before. By temperament a spender, such economies did not come naturally to him, and by October he had evidently begun to wonder whether he was not spoiling the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar. At all events before next April those economies so anxiously contrived in the spring and early summer of 1609 had all been abandoned. The double architraves, friezes and cornices, the tafferils over the windows, and the traceried gable ends were all restored, and the cuts in the internal carving and joinery and in the terrace of the east garden were cancelled. In addition, two new charges were decided upon. Major alterations were ordered in the chapel and the chapel windows, costing altogether no less than £200. There are certain hints to suggest that these included redesigning the east window.<sup>5</sup> The tracery of this window, with its round-headed lights, is quite unlike all the other windows in the house, though it is similar to closely contemporary windows in the almshouses at Audley End and at Gosfield Hall, Essex. It seems likely that originally there had been a bow window to conform with the symmetry of the plan, and that the projecting straight-sided window with its curious tracery was substituted at this late stage.

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, 45/84.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, 45/76.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, 47/53 ; 53/79.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, 47/98 ; 66/42.

<sup>5</sup> The survey of joiners' work up to November, 1610, included panelling 'in the passage behind the Chappell one the second storie . . .

with that which was pulled downe for the Chappell windo' (S 143, f 118), and the survey of bricklayers' work for the same period included a special item, additional to the main building, for 'the foundatione of the Chappell windo' (A 9/24).

The second change concerned the central feature of the whole building, namely the south front, the complicated history of which we must now examine in detail. As it stands to-day this front presents a startling contrast with the rest of the building with its bleak brick structure and fanciful strapwork decorations. In the first place it is built entirely of stone, and in the second its style is unlike that of the rest of the exterior. The classical frieze with its ox-skull and paterae metopes, the windows with their projecting corbelled sills and flattened mullions and transoms, quite unlike those anywhere else in the house, and the elegant pilasters between them give the first-floor gallery front a classical air that even the very Jacobean central porch and the strapwork and gable-ends above cannot altogether disguise (Pl. XVI). It is significant that none of these features appear in Liming's subsequent architectural venture at Blickling, though almost every other element in Hatfield's exterior can be found there (Pl. XVII).<sup>1</sup>

The inner court to the south, up to which ran the newly-made approach road, was intended to be the principal feature of the house, and the original designs were probably made by Liming with Simon Basil's approval. From the first the ground floor of the south front seems to have been planned as an open loggia, a system becoming popular at just this period and here deriving directly from the four loggias at Theobalds. So far as we can gather from the evidence, the original design had a ground floor decoration of pilasters, while at top and bottom of the first floor gallery ran two stone bands of architrave, frieze, and cornice that continued right round the inner court. Like the rest of the building, the first floor of the south front was to be principally built in brick with these decorative features in stone. All the brickwork of the south court was double pencilled, and the design was therefore a deliberate study in colour contrast of reddened brick and white Caen stone that is a characteristic of royal works of this period.<sup>2</sup> But this was not all. Liming's economy suggestions of May, 1609, included the following mysterious proposal: 'If it may please his Lordship to let the front of the gallery to be built with pilasters as it is begun & leave out the culloms he may deduct out of the charge—120 *li*'.<sup>3</sup> From this it would appear that Liming had been planning the very strange architectural anomaly of a set of engaged or detached columns running up between the windows, and resting, presumably, on the pilastered piers of the ground floor arches. The idea of a pilastered (or pillared) first floor front was thus evidently part of the original

<sup>1</sup> cf. respectively, Hatfield, E. side of S.-W. wing (*Country Life*, 61, 1927, p. 428, fig. 4), corner towers with two-storey bow windows (*loc. cit.*), and shape of gable ends (*loc. cit.*, fig. 3), with Blickling (*Country Life*, 67, 1930, p. 817, figs. 8, 4, and 8). Where certain elements of the front are copied at Blickling, the work is coarse and the design is bungled. Compare

the door spandrels in *Country Life*, 61, 1927, p. 428, fig. 4, with *Country Life*, 67, 1930, p. 814, fig. 8.

<sup>2</sup> E. Mercer, 'The Decoration of the Royal Palaces, 1553-1625'. *Arch. Jnl.*, CX, 1953.

<sup>3</sup> SPD, JI, 45/69. There can be no doubt about the word 'culloms'.

Liming design, and must have been copied from the front of Britain's Burse. The omission of this feature was endorsed in the official report four days later, when it was recommended that £120 be saved in 'garnishment of the front', and was most probably included in the new programme of 28th July.

On 9th October, 1609, Liming wrote to Wilson to report progress. After explaining his hopes to have most of the building roofed before winter, he added 'I am about the drawing of an upright for the front of the gallery, which I can doe little to but in the evenings by reason of giving order to the workemen . . . but the next weeke I will satisfy you at large the manner of it and what needful stones is to be provided For the performance of it'.<sup>1</sup>

But this measured drawing of Liming's was never executed. Some time during the winter Cecil had changed his mind again. By April, 1610, the architraves, friezes, and cornices had been restored to the two sides of the court, and the main south front had been redesigned as a solid stone façade, at an estimated extra cost of £150.<sup>2</sup> Who then was responsible for the new design? It could, of course, have been Liming, though we have seen that there are stylistic grounds for thinking this unlikely. An alternative, and more exciting, hypothesis is that here we have the first known architectural achievement of Inigo Jones. The documents tell us that on 30th October, at the express orders of Robert Cecil, Thomas Wilson provided Inigo Jones with a horse from the Earl's stable and rode down to Hatfield with him. They spent two nights there and returned on 1st November. On 28th February, 1610, the Earl's receiver-general entered in his accounts, *under the heading of expenses for Hatfield building*: 'To Inigo Jones, as your ho: reward given him for drawinge of some Architecture 10-0-0'.<sup>3</sup> Now £10 is a large sum of money and would only be given for some outstanding service. For example, on the previous occasion when Cecil had employed Jones' services to design a masque to entertain the King at the official opening of Britain's Burse in April, 1609, he had only given him £13 6s. 8d.<sup>4</sup> Though the wording of the entry is a little obscure—'some Architecture' is a curious phrase to employ for what was usually described as a 'plot', an 'upright', or a 'model'—the conclusion seems inescapable that Inigo Jones did some architectural drawings for the Earl in connection with the building of Hatfield. His visit was carried out at the express orders of the Earl at just the moment when Liming's design for the south front came to the latter for final approval, and shortly before the design was radically altered. This certainly suggests that Jones was consulted about the new south front, though it does not mean that he must have designed the sculptured details, which may well have

<sup>1</sup> SPD, JI, 66/42. Liming does not give the year, but from internal evidence the letter clearly dates from 1609, not 1611 as stated in the *Calendar of State Papers*.

<sup>2</sup> SPD, JI, 53/79.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, 57/82; A 160/1.

<sup>4</sup> A 160/1.

been left to the head carver. We cannot be sure who this carver was, but the payment to John Bucke of nearly £200 during 1611 may mean that he was responsible.<sup>1</sup>

The clock tower that dominates Hatfield (Pl. XX) is also unlikely to have been designed by Liming.<sup>2</sup> These towers were present at Burghley, Theobalds, and Salisbury House, and it is only natural that there should have been one at Hatfield.<sup>3</sup> But its elegant simplicity of design forms a striking contrast with the earlier prototype at Burghley and with Liming's later tower at Blickling, which is in the ponderous style of 'Artisan Mannerism' (Pl. XVII). Is it conceivable that the same architect, having designed the Hatfield tower, and having seen Jones' new building at Whitehall, whence he took the triangular pediments over doors and windows at Blickling, would have fallen back on this clumsy provincial contrivance? It seems likely, therefore, that Jones' 'drawinge of some Architecture' for Hatfield covered both the first floor gallery front and the clock tower above it. Whether Jones also redesigned the central porch at the same time is more open to question, since there is little about it that could not have been contrived by Liming himself. Nor can we be sure what hand Simon Basil had in these alterations. He certainly carried out surveys of costs on 14th December, 1609, and 4th April, 1610,<sup>4</sup> and his opinions must almost certainly have been sought on the new designs.

It should be emphasised that the arguments in favour of Jones' responsibility for the clock tower and the south front do not depend on any hypothesis that at this stage, before the second Italian visit of 1613-14, Jones was necessarily working in the classical style for which he later became famous. All that is being put forward is that there are stylistic grounds for thinking that the south front and the clock tower are not the work of Liming, but that they are not impossible for one who had already visited Italy and seen something of architecture in a classical style. For a comparison of the south doorway at Hatfield with a similar doorway at Blickling, and of the clock tower at Hatfield with that at Blickling, shows an unmistakable coarsening of design and a retreat to a more insular Jacobean idiom. This serves to rule out Liming as the designer, unless we are to suppose his style actually retrogressed between 1610 and 1620. If Liming is therefore eliminated we are left with Jones, whom we know was consulted at this time and was paid for some architectural drawings connected with the house, and with

<sup>1</sup> B 58; A 160/1; Box G/13.

<sup>2</sup> That the tower is not a subsequent addition is proved by references in accounts of 1611 to 'leade for the lanthorne' (S 140, ff. 38-9) and to the painting of the great vane at the top and lions holding vanes standing about the lantern (B 58); and by the fact that in the receiver-general's accounts between 1620 and 1648, which are complete, there is no reference

to any tower being added or rebuilt.

<sup>3</sup> The 'great lanthorn' at Salisbury House was finished in 1608. Its walls were painted by Rowland Bucket to resemble glass, and it bore two great dials; it resembled the Hatfield structure by being surrounded with lions bearing the Cecil arms and crest (B 28).

<sup>4</sup> SPD, JI, 57/82; 53/65, 79.

Basil, who was still acting in an advisory capacity. The latter, however, was never rewarded for any drawings.

It has always been realised that Jones must have done some designing of architecture as well as masque scenery before he was appointed Surveyor to Prince Henry in 1611. The problem has been to identify the building or buildings by which he had made his name. Nothing would be more likely than that in about 1609–10 Jones should have taken a hand in the design of a great house for one of the leading politicians of the day, and it now seems probable that in this south front at Hatfield we have Jones' earliest known architectural work, and the one which led directly to his first official appointment. Although the argument stands without any hypothetical conjectures about the sort of style in which Jones might have been working at this time, it should be pointed out that the Hatfield south front fits in very well with the scanty known facts of Jones' career. We have no idea in what style he was working at this date, except for a few sketches for masque scenery, and a drawing for a porch in a fairly conventional manner and dated 1616, *after* the second Italian tour.<sup>1</sup> But in 1609 he had been at least once to Italy, and had visited France that very summer. Now windows set between pilasters, with projecting corbelled sills and flattened mullions and transoms, are to be found in Philibert de L'Orme's book on architecture, published in 1576, and in a number of classically inspired 16th-century French châteaux. This type of window is, so far as I am aware, unique in English architecture at this date.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand the windows are not pedimented, there are Jacobean gables and strapwork above, and there is nothing very unusual about the porch. The front is in fact just what one might expect from a man still tied to the native idiom, but already interested by what he had seen abroad.

Work on the new design proceeded steadily throughout the summer of 1610, and by November Liming could report considerable progress. The bricklayers had virtually finished the work on the exterior, and the stone facing of the south front was completed up to the pedestals of the first-floor pilasters. No less than 30 masons were now at work on this front, and there was urgent need of more Caen stone to keep them busy during the winter in preparing the sculpture ready to be set up in the spring. At the same time the hall and tower roofs were leaded, all the stairs were finished up to the top of the house, the floors were boarded and joisted, the joiners were busy on panelling and chimney pieces, some of the windows were glazed, and the mullions for the new chapel window were being made.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Gotch, *Inigo Jones*, 1928, pl. VI; J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530–1830*, pl. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Philibert de l'Orme, *L'Architecture*, 1576, pp. 250–2.

*Châteaux et Manoirs de la France : La Loire*, II, pl. 93. It should be emphasised that none

of these are identical with the Hatfield windows, but they display the same basic elements. There *may* have been somewhat similar windows at Britain's Bourse, but the Smithson drawing is not clear enough for one to be sure (L.C.C., *Survey of London*, XVIII, 1937, pl. 58).

<sup>3</sup> SPD, JI, 58/9; S 143/118.

By May, 1611, the masons were busy on the chimneys, the open-work scroll 'tafferils' that topped all the windows, and the balustrade that ran around the roof; the joiners were setting up the hall screen, and the plasterers' work was almost finished. In July the south porch was finished, apart from the coat of arms, and the scaffolding removed, and a sufficient number of rooms were matted and hung to enable King James and the Court to be entertained. By December the great lantern was leaded, the chapel was paved, the joiners and painters were busy with the interior of the house and, by the winter of the next year, 1612, the whole house was ready for occupation.<sup>1</sup> But Robert Cecil had died in May after a prolonged and agonising illness, without having slept for more than a few days in the building on which he had lavished so much trouble and so much money.

Though the interior of Hatfield has undergone considerable changes since 1612, and though much of the west wing was gutted by fire in 1835, many of the principal decorative features of the house have survived. If James Lee's plaster ceilings have all disappeared, a good deal of the panelling and joiners' work executed under the direction of Jenever still remains.<sup>2</sup> Also preserved are the three stone fireplaces with their elaborate architectural settings. These fireplaces were the work of Maximilian Colt, the French *émigré* artist from Artois, who had just finished the tombs of Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots, for Westminster Abbey. Much of the materials for these fireplaces, and for Robert Cecil's tomb which was commissioned at the same time in 1609, were provided by the Earl himself.<sup>3</sup> He supplied Colt with the Carrara marble, and exchanged more marble with another London tomb-maker, Cornelius Cure, for Purbeck marble and rance. Alabaster was bought by Colt and carried to his workshop, some from Islington and some from a warehouse by the Tower. The statue of King James for one of the fireplaces was executed in Caen stone by Colt and then painted to look like copper; the centre piece of another was a mosaic portrait of Robert Cecil, executed by Venetian craftsmen under instructions from the English ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton, and based on a picture by John de Critz.<sup>4</sup>

The two masterpieces by the carver John Bucke, the screens for the hall and the carvings of the superb open-well staircase, have both survived. This type of staircase seems to have been new to England

<sup>1</sup> B 58; SPD, JI, 63/88 (1); 65/3; S 140, ff. 38, 39; 143, ff. 122, 123.

<sup>2</sup> The survey of joiners' work provides interesting specimens of the technical terminology of the day. For example: 'In the Queenes bedchamber one frize, Archi; vase, triddlefines (triglyphs), swellinge pannells, Cattooses, droppes, teeth and water crease, plantseare & ogeeve' (S 143, f. 118).

<sup>3</sup> B 69; S 143, f. 129; B 35/2. Colt was also

carving two statues in Burford stone for external niches in Britains Burse in the Strand (B 29) and another fireplace for the Queen's closet in Salisbury House (S 143, f. 129).

<sup>4</sup> L. Pearsall Smith, *Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, Oxford, 1907, I, pp. 452-3, 460. In Critz's bill of 1607 there is the item 'a other pictor of your Lordship for the Ambassador of Venice 4-0-0' (Box U/81).

and may well have been designed by Liming, as it is repeated again in a more elaborate form at Blickling. The original appearance of screens and staircase were very different from to-day, for both were gaily painted. The year's work for 1611 by the painter Rowland Bucket included covering the screens with 'Armes, gildinge, & personages'. On the staircase he decorated the central pendant in white and gold and painted all the timber work, besides 'guldunge & workinge of the naked boyes and lyons standinge upon those stayres, houldinge of instruments and his Lordshypps Armes'. He even proposed to paint the walls of the stair-well, which in January, 1612, he was 'about a plot for'. Everywhere, indeed, the interior was brilliant with colour. Wooden friezes and chimneypieces in every principal room, the ceiling pendants and the huge organ installed in the great chamber, were all picked out in paint and gilding.<sup>1</sup> In the Earl's bedroom the great bed, the chair, and the stools were also painted with 'floweres, birdes and personages'.<sup>2</sup>

The chief decorative effort, however, was reserved for the chapel, whose present sombre appearance is remote from its original condition. The plan of the chapel with its upper floor seems to have been copied from the slightly earlier chapel at Salisbury House, where there was also a 'room over the Chapel where my Lord goeth to prayers'.<sup>3</sup> In 1612 Bucket painted two canvases for the west end of the Annunciation and the angel appearing to the shepherds, and gilded frames for the total of eight pictures that hung around the lower chapel. Around the windows ran a broad band of gold, and between the pictures the walls were 'wrought with figures of the small prophetts and with bordars and scrowles golded about them and very muche other worke'. The roofs of both upper and lower chapel were heavily gilt, the fireplace of the upper chapel was painted black and gold, and the soffits of the arches supporting the upper chapel were gilt and worked. In addition Bucket painted a big picture of Christ and the Apostles. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance in contemporary eyes of all this painting. Both inside and out the house was intended to be ablaze with gilt and gaudy colours, and no expense was spared to achieve this effect. Owing partly to the cost of the heavy gold leaf so lavishly employed, Bucket's bills were very heavy. For the nine and a half months from January to November, 1611, he was paid no less than £577, a very large sum for that time.<sup>4</sup>

The stained glass in the east window of the Chapel is usually described as of Flemish workmanship. The architectural backgrounds,

<sup>1</sup> B 58, 77; S 143, f. 122. This organ, or great wind instrument, was bought in 1609, along with other mechanical toys like 'a clock in the forme of a turtus', etc., from a Dutchman for £1060 (A 160/1). It seems to have been quite common to have organs in living rooms at this time. For example, in 1613 the Earl of Arundel

had his organ at Greenwich moved to the lower dining-room (M. F. S. Hervey, *The Life, Correspondence, and Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, Cambridge, 1921, p. 93).

<sup>2</sup> B 36.

<sup>3</sup> B 28.

<sup>4</sup> B. 58, 77; S 143, f. 123; Box G/13.



North Front of Hatfield House  
(*Photograph: A. F. Kersting*)



Clock tower of Hatfield House  
(*Photograph : G. Leslie Horn*)

however, are French rather than Flemish, and the bills and accounts prove that they were designed by a Frenchman, 'Lewis Dolphin' (presumably Louis Dauphin). But, as so often at Hatfield, the story is not a simple one. In October, 1609, Dolphin was paid £8 for 'painting certain pictures' for the chapel window. He spent three days at Hatfield in March, 1610, and throughout the year was paid various sums for 'pictures made in glass' for the chapel, finishing up with a large payment of £62 'to discharge Lewis Dolphins works'.<sup>1</sup> But in January of that year there is a note by Thomas Wilson that a Martin van Benthem had made three pictures in colours for the chapel glass, for which he asked £6. Wilson suggested to the Earl that he be paid £3 for the lot and 6s. 8d. for pasting the pictures on cloth and for a tin case in which to send them to France. And on 3rd January van Benthem was duly paid £3 6s. 8d.<sup>2</sup> From this it seems clear that three of the windows were to have been designed by van Benthem and executed by a French glazier. But nothing more appears in the accounts either of van Benthem or of payments to a French glazier, and it seems certain that this project was abandoned. The heavy payments throughout the year to Lewis Dolphin, totalling some £90, can only mean that he actually made the glass himself, as well as designing it. But he was not the only glazier to be employed, for Richard Butler of Southwark certainly designed and made the Jonah window, and was paid a further £30 'towards making of the painted glass for the Chapell windows'.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to general belief, the external appearance of Hatfield has probably been changed more radically than the interior over the past 350 years. Were Robert Cecil and Liming, Simon Basil and Wilson, to return to-day, what would shock them most would unquestionably be the present practice of approaching the house up to what was intended to be the base court in the rear. The whole building was carefully designed to look south, upon which face all the really lavish architectural and decorative effort was concentrated. A new road was specially built to lead up to the inner court to the south, and only the more curious of visitors or guests making their way to the stables would see the north front.

Nor was the house itself as austere and self-contained as it appears to-day. When Evelyn visited Audley End he commented that it 'shews without like a diadem, by ye decorations of the cupolas and other ornaments on ye pavilions'.<sup>4</sup> Both Theobalds and Audley End proliferated in domed turrets, and Hatfield was not far behind, as an early picture shows (Pl. XVIII). Besides the numerous lodges, pavilions, and gateways that surrounded the house on all sides, many with their

<sup>1</sup> A 160/1; SPD, JI 57/82.

<sup>2</sup> G 12/21; A 160/1.

<sup>3</sup> B 38; A 160/1; Box G/13. In 1611-2 Butler made the windows for the Chapel at

Salisbury House (Box G/13). See also *Arch. Jnl.*, CX, 1953, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> J. Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. W. Bray and H. B. Wheatley, 1879, II, p. 73.

own little domes and cupolas, the roof-line was originally enlivened with eight little turrets with their 'Dutch types' or leaded domes, in addition to the four existing turrets at the south ends of the wings and the two towers to the north. These eight turrets were placed at the corners of the two square projecting blocks at either end of the main building. Reference to 'the two great touers . . . and the gable eands belonging to the said touers' suggests that the present truncated appearance of the tops of the towers is not original.<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1612 this north front, topped by four little turrets and two ornamental gables, a great painted 'tafferil' of timber above the central porch, and the eight lions glittering with gilt and holding gilded escutcheons with the Cecil arms,<sup>2</sup> was very different from its present condition of oppressive simplicity (Pl. XIX). Even the south front was more ornate than it is to-day. All the fifty-four stone lions about the house were gilded and carried their gay little armorial vanes, every window was topped with its 'tafferil' of open strapwork arabesques, the tall lantern was bright 'with fayre coullar', and the lions around it and the great vane were picked out in dazzling gilt.

Though the exterior of the house has become more drab over the centuries, even more radical changes have taken place in its surroundings. A great Jacobean house was not intended to be burst upon unheralded, and much pains were taken in planning the approaches.<sup>3</sup> Visitors came up the house from the south along the newly-constructed road. They passed first into an outer court and then through a gate in the curtain wall, flanked by two porters' lodges topped by painted castellations, into the paved and turfed inner court. The gateway itself was decorated with pilasters, architrave, frieze, and cornice, the walls were 'garnished' in stone, and there were two domed houses over doorways leading to the east and west gardens (Pl. XVIII). In the base court at the back there was another elaborate gateway, and two little circular buildings at the corners; the west garden had two substantial banqueting houses, decorated with pilasters, architrave, frieze, and cornice, and topped by tafferils; and the principal garden to the east had further little buildings intended to conceal water cisterns.<sup>4</sup> From every angle, therefore, the house was surrounded by curtain walls, court-yards, and a protective cluster of little domed pavilions.

If a good deal of trouble was taken over these outworks, even more detailed care went into the planning of the gardens. This was a feature of particular interest to the 17th century, and many of Cecil's friends, relations, and neighbours, notably Lord Burghley, the Earl of North-

<sup>1</sup> B 77.

<sup>2</sup> A 9/24.

<sup>3</sup> A good idea of the care expended on out-buildings can be obtained at Hampstead Marshall, Berks., where Lord Craven's great

house has gone but some of the elaborate gateways survive, scattered about in the fields in bewildering profusion.

<sup>4</sup> A 9/24; SPD, JI 63/88 (1).

umberland, Sir Thomas Fanshawe, and Lord Cobham, had distinguished themselves in this field. When Evelyn visited Hatfield in 1643 he observed that 'the more considerable rarity besides the house (inferior to few then in England for its architecture) was the garden and vineyard, rarely well watered and planted'.<sup>1</sup> Of these gardens so admired by Evelyn virtually nothing remains to-day, but from the documents it is possible to reconstruct something of their history and appearance.

It has been seen that the story of the house itself is a complicated one, involving many hands and numerous changes in design, and it is not surprising to find the same features repeated over the gardens. The first plans for the garden were drawn up in September, 1609, by Mountain Jenings, the Earl's gardener, who was probably taken over from Theobalds and who later returned there to look after King James' silkworms.<sup>2</sup> In this he was helped by Robert Bell, the London merchant who handled the import of Caen stone and other transactions with France on the Earl's behalf. Bell seems to have been something of a connoisseur of gardens. He told Wilson that he had tried to persuade one 'Bartholomewe the gardener' to go and take over at Hatfield, but he had refused because he was too old. However, Bartholomew offered to visit Hatfield from time to time and to order plants from the Low Countries. Bell then reported that he and Bartholomew had conferred with Jenings, whom they found 'very sufficient'. 'We did determine of a plott to be drawne to bee shewed unto my lord, which I thinke will doe very well, & after may be chaunged or altered at my lords pleasure'.<sup>3</sup> But Cecil must have had doubts about Jenings' capacity, and another gardener, Thomas Chaundler, was also taken on. Chaundler made 'many plotts' of the gardens and in return for £55 supervised the layout of the principal show-piece, the east garden.<sup>4</sup> Soon after this yet another gardener, John Tradescant, was employed to buy the necessary trees and plants, for which purpose he made several journeys both to Flanders and to France.<sup>5</sup>

The garden plans thus went ahead during 1609, 1610, and 1611 under the confused direction of three men—Jenings, Chaundler and Tradescant—with Robert Cecil as the ultimate authority. And in January, 1611, the waterworks for the Chaundler plans of the east garden were begun by an hydraulic engineer, Simon Sturtevant, presumably a Dutchman.<sup>6</sup> But in November Thomas Wilson became dissatisfied with this project and sent down Prince Henry's engineer, the Frenchman, Salomon de Caux. Though by now pipes had been laid, cisterns built, and substantial progress made with Jenings' 'works and devises about the fontaynes',<sup>7</sup> de Caux ruthlessly recommended scrapping the whole hydraulic system and beginning again. No wonder

<sup>1</sup> J. Evelyn, *Diary*, I, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> F. Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer . . . during the reign of James I*, 1836, p. 288.

<sup>3</sup> Box U/72.

<sup>4</sup> B 35/6; A 160/1.

<sup>5</sup> A 160/1; G 11/25; B 58.

<sup>6</sup> SPD, JI 61/37; 57/82.

<sup>7</sup> B 58; SPD, JI 61/37; 63/88 (1).

poor Cecil, tied to London by the pressure of work and the ravages of an increasingly painful skin disease, complained bitterly that 'every journey brings new designs'. De Caux promised to provide 'models' of his scheme, rough drafts of which have been preserved, and Liming was drawn into garden planning to make fresh 'plots'.<sup>1</sup> Despite the heavy expense involved, Cecil accepted these proposals, Chaundler and Sturtevant were sacked, and Jenings entrusted with the responsibility of finishing the east garden according to the new designs of de Caux and Liming.<sup>2</sup> And so it was not till January, 1612, that the situation became clear and Jenings could draw 'a plott of all the garden' to show to the Earl.<sup>3</sup>

The layout comprised a kitchen garden to the north-west, with herbs, roots, artichokes, cabbages, etc., a west garden, with walks, trees and hedges, a huge orchard, a vineyard some way to the east, and a large and ornamental east garden, the lower half of which was filled with raspberries and strawberries, roses and flowers. On his purchasing expeditions on the Continent, whence came most of the plants for the new garden, Tradescant spared no pains to make Hatfield the leading centre of English horticulture, and brought back with him a number of varieties unknown to Lord Burghley's gardener, John Gerard.<sup>4</sup> Tradescant was evidently an optimist, and hopefully transplanted to this dreary English climate such southern exotics as oleanders, myrtles, figs, oranges, aubergines, and no less than 206 cypresses. Already he was collecting curiosities, though at this time on his master's behalf, and his bills include the purchase of such things as 'on great buffels horne' and 'on artyfyshall bird', perhaps intended as garden ornaments.<sup>5</sup> The vineyard was a very ambitious undertaking, stocked with 30,000 French vines presented by Madame de la Boderie, and tended by two French gardeners specially brought over for the purpose.<sup>6</sup> Even here, however, the experts were not altogether trusted, and Cecil persuaded the Earl of Exeter's gardener to go down twice to Hatfield to plant vines himself, in order to see the difference between his method and that of the Frenchmen. The result is celebrated in a remarkably purple passage by Thomas Fuller.<sup>7</sup> For the orchard large quantities of pears, peaches, plums, mulberries, cherries, nectarines and quinces were bought, mostly abroad, and to this was added in 1611 a present of 500 fruit trees from the French Queen.<sup>8</sup>

The greatest attention, however, was paid to the ornamental east garden, running down the hill to a stream in the valley below. This was surrounded by brick walls and divided into two halves, laid out in the usual formal manner with red brick-dust paths and grassy knots

<sup>1</sup> SPD, JI 67/62.

<sup>2</sup> Box G/13.

<sup>3</sup> S 143/122.

<sup>4</sup> J. Gerard, *The Herball*, 1597.

<sup>5</sup> G 11/25; B 58, 69.

<sup>6</sup> SPD, JI 61/50; B 58, 69.

<sup>7</sup> SPD, JI 57/82; T. Fuller, *The Worthies of England*, 1662, pt. ii, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> B 24, 58, 59; SPD, JI 67/62.

bordered by pinks. Immediately outside the house was the terrace, with painted wooden rails decorated with 'French terms' and cup-shaped finials. From the terrace stairs descended to the main garden, lined by 24 painted and gilded wooden lions.<sup>1</sup> The central feature of the garden was the waterworks, which were subject to considerable alterations. As has been seen, the first works were designed by Simon Sturtevant and Jenings. The water was contained in two cisterns at the upper end of the garden and ran into a great cistern in the centre, in which were painted artificial rocks and a painted statue of Neptune. A great deal of trouble was taken over this cistern, especially for King James' visit in the summer of 1611, and Jenings was paid £13 3s. 'upon his bill for altering a rocke twice in the east garden'.<sup>2</sup>

All this was altered during the winter of 1611-12 in accordance with the new plans of de Caux, who designed a grand new central fountain. In the huge marble basin, made by the Dutch tomb-carver, Garrett Johnson, was a great artificial rock on an iron-work core. On this stood a metal statue, cast by another Dutch tomb-carver, Garret Christmas, and painted to resemble copper by Rowland Bucket.<sup>3</sup> From this elaborate centre-piece ran a shallow meandering little river, in imitation of one at the Earl of Exeter's (presumably at Burghley House). This item also gave a good deal of trouble, and was altered several times. The bottom of the winding stream was paved with coloured pebbles and sea-shells. Winkles and stones were collected in England, and Tradescant shipped back from Paris one chest and eight boxes of shells. In addition, little leaden leaves, snakes and fishes were scattered about the face of the rock and the bottom of the stream.<sup>4</sup> All this sounds very much like earlier work in some of the great French gardens, for example, those of Bernard Palissy at the Tuileries and Thomas Francini at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and it is from these that de Caux most probably drew his inspiration.<sup>5</sup>

At the bottom of the garden the stream that ran through the valley was partially dammed and an artificial island, which still exists, was created in the centre. This island was linked to the mainland by two painted wooden bridges and its walls were planted with whitethorn, sweetbriar and osiers. Down-stream, probably on the site of the existing lake, was a 'dell' with a water pump, fountains, and a large wooden 'standing' or first-floor erection over the stream. A rough sketch of this standing, perhaps by de Caux, has survived to give us some idea of its appearance.<sup>6</sup> Like the island, the walks of the dell were also closely planted with whitethorn and sweetbriar.

There are a number of general conclusions to be drawn from this

<sup>1</sup> B 58, 77.

<sup>2</sup> B 58; A 160/1.

<sup>3</sup> It took 2,500 lbs. of plaster to make the mould, and 300 lbs. of 'solder' for the casting. But the most expensive item was the marble basin, for which Johnson charged £70 (B 69, 77;

Box U/90, 92).

<sup>4</sup> S 143, f. 122; Box G/15; B 58, 69.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Ernest de Gany, *Les Jardins de France* (Paris, 1949), pp. 48-9, 53.

<sup>6</sup> B 77; Box G/13. A. H. Tipping, *English Homes*, Period III, Vol. II, fig. 410.

detailed study of the building of Hatfield House. In the first place it shows once again the radical difference between the role of the architect in the early 17th century and to-day. His position was then very much humbler, and his reward for architectural designs was very much less substantial than to-day. In consequence it was not thought at all improper for the plans of one architect to be criticised and altered by others, so that a building like Hatfield has not one designer but several.

Secondly, we find that even a fairly symmetrical house, erected in a hurry within the space of a few years, has an extraordinarily complicated history, with frequent demolitions and changes of plan taking place all the time that building operations were actually in progress. No doubt such chopping and changing and such a wide range of consultants were unusual for any except one of the houses of the great courtiers. But if such practices were at all common in the case of these outstanding buildings, it would seem that very great caution should be exercised in asserting architectural responsibility except where the documentary evidence is more or less complete.

It should be noted that the cost of a house the size of Hatfield put such an undertaking far outside the reach of a private person, and indeed came near to ruining the greatest of public officials. Including the work on and improvements to the park and gardens, between September, 1607, and September, 1612, the recorded expenditure on Hatfield is no less than £38,848.<sup>1</sup> On all his buildings, at Cranborne, Britains Burse, Salisbury House, Hatfield and Hatfield parsonage, the Earl of Salisbury in these five years spent about £60,000. Such was the cost of being one of the greatest architectural patrons of the early 17th century.

Lastly, the all-pervasive influence of foreign artists and foreign imports on early Jacobean decorative and luxury trades is very striking. From the Netherlands came plants, trees and shrubs for the garden, a few Flanders bricks and tiles, and the organ for the great chamber. The fountain was the work of Garret Johnson and Garret Christmas, Jenever the joiner was probably also Dutch, and a design for the Chapel window was made by Martin van Benthem. It was even planned to import Dutch workmen to Hatfield to weave tapestries to decorate the interior.<sup>2</sup> From France came plants, fruit trees and vines. The Chapel windows were designed by Lewis Dolphin, the fireplace by Maximilian Colt, and the fountain and waterworks by Salomon de Caux, while at Salisbury House the principal carver was one 'John de Booke'.<sup>3</sup> In some cases even the current terminology is foreign, for example, 'French terms' and 'Dutch types'. Rarely has English decoration been so wide open to foreign influences.

<sup>1</sup> A 9/5; A 160/1; Box G/13. A contemporary estimate puts the cost as high as £43,000, but this possibly includes expenditure on buying land to enlarge the park (A 112/6). If this was the cost of Hatfield, imagination boggles at what the Earl of Suffolk paid for Audley End. No wonder he was overwhelmed with debt and

much of the family property had subsequently to be sold (Bodleian Library, MS. Add. D. 110, f. 59; Essex Record Office, D/DBY, A 5, 6).

<sup>2</sup> B 27.

<sup>3</sup> B 28; Box G/13. The John Bucke who did the carving at Hatfield may well be the same person.