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## The Gothic Architectural Work of Sanderson Miller by William Hawkes

Sanderson Miller has long been recognised as a pioneer of the Gothic Revival. Ignored by Eastlake, acknowledged by Clark, reinstated by Summerson, endorsed by Mordaunt Crook, and fully championed by Davis, Miller is now accorded a position of some significance.

Apart from a selection of his correspondence, little has been published on him, and a false image persists of a barely competent socialite, gadding about the noble circuit and knocking off crude Gothic sketches for the amusement of his friends.<sup>1</sup> Even in Howard Colvin's revised *Dictionary*, Miller still appears as rather impractical and dependent on professional draughtsmen and craftsmen to execute his designs. I hope to do something to correct this idea, for Miller valued himself (and was valued by his contemporaries) not only for his scholarship but for his practicality and common sense. Research has helped to flesh out his character and extend our understanding of his building work. Nonetheless a weakness remains. What is one to make of an architect whose reputation survives but precious little else? — few buildings, almost no drawings and fragmentary documentary evidence.

More careful examination is still needed before the evolution of the Gothic Revival in its early years can be clearly established. It appears, particularly in the provinces, that there was — after the sparkling divertimenti of the earliest period — a slight rallentando in the 40's and early 50's, before the fully orchestrated work swept across the nation. Miller's principal output fell into this period. Hence, I believe, its significance.

Sanderson Miller was born in 1716 at Radway in Warwickshire. The village of Radway lies under the sudden escarpment of Edge Hill and on the site over which the muddled and indecisive battle of the Civil Wars was fought in 1642. His father had purchased the estate of Radway Grange some two years before on his retirement from business in Banbury. Miller was possibly educated at Solihull School and then went on to St. Mary Hall at Oxford. Here his youthful interest in the classics, metaphysics and antiquarianism found an easy outlet.

As might be guessed from his portrait (Plate 1), his natural inclination was to the company of the sober and earnest. Principal amongst these was Charles Lyttelton, later president of the Society of Antiquaries, whose family were to play a key role in Miller's architectural advancement. Miller never matriculated for, at the age of 24, he took over the running of the Radway estate on the death of his father.

Miller's first constructional experiments were in the form of landscape. In 1739 he began to tackle the reclamation of the grounds at Radway Grange. It would be hard to imagine a site more fertile in natural dramatic effect and historical association. The Grange — a pleasant if slightly dull 17th century Manor House — stood at the bottom of the hill. From there the ground rose some 300 feet to the ridge, on the brow of which Charles I was traditionally said to have raised his standard on the morning of the battle. Associations of a different kind were provided by the earlier presence of a monastic grange at Radway, mentioned in the mid-12th century foundation charter of Stoneleigh Abbey. The site was then largely denuded of trees, but was plentifully watered with springs, including the, supposedly monastic, St. Thomas' Well.

Not surprisingly, these first contrivances were rather amateur and stiff. Probably using estate labour, a viewing platform was built, half way up the hill to give an opportunity of inspecting the field of battle. Clumps of trees were planted to represent some of the positions of the main parties during the battle. Below the terrace, a cascade fell through rustic arches and broken stonework down to an occasional fountain — fed by a reservoir.

Some ten years later, William Shenstone was to think these early works incongruous but at the time they would have compared with Kent's work then going on in Venus' Vale at Rousham.<sup>2</sup>

In 1743 Miller began, at Radway, a more revolutionary project. This was the construction of Egge Cottage, nestling at the top of the hill, and clearly a deliberate attempt to evoke a mediaeval and monastic past. The thatched roof gave a cosy air to stonework, whose rounded corner bastions suggested the remains of a blasted fortress. The interior was stone vaulted and intended for picnics and scholarly contemplation. It was here that Miller kept part of his library and was to offer it later to accommodate the distinguished but impoverished scholar in Anglo-Saxon, George Ballard, who would have made a very superior hermit. Another Oxford friend, James Merrick, summed up the intended mood in verse:

Within this solitary cell  
Calm thought and sweet contentment dwell,  
Parents of bliss sincere;  
Peace spreads around her balmy wings  
And banish'd from the courts of kings,  
Has fixed her mansion here ...<sup>3</sup>

Miller next turned his attention to his own house, Radway Grange. Here he had to proceed with consideration as his mother was still in residence as a life-tenant. This sketch (Plate 2) appears to have been executed before 1745. A dedication below to Mrs. Miller in the formal manner of an engraved view proclaims it to have been prepared by Miller himself, obviously proud of his Gothic intentions. The final scheme was to follow the sketch quite closely but, first a new S.E. front was built out, one room deep, towards the hill. The composition is a curious assemblage of mediaeval elements under a gable or pediment, yet already the shallowness of the detail and the use of ornamental foliage show signs of Miller's later style. Internally, a new stair was put up, an archway formed, and two quite convincingly mediaeval fireplaces added. In 1746 the intended bay windows were built. The cresting has since gone, along with the glazing bars. The central door had to wait another 6 years, until funds allowed, and was then put up without the flanking panels on the drawing.<sup>4</sup>

The detailing on the Grange is, of course, very different from Egge Cottage. The sources for the design seem to be more a matter of personal observation or creation than a dependence on the work of others, although Miller's mason, William Hitchcox, may have brought a degree of traditional survival to the mouldings. Hitchcox was to be a vital figure in Miller's success. His ambivalent role of both mason and personal servant caused confusion and amusement amongst Miller's friends. Reliability and speed were not his strong points, but he achieved a high standard of craftsmanship.

As soon as the renovation of the Grange was under way, Miller turned his attention back to the brow of the hill. Evidently encouraged by the response to Egge Cottage, he determined upon a much bolder Gothic manifesto. This was the erection of an octagonal Gothic Tower, to serve both as a gate-lodge to his estate and as an object to draw the eye from below.

Work began on the Tower on 23 October 1745, the anniversary of the battle. The upper room was plastered out, with arcaded cornice, ogee headed windows and the arms of a selection of Miller's friends whose estates lay roughly in the appropriate direction. The ceiling (now destroyed by a flat roof) originally contained a vault with the royal arms in the centre and those of the Saxon heptarchy below. The whole thing was a neat piece of

scholarship, originality, social politeness and — possibly as at Stowe — political allusion.<sup>5</sup> Hitchcox was again the mason with help from the estate force. The plasterwork was by Robert Moore. The rather rigid quality of the mouldings here betraying his lack of familiarity with a style that was later to become his hallmark. To complete the setting of the Tower, a square turret and drawbridge were added, together with a ruined wall and — across the road, to screen some old cottages — a grander ruined wall with archway and oriel window (Plate 3).

By September 1750, all was in readiness for a grand opening ceremony — the date carefully chosen to suit all persuasions, as celebrating Cromwell's victories and his death. Shenstone was not invited — probably as well — for when he did get there he complained the height made him sick and he didn't like to look out of the window — but his cronies managed to jeer at Miller for sending for Birmingham cannon-balls to give authenticity at the opening.<sup>6</sup> Bishop Pockocke, that indefatigable traveller, was much more charitable when he visited Radway some years later:

I came to Mr. Miller's house at Radway. This gentleman ... has a great genius for architecture especially the Gothic ... He has ... made a fine lawn up the hill with shady walks round it, up to the Ruined Castle ... there is a very fine octagon Gothic room in it, with four windows and four niches and some old painted glass in the windows. In one of the niches is to be placed Caractacus in chains, modelled under Mr. Miller's direction ...<sup>7</sup>

If Caractacus, the leader of the ancient Britons, *was* intended for the niche, something went seriously wrong; for the figure by James Lovell is some 9 feet tall and now frets at the bottom of the hill.

The inspiration for the Edge Hill Tower was clearly the late 14th century Guy's Tower at Warwick Castle and is a piece of closely observed Gothic. What made Miller's achievement the more remarkable was the assurance, with which the various elements of the building were disposed to form a convincing mediaeval group; the ruined sections giving a strong element of decay and a surprisingly apt air of Anglo-Saxon elegy.

The whole thing seems a long way from, say Vanbrugh's Claremont Belvedere and much closer to the precocious Alfred's Hall at Cirencester. The Edge Hill Castle, formed the centrepiece of Richard Jago's rather pedestrian poem *Edgehill; or the Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralised* published in 1767 and in four books. After thanking Miller for making a path up the hill, the poem rambles towards the ridge:

And oft the stately Tow'rs that overtop  
The rising Wood, and oft the broken Arch,  
Or mould'ring Wall, well taught to counterfeit  
The Waste of Time, to solemn thought excite,  
And crown with graceful Pomp the shaggy Hill.

And then the moral:

So Virtue paints the steep Ascent to Fame<sup>8</sup>

I have dwelt, at some length, on Radway as it was critical to Miller's architectural success. Not only in giving him an opportunity to demonstrate his ideas for his friends, but in acquiring further practical experience in building.

In 1746 Miller married — and married well. His wife, Susannah, was small and energetic, equally capable as hostess or as book-keeper, and much liked by his friends. She brought him a welcome marriage settlement and improved social connections through her relationship with the Fiennes family.

In 1745, Miller began his discussions with Thomas Lennard Barrett (later Lord Dacre) on the remodelling of Belhus in Essex. Barrett was neurotic and pedantic, but he was also a fellow antiquary and Gothic enthusiast. Miller's part in the remodelling of the West and South fronts of the house is confused but, on Horace Walpole's authority, he is to be credited with the more interesting interior alterations of 1745-7, when a new Gothic Hall, Staircase and Upper Drawing Room were fitted out. This work is impressive for its date. The detailing fairly simple and rather muscular. A sketch, attributed to Miller, from the Farmington library in America could be a scheme for a Gothic lobby at Belhus.<sup>9</sup>

Amongst Miller's acquaintance in the Midlands, the early Gothic was equally restrained. Lord Guernsey describes putting up a Gothic elemental building in 1746. The next year, Edward Turner demanded from Miller a design for a Gothic eye catcher to be slapped on to the end of a barn at Ambrosden — as Miller had done at Radway. This drawing (Plate 4) (now in the RIBA, discovered in Miller's copy of *Alberti*) must be very much the sort of thing. Turner also rushed up a Ruin in such unseemly haste that it collapsed as soon as it was finished.<sup>10</sup>

The subject of deciduous architecture leads to Lord North at Wroxton, where the church tower was reconstructed to Miller's design with Hitchcox as mason. Horace Walpole describes it:-

The tower is in good plain Gothic style and was once, they tell you, still more beautiful but Mr. Miller who designed it, unluckily once in his life happened to think rather of beauty than of the water-tables, and so it fell down the first winter.

To be fair, it was an octagonal lantern top only that collapsed, which Hitchcox failed to cramp on properly. It is interesting that Walpole, for one, considered Miller better on practicalities than aesthetics.

At the same time, in 1747, Miller was busy at the Abbey in Wroxton. The Chapel was extended on a scheme devised by North in conjunction with Miller and Barrett. The craftsmen's lack of familiarity with Gothic is clearly demonstrated in the puddingy quality of the external mouldings. The interior plasterwork was an improvement and even six years later, was admired by Walpole as being just what was needed for his Dining Room at Strawberry Hill.<sup>11</sup>

Walpole was to praise still more unreservedly Miller's next commission of significance, which was the erection of the Sham Castle at Hagley in Worcestershire, for George Lyttelton, elder brother of Charles. This was nearing completing in 1748, and was, as a ruin, more convincing even than Radway: one round tower intact with shattered curtain walls between and the stumps of two more towers forming a triangle. No pains were spared to get it right: the great windows were said to have come from Halesowen Abbey, stones were carefully arranged to suggest they had just tumbled from the walls and mediaeval glass was provided by Miller. As a final touch, special chairs were ordered to Miller's design, from Henry Keene; Lyttelton insisting that —

They are not to be common chairs but in a Gothic form.

Walpole's judgement of the Castle, if often quoted, is too good to leave out —

There is a ruined castle, built by Miller, that would get him his freedom, even of Strawberry: it has the true rust of the barons' wars.<sup>12</sup>

The Hagley design was promptly adapted for a similar scheme for Lord Chancellor Hardwicke at Wimpole in Cambridgeshire. A careful perspective drawing (Plate 5) was dispatched by Miller in 1749, within a week of its being requested, and followed by pencil elevational sketches, executed at the house. Hardwicke unfortunately decided to leave his castle "in the air", and it was not to be put up for another two decades, when his son erected it in slightly modified form.<sup>13</sup>

A third, much plainer, castle tower went up at Ingestre in Staffordshire, again sketched by Miller at George Lyttelton's request.<sup>14</sup>

To close the period up to 1750, and the first ten years of his architectural activity, Miller was invited by Sir Roger Newdigate to help put his house, Arbury Hall, into order. This episode is of considerable interest as an illustration of two gifted amateurs at work together. The significant difference, from Belhus, is that Newdigate was an equal participant and a competent draughtsman and designer. An illuminating entry in Miller's diary describes him teaching Sir Roger to draw Gothic arches in return for his receiving instruction on perspective drawing — no doubt for use on the Wimpole scheme.

The first project was a bay-window at the end of the Library. This was drawn out in 1749 and put up by William Hitchcox. At first sight its close resemblance to the Radway bay seems slightly shocking. There are, of course, differences in detail and the ceilings inside are vaulted.

Newdigate and Miller next prepared a scheme for fitting up lady Newdigate's Dressing Room on the first floor behind the new bay. For once Miller's original rough sketches survive. As a piece of draughtsmanship these are unimpressive — fussy and imprecise with an almost schoolboyish pre-occupation with trivial objects on the shelves. A glance at the ink version (be it Newdigate or Miller) shows the weakness to lie in the feeble presentation and not in the quality of the design. The scheme for the Dressing Room followed the sketches (Plate 6) closely and is, I believe, a particularly fine example of a Gothic interior for its date. The contractor was William Hiorn.

Miller's future involvement at Arbury was, it seems, minimal and he was succeeded by Henry Keene for the later phase of the work.<sup>15</sup> Keene had been employed by Miller's friend, Bishop Maddox, to remodel the Chapel at Hartlebury Castle. Miller's presence during building suggests that Keene may well have been working with Miller at his shoulder. As Miller records in his diary "Drawing seat" there it is tempting to see him as the designer of the Bishop's Pew. When amateurs are involved, the architectural historian must ever beware of neat attribution.<sup>16</sup>

There is, of course, a strong link between the rather crude fan vaults at Hartlebury and those, originally in the Museum at Enville which also dates from 1750 (Plate 7). Pococke attributes this to Miller, who designed several buildings there, but the authorship of the Museum has recently been the subject of scholarly debate. Allowing for some Batty Langley influence in the columns, the disposition of the elements and the quality of the masonry work still seem to me sufficiently reminiscent of Miller, and of Hitchcox, who was sent over to work at Enville (Plate 6). The building is now in a sad state of decay but is described at its prime in an 18th century guidebook —

This is a stately Gothic edifice and does much credit to the designer. Its inside is curiously and richly adorned with stucco; the ceiling remarkably so. At one end in a niche is a bust of Homer; at the other a Cicero. A billiard table and a small organ are the furniture of this superb room.

William Shenstone was later to take over the layout of the grounds, but the initial move away from 17th century formal may well have been influenced by Miller.<sup>17</sup>

The subject of informalised landscaping leads back once again to Wroxton, where a similar move was taking place, apparently under the aegis of Miller and North's agent, John Strong. Below Miller's earlier cascade, a mound was thrown up and surmounted by a Gothic Seat of his design. The ground beyond was planted with wiggly walks and Chinese buildings. Discerning visitors, such as Horace Walpole and Bishop Pococke, were vastly impressed as was William Pitt (the elder), whom Miller had got to know well at Stowe and Astrop Wells, a spa near Banbury.

This is perhaps a good moment to pause and reflect on Miller's architectural achievement so far. Although his major commissions still lay ahead, one feels that — if he had stopped now and done nothing more — he would still have merited a place in the History of the Gothic Revival. At a time when Strawberry Hill had only just begun, Miller was already regarded highly by his contemporaries. Thus Lennard Barrett to Miller —

Your fame in Architecture grows greater and greater every day and I hear of nothing else; if you have a mind to set up, you'll soon eclipse Mr. Kent, especially in the Gothic way in which to my mind he succeeds very ill.<sup>18</sup>

Miller's amateur status was largely due to his avowed intent to avoid charging for his work. Whilst aware that his architectural skills could prove invaluable, if the financial burdens of estate and family became too great, he was careful to avoid being at the beck and call of others by charging for his schemes. This decision led to a variety of presents, including such curiosities as seeds from New England and a live eel. It is difficult to accept that Miller deliberately exploited the gratitude of his clients, but this certainly enabled him to lead the kind of life he wanted and brought him solid help, when badly needed at the time of his Inclosures.<sup>16</sup>

Also in 1750, the first of the Gothic bays was put up at Adlestrop park for James Leigh (Plate 9). Again we see Miller repeating his successful Radway formula, with variety in the centre portion — which, like other bay, was added later when funds allowed.<sup>19b</sup>

Despite the almost frenetic energy displayed by Miller at this time, it is clear that pressures were building up on him in earnest. Although now only 34, he must have found the increasing demands of society, architecture and estate difficult to balance. Yet, in the midst of this he still found time, at Radway, for the gentler pursuits of reading, walking, star gazing, using his camera obscura and entertaining friends to syllabub and music at the Castle.

It is hardly surprising that some of his schemes were relatively plain: a stable block for Lord Vere Beauclerk at Hanworth, a garden front with plain bays for George Lyttelton's half-brother at Hagley, and — possibly — similar schemes for James West at Alscott and Sir William Stanhope at Eythrope.<sup>20</sup>

By contrast Miller's interiors from this period are more impressive. From 1751 comes a remodelling of the old library at All Souls, Oxford, to make rooms for Robert Vansittart and a conversion at Durham Castle to form a Dining Room for the new Bishop (Plate 10). The former scheme was stitched together from various old fragments with new panelling and partitions. The wall panelling only survives. The preservation of the Elizabethan ceiling was more a matter of donnish economy than good judgement.<sup>21</sup> A similar

blindness was present at Durham (Plate 11) where Norman windows were concealed on the Bishop's insistence to establish symmetry. The work here was carried out by a craftsman sent by Miller, as the Bishop believed —

Our people at Durham do not much understand this kind of Antique work.

(Ironical when one considers what had been going on next door in Yorkshire.) The room was given ogee windows, a buttercupped ceiling and a typically Miller fireplace.<sup>22</sup> The fireplace can be matched with Miller's design for the Eating-room at Belhus. From 1752 he continued to advise Barrett on his alterations to the North Tapestry Drawing Room, a heraldic Bedroom, and a Dressing Room. From this period must also surely come the Hall at The Priory in Warwick, the home of Matthew Wise, whose arms Miller had put up at Edge Hill Castle.<sup>23</sup>

We now come to Miller's three major commissions — the rebuilding of Hagley Hall for George Lyttelton, the new Shire Hall for the County of Warwick and the Great Hall at Lacock Abbey for John Ivory Talbot. Only the last of these was built as Gothic, but Hagley Hall had originally been designed as such by Miller. The subsequent involvement of Walpole and Chute, and advice from Barrett persuaded Lyttelton to change tack, with a revised request to Miller —

We ... desire you will try your skill in the Greek architecture — Your Gothick House was an admirable good one and, the nearer you can bring this one to that, the better it will be.<sup>24</sup>

Fortunately Miller had the true flexibility of the Rococo age or — as Lyttelton himself put it more kindly — he was —

A Man of too large Ideas to be confined to one Taste.<sup>25</sup>

and the final design was basically Miller's, with modification by another amateur, Thomas Prowse, and John Sanderson, a surveyor and architect in London, who was employed, it seems, solely in the capacity of professional draughtsman, with Miller's approval, in order to relieve him of the burden. For the same reason, the fair version of the Shire Hall scheme was drawn up by others.<sup>26</sup>

This episode has led to the mistaken assumption that Miller could not draw. It would be unfair to judge him on the evidence of the few drawings that survive, but his ink drawings suggest he was a competent rather than a gifted draughtsman. However, it is clear, from his diaries and correspondence, that he was perfectly capable of providing drawings fine enough to persuade their recipients of the quality of his designs, and — when the need arose — detailed enough to enable draftsmen to work from them.

Crowding on the heels of Hagley and Warwick came Miller's major Gothic commission — the rebuilding of the Great Hall at Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire. Here Miller was on his own, although — rather curiously for a job of this size — he only visited the site twice and relied instead on providing the foreman with careful briefings at Radway and large-scale details of all the mouldings. Miller successfully overcame the practical difficulties of the brief — including building over the old vaults, and an awkward kitchen chimney, which Talbot was happy to convert into a pinnacle. As he put it:-

The chimney being converted into an ornament will have a pretty effect and, as I would by no means have my front regular, will fully answer that intent: since the beauty of Gothick Architecture (in my opinion) consists like that of a Pindarick ode in the boldness and irregularity of its members.

Unfortunately this prophetic attitude did not prevail and the building is symmetrical (Plate 12). The composition of the exterior is comparatively simple using Miller's standard vocabulary with improvements and additions.

By the end of 1754 the Hall was roofed in. The heraldic richness of the ceiling disguises Talbot's anxiety to keep its form plain. The doorcases and fireplace are typical Miller. The niches were designed to house "Nun's heads etc.". The baroque exuberance of the terracotta figures installed can hardly be what Miller envisaged, but at least they fit better than poor Caractacus at Edge Hill. Talbot showed his gratitude by giving Miller a copy of Leoni's *Alberti* and installing his arms at the north end of the ceiling. The following year a Gothic gateway was erected to Miller's design next to the Hall, to use up the surplus ashlar stonework, and the final completion was celebrated by a "Grand sacrifice to Bacchus".<sup>27</sup>

The period up to 1755 can be closed by a short political digression and a group of ecclesiastical commissions. Sir Edward Turner decided to stand for Parliament in the subsequently notorious Oxfordshire Election of 1754. Miller had many friends on both sides, but fell victim to an Old Interest pamphlet entitled: - *The Canvassing Couple or a Trip to the House of Commons* with scenes, machines and other decorations. Particularly a new scene in the Gothic Taste designed by Mr. M - 11 - r.<sup>28</sup> The church schemes were repairs to Ross on Wye Church, the rebuilding of the nave and transepts of Kineton Church in Warwickshire, and a new chancel at Hagley Church. All of these were swept away by the Victorians. We have now only the evidence of early photographs for Kineton and of Bishop Pococke's description for Hagley. The latter seems worth quoting.

Sir G. Lyttelton has adorned the Church in the most exquisite Gothic taste, Mr. Miller's design. The Chancel is entirely new; the windows are adorned on the sides and every part with Gothick ornaments in hewn stone and all the other parts of it is in stucco. On the ceiling and at each end are the arms of the paternal ancestors of the Lytteltons ... all at the expense of the Dean of Exeter, who gave a persian carpet as a covering for the communion table. [The] East window is of rich painted glass ... bordered with blue, purple and green glass lately made at Stourbridge. There are three windows each side in the Gothick style with a bordering of coloured glass thrown in pretty Gothick forms ... The Gallery rails are Gothick.

This all suggests a sumptuous interior worthy of comparison with the enigmatic Shobdon, then nearing completion.<sup>29</sup>

By 1755, of course, the Gothic style had begun to take off in earnest. Even amongst Miller's immediate acquaintance, there is some evidence that Capability Brown, Thomas Prowse and the Hiorne brothers, all took up Gothic with his encouragement. For Miller the year was to close on a distinguished note, for William Pitt, addressing him boldly as "the true, Great Master of Gothick", sought a design for a —

Considerable Gothick object that is to stand in a very fine situation on the Hills near Bath.

This was the Sham Castle, on Claverton Down, for Ralph Allen. Construction was delayed for some years and then the builder, Richard Jones, tried to take all the credit to himself.<sup>30</sup>

An attempt was made at this time to secure for Miller the post of Surveyor to the Office of Ordnance, made vacant by the death of Gibbs. In this he failed to succeed Gibbs, but back at Stowe in July 1756 he records laconically in his pocket book, "contriving a finishing to Gibbs building." Gibbs' Gothic Temple had been substantially completed by 1745, but the internal plasterwork, painted glass and heraldic dome were evidently delayed and

carried out by Lord Temple. Once again the Saxon Heptarchy is in evidence and the glass came from Miller's friend Matthew Wise. It must remain a distinct possibility that this is by Miller and Howard Colvin has suggested that the external pepperpots may be his too, for they do not appear on Gibb's sketch.<sup>31</sup>

Temple had tested Miller's abilities four years earlier by employing him to restore an ancestor's monument at Burton Dassett. Miller evidently proceeded with scholarly caution. In undertaking a similar restoration he had been careful to emphasise he had 'added nothing which was not justified by the remains of the old painting' True Morris principles!<sup>32</sup>

Heraldic correctness was but a part of Miller's antiquarian scholarship, for which he was regarded highly by many of the distinguished academics of his day. They urged him to complete an intended History of Architecture to correct some of Langley's misconceptions. Unfortunately this was no more successful than the later attempts of Muntz and Essex. Although Miller had a splendid library, it was stronger on classical sources. He seems to have had a copy of Langley's *Gothic Architecture Improved* by 1749, but appears to have made little direct use of it.<sup>33</sup>

Miller's part in the design of Pomfret Castle, in Arlington Street in Mayfair, remains unclear. Horace Walpole, who had a house in the street and should have known, states that Miller was the architect and certainly he prepared sketches for it, but it is likely that his direct involvement was limited. The exteriors seem sufficient echoes of his style, but I am inclined to think that the interiors owe more to Roger Newdigate — who introduced Miller — and probably Henry Keene; apart that is from the first floor Saloon and adjacent Lobby, which recall Miller's earlier work.<sup>34</sup>

Bishop Pococke's name has occurred several times in this paper. What I failed to mention in the account of his visit to Radway in 1756 was that he was there to consult Miller about the restoration (or rather remodelling) of Kilkenny Cathedral in Ireland. Miller was then too ill to give the matter full attention, but later went on to deal with Pococke's meticulous correspondence, to prepare detailed sketches, to arrange for a wooden model to be made in London and to select a craftsman to send over who was considered resistant to the influence of Irish alcohol. Although intended as Gothic, the work was in the end predominantly classical and has since been removed.<sup>35</sup>

A factor that would have restricted Miller's participation in these last two schemes was the state of his health. For the last nine years he had suffered from increasingly recurrent fevers and disorders. In December 1759 these culminated in a violent and public fit of insanity in Warwick, after which Miller was discreetly removed to the house of his London doctor, but alarmed the neighbourhood too much by his behaviour and had to be placed in a private mad-house. Within 6 months he was back at Radway, but remained paranoiac and resigned to the impression that he had lost his public reputation and must now "give over living in the world". This he did, spending the remainder of his life largely in retirement at Radway.

His dented self respect must have been raised slightly by the delayed construction of his Sham Castle schemes for Bath and Wimpole in 1762 and 1772. Otherwise, apart from the probability of his having designed the Gothic alterations at Broughton Castle to the Great Hall and Gallery for Thomas Twistleton, a relation, and the very slight possibility that he was consulted over the new church at Hillsborough in Ireland, the last 20 years of his life produced nothing of Gothic significance.<sup>36</sup> Insanity closed in again towards the end. He

spent some time in Lincolnshire under Dr. Willis, who was to treat George III for mental disorders. This last Gothic sketch was drawn whilst under confinement, but still shows a certain grasp of his favourite subject.<sup>37</sup> Miller eventually died in 1780 in London.

In closing this account of Miller's Gothic architecture, I should perhaps attempt to draw together some of the main features of his work. No easy task, for it was very much a period when — to use Marck Girouard's phrase — Whoever embarked on these delightful and uncharted seas was his own master.

Miller's lack of consistency is further complicated by the joint authorship of many projects — Miller's position ranging from equality to dominance — and his readiness to vary his architectural role — from a full and detailed service on some jobs to little more than postal sketches on others. All of this tends to obscure his stylistic development.

Looking at his Gothic work as a whole, certain groups and themes stand out. The sham castles and ruins, the eye-catchers, the stable blocks, ecclesiastical work, domestic remodellings, including the bay-windows and a variety of ornamental garden buildings. Not all of them works of substance, but generally a cut above what one of Miller's less respectful correspondents considered a typical commission — A Gothic Hogsty for some customary freeholder of Oxfordshire.<sup>38</sup>

In looking more closely at his architectural vocabulary, a few illustrations will suffice to show that the most easily recognisable characteristic is a shallowness and precision of moulding, mediaeval in spirit rather than in accuracy, but displaying a perception and understanding of the original sufficient to awake respect in his contemporaries.

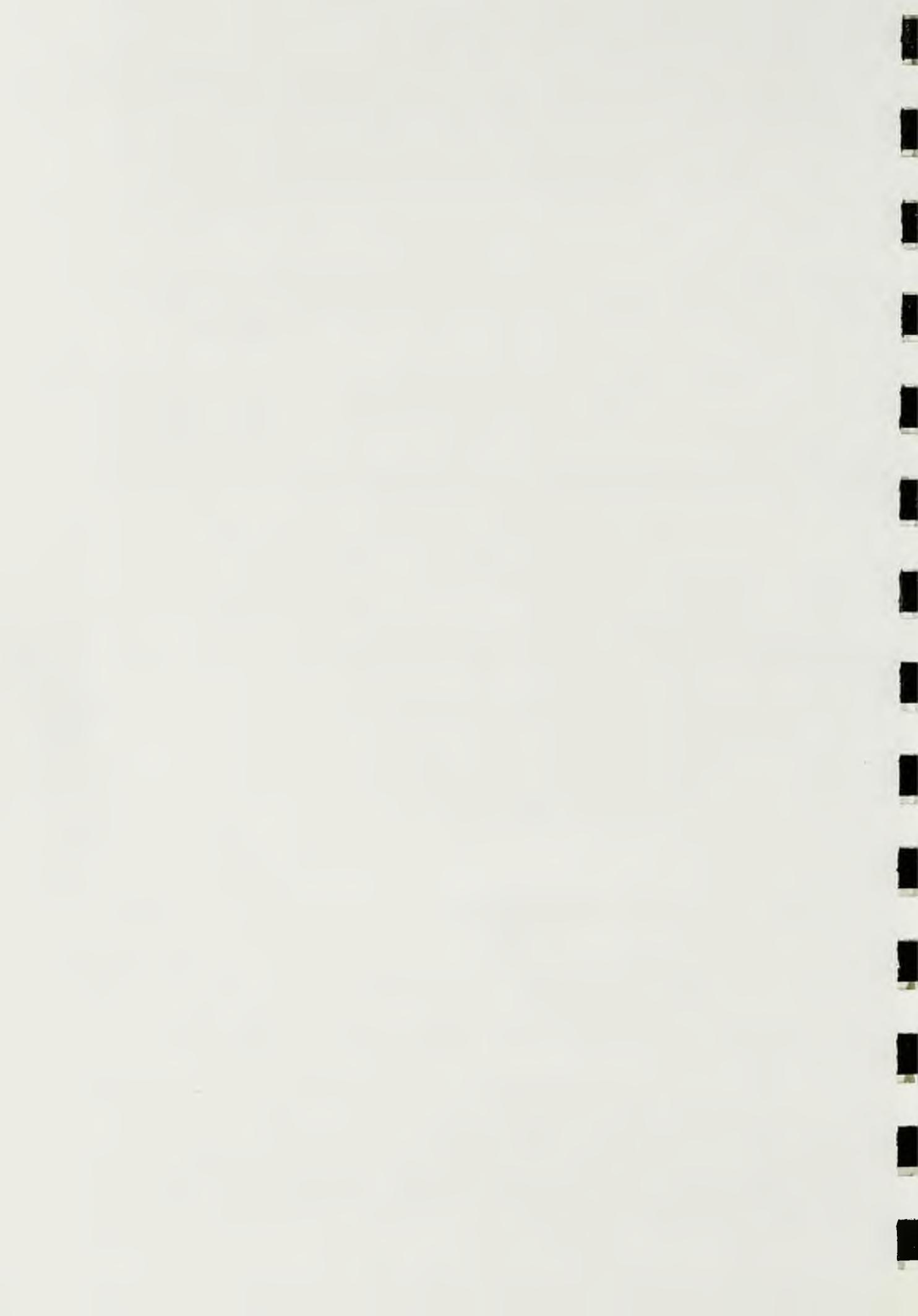
It has not been my intention to set Miller up as a major architectural figure. As an amateur, his architecture formed only a part of an active social life. His output of buildings — even including those in classical style — was modest. I would however suggest that — at the time they appeared — their quality and originality made them surprisingly influential. His continuing championship of the Gothic cause spread his views into a much wider circle. I am conscious that not enough is yet known in detail about the early Georgian period of the Revival, for Miller's architectural status to be assessed accurately, but I hope that I have shown his contribution to the Gothic Revival to have been of some significance.

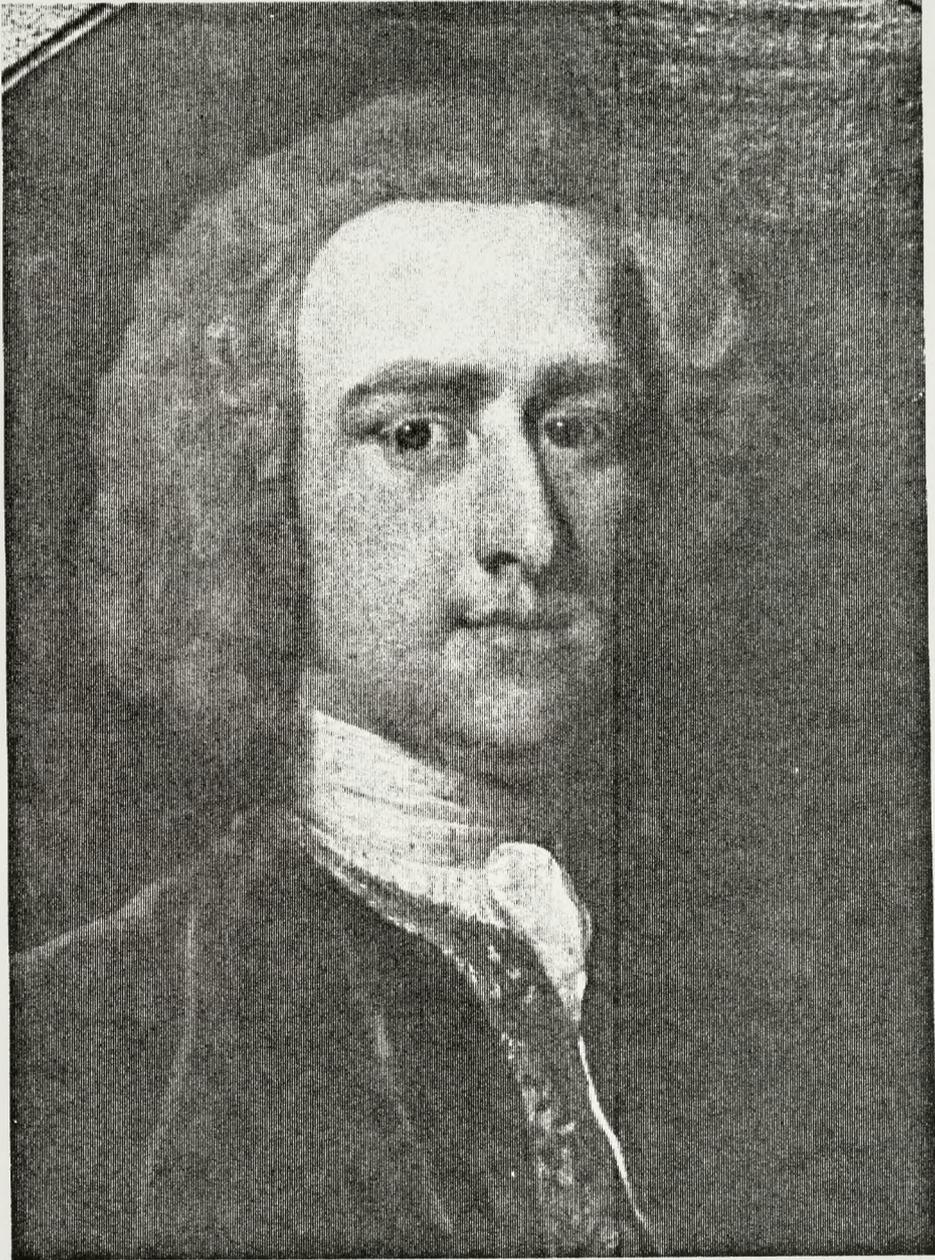
## Notes

- 1 Miller's correspondence is now in the Warwick Record Office (CR 125 - 125C). With L. Dickins and M. Stanton as editors, a selection was published as *An Eighteenth Century Correspondence* (London 1910). The information given here is based on study of the originals, together with other Miller papers at Warwick. Other principal sources are given. See also A.C. Wood and W. Hawkes *Sanderson Miller of Radway* (Banbury Hist. Soc. 1969); and H.W. Hawkes "Sanderson Miller", unpublished thesis (Cambridge Fine Arts Faculty 1964). This paper is based on continuing research by the author in conjunction with Anthony Wood. References below are limited to principal sources.
- 2 The dating of the work at Radway is largely based on Miller's building accounts (CR 125B, Box 1). Shenstone's description is given in his *Letters*, ed. M. Williams (London 1939) p.251.
- 3 Bod. Ballard 40, f.108. Merrick's poem is quoted in Dickins & Stanton *op.cit* p. A fuller version is BM Add. Ms 6230 f.40v.  
Exterior photographs in NMR and *Country Life* collection. Illustrated in *Country Life* c (1946) p.486.
- 4 The sketch is in Warwick C.R.O., CR 1382/41.
- 5 W. Shenstone, *loc.cit*; G. Miller *Rambles round the Edge Hills* (1900) p.24; E. Greening Lamborn in *Notes & Queries* CLXXXIV (1943) p.157.  
Exterior photographs are in NMR.
- 6 W. Shenstone *loc.cit* and T. Hodgetts, *Letters of Lady Luxborough* (1775) p.227.
- 7 R. Pockocke, quoted in Dickins & Stanton *op.cit* p.269-70.
- 8 R. Jago *Edgehill* (London 1767) p3.
- 9 Belhus: see Barrett's letters (CR 125B/141, 413-485, 967). Also Dacre Ms in Essex R.O. (D/DL C52).  
For exterior photographs see NMR and for interiors *Country Life*. I am grateful to Michael McCarthy for informing me of the Farmington drawing.
- 10 Packington: CR 125B/904; Ambrosden: CR 125B/494-5, 498, 500, 510; RIBA: L6/24.
- 11 Wroxton: see Wood & Hawkes, *op.cit*.
- 12 Hagley: W. Shenstone *op.cit* p.147; CR 125B/350, 618, 653, 672; Walpole, quoted in Dickins & Stanton *op.cit* p.297.
- 13 Wimpole: CR 125B/348, 349, 350, 788; CR 1382/1; CR 1382/32; BM Add Mss 35679 f.55. Miller's ink and pencil sketches are at Wimpole. An engraving was published c.1777 (UL Cambridge, Views aa. 53.91.4/103). Miller's drawing is illustrated in D. Watkin's *The English Vision* (1982) 51.
- 14 Ingestre: CR 125B/348, 350, 386, 387. A sketch by T.P. Woods is in Staffs C.R.O.: Salt D. 240/U/812.
- 15 Arbury: CR 125B/481, 911, 967; CR 1382/1; CR 1382/32 (11 Dec. 1749). Newdigate MSS at Warwick C.R.O. A.C. Wood *Diaries of R. Newdigate* (Birmingham Arch. Soc. 1962) vol. 78. The drawings are in Newdigate CR 764. The exterior bay is illustrated in C. Hussey *Mid Georgian* (1956), Plate 63.

- 16 Hartlebury: CR 125B/809; CR 1382/1. Interior illustrated in *Country Life* (1971) p.740-1.
- 17 Enville: CR 125B/401; CR 1382/1. R. Pococke *Travels* (1889) ii, p.231. W. Shenstone *op.cit* p.261. J. Heely, *Hagley, Envil & the Leasowes* (1777) ii, p.82. Earlier photographs in N.M.R. and by C. Lyster and Osvald Siren.
- 18 Barrett to Miller: Belhus, 4th March 1746, CR 125B/419.
- 19a CR 1382/2.
- 19b Adlestrop: CR 125B/514, 580; CR 1382/1; CR 1382/2, Stratford Birthplace, Leigh MSS. Col. Mrs. G. Beechcroft, Leigh Ms. Stoneleigh papers, MS Hist. of Leigh family. Drawing by J.P. Neale in V&A D/55/160. Illustrated in Pevsner, *Glos: Cotswolds* (1970), Plate 77.
- 20 Hanworth: CR 1382/1. Copy of watercolour view in NMR, AA 56/4830. Hagley, Rockingham Hall: CR 125B/975. Z 30/1. Photographed by C. Lyster before alteration. Alscot: CR 1382/1. North Wing illustrated in *Country Life* (1958) pp.1064-6.  
Eythrope: CR 125B/725; CR 1382/1. Ink drawings in BM Kings Top XXX, f.19 u-w. Illustrated by H.M. Colvin in *Records of Bucks* (1964), XVII, 219.
- 21 All Souls: CR 125B/715-20; CR 1382/1; All Souls, *Acta in Cap.* (1750).
- 22 Durham: CR 125B/383-5, 388-9, 795-7. Miller's sketch for fireplace is on back of 388.
- 23 Priory BM Add Ms. 29, 264.
- 24 Hagley Hall: CR 125B/348, 434-5, 636. See also M. McCarthy in *Burlington Mag.* CXVIII no. 877 (1976) p.214-225.
- 25 G. Lyttelton to Miller: London 30 July (1752) CR 125B/645.
- 26 Sanderson was employed several times in this capacity by Thomas Prowse.
- 27 Lacock: CR 125B/392-7, 400-409, 973. Miller's sketch for the archway is on the back of 403. Illustrated in T. Davis *Gothick Taste* (1974), Plate 360 & p.119.
- 28 Quoted in Dickins & Stanton *op.cit* p.198.
- 29 Ross: CR 125B/786-7.  
Kington: CR 1382/2; CR 1382/32. Early photographs at Church in 1963. Copies in NMR. Hagley Chancel: R. Pococke *op.cit* II p.285.
- 30 Bath: CR 125B/584. Sketches by S. Grimm in BM add. MSS 15546 ff.116. Also by T. Robbins in private collection. Illustrated in T. Davis *op.cit*, Plate 40.
- 31 Stowe, Gothic Temple: CR 1382/1 & 32. Interior illustrated in S. Cantacuzino, *New Uses for Old Buildings* (1975) pp.99-101.
- 32 Miller to Lord Dacre, Radway, 22 Feb. 1768. Essex CRI. D/DL C. 52.
- 33 For the intended History, see: CR 1382/1; BM Stowe, 752 (info. ex M. McCarthy).
- 34 London, Pomfret Castle: A.C. Wood *loc.cit.* J. Cornforth in *Country Life Annual* (1970) pp.138-9. H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting* (1937) v, p.161. Views in BM. Crace Px 88, 98; and Bod. Gough 22, f.39v. Photographs in NMR & *Country Life* collections.

35. Kilkenny: CR 125B/782-5, 798, 804; CR 1382/1.
36. Broughton: CR 125B/1, 2, 620; Essex CRO. Dacre MSS D/DL C.52. Illustrated in *Country Life* (1976) pp. 1834-6. Hillsborough: CR 125B/774.
37. CR 1382/32 f.179.
38. Robert Nugent to Miller, Gosfield, Sep. 1974 — CR 125B/173.

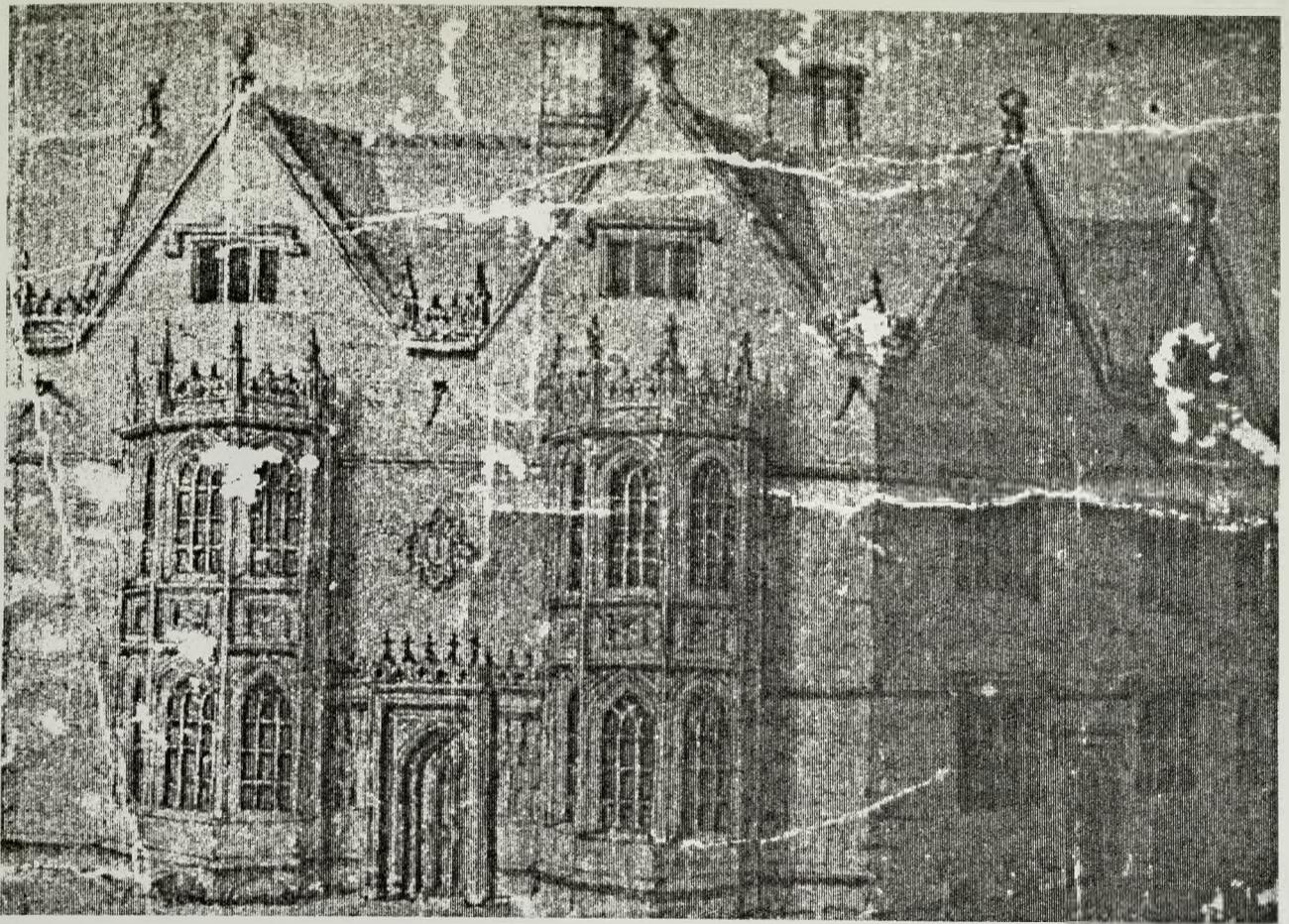




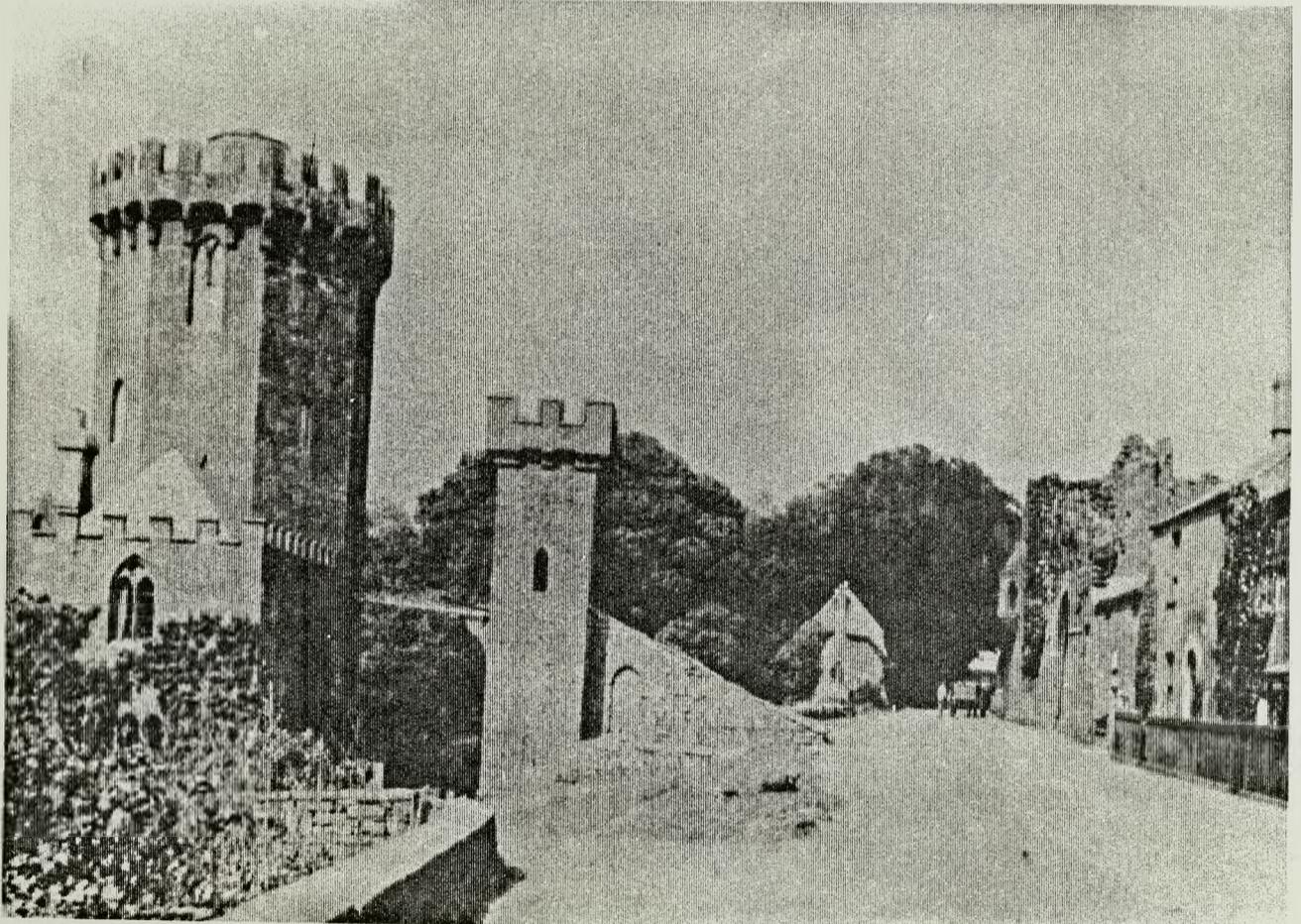
1. Portrait of Sanderson Miller (Mr. J. Matthews, Vancouver) Photo: Thatchow



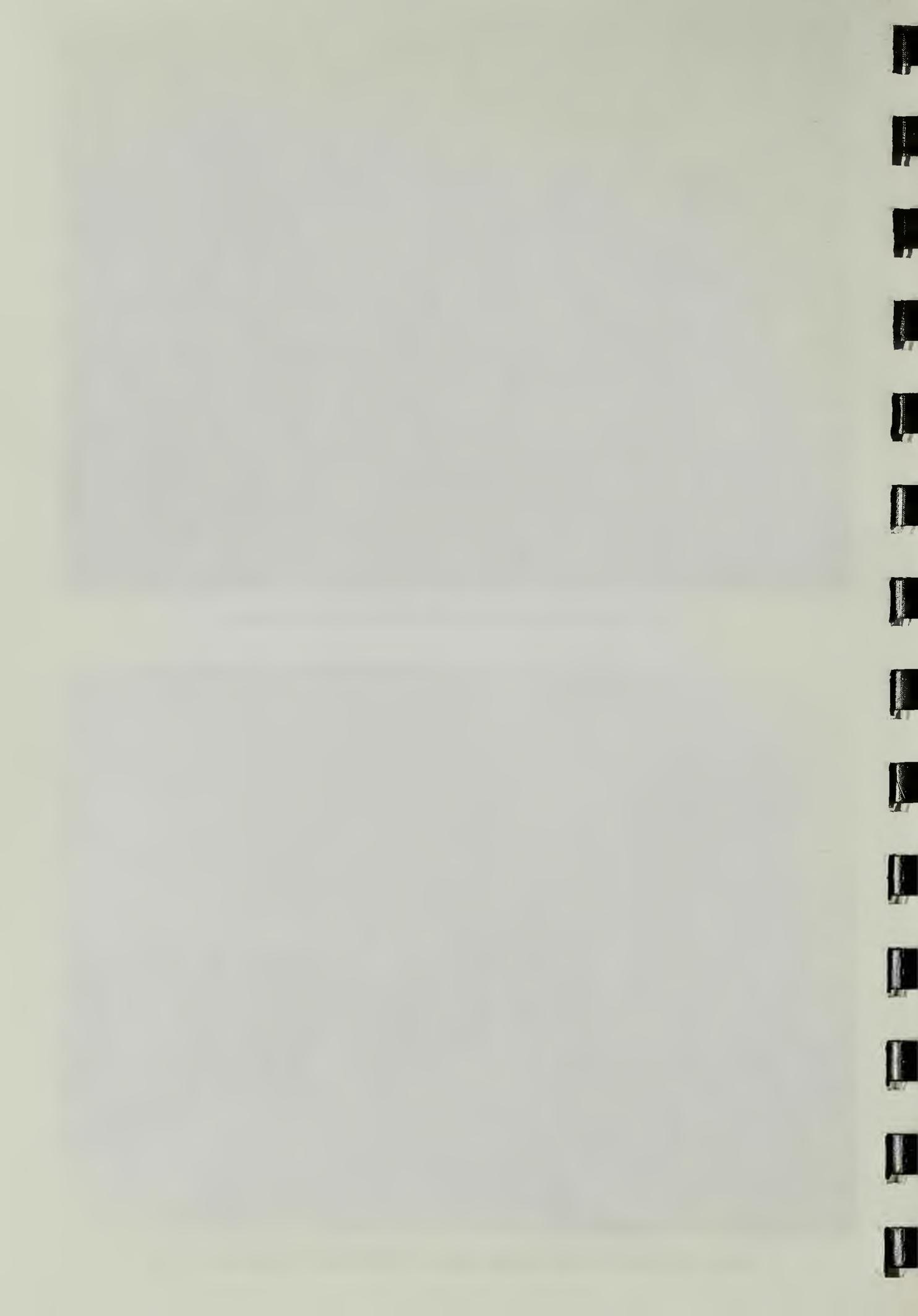
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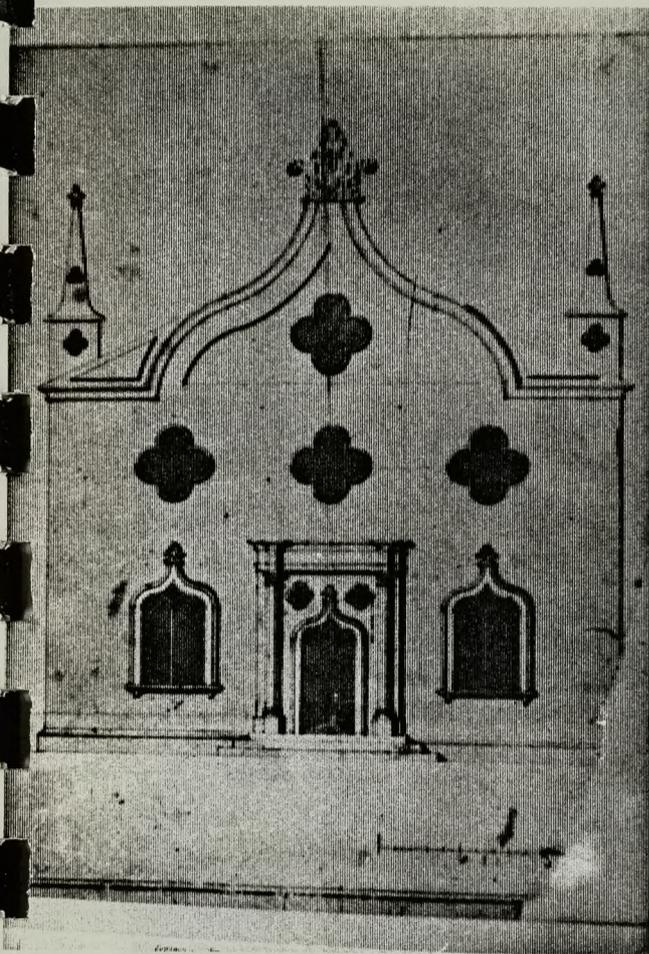


2. (top) Sketch of Radway Grange (c.1744) (Warwick County Record Office)



3. (bottom) Edgehill Castle (1745-50) and Egge Cottage (1743) (NMR) Photo: B Howarth Loomes, c.1900

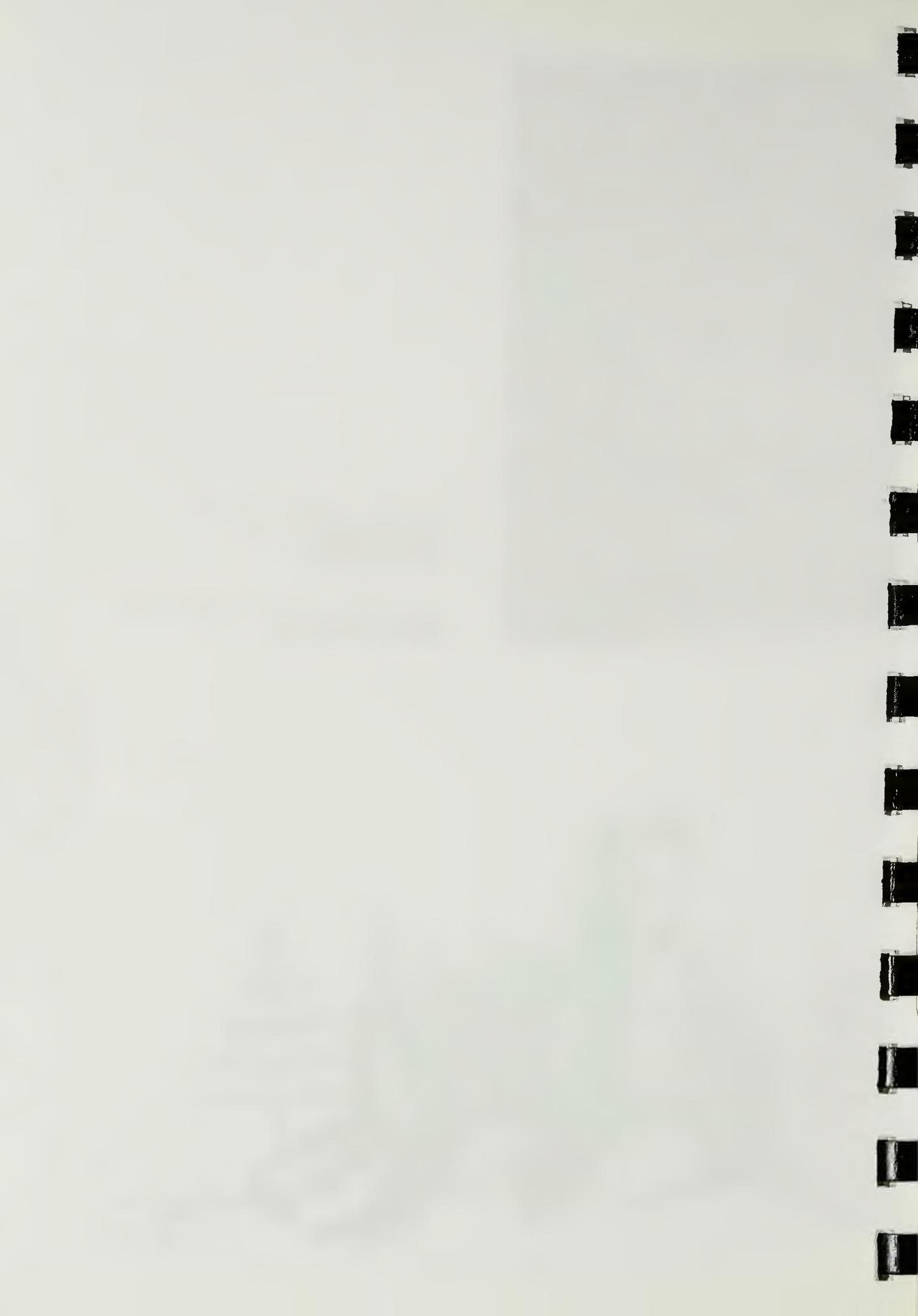


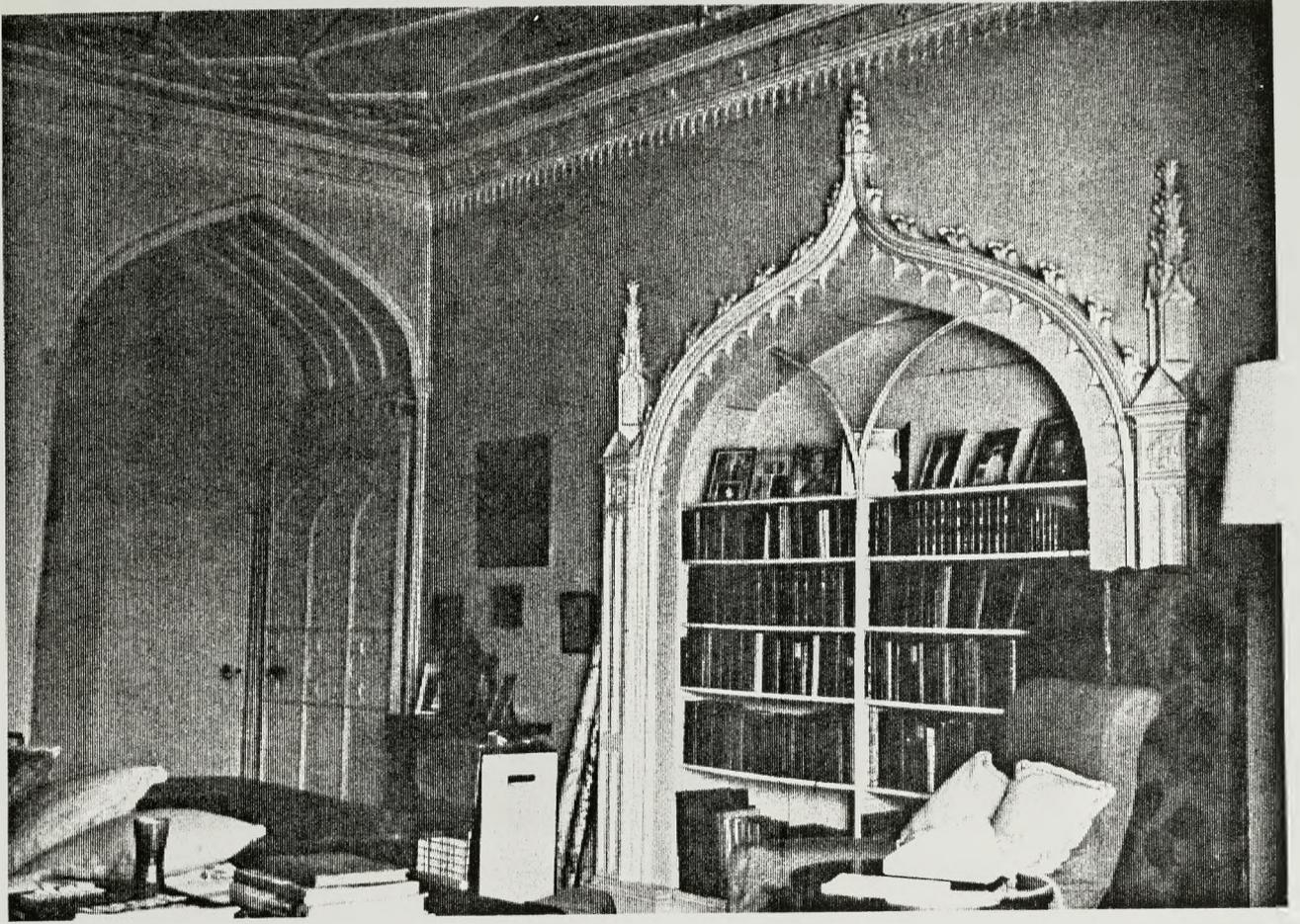


4. *(top)* Drawing of Gothic Facade (c.1747)  
attributed to S. Miller  
(RIBA Drawings collection)

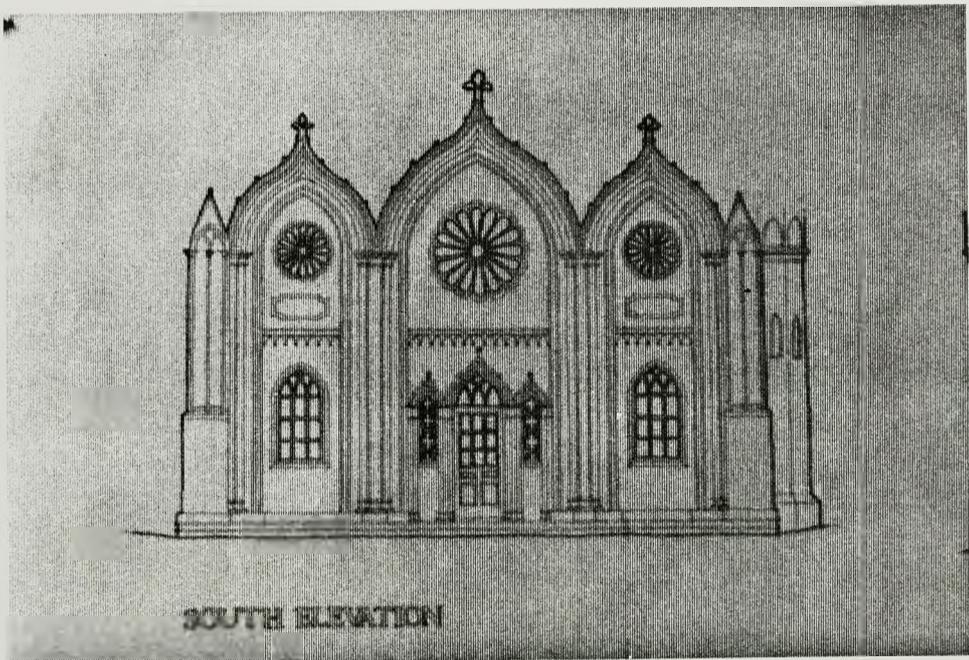
5. *(bottom)* Sketch of Wimpole Castle (1749) by S. Miller  
(National Trust) Photo RCHM







6. (top) Arbury Hall, Dressing Room: interior (1750) (by kind permission of H. Fitzroy Newdegate Esq.) Photo: H.W. Hawkes



7. (bottom) Enville: The Museum — exterior (1750) Drawing by T. Price, 1982



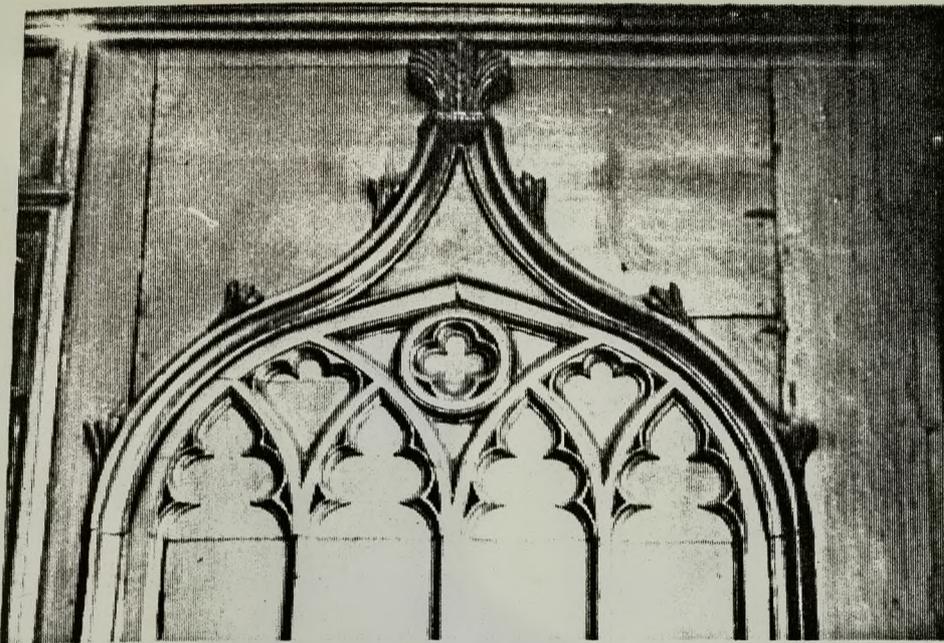


8. (top) Enville: The Museum — interior, niche detail (1750) Photo: H.W. Hawkes



9. (bottom) Adlestrop Park: garden front (1750 & 1759) Photo: H.W. Hawkes

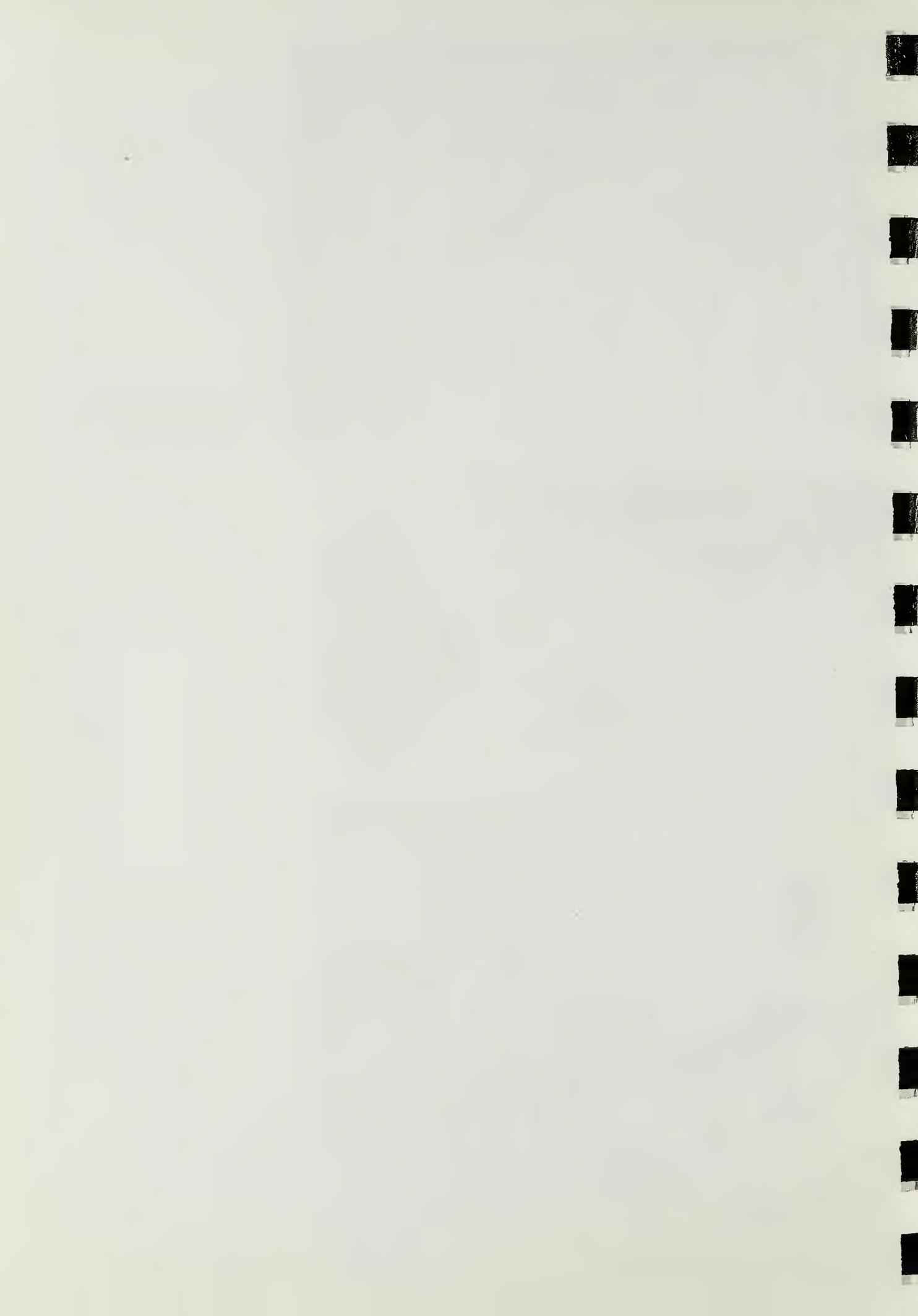


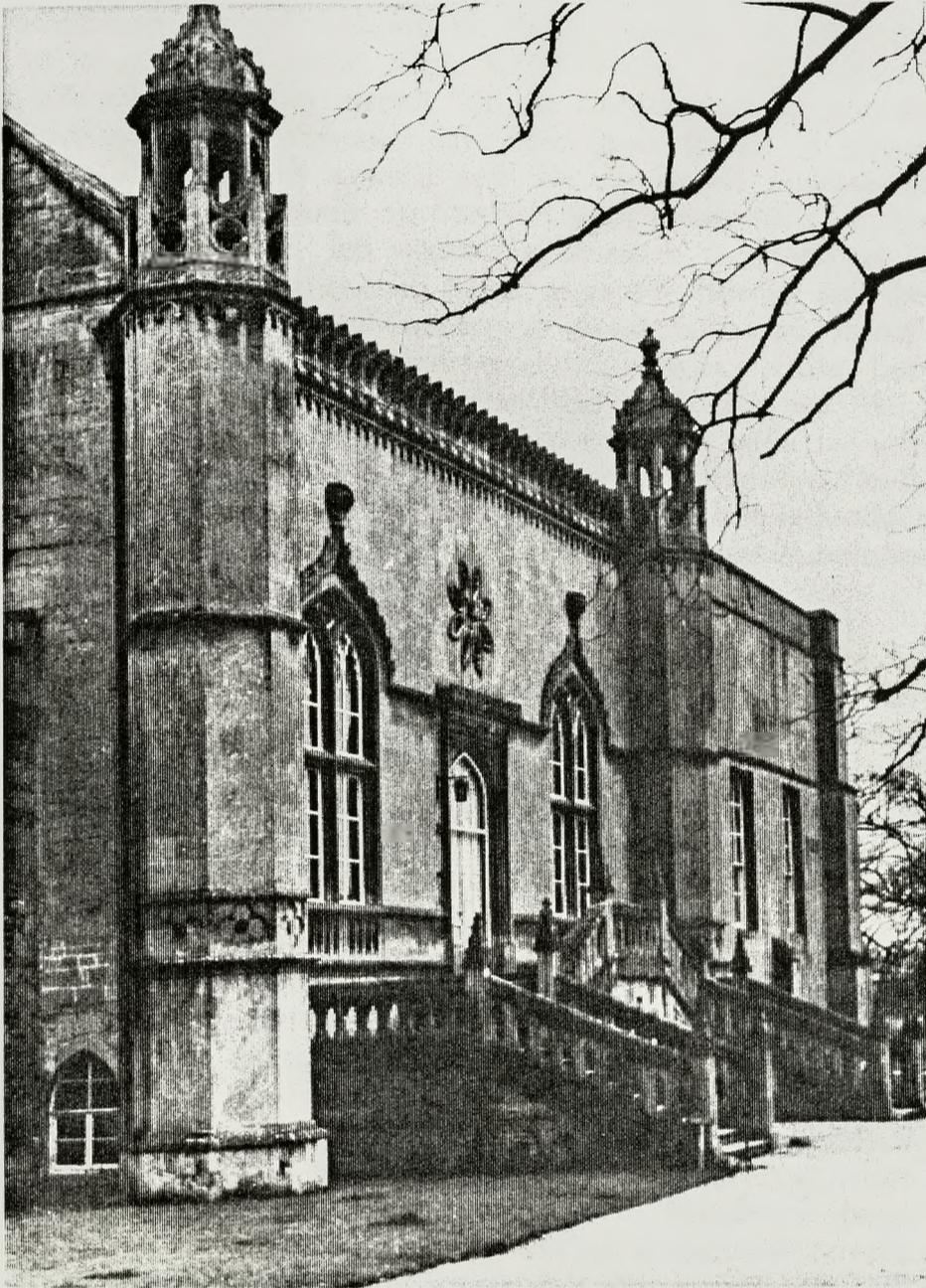


10. (top) All Souls, Oxford:  
old library panelling (1750-60)  
Photo: H.W. Hawkes



11. (bottom) Durham Castle:  
the common room (1751)  
Photo: R. Tilbrook





12. Lacock Abbey: the Great Hall, exterior (1753-6) Photo: H.W. Hawkes