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# GOTHS AND VANDALS: RESTORING HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN GEORGIAN HEREFORDSHIRE

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*This is the second part of a study of attitudes to Gothic architecture in eighteenth-century Herefordshire, the first half of which appeared in last year's Journal. It focuses on the rebuilding of two important buildings – the Market Hall in Hereford and Kentchurch Court – and throws new light on the activities of two architects who carried out important work in the county, Thomas Farnolls Pritchard and John Nash.*

The earlier part of this paper pursued artisan attitudes to Gothic within the precincts of Hereford Cathedral<sup>1</sup>. Here were to be found craftsmen who could replicate the style and detail necessary to maintain a Gothic cathedral. Guided in 1735 by Browne Willis and Francis Smith of Warwick, they repaired and strengthened the west window of the Cathedral and persuaded the Dean and Chapter to put aside a cast iron structure, designed to replace the original fifteenth-century tracery. During the later-eighteenth century the cathedral was watched over by its first professional surveyor of the fabric, a local monumental mason/architect, called Thomas Symonds. His skill in propping up the ailing west tower of the Cathedral recommended him to Richard Payne Knight who employed him to supervise the construction of his precocious 'castle' at Downton between 1772–6.<sup>2</sup> It was argued that Knight's desire to produce an original building, neither Gothic or classical, in the conventional sense, persuaded him to reject the services of a professional metropolitan architect and instead employ a band of local craftsmen led by Symonds whose life-work had principally consisted

in preserving a cathedral with its Gothic shell and Romanesque heart. In this way Knight sought to ensure that his new 'castle' would not be mistaken for a piece of conventional Gothic revivalism. In this he was generally successful, for, as Richard Colt Hoare pointed out in 1799, Downton 'was neither an ancient castle nor a modern house'. The role of Thomas Symonds in the creation of Downton was eclipsed by his failure to save Hereford Cathedral from collapse in 1786, and only a sketch for a new Bridewell on the Castle Green at Hereford, dated 1788, suggests that, had Symonds lived longer, he may have revealed more of the lessons he had learnt at Downton, producing other buildings in the picturesque Gothic style.

## THOMAS FARNOLLS PRITCHARD AND THE RESTORATION OF THE HEREFORD MARKET HALL

There was one other iconic building in Georgian Hereford against which the Gothic sensibilities of artisan craftsmen can be measured. This was the Hereford Market Hall, described by Nikolaus Pevsner one hundred years after its demolition as 'the most fantastic black and white building imaginable'.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of surviving municipal records, even the date of its construction has been shrouded in mystery, but recent research suggests that it was built between 1574–6.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it dates from the first half of Elizabeth's reign and was thoroughly Gothic in structure and ornamentation. Fortunately, from the



Fig.1. The Hereford Market Hall – surviving column with leaf capital, Holmer Hall, Hereford.

*David Whitehead.*

late seventeenth century until its demolition in 1861 it was frequently illustrated and some notable fragments still survive in the countryside around the city, integrated into a Victorian aviary, a barn and a porch. (Fig. 1) The fragments show that the twenty-seven columns that supported the structure were square in section with attached half shafts on each face. Some of the columns have simple ring mouldings as capitals, others have the addition of stiff-leaf foliage sprouting beneath. The spandrels, which also survive, have carved leaf work, each with a quatrifoil containing a shield. Elsewhere there were heavily moulded ceiling beams, with brackets enriched with further leaves. The external shields were presumably

painted with the arms of the local gentry, as its principal use until the nineteenth century was as a shire hall. The interior, we learn, was richly painted, especially on the upper floor with representations of biblical scenes and various devices indicating the city trading companies who met here. In profile the building was three storeys high and multi-gabled. At the corners there were crenellated oriels with spires to complement the larger spire placed on the roof at the west end. Not a breath of the Renaissance was visible; it was a late arrival but nevertheless an honorary member of the Gothic fraternity.<sup>5</sup>

During the first century of its existence, the building is mentioned in passing and its upkeep seems to have been in the hands of the local magistrates. Between 1640–43 it was maintained by the High Steward of the city, Viscount Scudamore of Holme Lacy who paid £20 per year to a Mr Manfield for its upkeep.<sup>6</sup> After the Restoration responsibility for repairs was shared by the magistrates and the City Council. In c.1680 the building was noticed by Thomas Dingley who described it as a ‘fair timber structure’ and provides the first sketch of its appearance, together with details of ‘the proper verses of scripture and devices’ painted in the ‘uppermost part of the building for the city craft corporations’. (Fig. 2) Unselfconsciously, Dingley laments the loss of ‘Merry England’ – an age of craft guilds and community religion. His view from the west shows a clock face above the central columns and beneath it a long seventeen-light projecting window on the first floor.<sup>7</sup> This had disappeared when the Town Hall appears again on Isaac Taylor’s *Map of Hereford City* (1757). (Fig. 3) The clock now has a classical setting and is flanked by sash windows with semi-circular heads. Four similar windows below have replaced the long oriel. The chamberlain’s accounts suggest that this work, costing £220, was carried out in 1749. The spire on the roof has also been replaced by a lantern and cupola whilst the little castellated oriels at the corners have been replaced with low-pitched roofs.<sup>8</sup>

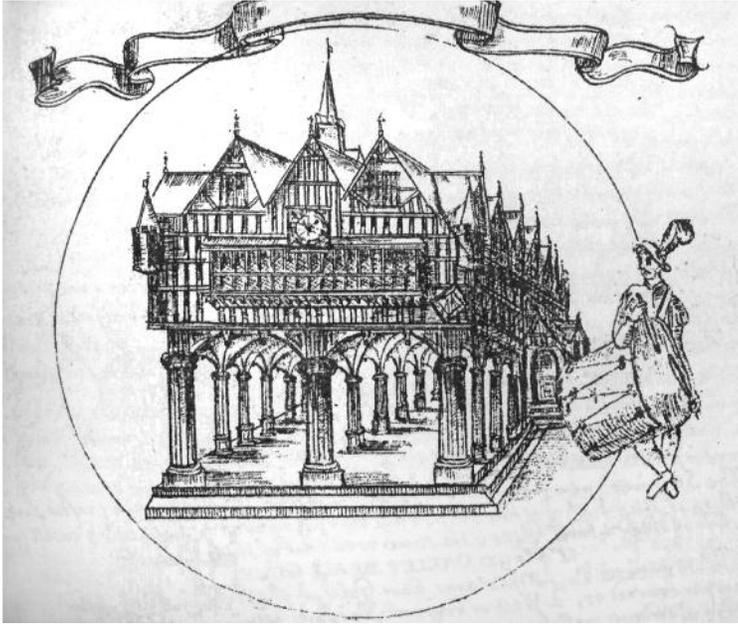


Fig. 2. The Market Hall in 1684, from Thomas Dingley's *History from Marble*.

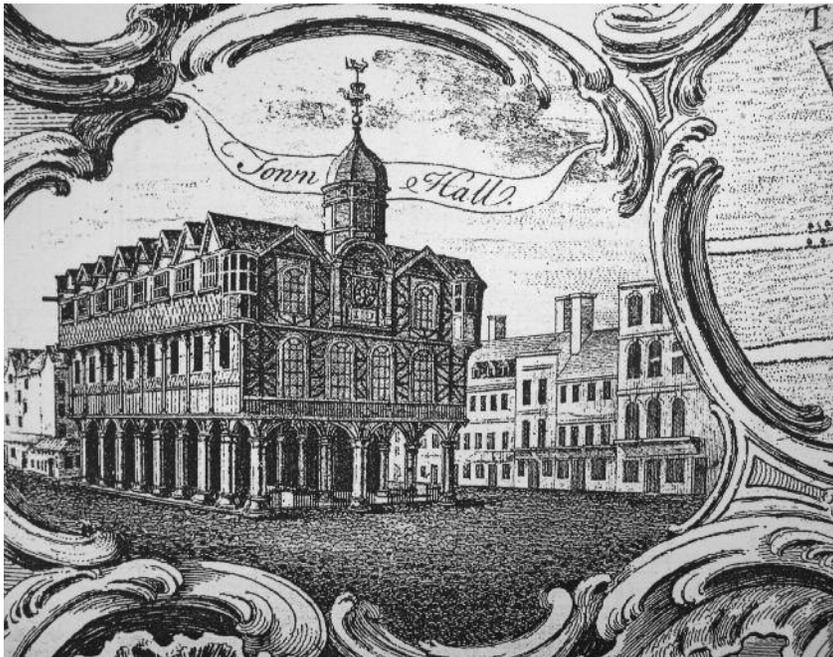


Fig. 3. The Market Hall in 1787, from Isaac Taylor's *Map of Hereford City*.

The presence of the Market Hall on Taylor's plan suggests that in some quarters the building was admired. Apart from representing comital government in Herefordshire, its antiquity was highlighted by association with other Gothic buildings marked on the map. In the adjoining cartouches were the three surviving medieval churches, the demolished Romanesque chapel next to the bishop's palace, two medieval crosses and three views of the cathedral. Indeed, it seems that an Elizabethan building dating from the first age of English imperialism had been assimilated into the local pantheon of treasured edifices.<sup>9</sup> Taylor's maps of the West Midlands, designed for the country house library, are especially replete with antiquarian references e.g. coats of arms, castles, churches and other ancient monuments and it is somewhat ironical that the Market Hall should be admitted to such illustrious company when it was about to be deflowered. The gentry who sat in the building and adjudicated upon its future were the very ones who subscribed to Taylor's maps.<sup>10</sup>

Although minor repairs and alterations to the Market Hall were constantly being carried out, it was only in 1770 that the need for more fundamental work became apparent. The unstable condition of the hall was brought to the attention of the county magistrates at the Easter Session by Francis Thomas, a prominent city carpenter, frequently associated with Thomas Symonds.<sup>11</sup> Thomas's memorandum 'Account of Work necessary to be done to putting the Town Hall in Substantial Repair' identifies the problem and suggests a radical solution. A number of the supporting columns had sunk, which created lateral tension in the building and was pulling apart the cross beams in the lower floor. This in turn caused the west front to slump, dragging the sash windows out of alignment. Thomas suggested that the roof and the upper floor of the building should be removed, reducing the building to a single storey. His estimate for the work was £260. The magistrates accepted his solution as long as the city authorities

agreed to pay half the cost and a sub-committee was established to supervise the project, which also had the authority to consult with 'any surveyor or Principal Workman'. They apparently knew just the person – Thomas Farnolls Pritchard of Shrewsbury (1723–77).

Pritchard was at the apogee of his career, which had started in the early 1740s. He had recently been working at Croft Castle for Thomas Johnes senior (1765), at Gaines, near Bromyard for John Freeman (1765–6), and nearby at Brockhampton House for Bartholomew Barnaby (c.1764). He was probably already known to Richard Payne Knight, who called upon him in 1772 to survey the site for Downton Castle. There are other more tenuous links with Herefordshire seats and families, which suggest that Pritchard would have been well known by some of the most prominent Herefordshire justices.<sup>12</sup> He was also an ideal candidate for the job. He was a carpenter/joiner by trade, and few other Midland craftsmen at this date could match his experience. In a sense he had taken over the western half of Francis Smith's empire and was especially skilled in adapting ancient fabric for modern living. At Croft he embraced the Middle Ages with gusto, adding considerably to the Gothic atmosphere of a castle, which had been virtually rebuilt after the Civil War. On the east front a pair of canted bays with Gothic windows on each floor echoed the original corner towers and flanked a new entrance under a sweeping ogee arch. A comprehensive system of battlements was imposed upon the roofline, the crenels rising up gable ends with gay abandon. (Fig. 4) Inside, the ogee arch is ubiquitous in the Gothic plasterwork, although classical and rococo motives are equally evident. Here was a craftsman with, it seemed, some sympathy for the gothic. He regularly worked on institutional buildings, including churches and was familiar with the products of the Renaissance e.g. Shipton Hall, Salop. (c.1585), Conover Hall, Salop. (1598), and Bitterley Court, Salop. (c.1600–20). At Ludford House, Salop., where there were medieval and Tudor

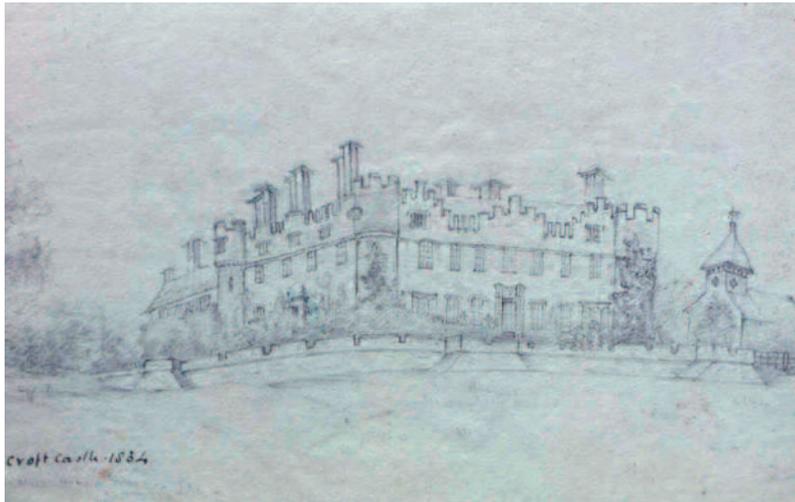


Fig. 4 A pencil sketch of Croft Castle in 1834 with full Gothic battlements.  
*Hereford City Library.*

elements, Pritchard’s biographer suggests that his work ‘illustrates how fashionable updating could be combined with the retention of older fabric and demonstrates Pritchard’s skill in blending old and new...creating a Gothick interior in keeping with the history of the building’. He was, she believes, ‘an architect capable of combining originality with an unusual respect for the past’. As at Croft, a key weapon in Pritchard’s armoury was the pretty plasterwork provided by John Nelson and John van der Hagen, which was pure Batty Langley, and seems from the Washington *Drawing Book* to have been very popular with the marcher gentry. Pritchard thus had all the right credentials, as well as the sensibility, to appreciate one of the finest late Gothic buildings in his region.<sup>13</sup>

Pritchard’s report is dated 19 May 1770. He acknowledges ‘That it is a very Antient Building compos’d of Oak Timber, and Lath and Plaister work fill’d in between them’. His diagnosis, expressed in five short paragraphs, is explicit and pointed. ‘Two of the pillars are Shrunk down’, pulling the other pillars and walls above out of

vertical. In the court room on the first floor ‘the Beams and Binding Joists and Braces [are] being torn away from their Mortices’. Above, the ‘Timber Framing of the Upper Storey was in a dangerous state’, beams were broken and not capable of holding the roof. He suggests that once the roof is taken off, the pillars should be examined and raised upon ‘a good stone Basement’. Under the courtroom the beams should be tied to the pillars with ‘Long Iron Cramps’. The roof should be completely rebuilt with a central lead-lined gutter to convey water to the down pipes. At the west end the clock and cupola should be retained but ‘made proportional by shortening’, thus reducing the amount of lead-work. The weight of the roof should also be reduced by using ‘Thin [s]tone Slates’.<sup>14</sup>

All of this represents remedial work, and without pre-knowledge of the outcome would suggest a sympathetic, even preservationist, approach. Nowhere in the report does Pritchard refer to the removal of the upper storey of the building, notwithstanding his dire prognostications about its ‘dangerous state’. He simply concludes his survey by stating ‘consequently

it was truly right to take down the present roof, and constitute a more substantial one in its place'. The roof was already off and it seems that the removal of the upper floor had already been agreed by the 'Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens' in a set of 'Articles' agreed with Francis Thomas, dated 12 May 1770 – a week before Pritchard did his survey. In the Articles it is stated categorically that 'it is intended that the Upper Rooms over the said Hall shall be entirely taken away and the said Roof lowered down as near as maybe to the cieling (*sic*) of the said Hall'. Enclosed with the Articles are two competent sketches signed by Francis Thomas and witnessed by the Town Clerk, Walter Moseley, of a side elevation, nine columns in length with the surviving floor with gables above, and the west elevation with clock and lantern. (Fig. 5) It seems likely that Pritchard would have been informed of this decision and yet there is no specific reference to it in his report, although the shortening of the cupola suggests he was anticipating the loss of height. His silence could, perhaps, be read as a sign of disapproval.

Pritchard was consulted as a structural engineer and, given the period and the context, it is out of place to expect any aesthetic judgement in his report. Had his recommendations been carried out without the loss of the upper floor, the building would survive to be admired and celebrated by the coming generation of Gothicists. Richard Payne Knight's espousal of picturesque associationism would have found much to admire in such a quirky edifice. However, in one respect Pritchard condemned the hall to future ostracism. He recommended that a new projecting wooden cornice should be constructed 'all round the Building at the Dripping Eaves of the Roof to convey the wet from the Timber Walls, which may be fill'd in and rough Casted'. Thus, in one sentence the intricacy and variety of the building, the interplay of vertical and horizontal timbers with infilling of lozenge work, providing a backdrop for ranges of mullion windows, was to be banished. Indeed, the picturesque qualities, which

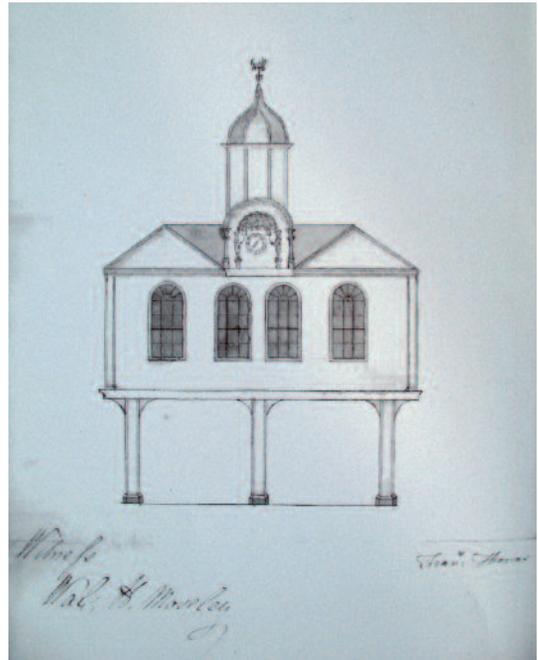


Fig. 5. The reduced west elevation of the Market Hall, drawn by Francis Thomas, 1770.  
*Hereford Record Office.*

even in the absence of an upper storey could have saved the building from ignominy and eventual demolition, were lost. Pritchard, it seems had no real sympathy for authentic gothic surface detail unless it was derived from Batty Langley.

The Town Hall lost its upper storey and was fenestrated throughout with sash windows, which looked blindly out of a stuccoed façade. (Fig. 6) It remained upright on its twenty-seven columns, now supported by new plinths and a paved apron. Amidst this forest of columns something of the old magic persisted. Ironically, in the *Washington Drawing Book* Pritchard provides a sketch of a 'gothick' pillar for Mr Freeman at Gaines, near Bromyard. With its attached half shafts and leaf capital, it is essentially a representation of those Tudor columns supporting the Town Hall.



Fig. 6. A hand coloured early-nineteenth century print of the Hereford Market Hall. *Hereford City Library*.

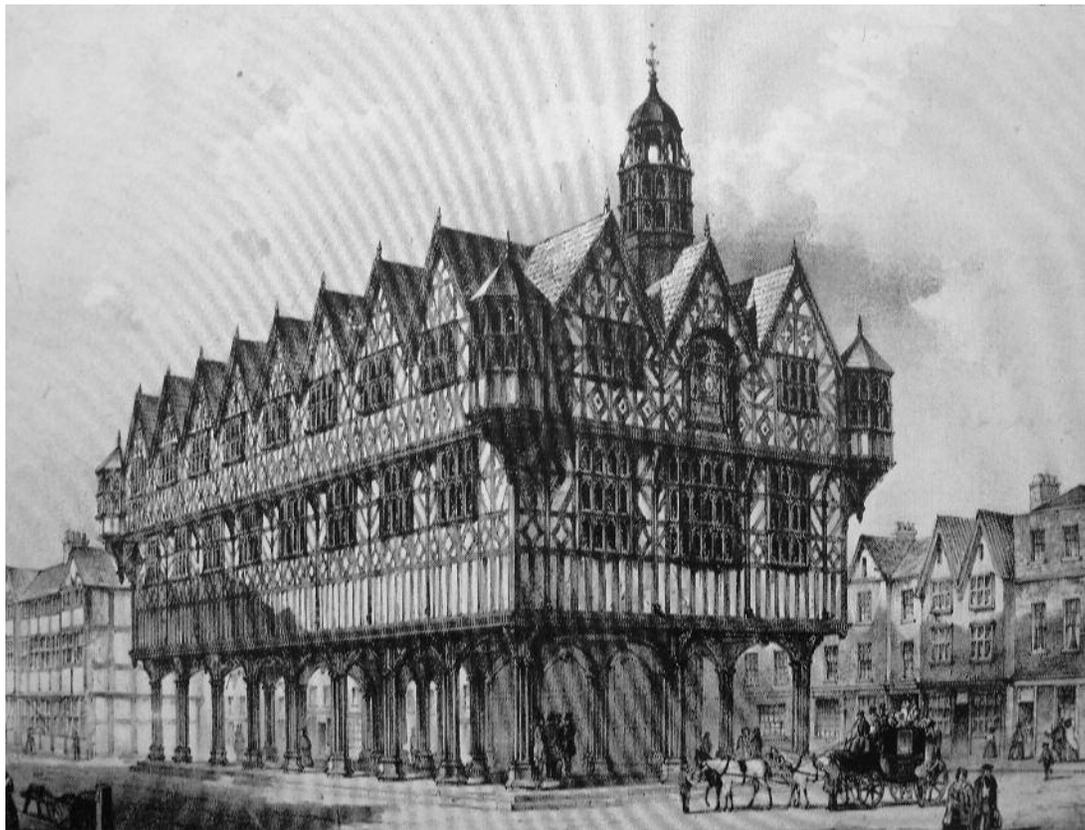


Fig. 7. John Clayton's sketch for the reconstructed Market Hall, 1846, from the *Collections of Ancient Timber Edifices of England*.

Of course, similar columns are illustrated by Langley and it is just possible that Pritchard noticed this and applauded their preservation.<sup>15</sup>

It was predictable that before long there would be public expressions of nostalgia for the old hall. Twenty-five years later, John Price (1772–1806), a young peripatetic schoolmaster from Leominster, with an eye for the picturesque, commented in Hereford's first history that the Market Hall 'was sometime since, a very handsome structure. But elegance has been sacrificed to utility. It has been reduced in its height, and its beauty deformed.... Before this alteration took place, the building was considered as a very curious piece of workmanship'.<sup>16</sup>

Significantly, Price was an admirer of the Leominster Market Hall, which was painted by John Varley and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1802 – a public humiliation for Hereford, at least in the eyes of the cognoscenti who may have noticed these matters.<sup>17</sup> Price heightened the loss by associating the Hereford building with the legendary John Abel 'carpenter to Charles I'. *The Hereford Guide* (1806) is less forthright in its defence but similarly laments 'it was esteemed a very handsome structure ... but it has been reduced in height, and its beauty destroyed'.<sup>18</sup> And so it went on throughout the early 19th century. In 1837 the much-eulogised artist George Robert Lewis (1782–1871), whose drawings of Kilpeck and the

Shobdon Arch celebrated the Herefordshire Romanesque, produced a view of High Town with the old Market Hall *in situ*, basing his reconstruction on Taylor's vignette of 1757. The sketch was quickly reproduced by a local bookseller, W.H. Vale, and went through several editions. Further detailed drawings of the pillars appeared in *The Civil Engineer and Architects Journal* for 1838 and in 1846 the architect John Clayton gave the reconstructed Market Hall star billing in his *Collection of Ancient Timber Edifices of England* – a veritable catalogue of Georgian vandalism.<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 7) Clayton was eventually to be the architect of the new Hereford Butter Market (1861), on the north side of High Town, but clearly hoped in 1846 that his drawing would stimulate public interest in the mutilated Market Hall and a call for its reconstruction. But the cause was hopeless, principally because public imagination could not associate the truncated and drab structure, which inconvenienced through traffic in High Town, with Clayton's fabulous reincarnation. It was demolished in 1861.

The failure of the Herefordshire magistrates and their eminent craftsmen, Pritchard and Thomas, to recognise the Gothic and picturesque qualities of the Old Market Hall, suggests that the preservationist spirit, detectable among the artisans working round the corner at Hereford Cathedral, was not transferable to other civic buildings of Gothic character in Hereford. Perhaps we can detect here



Fig. 8. Kentchurch Court as Sarah Westcombe would have known it: late-eighteenth-century sketch. *Private collection.*

the modern aversion, which exists among our democratic representatives, to reject patch and mend solutions when it comes to contemporary civic buildings. Significantly, Richard Payne Knight did not employ Pritchard, other than to survey the site, when he began to build Downton Castle in 1772.

#### ANTHONY KECK, JOHN NASH AND KENTCHURCH COURT

In 1757 Sarah Westcombe, an heiress, recently married to John Scudamore of Rowstone, west Herefordshire, was taken by her husband to see the family seat of Kentchurch Court. The house had been unoccupied since *c.* 1740, and Sarah, a correspondent of Samuel Richardson, described how her London friends led her to believe Kentchurch was 'a sad forlorn dismal place, fit only to be inhabited by hobgoblins'. They probably also informed her that the last occupier of the house, William, her husband's cousin, had been declared a lunatic in 1736. The scene was set for Sarah to enjoy a real gothic experience.

Kentchurch was indeed the epitome of the medieval manor house (Fig. 8). It lay sequestered in a small valley beside a tributary of the river Monnow and was overlooked to the east by the bare slopes of Garway Hill. The principal range of the house still contained a medieval hall, lit by tall fourteenth-century windows, and was entered via a porch and screens passage. At the dais end of the hall there was an attached solar tower, with a steeply pitched helm. It was a tower house, exceptional in Herefordshire, which would not have looked out of place in Northumberland. Sarah Westcombe was rather pleased with the 'old and irregular' house and found several good rooms 'filled up, and furnished in the modern taste'. These were probably found at either end of the hall in the new wings added by Ambrose Scudamore (1657–1700) in the late-seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup>



Fig. 9. Kentchurch Court, sketched by James Wathen, August 1794, just before Nash 'altered and spoiled' it.  
*Hereford City Library.*

Notwithstanding the 'good rooms ... in the modern taste', Sarah and her husband were soon back at Newendon House, Enfield, in Middlesex, despite the fact that John became the MP for the city of Hereford in 1764. They lived well and were soon approaching bankruptcy. A retreat to Herefordshire made good sense, and in April 1773 Anthony Keck of Kings Stanley in Gloucestershire produced a plan of alterations at Kentchurch to be undertaken by Francis Thomas, the Hereford carpenter/builder who had just completed his 'makeover' of the Market Hall. Basically, Keck was asked to divide the hall into a parlour, dining room and vestibule with chambers above. The gothic windows were to be ripped out and replaced with sashes and the roof was to be hipped. Thomas promised to complete the work by Christmas for £445, excluding materials, which were to be provided by Scudamore. The rooms created in 1773, with their smart decorations, still exist today, but there is little evidence that anything of the medieval fabric of the hall survives and to the rear of the house Keck's raw external brickwork is still in evidence.<sup>21</sup>

Keck was a good provincial architect who absorbed and digested the canons of late eighteenth-century neo-classicism and kept an eye on his metropolitan contemporaries like Robert Adam, Robert Taylor and James Wyatt. There is no evidence that he had any sympathy with Gothic, either surviving or revived. He modernised several medieval houses, such as Flaxley Abbey and Forthampton Court (Gloucestershire), and demolished others e.g. Moccas Court, Herefordshire.<sup>22</sup> He was the first on the scene after the collapse of Hereford Cathedral in 1786, and was paid an eight guinea fee, presumably for a remedial scheme to patch up the gaping hole left in the west end of the nave.<sup>23</sup> Externally, he left Kentchurch still apparently rambling, superficially Gothic and picturesque, especially when viewed from the north-west. A local artist, James Wathen, produced two sketches in 1786 and 1795, which focus upon the tower with its irregular fenestration, pyramidal roof, and below, on the backside of the house, a miscellany of gables and chimneys, all in a variety of materials.<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 9)

John Scudamore must have begun to appreciate that he had something special in Kentchurch Court. His neighbours, it seems, began to tell him so, albeit his son-in-law, James Hereford of Sufton Court, near Hereford, set a bad example. In 1788 he had moved from his medieval house at Old Sufton to a new mansion on the adjoining hill, designed by either Keck or James Wyatt. Seven years later Humphry Repton arrived to enhance its setting, just at the moment when his assumed profession of 'landscape gardener' was under attack from Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price. He used the Sufton Red Book to defend his skills. On the other side of Hereford, John Matthews of Belmont, who was also employing Wyatt and Repton, rushed into print to defend the 'ready made taste' offered by professional landscapers like Repton. Knight and Price made it clear that they disliked the whole package of eye-catching villas, like Sufton and Belmont, set in vapid lawns and dominating the surrounding countryside. To use the modern cliché, local distinctiveness in Herefordshire was being damaged by the insensitive deployment of metropolitan taste.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps John Scudamore wanted to complete Keck's transformation of his house, and although his finances were still a little fragile, he could have followed his son-in-law's path, leaving Kentchurch as a picturesque curio and building a view-catching new house on an adjoining hill. It seems, however, that like the more discriminating Herefordshire gentry he could see the points being made by the 'gentlemen professors' – Knight and Price.<sup>26</sup> At Moccas, a few miles north of Kentchurch, George Cornwall set a better example. Although he also employed Keck to demolish his medieval house and build a new villa, which Price felt had little to recommend it, and although he consulted Brown and later Repton, he ignored the advice of both and instead became his own improver in the manner recommended by the Picturesque school. Later he consulted William Sawrey Gilpin, a protégé of Price, whose painterly advice was much less prescriptive

than that of his eminent predecessors.<sup>27</sup> Significantly, Scudamore was often to be found in the company of Price and Knight, as both a magistrate and an MP. He shared the same Whig principles and sat with them – and George Cornwall – on the committee for the rebuilding of the Hereford County Gaol, where John Nash was chosen as architect in 1792.<sup>28</sup> Thus, when he aired the idea of completing the refurbishment of Kentchurch, no doubt John Nash was the name recommended by his friends, especially as his skills were underwritten and admired by both Price and Knight. Indeed, Price subsequently claimed that he taught his 'little friend Nash' the elements of picturesque architecture whilst he was constructing the Castle House at Aberystwyth. Who better to enhance and polish the Gothic character of Kentchurch?<sup>29</sup>

Nash's Gothic credentials were already fairly well established by the 1790s. He had restored St David's Cathedral, had built two or three gaols and also the Castle House for Price. Like his contemporary Wyatt he began to assemble a Gothic vocabulary, based upon observation, rather than recycling Batty Langley or Walpole. In particular, he had escaped from the tutelage of the ogee arch. At Kentchurch he encountered a picturesque multi-period building, which required a sensitive preservationist approach. It was a building in the 'mixed style', reminiscent perhaps of the house in the 'undressed park' sketched by Thomas Hearne for Knight's poem *The Landscape* (1794). However, had Nash fully absorbed the Picturesque canon, he should have left Kentchurch wind and weather proof but apparently untouched.<sup>30</sup>

It is difficult to unravel Nash's work at Kentchurch from that of the watercolourist/architect Thomas Tudor, who completed the restoration in the 1820s. Nash's work seems to have been restricted to the west end of the building, which included the tower, an almost free-standing late seventeenth-century wing with a hipped roof, and a connecting range. Before the arrival of Keck the free-standing building

probably represented the solar at the top end of the medieval hall. Nash's picturesque credentials are reflected in the treatment of this grouping. There was no attempt to unify the buildings; they remain irregular and disarticulated. It seems that Price's lessons at Aberystwyth were applied here. Secondly, as Wathen's sketches show, the roof-line was spiky and irregular, and in Price's words 'led the eye on a wanton chase'.<sup>31</sup> The chimneys, gables and sloping roofs were the key elements. Nash amplified the chimneys, developing here a leitmotif of his later cottage work. He also added a prominent turret to the tower, which was probably necessary to improve the access to its upper rooms. Thus a picturesque incident was created out of structural necessity – another principle of nineteenth-century Gothic architecture learnt from Knight. So far, so good.

Price (and perhaps, Knight) had an abhorrence of spires. 'The spire has its own peculiar beauty, though of a very inferior kind to that of the tower ... the battlemented tower admits, also, of many picturesque additions'. Thus, satisfied that his chimneys and the turret would have the desired effect, Nash adopted one of the worst solecisms of the Gothic Revival. Namely, he flattened out the roof and crenellated all the parapets, assuming presumably that all ancient houses were castles. The most distinguishing feature of medieval Kentchurch – the steep helm, rising to a spirelet on the tower – was lost. The leading model here, was of course, Downton Castle, which denies Price's dictum that the 'aim in decorating the summit [roof line] was to produce richness and variety'.<sup>32</sup> Old Kentchurch had this in quantity before Nash's alterations. On the roofline above the original solar his battlements rise up the gable over a new window in the classic Langleyesque manner. His fenestration is generally flat-headed and Tudor, and appears on many of his later buildings. For the linking range he borrowed elements of the great west window, which he had recently designed at St David's, to throw light down Keck's rear corridor. Its ecclesiastical character led it

to be christened the 'chapel' window although it only provided light for a lobby (Fig. 10). At the east end of the ensemble a pretty oriel window looks out from the first floor of the formerly hipped-rood solar wing onto the garden and Garway Hill. This was also Tudor in character and well modelled, though it replaced a genuine seventeenth-century mullioned window. On the west side of the tower the original fenestration was irregular, and much of the medieval surface detail survives here today, including a garderobe chute. It would be generous to attribute the survival of these details to the good taste of John Nash, but his employer, John Scudamore died suddenly in July 1796 and the work came to an abrupt end. Even today, Nash's all-consuming battlements come to a sudden halt on the west side of the house where he was using them to disguise Keck's brickwork.<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 11)

Nash's work at Kentchurch would have gone unnoticed but for a brief reference in Neale's *Views of Seats* (1825).<sup>34</sup> It was then, and remains today, a very secret place, concealed by a long drive. It was here, however, that the early Gothic Revival in Herefordshire comes to an end, at the same time as artisan involvement in the style ceases. At Hereford



Fig. 10. The tower and 'chapel' window at Kentchurch Court in 1976.

*David Whitehead.*



Fig. 11. Anthony Keck's heightened medieval range at Kentchurch Court (1773). New battlements were proposed in 1796 but never added.

*David Whitehead.*

Cathedral the artisan craftsmen were relearning their craft under the direction of James Wyatt, who, among other innovations, taught them to cast Gothic mouldings in plaster. Wyatt and Nash were far removed from the world of Smith, Symonds and Pritchard, and even more remote from the artisans who in the recent past had regularly propped up Gothic monuments such as the cathedral and the market hall. Their views were unimportant now.

In conclusion, we must reluctantly agree with Horace Walpole that it was impossible to get genuinely Gothic work out of workmen who had not studied the 'science' of the style. The Gothic that attracted the cognoscenti or *avant-garde* patrons in the eighteenth century was always remote from the real thing, and the craftsmen responsible for an ancient building either had little sympathy for it or could not reproduce it out of context.<sup>35</sup> We will leave the last words to our wandering artist, James Wathen, who left a collection of his sketches to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Among them was a view of Kentchurch Court on which he had written the prescient epitaph: 'It is now altered and spoiled. This view was taken 26th August 1795'.<sup>36</sup>

NOTES

- 1 D. Whitehead, 'Artisan attitudes to Gothic in Georgian Herefordshire', *Georgian Group Journal*, 17 (2009), pp. 61–76.
- 2 Subsequent to the publication of the first part of this paper, James Lawson of Shrewsbury has written to inform the author that in a letter dated 1776 in the Powis Castle Collection at the National Library of Wales (3035), Thomas Johnes of Croft Castle wrote to the agent of Lord Powis about a bridge at 'Stoke' which was 'to be built under the inspection of Symmonds (*sic*) of Hereford who surveys Knight's castle', thus confirming the role of Symonds as the executant architect at Downton Castle.
- 3 Nicholas Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 180.
- 4 John C. Eisel, 'Notes on the former Hereford Market Hall and Tolsey', *Trans. Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club (TWNFC)* 53 (2005), p. 27.
- 5 Detailed drawings, illustrations and photographs are provided by Norman Drinkwater, 'The Old Market Hall, Hereford', *TWNFC* 33 (1949), pp. 1–5. On the Gothic character of sixteenth-century market halls, see Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 42–3.
- 6 Hubert Reade, 'Some Account Books of the First Lord Scudamore and the Hereford Craft Guilds', *TWNFC* (1925), p. 123. Manfield was probably Scudamore's steward.
- 7 Thomas Dingley, *History from Marble* (Camden Society, 1867), I, p. ccxvii.
- 8 Hereford Record Office (HRO), Guildhall Records (GH), 2/53.
- 9 Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London, 1999), pp. 75–6.
- 10 The map is discussed in Brian Smith, *Herefordshire Maps 1577–1800* (Logaston, 2004), pp. 84–5, and Taylor as a mapmaker by Brian Smith, 'Isaac Taylor's map of Gloucestershire, 1777', in Joseph Betsey (ed.), *Archives and Local History in Bristol and Gloucestershire* (Bristol, 2007), pp. 89–114.
- 11 HRO, GH 2/53.
- 12 Julia Ionides, *Thomas Farnolls Pritchard of Shrewsbury* (Ludlow, 1999), pp. 87–97, 103–9, 98–101, 206–7.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 53, 87–97, 119–32, 124–7, 183–6. The Washington Album or Drawing Book belonged to Pritchard and came into the possession of the Library of the American Institute of Architects in 1926. It was discussed by John Harris in

- Architectural History* 11 (1968), pp. 1–24 and is reproduced and transcribed in Ionides as an appendix.
- 14 HRO, GH 2/53.
  - 15 Ionides, *Pritchard*, facsimile A1A54.
  - 16 John Price, *An Historical Account of the City of Hereford* (Hereford, 1796), p. 71.
  - 17 Illustrated in Andrew Wilton and Ann Lyles (eds.), *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750–1880*, Royal Academy (London, 1993), pl. 72.
  - 18 *The Hereford Guide* (Hereford, 1806), p. 38.
  - 19 Lewis’s drawing can be found in Hereford City Library (HCL), Print Collection, whilst Clayton’s reconstruction is illustrated in Drinkwater, *TWNFC* 1949, facing p. 1.
  - 20 John Cornforth, ‘Kentchurch Court, Herefordshire’, *Country Life*, 15 December 1966, p. 1633; *Royal Commission on Historic Monuments: Herefordshire* (1931), I, pp. 153–4.
  - 21 HRO, AL/40/818, 939, 1767–1830; M/26/614 (Keck’s contract).
  - 22 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (New Haven and London, 2008), pp. 569–70.
  - 23 Hereford Cathedral Archives (HCA), 7031/5 f. 241, and 5695/10.
  - 24 David Whitehead and Ron Shoesmith, *James Wathen’s Herefordshire, 1770–1820* (Logaston, 1994), unpaginated.
  - 25 David Whitehead, ‘John Nash and Humphry Repton: An Encounter in Herefordshire, 1785–98’, *TWNFC*, 47(2) (1992), pp. 210–36.
  - 26 See note 59 in *Georgian Group Journal* 17 (2009), p. 76.
  - 27 David Whitehead, *A Survey of the Historic Parks and Gardens of Herefordshire* (Hereford, 2001), pp. 269–72.
  - 28 Whitehead, *TWNFC* (1992), p. 212.
  - 29 Charles Watkins and Ben Cowell, *The Letters of Uvedale Price* (Walpole Society, 2006), p. 26. For Nash in Wales and the Price connection see Richard Suggett, *John Nash: Architect* (1995).
  - 30 John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash* (London, 1980), pp. 13–28.
  - 31 Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque* (London, 1810), II, p. 199.
  - 32 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 360–1, 223.
  - 33 Whitehead, *TWNFC* (1992), pp. 215–16.
  - 34 J.P. Neale, *Views of Seats*, 2nd ser. IV (London, 1828) – unpaginated copy in HCL Herefordshire Pamphlets XXII (19).
  - 35 Quoted in Howard Colvin, *Essays in English Architectural History* (New Haven and London, 1990), pp. 217–18.
  - 36 Letter from Jane Munrow, Senior Assistant Keeper of Paintings, Drawings and Prints in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge to Nigel Temple, in the possession of the author, dated 26 January 1995.