



THE
GEORGIAN
GROUP

Maxwell Craven, 'Particularly clever at contrivance': William Lindley and the rebuilding of Stanton Hall, Derbyshire', *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXVI, 2018, pp. 133–156

‘PARTICULARLY CLEVER AT CONTRIVANCE:’ WILLIAM LINDLEY AND THE REBUILDING OF STANTON HALL, DERBYSHIRE

MAXWELL CRAVEN

There has been a seat at Stanton-in-Peak for centuries. Indeed, the Old Hall, a mid seventeenth-century rebuild of a much earlier house, still exists, perched on a hillside overlooking Darley Dale. Stanton itself stands on a dome of millstone grit sandstone overlying lead rich strata of carboniferous limestone. Consequently, it was the extravagant financial rewards of the extraction of lead which drove the building of Stanton Hall. An extensive and hitherto unpublished correspondence between the architect, William Lindley, and the owner,

Bache Thornhill (see Appendix), throws a revealing light both on the building of this little-known house and, more generally, on the building and interior decoration of smaller gentry houses at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Thornhill family bought themselves into the estate at Stanton by taking over a series of mortgages taken out by the Bird family of Stanton Old Hall, desperately seeking funds to unwater a potentially lucrative mine. The Thornhills, of an old



Fig. 1. Drawing of c.1700 showing Stanton Hall as originally built by John Thornhill, from the south-east. (N.B.B. Davie-Thornhill)

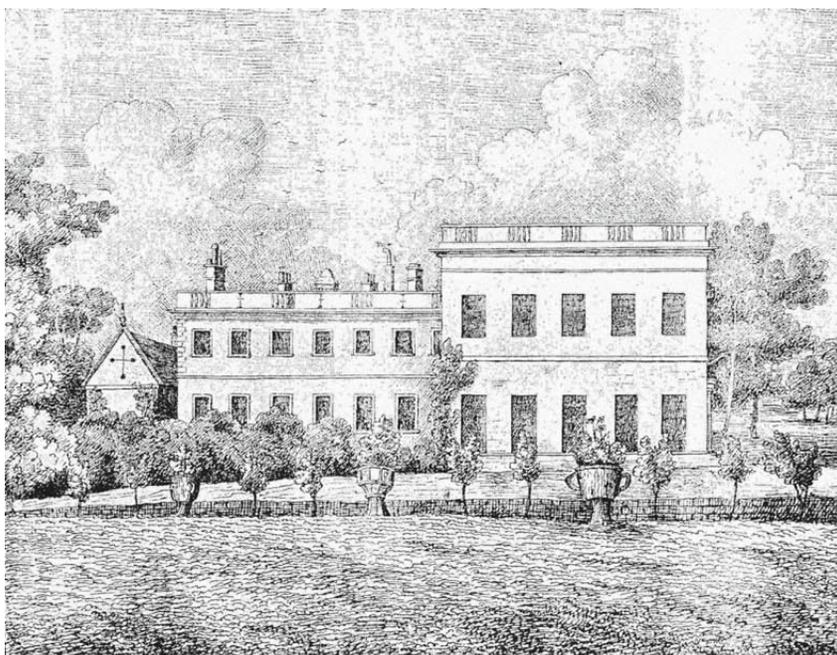


Fig. 2. Anonymous drawing of Stanton Hall from the west, c.1820.
(*N.B.B. Davie-Thornhill*)

Peak District family and unrelated to the Thornhills of Yorkshire, despite heraldic congruences, had married the heiress of William Bache. He too had come to Stanton through the lure of lead and whose father Raphael had built an irregular stone house on the edge of the village on the site now occupied by the hall in the early seventeenth century (Fig. 1). On foreclosing upon the Birds family mortgages in 1703, John Thornhill (1668–1730) managed to take control of the entire estate at Stanton and proceeded to capitalise upon it over the following years.

Thornhill built a new house to replace that of William Bache. We do not know the exact date for this, for the building records have not survived, except for a sheet of accounts running from Michaelmas 1721 to Michaelmas 1731. These are for ‘house expenses’ and total a modest £168, 4s, 0d. Moreover, the items include no less than £128, 4s, 0d worth of soft furnishings and furniture, although it

is to be regretted that the recipients of these moneys are not named, for the surviving pieces of early Georgian furniture in the present Hall (if indeed survivors from the fitting-out of the new house) suggest a maker of some quality.¹

The implication therefore, supported by the surviving architecture, is that house was probably built in the 1720s, and completed by 1731 – not therefore 1699 as has hitherto been supposed by family tradition. It consisted of a classical range of one and a half storeys set over a semi-basement (created by the fall of the ground) and of seven bays, executed in ashlar local Ashover Grit from a local quarry, with first floor quoins at the angles.² Part of the original seventeenth-century house was suffered to remain to the south end, whether out of sentiment or convenience is difficult to say. A drawing done prior to alterations made by William Pole Thornhill in the 1840s (Fig. 2) provides us with an idea of the situation



Fig. 3. Allestree Hall from the east, photographed in 2000 before the house was abandoned by the local authority (its owners). (*M. Craven*)

following the completion of this wing.³ The interior plan, however, was largely lost in later changes.

The question as to the likely architect, though, is less clear, but a possible candidate obtrudes. This is John Barker of Rowsley (1668–1727). He had become, as a result of his building activities, very prosperous, lending and investing money; nor did he eschew involvement with lead extraction enterprises, with which both his own family and the Thornhills were already heavily involved.⁴ The proximity of his home at Rowsley to Stanton, combined with the fact that from 1723 he had been appointed steward to the third Duke of Rutland, and his involvement with the building of Hopton Hall for John Thornhill’s kinsman Sir Philip Gell, all suggest John Barker as the most likely candidate as architect of Stanton Hall. Furthermore, it was through the good offices of Barker that in 1711 John Thornhill took a profitable twenty-one year lease on two smelting mills at Little

and Great Rowsley, from the Duke of Rutland, in which he was succeeded by Barker’s nephews George and Thomas.⁵

John Thornhill’s grandson, Bache Thornhill (1747–1830), thanks to judicious marriages on the part of his homonymous father, and entrepreneurial flair on that of his uncle Henry Thornhill, found himself exceedingly well off on coming of age in 1768, his father having died seven years before. He spent three decades consolidating the family estate and broadening his mining operations, before he turned his mind to building. Initially he resolved to build himself a villa near Derby, where much of his business was transacted and, in 1795 he commissioned James Wyatt to build him the present Allestree Hall (Fig. 3).⁶

Yet, even before this house was finished, he had changed his mind, and decided instead upon enlarging his house at Stanton. On 1 July 1798,

three years after having started work on Allestree Hall, Bache Thornhill received a letter from his friend Bryan Cooke (Appendix I) recommending William Lindley as architect for the remodelling of Stanton Hall.⁷ In his letter Cooke referred to Hallcross House, at Doncaster (Fig. 3), which appears to have been built around 1780 to Lindley’s designs; Lindley also made alterations to Owston Hall, Yorkshire, Cooke’s chief seat, before being called in to replace it completely in 1794–95, and at Grove Hall, Nottinghamshire, Anthony Eyre had commissioned Lindley to add lodges only four years before.⁸ Needless to say, Cooke and Eyre enjoyed close familial ties. Bryan Cooke, MP (1756–1821), was the son of Anthony Cooke of Owston by Mary, aunt of Anthony Hardolph Eyre (1757–1836) of Grove, a house built for his father by John Carr of York,⁹ and another Eyre aunt, Margaret, had in 1742 married (as his second wife) Bache Thornhill of Stanton (1698–1761), Bache Thornhill’s father. What we see here is William Lindley working his way through a close-knit nexus of related families clustered around North Derbyshire, southern Yorkshire and north-east Nottinghamshire with common ties of blood, enterprise and age.¹⁰

As Wyatt was still building for Thornhill at Allestree, an obvious question arising out of Bryan Cooke’s letter is, what happened to him? Did Wyatt fail to give satisfaction, or was he unavailable at the precise moment that Bache had his change of heart and decided to switch his attention back to Stanton again? Wyatt was certainly hard at work that summer, having just begun work on one of his finest houses, Dodington Park, Gloucestershire, for Sir Christopher Codrington, Bt., and was also simultaneously working rebuilding Joseph Pickford’s Soho House, just outside Birmingham, of 1760–61 for Matthew Boulton; Plas Newydd in Anglesey for Lord Uxbridge; Norris Castle, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, for Lord Henry Seymour; and the stupendous Fonthill Abbey for the demanding William Beckford. Quite possibly, having measured

off Allestree Hall, he found himself unavailable to return to any project of Bache’s for perhaps four years, and Bache, having again changed his mind about where he wished to settle, probably wished to get on with modernising Stanton rather than waiting until his busy and fashionable architect was once more available. Furthermore, the fact that Cooke added, in his letter, that Lindley’s charges were generally ‘not immoderate’, must have appealed to the business instincts of Bache, who had probably just settled up with Wyatt and was still feeling the gap in his finances.¹¹

Nevertheless, Bryan Cooke was as good as his word, and had written to Lindley the same day, for on very the next day, 2 July, Lindley wrote to Bache (Appendix II): ‘I have just recd. a letter from Colonel Cooke of Owston, informing me that you wish to have my Assistance in planning some alterations in your House; I therefore send you this to acquaint you that I purpose being at Stanton on Friday morning next’.¹² Quite apart from being a ringing endorsement of the postal services in Yorkshire two centuries ago, especially compared with today, the celerity of Lindley’s reply might pre-suppose a want of work to hand on his part, a supposition confirmed by reference to Colvin’s *Dictionary*, which informs us that, apart from continuing restoration work on St Peter’s, Sheffield (now the Cathedral), he was indeed experiencing a lull: hence his alacrity.

William Lindley was an example of a first-rate provincial architect-cum-builder of the sort exemplified in the Georgian era by such better known men as the Smiths of Warwick, Carr of York, William Henderson of Loughborough and Joseph Pickford of Derby. Lindley, born around 1739, had indeed been trained by Carr as apprentice and had subsequently worked as his assistant for two decades before setting up on his own in 1774; his first commission was to design and build Doncaster playhouse. Furthermore, the house he built for himself in Doncaster’s South Parade was sufficiently opulent and spacious for the Prince of Wales to be

lodged in it in 1806. Colvin summed him up as ‘a competent but unadventurous architect who never deviated far from the basically Adamsian style that he had learned from John Carr...’¹³

Most of his clients were men whom the late Angus Taylor described as ‘of conservative tastes and limited means’ although one doubts if this description applied in any sense to Bache Thornhill, who was certainly not then of limited means, and was far from conservative in his architectural tastes, having recently, after all, employed the adventurous and fashionable Wyatt.¹⁴

Within a month, Lindley had visited, measured, talked to his client, to Bache’s bailiff or factor, Joseph Gilbert, and drawn up the designs, as is attested by a long letter (Appendix III) advising on the disposal of much of the materials from the part of the house to be replaced and other timber clearly to hand on the Estate.¹⁵ He recommended the sale of as much as £150 worth of materials, and pointed out that mahogany, of which Bache appeared to have a superfluity, for window frames and doors would only really be necessary for the three main reception rooms, vestibule and staircase, and went on to suggest that the family could continue to use the drawing room and dining room of the existing house while the work was going on. It seems unlikely that this suggestion was acted upon; it appears more likely that Bache and his family decamped to the partially complete Allestree for a couple of years. This would explain the voluminous correspondence; Bache was clearly not often on site. In any case, what he suggested sounds very uncomfortable and noisy. From what Lindley wrote later in the missive, it would appear that his fortunes were on the turn, even as he was starting at Stanton. His letter referred to Joseph Sikes [*sic*] of The Chantry, Newark, whose family owned Old St Helen’s House, Derby. Sikes had died earlier that year, and the commission arose from the probate of his will on 6 June, instructing his executors to dispose of the Derby house. The contents sale was held on 6 August 1798, and the house, until 1793 the home

and studio of Joseph Wright of Derby, ARA, was subsequently demolished; the materials were sold on 13 February 1800. The new street to be pitched was the present St Helen’s Street, and the site of the old house was used for the erection of Richard Brown’s spar manufactory and marble works, in operation from 1802.¹⁶

Lindley’s plan for Stanton Hall involved adding to John Thornhill’s house (on the site of the remaining seventeenth-century part) a roomier, loftier and more convenient building, in which almost all the normal family accommodation would be situated. This meant that the early eighteenth-century wing behind could be relegated to service accommodation, with some good bedrooms over for guests. The surviving plan shows the new wing with the fairly cosmetic alterations made to the lower floor and which Lindley planned to shield with planting. The new work in some ways resembles the first scheme for Allestree, with two main reception rooms either side of the vestibule, drawing room on the left and dining room on the right, both as today. Behind the dining room was a library, but the housekeeper’s room and cupboards lay in the equivalent position on the opposite side of the house, but which today has been altered to form a study. The inner (staircase) hall is an impressive space containing a fine well staircase of cantilevered Hoptonwood stone with a mahogany rail supported on a wrought iron balustrade all leading up to a galleried landing, very much like that at Allestree Hall. Decoration was sparing, which is common to almost all Derbyshire seats and villas built in the Regency period, in contrast to the exuberance more often found in the equivalent houses in, say, Yorkshire.

The correspondence regarding the construction of Stanton Hall is fairly voluminous. Lindley, despite being a man of arresting personal appearance, as Cooke’s letter suggested, seems also to have been a little insecure, for he followed up a letter of 27 August 1798 (Appendix V) giving his impressions of Allestree Hall and what the prospects might be for

its disposal, with another quoting a former client who had praised his ‘taste and Judgment’ (Appendix VI). This second, undated, letter is helpful for us today by filling in some lost details of Lindley’s career, but it must have been slightly irritating for Thornhill to read, when his chief concern was to get his own project under way. The house in Beverley referred to by Lindley would appear to have been St Mary’s Manor, North Bar Within, the traditional date for which, 1803, may thus need to be revised,¹⁷ but it was much rebuilt in 1826. Mr. Ellison MP (for Lincoln) was Richard Ellison, and his house Sudbrooke Holme, a large house neither really grand nor handsome, was demolished in 1951.¹⁸ John Ellison’s Thorne Hall survives – just, disfigured by institutional alterations, derelict and for sale. It boasts a bold five bay façade under a giant pediment which once broke well forward of two modest wings, each of a single tripartite bay (Fig. 4).¹⁹

We know from the letters exchanged between Thornhill and Lindley that the contractor at Stanton was a Mr. Staley, along with his son. Staley turns out to be a local mason, Francis Staley of Youlgreave; his association with Lindley seems to have done him no harm, for he died a successful builder in

Sheffield aged 68, and was buried with his ancestors in Youlgreave on 30 July 1833. Lindley’s letter of 27 August 1798 makes clear that he wanted the plasterwork doing by one ‘Holiday’ over the local choice of Nathan, of Chesterfield. This was a wise choice, since the reputation of William Holliday [*sic*] of Byland, Yorkshire was a good one. Admitted a freeman of York in 1778, he had also worked with Lindley under Carr, and this valuable attestation of his work extends his *floruit* by two decades.²⁰ In contrast, almost nothing is known of Thomas Nathan, except that he was later of Matlock. The work began with the footings from 1 March 1799, matters having been delayed by ‘the storms of frost and snow’. Lindley subsequently wrote to Thornhill (Appendix VIII) about difficulties in finding a competent mason (‘stone setter’) to carry out the work, local ones not being up to his standards and others (in Doncaster) being unwilling to leave their wives and families. In the end the choice fell upon a Mr. Ward, warmly recommended by Lindley’s old master, John Carr, and almost certainly a member of the family of Matthew and Richard Ward, who had worked as plasterers for Carr in the 1760s.²¹

We learn from another letter, of April 1799



Fig. 4. Thorne Hall, c.1906 from a postcard. (*P.J.R. Withington*)



Fig. 5. Shipley Hall from the south-west, photographed by Richard Keene c.1860 before its enlargement by Sir Walter Tapper. (*M. Craven*)

(Appendix X), that Lindley was simultaneously beginning work on another Derbyshire house, Shipley Hall, for Edward Mundy, MP. After a long discussion about the details of fitting up Stanton (well in advance of it happening), Lindley added that he had ‘been twice over to Shipley once to take over a Plan of the Place and with the finished Plans, which was very much approved on’.²² Shipley Hall (Fig. 5) was remarkably similar in both plan and elevation to Stanton, save for the inclusion of canted bays at each end of the façade, and giant pilasters supporting the pediment, which was enriched with Neo-classical swags. Like Stanton Hall, it was attached to an earlier wing, the only difference being that the coal-rich Mundy was prepared to spend a great deal more money on his house. Bache Thornhill, who had only recently built Allestree Hall, was much more restrained in his demands, one letter (Appendix XV) showing him agonising about the amount of internal embellishment appropriate at Stanton, while Lindley discreetly urged to spend more than he might seem to require:

‘I am sure it is always far from me to recommend anything that is superfluous or unnecessary, but such a fine spacious apartment as the Drawing Room, with nothing but a plain cornice would be quite out of character; especially as it has both Mahogany Doors and Sashes; and the Library as I have contrived the Frieze it will but be about 6 guineas extra by having the frieze and cornice ornament and it would be a pity to spoil the room for so small a sum. Now the Revd. Mr. John Eyre of Babworth has been building a new Drawing Room of 28 by 18 and he (without my advising [him] to have it) has both an ornamented frieze and ornamented cornice (done from my designs) although it is built to the parsonage house, and only a life Estate; therefore yours that is a capital family mansion ought to have the rooms finished in proper style in character with the rest of the work, for I am sure the outside of the house is handsome enough for such a finish.’²³

Certainly, by August 1799 Shipley was well under way, and we find Lindley endeavouring to combine his visits to both houses.²⁴ By May 1800, Lindley was able to report to Thornhill that he ‘was over at Shipley to meet Mr. Mundy about a fortnight since

the whole of the new Kitchen Offices are finished, and the new apartments of the House are now building, the whole is to be cased with stone... Mr. Mundy is exceeding well pleased with his improvements.²⁵

It is quite clear from all the letters that Thornhill interested himself in even the most insignificant details: materials for upstairs door-cases, the design of dado panelling beneath sashes, room dimensions, and so on. Furthermore, it is also clear that there was a good deal of interchange of ideas between him and Edward Mundy over their respective plans, and the impression is strongly conveyed that Lindley was recommended to Mundy by Thornhill, which establishes an inter-familial relationship not otherwise apparent. Lindley’s involvement at Stanton even extended to the recommendation of a new housekeeper, of whom he wrote: ‘I do not think it will be in my power (ever) to meet with a person more likely to suit Mrs. Thornhill, to whom I beg my respectful compliments.’²⁶ He later went on to offer the Thornhills a footman.²⁷

Lindley’s letters do not lack surprises on the architectural front. Only ten months after the start of building work, the plasterers were in the house: very good going compared with the three years the admittedly larger Allestree Hall had taken. The internal fitting up of Stanton took almost as long as building the carcass, and subsequent letters are full of details of suggested wallpapers, type of pictures to hang and so forth. In one (Appendix XVI), Lindley begged Thornhill not to be so mean – this is implicit only, one might add – as to spoil the drawing room by omitting the stucco panels above the dado intended to relieve the plainness of a lengthy unornamented wall:

‘I therefore beg for God’s sake, you will not spoil so fine a room, by robbing it of its proper ornaments, consider what a long naked blank side facing you as you enter the room, a plain naked wall 30 feet in length, pray do consider how heavy and dead that will appear without the panels, whereas with them I will

venture to say it will be admired as beautiful and even elegant, for I’m sure I took very great pains to render it such, at the least expense possible; and shall be greatly mortified to have it robbed of what was designed to give it lightness and elegance’.²⁸

By August Lindley and Thornhill were busy settling the designs for the chimneypieces, which were to be carved by Mr. Snowden, a craftsman who, so far, has eluded identification. Thornhill meanwhile was still resisting – quite rightly, one might add with hindsight – Lindley’s suggestion that the staircase should be panelled, as indeed had that at Allestree, to its permanent detriment. His persuasiveness has all the desperate rhetoric of the salesman on commission to it: ‘... it will be a very great ornament and the expense will only be about 3£ per ft it [will] add the greatest beauty, for so small an expense that ever was known; it would then be admired as a most elegant Staircase indeed! pray do consider of this it would be the last money you ever laid (out) for giving a proper effect ...’²⁹ By mid September Lindley’s ‘head clerk’ (whom he rather tiresomely fails to name) was *en route* for Stanton to measure off the work and bearing a light green wallpaper sample for Mrs. Thornhill to consider for the dining room, which, not long before, had been intended to be panelled in the earlier Georgian mode (thus to be easily cleaned of tobacco smoke); it was now, however, to be left plastered, with stucco panels and papered. This treatment was to be applied above the dado with the panel mouldings – clearly the architect’s earlier admonition concerning long unadorned walls had been heeded by Thornhill – picked out in white. The same paper was recommended for Jane Thornhill’s dressing room, on the first floor over the hallway.³⁰

Two months later, the clerk was back yet again, this time bearing the bill. From this it appears that the alterations to the earlier wing, indicated by buff lines on the plan, were being carried out to Lindley’s plans by Francis Staley and his lad but without the necessity of the architect himself being involved.



Fig. 6. Stanton Hall from the south-east, 2011. The extensions to the right date from the 1840s and later. (*M. Craven*)



Fig. 7. Stanton Hall, Lindley's entrance front, with the spire of Cottingham's church behind, June 2011. (*M. Craven*)



Fig. 8. Stanton Hall from the west, June 2011, showing the earlier wing (left). (M. Craven)

Concerning the accounts, he coyly added in a post script: ‘The Bills are wrapped up as a small square parcel covered with blue paper which I hope you will get safe.’ One can only presume that the payment was eventually made, although knowing how slow most eighteenth-century clients were in paying their architects, it is not impossible that Lindley had to wait quite twelve months for his money.

What Bache and Jane Thornhill got for their money is a very well-proportioned five by five bay house, in which the ground floor sashes were brought right down to terrace level in the then modern fashion. (Fig. 6) The house is of two fairly lofty storeys – slightly higher than the earlier wing – made of superb quality ashlar Millstone Grit sandstone from a quarry on the estate. Unlike Shipley Hall, external ornament was reduced to a minimum, the main facades merely being embellished with a plat band between the floors, a moulded cornice, blocking course and modest parapet, pierced by balustrading over the bays. The only serious decorative treatment is to the entrance, where the central three bays break forward very

slightly under a plain shallow pediment containing an *oeuil-de-boeuf*. (Fig. 7) The door itself is protected by a semi-circular stone Doric portico with a curved window above (alluded to as such by Lindley in a letter), equipped with a door so that Mrs. Thornhill could go out onto the porch roof, where there was an iron balustrade upon which she could safely lean.

Lindley rebuilt the lower ground floor of the older wing with three pairs of paired sashes on the north-east side of which two survive today, along with two extensions on the opposite side, one adjacent to his new build, being part of a still room/larder, and another further along for a store off the servants’ hall. At this stage, the service stair was tucked in behind the main one in the new block, as one might expect; that it is not there now is part of the developments the building underwent in the mid nineteenth century. Thus in the revised lower ground floor arrangements, a new spacious kitchen was formed immediately adjacent to the end wall of the new block, with butler’s pantry and larder opposite. An angled internal corridor, still extant, was formed in order to cope with the varying room

sizes, with the scullery behind the much larger kitchen lying on one side and the servants’ hall, a large room, set behind the relatively modest butler’s pantry on the other. Beyond these was a cross corridor, dividing these offices from the brewhouse and back-kitchen/laundry, the latter including a small staircase, and there was a larger one – probably the oak one now re-positioned further forward as a way to the first floor of the older wing – off the end of the cross passage. Beyond again were the remnants of earlier ranges adapted as outbuildings. The most prominent of these has an arrow-loop style vent in its gable which, if original, would suggest that it was originally the end gable of a barn rather than part of William Bache’s original house. (Fig. 8) The whole arrangement appears to have been well thought out and no doubt suited the Thornhills admirably; it was less showy than Shipley, although it involved a very similar rebuilding.

Bache Thornhill’s grandson William Pole Thornhill (1806–1876) was the next person to make alterations. In 1841–42, probably with the aid of L.N. Cottingham, who was then building a new parish church adjacent, and was also doing work on the church of St Oswald, Ashbourne, although no documents seem to survive relating to these changes. A single storey square bay with canted corners was added to the south-east side of the house, giving the dining room (then the drawing room) a great deal more potential light on dull days, of which there is a superabundance in the Peak District; the boudoir was also subject to alterations, and panelling was put into the entrance hall. The most notable change was to the early eighteenth-century range. This was lengthened in precisely matching style by a single bay at its north end and extended on the east side, where it met Lindley’s addition, with a substantial full height gabled addition, the gable itself being depressed into a modest parapet and embellished with a cruciform arrow-loop rather like the one on the gable which ended the range on the west side, which was itself rebuilt from mid-ground floor level.

The ground floor of the older part of the house was entirely given over to service accommodation with paired sashes being inserted on the first floor of the old gabled wing to match those installed below by Lindley, which was henceforward incorporated into the house.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to Nicolas Davie-Thornhill for allowing me access to his family archive, and for enabling me to get to know his house at close quarters. Unless otherwise credited, the source for the article is the as yet un-catalogued Thornhill MSS in the muniment room at Stanton.

APPENDIX: LETTERS RELATING TO LINDLEY’S INVOLVEMENT IN STANTON

I

Brian Cooke to Bache Thornhill
1 July 1798

My Dear Bache,

Your letter followed me to this place where I have been for the last fortnight to avail myself of the sea air and bathing for my children three of whom have been unwell and one (my second daughter) so reduced that before we came here we almost despaired of her, however, we do flatter ourselves that change of air and that to sea air is affecting what the powers of medicine were unable to do, she seems gradually getting better and unless some thing happens to throw her back again, I hope will recover her health.

As the best proof of my opinion of Lindley, I many years ago employed him to build my stables and at that time was so satisfied with him that I

have since employed him to build my house, in which every one seems to agree that he has done himself great credit, and of which opinion I think you will be when you see it. It is from this as well as my knowledge of his general character and of integrity and ingenuity that I think I may venture to recommend him to give his apertance in making any alterations you may wish for at Stanton. When you see him you had better come to an understanding about his charges, he generally is not immoderate.

I will write to him as you desire, to write to you to let you know when he can come over. When you see him he will not make the most favourable impression, he is a pig and quiz and sometimes appears simple in conversation, but he doubtless has ability and is particularly clever at contrivance, and put him to his pencil he will do himself more credit than his words. Anthony Eyre has employed him at Grove.

You certainly are a shabby writer, and have great room for amendment, but as the will seems now in you, the deed will instantly [*word missing*] away all confusion, we will have you [*over to see us*] this Autumn to see how little Lindley has modernized old Nottm. and bring the Etonian with you and any of them that may be at home and convenient to you, I like much keeping up relationships and particularly the rising youth from such a stock.

I am flattered by your congratulations and sentiments on the subject of my seat in Parliament which was offered and accepted on the most liberal and independent terms.

Mrs. Cooke joins in best compts to you and Mrs. Thornhill and dear Bache.

Yours most truly, B. Cooke.

II

Wm. Lindley to Bache Thornhill
2 July 1798, Doncaster

Sir,

I have just recd. a letter from Colonel Cooke of Owston, informing me that you wish to have my assistance in planning some alterations in your House; I therefore send you this to acquaint you that I purpose being at Stanton on Friday morning next, and am Sir,

Your most obedt. Servant, W. Lindley.

III

1 August 1798, Doncaster

Sir,

Agreeable to your desire I have examined the quantity of Deals, Timber, Mahogany, Oak, etc. from the amount given me by Mr. Gilbert and upon examining the plan of the intended new additions I am of the opinion that you will have a sufficient quantity of Deals to complete the joiner work of the whole building and more than sufficient but not so much as would be prudent to part with any until you have finished your work, thus you may have the advantage of your joiner work being done with good stuff, but there appears to be a great deal more Mahogany than will be wanted for my plan I think to near the value of £150 which as soon as the Joiner has cut out the quantity wanted for the Mahogany doors and sashes I would advise you to let the remainder be sold at Derby – It is not necessary to have mahogany sashes anywhere but to the Dining, Drawing Rooms and Library windows which is only seven in number, and only seven Mahogany doors are required for the three best rooms on the Ground floor, with the Vestibule, and best Staircase all of which are to the size of the Design I made of Stanton; There also appears to be some Oak that may be disposed of, but the particulars thereof may be better ascertained hereafter when I have got further on with the workman’s plans etc., so as to see better what will be wanted for the new building. I think the 47½ in. Oak plank nor the 37½ in Oak

boards will not be wanted. I have calculated the quantity of new Timber wanted for long lengths in the carpenters work, and I find that only 8 new Balks of 22 feet long by 12 or 13 inches square will be quite sufficient to do for both the floors and roof (with which you have) the way I shall contrive to cut them up and put them together etc. but these Balks I advise not to be bought until they are wanted to give a chance for the fall of the price of Timber – I think I have now so contrived the execution of the plan, that you may if you choose, live in your present dining and drawing room until the new ones are habitable (by building over the old rooms) and also the getting of two very good bed rooms for Ladies Maids or Valets etc. over your Dressing Room and the Butlers Pantry (this can be done) by making two storeys in these two rooms equal to one (storey) of the Dining Room etc. and I can get them both a very decent height, but these matters I can best explain (to you) on the spot – I am exceeding glad that both you and Mrs. Thornhill has approved of the plan I have made for your house, as the compactness, and convenience thereof I flatter myself will do me as much credit (for the size of the job) as any thing of the kind I have yet done although they are almost innumerable and you may rest assured that no endeavour shall be wanting on my part to get your work executed at the least expense possible, and properly done – Col. Cooke says in his letter when he wrote to me on your business, (he says) ‘in which I have no doubt you will do my recommendation and yourself credit, both in respect to the execution of the building, and the moderation of your charge’ – This you may depend upon my observing and do not fear but that all will end so much to your satisfaction, that you will be as ready to recommend me (when ever an opportunity may offer) as my other numerous Employers have done – since my return from your House I have the satisfaction to inform you, that another of my worthy Employers (a Gentleman in Lincolnshire) has recommended me to make a valuation of a large premise in the Town of Derby belonging to a

Mr. Sykes of Newark, and Mr. Cooke of the former place; I am also to make (a) plan thereof to form a new street etc. so that the ground may be sold in separate Lotts for building upon – I purpose being at Stanton on Wednesday morning the 15th of this Month and shall bring with me such drawings and directions both for the Mason and Joiners work etc. so that the whole business may proceed as ready as possible, I shall also be enabled to contract with the Joiner for every article in his branch on the cheapest terms, etc. etc.

I am with compliments to Mrs. Thornhill, Sir,
your most obliged Humble Servant,

W. Lindley.

P.S. If it should not suit you to be at home at the time I have mentioned I will visit on you any other day after you may please to appoint.

IV

12 August 1798, Doncaster

Sir,

I have received your Letter and am very sorry to find that there has been some misunderstanding respecting the time of my being at Stanton. I either fixed to be there on Wednesday next (in my last letter) or intended so to do for I find I have put it down on my memorandum paper to be there on the 15th August, I thought it best to give (you) at least a fortnights notice of my coming ... in case you should (have) happened to be from home, there would be time for you order so as to be there by the day appointed, or to fix some other day in case you could not be at home then – I have got the proper drawings for the workmen ready, and hope to be with you on the day above mentioned, and am Sir, your most obliged and very obedt Servant,

W. Lindley.

V

27 August 1798, Doncaster

Sir,

On my return from Derby on Saturday the 18th inst., I called to look at your new place at Allestry, and I like the situation exceedingly, so that I hope there may be a probability of some person of large fortune purchasing of it when the War is over; and of the worst of all if you cannot sell the House for any thing near its value, you can but pull it down and sell the whole of the materials; they will always be as good as new while they are kept dry; and the place being near Derby it will be a good market for the disposal of them; but upon viewing the beams and considering how much it would injure the house to take them out, I cannot help advising you to let them remain until you have given the House a fair trial whether it will sell in its present state or not, but the Bridging and Ceiling Joists etc. may be taken out with great propriety, and also the binding Joints if we find the worst of them at Stanton – According to my promise I have herewith sent you the exact number, and scantling of the steps for the best Staircase, and also (the flags) for the floor of Do. and the Vestibule; in order that the stone be got and lead to the spot while the roads are good – I have seen Mr. Holiday the plasterer I recommended him to you, since I came from Stanton who informs me that he has no connection with Nathan plasterer of Chesterfield; therefore if any enquiries is made about your plastering work, you will be so good as to say that is promised – I will take care to draw a proper plan of the flags for the best staircase (for the Masons) before it is wanted present I am exceeding busy; I beg my Compliments to Mrs. Thornhill and remain, Sir your most obliged humble servant.

VI

No date

Sir,

I told you in a former letter how much I was turned with business, which still continues to increase; I am sent for as far as Beverley by a Mr. Henry Ellison brother to Mr. Ellison Member for Lincoln whose large House (near that City) I attend and made great additions about 8 years since, and about 5 years since I altered for his brother John (a house) at Thorne, so that this will be the 3d brother of that Family that employs me, but I will give you an extract of his letter “I have some thoughts of materially altering my house at Beverley, and having a high opinion of your taste and judgement in these matters”. It is very pleasing to have such compliments from persons that has known me for several years back, and seen various specimens of works in my professional line.

VII

23 February 1799, Doncaster

Sir,

I have recd. the favor of your letter of the 12th inst. – the storm of Frost, and Snow has been so bad here as it could possibly be with you, I have therefore laid aside my intention of going into Derbyshire at the time proposed before I got your your letter; but the Snow seems now to be nearly gone though the waters are very much out in most parts of this County, however, if all be well, I intend being at your House on Friday evening next the 1st of March, hoping by that time the snow will be quite gone, so that we (may) be able to set out the Ground ... of the intended new building at Stanton.

I am Sir your most obliged and very obedt. servt.

W. Lindley.

VIII

12 March 1799, Doncaster

Sir,

According to my promise made application for getting a capital stone-setter, but I could meet with none here that were capable, but married men, who did not like to leave their families at so great a distance.

I therefore applied to the Master Mason who built Mr. Milnes's House near Ferry Bridge; who has promised to let me have two young men who he recommends, as excellent good hands for either working (cornice etc) or setting stones and he says they are (both) sober, and industrious men; he says they asked 3 shillings a day (to go that distance) I wrote him that I would venture to promise so far as 2s-9d or more if their merit deserved it; but I am sorry to find that they are at present so engaged, that they cannot go to Stanton (sooner) than a fortnight from this time; I therefore thought it proper to acquaint you with this, before I positively engaged these men lest you should think the time too long, and that you may have happened to have got hands, or had an offer of some on shorter notice etc. – I must on this account beg the favor of your answer by return of post, that I may (finally) engage these men if you are not yet fully provided with a sufficient number of hands.

You will please let Mrs. Thornhill know that I have made what enquiry I can amongst my acquaintance about a housekeeper, but not being able to meet with one that would suite, I applied to a Register Office that we have in this Town, who thinks he knows of one that will suite [*sic*], but the person wishes to know what wages you give, and whether you want one as Housekeeper only or as cooke and Ladys Maid also, etc. etc.

I am with respectful compliments to Mrs. Thornhill

Please to excuse haste

IX

24 March 1799, Doncaster

Sir,

I received your Letter in due course which I should have answered sooner, but have been much disappointed in not being able to send a mason as was expected; I thought it proper to write to acquaint the persons I had spoke to of the terms you a ... to allow, and it unfortunately happened that the two masons that I mentioned in my last (letter) are in some kind of partnership so that when I wrote that you only wanted one Mason and that the terms were to be 2s-9d per day they both refused to go, and I was near a week before I could get their final answer, I then had to make another application. I have met with a very Capital good setter, but he will not for less than 3s per day I have just got his answer, he says he can go in labour a week from this time, I therefore promised to let him know in that time whether you would have him or not; I therefore wish you would write me immediately that I may inform this Man what he is to do. I realy do not believe that is practicable to get very good hand, every way qualified to go such a distance for less than 3s per day – Now I think it would be a good thing if Mr. Gilbert could manage to get the setting done by measure provided it could be done at such a price that the whole both working and setting may not exceed the price agreed for; this man said he had no obligation to do the setting by measure, but he could (not) tell (at) what price until he had seen the place etc. – You will please to give my Compliments to Mrs. Thornhill and inform her that I am very sorry that I am also disappointed about the Housekeeper I wrote about, for upon further enquiry I found that she was too high for your place, she had been used to live in great noble men families, she asked £30 wage and did not like to live in a family that did not spend their winter or at least some part of the year in London. It is certainly a difficult thing to get a person every suitable in this Capacity –

I have given the necessary orders to Mr. Harwood of Sheffield about the Lock, Hinges and pass keys etc. – please to inform Staley that I intend to have the Shutters to the Vestibule sash door and side lights to be boxed, and that I intend to make a Design for that purpose as soon as I have leisure, at present I am very much engaged and am obliged to go from home tomorrow for 2 or 3 days,

I am Sir etc.

Please to excuse haste.

I am sure I gave Staley plenty of directions when I was last at Stanton so as to employ him and his son for a considerable time.

X

Annotated by BT April 1799

Sir,

The Mason I had engaged for you was taken very ill about a week before the time he was to have gone to Stanton and continue so bad as not likely to recover at least for some time to come; I have therefore been obliged to engage another person who is the bearer of this his name is Mr. Ward who from the Character I had of him from respectable Master Mason he is equal if not superior to the other person; he has been recommended by Mr. Carr [of York the architect of Buxton Crescent] to some Capital jobs some years back where he has executed the setting business exceedingly well, he having had much practice in that branch. I have agreed with him to work exactly on the same terms as the other person of which I have before given you an account – I believe in my hurry I forgot to answer your observation respecting the Vestibule Door, I think indeed that the Door and sash guts ought to be of mahogany to match with the other doors but I think the styles etc of the Door might be fineared [veneered] with mahogany on the

inside upon Deal; with regard to the Dressing Room window over the Vestibule it must have 5 panes of glass in height in order to suit the other windows on each side, and as it will be about a foot from the floor to the underside of the bottom pane of Glass there will be height enough to walk out of the window when the sash is thrown up, and therefore it (will) do very well as it is, and the panes of glass correspond with all the rest in the Chamber Story etc – to the difference of expense between the having Attics and Garretts I am afraid will be much more than you expect, and the saving of the Bannisters but trifling, they will not cost above 15 or 16 shillings (an opening over) each Window, and there is only 12 openings in all the three fronts; however I will consider this matter well and the difference of expense and also make a Sketch of an Elevation with the Attic windows against I come next at Stanton as it will be much better to talk the subject over on the spot, but I am afraid we shall not make a better design than the present, considering the Difference of expense in any alteration that can be made for the better, for I have shewn your plan to a great many gentlemen amongst my numerous employers, and several very good judges of building, and they allow it to be a masterpiece of compactness and convenience as a comfortable habitation etc., etc. I have been twice over to Shipley once to take over a plan of the place and with the finished plans, which was very much approved on (&) was so much to Mr. M. and his sisters (satisfaction) as to require no attention of improvement in the B-- part of the house (in particular) and very luckily Mr. Mundy happened to have a large (hunting) party at his house there were two Gentleman (that) had built near Matlock and seemed to be good judges, I showed your plan amongst others, which were liked for the properties above mentioned very much – Mr. M. is so pleased with his plan, that he intends to begin this summer; I am to send him fair copies of his plan with an estimate to town as soon as ever I can get them ready – I will shew you the whole design the next time I come to Stanton.

I am with compliments to Mrs. Thornhill, Sir, your most obliged and very obedient servant, W. Lindley

Mrs. T. will be so good as to let me know her answer respecting the Housekeeper as the person is anxious to be informed as soon as possible as she is out of place. I am in great hopes that she will suit very well if I can judge from her appearance please to haste.

I have included some mouldings that Stayley is in want of.

XI

25 April 1799, Doncaster.

Sir,

I have just received the favour of your letter of the 22nd inst. with regard to the panneling under the sashes on the ground floor there is only two in the Dining Room that will require any panels under them all the other sashes on that storey is to go (nearly) down to the floor however you may inform Stayley that he may put in those sash frames and fix them in the wall (immediately) as I can order the pounding to be done any time after the sash frames are fixed, as well as if done before – the rough height of the Dining and Drawing Room chimney reach from the floor line to the underside of the mantle must be 3ft 6in and the Library chimney piece Do. 3ft 4in. Your room and Butlers Pantry chimney 3f 0in with respect to the Attic storey in consequence of what you hinted in your last letter on that subject, notwithstanding I am exceedingly busy I set to work in drawing an elevation hereof in order to form a proper judgement of the difference in the effect and expense etc. etc., and I have formed so handsome an elevation (but) in the same plain style as the original [*text missing*] I am now quite an advocate for its being adopted. My motive for (not) having [*text missing*] was that I was afraid it would make the house appear

too high and tower ... [*missing*] denoted a situation and also that an Attic storey was not wanting, as the [*missing*] should be so many good bed chambers got in the old part of the house, so that sleeping rooms for servants would only be wanted, and as the cheapest way of getting them would be to get them in the roof I accordingly adopted the plan and elevation to just that scheme is the best answer I could find for that purpose; but up a further consideration of the matter (since you hinted rather a desire for attics) I perceive that there will be some advantages arise in having Attics instead of Garretts; it will help to raise the new House more above the old one (which is much higher than I could wish) and therefore give the new building a greater air of consequence, and will also give an opportunity of making a capital Billiard Room which your eldest son seemed very desirous to obtain, and if the building is regulated according to the elevation I have here sent you it will not raise the wal.. [*missing*] about 3 feet more than the Garrett plans by making the Ground [*missing*] 14ft 6in high, which would do very well ... of the principal building, [*missing*] 30 by 20 has the room but 14 foot high and with respect (to) the difference of [*missing*] the two plans will not be more than about 50 or thereabouts if you keep to the dimension of this elevation and finish the Attics as plain as Garretts but the Attics should not on any account (be) made lower than 5–6 high least at any time you should wish to cause some alteration in the courses of Ashlar stone but that may be easily done by diminishing 3 or 4 of the courses under the fascia or perhaps the whole of the courses and other places, but this you can inform me of and I can order a working elevation to suit – please to present my compliments to Mrs. Thornhill and inform her that I have made enquire of some of my acquaintances in this town of respectability who has known Francis Green many years and I cannot find that she has a bad temper or bad disposition; she lived with Mr. Acklom of Wiseton (as Housekeeper) near Bawtrey near two years before she went to live with Mr. Clay to whom they gave her a very good

character; she left their place through an illness not from any misbehaviour. Mr. Ackloms is a steady regular family just like your own – she is about 35 years of age a personable (neat) good looking woman, indeed I do not think it will be in my power (ever) to meet with a person more likely to suit Mrs. Thornhill, to whom I beg my respectful compliments and remain your most obliged and very obedt. humble servant, W. Lindley.

P.S. Mrs. Thornhill will be so good to let me know her final answer respecting Francis Green by the next post.

XII

2 Sept. 1799, Doncaster.

As I have to meet Mr. Mundy this week at Shipley, I purpose going from thence to Stanton where I think I should arrive about Thursday evening next, I thought it proper to give you this notice of my coming that you might continue to be got thence. I am with compliments to Mrs. Thornhill, etc.

XIII

21 January 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

The Master of the Register Office has just called upon me with a footman that wants a place, and which I think might suit you; his name is Richard Askwith, he is a middle sized person, and says he is 34 years of age – the Master of the R. Office says he is a very sober steady person, and that he has lived in several families in this neighbourhood, some of which I am acquainted with (as having formerly employed me) and in one of these families he lived three years; but the last place, and from whom you are desired to enquire his character, is Colonel Nevil of Thorney near Newark in Nottinghamshire – I asked him what wages he would expect; he said

if you give a livery of coat, waistcoat, breeches, (hat) and boots, 16 Guineas a year, but if youhed at your House, only 15 Guineas. He also desired me to mention that he must have the expense of his journey to your house allowed him, if he comes, and begs to have your answer as soon as you can. I hope you have received my answer to your last letter, with the various Drawings that I sent by the same post.

I remain with much deference, Sir etc.

P.S. I have just begun to set about designing the finishings for rooms on the principal floor of Stanton House, I hope the late open weather has enabled the plasterers to make a tolerable progress with the Chamber storey etc.

XIV

28 February 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

I have just received your letter, and as the servant I wrote to you about is not engaged, I have told him your terms which he is agreeable to accept, and will wait on you at Stanton as soon as he gets your orders so to do – you are desired to direct to George Neville Esqr., Post Office Bath, for his character –

On Tuesday last I wrote to you along with (some) drawings wanted by Staley, which I hope before this time you have received safe; I mentioned my being at Stanton about the middle of next week, but I find that I cannot conveniently be with you until the latter end of the week, about Friday the 7th March.

I am Sir etc.

XV

2 May 1800, Doncaster.

Letter written on a sheet of drawings illustrating (1) Cornice Frieze for the Doors in the Dining Room (2) The side of Dining Room opposite the Chimney.

Sir,

I have herewith sent the remainder of the drawings for the dining Room at Stanton, and also proper Designs of Cornice etc. for the Drawing and Breakfast Rooms, with proper amounts for the Friezes and moldings to the Cornice; all which I have contrived so as to be done at the least expense possible (so as) to have the proper effect in appearance; I have also put down the lowest price that they can be executed for per foot running, in order to give you an idea of the extra expense of the ornamental plaster work. I am sure it is always far from me to recommend anything that is superfluous or unnecessary, but such a fine spacious apartment as the Drawing Room, with nothing but a plain cornice would be quite out of character; especially as it has both Mahogany Doors and Sashes; and the Library as I have contrived the Frieze it will but be about 6 guineas extra by having the frieze and cornice ornament and it would be a pity to spoil the room for so small a sum. Now the Revd. Mr. John Eyre of Babworth has been building a new Drawing Room of 28 by 18 and he (without my advising (him) to have it) has both an ornamented frieze and ornamented cornice (done from my designs) although it is built to the parsonage house, and only a life Estate; therefore yours that is a capital family mansion (surely) ought to have the rooms finished in (a) proper style in character with the rest of the work, for I am sure the outside of the house is handsome enough for such a finish – there still wants designs for the Dining, Drawing Room, and Library chimney pieces, which ought to be settled (and fixed upon) soon, as they will take some time in getting ready by the workmen, after fixed (upon) I will therefore get

them drawn out for that purpose as soon as ever I can – I was over at Shipley to meet Mr. Mundy about a fortnight since the whole of the new Kitchen Offices are finished, and the new apartments of the House are now building, the whole is to be cased with stone, the two fronts measured by ... (very faint) or girts 246 feet long (of stone) Mr. Mundy is exceeding well pleased with his improvements.

I am Sir etc.

The ornaments to Drawing Frieze and Cornice will amount to 2s.3d. per foot running, the Library Do. 1s.7d.

XVI

1 June 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

I have received your letter and am very sorry to hear that you have been so ill used by N... of which I will inform Mr. Holiday the first opportunity and I hope the business will in future go on more to your satisfaction. I am very much grieved to hear that you have stopped the panels from being executed in the Dining Room, as they would have given it such a graceful and elegant finish, 500 pounds worth of pictures would scarce furnish the walls so handsome, besides they give such a pleasing variety (in making it) different from the other rooms, and done at much less expense than papering; for the panel mold I designed is quite plain, has no carving, and would not cost more than about 2½d a foot running; rooms done in this manner I am sure are cheaper than papered walls, for when they get dirty they are soon revived by a wash in water colour at a trifling expense compared to the new papering a room with printed paper, and if the ground of the walls were coloured either with a light French grey or pea green with the panel moldings white, the room would have a beautiful effect and as to hanging pictures in the

room the paneling will be no objection, but rather an advantage, for the pictures may be put in the panels and (the) one will set off the other, and (thereby) will require much fewer pictures to furnish the room, with panels than without, for unless you had several very large pictures (suppose history pieces or landscapes) 10 or 12 feet wide, and 5 or 6 feet high; or full length portraits of 6 or 7 feet long and 3 feet wide etc; the room so large, and lofty would appear very poorly furnished without panels, but with them a moderate quantity of pictures and of a middling size, would (appear to) furnish the room very decently, and this is the method now used in genteel houses and these panels as I have appointed them are large, open and well adapted to receive pictures of various sizes; I therefore beg for Gods sake you will not spoil so fine a room, by robbing it of its proper ornaments, consider what a long naked blank side facing you as you enter the room, a plain naked wall 30 feet in length, pray do consider how heavy and dead that will appear without the panels, whereas with them I will venture to say it will be admired as beautiful and even elegant, for I'm sure I took very great pains to render it such, at the least expense possible; and shall be greatly mortified to have it robbed of what was designed to give it lightness and elegance etc. etc., (missing) you have so far finished the building well and properly quite to my satisfaction. I humbly hope you will not disoblige me by omitting this cheap and pleasing decoration, I am very sure you (will) thank me when you see it done. I have by this post sent the Cornice etc. that you require all of which I had before sent, except the landing of the best stairs and vestibule Cornice, but they perhaps have got lost or mislaid. From what you say about the Landing of best stairs, I am afraid Stayley has not put on the Timber for the Landing place strong enough, there should always be a Beam in the front of the Landing (as I have shown by a Sketch) so that from the top of the plaster floor to the ceiling, under it, will be more 12 in. instead of 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (as you mentioned in your last letter) otherwise the Landing would not be sufficiently

strong, I intend the passages on the Chamber plan to be laid with plaster as well as the Landing place; the plaster floor will do 2in thick for the passage, so that it is only sinking the Joists 1in more, to contain the plaster floor – The joining of the Master Landing and Mrs. Thornhills dressing room boarded floor and indeed all the other floors must be made to join the boards with the plaster directly under where the Door is when shut, by this means the joining of the wood and plaster cannot be seen when the Bed Room doors are shut. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Thornhill and remain with much deference etc.

I would have answered your letter sooner but have been from home.

XVII

6 August 1800, Doncaster.

A loose sheet showing the 'Drawing Room Chimney Piece at Stanton' with detail of the acanthus capital.

Sir,

According to my promise I have herewith sent you a Design for the Drawing Room Chimney Piece, which I hope will please; I have drawn it to a large scale that the first Design, in order to make it more intelligent to the workman, and the Moldings etc. are drawn to the full size; all of which are in light and elegant style, and with as few ornaments as possible to give a proper effect to the Design – I very much wish that you would consent to let the best Staircase be panelled, it will be a very great ornament and the expense will only be about 3£ it (will) add the greatest beauty, for so small an expense that ever was known; it would then be admired as a most elegant Staircase indeed! pray do consider of this it would be the last money you ever laid (out) for giving a proper effect – I doubt not but both you, and your friends are satisfied that you have done right in taking my advice in panelling your Dining Room, for comparatively speaking you

would have quite spoiled the appearance of that now very handsome Room, if it had been finished with bare walls only – As soon as I have leisure I will send you a Design for papering the Drawing Room in the modern Style; please to give my most respectful Compliments to Mrs. Thornhill, and I remain etc.

P.S. I will send my Head Clerk to measure off the work as soon as ever I hear that Stayley and Holiday have finished. I made a drawing for the panel Mold when at Stanton.

XVIII

26 July 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

I have recd. the favour of your letter of the 19th inst., and if all be well I intend being at Stanton on Tuesday evening next,

I am Sir etc.

XIX

15 September 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

The bearer is my Head Clerk who I have sent to measure off your work at Stanton; both myself and Clerk have been so very busy ever since I saw you last (that) I am sorry it has not been my power to have it done sooner – I have according to my promise sent Mrs. Thornhill a pattern of the beautiful light Green the same as my best room is coloured with. I recommend it for the Dining (Walls) Room, leaving the panel moldings white; and also for Mrs. Thornhill's Bow-Window dressing room, which if hung with (drawings) in gilt frames as my Room is, this Colour will show them to great advantage.

I am Sir etc.

XX

29 November 1800, Doncaster.

Sir,

I have this day sent you by the Sheffield Coach, all the Workmens Accounts that my Clerk measured off at Stanton. I am sorry it has not been convenient for me to send them sooner, we have been so exceeding busy for sometime past – I expect by this time you have begun to alter your Kitchen offices; when ever any further assistance is wanted from me, if you will please to inform me by a line, your kind orders shall be strictly attended to by, Sir etc.

Please to present my best compliments to Mrs. Thornhill.

The Bills are wrapped up as a small square parcel covered with blue paper which I hope you will get safe.

XXI

BUILDING QUERIES

[None Dated]

1. From Bache Thornhill to W. Lindley

How would you have the Top Step and (front of) Landing to finish together, whether straight in a Line, on the front Edge, and Likewise how the top side and under side of Step must finish with the Floor and Ceiling. I think you mentioned having a Plaster Floor on the Landing, the Steps are just 6½ inches thick, and when the Laths and Plaster for the under side, of Ceiling, and Laths and Plaster for Floor is taken off it leaves the Runner of wood of Landing so very narrow. I am afraid they will not answer well, I want your advice, and whether you think the Plaster Floor, and Boards out of Mrs. Thornhills Dressing Room, and the other Door ways will join well together and have a good affect,

An Answer by the next Post. If convenient there is no design for any Cornice to Vestibule, and we don't understand exactly what Cornish you Intend for the ceiling under Garrett Landings and over the Best Staircase of Ceiling to Best Staircase.

2. Question from Joiner to Lindley

The Joiner wants to know how many Squares and in what form they must finish (as make) the Round Window for the Pediment, we want likewise the Drawings at Large for the Mason Work above the Cornish what is the size of Ballester, Rail etc. we understand by the Last Drawing for the Garretts, you intend for to wall up behind all the Ballestrade with Stone Ashler, except them that happen against the Garrett windows, the ... before the Ballesters seem to be the same as the Windows below if so want you to fix of the size of Ballester to the thickness of the Ashler behind Do. this Stone wants all to be got. If you examine the Copper of the Roof and Garretts Plan you will find there is Two (principle) Beams lay – in the Back Staircase likely to be in the head Room when we Land, and Likewise the Prinsaple Rafters of the Roof in one Front and Back Part of the House goes exactly through the windows – where they are now Drawing in the Garrett Plan. We want all framed together and the Sidetrees etc. Likewise is fixed in them, and the Naked Flooring or Joynting for the Garrett Floors are all done and fixed into the Beams only leaving the open for Staircase; the Lights etc. etc. – part of the (Hopton Wood) Stone for the best Staircase is now at Stanton and the Man has sent them in Blocks of two or more Steps, allowing them 5 ft. 2 in. and a Block 1 foot 4 in. wide and 11 inches thick to make two steps the order you gave was 5 ft 2 in long 1 ft 5 in wide and 8 in thick, should be glad if you would send the form of the Steps as the Stone needs not be built up to less.

3. Reply

The manner of finishing the facing of the landings over the best staircase leading to the Garretts as the plasterers will want to lay the plaster floor on the landing at the same time as they lay the Garrett floors, it will be about 15½ or 16 inches deep from the top of the plaster floor to the underside of the ceiling, what margent you would have for the banesters to stand upon, the size of hand rail and height of banesters for do., and the back staircase and what sort of banesters.

4. Directions about some of the dimensions of the new rooms in my house
(presumably B.T.)

Mem.

To send the Dimensions of the Dressing Room as it was before the corners were taken off, and to specify how much of each corner is now lost – ----

To send the Dimensions of the Hearth and fireplace of the said Room – – also of the Window – ----

To send the Dimensions of the dining Room
Fireplace for Mr. Snowden.

Width of Fireplace in the Dining Room fireplace for Mr. Snowden.

Width of Fireplace in the Dining Room 4 ft. 1¾ ins.

Height of Fireplace 3 ft. 5⅞ ins.

Width of Do. for Mrs. Thornhills Dressing Room
2 ft. 8¼ ins.

Height of Do. 3 ft. 1 in.

5. Questions to Lindley about the Building

As the Joiner has nearly all the Ground, Flooring etc. now fixed up in the Chambers they will want to fix the Ground etc. in the Passages. The Crosswall betwixt the Chamber over the Dining Room, and Library and Do. betwixt the Chamber over the Drawing Room and Butlers Pantry is arched over the width of the Passages on the account of some Chimney Piece that goes over them into the Middle walls, in what manner are they to be finished, wether you would have the Arch to strike into the Wall or w[h]ether there must be a brake and what must be round them.

And what there must be round the Doorways or Arches at the Top of the Landing of the Best Staircase Leading to the Chambers.

That End of Mrs. Thornhills Dressing Room toward the (missing) Landing of the Best Staircase is Circular to answer the Circular Window. Must the Door be to the Circle or straight as the head of the Door casing will be circular on one side and straight on the other.

What sort of a Faseing [facing] must there be before the Edge of the Stu[d]ding that comes to the circular Window so as the Plastering may finish to it and if to the Edge or the Shutter.

A Plane Drawing for Frieze and Cornish of the Garretts (Chimney Pieces) the stone steps are now up.

6. Dimensions

----- of Vestibule betwixt the front lift 9 ins

A is the stone jambs and architraves

B is the sash frames and d... that class against – [missing] which makes up the 8 inches from the casings to the side of the wall is 6 inch as marked but it can be ...

There has been no design for any architraves of the vestibule should be glad if you will send one with the above designs for the [?] reach in the dining room or a rough sketch so as the joiners can make it ready for the first coat of plastering. The dimensions of it now left are as under 11 ft 6 in high from floor joist to under side of the lintel 6 ft 6 in wide betwixt the stone.

7. The Chamber Doors are ordered to be Raised Panel on one side and flat on the other, and we want to know whether of the sides Mr. Lindley intends to be into the inside of the Room as there will want No. 3 Door for between Dressing Room and Chambers worked the same on both sides so as they will answer one another in both rooms when shut.

(signed) F. Staley.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Thornhill MSS.
- 2 I am obliged to my friend Michael Stanley, FGS for information about the stone.
- 3 M. Craven & M. Stanley, *The Derbyshire Country House* (3rd ed., Ashbourne, 2001) vol. II, pp. 204–205, supplemented by Thornhill MSS.
- 4 H.M. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* 4th edn. (New Haven & London, 2008), pp. 96–97. For the Barkers as lead traders, see L. Willies, *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society*, 93 (1973), pp. 55–74.
- 5 For the design for the stables, see Derbyshire Record Office, Gell MSS, D258/14/14/7. Barker probably designed the Hall too but it was later much altered: Lease of 1711, Belvoir MSS, survey of 1725 & Willies, *op. cit.*.
- 6 J.M. Robinson, *James Wyatt, Architect to George III* (New Haven & London 2011), p. 323; cf. an engraved and named plan in the collections of the Derbyshire Museums Service and an ashlar block to the right of the entrance carved with: JW/1802. The house (listed grade II*) was finished to an altered design and by another hand, and still

- exists, despite having passed into the hands of Derby City Council and being currently a building at risk.
- 7 Thornhill MSS. There are 20 letters from Lindley to Thornhill and six undated building queries: see Appendix.
 - 8 Grove Hall, Nottinghamshire, demolished 1952, was mainly the work of Carr. Anthony Hardolph Eyre (1757–1836) had succeeded his father in 1788.
 - 9 On Cooke, see H. Pirie-Gordon (ed.), *Burke’s Landed Gentry* (London 1937), p. 474; for Grove, Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 226; for Hall Cross and Owston, Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 655–6 (it has not been demolished, *pace* Colvin). Owston is relatively intact (but extended) and serves as a ‘wedding venue.’
 - 10 M. Craven, *Stanton and the Thornhills* (Derby 2012), pp. 187, 580.
 - 11 Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 1187. For Soho and Pickford, see M. Craven, *John Whitehurst* (2nd ed., Stroud, 2015), p. 65.
 - 12 Thornhill MSS.
 - 13 Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 654–55.
 - 14 A. Taylor, *William Lindley of Doncaster, Georgian Group Journal* 4 (1994), p. 55.
 - 15 For the complete correspondence, see Appendix. No drawings appear to have survived.
 - 16 Sikes’s will is dated 3 March 1798; *Sikes of Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire*, in *Herald and Genealogist*, 6, p. 20. For Old St Helen’s (not by Lindley) demolition and sale, see *Derby Mercury* 26 July 1798 and 2 February 1800. A new house called St Helen’s at the southern end of the new street, of which neither a satisfactory illustration nor documentation has survived, might conceivably have been Lindley’s work. The Newark Sikes family were unrelated to the Sykes of Sledmere, Yorkshire; their house at Newark (dem.) was Baroque in style (*ex. inf.* Nicholas Mellors).
 - 17 Historic England, Statutory List 167349 (listed grade II). The house has been enormously extended in the later twentieth century to create many apartments, and is barely recognisable.
 - 18 H. Thorold, *Lincolnshire Houses* (Norwich 1999) 62, 194.
 - 19 Correcting Historic England, Statutory List, 128376 (listed grade II).
 - 20 G. Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660–1820* (London, 1981), pp. 264, 265.
 - 21 For start, letter from Lindley to Bache, 23 February 1799, Thornhill MSS (Appendix II), Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 289; letters 12, 24 March and (date unknown) April 1799, Thornhill MSS (Appendix VIII, IX, X).
 - 22 Letter, April 1799, Thornhill MSS (Appendix X). The correspondence establishes that Shipley was started in the summer of 1799, not in 1778, the date traditionally ascribed to it.
 - 23 Letter 2 May 1800, Thornhill MSS (Appendix XV). The Ven John Eyre (1758–1830) of Babworth Rectory (a house now much altered) was the younger brother of Anthony Hardolph Eyre of Grove (*qv supra*).
 - 24 For the date of Shipley, see Craven & Stanley, *op. cit.* (2001), pp. 192–195; for Shipley, Thornhill MSS, letter of 2 September 1799 (Appendix XII).
 - 25 Letter 2 May 1800, Thornhill MSS (Appendix XV).
 - 26 Letter, 25 April 1799, Thornhill MSS. (Appendix XI).
 - 27 Letter, 21 January 1800, Thornhill MSS (Appendix XIII).
 - 28 Letter 1 June 1800, Thornhill MSS (Appendix XVI).
 - 29 *Ibid.*
 - 30 Letter, 15 September 1800, Thornhill MSS (Appendix XIX).