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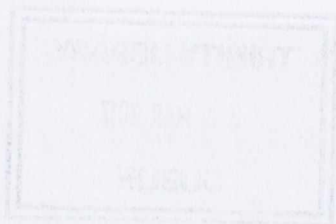
Perceptions and uses of Gothic in Irish domestic and ecclesiastical architecture, 1800–1815

Judith Hill

Vol 1



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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity College Dublin

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PhD
HISTORIES
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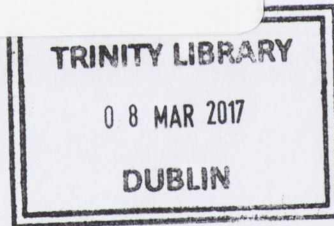
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Summary

'Perceptions of Gothic in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and its use in domestic and ecclesiastical architecture in Ireland, 1800–1841' is a study of meaning in Gothic revival architecture. The thesis challenges generalisations that have been made about meaning projected by early nineteenth-century Gothic revival castles and churches by analysing historical evidence. A method was developed to investigate three building projects with the aim of understanding the period in its own terms rather than as a precursor of the better understood Victorian Gothic revival. The thesis demonstrates that an investigation of meaning in pioneering Gothic revival buildings in post-Union Ireland makes a contribution to an understanding of expressions of national identity in British architecture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The method involves the investigation of meaning at different points in the process of realising the three selected buildings: conception, intention, production and reception. Historical sources are analysed within the context of the developing taste for Gothic and within the specific social, political and economic contexts of the chosen projects. The thesis begins with an investigation of perceptions of medieval architecture of the patrons and architect of the subject buildings. It proceeds project by project with an investigation of intentions, a study of how those intentions were realised architecturally, an analysis of how meaning was conveyed, and an interpretation of meaning with reference to the political, social, and economic circumstances and ambitions of the patrons. It concludes with a chapter on the reception of Irish Gothic revival architecture in the 1820s and 30s in periodical and topographical literature. The chosen buildings, which represent a pioneering phase in Irish Gothic revival architecture, were selected from the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a period of significant political and cultural change as Ireland was brought more closely within the orbit of Great Britain after the Union. The case studies encompass domestic and ecclesiastical architecture, and represent both the elite Protestant ascendancy and the viceregal government in Ireland. They are: Charleville Castle, Co. Offaly (1800–1809) whose patrons were Charles William Bury and Catherine Maria Bury; Birr Castle Co. Offaly (1801– *c.*1806) whose patron was Sir Laurence Parsons, and the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle (1807–1815) built by the viceregal establishment with significant input from the Church of Ireland. Two of these buildings – Charleville Castle and Chapel Royal – were designed by Francis Johnston, the foremost architect in Ireland of the period.

The analysis reveals that the taste for Gothic, which was developing in Britain and Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was shared by the patrons and architect that were the focus of the study, and expressed by them in a variety of ways. The study shows how this taste was applied to the early nineteenth-century castles and chapel in Ireland. It reveals that Gothic was a concept freighted with meaning so that when it was used it was with the intention of transmitting messages. The study demonstrates that intentions were realised through a vocabulary of images and references derived from medieval and Gothic revival models and worked into schemes according to both established classical design principles and the emerging picturesque aesthetic to produce buildings that were regarded as modern, authentically Gothic and capable of conveying meaning. Comparisons between the case studies reveal complexity: there was variety of responses to Gothic and variation in the way meaning was conceived and conveyed. Analysis of the metaphoric role of the two castles demonstrates that they reflected the hybrid identity of patrons who were members of the British elite rooted in Ireland, though with subtle yet significant differences between the patrons. Analysis of the metaphoric role of the Castle Chapel indicates that it celebrated the idea that Ireland was not to be subsumed by the Union, but to play a distinctive part within it. The reception study reveals that the buildings held different values for those writing for relatively popular journals and books within a generation, indicating the volatility of meaning.

The thesis demonstrates that historical sources, analysed in their cultural, political and social contexts to produce evidence for taste and its application to buildings, can yield meaning in early nineteenth-century Gothic revival architecture in Britain. Complexity, in terms of both the way meaning was conceived and expressed and in terms of the variety of responses to medieval architecture and uses made of Gothic, is one of the most significant findings. The volatility of that meaning is another.

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Abbreviations & shortened titles

Abbreviations

Libraries:

BL: British Library

IAA: Irish Architectural Archive

NA: National Archives of the United Kingdom

NAI: National Archives of Ireland

NLI: National Library of Ireland

OPW: Office of Public Works

OS: Ordnance Survey

PRONI: Public Records of Northern Ireland

RCB: Representative Church Body

RIA: Royal Irish Academy

RIBA: Royal Institute of British Architects

RDS: Royal Dublin Society

TCD: Trinity College Dublin

TRIAC: Trinity Irish Art Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin

UCD: University College, Dublin

Books and journals

DIA: Dictionary of Irish architects

DIB: Dictionary of Irish Biography

IADS: Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies

DPJ: Dublin Penny Journal

IPJ: Irish Penny Journal

ODNB: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

TRIA: Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy

Shortened titles

Collections of papers:

Bedford Estates Archive: Woburn Abbey, The Bedford Estates Archive.

Bryan Bolger Papers: NAI, Bryan Bolger Papers.

Colchester Papers: NA, Charles Abbot, 1st Baron Colchester Papers.

Hardwicke Papers: BL, the Hardwicke Papers.

Marlay Papers: Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham, papers and correspondence of Charles Brinsley Marlay of Westmeath, Ireland and his family, 1559, 1778–1910 (My 1–4400), papers of Catherine Maria Bury, 1st Countess of Charleville and her husband Charles William Bury, 1st Earl of Charleville (My 1-1069).

Minto Papers: National Library of Scotland, Minto Papers, William Elliot of Wells.

Official Papers: NAI, Chief Secretary's Office, Official Papers series 1.

Rosse Papers: Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, the Rosse Papers.

Manuscripts, catalogues, articles and drawings:

***A poem on Charleville*:** Westmeath County Library & Archives Service, Howard Bury Collection, P1/33, John Doran, *A poem on Charleville and castle, addressed to the Rt Hon the Earl of Charleville* [1809].

Bury diary: Howard Bury Collection courtesy of Westmeath County Library & Archives Service, P1/25, '" March's Daily Register or Annual Journal" outlining Viscount Charleville's travels, appointments and expenses', 20 July 1802–[6] June 1803, 42 ff, copy consulted in Offaly County Library.

Bury library catalogue: Offaly County Library, Howard Bury Papers, P59, 'Catalogue of books in the possession of the Rt Hon. Charles William, Lord Tullamore, 1799'.

Bury's account of Charleville: Marlay papers, MS My 1043/1, MS fragment of account of Charleville by Charles William Bury.

Charleville Sale Catalogue 1948: *Fine art auction ... to be held at Charleville Castle*, 1–5 Nov. 1948, Allen & Townsend, Dublin.

Christie's 1985: *Important old master drawings architectural and decorative drawings,* auction catalogue, 11–13 Dec. 1985, Christie's, London.

Demesne proposal, 1786: private collection, 'Plan of intended improvements at Charleville, the estate of Charles William Bury Esq. by Thomas Leggett, 1786'.

Demesne survey, 1785: private collection, 'A survey of Charleville demesne the seat of Charles William Bury esq, situate in the King's County, containing 924.2.36 plantation measures by Michael Cuddehy, 1785'.

Johnston's Library catalogue: *Francis Johnston: sale of architectural library (portion of),* Charles Sharpe, 10 May, 1843, Dublin (copy made by Christine Casey from an original in RIA but not now located).

Johnston's Tour diary: Armagh County Museum, Armagh, 'Diary of Francis Johnston architect 25 March to 14 April 1796', ARMCM.3.1949 (photocopy in NLI, MS 2722), my pagination.

Johnston, 1823: Francis Johnston, 'Castle chapel', *Irish Builder* (1 Mar., 1896), 48–50, publication of a manuscript dated May 1823.

OPW day books: NAI, OPW, Accountant's branch, day books, public buildings and Phoenix Park.

OPW drawings: Office of Public Works, Office of Public Works drawings collection

OPW letter books: NAI, OPW Secretariat branch, Records of a general nature, letter books.

OPW minute books: NAI, OPW, Secretariat branch, Records of a general nature, minute books.

OPW ledgers: NAI, OPW, Accountant's Branch, Accounts of a general nature, ledgers.

Sketch notebook: Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, the Rosse papers, O/16, notebook containing sketches, attributed to Laurence Parsons, n.d., [1801–1803].

Tour journal: Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, the Rosse papers, B/9/1, 'Log book of travels. Laurence 2nd Earl of Rosse', n.d., [1786].

Reports:

***Second report; public accounts, Ireland* (1813–14):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The second report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland,* H.C. 1813–14 (129), vii, 169.

Third report; public accounts, Ireland (1814–15): House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The third report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland,* H.C. 1814–15 (67), vi, 1861.

Fourth report; public accounts, Ireland (1816): House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The fourth report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland,* H.C. 1816 (496), ix, 163.

***Fifth report; public accounts, Ireland* (1817):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The fifth report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland,* H.C. 1817 (116), viii, 133.

***Sixth report, public accounts, Ireland* (1818):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The sixth report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland,* H.C. 1818 (154), x, 337.

***First report: public records* (1811):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *First report from the Commissioners, appointed by His Majesty to execute the measures recommended in an address of the House of Commons respecting the public records of Ireland, with supplements and appendices* (18 Mar. 1811);

***Second report: public records* (1812):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *Second report from the Commissioners, appointed by His Majesty to execute the measures recommended in an address of the House of Commons respecting the public records of Ireland, with supplements and appendices* (16 Mar. 1812).

***First–fifth reports: public records* (1810–15):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *Reports from the Commisioners, appointed by His Majesty to execute the measures recommended in an address of the House of Commons respecting the public records of Ireland with supplements and appendices* (1810-1815).

***Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812):** House of Commons Papers, Reports of Commissioners, *The twelfth report of the commissioners appointed to enquire into the fees, gratuities, perquisites, and emoluments, which are or have been lately received in certain public offices in Ireland; and also, to examine into any abuses which may exist in the same; and into the present mode of receiving, collecting, issuing, and accounting for public money in Ireland; Board of Works,* H.C. 1812 (33), v.

Note on spelling:

The spelling and emphases of the original letters has been retained.

Introduction

Aims

On 31 October 1823 the young architect, Charles Robert Cockerell visited Lowther Castle, the seat of the 1st Earl of Lonsdale, which had been completed to Robert Smirke's designs twelve years previously. It prompted a rant against new castle style mansions:

'The affection of the old English baronial residence is founded on aristocratical feeling & associations of acnt descent, but I cannot help attaching an idea of ridicule to these mock castles which can never fulfil the notions one has of the times in which they were built or bear any comparision ... to the remains of buildings of that kind, as Warwick Castle, & others'.[1]

There was no suspension of disbelief for Cockerell. Far from encouraging the idea, implicitly suggested by the neo-medieval architecture, that the new castle had some link, however intangible and illusory, with an older tradition, Cockerell saw only an unsuccessful attempt to imitate an outmoded domestic model, and worse, architecture springing not from a designer's vision but the literary notions and dynastic ambition of a patron. However, Cockerell's architectural imagination was not entirely disengaged;

'If such a thing were excusable it seems to be it would be in some romantic site amidst Hills & lakes & precipices in which a vantage ground might be taken commanding some striking eagle view over crags & cliffs ... I would use the rough walling thrown together in thick walles producing grand masses – all the expence of finishing reserved for inside. The approach should be thro courts in which should be the offices, producing all that effect of vast establishment essential to convey the just idea of these castles'.[2]

He understood the appeal of picturesque architecture in which a building could conspire with the landscape to produce a powerful, poetic image. He could also appreciate the capacity of castles to evoke grandeur. But he soon returned to the problem of whether

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[1] John Harris, 'C.R. Cockerell's "Ichnographica Domestica"', *Architectural History*, 14 (1971), 22. Harris reproduced Cockerell's text which was hurried and uncorrected by Cockerell.
[2] Ibid., 22.

the life style evoked by the building type had contemporary relevance, concluding with the observation that in Lowther Castle 'these mighty halls are empty, mournfully silent, one discovers no obvious purpose in this magnificence for the misuce of cash & for employment, ennui & mistaken taste.'[3]

Cockerell's perception was prescient. The inappropriateness of the castle as an image for nineteenth-century architecture and as a practical model for nineteenth-century life was definitively articulated by A.W.N. Pugin in a rhetorical question posed in 1841, 'What can be more absurd than houses built in what is termed the castellated style?'[4] Even more damagingly the failure to imitate medieval sources accurately in ecclesiastical as well as domestic buildings was a criticism that would build up throughout the nineteenth century until it became the single most trenchant reason to condemn Gothic revival architecture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

When twentieth-century historians began to disentangle themselves from the perceptions of nineteenth-century critics one theme that emerged was the idea that Gothic revival had been a conscious choice involving the rejection of classicism.[5] The corollary of this was the notion of meaning; the reason for the choice. Notwithstanding the sophistication with which Gothic revival architecture has been investigated – the ways in which this has been explored will be discussed below – a certain type of unsubstantiated generalisation is frequently to be found. References to medieval buildings in Gothic revival domestic architecture in particular are often attributed to the desire to evoke rootedness and longevity; the illusion which Cockerell acknowledged but to which he refused to succumb. For example, in his survey of Irish architecture Maurice Craig speculated that the castellated commissions of the post-Union Protestant ascendancy, many of whom had come to Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century and were aware of their relatively recent arrival, were intended to assert longevity. 'By castellating their houses, or adding castellated wings to them, or in extreme cases replacing them by sham castles, they sought – at the sub-conscious level no doubt – to convince themselves and others that they had been there a long time and that their

[3] Ibid., 23.
[4] A.W.N. Pugin, The true principles of pointed or Christian architecture (London, 1841), p. 58.
[5] Giles Worsley, 'The origins of the Gothic revival: a reappraisal', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1993), 105-150.

houses, like so many in England, reflected the vicissitudes of centuries.'[6] James Stevens Curl assumed a similar motive in relation to English architecture. '[T]here are many examples of country-houses consciously designed to evoke a medieval past, and to suggest the buildings (and their owners) had long been connected with the land.'[7]

Chris Brooks in his ground-breaking book on the Gothic revival focused purposefully on possible meanings conveyed by Gothic revival styles.[8] The approach that he adopted with reference to Irish castles was to draw inferences from evidence relating to the builders, such as their known religious and political affiliations, rather than evidence connected to the particular project.[9] He distinguished between several types of patrons – those who had received Union peerages, the New English and the native nobility – and he argued that their castles were constructed to assert their builders' claims to legitimacy as rulers. Of those who had received Union peerages he wrote, 'Some castles seem to embody colonial ascendancy'.[10] Of the New English he claimed; 'Less opportunistic, more complex, were the responses of established settler families, resident since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their castle-building can be read as expressing loyalty to the colonial power that had established them, or commitment to the country that had been colonised, or indeed both.'[11] It is not clear from this last sentence whether Brooks meant to show that ambiguity was important to these builders, or whether the alternative interpretations represented a complex situation which was difficult for the historian to unravel.

Brooks's ambition to recover meaning was an inspiration for the present project, as was his difficulty, in the case of the Irish builders, to penetrate their mindset. An overall aim of the present thesis crystalised under this influence into an examination of Irish Gothic revival buildings in the terms in which they were conceived and built. An initial idea was to explore, through the study of primary sources, whether the politics and religious

[6] Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (London, 1982), p. 248.
[7] James Stevens Curl, *Georgian architecture in the British Isles 1714-1830* (2nd expanded ed. London, 2011), p. 113.
[8] Chris Brooks, *The Gothic revival* (London, 1999).
[9] Alexandrina Buchanan stated that architectural historians are forced into this position because statements of intention are non-existent, (Alexandrina Buchanan, 'Interpretations of medieval architecture, *c*.1550–*c*.1750' in Michael Hall (ed), *Gothic architecture and its meanings 1550–1830* (Reading, 2002), p. 27).
[10] Brooks, *Gothic revival*, p. 177.
[11] Ibid., p. 177.

affiliation of patrons had had a decisive influence on the choice of style. But it was soon apparent that this was too prescriptive. It was decided to dispense with any hypotheses about meaning and adopt, as far as possible, an evidence-driven approach and an open mind, and to seek a way to determine whether meaning was in fact intended, and if it was, what it may have been. And further, to discover what meanings the buildings, once built, conveyed for contemporaries. This would involve a study of the values of patrons and the linkages between ideas, political, social and economic circumstances and built form. It meant identifying the kinds of documentary sources that could provide evidence of attitudes and intentions, and to find a framework in which to interpret the results. Finally, it meant analysing the literature that articulated responses to these buildings.

Concepts and themes: theory and practice

The English Gothic revival first received scholarly attention as a movement within architectural history in Charles Eastlake's monograph, *A history of the Gothic revival*, published in 1872.[12] With this book Eastlake articulated what would become an influential narrative of the revival, in which architects' progressive success in understanding medieval architecture – beginning in the seventeenth century and culminating in his own period – was conceived as the foundation on which to recreate Gothic to meet the needs of the present. In this account the early revival (a watershed of *c.*1830 was identified) was cast as the less authentically medieval version of the later period and regarded as comparatively insignificant.

It was not until Kenneth Clark wrote his extended essay on the Gothic revival in 1928 that Eastlake's view was challenged.[13] Clark regarded Gothic revival architecture as the work of lesser talents, and this made it, in his view, expressive of shared ideas and concerns; 'What ideals, what dream worlds do they [any specific objects] express?'[14] From this vantage point Clark set out to discover rather than impose values on the early period, and by asking pertinent questions and identifying fruitful literary archives, set the scholarly agenda.[15] Although significant progress would be made in understanding

[12] Charles L. Eastlake, *A history of the Gothic revival: an attempt to show how the taste for medieval architecture which lingered in England during the last two centuries has since been encouraged and developed* (London, 1872, new ed. edited with an introduction by J. Mordaunt Crook, Leicester, 1970).
[13] Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic revival: an essay in the history of taste* (London, 1928).
[14] Ibid., p. 8.
[15] A recent study of the context in which Clark was writing has noted that Clark's understanding of Gothic altered as he wrote the book; where he initially regarded it as a largely irrelevant historical

and valuing the early Gothic revival, it would be a long time before the idea that the earlier period was a less successful version of the later one would be discarded.[16]

Much scholarly effort in the mid- to late twentieth century was directed towards reinstating the early Gothic revival according to the standards set by Eastlake: especially, that it was based on antiquarian study and was thus authentically medieval. Such studies were often directed towards recovering the work of previously undervalued architects and revealing connections between the earlier and later periods. The scholar who has most consistently investigated the extent and role of antiquarianism in the mid- to late eighteenth century was John Frew. It was the focus of his doctoral thesis of 1977, and he published on the subject in the 1980s.[17] He argued that antiquarianism became increasingly influential in the late eighteenth century through improved standards of draughtsmanship applied to the representation of medieval cathedrals which appeared in both expensive and cheaper publications, and through architects' involvement in the restoration of cathedrals. Frew argued that James Wyatt, the most prominent Gothic revival architect of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was attuned to contemporary antiquarianism, and used antiquarians' publications and his own experience as a cathedral restorer in his new work, especially after 1794.[18] However, Frew recognised that, influenced by the picturesque, Wyatt resisted full-blown revivalism and archaeological correctness.[19] Two other architects were singled out for a scholarly interest in medieval architecture: James Essex was shown to have had a technical interest in medieval structure; and it was argued that Henry Keene, working from *c.*1750 to 1776, gained a professional architectural

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curiosity, by the end he was beginning to see it, as Pevsner would, as linked to the rise of modernism (Ayla Lepine, 'The persistence of medievalism: Kenneth Clark and the Gothic Revival', *Architectural History*, 57 (2014), 323–56).

[16] Michael Hall (ed.), *Gothic architecture and its meanings 1550–1830* (Reading, 2002), p. 11. See Terence Davis, *The Gothick taste* (Newton Abbot, 1974) for a survey of Gothic revival architecture which interprets it as a decorative style whose builders were interested in creating a fantasy of the past.

[17] John Frew, 'An aspect of the Gothic revival in England *c.*1770-1815: the antiquarian influence, with special reference to the career of James Wyatt', 3 vols, (D.Phil, University of Oxford, 1977); John Frew, 'An aspect of the early Gothic revival: the transformation of medievalist research, 1770-1800', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 43, (1980), 174–185; John Frew, 'James Bentham's *History of Ely Cathedral*: a forgotten classic of the early Gothic revival', *Art Bulletin*, 62:2 (June 1980), 289–92.

[18] John Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style 1790–1797', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 41:2 (May 1982), 144–49.

[19] Megan Aldrich also argued that antiquarian standards were compromised by contemporary interest in the picturesque and the influence of Romanticism which promoted abstract aesthetic values such as contrast, irregularity, the sublime (vastness, for example), as did a taste for rich ornamentation which she describes as Regency (Megan Aldrich, *Gothic revival* (London, 1994), pp 78–98).

understanding of medieval structure as Surveyor of Westminster Abbey and applied it in new buildings such as St Mary's Hartwell, and Arbury Hall whose patron was Sir Roger Newdigate.[20]

The recovery of the achievements of these and other architects – Johann Heinrich Müntz and Sanderson Miller, for example – was also part of an objective to challenge the pre-eminence of Sir Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill, the Twickenham villa he designed with a succession of architects from 1752 to the mid-1770s. Walpole's dominance was a result of his great influence and his propensity to underplay the achievements of his rivals. Discovering the architectural attainments of Walpole's contemporaries was one of the main purposes of Michael McCarthy's important 1987 study of the early revival.[21] The other focus of his book was his argument that these architects, including Walpole, were the instigators of an antiquarian approach to Gothic design, creating a demand for fidelity to antique sources. Although Walpole had explicitly discussed the use of medieval sources in his work at Strawberry Hill, architectural historians, focusing on his style, which they regarded as the epitome of the frivolous early period, had tended to overlook his antiquarianism.[22]

One strength of McCarthy's book was his ambition to relate antiquarianism to building design. However, he did not focus on the specific character of mid-eighteenth-century antiquarianism – for example, the lack of curiosity about stylistic differences within Gothic, and the transposition of medieval models to designs in different materials, at a different scale, onto symmetrical schemes and different building types – characteristics which, from a later nineteenth-century perspective, would be regarded as limitations. It was a missed opportunity to understand the period in its own terms, the challenge raised by Clark, which was taken up by a number of scholars of the early revival whose work explored agency and context. These particular studies have a significant bearing

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[20] Thomas Cocke, 'James Essex, 1722-1784: archaeological sensibility', in R. Brown (ed), *The Architectural outsiders* (London, 1985), pp 98-113; Nikolaus Pevsner, *Some architectural writers of the nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1972), pp 2–8; Timothy Mowl, 'Henry Keene 1726-1776, a goth in spite of himself', in Roderick Brown (ed), *The architectural outsiders* (London, 1985), pp 82–97; Terry Friedman, 'Henry Keene and St Mary, Hartwell', in Michael Hall (ed.), *Gothic architecture and its meanings 1550-1830* (Reading 2002), pp 135-158.

[21] Michael McCarthy, *The origins of the Gothic revival* (New Haven & London, 1987).

[22] Horace Walpole, A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (Strawberry Hill, fac. ed of enlarged ed. 1784); Eastlake, *Gothic revival*, p. 47. Weight has been given to the fact that Walpole was not faithful to his sources by James Stevens Curl in 2011, (Curl, *Georgian architecture,* pp 108–9).

on the present thesis with its aim of investigating the intentions of patrons and architects, analyzing the connections between ideas and built form, and studying reception.

This is an approach to the investigating of meaning. There is a long history of architectural writers exploring the way that buildings transcend their utilitarian function to embody ideas and beliefs, as William Whyte has shown.[23] The problem is that there is a lack of consensus about how meaning is inscribed in buildings and how it can be interpreted.[24] This lack of consensus was revealed by Whyte's review of architectural historiography.[25] He argued that for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries historians assumed that buildings expressed structural values embedded in society; 'deep' cultural meaning, or an underlying social order, or an all-embracing *Zeitgeist*. This was successfully challenged in the later twentieth century. Ernest Gombrich, for example, criticised such an approach for projecting interpretation and thus meaning onto architecture, rather than reading meaning from it.[26] This fed into the work of historians who put increasing value on documentary history.[27] Another approach to the recovery of meaning was to examine the architecture itself, and, regarding it as a language, attempt to read it.[28] An extreme version of this was the application of linguistic theory to architectural criticism in the 1960s, and the development of a structuralist methodology in which it was assumed that architecture was a sign system.[29] An awareness that such an approach excluded an account of the multidimensionality of architecture – for example, buildings are experienced as space and atmosphere as well as existing in plan, section and elevation – led to the post-structuralist study of the reception of architecture. Radical versions of this approach involved denials of the significance of the role of the initial conceivers and creators of buildings, with meaning deriving from those who use and experience buildings, and thus varying with time and circumstance.

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[23] William Whyte, 'How do buildings mean? Some issues of interpretation in the history of architecture', *History and Theory*, 45 (May 2006), 155.
[24] Ibid.,159.
[25] Ibid., 160–68.
[26] E.H. Gombrich, 'In search of cultural history' in Eric Fernie (ed.), *Art history and its methods, a critical anthology* (London, 1995), pp 223–36.
[27] In the field of architectural history Howard Colvin was an important inspiration.
[28] Examples of architectural historians are John Summerson and David Watkin.
[29] Examples include Geoffrey Broadbent and Charles Jencks.

A concerted attempt to recover artistic intention was made by Michael Baxandall in *Patterns of intention* published in 1985.[30] In a chapter on the Forth Bridge Baxandall proposed a model which characterised the conception of this engineering project and its realisation as an exercise in problem solving. In 2012 Paul Crossley applied the model to two phases of an architectural project; the building of Prague Cathedral in the fourteenth century.[31] Crossley's method, emulating Baxandall, involved a recital of the narrative history of the chosen project, followed by the compilation of a list of 'cause-suggesting features' that had a bearing on the design of the chosen project. From this he selected the elements that formed the brief given by the patron to the architect, and the set of resources available to both architect and patron. These two were amalgamated into the design of the building. Thus, in a reasoned but, as he admitted, necessarily crude way, he reconstructed the original problem and the way it was solved, recovering agency in the design process. In the essay Crossley argued that Baxandall's model could be modified when applied to the Prague architectural project, for he had discovered that the patron also had a role in providing aesthetic solutions, and that the architect's creativity provided aesthetic experiences that were not simply a solution to the problems posed by the brief.

In the introduction to the collection of essays on the interpretation of architecture published in 2012 Christine Stevenson and T.A. Heslop brought together the notions of intention and reception.[32] They defined architecture as an artifact, which, on the one hand, is the result of the design process, and, on the other hand, will have cultural significance after construction has been completed. Interpretation, they argued, should thus focus on both the original intentions of the designers and the later reception by users and visitors.

The recovery of intention as outlined by Baxandall and Crossley relies on an understanding of the specific context in which a design is formed and executed. In an essay on interpreting architecture published in 2006 Andrew Ballantyne articulated the importance of reconstructing context as fully as possible in order to analyse meaning;

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[30] Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of intention* (New York and London, 1985).

[31] Paul Crossley, 'Baxandall's Bridge and Charles IV's Prague: an exercise in architectural intention' in Jill A. Franklin, T.A. Heslop & Christine Stevenson, *Architecture and interpretation: essays for Eric Fernie* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp 192–220.

[32] Christine Stevenson & T.A. Heslop, 'Introduction' in Ibid., pp. 1–15.

'Architecture is gesture – gesture made with buildings. In order to understand gesture we need to see it in its cultural context, and once we have contextualised it then it can be highly expressive and accurate; but without context the meaning is adrift and is not to be relied upon.'[33]

But, as Ballantyne demonstrated in his study of Richard Payne Knight, intentional meaning is not transmitted unequivocally in architecture.[34] Knight, he argued, had conceived Downton Castle, which he designed and built in 1771 to 1778, in terms of classical precedents and principles, whereas the house as built was interpreted by contemporaries and later historians as an attempt at neo-medievalism.[35] This demonstrates that there are a number of contexts in which a building can be evaluated; those in which it is conceived and built and those in which it was evaluated.

Whyte presented a similar scenario in his essay on meaning in architecture discussed above. He postulated that the processes of commissioning, designing, constructing, occupying and viewing buildings occur in a number of different contexts, each of which can be appreciated as a genre with its own conventions.[36] As the building moves from one stage to the next it shifts genre, and the ideas it embodies – for example, the architect's vision, or the client's values – undergo a process of transposition, and the meaning of the building changes. With this insight Whyte hoped to encourage historians to investigate how meaning in buildings changes through time, and he concluded that the task of the historian is to uncover meanings in the plural. Although this would be a cumbersome process of analysis if taken too literally, it usefully suggests that meaning is not fixed and that buildings exist in multiple and changing contexts. His argument rests on the assumption that meaning is objective, in the sense that it is derived from cultural values shared and expressed by the society in which the buildings were built and assessed, and thus potentially recoverable.

There are many problems associated with the study of agency and context. One, for example, is to find links between ideas and built form. A patron commissioning a new

[33] Andrew Ballantyne, 'Architecture as evidence' in Dana Arnold, Elvan Ergut, Belgin Turan Özkaya, (eds), *Rethinking architectural historiography* (London, Routledge, 2006), p. 36.
[34] Andrew Ballantyne, *Architecture, landscape and liberty: Richard Payne Knight and the picturesque* (Cambridge, 1997).
[35] Ballantyne, *Richard Payne Knight* (Cambridge, 1997), pp 298–9.
[36] Whyte, 'How do buildings mean?', 172–4.

house may subscribe to a set of political opinions which can be recovered by the historian. This constitutes a general context for his patronage, but it may not be directly relevant to his commission. If evidence is found for the embodying of these ideas in the building, it comprises a more specific, defined context. In the field of early Gothic revival studies awareness of the importance of patrons' and architects' thought processes, and investigations of context have been fundamental in arriving at an appreciation of this period as one that is in many ways distinct from its successor. These studies have investigated different types of context – literary, aesthetic, political, familial – and approached them in a variety of ways; for example by studying perceptions of medieval architecture, by looking at ideas that governed the development of a building type, or investigating a specific building project. They demonstrate a variety of ways to approach sources. They indicate a diversity of interpretative perspectives.

Howard Colvin introduced the concepts of purpose and motive into study of the eighteenth-century Gothic revival in his ground-breaking essay of 1948 which focused on patrons and their masons, and asked whether they were working within a tradition of Gothic survival or Gothick revival.[37] These ideas were developed by Giles Worsley in the 1990s when he argued that Gothic had been a deliberate choice in a stylistic world dominated by classicism from as early as the sixteenth century.[38] Reviewing each successive period, Worsley identified different reasons for the adoption of Gothic, ranging from the promotion of continuity in medieval Oxford colleges, the antiquarian and conservative perceptions of post-Restoration ecclesiastical builders, and the associations projected onto Gothic garden buildings in the early eighteenth century.

Worsley's scholarship emphasised agency, but it also suggested that historians need to pay close attention to context if they are to understand the Gothic revival. Context was far from being a new concept in the 1990s, but it had become of more focused concern. One approach to context was to delineate and describe it. Gothic is a literary concept, first used in writing on architecture by Georgio Vasari in 1550 to both denote building

[37] H.M. Colvin, 'Gothic survival and Gothick revival', *Architectural Review*, 103 (1948), 91–8, reprinted with revisions in H.M. Colvin, *Essays in English architectural history,* (New Haven & London, 1999), pp 217–44.

[38] Worsley, 'The origins of the Gothic revival', 105-150; Giles Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain: the heroic age* (New Haven & London, 1995), chapter IX, 'The continuing Gothic tradition', pp 175–96.

not in the ancient manner and to criticise it.[39] Subsequently, Gothic was a theme for many scholars, antiquarians, architects and theorists. The rich literary framework that resulted was chronicled by Paul Frankl in 1960 in a vast, broadly chronological and thematically structured compendium with a European perspective. This book revealed the variety of views and the intensity of the debates on the origins and nature of Gothic, although Frankl's interpretive comments also betrayed a teleological view of literary Gothic, which he characterised as a development towards a full understanding of medieval architecture.[40] This attitude is illustrated by the arresting image he used to describe what he saw as the ultimate function of concepts that inspired an appreciation of Gothic: 'these factors [Gilpin's concept of picturesque beauty added to Burke's concept of beauty and the sublime, and the emergence of the idea of infinity] were so many piles driven into the morass, so that on them could be raised the structure of modern aesthetics and stylistic theory.'[41]

Specific context was delineated in two papers given at The Georgian Group symposium in 1983; Roger White's discussion of the classical context of Batty Langley's influential pattern book and Thomas Cocke's essay on church restoration.[42] In his introduction to the subsequent book J. Mordaunt Crook summarised the period as a progression from environmental to associational thinking, evoking two broad intellectual frames of reference.[43] Crook himself would later make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the political and cultural texture of the period in his study of the journalist and architect, John Carter, demonstrating the effect of ideas on a single life.

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[39] E.S. de Beer, 'Gothic: origin and diffision of the term: the idea of style in architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11 (1948), 147–8.

[40] Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: literary sources and interpretations through eight centuries* (New Jersey, 1960).

[41] Ibid., p. 446. Frankl's omissions were made good by Pevsner in 1972 (Pevsner, *Some architectural writers of the nineteenth century*) while in the same year Georg Germann wrote his account of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories that underpinned the revival of Gothic architecture (Georg Germann, 'Gothic Revival in Europe and Britain: sources, influences and ideas' (London, 1972)). They all had a European perspective, which has never been equaled by writers in English on the Gothic revival. A later collection of thematically ordered documents which included literature relating to the Gothic as well as writing referring to Gothic architecture was compiled by Michael Charlesworth (Michael Charlesworth, (ed.), *The Gothic revival, 1720-1870: literary sources and documents*, 3 vols (Mountfield, 2002)).

[42] Roger White, 'The influence of Batty Langley' in The Georgian Group, *A gothic symposium at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 21 May, 1983* (London, 1983), unpaginated; Thomas Cocke, 'Eighteenth-century attitudes to church restoration' in The Georgian Group, *A gothic symposium at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 21 May, 1983* (London, 1983), unpaginated.

[43] J. Mordaunt Crook, 'Introduction' in The Georgian Group, *A gothic symposium at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 21 May, 1983* (London, 1983), unpaginated.

Carter was also influential; his drawings imprinted highly accurate images of medieval architecture onto the contemporary imagination, while his writings sent out forcefully ideological messages about its Englishness.[44] Thus Crook's study revealed how a single life's work had enriched the Gothic environment for others.

Ideas travelling through the prism of the individual emerge as perceptions. Studies of perceptions can reveal how aesthetic, literary and intellectual contexts operated. In an essay published in 2002 Alexandrina Buchanan investigated the meanings and associations that medieval architecture had for observers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century to discover when medieval buildings began to be perceived within the framework of Gothic.[45] Philip Aspin, investigating the perceptions of cathedrals in late Georgian England, argued that they were regarded as the locus of religious experience as defined by sublime aesthetics, and that, through their architecture and their continuous institutional and physical existence, they were valued as links with the past and the piety of former generations.[46] His investigation gave him a new angle on the concept of authenticity. He argued that it was important, but de-historicised; observers, most notably the 'improvers' of cathedrals, did not look for the authentic through the investigation of a particular historical condition, but by approaching medieval cathedrals through the vision, heavily inflected with the sublime, they cherished of them.[47] The perception of medieval architecture was fundamental to the innovative contemporary project on Irish Gothic, the collaborative TRIAC study, that resulted in the publication *Irish Gothic architecture; construction, decay and reinvention* of 2012.[48] It was integral to Niamh NicGhabhann's thesis and subsequent book in which she investigated the ways people had responded to medieval ecclesiastical buildings visually, through writing on Irish Gothic architecture, through continued use, and through built adaptations and restorations.[49]

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[44] Crook, *John Carter and the mind of the Gothic revival* (London, 1995). Crook also wrote on John Britton (J. Mordaunt Crook, 'John Britton and the genesis of the Gothic revival' in John Summerson, (ed.), *Concerning architecture: essays on architectural writers and writing presented to Nikolaus Pevsner* (London, 1968), pp 98–119).
[45] Buchanan, 'Interpretations of medieval architecture, pp 27–52.
[46] Philip Aspin, '"Our ancient architecture": contesting cathedrals in late Georgian England', *Architectural History*, 54 (2011), 213–32.
[47] Ibid., 222. The critics, mostly antiquarians, regarded the 'improvements' as 'innovation'.
[48] Roger Stalley (ed.), *Irish Gothic architecture; construction, decay and reinvention* (Dublin, 2012).
[49] Niamh NicGhabhann, 'Reconstructions of the Gothic past', (PhD, TCD, 2012); Niamh NicGhabhann, *Medieval ecclesiastical buildings in Ireland, 1789–1915: building on the past* (Dublin, 2015).

Simon Bradley's 1996 thesis was constructed around discussion of the taste that informed a specific building type at a particular time: the churches built by the Church Building Commission in the first half of the nineteenth century.[50] Investigating the articulation of ideas in Church of England journals, popular cultural magazines, architectural journals and antiquarian publications, this study exposed a set of values, ideas, and priorities that largely differed from those of the later period. Knowing this context in detail, Bradley gained insights into the way ideas were applied to these early nineteenth-century churches. One finding was that antiquarianism was important in this period, but, by discovering that it often had a different basis and expression from the antiquarianism of the later nineteenth century, Bradley could begin to explain why early nineteenth-century churches failed to reach the standards of medieval authenticity set by the later nineteenth century. Another discovery was that the picturesque, which had emerged as an important conceptual and aesthetic context for the early Gothic revival, was not favoured by the Church of England, which wished to appear modernising and efficient; something which the picturesque, often associated with neglect, did not evoke.

Bradley was one of a number of architectural historians who were concentrating on the values and ideas of patrons rather than the achievements of architects. Some of these historians asked questions about possible meanings of Gothic in new and remodelled buildings. Worsley, interested in Gothic as a conscious choice which could carry possible symbolic meanings, rejected the idea that these meanings could be political.[51] For Chris Brooks in *The Gothic revival* published in 1999, meaning, as has been noted, was a central concern.[52] The book was based on the premise that style expresses meaning; that is, an understanding of the world and our place in it. To use medieval styles is to be imaginatively involved in the distant country of the past, which comes to symbolise ideas, ideological positions, or an active attempt to make a connection with the past and thus create a sense of continuity. Brooks argued that from the seventeenth century Gothic was used, ambidextrously, to project political allegiance. In an English

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[50] Simon Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England 1790–1840', (PhD, Courtauld Institute, 1996). His research was published in a number of articles: Simon Bradley, 'The Roots of ecclesiology: late Hanoverian attitudes to medieval churches' in Christopher Webster & John Elliott (eds), *'A church as it should be' The Cambridge Camden Society and its influence* (Stamford, 2000), 22–44; Simon Bradley, 'The Englishness of Gothic: themes and interpretations from William Gilpin to J.H. Parker', *Architectural History*, 45 (2002), 325–346.
[51] 'The political overtones of the Gothic Revival were dynastic, not constitutional', (Worsley, 'The origins of the Gothic revival', 121).
[52] Brooks, *Gothic revival*.

context it was able to refer, in some circumstances, to the native tradition of liberties, while in others it denoted conservatism, patriarchy and monarchy.[53] Brooks tended to use circumstantial evidence and rarely quoted documentary sources for individual cases, but, placing his studies within the context of the picturesque, sublime, romanticism and the concepts of the later period, he successfully opened up a field of enquiry that had been initially suggested by David Stewart in 1996.[54]

Underpinning Brooks's analysis was the idea that Gothic as a revival style was freighted with meaning. Not all patrons are interested in the way a building looks. Ballantyne has observed that patrons who commission stylistically novel buildings betray such an interest in their appearance.[55] Patrons of Gothic revival buildings also, arguably, invested significance in style. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century Gothic was chosen as an alternative to other styles. The style itself was a statement about the earlier medieval architecture to which it is related.[56] The use of Gothic may express no more than admiration for the medieval model, or a desire for decorative variety.[57] But, as will be discussed in the thesis, Gothic was invested with associative meaning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and chosen as a way of transmitting desired associations. The style was thus perceived as a conveyor of meaning. How does it convey meaning?

Nelson Goodman has argued that architecture is not strictly a representational art. 'With some interesting exceptions, architectural works do not denote – that is, do not describe, recount, depict or portray'. [58] But, as Whyte has argued, parts of buildings can represent something else.[59] Sculptural decoration can refer to people, myths, past events, or, through heraldry, families. One building can refer to another specific building through the quotation of recognisable details. In the case of late eighteenth- and early

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[53] The book also discussed Gothic in Scotland, Germany, France, Belgium, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America.

[54] David Stewart, 'Political ruins: Gothic sham ruins and the '45', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* 55, (1996), 400–11.

[55] Ballantyne, 'Architecture as evidence', p. 43.

[56] This context changed. Broadly, in the eighteenth century classicism was predominant and Gothic was a new alternative, whereas in the later nineteenth century Gothic was an established alternative and the choice was dubbed a 'battle of styles'.

[57] Variety was a theme in many eighteenth-century pattern books, for example, N. Wallis, *The carpenter's treasure* (London, 1773) and William Wrighte, *Grotesque architecture* (London, 1767).

[58] Nelson Goodman, 'How buildings mean' in Nelson Goodman and Catherine Z. Elgin, *Reconceptions in philosophy and other arts and sciences'* (London, 1988), p. 32.

[59] Whyte, 'How do buildings mean?', 170.

nineteenth-century castle style houses Warwick Castle and Inveraray Castle were favourite and identifiable models. In Gothic revival structures the building as a whole can be representational, referring, say, to a specific historic building type; a medieval castle represented by a castellated early nineteenth-century mansion, for example. Goodman has also argued that buildings can convey meaning through the exemplification or expression of properties or parts of a building. 'Such reference runs, not as denotation does, from symbol to what it applies to as a label, but in the opposite direction, from symbol to certain labels that apply to it or to properties possessed by it.'[60] The nineteenth-century castellated house thus exemplifies the strength and durability of the medieval castle of which it is a symbol. Attention can be drawn to this through the massing of the architectural forms, purposefully irregular and dramatic; the picturesque architecture that became popular in the early nineteenth century.

Such analysis works most effectively in tandem with the exploration of documentary sources. A major problem for studies that investigate meaning is the identification of evidence and construction of arguments. Stevenson and Heslop discerned a fundamental problem when they argued that as buildings have a functional purpose and a structural framework which are usually primary, evidence for meaning cannot necessarily be treated as a deliberate transmission of information, but must be regarded as incidentally indicative.[61] The types of evidence used, the way it has been analysed, and the conclusions drawn by recent historians of Gothic revival buildings vary. Together, these studies begin to build up a picture of how meaning was encoded in Gothic revival architecture.

In her 2010 investigation of why the Corporation of London rebuilt London Bridge in a mixed Gothic style in 1757-1762, Marie Prior admitted her failure to find any explicit accounts of motivations; 'Unfortunately, the extant records of the Corporation and of the Bridge House Estates do not provide a full account of the motivations of the patrons and architects. Hence these must be reconstructed as far as possible using the available evidence, which itself emerges from the records of now-vanished buildings.'[62] She

[60] Goodman, 'How buildings mean', p. 36.
[61] Stevenson & Heslop, 'Introduction', pp 5, 7
[62] Marie Prior, 'The medieval bridge in the Georgian city: London Bridge *c.*1730-1762, *Georgian Group Journal*, 18 (2010), 82. This article was based on a thesis; M.F. Prior, 'Style, perception and identity: the Gothic bridge in London and York, c.1730-1881' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 2008).

turned to the context of the remodeling of London Bridge, notably the proposal drawings and statements connected to the contemporary construction of Westminster Bridge, convincingly arguing for a connection between the Gothic style for the remodelled bridge and an assertion of ancient authority. The present author, in her essay investigating how the 2nd and 3rd Earls of Dunraven put the past to work in the reconstruction of medieval churches and remodelling of their classical house as a Tudor revival mansion in Adare, Co. Limerick, investigated correspondence, drawings and accounts. She analysed them in the context of the prevailing concepts of improvement, the picturesque and the social, economic and political relationships between the earls and their tenants to demonstrate the role played by architecture as a form of communication between the Dunravens and their contemporaries of all classes.[63]

Tim Mowl used both material and documentary evidence to make a clear connection between the social and political ambition of the 2nd Earl of Egmont and the building of the family seat, Enmore Castle.[64] Egmont was both patron and architect of Enmore, and Mowl argued that his intention to evoke family strength was realised with a literal reconstruction of a medieval castle, drawing on Egmont's antiquarian knowledge. This was acknowledged, though not admired, by contemporaries who described the castle's gesture to a time when such buildings 'were the impregnable protection of every potent Baron before the invention of gunpowder and the use of artillery.'[65] Mowl pointed out that Enmore was not emulated, revealing that when he ignored contemporary taste Egmont ensured that his castle and its original meaning were forgotten and that the building had a short afterlife.

When Andrew Ballantyne argued that Richard Payne Knight was motivated by classical rather than Gothic concerns in his design for Downton Castle, he used Knight's own work, analysing Knight's published writing, the original plan of the building, and, more speculatively, Knight's understanding of Epicurian philosophy and the poetry of

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[63] Judith Hill, 'Gothic in post-Union Ireland: the uses of the past in Adare, Co. Limerick' in Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway, *The Irish country house: its past, present and future* (Dublin, 2011), pp 58–89.
[64] Tim Mowl, '"Against the time in which the fabric and use of gunpowder shall be forgotten", Enmore Castle, its origins and its architect', *Architectural History*, 33 (1990) 102-119.
[65] Quoted in Ibid, 103.

Lucretius.[66] As mentioned above this largely personal programme for the castle was not transmitted to contemporaries and future historians. The investigation of personal meaning invested in a building by a patron was also at the root of Elizabeth Chew's study of the buildings of two female patrons working outside the courtly classical manner of Inigo Jones in the early seventeenth century, and it enabled Chew to question Summerson's assertion that the architecture promoted by Inigo Jones was the only style to carry kudos.[67]

Several studies of eighteenth-century houses have argued that patrons were concerned to transmit political messages. In his study of Sir Roger Newdigate's remodeling of Arbury Hall in the second half of the eighteenth century Michael Hall argued that Newdigate's use of medieval models and family coats of arms was not driven by antiquarianism. Instead, taking Newdigate's modern furniture into account, he contended that it was an attempt to create a modern Gothic house.[68] Hall argued that Newdigate, who was loyal to the establishment while harbouring sympathy for the Stuart cause, wanted to create 'an inclusive architectural symbolism, that would reconcile these irreconcilables' for his contemporary house.[69] Where Newdigate employed a subtle combination of symbols and associations, Oliver Cox showed how the 11th Duke of Norfolk used architecture, sculpture and painting 'to transform Arundel Castle into a three-dimensional narrative of English Liberty', a project that spanned the years 1787 to 1809.[70] The symbolic programme was largely achieved through representations of King Alfred, though Cox also argued that architectural styles were used symbolically.[71] Cox showed that changes in values had a devastating effect for the 11th Duke's scheme. While contemporaries were alert to the iconography of the murals and sculptures, taste soon changed so that by the mid-nineteenth century representations

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[66] Andrew Ballantyne, 'Downton Castle: function and meaning', *Architectural History,* 32 (1989), 105-130.

[67] Elizabeth V. Chew, '"A mockery of the Surveyor's style"?: alternatives to Inigo Jones in seventeenth-cecntury elite British architecture' in Barbara Arciszewska & Elizabeth McKellar (eds), *Articulating British classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (Aldershot, 2004), pp 57–95.

[68] Michael Hall, 'Arbury Hall, Warwickshire – I & II', *Country Life* (7 & 14 Jan. 1999), 30–5, 40–3.

[69] Ibid, 43.

[70] Oliver Cox, 'Arundel castle as a "palladium of English liberty"', *Georgian Group Journal*, 21 (2013), 124.

[71] Ibid, 130.

of King Alfred were no longer valued and the mural showing Alfred instituting trial by jury was torn down.[72]

Some historians have gone beyond the analysis of intentions and their embodiment in built form to ask whether the resulting architecture expresses concepts such as identity or power. Thus they distance themselves from the aim of understanding building in the terms in which it was conceived to draw more general conclusions about architecture and society. Stevenson and Heslop have warned that this approach risks identifying issues that may owe more to the historian's perception than the makers', and that it could suggest that buildings are active agents independent of their creators.[73] '[T]oday we discuss buildings as expressions of wealth and power, or taste or character; we re-present them as representing reforming ideologies, a yearning for the exotic, self-indulgence or conspicuous meekness. In short, buildings are once again endowed with agendas and personalities'.[74]

Some historians have combined both a detailed understanding of the context of production and early reception and a more distanced perspective that judges the result in the context of historians' concerns. In his recent thesis investigating the Tudor revival mansions commissioned from English architects in Ulster in the 1820s and 1830's, Myles Campbell wrote a detailed account of the building projects of a group of Ulster patrons with a strongly unionist background.[75] He argued that in these houses the Tudor revival style was a deliberate attempt to express affiliation to Britain, and concluded that they were expressions of British identity. Aonghus MacKechnie and Florian Urban, on the other hand, discussed Balmoral Castle entirely in terms of regionalism and national identity.[76] They introduced their subject within the frame of their interpretive stance that the mid-nineteenth-century royal castle was expressive of unionism and could be designated 'built unionism'.[77] They investigated the commission to find out how 'a "regionally sensitive" building was accepted as an appropriate representation of

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[72] Ibid, 124.
[73] Stevenson & Heslop, 'Introduction', p. 12.
[74] Ibid., p. 12.
[75] Myles Campbell, 'Building British identity and the Tudor-revival country house in Ulster, 1825–50' (PhD, TCD, 2014).
[76] Aonghus MacKechnie & Florian Urban, 'Balmoral Castle: national architecture in a European context', *Architectural History*, 58 (2015), 159–96.
[77] Ibid.,159–63.

British royalty, and thus a contribution to the "national" message.'[78] Their argument, however, was more deeply rooted in the cultural context of the period than this brief account would suggest, for by the mid-nineteenth century revivalist architecture was being cast in national terms, and the activities of the royal patrons were construed by contemporaries in terms of nationalism.[79]

The idea that architecture has expressed national identity is undoubtedly a contemporary preoccupation and draws on historical research from the last twenty-five years.[80] It has only recently been applied to architectural history. A collection of essays on seventeenth-century British architecture published in 2012, which shared a common aim to challenge Anglocentrism, has demonstrated a variety of approaches and drawn a number of conclusions.[81] In studies exploring the expression of Scottish and Welsh identities in architecture British identity was atomised, while in another essay research revealed that the identities of trading partners situated in North America and the West of England were shared.[82] A further study investigated building in Ulster in a colonial context.[83] Several essays were concerned with influences. Rolf Loeber's quantitative and comparative analysis of Irish houses concluded that influences were multifarious and resistant to simplification.[84] Another study challenged accepted interpretations of the sources of influence by discussing the idea that some influences flowed not from England to the peripheries but in a reverse direction, and by revealing how English claims about the geographic location of influences have reflected self-image rather than reality.[85]

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[78] Ibid.,169–70.
[79] Ibid., 169–75.
[80] One of the most influential contributions to the debate was Linda Colley, *Britons; forging the nation 1707-1837* (New Haven & London, 1992).
[81] Olivia Horsfall Turner (ed.), *'The mirror of Great Britain': national identity in seventeenth-century British architecture* (Reading, 2012). The approaches and conclusions were outlined in the introduction (Olivia Horsfall Turner, 'Introduction' in Horsfall Turner, *'The mirror of Great Britain'*, pp 9–14). This collection of essays did not focus on Gothic revival architecture, but merits discussion because it introduces a theme that will be pursued in this thesis.
[82] Ibid., pp 11–12. One study of Scottish royalty explored the idea that Scottish architecture could express the concept of Great Britain (Aonghus MacKechnie, 'Sir James Murray of Kibaberton: King's Master of Works, 1607–1634' in Horsfall Turner, *'The mirror of Great Britain'*, pp 15–50).
[83] Brenda Collins, 'The Conway estate in County Antrim: an example of seventeenth-century "English" building styles in Ireland' in Horsfall Turner, *'The mirror of Great Britain'*, pp 165–86.
[84] Rolf Loeber, 'The early seventeenth-century Ulster and Midland plantations, Part I: pre-plantation architecture and building regulations' in Horsfall Turner, *'The mirror of Great Britain'*, pp 73–100; Rolf Loeber, 'The early seventeenth-century Ulster and Midland plantations, Part II: the new architecture' in Horsfall Turner, *'The mirror of Great Britain'*, pp 101–138.
[85] Horsfall Turner, 'Introduction', pp 12–13.

Gothic revival architecture is now regarded as a significant stylistic trend within English architectural history that dates from the sixteenth century, and is seen as a fruitful conduit by which builders could embody ideas in architecture. In his 1993 reappraisal of the origins of the Gothic revival Giles Worsley placed his interest in understanding Gothic in the context of the collapse of the idea that modernism was the singularly appropriate and authoritative style of the twentieth century.[86] A result of this, he noted, was that the attendant imperative to view architecture as a progressive force leading to modernism was no longer tenable. Gothic revival, once seen as a frivolous cul-de-sac, could now be regarded as an intrinsic element of British architecture with deep roots and a serious purpose. The historiography of the Gothic revival also reflects general changes in architectural history, with a connoisseurial emphasis on style and architects and a focus on built form being replaced by a growing interest in patronage and context, the use of documentary, literary and visual evidence, and an investigation into meanings projected by buildings. This is reflected in the historiography of surveys of Gothic revival architecture. In the 1960s and 70s, when architectural historians were more focused on style, the discussion of taste tended to be confined to an initial general chapter, and few references were made to it when individual projects were discussed in the main body of the text.[87] More recent surveys are more contextually based. The chapter headings in Michael Lewis's 2002 account indicate that his discussion revolves around ideas that animated the adoption of Gothic – literature, Romanticism and nationalism.[88]

Historiographically, the present thesis aims to make a contribution to the contextual interpretation of Gothic revival architecture by amalgamating an investigation of perceptions, building history and reception into a single study. It will attempt to understand the chosen buildings in the terms in which they were conceived, to interpret possible meanings within the political, social and cultural contexts in which the buildings were designed and built, and investigate whether those meanings were

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[86] Worsley, 'The origins of the Gothic revival', 105.

[87] A.J. Rowan, 'The castle style in British domestic architecture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1965); Douglas Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, 2 vols (New York and London, 1983).

[88] Michael Lewis, *The Gothic revival* (London, 2002). See also Curl, whose account of Gothic is integrated into a book about Georgian architecture, (Curl, *Georgian architecture*) and Aldrich, *Gothic revival.*

conveyed to observers. Context, at the heart of the thesis, is present at each stage and at various levels; the context of an individual's taste, a specific commission, a family's role and status, the function, role and meaning of an architectural style. Contradictions and inconsistenties may surface, for the aim is to try as far as possible to listen rather than impose. Semantic context, running through the project from an individual's perception of medieval architecture to the question of national identity, functions as a way of accessing value and significance, and is the chosen method to attempt to discover meaning; intended, transmitted and received.

A sustained account of Gothic architecture in Ireland explored in a contextual way will make a contribution to Irish architectural historiography by presenting a strata of Irish architectural history that has been largely overlooked. Not only has very little been written on the neo-Gothic castles and churches of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but also the cultural sophistication that informed these buildings has never recieved critical attention, so that the castles have tended to be dismissed as fancy-dress structures and the churches regarded architecturally as decorated boxes.[89] By identifying this gap the thesis will challenge the impression gained by existing scholarship of the highest quality concerned with Irish public, domestic and urban architecture that classicism was the sole significant cultural influence in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[90]

Methodology and research questions

Given the aim to approach the field through the study of primary documentary sources and surviving buildings, it was clear that the thesis would be developed through case studies. Three were chosen: Charleville Castle, Co. Offaly (1800–1809); Birr Castle Co. Offaly (1801–*c.*1806) and Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle (1801–1815). Two of these buildings – Charleville Castle and the Castle Chapel – were designed by Francis Johnston, the foremost architect in Ireland of the period. Several considerations lay

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[89] Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland* (London, 1982), p. 247 The only sustained account of Gothic architecture in Ireland is Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, 2 vols.

[90] Monographs on classical Irish architecture include; Maurice Craig, *Classic Irish houses of the middle size* (London, 1976); Edward McParland, *James Gandon Vitruvius Hibernicus* (London, 1985); Edward McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland 1680–1760* (New Haven & London, 2001).

behind the choice of subjects; the time frame, building type, patronage and the availability of source material.

It was decided to select projects covering a similar time frame, with genesis, design and construction occurring in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. This is a significant period in Irish architectural and political history. In terms of the Gothic revival in Ireland it is groundbreaking. Although Gothic revival architecture was not unknown before 1800, two building types that would become popular and distinctive in Ireland – the castellated mansion and the Gothic revival church – began to be commissioned in greater numbers after 1800. Pioneering examples of both domestic and ecclesiastical architecture were chosen. Politically, the first two decades of the nineteenth century were the early years of the Union of Ireland with Great Britain. This would survive until 1922 and have a profound impact on Irish life. The elite, particularly the Protestant ascendancy, and the viceroy – the monarch's representative in Ireland who, anomalously in some eyes, continued to hold office after the Act of Union in 1800 – was faced with a new political situation to which it had to adapt.[91] The case study buildings represent both these perspectives; the two castles – Birr Castle and Charleville Castle– were built by members of the Protestant elite, and the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle was commissioned by the viceregal establishment.

The castles were both located in Co. Offaly. This narrowed the field, and made comparisons between the patrons – who were friends and local political rivals – and the buildings, one of which influenced the design of the other, more meaningful. However, there were several factors which distinguished the castles. The male patrons had different attitudes towards the Union. Sir Laurence Parsons, later the 2nd Earl of Rosse, who commissioned Birr Castle, was associated with the patriot party in the late eighteenth-century Irish Parliament and voted against the Union. Charles William Bury, later the Earl of Charleville, who designed Charleville Castle in association with his wife, Catherine Maria Bury, voted for the Union. They also had differing family and social situations. The Burys had no historical connection with Charleville demesne before Charles William Bury inherited it from his maternal uncle, Charles Moore, in

[91] For the use of the term 'Protestant ascendancy see Jacqueline Hill, 'The meaning and significance of Protestant ascendancy, 1787–1840' in *Ireland after the Union: proceedings of the second joint meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy, London, 1986* (Oxford, 1989), pp 1–22

1764. Moore had lived on the demesne for 24 years from 1740; from 1764 to 1785, when Bury came of age, the old house was rented out. The Parsons, on the other hand, had lived continuously in Parsonstown House (the former name for Birr Castle) since the late 1620s. Socially, Parsons was more secure; he inherited a baronetcy from his father and a peerage from his uncle, whereas Bury had to apply for his accession to and elevation within the peerage. These political, family and social differences had a marked effect on the patrons' approaches to their building projects, affecting their attitudes to place, to the past and to their existing buildings. It was most obviously apparent in the basic brief; whereas Bury abandoned the seventeenth-century house he had inherited, Parsons remodeled his. Bury was focused on creating a powerfully integrated architectural statement, whereas Parsons, although intent on making a strong architectural impact, allowed existing structures to influence the result so that the architectural language was more diffuse. The patrons of the castles worked closely with their architects; but whereas Parsons employed an obscure architect, John Johnston, Bury employed the foremost architect of the period in Ireland, Francis Johnston, no relation to John . Francis Johnston forms a link between the castles and the chapel for he was also the architect of the Castle Chapel, which he began designing as Board of Works architect in 1807, when his castle commissions were coming to an end.[92] The chapel was thus the work of his maturity as a Gothic revival architect.

It was important for a thesis which aimed to investigate specific ideas in a directional manner that case studies were chosen which had ample surviving archives. This was true of all the case study buildings. The material relating to Birr was concentrated in the Rosse papers held at Birr Castle. They had been archived by Anthony Malcomson, who had published an extensive calendar with some material, particularly correspondence, transcribed.[93] Much of the material of particular relevance to the case study for this thesis had not been transcribed or referred to in any previous publication. It included personal material relating to Sir Laurence Parsons, drawings and accounts derived from the remodelling of the castle, and drawings dating from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century relating to the earlier building. The Charleville archive was more

[92] The last surviving sketches for Killeen Castle date to 1813 (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.927, pencil sketches depicting ceiling designs). Johnston also sketched proposed alterations to Kilruddery, Co. Wicklow in 1814 (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.933–5, drawings for Kilruddery) and, with his partner, William Murray, for Howth Castle, Co. Dublin in 1824 (NLI, AD 1818–1821, drawings for Howth Castle).

[93] A.P.W. Malcomson, *Calendar of the Rosse papers* (Dublin, 2008).

fragmented but, when assembled, equally rich. The most significant collections were two repositories of family papers – the Howard Bury papers – in the county libraries of Offaly and Westmeath, an archive of family correspondence in the University of Nottingham some of which had been published by Warwick Bond in 1937, correspondence in the National Library of Ireland, and an extensive archive of original and photographed drawings relating to Charleville assembled by the Irish Architectural Archive.[94] This was the first time too that this material had been fully investigated. Because of the destruction of the registered papers of the Chief Secretary's office in the fire at the Four Courts in 1922 very little scholarly work has been carried out on the Castle Chapel. The strategy adopted in the thesis was to assemble the papers, found in a number of locations, of the successive viceroys and chief secretaries who presided over the project and the churchmen and functionaries associated with the building. This was complemented by research into the official papers in the National Archive in Ireland, investigation of printed sources – House of Commons reports, newspapers, Johnston's account of the building and sermons – and an interpretive study of the sculptural programme incorporated into the interior and exterior fabric of the building.

The building projects that formed the case studies were investigated within a larger time frame: the years at the end of eighteenth century when the protagonists were travelling and absorbing the cultural values and taste that would later inform their projects; and the years immediately after the buildings were constructed when they and other Gothic revival buildings were visited and assessed. It was decided to terminate this period in 1841, the year the *Irish Penny Journal* ceased publication, contributing to the marking of the end of the pre-Victorian period in Irish cultural history.

There were a number of objectives associated with the thesis: to investigate the formation of an emerging taste for Gothic; to discover whether and how that taste was expressed architecturally; to investigate intention in architectural projects; to investigate how intention was expressed architecturally; to analyse how buildings conveyed meaning in Ireland in the chosen period; to interpret that meaning with reference to the political, social, cultural and economic context of the Union; to analyse the reception of Gothic revival buildings in Ireland.

[94] Warwick Bond R. (ed), *The Marlay letters 1778-1820* (London, 1937).

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first section (two chapters) explores the taste of the three patrons who commissioned Charleville and Birr castles – Charles Willliam Bury, Catherine Maria Bury and Laurence Parsons – and the architect Francis Johnston. These particular patrons were selected because of the available sources for their activities, and because of evidence that they had a significant design input into their projects. By contrast, the Chapel Royal was conceived and built during the incumbency of four viceroys and individually they had less input. The study of Francis Johnston's taste was made possible by two surviving sources and was vital for the thesis because of his involvement in two case study buildings and his pre-eminence in the period. John Johnston had a relatively minor role to play at Birr and very little evidence survives relating to him. The taste of the Charlevilles, Parsons and Johnston is explored by investigating their knowledge and understanding of medieval and Gothic revival architecture within the contemporary cultural context using diaries, journals, correspondence, sketches, drawings and library catalogues.

The second section investigates the genesis, design and construction of the selected buildings in their historical and physical context in three separate chapters. In each case the sources – design and working drawings, maps, correspondence, poems and written accounts relating to the buildings, building fabric, sculptural, stuccoed and stained glass decorations – are analysed for evidence of patrons' intentions, and for the relative roles played by the patrons and architects in the design and realisation of the buildings. The ways in which decorative, sculptural and architectural elements of the resulting buildings convey meaning is analysed. The projects are interpreted in the context of the political and social lives of the patrons to consider whether the buildings performed a functional role within this context. Conclusions are drawn about the meaninsg conveyed.

The third section considers reception in the era before attitudes towards Gothic revival architecture had shifted decisively under the impact of A.W.N. Pugin's work and the writings of the Ecclesiological Society. A range of literary sources and images discussing and presenting the buildings discussed in the study and the castellated houses that were built in significant numbers in the 1820s and 30s, are analysed with reference to the political and cultural values of the writers. The thesis concludes with observations

about what the method employed in the thesis revealed about meaning in Gothic revival architecture in post-Union Ireland.

Chapter One

Patrons and the taste for Gothic

Introduction

Charles William Bury (1764–1835), his wife, Catherine Maria Bury (1762–1851) (later Earl and Countess of Charleville) and Sir Laurence Parsons (1758–1841) (later 2nd Earl of Rosse) belonged to the same generation. They were born in the late 1750s and early 1760s, came of age at the beginning of the misleadingly-named period of legislative independence of 1782–1800, experienced the French Revolution, and, more immediately, the 1798 rising in Ireland. In the first decade of the Union, and against the background of the Napoleonic Wars and continuing atmosphere of unrest in Ireland, they built Gothic revival castles in Co. Offaly. Although they all came from planter stock, moved in elite Ascendancy and British social circles, the men taking on political roles at local and national level, they had different political outlooks and subtly different ambitions.

They were all interested in medieval architecture and their perceptions of Gothic reflected contemporary taste. Their feeling for Gothic coexisted with an understanding and appreciation of classicism. Their response to Gothic was inflected by the new sensibility which privileged subjective feeling. Their knowledge and understanding of Gothic was informed by contemporary antiquarian thinking that approached medieval architecture in a systematic and investigative way. It was an emerging sensibility and one that was forming in this many-sided way. A discussion of the taste for Gothic will tend to categorise the perception of Gothic according to different contexts in which it was discussed and appreciated.[1] This will reveal some of the differences between the patrons. However, they themselves did not classify their responses, and the categories useful for historical analysis are also permeable; one person could respond to a single building in a variety of ways. Before investigating the unpublished personal sources that can reveal something of these individual ways of seeing Gothic, an introduction to the impulses that were promoting the rehabilitation of Gothic will reveal the complexity of this emerging taste.

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[1] Alexandrina Buchanan has discussed the usefulness and risks associated with using categories to analyse perceptions of medieval buildings (Buchanan, 'Interpretations of medieval architecture, *c.*1550–*c.*1750', pp 28–9).

The taste for Gothic

Notwithstanding recent scholarly reappraisals of the role of classicism in eighteenth-century society, the consensus remains that classicism was the dominant cultural influence of the period.[2] Yet, by the early nineteenth century Gothic was emerging as an alternative architectural style. In 1808 John Milner could write, 'the style itself is [now] generally admired', and by the 1820s it had become the *de facto* language for churches in Britain and Ireland, an increasingly popular choice for new mansions and an option for public buildings.[3]

In the early eighteenth century this would have been unthinkable, for medieval architecture was despised as the inchoate product of the barbarian Goths, and the antithesis to classicism. This attitude was articulated by Isaac Ware in the mid-eighteenth century in *A complete body of architecture*.[4] It is, Ware wrote 'a wild and irregular manner of building, that took [the] place of the regular antique method at the time when architecture ... declined.'[5] To Ware and other British Palladians, medieval architecture lacked the rational basis without which invention and the exercise of genius was impossible.[6] This conviction blinded critics not only to the beauty of Gothic architecture but, as significantly, to its details. Gothic would gradually gain credence in the later eighteenth century through a variety of intellectual and aesthetic channels, and the new taste would be propagated in books and paintings collected by patrons and architects.

Gothic was a beneficiary of the value that was increasingly put on subjective experience. In an essay published in Germany in 1772 the poet Goethe identified the moment his eyes and mind turned towards Gothic in his emotional response to Strasbourg Cathedral.[7] He had been expecting 'the confused, the unregulated, the unnatural'. Instead, he had found that 'A sensation of wholeness, greatness, filled my

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[2] Barbara Arciszewska, 'Classicism: constructing the paradigm in continental Europe and Britain', in Arciszewska & McKellar (eds), *Articulating British classicism,* pp 18–19.
[3] John Milner, *An inquiry into certain vulgar opinions concerning the Catholic inhabitants and antiquities of Ireland* (London, 1808), p. 253. Examples of Gothic revival public buildings include County Courts, Carlisle, Robert Smirke, (1810–12) and Law Courts, Westminster, John Soane, (1822–5).
[4] Isaac Ware, *A complete body of architecture* (London, 1756–7).
[5] Ibid., p. 19.
[6] For an assessment of Ware as a Palladian see Howard Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600–1840* (3rd ed. New Haven & London, 1995), p. 1021.
[7] Fernie, *Art history and its methods*, pp 80–4.

soul'.'[8] It was an articulation of the ecclesiastical sublime. The sublime, an established concept but defined for his contemporaries by Edmund Burke in *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* in 1757, would become the vehicle by which many in the late eighteenth century approached medieval cathedral architecture.[9] Burke did not discuss cathedrals, but in the chapter on power inserted into the second edition of 1759 he described the experience of the power of God in terms of the sublime; 'But whilst we contemplate so vast an object ... we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before him.'[10]

Gothic also benefited from the fashion for ordering ideas according to the principle of association rather than reasoning logic. Gothic architecture would be recommended through many associative channels. One of the earliest, and most widely quoted, was an association of medieval towers and battlements with the British landscape. In his poem *L'Allegro*, published in 1645, John Milton described a landscape in which these features have an intrinsic place:

Some time walking not unseen
By Hedge-row Elms on Hillocks green, …
Meadows trim with Daisies pide,
Shallow Brooks, and Rivers wide.
Towers, and Battlements it sees
Boosom'd high in tufted Trees, ...[11]

The appreciation of buildings within a landscape context was fundamental to the picturesque as it developed in the eighteenth century. In topographical paintings and drawings medieval buildings played a central aesthetic and semantic role, while in designed landscapes medieval ruins or neo-Gothic follies played a similar part, positioned to attract attention and discussed in terms of allusion to the past. Associative

[8] Quoted in Nikolaus Pevsner, *Studies in art, architecture and design,* 1: *From Mannerism to Romanticism* (London, 1968), p. 166.
[9] Edmund Burke, *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, (London, 1757). For discussion of responses to cathedrals see Aspin, '"Our ancient architecture"', 215–216.
[10] Edmund Burke, *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful* (Oxford, 1990), p. 63.
[11] Quoted in Malcolm Andrews, *The search for the picturesque,* (Aldershot, 1989), pp 12–13. Andrews observed that many picturesque tourists would recall these phrases when looking at Welsh or Scottish landscapes.

thinking gained the imprimatur of Sir Joshua Reynolds when he argued in his thirteenth *Discourse* for the imaginative power of associative thinking;

'[A]s we have naturally a veneration for antiquity, whatever building brings to our remembrance ancient customs and manners, such as the castles of the Barons of ancient chivalry, is sure to give this delight. Hence it is that *towers and battlements* are so often selected by the painter and the poet'.[12]

By the nineteenth century this sensibility was gaining a romantic dimension in what was a fundamental shift of perspective. Eighteenth-century writers had approached the problem of sensibility with rationalist arguments; the sublime, although an emotional experience, was understood as having precise causes. With Romanticism the appreciation of artistic creativity as inexplicable and disproportionate moved away from the rationalist moorings of eighteenth-century sensibility. Under the influence of Romanticism the historicism of medieval architecture – its roots in a distant past – was valued.[13] John Carter (1748–1817), architectural draftsman and prolific journalist, articulated an intense emotional response to medieval buildings and, in a passionate linking of the patriotic and the aesthetic, campaigned for the recognition of Gothic architecture as the legitimate architecture of England.[14]

In the eighteenth century intellectual developments within classicism encouraged the appreciation of Gothic as an alternative architectural style. When Johann Joachim Winckelmann argued in his publications of 1755 and 1764 that classical art was the quintessential expression of ancient Greece rather than Rome, he defined it as a particular culture of the past.[15] This was a significant departure from the idea that classicism was timeless and universal. It drew attention to style as a specific cultural phenomenon with its own history, and allowed the possibility of alternatives to classicism.

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[12] Joshua Reynolds, *The discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds,* ed. John Burnet, (London, 1842), p. 236. Discourse 13 was delivered at the Royal Academy of Art, 1 Dec. 1786.

[13] For discussion of the role of the industrial revolution, the French Revolution the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars see Brooks, *Gothic revival*, pp 130–4 and John Frew, 'Gothic is English: John Carter and the revival of the Gothic as England's national style', *Art Bulletin,* 64:2 (June, 1982), 315–19.

[14] Much of this was published in a series of articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine* from 1798 to 1817 making Carter one of the most high profile advocates of Gothic. For discussion of Carter see Crook, *John Carter.*

[15] Arciszewska, 'Classicism: constructing the paradigm', p. 5.

Gothic gained credibility in these circles when a rationalist approach – accurate measurement, the careful discrimination of details – was applied to medieval architecture with the sponsoring of measured drawings of medieval buildings and their details by the Society of Antiquaries in London from 1771.[16] With such developments the stylistic complexity of medieval architecture could be perceived, resulting in the extended project to create an accurate taxonomy of Gothic, initiated by Thomas Warton in 1762 and realised by Thomas Rickman's authoritative terminology in *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture* in 1817.[17]

Despite these attempts to apply rational thinking to Gothic architecture in order to increase knowledge of its forms and unearth its structural logic, apologists for Gothic architecture were slow to recognise it as a rational endeavour, pursued by knowledgeable and thoughtful designers. In *Anecdotes of painting* first published in 1762 Horace Walpole characterised Gothic as a style that resisted rational appreciation; 'One must have taste to be sensible to the beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passions to feel Gothoic.'[18] However, elsewhere in the book he did attribute clear intentions to the architects.[19] The architect and antiquarian, James Essex, who based his restorations of medieval cathedrals on measured drawings and the careful matching of new with existing work, recognised the design achievement of medieval masons when he wrote in *Archaeologia* in 1777 that 'the ancient freemasons … properly understood the nature and use of proportions, and knew how to vary them when they wanted to produce a striking effect.'[20]

To discover good proportions in Gothic was to endow it with an attribute of classicism. This method of legitimating Gothic proved irresistible to nearly all commentators on Gothic in the period. A crude attempt to map classical orders onto Gothic architecture to prove that Gothic did not lack order was made in 1742 by Batty Langley, in his popular

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[16] For discussion of the Society's publications (*Archaeologia* and *Vetusta Monumenta*) see John Frew, 'An aspect of the early Gothic revival', 175–81.

[17] Thomas Warton, *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser,* 2 (2nd ed. corrected and enlarged, London, 1762), pp 185–198; Thomas Rickman, *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture from the conquest to the reformation, preceded by a sketch of the Grecian and Roman orders* (Liverpool, 1817).

[18] Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of painting in England,* 1, (3rd enlarged ed. London, 1782), p. 183.

[19] Ibid., pp 182, 185.

[20] Quoted in Frew, 'Gothic is English', 316.

pattern book, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved.*[21] He extracted rules from his knowledge of Westminster Abbey, which, in an echo of classical scholarship, he presented as five 'orders of the Gothick Architecture'. Even Matthew Young, who used mathematical arguments to demonstrate the structural properties of the pointed arch, was not above relating Gothic typology to classical orders, suggesting that Saxon corresponded to Tuscan, Norman to Doric and Ionic and Gothic to Corinthian and Composite.[22]

For much of the eighteenth century good taste referred to classicism.[23] It was absolute and exclusive, depending on knowledge derived from the books and grand tour to which only the privileged few had access, and was used by the elite to reinforce their status.[24] However, with the growing importance of subjectivity in aesthetic matters, taste gradually became a relative concept. This was articulated by James Essex in his 1777 article in *Archaeologia* when he wrote, 'we must allow that they [medieval masons] had taste well adapted to the religion and genius of the age in which they lived.'[25] It has been argued that the dissemination of both classical and Gothic styles through cheaper architectural books meant that the exclusivity of taste was challenged, as it became available to a wider market.[26]

Taste may have transmuted from an absolute to a relative concept, and it may have been more prevalent, but in a hierarchical society royal endorsement was still important. This occurred when in 1800 George III became a patron of Gothic by commissioning a castellated palace for Kew. He was reportedly bemused by a decision that seemed almost involuntary; '[he] said he should have thought it impossible thirty years ago that he should ever encourage Gothic architecture'.[27] His son maintained the tradition, commissioning Gothic revival alterations to Windsor Castle in 1824. Gothic taste gained acceptability when the government set up a so-called 'Committee of Taste' 'for

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[21] Batty and Thomas Langley, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved,* (London, 1742).
[22] Revd Matthew Young, *The origin and theory of the Gothic arch*, (Dublin, 1790), p. 58.
[23] Walpole, *Anecdotes of painting,* vol. 1, p. 183.
[24] Arciszewska, 'Classicism: constructing the paradigm', pp 14–23.
[25] Quoted in Frew, 'Gothic is English', 316.
[26] Arciszewska, 'Classicism: constructing the paradigm', p. 20.
[27] Quoted by Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in art: some aspects of taste, fashion and collecting in England and France* (London, 1976), p. 3.

the regulation of matters of taste' at Windsor.[28] The committee was composed of the some of the most prominent political and landed figures in Britain including George IV's aesthetic advisor and connoisseur of the arts, Sir Charles Long. They examined plans by Robert Smirke, John Nash and Jeffry Wyatville and supervised Wyatville's Gothic revival scheme. By the time the rebuilding of Windsor was completed in 1840 the taste for Gothic had been transformed into a well-established stylistic alternative to classicism.

Charles William Bury and Catherine Maria Bury

Charles William Bury had grown up with the knowledge that when he came of age he would inherit a substantial estate, for he was an only child and his father, John Bury, had died five weeks after his son's birth in 1764.[29] John Bury left Charles the Bury family estate of Shannongrove Co. Limerick, property in Dublin, and the Charleville estate near Tullamore in King's County (now Co. Offaly). He himself had inherited the Charleville estate from his mother's brother, Charles Moore, who had died on 17 February the same year, 1764.[30] Charles Moore (1712–1764) had been created Earl of Charleville on 16 September 1758, but the title had become extinct on his death. When Charles Bury came of age in 1785 it was on the Charleville estate that he focused his attention. Intent on regaining the earldom, he was created Baron Tullamore of the 2nd creation in October 1797, having presented his documents to argue his case.[31] Three years later on 29 December 1800 he became Viscount Charleville, and after hard petitioning Earl of Charleville in February 1806.

Bury's education prepared him for life as a substantial landowner and cultivated gentleman. He entered Trinity College Dublin on 11 October 1781, graduating in

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[28] Quoted in J. Mordaunt Crook & M.H. Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6: 1782–1851* (London, 1973), p. 384.
[29] C.W. Bury was born 30 June 1764; his father died on 4 August 1764 (*Burke's Irish family records* (5th ed. London, 1976). For writing on Bury see R. Warwick Bond (ed.), *The Marlay letters 1778–1820* (London, 1937), pp 31–46, 110–134.
[30] John Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1789), pp 82–91. C.W. Bury's mother, Catherine née Sadlier was trustee of the estate until her son came of age. She married Henry Prittie of Kilboy, Co. Tipperary when Charles was eighteen months old.
[31] NLI, Genealogical Office, MS 103 p.153 (microfilm: P 8290), 'Confirmation of arms to Charles William Bury Oct. 15 1797'.

summer 1785.[32] In 1788 he went on a Grand Tour to Italy, returning in 1789.[33] He sought political position and influence but showed little aptitude or interest in politics. He was elected MP for Kilmallock in 1790, and, having failed to obtain a seat for King's County in the general election of 1790, he was re-elected for Kilmallock in 1792, keeping his seat until 1797.[34] He made no mark in Parliament and supported the Union. He became a representative peer in 1801 after the death of Lord Rossmore, the first of the original 28 peers to die.

Bury had married Catherine in June 1798, the widow of James Tisdall of Bawn Co. Louth, who had died suddenly in November 1797.[35] Catherine, born on 22 December 1762, was the daughter of Thomas Townley Dawson (1732–1794) of Armagh and Joanna Saunders of Wicklow. For a girl in the 1770s, Catherine had a haphazard but advanced education. Her parents took her to France and she spent two summers at the Collège Royal in Toulouse where she was taught mathematics and philology in French.[36] She read Joseph Butler's *Analogy of religion* of 1736, a defence of Christianity against fashionable deism, using empirical rather than rationalist arguments.[37] She had an enthusiastic interest in literature, and later in life she read the novels of Walter Scott as they appeared, encouraged the young novelist Sidney Owenson, and corresponded with other novelists including Maria Edgeworth. She wrote a play, and translated French correspondence in Charles Fox's seventeenth-century history of England into English.[38] She had studied drawing and was an accomplished painter.[39] She had an intellectual presence in her social circle, attracting the respect of

[32] George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir (eds), *Alumni Dublinenses, A register of the students, graduates, professors and provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin (1593–1860)* (Dublin, 1935), p. 120.
[33] John Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (New Haven & London, 1997), p.164.
[34] E.M, Johnston-Liik, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, vol. 3 (Belfast, 2002), pp 331–2.
[35] For writing on C.M. Bury see Finola O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque: design, landscape painting and tourism 1700–1840* (New Haven & London, 2013), pp 174–80.
[36] Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 3–7.
[37] Ibid., p. 3.
[38] Marlay Papers, MS, My 91, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 17 July 1808. Bond suggested that the reference to her translation in Bury's letter referred to French correspondence, Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 107, nt 1. Charles Fox, *A history of the early part of the reign of James the second* 4 vols (London, 1808).
[39] Marlay Papers, MS, My 969, notes, sketches and dimensions of a Tuscan portico. n.d. annotations in C.M. Bury's handwriting. Correspondence between C.M. Bury and Richard Lovell Edgeworth on proportional figure drawing (Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 196–8).

Richard Marlay, Bishop of Waterford and Thomas Barnard, Bishop of Limerick, friend of Reynolds, Burke and Johnson.[40]

Her intellectual and literary interests intersected with those of Bury; he copied sections of Butler's *Analogy* and had read French, Italian and English literature. There was, however, a significant difference in their focus and determination. Warwick Bond, who meticulously analysed Bury's large, amorphous manuscripts, discovered that it was largely a disordered copying of extracts from books, without obvious plan or purpose.[41] It showed wide interest but unwillingness to discipline his thoughts. Catherine on the other hand, had direction and persistence. Writing at the age of 86 to her godson, Brinsley Marlay about her French education she said that what remained to her was 'the satisfactory conviction [that] the study of the exact Sciences produces a habit of keeping the mind directly to the given point and leading one from waste of time on useless divergence.'[42]

Perceptions

A number of documents survive to give insight into the Burys' perception of Gothic. A significant part of their library can be pieced together from three sources. The first is a manuscript catalogue of Charles, Lord Tullamore's library dated 1799.[43] This list reveals a man of catholic taste, typical of his class and period; French, Italian and classical literature, politics, history, philosophy and divinity, travel, landscape, natural history, art and architecture. Having inherited a 'scanty' library, he had acquired most of these books himself; of the 205 books listed in the catalogue over two thirds (148) were published between the 1760s and 1790s, after the death of his father.[44] The second is an undated manuscript list of 41 works in the papers of Catherine and Charles Bury deposited in Nottingham University with the Marlay papers, and can be assumed to

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[40] For her relationship with Marlay and Barnard see Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 56–60; Anthony Powell (ed.), *Barnard letters 1778–1824* (London, 1928), p. 119.

[41] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 36. The family's papers, dated from 1778 to 1912, were bequeathed to Warwick Bond by Charles Brinsley Marlay. Bond published a selection of the correspondence dated 1778–1820 and deposited the remaining papers in the Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham (Bond, *Marlay letters,* pp v–xv). The papers relating to Catherine Maria Bury and her husband form a subsection of the Marlay Papers (My 1–1069) referred to here as the Marlay Papers.

[42] Quoted in Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 3.

[43] Bury library catalogue.

[44] The 'scanty' library is referred to in Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 416. Four titles post-dating 1799 were added in 1804–6.

refer to their library.[45] The last is a list of books included in the 1948 auction catalogue of the contents of Charleville Castle.[46] This catalogue obviously contains books purchased by Lord and Lady Charleville's successors, but includes a few published during their lifetime and relating to their interests which can assumed to have been in their library. Taken together these sources undoubtedly give an incomplete account of the Charlevilles' library; even if the 1799 catalogue is complete, the two later sources are unlikely to be the full account of the books acquired after 1800, during the years when Charleville Castle was being constructed. However, there is substantial material in these sources relating to the Gothic taste of Lord and Lady Charleville.

Charles Bury's diary of July 1802 to June 1803 survives.[47] A small book for documenting appointments and finance, Bury used it to record expenses, visits and the occasional comment.[48] It charts a year travelling in England with extended periods in Buxton and Weymouth where Catherine sought relief from rheumatism. Charles returned briefly to Ireland in December 1802 to deal with the Charleville estate, oversee the building of the new castle and petition for elevation within the peerage. In spring 1803 he was in London to be sworn in as a representative peer. The diary reveals that the Burys visited many houses and castles; some were the residences of friends, others were inspected for design ideas for their new castle. They visited the Soho works of Francis Eginton in Birmingham to discuss their commission for painted glass. Other surviving documents include an account of a journey from Dublin to Gloucester written by Bury in October 1813 for Catherine, two letters from Catherine to Frederick Trench and a painting by Catherine of Penrhyn Castle.[49] (fig 1.2)

Bury set off on his grand tour aged 24, and this ensured that his early cultural interests revolved around classicism. In April 1788 he was in Genoa, and the following year in

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[45] Marlay Papers, MS My 1027, 'List of books at 'C' [Charleville]', n.d.

[46] *Fine art auction ... to be held at Charleville Castle, Tullamore,* 1–5 Nov. 1948 Allen & Townsend, Dublin.

[47] Bury diary, ff 1r–22r.

[48] Evidence from correspondence reveals that Bury did not record every building they visited; for example, he mentions Warwick but not Warwick Castle which is referred to in a letter from Lady Charleville to Frederick Trench (NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802]).

[49] Bond, *Marlay letters,* pp 254–8. NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2 August [1802]; MS 11,348 (1) letter from C.M. Charleville, to [Michael] Frederick Trench, 28 Aug. 1802. Catherine Maria Bury, *Penrhyn Castle, near Bangor, Gwynedd, North Wales* in *Glin Castle, A knight in Ireland*, auction catalogue, 7 May 2009, Christie's, London, lot 89 (illustrated).

Rome.[50] Bury benefitted from the cultural experience and social implications of the Grand Tour. He owned expensive folios illustrated with high quality engravings of classical art and architecture. Bury's 1799 catalogue listed sixteen such folios, many dealing with ancient and modern Roman art and architecture. These included Pietro Bartoli's late seventeenth-century volume on Roman antiquities, Paolo Alessandro Maffei's finely engraved *Raccolta di statue antiche e moderne* published in Rome in 1702, one of the earliest eighteenth-century books on sculpture designed to appeal to *cognoscenti*, Giovani Pietro Bellori's books on the triumphal arch of Augustus, and the Antonine and Trajan Columns, Giuseppe Vasi's comprehensive ten volumes on ancient and modern Roman buildings published in the mid-eighteenth century and Sir William Hamilton's documentation of the eruptions of Vesuvius.[51] Bury possessed eight volumes of high quality engravings of Herculaneum, and *Le antichità di Pozzuoli, Baia e Cuma*, suggesting that he travelled to the recently-discovered archaeological sites near Naples.[52] His *cicerone* in Rome was the Scottish architect, antiquarian and art dealer James Byres.[53] Byres, who had first established himself in Rome in 1764, had a reputation as an erudite and zealous guide whose six-week courses involved an intensive study of the archaeology, history and mythology of the city.[54] Two years earlier Charles Long had written of Byres to the Duke of Cumberland, '[I am] not sorry to have done with a man who is one of the most excitable I ever met with – in spite of this I wd recommend any of my friends to him – it is not difficult to keep [up] with him,

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[50] C.W. Bury is recorded as being in Genoa from 3-15 April 1788 by Thomas Egerton, Lord Grey de Wilton, (Ingamells, *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy*, p. 164). Bury had returned to Ireland by late 1789 for the Kilmallock by-election which he won, and was sworn in as MP on 26 Jan. 1790.

[51] Bury library catalogue, pp 1–4: Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum* (Rome, 1693); Paolo Alessandro Maffei, *Raccolta di statue antiche e moderne* (Rome, 1704); Giovani Pietro Bellori, *Veteres arcus Augustorum triumphis insignes* (Rome, 1690); Giovani Petro Bellori, *La colonna Antonina di Roma* (Rome, 1704); Giovani Petro Bellori, *Colonna Traiana* (Rome, n.d.); Giuseppe Vasi, *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*, 10 vols (Rome, 1747–1761); Sir William Hamilton, *Campi phlegraei* (Naples 1776).

[52] Bury library catalogue, pp 1–2: *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte*, 8 vols (Naples, 1757–92); *Le antichità di Pozzuoli, Baja e Cuma* (Naples, 1760).

[53] Evidence for this derives from his commission of a classical house, IAA, A/4/1-3, photographs of ground floor and first floor plans, elevation, transverse and longitudinal sections of proposal for 'Mr Bury's house' attributed to James Byres. These drawings were formerly in Belvedere House, Co. Westmeath, belonging to a descendant of C.W. Bury (Mark Girouard, 'Charleville Forest, Co. Offaly, Eire', *Country Life* (27 Sept. 1962), 711).

[54] Brinsley Ford, 'James Byres, principal antiquarian for the English visitors to Rome', *Apollo* (June, 1974), 446–61; Timothy Mowl, 'A Roman palace for a Welsh prince; Byres' designs for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn', *Apollo*, 142:405 (1995), 33–41.

and he is in every subject capable of the task he has undertaken'.[55] As Byres's antiquarian interests extended to the largely ignored Etruscans, he no doubt introduced Bury to the contemporary spirit within classicism that engaged with the unexplored and valued empirically-derived knowledge.[56] Bury reaped his social rewards and made further contact with contemporary classical scholarship when, on his return from Italy, he was elected to the Society of Dilettanti in London.[57] He was now a member of a society at the heart of patrician Britain which was the foremost patron of archaeological expeditions to Greece and the resulting publications; the project which dominated the minutes when Bury joined was the engraving of the second volume of *The antiquities of Athens*.[58] There were very few Irish members.[59] Instead, Bury would have met influential connoisseurs such as Charles Long and Richard Colt Hoare (both elected in 1792), as well as two men who would soon become prominent as theoreticians and polemicists for the picturesque movement; Uvedale Price (elected in 1770) and Richard Payne Knight (elected in 1781). Bury was not an assiduous attender at meetings, but he valued the connection and was re-elected in 1807 after he received his earldom.[60]

Bury was receptive to the enlightenment thinking of the late eighteenth century. He did not apply it in a serious way to architecture, but it was not without influence. He demonstrated an interest in the subjects and methodology of science. In Buxton he met White Watson, geologist and mineral dealer, whose diagrammatic tablets, one of which Bury purchased, were devised to show the stratiographical structure of Derbyshire and demonstrated an understanding of the new science of geological strata.[61] Bury wrote a paper for the Royal Irish Academy based on experiments he had carried out in 1799 on burning turf, as a contribution to debate in Ireland on the reclamation of bogs and the

[55] BL, Cumberland Papers, Add MS 36495 vol V f 189, letter from Charles Long to Duke of Cumberland, Rome, 18 Mar. 1786.
[56] Byres made measured drawings of the Etruscan caves at Corneto, first excavated in 1761, which he had engraved for a proposed book on Etruscan history, never produced, (Ford, 'James Byres', 452–3).
[57] Archives of the Society of Dilettanti deposited at the Society of Antiquaries, London, B4, Minute Books, vol. 4, 11 Feb. 1790. Bury was proposed by William Mitford, the author of *The history of Greece*, 1 (London, 1784), and seconded by 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718–1792) who had made his name as an adventurous traveller in his youth and had supported Captain Cook's expeditions.
[58] James Stuart & Nicholas Revett, *The antiquities of Athens,* 4 vols (London, 1762–1816).
[59] Exceptions included the Earl of Charlemont (elected in 1756), Robert Wood (1763), Robert Gregory of Coole Park (1769), and Robert Tighe of Mitchelstown (1793) (Sir Sidney Colvin (ed.), *History of the Society of Dilettanti compiled by Lionel Cust* (London, 1914)).
[60] Bury 'abdicated by neglect of attendance', 3 Mar. 1799 (Archives of the Society of Dilettanti deposited at the Society of Antiquaries, London, B4 Minute Books, vol. 4, 5 Mar. 1799). For 1807 re-election see Colvin, *Society of Dilettanti*, p. 284.
[61] Bury diary, 3 Sept. 1802, f. 4r.

provision of fertilizer.[62] An active engagement with contemporary literature is evident in his translation in collaboration with Catherine (then married to James Tisdall) of Voltaire's *La Pucelle* privately printed in 1796–7.[63] The poem argued for conservative, classical taste, but demonstrated an engagement with contemporary styles which Voltaire deplored as degenerate. In a previous poem, *le Temple du goût,* Voltaire had used an architectural metaphor to discuss taste, associating good taste with the classical temple and bad taste with the 'gothique'.[64] If *La Pucelle* were to be translated into architecture it would be the building of a vast, amorphous medieval castle to parody contemporary architecture that had moved away from the simple elegance of a Greek temple.

An obvious way for a gentleman connoisseur to apply enlightenment thinking to medieval architecture was to buy antiquarian books. Folios of drawings of medieval buildings displaying high standards of draftsmanship were beginning to complement the existing antiquarian books on medieval architecture after Bury returned from Rome. Richard Gough had encouraged the publication of engraved plates of medieval architecture on becoming director of the Society of Antiquaries in London in 1771. This project was more fully realised under his successor, Sir Henry Englefield when, in 1794 the Society Council began commissioning architectural draftsmen – most notably John Carter – to produce measured drawings in plan, section and elevation of several English cathedrals which set new standards of accuracy in large, beautifully produced and expensive folio volumes.[65] None of these books, published between 1794 and 1810, or similar works published in the early nineteenth century appear in any of the catalogues relating to the Charlevilles' library. However, it is likely that they owned antiquarian books not listed. For example, in designs for Charleville Castle Charles Bury used details from a leading antiquarian volume sponsored by the Irish antiquarian, William Burton Conyngham – James Cavanah Murphy's *Plans, elevations, sections, and views*

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[62] Lord Tullamore, 'Analysis of turf ashes', *TRIA*, 8 (1802), 135–9.

[63] *La pucelle: or, the maid of Orleans: a poem, in XXI cantos. From the French of M. de Voltaire. With the author's preface and original notes,* 2 vols ([London], 1796–97). Surviving letters reveal that Catherine had been involved in the translation and that this was known to her immediate social circle, although it was vigorously denied by Bury to deflect a scandal (Bond, *Marlay letters,* pp 37–9).

[64] Discussed in Jennifer Tsien, 'Voltaire and the temple of bad taste: a study of *La pucelle d'Orléans*' in *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 2003), pp 287–422.

[65] For accounts see Frew, 'An aspect of the early Gothic revival', 175–81; Crook, *John Carter,* pp 11–23.

of the church of Batalha published in 1795 – a book that does not appear in any of the library catalogues, but which Bury more than likely possessed.

The catalogues are not entirely devoid of antiquarian books. The undated list of 41 books in the University of Nottingham included the popular and early eighteenth-century antiquarian volume, John Dart's *Westmonasterium*, a largely textual history of Westminster Abbey detailing benefactors, incumbents and customs, while the 1948 auction catalogue listed William Darell's *History of Dover Castle* published in 1786.[66] This book can be compared with Edward King's *Munimenta antiqua* published in 1799 in which Carter's approach to cathedrals was applied to medieval castles.[67] Although King did not realise Carter's standards of draughtsmanship, he included accurate plans and elevations, drawn at a small scale, and showed an awareness of the stylistic evolution of castles in the text. Darell's *Dover* was even less ambitious than King's *Munimenta*, but it did contain a plan based on an engineer's survey showing the outer curtain wall punctuated by towers and bastions, and the inner court with its buildings identified. The engraved views engaged more closely with picturesque convention than King's drawings, but Darell's approach was systematic and objective: he identified the position of the observer; presented the castle from each direction; and, using a mechanistic style that barely distinguished the stone of the buildings from the natural rock of the landscape, suggested a relation of building to landscape through material as well as form. (fig 1.1)

Both Burys were conversant with the idea of Gothic as a style, using it in a variety of contexts. Charles applied the word 'Gothic' to ecclesiastical planning, referring in a letter to Catherine to the proposed plan for a new Protestant church in Tullamore, and, in a description of the project at Charleville, referred to his new house as a 'Gothic castle' distinguishing it from the 'original mansion house.'[68] In both cases he was describing a Gothic revival style. He used the word in a more theoretical context

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[66] John Dart, *Westmonasterium. or the history and antiquities of the abbey church of St Peter's Westminster*, 2 vols (London, 1723), listed in Marlay Papers, MS My 1027, 'List of books at 'C' [Charleville]', n.d.). There was also the popular mid-eighteenth-century book of medieval poetry, Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (London, 1765). William Darell, *The history of Dover Castle* (London 1786) listed in auction catalogue, 1948, lot 1395.

[67] Edward King, *Munimenta antiqua; or, observations on antient castles*, 4 vols (London, 1799–1806).

[68] Marlay Papers, MS My 89, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 13 July 1808; Bury's account of Charleville.

referring to 'the present prevalence of the taste for Gothic Architecture', which probably encompassed medieval and modern versions of Gothic.[69] The phrase came from his description of Charleville which, it will be shown, was heavily influenced by Horace Walpole's account of Strawberry Hill. Catherine also referred generally to Gothic architecture in a letter to Frederick Trench where, writing about Warwick Castle, she referred to its appeal to 'all true lovers of Gothic architecture', using 'Gothic' as a synonym for medieval.[70] The diaries and letters of the Burys make no reference to the stylistic details of medieval architecture, but Louisa Conolly wrote to Catherine about the 'Gothic arches' of Salisbury Cathedral.[71] And Catherine betrayed an interest in dating details and in their provenance when she told Trench that she had sketched a piece of statuary dated 1571 in the gatehouse of Kenilworth Castle.[72]

Bury's short surviving description of his journey to Gloucester reveals that he could engage empirically with medieval buildings. In his account of Caernarfon Castle he recorded impressions derived from two hours spent critically inspecting the remains. He had a good sense of the plan, information about the thickness of the walls and the design of the windows, and ideas about the way the fabric had changed over time. Although there are no sketches and no comments about style or specific historical context, there is engagement with the structure:

' Chief entrance very handsome: the Queen's Gate formerly communicated with the opposite Rock – perhaps by a draw-bridge. The Gallery within the thickness of the walls is four feet wide, & was continued all round: the outward part of the walls was from 6 to 9 feet thick, & within the Galy [gallery] 2 feet. – The rooms must have been very ill lit: in some I found great difficulty to trace how lit at all, the inner Windows of the chambers being only opposite small appertures in the outside wall. The long spike holes thro'out six inches wide.'[73]

There is evidence that Charles and Catherine viewed medieval buildings as aesthetic objects in the landscape. Bury's account of Powis Castle – medieval, much augmented

[69] Bury's account of Charleville.
[70] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville], to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802].
[71] Marlay Papers, MS My 30/1, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to C.M. Bury, 22 Feb. 1807.
[72] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802]).
[73] Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 255.

in the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth century, still inhabited – which he visited in October 1813 and which he described for his wife, began with its relationship to its setting in words that not only drew attention to its picturesque beauty but also to those lines of Milton which had extracted the jagged silhouette of medieval castles half lost in trees as the epitome of the British landscape:

' … proceeded to Powis Castle which stand[s] beautifully & overlooks the river & a beauteous Vale, bounded by abrupt Hills & distant Mountains. The Castle is built of Brick, & from no side that I could get at does it afford a tolerable architectural façade, but from a distance it looks extremely well, rising irregularly from the midst of Trees.'[74]

Catherine expressed her appreciation of Gothic as an extension of a wild landscape in a watercolour of Penrhyn Hall – medieval, with later additions, Gothicised in 1782 by Samuel Wyatt, still inhabited.[75] In her painting, the castle – its towers taller and more attenuated than they were in reality – is a distant sun-lit vision, set between two bleakly dark hills, facing a bright sea. (fig 1.2)

The Charleville library contained a number of books that engaged with medieval architecture in a picturesque landscape context. The picturesque was popularised by William Gilpin in three books published between 1782 and 1789 based on his tours to the wilder parts of Britain – the Wye valley and South Wales, Cumberland and Westmorland, the Scottish Highlands.[76] The second editions of the first two books and the first edition of the Scottish highlands were listed in Bury's 1799 catalogue.[77] Although Gothic architecture was not a primary focus of Gilpin's volumes on travel, it had its place, and the books established a landscape context for the appreciation of Gothic architecture. Gilpin defined the role of medieval architecture within the picturesque view, stating categorically in *Observations on the River Wye* that the

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[74] Ibid., pp 256–7. The lines from *L'Allegro* are 'Towers, and Battlements it sees/Boosom'd high in tufted Trees'.

[75] Catherine Maria Bury, *Penrhyn Castle, near Bangor, Gwynedd, North Wales* in *Glin Castle, A knight in Ireland*, lot 89.

[76] William Gilpin, *Observations …lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland,* 2 vols (London, 1786); *Observations on the River Wye* (London, 1782); *Observations … the Highlands of Scotland,* 3 vols (London, 1789).

[77] Bury library catalogue, p. 34. William Gilpin, *Observations … lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland,* 2 vols (2nd ed. London, 1788); *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales*, (2nd ed. London, 1789).

presence of a castle made a landscape picturesque, that is, a suitable subject for a landscape painter.[78] In *Three essays* published in 1794 Gilpin would argue that ruggedness and irregularity were the salient qualities of the picturesque.[79] This idea is evident in his description of Brecknock in *River Wye* when he defined the features which made a good picturesque ruin, connecting the broken coherence of the castle with the disjointed rhythm of the rocky landscape:

'*Brecknoc* is a very romantic place, abounding with broken grounds, torrents, dismantled towers, and ruins of every kind. I have seen few places, where a landscape-painter might get a collection of better ideas. The castle has once been large; and is still a ruin of dignity. It is easy to trace the main body, the citadel, and all the parts of ancient fortification.'[80]

This was the theme too of his idiosyncratic watercolour sketches. Eschewing detail, the castles, many shown in the distance, were reduced to simple shapes so that it is their basic form and silhouette which relates to the landscape. (fig 1.3)

The picturesque treatment of ruins became a staple of antiquarian artists. One of the most accomplished and popular in the 1770s and 80s was Paul Sandby. In plates published in *The virtuosi's museum* and *One hundred and fifty select views* his ruins are usually placed in the middle distance and given the same level of fine detail as the surrounding trees, hills, water, meadows so that they are presented as aestheic ornaments within a landscape in which they are manifestly an integral part.[81] (fig 1.4) The Charleville 1948 catalogue lists Sandby's *One hundred and fifty select views*.[82] It also lists Francis Grose's *Antiquities of England and Wales*, and *Antiquities of Ireland*.[83] In these books the visual message of symbiosis between building and landscape was not supported by the accompanying descriptions which usually gave a brief history of the

[78] Gilpin, *River Wye* (1789), p. 63.
[79] William Gilpin, *Three essays: on picturesque beauty; on picturesque travel; and on sketching landscape* (London, 1794), pp 3–27.
[80] Gilpin, *River Wye* (1789), pp 91–2.
[81] Paul Sandby, *The virtuosi's museum containing select views in England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1778). Paul Sandby, *A collection of one hundred and fifty select views, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland,* 2 vols (London, 1783): the first volume of this book focused on gentlemen's seats, the second was a reprint of *The virtuosi's museum.*
[82] Sandby, *A collection of one hundred and fifty select views*, 2 vols (Auction catalogue, 1948, lot 1218).
[83] Francis Grose, *The antiquities of England and Wales,* 6 vols (London, 1773–87) (Auction catalogue, 1948, lot 1394).

building, naming the builder and subsequent owners. In James Moore's *Monastic remains*, a book that is listed in the Marlay papers in Nottingham University, the ruins in the images were more romantically associated with the landscape – keeps, bawn walls and towered gateways were shown situated on craggy outcrops (Cockermouth Castle), beside moonlit water (Flint Castle) or masked by trees (Chepstow Castle).[84] The descriptions, drawing attention to the form of the castles, the composition of their parts and the effect they had on the viewer, underlined their picturesque message. (fig 1.5)

Bury had a number of books on designed landscapes that referred to recently-built Gothic revival follies: Thomas Whately's *Observations on modern gardening*; William Mason's influential poem *The English garden;* the anonymous *A companion to the Leasowes, Hagley, and Enville*, and the 1773 edition of the much printed work on Stowe.[85] Bury's diary reveals his interest in a variety of garden landscapes – he visited Pope's villa in Twickenham, and enjoyed the parks at Sherbourne and Mount Edgcumbe – and his seeking out of ruins at Mount Edgcumbe and Wardour (the gate of the old castle).[86] He would have read of the associations with the medieval past projected by Gothic follies in his 1773 edition of *A companion to the Leasowes* where, for example, the author described how Enville's Gothic gateway 'strongly enforce[s] the idea of its having been the inlet to some feat of chivalry'.[87] Reality could be achieved by artful design, but also by the use of native Gothic buildings. The author quoted from Mason's *English garden* to make his point:

'Ornament,
When foreign or fantastic, never charms
Our judgment: here *we* tread on British ground'.[88]

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[84] Marlay Papers, MS My 1027, 'List of books at 'C' [Charleville]', n.d.). James Moore, *Monastic remains and ancient castles in England and Wales, drawn on the spot by James Moore*, (London, 1791–2).

[85] Thomas Whately, *Observations on modern gardening*, 5 vols (Dublin, 1770); William Mason, *The English garden* (York, 1783); *A companion to the Leasowes, Hagley, and Enville* (London, 1789)*; Stowe: a description of the magnificent house and gardens etc* (new ed. London, 1773).

[86] Bury diary, 21 July 1802, 8 Nov. 1802, 4, 5, 6 May 1803, 4 Apr., ff 1r, 8v, 19v, 18v.

[87] *A companion to the Leasowes, Hagley, and Enville*, p. 107.

[88] Ibid., p. 107.

For Thomas Whately, garden buildings acted primarily as aesthetic objects, adding character to the landscape, designed 'to distinguish, or to break, or to adorn, the scenes to which they are applied.'[89] This approach to picturesque landscape regarded gardening as a form of three-dimensional painting in which the designer manages distances by identifying vistas, creating foregrounds, mid-grounds and backgrounds.[90] There is no surviving account of either of the Burys' perception of the use of Gothic follies. But there is a revealing description by one of their social circle, John Penn, who Charles visited on the Isle of Portland two years after Penn's Gothic revival house, Pennsylvania Castle, designed by James Wyatt was completed.[91] Penn also owned Stoke Park estate near Stoke Poges, which was adjacent to the graveyard made famous by the poet Thomas Gray in his *Elegy* and, with Windsor Castle, had become an emblem of Englishness.[92] In a letter to Joseph Cooper Walker (also known to Bury) Penn described his plan for an ingenious new route through the estate which would allow the existing buildings to be read both as elements within a picture and as objects with vibrant, well-established associations. His planned approach, he wrote, echoing Whately, 'seems to perfect the place, in respect to character.'

'At first you enter a large field … the common way to Church. On the left you immediately perceive in the same field, in the second ground, backed there by evergreens & poplars, Gray's monument; & in the third ground, Windsor Castle & forest, with the more distant Surrey hills. On the right you have a good view, between elms happily situated, of the ruins up which ivy is creeping, of the old house, the woody park beyond, & the church spire towering above the neighbouring trees.'[93]

So far the various strands that, it has been argued, composed the Burys' taste for Gothic have been treated separately. Bury's account of Powis Castle reveals that these attitudes could influence responses to different aspects of the same building. After evoking the picturesque presence of Powis Castle in the landscape, Bury briefly considered the structure – its material and elevations – and then, passing through the entrance courts and the rooms of the house, he commented on their spatial characteristics – shapes,

[89] Whately, *Observations on modern gardening,* p. 118.
[90] Andrews, *The search for the picturesque*, p. 51.
[91] Bury diary, 2 Oct. 1802, f. 6r.
[92] Andrews, *The search for the picturesque,* pp 11–17.
[93] Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, MS 1461/4, the correspondence of J.C. Walker 1795–1801, vol. 4, letter from John Penn to J.C.Walker, 11 Feb. 1802.

levels of lighting – while also drawing attention to the house as a modern habitation; decorations, furniture and picture collections and the glimpse of Lord Powis taking breakfast.[94] All these aspects, only lightly touched on, were integral to his desire to present a satisfactory impression to Catherine.

Frederick Trench (1746–1836) was a member, of the Burys' social circle, as we have seen. A more serious antiquarian than the Burys and a man who revelled too in the new sensibility, he has left a detailed letter illustrated with sketches written in October 1808 about a visit to Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, in which he more thoroughly reveals how the various responses, complementing each other, produced a comprehensive body of information.[95] Over a three-day period Trench systematically approached the abbey ruins from several different aesthetic and philosophical angles. The letter, which refers to Gilpin, begins with his concern about the relationship of the abbey ruins with the adjacent park at Studley Royal and the immediate landscape setting of the medieval building, both of which he found too domesticated. He was keen to find an appropriate image for the abbey, fixing on a view from the north-east rather than the usually illustrated south-west view 'which take[s] in the long range of the ambulatory and the walls of the dormitory over it … [which] give an appearance of a castellated not a monkish building.'[96] (fig 1.6) He returned the following evening with his companions when they contrived an emotionally charged, romantic encounter with the ruins: '[we] reached [Studley] as the setting sun appeared thro' the steeple Windows, twas Solemn and Majestick – we enjoyed the Twilight, dined by it in the Ambulatory on Benches for Tables'.[97] The next day Trench inspected the ruins carefully. In the habit of measuring buildings, but without the necessary equipment, he drew a free-hand plan, approximately to scale. (fig 1.7) He observed the structural details, noted anomalies, speculated about builder's intentions and made comparisons.

Trench, an amateur architect, leased Heywood, about 35 miles south of Tullamore in neighbouring Queen's County (now Co. Laois) where he created a picturesque demesne

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[94] Bond, *Marlay letters,* pp 256–7.
[95] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,353, letter from M.F. Trench to Andrew Caldwell, 15 Oct. 1808. For date, attribution, and the observation that the letter was never sent because of Caldwell's death in July 1808 see O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque*, pp 159, 210 nt. 95. Trench's full name was Michael Frederick Trench.
[96] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,353, letter from M.F. Trench to Andrew Caldwell, 15 Oct. 1808, f. 4.
[97] Ibid. f. 7.

in the 250-acre estate.[98] Using buildings to define character, he established two contrasting moods, both visible from the house: an open vista over a rolling busky landscape in which a classical temple and 'Claude's Seat' stood out as salient ornaments; and an enclosed wooded landscape where an ecclesiastical Gothic ruin, sham castle and orangery appear among dark trees and are barely distinguishable from them.[99] (fig 1.8) That he transmitted his interest in medieval architecture to the Burys and acted as an informal teacher is clear from an acknowledgment Catherine made in a lively letter she wrote to him six days after the Burys had visited the medieval castles at Warwick and Kenilworth in summer 1802; 'I … assure you I was worthy of your lessons at least on this subject, & equally delighted as you could be, with the entrance & Julius Cesar's Tower etc'.[100]

In this letter Catherine showed no hesitation in linking classical and Gothic taste when she used an image from classical mythology to convey to Trench how inspiring she had found Warwick Castle:

'I think the plainest spoken man in England would dream of Apollo, & the muses if he rode over Mount Helicon; whither he got or not upon Pegasus' back; and it were almost as great a sacrilege to pass a day at Warwick without sharing with you the enthusiasm the Castle cannot fail of inspiring all true lovers of Gothic architecture.'[101]

In Greek mythology Mount Helicon was the location of two sacred springs, one of which, released by a kick from the winged horse Pegasus, had become a well-known emblem of poetic inspiration. Mount Helicon was also conflated with Mount Parnassus, the mythical home of Apollo, to which he brought the nine muses from Mount Helicon,

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[98] See Patricia Friel, *Frederick Trench (1746-1836) and Heywood, Queen's County: the creation of a romantic demesne* (Dublin, 2000).

[99] They were recorded in lithographs by his son, F.W. Trench, illustrated in Friel, *Frederick Trench*, figs 10 & 11. The scenic Gothic structures at Heywood survive; the ecclesiastical ruin and sham castle, the orangery (now a ruin) and the towered gate lodge.

[100] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802]. That Trench valued C.W. Bury as an intellectual companion is evident in a passage from a letter Trench wrote to his friend and architectural connoisseur Andrew Caldwell: '… if you only determine to breakfast and sit the morning in your Library – we can easily select a few, who may be allowed the Entrie and privilege to using it as a book-room, and if Lord Charleville (without his wife) passes part of the winter in Dublin, he and even Ld Ashtown will be a valuable and literary acquisition' (RIA, Caldwell Papers, vol. 6, 1801–8, 12 R 44/99, letter from M. F. Trench to Andrew Caldwell, 5 Nov. 1805). It is possible that Trench visited Strawberry Hill with the Burys in 1802 as Bury's diary records that Trench came to breakfast the day they visited Strawberry Hill (Bury Diary, 21 July 1802, f. 1r).

[101] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville], to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802].

and was a symbol of earthly paradise.[102] Catherine used the reference to articulate in the most poetically emphatic way possible that Warwick Castle was the origin and fount of medievalism for her generation.

To stress inspiration as the primary experience at Warwick Castle was to proclaim a Romantic notion. This sensibility permeates Catherine's letter as she proceeded to tell Trench how she tried to escape the present to dream about the past, thwarted by the loquacious Earl of Warwick who intruded with accounts of his prosaic concerns; 'Most unfortunately for our reveries of past times the noble proprietor chose to receive us at the gate & to remain the whole time pressing dinner, beds … & portfolios of children's drawings on us & … to give us a minute detail of his progress in agriculture'.[103] Yet, although the Earl's talk was a barrier to her dreamy connection to the past, she did appreciate the continuous tradition of careful proprietorship of which he was the custodian, ending the letter, '…I believe it is a little ungrateful to laugh at this right courteous Earl, who is certainly an exceeding fine gentleman'. Warwick, a medieval ruin encompassing a seventeenth-century country house, had the unusual capacity to inspire this contradictory reaction. John Byng, visiting in July 1785, enjoyed both experiences, indulging in romantic contemplation of the historic roots of the castle from the town bridge in the half-light of dusk, in which he imagined himself transported back to the middle ages, then critically inspecting it by daylight next morning when, having passed through the gates, questions of taste, such as the elegance of the furniture, became paramount.[104]

The Burys had opportunities to visit cathedrals on their tours in England: in 1802 they were at Oxford, Litchfield, Worcester, Gloucester, Bath and Wells.[105] Bury made no comments in his diary, but it seems likely that they viewed them as a source of sublime experience. Louisa Conolly, a close friend of Catherine's, hinted at such an experience when she wrote to Catherine in 1807 about a service at Salisbury Cathedral; 'Organ

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[102] Claudia Lazzaro, *The Italian renaissance garden: from the conventions of planting, design, and ornament to grand gardens of sixteenth-century central Italy* (New Haven & London 1990), p. 132.
[103] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville], to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802].
[104] C. Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington diaries containing the tours through England and Wales of the Hon. John Byng between the years 1781 and 1794*, vol. 1 (new ed. New York & London, 1970), pp 227, 230.
[105] Bury diary, 23, 30 July, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 Sept. 1802, ff. 1r, 1v, 4v, 5r. Only the cathedral at Wells is mentioned.

sounds delightful thro' all the Gothic arches'.[106] Joseph Cooper Walker, a contemporary of Bury's in the Royal Irish Academy articulated his reaction to Chester Cathedral in 1782 in the emotionally charged language of the period: 'The Cathedral built by Edgar is the finest Gothic Structure I ever saw. I felt all its beauties – for the Beauties of Gothic Architecture can be felt – It struck me, when I first beheld it, with a religious Awe, and I approached it with Veneration.'[107]

Few people were involved in the antiquarian study of Irish medieval architecture, and those that were tended to be mired in politically-infused debates about the cultural origins of the Irish.[108] So, whereas in England Gothic was becoming a subject of serious antiquarian enquiry, in Ireland discussion of medieval architecture lacked rigour. However, in the 1780s and 90s two initiatives, which involved Charles Bury, had the potential to improve the study of medieval Irish architecture. One was the inauguration of the Royal Irish Academy on 18 April 1785 to promote 'an inquiry into the ancient and present state of the several counties of Ireland', to which Bury was elected on 6 June.[109] There were three committees – science, antiquities and literature. However, despite the involvement of several men with an interest in medieval Irish architecture – William Burton Conyngham, Lord Charlemont, Mervyn Archdall, Edward Ledwich, William Beauford, Joseph Cooper Walker – this subject was rarely discussed at meetings or in the published *Transactions,* only one of which (in 1828) dealt comprehensively with medieval architecture.[110] The other exception was a paper delivered by Revd Matthew Young (1750–1800), a Newtonian and a professor of natural philosophy at Trinity College Dublin from 1786, who applied his rigorous mind to the problem of the origins of Gothic. In his pioneering paper presented in 1789 he made logical objections to five historically-based theories about the origins of Gothic, followed by a mathematical investigation into the strength of the pointed arch,

[106] Marlay Papers, MS My 30/1, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to C.M. Bury, 22 Feb. 1807.
[107] NLI MS 2654, Miscellaneous papers of Joseph Cooper Walker, Itinerary 1782.
[108] Clare O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations: antiquarian debate and cultural politics in Ireland,* c.*1750–1800* (Cork, 2004).
[109] T. Ó Raifeartaigh (ed.), *The Royal Irish Academy: a bicentennial history, 1785–1985* (Dublin, 1985), p. 2. RIA, Academy Minutes, vol. 1, 1 Apr. 1785–Nov. 1826, meeting 6 June, 1785, p. 9. Twelve volumes of the *TRIA* were listed in the auction catalogue of 1948 (lot 1151).
[110] In 43 years between 1787 and 1830 16 volumes of the *TRIA* were published in which there were only eight articles relating to Irish architecture, all pre-Norman. The most comprehensive article was Louisa Catherine Beaufort, 'An essay upon the state of architecture and antiquities previous to the landing of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland', *TRIA*, 15 (1828), pp 101–241 (also printed separately the same year).

demonsrating that theory could be discarded for observation and analysis.[111] Significantly, he presented the paper to the science, rather than antiquarian committee; not exclusively concerned with Irish architecture the paper was categorised as a subject for science.[112] Bury was an irregular attender of meetings, and an inactive president from 1812 to 1822, presiding over years of falling membership and morale.[113]

A short-lived but, for Irish medieval architecture, a more productive project, to which Bury subscribed, was *Anthologia Hibernica*, 'monthly collections of science, belles-lettres, and history' which was published in four volumes in 1793 and 1794.[114] Although articles on architecture reflected traditional approaches to antiquarianism in their tendency to emphasise family histories, the journal included essays that demonstrated an awareness of a more analytic approach to medieval building. An article on Ballymoon Castle included an annotated plan, one on the castle at Carrick a Uile in Mayo incorporated a concise description of the structure, one on Carlow Castle related it to other Norman castles, and one on the early church at Roscrea attempted to put it in a stylistic context.[115] (fig 1.9) The journal also included Catholic perspectives; information about ancient noble Catholic families and, unexpectedly, given that the subscribers were predominantly aristocratic and middle class Protestants, including an account of local Catholic reactions to the re-use of stone from Moyne Abbey, Co. Mayo in a new house.[116]

But the most sustained piece of writing on medieval Irish architecture in *Anthologia Hibernica*, William Beauford's series, 'Some thoughts on the rise and progress of architecture in Ireland', argued that that which was valuable and enduring in Irish

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[111] Young, *The origin and theory of the Gothic arch.* Horace Walpole, in a letter to Joseph Cooper Walker written on 21 Dec. 1790, wrote that he found Young's arguments against existing theories of the origins of Gothic and his defence of the strength of Gothic very persuasive (W.S. Lewis (ed), *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence,* 42, S. Lewis and John Riely (eds), *Horace Walpole's miscellaneous correspondence III,* (Oxford, 1980), p. 305).

[112] RIA, Minutes of the Committee of Science, vol 1, June 1785–Feb 1859, meeting 7 Nov. 1789.

[113] RIA, Academy Minutes, vol. 1, Apr. 1785–Nov. 1826, meeting 22 June, 1812, pp 238–9; RIA, Minutes of the Council, vol. 3, Jan. 1811–Feb. 1822, pp 40–337; Ó Raifeartaigh, *The Royal Irish Academy*, p. 23.

[114] *Anthologia Hibernica, or monthly collections of science, belles-lettres, and history*, 4 vols (Jan. 1793–Dec. 1794).

[115] 'Ballymoon Castle, Co.Carlow', *Anthologia Hibernica,*vol. 2, (July–Dec. 1793), 274; 'Carrick a Uile, Co. Mayo', *Anthologia Hibernica,* vol. 2, (July–Dec. 1793), 1; 'Carlow Castle', *Anthologia Hibernica,* vol. 2, (July–Dec. 1793), 393; 'Roscrea', *Anthologia Hibernica*, vol. 1 (Jan.–June 1793), 81.

[116] 'The Aylmer monument, Co. Kildare', *Anthologia Hibernica*, vol. 2 (July–Dec. 1793), 1; 'Moyne Abbey', *Anthologia Hibernica* vol. 3 (Jan.–June 1794), 1.

architecture derived from England.[117] This perspective no doubt contributed to the antiquarian controversy in Ireland in which assessments of the origins and achievements of the inhabitants of pre-Norman Ireland were cited to support current political positions.[118] On one side were antiquarians such as Ledwich who, in *The Antiquities of Ireland*, argued for a northern 'gothic' origin (he argued that the round towers were built by the Danes) for the Irish. On the other were men like Charles Vallancey, whose investigations into eastern languages had confirmed his thesis that the Irish had Phoenician origins.[119] Broadly speaking, an assertion of connections with the north was supported by those searching for associations with England. Ledwich, a conservative Protestant, was keen to assert his Anglo-Norman ancestry.[120] Vallancey's more inclusive theory appealed to liberal Protestants, and those that were descended from seventeenth-century English Protestant settlers, for it allowed them an imaginative place within Ireland. Bury's library contained Ledwich (the second edition of Ledwich's *Antiquities of Ireland*) but not Vallancey's writings.[121]

A mirror image of this debate occurred in English books that presented Irish culture as an integral part of Britain. This is evident in Sandby's *Virtuosi's museum.* It was explicitly addressed to the inhabitants of Great Britain, and had a patriotic subtext: after relating how Catherine the Great collected china decorated with views of noblemen's seats and 'delightful spots', the preface continued, 'If these views appear so enchanting in the eyes of this great princess, surely it must afford the highest satisfaction to Britons themselves, to have in their possession complete representations of them on a better plan for preservation, and on much easier terms.'[122] The plates, issued in monthly installments between February 1778 and January 1781, had a very high proportion of Irish scenes, nearly one in three.[123] Thus Dunamase Castle, Co. Laois was juxtaposed

[117] William Beauford, 'Some thoughts on the rise and progress of architecture in Ireland, from its remotest periods to the present time', *Anthologia Hibernica,* vol. 2 (July–Dec. 1793), 'domestic', 3–6; 'military', 94–6; 'ecclesiastical', 191–5.
[118] See O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, pp. 41–70.
[119] Works by Vallancey include, *An essay on the antiquity of the Irish language* (Dublin, 1772) and *Grammar of the Iberno-Celtic language, or Irish language* (Dublin, 1773). His theories were a development of the tradition which argued that the Irish originated in a colony of so-called Milesians from Spain.
[120] O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, p. 69.
[121] Edward Ledwich, *The antiquities of Ireland*, (2nd ed. Dublin, 1804) (Auction catalogue, 1948, lot 1059).
[122] Sandby, *Virtuosi's museum*, preface, unpaginated.
[123] For discussion of the prints see John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels (eds), *Paul Sandby (1731–1809): picturing Britain, a bicentenary exhibition* (London, 2009), p. 187.

with Conway Castle in North Wales, Dromana, Co. Waterford with Caernarfon, also in North Wales, the buildings at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow with Luton Tower in Bedfordshire, so that Ireland was presented as a manifestly assimilated part of Great Britain.[124] These images were reproduced in *One hundred and fifty views*. Along with Beauford's articles and Sandby's books which presented Gothic within a British context, the Burys also owned some of the few books published specifically on Irish antiquities; Mervyn Archdall's *Monasticon Hibernicum* and Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland.*[125]

Sir Laurence Parsons

Laurence Parsons was born on 21 May 1758. His father, Sir William Parsons was the 4th baronet. Laurence was brought up in Parsonstown House (now Birr Castle) immediately adjacent to Parsonstown (Birr) Kings County (Co. Offaly). Unlike Charles Bury he did not make the Grand Tour; instead, after graduating from Trinity in summer 1780, he trained at Lincoln's Inn Fields, graduating in 1783.[126] Even as a student his focus was politics; in 1780 he was publicly supporting the opposition in the debate on the Irish Mutiny Bill, and in 1782 he entered parliament as a representative of Dublin University.[127] He would remain in the Irish Parliament until the Union – when his father died in 1791 he replaced him as MP for King's County – a Whig, a disciple of Henry Flood and a political 'loner'.[128] The house that Parsons inherited had been built in the seventeenth century around the gatehouse of a much earlier fortified house, and had been progressively modernised by his grandfather and father. Laurence Parsons married Alice Lloyd of nearby Gloster House in 1797. Although he voted against the Union, he

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[124] In the chapter on round towers in King's *Munimenta Antiqua* Irish examples were included in a British context (King, *Munimenta Antiqua,* vol. 4, pp 243–79.

[125] Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum* (London, 1786) (Action catalogue 1948 lot 1200); Francis Grose, *The antiquities of Ireland*, 2 vols (London, 1797) (Auction catalogue, 1948, lot 1195).

[126] Burtchaell and Sadleir (eds), *Alumni Dublinenses*, p. 655. He became Doctor of Law (LL.D) in 1790. For publications on Parsons see: N.D. Atkinson, 'Sir Laurence Parsons, second Earl of Rosse, 1758-1841', (Ph.D, TCD, 1963); G.R. Thorne, *The House of Commons, 1790–*1820, vol. 4 (London, 1986), pp 728–30; A.P.W. Malcomson, 'A variety of perspectives on Laurence Parsons, 2nd Earl of Rosse' in William Nolan and Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin, 1998), pp 439–83; Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament* vol. 5, pp 22–6; Malcomson, *Calendar*; Patrick M. Geoghegan and James Quinn, 'Sir Lawrence Parsons', *DIB* [online] <www.dib.cambridge.org.elib.tcd.ie> accessed 12 Sept. 2012.

[127] He was elected at a by-election in July 1782 and re-elected at the general election the following year. Laurence Parsons, *Observations on the Irish Mutiny Act* (Dublin, 1780).

[128] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 4 (Belfast, 2002), pp 22–6.

became a representative peer in the Union parliament, and in 1807 he became 2nd Earl of Rosse.

'... an inquisitive traveller ...'

In 1786 Parsons made a tour of Wales and southern England which he record in a journal which is now in the Rosse Papers.[129] This archive also contains a number of sketches of pre-historic, medieval and classical buildings, as well as engravings.[130] Included are sketched details of several Scottish and English medieval structures attributable to Parsons that he may have seen in 1786 or on other occasions. It is evident from his tour journal and sketches that Parsons had a keen interest in architecture, and ability as a draftsman. He had acquired a grounding in classical architecture, partly derived from reading *Vitruvius Britannicus*, the multi-volume folio initiated by Colen Campbell in 1715 as a showcase of British architecture.[131] Representing buildings in plan and elevation, it encouraged an appreciation of the abstract qualities of architecture such as rhythm and composition, and attuned viewers to the nuances of the Palladian style. That Parsons had absorbed the vocabulary of Palladianism in terms of both nomenclature and convention is clear from his description of Fonthill Splendens written concisely and from memory; 'The House a rustick Basement, one storey & a attic over it. A handsome (I think Corinthian) Portico of 4 Columns in the Centre, two windows properly ornamented on each side & a projection at each end with a Venetian window.'[132] He had the confidence to exercise critical judgment, evident in his encounter with the elevation of Wardour; 'The house was designed by Payne [James Paine] the architect; he never should plan for me. The fronts are heavy, dull, without the

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[129] Tour journal.

[130] Rosse Papers, O/14/1–14, bundle of drawings.

[131] Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus,* 3 vols (1715–1725). Parsons made a specific reference to *Vitruvius Britannicus* (Tour journal, f. 7r). The descriptions in *Vitruvius Britannicus* influenced the way he approached buildings on his tour, evident in the similarity between his description of Wilton and that in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, where, like many people he was drawn to the single and double cube rooms and the Vandyke family portrait. Parsons noted that the great salon was a double cube which contained a 'great family pictured by Vandyke, 20 feet long, 12 broad, [which] contains 10 figures as large as the life ... It is reckoned the finest portrait picture in the world'. Campbell had written, '... in one end of the Room is the celebrated Family Picture by *Vandyke*, 20 foot long and 12 high, containing 13 figures as big as the Life', (*Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol. 2 (London, 1717), p. 3). The discrepancy in the number of figures seen in the painting suggests that the similarity may have been unconscious; a case of remembering what he had read without recalling the source. David Watkin has noted that the double and single cube rooms at Wilton had gained iconic status since the publication of the second volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, (David Watkin, *The English vision: the picturesque in architecture, landscape and garden design* (London, 1982), p. 30).

[132] Tour journal, f. 23r.

least pretensions to taste. The wings so large & high, that they seem to smother the house.'[133] It was the vocabulary of a connoisseur, displaying knowledge and critical taste. More unusually, he had a spatial understanding of interiors. When he described the magnificent staircase at Wardour he pointed out the structural logic that had produced its stunning three-dimensional qualities; 'There is in the centre of the house a Circular wall the height of the base story, & I believe about 36 di., which supports 8 corinthian columns on the second story, & they support a beautifull dome, with a very large circular glazing in the centre.'[134]

Both his analytic and three-dimensional appreciation of architecture are evident in the sketches made while touring.[135] At his best he would relate plan and elevation and draw confidently to scale, seen in his sketch of a gabled seventeenth-century building whose two centrally-placed staircases were crowned with lanterns.[136] (fig 1.10) He examined elevational details at different scales, evident in the annotated pages depicting the towers, windows, interior mouldings and arrow loops of Chepstow Castle.[137] (figs 1.11–1.15) In the Rosse papers are a number of perspective sketches in a stiff, naive style reminiscent of William Stukeley's views in *Itinerarium curiosum* of 1724, which Parsons possessed, two of which may have been Parsons's drawings.[138] (figs 1.16 & 1.17) These drawings omitted the landscape settings, though Parsons revealed a sensitivity to context in his tour descriptions: the yew trees surrounding the church yard at Brecon; two country house seats 'near & below' the road from Trecastle to Brecon 'the ground beyond the river tho' wooded too high & too near, the ground beyond the road in their front too high also'.[139]

Criticising the road-side positions of the two Welsh houses Parsons revealed that he also viewed domestic buildings and their settings as a landowner and potential patron.

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[133] Ibid., f. 23v.
[134] Ibid., f. 23v. He drew a plan, (Ibid., f. 40v).
[135] Ibid. and O/14/1–23, the latter contain drawings from other tours. He often drew a rough idea in pencil then a finished version, sometimes using a ruler, in ink (Rosse Papers, O/14/9, page of drawings of Iona, attrib. to Laurence Parsons; Tour journal, ff 42r and 42v).
[136] Tour journal, f. 44v.
[137] Rosse Papers, O/14/5, annotated page of drawings of details from Chepstow Castle, attrib. to Laurence Parsons.
[138] William Stukeley, *Itinerarium curiosum*, (London, 1724). Perspective sketches are found in Rosse Papers, O/14/3, perspective of a medieval gatehouse, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, n.d.; O/14/4, perspective sketch of [Ludlow Castle], attrib. to Laurence Parsons, n.d.; O/14/6, North-west view of Ludlow Castle attrib. to Laurence Parsons 3rd bart, attribution based on caption handwriting.
[139] Tour journal, f. 1v.

This perspective was uppermost in his comment about not employing James Paine, and when he observed that the porter's lodge at Kenilworth Castle (built 1570–75) 'remains entire & 3 or 400 £ would make it a very good house'.[140] In 1786, touring Wales and southern England aged 28, his father still alive, it is clear that Parsons was indulging his interest in architecture and considering his future role as a patron.[141] But it was also a good training for an amateur architect, which is what he effectively became in 1800 when he remodelled Parsonstown House.

Parsons had in his grandfather, Sir Laurence Parsons (1708–1756) the 3rd baronet, an inspiring example of how the roles of patron and amateur architect could be combined. The elder Parsons had travelled on the continent, amassed a library with a strong architectural and antiquarian element, and collaborated with his young, talented relative, Samuel Chearnley, to produce what was undoubtedly intended to be a published book of designs for garden buildings and villas.[142] This had been a novel project based on familiarity with both established and emerging design ideas of the 1740s. That Parsons consulted the work of his grandfather and Chearnley is suggested by the presence of a sketch attributed to his grandfather in Parsons's collection, and a sketch of the shrine of St Hugh in Lincoln Cathedral copied from William Stukeley's *Itinerarium curiosum* by Chearnley or the 3rd baronet and annotated by Parsons.[143] (figs 1.18 & 1.19)

In 1786 Parsons viewed himself as an 'inquisitive traveller', a 'gentleman travelling for curiosity', looking for accurate information about the places and buildings he had come to see, frustrated that local people did not share his values and that guidebooks could be misleading.[144] His standards of accuracy may have been higher, but his general

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[140] Ibid., f. 12v.

[141] The Tour journal is dated to 1786 for several reasons. It is post 1785 because Parsons refers to the grandson of the designer of Stourhead, Richard Colt Hoare who inherited in 1785, as the present proprietor. There is a list of books at the back of the journal all published in 1786.

[142] Rosse Papers, B/4/5, letter from Sir Laurence Parsons to Trevor Lloyd, 31 May 1737 from Hamburg. He had been to Holland and had plans to travel either to Leipzig or Copenhagen and Stockholm, then on to Berlin and Dresden. Chearnley's drawings were not published until 2005 (William Laffan (ed.), *Miscelanea structura curiosa* (Tralee, 2005)). For discussion of Chearnley's achievement and the library at Birr, largely destroyed by fire in 1921, see Christine Casey, '*Miscelanea structura curiosa,* impetus, sources and design' in Laffan, *Miscelanea structura curiosa,* pp 35–45.

[143] Rosse Papers, O/14/15, 'The shrine of St Hugh', attrib. to Sir Laurence Parsons, 3rd Bart. or Samuel Chearnley, Casey, '*Miscelanea structura curiosa'*, p. 38.

[144] Tour journal, ff 9r, 6v. Failing to find what had been described as carving 'in imitation of Honey combs' in the cloisters at Gloucester Cathedral, he realised with disgust that the guidebook was referring to the fan vaulting, which he called 'open work'; 'but how the most whimsicall imagination would

approach to travel mirrored that of many gentlemen in the period.[145] Like them, his sources of information included the specialist –*Vitruvius Britannicus* – and the general – he carried 'itineraries' and bought available guidebooks, making notes from these in his journal.[146] There are summaries of general topographical information in his journal probably derived from guidebooks that are difficult to identify; for example, even the more specific historical information he gave concerning Hever Castle can be found in both *The complete English traveller* and *The modern universal British traveller.*[147]

His route took him through the mountains and small towns of south Wales, into England at Monmouth, north to Gloucester, south to Somerset and east to Kent. Part of Parsons's journey took in a fashionable tour of British country houses – Stourhead, Fonthill, Wardour and Wilton in Wiltshire – but where most visitors (and the guidebooks) confined their observations to furnishings and picture collections, Parsons, also critically viewed the architecture. Parsons also bucked trends by waiving the opportunity to do a picturesque tour for, although he appreciated the dramatic Welsh scenery, he did not sketch views nor travel down the River Wye. Ian Ousby and Esther Moir have revealed that, apart from the medieval cathedrals and castles at Windsor and Warwick, gentlemen travellers had little enthusiasm for medieval buildings, or for Elizabethan and Jacobean houses, many of which were in poor repair or abandoned and with no published guides.[148] Parsons, however, showed a great interest in medieval architecture. He described and sketched the medieval churches, inns, gatehouses, libraries and almshouses of the towns he visited, he made detours to visit Raglan Castle and Glastonbury Abbey, and his journey ended in Kent where he visited houses with

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assimilate it to honeycombs I cannot imagine, for it is no more like a honey comb than it is like a whale' (Tour journal, ff 8v, 9r). No guidebook referring to honey combs has been found.

[145] See Esther Moir, *The discovery of Britain: the English tourists 1540-1840* (London, 1964); John Harris, 'English country house guides, 1740-1840' in John Summerson, (ed.), *Concerning architecture: essays on architectural writers and writing presented to Nikolaus Pevsner* (London, 1968), pp 58–74; Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: taste, travel and the rise of tourism* (Cambridge, 1990).

[146] Examples of general guides include: Nathaniel Spencer, *The complete English* traveller (London, 1771); Charles Burlington, David Llewellyn Rees, Alexander Murray, *The modern universal British traveller* (London, 1779); George Augustus Walpoole, *The new British traveller* (London, 1784). The information in these three is roughly the same. He bought guidebooks at Wilton and Salisbury and paid for guides at Glastonbury, Stourhead, Fonthill, Wardour, Salisbury, Stonehenge, Winchester (Tour journal, f. 43r). Parsons seems to have had a single catalogue for both sculpture and painting at Wilton which may have been James Kennedy, *A description of the antiquities and curiosities in Wilton House* (2nd ed. Salisbury, 1786), or *Aedes Pembrochianae* (10th ed Salisbury, 1784).

[147] Spencer, *The complete English traveller*, p. 158; Burlington et al, *The modern universal British traveller*, p. 27.

[148] Ousby, *The Englishman's England*, p. 52.

medieval roots: Penshurst Place, begun in the mid-fourteenth-century, with additions in the fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth century; Hever Castle which had a gatehouse surviving from the late thirteenth–early fourteenth century and a rear court erected in c.1500; Knole, begun in the late fifteenth century and greatly extended in the early seventeenth century; the much-altered originally thirteenth-century archbishop's palace in Canterbury, and early seventeenth-century Somerhill.[149]

To travel in this way was to participate in a popular eighteenth-century pastime linked by recent scholars to the post-Reformation spirit of inquiry which valued empirical knowledge over abstract speculation or book learning derived from tradition.[150] Parsons embodied this enquiring spirit, his tour journal revealing that he often applied a sceptical mind to established classical taste, while he approached less well-recorded or disregarded medieval architecture in an investigative manner. But Parsons also expressed strong opinions. Two types of travel writing have been identified in the eighteenth-century, one with factual knowledge uppermost, the other with the personal experience of the traveller dominating.[151] In Parsons's manuscript tour journal, written for his personal use, there is a balance between the objective and subjective as he juxtaposes opinions and personal response with factual summaries and level-headed observation.[152]

Unlike the Burys, Parsons arrived at the great houses as an outsider, paying for guides and books. Although he seems to have had fewer social connections in England than the Burys, the language of his journal and his attitude suggest that he felt no inferiority.

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[149] Parsons's concentration on these houses in a county with a surfeit of other types of medieval monuments is striking; Walpole called it the 'holy land of abbeys and Gothic castles', (W.S. Lewis (ed.), *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence*, vol. 35 (London, 1973), p. 131).

[150] Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge companion to travel writing* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 4. Several works were consulted on the 'home tour' but not one discussed accounts of visits to country houses and medieval cathedrals by people with an interest in architecture and antiquities in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Additionally, there are no surveys of Irish travellers in Britain in the eighteenth century.

[151] A distinction has been made between object-orientated accounts (for example, early eighteenth-century travel literature that aimed to present the state of contemporary Britain), and subject-orientated accounts (where the reader assumes the narrator and traveller are the same person), (Barbara Korte, *English travel writing from pilgrimages to post colonial explorations* (Basingstoke, 2000), chapter one).

[152] Nigel Leask has argued that eighteenth-century travel writing deserves the title romantic because of the subjective element, but that in writing characterised by a struggle to find a way of integrating scientific and literary issues, observation and individual response, instruction and pleasure, the genre did not preclude objectivity, (Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the aesthetics of travel writing, 1770–1840* (Oxford, 2002), pp 6–7).

Stephen Bending has argued that in the late eighteenth century tourism to country houses became popular for people without the advantage of an aristocratic education whose aesthetic judgments were couched in language that was more generalised and subjective; words such as 'beautiful', 'grand', 'pretty' predominated over the language of connoisseurship.[153] Parsons was not immune to fashionable epithets: 'capital paintings'; Wardour chapel 'a most elegant room'.[154] But a use of quirky adjectives reveals attentive observation: 'the humble & grand beauty' of Crickhowell; the Turkish room in Fonthill 'magnificently whimsical'.[155] And, as we have seen, he could employ a critical and informed vocabulary with respect to classical architecture, which was also applied to landscape design.[156] Where the guidebooks neglected to mention the garden buildings at Stourton, Parsons gave architectural and sculptural details. He was aware of the status of his unseen hosts, but his comments suggest that he had no wish to emulate them. At Wilton, where Lord Pembroke had a celebrated collection of antique sculpture and his house incorporated a ceremonial route designed for royalty, Parsons found a lack of taste; 'On entering the great hall, an ugly room, wainscoted, and wants painting much I thought I was entering a statuary shop it is so crowded with them it is disgusting.'[157] He may have known that Lord Pembroke had previously been attacked for his unrestrained acquisitiveness by Alexander Pope, and in 1757 Jonas Hanway also used the image of the shop to condemn.[158] Parsons found Wilton dark due to old-fashioned decoration and intrusive tree planting, and concluded his journal entry, 'Adieu Wilton, the gloomiest house I ever saw. Were it to remain as it is, I would not live in it for his Lordships estate & curiositys.'[159]

All this suggests that Parsons had sufficient social confidence to apply the aesthetic judgments of received taste independently. But his comment about Lord Woodgate's

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[153] Stephen Bending, 'One among the many: popular aesthetics, polite culture and the country house landscape' in Dana Arnold, *The Georgian country house: architecture, landscape and society* (Stroud, 2003), pp 61–78.
[154]Tour journal, ff 6v, 24v.
[155] Ibid., ff 3v, 23r.
[156] Ibid., f. 24v.
[157] Ibid., f. 25r.
[158] See Ruth Guilding, *Owning the past: why the English collected antique sculpture, 1640–1840* (New Haven & London, 2014), p. 61; Jonas Hanway, *A journal of eight days journey from Portsmouth to Kingston Upon Thames through Southampton, Wiltshire etc*, vol. 1 (London, 1757), p. 62 (<find.galegroup.com.elib.tcd.ie/> accessed on 12 Apr. 2015).
[159] Tour journal, f. 25v.

activities at Somerhill in Kent reveal that Parsons's taste encompassed broader criteria than the classical;

'The present possessor is spoiling the house by modernising it & has sashed one front, only part of the other, by which means the gallery has at one end two sashed windows & at the other a large casemated kind of Bow window. There is every capability of making it a very fine place, but the present owner, either wants the means or taste to adorn the natural beauty of it.'[160]

The concept of 'natural beauty' distinguishes Somerhill from a house exhibiting finely engineered classical design, and Parsons makes an argument for respecting existing architecture. Good taste was not an absolute for him to be solely equated with classicism.

A progressive taste for Gothic

Where Frederick Trench displayed a variety of responses to a single building, Parsons's responses to medieval buildings – ranging from objective analysis to emotional engagement – tended to vary with building type and state of repair. But the tone of his writing was almost invariably sober and rational; he was not a Romantic.

Like the Burys, Parsons was comfortable with the word 'Gothick', as he usually spelt it, using it as a shorthand for characteristics needing no explanation. He used it for entire buildings and their details – a 'Gothick building' (Salisbury); Gothick arches in Canterbury; the dramatic internal supports for the tower at Wells described as being 'in a heavy Gothick stile' and sketched by him; (fig 1.20) a 'fine gothick skreen in Winchester, described elsewhere as 'an exquisite piece of Gothick carving in Irish oak'.[161] It was applied to churches and houses.[162] However, his confidence was sometimes misplaced. He seems to have associated ecclesiastical windows with tracery so he was surprised by the lancet windows in Salisbury Cathedral, observing that they '[looked] odd in a Gothick building'.[163] He also made frequent use of 'curious'. A word that tended to convey admiration for intricacy regardless of style, or to denote rarety, it

[160] Ibid., f. 32r.
[161] Tour journal, ff 26r, 33v,19r, 19v, 26v, 30v.
[162] Ibid., f. 32v.
[163] Ibid., f. 26r.

had been a staple of medieval texts and, it has been argued that even its application in sixteenth and seventeenth century topographical texts was conservative.[164] Parsons seems to use it in this way, referring generally to 'some curious old carving' on the stalls in Abergavenny church, to the Eleanor cross near Northampton as 'very curiously carved', to a 'church with a curious steeple' near Wells and to the 'most curious foliage' decorating the capitals supporting the arches in the hall of the archbishop's palace in Canterbury.[165] As in the earlier use, to designate an object as curious was not a prelude to closer inspection, but often an expression of general approval, though Parsons was more aware of historic context – he dated the Eleanor Cross to the reign of Edward I – and the capitals in the archbishop's palace received very careful attention.

There is evidence that in 1786 Parsons was in touch with advanced antiquarian thinking that emphasised objectivity and empiricism.[166] He was a friend of Revd Matthew Young.[167] Young's focus, discussed above, on the structure of Gothic architecture was progressive: the only research already conducted on the subject had been the unpublished mid-eighteenth century work of James Essex and Johann Heinrich Müntz, and no one was currently exploring the issue in England.[168] In his essay Young referred to James Bentham's *History of Ely Cathedral*, a seminal antiquarian book published in 1771, which demonstrated that a close inspection of medieval buildings leading to a precise description of details was necessary for an understanding of the chronology of the development of Gothic.[169] Bentham developed the taxonomy first proposed by Thomas Warton in 1762 by making distinctions between Saxon, Norman and Gothic

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[164] Buchanan, 'Interpretations of medieval architecture, *c.*1550–*c.*1750', pp 32–3.

[165] Tour journal, ff 4r, 16r, 18v, 33v.

[166] Parsons's scientific approach would be evident much later in life when he wrote *An argument to prove the truth of the Christian revelation* published in 1834. Although he wrote this essay as a way of coming to terms with the death of his son, John Clere, in 1828, he revealed little emotionalism. Instead, he brought scientific rigour and knowledge to a philosophical issue in the late eighteenth-century tradition (Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. xxvi).

[167] See letter 19 May 1791 from Matthew Young congratulating Parsons on his election as MP for King's County in 1791, (reproduced in Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 437). Both were founder members of the RIA, (RIA, Academy Minutes, vol. 1, Apr. 1785–Nov. 1826, meeting 18 Apr. 1785, pp 1–3).

[168] McCarthy, *The origins of the Gothic revival*, pp.17–24.

[169] James Bentham, *The history and antiquities of the conventual and cathedral church of Ely from the foundation of the monastery, AD 673, to the year 1771* (Cambridge, 1771). For discussion of Bentham see Frew, 'James Bentham's *History of Ely Cathedral*, 290–2. The relationship between empirical observation and the development of taxonomies is discussed by Sam Smiles (Sam Smiles, 'Data, documentation and display in eighteenth-century investigations of Exeter Cathedral', *Art History*, 25:4 (Sept. 2002), 500–19). Previously, documentary sources had been used to date buildings in books such as William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum,* 3 vols (London, 1655–73).

architecture. There is some evidence that Parsons had also read Bentham.[170] Parsons never used the terms Saxon and Norman to refer to specific styles in his journal, but he was alert to differences and details. In Monmouth he identified a small church as 'of great antiquity at least much older than the large church as appears by a side door of which I have taken a sketch'.[171] He observed that the arcade in Wells Cathedral had pointed arches.[172] He compared the cloister ceiling in Gloucester Cathedral with ceilings in Westminster Abbey; 'all open work, of the same pattern as well I recollect of some side isles in Westminster Abbey, & the ceiling of Henry the 7th Chapel'.[173] On other journeys he sketched the Norman details on the tower of Ramsay Church, and the transitional styles at Iona where round and pointed arches displayed similar carved decoration.[174] (figs 1.21 & 1.22) He observed differences but did not conceptualise them.[175]

Parsons noted the publication of Richard Gough's three-volume *Sepulchral monuments in Great Britain* in the back of his tour journal demonstrating an interest in one of the most forward-thinking works dealing with English Gothic architecture in the 1780s.[176] Although the subject was medieval church monuments, the close attention to the sculptural detail of these often architecturally complex objects meant that the books, which were richly illustrated with the work of artists such as John Carter and the

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[170] Parsons's description of the pillars in Salisbury Cathedral is very similar to Bentham's description of early thirteenth-century columns: Parsons wrote, 'The pillars are slender & round with small shafts detached which then appear of a more proportional thickness. Each of these small shafts had a capital adorned with foliage all of which uniting formed one handsome capital', (Tour journal, f. 30r); Bentham wrote, 'During the whole Reign of Henry III the fashionable Pillars to our Churches were of *Purbec* [*sic*] Marble, very slender and round, encompassed with Marble Shafts a little detached, so as to make them appear of a proportionable thickness; these Shafts had each of the a Capital richly adorned with Foliage, which together in a Cluster formed one elegant Capital for the whole Pillar' (Bentham, *History of Ely Cathedral*, p. 39). Parsons's description is included in a section of facts rather than observations in his journal.

[171] Tour journal, f. 4v. No sketch in the journal or Rosse Papers survives.

[172] Tour journal, f. 19r.

[173] Ibid., f. 9r.

[174] Rosse Papers, O14/7, 'Steeple of Ramsay Church', Laurence Parsons, n.d.; O/14/9, Ecclesiastical details, Laurence Parsons, n.d.; O/14/10–12, details of Iona, Laurence Parsons, n.d.

[175] He could identify Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture but did not distinguish between them, describing Somerhill, built in the second decade of the seventeenth century as being in the style of Elizabeth's reign, (Tour journal, f. 32r).

[176] Richard Gough, *Sepulchral monuments in Great Britain applied to illustrate the history of families, manners, habitats and arts at the different periods from the Norman conquest to the seventeenth century*, 3 vols (London, 1786–1796). The book was included in Parsons's list of books published in 1786, (Tour journal, f. 43v).

engraver James Basire, were a significant contribution to the understanding of medieval architecture.[177]

In Ireland, the clergyman antiquarian, Edward Ledwich (*c.*1737–1823), whom Parsons would have known from the Royal Irish Academy, demonstrated an awareness of the need for higher antiquarian standards. He criticised the copies of antiquarian drawings made by Gabriel Berenger for William Burton Conyngham; 'what he [Berenger] conceived to be embellishment, [was] a profusion of daubing which injured the truth & perspective of the original'.[178] However, Ledwich's own work was less than objective. His *Antiquities of Ireland*, published in 1790, can be read as a contribution to the highly politicised Irish antiquarian debate, and some of the illustrations, for example, the engraving of the interior elevation of the east window of Glendalough Cathedral, although stylistically precise, included invented details.[179] (fig 1.23)

Close observation is a hallmark of Parsons's journal and sketches, linking him to progressive antiquarian thinking. Incompleteness and a lack of knowledge of medieval architecture were frequently a spur to careful observation to recover the original plan or design. And, in an era before the publication of detailed antiquarian studies, careful description was a natural response in an enthusiast's encounter with a medieval building. Parsons, an amateur, was not, however, systematic. He did make detours to see important buildings, but he was not making a concentrated study of any building type: Raglan Castle was the only seriously fortified castle that he visited; although he showed great interest in Wells Cathedral he made very perfunctuary comments about Worcester Cathedral, and failed to mention Bath Abbey. Drastic, as opposed to

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[177] For discussion of eighteenth-century antiquarian publications and their relationship to architecture see Frew, 'An Aspect of the Gothic revival in England'; Frew, 'An aspect of the early Gothic revival'.
[178] NLI, 'Correspondence and notes of G. Beranger, Edward Ledwich, Charles Vallancey, Charles O'Conor and other, relating to Irish antiquities 1779–92', MS 1415, letter from Edward Ledwich to [Charles Vallancey] 26 Nov. 1778, f. 120.
[179] Edward Ledwich, *The antiquities of Ireland* (Dublin, 1790). The book included architecture among other antiquarian subjects. An example of his polemic can be found in this description of the sculptural decoration in a crypt in Glendalough: 'here are no traces of Saxon architectonic feuillage, no Christian symbols, or allusions to sacred or legendary story: the sculptures are expressive in the highest degree of the national sentiments, and prevailing manners of the northerns', (Ledwich, *Antiquities*, p. 44). Invented details appeared in plate II (Ledwich, *Antiquities*), which is an engraving from a drawing by William Beauford of the east window in Glendalough Cathedral. This was observed by John O'Donovan in 1840, (Peter Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham and his Irish circle of antiquarian artists* (New Haven & London, 2012), p. 34).

suggestive, ruination was a deterrent to study: Glastonbury was scarcely worth the journey it was so 'defaced'.[180]

As Parsons devoted over four journal pages to a description of the ruins of Raglan Castle whose plan he reconstructed as he explored the remains, it gives the best insight into his methods.[181] He deduced function from surviving details; 'The second court is but small & the inside walls so pulled down that I could form an imperfect opinion about it. But it appears to me from the number of fire places that it was the part allotted for the family residence'.[182] Size, to which he was particularly alert, could also be a key to function; puzzled by the use made of rooms about 15 feet wide he speculated that they may have contained a staircase; 'for I could not trace any stairs wide enough to bring up a tallow candle, but the old narrow winding stairs'.[183] Comparing the great hall to Conway Castle, he imaginatively reconstructed its roof; 'This hall was either entirely vaulted, or had ribs of stone to support the roof, as at Conway Castle for the imposts from when the arches sprang still remain in the wall.'[184] His achievement was to discover the connections between the different parts of the castle and to give an impression of the primary organising features: the strong octagonal tower outside the walls that protected the towered gateway; the two courts within – one for offices the other for dwelling – divided by the great hall. He realised the danger of mapping contemporary perceptions onto medieval design;

'It is almost impossible to reconcile old buildings by modern ideas of convenience, symmetry or proportion. We can only work by conjecture & what satisfaction is that to an enquirer, to puzzle himself for hours to find out the end to which such a part of a building was appropriated, & when he is pleased at fancying he has found it out, his agreeable reason is at once overturned by a suggestion that there is no proof that such & such conveniences were made use of 5 or 600 years ago.'[185]

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[180] Tour journal, f. 20v.
[181] Parsons's interest in reconstructing the plan can be compared with John Byng's description of the ruins as they appeared, displaying random features and covered with vegetation, (Andrews, *The Torrington diaries*, p. 27).
[182] Tour journal, ff 5v–6r.
[183] Ibid., f. 5v.
[184] Ibid., ff 5r–5v.
[185] Ibid., ff 6r–6v.

This observation underlines his desire for objectivity. It also reveals his sense that the past was a distant country; not one to be condemned for its different standards as had been the case until relatively recently, nor one that was to be romantically encountered, as would increasingly be the case, but one to be studied with care.

The extent of Parsons's existing knowledge of medieval architecture was good, but there were significant gaps, as well as a willingness to learn. He possessed some specialised vocabulary; for castellated structures – machicolated towers, portcullises, rounders – for general architectural featuress – imposts, vaulting – for ecclesiastical architecture – 'tabernacle work', 'tabernacle stile', clustered pillars, canopied chapels.[186] However, he lacked a vocabulary for traceried windows – they are 'like old church ones' – and for fan vaulting.[187] He referenced buildings he already knew, comparing Conway with Raglan, Westminster Abbey with Gloucester Cathedral. This tour also introduced him to some aspects of medieval architecture he had previously overlooked, most notably medieval carving. The high relief of the carved capitals that would have supported the roof in the great hall of the archbishop's palace in Canterbury was a revelation; 'These arches are supported by capitals of the most curious foliage, exquisitely carved in stone, with such elegant relief that you could insinuate your fingers behind both [word indecipherable] & leaves.'[188] He was astonished by the intricacy of the carving in the side chapels at Wells.[189] His sketches from this and other tours reveal a particular interest in domestic late medieval and sixteenth-century window design: overall casement shape and the various designs of their cusped arches at Chepstow Castle, Crickhowell gatehouse and the George Inn at Glastonbury; the bow window at Ramsay Abbey gatehouse; unusual elevations in the library at Glastonbury and almshouses at Wells.[190] (figs 1.12, 1.14, 1.24– 1.26) Several sketches, some at a

[186] 'A rounder at each angle' at Alfred's Tower, Stourhead (Tour journal, f. 21v); 'tabernacle work', 'tabernacle stile, canopied chapels, clustered pillars for Wells (Ibid., f. 19r).
[187] Ibid., f. 6r. He was also unfamiliar with lancet windows, complaining, 'The windows are quite plain, no tracery, which looks odd in a Gothick building' (Ibid., f. 26r).
[188] Ibid., ff 33v–34r.
[189] Ibid., f. 19r.
[190] Rosse Papers, O/14/5, Chepstow Castle, sketch details, Laurence Parsons, n.d.; Tour journal, back cover; Ibid., f. 41v; Rosse Papers, O/14/8, 'Window at the gatehouse of Ramsay Abbey, Laurence Parsons, n.d.; Tour journal, inside front cover; Ibid., ff 19v & 20r.

large scale, reveal that he improved his knowledge of Decorated windows, even if he did not identify them as such.[191] (fig 1.27)

In the eighteenth century recognition was given to important medieval seats. Volume one of William Angus's *Seats of the nobility and gentry* published in 1787 included Raby and Lumley Castles, for example.[192] But acknowledgment was not a forgone conclusion. This was true too of Parsons. When he wrote in his journal, 'Knowl[e] [is] a very antient but magnificent seat of the Duke of Dorset', his 'but' suggested that he had unexpectedly found magnificence, a classical virtue, despite the age of the house.[193] Two of the medieval houses that Parsons visited in Kent – the archbishop's palace in Canterbury and Hever Castle – were inhabited by farmers, and Parsons approached them less as seats and more as historic structures. The dilapidation and subsequent alterations of the archbishop's palace had altered the ordering of the house and Parsons set out to recover the plan. From the low kitchen he ascended a step ladder to the dining room where part of the chimney piece was supported by the handle of a shovel. 'On one side of this great room by peeping thro' a hole in the rotten door, I perceived a small octagon closet in a tower, the ceiling coved & painted red & blue on the white ground … I was happy when I found myself safe at the bottom of the step ladder.'[194] It is notable that although the sense of a past surviving almost untouched was palpable, Parsons did not succumb to the romantic ecstasies enjoyed by Lady Charleville. He also refrained from judging the rooms in terms of contemporary standards. Parsons, finding Hever Castle better furnished than he expected, described with interest and approval the low wainscoted rooms, lit by casements and decorated with paintings depicting friars and a portrait of Anne Boleyn.[195]

However, despite Parsons's dispassionate assessment of medieval houses he was capable of emotional reactions, and he valued Hever Castle and Penshurst for

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[191] Rosse Papers, O/14/13, part elevation of traceried window, Laurence Parsons, n.d.; Rosse Papers, O/14/14, 'West window of the Mayors Chapel in College Green Bristoll [*sic]*'; Rosse papers, O/14/11, 'window at Iona', Laurence Parsons, n.d.; Rosse Papers, 014/12, interior view of Iona Cathedral, Laurence Parsons, n.d.
[192] William Angus, *The seats of the nobility and gentry in Great Britain and Wales* (London, 1787–1815).
[193] Tour journal, f. 31v.
[194] Ibid., ff 34r–35v.
[195] Ibid., f. 36r.

associations with people who had once lived there. This, in the case of Penshurst, released the language of feeling;

'This is an ancient, irregular but vastly large house once the mansion of the Sydneys, Earls of Leicester. There Sir Philip Sydney the gallant warrior & romantick author of the Arcadia was born; but in my Opinion it deserves its greatest glory, for being the Birthplace of the immortal Algernon Sydney. I passed with awe & veneration over those floors on which the hero of Liberty had so often trod, & enquired with anxiety but in vain for the room in which he first saw light.'[196]

Algernon Sidney (1623–1683) was a republican, who, charged with plotting against Charles II, had been executed. In his *Apology* Sydney defined his life's work as being an attempt to '… uphold the Common rights of mankind, the lawes of this land, and the true Protestant religion, against corrupt principles, arbitrary power, and Popery…'[197] He was an inspiration for Parsons, an Irish Protestant patriot politician who would eloquently resist union with Great Britain.[198] At Hever it was a family connection that attracted Parsons.

Hever Castle had been inherited by Anne Boleyn's father in 1505. There Anne had spent her youth and been courted by Henry VIII, as Parsons and the guide books related. The Parsons family had a marriage connection to the Boleyns through Laurence's mother, Mary Clere, which was highly prized.[199] Mary Clere's inheritance included portraits of two young women dated 1567.[200] Surviving letters testify to Laurence Parsons's interest in this family connection, and there is a record that when, in 1803 the tomb of Elizabeth and Mary 'Bullyn' was found beneath ruined Clonony Castle in Co.

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[196] Ibid., ff 32r–32v.

[197] Quoted in Jonathan Scott, 'Algernon Sydney', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie> accessed 6 June, 2013. Parsons also noticed the depiction of a porcupine in the glass of the parlour window of a village inn at Penshurst which he identified as the Sydney arms or crest.

[198] Parsons passed a motion in the Irish Parliament deleting the paragraph concerning union from the king's address for 24 Jan. 1799.

[199] Parsons's mother, Mary Clere was the daughter and heir of John Clere of Kilbury, Co. Tipperary. The main branch of the Clere family was in Ormsby and Blickling, Norfolk. See Rosse Papers, D/5/25, letter from Thomas Parsons to Laurence Parsons, 5 Nov. 1800; Rosse Papers, A/26/12, photocopies of an article by Rolf Loeber on Clonony Castle, Co Offaly, home of Boleyn and Clere families; Rosse Papers, F/11, notes by Laurence Parsons on history and genealogy of the Parsons family.

[200] Girouard, 'Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, II', *Country Life* (4 Mar. 1965), 471. These portraits are still in the Gothic salon, now the music room.

Offaly, the inscription revealed that they were cousins of Anne Boleyn and a connection was made between these two women and the portraits at Birr.[201] Parsons made no mention of Ben Jonson's eulogy, *To Penshurst*, where the Sydneys, the virtues ascribed to them, and the life they led were represented as being sustained by the house, 'an ancient pile', offered as the embodiment of the 'old fashion of England' and the antithesis of the luxuries of court.[202] This poem, and other seventeenth-century poems that promoted the idea of estate rather than court life for England's nobles, may have coloured Parsons's view of these Kentish houses, linking them to his own estate and historically rooted house in Ireland.[203]

Unlike the Burys, Parsons did not display a very well developed sense of the picturesque possibilities of medieval buildings in his tour journal beyond appreciating the landscape setting of Welsh castles and towns. Far from viewing Gothic within a picturesque frame, he admired the regularity of Gothic where he found it, as evidenced in his thorough description of the Abbots' Kitchen at Glastonbury; 'The abbot's kitchen remains perfect … it is a square without & an octagon within, 4 corresponding doors, and as many chimneys occupy the 8 sides, a large window over every door, it is vaulted in a pyramidal form …'[204]

He was fully attuned to picturesque landscaping, describing the garden buildings as they were experienced in a circuit of Stourhead. This included two Gothic structures. One was Gothic revival, the other a displaced medieval structure; the medieval cross from the abbey green in Bristol. David Watkin has observed that the proprietor, Henry Hoare II, intended to create the illusion of a village beyond the demesne, anticipating Nash at Blaise Hamlet.[205] Parsons, however, saw the cross from the inn and appreciated its connection with the demesne temples. He was also interested in its medieval

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[201] Rosse Papers, D/5/25, letter of Thomas Parsons to Laurence Parsons, 5 Nov. 1800. Rosse Papers, T/1, letter from James Fleming to Lord Rosse, 14 March, 1940.

[202] See Jules Lubbock, *The tyranny of taste; the politics of architecture and design in Britain 1550–1960* (New Haven & London, 1995), pp 149–152.

[203] Parsons did not compare Parsonstown House with Hever or Penshurst. Stylistically there were significant differences – Parsonstown House was more regular and displayed fewer defensive features (see chapter 4) – though it had similar historic roots to Hever (though Parsons thought his house was built entirely in the seventeenth century).

[204] Tour journal, f. 21r. Another regular Gothic structure that Parsons encountered and described is the great hall in the archbishop's palace, Canterbury which had '3 … Gothick arches, dividing the hall into 4 equal parts' (Tour journal, f. 33v).

[205] Watkin, *The English vision*, pp 28–9.

(fourteenth-century) decoration, displaying more antiquarian zeal than picturesque sensibility.

Parsons departed from measured antiquarian observation most spectacularly when he looked at cathedrals. It is clear from his descriptions that he was expecting a sublime experience. This was the period when public discussion about the precise architectural qualities that stimulated sublime experience was being debated. A common theme was that uninterrupted views within cathedrals were desirable.[206] In 1787 James Wyatt proposed that the choir in Lichfield Cathedral would be a more sublime space if the reredos were removed to admit the Lady Chapel.[207] In the introduction to a compilation of antiquarian scholarship published in 1800 John Milner articulated the unique ability of Gothic architecture to stimulate 'awe and pleasure', 'prayer and contemplation', and listed the active architectural qualities: height, length, variety, 'solemn gloom'.[208] Impressions were as important as absolute dimensions; pointed arches and tapering pinnacles were vital for giving the impression of height.

Parsons's criticisms of Wells Cathedral reveal that externally he felt it did not soar sufficiently, and internally it was not extensive enough:

'The two west towers are very handsome, as far as they go, but end so abruptly, they appear as if their heads were cut off. The centre tower is but low, has no spire & is not near so fine as the one at Gloucester. … The inside is extremely neat, the pillars clustered, lofty & light, pointed arches. The organ as usual cuts the isle from the choir & interrupts the grand vistor.'[209]

However, beyond the altar the view had been elongated, a spatial effect that Parsons appreciated; 'There was formerly a gothick screen behind the altar, which has been

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[206] Laugier championed the open interior (Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An essay on the study and practice of architecture* (London, 1756), pp 217–18. See also John Frew, 'James Wyatt's choir screen at Salisbury Cathedral reconsidered', *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), 485, nt 10). The ideal conflicted with antiquarian sensibilities because of the destruction of medieval fabric.

[207] John Martin Robinson, *James Wyatt 1746-1813, architect to George III* (New Haven & London, 2012), p. 225.

[208] John Taylor (ed), *Essays on Gothic architecture by the Rev. T. Warton, Rev. J. Bentham, Captain Grose, and the Rev. J. Milner* (London, 1800), pp xvi–xx.

[209] Tour journal, f. 19r. He had a similar criticism of the tower at Winchester; 'the cathedral, a noble building, but the effect spoiled as the steeple is hardly higher than the roof' (Tour journal, f. 26v).

taken away, & a light railing substituted in its place, which has a charming effect, as it opens to your view a very beautiful chapel behind the altar, which being almost circular, gives a fine perspective.'[210] Parsons also enjoyed the sublime profusion of the carving;'… the west front is a cluster of tabernacle work & niches & such a multitude of statues, some tolerably perfect, others in different degrees of mutilation, astonished me – I believe there are some hundreds.'[211] At Salisbury, a cathedral praised in the guides as the most 'regular' and 'elegant' cathedral and with entire walls that appeared to be glazed, Parsons was disappointed, and, uninspired by the aesthetic impact of the cathedral, he was discouraged from making his own observations; a very different reaction from his approach to ruins which inspired him to enquiry and investigation.[212]

Style for Parsons was relative in two ways; in the sense that it was a cultural phenomenon with its own history, and in the sense that its application depended on circumstances. His understanding that medieval architecture was rooted in a period different from his own underscores his tour journal and it allowed him to approve that which he failed to understand. The willingness to assume the best in the face of apparent disorder and in the absence of systematic study is apparent in his attitude to Raglan; 'Why the building was made so irregular I cannot conceive as it was not circumscribed by any local interference; had it been built on a rock, there might have been some excuse, but in the middle of a field, where nothing interfered puzzles me, & I can only account for it thus, that it was built at different times.'[213] Taking medieval architecture to be a serious endeavour he assumed that medieval builders planned their buildings rationally, he was quick to realise that apparent disorder was often the result of subsequent changes, and, far from judging, he observed that 'we can only work by conjecture'.[214] There was much that he simply admired. The fifteenth-century Beaumont chapel in St Mary's in Warwick was 'beautiful'.[215] The cloister ceiling at Gloucester 'executed in most wonderful stone carving'.[216] Warwick Castle was 'magnificent', Wells Cathedral, 'most beautiful'.[217]

[210] Ibid., f. 19r.
[211] Ibid., f. 19r.
[212] Ibid., f. 26r.
[213] Ibid., f. 6r.
[214] Ibid., f. 6r.
[215] Ibid., f. 12r. See Terry Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain* (New Haven & London, 2011), pp. 202, 302–3.
[216] Tour journal, f. 8v.
[217] Ibid., ff 12r, 19r.

Parsons judged style, if there was a question of choice, according to the principle of decorum or suitability. He criticised Lord Woodgate for juxtaposing classical windows with existing casements because they were unsuitable; '[he] either wants the means or taste to adorn the natural beauty of it.'[218] He was a great advocate of contemporary naturalistic picturesque landscaping, but for a medieval mansion close to the Kentish village of Chiddingstone, regularity was to be welcomed: '… it is a large brick mansion with neat old fashioned gardens, strait canal clipped hedges & everything in neat order.'[219] This anticipated Repton who in the 1790s would argue that building types should be matched to landscape.[220] Parsons displayed little interest in Gothic revival buildings, but where he did refer to them it was within contexts that were suitable, and this may have recommended them to him. St Mary's in Warwick, rebuilt in 1695–1706 after a fire, was described as 'a pretty attempt to something Gothick', while a 'small Gothick habitation' (part of the medieval abbey that had been gothicised by John Pratt in *c.*1740) was noted adjacent to the 'fine' ruins of Bayham Abbey.[221] At Stourhead, it was the position of the recently completed castellated Alfred's Tower that interested Parsons, 'on a fine rise' where Alfred regrouped his army after the retreat at Atherby.[222]

Parsons was one of the 38 founder members of the Royal Irish Academy, and he sat on the antiquarian committee in the 1790s.[223] He was not an assiduous attender at meetings and his one recorded contribution was to propose that Theophilus O'Flanagan, a scholar supported by the Academy since 1786, translate the Annals of Innisfallen.[224] This contribution to literature had a political dimension.[225] His investigations into medieval architecture do not seem to have extended significantly to Ireland. There are drawings of two Irish houses in a small sketchbook that he used to develop designs for Birr Castle,

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[218] Ibid., f. 32r.
[219] Ibid., f. 35v.
[220] J. Mordaunt Crook, *The dilemma of style: architectural ideas from the picturesque to the post-modern* (London, 1987), pp 24–9.
[221] Tour journal, ff 12r, 32v.
[222] Ibid., f. 21v. It was designed by Henry Flitcroft and completed in 1772. Parsons recorded the inscription which reveals the intended political message of the building: 'Alfred the Great A.D. 879, on this summit erected his standard against Danish invaders; to him we owe the origin of jurys [*sic*] [the establishment of a Militia] & the creation of a naval force. Alfred the light of a benighted age was a Philosopher & a Christian, the father of his people, & the founder of the English monarchy & Liberty' (Tour journal, f. 29r).
[223] RIA, Academy Minutes, vol. 1 April 1785–Nov. 1826.
[224] RIA, Minutes of the Committee of Antiquities, 1785–1870, meeting on 19 Dec. 1795, p. 112.
[225] O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, pp 173–4.

suggesting that he was primarily interested in them as potential source material. On two pages he sketched details of nearby Kilcolgan Castle, a mid-seventeenth-century fortified house with square, gabled corner towers and vertical transom and mullioned windows.[226] (fig 1.28) He showed elevations of the gables decorated with finials, and a chimneypiece, also sketching the consoles in side elevation. The other Irish structure, not named, appears as a sixteenth or seventeenth-century tower house with a battlemented and turreted roof, battered walls, loop-holes and a mullioned top-storey window incorporated into a proposed gateway design and shown adjacent to Gothic revival structures.[227] (figs 1.29)

The backwardness of Irish antiquarian studies compared to England discussed above was reflected in Parsons's library, which contained only two books dealing with Irish architecture: Mervyn Archdall's *Monasticon Hibernicum* and Walter Harris's *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland.*[228] In neither was architecture the primary subject and both belonged to the early period of antiquarian study. Although Archdall's work was published in 1786, he emulated the mid-seventeenth-century project of William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* by compiling abstracts of documents relating to the pre-Reformation Irish church.[229] Archdall was inspired by the 'singularity of the architecture and situation of the monasteries', but he included few detailed descriptions of the buildings and almost no illustrations.[230] The first volume of Ware's works included engravings of Irish cathedrals based on the drawings of Jonas Blaymire

[226] Tour Journal, ff 16v–17r. For information on Kilgolgan Castle see Caimin O'Brien & David P. Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1997), pp 157–8, and for photograph of the building in *c.*1900 see James Lyttleton, 'The MacCoghlans of Delvin Eathra: the transformation of a late medieval lordship in early modern Ireland' in Linda Doran and James Lyttleton (eds), *Lordship in medieval Ireland image and reality* (Dublin, 2007), p. 251. Kilgolgan Castle was largely destroyed in 1954.

[227] Sketch notebook, f. 12r. The sketch notebook is dated 1801–1803 on a number of grounds. There is a reference to a payment dated 14 Feb. 1802 (f. 13r), a reference to a sum that had ben settled dated 14 Aug. 1801 (f. 21r) and a sketch of a gateway (f. 7v) that is very similar to a sketch signed by John Johnston and dated Apr. 1803 (Rosse Papers, O/19/2, elevation of entrance tower, signed 'J Johnston' and dated 'April 1803'). Parsons sketched a development of this gate, similar to the final design (Sketch notebook, f. 19r). The sketch notebook is a hand-made, pocket-sized book without a cover composed of pages roughly sewn together.

[228] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*. Archdall's copy with ms annotations is in in RIA, MS 24 M 7–8; Sir James Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland,* ed. Walter Harris, 3 vols, (Dublin, 1739–45), copy with Ms annotations and bound with letters in TCD, MS L-2-353.

[229] In his introduction Mervyn Archdall (1723–1791) wrote that the Irish antiquary Sir James Ware (1594–1666) gave him the idea for this emulative project that Ware was too old to undertake (Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. xv). Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*.

[230] Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. x.

(d. 1763). These show the buildings from a distance, though not without some basic detail, the patterns of tracery shown in single lines, for example.[231] (fig 1.30)

Parsons made one published reference to early Irish architecture in a pamphlet defending a bequest made by Henry Flood to Trinity College, Dublin in 1795, but it was in a political not an architectural context.[232] The purpose of Flood's legacy was to enable Trinity to buy Irish manuscripts to promote the study of ancient Irish language and literature. Flood, a liberal, was, as observed above, Parsons's political mentor, and, to a significant degree, the legacy and Parsons' defence of it, was an extension of their political agenda which asserted Irish interest when it conflicted with that of Britain.[233] The second part of the pamphlet was a defence of ancient Ireland. Arguing for the superiority and civility of the ancient pre-Christian Irish at a time when Britain was 'in a rude state', Parsons supported his claim by pointing to the written language, and the round towers.[234] 'Where in [Britain or Gaul] are to be seen any edifices so antient, and of such excellent workmanship, as the round towers of Ireland?' he asked rhetorically.[235] This was also a contribution to the political debate about the origins of the Irish discussed above, with Parsons, whose *Defence* relied heavily on Vallancey's arguments, siding with the antiquarians who argued for a non-British origin for the Irish. Although he asserted the value and significance of ancient Irish civilization, Parsons did not advocate a cultural revival. In *Observations on the bequest of Henry Flood* Parsons was adamant that Flood did not intend a reintroduction of ancient Irish language in present-day Ireland as many of those opposing the bequest argued.[236] Parsons's vision of Ireland was for a country ruled by the Protestant Ascendancy, giving Catholics a subordinate place.[237] Atkinson has argued that Parsons put his faith in property, and that fear of the majority Catholic population underpinned many of his

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[231] Reproductions of the south-east and north-west views of Waterford Cathedral can be found in Roger Stalley, 'Reconstructions of the Gothic past: the lost cathedral of Waterford', *IADS*, 16 (2013), 103.
[232] Sir Lawrence [*sic*] Parsons, *Observations on the bequest of Henry Flood esq. to Trinity College Dublin with a defence of the ancient history of Ireland* (Dublin, 1795) See also Rosse Papers, F/6, small notebook of jottings on Irish history and language, which is more detailed than *Observations*.
[233] For example, in 1785 Parsons opposed William Pitt's commercial propositions as an infringement on Irish rights.
[234] Parsons, *Observations*, p. 59. For discussion see O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations,* pp 173–4.
[235] Parsons, *Observations*, p. 57. Louisa Beaufort referred to Parsons's reference to round towers though she did not discuss the architecture (Beaufort, *An essay upon the state of architecture*, p. 111).
[236] Parsons, *Observations*, pp 24–5.
[237] His support for Catholic rights varied. In 1793 he supported Catholic emancipation but not the extension of the franchise to Catholic forty-shilling freeholders, arguing that a £20 property qualification would ensure that only Catholics with property would gain seats.

political acts.[238] A revival would be a too literal connection with the past, encouraging those who felt they had a kinship with the ancient Irish, and excluding later colonists.

Parsons existed between two worlds. On the one hand there was the arena of Irish politics in which history and selected artifacts were promoted as part of a political debate. On the other hand there was the world of the gentleman tourist in England at liberty to cultivate his interest in classical and Gothic architecture. In that second world Parsons displayed a progressive taste for Gothic. He followed contemporary fashion in looking for a sublime experience in a cathedral, while appreciation of small churches was coloured by a picturesque sensibility, and certain pre-classical houses that embodied values with a personal significance inspired associational thinking. But his descriptions and sketches reveal that he was intent on cultivating a detached observational approach that enabled him to accept Gothic in all its variety. Although he valued regularity in medieval architecture, he was not concerned to apply classical standards to medieval design. Although he appreciated irregularity in medieval architecture, he did not view it as a devotee of the picturesque. He had the makings of an antiquarian as well as an amateur architect.

Conclusion

Using published sources, Alexandrina Buchanan has argued that from about the mid-sixteenth and into the eighteenth century the style of medieval buildings was not a primary concern to English writers. Instead, it was the functional purpose or more general aesthetics of these buildings that were important.[239] Thus topographical writers often expressed admiration for the workmanship and materials of medieval buildings, or drew attention to the tombs they harboured, with their records of the lives of important people and the lessons that could be drawn from them about mortality. By the late eighteenth century, as has been shown here, medieval buildings were firmly established as historic artifacts and categorised as Gothic in published writing and in private journals and letters.

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[238] Atkinson observed that this was evident from the start of his political career when he opposed mutiny bill in *Observations on the Irish mutiny act* (1780), (Atkinson, 'Sir Laurence Parsons, second Earl of Rosse', pp 56–7).

[239] Buchanan, 'Interpretations of medieval architecture, pp 30–9.

It is clear that there were a variety of ways to approach Gothic, and, although the people discussed here were capable of engaging with Gothic through the medium of the picturesque, the sublime and antiquarianism, personality and inclination meant that some tendencies predominated. Parsons was inclined towards analytical antiquarianism, whereas Catherine Maria Bury was more emotional in her responses. Building type exerted a strong influence; even Parsons found it hard to engage with the stylistic complexity of cathedrals and responded emotionally to their size and impressiveness. It is evident that different perceptions yielded different types of information so that a flexible approach was the optimum to approach completeness. However, it took an exceptional individual such as Frederick Trench, amateur architect and sought-after advisor on architecture, to engage in this way. Bury, for example, was not inclined to apply the analytical approach he cultivated in the investigation of peat to the analysis of medieval architecture, and Parsons consistently favoured antiquarianism over the picturesque. Parsons's 1786 journal and sketches are the work of a young man who was eager to learn; in them he revealed himself as someone who was adding to his knowledge of the style through careful observation rather than experimenting with different ways of seeing Gothic.

These patrons displayed an interesting difference in attitude to the relationship between enlightenment thinking and Gothic. For both Charles and Catherine Bury there was a tendency to separate their engagement with enlightenment philosophy and science from their interest in Gothic, which was largely inspired by an emotional engagement with the past and an aesthetic enjoyment of Gothic architecture in its landscape context. Parsons, however, applied enlightenment thinking to Gothic, analyzing the plans of buildings, sketching and labeling details, identifying building sequences, enjoying symmetry and regularity where he found it, assuming rationality in the builders and applying rationality to his assessments. It was, it will be shown, closer to the sensibility of an architect.

Chapter Two

An architect's perception of Gothic: Francis Johnston.

Introduction

For an architect such as Francis Johnston (1760–1829), maturing as a practitioner in Ireland in the 1790s and first decade of the 1800s, an interest in medieval architecture was almost inevitable and Gothic revival commissions very likely. Existing scholarly investigations into architects' knowledge and understanding of Gothic architecture in this period have revolved mainly around two issues; antiquarianism, and restorations of medieval cathedrals and churches. Particularly apposite for the present thesis is the work of John Frew and J Mordaunt Crook, who have discussed how antiquarian knowledge was disseminated to a wider audience.[1] Frew's studies of Wyatt's restorations of medieval cathedrals and Gothic revival architecture provides a context for a study of Johnston. Apart from these studies, there has been very little specific investigation into individual architects' knowledge and understanding of medieval architecture and the particular use they made of it.[2] Patrons with their commissions to renovate existing medieval buildings or build new Gothic revival structures were clearly influential. But what lay behind an architect's response to these projects?[3]

Evidence for such an enterprise, as Frew discovered with Wyatt, is frequently lacking or fragmentary. This is true too for Francis Johnston. Only one measured drawing of a medieval building survives.[4] Johnston published nothing on architecture and very little of anything he wrote, including correspondence, survives. However, there are four surviving sources which can be used to investigate his taste: a journal of a tour he made in Wales and southern England in the spring of 1796; a copy of the catalogue of part of his architectural library; the drawings of a great many of his Gothic revival commissions and his few restoration projects; and his description of his design for the

[1] Frew, 'James Bentham's *History of Ely Cathedral*'; Crook, *John Carter*.
[2] Pevsner has discussed Essex and Rickman, who were both antiquarians and architects (Pevsner, *Some architectural writers of the nineteenth century*); Cocke has written on Essex (Thomas H. Cocke, 'James Essex, cathedral restorer', *Architectural History*, vol. 18 (1975), 12–22, 97–102).
[3] Wyatt's development was discussed by John Frew (Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style') and John Martin Robinson (Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp. 219–46).
[4] Armagh County Museum, ARMCM.116.1968, 'West elevation of Armagh Cathedral in its present state', 'Armagh, 1785', attributed to Francis Johnston.

Castle Chapel, Dublin.[5] The catalogue has never been discussed in the literature on Johnston. Although the journal, drawings and description have been referred to by writers, they have never been closely analysed for what they might reveal about Johnston's Gothic sensibility. In fact Francis Johnston, who was the most prominent architect of his generation in Ireland, and the first professional Irish-born and Irish-trained architect, has received very little scholarly attention.[6] Early appraisals were generated by enthusiasm for an architect appreciated as the ancestor of Irish architects and were expressed in occasional memoirs and articles in architectural journals and cultural magazines published from the 1840s to 1850s.[7] Edward McParland's extended essay, written in 1969, in which he surveyed Johnston's work as a designer of domestic, ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, establishing the scope of his achievement, has been the only published scholarly work to take in Johnston's entire career.[8] More recently, Ned Pakenham's dissertation of 2005 investigated Johnston's Gothic revival work in three major buildings.[9] He used a variety of sources to discuss the influences on these castellated and ecclesiastical designs.[10]

Johnston's career can be divided into three parts. In the first, *c.*1778–1794, he worked mainly under the influence of the architect, Thomas Cooley (d. 1784) and his patron, Primate Richard Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh (d. 1794). In the second period, 1794–1805, he established himself with new clients mainly in Co. Louth, Co. Meath

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[5] Johnston's Tour diary; Johnston's Library catalogue; drawings in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection and Guinness Drawings Collection, in NLI, and in private collections; Johnston, 1823.

[6] Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan observe, 'it is probably not too much to say that with Johnston the architectural profession in Ireland finally comes of age' (Christine Casey & Alistair Rowan, *North Leinster* (London, 1993), p. 52). His main competitor was Richard Morrison (1767–1849), his slightly younger contemporary, who had a very successful practice as a designer of provincial houses, whereas Johnston combined a private practice with work as the Board of Works architect.

[7] 'Memoirs of native artists No III – Francis Johnston, esq., President of the Royal Hibernian Academy', *The Citizen or, Dublin Monthly Magazine*, 4:26 (Dec. 1841), 270–4; 'Francis Johnston, R.H.A.', *The Dublin Builder,* 10 (1 Oct. 1859), 131–2; Etta Catterson-Smith, 'What Dublin owes to Francis Johnston', *The Lady of the House* (15 Jan. 1902), 3-4; William Murray, 'Memoir of Johnston', *Irish Builder and Engineer,* 58 (8 Apr. 1916), 171; John Betjeman, 'Francis Johnston, Irish architect' in Myfanwy Evans (ed) *The Pavilion*, (London, 1945), 20–38; Patrick Henchy, 'Francis Johnston, architect, 1760–1829', *Dublin Historical Record,* 11:1 (Dec. 1949–Feb. 1950), 1-16.

[8] Edward McParland, 'Francis Johnston, architect, 1760-1829', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 12, (3 & 4 July–Dec. 1969), 61–139. Johnston's work is also discussed in Bernadette Goslin, 'History and descriptive catalogue of the RIAI Murray Collection of architectural drawings in the collection of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland' (MA, UCD, 1990); Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*; Christine Casey, *Dublin* (New Haven & London, 2005); Kevin V. Mulligan, *South Ulster* (New Haven & London, 2013).

[9] Charleville Castle, (known as Charleville Forest), Pakenham Hall (now Tullynally Castle), and Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle (known as Chapel Royal).

[10] Ned Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel by Francis Johnston (1760-1829)', (MA, Courtauld Institute of Art, 2005).

and Dublin. The third period starts with his appointment as Board of Works architect in 1805 and ends with his retirement in 1826, three years before his death.[11] Although there were some ecclesiastical Gothic revival commissions in the first part of his career, it was in the second period that Johnston can be seen discovering medieval architecture and establishing himself as a designer of castellated houses in Ireland.[12] However, his most ambitious Gothic revival building, the Castle Chapel in Dublin Castle, was built in his early years as the Board of Works architect, and he would continue to develop his interest in Gothic to the end of his life.[13] This chapter will focus on the first two periods of his career, a time in which Johnston can be discovered acquiring knowledge and understanding of medieval architecture and developing attitudes towards the Gothic revival.

Apprentice and young architect, *c*.1778–1794

Francis Johnston was born in 1760 into a family dominated by architecture.[14] He grew up in Armagh, where he would have witnessed the transformation of the city through the patronage of archbishop Robinson, the first resident incumbent, who commissioned a number of prominent but spare classical buildings – the archiepiscopal palace, Primate's Chapel, infirmary and barracks, Royal School, public library and observatory – and the creation of a picturesque landscape within the demesne of his palace.[15] Robinson's architect was Thomas Cooley (1741–84) and *c*.1778 Robinson sent the young Francis Johnston to work in Cooley's Dublin office.[16] Cooley, an English

[11] Johnston was appointed 'Architect and Inspector of Civil Buildings in the room of Mr Woodgate deceased' on 4 Oct. 1805 (OPW letter books, OPW 1/1/2/1, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 4 Oct. 1805). His retirement and death are recorded in an official memo on architects' pensions (NAI, Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, CSO/RP/1829/1799.

[12] See chapter three for discussion of Charleville Castle

[13] See chapter five for discussion of Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle. Apart from books published in the late 1820s listed in his library catalogue (Johnston's Library catalogue) there is evidence that he collected prints of medieval buildings and medieval *objects d'art* (*Catalogue of the inimitable and vast assemblage of paintings, bronzes, china, statuary, and other valuable works of art, the property of the late Francis Johnston, Esq. architect,* John Litterdale, 24 Mar.–15 Apr. 1845, Dublin, photocopy in IAA, copy in National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum).

[14] *Burke's Irish family records* (5th ed. London, 1976), pp. 638–9. Johnston's eldest brother, Richard (1759–1806) and younger half brother, William (1764–1797) were architects.

[15] A.P.W. Malcomson, *Primate Robinson 1709–94: 'a very tough incumbent in fine preservation'* (Belfast, 2003), pp. 36–69. Johnston designed an obelisk for the palace demesne (1782–3), completed the interior of the Primate's Chapel (1785) and designed the observatory (1788–9).

[16] Murray, 'Memoir of Johnston', 171. Direct evidence of Johnston working with Cooley can be found on a working drawing of a Gothic tower for Armagh Cathedral, (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.75, attributed to Thomas Cooley, nd) and in a letter written by Johnston (Armagh County Museum, ARMCM.T310.7, TS copy of an extract of a letter from Francis Johnston to [archbishop of Armagh], [1823]). There is no record that Johnston attended the Dublin Society Architecture Drawing School.

architect, trained initially as a carpenter, had spent five years (1764–9) in the London office of architect Robert Mylne where he had absorbed continental classicism and was involved in supervising the erection of Blackfriars Bridge, a major public work of the eighteenth century.[17] Cooley won the competition for the Royal Exchange in Dublin and came to Ireland to supervise its erection in 1769. This remarkable building brought modern classicism to Ireland.[18] Although Cooley never reached such heights again, working in his office gave Johnston an insight into contemporary classicism; it is likely, for example, that Johnston was in Cooley's office when Cooley executed James Wyatt's designs for Mount Kennedy in 1782–4.[19]

Cooley received a number of ecclesiastical commissions which Johnston worked on with him. Cooley's approach to these projects had a profound influence on Johnston, while they also gave him practical experience of medieval buildings. The most important project was Robinson's commission, begun in 1782, to replace the single-stage tower and stumpy spire of Armagh Cathedral with a two-stage tower based closely on the late fifteenth-century tower of Magdalen College Oxford for which a working drawing survives.[20] (fig 2.1) The use of a medieval model was progressive. But, although Robinson was proposing an ecclesiastical source for his cathedral commission, he was disregarding existing context. Magdalen College tower with its crocheted and paneled pinnacles, pierced battlement and deeply set traceried windows was far more elaborate and sophisticated than the plain, squat, battlemented tower at Armagh that so obviously belonged to the simple undecorated exterior of the cathedral. (figs 2.2 & 2.3) Even more incongruously Robinson had recently taken out the early seventeenth-century three-light traceried windows of the north and south aisles of Armagh Cathedral, giving the building an even simpler character.[21] Although, probably for

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[17] Ruth Thorpe, 'Thomas Cooley before the Royal Dublin Exchange', *IADS*, 8 (2005), 71-85. Thorpe (p. 76) refers to the Franco-Roman influence evident in an extant sketchbook of Cooley's.

[18] Casey, *Dublin*, p. 301. The building was completed in 1779.

[19] Wyatt's design was dated 1772 (Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 106–8).

[20] Anon, 'Critical remarks on observations contained in Shaw Mason's parochial survey – and on certain passages in Coote's Statistical survey of the County Armagh; and in the Edinburgh Encyclopeadia', *Newry Magazine or, Literary & Political Register, for 1815*, 1:1 (Mar.–Apr. 1815), 58. The original tower was about 38 feet. Image of original tower in Mulligan, *South Ulster*, p. 11. Drawing of proposed tower in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.75, elevation and section of a two-storey battlemented Gothick tower, attributed to Thomas Cooley, nd. Magdalen College, Oxford has a three-stage tower.

[21] James Stuart, *Historical memoirs of the city of Armagh* (Newry, 1819), p. 448. A watercolour of the south elevation by Daniel Grose of *c.* 1830 showing the windows with square-paned glass is illustrated in Mulligan, *South Ulster*, p. 96. Nineteenth-century criticism of Robinson's insensitivity has been noted by Malcomson (Malcomson, *Primate Robinson*, pp 37–9).

financial reasons, Cooley simplified his model – the surviving working drawing reveals that he gave the tower a plainer silhouette and more lightly inscribed details – it would still have appeared strange, hovering over the simple building of Armagh Cathedral.[22] Aesthetic congruity and antiquarian rigour as motives were probably trumped by Robinson's emotional attachment to Oxford: he had studied at Christ Church College Oxford and, retaining a strong affection for it, was currently commissioning James Wyatt to built Canterbury Quad and gateway.[23]

Advanced contemporary restoration practice as carried out by the architect James Essex at Ely and Lincoln Cathedrals was concerned to match new with existing.[24] When in 1774 Essex had been faced with a commission from the Dean of Lincoln to erect a Salisbury-type spire on the central tower, he had argued that it was unsuitable on structural grounds. In the letter accompanying his proposal he explained that he had 'made the design as near as I could agreeable to the Ideas of the architect who built the tower'.[25] Cooley's response to Robinson's commission was the reverse; he judged that the existing structure was adequate for the increased load and proceeded with a design which Johnston began to execute in 1783.[26]

Construction did not proceed smoothly. With 60 feet erected, the north-west pier and arches appeared to be under extreme strain and the uncompleted tower was removed. After Cooley's death in 1784 Johnston was asked to rebuild the former Armagh tower with a new 40-foot spire on the original supports.[27] Johnston recounted this episode in a letter written in 1823, describing Cooley's design as 'a very superb steeple .... designed

[22] Compared to Magdalen College Tower the proposed design for Armagh included no gargoyles and fewer crockets, the windows were not as deeply set, and the battlements were given a blind arcade rather than being pierced.
[23] The Christ Church commission ran from1773–83 (Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 195–6).
[24] Cocke, 'James Essex', 12–22, 97–102. Essex was an exception: there was a great deal of restoration work on English cathedrals after 1660, but most did not reveal an appreciation for authenticity, (Cocke, 'James Essex', 13–14).
[25] Quoted in Ibid., 18.
[26] Armagh County Museum, T 3107, TS copy of an extract of a letter from Francis Johnston to [archbishop of Armagh], [1823]. Part of this letter was published by G.O. Simms and dated by him to 2 Jan. 1823 (G.O. Simms, 'Armagh's old cathedral' in Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, *The buildings of Armagh* (Belfast, 1992), p. 3).
[27] Armagh County Museum, T 3107, TS copy of an extract of a letter from Francis Johnston to [archbishop of Armagh], [1823]. The only variation added by Johnston was to incorporate two windows per façade instead of one. The spire that was erected can be seen on a survey elevation of the cathedral drawn by Johnston (Armagh County Museum, ARMCM.116.1968, 'West elevation of Armagh Cathedral in its present state', 'Armagh, 1785', attributed to Francis Johnston).

… from that of Magdalen College, Oxford'.[28] Even at the end of his life, with his far greater knowledge of medieval architecture, and with so much critical comment on cathedral restoration in British journals, but his judgment perhaps coloured by loyalty to Cooley and Robinson, Johnston did not see anything incongruous in bringing such a tower to Armagh.[29]

In the same letter Johnston alluded to his detailed knowledge of the cathedral; 'Having spent I may say some years in and out of the old Fabrick, I am almost acquainted with every stone of it'.[30] Much of the fabric of the cathedral had been sympathetically restored in the seventeenth century so that it conveyed a convincing medieval character.[31] However, Johnston, asked to make alterations in 1784, suggested the imposition of a Georgian Gothic sensibility. His surviving proposal of June 1784 for a ceiling for the north transept and crossing was for a plaster vault.[32] In the transept the space was divided into three bays comprising a large central bay and two smaller side bays, a classical conceit that worked awkwardly with a ribbed vault. There is no evidence that either ceilings were erected. (fig 2.4)

There was a strong measure of classicism in the Gothic revival example that Cooley gave Johnston. This can be seen in Cooley's pattern book for church designs commissioned by Robinson.[33] The archbishop had presented a bill to Parliament in 1768 for the erection of new chapels of ease on the sites of medieval churches destroyed

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[28] Armagh County Museum, T 3107, TS copy of an extract of a letter from Francis Johnston to [archbishop of Armagh], [1823].

[29] For example, 1797–1817 *Gentleman's Magazine* carried frequent articles by John Carter. many commenting on current restoration projects and vilifying those by James Wyatt, (list in Crook, *John Carter*, pp 80–9).

[30] Simms, 'Armagh's old cathedral', p. 3.

[31] Mulligan, *South Ulster*, pp 11, 96. A plan of the cathedral before the restorations started in 1834 shows a cross-shaped plan, clustered piers, mullioned windows, buttresses (Armagh Public Library, information from Kevin Mulligan).

[32] Drawing reproduced Betjeman, 'Francis Johnston, Irish architect', 27, original in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.76, signed and dated June 1784, missing. There is no evidence that it was realised. The interior was radically altered after 1834 in the restoration by Lewis Nockalls Cottingham.

[33] Erica Loane, 'Architectural drawings by Thomas Cooley in the public library Armagh', (Undergraduate dissertation, TCD, 1983). Robinson may have introduced Cooley and Johnston to the Gothic revival buildings his friend, the Earl of Hillsborough, had commissioned at Hillsborough from *c*.1760–72: the rebuilding of the gatehouse and gazebo of the seventeenth-century Hillsborough Fort and the rebuilding of the seventeenth-century parish church of St Malachy. These were notable structures using the contemporary Gothic revival vocabulary in an appropriately restrained and robust manner (Frederick O'Dwyer, 'In search of Christopher Myers: pioneer of the Gothic revival in Ireland' in Michael McCarthy and Karina O'Neill (eds), *Studies in the Gothic revival* (Dublin, 2008), pp 80–7; C.E.B. Brett, *Buildings of North County Down* (Belfast, 2002), pp 39–41, 26, 28; Malcomson, *Primate Robinson*, p. 11).

in the seventeenth century in the parish of Armagh. In 1773–4 Cooley produced twelve designs, some with instructions for execution and estimates of quantities.[34] They are all for small auditory churches, most with an integral or projecting tower. Plain, simple and largely unornamented, they are obviously intended to be economic, although number ten, with a pinnacled tower and spire, has the capacity to impress. There are both classical and Gothic designs, but the Gothic designs are conceived within a classical framework: the churches are symmetrical, they have a box-like silhouette, there might be the suggestion of a pediment at the west end (designs 9 and 10) or pilaster buttresses to the towers finished with a projecting cornice (design 10). (figs 2.5–2.7) Cooley seems not to have gone to existing pattern books of Gothic details for his designs, developing instead a pared-down Gothic of simple pointed arches with Y or intersecting tracery for his windows, undecorated arched paneling at the base of the steeple, and triangular pinnacles. He often omitted hood mouldings. This is in contrast to contemporaries in England such as John Carr and Timothy Lightoler whose parish churches had ogee arches, quatrefoils and more elaborate tracery.[35] Cooley's designs share the restraint of other mid-eighteenth-century Irish churches.[36] Unlike them, however, there are a few signs that he borrowed Irish medieval motifs: crenellations for the towers that are stepped at the corners and have sloping caps.[37]

Several designs were realised.[38] Two, Lisnadill and Grange, were situated on high ground just outside Armagh and were obviously intended to embellish the city.[39] St Nicholas, Ballymakenny, Co. Louth, a design by Cooley based on number 10 in his pattern book, was begun in 1785 adjacent to Robinson's Rokeby estate.[40] This proposal, probably by Cooley, is slightly more elaborate than the pattern book design, with larger

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[34] Armagh Public Library, P001923591, Thomas Cooley, 'Collection of Drawings manuscript', 1773–4.
[35] Timothy Lightoler, St John's Manchester, 1768–70 and John Carr, All Saints, Dewsbury, 1764–66, (Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain*, pp 212, 226–9). Estate churches such as St John the Evangelist, Shobdon, Herefordshire, built by 2nd Viscount Bateman, 1748–56, were even more elaborate.
[36] See Loane, 'Architectural drawings by Thomas Cooley'.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Examples include Grange church consecrated in 1782, based on design no 10; Newtownmanorhamilton based on design no 5; Tamlaght, erected by 1782 with some similarities to design no 2.
[39] Lisnadill was closely based on pattern no 9, though, as realised, slender quatrefoil-shaped columns with shaft rings replaced the Tuscan columns supporting the gallery (Loane, 'Architectural drawings by Thomas Cooley'). The columns bare a close resemblance to Batty Langley's design for quatrefoil columns (Langley, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved*, plates XXIX–XXXII). The six-sided figures that decorated the gallery paneling were a variation on a standard medieval tomb design, a further variation of which Johnston would later use in the Castle Chapel (see chapter 5).
[40] Drawings in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.102–5, nd, unsigned, attributed to Cooley (McParland, 'Francis Johnston', 74–5).

windows of varied form, including an ogee hood moulding over the window on the second stage of the tower.[41] (figs 2.8 & 2.9) As executed, Ballymakenny received further elaboration: pointed instead of rectangular loops on the tower; round-headed tracery for the windows; a triangular finial to the ogee. (fig 2.10) The tone is restrained, the novelties geometric rather than authentically Gothic. Johnston was responsible for supervising the building and we see him here inventing details within the vocabulary established by Cooley.[42] Inside, the plasterwork includes a pointed arch cornice, ogee-decorated niches, while the pulpit has cusped arches and a quatrefoil frieze. (fig 2.11) These suggest the use of generally available pattern books, used sparingly, with decoration largely concentrated on the pulpit and reredos.[43] Thus we see Johnston following Cooley's lead in the cautious development of a Georgian Gothic style where plainness, imposed by financial constraints, was made palatable by simple, well-conceived forms carefully deployed.

Such an attitude is expressed in Johnston's description of his work of 1786 at St Nicholas Dundalk, a medieval church that had been remodelled in 1707 but retained its tall, three-stage medieval tower with stepped battlements: 'In Dundalk I planned and directed the erection of a spire on the Church, which though very plain and simple has a good effect from its good proportion to the tower.'[44] (fig 2.12) This statement reveals a concern to match the architectural qualities of the existing structure. However, although the plainness of the spire harmonised with the robust plainness of the tower, Johnston's priority (as he remembered it in 1820) was to find the right height and taper, architectural concerns that were inculcated by his training in Cooley's office. This rationale probably guided him in the 1780s when he designed a clock stage and spire for the tower of St Peter's, Drogheda, a mid-eighteenth-century church with an impressive

[41] McParland noted that the design for Ballymakenny was similar to Cooley's 1778 church in Kells (McParland, 'Francis Johnston', 75). Ideas for the realisation of pattern no 10 were sketched in pencil on the design and included reduction in size, the elimination of the north windows (realised) and constriction of a concave balcony at the west end (unrealised) (Armagh Public Library, P001923591, Thomas Cooley, 'Collection of Drawings manuscript', 1773–4).

[42] For Johnston's role see 'A letter from Francis Johnston (1820), *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 6:1 (Jan.– Mar., 1963), 1.

[43] Lower frieze on reredos with roses placed within quatrefoils is a detail found in Batty Langley, (Langley, *Ancient architecture restored*, plate XLIII). Pointed arch cornices were common in mid-eighteenth-century revival interiors; examples include: main hall Strawberry Hill; drawing of cornice profile by Sir Roger Newdigate (McCarthy, *The origins of the Gothic revival*, p. 129); and a more elaborate version in the dining room, Ballinlough, Co. Westmeath.

[44] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', p. 4. For history of the church see Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, pp 262–4.

Palladian west front designed by Hugh Darley. Johnston used strong, plain forms for the pinnacles and decorations – a roundel for the top of the tower, an arcade of round-headed arches, and quatrefoils for the base of the spire; geometric legibility rather than stylistic consistency united the design.[45] (fig 2.13)

Experiencing Gothic: 1794–1829

Focused attention on medieval architecture from antiquarians intent on bringing scholarship closer to that applied to classical architecture meant debates, controversy, and for those not directly involved no doubt, much confusion. Some of this work was accessible to architects through publications. Much would elude Johnston. His experience can be compared with that of the succeeding generation of architects, living at a time of greater consensus among antiquarians, with better books of drawings of Gothic architecture and the moral imperatives of A.N.W. Pugin to goad and guide them. In 1796 Johnston confronted some of the great buildings of medieval Britain. Apart from what he had learnt from Cooley and Robinson he was also armed with ideas derived from the foremost patron of antiquarian and Gothic revival work in Ireland, William Burton Conyngham, and he was not without some independently acquired knowledge of contemporary Gothic scholarship.

Books and patrons: 1794–1796

The surviving catalogue of the part of Johnston's architectural library that was sold in 1843 has its obvious limitations: it is incomplete, and there is no record of when Johnston acquired his books.[46] The older antiquarian books in particular may have been bought once Johnston was an established architect and a significant collector of medieval and renaissance art and artefacts.[47] Johnston owned the mid-seventeenth-century book by Daniel King, *Cathedral and conventuall churches of England and Wales*, which reissued plates made for William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*.[48]

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[45] Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, pp 237–8. The church was designed by Hugh Darley in 1748. The mixing of classical and Gothic details was a feature of Georgian Gothic, criticised by Walpole as 'that bastard breed' (Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain*, p. 296). Johnston tended not to mix styles, though it is evident in his design for the tower at St Andrew's Church, Dublin, 1800–07.

[46] Johnston's Library catalogue.

[47] *Catalogue of the inimitable and vast assemblage of paintings, bronzes, china, statuary, and other valuable works of art, the property of the late Francis Johnston, Esq. architect,* John Litterdale, 24 Mar.–15 Apr. 1845, Dublin.

[48] Daniel King, *The cathedrall and conventuall churches of England and Wales* (London, 1656). Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum.*

As a young man he more than likely had access to Armagh Public Library where there were many early to mid-eighteenth-century antiquarian publications: John Dart's history of St Peter's Westminster, Francis Drake's history of York Minster, an account of the city of Winchester by an unnamed author and Thomas Wright's 1748 edition of *Louthiana*.[49] Essentially document based histories, these books relegated architecture to small sections of spare description. But some contained useful plates. The second volume of *Louthiana* contained engravings of perspectives and plans of castles and tower houses. Daniel King's illustrations lacked convincing detail, but they could inspire interest and a desire to see the great buildings that looked in his engravings like carefully crafted three-dimensional models. (fig 2.14)

Antiquarians who admired Gothic such as James Bentham, Richard Gough and John Carter demonstrated that close scrutiny of details revealed stylistic developments based on rich vocabularies of design. They postulated more accurate taxonomies, and Carter produced accurate drawings at large scales. (fig 2.15) However, this activity was largely the preserve of a small group of English antiquarians. Francis Johnston, an Irish architect, was not a member of the London Society of Antiquaries of which Gough was the director and not in receipt of its publications *Archaeologia* and *Vetusta Monumenta,* though he may have read volumes in Armagh Public Library.[50] He appears not to have possessed any of the cathedral series volumes illustrated by Carter, though after 1808 he probably had access to them in the Royal Dublin Society.[51] There is a higher chance, especially as a young man, that he had read Sir William Chambers's (1723–1796) defence of Gothic, either in the introduction to the third edition of Chambers's *Civil architecture* or in Joseph Halfpenny's book *Gothic Ornaments in the Cathedral Church of York* where it was reproduced verbatim and which Johnston owned.[52]

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[49] Dart, *Westmonasterium*; Francis Drake, *Eboracum; or, the history and antiquities of... York* (London, 1736); *The history and antiquities of Winchester* (Winchester, 1723); Thomas Wright, *Louthiana, or, an introduction to the antiquities of Ireland*, 3 vols (London, 1748). Listed in Armagh Public Library, P001498092, 'Catalogue of books in Armagh Public Library', William Lodge, 1780.

[50] There were 12 volumes of *Archaeologia* in Armagh Public library (Armagh Public Library, P001498092, 'Catalogue of books in Armagh Public Library', William Lodge, 1780).

[51] Johnston would be admitted as a member of RDS on 8 Dec. 1808 (*Proceedings of the RDS*, vol 44–5, p. 27) after which he would have had access to the library. It is likely that the volumes from the cathedral series – St Stephen's Chapel, Bath Abbey, Durham Cathedral, Exeter Cathedral, Gloucester Cathedral and St Alban's Abbey – which went to NLI in 1888 originated in the RDS library where he may have seen them, (communication from Gráinne MacLochlainn, Printed Books Dept, NLI).

[52] Chambers's comments on Gothic were published in the 3rd edition (Chambers, *Civil architecture*, 1791), and reproduced in the introduction to Joseph Halfpenny, *Gothic ornaments in the cathedral church of York* (York, 1795–1800). The introduction to Halfpenny's book, which was published in twenty parts

'To those usually called Gothick architects we are indebted for the first considerable improvements in construction; there is a lightness in their works, an art and boldness of execution; to which the ancients never arrived: and which the moderns comprehend and imitate with difficulty. England contains many magnificent examples of this species of architecture, equally admirable for the art with which they are built, the taste and ingenuity with which they are composed.

'One cannot refrain from wishing, that the Gothick structures were more considered; better understood; and in higher estimation; than they hitherto seem to have been. Would our dilettanti … encourage persons duly qualified to undertake a correct elegant publication of our cathedrals, and other buildings called Gothick, before they totally fall to ruin'.[53]

Chambers's appreciation of the attributes of Gothic and his call for measured drawings came over thirty years after similar statements by Bentham and Gough, but they were made by an architect of the highest standing and spoke directly to architects and architectural draftsmen. Halfpenny's use of Chambers in *Gothic Ornaments in the Cathedral Church of York* reveals much about the sub-antiquarian world of the 1790s. Halfpenny, a topographical engraver and watercolour painter, was also clerk of works under the architect John Carr during the restoration of York Minster in the early 1790s. Responsible for stone repair, scaffolding had given him close views of inaccessible carvings such as roof bosses, and he had made drawings of them, which were later engraved and published in twenty parts from 1795–1800.[54] His quotation of Chambers's sentiments was obviously intended to add architectural gravitas to a publication which did indeed, as Chambers requested, present measured medieval architectural details. But the book was no antiquarian milestone although it claimed to add to existing scholarship.[55] The bosses, capitals, finials, figures and canopies were presented without

to subscribers over five years, is dated 2 March 1795. Johnston referred to Chambers's *Civil architecture* in his Tour diary: 'There are some other handsome buildings by Sir Wm Chambers viz the casino etc which see in his Civil Architecture' (Johnston's Tour diary, f. 9r). Halfpenny is in Johnston's Library catalogue.

[53] Chambers, *Civil architecture*, p. 24.

[54] Bertha Porter, revising William Joseph Sheils, 'Joseph Halfpenny', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 6 June, 2014. Halfpenny, *York*.

[55] He claimed was he was adding to the work of Bentham and the architect James Murphy in formulating an understanding of medieval architecture, (Halfpenny, *York*, introduction).

a visual context, and Halfpenny did not date his details or categorise them stylistically. It was instead most useful as a pattern book for contemporary architects working in a Gothic idiom. (fig 2.16)

This sub-antiquarian world was Johnston's; accessible to him and congenial. Halfpenny could be acquired piecemeal from 1795 to 1800 as the prints were issued. The book paid lip service to contemporary antiquarian thinking. And it provided graphic design models. He would use it after 1807 when he was designing the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle. He also possessed, and used, *Specimens of Gothic ornaments selected from the parish church of Lavenham in Suffolk*, published in 1796, another book of rendered details. In this one there were extrapolated line drawings of window mouldings on elevational details; a feature which would have appealed to architects looking for convincing medieval profiles.[56] (fig 2.17)

These were two of three significant books published in the mid 1790s that were not commissioned by the London Society of Antiquaries.[57] The third was James Cavanah Murphy's (1760–1814) *Plans, elevations, sections, and views of the church of Batalha* published in 1795.[58] (fig 2.18) An expensive book, it was not in the surviving portion of Johnston's library catalogue, but there is evidence that he used details in his designs for Charleville Castle. It is most likely that he was shown the book by Murphy's patron, William Burton Conyngham of Slane Castle, for Johnston worked at Slane from 1794 until Conyngham's death in 1796.[59] Murphy's *Batalha*, partly influenced by the agenda of the London Society of Antiquaries under Richard Gough, was the first volume to contain engravings of Gothic architecture that were the equivalent in terms of detail and accuracy to the engravings in volumes illustrating classical antiquities earlier in the eighteenth century.[60] Despite his admiration for the late medieval Portuguese monastery, Murphy, who had a close working knowledge of French classical theorists

[56] Anon, *Specimens of Gothic ornaments selected from the parish church of Lavenham in Suffolk* (London, 1796).
[57] Frew, 'An aspect of the Gothic revival', 50 and Simon Bradley, '"The Gothic revival"' and the Church of England 1790–1840', (PhD, Courtauld Institute, 1996), p. 375.
[58] Plates were issued to subscribers from 1792.
[59] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', p. 2. Work by Johnston in Slane include the Gothic gate and the completion of the hall, staircase and entrance in the castle. Murphy's *Batalha* was dedicated to Burton Conyngham.
[60] It was promoted as such by Gough in the introduction to the second volume of *Sepulchral monuments* (Michael McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church: the drawings of James C. Murphy for his book on Batalha of 1795', *IADS*, 11 (2008), 169).

such as Félibien, argued in the introduction that the best Gothic realised classical architectural standards such as sparseness of ornament and structural lucidity.[61] Murphy's book might have appealed to Johnston for a number of reasons; Conyngham's recommendation; Johnston may have known Murphy, an Irish architect who had worked with Gandon; the impressive quality of Murphy's sections and elevations and large-scale details; Murphy's description of Batalha as the best example of Gothic architecture; Murphy's classical bias. Johnston would have encountered this book at the time when he was maturing as a classicist, for while he was working for Conyngham he was also employed by Blayney Townley Balfour and his wife Lady Florence Cole to design and build Townley Hall, his neoclassical masterpiece.[62]

Murphy subscribed to the popular view that to be in a great medieval cathedral was to experience the sublime: 'No other mode of building is so well calculated to excite sublime and awful sensations; and if we admire heathen temples of ancient Greece and Rome, because they awaken these emotions in us, we must surely esteem these Christian temples, as they certainly produce that effect in a superior degree'.[63] Johnston may have been introduced to this idea by John Soane (1753–1837) who wrote in 1788 of the emotional appeal of Gothic in *Plans, elevations, and sections of buildings*, a book that was listed in Johnston's catalogue:

'By Gothic architecture I do not mean those barbarous jumbles of undefined forms in modern imitations of Gothic architecture: but the light elegant examples in many of our cathedrals, churches, and other public buildings, which are so well calculated to excite solemn, serious, and contemplative ideas, that it is almost impossible to enter such edifices without feeling the deepest awe and reverence.'[64]

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[61] Murphy, *Batalha,* p. ii. For discussion of the drawings see McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church', 172–203. For a review of the classical influences in Murphy's introductory text see J.D.C. Masheck, 'Irish Gothic theory before Pugin', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 70:278–279 (Summer–Autumn, 1981), 206–219.
[62] 'This house is Francis Johnston's master work, a building where his preference for minimalism and understatement is celebrated both in the precision of the detail and in the absolute accomplishment of the craftsmanship which brought it into being. In many ways Townley Hall is the perfect neoclassical house: ideal in conception; severe in execution; lucid and uncluttered in its interior spaces', Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, p. 3. The house was finished in *c.*1798.
[63] Murphy, *Batalha*, p. 1.
[64] John Soane, *Plans, elevations and sections of buildings* (London, 1788), p. 9.

In this book Soane also argued that Gothic had an intellectual basis and that it was an essentially geometric art. 'King's College Chapel at Cambridge, is a glorious example of the wondrous perfection of Gothic architecture; there is a boldness and mathematical knowledge peculiar to this edifice, which … reminds us of the high opinion the ancients had of geometry.'[65]

Apart from quite possibly giving Johnston access to his library, William Burton Conyngham probably stimulated Johnston's interest in Gothic architecture in other ways, revealing his interest in Irish and Iberian medieval architecture and his feeling for the picturesque. An antiquarian who had travelled to Spain and Portugal in 1783, he had become a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1790, and knew the leading figures in the English antiquarian world such as Richard Gough who published his second volume of *Sepulchral monuments* in 1796, the year of Johnson's tour.[66] Burton Conyngham was the prime mover in the establishing of antiquarian societies in Ireland, and a patron of the Gothic revival, commissioning James Wyatt in 1785–6 to redesign Slane as a modern castle.[67] He also employed a number of artists in 1779 and 1780 to record Irish medieval architecture to supplement his existing drawing collection, which was known and appreciated in England as a valuable body of material, and regarded as comprehensive with regards to Irish, Portuguese and Spanish antiquities.[68] Together, the drawings of Irish buildings would form a volume, published from 1791–96 as *Antiquities of Ireland*, to complement Francis Grose's book on England and Wales.[69] Where *Batalha* was part of an empirical pioneering impulse to register the magnificence of Gothic architecture, the Irish drawings were a contribution to a more established topographical genre that was flourishing under the influence of picturesque sensibility, though they were also of interest to men like Richard Gough.[70] Buildings in such images tended to be depicted in a pictorial manner as three-dimensional objects in a

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[65] Ibid., p. 9. This was in Johnston's library catalogue.

[66] For discussion of William Burton Conyngham's connections with English antiquaries see Michael McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church',166–172.

[67] Conyingham's most successful venture was the Royal Irish Academy for which he was a founder member in 1785 (Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham*, pp 9–17). For building history of Slane see Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle, Co. Meath–I, II, III, *Country Life* (July 17, 24, 31 1980), 198–201, 278–81, 382–5. For summary of Slane see Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster,* pp 478–83.

[68] Tribute in *European Magazine*, 1794 quoted in McCarthy, 'Three mausolea and a church', 168. For assessment of Burton Conyngham's collection see Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham*, pp 39–55.

[69] Grose, *Antiquities of Ireland*, ed. Edward Ledwich, 2 vols (London, 1794–6 with 1791 on the title page). Conyngham had tried to get the drawings engraved in London in 1779–1783. Grose died in 1791 and the Irish volumes were edited by Edward Ledwich.

[70] Gough's interest in the drawings is discussed in Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham,* p. 14.

landscape, often dramatically lit and accessorised with people. Visual antiquarian information could suffer as a consequence; the buildings, often shown in the distance, lacked detail, and might be distorted for aesthetic affect. However, although many of the drawings commissioned by William Burton Conyngham and the engravings made from them, fall into this category – for example, John James Barralet's romantically side-lit view of the ruined interior of St Mary's church in Wexford – many also revealed an interest in architectural features.[71] (fig 2.19) Angelo Maria Bigari produced carefully observed and extremely detailed perspectives of ruined abbey churches that show the moulding details of the arches and the construction of surviving arcades and tower. (fig 2.20) This, and others like it, were engraved for the published volume, although Gabriel Beranger's plans and elevation of the drum-columns in St Mary's Church, Wexford, with their moulded base and foliate capitals in plan and elevation, were not engraved.[72] (fig 2.21)

If, as seems likely, Conyngham showed Johnston his collection of drawings, engravings and the published book it would have supplemented whatever knowledge Johnston had already gained of Irish architecture. Towards the end of his life in 1828 Johnston told the artist Thomas J. Mulvany that reading descriptions of Irish medieval architecture in Thomas Bell's manuscript for a book on Gothic architecture had revived for him buildings that he had not seen in years, suggesting an early enthusiasm for Irish medieval architecture.[73]

It is not known whether Johnston owned books that concerned themselves with the picturesque for they were usually categorised as topographical books in library catalogues and the record of the sale catalogue of Johnston's library deals only with his

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[71] For Barralet's drawing and the Grose engraving see Peter Harbison, 'Barralet and Beranger's antiquarian sketching tour through Wicklow and Wexford in the autumn of 1780', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 104c:6 (2004), figs 10–11. The drawings were of sufficient standard to interest Richard Gough who seems to have referred to them when he was updating Camden's *Britannia* (Harbision, *William Burton Conyngham*, p. 14).

[72] For Bigari's work see Tristernagh Abbey Co. Westmeath (Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham*, p. 190 and fig 49). For Berenger's drawing of St Mary's columns see Harbison, 'Barralet and Beranger's antiquarian sketching tour through Wicklow and Wexford', fig 12. Correspondence reveals that the artists were not acquainted with up to date antiquarian terminology, but they observed details (NLI, 'Correspondence and notes of G. Beranger, Edward Ledwich, Charles Vallancey, Charles O'Conor and other, relating to Irish antiquities 1779–92', MS 1415).

[73] NLI, 'Manuscript correspondence, notes, observations … on various occasions by Thomas Bell', 1847, Joly 14, Mulvany to Bell, 25 Feb. 1828. Thomas Bell, *An essay on the origin and progress of Gothic architecture* (Dublin, 1829).

architectural books.[74] We do know that Burton Conyngham gave him the design challenge of creating picturesque garden Gothic. In *c*.1795 Johnston constructed a battlemented and towered gateway with flanking screen walls terminating in turrets adjacent to the River Boyne at the south-east entrance to Slane.[75] (fig 2.22) Formally symmetrical, the gate itself owed much to classical ideas of grandeur. But Johnston's response to the sloping ground with an irregular, stepped screen wall and unmatched end turrets, and his discreet echo of the late fourteenth-century bridge crossing the river with his use of roughly coursed squared rubble limestone, reveals a picturesque sensibility. His detailing was inventive and owed little to pattern books, particularly the zig-zag voussoir terminations which broadly referenced Romanesque chevrons.[76] (fig 2.23) Although it could never be mistaken for a medieval structure, the gateway had conviction derived from the stone work and the strongly geometric character of the quartrefoils, loopholes and corbels. This can be compared with the stage-set effect of garden Gothic that used more elaborate pattern book motifs, such as those employed by Lancelot Brown for the façade of the stable at Slane built *c*.1770.[77](fig 2.24) Johnston's feeling for the castellar picturesque would have been stimulated by James Wyatt's work on the castle itself which, although rigidly symmetrical, had a dramatic silhouette derived from substantial corner towers, a vast semi-circular tower to the south, battlements and turrets.[78] (fig 2.25)

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[74] Johnston collected a few paintings with sublime and picturesque themes. Examples include two mountain landscapes by Salvator Rosa, a Gaspar Poussin landscape, a Claude Joseph Vernet landscape, two landscape with figures and buildings by Richard Wilson, an eighteenth-century painter of British and Italian landscapes whose style was influenced by Claude Lorrain and several William Ashford landscapes ('Catalogue of the … property of the late Francis Johnston, Esq. architect', cat. nos 113, 153, 151, 194, 73, 307, 66, 112, 225, 293). The catalogue listed a total of 454 paintings.

[75] 'Slane Castle', *DIA*, 1720–1949, IAA [online] www.dia.ie accessed 3 Mar. 2012.

[76] Observation from Roger Stalley.

[77] Drawing in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection 92/46.1132. This may have been influenced by Batty Langley (Langley, *Ancient architecture restored*, plates XLIX for ogee arch supported by clustered piers; plate XXXIII for quartrefoil in a circle; plate LVII for triangular openings). Johnston possessed Langley's book., N. Wallis's *The carpenter's treasure* (London, 1773), a series of sixteen plates of elaborate designs invented by Wallis for temples, railings and bridges mainly in the Gothic style. We have no evidence Johnston ever used this book. The wilder end of garden Gothic could segue into fantastical naturalist forms for huts, grottos, hermitages. Johnston had the authority on these, William Wrighte, *Grotesque architecture, Or Rural Amusement* (London, 1767), another book he seems not to have consulted in practice.

[78] Wyatt's reliance on massing and silhouette echoed Adam's approach to Gothic, which in turn echoed Vanbrugh.

Tour in Wales and England: spring 1796

Johnston was 36 when he landed at Holyhead in the early hours of 25 March 1796 for a tour of Wales and England of which three weeks is recorded in a surviving diary.[79] His route, travelling by coach, took him through North Wales to Shrewsbury, then south to Portsmouth, passing through Coalbrookdale, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Gloucester, Bath, Bristol, Salisbury, and Southampton, where he turned north east for London. It was an architect's journey in which he made detours to visit country mansions – many of which were familiar to him from *Vitruvius Britannicus* and Chambers's *Civil architecture* – great medieval castles and cathedrals.[80] He had planned to visit more modest buildings, and was clearly interested in most aspects of the man-made landscape – roadside houses, inns, bridges, towns, farmland, industrial activity – the natural landscape, and – a reminder that this was the period of the French revolutionary wars – soldiers and ships. The diary charts the journey, giving dates, the distance travelled, the place arrived at. Johnston recorded what he saw and did, and often gave his response or an opinion in short concise sentences. He referred to books he had read and occasionally provided factual information. He began by sketching buildings that attracted him, using a ruler, but after page 4 he stopped (with the exception of a sketch of a brick kiln), probably because he lacked the time. The impression is that the diary was written up at the end of each day and that it was for his personal use, an architect's aide-mémoire. It suggests that, armed with expectations about British buildings, Johnston wanted to see for himself, acquire additional information and make his own judgments.[81] But the diary also reveals his surprise and delight. Encountering the great and solidly built Caenarvon Castle, the many timber-framed houses of Tewkesbury, the frenetic busyness of Bristol, wild, flat Salisbury Plain and the soaring spire of Salisbury Cathedral Johnston remarked in his journal, each time, that he had seen nothing like it before; 'the cathedral', he wrote of Gloucester, 'far surpasses anything I have yet seen, and indeed my expectation'.[82] This was his Grand Tour, his first encounter, quite likely, with the world beyond Ireland.

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[79] Johnston's Tour diary. It is not clear from the diary that his tour ended in London.

[80] References to *Vitruvius Britannicus* and Chamber's *Civil architecture* were made in his diary.

[81] He acquired a plan of Gloucester cathedral, maps and guides of Bath, a guide to Wilton House and eight volumes of a dictionary of arts and sciences.

[82] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 6v.

Johnston did not travel through North Wales as a picturesque tourist, though he was not oblivious to the picturesqueness of a landscape that was already discussed in these terms. Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn of Wynnstay near Oswestry had sponsored the first picturesque tour of North Wales in 1776, and the area had been made more widely known in Paul Sandby's *XII Views in North Wales* published the same year.[83] Picturesque tourists, followed in their footsteps to see for themselves the views depicted in these books of rugged landscapes that bordered the sublime. Ruins, such as the royal thirteenth-century castles of Wales, were integral to the experience.[84] Johnston, however, took the most direct route from Conway to Llanwrst on the main road, travelling at night. He left Llanwrst early in the morning, commenting on the beauty of the mountains and rocks, and he saw Corwen against a high background of rocks which he described as picturesque.

But Wales, for Johnston, was not entirely a place to pass through. Before he embarked on his eastward coach journey Johnston had three places to visit – the Penrhyn estate, Caernarfon Castle and the castle and estate at Beaumaris on Anglesea – where he would see two medieval castles and several Gothic revival buildings commissioned by Lord Penrhyn and 7th Viscount Bulkeley. The comments and drawings in Johnston's journal reveal that his main interest was in the recent work of Samuel and Benjamin Wyatt, and his encounters with the medieval castles should be seen in this context. But he may have been attracted to Caernarfon Castle – which he made a nine-mile detour to see – because of its reputation, for it was the most popular castle for picturesque tourists.[85]

Johnston's interest in the work of the Wyatts suggests that he had a personal connection with the family, for the buildings he saw were modest structures, similar to those he had been designing for Archbishop Robinson in the 1790s. No evidence has yet come to light to indicate whether Johnston did know the Wyatt brothers: Samuel Wyatt (1737–1807), a carpenter and architect who had worked with his brother, James Wyatt (1746–

[83] See Andrews, *The search for the picturesque* for discussion of tours in North Wales.
[84] A dedicated picturesque tourist such as the architect Robert Smirke (twenty years younger than Johnston) who went to Wales in the autumn 1801, might climb the high passes between Llanwrst, Capel Curig and Llanberis rather than following the valley to Caenarvon, and sketch the scenes he saw. Smirke described Conway Castle to his sister Mary in terms of images; 'As much as I have yet seen of the castle I like your view best' (RIBA Drawings and Archives Collections, Smirke Family Papers, SMK 5, letter from Robert Smirke to Mary Smirke, 2 Oct. 1801).
[85] Andrews, *The search for the picturesque*, p. 132. Once he left Wales Johnston made no journeys to equally significant English castles such as Ludlow or Warwick.

1813) on the Pantheon in London, Benjamin Wyatt (1745–1818) who was the agent of Lord Penrhyn, and Lewis Wyatt (1777–1853), Benjamin's son, who was apprenticed to his uncle Samuel.[86] Both Francis Johnston and his brother, Richard worked on buildings that James Wyatt was involved with. Richard Johnston was commissioned to design Castle Coole, Co. Fermanagh a year before James Wyatt's involvement, while Francis Johnston, as has been noted, worked on Slane after James Wyatt's departure.[87] Johnston may have been introduced to Wyatt by Archbishop Robinson who commissioned Wyatt in Oxford. A very strong indication that Johnston had personal access to the Wyatts is suggested by the fact that he visited Wilton House on this tour knowing that James Wyatt had been commissioned to make 'a large addition to the house on that side where the Chapel is' although Wyatt was still developing his design at the end of 1800 and work would not begin until 1801.[88] Johnston's interest in the English architect's work is revealed by his probable acquisition of drawings by Wyatt, for Johnston's collection of drawings, which forms the nucleus of the Murray Collection, also contains working drawings and sketches by Wyatt.[89] The drawings of Slane may have been acquired from Thomas Penrose, Wyatt's executant architect for Slane, at the time in *c.*1795 when Johnston made his own contribution to the castle.[90] Wyatt's drawings for Slane had some influence on Johnston; notably the unexecuted bartizans which Johnston used for the rear towers at Charleville.[91]

Johnston was alive to the contemporary spirit of Samuel and Benjamin Wyatts' work in North Wales. Lord Penrhyn had made a fortune developing his slate quarries and Johnston visited two of them, obtaining price lists and observing work practices.[92] He saw Samuel Wyatt's use of patented slate on the exterior of the stable block at Penrhyn Hall and he visited and sketched the classical, compact, cleverly designed farm and estate buildings designed by Samuel and Benjamin at Penrhyn.[93] He looked critically at

[86] Colvin, *Biographical dictionary*, pp 1103–4, 1107–28.
[87] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp103–4, 119–24.
[88] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 9r. Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Wilton House Archive, 2057/F7/3/1, letter from Lord Carnarvon to Lord Pembroke, 14 Jan. 1801. Robinson, *James Wyatt* , pp 238, 349.
[89] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection. Schemes by Wyatt include Slane Castle, Co. Meath, Dartry Mausoleum, Co. Monaghan, Carton House, Co. Kildare.
[90] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.1105–1130, designs for Slane Castle by James Wyatt, 1785–6.
[91] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.1026, Plan and elevation of a bartizan.
[92] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 1v.
[93] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 2r. Johnston had built in a similar manner on a more modest scale in 1786, 1792–3 at Marlay Farm on Richard Robinson's estate, Rokeby and at Clonmore (Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, p. 467; IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.951, plan and elevation, 'Design of a farm house

Samuel Wyatt's 1782 work at Penrhyn Castle that Catherine Maria Bury painted.[94] (figs 2.26, 1.2)

A house with mountains for a backdrop and a view of the sea, Penrhyn Hall had until recently consisted of a slim tower of possibly recent date and a fourteenth-century hall with low eaves flanked by irregular three-storey wings.[95] Wyatt had added rooms to the east which were given a classical façade, and remodelled the west elevation in a Gothic style, adding battlements, a false tower to balance the existing, re-fenestrating with pointed arch windows, and designing a crocketed arched entrance loosely taken from Batty Langley. He had turned a rambling medieval house into a symmetrical pattern book-derived idea of a Gothic castle. Johnston, who appreciated Penrhyn, which he had seen earlier that morning from Pen y Bryn as he had looked across the Menai Straits to Anglesea, as an 'old castle' set in a wide and dramatic landscape, was disappointed with the new entrance front; 'The front is dressed up with towers battlements Gothick door etc but not in that substantial style which the situation & character of the building requires.'[96]

To criticise a castle for not being robust enough for its wild setting implies a picturesque sensibility. But, where picturesque tourists tended to yearn for the irregularity and pathos of ruins (Caernarfon Castle, at the other end of the Menai Straits, was criticised for being too well preserved), Johnston was looking for heft and bulk in his romantic setting.[97] He was impressed by the scale, workmanship and strength of the nearby medieval castles. 'This castle', he wrote of Caernarfon, 'both in design &

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and offices to be built by His Grace the Lord Primate at Marlay,' signed Frans Johnston, 1786; Armagh County Museum, ARMCM.T311.9, mounted photocopies of architectural drawings by FJ' which include farmhouses in Clonmore and Marlay dated April 1792 and May 1793). The layout of this farm was very similar to that of the inn at Caernarfon which Johnston sketched (Johnston's Tour diary, f. 4r). Lewis Wyatt exhibited drawings of estate buildings at the Royal Academy in 1797, subsequently published on separate sheets in 1800 and 1801 (Lewis William Wyatt, *A collection of architectural designs, rural and ornamental, executed in a variety of buildings, upon the estates of the Right Hon. Lord Penrhyn, in Carnarvonshire and Cheshire* (London, 1800–1801)). Samuel Wyatt would gain a reputation as a designer of model farm buildings. There was a copy of Lewis Wyatt's book in Johnston's library.

[94] Douglas B. Hague, 'Penrhyn Castle, Caernarvon–I', *Country Life* (14 July, 1955), 80–3. The house would be remodelled by Thomas Hopper in 1822–37.

[95] Ibid., 80–3.

[96] Johnston's Tour diary, ff 1r, 2r.

[97] In 1797 a traveller would write that Caernarfon Castle failed to 'produce those lively emotions in the mind … from its wanting the fine circumstance of a mantle of ivy to relieve and soften down that broad face of stone which the extensive ruin presents to the eye' (quoted in Andrews, *In search of the picturesque,* p. 132).

execution surprised me much as I had not before seen anything of the kind so great & so masterly executed.'[98] For him the vast expanses of undecorated, undamaged walls and polygonal towers were an architectural joy, speaking of feats of design and construction that were not to be seen in modern buildings. His response was similar at Beaumaris Castle, where he appreciated the strength of the structure seen from a distance – 'The castle is very extensive – & has been very strong having a Counter Wall & town all round it' – and admired the workmanship of the chapel ceiling; 'the groining of [the chapel] is very perfect & well executed'.[99] He rejoiced in the way such castles related directly to their setting, summarising the impression made by Caernarfon in a few simple words; 'The castle is a noble old building, stands boldly on the beach'.[100]

The contemporary writer who came closest to Johnston's way of thinking about castles was Edward King, an antiquarian, who valued military architecture as an expression of its function.[101] He set out to measure and describe British castles, to define their stylistic changes and to discover their builders' intentions. He was critical of the fact that castles were largely appreciated as picturesque objects in the landscape. Instead, he stressed that they were built to afford '*Necessary protection,* against barbarous violence, and oppression'. The result: 'They have … frequently … a rude sublimity of thought and design manifested in their Architecture'.[102] This focus on the strength of castles was to regard them as a building type rather than as a pictorial accent within landscape.

But, although Johnston's criticism of Wyatt's work at Penrhyn Hall seems to point to an appreciation of the character of a particular building type, his phrase, 'which the situation & character of the building requires', is also seamed with associationist thinking. He was discussing a house not a functioning castle and it must, he was implicitly arguing, suggest the right ideas. Humphry Repton (1752–1818), whose career as a landscape gardener was well established by the mid-1790s and who would

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[98] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 2v. '… anything of the kind' had been added later above the line, which emphasises Johnston's revelation about the castle; it was castles in particular that he had not known to be so strong. The well travelled Lord Lyttleton was also impressed by medieval Welsh castles writing in 1755 that Conway Castle had 'the grandest appearance of any building he had ever seen' (Andrews, *In search of the picturesque*, p. 124).

[99] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 4v. There was a vaulted space under the chapel, (Grose, *Antiquities of England and Wales,* 7, p. 2).

[100] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 2v.

[101] King, *Munimenta antiqua*. This book is not listed in Johnston's library catalogue.

[102] Ibid., p. xv.

advertise his practical ideas, so well attuned to his clients' desires, in a series of publications, would echo Johnston's prescription in a book published in 1803, acquired by Johnston.[103] When discussing garden buildings Repton sent a clear message that the design should reflect the chosen 'character, situation, or uses.'[104] A house designed as a castle should look strong. An appropriate character was important because this was the means by which it could convey the desired messages. In Warwick Castle, he wrote 'and in other great mansions of the same character, the proud baronial retreat "of the times of old," has been adapted to the purposes of modern habitation. Let us preserve the massive strength and durability of the castle, and discard the gloom which former tyranny and cruelty inspired'.[105] Appropriateness was to be skin deep; after all the new building was not really a castle.

As neither King nor Repton had published the books referred to here in 1796, Johnston could not have been influenced by them. A common source for the ideas of all three about appropriate character in architecture may well have derived from contemporary architectural theory as disseminated by Soane and Chambers. John Soane in *Plans, elevations and sections* had written that ornaments should be appropriate: 'simple, applicable and characteristic of their situations', and 'as tend to shew the destination of the edifice, as assist in determining its character, and for the choice of which the architect can assign satisfactory reasons'.[106] Chambers made a similar point in his *Treatise.* The idea derived from French theory: Soane had been influenced by Laugier, and Chambers by Claude Perrault.[107] The notion of appropriate form implies the existence of a variety of styles and a reason for choosing one rather than another. The idea derived from the classical tradition where the five orders of architecture were each regarded as having an individual style, which, through the association of ideas, expressed a particular character.[108] In the early eighteenth century this notion was extended to other, newly fashionable styles such as Gothic and Chinese, used in garden

[103] Humphry Repton, *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* (London, 1803).
[104] Ibid., p. 150.
[105] Ibid., p. 207
[106] Soane, *Plans, elevations and sections,* p. 8.
[107] Claude Perrault, *Ordonnnance des cinq espèces de colonnes selon la méthode des anciens* (Paris, 1683). Johnston had a copy of the English translation published in London, 1722. David Watkin notes that Perrault (with Laugier) was among the few French theorists to be widely known in English architectural circles (David Watkin, *Sir John Soane: enlightenment thought and the Royal Academy lectures* (Cambridge, 1996)).
[108] For a good summary of the development of the idea of appropriate form during the eighteenth century see Crook, *The dilemma of style*, pp 15–24.

design. As Gothic became an increasingly popular choice for houses and churches, the tradition of canonical architecture was replaced by aesthetic relativism in mainstream architecture and the notion of appropriateness was applied to widely different architectural styles.

To appreciate the architectural and scenic qualities of these castles as Johnston did was to view them as artifacts in the contemporary world, solid and striking in their context. This perspective is evident too in Johnston's observation – unmediated by concerns about whether it was appropriate – of the use to which Beaumaris had been put: 'This castle is now the property of Lord Bulkeley & is kept in good order. A porter attends to [word illegible] it. In the middle is a good bowling green & tennis court'.[109] Johnston applied the same uncritical approval to modern interiors and fashionable furniture that had been added to existing houses. Samuel Wyatt had remodelled Baron Hill, Viscount Bulkeley's residence, in 1776–9, converting an early seventeenth-century house into a Palladian mansion with a porticoed entrance and flanking pavilions.[110] Inside, Johnston approved the size of the rooms, the handsome bowed dining room at the rear, the well-thought out arrangement of the servants' quarters.[111] At Penrhyn he appreciated Wyatt's interior – 'There are some excellent modern apartments in it … & very fashionably furnished'.[112]

The Welsh houses also gave Johnston examples of garden Gothic. At Baron Hill he admired a Gothic tea room for its geometric shape and picturesque situation: 'near the strand on a mount is a handsome octagon building in the castle stile fitted up for a Tea Room.'[113] At Penrhyn Hall he sketched an entrance; a gate flanked by two lodges.[114] (fig 2.27) A symmetrical building loosely based on a triumphal arch, it has a classical presence with simple Gothic detailing – battlements, pointed arches, Y-tracery to the lodge windows. It resembled Johnston's approach to his Slane commission and was perhaps sketched as a source for alternative ideas in a similar idiom.

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[109] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 4v. Grose states that it was crown property, (Grose, *Antiquities of England and Wales,* 7, p. 2).
[110] Colvin, *Biographical dictionary*, p. 1126.
[111] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 3v.
[112] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 2r.
[113] Ibid., ff 3v, 4v.
[114] Ibid., f. 3r. The gateway may have been designed by Samuel or Benjamin Wyatt. It was not in Lewis William Wyatt's book cited above.

Johnston visited four cathedrals in England: Worcester, Gloucester, Salisbury and Westminster Abbey.[115] He had almost nothing to say in his journal about Worcester – 'a very pretty Cathedral' – and Westminster Abbey – 'took a glance at the monuments' – both barely seen perhaps because of lack of time, but his descriptions of Gloucester and Salisbury, although brief, were illuminating.[116] Of Gloucester, he wrote,

'Gloucester … cathedral by far surpasses any thing I have yet seen, and indeed my expectation – The lightness & true proportion of the buttresses – the neatness of the belt course & elegance of the Gothic screen & pinnacles of the tower cannot be described – The inside is spacious & beautiful. The great window wonderful, 50 feet by upwards of 40. In short I cannot express my opinion of this church but I have a plan of it – '[117]

Of Salisbury,

'The Cathedral is a beautiful light gothick structure with a just uniformity of style in every part – The tower & spire for height lightness & elegance of execution I cannot describe. It much surpasses what I expected – but unfortunately the strength of the material and delicacy of the design were not well considered as there are some very serious fractures in the tower which tho' secured by the abilities of the Gt. Sir Christopher (in my opinion) still threaten the downfall of this incomparable edifice'.[118]

His admiration is unmistakable; nothing in his experience had prepared him for these buildings; he found them wonderously beautiful; they were (with the exception of Salisbury tower) a feat of building technology. There is also awe; he is lost for words to describe them. It is partly the rapture of an architect admiring cathedral Gothic; the design of the buttresses at Gloucester; the exterior of the tower at Salisbury. But there is something too of a response to the sublime qualities that contemporaries admired; the soaring height of Salisbury's tower and spire; the vast extent of the east window in Gloucester; and the ecstatic feeling that words were inadequate.

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[115] He visited Bath and Bristol and may have seen Bath Abbey and Bristol Cathedral, though neither are mentioned in his journal.
[116] Johnston's Tour diary, ff 6r, 11v.
[117] Ibid., f. 6v.
[118] Ibid., ff 9r–9v.

Johnston's reading had not equipped him to comment on the variety of Gothic styles displayed in these cathedrals; he did not even draw attention to the fact that the choir screen in Gloucester had been designed by William Kent in 1741.[119] He acquired a plan of Gloucester, but this is unlikely to have drawn his attention to the details of the structure. Carter's analytical survey of Gloucester would not be published until 1807. Johnston's plan may have come from the second volume of Browne Willis's survey of cathedrals published in 1742.[120] Typical of its period, the plan was drawn at a small scale so that the profiles of the columns were indistinct, and there were few details; the window joinery was omitted and there were no reflected ceiling plans. The text relied entirely on documentary sources, and its interest in the architecture was largely confined to dimensions of major physical elements and the tombs.

Johnston's brief account of Salisbury and Gloucester echoes that strand of late eighteenth-century thinking which regarded the application of rules and mathematical knowledge to be intrinsic to Gothic architecture. Johnston commented on the 'true proportion' of the Gloucester buttresses, and the 'elegance' – suggesting the harmonious assembling of parts – of (Kent's) screen and the pinnacles of the tower at Gloucester; for him, the tower and spire at Salisbury demonstrated 'elegance of execution'. Drawing attention to the pronounced vertical and horizontal elements of Gloucester – the thrusting buttresses and pinnacles and the 'neatness of the belt course' (which probably referred to the string courses that encircle the tower) – Johnston showed himself aware of the geometric logic that underlay the balanced design.[121]

Like many of his contemporaries, he admired the consistency of Salisbury Cathedral.[122] This admiration derived from Francis Price, the surveyor of Salisbury, who had published a book on the cathedral in 1753 in which he had established it as an exemplar

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[119] The screen was illustrated in William Kent, *Some designs of Mr Inigo Jones and Mr Wm Kent, published by John Vardy* (London, 1744) plate 49, which is not listed in Johnston's library catalogue. The screen was removed in 1820.

[120] Browne Willis, *A survey of the cathedrals of York, Durham, Carlisle, Chester, Man, Litchfield, Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester, Bristol, Lincoln...*, 3 vols (London, 1742), ii, p. 691.

[121] Suggestion about the belt course from Roger Stalley, who noted that apart from those on the tower the string courses at Gloucester are not prominent.

[122] Taylor (ed), *Essays on Gothic architecture*, p. 78. Johnston had a copy of this book. For comments on popular conceptions of Salisbury see Moir, *The discovery of Britain*, p. 55.

of medieval architecture.[123] James Bentham, who wrote in his study of Ely that Salisbury had been built in a single short timespan 'whence arise that uniformity, symmetry, and regular properties observable in all parts of it', further disseminated the idea.[124] It was one thing to establish that medieval architects were educated, rational and capable of following rules, but it was another to think of medieval architecture as regular and consistent. It postulated a theory about the nature of medieval ecclesiastical design that was an alternative to the conception that it was picturesque and asymmetrical.[125] It would influence restoration practice in the early nineteenth century in which later additions were demolished to reveal what was considered to be the original logic of the building.[126]

The word that jumps out in Johnston's comments on Gloucester and Salisbury as the most frequently repeated term of approval is 'lightness'. It was often used by his contemporaries – Chambers, Young, Murphy, Parsons; John Carter referred to Gothic as *the* 'light and elegant style' – but in such a variety of ways that it is difficult to decode what was meant.[127] It was the term used to distinguish Gothic from classical architecture, and to differentiate between heavy round-arched styles (Saxon and Norman) and later Gothic.[128] For the writer in the *Builder's Magazine* in 1774 'light' was associated with excessive ornamentation and was not a term of approval.[129] But for the architects and theorists such as Soane, and for Johnston, it was a term of affirmation.

The word could refer to the visual effect derived from the many composite elements of Gothic architecture which gave it its linear character. This was how John Milner used it in his 1806 *Treatise on ecclesiastical architecture* as he described the nave of York Minster, for him the quintessence of early fourteenth-century Gothic, the period he most admired. 'The massive columns, which principally sustain the stupendous pile, are so judiciously divided into clusters as to appear comparatively slender. The tallest shaft in

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[123] Francis Price, *A series of particular and useful observations, made with great diligence and care, upon that admirable structure, the cathedral church of Salisbury* (London, 1753).
[124] Bentham, *The history and antiquities of the cathedral church of Ely*, p. 38.
[125] Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', chapter 5, pp 339–429.
[126] James Essex's reconstruction of the Round Church, Cambridge and Wyatt's work in Litchfield and Salisbury are examples of restoration practice that aimed to recreate earlier logic.
[127] Quoted in Frew, 'Gothic is English', 318.
[128] In 1753 Horace Walpole, writing to Bentley, made this distinction for Gloucester Cathedral describing the exterior as 'beautifully light', and the round Norman columns of the nave as 'outrageously plump and heavy' (Lewis, *Horace Walpole's correspondence*, vol. 35, p. 153).
[129] Quoted in John Frew, 'James Bentham's *History of Ely Cathedral*', 291.

each of them, rising to about two-thirds of the perpendicular height of the lofty groins, is there crowned with a sculptured historic or hieroglyphic capital. From this springs three principal ribs, which diverge, at their respective knots, into other shorter ribs, after a simple but elegant design of tracery, so as to give the appearance at once of lightness, beauty, and height to the towering canopy which they support.'[130]

Others used 'light' to denote restraint. James Dallaway defined Gothic as it developed in France as a 'simpler, and consequently a lighter style' in *Observations on English architecture* published in 1806.[131] In his *Treatise* Milner described the 'second pointed order' in York as having 'chaste and appropriate decorations': 'Here every part is ornamented, and yet no ornaments appear redundant or crowded, none but what seem to have their use, and to be duly subordinate to the proper effects of the sacred fane, namely, awfulness and devotion.'[132] The connection between lightness and restraint in Gothic architecture had been made by the French classical theorist, Marc Antoine Laugier in his *Essai sur l'architecture* translated into English in 1755.[133] In this first significant reappraisal of the Renaissance attitude to the medieval, Laugier expressed an admiration for the lightness and economy of Gothic construction. He thought contemporary classical designers could learn from this, while he advocated that the restoration of medieval structures should involve a purging of unnecessary ornament to reveal the elegant structure and intelligent proportion systems.

But there were other uses of the word 'light' within a classical context. In the field of English domestic and public architecture in the late eighteenth century 'heaviness' – monumental, with few ornaments – was contrasted with the light, the decorated and elegant. In a debate about the relative treatment of exteriors and interiors, James Wyatt's view was expressed by his pupil William Porden in a satirical publication of 1779: 'In all the work of Mr. Wyatt the style of the Interior is totally different from the

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[130] John Milner, *A treatise on the ecclesiastical architecture of England during the middle ages* (London, 1806-11), p. xv. Johnson had a copy of this book (Johnston's Library catalogue).
[131] James Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture, military, ecclesiastical, and civil* (London, 1806), p. 10. Johnston possessed this book.
[132] Milner, *A treatise on ecclesiastical architecture*, p. xiv.
[133] Laugier's essay in relation to Gothic is discussed by John Frew (Frew, 'An aspect of the Gothic revival', 56). The French edition of 1752 Laugier's essay and the English translation of 1755 were both in William Burton Conyngham's library to which Johnston may have had access (NLI, *Catalogue of an extensive and valuable collection of books, antiques, books of prints, and manuscripts, being the family library of a gentleman of distinction (deceased) ... will be sold by auction*, Thomas Jones, 16 Apr. 1810, Dublin), lot nos 3714, 3717).

Exterior. On the outside he is simple, plain and bold; within light, fanciful and elegant.'[134] It is difficult to extract the exact resonance of Johnston's use of the word 'light', but it was undoubtedly part of the growing chorus of approval for the striking linearity and delicate filigree work of post-Norman Gothic styles designed by architects regarded as knowledgeable and discriminating.

Salisbury spire, so tall and visible from such a distance, magnetised visitors. Johnston was no different; 'The tower & spire for height lightness & elegance of execution I cannot describe. It much surpasses what I expected'.[135] But he also tapped into current architectural concerns about its structural strength. In a report on the fabric prior to renovations in 1668 written while surveyor of Salisbury Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren suggested that the spire had been constructed after the tower, the latter consequently strengthened with iron bands.[136] His successor, Francis Price, corroborated Wren's analysis, and alerted his contemporaries to the continuing stresses and their results: the splitting of the walls above the arches of the crossing point resulting in increased loads on the piers. He added iron bands to the spire and tower. In his book on the cathedral, *Observations upon the cathedral church of Salisbury,* published in 1753 and valued in the mid to late eighteenth century as one of the few authoritative accounts of medieval construction, he included large scale drawings representing his interventions.[137] The observations of both Wren and Price were further disseminated by William Dodsworth in his *Guide to the cathedral church of Salisbury* of 1792 who included accounts of James Wyatt's survey of 1787 and his subsequent controversial restoration work of 1788–1792 which, under the rubric of 'improvement', had involved the destruction and relocation of medieval fabric.[138]

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[134] Quoted in Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 53. William Porden was one of several writers who contributed to the work published under the pseudonym Roger Shanhagan, (Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 50–1).

[135] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 9r.

[136] The report was included in a book published by his son after Wren's death (Christopher Wren, *Parentalia; or, memoirs of the family of the Wrens* (London, 1750)).

[137] Price, *Observations upon the cathedral church of Salisbury*, plate 8. For discussion of Price's book see Frew, 'James Wyatt's choir screen at Salisbury Cathedral', 483. An enlarged edition of *Observations* was published in 1774. The book was based on empirical observations, and contained a series of plates of plans and sections through the nave – the plans indicate the profile of the piers and a reflected ceiling plan; the sections show the stonework of the interior and joinery of the roof – though drawn at a scale that is too small to show exactly how the building was constructed.

[138] William Dodsworth, *A guide to the cathedral church of Salisbury with a particular account of the late great improvements made therein, under the direction of James Wyatt Esq.* (Salisbury, 1792). This is discussed by Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style', p. 147. For Wyatt's restoration work in Salisbury see Robinson, *James Wyatt,* pp 225, 345.

Neither *Parentalia*, Price nor Dodsworth are listed in the surviving portion of Johnston's catalogue, although he did possess Price's authoritative *The British carpenter* with its hint of his appreciation of Gothic structure.[139] In fact Johnston's comment on the structural problems of the spire at Salisbury derives from a less specialist source. Johnston mistakenly attributed the iron bands to Wren: '... there are some very serious fractures in the tower which tho' secured by the abilities of the Gt Sir Christopher (in my opinion) still threaten the downfall of this incomparable edifice'.[140] The same mistake can be found in *The modern universal British traveller* and probably in other travel books, which tended to reproduce the same material.[141] Johnston considered the iron bands insufficient. To contribute his own opinion to an issue that had engaged architects of the calibre of Wren suggests confidence, no doubt derived from his experience in Armagh and his subsequent work designing spires in Dundalk and Drogheda. However, it is notable that it was the practical matter of fabric repair rather than the more philosophical concerns of improvement that interested him in relation to cathedral restoration. This practical approach was evident in a letter he wrote in 1823 to the archbishop of Armagh, giving his opinion about a strategy for restoring the cathedral.[142] Assuming that financial resources would remain limited, he advocated very cautious interventions mainly to improve the light, and argued against serious alterations as too dangerous and expensive.

In Shrewsbury and Bristol Johnston encountered several contemporary churches within a medieval context, each time showing more interest in the new than the old. At St Alkmund's in Shrewsbury he noted that a nave had been built onto an existing tower, and he picked out the Gothic revival east window to admire. In Bristol he listed five churches – St Mary Redcliffe, St Nicholas, St Stephen, St Paul, Christ Church – making comments on St Nicholas (a Gothic revival church built between 1762 and 1769), St Paul (a mixed style church built between 1789 and 1794) and Christ Church (a classical church built 1786), leaving no record of his response to fourteenth-century St Mary

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[139] Francis Price, *The British carpenter* (6th ed. Dublin, 1768). This is the edition that Johnston owned. Price's appreciation of the structural merits of Gothic are hinted at in a note; 'The cause of those centres against the windows being a kind of Gothick arch, proceeds from their making part of the whole sweep, or arch; which though it does not add to its beauty, it does to its strength in a particular manner', (p. 35).
[140] Johnston's Tour diary, ff 9r–9v.
[141] Burlington, Rees, Murray, *The modern universal British traveller*, p. 384.
[142] Armagh County Museum, ARMCM.T3107, TS copy of an extract of a letter from Francis Johnston to [archbishop of Armagh], [1823].

Redcliffe, one of the most admired of medieval churches, or St Stephen's, an early medieval church that had been rebuilt in the fifteenth century.[143]

Johnston's interest in contemporary church building was professional; they represented a building type of which he had design experience and could expect to design in the future. In all cases the Gothic revival churches he saw make an interesting comparison to his surviving churches in the same style. Most strikingly, the English churches are more elaborate: there are traceried perpendicular windows in St Alkmund's, Shrewsbury and St Nicholas, Bristol; while the gabled pinnacles in St Nicholas are decorated with ogee arches springing from sculptured heads. But Johnston made no reference to this. Instead, he appreciated the two Gothic revival churches in Bristol, which he liked, as simple: 'St Pauls is a new church just finished – built in a light plain Gothic style .... St Nicholas' abt 25 years built in a similar style very handsome & well finished.'[144] To regard them as the same was to ignore what might seem to be the significant difference: St Paul's was a mixed style church, whilst St Nicholas was Gothic.[145] But from a distance they did give a similar, broadly classical, impression: although both churches displayed spiky gothic features on their towers, the naves, without pinnacles, could be read as rectangular boxes; and the exterior details were lightly inscribed. It was presumably this common theme that Johnston approved. Here again, Johnston was admiring regular medieval ecclesiastical architecture. As a corollary to this he displayed little feeling for the subsequent additions acquired by medieval buildings, failing to mention that St Nicholas's was a rebuilding of an older church with medieval masonry incorporated into the south wall and a surviving late fourteenth-century crypt.

The Shrewsbury churches introduced Johnston to the possibilities of applying new technology to traditional forms. At St Chad's and particularly at St Alkmund's, iron, a product of the industrial revolution that was gathering momentum in Shropshire, had been used to significant effect. The strength of iron allowed the thin sections seen in the

[143] '... the church of St Mary Redcliffe which is the most beautiful Gothic structure of a parish church in England', (Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, William Shaw Mason Correspondence, MS 1732, letter from J. Ball to William Shaw Mason, 29 July, 1813).
[144] Johnston's Tour diary, f. 8r.
[145] St Pauls has a three-stage tower capped by two diminishing stages, which although Gothic in detail is classical in form, and inside, the detailing is classical. Diminishing stages seen in St Mary-le-Stand, James Gibbs, 1728 (Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain,* pp 378-9).

pillars supporting the gallery at St Alkmund's, and was used spectacularly in the windows where large areas of glass could be installed at a relative cheap cost.[146] Johnston did not comment on the use of iron in this church, but he did admire the east window which incorporated glass painted by Francis Eginton of Birmingham.[147] Terry Friedman has noted that the interior framework was gilded so that, illuminated by the morning sun, the whole would have glowed like an illuminated altar piece, rather than as traditional, fragmented stained glass.

Books 1796–1829

For about twenty years after he returned from his tour in 1796, Gothic would play an important part in Johnston's work as an architect. Between 1800 and 1825 he was working on the design and execution of nine castles: one new, Charleville Castle Co. Offaly; and eight adaptations of existing houses.[148] He designed several Gothic revival churches, an unrealised bridge at Headfort (1802) and a castellated gateway on Military Road, Dublin (*c.*1818).[149]

During this period knowledge of medieval buildings derived from antiquarian study and analytical architectural drawings increased significantly. By the 1820s antiquarian Gothic revival publications were becoming significantly more numerous, and it is clear from Johnston's library catalogue that he was acquiring some of them. He owned Pugin's *Specimens of Gothic architecture* published in 1821, one of the most important illustrated publications of the early Gothic revival period with its large-scale analytical

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[146] Although iron had been used in buildings since the 1730s it was used in St Alkmund's on an unprecedented scale, and included the use of cramps, iron straps, hinges and locks (Friedman, *The Eighteenth-century Church in Britain*, pp 268-9).

[147] Eginton's business had succeeded partly because he supplied glass to James Wyatt for his restoration in Salisbury and Lichfield in 1790 and 1795.

[148] St Catherine's Co. Kildare (design 1799–1803, demolished); Markree Castle Co. Sligo (design 1802–1804, remodelled by James Wardrop, hotel); Killeen Castle Co. Meath (design and execution 1802–1813, extended by James Shiel, ruin); Headfort Co. Meath (design 1802, unrealised); Glanmore Castle Co. Wicklow (design 1803–1804, recently subdivided, partially inhabited); Pakenham Hall Co. Westmeath (design 1806, extended by James Shiel and Richard Morrison, inhabited); Kilruddery Co. Wicklow (design 1814, unrealised) and additions at Howth Castle Co. Dublin (design 1824–5, unrealised). Johnston's involvement and dates can be largely derived from drawings in the Murray Collection, IAA and in NLI. Charleville Castle is largely unaltered, partially inhabited.

[149] Churches include: Catholic church at Kells, Co. Meath (design 1799); the tower for St Andrew's Dublin (design 1804, largely unrealised); Louth, Co. Louth (*c.*1807, ruin); St Catherine's Tullamore (design and execution 1808–18, survives largely unaltered); St Mark's Armagh (attributed, 1811, survies); St Columba, Swords, Co. Dublin (attributed, 1811, survives), Foundling Hospital Chapel, James St., Dublin (1802–1804, demolished), Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle (1807–15). The castellated gateway was moved to South Circular Road in 1846.

dimensioned drawings indicating precise locations of details and annotated with construction notes.[150] (fig 2.28) He possessed John Britton's *Architectural antiquities of Normandy* published in 1828, whose engravings were based on measured drawings by Augustus Pugin and presented in a clear and consistent manner.[151] And he had Charles Wild's informative *Architecture and sculpture of the cathedral church of Lincoln,* published in 1819, which contained details drawn at a relatively large scale, with associated plans indicated.[152] But, by the beginning of the 1820s, when these books were being published, Johnston was no longer very active as a designer of Gothic.

In the period when commissions were arriving frequently for Johnston – the first two decades of the nineteenth century – antiquarian knowledge amassed during the eighteenth century was being disseminated to a wider audience. Johnston's library catalogue reveals that he was buying books that were purportedly addressed to the amateur gentleman, but which were useful to the architect and seemed, by their comments on the practical application of Gothic in a contemporary context, to aim at an architectural readership.[153]

One of the most influential antiquarian books of the early years of the nineteenth century was the compilation of late eighteenth-century antiquarian scholarship by Warton, Bentham and Milner edited by the publisher John Taylor and published in a cheap octavo volume with very few illustrations.[154] In his preface Taylor stated the intention to supply a concise, accessible, affordable account of the subject.[155] Johnston acquired a copy and thereby accessed Thomas Warton's ground-breaking effort to produce a rudimentary taxonomy of Gothic of 1762, James Bentham's more empirical attempt of 1771 to log detailed changes, and John Milner's thorough 1798 survey of

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[150] Augustus Pugin, *Specimens of Gothic architecture, selected from various ancient edifices in England accompanied by historical and descriptive accounts by E.J. Willson,* 2 vols (London, 1821–3). For assessment of Pugin's book see Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', p. 256.
[151] John Britton (ed.), *Historical and descriptive essays accompanying a series of engraved specimens of the architectural antiquities of Normandy* (London, 1828).
[152] Charles Wild, *An illustration of the architecture and sculpture of the cathedral church of Lincoln* (London, 1819). Wild was less rigorous than Pugin: precise locations of detailed elevations were not indicated, there were fewer dimensions and more perspective views.
[153] For reference to the dissemination of antiquarian books see Alexandrina Buchanan, 'Science and sensibility: architectural antiquarianism in the early nineteenth century' in Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz (eds), *Producing the past: aspects of antiquarian culture and practice 1700–1850* (Aldershot, 1999), pp 169–70.
[154] Taylor, *Essays on Gothic architecture*.
[155] Ibid., pp iii, vi.

Winchester.[156] The volume included a letter from Milner in which he purportedly aimed to clarify confusion relating to taxonomy and the origins of Gothic, and to define the Gothic aesthetic as the means by which architecture characterised by the pointed arch had achieved sublime expression.[157] The letter was designed to appeal to architects like Johnston with a tangential knowledge of medieval architecture and a focus on architectural concerns such as size, scale, the overall impression of details, planning and classical values. Thus, for example, he wrote that the beauty of Gothic details in the second pointed period, stretching from the late thirteenth to mid-fifteenth century, arose from the infinite variety of ribs, arches and bosses; 'all grow out of the main columns, with the regularity of Nature in the vegetable kingdom, and also with the wise contrivance to combine strength with beauty'.[158]

In 1806 John Britton began to publish his volumes of *Architectural antiquities of Great Britain*, another antiquarian publishing phenomenon which extended the London Society of Antiquaries' project to produce clear measured surveys of English cathedrals by including parish churches, crosses and domestic architecture in smaller volumes that would reach a wider audience.[159] (fig 2.29) Johnston, who owned volume one, had access to analytical drawings of a number of parish churches in southern England and King's College Cambridge.[160] Although lacking the absolute clarity and dimensioning of Pugin's later work, Britton's volumes gave its readers access to accurate, precisely located details, ensuring, as Kenneth Clark wrote, that 'the old fantastic parodies of

[156] Warton, *Observations on the Faerie Queene;* Bentham, *The history and antiquities of cathedral church of Ely;* John Milner, *The history, civil and ecclesiastical, and survey of the antiquities of Winchester*, 2 vols (Winchester, 1798–1801).
[157] Taylor, *Essays on Gothic architecture*, pp xi–xxiii. He in fact argued his own case. He recommended many of the books owned by Johnston (Halfpenny, *York;* Anon, *Lavenham;* Murphy *Batalha*).
[158] Taylor, *Essays on Gothic architecture*, p. xix. Milner's 'second pointed period' ran from the late thirteenth century to mid-fifteenth century, incorporating what would now be regarded as the Decorated and part of the Perpendicular period.
[159] John Britton, *The architectural antiquities of Great Britain*, 5 vols (London, 1806–27). Prospectus, end papers, Britton, *Architectural antiquities*, vol. 1 (London, 1806). 'The ichnography of British medieval building had been popularly demonstrated for the first time' (Crook, 'John Britton and the genesis of the Gothic revival', p. 111). Britton instructed his draftsman to use outline to bring out architectural detail (Frew, 'An aspect of the Gothic revival', p. 86). Parts of volume one were published in 1805 (Britton, *Architectural antiquities,* part I (24 June 1805) and part II (1 Nov. 1805), copies in IAA).
[160] Other churches included in this volume: St Botolph's Priory Church, Colchester, Essex; Dunstable Priory Church, Beds; St Nicholas Church, Abingdon, Berks; Round Church, Cambridge; Round Church, Northampton; Round Church at the Temple, London.

Gothic were no longer possible.'[161] Britton addressed a contemporary anxiety that King's College was over decorated by quoting Payne Knight, who argued that although every surface was ornamented and that individual parts could look 'crowded, capricious, and unmeaning, yet the effect of the whole together is … rich, grand, light and airy'.[162] Thus what had once seemed excessive now had voices raised in its defence.

James Dallaway's *Observations on English architecture* published in 1806 and listed in Johnston's library catalogue was explicitly intended for the amateur gentleman, but his many references to architects suggests that he aimed to have an impact on the contemporary Gothic revival.[163] Dallaway made his book appealing to architects not with illustrations, but in a number of other ways. He gave clear guidance about which buildings illustrated which style. He provided tabulated measurements of cathedrals. He discussed the issues of invention and imitation. Refuting Richard Payne Knight's contentious assertion that Gothic was not bound by rules, Dallaway gave the example of an architect inaccurately imitating a fifteenth-century style: '… if a church should be built in 1806, purporting to be an exact renovation of one erected in the reign of Henry VI and the pointed arches should bear an indented moulding, or the roof of the ailes equal that of the nave, we might fairly determine, that the architect had not studied a pure style, or that he had widely deviated from every known instance of the date he pretended to imitate.'[164] This demonstrated how a good classification system based on empirically observed details could set a standard for the revival, a standard that would not be fully realised for another generation. On invention Dallaway, like many apologists of Gothic, presented medieval architects as masters of invention.[165] This derived, he argued, from the desire to outdo their contemporaries and resulted in

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[161] Clark, *The Gothic revival,* p. 80. Britton's drawings did not match A.C. Pugin's standards in *Specimens of Gothic:* there were fewer large-scale details and the hatched elevations detracted from the scientific character of the drawings. Britton's prospectus had promised specimens of different styles but it was a miscellany, rather than a systematic chronological survey (Crook, 'Britton and the genius of the Gothic revival', p. 111).
[162] Britton, *Architectural antiquities* vol. 1, (1806) plate VII. Milner regarded King's as excessive (Milner, *A treatise on ecclesiastical architecture*, p. 114). Soane admired King's as 'a glorious example of the wonderful perfection of Gothic architecture' (Soane, *Plans, elevations and sections,* p. 9). James Dallaway valued King's for its sublimity (Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture*, p. 83).
[163] Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture*.
[164] Ibid., p. vii. Payne Knight's view that Gothic was not bound by rules was expressed in Richard Payne Knight, *An analytical inquiry into the principles of taste* (London, 1805) p. 159.
[165] An early example of a writer extolling the inventiveness of medieval architects was William Duff writing in 1767 (Susan Lang, 'Richard Payne Knight and the idea of modernity' in Summerson, (ed.), *Concerning architecture* (1968), p. 93).

wondrously complex architecture.[166] It could be taken as a model for contemporary practitioners, though Dallaway argued for restraint in ornamentation.[167]

Johnston also possessed John Milner's *A treatise on ecclesiastical architecture* published in (1806–11).[168] In this polemical survey of medieval architecture Milner made a very clear case for his particular taxonomy of style – three periods based on the organic model of progression from early vitality through maturity to final degeneracy – advocating the second period, epitomised by the nave of York Minster whose beauty, he argued, was largely due to its fine proportioning system.[169] (fig 2.30) With his detailed anatomy of the style of each period based on the empirical observation of details, his call for 'the scientific architect' to make a careful record of selected architectural specimens that could be demonstrated as belonging to each period, and his adamant injunction that periods should not be mixed, Milner's book looked towards a future in which authenticity would be the guiding principle.[170] It was an accessible book, which presented the complexity of Gothic development to a wide audience using understandable terms, anticipating Thomas Rickman's more authoritative terminology in *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture* of 1817.

But there were other ways of reading the *Treatise*. As mentioned above, Milner had an interest in abstract architectural concerns. His characterisation of the arch of each period stands out: acute for the first, 'perfect or equiliateral' for the second and 'obtuse' for the third.[171] He applied the idea derived from classical scholarship that each style had its own inimitable character; the first achieved sublimity with heavy, plain architecture, the second through fine balance, the third through 'magnificence, ingenuity, delicacy, and elegance'.[172] Such an appraisal could encourage an application of Gothic styles in new situations according to appropriate character rather than striving for imitative accuracy. That this was directed at architects as much as antiquarians is suggested by a footnote in

[166] Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture,* pp vii–viii.
[167] Ibid., p. x.
[168] Milner, *A treatise on the ecclesiastical architecture*.
[169] Ibid., pp, 103–4, 122.
[170] Ibid., pp 119 (note), 123.
[171] Ibid., p. 120.
[172] Ibid., pp ix–xiii. 'From what has been said it will appear that there are three orders of the pointed style, corresponding with the different periods in which they prevailed, each one of which has its proper character and members, as much as the five orders of the Grecian style have theirs', (Milner, *A treatise on ecclesiastical architecture*, p. 118).

which he distinguished his appreciation for the order existing in Gothic architecture from the invented orders of Batty Langley, suggesting that his book should supercede Langley as a guide to contemporary architects.[173]

Conclusion

It is tempting to attribute the impetus for the Gothic revival to those who commissioned neo-Gothic buildings at a time when classicism was in the ascendant in architects' practices. And it is undeniable that the initial impetus came from patrons. But architects brought a great deal to the commissions, derived from experience repairing and restoring medieval buildings and from interest and knowledge stimulated by travel and antiquarian publications, many of which from the late eighteenth century were aimed at practicing architects.

This has been demonstrated to some degree in the case of James Wyatt (fourteen years older than Johnston) who, John Frew has argued, allowed his experience of medieval buildings and acquaintance with antiquarian literature to inform his Gothic revival commissions. Frew has identified medieval sources used by Wyatt in Gothic revival projects – a Milton Abbey vault in new work at Cobham Hall, Kent in 1801, for example – and has argued that Wyatt's reading of Bentham informed his design for the prospect tower at Springfield Hill Worcestershire of 1794.[174] Frew has argued that in his restoration of the choir screen in Salisbury Cathedral Wyatt showed sensitivity to the structural concerns engendered by medieval buildings and a willingness to incorporate authentic imitations.[175] It is also clear that Wyatt's medieval work was inflected by contemporary notions of the sublime and picturesque and that he applied classical criteria of good taste.[176]

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[173] Ibid., p. 118.

[174] Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style', 144–8.

[175] Frew, James Wyatt's choir screen at Salisbury Cathedral', 483–4. See also Frew's discussion of Wyatt's work at Hereford Cathedral (Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style', 145).

[176] Michael Lewis, *The Gothic revival* (London, 2002), pp 38–41 and Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 218–45. See especially his work at Fonthill Abbey, Wilts for the influence of the sublime. Wyatt expressed a preference for regularity in a letter of 1811 about renovations to Henry VII chapel (John Frew, 'The "destroyer" vindicated?: James Wyatt and the restoration of Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster Abbey', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 84 (1981), 106), but he also developed an asymmetric aesthetic for castles such as Norris Castle, Isle of Wight (1799) and Fonthill Abbey (1796–1817).

Johnston, it has been argued here, approached medieval architecture with the concerns of a professional architect who had already received commissions to restore medieval buildings and design and build in a Gothic revival style. He engaged with the fabric of medieval buildings, while his responses also revealed a preoccupation with concerns relating to the commission of new Gothic revival buildings; what was the appropriate character for a castle? how should a castle or a garden building relate to its setting? what is admirable in a Gothic church? He had absorbed the developing taste of the period, so that he could feel that cathedrals were sublime, and for him picturesque principles governed the way a rural Gothic building should relate to its setting. In his years as an active designer of Gothic revival buildings he referred to contemporary antiquarian scholarship that was accessible; relatively cheap and easily used for detailed designs.

Authenticity, the watchword of the future, had its place in his thinking about medieval architecture. But Johnston did not display an interest in taxonomies of medieval architecture during his 1796 tour or in his later work, despite pressure from writers such as Milner and Dallaway for stylistic consistency in any imitative designs. Instead, Johnston was more alert to observations that related to abstract architectural features. For example, the basic differences between the plain and the decorated, a well-established theme that predated appreciation of Gothic, was a subtext of Milner's analysis. Milner also made strong comparisons between the shapes and characteristics of Gothic arches. Johnston's interest in this is evident in his description of his work for the Castle Chapel where he made no mention of stylistic periods, but distinguished between the pointed and flat Gothic arches of the windows, and between the 'richly ornamented' ceilings and carved oak features and 'chastely decorated' altar.[177] He was attuned to overall character and image too: the strength of a castle, the lightness of cathedral architecture.

But apart from Johnston's professional interest in medieval architecture the tour journal reveals his admiration for and delight in it. This was later expressed in an exuberant Gothic belfry tower projecting from ecclesiastical Gothic mews buildings erected to the

[177] Johnston, 1823. The theme that emerges in this account is one of contrast. It is possible that this derived from a reading of Milner whose clear exposition of different Gothic styles and their characteristics might suggest that they could be evoked together within one building to produce stimulating contrast.

rear of his own garden and those of his neighbours in Eccles St, Dublin.[178] It is recorded that Johnston loved bells, and what more appropriate place to put them than in a tall, pinnacled tower attached to an array of buildings giving the impression of a monastic settlement?[179] The project was a flight of fancy, something that was vividly conveyed in the brightly lit, apparently insubstantial, continuous wall of buildings painted in oil by his friend, the artist Henry Kirchhoffer.[180] (fig 2.31) But a surviving drawing, attributed to Kirchhoffer but probably based on a drawing by Johnston and showing the buildings at a different angle, reveals that Johnston had designed a sequence of structures, some projecting, with a variety of roofs and that his detailing was robust.[181] (fig 2.32) The project owed much to his experience of designing the Castle Chapel, with the mews in adjacent no 61 Eccles Street, closely modelled on the proposed east elevation of the chapel. (fig 5.41) The walls and tower are battlemented, the windows have hood mouldings, some have head decorated label stops, the pinnacles are crocketed, there is perpendicular tracery in the larger windows. Johnston was evidently enjoying himself, realising his scheme to the best of his abilities.

This chapter, using mainly textual sources, has focused on Johnston's perception of medieval architecture. An example of Johnston's architectural response to an existing medieval building can be seen in the commission he received in 1802 from the 7th Earl of Fingall to extend the Killeen Castle Co. Meath. This large rectangular tower house with its four, irregular corner towers, initially built in the fifteenth century adjacent to a fifteenth-century church, had already been altered: a stair had been placed between two of the towers and some of the windows enlarged.[182] (fig 2.33) Surviving drawings show

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[178] For discussion of this project see Emmeline Henderson, 'Francis Johnston's Belfry and Gothic folly in his garden, Eccles Street, Dublin' in William Laffan (ed), *Painting Ireland, topographical views from Glin Castle* (Tralee, 2006), pp 205–208.

[179] Catterson-Smith, 'What Dublin owes to Francis Johnston', 3.

[180] Henry Kirchhoffer, *A view of Mrs Johnston's garden in Eccles Street, from her dining-room*, oil on canvas, n.d. It was exhibited under this title at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1832 (Henderson, 'Francis Johnston's Belfry', p. 205). The buildings were constructed in brick, rendered and scored to look like ashlar (Ibid., p. 207).

[181] 'View of the garden at the rear of Francis Johnston's house, 60 Eccles St Dublin', drawing and wash, n.d, private collection, photograph in TRIAC. A letter in TRIAC reveals that there has been disagreement about the author of the drawing ('Henry Kirchhoffer', TRIAC).

[182] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.895, Survey drawing, ground floor plan. The 7th Earl of Fingall regained possession of Killeen in 1779 (Bernadette Goslin, 'History and descriptive catalogue of the Murray Collection of architectural drawings in the collection of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland' (MA, National University of Ireland, 1990). Killeen castle can be compared to Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare and Dunsoghley, Co. Dublin both dated to the fifteenth century (H.G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (reprinted revised ed. Dundalk, 1995), pp 116–21.

that although Johnston was given the original commission Fingall asked the amateur architects Daniel Augustus Beaufort and Thomas Wogan Browne for opinions, and that Johnston produced a second scheme in the light of these.[183]

Johnston seems to have been slow to make an accurate survey of the existing structure showing the details such as its strongly splayed windows and the thickness of its walls.[184] (figs 2.34–2.35) In fact Beaufort initially showed more respect for the medieval structure, using a more accurate survey and proposing that the new structure be built at the rear and separated from the existing building by a single-storey corridor.[185] (fig 2.36) However, Johnston demonstrated an interest in retaining the integrity of the tower, unlike Wogan Browne who eradicated two of the towers and altered the proportions of the central rectangular space. (fig 2.37) Johnston kept the plan intact (apart from one tower) and retained the original appearance of two of the elevations with their irregular fenestration. (fig. 2.35) What is particularly interesting is his treatment of the main façade which, in his second scheme, included both new and existing fabric.[186] (figs 2.38 & 2.39) In the first scheme he had introduced an octagonal tower and three round towers in an asymmetric composition which were expressed on the front elevation. Although he had retained the pointed arched windows of the castle, he had given the windows in the new work both pointed and square heads. The result was a castle composed of a jumble of parts, many insubstantial, in which the original structure formed three obscure bays. The second scheme included no new towers. Instead, the character of the original castle, which had consisted of a collection of square battlemented towers, was retained and informed the new work. Window design differentiated the old and new – pointed and irregular for old; square-headed and regular for new – while fifteenth and nineteenth-century fabric was integrated into a largely symmetrical composition of projecting and receding parts crowned by pronounced

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[183] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.895–929, drawings for Killeen Castle.
[184] Johnston used a more accurate survey for his second scheme of Feb. 1803 (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, nos 902–913, dated Feb. 1803) than for his first scheme (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.896 (nd), 92/46.897 (Jan. 1802)). For Johnston's surveys see IAA RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.895 and 92/46.907 reverse.
[185] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.898–900, designs for additions to Killeen Castle attributed to Daniel Augustus Beaufort. Goslin assumes that these were proposed after Johnston's first scheme (Goslin, 'Catalogue of the Murray Collection', pp 275–7).
[186] Tullynally Castle, Co. Westmeath, Pakenham Archive, proposed elevation principal façade, Killeen Castle, Francis Johnston, [Jan. 1802]; IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.905 and .908, proposed elevation principal facade, Killeen Castle Killeen Castle, Francis Johnston, Feb. 1803.

battlements and tall chimneys. It was a clever design combining contemporary regularity with an understanding of the character of the original. Here was imitation and authenticity, not as they would be understood in the later nineteenth century, but within a framework which valued symmetry and looked for an impression of strength and bristling readiness in castles.

Chapter Three

Charleville Castle and demesne (1800–1809)

Introduction

Charleville Castle, designed in 1800 by Francis Johnston in close association with his patrons, Charles and Catherine Bury and largely completed by 1809, was a pioneering Gothic revival castle that reflected contemporary thinking about Gothic architecture and domestic comfort.[1] The material assembled for this thesis from the various sources relating to the Charlevilles, is copious and suggestive. Apart from sources referred to in chapter one, the family papers also yielded *A poem on Charleville* by John Doran dated to 1809, and estate accounts. There is correspondence in the Marlay papers in the University of Nottingham, which relates to the building of the castle and the viceregal visit of 1809. The extensive archive of original and photographed drawings relating to Charleville brought together by the Irish Architectural Archive contain both design and working drawings.[2] Many of the estate drawings were auctioned by Christies in 1985; the catalogue is a valuable source.[3] A twentieth-century auction catalogue was sourced, copies of two demesne drawings and an estate book in a private collection have been consulted as well as a set of paintings of the demesne by William Ashford commissioned by the Charlevilles in 1801.[4]

This is the first time this material has been brought together and it is the first detailed investigation of the building of the castle.[5] Apart from R. Warwick Bond's largely

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[1] Charleville is often referred to as Charleville Forest. This was the official title for the estate, see reference to Charleville Forest in the conformation of arms of 1797 (NLI, Genealogical Office, MS 103 p.153 (microfilm: P 8290), 'Confirmation of arms and supporters to Rt. Hon. Charles William Bury, Baron Tullamore of Charleville Forset, King's Co. Oct. 15 1797') and estate accounts (Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, MS 10498, 'Charles William Bury of Charleville Forest, accounts of the Charleville Forest Estate', 3 July 1813-31 Dec. 1814). Johnston and the Charlevilles referred to the house as Charleville Castle (for example, IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.200, 'Working sketches for building the basement storey of Charleville Castle', signed F. Johnston and dated 3 Feb. 1801). Charleville had become more generally known as Charleville Forest by 1948 (Charleville Sale Catalogue 1948). The construction of Charleville is described in appendix 1.2.

[2] This archive is detailed in appendix 1.1.

[3] Christie's 1985, lots 1–30.

[4] Demesne survey, 1785; Demesne proposal, 1786; Private collection, Estate book, 1855. *Fine art auction ... to be held at Charleville Castle, Tullamore*, 1–5 Nov. 1948, Allen & Townsend, Dublin. For Ashford see Anne Crookshank, 'A life devoted to landscape painting, William Ashford (*c*.1746-1824)', *IAR Yearbook*, 11 (Dublin, 1995), 119–130.

[5] Finola O'Kane referred to unpublished material relating to the demesne in her study of the picturesque (O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque,* pp 174–80).

paraphrased selection of letters of 1778–1820 from the Marlay Papers at the University of Nottingham published in 1937, the main publication devoted specifically to Charleville is Mark Girouard's article for *Country Life* written in 1962.[6] There have been valuable discussions of the castle by Rowan (1964, 1965), McParland (1969), Scott Richardson (1983), and Pakenham (2005), but they mainly concentrate on style.[7] The aim in this chapter is to try to recover the thinking behind the design and realisation of Charleville Castle in its estate context, to analyse possible intended and embodied meanings, and to put forward historical interpretations that elucidate meaning. There will be four sections. The first will consider evidence for the patrons' intentions with regard to the project. The second will discuss the design of the castle and its realisation. The third will consider explicit cultural links between the building and the family. The final section will discuss the social and political roles and ambitions of the Charlevilles, and the building of the castle as an instrument in the realisation of these roles. Conclusions will be drawn about what Charleville, built in the immediate post-Union years, suggests about the national identity of its patrons in a period when identities were being re-formed.

The context in which Charleville Castle was built was rich in activity and decision-making: the castle was part of an ambitious project to redesign the demesne which began in 1785; the decision to build a castle was made after plans for a classical mansion, commissioned in 1789, were abandoned; the collaboration with Francis Johnston occurred after earlier designs of 1797 by the architect John Pentland for a castle were rejected. This reveals much about the attitudes of Charles Bury. It also means that the Charleville project extended from 1785 to 1809, bridging the Union.

Stylistically, Charleville Castle refers to two traditions identified by architectural historians– the late Georgian castle and the picturesque castle.[8] It was built at a time

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[6] Bond, *Marlay letters*. Girouard, 'Charleville Forest', 710-13.

[7] Rowan, 'Georgian castles', 23–5; Rowan, 'The castle style in British domestic architecture', pp 240–1; McParland, 'Francis Johnston', 87–93; Douglas Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, vol. 1 (New York and London, 1983), pp 119–.123; Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel', pp 1–19. There is also a recent account of the demesne (Howley Harrington Architects, 'Charleville Forest demesne, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, conservation report' (Nov. 2003)).

[8] Alistair Rowan, 'Georgian castles in Ireland – 1', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 7:1 (Jan.–Mar. 1964), 3–30 and Watkin, *The English vision*.

when attitudes towards castle building were changing in Britain and Ireland.[9] Georgian castles, pioneered by Roger Morris at Clearwell Court in *c*.1728 and at Inveraray Castle in 1745 tended to be symmetrical, robust, towered and castellated, with classical interiors. In Ireland this trend was reflected in Wyatt's design for William Burton Conyngham at Slane in 1785.[10] Robert Adam's castle for the Templetowns at Castle Upton in Co Antrim in 1788–9, was, unusually for Adam and for the period, asymmetrical. The exteriors of Georgian castles were often plain, or inflected with classicism, particularly in their fenestration. Where there was decorative Gothic detailing it tended to be influenced by the ecclesiastically-derived details of William Kent or Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill and the work of his circle. This is seen in the north-east façade and corresponding interior at Castle Ward, Co Down. Existing buildings were often adapted with the relatively simple expedient of adding battlements and towers. In Ireland Thomas Wogan Browne added a single symmetrical castellated wing to existing houses at Clongowes, Malahide and Ballinlough in *c*.1788, some decorated with ogee arched windows and all flanked with round towers.[11]

New attitudes towards castle building were inspired by the new sensibility. The style in which they were realised began to be influenced by the appreciation of irregularity and asymmetry inspired by the picturesque aesthetic, and the use of authentic medieval sources encouraged by antiquarian studies. Picturesque asymmetry is regarded as being pioneered by Richard Payne Knight at Downton Castle in 1771–8, to be taken up by John Nash in Hadfod in 1794 and Castle House, Aberystwyth in 1795.[12] Nash, in association with Humphry Repton, would develop designs for asymmetric castles in the 1790s and 1800s. The Charlevilles may have known East Cowes Castle, designed for Nash himself *c*.1798 and Luscombe Castle, Dawlish, Devon designed for Charles

[9] The first surviving reference to the building of Charleville Castle is in a letter from Louisa Conolly to C.M. Bury, 8 Nov. 1800, (Marlay Papers, MS My 27/1-2, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to C.M. Bury 8 Nov. 1800). John Claudius Loudon is recorded as laying out the terrace in July 1812 (R. Warwick Bond (ed.), *The Marlay letters 1778–1820* (London, 1937) p. 112). See appendix for brief construction history.
[10] Mark Odlum, 'Slane Castle. Co. Meath–I, II, III', *Country Life* (17, 24, 31 July, 1980), 198–201, 278–81, 382–5. Drawings in IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.1105–30.
[11] Rowan, 'Georgian castles',14–19. Francis Wheatley's drawing of 1782 of Malahide illustrated in Desmond Guinness and William Ryan, *Irish houses and castles* (London, 1971), p. 147.
[12] Watkin, *The English vision*. pp 94–112. Even symmetrical castles, designed within a picturesque context, with pronounced drama at roof level and facades with accentuated projections and recessions, produced a lively, rugged impression in the landscape. Examples include Robert Adam's castles designed in the 1770s and 1780s, which owed much to his appreciation of the upland character of the Scottish landscape seen in his the romantic drawings of scenic castellated buildings (Alistair Rowan, *Designs for castles and country villas by Robert & James Adam* (Oxford, 1985), pp 17–19 and Colin Thom, 'In search of Adam', *The Georgian*, 1 (2015), p. 10).

Hoare, in 1799.[13] In Ireland, Nash designed Killymoon, Co Tyrone in 1801 for James Stewart when construction on Charleville had already begun. Nash's innovative asymmetric plans and compositions, often revolving around a substantial anchoring round or octagonal tower, have attracted architectural historians for their aesthetic originality and influence.[14]

An equally important influence on contemporaries was the work of James Wyatt, architect to George III, who demonstrated a closer engagement with medieval sources as well as an understanding of the implications of asymmetric design. Wyatt's Gothic work is only now being fully assessed.[15] Wyatt's early Gothic work – none of which was strictly castellar – at Sheffield Place (*c*.1775–*c*.1787) and Sandleford Priory (*c*.1780–9), owed much to Strawberry Hill rather than medieval sources. But at Lee Priory (1785–1790) and later at Fonthill Abbey (1796–1817) and Belvoir Castle (1801–13) he was inspired by drawings of the mausolea and Church of Our Lady of Victories at Batalha, Portugal by James Cavanah Murphy which Wyatt saw before their first publication in a series of engravings from 1792–5.[16] Wyatt designed several castles before and during Johnston's commission at Charleville. Some of these may have been known to the Charlevilles on their travels around England, or from drawings exhibited at the annual summer exhibition at the Royal Academy.[17] Lasborough Park, Gloucestershire, a new symmetrical castellated house with corner towers and central tower-like canted bay, was finished in 1794, while Norris Castle on the Isle of Wight, a plain battlemented ramblingly asymmetric house with rectangular and round-arched windows, was completed in 1799. The Charlevilles knew Pennsylvannia Castle, Dorset built by John Penn on Portland. It was another asymmetric composition, with round- and pointed-arched windows, completed in 1800.[18]

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[13] Record of the Burys' 1802 and 1803 visit to Weymouth and surrounding area (Bury diary, ff 4v–9v, 12v–16v, 18v–21v).
[14] Terence Davis, *The architecture of John Nash* (London, 1960); John Summerson, *The life and works of John Nash, architect* (London, 1980); Geoffrey Tyack, 'Domestic Gothic' in Geoffrey Tyack (ed), *John Nash: architect of the picturesque* (Swindon, 2013), pp 35–56.
[15] Frew, 'An Aspect of the Gothic revival in England'; Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style', 144–49; Robinson *James Wyatt*.
[16] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 220, 236, 240.
[17] Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904,* vol. 4 (Kingsmead, 1989), pp 371–2.
[18] See chapter one.

George III commissioned Wyatt to work on Gothic revival designs for two palaces which had a significant impact on contemporaries and which were being designed at the same time as Charleville. It is not known what the Charlevilles knew of Kew Palace, a vast symmetrical and robustly detailed towered and battlemented castle.[19] Wyatt began design work in 1794, but only formally received the commission in 1800. Building work began in 1801, at the same time as at Charleville. Wyatt was working simultaneously on Windsor Castle (1800–13), where he remodelled the north range with new octagonal and rectangular towers and Gothic windows, and transformed the state apartments into a Gothic palace. There is evidence that the Burys looked to Windsor.[20] Officially, they would not have seen Wyatt's work at Windsor Castle when they began to plan Charleville in 1800, for Wyatt's appointment at Windsor was only announced in September 1800.[21] However, detailed interior design at Charleville was probably carried out from the beginning of 1805.[22] By this time Wyatt's work at Windsor Castle would have been accessible, for the royal family took up residence in autumn 1804, and the following summer the Charlevilles had been drawn into the royal circle.[23] Alternatively, the Charlevilles may have known about Wyatt's designs from John Penn, who was employing Wyatt on Pennsylvania Castle at the time the Charlevilles were designing their castle.[24] An alternative conduit may have been the Charlevilles' friendship with Frederick Trench. Trench and his son had strong connections with the 5th Duke and Duchess of Rutland who were employing Wyatt to rebuild Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire from 1799.[25] The Charlevilles were also influenced by Fonthill; Wyatt's drawings were exhibited at the Royal Academy summer exhibition in 1797–9 and in a letter to Trench Catherine referred to the ecclesiastical character of the fenestration at Fonthill.[26]

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[19] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 266–71.

[20] Marlay Papers MS My 87, Letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 10 June, 1808.

[21] *Gentleman's Magazine* vol. 70, (30 Sept. 1800), p. 892.

[22] Marlay Papers, MS My 81/1-2, letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Jan. 1805.

[23] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 266. For the Charlevilles' entry into Royal social circles see letters in Bond dated by him to the winter of 1805–6 and 30 Aug. 1805 (Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 93–95, 84–5).

[24] Penn laid the foundation stone for Pennsylvania Castle in August 1800, telling Joseph Cooper Walker 'I ... shall very shortly set off, to lay the first stone of the small fort I am about to build in Portland' (Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, MS 1461, The correspondence of Joseph Cooper Walker, vol. 4, 1795–1801, p. 212, letter from John Penn to Walker, 21 Aug. 1800).

[25] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp 239–40, 324–5; Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the house: great ladies and grand houses 1670–1830* (London, 2003), pp 232–53; IAA, copies of letters from Belvoir Castle Archives, 4 letters from Frederick Trench to 4th Duke of Rutland, 1784–6.

[26] Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, vol. 4, p 372; NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,348 (1), letter from C.M. Bury to Frederick Trench 28 Aug. 1802.

Charleville, then, was contemporary with the innovative domestic Gothic revival and castle building of Wyatt, Nash and Repton. This suggests a question; to what extent were Johnston and his patrons following design fashion, and to what extent were they applying current ideas independently? Whatever the answer, it is clear that Charleville was at the forefront of evolving domestic Gothic revival castle design in the early years of nineteenth century.

Ideas: intentions

On 29 February 1820, eight years after Charleville Castle had been completed, Francis Johnston described the projects of his professional practice in a letter to the topographer James Norris Brewer, then preparing his book *The beauties of Ireland* which would be published in 1825–6. Johnston's reference to Charleville touches on the brief he had been given: 'In the King's Co I planned and erected Charleville Castle and offices, it is a very extensive building imitating as near as modern convenience and comfort would admit an old British castle.'[27] With the concept of the 'old British castle' Johnston revealed that the building he began designing in *c.*1800 was intended by the Burys to have associative meaning bearing on that which it was representing.

Associations were frequently made in the topographical and picturesque literature of the late eighteenth century between Gothic revival castles – both follies and houses – and the life lived in the medieval castles to which they referred. This life was broadly evoked as baronial, and it conjured ideas of power and warfare. Here is the Revd S. Shaw in *A Tour of England* published in 1787, demonstrating contemporary appreciation of the associative significance of the recently-built Gothic- revival castle, Enmore:

'The castle is a true representation of those ancient habitations, which, amid the rivalries, animosities and dangers of feudal times, were the impregnable protection of every potent Baron before the invention of gunpowder and the use of artillery.'[28]

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[27] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', 4. James Norris Brewer, *The beauties of Ireland*, 2 vols (London, 1825-1826).
[28] Quoted in Tim Mowl, '"Against the time in which the fabric and use of gunpowder shall be forgotten", Enmore Castle, its origins and its architect', *Architectural History*, 33 (1990), 103.

Feudal life is evoked here, but it is the significance of the castle as the literal and symbolic seat of baronial power that is emphasised. Edmund Burke also aligned the castle to the past. For him it was a metaphor for inherited strength; military advantage and social status. Addressing the French revolutionaries he proposed an alterative to destruction; '… you possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations.'[29]

It is likely that Lord and Lady Charleville, steeped as we know them to have been in current thinking about Gothic, would have made associations about baronial power and strength when they evoked an 'old' castle for Johnston. But the full phrase used was an 'old *British* castle'. Neither Shaw nor Robinson referred to the Gothic revival castle as British. For them the country of revival architecture and the country of historical reference were the same. For the Burys however, there was a difference so that to emphasise nationality and for that nationality to be British was significant. It was especially significant to assert Britishness in Ireland at a time when Union was being debated in the Irish parliament, for it was a gesture in support of Pitt and the Union party. To continue to associate the finished castle with Britishness in the years after the Act of Union had been passed was to be engaged in the creation of a specific post-Union identity.[30]

Yet although the Charlevilles may have intended their castle to be recognisably British, it was situated within an Irish demesne whose *genius loci* they valued and had enriched so that it transmitted a strong sense of place and contributed to the local topography. Charleville was to be a British castle within a very specific Irish landscape. In developing the Charleville estate Bury was following the example of his great-uncle Charles Moore, first Earl of Charleville. Moore had died in February 1764, leaving his estates around Tullamore to Charles's father, John Bury of Shannongrove, Co.

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[29] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the revolution in France,* ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London, 1986), p. 121.

[30] There is extensive literature on the creation of a British identity, particularly useful are: Linda Colley, *Britons; forging the nation 1707-1837* (New Haven & London, 1992), S.J. Connolly, 'Varieties of Britishness: Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the Hanoverian state' in Alexander Grant & Keith J. Stringer (eds), *Uniting the kingdom? The making of British history* (London & New York, 1995), pp 193–207; Laurence Brockliss & David Eastwood (eds), *A union of multiple identities: the British isles,* c.*1750–*c.*1850* (Manchester and New York, 1997).

Limerick.[31] When John Bury died six months later on 4 August 1764, he had an infant son, Charles, who was five weeks old, to whom he left his estate, in King's County, Co. Limerick and Dublin. When he came of age in 1785 Charles Bury focused his attention on Charleville, commissioning Michael Cuddehy to draw up a survey of the Charleville demesne.[32] (fig 3.1) The demesne, which stood in a flat, boggy landscape to the west of Tullamore, was dominated by a large central area of ancient woodland largely composed of oak and ash rooted in rich limestone soils.[33] The western boundary was defined by the sinuous, tree-lined River Clodagh. It was the river that had attracted Charles Moore who moved to Charleville in 1740.[34] Moore landscaped the demesne in the Brownian manner forming a lake to the north and, with his wife, constructed an extended grotto of dark, linked, rocky chambers set into a small wooded hill beside the river.[35]

This was appreciated by Charles Bury, who wrote an unfinished account of Charleville, and in 1786 continued his ancestor's work of enhancing the natural features of the demesne by commissioning a proposal for improvements from Thomas Leggett.[36] (fig 3.2) Leggett proposed situating a new house at the head of a curved avenue addressing a park, the Birr–Tullamore Road re-routed and sunken, the pond field to the south flooded to form a lake decorated with an island and bordered by woods. The scale and drama of the river was to be enhanced by forming wooded islands and cascades in the wide

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[31] John Lodge, *The peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1789), p. 91. C.W. Bury's mother, Catherine née Sadlier was trustee of the estate until her son came of age.

[32] There were just over 934 acres in the demesne (Demesne survey, 1785).

[33] Howley Harrington Architects, 'Charleville Forest demesne'. Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland, statistical and political,* vol. 1 (London, 1812), pp 44–5 described the flat bogs surrounding Charleville concluding, 'I never saw an instance of so much money expended in erecting a princely mansion in so bad a situation.'

[34] Bury's account of Charleville. In 1633 Sir Robert Forth had leased Killinroe (Redwood), part of the Moore possessions situated to the west of Tullamore, and built a house sometime after 1641. In May 1740 Charles Moore occupied this estate and, leaving his father's newly built house at Croghan for seventeenth-century Redwood, renaming it Charleville (Howard Bury Collection courtesy of Westmeath County Library & Archives Service, P1/8, 'Memorandum outlining the details of the purchase by Lord Tullamore of Redwood, King's County, 1740').

[35] Demesne survey, 1785. The grotto survives. For description and plan see James Howley, *The follies and garden buildings of Ireland* (New Haven & London, 1993), pp 28–9.

[36] Bury's account of Charleville; Demesne proposal, 1786. Leggett had recently arrived from England where he had worked in the manner of Lancelot Brown (Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton: landscape gardening and the geography of Georgian England* (New Haven & London, 1999), p. 132). Bury also commissioned Pentland to design demesne ornaments, (IAA, A/2/4-5, photographs of alternative designs for an urn on a plinth, one signed John Pentland, dated 1786 (Christie's 1985, lot 10), IAA, A/2/2–3, photographs of alternative designs for a gate, both signed and dated 1785 (Christie's 1985, lot 9)).

stretch above the existing house and stable yard.[37] (fig 3.3) There were proposals for demesne buildings including three Gothic structures; temple, tower and dairy, all with the strong geometric plans that had become popular by the mid-eighteenth century in England. Surviving drawings for a two-storey circular Gothic folly similar to Blaise Castle, Bristol may have been intended for the island site.[38] (figs 3.4 & 3.5) Alternative designs for a domed octagonal structure detailed with reference to Batty Langley's *Ancient architecture restored* may have been early designs for the octagonal Gothic dairy backed by a symmetrical castellated farm building that had been built by 1801.[39] (figs 3.6 & 3.7)

There was nothing to ground these garden designs stylistically in an Irish demesne, but the third building, a four-storey triangular tower of *c.*1797, has rubble stone walls, stepped battlements and defined quoins which gives it the superficial appearance of a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Irish tower house.[40] (fig 3.8) On closer inspection it is clearly a folly, designed with geometric precision: the triangular plan, the centrally-placed, Palladian-proportioned windows.[41] But the gesture towards traditional Irish architecture associated it with Ireland and linked it to the past.[42] Located south of a group of trees and visible across the park from the proposed house, it was a picturesque object, alluding to Milton's 'Towers, and Battlements ... Boosom'd high in tufted Trees'. (figs 3.9 & 3.10)

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[37] This was largely realised, see Charles Coote, *Staistical survey of the King's County* (Dublin, 1801), pp 179-80; first edition OS map (survey dated 1838).

[38] IAA, A/3/1-4, photographs of a design for a circular Gothic folly, two elevations, ground and first floor plans, all signed John Pentland and dated 1790 (Christie's 1985, lot 7). There was a design for an oval variant (IAA, A/3/5, photograph of a plan for an oval Gothic folly (Christie's 1985, lot 7)). Pentland (d.1808) was an obscure Dublin architect and timber merchant whom Bury had first commissioned in 1785 to design gate piers. The only known works by Pentland are for C.W. Bury. There is no record that the temple was built. Blaise Castle folly was designed by Robert Mylne in 1766. Pentland was probably directed to this by Bury who stayed at Clifton 25 May to 4 June 1803 and probably knew Blaise (Bury diary, ff 20v–21r).

[39] IAA, A/3/6–7, photographs of alternative designs for a domed Gothic folly attributed to John Pentland (Christie's 1985, lot 8). Langley, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved*, pls 24 & 49. William Ashford *The Gothic dairy at Charleville* (signed and dated 1801). Remains of the dairy may survive at the rear of a house built in 1845 at the south side of the farm. The dairy was not marked on the demesne proposal, 1786 and there are no known surviving drawings. The octagonal structure in Ashford's painting with its pointed windows, undecorated pinnacles and buttresses may have been influenced by the orangery that Frederick Trench constructed at Heywood, which survives in ruins.

[40] Camden tower is now a roofless ruin. It was probably designed by John Pentland, Bury's architect in 1797. See Howley, *The follies and garden buildings of Ireland*, p. 59 for plan and elevation of Camden tower.

[41] Triangular plans were fairly common in garden buildings in eighteenth-century England, see Rowan, 'The castle style in British domestic architecture', pp 73–8.

[42] This was rare for demesne buildings in Ireland in the period.

That the landscape, and particularly the river, was fundamental to the significance of what Bury was creating at Charleville is evident from the commission he and his wife gave in 1801 to William Ashford – by then a much sought-after Irish landscape artist – to paint five large-scale views of the demesne.[43] Ashford responded to the Burys' desire to aggrandise and romanticise the demesne by subtly amplifying the scale of the recent changes, and presenting them at maturity. In one view he gave the impression of a tributary meeting the main stream in a wooded glade, and in another presented a stretch of calm lowland water amid splendid trees falling majestically over massive rocks. (figs 3.11 & 3.12)

Further clues to the intentions for Charleville Castle are suggested by the pre-history of the commission; the two earlier rejected projects. These, like the demesne proposals, emanated from Charles Bury. Both, arguably, point to Bury's concern to project status, grandiosity and magnificence. In Rome in 1789 Bury commissioned James Byres to design a Palladian mansion consisting of a three-storey-over-basement central block connected by quadrant links on both elevations to a pair of two-storey pavilions.[44] (figs 3.13 & 3.14) A large building (it had a total floor area over 37,000 feet), it was monumentally wide and without a central focus. The thirteen-bay central block was over 170 feet wide, while the width of the whole composition was about 440 feet. Heavy cornicing and balustrading on the main block, quadrants and pavilions emphasised the lateral extension of the design. It was an elongated version of a scheme Byres had produced in 1774 for Sir John Rous's Henham Hall, Suffolk, which had a more compactly planned central block and was only about 340 feet wide in total.[45] Byres's design for Charleville would have sat commandingly at the apex of Leggett's

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[43] Charleville Sale Catalogue 1948, lot 509, 5 oil paintings, Charleville Forest. Images exist of three of the paintings, titles of which were added later: *The river in the demesne at Charleville,* (signed and dated 1801) NGI, illustrated in Nicola Figgis & Brendan Rooney, *Irish paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 38-9; *The Gothic dairy at Charleville* (signed and dated 1801); and *The river on the Charleville estate* (signed and dated 1801) both illustrated in Crookshank, 'William Ashford', p. 126. A fourth painting, *The river with trees and a rustic bridge on the Charleville estate at Tullamore* (signed and dated 1801) is described by Crookshank and is in a private collection. The fifth is unknown. By the early twentieth century the paintings hung in the hall at Charleville.

[44] IAA, A/4/1-3, photographs of ground floor and first floor plans, elevation, transverse and longitudinal sections of proposal for 'Mr Bury's house' attributed to James Byres (Christie's 1985, lot 6).

[45] Hugh Honour, 'James Byres's designs for the rebuilding of Henham Hall' in Howard Colvin and John Harris (eds), *The country seat: studies in the history of the British country house* (London, 1970), pp 164–68.

proposed curving avenue, dominating the great expanse of parkland to north and south. (fig 3.15)

In 1797, nine years after he returned from Rome, Bury commissioned John Pentland to design a Gothic castle. (fig 3.16) It would have been a smaller building than Byers's (it had a total floor area of about 20,000 square feet) but, incorporating the stables into the overall design, was contrived in such a way as to present four substantial elevations to the demesne, the two longer (east and west) each being 268 feet, and two shorter each 170 feet.[46] (figs 3.17 & 3.18) The house itself had a U-shaped plan with staircases in two small circular towers at the re-entrant angles. This was connected to a larger U-shaped stable yard by walls fenestrated with blank windows to appear as one with the house. Wherever the intended location of the castle it would have presented a four-square figure, drawing all parts of the demesne to it. Apart from the long elevations, there was an attempt to combine substantial castellated features – four square corner towers and two towered gateways – with formality – repetitive details, rigid symmetry – and elaborate decoration that recalled mid-eighteenth-century Gothic; arched corbel tables, stepped battlements cresting, and friezes. These included quotations from James Cavanah Murphy's recently published book on Batalha Monastery in Portugal which were probably suggested by Bury who incorporated them in his own proposed elevations.[47] (figs 3.19–3.22.)

A contemporary letter relating to considered changes at Eaton Hall, Cheshire reveals that the Gothic style was regarded as conveying dynastic grandeur because of its relative expense. The letter of January 1803 was from William Porden advising his

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[46] IAA, Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/10–16, seven plans for proposed castle at Charleville, one basement plan (86/24/12) signed by John Pentland and dated 1797 (Christie's 1985, lot 12); IAA, A/6/11-14, photographs of four elevations for proposed castle at Charleville attributed to John Pentland [1797] (Christie's lot 11); IAA, Guinness Drawings Collection, 96/68/1–2, 'north front' signed CWT, [1797], & 'south front' attributed to C.W. Bury [1797]; IAA, A/6/10, photograph of south elevation, attributed to C.W. Bury (Christie's 1985, lot 14).

[47] Murphy, *Batalha*, plates titled 'Rails, cornices and arched modillions' and 'The north elevation of the church of Batalha'. Bury included cresting, frieze and arched corbel tables from Murphy's *Batalha* in two proposed south elevations (IAA, A/6/10, photograph of south elevation, attributed to C.W. Bury (Christie's 1985, lot 14) and IAA, Guinness Drawings Collection, 96/68/2, 'south front' attributed to C.W. Bury [1797]). These details are also found on Pentland's south elevation (IAA, A/6/11, photograph of south elevation for proposed castle at Charleville attributed to John Pentland [1797] (Christie's lot 11)). The detailing around the tower doors in one of Bury's south elevations was also taken from Murphy's *Batalha*, (Murphy *Batalha*, plate titled 'The entrance of the mausoleum of Emanuel the Great King of Portugal'; IAA, A/6/10, photograph of south elevation, attributed to C.W. Bury (Christie's 1985, lot 14).

client, Lord Grosvenor, to build in a Gothic style; 'Its [Gothic Architecture] expensiveness, or the opinion of its being so, has prevented it from becoming common as well as the difficulty there has been of getting workmen to execute it. It therefore is preferable on the score of preserving that distinction to Rank and Fortune, which it is the habit of the age to diminish. ... With regard to splendour it is far superior, and its variety is infinite. ... Add to all this, it appears as the work of our Ancestors and not of yesterday.'[48] The Earl of Carnarvon, advocating that his cousin the Earl of Pembroke commission a rich Gothic interior at Wilton in 1800, also showed a preference for conveying rank through conspicuous consumption; '... I have but one fear which is that you who do not feel the great difference between a Marquis and an Earl will not feel the wide distinction between a passage and a Cloyster, & be satisfied with too little Gothick ornament in that part. Stucco ornament ... is one of those things that is charged not in proportion to its real expence, but to its effect & is therefore to be got for a fourth of its common estimation'.[49]

The two grandeur-endowing qualities of Gothic suggested by these opinions – that it is elaborate, and that it embodies an implicit narrative extending far into the past – were articulated by Humphry Repton in *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening*. Repton was writing as a designer to a public of potential patrons, giving advice derived from the experience of specific projects. At Corsham Court Repton and Nash had used the southern, gabled, Elizabethan elevation, as the inspiration for their Gothic revival interventions that mixed castellations and ecclesiastical details. Repton argued that it made an appropriate setting for the established picture collection which would seem 'the old inhabitants of an ancient mansion, belonging to a still more ancient family'.[50] He went on to evoke the richness of Gothic revival design: 'there is a stateliness and grandeur in the lofty towers, the rich and splendid assemblage of turrets, battlements, and pinnacles, the bold depth of shadow produced by projecting buttresses, and the irregularity of outline in a large

[48] Quoted in Peter Lindfield, 'Porden's Eaton: William Porden's role in the development of Eaton Hall, Cheshire, 1802–1825', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 21 (2013), 153. Porden calculated that 'in *Grecian* Architecture, your House would be completed in *two* years, at an expense of £10,000; and in the Gothic that it would take up to 3 years, and cost £15000.'

[49] Wiltshire & Swindon Archives, Wilton House Archive, 2057/F7/3/1, TS of letter from Lord Carnarvon to Sidney Charles, Lord Herbert, later 16th Earl of Pembroke, [end of 1800] from *No beggarly peer* (*c*.1940).

[50] Repton, *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening*, p. 189.

Gothic building, unknown to the most perfect Grecian edifice.'[51] Elsewhere, Repton, employing a basic science of perception, explained why 'intricacy and variety of parts' could give the impression of grandeur: 'A perfect correspondence of two sides assists the mind in grasping the whole of a design on viewing only one-half; it therefore … lessens the apparent magnitude, while the difficulty with which dissimilar parts are viewed at once, increases the apparent dimensions'.[52] He also argued that houses which incorporate their outbuildings into asymmetric wings maximise their potential for grandeur.[53]

The picturesque was also preferred for castles in this period for aesthetic reasons. William Gilpin's criticism of the regularity of Enmore Castle in *Observations on the western parts of England* published in 1798 articulated this;

'The towers, which occupy the corners and middle of the curtains, are all of equal height, which gives the whole an unpleasing appearance … The old baronial castle, in its ancient state, even before it had received from time the beauties of ruin, was certainly a more pleasing object than we have in this imitation of it. … our ancestors had no idea of uniformity. If one tower was square and low, the other, perhaps, would be round and lofty. The curtain too was irregular, following the declivity or projection of the hill on which it stood. ... Nor were the windows more regular, either in form or function, than the internal parts of the castle, which they enlightened.'[54]

In this critique Gilpin imposes his aesthetic values on medieval architecture, assuming that the irregular character he preferred was inevitably found in medieval building. Gilpin, as we have seen, contributed significantly to the late eighteenth-century definition of a picturesque aesthetic for architecture which put a premium on irregularity and roughness. In his authoritative book on the picturesque published in 1794 Uvedale Price specified the features of Gothic that made it appear irregular and contributed to the impression of asymmetry even in a regular composition.[55] 'In Gothic

[51] Ibid., p. 189.
[52] Ibid., p. 198.
[53] Ibid., p. 174.
[54] William Gilpin, *Observations on the western parts of England …. Isle of Wight*, (London, 1798), pp 158–9.
[55] Uvedale Price, *An essay on the picturesque, as compared with the sublime and the beautiful*, 2 vols (London, 1794, new expanded ed. 1796).

buildings the outline of the summit presents such a variety of forms of turrets and pinnacles, some open, some fretted and variously enriched, that even where there is an exact correspondence of parts, it is often disguised by an appearance of splendid confusion and irregularity. In the doors and windows of Gothic churches the pointed arch has as much variety as any regular figure can well have'.[56]

Pentland's design for Bury was too regular to be picturesque. Three years later, however, Johnston was working on a design for Charleville Castle that was picturesque in character and siting. The surviving drawings suggest that this idea originated with the Burys. A rough sketch of an elevation to a courtyard plan, attributable to Catherine Tisdall (later Bury), reveals a change in taste from the highly decorated facades of the Pentland/Bury scheme towards one displaying a more authentically medieval spirit; battered corner towers, plain castellations and no extraneous decoration.[57] (fig 3.23) On the same page is a hesitant perspective sketch of an irregularly castellated bawn wall punctuated by towers and an arched gate. (fig 3.24)

It is highly likely that this new approach to Gothic emanated from Catherine, whom Bury had married in June 1798. We know that she would later design windows and interiors for the castle, and letters from Charles Bury reveals that she was engaged in the progress of construction.[58] But her role may have been more fundamental. Contemporaries seem to have been given different versions about whether it was the husband or wife who worked with Johnston. When construction began in November 1800 Louisa Conolly was told by Catherine that it was Charles. Louisa wrote; 'I am very glad to hear that you have begun your Castle for I think there are few occupations more entertaining than Building, & Lord Tullamore I am sure will enjoy it much, having planned it all himself.'[59] But in July 1812 Judge Robert Day, convincingly correcting himself in his diary, regarded Catherine as the motivator; 'Drive to

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[56] Quoted in Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: literary sources and interpretations through eight centuries* (New Jersey, 1960), p. 441.

[57] IAA, Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/5, verso, sketch of elevations to castle and perspective sketch of bawn, attributed to C.M. Tisdall [1797].

[58] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.202, 203, 204; Marlay Papers, MS My 80, 81, 82, 84, 87, 88, 89, letters from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury [Jan. 1805]–July 1808 reporting on the progress of work at Charleville Castle.

[59] Marlay Papers, MS My 27/1-2, letter from Lady Louisa Conolly to C.M. Bury 8 Nov. 1800. The idea that Charles had planned Charleville may have been promoted by Catherine wanting to deflect attention from herself.

Tullamore Forest where we are most courteously and kindly received by our noble host and his poor infirm lady, Lord and Lady Charleville. A magnificent castle, and on the cursory view I could take of it, admirably contrived. Does great credit to the taste and munificence of the noble owner, or rather of her ladyship, who I understand projected the whole under the auspices of Johnston, our Irish and very ingenious architect. She is distinguished for very fine taste in the arts, possesses a masculine understanding'.[60] Catherine had an aesthetic appreciation for picturesque castles, and a romantic sensibility that cast medieval buildings as conduits to the past, as was evident in her painting and correspondence discussed in chapter one. Although Charles shared her picturesque sensibility it was less pronounced.

Why might Gothic have appealed to the Burys as a means of projecting status through associations with the past? One possibility is that the Burys felt that their possessions were insecure. Niall Ó Ciosáin has argued that when title to land was the subject of Parliamentary debates on issues such as the Catholic Relief Acts in the early 1790s and the granting of the parliamentary franchise to Catholics, Protestants with planter backgrounds became uncomfortably aware of the insecurity of their possessions. He quoted John Fitzgibbon; 'The Act by which most of us hold our estates was an Act of violence – an Act subverting the first principles of the Common Law in England and Ireland. I speak of the Act of Settlement'.[61]

Bury, an MP in the 1790s, both of whose parents were from families which had been beneficiaries of confiscated property, may have felt the insecurity of his position. His extended family was derived from English settlers who had come to Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sir Thomas Moore (*d.* 1599) was an Elizabethan planter who was granted land and castles in King's County in 1577, including Croghan Castle (near Killenaule) where he lived, and Philipstown Castle, and was contracted to assist in the defence of King's County.[62] His son John (*d.* 1634) was a beneficiary of the early seventeenth-century grants of James I, which included the castle, town and lands

[60] Quoted in Gerald O'Carroll (ed.), *Robert Day: the diaries and the addresses to Grand Juries 1793-1829* (Tralee, 2004), pp 224–5.
[61] Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and popular culture in Ireland, 1750–1850* (Basingstoke & New York, 1997), p. 172. This probably refers to the Act of Settlement of 1652 in which land was confiscated to repay City of London loans and reward soldiers who had fought with Cromwell. It resulted in a drastic fall in the proportion of Catholic land holding in Ireland.
[62] Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2, pp 84–5.

of Tullamore in Ely O'Carroll territory, which were granted to Moore in 1622.[63] His descendant, Jane Moore, married into the Burys. From Oxfordshire, the Burys had benefited from the confiscation of Catholic property in the wake of Cromwell's mid-seventeenth century campaign. Phineas Bury received a grant of almost 6,000 acres in Co. Limerick in 1666 and 588 acres in Co Kerry in 1669.[64] One branch of the Burys established themselves as landowners in Co. Limerick where Phineas's second son built Shannongrove in 1710. It was his son, William, who married Jane Moore. Their son, John, Charles's father, married Catherine Sadleir, whose family was descended from a Cromwellian soldier granted confiscated properties in several Irish counties. The core of their estate was in north Tipperary where Catherine's father, Col. Francis Sadleir, rebuilt Sopwell Hall in 1745.[65]

We know that Bury was ambitious to advance socially and that this was what motivated him politically, for his ambition as a young man was transparent to contemporaries. When he stood for King's County in the 1790 general election a sceptical Castle official writing the Parliamentary List urged the freeholders not to vote for a man whom he characterised as inexperienced and ambitious: 'If the right to represent them [freeholders of King's County] is demanded as a species of family inheritance, arising not from attachment to superior worth and eminent abilities, but from subjugation to the possessor of extensive property; ... if it is evidently an object of ambition, in order to the attainment of honours ... which the representative of a considerable County might seem in some sort entitled to, had they ever been in a branch of his family: in all such cases the Freeholders are called upon ... to mark their independence ... by decisive actions.'[66] Bury was not elected.[67]

Central to Charles Bury's ambition was the restoration of the lost Irish peerage of Charles Moore, 1st Earl of Charleville, from whom he had gained his legacy. Charles Moore's father, John, MP for King's County, had gained a peerage in 1715, becoming

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[63] Lodge, Perrage of Ireland, vol. 2, p. 86.
[64] 'Bury (Shannongrove)' The Connacht landed estates database, [online] <landedestates.nuigalway.ie:8080> accessed 6 Feb. 2013.
[65] Knight of Glin, 'Francis Bindon; his life and works', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society,* 10:2&3 (April–Sept. 1967), 3–36.
[66] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament,* vol. 3, p. 332. Parliamentary lists were prepared for government by anonymous castle officials to give practical parliamentary information about each sitting MP.
[67] Instead, he was re-elected for Kilmallock in 1792 at a by-election, keeping his seat until 1797.

Baron Moore of Tullamoore [*sic*].[68] In 1718 he was granted the office of Muster-Master General. His son, Charles (1712–1764), who inherited in 1725, took his seat in Parliament in 1733, became Muster-Master General and Governor of King's County, and married an heiress, Hester Coghill in 1737. He was created 1st Earl of Charleville in 1758. It was his sister, Jane who married Charles Bury's grandfather.[69]

It is possible that it was when Bury began to realise this ambition to regain the peerage that his thoughts turned to a Gothic castle with its associational benefits. On 15 October 1797 he received the right to bear arms, and six weeks later, during the administration of the 2nd Earl of Camden, he was created Baron Tullamore of the 2nd creation, on the strength of documents proving his entitlement.[70] This was the year in which he commissioned Pentland to design a Gothic house. It was probably at this time that he commissioned the eponymous Camden Tower, no doubt built to celebrate Bury's elevation to the peerage, named after the viceroy who had presided over his promotion. Bury made a direct link with the Moores in this building by re-setting a stone plaque decorated with the Moore coat of arms below the first floor window to the tower. (fig 3.25) The coat of arms is depicted in the top half of the central shield, with, in the second half, an escutcheon of pretence of the arms of the daughter of Sir William Sambach who married John Moore (d.1699), giving the plaque a roughly mid-seventeenth-century date.[71] It is a fine piece of carving and was probably taken from a chimneypiece, perhaps from Croghan Castle.[72] The congruence of mid-seventeenth-century family heraldry from what was probably the late sixteenth-century Moore castle with the elegant architectural reference to an Irish tower house of the same period suggests that Bury was planting Moores in Charleville; this was now to be the locus of his family's identity.

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[68] Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 89.
[69] Lodge, *Peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 91.
[70] NLI, Genealogical Office, MS 103 p.153 (microfilm: P 8290), 'Confirmation of arms to Charles William Bury Oct. 15 1797'.
[71] An escutcheon of pretence is a shield bearing arms assumed by marriage. Sir William Sambach was the Attorney-General of Ireland. The Sambach (same as Sandbach) coat of arms has a fess (horizontal lines) or sometimes a bend (diagonal lines) between three garbs or (garb is a sheaf of grain). The escutcheon of pretence appears to be quartered, 1st and 4th Sambach and 2nd and 3rd Moore. Interpretation from Katy Lumsden.
[72] Croghan Castle is recorded on the sixteenth-century 'Cotton' map as a gabled building, probably a tower house, see J.H. Andrews and Rolf Loeber, 'An Elizabethan map of Leix and Offaly: cartography, topography and architecture' in William Nolan & Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin, 1998), p. 267.

Another reason why Bury wanted to build a castle in 1797 may have been the influence of his patron, the 2nd Earl of Camden. Camden would commission Humphry Repton to consider the building of a castle in the grounds at Bayham, Kent in the early 1800s. This would result in a Red Book, much of the content of which was published in Repton's *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* in 1803. It is possible that some of the ideas that Repton discussed in relation to Bayham had been discussed with Camden and maybe Bury. Repton's rationale for a castle at Bayham certainly echoes Bury's likely thought process; he wrote that because Bayham was to be considered as an established mansion of an English nobleman's family 'its character, therefore, should be that of greatness and durability.'[73]

Bury's social ascent continued. On 29 December 1800 he became Viscount Charleville as a reward for supporting the Union.[74] In 1803 he petitioned the first Union viceroy, the 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, to elevate him to the position of Earl of Charleville based on his great-uncle's title, and in November 1805 Hardwicke recommended his elevation to the home secretary.[75] This was followed by nail-biting attendances at Dublin Castle, culminating in the granting of the earldom on 8 February 1806: 'I just write one line to salute you Countess. – Our Patents are sealed & enrolled'.[76]

The Charlevilles had the means and financial acumen to aspire to grandeur. When Bury came of age in June 1785 he had a regular income of over £14,000 per year from his estates in Limerick, Tipperary, Dublin and King's County and no substantial debts.[77]

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[73] Repton, *Observations*, p. 204.

[74] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 3 p. 332. Bury had purchased the pocket borough of Carlow in 1795, but it was not disenfranchised at the Union (Ibid., p. 332) so Bury did not receive the £7,500 compensation given per disenfranchised borough that men such 2nd Earl of Longford of Pakenham Hall received (he gained £15,000) and which encouraged his subsequent building programme (Eliza Pakenham, *Soldier, sailor: an intimate portrait of an Irish family* (London, 2007), pp 47, 71).

[75] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35772, copy of a letter from 3rd Earl of Hardwicke to William Wickham 23 May 1803; NA, Home Office correspondence on civil affairs: Ireland, HO 100/130, p. 22, letter from 3rd Earl of Hardwicke to Lord Hawkesbury 6 Nov. 1805.

[76] Bury diary, 30 Nov. 1802, 21 Dec. 1802, ff 10v, 12r; Marlay Papers, MS My 85, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Feb [1806]; Marlay Papers, MS My 86, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 8 Feb. [1806].

[77] NLI, Dunalley Papers, MS 29,806 (179), 'Accounts by guardian of Charles William Bury esq re Dublin and Shannongrove estates, 7 July 1785' reveals that he received about £2,400 a year from Shannongrove and £700 a year from his Dublin estates. Howard Bury Collection courtesy of Westmeath County Library & Archives Service, P1/24 'Particulars of Lord Charleville's estates in Ireland', [mid-1830s], gives his income from Kings County as about £9,000 a year, income from his County Limerick estate (Shannongrove) as £5,000–£7,000 a year (with a potential of £9,000 a year) and income from County Tipperary estate (Sopwell Hall) as £1,200–£1,300 a year, making a total of over £15,000. Michael Byrne

When he married Catherine he allied himself to a prudent woman of independent means; the recent widow of James Tisdall (d.1797) and the heiress of Thomas Townley Dawson (1732–1794) of Armagh.[78] Her first husband's estate was indebted and she would use her Dawson and Saunders (her mother's family) legacies to pay off the debt so that her son by her first marriage should inherit an unencumbered estate.[79] Worldly, with a carefully calibrated sense of Bury wealth, she joined with her husband in the extravagant enterprise of castle building, but she was careful in her personal expenditure and together they could economise in the running of the household.[80]

Literary evidence in the form of a poem eulogising Charleville reveals that status was central to the Burys' conception of the castle and estate.[81] Signed by John Doran but undated, it is likely that *A poem on Charleville* was commissioned to coincide with the visit of the viceroy in 1809 to complement the effect of the architecture. It is broadly modelled on the commendatory poems of the seventeenth century, of which Ben Jonson's *To Penshurst* was one of the first and most well known. The purpose of these poems was to celebrate country houses and the life they sustained to encourage nobles to return to their estates.[82] The houses were depicted – rhetorically – as pre-classical, homely, rooted in their locality.

'Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roofe of gold:
Thou hast no lantherne, whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudg'd at, art reverenc'd the while.'[83]

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estimated the income in 1835 from the estates in King's County, Limerick, Tipperary and Dublin to be £15,959, which, when provision for tithes, rents, agencies and charities of £1,657 are deducted, leaves a net income of about £14,302 (Michael Byrne, 'The development of Tullamore 1700-1921', (M.Litt, TCD, 1979)).

[78] Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 23–7, 45–50.

[79] Ibid., pp 49–50.

[80] In a letter dated 30 Jan. 1806, C.W. Bury wrote, 'The Dean has not been so magnificent in his loans, & we shall find it difficult to keep two footmen, without a supply from hence' (Marlay Papers, MS My 84).

[81] *A poem on Charleville*.

[82] Lubbock, *The tyranny of taste*, pp 149–52.

[83] From Ben Jonson, *To Penshurst*, in George Burke Johnston (ed), *Poems of Ben Jonson* (London, 1954) p. 76, lines 1–6.

Like *To Penshurst*, *A poem on Charleville* is written in heroic couplets, and, like the seventeenth-century poem, the first half sings of the natural beauty of the lands, while the second half praises the family. To revive such a prestigious form and apply it to Charleville was to associate Charleville with houses that were famed for their rootedness.

This model also informed the content of the poem which, instead of making the contemporary equation between barons, castles and power, concentrates on Charleville as a pastoral idyll, productive and peaceful. Castellar strength in *A poem on Charleville* is a comfortable future promise rather than a hard-won historic fact; 'This castle proud distains to be surpassed/A Gothic work that will for ages last'.[84] Its sturdiness is assumed rather than trumpeted.

Another model for the poem was Edmund Spenser's late sixteenth-century, *The faerie queene*, in which Spenser cast poetic glory on Queen Elizabeth I through the medium of medieval courtly romances.[85] In the opening lines to *A poem on Charleville* Doran refers to himself as the poet Edmund Spenser and Lady Charleville as 'our fairy queen'. This ploy sets Charleville in a never-never land of ancient glory, allowing Doran to refer freely to 'old Charleville' and 'Famed Charleville's long line of majesty', ignoring the fact that the family had lived there for less than 70 years, including the 21 years of Bury's minority when the estate was rented to a Mr Johnston.[86]

A poem on Charleville also has room for the less exalted, and refers to the provision of modern amenities such as water closets.[87] Comfort was fundamental to the building of Charleville: Johnston's words in his 1820 letter to Brewer were that Charleville was a building 'imitating as near as modern convenience and comfort would admit an old

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[84] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 53 and 54.

[85] *The faerie queene* also championed the well-ordered country estate in preference to the sophisticated luxury of court life (Robert Welch, *The Oxford companion to Irish literature* (Oxford, 1996), p. 532.

[86] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 12 and 42. References to Mr Johnston in Arthur Young, *Arthur Young's tour in Ireland (1776-1779)*, ed. Arthur Wollaston Hutton, vol. 1 (London, 1892), pp. 61—5; NLI, Dunalley Papers, MS 29,806 (179), 'Accounts by Guardian of Charles William Bury esq re Dublin and Shannongrove estates, 1785', 7 July 1785.

[87] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 64–5: water 'And from the fountain to the kitchen grate/Gives motion go the jack and roasts the meat.'

British castle'.[88] In a description of Redwood, the seventeenth-century house that he had inherited, Bury evoked an old, sturdy building that had outlived its usefulness:

'Near where the Gothic Castle now stands was the original mansion House, built shortly after the year 1641, according to the fashion of that time, with many small and ill-connected apartments, but on the whole not destitute of much comfort & convenience. The interior divisions were uniformly constructed by strong partitions of Oak, probably the growth of the soil, and very liberally supplied … Tho' long the seat of Hospitality and occasionally filled with numbers of the friends & followers of the Family to such amount that the fastidiousness of modern times can ill account for their accommodations'.[89]

Eighteenth-century patrons and observers were unanimous in their opinion that a new house must be modern. What this meant is not easy to gauge as terms were often vague and unanimity masks differences in emphasis. There is often an allusion to physical comfort.[90] Horace Walpole alluded to this when he wrote of Strawberry Hill; 'In truth I did not mean to make my house so Gothic as to exclude convenience, and modern refinement in luxury.'[91] William Gilpin referred more specifically to contemporary planning conventions and spaciousness: 'We are amused with looking into these mansions of antiquity as objects of curiosity, but should never think of comparing them in point of convenience with the great houses of modern taste in which the hall and the saloon fill the eye on our entrance; are notable reservoirs of air; and grand antechambers to the several rooms of state that divide on each hand from them.'[92]

For many patrons, such as the young Lord Longford of Pakenham Hall, comfort was equated with classicism. On his visit to Inveraray Castle in 1793 he thought the Duke of

[88] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', p. 4.
[89] Bury's account of Charleville.
[90] The debate was about servicing modern life rather than devising a style which was expressive of modernity. The exception was Richard Payne Knight, who advocated a mixture of styles to both accommodate practical needs and satisfy the demand for contemporary character: 'A house may be adorned with towers and battlements, or pinnacles and flying buttresses; but it should still maintain the character of the age and country, in which it is erected; and not pretend to be a fortress or monastery of a remote period or distant country' (quoted in S. Lang, 'Richard Payne Knight and the idea of modernity' in John Summerson (ed), *Concerning architecture: essays on architectural writers and writing presented to Nikolaus Pevsner* (London, 1968), p. 91).
[91] Walpole, A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (1784), p. 397.
[92] From *Excursions*, 1800, quoted in Moir, *The discovery of Britain,* p. 64.

Argyll had the best of both worlds, a cut stone battlemented Gothic exterior perfectly suited to its landscape setting and a classical interior in which 'the windows are large the rooms large, well proportioned, and most superbly fitted up'.[93] This duality had been pioneered by Richard Payne Knight at Downton Castle in 1771. He advocated it in his influential *An analytical inquiry into the principles of taste*, first published in 1805, noting that his house 'ornamented with what are called Gothic towers and battlements without, and Grecian ceilings, columns, and entablatures within' gave him 'at once, the advantage of a picturesque object, and of an elegant and convenient dwelling'.[94]

Interior light and space implied large windows. This impacted on the façade, compromising castellar authenticity and introducing the problem of detailing. Repton, writing about Wyatt's aims in 1803, suggested that it was not only the windows but the entire design that had to be modified to marry Gothic references with modern comfort; '[he] introduced a style which is neither Grecian nor Gothic but which is now become so prevalent that it may be called *Modern Gothic*. The details are often correctly Gothic, but the outline is Grecian.'[95] The 5th Earl of Essex, who employed James Wyatt to Gothicise Cassiobury Park from 1801 to 1805, was also an advocate of 'modern Gothic'. 'The beauty of modern Gothic is the simplicity of the style' he wrote in 1805 to Sir William Lowther, who would commission Robert Smirke to castellate Lowther Hall.[96] Like many patrons, Essex considered that only sash windows could guarantee contemporary standards of comfort, and advocated a design for a sash window in a new castle that would suggest that it was the modernising of an older window: '... the South Window [sketch of square window divided into three over-three-panes] with the label over it thus has the best effect possible, and shows that other windows ... existed ... where the sash now is'.[97]

Some, attuned to changes in castle design during the middle ages, were aware that the towered and turreted fourteenth-century houses had no need to function as defensive structures and aspired to be comfortable palaces, only aping castles for the associated

[93] Tullynally Castle, Co Westmeath, Longford MSS, T3763/N/2, Thomas Pakenham, 'Tour in south and west Scotland 1793', p. 14r.
[94] Quoted in Lang, 'Richard Payne Knight and the idea of modernity', pp 85–6.
[95] Quoted in Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p.
[96] Cumbria Archive Centre, Carlisle, Lonsdale Collection, D/LONS/L1/2/8, letter from Lord Essex to Sir William Lowther, 9 Dec. 1800.
[97] Ibid.

prestige. This was pointed out in a paper read to the London Society of Antiquaries and subsequently published in 1789 by the antiquarian, Richard Gough.[98] In a memo on the future design of Windsor Castle written in 1824 and published anonymously in 1826, Charles Long outlined the design implications of this medieval development:' … as Castles afterwards became less important as places of defence, the external Appearance gradually changed … the stern grandeur of the Castle Character yielded in some degree to the more elegant and decorative style of the inhabited Mansion. Among the best specimens of the mixed Character are Raby, Lumley, Thornbury, Warwick, Oxburgh, Wingfield Manor, Brancepeth, Hampton Court in Herefordshire etc'[99] In *Observations* Repton designated these types of buildings as '*House* Gothic', arguing that they were often the best models for new houses.[100] The alternatives were: '*Castle* Gothic', which, he argued, meant windows that were too small; and '*Church* Gothic', stylistically inappropriate and with over large windows. Repton outlined the accommodation required by modern life – eating room, library, drawing room or salon, music room, billiard room, conservatory, boudoirs, wardrobes, hot and cold baths, instead of gallery, chapel, small parlours, small closets.[101] '… let us …never forget', he wrote of Bayham Castle, 'that we are building a *house*', and that although castle Gothic is more appropriate than church or house Gothic, it 'is surely allowable to blend with the magnificence of this character the advantages of the other two, as well the elegance, the comfort, and the convenience of modern habitation.'[102] Bury articulated his aspiration to unite the antiquarian with modern standards of comfort by quoting Walpole: 'In truth I did not mean to make my House so Gothic as to exclude convenience & modern refinements in luxury. The design of the inside and outside are strictly ancient, but the decorations are modern.'[103] This would be translated into a unique solution at Charleville.

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[98] Richard Gough, *Description of two antient mansion houses in Northamptonshire and Dorset. Read at the Society of Antiquaries, Dec, 3, 1789* (London, 1789) It refers to Longuevilles Manor, Little Billing, Northants and Great Canford, Dorset.

[99] Quoted in Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works vol. 6*, p. 382.

[100] Repton, *Observations*, p. 190.

[101] Ibid., pp 178–9.

[102] Ibid., pp 207–8.

[103] Bury's account of Charleville. Only 300 copies were printed of the two editions of Walpole, A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (1774 and 1784) during Walpole's lifetime (d.1797) most of which were circulated to friends. Lady Louisa Conolly, a friend of Walpole and of the Burys, may have possessed a copy and leant it to the Burys (Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel').

Finally, the question of defence. Neo-medieval castles built according to the dictates of early nineteenth-century aesthetics were obviously not intended to be militarily effective. But Charleville was conceived when the threat of raids and, at worst, the fear of insurrection fuelled by a French invasion, was strong. As the United Irishmen became a threat in 1797 – in April 1797 *Saunder's Newsletter* reported large increases in numbers, arms raids and assassinations – some property owners had responded by converting their houses into 'garrisons', barricading their windows and doors and sinking gun ports into their walls.[104]

Part of Dublin Castle's response to the threat of a French invasion and the prospect of concurrent insurrection in 1796 had been to form a yeomanry, with the first commissions issued in October.[105] This was Camden's initiative. It was taken up by Bury, who became a captain of the Tullamore Cavalry, responsible for raising the corps; another political bond between Viceroy and aspiring peer.[106] During 1798, especially in August when the French landed in Mayo and crossed Ireland to the north of King's County, Bury was with the Yeomen, though it is not known whether he saw active service in a county that was little affected by the fighting.[107] After the defeat of the French in Longford in September 1798 the propertied and Protestant in this area continued to crave military protection, according to a report on Christmas Eve 1798; 'in most parts of the King's and Queen's Counties, Carlow and Kildare, no protestant or person suspected to be well affected to Government can venture to sleep in a house that is not protected by the neighbourhood of the soldiery'.[108] The idea of constructing a keep surrounded by a bastion wall with a potentially defensive function cannot be ruled out. As realised, the bastion wall was only a few feet high, but it stood over a fifteen-foot external perimeter ditch which was an effective deterrent, not to guns, but to intruders.

However, while not ruling out a purposeful element of protectiveness from a robustly designed house, Charleville Castle was intended primarily as a modern habitation

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[104] Report from tour of home circuit by Judge Robert Day quoted in Ruán O'Donnell, 'King's County in 1798' in Willam Nolan & Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin, 1998), p. 490.
[105] Allan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998), pp 50, 74.
[106] O'Donnell, 'King's County', p. 509. There were 13 cavalry and 4 infantry divisions in the King's County Yeomanry.
[107] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 53.
[108] Quoted in O'Donnell, 'King's County', p. 507.

whose generic, scenic architecture managed to both conjure the idea of an old British castle linking it semantically with the past and to root it securely in its Irish demesne.

Fabric: form

Charleville Castle as designed and built between 1800 and 1809 resulted from the collaboration of Francis Johnston, Lord and Lady Charleville. The surviving sources enable some untangling of their various roles, and reveal how they produced a design whose ambition, image and expressiveness realised the patrons' intentions. This is perhaps surprising given that when the Burys commissioned Johnston to design a new house in the castle style they were engaging an architect whose domestic work was entirely associated with classicism, a style in which, at Townley Hall, Co. Louth, he was excelling.[109] However, with a number of simultaneous commissions during the period of his work at Charleville, Johnston was developing rapidly as an architect of Gothic revival castles.

From 1800 to 1806 Johnston had acquired seven patrons interested in castle building: 3rd Earl of Lanesborough and David La Touche at St Catherine's House, Co. Kildare; 8th Earl of Fingall at Killeen Castle, Co. Meath; Marquess of Headfort at Headfort, Co. Meath; Joshua Edward Cooper at Markree Castle, Co. Sligo; Francis Synge at Glanmore Castle. Co. Wicklow; 2nd Earl of Longford at Pakenham Hall, Co. Westmeath.[110] These patrons were demonstrably cautious. Some came by degrees to the idea of a fully gothicised exterior, and all, except Fingall, looked for alterations and extensions to existing classical buildings. All wanted classical interiors. In several cases their successors would invest heavily in large additions in castellated and collegiate Gothic styles.[111]

These patrons played a significant role in the projects. Johnston's proposal for La Touche at St Catherine's was different in style, as well as scale, from Lanesborough's

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[109] See assessment in Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, pp 503–8.

[110] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection drawings: 92/46.1075 (St Catherine's, Feb 1800), no 897, (Killeen Castle Jan. 1802); no 879 (Headford, Feb. 1802); no 1079 (St Catherine's Nov. 1802); no 947 (Markree, Feb. 1803); no 1201 (Pakenham Hall, July 1806). NLI, MS1433 (Glanmore, May 1804).

[111] Pakenham Hall would be altered by James Shiel (1820–35) and significantly extended by Richard Morrison (*c*.1842–8); Johnston's scheme at St Catherine's for LaTouche included a new gateway and chapel; Markree would be reordered and extended by James Maitland Wardrop (1866); Killeen would be extended and altered by James Shiel (1840–2).

commission for the same house, while Johnston's solution to the problem of Gothicising a four-square house varied in response to patron resources and taste; Cooper greatly extended his house at Markree and the result was symmetrical, regular, substantial-looking and grand, whereas Longford only added corner round towers and a gateway at Pakenham Hall which was picturesque, asymmetrical and uneven at roof level.

However, it is also clear from Johnston's surviving drawings for his castle schemes that he was developing a vocabulary of domestic Gothic revival design between 1800 and 1806. Early attempts tend to be more regular, (fig 3.26) while reconsideration often produced picturesqueness: the later designs at Pakenham Hall (1806) and St Catherine's (November 1802) have broken rooflines and one or more asymmetrical facades. (figs 3.27–3.28) Johnston showed a preference for variations on Tudor fenestration. This was the almost inevitable by-product of Gothicising Georgian sashes by converting them to mullioned and transomed windows often overhung by label mouldings. But he used similar windows in the new work at Killeen. (fig 2.39) There was a desire to vary the fenestration. In earlier schemes for Pakenham Hall and Killeen this can look arbitrary. Later he grounded variety in purpose – arched windows might be found on a central bay (St Catherine's south façade (fig 3.29)), in a chapel (St Catherine's east façade) (fig 3.28), on the ground floor (Pakenham Hall) (fig. 3.27), in a tower or on a gateway (Pakenham Hall), while there were round windows for the central bays of the semi-basement in Markree. (fig 3.30)

Symmetry was an integral part of his designs and Johnston devised various ways to emphasise the central bays. This might be marked by an arched corbel table, decorative cross loops and arched windows (St Catherine's in November 1802, Markree February 1803). (figs 3.29 & 3.30) Often there was a battlemented porch sheltering a Tudor doorway (Pakenham Hall *c.*1806 and *c.*1806, Killeen). (fig 3.26, 3.27, 2.39) In the final design at Charleville of 1801 the porch, enlarged to encompass a perpendicular window, appeared to partly obscure the first-floor window above.[112] (fig 3.31) This was awkward. At Killeen in February 1803, where the façade was broken into a series of

[112] An early date for the design of the porch is spring 1801 (IAA, Murray drawings, 92/46.200, 'Working sketches for building the basement storey of Charleville Castle', signed F. Johnston and dated 3 Feb. 1801); by August 1802 the detailed design of the Perpendicular window above was being discussed (NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,348 (1), letter from C.M. Bury to Frederick Trench 28 Aug. 1802).

towers, Johnston set a porte-cochère in front of a richly fenestrated recessed bay defined by a four-centred arch under prominent battlements, resolving the ideas suggested at Charleville in a strongly conceived design.[113] (fig 3.32) In Wales in 1796 Johnston had revealed a feeling for the massiveness and strength of medieval design, and this is the quality that emerges in his most accomplished designs – the battered round towers added to Pakenham Hall, with their substantial girth and knotty projecting battlements; the plain and massive garden front at Markree. He avoided ecclesiastically-derived detailing associated with mid-eighteenth-century designers such as ogee arches, quatrefoils, and clustered columns on facades, restricting his decorative vocabulary to detail found on medieval castles: cross loops, arched corbel tables (though these were seldom realised), label mouldings, and corbelled battlements.[114]

The Charlevilles stand out as patrons of Gothic in early post-Union Ireland with their commission for a new house with a Gothic interior.[115] But it went further than this. Bury came to Johnston with personal design experience, both Charlevilles suggested models from a diversity of sources, engaged with Johnston in the design process and held up contemporary standards for Johnston. Surviving sketches attributed to Catherine Bury suggest that a dialogue existed between the Burys and Johnston as the design was developed. There is an early plan which suggests that Catherine proposed the round tower to the north-east, and early perspective sketches attributed to Catherine that explore the massing of the castle.[116] (figs 3.33 & 3.69) A perspective by Catherine, which shows the final massing, includes details which Johnston initially adopted (arched corbel table, battlements decorated with loop hopes) (figs 3.66, 3.71, 3.78) but later modified or abandoned.[117] (figs 3.67 & 3.68) The use of medieval models had been

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[113] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.905, elevation of principle façade, Killeen Castle, dated Feb. 1803.

[114] Armagh County Museum, *Tour diary*, p. 2r.

[115] Charleville Castle had the first fully revival interior in Ireland.

[116] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.196, sketch plan of proposed first floor of a castle, attributed to C.M. Bury, [1800]). For early sketches exploring the massing of Charleville by C.M. Bury see IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/17, perspective sketch of proposed castle from north-east attrib. to C.M. Bury, [1800]; IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.194, perspective sketch of proposed castle, attrib. to C.M. Bury [1800]. All attributions discussed in appendix 1.1.

[117] For sketch of early version of the final scheme by C.M. Bury see perspective design sketch, attrib. to C.M. Bury, [1800–1801], from Laffan & Monkhouse (eds), *Ireland: crossroads of art and design*, fig 23. For sketches by Johnston which include similar details to C.M. Bury's sketch see IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197 recto and verso, proposed part elevation of rear (south) façade, Francis Johnston [1800–1801]. For drawings by Johnston which show details as executed, see IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.199, proposed elevation of west façade, Francis Johnston [1801]; IAA, RIAI Murray

sanctioned by Horace Walpole in his *Description* of Strawberry Hill.[118] Walpole, using prints, and not concerned to match like with like, advocated ecclesiastical sources for new domestic work, altering scale and context. In his unfinished description of Charleville, Bury copied a passage in Walpole's *Description* that advocated this: 'The view – to exhibit specimens of Gothic architecture, as collected from Cathedrals and Chapel-tombs, and to show how they may be apply'd to Chimney Pieces, Ceilings, windows, balustrades, etc.'[119]

There is evidence that the Charlevilles did consult medieval and sixteenth-century sources in much the way that Walpole did. Catherine sketched details from life for the new castle. The 'fine charming piece of statuary marble gilt dated 1571' in the gatehouse at Kenilworth Castle which Catherine described to Trench was an example; 'I took a correct sketch for our eating room'.[120] We have seen that Bury extracted decorative details – cresting, frieze and cornicing – from Murphy's *Batalha* for the south elevation of the 1797 scheme for Charleville, transposing ecclesiastical details to a domestic building.[121] (figs 3.19–3.22) Bury no doubt encouraged Johnston to use *Batalha* drawings in his design for the gallery and library: Murphy's drawings inspired the cresting and frieze on the gallery chimney overmantles, the superimposition of varied arches and the detail of interlinked circles in the gallery door, and the central roof boss in the library.[122] (figs 3.34–3.37)

The Burys not only consulted medieval work for interior fittings and decorative detail. The basic model for the keep – a quadrangular battlemented structure with corner towers – may have derived from medieval castles such as late fourteenth-century Bodiam Castle, Sussex (though this was rectangular and had an imposing towered gateway), or Lulworth Castle, Dorset, an early seventeenth-century three-bay square

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Collection, 92/46.198, proposed elevation of east façade, Francis Johnston [1801]. All discussed in appendix 1.1.

[118] Walpole, A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (1784), p. 395.

[119] Bury's account of Charleville. Bury's extract was unreferenced and had minor alterations. Dallaway advocated Strawberry Hill as a model in 1806 (Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture,* p. 82).

[120] NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2 Aug. [1802]). There is no evidence that it was used.

[121] Bury's attention may have been drawn to the book by his friends in the Society of Dilettanti.

[122] See note 47. Detail of frieze and cresting drawn at large scale was included in Murphy, *Batalha*, plate titled 'Rails, cornices and arched modillions'. Detail of roof boss in Murphy, *Batalha*, plate titled 'Ornaments and motos'. The door details in Murphy, *Batalha*, plate titled, 'The entrance to the mausoleum of Emanuel the Great, King of Portugal'.

symmetrical building with large round towers at the four corners, no gateway, and a viewing platform on the roof defined by four turrets which was known to the Burys.[123] Warwick Castle inspired the massing of Charleville. Or, more precisely, it is likely that Paul Sandby's perspective drawing of Warwick in *One hundred and fifty select views* was the catalyst for the design.[124] (fig 3.38) A comparison with an early proposal for Charleville attributed to Catherine shows her not only imitating the clover-leaf design of 'Ceasar's tower' and the octagonal form of 'Guy's tower', but reproducing their relationship to each other and with the central gatehouse.[125] (fig 3.33) This gatehouse appears to be set back in Sandby's drawing, and is transposed into a tower projecting from the centre of the 'keep' in the proposed design for Charleville. As we have seen Warwick Castle was regarded by the Charlevilles as the acme of Gothic architecture. It had also been cited by Repton in his passage on Bayham in *Observations* as one of the 'great mansions ... the proud baronial retreat "of the times of old".[126] He also advocated it as a model for new houses pointing out that it 'has been adapted to the purposes of modern habitation'.[127] Its details were quarried by contemporaries, particularly Guy's tower, admired for its lightness in comparison to heavy Norman towers, for its picturesque qualities and for its associations with baronial residences.[128] We know that the Charlevilles shared an interest in Warwick with Frederick Trench, who had probably been inspired by it for his castellated gateway at Heywood.[129] (fig 3.39) However,

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[123] There is a record that they visited Lulworth Castle on 6 Oct. 1802 (Bury diary, f. 6v); but they may have visited previously because of their connections in the area.
[124] Sandby, *A collection of one hundred and fifty select views*, vol. 2, pl 71. They probably pssessed this book, see chapter 1.
[125] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.194, perspective sketch of proposed castle, attributed to C.M. Bury [1800], shows clover-leaf tower to SW and octagonal tower to NE; IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/17, perspective sketch of proposed castle, attributed to C.M. Bury, [1800], (Christie's lot 15), shows clover-leaf tower to NE (where round tower would be in realised design) and octagonal tower to NW (as realised); IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.195, sketch plan, first floor, attributed to Francis Johnston [1800], shows towers as in perspective sketch 86/24/17. Pakenham observed that Sandby's view of Warwick from the SE which he referenced to a private collection could have been a source for the individual towers (Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel').
[126] Repton, *Observations*, p. 207. See above for the Charlevilles' possible privileged access to ideas for Bayham.
[127] Ibid., p. 207.
[128] Dallaway, *Observations*, p. 98. In a letter that the landscape painter, Joseph Farington (1747-1821) wrote to Robert Smirke, senior, from Warwick on 16 Aug. 1801 he described Warwick Castle as 'a fine specimen of an old Baronial residence and from many points very picturesque' (RIBA, Drawings and Archives Collections, Smirke Family Papers, SMK.1/2). Sanderson Miller had based his octagonal castellated tower at Radway, Warwickshire in 1745–7 on it (James Steven Curl, *Georgian architecture in the British Isles 1714-1830* (2nd expanded ed. London, 2011), p. 85). The octagonal tower was a lynch pin of several of John Nash's asymmetric castles including East Cowes (*c.*1798), Luscombe (1799), Lough Cutra (1811), and in the larger scale composition of Ravensworth (begun 1807).
[129] C.M. Bury sent an image of Warwick Castle to Trench by John Dees, (NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,348 (1), letter from C.M. Bury to Frederick Trench 28 Aug. 1802).

rather than abstracting single features from Warwick Castle, the Burys seem to have represented the entire image of the castle as transmitted by Paul Sandby, suggesting that 'an old British castle' was at least partially a reference to this specific example. Another likely inspiration for the massing of Charleville was Inveraray Castle, the seat of the Duke of Argyll, designed by Roger Morris in 1745, particularly the central tower. (fig 3.40) Like the Inveraray tower, that on Charleville has pointed arch openings, though the flanking features were omitted in Charleville.[130] (fig 3.41) Inveraray's central tower emerging from a quadrangular keep was also a popular source for the Burys' contemporaries.[131] A high-profile imitation was made by a kinsman of the Duke of Argyll, 4th Earl of Breadalbane, for the main block of Taymouth Castle, Perthshire, a quadrangular keep with round corner towers and a central tower, construction on which began six years after Charleville.[132]

The Bury's reference to Inveraray was an acknowledgment of more recent Gothic revival design. They probably also looked at eighteenth-century work at Warwick Castle: the plastered quadripartite vault supported on clustered colonettes in the corridor between the state rooms and the chapel in Warwick may have been the inspiration for the vaulting in the entrance hall, (figs 3.42 & 3.43) while the ogee-headed doors may have been suggested by the ogee door to the chapel at Warwick. Alternatively, plates in Batty Langley's *Ancient architecture restored* may have been the inspiration for the clustered colonettes used to 'support' the ribbed vaulting in the hall.[133] (fig 3.44) It is not known whether the Charlevilles knew the Dowager Countess of Pomfret, but the fan vaulting in the gallery at Charleville has striking similarities to that in the 'Great Room'

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[130] Inveraray castle was described and illustrated in Gilpin, *Observations on the highlands of Scotland,* vol. 1, pp 181, 184–5. Gilpin criticised the two wings on the central tower. This book was listed as part of Bury's library in 1799 (Bury library catalogue). Roger Morris's plans and elevation were illustrated in William Adam, *Vitruvius Scoticus* (Edinburgh, 1811) though the plates had been printed by 1766 and may have been available (Eileen Harris assisted by Nicholas Savage, *British architectural books and writers, 1556-1785* (Cambridge, 1990), pp 94–104). In Charleville the central tower functioned as a lantern to light the upper floor and as a belvedere containing stone seats from which to view the landscape.

[131] Inveraray Castle was a likely influence on Robert Smirke's designs for Lowther Castle, Westmoreland (1806) and Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire (1811), William Burn's design for Blairquhan Castle, Ayrshire (1820), James Gillespie's The Lee Lanarkshire (1820).

[132] James Macaulay, *The Gothic revival 1745-1845* (Glasgow and London, 1975) pp 193–8.

[133] Langley, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved*, plates 27, 29, 31, 32.

of the Gothic revival house she built and decorated in London at No 18 Arlington Street from 1757–60.[134] (figs 3.45 & 3.46)

But their most consistently used eighteenth-century source was Strawberry Hill.[135] There is evidence they referred to Walpole's engravings from the *Description*: the flower-decorated diamond pattern on the drawing room ceiling at Charleville derived from the engraving rather than the finished library ceiling at Strawberry Hill.[136] (figs 3.47 & 3.48) It is likely they sketched details when they visited the house in July 1802.[137] Their advocacy of Strawberry Hill is evident in two alternative sketch designs by Catherine for the interior of the hall and gallery which show the influence of the engraving of the staircase in Walpole's *Description*: the balustrading is similar, and the wall decoration in the upper scheme is based on the view of the armory at Strawberry Hill seen from the stair.[138] (figs 3.49–3.52) Strawberry Hill influence at Charleville can be found in the library bookcases, which share the idea of ogee arches and crocketed pinnacles with John Chute's designs for Walpole. (figs 3.48 & 3.53) It is evident in the boudoir in the round tower where semi-circular and square-shaped recesses alternate and the vault rises to a golden star recalling the Tribune at Strawberry Hill; both rooms quasi chapels. (figs 3.54, 3.55, 3.86) The eight-leaved figure motif used for the dado in the dining room and as a display for family crests under the windows in the gallery and on the dining room ceiling at Charleville were derived from the balustrading and dado details in the Tribune at Strawberry Hill.[139] (fig 3.51 & 3.56)

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[134] See Sarah Freeman, 'An Englishwoman's home is her castle: Lady Pomfret's house at 18 Arlington Street', *Georgian Group Journal*, vol. 20 (2012), 87–102. The ceiling is attributed to Henry Keene by McCarthy (McCarthy, *The origins of the Gothic revival* , p. 143). Keene (1726–1776) was taken to Ireland in 1761 by Lord Halifax, and from 1763–6 is referred to in Irish records as 'Architect to the Barrack Board' (Colvin, *A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600-1840*, p. 571). Although nothing is known of Keene's work with the board Johnston, as Architect to the Board of Works in 1805, or earlier through his work with Cooley who remodelled the Bermingham tower at Dublin Castle, may have had access to drawings by Keene that have now disappeared.

[135] Charleville is one of the few documented examples of houses which shows the influence of Strawberry Hill.

[136] A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (1784), between pp 442–3. This was noted by Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel'.

[137] Bury diary, 21 July 1802, f. 1r.

[138] IAA 89/88, sections through entrance hall and gallery with alternative decorative schemes, attributed to C.M. Bury [1801–1804]; Walpole, A *description of the villa of Mr Horace Walpole* (1784), between pp 438–9.

[139] Illustrated in McCarthy, *The origins of the Gothic revival*, p. 84.

There is evidence that the Charlevilles, looking to the work of James Wyatt and John Nash, were concerned that their castle would emulate contemporary Gothic revival styles and standards. Catherine sketched the hall doors at Corsham, designed by Nash in *c*.1796–7, noting, 'Pattern of all doors leading to hall at Corsham. The hall door was the same pattern folding door. The cross board plac'd one qr of eith of door'.[140] This was the basis of Johnston's design for the drawing room doors at Charleville. (figs 3.57 & 3.58) Lord Charleville saw Wyatt's finished work at Windsor: in June 1808 Charles, reporting from Charleville, wrote to his wife, 'What has been done since I was here before is in general well; but I must make him [Johnston] alter the doors which do not open to my mind. And are not finished with the true mouldings notwithstanding all our efforts – there is twice as much work on them, as on those of Windsor & not such effect. Like other things, it can't be helped; & they are still very handsome.'[141] Bury reveals that they had made persistent efforts to guide Johnston, but that they were prepared to accept his work even while they criticised it. Two and a half years earlier Bury had deferred to Johnston's professionalism in overseeing the plasterwork: 'The parlour ceiling … is extremely handsome and I am well content at not professing judgment enough to discover its faults.'[142]

In the case of the great Perpendicular window for the hall, which was to be decorated with heraldic glass, the Burys themselves had differing opinions: Charles liked the design, but Catherine, uneasy with its ecclesiastical overtones, consulted Frederick Trench. She compared it with Fonthill and Corsham; 'I inclose you a sketch of a window the framework of which Lord Charleville fancies violently for his Hall & the decoration of which is beautifully made out by Eginton at Birmingham. … You will perhaps think this too Monastical, but tho' it be in that stile, I have seen at Corsham & the windows for Fonthill, which were more so, – If you have any better idea communicate it by return of post directed to Birmingham, as there we shall go to finally agree for the coloured ornaments with Eginton.'[143] Catherine, glossing over the fact that Fonthill – an abbey – and Corsham – Nash's response to existing sixteenth-century

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[140] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.202, sketch of a door in Corsham Court, C.M. Bury, [1802]. For discussion of Nash's work at Corsham see Frederick J. Ladd, *Architects at Corsham Court: a study in revival style architecture and landscaping, 1749-1849* (Bradford-Upon-Avon, 1978).
[141] Marlay Papers, MS My 87, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury 10 June 1808.
[142] Marlay Papers, MS My 82, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 20 Jan. 1806.
[143] NLI, Domville Papers, MS 11,348 (1), letter from C.M. Bury to Frederick Trench 28 Aug. 1802. C.M. Bury's sketches for windows had ecclesiastical overtones, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.203 and 204.

work – belonged to different categories of Gothic revival from Charleville, seems to have been less concerned to be true to the castellar character of Charleville than with producing a fashionable building. To approach the glass painter, Francis Eginton, for heraldic glass was in itself a modish thing to do. He had responded to a demand for painted glass by setting up a manufactory in Soho, Biringham in 1784, and, largely through the patronage of James Wyatt, his patrons included William Beckford of Fonthill and George III who had commissioned glass depicting the arms of the Knights of the Garter for St George's Chapel, Windsor in 1786.[144]

What did this partnership of active patrons and quietly innovative architect design at Charleville? The castle was conceived as a three-storey square keep (each side 82 feet) over basement (with entrance at a mezzanine level). It had five towers; four at the corners – octagonal at the north-west, round with a projecting flagpole tower at the north-east, two false square towers to the rear – and one centrally-placed square tower. (fig 3.59) The facades of the keep were essentially, though not rigidly, symmetrical. (fig 3.60) Projecting at forty-five degrees from the octagonal tower were two courtyards: a court with a chapel marked by two large towers to one side and an octagonal kitchen in the centre, beyond which was a stable court with battlemented gates. (figs 3.61 & 3.62) It was constructed in roughly squared, Tullamore limestone with ashlar quoins and window surrounds, giving it a rugged character. Beyond this group of buildings was a diminutive stone curtain wall, rising over the fifteen-foot ditch. It was grandiose and magnificent. This was achieved through the manipulation of scale – the height of the batter to the towers and the gigantic proportions of the porch made the front elevation truly intimidating – and extensiveness; the courts punctuated by the towers and gates gave the castle the presence of a medieval fortress harbouring many habitations. (figs 3.31, 3.60, 3.63)

The castle was positioned picturesquely in the demesne. The survival of two variant plans, sketched in pencil, superimposed on Cuddehy's survey of 1785 and Leggett's proposal drawings of 1786, suggest that the Burys and their architect were discussing locations for the castle as the design was being developed. The first sketch – a

[144] For accounts of Eginton see also *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1:75 (1805), 387, 482–3, 606; W.C. Aitken, 'Francis Eginton', *Birmingham and Midland Institute, archaeological section, transactions, excursions and reports*, 3 (15 Feb. 1872) 27–43.

preliminary idea – shows one roughly drawn rectangle within another, indicating a keep within bastion walls. (fig 3.64) It was sketched on Cuddehy's survey at the edge of the ancient woodland in the centre of the demesne.[145] A more detailed sketch in the same location was drawn on the 1786 proposal.[146] (fig 3.65) This shows a square-shaped keep with towered corners linked to an arrow-shaped court (this latter detail different from the realised castle), the whole surrounded by a curtain wall with towered spurs to north-east and north-west. Broadly accurate in terms of scale and similar in detail to a plan dated 1800, it was an early scheme, probably drawn by Johnston.[147] More pencil lines superimposed on the 1786 proposal, indicating serpentine drives cut through the woods, suggest that the castle was to be approached through trees. Although the new location was close to the designated position for a new house shown on Leggett's proposal, it represented a rethinking of the relationship of a new castle to the demesne, in which the castle, partly obscured by trees, would be read in conjunction with them.[148] This idea is manifest in Catherine's sketch dated 1801, where the demesne trees are shown growing up against the back of the castle, separated by a mere fence.[149] (fig 3.66) The association of castle and trees echoed the rationale behind the location of the Camden Tower, indicating that the castle itself was to be appreciated as a picturesque object within the natural and historic landscape.

Johnston's surviving elevational drawings of the house present a regular Georgian castle.[150] (figs 3.67 & 3.68) His endeavour to achieve symmetry on the east and west elevations ran to the solution – familiar to him as a designer of classical buildings – of inserting blind windows.[151] However, a sequence of three perspective sketches suggest

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[145] Demesne survey, 1785.

[146] Demesne proposal, 1786.

[147] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.195, sketch plan for house and offices, inscription, 'South front 1800', attributed to Francis Johnston, [1800].

[148] A comparison between the sketch on the demesne proposal, 1786 and the 1st edition OS map (1838) shows that most of the existing trees that stood within the curtain wall were felled when the castle was built, only those in the north-east spur were retained.

[149] Charleville Castle, perspective design sketch showing west and south facades, attributed to C.M. Bury, [1800–1801], from Laffan & Monkhouse (eds), *Ireland: crossroads of art and design*, fig 23.

[150] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197, 198, 199, elevations of principal, east and west facades, Charleville Castle, Francis Johnston, [1800–1801].

[151] At Galtrim, Co. Meath (designed in *c*.1802), Johnston ensured that the interior planning and fenestration were worked out in such a way that internal and external symmetries matched perfectly, even for dummy windows. At Charleville, Johnston produced complex door details to create well proportioned symmetrical designs for individual rooms. For example, the doors to the drawing room and dining room had angled jambs, while the door in the centre of the north wall of the gallery was slightly off centre in the hall, a problem Johnston overcame by designing a six-panel screen facing the stairs, four panels of which opened into the gallery, thus managing centralised openings in both spaces. (fig 3.59).

that design effort was concentrated on amalgamating the heterogeneous collection of towers and battlements into a picturesque composition to enliven the massive quadrangular presence of the keep.[152] In two of the sketches, attributable to Catherine, tower positions and designs were explored but remain unresolved; the towers seem independent of each other and the central block, the whole lacks conviction as a unified design.[153] (figs 3.69 & 3.33) It is a final perspective sketch, drawn in ink with vigour and assurance, most probably by Johnston, presenting the castle more or less as it was built, which conveys the idea of Charleville Castle as an integrated collection of robust towers clustered about a strong rectangular keep.[154] (fig 3.70) This is the romantic object with the jagged skyline and complex three-dimensional form that picturesque sensibility demanded of a castle.[155] Johnston realised this ideal in detailed designs that, surviving drawings reveal, concentrated on orchestrating the massing of the elements, with simpler facades, deeper shadow lines and a well-defined skyline. In the final design shallow arched corbel tables under wall battlements were omitted, while rear towers were given prominent projecting turrets, and corbelling details on the front elevation were pronounced, bold and inventive.[156] (figs 3.71–3.75) These details distinguished it from medieval castles and transcended early eighteenth-century exemplars, giving the castle its starkly distinctive silhouette rising above the demesne trees, 'orc-like in its spraw', Rowan has written, '... forbidding, even cruel'.[157] The detailing was authentic, not in the literal sense in which Enmore Castle, regarded as 'dull' and 'whimsical' by contemporaries, was authentic, with its moat, drawbridge and

[152] Although other details vary (fenestration, doors), the most conspicuous differences in the perspective sketches are the design and location of the towers, while the different view points taken and the concentration on the central block suggest that the design focus is the composition of the towers.
[153] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.194 perspective sketch attributed to C.M. Bury showing a round and octagonal tower, [1800]; IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/17, perspective sketch attributed to C.M. Bury [1800] showing an octagonal, a clover-leaf tower and two rear square towers (date based on sketch plan in the Murray Collection 92/46.195 with a clover-leaf tower at the north-east corner, inscribed '1800') (Christie's lot 15).
[154] IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/18, perspective sketch attributed to Francis Johnston [1800] showing castle largely as built except for drawbridge and few other details.
[155] See Humphry Repton's advocacy of a castellated design for Luscombe in the Red Book June, 1799: 'a castle which by blending a chaste correctness of proportion with bold irregularity of outline, its deep recesses and projections producing broad masses of light and shadow, while its roof is enriched by turrets, battlements, corbels, and lofty chimneys, has infinitely more picturesque effect than any other stile of building', quoted in Summerson, *The life and works of John Nash*, p. 38.
[156] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197 verso, 198, 199, elevations of north (front), east and west facades, Francis Johnston [1800–1801].
[157] Rowan, 'Georgian castles', 241. Scott Richardson observed that although the rectangular appearance of Charleville related it to eighteenth-century castles, it did not display a preoccupation with balanced proportion, horizontal composition and rigid symmetry and in this anticipated nineteenth-century design (Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, vol. 1, p. 121).

towers of equal height.[158] It was authentic in the sense that it approached an idea of what a medieval castle ought to have looked like. This was how Gilpin approached the Gothic and how Johnston interpreted it, putting triple corbels on his version of Guy's Tower, the original of which had more modest corbelling, and deliberately mismatching his front corner towers.

Johnston's design for the kitchen and stable courts, which projected north-west from the octagonal tower, ensured an irregular sequence of battlemented towers – two large square pinnacled towers for the narrow chapel, a high octangular battlemented chimney for the kitchen, three battlemented gateways for the stables – and intervening walls. This stretched Charleville laterally in picturesque asymmetry and continuing incident. (fig 3.76 & 3.63) Best appreciated from the front, the extensiveness of the castle is also evident from the rear where, as part of the curtain wall design a slim tower rose out of a bastion behind the stables (a view celebrated by the Bury's grand-daughter in 1843), and from the rooftop belvedere.[159] (figs 3.77 & 3.61) The design reflected current trends. The Charlevilles and their architect may have been responding to Repton's advice that offices 'partaking of the character of a castle will extend the site and make it an apparently considerable pile of building', articulated in his Red Book of 1799 for Luscombe where Nash would design the offices at a 45-degree angle from the house.[160] What Nash did and Johnston did not do was to make asymmetry fundamental to the planning and three-dimensional realisation of the house.

Johnston's treatment of the castle fenestration displayed inventiveness and was in tune with his contemporaries. His original idea was to substantially fenestrate the main elevation with tall vertical windows detailed as cross-windows with label mouldings, as though a Georgian house had been Gothicised.[161] (fig 3.78) Another drawing shows Johnston experimenting with late medieval-styled windows: horizontal, three-light mullioned and transomed openings that decrease in size with height.[162] (fig 3.71) Both

[158] Lord Palmerston, in his journal of 1787 and Gilpin, *Observations on the western parts of England*, quoted in Moir, *The discovery of Britain,* p. 70.
[159] The entire elevation is represented in an amateur sketch for an estate book (Private collection, Estate book, 1855) (fig 3.59)
[160] Quoted in Christopher Hussey, 'Luscombe Castle I', *Country Life* (9 Feb. 1956), 250.
[161] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197, 'Line elevation of the principal façade', unfinished [1800–1801].
[162] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197 verso, line drawing of rear façade, unfinished [1800–1801].

drawings show upper windows with cusped lights. All these ideas had been presented in the earlier Bury/Pentland scheme and were no doubt discussed with the Burys.[163] As realised, Johnston varied the fenestration with aspect. For the side elevations he used vertical two-light windows, and for the rear the horizontal three-light designs.[164] (figs 3.79 & 3.72) All mullions and transoms were in timber and painted to pass as stone and the glass was divided into vertical panes, with diamond panes for the basement.[165] (fig 3.80) For the front Johnston incorporated cusped lights into three- and six-light windows with timber mullions and transoms that gave them a horizontal emphasis.[166] (figs 3.60 & 3.81) There is an overall late medieval character to the fenestration, although the cusped light motif was singular. Inventiveness with the design of lights was a feature of the designs of Wyatt and Nash. Nash tended to play with bolder rounded shapes than Johnston, but Wyatt may have been an influence. There are timber windows detailed with cusped lights on the tower at the rear of Slane, and Wyatt would develop the motif at Ashridge in 1808. (fig 3.82) The imperative for more elaborate windows on the front façade may have come from Lady Charleville who drew designs for a variety of arched lights, many cusped, some spandrels decorated with flower shapes, to contain coloured glass.[167] (fig 3.83) Two of these were intended for the eating parlour, but were unrealised as Johnston's plainer designs prevailed.

Johnston's design for the front door and window above may represent an abstraction of the original idea to design a portcullis.[168] (figs 3.84, 3.33, 3.70) He gave the door of his

[163] IAA, A/6/11–14, photographs of elevations of four fronts for proposed scheme for Charleville Castle, attributed to John Pentland, [1797] (Christie's, 1985, lot 11); IAA, A/6/8–10, photographs of west, east and south elevations for proposed scheme for Charleville Castle, attributed to C.W. Bury, [1797] (Christie's 1985, lots 13 & 14); IAA, Guinness Drawings Collection, 96/68.6/8/1–2, north and south elevations for proposed scheme for Charleville Castle, C.W. Bury [1797]. Pentland's west front had cross windows; Bury's south front (Guinness) had horizontal windows and arched lights.

[164] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.198 & 199, elevations of east and west facades, ink and water colour, Francis Johnston [1801].

[165] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.201, plan, elevation and section of a square-headed window with hood moulding, Francis Johnston [1801].

[166] A similar idea was proposed for Killeen with simpler cusped lights in a window above the main entrance, (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.905, elevation of the principle façade, Francis Johnston, Feb. 1803).

[167] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.203 and 204, elevations for two and three windows respectively, C.M. Bury, 203 inscribed, 'two windows designed for eating parlour by CMB', [1800–1801].

[168] Several early perspective sketches include a portcullis and one includes a drawbridge (IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/17, perspective sketch of proposed castle from north-east, attrib. to C.M. Bury, [1800]; IAA Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/18, perspective sketch of proposed castle from north-west, attrib. to Francis Johnston [1800]). An early detailed design sketch shows a portcullis (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.195, reverse, sketch of round-headed door

final design a Tudor arch, retained the cross loops, and converted the portcullis into a five-light perpendicular window of strong vertical emphasis within a four-centred arch.[169] (fig 3.85) The final design for the Perpendicular window alluded more closely to the portcullis idea.[170] (fig 3.31) Elsewhere, he designed windows that reflected internal decoration and, to a degree, function, as he did in other castles. He designed pointed Y-traceried windows for the library and boudoir that related to the internal groined vaults. (fig 3.86) There were similar windows for the chapel. He incorporated loops in the towers and on some of the battlements. In this way Johnston produced large, well-proportioned windows for the main reception rooms, wide prominent doorways, an ecclesiastical atmosphere for the library, boudoir and chapel, and reinforced the defensiveness in the strongly battered towers. It was characterful, while ensuring the requisite comfort for the principal rooms.

Whatever might be observed about the degree to which Johnston and the Charlevilles followed the stylistic innovators of the period, would Charleville have been regarded in the early nineteenth century as an example of modern Gothic? This question with regard to new castellated houses was a preoccupation among patrons, designers and writers. There was a consensus that new castles were not to simply reproduce a past style to fool the viewer into thinking that the buildings were older than they were.[171] The debate was about models and the character of the resulting building. It has been noted that the Earl of Essex thought that modern Gothic was characterised by simplicity. Repton found it in a mixed style: Gothic details within a classical framework. He also advocated domestic rather than castellated medieval models for contemporary houses. This often repeated idea was echoed by the writer James Norris Brewer in 1826: '... *the modern Gothic* ... when correctly designed, should be imitative of that character of structure which was invented by the English on the demise of real castellations ... the ... *castellated house*. The licence permitted by this legitimate prototype, affords an ample scope for the

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flanked by cross loops with portcullis above, over which is a three-light window, and a roundel above, attributed to Francis Johnston [1800]).

[169] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.197, principal elevation showing Tudor-arched door flanked by cross loops above which is a three-light window within a flat arch the whole within a battlemented porch, above is a four-light arched window, over which is a squared topped four-light window, attributed to Francis Johnston [1800–1801].

[170] There is a portcullis detail above the opening to the fireplace in the dining room.

[171] An exception to this was the comment made by John Dalrymple who commissioned Robert Adam to rebuilt Oxenfoorde Castle, Midlothian, in 1780. In a letter of July 1784 he wrote, 'I have repaired a noble old castle and by the help of Bob Adams [sic] have really made it much older than it was' (Alistair Rowan, 'Oxenfoorde Castle, Midlothian', *Country Life* 156:4024 (15 Aug. 1974), 432).

indulgence of imagination, even in an architect of the boldest powers of mind.'[172] Underlying the avocation of domestic models was the desire for comfort. Charleville could be counted as modern: the rooms were large, regular and light; there were intimations of late medieval design about the windows; its picturesque irregularity recalled these buildings too. But the image at the heart of the castle was of the defensive type of castellar architecture: the quadrangular keep with its corner towers; the grand scale and forbidding presence. Picturesque detailing also worked to reinforce this grand image. This was conservative. It echoed Taymouth Castle which a contemporary journalist characterised as 'the most emblematic of neo-dynastic castles'.[173]

This tension between following fashion and asserting grandeur can also be discerned in the planning of Charleville which went a long way towards contemporary thinking on internal layout, but stopped short of the ideal because of the requirement to accommodate a central processional stair leading to a gallery. (figs 3.59, 3.87, 3.88) This stair, lit by the great Perpendicular window, rose from the mezzanine-level entrance directly to the gallery, which stretched across the entire rear of the house on the principal floor.[174] The stair occupied the central bay of three and, to the left, gave access to a 'breakfast parlour' (later described as the drawing room), and, to the right, the eating parlour, known as the dining room by the mid-nineteenth century.[175] The breakfast parlour was connected to a suite of rooms for Lady Charleville – a bed chamber and a boudoir in the circular tower.[176] A library in the octagonal tower was linked via the main stair hall to the dining room. There was also a concealed door from library to the chapel; one of the bookcases in the library opened onto a passage which

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[172] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. cxxx. For discussion of Brewer as a critic see chapter 6.
[173] Quoted in MacKechnie & Urban, 'Balmoral Castle',163.
[174] This was referred to as the 'parlour floor' by Bury (Marlay Papers, MS My 81/1-2, letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Jan. 1805).
[175] 'I expect by that time to have three Stories completely finished; and three rooms finished on the parlour floor; that is, the Bed-chamber from which I have made a door into the Breakfast Parlour, & the Eating Parlour opposite, besides your little Boudoir. - By making up the Doors of the Back Stairs, which we must use, the habitable part of the house will be completely divided from that in which the workmen must continue, that is the Hall, Gallery and Octagon Tower' (Marlay Papers, MS My 81/1-2, letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Jan. 1805). Reference to 'drawing room' in Marlay Papers, MS My 82 letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 20 Jan. 1805. Reference to 'dining room' see lithograph after drawing by Lady Beaujolois Bury (b. 1824) *The dining room at Charleville Forest county Offaly*, (Laffan, *Painting Ireland,* p.176).
[176] The bed chamber had become a music room by the mid-nineteenth century, see lithograph after drawing by Lady Beaujolois Bury (b. 1824), *The music room at Charleville Forest, county Offaly*, (Laffan, *Painting Ireland*, p.176). Today the wall between these two rooms has been removed.

led to the chapel, a five-bay buttressed structure with square towers at either end integrated into the kitchen court. The highly decorated timber main stair was situated on the west side of the house and gave access to the bedrooms on the second and third floors.[177] (figs 3.90–3.93) Beneath this stair, which was located close to the dining room, a stone staircase gave access to the butler's pantry and silver safe located in the octagonal tower, the basement servants' hall, kitchens, larders, gun room, offices and accommodation and the tunnel which led to the kitchen court.

The room types, including the gallery which, judging by Lady Charleville's sketched proposals, was conceived of as a drawing room, and the division between male and female quarters, corresponded in some measure to ideas articulated by the Earl of Carnarvon in 1800 in advance of Wyatt's re-planning of Wilton House:

'A House according to the present state of Society cannot be perfect unless it consists of one or more Drawing rooms, a Library, a dining room and a Billiard room, and apartments for the Male and Female proprietors of the House on the same floor. The perfection of the House also requires … that the Gentleman's private apartment should connect immediately with the Library and the Ladies apartment to the Drawing Room'.[178]

Carnarvon also advocated that the library should open to the drawing room, and that the billiard and dining room should be connected to either the library or drawing room. All this suggested a house that enabled a greater capacity for circulation between the rooms than Charleville could give. Charleville, with its entrance at a mezzanine level, (a level which had almost no rooms apart from the entrance hall) also failed to address contemporary aspirations for closer connection to gardens. Wyatt and Nash provided for this – as did Johnston in some of his villas – by discarding the *piano nobile*.[179]

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[177] There was a service stair to all floors to the left of the hall door.

[178] Quoted in Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 73. IAA, Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 89/88, alternative decorative schemes for entrance hall and gallery [1801–1804], attributed to C.M. Bury, illustrated in David J. Griffin and Simon Lincoln, *Drawings from the Irish Architectural* Archive (Dublin, 1993), p. 47. A possible model for the gallery was the gallery at Castletown Co Kildare, decorated by Lady Louisa Conolly as a drawing room.

[179] An example of a villa designed by Johnston without a *piano nobile* is Galtrim, Co. Meath. At Charleville Castle there are only two small rooms on the entrance floor in the west side of the house. The windows on either side of the front door light stairs: the main stairs to the right and a stair to the basement to the left. There is also access to the basement via a passage and a further stair.

However, the main rooms were large, rectangular and well lit, and, although the kitchens and service quarters were distant from the dining room, they were adjoining. The bedroom floors were designed with comfort in mind: light filtered down from the roof lantern to light the centres of both floors, the passages were vaulted, the bedroom ceilings were decorated to look vaulted, while Lady Charleville's boudoir had an apse and elaborate plaster decorations on wall and ceiling.[180]

Although on a different scale, the design of the processional stair at Charleville has striking similarities to the stair Wyatt designed at Windsor to connect his remodelled entrance to George III's drawing room.[181] (fig 3.89) Both began under a dark low vaulted vestibule and climbed into the light: at Windsor this was a spectacular vaulted space lit from above; at Charleville the main floor was lit by the great perpendicular window.[182] Both led directly to the main public room, something that Charles Long would criticise as being contrary to precedent in Windsor.[183] Both stairs were wide with broad handrails. It is possible that the Charlevilles had seen Windsor before Johnston designed the stair, for the royal castle was accessible after autumn 1804, the time when the shell of Charleville was completed and work probably began on the design of the stair.[184] Alternatively, as suggested above, the Charlevilles may have been familiar with the design of Windsor through connections with Wyatt; indirectly, through John Penn and the Duke and Duchess of Rutland. Johnston, as suggested in chapter two, may have had a more direct connection with the English architect. Describing the heraldic glass in the Perpendicular window and how it could be seen from the stair, John Doran, in his poem on Charleville, wrote, 'His dignified arms from their centre glares/ With royal splendour view it from the stairs'.[185] This hints at a royal source, while it clearly conveys the function of the stair as a place to savour the grandeur of the Charlevilles.

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[180] The decoration of this room is evident in a drawing by Lady Charleville's granddaughter (Lady Beaujolois Bury, *The boudoir at Charleville Forest, county Offaly* in Laffan, *Painting Ireland*, p. 176).
[181] See plans of lower and upper floors of the state apartments from Lyson's plan of 1805 (W.H St. John Hope, *Windsor Castle: an architectural history*, 2 vols & vol of plans (London, 1913), fig 24). See W.H. Pyne's drawings of the staircase in David Watkin, *The royal interiors of Regency England from watercolours first published by W.H. Pyne in 1817–1820* (London and Melbourne, 1984), pp 80–1.
[182] One of C.M. Bury's sketched proposals for the hall shows a lantern (IAA 89/88, sections through entrance hall and gallery with alternative decorative schemes, attributed to C.M. Bury [1801–1804]). (fig 25)
[183] Crook and Port, *The history of the king's works,* p. 383.
[184] For reference to the completion of the shell and plans for workmen to continue working in the hall see Marlay Papers, MS My 81/1-2, letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Jan. 1805.
[185] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 39 & 40.

Here then with the stair and its associated spaces, the assertion of grandeur trumped domestic comfort.

The interior decoration of Charleville was elaborate, but carefully controlled by Johnston. One aspect of this restraint was propriety; each room had a specific character calling for different models and treatments. Strong ecclesiastical references were used for the processional stair and gallery, for the library and boudoir. The dining room and breakfast room were entirely domestic; Gothic versions of Georgian interiors. The main stair (to the west), a timber construction built into a wall, was based on the design of classical townhouse stair. It was exuberant, every surface decorated with carved, Gothic patterning, the decorative energy reflected in the plaster mouldings of the wall surfaces. (figs 3.90–3.93) Control was expressed in Johnston's geometrical sensibility seen in his use of bold bolection moldings and simplified forms in the architraves and balustrading of the hall. (fig 3.94)

A new spirit pioneered by Wyatt encouraged a more authentic use of medieval sources for Gothic revival designs. At Wilton, the plaster vaulting in his cloisters of 1807 have substantial ribs and rest on corbels. (fig 3.95) This was closer to medieval models, the style suited the form (vaulting for a cloister, though it was domestic rather than ecclesiastic), and, eschewing other decoration, it relied only on the lines of the ribs and progression of bosses for architectural effect.[186] For the entrances of Fonthill and Ashridge Park Wyatt referenced the halls of grand late medieval houses with his exposed hammer beam roofs, thus matching medieval and modern genres. Some of Johnston's details benefitted from his observations of medieval precedent. Although the vaulting in the hall had narrower ribs and fewer mouldings than Wyatt's in Wilton, it was more substantial than mid-eighteenth-century examples; the decoration of the structural supports of the main stair gestured towards an appreciation of medieval structural timberwork.[187] (figs 3.91 & 3.92) Although there was little that was medieval about the shape and naming of the rooms at Charleville, some alluded to the medieval; the concept of the gallery, the decoration of the quasi-ecclesiastical boudoir and library.

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[186] Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 238.

[187] This may have attracted Lady Beaujolois Bury, the granddaughter of Charles and Catherine, who drew the staircase in the 1840s from the staircase hall, showing the undersides of the stair as well as the decorated walls, (Laffan, *Painting Ireland,* p. 176).

However, much about the interior was not quite at the forefront of Gothic taste. The Strawberry Hill style, for example, was becoming discredited in the most advanced circles by the late eighteenth century. This is suggested by Nash's removal of the *c*.1759 rococo Gothic bookcases from the library at Corsham in 1796–7.[188] Thus, despite the radicalism of applying Gothic comprehensively to the interior, the Charlevilles' application of a mid-eighteenth-century decorative style to rooms mainly conceived within a Georgian-style plan was a traditional gesture that worked in tandem with Johnston's classically inflected stylistic restraint. Yet even here, where the planning and decoration were designed to promote domestic comfort, albeit of the more glamourous kind, Gothic was being used to assert grandeur by providing the setting for a theme that formed a direct and purposive link between the family and an imagined past.

Inhabitants: 'a still more ancient family'

One aspect of medieval design that could generate the impression of a specific history and create direct links with an imagined past was heraldry. Decorated with coats of arms celebrating the family that had built it, a Gothic revival castle was explicitly bound to that family, which would, in turn, benefit from associations with the past radiated by the revival style. Heraldry, which had chivalric origins, had been devised as a way of identifying the bearers of arms in battle. By the sixteenth century this had been forgotten, and a coat of arms was a more general signifier of gentle birth or illustrious ancestry.[189] The owners of Elizabethan and Jacobean houses had revelled in the display of arms, incorporating them into elaborate decorative schemes on chimney pieces, screens, ceilings and stonework parapets.[190] Heraldry had also been intrinsic to eighteenth-century Gothic revival houses: it decorated the exterior of Clearwell Court in 1728; James Wyatt incorporated arms on the battlements of Sheffield Place designed in 1775–79. It was a theme in early nineteenth-century Gothic revival: there was, for example, heraldic stained glass in Fonthill Abbey.

There was an expectation of veracity – that lineage was not fabricated and armorial details were correct – even as a new 'ancient' house or neo-medieval renovations to an

[188] Ladd, *Architects at Corsham Court,* p. 99.
[189] Mark Girouard, *The return to Camelot, chivalry and the English gentleman* (New Haven & London, 1981), p. 18.
[190] The Charlevilles knew Sherbourne Castle and Lulworth Castle both in Dorset (Bury diary, ff 6v, 8v).

old one projected contemporary aspirations. This was articulated by Frederick Trench in his surprise and disappointment at the new stained glass in Arundel Castle: '[Mr Eginton] is now completing a set of portraits as windows for the great new intended Hall at the Duke of Norfolk's Grand Gothick Mansion; … These figures, 7 feet in Height are in the perfect costume, at the Conquest; Coats of mail, (that is close fitted dresses of woven iron-wire, and over them the Surtouts apparently of strong Buff-leather) with the armorial Bearings properly emblazoned, with shields & the most correct Battle-axes. But judge my real astonishment to find the portraits of an acquaintance (old Lord Suffolk) of the Duke, and two other moderns in this whimsical masquerade.'[191]

At Charleville, surviving drawings, which show a coat of arms on the gatehouse in Pentland's proposal, indicate that heraldry had been an intrinsic part of Bury's original concept for the castle.[192] This was extended to the picturesque scheme; three blank coats are shown on the towers in one of the early perspective sketches.[193] A surviving unsigned, undated sketch for a comprehensive armorial scheme to cover a flat ceiling reveals the Burys' interest in linking both families for several generations within a scheme for internal plasterwork.[194] (fig 3.96) The design was strikingly similar to the mid-eighteenth-century Gothic ceiling of the former library at Corsham Court which they knew, and more than likely derived from it.[195] (fig 3.97) Both were centralised designs composed of coats of arms set in roundels of different size, with a single focus and four groups linked by ribbon work. At the centre of the Charleville scheme was the arms of the Earl and Countess of Charleville, composed of the Bury coat with a Dawson escutcheon of pretence at the centre, and the earl's coronet decorated with five pearls.

[191] RIA, Caldwell Papers, vol 6, 1801–8, 12 R 44/164, letter from Frederick Trench to Andrew Caldwell, 14 April 1808, f. 2.

[192] IAA, A/6/13, photograph of east elevation for proposed castle at Charleville attributed to John Pentland (Christie's lot 11).

[193] IAA, Charleville Forest Drawings Collection, 86/24/17, perspective proposal for Charleville Castle, attributed to C.M. Bury, [1800], (Christie's lot 15).

[194] IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.205, unfinished plan of armorial ceiling showing Bury lineage, attributed to C.W. Bury, [1806], probably intended for the drawing room.

[195] Illustration of Corsham breakfast room (former library) in Christopher Hussey, 'Corsham Court, Wiltshire –II,' *Country Life,* 82:2132 (27 Nov. 1937), 552, fig. 9. The ceiling and frieze were all that survived of the mid-century library after Nash's alterations in 1796–7. The Corsham design, commissioned by Sir Paul Methuen, designed by Henry Keene and executed under Lancelot Brown by Thomas Stocking in the early 1760s (Ladd, *Architects at Corsham Court*, pp 52–3), may have been based on the fifteenth-century ceiling in the Waller chantry chapel in Salisbury Cathedral. The Waller chapel was restored by Earl of Radnor in 1778 when it was removed from the nave to a place above the choir and used as a family pew (fig 3.98). The Charlevilles may have seen this ceiling too.

The four radiating groups of arms represented three generations of the paternal and maternal lines of Lord and Lady Charleville. The design demonstrated pride in lineage divided equally between the families of the earl and countess.

This scheme was unrealised. However, heraldry was intrinsic to the plasterwork decoration of the main reception rooms. In most cases an alternative approach, in which the single connection between Bury and Moore, the earl of the first creation and that of the second, was taken. On the drawing room ceiling plain plaster roundels framed by wreaths were decorated with Moore, Bury and Dawson coats and crests against the background diamond pattern based on the library ceiling at Strawberry Hill. (figs 3.47 & 3.48) The Charleville ceiling, like the Strawberry Hill ceiling which has a geneological theme and is decorated with the coats of arms of Walpole's ancestors, has corner shields, suggesting that Strawberry Hill inspired the theme as well as the background pattern. On the flat coffered dining room ceiling eight-sided figures are formed in each compartment decorated either with a 'C' embellished with the earl's pearl-decorated coronet displaying a double row of seven pearls, or with the Moore or Bury crest.[196] (fig 3.99) In the gallery the heraldry is an integral part of the architectural decoration in several locations. Bury and Moore crests are incorporated into cusped six-sided figures in the plaster frieze under the windows, miniature Bury and Moore coats of arms are superimposed on the interlinked rings that decorate the spandrels of the main arch of the doorway, and spandrels between the fan vaults were ornamented with coats and crests set inside diamonds decorated with coronets. (figs 3.100)

Stained glass panels in the vast Perpendicular hall window formed the most prominent display of heraldry at Charleville. A sketch of a seven-light, four-centred arch window, attributed to Lady Charleville, accommodates the arms of the earl and countess flanked by family coats within cusped arches.[197] (fig 3.101) A similar theme was realised in the final design incorporated into the panel tracery that would more accurately have decorated the Perpendicular arch.[198] (figs 3.88 & 3.102) The glass was made by Francis Eginton, and Lord Charleville's diary reveals that the Burys worked out the design in

[196] This was completed by January 1806 (Marlay Papers, MS My 82, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 20 Jan. 1806) but must have been altered to incorporate the 'C's decorated with the earl's pearls after Bury received his earldom on 16 Feb. 1806.
[197] IAA, A/9/11, photograph of a design for an armorial window attributed to C.M. Bury [1806].
[198] Press photograph, 1873, Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society.

close association with him.[199] The glass would have stood out against the dark woodwork of the vestibule and stair.[200]

Although the heraldry was accurate it was used to create a specious aura of dynastic rootedness at Charleville. This was indicated by John Doran in *A poem on Charleville* which conjured family illustriousness and longevity with a description of the heraldic glass which, he claimed, outdid nature in its vivid colours;

'Ten thousand rays dart from the blushing stains
And scarlet suns are dancing through the panes
His dignified arms from their centre glares
With royal splendour view it from the stairs
Right pointing from the great hall unite thee
Famed Charleville's long line of majesty'[201]

Another decorative feature which could invite a spurious family link with the past was the presence of armour. Displays of armour and arms in medieval hall had had the practical advantage of being ready for use.[202] In some houses such exhibitions had survived as decoration. With the revival of interest in the middle ages arrangements of arms took on an antiquarian purpose, and those without armour or with a special interest began to form collections; armour was first sold at Christie's in 1789. Lord Carnarvon, advising the Earl of Pembroke on the redesign of Wilton House in January 1801, evoked a richly historic interior where family coats and family ghosts, the latter summoned by arms and armour rubbed shoulders with Greek gods; 'bestow the cash and magnificence on the cloysters, Library bookcases & Hall which ought to be superbly Gothick; emblazoned ceiling with arms and quarterings, Grecian Gods & Demigods in niches; old Montmorency shaking his spear in one corner, some other

[199] The Charlevilles visited Eginton in Soho on 9 Sept. 1802 where they 'decided on changes to the Hall window'. Lord Charleville returned to Soho at the end of Dec. with a model of the window, presumably the tracery. He had just returned from Charleville Castle where he had met Johnston and Trench, and the model may have been finalised with one or both of them at that time. Two months later Eginton sent him revised glass designs, and on 7 June 1803, on his way back to Ireland Lord Charleville ordered the windows, deciding on a lighter ground and a deeper yellow (Bury diary, ff 4v, 12v, 16r, 21v). Today the heraldic glass has gone, but the tracery and some patterend glass remains.

[200] Girouard, noted that in May 1811 the painters were graining the woodwork of the vestibule and staircase (Girouard, 'Charleville Forest', 711).

[201] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 37–42.

[202] Girouard, *Camelot*, p. 50.

departed Ghosts of St. Quentin hugging his iron gauntlet in the other … The hall should in its shapes and its ceiling be Wyatted and should be fit for the Castle of Otranto.'[203]

Lady Charleville's sketched schemes for the hall at Charleville show displays of armour in decorated niches, and helmets crowning shields crossed with swords above.[204] (fig 3.49) She also proposed that a helmet, crowns and trophys cap the curtains and pictures in one of her schemes for the gallery. That the Burys valued armour as an artefact redolent of the past is suggested by an observation that Charles made to Catherine about two of his grandmother's 'gowns' 'which for weight and curiosity can only be exceeded by ancient Armour.'[205] Armour, firearms and gothic-style furniture did become a feature of the hall, though at what date is not known.[206] Such medievalising was a feature of Fonthill where it impressed visitors, and it would become popular in later revival houses, a trend that was fed by the illustrations in Joseph Nash's influential book, *Mansions of England in the Olden Times.*[207]

Politics: 'an old British castle'?

On Thursday 12 October 1809 the viceroy, the 4th Duke of Richmond, and his entourage arrived in four coaches at the gate lodge of Charleville Castle for a four-day visit. They had just left Parsonstown and were at the end of a tour of the south of Ireland.[208] The Charlevilles had only recently moved into the almost completed castle, and this event, recorded in letters from Lady Charleville and her daughter and in a newspaper report, reveals that the Charlevilles were keen to realise some social and political return for their considerable investment.[209] Apart from the extensive preparations to make the visit enjoyable, the Charlevilles made additional efforts to project an impressive image,

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[203] Wiltshire & Swindon Archives, Wilton House Archive, 2057/F7/3/1, TS of letter from Lord Carnarvon to Sidney Charles, Lord Herbert, later 16th Earl of Pembroke, 14 Jan. 1801 from *No beggarly peer* (*c*.1940).

[204] IAA 89/88, two sections through entrance hall and gallery showing alternative decorative schemes. Attributed to C.M. Bury [1801–1804].

[205] Marlay Papers, MS My 81/1-2, letter, C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 6 Jan. 1805.

[206] Charleville Sale Catalogue 1948 records: five suits of armour (lots 486-7, 503-5); a pair of antique cannon (485); collection of breastplates, helmets and shields etc (lot 506); 51 various swords, pikes etc (507) as well as 8 antlers (508). There was some gothic-style furniture: pair of carved oak hall chairs with gothic backs (497) and several items described as antique. The evidence is not conclusive about the early nineteenth-century castle.

[207] Joseph Nash, *Mansions of England in the olden times,* 4 vols (London, 1839 -1849). John Rutter, *Delineations of Fonthill and its abbey* (London, 1823).

[208] Marlay Papers, MS My 1130/2, cutting from newspaper [not identified], 17 Oct. 1809.

[209] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 124. Correspondence about the viceregal visit is found in Marlay Papers.

commissioning full dress liveries for the servants, a uniform of blue and scarlet for the 'upper men'. The yeomanry were also put to good use.[210] Ranged at the entrance to the castle, the yeomen met the viceroy on arrival, and the following day the earl's brigade was reviewed by Richmond.[211] The press described a more professional event than was in fact the case; 'His Grace … [expressed] … his high satisfaction at the fine appearance of this brigade, their state of discipline, and the steadiness with which they performed their maneuvers and firing', the paper reported, though one of the officers had fallen head first from his horse.[212] The captains were invited to the grand dinner, ball and supper in the evening. The Charlevilles projected their local standing in the traditional manner as several hundred tenants met the viceroy and pulled his carriage from the Mucklow Bridge lodge to the castle, while others lit bonfires as a welcome, and formed a much-needed appreciative crowd for the yeomen's review.

Despite their efforts to dazzle, the Charlevilles were obviously at ease with the Richmonds: the duke was the nephew of Lady Charleville's close friend Louisa Conolly, and Lady Charleville reported selling a fine lace shawl won in London to Lady Richmond, 'at her earnest desire, for 56 guineas! I was quite glad to get rid of it.'[213] The Charlevilles had over 40 house guests, using the opportunity to exercise their social standing within the county. There was to be a repeat visit in December.

If success was to be measured by appreciation for Charleville impressiveness it was unqualified. '[The viceroy's] reception at the Castle was truly worthy the Representative of his Majesty – for whether we consider the magnificence of the building, the splendour of the furniture, the number of attendants with the extreme richness of their liveries, seldom have we witnessed as grand a spectacle' the newspaper reported.[214] One purpose of the invitation had been to assist Lord Charleville in acquiring the lucrative post of postmaster-general. But on 23 November Lady Charleville told her son that the second available position had gone to Lord Rosse in

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[210] Marlay Papers, MS My 1127/1-3, letter from C.M. Bury to her son by her first marriage, James Tisdall, 7 Oct 1809.
[211] Marlay Papers, MS My 1132, letter from Louisa Tisdall to James Tisdall, 24 Oct. 1809; Marlay Papers, MS My 1130/2 cutting from newspaper [not identified], 17 Oct. 1809.
[212] Marlay Papers, MS My 1130/2 cutting from newspaper [not identified], 17 Oct. 1809; Marlay Papers, MS My 1132, letter from Louisa Tisdall to James Tisdall, 24 Oct. 1809.
[213] Marlay Papers, MS My 1128, letter from C.M. Bury to James Tisdall, 15 Oct 1809.
[214] Marlay Papers, MS My 1130/2, cutting from newspaper [not identified], 17 Oct. 1809.

preference to Lord Charleville.[215] The reason she gave was that Rosse was a better speaker in the House of Lords. 'L[d] is enraged & I suppose we shall of course have no Lord Lieutenant: but the great reason I mention this detail to you is to shew, that in these countries to make our way it is absolutely required to speak, and that provided we do speak courageously and not absolute nonsense, on we shall go!'[216] Magnificence needed to be underpinned by an effective political contribution if a family was to advance.

The Charlevilles' ambition to proceed socially and politically had been maintained after the Union, and, by necessity, it had acquired a British dimension. Lord Charleville had not been one of the 28 original representative Irish peers elected at the Union to sit in the United Kingdom House of Lords. But in 1801, when the death of Lord Rossmore created a vacancy, Charleville successfully petitioned to replace him, and he was elected on 2 November 1801.[217] He had used political leverage derived from his vote for the Union, and his borough, Carlow, which he had purchased in 1795.[218] Because Carlow was not disenfranchised at the Union, Bury controlled a seat in Westminster, the nomination of which he gave to the government.[219]

The Irish peerage was hereditary, but seats as representative peers were not, so that if the family were to retain its hereditary privileges they needed to acquire a British title, as Lady Charleville spelled out in 1812 to her son:

'I believe I told you I din'd in compy at the Park with Mr Peele [Robert Peel, Chief Secretary] who has a very sharp countenance & unaffected manner, but nothing very polish'd or genteel in his address or person. … There are promotions, & we might have got up a step – but our object is the English Peerage; & the Marquisate [the next step in

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[215] The Irish Post Office Act of 1784 had not been repealed with the Act of Union, so that the two positions of postmaster-general, worth £1,500 a year, were still within the patronage of the viceroy.
[216] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 132.
[217] Offaly County Library, Howard Bury Papers, uncatalogued box, original letters to Viscount Charleville responding to his request for votes in the election to be held for a representative peer for Ireland, Sept. 21, 22, 23 etc. 1801. Twenty eight representative peers had been elected on 2 Aug. 1800 from the peerage of Ireland to sit in the House of Lords. Viscount Charleville, the first replacement, was sworn in at the spring session of 1803.
[218] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 3, p. 332.
[219] Michael MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag: correspondence hitherto unpublished of the earl of Hardwicke first Lord Lieutenant of Ireland after the Union* (London, 1904), pp 54–5; M.W. McCahill, *The House of Lords in the age of George III (1760–1800)* (Oxford, 2009), pp 62–3, 65.

the Irish peerage] we do not chuse because it wd. impede the other, & because we are not rich enough to desire further elevation. The Eng. Peerage will not *now* be granted, but … I hope soon it may be accomplish'd. For it I am extremely anxious, because thereby my son wd. be secure of that hereditary seat in the grand council of the Nation which he lost by the Union, & which is now only to be obtained for the life of a peer by court favour & yielding up probably the freedom of opinion to a party.'[220]

Her hopes were disappointed; on 15 October, 1812 Peel wrote to Charleville 'Lord Liverpool does not feel himself authorised to hold out any expectations in regard to the English Peerage.'[221]

Lady Charleville's reference to the loss of a hereditary seat suggests that the ambition for a British peerage was not only, or even primarily, a social objective; within the Union context a British peerage was necessary in order to retain the family's entitlement to rule. This suggests that after the Union the question of identity for Irish elite families such as the Charlevilles was a complex issue with elite status bound up with an aspirational British identity.

Linda Colley's *Britons, forging the nation* first published in 1992, which argued that Britain was a culturally and ethnically diverse nation that was invented during the long eighteenth century, sparked a heated debate among historians in the late twentieth century about British identity.[222] In her chapter on the elite she argued that, under pressure from a commercial middle class growing in wealth and influence, and challenged by war first with recalcitrant Americans and then with republican France, the elite of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland reformulated itself, becoming more closely amalgamated and developing a cultural identity which would support their claim to be the legitimate rulers of Britain.[223] This did not rule out dual nationality; a peer from the Celtic fringe could retain a passionate connection to his hereditary lands, while

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[220] Letter dated 8 Nov. 1812 quoted in Bond, *Marlay letters,* pp 233-4.
[221] Marlay Papers, MS My 169, letter from Sir Robert Peel to C.W. Bury, 15 Oct. 1812. A letter dated 23 Dec. 1829 letter from Lord Tullamore to his mother Lady Charleville shows that the family desire for an English peerage was still alive, and still getting nowhere (Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 234).
[222] Colley, *Britons; forging the nation.*
[223] Ibid., pp 149–198.

educating his sons in Eton and himself operating politically and socially in London.[224] British identity was thus a changing, protean, heterogeneous entity.

The case of Ireland was subtly different from the rest of the Celtic fringe. Whereas Wales had been bound to England since 1536 and Scotland had entered into union in 1707, Ireland only joined the Union in 1801, and, with the retention of the viceroy, a colonial component existed in the political relationship between the two countries, a potential source of friction within the elite as well as in other social classes.[225] The addition of Ireland was no small thing: with a population of 6.8 million, it added nearly fifty percent to the existing population of England, Scotland and Wales of 13.9 million.[226] This substantial addition to Britain had a character and recent history very different from England, Scotland and Wales. Of that 6.8 million about 4 million were Catholics, a significant problem when the British national identity was Protestant and Catholic emancipation a live issue.[227] And Ireland was just emerging from a decade of revolutions in which parts of the population – the United Irishmen – had called on the French, the enemy of Britain, in support. Colley did not discuss the Irish situation in detail, but Thomas Bartlett addressed the issue of whether a shared British identity was possible for the Irish.[228] He made arguments for and against assimilation, concluding that the Irish could never be fully accepted within Britain, although this was not apparent in 1800. His identification of the contingent nature of the early decades of the nineteenth century is valuable; it was undoubtedly a period of discovery and formation, and one in which castles such as Charleville played a part in creating new cultural norms. Something of the process by which a new British identity was created by the elite in Ireland can be glimpsed in the case of the Charlevilles. A brief consideration of where the Charlevilles stood on the various indicators of identity – where did they live? who inhabited their social circle? were they patriotic? – reveals something of the tone of their Britishness and can be used to add depth to this analysis of what was meant by an 'old British castle' and the meaning embodied in the use of Gothic revival in post-Union Ireland.

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[224] Ibid., p. 165.
[225] Ibid., p. 8.
[226] Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: a history of four nations* (2nd ed. Cambridge, 2006), p 216. England had a population of 11.2 million; Scotland, 2.0 million; Wales, 0.7 million.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Thomas Bartlett, 'Ireland, empire, and Union, 1690–1801' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp 61–89.

The Charlevilles' land and power base as we have seen was entirely Irish. Their political aspirations were both Irish (the postmaster-general) and British (the seat as a representative peer).[229] Socially, their Irishness made for difficulties, but these were not insurmountable. When the English sisters Louisa Conolly and Sarah Napier first met Catherine, then Tisdall, in Kildare they found her manners unattractively Irish, but were won over by 'the excellence of her heart, her sense, her wit, & friendship'.[230] Sarah Napier made many efforts to advance Lady Charleville socially, recommending her to the English Lady Susan O'Brien and her mother Lady Ilchester, and encouraging her to cultivate the queen whom Lady Charleville had impressed in Weymouth in summer 1805.[231] Sarah Napier thought that Catherine's liveliness, self awareness and wealth would recommend her to the queen; 'by your remark on the prudence required in conversation and seeing at once that the Irish family are not *ce qu'il faut dans ce pais-là.* … your rank, fortune and Character can support the favor without dependence on it'.[232] To Susan O'Brien she wrote of the Charlevilles: 'They are *very rich*, tollerably recherché [elegant] in London, & want no help in worldly affairs'.[233] Lady Charleville, despite debilitating rheumatism, cultivated an impressive social presence, noted by the writer Sydney Owenson who described her as 'large, stately, and imposing, with magnificent grey eyes, a courtly, formal manner, and a deeply-toned voice, which made her most trifling observations impressive'.[234]

Yet Lord Charleville, for all his ambition, failed to impress socially – women found him whimsical and inconsistent. He did not encourage his wife to socialise at court and, as we have seen, lacked the interests and talents that would enable him to advance politically.[235] But he had an extensive Irish and English social network centered on their London and Dublin town houses, regular sojourns in Buxton and Weymouth, and

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[229] C.W. Bury was also High Sheriff of King's County in 1825.
[230] Quoted in Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 94. Sarah Napier (1745-1826), and Louisa Conolly (1743–1821) were two of four daughters of 2nd Duke of Richmond. Sarah was married to George Napier and lived in Celbridge, Co. Kildare in 1787, Louisa married Thomas Conolly and lived in Castletown, Co. Kildare.
[231] Ibid., pp 93–95, 84–5.
[232] Quoted in Ibid., p. 85.
[233] Quoted in Ibid., p. 94.
[234] *Lady Morgan's memoirs: autobiography, diaries and correspondence*, 2 vols (2nd ed. London, 1863), ii, p. 68.
[235] Bond, *Marlay letters*, pp 84, 93–4.

Charleville.[236] Some of these friendships were based on mutual interests: for example, Michael Frederick Trench and Andrew Caldwell valued him as a literary companion.[237] Many of his social circle, both Irish and English, had only recently obtained baronetcies and peerages. Sir John Coxe Hippisley (1745/6–1825), whose father had been a haberdasher, made his fortune in the East India Company, obtaining a parliamentary seat in 1790 and a baronetcy in 1796. The father of his friend Lord Digby of Sherbourne Castle, Henry Digby (1731–1793) had succeeded his elder brother to an Irish peerage in 1757, became a British peer in 1765, eventually gaining an earldom. John Damer of Milton Abbey was created 1st Earl of Dorchester in 1792.

Lord and Lady Charleville were conservatives, but their outsider status, derived from their Irishness, led not to uncompromising traditionalism but an openness to contemporary thinking. Bury had been proposed as a member of the Society of Dilettanti by William Mitford, the author of *The history of Greece*, the first volume of which was published in 1784.[238] Bury possessed this book and copied large sections into a notebook.[239] Mitford acknowledged that the British system was based on the right of landed proprietors to exercise power, but he was keen to characterise it as an enlightened system, arguing, for example that the many degrees of rank and offices of state were accessible to all, and that, with the sovereign's power checked, public and private liberty were safeguarded. It was a defence of the status quo that would have appealed to the socially aspiring Bury.[240] Lady Charleville made great efforts to appear conservative, but her actions betrayed sympathy for more radical ideas. Sidney Owenson observed that Lady Charleville felt constrained to act as the great lady, 'reared in the bosom of high Toryism', and that in order to engage with alternative doctrines – which she did as the patron of aspiring authors such as Owenson, and Maria Edgeworth

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[236] They had a house in Berkeley Square in early 1800s (Marlay Papers, MS My 77–96); and first leased Queensbury House, Piccadilly in 1813 (Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 340). C.W. Bury had a house at No 1 Denmark St, Dublin until the Union when it became the residence of his first cousin Lord Ashtown, (*Irish Builder*, 1 April 1893, p. 77).

[237] RIA, Caldwell Papers, vol 6, 1801–8, 12 R 44/99, letter from Frederick Trench to Andrew Caldwell 5 Nov. 1805.

[238] Mitford, *The history of Greece*.

[239] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 35.

[240] In a later edition Mitford's brother Lord Redesdale wrote an introductory memoir in which he revealed that Mitford's researches into Greek history had confirmed him in the belief of the superiority of the British political and social system. William Mitford, *The history of Greece with ... a brief memoir of the author, by his brother, the late Lord Redesdale*, vol 1 (London, 1838).

– she affected amazement and bewilderment.[241] She co-financed and set up the infirmary in Tullamore with Sir Francis Burdett, then a liberal MP with an anti-establishment temper who condemned the Peterloo massacre in 1819 and was a voice for parliamentary reform.[242]

Colley argued that displays of patriotism were important in the cementing of the evolving British elite that had formally had close connections with French culture. The Burys were more independent-minded. Catherine had connections with France of which she remained proud – she had been educated in France, her sister had married a French nobleman (both were dead by 1783), she knew Talleyrand, was a friend of Madame de Staël and met Louis XVIII in Bath.[243] Few in the English elite showed sympathy towards republican ideology which challenged the hereditary principle, defended so eloquently by Edmund Burke in *Reflections on the revolution in France.*[244] However, neither patriotism nor their allegiance to the hereditary principle prevented the Charlevilles from having an open-minded attitude to the French revolution; Catherine admired La Fayette, and Bury's library catalogue of 1799 contained books displaying various attitudes to the revolution as well as works on the ancien regime.[245]

The Burys demonstrated a strong allegiance to Ireland. The most tangible evidence of this was their encouragement of the development of Tullamore. Bury had inherited considerable land in the town which was neglected during the years of his minority.[246] (fig 3.103) When he renewed leases after 1785 lessees were typically given 10 to 12 acres for three lives renewable for ever, terms designed to encourage building. Bury influenced the planning, creating a grid, allowing vistas for public buildings that he hoped to atract to the town, and commissioning his architects to design terraces: Pentland in Pound St; Johnston in Church St.[247] Two public buildings were founded by

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[241] *Lady Morgan's memoirs*, ii, pp 389–90.

[242] Bond, *Marlay letters,* p. 203; Marc Baer, 'Sir Francis Burdett', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 6 Oct. 2012.

[243] Bond, Marlay *letters*, pp 3–22, 360–74.

[244] Burke, *Reflections on the revolution in France*.

[245] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 361; Bury library catalogue.

[246] Byrne, 'The development of Tullamore; Michael Byrne, 'Tullamore:the growth process, 1785–1841' in William Nolan & Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin, 1998), pp 569–626.

[247] Charleville's concern to attract support from Laurence Parsons in Nov. 1829 for his campaign to site the county courthouse in Tullamore is revealed in Rosse Papers, (Malcomson, *Calendar* p. 413). C.W. Bury gave a site in 1808 for the new Ordnance barracks to be built by English Board of Ordnance (Marlay Papers, MS My 89, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 13 July 1808).

Lady Charleville. The school, financed by her and for which the foundation stone was laid in April 1810, was based on the monitor system (an economic and disciplinarian model) of John Lancaster.[248] The infirmary, built not long after, stood prominantly at the end of Henry Street.[249]

They were most actively involved in the siting and design of St Catherine's Church, a parochial chapelry within the parish of Durrow.[250] The new church was positioned on a hill to the south-east of Tullamore, visually, though distantly, linked to the demesne. It was accessed by a wide road which enabled the Charlevilles to approach it without fully entering the town. This project built on Moore precedent, for Charles Moore's wife had financed the original chapel, which had subsequently 'fallen into a state of decay'.[251] With one of the greatest number of Church of Ireland families in any parish of the Meath diocese, the servicing of local Protestant families was added to demesne improvement as an incentive to rebuild the chapel in some splendour.[252] Bury chose the site and commissioned Johnston to design a Gothic church after the foundation stone was laid in July 1808.[253] Three £1,000 loans were obtained from the Board of First Fruits as well as a gift of £1,300. Bury repaid the loans and contributed £3,000.[254] Surviving copies of two earlier schemes by Johnston indicate that this galleried and aisled church with its cruciform plan, prominent tower, and vaulting over the crossing which is one of the more elaborate Church of Ireland structures of the period, is in fact a pared down version of much more ambitious schemes. (fig 3.104) One, with a lower, wider, two-light tower over the crossing, had an almost comfortable English parish

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[248] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 203; O'Carroll, *Robert Day*, pp 224–5.
[249] First edition OS map (survey dated 1838). Bury viewed the site for the hospital in Dec. 1802 (Bury diary, f. 11v).
[250] RCB, D/5, Bishop O'Beirne, Visitation book, 'State of the Diocese of Meath in the year 1818', f. 79.
[251] Ibid., f. 79.
[252] Mary Caroline Gallagher, 'Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and his church-building programme in the diocese of Meath 1798–1823', (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2009), p. 222.
[253] (Marlay Papers, MS My 89, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 13 July 1808. In this letter CWC told CMC that the site agreed on was on Hop Hill (chosen in 1802 (Bury diary, f. 11v) which was also acceptable to the people. In the letter he also wrote, 'I insist on a Gothic Plan, which I think you will like'. The building was largely completed by 1815 when the seating was allocated (RCB, Vestry Minutes, St Catherine's Tullamore, P912.5.1, entry for 26 July 1815).
[254] At £7,300 this was one of the most expensive churches in the period. The average amount given by the Board of First Fruits in loans and gifts was between 1801 and 1822 was just over £600 (total amount given and lent was £430,417 and number of parish churches were 697 (House of Commons Papers, *Third report of His Majesty's Commissioners on ecclesiastical revenue and patronage in Ireland*, 12–14, HC 1836 (246), XXV, p. 119). Most churches did not receive gifts from benefactors.

church air.[255] (fig 3.105) It had buttressing with crocketed pinnacles, traceried windows, those for the aisles about a third of the height of the clerestory openings, echoing the proportions of the Chapel Royal. The tower, decorated with a corbel table and cross loops, referenced distant Charleville Castle. Inside, this scheme had a tierceron vault over the nave and crossing. The second scheme was plainer in some of its detailing – simple rib vault, no buttressing – but with its Decorated windows (two-lights with cusped arches), its vertical emphasis (taller aisle windows and slim tall tower) and lack of castellated details it was a purer ecclesiastical design.[256]

Statements of Lady Charleville's feeling about Ireland survive. In a letter written to Laurence Parsons in 1831 she compared herself with her son, then Lord Tullamore, an MP who seems to have internalised his parents' outward conservatism and pragmatic social ambition; ' … I don't speak with him often on those topics [politics], for he is warm, and I have all my life thought more freely on politics than my Lord. Indeed, excepting my strong wish to support pure and simple Protestant religion in these *kingdoms*, we have seldom agreed on them in our equally sincere zeal for Ireland'.[257] In another letter written in June 1829, where she commented on riots fuelled by unemployment in England, Lady Charleville suggested that the economic relationship between Ireland and England was one of co-dependency: 'As to politics, I do not feel easy while the manufacturing world is not so. I think we Irish should be a granary for England and to promote tillage all we could, that bread may be plenty there, for it is impossible that theories should satisfy hungry men.'[258] Her verses on the death of Lord Charlemont reveal, in the elevated language of the genre, her appreciation of his work for Ireland:

'He knew no passion but his country's weal,

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[255] IAA, A/10/5–8, photographs of unrealised scheme for St Catherine's Tullamore, south, west and east elevation (Christie's 1985 lot 19) and plan at clerestory level with reflected ceiling plan, attributed to Francis Johnston, [1808].
[256] IAA, A/10/1–4 photographs of unrealised scheme for St Catherine's Tullamore: plan of foundations, signed by Johnston and dated 6 Sept. 1808; ground floor plan; clerestory plan; elevations of foundations signed by Johnston and dated 6 Sept. 1808 (Christie's 1985, lot 20) and A/10/9, photograph of south elevation attributed to Johnston [1808], variation on scheme A/10/1–4.
[257] Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 413–4. Sidney Owenson said of Lord Tullamore that he was 'a Lord in Waiting, a Tory, a dandy, an exclusive. He talked to me of the *class and order* to which he belonged!' (*Lady Morgan's memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 391).
[258] Ibid., p. 412.

No interest, but that injur'd countrey's cause.'[259]

The Irish location of Charleville was, it has already been noted, prized for its picturesque potential and as the location chosen by Charles Moore for his seat. It is celebrated too in John Doran's poem in praise of Charleville where the rural idyll is referred to as 'old Hibernia':

'Come gentle Muse and take me by the hand
I am your Spencer this your fairy land
In old Hibernia lies the charming scene
And the bright Countess is our fairy queen'.[260]

Doran's use of the Latin word for Ireland conjures a romantic allusion to sixteenth-century Ireland.[261] This was unusual for poets or novelists in the early nineteenth century. When a critic in the *Monthly Review* described Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* in 1800 as 'Hibernian memoirs' there is a suggestion of pomposity rather than allusion to the past.[262] In Doran's poem 'Hibernia' evoked a country innocent of contemporary problems – absenteeism, rural unrest – and in which historic issues, such as the legal uncertainties about Charleville tenure or their relatively short presence in Ireland, were overlain by a hazily historic pastoral idyll presided over by Charleville.

Conclusion

Charleville Castle was a contemporary 'old British castle'; a defensive quadrangular castle modified with regard to domestic Gothic and contemporary comfort, and realised with picturesque drama. Stark exterior grandeur harboured formal, but highly decorated amenity within. It was an image which projected historic dynastic strength and contemporary ambition.

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[259] Bond, *Marlay letters*, p. 222.
[260] *A poem on Charleville*, lines 1–4.
[261] Spenser himself used 'Ireland' rather than 'Hibernia',
[262] The latinisation 'Hibernia' tended to be used in the formal titles of cultural and antiquarian institutions in this period: Hibernian Antiquarian Society (1779), Royal Hibernian Academy (1823). An early use of 'Hibernia' to romantically evoke sixteenth-century Ireland was Samuel Ferguson's stories supposedly told by a Gaelic poet imprisoned before the 1594 rising (Samuel Ferguson, 'Hibernian nights' entertainments', *Dublin University Magazine* (1833–1836)).

Status based on rootedness in Ireland and connectedness to contemporary Britain was the message of the Gothic revival at Charleville Castle. The 'old British castle' was not an Anglicised construct, signifying the subsuming of Bury identity into an Anglo-centric, patriotic British union. Instead, it was an expression of a British identity that was evolving among the post-Union Irish elite; English in references, Irish in location, and above all contemporary; a contribution to an architectural genre and the embodiment of the aspirations of an Irish family that needed to make its way in the British elite to retain its privileges.

Chapter Four

Birr Castle and demesne (1801–*c.*1806)

Introduction

Sir Laurence Parsons started work remodeling and extending Parsonstown House in April 1801, creating a picturesque castellated mansion eventually known as Birr Castle.[1] (fig 4.1) The castellated character of this castle would be enhanced when reconstruction after a fire in 1832 included the raising of the central portion of the castle by a storey and the construction of a roof concealed by castellations.[2] (fig 4.2) The building of the pre-1832 castellated mansion was contemporary with Charleville Castle, which lay only 24 miles north-east of Birr in King's County.[3] The differences between the patrons of these two early nineteenth-century castles were many and significant. Where Charles Bury had abandoned the seventeenth-century house he had inherited, Parsons remodelled his seventeenth-century planter house, itself an adaptation of older buildings. Bury's task had been to establish his family in Tullamore, but Parsons lived in the knowledge that his family had been in Birr for nearly two hundred years, and he was fully aware through his own researches that the history of family and town were closely intertwined. Where Bury had voted for the Union and been rewarded with a peerage, Parsons had been associated politically with liberal patriot politics in the Irish Parliament, and he was a vociferous opponent of the Union.[4] He inherited his father's baronetcy in 1791 and his uncle's earldom in 1807 to become the 2nd Earl of Rosse. Bury and Parsons were the most prominent men in King's County, which inevitably meant that they were rivals, though there is evidence of friendship too.[5]

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[1] For account of construction see appendix 2.1. In the 1820s there was a consensus that the house had become a castle but it was known interchangeably as Parsonstown Castle (Thomas Lalor Cooke, *A picture of Parsonstown in the King's County* (Dublin, 1826)) and Birr Castle (IAA, Robert Smith, Lieut. 44th regiment, 'Birr Castle, the seat of the earl of Rosse', pen and ink, signed and dated 1820). In this thesis the remodelled house will be referred to as Birr Castle and the town as Birr.

[2] The reconstruction was done during Sir Lawrence Parsons's lifetime in *c.*1836, (Rosse Papers, M/5/1, youthful recollections of the 4th Earl of Rosse). The interior was redecorated after *c.*1836 (Rosse Papers, O/30, 12 designs by Mary Countess of Rosse and/or Colonel Wharton Myddleton for hall ceiling, *c.*1840–45). A decorative recreation of earlier fortifications was carried out in the redesign of the gardens in front of the castle in *c.*1850 (Rosse Papers, O/32–4, plans for formal gardens, two designed by Col. Wharton Myddleton, *c.* 1850).

[3] Birr was then known as Parsonstown.

[4] Parsons was particularly associated with Henry Flood before Flood's death in 1791.

[5] Comparative data for landholding in King's County exists from Parliamentary Papers from 1876, which records: Charleville 23,370 acres; Parsons, 25,167 acres. Charleville's land was of marginally greater value: Charleville £10,190 and Rosse, £10,048 (Gráinne C. Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the

Culturally, as has been discussed in chapter one, the patrons of Charleville and Birr also displayed significant differences. Where the Burys cultivated a romantic and picturesque sensibility, Parsons most often showed himself to be an antiquarian in the modern mould; enquiring, objective, sensitive to the character of existing buildings. Charleville Castle was the result of the coming together of two informed, forward-thinking patrons and their talented architect. Although Laurence Parsons employed an architect, John Johnston, who initiated ideas, Parsons, an accomplished draftsman, often translated concepts into drawings to be used in discussions with Johnston, so that, to an even greater extent than Charleville, Birr bears the stamp of the intentions and values of its patron. It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate whether the differences between the patrons translated into disparate intentions, and whether the differences were also stamped on the resulting architecture so that conclusions can be drawn about the relationships between taste, meaning and built form in the realm of domestic castellated architecture in early nineteenth-century Ireland.

As noted in the introduction there is a rich seam of primary source material in the Rosse papers catalogued by Anthony Malcomson.[6] Apart from the tour journal of 1786, loose undated sketches and sketchbook of 1801–1803 discussed in chapter one, the personal material relating to Sir Laurence Parsons includes extensive notes he made on family and antiquarian matters, lists of books, commonplace books and manuscript poetry, correspondence and published pamphlets. There is also an extensive archive of design and working drawings and a building account book of 1803–5 relating to the rebuilding of the castle, mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century plans and drawings relating to the earlier building and estate maps. Despite the existence of this valuable source material, no scholarly attention has been paid to the alterations to the castle carried out between 1801 and 1806, beyond the account by Mark Girouard in his three-part article on Birr published in *Country Life* in 1965.[7] Girouard consulted the documents in the

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mid-nineteenth century' in Willam Nolan & Timothy O'Neill, *Offaly history and society*, (Dublin, 1998), p. 635).Lord Digby was the largest proprietor in King's County, but he was an absentee (Ibid., p. 635).

[6] Malcomson, *Calendar*. It is an invaluable guide to the drawings and papers in the archive, although there are occasional disparities between the current labeling and the calendar.

[7] Girouard, 'Birr Castle – I, II, III'. Girouard considered the building work at Birr from the early seventeenth-century to the mid-nineteenth century in the context of the family history. There has been some work on the seventeenth-century house, notably, Jane Fenlon, 'Some early seventeenth-century building accounts in Ireland', *IADS*, 1, (1998), 84–99; Alison Rosse, 'Plasterwork restoration at Birr Castle', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (1991–2), 214–217.

Rosse papers, but the early nineteenth century was only one part of his survey and he was not concerned to investigate the link between ideas and design. This thesis chapter is the first study based on a detailed investigation of the archives. As a preliminary to the analysis a building history was constructed; the working relationship of patron and architect has been deciphered; a design and construction chronology for the castle has been proposed; the character of the house before the mid-century rebuilding after the fire in 1832 has been identified. They will be integral to the following discussion of intentions and realisation and the interpretation of meanings.

The nature of the project

At Birr Parsons was remodelling an existing house which was the product of a long and varied history. It will be argued in this chapter that he was building on that history; he was aware of it, valued it and wanted, for his own reasons, to embody it in his house. These desires and intentions emerged as the design and building work proceeded, for Parsons was completing a project that had been initiated by his father; the past was both an inspiration and a constraint for Sir Laurence Parsons.

The house that Parsons inherited in 1791 had been initially formed in the 1620s from an existing thirteenth-century castle, probably extended in the period of peace between 1653 and 1688, and had been remodelled internally during the eighteenth century. The Parsons family came to Ireland in the late sixteenth century and, in addition to acquiring land, soon achieved positions in the Irish administration. Laurence Parsons traced his ancestry to another Laurence Parsons who, in 1612, was appointed Attorney-General for Munster. He received a knighthood in the same year and was made second Baron of the Exchequer in 1624.[8] In 1620 he was granted 1,662 acres as an undertaker for the plantation of Ely O'Carroll. His land included a castle and the town of Birr out of which he was to create the manor of Parsonstown.[9] This process was immediately inaugurated; before his death in 1628 Parsons had enlarged the castle and improved the town.[10]

During the two great military crises of the seventeenth century – the Confederate War of 1641–53 and the Williamite War of 1689–91 – both town and castle were attacked at

[8] *Burke's Irish family records*, p. 1184.

[9] Rosse Papers, T/1, copy of grant to Sir Laurence Parsons, 26 June 1620. He was granted 1,000 acres of arable and pasture, 662 of bog and wood. There were unspecified grants of land in Co. Cork.

[10] Thomas Lalor Cooke, *The early history of the town of Birr, or Parsonstown* (Dublin, 1875), pp 36–50.

Birr. Sir Laurence Parsons's grandson, William, garrisoned the castle for the crown as Governor of Ely O'Carroll in 1641. In April 1642 the town was burnt, and the following January the castle was besieged for five days. Mined on the west side, the garrison capitulated and William Parsons left to join the English army in Dublin. It was his son, Laurence (1st baronet), who reoccupied the castle which had been burnt by the Catholics.[11] An even more prolonged, devastating and destructive period occurred during the Williamite War. Laurence Parsons was arrested in May 1688 and not released until after the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690. On his return the garrisoned castle was besieged by the Jacobites, attacking with cannon. The Williamites relieved the castle but destroyed much of the town laying trenches and fortifications to strengthen Birr against further seiges. When the Jacobites finally withdrew, the castle was used as a hospital for about 400 wounded Williamite men.

With the restoration of peace in 1691 Laurence Parsons's son, William (2nd baronet), became MP for King's County. After that the Parsons family would consistently represent King's County in the Irish parliament, with, as was mentioned in chapter one, Laurence, the builder of the Gothic revival castle, representing the University of Dublin from 1782 till 1791, after which he followed his father as the elected MP for King's County.[12] He also succeeded his father into the governorship of King's County.[13]

A naïve perspective pen and ink drawing kept in a recipe book in the Birr archive shows Parsonstown House as it appeared in 1668 in the period of peace between the mid- and late seventeenth-century sieges.[14] (fig 4.3) It is attributed to Dorothy Parsons. She had married William Parsons in 1636, experienced the 1643 siege and, surviving her husband, lived on at Birr with her son. Like other houses built in the early to mid-seventeenth century in Ireland the house displays a variety of features from different sources; defensive elements associated with Irish tower houses, influences from

[11] Cooke, *The early history of the town of Birr*, pp 52–89.
[12] Sir William Parsons (1661–1741, 2nd Bt.), Sir Laurence Parsons (1708–1756, 3rd Bt.), Sir William Parsons (1731–1791, 4th Bt.), Sir Laurence Parsons (1758–1841, 5th Bt.).
[13] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament,* vol. 6, p. 23.
[14] Rosse Papers, A/17, 'Parsonstown House, 1668', in Dorothy Parsons, recipe book, 1666 [–*c*.1720]. The pen and pencil drawing was found loose in the fly-leaves with the inscriptions, 'Parsonstown House, 1668' and 'An excellent receipt to spend 4000 pound' and is attributed to Dorothy Parsons.

England that would give a house greater light, comfort, and transparency, and stylistic models that ranged from traditional medieval to newer classical.[15]

It is a double pile T-plan house with two flankers projecting at angles. It faces south, towards the town, with a dormered three-storey five-bay central block (with two lateral load-bearing walls internally) and two wings of the same height at roughly forty-five degree angles to the main block.[16] Its many-windowed aspect, its symmetry, the corniced chimneys and the urn-decorated balustraded terrace in front all reference the more advanced aspects of English houses. But the style of the windows, which are mullioned and transomed squares with hood mouldings, the doors, which are pointed, the prevalence of gables terminating in large stacks, recall Irish tower house architecture and the more traditional detailing on early seventeenth-century English houses. Dorothy Parsons omitted both the castellations, and the bartizans on the wings, (one of which remains today on the east flanker), which would have given the house a more defensive character, and the panes of glass as she depicted them were too large for the period.[17] This suggests that she was intent on creating a more fashionable image than the house possessed.[18] For, despite its brave open aspect, Birr was defended by a towered bawn wall which enclosed an extensive courtyard to the rear and a smaller terraced garden to the front. This fortified aspect of late seventeenth-century Birr is clearly presented on a military plan of 1691, which labels two rectangles (both 'B') adjacent to the inner wall as 'old castles', and a structure attached to the outer north wall ('E') as a redoubt.[19] (fig 4.4) There is a single entrance to the town, defended by circular towers, which led to Castle Street. Some of these fortifications, such as the redoubt and the outer wall to

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[15] For discussion of influences on seventeenth-century plantation houses in Offaly and Ulster see Rolf Loeber, 'The early seventeenth-century Ulster and Midland plantations, part II: the new architecture' in Olivia Horsfall Turner (ed.), *'The mirror of Great Britain': national identity in seventeenth-century British architecture* (Reading, 2012), pp 101–138.

[16] Today the ground slopes towards the north so that the ground floor is a basement to the north. This may have been a result of infill when the yard to the north was landscaped. The assertions about the interior plan are derived from a later survey drawing (Rosse Papers, O/17/8, proposed plan, attributed to John Johnston, [1801]).

[17] Thomas McErlean & Belinda Jupp, *Historic landscape survey of Birr Castle demesne* (1996), p. 26. Parsons sketched the east flanker which he depicted with a bartizan and crenellations, (Sketch notebook, ff 15v & 16r).

[18] Dorothy Parsons has drawn a balustrade around the parapet on the main block, which diminishes the impact of the three gables which form the roof. It is an unusual feature and may be aspirational

[19] Rosse Papers, O/2, photocopy of a plan of Birr Castle and its defences by Michael Richards, [pre-2 Apr. 1691]. A letter from Richards of 2 Apr. 1691 refers to this plan, (Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 110). This drawing presents a symmetrical plan of house with wings at forty five degrees from a central block as in the 1668 drawing.

which it is attached, may have been built in 1690 in preparation for conflict. The defensive nature of Parsonstown House certainly allied it to other plantation houses in Offaly, but the complex plan was unique – though T-plans were relatively common – and the use of symmetry and classical detailing marked it out from its contemporaries.[20]

Coherent though the 1668 house appeared, it was the result of adaptations and extensions to older structures. In the absence of detailed archaeological investigation the building sequence on the site in not entirely clear.[21] There is evidence that the Anglo-Norman owner built a castle here, but no conclusive evidence that it was in stone. However, it is highly likely that an original motte and timber castle, erected on an esker spur over the River Camcor, was replaced by a stone castle in the early thirteenth century and that it was a keepless castle composed of a polygonal enclosure defended by mural towers and a gatehouse.[22] Evidence for this rests on the fact that the bawn wall shown on the 1691 plan is polygonal. Further, the width, length and vaulting of the central bay of the house, which runs from front to rear, suggests the proportions of an Anglo-Norman gatehouse and, situated at the closest point to the town, it is in the logical place for an entrance.[23] The rooms on either side of this bay are vaulted at basement level.[24] Once the O'Carrolls regained control of the land in *c.*1350 it is highly likely that they strengthened the defences and constructed a tower house (possibly

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[20] Loeber, 'The early seventeenth-century Ulster and Midland plantations', pp 111–121.The U-plan can be found at Ballymooney Castle built *c.*1622, (O'Brien & Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly*, pp 159–60). In England there are houses with wings at similar angles: Westwood House, Droitwich, Worcester, 1612–20, Sherbourne Castle, Dorset, 1594–1617, Warmwell Manor, Dorset (1618), (Andor Gomme & Alison Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house* (New Haven & London, 2008), pp. 60–1, 118).

[21] I am indebted to Caimin O'Brien for discussing the archaeology of Birr and suggesting possible dates and influences.

[22] Theobald Walter was granted land in Munster including the cantred of Ely O'Carroll in the late twelfth century, (Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans 1169–1216,* vol. 2, (Oxford, 1968), pp 174–5). Walter granted the *vill* of Birr to Hugh de Hose, (Elizabeth Fitzpatrick & Caimin O'Brien, *The medieval churches of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1998) p. 120). In 1207 'Morictagh O'Bryen an Tieyve besiged the castle of Byrre and at last burnt the whole town' and in 1213 'The English army finished and made the castles of … Byrre', (Rev. D Murphy (ed), *The annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896) pp 222, 227). The first reference in the annal accounts suggests that a castle had been constructed by de Hose. It may have been a timber castle on a motte. The 1213 castle may have been a stone castle. It was located in the townland of Townparks, in Ballybritt barony and labeled 'Black Castle' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, 1840, (O'Brien & Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly*, p. 176.

[23] I am indebted to Caimin O'Brien for this observation. A mid-nineteenth-century design drawing based on a survey of the basement reveals that the walls of the central bay of the main block were the thickest in the house, (Rosse Papers, O/42, proposed basement plan, Anthony Salvin, *c.*1860).

[24] Caimin O'Brien has emphasised the need for archaeological investigation to discover techniques used to create vaults. The late sixteenth-century section of Ballycowen Castle contains a sequence of vaulted rooms. Alternatively, the vaults at Birr may be subsequent constructions.

remodelling an existing tower) for, when Sir Laurence Parsons was granted the land in 1620, it had been one of the principal strongholds of the O'Carrolls.[25]

Instead of occupying the O'Carroll tower house, Laurence Parsons seems to have converted the gatehouse of the castle complex into his house, remodeling the building, wainscoting and plastering the rooms. This is suggested by Parsons's reference to 'my dwelling castle called the gatehouse' in an account book of 1620–1628 which records his building work at Birr.[26] It is supported by the fact that the south door to the present house (the main entrance in the 1668 drawing), which has a pointed arch and was built of stones decorated with drafted margins and pocked dressing, is of early seventeenth-century date. Parsons also altered the bawn, demolishing part of the wall and sections of one of the old castles. Parsons constructed new buildings and adapted existing ones within the bawn, some of which are shown on the 1691 map.[27] One building is referred to as 'my English house', and may be the three-bay gabled house with hood-moulded door and mullioned and transomed windows, which was built north of the main house and can be seen on the 1668 drawing.[28] (fig 4.3) Parsons's consciousness of English style is unsurprising, for Sir Laurence and his family lived in Youghal, Co. Cork, visiting Birr infrequently.[29] There they were closely associated with Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork, and would have known his house, Myrtle Grove, an undefended house of English inspiration built in the late sixteenth century. The 1691 map records the existence of a garden beyond the bawn walls that was probably created at this time.[30]

Work was done improving – and no doubt repairing – the house after the siege of 1643 by Laurence's grandson, Laurence, who inherited in 1653 and was elevated to the peerage in 1677. The inscription on the 1668 drawing, 'An excellent receipt to spend

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[25] It is likely to one of the 'B''s on the plan in fig 4.4.

[26] Rosse Papers, A/8, 'Receipts and disbursements 28 October 1620–7 June 1628'. For discussion of this manuscript see Jane Fenlon, 'Some early seventeenth-century building accounts in Ireland', *IADS*, 1, (1998), 84–99.

[27] See McErlean & Jupp, *Historic landscape survey of Birr Castle demesne*, pp 25–27. The references in the account book are difficult to identify precisely on the map (Rosse Papers, A/8, 'Receipts and disbursements 28 October 1620–7 June 1628'; Rosse Papers, O/2, photocopy of a plan of Birr Castle and its defences by Michael Richards, [pre-2 Apr. 1691]). The buildings included a watch tower, porters lodge, garden tower, kitchen, buttery and other offices.

[28] Rosse Papers, A/17, 'Parsonstown House, 1668', in Dorothy Parsons, recipe book, 1666 [–*c*.1720].

[29] Rosse Papers, F/11/16, Laurence Parsons, Notes on history and genealogy of the Parsons, [*c*.1810–*c*.1841], unpaginated. The account probably post-dates the alterations of the castle because the description of the castle contained in it refers to the old entrance as giving access to the basement.

[30] Erlean & Jupp, *Historic landscape survey of Birr Castle demesne*, pp 27–28.

4000 pound' suggests that the expenditure was within recent memory.[31] Yew windows and furniture, and a magnificent yew staircase, described by the English antiquarian, Thomas Dineley in 1681 as 'the fairest staircase in Ireland' and which still survives, were constructed.[32] It is also possible that the two flankers in the present castle – the angled wings shown in the 1668 house – were amalgamated into the house at this time. The style of the surviving quoins, hood mouldings and bartizans, suggest that they were originally constructed in the early seventeenth century.[33] Unequal in size and not identically placed in relation to the central block, it is likely that they were built to fit in with the existing topography, probably as defensive towers. [34] (fig 4.5)

In the peaceful conditions established after 1691 the interior of the house was modernised with new decorative schemes and maybe also the altering of internal partitions to make larger rooms in the main body of the house. Parsons's grandfather (Sir Laurence Parsons, 3rd Baronet) erected two square ceilings and a 'cumpass' (coved) ceiling in the ballroom (probably a room on the first floor over the present library and study, now gone) and a 'cumpass' ceiling in the 'Room next the River'.[35] This probably refers to the first floor bedroom in the west flanker which still has an early eighteenth-century cove. This and neighbouring rooms have doors with early eighteenth-century shouldered architraves.[36]

His son, William (4th Baronet), Parsons's father, inherited Birr in 1756. There is evidence that he maintained his father's project of modernising the house internally.

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[31] Rosse Papers, A/17, 'Parsonstown House, 1668', in Dorothy Parsons, recipe book, 1666 [–c.1720].

[32] 'Extracts from the journal of Thomas Dineley', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 5 (1864–66), 272. The staircase has been dated to the immediate post Restoration (1660) period (Girouard, 'Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, I', 413). The fire in the castle on Monday 25 June, 1832, badly damaged the centre of the building, though the greater part of the furniture with the library and family pictures escaped (*Freeman's Journal*, 28 June, 1832). It is not clear to what extent the staircase was damaged. The style of the plasterwork in the Muniments room on the first floor of the east flanker suggests that it was constructed in the late seventeenth century.

[33] The details and general form of the flankers are similar to the 1626 addition to Ballycowen Castle, (O'Brien & Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly*, pp 154–6).

[34] Rosse Papers, O/17/18, proposed ground floor plan based on a survey, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1803] (fig. 4.5)

[35] Quoted in Girouard, 'Birr Castle–I', p. 414. The house faces north-west; where I have rationalised this as north, Girouard rationalised it as west.

[36] The 3rd baronet was probably responsible for converting the window in the parlour on the first floor of the east flanker (now the muniment room) into an elongated sash window. This has similar proportions to the windows of Damer house, Roscrea, built in *c*.1730. It is possible that the third baronet also altered other windows; but all the windows on the main façades were replaced in the early nineteenth-century remodeling.

Three marble chimneypieces, a frieze of alternating bucrana and a floriated design in the study, and a frieze of rams sculls and garlands in the west flanker dating to the late eighteenth century survive. A ceiling design in the archive copied from a drawing of a mausoleum soffit in Robert Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) may have decorated the library.[37] But Sir William also had radical plans for the gardens, which changed the context of the house and raised new expectations.[38] In 1778 he demolished the bawn walls and outbuildings, opening the house to the wide landscape of the demesne, which had been incrementally enlarged with the acquisition of land since the 1760s, and commissioned an informal, Capability Brown-inspired landscape.[39] The final form of this landscape is evident from an estate map of 1803.[40] (fig 4.6) This shows a 14-acre serpentine lake (no 13 on fig 4.6), formed by damming the River Camcor, which curved along the west side of a vast lawn decorated with clumps of trees. Narrow belts of trees, giving the impression of extensive woodland, encircled this wide view, simultaneously screening the demesne wall to the east, meadows and orchards to the south and agricultural land to the west. The house is shown facing not the town but the landscape. There is a new castle yard to the east, (no 11 on fig 4.7) and a curving avenue meeting a new entrance to the town in the wall to the north-west. (fig. 4.6) Parsonstown House had been transformed; no longer a fortified adjunct to the town of Birr, it was now the focus of an arcadian landscape.

This was the project that Parsons inherited. It has already been shown that when he travelled to England as a young man in 1786 Parsons was thinking as the potential

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[37] Rosse Papers, O/10, design for a ceiling. Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the desart* (London, 1753). It was used frequently as a source in the later eighteenth century. The Birr design is taken from Pl XLI, which shows three soffits in the coffin vaults of a mausoleum at Palmyra. The use of this plate suggests this book, an expensive production of finely executed measured drawings, was in the library at Birr. The drawings in the archive suggest that the two rooms to the west of the hall were different sizes in 1791 when Parsons inherited, with the room at the rear, now the smaller room, being then the larger room (Rosse Papers, O/17/6, O/17/8, O/17/14, O/17/22). The present ceiling in the library was formed in the early twentieth century.

[38] Although his father had commissioned Samuel Chearnley to design garden buildings it is unlikely that they were intended for real projects in the demesne at Birr (William Laffan, 'From paper to pillar, '*Miscelanea structura curiosa*' and the Cumberland Column' in Laffan, *Miscelanea structura curiosa*, p. 14).

[39] Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c.*1840], unpaginated. McErlean & Jupp, *Historic landscape survey of Birr Castle demesne*, pp 33–46. Sir William's desire for a view over the demesne had initially been expressed when, after he inherited in 1756 at age of 25, he had converted the watch tower, a projection from what had become known as the Black Castle, into a sitting room for wine drinking with friends after dinner (Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c.*1840], unpaginated).

[40] Rosse Papers, O/20, copy of an 1803 map inscribed, 'A map of the demesne of Parsonstown taken in the rough from the original May the 7th 1803 – … [by] Patt. McNevin, land surveyor'.

architectural patron. He was also, eight years after his father's landscape project had been initiated, critically alive to the possibilities of 'improvement'. Stourhead was for him, as for many, inspiring, while he criticised Wardour Castle demesne for its relative flatness, lack of water and absence of ornamental buildings.[41] He found Fonthill too formal; 'Little has been done in the improvement way, a large piece of water skirts the house on one side, & a wooded hill, squares it with the water, on the other.'[42] It is very likely that Laurence was actively involved with his father in this project, which was underway in 1785 with the planting of trees and construction of a walk overlooking the river.[43] Certainly, after his father died in 1791, Laurence continued to execute their plans, commissioning E. Johnston in 1793 to design a three-courtyard complex for turf, stables, and a farm yard to the east of the house, and overseeing the completion of the lake which was seen by a visitor in 1796.[44] He continued to plant trees, and from autumn 1800 to summer 1803 he constructed a number of garden buildings, and replaced the terrace at what had been the front of the house with a garden at what was now referred to as the rear of the house.[45]

It was Sir Laurence Parsons who would implement the changes to the house, the primary objective of which was to convert the rear façade into the front elevation to address the demesne. This was an opportunity to enlarge and modernise the house and alter its image. One incentive to progress the work was Parsons's domestic situation; he had married Alice Lloyd, the daughter of his neighbour, John Lloyd of Gloster, in May 1797 and their first child was born in June 1800.[46] We know from the study of Parsons's 1786 journal that he looked for 'convenience, symmetry or proportion' for a

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[41] Tour journal, ff 21v–22v, 24v.
[42] Tour journal, f. 23r.
[43] Erlean & Jupp, *Historic landscape survey of Birr Castle demesne,* p. 33.
[44] Rosse Papers, O/19/10, 'Rough draft of offices designed for Parsonstown Castle, E. Johnston, 1793'. There is no evidence that they were constructed. Rosse Papers, E/11/19, TS extract from Hamwood Papers including an extract from Alexander Hamilton's diary, 29 [September 1796]. The lake had gone by 1838.
[45] Rosse Papers, D/5/21–24, correspondence between Laurence Parsons and Thomas Parsons, Sept.–Oct. 1800; D/9/1, folio volume of accounts, 1803–5. In Oct. 1800 Thomas Parsons mentioned that work was to begin on Lady Parsons's garden at the back of the castle, (Rosse Papers, D/5/24, letter from Thomas Parsons to Laurence Parsons, 24 Oct. 1800). This may refer to the 'flower garden' marked 10 on the 1803 map which is shown between the house and the town. (fig 4.7)
[46] Rosse Papers, E/32/8, marriage licence for Laurence Parsons and Alice Lloyd 1 May, 1797. Obituary, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 15, new series (May 1841), 535–36. Their first child, a boy, William, was born on 17 June 1800, John Clere, would be born on 17 August 1802, Laurence on 2 Nov. 1805, and there were two daughters. Jane and Alicia (*Burke's Irish family records*, p. 1185).

modern house.[47] His criticism of Wilton as 'the gloomiest house I ever saw', and his approval of the unexpectedly large window panes in Hever Castle reveal that light and a sense of space were great priorities for him.[48] Early plans for Birr suggest that initially this was an important consideration. A plan of 1801 shows a large parlour and drawing room made out of the rooms that flanked the central hall, and a line of smaller well-lit rooms across the southern, rear, side of the house.[49] (fig 4.8) This plan also shows an open-well stair positioned behind a screen in a projection on axis with the new entrance, which reveals a concern to increase the formality of the house.[50] This and other early sketches also suggest that initially there were plans to significantly increase accommodation by building across the south, or by forming a courtyard to the north of the house.[51] (figs 4.9 & 4.10) In the end there was relatively little intervention in the existing interior planning, and new accommodation was confined to the creation and decoration of a single large and impressive Gothic drawing room behind the west flanker and attic rooms over the central block.

The rest of the effort was concentrated on the front façade which was completely remodelled, giving the house its medieval castellated character. External aesthetic remodeling and the making of a single spectacular Gothic revival drawing room had taken precedence, suggesting that to a considerable extent the creation of an image was paramount. This is partially explained by the landscape context of the project, for the wide open parkland called for a significant statement from the house that faced it. It is reminiscent of the early landscape design for Charleville, and it is possible that, as in so many similarly designed landscapes, a classically designed house had originally been imagined at Birr.

It is also likely that financial constraints played an important part in the decision to concentrate on image. A comparison between Parsons's income from Birr rentals in 1797 and 1809 suggests that his income was rising considerably at this time, a common experience for landowners at a period when the French wars were increasing the

[47] Tour journal, f. 6r.
[48] Ibid,, ff 25v, 36r.
[49] Rosse Papers, O/17/4, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to John Johnston, [1801].
[50] Parsons worked this idea out in sketches where he related the stair treads of the proposed staircase to the structural elements in both plan and elevation (Sketch notebook, ff 11r, 14r & 14v).
[51] Rosse Papers, O/17/6, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, [1801]; O/17/8, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to John Johnston, [1801.

demand for agricultural produce.[52] Parsons also sold land in the 1790s, receiving a total of more than £31,000.[53] However, he inherited a heavily encumbered estate with debts that were 'beyond all proportion to its extent', and he would be involved in a number of expensive law-suits.[54]

Against this he expected a considerable inheritance from his half uncle, Laurence Harman. This man had succeeded to his mother's estate in Co. Longford, and when he was elevated to the peerage in 1792 as Baron Oxmantown, the remainder was to go to his nephew, Sir Laurence Parsons.[55] In the event Parsons's half uncle became Earl of Rosse in February 1806, and when he died in April 1807 Parsons succeeded by special remainder as 2nd Baron Oxmantown and Earl of Rosse, but the estate did not come to him.[56] In the surviving drafts of letters written by a distraught Parsons to his aunt in late 1818 and early 1819 when his hopes had been finally disappointed, he told her that his expectation of an inheritance had caused him to live less frugally than he might otherwise have done. Although he criticised 'speculations and castle building on the property of another', he admitted that he had failed to pay off his debts because of his expectations.[57] From this we can gather that for many years Parsons had numerous calls on his income and adopted a financially cautious attitude towards a possible large-scale building project. He could not contemplate an entirely new castle. Even as a young man touring England Parsons was thinking in terms of improving existing buildings rather than building new. He was aware, for example, of the money spent by the Earl of Leicester in the 1570s improving Kenilworth Castle, and the '3 or 400 £' that would

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[52] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 415. His gross rental in 1797 excluding rents from Tipperary and Wexford property and Rathbeg can be calculated at £4,844, producing a total disposable income of about £2,000 (Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 415). In 1809 Parsons calculated the rental for part of the King's County estate at over £10,000 (Malcomson, *Calendar,* p. 30). His rental was estimated as 'about £10,000 in *c.*1812 (Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament,* vol. 6, p. 26). Malcomson has commented that his financial situation barely supported his earldom; although his annual income was augmented between 1809 and 1831 by his official income as joint postmaster-general, there were annual interest and annuity payments of £3,000 and annual outgoings of £750 for quit rents and chief rents. However, his financial situation improved after 1818 with compensations from Dowager Lady Rosse (*c.*£25,000), and the estate benefitted from his elder son's marriage to an heiress in 1836 (Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. xxv).

[53] Rosse Papers, E/2/2, account book kept by Parsons, extract in Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 415.

[54] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 365.

[55] The senior Parsons line became extinct in 1764 when Richard Parsons, 2nd earl of Rosse died. The representation of the family devolved to Sir William Parsons 4th Bt. The peerage was revived for Laurence Parsons of Newcastle Co. Longford (Sir Laurence Parsons's uncle) who was made Baron Oxmantown on 25 Sept. 1792 with remainder to his nephew. It was noted in 1799 that Parsons had or was heir to substantial landed property estimated at £4,000 per annum (Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6 p. 26).

[56] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 22.

[57] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p.366.

now make the gatelodge 'a very good house'.[58] However, despite his pragmatism the expectation of a peerage and the hope of an enlarged estate had had their effect on Laurence Parsons's thinking at Birr and perhaps explain a project that prioritised effect over increased accommodation.

Design and realisation

Surviving drawings suggest that it took Parsons and his architect about two years to design the alterations. There were many issues to be grappled with: the problem of how to impose symmetry, convenience and proportion onto an older building with its awkward geometries; whether irregularity was in fact desirable and how to accommodate it; the question of what architectural models to apply and how to apply them. The design sketches, some attributable to Parsons, others to his architect, reveal them presenting, developing, rejecting and refining ideas.[59] From these it is possible to reproduce something of the dialogue which took place between them, and to gain an insight into their intentions and priorities.

It has been established in chapter one that the young Parsons was a knowledgable, independent minded critic of classical architecture who developed an interest in medieval buildings by applying contemporary antiquarian thinking. His response to Gothic was also refracted through fashionable sensibilities; he saw cathedrals through the prism of the sublime, and late medieval and early post-medieval houses through the emotional lens of association. His analytical interest in buildings and his skill as a draughtsman meant that he was in a position to develop as an amateur architect, although he displayed no interest in measured drawing. There is also evidence that he had an ongoing involvement with the fabric of the house he had inherited. He may not have had a detailed knowledge of construction but, applying his logical mind to structural problems, he could be confident in his conclusions. In a letter written to his brother Thomas written in September 1800 in a response to Thomas's concern about a crack in an angle of the castle, he wrote 'As to the angle of the castle I confess I have no

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[58] Tour journal, f.12v. NLI, Domvile Papers, MS 11,358, letter from C.M. Ch[arleville] to Frederick Trench, 2nd August, [1802].

[59] See appendix 2.2.

apprehension about it, for the wall batters so that I believe, if it opened a foot wide, it would still be within the perpendicular, and consequently could not fall.'[60]

Parsons employed John Johnston as his architect, a man of whom very little is known.[61] He may have been the John Johnson who entered the Dublin Society Drawing Schools in 1767, winning an award.[62] He may also have been the speculative developer, John Johnston, in 1790s Dublin for whom building work was carried out on new houses in Gardner Square, Mountjoy Square, Leeson Street and Belvedere Place.[63] Johnston was resident in Birr from at least June 1804 while he oversaw the operations of the craftsmen employed by Parsons to build the castle.[64] Parsons would employ him to design and build the Protestant Church in Birr – inaugurated in April 1809 – until he died in October 1812, before the church was completed, aged about 63.[65] When Francis Johnston outlined his architectural projects to the author, James Brewer in 1820 he was careful to disassociate himself from the architect of Birr, writing that he, Francis, did no other buildings in King's County apart from Charleville Castle, its offices and the church of Tullamore, and that 'the alterations and additions made at Lord Rosse's Castle, at Parsonstown or Birr were done by a Mr John Johnston, who died about Five years ago'.[66] Johnston's fastidiousness suggests that Birr had frequently been attributed to him, a castle which, perhaps because it lacked the assertive panache of Charleville, he was anxious not to be connected with. Francis Johnston undoubtedly knew John Johnston for they were working on their respective castles simultaneously and Birr would be influenced by Charleville.[67] But this comment to Brewer gives no indication whether there would have been visits and discussions or distance and professional

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[60] Rosse Papers, D/25/21, letter from Laurence Parsons to Thomas Parsons, 8 Sept. 1800.
[61] See 'John Johnston', DIA, 1720–1949, IAA [online] www.dia.ie accessed 10 Oct. 2013.
[62] Gitta Willemson, *The Dublin Society Drawing Schools: students and award winners 1740–1876* (Dublin, 2000) pp 51 and 113.
[63] National Archives, Bryan Bolger Papers, 2/476/15.
[64] Rosse Papers, D/9/1, folio volume of accounts, 1803–5. Salary payments were made to Johnston on account, but also payments were made for candles, laundry and subsistence. There is evidence that he signed off the work (Rosse Papers, D/9/1, loose sheet, slating bill, 30 Nov. 1804).
[65] St Brendan's Church of Ireland church, Birr, Vestry minutes, 19 April 1809 and 7 Oct. 1812. In the latter entry it was recorded that due to Johnston's death it was resolved to use his original plans. He died on 5 or 6 Oct. 1812.
[66] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', p. 4.
[67] When John Johnston arrived at Birr Francis Johnston was producing working drawings at Charleville, (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.200, 'Working sketches for building the basement storey of Charleville Castle, no 3, Feb. 1801'). Francis Johnston was working on St Catherine's Tullamore from 1808 to 1818 during the period when John Johnston was working on St Brendan's, Birr, and at the time he died.

rivalry. What is certain is that when John Johnston arrived at Birr in April 1801 Charleville was being built, and that 16 months later – by August 1802 – the front façade had been constructed.[68] It was during this period that Parsons and John Johnston were formulating their designs.[69]

Parsonstown house, with its central block and two flankers, was broadly symmetrical. One of the earliest ideas entertained by Parsons and Johnston was to superimpose the popular conception of a medieval castle as a symmetrical composition of square block with corner towers onto Parsonstown House.[70] Johnston, probably instructed by Parsons, who, as we have seen, admired symmetry in medieval buildings, produced a conceptual sketch, which retains the two existing flankers and much of the central block. (fig 4.11) The main entrance gives access to a hall, which runs through the centre of the house. There are symmetrically placed staircases, new square towers project at each corner of the south facade, and two new round towers are shown on the north elevation as a way of joining each flanker visually to the main block. This sketch was made before the survey was carried out which would uncover the irregularity of the flankers, so it was unhindered by considerations of the actual topography of the existing building.

That Parsons was thinking of medieval castles is suggested by the existence in the Birr archive of sketches of medieval castles with round corner towers, which can be attributed to him.[71](fig 1.16) But the idea of corner towers, especially the unusual idea of differentiating the form of rear and front towers, may have been inspired by Charleville Castle. (fig 3.59) There is certainly evidence that Charleville Castle was emulated by Parsons. In a large-scale plan of the gatehouse at Birr, produced in about April 1803, Johnston wrote beside a proposal for a cross loop, 'Lord Charleville has the same at the side of his door'.[72] In a proposal for Birr Johnston proposed two square

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[68] See appendix 1.2.
[69] See appendix 2.1.
[70] Rosse Papers, O/17/3, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to John Johnston, [1801].
[71] Rosse Papers, O/14/3, perspective of a medieval gatehouse, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, n.d.; O/14/4, perspective sketch of [Ludlow Castle], attrib. to Laurence Parsons, n.d..
[72] Rosse Papers, O/17/27, plan of entrance walls, signed 'J.J.'. The plan may relate to O/19/2, elevation of the entrance tower with cross loops on either side of the door, signed and dated 'April 1803. In 1969 Mark Girouard speculated that Charleville may have been an influence; research for this thesis has shown that this was the case (Girouard, 'Birr Castle–II', 469).

corner projections that were entirely decorative, as they were at Charleville.[73] (fig 4.8) Symmetry would be intrinsic to the final design at Birr, but its expression would be looser than the concept conveyed in this initial sketch.

The survey of the existing house revealed the awkward facts about the flankers.[74] (fig 4.5) They were of unequal size. Where the east flanker was set back behind the proposed façade of the central block, the west flanker projected beyond the front. Each was at a slightly different angle to the central block. The survey is incorporated into a measured drawing of a relatively late proposal which distinguished between the walls to be retained and the proposed new structure. It reveals that Parsons and Johnston had discovered that intrinsic to the existing building was a tripartite main block consisting of a narrow central bay (the original Anglo-Norman gatehouse), on either side of which were two wider bays of equal width. The flankers were the other original element in the composition. The flankers may not have been uniform, but the central block had a symmetrical structure.[75]

The response to the discovery of the irregularity of the flankers was not to demolish or alter them. In fact, with one exception, all subsequent proposals explored ways of retaining them.[76] Early schemes, however, concealed them. It was only gradually realised that the main block and flankers could be expressed in the final design. The sequence of design sketches reveals that patron and architect slowly became aware of the picturesque potential of what they had: the variety of projections and recessions on the front facade; the variety of roof levels; the long elevation, linked to the stable yard, which could extend across the apex of the landscaped demesne.

The attempt to create an exactly symmetrical composition which retained the central block and flankers but did not express them can be found in a scheme explored by Parsons and Johnston for enlarged accommodation which proposed a well-proportioned courtyard to the front. This entailed concealing the flankers behind towers and screen

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[73] Rosse Papers, O/17/4.

[74] Rosse Papers, O/17/18, proposed ground floor plan based on a survey, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1803].

[75] The placing of two staircases to the north-east of the plan unbalanced the composition internally.

[76] The exception was for a proposal to extend the west flanker to create the new drawing room (Rosse Papers, O/17/14, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804], & O/17/20, proposed plan of new drawing room, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804]).

walls and ignoring the symmetrical nature of the central block by putting the entrance in the east bay.[77] (figs 4.9 & 4.10) A different approach was adopted in an elevational sketch of the north front made by Parsons.[78] (fig 4.12) Here, with four round towers proposed to symmetrically link two elevations of each flanker to the main block, the flankers with their bartizans were to be expressed, and the long elevation was extended by the addition of a wall to the east that ran into trees.[79]

This suggests an incipient awareness of the picturesque potential of the scheme. That Parsons was thinking in this way is suggested by contemporary sketches he was making. These depict a number of walls punctuated by towers and gates which combine drawings of existing buildings with neo-Gothic fantasy. In one there is an accurate depiction of an Irish tower house with battered walls, battlemented parapet, pyramidal roof, projecting turret, slit windows lighting the angle stair and an asymmetrically placed larger tripartite window on the top storey.[80] (fig 4.13) This is set at right angles to a symmetrical towered gate with a central diamond window in a Gothic revival style. In another sketch he depicts the east flanker at Birr with its uneven array of windows and corner bartizan.[81] (figs 4.14 & 4.15) This is attached to a battlemented wall punctuated by a gate and a tower with an echoing bartizan; this time the tower no longer resembles an Irish tower house.[82] In both drawings the walls and towers are partly obscured by trees. Here we see Parsons linking the house to the stable yard in the context of the landscape, as Repton advocated and as was currently being explored at Charleville.[83] It is notable that, like the Charlevilles, he considered an Irish medieval

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[77] Rosse Papers, O/17/6, proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, [1801] & O/17/8 proposed ground floor plan, attrib. to John Johnston, [1801]. The latter drawing is a more fully worked out version of the former.

[78] Rosse Papers, O/17/5, sketch of proposed north elevation, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, [1801–1802].

[79] The bartizan on the east flanker is on the wrong side, suggesting that even at this stage the desire for symmetry could override evidence of what was present.

[80] Sketch notebook, f. 12 r. Other evidence that Parsons visited and drew tower houses can be found in the two pages of gable and chimney-piece details in early seventeenth-century Kilcolgan Castle details, (Sketch notebook, f. 15r. See O'Brien & Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly*, pp 157–8 for archaeological details of the house

[81] Sketch notebook, f. 16r.

[82] Ibid., f. 15v.

[83] A curved wall with three pointed arches was constructed at Birr in the early nineteenth century between the east flanker and the stable yard which, recent excavations have revealed, was once attached to the flanker (information from the Countess of Rosse). A curved wall with an arched opening is shown on the 1803 map attached to the east flanker and the walls of the castle yard, (Rosse Papers, O/20, copy of an 1803 map inscribed, 'A map of the demesne of Parsonstown taken in the rough from the original May the 7th 1803 – … [by] Patt. McNevin, land surveyor'). A curved wall is shown on the estate maps of 1853–6 linking the east flanker to the L-shaped outbuildings (Rosse Papers, O/38, 'Maps of the estate of the Rt

model in the context of landscape design – and, in his case in the context of a surviving early seventeenth-century flanker. Unlike them he discarded the Irish tower idea.

Once the northern courtyard idea had been abandoned Parsons and Johnston concentrated on exploiting the intrinsic symmetry of the main block by putting the hall and main entrance in the central bay. It was not immediately clear how to deal with the entrance. An early proposal by Parsons for a pointed door within a broken pediment, that is very similar to a former gateway at Birr and maybe drew on it, mixed Gothic and classical elements.[84] (figs 4.16 & 4.17) But a measured drawing attributable to Johnston proposed a much more strongly castellar building with battered walls and a central recessed gatehouse decorated with corbelled turrets and a conical roof.[85] (fig 4.18) The corbelled turrets reference details found in Slane Castle and Charleville, and would be abandoned in the final design, but the realisation that an assertive gatehouse which would make Birr look more convincingly like a castle had taken root.[86] (figs 4.19 & 4.20) In his notebook Parsons explored the possibilities of the gatehouse by pushing it forward, enlarging the opening to encompass two storeys, and adding a central turret to give it greater height and prominence; features that would be realised in the final scheme.[87] (figs 4.21–4.23) He also explored alternative details for the gatehouse in his notebook.[88] In 1786 Parsons had made an accurate recording of the asymmetrical late medieval gatehouse at Crickhowell which had a pointed arch opening, single lancet, a mullioned window decorated with four ogees, battlements and a corner turret.[89] (fig 4.24) But for his own house, he ignored authentic medievalism for the eclectic aesthetic of the revival. An initial idea in Parson's sketchbook was drawn up by Johnston.[90] (figs

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Hon. William, Earl of Rosse in the King's County and County of Tipperary [surveyed by] John Logan, 1853–6). The L-shaped building had been demolished by 1884 but not the curved wall (2nd edition O.S. map, 1884). The wall is half covered by the bank constructed to facilitate the tunnel to the stable yard built between *c.*1853 and 1884.

[84] Rosse Papers, A/17, 'Parsonstown House, 1668' in Dorothy Parsons, recipe book, 1666 [–*c.*1720]. This gate had been removed in 1778

[85] Rosse Papers, O/17/10, proposed north elevation, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1803].

[86] Adam also used turrets and conical roofs at Mauldsie Castle, Lanarkshire (completed by 1796) and Castle Upton, Co. Antrim (1788–9).

[87] Sketch notebook, ff 8r, 9r & 9v.

[88] That Johnston was being led by Parsons is suggested by surviving drawings. Johnston drew up a proposal for a single storey entrance (Rosse Papers, O/19/2, elevation of gatehouse tower, signed J Johnston and dated Apr. 1803) (fig 24) which was superseded by Parsons's double height entrance whose details are similar to the realised design (Sketch notebook, f. 19r).

[89] Tour journal, inside back cover, 'gateway at Crickhowell'.

[90] Sketch notebook, f. 7v; Rosse Papers, O/19/2, elevation of proposed gatehouse tower, signed J. Johnston, April, 1803.

4.25 & 4.26) This was developed by Parsons with details that were later realised.[91] (fig 4.27). With symmetry, cross loops, lancets, quartrefoils, a triple lancet with ecclesiastical overtones and coats of arms, they followed the example of Charleville.[92]

Exploring the possibilities of the turreted gatehouse, Parsons and Johnston had realised the importance of orchestrating drama at roof level to create a convincing impression of a castle. They also understood that by integrating the flankers and the main block in an extended composition of projecting and receding elements they could disguise the fact that the elevation was not exactly symmetrical. They had adopted the picturesque. Like many of their contemporaries they did not fully grapple with asymmetry. As late as 1816 Humphry Repton would lament the inability of the builders of revival castles to comprehend the value of irregularity in their pursuit of picturesque effects. '... although many attempts have recently been made to produce modern Gothic Castles, yet the great principle on which the picturesque effect of all Gothic edifices must depend, has too generally been overlooked: viz. irregularity of outline', he wrote, referring to skyline, elevational projection and recession, variety of fenestration, base and relationship to attendant buildings.[93] Parsons, as we have seen, approached medieval castles as an antiquarian rather than as a romantic. But, developing the design of his house, he tapped into contemporary feeling for the picturesque, which valued the order of a broadly symmetrical composition mitigated by the drama of varied roofs and the sinuosity of a façade that moved in and out and subtly changed direction.

This aesthetic, giving an impression of both order and informality, was celebrated by George Petrie in 1820 when he depicted the north front of Birr from across the lawn partly concealed by trees, the focus, as originally intended, of the demesne.[94] (fig 4.28) That same year Robert Smith, a visiting lieutenant with the 44th regiment, stood by the river below the castle to the west, and drew the building from an oblique angle,

[91] Sketch notebook, f. 19r.
[92] See note 72 above for Johnston's reference to Charleville's cross loops (Rosse Papers, O/17/27, working drawing plan of entrance walls, signed 'J.J.' [1803]).
[93] Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening including some remarks on Grecian and Gothic architecture* (London, 1816), p. 19.
[94] Rosse Papers, O/24, George Petrie, north elevation of Parsonstown Castle, watercolour, *c.*1820. (fig 4.28) The drawing was engraved for Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 2 (1826). (fig 4.1) Inscription in pencil on lower LH of the drawing, 'Geo Petrie, Del 1820', probably made for future engraver. 'Parsonstown Castle' is added in another hand.

presenting it as a jumbled mass of towers, battlements, chimneys and gables.[95] They formed a dramatically broken silhouette among the trees and revealed that a romantic sensibility that eschewed order could find much to admire at Birr. (fig 4.29)

These images also reveal another very important aspect to the completed castle. Behind the battlemented façade of the main block was a high, hipped roof, its ridge parallel to the front elevation, containing the attics, while tall chimneys with projecting cornices and string-courses rose above the external walls. These features were reminiscent of late medieval, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English houses. However, the roof at least was not a retention of the existing seventeenth-century roof which had consisted of three lower roofs with ridges at right angles to the front elevation.[96] (fig 4.3) Although smaller roofs that echoed – or retained – the existing roofs had been considered in the design process, these had been rejected for the large dominant structure.[97] The reference to older houses, as opposed to defensive castles seems to have been an important consideration. The juxtaposition of battlements, substantial roofs and tall chimneys recalled the houses with medieval roots and later additions that Parsons had seen in Kent: Hever Castle, where the gabled domestic apartments of a manor house had been constructed behind a thirteenth-century gatehouse; (fig 4.30) Penshurst Place, where the roofs of chapel and hall rose above battlemented walls; (fig 4.31) Knole, where chimneys and turrets vied for prominence. (fig 4.32)

These castellated houses may have influenced the fenestration of Birr. The completed house at Birr had tripartite mullioned windows with straight heads and a high transom for the main block, tripartite windows with round heads for the wings, and pointed lancets for the round towers.[98] All had drip mouldings. Initially, Parsons seems to have emulated Charleville. Early proposals for the main elevation at Birr show long

[95] IAA, Robert Smith, Lieut. 44th regiment, *Birr Castle, the seat of the earl of Rosse*, pen and ink, signed and dated 1820.

[96] Rosse Papers, A/17, 'Parsonstown House, 1668', in Dorothy Parsons, recipe book, 1666 [–*c*.1720].

[97] Rosse Papers, O/17/19, proposed plan of first floor, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804] with additional pencil sketch of section through the castle, & O/18/14, reverse, section through castle and new drawing room, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804]. Other proposals depict a roof with a ridge parallel to the front façade: Rosse Papers, O/17/9, proposed north elevation, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, [1802–1803]; & O/17/10, proposed north elevation, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1803].

[98] The windows immediately on the west of the main entrance were enlarged when the main block was rebuilt after 1832.

rectangular windows for the main block, which echo the side elevations at Charleville.[99] (fig 4.21) The final windows owed more to medieval precedents. Here Parsons may indeed have used his acquired knowledge of medieval buildings. It was noted in chapter one that he sketched medieval window details.[100] (figs 1.11–1.15, 1.24–1.26) On the reverse of a sheet of drawings of tripartite and lancet windows on the Dungeon Tower at Chepstow Castle Parsons made notes of construction details: 'Most of the doors and windows in this part of the building which is on the right hand at the entrance have pointed arches, some of them with flat sides as above, but in general is circular'.[101] But the idea of juxtaposing different window types relating to different types of rooms in the context of a domestic house may have been suggested to him by the houses he had seen in Kent.

The construction of the new Gothic drawing room to the rear of the west flanker was an opportunity to produce a room that conformed to 'modern ideas of convenience, symmetry [and] proportion'.[102] This was realised through the positioning of the room adjacent to the river, and the provision of large pointed traceried windows that admitted the light, the view and the sound of the water.[103] (fig 4.34) The room has a strong geometrical framework, which, surviving plans reveal, was an essential feature of the design from the start, the space being divided into three parts, with a large central section and two smaller ends that in the final design were canted.[104] (figs 4.34–4.36)

There is evidence that Parsons and Johnston aimed at grandeur, and that this was to be realised through the use of ecclesiastically derived decorative details. In a proposal for a vaulted passage to connect the hall to a new staircase John Johnston's annotated comments suggest that he and Parsons associated ecclesiastical Gothic with impressiveness: 'to be arched in the gothic style', it would have 'an air of grandeur' 'all

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[99] Sketch notebook, f. 8r.

[100] See chaper one note 214.

[101] Rosse Papers, O/14/5 Sketch details, Chepstow Castle, Laurence Parsons.

[102] Tour journal, f. 6r.

[103] Rosse Papers, O/18/14, elevation of window wall in new drawing room, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804], with inscription 'rough plan of the inside of the Drawing Room, next the River shewing the dimensions'.

[104] Plans that include the new drawing room and basement are dated [1802–4] (appendix 2.1). For drawings that include the new room on a general plan see Rosse Papers, O/17/14, O/17/19. For plans that explore the design of the new room see O/17/20, O/17/21, O/17/22, O/17/23, O/17/'24', O/17/25, O/17/26. O/17/26 is signed 'J. Johnston', O/17/21 is attributed to Parsons, the rest are attributed to John Johnston.

the doors opening into it must be gothic & a high gothic window at the end.'[105] (fig 4.37) By 'high gothic window' he most probably meant a traceried window.[106] There was uncertainty about how to introduce ecclesiastical Gothic into the drawing room and how intense it should be. An early idea for the fireplace wall proposed a tripartite scheme with a central cusped and crocketed ogee arch that recalls a reredos, and a vaulted ceiling; the whole ensemble suggested a chapel.[107] (fig 4.38) However, there were also plans for a flat ceiling with classically-derived detailing: the working drawing for the window wall showed a coved ceiling, and a surviving ceiling plan proposed a radiating pattern based on a concentric circle and oval with ribs radiating from the edge of the central circle and bifurcating where they met the oval.[108]

In the end it was the ceiling that benefited from their feelings for ecclesiastical Gothic. It was a unique, idiosyncratic and effective construction. Where most designers of eighteenth-century vaulting schemes for major domestic rooms tended to prefer fans, the vaulting at Birr incorporated tierceron and lierne ribs between diagonal, transverse, ridge and wall ribs.[109] (figs 4.39 & 4.40) This was unusual in the middle ages. There is an outstanding example constructed in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century in the chancel of Pershore Abbey in Worcestershire. We do not know whether Parsons had seen this, but it is possible that for the ceiling he used an archaeological source. The design had to be adapted to the geometries of the space, which was proportionately wider than a church chancel, far lower and had two canted ends, and the plaster ribs were less rounded than was usual in medieval detailing. The result has a strongly encompassing effect, like a tent. Johnston was well served by his plasterer who produced fine foliate bosses, nearly all different, in which the leaves curl realistically over the ribs to touch the vault, following Johnston's instruction.[110]

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[105] Rosse Papers, O/17/14, plan, attrib. to Johnston, [1802–1804].

[106] When he was in Salisbury Cathedral in 1786 Parsons was disappointed by the lancets, writing, 'The windows are quite plain, no tracery, which looks odd in a Gothic building' (Tour journal, f. 26r).

[107] Rosse Papers, O/18/4, proposed elevation for the fireplace wall in new drawing room, attrib. to John Johnston, [1804–1805].

[108] Rosse Papers, O/18/14, elevation of window wall in new drawing room, attrib. to John Johnston, [1802–1804]; Rosse Papers, O/18/1, design for a ceiling, attrib. to John Johnston, [1804–5].

[109] Tierceron ribs are secondary ribs in a tierceron ribbed vault, and liernes are secondary ribs in a lierne ribbed vault. Rosse Papers, O/18/2, plan for vaulted ceiling in new drawing room, [1804–1805], attrib. to Johnston. It has a damaged inscription detailing size and design of bosses and mouldings.

[110] Ibid. There is similar accomplishment in the plasterwork of the roof bosses in the Church of Ireland church in Birr, designed by Johnston and probably executed by James Jones (Rosse Papers, E/11/15, 'stucco work done in vestry rooms and entrances of Parsonstown church'. The bill includes work for '2

The vaults are 'supported' by colonnettes that are similar to those in the hall at Charleville. (fig 4.41 & 4.42) And, in many aspects of the drawing room and other interior detailing at Birr, Charleville is a strong influence, although Batty Langley's designs may have been important too.[111] Parsons was undoubtedly inspired by medieval windows for his own windows – there are two large-scale drawings of traceried windows incorporating roses in the archive.[112] (fig 1.27) But the detailing – the use of small roses, the frieze of pointed arches in the bottom panes, the uncusped tracery – is very close to Catherine Bury's unexecuted designs for windows at Charleville Castle.[113] (figs 3.83, 4.33, 4.43) If this was his source it suggests that Lady Charleville had given Parsons access to her drawings and that they discussed their schemes. In the case of the hall doors John Johnston either had access to drawings from Charleville or saw the joinery *in situ*, for his signed working drawing presents a four paneled door decorated with two rows of cusped arches and a central row of quatrefoils which echoes the drawing room dado and hall doors at Charleville.[114] (figs 3.58, 4.44, 4.45) When the Birr doors (placed in the new drawing room) were constructed, the detailing was altered: the four panels were reduced to two and the central row of quatrefoils were enlarged and given V-shaped features at the corner, imitating a motif that the Charlevilles had taken from Strawberry Hill. (figs 4.46, 3.56) They are crude compared to the Charleville joinery and suggest the work of a joiner who has simplified Johnston's design in his absence, but who is also aware of the decoration at Charleville.

Associations and meanings

Parsons the antiquarian had remodelled his seventeenth-century house using a picturesque Gothic revival style. In part he was following fashion, an interpretation that is supported by his awareness of what was being realised in neighbouring Charleville.

Gothick ornaments (omitted in last bill)'). Two of these seem to be derived from Halfpenny, *York*, plates 32 (upper left hand), 79 (upper).

[111] Langley, *Ancient architecture, restored, and improved,* plates 6, 9, 14, 49 out of this book are found in Rosse Papers, O/14/19–22.

[112] Rosse Papers, O/14/14, 'West window of the Mayors Chapel in College Green Bristoll [*sic*]', attrib. to Luarence Parsons, n.d.; Rosse Papers, O/14/13, unfinished sketch of a traceried window, attrib. to Laurence Parsons, n.d.

[113] RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.203, 'Two windows designed for eating parlour', signed 'CMC' [1800–1801]; IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.204, attributed to C.M. Bury, [1800–1801].

[114] Rosse Papers, O/18/9, 'One of the hall doors', elevation of door with full-scale details of mouldings, signed J. Johnston, n.d. Work on the interiors of Birr and Charleville was progressing simultaneously from 1805, see appendices 1.2 & 2.1.

But he was keen to be guided by the contours of his existing house and to allow its various elements (central block and flankers) expression in the final design. Thus the remodelled house referred to the older structure. The language of the picturesque was integral to the Gothic revival style that Parsons adopted. This signaled associative intentions. Broadly, the neo-Gothic style translated the architecture of the existing house into a new language which exemplified the ancient.[115] At a more specific level this style as realised at Birr was ambivalent. The battlements and towers could refer to the strength and durability of the medieval castle, or, seen juxtaposed to high pitched roofs and tall chimneys, they could refer to the castellated houses that had been built in the middle ages and subsequently extended and thus to the rootedness of the families who inhabited them.

There is evidence in the Birr archive that buildings could have a symbolic purpose for Parsons. In August 1828 his second son, John Clere died, aged 26. A year later Parsons was proposing to build an Ionic temple as a memorial. He discussed the project with Lady Charleville, who, in a letter to Parsons, revealed the symbolism such a building had for her: 'I like the idea of the school-house, having, as I suppose, a portico, which will be ornamental, and the Ionic seems to me the fittest order for a light structure sacred to youth, and its classic purity most appropriate.'[116] We can assume that this was also Parsons's interpretation, for the notion that architectural orders personified human qualities echoed the ideas of Vitruvius which had been popularised by renaissance writers such as Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548–1616) and Sebastiano Serlio (1475–*c.*1554). Although there was great variety in these subsequent interpretations of the orders, John Summerson has observed that there was a broad consensus that Doric was male, Corinthian female and Ionic something unsexed.[117] A locally born architect and contractor, Bernard Mullins (1772-1851), was commissioned to produce a design based on the Ionic Greek temple of Ilissus, the shady riverside place outside Athens where Socrates had walked and taught.[118] Alluding to John Clere's scholarly interests, this added another layer of meaning.

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[115] For discussion of expressiveness in architecture see Goodman, 'How buildings mean', pp 31–48.
[116] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 411.
[117] John Summerson, *The classical language of architecture* (revised ed. London, 1980), p. 15.
[118] Rosse Papers, O/28, drawings for John's Hall, Bernard Mullins, [*c.*1828], inscription on plan reads, 'Design from the Temple on the Ilissus for a school house at Parsonstown selected by the Right Honble the Earl of Rosse.' The restored temple front was illustrated in Stuart & Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens.* The schoolhouse was built in Birr in *c.*1829 on John's Mall.

There is a strong possibility then that Parsons intended his remodelled house to project a symbolic message. What may be described as a piece of linking evidence – two coats of arms set high on either side of Parsons's new gatehouse – connect the building with his family. On the left are the arms of Sir Laurence Parsons who had converted the O'Carroll stronghold into a Parsons castle in the early seventeenth century, quartered with the arms of his wife, Anne Malham. On the right are Parsons's own arms, quartered with the arms of *his* wife, Alice Lloyd. So a direct connection was made between the founder of the Parsons family in Birr and the contribution of the 5th baronet.

Parsons's surviving notebooks and letters reveal that he was passionately interested in his family history.[119] A letter written to his brother in September 1800 about a portrait of the Laurence Parsons who had been created a baronet in 1677, reveals his familiarity with the family archive and careful inspection of family portraits, while his imaginative involvement in the lives of his predecessors was expressed in drafts of justifications of the conduct of Lord Justice Parsons in the 1640s.[120] Genealogy and pedigree were specific concerns. His notes were punctuated with drawings of family coats of arms, and accounts of the genealogies of the women who married into the family, such as the Cleres of Norfolk, his mother's family, whose origins he traced to the Norman conquest.[121]

Parsons wrote notes for a history of the family which included a detailed account of the alterations made to the O'Carroll castle by the first Sir Laurence Parsons.[122] Using the 1620s account book in his archive, he attempted to map the brief references to 'garden tower' and 'storehouse tower' etc in the early seventeenth-century account to the buildings he knew. The manuscript confirms that Parsons had a clear idea of the various elements of the existing house, and reveals that he attributed the building of all parts, including the central gatehouse, to Laurence Parsons. '[Laurence Parsons] had a

[119] Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c.*1840], unpaginated.
[120] Rosse Papers, D/5/21, letter from Laurence Parsons to Thomas Parsons, 8 Sept. 1800, from Scarborough. Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c.*1840], unpaginated.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

gatehouse built to the fortifications consisting of a tower about 46 feet long & 25 broad', he wrote. 'This is now the centre building of the present house, & contains the hall. At each end of it there are arches of hewn stone on a level with the kitchen apartments & thro' these was the entrance into the fortification.' However, rational and honest as he was, Parsons also displayed caution with material that was often elusive. Of the flankers he wrote: '[Sir Laurence built] the garden tower which I believe to be the present eastern tower'; and, in 1625 and 1626 'he built the Storehouse tower which I suppose to be the present West tower, but this is only conjecture.'

When he constructed the neo-Gothic gatehouse tower in front of the hall Parsons may have regarded it as an exemplification of the original gatehouse built by his predecessor, for it alluded to the former military structure that had been subsumed into the house, giving it the visual distinction which it had lost. Because of its prominence the tower acted as a symbol of the castle as a whole; a role that was enhanced by the placing of the two coats of arms linking the two builders of the castle. The gatehouse may thus have symbolically represented his predecessors' achievement for Parsons. He may have been inspired to focus on the gatehouse by what he remembered of Hever Castle, where he had identified the surviving gateway with 'two of the ancient portcullises' and gates as a significant feature.[123] Today this late thirteenth– early fourteenth-century element still stands out in front of the fifteenth-century building at Hever.

The notion that Parsons associated his own building activity with the founder of the Parsons family in Ireland is supported by the fact that Parsons was not immune to the charm of associative thinking. We know, for example, that Parsons valued some of the houses that he visited in Kent in 1786 because he cherished personal and family associations with the former inhabitants; the Boleyn connection at Hever and the association of Algernon Sidney with Penshurst. We have seen that these houses and others like them were appreciated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as exemplary domestic buildings in which the castellations were appreciated as having only ever been symbolical. Richard Gough, for example, identified fourteenth-century Spofford Castle as an example of a 'convenient hospitable *palace*' in which the idea of

[123] Tour journal, f. 35v.

the 'close compact well secured *keep* was nearly laid aside'.[124] While Repton, who distinguished between '*Castle* Gothic' and '*House* Gothic', identified '*House* Gothic' as buildings constructed after the dissolution of the monasteries, mainly in the Elizabethan period. '... the general character and effect of those houses is perfectly Gothic; and the bold projections, the broad masses, the richness of their windows, and the irregular outline of their roofs, turrets, and tall chimneys, produce a play of light and shadow wonderfully picturesque'.[125] On his tour in 1786 Parsons discriminated between the defensive and domestic features of medieval castles. For instance, at Raglan Castle he had written appreciatively of the strength of the great, detached octagon tower and the towered gatehouse, before trying to unravel the plan of the domestic quarters within the walls. This can be compared with Lady Charleville, who, in her enthusiasm for the ruins at Kenilworth, made no distinction between the fortifications and the domestic quarters. At Warwick, Parsons, focusing on the earl's apartments and the dramatic situation of the castle, failed to record the fortifications, unlike Lady Charleville and so many of his contemporaries, who had gone specifically to see Guy's and Ceasar's towers.

Birr then, with its large roof and tall chimneys appearing behind the castellations, was more than likely designed to refer to late medieval, Tudor and Jacobean buildings, even perhaps the houses Parsons had seen in Kent. Amalgamating the castle and the palace, they would have been eminently suitable models for someone wanting to castellate an existing seventeenth-century house with its multiple stylistic references. Parsons, we observed, judged design according to suitability, and he may have considered these types of houses the most suitable models for his purpose. Further, their appeal as exemplars would have been deepened by the fact that they were readily associated with specific people who had connections to his own family and personal values. The remodelled house was arguably an exemplification of Parsonstown house, the castellations that his ancestor Dorothy Parsons had suppressed in her drawing of 1668 now celebrated in a landscape context that spoke of enjoyment of the natural world rather than defence against enemies. And within, Parsons had built a new drawing room that reflected beneficially on the status of the present family; modern in terms of proportions and comfort, grand in its ecclesiastical references, and with a certain glamour and prestige derived from its emulation of Charleville.

[124] Gough, *Description of two antient mansion houses in Northamptonshire and Dorset.*
[125] Repton, *Observations*, p. 190.

Political and social purpose

Why was it important for Parsons to go to such trouble to symbolically re-create an ancient castellated house for his family at this time? Begun in April 1801, the re-designing of Birr Castle was a project of the immediate post-Union period. The Union precipitated a crisis for liberals and radicals in Ireland as they adjusted to the closer integration of Ireland within imperial Britain. After a brief description of Parsons's political experience before the Union, this section will consider the adjustments he made after 1801, how they affected his ambitions for his family and how the rebuilding of Birr played a significant role in this.

As an MP Parsons was, as we have already seen, associated with the liberal opposition of Henry Flood.[126] Although an active member of the House of Commons, intervening on every major issue except the regency bill, Parsons would fail to propose a successful motion, mainly because of his stubborn independence.[127] In 1799 an assessment written by a contemporary reveals that Parsons elicited respect as a man of reason, integrity and conviction but that he lacked charm.[128] Later in life Parsons would say of himself that he was indifferent to office and power, that duty had led him to politics and that he was more suited to live the life of a scientist or scholar.[129]

He wrote two pamphlets in the 1790s that articulated his political and cultural ambitions for Ireland. His 1793 pamphlet, in which he defended the status quo against the challenge of revolutionary change, was recognised by Edmund Burke as 'essential service to your country'. [130] His *Observations on the bequest of Henry Flood* published in 1795, discussed in chapter one, revealed Parsons's cultural ambitions for Ireland. 'How can a nation be truly great without learned men?' Parsons asked rhetorically.[131] He assured his readers that Trinity College library, enriched by Flood's bequest, would

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[126] For discussion of Parsons's political career see Atkinson, 'Sir Laurence Parsons, second Earl of Rosse', and A.P.W. Malcomson, 'A variety of perspectives on Laurence Parsons, 2nd Earl of Rosse' in William Nolan & Timothy O'Neill (eds), *Offaly history and society* (Dublin, 1998), 439-484.
[127] Atkinson, 'Sir Laurence Parsons, second Earl of Rosse', p. 271.
[128] Quoted in Johnston–Liik, *Irish Parliament,* vol. 6, pp 24–5.
[129] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 459.
[130] Laurence Parsons, *Thoughts on liberty and equality by a Member of Parliament* (Dublin, 1793). NLI, Rosse Papers, MS 13547, copy of letter from Edmund Burke to Sir Laurence Parsons, 7 March 1793.
[131] Parsons, *Observations,* p. 70.

become one of the most illustrious in the world, 'as renowned as Ptolemy's library in Alexandria.'[132]

Like most Irish patriots of the late eighteenth century Parsons valued the English constitutional connection.[133] In the debate after the passing of Yelverton's Act in 1782 about the clause laying down that only Irish bills given royal assent under the great British seal should become law – which many interpreted as an undesirable impediment to Irish independence – Parsons asserted the value of the seal, arguing that it 'is the bond of connection between the two kingdoms'.[134] Faced with the French revolution he took the conservative line, making a valuable contribution to the debate by defending the social order, and arguing in favour of the rights of the propertied in the pamphlet that was published in 1793.[135]

However, he did not support the conservatives and immediately support the war against France. He displayed similar inconsistency and independence in his response to the fear of a French invasion and, from 1796, the anticipation of a United Irishmen-led insurrection in Ireland. At a local level he became a keen defender of the rights of property, supporting the government initiative to form militias by becoming a colonel in the King's County Regiment in 1791.[136] Yeomanry, Volunteer-like units gazetted from Dublin Castle, were formed to counter rural unrest: Parsons too played a role here as Captain of the Parsonstown Cavalry from 1796.[137] But his response as a MP was less martial, for, when in March 1798, full-scale rebellion within Ireland came nearer to reality, rather than support the confrontational approach of the Insurrection Act of 1797, Parsons proposed that the government look into the causes of the crisis.[138] His plea for understanding and for a more measured response was unsuccessful (it was voted down by a majority of 127). This may have contributed to the personal attack by the ambitious major in the King's County Militia which resulted in Parsons tendering his resignation

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[132] Ibid., p. 69.

[133] S.J. Connolly has argued that Irish patriots were influenced by the English 'real whig' or 'country' tradition, and that their political concerns can be seen as an application to Irish conditions of the principles of civic virtue, active citizenship and commitment to parliamentary scrutiny of the executive of English 'country' politics; the constitutional rights of Englishmen (Connolly, 'Varieties of Britishness', p. 197).

[134] Quoted in R.B. McDowell, *Irish public opinion 1750–1800* (Westport, Connecticut, 1975), p. 77.

[135] Parsons, *Thoughts on liberty and equality*, p. 54. R.B. McDowell, *Irish public opinion*, p. 166.

[136] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 23.

[137] O'Donnell, 'King's County', p. 509.

[138] Ibid., p. 493.

as Colonel.[139] Parsons's experience of 1798 was thus of political defeat by members of his own class, rather than the helpless fear of attack of a beleaguered loyalist.

Parsons opposed Union with Britain. Writing to his political ally and friend, Lord Charlemont, in November 1798, he described it as 'this detested union' from which he anticipated calamity; '[I] am persuaded that, if accomplished, it [Union] would, if not accompanied, be soon followed by a civil war and ultimate separation.'[140] In Parliament Parsons moved an amendment to the address to the throne on 15 January 1800, declaring 'the resolution of parliament to preserve the constitution as established in 1782.[141] His speech was defeated by 138 votes to 96. But even as he was arguing against Union Parsons was uneasily aware that peace in Ireland had been imposed by military might and that Birr was 'crammed with troops'.[142] Once the Act of Union was passed Parsons took his seat in the Westminster Parliament. The rationale of his acquisition may have echoed that articulated by John Foster, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, who wrote in February 1801, 'even so carried, it is the law. We are bound'.[143]

The Union was a defeat for that section of the Protestant Ascendancy which had argued that Ireland's salvation lay under its leadership. For such men adjustment to the Union meant that they had to embrace a British identity, and abandon their role as the political conscience and leaders of Ireland, or find a new way in which to realise this role. George Boyce succinctly articulated the problems of this class when he wrote, 'The Union … created unionists as the Protestants of Ireland sought to combine their Irishness with a full commitment to, and membership of, the British nation.'[144] The forging of a multiple identity, it has been argued by Brockliss and Eastwood, was a common experience for those living within the Celtic fringe of Britain. For although

[139] Rosse Papers, F/20, commonplace book containing a poem by Parsons about his resignation and an explanation of the circumstances. The explanation is reproduced in Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 476–7.
[140] Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1894, vol. 2, pp. 337–8.
[141] James Kelly, 'The failure of the opposition' in Michael Brown, Patrick M. Geoghegan & James Kelly (eds), *The Irish Act of Union, 1800, Bicentennial Essays* (Dublin, 2003), p. 122.
[142] Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1894, ii, pp. 337–8. There is some inconclusive evidence that he may have initially supported Union (Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 25).
[143] Quoted in A.P.W. Malcomson, 'John Foster', *DIB* [online], <www.dib.cambridge.org.elib.tcd.ie> accessed 7 Apr. 2013.
[144] D. George Boyce, 'Weary patriots; Ireland and the making of unionism' in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *Defenders of the Union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801* (London & New York, 2001), p. 22.

Parliament formed a strongly integrative element within the Union, there was no concerted attempt to create a single British identity, and there were many areas in which separate cultural identities could be asserted and religious and national differences contested.[145]

Culturally, as a member of the Anglo-Irish Protestant elite, Parsons was well equipped to acquire a post-Union British identity that integrated English and Irish experience. He was a law graduate of Lincoln's Inn and an MP in Westminster. Protestantism, a primary defining feature of British identity, as Linda Colley has argued, was a badge of honour for Parsons.[146] Colley repeatedly shows that one of the mainsprings of a Protestant identity was the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, when Protestant William of Orange was invited in as monarch in place of Catholic James II. For Parsons this episode was vitally important. He wrote (though never published) a thirteen-canto poem titled 'The Revolution', based on meticulous historical research. It begins, 'England from thralldom sav'd, and from the yoke/ of Papal tyranny, my verse unfolds.'[147] Parsons's interest in British architectural and scientific matters, his rational mode of enquiry, his sensitivity to prevailing taste all reveal that culturally and intellectually his horizons were not circumscribed by Ireland, and that assimilation into a British identity would not be problematic.

However, Parsons's links to Ireland remained strong: part of his education had been at Trinity College, his property lay entirely in Ireland, his wife was Irish. His response to the political opportunities immediately after the Union shows him channelling his ambitions into the two available courses left to him in Ireland: the Irish administration and a local role in King's County. He was elected to the United Kingdom parliament and after an initial period when he was the leading Irish critic of the Irish Martial Law Continuation Bill, he became a valued supporter of the ministries of the day, requesting, as payment, a seat in the Irish Treasury, the advancement of his brothers in the church and law, the peerage for his uncle (which he would inherit), the position of Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer and campaigning for a representative peerage for

[145] Laurence Brockliss & David Estwood, 'A union of multiple identities' in Brockliss & David Eastwood, *A union of multiple identities*, pp 1–8.
[146] Colley, *Britons; forging the nation*, see especially chapter one.
[147] Rosse Papers, F/2, box containing drafts of poems by Laurence Parsons.

himself.[148] He was largely successful, becoming a lord of the Irish Treasury, and, in 1809, joint postmaster-general with Lord O'Neill, prevailing over Lord Charleville.[149] His petition to become a representative peer was supported in 1808 by the chief secretary, Sir Arthur Wellesley, whose assessment of Parsons reveals the substantial and dependable figure he had become by then; 'These seats ought to be given to the persons resident in Ireland who have the largest influence and the greatest property and are in themselves of the most respectable character; and on this ground Lord Rosse is the man of all others who ought to be appointed.'[150] Lord Rosse was voted to the position in 1809.[151] There is evidence that he discussed with his friends how his family might enter the British peerage. Denis Browne spelled out the advantages: '[A] British peerage [is] an inestimable object to your family. If your son has talents, it will enable him to show them: if he has not, it will put him in [a] situation of dignity and ease, where he can wait till he produces perhaps some opening.'[152] In order to realise his ambition to acquire positions of local power Parsons again found himself in competition with Lord Charleville. A major objective was the post of *Custos Rotulorum*, and in a letter written in 1815 he successfully persuaded Sir Robert Peel (then chief secretary for Ireland) that Peel's preferred candidate, Lord Charleville, was less suited to the post.[153]

There is evidence in surviving poems and letters that at an emotional level Parsons lived the life of a Westminster MP uneasily, finding the pull of Ireland stronger than the challenge of British politics. Staying at Nerot's Hotel off St James's, he was in the heart

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[148] Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 25; G.R. Thorne, *The House of Commons, 1790–1820*, vol. 4 (London, 1986), p. 729.

[149] The treasury position was a reward for supporting Prime Minister Addington (Malcomson, 'A variety of perspectives on Laurence Parsons', p. 458). Parsons was postmaster-general when Francis Johnston designed the General Post Office (1814–1818) and must have been involved in the commission. There was official consideration in April 1807 that Parsons could replace John Foster as chancellor of the exchequer, though in the event William Wellesley-Pole succeeded Foster in 1811, (Minto Papers, MS 12911, letter from William Elliot to James Trail, 17 Apr. 1807).

[150] Quoted in Malcomson, 'A variety of perspectives on Laurence Parsons', p. 458.

[151] Rosse, the eighth new representative peer, replaced the earl of Normanton, former Archbishop of Dublin.

[152] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 383. The Rt Hon. Denis Browne wrote to Parsons on 17 Feb. 1817 advising him that if he wished to enter the British peerage he should maintain influence in King's County through his brother, assiduously attend the House of Lords, and use his influence in Birr to ensure votes (Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 382–84). Parsons was unsuccessful in obtaining a British peerage.

[153] Atkinson, 'Sir Laurence Parsons, second Earl of Rosse', p. 213. Parsons argued that Lord Charleville had a smaller property in the county, no connections with local MPs, and had been defeated on the two occasions when he had stood as MP for King's County. Rosse Papers, E/40/4, patent appointing 2nd earl of Rosse *Custos Rotulorum* of King's County, 1825. Parsons had held a local office prior to the Union; he was joint governor of King's County from 1792–1800 (Johnston-Liik, *Irish Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 23).

of political and aristocratic London, but he mixed mainly with Irish MPs.[154] In his letters to his wife he described how he missed her on the journeys to and from Ireland which they had previously taken together, and even in the House itself in 1805 during one of the crucial debates. His account of this episode suggests a certain level of detachment from his activity as a politician in Westminster: 'My dearest life, the House is now fuller than I ever saw it. The Prince of Wales and most of the Princes of the Blood and principal peers ... to witness this extraordinary day. … I snatched this moment to let you know what we are doing and to tell you while the multitude in the House are thinking with earnestness on the political scene before them, my thoughts and all the emotions of my heart are buried about my treasury in [their Dublin town house] Merrion Square.'[155] Parsons was noticeably absent from the House in 1806, ostensibly because of his wife's health, though his political masters feared that it signaled lack of support for the Union.[156] Even before the Union Parsons had pitted home life against political duty. In March 1798, when he had been forced to resign as Colonel of the King's County Regiment of Militia, he had written a poem addressed to his father-in-law, John Lloyd of Gloster, in which he had expressed no regret at losing his opportunity to defend the British empire, and great enthusiasm for the opportunity it gave him to study peacefully at home close to his family.[157]

Thus it was that in the early years of the nineteenth century Parsons's emotional life and his ambition for a role in Irish public life was centred on his family and estates. It is not surprising that his work here should involve the remodeling of his house, and that that building work should acquire a symbolic purpose. That residency was key is clear from an unpublished poem, *The Absentees*, which Parsons wrote in 1801 when Union had intensified the threat of absenteeism and he felt the need to articulate the responsibilities that came with property.[158] This poem may have been inspired by Oliver Goldsmith's

[154] Rosse Papers, D/10/1–14, letters from Sir Laurence Parsons to Lady Alice Parsons, May 1805 – June 1805.
[155] Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 378–9. The event was Viscount Melville's impeachment.
[156] Minto Papers, William Elliot of Wells, MS 12910, copy of letters from William Elliot to Lord Greville 26 May 1806 & 4 June 1806; MS 12917, copy of a letter from Sir John Newport to William Elliot, 30 May [1806].
[157] Rosse Papers, F/20, poem on the resignation of Sir Laurence Parsons's command of the King's County Militia in 1798.
[158] Rosse Papers, F/20, *The Absentees*. The paper in this book is dated 1811. In the front of the book is a draft of the poem written on paper dated 1801.

poem *The deserted village* published in 1770.[159] Although Goldsmith's political target was different – he was lamenting the clearance of a village by an improving landlord – like Parsons, he was expressing fondness for place and indignation against contemporary materialism. In both cases the past was represented as having moral authority. Using a succession of rhetorical questions, Parsons argued in *The Absentees* that the economic health of Ireland was dependent on a continuously resident and active landlord class, and that because of this it was the duty of the propertied to invest in Ireland. He compared the emigrant, a consumer who depleted his estates, with the resident landlord who created order and industry around him in Ireland. This had long been a preoccupation of his, as is evident from comments in a commonplace book of the late 1780s.[160] Parsons was comfortably aware that his own family had a history of stimulating economic activity, writing that the first Sir Laurence Parsons, about to leave Birr for the last time in 1628, 'had the satisfaction to see that the little colony of English which he had induced to settle here was well formed and giving a promising appearance of future civility industry order and affluence'.[161]

This poem memorably evoked the threat of rebellion. It is evident from other sources that in the post-Union years Parsons's attitude to challenges from the disaffected majority had altered. There had always been a defensive element to his thinking. In *Thoughts on Liberty* written in 1793 Parsons had argued that the wealthy were justified in protecting themselves against the numerous improvident, and he had passionately evoked the efforts of past generations of the elite in defending the government, 'maintain[ing] it against invasions and conspiracies, against the machinations of tyrants, the seditions of the turbulent, the intrigues of factions; – often and gloriously have they fought for it, bled for it, died for it.'[162] These words recall his descriptions of Birr during the civil war of 1641 and the sieges of 1691 in which his own ancestors had fought and suffered in the effort to retain town and castle.[163] In 1793 he supported Catholic emancipation, but he wanted to limit the franchise to those with £20 per annum

[159] Communication from Dr Wendy Moody. Another possible model was Ben Jonson's *To Penshurst* discussed in chapter three. One of the themes of *To Penshurst* was residency.

[160] Rosse Papers, F/17, folio commonplace book, [*c*.1778–*c*.1819], unpaginated, entry quoted here *c*.1788–9.

[161] Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c*.1840], unpaginated.

[162] Parsons, *Thoughts on liberty and equality*, p. 28

[163] Rosse Papers, F/11/16, bundle of notes on the history of the Parsons family, [c.1810–*c*.1840], unpaginated.

freehold, and he believed that such Catholics of property should also have the right to hold offices. This was more about the rights of property and the need of the state to be served by the talented, than it was about extending political rights to the majority.

After the Union, his attitude towards Catholic rights altered, and in 1822 he voted against Catholic emancipation. In a letter written to Lord Redesdale in May 1822 he recalled that after a speech he had made as a young man arguing for the removal of all the political disabilities of the Catholics, a succession of influential people with Catholic backgrounds had warned him that once they had power Catholics would act against the Protestant interest.[164] Parsons perceived significant differences between the liberals among the Catholic laity and the more bigoted hierarchy. In 1795 he wrote to Peter Burrowes describing how a Catholic bishop had told a fifer that he would be damned if he played at a Protestant service. '[U]nless the liberal Catholic laity trample down the superstitions of their hierarchy', he wrote, 'there cannot be the union, which I believe they wish among the people of this country'.[165]

In 1820 Parsons and his family were the victim of a hoax which had aimed to set Catholic against Protestant.[166] Their response, which was to withdraw behind the defences of the castle, was atavistic, and revealed that Birr Castle could still function as a defensive structure. Building on an existing revival of Ribbonmen activity in the area, letters were given to Parsons, purportedly from one of the agitators, warning of a large-scale attack on the castle and cautioning against placing any trust in his Catholic servants. This induced the family to block up the windows, man cannon remaining from the period of the Volunteers in the late 1770s and offer the castle as a sanctuary for local Protestants. Notes in Parsons's handwriting in the Rosse papers in which he described and tried to account for a Catholic conspiracy formed of men who were oath-bound to destroy Protestants reveals the tenor of anxieties first formulated during the French wars when the threat of insurrection and French invasion was ever present and which only subsided with the English victory at Waterloo in 1815.[167]

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[164] Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 399–402. These people included Rev. Dean Kirwan, a former Catholic priest, Lord Dunboyne, a former Catholic bishop, and Peter Burrowes who had a Catholic mother.
[165] Quoted in McDowell, *Irish public opinion*, p. 184.
[166] Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 418–20.
[167] Rosse Papers, E/10/1, 'Notes on a conspiracy', [*c*.1820]. See Bond, *Marlay letters*, chapters 4 & 5 for letters recounting local disturbances and the French threat.

Parsons's strategic attitude to perceived threats was a positive attempt to promote harmony through building a Catholic chapel: he donated ground in Birr and £100 towards the building costs. Bernard Mullins, was commissioned to design the building in a Gothic revival style. The foundation stone was laid on 1 August 1817 by Parsons's son, and the chapel was finished by 1 August 1824.[168] This was acknowledged in an address from the local clergy, committee and inhabitants as a gesture of good will, which they reciprocated.[169] It was undoubtedly a gesture that had been given and received as they described. But in a letter to Lord Redesdale written two years before the completion of the chapel Parsons revealed that he had also supported the chapel in order to attract Catholic votes.[170] This effort would be wasted if Catholic emancipation was achieved because, instead of voting according to the landlords' wishes, the townspeople would follow the priest and vote for new Catholic candidates. 'I think it would be painful to the priest and to most of the Catholics of this town to vote against my son. But I am sure that they dare not do otherwise, if there were Catholic candidates. The Catholics are now building a chapel here much larger and more beautiful than our church, which cost above £8,000. We all contributed most liberally ... [The Catholics], together with my Protestant tenantry here, gave a dinner on the occasion [that his son was elected for King's County in 1821], where we all dined, the Protestant rector sitting with a Catholic priest on either side of him. Nothing could be kinder or more affectionate than their whole demeanour. But if the Catholic bill passed, this would all change to wrath and hostility.'[171] It is perhaps significant that the Catholic church was located on the eastern edge of Birr and had no formal relationship with the castle, whereas the new Protestant church was integrated with the castle and more closely connected with the family. This church, designed by Parsons's architect, John Johnston and built between *c*.1812–*c*.1818, was situated at the end of a newly constructed mall and addressed the main castellated entrance built soon after the castle was completed.[172] The new entrance was linked to the avenue that extended the drive shown on the 1803 map, and which curved gently through the demesne towards the castle. Apart from donating the ground in August 1810, Parsons was the treasurer of the accumulating

[168] Malcomson, *Calendar*, pp 417–18.
[169] Rosse Papers, E/11/51, 'Address of the Roman Catholic clergy, chapel committee and inhabitants of Parsonstown and parish of Birr', 31 Aug. 1824.
[170] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 403. The letter is dated 27 May, 1822.
[171] Ibid., p. 403.
[172] Rosse Papers, E/4/22, plan showing proposed mall, nd. Rosse Papers, E/11/1–72, includes bills for work done on the new church in Birr.

fund, and was active in securing a loan from the Board of First Fruits the following year.[173]

From the foregoing it is clear that in the immediate post-Union years Parsons, driven by the challenge of Union and the perceived threat posed by the Catholic majority, felt the need to underline his family's historic presence in Birr, both as a moral force and as the primary source of power. Articulating a new role for himself, finding a new way to promote Ireland and responding to the threat of majority rule he increasingly put value on his patrimony. 'All things derive their value from their place', he wrote in *The Absentees*.[174] Place in this poem, which contained two powerfully contrasting images of buildings, was intimately linked to architecture. With the image of a ruin, Parsons graphically conveyed what he saw as the devastation contingent on non-residency. The poem evoked a scene repeated many times across the Irish landscape; the neglected avenue leading to the ruined tower house.

'See yonder grass-grown avenue that leads
Up to the antient portal thro' these meads,
Here grew a double range of fragrant limes
And spread embow'ring shades in former times;'
…
'Approach the mansion now; see who lives there,
No habitants but rooks and doves appear,
Its mould'ring turrets all in rubbish lie;
Its roofless chambers open to the sky;
Its antient outlines scarcely can be trac'd;
Within one ruin, and without one waste.'[175]

This he compared to Charleville Castle, presented as a many-sided symbol; of commitment to Ireland, of defence against rebellion, and of the family who built it. He described a mighty structure which seemed to have sprung fully formed from the earth –

[173] St Brendan's Church of Ireland Church, Birr, Vestry minutes. Entries referred to here dated Aug. 1807–Oct. 1812.
[174] Rosse Papers, F/20, Laurence Parsons, *The Absentees*, 1801, line 77.
[175] Ibid., lines 113–16, 133–38.

a force of nature and a magical emanation – summing up its defensive and exemplary purpose:

'Great pledge of residence for many an age!'
'Vast fort to stem rebellions' savage rage!
Grand monument, the neighb'ring country's pride.
Stupendous dome, where worth and taste reside!'[176]

The act of building, regardless of style, was represented as symbolic of the investment of virtuous resident landlords.

'Yet 'midst the wreck some proud examples stand,
Of wealth and worth to grace this native land.'[177]

But the example he chose was a castle. Evoking the idea that it had been built without human agency expresses its magnificent scale, but it also bypasses the association with feudal times which, in Parsons's mind, evoked an unacceptable economic and social system:

'Vast work, I ween, if form'd in feudal times,
When the fierce Baron fortified his crimes
With untaught labours of a vassal clan:
Ev'n then 'twere deem'd a work immense for man;'[178]

So, he accepted the association between castles and the baronial past made by Lord Charleville and his contemporaries, but, significantly, distanced himself from it. Yet, the castle he described in the poem was a forceful symbol. The apparently super human powers required to construct it resulted in architecture of massive strength and authority.

'But now it seems as if some magic pow'r

[176] Ibid., lines 184–87.
[177] Ibid., lines 166–67.
[178] Ibid., lines 174–77.

Spread the wide base, and pil'd up tow'r on tow'r;
Stretch'd far in air the corbels' threatening shade,
And the pois'd battlement impending laid;
Till every flanker with a quarry crown'd
Hung the majestic terraces all around.'[179]

The building of a castle was a symbol of the commitment to fulfill the role of the benevolent and virtuous landlord, but it was also a gesture of defiance against possible attack. The final image in *The Absentees* is of an illustrious reputation for the family.

'Thy fabric, Charleville, shall long proclaim
Through future times the honours of thy name.'[180]

This is a conventional idea, also expressed in the poem written by John Doran about Charleville Castle.[181] What emerges from these lines in praise of Charleville is that the act of building so magnificently was a sign of commitment to Ireland, and a defence against rebellion, which reflected spectacularly on the family who built it. But, by distancing himself from the idea of associating the castle with the baronial past, a contemporary cliché that the Charleville's had embraced, Parsons suggested that Birr was not intended to be perceived in that way.

There is another piece of evidence that draws attention to the unlikelihood that, although Parsons celebrated the militaristic gusto of Charleville in *The Absentees*, this was not intended for Birr. The placing of the coats of arms high on the gatehouse of Birr was self-aggrandising, but it was not the gesture of a pompous man, as the following extract from a letter written to Lady Charleville in October 1829 reveals. It is about a gold ring that Parsons had wanted to give to his son John Clere. 'Beneath, you have an impression from an ancient gold ring. It was Colonel *John Clere's*. It is his coat of arms. It was one of the trifles which was to have accompanied a small estate in the county of Tipperary which I derived from that family, and which was intended for him who is gone. The name is now extinct, as is any little gratification of vanity which I had

[179] Ibid., lines 178–83.
[180] Ibid., lines 192–93.
[181] See chapter three for discussion of Doran's poem.

annexed to it.'[182] Grief had made him self-aware in this case, but one suspects that Parsons was fully cognisant of the potential swagger implicit in his building work at Birr. It was mitigated by an architecture that, as we have seen, favoured as exemplars the late medieval, Tudor and Jacobean house where castellations were only present symbolically. However, they were castellations nonetheless, even if only symbolic, projecting power, authority and dominance. Refashioning the ancient mansion for the modern period as a picturesque composition in a landscaped setting was also an assertion of the power of the Parsons family within Birr, King's County and Ireland; their membership of the class of landed proprietors, their political role locally and nationally.

Conclusion

Despite their manifold differences, Parsons and the Charlevilles approached the design of their castles in similar ways. They used an evolving contemporary Gothic revival style that was strongly informed by the picturesque and intended to convey associative meaning. And they were both focused on asserting the role and position of their families within an Irish and British context. However, divergent attitudes to the past had a fundamental impact on the results. Where the Charlevilles were intent on creating an imagined past, Parsons was interested in articulating continuity; he valued the existing house as the fabrication and habitation of his family, and he was predisposed to design alterations that suited the existing. The result was that Charleville Castle referred to baronial castles and contributed to the genre of the Georgian castle that would evolve into the picturesque castle, seen most spectacularly in Ireland the work of Nash and James and George Richard Pain in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century. Birr Castle, on the other hand, as it was originally built, referred to the castellated mansions of later, more tranquil periods, and looked towards the Tudor revival which would become more popular in Ireland in the 1820s, although Birr itself would be refashioned in the 1830s to more nearly resemble the Georgian castle.

Both Charleville and Birr reveal the hybrid identity of their patrons that was intrinsic to Britishness in the early Union period in Ireland. Englishness, integral to their identities as Irish Protestants before the Union, persisted. What changed after the Union for both

[182] Malcomson, *Calendar*, p. 413.

patrons was a need to be more emphatic about place: their place in Ireland; and Ireland as the place where their families were rooted. Thus was Irishness expressed; not by Irish symbols, nor, with the one exception of Camden Tower, through references to historic Irish architecture, but through place expressed in landscape, family emblems and, in the case of Birr, the exemplification of the existing house.

Chapter Five

Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle (1801–1815)

Introduction

The Castle Chapel was a discreetly significant viceregal building project undertaken during the first two decades of post-Union Ireland.[1] During six of the nine years in which it was being constructed the annual cost was just over an eighth of the total average annual outlay for civil buildings in Ireland.[2] Yet once it was built it had a much higher profile than the Stamp Office, and the expensive alterations that had been made to the viceregal buildings and their setting in Phoenix Park.[3] It was built at a time of great uncertainty for the viceregal administration which had to justify its existence within British governmental structures while exercising power within an Ireland that continued to be unsettled in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion and under the threat of a French invasion. At the same time the Protestant hierarchy, apprehensive about the position of the established church in the new dispensation, was keen to implement reforms. The chapel, ready for divine service on Christmas day 1814, but not completed until over a year later, was a pioneering building in Ireland in terms of style and sculptural programme, and unique in its planning.[4] Much of this was appreciated at the time, for even before it was built the chapel was being hailed as 'one of the most beautiful modern specimens of Gothic Architecture.'[5]

Despite the architectural importance and cultural significance of the Castle Chapel it has received relatively little scholarly attention. It featured in Edward McParland's 1969 essay on Johnston, Douglas Scott Richardson's comprehensive review of Irish Gothic revival architecture of 1983, and in Ned Pakenham's 2005 dissertation on three of

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[1] Contemporaries referred to it as the Castle Chapel. For discussion of the term 'Chapel Royal' see below.
[2] *Second report; public accounts, Ireland* (1813–14).
[3] The Castle Chapel was discussed in: John Warburton, James Whitelaw and Robert Walsh, *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 2 (London, 1818), pp 1150–3; John James McGregor, *New picture of Dublin* (Dublin, 1821), pp 71–2; Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, pp cxix, 63–5; G.N. Wright, *An historical guide to the city of Dublin* (London, 1825), pp 8–9; Bell, *Gothic architecture*, pp 249–56.
[4] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 27 Dec. 1814. £8,506 is recorded as being spent for year 5 Jan. 1815 – 5 Jan. 1816 (*fifth report; public accounts, Ireland* (1817)). £756 was spent the following year (*sixth report; public accounts, Ireland* (1818)).
[5] *Dublin Evening Post*, 7 Apr. 1807.

Johnston's buildings.[6] All three authors concentrated on an analysis of the style of the building, mainly using published sources and the historical background given in an article on the medieval and seventeenth-century castle chapels by H.T. and M.S. Dudley Westropp written in 1923.[7] More recently, a book produced to accompany an exhibition on the chapel at Dublin Castle includes essays on the architecture, music, furnishings, plate and sculpture.[8] Using previously unconsulted primary sources to discover patrons' intentions, and analyzing architectural sources and sculptural themes to find out whether and how those ideas were realised, the aim in this chapter is to discover the meanings conveyed by the chapel in post-Union Ireland. Primary sources consulted include the papers of successive viceroys and chief secretaries found in a number of locations: the papers of the Earl of Hardwicke and Robert Peel in the British Library; the Duke of Bedford in Woburn Abbey; the Duke of Richmond in the National Library of Ireland; William Elliot in the National Library of Scotland; Charles Long in Cumbria Archive Centre; Charles Abbot in the National Archives of the United Kingdom. Official papers in the National Archive in Ireland include the official papers of the Chief Secretary's office, Board of Works papers and Bryan Bolger's measurements. Archives of churchmen consulted include: the papers of the Bishop of Meath, Thomas O'Beirne, in the National Archives of the United Kingdom and Representative Church Body; the papers of the Archbishop of Cashel, Charles Brodrick, in the National Library of Ireland; and the papers of the secretary to the Irish Records Commission, William Shaw Mason, in Trinity College Dublin. Printed sources consulted include parliamentary papers, sermons, newspaper reports, and Johnston's account of the building written in May 1823. Johnston's library catalogue was invaluable. The richly allusive sculpture in stone and plaster and the wood carvings were analysed. Although there are significant gaps in the surviving archives, sufficient material has been gathered to reveal the intentions behind the brief for the chapel and adjacent tower, and the sources and influences that helped to shape the solution devised by the architect and his craftsmen.

[6] McParland, 'Francis Johnston', 61-139; Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, vol. 1, 49–63; Pakenham, 'Two castles and a chapel'.Kim-Mai Mooney has described the Castle Chapel in detail (Kim-Mai Mooney, 'The Dublin Castle Chapel' (Undergraduate thesis, TCD, 1982).

[7] H.T. Lawlor and M.S. Dudley Westropp, 'The chapel of Dublin Castle', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 6:13:1 (30 June, 1923), 34–73.

[8] Myles Campbell & William Derham (eds), *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: an architectural history* (Dublin, 2015). The essay on the building of the early-nineteenth-century chapel was written by Judith Hill and based on research carried out for this thesis (Judith Hill, '"A stile more suited to Vice-regal splendor": the building of the Chapel Royal, 1807–14' in Campbell & Derham, *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, pp 39–54).

Intentions

Ireland in 1800

When he arrived in Ireland on 25 May 1801 one of the concerns of the new viceroy, Philip Yorke, the 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, and his chief secretary, Charles Abbot, was the definition of the role and status of the viceroy. The position of viceroy had been maintained by default, with the Act of Union silent on the nature and powers of the government in Ireland and unclear about the relationship between the Irish government and the British administration.[9] One result of this was that in September 1801 the Home Secretary, Henry Pelham, argued that there was no need for an Irish government, and that Ireland should be fully incorporated into the British administration with Irish affairs executed by the Home Department.[10] Hardwicke replied that a viceregal administration in Ireland remained a necessity because of the continuing need to combat rebellious elements in Ireland, and a danger that ambitious elite Protestants such as John Foster and Lord Clare could turn the Union to their own advantage.[11] The issue was then shelved and remained unresolved.[12]

The viceregal role and the character of the viceregal administration thus became dependent on the attitude of the incumbent and the capacity of his chief secretary.[13] Traditionally, the viceroy's authority rested on his role as the embodiment of monarchy, but the implicit ambiguity of his post-Union position meant that his ability to symbolically portray what James Loughlin has described as the 'monarchic identity of the extended British state' was compromised.[14] Alternatively, he could find a new role. There would, for example, be opportunities in which he could take local feeling into account and act as an intermediary between Westminster and Ireland.[15] The viceroy also

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[9] K. Theodore Hoppen, 'A question none could answer: "What was the viceroyalty for?" 1800–1921' in Peter Gray and Olwn Purdue (eds), *The Irish lord lieutenancy c.1541–1922* (Dublin, 2012), pp 132–157.
[10] Charles, Lord Colchester (ed.), *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, speaker of the House of Commons, 1802–1817*, vol. 1 (London, 1861), p. 275.
[11] S.J. Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, vol. 5: Ireland under the Union, 1, 1801–1870* (Oxford, 1989), pp 1–23.
[12] *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, p. 275.
[13] See Edward Brynn, *Crown and castle: British rule in Ireland 1800–1830* (Dublin, 1978).
[14] James Loughlin, *The British monarchy and Ireland, 1800 to the present* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 12. Loughlin, p. 8 articulates the difference between the title 'lord lieutenant', which was the official description, and 'viceroy' which captured the nature of the role which was to be a substitute for the king. Thus the viceroy had a court and was the focus of ceremonial.
[15] An example is the occasion that the Duke of Bedford listened to Primate Stuart and persuaded London to replace the idea of a royal visitation to investigate the state of the Church of Ireland with a diocesan

needed to adopt a position with relation to the developing sectarianism in Ireland in the early years of the nineteenth century. And culturally, he must take account of an evolving cultural nationalism.[16] Increasingly, the particular character and approach of the person of the viceroy vied with the idea of the monarchical aura of a proxy as the basis for the authority of viceregal government in Ireland.

Another significant cause of concern was religion. The Catholic majority had been betrayed by the Union and there was no immediate policy to make the necessary concessions.[17] In fact in 1801, before a concerted Catholic emancipation campaign had got underway, Catholics did not pose a serious threat to the Union. But the viceregal administration and British government were fearful. This is evident in the field of historiography where strong assertions of Catholic sensibility were not tolerated. The British government felt that Sir Richard Musgrave's *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland*, first published in 1801, which presented Catholics as implacably hostile to the Protestant establishment, was fuelling discontent with the Union.[18] To counter this Prime Minister Addington commissioned Francis Plowden to write a history of Ireland.[19] Addington assumed that Plowden, known as a Catholic supporter of the Union, would present the role of Catholics in Irish history in a more favourable light and thus gain their support for Union. However, when it became clear that Plowden's history argued that further concessions to Catholics were fundamental for a full and successful Union Addington distanced himself from the resulting book.[20]

The viceroy was also put under pressure by the Protestant hierarchy. The Act of Union had united the Church of Ireland with the Church of England and established it as the

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survey, (Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letters from Bedford to Lord Grenville, 14 Apr. 1806, 20 May 1806).

[16] See John Hutchinson, *The dynamics of cultural nationalism: the Gaelic revival and the creation of the Irish nation state* (London, 1987).

[17] In the run up to the Union vote Pitt had promised Catholic emancipation as the culmination of the series of Catholic relief acts of the 1774–1793 which had stopped short of full political and civic rights. Royal resistance had defeated Catholic emancipation, and Pitt and his ministry had resigned.

[18] Richard Musgrave, *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland* (Dublin, 1801; 2nd ed. Dublin, 1801; 3rd ed. Dublin, 1802). Cornwallis, the viceroy-architect of the Union, publically detached himself from it.

[19] Francis Plowden, *An historical review of the state of Ireland from the invasion of that country under Henry II to its union with Great Britain on the 1st of January, 1801*, 2 vols (London, 1803).

[20] Francis Plowden, *A postliminious preface to the historical review of the state of Ireland* (Dublin, 1804), pp 48–9. For discussion of history writing in the early years of the Union see J.R. Hill, 'Popery and Protestantism, civil and religious liberty: the disputed lessons of Irish history, 1690–1802', *Past and Present*, 118 (Feb. 1988), p. 122; Donal MacCartney, 'The writing of history in Ireland, 1800–1830', *Irish Historical Studies*, 10:40 (Sept. 1957), 353–5.

official church, but there were fears that it was not strong enough.[21] It needed reforming – religious observance had declined, clerical residence was low; there were not enough churches and glebe houses – and there was a concern that the church should be clearly and unambiguously Protestant. A strong established church, it was felt, was necessary for a successful Union. These fears and concerns would be transmitted to Charles Abbot by the bishop of Meath, Thomas O'Beirne, in a lengthy statement written before either Abbot or Hardwicke had set foot in Ireland.[22]

Although peace was gradually established in Ireland during the early decades of the nineteenth century, the threat of disorder continued and civil control remained an issue.[23] Sermons revealed the desire to promote public tranquility and end civil discord by re-establishing old hierarchies, encouraging the poor to be industrious and obedient and the rich paternalistic.[24] Hardwicke and Abbot were aware of underpinning their practical efforts to establish control by good propaganda. They commissioned Thomas Sautell Roberts to paint a series of watercolours of the building of a new military road through Co. Wexford, the heartland of the 1798 rebellion. These were exhibited in January 1802 in the old Parliament House. [25]

The viceroyalty of the 3rd Earl of Hardwicke

When Hardwicke first arrived in Dublin he attended service in the existing Castle Chapel, a building constructed in about 1684.[26] It had been located outside the medieval walls immediately to the east of the Wardrobe Tower, and was contemporary with the

[21] Donald Harman Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800–1855* (New Haven & London, 1971), p. 71. There were limits to unification, for example, the hierarchies of the two churches were not amalgamated.
[22] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, ff 149–164, 'State of the Church in Ireland, 1801; a MSS statement of the Bishop of Meath delivered to me in April 1801', signed by Charles Abbot.
[23] In June 1801 the government had secured the continuation of both the act for suppression of rebellion in Ireland and the suspension of habeas corpus, but five months later in November trial by jury was in operation for people charged with acts connected with rebellion, (Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment', p. 8).
[24] For example, Revd James Dunn, *A sermon preached before His Excellency Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, Lord Lieutenant, President, and the members of the Association Incorporated for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion* (Dublin, 1802).
[25] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Jan. 1802. The project is discussed and one of the watercolours is illustrated in Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *The watercolours of Ireland* (London, 1994), p. 87. Another painting is discussed in Whyte's catalogue, 10 Oct. 2011, lot no 83. On a practical level Hardwicke, Abbot and their successors took steps to defend Dublin Castle by buying up surrounding properties and taking down the damaged but beautiful and imposing tower of St Werburgh's Church to the aesthetic detriment of the city (OPW letter books, I/1/2/1, 20 Nov. 1806; J. Warburton, et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 1, p. 501).
[26] *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, p. 283.

designs for the rebuilding of the castle after the fire of April 1684 drawn by William Robinson.[27] A late eighteenth-century oil painting of the avenue to the south of the castle shows that the chapel was an extremely modest four-bay brick-built building with stone window surrounds and base, which, with its steeply pitched roof and regular, round-headed fenestration was a humbler version of the buildings erected within the castle yard.[28] (fig 5.1) A survey indicates that the east end of the 54-foot chapel was attached to a building containing barracks and anciliary chapel rooms.[29] (fig 5.2) It had four windows on the south and four on the north elevation but no external entrance, the only access being from the state apartments through the Wardrobe Tower. The interior was a simple rectangular space with a balcony over most of the west end for the viceroy. It had an almost negligible public presence, obscured by an armory to the north, the ancilliary buildings to the east, the Wardrobe Tower to the west; only a small gable cross and the fenestration announced its existence.[30] (fig 5.45)

By the summer of 1790 it was described as being in a 'very tottering state, and is in every respect unbecoming the dignity of the representation of Majesty'.[31] By August 1801 it was deemed too dilapidated for use, though services had been continued up to this date.[32] When it closed the viceroy attended service at St Werburgh's, the parish church for the castle, where a seat had been built for him in front of the organ in the

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[27] Rolf Loeber, 'The rebuilding of Dublin Castle: thirty critical years, 1661–1690', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 69:273 (Spring, 1980), 66. The seventeenth-century chapel replaced a sixteenth-century chapel built within the medieval walls close to the south curtain wall which was a victim of the devastating fire in the castle of 7 April 1684 (Lawlor & Westropp, 'The chapel of Dublin Castle', 48–51). It was refurbished as a Catholic chapel by Tyrconnell after January 1687 (Loeber, 'The rebuilding of Dublin Castle', pp 66–7). There is a record of it being used to commemorate the birth of James II's son on 1 July 1688 (*London Gazette*, 9–12 July 1688). The tower was known as the Wardrobe Tower in the eighteenth century (Conleth Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle' in John R. Kenyon & Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales* (Dublin, 2003), p. 74). It would later become the Record Tower.

[28] Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, unknown artist, *View of Dublin Castle, c.* 1761–1807, oil on canvas. This unusual view is possibly painted by an apprentice draftsman in the Ordnance Office (Rachel Moss, 'Oil painting of Dublin Castle', 2008, 5pp, unpublished). For account of this structure see also Rachel Moss, '"The Chapel of the King in the Castle of Dublin": the Dublin Castle Chapel before 1807' in Campbell & Derham (eds), *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, pp 29–38. For drawings of Robinson's buildings see Edward McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland 1680–1760* (New Haven & London, 2001), p. 93. The chapel can be compared to Tailors' Hall, Brick Lane, Dublin.

[29] The plan was reproduced in Lawlor & Westropp, 'The chapel of Dublin Castle', pl. 4, 'Plan of the second chapel, about 1800'.

[30] John Rocque, 'An exact survey of the City of Dublin', sheet 3, 1756, Trinity College Library, Dublin.

[31] *Dublin Evening Post*, 19 Aug. 1790. There was a proposal to build a new chapel in the castle garden in August 1790, but it was unrealised (*Dublin Evening Post*, 19 Aug. 1790, & 22 Sept. 1791).

[32] *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, p. 283. *Times,* 22 Aug. 1801. Johnston described it as having fallen into 'a state of ruinous dilapidation' by 1806 (Johnston 1823, p. 48).

gallery.[33] A brief for a new chapel on the site of the old had been assembled by early August 1801 and was given to James Gandon a month later by Charles Abbot.[34]

There is evidence that the decision to rebuild the Castle Chapel was intimately connected to O'Beirne's proposal to reform the established church, and that the new chapel was intended as an exemplar and inspiration. In his memorandum of April 1801 to Abbot, O'Beirne made several criticisms and suggestions about the viceroy's chapel. None referred directly to the physical structure, but they reveal much about the potential role of the chapel in the administration of the incoming viceroy. After criticising Irish lord lieutenants for making political appointments to fill episcopal vacancies, O'Beirne continued:

'Indeed under the present administration [Cornwallis] the religiously disposed have, for the first time, had to complain of the total inattention to everything of this kind at the Castle. The Duties of the Viceregal Chapel have been left to be discharged by the person called the Chaplain, instead of that regular rotation of public Chaplains who always preached before the Lord Lieutenant, and who if properly selected, might be rendered essentially serviceable to the cause of religion, as well by their Emulation amongst themselves to recommend themselves to the notice of the Lord Lieutenant, as by the effects of their example; even the immemorial custom of having a chaplain to say Grace at the Castle dinners has been entirely laid aside. It would be productive of the very best consequences to have the establishment of the Royal Chapel at St James's, in part adopted at the Castle. A Lord almoner, as at present, a Deputy at £60 or £70 a year – a Dean of the Chapel, who should always be a Bishop, without salary, but … with apartments at the castle, and a sub Dean in the place of the present Chaplain with the salary now annexed to that place. Two chaplains for each month as was the custom formerly, and an organ and choir which could be managed at a very trifling expense from the choir of Christ Church, as was in contemplation in Lord Fitzwilliam's time.'[35]

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[33] *Times,* 22 Aug. 1801.

[34] In a letter of 1802 Gandon mentions that Abbot asked to see him on 8 Aug. 1801 about a 'Public Work [that] was in contemplation'. Gandon embarked for Buxton that day but received the brief a month later (Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 312, letter from James Gandon to Hon. C. Lindsay, 30 Mar. 1802; f 314, brief enclosed with letter). For brief see appendix 3.1.

[35] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, f 154v–155r.

What emerges from this is O'Beirne's vision of the public function of the Castle Chapel, which should be giving an example interweaving religion into daily life, employing people of merit, and acting as a platform for public preaching.[36] The viceregal chapel was not under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Dublin, but O'Beirne asserted that this did not rule out a fruitful relationship between the viceroy and an episcopal dean.[37] The proposal to place an emphasis on music was an attempt to raise the standards of the service. Since the 1662 Book of Common Prayer had given formal recognition to the singing of anthems, music was fundamental in the best institutions.[38] One of the most prestigious was St James's Chapel Royal which was synonymous with high musical standards. The quality of public devotion had been improved in Ireland where choral services had been instituted after the Restoration in the late seventeenth century in St Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedrals.[39]

Chief secretary Abbot agreed with much of what O'Beirne proposed, transmitting an edited version of his suggestions in a letter to Hardwicke noting that these points would form the basis of the official instructions to the lord lieutenant.[40] One of Hardwicke's instructions included the injunction to encourage the established church by giving a good example in Dublin Castle: 'You will pay strict attention to the support and encouragement of the Established Church and to the due observance of its rites and ceremonies, most especially to your own example in your own Household and Residence in the Castle of Dublin'.[41] Several of the organisational reforms concerning

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[36] There is evidence that clergy within the Anglican church at this period were keen to commission substantial buildings. Simon Bradley has argued that they aimed to realise the idea of the 'visible church' – the church we see being the earthly manifestation of the mystical church – as fully as possible to promote the practice of religion. (Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England). He quoted Revd Thomas Middleton of St Pancras parish who stated that substantial church building 'makes religion visible; it invests the service of God with dignity and veneration' (Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', p. 32).
[37] Lawlor & Westropp, 'The chapel of Dublin Castle', 59.
[38] The 1662 Book of Common Prayer was the basis of Church of Ireland liturgy.
[39] Barra Boydell, 'The flourishing of music, 1660–1800,' in Kenneth Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, a history* (Dublin, 2000), p. 298.
[40] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, f 201r, 202v, notes made by Abbot of two letters from Abbot to Hardwicke dated 4 & 6 Apr. 1801. A copy of the second letter is also in Hardwicke Papers (Hardwicke papers, vols ccclxiii–iv, Add MS 35711, f 7, letter from Charles Abbot to Earl of Hardwicke, 6 Apr. 1801). Many of the points mentioned duly appeared in the instructions sent to him (Hardwicke Papers, vols ccclix–xii, Add MS 35707, 'Private instructions to his excellency the Earl of Hardwicke, lord lieutenant of Ireland').
[41] Hardwicke Papers, vols ccclix–xii, Add MS 35707, 'Private instructions to his excellency the Earl of Hardwicke, lord lieutenant of Ireland', item 4. This had been anticipated in a postscript to Abbot's letter: 'I cannot help again mentioning what he [O'Beirne] suggests respecting, The Establishment of Chaplains and a Choir in the Castle Chapel & the regular performance of Divine Service there at all seasons of the

chaplains and preaching were implemented and Abbot wrote the brief for a new Castle Chapel.[42] The brief incorporated O'Beirne's idea for an organ; it was to be specifically for 'Cathedral Service'.[43] He also interpreted O'Beirne's request for an enhanced public function by specifying a building 'double the size of the present Chapel', which, given that the new building was to be on the existing footprint, meant a galleried chapel with increased seating.[44] That this new chapel was intended to accommodate the public is suggested by the fact that the new building was to have a public entrance. Although the brief did not specify a public entrance, it did require that the chapel be constructed on a level with the upper Castle Yard, which would allow for a public entrance on the north side facing Lower Castle Yard.[45] The *Times*, no doubt responding to a memorandum from Abbot, reported in August 1801, 'the Castle Chapel is about to be rebuilt … on a scale more accommodating to the Public.'[46] Once the chapel was built press reports would mention attendance by peers and the public.[47]

Another requirement of the brief was that the new building should recognise its context. Gandon was asked for a drawing of the garden front of the castle, and elevations of the three sides of Lower Castle Yard. The brief continued: 'The site of the rest of the Castle, and the connection with the principal apartments of the Lord Lieutenant to be considered – as also the preservation of the Gaol [Wardrobe] Tower, contiguous to the

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year. … N.B. Lord Cornwall has left off the custom of having a Chaplain to say Grace at his Table – which surely ought to be revised' (Hardwicke Papers, vols ccclxii–iv, Add MS 35711 f.7, Abbot to Earl of Hardwicke, 6 Apr. 1801).

[42] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 314, brief enclosed with letter. See appendix 3.1. It is likely that Abbot was the author of the brief for a number of reasons: he was the one who discussed the project with Gandon (Ibid.); the brief includes the unusual provision for a repository for state papers in the basement which was a project of Abbot's (see below). In his diary Abbot noted that a rota of chaplains had been appointed for every month of the year, and that four of the 'most distinguished Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin' have volunteered to preach (*The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, p. 291).

[43] Charles Agar, who was Archbishop of Dublin, 1801–9, also wanted to raise the standard of choir and organ music (A.P.W.Malcomson, *Archbishop Charles Agar churchmanship and politics in Ireland, 1760–1810* (Dublin, 2002), p. 302).

[44] Johnston noted that he was restricted to the limits of the former building (Johnston 1823, p.48).

[45] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 314, brief. The older chapel seems to have been built at the lower level of the south side of the site (Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, unknown artist, *View of Dublin Castle,* c 1761–1807, oil on canvas). The finished building had an unconventional north entrance to accommodate it to the site.

[46] *Times*, 22 Aug. 1801.

[47] In 1822 a report noted that on Easter Sunday the chapel 'was crowded to excess by persons of distinction persons of distinction', though it did not say where they sat (*Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1822). By 1845 it was reported that divine service was held every Sunday at noon for the lord lieutenant, his staff, household and servants and 'The seats not occupied are free to the public, who avail themselves of the privileges to hear the services and anthems performed' ('The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle', *Musical World*, 20:3 (16 Jan. 1845), 27).

apartments and Chamber of the Privy Council –'[48] The preservation of the Wardrobe Tower succeeded pressure in September 1793 to demolish it. Then, the tower was described as 'a useless fabric that gives a disgraceful gloominess to the vice regal residence, little according with the style and elegance of other parts.'[49] The early thirteenth-century circular tower built in rubble limestone had an external diameter of over fifty feet, which extended to 61 feet at its strongly battered base.[50] Its girth made it impressive, but it was slightly lower than the adjacent late seventeenth-century buildings and, with no curtain wall, stood as a forlornly isolated reminder of the medieval past.[51] The change in attitude towards it may have derived from an antiquarian appreciation of the single remaining medieval tower of the castle, or from a picturesque feeling for its rugged character. Significantly, the latter sensibility, if it existed, did not extend to suggestions about stylistic compatibility.[52] Picturesque and historical sensibility may have come from Hardwicke, for although he demonstrated a taste for classicism he had been exposed to the Gothic enthusiasm of his uncle, the 2nd Earl of Harwicke, to whom he was close.[53] The earl was an antiquarian, and a patron of James Bentham; he had subscribed to *The History and Antiquities of Ely* and paid for the engraving of the Lady Chapel, the Decorated chapel (consecrated in 1353) whose spectacular ornamentation included a gabled arcade with outwardly curving ogee arches.[54]

Included in the brief was provision for a 'proper Repository' for the state papers and public records in the basement of the chapel which would be fire proof, damp proof, well ventilated and well lit.[55] It would be accommodated within the sloping site and accessed from the south. This undoubtedly came from Abbot who, in 1800, had set up a

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[48] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 314, brief.
[49] *Dublin Evening Post*, 3 Sept. 1793.
[50] See Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle', p. 81.
[51] An image of the tower as it appeared in the early eighteenth century can be seen on Brooking's map of Dublin, 1728 (Loeber, 'The rebuilding of Dublin Castle', 59). The south-west tower, known as the Bermingham Tower, also survived, but it had been rebuilt from the base in 1775–7, (O'Dwyer, 'In search of Christopher Myers', pp 108–9).
[52] Neither Gandon's drawings for the scheme nor a description have survived (Edward McParland, *James Gandon Vitruvius Hibernicus* (London, 1985), pp.106, 196, n. 22.
[53] Hardwicke had been on a grand tour to Italy in 1778–9 where he met James Byres, who bought paintings, busts, and furniture for him into the 1780s (Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy*, pp. 1035–6). He employed John Soane to enlarge his house, Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire (J.M. Rigg, 'Philip Yorke, Third Earl of Hardwicke', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 28 Feb. 2014.).
[54] Bentham, *The history and antiquities of the cathedral church of Ely*, pl. XLVII.
[55] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 314, brief.

select committee in England for overseeing the preservation of public records and ensuring their accessibility.[56] In Ireland there were four separate offices dedicated to preserving records – the registry of deeds, the Bermingham Tower in Dublin Castle, the office of arms and the parliamentary record office.[57] This meant that the records were dispersed. They were also largely uncatalogued and neglected. Abbot found an ally in the barrister Bartholomew Duhigg who in a public letter addressed to Abbot in 1801 argued that it was a pro-Union initiative that would help Ireland to function efficiently, promote the legal union of Britain and Ireland and dispel 'ancient prejudices'.[58]

If, as O'Beirne's letter suggests, the new chapel was intended as a setting for the viceroy to perform an exemplary role, this needs to be understood within the context of contemporary perceptions of the viceroy, which had been altering since the late eighteenth century. Robin Usher has argued that during the eighteenth century the castle had operated symbolically as a royal fortress protecting the British interest, and functionally and symbolically as a palace for the king's deputy.[59] However, he has also asserted that in the early eighteenth century the symbolic significance of the castle was increasingly derived from the progressively close association of the building with the administration and the person of the viceroy.[60] A semantic link was being formed between the administration and the building, with the use of 'Castle' as in 'Castle interest' being used in place of 'viceregal administration'. This might be construed as a move away from royal connotations and towards political associations. The idea that the viceroy should give a good public example in his personal religious practice, suggested by O'Beirne in his memo of 1801, focused on the person of the viceroy and the operation of his household. It effectively adapted the existing trend for the post–Union situation, and indicated that viceregal impressiveness did not have to rely on monarchical aura.

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[56] *Reports from the select committee appointed to inquire into the state of the public records of the kingdom etc presented by Charles Abbot, 4 July 1800.*

[57] R.B. McDowell, *The Irish administration 1801*–1914 (London, 1964), p. 267.

[58] Bartholomew Thomas Duhigg, *A letter to the Rt Hon. Charles Abbot on the arrangement of Irish records and the assimilation of Irish to English statute law* (Dublin, 1801). Duigg would be one of the four barristers appointed as the first sub-commissioners for records (Colum Kenny, 'Bartholomew Duhigg', *DIB* [online], <www.dib.cambridge.org.elib.tcd.ie> accessed 26 May 2013). There was also a growing understanding that authentic records formed the basis of objective history writing (McDowell, *The Irish administration*, p. 269; J.R. Hill, 'Popery and Protestantism', 96–129).

[59] Robin Usher, *Protestant Dublin, 1660–1760: architecture and iconography* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 21.

[60] Ibid., p. 142.

Yet it is evident that contemporaries looked for kingly dignity in the viceroy. James Malton, the Irish watercolourist and engraver, condemned the insignificant and neglected seventeenth-century chapel for its unworthiness, writing in 1792 that 'The private Chapel of the Lord Lieutenant … appear[s] very little consistent with its attachment to a Royal Palace'.[61] And when the *Times* reported in 1801 that Gandon was redesigning the chapel, it celebrated the opportunity that it would be rebuilt 'in a stile more suited to Vice-regal splendor'.[62]

There is some evidence to suggest that the viceregal administration was interested in identifying the rebuilt chapel as a chapel royal, thus connecting it to the monarchical roots of the post and enhancing its status.[63] Admittedly there is no evidence that the term 'chapel royal' was formally given to the Castle Chapel.[64] Instead, the chapel seems to have acquired that designation through usage from the middle of the nineteenth century.[65] Christ Church asserted itself as the official chapel royal. Its claim was based on a letter written by Charles II to the Lord Lieutenant in 1672 in which he referred to Christ Church as '"that our said cathedral church and royal chapel'.[66] In 1679 two grand staircases were built for the viceroy and his entourage to access their seats in the cathedral gallery.[67] However, O'Beirne's reference in 1801 to the Chapel Royal at St James's as a possible exemplar for the Castle Chapel establishment may have been an intimation that it was thought that the Dublin chapel should take on the role of a chapel

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[61] James Malton, *A picturesque and descriptive view of the city of Dublin* (London, 1792–99). In 1790 the *Dublin Evening Post* remarked that the dilapidated state of the Castle Chapel was 'unbecoming the dignity of the representation of Majesty' (*Dublin Evening Post*, 19 Aug. 1790).

[62] *Times*, 22 Aug. 1801.

[63] A chapel royal referred initially to an institution: a body of priests and singers who serve the spiritual needs of the sovereign. In England it became associated with the chapel building at St James's Palace built in 1531–40.

[64] NA, Colonial Office: Records of the Irish Office, Dublin Castle Records (1822–1922), CO 904/180/1–258, 'Letters, memos re chapel royal', 1822–1922.

[65] The term 'chapel royal' is used in the *Freeman's Journal* from 1833 and in the Parliamentary Papers from 1835. The use of the term may have been encouraged after George IV attended service in the chapel 2 Sept. 1821, although the term 'Castle Chapel' was used in the *Freeman's Journal* report (*Freeman's Journal*, 4 Sept 1821, p. 3).

[66] Quoted in Kenneth Milne, 'Restoration and reorganisation, 1660–1830' in Milne, *Christ Church*, p. 259.

[67] Stuart Kinsella, 'An architectural history of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, *c*.1540–*c*.1870', (PhD, TCD, 2009), p. 201. Seventeenth-century visitors described Christ Church as the Chapel Royal. For example, John Dunton visited in 1698 and wrote, 'Hither the government come to church as the King's Chapel Royal. They sit over the Great Door of the choir and the ascent to it from the aisle is by two large stair-cases' (quoted in Kinsella, 'An architectural history', p. 201). However, the Castle Chapel was referred to as the Chapel Royal on 1 July 1688 when High Mass was celebrated for the Earl of Tyrconnell to mark the birth of James II's son (*London Gazette*, 9–12 July 1688).

royal.[68] This idea is strengthened by the reaction of the dean and chapter of Christ Church who seemed to feel threatened by the proposal to rebuild the Castle Chapel in 1801, petitioning the lord lieutenant for money in 1802 for restoration work for the cathedral. In their letter to Hardwicke they argued the case for Christ Church as a chapel royal in such comprehensive terms that, as Stuart Kinsella has observed, they were 'implicitly acknowledging their concern that this was no longer the case'.[69] When the chapel was nearing completion in 1814 a letter from St James's to the newly appointed chaplain in Dublin, Samuel Slade, reveals that with regard to music there was an aspiration to emulate St James's Chapel Royal.[70] The sub-dean of St James's wrote a detailed account of the situation in London, which was sent with a covering note from the dean saying that it was too cumbrous to make a good model, and suggesting that Slade use his discretion. The new chapel then might be expected to retain a flavour of the traditional perception of the viceroy as the king's proxy, mixed with the growing feeling for the person of the viceroy in his capacity as the head of the British administration in Ireland.

That Hardwicke viewed buildings as vehicles for symbolic messages is evident from his recommendation to the Home Secretary that the old Parliament house should be sold to the Bank of Ireland for the reason that 'Public [opinion] would be most effectively conciliated by appropriating the Building to some one National Purpose of Dignity and Utility'.[71] This was an acknowledgement that it had been a national institution and should remain as such. It also recognised that a commercial institution rather than the state bureaucracy, 'connected with the levying of taxes', was preferable for a building of national importance.[72] State bureaucracy was too readily associated with the extraction of tax by the British administration, whereas the Bank of Ireland signified independent Irish activity. The national role of the bank would be represented allegorically in 1808 when the Bank of Ireland commissioned Johnston to design three

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[68] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, f 155r, 'State of the Church in Ireland, 1801; a MSS statement of the Bishop of Meath delivered to me in April 1801', signed by Charles Abbot.
[69] Kinsella, 'An architectural history', p. 246.
[70] Official papers, OP 405/5, letter from W. London to Rev. W. Slade, 9 Oct. 1814, with account enclosed of the organisation of St James's Chapel Royal by the sub-dean.
[71] Hardwicke Papers, vol. ccccxxi, Add MS 35769 f 47, letter from Hardwicke to Lord Pelham, 12 Dec. 1801.
[72] Hardwicke Papers, vols ccclix–xii, Add MS 35707 f 196, letter from Hardwicke to Lord Pelham, 17 Dec. 1801. At this period the Bank of Ireland, founded in 1783, had a virtual monopoly, with competition confined to small private banks, (Brian Lawlor (gen. ed.), *The Encyclopædia of Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), p. 69.

statues for the top of the south pediment, one of which was to be Hibernia.[73] Correspondence relating to the sale of the bank reveals that it was Hardwicke who had suggested the addition of sculpture because of its populist appeal. In a secret condition of the sale, the bank was requested to 'reconcile the citizens to [the exterior] … by making the edifice more ornamental'.[74] Another example of Hardwicke's appreciation of the symbolic power of architecture is found in the 1802 exhibition, referred to above, of Thomas Sautelle Roberts' watercolours of the military road in Co. Wicklow. By locating the exhibition in the Parliament House Hardwicke used the existing national associations of the building to relay the message that their road-building project was in the national interest.

The initiative to rebuild the Castle Chapel was shelved. Abbot left his post on 30 January 1802, recalled to Westminster to take up the position of speaker of the Commons.[75] Gandon, who did not want to compromise his reputation by seeming to usurp the position of the Board of Works architect, Robert Woodgate, resigned at the end of March 1802.[76] He had produced seven designs for the chapel which he gave to Woodgate, and he offered to be 'ready to explain many particulars to Mr Woodgate for better understanding of my Ideas in Order to make my designs more perfect'.[77] Despite the change of personnel, the main reason the project was laid aside was no doubt because of an outstanding debt of £37,000.[78] Hardwicke's strategy was to put £10,000 of the year's 'charge' of £32,000 towards repaying the debt and trust that the rest would be sufficient for expenses. With the completion of Carlisle Bridge and the widening of St George's Street taking priority, it is perhaps no surprise that the Castle Chapel, even though it had been approved by 30 March 1802, should be postponed.[79]

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[73] Paula Murphy, *Nineteenth-century Irish sculpture: native genius reaffirmed* (New Haven & London, 2010), p. 35. The other figures were Fidelity and Commerce.
[74] Quoted in Patrick Lenehan, 'Edward Smyth, Dublin's sculptor', *Irish Arts Review*, (1989–90), 72. The three roofline statues for the south portico would complement figures on the east portico of Justice, Wisdom and Fidelity carved in 1787 by Edward Smyth.
[75] *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, p. 275; Clare Wilkinson, 'Charles Abbot', *ODNB* [online] www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie accessed 17 Feb. 2014.
[76] Hardwicke Papers, Add MS 35733, f 312, letter from James Gandon to Hon. C. Lindsay, 30 Mar. 1802.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Hardwicke Papers, vols ccclxii–iv, Add MS 35771, ff 406–8, Hardwicke to Wickham, 20 Mar. 1802.
[79] Ibid., and Add MS 35733, f 312, letter from James Gandon to Hon. C. Lindsay, 30 Mar. 1802.

The viceroyalty of the 6th Duke of Bedford

John Russell, the 6th Duke of Bedford arrived in Dublin as the new viceroy on 28 March 1806.[80] Within a few months the Castle Chapel project had been revived.[81] Bedford and his chief secretary, William Elliot, were part of William Grenville's 'Ministry of All Talents', a unity government, incorporating Whigs and Tories. Many of the problems faced by Hardwicke in Ireland remained. The established church was still in need of reform, war continued with France, and a French invasion was still perceived as a threat. Bedford was charged with the task of consolidating the Union.[82] Unlike his predecessors, Bedford, a Whig, interpreted this as remaining true to Pitt's promise to bring about Catholic emancipation.[83]

One result of this was that Bedford actively discouraged sectarianism. In July 1806 liberal Protestants in the Dublin press had for the first time criticised the 12 July Orange parades as partisan. The parades celebrated the victory of William III at the Battle of the Boyne and had been instigated in Dublin in 1798.[84] Bedford gave support to this view when, in 1806, he discontinued the viceregal procession for the 4 November celebrations of William III's birthday, a break with a tradition that dated back to the 1690s.[85] In a letter to Elliot on 30 September 1806 he articulated the risks and the reasoning behind his decision; 'We must be fully prepared to be ranked by the violent among the Orange-men, as enemies to the "glorious and Immortal Memory". But I am of [the] opinion that prudence and policy demand the suppression of all political and religious animosities: and a fitter opportunity than this cannot offer itself.'[86]

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[80] NA, Home Office, Ireland: Correspondence and Papers. Miscellaneous subjects (Jan.–June 1811), HO/100/131, letter from the Earl of Hardwicke to Earl Spencer, 28 Mar. 1806. Hardwicke had been recalled as viceroy with the death of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, in January 1806. Hardwicke had five chief secretaries: Charles Abbot (Apr. 1801–Jan. 1802), William Wickham, (Feb. 1802– Jan. 1804), Sir Evan Nepean, (Feb. 1804– May 1804), Nicholas Vansittart, (Jan. 1805–Sept. 1805) and Charles Long, (Sept. 1805–Mar. 1806).

[81] The design is recorded as being costed by Oct. 1806 in a House of Commons Report, (*Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 10), but OPW minutes record that Johnston submitted plans and estimates to the Board of Works on 5 Jan. 1807 (OPW minute books, I/1/1/2, p. 38, minutes for meeting of 2 Mar. 1807). Both sources costed the plans at £9,532.16.8.

[82] Minto Papers, MS 12921, copy of letter from Lord Spencer to Bedford, 20 Mar. 1806.

[83] This was the stand taken by his political mentor, Charles Fox whose opinion Bedford followed, see Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to Lord Viscount Howick, 29 Sept. 1806.

[84] J.R. Hill, 'National festivals, the state and the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, 1790–1829', *Irish Historical Studies*, 24 (May 1984), 39–40.

[85] Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to William Elliot, 30 Sept. 1806, and Minto Papers, MS 12909, copy of letter from William Elliot to Duke of Bedford, 4 Oct. 1806. Hill, 'National festivals', 40.

[86] Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to William Elliot, 30 Sept. 1806.

O'Beirne was concerned that this gesture would send out negative signals to the wider Protestant community.[87] Bedford, however, proved to be a staunch supporter of the established church, effecting reforms in association with the Archbishop of Dublin, Charles Agar, which Hardwicke had failed to make, such as discontinuing non-residence and supporting measures for church and glebe building.[88] He developed good relationships with other members of the episcopacy. He supported William Stuart, Archbishop of Armagh, when Stuart baulked at the idea of a royal visitation to investigate the established church.[89] Archbishop Agar described him as 'a very respectable and worthy man, and likely to give satisfaction wherever he goes'.[90] Bedford's correspondence reveals that he was concerned to revive standards of worship and develop a strong and durable Protestant church as a prelude to Catholic emancipation.[91]

Bedford's brief viceroyalty was overshadowed by the threat of a French invasion and his administration ended in defeat when an outburst of violence in Sligo challenged his conciliatory politics.[92] The Ministry, ultimately reluctant to institute Catholic emancipation, fell. Bedford himself was convinced that the majority wanted peace and security, and he articulated a pacifying role for government: 'all the horrors [the factions] have occasioned must be obliterated from the publick mind; and the alarm still

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[87] Minto Papers, MS 12911, letter from William Elliot to Earl Spencer, 24 Nov. 1806.
[88] Malcomson, *Agar*, pp 254–5.
[89] Ibid., p. 270. Bedford initially advocated the proposal for the visitation (Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to Grenville, 14 Apr. 1806), but, when Stuart informed him of widespread clerical resistance to the idea he supported Stuart's idea of collecting diocesan returns (Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to Grenville, 20 May 1806). A letter from Elliot to Stuart articulated Bedford's intention to give 'diligent attention to the character and interests of the church establishment' and he invited Stuart to give his opinions on church matters (Minto Papers, MS 12910, Elliot to Stuart, 40 Apr. 1806). It is possible that Stuart may have advised Bedford to revive the Castle Chapel project. However, no mention of the project has been found in the Brodrick Papers, (NLI, Brodrick Papers, MS 8869, folders 1–8, letters from William Stuart, Archbishop of Armagh to Charles Brodrick, Archbishop of Cashel, 1802–1821). Another possible clerical influence on the Castle Chapel was Charles Agar, Archbishop of Dublin, but no mention has been found in the summary of the Normanton Papers in PRONI, (PRONI [online] <apps.proni.gov.uk> accessed 30 June 2014) or in the catalogue of the Hampshire Record Office.
[90] Malcomson, *Agar*, p. 248.
[91] Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, letter from Bedford to Grenville, 20 May 1806.
[92] Minto Papers, MS 12911, letter from Elliot to Grenville, 17 Mar. 1807. Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, Bedford to Spencer, 18 Apr. 1806, 26 May 1806, 2 Aug 1806.

alive at the recollection of them be suffered to subside with tranquil and confident security'.[93]

The idea that government had a role influencing public attitudes recalls O'Beirne's aspirations for the viceroy to set an example, which, it was argued above, was extended to the brief for a new viceregal chapel. No brief or correspondence concerning the chapel survives from the autumn of 1806 when Francis Johnston, who had replaced Woodgate as Board of Works architect in October 1805, began work on the commission.[94] However, details from Board of Works minutes and the evidence of the building as constructed show that the brief retained the provisions for an organ, and for increased volume and accommodation compared to the existing chapel, suggesting that the intention to create an impressive building in which to promote the viceroy and the Church of Ireland remained.

There was, though, one telling difference. Where the 1801 brief had stipulated that the medieval Wardrobe Tower be preserved, the plans developed by Johnston included the 'ornamenting [of] the old tower immediately adjoining so as to Correspond with the Elevation of the Chapel'.[95] This restoration work was alluded to in the *Dublin Evening Post*; 'The old Round Tower, to which [the chapel] will adjoin, is to be thoroughly repaired, and will receive such alterations in the form of its battlements and windows, as to make it harmonise with the style of the Chapel.'[96] Johnston was commissioned to draw a perspective of the chapel and the tower.[97] The requirement to match tower to chapel reveals that it had been decided to adopt a Gothic revival style for the new chapel and that the new work to the tower was to be read in the same frame as contemporary Gothic revival. It betrayed a picturesque approach to design, composing chapel and tower in a pictorial group that could be appreciated within the Lower Castle Yard. There would more than likely have been an associative significance too, for a Gothically enhanced tower would draw attention to its medieval origins. Thus, with the

[93] Bedford Estates Archive, HMC 96C, Bedford to Spencer, 23 July 1806.
[94] OPW letter books, OPW 1/1/2/1, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 4 Oct. 1805. There is a gap in the correspondence between the viceroy, the Duke of Bedford and his chief secretary, William Elliot between early Oct. 1806 and Mar. 1807 in the Bedford Estates Archive and Minto Papers suggesting that they were both in Dublin during the period when the Castle Chapel project was reignited.
[95] OPW minute books, I/1/1/2, p. 38, minutes for meeting of 2 Mar. 1807.
[96] *Dublin Evening Post*, 7 Apr. 1807.
[97] Ibid.

intention to link the new chapel visually with the older structure there was probably a desire to connect it semantically with the medieval roots of Dublin Castle.

No evidence has been found to connect this innovation with anyone within the viceregal administration.[98] However, there are strong reasons to suppose that it originated with Charles Long, chief secretary during the final six months of Hardwicke's viceroyalty (23 September 1805 to 28 March 1806). Long was a politician of modest ambition, but he was a passionate patron of the arts well on the way to becoming an arbiter of national taste in England. Shortly after he returned to London in 1806 the committee set up in 1792 to inspect models for national monuments dubbed 'The committee of taste', of which he was the chair, was asked to give advice on the restoration of Henry VII's Chapel.[99] He would later become an artistic advisor to George IV, writing the brief for the re-building of Windsor Castle in 1824, which he amplified in a memo to the prime minister, Lord Liverpool.[100] That he stood out within English political circles out as a man who applied his artistic sensibility to public buildings and who had a feeling for medieval architecture is clear from the House of Commons debate in 1824 on the new Inns of Court to be erected in Westminster.[101] He was the only one who discussed the issues rationally, referring to taste, the professional competence of John Soane whose scheme was being discussed, public expenditure. He argued for exposing 'the beautiful Gothic style of Westminster-hall' and, taking an idea suggested by Jeffry Wyatt, evoked a beguiling image of the new complex: '[Westminster Hall] should have been like the aisle of a large cathedral, while the courts might have formed small chapels around it.'[102]

Long arrived in Dublin with an awareness that the viceregal administration did not always receive satisfactory support in Westminster. With his offer to Hardwicke of 'further ... attention' from Westminster he no doubt had practical political measures in mind, but, given his interest in artistic patronage, he may have been inspired to revive

[98] Correspondence of the viceroys and chief secretaries from 1801–1807 has been consulted.
[99] Lewis Nockalls Cottingham, *Plans, elevations, sections, details, and views, of the magnificent chapel of King Henry the seventh at Westminster Abbey Church; with the history of its foundation, and an authentic account of its restoration*, vol. 1 (London, 1822), pp 6–7.
[100] Reproduced in Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6*, pp 380–3.
[101] House of Commons Papers, *The Parliamentary debates*, new series, x, 23 Feb.–29 Mar. 1824 (London, 1824), pp 1384–5. The debate on the new Inns of Court took place on 23 Mar. 1824.
[102] Soane records (on the back of a drawing) that Long had got the idea from 'Jeff' [Jeffry Wyatt] (Sir John Soane's Museum, London, 53/3/60, verso).

the viceregal chapel project as a way of asserting Dublin's significance within the administrative system.[103] There was a change of personnel within the Board of Works soon after Long's arrival which may have been an incentive to reconsider the shelved project. Robert Woodgate, the Board of Works architect, whose presence had discouraged Gandon in 1801, died prematurely in October 1805 and was replaced by Francis Johnston.[104] Johnston may have been recommended to Long as an accomplished architect open to new ideas by Lord Charleville, who socialised with the castle administration and was a fellow member with Long of the Society of Dilettanti.[105] An indirect indication that the project may have been revived at this point is a record that the viceroy instructed Johnston to remove Parliamentary journals from the Castle Chapel, where they must have been stored.[106]

Long's aesthetic approach to the restoration of royal castles was articulated in his 1824 memo about the rebuilding of Windsor.[107] Here he advocated raising the height of a dominant tower; the great circular Keep. The rationale behind this was picturesque impact: 'In an old Castle there should be some predominant feature, and the Keep seems to furnish such feature in Windsor Castle. ... I would add to this tower 20 or 30 feet, carrying it up of the same dimensions as the present tower – a smaller Tower rising out of the present would destroy its dignity and grandeur. This elevated Tower seen from a distance would much improve the general Effect of the whole Building.'[108]

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[103] Hardwicke Papers, vol. ccclxviii, Add MS 35716 f 137, letter from Charles Long, to His Excellency Earl Hardwicke, 23 Sept. 1805. There is a record of Long ordering Johnston to make repairs and alterations to the chief secretary's lodge, gardens and demesne (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/1 copy of letter from Robinson, secretary to Commissioners of the Board of Works, to Johnston, 25 Feb. 1806).

[104] Johnston was appointed 'Architect and Inspector of Civil Buildings in the room of Mr Woodgate deceased' on 4 Oct. 1805 (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/1, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 4 Oct. 1805).

[105] Charleville attended a ball held by Mrs Long on 16 Dec. 1805 (Marlay Papers, MS My 79/1–2, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury, 25 Dec. [1805]). Charles Long became a member of the Society of Dilettanti in 1792, two years after Lord Charleville (Lionel Cust, (ed. by Sir Sidney Colvin) *History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1914), pp 278–9). Charleville and Long had a connection through James Byres: Long had been taught by Byres in Rome in 1786–7, a year before Charleville who was in Italy from 1788–9 (BL, Cumberland Papers vol. 5, Add MS 36495 ff 164, 189, letters from Charles Long to Duke of Cumberland from Rome 23 Dec. [1786], 18 Mar. [1787]). Charleville was aware of Johnston's appointment to the Board of Works, commenting to his wife, 'Johnson is with me and as agreeable as usual; and what is not usual, is not the worse for his late preferment' (Marlay Papers, MS My 82, letter from C.W. Bury to C.M. Bury 20 Jan. 1806).

[106] OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/1, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 13 Dec 1805.

[107] Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works vol. 6*, pp 380–3.

[108] Ibid., p. 382.

Long's attitude was more historically informed than this reference to 'an old castle' suggests. Windsor had evolved over a long period of time, and Long was keenly aware of the successive building phases. However, he identified the work erected during the reign of Edward III as the style that should predominate in a restoration, partly because it was historically appropriate, but also because it projected a desirable image for the castle. His memo began; 'The Character of this Castle should be that of simplicity and grandeur, and as well from its History, as from the imposing style of Building belonging to that period, I should say the period of Edward the 3rd is that which should generally predominate'.[109] This image could be enhanced by incorporating details from buildings of earlier periods – he suggested Conway, Carnarvon, Ragland, Bodiam – 'where we find anything of grand or picturesque effect'.[110] Modern castellated gothic, which he characterised as an aesthetic of small insignificant towers, was roundly denounced as inappropriate. Authenticity for him was not an end in itself, as it would be for later nineteenth-century architects, patrons and critics for whom style became an all-consuming passion. Instead, it was a means of finding and projecting a desirable image, which could be reinforced by new additions and modifications.

Long was also concerned to incorporate elements from later medieval castles erected when defence was less important and '... the strict severity of [the architecture of Edward III's reign] ... yielded in some degree to the more elegant and decorative style of the inhabited Mansion'.[111] He advocated that these styles be used for the east and north facades of the state apartments which had been altered in the reign of Charles II, destroying, according to Long, the character of the castle.[112] This recommendation was inspired by a concern to reflect historical development, but not as it had actually occurred at Windsor where seventeenth-century additions had lacked castellar character, but as it should have occurred according to Long's concept of castles and their evolution.

A further reason to suppose that Long revived the Castle Chapel project and had an influence on Johnston is that, as will be discussed below, the Castle Chapel outstripped any other near contemporary ecclesiastical Gothic revival building in Ireland. But with

[109] Ibid., p. 382.
[110] Ibid., p. 382.
[111] Ibid., p. 382.
[112] For plans and drawings showing earlier work at Windsor see Hope, *Windsor Castle*.

the death of the prime minister, William Pitt the Younger, in January 1806, Long and Bedford were recalled. The Duke of Bedford, who ensured that the foundation stone was laid before he left Dublin (his successor was sworn in on 11 April 1807, only seven days after the ceremony), was keen to promote the project publicly.[113] The ceremony itself on 4 April 1807 was relatively subdued, attended by Bedford, his household, the state chaplain, Bedford's private secretary, Philip Hunt, the bishop of Limerick, Warburton who was a household chaplain, and the commissioners of the Board of Works.[114] But the design drawings were published or placed on public display, and, most importantly, the press was briefed about the significance of the new building.[115] All stated that, 'Those who have seen the plan and elevation of this building, agree in describing it as one of the most beautiful modern specimens of Gothick Architecture.'[116] Distinctive contemporary architecture would reflect well on both the viceroy and the established church. It could also bind them closer together.

The architectural solution

Building work started immediately after the foundation stone was laid, and was finally completed in 1815.[117] The evidence from official papers suggests that Francis Johnston had a relatively free hand, but the considerable differences in ambition, antiquarianism and architectural quality between the Castle Chapel and Johnston's other ecclesiastical work imply that apart from receiving a larger budget for the chapel he was also given guidance, advice and promptings. Out of this arose a building which was a supremely creative expression of the ideas encompassed by the brief. This section will discuss the nature of the resulting forms and how they projected their messages.

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[113] NA, Home Office, Ireland: Correspondence and Papers. Civil Correspondence (1807), HO/100/143, letter dated 19 Apr. 1807. That Bedford and his second wife had an eye for the picturesque is evident from his commission for a cottage ornée from Humphrey Repton in 1810 at his country estate in Endsleigh, Devon, inspired by an existing cottage (Christopher Hussey, 'Endsleigh, Devon – I & II', *Country Life* (3 & 10 Aug. 1961), 246–9 & 296–9; John Cornforth, 'Endsleigh House, Devon –I & II', *Country Life* (9 & 16 Oct. 1997), 58–61 & 62–5).

[114] OPW minute books, I/1/1/2, p. 57, minutes for a meeting of the commissioners of the Board of Works, 4 Apr. 1807; *Dublin Evening Post*, 7 Apr. 1807; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Apr. 1807; *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 7 Apr. 1807. Bedford, prompted by Fox had promoted the Irishmen Rev. Charles Warburton from Armagh, a Whig and supporter of the Union, to the bishopric of Limerick in 1806 and made him a household chaplain. Philip Hunt, a young English cleric, became Bedford's private secretary when Warburton refused the post (Malcomson, *Agar*, p. 602).

[115] *Dublin Evening Post* referred to the possibility of seeing the plan and elevation (*Dublin Evening Post*, 7 Apr. 1807). An unsigned undated presentation drawing of a design for the east elevation (not exactly as realised) is on display in Dublin Castle (OPW drawings, east elevation, unsigned, n.d.).

[116] *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Apr. 1807.

[117] See appendix 3.2.

The surviving official papers reveal how Johnston realised his designs and supervised the work of the castle craftsmen and tradesmen. He reported regularly to the Commissioners for the Board of Works, a small group that administered the accounts and acted as a conduit between Johnston and the viceroy.[118] Johnston submitted the workmen's bills he had endorsed to the Commissioners. They made requests for payment to the viceroy who instructed them to apply to the Irish Treasurer for the amounts.[119] All Johnston's instructions from the viceroy were communicated by the Commissioners. There is no occasion in the surviving official papers to indicate that pressure was put on Johnston with regard to the interpretation of the brief.

But this does not rule out indirect pressure, or informal encounters. The influence of individual viceroys was compromised by the fact that, including Hardwicke, there were four incumbents during the genesis and realisation of the project.[120] It is evident in one documented case that Johnston did attempt to withstand viceregal pressure; in 1825 he was reluctant to contemplate changes to the pattern for representing viceregal coats of arms established for the decoration of the gallery front and now to be extended to the chancel.[121] Even in this sensitive area he had considerable control. However, it is also clear that there were limits to the architect's influence. In the case of Wellesley's arms he did capitulate to the viceroy's demand to include supporters on his arms.[122] It is evident that Viscount Whitworth had an influence on the design of the chapel: his arms have a central position in the gallery scheme and, having presented medieval stained glass that was incorporated into the east window, his arms could be found there too.[123]

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[118] See OPW Minute books, OPW letter books. Three commissioners attended each meeting from a pool of at least five, including Frederick Trench, John Longfield, Henry Singleton, Henry Lingletter, Hugh O'Reilly.

[119] The Commissioners had some discretion here. For example, they agreed to Johnston's request to increase payments to Edward Smyth (OPW Minute Books, OPW I/1/1/2, 27 Jan. 1809).

[120] 3rd Earl of Hardwicke, (appointed Mar. 1801), 6th Duke of Bedford (arrived 28 Mar. 1806), 4th Duke of Richmond, (installed 11 Apr. 1807), Viscount Whitworth, (installed 26 Aug. 1813).

[121] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 6, 'Report of meeting of Commissioners of the Board of Works', 17 Mar. 1826.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Johnston, 1823, 48. The glass consists of four panels dating to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Three are from the same window originally. Two are placed in the wrong order. (Observations from Roger Stalley.) Johnston records that Whitworth obtained the glass in France (Johnston, 1823, 48). This may have been in 1802 when he was on a peace mission after the Peace of Amiens. Viscount Whitworth was made Earl Whitworth in Nov. 1815. There were lower panels of enameled glass containing images of the four evangelists, and upper panels which were commissioned from Joshua

The Church of Ireland too had an impact on the final form of the chapel. Apart from the expected role of specifying how the liturgy should influence the planning of the chapel, the church authorities seem to have suggested a detailed sculptural programme that would reflect on the church as an institution. It is highly likely that Johnston was given cultural direction; he seems to have been advised to look at English cathedrals, and the buildings at Westminster and Windsor for ideas and inspiration. Although, as will be discussed, contemporary literature would furnish him with examples, it is possible that he was pointed in this direction by someone from the viceregal establishment. Charles Long might have played a role here. As we have seen he was chair of the committee overseeing the restoration of Henry VII's chapel from 1806, for which work began in 1809, the period during which the Castle Chapel was being designed and built in Dublin.[124] Another possible cultural influence was Frederick Trench, who was one of the Commissioners of the Board of Works, and who Johnston would have known through Lord and Lady Charleville.

The Castle Chapel impressed by outstripping contemporary ecclesiastical architecture in Ireland. The chapel was more spatially complex internally, the facades were more robustly modelled and finely articulated, and there was a much greater degree of sculptural embellishment than in any Gothic revival church that had been built in Ireland since the mid-eighteenth century.[125] Externally, there were six battlemented bays divided by stepped buttresses terminating in crocketed and gabled pinnacles. (fig 5.3) There were small aisle windows with four-centred perpendicular arches decorated with geometric timber tracery, while the upper gallery windows were tall pointed-arch windows decorated with timber perpendicular tracery and label mouldings whose stops bore portrait busts. The gabled east end, with its large sculpture-decorated stained glass window, was flanked by battlemented and pinnacled towers. (fig 5.4) Inside, there was a tall, relatively narrow nave and chancel with a tierceron-vaulted ceiling and six slender

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Bradley (OPW day books, OPW II/2/3/4; Johnston, 1823, 48; A.M. Fraser, 'George McAllister, glass painter', *Dublin Historical Record*, 9:4 (Dec. 1947–Feb. 1948), 128–136).

[124] Cottingham, *Plans, elevations, sections of the Chapel of King Henry the Seventh*, vol. 1, pp 6–7; Frew, 'The "destroyer" vindicated?", 100–106.

[125] The plan of the Castle Chapel was not much bigger than an average-sized parish church: at 73 feet x 35 feet (interior dimensions), it was slightly larger than Ballymakenny (c.1785), Co. Louth; *c*.60 feet x *c*.25 feet; and considerably bigger than a small church such as Timogue (late eighteenth-century), Co. Laois, *c*.42 feet x *c*.24 feet. ((Johnston, 1823, 48; G.W.O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The architectural setting of Anglican worship* (London, 1948), plans 12 & 43). It was smaller than Downpatrick Cathedral, 107 feet x 57 feet (Peter Galloway, *The cathedrals of Ireland* (Belfast, 1992), pp 72–6).

clustered columns supporting pointed arches at a high level which separated the nave from the low side aisles and the high, fan-vaulted gallery. (figs 5.5 & 5.6) The columns, arches, and vaulting, formed in timber and finished in stucco, were highly decorated: the linear elements were elaborately moulded; the columns had foliate capitals; the rib vaulting had foliate bosses and the fan vaults tracery.[126] A profusion of stucco figures decorated the vaulting corbels and label stops.

This can be compared to the vast majority of parish churches that had been erected in small numbers since the Irish Parliament had voted an annual grant to the Board of First Fruits in 1777, and would be erected or restored in greater numbers after the act of 1808 provided funds that were large and flexible enough to encourage the substantial rebuilding of Church of Ireland churches.[127] Most of these churches had spatially simple hall-type plans with no projecting chancel, flat ceilings, and sparse decoration using either classical or Gothic motifs. Externally, they tended to have flat wall surfaces. Some had towers decorated with blunt pinnacles. (figs 2.8–2.11) The simplest were built on modest loans and grants of between £500–£900.[128] There were exceptions: Johnston's design for St Catherine's, Tullamore (1808), had a nave, aisles and transepts and rib vaulting over the crossing point; St Columba, Swords, had buttresses topped with head-decorated pinnacles; Collon church, designed by Daniel Augustus Beaufort, had towers at the east end between a seven-light window and was decorated inside with fan vaulting.[129] (figs 3.104–3.105)

The Castle Chapel owed far more to medieval models than any contemporary church in Ireland. This too was impressive for it entailed a greater attention to detail and resulted in a more convincingly neo-Gothic building. Most Irish churches built in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century made only sparse generic gestures to medieval

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[126] Measurements and prices for carpenter's work to roof and interior of chapel in NAI, Bryan Bolger Papers, Public buildings; Board of Works – Churches, 'Carpenters work' for quarter ending 5 Jan.1812. Inspection of the chapel suggests that some features were formed in timber and covered in stucco (for example, ceiling tracery under gallery, door jamb detailing on ground floor) while others are formed in plaster (for example, jamb mouldings in upper windows).

[127] Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, p. 116–118; Nigel Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland 1770–1850* (Oxford, 2006), pp 220–5.

[128] David Lee and Debbie Jacobs, *James Pain: architect* (Limerick, 2005), p. 134.

[129] These were partly financed by landowners. For St Catherine's Tullamore see chapter 3 here, especially notes 252–4. John Foster gave about £2,000 for Collon church, Co Louth (1811–*c*.1818) which cost in total £6,500. (Malcomson, *Agar* p. 282). Swords Church, Co. Dublin (1811–12) has been attributed to William Farrell, working on designs by Frederick Trench and Francis Johnston ('Church of St Columba, Swords, Co Dublin', DIA, 1720–1949, IAA [online] <www.dia.ie > accessed 10 Oct. 2011).

architecture. Collon stood out for (1811–*c*.1818) referencing King's College Chapel Cambridge and St George's Windsor, popular models in England in the period.[130] Kilbixy church, Co. Westmeath, designed by James Wyatt in 1793, contained a higher level of decoration than the average; it had plaster quadripartite vaulting decorated with bosses and resting on foliate corbels.[131] Externally it had buttresses ending in pinnacles topped with foliated finials, and battlemented walls. The restoration of the medieval cathedral at Downpatrick also demonstrated an alert awareness of medieval detailing.[132] The aisles were rebuilt with stepped buttresses, while two buttresses at the east end were carried to roof level and finished as battlemented towers supporting spires. Inside, a pulpitum supporting an organ, created a convincingly medieval prelude to the choir where a collegiate seating plan which incorporated a bishop's throne facing a so-called 'judge's seat' was one of the earliest revivals of a medieval choir.

But the Castle Chapel had a larger vocabulary of medieval detailing than these churches displayed which, it will be shown, was applied with a far greater awareness of medieval architecture.[133] Overall, the exterior has the well-modelled rhythm deriving from substantial buttresses and dripstones that characterised many Gothic revival buildings of the later nineteenth century, and inside, the high, rib-vaulted nave has the vertical emphasis looked for in Gothic.[134] This did not mean that it aspired to or realised the standards of authenticity inspired by A.W.N. Pugin and promoted by the Ecclesiologists of the mid-nineteenth century.[135] Stylistic periods were mixed, fakery was an integral part of the design – the interior structural elements (piers, vaults, arches) were constructed in timber and finished in stucco which was painted to resemble stone –

[130] For earlier scheme without the tall slender towers that reference King's College Chapel and St George's Windsor at the east end see RCB, PRONI MIC 1/163D, 'Plans and elevations of Collon church', 1811. For discussion of references see Casey & Rowan, *North Leinster*, pp 218–9.
[131] Jennifer Moore, 'A new Wyatt church in Ireland', *IADS*, 10 (2007), 246– 63.
[132] Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture*, pp 188–91 and plates 91–4. Work started in 1790, it opened in 1817 but the tower was not completed until 1829. The exterior is attributed to Charles Lilly of Dublin and the interior to Robert Brettingham of London. The collegiate seating survives.
[133] Variations of some of the detailing in the Castle Chapel had been used by Johnston in the Foundling Hospital Chapel, James St., Dublin (1802–1804, now demolished), a galleried rectangular building with a vaulted ceiling. For example, the east window was a four-light version of the north and south elevation windows in the Castle Chapel (IAA, J16 (1), photograph of ruined interior). Drawings attributed to Johnston and dated 1802 and 1804 are in the IAA (IAA, RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.600–608).
[134] The characteristics of Gothic appreciated by contemporaries were discussed in Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', pp 104–108.
[135] Medieval buildings did not necessarily aspire to later nineteenth-century standards of authenticity, and in the late eighteenth, before such rigorous criteria were formulated, people observed medieval fakery without prejudice. Joseph Halfpenny, for example, observed that the bosses that decorated the nave in York Cathedral were formed in timber but treated as stone (Halfpenny, *York*, note to pl. 32).

Johnston was inventive with details, the sculptural decoration was baroque in character. Accuracy was important, but, it will be argued, it was not an end in itself.

Although the original estimate of £9,532. 16. 8, which was formally approved by Bedford on 4 April 1807, was much higher than the average spent on parish churches in the period, it was less than a quarter of the final cost of over £42,360. 0. 2.[136] The increase appears to have emanated from Johnston. This seems to contradict the argument that the viceregal administration and the established church had high ambitions for the chapel. However, a closer investigation of the administrative system within which Johnston was working suggests that the original estimate was purposefully low and that Johnston was working in cooperation with the viceregal establishment.

In 1812, parliamentary commissioners, appointed to review public expenditure in Ireland, published a report which revealed that Johnston had spent just over £17,358 on the chapel, and that he expected that the final cost would be £25,000, an excess of over £15,467 on the original estimate.[137] Johnston was interviewed in May 1811 and explained the reasons for the increase. There had been unforeseen expenditure in a number of areas.[138] The existing foundations for the chapel were decayed and new foundations had been laid at considerable depth.[139] Part of the Wardrobe Tower had had to be rebuilt. Timber prices had risen and much of the roofing and heavy timber work had been executed in 1809 and 1810. But costs were also high because of his choice of materials for the exterior walls. The original estimate had been for rough stone masonry and brick, finished with Roman cement 'in imitation of hewn stone', a material also to be used for the sculptural ornaments.[140] Instead, he had used cut dressed limestone (known as calp) from Co. Dublin quarries laid in regular courses, and the sculptures had

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[136] OPW minute books, I/1/1/2, p. 55, minutes for meeting of 10 Mar. 1807. The final expenditure is derived from processing annual expenditure detailed in *Second – fifth reports; public accounts, Ireland* (1813–1817).

[137] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 10. It is clear from comments in the report that the aim of the investigation was to reform the system and save money.

[138] Ibid., pp 10, 30.

[139] Patrick Lynch, *A geographical & statistical survey of the terraqueous globe, including a comprehensive compend of the history, antiquities and topography of Ireland* (Dublin, 1817), p. 282.

[140] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 10. James Wyatt had used stucco for the House of Lords in 1800 and received a great deal of criticism, especially from John Carter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1806 (Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6*, p. 517).

been carved from limestone brought by canal from Tullamore.[141] It was recorded in the report that the commissioners approved these changes because they would result in a better building: 'Some part of this excess seems to have been unavoidable; and though a considerable portion of it was optional, arising from the substitution of stone for cement, we think this change in the plan is to be commended, on account of the permanence and durability of the materials.'[142] Costs in the succeeding five years would dramatically outstrip the €25,000 estimated by Johnston in his interview with the parliamentary commissioners in 1811, reaching £42,360 by 5 January 1816, over £32,827 on the original estimate. The surviving measurer's papers indicate that from late 1811 to the end of 1816 were the years when the interior was constructed and decorated, with considerable expenditure on decorative stucco work and sculpture, wood carving, the construction of three Portland stone staircases, some stained glass and the installation of an organ.[143]

What Johnston appears to have done on his own initiative seems in fact to have been done with tacit or articulated viceregal compliance. One relatively expensive option, which we know was proposed by Johnston and agreed to by the viceroy before work started, was that, rather than tendering the work, Johnston would use tradesmen employed by the Board and that he would inspect them himself.[144] It is evident from the report that the Board's tradesmen were the best available and were paid accordingly, though Johnston argued that close superintendence of such men would be more cost effective in the long run, stating, 'there may be an ultimate saving to the Public ... no disappointment will arise from delay, bad workmanship, or other defects, so frequently intendant on contracts for Public works'.[145] As outlined in the report Johnston's proposal to superintend the works was not a regular duty, and he received no financial benefit, indicating his commitment to doing the best possible job.[146] Apart from cost

[141] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 30. For Dublin quarries see Casey, *Dublin*, pp 2–3. What did not emerge from the interview but is evident from a surviving drawing of the east elevation of the initial scheme is that the proposed windows had less elaborate tracery than the finished ones, something that may have also been the case on the six bays of the north and south facades (OPW drawings, east elevation, unsigned, n.d., on display in Dublin Castle).
[142] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 10.
[143] NAI, Bryan Bolger Papers, public buildings: Board of Works – churches. The organ, designed in conjunction with Johnston, was tendered for in early 1814, and built at a cost of £740.5.0. by William Gray of London (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/2, 22 Feb. 1814, 27 Apr. & 17 June 1814).
[144] OPW minute books, I/1/2/1, pp. 38, 55, 10 Mar. 1807 & 4 Apr. 1807.
[145] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 10; OPW minute books, I/1/2/1, p. 38, 10 Mar. 1807.
[146] *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 29.

effectiveness, Johnston also argued that this arrangement was better suited to the Gothic design: 'the design of [the chapel], being in imitation of Gothic architecture, its erection could not, in his opinion, owing to the peculiarity of the work, and its being so much out of the usual course, be so properly or advantageously conducted as under his own immediate direction and supintendance'.[147] In other words, working in a Gothic idiom was beyond the knowledge and custom of the Dublin building trade, but Johnston – and his masters – had confidence that he could manage a good result.

There was obviously a commitment to high quality, shared by Johnston, the viceroy and parliament. Equally, there was a need to keep costs down. Despite the focus on total costs in the report, it was annual costs that were most important. The yearly Board of Works grant of £32,000 that Hardwicke had received in 1802 had fallen to £25,000 in 1811, but annual expenditure was higher and increasing.[148] There was no requirement that estimates for new work were to be detailed, and it was not usual to compare actual and estimated expenditure, except on principal buildings, although this was hampered by the fact that the accounts were organised according to the work of specific tradesmen rather than for particular jobs.[149] By giving a low estimate and making sure that annual expenditure was relatively modest, Johnston was operating effectively within this system.[150] Steady progress towards an unquantified goal was evoked in Johnston's 1823 account: 'the work proceeded with, regularly, according to yearly grants of money, until completed'.[151] It was a system that had been exploited by the viceroys during the great public building programme of the late eighteenth century, evident in Lord Carlisle's observation made in 1782; 'as the money can only be expended by Degrees, the weight

[147] Ibid., p. 29.
[148] Hardwicke Papers, vols ccccxxiii–iv, Add MS 35771, letter from Hardwicke to Wickham, 31 Mar. 1802. *Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), p. 48. Annual expenditure was £39,419 in 1806 and £45,427 in 1807, rising to £72,024 in 1809. Though it fell to £49,673 in 1810, it was still nearly double the grant (*Twelfth report; Board of Works* (1812), pp 40 –41 for annual expenditure 1804–10).
[149] Ibid., pp 29 & 48.
[150] The average cost for the Castle Chapel from 1807 to 1822 was £4,046, just over an eighth of the total average outlay by the Board of Works. An example of the way Johnston managed the increase in costs can be seen in case of the sculptor Edward Smyth. Johnston and Smyth agreed a cost for moulding in stucco and Smyth then made a formal request to the Board of Works committee for an increase of a guinea on this price. This was defended at a meeting in January 1809 by Johnston who argued that Smyth's sculptures were 'inimitably executed, and in a hard stone difficult to work in' (OPW minute books, I/1/1/2, p. 381, minutes for meeting of 27 Jan. 1809). Smyth's estimate for the statue of St Andrew for St Andrew's Church was £113.15.0 ('Edward Smyth', *DIA*, 1720–1949, IAA [online] www.dia.ie accessed 15 Sept. 2014).
[151] Johnston, 1823, 48.

upon the Public will press but lightly.'[152] Thus, a low initial estimate and modest annual expenditure for the chapel disguised the fact that it was intended to spend a relatively substantial sum on the building, one that by 1816, when the chapel was complete, was the same as the amount spent on the restoration of Henry VII's chapel Westminster over a 30-year period from 1793–1822.[153]

What were to be the models for a substantial and impressive Castle Chapel? Strikingly, given O'Beirne's earlier hints, and the aspiration to create an exemplary building, Johnston was not directed to the Chapels Royal at St James's Palace or Hampton Court. The differences between them and the Dublin chapel are fundamental. Both the London chapels were designed as single rooms with royal closets located in galleries at the west end. Both had originally been built in the sixteenth century and had highly ornamented ceilings typical of the period.[154] The failure to refer to these chapels is significant. Not only were they associated with the king and the exemplary tradition of the chapel royal, but they also leant themselves to liturgical arrangements which were popular in early nineteenth-century Dublin. This suggests that they lacked a characteristic of overriding importance. They were not Gothic. For Gothic inspiration Johnston turned to cathedrals and larger urban churches. That the chapel aspired to cathedral Gothic was observed by a writer in the *Citizen* in 1841 when he criticised the chapel royal for being too small: 'It is quite clear that that the style of architecture whose essential character is loftiness and grandeur, should never be attempted on so reduced a scale as to deprive it of its true character'.[155]

When architects, patrons and critics contemplated the use of medieval ecclesiastical models in the early nineteenth century they almost inevitably turned to cathedrals. The aesthetic value of these buildings was articulated by a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1802 who recommended that Westminster Abbey 'and other equally rich

[152] Murray Fraser, 'Public building and colonial policy in Dublin, 1760–1800', *Architectural History*, 28 (1985), p. 113.
[153] Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6,* p. 517.
[154] The ceiling in the Chapel Royal, St James's, decorated in 1540, was based on an Italian Renaissance design of interlocking octagons, crosses and elongated hexagons, and its painted decoration included royal arms (Simon Bradley & Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 6: Westminster* (New Haven & London, 2003), p. 600). The Hampton Court chapel had been extensively classicised in the early eighteenth century. Its 1530s timber ceiling displayed lierne vaulting decorated with stars and heavily decorated pendants in a quintessentially early sixteenth-century design (Bridget Cherry & Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 2: south* (New Haven & London, 1983), p. 496).
[155] *Citizen*, 272.

English cathedrals, may be taken for models [for new Anglican churches]; for it is undoubted that they afford every grand and fabulous effect that the art of man can attain in Architecture.'[156] In his influential *Anecdotes of painting* of 1762 Horace Walpole had recommended cathedral architecture as models for new work, advocating the nave of York Cathedral for its 'great and simple style', the choir for its 'rich and filigraine workmanship', the retro choir of Gloucester cathedral, the Lady Chapel and lantern of Ely Cathedral.[157] Philip Aspin has investigated the moral and aesthetic power exercised by cathedrals on the public imagination in this period.[158] He argued that they stimulated religious experience through the perceived sublimity of their aesthetics, and that through their continuous institutional and physical existence they were valued as a link with the past and thus intrinsic to narratives of national and local history. Such attitudes no doubt underlay the decision of the Society of Antiquaries to commission John Carter to survey English cathedrals and produce the magnificent architectural drawings that formed the cathedral series of 1794–1810, and which provided architects with a range of scaled details.[159]

We know a limited amount about Johnston's experience of English cathedrals and large churches. He had visited Worcester, Gloucester, and Salisbury Cathedrals, Bath Abbey, St Mary's Redcliff in Bristol and Westminster Abbey during his visit to England in 1796. He made subsequent journeys, maybe for study purposes.[160] He may, for example, have visited Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey to view the restoration work on the exterior, which started in September 1807.[161] John Frew has argued that

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[156] *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jul. 1802), 623. There is no mention of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in Johnston's library, but it was collected by William Shaw Mason, secretary to the Commissioners of Public Records of Ireland from August 1810 (Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, William Shaw Mason Correspondence, MS 1732, letter from Thomas R Byng to William Shaw Mason, 16 Nov. 1813).

[157] Walpole, *Anecdotes of painting*, vol. 1, pp 194–5. He also mentioned Henry VII's chapel, Westminster, the tomb house behind St George's Windsor and, the only non-English example, the tower of Rheims Cathedral in France.

[158] Aspin, '"Our ancient architecture"', 213–32.

[159] See chapter 2. Publications by John Carter in the Cathedral Series include (with publication dates); St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster (1795), Exeter Cathedral (1797), Bath Abbey (1798), Durham Cathedral (1801), Gloucester Cathedral (1807), St Alban's Abbey (1810). Such serious antiquarian treatment was not given to parish churches until later in the nineteenth century although parish churches were not ignored, see (Anon, *Lavenham*; Britton, *Architectural antiquities*, 5 vols.

[160] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 6, 'Report of meeting of Commissioners of the Board of Works', 17 Mar. 1826.

[161] *Times* announced the decision to restore it at a cost of £30,000 (*Times*, 9 Sept. 1807). For details about Henry VII's chapel commission see Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 340.

Charles Long's overseeing committee set new standards of accuracy.[162] We have noted that Johnston owned Joseph Halfpenny's book on the Gothic ornaments in York Minster, and the first volume of John Britton's *Architectural antiquities of Great Britain.*[163] This volume of Britton's *Architectural antiquities* included King's College Chapel, Cambridge, represented through a ground plan and interior and exterior elevations that were informative, but at a smaller scale than similar drawings in the cathedral series. It also included more picturesque views. However, it is likely that after December 1808, when he became a member of the Royal Dublin Society, Johnson had access to Carter's cathedral surveys, which were held by the library.[164] In December 1808 the external walls of the chapel were still being erected, so that he could have consulted the books while he was designing the interior.[165]

The most conclusive proof we have that Johnston looked to cathedral models for the Castle Chapel is the application of designs from Halfpenny's *York* by the stuccodore, George Stapleton for ceiling bosses and capitals in the chapel.[166] George Stapleton (1777–1841), the son of one of the most prolific neo-classical stuccodores in Dublin, worked extensively with Johnston on St George's Church Hardwicke Place and on Board of Works contracts at Dublin Castle where he modelled in both classical and Gothic styles.[167] Several of the Halfpenny plates copied by Stapleton have survived; most notably bosses from plates 5, 10, 32, and 79.[168] (figs 5.7–5.14) Other bosses illustrated on plates 5, 32 and 79 in Halfpenny were reproduced on the ceiling of the

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[162] Frew, 'The "destroyer" vindicated?', 100–106.
[163] Halfpenny, *York;* Britton, *Architectural antiquities*, vol. 1 (1806). Johnston's library catalogue is incomplete, so it is likely that he owned more volumes in this series.
[164] See Chapter 2 note 57. Johnston owned other books that discussed cathedrals and incorporated some illustrations: King, *The cathedral and conventuall churches of England and Wales*; Taylor, *Essays on Gothic architecture*; Milner, *A treatise on the ecclesiastical architecture of England.*
[165] The *Freeman's Journal* gave periodical work-in-progress bulletins while the chapel was being erected, reporting in May1808 that the new chapel walls were a considerable height from the foundations (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1808), while over a year later in June 1809 it was commenting on external sculpture (*Freeman's Journal*, 2 June 1809).
[166] Halfpenny, *York*. Johnston seems to have informed Brewer that he had used Halfpenny for Brewer wrote 'The plans of the groined ceiling, and of various parts in the detail of this splendid pile, are derived from the most highly-ornamented divisions of York Cathedral' (Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, p. 64. Ned Pakenham pointed out a connection between Halfpenny and the work executed in the Castle Chapel (Pakenham, 'Two Castles and a Chapel', p. 33).
[167] Conor Lucey, *The Stapleton collection: designs for the Irish neoclassical interior* (Tralee, 2007), pp 89–93.
[168] Lucey, *The Stapleton collection,* plate 161.

Castle Chapel, while the pilaster capitals in the aisles were derived from plate 101.[169] (figs 5.15–5.22). Halfpenny included brief notes on the plates, indicating location, size and contextual information. In some cases Johnston and Stapleton took note of the context: Halfpenny had recorded that plate 32 showed four of the 147 nave bosses, and Stapleton used one as a pattern for some of his bosses in the nave of the chapel.[170] (figs 5.17 & 5.18.)

Other sources are suggested by visual congruity. The fan vaults over the gallery in the Castle Chapel have a striking triangular theme, which also underlies the fan vaulting in parts of Henry VII's chapel, illustrated in the second volume of Britton's *Architectural antiquities*.[171] (figs 5.23 & 5.24) Simpler triangular patterns were illustrated in reflected ceiling plans of the fan vaults in the transepts and choir aisles in Carter's 1798 book on Bath Abbey, and in the north aisle of St Stephen's Westminster, a church surveyed by John Carter for the cathedral series in 1795.[172] (figs 5.25 & 5.26) Johnston's unusual juxtaposition of a rib-vaulted nave and fan-vaulted gallery may have been suggested by Carter's reflected ceiling plans for St Stephen's which showed rib vaulting in the nave and fan vaulting in distant side aisles.[173] (figs 5.26 & 5.27) The two-dimensional design of the flat aisle vaulting and the fan vaulting in the organ gallery with their elliptical conoids and central lozenge spandrel panel decorated with circles, both in the Castle Chapel, has many similarities to the arrangement in the north aisle of St Stephen's, Westminster and the side aisles at St George's Windsor, illustrated in Britton's third volume of *Architectural antiquities*.[174] (figs 5.27 & 5.28) Johnston's three-light perpendicular windows at gallery level in the Castle Chapel have much in common with a number of possible sources; there are similar arrangements to the corner windows in the Gloucester cloister, within the aisle windows in St Margaret's, and at Cobham Hall,

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[169] Johnston and Stapleton adapted Halfpenny in some cases: the capitals for nave columns in the chapel have similarities to plates 44 and 51 in Halfpenny.

[170] In other cases Johnston applied Halfpenny's designs to different locations: the boss illustrated on plate 79, located in the spandrel of an arch in York, was used for the chancel ceiling in the Castle Chapel; and a boss on plate 5 in Halfpenny located in the choir at York was used in both the organ gallery and on the nave ceiling of the Castle Chapel.

[171] The fan vaulting was illustrated in Britton, *Architectural antiquities,* vol. 2, (1809), plates 2 & 3.

[172] John Carter, *Plans, elevations, sections and specimens of the architecture of the abbey church of Bath* (London, 1798), pl 2; John Carter, *Plans, elevations, sections and specimens of the architecture and ornaments of... St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster* (London, 1795), pl 2.

[173] Carter, *Plans, elevations, sections ... St Stephen's Chapel*. Attention was also drawn to this building by James Wyatt's work in 1800–1 altering the chapel to accommodate the new Irish members.

[174] Ibid. Britton, *Architectural antiquities,* vol. 3 (1812), pls 1 & 8.

Kent – but the Castle Chapel profiles are thicker and the details differ.[175] (figs 5.29–5.32)

Johnston's medieval detailing in the Castle Chapel reveals that he could pay close attention to medieval models, but also that could improvise, departing from medieval standards.[176] The interior mouldings of the aisle windows with their half-round mouldings flanked by deep hollows are typical of Perpendicular detailing.[177] (fig 5.34) The piers, moulded to appear as clustered columns, have profiles that echo late thirteenth–early fourteenth-century pier mouldings at York Minster, except that the fillet, instead of being flat as at York, is mitred, a detail that is rare in medieval design.[178] (figs 5.35 & 5.36) The base is also disproportionately short and owes much to classical detailing.[179] (fig 5.37) The repeated rolls that decorate the window jambs are common in Perpendicular work, but, instead of being separated by concave mouldings as is most often the case, they are divided by straight fillets.[180] (fig 5.38) The angular sections of the tracery on the fans is a late Perpendicular detail which Johnston may have taken from Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster.[181] (fig 5.39) Johnston decorated the upper walls of the nave with ogee gables, each decorated with emphatic foliate crockets and a finial.[182] (fig 5.40) There was rarely an opportunity for such decoration in medieval churches; either the springing point for the vault would be lower, or it would be higher and there would be a clerestory above the arcade.[183] Although the caryatid

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[175] It is possible that Johnston took his thicker profiles from an Irish source such as Killeen Church, which he would have known through his work on Killeen Castle, 1802–1813. (fig 5.33) Johnston may have known Cobham Hall through James Wyatt who worked there on a variety of projects from 1773 to 1810 (Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 328). Frew has noted that Wyatt used a medieval source for his entrance vault at Cobham in 1801 (Frew, 'Some observations on James Wyatt's Gothic style', 144–5).
[176] That Johnston was exposed to arguments in favour of careful imitation was shown in the discussion of Dallaway's *Observations on English architecture* in chapter two here.
[177] Observation from Danielle O'Donovan.
[178] Harvey, *The Perpendicular style*, fig 28. It can be found in Holy Cross Abbey, Co. Tipperary (Danielle O'Donovan, 'Building the Butler lordship, 1405–*c*.1552', 2 vols (PhD, TCD, 2008). For dating of York David Neave and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Yorkshire; York and the East Riding* (2nd ed. New Haven & London, 2002).
[179] Observation from Danielle O'Donovan. An example of a late Perpendicular pier detail can be found in the nave of Westminster Abbey illustrated in Harvey, *The Perpendicular style*, fig 31.
[180] Observation from Roger Stalley.
[181] Ibid., who noted that it is a relatively rare detail which also appears in Audley Chapel, Salisbury Cathedral.
[182] The use of an ogee arch and emphatic crockets can be found, though rarely, in English and Irish situations; for example, on the south doorway of the Collegiate Church, Kilmallock, Co Limerick, (illustrated in O'Donovan, 'Building the Butler lordship', pl 6.13), Sedilia, St Mary Magdalene, Northants (illustrated in Jill Lever & John Harris, *Illustrated dictionary of architecture 800–1914* (London, 1993), fig. 92).
[183] Observation from Roger Stalley.

busts under the fan vaults of the gallery ceiling rest on an abacus and capital, the busts out of which the rib mouldings of the nave vaults spring have no abacus or capital beneath them, a detail that is crude in medieval terms.[184] Johnston's gallery ceiling fan vaults were designed within rectangular compartments, whereas those in St George's Chapel, Windsor, St Stephen's Westminster and Bath Abbey were square. (figs 5.23, 5.25–5.28) Whereas Johnston's conoids were elliptical and decorated with distorted tracery, the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century chapels had semi-circular conoids and regular tracery. Although square compartments were more common, rectangles were not unknown.[185] However, Johnston's solution to distort the stucco tracery was not one contemplated by medieval masons.[186]

It is clear that although it was important for Johnston to use medieval sources he was not bound by the concept of accuracy. So what were his priorities? For what reasons did he aim at accuracy, and for what reasons did he depart from his models? Johnston, like Long (discussed above), was interested in creating an image rather than being faithful to a style or a model. In a description of the chapel written in 1823 Johnston pointed to the success of his details and hinted at their repeatability: the buttresses are of 'good proportion', the 'monastic battlement' is 'properly decorated', the windows are divided into 'well-formed Gothic compartments'.[187] Although the idea of authenticity is suggested here – 'properly decorated' – he also gestured to the concept of scale – good proportion – and shape – 'well-formed'. Such attributes suggest that the architecture is to be valued for its formal qualities. This was certainly to Johnston's taste; it was noted in chapter two that he admired the regularity of Salisbury Cathedral and new Gothic revival churches in Bristol and Shrewsbury on his 1796 tour. But it also may be attributed to the requirements of his patrons. Simon Bradley has argued that Anglican opinion tended to favour regular Gothic rather than the irregularity that had become associated with the picturesque.[188] He noted that theologically the Reformation was regarded as having purged the church of the accretions of the middle ages such as lady

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[184] Ibid.
[185] Walter C. Leedy, *Fan vaulting: a study of form, technology, and meaning* (London, 1980), pp 24–5.
[186] Observation from Roger Stalley. For masons' solutions see Leedy, *Fan vaulting,* pp 24–5 and figs 60–1, 80–82.
[187] Johnston, 1823, 48. The manuscript, signed by Johnston and dated May 1823, was, by the late nineteenth century, in the possession of the architect, Thomas Drew, who gave it to *The Irish Builder* who published it in 1896 (Johnston, 1823). The manuscript may have been intended for James Norris Brewer, who included a long entry on the chapel (Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, pp 63–5).
[188] Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', chapter 5.

chapels, and he quoted authors who held up medieval churches that displayed symmetry and regularity as the ideal for new churches.[189] Orderliness and consistency certainly dominated the overall impression of the Castle Chapel, with its symmetrically-placed eastern towers and its parade of pinnacled buttresses. A likely model for Johnston was St George's Chapel, Windsor, with its regular well articulated façade formed of crocketed pinnacles, battlemented walls and stepped buttresses.

The interiors of medieval cathedrals were celebrated for inducing sublime religious experiences.[190] Two of the antiquarian books that Johnston possessed attributed this to Gothic styles. Milner wrote that with the 'second pointed order' (Decorated Gothic) seen in York Minster 'every part is ornamented, and yet no ornaments appear redundant or crowded … and [all are] subordinate to the proper effects of the sacred fane, namely, awfulness and devotion.'[191] James Dallaway preferred the Perpendicular, advocating St George's Chapel, Windsor for 'the beauty of holiness' and King's College Chapel, Cambridge for sublimity.[192] Aspin has argued that antiquarians and travellers visited medieval cathedrals with the express purpose of experiencing the sublime, and Bradley has argued that by the end of the eighteenth century 'the connection between Gothic architecture and religious feeling had become a convention of Associational aesthetics'.[193] He pointed out that even those who disparaged Gothic such as Richard Payne Knight appreciated its imaginative appeal and ability to aid devotion.[194]

One way of creating sublimity was through the impression of great height. Johnston as we know was confined to the site of the old chapel. That he felt it limiting is suggested despite the diplomatic circumlocutions in his description; 'The outline and dimensions being confined to the limits of the former building, put it out of the architect's power to deviate, should he have wished it, as any further obtrusion on the avenues around it could not be allowed.'[195] Having decided on the creation of a gallery for the accommodation of the viceroy, Johnston was limited in the size of his nave. However,

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[189] Ibid., pp 366–70.
[190] See discussion in chapter one.
[191] Milner, *A treatise on the ecclesiastical architecture of England*, p. xiv.
[192] Dallaway, *Observations on English architecture*, p. 83.
[193] Aspin, '"Our ancient architecture"', 216; Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', p. 77. Bradley developed his argument in Bradley, 'The Roots of ecclesiology', pp 22–44.
[194] Bradley, '"The Gothic revival"' and the Church of England', p. 78.
[195] Johnston, 1823, 48.

to achieve splendour, he made it as wide as possible so that he could give it a lofty vault. We have seen that the height of the nave walls meant that he had room to decorate them with ogee gables, and arguably, some of the other details that did not conform to medieval precedent such the low base for the piers, and his use of relatively narrow three-light Perpendicular windows, as well as the excessively tall slim doors to the gallery were designed to increase the perception of height.[196]

Where Johnston emphasised the austerity of the exterior in his description – 'The outside appears plain and simple' – the words he used most frequently to describe the interior were 'rich' and 'highly ornamented'.[197] In his description of King's College Chapel John Britton reveals how a richly decorated interior contributed to the sublime impression of a cathedral: 'No part of the interior of King's Chapel is unornamented; and though the ornaments, considered with reference to parts only, often appear crowded, capricious, and unmeaning, yet the effect of the whole together is more rich, grand, light, and airy, than that of any other building known, either ancient or modern'.[198] This was also an image that the Church of Ireland wished to cultivate as revealed by John Foster, chancellor of the Irish exchequer who pushed through legislation in 1808 to improve the operation of the Board of First Fruits which would lead to the comprehensive church and glebe building programme of the next fifteen years.[199] Writing to Bishop O'Beirne in 1809 he regretted that there was insufficient finance for the comprehensive repair and rebuilding of cathedrals 'in such a style of proper architectural ornament as is suited to the dignity and appearance which an Established Church requires, and which has been so useful here in impressing the public with a respectful awe and reverence.'[200]

It is likely that Johnston's choice of medieval models for the interior was significantly governed by this desire to create an impression of richness. Thus, he juxtaposed a tierceron vault (usually found in late thirteenth-century buildings) which emphasised height, with Perpendicular fan vaults (first fully realised in the late fourteenth century and popular in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century), whose tracery gave

[196] It was the relatively narrow galleries that created the rectangular bays for the fan vaulting.
[197] Johnston, 1823, 48.
[198] Britton, *Architectural antiquities*, vol. 2 (1809), p. 8.
[199] Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, pp 114–18.
[200] Quoted in Malcomson, *Agar*, pp. 310–11.

ornamental richness to the chapel. Instead of suggesting that these parts of the church had been built at different times by giving them separate roofs, Johnston put nave and aisles under a single roof.[201] The mitred fillets added extra lines to the piers. The ogee gables and the foliated capitals were in the highly ornamented Decorated Gothic. It is possible that this superfluity came late in the design process. The only surviving drawing of the early scheme is of the east elevation.[202] (fig 5.41) In the drawing Johnston used more subdued Early English and Perpendicular details; stiff leaf crockets on the pinnacles, small stop heads, a pointed arch hood moulding over an east window decorated with restrained Perpendicular tracery. (fig 5.42) In the final design the Decorated period predominated in the detailing; the crockets were naturalistic, the hood moulding had an ogee head decorated with crockets and a finial, and the window incorporated curvilinear tracery, while in a departure from the Gothic the heads had become busts and stood out more strongly than such details did on any medieval building.[203] (fig 5.4)

It has been argued here that Johnston's approach to his medieval sources was tailored to his pursuit of the images desired for the exterior and the interior. But it must also be remembered that many of the sources available to him did not encourage the concept of stylistic accuracy.[204] There was as yet no definitive chronology of medieval architecture, with writers such as Milner and Dallaway differing in their definitions. The cathedral series drawings were unusual in their inclusion of plans, elevations, sections and details which allowed an architect to locate features. Most books either presented decontextualised details with little or no indication of date – Halfpenny and Lavenham – or they lacked drawings of scaled features – Britton.[205] This may account for Johnston's inauthentic details which did not contribute to the overall image for the Castle Chapel:

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[201] Richard and William Vitruvius Morrison would design houses to evoke historical evolution. Respect for historical change would become a hallmark of later nineteenth-century Gothic revival and restoration. The tierceron vaulting in the chapel of the Bishop's Palace Wells is dated 1285–90 by Lever & Harris, (Lever & Harris, *Illustrated dictionary of architecture*, fig 42). Fan vaulting in the cloister at Gloucester Cathedral is dated 1381–1412, and the most important period for the construction of fan vaults is given as c.1475–1540 by Leedy, (Leedy, *Fan vaulting,* pp 7, 13).

[202] OPW drawings, east elevation, unsigned, n.d., Collection of Dublin Castle.

[203] Such details were also more expensive. This ties in with the strategy outlined above to initially present a relatively modest scheme which would be elaborated in the execution.

[204] This is observed by Simon Bradley who argued that contextualised and dated details did not become widely available until the 1830s (Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', pp 373–83).

[205] Halfpenny, *York;* Anon, *Lavenham.*

the window jambs with their straight fillets; the omission of abacus and capital for the nave busts; the classical tone to the pier bases.

It was argued above that the exterior of the Castle Chapel was purposefully regular. Did that mean that the picturesque sensibility which seemed to be encoded in the brief with its requirement to alter the Wardrobe Tower to make it compatible with the new chapel, had been abandoned? No. Construction had gone ahead and a new use had been found for the tower.[206] After Westminster appointed Irish commissioners to oversee the preservation and rationalisation of public records, and Johnston had produced a report detailing the disadvantages of suggested locations, it was decided to accommodate the records in the Wardrobe Tower.[207] Johnston was instructed to produce a scheme that would protect the records from the hazards of fire and damp, and the standards of new work for British records at Somerset Place were alluded to.[208] Work on the interior began in early 1812 and was finished by October 1813.[209] Johnston had increased the height of the tower by about 32 feet, adding a fourth storey with large tripartite windows. (fig 5.43) It is the most impressive of Johnston's towers. He used rubble limestone to match the existing walls, and he responded to the massive girth of the medieval structure with a dramatic silhouette: well-defined battlements and his most substantial machicolations, composed of rounded-arch projections resting on four-tiered corbels. [210] Seen from the Lower Yard, the Record Tower, as it became known, anchors an asymmetrical picturesque composition in which the ashlar-faced chapel steps away from the tower.

The composition was concluded with two square towers placed on either side of a central door at the east end of the chapel. It is possible that they were inspired by the

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[206] The instruction to prepare a plan and estimate for fitting up the tower was made in Sept. 1811 (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/2, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 3 Sept. 1811). It was approved a month later and Johnston was instructed to prepare documents for tender (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/2, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 16 Oct. 1811). At £2,371.13.2, the estimate for fitting up the tower did not include exterior stonework.

[207] *First report: public records* (1811); *Second report: public records* (1812). The tower keeper had been evicted from the tower and he was accommodated in the basement of the Castle Chapel. Johnston was instructed to fit up appropriate rooms in the basement 'in the plainest manner' (OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/2, copy of letter from Robinson to Johnston, 11 Nov. 1811).

[208] *Second report: public records* (1812), p. 409.

[209] Johnston's plans, elevation and section were engraved for the publication of the first five reports of the Commissioners (*First–fifth reports: public records* (1810–15)).

[210] Manning, 'The Record Tower, Dublin Castle', p. 81. The Round Tower at Windsor was remodelled by Wyatville in 1824–40. Like Dublin, the Windsor tower had three-tiered corbels but it differed in having pointed arch projections and shallower battlements decorated with gun loops.

north facade of medieval Westminster Hall which had a tall gable flanked by twin towers. Johnston may have been directed to this by Charles Long, an admirer of Westminster Hall. A part of the project of the Westminster Improvements Commission, first appointed in 1792, and whose work would be closely followed by the press, was the demolition of ad hoc buildings that partly obscured the north façade of Westminster Hall.[211] Although the towers were visible before clearance was completed, as is clear in an engraving of 1805, the demolitions may have rendered them topical and interesting.[212] (fig 5.44) However, whereas the Westminster Hall towers soar above the eaves level Johnston kept his towers below the eaves in deference to his composition. Anchored by its references to the medieval past in Dublin and political tradition at Westminster, the chapel stood securely yet spectacularly and associatively within its context, realising his patrons' two main requirements; it was a building that could convincingly house an established church of exemplary character, and it could strengthen viceregal identity as an institution of authority, antiquity and continuity.

The monumentality not only of Westminster Hall but also of Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church, and the spatial qualities of Old Palace Yard were revealed with the demolition of the domestic chaos of post-medieval buildings in Westminster.[213] This may have inspired the Dublin Board of Works to regularise the perimeter and clear the centre of Lower Castle Yard so that it became as formal an adjunct as possible (given its irregular shape) to Upper Castle Yard.[214] (figs 5.45 & 5.46)

Johnston's interior layout was a unique solution to a problem with potentially conflicting strands. (fig 5.6) Apart from the need to accommodate and represent the viceroy, there was the requirement that the chapel embody a reforming Church of Ireland. There were several ways of interpreting this. Liturgical reform, begun in the late eighteenth century, aimed to provide a building in which the spoken word of the

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[211] Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6*, pp 515–16. A report in Jan. 1807 in the *Gentleman's Magazine* highlighted the projecting square towers on the north front (*Gentleman's Magazine*, (Jan. 1807)), 15).

[212] The engraving of new palace yard in 1805 by J. Bryant was published in John Thomas Smith, *Antiquities of Westminster* (London, 1807), p. 30. See also sketches of *c.*1750 and 1793 reproduced in Howard Colvin, 'Views of the old palace of Westminster', *Architectural History*, vol. 9 (1966), 23–184.

[213] Crook & Port, *The history of the king's works, vol. 6*, p. 516. *Times*, 23 Oct. 1806.

[214] John Rocque, 'A exact survey of the City of Dublin' (1756), Trinity College Library Dublin; Map from Report of Wide Street Commissioners, 1802, reproduced in Lawlor & Westropp, 'The chapel of Dublin castle', fig 2; Casey, *Dublin,* p. 360. For an impression of the monumentality of Lower Castle Yard see view by T.S. Roberts, 1816 reproduced in McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland*, fig 123.

sermon and the Eucharist were audible, and all aspects of the service were visible. Audibility and visibility were fundamental to the 1660 prayer book service, and in the eighteenth century new churches designed as single rooms with galleries and with as little architectural interruption in the form of arches, columns, and different ceiling heights as possible were intended to enhance these attributes.[215] Such churches were usually designed in a classical style. Dublin in recent years had been notably experimental, and it was Francis Johnston who was pushing the boundaries most successfully in St George's – contemporary with the Castle Chapel – by designing a cantilevered gallery and creating a concentrated liturgical centre combining sacrament and word in which the pulpit and reading desk were positioned in a curved recess behind the communion table.[216] (fig 5.47) Pulpits placed in front of altars, not uncommon by the late eighteenth century, were found in many Dublin churches.[217]

O'Beirne's 1801 memo to Charles Abbot had laid particular emphasis on acts of devotion – the viceroy's – as a stimulus to reform. This implied the creation of an atmosphere that induced religious feelings and suggested, as already discussed, a Gothic style. It might mean an emphasis on the altar, and the suggestion of mystery through the creation of spaces that were not immediately visible on entering the chapel. Thirdly, reform could also refer to the Reformation. The Church of Ireland was a child of the sixteenth-century reformation, and in his letter to Abbot, O'Beirne had included a brief history of the church, highlighting the role of English and Irish clerics such as William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Derry, John Bramhall, in the interpretation of Protestantism.[218] Such figures might also be expected to have presence in the new chapel.

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[215] See Addleshaw & Etchells, *The architectural setting of Anglican worship*, and Nigel Yates, *Buildings, faith and worship* (Oxford, revised ed. 2000).

[216] For plans see Addleshaw and Etchells, *The architectural setting of Anglican worship,* pp 182– 7. St George's was built 1802–14. For discussion see J. Warburton et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 1, pp 513–15. Johnston restored St Andrew's Church which opened in March 1807, redesigning the interior of this elliptical church with a reading desk, pulpit and organ behind the communion table (J. Warburton et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 1, p. 510–12). St Andrew's was burnt in 1860.

[217] Yates, *Buildings, faith and worship,* pp 86–7. For position of pulpits in Dublin churches see J. Warburton et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 1, pp 498–516. The authors criticised pulpits in front of the altar for obstructing the preacher's voice during the communion service, preferring the pulpit to be placed behind what they described as the communion table. They admired the 'fine effect … on entering the church'. This suggests that the pronounced emphasis on the preaching word made with the centrally-placed pulpit and reading desk had to work in conjunction with an audible and visible communion service.

[218] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, ff 149r–150v, 'State of the Church in Ireland, 1801'.

There were several conflicts entwined in these issues. A single liturgical centre was not compatible with a chapel which must also prioritise the viceroy. An open classical design with the slenderest of pillars and a flat ceiling that would ensure audibility and visibility was not going to deliver sublime religious experience dependent on the soaring heights and rich decoration of Gothic. Johnston's solution to the problem of focus was original. He placed a projecting seat for the viceroy and his wife in the centre of the gallery on the south side, opposite a similar seat for the church hierarchy on the north.[219] To the east, directly in front of the altar, at the same level he set the pulpit above the reading desk. (fig 5.48) He had created a three-sided figure so that the focus of the chapel was not a concentrated liturgical centre, but the interaction of viceroy, bishop and chaplain. There was no precedent for this. When he had renovated the interior of St Margaret's at Westminster between 1799 and 1802 Samuel Pepys Cockerell had accommodated the speaker in the centre of the west gallery. (fig 5.49) It was a traditional solution, and made no difference to the prominence of the new, centrally-placed pulpit and reading desk which the speaker faced along the nave.[220] Another traditional formula that Johnston eschewed was the seating arrangement in the choir gallery at Christ Church, Dublin erected in 1663.[221] Here, all the notables sat in places allotted without reference to geometry or the cathedral stalls beneath.[222]

To make the contemporary liturgical arrangements compatible with a greater emphasis on devotion called for innovative thinking. The liturgy itself incorporated a balance between the sermon and sacrament, word and mystery, rational understanding and spiritual experience. The stress on devotion made by O'Beirne was in effect a favouring of mystery over clarity. It was possible to design an auditory church using a Gothic structure. St Mary's, Tetbury, with its extremely slender timber columns and absence of

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[219] Johnston, 1823, 48. A possible source for bow-fronted seats may have been the nave in Downpatrick Cathedral where bow-fronted pews flanked the bishop's throne.
[220] See engraving, George Hawkins after Joseph Kay, 'Interior of St Margaret's church, Westminster, as seen from the east end', June 1804 (Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain*, fig 246, p. 278). The Irish viceroy was temporarily placed in the same position in St Werburgh's in 1801, (J.Warburton et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 1, p. 500). Remodelled St Margaret's may have been an inspiration to Johnston: Cockerell had added a gallery between the piers, the pulpit was octagonal and rested on a central stem and was heavily ornamented (Friedman, *The eighteenth-century church in Britain*, p. 277). A view of the nave from the west can be found in Rudolf Ackermann, *The microcosm of London,* vol. 3 (London, 1808–9), pl. 78.
[221] Kinsella, 'An architectural history', pp 203–9. The gallery still existed in 1821. The choir was demolished in George Edmund Street's renovations of 1868–78.
[222] The viceroy was positioned towards the west end between the primate and lord chancellor and opposite the lord mayor. The viceroy's seat bore no relation to the stalls for the dean and chapter and the archbishop's throne placed in a collegiate arrangement below.

a nave arcade, built between 1775–81, was an example. But it lacked mystery and interiority. Instead, Johnston created a lofty nave flanked by an arcade, which set the desired, sublime tone and travelled towards a sanctuary raised by three steps and defined as a narrower space by the flanking east towers and sculptural decoration. Such a chancel gave more emphasis to the Eucharist than St George's did. The pronounced chancel anticipated the values of the mid-century Ecclesiological movement, and gained the approval of *The Ecclesiologist* in 1852, which found that the chapel had a 'richness and solemnity' despite what it considered the inauthenticity of its details.[223] 'The sanctuary, very clearly marked, both in the roof and throughout, and not flanked by galleries, with its large substantial altar, painted window, carvings albeit armorial, seats placed sedile-fashion, to the north and south, and massive rails, is really of a very religious aspect.'[224] But there was no chancel arch. Instead, the nave ceiling continued into the chancel as if it was a single space and a ceilure band gestured to an absent rood screen.[225] This was the influence of contemporary liturgical thinking, and it was reinforced by the position of the pulpit and reading desk directly in front of the altar.

The viceregal presence in the Castle Chapel was given historic depth and visual impact through the carvings on the front of the gallery. The oak panels between each column were divided into five square bays with the arms of a different viceroy in the centre of an eight-leaved figure with dates inscribed above and title below. (fig 5.50) There was a band of carved foliage and a frieze of cusped pendant arches below, adding richness and a strong silhouette. The sequence of viceroys began in the chancel with de Lacy (1173), and proceeded in a zig-zag pattern so that two of the most recent viceroys (Bedford and Richmond) were to be found either side of the royal coat of arms at the west end. Richard Stewart, a young, volatile carver, made the carvings. It is possible that he designed the foliage band, but Johnston was responsible for the presentation of the viceroys.[226]

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[223] C.E.S., 'Some notes from Ireland, *Ecclesiologist*, 13 (Oct. 1852), 305.
[224] Ibid., 305. The altar, its decorative backdrop, rail and balustrade have gone.
[225] A ceilure is defined as a 'specially adorned part of a roof over an altar or rood (Lever & Harris, *Illustrated dictionary of architecture,* p. 9).
[226] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, eight documents relating to the carving of coats of arms of Earl Talbot and Marquess of Wellesley, Sept. 1825–Mar. 1826. Stewart priced for 'making a Design of Gothick Tracery creepers and finials with a foliage frieze' (OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 1, 'Report to the Board of Works dated September 1825 from Richard Stewart').

The idea of marking places with coats of arms was a medieval commonplace: Johnston could have seen it in Christ Church where the back of the north gallery was painted with royal coats of arms; or the plate in his copy of Daniel King's *The cathedrals and conventuall churches of England* which showed the Earl of Chester facing his parliament, each member in an allocated seat.[227] (fig 5.51) The eight-leaved figure surrounding the coat of arms was standard for medieval tombs: for example, Britton had engraved a version from Henry VII's chapel in his 1809 volume of *Architectural antiquities*.[228] But, given the similarities, Johnston's source was most likely plate 26 in *Specimens of Gothic ornaments from the parish church of Lavenham in Suffolk* which he possessed.[229] (fig 5.52) Although he had transposed stone tomb decoration onto a timber gallery, Johnston remained faithful to the idea of using the figure for commemoration, and the form was close to the medieval original.[230] A consideration of the original form and use combined with an inventive response to the demands of the commission illustrated in miniature Johnston's attitude to Gothic architecture in the chapel. It was important that the coats of arms were accurate. Surviving evidence reveals that William Betham, deputy keeper of records, was consulted.[231] Historical accuracy based on records that were preserved and accessible because of the knowledge and industry of people like Betham was only recently possible.[232]

The visual impact of the parade of viceregal arms on the gallery front meant that iconographically the institution of the viceroy trumped the monarchical aura of the king's coat of arms at the west end. However, the viceregal presence in the chapel was not without regal character; his seat was referred to as a throne and behind it hung an

[227] Kinsella, 'An architectural history', p. 206. King, *The cathedral and conventuall churches of England and Wales*. The seats for the Knights of St Patrick were marked by flags hanging from the triforium in the choir of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin.

[228] Britton, *Architectural antiquities*, vol. 2 (1809), p. 13. Thomas Cooley had used a simplified version of the six-sided figure fitted into a vertical rectangle rather than a square at Lisnadill Church, Co Armagh in 1772.

[229] Anon, *Lavenham*. Pl. 26 illustrated carvings on the base of the tower. There were differences in detail.

[230] This can be compared with his use of the figure at Charleville Castle, which, freer in terms of form and application, followed the precedent set by Walpole in Strawberry Hill.

[231] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 2, 'Statement of facts' dated Dec. 1825 signed by Richard Stewart.

[232] Betham, who had an active interest in records, had been made deputy keeper in 1805. The carving of the gallery panels was contemporary with the work renovating and converting the Wardrobe Tower into the repository for state records. This project was directed by the specially constituted Commissioners of Public Records of which William Shaw Mason was the secretary.

ogival Gothic baldaquin with crimson hangings (now gone).[233] (fig 5.48) The balance, discussed by Robin Usher, between royal proxy and the person of the viceroy was evident here, but it was tipping towards the latter.[234] Johnston's clever geometry equating viceroy, bishop and chaplain neatly encapsulated the aspirations of his patrons that such a viceroy was interdependent with the established church, and that together they were to perform a joint exemplary role in post-Union Ireland.

The chapel was designed so that such a viceroy could perform his religious duties in a public manner.[235] The main public entrance was in the north façade, addressing Lower Castle Yard and giving access, through the lower vestibule, to box pews in the aisles.[236] The viceroy and his entourage entered at gallery level from the viceregal apartments by a passage constructed by Johnston around the Record Tower. (fig 5.53) The viceregal household and the chief secretary sat on the south, while peers and peeresses, the lord chancellor and the bishop occupied allocated boxes on the north.[237] Towards the west were places for secretaries and heads of government offices. The choir had seats next to the organ at the west end.[238] That these physical arrangements were intended to accommodate formal ceremonial proceedings is evident from the description of the lord lieutenant going in state to receive Holy Communion on Easter Sunday in 1822.[239] This account listed the principal officers of the household – chaplains, aides-de-camp, guards, colonel and officers of the Battle Axe, Athlone Pursuivant and the Ulster King

[233] Johnston, 1823, 48. The baldaquin is shown in a watercolour of the interior of the Castle Chapel by George Petrie, (G. Petrie, *Interior of the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle,* signed, n.d. collection of John O'Connell). I am indebted to John O'Connell for showing this to me.
[234] Usher, *Protestant Dublin*, p. 142.
[235] This complied with the instruction to the viceroy to encourage the established church by giving a good example in Dublin Castle through due observance of its rites and ceremonies.
[236] There is an east door, which gives access to the gallery via stairs in the towers, though this would have been rarely used. The box pews, which had benches attached to their panels facing the nave, have now gone. There were also free standing benches, some of which are now in the entrance to Dublin Castle. The seating arrangements can be seen in a contemporary watercolour by George Petrie, (George Petrie, *Interior of the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle,* signed, n.d., collection of John O'Connell.
[237] Johnston, 1823, 48.
[238] The organ was replaced in 1856, though the panels with the coats of arms were retained, (OPW drawings, OPW U16 7 misc 2, front and side elevation of proposed organ signed Zachariah Jaques, dated 7 March 1856). The original organ is now in the church in Enniscorthy. The choir would be accommodated in the main body of the chapel by 1849 (engraving, 'Interior of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle', *Illustrated London News* (11 Aug. 1849), 108, reproduced in Campbell & Derham, *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, p. 126).
[239] NLI, Genealogical Office, MS 150, pp 331–2, 'The ceremonial of His Excellency The Lord Lieutenant going in state to receive the Sacrament in the Chapel Royal on Easter Sunday 7th April 1822'.

of Arms.[240] It described how they assembled in the Presence Chamber half an hour before the viceroy arrived from Phoenix Park, when they all processed into the chapel, the household taking their allotted places after the viceroy had seated himself. They processed in the same order to receive communion at the altar (descending the circular stair adjacent to the passage connecting the chapel and viceregal apartments), and this order was maintained when they left the chapel at the end of the service.[241] The *Freeman's Journal* report emphasised the magnificence of the liveries, and the state coach in which the viceroy arrived at the castle, and noted that the chapel 'was crowded to excess by persons of distinction'.[242] Other accounts testify to the fact that the services were routinely open to the public, with tourists such as the American, Andrew Bigelow, visiting in April 1817, attending crowded services.[243]

Architectural sculpture

The sculptural programme on the supposedly 'plain' exterior and within the 'rich' interior of the chapel was prodigious, out performing that on all contemporary ecclesiastical buildings in Ireland and most contemporary churches in England. Sculpture, with its legible subject matter and its expressive potential is a more revealing medium than architecture. So, where it has been possible to argue in the previous section that the architectural solution was able to convey the general purposes of the viceregal administration and the Church of Ireland to project themselves as modern institutions with significant roles to play in post-Union Ireland, in this section more specific meanings can be investigated.

The exterior of the building was decorated with 103 pieces of sculpture. Four heads were carved at the base of each gabled pinnacle (72 in total), while 31 carved figures decorated the doors and windows: pairs of busts representing monarchs, clerics and angels decorated the label stops of the gallery windows and the east door, a single bust of St Peter presided over the north entrance, with Dean Swift over the window above,

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[240] Total numbers were not given. A rough estimate based on the list of the viceregal household and other officers in the *Dublin almanac & general register of Ireland* (Dublin, 1834) suggests there were about 37, including the viceroy. They were accommodated in six boxes and two half boxes. There was no mention of the state officers that Johnston described as being accommodated in the gallery (Johnston, 1823, 48).

[241] The circular stair was constructed in Portland stone and decorated with stucco heads. It was located at one end of the organ gallery, which was richly decorated with fan vaulting and heads issuing from the pilaster capitals carved by Richard Stewart.

[242] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1822

[243] Andrew Bigelow, *Leaves from a journal* (Boston, 1821).

and busts representing Faith, Hope and Charity decorated the east window. (figs 5.54 & 5.55) A ringed cross bearing a diamond pattern terminated the east gable. (fig 5.56) Inside, eloquent busts of angelic and more earthly figures modelled in stucco, confronted the viewer from all directions. The progression of the nave was marked by gesticulating angels supporting the vault ribs, culminating at the chancel, whose corners were inhabited by the four Evangelists each with an accompanying angel. (figs 5.57–5.62) At roof level a bust of Moses gesturing to the Ten Commandments issued from the apex of the ceilure defining the threshold of the chancel, while above the east window recumbent figures of Hope and Charity flanked Faith brandishing her cross.[244] (figs 5.63 & 5.64) In the gallery to right and left meditative figures alluded to 'Piety and Devotion': angels supported the heavily carved fan vaulting, while smaller busts, mostly female, some angelic, decorated the label stops.[245] (figs 5.57, 5.65–5.67) Pendants terminating with clusters of cherub heads (four to each) hung above the aisles. In the organ gallery twelve figures of vigour and originality supported the fan vaulting. (fig 5.68)

This sculpture was ground breaking. It was the first comprehensive scheme for ecclesiastical sculpture in Ireland. In fact sculpture on Protestant churches was rare, as the financial resources were lacking. James Brewer noted in 1825 that St Andrew's statue was 'the only statue erected as an ornament to a Protestant place of worship in Dublin'.[246] As architectural sculpture the chapel figures represented a new departure; where previously sculpture on public buildings was allegorical, a great deal of the chapel sculpture depicted historical portraits, or what Johnston referred to as 'fanciful' figures.[247] The deliberate impression of profusion was also novel, for the sculpture on the Custom House and the Four Courts built by James Gandon conformed to classical

[244] There is a surviving drawing by George Stapleton of the ceilure decoration showing springing line and centre line, without a place for the figure of Moses, (Lucey, *The Stapleton collection,* plate 157). When the ceilure was carved a pair of finial arches and the centre boss were removed to make room for the figure of Moses.

[245] Johnston, 1823, 48.

[246] Quoted in Viola Barrow, 'Edward Smyth', *Dublin Historical Record*, 33:2 (Mar. 1980), 64. Johnston was pioneering in providing for carved keystones representing Faith, Hope and Charity, carved by Edward Smyth on the west (entrance) front of St George's, 1809–12.

[247] Johnston, 1823, 48. Prominent public buildings in Dublin with sculptural decoration included Custom House (1781–91), Four Courts (1785–1802), Bank of Ireland (1803–8). For discussion of sculptural programme on the Custom House see McParland, *James Gandon*, pp 68–70 and Fraser, 'Public building and colonial policy in Dublin, 1760–1800', 111.

standards – outlined in an essay by the architect – which advocated that ornaments should be few and entirely necessary to the design.[248]

There was consistency in one area. The figures were executed in the rhetorical classical idiom that characterised the allegorical figures on the Custom House, Four Courts and Bank of Ireland. There was movement – twisted torsos, angled heads, extended arms. The surfaces were broken and the silhouettes dynamic – the details were deeply undercut, the outlines were uneven. There was a great cacophony of emotion – angels singing and proclaiming, Evangelists tortured by thought or transported by visions – and quieter contemplative figures. But even this consistency was novel for it was entirely inappropriate in a Gothic church.

The disjunction between the architecture and sculpture, not so evident in any other contemporary commission, is a puzzle. A partial explanation lies with Johnston's sculptors who came from two extraordinary Dublin families; the Smyths and the Stewarts. Edward Smyth, who had revealed his artistic versatility when he combined classical order with a baroque vigour in sculptures for the late eighteenth-century Custom House, and was acknowledged as the best sculptor in Dublin, had worked with Johnston on St Andrews Church in 1803, and was currently working with him on carvings for St George's and the Bank of Ireland.[249] He was now in practice with his son, John. They carved the exterior busts, and John modelled the interior figures in the main body of the chapel after the death of his father in August 1812.[250] The Stewarts were hardly known at all.[251] John, the father, was a stone cutter and wood carver, and his son Richard worked in wood, stone and stucco. John carved the heads that decorated the pinnacles of the exterior buttresses, while father and son carved the highly visible coats of arms on the gallery panels, and Richard modelled the less visible but nevertheless important figures in the organ gallery, where he revealed a talent for expressiveness that equaled the Smyths'.[252]

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[248] James Gandon jnr & Thomas J. Mulvany, *The life of James Gandon, Esq ...* (Dublin, 1846), p. 271.
[249] Murphy, *Nineteenth-century Irish sculpture,* pp 48–9.
[250] Johnston, 1823, 48. Edward Smyth died on 2 Aug. 1812 (Obituary in *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Aug. 1812).
[251] There is no evidence that Johnston had previously worked with Richard or John Stewart.
[252] OPW Day books, OPW II/2/3/4, 18 Feb. 1809, payment to 'John Stewart for Gothick ornaments for models of pinnacles for chapel'; Johnston, 1823, 48.

The evidence suggests that Johnston specified general forms and locations for the sculpture, while the craftsmen designed the compositions and details. Johnston's surviving 1807 presentation drawing of the east elevation shows small generic kingly heads for the stops and pinnacles, designs that were compatible with an Early English Gothic church.[253] That Johnston left most of the specifics to the sculptors is suggested by the fact that as the sculptors were not paid for their drawings and sketches it might be assumed that they were regarded as being part of the creative process rather than vehicles for discussion.[254] There was some exchange of ideas: Edward and John Smyth made models, which Johnston explained as being 'necessary for particular parts of the works'.[255] However, Johnston's detached and complementary descriptions of some of the sculptures in his written account reinforces the impression that the sculptors had considerable latitude: the groups of pendant cherubs are 'well imagined and executed', and Stewart's organ-loft sculptures are 'singularly curious'.[256]

But that does not explain why Johnston allowed these artists to prevail. One possible reason was that Johnston and his masters not only valued their artistic input but the fact that they were Irish, so that the Castle Chapel would become a showcase for resident talent. This idea is supported by the insistent emphasis on the Irishness of the architect and artists in subsequent accounts. Johnston concluded his 1823 description by remarking that the organ case, built by William Gray of London, 'was the only article of ... [the chapel] not executed by native artists.'[257] The *Freeman's Journal* described Johnston as 'our countryman.'[258] In their book on Dublin published in 1818 Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh expressed the hope that the external sculpture would survive as 'durable and unimpaired memorials of what Irish talents can effect when duly fostered.'[259]

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[253] OPW drawings, east elevation, unsigned, n.d., on display in Dublin Castle.
[254] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 6, 'report of meeting of Commissioners of the Board of Works, 17 March 1826. Richard Stewart later made a claim for payments for drawings produced to communicate directly with the lord lieutenant in Johnston's absence and this resulted in an investigation by the Commissioners of the Board of Works (OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, 8 documents).
[255] OPW Official Papers, OP/984/2, document 6, 'report of meeting of Commissioners of the Board of Works, 17 March 1826.
[256] Johnston, 1823, 48.
[257] Ibid.. 51. For William Gray see OPW letter books, OPW I/1/2/2, 27 Apr. 1814, copy of letter from Robinson to Wm Gray re. his proposal to build an organ.
[258] *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Apr. 1807.
[259] Warburton et al., *History of the city of Dublin*, vol. 2, p. 1153.

This narrative line complemented current theories about the role of public building in Ireland. In a pamphlet on the promotion of Irish painting published in 1790, Joseph Cooper Walker expressed his enthusiasm that Irish-born artists now abroad should return.[260] There was a role for architectural sculpture on prominent public buildings in this; if they were decorated with 'Irish worthies' they would attract exiled artists back to Ireland and promote art in the country. In *c.*1823 the artist William Cuming in a letter to Gandon's son confirmed that the idea that public buildings had a national role to play was still current: 'Public buildings are intended to display the taste, progress, and refinement of a nation'.[261]

Rhetorical sculpture, an integral part of the artistic language of Richard Stewart and the Smyths, was thus perhaps favoured as an expression of native art. It was also an undeniably more effective way of projecting a message. The busts, larger than mere heads, figured more significantly on the building than Early English heads would have done.[262] Busts also gave an opportunity to delineate costumes – important signifiers of identity – while the expressiveness of the gestures and facial expressions attracted attention.

There is evidence that legibility was considered important. In his *c.*1823 letter Cuming wrote that sculpture should indicate 'the object and uses to which [public] buildings are dedicated', giving them a significant role as the transmitters of meaning.[263] People expected to identify the façade figures. The *Freeman's Journal*, assuming that they were all monarchs, wrote, 'They are no doubt well executed, as any person who has seen the pictures of our ancient kings and queens, can easily trace a likeness'.[264] Some figures were identifiable from established images. The elderly Dean Swift in his clerical

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[260] Joseph Cooper Walker, *Outlines of a plan for promoting the art of painting in Ireland: with a list of subjects for painters, drawn from the romantic and genuine histories of Ireland* (Dublin, 1790). His recommendation of Irish subjects for a patriotic art anticipated the Young Irelander, Thomas Davis writing in the *Nation* in the1840s (Thomas Davis, *Essays by Thomas Davis* (Dundalk, 1914).
[261] Quoted in Gandon & Mulvany, *The life of James Gandon*, pp 229–30.
[262] An engraving published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1849 exaggerated the size of the nave angels suggesting they had had considerable impact on the artist, ('Interior of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle', *Illustrated London News* (11 Aug. 1849), p. 108, reproduced in Campbell & Derham, *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, p. 126).
[263] Quoted in Gandon & Mulvany, *The life of James Gandon*, pp 229–30.
[264] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 June 1809. The sources for the royal portraits have not yet been identified. Several obvious sources were not used: Francis Sandford, *A genealogical history of the kings of England, and monarchs of Great Britain etc. from the conquest,* anno *1066 to the year, 1677* (London, 1683); Rapin, *Imperial history of England*, 4 vols (London, 1784–89).

bands was based on Patrick Cunningham's 1766 bust in the south aisle of St Patrick's Cathedral. (figs 5.69 & 5.70) The bearded, be-ruffed image of James Ussher, theologian and early seventeenth-century Archbishop of Armagh, was taken from a widely disseminated engraving of the portrait painted by Sir Peter Lely.[265] (figs 5.71 & 5.72) Other figures were carved in such a way that their identity was unmistakable: St Peter was given an outsised key; the shamrocks decorating Brian Boroimhe's crown are prominent. (figs 5.55 & 5.73)

That the subjects of the sculpture reflected viceregal and Church of Ireland concerns points to the decisive role of Johnston's patrons in making the choices. The generic figures on Johnston's early scheme for the east elevation not only functioned as a blank canvas for the sculptors but as a vacuum to be filled by the figures that could convey the messages desired by church and state. The external busts were designed and executed during 1808 and 1809, when the pinnacle heads were being designed.[266] The interior was probably designed after the timberwork was erected in late 1811, and while Stapleton was making his mouldings and decorations in the spring and early summer of 1812.[267] The plasterwork was modelled after Edward Smyth's death in August 1812.[268] This coincided with the viceroyalty of the 4th Duke of Richmond, who held his post between April 1807 and June 1813. There is no direct evidence for Richmond's input, although it is known that two of his successors, Viscount Whitworth, viceroy from June 1813 to October 1817, and Wellesley, who was succeeded by Lord Talbot in 1821, both regarded the chapel in a proprietorial way, as discussed above. Johnston family notes, which would admittedly be biased, stated that Johnston had close relationships with the viceroys, especially Whitworth.[269] The period from late 1807 to early 1812 coincided

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[265] Sir Peter Lely, *James Ussher c.*1654, illustrated in Robert Buick Knox, *James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh* (University of Wales, 1967).
[266] There are two recorded payments to Edward Smyth made 20 Aug. 1808 (£84.14.101/2) and 23 Nov. 1808 (£61.8.6) (OPW day books, OPW II/2/3/3). Day books for period 6 Mar. 1809 – 10 Oct. 1815, when payments may have been made, are missing. The minutes for meeting 27 Jan. 1809 imply that the sculptures were finished by then (OPW Minute Books, OPW I/1/1/2, 27 Jan. 1809). A report on the busts in *Freeman's Journal* June 1809 confirms they were completed by then (*Freeman's Journal*, 2 June, 1809).
[267] NAI, Bryan Bolger Papers, public buildings: Board of Works – churches, 'Carpenters' work done for the Commissioners of His Majesty's Board Works ... for the quarter ending 5th day of Jan. 1812'; NAI, Bryan Bolger Papers, public buildings: Board of Works – churches, 'Plastering & stucco work done for the Commissioners of His Majesty's Board of Works – in the Quarter ending the 5th day of July 1812. Per George Stapleton'; 'Carpenter's work ... measured 10 Jan. 1812'.
[268] Johnston, 1823, 48.
[269] NLI, MS 2722, Genealogy notes compiled by J.P.G. Johnston of Rich Hill, Co. Armagh, of the Johnston family.

with the incumbency of a number of prominent Church of Ireland reformers.[270] William Stuart, Archbishop of Armagh (1800–1822), and Charles Brodrick, Archbishop of Cashel (1801–1822), were both anti-emancipation churchmen who implemented structural reforms, not least negotiating and administering the parliamentary grants that underlay the building programme of the Board of First Fruits. Charles Agar, Archbishop of Dublin (1801–1809), was an energetic reformer despite ill-health. Thomas O'Beirne remained Bishop of Meath until 1823. The scholar-cleric John Jebb, who would take up high office in the 1820s, was active earlier in the period.[271]

The idea that the chapel would be decorated with images of the British monarchs seems to have caught the public imagination, for when, in June 1809, the *Freeman's Journal* commented on the progress of the sculpture it saw only 'a number of well executed Busts of the Monarchs of Great Britain'.[272] In fact there were only six monarchs, also six clerics and Johnston's 'fanciful' figures: saints probably and two angels.[273] Thus the concerns of church and state were iconographically interwoven. This was summarised at the east door where Brian Boroimhe, High King of Ireland in the early eleventh century, faced St Patrick. (figs 5.73 & 5.74) Mostly, categories were consistent, with clerics or monarchs paired, and themes identifiable. Two sixteenth-century queens – Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots – two archbishops of Armagh – James Ussher and Richard Robinson.[274] (fig 5.75) Queen Mary is identifiable, perhaps paired with her predecessor, Edward VI.[275] Other possible figures include: two archbishops of Canterbury –Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Becket; William the Conqueror; two Plantagenet Kings – Henry II, celebrated as the founder of the British royalty in Ireland in nearby St Patrick's Hall, and Henry III, who built the first chapel in the castle; and John Wycliffe, a fourteenth-century theologian and influential dissident.[276]

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[270] Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland*, pp 63–99.
[271] Jebb, a friend of Brodrick, and a pre-Tractarian high churchman, gave his first public sermon in Dublin in 1802 (Desmond McCabe, 'John Jebb', *DIB* [online], <www.dib.cambridge.org.elib.tcd.ie> accessed 30 May 2014).
[272] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 June 1809.
[273] Johnston, 1823, 48.
[274] These pairs were positioned next to each other at the east end of the north façade.
[275] This pair followed Ussher and Robinson on the north façade.
[276] These busts were on the south façade. John Gilmartin, 'Vincent Waldré's ceiling paintings in Dublin Castle', *Apollo,* 95:119 (Jan. 1972), 42–7.

Apart from the combined presence of church and state, this programme also projects evenhandedness and inclusiveness. Here are Protestant and Catholic monarchs, Irish and English clergy, high church and calvinistic clergy, Irish and English kings, monarchs and reformers from different periods. This attitude can be traced to both the viceregal administration and the Church of Ireland. It was noted above that the 6th Duke of Bedford had cancelled the state procession and levee on 4 November 1807 in honour of William of Orange's birthday in the interests of neutrality. Although his successor, the Duke of Richmond, was not a supporter of Catholic emancipation and thus without Bedford's motive for cultivating Catholic opinion, he did not reinstate these events. This seems to have been motivated by the desire to appear impartial, and to distance the viceregal administration from the increasingly sectarian character of the 4 November celebrations dominated by the Orange Order.[277] It fitted in with the early nineteenth-century trend in government towards what S.J. Connolly has described as 'administrative impartiality and bureaucratic rationality', a development that was significantly advanced by Robert Peel as chief secretary from 1812 to 1818, who applied it to such areas as patronage and the administration of justice.[278] Connolly has argued that these were the first steps towards the emergence of the state as a neutral body, aloof from competing interests within Irish society.[279] It may not have been unrelated to the monarchical trend towards inclusiveness identified by Linda Colley. She has argued that during the reigns of George III and George IV it became established that royal celebrations would ideally involve all political affiliations, all religious groups, and all parts of Britain.[280]

One figure more than any other was arguably intended as an all-embracing national symbol; St Patrick. The precedent for viceregal use of St Patrick was the setting up of the Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick in 1783 by George III.[281] This was conceived as the Irish equivalent of the English Order of the Garter and the Scottish Order of the Thistle. Using St Patrick, George III had appropriated a symbol for the viceregal administration that was popularly but not fanatically associated with Ireland; for

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[277] Hill, 'National festivals', p. 41.
[278] S.J. Connolly, 'Union government, 1812–23' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v: *Ireland under the Union, I, 1801–70* (Oxford, 1989), p. 65.
[279] Ibid., p. 66.
[280] Colley, *Britons; forging the nation,* p. 236.
[281] Peter Galloway, *The Most Illustrious Order: The Order of St Patrick and its Knights* (London, 1999).

example, St Patrick's Day was celebrated in Britain and Ireland.[282] Galloway has argued that it was an astute political move, aiming to tie the Protestant Ascendancy into the British administration shortly after the Declaratory Act had freed the Irish parliament from legislative restrictions and when Irish patriot sentiment was gaining ground.

Iconographically, the Order asserted an Irish institution within Britain. The collar depicted alternating roses and harps, joined by knots, and the motto was 'quis separabit', 'who shall separate'. It was non-sectarian. The colour chosen for the Order was sky blue, the field of the arms of Ireland, rather than orange in honour of William of Orange. The latter proposal was rejected because of a too strong association with Protestantism.[283] This non-sectarian gesture would become much more significant after 1795 when the Orange Order was founded. The message of unity projected by the Order of St Patrick was reinforced in the ceiling of St Patrick's Hall in Dublin Castle, the location of the Order's investitures, annual banquets and balls, painted by Vincent Waldré, started in *c.*1788 and still unfinished at his death in 1814.[284]

Jacqueline Hill has argued that in the immediate post-Union period liberal Protestants and the viceroy were keen to present St Patrick as the national symbol, to draw Protestants and Catholics together. In London, Irish MPs embraced St Patrick's day as a badge of identity, while in Dublin in 1805 Hardwicke ordered the tune, 'St Patrick's day' to be played at a theatrical performance he was attending.[285] However, after 1806 St Patrick was increasingly regarded by conservatives as a party emblem rather than a national symbol. A conservative lord major stood for 'God save the king', but sat for 'St Patrick's day'.[286]

So, if as it seems, St Patrick was carved on the Castle Chapel in 1808 as an all-embracing national symbol, it was largely done in a spirit of hope. Hill has argued that

[282] Hill, 'National festivals', 31; James Kelly, '"The glorious and immortal memory": commemoration and Protestant identity in Ireland, 1660–1800', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 94c (1994), 48.
[283] Galloway, *The Most Illustrious Order*, p. 172.
[284] Three scenes used historical and allegorical images to symbolise the historical unity of England and Ireland and its continued desirability. For discussion of the ceiling paintings see: Gilmartin, 'Vincent Waldré's ceiling paintings in Dublin Castle', 42–7; Edward McParland, 'A note on Vincent Waldré', *Apollo*, 96 (Nov. 1972), 467; John Turpin, 'Irish history painting', *Irish Arts Review* (1989–90) 237–7; Fintan Cullen, 'Visual politics in 1780s Ireland: the roles of history painting', *Oxford Art Journal*, 18:1 (1995), 58–73.
[285] Hill, 'National festivals', 43.
[286] Ibid., 43–4.

the aspiration that St Patrick's day would remain a symbol around which Catholics and Protestants could gather would be disappointed, for emblems in Ireland acquired increasingly sectarian meanings in the nineteenth century under pressure from conservatives.[287] This argument is supported by Thomas Bell's baffled response to the presence of St Patrick and Brian Boru on the chapel in 1829 when he described them as 'two figures, which to a passing observer, have the appearance of being rather pressed into the service of supporting the portals of a chapel of the established church.'[288]

The Church of Ireland too promoted inclusiveness for its own reasons. It is apparent in a brief ecclesiastical history of Ireland that was part of O'Beirne's 1801 memorandum sent to Abbot.[289] In this account O'Beirne, revealing a high church bias, criticised the puritan streak in the Irish church and praised the 1630s reforms made by the lord lieutenant, Thomas Wentworth, in conjunction with the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, and the Bishop of Derry, John Bramhall. Among other things they ensured the adoption of the English 39 Articles.[290] But O'Beirne also approved of Archbishop Ussher's role; he had defended the independence of the Irish church and was theologically Calvinistic.[291]

Many of these figures were incorporated into the design of the richly carved pulpit.[292] (fig 5.76) Apart from gestures towards different shades of doctrinal thinking, the coats of arms encompassed Irish and English ecclesiastics, thereby giving an historical perspective on the Irish church, and demonstrating both its connection to England and its independent achievements. But as a pulpit it also stressed the importance of preaching. It stood on an open bible on which was carved 'The Words of God'. four shafts of the central column rose to the heads of the four Evangelists, each supporting an open gospel. The octagonal pulpit curved above, its supporting faces bearing the coats of arms of monarchs, and clerics – Irish and English – who had presided over the Reformation. There was Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury who

[287] Ibid., 49–51. Hill also observed that recognising celebrations for St Patrick's Day but not William III's birthday the viceregal establishment identified itself with the popular, Catholic side in the campaign for Catholic emancipation, and played a part in the evolution of Irish national symbols. The use of St Patrick in the Castle Chapel was a significant and an entirely overlooked part of this.
[288] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, p. 253.
[289] Colchester Papers, PRO 30/9/163, 'ff 149r150v, 'State of the Church in Ireland, 1801'.
[290] S.J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford companion to Irish history*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 56–7.
[291] Ibid., pp. 575–6.
[292] Carved by Richard Stewart, (Johnston, 1823, 48). The pulpit is now in St Werburgh's Church, Dublin.

commissioned the first English prayer book in 1549. There were reforming Irish clergymen such as William Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, who translated the Old Testament into Irish, and William King, Archbishop of Dublin, who defended Irish interests. There were influential preachers; the late seventeenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson, and the popular preacher of late eighteenth-century Dublin, Walter Kirwan.[293] The eight faces of the pulpit carried the arms of a diverse selection of reforming English and Irish bishops; Thomas Cranmer, William Laud, William King, Richard Robinson, James Ussher and William Bedell (1571–1642).[294] (figs 5.77 & 5.78)

St Patrick did not appear on the pulpit, but his label-stop bust on the east door was at eye level. It was positioned on the north side, the side of the bishops' seat in the gallery whose paneling was marked by the arms of St Patrick. This suggested a link between the early Irish church and the contemporary Church of Ireland, something that can be supported by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century church historiography.[295] St Patrick and the early church had been regarded in certain church circles since the early seventeenth century as the precursor of the Protestant Irish church. This idea had been developed by James Ussher in *A discourse of the religion* published in 1631.[296] He had not only been intent on distinguishing the early church from Roman practices but also from the Church of England, arguing that the Church of Ireland's 104 Articles were closer to the 'purity' of St Patrick's church than the Church of England's 39 Articles. He maintained that the Church of Ireland was essentially autonomous, and his text was sprinkled with expressions such as 'our Patrick', and 'our ancient church', which evoked a national spirit. Although Ussher's arguments were superseded by contemporary scholarship and, with the adoption of the 39 Articles in 1634, the independence of the Church of Ireland was compromised, the *Discourse* was resilient in providing a foundation myth for the Irish church and identifying a powerful pedigree. It

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[293] For discussion of Hugh Douglas Hamilton's 1806 painting *The Rev. Walter Blake Kirwan pleading the cause of the destitute orphans of Dublin* and images of clergymen see Fintan Cullen, *The Irish face: redefining the Irish portrait* (London, 2004), pp 123–145.
[294] Bishops' arms are described in Revd W.K. Riland Bedford, *The blazon of episcopy* (Oxford, 1897).
[295] The ringed cross on the east gable seems to be a contemporary gesture to the early church, though no reference to this is found in accounts and descriptions of the church. Simon Bradley has argued that in England the erection of a cross was an assertion of traditional, more high church Church of England values (Bradley, '"The Gothic revival" and the Church of England', pp 51–7).
[296] James Ussher, *A discourse of the religion anciently professed by the Irish and British* (London, 1631). This is discussed in John McCafferty, 'St Patrick for the Church of Ireland: James Ussher's *Discourse*', *Bullán*, 3:2 (Winter 1997/Spring 1998), 87–101.

would be picked up by polemical historians in the early nineteenth century. '... the important truth, my fellow countrymen,' wrote William Monck Mason in 1822, 'is this, that neither St Patrick nor the native Christians of Ireland, preached or taught or thought, as the clergy of the See of Rome do now.'[297] There is also a contemporary example of St Patrick's image being used to represent the early Irish church. In the viceregal setting of St Patrick's Hall St Patrick was represented iconographically as the embodiment of the ancient Irish church in the scene 'St Patrick converting the Irish to Christianity' on Waldré's ceiling.

That contemporary clergymen were interested in evoking links between the early Irish church and the nineteenth-century Church of Ireland is evident from a charity sermon preached in May 1818 at the opening of the Female Orphan House chapel, in which John Jebb evoked a link between the contemporary and pre-600 church.[298] The focus of his sermon was on the decoration of the chapel. Designed by William Farrell in 1817 in a Gothic revival style, the chapel is now demolished, but two drawings in the Stapleton collection show that the plaster decoration bore similarities to the Castle Chapel, and, although less elaborate, the decoration was richer than that in most contemporary churches.[299] Jebb, a pre-Tractarian high churchman, was concerned to articulate how the architecture of Farrell's chapel could exemplify the liturgy;

'As to appearance and interior decoration, the object has been to make this building what may properly be called a Church-of-England Chapel; that is, on the one hand to avoid all ostentatious ornament and show, but, on the other, to shun all sordid and unseemly negligence:– in a word, the attempt has been made, and, it is hoped, not unsuccessfully, to render the building answerable to the service of our Church; which, above any public service in the world, is at once cheerful, simple, and majestic.'[300]

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[297] Quoted in McCafferty, 'St Patrick for the Church of Ireland', 97–8.
[298] *A sermon preached in the Chapel of the Female Orphan House, Circular Road, Dublin, at its opening on Sunday the third of May, 1818, by the Rev. John Jebb, A.M. Rector of Abington, in the diocese of Cashel* (Dublin, 1818).
[299] Lucey, *The Stapleton collection*, plates 149 & 150. Photograph of the chapel in ruins in IAA. The chapel had compound piers, figures under the springing of the arches, and a frieze around the windows similar to the ceilure in the Castle Chapel. William Farrell was a clerk in the Board of Works under Johnston until his dismissal in 1810 ('William Farrell, *DIA*, 1720–1949, IAA [online] <www.dia.ie > accessed 18 Sept. 2014).
[300] *A sermon preached in the Chapel of the Female Orphan House ... by the Rev. John Jebb* (Dublin, 1818).

The desired expression was a balance between extremes. Decoration could be plentiful – for Jebb 'cheerful devotion' was to be found in 'magnificent temples'. But it must be at once 'simple' and 'majestic', which seems to imply that impressiveness was to be gained through control and purposefulness.[301] The notion of theological and spiritual balance was at the heart of Anglicanism.[302] It has been argued here that architecturally the Castle Chapel presented a specific solution to this issue with the creation of a space that could at once induce spiritual excitement through sublime Gothic spaces and more sober devotion through the ability to comprehend the service. This was reinforced by the sculpture. The eloquent angels, and the figures specifically described by Johnston as 'alluding to Piety and Devotion', complemented the lofty nave and airy gallery decorated with Stapleton's rich stucco work.[303] But in the chancel, behind the pulpit, and beyond the ceilure decorated with Moses in the robes of a prophet pointing to the Ten Commandments, all was sober contemplation of the Word, as directed by rubric in the Book of Common Prayer and popular in English churches.[304] Above the altar were panels inscribed with the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed, while gospels were represented in the busts of the four Evangelists.[305]

Conclusion

Johnston used Gothic to realise the intentions of his patrons to project the role of the Church of Ireland and define the status and, broadly, the political agenda of the viceroy in post-Union Ireland.[306] It was a modern Gothic idiom: modern in the sense that Johnston was tapping into contemporary antiquarianism and restoration projects; and in the sense that he used his models in a contemporary way, extracting details that could be identified as accurate, but ultimately concerned to project appropriate images:

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[301] He also described these characteristics as the prevailing qualities of the prayer book.

[302] This was manifest in such divines as Jeremy Taylor who appealed to reason, sense and tradition rather than the fundamentalism of the seventeenth century, see H.R. McAdoo, *Jeremy Taylor, Anglican theologian* (Dublin, 1996).

[303] Johnston, 1823, 48.

[304] Richard Mant, *Church architecture considered in relation to the mind of the church since and before the Reformation* (Belfast, 1843), p. 21; Addleshaw and Etchells, *The architectural setting of Anglican worship,* pp 155–171.

[305] Johnston, 1823, 51.

[306] These themes also emerged in Aspin's essay on the interpretation of medieval cathedrals in late Georgian England, in which he concluded that medieval cathedrals were evaluated within a context that was concerned with the role of the church and the construction of notions of nationality (Aspin, '"Our ancient architecture"', 213–32).

regularity and simplicity for an exterior which concealed a richly sublime interior.[307] Gothic revival was often referred to as modern in the early nineteenth century. It was one of the descriptors used by James Brewer to articulate his enthusiasm for the Castle Chapel; 'the richest modern casket of pointed architecture to be witnessed in the British Empire.'[308] It was an important characteristic for the viceroy and the Church of Ireland, both of whom wanted to project themselves into the future; the viceroy as relevant, the Church of Ireland as reforming. Even commentators who acknowledged that Gothic referenced medieval structures valued it as a style for the Castle Chapel because it was admirable rather than because of its historic roots. The *Freeman's Journal* wrote in June 1810, 'the appearance of that chaste and neat structure of Gothic architecture, the new Castle Chapel, now erected in the Lower Castle Yard, increases every day in its appearance of beauty and simplicity – this building although necessarily upon a small scale, will nevertheless display all that taste and appropriate embellishments, which have justly famed the ancient structures of Gothic architecture …'.[309] The past though was far from irrelevant. The act of remodeling the medieval fabric of Dublin Castle into Gothic revival forms reinstated the iconography of the medieval royal fortification and asserted the longevity and purpose of the viceregal institution against contemporary doubts about its necessity. Intrinsic to the sculptural and decorative programme were accounts of the history of the viceregal institution and the Church of Ireland. Such accounts sat well within the walls of a building which gestured to the middle ages.

In some circumstances Gothic was employed as a generic style onto which meaning could be projected.[310] In the case of the Castle Chapel the intricate sculptural and decorative programme meant that there was much that was specific here. This reflected on the architecture. Gothic was used in the service of a balanced Protestant liturgy and to project a neutrally-minded viceregal administration. There was also the question of Irishness. This might be regarded as a detail, – St Patrick and Brian Boru; Dean Swift; the ringed cross. But when the Irish clerics, the celebration of 'native' workmen and the discussion of local stone are taken into account it amounts to a significant component of the appeal of the building.

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[307] It was not modern in the sense of creating a self-consciously innovative style deemed appropriate to the age; an ambition that would be developed in the later nineteenth century.
[308] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, p. 63.
[309] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 June 1810.
[310] MacKechnie & Urban, 'Balmoral Castle', 190.

This Irishness existed within a British envelope. The viceregal arms that dominated the interior were the coats of arms of English aristocrats dating from the twelfth century. The British monarchy was represented by coats of arms and sculptured busts. The chapel stood within the precincts of Dublin Castle, the headquarters of the British administration in Ireland. Alvin Jackson has categorised the post-Union viceregal administration in Ireland as a colonial component in an otherwise metropolitan Union.[311] He argued that the metropolitan Union was centralised and British, with Ireland sending representatives to the Houses of Parliament. But Ireland was also ruled colonially, by an administration tailored to local demands with a lord lieutenant and the remnants of a separate executive. The analysis of the Castle Chapel made here suggests that this is not how the relationship was viewed. In the chapel English and Irish were too closely intertwined. The celebration of the Irish contribution undoubtedly owed something to a self-conscious promotion of national Irish culture and achievement, but there was no campaigning edge to accounts such as Johnston's quiet observation about the role of native craftsmen. An alternative interpretation of early nineteenth-century British politics made by Brockliss and Eastwood lays stress on the United Kingdom as a multi-national state.[312] They argued that the British state brought into being in 1800 was not focused on forging a specific British identity, and instead allowed space for the expression of the identities of the component nations. This fits more closely with the present interpretation of the Castle Chapel project. Gothic here is the Irish version of British, borrowing freely from English sources and formed into a uniquely expressive architecture.

As a public building that could encourage the development of the arts in Ireland, providing an architectural example of the use of Gothic for the architects of churches to be financed by an invigorated Board of First Fruits after 1808, it should have been emulated. But this was not possible, partly because Irish ecclesiastical resources stretched over the country never matched Parliamentary resources concentrated in Dublin. Irish churches would have to wait for the Ecclesiologists to make English parish churches rather than cathedrals models for churches that could become more than

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[311] Alvin Jackson, 'Ireland, the Union, and the empire, 1800–1960' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp 123–153.
[312] Brockliss & Eastwood, 'Introduction: a union of multiple identities', p. 2.

preaching boxes with towers. And Gothic would become an Irish style not primarily through its use on Protestant churches, but when it was adopted by Catholic congregations.

Chapter Six

Reception, *c.*1810–1841

Introduction

To confine the investigation of meaning in architecture to the intentions of patrons and architects would be to ignore the continuing life of buildings, existing and functioning within changing contexts where they are susceptible to re-evaluation. Reception, as the study of subsequent attitudes to buildings is often termed, was integral to architectural criticism before it was identified as a profitable scholarly focus.[1] The roots of the concept lie in reception theory, defined within a literary context by Hans Robert Jauss in 1970, which postulated that people approach historic art with new questions, so that art continues to live in the perceptions of subsequent generations.[2] As noted in the introduction to this thesis the historian William Whyte included reception – without naming it as such – in his 2006 essay on meaning in architecture.[3] In the introduction to the 2012 collection of essays, *Architecture and interpretation*, reception was identified as an intrinsic component of architectural criticism.[4] In this volume Eric Fernie's observation that we should not 'value intention too greatly over reception' was quoted, an idea that allows a significant role for consumers as generators of meaning.[5]

Guillery's essay in this volume demonstrated that by considering subsequent responses to buildings the architectural historian is encouraged to view architecture within a social context, and to value it as a 'social arena ... spreading agency'.[6] A study of reception will broaden the context for this thesis. So far, the context has been largely confined to the social, political, aesthetic and intellectual milieu of the Irish elite, and the cultural environment of a single prominent Irish architect. In this chapter, through the examination of publications which reference Irish Gothic revival architecture, the social

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[1] Adrian Forty, 'Common sense and the picturesque' in Iain Borden and David Dunster (eds), *Architecture and the sites of history: interpretations of buildings and cities* (Oxford, 1995), pp 176–86.
[2] There is a brief review of this in Fernie, *Art history and its methods*, pp 357–8.
[3] Whyte, 'How do buildings mean?', 153–177.
[4] Stevenson & Heslop, 'Introduction', pp 1–15.
[5] Quoted in Ibid., p. 11.
[6] Peter Guillery, 'Bicycle sheds revisited, or: why are houses interesting?' in Franklin, Heslop & Stevenson, *Architecture and interpretation,* p. 383.

context will be broadened to encompass what might be described as polite society in Ireland and Britain.[7]

The field of Irish Gothic revival literature is limited but diverse. The period to be investigated stretches from the early years of the Union to 1841, the year when the *Irish Penny Journal* ceased publication. Essentially pre-Victorian, in architectural terms it is the period before the full force of A.W.N Pugin's moral crusade – initiated by the publication of *Contrasts* in 1836 – was felt.[8] In Irish political and cultural terms this is the period that just begins to anticipate the cultural nationalism that would be a hallmark of the Young Ireland movement as expressed in *The Nation*, first published in 1842.[9]

The diversity of Irish Gothic revival literature arises from the different literary genres which referred to Irish Gothic revival. One of the most striking accounts of Irish ecclesiastical Gothic revival architecture emerged from an antiquarian context; an essay written by Thomas Bell in 1825 for a Royal Irish Academy prize on the origins and development of Irish Gothic architecture.[10] When it was published four years later it gained a wider readership beyond the Irish-based antiquarian audience of the Academy by appealing to the interest of both the Catholic and Protestant establishment in ecclesiastical history, and by attracting the influential support of successive viceroys, the king, and an English publisher.[11]

Topographical literature flourished in this period. In the late eighteenth-century the few books written on Ireland had either been antiquarian in subject – Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1791–96); Edward Ledwich's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790) – or they presented picturesque views in which architectural interest tended to be supplied by medieval ruins, and textual (letter press) accounts were only brief accompaniments to the illustrations – Paul Sandby's *Virtuosi's museum* (1778), C*ollection of one hundred and fifty select views* (1781); and Jonathan Fisher's *Scenery of Ireland*

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[7] For discussion of polite culture see Bending, 'One among the many: popular aesthetics, polite culture and the country house landscape', pp 61–78.

[8] A.W.N. Pugin, *Contrasts: or a parallel between the noble edifices of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and similar buildings of the present day* (London, 1836).

[9] Jeanne Sheehy, *The rediscovery of Ireland's past: the Celtic revival 1830–1930* (London 1980), pp 29–30.

[10] RIA, MS 12 0 11, [Thomas Bell] 'An essay on the origin and progress of Gothic architecture with reference to the ancient history and present state of the remains of such architecture in Ireland' (1825).

[11] Bell, *An essay on the origin and progress of Gothic architecture*.

(1795).[12] After the Union a number of topographical books illustrated with full page engravings, written by Englishmen and published in London and Dublin engaged with both antiquities and contemporary architecture in the context of place. Thomas Kitson Cromwell's three-volume *Excursions through Ireland* (1820–21) contained 119 engravings of which six were of castles which had been remodelled or extended; G.N. Wright's *Ireland illustrated* (1829) had 76 illustrations, six of which dealt with new work.[13] The most prominant and comprehensive publication was James Brewer's *Beauties of Ireland*, published in two volumes in 1825 and 1826.[14] Brewer intended to publish three volumes to cover the country.[15] If he had succeeded he would have produced a weightier sequel to *Beauties of England and Wales*, a 27–volume work which John Britton had overseen from 1801 to 1816 and to which Brewer had contributed some volumes, the introduction and bibliography.[16] Brewer's surviving correspondence with George Petrie reveals that illustrations were fundamental to the publication, but with only 24 published in the two Irish volumes it was clear that the text with its opinions and coverage played a far more significant role than in previous topographical volumes on Ireland.[17]

An important subset of topographical literature was the book of seats. An early example, which concentrated on Ireland, was Thomas Milton's *Views of different seats*

[12] Grose, *The antiquities of Ireland*; Ledwich, *Antiquities*; Sandby, *The virtuosi's museum*; Sandby, *A collection of one hundred and fifty select views*; Jonathan Fisher, *Scenery of Ireland* (London, 1795). Exceptions include, Slane Castle and Castleward which were illustrated in Fisher, *Scenery,* and the old inhabited castles – Malahide, Lismore, Howth, Glenarm, Shane's – which were illustrated in Sandby, *The Virtuosi's museum*.

[13] Thomas Kitson Cromwell, *Excursions through Ireland* 3 vols (London, 1820–21); G.N. Wright, *Ireland Illustrated from original drawings by G. Petrie, W.H. Bartlett and T.M. Baynes* (London, 1831).

[14] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* 2 vols. He began the project in early 1820 and had hoped to publish the first volume in Oct. 1821 (Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at the Library of TCD, William Shaw Mason Correspondence, MS 1734, letters from J.N. Brewer, 1818–21; NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos 43–77, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 1820–1830).

[15] Advert in Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1 (1825). He had largely completed research for Ulster by Sept. 1823 and was working on Munster in Aug. 1825 and July 1826 (NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos 43–77, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 1820–1830; NLI, Croker Papers, MS Joly 1, nos 140–7, letters from J.N. Brewer to T.C. Croker, 1826–7). Vol. 1 (published 1825) covered part of Leinster (Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford and Kilkenny); vol 2 covered the rest of Leinster (Carlow, Kildare, Queen's County, King's County, Meath, Westmeath, Longford, Louth) and part of Munster (Cork).

[16] J. Mordaunt Crook, 'John Britton', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 3 Sept., 2015; John D. Haigh, 'James Norris Brewer', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 3 Sept. 2015. In an advert published in volume one Brewer stated 'This publication is intended to class with the Beauties of England and Wales' (Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1).

[17] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos 43–77, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 1820–1830.

of the nobility and gentry (1783–93).[18] The most ambitious publication project of the period was John Preston Neale's eleven-volume *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland* published between 1818 and 1829.[19] Here, in the more traditional format of an engraving and letter press description for each entry, Ireland was presented as an integral part of Great Britain. In numerical terms Ireland was poorly represented; where Scottish houses accounted for almost ten percent of the entries, just under six percent of the total were Irish houses.[20] But contemporary Ireland was given prominence in the introduction, as will be discussed. The city of Dublin attracted a number of topographical volumes: James Malton's late eighteenth-century *Picturesque and descriptive view of the city of Dublin* was structured around engravings of principal public buildings, but early nineteenth-century works were more comprehensive and text-based; Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh's *History of the City of Dublin* (1818), published in London, set the standard, closely followed by John James McGregor, *New picture of Dublin* (1821) and G.N. Wright's *Historical guide* (1821), the former published in Dublin and the latter in London.[21]

In the period from 1820 to 1840 about twelve periodicals with varying commitments to culture were inaugurated for an Irish audience.[22] Most were short lived, and most had little to say about Gothic revival buildings. *The Christian Examiner*, a Protestant journal started in 1825 by Revd Caesar Otway in the run up to Catholic emancipation, for example, had a surprisingly small coverage of Protestant churches. Four journals stand out for their interest in culture; the *Dublin Literary Gazette* (started January 1830), the *Dublin Penny Journal* (1832–7), its competitor the *Irish Penny Magazine* (1833–4) and the *Irish Penny Journal* (1840–41). The common denominator for three of these was George Petrie, an artist and antiquary who had previously supplied the majority of the

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[18] Thomas Milton, *Views of different seats of the nobility and gentry* (London and Dublin, [1783–93])
[19] John Preston Neale, *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, series 1, vols 1–6 (London, 1818–1823), series 2, vols 1–5 (London, 1824–1829). See also volumes on seats published in the later nineteenth century: John Bernard Burke, *A visitation of the seats and arms of the noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain* (London, 1855); F.O. Morris (ed.), *A series of picturesque views of seats of the noblemen and gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland, with descriptive and historical letterpress*, 6 vols (London, 1866-1880).
[20] James Macaulay, 'J.P. Neale and the *Views* of Scotland' in Ian Gow & Alistair Rowan (eds), *Scottish country houses, 1660–1914* (Edinburgh, 1995), pp 217–28. Thirty-eight Irish houses were represented of which 18 were castles, just under fifty percent.
[21] Malton, *A picturesque and descriptive view of the city of Dublin*; Warburton, et al., *History of the city of Dublin,* 2 vols; McGregor, *New picture of Dublin*; Wright, *An historical guide to ancient and modern Dublin.*
[22] For discussion see Barbara Hayley, 'Irish periodicals from the Union to the *Nation*', *Anglo-Irish Studies*, 2 (1976), 83–108.

drawings for the publications of Cromwell, Wright and Brewer.[23] He contributed articles to the *Literary Gazette*, but was an editor of the *Dublin Penny Journal* from issue 8 to 56, and he was the founding editor of the *Irish Penny Journal*. These two latter publications, which had broadened their audience to the Protestant and Catholic middle classes and avowed an incipient cultural nationalism, both adopted the format of presenting an engraving of a building on the front page accompanied by a descriptive and critical account. Although antiquarian buildings predominated, newly built or re-edified Gothic revival castles and churches were shown – just under 12 percent in the *Dublin Penny Journal*; over 15 percent (nearly all castles) in the *Irish Penny Journal*.

Ireland after the Union was a magnet for English tourists, some of whom felt the need to educate their contemporaries about the new addition to the British empire by publishing accounts of their journeys. Some were openly curious about the unknown, others were aware of the history of wars and poverty and wanted to bury the notion of political discord; all had the broadly political agenda to aid an assimilation of Ireland into Britain through the dissemination of information.[24] Several commented on Gothic revival castles and churches, often in a topographical context, so that the texts of George Holmes (1801), John Carr (1806), and Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1807) provide personal variations on the themes that would be developed by Brewer and Neale.[25] The early nineteenth century saw the compilation of statistical county surveys directed by the Dublin Society and a number of more comprehensive all-Ireland surveys, of which the most interesting from the point of view of landed estates was Edward Wakefield's *Account of Ireland* published in 1812.[26] A description of the land, industry, economy and institutions of Ireland, the book was intended as a prelude to the economic development of what he regarded as a 'valuable portion of the British empire'.[27]

It is clear from the foregoing that interest in Irish Gothic revival buildings was mainly concentrated at the end of the period – *c.*1820 to 1841 – whereas the buildings for the

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[23] For review of Petrie's work as an illustrator see Peter Murray (ed.), *George Petrie (1790–1866) – the rediscovery of Ireland's past* (Cork, 2004).
[24] See Glenn Hooper, *The tourist's gaze* (Cork, 2001).
[25] George Holmes, *Sketches of some of the southern counties of Ireland* (London, 1801); Sir John Carr, *A stranger in Ireland* (London, 1806); Sir Richard Colt Hoare, *Journal of a tour in Ireland A.D. 1806* (London, 1807).
[26] Wakefield, *An account of Ireland.*
[27] Ibid., vol 1, p. ii.

study were constructed in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. By the time the topographical books and periodicals that referred to new and remodelled castles and churches were published the field had expanded considerably. With at least seventy-three castellated houses designed (most a remodeling of existing houses) by prominent and not so prominent architects between 1800 and 1840, it is clear that castles and Tudor revival houses constituted a popular style in the early nineteenth century.[28] Church building expanded considerably too, with the Board of First Fruits allocating £149,000 in grants and £281,148 in loans between 1801 and 1822.[29]

In terms of castle-building Johnston dominated the first decade of the nineteenth century with six commissions between 1800 and 1806. Once he became architect to the Board of Works in 1805, his competitors gained ground in an area that grew considerably in the next three decades of the nineteenth century. John Nash, James and George Richard Pain, Richard Morrison, and his son William Vitruvius Morrison were the most prominent.[30] Other Irish architects involved in castle commissions were James Shiel, John Hargrave of Dublin, William Robertson of Kilkenny, Thomas and Kearnes Deane of Cork and William Tinsley of Clonmel, while a significant number of English architects also obtained Irish commissions; Thomas Hopper, William Atkinson, Thomas Cobden, Daniel Robertson, Thomas Rickman, Edward Blore, Thomas Smith and William Bardwell.

One of the most important trends was the growing popularity of Tudor and neo-Elizabethan designs. A feature of Richard Morrison's work from *c.*1813 with the design of Borris House, Co Carlow, it became an established alternative to the castle in the 1820s and 1830s with significant contributions being made by English architects such as Thomas Hopper, Thomas Rickman and Daniel Robertson.[31] Meanwhile the design of castles changed during the period. The picturesque-accented quadrangular Georgian

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[28] This review of castle building only takes account of those designed by known architects listed in *DIA* (*DIA*, 1720–1949, IAA [online] <www.dia.ie > accessed 26 Aug. 2015)

[29] Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, p. 119.

[30] James and George Richard Pain were English architects who had come to Ireland to oversee the building of Lough Cutra Castle, Co. Galway, and built up a successful Irish practice in Limerick and Cork (Lee & Jacobs, *James Pain*). For Morrisons see Edward McParland, Alistair Rowan, Ann Martha Rowan, *The architecture of Richard Morrison and William Vitruvius Morrison* (Dublin, 1989).

[31] For discussion of English architects in Ulster see Campbell, 'Building British identity and the Tudor-revival country house in Ulster'. For Daniel Robertson see Frederick O'Dwyer, '"Modelled muscularity": Daniel Robertson's Tudor mansions', *IAR Yearbook,* 15 (1999), 87–97.

design pioneered by Johnston had some influence – James Shiel's Knockdrin, Co. Westmeath of *c.*1815 and Daniel Robertson's Johnstown, Co. Wexford, of 1836 are examples – and Charleville's telescopic round tower would be found on later castles; Richard Morrison's Thomastown, Co. Tipperary of 1812, Thomas Cobden's Duckett's Grove, Co. Carlow, of 1818 and Daniel Robertson's Wilton Castle, Co. Wexford, of *c.*1833. But a picturesque aesthetic based on an irregular plan and the interplay of towers, introduced by Nash in *c.*1801 with the design for Killymoon, Co. Tyrone, soon gained ground. This was partly due to Nash's further commissions in both the north and south of the country – particularly Kilwaughter, Co. Antrim, 1806, Lough Cutra, Co. Galway, *c.*1811, and Shanbally Castle, Co. Tipperary, *c.* 1812 – reinforced by the Pains' work in southern counties; Dromoland, Co Clare, 1819, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, 1823, Blackrock Castle, Co. Cork, 1828, and Strancally Castle, Co. Waterford, *c.*1830. Many Morrison castles presented a similar impression of variety, but Richard Morrison's Moydrum, Co. Westmeath of *c.*1812 was the only purely castellated design by the practice. Instead, the Morrisons innovated with the concept of juxtaposing buildings of different styles to represent a history of growth and change. At Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry (*c.*1809) a Henry VI-style castle was given a gabled front supposedly added in Henry VIII's reign.[32] Castellated and gabled sections were features of Thomastown, Co. Tipperary (1812), and Castle Richard, Co. Waterford (pre 1819) as designed, while the castle of Castle Freke, Co. Cork, (*c.* 1812) had a low ecclesiastical wing, and Shelton Abbey, Co. Wicklow (*c.*1819) was intended to represent a fourteenth-century abbey converted into a baronial residence after the Reformation.[33] The fullest expression of this conceit was Clontarf Castle, Co. Dublin (1836–7), where each element was given separate treatment in terms of materials, roofs, chimneys, window and door detailing so that the Norman keep, fourteenth-century tower and Elizabethan manor stood as a cluster of readily identifiable structures. The authenticity of this grouping represented another, growing concern of the period, expressed in the neo-Norman castles of two English architects; Thomas Hopper's Gosford Castle, Co. Armagh, of 1819 and William Bardwell's Glenstall Abbey, Co. Limerick, of *c.*1838.[34]

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[32] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 2 (1819).

[33] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1, p. 330.

[34] The massive towered gateway of William Morrison's unfinished Brittas Castle, Co. Tipperary designed before 1834 was convincingly based on a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century English castle (McParland et al., *The architecture of the Morrisons*, p. 42).

It will become apparent in the subsequent discussion that the castles chosen for the thesis case studies received relatively little attention in the topographical and periodical literature of the 1820s and 30s. Although these publications demonstrated an interest in buildings, they were not focused on architecture and its development. Within this latter frame, and within the focus of this thesis, the castles of the first decade of the nineteenth century, are of fundamental importance as ground-breaking commissions in which the expression of the patrons' recently acquired taste was being pioneered in Ireland in an atmosphere where classicism still held sway. Architecturally, as it has been noted, these castles combined an old-fashioned respect for formality, with picturesque qualities and, particularly in the case of Birr, a gesture towards the Tudor revival. Their picturesque and Tudor revival successors more fully manifested the qualities embryonic in Charleville and Birr so that by the 1820s and 30s the castles of the first decade of the nineteenth century had been superseded stylistically. But the topographical and periodical writers also had different frames of reference from the builders of the castles of the 1800s; frames of reference that were closer to the builders of later castles. The situation is very different with regard to churches. They received most concentrated attention in literature that was focused on ecclesiastical architecture, and within this context the Castle Chapel was valued as a pioneering building and received focused attention.[35]

Politically, the reception period was very different in character from the years just after Union when the case study buildings were designed and constructed. This early period had been relatively peaceful. It was overshadowed by the rebellion of 1798, and there were sporadic agrarian disturbances, but they were non-sectarian, and the campaign for Catholic emancipation was largely carried out by the small Catholic upper and middle classes at a political rather than popular level.[36] The period between 1823 and 1830 saw increased tension and conflict between Catholics and Protestants. This was partly due to the rise of religious enthusiasm which led, damagingly, to proselytism by Protestants, and there is evidence that agrarian disturbances took on an anti-Protestant character under the influence of the millenarianism peddled by Pastorini. In January 1824 the

[35] Churches received relatively little attention in topographical literature. Some new churches were profiled in the *Dublin Penny Journal* including three by John Semple in Co.Dublin; Kilternan Church, Monkstown Church, Donnybrook (known as Simons-Court) Church.

[36] S.J. Connolly, 'The Catholic question, 1801–12', 'Union government, 1812–23', 'Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823–30' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland,* v: *Ireland under the Union, I, 1801–70* (Oxford, 1989), pp 24–47, 48–73, 74–107.

campaign for Catholic emancipation gained a popular dimension under Daniel O'Connell's leadership of the Catholic Association. Although many Westminster politicians favoured Catholic emancipation and the viceregal administration maintained a policy of neutrality, it took six more years and the threat that sectarian violence between Catholic Association members and the radical Protestant Orange Order would spiral out of control before the act of Catholic emancipation was passed in April 1829. This removed the final legal disabilities to the participation of Catholics in public political life in Britain.[37]

After forty years of Union, Ireland was more closely bound to Britain. This was particularly true for the governing classes, but with Catholicism a more clearly recognised and respectable part of Britain from 1829, and improved provision for health and education for poorer sections of society, many others in Ireland also felt the benefit of integration.[38] However, Ireland remained a place that needed pacification: hostilities between Catholics and Protestants remained dangerously high after 1829. It is also apparent that throughout the period cultural nationalism was growing in Ireland, and with it an identity distinct from Britain. The earlier variety, introduced by Protestants in the 1820s anxious about the threat of Catholic power, aimed to dissolve sectarian divisions by appealing to a shared Irish culture. After 1829, partially encouraged O'Connell's campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union, Catholic nationalism grew and with it a sense of Catholic Irish identity.

Castles: 'architectural and picturesque'

In the 1820's and 30s assessments of Irish Gothic revival domestic architecture was made predominantly by English commentators in topographical literature within an imperial context and by Irish critics in periodicals within the emerging context of cultural nationalism. But in the first two decades of the Union Irish Gothic revival

[37] A series of relief acts passed from 1772–82 had abolished positively penal legislation against Catholics (outlawing of clergy, prohibition of schools, restriction on ownership of landed property), the act of 1793 had restored to Catholics the right to vote in parliamentary elections and become members of municipal corporations. The Catholic relief act of 1829 allowed Catholics to sit in parliament and hold civil or military office with a few exceptions.

[38] The provision of up-to-date lunatic asylums was made under legislation enacted in 1817 and 1821 and a national education system was set up in Ireland in 1831 (Judith Hill, 'Barracks, asylum and model school: public architecture in Limerick from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century' in Liam Irwin, Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh and Matthew Potter (eds), *Limerick: history and society* (Dublin, 2009), pp 277–306).

castles were most frequently commented on in travel literature and in Wakefield's geographical survey.

For Wakefield, Charleville and Birr Castle stood out among all the houses he reviewed; classical and Gothic, old and new. In most cases the architecture of the houses did not distract him from the demesnes, but Charleville impressed him by its grandeur, though he decried the featurelessness and neglect of its setting: 'Charleville castle, both in its exterior and interior, is a magnificent mansion built of limestone in the Gothic style of architecture, and stands in the middle of a very flat park, with a large piece of artificial water to the south... The domain ... abounds with trees universally stunted by loads of ivy ... Neither the house nor ground command any distant views ... I never saw an instance of so much money expended in erecting a princely mansion in so bad a situation.'[39] At Birr, Wakefield made an unusual detour into the house and was pleasantly surprised; 'what excites most admiration is the drawing-room, which is one of the best proportioned apartments I ever saw. It is fitted up and furnished in the most elegant manner, and when in it you would hardly suppose that you were so near to the dirty town of Birr.'[40] In Wakefield's account Charleville and Birr were not only held up as exemplary houses, but it is evident that the author shared the patrons' aesthetic concerns, responding to the impressiveness of Charleville and to the regularity that underlay the interior decorative scheme at Birr. Although there is an implicit suggestion that he understood the social purpose of the castles he made no mention of the associative power of Gothic or of the family symbolism embedded in the designs.

English travellers in Ireland in the early post-Union years who published their journals often evinced a desire to assist the integration of Ireland into Britain by making it better known to English readers.[41] Several, such as the artist George Holmes, who travelled in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion, but wrote his book after the Act of Union, depicted demesnes as oases of civility.[42] However, Ireland's wildness was also an attraction, something that could be safely experienced when contemplating picturesque scenery.[43] This was the context in which John Carr encountered Glenmore Castle that Francis

[39] Wakefield, *An account of Ireland*, pp 44–5.
[40] Ibid., p. 45.
[41] Glenn Hooper, *The tourist's gaze* (Cork, 2001), p. xx.
[42] Hill, 'Gothic in post-Union Ireland, p. 64.
[43] For discussion see O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque*.

Synge was building to Johnston's design in Wicklow in 1806: the bathos at the end seems to be unselfconscious; 'The castle ... has not yet received the hoary tints of time; some of its battlements were constructing at the time of my visit; but when it is completed, and well coloured by the elements it will be a fine object. At a little distance it seems to impend over a vast abrupt precipice, from which it commands a superb view of the country, and the entrance of the celebrated Devil's Glen, into which he descended through a well-planted shrubbery.'[44]

Carr made no mention of Charleville or Birr, but Richard Colt Hoare did. A highly educated and well-travelled aristocrat who had inherited Stourhead in 1785, Hoare was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and Society of Dilettanti, had an extensive library and enjoyed a picturesque sensibility. He appraised contemporary Gothic revival as an architectural style, criticising its architects for ignoring medieval precedent and producing buildings that did not achieve his standards of 'lightness, uniformity [or] solidity', a heterogeneous list that seems to allude to both classical standards of design and an appreciation of castellar strength.[45] Regarding Ireland as an intrinsic, though as yet little known part of Britain, he assessed Johnston as a British architect. He was critical of Johnston's gateway at Slane, which he thought 'slender and meager according to the Gothic *costume* of modern architects'.[46] Yet when he assessed Charleville it was in the Earl of Charleville's terms: 'Two miles from Tullamore is the seat of Lord Charleville adjoining the turnpike road, where a handsome castellated mansion is now erecting under the superintendence of Johnson [*sic*] the architect. The plan of the building aims at accommodating the most prominent features of a baronial castle to the conveniences of a modern habitation'.[47] He went on to criticise the central tower because, with four large pointed openings, 'its massive solidity and grandeur are completely destroyed'.[48] Hoare would have known Lord Charleville from the Society of Dilettanti and he seems to have been given access to the Charlevilles' intentions, while he shared their aesthetic values, which he applied to his critique.

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[44] Carr, *A stranger in Ireland*, p 147. An accompanying image presents the castle from beneath.
[45] Hoare, *Journal of a tour in Ireland*, p. 248
[46] Ibid., p. 248.
[47] Ibid., p. 33.
[48] Ibid., p. 33.

Arthur Atkinson, who published an account of his travels in Ireland in 1815, was one of the few travellers to take the religious affiliation of the owner into account.[49] Atkinson, who understood that owners used Gothic to make connections to the past, assumed that Catholics were claiming former rights and power that had been suppressed, whereas Protestants were asserting legitimate contemporary power. His account reveals that he felt threatened by the former, while he accepted the latter. He nervously associated medieval buildings with Catholic power: '... it has of late become fashionable in our island, to rescue from the *ruins* of modern improvement, the vestiges of our ancient state – such as the names of our seats and townlands ... and in a grand national project it might be conceived necessary to introduce the ancient architecture of the country, like the ancient religion, into the foreground, to render the piece consistent.'[50] Faced with Killeen Castle, he interpreted the Catholic Earl of Fingall's rebuilding of his old tower house as an assertion of the former power of his family; 'I had formed such an *antique* opinion of Lord Fingall's person and manners, and had given to the prejudices of his sect such a rueful tinge, as to approach the castle of Killeen with the utmost timidity.'[51] However, he was admitted without pomp, found Fingall well educated and modern in outlook and, revising his opinion of Fingall's motives, found it hard to understand why such a man should have chosen to ally himself to medieval architecture.[52] When he visited nearby Leap Castle, a home of the O'Carrolls in the middle ages, but in the early nineteenth century the seat of the Protestant Sir Henry D'Esterre Darby, his acceptance of Protestant uses of the past is clearly stated. Darby had extended the tower house, and Atkinson approved of his gesture to the past and appreciated his work as an attempt to improve his estate; from its situation on a rock it looked down 'with an air of ancient grandeur, and yet so tempered by modern improvement as not to look frightful'.[53]

James Norris Brewer wrote *The beauties of Ireland* as one of those Englishman who hoped, through the dissemination of information and comment, to draw Ireland more firmly into the British orbit. In 1826 he told the antiquary Thomas Crofton Croker that his volumes were 'designed on my part (in however humble a way) to do justice to

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[49] Arthur Atkinson, *The Irish tourist in a series of picturesque views, travelling incidents, and observations statistical, political and moral of the character and aspect of the Irish nation* (Dublin, 1815).
[50] Ibid., p. 231.
[51] Ibid., p. 229.
[52] Ibid., p. 231.
[53] Ibid., p.160.

Ireland, and to make that country better known to Englishmen.'[54] Writing to George Petrie five years earlier about whether to include the Aran islands in his projected volumes, he revealed his attitude to the margins of Britain. On the one hand 'the obscurity and comparative insignificance of these isles are arguments against attempting a work descriptive of them. On the other hand the very circumstance of obscurity as relates to insulated tracts so near home – the entire ignorance of the polished and reading part of the world ... [make] the subject worthy of attention. The hand of taste may elicit charms from any soil.'[55] There was a market for the unknown and proximate. When Brewer proposed his Irish project he had an established reputation as a contributor to *The beauties of England and Wales*, which Britton, quoted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, judged to have 'formed a sort of epoch in Topography'.[56] To extend the project to Ireland was a significant act for Irish architecture, placing it within a well-regarded sector of British culture.

Brewer carefully defined the parameters of his project for his Irish correspondents. It was not to be a guide, like Wright's *Wicklow,* omitting any mention of the scenery; or a 'mere tour' responding only to what was seen.[57] It was a 'sketch towards a topographical history', with an historical introduction and a selection of buildings from all counties assessed within their geographical and historical settings: a book suitable for a gentleman's library.[58] Brewer, concerned with accuracy, read contemporary scholarship and relied on a network of informed men such as George Petrie, Colonel de Montmorency Morres, William Shaw Mason and Thomas Crofton Croker for advice, criticism and documents. He also depended on information given to him by landed gentry and architects. He was disappointed in the former, remarking to Crofton Croker that he had found no resident gentlemen sufficiently qualified or willing to communicate with him.[59] Of architects we know that Johnston sent him a briskly

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[54] NLI, Croker Papers, MS Joly 1, no. 145, letter from J.N. Brewer to T.C. Croker, 23 Nov. 1826.
[55] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 57, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [1822].
[56] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'Introduction to ... The beauties of England and Wales ... by J. Norris Brewer', 88:1 (May 1818), 425.
[57] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 57, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [1822]; NLI, Croker Papers, MS Joly 1, no. 145, letter from J.N. Brewer to T.C. Croker, 23 Nov. 1826. He was referring to G.N. Wright, *A guide to the county of Wicklow* (London, 1822).
[58] NLI, Croker Papers, MS Joly 1, no. 145, letter from J.N. Brewer to T.C. Croker, 23 Nov. 1826; NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no.74, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 5 Mar. 1820 and 8 Feb. 1827.
[59] NLI, Croker Papers, MS Joly 1, no. 145, letter from J.N. Brewer to T.C. Croker, 23 Nov. 1826.

informative letter in 1820 outlining his projects.[60] But the Morrisons were far more forthcoming, and Brewer established a correspondence with them, using insights they gave about their commissions in his text.[61] This experience may partially account for the fact that their buildings received more detailed treatment than Johnston's in Brewer's volumes. The Morrisons also convinced Brewer of their value and significance as architects. Their communications about the historical genesis of some of their designs prompted Brewer to conclude that they 'are men of reading in ancient English architecture', while the finished buildings satisfied him that they were men of 'cultivated taste.'[62] On these two accounts 'their works will add much in every sense to the Beauties of Ireland'.[63] They are the stars of contemporary architecture in the volumes.[64]

Architecture took its place with physical and political geography in the lengthy introduction, and in the body of the text arranged according to province and county. Brewer had almost no interest in classical architecture, confining his introductory history to the development of Gothic architecture and its re-emergence as 'modern Gothic', or in the case of ecclesiastical buildings, as 'an imitation of the pointed style'.[65] Brewer engaged with current Gothic scholarship, quoting Milner's *Inquiry* of 1808, and probably referencing Milner's *Treatise* when he referred to the 'Pointed style' and the other 'several progressive and determinate orders'.[66]

For Brewer, English and Irish architectural history were closely interlinked. In the case of castles he regarded the earliest Irish castles as being Anglo-Norman, designed by English architects.[67] He argued that during the middle ages castellar architecture in the two countries diverged because of different conditions; in England castellated houses with imitation defences replaced the older military structures, while in Ireland castles

[60] 'A letter from Francis Johnston', 1–5.
[61] There is a record of correspondence with Morrison (NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos 43–77, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 18 Mar. 1822 & Jan. 1824), and reference to architects' intentions in the published works.
[62] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos 43–77, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [1822].
[63] Ibid.
[64] Brewer did name most other contemporary architects in his text, but their work receives far less attention and the work of Richard Morrison was singled out in the introduction.
[65] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1 (1825), pp cxxx, cxviii.
[66] Ibid., pp cxx, cxviii. Milner, *A treatise on the ecclesiastical architecture of England*. See chapter one for Milner's accessibility.
[67] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1 (1825), p. cxxiv.

with 'a more severe external character' were still being built, a trend that continued, with a few exceptions, into the seventeenth century.[68] For Brewer, the two countries merged again in the modern era, and he described the contemporary taste 'which prevails so generally in Britain' as '*the modern Gothic*'.[69] Brewer's account changed abruptly at this point, the historian's observations being replaced by a critic with strong views about how a new phenomenon should develop: 'It has ever been our opinion that buildings of this kind, when correctly designed, should be imitative of that character of structure which was invented by the English on the disuse of real castellation ... the ... *castellated house.* The licence permitted by this legitimate prototype, affords an ample scope for the indulgence of imagination ... In a strict observance of rules ... the whole exterior, in general design and in detail, should be allusive to military architecture, except ... [for] the family chapel.'[70] So, he deemed an English model appropriate for a new Irish castle because of the historical, architectural and political links of the two countries. And, Brewer judged that successful contemporary castles must demonstrate authenticity compatible with inventiveness. He deplored the type of imagination that mixed styles in a single elevation; 'We must persist in thinking that the inventors of this kind of fabric committed a great error, by intermingling in one façade ... the windows and ornamental particulars of the ecclesiastical style with the towers and loops of the military.'[71]

Brewer's architectural sensibility encompassed the picturesque, for he regarded the English model as peculiarly appropriate to parts of Ireland. 'This bold and harsh, but splendid species of design, is well adapted to the recluse parts of Ireland, where nature reigns in wild and mysterious majesty. The towers, the ramparts, and long irregular lines of military grandeur which characterise the *castellated house*, assimilate with the lofty mountains and wide-spread lakes of this romantic island. Such architectural creations impart a grateful air of antient baronial character to scenes averse from the delicate refinements of Palladio.'[72] This perception drew on knowledge of what had become the established picturesque regions of Ireland such as Wicklow and Killarney, actively improved and marketed through books of engravings, paintings, maps and

[68] Ibid., p. cxxvii.
[69] Ibid., p. cxxx.
[70] Ibid., pp cxxx–cxxxi.
[71] Ibid., p. cxxxi.
[72] Ibid., p. cxxxi. Repton made similar recommendations (Repton, *Observations*, p. 190), discussed here in chapter three.

topographical books as tourist destinations since the late eighteenth century.[73] It also revealed the influence of the idea that architecture and setting should be compatible, a concept influentially discussed in a number of publications by Humphry Repton from 1795.[74] In Repton's scenarios Gothic realised the pictorial potential of differet types of picturesque settings; while 'castle Gothic' called for a rocky eminence, 'abbey Gothic' was most at home in a fertile valley. Brewer's pan-British view of Gothic designates Ireland as a region within Britain which can play a contemporary role hosting an historic style. The architect – according to Brewer – responsible for achieving this feat was Richard Morrsion, recognised as a 'native'. '[T]he most estimable examples [of his buildings] ... are highly ornamental to the country, and evince an exemplary depth of research into the history and progressive variations of our antient architecture.'[75]

In a topographical book architectural ideas had to play a secondary role. It is clear from Brewer's correspondence with George Petrie, who had been engaged in 1820 to do the drawings on which the engravings would be based, that buildings were divided into antiquities and seats, with contemporary castles obviously falling into the latter group.[76] Status was intrinsic to the concept of seats, which were identified with their owners. For this reason their presence was a valuable marketing tool for the publisher, Sherwood, Jones & Co. 'The proprietors are fond of the seats of nobility and powerful gentry', Brewer told Petrie.[77] Although Brewer deemed Carton ugly, it had to be illustrated because 'the Duke's name is "a tower of strength"'.[78] The injunction to include seats caused some tension with Petrie, for Petrie, who would develop into the most forward-thinking Irish antiquarian of his generation, was more interested in representing ruins. Brewer acted as a go-between: 'There must be a proportionate quantity of seats', he wrote, 'although my feeling as well I believe as your own would rather incline chiefly

[73] O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque*. For example, she argues that Jonathan Fisher's *A picturesque tour of Killarney* (London, 1789) was significant in the making of Killarney as a tourist destination. Wicklow's popularity came later, partly through the improvement of the Dargle valley by the Wingfield family in the early nineteenth century.
[74] For discussion see Crook, *The dilemma of style*, pp 24–6.
[75] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1, p. cxxxi.
[76] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 43, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 26 Mar. 1820. Brewer also used drawings by George Holmes, Richard Morrison, P. Duggan and Joseph Peacock. The engravers were J. & H.S. Storer. Brewer included old inhabited, often re-modelled or extended castles including; Leap, Co. Offaly, Howth, Co. Dublin, Dunsany Co. Meath, Killeen, Co. Meath, Barmeath, Co. Louth, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Donadea, Co. Dublin.
[77] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 46, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [26 Aug 1821].
[78] Ibid.

to ruins interesting from architectural character or picturesque features.'[79] There was also the question of style, as the last phrase of Brewer's sentence suggested: should the buildings be rendered so that architectural detail was paramount, or should they be given a picturesque treatment? And some buildings were more worthy of inclusion because of architectural distinctiveness. Brewer preferred a picturesque approach, criticising Neale's illustration of Shelton Abbey, which was based on Morrison's drawing, as being 'merely architectural'.[80] In this he seems to be attempting to counter a current trend to express status through architectural drawings in favour of a more traditional picturesque treatment, which emphasised setting and thus the particular importance he gave to Irish domestic Gothic revival. Both Brewer and Petrie influenced each other with regard to Gothic revival seats; Brewer advocated Shelton Abbey to Petrie, while Petrie persuaded Brewer of the merits of 'Parsonstown'.[81] Brewer left the final decision about whether to include Shelton Abbey to Petrie: 'You best know whether there are subjects really fine, more important and at once architectural and picturesque'.[82] It was not included.

In his textual treatment of individual buildings, Brewer gave historic information about the family, descriptions of the site, and brief architectural assessments. The passages on the houses were incorporated with those on other buildings so that the seats were treated less as reflections of the owners' status and more as buildings integral to the Irish countryside. The buildings discussed in this thesis emerge in rather a pallid shade for a number of reasons. They were not in strikingly picturesque settings. Brewer found the demesne at Charleville 'truly beautiful, although surrounded by bogs and moors, flat, dreary, and repulsive'.[83] He did go on to describe the fine plantations, and the rocky bed of the Clodagh river, but failed to relate them to the castle, which he described flatly, paraphrasing Johnston's letter, as being 'chiefly in imitation of an English castle'.[84] By contrast, Wicklow, 'a mountainous and romantic country' was the primary locus of Brewer's Irish picturesque.[85] He had spent ten hugely enjoyable days there in late 1822,

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[79] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 44, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 8 May 1820.
[80] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 46, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [26 Aug 1821].
[81] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, nos. 46 & 54, letters from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [26 Aug 1821] & 15 Oct. 1821.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 137.
[84] Ibid., p. 137.
[85] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1, p. 327.

'as agreeable as ever in my life' admiring the scenery.[86] He approached Castle Howard, designed in *c*.1811 by Richard Morrison to represent a castellated medieval house with an attached abbey, both literally and metaphorically through its picturesque situation. He drew attention to its location on a steep wooded hill, and the tortuous ascent giving tree-framed views of the nearby mountains which prompted him to think of 'the circuitous progress to the embattled castles of times long past'.[87] He concluded that it provided the perfect setting for the house: 'The adoption of the antient English style of architecture is peculiarly judicious is a mountainous and romantic country, like Wicklow. The towers of this elevated building, so beautifully circumstanced by nature, afford conspicuous ornaments of the fairest vale which Ireland produces, and which is, perhaps, not to be excelled in any other part of Europe.'[88]

Brewer did not confine his appreciation of picturesque Ireland to recognised tourist destinations. He found that the Blackstairs Mountains visible from Borris House, Co Carlow had 'unusual grandeur', endowing the undulating and richly wooded demesne with a dramatic backdrop.[89] On the Cork coast he discovered that a windswept cliff provided a 'bold situation' with extensive views, 'favourable to the display of the mansion': Castle Freke.[90] These houses were all designed by the Morrisons. It is tempting to attribute much of his enthusiasm to this fact – and to their self-publicity – for Brewer gave Johnston's Glanmore Castle, which stood at the entrance to the Devil's Glen in Wicklow, one of the most romantic spots in this celebrated region, appreciated by travellers such as Pückler-Muskau and John Carr, a dry assessment, noting merely that it was 'imitative of the antient castellated style; a mode of architecture well adapted to the character of the scenery'.[91]

Brewer claimed to value authenticity, but, with only a general idea of architectural history, he was not in a position to assess whether buildings were accurate or not, and consequently he accepted what his informants told him about their models. He

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[86] NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 64, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, 1 Nov. 1822.
[87] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 1, p. 327.
[88] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 327.
[89] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 12.
[90] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 470.
[91] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 298. Hermann Fürst von Pückler-Muskau, *Tour in England, Ireland and France in the years 1828 and 1829*, (Philadelphia, 1833), p. 332. Carr, *A Stranger in Ireland*, p. 428. Johnston merely named the castle, owner and location in his letter of 1820 to Brewer ('A letter from Francis Johnston', 4).

confidently condemned symmetrical houses such as Moore Abbey and Slane Castle. Moore Abbey, a Kentian, mid-eighteenth-century reworking of a medieval abbey, displaying a regular, Palladian-inflected façade decorated with ogee windows, was criticised by Brewer for 'being destitute of all strongly-marked architectural character'.[92] Castellated Slane was 'splendid', in the 'modern Gothic' style, 'romantic' with 'striking combinations' of battlements and turrets, but inauthentic: 'the boasted picturesque of architecture is here attained by the sacrifice of consistency ... it does not, in its component parts, bear resemblance to the castle, or other pile of building, of any known antient period in the history of our national architecture.'[93] Charleville, by contrast was not criticised, for by identifying an English model for the castle Johnston had given it an appropriate stylistic pedigree. Birr escaped criticism, but Brewer did not examine the exterior in detail; he noted that the rear was converted to the front façade 'ornamented in imitation of castellated architecture.'[94]

The Morrisons, crucially, informed Brewer of their models. In the introduction to *The beauties of Ireland* Brewer had expressed approval of medieval castellated houses which incorporated, but distinguished between, military and ecclesiastical features. The Morrisons took the idea of diversity further, encrypting an historical narrative into several of their houses. This was perhaps the inventiveness that Brewer admired. Certainly, he approved wholeheartedly. Of Shelton Abbey he wrote; 'We are informed by the architects that their intention ... is that of an abbey constructed in the fourteenth century, and converted, with additions, into a noble residence at a date shortly subsequent to the Reformation. This conception is entitled to much praise. Public taste has been too long misled by "Gothic" designs, entirely destitute of attention to the progression of styles observable in antient English architecture, and fantastically comprehensive ... of the ecclesiastical, the military, and the domestic ... as practiced in various ages.'[95] The success of the Morrisons' historicist schema relied on authenticity of detail, but Brewer tended to assume the architects had referred to their models accurately.

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[92] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 39. Moore Abbey is dated to *c.*1769 and attributed to Christopher Myers (O'Dwyer, 'In search of Christopher Myers', pp 99–103).
[93] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 203.
[94] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 155.
[95] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 330.

The awareness that past styles could be associated with family history played a less significant role in Brewer's assessments than, it has been argued here, it played in the genesis and construction of Charleville and Birr. Brewer's accounts of family history tended to be unrelated to his comments about architecture. The fiction at Shelton Abbey that a fourteenth-century abbey had been converted into a residence after the Reformation contradicted the actual history of the family as related by Brewer – the Earl of Wicklow's ancestors had first built a house on the estate in the mid-seventeenth century. Brewer made no connection between reality and fantasy, not even to suggest that the house was intended to cast a spell and to give the family Anglo-Norman roots. Instead, as shown above, he was more concerned with the portrayal of a supposedly authentic multi-style model of architecture. However, Brewer was not oblivious to the associations of antique styles. He questioned whether a sixteenth-century Tudor revival style was appropriate for Borris House designed by the Morrisons in *c.*1813 for Walter Kavanagh, whose ancestors were the royal Gaelic McMorrough Kavanaghs, 'seated through almost countless generations on this demesne'. He suggested instead a castle modelled on those built during Edward III's reign.[96] His attitude to fiction and authenticity is contradictory: on the one hand he rejected the Tudor design because of inauthencity, but the style proposed does not relate to the historic roots of the family, though could reflect later building ventures. With Charleville, far from being critically aware of the associative power of the castle for a family recently established in Tullamore, he seems to have been a victim of the illusion conveyed by the castle in its well-cultivated demesne, ending his account of the demesne improvements with the comment that they 'reflect high honour on the good taste, and munificent spirit, of the successive noble owners of this estate.'[97]

But Brewer focused less on architectural detail than on the location of the castles. He valued Irish castles, particularly those designed by the Morrisons, as representative of a building type of English inspiration which, in the romantic scenery and equally romantic demesnes regarded as characteristic of Ireland, found ultimate and unforgettable expression. Their Irishness, and by implication the Irishness of their owners, was a regional attribute, a distinctive regional identity within Britain.

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[96] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 12

[97] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 137.

J.P. Neale, in his *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, wrote from a similar perspective.[98] The British context and its implication for Ireland was graphically evident in the content list of each volume, with Irish houses taking their place in sections that were headed by England (longest) and followed by Wales, Scotland and Ireland (each progressively smaller). In the introduction Neale asserted the superiority of Great Britain with regard to country seats, and in an address, written on the completion of the first series in 1824, he described the volumes as reference and companion works to topographical literature 'of our empire'.[99] The books were intended to promote the image of the British elite as wealthy and discriminating.[100] Like many of his contemporaries he conflated 'British' and 'English', betraying an assumption that the other constituent nations were peripheral, a belief that was manifest in regard to Ireland which he nominated 'our sister kingdom'.[101]

With such a broad field, Neale was more selective than Brewer, discussing only 38 Irish seats in eleven volumes. He was more interested in classical houses – 20 were classical, 18 castles – but, like Brewer, he singled out the Morrisons – 13 of the Irish castellated houses were designed by them. There was no mention of Francis or John Johnston. Like Brewer, Neale had received information from the Morrisons. He used it even less critically than Brewer as he had no corresponding ideas about modern Gothic architecture. In fact, he claimed to be predominantly interested in sixteenth- to eighteenth-century houses, and was reluctant to adjudicate on contemporary work.[102] He made an exception of the Morrisons' work: 'as no reference has been made to the sister kingdom for any instance, it is but justice to pay a deserved tribute of acknowledgment to the merit of the Messrs. Morrison, under whose direction, and from whose designs,

[98] Neale's volumes began in 1818 and ended in 1829 so that the period of publication began before Brewer's and ended afterwards. Brewer regarded Neale as 'more of a publisher than a draftsman' (NLI, Petrie Papers, MS 789, no. 46, letter from J.N. Brewer to G. Petrie, [26 Aug. 1821]).
[99] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 1 (1818), p. 10. The address, dated 12 Jan. 1824, was bound with the first volume.
[100] Ibid. p. 10.
[101] Ibid. p. 11.
[102] Ibid., p. xx. The introduction, dated 31 Jan. 1823, was bound with the first volume. Neale did include living architects, notably John Nash, Robert Smirke and James Gillespie Graham.

the situation and face of that hitherto neglected country, has been judiciously consulted for erections either in the ancient or modern style'.[103]

The Morrisons appealed to Neale, as they had done to Brewer, because their scenographic designs revealed the picturesque potential of a highly valued landscape. This was stated categorically in the entry on Kilruddery; '[the Morrisons] to whom much is due for the good taste of introducing into their native country a style of architecture before unknown in it, and which peculiarly harmonises with the picturesque character of the country'.[104] This referred mostly, though not always, to demesnes set in mountainous landscapes. In fact, although Neale appreciated the picturesque qualities of Wicklow – which 'render Shelton Abbey one of the most interesting residences in the British dominions' – Moydrum Castle, situated in relatively featureless country in Westmeath, but within a richly undulating and magnificently wooded demesne, was given one of his highest accolades; 'Moydrum may justly be considered one of the most finished and complete residences in Ireland.'[105]

Neale approached his project as an architectural draftsman – he was a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy from 1804 to 1844 – who also had an interest in giving each letter-press entry accurate architectural, topographical, biographical and genealogical details.[106] However, his reliance on proprietors for subscriptions and content meant that genealogical details were substantial (the *Gentleman's Magazine* criticised him for this), and he was much keener than Brewer to project the status of the owners.[107] Revival styles, he insisted, achieved this. Kilruddery, for example, is described as a 'representation of the buildings of the Elizabethan period', which 'give the greatest possible idea of magnificence and splendour to the edifice, which is large and sumptuous, containing every accommodation requisite to the rank of life of its noble proprietor'.[108] In several cases he noted that a plain house had been remodelled into a

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[103] Ibid., p. xx. There was the added bonus that their work had not before been published: '[Morrison's mansions] which, independently of their intrinsic excellence, are the more interesting as they have appearance in no other publication' (Ibid., p. 11).

[104] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 4 (1821), 'Kilruddery, Wicklow'.

[105] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 2 (1819), 'Shelton Abbey, Wicklow' and Moydrum Castle, Westmeath'.

[106] R.E. Graves, 'John Preston Neale', *ODNB* [online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com.elib.tcd.ie>, accessed 5 Sept., 2015. Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 1 (1818), p. 10.

[107] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 95, part 1 (Mar. 1825), p. 246.

[108] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 4 (1821), 'Kilruddery, Wicklow'.

grand castle; Borris, improved in the last seven years, ' may certainly be ranked now among the principal of the residences of the Gentry of this kingdom.'[109] Thus in Neale's volumes the proprietors of Irish castles emerge as significant members of the British elite.

Irish Gothic revival castles and houses were discussed within an Irish context in the two periodicals of the period that concerned themselves significantly with architecture. The *Dublin Penny Journal* was set up in June 1832 to create a non-sectarian audience within Ireland which would be nourished by Irish history, biography, literature and art to develop a taste for cultural nationalism.[110] Profiling Irish contemporary architecture was one way of realising this. Several articles signed by 'E' or 'G' articulated the need to improve design in Ireland, but one unsigned article, probably by George Petrie as joint editor, presented a vision of architecture as a social phenomenon.[111] Revealing an awareness of contemporary English architectural criticism, he adopted a forward-looking perspective and asked how future generations would rate Irish architecture.[112] His conclusion; 'they will consider us far inferior to those earlier ages which we are apt now to regard as barbarous. It is indeed unquestionable, that of all the numerous edifices now erecting, or lately erected in Ireland, there are but few, if any, in a pure and correct architectural style, and perhaps not *one* that could bear a comparison in beauty and symmetry, with many of the gothic structures of our ancestors.'[113] Writing about new churches, he complained, 'they are all in the *one* style – a kind of non-descript and novel gothic, unlike every known ancient remain, and exhibiting as little skill in the harmonious arrangement of their parts, as acquaintance with the true forms of the pointed style of architecture.'[114] Petrie allowed these churches a picturesque charm, appreciated at a distance – 'their slender spires are appropriate, and add beauty, and interest to the pastoral scenery of the county' – but that did not outweigh the

[109] Neale, *Views of the seats*, series 1, vol. 2 (1819), 'Borris, Co Carlow'.
[110] *DPJ*, 1:1 (30 June 1832). The preface written 25 June 1833 was bound in with the first volume.
[111] [G. Petrie], 'Simons-Court Church', *DPJ,* 1:27 (29 Dec. 1832).
[112] For nineteenth-century architectural critcisim see Peter Collins, *Changing ideals in modern architecture 1750–1950* (London, 1965), pp 131–2.
[113] [G. Petrie], 'Simons-Court Church', *DPJ,* 1:27 (29 Dec. 1832). 212.
[114] Ibid., 212. He extended this criticism to new Catholic churches, although, because they were simpler, he was more forgiving; 'as they are generally of a simpler and less expensive construction, their faults are less glaring'.

deficiencies apparent close up.[115] This poor architectural taste, he argued, reflected badly on the nation; 'It should be understood that the architecture of a country is the truest criterion by which its taste in art can be estimated; because though the painter and sculptor may be supported and fostered into eminence by individual taste, the architect is patronised by communities.'[116] It was thus in the national interest to educate the public.

This then was the reason for including articles on new buildings in the journal, and in the volumes edited by Petrie there was often a critical tone in such articles. Those edited under P.D. Hardy tended to revert to disjointed Neale-like descriptions, or, in the case of Monkstown Church, descended to subjective ranting.[117] The choice of new or altered castles differed in some respects from those selected by Neale. Of 12 castles, six had medieval origins – Kilkenny, Lismore, Rathmines, Malahide, Howth and Glenarm, apart from Rathmines, Neale had dealt with these. Of the six remaining, four were new castles. Two of these – Mitchelstown and Strancally – were by the Pain brothers (one post-dating Neale) one was designed by Richard Morrison – Castle Freke – and one had an unrecorded architect – Castle Forgarty, Co. Tipperary. Of the remaining two, Shanes's Castle was only partially unrealised and at Ballysaggartmore it was the extravagant gate lodge and bridge, designed by a gardener, John Smith, that were described.[118] This selection reveals that the *Dublin Penny Journal* was less dependent on architects' accounts than Brewer and Neale. It represents a wide geographical area and some unusual choices; although it includes large and spectacular castles such as Mitchelstown and Strancally, it omits Dromoland, Shanbally, and the Morrison houses so comprehensively admired by Brewer and Neale.

What was the good taste in which the public were to be educated? The articles reveal that for castles, the assimilation of the building to the picturesque landscape was fundamental. 'EH' wrote of Strancally '... no place can boast of more variety, or be more truly picturesque than the irregular embrasure towers and other ornamental parts

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[115] Ibid., 212. Brewer also appreciated the picturesque role played by the spires of new rural Irish churches, observing, 'Its taper proportions, and unassuming character, readily assimilate with our ideas of village simplicity, to which the embattled tower ... is utterly repugnant' (Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, p. cxx).
[116] [G. Petrie], 'Simons-Court Church', *DPJ,* 1:27 (29 Dec. 1832), 212–3.
[117] 'Monkstown Church', *DPJ,* 3:106 (12 July 1834), 1.
[118] Of the twelve castellated structures, nine had been covered by Neale.

of the new edifice, crowning the foliage of an apparently endless forest'.[119] There was the suggestion that this could have an associative undertow: discussing the north elevation of Mitchelstown Castle, the writer observed, 'On this side its stately towers are seen to the greatest advantage; they appear rising from a rock, which, thickly planted, stetches down to a broad sheet of water, on whose clear bosom the whole scene is reflected, reminding one forcibly of "the round towers of other days."'[120] However, he drew no conclusions about status or grandeur from this.

Authenticity had a role to play in castellar design in the *Dublin Penny Journal*. There was no discussion about the correct use of Tudor or castellated details in revival castles, but where old castles were restored the journal looked for a good match. The author of the article on Kilkenny praised William Robertson for restoring the old towers, 'disfigured by fantastic decorations', 'to something like their original character'.[121] At Glenarm the destruction of existing fabric was deplored; 'the magic character of antique greatness and splendour, has been completely cut away by the refining chisel of modern improvement'.[122]

Irish architectural distinctiveness was not a criteria of excellence. However, the total absence of comment on the use of English models was itself eloquent, leaving the untagged castles to be claimed as Irish at a future date. There were hints of appreciation for anything that reflected an Irish input. The use of local materials, never mentioned by Brewer or Neale, was noted. At Ballysaggartmore the type, colour and effect of the stone was described in a letter: 'The porter's lodge ... is composed of cut mountain granite or freestone, of a whitish colour, variegated with a brownish strata, which gives the whole a rich and pleasing appearance'.[123] Here a tall, slim, round tower, erected on an archway at one end of the bridge, was recorded as 'the greatest novelty', though there was no comment that it had a possible Irish source. Irish craftsmanship was praised; the ironwork of the gate, executed by a 'native mechanic' was favourably compared to a specific example sketched by Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia*.[124]

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[119] E.H, 'Strancally Castle', *DPJ*, 3:105 (5 July 1834), 1.
[120] 'Mitchelstown Castle', *DPJ*, 2:90 (22 Mar. 1834), 300.
[121] [G. Petrie], 'Kilkenny Castle', *DPJ*, 1:11 (8 Sept. 1832), 81.
[122] 'Glenarm Castle', *DPJ,* 4:192, (5 Mar. 1836), 288.
[123] E.H., 'Ballysaggartmore Castle, Near Lismore', *DPJ*, 3:128 (13 Dec. 1834), 186.
[124] Ibid., 186. He was referring to John Claudius Loudon (ed), *An Encyclopaedia of cottage, farm and villa architecture and furniture* (London, 1833).

Contemporary castles were considered by the *Dublin Penny Journal* to be a vital component of cultural nationalism, not so much because they were Irish in character – though there were signs that Irish materials and craftsmanship and even an Irish model were valued. Far more important was the opportunity they gave for patrons, architects and the public to demonstrate an awareness of contemporary standards of architectural practice and an ability to apply them.

There is some evidence that although Petrie primarily regarded new Gothic revival castles as channels for investment in the local economy, he, and other writers in the *Dublin Penny Journal*, also engaged with the patrons' likely perspective. Mitchelstown Castle was associated with the ambitions of the Earl of Kingston: it was pointed out that it was built 'very judiciously' on the site of the old family residence, and family armorial sculpture was referred to.[125] Castle Fogarty was connected with the reinstatement of the Lenigan's, heir and representative of the Gaelic O'Fogarty's, after a long history of suffering for Jacobite sympathies.[126] At Malahide Castle the continuous occupation of the Talbots was emphasised.[127]

The other periodical of the period to discuss Irish Gothic revival castles was the *Irish Penny Journal*, published in 52 issues from 1840 to 1841, to a largely Dublin-centred, middle class audience. In eight articles on new and remodelled Irish castles Petrie took the cultural nationalism of the *Dublin Penny Journal* with respect to contemporary architecture further.[128] Economic health and social harmony now joined cultural improvement as the goal for Ireland, so that in his first essay Petrie stressed that aristocratic investment was to be valued as a pledge of involvement in the future of the nation: '... those who have erected [new mansions] have a filial attachment to the soil which gave them birth, and which supplies them, whether for good or evil, with the means of greatness'.[129] He emphasised that creed and party were irrelevant, characterising all wealthy investing residents as 'patriots'. He regarded the nation of Ireland to be part of the empire; his ambition was that it would flourish conspicuously

[125] 'Mitchelstown Castle', *DPJ*, 2:90 (22 Mar. 1834), 300.
[126] 'Castle Fogarty', *DPJ,* 4:188 (6 Feb. 1836), 249.
[127] 'Malahide Castle', *DPJ*, 2:88 (8 Mar. 1834), 284–5.
[128] These articles were all signed 'P'.
[129] G. Petrie, 'Clontarf Castle, County of Dublin', *IPJ,* 1:11 (12 Sept. 1840), 81.

within this context: 'our island shall rival any other portion of the empire in the possession of such characteristic features of civilization and beauty.'[130]

Although by 1840 stylistic choice was becoming an established feature of architectural practice, Petrie made no reference to the debate or to alternative styles.[131] His concern was with appropriate forms for picturesque landscape and historic sites, and this for him meant Gothic. Thus Gothic was synonymous with the situation in Ireland. Associating Gothic with the Irish landscape was to fall into line with Brewer and Neale and so to consolidate a growing consensus.[132] But his discussion of the use of Gothic in Irish demesnes to reflect the past had a new twist.

If possible, Petrie preferred existing fabric to be preserved and restored to its original form: he applauded William Morrison for considering this in the first instance at Clontarf Castle, and he approved of the reinstatement of the crenellations and general 'architectural magnificence' at Malahide.[133] At Clontarf, it was discovered that the foundations had sunk, so the house was demolished and rebuilt. The new building did not replicate the old – a twelfth-century tower with sixteenth-century additions – but reflected the history of the site which Petrie recounted in detail; '... [Morrison] so designed it as to exhibit with historical accuracy what might be supposed to have been the forms and features of the ancient buildings, and thus make it a consistent commentary on and illustration of the past history of its locality.'[134] The result was a building with a twelfth-century Norman tower with a smaller turreted tower behind, attached to a rangey gabled building with bow windows and a Tudor style hall.[135]

This appraisal suggests that Petrie's attitude to authenticity was flexible rather than doctrinaire. While he was keen that the new house be historically pertinent and eloquent of the history of the family, he allowed the architect latitude in devising the forms,

[130] Ibid., 82.
[131] For discussion see Crook, *The dilemma of style*, pp 13–41.
[132] An example of Petrie's appreciation of the suitability of Gothic styles to Irish scenery is found in his description of Hollybrooke Hall a house of gables, bay windows and tall chimneys set in Wicklow designed by William Morrison in c.1831; '... the building and its immediate accompaniments seem of coequal age and designed for each other; and all breathe of a seclusion from the cares of the world and a happy domestic repose' (G. Petrie, 'Hollybrook Hall, County of Wicklow', *IPJ*, 1:13 (26 Sept. 1840), p. 98).
[133] G. Petrie, 'Malahide Castle, County of Dublin', *IPJ*, 1:20 (14 Nov. 1840), 153.
[134] G. Petrie, 'Clontarf Castle, County of Dublin', *IPJ*, 1:11 (12 Sept. 1840), 82.
[135] Ibid., 82.

according to his perception of the past: 'what might be supposed to have been the forms and features of the ancient buildings'.[136] This included a Tudor revival building that owed more to English models than Irish sixteenth-century structures. However, the resulting 'diversified character' 'partly military, partly domestic, and to a certain extent ecclesiastical' was praised because the details of each part were consistent with the specific form: twelfth-century military details confined to the towers, Tudor details for the house.[137] He criticised Nash at Killymoon for confounding details: '... like most modern structures of this kind, it has but little accurate resemblance to an ancient military fortress, and its architectural details present that capricious medley of styles of various ages, ecclesiastical, domestic, and military'.[138] This state of affairs will continue, he wrote, echoing the sentiments expressed in the *Dublin Penny Journal*, 'till architects become skillful antiquaries as well as tasteful artists, and their employers acquire such an accurate judgment and knowledge of art as will enable them to form a correct opinion of the capabilities of those they employ, and not take their estimate of them, as now, from fashion or popular reputation.'

Petrie also valued the use of castellated Gothic to draw attention to urban history, praising Johnston's castellated gateway erected where the new Military Road met the Barrack Bridge in 1820.[139] He regretted that Dublin was dominated by modern buildings, 'very dignified and imposing, no doubt, in their aspect, but without any hallowing associations connected with remote times to make us respect them.'[140] There was a specific architectural context for the gate, the Barrack Bridge, built after 1670, which he characterised as having a 'rude and antique appearance'.[141] Asking only that that the new gate, '... a square tower, having smaller square towers projecting from three of its angles, and a circular one of greater diameter and altitude at its fourth or north-eastern angle', harmonise generally with the bridge, he did not discuss the authenticity

[136] Ibid., 82.
[137] Ibid., 82.
[138] G. Petrie, 'Killymoon, County of Tyrone', *IPJ*, 1:41 (10 Apr. 1841), 322.
[139] G. Petrie, 'Barrack Bridge and Military Gate, Dublin', *IPJ*, 1:34 (20 Feb 1841), 265–6. Casey gives the date of 1820 and the name, Richmond Gate. It was later moved to the western avenue of Kilmainham Hospital, now, Irish Museum of Modern Art, (Casey, *Dublin*, p. 680).
[140] G. Petrie, 'Barrack Bridge and Military Gate, Dublin', *IPJ*, 1:34 (20 Feb 1841), 265.
[141] Ibid., 265.

of the design.[142] This was Petrie's most explicit expression of the idea that underlay his articles on Gothic that the style was valuable for its associations with the past.

A new aspect of the castles that Petrie drew attention to was their relationship with the wider social landscape. In this respect, too, Clontarf Castle was exemplary: its scale was proportionate to the rank and means of the landowner; it was close to the village owned by the Vernons, reflecting a good relationship with their dependents, 'expressive of ... confidence and kindly familiarity'.[143] And it was without the all-too-common high, excluding perimeter wall which indicated 'but too truly the cold and heartless selfishness of their owners, which would not allow the many even the passing enjoyment of a glimpse of the grandeur and the beauty which they claim as their own.'[144] Despite the barb in the last sentence, which cast doubt on the landowner's legitimacy, this passage reflected Petrie's view that Ireland would flourish if class and creed were less divisive. While he tried to persuade his middle class audience that the building of grand castles by landowners was in the public interest, he wanted to see a modification of their pretensions to grandeur with his call for a physical manifestation of integration.

Although Petrie praised William Morrision for the Tudor revivalism in the design of Clontarf Castle, unlike Brewer and Neale he did not emphasise its English origins. In fact, although he looked for authentic details, he did not stress fidelity to models, thus allowing him to ignore their often English derivation. For example, he criticised the style of Ormeau House, Co Antrim, a Tudor revival building designed by William Morrison in 1823, not for lapses in accuracy, but for being too regular and thus monotonous.[145] In this way Petrie could represent the castles as being expressive of local history and the local landscape with the implication that they were characteristic of an Ireland of particular character and vigorous identity within Britain.

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[142] Ibid., 265. This is the only article to deal with a design by Johnston, who he describes as 'eminent', but who he does not discuss in detail, architects not being his focus.
[143] G. Petrie, 'Clontarf Castle, County of Dublin', *IPJ*, 1:11 (12 Sept. 1840), 83.
[144] Ibid., 83.
[145] G. Petrie, 'Ormeau, County of Down', *IPJ*, 1:48 (29 May, 1841), 377.

Castle Chapel: 'the richest modern casket of pointed architecture to be witnessed in the British empire'

Although neo-medieval castles were regarded as examples of 'modern Gothic' and thus part of the Gothic revival, these castle style buildings were also treated as a sub-section of Gothic architecture. This did not apply to ecclesiastical architecture, for Gothic, to many writers, was synonymous with this building type. Charleville and Birr stood at the very start of a period which abounded in ambitious castles and Tudor revival houses, and had thus largely faded from view by the 1820s. The Castle Chapel, however, was uniquely grand and important, and although church building flourished in the early decades of the nineteenth century, it was challenged by no individual building.[146] The reception of ecclesiastical Gothic in this period was thus dominated by the Castle Chapel discussed within the frame of the Irish Gothic revival.

The earliest assessment of the completed Castle Chapel was made in 1818 by Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh within the context of their study of Dublin.[147] James Whitelaw, a Dublin clergyman and philanthropist, who set high standards of meticulousness, had researched the contemporary buildings.[148] His lengthy account of the Castle Chapel may have been based on the description given to him by Johnston, but there were significant differences suggesting independent observation and research.[149] There was no attempt to assess the building in terms of style or impact beyond noting the beauty of the interior. Three years later G.N. Wright, a topographer, clergyman and school teacher, identified the chapel in his *Historical guide to ancient and modern Dublin* as the most interesting structure in Dublin Castle and defined it as a Gothic revival building; 'a modern building in the most beautiful order of pointed architecture'.[150] He associated this work with Johnston, 'an eminent architect'. But it was Brewer who, in 1825, forcefully presented the chapel as an exemplary building of its kind; 'This splendid structure is seventy-three feet in length by thirty-five feet in

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[146] The point is illustrated by a comparison of costs; two examples of the more expensive parish churches are Collon Co. Louth (£6,500) and St Catherine's, Tullamore, Co. Offaly (£7,300) cost significantly less than the *c.*£42,000 spent on the Castle Chapel.

[147] Warburton, et al., *History of the City of Dublin*, vol. 1, p. 473; vol. 2, pp 1150–3.

[148] Ibid., vol. 1, preface.

[149] Compared to Johnston's description Whitelaw gave additional information, a more accurate account of the east elevation sculpture, and he omitted Johnston's concern with accuracy.

[150] Wright, *An historical guide to ancient and modern Dublin*, p. 16. In April 1807 The *Freeman's Journal* had proclaimed the intended structure to be 'the most beautiful modern specimen of Gothick architecture' (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 Apr. 1807).

width; and, although thus limited in dimensions, must be viewed as the most elaborate effort made in recent years to revive the antient ecclesiastical style of building; – as the richest modern casket of pointed architecture to be witnessed in the British Empire.'[151] The sumptuousness evoked by others was now fixed as a characteristic. In his introduction Brewer had praised the chapel for being stylistically consistent; after regretting that modern architects tended to mix early and late Gothic details within a single feature, he cited the viceregal chapel as ranking 'amongst the most attractive modern imitations of that order of Pointed architecture denominated florid'.[152] Elsewhere he noted that the ribbed nave ceiling and other decorations were modelled on details from York Cathedral.[153] Thus, the Castle Chapel was inaccurately assessed as being in a single style and gained, by later standards, an undeserved reputation for authenticity. Thus the exemplary architectural character which the patrons had hoped to project was realised in the subsequent assessment of the architecure.

Although the earlier assessments by Whitelaw and Wright were published in London and had a British audience, Brewer's statement placed the chapel firmly in an imperial context, where he allowed it to shine. Unlike Irish castles which were valued for their situation in picturesque Ireland, he held up the Castle Chapel as a worthy object regardless of geographic context. It was noted in chapter five that from the time the chapel was being erected commentators were recording that the chapel was being designed and built by Irish talent. Brewer confirmed this, defining Johnston as an Irish architect and remarking that apart from the organ and some of the 'painted glass' 'the whole of this sumptuous chapel proceeds from the talents and labours of native artists'.[154] This resonates with the efforts of Irish cultural nationalists later in the nineteenth century to celebrate local talent and encourage independent development. Although independent effort was important in early nineteenth-century Ireland it is more likely that praise for Irish work was conceived within the context of the Union. To insist on native workmanship in the service of the viceregal chapel was perhaps a way

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[151] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, p. 63.
[152] Ibid., vol. 1, p. cxix.
[153] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 63. He did not derive this information from Johnston, but possibly from Sir William Betham, the herald-at-arms, who informed Anne Plumptre in 1815 about the use of designs from York, (Anne Plumptre, *Narrative of a Residence in Ireland during the summer of 1814, and that of 1815* (London, 1817), p. 30).
[154] Brewer, *Beauties of Ireland,* vol. 1, pp cxix, 65.

of claiming this product of the viceregal administration as part of Ireland; a unionist rather than a nationalist gesture.

Thomas Bell in his essay written in 1825 took Brewer's assessment a stage further, defining the Castle Chapel as the single inspirational beginning of the nineteenth-century Irish Gothic revival; '[The Castle Chapel] is the most complete and defined in its character among those I have enumerated, [so] may suffice to represent the entire of this modern-antique class of architecture,' he wrote. [155] Bell, a painter with an interest in depicting topographical views featuring antiquities, won the Cunningham prize at the Royal Irish Academy for his essay 'On the origin and progress of Gothic architecture, with reference to the ancient history and present state of the remains of such architecture in Ireland'.[156] There had been several attempts to use the Cunningham fund, set up in 1789, to encourage an objective assessment of pre-Norman Irish history, but the response had been disappointing.[157] Bell, the only entrant for the 1825 prize, rose to the challenge of applying this scholarly approach to Irish Gothic architecture, and was awarded 30 guineas. He demonstrated a willingness to examine evidence, be cautious about drawing conclusions and to rely on his own observations. Thus, he revealed a receptiveness to the scientific approach to antiquarianism that contemporary scholars, some of whom he read and quoted, were applying to their work and which the Academy was trying to promote.[158] However, Bell's text suggests that he anticipated an audience with a broad interest in antiquities, and one that did not necessarily look favourably at Gothic architecture.[159] Commenting that his essay on Ireland could act as a supplement to John Britton's five-volume *Architectural antiquities of Great Britain*, he set his work

[155] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, (1829), p. 249.
[156] The prize was awarded at the RIA council meeting of 13 Mar. 1826 (RIA, Council Minutes, vol. 4 Mar. 1822–June 1837, p. 115). For summary of Bell's career see Nicola Figgis (ed.), *Painting, 1600–1900* in Andrew Carpenter, (Gen. ed.) *Art and architecture of Ireland* (New Haven & London, 2014), vol. 2, p. 175. For discussion of Bell's essay from an antiquarian perspective in the context of contemporary scholarship and debates see Niamh NicGhabhann, 'Reconstructions of the Gothic past', (PhD, TCD, 2012), pp 83–105.
[157] 'An historical account of the Cunningham Fund', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (1836–1869)*, vol. 7 (1857–61), 406 –19.
[158] He referred to two contemporary authors who demonstrated, against Milner's view, that Gothic architecture did not originate in England; Georg Moller, *An essay on the origin and progress of Gothic architecture, traced in and deduced from the ancient edifices of Germany* (London, 1824)) and G.D. Whittington, *An historical survey of the ecclesiastical antiquities of France* (London, 1809) (Bell, *Gothic architecture*, (1829), p. 261). For discussion of the debate see Simon Bradley, 'The Englishness of Gothic', 325–346.
[159] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, pp 17–18.

within the more populist spectrum of the British market.[160] Bell discussed the Gothic revival in the final chapter, 'On the revival of Gothic architecture in modern times'. This had not been a requirement. Short, listing a mere fourteen churches and only giving details about the Castle Chapel, it articulated Bell's idea that the revival was an intrinsic part of the history of Gothic.[161]

Irish Gothic architecture was regarded by Bell as a phenomenon with a European genesis. Bell, engaging in the current debate about the origins of Gothic, argued that 'Saxon' design was a corruption of Roman architecture, originated in Italy and was disseminated in Europe by itinerant masons.[162] In this he joined the emerging opposition to the consensus view in England that Gothic had English origins. Bell's argument allowed him to assert that the Irish were capable of building in stone before the arrival of the Normans, and even, tentatively, to suggest that they had made a contribution to the pointed style, without claiming too much for them. This was his input to the often acrimonious, ideologically inflected debates on Irish culture in which a Ledwich would ascribe round tower construction to the 'Danes' to deny native Irish achievement, while a Vallancey asserted that Ireland had experienced a golden age before the arrival of the Normans.[163] Although Bell allowed Irish architects some independence from English traditions, he acknowledged the fundamental role of the Anglo-Normans, asserting that most churches in Ireland were founded or rebuilt and all castles were erected after their arrival in 1172.[164] Elsewhere, he described Irish medieval architecture as an 'alloy' of older native architecture and the work of the new arrivals.[165] He was fully aware of the influence of social, economic and political circumstances on architectural development, and, comparing the fortunes of English and Irish architecture from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries – English Gothic

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[160] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, p. xii. John Britton, *Architectural antiquities of Great Britain*, 5 vols (London, 1807–1827).

[161] Most of the churches list by Bell were in the city and county of Dublin, including Chapel of the Orphan House (William Farrell, 1817–19); Swords (William Farrell, 1811), Booterstown Church (John Bowden and Joseph Welland, 1821–2); Dundrum (William Farrell, n.d.); and several designed by John Semple: Kilternan (1826), Rathmines (1828), Donnybrook (known as Simonscourt, 1827). Outside Dublin he listed Collon Church, Co. Louth (Daniel Augustus Beaufort, 1811–1818) and Ballynagal, Co. Westmeath (John Hargrave, 1824).

[162] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, pp 46, 52, 57.

[163] O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, pp 41–70.

[164] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, pp 258–9.

[165] Ibid., p. 76.

flowering much more spectacularly until what he saw as decline set in –explained it by different historical experiences.

The history of Irish Gothic as told by Bell is a narrative of birth, growth and decline, to which Bell added the final chapter on revival. Although, as we have seen, early nineteenth-century writers advocating Gothic regarded it as a style that was appropriate for modern times, Bell's coda on Gothic revival, following his disquisition on medieval Gothic, suggests that he saw revival as a further, modern, stage in a continuous history. This is emphasised by his observation on nomenclature; 'There can be little doubt, should this taste continue in fashion for any length of time, that a new era may spring up in the annals of Gothic architecture; and ... the future historians of this art, may have to invent some novel term ... to denominate the style that has been recently introduced.'[166] So, Bell extended the contemporary antiquarian challenge to find resonant nomenclature for the phases of medieval architecture to modern Gothic, which elsewhere he called 'modern-antique'.[167]

The foregoing suggests that Bell assessed the Castle Chapel in an antiquarian context. This was to some extent true. He was the first to apply the nomenclature of antiquarian scholarship to the building, drawing attention to the Tudor arches of the lower windows and the Perpendicular tracery of the upper windows.[168] But he shared some of Johnston's approaches to Gothic. He was uncritical about the mixing of styles in the bays of the elevation, and he was tolerant of the use of stucco, advocating the 'rich stucco tracery work [resembling] stone' on the nave ceiling.[169] His comments on restoration work in medieval Irish cathedrals reveal a similar tolerance of stucco used instead of stone and the mixing of styles.[170] Like others in the early nineteenth century he was in thrall to the idea of Gothic as a vehicle for the sublime. He criticised the use of stucco in the vault of the north transept of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin because awareness of the materials would not evoke 'the same idea of stability' as stone. He would have preferred to see a groined stucco ceiling replacing the open-work roof of the

[166] Ibid., p. 248.
[167] Ibid., p. 250.
[168] Ibid., p. 250.
[169] Ibid., p. 251.
[170] Ibid., p. 121. He enthusiastically commended repairs in Derry Cathedral, praising stucco piers and arches, and an east window which combined Decorated tracery with Perpendicular mullions.

nave and aisles because 'such an improvement would add wonderfully to the effect of the perspective'.[171]

Like Petrie, Bell evaluated modern Gothic in a social and political context. He attributed the revival to active clerics, and recognised that modern churches were necessarily less complex than medieval ones; 'We no longer have the lofty vaulted aisle – the capacious arches, with ranges of massy columns to sustain them, or the curiously diversified transepts united with the solemn choir; but the little we have, simple as are its parts, exhibits a high degree of kindred taste in the architect.'[172] Politically and socially, Ireland in 1825 was in a state of tension. The Union was an established fact, but Catholic emancipation was not yet accomplished. However, there were signs in Ireland and within the political establishment at Westminster that it would be ultimately successful.[173] Bell was cautiously optimistic for future peace between Catholics and Protestants, writing in a published tour journal about new Catholic churches, 'Let us hope that this revolution of liberal sentiment will continue in a progressive state, and that after a little time all acrimony of feeling, at least upon such trivial points, may submit for ever.'[174] He had no problem allowing that mediaeval churches had once been Catholic, observing; '... it is not surprising that Roman Catholics should be partial to [Gothic] structures. With the zeal and piety of their ancestors, whether well or ill directed, the Gothic order originated'.[175]

Like Petrie, he looked forward to a peaceful, prosperous, non-sectarian Ireland within the Union. Bell imagined that the Castle Chapel had an exemplary role to play in such an Ireland. As the largest, most complex and most highly decorated of the modern Irish churches, it symbolised his hope for a peaceful and prosperous future.[176] On a more practical level he suggested that Gothic would provide the setting conducive to the future he looked forward to, writing that the 'influence of genuine religion, diffused

[171] Ibid., pp. 160–1.
[172] Ibid., p. 250.
[173] In Westminster Burdett's relief bill, which proposed removal of the remaining legal disabilities for Catholics, was debated in March 1825, though it was defeated in the Lords with a large margin. In Ireland the Catholic Association was reformed in July 1825.
[174] NLI, MS Joly 12-13, [Thomas Bell], 'Rambles northward in Ireland during the government of the Marquess Wellesley. By the author of the RIA's prize essay on Gothic architecture for the year 1826', vol. 1 (1827), p. 62.
[175] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, p. 248.
[176] Ibid., p. 250.

among her people, and taught in those religious temples which this little essay has endeavoured to describe, may finally unite them together, in bonds of social concord, prosperity and peace.'[177] Like his Unionist contemporaries, Bell emphasised Irish endeavor within a British tradition; Gothic, which he had characterised as a hybrid tradition, was finding contemporary expression through native talent. Bell was particularly keen to promote Johnston who he described, as no one else had, as a patriot and 'the restorer of Gothic Architecture in Ireland'.[178]

Bell's essay was published in Dublin and London in 1829, after considerable effort by Bell.[179] Having failed to find a London publisher, he was encouraged in February 1828 to persist by the artist Thomas Mulvany who admired the originality of the essay and gave him a letter from Francis Johnston who vouched for its accuracy.[180] Bell approached the viceroy, the Marquess of Anglesea, with this recommendation, and once he had his subscription used his name to get further contributions from other influential patrons. These included the Archbishops of Armagh and Tuam, Dr Doyle, the Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, subsequent viceroys, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and George IV. Bell aimed to maximise the market. The book had inclusive denominational appeal: he informed the Church of Ireland primate that the book was 'intimately connected with the History of the Church of Ireland'; Dr Doyle was assured that 'it endeavours to trace the improvements of Architecture in common with the early progress of Christianity in Ireland during the remotest periods of its History'.[181] It could be acquired for 10 shillings (unbound) and up to £3 for a bound copy.

Very few references survive to reveal how influential the essay was. It was read by writers for the *Irish Penny Magazine*, but their references were to Bell's comments on medieval buildings.[182] By the late 1840s new standards of authenticity meant that Bell's assessment was largely overturned. This applied at both the popular and scholarly ends of the market. Charles Knight's *The land we live in* dismissed the Castle Chapel as 'a

[177] Ibid., p. 260.
[178] Ibid., p. 256.
[179] NLI, MS Joly, 14, Thomas Bell, 'Manuscript correspondence, notes, observations etc etc on various occasions by Thomas Bell', 1847.
[180] Ibid., ff 10–19.
[181] Ibid., ff 76, 88.
[182] 'Malahide', *Irish Penny Magazine*, 1:1 (5 Jan. 1833), 2; 'Swords round tower', *Irish Penny Magazine*, 1:30 (28 Sept. 1833), 305.

very elaborate, but not particularly successful, example of modern Gothic.'[183] The *Ecclesiologist*, which was setting the agenda for the assessment of Gothic by the mid-century, was more receptive to the chapel's qualities, observing that it foreshadowed the ecclesiological movement not in its authenticity but in its religious atmosphere; 'though the details are of course very far from pure, the richness and solemnity about the whole will be acknowledged if we consider the time of day at which it was constructed.'[184] Where Bell and his contemporaries had emphasised the richness of the architecture, the *Ecclesiologist* noted specific details that fitted in with its high church Anglicanism; the prominent exterior cross, well-defined sanctuary and *chorus cantorum* seating.

It was argued in chapter five that the all-encompassing iconography of the Castle Chapel sculpture reflected the viceregal policy of agnosticism with regard to divisive religious and political issues, and the Church of Ireland's desire to assert legitimacy by associating it with the Reformation and early Irish civilization. There is some evidence that by the late 1820s, when divisions were even stronger, that these ideals and ambitions as embodied in sculptural imagery were no longer readily comprehensible. Bell, for example, was puzzled by the presence of St Patrick and Brian 'Boiromhe' flanking the east door of the Castle Chapel, remarking that the corbel sculptures have 'to a passing observer ... the appearance of being rather pressed into the service of supporting the portals of a chapel of the established church.'[185] An Englishman visiting before the chapel was completed and who considered it to be an exemplary piece of modern Gothic, was confounded by the saints; 'I have thought that so many carved images of Saints, and Peter with his keys over the principal entrance, are very inconsistent with a protestant place of worship, and evinces too near a relationship to that religion, whose members say, they are, in this same country, under discouragement.'[186]

However, there is evidence that the images that Johnston conceived for both the exterior and interior of the chapel were picked up by artists soon after the chapel was completed and transmitted into the mid-nineteenth century and beyond. An aquatint of a drawing

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[183] Charles Knight et al, *The land we live in: a pictorial and literary sketch-book of the British Empire*, vol. 3 (London [1847–50]), p. 264. This was reprinted verbatim in the *Illustrated London News*, (11 Aug. 1849), 108.
[184] C.E.S., 'Some notes from Ireland', 305.
[185] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, p. 253.
[186] [John Gough] *A tour in Ireland in 1813 & 1814* (Dublin, [1816]), p. 106.

by Thomas Sautelle Roberts published in 1816 depicts the chapel receding in long perspective from the east end, a view which emphasises the architectonic qualities of relentlessly repeating buttresses and pinnacles, stamping the image of regular spiky Gothic on the mind.[187] Petrie's drawing engraved for Wright's book on Dublin in 1821 observes the chapel from the north-east, depicting the Record Tower as a pivot between the chapel and adjacent castle buildings.[188] The chapel, unfurled here, the bays of the side elevations shown in detail, is seen in the comfortable, picturesque context of the tower. This is the most frequently reproduced image of the building, articulating scenographic qualities that the descriptions miss.[189] Inside, in his watercolour discussed here in chapter five, Petrie exaggerated the height of the nave and the width of the aisles to confer grandeur and mystery.[190] (fig 5.48) Although Petrie also evoked the richness of the interior, especially by silhouetting the cusping at the base of the gallery against the mellow tone of the aisles, those who came after him heightened the sense of sculptural splendour with a careful detailing of the mouldings or, in the case of the engraver for the *Illustrated London News*, by exaggerating the size of the figures at the springing point of the ribs to the nave ceiling.[191]

Conclusion

The context of reception differed significantly from that of production. Houses built in the 1800s addressed the patrons' families, their social circle, visitors and those to whom they were connected locally – tenants, townspeople – whereas the journals and topographical books in which the buildings were discussed in the 1820s and 30s were written for a much larger elite and middle class audience. Buildings were analysed in a broader context, more focused on style and setting and on how Gothic revival architecture could relate to the past, than concerned with how buildings projected the patrons' status.

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[187] Illustrated in McParland, *Public architecture in Ireland*, p. 98.
[188] RIA, MS 12Q 12, G. Petrie, watercolour of the Castle Chapel and Record Tower. Wright, *Guide to Dublin* (1821).
[189] NLI, Lawrence Collection, 'Chapel Royal, Dublin'.
[190] G. Petrie, *Interior of the Castle Chapel, Dublin Castle,* signed, n.d. collection of John O'Connell.
[191] James Mahony, The nave of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle, watercolour, 1854, illustrated in Myles Campbell, '"throw open those privileged pens": the changing face of the Chapel Royal, 1815–2015' in Campbell & Derham (eds), *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, p. 128. *Illustrated London News*, xv (11 Aug. 1849), 108.

Taste too had, in many ways, changed. In one important aspect there was continuity. Picturesque sensibility that valued the aesthetic congruity of irregular Gothic building with rugged landscape and regarded Gothic as the natural denizen of wild mountainous or even just diverse landscape, was as strong in the 1830s as it had been in the 1790s. Attitudes to authenticity were altering. Invention was still allowable – Brewer and Petrie both valued this – but it was to be more firmly rooted in the actual. Where Johnston had used medieval models to realise a pre-conceived image – to design a castle or a church as it should have been – Brewer and especially Petrie were more concerned that invention be at the service of what had probably been. However, Bell, who had a demonstrably historical approach towards Gothic, investigating the origins and development of the style, nevertheless shared Johnston's tolerance for mixing styles and supplementing stucco for stone. All this suggested a sliding scale, from a romantically-inclined to an historically-inclined outlook. This difference is also evident in attitudes towards the use of English models in Irish buildings. Brewer argued that such a practice was legitimate because of the historical and political links between the two countries. In contrast, the patrons of the buildings in this study found legitimacy in models that evoked desired images or values.

The changes in taste had affected attitudes towards architectural expressiveness. In the early years of the nineteenth century associational meaning was readily appreciated and utilised by the builders of castles. But by the 1820s and 30s, although this type of thinking was referred to, it was less often applied to particular buildings. In fact Petrie was more engaged with architecture as a catalyst for moral and material improvement, an idea he shared with A.W.N. Pugin. Like Pugin, he valued Gothic as a conduit for such benefits, but unlike Pugin, who regarded Gothic as symbolic of medieval society which he idealised, Petrie only valued Gothic as a way of connecting more generally to the past.

In such a changed context the concerns of the builders of Charleville and Birr with family status and longevity, and the patrons of the Castle Chapel with their roles and status in post-Union Ireland were not readily transmitted into the 1820s and 30s. Meanwhile, changes in architectural fashion meant that Charleville and Birr had become more or less invisible in the later period. In the case of the Castle Chapel the iconographical programme was more opaque to later observers and commentators.

However, architecturally it still held an exemplary position in Ireland in the late 1820s and 1830s and, as ecclesiastical buildings were assessed within an architectural frame, the chapel remained at the centre of discussion.

Despite changes in political conditions from 1800 to 1841 the broad political framework – the Union – in which the buildings functioned as significant objects remained largely the same. However, the approach to the Union had shifted. It was argued in the earlier chapters that the patrons of the buildings profiled in this study were concerned with their roles and status in Britain. Later commentators took a broader view. English observers were concerned with the Irish contribution to Britain. For them Irish picturesque landscape conferred distinction by supplying that which was highly valued but scare within England itself. Gothic castles, regarded as the natural ornaments of such scenery, found a definitive location in Ireland. Thus Irish castles were regarded as making a contribution to the empire. This perspective, which placed a premium on Irish picturesque landscape, partly explains why castles such as Charleville and Birr, presiding over flat demesnes and set within undramatic scenery, were less visible and given less value by English observers.

Irish unionists, concerned with the prosperity of Ireland as a nation within the Union, accepted the idea that Gothic was appropriate to Irish scenery without reservation. For Petrie, Irish Gothic was an expression, even perhaps a symbol of, local particularity, accessing historic meaning. He regretted that most new public buildings in Dublin were classical 'without any hallowing associations connected with remote times to make us respect them.'[192] He valued the Morrisons' ability in their castle designs to exemplify the family and building history of particular demesnes. Such a style was promoted by him for the investment that would ensure future Irish prosperity and social integration. With this perspective Petrie was less predisposed towards quadrangular Georgian castles like Charleville and Birr (as it had become after 1832) where the vicissitudes of family history and the sense of an interplay between the family and the locale were subsumed into a single integrated expression of grandeur and an assertion of status.

[192] G. Petrie, 'Barrack Bridge and Military Gate, Dublin', *IPJ,* 1:34 (20 Feb. 1841), 265.

Thomas Bell, concerned about contemporary 'fluctuations in public taste', used his essay as a vehicle to promote Gothic for new churches.[193] He too was concerned with peace and prosperity. For him, Gothic was the right style for Ireland in union with Britain. By advocating the Castle Chapel as an exemplar of future architectural development in Ireland he transmitted the original idea that it would be an exemplary building into the future, thus ensuring some continuity in the meaning invested in it. Where meaning was initially related to the patrons and their perceived roles in post-Union Britain, it had shifted by the 1830s to the buildings themselves as symbols and denominators of Irishness within Britain. Where Gothic had projected aspirations for the roles of the elite in the 1800s when the buildings were constructed, it had come to be regarded as an indicator of national development by the 1830s.

[193] Bell, *Gothic architecture*, p. 249.

Conclusion

The method used here to investigate meaning in Gothic revival buildings erected in Ireland in the early post-Union years has revealed complexity. This complexity lies in the way in which meaning was conceived and expressed, and in terms of the variety of responses to medieval architecture and uses made of Gothic by the individuals and institutions discussed. Meaning was volatile, so that observers writing within a generation of the erection of the buildings investigated here read them in ways that differed from the original creators.

The method was devised as an alternative to the search for stated intention or the extrapolation of intention from political affiliation or social circumstance, and builds on recent contextual studies of Gothic revival structures. This study is the first to bring together an investigation of taste, intention, production and reception. It has resulted in the tracing of meaning from an individual's perception of Gothic, through his or her use of Gothic styles –the intended and transmitted messages – to the meaning received by others. At each stage the emphasis has been on understanding taste or design in the terms in which they were conceived. This method has shown that meaning was intrinsic to the understanding and use of Gothic and that each pathway from understanding to realisation has a specific individual trajectory so that the final picture is rich in detail and resistant to simplification. By embedding analysis in the values and understanding and in the social and political circumstances of the protagonists the thesis has contributed to recent scholarship that is bringing the Gothic revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth out from the shadow cast by the moral and aesthetic values of the later nineteenth century.

The study of perceptions of Gothic revealed that although there was interest in developing an objective knowledge of Gothic through antiquarian study and the application of systematic investigation and analysis, emotional and interpretive responses were prevalent. Gothic was a mediated cultural experience. Medieval cathedral architecture was valued as the means to experience elevated religious emotions. Medieval castles evoked baronial power. Viewed in a picturesque context, medieval buildings were appreciated as intrinsic to the landscapes in which they were

set and thus derived meaning from their location. Gothic also had personal significance derived from an individual's values and memories.

Patrons with such a taste for Gothic, coloured as it was by emotional or interpretative responses, often couched their design projects in terms of meaning. The Burys conceived their intentions for Charleville Castle with reference to associational meaning derived from their response to medieval castles; their new house was to be 'an old British castle', intended to evoke the strength and durability of a feudal stronghold. This derived from Catherine Maria Bury's romantic attitude to medieval architecture and was a desirable image for a family propelled by social and political aspirations within a British context. Sir Laurence Parsons's concern to project his family's historic role in Birr centred on a remodelling scheme that combined his interest in antiquarianism – he worked with the topography of the existing fabric and used a style that was suited to the seventeenth-century date of the house – and the associations he made between late medieval castellated houses and his own family history. He too conceived his project in terms of meaning; it was derived from his own experience and an understanding of Gothic that was subtly yet distinctly different from the Charlevilles' approach. The analysis reveals that despite the similar political circumstances of Parsons and the Burys they demonstrated different attitudes to politics, Britain, Ireland and their family situations and that this was reflected in their building projects and the meanings transmitted.

Intended meaning emanated from the patron, but its realisation usually involved an architect, and the thesis revealed that although patrons and architects approached Gothic from different perspectives, there was a symbiosis between them, derived from a shared taste informed by antiquarianism and inflected by the picturesque and sublime. Meaning was thus generated and transmitted from within a culture shared by patrons and architects. The thesis revealed that architects, educated in the classical tradition, were inspired by their patrons and learned from them; recent studies of James Wyatt suggest that even when he was sufficiently well established to inspire the term 'Wyatted' he was open to influence from his clients.[1] At Birr, Parsons worked closely with his architect,

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[1] Wiltshire & Swindon Archives, Wilton House Archive, 2057/F7/3/1, TS of letter from Lord Carnarvon to Sidney Charles, Lord Herbert, later 16th Earl of Pembroke, 14 Jan. 1801 from *No beggarly peer* (*c*.1940).

John Johnston, and together they produced a design in which meaning was transmitted through a style that could be associated with the family and which exemplified the historic roots of the existing house. It was made expressive and memorable by a picturesque treatment. However, in Charleville Francis Johnson's contribution was vital for the realisation of intended meaning. Charles and Catherine Bury proposed concepts and models, but Johnston created the architectural image capable of transmitting the impression of strength and durability, applying his classical sensibility to medieval forms and detailing, and exploring the expressive possibilities of picturesque design. The result was a significant difference in architectural form: Birr was a castellated house, a form that would evolve into the popular Tudor revival house, whereas Charleville was, at its core, a four-square Georgian castle, showing signs of evolving into a picturesque castle.

The differences between the two castles demonstrate varieties of intention in architectural patronage and a significant degree of diversity in its expression. This impression of complexity is reinforced when the metaphoric roles of the castles are considered. At one level it can be appreciated that both castles were built as part of an attempt to assert the Irish possessions and identity of a member of the British elite. But there were significant differences. The Charlevilles knew they could never be more than successful outsiders in Britain, and thus needed to establish their Irish base and emphasise their roots and position in Tullamore in order to establish their position more securely within the British elite. The castle's metaphorical role was to assert an imagined past and present status. Parsons's attachment to Ireland was much stronger than the Charlevilles': he had been a patriot in the Irish House of Commons before the Union, and his emotional and political life was more bound up with Ireland after 1800. This was the ground on which he claimed membership of the British elite. The metaphoric role of his castle was to evoke the continuous presence and involvement of his family in Birr since the seventeenth century. He distanced himself from the military gusto conveyed by the baronial castle image of Charleville, preferring the image of the castellated house where a message of continuous habitation worked in tandem with claims about power and position proclaimed by the castellations.

When ecclesiastical Gothic architecture is considered the tapestry of meaning running through early nineteenth-century Gothic revival in Ireland appears richer again. As a

public building, the Castle Chapel was distinct from the domestic castles; it made productive use of an integrated sculptural programme, and there was a greater concern to use specific medieval sources so that the chapel could benefit from the kudos of former greatness. Yet it is clear that the chapel was erected largely within the same parameters of taste as the castles; meaning was transmitted through the creation of image and the manipulation of association. However, although the language of the picturesque was employed in the design of the Wardrobe Tower, it was not extended to the chapel itself, and within, the creation of the sublime had a decisive influence on the design, something that was absent inside the castles which focused on decorativeness modulated with grandeur.

Antiquarianism was much more important in the design of the Castle Chapel, with Johnston employing a variety of medieval sources, which were worked into the scheme with his own inventions. Meaning was projected by a resulting architecture that evoked an ideal ecclesiastical building externally and promoted religious experience internally. The chapel was intended to project its patrons – the viceroy and Church of Ireland – as exemplary, and the conspicuous use of medieval models meant that this was reflected in a building which was regarded as the most progressive example of Gothic revival architecture in Ireland at the time. It was valued as an authentic Gothic building, not in the later nineteenth-century sense of conveying accuracy, but in terms of projecting the appropriate image through the use of finely adjusted medieval models. It was valued too as modern Gothic – Bell's 'modern-antique' – not in the later sense of projecting an expression of contemporary life, but as the latest manifestation of an historic tradition.

In the chapel, sculpture executed in stone and plaster played a significant metaphorical role. The semantic connection between the chapel, the viceroy and the Church of Ireland was spelt out in the extensive sculptural programme which employed an historic perspective, supported by the Gothic style of the architecture which so strongly evoked the past. Gothic, which had historically served both Catholic and Protestant establishments, was also an appropriate setting for a sculptural scheme which conveyed the neutral stance of the viceroy by incorporating figures from both traditions. Aspects of contemporary taste which were evident in the castle projects were also employed to project meaning in the chapel. Gothic linked the chapel to the renovated Wardrobe Tower and so to the medieval roots of Dublin Castle through association, while the rich

and lofty interior played to contemporary feeling for the religious sublime and contributed to the exemplary character of the chapel.

The thesis demonstrated that contextual study is fundamental for an understanding of Gothic revival architecture. Gothic had meaning within a number of contexts: in the viewing and appreciation of medieval buildings; in the generation of a building project; in its design; and in the understanding of the completed building. Meaning spanned these contexts, in the process of which it could be modified. How and when that occurred varied. The transmutation of meaning was revealed by the investigation of attitudes to Gothic revival buildings in Ireland in the decades immediately following the completion of the pioneering buildings discussed in this study. In the altered political and cultural context of the 1820s and 30s meaning and significance changed, with Gothic losing its connections to its original builders and becoming attached to observers' concerns about Ireland. Yet there were also continuities; associational thinking persisted; the Castle Chapel retained its status as an exemplary building. This aspect of the complexity of meaning merits further attention to establish trajectories of meaning as perceived by varieties of people further into the future.

By taking an Irish perspective the thesis has contributed to an understanding of British architecture as an architecture expressive of national identity. Here too, the thesis revealed nuance. It showed that English influences, valued by patrons for relevance to their own specific concerns, was used to create a hybrid British identity in which allegiance to Ireland as a physical location and commitment to Britain as a cultural and political concept were fused. But in the subsequent decades unionists appreciated Irish Gothic revival architecture in relation to their aspirations. This worked in different ways for English and Irish observers, with the English concerned about placing Ireland within Britain, and Irish unionists interested in promoting the development of Ireland within the Union. For both, Gothic, rooted to place and in specific histories, was a potent symbol and expression of Ireland within Britain. Meaning, it has been demonstrated, is insistent but mercurial, grasped only for a moment before it alters and is changed.

In terms of Irish historiography, the thesis has demonstrated that Gothic was a significant cultural force in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Buildings in neo-Gothic styles were commissioned by ambitious and culturally

sophisticated patrons and realized in several prominent cases by the foremost architect of the period, whose understanding of contemporary Gothic taste extended from the siting of buildings to the creation of images, the manipulation of massing and volume and the application of a stylistic vocabulary appropriate in each case to the specific type of commission. The thesis has shown that there was a significant lacuna in writing on Irish historical architecture, and it challenges the status given to classicism as the overwhelmingly dominant mode of architectural expression sought by Irish patrons and realized by their architects in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.