Lord's Place, Leicester: an Urban Aristocratic House of the Sixteenth Century

by Paul Courtney

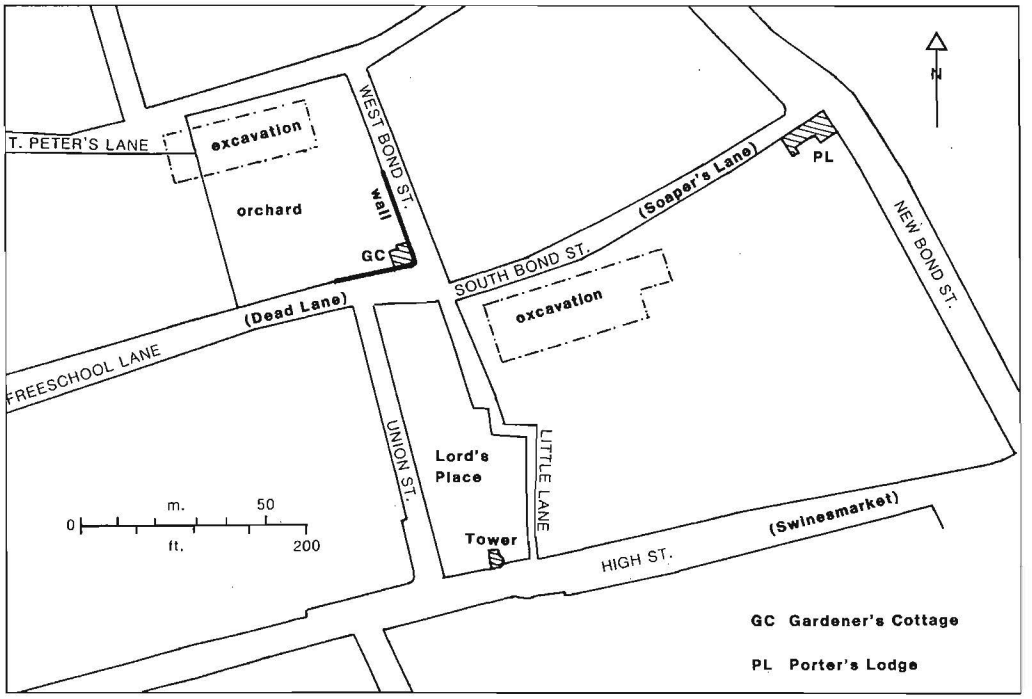
This article provides an interdisciplinary analysis of the architecture and social history of Lord's Place. This building was the Leicester residence of Henry, the third earl of Huntingdon, the borough's patron in the late sixteenth century. The last remnants of Lord's Place were demolished in 1902 when the High Street was widened. However, surviving plans, photographs and documents allow some aspects of this former aristocratic complex to be re-interpreted.

Introduction

The Elizabethan stone house, known as Lord's Place from at least the middle of the seventeenth century (and more recently as Huntingdon's Tower), lay on the north side of the modern High Street. This house had once been the residence of Henry, third earl of Huntingdon, a leading puritan. Its twin towers would have overlooked the adjacent timber-framed dwellings of the High Street merchants, a symbol of the earl's paternal power over the borough. The earl of Huntingdon was not only one of the county's largest landowners but served as both the Lord Lieutenant of the county and as the steward of the honor of Leicester. He was thus an important regional representative of the Elizabethan state. However, as Leicester's patron the earl also had an important, if unofficial, role as a friendly and influential intermediary in the borough's relations with central government (Patterson 1991; Cross 1966).

The house was demolished in 1902 when the High Street was widened for the new electric tramway. The current work on this building was originally undertaken as part of the documentary research for the nearby Shires excavations (illus. 1) of 1988-89 (Lucas and Buckley 1989). It attempts to use surviving documents, photographs and plans in an interdisciplinary manner to shed light on the architectural and social history of Lord's Place. The history of the building is also shown to have been interwoven with that of Leicester's other elite houses.

Demolition in 1902 briefly revealed that the original stonework of the sixteenth-century tower still survived under its casing of eighteenth-century brick. Plans of the surviving fragments of Lord's Place were made during its demolition by the Leicester architect, Albert Herbert of Friar Lane (LLRRO. DE 2793/49/1-3). There are also several paintings and sketches made by various local artists, many on the eve of destruction of Lord's Place, which survive in the collections of the Leicester City Museums Service. In addition, a number of photographs also contribute to the record of



1. Location of Lord's Place, based on 1886 O.S. map

the architecture of the building (LLRRO PP 3376 photos: High St.). These records are in themselves signs of an increasing interest among the local elite of Leicester in recording, and when possible preserving, threatened historic buildings. This reflects an awareness of historic architecture inspired by the Romantic movement and fostered by the Victorian luminaries Willaim Morris, John Ruskin and Philip Webb, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings which they founded in 1877 (Fawcett 1976).

History

Lord's Place was clearly not the first high-status stone house within the borough of Leicester. The undercroft of a twelfth-century stone hall was recently rediscovered in Guildhall Lane, having been photographed in the last century (Hagar and Buckley 1990; Courtney and Courtney 1995, 13). Another stone hall, belonging to Leicester Abbey, is also documented as having stood on the south side of St. Peter's cemetery. A deed of 1725 locates the cemetery to the south of a property on St. John's Lane, modern Causeway Lane. It therefore seems likely that this hall, probably of twelfth or early thirteenth-century date, lay on the north side of St. Peter's Lane. In 1477 this property was rented to 'lord' William de Hastings (Courtney 1998, 118-9). The history of the stone hall after 1477 is uncertain but it may have come into the hands of the earls of Huntingdon along with the other abbey possessions after the Dissolution. It is presumably sheer coincidence that the late sixteenth-century town house of the Hastings family cannot have been far distant from the building used by their ancestors of a hundred years before.

2. Tower with brick shell prior to demolition

Besides Lord's Place, the remains of two other high status dwellings survive in Leicester. Skeffington House in the Newarke was built in the late sixteenth-century, though with many later additions. An external masking of stucco on its frontage hides the palimpsest of alterations, which are apparent when viewed from the rear garden. On the outskirts of Leicester lay the post-Dissolution successor to Leicester Abbey, Cavendish House. This was destroyed in the Civil War but its ruins have recently been the subject of an archaeological and documentary survey for Leicester City Council (Buckley 1997).

Lord's Place is first depicted on Speed's map of 1605 and, more reliably, on John Roberts' map of 1741 as a twin-tower structure. The first certain reference to the house is in 1569 when 'Reynolds dwelling house' in the High Street was sold by John Eaton of Raunston (Ravenstone) and Ralph Eaton of Leicester, gents, to Henry, earl of Huntingdon for £100 (*BL* Add Ms 5822, f.187: Carte MS and *Nichols* Iii, 532). Nicholas Reynolds was mayor of Leicester in 1531-2 and 1539-40 and one of only five citizens rated at £40 in the 1544 Lay Subsidy. William Reynolds, possibly his son, was mayor in *1562 (RBL,* iii, 458; Hoskins 1965, 91). Reynold's dwelling house may have been the same High Street property which Nicholas Reynolds purchased in 1539 from Hugh Whalley. This property was said to lie on the north side of the High Street with the George, an inn owned by the Corpus Christi Guild, on its east side and Soaper's Lane behind (*Nichols,* Iii, 566). Soaper's Lane like Dead Lane ran behind the High Street (e.g. *RBL,* ii, 287 and 435). The name, Dead Lane suggests that it originally came to a dead-end. However, testimony in an archdeaconry court case of 1637, over disputed parochial boundaries, makes it clear that at this date Dead (alias Soaper's) Lane formed a continuous way from Parchment Lane (East Bond Street) to High Cross Street (LLRRO ID41/4, box.21, no.98; transcripts provided by Anne Tarver).

A deed of 20 December 1569 transferred the capital messuage called Reynold's dwelling house for £100 from the earl to Sir George Turpin of Knaptoft (Cross 1966, 308 *citing* Huntingdon Library deeds). However, the house appears to have continued in the hands of the earl of Huntingdon. Presumably this deed was the security for a concealed mortgage. Certainly the earl had financial problems throughout his career (Cross 1966). The concealment may be due to the fact that the legality of mortgages was still far from certain at this date. From 1580 the earl's brother, Sir Edward Hastings, newly retired from a military career, acted as his brother's local representative and was given Leicester Abbey as his seat (Cross 1966, 117 and 312). In 1590 a deed enrolled on the back of the close rolls records the transfer of the house to the earl's brother, Sir Edward Hastings in fee simple (PRO C54/1361; Cross 1966, 315). In the following year earl surrendered his post as steward of the honor of Leicester to his brother in 1591 (Somerville 1953, 571). Sir Edward Hastings died in 1603 and it is unclear what use he made of Lord's Place. His son, Henry, appears to have been living at Leicester Abbey from at least 1605 until 1613 when it was purchased by William Cavendish, earl of Devon (*RBL,* v, 37 and 103 and *VCH,* iv, 452). A messuage in the High Street was sold in 1610 by Henry, the fifth earl of Huntingdon to John Walthall (LLRRO 14D57/94/2). However, the borough records still refer to the earl of Huntingdon's house in 1616 when the King lodged there suggesting that Lord's Place was still in the earl's possession (*RBL,* iv, 163). The ownership of the house henceforth until the end of the Civil War remains totally obscure.

Notables who appear to have stayed at Lord's Place include James I in 1616, as the backlane to Lord's Place was specially cleansed for his visit (*RBL,* iv, 163). Charles I probably stayed there twice on visits before the Civil War, though the borough records

3. Tower with brick removed, during demolition in 1902

only refer ambiguously to the 'King's house' in 1634 and to the 'Court gate' in 1642 (LLRRO BRIII/2/80 and *RBL,* iv, 316-7). There is considerable confusion over whether or not Mary, Queen of Scots stayed at Lord's Place either on her way from Tutbury to Coventry in 1569, in the custody of the earl of Huntingdon, or on her fateful journey to Fotheringhay in 1586 (Kelly 1884, 290-2). There is no firm evidence of her travelling via Leicester in 1569 despite the fact that she was escorted by troops from the borough (*RBL,* iii, 132). In 1584 the evidence of Mary's personal physician states quite categorically that she stayed at the Angel for one night only (Monday 23rd Sept) before heading on towards Fotheringhay, *et fut Sa Majesté, logée en l'hostellerie des faulxbourgs, a la l'Ange* (Chanteleuze 1874, 493). The Angel was the town's leading inn in this period, fragments of which still survive between Cheapside and Gallowtree Gate.

The borough was already considering buying the building in 1641-42 though it is not known from whom (*RBL,* iv, 332). Finally they bought the house in 1648 from various co-inheritors through the intermediaries of William Warburton and Joseph Bradley. Including expenses, the purchase cost the borough £415 and a further £32-14s-7d was spent on repairs (*RBL,* iv, 361 & 375-7; LLRRO BR II/8a/2044). The borough, almost immediately, decided to sell off all the buildings within the 'farther court' (*RBL,* iv, 365). A five-bayed building belonging to the Great House was also sold in 1648 for the paltry sum of £1, perhaps suggesting it was decayed or little more than a lean-to (*ibid,* 375). A deed of 1648 records the sale of the house's walled orchard by the borough for £135 (LLRRO BR II 8a/1025). The orchard, described as 'now walled', was said to lie between St. Peter's Lane on the south and Dead Lane (modern Freeschool Lane) on the north and an un-named lane on the east. The deed clearly confuses the compass positions of St. Peter's Lane with the more southerly Dead Lane. The un-named lane is probably the 'cross lane' documented in 1336 running from Dead Lane towards St. Peter's Church (*RBL,* ii, 258 and 418). The walled orchard can probably be identified as the walled plot on the site of the nineteenth-century Salem chapel (illus. 1) partially excavated in the 1988-89 Shires: St Peter's Lane excavation. This block of land had rubble walls including twelfth-century architectural fragments believed to be from St. Peter's church, demolished in 1573-74 (Lucas 1990; R. Buckley, pers. comm.). The 1648 deed also refers to the adjacent gatehouse of Lord's Place possibly on the south side of Dead Lane. Freeschool (Dead) Lane was cleansed for the King's visit in 1616, when he lodged in Lord's Place (*RBL,* iv, 163).

Billson (1920, 33-4) suggests that the 'Porter's Lodge' public house formerly at the corner of South Bond Street and East Bond Street marked one entrance to Lord's Place. However, it is some distance from the house and there is no historical documentation to link it to Lord's Place. Billson also noted a building, known as the Gardener's Cottage, on the western corner of Freeschool Lane and West Bond street which he believed might also have been associated with Lord's Place (illus. 1). This eighteenth or nineteenth-century building is too late for any such association but photographs show that it appears to have incorporated part of the same stone boundary wall noted in the Shires excavations (Courtney and Courtney 1995, 83). As noted above, this wall appears to have enclosed the orchard of Lord's Place. A timber beam from the Gardener's Cottage, with a decorative boss in the form of a grotesque bearded face, is currently on display in Newarke Houses Museum. It was clearly re-used from an older building, possibly the nearby St. Peter's church.

Part of Lord's Place was rented out by the borough as early as the financial year ending Michaelmas (Sept. 21) 1648. Repairs to the 'Commissioners' Chamber' in 1648-49 suggest part of the house was initially kept by the borough government (or

commissioners) for its business. The negotiations by John Woods, the new master of the Freeschool, for a tenancy of part of the house (Moiety B-see below) in 1650/1 indicated the possibility of allowing the sheriff to use some of the rooms during the assizes. The implication being that the building was already used for this purpose as it was on occasion twenty years later (*RBL,* iv, 375. 392 and 395).

Tenants of house (accounts start and end at Michaelmas)

Moiety (Unspecified)

1648	Col. Needham (6 months rent)

Moiety A (Western side of house and W. Tower)

1649-1665	John Maior
1665-70	Executors of J. Maior
1669-94	Lawrence Carter (from executors of J.M. in 1669-70)
1694-1702	Mr Watts

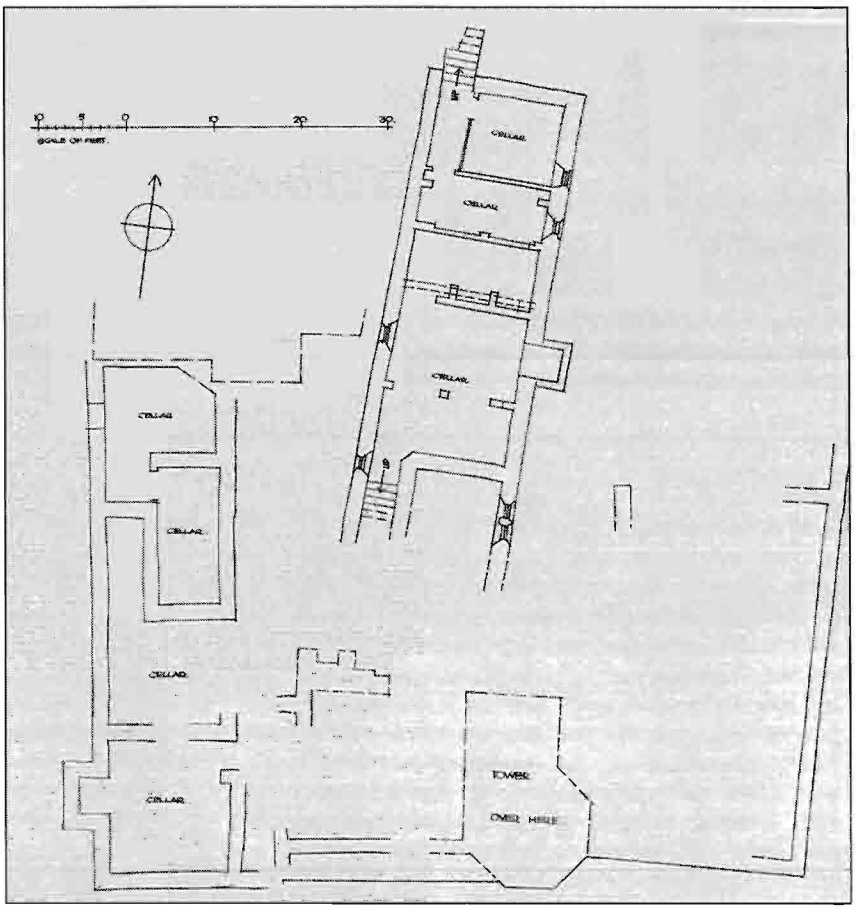
Moiety B (Eastern side of house and E. Tower).

1650-51	John Wood, schoolmaster (second half year)
1655-58	Lady Hungate (widow of Sir Henry Hungate)
1658-59	Frances Rudinge
1659-60	Henry Hungate/ earl of Stamford (paid £5 each)
1660-66	Henry Hungate
1666-70	Executors of H. Hungate
1669-70	Thomas Pochin, sheriff
1670-71	Sir John Hartopp
1671-72	vacant
1672-73	William Woolaston, sheriff
1673-74 ?	?vacant (no entry)
1674-75	William Boothby
1675-77	vacant
1678-98	Henry Hargrave
1698-1702	Executors of H. Hargrave

Moiety C (Under gallery).

1649-1656	Nathaniell Churchman
1656-57	? vacant (no entry)
1657-58	vacant
1658-64	Edward Billing
1664-85	John Seale, pinmaker
1685-1702	Widow Seale

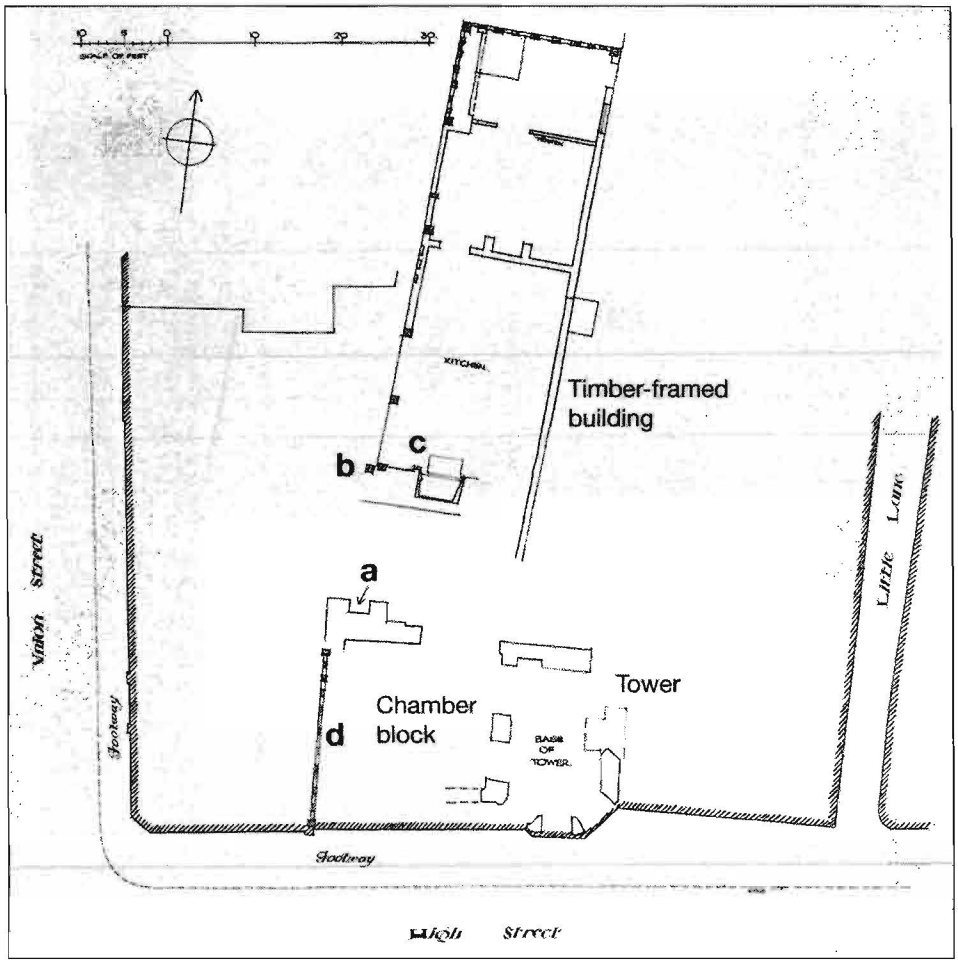
The tenants of Lord's Place from 1648 onwards are revealed by the Chamberlain's Accounts, which also occasionally record payments made for sweeping or repairing the house (LLRRO BR III/2: MF 1/6-9). The house was let in three portions or moieties, henceforth termed A, B and C. Moiety A comprised the western part of the house and the west tower, while moiety B was in the eastern side of the building and included the east tower. Moiety C clearly comprised lower status accommodation to the rear of the front range and was described as lying 'below the gallery'. A number of leases survive for the two larger moieties, A and B (LLRRO BR II 8a/1068, 1084, 1175, 1221, 1230).



4. Plan of Lord's Place cellars, A. Herbert 1902

The lessees of moieties A and B were all of some substance. Colonel Needham was the commonwealth governor of Leicester while John Maior acted as the borough solicitor from 1655. Lawrence Carter was a lawyer, steward of the honor of Leicester in 1697-1702 and MP for the borough in 1688 and 1701-72 (Sommerville 1972, 180). These last two tenants were among the first of a rising class of substantial professional lawyers to be recognised in Leicester. Carter subsequently rose to become a baron of the exchequer. Sir Henry Hungate, whose widow and son lived in the house, had been a royalist supporter in the Civil War. In 1642, Sir Henry delivered a threatening letter from Prince Rupert to the Mayor demanding a £2,000 loan from the borough within 24 hours, an incident which may have helped influence their eventual commitment to the Parliamentary cause.

Frances Rudinge and William Boothby, esquires were members of county gentry families (see *Nichols,* IVi, 179 and IVii, 568 for pedigrees). Moiety B was also rented by sheriffs for use during the assizes in 1669-70 and 1672-3. A single probate inventory for Henry Hargrave, a schoolmaster (d.1695) who leased moiety B, has been found for



5. Ground Floor plan of Lord's Place, A. Herbert 1902

Lord's Place. Unfortunately the inventory gives no information on the building apart from valuing his remaining lease and valuing a bell and a sconce at £2-3s-0d. The rest of his material and financial possessions are lumped together in a few categories (LLRRO PR/I/100/56).

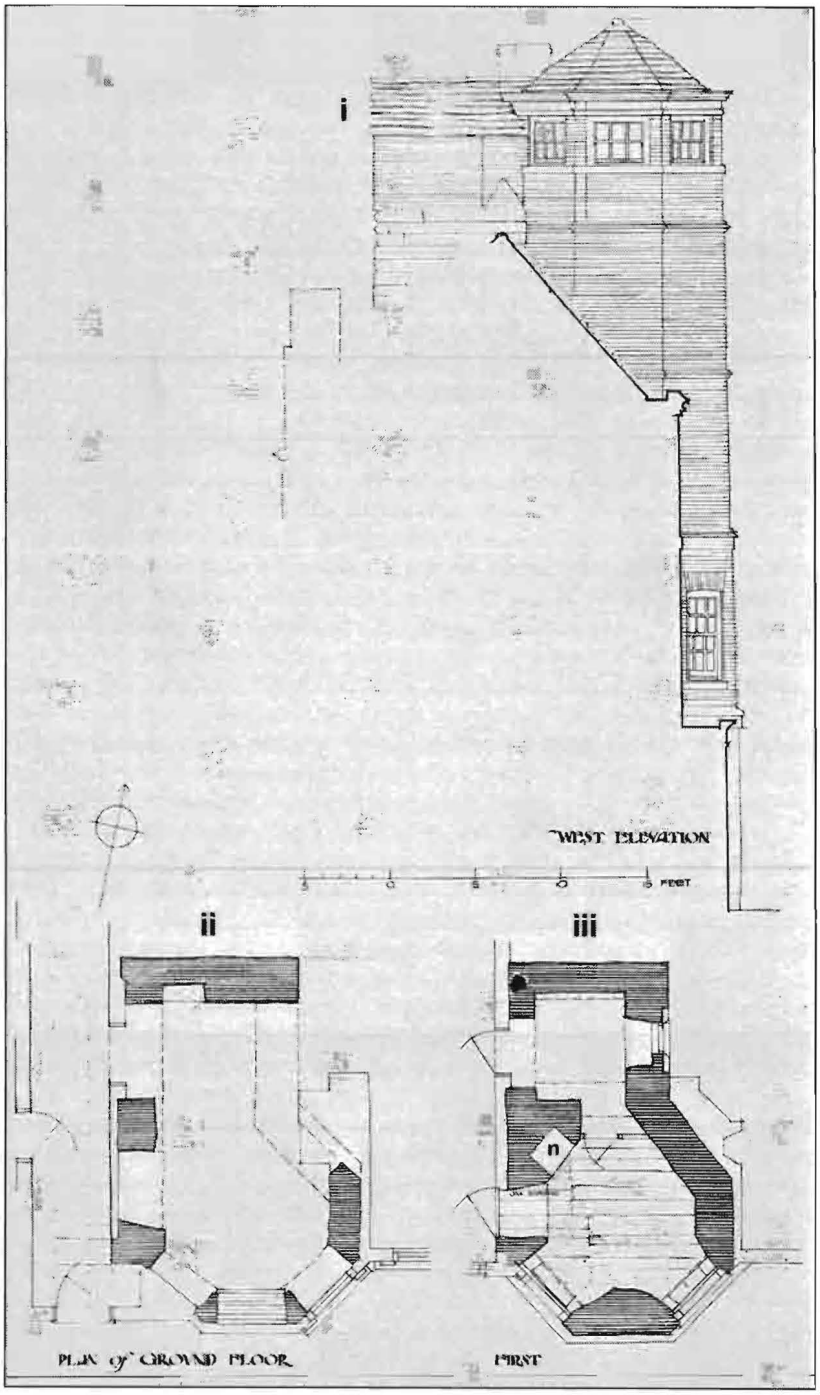
The duke of York stayed at Lord's Place in 1664-5 and the duchess in the following financial year (1665-6), probably in the vacant moiety A (*RBL*, iv, 505 and 511). In 1689 Mr Carter the tenant of moiety A of Lord's Place requested additions and alterations for which he was prepared to pay a higher rent (*RBL*, v, 4). There is no evidence his request was met and he left in 1694 to move into his own newly-built house in the Newarke, later known as the Shipley Ellis house (*BL* Add. MS 5822, f183). In 1702 Lord's Place was sold for £400 to Simon Barwell, who was deputy steward of the honor of Leicester from 1702-20 (*RBL*, v, 36 and 40; Sommerville 1972, 180). According to Samuel Carte, Barwell carried out the part demolition of the house (*BL*

6. Timber framed building at rear of tower during demolition, viewed from south

Add. Ms 5822, f.187). Nichols (Ii, 4), writing at the end of the eighteenth century, noted that the building, then occupied by a Mr Freer, had been clad in brick and the top of the surviving tower glazed for a prospect seat. Directories show that the remnants of Lord's Place formed part of a boot and shoe manufactory, no. 55 High Street, in the second half of the nineteenth century. The last remnant of Lord's Place disappeared in the 1902 widening of High St. Its imminent destruction, however, led to photographs, sketches and line drawings being made by citizens of the borough. A memorial plaque which had been hung on the house prior to 1902 (illus. 8i-a) is unfortunately the only fragment of its fabric to survive and is now in the collections of Newarke Houses Museum.

Architecture

Lord's Place comprised a two-storey chamber block on the High Street, with two turrets. In addition to the timber-framed range surviving in 1902, it seems likely that more accommodation, perhaps a second timber-framed range, lay behind, or close to,



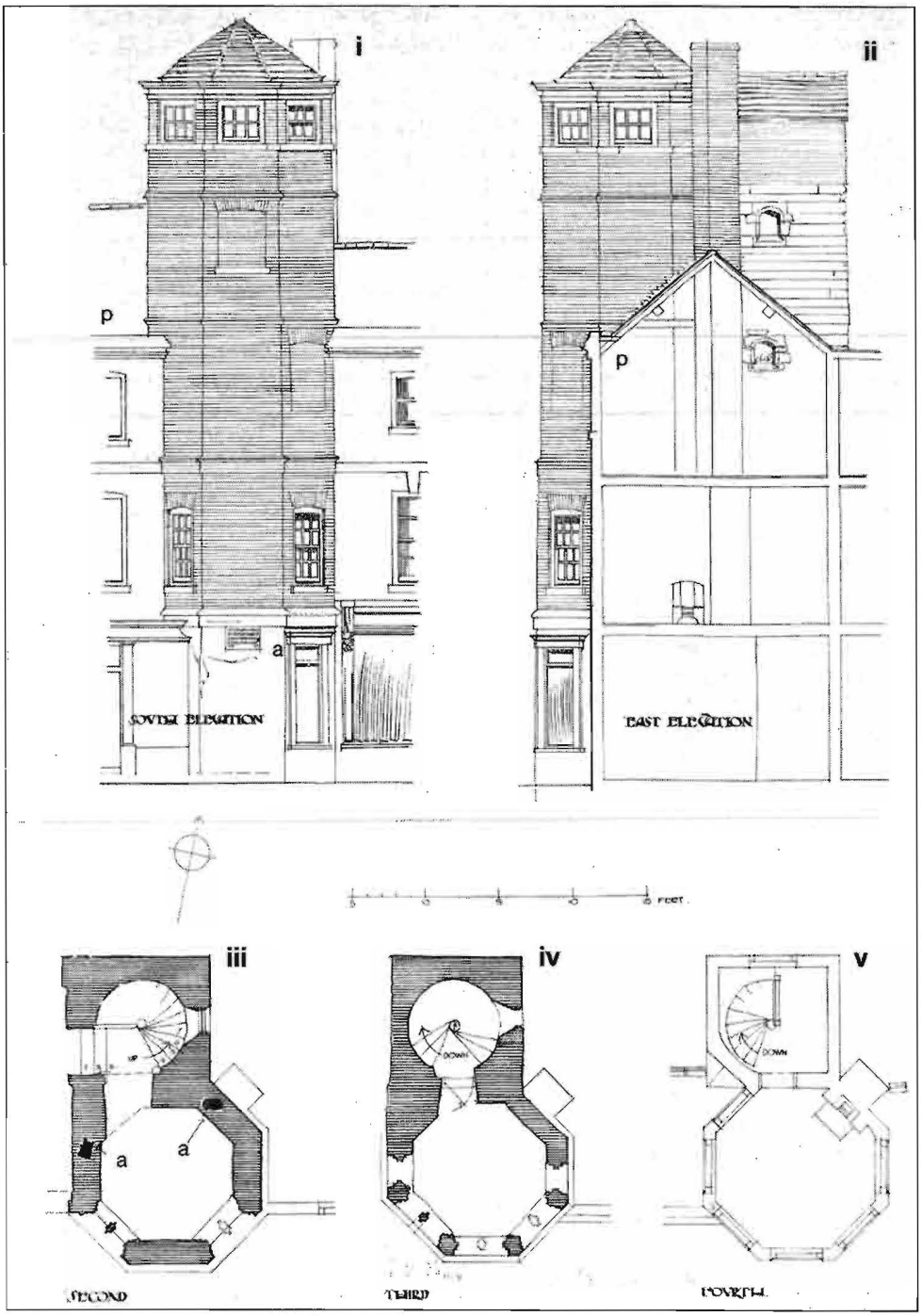
7. West elevation and floor plans of tower, A. Herbert, 1902

the western tower. Otherwise the accommodation of moiety A seems highly inadequate. This lost range may have overlain the north-south row of cellars illustrated by Herbert along the western edge of the site (illus. 4). The garden was probably walled and contained a small building or office and a gate-house, the latter presumably on Dead Lane (modern Freeschool Lane). Access to the gate-house appears to have been possible from either Dead Lane and St. Peter's Lane, both leading to High Cross Street, and probably via Soaper's Lane, eastward to Parchment Lane. Other outbuildings, notably the five bayed building sold for £1 in 1648, may also have existed in this outer court. To the north of Dead Lane lay the walled orchard (illus. 1).

This section of the article attempts to shed further light on the layout and evolution of Lord's Place using Herbert's drawings, photographs and the documentary evidence. Unfortunately, the western end of the complex had been demolished probably in the early eighteenth century. Its reconstruction, therefore, has to be based entirely on documentary evidence. Even the interpretation of that part of the house which survived in 1902 is far from easy. The problems of studying the history of a building with no surviving remains should not be underestimated. It should be noted that despite their fine quality, Herbert's drawings were made a century ago by someone trained in architecture rather than the modern specialism of architectural history. His drawings have limitations when it comes to interpreting the phasing of the building. They were probably drafted in his office using measured sketches made on site (D. Smith, pers. comm.). This is reflected in the many specific measurements given in his original drawings, which have been omitted in this publication for reasons of clarity. It should also be noted that Herbert was having to undertake the difficult task of recording the building while it was being demolished. This no doubt explains the poorer quality of some of his drawings, notably the rear of the timber framed building and the cellar plan which appear to be hastily drawn sketches based on a few key measurements only.

Nevertheless it is possible to draw some conclusions, even if interpretative, from the surviving body of evidence. It seems appropriate to start with the remains of the building which did survive until the 1902 road widening. Both the documents and early maps make it clear that Lord's Place had twin towers on its High Street frontage of which only the eastern example survived in 1902. This tower was built of stone, probably local sandstone, to judge from the photographs (illus. 2). Herbert noted the re-use of thirteenth and fourteenth century architectural fragments in the core of the second floor level (illus. 7iii). In 1902 the eastern tower survived to a height of four stories, though most of its architectural detail was hidden prior to demolition by a brick casing (illus. 2 and 3). The fourth storey of the tower had also been added at the same time as the rest of the tower was brick encased. The new brick garret was served by a fireplace and chimney (illus.8v) and had a wooden cornice on its exterior (fig. 8i). Surviving photographs indicate that the brickwork of the tower and the clearly contemporary buildings on either side was of Flemish bond. External sash boxes were used in the windows and parapets built at the eaves, comprising three courses of raised brick stringers with a course of chamfered brick above (illus. 8i-p and 8ii-p). These features would indicate a date of *c.*1720-40 for the brick cladding of the tower and building of the immediately adjacent structures (D. Smith, pers. comm.).

Originally the tower had almost certainly been of three stories. The continuous band of mullioned windows (eight lights in all) on the third floor indicates that it was originally the top floor of the tower (illus. 3 and 10). Herbert measured the height of the stone tower as 40 ft 3 ins. (12.27 m.) from the street to the string course above the third floor windows. He also noted a slight taper as it rose in height. The removal of the brick



8. South and East Elevations and floor plans of tower, A. Herbert 1902

casing during demolition revealed the remains of previously hidden square-headed mullioned windows lighting the main chambers in the stone tower (illus. 3, 10 and 12). Herbert's drawings indicate these had hollow (cavetto) chamfered mouldings (illus. 13ii), typical of the period from *c.*1575-c.1615 (Wood-Jones 1963, fig. 73 and 255-7). This provides very strong, though not conclusive, evidence for assigning the building of the tower to the earl of Huntingdon who purchased the property in 1569. Herbert illustrates a fragment of decorative leading, measuring 1 foot 6½ ins. (47 cms.) across, which was found built into the brickwork of the third floor during demolition (illus.13i). Externally, the tower was decorated with moulded, horizontal string courses and had a projecting plinth at its base (illus. 9 and 10).

The second and third floors of the tower were made of plaster, possibly an original feature. By contrast, the first floor in 1902 was made of oak planks (illus. 9). All the floors were supported by timber beams and a moulded oak beam is also recorded over the ground floor (illus. 9-a and 10ii-a). The beams were later hidden by the addition of plaster ceilings, probably in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries (illus. 9-d) The interior of the first floor tower chamber had a round-headed wall niche of uncertain function (illus. 7iii-n and 9-n). An oak door, thought by Herbert to be original, survived on the third floor (illus. 12).

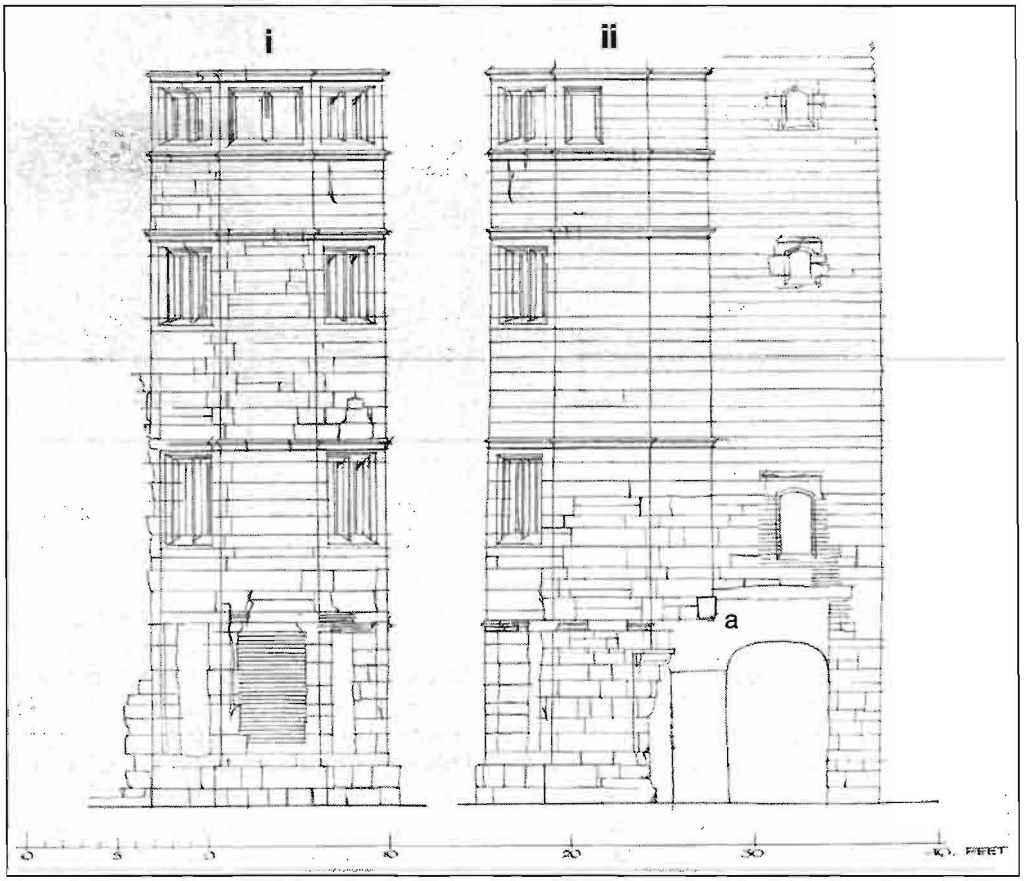
The stair-well at the back of the tower was lit by small, squat, single-lights with slightly pointed heads (illus. 8ii). A spiral staircase originally connected the second and third floors of the tower. At the second floor level it gave access both to the tower room and the garret of the adjacent block. The lower steps at least seem to have been of solid oak. Herbert does not specify the construction of the stair post but it also appears to have been of timber and was supported at intervals by timber lintels (illus. 9-b). The staircase was later extended to give access to the new fourth floor of the tower (illus. 12). The access to the tower also demonstrates that the chamber block (lying between the two towers) was originally two stories in height with a roof garret (illus. 7-8). The ridge line of the inter-tower block roof presumably ran parallel to the street to allow access to the second floor of the tower. The attic or garret was most likely lit by gable windows.

Except for the stone-built chimney (illus. 5-a) at the rear, only the foundations of the inter-tower chamber block survived in 1902 A close-studded timber framed wall must also be a survival from the sixteenth century (illus. 5-d). The rest of the chamber block appears to have been demolished and rebuilt in brick. Examination of Herbert's front elevation of the tower (illus. 10i) leaves no doubt that the stonework of the 1902 tower had originally extended westward along the front of the chamber block. However, there is no such indication at the rear and the foundations of the chimney stack come to an abrupt end (illus. 3 and 5). It seems strange that the original stone chimney stack (illus. 5-a and 9-c) survived intact at the back of a stone-built block while the rest of the building was demolished and replaced in brick. This suggests that both the east tower and chimney stack were additions to a pre-existing timber-range which was also given a stone facing along its High Street frontage. The fact that the studded wall in the ground floor of the chamber block (illus. 5d) is out of alignment with the tower further supports this interpretation.

No traces were found of the documented western tower in 1902. Herbert drew a range of cellars, probably stone (to judge from their thickness), running back from the street front alongside Union Street (illus. 1). There is no trace of an octagonal tower to match that at the eastern end. However, it is possible for an octagonal tower to be carried over a square cellar. A further possibility at this date is that the western tower, especially if over an entrance way, was square despite the lack of symmetry. Examples of buildings

9. Section of tower, A. Herbert 1902

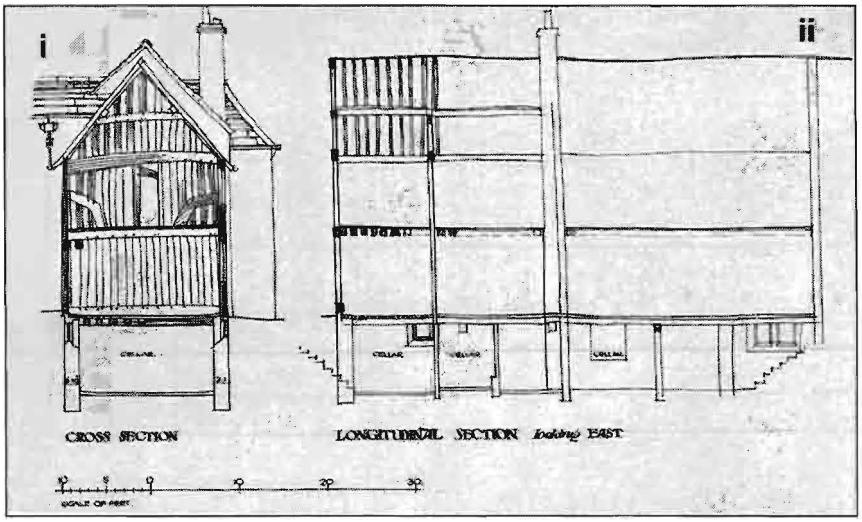
combining square and hexagonal turrets include the stone-built, town-house of Plas Mawr in Conwy, built by the noble Wynn family in 1576-80 (Hilling 1974, 109 and pl. 43). A further more local example, also partly symmetrical in execution, is Bradgate House, built in brick at the end of the fifteenth century (Pevsner and Williamson 1984, 108-9). A more asymmetrical combination of these types of towers is seen in the brick town-hall of Hondschoote (Nord, France), built in 1558 with its square porch tower and a single hexagonal prospect tower (Branquart *et al* 1994, 112 and 172).



10. Elevations of tower with brick casing removed, A. Herbert 1902

Another possibility, given the lack of dating evidence, is that the cellars may have been earlier than the western tower. It is thus possible they were entirely back-filled for its construction or additional masonry added and later removed during demolition. However, Union Street was not created until *c.*1808 and it is conceivable that it was constructed through land formerly belonging to Lord's Place (*RBL,* v, 370 and vi, 485 and 527). It is therefore just conceivable that the western tower may therefore have lain to the west of the cellars, under what is now Union Street, though the layout of the cellars running parallel to Union Street argues against this having been the original boundary of Lord's Place (illus. 1 and 4). Unfortunately, while the documentary evidence provides conclusive evidence for the existence of a western tower, the problem of its form and location remain unresolved.

Herbert's drawings also illustrate a timber-framed building to the rear of the surviving turret (illus. 4, 5 and 11). It lay above stone built cellars, which were lit by several single-light windows and a single mullioned window at the south-east end. The drawing by Herbert of a jamb moulding from the southern end of the building, probably from a fire-place, suggests a mid sixteenth-century date with its cavetto-roll-cavetto shape (illus. 5-c



11. Elevation from north and south-north longitudinal section of timber-framed building, A. Herbert 1902

and 13iii). However, the tucked-in roll at the end of the moulding is unparalleled and may represent a misinterpretation of a moulding damaged by the heat from a fire.

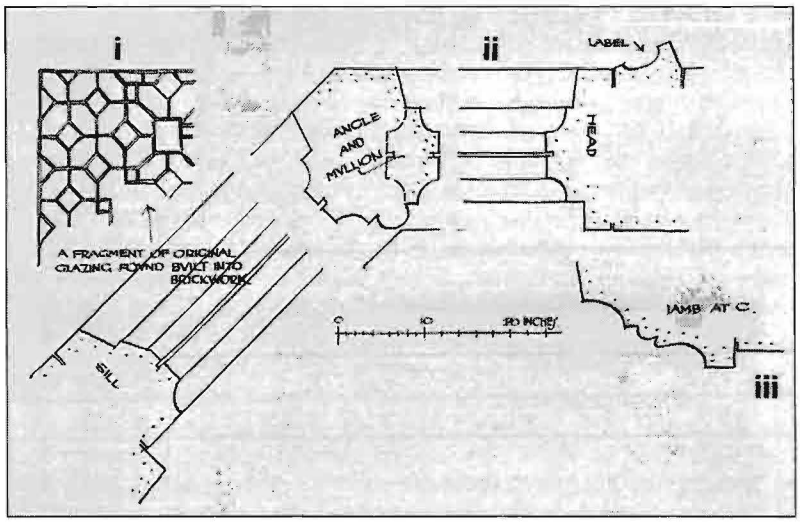
Herbert illustrated a longitudinal section of the building and the elevation of the north end. The roof timbers are all said to be of oak, as are at least some of the floor joists. The floor joists comprised substantial timbers, one measured at 8 x 7 ins (20 x 18 cms.), with supporting beams only evident in the cellar. This suggests a substantial dwelling built with quality materials. Herbert's obviously hurried sketch of the end frame (illus. 11i) poses a number of problems especially on the western side which he seems to have drawn from imprecise information. Fortunately, it can be compared with a photograph taken during demolition (illus. 6). Close examination of the photograph suggests that the end roof frame probably comprised a reduced principal rafter truss with the principal rafters reduced in thickness above the purlins, though this partly obscured in Herbert's drawing by a set of common rafters. Herbert's drawing does indicate that the common rafters were bridle jointed at their apex and therefore the roof had no longitudinal ridge piece. The use of reduced principle rafters is a feature of the second half of the sixteenth century and limited to buildings of superior quality. Dated Leicestershire examples include the Old Grammar School, Uppingham of 1584 and the south chapel of Stoke Dry church of 1574 (D. Smith, pers. comm). Herbert's illustration of the end truss also indicates a tie-beam with a collar above it and clasped purlins (i.e. clasped between the collar and rafters) (illus. 6 and 11i). The wall plate on the eastern side is illustrated but that on the west wall had apparently been lost, perhaps during demolition.

The northern and north-western end of the building still retained its vertical close-studding, presumably originally infilled with gypsum plaster (illus. 6). Curved tension braces are also evident on the end wall. The east wall of this range had been completely rebuilt in brick (illus. 6). The western wall was largely infilled with bricks but the vertical timber wall posts appear to have survived. The number of wall posts suggests a five bay building, while an additional wall post at the south-west corner suggests an extension or structure to the south and west (illus. 5-b). This building appears to have been

12. Inside of 3rd floor showing spiral staircase and range of blocked mullioned windows

constructed to high standards and can probably be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century. It is therefore unclear whether it was built by the Reynolds family or the earl of Huntingdon.

Having cursorily described the architecture of Lord's Place as recorded in 1902, itself far from easy to interpret, it is possible to attempt to integrate this evidence with the written records. The right hand or eastern side of the house (moiety B) is described in some detail in its leases (e.g. LLRRO BR II 8a/1068, dated 1656). The great door led from the street into the pantry on the right. The description of the rooms indicates three chambers on the first floor, respectively over the pantry, pastry and entry. A pantry was a room used for storing food, linen and sometimes plate, while a pastry was a room with ovens used to bake bread and pastries. The lease also included the adjacent tower and that part of the adjoining garret which lay over the 'great chamber', presumably the larger of the three first floor rooms. This chamber can possibly be identified with the commissioner's chamber repaired in 1649. This room was perhaps once the personal chamber of the earl of Huntingdon. It is likely to have been the room served by the stone chimney stack which still survived in 1902 (illus. 5). The lease also included a garden on the east side of the house with a little house or office in or near the garden, as well as one bay of a building with a chamber belonging to it which lay to the rear of the 'bakehouse' ('backhouse' in later deeds). No mention is made either of a kitchen which both moieties A and B must have required. Herbert describes the southern ground-floor room of the



13. Window glazing and moulded stonework, A. Herbert 1902

timber-framed building as a kitchen but this may not have been an original function (illus. 4 and 11).

Unfortunately leases for moiety A give little information about the room layout at the western end of the complex. They confirm that a second tower lay at the west end of the building with the garret space over the intervening block being shared between the two moieties (e.g. LLRRO BRII8a/1084). In the 1650' s and 1660's moiety A was rented for £8-10s and moiety B for £10. A further part (moiety C) of the Great House was let for £2-13s in the same period. The latter was first described as lying beneath the great gallery and later as an adjacent tenement. Its occupant from 1664-85 was a pin maker. The term 'gallery' was applied to several types of structures in the sixteenth century: a passage connecting rooms or separate buildings, long rooms used for exercise, or covered passages around gardens (Girouard 1978, 100-2; Schofield 1994, 84-6). The term 'great gallery' would appear to indicate a sizeable structure ruling out, for example, a short passage joining the tower range and the timber-framed range to the rear. One possibility is that the 'great gallery' was the surviving timber-framed range which probably lay along the west side of the garden mentioned in the leases. Certainly the whole of the eastern side of the timber range, i.e. that which would have faced the garden, had been replaced in brick. It is possible, therefore, that either the ground or first floor was physically open to the garden or else lit by a long horizontal range of windows. On a smaller scale, long ranges of windows overlooking a yard or garden are evident in three surviving late medieval buildings in Leicester: 42 Silver Street, the Guildhall and Wygston's House.

Conclusion

The crenellated tower was one of the most obvious symbols of medieval 'feudal' power which continued in use for symbolic purposes long after the defensive functions of the castle were in decline (Dixon and Lott 1993). As early as the twelfth and early thirteenth

centuries the burghers of Ghent were building crenellated tower houses in symbolic competition with the castle of the Count of Flanders (Laleman and Raveschot 1991; 1994). In England, by contrast, royal and aristocratic power remained ascendant over the towns. However, tower houses were certainly being built by urban merchants by the sixteenth century, if not without opposition. John Stow complained of two London merchants (one a lord mayor), who committed, in Stow's view, the heinous social crime of building towers which overlooked their neighbours (Kingsford 1908, 133 and 155). A number of towers can be seen overlooking the London waterfront in Hollar's panorama of the London waterfront published in 1647 (Godfrey 1994, no 62). Kings Lynn had several towers attached to the houses of rich merchants along its waterfront. The only one to survive dates to the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century, although, another tower is recorded in a document of 1557 (Parker 1971, 47 and 89-90).

Towers attached to merchants houses near to the quaysides of ports may have served as watch towers for incoming shipping but inland towers such as that at Leicester must represent social display. The use of the top floor of the tower as a look-out or prospect room can be paralleled in other fashionable fifteenth/sixteenth century buildings. An illustration survives of an urban example in Bishopsgate, London (Schofield 1994, fig. 95). Examples in rural gentry houses include the sixteenth century King John's Tower at Nevill Holt (Leics) and Melbury House in Dorset built in the 1530s (Girouard 1978, pl. 44).

The £100 price paid by the earl of Huntingdon for Reynold's dwelling house suggests that it was already very substantial property. The mouldings of the mullions in the tower windows point to date of *c.* 1575 or later for its construction implying that it was almost certainly the work of the earl of Huntingdon. The likelihood that the stone elements of Lords' Place were indeed the earl's creation is further increased by the fact that it appears to have been a double-towered structure. By contrast, urban merchant houses of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries in north-west Europe characteristically had single towers, for instance the outstanding Brugge (Bruges) assemblage recorded by Devliegher (1975): 6 Biezenstraat, 10 Huidenvettersplaats, 7 and 19 Naaldenstraat and 10 Woensdagmark.

It remains uncertain whether Huntingdon's Tower had a pair of hexagonal towers or combined a square entrance tower with a single hexagonal prospect tower. However, given the date of construction and the earl's status the most likely interpretation is that the lost west tower was also hexagonal aping the symmetrical twin towered gate-houses of rural mansions. Examples of such gate-houses include Titchfield Place (Hants) in stone, built in 1537-40 and Upton Cressett (Shrops.) in brick, built in 1580 (Summerson 1977, pl. 13; Barley 1986, fig.113). For urban parallels to the twin-towered gate-house one has to turn to the palatial courtyard mansions of London such as Lincoln's Inn and Lambeth Palace (Schofield 1994, 61).

However, whatever form the two towers took, the conceit of Lord's Place was that the front almost certainly formed the main accommodation rather than being guest accommodation as in a country manor. The building is also notable for its combination of stone and timbered ranges, whether or not they were contemporary. It has also been argued that the inter-tower chamber block range comprised a pre-existing timber building given a stone facade at the front and stone chimney at the rear. The earl of Huntingdon's role at court and as the borough's patron demanded that his town house should display his status. This may have been tempered both by his puritan beliefs and by his well-documented financial problems. Despite the limitations of interpreting this lost building, the architecture of Lord's Place does indeed seem to reconcile the earl's competing needs to combine both aristocratic display and economy.

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