

NINETEENTH CENTURY REVIVALS



The nineteenth century was predominantly the age of revivals, with restless efforts at renewal in the ancient languages of architectural history. The Cotswolds have outstanding examples of nearly all of the styles: Neo-Classical at Dodington and Wormington, Neo-Gothic at Woodchester, Neo-Elizabethan at Westonbirt, Neo-Tudor (Perpendicular) at Toddington, and Neo-Jacobean at Sherborne House (1829–34) and Campden House (1846), for Lord Gainsborough. The Anglo-Indian Arcadian at Sezincote is a one off, and perhaps most successful of all. For domestically many of these houses are overblown and unlovable, predicated on immense numbers of servants and broad acres, with a healthy rent roll to sustain them. Few of the larger ones remain occupied as family houses, though many have adapted well to new institutional or quasi-institutional uses.

The earlier nineteenth-century houses were often re-

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buildings in the latest style by the old landed families on their estates, sometimes on new sites. By the mid-century, there were increasing numbers of predominantly merchant houses, as new money poured in from the Empire, and the new rich wanted to express their wealth and status in grand houses to match.

Kingsley and Hill in *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire 1830–2000* note a peak of building activity about 1865, after a period of slowly increasing prosperity. Agricultural rents saw a decline in the 1880s, and then rapidly recovered with feverous activity in the decade leading up to the First World War, while after the War new projects bounced back pretty quickly.

There are several essays in *Italianate of the High Victorian period*. Cowley Manor is a textbook example in the *Italianate of 1855–57* by Sir Charles Barry's pupil and assistant, the competent George Somers Clarke, but it was enlarged rather tastelessly forty years later with colonnades for Sir James Horlick, the malted milk king. Tortworth Park (under the edge of the Cotswolds, of 1849–53) and Owlpen House (built 1848; demolished 1956) are both early works by Samuel Sanders Teulon. Rendcomb House, near Cirencester, was built for the Jewish bullion broker Sir Francis Henry Goldschmid in conventional *Italianate* of 1867, but more successful are the French Renaissance stables with steep roofs and sumptuous Baroque *lucarnes* in the 'Rothschild' manner. Colesbourne Park (1853–5) was built for Henry Elwes by David Brandon in heavy Jacobean, but a soft Bath stone was chosen, which crumbled away in decades, and it was replaced with a design in reconstructed stone by his descendant, also Henry Elwes, in a simplified Jacobean in 1958–60. Today it has one of the best snowdrop gardens in the country, and a fine collection of over 200 rare trees.

Some of the best specimen plantings are at Batsford Park

and Westonbirt, set in landscapes Japanese or English, with their important arboretums. These are exceptional among Victorian houses for being noticed in the early volumes of *Country Life*. Others were too close to its own time to be assessed in the critical literature of the country house.

Variants of Gothic are exemplified at Quarwood (1866–69), near Stow-on-the-Wold, by J. L. Pearson, now altered beyond recognition, and Beaudesert Park (1871–73), near Minchinhampton (originally called Highlands), by Ewan Christian, designed in a Midland timbered style after the 'Old English' of George Devey.

Notable additions to houses of the Georgian period include the flanking wings (1828) at Painswick House, added by George Basevi, brother-in-law of the owner W. H. Hyett, and large wings (1873) at Barrington Park by J. M. Anderson. Basevi also worked at Gatcombe Park in the 1820s, adding stables and a curved conservatory for David Ricardo. Adaptations include Sudeley Castle and Lypiatt Park, noted elsewhere.

Angeston Grange in Uley is the Cotswolds' only cottage orné, built for the clothier, Nathaniel Lloyd, owner of a mill in Cam, sometime after 1811. It follows the style of the cottage orné inflated to the scale of a country house, to a precedent popularised with the completion of the Duke of Bedford's Endsleigh Cottage (begun in 1810) in Devon by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, and more locally John Nash's project of rustic cottages in village Picturesque at Blaise Hamlet, outside Bristol (1811).

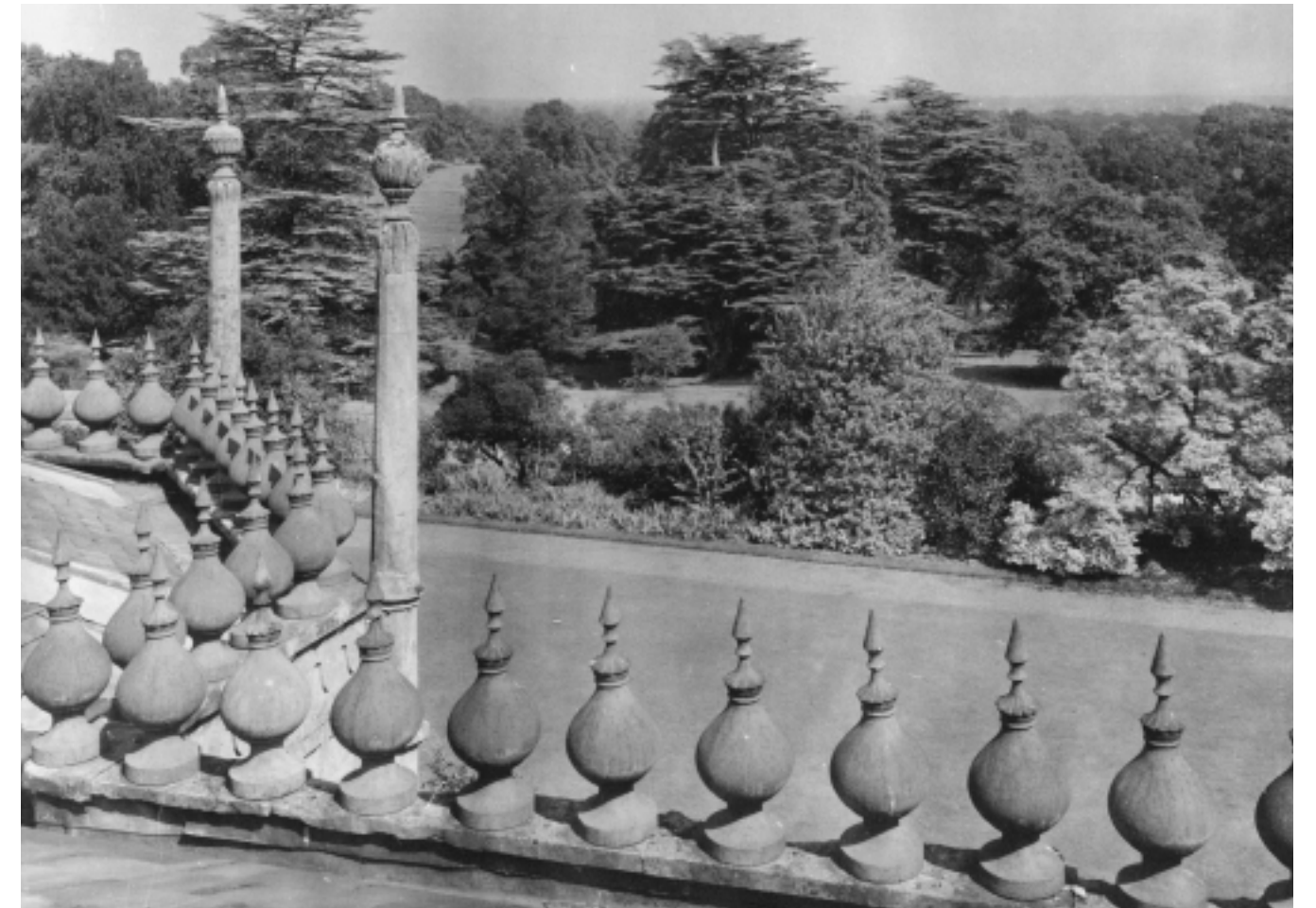
It has a long irregular façade, with hipped gables, extravagant (altered) barge boards and the vertical thrust of chimneys, balanced by a horizontal verandah. Inside, there are conventional late-Georgian reception rooms, altered several times since they were built. Outside, it is painted an orange-ochre limewash, striking and luminous, set gloriously on the edge of Uley Bury, an outlier of the Cotswolds, with valley views.

Dodington, near Chipping Sodbury, is one of the last of the great Neo-Classical houses in England, grand and porticoed like a temple, with Corinthian columns. In style it is Classically eclectic, hovering somewhere between Roman and Greek, with Roman capitals and Greek proportions. It is a monument to wealth, built, c.1810, for a rich West Indian sugar planter, Christopher Bethel Codrington. James Wyatt prepared his design in 1796 for a house commensurate with

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Sezincote, Gloucestershire

Sezincote stands like a dream of Kublai Khan on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds, with its stately onion domes of pleasure. The exotic pavilion architecture of India dominates a Picturesque landscape of the English countryside, out of key, presenting an ambiguous translocation from East to West.

But Sezincote's dream is rooted in memory and history, a personal evocation of the travels and architectural reminiscences of its builders. The circle included the Cockerells, the owners; Thomas and William Daniell, the willing artist begetters; and Warren Hastings, the nabob of nabobs who had settled a few miles away at Daylesford.

In 1795, Colonel John Pepys Cockerell, descended from a nephew of the diarist, bought the estate, having made his pile

Onion finials form a cresting to the roof looking east down the valley.

The trompe-l'œil murals to the dining room, an enchanting capriccio painted by George Oakes in 1982.

in India through various employments with the East India Company. But he died soon after, in 1798, when his youngest brother Charles inherited (later a baronet and MP for Evesham), employing in turn another brother, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, as architect for a new house in the Indian style. He had been a Surveyor to the East India Company, and had already designed Daylesford House (1788–98) for Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of Bengal.

Their architectural fantasy was developed under the inspiration of the topographical artists Thomas and William Daniell, who had travelled throughout the sub-Continent 1786–93, observing, noting, and producing hundreds of watercolours of landscapes, buildings and architectural features, with a concern for accuracy symbolised by their use of the *camera obscura*. They published their series of lithographs of *Oriental Scenery* in six volumes in 1808.

Sezincote was built about 1810, as something new in Picturesque taste, and experimental in saffron-coloured stone believed to be from Barrington. It translates a hoard of architectural details energised with Moghul references to create a mood of the Longinian Sublime. It is playful as the eighteenth-century Neo-Gothic or Neo-Greek had been; a fashion to succeed, even to surpass, the historicist experiments of Egyptomania, Chinoiserie, the Adamesque Pompeian graceful, but with a hint of terror that we find in the Gothic novel, or William Beckford's *Vathek*. Such historicism was to continue through the nineteenth century till it exhausted itself in a return to native inspiration in the Arts and Crafts movement particularly successfully here in the Cotswolds.

But there is something more earnest and critical at Sezincote, creating not an idyllic harmony, but a sense of strangeness and tension in the romanticised, Picturesque landscape. Sezincote's architecture is couched in the calculated and artificial contrasts of the Picturesque style. In its dream setting, Sezincote is not just a scholarly imitation and paraphrase from little-known sources, a series of quotations of its elements of *iwans*, *chattris*, *chayas*, *jalis*. The Picturesque style relied on precisely this variety and unlikely combination of unusual elements to disturb and surprise the imagination.

Sezincote was built by the eighteenth-century generation steeped in the enlightenment legacy. They had learned from Orientalists like Sir William Jones that the Indian heritage, mythologies and Aryan languages derived from the same sources as the Classical civilisation of the west. The Cockerell brothers had settled in India and developed a sincere affection for its culture, and in retirement wanted to bring home some defining memory of place. Sezincote dates to the earlier Georgian colonial phase when there seems to have been a genuine respect for Oriental forms and culture in the European encounter with the East.

Outside, Sezincote imitates not a domestic building, but the mausoleum pavilions of the Emperor Akbar (1556–1605) and the later ornamented style of the Awadh rulers at Lucknow. The style is a deliberate mix of Muslim and Hindu elements of the subject peoples of the Emperors. The original pavilions were single storey, of course, and in their translation to the practicalities of English country house planning, a forceful horizontal emphasis is introduced to underplay the verticality of the three-storey fronts.

The south façade is the most gracious, with 'peacock tail' foliated arches from Rajasthan, and a central bay window.

Sezincote from the south west, with its eclectic decoration: Brahmin bulls and urns, peacock-tail arches, corner turrets derived from chattris, and a cast iron verandah beneath the central bay.



divided by pilasters with blind arcades. The copper-green onion dome is seen to its best effect here, raised above the chimneys, which had to be incorporated for the Cotswold winters. The main *piano nobile* hovers over a low storey, conflated as a semi-basement, hidden beneath a delicate cast-iron balcony, whose lattices imitate not Regency Cheltenham, but Indian *jali* work.

The façades are another picturesque play of contrasts, and do not repeat themselves. The long entrance façade is framed by pilasters and octagonal turrets at the corners, with lanterns like miniature pavilions, a diminished version of the Moghul *chattris*. The central accent is the *iwan*, the high portal niche of the Moghul style, with a hotch-potch of detail: blind arcades, scalloped niches to the window heads, Lucknow style, and humorous roundels in the form of Union Jacks high in the spandrels. (Pineapples abound, also un-Indian references.) Above, the attic servants' rooms are concealed, with tiny porthole oculi for windows, below an exaggerated eaves cornice, or *chujja*, overhanging on brackets. The windows of the main floor have eyebrow heads.

Its inner and outer worlds also show contrasting faces: outside Sezincote may play studiously with Moghul references, but the more private world encased within is European. The inner spirit is the confident Neo-Classical of the Regency, conventional and universal.

Inside, Sezincote is grand and Grecian, therefore, and the mood is a little later (c.1820). The house is entered from the long east front into a low basement, with family and service rooms, which sprawl generously at the back of the house. Two oil paintings by Thomas Daniell show his contemporary views of the house and garden. Humphry Repton seems to have enthused, encouraging the Prince of Wales to visit. He was so enchanted with what he saw that he immediately commissioned the Oriental theme for his Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

The central feature downstairs is a magnificent imperial

The interiors contrast, where detail is Neo-Classical. The south-facing central saloon has grand coving in gilt trellis work and swagged curtains by John Fowler depending from the eagle and lions' masks. The bed in the south-west room incorporates fragments from Sir Charles Cockerell's tented bed in the (demolished) north pavilion, including the spears that supported a canopy.





staircase in cast iron, technically innovative, which rises in a staircase hall to the main enfilade on the south side of the *piano nobile*. It is lit by two lunettes under the lantern dome but all trace of this exotic feature is invisible here. A suite of dining room, central saloon and breakfast room gives on to the verandah, which overlooks the segmental orangery with its formal garden à l'indienne. The saloon has magnificent curtains by John Fowler depending in swags from a spread-eagle above the central canted bay window, and fine Anglo-Indian chairs, and a pair of commodes from St Petersburg. To the east are bedrooms with the best views, looking over the lake and the Vale of Evenlode into the Oxfordshire Cotswolds.

The Indian house is set in its eastern 'Hindu' garden, inspired by Thomas Daniells (and others). The drive from Bourton-on-the-Hill leads past Indian lodges over a conventional Palladian bridge, which has morphed into the Indian phantasmagoria, raised on eastern columns after those in the

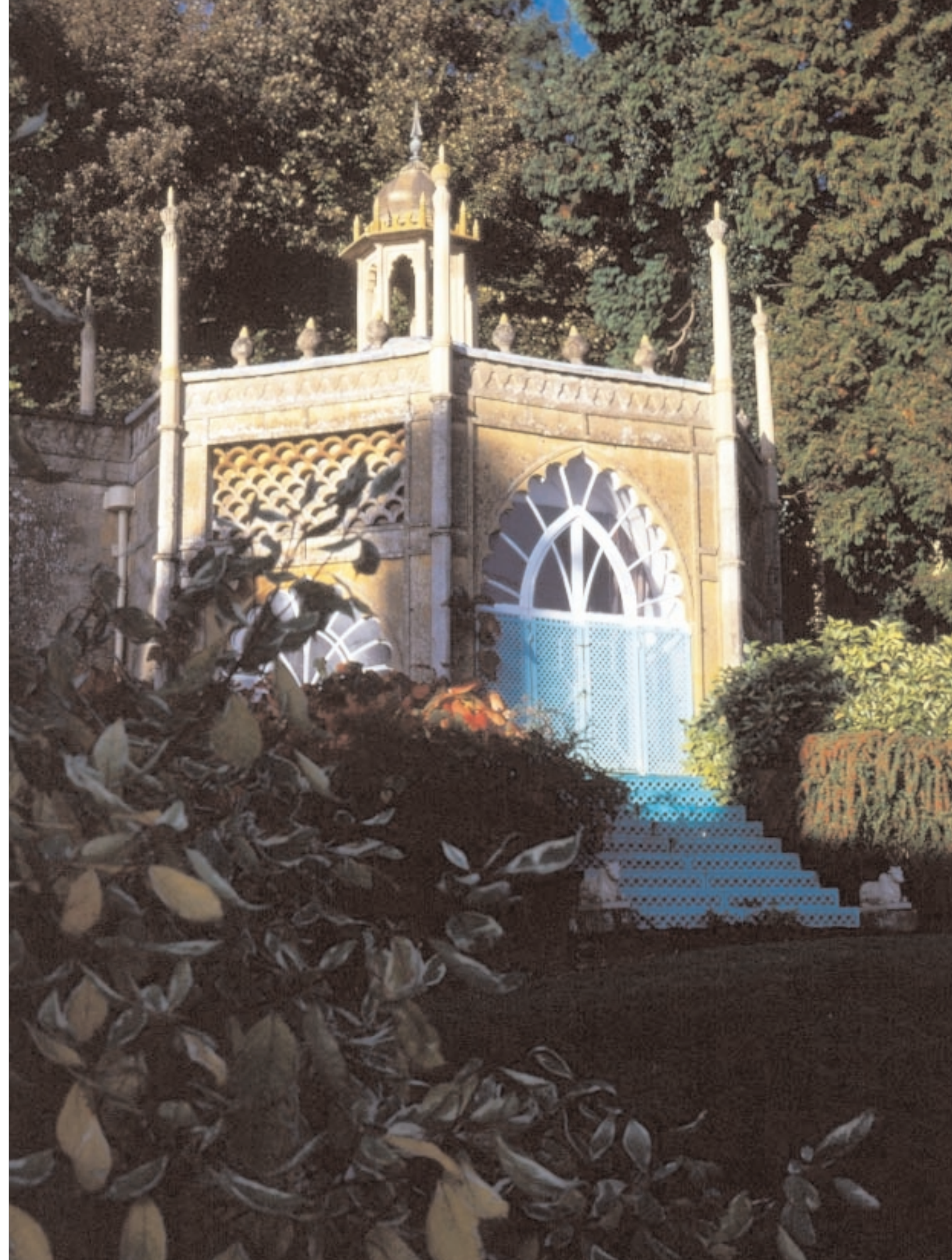
Elephanta caves. It is set with Brahmin bulls, weathered and worn, recast in bronze from Coade stone originals, dated 1814.

The bridge spans a streamside garden below, suggesting a gaping chasm. This is the so-called Thornery to the north, a narrow dell laid out with the sure artist's eye of Thomas Daniell. The Hindu sun goddess Souriya in Coade stone presides on her throne, standing in for Greek Apollo.

Cyril and Elizabeth Kleinwort bought the estate in 1944. The garden in front of the orangery was never intended to be Indian. Elizabeth Kleinwort laid out the present Moghul paradise garden from 1965, with the advice of Graham Stuart Thomas.

The orangery extends like a scimitar arm, snuggling into the hillside. The end pavilion was conceived as an aviary. The cypresses to the Moghul paradise garden were planted by Graham Stuart-Thomas after 1968.

The octagonal north pavilion once housed the bedroom apartments of the owner, Sir Charles Cockerell.



The orangery sweeps to the south of the house, a low enfolding arm set into the hillside in a filigree of stone, cast iron and glass. It has been refaced recently (twice) in reconstituted stone. The end pavilion was conceived as an aviary. There was another curving arcade to match on the north side, linking to Sir Charles Cockerell's tented bedroom in the far pavilion, an eastern pomp of which the spear supports survive, transformed into a four-poster bed in the main house.

The house is now lived in by Sir Cyril's grandson, Edward Peake, and his wife, Camilla, and their young family.

TO CUT



Dodington, Gloucestershire

Dodington is one of the last of the great Neo-Classical houses in England, grand and porticoed like a temple, with Corinthian columns. In style it is Classically classically eclectic, hovering somewhere between Roman and Greek, with Roman capitals and Greek proportions. There is a Picturesque counterpoint to the rigidity and earnestness of Neo-Classicism in the arrangements of façades, the relaxed, asymmetrical placing of conservatory and domed church, and the landscape setting itself.

It is a monument to wealth, built for a rich West Indian sugar planter, Christopher Bethel Codrington, on the profits of his estates (and, more horrifically, slave breeding and trading) in Barbuda and Antigua. The architect was James Wyatt, the date c.1810. Alexander Pope had admired the park around the old Tudor manor house, which stood on the site, for its 'situation romantic' in 1728. 'Capability' Brown landscaped it

again in 1764, opening up the vistas, and providing two lakes and bridges, Gothick seats, aqueducts and a cascade building, and the drama of hanging beech woods. Wyatt, Adam's greatest and most successful rival, prepared his design in 1796 for a house commensurate with its setting, to a square plan set around the top-lit central stairway, of Imperial grandeur.

At the entrance of the mile-long drive from the Bath road there is a drum-shaped lodge like a Tuscan Bramante's *tempietto*, and an immaculate semicircular screen of railings, announcing the splendour yet to come. The entrance front of the great house in the valley below is dominated by a colossal

The broad hexastyle portico to the west front, Roman and Greek, like a temple; a search for a Neo-Classical version of the Picturesque, by James Wyatt, c.1810

Inside, the entrance hall is sumptuously fitted out with columns of porphyry scagliola, compartment ceilings, gilded ornament, inlaid brass and marble floors.





portico, six columns wide, beneath a Greek-style pediment, to form a *porte-cochère*, drawn (almost) from side to side across the façade.

Within, the interiors are just as impressive. There is plasterwork, *scagliola*, chimneypieces, doors in inlaid mahogany, gasoliers, columns galore – all supplied by the best masters – and Adamesque decorative schemes, with fine fittings to match. The entrance hall has screens with columns of porphyry *scagliola* at either end and, beyond the screens, a coved and coffered ceiling set with trophies. The crowning glory is the central staircase, lighter, and one of Wyatt's most majestic. The ironwork to the balustrades is earlier and more delicate: a Rococo creation of the 1760s removed from Fonthill Splendens, the house of another sugar magnate, Alderman Beckford, where Wyatt was working on a Gothick fantasy to replace it for 'England's wealthiest son', William Beckford. Over half the floor area is given over to staircases, landings, corridors and circulation space.

A wing with accommodation for sixty servants was demolished in 1932. Sir Simon Codrington (the 3rd Baronet of the second creation and a brother officer of my father's) broke up the estate 1980–84, and moved out with a few family heirlooms to a nearby bungalow, when the Dodington was closed to the public. The house – which was said to have 51 bedrooms, 40 bathrooms and ten huge reception rooms – was 'hoovered up' in 2003 by the industrial inventor and vacuum cleaner mogul, James Dyson. He has erected a huge circular pool in the entrance court, reflecting Wyatt's noble portico.

From the south east, the austere Classical façades lack coherence: bow windows to the east, recessed columns in antis to the south

The top-lit great staircase with its Rococo ironwork of the 1760s is earlier than the house, having been 'appropriated' from Alderman Beckford's Fonthill Splendens, where Wyatt was also engaged.





Westonbirt, Gloucestershire

Westonbirt is the most ambitious nineteenth-century house in the Cotswolds, in a Jacobethan Revival style based on Wollaton Hall, by Robert Smythson, in Nottinghamshire. It was designed by Lewis Vulliamy after 1865, on the scale of a palace, to replace an adequate house near the site which had stood just forty years. He incorporated all the latest technology, of gas lighting, early central heating, hot water, ironwork. He also removed the village, and built for his client a London house, Dorchester House, in Park Lane, based on the Villa Farnesina, in Rome.

His client was Robert Stayner Holford (1808–1892), MP, whose family had lived at Westonbirt from 1665 and had risen from the squirearchy into the plutocracy through their stake in the New River Company, which provided London's

water supply. He inherited the 1,000-acre estate from his father, who had pulled down the Elizabethan house, replaced it with a Neo-Tudor one in 1823, and first set out the arboretum to complement it in 1829.

The stonework everywhere is superb, excessive, luxuriant, and there are heavy-handed Mannerist references, Classical orders and unlikely juxtapositions of styles. The roofscape is a riot, which embraces French dormers, shaped gables, obelisks, ranks of octagonal chimneys, balustrades, and a tower decorated with strapwork under an ogival roof. Inside is the

The garden front, a riot of historical styles from Jacobethan and Flemish to Loire Renaissance, and on a palatial scale, by Lewis Vulliamy, 1864–74.

Renaissance grand stairway with coffered ceiling. Westonbirt housed one of the finest art collections of its time until its sale in 1927.



amazing full-height saloon, sky-lit with a gallery, leading to Renaissance reception halls, with sumptuous ceilings and introduced architectural antiques, the most extravagant of which is the hall chimneypiece, incorporating elements of a Baroque altar. The great Holford collection of paintings, including five Rembrandts, decorated the rooms. Nothing of the period could have been richer, to the point of exhausting vulgarity.

Westonbirt has a virtually untouched Italian garden to the east, enclosed by two Neo-Jacobean gazebos by Hamlin with fishscale domes, which like the garden are earlier than the present house (1843). Other features, include a pergola, orangery, Pulhamite rockery and lake, and a giant conservatory.

Sir George Holford succeeded, and continued his father's tradition of opulence, maintaining 27 orchid houses and entertaining King Edward VII and then Queen Mary. But by 1927, Westonbirt was too large to live in or maintain. The incomparable picture collection was dispersed for £572,377 and the house became a girls' school, which has flourished since. Though the resident pupils, circumspect as to the architecture, claim the house would be a perfect location for a horror film.

Westonbirt is famous today for its arboretum, one of the best anywhere, originally 114 acres and now extending to 600 acres, which stands on the north side of the road, owned and managed since 1956 by the Forestry Commission and its successor bodies. The National Arboretum is open to the public.



The Italian garden with ogival Jacobean and Moorish pavilions of 1843 surviving from the earlier house and garden.

Reflection of ranks of chimneys in the pool garden. The famous tree collection was started by R. S. Holford in 1829.





Woodchester Park, Gloucestershire

Woodchester Park is the domestic masterpiece of the Gothic Revival, perhaps the most absolute of all Victorian country houses. Every element – the roofs and floors, the staircases, bath, gutters and downpipes – is built of stone of matchless quality, creating a learned anthology of neo-medieval craftsmanship. Its ideal is an uneasy anachronism, built four centuries after the Middle Ages, in the industrialised Stroud valleys, one of the first industrial landscapes in the world. It is an architectural anomaly, forcefully melding Northern French Gothic and Cotswold Tudor, incomplete, and long unknown and forgotten – until its rescue in the late twentieth century.

The house is set in the deep hollow of a medieval park, acquired by the Huntley family in 1564. Sir Robert Ducie bought the estate in 1631, and his successors built a Georgian house called Spring Park more or less on the site of the present Woodchester Park in the 1740s, which was later remodelled by J. A. Repton. The place was ready to receive George III in 1788.

In 1845 the estate was bought by William Leigh (1802–1873), from Little Aston Hall, Staffordshire, whose family had prospered in Liverpool merchanting and in land speculation in Australia. Leigh had converted to Catholicism under the Oxford Movement, and was intent on living a life of monastic austerity with his family, reclusive, pious and pure. He set about creating a house which expressed such ideals, and sought the advice of the great A. W. N. Pugin, the founding genius of the Gothic, or 'pointed', Revival. He recommended pulling down the old eighteenth-century house and prepared a design (which survives), but begged to bow out of the project. When Pugin died in 1852, Leigh transferred the commission to Charles Hansom, a Catholic architect from Bristol who had already built a monastery for Leigh at the eastern edge of the estate.

South front in Cotswold Tudor manorial. The mansion, inhabited only by bats, lies brooding in a deep valley near Stroud.

Gargoyle of a roaring beast; everything is built of stone, down to the rainwater goods and bathtub.



About 1860, the project was taken over by Charles Hansom's assistant, an unknown twenty-one year-old enthusiast for the Gothic named Benjamin Joseph Bucknall (1833–1895), son of an accountant in the Stroud valleys. Bucknall was the translator, friend and chief English disciple of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, the French architect, restorer of medieval buildings, and theorist.

Woodchester remains Bucknall's masterpiece, a powerful and original amalgam of his passions for the spirituality of French rational Gothic and the romance of Cotswold vernacular. The hieratic chapel is the *tour de force*, with a riot of Rayonnant late Gothic tracery to the rose window, tierceron vaulting, and an elevated squire's gallery, making it a monastery-mansion, like a country gentleman's Escorial. Everywhere Northern Gothic detail is deployed to demonstrate a system of building in stone, where the constructional principles are made manifest, carefully studied from originals: fan-vaulted ceilings to all the main rooms and corridors, bosses and buttresses, gargoyles in the form of fantastic attenuated leopards, ravens and nocturnal owls. All is set round a crepuscular courtyard overlooked by a louvred clock-tower which soars above, with the date 1852, and the motto: *'In sapientia ambulate tempus redimentes'*.

Woodchester is one of the great unfinished symphonies of architectural history. For some unknown reason, the clock stopped and all work was suspended suddenly about 1868, the ladders and scaffolding and form-work left *in situ* as if the workmen had knocked off for lunch one summer afternoon. Bucknall retired young to Algeria, an exhausted genius. William Leigh, cursed by the deaths of his daughters (and a son), died in 1873, and his sole remaining heir, known as 'Squire' Leigh, had not the will, nor probably the money, to carry on. The building, inconvenient, impracticable, and eternally damp, was left a roofed shell, hollowed into the cold north slope of the hills. From the outside, at any rate, it looks deceptively complete. Only the drawing room, lierne-vaulted in stone with fifty bosses, was made ready for a visit by Cardinal Vaughan in 1894. For a hundred years Woodchester was lost hopelessly to history in its deep wooded valley, where the sunlight rarely penetrated; abandoned, re-absorbed by its landscape, until it became the roosting place of bats and the stuff of local ghost legends.

The Leigh family held the estate until 1938, the year Evelyn Waugh gave a lecture there. The 'Mansion', as it was known by the villagers, survived, just, into the age of conservation. It was first brought to the notice of the architectural public when

The approach from the south east, where the chapel is seen in the centre in Rayonante French Gothic, with the clock tower behind.



David Verey, the local historian, published his article in *Country Life* on 6 February 1969. He concluded that Woodchester is 'one of the greatest achievements of nineteenth-century domestic architecture in England'.

The precarious condition of the house began to excite increasing concern. In 1989 the local council bought it and then leased it to The Woodchester Mansion Trust, a buildings restoration trust formed in the nick of time. The aim was to restore the house to its 'profound state of abandonment' and thereby encourage training in the skills of stone masonry and building crafts. The National Trust acquired the enviroing parkland and 'lost' garden in 1994. The bats are protected in their home, and visitors are surprised to see them fly in and out of the attic windows unmolested, as they have done for 130 years.

TO CUT