

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the evolution of Vernacular Italianate architecture as expressed in the smaller house in Britain, from its introduction in the early nineteenth century to its maturity six decades later, identifying the significant waymarks along the route. It will consider the cultural context of the inception and reception of the style, the means of its dissemination, its evolution into differing house typologies, and its geographical and demographic incidence. It will analyse the inherent factors which underlay its appeal.

This was an architectural idiom which drew on the farmhouses and rustic buildings to be found in the Italian countryside, as represented by both seventeenth-century European landscape artists such as Claude Lorrain, and by later British and European painters, travellers and observers. It was introduced to England by John Nash (1752-1835) in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the form of the country house, or *villa rustica*, as one manifestation of the Picturesque aesthetic in architecture. Nash built three such villas between 1802 and 1811: Cronkhill in Shropshire, Sandridge Park in Devon, and Lissan Rectory in Co. Tyrone.¹ [1.1, 1.2, 1.3] As interpreted by Nash and others, this style was broadly characterised by features such as asymmetrical massing and elevation; a varied roof line of shallow pitch, with broad overhanging eaves supported on brackets; grouped, round-headed fenestration; and the use of a belvedere or stylised tower as a vertical counterpoint to long, lower ranges. Superficial decoration such as quoins or mouldings was of secondary importance and, in the style's purest form, absent.

After its introduction by Nash the style was first taken up by a contemporary, Robert Lugar (c.1774-1855), who executed a small number of villas of asymmetrical plan in this character (and who employed the term 'Italian' to describe them); there were otherwise few examples

¹ Sir John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash, Architect*, (London, 1980), pp. 41-2.; Terence Davis, *John Nash: The Prince Regent's Architect*, (2nd edition, Newton Abbot, 1973), pp. 42-3, 52; Michael Mansbridge, *John Nash*, (London, 1991), entries 72, 90 and 106.

for a decade or so until a number of architects began to illustrate it in books of designs for modest villas, of which the most influential were those by John Buonarotti Papworth (1775-1847), Thomas Frederick Hunt (c.1791-1831), and Peter Frederick Robinson (1776-1858). Amid a plethora of 'villa books' published from the 1820s, Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica*, initially published in 1832, and based on his field drawings, can be regarded as a landmark in the advertisement of Vernacular Italianate to a wider public. By the 1830s the style was frequently depicted in the architectural pattern books, particularly for the smaller house, and in them the terms 'Italian' and, more frequently, 'Anglo-Italian' were well-established. In parallel the built repertoire of Vernacular Italianate houses was developing to include not just country retreats but suburban villas, with particular application in the new villa 'colonies': planned estates which characterised the expansion of many Regency towns. By the next decade it was demonstrating its adaptability for houses of smaller size, and for the layout of the suburban street; by the mid-century it had begun to appear in urban contexts of higher density in the forms of semi-detached, grouped, and even terraced houses. By the 1860s examples abounded in very many towns and cities but the style had become distanced from its original simplicity, its Picturesque provenance largely forgotten or discarded as the broader concept of Italianate style in domestic architecture became increasingly imprecise, most noticeably in the field of the smaller house.

A parallel strand of domestic Italianate architecture had been introduced by Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860) in the 1830s which, in contrast to Nash's Picturesquely-conceived Italianate models, derived from the Renaissance palazzo form, and while recognisably rustic Italianate house designs continued to be executed well into the 1860s, both architects and the pattern books of the building trade increasingly adopted elements of Barry's interpretation and grafted them without discrimination (wittingly or not) onto the Claudean rusticity which had been the essence of earlier Vernacular Italianate design. In its mature phase from around the 1860s, therefore, domestic Vernacular Italianate style could still be

clearly observed in what might be seen as its purer form in larger, individual houses, where it tended to conform to an asymmetrical, towered model which had been disseminated by the pattern books since the 1840s. In its urban form, however, particularly for attached houses, where there was more restricted opportunity for imaginative massing, the expression of a Vernacular Italianate idiom became increasingly merged into a hybrid style which combined characteristic rustic fenestration and roof detail with elements of palazzo-derived decoration, with greatly reduced Picturesque impact. This broadly represented the final form of Vernacular Italianate in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

As an architectural style the importance of Vernacular Italianate in Britain lies not just in its initial role as an innovative and charming incarnation of the Picturesque, but in the central position which it came to assume as one of the faces of the nineteenth-century town. Yet, for reasons which will be explored below, it has not to date received the attention which its ubiquity within urban and suburban architecture of the period should demand. The literature to date has struck only glancing blows at the subject, usually in one of three contexts. The first is within the arena of the Picturesque as a whole where Vernacular Italianate is often seen as a less significant element of the repertoire by comparison with cottage or English Revival styles. The second is in relation to the Italian Renaissance Revival or 'Palazzo' style already referred to, brought to prominence by Sir Charles Barry, in which context Vernacular Italianate is characterised either as a less distinguished sibling, or as its precursor, thereby reducing it to an architectural means rather than an end in itself. The third area in which it tends to make an appearance is as a footnote to the study of nineteenth-century urban development, and that of London in particular, where its presence is frequently remarked upon but not further analysed.

The approach of Henry-Russell Hitchcock, for example, is to distinguish between the importance of the asymmetrically towered 'Italian Villa' as a lasting style *per se* from that of

the contribution which it made as an important ‘vehicle’ of Picturesque ideas,² alongside the *cottage orné* or the Jacobethan or Tudor-Gothic villa. He feels that Nash’s Cronkhill, ‘the first [rustic] Italian Villa’, ‘was to be perhaps the most significant of the Picturesque modes of house design ... appearing here almost full blown’.³ Yet he goes on to remark that ‘Italian Villas, as such, are not of much consequence after 1837’,⁴ a surprising assessment given the many examples which can be identified in Britain well beyond this date, as evidenced in this thesis. By this he seems to mean that the importance of the Italian villa as he identifies it lay not so much in the detailing and characteristics of the style itself, for as he sees it, ‘as the Victorian Age advanced, the later examples declined in style and grace’;⁵ but rather more in the ‘opportunities for a new and elastic sort of domestic planning’ which it represented. In his view its influence was more general and more fundamental, as a model for the ‘asymmetrical composition ... organised about a major vertical accent’, which, variously clad in Gothic Revival or French Empire or other superficial styles became in his view the *leitmotif* of Victorian domestic architecture. The significance of the early Italianate villa in opening eyes to the acceptable face of asymmetry is far from negligible but the case will be made in this thesis that this significance resonated far beyond the transitional role assigned by Hitchcock, for the extensive built repertoire demonstrates the lasting status achieved by Vernacular Italianate as a distinct and popular style.

David Watkin’s survey of the Picturesque⁶ acknowledges the debt which Picturesque architecture owed to Claude and other landscape painters but sees the influence of this artistic genre manifesting itself more forcefully in the late eighteenth-century architectural impetus to unite house and landscape rather than in the specifics of Italianate massing or detailing; he repeats Hitchcock’s term in describing the Vernacular Italianate style of John

² Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain*, (New Haven, 1954), Vol. I, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ David Watkin, *The English Vision*, (London, 1982).

Nash, Thomas Hope (1769-1831) and Henry Goodridge (1797-1864) as a ‘vehicle’ for or ‘aid to’ the Picturesque, implying that ultimately it could not hold its own in the Picturesque repertoire against the challenges of the Gothic and Domestic Revivals.⁷ He seems to diminish the wider significance of Nash’s three rustic villas by suggesting that Nash’s failure to repeat or develop the experiment reflected the fact that it ‘unfortunately proved less popular than his castle style’, a judgement which he does not substantiate.⁸ In Watkin’s earlier study of Thomas Hope⁹ he had put forward a more nuanced reading, elevating the Vernacular version to the position of ancestor of palatial Italianate, with Barry as a natural successor and the true source of the urban Italianate which was to follow. Thomas Hope’s house, The Deepdene, from c.1818, was a very personal rather than necessarily representative interpretation,¹⁰ but Watkin sees it as a crucial waypoint in a stylistic shift from ‘Picturesque Claude-like Italianate’ to ‘the more precise Italianism of the 1830s which was based fairly closely on fifteenth and sixteenth-century models’.¹¹ This at least pays homage to Claudean Italianate but implies that even before the mid-century it had become a stylistic *cul-de-sac*: in its application to the new great houses of the period this reading rings true, but in the suburban and urban context of the smaller house it can readily be contradicted.

Christopher Hussey, whose seminal work generated what was to become the full-scale twentieth-century re-appraisal of the Picturesque aesthetic in its broadest context,¹² discusses the appearance of Poussin- and Claude-inspired buildings. He does not set out to define an ‘Italian’ Picturesque architectural style in any terms other than one which ‘arouses an

⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸ Ibid., p. 115.

⁹ David Watkin, *Thomas Hope 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical Idea*, (London, 1968).

¹⁰ The Deepdene will be discussed in Chapter 6.

¹¹ Watkin, *Hope*, p. 183.

¹² Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a point of View*, (London, 1927).

association of ideas with the Italian landscape’,¹³ whether it manifests itself as ‘The Deepdene or Dorchester House’¹⁴ and their ‘suburban villa’ offspring,¹⁵ or rural-inspired (in Hussey’s word ‘domestic’¹⁶) architecture, appearing to see no differentiation in approach or origin between the Palatial or Rustic varieties. In respect of the latter, however, he picks up the story only with the pattern books of the 1820s and 1830s: his omission of Nash’s Claudean villas in the context of the architectural response to the Picturesque is inexplicable.

Others seem to encounter difficulty in accommodating Vernacular Italianate within the turbulent stylistic cross-currents of the early nineteenth century. James Stevens Curl, for example describes Nash’s Italianate villas merely as ‘a by-product’ or ‘an inevitable consequence’ of the Picturesque,¹⁷ although he at least concedes that Cronkhill is ‘enchanting’.¹⁸ However he fails to pick up the scent for their subsequent evolution and re-emergence in the Regency town, focusing exclusively on the Renaissance Palatial variety of Italianate as exemplified by Barry and Cubitt; he nominates the *Rundbogenstil* Italianate works of Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) at Potsdam, executed c.1830, as a major influence on what he sees as the British Italianate Revival, thereby ignoring Picturesque precedent in general and Nash in particular. He identifies British Italianate with ‘vast ranges of stucco-fronted London terraced houses’, firmly placing them as ‘descendants and relatives of the Barry palazzo style’.¹⁹ Michael Turner, in considering Prince Albert’s aesthetic contribution to the design of Osborne House (from the mid-1840s), similarly sees Italianate as a fusion of ‘the Picturesque, the archaeologically-based neo-Romanesque, and the [Renaissance Revival] palazzo’, its chief merit being as ‘a stylistic compromise, as it could accommodate

¹³ Hussey, *Picturesque*, p. 217.

¹⁴ Park Lane, London: by Lewis Vulliamy (1791-1871), built 1850-63 (demolished 1929). H.M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, (4th edition, New Haven and London, 2008), p. 1080.

¹⁵ Hussey, *Picturesque*, p. 223.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁷ James Stevens Curl, *Georgian Architecture in the British Isles, 1714-1830*, (2nd edition, Swindon, 2011), p. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 343.

¹⁹ James Stevens Curl, *Victorian Architecture: Diversity and Invention*, (Reading, 2007), p. 158.

symmetrical facades with the asymmetrical planning of the Gothic'. Like a number of commentators when faced with the concept of Italianate architecture in nineteenth-century Britain, he chooses to conflate rather than distinguish the different strands within this portmanteau view.²⁰ This consistent identification of British Italianate solely with Barry's approach, rooted as it was in field observation and historical study, risks minimising the significance of the Vernacular Italianate interpretation, and with it the contribution of the Picturesque aesthetic in shaping it. It also tends to distort the chronology by changing the focus to a point much later in the century, at around 1840, and ignoring much of what had gone before other than by reference to what was emerging in the architectural pattern books.

Perhaps alone among practitioners of rustic Italianate, Henry Goodridge has received a generous amount of attention, and rightly so.²¹ Christopher Woodward has written about Goodridge's Italianate Bathwick Hill houses of the 1840s, seeing them as an essay in suburban Picturesque which strikes a fine contrast to the Classical rigidity of Bath's Georgian period and uses the natural topography to skilled effect.²² Separately, Timothy Mowl has put forward a concept of the 'Williamane' as a towered 'Tuscan' style which formed a bridge between the old classicism and the later Italianate Revival.²³ However, his analysis presents problems of both chronology and stylistic evolution as he seeks to narrow its flowering to the seven years (1830-37) of the reign of William IV. Acknowledging Nash's innovation at Cronkhill he appears to suggest that it was in some sense ahead of its time and

²⁰ Michael Turner, 'From Coburg to Osborne via Naples: Prince Albert and Architectural Inspiration at Osborne', in *Prince-Albert Studien: Künstlerische Beziehungen zwischen England und Deutschland in der viktorianischen Epoche*, Proceedings of the 16th Conference of the Prince Albert Society, (Coburg, 1997), pp. 21-38, 190-193.

²¹ Amy Frost offers the most comprehensive monograph to date on Goodridge: 'From Classicist to Eclectic: the stylistic development of Henry Edmund Goodridge, 1797-1864' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bath, 2009); see also Christopher Woodward, 'H.E Goodridge in Bath: The End of the Terrace and the Rise of the Villa', in *The Picturesque in late Georgian England*, (London, 1995), pp. 57-66.

²² Christopher Woodward, 'Aerial Boudoirs of Bath', in *Country Life*, 4 September 1997, pp. 68-71.

²³ Timothy Mowl, 'The Williamane: Architecture for the Sailor King', in Roger White and Caroline Whiteburn (eds.), *Late Georgian Classicism*, Proceedings of the Georgian Group Symposium, (London, 1983), pp. 92-106; 'A Taste for Towers', in *Country Life*, 1 October 1987, pp. 152-55.

that this radical interpretation therefore died stillborn, leaving it to others to ‘invent’ a new style three decades later. As a result he fails to give due weight to others such as Robert Lugar or P.F. Robinson, whose contribution through either built examples or pattern books was made well before the 1830s. Nor does he satisfactorily deal with the customary dilemma of how to reconcile Nash’s ‘Claudean’ Cronkhill with Hope’s eclectic Greco-Roman Deepdene, and with Barry’s Renaissance-derived Italianate as seen at Trentham, and the Palatial Osborne of Cubitt and the Prince Albert, all of which he clusters under the undifferentiated ‘Italianate’ umbrella.

The later (that is, post-1850) and urban manifestations of the style have been particularly neglected.²⁴ Sir John Summerson, in his 1948 essay on the London suburban villa in the later nineteenth century,²⁵ acknowledged the part played by Vernacular Italianate (in more or less mannered form)²⁶ in satisfying the need for ‘character’ in the new urban house, as an alternative to classicism or the Gothic. But his lack of enthusiasm as well as the absence of references back to its intellectual credentials and its Nash provenance seem to underline a view that it represented second-rate if acceptable ‘whimsy’,²⁷ which had its place but knew its station. It is, in the view of Summerson and others, very much the cadet branch of the Italianate family.

The most focused studies to date of the genesis of Vernacular Italianate have come from French commentators. Two articles, nearly thirty years apart, deal with the topic from different standpoints. Irénée Scalbert in 2004 re-visited the influence of landscape painters on the architecture of the Picturesque movement, singling out the architectural

²⁴ One exception is Neil Jackson, who considered the ‘Italian Villa Style’ as one of a number of urban forms in ‘The Speculative House in London c.1832-1914’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, 1982), pp.155-62.

²⁵ Sir John Summerson, ‘The London suburban villa, 1850-1880’, reprinted in *The Unromantic Castle*, (London, 1990), pp. 217-234.

²⁶ In analysing the sources for mid-century suburban house design Summerson in fact identifies ‘Italian Revival’ with Barry, while relegating the ‘Italian villa’ models provided by architect and pattern-book author Charles Parker to the category of ‘Bookish Influences’: *Unromantic Castle*, p. 222.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

interpretations of Italianate rustic buildings, and in particular comparing the approach of Schinkel with that of Nash.²⁸ On the subject of its English interpretations he is not wholly complimentary in tone, and is particularly critical of Nash's Cronkhill where he feels that any genuine Italian observation or allusion was sacrificed to the requirements of Picturesque gentility. But his focus is on the interplay between artist and architect and his scope does not include either a *tour d'horizon* of the other influences in play, or a consideration of the future course of the style. Much more germane is the approach taken by Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos in an article of 1976, tracing the journey of Vernacular Italianate in France '*du rural au rustique et du rustique au moderne*'.²⁹ While writing from a French perspective his analysis has more universal application. He begins by distinguishing '*l'architecture rurale*' – spontaneous, vernacular – from '*l'architecture rustique*',³⁰ a conscious construct developed in early nineteenth-century Europe, at the same time as the term 'villa' became associated with function rather than form.³¹ He presents a thorough discussion of French and German academic sources and precedents for the importation of rustic Italianate into France, noting that analysis of French Italianism had thus far tended to concentrate on the influence of the '*modèles savants*' (published volumes of drawings of buildings of high status presented by Percier and Fontaine)³² as opposed to '*modèles populaires*'³³ (vernacular domestic buildings, as recorded by Seheult and others),³⁴ noting also the imprecision of terminology in contemporary texts, where '*villa à l'italienne*' can mean not only a Palladian form but also an asymmetrically towered Italian villa. He compares similar interpretations in Britain and the United States, opining that, in anticipating twentieth-century suburban design ideals, with Cronkhill and Sandridge Park Nash 'wrote an introductory page to the history of the

²⁸ Irénée Scalbert, 'A Real Living Contact with the Things Themselves: Landscape Painters and Architects 1600-1850' in *AA Files*, 50, Spring 2004, pp. 20-35.

²⁹ Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, 'De la villa rustique d'Italie au pavillon de banlieue', in *Revue de l'Art*, No. 32, (1976), pp. 23-36.

³⁰ Pérouse de Montclos, p. 23.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27. This idea will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

³² Charles Percier and P.F.L. Fontaine, *Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome*, (Paris, 1798).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁴ François-Léonard Seheult, *Recueil d'architecture dessinée et mesurée en Italie dans les années 1791-3*, (Paris, 1821).

modern house'.³⁵ Pérouse de Montclos remains alone to date in having set out to follow the story of Vernacular Italianate on a linear basis from its origins to modernity, but he also acknowledges the need for a fuller study to tease out sufficient examples to be able to analyse it with the detail which it warrants. Nearly forty years later this thesis still appears to be the first attempt to do so.³⁶

A detailed survey of how and in what form the style was transplanted to the former colonies in the shape of the United States and Australia is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is impossible to ignore the fact of its easy transition, attributable in large part to the influential advocacy of the Picturesque in general and rustic Italianate in particular by the writer and designer John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843). An examination of its enthusiastic reception and the factors which appear to have encouraged it in these former or existing British territories overseas also reveals much about its success in Britain. The successful export of the Anglo-Italian style overseas has been the subject of research, and indeed in contrast to British scholarship there has been a wealth of literature about the Anglo-Italian villa in the United States.³⁷ Carroll Meeks in 1948, Clay Lancaster in 1952, and to a lesser extent Charles Brownell in 1989 give careful consideration to its provenance and channels of transmission

³⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁶ In addition to these two essays, Jean-Philippe Garric's book, *Recueils d'Italie: les modèles italiens dans les livres d'architecture français*, (Sprimont, Belgium, 2004) is a comprehensive study of the appearance of Italian building models in French architectural pattern books from Palladio to the mid-nineteenth century, and their influence on the formation of French architectural theory, indirectly addressing the criticism by Pérouse de Montclos of the privileging of *modèles savants*. To date, no equivalent work considering their influence in Britain has been produced. Vernacular Italianate architecture in France has also been considered in French academic literature in the context of the village of Clisson in western France, a project commissioned in the first decade of the nineteenth century as a self-consciously picturesque, connoisseurial exercise to evoke a Claudian spirit of the Campagna, and designed partly as a stage for the display of collections acquired in Italy. See for example, Jean-Jacques Couapel (ed.), *Clisson, ou le retour d'Italie*, Exhibition catalogue, (Paris, 1990), with an introduction by Pérouse de Montclos; and Jean-Jacques-Couapel and Anne Duflos, *Voyage Italien à Clisson*, (Nantes, 1996).

³⁷ See, for example, Carroll Meeks, 'Henry Austin and the Italian Villa', in *Art Bulletin*, xxx, (1948), pp. 145-9; Clay Lancaster, 'Italianism in American Architecture Before 1860', in *American Quarterly*, iv, (1952), pp. 127-48; Charles Brownell, 'The Italian Villa and the Search for an American Style, 1840-1860', in Irma B. Jaffé (ed.), *The Italian Presence in American Art, 1760-1860*, (New York, 1989), pp. 208-250. It has not proved possible to trace the full text of a paper given by Henry-Russell Hitchcock at the Fifteenth International Congress of the History of Art, London, 1939, on the 'towered Italian Villa', to which he refers in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 11, no. 2, May 1952, p. 27, although a résumé was published: 'The Nineteenth Century Italian Villa and the Significance of "Centrifugal" Planning', in *Art Historians' Congress, London 1939: Résumé of Lectures*, (London, 1939), pp. 22-23.

from its British birthplace, and due weight to Picturesque antecedents, and in Meeks' case to the model of Nash's villas. Its reception in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century has also received attention as the subject of an unpublished thesis of 2003, which considers its appearance in both domestic and public architecture and in doing so rehearses its English Picturesque ancestry.³⁸

On the evidence of the literature it may seem that in terms of his Italianate legacy, Nash is a prophet without honour in his own country. Nash's work for the Prince Regent and his role in the re-shaping of London, undoubtedly extraordinary achievements, were in retrospect accorded disproportionate attention by his early biographers, who treated his Picturesque villas largely as evidence, if any were needed, of his lively imagination and casual brilliance, but of less enduring significance by comparison with his more monumental works.³⁹ In recent decades, however, a re-appraisal, if not a rehabilitation, of Nash has taken place. One strand within this field has drawn attention to his Picturesquely-conceived country houses, celebrating his versatility in playing with free form in interior plans while making use of a variety of external *mises-en-scène*, encompassing Tudorbethan Revival and the domestic castle form as well as the Italian *villa rustica*. Geoffrey Tyack has discussed this stylistic variety.⁴⁰ Nash's three Italianate villas have recently received more detailed and individual attention.⁴¹

The dearth of detailed research into Italianate influences on domestic architecture in Britain, whether Claudean or Palatial in inspiration, reflects the conventional and narrow characterisation of the Victorian search for national identity in architecture as a duel between Classical and Gothic. Frank Salmon has recently argued for a re-appraisal of British

³⁸ Timothy Hubbard, 'Towering Over All: The Italianate Villa in the Colonial Landscape', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Deakin University, Australia, 2003).

³⁹ Sir John Summerson's 1935 monograph for example deals with the three Claudean villas in a few short paragraphs, although his later and much expanded edition considers them at greater length.

⁴⁰ Geoffrey Tyack has written widely on Nash's Picturesque versatility. See for example: 'The Villas of John Nash' in Malcolm Airs (ed.), *The Regency Great House*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 49-56; 'Domestic Gothic' in Geoffrey Tyack (ed.), *John Nash: Architect of the Picturesque*, (Swindon, 2013), pp. 35-56.

⁴¹ Rosemary Yallop, 'Nash and the *villa rustica*', in Tyack, *Picturesque*, pp. 57-74.

Italianate (as broadly defined) in both domestic and public architecture, which he believes 'has been forced to play second fiddle to the Gothic revival for too long in our understanding of early and mid-Victorian architecture'.⁴² The uncompromising polarisation between Classical and Gothic leaves Italianate in general, and Vernacular Italianate in particular, uncomfortably marginalised: an awkward spectre at the feast which, if too difficult to accommodate, seems to have been gratefully dismissed as a transient fancy. The fact that Vernacular Italianate reached its full flowering not as a country house model but in the modest form of the urban house, often executed by unidentified architects for unnamed occupants, and frequently sparsely-documented, has also perhaps detracted from its attraction as a field of study.

The loose terminology often employed by the Victorian architect, builder or pattern-book author brings us to the question of defining Vernacular Italianate architecture for the purposes of this thesis.⁴³ The starting point for this study is Nash's Italianate villas which are quite clearly based on Italian rustic models: the morphology of this interpretation is traced as it passes through both time and social strata to emerge as a malleable template for the smaller urban house. While the Palatial, or Renaissance-derived Italianate interpretations introduced by Barry and taken up by others are noted and their relationship with the Vernacular version analysed, these are regarded for this purpose as taxonomically distinct: a discernible bloodline of rusticity is what connects the houses which are the subject of this study. For the purposes of clarity I have in most cases chosen to adopt the term 'Vernacular Italianate' to identify the rustic idiom, but the terms 'rustic', 'Tuscan' or 'Claudean' are also used, according to context. Inevitably the distinction between a rustic and a palatial

⁴² Frank Salmon, 'The Battle of the Styles Continued?', in *The Victorian Society in Manchester Summer Newsletter*, (2014), pp. 1-3.

⁴³ The term 'Italianate' is one which is used here, as it is used in modern secondary sources generally, to denote architectural forms derived from Italian models. It will be noted that 'Italianate' was not a term in wide contemporary use, 'Italian' or 'Anglo-Italian' being preferred: see Chapters 5 and 6. 'Vernacular Italianate' is a term which has been constructed and adopted here to designate more specifically the rustic-inspired forms which this thesis sets out to delineate and describe.

interpretation is not always rigid, but where this is the case, these 'hybrids', which are in themselves interesting aspects of the discourse, are noted and evaluated.

As Vernacular Italianate grew in acceptance and popularity, its use extended, as evidenced not just by the pattern books but by built examples, to encompass *inter alia* entrance lodges, farm buildings, railway stations, water pumping houses, market halls and lunatic asylums. Tempting though it was to expand the range of this thesis to encompass these other typologies, not least as demonstrations of the versatility of this style even in the hands of the most minor provincial architect, it would have rendered the study unmanageably broad: selected examples of lodges are nevertheless included because of their intrinsic connection with the principal house and where they usefully illustrate a discrete point. The main focus remains domestic use, from the style's origin as a country villa to its subsequent transformation into varied forms for the smaller house.

Chronology is another area where an element of arbitrary judgement is inevitable, and setting limits to the period of time covered in this thesis proved more difficult than initially anticipated. The decision to start in 1800 was more easily arrived at, for this was the opening of the decade which saw Nash make his initial and vital contribution in the form of his three Claudean villas. This date also marks a turning point in the history of the architectural pattern book. In the 1790s Sir John Soane (1753-1837) published his *Sketches in Architecture*, Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824) his didactic poem *The Landscape*, and Humphry Repton (1752-1818) his *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, all of which significantly advanced the exploration of the practical implications and possibilities offered by Picturesque theory. This decade had also seen the publication of a number of influential books which discussed the nature of the Picturesque no longer in the refined cadences of philosophical theory but as it could be interpreted in an architectural context, and with a shift in focus to the design of the smaller house: Charles Middleton (1756-c.1818), John Plaw (1746-1820) and James

Malton (1765-1803) contributed to this discourse with works which appeared in the 1790s. From 1800, therefore, the pattern book as a public and accessible medium was poised to facilitate the wide-ranging stylistic debate which was to follow in the 1820s and 1830s, and as a genre it played a vital role in the dissemination of Vernacular Italianate style.

Setting an appropriate end-date proved to be more problematic. The period covered by this thesis parallels a time of significant metamorphosis of the British town, for this was perhaps the most concentrated period of urbanisation in British history, the half-century seeing the doubling of the population of England and Wales and a transformation from a largely rural demographic to an urban one, over half of the population living in conurbations by 1851.⁴⁴ Much of this expansion was to accommodate the ‘middling sort’ who made up the primary market for the suburban villa, a market which the architecture considered in this thesis sought to serve.⁴⁵ It is difficult if not impossible to point to a date which marks the ‘end’ to any architectural style, but it is possible to recognise symptoms betraying that an idiom has gone beyond maturity into banality, or through dilution has lost its clear identity. Both the ‘villa books’ and the built examples provide clear evidence that the style had achieved recognition and wide acceptance in both conceptual and actual form by around 1840, and the initial intention was to close the scope of the thesis at this date. However as research progressed it became increasingly clear that, in general terms, far from signalling the maturity of the style this date marked the beginning of a critical phase of its adaptation for housing of higher density for urban use, frequently in attached forms such as pairs or terraces. This development is also reflected in the pattern books which from this date were themselves changing once more, assuming a different role as builders’ technical manuals and style catalogues rather than the didactic and innovatory vehicles for architectural vision which they had been in the preceding four decades, and from around 1850 they too began

⁴⁴ Noted in more detail in Chapter 1.

⁴⁵ This will be further explored in Chapters 1, 6 and 7.

to deal with urban housing, with Vernacular Italianate a cornerstone of their stock-in-trade. This provides further weight to the observation that it had by the mid-century left its more élite roots and become a staple of the repertoire of the provincial architect or builder. It proved necessary to follow the style to the end of the 1850s in order to complete the story: examples continued to be built after this date but little creative innovation is on display.

It would be impossible to identify and record all the built examples of such a prolific style, or of those architects who employed it, and in any event such a mass of data would not in itself be illuminating. Instead, examples have been selected to illustrate different facets of the emergence and adoption of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain such as chronology, stylistic evolution, social placement, and versatility in an urban context. The methodology employed to establish the existence and scope of the built repertoire was inevitably selective in many respects, but followed lines of enquiry which used specific starting points. An initial examination of the executed works and published designs of the leading architects of the Picturesque (such as Robert Lugar) was followed by research into the careers of those pattern book authors who presented Vernacular Italianate designs in their publications, and comparing those designs with their built works; another approach was to study the history of the planned villa estates which sprang up on the fringes of British towns in the early nineteenth century, examining the extent to which rustic Italianate style was employed. More generally, studying the urban development of the fastest-expanding towns and cities in the first half of the century and exploring their architectural responses yielded many results: Bristol, discussed in Chapter 7, provides an outstanding range of Vernacular Italianate interpretations. Archival material relating, for example, to particular aristocratic landowners, was another route into identifying specific urban developments of the period, some of which made use of Vernacular Italianate architecture: the mid-nineteenth century development of Newton Abbot by the Earls of Devon, for example, is the subject of a case study in Chapter 7. Other examples, such as The Villas,

Stoke-on-Trent, also the subject of a case study, or individual houses such as St. Tewdric, Chepstow, or High Hazels, Sheffield,⁴⁶ were serendipitously encountered.⁴⁷ Omissions are inevitable but it is to be hoped not major in nature. With the object of constructing an analytical framework in which to place the broad gamut of houses identified and described throughout the text, a group of illustrative examples, presented in taxonomical form, is provided for reference at Appendix II.

This thesis is presented in eight substantive chapters. The first two set the scene for the genesis of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain by examining twin themes which were central to the intellectual landscape of domestic architecture from the later eighteenth century: the evolving concept of the 'villa'; and the Picturesque architectural aesthetic, including the contribution of John Nash as one of its most accomplished practitioners. The more general cultural context of the Italophile climate in nineteenth-century Britain, and the factors underlying it, is surveyed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 is a detailed examination of the three country villas by John Nash which represent the introduction of the Vernacular Italianate idiom into Britain, collectively referred to as his Claudean trio: Cronkhill, Sandridge Park, and Lissan Rectory. Nash's visual references and allusions are considered here: the conventional explanations are tested and alternative and complementary sources put forward. The next three chapters move on to examine the Vernacular Italianate house after Nash, in three parallel strands: the growing emergence and acceptance of the style as a staple of the architectural pattern books, in themselves a burgeoning area and a useful mirror of popular taste; the work of those who followed Nash, initially in the field of the smaller country house but also spreading into the new suburbs on the fringe of the town;

⁴⁶ Figs. 6.42 and 6.43 respectively.

⁴⁷ Specifically-directed searches through successive annual Royal Academy Exhibition catalogues and the Drawings Catalogue of the Royal Institute of British Architects, as well as databases such as Historic England's *Images of England* (www.imagesofengland.org.uk) also identified many of the designs and executed buildings cited.

and finally the style's transition to the town in infinitely variable form. Chapter 8 considers the adoption of domestic Vernacular Italianate architecture in the United States and Australia, and the factors underlying the rapid and enthusiastic reception of 'Anglo-Italian' in those countries.

The concluding section looks at both contemporary and current commentaries to illuminate the reasons underlying the widespread and enthusiastic reception of Nash's original concept, and considers its legacy, not least of which was its remarkable role in changing the face of the British town.

Chapter 1

Rus in urbe: the idea of the villa in late Georgian Britain

‘Elegance, compactness and convenience’⁴⁸

Vernacular Italianate architecture arrived in Britain in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the form of the compact, informal country house. This thesis will examine how, over the following fifty years, Nash’s initial model was not only taken up within the country house repertoire by other architects but was also adapted for a new genre of domestic architecture in the form of the suburban villa, and subsequently transformed into a variety of templates for the smaller urban house. The parallel phenomena of the rapid physical expansion of towns in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the growing economic significance of the cadre of newly wealthy mercantile and professional men and their families, eager to express their status through material consumption,⁴⁹ together generated a demand for a new typology of smaller house, a challenge which, from the end of the eighteenth century, architects began specifically to address for the first time. Two themes became central to the development of domestic architecture in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century: the Picturesque aesthetic; and the evolution of the concept of the villa, which in combination provide the context for the successful reception of Vernacular Italianate architecture. The impact of the Picturesque will be considered in the next chapter; but before that it is appropriate to examine the idea of the villa, not as a specific architectural style but as a vessel for middle class life.

⁴⁸ Charles Middleton, *Picturesque and Architectural Views for Cottages, Farm Houses and Country Villas*, (London, 1793), p. 9.

⁴⁹ The definition of this ‘middling sort’ has been examined by historians at some length. In the context of housing and architecture, sources drawn upon here include Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (London, 1987); G.E. Mingay, *Land and Society in England*, (London, 1994); Christopher Chalklin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England*, (London, 1974); and M. Daunton and P. Clark (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Vols. 2 and 3 (Cambridge, 2000, 2001).

The origins of the villa

‘Yesterday I came to the villa of Careggi, not to cultivate my fields but my soul.’

(Cosimo de’ Medici, writing to Marsilio Ficino, 1462⁵⁰)

The origins of the European villa have been the subject of extensive academic study, of which James Ackerman’s comprehensive history forms the cornerstone,⁵¹ complemented more recently by John Archer’s analysis of the shifting socio-economic and architectural significance of the villa in England and America over the last three centuries.⁵² The villa’s history before 1800 will therefore be treated here only in outline. The primary focus of the British literature to date has been the Georgian villa, understood as the new form of smaller country house appearing in the eighteenth century, a typology which has been examined from a number of architectural and cultural standpoints;⁵³ by contrast (with the exception of recent work on London),⁵⁴ the urban and suburban models, and the evolution of the villa after 1800, have surprisingly attracted less attention. The first half of the nineteenth century is the period in the history of the villa of most direct relevance to the reception of Vernacular Italianate, and is the area to which the focus of this chapter will be directed.

The function of the villa as a secondary house had been a recurring theme. From Pliny, through Petrarch to Lord Burlington, the concept of *villeggiatura*⁵⁵ – temporary retreat from the discomforts and responsibilities of town life to a secondary, less formal house in the

⁵⁰ Quoted in David Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome*, (Princeton, 1979), p. 1.

⁵¹ James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, (Princeton and London, 1990).

⁵² John Archer, *Architecture and Suburbia: from English Villa to American Dream House, 1690-2000* (Minneapolis, 2005).

⁵³ The literature on the British villa is vast: in addition to Ackerman, see for example: Geoffrey Tyack and Malcolm Airs (eds.), *The Renaissance Villa in Britain 1500-1700*, (Oxford, 2007); Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, Chapters VI and XII; Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Georgian Villa*, (Stroud, 1996). For London: Dorian Gerhold, ‘London’s Suburban Villas and Mansions 1660-1830’, in *London Journal*, Vol.34 (3), November 2009, pp. 233-63; Chris Miele, ‘From Aristocratic Ideal to Middle-Class Idyll: 1690-1840’, in Andrew Saint (ed.), *London Suburbs*, (London, 1999), pp. 31-60.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth McKellar, *Landscapes of London*, (New Haven and London, 2013).

⁵⁵ ‘*Villeggiatura*: a holiday; *villeggiare*: to spend a holiday’, entry in *Dizionario Garzanti*, 13th Edition, (Milan, 1983).

countryside – was an established practice of the élite,⁵⁶ which even in Britain pre-dated the Palladian revival. Summerson, Archer, McKellar and others have pointed out seventeenth-century examples of the usage of the term to denote a secondary house in a rural or semi-rural setting for occasional use or occupation. In 1730 Robert Morris describes his designs as ‘villas’, offering the benefits of ‘Retirement’, and in locations affording ‘Prospects’,⁵⁷ two concepts which, as will be seen, were to remain constant features in the history of the villa as a building type over the following one hundred and fifty years. This élite habit was increasingly copied by the merchant and professional classes who had traditionally lived at their place of business in the centres of cities and towns, and by the mid-eighteenth century, secondary houses out of town were an established part of life for the newly wealthy.⁵⁸

Ackerman notes an agricultural treatise from the first century AD which set out a hierarchy of rustic buildings: the *villa urbana* was the most elaborate, being the dwelling of the estate owner; the *villa rustica* was more functional combining accommodation for the farm manager with shelter for livestock; and the *villa fructuaria* contained barns and storehouses. While a large estate would contain examples of all three, a more modest farm could be known in its own right as a *villa rustica*. Other types of villa had no agricultural function but were for occasional occupation, either near the city or on the coast: the *villa suburbana* and *villa marittima*.⁵⁹ This tripartite terminology is used by Robert Castell in 1728, accompanying his conjectural reconstructions of antique villas,⁶⁰ and repeated over a century later in the influential Vernacular Italianate pattern books published by Charles Parker from 1832 under the collective title *Villa Rustica*.⁶¹ In reminding us of the desirable qualities of the Villa as

⁵⁶ Coffin, *Villa*, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Robert Morris, *Lectures on Architecture*, Part Two, (London, 1736), pp. vi, 144.

⁵⁸ *Cambridge Urban History*, Vol.2, p.617. Daniel Defoe, for example, described villa life in Camberwell, Clapham and Peckham in *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, (London, 1724), Letter 2, Part 3, p. 126.

⁵⁹ Columella, *De Re Rustica*, quoted in Ackerman, p. 42.

⁶⁰ Robert Castell, *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, (London, 1728), British Library copy: GRC 62.i.7, p. 60.

⁶¹ To be discussed further in Chapter 5.

identified by Pliny⁶² - '*Vicinitas Urbis, Opportunitas Viae, Mediocritas Villae, Modus Ruris*' (proximity to town, convenience of the roads, compactness of the house and a small amount of land)⁶³ - Castell is voicing some enduring ideals, for we find this wording echoed in an advertisement for a newly-built villa at Herne Hill in the first decade of the nineteenth century: 'Elegant villa to let: Situated on a beautiful eminence commanding delightful prospects, four miles from London; the surrounding roads are remarkably good; the villa has airy cheerful rooms; there is a garden and meadow'.⁶⁴

Ackerman and Summerson trace the continuing history through Italian Renaissance models and thence to aristocratic interest in Britain in the villa as an architectural typology which was a concomitant of the eighteenth-century Palladian revival.⁶⁵ Summerson, Ackerman and Archer follow the villa through the remainder of the eighteenth century as architects took up the challenge of playing with the form, plan and appearance of the smaller country house. The houses of Sir Robert Taylor⁶⁶ are seen as epitomising this smaller, more concentrated model, with the characteristic additions of such devices as canted windows to open up the prospects from the windows and to add variety and light and shade to the façade.⁶⁷ The villa was seen not as a house of parade but a locus of informality, and a more fluid interior plan facilitated that 'Compactness' which was seen as a defining characteristic of a villa.⁶⁸ While these changes pre-dated the absorption of Picturesque theory unto architecture, they can be seen as contributing subsequently to the template for the informal

⁶² Castell, *Villas*, p. 27.

⁶³ Betty Radice, *The Letters of Pliny the Younger*, (Harvard, 1969), Book I, letter 24 to Baebius Hispanus.

⁶⁴ *Morning Post*, 4th August 1804.

⁶⁵ Ackerman, Chapters 4, 5; Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, pp. 106-120.

⁶⁶ Such as Harleyford (1755), Asgill (1761), Danson (1766): Colvin, p. 1025; Alistair Rowan, 'Villa Variants', in Arnold, pp. 85-88.

⁶⁷ Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 118; Archer *Suburbia*, p. 85.

⁶⁸ Middleton, p. 9.

Picturesque country house, as exemplified by Nash,⁶⁹ which was itself the fore-runner of the suburban villa type.

Urban expansion and suburban life

‘The wealthy Cit, grown old in trade,
Now wishes for the rural shade’

(Robert Lloyd, *The Cit’s Country Box*, *Poems*, 1757)

The post-Palladian evolution of the villa was not shaped by aristocratic aesthetic debate alone, for demographic change also played a significant part. The late Georgian town was a place of rapid physical change and growth: the population of England and Wales in 1750 of approximately 6 million had increased by nearly half to 8.89 million by the end of the century, had doubled to 12 million by 1820 and trebled to 18 million by 1850.⁷⁰ This absolute growth in population was mirrored by increasing urbanisation, driven by a number of factors of which industrialisation was pre-eminent. In 1801 around 20% of the population can be defined as ‘urban’, inhabiting towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants; by 1851, some 54% can be so defined.⁷¹ Growth was not uniformly spread, but heavily weighted toward the metropolis; outside London topographical and commercial factors produced varying patterns of growth.⁷² The vogue for the watering-place, whether inland spa or sea-bathing resort, was another source of urban growth, encouraging the creation of housing stock in a fashionable and genteel idiom: the eleven towns identified in the Census of 1851 as ‘Seaside Resorts’ had more than doubled their aggregate population since 1801.⁷³

Urban conditions often deteriorated as a result both of the influx of population and the impact of the new industries which, noted diarists and topographical writers,⁷⁴ rendered the centres of many towns unpleasant and unhealthy; the absence of social segregation left the

⁶⁹ At Luscombe, or Sandridge Park for example: Mansbridge, entries 67 and 90.

⁷⁰ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985*, (2nd ed., London, 1986), p. 14.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷² Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, (Harlow, 1999), Table 1, p. 3.

⁷³ Burnett, p. 10; Chalklin, p. 51; Aston and Bond, p. 177

⁷⁴ See, for example, Christopher Hibbert (ed.), *Louis Simond, An American in Regency England*, (London, 1968), pp. 25,33.

wealthier citizens all too aware of the urban poor, and nervous of their proximity. The desire of those who could afford to do so to leave the city on a more permanent basis led to the conscious creation of suburban enclaves, in areas outside the town, often on a hill or by a river, to ensure fresh air or clean water, but connected by improving transport links to their place of work.⁷⁵ In London, City merchants clustered on the northern fringes, such as Hackney or Hampstead;⁷⁶ in Bristol, the elevated hamlets of Redland and Clifton began to be colonised by Bristol merchants as early as the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁷ The phenomenon of the new suburb was described in a report on Liverpool by the Parliamentary Boundary Commissioners in 1832:

The main cause of the great extension of the town and increase in building is the rapid increase of its trade, the consequent construction of its new Docks, the progressive addition to the population and the constant and rapidly increasing communication .. with Manchester and the other surrounding towns by the Rail-roads and Canals ... The increase of luxury appears to have followed the increase of wealth; the persons formerly living in small houses in the densely peopled parts of the Town have been induced to seek more commodious habitations in the suburbs; this change may be considered as now in full operation.⁷⁸

Two years earlier a topographical guide to Liverpool had promoted the attractions of the suburb of Everton which included its proximity to the city centre, whence, the reader was assured, 'A walk of twenty minutes would take a merchant from the Rialto to these regions of Arcadia'.⁷⁹

The patterns of urban exodus were largely associated with the 'middling sort', a wide category encompassing a spectrum from rural minor gentry to merchants in commodities: those whose wealth did not arise from landed estates but who, equally, did not have to rely upon the availability of daily work in return for a wage. Most derived their income from the professions, commerce or investment; industrialisation generated new wealth both directly, into the hands of mine- and factory-owners, merchants and traders, and indirectly into the

⁷⁵ Mark Girouard, *Cities and People*, (New Haven and London, 1985), p. 275.

⁷⁶ Saint, pp. 31-2.

⁷⁷ Bristol City Council, *Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area Character Appraisal*, (June 2010), pp. 6-9.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Susan George, *Liverpool Park Estates*, (Liverpool, 2000), p. 67.

⁷⁹ Robert Syers, *The History of Everton*, (Liverpool, 1830), p. 180.

hands of those in ancillary trades or professions, servicing the growing habits of material consumption: in Mingay's description, members of 'a mobile society', where money and status were not necessarily co-incident.⁸⁰ Industrialisation did not create the middling sort, but it expanded its ranks, fuelled it with resources, and in consequence helped to shape it into a group with common values and aspirations. Burnett estimates that by 1841 this vast 'tier of middle classes' comprised some 6-700,000 'income-receivers' of varying degrees which, including their families, amounted to 3 million people; he describes this tribe as 'the most family-conscious and home-centred generation to have emerged in English history'.⁸¹ Their disposable wealth offered them the opportunity to decide where and in what manner they would make their homes.

The architecture of the smaller house

'cheerfulness, comfort and a due proportion of elegance'⁸²

The efforts of architects in all ages have hitherto been generally directed to .. the mansions of noblemen; and those who may be considered as composing the middling orders of society have been for the most part left to become their own architects. [The aim of this book is to show how] the residence of the man of wealth and the dwellings of a more humble grade may in a degree be equalised as far as regards essential comfort, convenience and beauty.⁸³

The desire of this new clientèle for affordable houses of appropriate status outside the towns presented a challenge to architects, who wrestled not only with issues of form and style but also with appropriate terminology. The result was a re-definition of the concept of the villa. The architect Charles Middleton in his pattern book of 1793 had summed up the *status quo*:

Villas may be considered under three different descriptions. First, as the occasional and temporary retreats of the nobility and persons of fortune from what may be called their town residence, and must, of course be in the vicinity of the metropolis. Second, as the country houses of wealthy citizens and persons in official stations, which also cannot be far removed from the capital; and thirdly, the smaller kind of provincial edifices, considered either as hunting seats, or the habitations of country gentlemen of moderate fortune. Elegance, compactness and convenience are the characteristics of such buildings, either separate or combined, in contradistinction to the magnificence and extensive range of the country seats of our nobility and opulent gentry.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Mingay, p. 7.

⁸¹ Burnett, p. 98.

⁸² J.B. Papworth, *Rural Residences*, (London, 1818), p. 61.

⁸³ Samuel H. Brooks, *Designs for Cottage and villa architecture*, (London, 1839), p. iv.

⁸⁴ Middleton, p. 9.

Middleton was conceding with his last category that villas should no longer be considered only as secondary houses but could be permanent homes, a significant shift in meaning which became widespread as the term villa, often qualified as the ‘ornamental villa’, was taken up by architects to signify a small house in modest grounds for genteel occupation: neither a conventional town house nor one at the centre of a country estate. Contemporary evidence supports the idea that in addressing the smaller house the architectural profession was reacting to market demand. It has been pointed out that of the architectural designs exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1780 and 1815, there was a ‘significant swing from the great houses to the medium-sized villa: 254 villa projects compare with 60 mansions, 31 seats for nobility and gentry, 31 casinos, 44 cottages, 5 castles and 2 royal palaces’,⁸⁵ which confirms a change of emphasis in the projects which architects chose to display. As the new century opened the architectural pattern book genre was changing, in content, function, and audience as the erudite and expensive folio volumes for the élite produced by Chambers, Ware and Gibbs gave way by the 1790s to cheaper and more accessible sources of instruction, deployed not only as a means of self-advertisement by their architect-authors, but also as a conduit for a discussion, in laymen’s language, of matters of taste, style, function and appropriateness.⁸⁶ Their focus was now the smaller house: Esdaile points out that in an 1804 list of publications by Taylor’s Architectural Library there are 21 works containing the words ‘Villa, Cottage or Small House’.⁸⁷ McMordie⁸⁸ estimates that more than 60 books illustrating designs for small to moderate houses were published between 1790

⁸⁵ J. Mordaunt Crook, ‘The Pre-Victorian Architect’ in *Architectural History*, Vol. 12 (1969), pp. 62-78; Sandra Blutman, ‘English Country Houses, 1780-1815’, (unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of London, 1967), cited Crook, ‘Pre-Victorian’, fn. 79.

⁸⁶ See, *inter alia*, Michael McMordie, ‘Picturesque pattern books and pre-Victorian designers’, in *Architectural History*, Vol. 18 (1975), pp. 43-112; Dora Wiebenson, ‘Documents of Social Change: Publications about the Small House’, in Ralph Cohen (ed.), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics*, (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 82-127; Sandra Blutman, ‘Books of Designs for Country Houses, 1780-1815’, in *Architectural History*, Vol. 11 (1968), pp. 25-206; and John Archer, *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture 1715-1842*, (Cambridge MA, 1985), pp. 28-30.

⁸⁷ Katharine Esdaile, ‘The Small House and its Amenities in the Architectural Handbooks: 1749-1847’, in *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society XV*, (1917-1919), p. 128.

⁸⁸ McMordie, p. 43.

and 1835; as a genre these publications came to be known as ‘villa books’. Their specific role in bringing Vernacular Italianate architecture to a wider audience will be considered in detail in Chapter 5, but they will be considered here in relation to the discussion of the idea, function and appearance of the villa and the recurring themes which can be observed.

An early theme of these pattern books was defining the types of dwellings which they were addressing, relating the appropriateness of the design to both the function of the house and the status of its occupant, and the place of the villa within this hierarchy. James Peacocke’s book of designs for villas of 1785 had shown designs for houses with only four principal rooms to each storey, although with a prominently placed staircase, ‘for .. gentlemen of moderate fortunes’.⁸⁹ [1.4] Middleton’s 1793 work cited above was a collection of designs for cottages (‘for the poorer sort of country people’), farm houses (with ‘plain and simple furnishing’), and country villas, the latter being sub-divided as we have seen into three classes, of both buildings and occupants; his villa designs ranged from elevations of three to thirteen bays. The new villa appears to have been easier to define by what it was not: Middleton’s quintessential qualities of ‘elegance, compactness and convenience’ distinguish it from both the grandiloquence and ostentation of the mansion and from the simplicity, with the attendant risk of unwelcome connotations of rural poverty, of the cottage. And his use of the word ‘convenience’ also hinted at a degree of domestic practicality which was more appropriate to the life to be led by the villa’s intended occupants. The distinction between a Villa and a Mansion was in some ways as much social as architectural: writing in 1803, Humphry Repton contrasts the ‘established mansion of an English nobleman’s family’ with the ‘small villa, liable to change its proprietor as good or ill success prevails’.⁹⁰ These attempts at definition were often circular: villas were defined by, but also contributed to, the status of their intended occupants. ‘The style of the Villa should at once declare it to be the

⁸⁹ James Peacocke, under the pseudonym Jose Mac Packe, *Nutsbells: being ichnographic distributions for small villas*, (London, 1785), p. 1.

⁹⁰ Humphry Repton, *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, (London, 1803), Chapter XIV.

residence of a gentleman’, declared Robert Lugar in 1805. ‘There should be a quality of lightness’, he continues, for ‘great architectural enrichments such as colonnades and porticos’ were entirely inappropriate.⁹¹ Richard Elsam also saw the villa as licensing a degree of playfulness, distinguishing the sober style of architecture required for the city mansion from the ‘cheerful and even extravagant embellishment’ permitted to the country villa.⁹² In 1806 Edward Gyfford’s advice suggests how the profession was beginning to address the smaller house, for he explains that his aim is ‘to give the importance of the villa to the cottage, not the cottage character to the villa’.⁹³ [1.5] In other words, the typology of the house was defined by character and not by size, and if carefully designed a smaller house need not sacrifice the dignity or elegance which characterised those on a larger scale. As late as 1825, ambiguity still existed, Papworth taking the easy option: ‘The villa is contradistinguished from the mansion, and from the ornamental cottage, by its size as well as its accommodation; being a mean between the moderate pretensions of the one and the stately magnificence of the other.’ The villa was in effect a stylistic blank canvas.⁹⁴

Many of the early titles for villa books contain the words rural, rustic or retreat, but this needs liberal interpretation. It was understood that villa designs were largely intended for plots of land which while affording kitchen and pleasure gardens and even paddocks were not large enough to constitute agricultural estates, the occupant’s income being derived from other sources, which required proximity to urban centres: the villa provided *otium*, the balm of rural retreat, as a reward for the material imperative of *negotium*, the preoccupations of business.⁹⁵ Elsam describes suburban, proto-rural settings, advocating ‘a comfortable, convenient retreat, elevated and on a pleasant spot, near to a public road, near the city or

⁹¹ Robert Lugar, *Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings, and Villas, in the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy styles with plans, Suitable to Persons of Genteel Life and Moderate Fortune*, (London, 1805), p. 15.

⁹² Richard Elsam, *An Essay on Rural Architecture*, (London, 1803), p. 18.

⁹³ Edward Gyfford, *Designs for elegant cottages and small villas*, (London, 1806), p. viii.

⁹⁴ It is certainly clear that stylistically the word villa carried no over-riding connotations of ‘Italian-ness’.

⁹⁵ The ancient Roman concept of *Otium* in relation to the villa is discussed in Ackerman, pp. 37-9.

town .. both cheerful and retired'.⁹⁶ Echoing Alberti,⁹⁷ he goes on to commend the villa as combining 'the dignity and consequence of the town house with the delights and pleasures of the country seat.'⁹⁸ Elsam appears to have been one of the few architects in the early decades to address small houses in the town itself, including in his 1803 book a design for three conjoined houses, described as: 'Three small houses to be built in Vauxhall Road whose exterior appearance is intended to convey the idea of one entire villa'.⁹⁹ [1.6] But for most pattern book authors in the first three decades of the nineteenth century the idea of an urban villa seems to have been thought contradictory, the terrace and the square remaining the standard models in the confines of the town,¹⁰⁰ and it was not until 1831 that Edward Trendall published a book of designs 'adapted to the environs of the metropolis and large towns',¹⁰¹ in which the terms cottage and villa are used almost interchangeably, and which includes 'double' - that is, semi-detached – houses. By the time of Loudon's *Encyclopedia* later that decade the paired or semi-detached villa has become commonplace.¹⁰²

The Architecture of Respectability

'persons of Genteel Life and Moderate Fortune'¹⁰³

In his *Rural Residences* of 1825 Papworth writes that while the primary function of a villa was to 'house a small family', it should also provide 'external claims to respectability, including whatever tends to produce those impressions recommendatory to the tasteful and judicious'.¹⁰⁴ [1.7] In commending the villa form to their prospective clients the pattern book authors emphasised the 'appropriateness' of their designs. This elusive and elastic

⁹⁶ Elsam, p. 8.

⁹⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *The Architecture of Leon Battista Alberti*, trans. James Leoni, (London, 1726), quoted in Archer, *Literature*, p. 59 and fn. 85.

⁹⁸ Elsam, p. 17.

⁹⁹ Elsam, Pl. 4.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, the development of the De Beauvoir and Lloyd-Baker Estates in London in the 1820s-1830s: *Buildings of England: London 4: North*, pp. 507-8 and 636-7.

¹⁰¹ Edward Trendall, *Original designs for cottages and villas*, (London, 1831).

¹⁰² John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, (London, 1833), pp. 870-877.

¹⁰³ Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, long title.

¹⁰⁴ Papworth *Rural Residences*, p. 61.

concept sprang partly from aesthetic associations, in the linkage of style with the identity of the occupants – such as Lugar’s ‘house in the style of an ancient English mansion, suited to the residence of a clergyman’, his ‘design in the fancy style .. for a genteel family’, or his ‘gothic house .. whose elevation shows a character becoming an English gentleman’,¹⁰⁵ but it took into account the social standing of the occupant and calibrated the scale and degree of elaboration accordingly: David Laing admitted in 1800 that, as distinct from his cottage forms, ‘In the designs for Villas I have indulged in more ornament and variety as allowable to such Buildings, whose inhabitants may be considered of some Rank in Life, and entitled to more Show, as well as more Conveniences.’¹⁰⁶

A highly prized and frequently mentioned quality was ‘Elegance’, a term which seems to have signified a more pared-down form of beauty which in stopping short of ostentation accurately reflected the social ambition of the middling sort with its conflicting tendencies of conformist modesty and desire for display. ‘To be natural and unaffected is the first rule of good taste’, Edmund Aikin wrote in the preface to his 1808 pattern book.¹⁰⁷ The language of the villa books also identified the characteristics of the villa with the abstract qualities which villa life promised: ‘Cheerfulness, comfort and a due proportion of elegance are the prevailing features desirable to the exterior’, suggested Papworth.¹⁰⁸ David Laing’s ‘convenience, elegance and economy’ of 1800,¹⁰⁹ is echoed by Lugar’s ‘beauty, elegance and convenience’.¹¹⁰ Most authors unashamedly defined their market: Gyfford’s long title addressed ‘the comfort and convenience of persons of moderate and ample fortune’, signifiers which appear repeatedly in books by other authors: Dearn,¹¹¹ in the following year offered designs for dwellings ‘suitable to persons of moderate fortune and for convenient

¹⁰⁵ Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, pp. 22, 24, 21.

¹⁰⁶ David Laing, *Hints for Dwellings*, (London, 1800), p. v.

¹⁰⁷ Edmund Aikin, *Designs for villas and other rural buildings*, (London, 1808).

¹⁰⁸ Papworth *Rural Residences*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ Laing, *Hints*, title page.

¹¹⁰ Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Thomas Dearn, *Sketches in Architecture*, (London, 1807), pp. iv-v; Lugar *Architectural Sketches*, long title.

retirement'; Lugar's were directed at those of 'Genteel Life and Moderate Fortune', and one of his Vernacular Italianate villas was advertised to let in similar language, as 'An elegant leasehold villa, adapted for an economical establishment and possessing at the same time ample scope for the indulgence of picturesque embellishments .. for a genteel family.'¹¹²

Et in suburbia ego: in search of Arcadia

The desire for more 'commodious habitations' noted by the Parliamentary Commissioners may be read as a quest for spiritual as well as material comfort by the newly self-conscious middling sort discomfited by a deteriorating urban environment.¹¹³ The two concerns were often conflated in the language of the time. A topographical guide to Manchester of 1795 notes that: 'persons whose business is carried on in the town reside some little way away from it, that the pure breath of Heaven may blow freely upon them.'¹¹⁴ A decade later John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) declared: 'Such is the superiority of rural occupations and pleasures that commerce, large societies or crowded cities may be justly regarded as unnatural. Indeed the very purpose for which we engage in commerce is that we may one day be enabled to retire to the country where alone we picture to ourselves days of solid satisfaction and undisturbed happiness.'¹¹⁵ Samuel Brooks in 1839 contrasts the German merchant who marks his success by buying a larger townhouse with 'The Englishman, in whose mind the idea of retirement from business and a country life are inseparably united'.¹¹⁶

Loudon was one of the most influential middle class tastemakers of the nineteenth century, writing both practically and philosophically for the popular market on the role of the villa as

¹¹² Described in more detail in Chapter 6. *The Times*, 3 July 1810.

¹¹³ Issues discussed in Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*, (London, 1959); J.A. Banks, 'The Contagion of Numbers', in H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, (2 vols., London, 1973), Vol. 1, pp. 105-22.

¹¹⁴ John Aikin, *A Description of the Country from 30 to 40 miles around Manchester*, (London, 1795), pp. 205-6.

¹¹⁵ John Claudius Loudon, *A Treatise on forming, improving and managing Country Residences*, (2 vols., London, 1806), Vol. 1, p. 5.

¹¹⁶ Brooks, p. iii.

a modest but dignified home in the suburbs. He proffered guidance on creating and sustaining a worthy and fulfilled life in the suburban milieu by the careful consideration of the triangular relationship between inhabitant, house, and garden. He identified and described the distinct qualities of suburban life as they related to suburban architecture, implicitly recognising that the latter was not only an expression of a particular and desirable set of values but could in turn shape and fulfil them. Didactic in approach, his works advertised a variety of Picturesquely-derived styles and his enthusiasm for rustic Italianate did much to disseminate it to a wide audience of laymen.¹¹⁷ Ackerman characterises Loudon's ambition as being 'to democratise the villa and to raise the level of taste on a global scale'.¹¹⁸ Loudon proposes the idea of the suburb as a society in miniature: 'The respect, or the good opinion of his friends and neighbours, or of the inhabitants of the parish in which he resides, are, to the citizen retired to the suburbs, as of great value as the respect of the inhabitants of a district, or of the whole nation, is to the wealthy landowner or the senator.'¹¹⁹ Society in miniature could be created through the new concept of the planned villa suburb. These homogeneous enclaves of polite society combined display and seclusion, emulating the life of social superiors in a semblance of a landscaped park, but without severing links to town where wealth was generated. Houses in these villa estates were almost always intended for permanent occupation; home and work could be kept separate but connected by means of improved public transport.¹²⁰ Covenants were frequently enshrined in leases, to preserve the wholesomeness of the neighbourhood.¹²¹ The villa garden was an important component of the whole and functioned on many levels. Its simplest virtue was to add beauty to the surroundings; and the kitchen garden promoted

¹¹⁷ Loudon's influence will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

¹¹⁸ Ackerman, p. 225.

¹¹⁹ John Claudius Loudon, *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, (London, 1838), p. 9.

¹²⁰ *Cambridge Urban History*, Vol. 3, p. 620.

¹²¹ For example, for restrictive covenants on the Eyre Estate, London, in the 1820s see Mireille Galinou, *Cottages and Villas: the birth of the Garden Suburb*, (New Haven and London, 2010), pp. 200-10; for covenants governing planting schemes at the Camden Park villa estate, c.1846, see Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, *Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area Appraisal*, (November 2000), section 10.1.4.

domestic husbandry. Gardens could provide space for quiet reflection but also had social value as places for entertainment. They were also a locus for diversion, not solely frivolous, a function which extended to the garden room or conservatory, as a liminal space between man-made interior and Nature outside: 'A conservatory adjoins the drawing room with which it may communicate or shut off at will. The fragrance of the flowers and the study of botany may thus afford pleasure and amusement.'¹²² [1.8] Villa life possessed 'genteel-rurality of character';¹²³ in the words of a modern commentator, the new typology of the 'bourgeois compact villa in the new suburb'¹²⁴ was 'a place for the performance of self'.¹²⁵

The villa in 1800

In 1825 Papworth felt able to state that: 'The English villa has become an universal pattern for such buildings in which simple elegance and usefulness are intended to be combined.'¹²⁶

While stylistically no such universal pattern existed, as an ideal its characteristics seem to have been universally understood. [1.9] Samuel Brooks in 1839 went further in his judgement: 'Britain has become *par eminence* a country of suburban villas, [which] form such a delightful feature in its landscape scenery';¹²⁷ only nine years later the press felt moved to complain that 'the villa mania is everywhere most obtrusive'.¹²⁸

The turn of any century is an arbitrary dividing line, but a case can be made that in 1800 the villa was poised, Janus-like, between two eras: on the one hand looking back to its grander provenance where the quality of compactness was a conscious avoidance of ostentation: the villa was an élite, if secondary, house with pretensions to humility. But at the same time the villa was looking forward: to its reinvention, or at least re-interpretation, as a distinct and

¹²² Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, p. 23.

¹²³ Robert Syers, *The History of Everton*, (Liverpool, 1830), p. 281.

¹²⁴ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 45.

¹²⁵ The central theme of Archer's book is that the villa as bourgeois architecture acts both outwardly as a public expression of shared values and on an interior plane as a private space for the fostering of selfhood.

¹²⁶ J.B. Papworth, 'Remarks on English Villas', in John Britton and A.W.N. Pugin, *Illustrations of the Public Buildings of London*, (London, 1825), p. 84.

¹²⁷ Brooks, p. iii.

¹²⁸ *The Builder*, (1848), p. 500.

popular genre for the middling sort, recognisable in its intended function and varieties of external form by architect and occupant alike: a vehicle for social aspiration, a symbol of, and reward for, respectability, as well as commercial and professional success. The villa books were in a sense as much about the villa as a vessel for an idealised life as they were about 'correctness' of design, and choosing a style was a matter of finding, under the architect's tutelage, a personally appropriate mode of self-expression.

Yet, it is argued, the aspiration enshrined in the original aristocratic model was preserved and celebrated, if nuanced in scale and sophistication, in its successors. Two themes remained constant: the character of lightness in the place of pomp; and the importance of a connection with landscape, the latter achieved both through moderating the formality of interior plan and the creation of an harmonious proto-rural setting. Both of these characteristics were to remain inextricably linked with the idea of the villa for the next half-century. And as demographic changes and expansionary pressures on towns by reason of prosperity, industry or leisure, created a new clientèle, architects rose to the challenge of the possibilities for design of the smaller house, both recognising and stimulating an appetite for more imaginative and experimental interpretations which the Picturesque aesthetic in general, and the Vernacular Italianate idiom in particular, were perfectly placed to meet.

Chapter 2

The Picturesque in British domestic architecture

Picturesque: probably no word in the language (exclusive of theological expressions) has been the subject of so frequent or so prolonged dispute; yet none remain more vague in their acceptance¹²⁹

(John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849)

The emergence of the Picturesque aesthetic in England in the eighteenth century represented a fundamental shift in attitudes to beauty and form: the debate about the nature of the Picturesque as an aesthetic category was a radical re-examination of the values and modes of visual and cerebral appreciation. Initially explored as a philosophical abstraction in the middle of the eighteenth century, in the last quarter of that century it broadened into a set of values with application in the practical arts, and particularly in the spheres of landscape design and architecture, where a number of the concepts which became integral to the Picturesque aesthetic had been aired, but without the Picturesque appellation, as early as the 1730s.

Widespread discussion and dissemination of Picturesque taste took place through the medium of the written word: essays, lectures, poetry, novels, travel journals, gardening treatises and architectural pattern books. In architectural terms the freedom from Classically-derived prescription which characterised the Picturesque approach permitted a variety of idioms, and its repercussions were to be felt most keenly in the context of the design of the smaller house. As the decades progressed Picturesque theory became uncoupled from its intellectual, philosophical ancestry, assuming in the field of architecture a democratised form as a repertoire of expressive, interpretative designs for buildings which could be easily labelled and ‘understood’, and inexpensively executed, qualities which enhanced their popular and commercial appeal. Vernacular Italianate was one of these architectural responses, and to understand its nineteenth-century reception it is necessary to

¹²⁹ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (London, 1849), para. 8.235.

consider its Picturesque provenance. This chapter will summarise the theoretical foundations of the Picturesque as a new theory of perception, and will consider how Picturesque values were transferred into the sphere of architecture and urban planning in the nineteenth century. It will examine the extent to which architectural interpretations of the Picturesque faithfully reflected its underlying principles, and in conclusion will look at the contribution of John Nash to the Picturesque repertoire.

Picturesque theory

‘The picturesque: a new science for which a new language has been formed, and for which the English have discovered a new sense’
(Robert Southey, *Letters from England*, 1808)¹³⁰

‘Le pittoresque nous vient d’Angleterre; un beau paysage fait partie de la religion comme de l’aristocratie d’un Anglais: chez lui c’est l’objet d’un sentiment sincère’
(Stendhal, *Mémoires d’un Touriste*, 1838)¹³¹

Picturesque taste penetrated deeply into so many facets of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British culture yet there was a dearth of academic appraisal of the Picturesque and its legacy until well into the twentieth century. From the middle of the nineteenth century the status of the Picturesque, both in its architectural manifestations and in its wider context, began to be first questioned and then eroded. As interpreted in architecture its eclecticism was increasingly criticised in a more self-consciously ‘serious’ age as lacking in rigour, frivolous, and dishonest: Pugin, for example, repudiated Picturesqueness in any form other than as the incidental product of accretions over time or pragmatic solutions to problems of topography or materials.¹³² This fall from grace confined the architectural Picturesque to the scholarly wilderness until the twentieth century, when historians began to revisit an aesthetic which had seemed to sit so uncomfortably and transiently between the ordered, academic formality of early nineteenth-century Classical

¹³⁰ Robert Southey, writing as Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, *Letters from England*, (2 vols., London, 1808), Vol. 1, Letter XXX, p. 158.

¹³¹ Quoted in Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England*, (New York, 1925), p. 167.

¹³² A.W.N. Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, (London, 1841), p. 52.

revival styles and the pretended moral certainty and intellectual rigour of Gothic Revival. Christopher Hussey's seminal evaluation in 1927 characterised the Picturesque as an 'interregnum' between the Classical and the Romantic: a phase, between 1730 and 1830, in the development of the arts - landscape painting, poetry, travel, architecture and the novel - during which each in turn 'shifted its appeal from reason to the imagination'.¹³³ Its reappraisal was given further momentum in a different context in the 1950s by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, who saw the Picturesque as offering a valid approach to the planning of contemporary townscapes.¹³⁴ David Watkin's 1982 study, *The English Vision*, considered the Picturesque in architecture, landscape and garden design: its title summarises his conclusion that 'the theory and practice of the Picturesque constitute the major English contribution to European aesthetics', arguing that its emphasis on the primacy of pictorial values rendered it between 1730 and 1830 'the universal mode of vision for the educated classes'.¹³⁵ There has been a wealth of critical studies in recent decades.¹³⁶ An evaluation of the modern legacy of the architectural Picturesque by John Macarthur ponders the contrast between the twentieth-century usage of the word Picturesque as a synonym for 'aesthetic failure, trivial cultural products and naive tastes', and its more particular and objective original usage in the eighteenth century; he regards the period 1780-1830 as 'the apotheosis of the Picturesque', the period which followed being one of assimilation and development (and, implicitly, dilution).¹³⁷ With such a plethora of available scholarship, it is unnecessary to chronicle its evolution as a philosophy in any detail here other than to identify its protagonists, the

¹³³ Hussey, *Picturesque*, p. 4.

¹³⁴ Nikolaus Pevsner, (Mathew Aitchison, ed.), *Visual Planning and the Picturesque*, (Los Angeles, 2010).

¹³⁵ Watkin, *Vision*, (London, 1982) p. vii.

¹³⁶ See, for example, Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, (Stanford, 1989) and *Literary Sources*; Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (eds.), *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2010); John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, *The Genius of the Place*, (London, 1975); Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Picturesque in late Georgian England*, (London, 1995). Articles such as David Marshall's 'The Problem of the Picturesque', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35:3, Spring 2002, pp. 413-37; in the same journal, Archer's 'Character in English Architectural Design', 12:3, Spring 1979, pp. 339-71, and G.L. Hersey's 'Association and Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Architecture', 4:1, Autumn 1970, pp. 71-89, address individual themes.

¹³⁷ John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: architecture, disgust and other irregularities*, (Abingdon, 2007).

principal strands of argument, and its chronology, to put into context its migration into the field of architecture.

The analysis of Beauty

‘we see with our imagination’¹³⁸

The genesis of the concept of the Picturesque in the mid-eighteenth century lay in philosophical discussions of the nature of Beauty. Was Beauty intrinsic to certain objects or could they be rendered beautiful by association? And was contextual learning or experience a pre-requisite for a proper appreciation of Beauty? If so, this pre-supposed an educated spectator and reserved to them questions of Beauty as matters of Taste. Edmund Burke, in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* of 1757, rejecting the rationalist argument that perception of beauty depended on analysis, which in turn demanded knowledge,¹³⁹ proposed a binary analysis of the ideas of Beauty which took the form of two alternative emotional responses to the qualities of objects as perceived by human senses. Objects which were Sublime would invoke a response of ‘delightful horror’;¹⁴⁰ by contrast the qualities of smoothness and gradual variation which rendered objects Beautiful would induce serenity. This binary division provoked others into proposing an intermediate category of beauty whose appreciation derived from different sensations, under various terms such as ‘Novelty’.¹⁴¹

But before Burke other definitions or aspects of Beauty had already been the subject of discussion, particularly in the context of the aesthetics of natural and designed landscapes. As early as the 1730s the established formality of the axial country house garden landscape was being coming into question, in favour of an approach which resulted in ‘the appearance

¹³⁸ William Gilpin writing to William Mason, (1769), quoted in J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Dilemma of Style*, (Chicago, 1987), p. 21, fn. 38.

¹³⁹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, (London, 1757). References are to the 5th edition, (London, 1767), p. 164.

¹⁴⁰ Burke, p. 129.

¹⁴¹ Robin Dix, ‘Addison and the concept of Novelty as a basic aesthetic category’, in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 26 (4) 1986, pp. 383-390.

of beautiful nature',¹⁴² and which found expression in terms such as 'Surprise' and Variety', qualities identified by Alexander Pope (1688-1774) in 1731 as desirable in the designed landscape.¹⁴³ In their encouragement of painterly effect these concepts, exemplified in the landscape designs of William Kent (c.1685-1748), were, in all but name, early manifestations of the Picturesque. Indeed, Watkin proposes that Kent's knowledge of landscape paintings and drawings by Poussin, Claude and Rosa was 'an important part of his pictorial approach.'¹⁴⁴

The relationship between Man and landscape was a recurring theme of educated debate in eighteenth-century Britain which extended beyond the aesthetic into the social and economic implications of issues such as changes in agricultural technology and the enclosure of common land..¹⁴⁵ It is perhaps unsurprising that the landscape continued to be central to the next stage in the evolution of Picturesque theory as the focal point of the writings of its main protagonists: William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price.

The Picturesque theorists: Gilpin, Knight, Price and Repton

The contribution of Reverend William Gilpin (1724-1804), a Hampshire parson, tourist of the British countryside and amateur artist, was to encourage a new appreciation of natural beauty which could only be obtained by adopting the eye of the painter.¹⁴⁶ His published notes and sketches recommended specific sites of natural beauty by reference to their potential for pictorial composition.¹⁴⁷ He was not the first to use the word 'Picturesque', which, meaning 'suitable as a subject for a picture', or 'picture-like' was current in England as early as 1705 to convey approbation of natural beauty, as well as signifying an idealised

¹⁴² Sir Thomas Robinson to Lord Carlisle, December 1734, quoted in Watkin, *Vision*, p. 13.

¹⁴³ Alexander Pope, *An Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard, Earl of Burlington*, (London, 1731), lines 55-56.

¹⁴⁴ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rural Tradition, 1740-1860*, (Berkeley, 1989), p. 40.

¹⁴⁶ Manwaring, p. 12.

¹⁴⁷ Malcolm Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, p. 76.

artistic composition within it.¹⁴⁸ His writings however distinguished beauty in ‘real objects’, associated with smoothness, from beauty in ‘picturesque representation’, a product of ruggedness or irregularity. He introduced the important idea of context: he cites an example of an object which in itself possesses formalised beauty, ‘such as a piece of Palladian architecture’,¹⁴⁹ but which ceases to please in a picture because of its ‘smoothness’; buildings must therefore be, or be depicted as, irregular or ruined to be considered picturesquely beautiful. In explaining that paintings ‘orchestrate’ their various elements to attain beauty of composition, he summarises the paradox inherent in the Picturesque aesthetic, which is that only by human intervention (whether physical in the creation of landscape or in art by carefully composed depiction) can natural beauty be fully conveyed.

Uvedale Price (1747-1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824), considered the practical application of Picturesque theory to landscape design and thence to architecture.¹⁵⁰ Richard Payne Knight, collector, connoisseur and landowner, opened this phase of the debate with his work *The Landscape: a Didactic Poem*, addressed to Price, in 1794, followed in 1805 by his *Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste*, a broader exposition with more specific comments on architecture. In his poem he argued for empathy between house and setting, as well as demanding a more challenging representation of the natural landscape, as exemplified by the paintings of Claude. This was an informed view, for Knight was a collector of Claude’s drawings who as a young man had experienced a Grand Tour.¹⁵¹ Indeed Knight’s viewpoint was rooted in connoisseurial privilege: to him, an intellectual hinterland was vital for proper aesthetic appreciation: ‘All the pleasures of the intellect arise from the association of ideas. ...

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of its provenance see Manwaring, p. 167.

¹⁴⁹ William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape*, (London, 1794), Essay I, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Inter alia*, John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830*, (9th ed., New Haven and London, 1993), p. 449.

¹⁵¹ Andrew Ballantyne, *Architecture, Landscape and Liberty: Richard Payne Knight and the Picturesque*, (Cambridge, 1997), Chapter 1.

To a mind richly stored ... recollection enhances enjoyment, and enjoyment brightens recollection'.¹⁵²

Uvedale Price by contrast, in his *Essay on the Picturesque*, appearing a few months after *The Landscape*, brought to the subject not Knight's connoisseurship, but, as a Herefordshire squire and son of a gentleman artist, both a keen sensibility and the social responsibility of a conscientious landowner.¹⁵³ He shared Knight's disapproval of the 'high polish and flowing lines' imposed by professional landscape 'improvers',¹⁵⁴ and the landscaped park, with its smoothed contours, vistas culminating in artful structures, serpentine streams, and neat plantations, typified by the work of Lancelot Brown (1716-1783). Brown had shared the desire of Pope and Kent to eschew the old axial formality but had replaced it with an idealised landscape which Knight and Price found unchallenging and artificial.¹⁵⁵ Both the latter sought a more nuanced approach, informed by the pictorial: the sub-title of Price's *Essay* is 'on the Use of Studying Pictures for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape'. His idea of the Picturesque was derived from the Italian '*pittoresco*' which referred not to the object but to the painterly or 'practised eye'.¹⁵⁶

While there were differences in emphasis between their arguments - in Watkin's succinct explanation, 'for Knight, the Picturesque was a way of looking, not a quality inherent in particular objects'¹⁵⁷ - their common ground in its most reduced form was that buildings and landscape should be seen as a conjoined whole, that there should be harmony in the design of them both, and that 'rules' of design were to be replaced by considerations of the 'appropriate' response stimulated by the form and outline of the overall composition.

¹⁵² Richard Payne Knight, *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste*, (London, 1805), Chapter 2, para. 12.

¹⁵³ Charles Watkins and Ben Cowell, *Uvedale Price: Decoding the Picturesque*, (Woodbridge, 2012). Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁴ Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque as compared with the Sublime and Beautiful*, (expanded edition, London, 1810), chapter 2. Quoted in Malcolm Andrews, (ed.), *The Picturesque: Literary Sources and Documents*, (3 vols., Mountfield, 1994), Vol. 2, pp. 77-8.

¹⁵⁵ Watkin, *Vision*, pp. 67-88; David Jacques, *Georgian Gardens: The Reign of Nature*, (London, 1983), pp. 78-89.

¹⁵⁶ Price, *Essays*, quoted in Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England*, (New Haven and London, 2000), p. 123.

¹⁵⁷ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 78.

However, associationism required cultural context, familiarity with classical or artistic allusion;¹⁵⁸ their concept of the Picturesque was no populist simplification which legitimised any and all personal interpretations of beauty. The aesthetic free-for-all seen in the extremes of eclecticism of the architectural Picturesque which followed cannot therefore entirely be laid at their door. In Price's words:

An architect who is notorious for his violation of rules, his neglect of purity and elegance, and his licentious mixture of styles and ornaments, certainly ought not to be held up as a model for imitation; but on the other hand, an artist who, in any art, produces new and striking effects, well deserves to have their causes investigated.¹⁵⁹

The nature of Humphry Repton's participation in the debate was less intellectual and infinitely more practical: 'The word Picturesque has of late excited considerable interest and controversy; but the word, like many others in common use, is more easy to be understood than defined.'¹⁶⁰ His overriding concern was for 'appropriateness', that is, for buildings and grounds to be specifically designed to match topography, desired function, and rank and status of client.¹⁶¹ He believed that 'the health, cheerfulness and comfort of a country residence' should not be sacrificed to the 'wild but pleasing scenery of a painter's imagination'. 'Propriety and convenience are not less objects of good taste, than picturesque effect', he writes to Price.¹⁶² Indeed he argued that in some situations, elements 'adverse to picturesque beauty' such as Order and Symmetry, should be 'very properly preserved'.¹⁶³ The significance of Repton's role in advancing Picturesque theory from landscape to architecture is demonstrated most clearly not only in his collaborations with Wyattville, and

¹⁵⁸ Knight, *Inquiry*, p.196. Discussed in Bermingham, p. 71.

¹⁵⁹ Price, *Essays*, Vol. II, p. 215.

¹⁶⁰ Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, (London, 1816), p. 217.

¹⁶¹ This idea of fitness for both purpose and status is a recurring theme in the early nineteenth century pattern books. It reflects the idea of 'Decorum', or seamliness, a concept which makes an appearance in architecture at least by 1772, in *The Rudiments of Architecture*, where 'Decor' or 'Decorum' 'signifies the keeping of a due respect between the inhabitant and habitation.' Archer, *Literature*, Entry 303.1.

¹⁶² Repton, *Fragments*, p. 124.

¹⁶³ Humphry Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, (London, 1795), p. 112.

his work in partnership with John Nash,¹⁶⁴ but also in his legacy, curated and further developed by John Claudius Loudon, who was instrumental in translating Repton's Picturesque into a more modest form, the Gardenesque, for the smaller house and suburban garden.¹⁶⁵ The architectural work of two of Repton's sons, George Stanley and John Adey, both of whom worked in Nash's office for a period, also reflected a Picturesque inheritance from both father and pupil-master.¹⁶⁶

Three strands of thought fed into the reception of the Picturesque in architecture: the nature of beauty as an emotional rather than cerebral or analytical response; the concomitant concept of the 'appropriateness' – by association or evocation of ideas – of the appearance of a house in relation to its function; and the interplay between house and setting, which influenced both form and plan. That architectural theory could take account of matters of individual and personal response, rather than of acquired knowledge, was certainly a paradigm shift away from prevailing canons of technical 'purity' and historical validity.¹⁶⁷ But the latter were already being challenged by other undercurrents, such as the evolving idea of the villa, and its increasing informality of plan, reflecting a greater desire for 'intimacy and comfort' in interiors,¹⁶⁸ and the increasing focus of architects, in response to demographic change, on the design of the smaller house. In parallel, the new genre of landscape garden¹⁶⁹ employed garden buildings or structures – pavilions, temples, hermitages, ruined or intact – in a variety of styles, imbued with meaning and allusion and

¹⁶⁴ The dates are unclear but the partnership (in essence, a fee-sharing arrangement) between Repton and Nash is believed to have commenced in 1796, with their first collaboration, on alterations to Corsham Court. It lasted for around 5 years, and they collaborated on a number of significant projects including Luscombe of which Longner Hall was the last. Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, pp. 34-6; Davis, *Prince Regent's Architect*, pp. 34-9.

¹⁶⁵ Loudon published a collected edition of Repton's works with a preface and biography in 1840. John Gloag, *Mr. Loudon's England*, (Newcastle, 1970), p. 68.

¹⁶⁶ Vernacular Italianate designs attributed to the Repton family are considered in Chapter 4.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example. David Watkin, *English Architecture*, (2nd ed., London, 2001), Chapter 6: The Classical Revival; Sir John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, Chapter 20; Giles Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain: The Heroic Age*, (New Haven and London, 1995), Chapters 12 and 14.

¹⁶⁸ John Cornforth, *English Interiors, 1790-1848: the Quest for Comfort*, (London, 1978), quoted in Watkin *Vision*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁹ Such as Painshill (1738-73); Stowe (c.1731-51: William Kent, James Gibbs, Capability Brown); and Rousham (1737-41: William Kent).

artfully placed, collectively known as ‘Fabricks’.¹⁷⁰ Summerson refers to them as ‘buildings meant to be seen as beautiful or curious incidents in a scene of controlled wilderness’;¹⁷¹ and they can be regarded as prototypes for the smaller Picturesque house of the early nineteenth century.¹⁷²

There was other and earlier evidence of a willingness to entertain a new theme in domestic architecture, based on an aesthetic of effect. The roles of figures such as Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), nominated by Watkin as the earliest architectural Picturesque practitioner,¹⁷³ or Robert Adam (1728-92), evidenced most notably by the theatricality of castles such as Culzean,¹⁷⁴ [2.1] as precursors of the architectural Picturesque, and the imprimatur given to irregularity in architecture and its role as ‘scenery’ by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Discourses, have been widely discussed in the academic literature.¹⁷⁵ Robert Adam, in his Preface to the first volume of *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* of 1773, admired the ‘movement, novelty, and ingenuity’ of Vanbrugh’s ‘genius’,¹⁷⁶ going on to give his own much-quoted definition of ‘Movement’ in architecture which involved ‘rise and fall, the advance and recess, with other diversity of form, ... so as to add greatly to the picturesque of the composition.’¹⁷⁷ A case can thus be made that the pre-requisites for the Picturesque in architectural form were in place and the manifesto apparently complete some two decades before 1795; in their writings Price and Knight were in a sense codifying strands of thinking which architects had been exploring for some time, and they should perhaps be seen as facilitators, rather than originators, for an already receptive audience.

¹⁷⁰ The academic literature on the subject is extensive. See for example, John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, (London, 2002); Jacques; Birmingham, pp. 9-32.

¹⁷¹ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, p. 447.

¹⁷² See, for example, William and John Halfpenny, *The country gentleman’s pocket companion and builder’s assistant for rural decorative architecture*, (London, 1753); Thomas Overton, *The Temple Builder’s Most Useful Companion*, (London, 1766).

¹⁷³ Watkin, *English Architecture*, p. 117.

¹⁷⁴ From 1778: Watkin, *Vision*, pp. 97-8.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Hussey, *Picturesque*, p. 192.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Watkin, *Vision*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Both men proposed some specific ideas about the architectural Picturesque. Knight's extended discussion of architectural styles in his *Analytical Inquiry* concludes with a direction that: 'The best style for irregular and picturesque houses which can now be adopted, is that mixed style which characterizes the buildings of Claude and the Poussins: it is distinguished by no particular manner or class of ornament but admits of all promiscuously'.¹⁷⁸ This made a very specific link between Picturesque theory and Italian vernacular buildings, to which, it will be shown, subsequent architects and pattern book authors frequently referred. He had already put his ideas into physical form in designing and building his new seat in Herefordshire, Downton Castle, begun in 1774. **[2.2]** Its evocative castellated, massive asymmetrical form is a synthesis of romanticism and historical reconstruction.¹⁷⁹ paintings by Claude such as *The Enchanted Castle* have been put forward as a source.¹⁸⁰ **[2.3]** Set in a dramatic landscape overlooking the River Teme enhanced by grottoes and rustic bridges, it is impeccably Picturesque.¹⁸¹ His mixed style extended to the Classical nature of his interiors, a contrast not at all incongruous in his eyes: thirty years later he justifies his 'successful experiment' in 'Gothic [sic] without and Grecian within', 'having at once the advantage of a picturesque object, and of an elegant and convenient dwelling'.¹⁸² This combination was the approach which Nash took at Luscombe, built between the construction of Downton and the publication of Knight's *Inquiry*, and to be further considered below. Price, for his part, favoured Gothic architecture as 'more picturesque, though less beautiful than Grecian', for, 'even where there is an exact correspondence of parts, it is often disguised by an appearance of splendid confusion and irregularity'.¹⁸³ Price's pioneering Castle House at Aberystwyth, to be discussed below, made a strong statement of faith.

¹⁷⁸ Knight, *Inquiry*, pp. 218-19.

¹⁷⁹ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 94.

¹⁸⁰ Nigel Temple, *John Nash and the Village Picturesque*, (Gloucester, 1979), p. 18.

¹⁸¹ H. Avray Tipping, 'Downton Castle', *Country Life*, 14 July 1917, pp. 36-42.

¹⁸² Knight, *Inquiry*, p. 217.

¹⁸³ Price *Essays* (1794 edition), p. 50.

Pretty as a picture: the Picturesque as an architectural idiom

‘The picturesque in architecture does not belong exclusively to ruinous and useless hovels but may be produced in newly-erected and comfortable houses.’¹⁸⁴

The inherent danger of the subversive Picturesque aesthetic was that, Beauty having been restored to the eye of the beholder, architects could believe themselves licensed to be at large in a world of whimsy and theatre of their own devising, achieving Price’s ‘splendid confusion’, or Knight’s ‘promiscuity’.¹⁸⁵ By its very nature it possessed few universally agreed characteristics, defined etymologically in 1801 as merely ‘what is pleasing to the eye; what strikes the viewer as singular’.¹⁸⁶ In a more modern view, ‘Widespread adoption of Picturesque terminology in conversational use in the late eighteenth century .. can seem so ill-defined as to be virtually meaningless.’¹⁸⁷ This conceptual confusion was reflected in the architectural repertoire so confidently labelled ‘Picturesque’ which started to appear in the pattern books of the early decades of the nineteenth century. Initially, in considering the Picturesque pattern book authors focused on rusticity in general and cottages in particular,¹⁸⁸ but their horizons soon widened to take in more sophisticated interpretations such as historical references in the form of the castle or abbey; and non-indigenous styles which were becoming familiar through travel or travel writing: the Swiss Cottage championed by P.F. Robinson;¹⁸⁹ and exoticism in the forms of an indefinite Orientalism variously referred to as ‘Hindoo’, or ‘Mohammedan’ or Egyptian as well as the already familiar Chinoiserie;¹⁹⁰ and in due course the Vernacular Italianate introduced by Nash. Of the cascade of pattern books for the smaller house appearing from 1800,¹⁹¹ one is a useful reflection of the state of

¹⁸⁴ T.F. Hunt, *Half a dozen hints on picturesque domestic architecture*, (London, 1825).

¹⁸⁵ ‘professedly miscellaneous buildings ... [which are] distinguished by no particular manner of execution, or class of ornament, but admit of all promiscuously’: Knight, *Inquiry*, p. 219.

¹⁸⁶ Dixon Hunt and Willis, p. 337.

¹⁸⁷ Copley and Garside, p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Archer, *Literature*, pp. 77-87.

¹⁸⁹ See his *Rural Architecture, or a series of designs for ornamental cottages*, (London, 1823) and *Designs for Ornamental Villas* (London, 1827).

¹⁹⁰ See, for example Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁹¹ See Chapter 5.

play of the architectural Picturesque in 1805: Robert Lugar's first villa book, *Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings, and Villas, in the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy styles, suitable to Persons of Genteel Life and Moderate Fortune, preceded by Some Observations on Scenery and Character Proper for Picturesque Buildings*. Lugar's book is notable not only for the reflective quality of his commentary but also because he went on to enjoy a career distinguished by a Picturesque eclecticism to rival that of John Nash, including in his repertoire Vernacular Italianate, the *cottage orné*, and most notably the domestic castle.¹⁹² [2.4] The modest type of house and of client which he addresses were to become the mainstay of the market for the picturesque villa; in his use of the word 'Fancy' Lugar conveys the sense of an architectural idiom which extends beyond the more conventional Grecian or Gothic dichotomy but which in its rich variety of designs is not susceptible to succinct categorisation; notably, amid a number of exotic and imaginative examples he includes an 'Italian villa'.¹⁹³ His preface refers explicitly to the Picturesque debate,¹⁹⁴ and while not defining the word he makes clear the importance in design of judgement over prescription, aiming to 'compose with a painter's eye', and thereby 'embellish the landscape': 'it is not necessary that the artist [sic] should be trammelled by the cold rules of the school; some scope must be allowed to taste and fancy; yet his judgement must select and so unite the parts, that each may be adapted to its place and the whole bear a just correspondence', thereby avoiding 'an heterogeneous and unmeaning mass, a mere jumble of incongruities'.¹⁹⁵

Over the next two decades many pattern books included the term 'Picturesque' either in their title or in their discursive text; they used it to signify 'irregularity' (as a synonym for asymmetry), variety and informality. Even if the vocabulary of Picturesque design was far from standardised, for the smaller house, irregularity, clad in any form, was an acceptable if

¹⁹² Rosemary Yallop, 'The enigma of Robert Lugar', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXII, (2014), pp. 149-166. Lugar's Italianate work will be considered in Chapter 6.

¹⁹³ Plates XXVII and XXVIII and p.24. This design will be considered further in Chapter 5 below.

¹⁹⁴ Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

not wholly prevalent option. By 1839 Samuel Brooks is able to state confidently that ‘It is evident that to introduce irregularity of form in buildings is an architectural refinement of the modern age.’¹⁹⁶ In Hussey’s phrase, the Picturesque was not a style but a point of view, and the variety of interpretations unleashed by this revolutionary way of seeing suggest that architects – or at least pattern book authors – increasingly categorised as Picturesque everything which was not ‘Grecian’. A retrospective view suggests that, ‘In gaining wider currency, the idea of the Picturesque also lost precision. Almost anything might be considered Picturesque, provided it was different from the standard productions of the previous age.’¹⁹⁷ By the 1830s if not earlier the popular understanding of the Picturesque risked becoming a free-for-all bereft of theoretical underpinning, and Francis Goodwin in his 1835 book *Rural Architecture* sounds a note of caution for those architects ‘embarrassed by their very freedom’: ‘An eye for picturesque composition and a knowledge of its principles must serve in lieu of the direct laws of symmetry and the guidance of the positive rules that in classic building used as much to help as fetter the architect’.¹⁹⁸ Loudon was happy to encourage this diversity by publishing villa designs in a wide range of styles, often presenting simultaneously houses of identical plan but differently clad;¹⁹⁹ but he lamented nevertheless in 1838 the tendency to be ‘captivated by the exterior and more influenced by its picturesque effect than by any property in the dwelling connected with habitableness’.²⁰⁰ However, in criticising the apparent primacy of exterior form he plays down the manner in which Picturesque theory facilitated the breaking down of convention in interior plan. This was particularly noticeable in Nash’s designs but subsequently widely adopted, with the introduction of informal or versatile spaces, often interconnecting to achieve a free-flowing circulation; the provision of numerous points of access to garden and grounds by the use of

¹⁹⁶ Brooks, p. vii.

¹⁹⁷ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁸ Goodwin, p. xi. It includes some Vernacular Italianate designs: see Chapter 5.

¹⁹⁹ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p. 68.

²⁰⁰ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 114.

conservatories and verandahs; and the lowering of the receiving room storey from *piano nobile* to ground level.²⁰¹ Nevertheless Loudon's criticism of superficiality had validity: many of the villa books demonstrate that in the realm of the smaller house, novelty often outstripped subtlety, the setting of the house was increasingly rarely discussed, cultural allusion decayed into counterfeiting; and the fantastical, theatrical design universe described by George Wightwick in his *Palace of Architecture* of 1840, or Richard Brown in his *Domestic Architecture* of 1841²⁰² demonstrated how far the Picturesque had come adrift from its philosophical and artistic origins and been reduced to an aesthetic of effect and ornament.

John Nash and the Picturesque: 'to charm the eye and captivate the soul'

John Nash is widely acknowledged as an early and central agent of the architectural Picturesque. In Summerson's words:

There would be a strong case for designating John Nash the greatest figure in the whole picturesque movement. His work embraces every aspect of it, while there is nothing in his enormous oeuvre (excepting only his Taylor-esque early houses) which does not embrace it.²⁰³

It is all the more unfortunate, but perhaps characteristic, that Nash published no philosophical contribution to the debate, expressing his interpretation through his buildings. The closest we have to a Nash manifesto of the Picturesque lies in his correspondence with the owner of Longner Hall, Staffordshire where in 1801 Nash comments on the gamut of styles available,²⁰⁴ making a primary distinction between 'a picturesque effect in the grouping of the buildings', and the 'perfect uniformity of all the parts', being the Classical approach. He advises that 'by rejecting symmetry' rooms could be placed in the most favourable situation, be suited to their purposes and offer variety 'to magnificent effect': it was a repertoire comprising a number styles all sharing the freedom to respond both to the functional requirements of the house and its occupant client, and to its natural setting. Nash's open-minded approach to the Picturesque is underlined by the fact that in the period

²⁰¹ Papworth makes observations on the changing interior villa plan: 'Remarks', pp. 84-86.

²⁰² Both to be discussed in Chapter 5.

²⁰³ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, p. 455.

²⁰⁴ Geoffrey Tyack, 'Longner Hall' in *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XIV (2004), pp. 199-213.

between 1799 and 1802 the designs for the castellated Luscombe, the *villa rustica* at Cronkhill, and the Tudor-Gothic Longner Hall, must have been in his mind simultaneously.²⁰⁵ [2.5] Each was complete and consistent in itself, showing mastery of the idiom, and robustness of concept; that he could handle such varying forms at the same time while preserving the integrity of each marks him as a master of the Picturesque.

Nash had become acquainted with the Picturesque theorists during his self-imposed exile in Wales after his London bankruptcy. While the precise circumstances of Nash's introduction to the squirearchy of the Border Country are not clear,²⁰⁶ Thomas Johnes of Hafod, his cousin Richard Payne Knight, and Uvedale Price all at some point became close acquaintances and in the case of Johnes and Price, clients, of Nash. Repton was also linked in to this circle, having worked at an estate neighbouring that of Price, consulting Knight for his knowledge of local topography.²⁰⁷ Nash embarked on an unconventional house for Price at Aberystwyth. The relative contributions of architect and client are difficult to distinguish, Price claiming credit for the design and reporting that Nash was 'excessively struck' with Price's ideas, nevertheless acknowledging that Nash has 'contrived the house most admirably for the situation'.²⁰⁸ The triangular plan of Castle House was anchored by three octagonal towers and the house perched above a rocky shore close to a ruined castle: an irregular, if symmetrical, house in a rugged setting with a nod to history: the Picturesque incarnate, perhaps influenced by Nash's reaction to Downton, if he was already familiar with it by then.²⁰⁹ [2.6] In any event, the irregular silhouette and the drama thereby created which both complemented and embellished the landscape clearly pleased him, for the 'domestic castle' became one of his new templates for the smaller country house and the style which

²⁰⁵ Nash's list of seven 'characters suitable to a house' in his letter of 1801 does not however specifically mention an Italianate style. Ibid.

²⁰⁶ There are various explanations in: Davis, *Prince Regent's Architect*, pp. 22-23; Summerson, *Nash* 1980, pp. 20-24; David Whitehead, 'Rebuilding a career: John Nash in Herefordshire 1790-1800', in Tyack, *Picturesque*, pp. 19-34.

²⁰⁷ Daniels, p. 109.

²⁰⁸ Quoted in Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 21.

²⁰⁹ Elizabeth Inglis-Jones, 'An Eccentric's Castle House', *Country Life*, 4 July 1952, p. 33

he used for his own home at East Cowes. Of Nash's twelve or so examples, Luscombe Castle is remarkable in that it takes the outward form of a castle and translates it into the new ideal of the villa.²¹⁰ [2.7] It is asymmetrical in outline, irregular and compact in plan, and makes use of a variety of geometrical forms, with octagonal and square towers; through the absence of a raised ground floor and the placing of a verandah Nash creates a tangible connection to the exterior landscape, enclosed on three sides by the natural valley which was to be enhanced by Repton's planting, with one open prospect to the sea. Nash rejected the client's initial ideas for a 'modern, Grecian' villa in favour of a Picturesque outline and plan.²¹¹ It is not a sham castle but a domestic one; unlike Knight's Downton or even Nash's own Killymoon (1803-9) or Caerhayes (1808)²¹² [2.8] there is not a hint of fortress, but rather, an air of peaceful comfort, or in Repton's words, 'chaste simplicity'. Luscombe is 'in some ways the model house of the whole picturesque movement'.²¹³

It is in the works of Nash above those of other architects of the period that we can best discern the intended impact of the Picturesque on the beholder. The intimations of power inherent in the Sublime left the onlooker diminished and discomfited; Beauty brought contemplation and serenity; it was left to the Picturesque house to delight, to surprise, and, to borrow a phrase from Knight's poem, 'to charm the eye and captivate the soul'.²¹⁴ The Picturesque house operated in the realm of the imagination, revealing itself with excitement, playfulness, even wit, rather than correctness and *gravitas*, and its element of make-believe accorded with its eclecticism. The Picturesque repertoire offered an architectural dressing-up box, and in designing a Picturesque house and placing it carefully in its setting the architect was creating a stage for the performance of the life appropriate to its inhabitants. It was this element of theatricality which, as time progressed, was to incite criticism of the

²¹⁰ Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses: Late Georgian*, (Woodbridge, 1955), pp. 55-65.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²¹² Both are discussed in Tyack, 'Domestic Gothic', in Tyack (ed.), *Picturesque*.

²¹³ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 112.

²¹⁴ Knight, *Landscape*, p. 12.

Picturesque as later interpreted and as executed by lesser hands. Pugin later criticised what he termed a ‘great error’ in irregular and Picturesque architecture: ‘the plans of buildings are designed to suit the elevation, instead of the elevation being subservient to the plan’;²¹⁵ yet Nash’s handling of the Picturesque work is surely not vulnerable to such criticism. His interiors, which pay as much attention to circulation as to decoration which could often be plain to the point of austerity (his three Italianate villas being a case in point), prove that the goals of movement and variety could be attained inside as well as outside. They took the visitor on a journey of exploration, for he manipulated the plan and varied the geometry of room shapes to foster constant surprise, just as an exterior perambulation would reveal different facets in turn. In short, he placed the outside and inside in dialogue with each other.

The architectural Picturesque: aberration, revolution, imitation, innovation

The architectural Picturesque has been described as ‘curious, destabilising and productive’.²¹⁶

Crook sums up its core with deceptive simplicity:

Picturesque values (that is, architecture as scenery) and associationist ethics (that is, architecture as embodied memory) broke up the canonical harmonies of classicism.²¹⁷

While Hitchcock rightly reminds us that ‘manifestations of the Picturesque around 1800 have rather been seen as aberrations from a norm considered primarily to have been a Classical Revival,’²¹⁸ Meeks cites an anonymous opinion published in *The Quarterly Review* of 1855 warning against ‘judging [the various styles of architecture] by reference to some type from which they have deviated’, rather than ‘by their agreement or disagreement with the more durable laws of taste’.²¹⁹ He applauds the creative energy underlying the break with convention which it represented, noting ‘how positive the advocates of the new mode of

²¹⁵ Pugin, *Principles*, p. 52.

²¹⁶ Macarthur, *Picturesque*, p. 1.

²¹⁷ Crook, ‘The Consequences of the Picturesque’, in *Dilemma*, p. 13.

²¹⁸ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, (New Haven, 1977), p. 21.

²¹⁹ C.L.V. Meeks, ‘Picturesque Eclecticism’ in *The Art Bulletin*, Vo.32, No.3, (September 1950), p. 227.

vision were. [They were] not involved with a careless slipping away from ‘good’ standards but with a revolution’.²²⁰ Watkin concludes that: ‘No other country [at the opening of the nineteenth century] in Europe could boast a domestic architecture of comparable freedom, variety and subtlety.’²²¹

It is the richness of its sources and the legitimising of the role of the imagination which constitutes the significance of the Picturesque in influencing the direction of British architectural design; its particular applicability to the villa as a form for the smaller house ensured that it would in time change the face of the British town. Rusticity, relationship with landscape and a willingness to embrace influences both indigenous and from beyond Britain’s borders were all important elements in shaping the Picturesque repertoire; to complete the analysis of the validity of the Vernacular Italianate style as a product of Picturesque theory it is also necessary to look at a wider, transnational cultural context: the English relationship with Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which is the subject of the next chapter.

²²⁰ Meeks, ‘Picturesque Eclecticism’, p. 230.

²²¹ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 112.

Chapter 3

Italy idealised

‘Italia! Oh Italia! Thou who hast the fatal gift of Beauty’²²²

This chapter analyses the nature and significance of the cultural nexus between Britain and Italy in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The continuing British interest in Italian culture throughout the period under review can be seen as taking the form of two distinct types and phases, as an earlier intellectual veneration of the antique was succeeded, after the Napoleonic Wars, by a more sentimental susceptibility. These changing British perceptions of Italy were of relevance, it is argued here, in preparing the ground for the emergence of a Vernacular Italianate style of architecture in Britain and in contributing to its subsequent acceptance and evolution.²²³

The rediscovery of the antique

A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. ... almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean.²²⁴

The cultivated eighteenth-century British gentleman looked to Italy to learn from its ancient civilisations and from Renaissance scholarship, as expressed in the country’s archaeology, landscape, art and architecture, and literature. In travelling to Italy he was fulfilling both a desire to observe and record it at first hand, and a duty to acknowledge a cultural debt. The Grand Tour has been extensively studied and needs little exposition here other than to set it in the general context of channels of Italian influence in eighteenth-century Britain.²²⁵

²²² Lord Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, (London, 1818), Canto IV, 370.

²²³ Works on which this chapter has drawn include: Charles Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: the Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge, 1957); Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England*, (London, 1925); Clare Hornsby (ed.), *The Impact of Italy: the Grand Tour and beyond*, (London, 2000), and Manfred Pfister’s anthology of travel writing, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers* (Atlanta GA, 1996).

²²⁴ Charles Dilly (ed.), *Dr. Johnson’s Table Talk*, (London, 1798), p.186.

²²⁵ Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: the Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century*, (Stroud, 1992); Roger Hudson (ed.), *The Grand Tour, 1592-1796*, (London, 1993); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1997); John Wilton-Ely, ‘Classic Ground: Britain, Italy and the Grand Tour’, in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Vol. 28, (1), 2004, pp. 136-65.

Intrinsic to it was an explicit acknowledgement of ‘the authority of the antique’.²²⁶ The Society of Dilettanti, formed in 1734, ‘recognised the central place of the Grand Tour in the making of a connoisseur’.²²⁷ The Tour in its by then conventional form approached its peak in the third quarter of the eighteenth century before its interruption by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. While travellers took in many Continental countries, Italy was seen as the ultimate destination of the cultural pilgrim: a young Robert Wharton, writing home in 1775, described Italy as: ‘the land of ancient virtue and modern virtù (otherwise called taste)’.²²⁸ *En route* the travellers amassed prints, drawings, paintings, medals and sculpture, which, displayed on their return, further disseminated the cultural *largesse* which Italy had to offer;²²⁹ those at home could learn vicariously, not solely through viewing these collections, but by attaining a knowledge of canonical paintings, even those in private hands, through the expanding print market; in addition many travellers published their diaries and guide-books, and artists and architects published volumes of drawings of monuments and sites.²³⁰ It was not therefore just the tourists themselves who acquired an easy familiarity with Italian culture: it extended to a wider audience of armchair travellers who had never left English shores.²³¹ Expressing a sentiment which foreshadows the admiration of the Picturesque theorists for Claude’s Arcadian compositions, and their desire to capture their essence in Picturesque landscape and architecture at home, the poet William Cowper wrote in 1785 of the ‘painter’s magic skill’, which ‘conveys a distant country into mine, and throws Italian light on English walls’.²³²

²²⁶ Ackerman, p. 168.

²²⁷ Brewer, p. 257.

²²⁸ Black, p. 40.

²²⁹ Brewer, p. 258.

²³⁰ See Black, pp. 328-334; Brand, Appendices D and E.

²³¹ Brand, p.1 and Chapter 1. Manwaring, pp. 62-94.

²³² William Cowper, *The Task*, (London, 1785), Book I, 422-425, quoted in Manwaring, p. 57.

Even by the 1750s patterns of travel were broadening to include two other categories of traveller: the modish ‘tourist’, male or female, not necessarily of the first ranks of society,²³³ and those in search of academic knowledge or professional advancement, such as antiquarians, artists and architects, the latter two groups partly from a genuine desire to study Classical models but increasingly because patrons expected it of them.²³⁴ These ‘professional’ travellers were a significant constituency, highly influential in the formation of British perceptions of Italy.

The lure of landscape

European artists had been travelling to Italy to record its antiquities and its topography since the Renaissance.²³⁵ A sense of their motives in doing so may be found in Panofsky’s characterisation of Dürer’s attitude towards Classical art as ‘neither that of the heir nor of the imitator, but that of the conquistador .. antiquity.. was a lost kingdom which had to be re-conquered by a well-organised campaign’.²³⁶ Rome and the Campagna was a magnet for a number of seventeenth-century artists from the Low Countries who travelled to Italy and painted landscapes which were rich sources of information about vernacular buildings and townscapes.²³⁷ Scalbert illustrates a drawing by Breenbergh from the 1620s which meticulously records the random massing of houses in a hill town.²³⁸ **[3.1]** A painting by Nicolaes Berchem of around 1655 depicts with some accuracy rural buildings, some in disrepair, scattered in the countryside in agglomerations of low houses with shallow-pitched roofs, courtyards entered through arches, and round towers.²³⁹ **[3.2]** A turning point in

²³³ Brewer, pp. 206-8; Black, p. 300.

²³⁴ Brewer, p. 312; Black, p. 261.

²³⁵ Henk van Os gives a full account in *Dreaming of Italy*, Exhibition Catalogue, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, (The Hague, 2006), Chapters 2 and 3.

²³⁶ Quoted in Mark Evans, ‘Dürer and Italy revisited: the German Connection’, *Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy*, British Museum Occasional Paper no. 130 (2004), www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/DurerandItalyRevisited/pdf, p. 1, [accessed 1 March 2015].

²³⁷ van Os, pp. 64-70.

²³⁸ Scalbert, p. 22. Bartolomeus Breenbergh, *View of Tivoli*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Acc.63.2.

²³⁹ Nicolaes Berchem, *Italian landscape with figures and animals*, H.M. The Queen, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 404818. Berchem never travelled to Italy, borrowing details from the works of contemporaries: van Os, p. 68.

depictions of Italy was the work of Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa and Nicolas Poussin in the mid-seventeenth century which combined an interpretative naturalism with topographical detail and classical allusion to create a new form of landscape painting, which, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, would be retrospectively ‘recognised’ as Picturesque one hundred and fifty years later. Their work was fundamental in shaping landscape painting ‘after life’,²⁴⁰ the genre which flowered in Italy in the mid-eighteenth century, no longer celebrating landscape solely as historical stage, but also for the composition, colour and visual texture of the scenery, and the seductive qualities of an Ovidian landscape. English artists such as Richard Wilson appeared in Italy in increasing numbers from the 1740s;²⁴¹ joined by other Continental artists such as Claude-Joseph Vernet and Simon Denis.²⁴² Their work was equally accessible to an English audience, Vernet’s Italianate landscapes for example already being collected by English connoisseurs in the 1740s.²⁴³ [3.3] Alongside the expressive possibilities of landscape the more traditional and inexpensive *vedute*, conventional landscape views recording antiquities and their environs and purchased as mementos, remained popular and commercially successful. Both types of work offered a perspective on Italy to those who saw them, whether as visitors or at home in Britain, increasing the sense of familiarity with the country. As Rosemary Sweet puts it in the context of British visitors to Rome, ‘the journey.. was a voyage of recognition – not discovery’, of *objets* and monuments ‘made famous through history’.²⁴⁴

Claude, Poussin and Rosa had created a lasting, seductive vision of Italy, Claude and Poussin ‘perhaps more than anyone providing the moulds for the dreams of Italy that were

²⁴⁰ Martin Sonnabend, *Claude Lorrain: The Enchanted Landscape*, Exhibition catalogue, Ashmolean Museum, (Oxford, 2011, pp. 10-11; Martin Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, (Oxford, 1999), pp. 97-103.

²⁴¹ Deborah Howard, ‘Some eighteenth-century English followers of Claude’, in *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 111, December 1969, pp. 726-33.

²⁴² The development of Richard Wilson’s Claudean landscape style is discussed in Martin Postle and Robin Simon, (eds.), *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting*, Exhibition catalogue, Yale Centre for British Art and National Museum of Wales, (New Haven and London, 2014), Chapter 3.

²⁴³ Philip Conisbee, *Claude-Joseph Vernet, 1714-1789*, Exhibition catalogue, Kenwood House, (London, 1976).

²⁴⁴ Rosemary Sweet, ‘The Changing View of Rome in the Long Eighteenth Century’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 33, No .2 (2010) p. 148.

to haunt successive generations'.²⁴⁵ Henk van Os describes Claude Lorrain as instrumental in constructing an Arcadian trope which, once established in the minds of northern Europeans, was hard to dislodge: 'There is one dream of Italy that became so potent that it is often assumed to be the only one there is. It tells of the land of Arcady, reveals a delightful pastoral vista, where all is carefree innocence.'²⁴⁶ He argues that Claude's *Landscape with the Ponte Molle* was the paradigm for this vision.²⁴⁷ [3.4] The bridge itself, well-known to travellers because of its location on the northern route in to the city, and also for its historical and religious significance as the place of Constantine's eve-of-battle conversion to Christianity, was a favourite subject of painters, but Claude's depiction became something of an icon, in the true sense of that word: a window onto the soul of Italy. Indeed, 'It must have been very difficult for any artist visiting Italy to shake off the persistent and pervasive presence of Claude Lorrain's dream'.²⁴⁸ In the eighteenth century his influence rippled outward beyond Italy: as Deborah Howard points out, 'it was not necessary for the English to go to Rome to see Claude's work as by 1750 around thirty-five of his pictures are thought to have been in England'.²⁴⁹ Then in 1777 John Boydell published in London Richard Earlom's engravings of Claude's *Liber Veritatis*, 200 drawings which the artist had made of his paintings as a catalogue of his work: copies were acquired by connoisseurs, including the 2nd Lord Berwick of Attingham Park, later a patron of Nash; Nash himself owned at the time of his death a copy of the first edition with 'very early and fine impressions, many of them proofs', as well as a reproduction of Claude's *Embarkation of St. Ursula*.²⁵⁰ Claude's treatment of light on landscape brought about a re-interpretation of landscape painting by British artists, tracing a line through Alexander Cozens and his son John Robert (who

²⁴⁵ van Os, p. 60.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁴⁷ Claude Lorrain, *Landscape near Rome with a view of the Ponte Molle*, 1645, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery: Acc.1955P111.

²⁴⁸ van Os, p. 18.

²⁴⁹ Howard, p. 728.

²⁵⁰ Robert Harding Evans, *Catalogue of the valuable architectural and miscellaneous library, prints and drawings of the late John Nash Esq.*, (London, 1835), lots 384, 943. Soane Coll.2215.

travelled with Payne Knight), Richard Wilson (who even by 1798 was being referred to as ‘the English Claude’²⁵¹) and Thomas Jones, Wilson’s pupil, and on to Turner, who was explicit in his homage.²⁵² Their putative role in the genesis of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain will be examined in the next chapter in considering Nash’s possible sources, but it is sufficient to note at this point the plethora of ‘Claudean’ imagery – both as topographical record and as cultural reference, which stretched beyond Claude’s paintings themselves - to which the British had been exposed by the beginning of the nineteenth century which shaped or reinforced their perceptions of the country and encouraged them to believe that its culture was both familiar and desirable. The advice of the Picturesque theorists to look to Claudean scenery for models not just for landscape but for buildings further exemplified Italy as a Picturesque homeland.

Italy and British architects

It is axiomatic that in late eighteenth-century Italy, and in Rome in particular, the worlds of art and architecture were closely linked: architects went to observe and record, artists often schooled them in rules of perspective and drawing technique, and their subject matter inevitably overlapped. Frank Salmon’s comprehensive study of the extent and impact of travel to Italy by British architects between 1750 and 1840 examines this facet of cultural exchange.²⁵³ Noting ‘the pre-eminence of Italy as the principal location for British architectural study abroad in the later eighteenth century’,²⁵⁴ he distinguishes architects, however generously sponsored, from Grand Tourists, in their purpose, their itineraries and their social milieu.²⁵⁵ He identifies over fifty British architects as having spent periods of

²⁵¹ Rev. Matthew Pilkington, *The Gentleman’s and Connoisseur’s Dictionary of Painters*, (London, 1798), p. 824.

²⁵² Ian Warrell, (ed.), *Turner Inspired: in the Light of Claude*, Exhibition catalogue, National Gallery, London, (London, 2012).

²⁵³ Frank Salmon, *Building on Ruins*, (Aldershot and Burlington VT., 2000).

²⁵⁴ Frank Salmon, ‘British Architects, Italian Fine Arts Academies and the Foundation of the RIBA’, in *Architectural History*, 39, 1996, p. 77.

²⁵⁵ Salmon, *Ruins*, pp. 27-34.

study in Italy, usually in Rome, between 1740 and 1804.²⁵⁶ David Watkin notes that although Sir John Soane made only one visit to Italy, the two years which he spent there from 1778 had a profound and continuing impact on his architectural education, his connoisseurship and passion for collecting, and his social ascent.²⁵⁷

The three-year sojourn of Joseph Gandy (1771-1843) in Italy under private patronage, undertaken before his association with Soane began and interrupted in 1797 by the Napoleonic incursions, is of particular note because he appears to have been one of the few eighteenth-century British architects to make a conscious study of Italian vernacular rural buildings rather than regarding them as mere elements of landscape composition. The specific impact of his field studies on his later published designs will be considered in a later chapter in the broader context of the pattern books, but it seems clear that Gandy's studies encompassed not just the conventional antique or Renaissance subjects but also vernacular architecture, which he observed both in terms of design and of utility. As he wrote home: 'I get at buildings few other architects visit ... I am making a series of designs without neglecting the antique, adapting each for the particular parts of the country that I visit. This is a study that no architect has made before and will be absolutely necessary on my return to England.'²⁵⁸ Lukacher reproduces two pen and wash drawings from this period, one a landscape with buildings and another two elevations for farm buildings, and comments:

Italian landscape watercolours from the mid-1790 by Gandy that depict clusters of rural vernacular buildings nestled in the terrain would inform the more stylized, Mediterranean flavour of his later publications [the two 1805 pattern books]. The dedication of *Designs for Cottages* to the collector and designer Thomas Hope reaffirms this picturesque appropriation of Italianate rural architecture, as Hope's own contemporaneous sketches for country villas with belvederes and prospect towers accord perfectly with Gandy's appropriation of the Italian vernacular.²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ **[3.5]**

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁵⁷ Watkin in Hornsby, p. 101.

²⁵⁸ Brian Lukacher, *Joseph Gandy: An Architectural Visionary in Georgian England*, (London, 2006), p. 50.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 50-51; figs. 49, 50. Lukacher also reproduces further Italian landscape watercolours by Gandy which give detailed attention to groupings of buildings: *ibid.*, pp. 26-27, figs. 21, 22, 23.

²⁶⁰ See Chapter 5 for an analysis of Gandy's designs.

Architectural travel resumed in the post-war period, Salmon pointing out that the two decades after the end of the Napoleonic Wars saw ‘more British architectural students travelling to Italy than at any other time in the Georgian era’, many, in the absence at this time of formal professional recognition in Britain, seeking to associate themselves whether by election or less formally with the Italian Academies which were perceived as repositories of the Renaissance tradition and thereby accredited their standing by proxy.²⁶¹ There were surprising exceptions, including two who were to be the earliest exponents of a Vernacular Italianate style in Britain: John Nash, notably, did not visit the Continent until a trip to Paris in 1815; Robert Lugar, as far as can be ascertained, never left British shores.²⁶² J.B. Papworth, whose picturesque designs published in 1815-8 may be thought to show a familiarity with Italian rustic buildings, never visited Italy, and nor did Decimus Burton; Nash, however, sent his pupil James Pennethorne to Italy in 1824 for two years.²⁶³ Salmon’s comprehensive list²⁶⁴ shows that others travelling after the war included Archibald Simpson, P.F. Robinson, Edward Cresy, Sir Charles Barry, Richard Brown, Charles Parker, George Wightwick, Robert Wetten and Henry Goodridge, all of whom were to go on to produce designs or executed works in an Italian rustic idiom, as will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6. Wightwick, who had published *Select Views of Roman Antiquities* in 1828 after his return, was in 1846 still exhorting young architects to travel to learn Italian and to travel to Italy because:

travel is as ever important in expanding the taste for the beautiful and picturesque and in stimulating the professional enthusiasm which can only be excited by beholding the actual realities whose distant features we have previously learned to appreciate.

²⁶¹ Salmon, ‘Fine Arts Academies’, pp. 77-113.

²⁶² Yallop, ‘Robert Lugar’.

²⁶³ Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the making of Victorian London*, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 8.

²⁶⁴ Salmon, *Ruins*, Appendix A.

He commended a study of the ‘villas of modern Italy’ as well as the practice of ‘water-colour exercises from Italy’s own Nature, in her combinations with architectural forms’.²⁶⁵

The notion of *Italianità* in post-Napoleonic Britain

The British concept of ‘Italian-ness’ was in many ways a curious one: the first wave of Grand Tourists and their early nineteenth-century counterparts each owned a very clear concept of ‘Italy’ as a geographical entity with cultural integrity, despite the fact that full nationhood was not to be achieved until the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.²⁶⁶ The difference between the understanding of the two groups of travellers, separated by the watershed of the Napoleonic Wars, seems to have lain in the emphasis of the former on a cultural unity and indeed primacy derived from the Roman Empire and what were regarded as the enduring values of its ‘classical’ civilisation, refreshed and interpreted by the Renaissance, as distinct from the nineteenth-century view from England of Italian culture and identity which was based on direct observations by travellers of its people, custom and folklore, supplemented by depictions by contemporary English landscape artists and the literature of the Romantics. Both were potent images, but while for the Grand Tourist Italy played a role as a vast cabinet of curiosities and deep well of erudition, the later concept operated on a popular rather than exclusive plane and was perhaps more easily and widely comprehended. This more sentimental understanding gained further momentum because burgeoning republicanism in Italy, encouraged by the French Revolution, had enhanced Italy’s romantic appeal to foreigners as an heroic, oppressed nation whose great and ancient civilisation had been destroyed by barbarians, and over whose decaying beauty all men of

²⁶⁵ George Wightwick, *Hints to Young Architects*, (London, 1846), pp. 18-19, 21.

²⁶⁶ Derek Beales and Eugenio Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy* (2nd ed.), (London, 2002), p. 69.

sensibility should weep. In the extravagant language of Robert Browning, ‘Open my heart and you will see Graved inside of it, “Italy”; Such lovers old are I and she’.²⁶⁷

Between 1800 and 1850 nearly 200 books were published in England describing travellers’ impressions of Italy, quite aside from volumes of memoirs and letters which mention only incidentally Italian travels, and in addition to many pictorial works, books of engravings and periodical articles.²⁶⁸ It is perhaps significant that the most prolific period for these publications was 1821-1830, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, also mirrors the chronology of the growing popularity in England of architectural pattern books containing Italian-derived designs. A not untypical view was expressed by an Englishwoman in 1820 in her preface to a volume of engravings reproduced from her field drawings of Italian scenes, aimed at the popular market: ‘To have seen Italy is an advantage which may be ranked amongst the highest means of mental improvement.’²⁶⁹ A bowdlerised version of William Beckford’s original account of his Grand Tour in 1780-2, supposedly an influence on the architectural education of Henry Goodridge, was belatedly published in 1834.²⁷⁰ In 1826 Mary Shelley described Italy’s seductive power over the ‘new race of Anglo-Italians’, those who ‘eat the lotus, and cannot tear themselves away’, for, ‘It is the land of romance and therefore pleases the young; of classic lore and thus possesses charms for the learned. .. in its fertile soil and the happiness of its peasantry [one] finds an ameliorated likeness of England.’²⁷¹

This new popular, populist vision of Italy and Italian-ness represented not just a shift in sensibility but one of intellectual hierarchy: if Italian allure was now based less on scholarship and more on sensual experience and sentimentality, it required little intellectual

²⁶⁷ John Woodford and Daniel Karlin, *The Poems of Robert Browning*, Vol. III, (London, 2014), ‘De Gustibus’, lines 43-6.

²⁶⁸ Charles Brand, ‘A Bibliography of Travel Books describing Italy published in England, 1800-1850’, in *Italian Studies*, 11 (1956), p. 108-117.

²⁶⁹ Elizabeth Frances Batty, *Italian Scenery*, (London, 1820), p. 1.

²⁷⁰ Frost, p. 119.

²⁷¹ Mary Shelley, ‘The English in Italy’, in *The Westminster Review*, 6 October 1826, pp. 325-51.

underpinning in order to be appreciated by the new breed of traveller, whether of the physical or armchair variety. Rosemary Sweet has noted this changed attitude in the British enthusiasm for Florence, now no longer rooted solely in cultural reverence but on the city's Renaissance mercantile foundations which had made artistic patronage possible: they now admired 'a republic with a flourishing cultural life based upon wealth derived from manufactures and commerce'.²⁷² This was a model with which early nineteenth-century Britain could identify. Italian artistic references even percolated down into the most mundane spheres of material culture: the Midlands china manufacturers, Spode, introduced between 1806 and 1819 no fewer than five patterns for dinner services and domestic items with Italian pastoral and architectural themes. Four patterns, depicting recognisable bridges, towers and a scene on the Tiber, used images from engravings in Merigot's series, *Views of Rome and its Vicinity*, published in London from 1797; a fifth, 'Italian Blue', introduced in 1816, showing an Arcadian landscape with a ruined arch and cowherds, is thought to have been based on Claude's *Pastoral Landscape* of 1638.²⁷³ [3.6]

Italiensehnsucht: dreaming of Italy

'How great my longing for Italy is I cannot even explain, but I am aware that it is something pathological. Italy is, as it were, within us.'²⁷⁴

A detailed consideration of the emergence of Vernacular Italianate architecture in countries other than Britain is outside the scope of this thesis, but it would be an incomplete account not to note here the architectural impact of picturesque Italian imagery in other continental countries, and in France and Germany in particular. The latter proved equally susceptible to this sentimental fascination with Italy: a word, *Italiensehnsucht*, a longing for Italy, was coined

²⁷² Rosemary Sweet, 'British Perceptions of Florence in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *The Historical Journal*, No. 4 (Dec. 2007), p. 839.

²⁷³ Sydney Williams, *Antique Blue and White Spode*, (London, 1950), pp. 88-121; pls. 73-95. Other manufacturers followed suit: Ridgway in the 1820s produced a pattern with a view of the Ponte Molle based on Thomas Major's 1753 engraving of Claude's painting.

²⁷⁴ The German artist Hans von Marées (1837-87), 1876: quoted in van Os, *Dreaming*, p. 23.

for this sense of connection.²⁷⁵ A central figure in the creation of the German idea of Italy as *Kunstheimat*, or artistic homeland,²⁷⁶ was Johann Goethe, who travelled in Italy between 1786 and 1788 in search of personal and intellectual renewal ‘in the spirit of the Ancients’.²⁷⁷ Later, on his own journey the Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel took in, as might be expected, antique and Renaissance subjects but his sketchbooks also evidence observations of rustic and vernacular buildings. Scalbert points out that Schinkel saw Italian rusticity in Utopian terms. His diary entries at Capri, where he sketched peasant houses, praised ‘the most lovely houses, which surpass every vernacular construction I have ever seen .. Here lives a people who are completely uncorrupted’.²⁷⁸ [3.7] His architectural translations for the more sophisticated constituency of the Prussian court will be discussed below.

French architects of this period were perhaps the most diligent in Europe in recording not only buildings of high status but also vernacular buildings in Italy, their attitude moving subtly ‘*de la rivalité à l’Italomanie*’.²⁷⁹ The essay by Pérouse de Montclos, cited above, on the development of Vernacular Italianate architecture in France details the prodigious output of such volumes, beginning with the ‘*charmantes habitations qui, sous les forms les plus simples, portent l’empreint du génie*’ recorded by Percier et Fontaine in 1798;²⁸⁰ and Jean Durand’s *Recueil et parallèle des édifices de tout genre ..* of 1799-1801 and his later *Précis des Leçons d’architecture* of 1802-5. [3.8] *Recueil de vues et fabriques pittoresques d’Italie* by the painter Constant Bourgeois, was published in Paris in 1804; Pierre Clochar’s *Palais, Maisons et Vues d’Italie mesurés et dessinés* in 1809; and a work entirely devoted to Italian rustic buildings drawn in Italy in 1791-3 by François-Léonard Scheult (1768-1840), was published in book form in 1821, although

²⁷⁵ Ludwig Tieck wrote an essay entitled ‘*Sehnsucht nach Italien*’, published in Berlin in 1797: Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory*, (Cambridge, 1993), p. 333; Gretchen Hachmeister, *Italy in the German Literary Imagination: Goethe’s Italian Journey and its reception*, (Woodbridge and Rochester NY, 2002), p. 79.

²⁷⁶ Another concept expressed by Tieck.

²⁷⁷ van Os, *Dreaming*, p. 23.

²⁷⁸ Scalbert, p. 29.

²⁷⁹ Garric, p. 22.

²⁸⁰ Charles Percier and P.F.L. Fontaine, *Palais, maisons et autres édifices modernes dessinés à Rome*, (Paris, 1798).

possibly known as individual illustrations from 1811.²⁸¹ [3.9] *Architecture Toscane* by Grandjean de Montigny and Famin, (Paris, 1806), dealt with buildings of higher status than the rustic or vernacular buildings but the fact that it was referred to by both Charles Parker and P.F. Robinson in their subsequent pattern books, is further evidence that the French pattern books were known beyond French borders: copies appear in the libraries of English architects, not least Soane, Barry and Nash.²⁸² Measuring the extent of their direct influence in Britain is more difficult, and certainly many of those listed above were published some time after Nash had designed Cronkhill.²⁸³ Nash's library at the time of his death did not include a copy of Seheult's *Recueil*, which, as noted, of all the French pattern books of this period is alone in focusing on the rustic, but in any event the volume, and even the individually-published plates, appeared some years after Cronkhill.

As noted above, an 1827 pattern book by P.F. Robinson makes reference to Grandjean and Famin and quotes from their '*Architecture Toscane*,'²⁸⁴ Parker, in the Preface to his *Villa Rustica* of 1832, acknowledges by name all of these French authors, but complains that '[these] collections are generally confined to palaces and pass by or omit the humbler class of dwelling', a defect he intended his volumes to address.²⁸⁵ Some of the French works would no doubt have provided sources for the hamlet of Clisson in the Loire-Atlantique region. The project was instigated by the Cacaault brothers, one an artist and his brother a connoisseur, collector and diplomat, both of whom had worked in Rome.²⁸⁶ Attracted by a

²⁸¹ François-Léonard Seheult, *Recueil d'architecture dessiné et mesuré en Italie dans les années 1791-3*, (Paris, 1821).

²⁸² Soane owned two copies of Percier and Fontaine's *Palais, maisons*, one originally a presentation copy to Josephine Bonaparte (Soane Coll. 4415) as well as a copy of their *Choix des plus célèbres maisons de plaisance de Rome et de ses environs*.. (Soane Coll. 4234) and copies of Clochar's *Palais, Maisons*, Durand's *Recueil* and *Précis* and Grandjean and Famin's *Architecture Toscane* (Soane Coll. 1955, 5084, 5043, 2361). Nash owned copies of both Percier and Fontaine's *Palais, maisons* and *Choix des plus célèbres maisons* (Evans, lots 851 and 848), Durand's *Recueil* (lot 411), and *Architecture Toscane* (lot 422). His library also contained a three-volume illustrated guide-book entitled *Viaggio pittorico della Toscana* (Florence, 1801): (Evans, lot 916).

²⁸³ The Soane catalogue entries for each volume make it clear that Soane did not purchase some of them until years after their publication: Clochar's *Palais, Maisons* of 1809 was acquired by him in 1814, and his two editions of Percier and Fontaine's *Palais, maisons* of 1798 and 1807 in 1818 and 1814 respectively.

²⁸⁴ *Designs for Ornamental Villas*, (London, 1827), Design XVI.

²⁸⁵ Parker, *Villa Rustica*, Book I, (London, 1832).

²⁸⁶ Couapel and Duflos, p. 5.

site on the Sèvre river which in their eyes resembled the landscape of Tivoli, they built a gallery for the collections which they had brought back from Italy. It came to the attention of other French artists, including the sculptor Frédéric Lemot and the architect Mathurin Crucy, both past winners of the Prix de Rome. Lemot purchased adjoining land and set about designing, with Crucy, a recreation of Italy, a grouping of villas, galleries, fabricks and ancillary buildings incorporating Imperial, Renaissance and rustic styles and motifs in a picturesque setting. The earliest designs date from 1808 and building took place between 1811 and 1815.²⁸⁷ The most obviously Vernacular Italianate buildings are the porter's lodge, and the *maison du jardinier*, an extensive complex of house, barns and courtyards, with crenellated walls, arched loggias and campanile. **[3.10]** The gardener's house at Charlottenhof, the summer palace designed by Schinkel at Potsdam for the Prussian Crown Prince from 1829, also takes the form of a rustic Italianate house, and Scalbert posits the Roman garden as a particularly potent Picturesque motif. **[3.11]** He also notes the many published depictions of a gardener's lodge at the Villa Borghese in Rome which would have been available as source material: by Clochar for example, and by artists such as Valenciennes and Eckersberg, and by Turner in 1819.²⁸⁸ It appears in Schinkel's sketchbook and again, rather later, in Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica*.²⁸⁹ **[3.12]**

Rural architecture in late eighteenth-century Italy

It is instructive to compare the seventeenth-century versions of Italian rustic buildings painted by Claude and his followers and admired by the Picturesque protagonists, with their reality at the turn of the eighteenth century as would have been observed by Gandy and Schinkel. Claudia Lazzaro shows how villa design in Tuscany and Latium had given rise by the late sixteenth century to a particular model for lesser estate houses: the hipped-roof

²⁸⁷ Couapel, pp. 150-154.

²⁸⁸ Scalbert, p. 30; for Turner: Tate Gallery, St. Peter's Sketchbook, TB CLXXXVIII, D16302: *Casa Cenci*.

²⁸⁹ Parker, Book 1, 1832, Plate III. Also referred to in the past as the Casina or Casale Cenci-Giustiniani, it is now known as the Casina Giustiniani, viale David Lubin, 4, parco di Villa Borghese, Rome: www.giustiniani.info/casina.html.

block with central belvedere.²⁹⁰ [3.13] As she notes, '[prior to this] two elements typified rural architecture: towers and dovecotes'; many rural buildings were 'conglomerate structures', where a defensive tower from centuries earlier had over time acquired domestic additions, the towers often adapted as dovecotes. The frequent depiction of this new genre in both estate maps²⁹¹ and as a background element in landscape painting²⁹² rendered their distinctive outline familiar beyond the region and beyond Italy. [3.14] Just as architects in England were by the last quarter of the century beginning to address cottage design from the dual viewpoints of estate improvement and labourers' moral and physical welfare,²⁹³ a similar process was under way in parts of Italy, and most notably under the Archduke of Austria and Grand Duke of Tuscany, Pietro Leopoldo II (1747-1792).²⁹⁴ He was convinced of the connection between improving the living conditions of the labourer and increasing agricultural productivity in the Grand Duchy by creating functionally effective buildings which integrated agricultural and domestic space: a return, in a sense, to the *villa rustica* of the Romans. Court engineer Ferdinando Morozzi (1723-1785), published in 1770 a pioneering treatise, *Delle Case de' Contadini* (On Rural Habitations), which discussed spatial and technical requirements and included plans and elevations for model farmhouses which drew on existing rural forms.²⁹⁵ [3.15] In the 1780s Leopoldo engaged his architects in designing models for farm buildings and houses.²⁹⁶ The consensus in the Italian academic literature is that these models, widely copied by other local architects, drew in part on the rustic architecture commissioned by the Medici in the Renaissance period.²⁹⁷ While there are local variations even within the Tuscan region, these late eighteenth-century model

²⁹⁰ Claudia Lazzaro, 'Rustic Country House to Refined Farmhouse: The Evolution and Migration of an Architectural Form', in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 44, No. 4, December 1985, pp. 346-67.

²⁹¹ Lazzaro illustrates a lunette by Giusto Utens of the estate manager's house, on the Medici estate at Pratolino (her Fig. 9).

²⁹² Lazzaro, Figs. 18 and 19.

²⁹³ Archer, *Literature*, p. 77-87.

²⁹⁴ Discussed in Lorenzo Gori-Montanelli, *Architettura Rurale in Toscana*, (Florence, 1978).

²⁹⁵ First published in Florence in 1770, the work was posthumously reprinted in 1807 and 1808: *Dizionario Biografico Italiano*, entry for Ferdinando Morozzi, www.treccani.it [accessed 17 September 2015].

²⁹⁶ Many are in the Archivio di Stato in Florence. Cited in Gori-Montanelli, p. 18.

²⁹⁷ Gori-Montanelli, 1978, p. 15; Lazzaro, pp. 346, 350.

farmhouses share some defining characteristics. This type of rustic building became known as a ‘*Casa Leopoldina*’ or simply a ‘*Leopoldina*’, a term which persists today.²⁹⁸ [3.16] They are square or rectangular in plan, on two floors, usually with a square tower ascending to a third storey, under a pyramidal roof (a *tetto a padiglione*, literally a tented roof), the walls of the top floor pierced, if used as a pigeon loft by pigeonholes, or, in farmhouses of higher standing, single or double window openings. Typically the ground floor housed areas for grain storage or animal shelter: as a result the outside walls at this level would often contain wide arched openings; bedchambers and a central kitchen with hearth occupied the first floor, in some variants reached by external staircases.²⁹⁹ Their broad eaves with visible, projecting rafter ends were already ubiquitous in Italian rustic architecture, whether in alpine or southern climates, in providing shelter or shade as appropriate; they were frequently adaptations of the existing buildings, with much re-use of old materials.³⁰⁰ [3.17] The resemblance between many of the nineteenth-century British suburban and urban forms to be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 and this model will become evident. [3.18] The rustic buildings of the Roman Campagna, while not the result of concerted agricultural reform, nevertheless for reasons of climate, tradition and the availability of materials, share many features with the old and new Tuscan models.³⁰¹ [3.19] These were the typologies of buildings, *mutatis mutandis*, which Gandy, and later Charles Parker and others, would have seen and sketched.³⁰² It is in keeping with the Picturesque paradox that serious study of these rustic buildings by those outside Italy began just at the moment when, in Tuscany at least, their appearance was beginning to owe less to ‘*costruzioni a crescita continua*’,³⁰³ literally ‘continuous growth’: a spontaneous, pragmatic process corresponding to Payne Knight’s ‘mixed

²⁹⁸ See for example Rafaele Lemme, *Le Case degli Italiani*, (Rome, 2010), p. 62; in recent years the term has been enthusiastically taken up by Italian estate agents.

²⁹⁹ Gori-Montanelli, 1978, p. 52, pl. 29.

³⁰⁰ Renato Stopani, *La Casa Colonica Toscana: Storia, Cultura e Architettura*, (Florence, 2006), p. 103.

³⁰¹ See Carla Tagliaferri, *I Casali della Campagna Romana*, (2nd edition, Rome, 1991), especially examples such as p. 77 (Torre Angela Vecchia), p. 108 (Tor di Quinto), p. 117 (Pantanella di Sopra).

³⁰² See Chapter 5.

³⁰³ Stopani, p. 76.

style...built piece-meal during many successive ages', or Malton's 'effect of chance',³⁰⁴ which would in Pugin's eyes have been an acceptable form of the Picturesque, and rather more to design consciously applied by architects.³⁰⁵

The genesis of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain: preparing the ground

One reading of the evolution of Anglo-Italian cultural exchange over this period is that the élite British approach which had prevailed for most of the eighteenth century which regarded Italy and its culture as an historical, scholarly resource was supplemented, and to an extent superseded, by a more popular and accessible vision of the country as a rich pool of associative experience. This was reinforced by, and indeed contributed to, the growing numbers of those who travelled with what may be termed social rather than intellectual, or in the case of artists and architects, professional motives, resulting by the 1830s in a widespread assumed knowledge of and familiarity with Italy throughout many elements of British society. It is suggested that this wide-ranging awareness was a significant factor in the successful acceptance of a range of Italianate-derived architectural styles in Britain, among which a Vernacular Italianate idiom had a potent and popular appeal.

³⁰⁴ James Malton, *Essay on British Cottage Architecture, being an attempt to perpetuate on principle, that peculiar mode of building which was originally the effect of chance*, (London, 1798).

³⁰⁵ 'Architettura su progetto': Stopani, p. 87, uses this term to designate those rural forms originally based upon architectural designs rather than vernacular tradition and practice.

Chapter 4

John Nash and the *villa rustica*

A primary tenet of this thesis is that Nash was responsible for the introduction of the Vernacular Italianate villa into Britain in the very early years of the nineteenth century. This chapter substantiates and illustrates that claim by describing his three ‘Claudean’ houses and identifying their shared characteristics; it will also review the range of sources and visual references available to Nash in creating his interpretation of Italian rusticity.

John Nash in 1800

All three houses in his *villa rustica* series were designed and executed in the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1800 Nash was forty-eight: the embarrassing bankruptcy of his earlier years had been buried by dint of his years of self-imposed exile in Wales which began in 1785, during which time he had built an architectural practice in Carmarthen which began with civic buildings and subsequently extended into the design of country villas in simple Classical style.³⁰⁶ He had engaged A.C. Pugin as draughtsman, and re-invented himself as a gentleman, coming into contact with members of the Welsh gentry such as Thomas Johnes of Hafod, cousin of Richard Payne Knight, who could be influential in securing commissions.³⁰⁷ We have already noted the significance of his introduction to Uvedale Price and Knight in encouraging him to explore the possibilities of the Picturesque, and that the Welsh border country was the most likely location for Nash’s introduction to Humphry Repton in the early 1790s.³⁰⁸ A measure of Nash’s successful Welsh-based renaissance is that by 1795 he had re-established an office in London, and although he continued to work for Welsh clients a new phase of his career began, as a fashionable country house architect, the principal engine of his fame before his appointment to government service in the form of

³⁰⁶ Such as Ffynone, Pembrokeshire; Llanerchaeron, Ceredigion; and Foley House, Haverfordwest: Mansbridge entries 19, 28, 24.

³⁰⁷ The most recent account of this period is Richard Suggett, ‘John Nash before fame and fortune’, in Tyack, *Picturesque*, pp. 1-18.

³⁰⁸ Whitehead, pp. 19-22.

the Office of Woods and Forests in 1806, and its associated royal patronage which were subsequently to dominate the remainder of his career.³⁰⁹ His country house practice in this period ranged widely both geographically and stylistically: in the decade after his return to London he was engaged on twenty or so country house projects ranging from Sundridge Park, Kent, triangular in form but Neo-classical in appearance;³¹⁰ mediævalising alterations at Helmingham Hall;³¹¹ Longner Hall, Shropshire, (1803), a new Tudor-Gothic house on the neighbouring estate to Attingham,³¹² and a number of Picturesque castles, such as Luscombe (1799), Killymoon, Co. Tyrone (1802),³¹³ and his own home, East Cowes Castle.³¹⁴ The Vernacular Italianate style which he introduced in the middle of this period did not therefore represent a particular evolutionary phase in Nash's career but rather constituted another facet of his broad and inventive Picturesque repertoire which – his scheme of the 1820s for a picturesque village in Regent's Park apart – may be said to have reached its apogee during this decade.

Nash's three rustic Italianate villas are Cronkhill, in Shropshire, designed from around 1802 and executed between c.1804 and 1807, Sandridge Park, in Devon, built between 1804 and 1809, and Lissan Rectory, County Tyrone, designed and executed from around 1805 and probably completed by 1808: they will be examined in turn.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, Chapter 7.

³¹⁰ Mansbridge, entry 58.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, entry 66.

³¹² *Ibid.*, entry 77.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, entry 74.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, entry 59.

³¹⁵ Each house has been the subject of an article: Geoffrey Tyack, 'Cronkhill', *Country Life*, 19 February 2004, pp. 62-67, and 'Sandridge Park', *Country Life*, 21 November 2012, pp. 40-44; Rosemary Yallop, 'A history of Sandridge Park: An house more worthy of the situation', in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, Vol. 141 (2009), pp. 181-218; E.M. Jope, 'Lissan Rectory, Kilwaughter Castle, and the buildings in the north of Ireland designed by John Nash', in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, Vol. 19 (1956), pp. 121-130. See also Rosemary Yallop, 'Nash and the villa rustica' in Tyack, *Picturesque*, pp. 57-74: its primary focus is Sandridge Park. Davis, *The Architecture of John Nash*, (London, 1960) provides reconstructed floor plans for each house; each house has an entry in Mansbridge's catalogue raisonné.

Cronkhill, Shropshire

Documentary evidence for the design and construction of Cronkhill [4.1] is, as for so many of Nash's projects, dispersed and incomplete.³¹⁶ A key starting point is a perspective pen and watercolour depiction³¹⁷ purchased by Soane at the posthumous sale of Nash's library and described in that catalogue as 'Mr. Welford's [sic] House, near Shrewsbury, in colours'.³¹⁸ [4.2] The watercolour itself is undated, although the current Soane catalogue suggests c.1802, no doubt because it is assumed to be the same item exhibited under Nash's name at the Royal Academy exhibition that year, described there as a 'House near Shrewsbury'.³¹⁹ The Soane catalogue entry attributes it to George Stanley Repton, as a 'preliminary design perspective for Cronkhill'. On the face of the mount a handwritten inscription reads: 'View of Mr. Wilford's [sic] House, Shrewsbury. J Nash Arch^t.', although the authorship of this inscription and its contemporaneity with the watercolour itself are not proven. There are some significant differences between the house as depicted and as eventually built, which will be discussed below, but taken together the evidence of Royal Academy catalogue and the watercolour confirms both attribution of the house to Nash and an approximate date for its design. Correspondence in the Attingham Estate papers also confirms Nash's authorship.³²⁰ Despite the absence of comprehensive accounts, an end-date for the building of Cronkhill can be deduced from an invoice 'for work done at Cronkhill'³²¹ in November 1807 which includes items such as glazing, the laying of gutters, and: 'to flashing chimney and round tower', which one can assume represented a late stage of construction.

³¹⁶ A report (not published) on the history of Cronkhill was commissioned by the National Trust and completed in 2011, which draws on sources including the Attingham Estate papers deposited at the Shropshire Record Office and catalogued before that date (SRO 112). I am most grateful to Sarah Kay, National Trust Project Curator at Attingham Park and to Emma Nock, author of the Report, for allowing me access to it, and for their wider assistance.

³¹⁷ Soane Coll. 73/5/2.

³¹⁸ Evans, lot 1000.

³¹⁹ Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, (8 vols., London, 1905-6), Vol. V, p. 342, entry 906.

³²⁰ Shropshire Record Office [hereafter SRO] 112/14/66D/99[a].

³²¹ SRO 112/6/57/69.

The house was built on the site of an existing farm on the Attingham Park estate, some four miles from Shrewsbury in the parish of Atcham. [4.3] The estate belonged to the Hill family, ennobled in 1784 by Pitt the Younger and taking the title Berwick. Tern Hall, the Hill family house, was altered a number of times in the eighteenth century but its most significant transformation came with the appointment by the first Lord Berwick of George Steuart (1730-1806) to construct a more substantial house around the core of the existing Tern Hall, austere and Palladian in elevation with flanking pavilions linked by colonnades which masked service corridors. Attingham Hall, as the new house was known, underwent further alteration under Thomas, 2nd Lord Berwick who succeeded in 1789 at the age of 19; in 1792 Thomas embarked on a Grand Tour, spending two years in Italy and acquiring antiquities and works of art, including drawings by Claude, and commissioning paintings and sculpture, displaying not only connoisseurship but also the reckless extravagance which was to end in bankruptcy in 1827 followed by self-imposed Italian exile.³²² He commissioned Humphry Repton in 1797 to bring more interest to the landscape around the house which despite earlier planting schemes still consisted essentially of the undistinguished flood plain of the River Tern; it may be assumed that Repton was the conduit for the engagement of John Nash, who initially designed estate buildings at Attingham including a bridge, and cottages for a new estate village in 1798, which was not executed but pre-dates his Blaise Hamlet by a decade.³²³ Nash was later, between 1805 and 1807, to design a Picture Gallery of revolutionary but technically flawed construction at Attingham to house Thomas's Grand Tour spoils.³²⁴ But by then, as we have noted, the genesis of Cronkhill had already begun.

³²² The National Trust, *Guidebook to Attingham*, (revised edition, Swindon, 2008), pp. 44-51.

³²³ See Temple, *Village Picturesque*, pp. 113-15.

³²⁴ Christopher Rowell, 'Furniture, Carving and Gilding at Attingham Park by Thomas Donaldson of Shrewsbury', in *Apollo Magazine National Trust Historic Houses and Collections Annual 2015*, pp. 12-20.

It is widely stated that Cronkhill was built for the 2nd Lord Berwick's Estate Steward or Agent, Francis Walford (c.1778-1856).³²⁵ Certainly Walford seems to have been appointed agent in 1804 and was living at that date in the existing timber and brick farmhouse, of seventeenth-century construction with eighteenth-century rear additions to which the new villa 'box' was attached; the captions and catalogue entries for the watercolour described above, spelling variations notwithstanding, also confirm his intended occupation in the new house. Less well-known is Walford's apparent involvement from the commencement of building and possibly even earlier at the design phase, as evidenced by the Attingham papers.³²⁶ A memorandum of 1814 which retrospectively records discussions which took place between Walford and Berwick about a possible lease of Cronkhill while it was still under construction sheds light on the possibility that Nash to some extent regarded Walford rather than Berwick as his client. Walford had clearly wanted a long lease of the new house and was prepared in return to shoulder some of the building cost, whereas Berwick was reluctant to constrain his successors by such an arrangement. The events are recorded in this third-party narrative which includes the following salient phrases:

Lord Berwick [had] proposed a lease, provided Mr. Walford built Cronkhill House and Farmyard buildings at his own expense, but Lord Berwick several times expressed his preference to bear the expense himself, stating among other reasons that he thought Mr. Walford had not the money or property sufficient to pay the building bills. ... When Mr. Nash pressed Mr. Walford to pay his Commission on the plans and bills which he [Walford] wished to pay himself, Lord Berwick said [that] as I have not given you a lease and you are not to have one, I would wish you to pay none of the bills.³²⁷

Clearly there had been a change of negotiating stance by both parties for there is a reference to 'the whole plan being changed, namely Lord Berwick took upon himself the expenses of the buildings'. That Lord Berwick would have even entertained such an arrangement with a young estate employee of 26 suggests a close and informal relationship. The correspondence

³²⁵ For example, Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 42; Davis, *Prince Regent's Architect*, p. 42.

³²⁶ Some of this evidence is cited in Nock's report; further information came to light as a result of research by the present author into the Attingham papers, some of which were individually catalogued only after the date of that report; some catalogue numbers have subsequently been amended and references here are to the new numbering scheme.

³²⁷ SRO 112/14/2/Box 66D/ff.99a, b, c.

evidences an unusual intimacy;³²⁸ a later letter to Lord Berwick from his lawyer noting ‘the peculiar feelings which your Lordship appears to entertain towards Mr. Walford’.³²⁹ While Walford’s background and education remain a mystery he clearly had sufficient presence to hold himself out to Nash as a credible client even if lacking the means to substantiate it. Despite Lord Berwick’s reservations it appears that Walford was eventually granted a lease of Cronkhill in 1816 immediately prior to his second marriage, when the newly-granted lease of the house and farm of 227 acres for a term of 21 years, at an annual rent equal to his annual salary,³³⁰ was transferred into a marriage settlement of which the trustees were his wife’s brother, a local attorney, and the 2nd Lord Berwick.³³¹ Very little is known of Francis Walford’s origins or circumstances: the letters of his second wife³³² show that while at Cronkhill he was active in the country pursuits of a Shropshire gentleman, and vestry minutes record him as an Overseer of the Poor for the parish of Atcham.³³³ Of the period of his life after he left Cronkhill in 1845 to take up residence in Shrewsbury,³³⁴ there are no discoverable records other than the Census, and finally, a burial record in 1856.³³⁵ Discussion of Walford’s involvement is pertinent because of the questions it raises about his identity, and the fact that his personal and professional relationship with Lord Berwick should have given rise to such a novel building project in the form of the first example of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain; the tangled and somewhat fraught

³²⁸ For example, SRO 112/14/2/Box 68/ff.201, 205.

³²⁹ SRO 112/14/2/Box 68/f.150. There is however nothing to suggest that there was any impropriety in this relationship, but simply an absence of the deference which might have been expected between men of very different station.

³³⁰ SRO 112/14/2/Box 66D/f.146.

³³¹ SRO 49/2/3/8/750a. The Nock report does not mention this lease but only a subsequent one; it was perhaps overlooked because it is held in the Scott family papers rather than the Attingham archives.

³³² His first wife died in 1814. He married again in 1816, to Anne Walford, formerly Scott, née Morse, widow of George Scott of Betton, of a gentry family whose estate bordered Attingham. The National Archives, PROB11/2128/141: *Will of Anne Walford, heretofore Scott, theretofore Morse, of Cronkhill, Shropshire*, proved 14 February 1851. Many of her letters to the Scott family written while she lived at Cronkhill after her marriage to Francis Walford are preserved: at SRO, Scott papers, X49: see for example X49/2/3/8/761, 763, 811.

³³³ SRO XP19/L/2/2.

³³⁴ *Eddowes’s Journal and General Advertiser for Shropshire* carries several advertisements for sales by Walford of the entire household contents, livestock and farm equipment at Cronkhill: 19 and 26 March, 2 and 23 April, 1845.

³³⁵ A monument to Walford and his first wife in the form of a Grecian-ornamented pillar is in Atcham churchyard.

circumstances surrounding its execution may explain why the finished house contains some elements of compromise which are surprising.

The Repton watercolour shows the proposed house as an extensive range punctuated by a round tower at the right-hand (north-eastern) end and a lower square tower anchoring the other end at the termination of the long axis which was to contain the service wing. The right-hand mass of tower and loggia as shown is considerably wider than was actually built, the first floor presenting five round-headed windows rather than two, and the round tower itself standing rather more proud from the loggia whereas as built it is melded into it. More significantly the finished house takes the form of a new villa 'box' which is very visibly joined to the existing farmhouse, which in turn becomes the service wing. [4.4] In the process the farmhouse was altered from its original vernacular state: the east (front) façade was faced in brick to cover its timber structure and its fenestration changed for round-headed windows, even where internal floor heights render the top portions of them blind, and the roof pitch - on the front elevation only - was made more shallow to facilitate the junction with the villa component. [4.5] The second square tower and small decorative turret shown in the watercolour having been omitted, the service wing exhibits much less Italianate rusticity than the new polite wing, a disjunction which is evident.³³⁶ [4.6] Cronkhill has attracted praise for its compactness compared to its two sibling houses,³³⁷ and looking at the polite wing in isolation it is a delightful and elegant composition; this effect is enhanced by the fact that it is frequently photographed in such a way as to hide the service wing, either behind shrubs or from a particular angle. [4.7] It is puzzling that for his first Italianate experiment Nash should have built not *ab initio* but by adapting and adding on to an existing vernacular house, but not fully disguising it. Given the purity and smoothness of the new villa element it is hard to believe that this disjunction is a literal interpretation of Knight's

³³⁶ This turret re-appears at Sandridge Park, discussed below, where it was built over the service wing.

³³⁷ Summerson, *Nash*, 1935, p. 72; Davis *Prince Regent's Architect*, p. 43.

exhortation to create buildings which looked as though they had evolved over time. Is it perhaps possible that the initial negotiations between Berwick and Walford, and the resulting lack of clarity over responsibility for building costs led to forced economies, which necessitated the abandonment of the initial plan as shown in the watercolour for a more cost-effective version which made use of the old house?

The picturesque placing of Cronkhill in the landscape must be regarded as fortuitous rather than conscious, for the situation of the existing farmhouse had no doubt taken practical advantage of a slight elevation above the Severn's flood plain which lies before it and which is regularly inundated. Nevertheless it also benefits from eastward views over the Severn to the Wrekin, a hill prominent in the Shropshire landscape. [4.8] Cronkhill is said to have been intended as an eye-catcher visible from the mansion at Attingham Park, nearly two miles away³³⁸ although the subsequent tree growth on the land between the two makes this difficult to verify in the present day, and of course the existing house dictated its site. While Cronkhill is on Attingham land, it lies well outside the park, the two being separated by the village of Atcham and its parish church, the eastern approach road to Shrewsbury, and the River Severn. The house faces east rather than south as might have been expected: the best distant view of it is obtained from the village of Wroxeter.³³⁹ Cronkhill's present-day approach is along a slightly rising drive which leads from a lane between the villages of Cross Houses and Atcham, with the front elevation in full view and with none of the gradual revelation of the house which would have created the Picturesque element of surprise; it has been suggested³⁴⁰ that the current drive is a nineteenth-century innovation, and that there is evidence for the original drive having approached from a lane to the west, curving around to give views of the landscape and an oblique view of the house before

³³⁸ Tyack, 'Cronkhill', p. 66; personal communication with Sarah Kay, Attingham Park Project Curator.

³³⁹ It has been suggested (Tyack, 'Cronkhill', p. 65) that Cronkhill's Italianate style could be a nod towards Roman villas at Wroxeter. However while the existence of the Roman site was known locally it was not recognised as significant until it was excavated in the mid-nineteenth century.

³⁴⁰ Nock, pp. 20, 34-6.

arriving at the front door, which is unobtrusively placed in the north elevation to the right of the round tower. [4.9]

The main elevation of the house, as shown in the Soane watercolour and as emphasised by the route of the current drive, is the eastern façade. It presents striking irregularity both in outline and massing; it uses three stepped progressions, from the loggia in front to the square tower behind, the round tower leading the eye around the side of the north-eastern end. The massing of solid geometrical forms - cube, rectangle, pyramid, cylinder – ingeniously conveys volume and solidity without sacrificing lightness, and provides a typically picturesque play of light and shadow as the sun moves around the house. The long axis of the old house extending to the south counterpoints to the irregularity of the villa box. The new villa is of stuccoed brick, the chamfered loggia columns carved from local Grinshill stone; the shallow-pitched roofs are of slate; the eaves are deep and ornamented with (non-structural) paired timber brackets. The ground floor sash windows in the round tower and service wing are round-headed, as are those on the first floor eastern elevation; those on the ground floor behind the loggia are square-headed and full height, the central pair being doors allowing access from the drawing room to the loggia. [4.10] The windows in the small area of the south façade from the ground floor study and the second floor of the square tower are later additions, presumably because views of the service wing onto which they give had initially been thought undesirable. The stone balustrading accords with the Soane Collection watercolour. The villa is placed at ground level: that is to say there is no concept of a *piano nobile* and the entrance is not even accorded a few steps up to the front door. This is entirely in keeping with the new informality of the villa in general and of the Picturesque house in particular.³⁴¹

³⁴¹ This development was discussed in Chapter 1.

While the exterior attempts to meld the two disparate components of the new house, the interior makes no attempt to unify them; Nash creates instead the illusion of a villa, complete in itself, on a centralised rather than axial plan, with an entrance vestibule leading into a reception hall from which an elegant and cantilevered staircase rises to the first floor, surprisingly sophisticated for a house of this modest size. [4.11-13] The three principal rooms - drawing room, dining room and study or library – all lead off the hall, but while each has its separate entrance each adjacent room is interconnected, to provide a route for informal circulation around the entire ground floor of this polite wing. The innovative external geometry translates into more conventional, and perhaps more practical, interior shapes: the cube of the study, the rectangular drawing room, and the dining room where Nash shaves off the corners of the interior rectangle by the use of additional internal walling, so that despite occupying the ground floor of the round tower the interior is read as octagonal rather than round or curved. The upper floor of the square tower, a ‘bachelor’s bedroom’, is reached by another smaller cantilevered staircase. The connection with the service wing is achieved on both ground and first floor levels by the simple use of a service door, although differences in level are unresolved: if anything this perhaps emphasises the effect of the new wing having been bolted on, or in a more positive reading, reinforces the idea of a compact, self-contained villa, for nowhere is there an internal vista which runs the whole length of the house, as there is at Sandridge Park and Lissan.

Internal detailing is simple, using simple reeded door-cases and fireplaces, and slim wrapped acanthus and bead cornicing, for it is the simplicity of flow and interconnection which predominates; and in each of the three main rooms the eye is immediately drawn not to elements within the interior, but to the exterior and the views framed by the windows. The only room which reflects its external geometry is the circular room on the top storey of the round tower.

In a sense, the house is a paradigm of Picturesque *mise-en scène*, in that it privileges one single elevation, resembling a theatrical set, and delivering its impact all at once. This impression is heightened when looking from the west, where the timber-framed brick elevation of the old house is visible and incongruous, and when looking at the rear elevation, where the stucco finishes abruptly, even on the return of the square tower, and bare brick prevails: it is as if one has gone behind the scenes; and the internal connections with the service wing described above heighten the idea of leaving the stage for the wings. [4.14]

Sandridge Park, Devon

Sandridge Park was the second in the series, almost certainly in its design stages while Cronkhill was still being built.³⁴² [4.15] It is conventionally dated to 1805 as this is the date at which Nash exhibited at the Royal Academy an illustration entitled ‘Sundridge [sic], Devon for Lady Ashburton’.³⁴³ Archival material for the project is even more elusive than for Cronkhill, but the Nash attribution suggested by the Royal Academy submission is confirmed by papers discovered in the Baring Archive³⁴⁴ which name John Nash and also show that work was already under way in the summer of 1804, and completed by 1809 at the latest.³⁴⁵ Its genesis however stretches back to the 1770s when the picturesque location of the Sandridge estate on the eastern bank of the River Dart, a few miles upstream from the estuary and port of Dartmouth, attracted the attention of John Dunning, a Devon-born attorney who rose to become Solicitor-General and Privy Councillor and was ennobled as Lord Ashburton in 1782 at the instigation of The Earl of Shelburne.³⁴⁶ He purchased the

³⁴² Yallop, in Tyack, *Picturesque*, p. 60.

³⁴³ Graves, Vol. V, p. 342, exhibit 757.

³⁴⁴ The Baring Archive: Northbrook papers, NP.1.B.10.1. Located by the present author in 2006: visit and personal communications with Moira Lovegrove, Jane Waller and Clara Harrow of The Baring Archive, 2006, 2007 and 2010.

³⁴⁵ Northbrook papers, NP.1.B.10.2. This folder includes a letter from the second Lord Ashburton to his mother’s executor, Sir Francis Baring, dated March 1809 noting that the latter had settled Nash’s account and discussing the letting of Sandridge Park, which substantiates its completion by this date.

³⁴⁶ Robert Dymond, ‘Memoir of John Dunning, First Lord Ashburton’, *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, Vol. 8, 1876.

estate from the Gilbert family in 1772, and as recorded by a friend who accompanied him on a voyage up the Dart, vowed to build 'an house on it that should be more worthy than the present, of the situation'.³⁴⁷ In 1781 he married Elizabeth, only daughter of John Baring, an Exeter merchant whose brothers were to found Baring Brothers, the merchant bank.³⁴⁸ Concentrating his energies on his Dartmoor estate, by the time of his early death in 1783 Lord Ashburton had not commenced any building operations at Sandridge, and his widow having been left with an infant son after losing their first child in infancy, the idea was abandoned for some twenty years.

Lady Ashburton decided to fulfil her late husband's wish as the new century opened, perhaps on her son reaching his majority. Her choice of Nash as architect is interesting, for her brother Sir Francis was simultaneously remodelling a Hampshire manor house to a Neo-classical design by Dance the Younger,³⁴⁹ and there is no record of any other Nash commissions from the extended Baring family.³⁵⁰ Nor is there evidence to explain her choice of such an innovative Picturesque design, but it is clear from correspondence between Lady Ashburton and her son as early as the autumn of 1804 that she took a keen interest in the building process and the planting schemes for the grounds.³⁵¹

Sandridge Park was extensively altered in the twentieth century, partly as a result of wartime military occupation and partly in the course of its subsequent reinstatement as a family home in the 1950s, which resulted *inter alia* in the physical separation of the house into two

³⁴⁷ Todd Gray and Margaret Rowe (eds.), *The Rev J. Swete's Travels in Georgian Devon*, (4 vols., Exeter, 1997), Vol. I, p. 102.

³⁴⁸ The best account of the family and its fortunes is Philip Ziegler, *The Sixth Great Power: Barings, 1762-1929*, (London, 1988).

³⁴⁹ Stratton Park, 1803-06, for Sir Francis Baring, Bt.: Colvin, p. 298.

³⁵⁰ It may be no more than co-incidental that Nash worked for a period of time in the early 1770s in the office of Sir Robert Taylor (see: Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 3), possibly while Taylor was working on the designs for Sharpham House for Capt. Pownall (Colvin, p. 1026). Sharpham lies some three miles upstream on the River Dart and is visible from the highest point of the Sandridge Estate. Nash may have become familiar with the landscape at that point, but his introduction to Lady Ashburton may have come about through her acquaintance with another banking family, the Hoares, for whom Nash built Luscombe Castle, at nearby Dawlish, from around 1799.

³⁵¹ Northbrook papers, NP.1.B.10.2.

parts and involved the demolition of part of the service wing. An extensive programme of restoration in 2006-9 re-connected the two parts and restored the footprint but it proved impossible to re-instate all of the lost internal or external features.³⁵² So an assessment of the house as originally built rests upon three principal sources.³⁵³ The house was depicted in an engraving in a history of Devonshire published in 1829 [4.16];³⁵⁴ an illustrated sale catalogue (lacking a plan) was produced when the house was sold and the estate dispersed in 1935;³⁵⁵ and two watercolours recently came to light which had not been previously identified, depicting the house in a landscape but not entirely as built, and with some poetic licence in the topography. [4.17] It is likely that one of these may have been the item exhibited by Nash at the Royal Academy in 1805; while without attribution, their style is very similar to George Stanley Repton's depiction of Cronkhill, and the watercolours of Lissan Rectory, discussed below.³⁵⁶

These watercolours show two different versions of a design for Sandridge Park, one being a much more substantial house than was ultimately constructed. Both show the house in its actual location high above the River Dart, but in both cases it is rotated anticlockwise by ninety degrees, so that the main elevation faces east, rather than south as the completed house does. This may seem a perverse choice of aspect, but it may be explicable as mere artistic licence, for this succeeds in showing both the principal elevation of the house and its relationship to the picturesque prospect of the river and the opposite bank, which is otherwise impossible to depict. Both versions include irregular massing composed of

³⁵² Yallop, 'Sandridge Park'; various South Hams District Council planning applications including 52/0721/07/LB; 52/2116/09/F.

³⁵³ In addition to which the National Monuments Record holds two sets of photographs, one taken in 1933 by Summerson: B42/1518-21; and one set dated 1959 showing the house after the demolition of the conservatory and the demolition of the middle section of the façade, and including some interior views: AA60/119-134.

³⁵⁴ Rev. Thomas Moore, *History of Devonshire*, (3 vols., London, 1829-33), Book I, plates at end; unnumbered.

³⁵⁵ Devon Record Office, 867B/S22.

³⁵⁶ Offered for sale at Messrs. Bonhams, Edinburgh, Catalogue for Sale no. 20510, Edinburgh, 24 October 2012, lot 551, described only as 'Sandridge Park, Devon, British School, 19th century'. This was a sale of the contents of Hensol, a house in Scotland designed by Robert Lugar and owned by the brother of the second Lady Ashburton, the latter dying childless. The catalogue entry mentions no caption, date or signature; examination is not possible as their present whereabouts have not been divulged.

geometrical building-blocks arranged in an L-shape: round and square towers of three storeys with conical and pyramidal roofs respectively, a central rectangular element of two storeys with shallow-pitched roof, and a smaller ancillary square tower at the end of one wing and a spire-like turret (as shown in the watercolour of Cronkhill but not constructed there) at the end of what is presumed to be a service wing. The eaves of each of the elements overhang and are 'supported' on decorative brackets. The most striking feature of each version is the attention paid to the connection of indoor and outdoor spaces, achieved through three devices: a conservatory, identical in both versions to the left of the principal entrance in the foot of the square tower, with five sets of arched glazed doors separated by pilasters, under a decorative balustrade; a loggia which in the larger house wraps around the house at the meeting of its two axes, and in the smaller version fills the external angle; and three further balconies at first floor level, to take full advantage of the river views. Paired chimneys are left prominent rather than disguised, adding to the riotous irregularity of the roof line.

In the event Nash seems to have pursued the less ambitious option, befitting the house's function not as a primary residence but as the occasional country retreat of a sexagenarian widow with an absentee son in Scotland but who nevertheless still maintained a presence in London society. Even then, as built there are small differences: the service wing, complete with turret, stretches back from the right-hand (eastern) end of the principal façade rather than the left-hand as shown; again, this has the advantage (having rotated the house to face south) of allowing western light onto the principal rooms and the round tower which the wing would otherwise have blocked, and it allows the round tower to emerge more prominently and act as an anchor to the end of the principal elevation, a much more pleasing effect. The house is built of local stone rubble, with brick courses reinforcing the window openings, and entirely rendered. The 1829 engraving captures a view from the south-eastern corner of the house, and surprisingly does not show the round tower at all,

but observations on site prove that from this viewpoint it is not in fact visible. It also shows the conservatory in greater detail: wreathed metal pilasters enclose pairs of glazed doors to the south and east; these are repeated as decorative pilasters around the outside of the serpentine bay of the drawing room. The scale of this detailing may be slightly exaggerated in the engraving, but there exists a drawing of c.1810 by John Adey Repton for a conservatory which while shown as free-standing is almost identical, and is annotated ‘very similar to the conservatory attached to the house at Sandridge Park, Devon 1805’;³⁵⁷ [4.18] a set of measured drawings by George Stanley Repton appear to record its original detailing,³⁵⁸ [4.19] and both seem to be borne out by Summerson’s photographs. [4.20]

The plan, which can be deduced from a combination of extant layout, supplemented by observations made during the recent renovations, and the 1935 sale catalogue which gives room dimensions but no plan, is more axial than Nash’s Welsh villas such as Llysnewydd or Llanarchaeron, of the mid 1790s,³⁵⁹ which cluster the polite rooms around a central staircase hall. [4.21] It would have been possible for a visitor to enter the Sandridge Park drawing room without catching sight of the stairs, for example. The entrance to the house at the foot of the square tower opens immediately into a small room which is a geometrical *tour de force*: an externally square room where the internal corners have been shaved away by diagonal walls to create an octagonal space, the walls rising to a circular ceiling. [4.22] This gave onto the conservatory on the right hand, some fifty feet in length, intended, as signalled by its prominent position on the principal façade and its commanding views, as a receiving or sitting room rather than a quasi-garden building, but which also hid from view the kitchen

³⁵⁷ *Design for a conservatory of rectangular shape with a pitched glass roof*: RIBA Coll. SE20/12. Also noted in Temple, *Village Picturesque*, p. 57.

³⁵⁸ This notebook covers the period 1805-1818. Nigel Temple, *George Repton’s Pavilion Notebook: A catalogue raisonné*, (Aldershot, 1993) discusses the conservatory designs of both Repton brothers at pp. 49-53. The new metalwork forged for the decorative columns on the south front erected in the 2006-9 renovations was based on the drawings catalogued as PNB 26-29: South Hams District Council planning applications 52/0721/07/LB; 52/2116/09/F, Drawing 1707/H/DE-34a.

³⁵⁹ Mansbridge, entries 32, 28.

and servants' hall behind, the flues from the ranges heating the conservatory. On the left the hall connected by double doors with the drawing room, with southern and western views and access to the small loggia; this is an otherwise simple rectangle but with a serpentine front wall with three windows each therefore at a slightly different angle, to widen the scope of the views from the room. Another door from the drawing room opens into the axial corridor and faces the foot of the staircase. [4.23] The door to the dining room is adjacent: this occupies the foot of the round tower but is joined to the main elevation in such a way that it is a D-shape made up of a half-circle and a square, (as is the room on the floor above, whereas the top storey of the round tower is entirely circular). A morning room and library were on the north side of the central corridor. The conservatory, octagonal hall and drawing room therefore make up an interconnecting space with windows onto the river, running for a hundred feet along two-thirds of the length of the façade, and extending through external doors an additional twenty feet onto the loggia. The dining room in the round tower has windows facing south and west: the western view was enhanced by blasting through a rocky outcrop a short distance away to reveal an upstream view of the river, which on this reach turns round the headland, changing direction by ninety degrees, this artificial cutting also brings western light and warmth to the rooms in the round tower. [4.24]

Internally the detailing of cornicing and architraves is plain but austerity is avoided by using geometry to full effect to create shape and shadow. In addition to the octagonal hall already described, vaulting and repeated arched mouldings are used to transform the axial corridor on both floors into an arcade, top-lit by a lantern on the first floor with a generous window on the north-facing staircase landing. All of the round-headed windows in the polite rooms on both floors are set into widely-splayed openings to maximise the light.

The house was built anew: it is unclear precisely where the predecessor house stood.³⁶⁰ There is no evidence of there having been a lodge; the house was approached from the north-east along a thickly wooded drive which snaked around the eastern side of the house to bring the river into the visitor's view almost at the last minute. The extensive stable block and coach house, which with an elaborate hipped roof and central tower line mimics the main house, would have been glimpsed from the drive through the trees which surround the house.

Lissan Rectory, Co. Tyrone

Lissan is the least-known and hitherto least-researched of the three villas. [4.25] While documentary evidence is sparse, not least because of the fire at the Dublin Public Record Office in 1922 which destroyed many public and ecclesiastical records, we have the advantage of the survival of a set of four plans and elevations in George Stanley Repton's sketchbook;³⁶¹ [4.26] there exist also four watercolours of the house, two of elevations and two of plans in ornamented landscape settings, although the authorship of these is not known.³⁶² [4.27] The attribution of the Rectory to Nash³⁶³ rests upon its similarity to Cronkhill and Sandridge Park, the Repton drawings, and on a drawing offered in the posthumous auction of Nash's library described as 'Mr. Staples's house in Ireland'.³⁶⁴ More circumstantial evidence lies in the family relationship between Nash's client at Lissan and another client for whom he designed Killymoon Castle, some four miles away.³⁶⁵ Lissan Rectory was built for the Rev. John Molesworth Staples, younger brother of Sir Thomas Staples, 9th Baronet, a family with landholdings in Co. Tyrone, Co. Leix and Dublin, and

³⁶⁰ Yallop, 'Sandridge Park', pp. 183-4.

³⁶¹ RIBA Coll. SKB 246/4 ff.47v, 48r, 48v, 49r.

³⁶² Three of the watercolours are reproduced in Mansbridge, pp. 136-7. The RIBA Photographic Collection holds monochrome photographs of the watercolour elevations and plans (nos. 12562-3, 12588-9); their current whereabouts are unknown.

³⁶³ It is not disputed in any of the academic literature.

³⁶⁴ Evans, lot 1001, present whereabouts unknown.

³⁶⁵ Mansbridge, entry 74.

with a seat at Lissan. Their mother, the Hon. Henrietta Molesworth, was sister to Elizabeth, who married James Stewart of Killymoon: Nash's clients were therefore uncle and nephew.

Lissan Rectory is situated in open countryside on the border between the mid-Ulster counties of Tyrone and Londonderry, equidistant from the towns of Cookstown, where Nash designed a new parish church,³⁶⁶ and Moneymore. Built as a glebe house or rectory, and still in use as such, it is some distance from the parish church served by its incumbent and the village of Lissan to which it is nominally attached. Staples was appointed Rector in 1804, the living being in the gift of the Lord Primate of Ireland, the Archbishop of Armagh. It appears that the existing provision to accommodate the rector was inadequate: according to the Parish Returns in 1731 the glebe and parsonage house were 'very inconvenient'; in 1767 there was a 'glebe but no house'.³⁶⁷ Staples immediately set about seeking permission for a new house, evidenced by a draft memorial to the Archbishop dated 1804.³⁶⁸

Your Memorialist not having any house on the lands belonging to the said Rectory proposes to build a Glebe House with suitable offices and other necessary improvements fit and convenient for the residence of himself and his successor Rectors.'

He continues in some detail: 'The said house shall be built with limestone and brick floored and roofed with foreign fir timbers and covered with slates,' and gives some of the dimensions. It makes no mention of an architect, nor of plans to be attached to the final version. A second draft document, also dated 1804,³⁶⁹ makes it clear that he is seeking a grant from the Board of First Fruits, a Commission established by Queen Anne to build and

³⁶⁶ St Luran, Derryloran (1822): Mansbridge, entry 205.

³⁶⁷ Rev. J. B. Leslie, *Armagh Clergy and Parishes: being an account of the clergy of the church of Ireland in the diocese of Armagh from the earliest time*, (Dundalk, 1911), p. 350.

³⁶⁸ Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [hereafter PRONI]: DIO/4/32/L/2/4/1.

³⁶⁹ PRONI: DIO/4/32/L/2/4/2.

improve churches and glebe houses in Ireland, funded by a tax on incumbent's salaries which were in turn financed largely from tithes.³⁷⁰

No official or signed copies of these documents and the corresponding approvals have been located,³⁷¹ but it appears that Staples was successful, for a receipt dated September 1816³⁷² documents a repayment of an amount of £39, described as the second instalment, towards a loan of £650 from the Board (no interest rate is stated so the rate of repayment cannot be calculated). The total cost of the Rectory is recorded³⁷³ as £1,313 14s 5d, of which £100 was a gift, £650 lent by the Board of First Fruits, and the remainder funded by the Rector, not in itself a unusual arrangement. The loan must have allowed for extended repayment terms, for this date, even if an annual instalment, is some time after the conventionally accepted completion date of 1807.³⁷⁴ There are fragmentary notes of building accounts addressed to Staples for work between 1806 and 1816 but these seem to relate not solely to the Rectory but also to other sites in the parish.³⁷⁵ Nash was engaged in building work for the Stewarts at Killymoon from around 1802 for four to five years so it is entirely feasible that he designed Lissan during this period even if he was not subsequently closely involved with its execution.

The house is on a slight elevation, approached by a drive leading initially north-west from the road between Moneymore and Cookstown, giving a view of the south-facing garden elevation before snaking around its eastern façade through shrubberies to the northern entrance front. The house is today much truncated, having lost its entire service wing and

³⁷⁰ D.H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution, 1800-1885*, (New Haven and London, 1971), p. 115. Between 1800 and 1820 some 550 new glebe houses were financed. The Board appointed a panel of architects but Nash was not among them.

³⁷¹ Many of the diocesan papers as well as those relating to the Board of First Fruits were lost in the extensive Dublin 'Four Courts' fire of 1922. PRONI: DIO/4, Armagh Diocesan Registry Papers 1356-1977, *Summary*.

³⁷² PRONI: D1567/E/1/7/1.

³⁷³ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, (2nd ed., London, 1837), pp. 250; Leslie, p. 350. The cost is however stated to be £6,000, 'supplied from the Rector's private fortune and resources': Angélique Day, Patrick McWilliams, Lisa English (eds.), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland*, Vol. 31, (Belfast, 1996), pp. 90, 96.

³⁷⁴ Lewis, p. 250. Davis, *Prince Regent's Architect*, p. 52; Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 192. The *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* give a building period of 1806-11: p. 90.

³⁷⁵ PRONI: D1567/F/2/2/1-28.

with it the round tower in the 1950s, so an assessment of it as originally built must rely upon the Repton plans and elevations together with a number of twentieth-century photographs taken before the destruction of the service wing and other alterations, but after alterations to the first floor of the garden front where a balcony was built over the loggia and the roof pitch altered in consequence.³⁷⁶ These alterations to the first floor appear to have happened relatively early in the house's history, as the *Ordnance Survey Memoir* for Lissan compiled in 1836 relates that: 'the architecture of the back part is more peculiar .. the upper tier of arches are [sic] formed by an open lattice work of wood', and a crude sketch substantiates this.³⁷⁷ The entrance façade was just over 100 feet in length³⁷⁸ and while it is asymmetrical and contains a number of elements recognisable from the other two houses, the impact is less striking in that they are here assembled in such a way as to give a more linear, almost two-dimensional appearance. A three-storeyed square tower houses the entrance porch, yet the pyramidal roof is set back behind a small parapet rather than projecting over the elevation: the characteristic overhanging eaves supported on brackets are absent. The round tower was not in this case an integrated feature of the composite massing, being sited at the end of the service wing to the far right. And indeed, while this is not shown on Repton's elevations, although it is clear in his plans, and is also evident from the photographs, the entrance façade is broken up physically, being bisected by a wall which adjoins at a right-angle and encloses the stable courtyard. It would therefore have been impossible to read the façade as a continuous composition in the way which Repton's drawing implies, and this leaves the principal element, with the entrance at its centre, lacking in the degree of variation in roof line which Nash would have led us to expect. The round tower with its characteristic oval windows and conical roof (of higher pitch than shown in the drawings) was nevertheless a

³⁷⁶ One is reproduced in Jope; another (undated) is available at www.archiseek.com [accessed 15 February 2014]. A view (undated) of the original entrance elevation is in the possession of the Rev. Alan Cross, current (2016) Rector of Lissan, who generously made it available to me.

³⁷⁷ *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*, pp. 90, 97.

³⁷⁸ The length and depth of the house are rather greater than Staples had proposed in his application.

striking feature which anchored the end of the façade. The garden front was more charming, the six-arched loggia with its chamfered stone columns under a stepped-back first floor elevation adding lightness, and its motif echoed in the tripartite grouping of round-headed windows to the dining room to the left. **[4.28]** The house was built of local red sandstone rubble, originally finished in traditional local harling, a lime-based granular render, under a slate roof.

Lissan has an extended axial plan with a central spinal corridor which extended from the entrance hall along the length of the house to the very end of the service wing where it terminated in the internal doorway to the round tower. **[4.29]** Within this drawn-out plan Nash arranged the polite rooms - dining room, drawing room, study - in close proximity to the entrance hall, although they do not interconnect; access to the loggia is from the drawing room. The study uses Nash's device for the smaller villa of small diagonal internal walls which transform a cube into an octagon; the dining room is a plain rectangle and of course unlike Cronkhill or Sandridge Park there is no round or even half-round room in the polite wing as the round tower was part of the service wing.³⁷⁹ The staircase is elegant and lit by a domed skylight,³⁸⁰ the interiors are not ornate but, as is also particularly noticeable at Sandridge Park, make use of widely splayed window openings to maximise the light. **[4.30]**

Today's rather bald and austere appearance of the house is due in part to demolition of the service wing which unbalances the composition, and to the loss of nearly all the planting which used to surround it and soften the outline, as the photographs show. **[4.31]** Staples's industriousness in planting the grounds with native tree species, fruit trees and hedging from 1806 onwards is recorded in a number of documents.³⁸¹ A receipt dated early in 1806 details

³⁷⁹ The precise intended use for the round tower, which had rooms on two floors, is not known.

³⁸⁰ This could correspond to the entry 'cutting roof for Dome' in the account dated 11 July 1806 for 'Jobing [sic] work done at Muff by Joseph Wilson, carpenter'. PRONI: D1567/F/2/2/1. Muff was the name for the glebe land on which the house was built, and for some time the Rectory seems to have been known as 'Muff House': See Lewis, p. 250.

³⁸¹ *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*, p. 96.

300 large conifers and 3,000 hedging plants,³⁸² and an affidavit by Staples in January 1809 attests the planting in 1808 of a further 5,000 trees bringing the total to 22,000.³⁸³ Despite the close attention which he paid to the building of the Rectory Staples was to become an absentee incumbent, paying a curate from his own stipend as was customary.³⁸⁴ The house continued to be used as the Rectory for Staples's successors. In the 1950s the Church of Ireland decided to demolish the dilapidated and redundant service wing, the rubble being used in the contemporaneous upgrading of the A29 Moneymore Road, and at the same time the gardens around the house were asphalted.³⁸⁵ In 2007 the Church of Ireland recognised the architectural significance of the building by instituting an extensive interior refurbishment;³⁸⁶ today it is still the residence of the Rector of Lissan.

The Claudean trio: an appraisal

Even in the context of Nash's unfailingly imaginative Picturesque repertoire these are extraordinarily innovative designs. The proselytising of Knight and Price had defused the power of asymmetry to shock *per se*, and while Nash's domestic castles of the same period boasted equally ingenious massing and elevations their outward format could at least claim historical and nationalistic resonance whereas Italian rusticity was novel and even daring.

In form, function and status these three houses epitomise the post-Palladian idea of the villa, the evolution of which was described in Chapter 1. Modest in size, they are not houses of parade and none constitutes a primary seat in the strict sense, functioning respectively as an estate manager's house and farm (the farmyard being only a few yards from the rear of the house); a true *villa rustica*, as a secondary country retreat; and as a house for the occupation of a clergyman while fulfilling his duties and remaining in the ownership of the

³⁸² PRONI: D1567/E/1/7.

³⁸³ Ibid. This affidavit was for publication for the official record in the *Dublin Gazette*: commercial deforestation by early settlers in the Plantation of Ulster had rendered the planting of trees a highly political issue.

³⁸⁴ Diocesan notifications of non-residence, 1826-34: PRONI: DIO/4/32/L/2/1-7. His curate from 1808-13 was Richard Stewart, son of James Stewart of Killymoon and Staples's cousin.

³⁸⁵ Alistair Rowan is particularly scathing: *Buildings of England: North-West Ulster*, p. 363.

³⁸⁶ Personal communication with the Rev. Alan Cross.

Church, rather than as a home owned by him in perpetuity and inheritable by family members. Indeed, as noted above, Staples chose to live for some years elsewhere in another, presumably more prestigious or lucrative, benefice. What they share is novelty of design accompanied by restraint, to produce an effect of charm, enhanced by settings of natural beauty rather than elaborate gardens. Each house is set at ground level, without basement storeys, to achieve a connection with the landscape outside, facilitated by other devices to promote a conversation between exterior and interior such as the conservatory and small loggia in the case of Sandridge Park, and the arcaded loggias of Cronkhill and Lissan; all have floor-length windows to the ground floor as frames through which to look outward, and through which the gardens can be entered, fostering an intimate connection between house and landscape which is so integral to the architectural Picturesque.³⁸⁷ They share in differing degrees a picturesque element of theatricality in presenting a primary façade which summarises the design, although at Lissan, with its more grandiose entrance, equal care is given to the front as to the garden façade; at Sandridge Park the extended river façade is the single showpiece, a subtle alteration from the designs shown in the Hensol watercolours; at Cronkhill the self-effacing entrance, the baldness of the rear façade and the incongruous retention of the half-timbered southern elevation of the old house are relegated to the primacy of the garden façade.

The common thread running through their composition is the use of solid geometry in the form of elements which can be arranged in manifold ways: the block and cylinder, the pyramids and cones of the roofs, the shallow roof pitches to soften the outline and the overhanging eaves to create light and shade. The motif of the round tower is a defining one: placed at the end of the main elevation the arc of the wall emphasises the play of light and shadow at different times of day and provides a counterpoint to the cubic element of the

³⁸⁷ This was not unique to Vernacular Italianate: Nash also uses this device at the castellated Luscombe, for example.

square tower as well as a vertical accent. Even then the elements and their composition are not identical: the round towers and their oval fenestration vary subtly in positioning and in proportion, that of Lissan being more squat and the Sandridge tower, at three storeys, each of full height, appearing the leanest.³⁸⁸ As already discussed, Cronkhill's illusion of compactness depends upon hiding the service wing from view,³⁸⁹ but it is undeniably the purest composition.³⁹⁰ The elements were arranged in a straggling line in Lissan's elevation, and the entrance porch is heavy; and at Sandridge Park Nash made use of greater surface ornamentation, if the 1829 engraving, reinforced by the Repton conservatory drawings, is regarded as accurate. Their internal layouts are not so revolutionary, although Nash ensures that in each house the polite rooms are conveniently grouped and interconnected (particularly at Sandridge) in the new informal manner; but they are not identical, Cronkhill taking advantage of its ability to keep the new polite wing compact by arranging the principal rooms around a grander staircase whereas at Lissan and Sandridge the axial plan relegates the staircase to an unobtrusive position, while maximising the exposure of these rooms to the garden façade. The interiors are significant in that they betray no hint of the stylistic experimentation going on outside. In this sense they follow exactly the principle set out by Knight at Downton, and followed by Nash at Luscombe, for example, that the interior style did not need to mimic or amplify that of the exterior, for they are neither Italianate nor even rustic, and, most notably at Sandridge Park, more notable for the use of geometry to bring light and shade through arcaded vaulting and subtle interior shape-shifting.

There is a case for cautioning that their modern exterior colour overstates their presence in the landscape to an unintended and misleading degree, in that all three are currently finished

³⁸⁸ Although curiously all were exactly 18 feet in diameter; all three houses share some of the same dimensions for their polite rooms.

³⁸⁹ One blatant example of a photograph so arranged is in Watkin, *Vision*, p. 116; another is in Mansbridge, p. 102.

³⁹⁰ A view with which Summerson *Nash*, 1980, p. 42 and Davis *Prince Regent's Architect*, p. 43, concur.

in white render, which was almost certainly not their original colour. In the case of Cronkhill, the perspective watercolour of 1802 shows a pronounced ochre colour; in addition there are two oil paintings at Attingham Park from the 1850s depicting prize livestock which show Cronkhill in the background, the render appearing a sandy or buff colour.³⁹¹ Paint sampling during exterior conservation works which have been taking place at Cronkhill since 2012 has established that both the brick farmhouse and rendered villa elements were limewashed to a uniform colour, which has been identified as a light ochre.³⁹²

In the case of Sandridge Park, it is more difficult to judge Nash's proposed colour tone from the photographic reproductions of the Hensol watercolours. Photographs from the early twentieth century shows the render to be light in colour, although the shade cannot be discerned. The 2006-2009 renovation work disclosed that the render had been heavily patched over time and reliable paint samples could not be extracted. It cannot necessarily be assumed that the colour was to be similar to the ochre of Cronkhill, but equally the bright white tone which it seems to have assumed by the twentieth century is unlikely to have been its original state.³⁹³ For Lissan Rectory there is little visual evidence to confirm its original colour but its finish in harling, a vernacular, granular render which incorporates stone chippings, may be indicative of the resulting original colour tone.

Their Picturesque credentials are impeccable but then so, as has been noted, were those of Nash's castles, which shared some of the free play of geometrical shapes and bold elevation. The innovation of the Claudean trio lay in the visual references which they brought to mind: an allusion to Italy which was neither archaeological, owing nothing to ancient Rome, nor flavoured by the Renaissance but, somewhat ironically in Nash's case, apparently drawn

³⁹¹ William Henry Davis, 'A pair of horses', 1852 (NT609104), and 'Hereford cow near Cronk Hill farmhouse', 1858 (NT609107)

³⁹² Personal communication with Sarah Kay, Attingham Project Curator.

³⁹³ A monochrome photograph of the 1880s shows the garden elevation of Sandridge Park to be heavily covered by climbing plants in any event.

from life. Curiously contemporary reaction did not seem to identify them as Italian; indeed very little contemporary reaction is traceable at all, possibly because these were not houses of high status and were geographically somewhat remote. Sandridge Park was visible only to river traffic, both functional and touristic, which passed it.³⁹⁴ The earliest published depictions of it were the perspective exhibited at the Royal Academy, and an engraving from a drawing by Shepherd published in 1829.³⁹⁵ The papers of the Newman family who became tenants after the death of Lady Ashburton³⁹⁶ contain some sketches of the exterior of the house by family members which confirm its likeness to the engraving but other descriptions or references to it in these papers have not yet come to light.³⁹⁷ Public descriptions have not so far been located until guidebooks and directories of the 1850s which commonly described it as an 'Italian villa'.³⁹⁸ One view was however privately expressed by Lady Ashburton's son in 1809 after the death of his mother. Confirming that 'I have no wish to sell – I have been pestered with several proposals', he proposes that the house and estate be let, and he writes to his uncle, Sir Francis Baring:

I would have Nash informed that Sandridge is to be let: of course the greater rent it produces to me, the greater glory it produces to the architect who built it, and his fame and reputation will act as motives to puff it sufficiently. .. Mr. Leach [attorney] says it is difficult to know what rent to ask for Sandridge as so extraordinary a thing cannot be valued like a common farm, for which purpose he wishes to consult Nash.³⁹⁹

Lissan Rectory attracted a stern rebuke in 1836, when it was described as:

³⁹⁴ J.M.W. Turner would have seen it on his voyages on the River Dart: in 1811 he sketched a view of a village on the neighbouring bank from the Sandridge shore: 'Dittisham from the River Dart', from *Devonshire Coast, No.1 Sketchbook*, f.97 recto, Tate Gallery ref. D08547, Turner Bequest CXXIII-94. The river journey was popular with tourists: Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited Dartmouth on more than one occasion; the Queen recorded in 1843 that 'the winding Dart' reminded Albert of the Rhine, and in 1856 was rowed from Dartmouth up the river to a point beyond Dittisham and therefore close to Sandridge. (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, Princess Beatrice's copies, Vol. 16, entry for 30 August 1843 and Vol. 42, entry for 11 August 1856: ©Bodleian Libraries and the Royal Archives, accessed at www.queenvictoriasjournals.org.)

³⁹⁵ 'Sandridge, Devon, the seat of R.W. Newman, Esq.', in Moore, Book I, plates, unnumbered.

³⁹⁶ Yallop, 'Sandridge Park', pp. 194-6.

³⁹⁷ I am most grateful to Sir Geoffrey Newman, Bt. and Lady Newman for sight of these sketches.

³⁹⁸ For example, H. J. Whitfield, *Rambles in Devonshire*, (London, 1854), p. 5.

³⁹⁹ Northbrook papers, NP.1.B.10.3: letters from the second Lord Ashburton to Sir Francis Baring dated 20 March and 13 May 1809.

a large castellated [sic] house on considerably too great a scale for a rectory. .. The architecture of the front of it has a heavy Dutch character and is rather uninteresting, but that of the back part is more peculiar.⁴⁰⁰

No nineteenth-century published or privately recorded description of Cronkhill has been located to date. As will be discussed in the next chapter, none of them are referred to in the pattern books of the decades which followed. So the moment at which Nash's innovatory style was publicly or even privately recognised as Italianate is not at all clear.

Nash's sources for Vernacular Italianate

Nothing survives to record Nash's own views on the style which he introduced, the terminology which he would have used, nor his sources and visual references. Modern historians identify his villas as Vernacular Italianate partly because of the subsequent corpus of built work in this style and the evidence of the pattern books which follow: our labelling of Nash's trio of villas is therefore retrospective. Nash's description of a repertoire of styles as conveyed to Robert Burton does not include an 'Italian' version.⁴⁰¹

Nash did not leave the British Isles until after the Napoleonic Wars, but the previous chapter noted the degree to which British society on many levels was imbued with cultural imagery of Italy and its real or imagined degree of familiarity with its landscape scenery, as well as Nash's ownership of a number of volumes of architectural drawings of buildings in Italy and guidebooks. It has become received wisdom⁴⁰² that Nash was influenced in his designs and informed by the drawings of Claude Lorraine, of which it is frequently pointed

⁴⁰⁰ *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*, p. 90.

⁴⁰¹ It was Humphry Repton, in his subsequent correspondence with Robert Burton of Longner, the neighbouring estate to Attingham, who uses the term 'modern Italian villa', but with pejorative intent. The context was the disagreement between Nash as Burton's retained architect, who was arguing for building a new house at Longner, whereas Repton as landscape designer was trying to persuade Burton to pay homage to his ancestors by preserving and altering the old house which, wrote Repton rather scathingly, should not be replaced by 'a modern Italian villa .. or a modern Saxon Castle'. This is pointed out by Tyack who suggests that Repton is deliberately referring to Cronkhill which at this point (1804) was under construction: 'Longner', p. 202.

⁴⁰² See for example Watkin, *Vision*, pp. 114-7.

out Lord Berwick was a collector; Claude's *Landscape near Rome with a view of the Ponte Molle*⁴⁰³ is cited as being the major influence on Nash, depicting as it does in the middle ground an asymmetrical grouping of buildings forming what appears to be a villa-farmhouse, which has clearly evolved over time and incorporates round and square towers, gateways and courtyards. The posthumous sale of Nash's library included a copy of Claude's *Liber Veritatis* as engraved for publication by Earlom in 1777, containing 'very early and fine impressions'.⁴⁰⁴ Nash was familiar with the writings of Knight and his exhortation to look to the architecture depicted by Claude and the Poussins, and the recommendation to take Claude as a model was not by this time new: in 1795 barrister and amateur architect Frederick Trench sketched a garden pavilion for Mrs. Stewart (of Killymoon), which he refers to it simply as 'the Claude', although it is monumental rather than rustic in character, redolent of one of Claude's history paintings.⁴⁰⁵ Certainly the *Ponte Molle*, as reproduced in an engraving by Earlom with which a wide audience would be more familiar, throws the massing and detail of the rustic buildings of the Roman Campagna into even sharper relief than the original painting. **[4.32]** Other Claude drawings depicting round towers, such as those of the *Torre Lazzeroni*, or the *Tomb of Cecilia Metella*,⁴⁰⁶ **[4.33]** when compared with Repton's elevations for Lissan⁴⁰⁷ evince a distinct family resemblance. Yet it would be simplistic to hold out a single artist, however much he was held to epitomise the effect of Picturesque arcadia sought by architects, still less a single painting, its status as a paradigm of Italian culture for the late eighteenth-century Englishman notwithstanding, as Nash's sole inspiration.

As discussed in the preceding chapter the iconic quality attained by Claude's images would have been reinforced by the works of British artists (and architects) making their own

⁴⁰³ Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Acc.1955P111.

⁴⁰⁴ Evans, lot 384. The sale also included a copy of Claude's *Embarkation of S. Ursula* (lot 943).

⁴⁰⁵ PRONI: D3167/2/114.

⁴⁰⁶ Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, WA1855.64 and WA1855.55 respectively.

⁴⁰⁷ RIBA Coll. SKB 246/4 f48v.

pilgrimages to Italy who were themselves discovering and recording landscape and with it vernacular architecture. Richard Wilson, already noted as ‘the English Claude’, painted a view of ‘Holt Bridge on the River Dee’ in 1762⁴⁰⁸ which in its subject matter and composition is widely regarded as a deliberate echo of Claude’s *Ponte Molle* but one which at the same time, like the Claude, depicts a recognisable place. [4.34] Significantly it has been described by art historian Robin Simon as an ‘imitation’, in the very specific sense in which that term was understood in literary circles at that time.⁴⁰⁹ Simon notes Dr. Johnson’s 1755 definition of an ‘imitation’ as: ‘a method of translating looser than paraphrase, in which modern examples and illustrations are used for ancient, and domestick for foreign’, Johnson later enlarging on it as; ‘a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and the parallels lucky.’ In other words, ‘imitations’ are works which are not copied from, but which instead make personal and considered reference to, admired models by others. Simon believes that this aptly sums up the relationship between the works of Claude and those of Wilson, and, by implication those of other of his British admirers such as Wilson’s pupil Thomas Jones, whose *plein air* Italian paintings included subjects such as mundane buildings which receive his close scrutiny.⁴¹⁰ The principal subject of a 1790 painting by Simon Denis is a spectacular Roman sunset, but it also depicts in some detail, silhouetted on the skyline, the grouping of a square crenellated tower and a round tower with a conical roof.⁴¹¹ [4.35] Francis Towne’s pen and wash *Temple of Vesta* of 1781 is an accurate observation of a three-storeyed cylindrical building with a chimney and a pantiled conical roof.⁴¹² Archaeological field drawings were a further resource, Morley citing in particular Bartoli’s survey of ancient

⁴⁰⁸ National Gallery, London, NG6196.

⁴⁰⁹ Robert Simon, ‘Seeing Double’, in *Art Quarterly*, Spring 1998, pp. 90-3.

⁴¹⁰ *A Wall in Naples*, c.1782, National Gallery, London, NG6544.

⁴¹¹ Simon Denis, *Sunset, Rome*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Coll.2009.400.43.

⁴¹² British Museum, Nn.1.18.

tombs, *Gli Antichi Sepolchri* of 1693 as an established source for Regency designers,⁴¹³ noting a close resemblance between the cylindrical tower and conical roof of Bartoli's *Scipio's Tomb*⁴¹⁴ and Soane's 1786 *Design for a prospect tower for Ossington Hall*,⁴¹⁵ and proposing Bartoli's illustration as a direct source for Nash at Cronkhill. [4.36]

Pevsner appears to credit a more general repertoire of Italian sources, not identifying Claude directly but settling for the 'southern farmhouse' as an influence, not elaborating on how this would have been mediated into Nash's ideas.⁴¹⁶ Indeed other models existed nearer to home, if not for complete villa forms then for some of the component parts to be employed by Nash. Both in pattern books and in built examples villa and cottage design in Britain had started to exhibit some bold experimentation with geometrical form. In the context of the smaller house, the bay, whether canted (a device characteristic of Taylor) or curved, had begun by the 1770s to develop vertically into a cylinder or half-cylinder, as demonstrated by a house of 1793 (Clare House, East Malling, Kent)⁴¹⁷ by Michael Searles, of stucco under shallow-pitched roofs of slate, which while symmetrical incorporates both canted bays and a half-round two-storeyed tower under a conical roof embraced by a balcony running around the first floor. An interesting use of a half-round tower which may pre-date Cronkhill can be found at Sandlin House, near Malvern, Worcestershire, where a Georgian re-working of an older house placed a red-brick façade onto an older core, adding a projecting half-cylinder three storeys in height, each with three windows, under a conical slate roof.⁴¹⁸ [4.37] Another more striking example is The Round House at Havering-atte-Bower, Essex,⁴¹⁹ built in 1792-4 and attributed to John Plaw, an elliptical stuccoed villa of three storeys, with little

⁴¹³ John Morley, *Regency Design*, (London, 1993), p. 110.

⁴¹⁴ Illustrated in Morley, p. 110.

⁴¹⁵ Soane Coll. 65/3/1.

⁴¹⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, (5th edition, London, 1957), p. 268.

⁴¹⁷ HE List entry 109910.

⁴¹⁸ Messrs. Knight Frank, Sale particulars for Sandlin House, Leigh Sinton, June 2016, Property ref. WRC120017. The architect and date of the remodelling are unknown: it is unlisted and not mentioned in *Buildings of England: Worcestershire*.

⁴¹⁹ HE List entry 1183562.

exterior ornament, the impact coming from its extraordinarily regular and smooth yet unconventional shape. [4.38] Much earlier, in 1774 Plaw had built Belle Isle on Lake Windermere, a circular villa of three storeys with a portico entrance, illustrated in Plaw's pattern book of 1785, *Rural Residences*, which contains plans for another oval villa. As early as 1785 James Peacocke had been playing with tessellations of varying room shapes,⁴²⁰ [4.39] and Edward Gyfford published two pattern books in 1806-7 which included villas, cottages and shooting boxes, many of which were compositions of varied geometrical forms arranged contiguously, although for the most part symmetrically: circles, ovals, cylinders and even hexagons.⁴²¹ [4.40] Gandy, too, was demonstrating the use of the purest of solid forms, including cones, in his pattern books at exactly the same time, if to more eccentric effect.⁴²² These examples among many confirm that a geometrical approach to form and mass, if in more general terms, had by the turn of the century already gained wide currency.

What lay behind Nash's three essays in this new style? What impression did he want to make on the spectator, and what response did he wish to evoke?

The twentieth-century re-appraisal of the architectural Picturesque in general and of Nash in particular brought his Italianate works out of the shadows.⁴²³ Davis describes them as 'the perfect country villa that was neither Gothic nor Classical but still possessed the romantic outline of the former and the simplicity of the latter.'⁴²⁴ Summerson, allowing Lord Berwick equal influence with Nash in Cronkhill's design, sees Nash's Italianate and castle styles as two facets of the same philosophy of 'purposeful asymmetry';⁴²⁵ praising Cronkhill as 'the essence of "picturesqueness": there had been nothing quite like it in English architecture.'

⁴²⁰ Peacocke's pattern book for small villas, *Nutshells*, was noted in Chapter 1.

⁴²¹ *Designs for small picturesque cottages and hunting boxes* (London, 1807), Plate VIII.

⁴²² J.M. Gandy, *Designs for cottages, Cottage farms and other rural buildings*, (London, 1805). Design for a pair of lodges.

⁴²³ Although even in Summerson's revised monograph of 1980 he describes Sandridge Park as demolished (p. 192). As noted earlier, Hussey fails to mention them in his *Picturesque*.

⁴²⁴ Davis *Prince Regent's Architect*, p. 42.

⁴²⁵ Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 44.

Singling out Cronkhill as the most successful of the trio he adds: 'If Nash had built Cronkhill and nothing else it would entitle him to a place in the history of the Picturesque'.⁴²⁶ This is an ambitious claim with which at least one modern commentator disagrees. Scalbert's uncompromising critique compares Cronkhill unfavourably with Schinkel's later Gardener's House at Potsdam:

Cronkhill, canonised by Nikolaus Pevsner and others after him as the first building in the Italianate style, is no masterpiece. From afar its silhouette, powdered and well dressed according to Georgian propriety, is not without grace. Close up, however, much of it transpires to be a cheap makeover at pains to conceal a weak design. The square tower, which offsets from a distance the round one, recedes so far into the main body of the house as to leave the last isolated and disproportioned. It is flanked on one side by a single storey arcade and on the other by the entrance porch, both of which are crowned by an improbably rich balustrade. To the left, the brick dressing of the service wing tries but fails to hide the timber-framed gable of a seventeenth-century farmhouse. To the right, the white paint breaks off behind the porch ...

Noting Nash's supposed debt to Claude's *Ponte Molle*, but arguing that Claude's view was that the reality of a picture was nature, whereas for the Picturesque theorists the reality of nature was a picture, the criticism continues unabated:

All things that are Italian in the painting – the unpainted brickwork, the square windows, the shallow eaves – are contradicted at Cronkhill. Nash's vision of Italy was a picturesque fantasy summarily executed with Georgian details, white paint being employed as a substitute for sunshine, and deep eaves as a substitute for shade. Most of the effort went into making the building seem what it was not. Nash struggled to restore a vague two-dimensional image to a three-dimensional reality. In the process everything that might conceivably be Italian or even Claudian was undermined by pictorial values.⁴²⁷

One might agree that the all too obvious sticking together of the old and new halves at Cronkhill was indeed, inexplicably, less than happily resolved. But the general thrust of the criticism surely misses the point of what Nash wanted to achieve: not an archaeological reconstruction, or slavish copy, but a work of playful elegance which complemented its setting and drew on the essence, not the exact form, of rustic Italy. It was allusive, derivative, in the sense (shorn of modern pejorative connotations) simply of drawing on something else as its source. He had no wish to transplant a fortified Italian farmhouse into the foreign fields of Shropshire any more than he designed Luscombe with a view to

⁴²⁶ Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, p. 42.

⁴²⁷ Scalbert, pp. 25-6.

defending the Hoares against besieging Dawlish peasants. Ideas of architectural ‘correctness’ or accurate ‘copying’ had no place in Picturesque theory, even if tempting in practice to architects of lesser vision and ability. Taking up Robin Simon’s idea that the literary concept of ‘Imitation’ had application in the field of art, it could as readily be extended into the architectural Picturesque: Nash’s Cronkhill, as well as Sandridge Park and Lissan Rectory, represented a nod towards Italian rusticity, an imitation of the Campagna, an *hommage* to Claude’s buildings and his Arcadian landscapes. As will be seen in succeeding chapters, Nash’s pared-down, almost austere representations contrast with the movement towards ‘realism’ and accuracy in Italianate forms which were to be attempted and promoted two decades later by architects like T. F. Hunt in his pattern book *Architettura Campestre*, or Charles Parker in his *Villa Rustica*, in which the latter conscientiously records the Italian buildings and locations which he has used as the basis for his designs. Much later, Robert Kerr was to distinguish between ‘Rural-Italian’ and ‘Palatial-Italian’;⁴²⁸ in the first decade of the century Nash’s work should perhaps be seen as ‘expressive’ rather than ‘archaeological’ Italian.

Nash and Vernacular Italianate after Lissan

The three villas constitute an identifiable rustic Italianate group, but just as abruptly as Nash embarked upon this experiment he appears to have moved away from it: in David Watkin’s view, it proved ‘less popular than his castle style’,⁴²⁹ a comment which rests only on the built evidence of Nash’s work rather than on any recorded contemporary commentary. Davis suggests that there was a design for the alteration of Langford Lodge, Co. Antrim, in Italianate style for the Dowager Lady Longford, which was never executed, although he

⁴²⁸ Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman’s House*, (2nd edition, London, 1865), pp. 355-362.

⁴²⁹ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 115.

does not identify any drawings.⁴³⁰ The next sighting of an Italianate Nash design is in a plan for 1823 for the Park Village, on an area of land to the north-west of Regent's Park, for which Nash had developed a master plan for the Crown.⁴³¹ This was an awkward site, so Nash conceived a different type of scheme for it: a garden village of modest villas in a picturesque landscaped setting, which he took on as a personal speculation.⁴³² The first scheme for the Park Village – divided into East and West areas - is depicted in a large scale plan of 1823⁴³³ which includes eight vignettes illustrating the styles of cottages which he was contemplating: one is clearly a compact copy of Cronkhill, without the service wing. **[4.41]** This development was in effect a metropolitan version of Nash's Blaise Hamlet near Bristol of a decade before, but aimed at a more prosperous category of resident and without the latter's philanthropic function. Over half of Park Village East was demolished in the late nineteenth century, but it seems that a form of the miniature of Cronkhill design was in fact built there, for a mid-nineteenth century watercolour shows a house with a round tower with conical roof, now demolished.⁴³⁴ A surviving Italianate example is the Tower House at 12 Park Village West, where the tower with its overhanging eaves is octagonal in form. **[4.42]** Nash may also have intended to include a rustic Italianate cottage variant in an unexecuted scheme for building a new estate village for Attingham, tentatively dated around 1800 and therefore possibly pre-dating his Blaise Hamlet.⁴³⁵ Seven perspective oil panels, attributed to A C Pugin, include one showing a riverside cottage with round two-storeyed bay and conical roof.⁴³⁶ **[4.43]**

⁴³⁰ Terence Davis, 'John Nash in Ireland', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, Vol. VIII No. 2, Apr-June 1965, pp. 55-63. No drawing or correspondence survives in the Pakenham Archives at Tullynally Castle (personal communication with Hon. Eliza Pakenham).

⁴³¹ Summerson, *Nash*, 1980, pp. 128-9.

⁴³² Tyack, 'John Nash and the Park Village', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. 3, 1993, pp. 68-74; J. Mordaunt Crook, 'John Nash and the Genesis of Regent's Park' in Tyack, *Picturesque*, pp. 90-100.

⁴³³ The National Archives: MPE 1/911.

⁴³⁴ Camden Borough Archives, Heal Collection A IX 64: noted in Tyack, 'Park Village', p. 73, fn. 10.

⁴³⁵ Temple, *Village Picturesque*, pp. 112-15. Temple's date rests on circumstantial evidence; he does not explicitly suggest that the cottage design pre-dates that for Cronkhill.

⁴³⁶ National Trust Collection, NT: ATT/D/028.

The Repton family and Claudean design

There are a number of drawings of Vernacular Italianate houses by members of the Repton family. Distinguishing original designs by Humphry's two sons, George Stanley, who worked in Nash's office from around 1800 to 1817 and John Adey, who worked with Nash from 1796 until the dissolution of Nash's partnership with his father in 1800, from drawings in their hands which recorded designs which they had seen or assisted with while in Nash's employ can be problematic; dates are also uncertain. A watercolour inscribed 'Panson Cottage/to have been erected near Hereford' shows a country villa in a wooded landscape. [4.44] There is a canted bay at the apex of the two wings, with floor length glazed doors opening to a trellis work verandah, connecting to the right to a round tower with conical roof, the range continuing to a square tower with shallow pyramidal roof. In manner and detailing it resembles George Repton's perspective watercolours for Nash's three villas.⁴³⁷ In 1980 it was attributed to Humphry Repton;⁴³⁸ it is listed, dated as pre-1810, without further explanation in Daniels' monograph.⁴³⁹ It is now attributed to George Stanley Repton.⁴⁴⁰ The cottage was not built as depicted (as the inscription on the watercolour perhaps bears out): a 'Panson Cottage' was built near Hereford for a local clergyman, although on a much smaller scale, judging by extant sketches by local artists; nevertheless this cottage can be dated with certainty to 1802.⁴⁴¹ This poses something of a conundrum, for if the perspective watercolour pre-dates the building of this cottage then it would be a design drawn up before that for Cronkhill, which if it is attributable to Humphry Repton, who at this time has split from Nash, would be remarkable. Perhaps the more likely explanation is that the watercolour by George Stanley Repton records the ideas being explored in Nash's office in

⁴³⁷ David Whitehead, 'Rebuilding a Career: John Nash in Herefordshire', in Tyack, *Picturesque*, p. 27.

⁴³⁸ Sotheby's London, British Architectural Drawings and Watercolours sale, 12 June 1980, lot 142.

⁴³⁹ Daniels, p. 260.

⁴⁴⁰ Now in the collections of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC. Personal communication with Linda Lott, Rare Books Librarian, December 2015.

⁴⁴¹ Whitehead, pp. 27-29. The Humphry Repton sketch to which he refers appeared in *The Royal Repository* for 1802, noted in *Bibliotheca Herefordiensis*, (1821), p. 85.

1801-2 at the time at which the Cronkhill design was being worked upon. The chronology is unresolved, but while an interesting addition to the documentation of the genesis of the rustic Italianate style, it would not seem to present a challenge to the conventional narrative of Nash's innovation.

One of George Repton's notebooks contains a drawing of a Claudean farmhouse with round tower and small ancillary building attached.⁴⁴² [4.45] There is no indication of whether it is a speculative design and nor can it be precisely dated: the notebook covers the period 1800-1805. In a scrapbook of drawings by the Repton family there is a sketch of a compact rural house in the Claudean mould: asymmetrical, rendered, with projecting eaves and a three-storey square tower with pyramidal roof, and an interesting entrance portico with open arches. It is neither titled nor dated, and it is currently attributed either to George Stanley or John Adey Repton.⁴⁴³ [4.46] The absence of the round tower robs it of the drama of Nash's Claudean trio, but, while there is no evidence that this house was ever built, or that the Repton sons executed any similar projects, it is an interesting precursor of a less exuberant but perhaps more workmanlike form of Vernacular Italianate which was initially to appear after Nash. It bears some resemblance to the Italianate designs of Robert Lugar, the architect who, almost contemporaneously, embarked on his own experiments in Vernacular Italianate. His work, and that of others who took up the baton after Nash, will be considered in the next two chapters.

⁴⁴² RIBA Coll. SKB246/4 f88r. Reproduced in Mansbridge, p. 316.

⁴⁴³ Norfolk Record Office: Colman collection, Scrapbook of original drawings by Humphry Repton, 712.6; reproduced in G. Carter, P. Goode, and K. Laurie, *Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardener, 1752-1818*, Exhibition catalogue, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, 1982, p. 75, pl. 66.

Chapter 5

Vernacular Italianate after Nash: the evidence of the pattern books

By the opening of the nineteenth century architectural pattern books were entering a new phase. Hitherto architectural publications had taken one of two forms: either the expensive limited editions prepared for aristocratic clients or the *cognoscenti* by Chambers, Ware or Gibbs, presenting meticulous studies of classical forms or plans and elevations of executed projects; or the practical manuals by master craftsmen such as William Pain or Batty Langley.⁴⁴⁴ The new genre by contrast was more popular and less exclusive; often discursive and occasionally polemical in nature. Some sixty or so books appeared between 1790 and 1835 containing designs for houses of moderate size, including cottages.⁴⁴⁵ They cannot be uncritically regarded as an accurate barometer of architectural taste as motives for publishing them varied: at the very least they merely demonstrated styles which their authors chose to depict, whether or not they commended them (T.F. Hunt's 1827 work, *Architettura Campestre*, being a curious example of an author explicitly disdaining his subject, in his introductory note) and whether the designs therein were actually executed or not; some were intended to promote the author's philosophical or aesthetic argument, as seen in the works of Joseph Gandy and James Malton, rather than as templates for realisable buildings. Others were intended not as a collection of specific plans or set of technical instructions (although by the mid-century this had become the norm) but as didactic source-books, of which Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* of 1832-41, or Gilbert Laing Meason's *Landscape Architecture of the Great Painters of Italy* of 1828, are examples. Some served as the author-architect's portfolio, recording executed commissions and explaining their suitability for both patron and site, as did Robert Lugar's *Plans and Views* of 1811, and his later *Villa Architecture* of 1828. An

⁴⁴⁴ Archer, *Literature*, pp. 20-21. The other principal secondary sources drawn on for this chapter were cited in Chapter 1: McMordie; Wiebenson; Esdaile, and Blutman. For the later period, Helen Long, *Victorian Houses and their details: the role of publications in their building and decoration*, (Oxford, 2002).

⁴⁴⁵ McMordie, p. 43.

extreme illustration of their populist nature is George Wightwick's *Palace of Architecture: a romance of art and history* of 1840, which masks its scholarship in pure whimsy in a conscious appeal to laymen, for it was, as he later explained, 'an experiment to see whether architecture might not be treated in so entertaining a manner as to introduce it even into the boudoir of the ladies'.⁴⁴⁶ They were affordable publications, often running to more than one impression or edition, and their popular appeal is underlined by their being the subject of reviews in periodicals such as *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *The London Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles-Lettres*, or even the *Church of England Quarterly*, which provide insights into contemporary reaction; these periodicals of general appeal in themselves further disseminated stylistic ideas and brought the discussion to a wider audience.

With some exceptions, during this period few British pattern book authors can be considered as coming from the first rank of the architectural profession:⁴⁴⁷ we find no such works by Wyattville or C.R. Cockerell for example. Unlike Soane, who first published a speculative pattern book, in 1778,⁴⁴⁸ Nash himself never published one, although both men owned copies of a variety of pattern books. Nash's library at the time of his death contained a number of the most widely-known, including Malton's *Cottage Architecture*, John Plaw's *Ferme Ornée*, Gandy's *Designs for Cottages*, and Lugar's *Architectural Sketches*, as well as volumes from the Continent such as Percier and Fontaine's *Palais et Edifices Modernes*, as already noted. The absence of the first flight of British architects as authors is entirely in keeping with the less elevated social milieu which these books were addressing, for their designs were largely intended to meet the requirements of 'persons of genteel life and moderate fortune'.⁴⁴⁹ An analysis of the pattern books over the first half of the century provides a rich insight into three aspects of the evolution of Vernacular Italianate style: the manner in

⁴⁴⁶ George Wightwick, 'The Life of an Architect', in *Bentley's Miscellany*, Vol. 52, 1857, p. 408.

⁴⁴⁷ Archer, *Literature*, p. 29.

⁴⁴⁸ Sir John Soane, *Designs in Architecture*, (London, 1778).

⁴⁴⁹ Robert Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, long title.

which they present and depict its aesthetic characteristics, their use of terminology, and their chronology.

Early appearances of Italianate designs

Identifying what appears to be either the earliest use of the term to denote a rustic, Italian-derived style in the pattern books or periodicals is not straightforward, and is complicated by the fluidity of stylistic terminology which was then current: 'Italian' could equally refer to Renaissance or Palladian styles. James Playfair, for example, produced a number of designs dated 1792-3, catalogued as an 'Italianate villa', 'Italianate country villa' or 'Italianate country mansion', all of which are classically-derived, symmetrical, and far from rustic.⁴⁵⁰ As has already been discussed in Chapter 1, the Italian-derived words 'villa' and 'casino' were common currency among country house architects by 1800, but the word 'villa' was becoming more descriptive of function rather than form, increasingly as shorthand for the smaller house, whether in the country or on the urban fringes. The term 'casino' was used in its literal sense of a 'small house', but of a very particular kind: usually but not always a Neo-classical box, sometimes in the form of a folly, bath-house or garden pavilion, without observable Italian influences.⁴⁵¹

In the absence to date of evidence to the contrary, the watercolour perspective of Cronkhill submitted to the Royal Academy in 1802 is ostensibly the earliest public appearance of a

⁴⁵⁰ RIBA Coll. SD45/5(1-2), SD45/7, 8, 9, 10, SD45/12: possibly unexecuted. It is important to note that these titles are taken from the current online catalogue entries: www.riba.sirsidynix.net.uk/uhtbin/webcat [accessed 10 September 2011 and 5 March 2016]. However, in the printed catalogue, of these, only SD45/8, 'Design for an Italianate villa' is so described. It is inscribed 'Pensiere/Roma/1792', and signed 'Playfair Roma'. If the 'Italianate' appellation was contemporary it would be an early use of the term in an architectural context, which otherwise seems to have been first used by William Henry Playfair in c.1830, an observation to be discussed in Chapter 6. However, a preliminary opinion from the RIBA Drawings Collection (to be confirmed) is that there seems to be no direct evidence that in the case of the James Playfair drawings this was a contemporary description, and is more likely to have been added subsequently by cataloguers as a descriptive term: personal communication with Cathy Wilson, 13 January 2017.

⁴⁵¹ Nash himself built a house called Casina in 1797 for Warren Hastings's solicitor, Richard Shawe, but in an austere Classical mode: Mansbridge entry 49. Soane's *Designs* included a 'Hunting Casine' at Pl. XXIX.

recognisable Vernacular Italianate design,⁴⁵² although no stylistic label was attached to it. The moment at which the pattern books began to present it is less clear-cut. Archer and Morley point out that as early as 1803 James Randall singles out a rustic Italianate detail in his *Collection of architectural designs for mansions, casinos, villas, lodges and cottages*.⁴⁵³ While none of his designs are designated 'Italian' his 'Casino in the Grecian style' is symmetrical in elevation but boasts a complicated roof line for picturesque effect, which he explains thus: 'The roof is after the Italian manner and is well-adapted to protect the building, and to produce an ample effect, by the beauty of light and shade on its parts.'⁴⁵⁴ The eaves, supported by brackets, are an exaggeratedly prominent feature: by comparing plan and elevation it is clear that they are designed to project some three or even four feet beyond the face of the wall, in the manner of an alpine chalet. **[5.1]** Randall's sources, whether from travels abroad or second-hand from other published representations, are not known.⁴⁵⁵ Edmund Bartell in 1804 similarly insists that 'unless the eaves project a considerable way over every part, the building will have a mean appearance',⁴⁵⁶ although he does not identify this feature as Italian, and presents designs which are variations on a generic, indigenous bucolic theme. Archer draws attention to a plate in a technical drawing manual, Edward Edwards's *A Practical Treatise of Perspective*, also of 1803,⁴⁵⁷ which shows two houses displaying the elevations and rooflines which are characteristic of the Campagna, and although Edwards is concerned with the technical challenges which their depiction presents rather than any stylistic significance, and they are not intended to serve as architectural patterns, it is an interesting choice of subject. **[5.2]** A lost opportunity is represented by Sir Robert

⁴⁵² As discussed in the previous chapter, this is assumed to be the drawing exhibited under Nash's name at the Royal Academy. Whether it is pre-dated by the Panson Cottage watercolour also discussed there remains unresolved.

⁴⁵³ Archer and others date it to 1806; the date of the dedication is 1803. Archer, *Literature*, 271.1, p. 698; Morley, p. 458, fn. 134.

⁴⁵⁴ James Randall, *Designs*, (London, 1803), Bodleian copy Vet. A6 .12.

⁴⁵⁵ Colvin, p. 843.

⁴⁵⁶ Edmund Bartell, *Hints for picturesque improvements in ornamented cottages*, (London, 1804), p. 19.

⁴⁵⁷ Archer, *Literature*, p. 310.

Smirke's unfinished set of *Specimens of Continental Architecture* (1806), which reproduces drawings made during his three years in Italy, but illustrates only Genoese *palazzini*. This was not his original intention, for he comments that Italian buildings of grander function tended to fall victim to the 'love of parade', and that only 'cottages' remain unsullied, assuring his readers that: 'several examples of this species of dwelling are given, as Italian cottages in particular are much admired for their picturesque effects',⁴⁵⁸ but this first and sole volume depicts only palaces and their interiors.

It seems that the earliest English pattern books containing original designs influenced by Italian village architecture must be those of Joseph Gandy (1771-1843), assistant to Sir John Soane from 1798. As already noted, Lukacher regards them as having incorporated observations of structures and landscape made during his three-year sojourn in Italy from 1795. Taking as an example a drawing of two elevations of farm buildings, Lukacher notes:

The elongated horizontality of these façades, along with the sleek rooflines, overhanging eaves, and strip fenestration, would be reincorporated directly into the 1805 pattern books.⁴⁵⁹

Gandy's pattern books, *Designs for Cottages, Farms and Other Rural Buildings* (dedicated to Thomas Hope) and *The Rural Architect*, were both published in 1805. While both books are primarily expositions of his philosophy that aesthetics and social utility were inextricably linked, they also demonstrate his ability to deconstruct what he saw and to reassemble the component parts into something more original: a cleaner, less associative or contextual form. The viewer sees shapes and conjunctions vaguely redolent of Italian vernacular buildings but, in most of the designs, stripped of detailing which might otherwise render them mere observational drawings. In *Designs* he shows a cottage with a pigeon house in the round tower, at Plate XXI; in both books he uses the label 'Italian', albeit sparingly: Plate XXXIII of the latter book for example shows a 'Double Cottage, containing each three

⁴⁵⁸ Preface.

⁴⁵⁹ Lukacher, p. 50.

rooms, after the Italian manner, and distributed so as to have a picturesque effect, rather than any uniformity'. More Italianate but described only as 'Picturesque' is the 'Dwelling on the sea coast designed for the retirement of a naval officer' at Plate XXXIII of *Rural Architect*, where he also shows a design labelled as 'an Inn' ('a dwelling for a farmer or it may serve for a Public-house') with a Claudean flavour at Plate XVII, again described merely as 'picturesque'. [5.3] Nash would without doubt have recognised Gandy's geometrical building blocks – the cube, the cylinder, the long low range counter-pointed by the tower – for these were the elements which he himself had combined with such originality at Cronkhill three years before.⁴⁶⁰ There is no evidence that Gandy was influenced by Cronkhill or Sandridge Park, but his designs, based on his field observations but synthesised into something more visionary, can be seen as constituting an early representation of Vernacular Italianate in the pattern books.

Robert Lugar, Edmund Aikin and John Buonarotti Papworth

The year 1805 is a significant one in this chronology, for in addition to Gandy's two books, and the depiction of Sandridge Park exhibited at the Royal Academy,⁴⁶¹ it also marks the next publication of an Italian-derived design, not only explicitly labelled as 'Italian', but followed shortly afterwards by a completed building and an exhibited depiction, all three under the hand of Robert Lugar. Lugar's *Architectural Sketches* appeared in 1805, the first of his four pattern books: his prefatory essay encouraged the architect to 'compose with a Painter's eye'.⁴⁶² Of particular interest is his Plate XXVIII, *An Italian Villa*, for which the plan appears at Plate XXVII. [5.4] By adding an octagonal three-storey belvedere tower to the neo-classical box shown at Plate XII he produces an effect very similar to that of Cronkhill and Sandridge Park in its counterpointing of shapes and roof pitches; the

⁴⁶⁰ Nash owned a copy of *Designs*: Evans, lot 333.

⁴⁶¹ See Chapter 4.

⁴⁶² See Chapter 2.

detailing, with broad eaves on twin brackets, and the round-headed windows (although not to ground level), also catch their spirit, and the canopied verandah at the foot of the tower echoes the Cronkhill loggia: Lugar tells us that the site has three fine prospects of which he wishes the house to take advantage. It is when we come to the plan that we see how his vision resonates with that of Nash, in employing rooms of varying shapes: the tower an irregular octagon serving as the drawing room, a rectangular dining room, and a circular breakfast room with internal alcoves, constructed from a structurally square room. A lower range containing the service wing is discreetly visible in the background. On paper, it certainly looks like a sibling of Cronkhill and Sandridge Park, and Lugar went on to build it as Gold Hill, later Dunstall Priory, in 1806, the design being exhibited at the Royal Academy that year.⁴⁶³ Clearly, Lugar, often thought of as a successor to Nash, was in fact playing with the same ideas contemporaneously. His *Country Gentleman's Architect*, for example, of 1807, contains a number of farmhouse designs of which one in particular (Plate 6) [5.5] is an asymmetrical Claudean design which brings to mind a farmhouse design in G.S. Repton's RIBA notebook;⁴⁶⁴ Lugar notes that 'the accommodations of this house are proper for a bailiff, who has a number of servants under his immediate care', which cannot but remind us of the intended occupant of Cronkhill, and 'calculated for a large establishment'.⁴⁶⁵ 'Lugar's built repertoire will be covered in more detail in the next section: his pattern books have been frequently cited in academic literature but he has been little studied and his contribution as an innovator and early contributor to the Italianate is surely under-rated.'⁴⁶⁶

After 1805, the flood of pattern books continued, but with the exception of Lugar no-one seems to have responded quickly to the Italianate gauntlet thrown down by Nash: many (and the cottage books in particular) debated 'Picturesqueness', but the villa debate was still

⁴⁶³ Under the title 'House at Gold hill, Shoreham, Kent': Graves, Vol. V, p. 112, exhibit 860.

⁴⁶⁴ The Repton farmhouse was discussed in Chapter 4 and illustrated at 4.45.

⁴⁶⁵ Robert Lugar, *The Country Gentleman's Architect*, (London, 1807), p. 5.

⁴⁶⁶ A suggestion that he was Nash's pupil is not yet substantiated and seems to be based on their both being in Carmarthen in 1796: Yallop, 'Robert Lugar', p. 160.

largely stuck in the narrow groove of Grecian versus Gothic. For William Pocock in 1807, ‘a Villa, something in the Italian manner’ meant simplified Palladianism;⁴⁶⁷ while to an unreformed Charles Busby, writing in his *Series of Designs for Villas..* of 1808, Italian architecture meant the villas and *palazzini* of the Renaissance, superseded and rivalled in England by the ‘genius’ of Jones; he praises the Greek Revival and pours scorn on ‘modern theorists and their irregular masses’.⁴⁶⁸

There is a glimmer of Claudean empathy in the 1808 volume of designs for villas published by Edmund Aikin, where he eschews Gothic for its ‘deception’ and advocates achieving ‘expression’, though not through ornament but by the variety of elevation and form. Aikin’s book, dedicated to Thomas Hope, for whom he had prepared final drawings for Hope’s book of furniture designs in 1807,⁴⁶⁹ is in the words of his preface: ‘an investigation of the style best adapted for the dwellings of the present times’.⁴⁷⁰ Aikin cogently argues that while uniformity is considered an essential part of beauty, it may be dispensed with for the sake of convenience of plan or to meet particular situations: ‘character and congruity’ are much more important.⁴⁷¹ He offers two asymmetrical designs, one of which is intended for a ‘romantic situation’: a low range is complemented by a tower.⁴⁷² He makes no claim that either of these designs is ‘Italian’ or ‘Italianate’, but his towered villa is remarkable not just for his fully-visualised elevation of a Claudean tower house in a romantic setting, but for his plan which corresponds uncannily to those of Cronkhill or Sandridge Park: a compact assembly of different geometrical figures. [5.6] He explains: ‘I have attempted that picturesque character which ... produced by a departure from the usual rules of uniformity, when neither fantastic nor affected, is perhaps better suited to a romantic situation.’ Aikin

⁴⁶⁷ William Pocock, *Architectural Designs for Rustic Cottages, Picturesque Dwellings, Villas &c.*, (London, 1807), Plates XXVIII and XXIX.

⁴⁶⁸ Charles Busby, *A series of Designs for villas and country houses*, (London, 1808), p. 12.

⁴⁶⁹ Colvin, p. 60.

⁴⁷⁰ Edmund Aikin, *Designs for Villas and other rural buildings*, (London, 1808), long title.

⁴⁷¹ Aikin, *Designs*, p. 14.

⁴⁷² Aikin, *Designs*, Plates XIV and XV.

may have been influenced in his perhaps unconsciously Vernacular Italianate style by his time with Hope. His limited output as architect rather than as draughtsman or architectural writer⁴⁷³ demonstrates if anything a penchant for Greek Revival; as far as can be ascertained no built evidence survives of his Claudean vision.

These are certainly straws in the wind but we then have to wait a decade before a further work appears of significance in the evolution of Vernacular Italianate. John Buonarotti Papworth's *Rural Residences* of 1818 represents a milestone in the dissemination of the style to a wider audience. Published in book form in 1818, the designs had already appeared individually in Ackermann's *Repository of the Arts* in the two preceding years. Papworth had already remarked in the *Repository* in 1813 that English had no equivalent term to indicate a building 'superior to the highest class of cottage', but 'below the importance of the villa'; he suggested borrowing the term 'Cassine' (which Soane had already done in his pattern book as early as 1778) from the Italians, whose 'buildings in the Campagna... were prepared for retirement from the scenes of splendour, state and ceremony'.⁴⁷⁴ Perhaps surprisingly in view of that, in his search for 'cheerfulness, comfort and a due proportion of elegance', the eclectic collection of designs in his book includes only one explicitly rustic Italianate building, in the form of his Plate XVII: 'A villa designed as the Residence of an Artist', which would be equally suitable as the residence of 'the man of literary study or the amateur of taste'.**[5.7]** Set in a dramatic Claudean landscape, he presents a principal block with shallow roof and loggia, offset by the square tower rising to the left of the connecting low range, the top of the belvedere tower with openings to the elements. He explicitly acknowledges the connection to Poussin and Claude, who had:

introduced forms of buildings in their compositions well suited to the poetic feeling obvious in their works; the feature is common to the countries in which they painted, but brought to a higher degree of elegant and judicious conformity with the chief subjects of their pencils than could be expected to

⁴⁷³ He died at the early age of 40: Colvin, pp. 60-1; Annette Peach, 'Edmund Aikin', in *ODNB*.

⁴⁷⁴ See Archer, *Literature*, p. 660.

exist in buildings generally erected without other considerations than such as merely related to fitness and conveniency.⁴⁷⁵

Papworth is therefore also acknowledging the element of artificiality and poetic licence in the models offered by the landscape masters. Aside from this, in his explanatory text he does not specifically refer to Italy or 'Italian' style at all, calling it instead 'the painter's style of buildings'. Papworth explains his goal of picturesque beauty united with utility, achieved through pleasing combinations of forms and varied effect of light and shadow. While his 'cottage orné' at Plate XIII is not obviously Italianate, we can recognise a Lugar/Nash treatment of the asymmetrical plan, employing a variety of geometrical shapes for individual rooms; the outline exerts a strong upward force through its verandah-ed tower which is reminiscent of Dunstall Priory. [5.8] Papworth intended his patterns to replace the 'ill-bestowed expense and tasteless absurdities .. offensive to true taste', exhibited by the 'mere cases of brick' which he observed in the new villas in the environs of London.⁴⁷⁶ His was not therefore a specifically Italianate agenda, as his book presents and argues for a more eclectic repertoire, but he evidences a loosening of form and a revival of interest in Claude and Poussin as picturesque architectural sources, over a decade after Knight's *Enquiry* and fifteen years after the building of Cronkhill. Contemporaneously, a scholarly volume of 1819 contains the first use in print of the term 'Romanesque' to describe *inter alia* the round-headed arch, grouped in pairs or arcaded, which was characteristic of early Christian architecture.⁴⁷⁷ The Reverend William Gunn, clergyman and antiquary, had made a study of Italian buildings to determine the origins of the gothic or pointed arch, and his *Inquiry into the Origin and Influence of Gothic Architecture*⁴⁷⁸ includes an illustration of a campanile which

⁴⁷⁵ Rudolph Ackermann (ed.), *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics*, 1st May 1817, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁶ Papworth, *Rural Residences*, pp. v-vi

⁴⁷⁷ Widely referenced: see, for example, Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, 1690-1820*, (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 251-2.

⁴⁷⁸ (London, 1819)

bears a resemblance to the more utilitarian drawings to be found later in Loudon's *Encyclopedia*.⁴⁷⁹ [5.9]

The late 1820s: Vernacular Italianate comes of age

Papworth's lone swallow did not make a summer and it was to be another five or ten years before others joined him in committing rustic Italianate ideas to print, but a quartet of names finally did so in the late 1820s: Hunt, Parker, Meason, and Robinson. Their texts are widely cited today as pivotal in the promotion of Vernacular Italianate, and have come to be regarded as canonical;⁴⁸⁰ their popular reception and subsequent influence are undeniable, yet a close reading of them displays that a degree of confusion and stylistic incoherence remained to be resolved.

In Hunt's earlier work, *Half a Dozen Hints on picturesque domestic architecture* of 1825, he had dismissed as unsuitable to our native scenery the Italian (by which he meant Palladian) Villa. Two years later he introduced his new volume, *Architettura Campestre*, on a perverse premise, explaining that he was merely bowing to the wishes of his patrons and that:

in the event of succeeding in my object of illustrating the character of modern or Italian Architecture, as applied to simple domestic structures, I shall do little more than render manifest its inferiority to that beautiful and appropriate style miscalled Gothic.⁴⁸¹

Despite the promise in the full title of 'simple and economical forms in the *modern or Italian style*' he neglects to discuss Italian rural architecture at all in his rambling historical introduction, other than to praise the 'picturesque' qualities of Italian tiles as a roofing material, leaving us to study the plates with their meagre notes to try to discern some sort of rationale behind his interpretation. It is true that there are many details which by this period seem to have become widely recognised as essential to the Italianate, some of which are

⁴⁷⁹ See for example, fig. 1694.

⁴⁸⁰ See for example Macarthur, p. 149.

⁴⁸¹ Hunt, *Architettura Campestre: displayed in Lodges, Garden-Houses and other buildings*, (London, 1827), p. v.

discussed within: the roof tiles, for example; or the *campanile*: ‘the prospect tower is a noble object to look at and a gratifying and instructive position to look from’. Some, such as the overhanging eaves supported by brackets, and round-headed windows, are employed without explanation; he concedes without further explanation for its inclusion that the thatched cottage depicted in Plate II is ‘not strictly Italian’.

The most obvious Claudean reference is Plate IX, a ‘prospect tower, garden-seat etc.’, composed of two unequal square towers, one with an open loggia, with an arched recess for seating below, a tiled roof, and an arcade of three slim round-headed windows on the ground floor. [5.10] Its perspective is awkwardly framed, and while all of the Campagna-derived elements are present it lacks charm; although Loudon, in reviewing the book, praised its elevation as ‘bold, striking and picturesque’, while criticising its lack of practicality.⁴⁸² His more formal houses seem ill at ease in this self-styled rustic idiom: Plate XI shows ‘a small villa’, symmetrical but with twin belvederes and a linking colonnade, succinctly commended as ‘handsome’ by Loudon [5.11]; and Plate XII, the ‘Casino ... adapted for the residence of a gentleman’, bears more than a passing resemblance to an antique Roman villa, with entrance portico, pilasters, and square-headed windows with stone balconies. Even Loudon feels that the elevation is ‘symmetrical, but to our taste rather formal or deficient in variety for the Italian style’. His villas are less Claudean than his estate buildings: his ‘Gate-Lodge’, Plate III, although simple is significant in ‘introducing the *campanile*, a peculiar feature in Italian architecture, with a *loggetta* [sic]. ... The *campaniles* are so identified with Italian scenery that we scarcely recognise any landscape of that interesting country as complete without them.’ [5.12]⁴⁸³ Equally significant is the identification in his long title, pointed out above, of ‘modern’ with ‘Italian’ style. The book was popular, running to a second edition in 1844, and Loudon’s doubts about the prospect tower did not prevent

⁴⁸² *Gardener’s Magazine*, Vol. 4, 1828, pp. 43-7.

⁴⁸³ Compare the Tuscan *casa colonica* illustrated at 3.18a.

its later physical appearance in identical form as an entrance lodge at Alton Towers.⁴⁸⁴ The conclusion must be that Hunt's book did little to maintain the integrity of Nash's Claudean style, but did succeed in raising the consciousness of the Italianate as an acceptable picturesque idiom among a wider public, or at least among the builder-speculators, and helping to fix in their collective minds some specific and identifiable characteristics.

When P.F. Robinson published his *Designs for Ornamental Villas* in 1827, the same year as Hunt's book, it is clear that he regarded Italian influences as well established in the repertoire, and expected his audience to be similarly *au fait* with both style and terminology. He hedges his bets by offering three different examples, sprinkled among the Swiss, Old English, Castellated and Anglo-Norman: 'Palladian', 'modern Italian', and 'Tuscan'. His Design IV is 'Palladian': he refers both to Claude's painting of an Italian port⁴⁸⁵ and Burlington's 'Casino' at Chiswick. He unashamedly claims that 'all the arrangement of an Italian palace is present to the imagination' and unites an 'air of comfort with magnificence'; he pre-empted objections that it is too grand to be called a villa by pleading that 'the spread of plan peculiar to Palladian Architecture' exaggerates its modest scale. His 'residence in the modern Italian style' (Design VIII) is a wholeheartedly Renaissance palazzo, symmetrical in plan and elevation, snatched up from the banks of the Arno or the Brenta and, externally at least, set down unchanged in Ireland.⁴⁸⁶ [5.13] It is illuminating that in his description he complains that: 'Buildings in this style of architecture have of late years been erected as Villas in various parts of the kingdom, each a servile copy of its neighbour, and it is difficult to create new features, and produce variety in a worn out subject.' But he goes on to commend as his own, presumably superior, source for this design: 'that city of palaces "Genoa la Superba"⁴⁸⁷ (echoing Smirke's enthusiasm voiced some twenty-one years earlier).

⁴⁸⁴ See Chapter 6.

⁴⁸⁵ Claude: *A Seaport*, c.1644, London, National Gallery, NG5.

⁴⁸⁶ Robinson does not disclose where.

⁴⁸⁷ Robinson, *Designs for Ornamental Villas*, (London, 1827); reference are to the 3rd edition, 1836; p. 24.

Robinson's palazzo is imitative, there is not a hint of stylistic fusion or adaptation and it is firmly in the camp of Barry rather than Nash. By contrast, his Design XVI, 'For a residence in the style of building in 'Tuscany'', his description of which begins with a quotation from Grandjean and Famin's *Architecture Toscane* of 1806, (to which Parker was also later to refer in his *Villa Rustica*) at last shows some picturesque feel in his use of an Italian source. [5.14]

The adjective 'Tuscan' is interesting, for in the early nineteenth century it carried a wide variety of meanings ranging from the simplest and most rustic of the orders to an entire palazzo (rather than rustic) style.⁴⁸⁸ In the 1825 re-issue of Chambers' *Treatise on Civil Architecture*, Gwilt as editor added an introduction in which he praised 'the Tuscan school' for its adaptability, by which he signified a specific palazzo form.⁴⁸⁹ Robinson, who had travelled in Italy and Switzerland, unlike Hunt, presents a design for an asymmetrical house with a campanile topped by an open loggia, on the scale of a large villa and intended for a rural location. Price and Knight were continuing to cast their long shadow, for Robinson refers back to them by name and stresses the importance of the union of house and setting and the need for the architect to become the '*Architetto-pittore*'.⁴⁹⁰ By contrast, in 1830 Robinson presented a more identifiably Claudian vernacular approach in his book *Designs for Farm Buildings*, in which he showed how picturesque principles could fittingly be employed in the design of agricultural buildings. He illustrates the same functional buildings, such as a barn, granary, or farmhouse, in each of four basic styles: Old English, Italian, Swiss and Rustic, and his Italian models, such as the low barn with a tall campanile (for a dovecote) prefigure suburban housing much more closely than his palazzo examples. [5.15]

John George Jackson's publication of 1828, *Designs for villas, on a moderate scale of expense; adapted to the vicinity of the metropolis, or large towns*, is a notable early attempt to meet the need

⁴⁸⁸ James Elmes, *A general and bibliographical dictionary of the fine arts*, (London, 1826), entry under 'Architecture: III Domestic', pages unnumbered.

⁴⁸⁹ Quoted in Morley, p. 155.

⁴⁹⁰ Robinson, *Designs*, p. 29.

for modified designs for the growing suburbs.⁴⁹¹ He comments on the specific requirements and constraints on designs for villas on a more modest scale, and implicitly on a smaller site, explaining that they required ‘elegance of appearance and a compact arrangement’ and that ‘The Grecian and Italian styles are chosen as most suited to edifices of this class’, as they lent ‘light and cheerful features’, but ‘the elevations have been studied more with regard to picturesque effects than strictly architectural character’.⁴⁹² As a pupil of Robinson it is unsurprising that Jackson should have seized upon the flexibility of plan afforded by asymmetry. He does not label any of the six designs Italianate but his commentary introduces the notion of ‘Italian Villa architecture’. His Design V for example is irregular Italianate, although with some palazzo-like details such as the balustraded balconies; there is an octagonal tower at one end of the range, echoing Lugar’s design some twenty or so years before. Jackson explains that

this style of elevation is adapted for a bold and rocky country, and the octagonal tower would form a conspicuous object in Coast Scenery. The Balconies and awning are introduced as component parts of Italian Villa architecture, producing by the aid of light and shadow much picturesque effect, and from the shelter they contribute, well calculated for exposed situations.⁴⁹³

Despite this widespread evidence of recognition and enthusiasm, it should not be assumed that Italianate, in any of its forms, had become a universal component of every book of villa designs. In 1827 James Thomson published *Retreats: a series of designs, consisting of plans and elevations for cottages, villas, and ornamental buildings*. This shows villas in the styles of the three orders as well as Gothic but the Italian or Italianate is, without explanation, conspicuous by its absence; a surprising omission for a pupil of Papworth.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ The word suburb is not actually used by Jackson and does not appear in this context until Loudon’s second major compendium, *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, of 1838.

⁴⁹² John George Jackson, *Designs for Villas....* (London, 1828-9), Bodleian copy: 173.h.58, ‘Address’ (not paginated).

⁴⁹³ Jackson, *Designs*, text to Design V.

⁴⁹⁴ Archer, *Literature*, p. 813.

Gilbert Laing Meason and *Landscape Architecture*

A frequently-referenced work in the early nineteenth-century pattern books, and in any subsequent commentary on the development both of Italianate architecture and of the Picturesque aesthetic, is not by an architect at all but by an antiquarian, Gilbert Laing Meason. In 1828 this Scottish man of letters published an unusual book entitled *On the Landscape Architecture of the Great Painters of Italy*.⁴⁹⁵ Meason's argument was that contemporary English domestic architecture was floundering in its search for expression: the beauty of Burlington's 'pure Palladian' had been discarded in favour first by 'Italian decorated', by which he meant the 'Roman style in which the Adam brothers excelled', and then by the 'wretched Grecian', with its 'tasteless heavy cubes... the most clumsy mass of masonry that any country ever produced'; and in any event Meason considered 'the Grecian quite out of place for a country residence'.⁴⁹⁶ He added that the subsequent Gothic (both castellated and priory) style was unintelligible and incongruous, and therefore 'at a stand'. He believed that into this stylistic void would step the 'irregular country house'.⁴⁹⁷ This leads him into his underlying aim: to recommend a close study of the works of the painters of Italian Landscape to provide models for the picturesque style of architecture, cautioning that the formal buildings placed in the foreground of many such paintings should be disregarded as models in favour of what he calls the 'incidental architecture' which they depict.⁴⁹⁸ He states that 'this work has originated from the observations of Mr. Payne Knight', and quoting at length from Knight's *Analytical Enquiry* he reminds the reader of the latter's commendation of 'irregular and picturesque houses in that mixed style which characterises the buildings of Claude and the Poussins..'⁴⁹⁹ And Meason goes one stage further by reproducing a series of lithographs commissioned by him which lift the buildings out of their background in the

⁴⁹⁵ Gilbert Laing Meason, *On the Landscape Architecture of the Great Painters of Italy*, (London, 1828).

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-9.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

original works by Poussin, Claude, Domenichino, Raphael, Titian and even Michelangelo and re-present them in greater detail as pictures in their own right; the collection runs to nearly sixty plates. [5.16] Meason is careful to avoid coining a specific name for this style, referred to throughout as ‘irregular’, and echoing Knight in stressing its ‘mixed’ character as a consequence of historical accretion:

If we may judge of this incidental architecture of the great painters of Italy, we cannot pronounce it either Grecian, or Roman, or Gothic. It is evidently of different periods, fortuitously formed by additions made either to a tower, or to ranges of sub-constructions of an earlier date, as suited the convenience or habits of the owners. Its picturesque effect is produced by contrast and disposition of large broad masses and extended lines .. in the outline against the sky there is a balanced variety.⁵⁰⁰

A small but important rider is almost hidden away: ‘It is almost needless to add that what has been said of this irregular style applies entirely to country residences. In city architecture, the Grecian, the Roman, the Italian and the Tuscan, can alone be employed’.⁵⁰¹

How significant was Meason’s book for the subsequent development of Vernacular Italianate in Britain? Despite appearing as a very limited edition of 150 copies, of which 100 were intended for sale, it received at least one extended and highly approbatory review, in the *London Literary Gazette*, an eightpenny weekly, in August 1828.⁵⁰² It is easy to dismiss the book as the work of a dilettante, yet it represented perhaps the most integrated discussion of the Picturesque aesthetic, its Italian landscape provenance, and its practical application to British architecture to have appeared since Knight’s own essay. What is significant about Meason is that he approaches the subject from a different angle: not as a crowd-pleasing jobbing architect setting out his stall for prospective clients and patrons, but from the standpoint of an antiquarian and educated man of taste. From his amateur, disinterested standpoint he too believed that Vernacular Italianate caught the mood of the moment. We must assume that Meason was well informed about the contemporary architectural scene

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., p. 77.

⁵⁰² *The London Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences &c.*, No. 602, August 2, 1828, pp. 481-2.

(although Nash's Claudian trio go, as ever, unremarked in his writing), but it is surprising that Meason felt the need to recall Knight's words in such precise detail, and so long – some twenty-three years - after the event. The apparent need for such a reminder is underscored by the reviewer's praise for Meason's 'taking up ..architecture in a very novel manner'. Opinion remains divided over Meason's legacy. David Watkin describes the book as 'one of the central documents of the whole picturesque period';⁵⁰³ Archer is more circumspect: 'He addressed matters of interest and importance to British architects of the 1820s yet his influence remained modest. Many mid-nineteenth century suburbs .. could boast tower houses and Italianate villas, but these designs were inspired less by Meason than by such prominent executed examples as the Tower House in Park Village West or Osborne'.⁵⁰⁴ Meeks accords Meason rather more significance, bracketing him together with Clochar and Charles Parker as authors of three landmark sources.⁵⁰⁵ What is beyond question is Meason's direct influence on Loudon, for the latter quotes him at length in his *Encyclopedia*, to which we will return below.

The 1830s and Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica*

The 1830s saw the publication of a large number of villa books, although in the context of Italianate style not all of even quality, nor consistency of interpretation, or of terminology. Consulting Robert Wetten's book, published in 1830, *Designs for villas in the Italian style of architecture*, in search of a contemporary appraisal of Vernacular Italianate will lead only to disappointment, for his recommended model is the ancient Roman villa, on which he heaps praise: 'no soft persuasive to ease and pleasure seems to have been wanting within its extended circuit'; they represented 'a complete dominion of nature and art'. Wetten's designs nod towards the Picturesque in their free composition but his distinctly antique and

⁵⁰³ Watkin, *Vision*, p. 130.

⁵⁰⁴ Archer, *Literature*, p. 559.

⁵⁰⁵ Meeks, 'Henry Austin', pp. 145-9.

mostly symmetrical elevations, ornamented with features such as porticos and pediments reveal only that when it came to concepts of Italian-ness, terminology remained ambiguous, or at the least fluid.⁵⁰⁶ Edward Trendall's 1831 *Original designs for Cottages and Villas in the Grecian, Gothic and Italian styles of Architecture* echoed Jackson's earlier work in taking as its particular theme the use of these styles in an urban setting, again acknowledging the changing demographics of the newly-expanding towns and their burgeoning middle-class suburbs which demanded a new architectural response: 'The several designs are adapted to the environs of the metropolis and large towns..' He shows 'A double cottage in the Italian style', with a pilastered portico, and with paired brackets to the eaves; and two 'Italian villas', each symmetrical, their round-headed windows and balconies more of a nod to the palazzo rather than the Campagna (as Meason had indeed recommended for the town). [5.17]

A more accomplished work was Francis Goodwin's *Domestic Architecture ... in the Grecian, Italian and Old English styles*, published in 1833 with a second volume the following year. Goodwin noted that 'the pictorial sentiment is rekindled',⁵⁰⁷ and advises that for domestic architecture, 'the Greek, Roman and Italian styles are universally admitted to be appropriate.'⁵⁰⁸ He remarks that he has introduced 'designs for small elegant villas in the Italian style' in response to the 'modern custom of erecting dwelling houses on a scale suited to limited establishments'; the 'regularity' of the Italian style 'admits abundant internal arrangements'. Other than that the author of the text is silent on the exact nature of Italian characteristics. The 'Italian Villa' in Design 13 of the first volume is suited he believes to the scenery of the Lake District or romantic parts of Derbyshire, or further north, as 'innumerable sites are afforded in these districts ... of similar character to the compositions

⁵⁰⁶ Wetten's pattern book was nevertheless specifically commended by the Accademia delle Belle Arti of Florence on his election to that body in 1831: Salmon, 'Academies', p. 91, fn. 74 and Fig. 9.

⁵⁰⁷ The text is by W.H. Leeds: Archer, *Literature*, p.360. Loudon reviewed the second volume at length in his *Architectural Magazine*, Vol. 1, 1834, where he declared the hunting lodge 'very handsome', but complained that the Anglo-Italian villa 'rose abruptly from the ground' and had no connection with the landscape: p. 134.

⁵⁰⁸ Except for parsonages where a cottage style, blended with a mediaeval style, was more appropriate: Vol. I, Design 5.

of the celebrated landscape painters of Italy.. in which the Italian villa is so frequently and so congenially introduced.⁵⁰⁹ He is happy to acknowledge his inspiration, but gives no further stylistic commentary. This villa is indeed asymmetrical, and a debt to Italy is recognisable in the two differently-sized towers with their Romanesque arcades, and the balconies to the windows. **[5.18]** The external finish seems a matter of stylistic indifference to him, for he quotes alternative prices either for brick and stucco, or for ashlar on the principal facades.

In his second volume, his 'Hunting lodge or villa in the Italian style' is a pictorial essay.

[5.19] The design shows a trio of round headed windows and a Bargello-like tower with an external balcony, with a whimsical accompanying note:

there is what we sometimes meet with in plain buildings as well as in plain women – a certain piquancy of expression – which if it does not entitle them to be called beautiful, at least prevents our applying to them any deprecating epithet. Much of this quality arises here from the manner in which the different masses are made to relieve each other ... strength below... lightness above, which latter is greatly enhanced by the slender tower ... a kind of aerial boudoir.⁵¹⁰

It seems to have been a model for an 1834 perspective of an Italian villa by E.H.

Browne.⁵¹¹ **[5.20]** Goodwin advises (or at least W.H. Leeds does) that, in designing farmhouses, should Old English not be the desired style, the choice should be:

the Italian – not the Palladian, but that which effects porches and turrets rather than porticoes, and projecting roofs rather than entablatures.... and by the licence it allows as well by dispensing with regularity, would afford nearly equal facilities to the architect, although it would hardly be so generally pleasing.. as something more strictly English.⁵¹²

That some terminological confusion (or latitude) exists in Goodwin's mind is borne out by his description of Design 17, a villa in 'modern Anglo-Italian' style. Symmetrical and lacking in Picturesque variations of light and shade, Goodwin claims nevertheless claims that it 'is a style which tolerates many freedoms', adding that:

⁵⁰⁹ Goodwin, Vol. I, p. 39.

⁵¹⁰ Goodwin, Vol. I, p. 4.

⁵¹¹ RIBA Coll. SC8/1 (7).

⁵¹² Goodwin, Vol. I, p. 2.

it affects a certain unconstrained liveliness, tending towards the fanciful if not the frivolous.. which is far from being out of place where cheerfulness is the quality principally aimed at. In these respects it forms a striking antithesis to the Palladian-Italian.... Features contributing .. include lofty windows descending to the ground... virandas ...porches and loggias rather than porticoes. [5.21]

This mode is Palatial rather than rustic; it is not clear to what extent Leeds's choice of the term Anglo-Italian for this design as opposed to the 'Italian villa' for the hunting lodge, is a conscious and therefore significant distinction.

Whether this decade also represented the summit of achievement in terms of built examples of the Italianate is of course a wholly different question which will be considered in the chapters which follow, but in terms of the Italianate design in print, amid the throng of authors two stand out as its most effective exponents, although the nature of their respective contributions was very different. Charles Parker, whose *Villa Rustica* of 1832 was perhaps the high point in purist interpretation, was the more observationally-based and rigorous in his attributions. By contrast the approach of John Claudius Loudon was pragmatic and commercial, for his *Encyclopedia* of 1833 was an eclectic tutorial for the popular market; while it offered a gamut of styles it nevertheless afforded rustic Italianate a favoured place in the repertoire.

Parker, a pupil of Wyattville,⁵¹³ had toured Italy, observing and recording both landscape and sites of antiquities around Rome, and he issued his drawings and accompanying commentary in three collections in 1832, 1833 and 1841, the last consisting exclusively of designs for schools. On the title page of the first volume he quotes directly from Meason: 'for domestic application the Italian [School] is decidedly more useful, and within the reach of our habits and comforts'.⁵¹⁴ Its full title, *Villa Rustica, selected from Buildings and Scenes in the vicinity of Rome and Florence, and arranged for lodges and domestic dwellings with plans and details*, shows his intention of combining accurate observation of historical sites (in Hitchcock's

⁵¹³ Colvin, p. 780.

⁵¹⁴ References are to the Bodleian copy, 2.Delta.290.

view representative of the ‘archaeologically-minded 1830s’),⁵¹⁵ with practical application to meet contemporary demand. He presents his designs as buildings in a landscape, accompanied by careful topographical descriptions of each building which he had taken as his model. He comments in his preface that throughout Italy, but especially in the environs of Rome and Florence: ‘there exist a great number of habitations, which under vary natural forms, produce many pleasing varieties, combining picturesqueness and symmetry without disorder or monotony’. He goes on to explain why he believes that his book is necessary:

Although on the continent collections [of drawings of Italian buildings] have been made and published, by Percier and Fontaine, Famin and Grandjean, Clochar, Gautier and Schuelt [sic], they are generally confined to palaces, and pass by or omit the humbler class of dwelling.⁵¹⁶

Finally he explains that in the tripartite, classical Roman classification, the Villa Rustica was taken to include not the apartments for the family (the Villa Urbana) but the stables, accommodation for servants, and ancillary buildings, and therefore ‘the name formerly applied to the class of buildings here treated of has been retained’.

Parker’s work is thorough and considered. He depicts buildings in their settings, describing their original location and function, as well as the intended function of his own design, with dimensions and plan: ‘this subject was attached to the .. Villa Borghese and is arranged for a gamekeeper’s dwelling... ’ [Plates XX-XXII]. **[5.22]** He also devotes pages to drawings of specific details such as chimneys, roof tiles, and campaniles:

Pliny mentions that in every villa there was a tower ... the peculiar form of the modern campanile is so identified with Italian scenery that without it we scarcely recognise any landscape as complete’.⁵¹⁷ ‘The chimneys and rafters’ feet under the projecting eaves are features of considerable importance in Italian architecture.’⁵¹⁸ **[5.23]**

⁵¹⁵ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 31.

⁵¹⁶ It is the same distinction which Pérouse de Montclos makes between ‘*modèles savants*’ and ‘*modèles populaires*’: see Introduction.

⁵¹⁷ Parker, Book 1, pl. IX-XI. Here he is repeating, if not plagiarising, Hunt’s words in the letter’s *Architettura Campestre*: see above.

⁵¹⁸ Parker, Book 1, pl. XXIII and XXIV.

Parker's approach is at once more scholarly and more pragmatic than that taken by many of his contemporaries. He presents meticulously observed actual models, romantically depicted, alongside his translation of them into workable designs for small houses, complete with plans: by presenting the historical and practical elements side by side he enhances their appeal. In his second volume in 1833 that he asserts that 'Architecture purely Italian has yet scarcely been attempted in this country',⁵¹⁹ which is a surprising statement. But his missionary zeal is clear: Hitchcock is surely a little harsh in describing him as 'the poor man's Barry', but he is closer to the mark when, damning with faint praise, he judges that Parker would have been recognised 'as 'the Pugin of the Italian villa mode' had he done more actual building of consequence'.⁵²⁰

The apotheosis of the pattern book: Loudon's *Encyclopedia*

If Parker had a proselytising passion for the rustic Italian style, John Claudius Loudon was of a much broader church. His *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, first published in 1833, was, at over eleven hundred pages and two thousand engravings, an ambitious undertaking from which Loudon's boundless self-confidence did not shrink. Believing that the 'science and rules of Domestic Architecture' had thus far been confined to Architects, he wished to open up the subject to the 'public'. Loudon clearly saw himself as an educator, with a duty to put before his audience both forms and ideas of which they could not be expected, without assistance, to be aware:

It will not only enable those who wish .. to build .. to express more clearly to the Architect.. those wants which they already have, but it will elicit new ones of which they previously had no idea and which the Architect and the builder.. will be called upon to supply.⁵²¹

The tripartite hierarchy of buildings which he addresses, all of which are rural, is crowned by:

⁵¹⁹ Parker, Book 2, text to pl. XLIX-LII.

⁵²⁰ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, pp. 93 and 426.

⁵²¹ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, Preface.

the villa or country house of an English gentleman of wealth and refinement. We have fixed on the English villa as combining more of the comforts and luxuries of life than the villa of a man of wealth and taste in any other country in the world.⁵²²

As befits its intended popular audience, it is organised as a catalogue rather than a textbook, in that many of his theoretical discussions of architectural style are found in the form of commentary to specific designs. It would be misleading to suggest that he advocated Vernacular Italianate for villa design at the expense of all others, but the style is privileged by Loudon: within his stylistic cornucopia Italianderived styles, mostly vernacular but occasionally palatial, occur frequently in both descriptive text and drawings, and both in detailing (such as the by now familiar chimneys, bell towers, eaves and tiles) and in overall design. It is when he moves to a discussion of the general principles of villa design in his Book III that he nails his colours firmly to the Picturesque, if not wholly Italianate, mast, taking Meason as his principal mentor and guide, and quoting him by way of introduction: ‘Our parks may be beautiful and our mansions faultless in design, but nothing is more rare than to see them properly connected.’⁵²³ Loudon’s justification for the appropriateness of the Italianate style for country villas rests in part on the qualities of association, a facet of aesthetic theory which had been acknowledged for at least a century:

An Italian villa has its interesting associations, and though these associations can never be so generally agreeable to a native of Britain as those raised up by the forms of Gothic Architecture, yet still they are recognised in such a manner as to excite emotion, from their frequent recurrence in the landscapes of the great artists of Italy.⁵²⁴

He does however concede that in matters of ‘Accommodation, Comfort and Convenience ... the Grecian, Gothic and Italian styles are altogether equal’. He goes on to mention Price, Knight, Hope and Meason as the principal proponents of the case for ‘Irregularity of the

⁵²² Ibid., p. 6.

⁵²³ Ibid., p. 763, para. 1622.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 774, para. 1653.

style of Villas⁵²⁵ after which introduction he quotes from Meason's book at length, reproducing, apparently with Meason's blessing,⁵²⁶ no less than fourteen of the latter's illustrations. He describes Thomas Hope's Deepdene, in Surrey,⁵²⁷ built on a scale and with a degree of opulence to which his audience could never directly aspire, as 'one of the finest examples in England of an Italian villa, united with the grounds by architectural appendages'; he nevertheless provides three views of it 'as graphic illustrations of the principles we have endeavoured to lay down'.⁵²⁸

The 'Anglo-Italian villa' (paras. 1753-6) has more of the flavour of an amended classical box than of any rusticity: of modest size, it is asymmetrical and ornamented with an octagonal tower attached by a low range; but here the tower contains stables with a hayloft over rather than living space. **[5.24]** By contrast the 'Italian Villa on a considerable scale' (paras. 1911 to 1922) is a very different animal, for this is a massive Renaissance palazzo with projecting wings forming a formal and monumental courtyard 'to be flagged with stones of irregular form as in the streets of Florence and Pompeii'. **[5.25]** Loudon's use of terminology, assuming it to be considered and deliberate, is interesting, in that the larger villa, imitative of the palazzo, is described as Italian, whereas the smaller house which displays the Italianate features which we now recognise as derived rather than imitative, is described as Anglo-Italian, a significant distinction. The design for the palazzo originated from one 'Robert Mallet, an amateur architect of great taste'⁵²⁹, but the detailed drawings were provided by E.B. Lamb who, according to Loudon, possessed a 'thorough knowledge of the Italian villa style' and 'is an artist of first-rate merit in this style'.⁵³⁰ Lamb is allowed to give his own

⁵²⁵ Ibid., para. 1656.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., para. 1662.

⁵²⁷ The Deepdene will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., para. 1668.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., para. 1911. Mallet (1810-81) was primarily an engineer: see entry at www.dia.ie [accessed 20 October 2014].

⁵³⁰ Ibid., para. 1933. Edward Buckton Lamb (1806-69) was widely known for his 'wilful' Gothic designs: *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, www.scottisharchitects.org.uk [accessed 20 October 2014].

observations, in what must be the most detailed design statement for the Italianate villa to have appeared in this period:

The villa architecture of Italy is characterised...when on a moderate scale, by scattered irregular masses, great contrasts of light and shade, broken and plain surfaces, and great variety of outline against the sky. The blank wall on which the eye reposes; the towering campanile, boldly contrasted with the horizontal line of roof only broken by a few straggling chimney tops; the row of equal-sized closely placed windows, contrasting with the plain space and single window of the projecting balcony; the prominent portico, the continued arcade, the terraces and the variously-formed and disposed out-buildings all combine to form that picturesque whole which distinguishes the modern Italian villa from any other.⁵³¹

Among Loudon's 'Miscellaneous designs for villas in various styles' are a site plan, an interior plan and an elevation for 'A small villa or parsonage in the Italian style', (Design IX, his fig.1497) with details and motifs including round-headed Romanesque windows, a square three-storey belvedere tower with pyramidal roof, and an external terrace with a verandah. [5.26] The plan is asymmetrical, with a drawing room of internally curved walls with inset niches, resembling Nash's interior treatment at Sandridge Park and Cronkhill as well as Lugar's work. Generous terraces connect the house directly with the gardens, and Loudon describes the rationale for his design of service areas and ancillary buildings, and its intended Picturesque location. In Loudon's words, 'The effect of the tower is excellent.'⁵³² In the *Supplement to the Encyclopedia*, Lamb provides Design III in the 'Cottage villas and villas' section: 'A small Villa in the modern style'. [5.27] Similar in some ways to Loudon's villa, it is a composite of a number of square or rectangular elements, but arranged around a central staircase so that they are all offset from each other, this plan producing exterior elevations of great irregularity. The three-storey, pyramidal-roofed tower is centrally placed over the staircase, which is 'lighted from the tower'.⁵³³ Lamb does not comment on its style or appearance, dismissing the whole in two short paragraphs, and there is no suggestion of any Italianate provenance. Yet it is significant because, together with Loudon's 'Design IX',

⁵³¹ Ibid., para. 1919.

⁵³² Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, para. 1775.

⁵³³ John Claudius Loudon, *First Additional Supplement to the Encyclopedia*, (London, 1842), para. 2355.

it represents what was to become one of the recognisable and normative templates for the smaller detached Vernacular Italianate house for the next three decades.⁵³⁴

Loudon does not confine the application of Italianate design to villas, for there is also a cottage design [5.28] and in case of doubt, he adds helpfully: ‘those who have viewed the buildings of Europe .. or have studied the cottage buildings in the pictures of the Italian landscape painters ... will agree that it seems to belong to the Italian style’; there is also a school, and an inn, by Lamb.⁵³⁵ He also specifies details, providing sketches of round-headed arcaded windows and campaniles, and explaining their aesthetic effect.⁵³⁶ Loudon has another bite at the cherry in 1838 in his *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, with architectural illustrations once again mostly by Lamb. His ‘Double detached house in the Italian style’ is an asymmetrical plan rendered a symmetrical whole by placing two as an attached pair, an important signpost prefiguring the shape of suburban things to come.⁵³⁷

[5.29] Lamb’s ‘Suburban villa with the House in the Italian style’⁵³⁸ is another compact villa with octagonal belvedere tower, somewhat resembling the tower house in Park Village West.

[5.30] In the design of entrance lodges Loudon compares two designs by Lamb with two by Hunt (in *Architettura Campestre*) and one by Edward Brigden, repeating the complaint that Hunt ‘displays great taste in the elevations but not sufficient attention to comfort and accommodation’, which he had already voiced in his review of Hunt’s book at the time of publication.⁵³⁹ In the same article, Loudon gives a further hint of his idea of the Italianate, for of Hunt’s Casino (Plate XII), he remarks that ‘the elevation is symmetrical, but to our taste rather formal or deficient in variety for the Italian style’.⁵⁴⁰ Hidden in the middle of the

Encyclopedia, we find Loudon’s most succinct opinion: ‘The *modern Italian Style of Architecture*,

⁵³⁴ It will be referred to later in the text simply as ‘Loudon’s Design IX’.

⁵³⁵ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, paras. 1605-6.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 1927-32.

⁵³⁷ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, figs. 118-9.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

⁵³⁹ *The Gardener’s Magazine*, Vol. 4, April 1828, pp. 43-7.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

the characteristics of which may be given in two words – painter-like effect – has in this country the recommendation of novelty; a quality which always makes a strong impression on the general observer. It is not however a style which can be trusted in the hands of any architect not a master of composition.⁵⁴¹

Italianate for all

By 1840 the pattern books evidence that in broad terms the Picturesque was not merely mature but over-ripe, its once-vibrant eclecticism tipping over into stylistic formulae in a catalogue, often bereft of commentary or context. Two books in particular suggest that, along with other exotic styles, nearly forty years after Cronkhill an indeterminate, Italian-derived idiom had been fully recognised and admitted to the Pantheon of styles, but one which at the same time been reduced to a bare template, shorn of its intellectual provenance, a world away from Nash's Claudean elegance and with no necessary connection with landscape. But notably both books also confirm its explicit acceptance as something more fundamental, for villa designs are unambiguously labelled 'Anglo-Italian' and while this was not, as we have seen, the first time which this had appeared in the literature, here the authors were laying claim to it as a new national style. These volumes were George Wightwick's *Palace of Architecture* of 1840, and Richard Brown's *Domestic Architecture* of 1841.

Wightwick set out in his book to 'promote a just appreciation of architecture in the minds of all who are susceptible of the Beautiful, the Poetical, and the Romantic'. But as already noted it is no arid textbook: subtitled '*A Romance of Art and History*', it is a whimsical account, addressed directly to the reader, of a journey through an imaginary landscape which exhibits a multitude of architectural styles. The ultimate goal of the journey ('the conclusion of your educational pilgrimage') is the 'Anglo-Italian' villa. The villa describes itself in the first person: it occupies an elevated site with a prospect tower commanding a panoramic view of

⁵⁴¹ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, para. 1933.

the domain; overhanging roofs protect the walls from rain and the bedchambers from weather and external noise. [5.31] ‘The required shape and arrangement of my rooms prevented uniformity in my east and south fronts respectively, but in the angular view which includes these fronts is seen a uniform composition of which my tower forms the centre’. Nodding in the direction of the Picturesque quality of ‘surprise’, he adds: ‘I pride myself on the variety of effects which successively present themselves as you walk around me.’ Finally, the villa explains its provenance:

As to my style, it is not pointed Gothic because the necessary form and construction of my roof and windows obstinately decline it. It is not Roman, because all my details are Greek. It is not Athenian, because I have arch-headed openings and a Tuscan roof. What am I then but an English mansion adapted to my locality and to the climate and customs of my country? Taking my arrangements from my owner, my leading external features from modern Italy, and my complexion from fair Greece?⁵⁴²

Wightwick’s observations of architectural details were derived from his own travels in Italy rather than second-hand pattern book gleanings, and his remarks on the qualities of irregularity and surprise demonstrate Picturesque orthodoxy. These combine in his design, and underpin his message that this marriage of England and Italy represents the ideal template for the Englishman’s house.⁵⁴³

In contrast, Richard Brown’s *Domestic Architecture* was workmanlike and didactic in tone, rivalling Loudon in its ambition, which was ‘The dissemination and advancement of architectural principles, to guide the employer as well as the employed, and to improve or advance our national taste.’⁵⁴⁴ Beginning with an extended history, philosophical and aesthetic discussions and technical dissertations, he moves on to his own designs, in 25

⁵⁴² George Wightwick, *The Palace of Architecture: a romance of art and history*, (London, 1840), p. 200. He also provides a surprisingly crudely sketched vignette showing a villa of slightly different composition and a more prominent tower to illustrate how the aesthetic impact of an Italian villa is enhanced if sited ‘on an acclivity’.

⁵⁴³ Wightwick’s built Italianate works are discussed in Chapter 6.

⁵⁴⁴ Richard Brown, *Domestic Architecture, containing a history of the science and the principles of designing public edifices, private dwelling houses, country mansions and suburban villas, with practical dissertations on every branch of building....*, (London, 1841). Little is known of Brown, a self-styled ‘Professor of Architecture’ with West Country connections, who ran an architectural academy in London; he tells us in his preface that he had travelled in Europe. This work is analysed at length in an article by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, writing as P.F. Donner, ‘The end of the pattern-books’, in *Architectural Review*, March 1943, pp. 75-79.

styles from *Cottage Orné* through Henry the Seventh, to Swiss, Morisco Spanish, Plantagenet, among others. His gallery of Italian-inspired designs include, in addition to Palladian and Roman, a Pompeian Suburban Villa, a Venetian Summer Residence, a Villa in the Florentine Style, and an Anglo-Italian Villa. All are presented in landscape settings of appropriate character. Brown's Anglo-Italian villa is suspiciously like that presented by Wightwick: a three-storeyed belvedere is linked to a pedimented entrance front, with a lower service wing leading off at right-angles. There are some changes: Brown's roof profile is more complicated; he has added decorative balustrade balconies to first-floor windows, and, more importantly on the ground floor has pushed back the external wall to create an open, pillared loggia to connect with the base of the tower. [5.32] But both Wightwick's original and Brown's adapted version merely glue together the necessary elements: campaniles, Romanesque windows, shallow roofs with projecting eaves, onto a classical box without any true feeling either for the playful elegance of the Picturesque or for the informality of their Campagna origins: where Wightwick's tends to the stodgy, Brown's is more florid, but they both give the impression of solidity which the mid-century suburban villa appeared to demand. Brown's attempt to characterise his Anglo-Italian design is neither original nor illuminating. He notes campaniles as a 'mark of nobility.... the belvedere [sic] a place of prospect or a watch-tower; the balustrade terrace, of Italian origin, a pleasing esplanade; the roof is Tuscan, which projects and protects from heavy rains'. In a footnote (attributed by Brown only to 'W.L.', possibly W.H. Leeds) he stitches together sentences from both Wightwick and Loudon, concluding with Loudon's warning that 'Italian architecture is sometimes characterised by irregularity and strange contrasts, and by other painter-like effects. No architect therefore ought to attempt the Italian style who has not studied the composition of landscape scenery generally'. Plagiarising Wightwick in explaining his description of the villa as 'Anglo-Italian', he adds a gnomic footnote of his own: 'The Italian

is to the Roman what the Tudor is to the Gothic.⁵⁴⁵ Brown's gluttonous display of styles does not make the case for Anglo-Italian as the leading or even preferred idiom for the modern villa, but, while he fails to produce any original thinking on the subject he nevertheless reinforces what Wightwick has confirmed: that by 1840 Italianate was not only here to stay, but it had been claimed for England.

The Wightwick/Brown model, an asymmetrical massing of elements of varying heights which also projected and receded to give light and shade to the facade, and anchored at one corner by a three-storey belvedere, was to become a canonical template for the detached house which was to endure in Britain from 1840 to at least the 1870s, adapting only to differences in scale. It also made a significant impact overseas, and indeed, in his essay on the American-Italian villa in which he analyses three different villa patterns, Meeks christens this the 'Wightwick-Downing' formula, which he argues is a close interpretation of the Italian rustic originals which could also be adapted to the American climate and for a more modest market.⁵⁴⁶

The pattern books at the mid-century

There were of course other sources of influence and information for the newly architecturally-literate public: debates over style were also conducted through periodicals and pamphlets of all kinds, from the *Literary Review* to *Ackermann's Repository*. Topographical works also served to publicise designs, particularly in London, where the Park Village of Nash and Pennethorne were illustrated in Elmes' *Metropolitan Improvements* of 1828, as well as C.F. Partington's *Views of London* (1834). For grander houses, guide books such as that for Bromley Hill,⁵⁴⁷ and descriptions in periodicals such as Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* or

⁵⁴⁵ Brown, p. 291.

⁵⁴⁶ Brownell, pp.213-18. He is referring to Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-52), American landscape designer and architect, whose Italianate work in the United States will be examined in Chapter 8. .

⁵⁴⁷ George Cumberland, *Bromley Hill: The seat of the Rt. Hon Charles Long M.P.*, (London, 1811) and revised edition (London, 1816).

Gardener's Magazine, the latter, for example, describing The Deepdene in some detail,⁵⁴⁸ also advertised the innovation of the Italianate villa to a wider audience. Other visual sources included Royal Academy exhibitions, where the general public could compare, contrast, and learn: the appearance of Cronkhill, Sandridge Park and Lugar's Gold Hill have been noted, but there were many others, including a number of executed projects which will be further discussed in Chapter 6: in 1838, two drawings of Barcombe, Devon, a large Italianate villa by Edward Davis of Bath,⁵⁴⁹ two 'perspectives of an Italian villa at Mells' by Bath architect James Wilson in 1841,⁵⁵⁰ and in 1844 a model by William Garrett of 'a pair of Italian Villas now being erected in Gloucester Road, Regent's Park'.⁵⁵¹

By the mid-century, while the more successful books from earlier years such as Loudon's works continued to be re-issued, the genre was changing again, with the emphasis moving toward books which took on the character of manuals, which presented patterns with estimates and technical details, aimed more at the builder-developer as a catalogue for his client, written by builders or minor architects, and including designs for urban settings such as semi-detached or even terraced houses.⁵⁵² Edward Tarbuck's *Builder's Practical Director* of 1855 was a compendium of articles and designs intended for the freeholder as much as his builder, 'to be of use to the uninitiated'.⁵⁵³ [5.33] Amid the Gothic and Elizabethan-derived examples, Italianate in some form predominated in these designs, which accommodated pairs and terraces as well as small villas. E. L. Blackburne's *Suburban and Rural Architecture, English and Foreign*,⁵⁵⁴ in appearance a much more lavish work, was aimed at a more affluent readership and judging by the text a more sophisticated one. Another compendium, with

⁵⁴⁸ *The Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. V, 1829, pp. 589-90. Both houses will be discussed in Chapter 6.

⁵⁴⁹ Graves, Vol. II, p. 259, exhibits 1202 and 1241.

⁵⁵⁰ Graves, Vol. VIII, p. 308, exhibits 1087 and 1089.

⁵⁵¹ Graves, Vol. III, p. 211, exhibit 1238. Designed by Henry Bassett: Colvin, p. 106.

⁵⁵² Long, pp. 42-9.

⁵⁵³ Edward Tarbuck, *The Builder's Practical Director, or Buildings for all Classes, Enabling Every Freeholder to be his Own Surveyor and Builder*, (London, 1855-8), preface.

⁵⁵⁴ (London, 1867).

designs by four architects, it featured styles labelled German, Swiss and numerous Italian or Anglo-Italian variations, notably introducing polychromy into many of them. Blackburne describes ‘Anglo-Italian’ as ‘an adaptation of simple Italian general features to the taste and habits of this country’.⁵⁵⁵ [5.34] His pair of seven-roomed villas [5.34c] bears a resemblance to Benjamin Ferrey’s Westover Villas, Bournemouth, built three decades previously.⁵⁵⁶ On a simpler level Thomas Morris in 1860 presented designs which had moved on little from Loudon, concerned more with cost and appropriateness.⁵⁵⁷ [5.35] By this point, much less space was being devoted in these books to stylistic commentary or analysis partly because of their changing nature and function; if in some pattern books there was a relative decline in the use of the ‘Italian’ label as a descriptive term and identifier, this may have been because Italianate-influenced styles were no longer novel and were so widely recognised and accepted that explanation was thought to be superfluous. There were exceptions, such as the careful analysis by Robert Kerr in his 1864 publication, *The Gentleman’s House*, of the differences between the Palladian, the ‘Palatial-Italian’ and the ‘Rural-Italian’ styles; or the compendium of recently executed designs which were the subject of *Villa and Cottage Architecture* published by Blackie in 1868 which contained descriptions of Italianate design elements such as roof and window treatments; but while there continued to be an appetite for pictorial models, they seemed to be expected to speak for themselves for, as Kerr notes in the context of Rural-Italian, ‘Examples of the style, of all degrees of importance and merit, are familiar everywhere.’⁵⁵⁸ [5.36]

In summarising this analysis of the pattern books over this period it remains puzzling that, as far as can be ascertained, Nash’s revolutionary interpretation is never recognised or even mentioned in the contemporary literature. That apart, the pattern books shed light on the

⁵⁵⁵ Blackburne, commentary to Design 12.

⁵⁵⁶ To be discussed in Chapter 7; illustrated at 7.10.

⁵⁵⁷ Thomas Morris, *A House for the Suburbs, Socially and Architecturally Sketched*, (London, 1860).

⁵⁵⁸ Kerr, p. 356.

evolution of the manner in which rustic Italianate architectural forms were depicted, presented and described, as well as signalling a parallel confusion over terminology. The context in which these designs appear and are discussed within the pattern books also reinforces the acceptance of Vernacular Italianate as an idiom within the Picturesque vocabulary.

One highly significant aspect of the pattern books which has been hinted at is the very direct role which they played in the export of the rustic Italianate house beyond British shores, a topic which will be addressed in Chapter 8. It suffices here to note the strength of the influence of Loudon's philosophy and his writings on the work of Andrew Jackson Downing, for example;⁵⁵⁹ Downing himself recommends to his American readership works by Robinson, Lugar, Goodwin and Hunt.⁵⁶⁰ In Ackerman's view, 'the American version of the Italian villa came from English books and not from any Mediterranean experience'.⁵⁶¹

The next chapter will examine how, in Britain, architects and clients brought Vernacular Italianate to life in built form.

⁵⁵⁹ K. Hafertepe and James O'Gorman, *American Architects and their Books, 1840-1915*, (Amherst, 2007), p. 6.

⁵⁶⁰ Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, adapted to North America, with a view to the Improvement of Country Residences*, (New York, 1841); references are to the 4th edition, 1849: p. 417.

⁵⁶¹ Ackerman, p. 248.

Chapter 6

The built repertoire: innovators, followers and imitators

Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain after Nash seems to have emerged relatively slowly. With a number of notable exceptions it appears, on the available evidence, to have taken nearly two decades to gain momentum, initially in the form of the country house or individual villa in its own grounds, joined by examples on a smaller scale in the suburbs or in the new concept of the planned villa estate, before the idiom moved on to be adapted for more restricted sites in the densely populated towns. These phases of demographic migration are by no means mutually exclusive, nor strictly sequential, but over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century and in common with many other Picturesque styles such as the *cottage orné*, Tudor Revival or ‘house Gothic’,⁵⁶² Vernacular Italianate trickled down the social scale and experienced a corresponding process of evolution. This chapter focuses on the country house and the individual villa: the villa estate and the urban form will be discussed in the next chapter.⁵⁶³

Translation from the pattern books

It is interesting to observe that of the pattern book authors who advertised a version of Vernacular Italianate, few appeared to practise what they preached: Robert Lugar, whose work receives closer examination below, was an outstanding example of one who did. Of the other early authors, Gandy’s limited built *oeuvre* consisted mainly of neo-classical or Gothic houses or alterations:⁵⁶⁴ how different might the literal and metaphorical landscape have been if his bold and imaginative interpretations of Italy had ever been executed. The authors of the supposedly canonical Italianate villa books left a meagre personal legacy in

⁵⁶² Lugar’s phrase: *Architectural Sketches*, p. 21.

⁵⁶³ The use of Vernacular Italianate for buildings for non-residential use (such as railway stations, schools, asylums, farm and estate buildings) was widespread, but the topic falls outside the scope of this thesis. Gate lodges will be noted where they bear a relationship to the principal house or have other significance.

⁵⁶⁴ Lukacher, pp. 56-87.

terms of Italianate bricks and mortar: Meason was not an architect but a gentleman amateur, and when he rebuilt his own Scottish seat in 1813 it was to a castellated design: not Italianate but acceptably *pittoresco* nonetheless.⁵⁶⁵ The designs in Hunt's *Architettura Campestre* of 1827 were, as the author explained, not to his taste, and he had little opportunity to recant as his career was cut short by his death only four years after its publication. Curiously the book's lone progeny seems to have been his villa with a prospect tower, faithfully executed as a quirky lodge on the Alton Towers estate in the 1830s; the authorship is unknown but it is a very close copy.⁵⁶⁶ [6.1] Papworth's *Rural Residences* demonstrated eclecticism as well as vision, and while his 'Residence for an Artist'⁵⁶⁷ exemplifies Claudean rusticity, interpreted with flair and originality, it was only one of a number of styles in his collection of drawings; his tenet of appropriateness of house to landscape perhaps explains why his designs for the development of Cheltenham, only partly fulfilled in any event, evidence little Vernacular Italianate. Equally, P.F. Robinson's *Designs for ornamental villas* showed that Italianate was only one of many interpretations of the Picturesque which he was willing to pursue and his legacy is similarly eclectic.⁵⁶⁸ His work at Leamington in the mid-1820s took the form of unreformed neo-classical terraces; while his scheme of 1826 for the Duke of Newcastle's Nottingham Park Estate was superseded, he did complete some houses of 1827-30 which are certainly Italianate in their massing and detail, if on a restricted site and constructed in attached groups.⁵⁶⁹ Francis Goodwin's practice leaned more towards churches and civic buildings but of his completed houses, his Cullamore, Sligo, for the Gore-Booth family, built according to his pattern book design, described as an 'Italian Villa',

⁵⁶⁵ By Archibald Elliott (1761-1823): Colvin, p. 351.

⁵⁶⁶ Pink Lodge: HE List entry 1374712. Mowl optimistically dates it to 'mid-1820s at the latest', on the assumption that it is by Robert Abraham, architect to the 15th Earl of Shrewsbury: see 'The Williamane', p.106, and *Trumpet at a Distant Gate: the Lodge as Prelude to the Country House*, (London, 1985), p. 147. On this basis it would not only be a surprisingly early example, but it would also precede the design's appearance in Hunt's book of 1827.

⁵⁶⁷ Illustrated at 5.7.

⁵⁶⁸ Colvin, pp. 879-81.

⁵⁶⁹ Numbers 15-17 Park Terrace, Nottingham. HE List Entry 1059024.

was formal and symmetrical. Edward Buckton Lamb was praised by Loudon for his thorough grasp of the Italian villa style, yet not one of his many country houses was in the Italianate style; he was later better known for his ‘rogue Gothic’.⁵⁷⁰ By contrast John Robertson (1808-52), Loudon’s long-serving draughtsman,⁵⁷¹ became assistant to Joseph Paxton (1803-65) and together they executed a number of Italianate designs for smaller houses for the Duke of Devonshire at his estate village of Edensor, including a substantial house for Paxton himself, as well as other estate houses, [6.2] and later work at Birkenhead Park.⁵⁷² The most surprising disjunction between the printed work and the executed output must be in the person of Charles Parker, author of *Villa Rustica*, whose Italianate predilections and detailed field observations recorded in his published work found material expression only in his churches, although in his defence these are uncompromisingly authentic.⁵⁷³ We can only regret, as with the designs of Joseph Gandy, the absence of villas by his hand.

But the absence of built examples in no way diminishes the influence of these authors. As we have seen, the function of the pattern book and its intended audience had moved on by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century: its role was to introduce ideas in easily assimilable form to the ranks of provincial architects (and the builder-speculator) and their clients, who had modest budgets and only slightly larger aspirations. Stylistic ideas were becoming generic and these affordable volumes disseminated them widely, in social and geographical terms. What Hunt, Meason, Parker et al had done was to raise a consciousness of the Italianate as a stylistic option, although it can be argued that, given the fluidity of terminology employed and the variety of interpretations depicted, this was achieved at the expense of clarity or precision as to how that style was defined. Nevertheless, their audience

⁵⁷⁰ Crook, *Dilemma of Style*, p. 133.

⁵⁷¹ Colvin, p. 876.

⁵⁷² Brodie, Antonia, A. Felstead, J. Franklin, L. Pirfield and J. Oldfield, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914*, (2 vols., London, 2001) Vol. 2, p. 311.

⁵⁷³ St Raphael’s, Kingston-upon-Thames, and Christ Church, St. Alban’s, Herts, both built as Roman Catholic churches.

had surely learned to recognise the grouped round-headed windows, the roof pitch and eaves detailing, and above all, literally speaking, the belvedere tower as its trademarks, even if their picturesque Claudean origins were not always comprehended, or were beginning to be forgotten.

Robert Lugar: innovation or imitation?

Lugar's Dunstall Priory was contemporaneous with Nash's Claudean trio: a leasehold interest of the Priory, then known as Gold Hill, was being offered for sale in December 1806 when from the evidence neither Cronkhill nor Sandridge Park had been finished.⁵⁷⁴

[6.3] So little is known about his early career that it is impossible to identify with certainty any formative influences, but he had a sensitive grasp of the Picturesque, and the design which he consciously labelled 'Italian' in *Architectural Sketches* is clearly in Claudean rather than Palladian mode. It is not clear whether Lugar had benefited from any professional engagement with Nash as pupil or assistant, or whether he had arrived at this conjunction of style and nomenclature independently,⁵⁷⁵ but he provides not only what appears to be the earliest example of an executed Italianate pattern book design, but also one which is described as 'Italian' both in the pattern book and in the advertisement for an 'elegant new built Italian villa'.

Like Nash, Lugar understood that in villa design, a number of variables were in play: the paramount importance of the free-flowing plan, and the management of the axial relationship between one elevation and another so as to maximise the view outward from the house into the landscape, and to ensure that an element of surprise, which could include the ability to view one elevation of the house from another, was always present. In terms of style, as long as an irregular mass could be composed of an array of differing geometrical solids and voids, Lugar realised, as had Nash, that to a large extent the external skin was a

⁵⁷⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, 22 December 1806, p. 4.

⁵⁷⁵ Lugar's early career and his putative connections with Nash are discussed in Yallop: 'Lugar', pp. 155-162.

matter of choice which depended primarily upon establishing a relationship between the house and the surrounding landscape, but also upon its appropriateness to the standing and social function of the client. As a result, the work of both men exhibited an ease in its exterior handling of both Vernacular Italianate and castellated styles; the tower motif and its use as an anchor for an asymmetrical composition was common to both styles and to both architects. Dunstall Priory sits, surrounded by woodland, on a slight incline and in much the same way as at Cronkhill and Sandridge Park the windows on the long garden elevation give onto lawns which fall gently away. The principal entrance on the other elevation is as discreet as those at Cronkhill and Lissan, placed at the meeting point between the round tower and the other receiving rooms. In one detail Dunstall Priory does not quite conform to Lugar's pattern book design, for the tower as built was round rather than canted as shown in the elevation in the book, where the plan shows an essentially square room with two chamfered (exterior) corners, which together with two niches in the interior corners create an octagonal internal space, a device also used by Nash at Sandridge Park. But in all other respects what was built reflects the drawings, the house finished in render under a slate roof with a metal verandah. [6.4] The printed plan shows a central staircase with rooms opening off the staircase hall, resembling the arrangement at Cronkhill; and while Dunstall's exterior seems more extended than the compact plan indicated in the pattern book elevation, the printed plan and commentary make it clear that a service wing leads off at an angle as in Nash's villas, Lugar explaining in his text that a covered way connects the offices with the polite rooms. The pattern book reveals a service wing in the background, masked in the drawing, as at Cronkhill in real life, by artfully placed shrubs.

After Dunstall, Lugar settled into his own Italianate villa style which usually combined the geometrical building blocks of cylinder and square with a distinctive pediment to cap the ends of ranges or to emphasize an entrance; some but not all incorporated a round tower or a suggestion of one in the form of a two-storeyed semi-circular bay. In his interiors he

shared with Nash the use of a variety of polygonal floor plans, creating octagonal rooms from square exteriors by chamfering internal walls, for example. The overall effect of Lugar's villas was less dramatic than that of Nash's trio but the form was pre-eminently adaptable and acceptable to a perhaps more cautious clientèle. The Ryes, on the Essex-Suffolk border, for which a design was exhibited at the Royal Academy,⁵⁷⁶ followed in 1809: here the round tower takes the form of a half-circle on two storeys under a conical roof, creating a D-shaped ground floor room as at Sandridge Park. Wood Hall, near Hull, Yorkshire, of 1814 for the Maister family, of grey brick under a slate roof, later burdened with added detail such as hood mouldings, seems his most successful Claudean interpretation, bolder and simpler, almost austere, an exercise in compact yet varied massing and with a more distinct round tower than at The Ryes.⁵⁷⁷ **[6.5]** These houses were both for the permanent occupation of provincial gentry, the Barnardiston family of Suffolk living off their estates,⁵⁷⁸ the Maisters a merchant dynasty in Hull.⁵⁷⁹ There may be another, hitherto unidentified, Italianate villa by Lugar which is depicted in a perspective drawing of a house in a garden, apparently drawn for pleasure rather than as an architect's presentation.⁵⁸⁰ **[6.6]** Situated in Herne Hill, south-east London, it is a villa for the fringe of town, with pleasure gardens but no attached estate, built as one of a number in different styles in a small development at a time when neighbouring Dulwich, where Nash had built the Casina, a Repton collaboration, in 1797,⁵⁸¹ was becoming a desirable villa enclave. As depicted the villa, set on the crest of a hill, had a round tower with conical roof and fenestration which matches that of Cronkhill and Sandridge Park; at the foot of the tower, French windows

⁵⁷⁶ Graves, Vol. V, p. 113, exhibit 809: 'Mr. Barnardiston's House.' HE List Entry 1306332.

⁵⁷⁷ Wood Hall is often attributed to Nash (see Mansbridge entry 162), but there is evidence of Lugar's authorship in a letter of September 1814 in which he mentions staying with Colonel Maister in Yorkshire: Essex Record Office, Q/ABbp 9. HE List Entry 1346626.

⁵⁷⁸ Suffolk Record Office: Bury613.

⁵⁷⁹ East Riding of Yorkshire Archives: zDDCC/108/140.

⁵⁸⁰ Lambeth Archives, Phillips Coll. no.2278. I am grateful to Chris Jones for bringing this drawing to my attention.

⁵⁸¹ Mansbridge, entry 49.

open onto the garden under a verandah, an arrangement which echoes Lugar's Dunstall Priory. The plan and elevations appear from the drawing to be highly asymmetrical and axial; and the use of pediments to crown the lower ranges is distinctive of Lugar's work at Wood Hall and elsewhere. The drawing, entitled only 'Villa on Herne Hill' is dated 1848, but research evidences that the villa, now demolished, was built before 1818;⁵⁸² it has so far proved impossible to trace the identity of the original owner or builder, but the pictorial evidence strongly suggests Lugar's hand, or that of someone who knew his work well.⁵⁸³ In any event it is hard to believe that the architect was not familiar with Cronkhill or Sandridge Park.

Other early post-Nash examples: essays in an intermediate style

There is an early Italianate foretaste in London from the hand of an artist rather than an architect. J.M.W. Turner designed a house at Twickenham, Sandycombe Lodge, for his own use as a retreat to share with his father.⁵⁸⁴ [6.7] Turner's approach to its design has been studied in some detail by Patrick Youngblood.⁵⁸⁵ While it is symmetrical, with some neo-classical, Soanean, devices to its exterior, there are nevertheless hints in the broad, bracketed eaves and shallow pitch of the roof, and the curving form of the lateral walls, which allude to a round tower, of a rustic simplicity, whether consciously Italian or not. The designs for the house in his sketchbooks show many variations which run to twenty-four plans and more than forty elevations,⁵⁸⁶ some more overtly Italianate in form.⁵⁸⁷ [6.8] The drawings

⁵⁸² Notice of Sale of Ground Rents at Herne Hill, *The Times*, 27 November 1818, p. 4; Sale catalogue, Lambeth Archives, C203.

⁵⁸³ Possibly John Burrell who practised in nearby Camberwell, with whom Lugar submitted a joint competition entry for the new Houses of Parliament. For a discussion of Lugar and Burrell, see Yallop, 'Lugar', p. 152.

⁵⁸⁴ Andrew Wilton, *Turner in his time*, (2nd ed., London, 2006), pp. 110-11.

⁵⁸⁵ Patrick Youngblood, 'The Painter as Architect: Turner and Sandycombe Lodge', in *Turner Studies*, 2, (1) 1982, pp. 20-35.

⁵⁸⁶ Youngblood, p. 23.

⁵⁸⁷ Tate Gallery, London, Turner Bequest, Windmill and Lock Sketchbook, TB CXIV, D08065: *Sandycombe Lodge, Twickenham, unexecuted elevations and plans*; Working Drawings for Sandycombe Lodge, TB CXX-R, D08232: *Ground Plan and elevations of an unexecuted design for Sandycombe Lodge*; Sandycombe and Yorkshire Sketchbook, TB CXXVII-15, D08985: *Alternative prospects of and an elevation design for Sandycombe Lodge*.

date from 1811 and the house was constructed between spring 1812 and the summer of 1813, predating his first visit to Italy in 1819.⁵⁸⁸ Youngblood sees the house as built (after numerous iterations by Turner) as a simplified *cottage orné* which owed much to the pattern books of the day,⁵⁸⁹ citing Bartell's comments on the desirability for aesthetic purposes of projecting eaves.⁵⁹⁰ Despite going on to note, however, that Turner considered but rejected the use of Italian pantiles for the roof, Youngblood makes no connection with contemporary Vernacular Italianate architectural design. Nevertheless it may be assumed that Turner would have been well aware of rustic Italian forms, from his knowledge of, and indeed unreserved admiration for, the work of Claude.⁵⁹¹ Turner's notebooks show his fertile mind re-imagining and re-arranging architectural components: Sandycombe is an instinctive and personal adaptation of the modest villa box by an artist imbued with the Italian vernacular form: whether he was aware of Nash's examples at this point is not known.⁵⁹²

The later expansion of Twickenham, long a desirable villa enclave, in the form of substantial stuccoed villas in generous grounds saw an emergent Vernacular Italianate which may in part have taken its cue from Turner's house. Here a landowner and developer engaged a minor London architect, L.W. Lloyd (c.1802-68),⁵⁹³ to design villas in the late 1820s such as Bute Lodge, which incorporates the shallow-pitched, bracketed eaves and rounded flanking walls of Sandycombe, but in the context of a more imposing house.⁵⁹⁴ **[6.9]** It was noted in Chapter 1 that some experimentation in villa design was already taking place in the late eighteenth century, with the use of new geometrical components such as an extension of the

⁵⁸⁸ Youngblood, p. 23.

⁵⁸⁹ Youngblood, pp. 25-31.

⁵⁹⁰ Referred to in Chapter 5; Youngblood p. 31 and fn. 86.

⁵⁹¹ Discussed at length in Warrell, pp. 25-49.

⁵⁹² Turner later became a friend of Nash, whom he visited at East Cowes: Tyack, *Picturesque*, p. 39.

⁵⁹³ Colvin, p. 657.

⁵⁹⁴ HE List Entry 1065364. Lloyd exhibited two sets of designs at the Royal Academy in 1828 for villas at Twickenham, for two different clients: Graves, Vol. V, p. 76, exhibits 1018 and 1030.

rounded bay into a half cylinder, as seen at Searles's Clare House,⁵⁹⁵ and the Round House, Dover.⁵⁹⁶ Lloyd's Twickenham villas suggest a continuing softening of the neo-classical villa forms which, while stopping short of a thorough-going asymmetrical Claudean approach, nevertheless incorporates some of its elements in an intermediate style which signals a growing recognition of Vernacular Italianate effect, all the more significant for its proximity to London in a fashionable location. There is an 1825 example of a bold villa experiment which seems to nod towards a Claudean model: Brooklands House, built on the Cator Estate at Blackheath by architect George Smith (1782-1869) for his own occupation.⁵⁹⁷

[6.10] An otherwise conventional stucco exterior is distinguished by overhanging eaves and shallow-pitched slated roof, and at the apex of the L-shaped plan is a three storeyed tower, essentially square in plan but with external chamfering to each corner, rising to wide eaves and a shallow-pitched irregular octagonal roof. It resembles both Lugar's 'Italian villa' design and the single extant Italianate villa by Nash and Pennethorne in the Park Village at Regent's Park with which it must have been broadly contemporaneous, although unlike the latter it was set in substantial grounds.⁵⁹⁸ Another example is The Cupola, Hastings, of the early 1830s, by architect Joseph Kay (1775-1847) for his own occupation.⁵⁹⁹

[6.11] Back in Twickenham, by 1833 Lloyd had completed his less conventional and more overtly Italianate Caen Lodge (now Willoughby House), on the river bank, with a strikingly tall campanile, in a rustic setting.⁶⁰⁰

[6.12] Little is known of Lloyd's professional training, but by the time of his Twickenham Park Estate the publications of Papworth, Robinson and Hunt would have been at his disposal.

⁵⁹⁵ Gordon Nares, 'Clare House, Kent', *Country Life*, 16 and 23 September 1949.

⁵⁹⁶ Demolished. Once attributed to Nash but now to Elsam: *Architectural Review*, Vol. XCII, September 1942, p. 71.

⁵⁹⁷ Colvin, p. 946; HE List Entry 1212911.

⁵⁹⁸ *Buildings of England: London 2: South*, p. 276. The gate lodge to the estate (2 Manor Way, SE3) is also in rustic Italianate style.

⁵⁹⁹ Pupil of S.P. Cockerell: Colvin, p. 599. HE List Entry 1352134.

⁶⁰⁰ HE List Entry 1261911.

One particular house on a much larger scale of ambition and dating from the second decade of the nineteenth century was identified in its own time as an ‘Italian villa’,⁶⁰¹ united with correspondingly Picturesque grounds: Bromley Hill House in Kent.⁶⁰² This was an eighteenth-century house extensively altered in the first decade of the nineteenth century by Charles Long, later Lord Farnborough.⁶⁰³ Long and his wife were knowledgeable *amateurs* of the Picturesque who had spent two years in Italy on the Grand Tour; friends of Payne Knight, they had stayed with him at Downton. At Bromley Hill they created a retreat set in a constructed landscape which offered both picturesque walks and more formal terraced Italian gardens. Subsequent alterations and the loss of its gardens⁶⁰⁴ leave us dependent upon contemporary descriptions, primarily a booklet published in 1811,⁶⁰⁵ supplemented by watercolours by John Chessell Buckler (1793-1894) of 1815-16⁶⁰⁶ and by Lady Long.⁶⁰⁷ The 1811 guide book described it as ‘a modern villa, of compact form, well broken into masses by varied angles’; more interestingly, the revised version of 1816 identified it as ‘not a little in Italian style and character’.⁶⁰⁸ Neither of Buckler’s watercolours fully convince of the house’s Italianate characteristics: there is irregularity in the plan, a canted bay, and overhanging eaves supported by brackets, but no vertical accent to contrast with a low range; **[6.13]** two campaniles were added only in the 1840s,⁶⁰⁹ **[6.14]** and its fame among *cognoscenti* and public alike rested primarily on the Picturesque and overtly Italianate gardens. Nevertheless it is of interest because contemporary references confirm its identification as rustic Italianate: Hunt in his *Architettura Campestre* of 1827 refers to the house with

⁶⁰¹ Hunt, *Architettura Campestre*, p. xviii.

⁶⁰² Jane Bradney has described the gardens at Bromley Hill in some detail in ‘The Italian Garden in England 1787-1863’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Bath, 2008), pp. 64-71.

⁶⁰³ He was a member of an informal committee advising the King on public works in London, publishing a pamphlet on the subject in 1826: Archer, *Literature*, p. 148; Summerson, *Georgian London*, (6th edition, ed. Howard Colvin, New Haven and London, 2003), pp. 228, 230 (fn).

⁶⁰⁴ Inexplicably it is unlisted.

⁶⁰⁵ Cumberland, (revised edition, 1816), p. 15.

⁶⁰⁶ Guildhall Library, Wakefield Collection, K1229319.

⁶⁰⁷ Illustrated in Bradney, figs. 3.24, 3.26, 3.28, 3.34.

⁶⁰⁸ Cumberland, (revised edition, 1816), p. 16.

⁶⁰⁹ Bradney, p. 64, fn. 237.

approbation as an ‘Italian Villa’, and in the same year Robinson presented a design for a substantial asymmetrical house, more palazzo than villa, which he claimed has been ‘partially adopted by Lord Farnborough at Bromley Hill’, although in truth it bears scant resemblance.⁶¹⁰ Years later, in 1840, after the addition of the campaniles,⁶¹¹ it was singled out as a ‘handsome and commodious house’ of the ‘modern Italian, Romanesque or Tuscan style’, a style commended by the commentator for its quality of irregularity and picturesque effect,⁶¹² curiously in the same sentence as a reference to Tue Brook Villa, Liverpool, which is a markedly different style, and one which by then, as we shall see, had emerged as a characteristic towered Italianate villa model. **[6.15]** The principal interest of Bromley Hill perhaps lies in the fact that the house seems to have attracted a degree of public recognition of rustic Italian-derived tendencies at a relatively early date, all the more interesting as the Longs were personally responsible for its design, without the assistance of an architect. The extent of its wider influence is however difficult to assess.

The examples so far identified might suggest that there existed a hiatus of some ten years or so between the initial phase of Nash’s introduction of the *villa rustica* together with Lugar’s own innovations or interpretations in the first decade of the century, and a subsequent quickening of pace of examples appearing only from the late 1820s, but this cannot be established with certainty. Italianate villas from this apparently fallow period continue to come to light, such as the Herne Hill villa described above; other known projects have not previously been joined into the narrative, such as a striking proposal believed to date from around 1823 for a new house at Fort Stewart, Co. Donegal, for the Stewart family,⁶¹³ by Dublin architect John Hargrave. Four extant drawings show an asymmetrical country villa with long ranges each anchored by vertical accents in the form of two square belvederes and

⁶¹⁰ Robinson, *Ornamental Villas*, p. 43.

⁶¹¹ By a subsequent occupant; Bradney, p. 64.

⁶¹² ‘Saxon’ in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, April 1840, pp. 410-11.

⁶¹³ Not related to the Stewarts of Killymoon.

one round, three storey tower with conical roof and fenestration of diminishing size to each storey. [6.16] Depicted in a picturesque setting, it strongly resembles both Cronkhill as shown in the watercolour designs, and Lissan Rectory.⁶¹⁴ The proposal was not executed, and Hargrave is not known to have designed any other Italianate houses.⁶¹⁵ There may be an indirect link with Nash: Hargrave submitted plans for a new church at Cookstown, Co. Tyrone in 1816, a parish in which Nash's castellated Killymoon⁶¹⁶ was situated and where the church was eventually built to Nash's design in around 1822.⁶¹⁷ It is possible that Hargrave would have seen nearby Lissan Rectory, and used it as his model. Other examples from this early post-Nash period, designed or executed, may continue to come to light.

The problem of The Deepdene

In the realm of the larger country house there was a significant Italianate landmark in the period before 1830: Thomas Hope's Surrey house, The Deepdene, which had its own distinctive intellectual and aesthetic provenance, for Hope was a connoisseur and collector with the wealth to indulge his aesthetic ambitions, which had been informed by extensive travel. In placing it in the Italianate chronology The Deepdene presents challenges of stylistic identification and terminology for it represents not so much a fusion of styles as an agglomeration.

Now demolished, its complicated chronology has been disentangled by David Watkin.⁶¹⁸ Thomas Hope remodelled a conventional red-brick villa in two phases, 1818-19 and in 1823, and after his death further extensive alterations were carried out in in the 1830s and 1840s by his son Henry, to designs which Richard Garnier posits to be the work of

⁶¹⁴ PRONI: D2358; illustrated as plate 9 in Hugh Dixon, *Ulster Architecture, 1800-1900*, Exhibition catalogue, (Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1972).

⁶¹⁵ Dictionary of Irish Architects, www.dia.ie [accessed 12 February 2014].

⁶¹⁶ Mansbridge, entry 74.

⁶¹⁷ Mansbridge, entry 205.

⁶¹⁸ David Watkin, *Thomas Hope and the Neo-Classical Idea*, (London, 1968), pp. 158-192; David Watkin and Philip Hewat-Jaboor, (eds.), *Thomas Hope, Regency Designer*, exhibition catalogue, (New Haven and London, 2008), pp. 219-235.

Alexander Roos (c.1810-1881).⁶¹⁹ Hope's vision was a synthesis of the Neo-classical (both Greek and Italian) with the Picturesque.⁶²⁰ [6.17] In Watkin's view, 'The eclectic and asymmetrical forms with which Hope united his house to its gardens lay in a Picturesque tradition of which John Nash and Jeffry Wyattville had been the principal recent exponents.'⁶²¹ With the assistance of the architect William Atkinson, in the first phase wings were added to the existing house to produce an asymmetrical plan and irregular elevation with the addition of an obliquely projecting wing to house a sculpture gallery, and a conservatory. The whole was eclectic, unmistakably evoking the work of Claude but perhaps more reminiscent of the monumental buildings in his history paintings than the rustic structures of his Arcadian compositions. [6.18] Evocation of the latter was the role of the gardens, transformed, like Bromley Hill, into a Picturesque Italian landscape of terrace, grove and ornament; an entrance lodge was in a simple Tuscan country idiom. [6.19] There are two drawings by Alexander Roos (c.1810-81) for the remodelling of the Gardener's House under Henry Hope: one shows a rustic vernacular pavilion attached to a machicolated tower; another version substituted in its place a pyramidal roof with Tuscan eaves.⁶²² [6.20] Both are Claudean compositions which recall Aikin's house 'in the picturesque style, suited to a romantic situation';⁶²³ other work by Roos shows him to be very well acquainted with rustic Italian forms.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁹ Richard Garnier, 'Alexander Roos', *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XV, 2006, pp. 11-68.

⁶²⁰ The proposed history of the house and gardens by John Britton was never finished, but drafts and an extensive set of watercolours survive, together with notes of visits written by C.R. Cockerell and others, which form the basis of present-day assessments: see Watkin and Hewat-Jaboor, p. 234. See also Paula Ridy, 'The Guidebook and the Picturesque: The Deepdene', in *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXIV, 2016, pp. 159-180, which reproduces many of the watercolours of the exterior by William Henry Bartlett in the collection of the Minet Library, Lambeth.

⁶²¹ Watkin and Hewat-Jaboor, p. 219.

⁶²² Garnier, p. 25. He has made a convincing case for the close involvement of Alexander Roos in Henry Hope's re-modelling of The Deepdene.

⁶²³ Aikin, *Designs*, plates XIV and XV. The Deepdene designs are illustrated in Morley, p. 118; Garnier, fig. 20; and Watkin, *Hope*, pl. 71.

⁶²⁴ Garnier hypothesises that Roos was a pupil of Schinkel, with the inference that this experience, rather than the prevailing British architectural interest in the Italian picturesque, was his primary influence.

The Deepdene attracted contemporary attention as a representation of Italy which reflected the aspirations of the Picturesque theorists while at the same time giving a scholarly nod towards antiquity. It was the subject of an article in the *Repository of Arts* of 1823, and Neale's *Views of Seats* of 1826 gave a detailed description; Loudon, no doubt dazzled by such a rich display of both erudition and consumption, devoted many pages to it first in his *Gardener's Magazine* and later in his *Encyclopedia* of 1833, praising Hope for the creation of 'a whole .. that will delight such men as Uvedale Price and Gilbert Laing Meason', adding: 'the house .. forms a group so rich in classic forms and combinations that no-one can duly appreciate its beauties whose mind is not thoroughly imbued with Italy and the fine arts.'⁶²⁵ The belvedere was one of its most striking features and the most obviously Italianate. Its impact on the composition as a whole as a robust vertical accent, as well as its faithfully transcribed detailing, can clearly be seen in Bartlett's vivid watercolour.⁶²⁶ Watkin notes that, as a means of breaking up regularity and giving an impression of magnitude the tower was an obvious solution; a device used to the same effect at Downton and Cronkhill,⁶²⁷ but he also points out that Hope was the first to borrow from the northern Italian rustic loggia-topped towers, described by Neale in 1826 as 'a curious open tower, in the Tuscan or Lombard style',⁶²⁸ as opposed (presumably) to the round Campagna towers used at Cronkhill or Sandridge. In Watkin's view the belvedere is 'probably unique in English architecture' for its time, for although contemporaneously it was decided to add an open belvedere tower to Chatsworth in Wyattville's re-modelling for the Duke of Devonshire, supposedly at the latter's

⁶²⁵ *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. V, 1829, pp. 589-90.

⁶²⁶ William Henry Bartlett, *The Deepdene: Entrance Court, looking towards the tower*, c.1825-26: Minet Library Lambeth, reproduced in Priddy as Fig.7, p.166. See also his *The House from the Drying Grounds* of the same date which places the tower in an emphatically rustic setting: Priddy, Fig. 13.

⁶²⁷ Watkin, *Hope*, p. 173.

⁶²⁸ John Neale, 'The Deepdene' in *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen*, Second series, Volume III, (London, 1826). Neale devotes twelve pages of description and two plates to The Deepdene; the vignette at the beginning of his essay shows the simple Tuscan vernacular lodge.

suggestion, it did not however appear in the working drawings until 1824.⁶²⁹ Papworth had of course illustrated an open tower which was similar but more primitive in his 'Residence for an Artist' which first appeared in the *Repository* of May 1817.⁶³⁰ Watkin's comment also reminds us that the round tower seems to have been an element largely confined to the works of Nash and Lugar,⁶³¹ for the square belvedere, based on the campanile, was now being acknowledged as the appropriate vertical detail, both in the pattern books, such as those by Hunt,⁶³² Parker,⁶³³ Goodwin,⁶³⁴ and Loudon, and in the built examples, as will become increasingly evident. Loudon explains the designs which he presents as 'forms of watch-towers, common on the smaller villas, and even farm-houses, in several parts of Tuscany.'⁶³⁵ On a smaller scale and lower in the functional hierarchy, the dairy and offices at The Deepdene were clustered under a spirelet, for which Watkin puts forward the illustrations by Meason in his 1827 book as Hope's source,⁶³⁶ overlooking perhaps the spirelet which featured in Nash's perspective drawings for both Cronkhill and Sandridge Park, and which in the case of Sandridge Park was executed, two decades before Meason's illustrations. [6.21]

The 'problem' of The Deepdene lies in deciding whether, even before Henry Hope's later re-working, Thomas Hope's executed vision marks a moment in the evolution of Vernacular Italianate, or is instead a deliberate, conscious fusion of rustic and palatial Italianate. How does The Deepdene relate to Nash's trio, or to Lugar's Dunstall and Wood Hall? Hope had certainly observed Italian rustic buildings on his travels and indeed there exists an

⁶²⁹ See Derek Linstrum, *Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, Architect to the King*, (Oxford, 1972), p. 142, for an explanation of chronology and sources.

⁶³⁰ Illustrated at 5.7.

⁶³¹ Other examples identified to date include that proposed by Hargrave mentioned above and by Thomas Duff, also in Ireland, to be discussed below; much later, John Gordon's Clyde villas of the 1860s, discussed at the end of this chapter, made occasional use of a half-round tower.

⁶³² Hunt, *Architettura Campestre*.

⁶³³ Parker, *Villa Rustica*, Book 1.

⁶³⁴ Goodwin, *Domestic Architecture*, Vol. 1.

⁶³⁵ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p.961, figs. 1692-95.

⁶³⁶ Watkin and Hewat-Jaboor, p.223.

extensively annotated design by him, tentatively dated as early as 1801,⁶³⁷ for a vernacular Italian villa with a flavour of the antique. [6.22] But this simplicity is absent from The Deepdene, which combines Tudor, Gothic and Grecian elements with an Italianism sourced variously from Tuscany, Lombardy, and Pompeii;⁶³⁸ in addition, in function (as a house of erudite display) as well as form it typifies, to use Pliny's analysis, the *villa suburbana* rather than the *villa rustica*. It is challenging to decide where to place it, if at all, in the Vernacular Italianate history. The Deepdene became known in the wider world beyond Hope's connoisseur circle through the publications which described and illustrated it, but its lasting significance beyond that of a unique and highly personal confection, whose eclecticism was *sui generis* and all but inimitable, is harder to establish. To what extent did it exert influence over the prevailing Italianate direction of travel? Perhaps its importance in the realm of the villa builder, who could not hope to emulate its scale, amounted to no more than the continuing encouragement or validation of an undefined and elastic Italianate style, a validation which was in itself significant enough.

The later phase of works carried out under Henry Hope, possibly to designs by Roos, from the 1830s, further transformed the house into a formal Renaissance palazzo, including the addition of a pair of towers to the entrance front, although drawings suggest that Thomas himself was thinking of remodelling it along these lines. [6.23] As has been noted, Garnier's hypothesis is that Roos's approach was grounded not in the Italianate undercurrents of contemporary English theory or practice, but by his knowledge of the work of Schinkel, whose pupil he may have been.⁶³⁹ The uncertainty surrounding the relative contributions of father and son, and the involvement of Roos, can cloud an appraisal of the nature of Thomas Hope's Italianate vision and the extent of his contribution to a more general dissemination of the Italianate idiom. Some historians (Hussey, Hitchcock, Watkin) appear

⁶³⁷ Watkin, *Hope*, pp. 137-8; fn. 31, p. 284.

⁶³⁸ C.R. Cockerell identified the Pompeian influence after a visit in 1823: Watkin, *Vision*, p. 126.

⁶³⁹ Garnier is, thus far, alone in making this case.

to suggest that the Deepdene marked a point at which Hope's Italianate interpretation succeeded that of Nash: Hussey certainly sees Hope as the progenitor of a blood-line which led directly to urban offspring:

Hope's Deepdene synthesis perceptibly influenced Gandy-Deering's remodelling of Shrubland, and through Barry's palazzos, begot the race of Victorian villas of which Osborne was to be the type.' [The Deepdene] was the parent of Dorchester House and innumerable suburban villas.⁶⁴⁰

Watkin suggests that Claudean Italianate may at this point have been obsolescent, adopting an elastic view of the Picturesque:

the more precise Italianism of the 1830s .. was based fairly closely on fifteenth and sixteenth century models. It is easy to regard this style merely as an example of the "growing historicism" of the 19th century, but there is no reason why it should not be seen as the natural heir to English Palladianism, which is not normally described as an 'historicist' style ... The shift from Poussinesque Italianate to Renaissance Italianate [is] merely another stage in the development of the picturesque.⁶⁴¹

The nature of these two approaches to, or interpretations of, the architectural Italianate, and relationship between them, will be further explored below in considering the work of Sir Charles Barry.

As a footnote to the story, there exists an undated drawing [6.24] for an Italianate country house 'as not completed' by Alexander Beresford Hope, Thomas's youngest son.⁶⁴² This was Errwood Hall, Derbyshire, designed by him for the Grimshawe family, but as executed in 1840-1 its solid, almost suburban, Loudonesque form, a template Vernacular Italianate villa of its time, is far from the Picturesque theatricality inherent in the eclectic vision of his father.⁶⁴³ [6.25]

⁶⁴⁰ Hussey, *Late Georgian*, p. 21; Hussey, *Picturesque* p. 223.

⁶⁴¹ Watkin, *Hope*, p. 194.

⁶⁴² Illustrated, re-drawn, in Watkin, *Hope*, fig. 21, p. 190.

⁶⁴³ Demolished in the 1930s.

Rustic Italianate and Palazzo Italianate: the work of Sir Charles Barry

The discussion of The Deepdene in the preceding paragraphs introduced the idea of a strand of Italianate which emerged as the progeny of neither Nash nor Meason, its origins seated in both historical study and field observation of Italian buildings rather than Picturesque theory. It has already been noted a number of times in this thesis that a palatial Italianate architectural form, which took as its starting point Italian Renaissance models, was initiated in Britain largely by Sir Charles Barry in the late 1820s. A comprehensive examination of this style lies outside the scope of this thesis, but any account of Vernacular Italianate in Britain would be incomplete without noting this strand, which made its appearance later than the rustic variety but thenceforward developed contemporaneously. It is helpful to distinguish and differentiate the two models by reference to their origins and their subsequent application, and it is appropriate to do so at this point in the chronology of the built repertoire of Vernacular Italianate. It is a necessary distinction because some historians have chosen to see Barry as the sole author of the Italian villa template which became prevalent in the British suburb by the mid-century and beyond.⁶⁴⁴ In addition, Osborne House, which is closer to Barry's interpretation (although he had no association with it) than to that of Nash, is frequently proposed⁶⁴⁵ as the principal driver of the popularity of villa and urban Italianate, despite its late dates (1845-51). It is clear that Barry made an incalculable contribution to the recognition and dissemination of Italian-derived forms and motifs (and the acceptance of its suitability for civic architecture as well as for the country house), yet while this also influenced to an extent the design of the smaller house, to see this Italianate mode as ousting the Claudian version, as Watkin appears to suggest, rather than existing co-terminously, would be a mis-reading.

⁶⁴⁴ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 181; Hussey, *Picturesque*, p. 223 and *Late Georgian*; Watkin, *Hope*, p. 176;

⁶⁴⁵ See, for example, Turner, p. 26; Historic England, *Designation Listing Selection Guide: Domestic 3: Suburban and Country Houses* (October 2011), pp. 5, 9.

It is suggested that Palazzo Italianate, or ‘Renaissance Revival’, a term used by Hitchcock⁶⁴⁶ among others, as a portmanteau for a style exemplified by Barry, was not an evolution of the Claudean Picturesque but a parallel strand rooted in a different aesthetic; each was in its way derivative but one can be seen as studiously literal – ‘archaeological’ in Hitchcock’s view – and the other romantic and pictorial.⁶⁴⁷ This difference in associative context and intentions was reflected stylistically in massing and decoration, and this in turn dictated to some extent the types of building, in terms of function and status, for which they were employed. In general terms the palatial style lent itself to civic and institutional buildings as well as to large country houses, whereas almost by its nature a vernacular-derived, pictorial style faithful to the Claudean model was more difficult to achieve in houses of larger scale (which is not to say that it was not attempted, as examples to be introduced later will attest), and certainly for public buildings this idiom lacked *gravitas*. In the realm of the smaller house, however, there was equal opportunity for their employment, and indeed their conflation, particularly after the mid-century, a theme which will be explored in due course.

Nevertheless Blissett makes the case for Barry being far from an archaeological architect:

For Charles [Barry] the architectural heritage was not so much a trove of artistic antecedents concerning ideals of beauty and perfection which could give rise to intellectual animation, as an array of architectural forms and elements which could be utilised for no other reason than that they suited his principal objective: to create picturesque architectural compositions which, in their grandeur, approached a state of sublimity rather than standing as sterile monuments to scholastic enterprise.⁶⁴⁸

This is a manifesto which, with the omission of the phrase ‘in their grandeur’, would place Barry on all fours with Nash, although their Italianate interpretations (Nash’s being admittedly much more limited in number) differ widely in both provenance and intent. The principal difference seems to rest on Barry’s use (even allowing Blissett’s argument that this

⁶⁴⁶ *Early Victorian*, p. 36.

⁶⁴⁷ Secondary sources drawn on here include David Blissett, ‘Sir Charles Barry: a Re-assessment of his Travels and Early Career’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Polytechnic, 1983); David McKinstry, ‘Our Great Architect: Inigo Jones in the 1830s – A forgotten Source for the English Italianate?’, *Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXI, 2013, pp. 166-180.

⁶⁴⁸ Blissett, ‘Barry: a Re-assessment’, p. 150.

was not rigidly antiquarian in nature) of his direct observations and study of Italian models to inform his approach, in contrast to Nash's reliance upon an instinctive interpretation of indirect, pictorial resources. Despite this difference, some of Barry's Italianate work illuminates the closeness of its relationship with the Vernacular Italianate idiom, and the difficulty which can be encountered in differentiating the two. The Attree Villa, Brighton, is a case in point.⁶⁴⁹ In 1829, by introducing to London the urban palazzo in the form of the Travellers' Club,⁶⁵⁰ Barry signalled the beginning of a shift in direction from the Greek Revival which had hitherto occupied him toward a new Italianate form which was not a direct Palladian legacy.⁶⁵¹ Simultaneously he devised a counterpart, rustic version for a villa on a landscaped pleasure garden. Brighton Park, later re-named Queen's Park, had been purchased by an influential local solicitor, Thomas Attree, in 1825 with a view to developing a number of villas around the margins of an open green in the Picturesque manner. A watercolour by Barry, reproduced as a lithograph in 1834, shows showing substantial stuccoed villas laid out in grounds, mixed in style,⁶⁵² although the memoir by Barry's son claimed that they were all to be 'in the Italian style'.⁶⁵³ [6.26] Problems of access to the sea meant that only two houses were ever built, including one for the proprietor, known as the Attree Villa, built from early 1830 'on the plan of an Italian villa, excellently adapted to modern English requirements'.⁶⁵⁴ Demolished in 1971, a photograph shows an asymmetrical, symmetrical, formal house, rectangular in plan. It is recognisably Italian in both detail and setting, with a three-bay arched loggia on the garden front recessed into the house, opening into a boudoir which connects with the drawing room, a pantiled roof and prominent

⁶⁴⁹ Arthur Bolton's article, 'The Italian Villa in England: Attree's house in the Queen's Park, Brighton', *Country Life*, Supplement, 11 August 1917, pp. 2, 4 and 6, was written before the villa's demolition; Blissett, 'Barry: a Re-assessment' corrects some factual errors.

⁶⁵⁰ Contemporaneously with Soane's Renaissance palazzo design for the State Paper Office: Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.236. Blissett, 'Barry: a Re-assessment', pp. 201-214.

⁶⁵¹ Blissett, 'Barry: a Re-assessment', p. 155.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁶⁵³ Alfred Barry, *Memoir of the Life and Works of the late Sir Charles Barry, Architect*, (London, 1870), p. 73. Based on the watercolour, Blissett believes him to be in error.

⁶⁵⁴ Barry, p. 73.

chimneys rising over a restrained cornice.⁶⁵⁵ It is set in consciously Italianate terraced gardens;⁶⁵⁶ a visit by the Duke of Sutherland is said to have persuaded him to commission Barry for his alterations to Trentham.⁶⁵⁷ **[6.27]** Blissett shows a number of sketches, some believed to be alternative designs for the Attree Villa and some intended for other houses in the Queen's Park estate. The elements which Barry omits or includes in these variations are the loggia, the belvedere tower, and the pantiled roof; some are asymmetrical and others not.⁶⁵⁸ **[6.28a, b, c]**

Blissett identifies two earlier schemes for the Attree Villa which differ from the finished design, and one further sketch which may have been another Attree variant.⁶⁵⁹ One (his fig. 229) has a slim belvedere tower and highly decorated cornice but omits the loggia. **[6.29d]** The other, described by Blissett as 'intermediate' (his fig. 233) has the open loggia of the finished version but includes a belvedere tower with arcaded, open upper storey; the roof is pantiled and as a result more rustic in nature than the finished version. **[6.29e]** The third sketch (his fig. 234) is, in Blissett's words, 'remarkably arid, possessing the architectural character usually preserved by [Barry] for outbuildings'.⁶⁶⁰ **[6.29f]** The built design omits the tower, which Blissett sees as a resolution of Barry's conundrum over symmetry versus asymmetry 'which had been a constant problem in the early days of this design'.⁶⁶¹

Blissett disagrees with Pevsner's assessment of the Attree Villa as pure or predominantly Quattrocento,⁶⁶² suggesting that, in addition to drawing on specific villas which he had seen in Italy, Barry was open to the influence of other architects including, perhaps surprisingly

⁶⁵⁵ Bolton, p. 4.

⁶⁵⁶ Bradney, p. 200-204.

⁶⁵⁷ The second villa remains, much altered, at 30 West Drive, Brighton: HE List entry 1381095.

⁶⁵⁸ Blissett, 'Barry: a Re-assessment', pp. 162-4.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.164.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

(and which Blissett does not further substantiate), that of Nash at Cronkhill;⁶⁶³ in any event, Blissett does not see a need to make any stylistic differentiation and places the Attree house in the centre of the ‘theme of the Italian villa romanticised into a Picturesque English counterpart, some symmetrical, others not’.⁶⁶⁴ Goodhart-Rendel accords the Attree Villa special status as the first expression of the type of astylar ‘symmetrical mansions of Italian character’ which was ultimately to vanquish ‘Grecianism’.⁶⁶⁵

Barry’s country house work is an illustration of the difficulty of expanding rustic Claudian character in its purest form to a larger canvas, which required the grandeur of the palazzo to sustain it. His re-modelling of Walton House, Surrey, for the Earl of Tankerville from 1837, as ‘an elegant and at that time almost unique specimen of an Italian villa’, according to Barry’s son, included an imposing belvedere, to introduce asymmetry and compensate for the house’s flat and featureless site, and the use of pantiles on the roof, supposedly the first ‘Italian tiles’ to be manufactured in England specifically for the purpose.⁶⁶⁶ In Hitchcock’s view, this was the ‘first complete Italian exemplar offered for Early Victorian country houses’.⁶⁶⁷ [6.29] At around the same time, Barry designed the Golden Gates, a formal entrance to The Earl of Shelburne’s seat at Bowood in Wiltshire, an asymmetrical composition of two unequally-size belvederes, echoing Hunt’s earlier asymmetrical gate lodge design which was built at Alton, but on a monumental scale.⁶⁶⁸ While the pattern book audience, whether aspiring villa owner or speculative builder, could not contemplate

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ H.S. Goodhart-Rendel, *English Architecture since the Regency*, (London, 1953; 1989 National Trust reprint), p. 32.

⁶⁶⁶ Hunt, in his *Architettura Campestre* of 1827, had written at length about the desirable qualities of Italian tiles: pp .xviii, 8.

⁶⁶⁷ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 181. Also known as Mount Felix. Lost by fire: only the coach house now remains. See also Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, (revised edition, New Haven and London, 1979), p. 49.

⁶⁶⁸ RIBA Coll. SC34/17 shows the design used; a simpler, unexecuted version with a single belvedere also exists as SC33/1. Turner makes a direct and personal connection between the towered style at Barry’s Mount Felix and at Osborne, noting that the son of Lord Tankerville, Barry’s client at Mount Felix, was a close friend of Prince Albert, becoming his Private Secretary in 1849: ‘From Coburg to Osborne’, p. 31.

buildings of this ambition, the villa designs of authors such as Goodwin, Trendall, Wetten and to an extent, Parker -‘the poor man’s Barry’⁶⁶⁹- and even, on occasion, Loudon, presented affordable versions of the palazzo which sat alongside the vernacular Claudean illustrated by Hunt and Robinson.⁶⁷⁰ The extent to which elements of both the palazzo and the *villa rustica* were later to coalesce in the suburban house is a theme to which we will need to return. Barry’s country house work⁶⁷¹ at Shrubland Park and Trentham in his own very particular Italianate Renaissance interpretation lies for that reason outside the scope of this thesis, but it is interesting to note the use of Vernacular Italianate in his plans for three cottages at Trentham village of c.1840,⁶⁷² and three views of a very similar design for the Trentham village police station.⁶⁷³ [6.30] Osborne House, the collaboration between Thomas Cubitt and Prince Albert from the mid-1840s built as a marine retreat for Queen Victoria and her family, and built in two phases, eventuated as a highly enriched Renaissance palazzo, with idiosyncratic asymmetrical elevations anchored by two campaniles.⁶⁷⁴ [6.31] Osborne is of interest here because The Prince of Wales Lodge [6.32a] and Arthur Cottage, both of 1845, and the later Albert Cottage of 1868⁶⁷⁵ are textbook examples of rustic Italianate, suggesting a hierarchy of function and status, the Vernacular form being judged appropriate for ancillary buildings.⁶⁷⁶ The Landing House of c.1855 [6.32b] is particularly interesting in its almost primitive Italian rustic towered form, for a structure which while primarily functional also played a role in setting the scene for visitors arriving by boat.⁶⁷⁷ The lodges by Alexander Roos for Shrubland Park, Suffolk, of the early to mid-1840s display

⁶⁶⁹ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 426.

⁶⁷⁰ ‘An Italian Villa on a considerable scale’, in Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, Design XXII, by Robert Mallet, p. 946.

⁶⁷¹ David Blissett: ‘Veneerer-in-chief to the nobility: Sir Charles Barry’s Country Houses’, in Malcolm Airs (ed.), *The Victorian Great House*, (Oxford, 2000), p. 64.

⁶⁷² RIBA Coll. SC33/4 (7).

⁶⁷³ Collection of the Countess of Sutherland: illustrated in Blissett, ‘Barry: a Re-assessment’, fig. 447.

⁶⁷⁴ Turner’s article is the most thorough examination of Osborne’s stylistic provenance. See also Geoffrey Tyack, ‘Osborne and Balmoral’, in *Victoria and Albert: Art and Love*, (Royal Collection Trust, 2012), published online at www.royalcollection.org.uk.

⁶⁷⁵ HE List entries 1224152, 1266956 and 1224086. Attributed to Cubitt.

⁶⁷⁶ Although Albert Cottage was a *cottage orné*, used to accommodate some of Queen Victoria’s daughters, as well as ladies-in-waiting: List entry description.

⁶⁷⁷ Turner, p. 36; HE List entry 1223968.

interesting variations on a rustic theme appropriate to the scale and function of the buildings, that for the Coddenham Lodge closely resembling a Charles Parker *Villa Rustica* design; [6.33] and his sketched proposals for three different versions of the Ipswich Lodge at Shrubland Park dated c.1841⁶⁷⁸ [6.34] include an example of a rustic Italianate composition involving a round tower which was rarely found after Lugar.⁶⁷⁹

The Italianate country house

The differentiation between the rustic and palatial approaches to Italianate in the field of country house design is illustrated by three houses by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881). Better known for his Tudor-derived compositions and his precisely-detailed castles,⁶⁸⁰ Salvin did venture into an Italianate country house style, both for new houses and remodelling, working in both villa and palazzo style. Skutterskelfe House, Yorkshire (1832-38) for the Viscount Falkland,⁶⁸¹ was an otherwise classical house differentiated by a three storeyed tower with pyramidal roof, the top storey in the manner of a closed loggia; but a more convincing Italianate villa essay was Burwarton Hall, Shropshire, commissioned by the 6th Viscount Boyne on his marriage and built 1835-39. [6.35] The Italianate idiom which he chose was surprising for a house on such a large scale, rejecting the symmetry of the palazzo in favour of a less formal rusticity; Allibone likens it to Decimus Burton's Italianate work, to be discussed below.⁶⁸² Salvin made additions and alterations in the 1860s, and parts of it were demolished in the 1950s, but evidence survives on which to base an assessment of its original form.⁶⁸³ In its varied roofline and undisciplined asymmetrical plan it is truly Picturesque, and the characteristic Claudean elements of shallow-pitched roofs with overhanging eaves, groupings of round-headed windows and small balconies are all present,

⁶⁷⁸ Garnier, p. 41, fig. 34.

⁶⁷⁹ Designs by Hargrave [6.16] and Duff [6.50] are notable exceptions.

⁶⁸⁰ Jill Allibone, *Anthony Salvin: Pioneer of Gothic Revival Architecture*, (Cambridge, 1988).

⁶⁸¹ Also known as Rudby Hall. A sketch is illustrated in Allibone, fig. 26.

⁶⁸² Allibone, p. 90.

⁶⁸³ Mark Girouard, 'Reducing a white elephant', in *Country Life*, 17 March 1960, pp. 582-4; Francis Leach, *County Seats of Shropshire*, (Shrewsbury, 1891), p. 224; HE List entry 1001116.

although the tower is hinted at rather than explicit. Yet their sheer profusion confuses the eye and detailing seems too small in scale for this ‘immense and shapeless house’.⁶⁸⁴ In 1833 Salvin had designed a pair of modest Italianate villas in Fortis Green, North London for himself and his brother-in-law, William Andrews Nesfield. Nesfield’s house was illustrated by Loudon in the *Gardener’s Magazine*, and an engraving shows it to be a compact Claudean villa of textbook correctness: Burwarton resembles an extended version of it, but in a parkland setting rather than a suburban plot.⁶⁸⁵ **[6.36]**

Salvin went on to remodel two houses on Italianate lines. Penoyre, Brecon, was a substantial enlargement and remodelling, 1846-8, of an earlier house.⁶⁸⁶ Faced in Bath stone, the central symmetrical block shows elaborate Renaissance detailing in the cornices and window surrounds; the ground floor loggia embraces the main elevation and also returns along both sides, supporting a first floor balcony with balustrade. There is a three-storey belvedere tower, capped with a pyramidal slate roof, the top storey of which also takes the form of an open loggia: in contrast to Burwarton it undeniably presents itself as a palazzo. In the same year as Penoyre Salvin undertook the latest of many alterations to Hafod in Cardiganshire, which had originally been conceived in the late 1780s as a Picturesque Gothic house.⁶⁸⁷ Salvin was commissioned to treble the size of the house, adding new elements in an Italianate style evoking an urban Renaissance palazzo but with simplified fenestration which gave it a more rustic tone. A slim campanile of twice the height of the house formed a prominent stop to the new range. Only the service buildings and the park remain today. We can no more explain Salvin’s rare Italianate excursions at these two houses than we can at

⁶⁸⁴ Girouard, ‘White elephant’, p. 582.

⁶⁸⁵ *Gardener’s Magazine*, Vol. VI, (February 1840), pp. 52, 56. The American designer Andrew Jackson Downing was also to illustrate Nesfield’s house in his published works. See Chapter 8.

⁶⁸⁶ Description in Cadw List entry: (Building ID: 7483).

⁶⁸⁷ Additions by Nash, not in an Italianate idiom, had been obliterated in a fire of 1807.

Burwarton, although Allibone holds the view that he had been strongly influenced by Cubitt's work at Osborne.⁶⁸⁸

Perhaps a surprising absentee from country house Italianate is Sir Jeffrey Wyattville (1766-1840).⁶⁸⁹ His introduction of the belvedere at Chatsworth has been already been noted, but in the context of the picturesque, where his mastery rivalled that of Nash, his *cottage orné* repertoire⁶⁹⁰ does not seem have encompassed rustic Italianate, with the possible exception, according to Loudon, of an Italian gate lodge at Edensor, the Chatsworth estate village, built in 1839 and criticised in 1842 by Loudon's draughtsman and architectural assistant John Robertson as 'without merit .. a specimen of what, twenty years ago, was reckoned the Italian manner'.⁶⁹¹ **[6.37]** One of Wyattville's many pupils was William Donthorn (1799-1859), author of a Norfolk rectory of 1831 in the form of an Italianate villa, at Great Moulton. This was the only extant Italianate example among Donthorn's Grecian and Gothic repertoire,⁶⁹² but is a fine Parker-esque composition which achieves its effect through geometry rather than decoration. There is strictly speaking no campanile, that role being played by a three-storeyed element which stands proud of the rest of the roofline, a device which was to recur in the urban Italianate form seen two decades later. The chimney stack with flues joined by an arch is a detail which could have come straight from *Villa Rustica*, whose author had been another pupil of Wyattville. **[6.38]** Other executed Italianate

⁶⁸⁸ Allibone, p. 90.

⁶⁸⁹ Decimus Burton designed a number of small country houses in an Italian rustic mode: these will be considered together with his Calverley Park development, and other Italianate villas by him, in Chapter 7.

⁶⁹⁰ Endsleigh, Devon, for the Duke of Bedford being a fine example: Linstrum, p. 236.

⁶⁹¹ Loudon, *Encyclopedia Supplement*, p.1170. This is possibly HE List entry 1088163. An inexplicable comment, as Robertson went on to help Joseph Paxton design his own house there, Barbrook House, of exaggerated rustic Italianate appearance.

⁶⁹² Roderick O'Donnell regards Great Moulton as Donthorn's sole completed Italianate work: 'W. J. Donthorn (1799-1859): "architecture with great hardness and decision in the edges"', in *Architectural History*, Vol. 21 (1978), p. 91, fn. 15.

designs by Donthorn include Stanground Manor, Cambridgeshire in the same restrained manner.⁶⁹³ [6.39]

Provincial architects played a significant role in the evolution of the Italianate country house in England. Samuel Daukes (1811-80), for example, developed a style which combined a central block in restrained palazzo mode with a belvedere tower at the end of a long axis, reminiscent of Barry's Mount Felix, at Abberley Hall, Worcestershire (1837, rebuilt to the same design in 1845 following a fire); [6.40] Bricklehampton of 1848 [6.41] and, much later, Guiting Grange, (attributed).⁶⁹⁴ His work outside the country house field also employed a towered Italianate idiom, including three lunatic asylums, but more significantly he can be credited with developing his country house model into an urban style, seen most clearly in Lypiatt Terrace, Cheltenham, of 1847, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. James Medland (1808-94), his partner, was responsible for smaller country villas such as St Tewdric's, Chepstow, asymmetrical towered country houses in miniature, on the Wightwick-Loudon Design IX model. [6.42] Thomas Flockton (1823-99) designed a number of Italianate villas in the new suburbs of Sheffield from the 1840s. He was also the author of a substantial country house east of the city, High Hazels, of 1850, built 'regardless of cost' for William Jeffcock, coal-master and the first Mayor of Sheffield, an asymmetrical towered house with a Romanesque loggia set in 70 acres, a style which was clearly felt to be appropriate to his status.⁶⁹⁵ [6.43]

Even amateur architects were not afraid to engage with rustic Italianate at an early date: Ockham Park, Surrey, a house altered in 1729 for the 1st Lord King by Hawksmoor, was extended in an Italianate style in 1830 by the 7th Lord King. An entry in Brayley and

⁶⁹³ RIBA Coll. SD120/2 (1, 2). Destroyed by fire, 1899.

⁶⁹⁴ I am grateful to Alec Hamilton for making available to me his extensive research into Daukes's life and work.

⁶⁹⁵ Sheffield City Council and Friends of High Hazels Park, *High Hazels Park: a short history* (no date); HE List entry 1255115.

Britton's *Topographical History of Surrey* comments that the house 'was completely Italianised by the late Lord King'; adding, 'the roofing projects considerably over the exterior walls', a detail borne out by Allom's accompanying engraving which clearly shows the roof detailing, a loggia, and a striking campanile used to carry multiple chimneys,⁶⁹⁶ the whole set in Italian gardens.⁶⁹⁷ There is no evidence of an architect having been employed. [6.44] It was inherited in 1833 by his son, the 1st Earl Lovelace, who married Ada Byron, and they embarked in 1835 upon the transformation of a *cottage orné* on the North Somerset coast into an Italianate retreat, apparently to Ada's own designs.⁶⁹⁸ The house, Ashley Combe, was possibly the most rustic and literal English translation of a Tuscan farmhouse of its time, an asymmetrical agglomeration of elements and towers of varying heights executed in stone rubble; the grounds contained elaborate ornaments, tunnels and grottoes, and terraces with sea views: a *villa marittima* in the tradition of Pliny. [6.45]

Italianate over the border

This chapter cannot pretend to be an exhaustive survey of Vernacular Italianate country houses, but it is worth singling out instances in Scotland and Ireland, which were not lagging behind the home country in experiments in the new style. To the contrary: James Hargrave's early Irish project has been noted above. More significantly, in Scotland William Henry Playfair (1790-1857) of Edinburgh not only pioneered Italianate in Scotland but did so well in advance of English contemporaries in the years after Nash. His Italianate repertoire preceded his monumental neo-classical work in Edinburgh for which he is better known, but is both imaginative and varied.⁶⁹⁹ His Manse of 1827-31 at Minto, Roxburghshire,⁷⁰⁰ took the form of a symmetrical villa, but with Tuscan detailing, described as 'in the Italian or

⁶⁹⁶ Brayley, *Surrey*, p. 118.

⁶⁹⁷ Bradney, p. 375.

⁶⁹⁸ John Harris, and Robert Hradsky, *A Passion for Building: The Amateur Architect in England 1650-1850*, Soane Museum Exhibition catalogue, (London, 2007), p. 24.

⁶⁹⁹ Colvin, p. 814.

⁷⁰⁰ Playfair's drawings for Minto are in the University of Edinburgh's Special Collections, Coll. 13/33, 1619-40.

Tuscan villa style .. built from designs specially prepared to suit the taste of the then holder of the living'.⁷⁰¹ Belmont, near Edinburgh, designed for Lord Mackenzie in 1828⁷⁰² and therefore just anticipating Barry's 'Travellers' Club, [6.46] was a substantial house in palazzo form finished in ashlar, with two projecting pavilions connected by a recessed subsidiary range; boldly overhanging eaves are supported on brackets and much use is made of balustraded balconies.⁷⁰³ But it is at Dunphail, Morayshire, that he displays a mastery of Italian rustic composition.⁷⁰⁴ [6.47] This elaborate asymmetrical villa for the Cumming Bruce family was composed of elements of differing heights, with grouped windows and a pyramid-roofed prospect tower at one end of the elongated principal elevation: the tower bears some resemblance to Papworth's 'Villa designed for the residence of an artist'.⁷⁰⁵ Of rubble dressed with sandstone and in a dramatic and picturesque riverside setting, it was completed a year after Belmont, and extended by Playfair in 1833 and again in 1842 when a walled service court was added, and subsequently by others in 1871.⁷⁰⁶ It was much admired, being described immediately after completion as 'admitted by all to be one of the happiest efforts of Mr. Playfair's classical taste',⁷⁰⁷ but this concept of 'classical' was eventually recognised for its true nature: an 1868 account describes it as 'an elegant mansion of the Italian order of architecture .. from the south-west front of the house the eye naturally glides along the beautifully wooded western bank of the river Divie'.⁷⁰⁸

Playfair also worked in Ireland where his Drumbanagher, near Armagh, was a radical composition for 1829. It is a substantial house: the main elevation presents as a complex

⁷⁰¹ Francis Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*, (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1882)

⁷⁰² Finished plans were dated February 1828: Messrs. Lyon and Turnbull, *Catalogue for sale no.304*, Edinburgh, 26 January 2011, lot 20A.

⁷⁰³ HES LB28032.

⁷⁰⁴ HES LB2171.

⁷⁰⁵ Papworth, *Rural Residences*, Plate XVII.

⁷⁰⁶ The present-day elongated river frontage was nevertheless part of the original design as contemporary illustrations show.

⁷⁰⁷ Thomas Dick Lauder, *An Account of the Great Floods of August 1829 in the Province of Moray* (Elgin, 1830), pp. 64-7.

⁷⁰⁸ J. and W. Watson, *Morayshire Described*, (Elgin, 1868), p. 71.

massing of a two-storey central block with taller hipped-roof pavilions, each resembling towers, projecting at each end, with one offset slim belvedere tower to the left; it resembles Belmont rather than Dunphail.⁷⁰⁹ [6.48]

It is worth observing at this point a use of terminology by Playfair which is of significance. In correspondence with his client, Maxwell Close, over the fenestration of the East Wing of Drumbanagher, Playfair refers to the house as being in ‘the Italian style’.⁷¹⁰ In addition Ian Gow has identified a description by Playfair himself of Drumbanagher as ‘Italianate’.⁷¹¹ Frank Salmon has noted that this reference, which must date from around 1830, when the surviving Playfair letter books begin, appears to be the earliest example of the term ‘Italianate’ – as opposed to ‘Italian’ – to signify Italian-derived architectural forms.⁷¹² Salmon comments that:

Given the building’s villa-like low roof, projecting eaves and belvedere tower, Playfair evidently intended the term to be a development of earlier uses of the word ‘Italian’ to describe a sort of rural vernacular that, in Britain, had been incorporated into the Picturesque and formed the basis of numerous smaller country house pattern books of the first third of the nineteenth century.⁷¹³

Playfair’s final Italianate house was at Dalcrue, a secondary house on the Lynedoch estate, Perthshire, dated 1832: it is a purist Claudean asymmetrical farmhouse with broad eaves and a pyramidal roofed tower, and a matching model farm.⁷¹⁴ [6.49] There survives correspondence with his client at Dalcrue, Lord Lynedoch, in which, using a different descriptive term from that employed at Drumbanagher, Playfair explains why he feels ‘the Tuscan style of building to be admirably well calculated for this purpose’, and writes

⁷⁰⁹ Demolished 1951. Mark Bence-Jones, *Burke’s Guide to Country Houses, Vol 1: Ireland*, (London, 1978), p. 112.

⁷¹⁰ Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, Playfair Coll., MSS 3084 Letter Book 4, 1 July 1831.

⁷¹¹ ‘“An Architect’s Melancholy”: Furniture by W H Playfair for an Irish House’, *Irish Arts Review*, 14 (1998), p. 58. I am grateful to Dr. Frank Salmon for bringing this to my attention. Gow does not however give a specific reference or date.

⁷¹² Frank Salmon, ‘The “ordinary Italian” in Nineteenth-Century British Architecture’, in Antonio Bruculeri and Sabine Frommel (eds.), *Renaissance italienne et architecture au XIX^e siècle: Interprétations et restitutions*, (Rome, 2015), pp. 233-42, p. 239.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ HES LB17897.

'beseeching your Lordship to build the Tower; .. it is this which stamps the Italian character upon the whole'.⁷¹⁵ These early Italianate villas, which owed much more to the Picturesque than to archaeological observation, constituted a phase from which Playfair had moved on by the early 1830s in favour of country houses in a developing Scottish vernacular. It is hard to account for his precocious Italianism, although his father, James Playfair, had travelled to Italy in 1790 for the purpose of 'improvement in my profession'.⁷¹⁶ William trained under William Stark,⁷¹⁷ an Edinburgh architect best known for his picturesque urban planning in the city, although he had also spent time in London in the offices of both Smirke and James Wyatt;⁷¹⁸ his library included Gandy's innovative volume of designs of 1805.⁷¹⁹ One of his pupils, David Cousin, provided a rustic Italianate house design for Loudon's *Encyclopedia*,⁷²⁰ and Drumbanagher is thought to have inspired a proposed Claudian addition to Lord Annesley's Donard Lodge, Newcastle, Co. Down, for which a design, never executed, of the mid-1830s by Thomas Duff shows a two storey wing with twin pyramidal belvederes and small loggia, although in rustic rather than palatial mode.⁷²¹ **[6.50]** Playfair's legacy stretched even further afield as another of his pupils was the Scotsman John Notman, who had worked with Playfair at Drumbanagher shortly before his emigration to America in 1831, where he was to become an early and successful exponent of the Italianate house.⁷²²

Playfair was followed by Archibald Simpson of Aberdeen (1790-1847), whose broad repertoire included a number of Italianate examples. A model farm on the Altyre estate, Moray, of around 1834 and attributed to him, bears some resemblance to Robinson's 1830 farm buildings designs, and contains a full complement of round-headed windows, open

⁷¹⁵ Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, Playfair Coll., MSS 3084 Letter Book 4, 21 June 1832.

⁷¹⁶ Salmon, *Ruins*, p. 24.

⁷¹⁷ Colvin, pp. 976-8.

⁷¹⁸ Colvin, pp. 813-16.

⁷¹⁹ *Catalogue for the sale of the Library of William Playfair*, 1857, National Library of Scotland, KR.16, f. 5 (1).

⁷²⁰ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, paras. 1776-80 and figs. 1501-7.

⁷²¹ Dixon, Cat. 17.

⁷²² See Chapter 8.

loggias, arcaded cart bays, and a castello tower.⁷²³ His alterations to Haddo House at Inverkeithney in 1836 [6.51] include a striking porte-cochère in the form of a massive square belvedere,⁷²⁴ which he repeats at Thainstone, Aberdeenshire (1840).⁷²⁵ [6.52] At Linton House, Sauchen, he produced a softer Claudean version on a smaller scale with an entrance elevation which has the simplicity of Lugar's Dunstall and which has some similarity with George Repton's drawing for a farmhouse.⁷²⁶ [6.53] Indeed Simpson's familiarity with Italianate detailing may have been acquired as a result of his year in Lugar's office which coincided with the publication of the latter's first book of executed designs.⁷²⁷ Later, and at the end of the chronological range of this thesis, in the 1850s Alexander Thomson of Glasgow would take up the baton for the smaller house with Clydeside villas such as Craig Ailey in 1850, [6.54] developing a model exhibiting an asymmetrical plan and elevations and anchored by a belvedere. Thomson's personal and distinctive Greco-Italian style has not generally been considered in the literature in a Claudean context and warrants separate consideration: it will be discussed at the end of this chapter. Nevertheless he should be included in the rich Scottish and Irish corpus of Claudean Italianate, which in the case of Playfair at least was apparently not matched at that date in England.

Henry Goodridge, Edward Davis, James Wilson and the 'English Florence'

The city of Bath had established itself in the course of the first half of the eighteenth century as an élite watering place, a status reflected in ambitious building schemes which encompassed formal terraces and such innovations as the linked sequence of square, circus and crescent by John Wood, father (1704-1754) and son (1728-1781);⁷²⁸ the latter's Royal Crescent, with its open rural views, introduced the concept of *rus in urbe* to the city. By the

⁷²³ HES LB17429.

⁷²⁴ HES LB9460; now derelict.

⁷²⁵ HES LB9152.

⁷²⁶ HES LB16274.

⁷²⁷ Cuthbert Graham, *Archibald Simpson, Architect of Aberdeen*, (Aberdeen, 1990), p. 11; David Miller, *Archibald Simpson, Architect: his life and times*, (Forres, 2006), pp. 21-2.

⁷²⁸ *Buildings of England: Bath*, pp. 17-22.

end of the eighteenth century the city's appeal as a fashionable resort was declining, and the building of large-scale formal terraces gave way to piecemeal villa development in the early decades of the next, the city expanding further into the picturesque, semi-rural settings of the surrounding hills.⁷²⁹ Writers such as Walter Savage Landor, who lived in both cities, praised the topography of Bath for its resemblance to the hillside setting of Florence,⁷³⁰ reflecting the newly-popular romantic allure of Italy in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁷³¹ The architectural response of three Bath architects, led by Henry Goodridge, took the form of Vernacular Italianate: Goodridge, who began by building his own house on Bathwick Hill in 1828, eventually created something of an Italianate *comune* there, although it took a further two decades for more examples to appear.⁷³²

In recent years the works of Henry Goodridge (1797-1864), Edward Davis (c.1802-1852), and to a lesser extent James Wilson (1816-1900), have deservedly attracted attention, although there remain differing shades of opinion over their relative contribution and originality.⁷³³ Goodridge's villas have been described at length by Woodward, and they are examined here more briefly to put them into a broader stylistic and chronological context. Goodridge's aesthetic is thought to have been strongly influenced by Grand Tourist and connoisseur William Beckford, for whom Goodridge built a folly in Bath, the Greco-Italianate Lansdowne Tower, in 1826, but Goodridge also made his own journey to Italy. Bathwick Hill began to be developed in the 1820s and early houses were in the main conventional villa boxes. Goodridge began work on his own house, Montebello, now known as Bathwick Grange, in 1828. His earlier town houses in the city had been Neo-

⁷²⁹ *Buildings of England: Bath*, pp. 22, 33.

⁷³⁰ John Foster, 'The Life and Opinions of Walter Savage Landor', in *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Vol. 24, 1865, pp. 171-206, p. 187.

⁷³¹ As discussed in Chapter 3.

⁷³² *Buildings of England: Bath*, pp. 192-5.

⁷³³ Some of the literature on these architects has already been cited in the Introduction: Woodward, 'Aerial Boudoirs of Bath', and 'H. E. Goodridge in Bath'; Mowl, 'A Taste for Towers', and 'Williamane'; and Frost, 'H.E. Goodridge'. Other relevant studies include Neil Jackson, *Nineteenth-century Bath Architects and Architecture*, (Bath, 1991); and Michael Forsyth, 'Edward Davis: Nineteenth-century Bath architect and pupil of Sir John Soane' in *Bath History*, Vol. VII (1998), pp. 107-128.

classical, but here he opted for a literal Claudian vernacular.⁷³⁴ He used the picturesque steepness of the slope to show off two towers: the smaller one is in the form of an octagonal temple of the winds; the other a square campanile, added after his return from a brief visit to Italy in 1829, with an open arcade loggia at the top; this is not integral to the house and is without access. The house is on an asymmetrical plan, with component rooms of differing shapes; a two-storey, linear loggia provides an open, round-arched arcade to its upper level; there is characteristic detailing to the eaves and soffits, and the varied roofline and elevation cast shadows on the pale ashlar. The site commands far-reaching views, and the house is approached up a winding drive which also engineers a picturesque pretence of more extensive grounds. **[6.55]** It is, like Cronkhill, a composition of immense charm, but much more literal in its stylistic borrowing, for this was not just Italianate, but self-consciously Italian: for the avoidance of doubt Goodridge named his house Montebello. Fifteen years later he followed with three more Bathwick houses, two as a semi-detached but non-identical pair (La Casetta and Casa Bianca), **[6.56]** and a single house, Fiesole, (the name a direct Florentine reference), into which Goodridge moved from Montebello.⁷³⁵ **[6.57]** Goodridge's semi-detached plan is ingenious in providing each house with external views from their loggias without compromising privacy. Overall, these three later villas rely more on detailing and decoration for their effect, with balconies and tiled roofs, quoins and elaborate masonry, but they still retain the playful quality of the Picturesque, perhaps unusual by 1846. Jackson rightly differentiates these two phases, seeing Montebello as being 'stylistically varied in the Picturesque [manner]' and 'austerely Tuscan', whereas the later villas are in his view 'rich, almost bombastic Italianate', demonstrating his 'consistent, elaborate and generous Italian Villa style'.⁷³⁶ This is probably a generous view, for it may instead be seen as a coarsening of style, for certainly by the mid-1850s Goodridge's villas in

⁷³⁴ *Buildings of England: Bath*, p. 198. He made a short visit to Italy in 1829 although this alone is unlikely to have been an overriding influence on his choice: Frost, pp. 114-18.

⁷³⁵ *Buildings of England: Bath*, p. 198; Woodward, 'Aerial Boudoirs', pp. 68-71.

⁷³⁶ Jackson, p. 113.

the developing Clifton area in Bristol, are a world away from the playful rusticity of Montebello, presenting more formal, palazzo frontages, the better to accommodate their semi-detached arrangement.⁷³⁷ But this is to jump ahead, both chronologically and stylistically.

There were other early examples in Bath: Smallcombe Grove, now Oakwood, is a compact Italianate villa set in a landscaped garden, built as the home of Benjamin Barker, a landscape painter (for whose brother Gandy had designed the Doric House down the hill). Attributions and dates vary, but there is now a consensus that it was by Edward Davis, a former pupil of Soane practising in Bath, who from 1833 extended the existing plain box and transformed it into an asymmetrical Italianate villa with characteristic eaves, campanile and first floor loggia, in Italianate gardens.⁷³⁸ **[6.58]** Davis was also the architect of the Rectory at Marston Bigot, Somerset, for a son of the Earl of Cork and Orrery.⁷³⁹ Designed in 1836 it has all the recognisable Vernacular Italianate characteristics of Smallcombe, including an open loggia to the principal bedroom on the first floor, overhanging eaves and strong vertical accents in the form not only of the square campanile but also tall, slim chimneys. **[6.59]** A low service range is punctuated at each end by pavilions with pyramidal roofs, not unlike the Sandridge Park stable block. The internal plan is free-flowing; the setting is a picturesque combination of wooded vistas and a formally terraced garden. Davis saw no occasion to change the elements he had used at Smallcombe by reason of the house's setting, its function or the status of its occupant: his model could meet the needs both of the rural rectory and the suburban villa. Later he built another Somerset villa which was almost an exact copy of the other two: this villa was Alburys, also known as Le

⁷³⁷ Four houses in two pairs on Clifton Down: Avonbank, Llanfoist, Eaton House and Glenavon. (HE List entries 1282361 and 1205748 respectively). Discussed in Chapter 7.

⁷³⁸ Forsyth, 'Edward Davis', p. 116-18; Tim Mowl and Carole Fry, 'Oakwood: an Appraisal of the Historic Gardens', (Bath and North East Somerset Council, 2008).

⁷³⁹ HE List entry 1058278.

Moigne's, at Wrington, built in a village setting for a local solicitor.⁷⁴⁰ Davis's most ambitious house was exhibited as a design 'now building' at the Royal Academy in 1838⁷⁴¹ for Barcombe, Paignton, Devon, co-incidentally some five miles from Sandridge Park. Demolished in 1989, it apparently rivalled The Deepdene in its eclecticism,⁷⁴² uncharacteristic for Davis and possibly at the behest of his client, N. H. Nugent.⁷⁴³ Of dressed local sandstone, its elevations presented Gothic and Grecian elements but it was also strongly Italianate with shallow roof pitches, bracketed eaves, a tower pierced by round-headed windows and a campanile. It stood in formal Italianate gardens with balustraded terraces.⁷⁴⁴ [6.60] Davis's Vernacular Italianate houses are recognisably Claudean in origin but sensitively adapted as modest 'modern' villas; they display perhaps greater restraint in elevation and detail than Goodridge's Bath villas, which can be adjudged imitative rather than interpretative. Davis has been overshadowed by Goodridge even though his work was contemporaneous, but in any event they were both leading exponents of the Claudean style for the smaller villa in the 1830s. As a result, it is hard to settle the authorship of a striking building outside Bath, the Aqueduct Hotel at Claverton,⁷⁴⁵ which was designed for landowner George Vivian in 1836, and while it is symmetrical it seems to be based on a rustic Italian building, with tiers of loggias and characteristic roof. It was built to serve the tourists who made the expedition along the canal from Bath and the architecture was no doubt thought to lend it a festive, *al fresco* air. [6.61] The final architect in the Bath trio is

⁷⁴⁰ HE List entry 130922.

⁷⁴¹ Graves, Vol. II, p. 259, exhibits 1202, 1241.

⁷⁴² Contemporaneously described as 'a strange medley of styles tastelessly jumbled together': *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, Vol. 1, 1837-8, p. 288, and 'a very elegant mansion of the Italian style of architecture': F. W. L. Stockdale, *History of Devon*, MS, Devon and Exeter Institution, quoted in Todd Gray, *The Garden History of Devon*, (Exeter, 1995), p. 36.

⁷⁴³ It has not been possible to trace N. H. Nugent.

⁷⁴⁴ Described in *Buildings of England: Devon*, pp. 843-4.

⁷⁴⁵ Various known also as the Claverton Inn, Bassett House, and now Pendragon House. HE List entry 1214481. Frost tentatively attributed it to Goodridge on the grounds of its proximity to Bath: p. 246; Mowl firmly to Goodridge: 'Williamane', p. 105.

James Wilson (1816-1900).⁷⁴⁶ His earlier work outside the city includes Wadbury, at Mells in Somerset, an 1838 Italianate house with three-storeyed tower in a picturesque setting, built for an ironmaster.⁷⁴⁷ [6.62] In similar vein is Fairfield House, attributed to him,⁷⁴⁸ and nearby Charlcombe Grove of c.1853, a towered house in the Wightwick mode.⁷⁴⁹ Drawings by him exist for alternative towered Italianate elevations as alterations proposed to Cumberland Villa, Bathwick Hill, a Neo-classical town house of 1824 by John Pinch.⁷⁵⁰ Never executed, Wilson must have taken his cue from the villas of Goodridge which surround it and Davis's neighbouring Smallcombe. Glen Avon, built as his own home much later in 1858 [6.63] seems less successful, perhaps because there was little opportunity to create a picturesque setting on such a constricted site.⁷⁵¹ The authorship of four Italianate suburban villas at Lansdown, Bath, built in the 1840s cannot be firmly attributed as between Wilson and Goodridge, which perhaps demonstrates the emerging consensus around a distinct Bath villa style.⁷⁵²

The smaller country house

Certain examples, notably under the imaginative hand of Playfair, had demonstrated that Vernacular Italianate could be employed on the grand scale, but for a period it remained true to its origins under Nash as an attractive idiom for the smaller villa in its own grounds, as exemplified by Lugar, Goodridge and Davis. Even as architects began to realise its possibilities for the more densely-designed sites of the urban centre, Vernacular Italianate villas continued to be built in the country and on city fringes. Indeed some architects, such

⁷⁴⁶ Brodie et al, *Dictionary*, Vol. 2, p. 1026.

⁷⁴⁷ HE List entry 1058294. Drawings were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1841: Graves, Vol. V, p. 308, exhibits 1087 and 1089; the identity of the 'Italian villa near Bath' exhibited by him in 1855 (exhibit 1250) is not known, but possibly Charlcombe Grove.

⁷⁴⁸ HE List entry 1395932.

⁷⁴⁹ RIBA Coll. PB497/11. Now divided into Ravenswell House and Grove House: HE List entry 1395317.

⁷⁵⁰ RIBA Coll. PB509/18/2, 4, 5, 6. By this time Wilson was in partnership with Thomas Fuller: see RIBA catalogue entry.

⁷⁵¹ HE List entry 1394984.

⁷⁵² Beckford (IoE 4442600), Heathfield (444260), Lonach (446723), Bella Vista (446725). HE List descriptions suggest Goodridge; *Buildings of England: Bath* opts for Wilson (p. 264).

Decimus Burton, whose work will be discussed in the next chapter, moved easily between town and country. Given the difficulty of gathering information about houses which were not connected with landed estates and whose authorship is often unrecorded, it is not possible to draw meaningful conclusions about the speed and success of its acceptance in various regions of Britain, but the country house origins of Vernacular Italianate meant that this was not a style led from the metropolis, and it is noticeable that drawings and plans by many provincial architects of the period evince a willingness to embrace it: Medland and Daukes in the Cotswolds and Flockton in Sheffield have already been mentioned, as well as the Bath group, but others include John Harper (1809-42), who practised in York and was the author of a remarkable group of drawings showing a variety of highly accomplished Italianate designs for villas and cottages dating from the 1830s.⁷⁵³ One in particular⁷⁵⁴ **[6.64]** shows a horizontality which invites comparison with Alexander Thomson's Glasgow villas two decades later, which will be discussed below. There is however no evidence that Harper executed any Italianate designs.⁷⁵⁵ There are similar designs from the 1830s for Italianate houses by both James Trubshaw (1777-1853) and his son Thomas (1802-1842), of the extended Staffordshire family of master builders and architects,⁷⁵⁶ **[6.65]** although whether these were speculative or commissioned, or ever built, is not known. George Wightwick (1802-72), who published an influential Italianate villa design in his *Palace of Architecture*,⁷⁵⁷ built Thornhill, a villa near Plymouth in 1835⁷⁵⁸ and a number of other Italianate houses in the West Country.⁷⁵⁹ **[6.66]** His clients tended to be drawn from the ranks of the gentry or those with second-generation mercantile wealth, who did not have country estates but could

⁷⁵³ RIBA Coll. SE3/1(3, 4, 9, 11, 12).

⁷⁵⁴ RIBA Coll. SE3/1(3), **[6.64d]**.

⁷⁵⁵ Colvin, p.483. Harper died in Naples at the age of 33 while on a Continental tour.

⁷⁵⁶ RIBA Coll. SD125/3(3, 4, 5); The influence of the Trubshaw family on the work of architect Charles Lynam in Stoke-on-Trent in 1850 will be examined in Chapter 7.

⁷⁵⁷ See Chapter 5.

⁷⁵⁸ RIBA Coll. VOS/201 ff.39-41, 62.

⁷⁵⁹ Wightwick's, drawings, bound into 5 volumes, evidence many more such as Trehill and Penhellis in Cornwall, and town villas at Ford Park, Plymouth: for example, RIBA Coll. VOS/201 f.29, 34-38 and /205 f.92; see also *Buildings of England: Devon*, p. 669.

afford to commission houses set in substantial grounds, typical of the clientèle for many of the architects whose villas are described in this section. In 1841 another Devon architect and, like Wightwick a former Foulston pupil, the otherwise unknown Edward Gribble,⁷⁶⁰ built Bishopstowe in Torquay, a substantial villa, as a private residence for the Lord Bishop of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts. This was a house not only geographically close to Davis's Barcombe of three years earlier, but also physically similar in concept; like Barcombe, the extensive grounds were laid out as pleasure grounds with walks and terraces to take advantage of their picturesque coastal sites. **[6.67]**

What becomes evident from these designs and many of the built examples is the emergence of a distinct template for the detached villa: an asymmetrical, towered form exemplified by the Harper and Trubshaw drawings and by the 'Anglo-Italian' villas presented by Wightwick and Brown in their pattern books of 1840 and 1841, and prefigured by Loudon and Lamb in their published designs of the 1830s. This proved remarkably persistent over the next decades. Flockton's High Hazels, near Sheffield, has already been referred to, but countless towered country villas continued to be built well into the 1860s, and typical examples by two architects, both from the north-west, illustrate how what might be termed the 'Wightwick' prototype survived with little modification for three decades. Charles Reed (1814-59)⁷⁶¹ was born in Birkenhead and practised on Merseyside and Cumbria where he completed at least three Italianate villas. Cowley House of 1847-50 at St Helen's, Lancashire, a substantial villa in extensive grounds was built for John Ansdell, a solicitor married to a brewing heiress;⁷⁶² **[6.68]** Halton Grange, Runcorn of 1853-6 was commissioned by a soap manufacturer; a measure of the scale of the enterprise is that the grounds were laid out by Edward Kemp

⁷⁶⁰ The *Western Times* for 15 November 1834 in reporting that Gribble had just taken up residence in Torquay, states that after training with Foulston in Plymouth, Gribble practised in London for 'many years'.

⁷⁶¹ His work is better known under the surname of Verelst which he assumed on inheriting an estate. Brodie et al, Vol. 2, pp. 445, 867. See also *Buildings of England: Cheshire*, p. 38 and *Lancashire: Liverpool and the South-West*, p. 84. For Verelst's obituary: *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 December 1859.

⁷⁶² HE List entry 1199150; the grounds now form Victoria Park: *Lancashire: Liverpool and the South-West*, p. 627.

who had been appointed by Paxton as the first superintendent of Birkenhead Park.⁷⁶³ [6.69] The third was built as a villa-retreat: Underscar Manor, near Keswick, of 1856-63 for William Oxley, a Liverpool textile merchant. [6.70] All employ an asymmetrical plan and a prominent pyramidal-roofed campanile, although materials differ, Halton and Cowley being finished in render whereas Underscar is in rubble with stone dressings; its location (and purpose) lending itself to a more romantic composition than the more urbane restraint displayed by the other two houses. Its extensive grounds were ‘set with specimen trees, with a walled garden .. and unrivalled views of Derwentwater.’⁷⁶⁴ Studies of the nineteenth-century ‘Discovery’ of the Lake District as a destination for the genteel pursuit of leisure, and of the concomitant process of villa-building⁷⁶⁵ suggest that the lakeside setting gave the Italianate villa a particular resonance, and many examples are found there, such as Belsfield (c.1840), attributed to architect George Webster of Kendal, for Baroness de Sternberg,⁷⁶⁶ and including one built as an hotel: Rigg’s Hotel, Windermere (1847), by Miles Thompson of Kendal.⁷⁶⁷ This proliferation is summed up in the List Entry for Underscar, which describes it as ‘an extensive and prominent villa in the Italianate style, the style and [spectacular] siting of which aptly characterises the flavour of the mid- to late nineteenth century developments around the Cumbrian Lakes by industrialists and entrepreneurs.’

Salvin’s Italianate country houses in Wales have already been considered. There are other examples there by a number of architects: no single local architect seems to have been predominant, although for many houses attribution remains problematic. Two large Carmarthenshire country houses of the 1850s, are both now in ruins: Gellideg, at

⁷⁶³ Janet Waymark, ‘Edward Kemp’, in *ODNB*. Halton Grange is now Runcorn Town Hall.

⁷⁶⁴ HE List entry 479596.

⁷⁶⁵ John Walton and Jason Wood (eds.), *The Making of A Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist Destination 1750-2010*, (Farnham, 2013); John Murdoch (ed.), *The Discovery of the Lake District: A northern Arcadia and its uses*, Exhibition catalogue, (Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984).

⁷⁶⁶ HE List entry 1241209; subsequently much enlarged. Illustrated in Murdoch, pl. 253.

⁷⁶⁷ HE List entry 1332580; illustrated in Murdoch, pl. 260.

Llandyfaelog, by William Wesley Jenkins (c.1793-1864),⁷⁶⁸ was built from 1852 around an older core for use as a secondary house for London barrister Richard Jennings.⁷⁶⁹ Pant-glas of 1853-5, by London architect E. L. Blackburne for David Jones, a banker, lay at the centre of a country estate and was more formal in tone, somewhat resembling Hafod as enlarged by Salvin, with open loggias on two storeys and a belvedere tower.⁷⁷⁰ [6.71] Richard Penson (1815-1886),⁷⁷¹ active in the Welsh borders and better known as a Gothic Revival architect and church restorer,⁷⁷² built a substantial Claudian lodge at Nanteos, Ceredigion (1857), of two storeys with a three-storey belvedere, a consciously charming eye-catcher, somewhat ironically replacing the *cottage orné* lodge designed by John Nash.⁷⁷³ [6.72] Of interest not least because of its architect and client is Falcondale, Lampeter, an extensive rebuilding of an earlier house for John Battersby Harford, nephew of J. S. Harford of Blaise Castle, Bristol for whom Nash had built Blaise Hamlet four decades earlier.⁷⁷⁴ Stuccoed with ashlar dressings, its symmetrical principal front presents a two-storey recessed range with three storey flanking pavilions suggesting belvedere towers and prominent eaves and chimneys; it is a house on a considerable scale. ‘An unusually distinctive example of a mid-century Italianate house in west Wales’,⁷⁷⁵ it was set in a landscaped park with formal pleasure grounds, with an Italianate lodge. Its architect was Thomas Talbot Bury (1809-1877), former

⁷⁶⁸ Colvin, p. 574.

⁷⁶⁹ www.coflein.gov.uk Ref. No.17352; *Buildings of Wales: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion*, p.69. Jenkins exhibited a drawing at the Royal Academy in 1854.

⁷⁷⁰ Cadw List nos.11144 for ruined main house and 11128 for outbuildings. The list description suggests James Wilson of Bath or William Wesley Jenkins as architects; however Blackburne exhibited a design for it at the Royal Academy in 1852: *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, Vol. 15, 1852, p. 163, and Graves, Vol. I, p. 205, exhibit 1213.

⁷⁷¹ Colvin, p. 798.

⁷⁷² Geoffrey Orrin, ‘Richard Penson as church restorer in Victorian Gower’, in *Journal of the Gower Society*, Vol. 55, 2004, pp. 14-16.

⁷⁷³ Caroline Palmer, *Historic Parks and gardens in Ceredigion*, (Llandeilo, 2004), p. 69.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.

⁷⁷⁵ Cadw List description: ID 10449.

pupil of A.C. Pugin and assistant to Vulliamy and Charles Barry;⁷⁷⁶ it is possibly unique among Bury's otherwise predominantly Gothic work.

New examples of the Italianate country villa in extensive grounds continued to appear well into at least the 1870s, such as Towerhurst, in the new community of Leigh Woods, Bristol, a group of villas of a variety of styles set among woodland at the western end of the newly completed suspension bridge. [6.73]

Alexander Thomson

It is appropriate to leave until last in this section a discussion of the work of Alexander Thomson (1817-75), partly because his Scottish villas were designed between 1850 and 1870 and therefore at the end of the chronological period covered by this thesis, but also because the idiom which he created for the larger villa was an eclectic, experimental reading, which in defying normative definitions has led to a difference of opinion over his sources and associative intentions. Indeed, some historians might be surprised at the very idea of the inclusion of Thomson in a study of Vernacular Italianate architecture.⁷⁷⁷ While other mid-century architects working in Scotland such as Andrew Heiton jnr. (1823-94)⁷⁷⁸ did not stray from the towered pattern book mould, producing designs such as those for Seggie House, St. Andrews of c.1860 [6.74] or Brunswickhill, Galashiels,⁷⁷⁹ as late as 1884, 'Greek' Thomson was by 1850 playing with combinations of picturesque asymmetry and classical (Greek) detailing, particularly relating to the use of trabeated window openings where Loudonesque styling would have prescribed round-headed windows, an approach which has

⁷⁷⁶ W.H. Tregellas, revised Annette Peach, 'Thomas Talbot Bury', in *ODNB*.

⁷⁷⁷ See Andor Gomme and David Walker, *The Architecture of Glasgow*, (2nd edition, London, 1987), Chapter 6 for a general discussion of Thomson's villas which by omitting any discussion of Nash implicitly denies any Claudian provenance. Gavin Stamp, in his 'At Once Classic and Picturesque', in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (March 1998), pp. 46-58, focuses mainly on Holmwood but discusses more generally Thomson's sources.

⁷⁷⁸ *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*: entry for Andrew Heiton jnr. [accessed 20 October 2014].

⁷⁷⁹ HES LB50494 and LB32005.

been celebrated as ‘unique in British architecture’ at the time.⁷⁸⁰ While his approach is undoubtedly original, his achievement at Holmwood, Renfrew, of 1857-8, an asymmetrical villa with overtly Grecian motifs subtly employed, which is rightly regarded as his masterpiece, has tended to overshadow his earlier villas whose rustic Italianate features are regarded by some historians as a mere way-point *en route* to his ultimate vision.⁷⁸¹ [6.75] In his assessment of the house Stamp states that ‘Thomson’s debt to Schinkel’ is ‘self-evident’.⁷⁸² He does however admit that ‘less obvious and more tantalising are the possible British precedents for the use of a manner “at once classic and picturesque”’, proposing Gandy’s designs, equally revolutionary, as a possible source, and nodding towards Cronkhill and its Knight and Price provenance.⁷⁸³ Gomme also points to Schinkelian *Rundbogenstil* as the source of the elevations and detailing for Thomson’s early Clyde villas such as Craig Ailey (1850) [6.76] and The Knowe (c.1853).⁷⁸⁴ [6.77] One could argue that the horizontality which was to become a marked feature not just at Holmwood but of all his later villas, not least Holmwood, had already been essayed, not least by Playfair at Dunphail. Some villas, such as Tor House of 1856 [6.78] and Arran View [6.79] of 1868,⁷⁸⁵ retained a pronounced form of the belvedere tower, Arran View in particular referring back, consciously or not, to Papworth’s ‘Villa designed for the residence of an Artist’. [6.80] Unlike Gomme and Stamp, another historian has conceded that the early villas did not yet display anything novel: ‘despite some lack of originality, Thomson has handled [Italianate] convincingly and is already moving forward towards the underlying principles of his mature work’.⁷⁸⁶ Indeed, this seems to be acknowledged in the much later description of Craig Ailey which was included (accompanying a slightly amended design) in the 1868 publication *Villa*

⁷⁸⁰ Stamp, p. 46.

⁷⁸¹ HES LB33944.

⁷⁸² Stamp, p. 51.

⁷⁸³ Stamp, p. 54.

⁷⁸⁴ Gomme and Walker, p. 134. HES LB 43472 and LB33371.

⁷⁸⁵ These and many more are shown in drawings in Gomme and Walker, pp. 132-3. HES LB 40468 and LB20928.

⁷⁸⁶ Ronald McFadzean, *The Life and Work of Alexander Thomson*, (London, 1979), pp. 30-31.

and Cottage Architecture: Select examples of Country and Suburban Residences recently created, a volume edited by Thomson's acquaintance and client, Robert Blackie.⁷⁸⁷ In it Thomson describes (or is content with Blackie's description of) Craig Ailey⁷⁸⁸ as 'affording a good example of the capabilities of the Italian style and how that style may be made to combine modern requirements such as large and numerous windows, oriels, balconies, etc., with graceful and picturesque grouping'.⁷⁸⁹ Thomson's subsequent visionary development of the asymmetrical villa concept notwithstanding, these early villas sit squarely, it can be argued, within the prevailing wider Italianate context of the time, borne out by Blackie's volume, which also contains an executed design by John Baird, another Glasgow architect, brother-in-law of Thomson and collaborator with him on Craig Ailey, for Howburn, of 1857, a modest villa on the cottage scale in rustic Italianate owing something to the drawing by David Cousin of Edinburgh in Loudon's *Encyclopedia*,⁷⁹⁰ and described here as 'in the main rural Italian in character'. Another set of plates in the same volume records a towered house built by John Gordon of Glasgow in 1863 called Oakleigh Villa,⁷⁹¹ [6.81], which is anchored in the mainstream of what seems to have become by this stage an established Scottish late Italianate villa style.

The Vernacular Italianate villa in mid-century

The role of John Nash in the birth of British Vernacular Italianate architecture is beyond question. The extent to which his models went on directly to influence the next generations of Claudian design is, perhaps paradoxically, more difficult to establish. It is possible to argue that there is a disjunction between his innovative Italianate work and that of later exponents. Nash's free interpretation can be seen as disconnected from the greater

⁷⁸⁷ Stamp, p. 55.

⁷⁸⁸ Stamp believes Thomson to have written the descriptions of his own works himself: *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷⁸⁹ Blackie, p. 20.

⁷⁹⁰ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, Design X, paras. 1776-1780.

⁷⁹¹ HES LB6662; Blackie, pls. vii and viii.

literalism, frequently justified by historical sources, found in the pattern books from the late 1820s. The purity of design of the Claudean trio with their simple if radically irregular elevations and pared-down decoration contrasts with the more elaborate detailing of designs by Parker and even Loudon two decades later. Mowl suggests that 'it was as if in designing Cronkhill Nash had gone too far too soon for contemporary taste',⁷⁹² proposing that there was then a hiatus until the real flowering of the Claudean in the work of Goodridge at Bath in the 1830s. It is certainly true that Goodridge's more literal and self-consciously charming Italian rusticity is closer than Loudon's practical and often more mundane versions to the spirit of Nash's villas. Proving Nash's direct influence and the degree to which his trio served as working models is almost impossible. Designs for Cronkhill and Sandridge were publicly exhibited as they were being built, so it can be assumed that they attracted some attention at the time,⁷⁹³ but the paucity of records of contemporary reaction to Nash's trio and the lack of reference to them by the later pattern book authors hampers a definitive judgement. Yet to suggest a hiatus, and the absence of a traceable bloodline from Nash, ignores the work of Lugar, who as has been discussed was working contemporaneously with Italianate Picturesque ideas and who may have had a close working connection with Nash and his office, and whose work was to become well known as a result of his pattern books. Nor was Lugar alone in his early interest: it has also been noted that Aikin was thinking along similar lines in 1808, and Papworth's strikingly novel Claudean designs were also in the public domain as early as 1815; minor architects such as L.W. Lloyd at Twickenham and Smith at Blackheath were experimenting in a proto-Claudean towered idiom by the late 1820s. So what might appear at first glance to be an inexplicable chasm between the isolated work of Nash in the first decade and that of Goodridge in the 1830s would be a misreading.

⁷⁹² Mowl, 'Williamane', p. 94.

⁷⁹³ The publication of the engraving of Sandridge Park in 1829, in Moore, Vol. 1, which was re-issued by George Virtue as a single print in 1833 would also have served as a reminder: (see J. V. Somers Cocks, *Devon Topographical Prints 1660-1870: A Catalogue and Guide*, (Exeter, 1977), p. 181..

The evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that, by the mid-century, the British Vernacular Italianate style for the small country house or semi-rural villa had for the most part settled into an asymmetrical towered template which, Thomson's individual eclecticism notwithstanding, then altered little for the next three decades. At this moment, on the evidence of Wightwick and Brown, 'Italian' had become a word in common architectural currency which did not refer back to Palladianism but stood for a wholly new idiom: both the pattern books and the professional and popular press were comfortably using the terms 'Italian', and, more tellingly, 'modern Italian', 'Anglo-Italian', or 'Tuscan' to convey this. Of course, this apparent ease with terminology disguised the fact that Italianate represented a spectrum of designs, sometimes shown together without discrimination, as Loudon's writings exemplify. The palazzo interpretations of Barry were distinct from Nash's 'Claudean' models not only on account of their differing approaches to elaboration, decoration and formality, but, it is argued, because they were rooted in historical observation rather than Picturesque theory. But by 1840 the pattern books had, as far as Italian-derived design was concerned, started to leave questions of historical accuracy and aesthetic theory behind, in favour of the classification of external detail, and what appears from a present-day standpoint to be stylistic confusion or a dichotomy of view may instead have been welcomed simply as a widening of the repertoire available under the Italianate banner. In the realm of the smaller house, even if provincial architects, builder-speculators or potential clients would not have been able to define 'Italianate', they would have recognised it when they saw it, in its various versions. When the pattern books of Brown and Wightwick were published in 1840-41 Vernacular Italianate was poised to make its appearance in the town, and it stood at a liminal moment between a certain maturity in its villa pattern and the beginning of the challenges of its urban adaptation: for the larger genteel house. It had travelled far since Nash, had come of age and attained broad

recognition, but had not yet been adapted for the higher density of housing demanded by the Victorian town with its implications for stylistic compromise.

As to the architects who took an interest in the Italianate idiom in this first period after Nash, with some exceptions (Lugar, Decimus Burton, William Playfair, Salvin) a picture emerges of provincial practitioners who were accomplished and successful but not actors on the national stage. This is not to denigrate their achievement – the Bath trio of Goodridge, Wilson and Davis for example were both innovative and possessed of picturesque sensitivity to landscape - but to define their role in the marketplace. They formed the architectural cadre whose work for the most part concerned not the country seat nor even the secondary retreat, but the compact house in limited grounds on the fringes of the town: this was their bread-and-butter. This was where demand lay, and where the Vernacular Italianate style had offered a promising solution: one which was now to be extended deeper into the town and into an even more modest market.

Chapter 7

The Transition to the Town

‘The suburbs of towns are alone calculated to afford a maximum of comfort and enjoyment at a minimum of expense.’⁷⁹⁴

Employing Vernacular Italianate in an urban or suburban context presented three challenges: how to maintain Picturesque integrity in the absence of a rural setting; how to retain an element of charming surprise in designing houses which would not be glimpsed from afar on a visitor’s approach, but would be seen all too clearly from much closer quarters; and how to adapt the irregular Claudian villa elevation and plan for more modestly-sized homes laid out in succession along roads, which might also involve contemplating its use in a semi-detached house or terrace. The new concept of the planned suburban estate, or villa colony,⁷⁹⁵ adopted offered opportunities for imaginative compromise in a more constrained milieu.

The march of Bricks and Mortar⁷⁹⁶

The first half of the nineteenth century in Britain was an era of rapid urban and suburban growth in a newly-industrialised age. Urban expansion, largely unregulated by civic authorities,⁷⁹⁷ depended to a great extent on peripheral land being made available by local landowners, whether (most frequently) aristocratic, such as the Dukes of Devonshire at Eastbourne and the Dukes of Newcastle at Nottingham, institutional (such as Eton College

⁷⁹⁴ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 10.

⁷⁹⁵ This term was used extensively on the Continent, in Germany and Austria for example, to denote planned villa estates for the wealthy of varied architectural styles or *Villakolonien*, such as Lichterfelde West, in Berlin, (built 1860-1900), or the Hohe Warte, Vienna (from 1860): see Donald Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna*, (Yale, 1986), p. 176. It does not appear in Britain until the late nineteenth century, when its use seems to have been largely derogatory, as in a political speech reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, 23 July 1895, cited in Alex Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London*, (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 7, before later emerging as an objective, descriptive term in an academic context: see for example, Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 485, in relation to west London. At the time of writing the term does not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁷⁹⁶ A phrase coined by George Cruikshank in his cartoon ‘London Going out of Town, or the March of Bricks and Mortar’, *Scraps and Sketches*, (London, 1829).

⁷⁹⁷ Some matters involving public order, health and the provision of roads and services were the province of Parish Vestries, or local Improvement Commissioners created by private Act of Parliament: see, for example, P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Vol. 2, (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 769-771.

in north London, or the Society of Merchant Venturers at Clifton, Bristol), or even the Crown (in Reading for example); but the developing shape of towns was also influenced by the conscious creation of desirable, homogeneous new areas in which to live. The growing demand for houses in more genteel surroundings on the fringes of town was a phenomenon already encountered in Chapter 1 in considering the evolution of the villa. The new idea of the villa 'estate' was a concept which in reconciling the conflicting requirements and constraints of gentility, privacy, ostentation and cost offered a versatile opportunity to satisfy these demands, and Picturesque variety could provide interest and individuality in its architecture.

Single houses on the town fringes, built piecemeal and outside any development scheme, continued to be commissioned by individuals, but the aesthetic vision for planned developments was rarely in the direct gift of the eventual occupant. It was occasionally strongly influenced by the grantor landowner, but for the most part fell somewhere between the two. As Hitchcock observes, the chain connecting freeholder through leaseholder, developer, builder (and sub-builder where sites were divided up and sold on in portions) and ultimately the occupier, was not only complex but could continue to evolve during the course of the building campaign. He cautions as a result that 'the attribution of the design of urban or suburban housing to particular architects is extremely precarious';⁷⁹⁸ for the same reasons the precise dating of particular forms or styles cannot be made with certainty. Indeed it might only be for the more prestigious or lucrative projects that trained architects were employed at all: for smaller developments the skills of a master-builder and his draughtsman would be easily up to the task; this in turn had the effect of increasing the influence of the published villa-books, and perhaps reinforced thereby a certain stylistic homogeneity as well as a degree of conservatism.

⁷⁹⁸ Discussed in Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 430.

The previous chapter looked at examples of Italianate villas which were for the most part in rural or semi-rural settings, but some of which, such as those by Goodridge in Bath, were part of the fabric of urban expansion of the time and can be thought of in those terms as suburban. Yet the categorisation of urban as opposed to suburban is often as much a function of character and form as size or precise location; this distinction between the two becomes further blurred with the advent of the villa estate such as that at Calverley Park which is considered below. The villa estate is treated here rather than in the previous chapter because it introduces the notion of planned Picturesque development which was to play such a significant role in urban expansion from the late Regency period: the need to consider individual houses in relation to each other being a characteristic of suburban design. The application of Vernacular Italianate to the smaller house did not always preclude the use of established villa models in the town: detached, towered Italianate villas of similar design, if different size, were by the late 1840s equally to be found in the countryside, the new suburb or villa estate, and on the town street. [7.1] But this chapter will assess to what extent the Vernacular Italianate form could be satisfactorily adapted for the higher density of housing required in developments in the town and for the increasing regulation of street layout, and it will look in particular at the development of new variations of the style which could be used for attached and terraced houses.

Vernacular Italianate appeared in an urban or semi-urban setting in each of three broad forms. The first was the planned, picturesquely-set villa estate of individual houses, usually encompassing a variety of styles, such as is found at Calverley Park, Tunbridge Wells, but with some examples of wholly Italianate developments such as The Villas, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. Alternatively it could take the form of a planned Italianate grouping set in and around more conventional urban layouts, including squares, such as Devon Square, Newton

Abbot.⁷⁹⁹ The least Picturesquely-inspired variant from the point of view of landscape setting was groups or rows of Italianate houses, ranged singly, in pairs or terraces in comparatively high density along conventionally laid out roads, with no overall landscape scheme: the Clifton and Redland districts of Bristol provide many instances of this.⁸⁰⁰ These three categories are by no means mutually exclusive, and do not correlate with any particular chronology or regional variation; and, as already suggested, where land availability and local market conditions permitted, individual town houses in Vernacular Italianate style continued to be built in a wide spectrum of aspirations and physical scale. This chapter cannot attempt to provide a comprehensive gazetteer of the permutations devised by architects and builders, but three case studies of Italianate groupings will be described below. They are all by local architects: Eldon Square in Reading, a group of houses of the 1830s in varying Italianate forms around a garden square; Stokeville at Stoke-on-Trent, an enclosed villa estate laid out in a constructed rather than naturally Picturesque setting, built as a group endeavour through the means of a Building Society and all in a single Vernacular Italianate idiom; and Devon Square in Newton Abbot, designed in the 1850s, which uses different Vernacular Italianate interpretations for terraces of houses of differing status, around the perimeter of a garden square. These three have been highlighted because they are examples of planned developments which were wholly Italianate but which also present a range of scale, forms and materials. These are followed by examples from west London and from the Clifton district of Bristol as further demonstrations that no prescriptive urban model (that is, for housing of smaller size and higher density) emerged, leaving the field open to ingenious adaptation.

⁷⁹⁹ The Villas and Devon Square are the subjects of case studies below.

⁸⁰⁰ The varieties of town Italianate in Bristol are discussed towards the end of this chapter.

Italianate in the Picturesque park

Many of the great set-pieces of planned development in the first half of the nineteenth century take the form of villas in a constructed landscape, often incorporating the word park in their titles: Calverley Park, for example, at Tunbridge Wells, Queen's Park at Brighton, Nottingham's Park Estate, Manchester's Victoria Park, Oxford's Park Town, and many others. The word carried pleasing associations with the country house and its demesne, conveying both an expanse of land and the exclusivity and privacy afforded to its occupants. This aspiration was reinforced by the frequent inclusion of entrance lodges (often in Vernacular Italianate style such as those at Calverley Park, at Leamington Spa, or Curzon Park, Chester, and sometimes unrelated to the prevailing style of the villas), for real or imagined gate-keepers. The two basic forms of the Park were either that of a large green enclosure within which houses would be dispersed in plots of irregular shape laid out along curving streets, planting schemes ensuring that each house could only be glimpsed by its neighbour through groves and shrubberies; or the Park as a central green space with houses laid out around the perimeter and looking onto it.⁸⁰¹ Intrinsic to the concept of the Park seems to have been the acceptance of architectural eclecticism. While it is frequently not possible to establish for a given estate the extent to which stylistic choice was a market-driven judgement by the developer (whether or not influenced by the ground landlord), rather than a response to the taste of individual purchasers, it nevertheless appears that within the inevitable tendency towards social homogeneity of the Park,⁸⁰² architectural

⁸⁰¹ There were other variations, such as the layout of the Ladbroke Estate in west London where the traditional garden square was turned inside out, placed at the rear of the houses and accessible only through them; or the retention of the terrace form around a central green but employing a architectural Picturesque idiom, as is found at Devon Square, Newton Abbot, which is in rustic Italianate style. These will both be discussed further below.

⁸⁰² A contemporary perception borne out, and reinforced, by popular publications: the new Birmingham suburb of Edgbaston, for example, was described long before its completion as already 'a favourite place of retreat to those who have basked in the sunshine of commercial prosperity': William Hutton, *The History of Birmingham*, (6th edition, London and Birmingham, 1835), p. 457. Very few villa estates provided for infrastructure such as commerce or trade and in most it was actively prohibited through the use of restrictive covenants. See for example, with reference to the Eyre Estate, London, *Cottages and Villas: the Birth of the Garden Suburb*, (New Haven and London, 2010), pp. 190, 204-5.

difference was a permitted mode of personal differentiation; it also corresponded to the Picturesque requirement for variety and surprise, as Nash demonstrated in his Park Village scheme. The overall tone tended to be regulated by controls exercised by the freeholder or developer over density, plot size and layout, and building line as well as stipulation as to minimum property value. Allom's watercolour view of the scheme for Queen's Park, Brighton, for example, a scheme which proposed arranging houses around the Park perimeter, clearly depicts a profusion of styles in elevation, detail and character, and the accompanying description, in the manner of a prospectus, confirms this:

The building plots ... contain an average depth of 250 feet, and may have any amount of frontage as desired. The owner of each plot is at liberty to build according to his Design, subject to the approval of the Proprietor.⁸⁰³

The late 1820s saw the inception of a number of schemes for villa developments. At Calverley Park, a scheme by Decimus Burton (1800-1881), built from 1828 for John Ward, a merchant who invested heavily in property, and Member of Parliament, showed villas disposed along one side of a curving carriage drive in imitation of a country lane, on a site of 56 acres, over half of which was laid out as a landscaped pleasure ground with picturesque walks, separated by a ha-ha from further land in a valley, giving the impression of limitless parkland. [7.2] It has similarities with Nash's original but unexecuted plan for Regent's Park, proposing a picturesque disposition of 24 villas around a park; Decimus Burton had been involved in the design of individual houses within the re-worked scheme there and was familiar with Nash's vision for urban Picturesque.⁸⁰⁴ Burton's villas at Calverley sit somewhere between the grandeur of his own Regent's Park villas and the more modest charm of Nash's Park Village, yet still form an undeniably picturesque whole.⁸⁰⁵ Twenty four villas were built, in styles which can broadly be grouped into three: Neo-classical and

⁸⁰³ Blissett, 'Barry: a Re-assessment', Footnotes, 4(iii) 235.

⁸⁰⁴ Mansbridge, entries 123 and 183.

⁸⁰⁵ Ultimately seven such residential parks were laid out under different landowners in Tunbridge Wells.

Italianate (which predominate), and English Vernacular or Tudor-Gothic. Britton's *Sketches of Tunbridge Wells*, published in 1832, while the estate was still under construction, included four specific villa styles and plans:⁸⁰⁶ design No. 1, with its triple grouping of round-headed windows over a balcony to the first floor, is a conscious Italianate reference. [7.3] In fact, as built the Italianate houses display much more variation, although devices such as square modillions supporting overhanging eaves, towers either square or canted, and arched windows grouped in threes are common to them all.⁸⁰⁷ The careful scaling of the houses relative to each other imposes a greater degree of harmony on what might otherwise have been jarring eclecticism: each house appears to be a subtle variation of its neighbour. All are in Tunbridge Wells stone rather than stucco, and each is different: numbers 2 and 11 show strikingly Lugar-like elements in the combination of pediment with canted tower and verandah, or double height rounded bow; 17, 18 and 23 present more varied rooflines and elevations, and the use of a more vertical accent, the latter most effective and pronounced in the case of no.23. [7.4] Burton's Italianate interpretations may not be as radical as Cronkhill or Dunstall Priory in their outline or asymmetry, but they incorporate a combination of varied solid shapes which recalls Nash and Lugar. Keston Lodge at one of the entrances to the drive is also in Italianate idiom. Just as Elmes' book publicised the architecture of the Park Villages, so Britton's would have brought Burton's designs to a wide audience. The occupants were typical of those of a villa estate of this aspiration at this time: almost all of independent means, described as 'Fundholders' or 'Landed Proprietors', retired senior army officers and a Baronet's widow and a daughter of the Marquess of Camden, although by 1851 a 'Wholesale Druggist' has crept in.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁶ John Britton, *Descriptive Sketches of Tunbridge Wells and the Calverley Estate*, (London, 1832), Plate 3.

⁸⁰⁷ See Christopher Hussey, 'Calverley Park', *Country Life*, 1 and 8 May 1969. I am also grateful to Christopher Jones of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society for sharing his extensive knowledge of the development of the town.

⁸⁰⁸ Census returns for 1841: HO107/463/7/40; and 1851: HO107/1614/227.

Burton's unexecuted 1830s scheme for Furze Hill, Brighton, for Sir Isaac Goldsmid, also envisaged individual houses in a cornucopia of styles standing in generous grounds, including a substantial Italianate villa with a three-storey square belvedere topped by what appears to be an open loggia.⁸⁰⁹ Burton is an interesting if relatively rare example of an architect whose documented work includes Vernacular Italianate interpretations spanning country villas, suburban villas, and compact urban forms. After Calverley Park he designed at least two rustic Italianate country houses. Blackhurst, near Tunbridge Wells of 1838, on land leased by Burton's Calverley patron Ward to Ford Wilson, was an asymmetrical Italianate villa, without a tower but with a distinct vertical accent and triple, round-headed windows. Built in local sandstone under a shallow slate roof with pronounced bracketed eaves, it is set in picturesque grounds.⁸¹⁰ [7.5] Outside Kent, in 1840 Thomas Fonnereau, from a Huguenot family grown rich in the linen trade, himself an attorney turned dilettante after inheriting the family fortune, commissioned from Burton a villa as, in Fonnereau's words, a 'bachelor's kennel', following the latter's extended visit to Italy.⁸¹¹ Burton designed for him Haydon Hill, at Bushey, Hertfordshire, built in 1841-3,⁸¹² a more literal translation than Blackhurst, complete with imposing belvedere tower, and a loggia opening to the garden. [7.6] Burton's Italianate villa work can also be seen at Hastings-St Leonard's, where he began to work after his father's death in 1837. His Baston Lodge, on Maze Hill, a seaside retreat for John Ward of c.1840, is a town villa, one of a number of such examples by him on this street. Finished in stone rather than stucco, while it boasts the required elements of square tower with pyramidal roof and characteristic fenestration, it is stocky, and urban in its lack of resonance with an admittedly limited landscape;⁸¹³ it is one of a number of such villas by Burton in this street. [7.7] The Mount, Hastings, is a later (c.1860) essay, attributed to

⁸⁰⁹ RIBA Coll. SC182/9(7).

⁸¹⁰ 'Blackhurst' entry in *The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens*, (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, June 2009).

⁸¹¹ W.P Courtney, revised Clare Loughlin-Chow, 'Thomas Fonnereau', in *ODNB*.

⁸¹² Extended in the 1890s: HE List entry 1103578.

⁸¹³ HE List entry 1192209.

Burton, in unpretentious town housing in a rustic Italianate mode, as a group of three pairs of small houses. The otherwise flat-fronted elevations of the semi-detached, paired houses behind a small front garden are relieved by scaled-down overhanging eaves, and grouped, round-headed fenestration.⁸¹⁴ This progression in Burton's work from the Italian-derived restraint of his Calverley Park villas of the late 1820s which then gives way to a more literal assembly of pattern book Italianate elements, initially for the country house as at Blackhurst and Haydon, trickling down into ever more modest suburban and urban house forms, is in many ways broadly illustrative of the general trajectory of Vernacular Italianate over the period in which Burton was practising.

From the evidence it is reasonable to make the assumption that wherever colonies of new middle-class housing were being designed in the 1830s-1850s, Vernacular Italianate houses were likely to appear, usually, as seen at Calverley, in the context of a stylistically mixed development. Examples abound from the 1830s, such as Rosherville, a projected new town on the Thames estuary, where a perspective drawing of the proposed scheme by Henry Kendall shows among the mixed styles a number of prominent houses with campaniles **[7.8]**;⁸¹⁵ Rock Park, Birkenhead⁸¹⁶ and, slightly later the villa suburb of Southsea, Hampshire, by Thomas Ellis Owen (1804-62).⁸¹⁷ Some of the new suburbs were coastal or inland resorts, where the style was perhaps favoured because of its Continental association, perceived as fashionable and appropriate for suitable a holiday *al fresco*. Nevertheless its appearance in the suburbs of manufacturing and county towns such as Chester (Queen's Park and Curzon Park, from c.1847),⁸¹⁸ **[7.9]** as well as Stoke-on-Trent and Bristol, to be discussed below, and in the metropolis, demonstrates that rustic Italianate was not perceived as an architecture merely for the leisured classes or for a summer season.

⁸¹⁴ HE List entry 1286881.

⁸¹⁵ RIBA Coll. SC185/2 (1).

⁸¹⁶ *Buildings of England: Cheshire*, p. 103.

⁸¹⁷ R.C. Riley, *Portsmouth Paper No.32: The Houses and Inhabitants of Thomas Ellis Owen's Southsea*, (Portsmouth City Council, 1980), pp. 3-5. See for example Annesley House, HE List entry 1387149.

⁸¹⁸ *Buildings of England: Cheshire*, p. 175.

The semi-detached house and the terrace

The yield from the exploitation of development land could obviously be improved by increasing the building density, through the use of the semi-detached or terraced form. The terrace was an established urban model used extensively in the Georgian city; and the semi-detached or double house, originating in the rural cottage, had gradually migrated into the town by the late eighteenth century.⁸¹⁹ It was noted earlier that Elsam's *Essay on Rural Architecture* in 1803 included a design for 'Three small houses intended to be built in Vauxhall Road whose exterior appearance are intended to convey the idea of one entire Villa',⁸²⁰ Loudon's own semi-detached house of 1823 in Porchester Terrace, west London, described at length in his publications, lent – if it were needed – respectability to the idea.⁸²¹ In the upper stratum of the market they sometimes took the form of paired houses linked by lower elements, to form what was in reality a terrace, (the Lloyd Baker Estate, north London, 1818),⁸²² sometimes disposed in a curve, of which one of earliest examples was the Paragon in Blackheath, (Michael Searles, c.1795).⁸²³ Trendall's 1831 book of '*Designs uniting convenience and elegance with economy, adapted to the environs of the Metropolis and large towns*', shows a 'double cottage in the Italian style', a revolutionary design in which he divides the house, which is symmetrical in plan, not along one straight axis fore-to-aft, but along a staggered axis, so that both houses tessellate, providing each with 'a generously sized dining room'.⁸²⁴

Vernacular Italianate semi-detached houses tended to employ a simple model, taking the front elevation of an asymmetrical Claudian house and using an end-wall as an axis of symmetry around which to create an attached mirror-image. The end-product offered an interesting outline which could at the same time conform to the restrictions of prescribed

⁸¹⁹ Finn Jensen, *The English Semi-detached House*, (Huntingdon, 2007), summarises its history.

⁸²⁰ Elsam, Pl. 4.

⁸²¹ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, pp. 325-332.

⁸²² *Buildings of England: London 4: North*, pp. 636-7.

⁸²³ Miele, pp. 49-50, pls. 38 and 39.

⁸²⁴ Plates 13-14. The basement level is divided conventionally with one straight party wall.

building lines by presenting a frontage occupying a single plane. An example can be seen at Sir George Tapps-Gervis's embryonic resort at Eastbourne where the young Benjamin Ferrey built the first guesthouses, a group of sixteen paired houses named Westover Villas (now demolished) of 1836. [7.10] It is as if Cronkhill or Sandridge Park had been re-cast as a reflected pair: while their outline is Picturesquely varied the overall effect is curiously two-dimensional. Italianate of any kind was to find no place in Ferrey's mature repertoire so their less than graceful handling here may be put down to youthful inexperience or a lack of conviction, although as shown in his plan for the scheme, never fully executed, en masse they produce a striking effect. [7.11]⁸²⁵ But this basic technique of mirror-imaging the asymmetrical house came to be employed in a wide gamut of designs for the attached house, in varying degrees of ambition and complexity. Examples abound, from the more modest which can be seen at Eldon Square, Reading and New Brighton, Merseyside,⁸²⁶ as well as in many versions in new London suburbs such as The Park, Ealing,⁸²⁷ or throughout Notting Hill, west London, considered below. [7.12] The smaller houses being more restricted in scope presented simplified versions with less well-defined towered elements although the design would still incorporate a strong vertical accent: even on a tiny scale they are still recognisably of rustic Italianate derivation. The mirrored pair can be found in a variety of sizes and materials: the stucco of Clifton Hill, Brighton,⁸²⁸ white brick at Fonnereau Road in Ipswich,⁸²⁹ and brick with stone dressing at Lansdowne Crescent, West London, all from c.1850; [7.13] rising to substantial paired houses such as those at 60-62 Pembroke Road, Bristol (c.1860),⁸³⁰ or Stanley Gardens, west London, from the early 1850s,⁸³¹ the latter

⁸²⁵ A pair of houses dating from the 1870s in Annandale, Sydney, Australia (illustrated at **8.36a**) bears a remarkable resemblance to Westover Villas.

⁸²⁶ *Buildings of England: Cheshire*, p. 373.

⁸²⁷ Illustrated in Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, pl. 206, p. 221. There are some designs by Sydney Smirke (1798-1877), who designed The Park, for large Italianate villas with belvederes; RIBA Coll. SD104/22 and 26.

⁸²⁸ Brighton and Hove City Council, *Montpelier and Cliftonhill Conservation Area Appraisal*, (2015), p. 11. IoE 480516.

⁸²⁹ HE List entries 1237506 (nos.12-14) and 1247676 (16).

⁸³⁰ Andor Gomme, Michael Jenner and Bryan Little, *Bristol: an Architectural History*, (London, 1979), p. 283.

⁸³¹ *Buildings of England: London 3: North West*, p. 536.

admittedly displaying hybrid palazzo and rustic characteristics in their wealth of decoration. [7.14] One of the most ambitious semi-detached examples identified so far is in Cheltenham: Lansdown Court by the Jearrad brothers, of the late 1830s, was built as a matched pair of villas. [7.15] They are imposing houses in ashlar, made up of components of two, three and four storeys, the latter being the square belvedere towers with pyramidal roofs; their cornices are highly ornamented and the eaves detailing is elaborate. Now much altered, it is still possible to discern the original detached/semi-detached ambiguity. Alone, each single asymmetrical element would appear more rustic; in conjunction they are transformed into a palazzo. The simple device of reflecting the design along a vertical axis lent itself to the pairing of any basic Claudean model, thereby somewhat ironically bestowing the symmetry which was required in order to make the most economical use of tightly packed urban road layouts. While their rustic Italian characteristics remained identifiably intact their restricted settings inevitably impaired their Picturesque effect, for these houses delivered their immediate impact all at once and head-on to the viewer. This problem risked magnification when transferred to the terrace.

Preserving any suggestion of the asymmetrical massing of the original rustic model by definition posed more of a challenge when designing terraces, but many architects approached it with ingenuity. Brighton was an example of a resort slow to shake off the prevailing idiom of the Regency terrace even if its persistent Neo-classicism was rendered more dainty by the addition of bow windows and decorative external ironwork seen for example in Powis Square as late as the 1850s. In 1845 Amon Henry Wilds designed Montpelier Villas, twenty Italianate houses in pairs, closer to Barry's Attree Villa than Burton's more rustic allusions in his St. Leonard's villas;⁸³² it was as late as 1849 that Wilds employed, very successfully, a form of Vernacular Italianate in Brighton for his Park

⁸³² HE List entries 1380089-98.

Crescent.⁸³³ [7.16] Here he created a stuccoed, curved terrace facing a Picturesque garden setting, making use of strong upright accents in the form of three-storeyed towers with pedimented rather than pyramidal elevations, eaves supported by elaborate cornices rather than plain paired brackets. Ingeniously the towers are divided laterally along the party wall and are therefore shared by each pair of houses. The overall effect is charmingly picturesque, its elaborate detailing notwithstanding: it demonstrates how with ingenuity picturesqueness could be contrived in the terrace, the densest urban housing form; and it also illustrates a successful combination of rustic and palatial elements in a manner which was coming to characterise urban Italianate. Occupants came from the ranks of salaried professionals (a ‘Professor of French’ at Brighton College, an accountant), or small scale entrepreneurs such as Master Builders. By contrast, for example, Henry Bassett had tried to achieve a similar effect with his Gloucester Crescent, Camden, London, of 1840-45 [7.17], but his materials (sombre brick with stucco dressing), and massing, top-heavy loggias acting as demarcations of the (much larger) individual houses within the continuous terrace, create only a feeling of solidity and pomp rather than playfulness, as perhaps befits a metropolitan site, in contrast to the pleasure grounds of Brighton with their ample green spaces. This model, *mutatis mutandis*, of terraces which use projecting towered elements to break up the mass of the elevation and provide a degree of picturesque variety to the visual impact even from an urban pavement, is evident in many towns from the mid-century: Sandown Terrace, for example, in grounds running down to the river at Chester, employs a very similar pair of belvederes at each end of the range. [7.18]

More exuberant even than Wilds at Park Crescent, and another complete contrast to Bassett’s rather stodgy metropolitan ensemble, at Cheltenham Samuel Daukes provides perhaps the most flamboyant example of the urban Italianate terrace, elaborately decorated

⁸³³ HE List entry (for nos. 1-16) 1380694.

yet still identifiably rustic in provenance, in his Lypiatt Terrace of 1847.⁸³⁴ [7.19] A range of seventeen houses, built in stone, it is a composition which reflects perhaps a growing conflation (or confusion) in the minds of both architects and occupants of the two Italianate streams, in combining rustic-derived massing with palatial detail. Daukes employed all the elements which we would expect in terms of shapes and outline: vertical accents, square belvederes, pavilion blocks with shallow-pitched roofs, round-headed windows. But he does not stop there, piling detail upon detail, with quoins, balconies, and decorative mouldings, achieving an effect of opulence rather than charm. Identification of Italianate work by him elsewhere in Cheltenham is problematic: he is known to have designed an Italianate lodge of 1838 for The Park development,⁸³⁵ although his authorship of the quirky miniature villa rustica known as Cornerways which served as the zoo-keeper's lodge and often attributed to him is unproven and it was subsequently substantially altered.⁸³⁶ [7.20] York Terrace, Cheltenham, of c.1848-53, is a terrace of 15 houses, paired except for one end house, with the roofline and massing of Lypiatt, but simplified fenestration and much reduced ornament rendering it a much more Claudean affair than Lypiatt; if he could also be confirmed as its author⁸³⁷ then Daukes could stake a claim to be one of the more imaginative exponents of the urban Vernacular Italianate terrace. [7.21] His work in particular is a reminder of the infinite renewability of the eighteenth century urban prototype seen in Bath, London, and other cities, of multiple houses concealed behind a unifying palace façade: its use for Vernacular Italianate recurs over the decades as further examples will demonstrate.

Vernacular Italianate in the metropolis: the Ladbroke Estate, west London

While there are countless examples of Vernacular Italianate in the metropolitan suburbs, in the forms of individual villas, semi-detached houses and terraces, the Ladbroke Estate in

⁸³⁴ Previously attributed to the Jearrad brothers, *inter alia*. Six of the 17 houses in the Terrace were not completed until 1857. *Buildings of England: Gloucestershire 2, The Vale and Forest of Dean*, p. 274.

⁸³⁵ Information from Alec Hamilton.

⁸³⁶ Illustrated in Mowl, 'Williamane', p. 104.

⁸³⁷ *Buildings of England: The Vale and Forest of Dean*, p. 273, suggests Daukes as probable author.

west London can be singled out as the most extensive mid-century planned urban scheme in the metropolis which exhibits a number of different variations on a unified Italianate theme. [7.22] In the words of the *Survey of London*, '[it] became the scene of a layout quite unlike anything previously or indeed subsequently to be found in London.'⁸³⁸ Its history was not without problems, building work being suspended for several extended periods as a series of speculators and developers ran into financial difficulties; these delays make its stylistic coherence all the more surprising. Construction took place in two phases: from 1823 to 1833, and then from 1841 for two decades, final work trailing on into the 1870s. On the western rural fringes of London, and farmland until building began, the Ladbroke family's estate comprised three contiguous parcels, the largest one, which is considered here, occupying 170 acres at the Estate's westernmost extremity.⁸³⁹ [7.23] It was not until it was inherited by James Weller Ladbroke in 1819 that covenants constraining its development were overturned through a private Act of Parliament in 1821,⁸⁴⁰ and plans were drawn up in 1823 by Thomas Allason (1790-1852), a pupil of Atkinson and the Estate Surveyor. The estate's development between Ladbroke's Act in 1821 and its completion in the late 1860s draws in an extraordinarily large roll of names, as leaseholders, developers, financiers and investors, and architects and builders. The usual nexus of freeholder-leaseholder-speculative builder-inhabitant is present but was multiplied by the number of different parcels into which the Estate was split, each involving a constantly changing cast of characters as participants dropped out, usually having overreached themselves financially, and whose interests were sold or novated to a new cast of characters.⁸⁴¹ Even by the standards of most Victorian building projects this was a highly dysfunctional exercise, houses frequently being built as carcasses but left unfinished until building resumed often some ten years later, usually

⁸³⁸ F.H.W. Sheppard, (ed.), *Survey of London, Volume 37: Northern Kensington*, (London, 1973), p. 194. References to the *Survey* are to this volume unless indicated otherwise.

⁸³⁹ *Survey*, Chapter IX: This is the most authoritative architectural history of the estate; F. Gladstone and A. Barker's *Notting Hill in Bygone Days* (London, 1969), comments on the social history of its development.

⁸⁴⁰ *An Act to enable James Weller Ladbroke* [sic]: 1 & 2 Geo. IV. c.26.

⁸⁴¹ The *Survey* devotes 64 pages to the Ladbroke Estate's history.

in the style originally planned for them.⁸⁴² It is all the more surprising therefore that, in the absence of a master plan (or at least one which was implemented as intended) or detailed over-arching specifications and designs, the area achieved the degree of stylistic coherence which it still displays today. The Ladbroke Estate can be adjudged as remarkable in two related respects: as a display of Italianate massing and detailing of unparalleled richness, coherence and density, but also as an exercise in picturesque urban planning which updated and can be said to have exceeded that of Regent's Park.⁸⁴³

The total acreage available was unprecedented so close to the centre of London; the vast expanse of land the ground sloped in two directions, falling away unequally from the highest point at the estate's centre, and presenting an opportunity for picturesque planning on a grand scale. Allason's 1823 scheme included a circus at the centre of the estate, bisected by a north-south axis; the circus device was hardly a novelty but few could boast an intended circumference of one mile, providing for individual or pairs of houses in plots of up to one acre, with a central paddock or pleasure ground.⁸⁴⁴ Although this was not implemented, on eventual completion the Estate boasted fifteen communal gardens. Houses began to be built almost immediately for different landlords by a variety of builders and architects, mostly in pairs or short terraces and in stuccoed neo-classical variations. But appetite for houses in a location still regarded as far from the City, and the super-abundance of supply on the Estate led to building being halted from about 1833, during which time James Weller Ladbroke's interest was divided into parcels taken up by lessees and sub-lessees. In 1841 a large portion of Estate land was sold on to Jacob Connop, a minor financier,⁸⁴⁵ whose development plans were widely reported by the press: 'Notting-hill Park, a portion of the property, is about to

⁸⁴² See for example the comments in *Building News*, 19 June, 1857, p. 635.

⁸⁴³ Nikolaus Pevsner photographed the Ladbroke Estate extensively in preparation for his proposed book, *Visual Planning and the Picturesque*, which was not published in his lifetime. A book of that name based on surviving materials (Mathew Aitchison, (ed.), Los Angeles, 2010), confirms that these images are now at the Getty Research Institute: fns. 68-71, p. 37. No record of his 1960 BBC radio talk on the Ladbroke Estate has survived.

⁸⁴⁴ The 1821 Act provided for up to five acres of land per house. *Survey*, p. 195.

⁸⁴⁵ *Survey*, p. 200.

be built upon from designs by Mr. Edward Cresy, architect, and the drawings are chastely executed and have the appearance of a series of Italian villages, in the centre of which is an elegant church'.⁸⁴⁶ Despite the successive waves of commercial disaster which befell various participants, the swathe of developers involved, and the lack of overall control, this in fact is the best description of what was actually achieved, although the aesthetics, apart from Connop's stated intention to create a colony of Italian flavour, seem to have been left to individual enterprise. The *Survey* makes it clear that it is difficult to determine where, within the chain of development, the stylistic impetus for each portion and at each stage of the development originated, and other accounts offer conflicting names as authors of particular streets or set-pieces.⁸⁴⁷ One can however look to the known architects and builders, in which some familiar names appear: Allason was Surveyor to the Estate from 1823 until his death in 1852; others include James Thomson (1800-83), executant architect for some of Nash's Regent's Park terraces and pupil of Papworth; Robert Cantwell (1792-1858), a friend of both Papworth and Robert Lugar,⁸⁴⁸ as well as Edward Cresy (1792-1858), the architect named in Connop's 1841 'prospectus'.⁸⁴⁹ The outstanding name in the Estate's later years is without question that of Thomas Allom (1804-72), who succeeded Allason as Estate Surveyor on the former's death. In Summerson's view, 'After 1850 it is rare to find an architect of any reputation meddling with estate development', but he names Allom as the most notable exception.⁸⁵⁰ Allom had been articled to Francis Goodwin and a pupil at the Royal Academy Schools, and was in demand as an illustrator (whose clients included Sir

⁸⁴⁶ *Morning Advertiser*, 14 April 1841.

⁸⁴⁷ See for example, *Buildings of England: London 3, North-West*, pp. 524-57.

⁸⁴⁸ Cantwell was the sole executor of Lugar's will. TNA: PROB 11/2233.

⁸⁴⁹ The *Survey* ignores and indeed denies Cresy's role in the design of any part of it (p. 203), a view endorsed by the only biography of him: Diana Burfield, *Edward Cresy*, (Donnington, 2003), p.99, evidently in ignorance of this newspaper article and others from later that year which describe his supervising the building operations: *Morning Chronicle*, 10 August 1841. Cresy was no minor local surveyor: he spent two years in Italy in 1817-19, on his return publishing, with George Taylor, *The Architectural Antiquities of Rome, measured and delineated*, (London, 1820-1); he had also sold to Soane in 1834 twenty architectural models acquired from Fouquet while in Paris: see for example Soane Coll. catalogue entry MR3. In 1836 Cresy published an annotated index to Thomas Hope's *Historical Essay on Architecture*. The extent of his role in the design of this part of the estate remains for the moment obscure. Gordon Goodwin, rev. Diana Cressy Burfield, 'Edward Cresy', in *ODNB*.

⁸⁵⁰ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 341.

Charles Barry) as much as an architect. There is little doubt that many of the larger houses on the estate dating from 1850, largely for Charles Blake, one of the more successful speculators on the estate, such as those in Stanley Gardens, were to his designs;⁸⁵¹ in 1853 Allom exhibited at the Royal Academy a perspective of ‘Stanley Crescent and Ladbrooke [sic] Gardens’.⁸⁵²

Today a spectrum of Italianate interpretations from different decades present themselves, in a variety which reflects not so much a chronological development as a stylistic hierarchy. **[7.24]** On Lansdowne Crescent, set well back from the street and arranged around a curve at the centre of the entire estate, are paired houses of the mid-1840s, in brick with stone dressings, with square belvedere towers⁸⁵³ at their outside corners; closing the view along Stanley Gardens (of the 1860s) is a massive stuccoed pair of houses, almost unbalanced by the height of their belvedere towers as the houses here are placed directly on the pavement; **[7.25]** at dates in between a simpler rustic style is employed for more modest houses in pairs (in upper Lansdowne Road) and terraces of the 1850s. **[7.26]** Kensington Park Terrace North of 1852 demonstrates another variant: the short palace-fronted terrace under a central pediment typical of the late eighteenth-century town, but here employing grouped, rounded rustic fenestration, which recalls Loudon’s *Encyclopedia* commendation that ‘a row of circular-headed windows .. forms one of the most striking features in the elevations of Italian villas’.⁸⁵⁴ **[7.27]** The houses themselves are small, but this is disguised by the repetition of this element.⁸⁵⁵ Other local examples show how at the simplest level, Vernacular Italianate effect was conveyed only by round-headed, grouped fenestration and eaves treatment, also seen or half a mile away on the Pitt Estate, developed in the early

⁸⁵¹ *Survey*, p. 225.

⁸⁵² Graves, Vol. I, p. 27, exhibit 1138. A lithograph of the same year depicting this is reproduced as Plate 64a in the *Survey*.

⁸⁵³ Described by the *Survey* as ‘Lombardic’: p. 211.

⁸⁵⁴ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p. 959, fig. 1686.

⁸⁵⁵ *Survey*, plate 67e.

1850s, where it is merely hinted at in the paired houses of Tor Gardens.⁸⁵⁶ [7.28] This was a device of which as was noted above, Loudon was well aware: ‘Few features are calculated to produce so much effect at so little expense. ... The co-operation of the arches is an idea once simple and grand.’⁸⁵⁷ One can only speculate about the appearance of the Ladbroke Estate had it been developed over a shorter period to one master-plan and representing one man’s architectural vision, but it is in the Ladbroke Estate that we see the clearest evidence that the architectural profession by this point regarded the twin Italianate modes, both Rustic and Palatial, as repertoires which were capable of successful combination, elements being indiscriminately plundered from each: Claudean fenestration and roof pitch used together with dressed quoins and console brackets, as seen in Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Road and Stanley Gardens, for example. This interpretation, the coalescence of the twin strands emanating originally from Nash and Barry, was to become even more widely expressed in the smaller house, as examples from Bristol from the 1850s, to be considered below, will demonstrate.

The Ladbroke Estate can be singled out on grounds of its scale and picturesque planning, but stylistically similar types of houses abounded throughout the immediate area, although not limited to Allom’s grander idiom. Bordering the northern fringes of the Ladbroke Estate, the semi-detached and terraced houses of Westbourne Park Villas of the 1850s offer a more humble form, with their shallow pitched rooflines and grouped round-headed windows. [7.29] Designed (or possibly not even designed but just built) for a more modest clientèle than the contemporaneous Stanley or Lansdowne Crescents, and on a dull, linear street plan bereft of communal ‘paddocks’ and facing the Great Western Railway, their simplicity is nevertheless almost closer to the Claudean rustic of the pattern books from which it so clearly derives than the highly decorated pomp of Stanley Crescent. Taken

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

⁸⁵⁷ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p. 960.

together, it is clear that even within the narrow confines of this area of London, Vernacular Italianate was both universal and infinitely variable, an observation which seems to hold true for many other English towns and cities of the period.

Rustic Italianate in the smaller town

Three case studies follow, presented chronologically, which illustrate how the style could be variously interpreted for planned groupings of urban rustic Italianate in the smaller town in the mid-century.

i) Eldon Square, Reading

‘a genteel house .. with every convenience .. in the most improving part of Reading’

Eldon Square today is engulfed in a modern traffic system, but approached on foot and from a static viewpoint in the garden square, the ambition and charm of this group of houses are evident. As ‘a formally planned composition around a park it is unique’ in the town.⁸⁵⁸ Built from the 1830s, the square is an interesting and early example of a planned urban grouping of Vernacular Italianate houses. [7.30]

Eldon Square was one of the early residential developments in the new phase of the nineteenth-century expansion of the town. New industrial enterprises had been encouraged by the cutting of the Kennet Canal which by 1810 was linked to the River Avon, and later by the arrival of the railway in 1840; the population of Reading rose from 9,742 in 1801 to 22,175 in 1851.⁸⁵⁹ Reading Abbey had been one of the richest English monastic houses by the time of the Dissolution and as a result much of the town and neighbouring land was at this point in the hands of the Crown Estates Commissioners, and the remainder owned by the town Corporation: the rivalry between them in the race to develop their holdings literally

⁸⁵⁸ Reading Borough Council: *Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal*, Draft 2, (2007), p. 9.

⁸⁵⁹ Berkshire Record Office [hereafter BRO]: Census Returns for Reading parishes.

shaped the expansion of the area east of the mediaeval centre.⁸⁶⁰ In 1832-3 the Crown offered land for sale on the town's eastern side, described as:

Well appropriate for the erection of Villas or other Residences .. noted as the most salubrious spot in the neighbourhood of Reading .. it presents pleasing and commanding eminences; its value is much enhanced by the beautiful views over Caversham Park.⁸⁶¹

It was clearly perceived as an opportunity to attract the genteel to the expanding town. The area which was to become Eldon Square and Eldon Road was one of a number of plots acquired by Thomas Lawrence, linen draper and former mayor of Reading.⁸⁶² In contrast to the legal constraints on the Corporation, the Crown was able to sell freeholds outright, free of covenants as to the type and density of building and repair obligations, controlling only the designation of land as residential, and the imposition of building lines.⁸⁶³ Having divided the land parcels into plots quantified by length of road frontage rather than square footage⁸⁶⁴ the Crown had little further interest in unified planning or aesthetic impact. Lawrence immediately began work on Eldon Square and Eldon Road, needing early completion of one or two houses to recoup the costs of laying out roads and services. One house was completed by 1834;⁸⁶⁵ and the eastern and northern sides by 1841,⁸⁶⁶ and last, the western side by 1847.⁸⁶⁷ A later map⁸⁶⁸ shows a total of twelve houses on the north and east sides, six detached and six in pairs; one larger villa in extensive grounds flanks each side of the square to the east and west. **[7.31]** The other houses (with one exception) fill their entire road frontage, their substantial gardens, including lawns, flower and kitchen gardens,

⁸⁶⁰ Stephen Blake, 'The Development of the Crown and Corporation Estates at Reading, 1828-60', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Reading, 1976). His Chapter 9, pp. 294-380, deals with east Reading. I am grateful to Christopher Jones for pointing out to me an article of the same title by Blake in C. W. Chalklin and J.R. Wordie (eds.) *Town and Countryside: The English Landonner in the National Economy, 1660 – 1860*, (London, 1989), pp. 147-173, which initially drew my attention to the thesis.

⁸⁶¹ Prospectus for the first Crown Estate sale (BRO: QR/NL Acc. 11095); Blake in Chalklin and Wordie, p. 172, fn. 59.

⁸⁶² Blake, in Chalklin and Wordie, pp. 166-7.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁸⁶⁴ BRO: QR/NL Acc. 11095.

⁸⁶⁵ Map of 1834 by Kemp and Nichols, (Reading Central Library, Misc. Maps Cabinet 6).

⁸⁶⁶ Blake, 'Development', p. 333.

⁸⁶⁷ St Giles Parish Rate Book, September 1847: BRO: DP 96/11/89.

⁸⁶⁸ Ordnance Survey maps, 1879, Reading Sheets XXXVII.3.15- 20.

summerhouses and coach houses all placed to the rear. The exception is the present-day number 23, formerly the Villa Rosetta, which is set at an angle across the north-east corner, slightly back from the road, with the largest garden area and a markedly asymmetrical plan in contrast to the others, which are constrained by a uniform building line and are all variations on a rectangular plan.

The square was perhaps the most ambitious and formal of any of the completed early Reading schemes.⁸⁶⁹ It was however irregular in shape, for only three sides of Eldon Square could be developed, as the principal artery of the London Road formed its southern boundary; the curvature of Eldon Road, which became the square's western boundary, was dictated by Crown's boundary lines. The houses of Eldon Square are not identical but each exhibits the recognisable characteristics of the urban *villa rustica*: shallow-pitched roofs with overhanging, bracketed eaves; mixed fenestration including round-headed windows, and in some cases a small-scale tripartite Venetian window, introducing a 'polite' note which is admittedly at odds with vernacular detailing but does not vitiate the other *villa rustica* credentials; and a varied roofline which includes three-storeyed towers with enough upward accent to qualify as miniature belvederes. [7.32] They are built not in brick, but in Bath stone, shipped via the Kennet and Avon canal from quarries at Box and Corsham, reported at the time as being cheaper than brick,⁸⁷⁰ but, that aside, no doubt intended to convey the higher status of the development, which included detached as well as paired houses. [7.33] A conveyance of October 1835 suggests that Lawrence had prepared a basic ground plan for the square, although a proposed church in the garden enclosure, often an essential keystone to the respectability of many new urban developments, was never built.⁸⁷¹ The ground itself, formerly farmland, was level and without natural features and was only cursorily landscaped; the garden square, measuring 250 by 140 feet, was reserved for the

⁸⁶⁹ Blake, 'Development', pp. 333-35.

⁸⁷⁰ *Reading Mercury*, 1 April 1833.

⁸⁷¹ BRO: D/EX/1358/1/1.

exclusive use of the residents and enclosed by decorative railings on stone plinths. In Eldon Road one large villa was completed by 1834, but the remainder were not completed until 1847.⁸⁷² The Eldon Road houses exhibit fewer Italianate characteristics and while they are undeniably handsome examples of town houses in Bath stone, their uniform layout and their positioning directly onto the road without the softening effect of green landscape, together remove any picturesque aspect to which their style might have pretended. The houses in both the Square and the Road gave onto rear service roads, giving access for tradesman and carriages, both an indication of the expected status of the eventual occupants.

Lawrence employed local architects, both for Eldon Square and a number of his other speculations in the town: the Briant brothers, Henry (1813-84) and Nathaniel (1816-49), who practised in partnership in Reading between the early 1830s and 1842.⁸⁷³ There are few records of their early life and training but local directories show them practising in Reading by 1835; some attributions to a particular brother exist but in the absence of such evidence their work has to be regarded as a joint enterprise, although in the case of Eldon Square Henry's name recurs in surviving documents more frequently than that of Nathaniel. Whether the architectural style for Eldon Square was initiated by Lawrence or proposed by the Briants and approved by him is not clear, but by the time building began it was stipulated in the contracts for sale. In the mortgage deed for a plot sold freehold by Lawrence to James Plumley, builder, in 1835 for what were to become 13 and 15 Eldon Square (a semi-detached pair) for example, Plumley undertakes to 'erect build and completely finish [clad with Bath stone] the dwelling houses and other Erections and Buildings conformable to the plan or design drawn in the margin...', where there is a small

⁸⁷² Rate Book for parish of St Giles, September 1847. BRO: DP 96/11/89 p. 56.

⁸⁷³ Sidney Gold's *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading*, (Reading, 1999: Reading Central Library reference collection qR/TA) contains an entry for the Briants. I am grateful to Mr. Gold for providing me with a copy of this work.

plan and elevation signed by Henry Briant, to which the finished houses conform.⁸⁷⁴ [7.34] Leading eastward from the square along the London Road are a number of houses in the Eldon Square Italianate mould, for the most part with elevations of stucco rather than ashlar; they are a mixture of detached and paired houses which do not form part of a grouped scheme but which are almost certainly the work of the Briants.⁸⁷⁵ Facing Eldon Square across the London Road is the neo-classical façade of the Royal Berkshire Hospital of 1839, designed by Henry Briant following a competition. Other work by the brothers evidences a functional eclecticism which is to be expected in provincial architects, such as Swiss and Gothic villas for Lawrence; other work in Reading includes Simond's Bank, King Street, a symmetrical Italianate palazzo in Bath stone of 1836.⁸⁷⁶

The Eldon Square scheme was a success, the houses being quickly occupied, largely by those of independent means such as retired Army officers and clergymen;⁸⁷⁷ advertisements described the houses as 'genteel' and the domestic offices provided for a number of indoor servants. Doctors favoured Eldon Road and Square for their proximity to the new hospital. The rustic Italianate of the Briants as evidenced by Eldon Square can be considered relatively sophisticated for the modest social standing of the houses, a series of stylistic modulations to the elevations of otherwise classically-inspired (or uninspired) town houses. The garden square itself lacks landscape character, but the imaginative variety of design and elevation and the siting of no. 23 at an angle in the north-eastern corner of the square displays flair. The subtlety of the Briants' treatment is all the more interesting because the dates of this project overlap with the publication of Loudon's *Encyclopedia and Suburban Gardener*, with their more exaggeratedly Italianate templates; but the brothers seem to have

⁸⁷⁴ BRO: D/EX/1358/1/2.

⁸⁷⁵ See, for example, 81 London Road: HE List entry 1321926.

⁸⁷⁶ HE List entry 1113497.

⁸⁷⁷ BRO: Census Return, 1841.

eschewed the easy temptations of the pattern books in favour of a more personal and restrained approach which in view of their youth is all the more surprising.

ii) The Villas, Stoke-on-Trent

‘All that is essential for happiness’⁸⁷⁸

The Villas was a planned development of twenty-four modest Claudian Italianate houses which still today as at the time of their construction stand out among the otherwise conventional Victorian architecture of an industrial Midlands town. [7.35]

Stoke-on-Trent in the early Victorian era was a settlement dependent largely on the pottery industry which had driven an expansion in its population from 1,400 in 1785 to some 9,100 by 1851. It displayed many of the problems associated with rapid growth such as issues of public safety and health, and the Chartist Riots of 1842 resulted in significant disorder on the streets.⁸⁷⁹ By the mid-century some of the elders of the town, including the Spode and Minton ceramics manufacturing dynasties, felt the need to restore some dignity and respect to Stoke’s somewhat tarnished name: it would be naive to think that they did not also see the collateral benefit of protecting their economic interest in the town. The Minton family had already donated land and finance for new churches, schools and workers’ housing in the area, employing George Gilbert Scott as architect. But they realised that social stability could be enhanced by the availability of genteel housing to attract a different social stratum, and in 1850 Herbert Minton, head of the family, together with his brother the Rector, initiated a project to bring this about. The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the ‘Provisional Committee to form the Stokeville Building Society’ in June 1850 record that,

⁸⁷⁸ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 8: ‘We shall prove in this work that a suburban residence with a very small portion of land attached will contain all that is essential to happiness in the garden, park and demesne of the most extensive country residence.’

⁸⁷⁹ Robert Nicholls, *A History of the City of Stoke-on-Trent and the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, compiled by Robert Nicholls from the History Published by John Ward etc.*, (Hanley, 1931).

A strong feeling [has] existed for some time past amongst several of the inhabitants of Stoke-upon-Trent in favour of erecting a number of Dwelling Houses of a superior class, with the view of increasing the importance and respectability of the Town.⁸⁸⁰

The Minton brothers offered a plot of ten acres on favourable credit terms provided that a Society could be formed to undertake the development. Building clubs or societies had emerged in the 1770s as collective mechanisms to finance house construction and purchase.⁸⁸¹ Operating on the basis of informed but amateur self-help, their numbers grew as economic confidence was restored after the end of the Napoleonic wars, and by the mid-century the societies were widespread, particularly among the artisan classes. Stokeville was of the type known as a terminating society, set up to finance a specific development and to be wound up on its completion. In addition to Herbert Minton, other trustees were local figures who could be directly useful or influential: an Improvement Commissioner for Stoke, and a director of the Staffordshire Potteries Water Company, which was to supply the water to the estate, the accountant at the Minton works, a parish churchwarden, and a Clerk to the Police Commissioners. The Trustees managed the project but the houses were to be available to Members, on application. Successful applicants paid an initial sum to purchase their share as a member of the Society, and then a monthly subscription to finance work in progress. The transfer of shares and the letting of houses once finished were subject to the approval of the Society's Trustees, who thereby retained the power to control the identity of the members and the occupants, and therefore the tone of the development as a whole. At the inaugural meeting the Minton brothers named as architect and surveyor Charles Lynam (1829-1921), the 21 year-old son of a local surveyor.

⁸⁸⁰ *Stokeville Building Society Minutes*, 'Report of the Provisional Committee read at a General Meeting of parties intending to become shareholders, held at the Wheat Sheaf Hotel in Friday evening, June 14th 1850'. Most of the records of the Stokeville Building Society are in private hands and access has been restricted; an invaluable secondary source is Joan Turner, 'The Stokeville Building Society 1850-56 and those who became involved in the project', (unpublished M.A. History dissertation, University of Keele, 1975). I am grateful to the Keele Special Collections Librarian for her assistance in arranging access to this document. The *Conservation Area Appraisal for The Villas* prepared by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, February 2007, has also confirmed some details.

⁸⁸¹ Malcolm Chase, 'Out of Radicalism: The Mid-Victorian Freehold Land Movement', in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No.419 (April 1991), pp. 319-345.

The site provided by the Mintons, a mile from Stoke parish church and in open countryside, had some interesting characteristics: essentially rectangular, it was on an incline over which the land fell by some 150 feet; but while presenting some technical challenges it also afforded an opportunity for picturesque landscaping. Whether Minton presented him with a detailed brief is not clear but Charles Lynam produced a ground plan for the site within a week of appointment and detailed plans and elevations four weeks later. Twenty-four houses were to be built on the site, of three classes: ten of the first class, six of the second and eight of the third, each set within its own garden. The classes were differentiated by amount of internal space, the number and disposition of rooms and extent of the ancillary offices; by the relative size of the gardens; and in their aspect, for the incline of the site meant that the upper reaches afforded good views of the Trent Valley and were also further from the Turnpike Road. [7.36]

The villas were built in four tranches from August 1850, each including a mixture of the three classes of house. Despite delays occasioned by anti-Protectionist rioting the first house was completed by September 1851 and advertised to let, being:

delightfully situated at Stokeville, within a mile of the Central Station of the North Staffordshire Railway, and suitable for a genteel family.⁸⁸²

Despite the bankruptcy of the original prime contractor, the estate was completed by 1855. The largest houses, the four on the middle terrace (Nos. 13-16), were built at an early stage: No.16 was apparently constructed entirely from bricks made on the site from soil excavated there. Nos. 23 and 24 (an attached pair), on plots belonging to Herbert Minton and which were at the gates to the London Road, were among the final houses to be completed.⁸⁸³

There were minor alterations to the specification of the houses as the project progressed,

⁸⁸² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 27 September 1851.

⁸⁸³ The ten first class houses, as identified by their modern numbers, are Nos. 8-17 (No. 10 was demolished and rebuilt in unrelated style), which are all on the upper half of the site; the six second class are Nos.1-4 and 23-24; and the eight third class are Nos. 5-7 and 18-22, which are in the centre on smaller plots.

such as the widening of the staircases in the second class and changes to the window designs in the tower rooms, both in response to members' complaints; but there is no evidence of any stylistic evolution over the five-year building period.

It is perhaps surprising that Herbert Minton should have appointed an untried 21 year-old as architect to the Society. However Charles Lynam had some useful credentials, no doubt known to Minton because his father George Lynam was appointed Surveyor to the Stoke Improvement Commissioners in 1839.⁸⁸⁴ Before setting up as a surveyor in Stoke in 1829 George Lynam had worked for a Midland dynasty of master masons: the Trubshaws. Among the fourth generation was James Trubshaw (1777-1853) who had worked as a young man with Wyatt at Fonthill and Windsor Castle and was now well established as an architect of country houses in the North and Midlands;⁸⁸⁵ so George's professional contacts extended beyond the merely provincial. Charles had in turn benefited from a more academic and more formal training than that of his father, his education in London having been sponsored by a distant relation; he returned home in 1843 to work with his father, who by now styled himself as an architect and had been appointed Surveyor for Stoke four years previously. By 1847 Charles was back in London, studying at RIBA and articled to William Wilkinson Wardell, whose reputation rests largely upon his ecclesiastical work in England, designing thirty Roman Catholic churches following his conversion to the faith in 1846. Wardell shared the religious and architectural leanings of Pugin, his friend and possibly pupil master, and it is likely that the young Lynam would also have received a thorough grounding in them. In fact much of Charles Lynam's legacy rests on his own Gothic ecclesiastical work, less distinguished than that of Pugin or Wardell, but no doubt encouraged by his close

⁸⁸⁴ Staffordshire Record Office: D997/Maps/6: *Survey of the parish of Stoke for the Improvement Commissioners; Minutes*, 19 July 1853.

⁸⁸⁵ See Colvin, pp. 1054-1060 for the Trubshaw family.

friendship with Thomas Miller Rickman, a fellow student of Charles (and son of Thomas Rickman) and subsequently Charles's brother-in-law.⁸⁸⁶

Charles Lynam clearly understood that the stated aim of the project was to raise the tone of the town by creating an enclave of gentility amid the fields at a safe distance from the factories, but although the villa estate was intended to be respectable rather than lavish, the challenge lay as much in the layout of the landscape as in the detailed design of the houses. Displaying sensitivity and originality, Lynam chose to lay out the main axis in the form of two broadly parallel but curved building lines, which simultaneously allowed for the creation of different sizes of plots and houses but dispersed in a picturesque manner such that not every house was visible at once, and different elements such as eaves and towers were glimpsed at different moments through foliage. In that respect Lynam followed the design of the various villa estates laid out by Nash, Burton and others in the preceding decades, but what differentiates it, other than the uniformity of the architectural style which contrasts with the eclecticism found elsewhere, is the extent of the grounds compared to the modest character of the houses. Instead of a central garden square the generous front gardens distance the houses from the main drive and overall the scene is much closer to that of a village street: the circus with its lamp standard provides a focal point akin to a pump on a village green. [7.37] The principal transverse lane forms an elevated terrace, referred to as such, emphasising the superior status of the four houses which front onto it,⁸⁸⁷ giving south-easterly views down the slope past the circus with its ornamental lamp standard, and onward to the valley beyond. From the south-western end of the terrace an even more exclusive view could be had: No. 13 was described as 'delightfully situated upon the eminence ... It commands an extensive prospect of Trentham and surrounding scenery'.⁸⁸⁸ The remaining four houses (Nos. 9 to 12) which face south-west and front on to the lane at the extreme

⁸⁸⁶ C. Peter Lynam, *Charles Lynam and his family*, (Ashstead, 2005).

⁸⁸⁷ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 27 February 1855.

⁸⁸⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 16 February 1861.

border of the site break the broad symmetry of the layout and seem rather oddly-placed, but this must have been forced upon Lynam by the uneven shape of the western end of the site. The Trent and Mersey Canal, joining Stoke to Newcastle-under-Lyme, ran parallel to the London Road, and a bridge crossed it almost at the entrance gates of The Villas, but its proximity, far from being a problem, seems to have enhanced the picturesque setting. One is reminded of the Regent's Canal flowing through the middle of the Park Villages as depicted in *Metropolitan Improvements*, creating virtue out of necessity.

The provision of service roads to the rear of the houses differentiated access for residents from that for tradesman or servants, removing them from the main upward-sloping vista from the London Road to the circus and beyond. Service areas attached to and immediately behind the houses containing storage and yards were screened by walls. Each house had a front garden of varying shape according to the position of the plot and size of the house, bordered by low walls supporting plain railings; the bigger plots were large enough to afford separate areas for lawn and flower gardens;⁸⁸⁹ all the houses were offset rather than centred within their plot, further distanced from their neighbours by an apparently dense planting scheme. Originally the main entrance from the London Road was secured by iron railings, with a double gate for carriage access and narrower pedestrian gates to each side (all now lost); there were however no lodges or shelters but this nevertheless preserved the illusion of the entrance to a country estate. The largest house, situated at the top of the estate, numbered 12 but known as Rosemount, was on a substantially larger plot, and the gardens highly cultivated, could also be accessed from a separate road at the top of the hill.⁸⁹⁰

The design of the houses represented three or four variations on a theme, tailored for householders of differing status and income. The immediately identifiable Italianate

⁸⁸⁹ No. 13, at the western end of the terrace, claimed a plot size of some 1,300 square yards, for example (*Staffordshire Advertiser* 9 March 1867), whereas the plot of No. 5, a third class house, ran to 918 square yards (*Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 December 1864).

⁸⁹⁰ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 31 January 1874.

characteristics are their asymmetrical plans and irregular rooflines; geometrical massing (although no round towers); shallow-pitched pantiled roofs with deep eaves supported by brackets; narrow, round-headed windows in pairs or triples; and the belvedere or campanile-inspired tower which in some houses is taller, more prominent and more developed (such as No. 7 or No. 18) [7.38] and in others is merely hinted at (such as the pairs at Nos. 1 and 2, and Nos. 23 and 24). All the houses are of two storeys, with the tower alone forming the third storey. Their brick construction is hidden under painted render, which would immediately have set them apart from all the other houses in the area. The opposing pairs, Nos. 1-2 and 23-24, set a grander tone right at the gates of the estate, by the simple expedient so often deployed in the suburbs of appearing to be substantial single houses, with well-detailed round-headed windows. [7.39] The smaller, third class houses such as No. 5 have narrower frontages and this accentuates the upward thrust of their towers, which are not as accentuated in some of the larger houses: the houses along the terrace, Nos. 13-16, have undergone substantial subsequent alteration, but while retaining their Vernacular Italianate characteristics they seem to have been more lateral in their design than the smaller houses. [7.40] Last, the detached houses such as No. 21 [7.41] form a distinct group and are as successful as the entrance pairs, with well-proportioned towers and varied roof outlines. With the exception of two of the semi-detached pairs no two houses were quite identical in plan. The ground floor of the first class houses contained drawing and dining rooms of equivalent area, a breakfast room with conservatory opening off it towards the rear garden, and domestic offices. On the first floor were four bedrooms, a dressing room, and a bathroom, an innovation in Stoke at that time, and the tower room, reached up a narrow staircase, acted as a servant's bedroom; the plan of No. 15 however was altered to accommodate seven bedrooms;⁸⁹¹ No. 5, a third class house, contained only three, and an

⁸⁹¹ An advertisement required a gardener for No. 15 capable of tending vines, peaches, melons and pineapples in the greenhouses: *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 December 1864.

attic room. Just as John Nash's Vernacular Italianate villas betrayed in their interiors little hint of their exterior stylistic provenance, the Stokeville houses appear to have had unremarkable mid-century interiors, complete with Minton floor tiles in the hall. The staircase in No. 9 [7.42] for example is simple, with square section painted balusters and a mahogany rail; hall and landings had simple decorative arched mouldings on small corbels; in terms of plan, while subsequent alterations stand in the way of analysis there seems little to distinguish them from other small villas of the period. [7.43]

We can only speculate on the factors which may have influenced Charles Lynam's architectural vision for The Villas. We do not know to what extent Herbert Minton discreetly guided Lynam's hand, if at all: Minton's aesthetic affinities, and commercial dealings, with Pugin were extensive,⁸⁹² and the Minton family's philanthropic projects nearby, such as the Penkhull almshouses for the poor of the parish, are all in the Gothic style. Perhaps therein lies part of the answer, for the intended inhabitants of The Villa were from a higher stratum of society, and this differentiation perhaps had to be made clear by employing a style with more refined associations. Whatever prompted Lynam's choice of the Claudean mode, his apprenticeship under Wardell would not have been influential: Wardell's oeuvre was almost entirely Gothic with the curious exception of one foray into the Italianate in the form of Government House in Melbourne, but this was executed in the 1870s during the second and more successful half of Wardell's career, after his emigration to Australia in 1857.⁸⁹³ Nearby Italianate examples such as Trentham Hall or the Vernacular Italianate railway stations both at Trentham and at Alton, completed in the late 1840s, have been proposed as models.⁸⁹⁴ Lynam junior may have been aware through his father with the

⁸⁹² Herbert Minton worked with Pugin on the design of the Mediaeval Court at the Great Exhibition; Benjamin Ferrey describes 'the warm intimacy' between the two men: *Recollections of A.W.N. Pugin* (London, 1861), p. 251.

⁸⁹³ This building, and Wardell's contribution to it, is central to Hubbard's thesis. For a more general Australian perspective on Wardell's work, see D. I. McDonald, 'William Wilkinson Wardell: Architect and Engineer', in *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria*, Vol. 41, no. 2, May 1970, pp. 327-350.

⁸⁹⁴ Andrew Dobraszczyc, *Social History Walks: The Villas*, (University of Keele, undated), p. 3.

work of the Trubshaws: as already noted, at least three drawings exist, dating from 1838, from the hand of both Thomas Trubshaw (1802-1842) and James (presumably Thomas's younger brother rather than his father) of Italianate houses. Thomas shows detailed plans and elevations for a modest villa in the mould of *The Villas*;⁸⁹⁵ [7.44] James's take the form of two sketches for an entrance lodge in a scenic setting.⁸⁹⁶ It is not clear whether any of these were ever executed, but Vernacular Italianate was clearly part of their repertoire.⁸⁹⁷ Perhaps Lynam's thorough schoolboy grounding in classical antiquity while at Christ's Hospital (later to surface in his antiquarian and archaeological obsessions)⁸⁹⁸ should not be ignored. On the whole it is much more likely that as a young practitioner he would have resorted to the pattern books to find an appropriate idiom, and Vernacular Italianate was thought to epitomise the gentility which was the intended motif of the whole project. Its appearance was distinctively different from the houses of local brick which dominated the surroundings; it had practical advantages as the impact of the design lay in the massing and detail which were not more expensive to construct, and this stuccoed playfulness introduced a note of sophistication. Its impact was all the more magnified by the Picturesque-inspired layout.

It was regarded as a success. At a special meeting convened in 1852 to consider a substantial over-run of costs, the committee commented:

We are nevertheless sanguine that in many respects an eligible property has been created, and a public want thereby supplied, which from the stimulus it has given to other building operations in the immediate neighbourhood cannot fail to enhance the prosperity in the Town, in which the owners of Stokeville must participate.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁵ RIBA Coll. SD125/3(5).

⁸⁹⁶ RIBA Coll. SD125/3(3) and (4). Further information on the Trubshaw family in addition to that available in Colvin, can be found in Anne Bayliss, *The Life and Works of James Trubshaw*, (Stockport, 1978).

⁸⁹⁷ That James Trubshaw gave his address as *The Villas* in a call for building tenders in July 1855 underlines the success of the project in attracting a successful professional cadre. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 July 1855.

⁸⁹⁸ C. Peter Lynam, *Charles Lynam and his family*, (Ashstead, 2005); Lynam's extensive personal papers are at the William Salt Library, Stafford: 117/39.

⁸⁹⁹ *Stokeville Building Society Minutes*, 27 July 1852, quoted in Turner, p. 14.

It had been fashioned as a template for respectability. In its social and architectural ambitions, The Villas stands out amid the otherwise conventional approach to middle-class housing of its time in the Potteries district. As an exercise in suburban design, The Villas is remarkable both for the imaginative idiom of its houses and the appeal of the picturesque grouping, which have continued to protect its charm despite the encroachment of later building on its boundaries amid what Pevsner describes as the ‘urban tragedy of the Six Towns’.⁹⁰⁰ [7.45]

iii) Devon Square, Newton Abbot

This provincial development is at the outer chronological limit of this study, but is worthy of inclusion partly because while not grand it is accomplished, in a town which was neither county town nor resort, nor magnet for the newly-affluent in the London hinterland; in short, it is a remarkably imaginative piece of urban planning to find in such an ordinary town. It was designed successively by two local architects who were typical of the ranks of talented but little-known provincial practitioners who had absorbed the message of the pattern books.

The development of Newton Abbot in the nineteenth century was largely attributable to the enterprise of the Courtenay family, Earls of Devon and the controlling landowners in the area, whose seat was nearby at Powderham Castle. Industrialisation and the growth of commerce was not taking place on the scale of that in Reading or Stoke-on-Trent; but new industry had replaced mediaeval trades as sources of wealth, and its logistical advantage, between Exeter and Plymouth and with canal access to the Teign estuary and ports, gave a further nudge to the town’s urban expansion. The ambitions of those who had vested interests in the town were, as at Stoke-on-Trent, not just economic, for as the Newton Abbot and Newton Bushel Associated Building Company, formed in 1838 observed: ‘The

⁹⁰⁰ *Buildings of England: Staffordshire*, (London, 1974), p. 252.

want of genteel residences in the immediate vicinity of the town has been long felt'; 'profit is not the main object of the Company: they desire to improve the town' by 'building some good and substantial residences; .. hoping that gentlemen of fortune may be induced to locate there, and adding to the intellectual standing of these thriving towns.'⁹⁰¹ Piecemeal villa development had begun in the 1830s, notably including a large Italianate villa,⁹⁰² and by 1841, one observer noted: 'Long ranges of houses of considerable size were rapidly rising, and the place exhibited a sprinkling of fine people.'⁹⁰³ Just as at Reading some ten years earlier, pressure to improve transport links reshaped the town by the insertion in 1842 of a new road leading in from Exeter to the north-east, principally at the instigation of the Earl of Devon, who also engaged Charles Fowler (1792-1867),⁹⁰⁴ who had already worked for the Earl on alterations to his seat at Powderham Castle, to rebuild the town's principal inn.⁹⁰⁵ The arrival in 1846 of Brunel's Great Western Railway at Newton Abbot, a strategic halt on the Exeter to Plymouth route, provided a further fillip and over the next five decades the population of the town doubled in size; even by 1855 there were concerns over the adequacy of the town's water supply.⁹⁰⁶

The engagement of the 10th Earl of Devon⁹⁰⁷ went beyond the mere provision of building land, and may account for refinement of the design of the new parts of the town. The Earl's concern was two-fold: to defend the value of his existing estate by ensuring a flourishing local economy (he was also an investor in the new railway, which ran through his land), and to enhance the town's future prospects by attracting appropriate residents. In his desire to

⁹⁰¹ *The Western Times*, 8 December 1838; *Notice of Annual General Meeting*, 1841 (Newton Abbot Museum). This was not however a Courtenay vehicle: the Board was made up of local tradesmen such as a builder, brewer, cloth merchant and a banker.

⁹⁰² Somerset Lodge. Much altered: unattributed. HE List entry 1256806.

⁹⁰³ A.B. Granville, *Spas of England and Principal Sea-Bathing Places*, (2 vols., London, 1841), Vol. 2, p. 469.

⁹⁰⁴ Colvin, pp. 393-5.

⁹⁰⁵ HE List entry 1257162.

⁹⁰⁶ Letter, Abberley to Courtenay Trustees, 25 January 1855, Devon Record Office [Hereafter DRO] 1508M/Estate Correspondence, Box III.

⁹⁰⁷ To whom Richard Brown dedicated his pattern book *Domestic Architecture* in 1841.

create ‘a most desirable place to live’, and his ‘kind attention to the interests of the town’,⁹⁰⁸ he displayed a typical early Victorian combination of entrepreneurship and paternalistic local pride. The concentration of landholding in his hands facilitated planned development, uncompromised by historic boundaries. The Earl appointed Humphrey Abberley (1805-1855) as Architect and Surveyor to his estates in the early 1840s: it is possible that Abberley, originally of Gravesend, had worked with Fowler in London,⁹⁰⁹ which would account for the former’s introduction to the Courtenays, but this is as yet unsubstantiated. Abberley died suddenly in 1855, and Joseph Rowell (1826-1902), a builder and surveyor from nearby Teignmouth, was appointed his successor; both men also maintained outside practices.⁹¹⁰

There is no evidence that the Earl influenced the aesthetics of the new housing developments, but both of the two successive estate architects employed, with much versatility, the Vernacular Italianate. There was of course the singular example of Sandridge Park some ten miles away, although it is unclear whether Abberley or Rowell were aware of it. One of the principal set-pieces in the town from this period is Devon Square, constructed on a site between the old road to the coast and the new road from Exeter. [7.46] It is made up of forty-one Vernacular Italianate houses of different sizes, and some ancillary buildings including the drawing office for the Courtenay Estates Surveyor. The houses are stuccoed over rubble and face onto a central green from which they are separated by the road; a church was built in the centre of the green. There is no trace of the original scheme for planting and paths but it appears to have been informally picturesque.⁹¹¹ The Square is on a sloping site, affording views of the surrounding hills which make up different parts of the town. [7.47] The overall layout of the square and early house designs seem to have been by Abberley from the late 1840s; on his death Rowell inherited its execution, almost certainly

⁹⁰⁸ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 28 September 1839.

⁹⁰⁹ Suggested in Teignbridge District Council, *Wolborough Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal*, (2011), p. 9.

⁹¹⁰ According to newspaper advertisements. For example, for Abberley: *Western Times* 10 November 1852 and 25 June, 1853; Rowell: *Western Times*, 1 September 1855 and DRO 7027M for Rowell.

⁹¹¹ Teignbridge District Council, *Newton Abbot Town Centre, Courtenay Park and Devon Square Conservation Area Appraisal*, (2010), p. 32.

contributing to the elaboration of the designs, with completion by around 1860 with the construction of Rowell's church.

The houses can be conveniently categorized into three groups, each linked to a different construction period, and different in character, although this is attributable more to differences in status and topography rather than any observable stylistic evolution. They all stand back from the road behind front gardens for the larger houses and modest paved areas in the case of the smaller ones. The three-storey south terrace is an example of rustic Italianate grouping in an urban context, for it takes a conventional palace front and fills it with a range of subtly differentiated and detailed Vernacular Italianate elevations, with two flanking pavilions and a central, focal house stepped forward, and further singled out by the use of ornamental metal balconies. [7.48] The terrace occupies the highest point along the spine of the square, presiding over it and over the church; and yet the impact of grandeur which it creates disguises the fact that it manages to accommodate eleven houses of modest footprint. Quite unlike Daukes's Lypiatt Terrace its external ornamentation is restrained and it presents an elegant simplicity. The western terrace is equally admirable but for different reasons. [7.49] Abberley and Rowell had to solve the problem of a steep slope while preserving the stylistic coherence of the square; whether the specific brief from their employer was to create a group of smaller, cottage-like houses is unknown, but this was the solution adopted. Seven two-storeyed houses are stepped regularly down the hill, sitting behind small front areas enclosed by low walls topped with railings. Notwithstanding their narrow frontage space has been found to vary the elevations and rooflines, with tall, slightly projecting gables hinting at a campanile; the degree of detailing, unexpected for such tiny houses, does not overwhelm but enhances them as a picturesque grouping, and they possess more charm than their counterparts at Stokeville. Houses in the northern range of the later 1850s, including what was to become Rowell's own house and office are in a third idiom, neither palace-fronted terrace nor cottage, but that of the villa. They are lower-built than the

southern terrace and more lateral in plan, some sharing a continuous glass verandah, but the eaves and fenestration remain characteristic. [7.50]

There are other examples of Vernacular Italianate in the town, including another set-piece by Rowell, Courtenay Park, which was deliberately built close to the railway station, some eight years after it opened, as a sort of genteel-triumphant entry to the town.⁹¹² Adjoining the eastern end of Devon Square, it takes the form of a pear-shaped, landscaped park, overlooked by a villas set back behind individual gardens, on the model of Calverley Park if on a smaller scale and for a less affluent clientèle. The effect of this conventionally Picturesque layout is reinforced by the variety of styles employed. The substantial villas are mostly semi-detached and present a mixture of Tudor Gothic, *cottage orné*, and at the southern end, Vernacular Italianate, but of more rustic character than Devon Square, being generally two-storeyed and laterally rather than vertically accented (such as nos. 1 and 2). One attached group of three (nos. 9-11, originally known at various times as Peamore Villas or Terrace) includes a prominent three-storey square belvedere tower. [7.51] Rowell is generally credited with the designs for the Italianate houses, although work on the Park began in 1854, during Abberley's tenure.⁹¹³

Other areas of the town developed by Rowell for the Courtenays in succeeding years, including Powderham Road, Forde Park and Keyberry Park, all to the south of the town centre, and Linden Terrace to the west, all make use of Vernacular Italianate although, with the exception of the picturesque Powderham Road which winds up a hill around a communal green, [7.52] their more conventional layout tends to mute its impact. Even the Corn Exchange of 1871 boasts an Italianate belvedere. In the countryside a few miles away Abbotsleigh House was built in 1847-8 in a design in the Wightwick or Loudon mould, finished in stucco under a slate roof, with broad, bracketed eaves, a canted bay, and

⁹¹² *Newton Abbot Appraisal*, p. 31; *Western Times*, 31 July 1858.

⁹¹³ *Newton Abbot Appraisal*, pp. 47-8.

anchored at one end by a characteristic three-storey belvedere with pyramidal roof. It was recognised as ‘A modern and elegant mansion in the most chaste style of Italian architecture’.⁹¹⁴ [7.53]

The Clifton district of Bristol

Claudean rusticity came to Bristol rather later than to its rival city, Bath. It seems that it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the builders of Bristol recognised it as an idiom which was appropriately genteel, and its assimilation in the city, and in the affluent district of Clifton in particular, provides a rich display of urban variations in Vernacular Italianate’s mature phase.

The development of Bristol’s residential areas and architectural styles has been addressed in detail by Andor Gomme and others,⁹¹⁵ and updated more recently by Andrew Foyle.⁹¹⁶ Both paint a complex background picture of uneven economic growth in the nineteenth century, for after its eighteenth-century boom based on sugar, slavery and shipping, Bristol was overtaken by other cities developing alternative bases of commerce: Bristol’s population, for example, grew much more slowly in the first half of the century than that of Liverpool, Manchester or Birmingham,⁹¹⁷ and as the local press lamented, ‘How does Bristol stand at the commencement of 1834? ... Are we proud of her situation in the scale of British cities? Alas the answer must be negative.’⁹¹⁸ In the second half of the century ‘no single industry predominated’ in Bristol, and growth was muted until a marked recovery in the 1860s as the port re-assumed its centrality to the city’s economy.⁹¹⁹ The prosperous times of the late eighteenth century had encouraged over-extension in speculative housing, and when

⁹¹⁴ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 August 1858. The architect is unidentified. Extended in the 1860s in a Gothic style by Joseph Hansom: *Buildings of England: Devon*, p. 124.

⁹¹⁵ Gomme et al.

⁹¹⁶ *Buildings of England: Bristol*, (2nd edition, New Haven and London, 2009).

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹¹⁸ *Bristol Gazette*, 2 January 1834, quoted in Max Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 58. He discusses barriers to Bristol’s economic growth at pp. 57-89.

⁹¹⁹ *Buildings of England: Bristol*, p. 27.

confidence evaporated in 1793 with the advent of war the crash triggered heavy bankruptcy casualties in the building trade and left vast numbers of projects unfinished even into the 1820s.⁹²⁰ The appetite for speculation may have been blunted for some time as a result. These factors may support a hypothesis that Bristol's relatively late reception of Vernacular Italianate was a more a symptom of its general economic malaise in the first third or so of the nineteenth century, rather than of any resistance by the local architectural profession; indeed, as Foyle points out, until the formation of the Bristol Society of Architects in 1850 the profession in the city had no 'consciously local identity', much of the architecture having been hitherto the preserve of family firms often, if not exclusively, originating as master masons.⁹²¹ One can therefore speculate that the apparent explosion in Italianate-derived styles seen in the expanding Bristol suburbs from the mid to late 1850s, which will be illustrated below, reflected the general upturn in the city's fortunes as much as the local popularity of the style. It is nevertheless curious and not immediately explicable that Italianate forms should have predominated in 1850s and 1860s Bristol, with much less evidence of the Gothic villa style which had prevailed almost exclusively in that the same period in, for example, North Oxford or Nottingham's Park Estate.

The village of Clifton, above the city overlooking the Avon Gorge, had been identified as a favoured site by the eighteenth century, attracting Bristol's merchant class to build substantial villas such as Goldney House of 1720,⁹²² and Isaac Ware's Clifton Hill House of the 1740s.⁹²³ The principal landowner was the Society of Merchant Venturers, the Bristol merchants' guild, eager to allow development of its five hundred acres but also adamant that the open spaces of Clifton Downs were to be conserved.⁹²⁴ No modern study of the role of the development activities of the society seems to have been made, but McGrath's general

⁹²⁰ Walter Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bristol* (Bath, 1952), p. 27

⁹²¹ *Buildings of England: Bristol*, p. 28.

⁹²² *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁹²⁴ Bristol City Council, *Clifton and Durdham Downs: A Landscape History*, Final Report, (February 2006); Patrick McGrath, *The Merchant Venturers of Bristol: a History*, (Bristol, 1975), pp. 426-33.

history suggests that even by the late eighteenth century the Society was setting standards to control the types and construction of houses built on its land, and to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure. Prospective builder-speculators frequently had offers rejected if the houses proposed were ‘not ornamental’ enough, or not ‘of an appropriate class for the situation’. The Society remained the ground landlord and as such enforced covenants strictly against tenants.⁹²⁵ It can be assumed therefore that the Society had views on the desirable status and density of developments on its land, but did not seem to have drawn up an overall scheme for its layout. Clifton’s favourable site and proximity to the open spaces of Clifton and Durdham Downs rendered it, over successful phases of building, one of the city’s most desirable suburbs, singled out by Foyle as ‘a special case for the size and cost of [its] developments’,⁹²⁶ and while other Bristol districts such as Cotham and Redland also offer rich Italianate pickings, this section will for the most part focus on Clifton for its profusion and variety.

The nineteenth-century development of Clifton, and indeed of the city as a whole, initially took the form of terraces, for the most part conventionally classical.⁹²⁷ Gomme describes Bristol as experiencing a ‘longish twilight of classicism’, suggesting that the city’s domestic architecture wrestled with innate provincial conservatism, clinging to the form of the terrace while acknowledging the need to reconcile it with the demands, both social and topographical, of the expanding suburb, before finally succumbing:

Until around 1840 almost everyone living in Bristol as in every other city lived in a terrace house of some sort, and in the working class areas people continued to do so ... but for the middle class the villa appeared more genteel. ... The south-west side of Victoria Square is the last terrace of real architectural consequence in Clifton, indeed in all Bristol ... from the 1850s onwards all the land that was left to use in Clifton and Cotham . and places further north became villadom.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁵ McGrath, pp. 330-34.

⁹²⁶ *Buildings of England: Bristol*, p. 27.

⁹²⁷ Gomme et al, pp. 216-226.

⁹²⁸ Gomme et al, p. 263.

Foyle sees this terrace, the Royal Promenade, Victoria Square, built 1847-51 by John Foster, as marking not merely the final days of the terrace in Bristol but also a new direction which he terms 'the slide towards rich Italianate'.⁹²⁹ It was revolutionary in Bristolian terms in its use of round-headed arches for the ground floor fenestration, and an exuberant cornice which supports another round-arched arcade at attic level, which in combination gives the terrace not just the customary desired effect of a single house, but of an urban Italian palazzo.

Grappling with the transformation of the simple uniformity of the 'sub-classical' terrace⁹³⁰ into the more daring irregularity of the Vernacular Italianate villa entailed, as has already been illustrated, more than the instantaneous adoption of superficial detailing. It required a re-thinking of the very form of the town house, which involved playing with shapes to produce semi-detached or grouped houses which even in their restricted frontages could retain elements of the individual villa without sacrificing sophistication. In Bristol, successful illustrations of the loosening of the classical form from the early 1840s include a group of detached and paired limestone ashlar villas in Richmond Park Road in Clifton, by local architect R. S. Pope (1793-1884).⁹³¹ In particular no. 2 with its asymmetrical elevation, vertically accented wing, pantiled roof and round-headed windows, exhibits a proto-Vernacular Italianate reminiscent of Robert Lugar, as do Pope's other houses nearby. **[7.54]** More recognisable Vernacular Italianate began to appear from around 1850; one, Claudean in character if grand in scale, is Tuscany House in Durdham Park, (strictly speaking in Redland rather than Clifton), a substantial villa in limestone ashlar with rusticated quoins, asymmetrical in plan with a three-storey square tower with pyramidal roof, and paired

⁹²⁹ *Buildings of England: Bristol*, p. 27.

⁹³⁰ Gomme's term: p. 272.

⁹³¹ Pupil of C.R. Cockerell; Bristol District Surveyor 1831-72: Colvin, pp. 820-21.

round-headed windows to the ground floor.⁹³² [7.55] It was part of a larger planned development of similarly sized houses, [7.56] inhabited according to the Census returns for 1861, by bankers, wholesale merchants in oil and linen, and barristers. Set only slightly back from the road behind a lawn Tuscan House has the air of a country house transplanted without concession to the suburban setting; in nearby Westbury Park (as in the case of Durdham Park, a single street rather than an enclosed villa estate), Chescombe Lodge [7.57] is in a similar idiom. Three attached houses of the 1850s facing onto a green enclosure,⁹³³ are in related vein; the architects of all of these are unidentified but they are all less mannered than the contemporary pattern-book examples of towered houses on the Wightwick model, which do not make much of an appearance in Clifton, the compacted versions found, for example, on Upper Belgrave and Percival Roads aside. [referred to below: 7.66]

The simplicity of these examples can be contrasted with the complexity shown in two pairs of grander houses on Clifton Down of slightly later date: Glenavon and Eaton House of c.1853 and Llanfoist and Avonbank of c.1857. [7.58] These very substantial houses are each a variation on an Italianate theme; the earlier pair of ashlar with a slate roof, of three storeys but with a slim four storey tower pavilion; the later pair is more squat, of rubble, with more characteristic round-headed fenestration. Both pairs owe more to the palazzo than the Campagna, all the more surprising because they are the work of Henry Goodridge, whose somewhat heavy-handed treatment here is in marked contrast to his self-consciously picturesque work at Bathwick Hill years earlier: the site at Clifton was less promisingly Claudean, but the expectations of the intended occupants had also perhaps moved on to demand something with more *gravitas*. Vyvyan House in Clifton Park of c.1860 joins the earlier Tuscan House as a more elegant solution than Goodridge devised for the design of the large villa, here on a relatively small and sloping plot. The symmetrical elevation is

⁹³² Originally Wick House, until at least 1929. HE List entry 1280087. Built for James Poole (1797-1872), Mayor of Bristol in 1858: *Post Office Directory for Gloucestershire*, (1863), p. 22.

⁹³³ Clifton Park Lodge, Northcote House and 13 Christchurch Road: HE List entry 1206090.

broken by bringing forward the central element; under a pantiled, hipped roof the windows, while grouped, are suitably scaled down and surface decoration is minimal.⁹³⁴ [7.59] This sophistication can be seen in other large Bristol houses of the period, such as nearby Clifton Park Lodge [7.60], noted above as part of a group, and those at College Fields [7.61] which have an air of Calverley Park about them: if anything can be said to characterise the Bristol urban Italianate villa this model would be a strong candidate.

The relative rusticity of the Durdham Park villas is also found on a smaller scale in a grouping on the east side of Pembroke Road, where two semi-detached pairs of houses (nos. 60-66) of the early 1850s in limestone ashlar employ undecorated round-headed windows in pairs and trios to the ground and first floors, with smaller trabeated windows to the attic storey of the square flanking pavilions, with pyramidal roof. A continuous balcony runs across both houses at first floor level. A restrained and elegant interpretation, Gomme describes them as ‘Italianate in its most genial and fastidious mood’.⁹³⁵ [7.62] Pembroke Road, which rises up a hill to the Downs following a mediaeval lane, on land owned by the Society of Merchant Venturers,⁹³⁶ developed over at least three decades from south (from the 1820s) to north (post-1850), for professional and mercantile men whose households even in the 1870s still included four or five servants.⁹³⁷ This gradual development saw a change in style from the southern end upwards, earlier neo-classical houses giving way to Italianate villas, predominantly of three storeys and detached or semi-detached behind front gardens, of Pennant sandstone or limestone ashlar or rubble, but of varying Italianate design.⁹³⁸ By contrast to the generously lateral houses at nos. 60-66 just described, nos. 65-

⁹³⁴ HE List entry 1202114. By J.A. Clark: see Gomme et al, p. 431, pl. 231c, p. 252.

⁹³⁵ Gomme et al, p. 258. pl. 233. There is no firm attribution, although he identifies later houses in a more decorated Italianate form built further down the same road with designs by W.H. Hawtin (fl. 1863-87).

⁹³⁶ McGrath, p. 342. Building leases were granted to at least three builders and while the usual strict covenants were imposed there does not seem to have been a master scheme.

⁹³⁷ 1871 Census Returns.

⁹³⁸ *Clifton and Hotwells Conservation Area Appraisal*, s.7.7.1.

79 on the western side,⁹³⁹ which Gomme places slightly later at c.1865, have a stronger vertical accent and are less refined in character, built in rubble with stone dressings and decoration, the tower element hinted at only by advancing one bay of the front elevation, and Italian-ness signalled more by its grouped, round-headed windows: a type which was already an urban trope in London and elsewhere.⁹⁴⁰ [7.63]

Many Bristolian examples show clearly the generic approximation of Italian-ness which had been reached and which abounded in the pattern books of this period.⁹⁴¹ [7.64] This could produce a lamentable effect, as exemplified by W.B. Gingell's grouping of three houses as a short terrace at 153-157 Whiteladies Road, Clifton.⁹⁴² [7.65] In an effort to break up the terrace the middle house is deeply recessed and squashed between two mirror-image towered asymmetrical villas: even allowing for modern alterations, the effect of the abundance of detailing, indiscriminately assembled, is almost risible. Every Italianate ingredient is thrown into the indigestible mixture: exaggerated gables with overhanging, bracketed eaves, square four-storeyed belvedere towers, and differently sized round-headed fenestration on each storey. The impact is overpowering: even allowing for modern incursions they lack a sense of place; the problem posed by their top-heavy scale is exacerbated by their siting directly on the road rather than set back behind a substantial garden. There are other examples of houses which pay lip service to an assembly of forms and devices but lack any sense of Picturesque light and shade: examples are found in Upper Belgrave Road and in other Clifton and Redland Streets where substantial houses from the mid-1860s make the effort to combine the correct elements, but do so without either finesse or rusticity. [7.66] By the time we arrive at nearby Cotham Brow, Redland, the game is nearly up, for while their Claudean provenance is still just recognisable from the three-

⁹³⁹ Unlisted; see drawing 231a, p. 252 in Gomme et al.

⁹⁴⁰ See Appendix II for examples.

⁹⁴¹ Such as Tarbuck's *Builder's Practical Director* of 1855-8 and Blackburne's *Suburban and Rural Architecture* of 1867. See Chapter 5.

⁹⁴² HE List entry 1291124. Gingell (1819-99), better known for his commercial work in the city, had been articulated to James Wilson of Bath: Gomme et al, p. 435.

storeyed gable and paired round-headed windows, the lacklustre composition and flatness of form in these smaller houses of the late 1860s demonstrate how far rustic Italianate had strayed from its imaginative Picturesque beginnings. [7.67] Taken together, these three streets also offer a further demonstration of the vagueness by this point of the architectural understanding of the differentiation between rustic and palatial Italianate, or indeed the absence of any feeling of obligation to make that distinction. [7.68]

Bristol may not be unique among English cities for its rich inventory of mid-century Italianate housing; and nor can a convincing case be made that it developed its own particular Italianate style. It is hard to construct a coherent story, for the sheer volume of Italianate design on view, the often confused chronology,⁹⁴³ and the difficulty of reliable attribution combine to counsel caution in drawing an evolutionary lesson from the city or treating it as a paradigm. Bristol is remarkable nevertheless for the stylistic consensus which a disparate group of local architects appeared independently to have reached, demonstrating therefore quite how deeply, consciously or not, Vernacular Italianate had become ingrained in the minds of architects, builders and inhabitants alike.

Urban typologies: towards a taxonomy

The sheer plethora of urban Vernacular Italianate examples presents us with an unwieldy mass of data. The examples singled out above are illustrative but not exhaustive: they have been selected as representing the variety of style, scale and social ambition to which rustic Italianate could respond within an urban context, demonstrating infinite variability in the combination of characteristic elements. An attempt to place these variations within a more analytical framework and to compare suburban and rural counterparts is made in Appendix II, which shows a range of examples in a tentative typological scheme.

⁹⁴³ *Buildings of England: Bristol* gives several examples of the revised dating at p. 27.

Chapter 8

Colonial Legacy: Vernacular Italianate in the United States and Australia

The preceding chapters have documented the emergence and evolution of the Vernacular Italianate style in Britain over the first half of the nineteenth century, and have illustrated its legacy in the form of the built environment over this period. While a full examination of the appearance of Vernacular Italianate architecture in countries outside Britain is outside the scope of this thesis, it would be incomplete not to note its successful translation to the United States and Australia, for it arrived in those two countries not as an independent phenomenon, as had been the case, for example, for Schinkel's work in Germany, but by direct succession from British architects.

Both countries contain many examples of Vernacular Italianate houses, dating broadly from 1840. As indicated in the Introduction, there have been a number of studies of the emergence of an Italian villa style in the United States,⁹⁴⁴ whereas Australian research to date has been more limited.⁹⁴⁵ It is not the intention here to look in any detail at the range of built examples in either country, but instead to look at the means by which the style was transmitted to them, to identify those British architects who played a direct role in its export, to consider the underlying reasons for its appeal in those countries, and what in turn that may tell us about its British reception.

Vernacular Italianate in the United States

It may seem surprising that in the mid-nineteenth century America, a young country which cherished its independence, should so readily accept British architects and their ideas. Yet Americans, although formally freed from the colonial yoke in 1783, 'continued to look to

⁹⁴⁴ Brownell; Meeks, 'Henry Austin'; Lancaster, 'Italianism in American Architecture'.

⁹⁴⁵ Hubbard; James Broadbent, *The Australian Colonial House: Architecture and Society in New South Wales, 1788-1842*, (Sydney, 1997); Morton Herman, *Early Australian Architects and their work*, (Sydney, 1954).

the mother country for aesthetic direction' well into the middle of the nineteenth century.⁹⁴⁶ An industrially-driven economic transformation was taking place in America resulting in urban development on a similar scale to that experienced in British towns some decades previously, in parallel with an accumulation of wealth by industrialists and entrepreneurs which created a deep well of architectural patronage. From the 1840s the design of country houses for America's élite circles and of more modest houses for its citizens began to coalesce around particular templates, some of which in built form, paradoxically, emulated identifiable British pattern book models to a much greater extent than was the case in Britain. It is remarkable enough that so much 'British' Italianate was transplanted fully-formed onto American soil, but what is more significant is the debate which accompanied its emergence there, an extended discussion not just of its utility but of the meaning and implications of the style, a debate which had no equal on British shores at that time.

A number of British architects and writers are identifiable as significant agents in the transfer of Vernacular Italianate style to America. Some, such as John Claudius Loudon, John Notman and Richard Upjohn, are well-known but others such as Marriott Field are more obscure. Each of these played a distinct role in promoting or practising the style in America. Loudon, who never visited America, was probably the single most important facilitator in disseminating the style through his professional relationship with the American Andrew Jackson Downing; Notman and Upjohn, both English-born émigrés, executed examples of Italianate villas which were cited even in their own time by other architects as models of their kind;⁹⁴⁷ Field, one of many English émigré architects in America, was a lesser figure, best known for two influential pattern books but notable also for his direct link to Loudon, whose role will be considered further below.

⁹⁴⁶ W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850*, (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 51.

⁹⁴⁷ Downing cites with approval, for example, Upjohn's King House of 1845: *Country Houses*, pp. 317-21.

Maynard and Meeks allude to the time-lag in the transmission of ideas across the Atlantic from the old country, citing the thirty-five years taken for the migration of the Italianate villa form from Cronkhill to John Notman's Riverside of 1837-39, an Italian villa widely acknowledged as the first of its kind in America.⁹⁴⁸ **[8.1]** But that comparison could mislead, for it took time for the style to become established and mature in Britain. Indeed, Riverside would have been seen in Britain as being not thirty-five years behind the times but absolutely of the moment: compare for example Tue Brook Villa, near Liverpool, of 1838, or the 'Anglo-Italian' villas in the pattern books of Wightwick and Brown some two years later. John Notman (1810-1865) was the pioneer of the American Italianate villa. His biographer describes him as 'one of America's most innovative architects in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; although not stylistically an originator, he was an importer of sophisticated design ideas from Britain, translating them skilfully for his American clientèle.'⁹⁴⁹ Notman was born in Edinburgh where he had been a pupil of William Playfair from around 1829 until his departure for Philadelphia in 1831, at the age of 21, working as a carpenter until his first architectural commission in 1835.⁹⁵⁰ During this time Playfair had been working on three substantial Italianate projects: in Scotland, Belmont and Dunphail of 1828, and Drumbanagher, a country house in Ireland designed the following year,⁹⁵¹ and this apprenticeship period was no doubt the primary source of Notman's Italianate themes and interpretations.⁹⁵² Just as Dunphail can be considered revolutionary in its freedom of plan, Notman's Riverside, for the wealthy Anglophile and Ecclesiologist Bishop Doane of New Jersey, was innovative not just for its Picturesque elevations and rustic, Tuscan characteristics but for the interior plan which arranges a series of irregularly-shaped

⁹⁴⁸ Maynard, p. 52; Meeks, Henry Austin, p. 146. Riverside was demolished in 1961.

⁹⁴⁹ Constance Greiff, *John Notman, Architect, 1810-1865*, (Philadelphia, 1979), p. 14.

⁹⁵⁰ Notman did not describe himself in trade directories as an architect until 1841: Sandra Tatman and Roger Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects*, (Philadelphia, 1985), p. 730.

⁹⁵¹ Described in Chapter 6.

⁹⁵² Playfair's working library included pattern books by Papworth and Robinson as well as a copy of Meason's *Landscape Architecture*. Sale catalogue, National Library of Scotland, KR.16, f. 5 (1).

elements of varying heights around a central vestibule.⁹⁵³ Downing illustrated both elevation and plan and included Notman's own functional description in his *Treatise* of 1841, Downing pronouncing it 'One of the best examples of the Italian style in this country'.⁹⁵⁴ **[8.2]** Notman's other Italianate work in America evidences an imaginative approach which continued to owe something to Playfair: Prospect House, of 1850, **[8.3]** bears a strong resemblance to Dunphail in the angularity of its elevation and lateral extension. By contrast his Alverthorpe of 1851 follows the emerging compact, American pattern book model but draws it up vertically to create a substantial mansion on a relatively confined footprint **[8.4]** while Fieldwood, of 1846-53, one of his many projects for Princeton University, returns to the scale of Riverside. **[8.5]** Ellarslie, of 1848, recalls the simple rusticity of Playfair's work at Dalcrue, but with a touch of Lugar in the canted tower wrapped in a verandah. **[8.6]**

Yet while Notman is rightly credited with having built the first example of an asymmetrical rustic Italianate villa, there are signs of earlier interest. A design for a villa in the 'Etruscan or American Style' had been exhibited in New York in 1835, with square towers and loggias, by the partnership of Ithiel Town (1784-1844) and Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-92), both American-born.⁹⁵⁵ Davis had joined Town in 1829, and although he designed the first Gothic Revival mansion in America, the idiom for which he is now principally known,⁹⁵⁶ he nevertheless became one of the most accomplished exponents of the Italianate villa of the time (commended, with Notman, by Downing as 'the most successful architects in the field of Rural Architecture'),⁹⁵⁷ building some twenty examples in the 1850s. Ackerman notes that Davis's account book for 1833 records a project for a 'Tuscan Villa'; and his pattern book,

⁹⁵³ Riverside had elaborate Gothic interiors.

⁹⁵⁴ Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, as adapted to North America with a view to the Improvement of Country Residences*, (New York, 1841), p. 389.

⁹⁵⁵ Possibly: 'Floor plan and elevations of an Etruscan Villa', Avery Architecture and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University Libraries, NYC, A.J. Davis Collection: NYDA 1940.001.

⁹⁵⁶ Edna Donnell, 'A.J. Davis and the Gothic Revival', *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 2, (Sept 1936), pp. 183-233.

⁹⁵⁷ Downing, *Treatise*, p. 417.

Rural Residences of 1837,⁹⁵⁸ included a ‘Tuscan’ villa design. The projected ‘Villa in the Italian style’ for James Smillie in Rondout, New York State, was begun in 1837 by Davis but abandoned before completion as the costs became unupportable.⁹⁵⁹ The design recalls Goodwin in the extravagantly elongated towers. **[8.7]** Ithiel Town was known for his Greek Revival work, but his architectural library was known to be extensive and contained many examples of British villa books, on which Davis may have drawn;⁹⁶⁰ the latter’s collaboration with Downing from the late 1830s, which took the form of illustrations for Downing’s publications, would also have introduced him to British-derived ideas of rustic Italianate through the works of Loudon. One of his most striking villas was Blandwood, for the Governor of North Carolina, of 1844 **[8.8]**, illustrated by Downing in a later edition of the *Treatise*, which broke away from the ‘tightly conceived compact cluster’ as one historian characterised the American interpretation,⁹⁶¹ in favour of a more visionary approach, in its pared down detail and very bold geometrical shapes, especially the tower of monumental size and crisp edges; it perhaps recalls Papworth’s designs in *Rural Residences*.⁹⁶² The later Winyah Park at New Rochelle, one of eighteen or so Italianate houses executed by Davis in the 1850s, retains Blandwood’s crispness but adds ornamentation. **[8.9]** The stylistic sources drawn upon by Richard Upjohn (1802-78), who arrived in America from Britain in 1829 must also remain the subject of speculation.⁹⁶³ In addition to his ecclesiastical architecture he also designed substantial asymmetrical Italianate villas such as the King house at Newport, Rhode Island of the 1840s **[8.10]**; the timing suggests that Loudon’s work as publicised by Downing may have played some part, but a parallel and simpler explanation may lie in the

⁹⁵⁸ Alexander Jackson Davis, *Rural Residences, consisting of Designs, Original and Selected, for Cottages, Farm-houses, Villas and Village churches*, (New York, 1837).

⁹⁵⁹ Watercolour perspectives with plans are in the Avery Architecture and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University Libraries, NYC, A.J. Davis Collection: NYDA 1955.001.00145-00152.

⁹⁶⁰ Ackerman, p. 234.

⁹⁶¹ Lancaster, ‘Italianism’, p. 137.

⁹⁶² See Chapter 5.

⁹⁶³ Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, (Los Angeles, 1956), pp. 611-2.

role of Notman's original model at Riverside, which was well received and rapidly became well known.⁹⁶⁴

Loudon's extraordinary influence on attitudes among the middle-class to the design of house and garden and its relationship to the quality of the everyday life of its occupants stretched far beyond the United Kingdom. Loudon was of course promoting the suburban ideal in general terms, which included a wide range of stylistic ideas of which the Italianate was only one, but his publications were in a sense the principal gateway by which Vernacular Italianate, entered America, at least in its more populist mode. He had already signalled the way ahead in his *Encyclopedia*:

One great recommendation of the Italian manner in our eyes is, that from the cheap nature of its finishing and decoration, it is suited to a people in moderate circumstances – to a democracy. Another is that, from the irregularity of its masses, which admit of a house receiving additions in every direction, it is suited to a prosperous and improving people, such as the Americans.⁹⁶⁵

One of the contributors to his *Gardener's Magazine* was Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-52),⁹⁶⁶ a New York landscape designer and gardening writer who like Loudon was unafraid to extend his opinions into the realm of architectural design.⁹⁶⁷ Downing, who described Loudon as his 'valued correspondent' and 'the most distinguished gardening author of the age',⁹⁶⁸ shared the tenets of Loudon's approach to villa architecture, which balanced expressiveness and utility, but always subordinated to the concept of appropriateness to the client and to the site:

Rural Architecture is indeed so much more a sentiment, and so much less a science, than Civil Architecture, that the majority of persons will always build for themselves and unconsciously throw something of their own character into their dwellings.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁴ Correspondence in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 11, No. 2, May 1952, pp. 27-29.

⁹⁶⁵ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, para. 1933, p. 963.

⁹⁶⁶ *American National Biography Online*, www.anb.org; David Schuyler, entry for Andrew Jackson Downing [accessed 12 May 2016].

⁹⁶⁷ Melanie Simo, *Loudon and the Landscape*, (New Haven and London, 1988), p. 142.

⁹⁶⁸ Downing, *Treatise*, p. 35.

⁹⁶⁹ Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, (New York, 1850), p. xx.

Downing's design philosophy and his discourse on the utility and symbolism of rustic Italianate architecture will be elaborated upon below but it is enough to note at this point the vital link between Downing and his mentor, who guided him not just as to content but also as to successful self-promotion.

British pattern books in general had a significant influence on American villa architects of the mid-century, for American architects initially lagged behind their British counterparts in the production of villa books, although they later gathered pace. Of the estimated 188 new pattern books published in America between 1797 and 1860, half of them appeared in the 1850s; Alexander Jackson Davis's *Rural Residences* of 1837 (it sold few copies but contained as already noted an Italianate or 'Tuscan' design) 'marked the appearance of a new sort of publication that was directed primarily to the prospective client and only secondarily to the builder'.⁹⁷⁰ This dearth therefore directed their audience to the British repertoire: Davis had purchased a copy of Loudon's *Encyclopedia* in 1835;⁹⁷¹ Downing recommends in his *Treatise* 'to readers who desire to cultivate a taste for rural architecture, the following productions of the English press', listing Loudon's *Encyclopedia* as well as works by Robinson, Lugar, Goodwin, and Hunt;⁹⁷² the library of the American-born architect Henry Austin (1804-1891), creator of a number of towered villas in the 1840s and 1850s, contained copies of pattern books by Aikin, Papworth, Loudon, Goodwin, Thomson and Robinson.⁹⁷³ In proselytising the Italianate rustic style Loudon helped to bring its theoretical underpinning, as outlined by Meason, whose book Loudon described in detail, to a transatlantic audience. Downing facilitated the transfer of an easily assimilable, British-derived, Italianate repertoire in two ways: through directly commending Loudon's writings, and then in turn developing the concept and ensuring its wider reception through the publication of his own works,

⁹⁷⁰ Dell Upton, 'Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860', *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 19, no. 2/3, 1984, p. 122.

⁹⁷¹ Kenneth Hafertepe and James O'Gorman, *American Artists and their Books to 1848*, (Boston, 2001), p. 176.

⁹⁷² Downing, *Treatise*, p. 417.

⁹⁷³ Meeks, 'Henry Austin', p. 145.

which included contributions, both in the form of patterns and of built examples, from leading American or naturalised architects such as Davis, Upjohn and Notman. Other members of the architectural profession in America followed: influential works containing sophisticated Italianate designs were published by William Ranlett of New York (1806-65),⁹⁷⁴ [8.11] and Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia (1815-84),⁹⁷⁵ [8.12] for example; Charles Elliott's *Cottages and Cottage Life* of 1848 presented some rustic and somewhat gauche examples, including a version of the familiar towered house model as well as one with a detached campanile. [8.13] British-born architects working in America whose pattern books and built repertoire included rustic Italianate included Marriott Field (c.1803-unkn.), who contributed to Loudon's publications designs including a set of drawings for entrance porticos for the *Encyclopedia*, where Loudon describes him as 'a young Architect, lately returned from a professional tour through Italy'.⁹⁷⁶ Field published two pattern books in New York: *City Architecture* of 1853 and *Rural Architecture* of 1857, describing 'simpler Italian' as his favourite taste', and including in his rural designs a 'sketch of a real Italian cottage in the environs of Rome [which] will enable the reader to compare the genuine features of the style here exhibited with the *quasi* conventional imitations too frequently seen'.⁹⁷⁷ British-born Gervase Wheeler (1815-89), who arrived in America in c.1846 and worked for a short period with Henry Austin, published several designs for villas in the 'Modern Italian Bracketed style' in his two books, *Rural Homes* of 1851 and *Homes for the People* in 1855.⁹⁷⁸

[8.14]

⁹⁷⁴ *The Architect*, Vols. 1 and 2, (New York, 1849-51).

⁹⁷⁵ *The Model Architect*, Vols. I and II, (Philadelphia, 1852).

⁹⁷⁶ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p. 961.

⁹⁷⁷ *Rural Architecture*, (New York, 1857), p. 80. Little is known of his early career although he is recorded as having entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1824: Colvin, p. 375.

⁹⁷⁸ His built works include the Joshua Newton Perkins house in Norwich, Connecticut. His early life and British training are obscure, although he impressed Downing sufficiently for the latter to include some of Wheeler's designs in his *Architecture of Country Houses*.

The work of Andrew Jackson Downing closely parallels that of Loudon, for neither was an architect, but both were landscape designers, yet Downing's 'influence on the way Americans visualised and built their homes was greater than that of anyone on the history of the nation.'⁹⁷⁹ They never met, but corresponded, and Downing contributed material for Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine*, where, in turn, Loudon favourably reviewed Downing's first two works.⁹⁸⁰ Downing's publications showed an eclectic series of designs familiar from earlier British villa books: Gothic, Norman, Swiss and English Rural, as well as a variety of Italian forms, but in Downing's writings can be found probably the most comprehensive mid-century manifesto for Vernacular Italianate on either side of the Atlantic. He first writes about rural Italianate architecture in his *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, published in 1841; he continues his theme in his influential pattern book, *Cottage Residences* of 1842, which ran to three editions before his early death in 1852 and at least five posthumous ones; and again in his *Architecture of Country Houses* of 1850. As templates, his designs cannot be described as innovative, as they largely represent magpie-like borrowings, although significantly adapted to use American vernacular materials and construction techniques, particularly in the use of timber and boarding. Downing's 'Villa in the Italian style', Design VIII in his *Cottage Residences*,⁹⁸¹ or indeed 'modern Italian style' as he sub-titles it, [8.15] is, as Brownell has pointed out,⁹⁸² an almost literal copy of the 'Anglo-Italian' villa of Wightwick's *Palace of Architecture*, a work with which Downing was familiar, having written the preface to the American edition of Wightwick's *Hints to Young Architects*, published in New York only a year after its appearance in London;⁹⁸³ or Brown's identically-titled version of the design in his *Domestic Architecture*. Downing, who owned a copy of

⁹⁷⁹ Ackerman, p. 229.

⁹⁸⁰ John Gloag compares their careers in *Victorian Taste, 1820-1900*, (Newton Abbot, 1962), Chapter IV, pp. 39-69, 162-3.

⁹⁸¹ Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residences, or a series of designs for rural cottages and cottage villas and their gardens and grounds, adapted to North America*, (New York, 1842); references are to the 1873 edition.

⁹⁸² Brownell, p. 216.

⁹⁸³ George Wightwick, *Hints to Young Architects about building in the Country*, American edition, (New York, 1847).

Goodwin's *Rural Architecture* of 1835, also shows a 'cottage in the Italian or Tuscan style', (Design IX) [8.16], which has more in common with Loudon's Design IX, and with small urban villas of the time in Britain, [8.17] than with the more palatial Anglo-Italian of Downing's Design VIII, supplied, Downing tells us with approbation, by Notman. Also of note are his references to current British practitioners: he commends as a model, for example, the Italianate London suburban villa of his fellow garden designer Andrew Nesfield, designed by the latter's brother-in-law Anthony Salvin, a house also described in detail by Loudon;⁹⁸⁴ and he quotes E.B. Lamb, one of Loudon's leading contributors of Italianate designs.⁹⁸⁵

Downing praised rural Italianate in an overtly associationist manner. The reception of Vernacular Italianate in America rested on the confluence of two factors: an appreciation of Picturesque values borrowed from British polite society, alongside a deep philosophical veneration for a simple, Thoreau-esque rusticity, as a counterpoint to technical advances and the civilising of wilderness which were symbols of America's material success.⁹⁸⁶ Expressing the view that the 'pointed, high-roofed' (that is, Gothic) style was more effective in conveying rural life, he goes on to single out the qualities encapsulated and expressed by the Italian villa style:

If it is not so essentially country-like in character, it is however remarkable for expressing the elegant culture and variety of accomplishment of the retired citizen or man of the world, and as it is capable of the most varied and irregular as well as very simple outlines, it is also very significant of the multiform tastes, habits and wants of modern civilisation. On the whole, then, we should say that the Italian style is one that expresses not wholly the spirit of country life nor of town life, but something between both, and which is a mingling of both.⁹⁸⁷

Perhaps allowing a touch of intellectual snobbery to overcome his utilitarian and democratic principles, he opines that: 'An Italian villa may recall, to one familiar with Italy and art, by its

⁹⁸⁴ Downing, *Country Houses*, p. 290; Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, pp. 278-85. [6.36]

⁹⁸⁵ Downing, *Treatise*, p. 386; Lamb's skill in Italianate design is praised by Loudon in his *Encyclopedia*, p. 963.

⁹⁸⁶ Discussed by Maynard and Ackerman.

⁹⁸⁷ Downing, *Country Houses*, pp. 285-6.

bold roof lines, its campanile and its shady balconies, the classic beauty of that fair and smiling land.⁹⁸⁸ Later in the same work he betrays an even more exclusive outlook in his description accompanying a design for ‘an Irregular Villa in the Italian style, bracketed’, which is a towered villa with balcony and verandah [8.18]:

While it will on account of the great picturesqueness and variety growing out of its [irregularity] be more pleasing to a portion of our readers, a great number of persons, who only judge of a dwelling-house by a common-sense standard, will probably prefer a more regular and uniform building. The latter class will find no good reason for any extra cost .. as a more regular one would afford the same comfort and convenience; but persons who have cultivated an architectural taste, and who relish the higher beauties of the art growing out of variety, will give a great preference to a design capable of awakening more strongly emotions of the beautiful or picturesque, as well as the useful or convenient.⁹⁸⁹

This surprising tirade is only slightly softened by the functional description of the villa plan and garden (assuming the availability of 150 acres) which follows. In mollifying tone, he adds, ‘The Italian mode is capable of displaying a rich domestic character ... The square tower, or campanile, is a prominent feature in villas of this style, and frequently confers on the Italian compositions a character of great boldness and dignity.’ For the avoidance of doubt, ‘The projecting roof and the round-arched window are also characteristic features.’⁹⁹⁰

This is perhaps the most influential of all of Downing’s templates. Shown as finished in boarded wood, although he concedes that brick and stucco would enhance the effect, in offering three receiving rooms and ample domestic offices the house corresponded in size and aspiration to the villas which were being presented in the pattern books of his British contemporaries. It can be argued that this is no mere imitation of Wightwick or Loudon, but represents instead a transformation by Downing into a proprietary American style of lasting influence.

By the time of *Country Houses* of 1850, Downing is referring to ‘our Bracketed style’, claiming it for America, although in the same volume his comments on a villa on a much grander

⁹⁸⁸ Downing, *Cottage Residences*, p. 24.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Design VI, p. 115.

scale by Upjohn for Edward King, in Newport, of 1845,⁹⁹¹ rather bely Downing's egalitarian credentials:

It is one of the most successful specimens of the Italian style in the United States, and unites beauty of form and expression with spacious accommodation. .. The first impression which this villa makes on the mind is that of its being a gentleman's residence. There is dignity, refinement and elegance about all its leading features. It next indicates varied enjoyment and a life of refined leisure – especially abounding, as it does, with evidences of love of social pleasures.⁹⁹²

Architecturally he praises the effect of 'harmony arising from variety' from its irregular façade and the diversity of its fenestration: 'to a highly cultivated taste, the satisfaction derived from harmony growing out of variety is .. greater than that arising from uniformity and simplicity'.⁹⁹³ He redeems himself by providing a design for a much humbler house, in the form of a 'Suburban cottage in the Italian style', small, symmetrical and with a verandah but no tower, for, as he notes, he has steered a course between 'baldness' and 'frippery'. Explaining his stylistic label, he adds: 'we have not of course endeavoured to give this cottage much architectural style. The projection of the roof supported by cantilevers [eaves brackets] and the simple but bold window dressings, give however the character of the Italian style.'⁹⁹⁴ His 'Cubical cottage in the Tuscan style' is of almost identical appearance, with eaves projecting by thirty inches: 'a very simple and unpretending modification of the Tuscan or modern Italian architecture'.⁹⁹⁵ In his hierarchy of Italianate styles, he reserves for the villa the 'campanile or Italian tower, rising above all, bringing all into unity, and giving picturesqueness, or an expression of power and elevation, to the whole composition.'

American architects proselytised Vernacular Italianate architecture by asserting its values in two different ways. Most overtly they extolled its practical adaptations to the American climate (projecting eaves to provide shade in summer and to deflect rain in winter, the

⁹⁹¹ [8.10]

⁹⁹² Downing, *Country Houses*, p. 317.

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

provision of a verandah, often described, curiously as ‘piazzas’,⁹⁹⁶ to profit from breeze and shade in warm weather), while more delicately hinting at the tasteful and artistic connotations of its Italian provenance. Like Loudon, they were at pains to stress the social neutrality of a style which could readily be adapted to different scales of aspiration; but their most ambitious goal was to lay a convincing claim to it as a ‘national’ style, and to do so the terminology used to describe it had to be wrested away from a purely ‘foreign’ label. This becomes apparent from the range of vocabulary used in the pattern books and other writings. We have noted that Davis for example, used terms such as ‘Tuscan’ and ‘Villa in [the] American style of Italian’,⁹⁹⁷ and that Downing used a number of terms from Italian to Modern Italian to Tuscan, to Southern Villa Romanesque, or simply ‘Bracketed’. William Ranlett, a New York architect who produced a pattern book in 1847 was not comfortable with a label which seemed to have emerged by consensus. In his view,

The style has been designated, for the want of a better term, the *Anglo-Italian*, but might with greater propriety be called the *American-Italian*, for it is more purely American than Italian in character and hardly at all resembling the English style of villas. .. An Italian villa might with very slight alterations be adopted in our middle States; so that when the Anglo-Italian villa was transplanted here it immediately began to revert back to its original type, as our climate and the habits of the people bore a stronger resemblance to those of Italy than of England.⁹⁹⁸

However he added disapprovingly that the antique Roman villa models displayed ‘richness of ornamentation and a thousand luxurious appliances, which would ill accord with the severity of our republican habits, and that predominance of economy and comfort which so distinctly mark all the efforts of American art.’ Ranlett even refers back to the tripartite classification of the Roman villa: the *villa rustica* ‘corresponds with our farm-house’ and the ‘*villa urbana*, or *pseudo-urbana*, which is the type which we for the lack of a better name,

⁹⁹⁶ See for example, Charles Elliott, *Cottages and Cottage Life*, (Cincinnati, 1848), p.211, or Orson Squire Fowler, *A Home for All*, (New York, 1848).

⁹⁹⁷ Annotation on his drawings for the Litchfield house, also known as Grace Hill, Brooklyn. [8.19]

⁹⁹⁸ Ranlett, *Architect*, Vol. 2, p. 13.

denominate the Villa ... the country residence of the town gentleman'.⁹⁹⁹ He commends the Anglo-Italian villa for its absence of monumental character, which by dint of swapping ornamental cornices for bracketed eaves, gains a more preferable 'aspect of cheerfulness and comfort'. In fact the roof treatment became in itself an identifier, many architects, led by Downing and including Ranlett, taking up the idea of 'cottage villas in the bracketed mode'.¹⁰⁰⁰ Ranlett also managed to accommodate a concept of a 'small cottage villa in the semi-Italian style',¹⁰⁰¹ [8.20] which turns out to be a towerless version, with bracketed eaves, resembling a more rustic and less elegant American cousin to Turner's Smallcombe. These discussions over provenance, adaptation and description were of course no mere argument over terminology, but a wider debate about the identification and communication of national identity and with it a Loudonian sense of 'fitness'.¹⁰⁰²

Downing's 'Irregular Villa in the Italian style, bracketed', Design VI in his *Cottage Residences* of 1842, was discussed above. The book ran to four editions during his lifetime and at least five posthumously, and in Brownell's view, this particular design was the most potent template of all. 'During its fifty year history, this model conquered the country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Canadian to the Mexican borders. It has no superior in illustrating the impact of the Italianate villa on design in the United States.'¹⁰⁰³ It is certainly true that this was not a style favoured only by the genteel of the eastern seaboard, for in addition to the democratic acceptance noted by Brownell, examples of more substantial houses abound in the mid-west states such as Ohio and Michigan, as well as in the south, in Tennessee and Kentucky. Indeed another émigré from Britain, the colourful Major Thomas Lewinski (c.1800-82), a half-Polish former Catholic priest turned soldier of fortune and

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Downing, *Cottage Residences*, Design V.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ranlett, *Architect*, Vol. 2, Designs XXVI, XLV and XXXVI respectively.

¹⁰⁰² Notably, Calvert Vaux did not use the terms Italianate, Anglo- or American-Italian in his *Villas and Cottages* (New York, 1857) even though it contains recognisably Italianate designs, preferring simply to call them 'towered villas'.

¹⁰⁰³ Brownell, p. 211.

finally architect, designed a number of Italianate villas in Kentucky in the 1850s of which one, Cane Run,¹⁰⁰⁴ of 1854, is, in the opinion of one American historian, ‘for beauty of massing, keen judgement in the selection of details, exquisiteness of planning and charm of effect ... unsurpassed by any other building of its kind in America.’¹⁰⁰⁵ [8.21] And, just as in Britain, despite the association with the rural idyll room was found to adapt the style to more dense urban uses, such as the block of ten semi-detached Italianate villas at Woodland Terrace, Philadelphia, of 1861 by Samuel Sloan, who had provided a variety of semi-detached Italianate designs in his pattern books. [8.22] So triumphant was the progress of rustic Italianate in America that Sloan stated confidently by 1852 that ‘nearly one half of the suburban dwellings that have been erected in this country within the last ten years are in this style’:¹⁰⁰⁶ a remarkable claim.

Vernacular Italianate in Australia and New Zealand

The transmission to Australia of Vernacular Italianate cannot be so overtly traced to the specific and personal agency of opinion-formers such as Loudon, but given the colonial control still exercised over Australia from Britain at this point, it is clear that it emerged there as a style imported from the mother country rather than one which had been arrived at by architects working in Australia independent of theories and undercurrents back in London. Its full flowering dates, as in America, from around 1840, although a handful of houses predate this, and one by some time. Australian historians acknowledge that those who arrived in Australia from England to follow a new life, whether as colonial servant or as entrepreneur, and who were in a position to build a new house for themselves, were faced with a blank sheet of paper: in the absence of any possibility of adaptation of indigenous traditions, European-derived design was the only option. In one view, ‘From the 1820s

¹⁰⁰⁴ From 1881 known as Glengarry.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Clay Lancaster, ‘The designs of Major Thomas Lewinski, émigré architect in Kentucky’, in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 11 no. 4, December 1952, pp. 13-20.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Sloan, *Model Architect*, Vol. 2, p. 63.

wealthy Australian colonists had begun to emulate the architectural fashions of their English counterparts, notably the romantic Gothic or Italianate villa popularised by John Claudius Loudon ... emulating the villa ideal', although this is qualified by the rider that 'style in the scholarly sense may have been a less powerful influence on the character of the Australian house than popular customs and beliefs about home and homeliness which the colonists brought with them',¹⁰⁰⁷ aspirations which Loudon and other villa book authors were reinforcing. It is of note that the single most influential British architect of the early period of colonial development in Australia had been a pupil of John Nash: Bristol-born Francis Greenway (1777-1837).¹⁰⁰⁸ Indeed, 'The Governor reflects that until the arrival of Mr. Greenway there was no Architect in the Colony'.¹⁰⁰⁹ Greenway's unorthodox entry to Australia, by means of deportation as a commutation of a death sentence for forgery in 1812, was no clearly no bar to achieving office once there, and as Civil Architect to the colonial administration he was responsible for a vast output of official buildings for a variety of purposes. His work has been characterised as 'provincial, restrained, vernacular-classical', although the same source argues that his skill with Picturesque form, often informed by study of antiquarian detail, has been underplayed: 'It was Greenway ... who introduced the Picturesque into Australian colonial architecture, both classical and Gothic.'¹⁰¹⁰ His British work, before the abrupt curtailment of his career there, shows no Picturesque influence,¹⁰¹¹ but his privately commissioned Australian villas, from c.1818, begin to show characteristics shared with Nash's early Welsh villas such as Ffynone and Foley House.¹⁰¹² His alterations to Government House, completed in 1820, represented a difficult compromise after the British government refused to authorise funds for the project, and produced an

¹⁰⁰⁷ Graeme Davison, 'Colonial Origins of the Australian Home', in Patrick Troy, (ed.), *A History of European Housing in Australia*, (Melbourne, 2000), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰⁸ James Broadbent and Joy Hughes, *Francis Greenway, Architect*, (Sydney, 1997).

¹⁰⁰⁹ Governor Macquarie, submission to Bigge Commission, Sydney, February 1821; quoted Broadbent and Hughes, p. 22.

¹⁰¹⁰ Broadbent and Hughes, p. 39.

¹⁰¹¹ The Clifton Assembly Rooms, for example. Colvin, p. 450; Broadbent and Hughes, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰¹² Discussed in Broadbent, p. 66.

asymmetrical, rambling ornamental villa which, with its varied massing and embracing verandah, bears a resemblance to the presentation watercolour perspective for Sandridge Park, lacking only a towered element. **[8.23]** But two other houses attributed to him are of interest in the Vernacular Italianate context. The first, Bligh Street, Sydney, of 1825-30, was a villa in the mould of Lloyd's Bute House in Twickenham, or Michael Searles's Clare House, Malling, which while symmetrical includes a central three-storey rounded bay under a conical roof with an open colonnade at its base, flanked by two lower pavilions in the manner of Turner's Sandycombe: very much in the mould of the intermediate villa stage between the neo-classical and the rustic Italianate of contemporary date in England which was discussed in Chapter 6. **[8.24]** Of more direct relevance for Australian Vernacular Italianate and attributed, although not definitively, to Greenway is Bungarribee, a house outside Sydney, built in 1826-7 for Colonel John Campbell, an émigré soldier turned pastoralist.¹⁰¹³ **[8.25]** Of L-shaped plan, the two wings were single storeyed, each incorporating a serpentine bay with full-length glazed exterior doors; at the junction of the two wings, its axis of symmetry, was a two-storeyed round tower under a conical roof, encircled by a verandah which was continuous with those around the wings. The ground floor of the round tower gave access to the verandah through three pairs of full length doors, alternated with blind arches. Its deceptively rustic exterior belies the sophisticated if simple interior, with refined detailing to cornices and architraves and tall niches in the walls of the circular room. The plan was compact, with a centrally-placed staircase. The resemblance is perhaps more to a design by Lugar than to one of Nash's trio, but it is a striking one nevertheless. Greenway's period with Nash is not well documented but a connection is beyond doubt: Greenway exhibited designs at the Royal Academy from Nash's office, including a drawing for Magdalen College Oxford at a time when Nash was

¹⁰¹³ Demolished 1957.

known to be working on projected additions.¹⁰¹⁴ It is hard to judge what degree of influence was exerted by Bungarribee, which Broadbent regards as a stylistic cul-de-sac, or at least *sui generis*, colonists of the time favouring the ‘Englishness’ of the Gothic Picturesque.¹⁰¹⁵ But he concedes that the house, ‘one of the most charming built in early colonial New South Wales’, was ‘subtly Italianate in style and unashamedly Picturesque in character’.¹⁰¹⁶ There were nevertheless other straws in the wind which anticipate the full force of the enthusiasm for rustic Italianate in Australia which was to emerge from the 1840s. Albion House in Sydney is on such example. It was built in the late 1820s for a merchant by a British-born minor architect, Henry Cooper, and although its façade is symmetrical it is an imaginative Picturesque composition which displays a wide array of shapes and a principal elevation which recedes in three stages, with a Lugar-esque canted, four-storey tower as a central element.¹⁰¹⁷ [8.26] It is interesting that the Australian press was already enlightened enough to describe it in 1832 as ‘entirely in the Italian style of architecture’.¹⁰¹⁸ Broadbent regards it as ‘more idiosyncratic than Italianate, but more Italianate than Picturesque’.¹⁰¹⁹ A country villa in New South Wales displays Picturesque characteristic elements which are exactly contemporaneous with those favoured in Britain: Newington House, on the Paramatta River, built for John Blaxland, settler and merchant, in 1829-32. An otherwise symmetrical, pedimented and stuccoed façade ends in a full-height bow, giving the end elevation the appearance of a round tower, in a Lugar-esque mode with notable refinement. [8.27] Its authorship is not definitively proven but John Verge (1782-1861), an architect who came

¹⁰¹⁴ Broadbent and Hughes, p. 6. Greenway also had links with the Harford family of Bristol, patrons of Nash at Blaise Hamlet: pp. 10-11.

¹⁰¹⁵ Broadbent, p. 148.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Sydney Herald*, 25 June 1832, quoted in Broadbent, *Australian Colonial*, p. 141.

¹⁰¹⁹ Broadbent, p. 148.

from a family of Hampshire stonemasons, arrived as a free settler in 1828 and became a notable Greek Revivalist,¹⁰²⁰ or Henry Cooper have been suggested as candidates.¹⁰²¹

As to sources, the role played by pattern books in developing an Australian style appears to have been significant: the wife of the Governor of New South Wales, Elizabeth Macquarie, owned copies of pattern books by Gyfford which she is known to have shown and lent to builders and architects, for example.¹⁰²² There is evidence of widespread ownership in Australia of British pattern books published from 1800 onwards both in private hands and institutional collections by the mid-century,¹⁰²³ and this must be assumed to be the primary channel of transmission for the style, reinforced by the arrival of further numbers of immigrant British architects such as William Wilkinson Wardell (to whom Charles Lynam of Stokeville had been articulated), who was to build Government House, Melbourne in a flamboyant Osborne-esque idiom in the early 1870s, after a late conversion from the strict Pugin-esque Gothic orthodoxy which he had practised in England. But the Italianate villa style had already begun to establish itself from the 1840s, exemplified largely in the smaller house, and with a smaller proportion of the substantial country houses of the kind being designed by Notman, Upjohn and Davis in America at this time, perhaps more a reflection of Australia's demographic composition than of stylistic preferences.

The Australian Italianate villa seems to have taken two alternative directions: one was an orthodox pattern-book style, usually towered, and resembling its modestly-scaled American counterparts; the other strand took the form of asymmetrically-planned ornamental villas with roofs of shallow pitch and projecting eaves but lacking towers or much in the way of external decoration. An example of the latter is Highfield, Tasmania, of 1832-5, designed by

¹⁰²⁰ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Harley Preston, entry for John Verge: www.adb.anu.edu.au [accessed 3 March 2016].

¹⁰²¹ New South Wales State Heritage Register, File S90/03638/3; database no. 504306. Cooper is obscure and not listed by Herman, p. xv.

¹⁰²² Broadbent, p. 42; Megan Martin and Scott Hill, 'The architectural pattern books of Elizabeth Macquarie', in *Insites*, Historic Houses Trust for NSW, Issue 61, Summer 2009, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰²³ Hubbard, Chapter 4.

Hampshire-born Henry Hellyer (1790-1832), Architect to the Van Diemen's Land Company, for its Chief Agent; it is a Picturesque composition of Regency lightness, with enclosing verandah and decorative chimneys, which resembles Decimus Burton's Blackhurst [8.28].¹⁰²⁴ Sir George Strickland Kingston (1807-80), born in Co. Cork and an auto-didact, arriving in Australia in 1836, developed a low-built form of Picturesque massing for an elite clientèle, of which two Adelaide houses provide illustration.¹⁰²⁵ His Ayers House, for Sir Henry Ayers, from 1859, presents as its principal elevation a low range punctuated at each end by a round tower under a conical roof [8.29]. Also in this looser Italianate mould, Woolmers, Tasmania, of 1845, resembles Lugar's Glenlee or Wyelands, of some two or three decades earlier: the elevations and roofline are varied and a tower is only hinted at by the use of a taller, square central block under a pyramidal roof, and it employs Lugar's characteristic pediment. This Italianate wing was an addition of the 1840s to an earlier house, and was designed by William Archer (1820-74), son of the original settler and the first Tasmanian-born architect.¹⁰²⁶ [8.30] By contrast, as an example of the other strand, Rosedale, an 1845 remodelling of an earlier house by British-born architect, James Blackburn (1803-54), who curiously emulated Francis Greenway in arriving in Australia in 1833 by way of commutation of a capital sentence for forgery,¹⁰²⁷ displays an innovative massing of several differently-sized square towers under pyramidal roofs within an L-shaped plan, close to the contemporaneous American Downing style discussed in the previous section. [8.31] Blackburn's work in Tasmania has been characterised as 'freely borrowed from British pattern-books, and Loudon's *Encyclopedia* in particular',¹⁰²⁸ a suspicion borne out by a more urban, less pastoral example in his Bishopscourt, Melbourne of 1853. [8.32]

¹⁰²⁴ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Shirley M. Eldershaw, entry for Henry Hellyer.

¹⁰²⁵ *Ibid.*, Jean Prest, entry for Sir George Kingston Strickland.

¹⁰²⁶ He trained as an architect in London 1836-40. Eric Ratcliffe, 'Here I raise my Ebenezer', *Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association*, Vol. 54, No 2, August 2007, pp. 84-104. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, G.T. Stilwell, entry for William Archer.

¹⁰²⁷ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Harley Preston, entry for James Blackburn. He was a civil engineer and former Commissioner of Sewers for Finsbury and Holborn.

¹⁰²⁸ Broadbent, p. 354.

Woolmers and Rosedale vie, in Hubbard's opinion, for distinction as 'the first fully Italianate villa in Australia',¹⁰²⁹ placing the date therefore at 1845. There may be an earlier candidate although it cannot be more precisely dated than to the 1840s: William Archer's Saundridge, Cressy, Tasmania. **[8.33]** This is uncannily reminiscent of Sandridge Park in its long lateral range and positioning of the square tower, with similar detail in the balcony and round-headed windows to the upper storey, lending it the character of a Regency country villa. His sources are unknown, but its name should not mislead, for the Archer family originated from Hertford, England and named a number of their Tasmanian estates after Hertfordshire villages such as Panshanger, Brickendon and Cheshunt: the Saundridge [sic] in question is no doubt the village of Sandridge near St. Albans rather than the Devon estate. It is nevertheless a strange co-incidence given the similarity in design which neither William nor Edward Archer, his uncle (1793-1879), seems to have exhibited elsewhere. The towered vogue persisted: Edward Archer's Northbury, Tasmania, of 1862, has been cited as 'one of the best examples of pattern-book Italianate in Australia'.¹⁰³⁰ **[8.34]** It penetrated further afield: Westoe, near Rangitikei in New Zealand of 1874, by British-born architect Charles Tringham could have come from the books of Wightwick or Downing of the early 1840s.¹⁰³¹ **[8.35]** As in America, there were subtle adaptations in the use of materials, often corresponding to the status of the house and particularly, but not restricted to, rural areas, where corrugated iron was frequently substituted as a roofing material and most houses were wooden. Urban forms were visible too: in Collins Street, Annandale, a suburb of Sydney, a pair of villas of the 1880s closely mimics Benjamin Ferrey's Westover Villas of 1838. **[8.36]**

¹⁰²⁹ Hubbard, p. 160.

¹⁰³⁰ Hubbard, p. 183.

¹⁰³¹ Charles Tringham (1841-1916), was born in Herefordshire and arrived in Auckland in 1864 as a carpenter: Heritage New Zealand list entry for Westoe, List no. 156.

It is plausible to detect in the reception of Vernacular Italianate in Australia from the mid-century onward, and particularly in the smaller house, a combination of an expatriate yearning for familiar suburban values (such as those exemplified by Loudon), and patriotic fervour for a style contemporaneously espoused by Queen Victoria at Osborne, the latter a factor which presumably played no part in the eager reception of the style in America.

A democratic architecture

It is in one sense ironic that in its search for a national style, new, republican America should turn to the old country. It imported an idiom which was itself neither traditional English vernacular nor neo-classical in origin, but a once-romantic construct now formalised into accessible, practical templates; in Ackerman's succinct assessment, 'the American version of the Italian villa came from English books and not from any Mediterranean experience'.¹⁰³² These were houses intended to be 'private, personal, sentimental and a little bit quirky'.¹⁰³³ A pattern book published in Massachusetts in 1848 illustrated¹⁰³⁴ some sensitivities by presenting a design for an Italian villa 'to meet the wants of a class of gentlemen, whose means and republican principles will not admit of their erecting more classical or regal edifices.' In Australia, the style was thought to reflect social ambition: 'the Italianate villa became the model for the moneyed, the well-connected and the powerful classes, and for those who aspired to status whether as a suburban estate, a pastoral run or even a vice-regal residence.'¹⁰³⁵ Loudon was prescient in his perhaps unwitting identification of the underlying reason for what was to prove the overwhelmingly successful reception of Vernacular Italianate across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans: he wrote that his designs (by which he included all the styles which he advertised) were 'calculated for

¹⁰³² Ackerman, p. 248.

¹⁰³³ Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South*, (New York, 1993), p. 278.

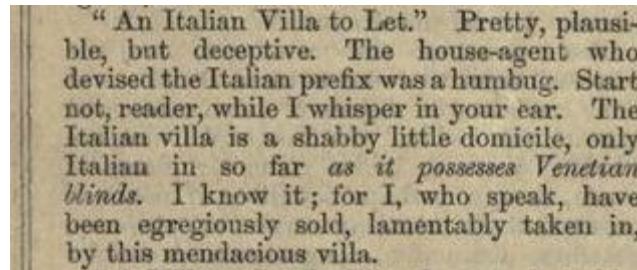
¹⁰³⁴ William Brown, *The Carpenter's Assistant: Containing a Succinct Account of Egyptian, Grecian and Roman Architecture*, (Worcester, MA., 1848), quoted in Maynard, p. 30.

¹⁰³⁵ Hubbard, p. 196.

what, in countries having a privileged aristocracy, are called the lower or middling classes of society; but which, in self-governing democracies like North America, or in newly-colonized countries, like Australia, constitute nearly the whole rural population.¹⁰³⁶ Rustic Italianate in the old and new colonies was a style which lent itself to the urban as much as to the pastoral, and to the mansion and homestead alike, and while it displayed a certain charm, it did not in itself announce either the wealth or ancestry of its occupants. It was above all, as Loudon asserted, a democratic style.

¹⁰³⁶ Loudon, *Encyclopedia*, p. 8.

Conclusions: the verdict of posterity



Charles Dickens, 'Houses to Let', *Household Words*, 20 March, 1852, p. 10.

'The fact is that British Italianate is not an easy architecture to define and write about, not easy therefore to appraise.'¹⁰³⁷

This thesis appears to be the first systematic study of the provenance, inception, reception and subsequent evolution in Britain of a domestic architectural style which was essentially derived from rustic Italianate models. It has explored its metamorphosis over the first sixty years after its introduction into numerous and diverse examples of country villas, suburban villas and town houses which together illustrate the ubiquity, versatility, and longevity of appeal of Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain.

To emphasise the ubiquity of Vernacular Italianate as a style for the smaller house is not to claim that it ousted or even overshadowed the other Picturesquely-derived and neo-classical forms which were also widely used in suburban and urban housing during this period. The significance of Vernacular Italianate should not be overstated at the expense of other styles, but the intention of this thesis is instead to focus attention upon it in order to validate its credentials as a widely-used idiom which flourished beyond the pattern books. It was widespread rather than predominant: uniformity of style was unusual in villa developments of the period in any event and reference has already been made to examples which include Burton's unexecuted scheme for Furze Hill and Barry's plan for the Queen's Park, both of

¹⁰³⁷ Mowl, *Trumpet at Distant Gate*, p. 146. Even the term 'Italianate' is one which, as has been noted, has been subsequently adopted by historians as a convenient label to designate Italian-derived architectural forms, and does not, with the exception of its use by Playfair noted in Chapter 6, appear to have been in contemporary use, 'Italian' or 'Anglo-Italian' being the terms most frequently used by architects and writers.

which contemplated extravagant stylistic variety, and the Eyre Estate in London as built displayed a catholicity of taste.¹⁰³⁸ The houses of the Park Estate at Nottingham, a villa estate of some 150 acres developed on land belonging to the over six decades largely from the 1840s, are preponderantly in Gothic Revival, Tudorbethan, and in the later decades an English Vernacular Revival style;¹⁰³⁹ while there are some Italianate villas, which were designed by P.F. Robinson in the estate's initial phase,¹⁰⁴⁰ they were outnumbered in subsequent development. E.L. Blackburne's 1867 pattern book, *Suburban and Rural Architecture, English and Foreign*,¹⁰⁴¹ includes 44 designs and variations; nine are labelled Italian, Anglo-Italian and even Rustic Italian and others are identifiably Italianate but not labelled as such; in equal measure are English Domestic, Gothic and Germanic. **[9.1]** Significantly, 'Italianized Gothic' also appears, 'a style which has been much introduced of late .. and is capable of many pleasing combinations'.¹⁰⁴² This style, evidenced in North Oxford for example,¹⁰⁴³ **[9.2]** and characterised most obviously by pointed-arch fenestration and polychromatic brickwork, in a mediæval Venetian or Sienese manner, signals both the fluidity of vocabulary used to describe Italianate forms and the continuing fascination with and re-invention of, Italian-derived design, at least in the realm of the smaller house.

One account dated 1838 of a recently-finished building in Liverpool which appeared in a British periodical aimed at a lay rather than professional architectural readership provides a simple contemporary explanation of the appeal of Vernacular Italianate:

A style .. called modern Italian, Romanesque or Tuscan has met with many admirers and been extensively adopted for domestic use during the last twenty years. It may be either simple in its outline and details or admit of considerable and even extreme enrichment; and it is well suited for many important purposes, in no ordinary degree. Several judicious and commodious structures of the kind have been erected, varying greatly in form as occasion may have required but all evidently

¹⁰³⁸ Galinou, pp. 153-4.

¹⁰³⁹ City of Nottingham Planning Department and the Nottingham Park Conservation Trust, *The Park Conservation Area Appraisal*, (2007).

¹⁰⁴⁰ 15-17 Park Terrace of 1832: HE List entry 1059024; *The Park Conservation Area Appraisal*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴¹ Referred to in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁴² Blackburne, Design 24.

¹⁰⁴³ See, for example, Wykeham House, 56 Banbury Road, of 1866: HE List entry 1392911.

bespeaking a common origin. It may either be square and compact in figure, or, consistently with the utmost convenience, and without any violation of rule, it may be planned with the greatest possible irregularity. The effect is often exceedingly picturesque; and future additions may be made without the slightest injury to this desirable and attractive quality. The tower is peculiarly characteristic of the style.¹⁰⁴⁴

A view from the architectural profession later in the century attempted some more precise definitions. Robert Kerr's comprehensive work, *The Gentleman's House*, first published in 1864, addressed the design and arrangement of country houses in a Loudonesque degree of detail. Kerr identifies two varieties of British Italianate style, devoting chapters to Rural-Italian, and Palatial-Italian. Accompanying his description of the former with a design resembling the Wightwick corner-towered model, [9.3] and under the explanatory sub-heading 'the legitimate successor of Palladianism', he muses:

It was the charming character of the irregular Villa of Italy which so far most usually pleased the taste, and this was so easily adapted to English uses that the style has ever since been common everywhere. This Rural Italian, in fact, was the direct descendant of the Palladian; it was the Palladian revised, rationalized, simplified, reduced to common-sense everyday wants, and so re-accepted. .. The Rural Italian was Picturesque composition with Palladian detail. Examples of the style of all degrees of importance and merit, are familiar everywhere.¹⁰⁴⁵

A century later Watkin was to agree, in the context of The Deepdene, that Italianate should not necessarily be seen as 'an historicist style' and that there was 'no reason why Italianate should not be seen as the natural heir to English Palladianism'.¹⁰⁴⁶ Citing Osborne as an example, Kerr adds: 'The picturesque of this style is of a refined and subdued character essentially', concluding with the accolade that: 'Our so-called Italian is in fact the vernacular English style of modern house-building.'¹⁰⁴⁷ Blackburne, three years later, also attempts to distinguish different versions of Italianate design by reference to their relative 'purity', in

¹⁰⁴⁴ Tue Brook Villa, Liverpool, as described by 'Saxon' in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 15 February, 1840, p. 99.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House*, 2nd edition, 1865, pp. 355-6.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Watkin, *Hope*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Kerr, pp. 356 and 359. The paradigm for his Palatial-Italian is Bridgewater House (p. 360).

comparing the characteristics of three of his Italianate designs: ‘A lodge –Italian style’, ‘A villa – Italian’ and ‘A pair of Villas – Italian’.¹⁰⁴⁸

The ‘Villa – Italian’ is ‘in a more strictly classic style than the Lodge, or that for a pair of similar villas. The latter design [the pair] indeed professes to be Anglo-Italian, at once admitting its adopted character, while the Lodge embodies the characteristics of a style which, though less pure than the first mentioned [the single Villa] has the sanction of use in several parts of Italy, and joins there with other features, admissible it is imagined, though belonging less exclusively to that country. The latter will recommend itself, possibly on the score of departure from a beaten and over-worked track, and in the opportunity it affords for a more unfettered exercise of taste, and for the production of new and less arbitrary exhibitions than classic rules in their integrity for the most part describe.

This is a representative of the struggle on the part of pattern book authors of the later period to rationalise and impose order upon the commingling of interpretations and fluidity of terminology which by then were commonplace. He adds later, more plainly, ‘Anglo-Italian is an adaptation of simple Italian general features to the taste and habits of this country.’¹⁰⁴⁹

In 1868, a pattern book by the Audsley brothers declared that however desirable it was to adopt a unifying national style of architecture, this was unlikely to come about as long as ‘individual taste and fancy’ were allowed to reign. Favouring Gothic and Elizabethan styles for cottage and villa design, they acknowledged reluctantly that ‘the domestic Italian style’ also had advantages as a style for villas, it being ‘too well known ... to require any description’.¹⁰⁵⁰

Three views from the American perspective, one from a contemporary pattern book and two retrospective analyses from architectural historians, are observations on the perceived advantages of the style which surely had equal application in Britain:

¹⁰⁴⁸ Blackburne, Designs 8, 10 and 12 respectively. Both the Lodge and the pair of villas were executed projects.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibid., Design 12.

¹⁰⁵⁰ W.J. and G.A. Audsley, *Cottage, Villa and Lodge Architecture*, (London and Glasgow, 1869), quoted in Long, p. 54.

A villa, however small, in the Italian style, may have an elegant and expressive character, without interfering with convenient internal arrangements.¹⁰⁵¹

The aesthetic of the Italian villa, which opposed the formal and the regular, managed to give .. an air of respectability and elegance to unconventionality. One appeal of this style was its emphasis on proportions which made elaborate detail and archaeological research unnecessary; some architects leaned further towards simplicity than others although none of them eliminated detail as severely as the geometrical purists of the turn of the century had done.¹⁰⁵²

Interest in the smaller Italian buildings was in answer to the need for a more attractive species of middle-class cottage, limited in size and ornamentation, in which the orders played a very minor or no part in its design. .. All of the features of the Italian villa combined to make it into a liveable home with exactly the right balance of decorum and cosiness. Its forms were straightforward and honest, and yet foreign enough to placate the contemporary romantic demands. .. In spite of its modesty, the Italian villa was quite a respectable building; and its economical aspect remained one of its chief selling points.¹⁰⁵³

The association with respectability, in Britain as well as America, was important to its appeal: the large, towered pairs of villas of the 1850s in the new north London suburbs of Highbury New Park and Aberdeen Park were specifically planned ‘to attract City businessmen and their families’.¹⁰⁵⁴ They sit securely behind garden walls in gated enclosures, and were affectionately characterised by Sir John Betjeman: ‘A separate tradesman’s entrance, straw in the mews behind,/Just in the four-mile radius where hackney carriages run,/ Solid Italianate houses for the solid commercial mind’.¹⁰⁵⁵

Mowl examines the impact of the Italianate idiom in the English landscape, discussing its widespread use for gate lodges. He suggests that because the Italian villa ‘was an alien style, always artificial in an English landscape’, its very differentiation from, for example, the cottage bestowed on the lodge a formality appropriate to its function. Mowl contrasts the ‘artificiality’ of Vernacular Italianate with English Palladianism which had been accepted

¹⁰⁵¹ Downing, *Treatise*, p. 388.

¹⁰⁵² Meeks, ‘Henry Austin’, p. 148.

¹⁰⁵³ Lancaster, ‘Italianism’, p. 131.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Buildings of England: London 4: North*, p. 693. It has been suggested that the architect was Charles Hambridge (1828-1889): Tanis Hinchcliffe, ‘Highbury Park: a nineteenth-century middle-class suburb’, in *The London Journal*, 7:1 (1981), pp. 32-3. I am grateful to Geoffrey Tyack for bringing this article to my attention.

¹⁰⁵⁵ John Betjeman, *Selected Poems*, (London, 1948): ‘St Saviour’s, Aberdeen Park, Highbury, London, N.’, p. 74. His parents had lived at Aberdeen Park.

despite its own origins as a ‘natural part of the English rural and urban scene’,¹⁰⁵⁶ and in doing so he raises the issue of the foreign-ness of Vernacular Italianate. The traits of artificiality, of alterity, are characteristic of the Picturesque architectural repertoire as a whole, and vital to its theatricality, encompassing as it does the play-cottage, the sham ruined abbey, exotic pavilion and other cultural references in its game of make-believe. Consciously-designed Picturesque architecture was criticised at the time (by Pugin for example) for privileging the synthetic, the artificial, and for creating mere copies which, however accurate were, when bereft of context, wholly inappropriate. Yet in designing Cronkhill Nash was not reproducing a foreign building or referring back to a specific historical style, notwithstanding a provenance so strongly associated, like that of Picturesque theory itself, with seventeenth-century landscape painting. Vernacular Italianate cannot be considered a Revival style: certainly with Cronkhill Nash had created something entirely novel. By implication Pérouse de Montclos suggests that Cronkhill and Sandridge Park succeed because, in contrast to French projects of the time, they are imaginative interpretations, rather than caricatures, of bucolic models.¹⁰⁵⁷ This freedom from strict precedent is perhaps one element in the distinction between Nash’s Italianate interpretation and that of Barry. It also underlines Nash’s particular achievement, seen in his Picturesque work as a whole, that through his nuanced understanding of the importance of uniting the qualities of house and landscape, and his skill in alluding to rather than re-creating eccentric models, Nash’s gift was to make the unusual appear entirely natural.¹⁰⁵⁸

It seems clear that the subsequent reception of Vernacular Italianate was assisted by its very foreign-ness. Two decades after Nash the undoubtedly influential pattern books of Meason and Parker, among others, emphasized its non-indigenous pedigree by placing importance

¹⁰⁵⁶ Mowl, *Trumpet*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Pérouse de Montclos, p. 31.

¹⁰⁵⁸ It can be argued that this is equally evident in his treatment of the domestic castle, at Luscombe for example.

on foreign models both depicted and actual; in Ackerman's view the 'homogenised' structures which made up Meason's 'bland, Claude-like repertory' reinforced 'the impression that there existed an actual historical source for the Italian villa style.'¹⁰⁵⁹ In a prevailing climate among the British of a sentimentalised admiration for all things Italian this could only have augmented its appeal, further encouraged by wide exposure to increasingly standardised templates made easily accessible by Loudon and others. Thus it moved from alterity to familiarity so completely that it began by the 1840s to claim credentials as a British style, as, among others, Brown and Wightwick evidence at the time; its naturalisation is confirmed by Kerr and Blackburne, for example, two decades later. This blurring of its identity, as both alien and indigenous at once, caused no unease in Britain and proved no bar to its acceptance across the Atlantic, for it is clear from the contemporary literature that it was embraced in America and appropriated as a 'national' style without resistance at an early stage.

Vernacular Italianate design was recognisable externally by its towered, broad-eaved elevations and the incorporation of increasingly standardised external elements such as grouped round-headed windows. By contrast, pattern books, published designs and executed examples all seem to suggest that there was no consensus on what a Vernacular Italianate plan might look like. In the Picturesque vision of John Nash interior plans played a distinct role. He took advantage of the freedom allowed by asymmetry to create interiors with elements of surprise, playing with geometry to create varied room shapes which often belied their external appearance; interconnecting rooms allowed an informality of interior circulation, and loggias and verandahs were used to counterpoint indoor and outdoor spaces, all of which heightened the Picturesque effect. All these devices were employed in the plans of his Claudean trio, although that for each villa is different, but they were also

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ackerman, p. 225.

common to all his Picturesque houses regardless of their exterior form;¹⁰⁶⁰ their detailing and decoration also show that Nash did not create a distinctive type of rustic Italianate interior. In the plans of Lugar's villas the same variety is visible: the use of varying geometry in the shapes of the rooms in his 'Italian Villa' design is very similar to that of Sandridge Park, for example; but it is a generally Picturesque rather than specifically Italianate approach. Discussion of rustic Italianate in the pattern books focused for the most part on external effect, plan being considered only in the broader context of the villa type as a whole, and other than considerations of the incorporation of loggias or verandahs¹⁰⁶¹ there was no such template. Even the location of the tower was not prescriptive, and it could be designated for a variety of different functions.¹⁰⁶² This absence of prescription of plan, enabling the use of Vernacular Italianate as an exterior style both for the substantial country houses of Playfair and the extremely modest villas at Stokeville, while reducing it to an aesthetic of external effect, in adding to its versatility also acted to promote its utility. In America, on the other hand, plan seemed to assume greater significance and indeed a degree of standardisation into two types: that of the central tower at the axis of two perpendicular wings favoured by Downing and more suitable for the smaller house, where it tended to serve as the central vestibule,¹⁰⁶³ or what Brownell terms the 'Loggia-Villa with Corner Towers' characterised by Upjohn's Edward King House,¹⁰⁶⁴ more radically asymmetrical and lending itself to the larger house, for the freedom to place the tower at one corner of the plan opened up a

¹⁰⁶⁰ Tyack, 'The Villas of John Nash', pp. 53-56.

¹⁰⁶¹ These were also an important feature of the design of the *cottage orné*. See for example the conservatory-loggia at Nash's Luscombe, the verandahs at Wyatville's Endsleigh, a *cottage orné* on a substantial scale (Watkin, *Vision*, pp. 118-20), and numerous designs in Lugar's *Architectural Sketches*.

¹⁰⁶² For country houses they were suggested as 'Prospect towers' by Goodwin and others; Lugar described his as 'Belle-vues'. They also had more functional roles: Playfair at Dalcrue Farm House suggested a cheese room on the first floor and a belfry on the top floor 'to call the people to their meals and work': (Edinburgh University Special Collections, MS. 3084, p. 297). At Sandridge Park the square tower and round tower accommodated entrance hall and dining room on their respective ground floors, dressing room and bedroom on the first floor and servants' rooms on the top floors; the spire-topped turret at Sandridge Park was a belfry; at Stokeville the top floor of the towers were maids' bedrooms. Even as late as 1867 Blackburne was suggesting in addition to a servant's room use as a 'prospect room' (Design 15).

¹⁰⁶³ Brownell, p. 213, Plate 128.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129, Plate 129.

wider range of possibilities both for its size relative to the rest of the floor plan and for the use of the rooms contained within it. This corner-towered model had of course also appeared in Britain, in the designs of Wightwick and in many built examples; but for the smaller British house such as the Stokeville villas, and particularly for the attached house such as on the Ladbroke Estate, for example, it was perfectly possible to accommodate a conventional plan within the Italianate exterior.

From the 1860s, in Britain Vernacular Italianate seems to have suffered a slow decline; despite Blackburne's care in distinguishing its variations, by the time of his pattern book the built evidence suggests that it was, to repeat his phrase, a 'beaten and overworked track' which was slowly but surely being overhauled by Gothic Revival styles. In the extensive suburbs of North Oxford, for example, where most of the development took place from the 1860s, there is very little Vernacular Italianate, forms of Gothic Revival predominating.¹⁰⁶⁵ Nevertheless it rumbled on, and examples from the 1870s and beyond of the country house, suburban villa and urban house typologies are certainly to be found. In the field of the country house, Rendcomb, of 1863-65 by Philip Charles Hardwick (1822-92), was an asymmetrical towered house, reminiscent perhaps of Daukes at Bricklehampton or Abberley, with a pyramidal-roofed campanile with an open loggia attached to an otherwise classical house, and a rustic Italianate lodge.¹⁰⁶⁶ The new Bristol villa suburb of Leigh Woods, across the recently-completed suspension bridge from Clifton, was a development from the late 1860s of large villas in extensive grounds, the houses designed in mixed style; one villa, Towerhurst, built in the 1870s, is a substantial house on an axial plan in local rubble with stone dressings, with a four-storey square tower under a pyramidal roof at one end and a three-storey canted bay at the other: it is the only Italianate house found

¹⁰⁶⁵ With the exception of a group of villas in Park Town, for which see Tanis Hinchcliffe, *North Oxford*, (New Haven and London, 1992). There is a handful of other Oxford examples such as the Headington Hill lodges: HE 1229839.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Girouard, *Victorian Country House*, p. 417 and plate 6.

there.¹⁰⁶⁷ A more urban type from the 1870s is Link Towers, Malvern, which takes the form of conjoined, mirror-image towered houses.¹⁰⁶⁸ But they seem to appear in proportionately fewer numbers, and even then often in an attenuated form, for in its later vestiges Vernacular Italianate ultimately became a style which was alluded to or hinted at merely through details such as windows or eaves brackets. This dilution had been at work for some time, for it can be observed earlier, in Westbourne Park Villas, London, of the 1850s¹⁰⁶⁹ [9.4] or The Vale, Southsea of the same date,¹⁰⁷⁰ [9.5] a half-hearted approach with somewhat lacklustre effect which is perhaps the basis of the charge of ‘mendacity’ laid against the Italian villa by Dickens. Indeed the concept of the villa itself suffered irreversible damage: pattern books which used the word in their titles continued to be published into the 1870s,¹⁰⁷¹ but the label had become over-used, leading one writer to complain that the word had been employed indiscriminately and that ‘a villa should stand in its own grounds; no house should be called a villa unless it has a good garden’.¹⁰⁷² The villa was sliding irreversibly down the social scale: a self-build manual of 1871 was entitled *A Freehold Villa for Nothing*;¹⁰⁷³ this social descent was not helped by the increasing use of the term ‘Villas’ as a street name for terraces of houses, a practice which dates, as just noted in the case of Westbourne Park Villas, from at least the mid-century.

There was a late flurry of literal Italianism in Britain from the 1860s in the form of replicas of contemporary Italian villas, and in particular those of the northern Italian lakesides, such as the Villa Lugano on Vane Hill, Torquay of c.1870. [9.6] Torquay, in its hillside setting above a harbour, had long been compared to Italian scenery by travellers; reflecting its status as a fashionable resort it already boasted an array of Vernacular Anglo-Italianate villas on

¹⁰⁶⁷ Illustrated at 6.73.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Malvern Hills District Council: *Trinity Conservation Area Appraisal*, (2009), p. 7.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, p. 486.

¹⁰⁷⁰ See Upper Mount, The Vale, Southsea: IoE475171.

¹⁰⁷¹ Long, p. 61.

¹⁰⁷² Quoted in Long, p. 95.

¹⁰⁷³ By the pseudonymous I. Marvel: Long, p. 61.

the hills above its harbour, built between 1830 and 1850, which bore Italian names such as Torcello,¹⁰⁷⁴ Vomero, or the Villa Borghese. But the Villa Lugano, in its exact mimicry, can be adjudged a phenomenon of ‘souvenir’ architecture brought home by returning travellers rather than a further development of Vernacular Italianate, although it also bears witness to the sentimental hold still exercised by Italy over the villa-owning classes. Within Italy this late nineteenth-century lakeside villa style was itself a reference point for the ‘*Stile Floreale*’ or ‘*Stile Liberty*’ of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an Italian architectural interpretation of Art Nouveau.¹⁰⁷⁵ In houses and lakeside villas by Gino Coppedè (1866-1927),¹⁰⁷⁶ [9.7] and in the apartment blocks designed by him in 1921 in what has become known as the *Quartiere Coppedè* district of Rome, northeast of the Borghese Gardens, amid the exaggerated decorative elements some of the characteristics of the *villa rustica* such as the overhanging eaves and towers can still be discerned.¹⁰⁷⁷ [9.8] An equally derivative but more eclectic approach was taken in the early years of the twentieth century in Britain, by the eccentric dilettante and amateur architect Richard Harding Watt (1842-1913), who included towered Italianate houses, often incorporating Art Nouveau, Greek or exotic elements, in what Pevsner described as ‘the maddest sequence of villas in all England’,¹⁰⁷⁸ in Knutsford, Cheshire. [9.9]

Most recently, there have been some literal revivals of the style in Britain in the form of new country houses, some explicitly based on Nash’s models. An early example was Bank Farm,

¹⁰⁷⁴ John R. A. Wilson, ‘Italy in England: Impressions of Torquay in the nineteenth century’, in *Country Life*, 25 December 1958, pp. 1508-11. Wilson suggests that Napoleon, while captive at Torbay, had compared it to Portoferraio, Elba. Torcello (now Ashcroft) is a characteristic towered villa in the Lincombes area of which there are many examples: HE List entry 1206779.

¹⁰⁷⁵ C.L.V. Meeks, *Italian Architecture, 1750-1914*, (New Haven and London, 1966), examines the *Stile Floreale* in his Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Such as the Villa La Gaeta at San Siro, Como, completed in 1920. [9.7]

¹⁰⁷⁷ Meeks however sees it as an essentially mediævally-derived style, making no reference to any rustic origins.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Quoted in Marjorie Sykes and Christopher Neve, ‘A Laundry from Damascus’, in *Country Life*, 4 March 1976, p.526. Alwarden Hill (HE List entry 1388390) of 1906, Broad Terraces (HE List entry 1388392, of 1907, and White Howe (HE List entry 1388406) of 1901, are the most overtly Italianate, with pyramidal roofed-square towers, pantiles, loggias and heavy, broad eaves.

Cheshire, by Francis Johnson and Partners, completed in 2000.¹⁰⁷⁹ [9.10] A replacement for ‘a Victorian farmhouse in poor condition [which] took no advantage of the beautiful views’, Bank Farm was explicitly modelled on ‘John Nash’s Campagna villas, particularly Cronkhill, which stands in a similar situation ... closely allied to farm buildings.’¹⁰⁸⁰ Stowe Court, Buckinghamshire, a new house situated on one of the principal axes leading to Stowe, designed by David Coles Architects and completed in 2012, was explicitly modelled on Sandridge Park. ‘While this house is on a more modest scale, the properties have been respected ... the integration of modified platonic forms ... creates a fascinating and apparently complex composition ... with a hierarchy of elements.’¹⁰⁸¹ [9.11] Little Marsh House, closely modelled on Cronkhill, is currently (2016) in course of construction as a marine villa on the shores of the Solent in Hampshire, designed by Ben Pentreath, in whose view the situation wholly informed the choice of idiom:

A formal, symmetrical country house would not achieve the desired feeling of repose. ... Georgian marine villas responded beautifully to their coastal settings. ... The house is particularly inspired by the series of so-called Claudian [sic] villas designed by John Nash. ... Its informal massing and extensive shadows will make the new building recessive in the landscape.¹⁰⁸² [9.12]

Similarly in America, a cliff-top situation had already inspired a seaside villa by Ike Kligerman Barkley Architects in 2000 on the New Jersey shore, explicitly modelled on Sandridge Park. The shore-line elevation is, as at Sandridge Park, dramatic, although its location in a relatively high-density suburban locale and its tiny plot mute its wider Picturesque impact.¹⁰⁸³ [9.13] The Wightwick-Loudon Design IX towered model has also been replicated, in new two houses in Cheshire, both situated in the modern equivalent of a

¹⁰⁷⁹ Cheshire and West Chester Council planning application 98/00884/FUL.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Description at www.francisjohnson-architects.co.uk/projects/new-country-houses/house-in-cheshire. See also John Martin Robinson, ‘The Classical Touch from the North’, in *Country Life*, 182007, pp. 108-113.

¹⁰⁸¹ Vale of Aylesbury District Council planning application 08/00122.App: *Design, Access and Justification Statement* by David Coles Architects, paras. 3.1-3.11, January 2008.

¹⁰⁸² New Forest National Park Authority planning application 14/00134: *Design and Access Statement* by Ben Pentreath Architects, March 2014.

¹⁰⁸³ 7 Monmouth Terrace, Deal, New Jersey: Ike Kligerman Barkley, *Ike Kligerman Barkley Houses*, (New York, 2010); www.ikekligermanbarkley.com/posts/little-houses.

Picturesque villa estate.¹⁰⁸⁴ [9.14] The design statements put forward by the respective architects of these revivals suggest that in Britain at least these models are now perceived not as exotic or ‘foreign’, but as established styles which are just as appropriate to the landscape or urban setting as the concept of normative English Palladianism.

Vernacular Italianate may have unconsciously cast a longer shadow. It is striking that the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867- 1959) echoes elements of designs from early Vernacular Italianate practitioners in Britain. The Lake Mendota Boathouse, Wisconsin, of 1893,¹⁰⁸⁵ with its overtly Romanesque loggias, twin towers and broad eaves, and arched watergate below, bears comparison with Hunt’s ‘Prospect Tower, Garden-seat etc’, Plate IX in his *Architettura Campestre*. [9.15] One unexecuted design by Wright would not look out of place in a pattern book by Gandy, Aikin or indeed Loudon, although it is rarely commented upon: a project for Robert Eckart.¹⁰⁸⁶ A watercolour perspective, exhibited in Chicago in 1900, shows a symmetrical villa composed of pavilions of similar design but differing height, all under shallow-hipped roofs with overhanging eaves, and with triplets of round-headed windows. [9.16] Twombly makes no Italianate connection, acknowledging the relatively unadorned exteriors of Wright’s houses in the late 1890s as but a signpost on the way to the ‘harmoniously resolved prairie houses [which] they anticipated’.¹⁰⁸⁷ Other comparisons suggest themselves: placing, for example, Papworth’s ‘*Cottage Orn *’ and ‘Villa designed for the residence of an artist’ side by side with Wright’s Robie House (Chicago, 1906) and the Tomek Residence (Riverside, 1904),¹⁰⁸⁸ reveals a remarkable unity of vision in their

¹⁰⁸⁴ Sunnyhill, Prestbury, (Fallows Gowen Partnership, 2010): Cheshire East Council planning application 10/2973M; Green Meadows, Hale, (FPA Architects, 2007): Trafford Council planning application H/67838.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Illustrated in William Allin Storrer, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*, (3rd edition, Chicago and New York, 2002), p. 24. Demolished 1926.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Illustrated in Robert C. Twombly, *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Architecture*, (New York, 1979), p. 65, Figure 3.5 (upper plate).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Twombly, p. 65.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Storrer, pp. 124 and 125 respectively.

horizontality.¹⁰⁸⁹ [9.17] Similarly, the Husser House, Chicago, of 1899, exhibits the massing of Cronkhill, the angularity of the tower an echo of Brooklands on the Cator Estate in Blackheath; [9.18] and the Dana-Thomas Residence (Springfield, 1902)¹⁰⁹⁰ resonates with Playfair's Dunphail. [9.19] This putative similarity may be attributable not to the direct or even unconscious influence of the British practitioners of Vernacular Italianate or even to the stock of Anglo-Italianate houses found across America from the 1840s onwards, but rather to a unity of response to landscape which happened co-incidentally to be made a century and a continent apart. There seems to date to have been little explicit speculation about English Picturesque or *villa rustica*-derived influences on Wright's work,¹⁰⁹¹ but there are parallels which could bear further exploration.

The chameleon-like adaptability of Vernacular Italianate extended itself to other building typologies with a comparable degree of popularity over the same period. The equally widespread use of Vernacular Italianate for the design of market halls, asylums, railway stations, hotels and other public and functional buildings has been excluded from this thesis which has confined itself to domestic architecture. That there was a great deal of interplay between the two areas is evidenced by the fact that at an early date Loudon included designs for many of these other applications in his works, and that a number of architects produced works in both the domestic and commercial or industrial spheres; smaller commercial buildings could easily be adapted from lodge or cottage designs. Book 3 of Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* was devoted entirely to the design of schools. Railway architecture was an obvious area for its use: the *Supplement* of 1842 to Loudon's *Encyclopedia* included four

¹⁰⁸⁹ A British house based explicitly on the Robie House bears an equally close resemblance to Papworth's Artist's Residence and is also described as 'having a distinct Italian feel': The Nash, Marnhull, Dorset (architect: Brian Savage, 1984): North Dorset District Council planning application 2/1978/0292, 0710.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Storrer, p. 71.

¹⁰⁹¹ No suggested connection appears in Twombly, Storrer or in Henry-Russell Hitchcock (ed.), *International Congress of the History of Art: Problems of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Princeton, 1963), which contains a number of essays considering influences upon Wright and his contemporaries, all appear to conclude that the Prairie Style was Wright's personal and wholly indigenous, American response to pioneer landscape.

designs for cottages based on the style of named railway stations, designed by Francis Thompson, Architect to the North Midland Railway Company, two of which are in Vernacular Italianate style.¹⁰⁹² In Loudon's words, 'we cannot sufficiently express our admiration for the public spirit of the directors of the North Midland Railway in erecting such architectural gems along their line of works'.¹⁰⁹³ The commercial and institutional use of Vernacular Italianate is itself a wide field which, like that of the Italianate house, has to date also lain largely unexplored.¹⁰⁹⁴

The history of domestic Vernacular Italianate architecture in Britain covered by this thesis runs from its introduction in the form of a gentry house in Shropshire in 1802 to its proliferation in the streets of Clifton and Newton Abbot of the 1860s and beyond. Its trajectory is inextricably linked to that of the villa, which, as has been noted, as an abstract concept rather than a rigid stylistic prescription had suffered a decline in reputation by the time the century drew to a close. The early villa books had 'promoted elements of the traditional villa mythology .. to proprietors below the rank of gentleman. .. Once the villa had been presented as a commodity, it was a short step to its manufacture by entrepreneurs for the open market, and another short step to its mass production.'¹⁰⁹⁵ Ackerman's analysis of the villa's progression has equal validity as a description of the life-cycle of Vernacular Italianate. This apparent degradation in the status of the villa, and the necessary adaptation of the originality and purity of Nash's vision of the Claudean for more practical and more modest applications, might be seen as matters for regret. But it should nevertheless be borne in mind that the middle-class villa in Britain was a socio-economic construct which came to represent a large part of the repertoire of the provincial architect and the stock-in-trade of

¹⁰⁹² Loudon, *Encyclopedia Supplement*, pp. 1164-68.

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1165.

¹⁰⁹⁴ It has been touched upon most frequently in the field of railway architecture: see Hitchcock, *Early Victorian*, who discusses 'Engineers' Italian' in his Chapter 15; Gordon Biddle, *Great Railway Stations of Britain: their architecture, growth and development*, (Newton Abbot, 1986), pp. 58-63.

¹⁰⁹⁵ James Ackerman, 'The Villa as Paradigm', in *Perspecta*, Vol. 22, (Boston, 1986), p. 17.

the jobbing builder over the century. It was the central element in a mass, national market which was both stylistically and economically significant; perhaps more importantly the villa was instrumental in creating a new, potent and enduring idea of the home. To both of these nineteenth-century phenomena Vernacular Italianate architecture made a substantial contribution.