

Sussex Archæological Society

THE PERCIES AT PETWORTH, 1574-1632

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(i) INTRODUCTION

THE visitor to the English country house may expect to have to walk several hundred yards within the grounds before he can enter the house itself. The visitor to Petworth House, Sussex, however, finds himself stepping from the street into an outbuilding of the house. He may well ask himself the reasons for this closeness of the stately Petworth House to the main road and to the parish church of the town from which it takes its name.

The reasons are to be found in the history of the house. The Petworth House which we know today is essentially the creation of Charles, Duke of Somerset (1662-1748), who married the heiress of the Percy family whose property the manor had been since 1150. Between 1688 and 1696 the Duke of Somerset reconstructed the house extensively and gave it the magnificent West Front, some 320 feet long, for which it is principally famous today. The story of Petworth from Somerset's time is a proud enough history, but behind this there lies another story, the story of a simple manor house, on the site of which modern Petworth has been built, small parts of which the present house incorporates even, but a story which has been largely forgotten, with the disappearance of the greater part of the mediæval and early modern work as the result of the successive restorations of its owners and of a disastrous fire in 1714. The story of this earlier Petworth seems worth recalling, both for its own sake and for the light which it throws on the layout of the present house.

It is clear that Petworth had become an important

seat of the Percies as early as the late thirteenth century. It is from this time that there survives the shell of a great chapel with fine Early English arches, and it was in 1293 that Henry, Lord Percy, applied for a licence to crenellate the manor house; as late as the early years of Elizabeth I's reign people still referred to the 'castle' at Petworth. But, although Petworth was the centre of concentration of lands which brought the family a substantial income throughout late medieval and early Tudor times (whenever the Percy lands had not fallen into the hands of the Crown by reason of an attainder), it was never more than the second seat of the Percies in these centuries. For the feudal power of the family lay in the north—it was the north which boasted that it 'knew no king but a Percy'—and it was there, in Yorkshire or Northumberland, that the Percies of these times made their principal home.

From 1537 to 1557 the family had suffered under an attainder, the third in its troubled history, and Petworth had been Crown property. The first holder of the restored title, Thomas Percy, seventh Earl of Northumberland, was a Catholic and had his interests firmly entrenched in the north. At the last he was executed at York in 1572 for his part in the rising of 1569. Fortunately, the restoration had included provision for a remainder in favour of his brother, Sir Henry Percy, who now succeeded to the family honours and estates without overgreat difficulty, though it was 1576 before he was summoned to the Lords and he was required to live in the south. Sir Henry had dissociated himself from his brother's intrigues, but the Government could not afford to run the risk of another Percy's gaining too much power in the north.

Despite the caution of the Government, in time the eighth Earl fell under suspicion of plotting on behalf of the Catholic cause, too; he was certainly a Catholic. From December 1584 he was held in the Tower of London on suspicion of plotting on behalf of Mary, Queen of Scots, and another attainder seemed likely to befall the Percies, when on 21 June 1585 he was found

dead under mysterious circumstances. Whether his death was murder or suicide has been debated ever since, but at any rate the Percy lands and Petworth among them passed without hindrance to his son Henry, ninth Earl, who was dubbed 'The Wizard Earl' on account of his profound interest in science.

The ninth Earl never so much as went north in his adult life and Petworth was always his principal residence. In addition, he maintained a London house or, rather, a succession of London houses during his years at Court, and, after his marriage in 1594 to Dorothy, the widow of Sir Thomas Perrot and the sister of the famous Devereux Earl of Essex, he had a second seat in the south at Syon, Middlesex. From 1605 to 1621 he was in his turn kept prisoner in the Tower. His father had brought him up a Protestant, but he employed a number of Catholics in his household, among them a principal conspirator in the Gunpowder Plot, his kinsman Thomas Percy, and he was convicted of what amounted to technical treason in the Court of Star Chamber in June 1606. After his release in July 1621 he was required to live at Petworth, and it was there that he died in 1632.

From 1574 or shortly afterwards until 1632, then, Petworth House was the chief residence of the Percies. In the north, they became absentee landlords and their feudal power, exercised through subordinate officers, suffered a marked decline. Their income from land, on the other hand, still came primarily from their northern estates: the Honour of Petworth never yielded more than a small proportion of their total revenues—in 1582 the net income from the Percy lands in the South Parts, mainly in the Honour of Petworth, was £544. 13s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. against the North Parts' £3,056. 17s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and in 1636 £1,576. 4s. 10d., against the North Parts' £10,895. 5s. 4d.¹ In these decades the Percies may be said to have raised most of their money in the north but to have been spending it largely in the south. Some of it was spent in renovating Petworth House.

¹ Syon MSS. Rentals, A. I. 8 (April 1582) and 13 (March 1635/6).

(ii) THE EIGHTH EARL AT PETWORTH, 1574-85

The Petworth House to which the eighth Earl came on his succession was a house which had been neglected by his brother for fifteen years and in the Crown's hands for twenty years before that. No ground-plan and no drawing or painting of Petworth House is known to

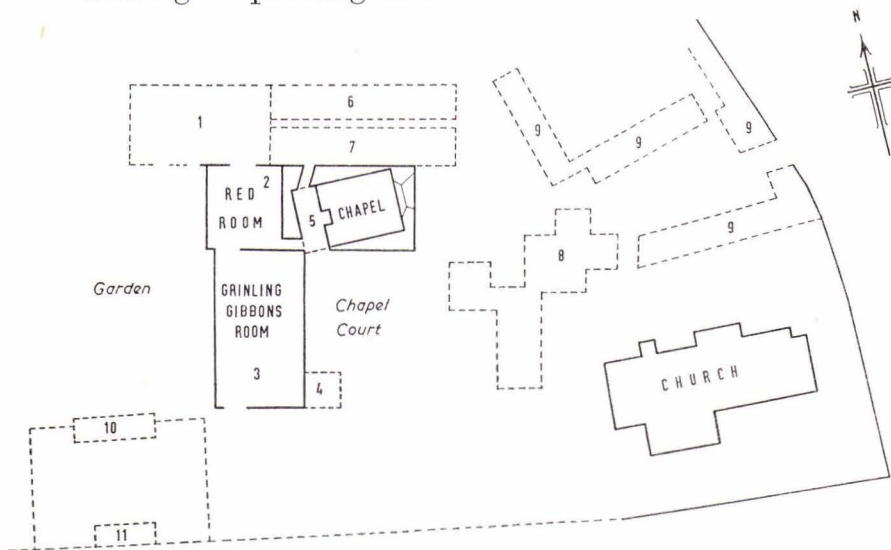


PLATE I. A ROUGH SKETCH TO SHOW THE RELATIVE PLANS OF THE 1574 HOUSE AND THE MODERN PETWORTH HOUSE.

---1574 — Present Day.

1. Hall. 2. 'Fair Room' leading to Parlour. 3. Parlour. 4. King's Chamber. 5. The Great Chapel (extending 8 ft. farther west than at present). 6. Pantry. 7. Buttery. 8. Great Kitchen. 9. Outbuildings shown in 1706 (the North Street outbuildings of the ninth Earl's times). 10. Gatehouse between Outer and Inner Courts. 11. Outer Gatehouse on West Street.

exist for this period, but it is possible to form a detailed impression of the layout and condition of the house in 1574-6 from the report of the eighth Earl's officers when they came in 1574 to take possession, and from the brief reference to the house which is made in a survey of the manor in 1576. It is, as one would expect, the story of a house in decay.¹

¹ Alnwick MSS. Letters and Papers, vol. 3, ff. 32-35, 'A view of Petworth House, 3 June 1574' (to be printed in the next volume of the *Collections*), and Leonfield MSS. Survey of Petworth, 1576, f. 49; I am indebted to Miss G. Beck, archivist at Petworth House, for drawing my attention to the latter.

The entrance to the house in 1574 was by a gatehouse fronting upon a road called West Street. There is no West Street in Petworth today, but it is clear from seventeenth-century plans that it ran by the church along the line of the modern Church Street and in a westerly direction across the present park to Court Ditch, which skirted the southern tip of the modern Upper Pond. The gatehouse must have stood approximately at the top of Sowter Lane, now called Pound Street.¹ It had two rooms on the ground floor and three above, together with a small garden. The Outer Court behind this gatehouse was enclosed by three barns, one of them next the street and on the west side, with a dovecote in its garden, and by stabling which would accommodate twelve or fourteen horses. A second gatehouse divided the Outer Court from the Inner Court; it was larger than the first, having some twelve rooms, seven beneath and five above, only one of which lacked a fireplace. The total area covered by these two courts, by the main house, and the formal gardens around it was estimated at four acres in the 1576 survey. All the out-buildings in both courts were described as 'very much decayed'.

From the Inner Court, entrance to the Great Hall was gained by 'a fair porch'. The Hall was 59 ft. long and 40 ft. wide; it ran east and west of the porch and was more or less parallel to West Street. Its roof was reported 'not much decayed' but, as was the Tudor custom, the windows had been left unglazed while the house was unoccupied and so the elements had been able to penetrate to the two old dormant tables, to the 'fair marble stone' (6 ft. long and 5 ft. wide) which had served as a screen, and to the double bench of marble which stood at the upper end and had doubtless formed the high table.

A 'fair room' with steps to the Parlour led out of the Hall in a southerly direction. The Parlour was in very good repair, with a fireplace and three windows com-

¹ Lord Leconfield, *Petworth Manor in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1954), map xv.

plete with their glass. It was above a wine cellar and next to the garden: these details place it approximately where the Grinling Gibbons Room is now. There was a little lodging next to the Parlour and at the far end a little chapel, with a window in good repair and with its altar stone of marble (8 ft. long and 3 ft. wide).

From this little chapel there led a room called the King's Chamber. This room, described as having one fireplace and four glazed windows and as being in good repair, seems to have protruded to the east so as to form an open court with the Great Chapel of the house—a 'chapel court' is mentioned in the household accounts of the eighth Earl. Wooden stairs led from the King's Chamber to the Queen's above and there was a privy at the foot of them.

We may now turn to the upper story of this north to south range. In the room leading from the Hall to the Parlour there were, on the right hand, stairs to the rooms above. At the head of these stairs was a withdrawing chamber, giving access to the Great Chamber. On the other side of this northern end of the Great Chamber a small room was to be found and, over it, a study with 'frames of wainscot for boxes and settles for writings' and, in the centre, 'a round counting house of wainscot with a round table in it, the counting house having desks and seats round about it'. A door from this study gave on to three or four steps to the leads over the withdrawing chamber. At the other end of the Great Chamber there was a wainscot portal leading into the Queen's Chamber, which had a closet at its upper end. The size of the Great Chamber itself we may judge from its having five windows and two roundels, all glazed; it must have corresponded to the Parlour and little chapel on the floor below. This upper story was in by no means the good condition that the lower was; the ceiling of the Great Chamber, for example, was described as 'somewhat decayed for lack of ridgetile' and the leads over the withdrawing chamber as 'much torn and cut away by the sides thereof'.

There were two ways from this range to the Great

Chapel across the open court. There was an entry from the King's Chamber leading towards the Chapel and there were turning stairs of wood going down into the garden from the upper end of the Great Chamber. 'There is also a closet having the door to it from the second turning of the same stairs wherein is iii windows whereof one partly glazed, the other unglazed and the third looketh into the great chapel.'

The Great Chapel was very large—48 ft. long and 24 ft. wide according to the 1576 survey—and had as many as ten windows. It was in some disrepair but had in it carved wainscot seats and desks and its altar stone of marble which was 15 ft. long and 3 ft. wide. Apparently it had not been used as a chapel for some time, for the vestry at the far end was described as 'lately used for a privy kitchen': its one window had been glazed and cross-barred, but both glass and iron were now 'clean spoiled and gone', and when the officers viewed the room they found two planks of wood lying on the ground.¹

We have seen that the Hall was separated from the Parlour by a room which led out of its south-east corner: one imagines that this room also separated the Hall from the Great Chapel which, as the description of the closet on the turning stairs at the northern end of the Great Chamber shows, must have adjoined the northern part of the north to south range closely. At the eastern end of the Hall, probably occupying the whole width of the Hall if one may judge from contemporary custom, there were a pantry and buttery leading to the Great Kitchen, which stood just to the east of the Great Chapel. Over the pantry and buttery there had been a Council Chamber, but it had fallen completely and 'a skilful carpenter' who was called in by the officers reported that it would cost £6. 13s. 4d. to repair the frame

¹ The present measurements of the Chapel at Petworth are 39 ft. 10 in. by 24 ft. 10 in. (I am indebted for these measurements to the house carpenter), so that the Great Chapel of 1576 must have extended a further 8 ft. westwards. The altar stone has been replaced. I append a rough drawing to show the relationship between the present main rooms and the layout of 1574 as I conceive it from the manuscripts and estate plans of the period (Plate I).

of the roof, 'which must be all new timber for the old will not serve again there'. At the end of the passage which divided the pantry and buttery there was another leading to the Kitchen on the right hand. First, however, there came the two larders, dry and wet, and the scullery: there had been three rooms above but these were in ruins, as was another before the dresser of the Kitchen. The Kitchen was a large room, 36 ft. long and 28 ft. wide, covered partly with slatestone and partly with shingle, and with two ovens in it. There was also a cistern of lead in the Kitchen to receive the water from the conduit. A coalhouse stood to the north of the Kitchen but this was in decay. The Kitchen itself was in great disrepair, 'especially in one part toward the south adjoining to the Churchyard', as the 1576 survey tells us, but it was capable of repair at small charge. On the east side of the Kitchen Yard there stood a new building with four rooms below and four lodgings above, 'the lofts whereof were boarded with inch boards but most of them are pulled up and carried away', and a bakehouse at the end of the building. I have not been able to identify for certain any buildings now standing at Petworth with these outbuildings, but it is clear that the Kitchen and its attendant buildings stood about where one finds today the outbuildings of the modern house by North Street.¹

Lastly, the view of 1574 mentions two other buildings at Petworth, both described as in great decay. At the west end of the great house there stood a two-roomed lodging known as the Nursery, and in the midst of the brick wall dividing the Inner Court and the garden there was a banqueting house of brick.

When the eighth Earl's officers came to take possession in 1574, it is clear that what they found was a simple manor house, 'enclosed with old walls of stone' and

¹ Lord Leconfield prints a plan of the North Street outbuildings, *op. cit.*, p. 40, based on the 1706 plan of the house (Plate V). His argument that these formed the main entrance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is, to my mind though not to his, controverted by the evidence which I have presented here. The passages in quotation marks in the above remarks are taken, unless otherwise indicated, from the view of 1574.

battlemented with brick. It was, moreover, of no great size—it could never have accommodated the Percy household at its largest (the fifth Earl had had as many as 166 servants in 1512).¹ Yet it was also a house which had, in a small way, a dignity of its own. The eighth Earl was now to divert his money and his energies to restoring the house and to enlarging it in accordance with the new use to which it was to be put.

The first essential, obviously, was to secure a good supply of water. The town supply had been installed in the reign of Henry VII and was now, not surprisingly, in need of repair. The Earl agreed with the town to share the cost of the repairs, and soon he was recorded to have ‘brought water into every office of his house’. The first two years were spent repairing the old premises—glazing and renewing timbers, tiling, and putting new locks on the doors, many of which had themselves to be replaced. In January 1576/7 this work had gone far enough for the Earl to begin on what are termed in his household accounts ‘the new lodgings’. The term, and the disproportion between the size of the eighth Earl’s household, which would have been fifty to eighty strong, and the number of small rooms mentioned in the 1574 description of the house, suggest that these new lodgings were mostly bedrooms. There is no specific indication as to where these new lodgings were; the absence of any mention of foundations for the new building, and the clear indication on the earliest known sketch of the house, the thumb-nail sketch on Ralph Treswell’s plan of the manor of 1610, of two stories and an attic floor in the main house, suggest that they may have represented a rebuilding of the main block, with a possible extension westwards from the Hall, since Treswell shows a more marked west to east range than the figures of the 1576 survey would justify. As for the extent of the new lodgings, we know that they required 1,487 yards 2 feet of wainscoting: Luke the joiner was paid £122. 7s. 2d.

¹ Leconfield MSS. Survey of 1576, f. 49; T. Percy (Ed.), *The Regulations and Establishment of the Household of Henry Algernon Percy, the Fifth Earl of Northumberland, 1512* (1905), p. 43.

for working it. Between January 1576/7 and June 1582 some £2,829. 16s. 1d. was spent on reparations at Petworth including £327. 14s. 9d. for masonry work. A further £488. 15s. 10d. was spent there between June

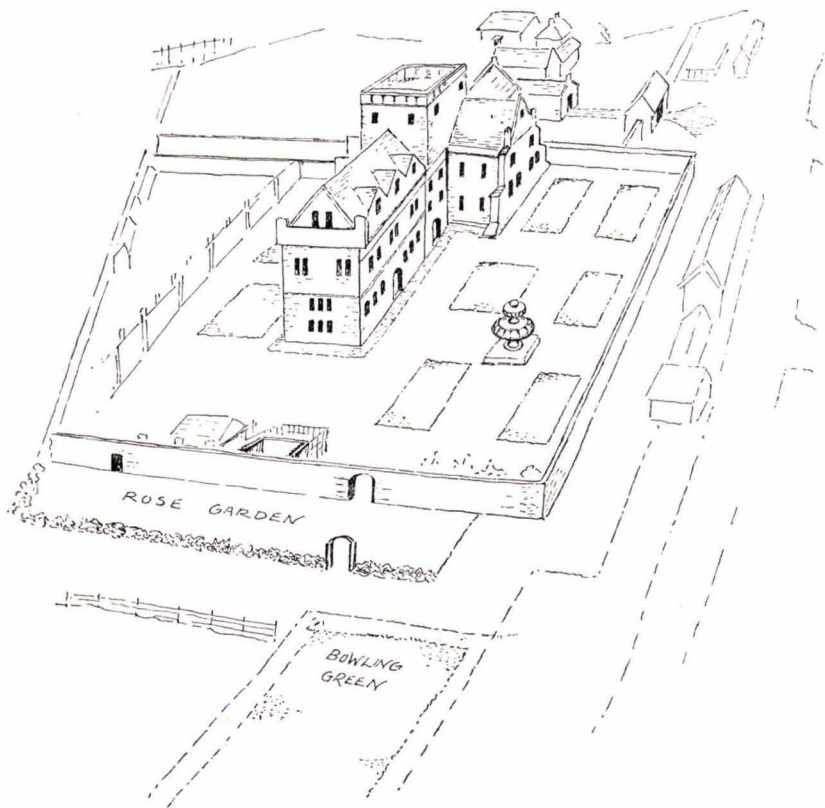


PLATE II. PETWORTH HOUSE, 1610. A drawing by R. G. Pidgley from Ralph Treswell's survey: reproduced by courtesy of the Lord Leonfield and the Oxford University Press.

1582 and August 1585; this included the cost of re-furnishing the Great Chapel in 1582-3, when the old stalls and seats were taken down and the chapel thoroughly renovated.

Another fact which emerges from a glance at the Treswell plan is that by 1610 the house was surrounded

by formal gardens, with a fountain set in line with the west end of the main house and a wall dividing the gardens from the bowling green and the kitchen garden beyond. This re-laying of the gardens immediately round the house occurred in the early years of renovation, too. The 'new garden' cost £347. 4s. 4½*d.* to lay out and stock, the garden wall £234. 0s. 2½*d.* to build, and the fountain some £332. 4s. to install. The fountain itself was bought of a Mr. Delafolla for £92 and was brought by river from London to Arundel; the water supplying the fountain was piped from Upperton and not taken from the town supply.¹

(iii) THE NINTH EARL'S BUILDING AT PETWORTH,
1585-1632

If details of what the eighth Earl did at Petworth are not forthcoming, it seems clear enough from the figures which are given on the household accounts that at his death he left Petworth both in a fair state of preservation and sufficiently extended to accommodate the Percy household of the time. We are fortunate in that the vast majority of the household accounts of the ninth Earl between his succession in 1585 and 1619 remain intact. From them we know that he spent a matter of £1,442. 2s. 7*d.* on repairs and new buildings at Petworth in the twenty years from 1585 to 1605 and £1,038. 0s. 11*d.* in the eleven audit-periods for which the accounts survive of the fourteen which occurred between 1605 and 1619. It is clear from this evidence that the ninth Earl was very largely doing no more than renovating the house at Petworth as it had been left by his father; it was only in 1616-17 that more than £100 was spent in any one year on reparations at Petworth. We hear for the most part of such minor projects as the provision of a new fretted plaster border for the 'best chamber', presu-

¹ Leconfield, *op. cit.*, p. 37: see Plate II. The figures for the eighth Earl's rebuilding are taken from my analysis of his household accounts, Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, U. I. 1; the garden expenses quoted occurred in the period 1577-82.

ably the Great Chamber, in 1585-6, or as the paving of the Hall and removal of the stone bench and marble screen in 1590-1, or, again, as the panelling and glazing of a room which had been made into a library (the 'Wizard Earl' could hardly have lived in a house without a library) in 1595-6. For such minor repairs labour was employed *ad hoc* under the direction of a servant of the Earl's who was designated 'clerk of the works at Petworth'. This clerk was responsible for the payment of wages and for the provision of materials and of workmen for the repairs and new building; he would be an ordinary gentleman officer of the Earl's with no special knowledge of building, in fact merely head of the clerical staff in charge, and would often have other duties within the household as well.¹

Occasionally, however, new building on some scale did occur. The only example for which we have the actual costs within the ninth Earl's time is the work done on what is termed on the accounts 'the new building near the wine cellar' in 1595-6. A Mr. Hunt, a mason, made a bargain with the Earl for the masons' and carpenters' work for £35. The Earl had to supply the materials and to pay for the other work requisite to the building, such as plumbing, tiling, and plastering. Most of the materials, as was usual, came from the Petworth estate. The stone came from the quarry at Petworth; getting it cost £8. 16s., carrying 177 loads of it from the quarry to the works—it was no great distance—£3. 10s. Timber was brought 'from divers places' on the estates for £3. 5s. 4d. Fifty-nine loads of sand and loam were used; getting the sand cost 12s. 8d., carrying it 18s. 2d. For the scaffolding employed on the job, laths, boards, bricks, poles, and hurdles were fetched

¹ I draw in this section from my analysis of the household accounts of the ninth Earl of Northumberland, which are to be found mainly in Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, U. r. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 14x, 50(5), III. 1, and C. r. 4b; I have also found three of the period 1605-7 in Alnwick MSS. Letters and Papers, vol. 7, ff. 250-1, and in Smyth of Nibley Papers (City of Gloucester Library), vol. VII, ff. 63 and 70. On the office of clerk of the works in medieval royal building see L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford, 1952), p. 8, and J. Harvey, 'The Medieval Office of Works', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, ser. 3, VI. 20-87.

at a cost of 7*s.* 11*d.* Philips the brickmaker supplied the bricks for £1. 6*s.* 8*d.* (one judges from contemporary prices that there could not have been more than 3,000 bricks employed) and the tiles for 9*s.* 2*d.*, while the hair and lime used cost £3. 4*s.* Roofing the new building cost £1. 8*s.* 6*d.*; the tilers and plasterers were paid £1. 16*s.* 2*d.* Panelling by the joiner in the new chambers cost another £1, and the wages of the labourers who were hired for 'cleansing the rubbish' and helping the workmen came to £1. 16*s.* 4*d.*—the usual pay for labourers was 8*d.* a day.¹

Lego the smith of Petworth presented his bill for the job together with his charges for other works at Petworth, but he set out very carefully the costs of the various types of nails used in this new building near the wine cellar. An abstract of his account is as follows:

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
250	20 <i>d.</i> nails	4	2
300	10 <i>d.</i> nails	2	6
1,800	great nails	11	4
600	7 <i>d.</i> nails	3	2
2,450	6 <i>d.</i> nails	12	9
2,350	5 <i>d.</i> nails	8	11
500	4 <i>d.</i> nails	1	8
1,100	3 <i>d.</i> nails	2	9
10,600	2 <i>d.</i> nails and lath nails	17	10

Nails had become standardized in sizes during the fifteenth century; prices had fallen so that 6*d.* nails were sometimes only 5*d.* a hundred, for example—on quantities, too, discounts were given. This explains some of the apparent discrepancies in Lego's bill. What it will not explain is that, where the items total £3. 4*s.* 7*d.* Lego presented a total of £3. 6*s.* 9*d.*, and it appears to have been paid him without question on the part of the auditor.

All this had been done by local labour and from local

¹ The summary accounts rarely give details of use for price and wage indexing. I note, however, a charge of 10*s.* 8*d.* for 1,000 bricks on the account for works at Petworth, 1574-82, and of 11*s.* on the account of Edward Francis for Petworth, 1607-8. The quarry at Petworth was just south of the words 'Court Ditch' on map xv, Leconfield, op. cit.

resources. The plumbers, however, came from London specially for the job: 'to the plumbers for laying of gutters and other works done about the same [new buildings] and for their wages coming and going from London', £2. 8s. The whole story of this new building by the wine cellar provides an interesting example of the way in which such a work of building was carried out, partly by bargain but mainly under the supervision of the clerk of works, and almost entirely out of local materials and by local workmen. Quite what the new building was it is not possible to say, but it most probably was one of the outbuildings near North Street.

While this is the only major new building at Petworth in the ninth Earl's time for which we have the actual account, there are other indications of new buildings there in the period. In 1616-17 we know from the bald statement of the household accounts that some £475. 2s. 5d. was spent on reparations at Petworth; it seems clear enough that there was extensive new building in that year at least. After 1619 we lack even the baldest total for reparations at Petworth—the Percy household accounts from that time until the death of the ninth Earl in 1632 are very fragmentary.

On 13 and 14 August 1622 the Earl entertained the Marquis of Buckingham and a great company at Petworth; we know that he made many preparations for the visit and that the company assembled in the Great Chamber. This suggests that the Great Chamber had probably been renovated shortly before, and in fact there exists at Alnwick a computation for its enlargement and repair which is dated 1619.¹

Sir Edward Francis, the Earl's officer at Petworth, set out in this computation the terms which he had agreed upon with the mason and other workmen; the document provides another good example of that com-

¹ On the entertainment, the occasion of a quarrel between the sons-in-law of Northumberland, see *Sydney Papers*, i. 121-7, q. Leconfield, op. cit., pp. 41-43. Lord Leconfield ascribes the incident to 1620, following Collins, but it occurred in 1622; see *Cal. Townshend MSS.* (1887), p. 21, and Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, P. i. 3n, f. 4. The 1619 computation is in Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, X. ii. 10 (2).

bination of contract and piece work and of that use of local resources and manpower which characterize building in the period.

The Earl was to provide the lime, sand, and stone which would be needed from his estates. The lime would come from Sutton, a manor within the Honour and very near to Petworth, so that it would cost only 5s. the load to carry it, and the wood to burn it could come from the estate; in all lime would cost only £4 for the job. The sand would cost so little as not to be worth listing separately among the charges. The rough stone could be dug in the Leiths, just to the north-east of the town, and the ashlar at Byworth Quarry (about this time the Earl was buying Byworth Manor) which was a little south of the town or, if the stone proved good in Petworth Quarry Fields, the ashlar could be taken there: the Earl would have to pay labourers to dig the stone but it would be carried by his customary tenants.¹

The mason agreed with Sir Edward to make and set up his scaffolding, to take down the upper parts of the Great Chamber walls between the top of the upper windows and the battlement, to take off the rough-cast of the external walls and to take down the windows, all without any additional charge. He would have to take up and place down again part of the Horsham stonework of the Chamber: for this he was to be paid £1. The rest of his work was to be paid for by rate and 'from time to time as the work shall go forward'. For every rod of rough wall which he had to rebuild from the ground and join with the standing old wall he was to have 2s., the wall was to be 3 ft. thick from the foundation to the water-table and 2 ft. from the water-table to the corbel-table.

For moulding, hewing, and placing of the water-table, cornice, corbel-table, and battlement the mason was to have 6*d.* the foot, for hewing and setting the window surrounds 5*d.* the foot, and for hewing and setting the

¹ The Leiths, Little and Great; Little Leith is shown on maps xvi, xvii, Leconfield, *op. cit.*; for the purchase and situation of Byworth see *ibid.*, p. 54 and map xiii.

ashlar $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ the foot. In all, Francis estimated that the mason's bill would be £44.

Sir Edward reported to the Earl that he had settled with John Dee, the carpenter of Petworth, for the carpentry work on the Great Chamber, for £7: the smith's and glazier's work would come to another £4. Reckoning everything, he estimated that the rebuilding would cost the Earl some £63.

It has long been supposed that the extension of the wine cellar at Petworth, which is itself believed to date from the fourteenth century, southwards to form the modern boiler house is the work of the ninth Earl.¹ There is another manuscript at Alnwick which is an estimate for the making of a cellar at Petworth; it is undated but has random calculations in the ninth Earl's hand on the back of it, and it seems very probable that this work was in fact carried out around this time when, as we have seen, rebuilding of this part of the house was taking place (the medieval wine cellar was, it will be remembered, immediately beneath the Parlour and the Great Chamber). The estimate provided for the building of an upright wall to go round the cellar of some 6 ft. in height, using 20,000 bricks and filling with stone, and for brick vaulting which would require another 30,000 bricks; the vaulting was to be supported, as it is today, by pillars. The lime and sand were to come from the estates and the bricks were to be made at Petworth. It was reckoned that 160 loads of local stone would be needed; digging and carrying it would cost 1s. the load. In all, the building of the cellar would cost £97. 17s. 6d.²

Petworth House had for some time had its own tennis-courts. There is, for example, an entry on the household accounts for 1588-9 for plastering and paving them for £4. 2s. 2d. Just where these courts were is not known for certain: Lord Leconfield has ventured the suggestion that they were in the Kitchen Yard over by North

¹ See, for example, C. Hussey, 'Petworth House, Sussex' (*Country Life*, 1926), pp. 5 and 7.

² Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, X. II. 10 (2). There is no mention of paving the cellar on the estimate; Hussey, *op. cit.*, p. 7, states that its Purbeck paving was replaced with brick in 1694.

Street, on the grounds that a building shown in the thumb-nail sketch on Treswell's plan of 1610 looks as if it might be a tennis-court. Among the household papers at Alnwick there is 'a computation of a tennis-court to be built in the Kitchen Yard'; unfortunately there is no clue as to its precise date or as to which Percy house was concerned. It seems likely, however, that it is in fact the estimate for the building of a new tennis-court at Petworth: it is an early seventeenth-century manuscript and, from what we know, it is probable that it belongs to the decade 1615-25. Tennis was a popular game at the time; in 1615 London had fifteen tennis-courts against four today.

The document has an intrinsic interest of its own, for it affords us a detailed account of the building of an early Stuart tennis-court. The main wall (which would be on the right-hand side) was to be 94 ft. long and 24 ft. 9 in. high at the scantlings; its building in brick would cost £70. A leaning wall, 97 ft. in length and 4 ft. high, and another, 38 ft. long and 3 ft. high, were estimated to cost £11. 15s.; presumably these leaning walls were to stand on the left-hand side and at the grille end of the court. There is mention of an appentice or penthouse of 101 ft. long and 7 ft. wide; this suggests that there would only have been a penthouse on the left-hand side and that the grille and dedans penthouses which we would expect to find were to be dispensed with—7 ft. is still the standard width for a tennis-court's penthouse and 38 ft. 8 in. for the ends of the court. Modern penthouses are of wood and slope towards the court, standing 7 ft. 1½ in. at the lower edge and 10 ft. 7 in. at the higher; this penthouse was to be made of oaken boards and would have been of similar dimensions. The floor and walls of the modern tennis-courts are cemented; play lines are marked out on the walls. Five hundred yards of the walls of this tennis-court were to be plastered and coloured with plaster of paris; 400 ft. of the floor were to be tiled and 1,596 ft. to be paved with Purbeck marble stone. The plastering was estimated to cost £25, the tiling £3, and the paving £46. 11s. The total cost of

the court was put at £183. 6s.—a small price, perhaps, for such luxury.¹

It is not possible to say for certain that this court was ever constructed, as we have seen. With the stables at Petworth the state of our knowledge is reversed. We know that extensive new stables must have been built in the ninth Earl's time. The old stables, as we have seen, had been in disrepair in 1574 and would in any case accommodate only a dozen or so horses. By 1632 there were stables at Petworth which had ten separate lodgings and a gallery, besides accommodation for 61 horses—'young horses, young mares and young geldings'—inside the stables, with some 30 breeding mares and 15 colts in the pastures. The size of the stables at Petworth was a matter of contemporary comment; in an old painting of the house which is thought to represent it as it was c. 1680 the stables appear as a commodious, quadrangular set of buildings in the foreground, a quarter of a mile away from the house in a portion of ground now occupied by the lake, and there is a representation of them in a thumb-nail sketch on an undated estate map which is attributed to Robert Norton and which is believed to have been drawn c. 1625. The question which eludes a firm answer is, when were these new stables built? There is only mention of minor repairs to the stables on the household accounts of the eighth and ninth Earls which survive; detailed accounts of expenditure at Petworth cease in 1609 for a period of twenty years, unfortunately. The oat consumption of the stables is known to us from the rear accounts for 1595-6 and 1597-1600 and again from estate papers for 1623-6 and 1627-8. Oat-consumption figures, however, are difficult to interpret—one does not know how much may have been supplied from the estates and possibly not recorded, and, again, it is not possible to arrive at a satisfactory average consumption figure for a horse, since oat consumption depends to a great extent on the

¹ Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, U. r. 18; Lord Aberdare's article on Tennis, *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (1950), XIII. 538-9; the article on Royal Tennis *sub* Lawn Tennis and Tennis, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition (1929), vol. xiii; Leonfield, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

breed and nature of the work being performed by the horse. What is clear, nevertheless, is that the consumption of oats had approximately doubled at Petworth in this thirty-year period. Therefore, the evidence which we have suggests a date between 1609 and 1623 for the building of these new stables; the fact that other rebuilding was taking place between 1616 and 1623 inclines one to believe that it was about then that the stables were erected.¹

The historian of West Sussex, Dallaway, has written of the Earl's 'splendid leisure' in the years of retirement which he spent largely at Petworth between his release from the Tower in July 1621 and his death in November 1632, and the inventory taken upon his death reveals a Petworth which could have lacked little of the splendour of a palace. His goods and chattels were valued at some £6,432. 12s. 8d.; the plate alone, 6,254 ounces of it, was worth £1,563. 10s.²

To the basic rooms of a Tudor mansion which had existed in 1574—Hall, Great Chamber, Withdrawing Chamber, Parlour, Chapel, and Great Kitchen—had been added a most notable series of bedrooms, for the family, for guests, for gentleman servants, and for gentlemen's men. The principal bedrooms were termed the Red and Green Bedchambers respectively and were lavishly furnished with suites in those colours. The Earl's own bedroom had the following furnishing: three large pieces of hangings of forest work with the Percy half-moon badges; a bed of blue perpetuana, laced with blue and yellow lace and furnished fully; a Turkey foot-carpet; an old green elbow chair; two high stools fringed with silk and a carpet to match them; a plain green carpet; a low-backed chair of red velvet and a low stool

¹ Syon MSS. H. II. 1b; Leconfield MSS., Robert Norton's map of the manor of Petworth, plate IV; E. B. De Fonblanque, *Annals of the House of Percy* (1887), II. 157, and R. Turner, *S.A.C.* XIV (1862), 1, reproduce the '1680' picture of Petworth, which is at Syon House; on oat consumption see my unpublished London M.A. thesis, 'The household accounts of Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632)', 1953, p. 188, and Leconfield, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

² J. Dallaway, *A History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex*, vol. II, pt. I (1819), p. 227; Syon MSS. H. II. 1b (to be printed in the next volume of the *Collections*).

to match, 'both much worn', two tables, a court cupboard, a pair of brass andirons, a fire-shovel, a pair of tongs, and a pair of bellows. The furniture in the Earl's bedroom was valued at £51. 15s. A gentleman servant's bedroom normally had furnishings of about £10 value in it and the room of his man items worth no more than £4 or so. We may quote the furnishing of the bedroom of Peter Dodsworth, Steward of the Household, and of his man as typifying the equipping of such rooms. Dodsworth's room had £9. 16s. 4*d.* worth of furnishings, composed of the following: old dornixe hangings, a feather bed-mattress, two bolsters, a pillow, three blankets, one quilt of holland, a canvas mattress, a bedstead, cords and mat, two high stools of russia leather and a low stool, two other old leather stools, one green cloth cushion, one old trunk, fire-shovel, tongs, and ironback, one close stool and pan, one chamber-pot, a pair of bellows, a pair of snuffers, and one little table. Off this room was the Steward's man's room, simply furnished with a livery bedstead, a feather mattress and bolster, an old pair of blankets and a green rug, cords, and mat, a table, a leather stool, an old trunk, and a chamber-pot—the whole worth only £4. 5s. The meagre furnishing of these rooms contrasts greatly with the equipping of the State bedrooms; in all there were 30 bedrooms for the family or for gentlemen servants, and many of them had rooms nearby for the menservants.

As this was the home of the 'Wizard Earl', one is not surprised to find that the Library was one of the most important rooms in the house. There were fifty-two chests of books 'of all sorts' and enough books over to fill a further twelve small chests. The Earl had four globes of the world, one large, two small, and one white globe described as 'very large, not perfected'. The other large one would have been Emery Molyneux's globe of 1592, which stands today in the North Gallery at Petworth and which is said to have been given the Earl by Sir Walter Raleigh. A cupboard in the Library held mathematical instruments, a reminder of the Earl's interest in science. There were some seventy-eight pic-

tures in the room—a dozen 'Turks' and a dozen which were a set of Hercules' labours; two dozen 'Emperors', two large pictures of St. Lawrence and the Maccabees, and twenty-eight 'of all other sorts'. In addition, there were four tables—one oval table, one with a folding frame, and two little wainscot tables—and three dozen wainscot stools, besides a bedstead. Other books and writings the Earl had kept in the closet next to his bedroom. There 44 folio volumes, 28 vellum books, and 33 pamphlets were to be found, with maps and other writings in a wainscot box separately. The books at Petworth constituted the major part of the Earl's remarkable library, though another section was at Syon; many of the books remain together despite the sale in 1928.¹

On the layout of the house itself the inventory of 1632 has nothing specifically to add to our knowledge, except that one may note that the 'new buildings' are described as having a lower and an upper corner chamber, so that they were clearly on at least two floors. When one compares the sketch on Treswell's plan of 1610 with the painting at Syon of Petworth House c. 1680, it is noticeable that the house has been greatly extended both westwards and southwards. The inventory, set against the scattered evidence of activity at Petworth which we have examined, confirms the theory that the extension most probably occurred in the early seventeenth century. The examination of the surviving household papers for the tenth Earl (1632-68) would enable us to place the story of the evolution of Petworth in the century after the coming of the eighth Earl with more certainty. This, however, must await a further study.²

¹ On the Earl's library see my article, *History To-day*, May 1956, vol. vi, no. 5, pp. 349-50, and the references there; on the globe see H. M. Wallis, the *Geographical Journal*, Sept. 1951, cxvii. 275 et seq. I am compiling a hand list of the ninth Earl's library, including nearly 400 printed books and 100 manuscript volumes still at Petworth.

² The Norton map of 1625 (Plate IV) shows the house too indistinctly to be of value here. I have deposited a list of the household papers of the tenth Earl of Northumberland, which include some 138 summary accounts (as against the 9 which survive for the eighth Earl and the 182 for the ninth Earl, on my analysis of which I have drawn in this paper), with the Duke of Northumber-

(iv) THE NINTH EARL'S PLANS FOR PETWORTH

What the ninth Earl of Northumberland achieved at Petworth was remarkable enough in the light of his long imprisonment, but what he planned to do there was more remarkable still. He occupied some hours of his imprisonment in 1615 in drawing and annotating with great care a plan for a new house at Petworth, which was to be built upon the garden ramparts between the old house and the stables as they were shown in the sketch on the Norton map. It was an elaborate plan; though Robert Flood, a close personal servant of the Earl, compiled building estimates for the project, it never came about. We have no evidence on the reasons for the abandonment of this plan; we know, however, that it was not shortage of money, for the Earl had nearly doubled his landed income in the years of his imprisonment.¹

The entry to this new house, like that of the 1574 house, was designed to front on West Street. In place of a simple gatehouse which was described for us in 1574, there was now to be a 'very fair' gate, 12 ft. wide and 24 ft. high, made all of hewn stone, with a lodging and inner room above, and a battlemented lead roof, complete with clock. At each corner of the outer court the Earl planned a tower or lodge 'as is at Syon'—and the lodges at Syon survive, little changed in general appearance from the ninth Earl's time. The outer court was to be extensive—something like 360 ft. wide and 400 ft. long, judging from the plans—and to be paved with stones 'so large as a coach may pass upon them'. In the centre of the wall on the left-hand side of the court there was planned a door through which coaches could have passed out to the Park and to the stables beyond; it would have given upon the bowling-green which Treswell indicates for us in his plan of 1610.²

land at Alnwick, where the manuscripts are, and with the archivist at Petworth House. I hope at a later date to submit these papers to a meticulous analysis.

¹ Leonfield MSS. Plan of Petworth New House (Plate III) and Building Estimates of 1615; Syon House MSS. at Alnwick Castle, X. II. 10 (18) is a rough version of the Petworth Plan.

² Plate II, above.

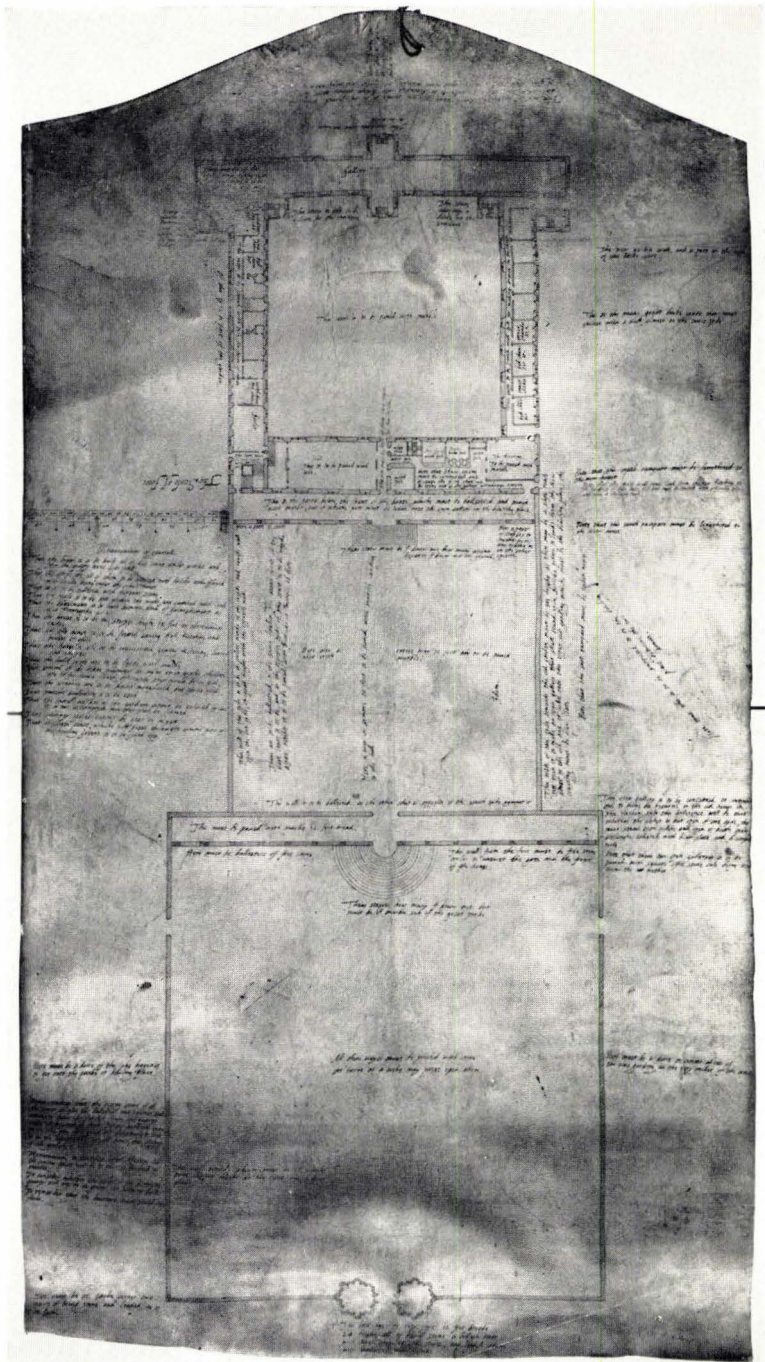


PLATE III. THE PLAN FOR THE NEW HOUSE AT PETWORTH: annotated by the ninth Earl of Northumberland (1615); reproduced from the Leonfield MSS. by courtesy of Mr. John Wyndham and Professor Sir Anthony Blunt

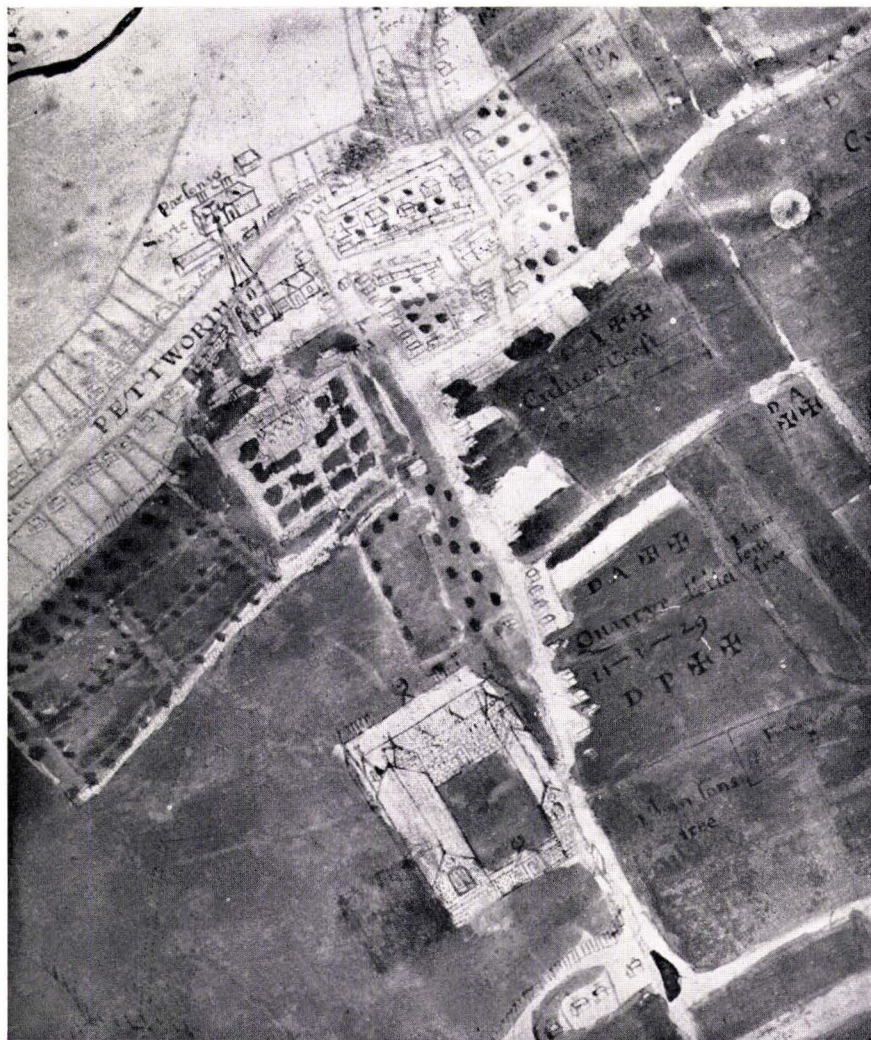


PLATE IV. PART OF THE 'PLATT OF THE HONOR AND MANNOR OF PETWORTH': attributed to Robert Norton, c. 1625; reproduced from the Leconfield MSS. by courtesy of Mr. John Wyndham. Photo. Messrs. C. Howard

At the far end of the outer court, a noble entrance to the house was proposed. A flight of marble steps would have led to a 12-ft.-wide marble-floored open Gallery with balusters of freestone. This Gallery was to give upon the inner court, to be square and walled, and intersected with paved ways some 10 ft. broad. On the other side of this court were to be the southern buildings of the main house, for it was planned as a quadrangular building round an open court, like Syon and so many other Tudor houses.

The southern side of the main court was to be divided into two by an entry. To the west, one was to enter through two doors 'very fair', each 20 ft. high, into the Hall. To the east were planned the Kitchen and its attendant rooms, including a pastry fitted with three ovens which were to be converted so that 'the fires shall not be seen out of the gallery windows opposite', for the Gallery was planned to face the main court on the northern side. All the rooms of this south wing were to be tiled except the Kitchen, which was to floored with marble.

The west range was to come out of the Hall by a flight of stairs, 'very fair with an open core'. The entry here, like the other entries marked on the plan, was to be paved with tile 'for fear of noise'. The west range was to have five rooms south of a central opening upon the main court, including the Parlour and Withdrawing Chamber, and four to the north. To the west these rooms would have had an aspect of the garden and park. Square towers—another reminder of Syon—were planned at either end of the Gallery or Library which was to form the northern wing, and which would have been some 315 ft. long (the famous Long Gallery at Syon is 136 ft. long)—what a magnificent room it would have been! A door at either end would have given access to the main court, which was to be marble paved, and stairs at each end would have connected with the west and east ranges. The east range was planned entirely as bedrooms.

The plan itself tells us only of the ground floor. The Earl's notes give us the full picture of the house which

he had in mind. It was to be two stories high, each of 18 ft., with a vaulted brick cellar beneath the whole. The house was to be built of freestone ashlar work, the stone to be taken from the quarry next Soke pond on the estate, and to be covered with Horsham stone. The roof was to be set within the walls and guttered with lead and to be battlemented; the battlements were to be 'garnished'. All the house was to be fretted with plaster except the Hall, Kitchen, and houses of office, and every room was to be wainscoted except the Kitchen, larders, and houses of office. Some of the bedrooms, including the family's, were to be double floored, for 'otherwise they would be too cold'.

The siting of this noble structure was to be immediately to the west of the old house. One gathers this from various statements which refer to the old house and gardens. The entrance to the main house was to be terraced and this terrace was to lead to an open gallery round the new bowling-green, which was planned to the east of the inner court. This open gallery, with Doric pillars, was to lead back to the bakehouse of the old Petworth House. From the east end of the Gallery or Library a wall was planned, termed 'the new garden wall', which was to enclose the main back court (east of the east range of the main new house) 'almost to the town side', i.e. to the back outbuildings by North Street. The door on the west side of the outer court would have given onto the park or, rather, the bowling green marked on Treswell's plan of 1610.

'Now that I am a builder I must borrow of my knowledge somewhat out of Theobalds, somewhat out of every place of mark where curiosities are used.' So the ninth Earl had written to Sir Robert Cecil in 1603 when he had been engaged on a large-scale rebuilding at Syon, a house with a basic plan which could be described fairly as a simpler version of the plan which we have just outlined, though a plan which arose out of the nature of earlier buildings there rather than out of deliberate design like this. We know that he had visited many great houses at this time—the gifts given to the

servants are recorded on the household accounts. To this visiting and observation he added a deep study of the best works on Renaissance building. The Earl sent from the Tower in 1606 what he described as 'all my store of this nature' to his friend Sir John Holles; the authors mentioned were Vitruvius, 'father of all the rest', Vignola, Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, Lorenzo Sirigatti, Jacques Perret, Philibert de l'Orme, Sebastian Serlio, Wendel Dietterlin, Leon B. Alberti, and Palladio which Holles already had—in short, almost all of the best of classical and Renaissance writings on architecture. The Earl's experience at Syon had given him the practical understanding of the work in hand which enabled him to be certain of exactly what he wanted done and the reason for it in each stage of the building. Flood's careful estimating showed that the cost of erecting the main house, taking much of the materials from the estate and using local resources of manpower, would be £2,810; with the outbuildings added, the total cost was put at £3,788. 13s. 10d. If the Earl chose to adopt a sloping roof in place of the leaden one which he had prescribed at first, the cost could have been reduced, Flood computed, by £287. 0s. 7d.¹

But this dream palace never left the planning stage, and so Petworth instead of coming down to us as a greater Syon had to wait for the Proud Duke of Somerset to rebuild it on the original site in his outdated French manner in the later seventeenth century.

(v) CONCLUSION

Although the earliest building plans which are known to survive in this country date only from 1586, it is certain that such drawings were used in building as early as the thirteenth century. Shakespeare describes the various stages in the building of stone structures in late medieval and Tudor times:

When we mean to build
We first survey the plot, then draw the model,

¹ *Cal. Salisbury MSS.*, pt. xv, p. 383; *Cal. Portland MSS.* ix. 152. On the Earl's work at Syon see my article in the *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 1956, pp. 95-109.

And when we see the figure of the house,
 Then must we rate the cost of the erection;
 Which if we find outweighs ability,
 What do we then but draw anew the model
 With fewer offices ?

Both 'plot' and 'model', i.e. ground-plan and elevation, were normally drawn by the mason in charge; a 1610 wage assessment list refers, for example, to a freemason 'which can draw his plot, work and set accordingly, having charge over others'. At Petworth we have an instance of an employer drawing his own plan instead of simply signing the mason's, as was customary; the 'model', if there was one, has not survived, but the estimates, compiled by a trusted servant, have, and with the Earl's plan provide an interesting microcosm of the process of building a new house of substance of the time.¹

It is easy to understand why the ground-plans of medieval and early modern buildings should not have come down to us in any numbers. The working plans of a new building would get worn in the hands of the mason in charge of the works; the employer's copy would be of no practical use once the building was erected, and if drawn on parchment might well be used again; and, if the building was set out on the ground, as it often was, the architectural drawing could easily prove dispensable. But, most of all, there is the point that what characterizes our great architectural heritage is the way in which each successive age built on, pulled down, restored, and enlarged the work of earlier periods. So it is with many of our greatest buildings, both ecclesiastical and lay. So it is with each of the main houses of the Percy family—Alnwick, Syon, and Petworth.

The story of Petworth which we have been examining is, then, a story with wider interest than purely local history or antiquarian value. What has been done in this paper is what needs to be done for a great many more such houses up and down the country. Where

¹ *Henry IV*, pt. 2, Act 1, Sc. 3; *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, n.s., III. 220; L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 16, 23.

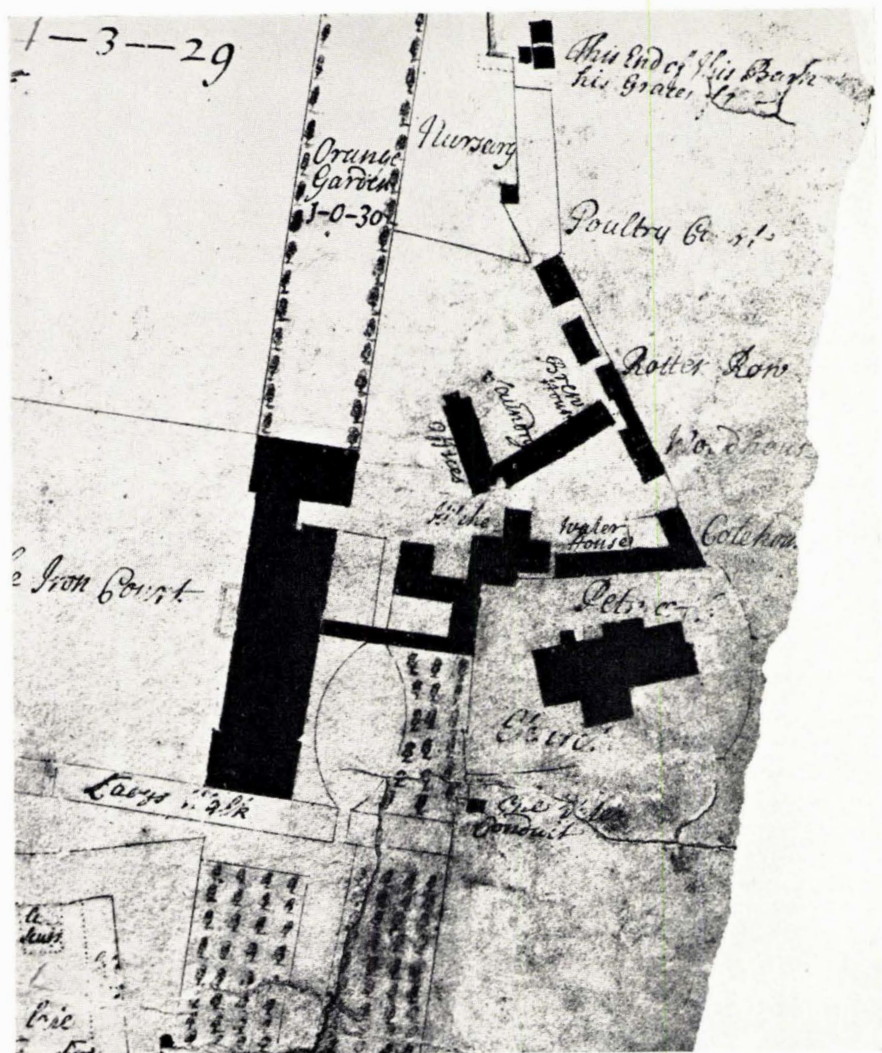


PLATE V. PART OF THE MAP OF PETWORTH, 1706; reproduced from the Leconfield MSS.
by courtesy of Mr. John Wyndham

ground-plans fail us—as they almost certainly will in this period—we must seek to put together the story of the layout and the evolution of the house from other material; from a meticulous analysis of the surviving household accounts, computations for building works, inventories and surveys, from a careful study of letters and old paintings and the remains of the contemporary building which still stands, we must assemble, piece by piece, the evidence which a cursory glance might dismiss as not existing. That way lies not merely a better knowledge of the individual house being studied, but a fuller understanding of both the building methods of our ancestors in particular and their way of life in general.¹

¹ The contribution to price and wage history of the manuscripts on which I have drawn for this paper will be given in the next volume of the *Collections*. I would acknowledge here my indebtedness to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland for allowing me the freest access to his manuscripts at Alnwick Castle and Syon House; to the Lord Leconfield and John Wyndham, Esq., for access to the manuscripts and buildings at Petworth; and to Miss G. M. A. Beck, the archivist at Petworth House, for her ready assistance in my researches there.