

# George More's other house: Baynards Mansion, Ewhurst

JUDIE ENGLISH

'I had now mounted a pretty, steep hill, when through a vista in the woods I caught the first, the most striking view of the old mansion of Baynards. All in front lay in deep shade, except where the lighter branches twinkled to a wandering sunbeam; beyond these, the grey and lordly dwelling steeply rising from a grassy knoll, with all its pointed gables, and stone mullioned windows, and tall clustered chimnies, seemed to slumber in the mellow western light. [...] Here was a house not only ancient, but beautiful, not a mere husk of antiquity, but full of antique and lofty associations.' (Hone 1882, 465)

## Summary

*Baynards Mansion, Ewhurst, was destroyed by fire in 1979. The house built by George More after he purchased the estate in 1587 and prior to his move to Loseley House in 1604 was extensively restored in 1832–8, primarily by Thomas Rickman. This paper examines the remaining evidence of the Tudor mansion and the effect of the 19th century restoration.*

## Background

Baynard is first mentioned as a personal name in 1331 (Lewis 1894, 101) and in 1447 William Sydney was given permission to empark 800 acres (320ha) of land at his manor of Baynards (PRO: C53, 25 & 26, Henry VI no 12); it seems likely that a house existed at this time but the exact site is unknown.

A 13th century house was described (Wilson-Haffenden, 1948) as a 'castellated pile of heavy timbers of oak and ragstone masonry, which stood like a cliff among a sea of magnificent oaks spreading in every direction for miles around, almost floating in a sea of mud and swarming with wild hogs and wolves, as well as robbers'. No source has been found for this 'information' other than the author's imagination and it clearly owes more to the inspiration of writers such as Sir Walter Scott than to any description of medieval Baynards.

On 29 October 1587 John Reade released his rights in Baynards to George More of Loseley and a fine was levied in 1588 confirming the conveyance. George More is reputed to have bought Baynards with his wife's money. His first wife, Ann, whom he married in 1580, was the daughter and co-heir of Adryan Poynings, who was, in turn, heir to his brother Sir Thomas, the last Baron Poynings who had died without issue (Manning & Bray 1808–14, 1, 97). She died in 1590 (SHC: LM/COR/3/482) and although no evidence has been found of the scale of her inheritance, the naming of George More's grandson (and heir) Poynings More after his grandmother's family may suggest that it was significant. According to John Evelyn (Aubrey 1718), George More built Baynards Mansion to be his home while his father, William, was alive. In 1604, after his father's death Sir George, his second wife Constance and his son Robert, sold Baynards to Sir Francis Woolley of Pyrford, Sir George's nephew, and the family moved to Loseley (VCH, 3, 98).

### George More's house

George More, born in 1553, followed his father William in holding a range of positions both locally and nationally (Munden 1996). On his marriage he followed his father's example at Loseley by building a house suitable for his position on his newly acquired estate at Baynards. Little information has survived about George More's house. John Evelyn saw it in 1657 and described it as 'a very fair noble residence' but was more interested in 'the goodliest oaks up to it that ever I saw' (Evelyn 1675/6 in Aubrey 1718). An engraving of 1804 shows a brick and stone house with ranges of large chimneys but the angle of view is unhelpful (Manning & Bray 1804–14, I, 547): this and the following reference are the only depictions of the house which have been located in published sources or in either locally available or major national archives. An anonymous article in Hone's *Year Book* (1882, 465) describes a visit to the house in 1831 and gives a sketch. The description of the interior is worth repeating at length:

The fine old porch had been converted into a larder. The door, which fitted into a deep and very flattened arch of stone, was of massive oak, studded with enormous octagonal headed nails. I was admitted into a spacious and lofty kitchen, supplied with a wide open arched chimney, which was in itself an apartment, and with many a smoke stained rafter and dim recess. I found the apartments much larger and loftier than is usual in old mansions, and the plan of the building much more regular than I would have supposed.

A large hall in the centre, decorated with a carved oak screen, divided the offices from two spacious sitting rooms, over the hall an immense apartment separated two sets of lofty bedrooms, and a gallery of a hundred foot in length ran along the top of the house opening on either hand into smaller dormitories.

The grand staircase was peculiar. It occupied a large and projecting gable, was of immense width and solidity, and kept turning around a square buttress, from the very bottom to the top of the house. All the doors and fireplaces were of the low flattened arch peculiar to the Tudor period, and the windows, of great size and height, were most of them divided into two horizontal ranges by a cross bar of stone, and again into numerous compartments by upright stone mullions.

This description together with the illustration given in the same article (fig 1) indicates that George More's house had two storeys with major rooms and an attic containing the long gallery under the ridge of the roof with small rooms, presumably bedrooms for the servants, on either side. This house, as far as can be judged from the drawing, appears to have been a diminished version of Loseley, the house built by George More's father, William, between 1561 and 1569. A plan of Loseley drawn for George More's extension of the house after his inheritance of it and dated c 1600 survives and the portion showing William More's house is given (fig 2). For Baynards, only a plan made in 1971 with some indication of the position of surviving Tudor fabric is available for comparative purposes (fig 2). At both houses there seem to have been short, projecting wings at either end, and a central range with two gabled projections of which one comprised the porch and the other the hall oriel (figs 3 and 4). Probably at Baynards, as at Loseley, the section of the central range between the porch and the low-end (eastern) crosswing was occupied by a buttery or pantry, but the Victorian alterations destroyed the interior and much of the exterior of that wing. At Loseley the space between the hall oriel and the high-end wing is occupied by a parlour. At Baynards the high-end wing may be a slightly later addition or alteration; the surviving original brickwork in the northern front of the house was red diapered with dark headers while that of the wing was plain and likely to date to the early 17th century. Evidence of the original layout of the western end of the central range may therefore have been lost but it seems unlikely that the parlour at Loseley had a parallel at Baynards. Both of the rooms in the western crosswing were probably parlours although, if George More



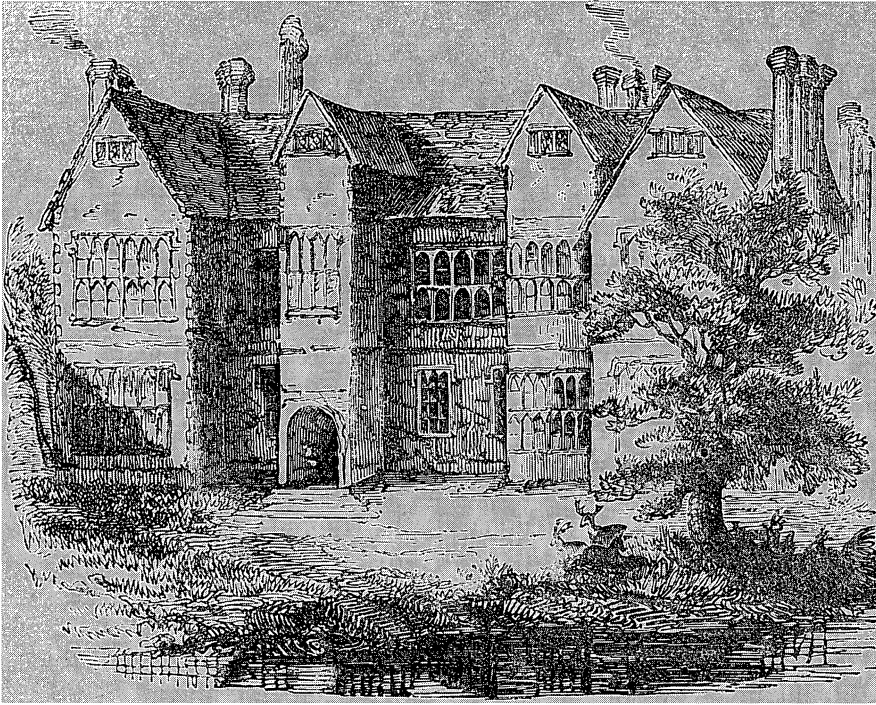


Fig 1 Illustration of Baynards from Hone's *Year Book*, 1882. Reproduced by permission of the British Library (British Library X972/5 [4], Hone, William).

were a little old fashioned, one may have been a lodging parlour and have contained a bed. However, this latter possibility is less likely in someone of his status.

Of considerable interest is the suggestion contained in the plan of 1971 that the earlier house had a depth of one-and-a-half-ranges. The fabric, and therefore the date, of the internal, southern, wall of the 19th century Dining Room and Great Hall, could not be studied but comparison with Loseley suggests that may have represented the original, outside wall. If this speculation is true the half range may have been added, from its Tudor brickwork content soon after the original building, in order to improve circulation within the house. In 1604 George More sold Baynards to his nephew, Sir Francis Woolley of Pyrford who in turn sold it in 1607 and in the succeeding 22 years the estate changed hands four times and was for a period heavily mortgaged. In 1629 it was bought by Richard Evelyn and Baynards holds the distinction of being owned by four of the leading post-medieval Surrey families, the Brays, the Mores, the Evelyns and the Onslows. Any alterations dating to the early 17th century are most likely to have been carried out by either Sir Francis Woolley or Richard Evelyn.

In late 16th century houses with a single-storeyed hall, the great chamber was frequently situated over the hall and here it was probably the 'immense apartment' lying over the hall and the screens passage from crosswing to crosswing, and lit by the large windows shown in the 1882 sketch. The great chamber was 'the ceremonial pivot of the house' (Girouard 1978, 88). Although primarily the formal dining room for the owner, his family and those considered worthy of dining with them, the great chamber was also used for formal entertainments and family prayers if the house had no chapel. However, in 1628/9 Margaret Jossey, mother of the then owner James Jossey alias Hay, surrendered 'two rooms over the great dining chamber at Baynards' to her son (*VCH*, 3, 98). If, as suggested above, the great chamber lay over the single-storey hall, and this is the same room as 'the

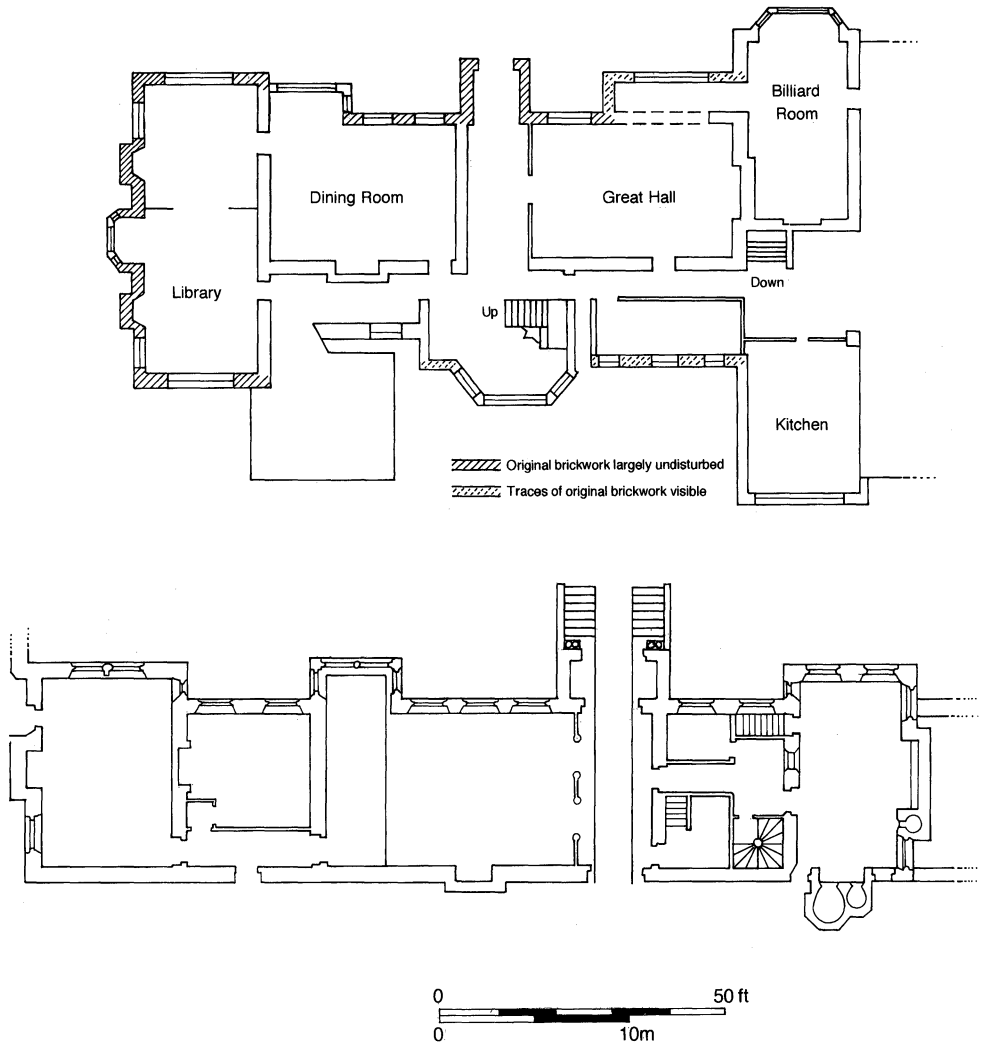


Fig 2 Above: plan of Baynards by Nugent, 1971. © Crown copyright. NMR. Below: part of a plan of Loseley House dated *c* 1600 showing the range built by William More in 1561–9. North is at the top. Reproduced from *Thorpe's Book*, by courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum (Soane Museum vol 101/39–40). Both plans redrawn by David Williams.

great dining chamber' in the Jossey will, then Margaret Jossey's two rooms must have lain in the attic, possibly occupying the porch and oriel bays on either side of the gallery. If the length of the gallery given by the anonymous writer in Hone's *Year Book* (1882, 465) can be regarded as reliable, the gallery must have extended over the central range and one of the wings. However, 100 feet (30m) is a suspiciously round figure and the exact location of the gallery remains uncertain. If the gallery did not extend over the western wing and the great chamber lay over the parlours, in that wing, then Margaret Jossey's rooms could have been in the attic above the great chamber. However, the position of the two chimneys in the western wall of the western wing, and the amount of Tudor brickwork thought to be *in situ* indicate two rooms on each floor militating against this latter case. In either case the great chamber would have been at the head of a stair from the high end of the hall, with further rooms beyond it to the east.



Fig 3 The north (entrance) elevation of Baynards Mansion in 1969 from the north-west. © Crown copyright. NMR. (NMR BB70/1233)

The position of the staircase at Baynards is uncertain, as it is at Loseley (Hussey 1935; Binney 1969 a & b). After the 19th century alterations it was situated at the end of the screens passage, opposite the entrance, and within a projecting gable but this is unlikely to have been its original position. The conventional position, given the description in the *Year Book* of a large and projecting gable, would have been at the rear of the house in the projection between the hall and the west wing and the mention of a square central buttress, presumably a central core, suggests that the original staircase had survived until 1831. The route from the hall to the great chamber was an important point on which a gentleman's house could be judged and the staircase still impressed the anonymous visitor; however, no sign of it in this or any other position could be seen in the 19th century house. If the great chamber lay within the central range the four rooms on the first floor of the crosswings would primarily have been bedrooms but it is possible that one was a withdrawing-room.

Galleries originated as covered walks, often partially open and on the ground floor, and while they were firstly intended to lead from place to place under cover they later became areas where exercise could be taken in poor weather. As the 16th century progressed the furnishing of galleries became more ornate with pictures and hangings to improve and entertain the promenading gentry. At Baynards the gallery was contained under the roof presumably lit either from windows in the gable ends or by dormers which were removed later. The 'smaller dormitories', possibly servants' bedchambers, may have been formed by later partitioning along its length or could have been located in the projections over the porch and oriel projections. On inheriting Loseley George More built a west wing, now demolished, adjoining his father's house, which contained an upper floor gallery some 121 feet (37m) long.

In summary, it is perhaps unwise to draw too many conclusions, particularly regarding the internal arrangements, from a short description and a sketch made 250 years after the



Fig 4 The north (entrance) elevation of Loseley House in 2001 from the north-west. By kind permission of Loseley Park.

house was built and when it was in poor condition, but a comparison of the exteriors of Baynards and Loseley shows considerable similarities between the two houses. Baynards appears to have been an H-shaped house with very short crosswings, a ground floor hall with a great chamber over it and a gallery contained within the attic space, and to have been fairly typical of a small gentry house of the period.

The article in Hone's *Year Book* (1882, 465) is anonymous but part of it reads: 'Few may feel as I do with regard to even useful changes, and what are called improvements. Neither shall I say whether disgusted by these alterations, and by the neglected state of the house, I gave up all thoughts of dwelling in it, or whether I made a fool of myself, and laid out a power of money in restoring it to its ancient splendour'. The article related to a visit in 1831 – perhaps the author was Thomas Thurlow, who bought the house in 1832 and certainly spent a great deal of money restoring it.

### **The 19th century house**

Some uncertainty exists in the literature about the relative importance of the roles of Thomas Rickman, Matthew Digby Wyatt and Benjamin Ferrey in the restoration of Baynards. Both Malden (*VCH*, 3, 99) and Nairn & Pevsner (1962, 89) ascribe the major part to Digby Wyatt (although later editions of Nairn & Pevsner omit this attribution) and Eastlake (1970, appendix 67) gives Digby Wyatt as remodelling work initiated by Rickman but continued after the latter's death by Ferrey. Extensive research has failed to provide any link between Baynards and Digby Wyatt and Ferrey's possible role will be discussed below.

When the Reverend Thomas Thurlow, nephew of an 18th century Lord Chancellor and second son of the Bishop of Durham (1787–91), bought the estate from Chauncey Hare Townsend in 1832, the remodelling of old houses was becoming a favourite

occupation of the 19th century landowner. Sometimes the alterations transformed an old house into a fashionable villa, but in many cases, as here, the remodelling was executed in the character of the original fabric.

The choice of Rickman as architect may reflect Thurlow's ecclesiastical background. Rickman had had a varied career in chemistry, medicine and insurance-broking but had acquired extensive knowledge of medieval churches, publishing the work which originated the division into Norman, Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular styles (Rickman 1817). By 1834, however, Rickman had completed his most famous non-ecclesiastical commission, the New Court of St John's College, Cambridge – a building in the most picturesque version of neo-Gothic (Linstrum 1969, appendix C, 4).

Some details of Rickman's involvement with Baynards are noted in his diary (RIBA: Rickman diaries, 1834). He first visited Baynards on 14 January and, perhaps tellingly, was taken to see Loseley the next day. Despite the state of dilapidation into which Baynards had fallen, Rickman recorded in his diary that he considered Loseley 'the lesser inferior'. By 18 February the plans were sufficiently advanced to justify a site meeting with Thurlow. The next day the position of the new foundations had been set out, a source of suitable stone located at Ewhurst and 'good brick earth' found nearby. The ornamental lake south of the house is believed to have originated as a clay pit. A dispute clearly arose over the competence of local craftsmen with the Cranleigh firm of timber merchants, Holden's, being relegated to work on the new parts of the building while 'our good joiner' was seconded to work in the old house. On 3 April Rickman was again at Baynards having travelled from Guildford on the Windsor coach. He 'looked over what had been done and arranged about the partitions which are some of them necessary to be replaced by new trusses to carry the floor'. He gave instructions on the scantling of timbers being prepared and the next day travelled on to Brighton by coach.

Unfortunately no diaries survive dated later than 7 April 1834 but various drawings of the exterior remain (RIBA: E1/33<sup>1-5</sup>). Rickman approximately doubled the area of the house by adding a range of service quarters and a stable block to the east of the Tudor house and a number of extensions to the south. The earlier set of drawings is dated February 1834 but considerable changes were made and a further set produced in July of that year. At the same time Rickman was working on Matfen Hall in Northumberland for Sir Edward Blackett and documented problems, which arose with this commission, may throw some light on the situation at Baynards. Rickman started plans for Matfen Hall in 1832 but Blackett required so many alterations that by December Rickman was weary of a client 'so very capricious that he says things quite contrary to what he has said before' (RIBA: Rickman diaries 1832, 17 December). Architect and client failed to agree and eventually Rickman was dismissed in February 1835, with Blackett engaging Cottingham to finish Matfen Hall and giving Rickman's ill-health and his resultant inability to attend meetings as the reason (Macauley 1975, 309). Certainly Rickman's health had collapsed by this date and Thurlow may also have needed to engage another architect to finish the work at Baynards. Nevertheless, the references in Rickman's diary and the drawings he produced make it clear that the house that existed until 1979, externally at least, was his (fig 3).

Drawings included in the Annual Exhibition of Architectural Drawings at the Royal Academy and taken to relate to Baynards, were reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1837 [2], 175; 1838 [2], 75). Those displayed in 1837 included both exterior and interior views of 'a baronial mansion in the County of Surrey, now erecting under the superintendence of J B Ferrey'. In 1838 portions of the same drawings were again exhibited but although some description of the Great Hall is given the location within Surrey is not. Eastlake (1970, appendix, 67) states that Benjamin Ferrey added the clocktower, staircase, music room and offices and restored the hall to its original design. Rickman's drawings include the clocktower but neither drawings nor descriptions appear to have survived for the interior of the house restored and extended by Rickman. However, the references in the



*Gentleman's Magazine* suggest that, with Rickman's ill-health and eventual death in 1838, the interior of Baynards was completed under Ferrey's control and probably also to his design.

In 1857 Baynards was visited by the Guildford artist Henry Prosser who painted a watercolour of part of the north front of the house and also sketched a few details (Guildford Museum Stevens Collection G9317–G9230). The watercolour shows a scroll mounted between the ground and first-floor windows of the second bay to the left of the porch which reads '*JUSTITIA SOROR FIDES*' (Justice the Sister of Faith).

A plan of the house was drawn in 1971 by Victoria Nugent for the owner and a copy was deposited with the National Monuments Record, Swindon (NMR). A copy of this plan is given (fig 2), but the following comments incorporate observations by the late Robin McDowell who visited with the author in 1978 when the house was at the centre of a planning dispute and whose report is also deposited with the NMR.

The walls of the central portion and western crosswing of the house appeared to be primarily late 16th century except for the south facing wall which had been extensively altered although on the original line. They were of red brick with grey headers in a diaper pattern with stone quoins on the three projecting gabled bays on the north and on the chimney stacks on the west side. Some late 16th century brickwork was also visible in the walls of the eastern crosswing. All the windows were framed by considerable areas of 19th century brickwork and the windows, stone transomed and mullioned, were also of that date. There was some evidence that the original building may have been raised in height and it had been completely re-roofed with Horsham slabs.

Internally the layout was completely 19th century. The great hall (fig 5) had a minstrels' gallery but it, the fine open timber roof carried on substantial hammer beams, and the grand staircase with arcaded balustrades, were all of oak plyboard facing around structural ironwork. Panelling in the main rooms and the decorated plaster ceilings were all also of the mid-19th century with some possible later 'neo-Georgian' work which may have dated to the end of that century.

The house contained a few fittings of Tudor date including a carved oak panel of a hunting scene with figures with horns, spears and dogs re-used as part of an overmantel, panelling with carved scenes of the sacrifice of Isaac and of Samson slaying the Philistine with the jawbone of an ass, 46 carved figures decorating a 19th century bookcase and several cast-iron firebacks one of which bears the initials 'GM' and the date 1593 (fig 6). This forms the centre of a long fireback in which it is flanked by two identical grave slabs commemorating Anne Forster who died in 1591; a further piece with the same errors of an inverted 'F' and reversed 'S' marks her grave in the chancel of Crowhurst church and a number of replicas of this casting are known to have been used as firebacks (McDowell 1967). Some or all of these items may have come from George More's house but this cannot be proven and they may have been brought in from elsewhere. Photographs of the house and its contents are held by NMR.

### **The relationship between the two houses**

While Rickman remained faithful to the Tudor house in exterior style it is clear that the interior was totally remodelled. The two small projecting chimneys on the west wall seem to reflect two living rooms – the sitting rooms of the description in Hone's *Year Book* and two chambers on the first floor. The 19th century dining room was in the position of the Tudor hall which was then entered from the screens passage, and retained its old fireplace in its original position in the middle of the back (south) wall. The Victorian hall would have been within the service end of the house, the position of its chimney may have been original but it only projected about 4 inches (10cm) from the wall in contrast with the much deeper projection of the other early fireplaces and was most probably rebuilt to accommodate the Victorian crosswing.



Fig 5 The Great Hall of Baynards Mansion in 1969. © Crown copyright. NMR. (NMR BB70/1248)

The southern elevation was extensively altered in the early 20th century when a totally incongruous extension was built. Some Tudor brickwork survived in the walls to either side of the oriel window which lit the great staircase but it is not possible to be sure that it was *in situ*.

Of the Tudor great chamber, which so impressed the author of the article in Hone's *Year Book*, nothing remained. The bedroom in its place was 19th century in structure and neo-Georgian in decorative style. Increasing the Great Hall to two storeys inevitably destroyed any upper floors in this area. Owing to its structural condition the attic area was not visited during any surveys between 1969 and the fire in 1979.

In summary, while some vestiges of the Tudor internal layout remained reflected in the surviving external walls after the 19th century restoration the interior can be attributed to Rickman and Ferrey. The exterior however retained a faithfulness to its Tudor origins and was an interesting example of the secular restoration work of this primarily ecclesiastical architect.

### **The end of Baynards**

The house that changed hands in 1970 was in poor condition. Permission was sought to demolish part of Rickman's additions to the east of the main house and to remove a 20th century extension to the south of the dining room. The application was refused. On the



Fig 6 A fireback photographed at Baynards Mansion in 1969 and bearing the initials 'GM' and the date 1593.  
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night of 19/20 June 1979 the house was extensively damaged by fire: permission was then given to demolish the ruins – a sad end to George More's other house.

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