

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF LONGLEAT HOUSE

between 1546 and 1572

By MARK GIROUARD

Anyone who studies the history of Elizabethan architecture in some detail finds himself continually baffled and exasperated by the scarcity of documentary evidence. A fair number of building accounts survive, though nothing compared with what is available for the later periods. Quite a few original plans are still in existence, but letters to do with building operations are very rare indeed, and any form of original elevation or design is rarer still. Moreover quite often, as is the case, for instance, at Kyre Park in Worcestershire, the building accounts survive but the buildings themselves have disappeared. So that whereas in the 18th and still more in the 19th centuries the architectural historian must often desperately try to disentangle himself from the sheer incumbent weight of his material, in the 16th century he prowls hungrily up and down, only too grateful for the smallest documentary crumb.

Longleat is the one great exception to this general aridity. There are in the muniment room there accounts, often of extreme detail, covering the building history of the house (with a few gaps) from 1550 up to 1580. There are a large number of relevant letters, dating from 1546 to 1582. There are a number of contracts made between owner and craftsmen<sup>1</sup>. In Bishop Ken's Library at Longleat is a small but extremely interesting collection of designs connected with the house, and there is another relevant design in the Smythson collection at the R.I.B.A. Two plans of the house, made shortly after it was finally completed, and annotated in Lord Burghley's hand, are preserved at Hatfield.<sup>2</sup> Finally, there is the house itself, externally little altered since Elizabethan times, though much remodelled inside during the 19th century.

Longleat is not only unique for its time in the amount we know about its origins; it is also of first rate importance in the history of English architecture. As Sir John Summerson says, 'It represents, as no other building does, the momentary High Renaissance of our architecture'. Its balanced and restrained design is in extraordinary contrast to the romantic and picturesque buildings built half a century before, or to the flamboyant houses—Wollaton, Hatfield, Aston, and the like—that succeeded it. It and Longford Castle were the only pre-Inigo Jones buildings which the 18th century thought worthy of inclusion in the *Vitruvius Britannicus*.

Those serene external facades are, however, deceptively simple. The Hatfield plan (fig. 1) shows the huddle of little courts which they concealed; and this internal confusion was the result of forty years building history of

<sup>1</sup> For the Longleat MSS., see appendix. I have given precise references only for what seemed to me the more important entries.

<sup>2</sup> Hatfield Maps. Photostats of these on the original scale are in the MS. room of the British Museum.

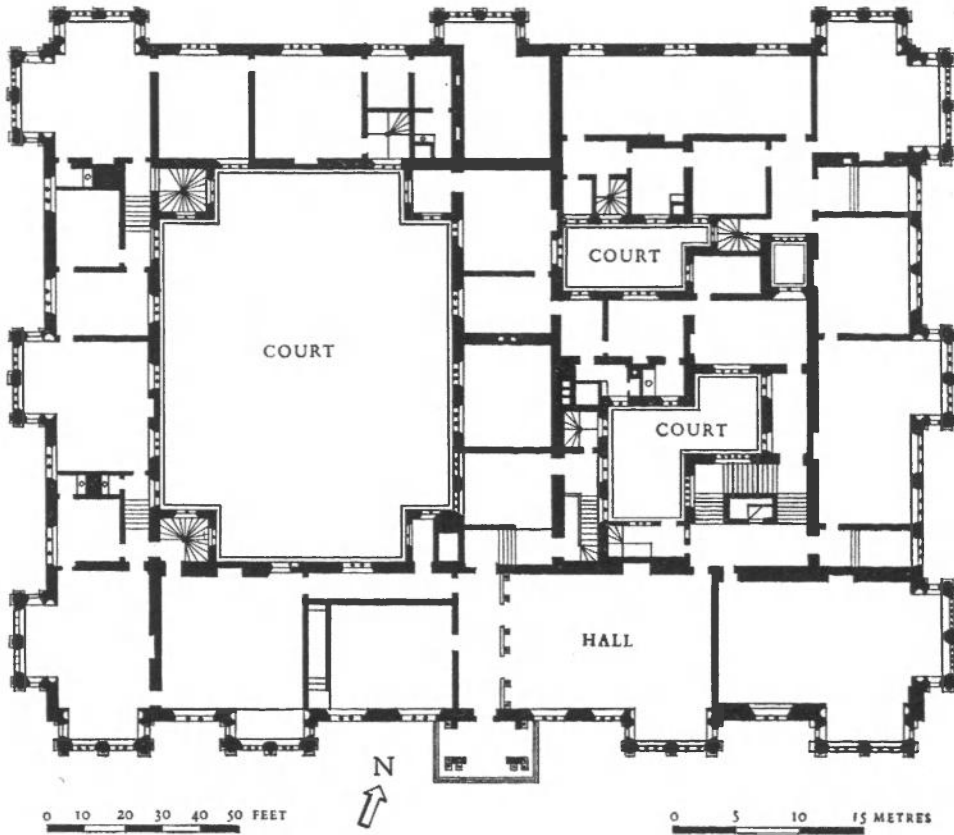


Fig. 1. Longleat, redrawn from a plan at Hatfield annotated in Lord Burghley's hand

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extreme complication. The available evidence, if carefully sifted, reveals that four distinguishable Longleats grew in four successive layers round a tiny monastic nucleus; the final layer which we see to-day was started only as late as 1572. The fourth Longleat I hope to deal with at length in a forthcoming publication; this article is mainly concerned with the history of the first three Longleats, which the fourth one overlaid but did not entirely destroy.

### THE FIRST LONGLEAT

Longleat was originally a house of the Austin Canons, founded probably in the 13th century. It seems never to have prospered; there were only five canons there in 1408 and by 1530 it was so decayed that it was handed over to the Carthusians of Hinton in Somerset. After the dissolution it was acquired, in 1540, by Sir John Horsey who sold it in the following year to John Thynne. Thynne must have taken over a small group of derelict and perhaps partly ruinous religious buildings. There is no evidence as to their plan: there was a church, probably of chancel and nave only; the usual monastic buildings may have been grouped round a small cloister, though in a religious house of the size of Longleat this need not necessarily have been so. Certainly, looking at the Hatfield plan of Longleat, it is tempting to surmise whether one of the two eastern courts (linked together by Wyatville in the 19th century) represented the original cloister garth.

Thynne converted these deserted buildings into a very handy dwelling-house for himself. The bulk of the work seems to have been done between 1546 and 1549. No accounts survive for this period, but there are a great many letters written between John Thynne and his steward, John Dodd, who was acting as clerk of the works.<sup>1</sup> Most of this time Thynne was away from Wiltshire; for these were the busiest years of his life, during which he was making his fortune in his capacity as secretary to the Protector Somerset. So his letters pour in, sometimes as many as four or five in a week, from London, from his master's house at Sheen, from France. At the end of it all Thynne had at his disposal (as an inventory of 1552 shows) a hall, great chamber, parlour and chapel, lodgings for himself and about twenty other rooms of varying sizes.

By the time the work was finished, Dodd wrote with enthusiasm in the summer of 1546, Longleat would be 'the first house and honsumyst . . . within the compase of 1111 shires round about the same and so doyth all the countre report, some greved and some pleased.' But compared with the house that exists to-day the first Longleat was very small beer. The hall, for instance, measuring 35 by 22 feet, was only one third of the size of the present hall. A certain amount of new building was involved, for which stone was quarried from 'Bradley', presumably either Maiden Bradley or North Bradley, both nearby villages. But much of the work was only patching and alteration of

<sup>1</sup> The Thynne-Dodd correspondence is bound together in R.O.B. I ff. 195-341; from it come all statements and quotations in my account of Longleat

up till 1549, except those to which I give separate references.

the old canonry buildings; there are references to the clearing away of buttresses, the insertion of new windows into rotten walls, and the retention of old windows. It does not seem that a very large labour force was employed: in an undated letter, written probably in the summer of 1546, Dodd reports the presence of four freemasons, two roughlayers, two carpenters and four labourers. The principal mason in 1546 was named Love; he was succeeded in the following year by Berryman. Thynne had, however, at the start less workmen than he needed, for there was a labour shortage at the time owing to the war in France; on June 18, 1547 he wrote to Dodd that Berryman must try to get more workmen now that the war was over; if anyone, he said, 'takes them up for the King, apply to myn uncle and other my frends at the court.'

Thynne's machine-gun cannonade of letters provides an interesting revelation of his character, and his ruthless and even nagging vitality. 'Make haste' is the background theme of all the letters; 'haste, haste, haste' is on occasion added as a postscript, and Thynne is continually amazed and indignant at the slowness with which work is proceeding. Nothing is too small to escape his attention: the paving of the hall, the size of panes of glass, the best way to widen a door, the exact siting of drains, the smallest details of lead and woodwork. Thynne seems to some extent to have been his own architect. Berryman is ordered up to London 'to th'extent I may show him my pleasur in suche things as I wolde have doon this year at my house'. A certain Hancoke sends Love a platt to show Thynne's mind about 'gyving lyght to the little vyse' [newel stair], which platt may have been drawn by Thynne himself. But the other platts mentioned were drawn by Love or Berryman, sometimes expressing their own ideas. Both were capable of making suggestions to Thynne. Love sends a platt to illustrate his proposal for a new disposition of the tower rooms. He complains 'that the chapell wyndow w<sup>ch</sup> you appointyd to stand will do vere yll and much disvegre yo<sup>r</sup> buyldinge'. Berryman sets forth a plat of the 'outhouses and the rest' in June 1547, and another plat 'against my mrs [Thynne's] coming' in September of the same year. The work that resulted would be due to the collaboration of master and mason; perhaps the master was the dominant partner.

The few clues which the letters supply suggest that this work was traditional Tudor gothic in character. A tower with battlements and a staircase turret is built; there is no single mention of any kind of classical detail. But there seems to be already a feeling for symmetry, for the offending chapel window (perhaps traceried and bigger than the others) was finally altered or destroyed and the chapel buttresses were removed. Thynne sent down joiners and plasterers from London; one of the joiners had been working for Somerset at Sheen. They, if anyone, are most likely to have carved or moulded in the new style.

On the other hand the masons, Love and Berryman, were probably local men. Love may have been a relation of the John Love who in 1547 was laying paving in the kitchen in a Wiltshire house of the Protector at Bedwyn.<sup>1</sup> Berryman

<sup>1</sup> Longleat, Seymour Papers, Vol. 9, f. 80.

had been working in the neighbourhood before his arrival at Longleat, perhaps for a Mr. Bainton to whom belonged the house in which he lived and who at one time tried to take him away from Longleat before his work there was completed. There is just a possibility that he had worked for Somerset at Sheen, for Thynne tells him to make a supporting arch above the porch window 'as he knoweth my lord did at Sheen'. But he could have seen Sheen when he went to London for Thynne's orders in 1547. A surviving list of craftsmen to whom Thynne owed money for work on his new London house at Brentford in 1549 does not include either Love or Berryman.<sup>1</sup> £24 16s. 2d. is owed to a John Hill who in 1551 is also owed money, along with the Fleming William Cure, by the Duke of Somerset.<sup>2</sup> At this period there is no evidence to show that Thynne sent London or foreign masons to Longleat.

### THE SECOND LONGLEAT

In October, 1549, Thynne's master Somerset was deposed from power by the Duke of Northumberland (then still Earl of Warwick); although he partially recovered his position in the following year, he never fully re-established himself, and Northumberland ultimately got him executed in January, 1552. These were difficult years for Thynne, during which he spent some months in the Tower of London; much of the time he seems to have been in retirement in Wiltshire, for his correspondence with Dodd abruptly ceases in June, 1549. But he did not stop building in these years; his general account books for 1550-2 show (without giving any details) that he spent £265 in building in 1550, £155 in 1551, and £356 in 1552.

In 1553 the Catholic Mary became queen. Thynne as a Protestant had no hopes of court preferment, but he was left unmolested and his estates and income remained intact. There was now nothing to tempt him from Wiltshire and the pleasures of building. Work went on there steadily year after year, the expenditure being much the same as in the earlier years: £249 in 1554, £204 in 1556, £143 in 1559, £230 in 1560. But the character of Longleat begins to change.<sup>3</sup> New ranges of more splendid rooms replace or adjoin the former patchings and alterations. Berryman, the obscure or old-fashioned mason, gives way to livelier figures, of more than local importance. Of the precise character of the work they put up we know regrettably little, for it was largely destroyed by fire in 1567. These two factors, the reputation of the craftsmen, our ignorance of their work, may tempt us to see this period as the nursery of all those features which made the later, still surviving, Longleat so remarkable. It is worth looking carefully through what evidence survives in an attempt to make out whether or not such claims are excessive.

The documentary evidence consists of occasional bills and contracts; of a few letters; and of the general account books which survive only for the periods

<sup>1</sup> R.O.B. I, f. 441.

<sup>2</sup> Account of Somerset's cofferer, John Pickarell, 1548-51. British Museum MSS. Egmont, 2815.

<sup>3</sup> The main sources of this period are the letters and miscellaneous payments collected in R.O.B. II, and the building sections of the general account books, L.P. Boxes LXXXV, LXXXVI.



A. The south front at Longleat  
*(Country Life)*



B. Fireplace, formerly in one of the state rooms, now in the basement



Sir William Sharrington's tomb in Lacock church

November to November 1554-6, November to November 1558-60, November 1561 to June 1562, and November to November 1565-6. A little is also known, from a letter and accounts, about the demolitions resulting from the 1567 fire; these involved at any rate portions of the buildings of this period.

It is necessary first of all to make clear the chronology of these years, and to introduce the principal craftsmen involved, leaving to the end a detailed discussion of the nature of the buildings that were put up.

Between 1553 and 1556 three bits of work were undertaken. A new wing, referred to as the 'new lodgings' or the 'new building', of at least six rooms including a parlour, was erected next door to the hall. A tower, three stories high, was built, apparently over the hall door. The hall itself was remodelled, with a new chimney-piece, new panelling, floor, and screen, and a new porch. For this new work Thynne engaged in 1553 two interesting men, John Chapman the carver and John Lewis the carpenter.

Chapman is best introduced by a well-known letter from Sir William Sharington, of Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire, to John Thynne, dated June 25, 1553.

'My very good friend, with like commendations to you and to your lady, my gossip, understanding how gladly you would that Chapman should work for you, as I am no less willing, so must I advise you of his going to Dudley, to be sent thither by my Lord of Northumberland, his Grace's commandment, to do things there of like effect, and yet not herehence departed. He hath sent all his working tools before, with such wains as be gone thither, with the chimney that so long he hath been working of. Think not, dear friend, but that he should work for you, at your desire, if I might continue with him still, though I had never so great business to do of my own; his time shall not be long there, but as he may do all yours within short space, therefore take patience for a time. The pedestal, whereon you will set your beast, may be made and set up, well enough, before the beast be made but you must needs have a measer and a patron, with order given of the pedestal herehence, that may be both agreeable unto your poynen table and to the beast, which I do send you by your servant . . .'<sup>1</sup>

This John Chapman had been in the King's works around 1541. He must have had a considerable reputation. Sir William Cavendish refers to him in a letter to Thynne of 1554.<sup>2</sup> The great Duke of Northumberland had commissioned a chimneypiece from him for Dudley Castle in Staffordshire, and finally ordered him there in person, as the letter above shows. But by the 23rd of July, a month after the letter was written, Northumberland was in the Tower and in August he was executed, so Chapman may never have got to Dudley. Some time in 1553 Sharington also died. At any rate, by the end of the year Chapman was at Longleat where he was to stay on and off till at least 1559. Besides carving the beasts for gable-ends to which Sharington refers, he made moulds and carved a little on the screen of the hall. But his most important work must have been the hall porch, with which he was occupied for two hundred days in 1565 and '66, finishing by setting up on it the arms of Somerset and Thynne.

<sup>1</sup> R.O.B. II, and quoted Clark-Maxwell, *Wills. Arch. Mag.* XXXVII, 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* f. 87, dated March 3, 1554.



John Lewis was to become the most constant element in the shifting Longleat caste, for he remained with Thynne, a faithful and trusted servant, till his master's death in 1580. In a bond at Longleat,<sup>1</sup> dated May 26, 1553, 'Jhone Raves, gentyllman' and 'Thomas Wetheryll' admit a debt of £40 owed to 'Jhone Lewis yeoman dwellinge in barkshire'. £30 of this debt is paid on June 27 'unto the hande of Thomas Thynne in the presence of Umphre Lovell and Henry Starky'. Thomas Thynne was a relation and employee of John Thynne's, which suggests that by June Lewis was already in Thynne's service. The other names are even more significant. John Raves had been the clerk-comptroller of Somerset's household and in charge of some of his building operations. Thomas Wetheryll had been the Surveyor of Works for Somerset at Syon. Humphrey Lovell, who in 1563 was to become the Queen's Master Mason, was in the pay of Somerset in 1551.<sup>2</sup> John Lewis must also have worked for Somerset, in a job of some importance, perhaps as head carpenter at Syon. The £40 was probably a debt left unpaid at Somerset's death in 1552.

At Longleat in these initial years Lewis was to put up the screen in the remodelled hall and very probably to re-roof it as well.

#### *William Spicer at Longleat*

On October 27, 1555, an even more important figure makes his first appearance. There is an entry in the accounts, 'To Williem Spycer fremason for li dais worke about the porche of the haule dore at vi d the day'.<sup>3</sup> The work was done under Chapman and Berryman, the pay the same as that of Berryman's son. This is the first recorded incident in a career that culminated with the Surveyorship of the Queen's works in 1595. At Longleat Spicer was to grow in importance with startling speed, and then to vanish again as abruptly, leaving a good deal of bitterness behind.

In 1556 he laid down paving and made a chimney-piece in the hall. 1557 and 1558 are obscure years, for no account books survive. All that is known about them is that between audit 1557 and October 1558 Spicer and Berryman received £20 each 'opon their bargayne for the great windowe'. At audit 1559 Spicer is paid another, anonymous, sum of £30 2s. 3d. In October, 1559, he reaches the peak of his success at Longleat. He becomes bailiff and collector of the rents of Thynne's Somerset manor of Lullington and on October 19 gets a three year contract for an important 'new piece of worke' to be carried out in three years for £300.<sup>4</sup> The contract itself makes it clear that the new buildings consisted of two wings, one containing a gallery. The rooms in the other wing are listed in the joiner's bills, sent in when they were finally fitted up in 1565 and 1566: on the ground floor a parlour, a great dining chamber and a withdrawing chamber; on the second floor an inner chamber, a great chamber, and perhaps the room known as the pendant chamber; above, what are called 'upper galleryes'.

<sup>1</sup> T.P. Vol. II, f. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Raves, Wetheryll, and Lovell appear in the Pickarell account, for which see p. 202, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> L.P. Box LXXV, Bk. 143, f. 7.

<sup>4</sup> The contract is quoted at length pp. 00—00.

These wings are described in the accounts as being on the east and north sides, which suggests that the hall was on the south or west. None of the existing evidence is contradicted if we assume that the rooms were disposed in much the same way in Longleat II as they were in Longleat III and IV, that is, with gallery on the north, the main reception rooms on the east and the hall on the south sides.

Spicer's final bargain at Longleat was not, in the end, to turn out a success. Everything went well to begin with. Payments were made to Spicer with regularity; the work must have gone steadily ahead. On September 29, 1551, a scrap of paper records 'Mr. Spicer confesseth that he hath receved in all from the making of the bargayne . . . £260 13s. 9d.', the greater part of the stipulated £300.<sup>1</sup> 'Confesseth' sounds the first mutter of thunder, for it suggests that a substantial amount of the work contracted for had still to be delivered. The new buildings should have been completed by October 1562, yet on April 28, 1563, Thynne's steward, George Walker, writes to him 'Spicer sent me word in a bille that he could seme now to fynysh your wourke at Longleat before Corsley woork were due'. On the other hand this letter also shows that Spicer was still in good enough odour to have been given another job of work at Corseley, a smaller house of Thynne's a few miles from Longleat.

On August 3rd Spicer covenants to make for Corseley forty lights of freestone windows, as long and as broad as the ones he has placed on the north side of Longleat house. Another note gives the context of this bargain. Spicer had agreed to supply Thynne with the forty lights 'in full recompence a fynall ende of all matters in question betwixte them for certeyne chimnyes for the house at Longlete'. 'Chimneys' always mean chimney-pieces in Elizabethan building parlance. A complaint follows. 'Whereof he receaved three wyndowes of 4 lightes transom, and one wyndowe of 6 lights also transomed'.

The last surviving utterance of Spicer under Thynne is a bill which he sent in, with what Thynne must have considered unbearable impertinence, on September 29, 1563, for work done in that year. The entries have been angrily crossed out or annotated by Thynne himself:

64 lyghtes of wyndowes hadd to Corsley	£16
<del>7 doores of fre stone</del>	<del>42s.</del>
<del>52 lodes of fre stone</del>	<del>17s. 4d.</del>
<del>Chymney in the parlor at Longleat and two stone dores</del>	<del>66s. 8d.</del>

The last entry marked by Thynne 'parcels of his bargain.'<sup>2</sup>

After that no more is heard of Spicer at Longleat or Corseley. Two entries in the accounts indicate the reputation which he left behind. In March 1566 'to Robt Fosbery mason in full payment for mending of the pyrimt of ye great gallery wyndowe 92s. 6d.' On April 11, 1566 'To Robert flosbery mason for tonyng of xxx lights in ye great gallery wyndowes, pcell [parcel] of Willm Spycers bargyn.'

<sup>1</sup> R.O.B. II, f. 135.

<sup>2</sup> R.O.B. II, f. 189.

The whole quarrel was for some reason resurrected in May 1569, as is shown by a letter from one Cavell to John Thynne.

'I have within these psentes sent unto you the latitat agaynst Spicer Bright and Russell according to the note by you delivered to me upon w<sup>ch</sup> latitat is returnable the monday after thre wekes after Trinity Sunday w<sup>ch</sup> is two wekes to come. I caused the returne to be wten this tyme bicause I thought youre mynde to be to—?—Spicer and Russell so soar as you can bicause of theyre evell delings wth you in your buildings. Wherefore if wthin the sayd tyme you cannot have them apprehended do you send worde to me thereof and for a little charges I will bring downe another (?) wrote against them re-tornable in michelmas day next. And if you apprehend any of them then I pray you send me uppon suche instructions of the causes and grefes you have agaynst them . . .'<sup>1</sup>

A latitat is the writ by which a person is summoned to answer in a personal action in the Queen's Bench. Thynne seems at any rate to have got as far as making up a list of his 'causes and grefes', which shows that they date from the period with which I have been dealing. A document at Longleat headed 'Spicers accounts. 20 dec 1569' gives at the top the amount Spicer had received for his 1559 bargain and underneath the cost of the work which he had left undone.<sup>2</sup>

'Rec <sup>d</sup> by W <sup>m</sup> Spicer as appereth by his acqtance being date the III <sup>d</sup> year of queen Elizabeth XXXVI October	CCLX. XII <sup>i</sup> XI <sup>s</sup> IX <sup>d</sup>	
Item for the making of XII shafts of brick		£18
„ for making of XI chymneys		£55
Item for thill workmanship		£4
Item for that he left ondon that was doon afterwards by Jervis and others		£30
Item for such rent as he oweth for Lullington		£33 19 1
Item, paid to Jokes and others for him		£2 4 7
For XXIII lyghts		£6
To Fostbery for mending the great window in the galery		£1'

In the light of all this evidence Thynne's version, at any rate, of the quarrel can be summed up fairly accurately. The work for which Spicer had contracted in 1559 had included twelve chimney-pieces with their shafts of brick, of which he had failed to produce all but one chimney-piece for the parlour. Thynne finally agreed to accept in lieu (perhaps taking in account other works done or services rendered) forty window lights for Corseley. Only fourteen of these were delivered. Moreover Spicer had left unfulfilled other parts of his contract, including the 'toning' (whatever that might be) of the gallery windows; while much of the work he had done had been done badly. Finally he had decamped from Wiltshire leaving unpaid £33 19s. 1d. which he owed Thynne as rent collector for Lullington.

As far as I can trace Spicer was never brought into the courts. He may already have scuttled under the wing of the Earl of Leicester, for whom he was working by 1571. Thynne would not have dared pursue him there.

<sup>1</sup> T.P. Vol. III, f. 216. I can find nothing about Bright and Russell or their connection with Spicer.

<sup>2</sup> R.O.B. III, 137.

*The Architectural Character of the Second Longleat*

Some attempt must now be made to answer the question, what was the architectural character of the work put up at Longleat in these ten years?

There is unlikely to have been any very great contrast in design between the buildings of 1553-9 and those of 1559-63. This is made clear in the 1559 contract, of which I now quote the relevant passages.

'Articles agreed upon the XIXth day of October, 1559, Between Sr John Thynne knight and William Spicer yoman for and consarning the making of a newe pece of worke at Longleate.

*First* the saide William Spicer dothe covenante for hym his executours and assignes to make or cause to be made all that the newe pece of buildinge at Longlete accordinge to a platt thereof made and signed by the said Sr John Thynne and Will<sup>m</sup> Spicer in almaner of stone worke fremasonrye Rowmasonrye and bryckworkes, as well doors, beastes, Chymnyne Crestes, water tables, severall tables, Lightes, jakes synkes to convey ordure to the brook, chymnys w<sup>t</sup> Columpnes or termes, and tunes of stone or brick, like to those that be upp alrely in thouse as also to make the forefronte w<sup>t</sup> assheler and to make

all the wyndowes of the forefront of lyke mouldinge as the greate wyndowes is of that is sett up alrely and that w<sup>in</sup> three yeres next . . . Also . . . to pull downe all the stoneworke that is to be pulled downe according to thafforesaide platt.

*Also* to make one wyndowe of fyftene foote wyde in the gallery of freestone w<sup>th</sup> Colompnes and to make the wyndowes of that forefront and also the wyndowes of the saide galary w<sup>th</sup> lyke mouldinge as afore is appoynted.<sup>1</sup>

The contract specifies that the 'doors, beasts, chimney crests, water-tables . . . chymnes with columpnes or termes and tunes of stone or brick' are to be 'like those that be upp alrely in the house'. The windows of both fronts are to be 'of lyke mouldings as the greate wyndowes is of that is sett up alrely'. Thus the mouldings and most of the decorative features are linked to the work that had been done before.

Thynne himself must have had a great deal to do with the nature of the new buildings. In the 1559 contract the work is to be made 'accordinge to a platt thereof maid and signed by the said Sr John Thynne and Will<sup>m</sup> Spicer'. His letters show how overpowering was the interest which he took in his building schemes. And not only in his own: he had been as deeply involved in those of the Duke of Somerset. I quote from a satire against Thynne written by his neighbour William Darell of Littlecote in 1575.<sup>2</sup> Longleat House is talking about Thynne.

'For how did he infest his Master's head with plattes and forms and many a subtle thing, not unmindefull of the consuming prince's treasure, that was a part of his decaye.'

One wonders if any of the plattes and forms were his own, or partly his own.

'But had that broyling work that nere the Broyle had lyke to have byn taken his seat had fynished byn: it might have becomed thee to have stand a noarserie to so statelie a thing. But where that should have byn is now corne, and so is where Trove was or else our poets lye.'

<sup>1</sup> R.O.B. II, 117.

<sup>2</sup> R.O.B. III, 213.

'That broyling work' refers to the great house which had been begun by Somerset in 1549, at Bedwyn Broil in Wiltshire, but which had not risen above foundation level before he fell from power. Letters to Thynne from Barwick, Somerset's West Country steward, confirm the close connection of Thynne with this house. One of them, dated June 4, 1549, is especially interesting.

'Further ye sent us downe such a lewde company of Frenchmen masons as I never saw the lyke. I assure you they be the worst condicyoned people that ever I saw and the dronkest; for they wyll drynke more in one day than three days wages wyll come to and then lye lyke beasts on the flore not able to stande. I have geven them dyvers warnyngs me selve and yet never the better. And now I perceive by Bryan they be departid and stolen away lyke themselves and be indeptyd to dyvers folkes yn these parts; wherefore it wer well don to punyshe them if they may be found, I think they will make their repayr to London.'<sup>1</sup>

If an attempt was made to use French masons at Bedwyn Broil in 1549, it seems almost certain that Frenchmen were also employed at Somerset House, which was in building between 1547 and 1552. Certainly its facade to the Strand was, as has often been pointed out, very French in character with a gateway that was comparable to parts of the Château of Ecoeuën near Paris. As Thynne was in all probability as much concerned with Somerset House as he was with Bedwyn Broil and as his carpenter, John Lewis, was a Somerset man, it would be natural enough to expect that the Protector's palace would have had some influence on the design of Longleat itself.

For work on Longleat hall porch in 1555 Chapman was paid at the rate of 10d. a day, Berryman 8d. a day, and Spicer 6d. a day. This suggests that Spicer, unlike Chapman, had done nothing of importance before he came to Longleat; that he learnt from Chapman how to work in the new style. I think Spicer must have impressed Thynne as an organizer more than as an artist: Thynne made him baliff and rent-collector of Lullington, an unusual job for a mason, and took the for him unprecedented step of putting the complete control of building operations for three years into Spicer's hands.

If Spicer can to a large extent be discounted as a stylistic influence at Longleat, all the more attention must be paid to Chapman, and so to the work for which Chapman was or may have been responsible at Lacock.

Hidden away by Sharington like a jewel, behind two heavy double-locked doors, in the tight dark little chamber in the tower which he used as a strong-room, where it can only be seen with difficulty and to its disadvantage, is the famous stone table, an octagonal slab supported by four fauns. In the stone gallery adjoining is a chimney-piece, of simple but delicate design; a correct and richly decorated entablature, and two doric pilasters, with incised panels of garlands and musical instruments carved in low-relief. Another stone table with terms in the top tower room and Sharington's tomb in the church

<sup>1</sup> These letters are in the separate collection of Seymour papers, at Longleat. They were printed by Canon J. E. Jackson in an Appendix to his 'Wulfhall and the Seymours' (Devizes 1875), a

reprint of an article in *Wilt. Arch. and N. H. Mag.* XV, 140. For the letter quoted here, see the separate edition, p. 45.

are clearly related to these two works. But while the beasts in the strong room leer sardonically but with intelligence, the cherub's faces on the tomb and the upstairs table have that half-witted rustic grin which was to re-appear so often, first in the churches, and then driven to the churchyards, of England, for the next three hundred years, the unfailing sign of provincial masons having a go. This difference in quality continues throughout. There is nothing in the upstairs table to compare with the tense clean curves of the downstairs beasts. The shape of the tomb arch is both ugly and unclassical, and its relief work dull repetitive stuff (Pl. XXIV), much less lively and graceful than that in the stone gallery.

The Renaissance work at Lacock seems in fact to be due to more than one hand. It is reasonable enough to posit two craftsmen, an unknown foreigner and Chapman, an Englishman still not quite at ease in a new idiom. A few beasts survive, or survived till recently, at Lacock, on the tower parapet and the gable ends. Chapman in all probability carved them. They are vigorous and delightful animals but purely gothic in style.

The other main decorative details at Lacock are the balustrade of the tower; the windows, with no surrounds but with curious circles or segments of circles where their jambs and cross-bars meet; the doors, sometimes enclosed by thin pilaster strips; a rather clumsy little Ionic pillar with entablature in the stable court; and the endlessly recurring consoles, slight and delicate, that support the entablatures of the doors, or the sills of the windows, or the shelves in the strong-room, or the ribs of a vault, or are used to arch the heads of a window.<sup>1</sup>

The character of all this work is much the same: French, but of a pre-Serlio, pre-Philibert de l'Orme flavour; the kind of decoration, with its small-scale units, its embroideries and arabesques, which had been seeping into France from the North of Italy during the first decades of the 16th century; just the kind of decoration that might have been expected to have arrived at Lacock by way of the Works of Henry VIII.

But one of the most interesting things about Lacock is the mixture of the cake: the rich and renaissance cherries are scattered rather sparingly in a more homely setting. The general outlines and much of the detail are still gothic. There are gables, drip-tables, twisted chimneys. Even the tower is basically a gothic design: an octagon with a corner-turret and gargoyles. The result is something very sensitive and personal; but a long way from pure classic design.

Sharington was building in a comparatively small way and his work was conditioned by the old convent building, much of which was allowed to remain. Yet even in Thynne's more ambitious rebuildings at Longleat, there is no

<sup>1</sup> I cannot believe that the fine double chimney-stack, in the form of two doric columns with their entablature, now re-erected on its own in the garden at Lacock, is not considerably later in date than the

rest of this Lacock ornament. It is far bigger in scale and bolder in detail than they, and resembles the double-column chimneys at Burghley, put up in the late 1560's or the 1570's.

evidence to show that the mixture was any different. In the pre-Spicer contract work the accounts repeatedly mention gable-ends up till August, 1559. There is a tower, which is battlemented. Berryman carves house-crests and many feet of crest-, saull-, and corbel-tables; Spicer carves fendell-tables; all old medieval building terms. The 1559 new work must, as I have said, have closely resembled the old. Moreover the contract itself mentions water tables, beasts and severall tables, the latter of which implies gables; gables are mentioned in the accounts as late as October, 1566. Finally an invaluable piece of evidence still survives, externally probably not complete, but what there is untouched: John Thynne's house at Corseley, where Spicer worked at least for the whole of 1563, supplying windows of the same dimensions and probably of the same mouldings as those he had set up at Longleat. This is, in a startling way, the cake without the cherries: a plain gabled brick manor house, such as any local country gentleman might have built. The only untraditional feature is the windows, which are square headed, not arched (Pl. XXVA). Their mouldings are of a very simple concave section, gothic in origin, such as is found in the stable-court at Lacock but nowhere in the surviving work at Longleat.

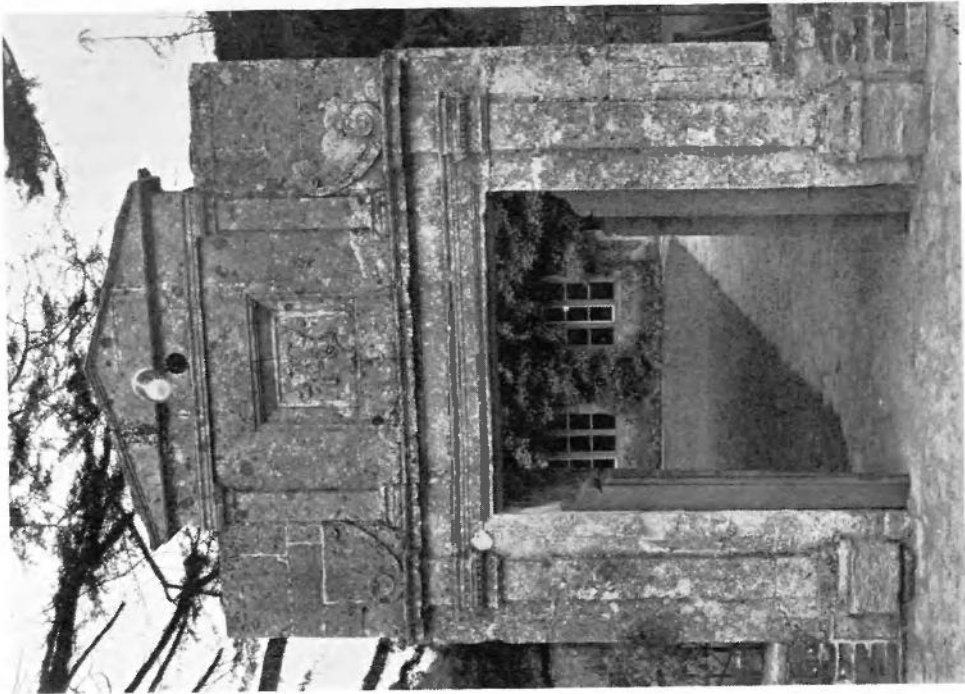
It seems, however, that the surviving buildings at Corseley are only a portion of a somewhat larger house; for the forecourt is at present entered through a pedimented archway which is clearly not in its original position, and may once have been the hall porch. It is a (for England) very pure classical design; not up to the superb standard of the later work at Longleat, but a far from discreditable performance which probably gives a representative idea of what the Longleat craftsmen were capable at this period (Pl. XXVB).

That the second Longleat was, ultimately, a symmetrical building can be surmised from one of the payments to Spicer, which is for 'pulling down and altering all that part that is to be changed to make it [Longleat] uniform.'

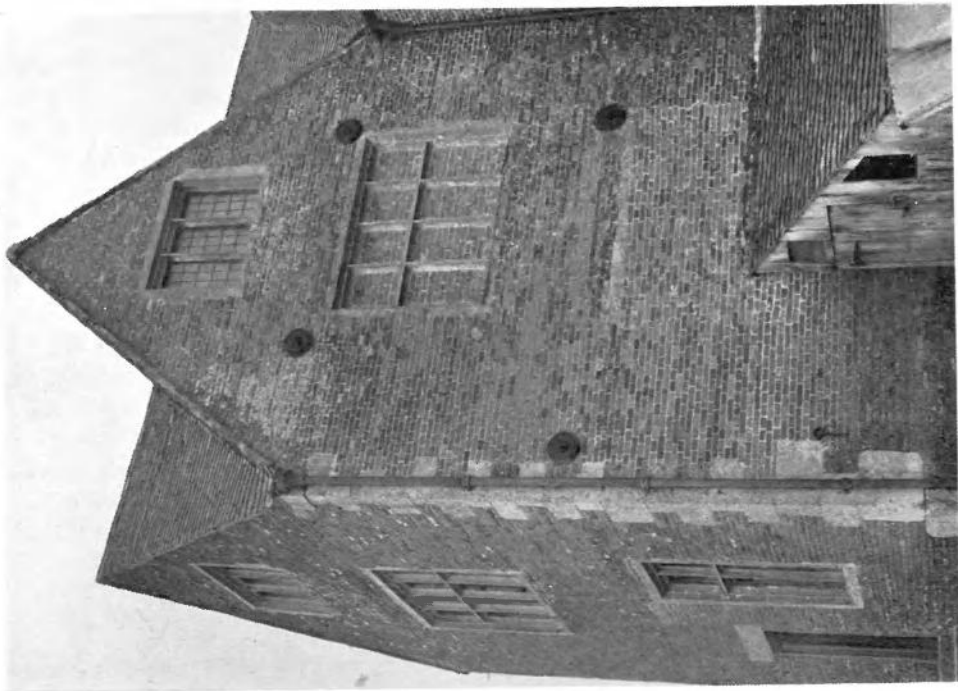
But specific references to classical detail in the documents of this period are very rare indeed. Up to the Spicer contract there is only the backward reference in the contract itself to 'chimneys with colompnes or terms'. Such chimney-pieces are in 'Spicer's accounts' of 1569 valued at £5 each, so that the hall chimney-piece for which Spicer was paid £2 in 1556 must have been something less elaborate. They were more probably carved by Chapman in the two blank years November, 1556-1558. It is also hard to believe that the hall porch, on which Chapman worked for so long, was not classically adorned.

In Spicer's 'new piece of work' there are more of the 'chimneys with colompnes or terms', of which Spicer failed to deliver all but one. He had contracted 'to make or cause to be made'; perhaps he had intended to get Chapman to carve them, but Chapman for some reason failed him. Then there is of course the 'wyndowe of fyfteen foote wyde in the gallery of freestone w<sup>th</sup> colompnes'. This must be the same as 'the great gallery window' of which in 1564 Robert Fosbery mended the 'pyriment'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L.P. Box LXXXVI Bk. 148, f. 304.



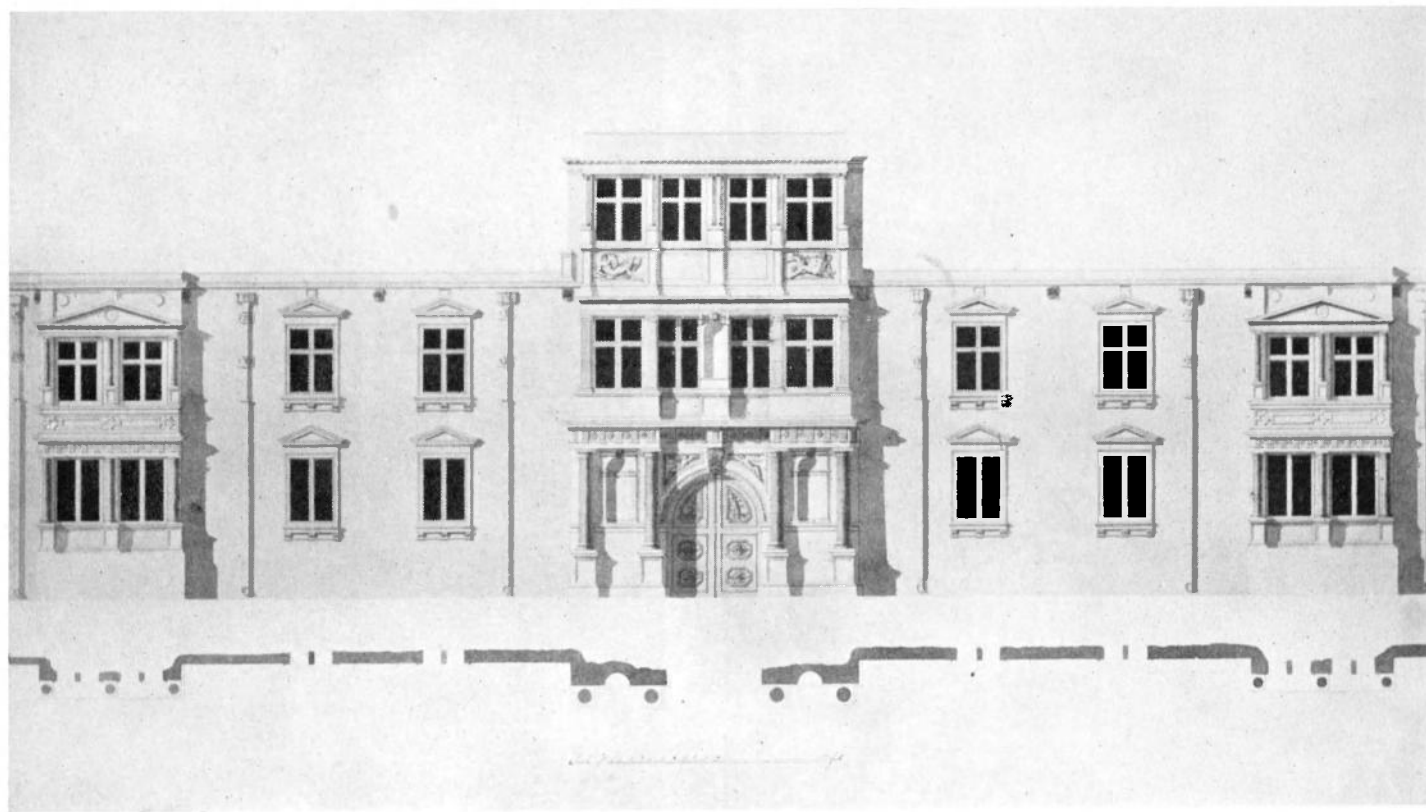
B. Gateway at front



A. Part of the rear elevation

CORSELEY





Somerset House, the Strand front  
*(From a drawing made shortly before demolition, now in the Ministry of Works Collection)*  
*(Crown Copyright reserved)*

On the Strand front of Somerset House were two window units, of two storeys, with coupled windows framed by side and centre columns under a pediment (Pl. XXVI). They were fourteen feet wide<sup>1</sup> and very probably the model for the Longleat window. Perhaps Thynne's major contribution the 'platt . . . maid and signed by the said Sr John Thynne and Will<sup>m</sup> Spicer' was to sketch in this window. Spicer seems to have had difficulty with the pediment; at any rate it had to be repaired after his departure.

A document at Longleat has been accepted as referring to Spicer's new building ever since Canon Jackson, in the course of arranging the Longleat papers in the 19th century, stuck it on the next page to Spicer's contract. I give it here in full.

Docketed 'The Lyghts of the wyndows at Longleate'		<i>No date</i>	
	Lower story	Upper story	
'Flore to upside of the scill	3 8	3 8	
clere of first light	3 9	4	
Next	2 6	3	
Next	2 1	2 4	
2 transoms	1	1*	
Moulding	5	5	
Depth of the lengther (above molding)	1 4	2 10	
Depth of the somme	1 3	1 3†	
Playster		1	
			* Two ynches added by my Mr.
			† that must bear the Ruffe
The wyddeth of the great parlour at the end of the hall		25 6	
"    "    "    " chamber over him		26 6	
To be wone viii ynches thereof on the side where the chymney shall stand and iiii ynches to the courtsid in the wall			
The hall to be full wide		30 0	
Item to sett of the wall of the lodgings at the lower end of the haule as they be at the upper end			
The story of the surveying place to be xii fote high.			
The ii chambers over the larder and pantry to be ix fotte story and a chimney in the utter chamber			
To ryse vi foot full entring into the haul porch out of the court			
Item, to devide the lower story on the west into two equall storyes at the ynner court			
Item a vault under the lytle gallery on the north side for larders to the prevy kechyn			
Item, the stone particions in thaul, the syde next the garden and the north side to the prevy kichen to be made all of stone and not of brycke, as high as the first flore and to be made half a foot thicker on either side to lay joists on			

<sup>1</sup> As shown in the John Thorpe plan of Somerset House,

Then they shall ryse wth brick

Item the long gallery in the north side in the second story to be XVII  
foot wyde if it be possible and vi<sup>xx</sup> foot long

Item all the starres to Ryse above the howse and to be typed and iiii to  
have lytle starres wonne fro the roofe so as they may serve as  
banketting howses

And a wyndow to be over the dore comyng out of the hall to gave light  
to the hal pors starres and to the cellar dore

[In a different hand]

The uppermost story into the gallery from the flore to the upsyde of the scill	3	8
The length of the fyrst light	3	1
The transom		6
The uppermost light	2	2
Berington promised to fell elms, John Ryder to get 2 sawyers. <sup>1</sup>		

If Canon Jackson was right, Spicer's new building had lower (but not upper) story windows with measurements almost identical to the measurements of those that still exist at Longleat. Its hall was of the same width, and its gallery and parlour very close in width to those at Longleat after the fire. Finally at Longleat there are still stair-turrets that 'ryse above the howse' and are 'typed' (i.e., domed) and 'have lytle starres wonne fro the roofe'. In short, pre- and post-fire Longleat, in parts at any rate, resembled each other very closely.

But first: the document is in a different hand from Spicer's contract, or any other accounts or documents of that date. Second: it refers to the building (as about to take place) of a new hall and hall porch, when in 1559 the hall had just been expensively re-fitted and an elaborate porch built; nor is there any reference in the accounts to a new hall, or new fittings for a hall, between 1559 and the fire. Third: the document refers to at least five staircases, which suggests something more extensive than the two wings for which Spicer contracted. Fourth: the dimensions of the rooms given in the document differ completely from those of the Spicer rooms, as they are specified in the joiner's bills.<sup>2</sup>

There is no need to surmise an uncanny resemblance between the new and the old Longleat, for it is to the new Longleat that the document refers.

There is one remaining reference to classical detail in the pre-fire house at Longleat. In September, 1567, shortly after the fire, Robert Fosbery is paid 'for taking downe xxx gable ends' (which gives a good idea of the prickly skyline of the old house) 'with the peryments of two wyndowes and ye porch of ye hall door at Longleat'.<sup>3</sup> The context suggests that these pedimented windows were on the hall side facade and that they were objects of some bulk. I would tentatively put forward the dark horses of the old house at Longleat, the

<sup>1</sup> R.O.B. II 121.

<sup>2</sup> R.O.B. II 231.

<sup>3</sup> Big Account Book.

'greate wyndowes . . . that is sett up already' whose mouldings the 1559 contract specify should be copied in the new work. There must have been at least two of these windows, one of which would be the great window for which Spicer and Berryman were paid £20 each in 1558; at that cost it would have been something fairly massive or elaborate. Perhaps one of them was the 'new plor window' on which in April, 1559 the plumbers were laying lead, which implies that it projected in some way. I would, again with diffidence suggest that these great windows were the bay window of the hall and a similar window built perhaps to balance it, both topped with pediments. Were they also decorated with columns, like the window to the gallery and those at Somerset House? I would only say that in the Spicer contract every other part specified is tied up with the previous work; only the window with columns is mentioned in isolation, as though at Longleat it had had no predecessors.

From this long and not altogether rewarding search there emerges what, with the available evidence, can never be more than the hint or suggestion of a house: symmetrically disposed indeed, but essentially traditional in its outlines and much of its detail; with a skyline of battlemented towers and long rows of steep gables; only, projecting here or there, a porch or windows decorated with pediments and orders; no traces of the level balustrades or elaborate centre-piece of Somerset House; still less the faintest foretaste of the Longleat that was to come with its stepped and integrated facades.

This is perhaps disappointing: one had hoped for more from a man who was so closely connected with the building and maybe the design of Somerset House. But Somerset House tends to impress us too much. It is startling because it is the first known building in England in which there is scarcely a trace of Gothic ornament. Yet it is possible to go a very long way in adopting classical detail and still to have no proper appreciation of what is meant by a classical design. As the latter Somerset House is not impressive. It does not hold together: the windows and the gateway on the Strand front, for instance, have no relation, either to each other or to the spaces in between. It is possibly more correct to think of it not as a fumbling attempt at a Renaissance palace, but as an old Tudor friend lurking behind a new disguise. The central gateway, the corner bays, even the symmetry and the level parapets, of the Strand facade had all appeared before in such works as the fronts of Hampton Court and of Christ Church at Oxford.<sup>1</sup>

There was still in England only a surface appreciation of Renaissance architecture. It provided a new, smart form of decoration, to be spread like jam on a traditional bread-and-butter. Only there was seldom enough jam to go round, for the number of craftsmen who could work in the new style was very limited. Somerset, being a millionaire and dictator of England, had the means and the power to assemble a team of French masons. Other men, with

<sup>1</sup> On the courtyard side the Tudor gate-house came right out into the open, as can be seen in Kip's view.

fewer resources, had to be more meagre with their ornament. In the great houses of Wilton and Gorhambury, built by powerful courtiers, one a little before, the other a little after the second Longleat, magnificent pillared porches were stranded like whales, almost alone upon an alien beach. It was not to be expected that Thynne, with the help of one court mason of Henry VIII vintage and a gang of rustics, would be able to produce another Somerset House in the wilds of Wiltshire.

*Fitting up the interior of the second Longleat.*

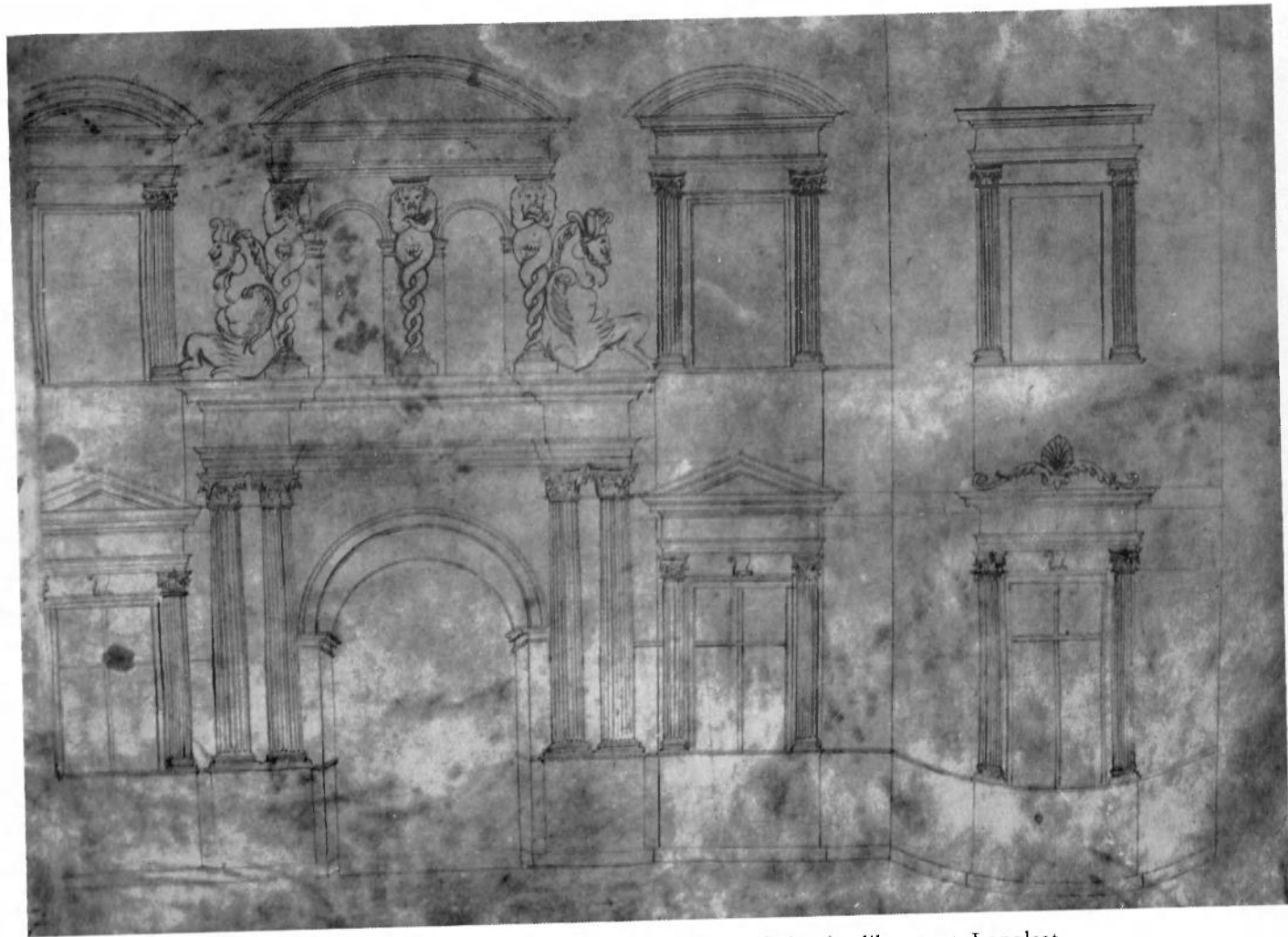
In June, 1562, John Lewis, having been summoned to employment in the Queen's Works, was diverted with her permission to the building of the new hall at the Middle Temple;<sup>1</sup> a remarkable tribute to his reputation, whether gained at Longleat or before. At the Middle Temple he was probably responsible for the hall roof, the brother of those still remaining at Longleat and Wollaton. He was back at Longleat at any rate by December, 1565. In his absence two new craftsmen appeared, Allen Maynard the sculptor, and Adrian Gaunt the joiner. Maynard's arrival was to lead in the end to changes at Longleat even more important than those brought in with Chapman and Lewis in 1553. But for the moment he, with Gaunt, was confined indoors to the decoration between 1563 and 1566 of the great rooms left empty by Spicer.

Gaunt and Maynard were Frenchmen, the first and only undoubted foreigners to work at Longleat. The record of their denization survives in the Patent Rolls, Maynard's dated February 12, 1566, Gaunt's, April 24, 1567.

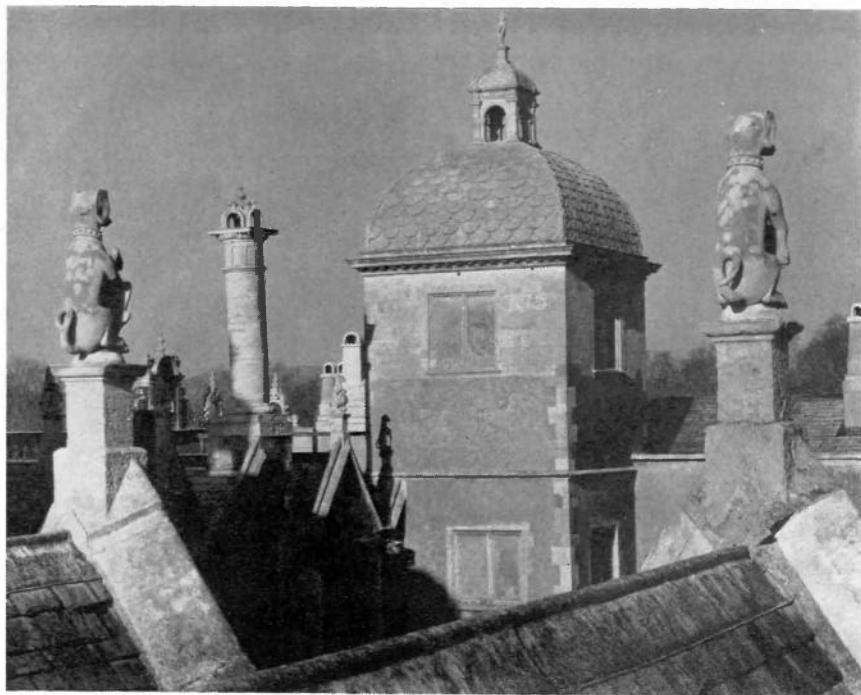
Maynard entered Thynne's service after the exterior of the second Longleat had been completed; had he come a little earlier Thynne would probably have built something considerably more advanced. In Bishop Ken's library at Longleat there is preserved a group of drawings all clearly by the same, very French, hand; one of them is docketed 'Alan Maynard's drawing for Rodmister Lodge'. One of these designs (the 'Monster', Pl. XXVII) probably dates from Maynard's early years at Longleat, for it has windows much smaller than the great nine- and twelve-light grids that were all ultimately erected; there is no evidence, however, that any such building as that shown in the design was ever put up. As a piece of architectural drawing it surpasses anything else of that date in England; not very high praise. Its Frenchness is of a different, more up to date variety than that of Lacock, reflecting two new trends, a more direct approach to antique models and a less restrained appetite for the grotesque. The tabernacled windows are a sign of the former, the monsters of the latter: they are far bigger and more rumbustious than their predecessors at Lacock. As a design the drawing is not very happy, for it is overcrowded in the centre. Yet every measurement is regulated by the diameter of the small pilasters, for England a startling new concept.

Of Maynard's work at this time we know that in the first half of 1563 he was carving a chimney-piece, perhaps for Spicer's parlour, of columns and

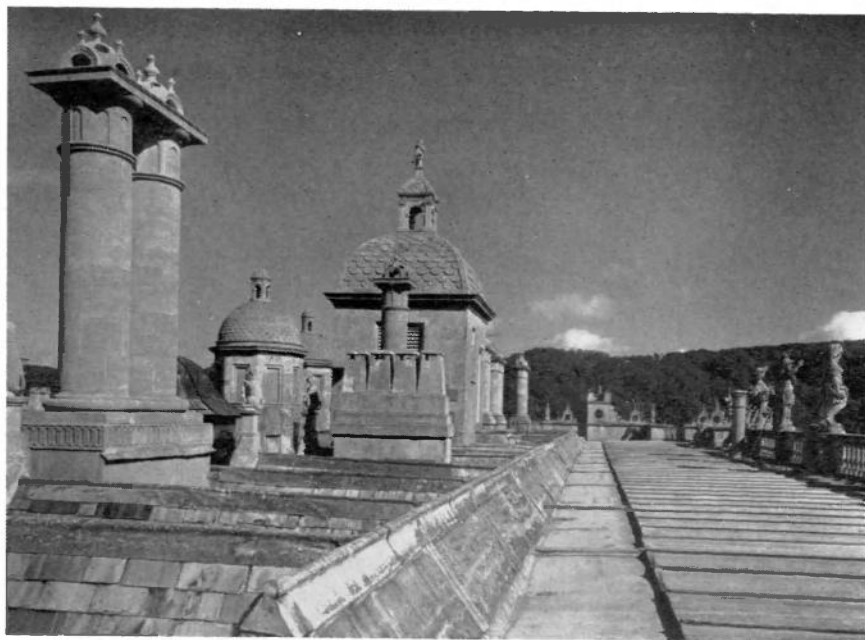
<sup>1</sup> See the letter from Edmund Plowden, Treasurer the Middle Temple, to Thynne, R.O.B. II, 100.



Unidentified design, probably by Allen Maynard, in the library at Longleat



A. Looking into the west courtyard  
*(Country Life)*



B. The roof of the south range  
*(Country Life)*

entablature below and terms above, perhaps not unlike the centre-piece of the 'Monster' drawing. In December, 1565, he was working on two more chimney-pieces which 'stand not levell because Allen hath mistaken his levell'. In 1566, he was paid £33 11s. 6d. 'for making of ye chimneys before the xxx of August'. In October, of the same year 'prests depending' include £26 1s. 2d. owed to Maynard.

Maynard was later on to be employed for much of the decorative detail still existing at Longleat. All the fireplaces to which there are references in the MSS. after his arrival were carved by him; and the three surviving carved Elizabethan fireplaces at Longleat, in the hall, in the top gallery, and in the basement are pretty certainly his work. These probably date from after the period with which I am dealing; but I illustrate the basement fireplace (which has not been published before) because, together with the drawing, it gives a good idea of the, for England, extraordinarily high quality of the Renaissance detail which he was capable of producing (Pl. XXIIIb).

At the same time Gaunt the joiner was busy providing woodwork of what must have been considerable splendour: a 'portal', that is, an interior porch, decorated with columns and terms, like Maynard's chimney-piece; doors of marquetry, doorcases with pilasters, panelling, and bookcases.<sup>1</sup>

On April 21, 1567, Longleat caught fire, and all this work was halted and perhaps destroyed.

### THE THIRD LONGLEAT

The damage done by the fire must have been considerable. In the 1568 account book the workmen are paid for 'workinge in New Buildinge of Longleate house . . . after the burning of the said house which was burnt Monday the XXIst Aprill, 1567, about three of the clock and between that and seven of the clock or eight in the afternoon'. Sir Thomas Smyth wrote from Paris, where he was ambassador, to condole with Thynne on his 'great misfortune'. William Darell in his satire says that the house was 'almost utterly consumed'. Certainly for the next five years Thynne went to live at Corseley.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile at Longleat the wreckage was slowly removed. On May 22, 1567, Thynne's steward wrote to him that 'the west side of Longleate hous ys almost taken down to the corbell'. From then till September there are payments for pulling down of gables and removal of rubble; and in September an entry records the pulling down of thirty gables, the 'peryments' of two windows, the hall porch and ten chimney-pieces.<sup>3</sup> The hall then was certainly gutted; the rest of the house at any rate partially gutted, with the gable storey, at least in places, left so

<sup>1</sup> The main sources for this internal decoration are the letters to Thynne of his steward, George Walker, 1563-6 (R.O.B. II, 200-230 approx.) and the joiner's bills for 1565-6 (R.H.B. II, 231-239).

<sup>2</sup> As appears from his household account books.

<sup>3</sup> The payments for demolishing the old house are in the big account book, and L.P. Box LXVIII Bk. 59.



insecure that it had to be demolished. After only a year's work the new building had reached skyline level, which suggests that it may have incorporated in part the walls of the old.

Thynne is unlikely to have used Maynard's help in the design of the third Longleat; for Maynard had for the time being disappeared from the accounts, last heard of in August, 1566 (when his work on the interior of the second Longleat must have been completed); Thynne was not able to get him back again until 1570. It was Adrian Gaunt, the French joiner, who on December 10, 1567, received the first instalment of a total of £4 15s. od. for 'making ye modell for ye house of Longleate'.<sup>1</sup> This is, I think, the only recorded example of a wooden model of this kind being made in England in the 16th century, though in France and Italy they were common enough.

Gaunt need not necessarily have designed the model he made. At the end of 1569, the Earl of Hertford, Somerset's son, wrote to Thynne

'I now stand in neade of yo<sup>r</sup> healpe and in yo<sup>r</sup> absence of yo<sup>r</sup> man Lewes about my middell garden house, wch whither be best to be in square, round or cant order I know not . . . I pray send by him the platt of my house devised by you and O. [Omfrey] Lovell.'<sup>2</sup>

Humphrey Lovell was the Queen's Master-Mason, and was in contact with Thynne at the time of the rebuilding, two years before this letter was written; for in March, 1568, he sent a new and very talented master-mason, Robert Smythson, down to Longleat, 'accordenge to my promes' as he said in the accompanying letter of introduction.<sup>3</sup> Lovell had worked for Somerset, and Thynne must have known him of old; it may be that the design of the third Longleat was the result of collaboration between him and Thynne, incorporating perhaps suggestions from Gaunt and Lewis. The design is unlikely to have had anything to do with Smythson, who only arrived at Longleat some months after the model had been made.

The third Longleat, built at the beginning of the great Elizabethan boom, was on a much more splendid scale than its predecessors. In the year from 1550 up to the fire Thynne's average annual expenditure on building had been about £230; his biggest yearly bill had been about £400. In the ten years from 1568 until his death, his building costs averaged around £800 a year, and in one year rose as high as £1,150. For the earlier buildings Thynne had used quarries in the immediate neighbourhood of Longleat; but after the fire he bought a Bath-stone quarry at Haselbury, on Box Hill, and from here the stone was dragged by oxen over twenty-five miles of hilly country to Longleat, an operation which added very considerably to the total building expenses.

It is a commonly accepted belief that the result of this post-fire rebuilding was Longleat as we see it to-day; but, as the documents show without any

<sup>1</sup> Payment recorded both in Big Account Book (back payment recorded in June-July period 1568) and L.P. Bk. LXVIII, Bk. 59.

<sup>2</sup> T.P. Vol. I f. 66. Undated; but another letter from Hertford to Thynne (*id.* f. 43), in which he asks him to remember 'yr hast of my platt' is dated September 3, 1569.

<sup>3</sup> R.O.B. III, 61.

possibility of doubt, this was by no means so. All the most distinctive features of the present house, the great bay windows, the three orders of pilasters, the windows with their carefully designed classical frames, were not begun until 1572, after Thynne had been building steadily for four years, and had spent rising £4,000, that is nearly half of his total post-fire expenditure.

There is enough evidence, both in the form of documentary materials and of surviving building, to give some idea of what this third Longleat looked like. On February 23, 1569, Thynne's steward, Richard Cavell, wrote to him:

'Smithson willed me to shew you that oone tipe is in woorking and that he will make all the haste therein as he can and also w<sup>th</sup> the grass tables their be but viii of them that woork/two wheirof be setting of the shaftes for the chimneys and gible ends and crestings. Their is as he sayeth thre shaftes of chimneys wrowght and as much creste as will suffise fr the gible endes . . . Thus praying you to beir w<sup>th</sup> these my rude letters and specially when it towcheth any termes of building for I am utterly unacquaynted the phrases of buylders as God knoweth.'<sup>1</sup>

This letter shows that the new building had gables and at least two 'tipes', that is, domed turrets; and its possession of these latter features helps to date the specification already quoted, docketed 'The Lyghts of the wyndoes at Longleate',<sup>2</sup> as belonging to this period. In this occurs the injunction 'All the starres to Royse above the house and to be typed and iiii to have lytle starres wonne fro the rooffe so as they may serve as banketting howses'. The reference must be to the domed turrets that were built in the corners of the Longleat courtyard, and of which seven of the original eight still survive. The positioning of these turrets makes it quite clear that the third Longleat was of almost exactly the same overall dimensions as the fourth; the specification shows that both the windows and main rooms of the two were of very similar sizes. In fact the fourth Longleat was not a rebuilding but a resheathing of the third; the gabled exterior of the 1568 house was overlaid in 1572 by more classical facades. The building accounts for 1568-71 suggest that the third Longleat was relatively plain; with its gables and turrets it must have been very similar too, though somewhat grander in scale than the pre-fire buildings.

This dichotomy between the third and fourth Longleat explains why the facade of Longleat is not related to its skyline; behind the carefully integrated facades the seven turrets stick up in illogical if picturesque confusion. But if one climbs up the twisting and uneven stairs in one of the turrets and emerges on the roof, one finds oneself behind the scenes; there, basically unreformed, the gabled and towered facades of the third Longleat look down into the chapel courtyard (Pl. XXVIII A). Perhaps these internal facades date back in part further still; for the clumsy way in which the turrets cut into the gables suggests (though it may be due to careless setting-out) that the gables are a relic of the pre-fire house, left in a good enough state to be incorporated into the re-building (Pl. XXVIII B). I would not like to be dogmatic as to whether the remarkable column chimney-shafts, equally clumsily superimposed upon the gables, date from the period of the third or the fourth Longleat.

<sup>1</sup> T.P. Vol. III, f. 198.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 213.

The imposition of the facades of the fourth Longleat onto an earlier building resulted in various oddities and discrepancies. The facades are not as regular as at first sight they seem. Thus on the east front the south bay window is set 6 ft. 8 ins. from the corner of the house, but the north bay only 2 ft. 1 in. The middle bay is set not quite centrally between the two corner bays with the result that one of the windows of the ranges in between the bays has had to be made narrower than its fellows. Every facade has a different proportion of window to wall. The orders on these facades cannot be analysed according to any exact system of proportion.

Internally the extra height of the Ionic storey windows has been gained by pushing them right up to ceiling height, swallowing the 2 ft. 7 ins. of 'somme' and 'lengther' allowed in the 1567 specification of the window dimensions. This was later felt to be uncomfortable and, perhaps in the 18th century, the top row of lights was in many rooms blocked so that internally the windows are now only of two rows. On the storey above, the windows, to fit the external elevations, had to be set uncomfortably high, 4 ft. 4 ins. from the floor. The windows to the court, a few of which preserve the dimensions of the immediate post-fire work, are all set much lower, around 3 ft. from the floor. Finally Bishop Ken's library is still shaped inside by the lines of the original pointed roof, to which the external facade has been added as an unrelated screen with some of the windows entirely false.

Longleat's building history is a long, complicated and confusing one and it may be convenient to summarize my conclusions.

Between 1546 and 1552 Thynne adapted and added to a small house of the Austin Canons, to make a home for himself. Any new work was probably in the local Tudor vernacular; the two main stone-masons employed, Love and Berryman, seem to have been local men. This is what I have called the first Longleat.

Between 1553 and 1567 Thynne gradually rebuilt and remodelled his house. When finished it was larger in scale and probably symmetrical in its elevations; the exterior incorporated some classical detail, and there were classical joinery and chimney-pieces in the interior; but in its main outline the house was still traditional, with towers, battlements, and many gables. The main craftsmen employed at this period were Chapman, Spicer and Maynard, freemasons; Lewis carpenter; and Gaunt joiner. This was the second Longleat, which was partially demolished by fire in 1567.

Between 1568 and 1572 Thynne largely rebuilt Longleat probably on a larger scale but in a very similar style to his pre-fire work. The main new features were eight domed staircase turrets built in the courtyards. The craftsmen employed included Smythson as master-mason; Lewis as master-carpenter; Gaunt as master-joiner. This was the third Longleat.

In 1572 Thynne started to refront the third Longleat with the facades that exist to-day. The three orders, the great bay-windows, and the horizontal

parapets all date from this period. The masons employed for most of the work were Smythson and Maynard. This was the fourth and final Longleat.

The building history of the fourth Longleat and the problems of design and attribution that it raises do not concern us here. But there is little doubt that for inspiration it went straight back to Somerset House, rather than to Thynne's earlier buildings at Longleat. In fact perhaps the most interesting thing about these earlier buildings is how comparatively retrogressive they were, considering the achievement of Somerset House and Thynne's own connection with Somerset himself. The lesson to be learnt, perhaps, is that we should never forget how acute a shortage of good craftsmen trained in the new style there was in the mid-16th century; for it took Thynne, dynamic and well-connected though he was, twenty-five years before he could collect a team of craftsmen who were capable of building him a house with which he could remain satisfied.

## APPENDIX

*List of the Longleat papers relating  
to the building of Longleat House*

(I) 'THE RECORDS OF THE BUILDING OF LONGLEAT.' (*Footnote reference: R.O.B.*)

Three gilt and leather-bound volumes into which, in the 19th century, Canon Jackson collected original bills, letters, etc. (some with transcriptions by himself into modern handwriting) and excerpts copied from original documents, all relating to the building history of Longleat. Arranged chronologically.

- Vol. I Up to 1550
- Vol. II 1550-67
- Vol. III After 1567

(II) LONGLEAT PAPERS. (*Footnote reference: L.P.*)

Mostly separate books of accounts, strapped several at a time into cardboard folders. The majority have nothing to do with building; I give the relevant ones.

## BOX LXVIII

- Book 59 Building accounts Jan. 1568—Dec. 1570, but including some 1567 payments made after the fire.
- Book 60 Building Accounts, 1571-75.
- Book 61 (a) Money paid out by Lady Thynne, May 1567—Feb. 1568, includes some payments for building.

## BOXES LXXXV AND LXXXVI

Containing mostly general account books, each covering a year, usually from November to November, and divided into sections, for Food, Clothing, Stables, etc. Up to 1566 they usually contain a section for building; from 1567 to 1575 building expenses went into account books of their own (see BOX LXVIII)

## BOX LXXV

- Book 141 General Accounts 1550-52
- Book 143 Building Accounts 1554-5
- Book 144 General Accounts 1555-6
- Book 145 General Accounts 1558-9

## BOX LXXVI

- Book 146 General Accounts 1559-60  
 Book 147 General Accounts 1561-2 (Nov. to June)  
 Book 148 General Accounts 1565-6

## BOX LXXXVIII

- Containing mostly general account books 1574-7, with no section for building. But:  
 Book 159 General Accounts, Oct. 1578—Dec. 1579, giving total of building expenditure.  
 Book 160 (1) Rough jottings of many miscellaneous payments, including some for building, 1576-79.  
 Book 161 Building accounts, May—December, 1580.

(III) THYNNE PAPERS. (*Footnote reference: T.P.*)

- Vols. I-IV Mostly Thynne correspondence, but with occasional bills, agreements, etc. Bound into leather volumes.  
 Vol. I Family and Seymour letters.  
 Vol. II-IV. Other letters, arranged chronologically *c.* 1550-80.  
 Vols. V-XLVII Later Thynne correspondence, which does not concern us. Also leather bound.  
 Vols. XLVIII-L Miscellaneous Thynne papers: in fact anything which had escaped being collected elsewhere. Not bound, but strapped into cardboard folders.  
 Vol. XLVIII (Box I) Papers to do with John Thynne Senior before 1561.  
 Vol. XLIX (Box II) Papers to do with John Thynne Senior before 1561-76.  
 Vol. L (Box III) Papers to do with John Thynne Senior 1577-81.

## (IV) OTHER SOURCES

## (a) 'THE BIG ACCOUNT BOOK'

A fair copy of the first half of Book 59, see (II), Building Accounts from the fire, April, 1567, to Nov. 1568. A very large book magnificently bound in a stamped leather cover which seems originally to have belonged to a medieval missal.

## (b) THE SEYMOUR PAPERS

A quite separate collection of MSS. to do with the Seymour family, but containing some letters to John Thynne.