# THE COTSWOLD MANOR HOUSE

The Cotswolds are epitomised by their manorial architecture and groupings, and their Tudor and early Stuart manor houses were celebrated from early days by *Country Life* as symbols of the enduring values of English civilisation. Edward Hudson and H. Avray Tipping inspired a group of gentlemen-owners to buy and repair a number of important early manor houses in or near the Cotswolds: Avebury and Westwood Manor in Wiltshire; Cold Ashton and Hazelbury Manor in Gloucestershire; and Lytes Cary and Cothay in Somerset. The Arts and Crafts architects who settled in the area in the late nineteenth century were the driving force behind the adaptation and repair of many more: Kelmscott, Daneway, Owlpen, Burford Priory.

All these early houses are complex hybrids, often only partly medieval, now with more circumspection described as 'sub-medieval'. There are few medieval manor houses still intact in the Cotswolds, and those that remain are incomplete,

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fragments incorporated into later houses, or were radically altered in the 'great rebuilding' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of these are conservative in style, retaining the standard medieval arrangement of planning – with a hall in the centre entered at the 'lower' end, flanked by service rooms and the family parlour/solar block at the 'upper' end – if with an increasing symmetry to the main façades. Good examples of medieval houses lie just outside the Cotswold region. Great Chalfield in Wiltshire is a textbook manorial group of the fifteenth century, all in stone, whose restoration by Sir Harold Brakspear was so admired by Tipping in *Country Life* in 1914.

The following houses are good examples of these early Cotswolds' manors. Iron Acton Court, in the Severn Vale, was taken over in 1986 by English Heritage, having survived untouched by the Victorian and Edwardian generations as a romantic and fragmentary ruin in rose-pink Pennant stone. Careful excavation and analysis has since uncovered its long evolution through the medieval period, retaining a courtyard plan. It was the seat of Nicholas Poyntz, whose family had been settled there since 1364. He rebuilt the medieval house, probably thirteenth century in origin, and in a matter of months added a new block hastily prepared for the entertainment of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn in 1535, fitted out in the latest fashion, with wall paintings at frieze level in 'antike' work.

Wanswell Court, a hall house of *c.*1450, is another good early house in the Severn Vale. It is on the estate of Berkeley Castle, which claimed Wanswell's stone fireplace for its own great hall in the 1920s. The hall range in three bays survives almost unaltered. The place was noted for its wantonness; the local saying has it that: 'All the maids in Wanswell could dance on an eggshell'.

A range at Horton Court, near Chipping Sodbury, includes a freestanding (and uninhabited) Norman hall of about 1150, with two matching, doorways, enriched, and some round-arched windows. It is one of the oldest halls in England and was probably built for Robert de Beaufeu, Rector of Horton and Prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, or his successor.

Southrop Manor, near Lechlade, is also an early manor house with Norman survivals, though it appears a conventional mid-seventeenth-century house today. Fragments shows its greater antiquity, notably a tower structure by the church, which is all that remain of the original Norman manor house. A late Norman doorway, moved by Norman Jewson in 1926, forms the entrance to the present dining room.

The Cotswolds are overwhelmingly a country of fine market towns, with plenty of good buildings and entire streets reared on the profits of wool. Burford and Bourton-on-the-Water are popular tourist honey pots, well manicured, overflowing with tearooms and antique shops. Tetbury, Stow-on-the-Wold, Minchinhampton, Lechlade and Painswick are centres famous for their picturesque groups of traditional buildings. Northleach, Winchcombe, Fairford and Cirencester have outstanding wool churches of the late Perpendicular. Cirencester, known as 'Ci'ceter' into my youth, was one of the main wool markets, and is the nearest to a regional capital.

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Chipping Campden is architecturally perhaps the most distinguished of them all, with several good early houses. Its merchant houses, though in a country town, are at the root of the pedigree of the smaller country house in the Cotswolds. The most famous of them is Grevel House, reputedly built about 1380 for William Grevel (d.1401), 'the flower of the wool merchants of all England'. With its fine doorway and Perpendicular oriel window of two storeys facing onto the street, cusped windows, and panelled tracery and gargoyles at the angles above, it already marks the emergence of a recognisably 'Cotswold' style.

Woolstaplers' Hall built for Robert Calf is almost opposite, possibly the solar range of what was a grander merchant house, late fourteenth century in origin. It was the home of the great Arts and Crafts designer C. R. Ashbee from 1902 to 1911, who carried out restoration work, exposing wonderful Gothic detailing and an oriel window with tracery in a first-floor room, and incorporating an early timber-framed barn into the house.

All the houses in Broadway are said to be built and roofed in the stone from the quarries at the top of Broadway Hill. The eastern part of Court Farm incorporates part of the hall of a cruck-framed house of the late fourteenth century. The so-called 'Tudor House' corresponded to the ideal of the Cotswold house cultivated by the early *Country Life*, a picturesque four-storey building with triple gables to the street. The centre of the street elevation is emphasised by a bay window to the ground and first floors, on the parapet of which are two shields bearing the dates 1659 and 1660.

Abbot's Grange is another distinguished early Broadway house celebrated by *Country Life*. When this 'gateway' town was the resort of artists at the turn of the twentieth century, it became the property and studio of F. D. Millet, who went down with the *Titanic* in 1912. It is a hall house of fourteenth century origins, with an oratory projecting at the south east and a solar with its undercroft at the southern end. There is seventeenth-century remodelling throughout, but many medieval features have survived, including tracery and ogee lights to the window heads, a grotesque spout and a corbel for a bell.

The church and in particular the religious orders controlled huge tracts of land in the Cotswolds in the Middle Ages, and became significant stakeholders in the fortunes of the wool trade. This is apparently the origin of the local saying: 'As sure as God's in Gloucestershire'. Many of the early country houses have a monastic history or connection, as summer retreats for the medieval abbots, outlying priories or granges, or rented properties, sometimes with notable tithe barns in Cotswold stone. Stanway, for example, was for centuries a country house of the Abbots of Tewkesbury. Many later country houses were rebuilt out of the ruins of the monasteries after the Dissolution. Chavenage House was allegedly built out of the stones of Horsley Priory, Newark Park out of those of Kingswood Abbey. While Cirencester House is said to stand on the site of the castle, Richard Master built a Jacobean house over the cloisters of the medieval Abbey.

H. Avray Tipping described the salvation of Burford Priory, just in Oxfordshire, in the early years of the twentieth century as 'a brand saved from the burning.' It was regarded by his generation as one of the most important Tudor houses in the Cotswolds, and was one of the first to be described in *Country Life*, in 1911. The house was all but demolished and abandoned in the early nineteenth century, and altered drastically after 1808 at a time when the fate of so many early Cotswold houses hung in the balance. Colonel La Terrière undertook the early-twentieth-century restoration, and, as Tipping commented with approval, 'combined a love of old architecture with practical knowledge and sound methods of dealing with quite decayed examples of it.' He published the photographs taken in 1908, before the intervention of La Terrière, comparing it with the pictures afterwards, when he lavished characteristic praise on 'the preservation of the

surface; every old feature has been retained and the aspect of venerable age preserved.' The repair work was massive, and was continued after 1911 by his successor, the tea trader, MP and collector E. J. Horniman, under Walter Godfrey, the antiquarian architect of Lewes. What stands today is (mostly) a confident restoration for these two patrons.

The original house was an Augustinian hospital dedicated to St John the Evangelist. The Elizabethan owner was Sir Lawrence Tanfield, a lawyer, who built the main range of the E-shaped house and entertained James I here in 1603. William Lenthall, Speaker of the Long Parliament, acquired it from his successors in 1634, adding on the chapel and other features. Charles II dined here in 1681. The long, late-seventeenth-century range was rebuilt, the interiors retaining excellent early fireplaces, doors and twisted columns, with a ceiling to the great chamber of 1662. The chapel of the same date is early Gothic Revival rather than Survival, with some astonishing virtuoso mason's work of the period, including a relief of Moses and the burning bush, supported by flanking angels standing on stocky columns.

Prinknash Park (now St Peter's Grange) was, like Frocester Court in the Vale, a summer house of the Abbots of Gloucester, and its core is by definition a pre-Reformation house. After losing Prinknash at the Dissolution, Benedictine monks came back from Caldey Island in 1928, when they received the house under the will of Thomas Dyer Edwardes, who had advertised it for sale in *Country Life* with 385 acres in 1923.

Medieval fabric remains, and there are gables, an oriel, and the arms of Katherine of Aragon of the sixteenth century. The main building, including the central range, was executed for Abbot William Parker about 1521–25, to an H-plan. The porch was probably added by Sir John Bridgeman, who bought the manor and park in 1628 with his son George, following his removal from Owlpen. The chapel was dedicated in 1629, and the house was used as a Royalist base during the siege of Gloucester.

The house has been badly altered by good architects, including Ewan Christian, F. W. Waller, Harold Brakspear, J. Coats-Carter and Harry Goodhart-Rendell, a generous benefactor to the community, whose design for the new abbey was alas never executed. At the time of writing, the monks, having built a new abbey in 1968–72, are planning to move back into 'St Peter's Grange'.

If Prinknash is the last of the pre-Reformation, Horton Court, already noted for its Norman hall described on page XX, is the first of the Renaissance, almost contemporary with Abbot Parker's work at Prinknash. The house has some of the earliest Classical detail in the country (*c.*1521), associated with courtier owners familiar with advanced developments on the Continent. The lintel of the doorcase has an entablature decorated with bold *paterae* and jambs with strapwork in confident Mannerist arabesques and triumphs. There is also a chapel and a wonderful six-bay Renaissance loggia, free-standing by the tulip tree in the garden.

The loggia contains a row of moulded busts, plaques in low relief set into the back wall, suggesting Antiquity. At first sight they seem to be crude and conventional Imperial medallions, a galumphing version of a portrait bronze by Pisanello, perhaps. But a scheme of humanist iconography has been identified, showing that the carefully chosen heroes and anti-heroes depicted, alternately Roman and provincial, are a learned commentary on the ups and downs of the career of a diplomat. For the builder, William Knight, was a clerk in the King's service, educated (partly) in Rome, and an emissary of Henry VIII to the Pope, charged with vain negotiations over the Royal divorce. The detail could date from before Knight's spell in Rome, and derive from Low Country sources, already widely available. In 1550, Horton was granted by the Crown to the recusant Paston family of Norfolk, who set up a chapel in the attics when they finally moved here in 1707. The interiors were restored for the Dudley Wards in 1927 to 1932, when they were written up in *Country Life*. The house was presented to the National Trust in 1946.

Down Ampney House, near Cirencester, was probably built for the courtier Sir Edmund Hungerford after his retirement in 1470; the open hall is of that date, in four bays with carved queen-post trusses. Soane altered the house for Sir John Eliot in 1799, with Gothick details answering the old fabric for once with an antiquarian respect. *Country Life* serves as a paper of record here, for tragically the twin-towered gatehouse of 1537 was demolished following a fire in 1963. The composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams was born in the village.

It is now possible to date Bradley Court, near Wotton-under-Edge, with some confidence to 1559, by the date stone above the entrance porch,. In the thirteenth century it belonged to Hugo de Bradleia, but was bought by the 1st Lord Berkeley and remained a house of a cadet branch of the great local family until it was sold in 1611.

The house stands under Westridge Hill, with a rendered symmetrical front, set back from the lane. The porch is in the centre of a long, gabled façade, with two flanking stair towers, octagonal in plan; only the hall chimney-stack stands off centre. It has been hardly touched externally since Kip's engraving of 1710, frozen in time, made when Thomas Dawes was owner. It was held by his successors, ultimately as a secondary house, into modern times. The house has been little altered, retaining its medieval plan, with service rooms (off the lower end of the hall), and hall and parlour (now the library). A beautifully proportioned drawing room was added like a box at the rear (north) with the best bedroom over, attributed to Anthony Keck for its mouldings in stiff acanthus leaves and characteristic mahogany doors, *c.*1790.

Thomas and Penelope Messel, the present owners, have achieved a miraculous transformation, demolishing a clutter of nineteenth-century extensions at the rear, and furnishing the house with gilded creations of Thomas Messel's own design and early oak, which survived the fire at his family's house at Nymans in Sussex. The poet Seamus Heaney was a frequent visitor, describing the landscape 'Of topiary, lawn and brick|Possessed, interspaced, walled, nostalgic.'

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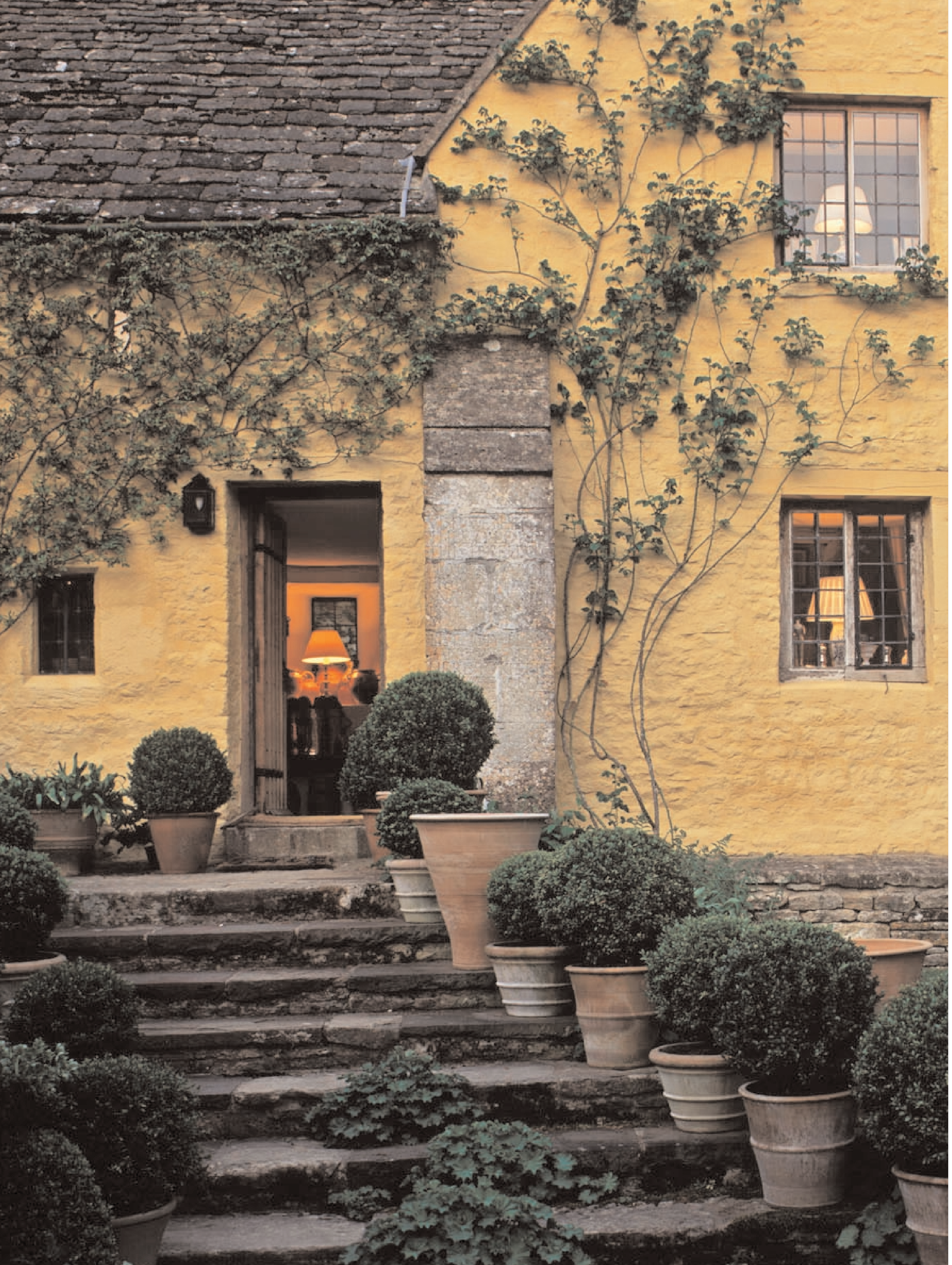
Dixton Manor is dated 1555, a fragment of a much larger house recorded in the painting now in the Cheltenham Museum. Only the porch of that date survives, the rest is a rebuild when a west wing was added at a right angle in the early Jacobean period.

Lypiatt Park, near Stroud, is a composite house: in part genuine medieval, in part Elizabethan, and in part a nineteenth-century essay in Neo-Tudor, with some grand rebuilding by the Wyatts. Jeffrey Wyatt(ville), architect of the neo-feudal work at Windsor Castle for George III, remodelled Lypiatt in a castellated Gothic Revival style in 1809–15, dramatically restyling the hall range and adding a new wing for the clothier owner, Paul Wathen. Wyattville's distant relation T. H. Wyatt took this further in 1876–77 in a more 'correct' Gothic style. The *Country Life* description of December 1900 says nothing to disillusion the reader that all the Wyatt family alterations are anything but genuine medieval work.

The north front is the main range of the Elizabethan manor house. The outbuildings of a large medieval manor house of the Maunsell family add a frame of authentic picturesque interest. The detached thirteenth-century granary is in splendid condition, with plate tracery to the north window, and a grain chute in the form of an ox's head. There is also a round dovecote of about the same date, and a late fourteenth-century Decorated chapel with nave and chancel, and a bellcote with two bells.

After being the country seat inherited by my uncle's amiable uncle, Judge Harry Woodcock and his sister Isla, exceptionally the house today is furnished not with the historical collections of the Cotswold country house; rather it contains in its whitewashed interiors arrangements of the sculpture of its celebrated post-war owner, Lynn Chadwick, who bought the house as demolition threatened in 1952, and established a Modernist interest in the house and gardens.

TO CUT



# *Daneway House, Gloucestershire*

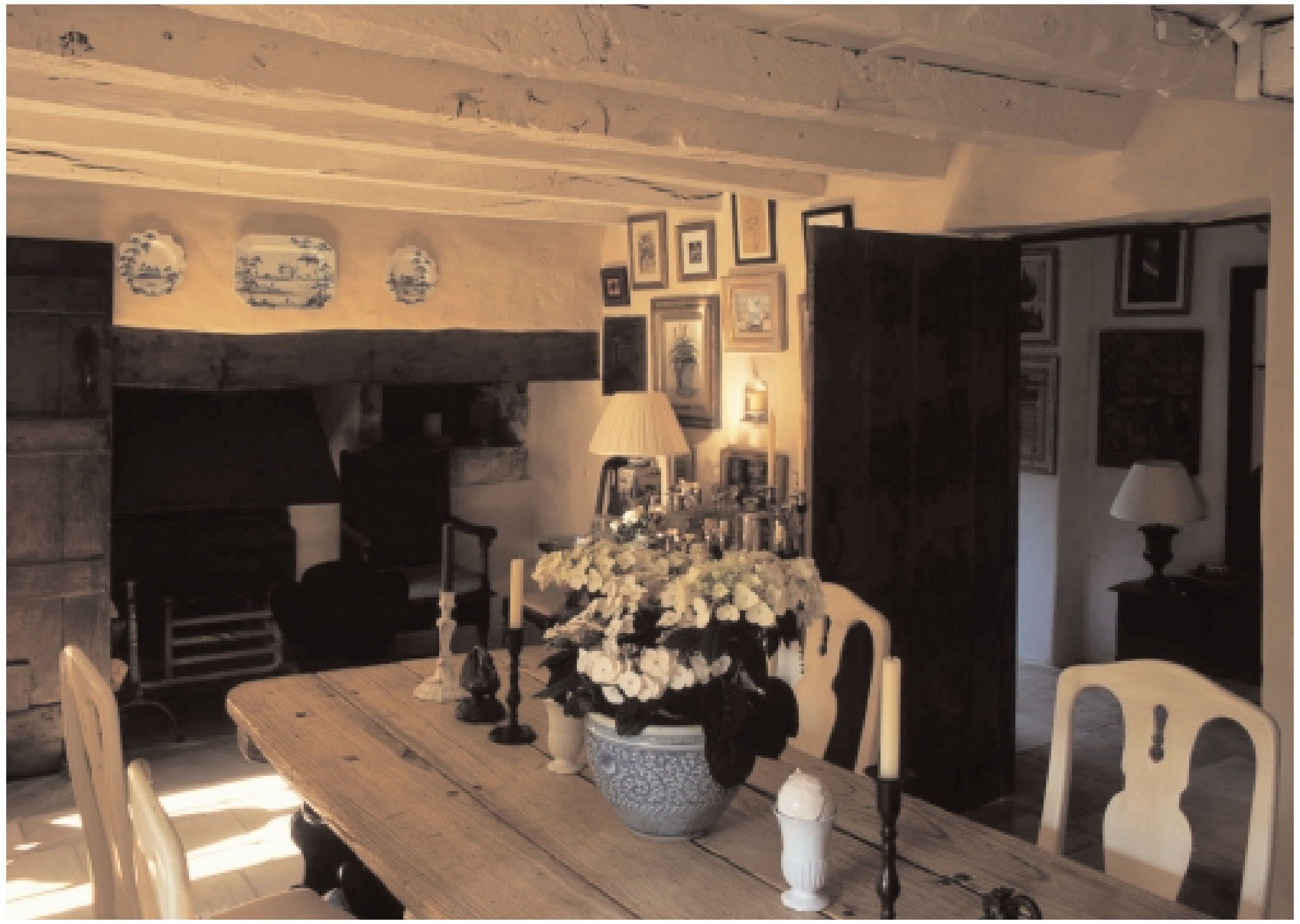
Daneway, one of the most romantically evocative as well as the oldest manor houses in the Cotswolds, is buried deep among woods. H. Avray Tipping in *Country Life* emphasised its solitude and changelessness, having 'kept modernity at a distance'. The place name apparently means 'road through the valley', and so it lies hidden down a narrow lane on rising ground beyond the estate village of Sapperton, though it is an outlying hamlet of Bisley parish. It is a size smaller than most, scarcely more than a farmhouse, where an accretion of modest stone roofs and gables is set off by a later tower wing to the south east – its only attempt at a note of grandeur.

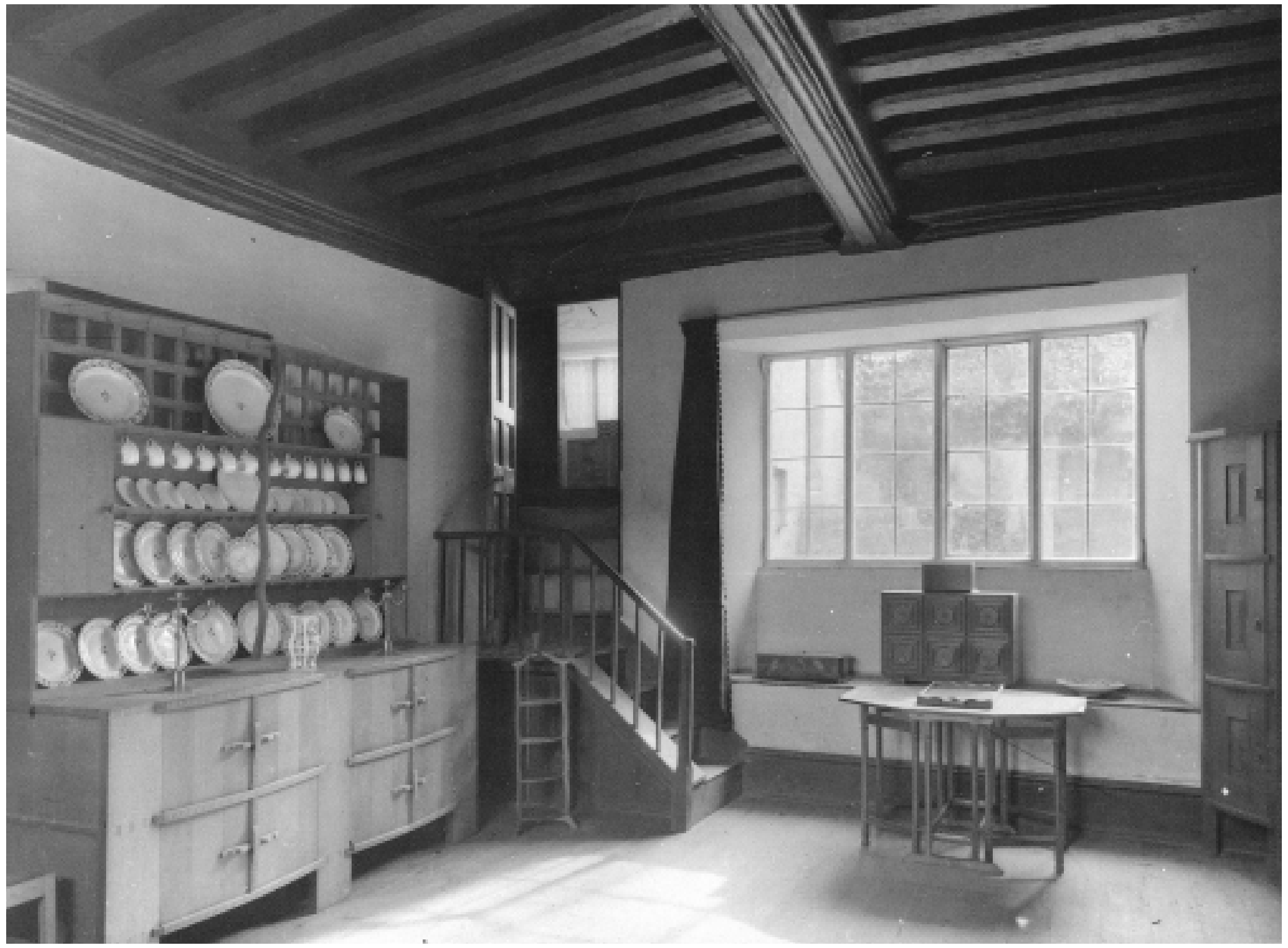
The feeling is medieval, timeless, with a nucleus of early buildings with stone buttresses and tiny lancet or Perpendicular windows, but then a Classical doorway with a rusticated head appears rather incongruously in the centre of the main front. This garden front is organic, with a 'satisfying balance', noted Tipping, but without any pretence at symmetry. All is harmoniously coherent. Hussey judged it in *Country Life* (December 1934) a composition of sheer romance that is 'instinctively right'.

The main entrance is to the left (west). Inside, there are plenty of up-and-down steps, worn by numberless footfalls, as you walk from room to room vainly piecing together a complex structure of evolution, with floor levels cut into a slope. Gothic arches over doorways contrast in various styles, an ogive-headed doorway to the west, and, slightly later, a trefoil-arched one. A screens' passage transects the house from the front porch to a garden up some steps behind. Beyond the screens' passage to the west is a domestic cross-wing, with the contemporary undercroft, later altered as the kitchen, and a private apartment, or solar, above.

*Steps to the buttressed service wing, with clipped box.*

*The kitchen wing was probably added in the sixteenth century.*





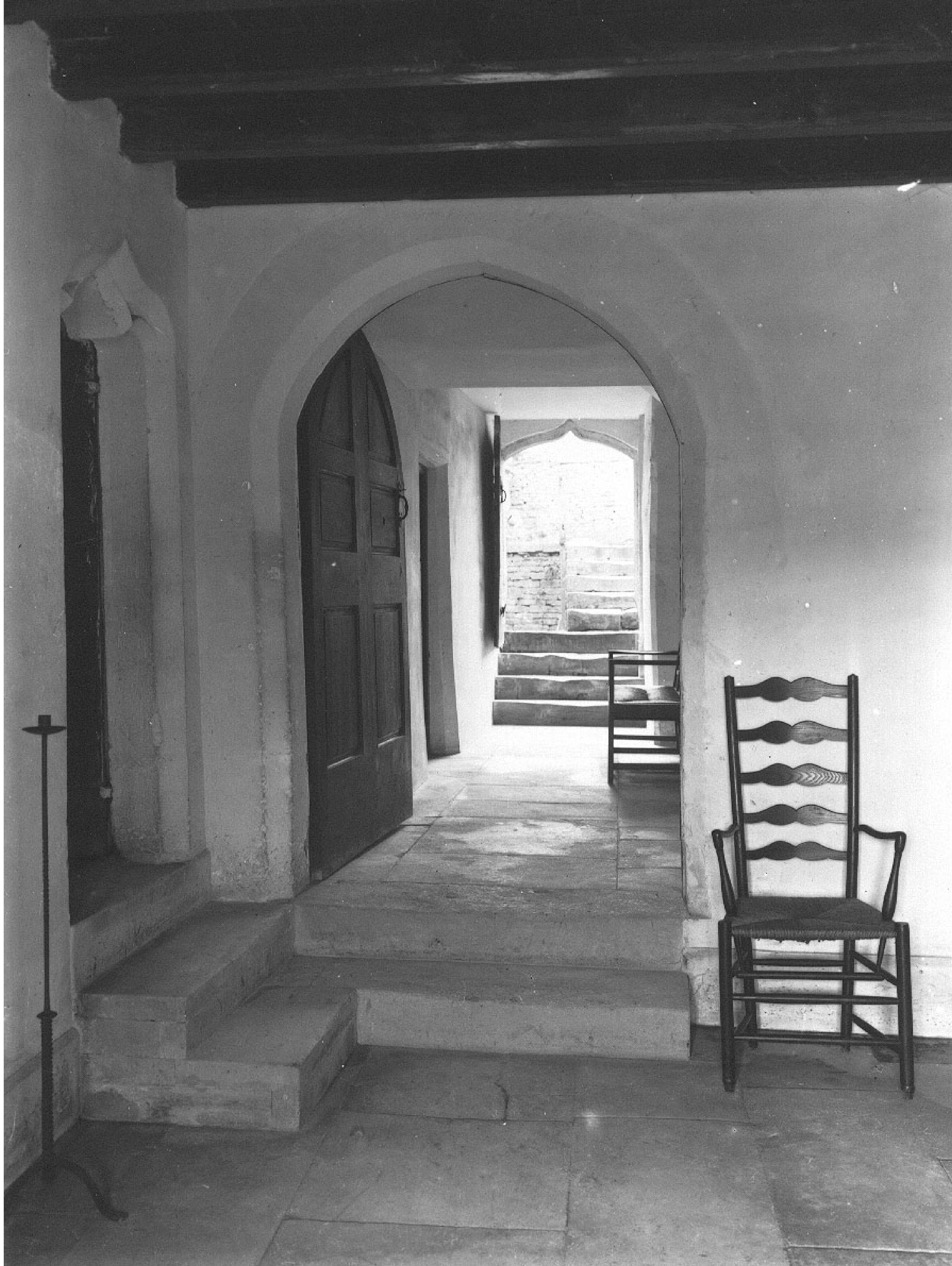
The hall entered by its original stone archway is the kernel of the house, which has grown organically either side of it. At its eastern or 'high' end, it is dug inconveniently into the hillside. Its soot-blackened roof timbers are exposed in the room above, dating to the time when it was open to the roof, but it is now horizontally divided with an inserted floor. They have been securely dated by dendrochronology to about 1315, a full generation earlier than was thought.

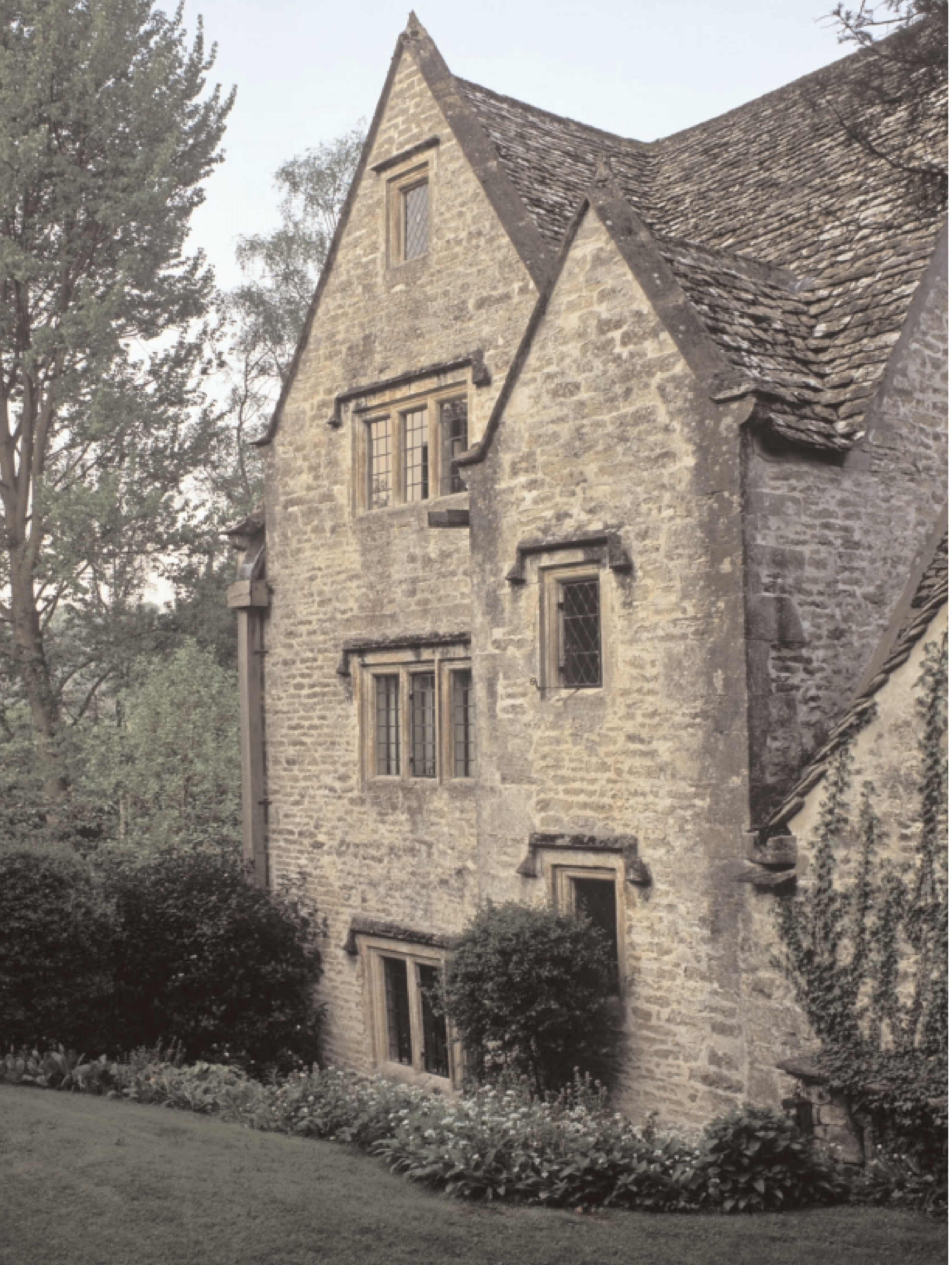
The records at this date are sparse, but Henry Clifford and his wife Maud received a licence to build their oratory in 1340, probably sited above the south porch; licence to crenellate and hold Mass was given about 1380 to John Clifford, and the manor, described as a messuage and a plough-land, was held by him at his death in 1397. Daneway was sold in 1647 to William Hancox, whose family had already been lessees since 1532. By the time of the Civil War, William Hancox, who served as a captain in the Parliamentary forces, was High Constable of Bisley Hundred, and Hancoxes were treating with the Protector Cromwell himself. It was owned or occupied for over three centuries (until 1862) by this yeoman family.

The medieval hall house is still embedded in their later additions, though they modified and extended Daneway over the generations, marking the family's rise in the world. This was symbolised most notably with the addition of the so-called 'high building', a cross-gabled tower of five storeys, added shortly after inheriting the estate by William Hancox II (c.1674). The high building is set slightly askew to the main house, and there are steps from the courtyard outside leading up to a west entrance with a mannered doorway. There is one room per floor, accessed by a spiral stair in the north-west corner. The rooms have ribbed plasterwork ceilings and modelled details, such as a trout in the eponymous Trout Room. The high building was the last structure to be built, and

*The early-fourteenth-century hall as used by Ernest Gimson to display his furniture, about 1911. The ceiling was inserted in the sixteenth century.*

*The passage cuts through the core of the medieval house to the hall, with arches over the early doorways of various dates, and steps to the garden beyond. The trefoil-arched doorway to the left probably led to the oratory of about 1340.*





nothing has been drastically altered since.

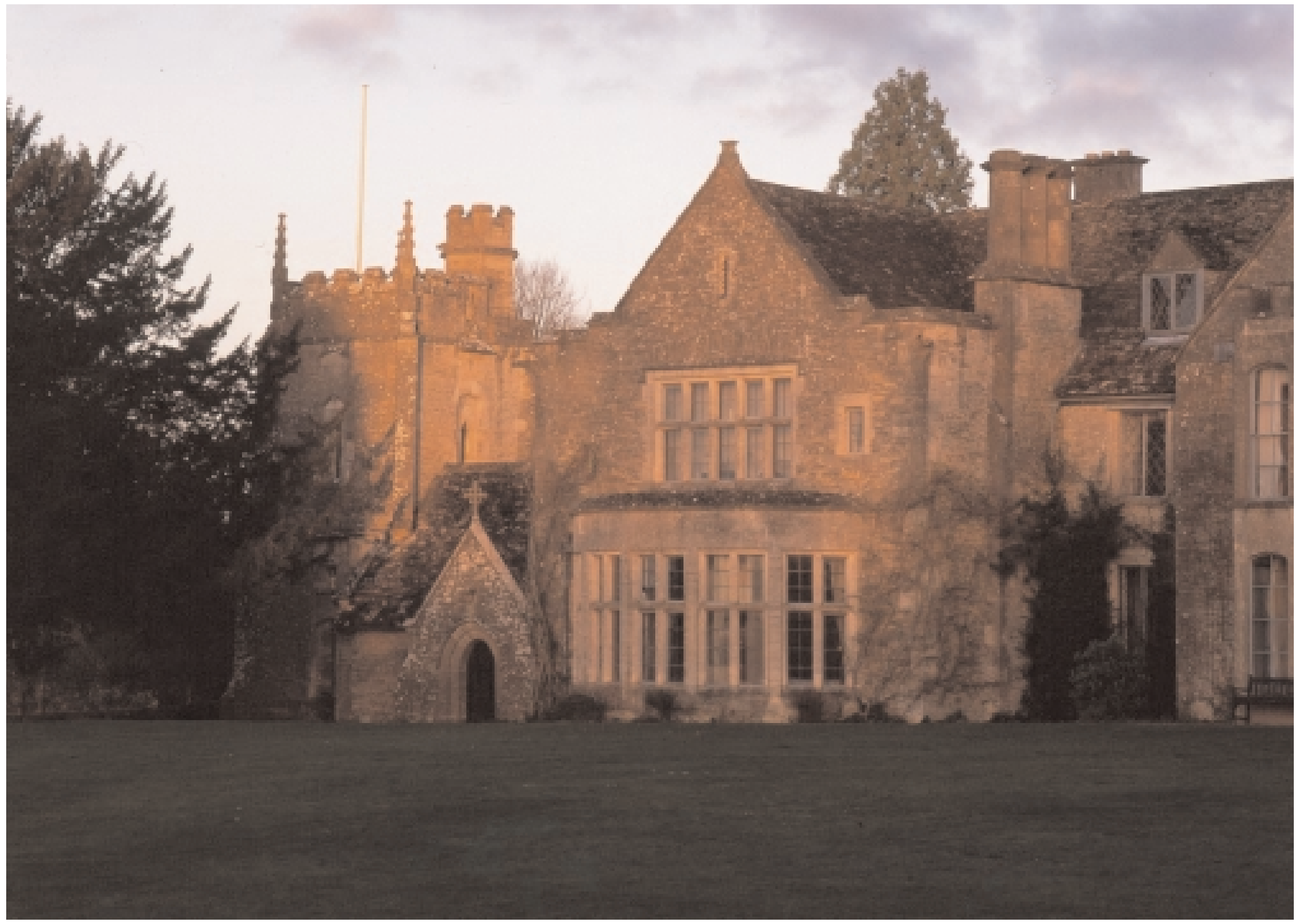
In the twentieth century, Daneway attracted a 'tribe' (as Morris's architect Philip Webb called them) of uncommonly creative and talented occupants. After being acquired in a state 'rather shabby, derelict and forlorn' by Lord Bathurst, it was restored by Ernest Barnsley in 1896, and let to Ernest Gimson from 1902 to 1919. He didn't live at Daneway, but used the outbuildings for the manufacture, and the house for the display, of his remarkably innovative furniture. As such, the house was a legend for architect-designers of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Oliver Hill (1887–1968), architect, garden designer, architectural historian and contributor to *Country Life* took on the house, with his wife Titania, from 1948. It was lovingly romanticised with Hill's heterodox clutter of textiles and antiques, and nurtured the formative years of his great-nephew, the sculptor Simon Verity, whose youthful blessing is graven on a buttress.

In 1994, Daneway was acquired by Nicholas and Kai Spencer, who became the first owner-occupiers for nearly a century. Wisely, they commissioned the best advice before intervening. The architect Nicholas Johnston planned a thoroughgoing but sensitive adaptation of the house. The Spencers reordered and extended the garden with formal yews and a new approach. There is a new lease of life, marked by fresh limewash throughout. Rory Young cut in slate the names of the craftsmen engaged in the repair work, in the Arts and Crafts tradition. On the small estate of about 300 acres, you will find Emily Young's sculpture of a shepherd striding the fields, thousands of young trees, and miles of new drystone walls. This magical house in its renewal remains a haven intact, enfolded in harmony with its landscape.

*The high building is the latest work, a self-contained bachelor wing of c.1674, here viewed from the garden to the east.*

*The enclosed terrace above the house was laid out by the present owners.*



## *Chavenage House, Gloucestershire*

Chavenage is set quietly among lanes on the Cotswold uplands near Tetbury. It has evident charm, one of the early manor houses celebrated in *Country Life* by H. Avray Tipping as an ideal which 'exhibits a variety of styles, the handiwork of succeeding generations of owners.' An avenue of chestnut trees leads to a gateway to the west of the road, marking a short drive past sloping lawns and umbrageous cedars. It is aligned on the central porch, bearing in the diamond stops of the label the date 1576 and the initials 'ES' and 'IS', for Edward Stephens and Joan his wife, marking the ownership and rebuilding by a wool man who had bought the estate in 1564.

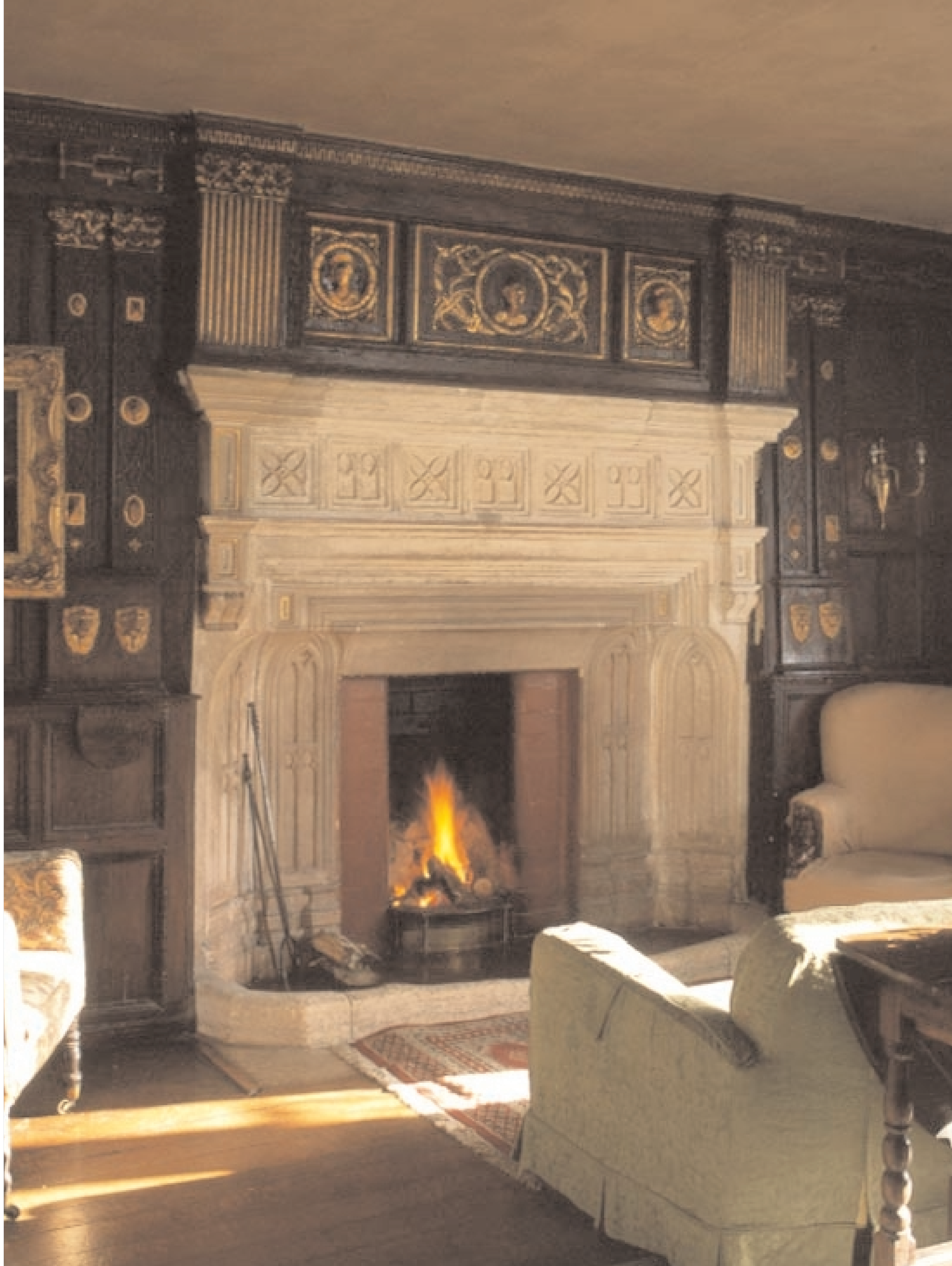
The core of the main house is convincingly medieval, but there are caveats, with signs of significant later phases of rebuilding. The porch has a Decorated, two-light window with tracery, but it is nowhere to be seen on an engraving of 1807, though it is said to have been reused from the dissolved Augustinian priory nearby at Horsley, or from the earlier manor house standing on the site.

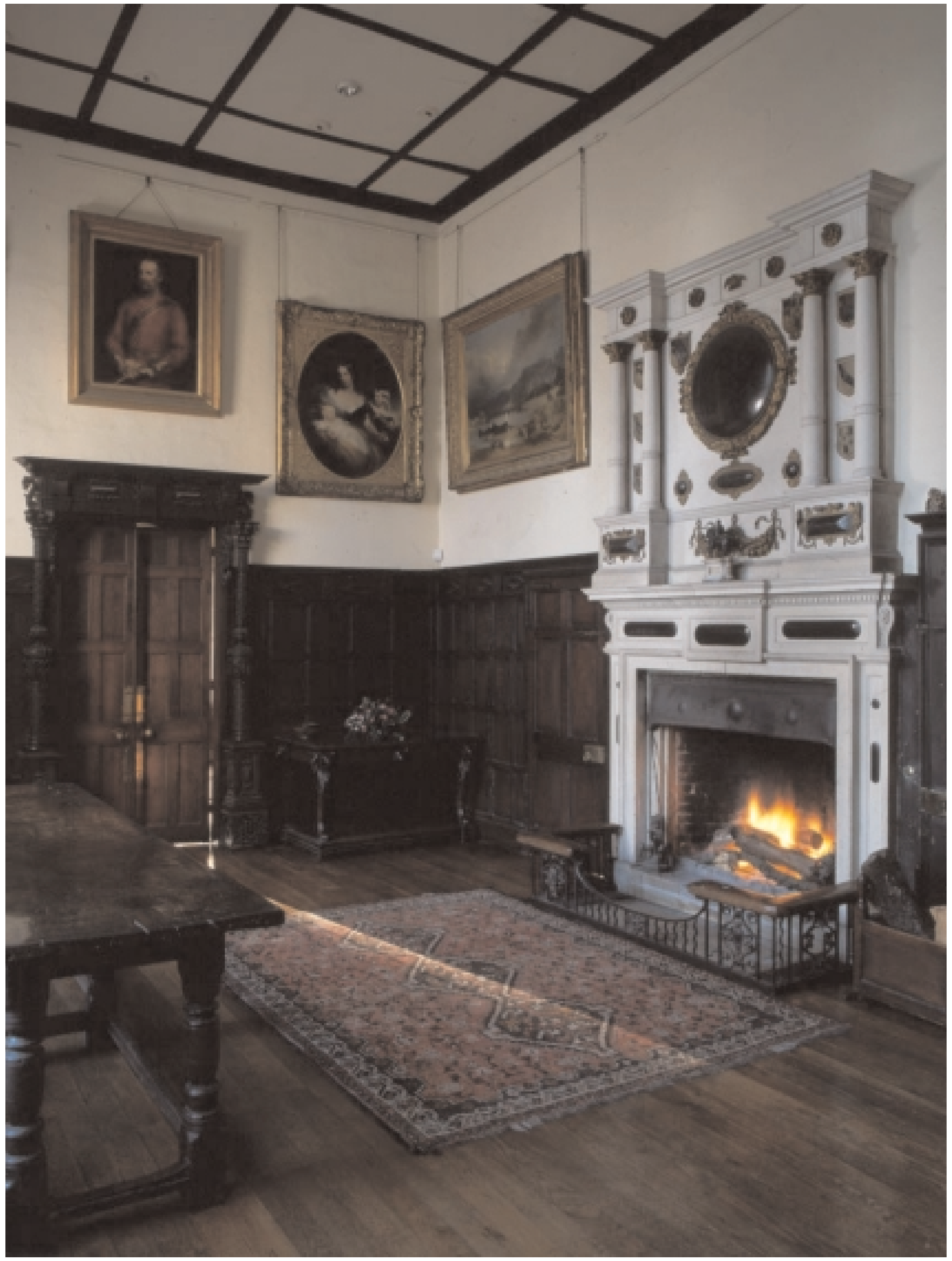
The east entrance front is arranged in a standard E-plan, but asymmetrical; Tipping commented approvingly on the odd windows, eccentrically placed and of different shapes and sizes. The great hall has two striking windows, divided by a buttress, with gabled cross-wings at either side projecting forwards. The service wing is to the right (north) of the hall and the parlour wing to the left.

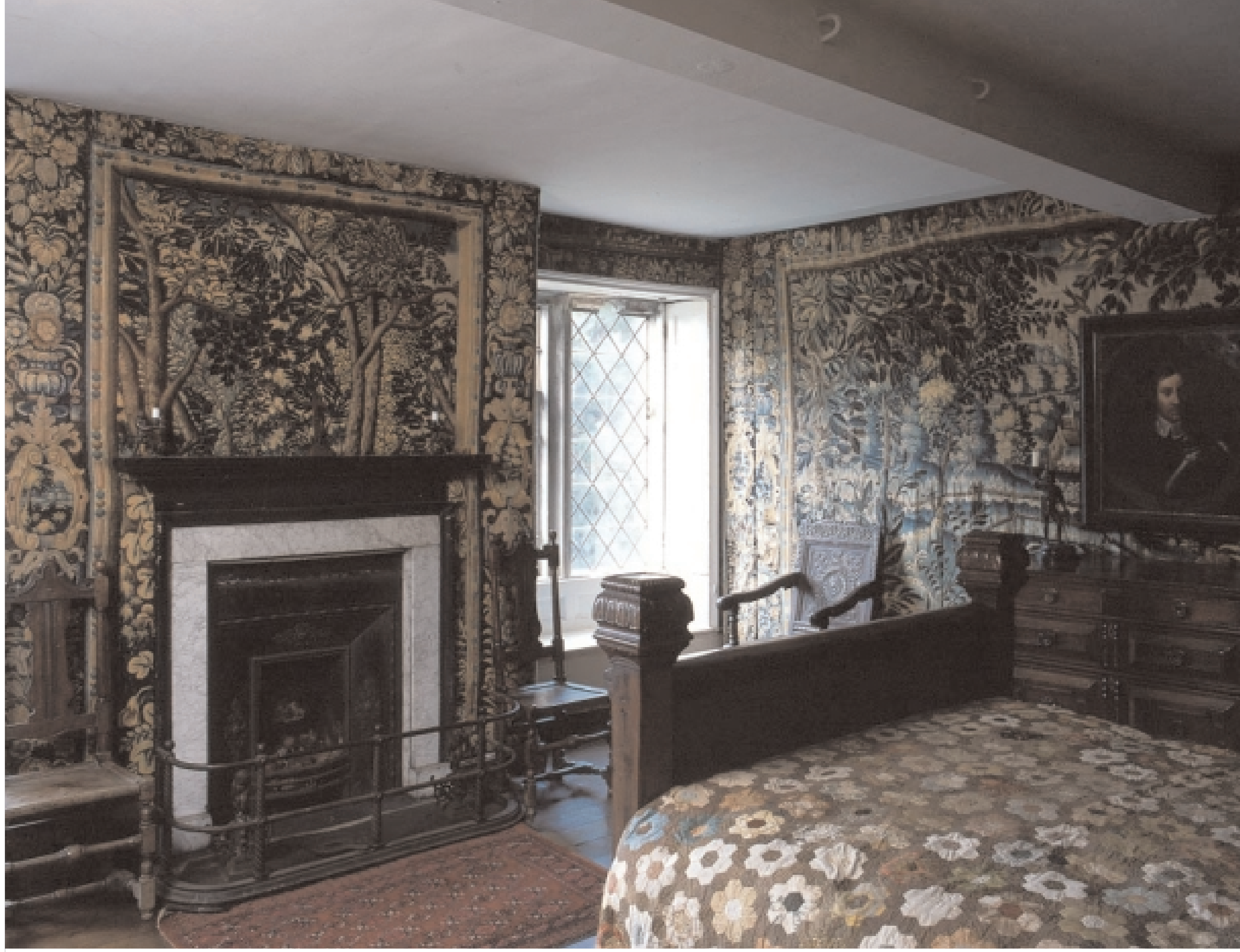
You enter the screens' passage by the early porch; the great hall within is spacious, of full storey height, with the double-

*Elizabethan splendour. But the large bay window of the ballroom to the south front is Edwardian, and the church is an early-nineteenth-century hotch-potch made up of fragments.*

*The oak room has sixteenth-century carvings of the Muses and an early fireplace set with roundels, probably inserted in the early nineteenth century in Antiquarian taste.*







*Caption required.*

*The Elizabethan great hall has a chimneypiece inlaid with swags and black marble cartouches, perhaps removed from another Stephens' house in Eastington.*

transomed windows here adapted later, so they soar from floor to ceiling (the ceiling is inserted), with stained glass removed from redundant churches. The screens support a minstrels' gallery, with an unplayable eighteenth-century chamber organ. The chimneypiece (perhaps from the Stephens's house at Eastington) is set with a black marble plaque as a medallion in a wreath of bay leaves, with escutcheons to the Stephens family. Beyond is the Jacobean Oak Room, the parlour of the Elizabethan house; the wainscoting and four panels of the Muses below the tree of life, dated 1627, seem to be a jumble of elements introduced later. An earlier fireplace dates to the time of Richard Stephens, the owner from 1587–99. The Cromwell Room upstairs is hung with Flemish verdure tapestries of the early seventeenth century on the theme of the Quixote, and is one of several rooms to claim Cromwellian associations.

At the rear of the house is the Edwardian west wing, with a floor area nearly equal to the old house itself, added in a muscular Neo-Tudorbethan by the Yorkshire architect J. T. Micklethwaite in 1904–05, to accommodate a ballroom and the rambling domestic offices of the Edwardian era. There is a freestanding chapel outside, cobbled together from architectural fragments in the early nineteenth century, including a Norman early font found on the estate. The tower is festooned with architectural bric à brac, apparently conceived as a folly.

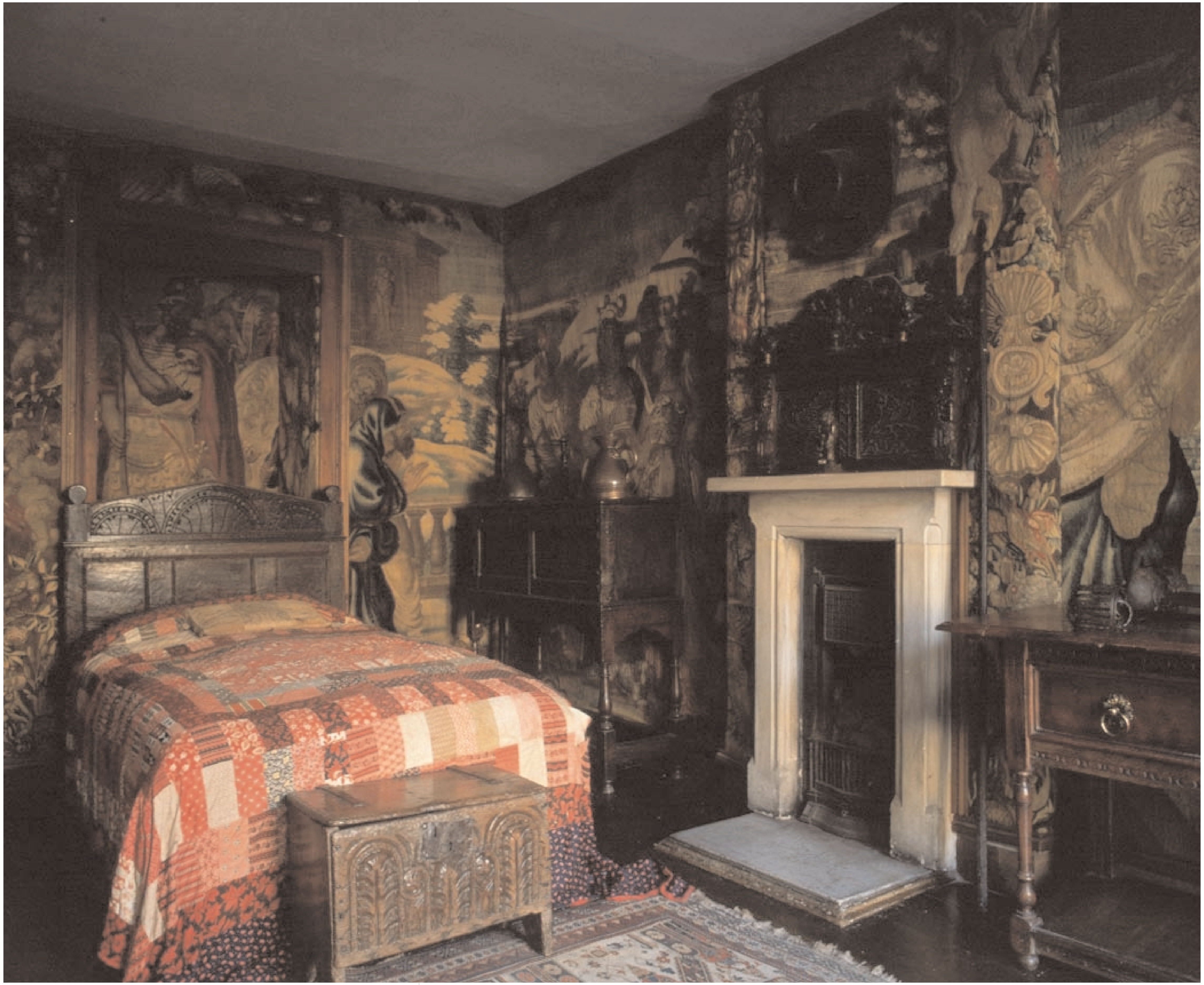
Chavenage belonged, like Sudeley Castle and neighbouring Beverston, to Princess Goda, the sister of Edward the Confessor and wife to Earl Godwin. It became the property of Horsley Priory after the Conquest, a cell of the Abbey in Bruton in Somerset. At the Dissolution it was granted, with many other estates in the Cotswolds, including Sudeley, to the Protector Seymour. When Seymour lost his head under Edward VI, Chavenage passed to Sir Walter Denys, owner of Dyrham; in 1564, Sir Walter's son, Richard, sold the estate with the manor of Horsley to Edward Stephens of Eastington.

The existing house was built by him and has been owned by just two families. The Stephens family were feudal lords in Gloucestershire from the reign of Henry II. Branches of the family owned extensive land in the South Cotswolds, from Lypiatt and Eastington to Little Sodbury and Lyegrove. The Stephens family seem to have lived mainly at Eastington, and Chavenage may have been a minor seat, which explains why the main front externally has been little altered since Elizabethan times.

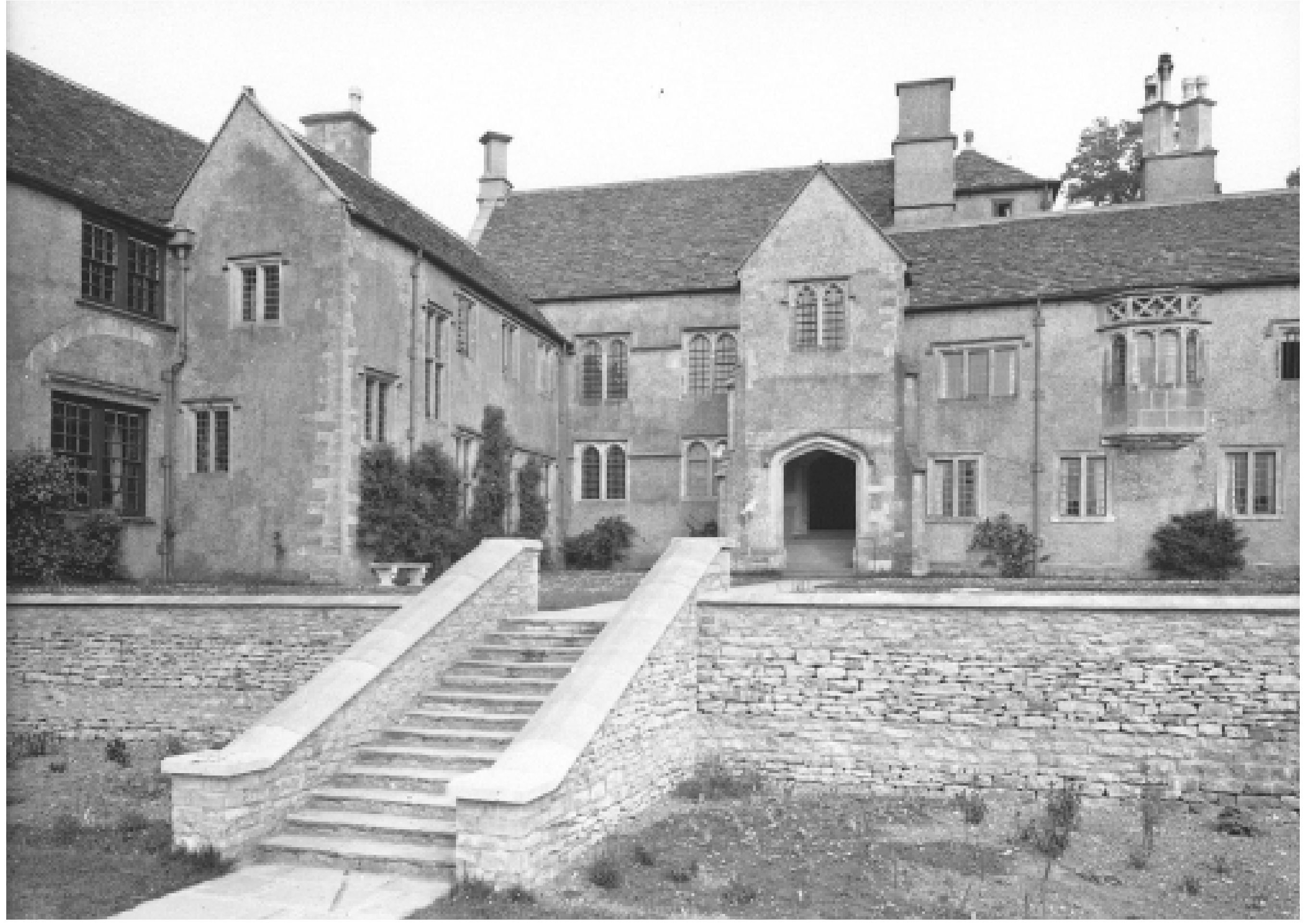
Nathaniel Stephens, owner from 1608 to 1660, was a Member of Parliament and fought in the Civil War, becoming an influential colonel in the Cromwellian army. He was a man of moderate opinions, however, and Cromwell is said to have sent his son-in-law, General Henry Ireton (a relation by marriage of Colonel Stephens), to Chavenage over Christmas 1648, in order to persuade him to consent to the King's 'removal'. Nathaniel was dithering in indecision when he was apparently warned by his father's ghost to have no part in the regicide. When Stephens finally acquiesced, he was cursed with a long catalogue of weird happenings, culminating in a lingering and ultimately fatal illness.

The last Stephens to live here was Henry Willis Stephens, a man of antiquarian tastes, who inherited in 1801, a bachelor and local clergyman who fled to take up with the Dominicans in Tenerife. Before his departure, he had added the billiard room and bay windows on the south garden front, and it is probably he who imported a host of architectural antiques now incorporated into the fabric, and altered the house in an advanced Neo-Jacobean taste. But by the mid-nineteenth century, the estate was heavily mortgaged to R. S. Holford, the rich owner of Westonbirt nearby, and was bought by a friend of the family, George Williams Lowsley Hoole-Lowsley-Williams in 1891.

Chavenage is still owned by his descendants. In 1970, David Lowsley-Williams discovered in the attic a portfolio of watercolours prepared for King George IV, which illustrated plans for the redecoration of Windsor Castle, the sale of which to the Royal Collection funded the repair of the roof.



*Alluring textures in the room where Cromwell reputedly slept in 1648, hung with Flemish verdure tapestries on the theme of the adventures of Don Quixote.*



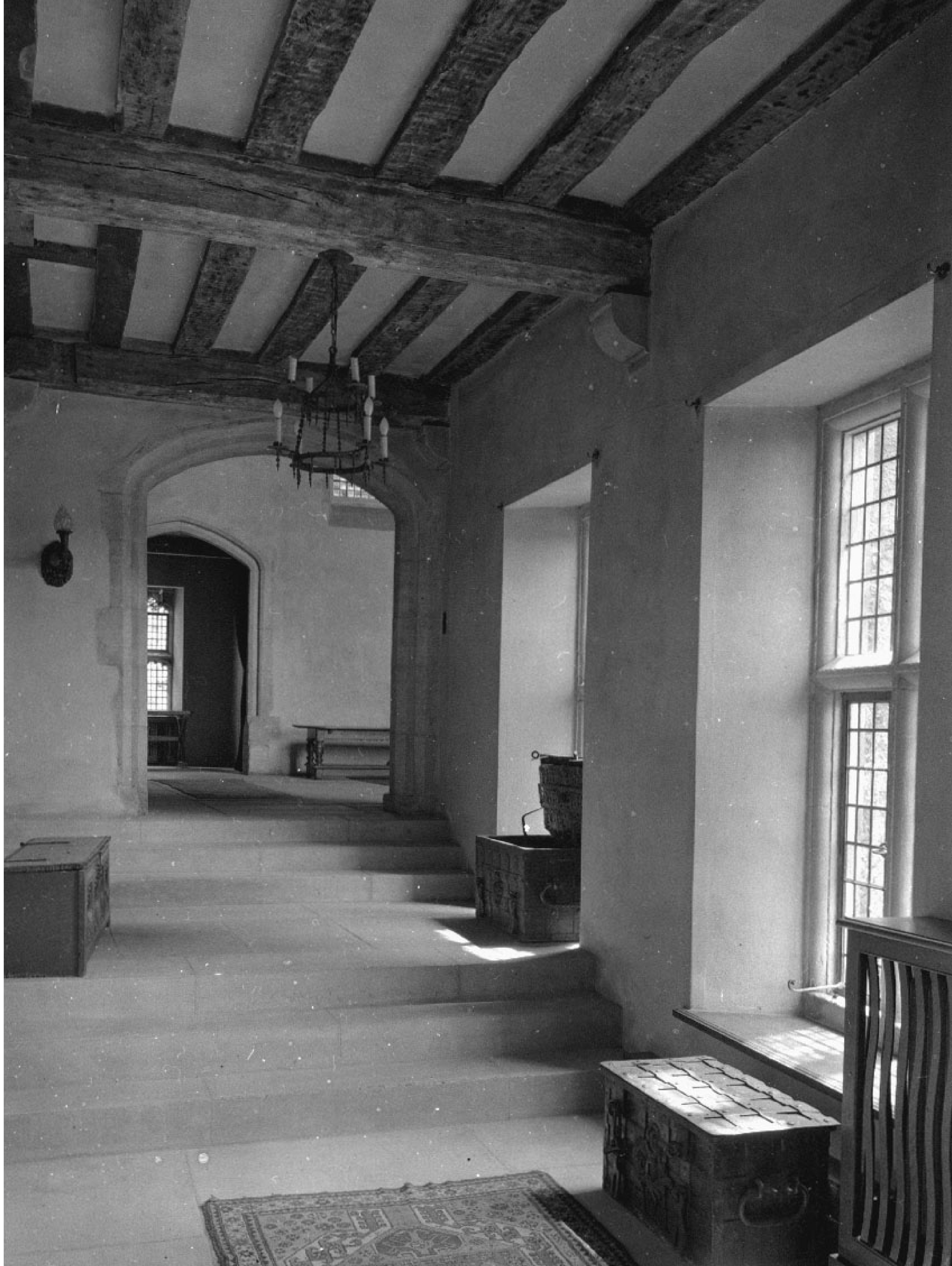
# Little Sodbury Manor, Gloucestershire

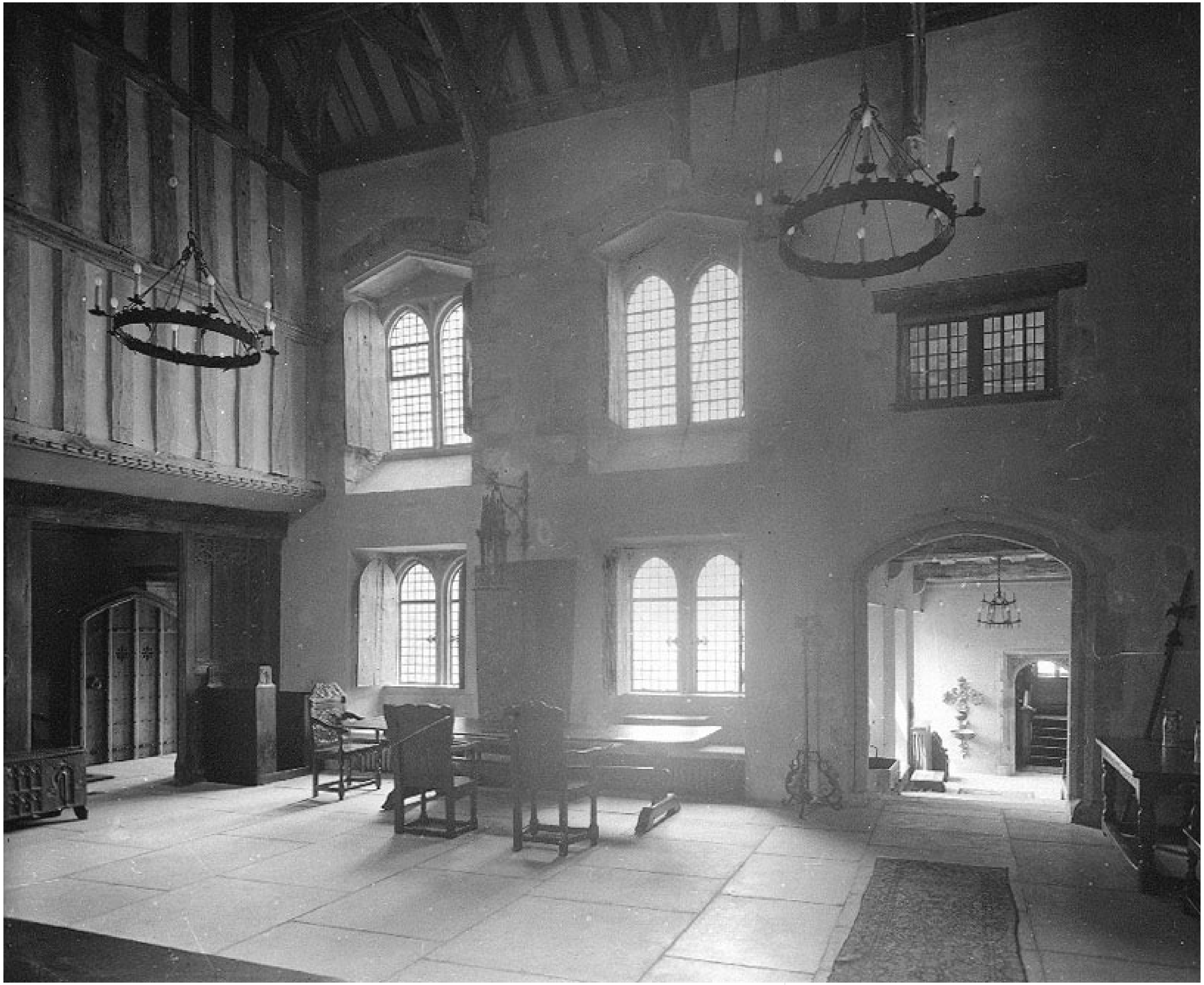
Little Sodbury is the perfect Cotswold manor house, perched on a ledge half way up a hill, with views westerly over the wide expanse of the Severn Vale as far as the Welsh hills. A spectacular Iron Age hill fort looming above the chimney-stacks commands an early defensive site, sheltering the manor house from the east wind: this is probably 'Sodda's bury', whose name lives on in the three places named Sodbury. A few fragments of the old church, uniquely dedicated to the obscure Saint Adeline, patroness of weavers, survive in the garden.

It was here according to the chroniclers that the army of the Yorkists, under the future Edward IV, camped before the battle of Tewkesbury in May 1471. Possibly its leaders dined in the impressive hall. It remains, as it has been since then, the heart and kernel of the house, and the best of its date in the region. Dated to the early fifteenth century, it is still happily adapted to dining and hospitality. It is open to the roof, steeply pitched and impressively timbered with four tiers of wind braces, moulded purlins, and collar beams. The trusses spring from corbels in the form of angel heads, and high up on the east wall a grotesque mask (probably not *in situ*), like the one at Great Chalfield, forms a peep-hole squint. The lofty height and scale (about 42 x 23 ft) quite takes the breath away; here a recent owner, Mark Harford, would dispatch intruding jackdaws at a fair range with his shotgun. The Gothic screens are rare in the Cotswolds as substantially original work. They have a studded partition over, enclosing a delightful oak-panelled bedroom. The Gothic porch leading to the garden, buttressed outside has a massive beam to bar the

*The main front faces west over the Vale, terraces descending to a bowling green below. The hall range is behind the Gothic porch in the centre.*

*The north-west range leading up to the great hall, as altered by Harold Brakspear in 1913–1915.*





door and again a cosy panelled porch room.

At the dais end it is much altered, with an oriel added by Sir Harold Brakspear who rebuilt whatever remained of the solar range to the north. There is evidence of little oriel rooms with an upper storey, which projected from both sides of the hall, balancing the porch on the main elevation.

The rest of the house has grown and adapted by accretions, like so many early houses, and its history, with wings upgraded and demolished over so many centuries, is hard to unravel. It certainly has early origins, but the hall which stands today is reasonably intact, built for the Stanshawe family about 1420. Their medieval house may have been laid out to an irregular courtyard plan, and a stray gatehouse doorway from this phase, integrated into a later plan, survives to the south.

In 1491, the house came by marriage into the possession of John Walsh of Olveston, a minor courtier as Receiver for the Berkeley estates, who prospered exceedingly by his connections. It was his son who was King Henry VIII's champion at the Coronation of 1509. Henry visited the house with Anne Boleyn in August 1535, when they are said to have watched a joust from the first-floor window, a fine oriel with a pierced parapet, which seems to have been added by Sir John Walsh at the same time as the domestic range running south from the hall.

Little Sodbury is remembered in history as the place where the great William Tyndale (1496–1536), Protestant scholar, linguist and reformer, was tutor (from about 1521) to Sir John's children. An austere bedroom, with timber-studded walls, claimed as his is shown in a garret. It was while at Little Sodbury that he set his ambition to translate the whole of the New Testament and much of the Old into the vernacular. His translation was to become one of the most influential works in English literature and to form the basis of the Authorised Version. Eventually, after being tried for heresy and treason, he was condemned to death by strangling. His monument (1866) at North Nibley is a landmark for miles around.

The house came next into the hands of Thomas Stephens, who purchased the manor to add to his substantial Gloucestershire landholdings (including Chavenage) in 1608, divided at his death between his three sons. Edward Stephens' portion included Lyegrove, near Badminton, and the two estates remained in the same ownership for several generations. He added a good staircase and early-seventeenth-century plasterwork, framed by pilasters and panels, in

*The soaring hall dated about 1420 has windbracing and an impressive close-studded partition above the screens.*

upstairs bedrooms, and chimneypieces. The Stephens favoured the seat Lyegrove after 1820.

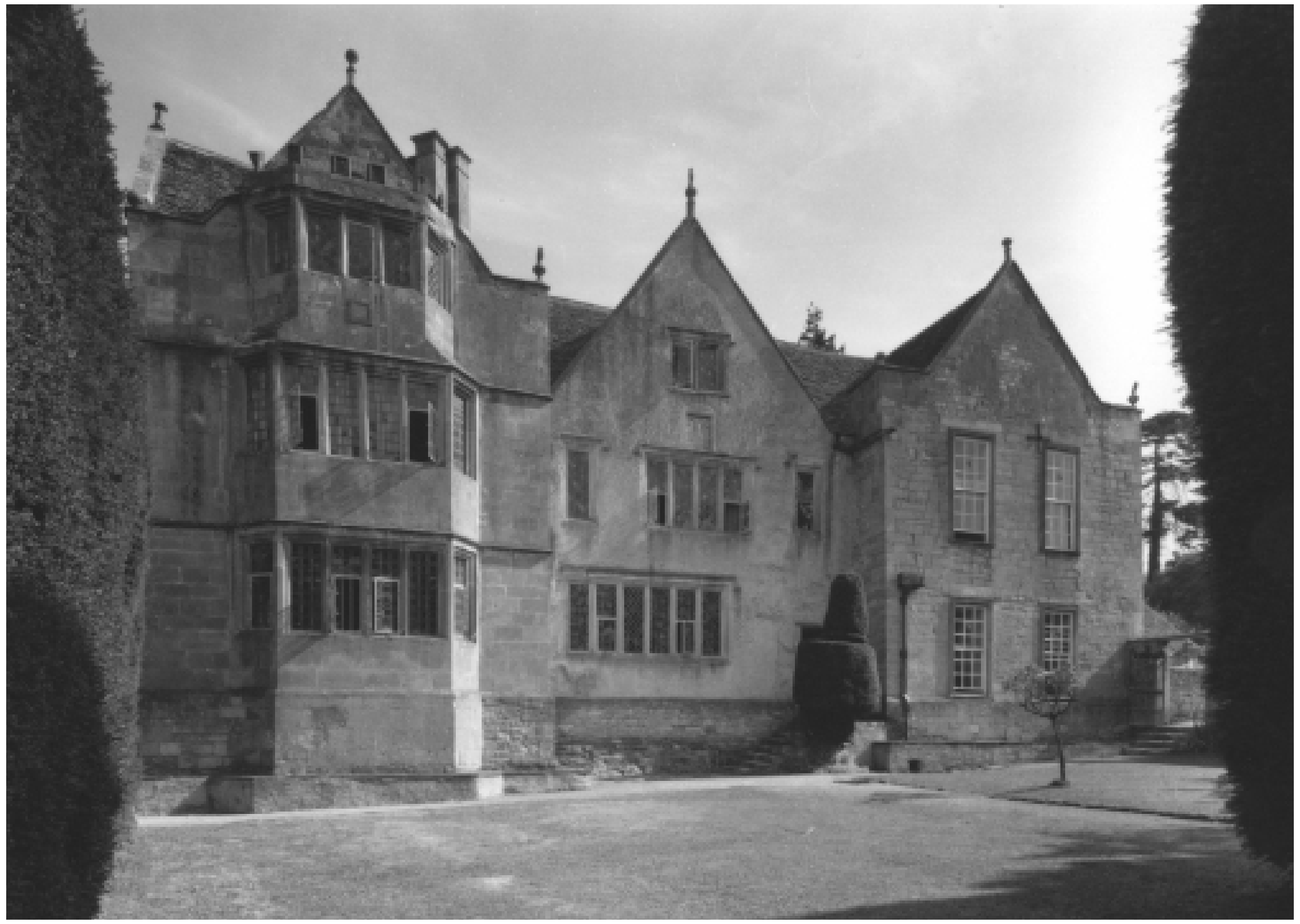
The house exposed to the prevailing westerlies has suffered at the mercy of a succession of natural disasters. A fireball rolled its way into the great parlour in 1556 killing the Lord of the Manor, Maurice Walsh and seven of his children who were with him. In 1703, the house was struck by lightning again, and the north (today's entrance) wing was damaged. The whole wing has been rebuilt, so there is little evidence of the medieval solar range it replaced, and the fenestration and planning are regular and Classical.

But the house was to decline through the following two centuries, until it was reduced to a rather profitless tenant farm by the late nineteenth century, and photographs show it was all but derelict by 1913. It was rescued in the nick of time by Lord Hugh Grosvenor, who appointed the skilful Sir Harold Brakspear (working at the time on Great Charfield nearby) to restore and adapt the house in 1913–15. Grosvenor was killed in the War without living to benefit, and his kinsman, Baron de Tuyll took over. Brakspear largely rebuilt the north wing solar range, particularly the east end of it, which now forms the entrance front in a rather cheerless Edwardian style, matching up what survived of the early- eighteenth-century work (to the west). Inside it forms a well-proportioned drawing room, entrance hall, with comfortable bedrooms over.

The Harford family bought the estate in 1952, and were succeeded in the 1980s by the Lampson family, of Atlantic Telegraph fame, the Lords Killearn. The house is much loved, and full of life and care. They have gallantly improved and restored the gardens, old bowling green, together with acres of magnificent retaining walls in drystone. Today the garden falls away in steep terraces with a succession of pools descending to a boating lake at the lowest level, which has been cleaned out and dredged.

*The well proportioned drawing room was created by Brakspear in 1913–15 in the then derelict solar range.*

*One of the evocative oak-panelled bedrooms, remodelled by the Stephens family of Lyegrove in the early seventeenth century.*



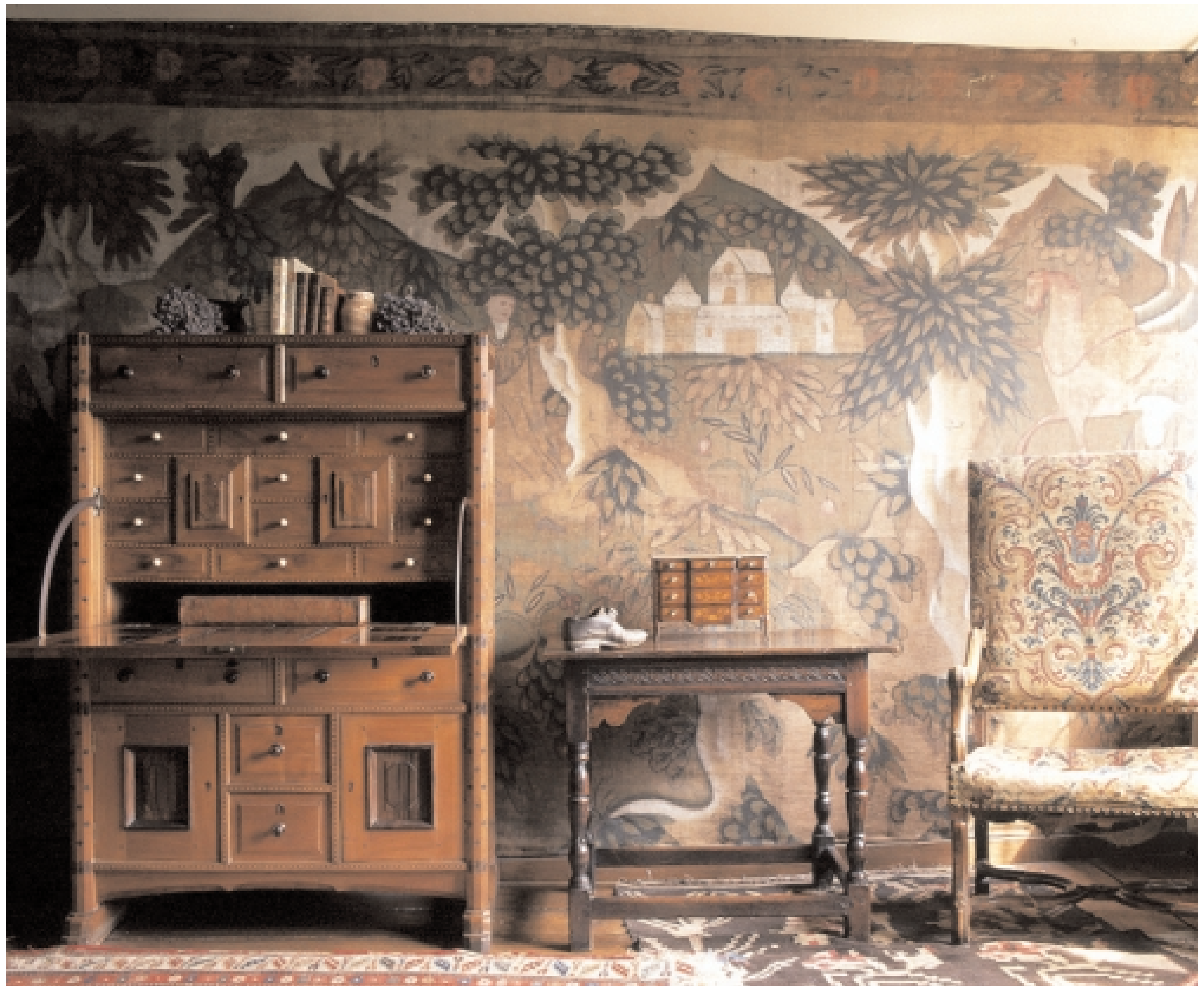
*View of the gables of the Jacobean west wing, from the loggia below the gazebo, or summerhouse.*

*The south front between yews has evolved from east to west over nearly three centuries, from 1450* (right) *to 1616* (left)*. Through the long continuity of the Cotswold vernacular tradition, all are in harmony.*

# *Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire*

Owlpen Manor stands in its own remote valley under the edge of the Cotswolds, its desmesne of pasture and meadowland enclosed by an amphitheatre of steeply rising hills crowned with beech woods. Here the pearl-grey manor house, with its enormous yews and attendant outbuildings – church, court house, barns and mill – nestle under the lee of a steep hillside. They form a remarkable group, with a charm, a presence and a perfection of form and scale, which have long been admired as one of the treasures of Cotswold scenery. The Tudor manor house was built and rebuilt organically between about 1450 and 1616 – since when, apart from minor alterations in the early eighteenth century, nothing has been done, or more remarkably, undone.

There was a long century of decline, when Owlpen became a Sleeping Beauty house, abandoned and derelict, overwhelmed by magnificent yews and the growth of rampant ivy. The Stoughton family had inherited in 1815, having come into money in the early nineteenth century through their interests in Monmouthshire iron and coal. They built an Italianate mansion a mile away, at the other end of the estate, to the designs of Samuel Sanders Teulon, in about 1848. As the century progressed, Tudor and vernacular architecture began to be appreciated under the inspiration of the Arts and Crafts movement, and they had the means to keep up the garden as a place for excursions, installing a caretaker living in some back rooms. The house is described as 'quaint' and 'curious', when it was rediscovered by the Victorian Romantics, and in particular *Country Life*. It was first written



up in 1906 by H. Avray Tipping, who described it as by then 'a garden house more than anything else … making its brave fight against consuming Time.'

The place name is Saxon, meaning 'Olla's pen', after a ninth-century thegn, or headman. Owlpen was a possession throughout the Middle Ages of the de Olepenne family, who probably derived their name from the place, and who are recorded from the twelfth century as henchmen to their overlords, the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle. To the last of the medieval de Olepenne we owe the west wing of the present house, with cruck trusses in the roof, similar to those in the great barn.

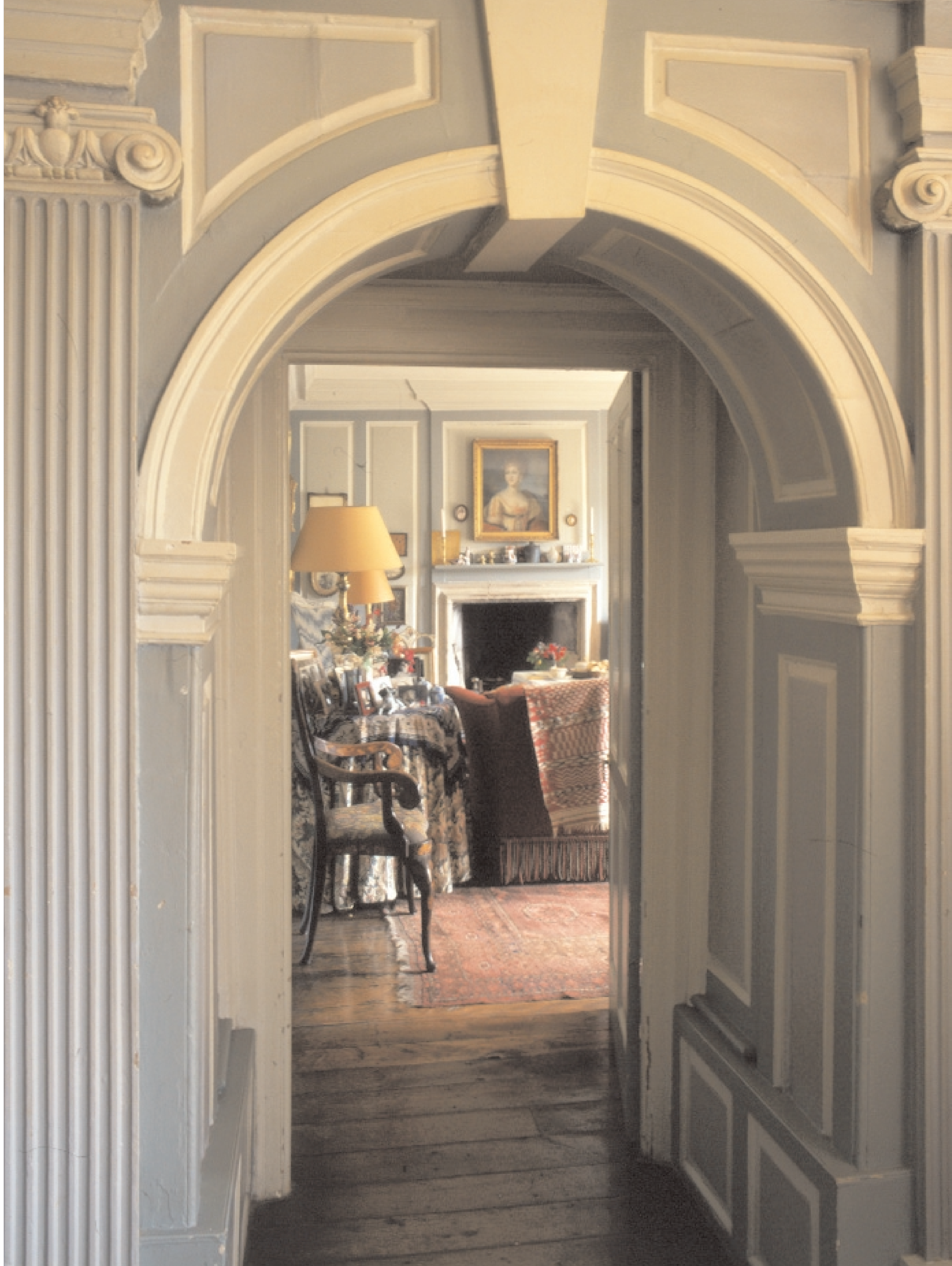
The male line failed about 1464, when the manor came into the Daunt family, following the marriage of Margery de Olepennes to Thomas Daunt, of a clothier family long settled in Wotton-under-Edge. The Daunts built most of what we see of the manor today, which grew by accretions from east to west over the three centuries to 1616. The hall/great chamber block in the centre is ascribed to Christopher Daunt, who inherited in 1542, following his marriage to Alice Throckmorton. The entry is at the lower end, where the screens would have been, and inside there are heraldic wall paintings commemorating the Daunts and de Olepennes.

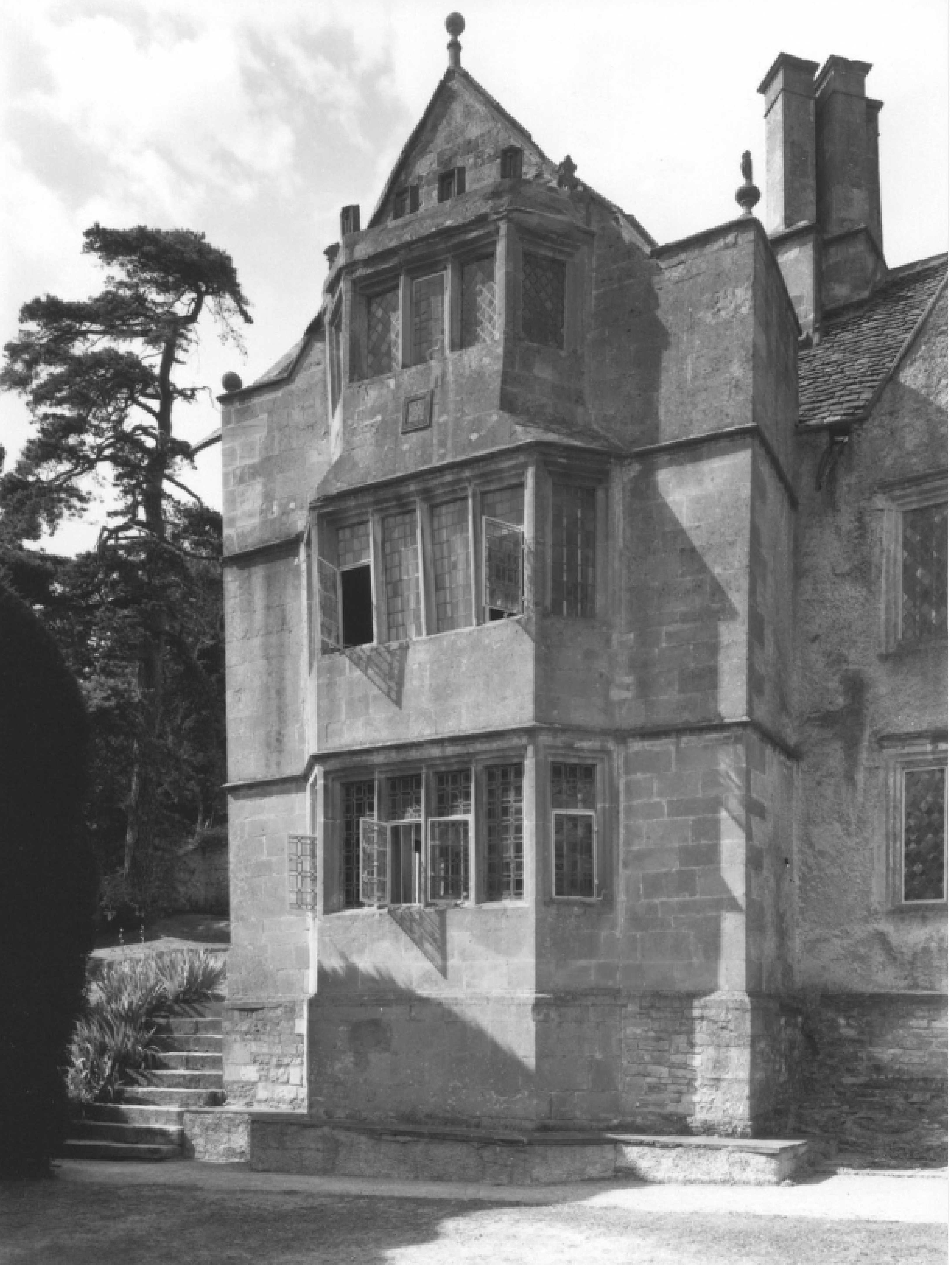
The most recent part of the manor is the west wing, an extension at the upper end of the hall. This is the parlour/solar block, with a storeyed bay window, diagonal-clustered chimneys, and two gables to the west front, and a date stone: 'TD 1616'. Thomas Daunt II's Oak Parlour represents the lord's parlour at the upper end of the hall, with the solar over at first-floor level, confirming the tenacity and continuity of medieval arrangements in the Renaissance period at the manorial level.

The south front is of three gables, representing three centuries of evolution. It is asymmetrical, haphazard, yet 'illogically satisfactory' in its appeal, as James Lees-Milne noted. David Verey commented that it is one of those houses

*The painted cloth hangings in Queen Margaret's Room are a rare survival dated about 1700, with scenes from the life of Joseph. The cabinet is by Sidney Barnsley, 1913.*

*The small panelled drawing room created within the shell of the medieval service wing seen through an early Georgian doorcase, both 1719.*





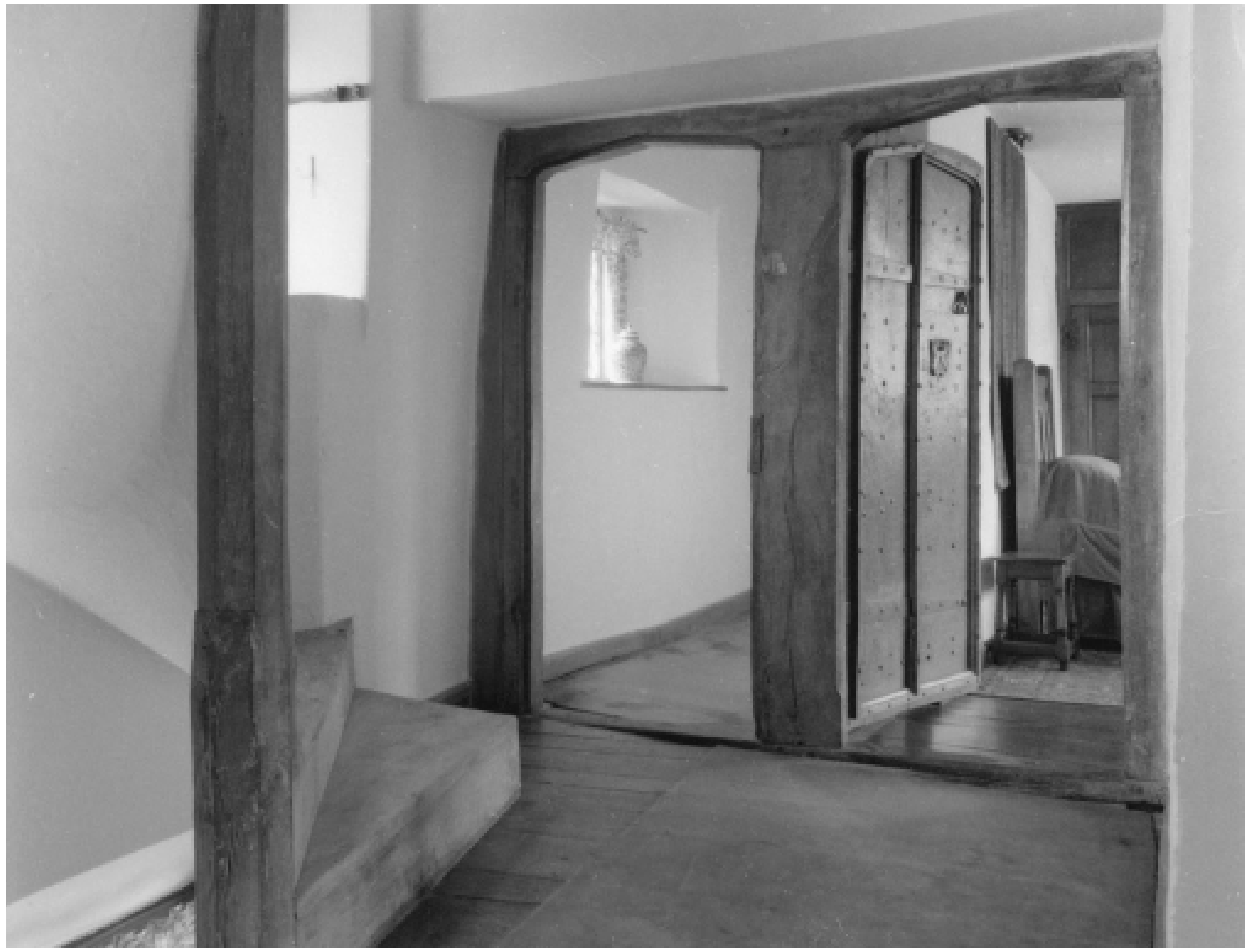
which has 'been altered so much at so many different periods that is difficult to say that this is Elizabethan more than anything else.' Christopher Hussey, writing in *Country Life* in 1952, was the first to recognise that it expresses a conventional, but squat, H-plan hall house, with cross-wings of unequal length at either end of the hall, a passage at first-floor level connecting them, and twin newel stairs. The Daunts had acquired considerable land in Co. Cork from the 1590s, a castle rather than a manor, and Owlpen declined to a mainland base, and was little altered.

The final phase is one of the early-eighteenth-century improvements, well documented from 1719 onwards when Thomas Daunt IV inherited. He laid out the present terraced gardens. There is an emphasis on increasing Classicism and symmetry, and the insertion of sash windows, hearths, panelling and partitions in a general remodelling, restricted to the two main floors of the (early) east wing. The house was little used or occupied after his death in 1749, when the manor began its long decline, which has preserved the house almost as he left it.

The condition of the 'beautiful ancient manor house at Owlpen' had already aroused the concern of antiquarians by 1912. Edward Hudson and H. Avray Tipping, respectively founder-editor and Architectural Editor of *Country Life*, Thackeray Turner, Chairman of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, F. W. Troup and A. R. Powys, two successive secretaries of the Society, Ernest and Sidney Barnsley and Alfred Powell, architects of the Sapperton group in the Cotswolds, were all manoeuvring behind the scenes to persuade Thomas Anthony Stoughton II's widow, Rose, now Trent-Stoughton, to make urgent repairs. 'The roof is propped up from the floor joists below and [there is] a serious fissure,

*The west wing with its storyed bay window and embattled parapet is dated 'TD 1616'– for Thomas Daunt. It forms the parlour-solar block, the most recent part of the manor house.*

*Sixteenth-century double doorway leading to the great chamber and the cross-passage, an advanced feature at this level.*



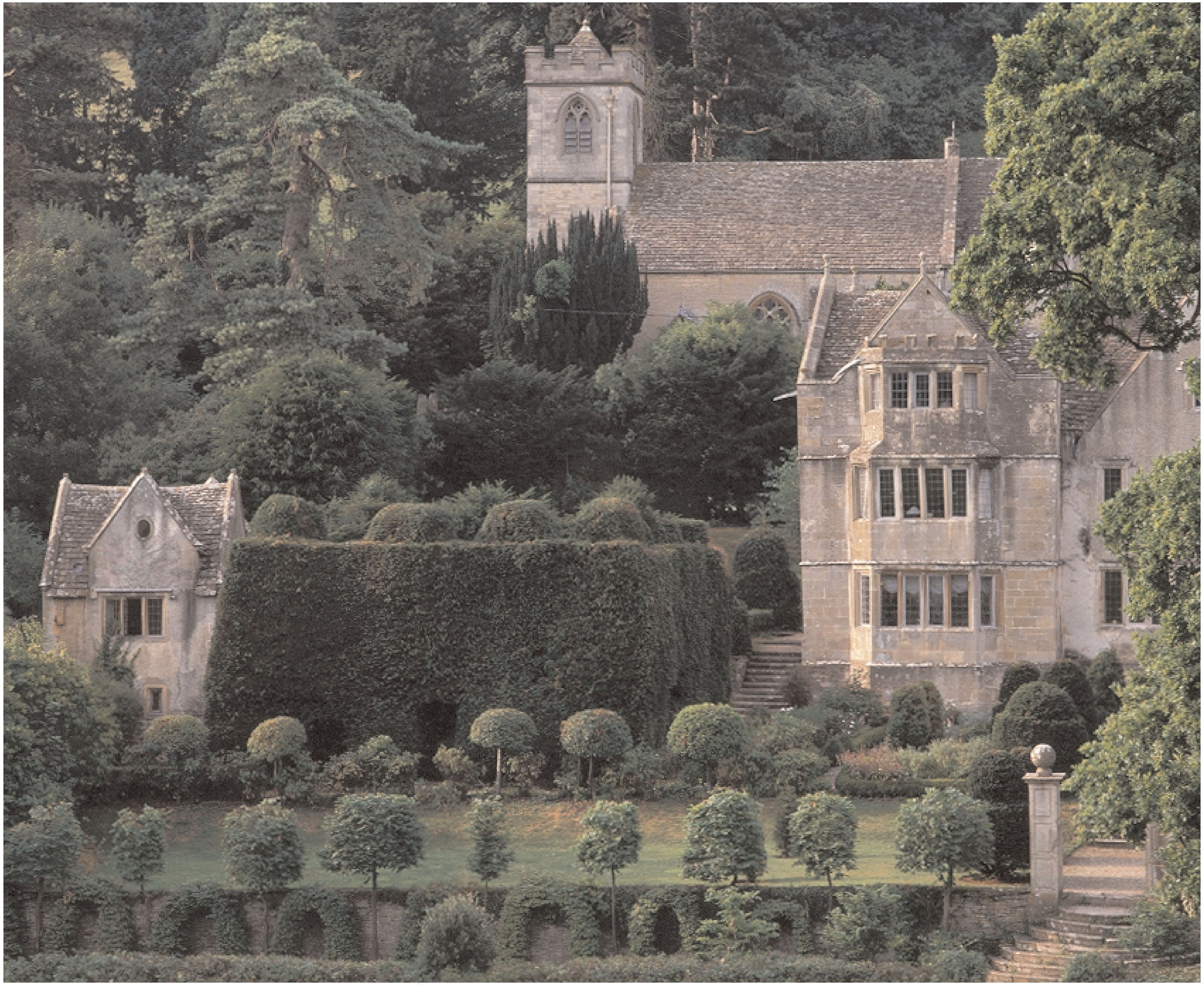
reaching from the top of one of the gables to within a few feet of the ground', wrote A. R. Powys. Failing that, he was suggesting that the property be given to the National Trust, when 'it might be possible to raise a sum for its repair.'

Conditions deteriorated through the First World War, and the Troubles in Ireland, where the main family estates were, took their toll. Sidney Barnsley wrote to A. R. Powys at the SPAB on 10 July 1921: 'It would be fatal if the house was ever again used as a dwelling place, as the alterations and repairs that would be necessary would mean its ruin – except of course if it was taken in hand by Weir and somebody could be found appreciative enough to sacrifice modern ideas of comfort!'

Such was the condition – shuttered and forsaken, yet picturesque in its timelessness – of the manor house when Norman Jewson (1884–1975), a colleague of William Weir, first stumbled across it on one of his bicycle excursions from Sapperton. In July 1925, Jewson succeeded in buying Owlpen at auction with its old garden, orchards, gardener's cottage, mill, barn and outbuildings for £3,200. He was competing against Charles Wade, the eccentric collector who (in 1919) had bought Snowshill Manor, near Broadway. The few remaining contents had also been sold, including the village stocks, old dog spits, and Queen Margaret of Anjou's reputed bed and chair. With his sound knowledge and sureness of touch, Jewson's sensitive repair of Owlpen succeeded in capturing the spirit of place as well as texture and period.

For aftercomers like Christopher Hussey, Owlpen was a dream made real, crystallising the spirit of the secret valleys of the Cotswolds, and preserving, with all the substance of its structure and history, something of a dream's lovely unreality. Hussey was a regular visitor, who had first seen Owlpen before it was restored 'on a dark autumn afternoon in 1925', empty and sad behind its dripping barrier of yews in the bowels of the valley. He painted a number of sketches of Owlpen in his visiting albums at Scotney Castle; the *Country Life* articles came out in 1952.

My wife Karin and I acquired the house in 1974, and befriended Norman Jewson in his old age. When he died, he left his Arts and Crafts furniture and many of his papers to the house. His discovery and subsequent purchase and repair of Owlpen is usually considered his most enduring achievement.



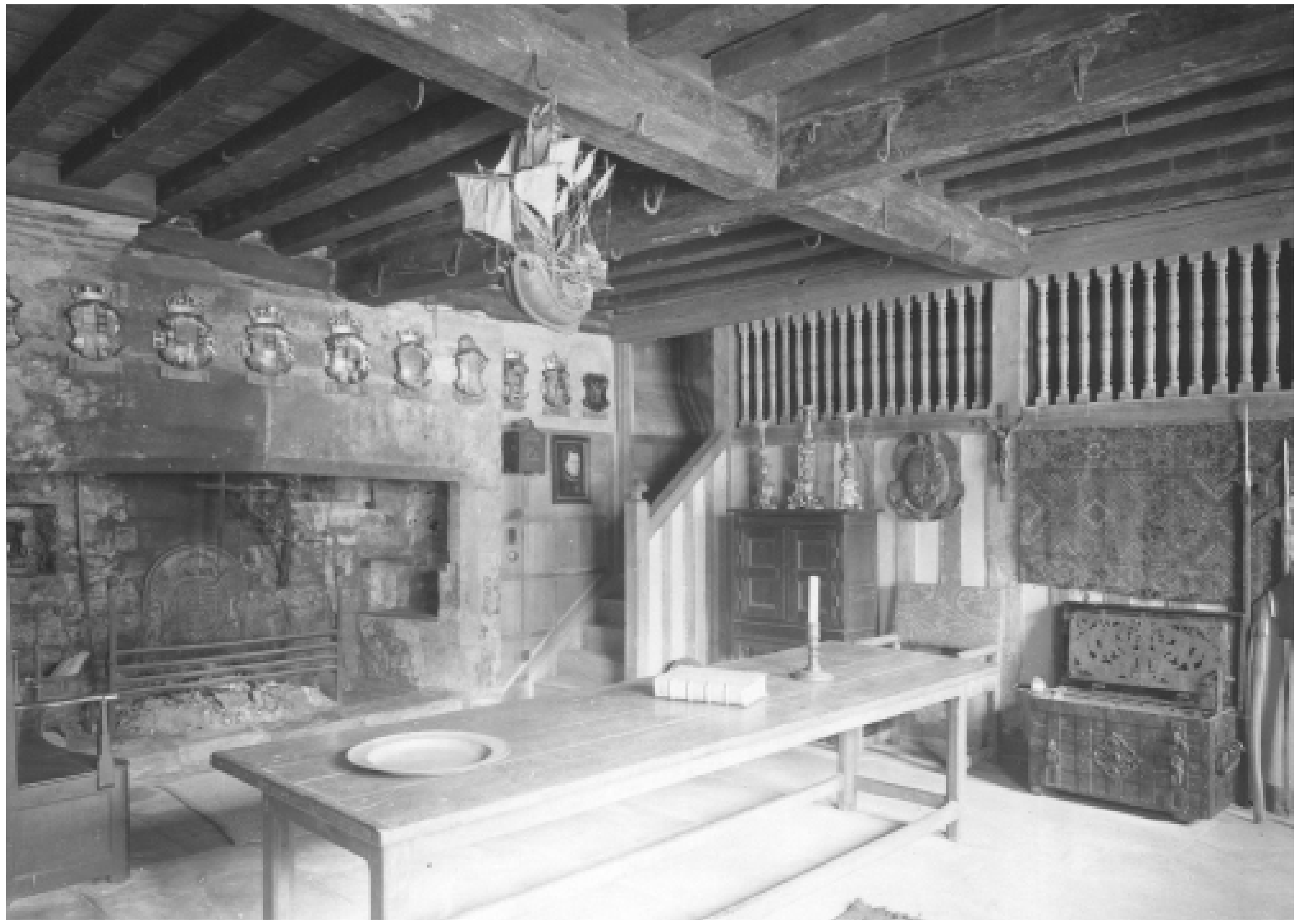
*The manor house and terraced hillside garden from the south, with the topiary yew parlour. It nestles below the church, heavily Victorianised, with the early Stuart summerhouse to the left and the early Georgian gate piers and segmental steps on an axis to the right.*

# *Snowshill Manor, Gloucestershire*

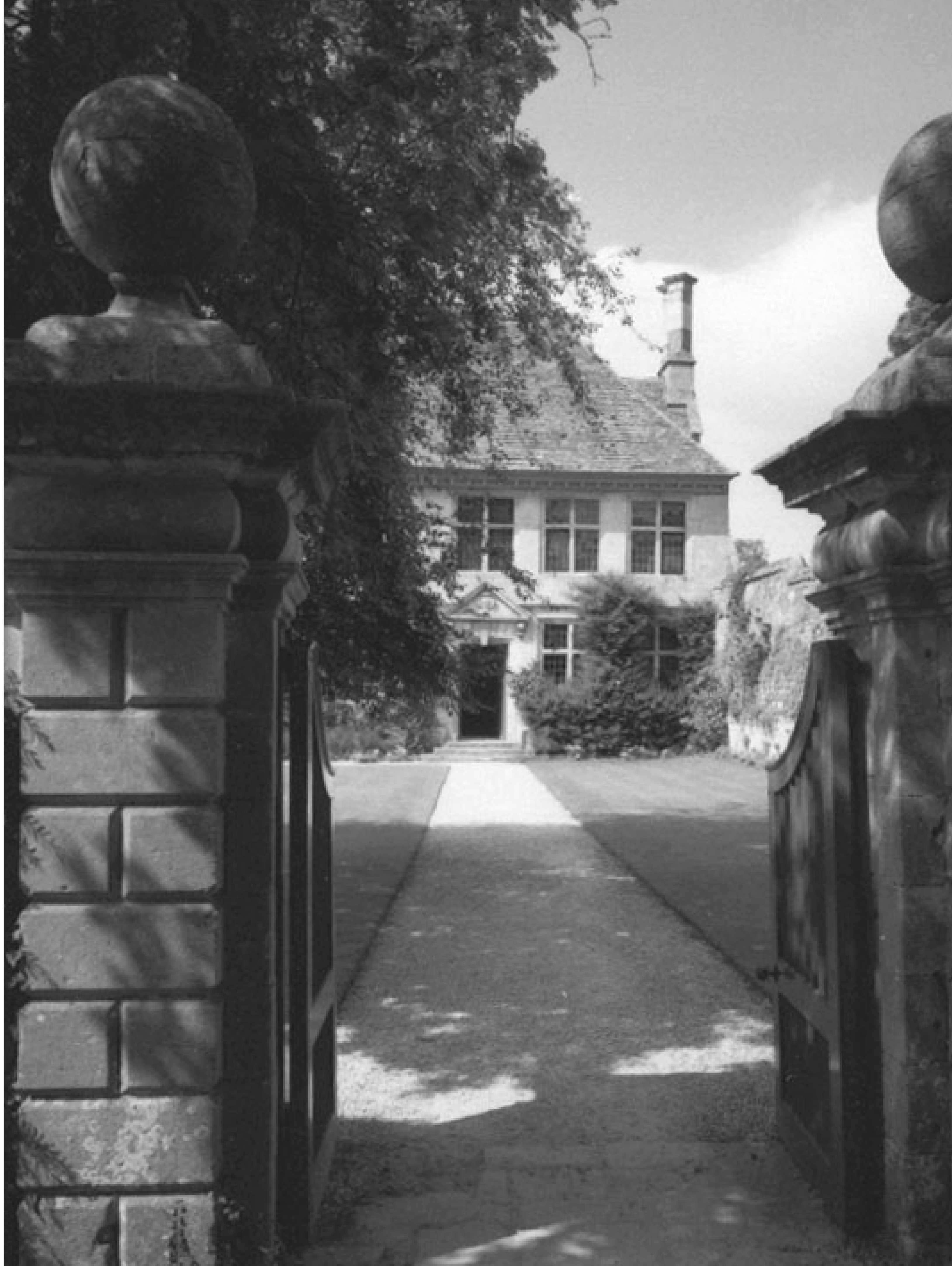
Snowshill, pronounced 'Snozzle' locally, is a house more notable for what it contains than the distinction of its elevations or its story. It is the expression of an owner. Today it houses a collection put together by Charles Paget Wade (1883–1956), architect and artist-craftsman; an uncommonly eccentric dilettante of scholarly habits, a self-styled poet, who had money behind him to indulge his tastes and collecting habit from family sugar plantations in St Kitts, in the West Indies. He grew up at Yoxford in Suffolk, and spent his life from the age of seven accumulating things, a gallimaufry of bibelots, proven by the 22,000 items which today fill his house.

They form an unusual arcanum of curiosa: craft objects steeped in the inflections of social history or exotic provenances, heterodox, random, deconstructed, seldom informed by any aesthetic as formal works of art or integrity as a collection. They include musical instruments and Samurai swords and armour, heraldic cartouches blazoned with bright tinctures, exotic Balinese masks, Middle Eastern metalwork, farm bygones like butter moulds and cow bells – all in arrangements contrived by Wade like a studied picture hang in rooms of haunting gloom.

As a sapper in the Royal Engineers, stationed at Doullens in France, Wade saw the house in an advertisement in *Country Life*. He bought the house in 1919, partly attracted by the dereliction into which it had fallen, and started to fill it with his magpie collection. He toyed with and improved the house with panelling and architectural antiques, at the same time decorating surfaces with his rambling inscriptions. By 1924, he was already restless, and made a bid to buy Owlpen Manor.



*'Dragon', where the fire belches smoke night and day, furnished with heraldic cartouches and balustrading, is set in the lower part of the medieval hall.*



*The Classical entrance through gate piers to the south with cross windows was added by William Sambach sometime after 1712. His coat of arms is in the pediment over the door.*

*The grim Samurai warriors in their armour are a popular exhibit in the vast collection of over 22,000 items.*

*Everywhere cabinets and surfaces are crammed with clutter and curiosities, here in a south room panelled c.1720.*

But he remained at Snowshill until 1956, leaving it to the care of the National Trust in 1951, before retiring to the West Indies.

Today, Snowshill is an Aladdin's den, with fragments of ships, figureheads or sailors' models whittled out of flotsam, Sicilian reliquaries, decorative painted banners, Victorian velocipedes and toys expressing the forgotten technologies of Midland factories, musical instruments, ubiquitous textiles and costumes – the conservator's nightmare. The names Wade called his rooms suggest nautical speak from his Atlantic crossings, Admiral', 'Top Gallant' (a garret under the eaves), 'Meridian ', or whimsical fantasies of a benign and blissful Arcadia, 'Seraphim', 'Seventh Heaven'. A small room in the bowels beyond the hall he called 'Nadir', erecting a wagon-vaulted ceiling. 'Dragon', the lower part of the medieval hall, was where he kept a cheering fire night and day.

As he filled the house to the gunwales with extravagant clutter, Wade soon forced his own withdrawal to a medieval outbuilding across the garden, originally a brewery or dairy, which he called the Priest's House. There he set up his workshop and choice items from his collection, including his favourite fireside rocking chair. He became a reclusive alchemist in this den, transmuting objects by his strange art, and reserving the house for his occasional guests and his burgeoning collection.

Lutyens described him as 'a most remarkable creature, with a face like a death mask of Henry Irving with a thick fuzz of grey hair, cut like a sponge.' James Lees-Milne remembers him thus: 'He wore a stiff winged collar, was always in breeches and stockings, and his shoes were adorned with large silver buckles. With his old wax complexion, his presence was daunting. But at heart he was a child.'

The house is beautiful but not distinguished, a Cotswold manor house of the early modern period, set in a terraced garden on the hillside. It lies exposed to the snow down a narrow lane, affording hopeless access for the hoards of

summer visitors on timed tickets today. The front door is approached between gate piers. The Georgian façade built by the owner (post 1712), William Sambach, has an uncompromising fault line, with mullioned and transomed windows in stone on the right and over the pedimented doorway, while the left has sash windows of the Georgian period.

The building dates back to the fifteenth century, when it was a possession of the Abbey of Winchcombe (from as early as 821). King Henry VIII gave it to Katherine Parr at the Dissolution. The main block is a small hall house dating to about 1500, but was remodelled in the early seventeenth century, with an extension to the south and the insertion of upper rooms; Sambach's Classical details date to a third phase, c.1720. Inside it is a tenebrous rabbit warren where twenty-one rooms are shown, crammed full, and illuminating.

Wade designed the terraced garden as a series of outdoor rooms descending a south-west slope, in collaboration with Arts and Crafts architect M. H. Baillie-Scott, who had been a fellow pupil at the practice of the town planners, Parker & Unwin, working on Hampstead Garden Suburb. He dug terraces and ponds between 1920 and 1923 on the site of the old farmyard, laid out with architectural antiques again – a Venetian well head, and an armillary sphere, a bellcote, a Madonna, a zodiac clock – and gates and timber features painted his favourite blue.

Wade was quoted in 1945 as saying: 'I have not bought things because they were rare or valuable, there are many things of everyday use in the past of small value, but of interest as records of various vanished handicrafts.'

*One of the early Jacobean bedrooms inserted above the hall.*

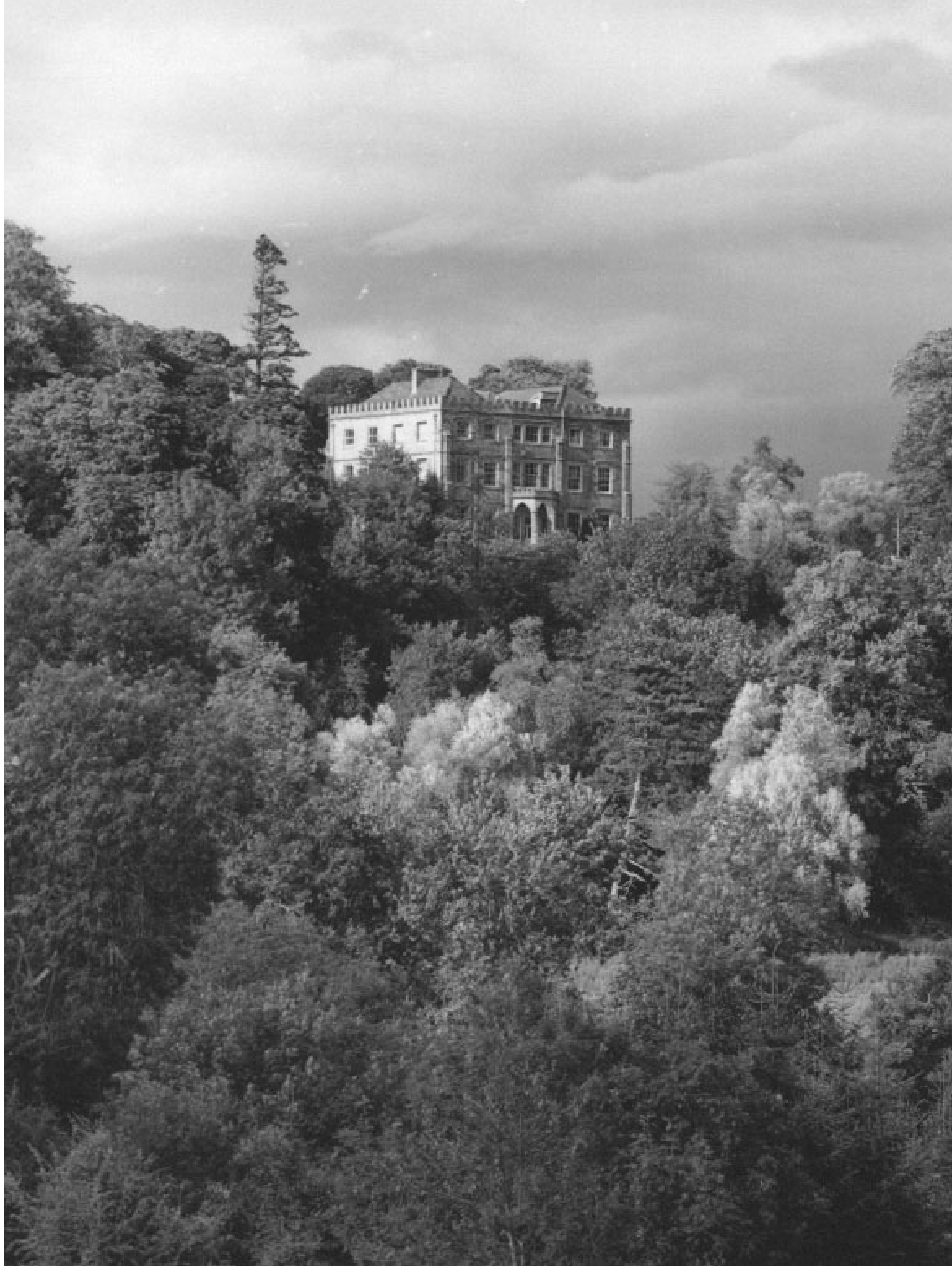
*The terraced gardens were laid out by Charles Wade, the magpie collector, with the help of his colleague M. H. Baillie-Scott in the early 1920s.*

# *Newark Park, Gloucestershire*

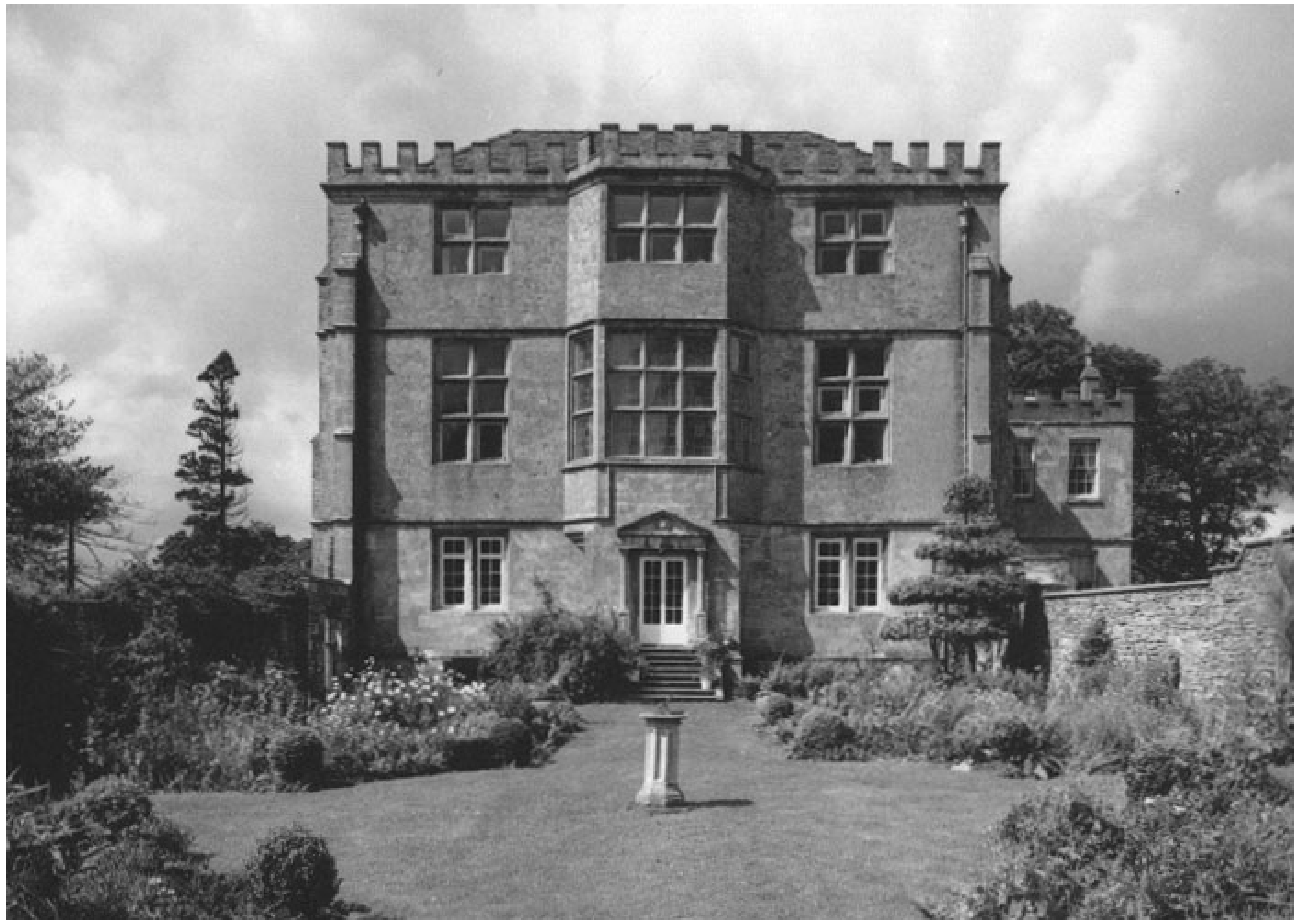
Sir Nicholas Poyntz of Iron Acton was a courtier to Henry VIII (and his distant kinsman through Elizabeth Woodville) and a Member of Parliament for Gloucestershire, who served a spell in prison only becauseF he was a dangerously close adherent to the Protector Somerset. His motto was: 'I obey whom I must, I serve whom I please, and I am what I merit.' He obeyed and served in his own way, and survived. In the end, his merit was not unrewarded: he was granted a quarter of the estate of Kingswood Abbey in February 1540, including the lands of Newark.

According to John Smyth, writing near the events in the 1620s, Sir Nicholas Poyntz built a house at Newark in the time of King Edward VI 'partly with the stones and timber of the demolished monastery of Kingswood, scarce two miles distant, and partly with the stones pulled from the crosses in the parishes thereabouts.' Sir Nicholas seems to have had little reverence for churchyard crosses, and was famous among his contemporaries for his incontinence. John Aubrey remarks acidly that he built a hunting lodge at Iron Acton 'to keep his Whores in'. Newark is precisely his 'New Work' for sylvan sports of various kinds, on a new site, already shown on Saxton's map of 1577. It was complete by the time he made his will in 1556, when he left his wife Dame Joan (a daughter of Thomas, the 5th Lord Berkeley) his 'new house at Osilworth that standith upon the hill and the parke that the same house standith in.'

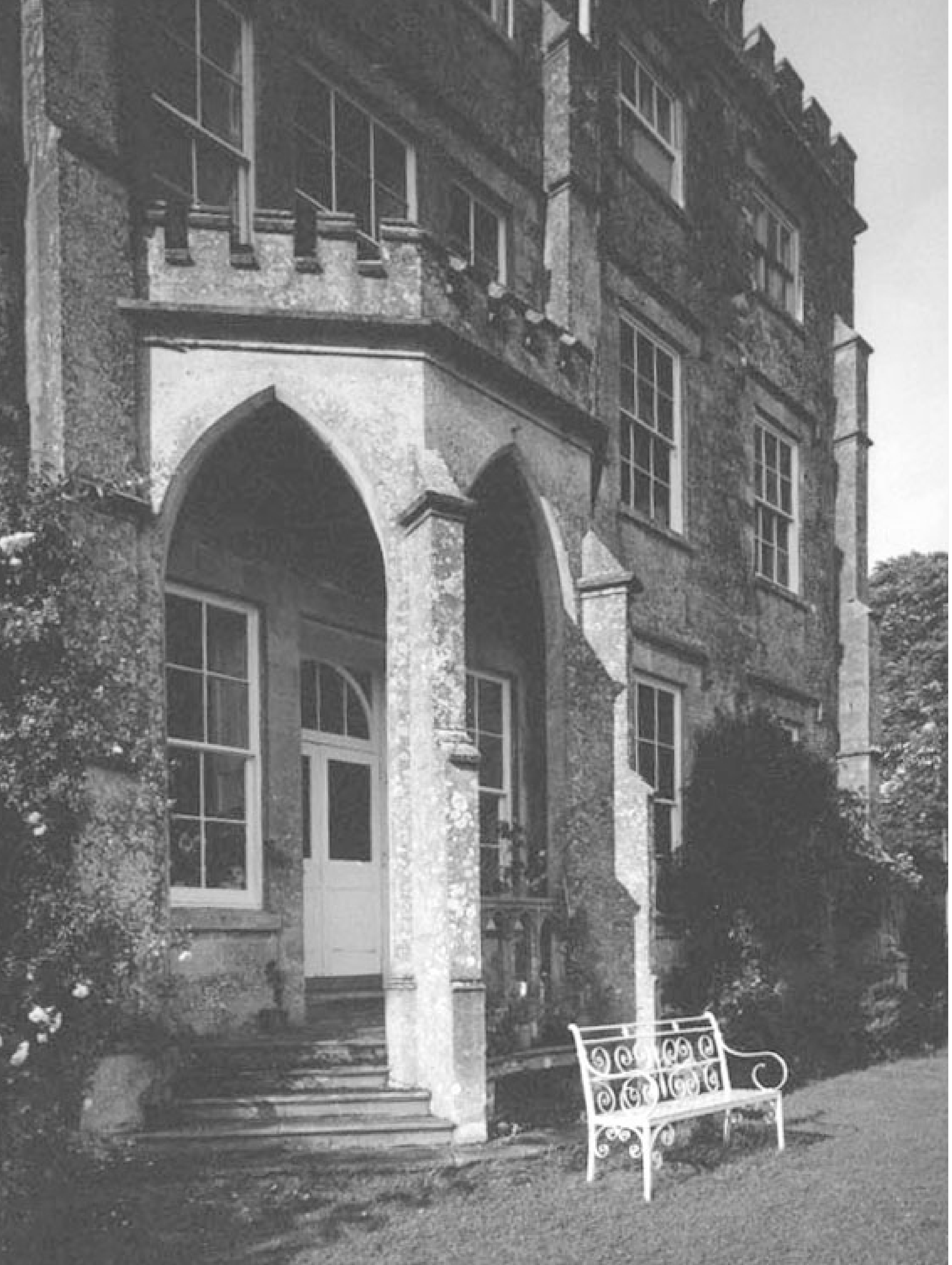
Newark is therefore a courtier house where we might expect to see the latest architectural fashions displayed. Functionally, it was not conceived as a dwelling house at all,



*The house stands spectacularly on the edge of a sheer cliff overlooking the open valley to the south. This view shows Newark remodelled by Wyatt as a Neo-Gothic villa in the 1790s, set in its Picturesque landscape.*



*The Tudor Renaissance front of Sir Nicholas Poyntz's hunting lodge of c.1550 has a progressive pedimented entrance (reset) with Doric columns; the decoration of parapet crenellations was added by James Wyatt.*



*The centre of James Wyatt's south front, with its canted Gothic porch.*

*The sylvan views to the south from the rooftops is reckoned one of the finest in the country.*

nor (principally) a seraglio, but as a hunting lodge: a *maison de plaisance*. Probably, like Lodge Park, the roof served also as a grandstand, a vantage point from which to watch the chase. It is hidden in what still seem like infinite woods, wilderness in its day. Here Giles Daunt of Owlpen, with his fellow huntsman George Huntley of Boxwell (and Woodchester) and stalkers armed with 'nets and dogs', claimed to have slaughtered 231 foxes in one year.

It was recently discovered that the pedimented doorway on the east main front is not *in situ*. It is an advanced Italianate feature, where the proto-Renaissance mood was for the first time penetrating the Cotswolds. Here we see a new building in the latest style, four storeys tall, where a calm symmetry has overtaken the rambling medieval arrangement of Sir Nicholas's other house at Iron Acton (see page xx), forming a fully integrated plan and elevations. There is a central bay, and battlements (the crenellated parapet is probably an addition by Wyatt), evoking the strife of Venus and venery. The feeling is compact, in a style that echoes gatehouse architecture, prefiguring some of the great Tudor houses of the Smythson school, like Wootton Lodge in Staffordshire. Yet it remains, in Tipping's own phrase, 'a classic veneer upon a Gothic framework.'

Inside, the service rooms were in the semi-basement. The ground floor had two entertainment rooms. The first floor was one open space, as a well-lit banqueting room. Above, no doubt, were the bedroom apartments. The original roof, providing the viewing platform, may have had corner turrets. The present staircase is a Wyatt insertion, and originally it would have been housed in a projecting staircase tower at the rear, as at Iron Acton Court.

Newark was adapted later as a functional country house, for it has three phases of evolution, each marked by changes in ownership. First it served as the Poyntz courtier hunting lodge, a plain symmetrical block of the Renaissance; second as the Lowe family's gentry manor house of the mid-seventeenth century, extended in an L-plan, with a parallel block, more typically Cotswold, which had twelve hearths in 1672; and third as the Reverend Lewis Clutterbuck's Gothic villa of c.1790, with appendages, ornament, lodges, new driveway and Picturesque landscaping by James Wyatt.

Wyatt's work was thorough and marks the building today, and its sash windows of the five-bay south front have some of the best views in England. The interior feel is predominantly of this Picturesque Neo-Gothic layer of its history, which has obscured the Tudor plan and details, made plain here and there by masonry scars, windows in strange places, stone laid bare in the restoration. Wyatt's scheme is at its most splendid in the entrance hall, with a screen of Doric columns and a *bucranium* frieze, and the staircase now set in the oriel bay to the east, with stained glass (*c.*1800).

Newark went through a long, steady decline in the twentieth century, and was almost lost to history. It went unnoticed by the early-twentieth-century writers of *Country Life*, like Tipping and Hussey. It was institutionalised after being bequeathed with an 800-acre estate to the National Trust in 1949, and accepted as a source of agricultural rent. James Lees-Milne, who dedicated his life to preserving great houses, admitted to having no eye for its architectural value. He proposed removing the roof and making of it a mighty and spectacular ruin on the hilltop where it stands, open to the sky.

Fortunately, this never happened. A prince came in the form of a dedicated Texan named Robert Parsons, an Anglophile architect, who took a long repairing lease of the desolate and cheerless house in 1972. With the labour of his own hands, and braving discomfort as he struggled with the ancient fabric, the weather and officialdom, he breathed new life into the house over a couple of decades of heroic work, patiently resurrecting it as a labour of love from a long century of decay. He uncovered bit by bit a rare masterpiece of the English early Renaissance. He furnished it appropriately and instituted a frank reign of hospitality.

The National Trust belatedly woke up to the repolished loveliness of the jewel that they owned, and it is now open to the public, with its garden cascading in terraces down the hillside, a glory of snowdrops in the spring.

TO CUT

# *Lodge Park, Gloucestershire*

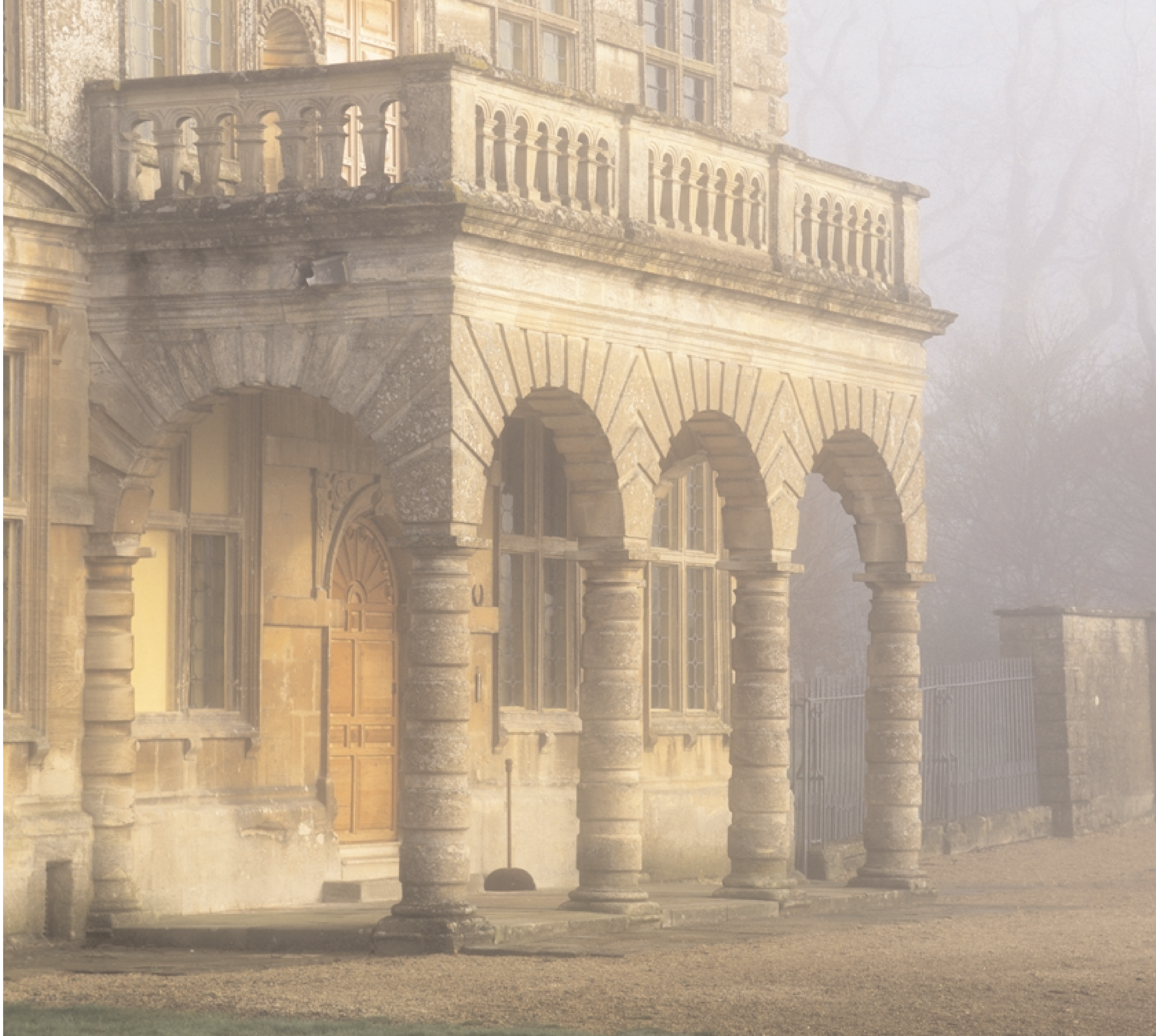
Lodge Park was built in 1634 for John Dutton (1598–1657), a wily, sociable and lusty Civil War politico, nicknamed 'Crump', after a cruel, disfiguring hunchback. He was a rakish gambler, dedicated to the sport of deer coursing, and one of the richest men in England. The Lodge was therefore built not to live in, or even to look on, but as a grandstand building from which to view the mile-long course, a gambling spectacle, which finished just beyond the Lodge. This was a race between sight hounds like the modern greyhound, let after the terrified deer, which ran as a lure (like an electric hare) in front of the house, more or less where the road now runs. A painting, now in the Lodge, by George Lambert *c.*1740, shows the threefold arrangement of lodge, deer course and formal park.

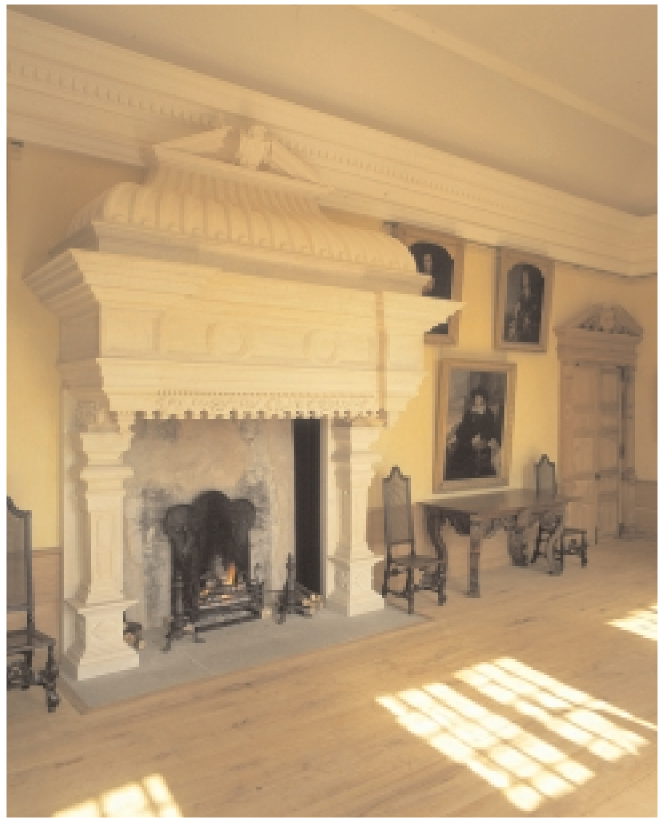
Crump Dutton was acquiring land for his 'new park' from 1624 onwards, but it was subsequently landscaped to the designs of Charles Bridgeman *c.*1729 for his great-nephew, Sir John Dutton, Bt. The Lodge is mentioned as 'lately built' by Lieutenant Hammond, a passing traveller, in 1634, who was the first to note the resemblance to Inigo Jones's Banqueting House in Whitehall.

The Lodge is a Classical ensemble in a simplified Inigo Jones manner, the most progressive building of its date in the Cotswolds. *Country Life*'s Clive Aslet describes the energy of the design: 'bursting with architecture.' Like the gatehouse at Stanway, it was long attributed to Jones himself, and that may

*The east front. The perfect Palladian grandstand building once attributed to Inigo Jones is progressive for its date (before 1634) in the Cotswolds.*

*A portico with a balustrade stands in front to form the viewing platform; the quirky miniature arcading of the balustrade echoes the rusticated loggia below.*





be why Lord Burlington commissioned a drawing by Henry Flitcroft about 1750 (though he records a purer, 'corrected' version), and then why it survived the depravations of the nineteenth century. The architect is unknown. It is putatively attributed to John Webb, or sometimes Sir Balthazar Gerbier, a virtuoso of a florid Netherlandish Baroque. A master mason such as Nicholas Stone is another candidate as executant.

The five-bay east entrance front is intact, with rusticated quoins and balustrading set around what would have been a flat roof. An arcaded loggia stands as a portico in front, with rusticated arches and parapet (it has scaled-down arcading), so that there are two levels of viewing platforms for a crowd of spectators. There are subtleties of detail, sometimes clumsily provincial and without Palladian precedent: shell-headed alcoves, and fenestration in cross-windows, with curious pediments, and crude busts sitting in the upper pediments; the balustrading is top-heavy, the chimney-stacks asymmetrical. These are features of the 'artisan mannerist' style, a loose jumble of quotations cribbed from Continental pattern books and the work of immigrant craftsmen. But the coarseness associated with the style is here restrained.

The elements of the plan are simple. The ground floor had an entrance hall and parlour behind, with service room. Below was a substantial service basement (later infilled), the kitchen with two fireplaces, and ample cellars, equipped for Dutton's lavish and sometimes debauched entertaining, with wenching and gambling. A staircase tower provided access to the first floor, where a new stairway has been wonderfully copied from one at Cornbury, in Oxfordshire. The first floor in the main block consisted of one huge space, a 44ft banqueting chamber, apparently a double cube, with a central fireplace (now replaced to its original design, after a fireplace found in Sherborne House) and central windows, accessing a balcony in front from which to view the chase. There was a bedroom behind to the west. The flat roof above formed the main viewing platform.

The house fell victim to a succession of drastic internal alterations, each more radical than the last, until nothing of worth survived from the seventeenth-century interior. William Kent was the first to intervene, refurbishing the main house and Lodge about 1728, but his work has been obscured by later overlays. We know he designed furniture for the banqueting room, delivered in 1730. Whatever work he carried out was gutted (twice) in the nineteenth century, when new partitions were set up and a new range added at the back, replacing the original one to make it serve adequately as a dwelling, first for gamekeepers and ultimately as a dower house for Lady Sherborne.

Unfortunately, the interior was radically simplified again in 1938 by tenants, and again about 1960 by Charles Dutton, 7th Lord Sherborne, by which time it seemed to be architecturally ransacked. Sherborne House, the main house on the estate, was leased to J. G. Bennett, disciple, biographer and friend of Giurdjieff and Ouspensky, as 'a centre for adult education and creative transformation.' After Bennett's sudden death, it was sold and the house and stables turned ruthlessly into flats, when the interiors were obliterated forever.

Lord Sherborne died without issue in 1982, leaving his Sherborne estate to the National Trust, and reserving the Lodge for the use of Betty Hall, his faithful housekeeper. The Trust commissioned a thorough archaeological survey of the building by Professor Warwick Rodwell. The interior of the Lodge is a scholarly reconstruction to as near as possible its original form, and was the first major project undertaken by the National Trust that relied on the interpretation of archaeological evidence. It was opened to the public in 2000.

*The canopied chimneypiece dominating the great room on the first floor is a faithful copy of one found in Sherborne House, the main house of the estate. Furniture for the room was contributed by William Kent.*

*The oak staircase is a careful reconstruction commissioned by the National Trust in the 1990s after one at Cornbury Park, in Oxfordshire.*