

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

PATTERNS OF RE-USE: THE TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER MONASTIC
BUILDINGS IN POST-DISSOLUTION HERTFORDSHIRE, 1540-1600.

TWO VOLUMES, INCLUDING APPENDIX

Volume 1

NICHOLAS DOGGETT, BA (Hons.), Cert. Archaeol., MIFA

Thesis submitted for the award of a Doctorate in
Philosophy

Department of History

April 1997

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy

PATTERNS OF RE-USE: THE TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER MONASTIC
BUILDINGS IN POST-DISSOLUTION HERTFORDSHIRE, 1540-1600

by Nicholas David Bartholomew Doggett

The re-use of monastic buildings has been little studied and it is usually assumed that the vast majority of former monastic structures were simply plundered at the Dissolution or after for their materials. Two new emphases suggest that frequently this was not the case. First, by treating the surviving architectural evidence of all Hertfordshire's former monastic sites as a primary source, it can be shown that much medieval fabric is incorporated in later houses on these sites. Coupled with contemporary documentary records and later antiquarian accounts, this analysis enables a reconstruction to be made of the processes of re-use in the half-century after the Dissolution.

Its proximity to London and the new desire for a country seat made Hertfordshire a particularly attractive county to the gentry and nobility from the mid-16th century onwards. Thus, between c.1540 and 1550 several of the first generation of post-Dissolution owners of former monastic buildings converted their new acquisitions into substantial country houses, including the crown at Ashridge, Sir Richard Lee at Sopwell and James Nedeham at Wymondley.

Lower down the social scale uncertainties over the future of former monastic property, not fully resolved until the religious settlement of Elizabeth's reign, appear to have discouraged immediate re-use and it was not until the 1570s and '80s that most of the conversion schemes at this level took place. In both phases, however, religious scruples seem to have been rare and generally insignificant.

The re-use of claustral buildings may have helped to foster the development of the gallery in Elizabethan architecture, but by the end of the 16th century, the courtyard plan of the monastic conversion was largely obsolete. Initially attractive to lay owners because of the relative ease of re-use, the conversion of monastic buildings had ended in an architectural blind alley.

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Preface and Acknowledgements | pp. i-vi |
| Chapter 1 | pp. 1-51 |
| Chapter 2 | pp. 52-89 |
| Chapter 3 | pp. 90-137 |
| Chapter 4 | pp. 138-82 |
| Chapter 5 | pp. 183-203 |
| Abbreviations | pp. 204-9 |
| Bibliography | pp. 210-35 |
| Appendix | Volume 2 |

Preface and Acknowledgments

The adaptive re-use of monastic buildings in the second half of the 16th century has been relatively little studied. With a few notable exceptions, it has generally been assumed that the vast majority of former monastic sites ~~were~~^{was} simply plundered for their building materials. Two new approaches suggest that frequently this was not so. First, by examining in detail all the monastic houses of a single county- in this case Hertfordshire- which survived until the Dissolution and secondly, by treating the surviving architectural evidence as a primary source, it can be shown that much medieval fabric is in fact incorporated in later houses on monastic sites, even when this is not readily apparent. Coupled with contemporary documentary records and later antiquarian accounts, this structural analysis allows a reconstruction to be made of the processes of re-use in the half-century after the Dissolution.

Hertfordshire is not a county noted for its monastic remains or well-known examples of conversions to domestic use after the Dissolution. Indeed, as is shown in the detailed architectural descriptions of the thirteen sites which comprise the Appendix to this thesis, the monastic origins of several of the buildings included in this study are not immediately obvious and it was therefore necessary to investigate and record these structures thoroughly in order to detect their many phases and the survival or otherwise of medieval fabric. In this way, it has been possible to provide solid evidence from which to draw conclusions.

Too cursory an examination of the buildings could have been misleading and would probably have led to a failure both to recognise monastic fabric and the ways in which individual structures were re-used after the Dissolution. Such lack of observation has unfortunately characterised previous work of this kind in Hertfordshire and accounts for the extraordinary omission of the largely intact 15th-century gatehouse from otherwise detailed architectural descriptions of King's Langley Priory,¹ the absence of any full published description of the 14th-century roofs at Ware Priory or of any description at all of the 15th- and 16th-century roofs at The Biggin, Hitchin and Royston Priory. Similarly, although J.T. Smith's recent comment that "nothing significant is known about the (16th-century) house at Markyate" is happily, if strangely, contradicted by his own very full description of the building elsewhere,² his apparently incomplete understanding of Royston could perhaps have benefited from a more rigorous structural analysis of the surviving building.

My purpose, though, is not to be overly critical of the work of others. Smith in particular casts his net far wider than mine and many of his general conclusions have been invaluable in researching and writing this thesis. Likewise, the considerable limitations of my own work will no doubt be exposed by those who have the opportunity to strip plaster, lift floorboards and carry out measured surveys of the buildings involved.³ Indeed, it has been a deliberate decision of mine not to include plans, drawings and photographs of the individual sites and buildings investigated, although references to where these can be found are, of course, listed in the Appendix.

The essentially building by building approach adopted in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis arises from the detailed site descriptions contained in the Appendix and

has, I believe, one significant advantage over the more usual thematic approach, which is itself adopted in Chapters 4 and 5. This is that a thorough examination of the raw data, omitting as far as possible any preconceived notions or ideas obtained from documentary or other sources, enables the conclusions to be drawn primarily from the built evidence itself. That this deductive approach is partially abandoned in Chapters 4 and 5 is not to be regarded as loss of confidence in its validity, but rather as a sign that, as the discussion broadens, it becomes necessary to take a wider and more topic-based view if any significant general observations are to be made. The fundamental point remains, however, that the built evidence is the prime source for a proper understanding of the conversion of former monastic buildings.

Much is made in this study of the importance and limitations of pictorial evidence. Here too, structural analysis of the surviving buildings is vital, acting as an impartial check on the accuracy or otherwise of a particular drawing or plan. The situation can, of course, be reversed, as is well illustrated at Markyate. Here the earliest surviving work is in the short wing of chequered stone and flint at the north-east end of the present house. This appears to have been a service block at right-angles to the main south range, and is shown in what is likely to be basically its original form in Thomas Fisher's 1805 north-east view of the house.⁴ This same range was, however, drawn in rather different form by G. Buckler in 1839, which raises some interesting points.⁵ The details which Buckler shows of this and the adjoining ranges look like genuine 16th-century work, but a comparison with Fisher's apparently accurate drawing shows

that this cannot be the case. Although this might be readily apparent from a site inspection,⁶ this would not necessarily be so. Totternhoe clunch stone (of which the house at Markyate is principally constructed) is notorious for its friability and poor weathering qualities and, as at nearby Ashridge, masonry of the 1820s or '30s could quite easily be mistaken for late medieval or Tudor work. The architectural context makes this far less likely at Ashridge, but at Markyate it might have been only too easy without the graphic evidence falsely to identify 19th-century Gothic masonry as medieval fabric.

Documentary evidence can similarly show the dangers of carrying out structural analysis in isolation. Once more Markyate provides the example. Much 13th-century moulded stonework is incorporated in the east wall of the present house, but documentary sources suggest that this re-use took place only in the 19th century.⁷ In many cases, of course, such deductions would be possible even without further supporting evidence, but the problem is far more acute with regard to internal fittings and furnishings. Again at Markyate it is known that much late 16th-century panelling was imported from elsewhere only in the 1920s, while at Wymondley Priory the provenance of similar panelling remains unknown. At Beechwood (originally the nunnery of St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead) an early to mid-16th-century fireplace is clearly out of context and not even careful dismantling would establish its origin. In contrast, the recent discovery of in situ panelling and blocked windows at Ware Priory has helped to date a particular post-Dissolution remodelling of the south range to c.1600, a conclusion it would otherwise have been considerably more difficult to reach.

Many people have assisted me in carrying out the research for this thesis. First, I should mention the many owners and occupiers of the buildings involved, almost all of whom were happy for me to visit their properties and record what I saw. For assistance with the documentary and pictorial evidence I am grateful to the staff of several libraries and museums including the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the British Library and Public Record Office in London, Hitchin and Hertford Museums and particularly the archivists at the Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford.

On a more personal note I should record my debt to Malcolm Airs and Jonathan Hunn for their constant encouragement and to Michael Bullen for discussing a number of issues and ideas. My employers, South Oxfordshire District Council, have been most generous in providing financial support during much of the time I have been working on the thesis. My biggest thanks, however, are to my supervisors, Colin Platt and David Hinton, whose teaching and utilisation of archaeological, architectural and historical sources have been an inspiration since I first went to the University of Southampton as an undergraduate in 1977. Colin Platt in particular has been instrumental in the structuring of the thesis and his firm but always friendly cajoling has enabled me at last to complete it.

Finally, I would like to mention my family: my parents for their help and support, my wife, Tace, for her encouragement and forbearance since I began the project in 1989, and most recently of all my son, Nathaniel, for allowing me enough time away from his train set to finish its writing.

REFERENCES

1. See, for example, R.C.H.M., 134-5 and Pevsner, 217.
2. Smith (1992), 66; Smith (1993), 124-7.
3. As, for instance, in the recent as yet unpublished investigative work carried out at Ware Priory by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust.
4. B.L., Add. MS. 32,349, fol.2.
5. H.R.O., Buckler Drawings, IV, 20; Bodl., MS. top. gen. a. 12, fol.90.
6. Permission to inspect the house at Markyate was refused by its owner, Mr J. Armstrong.
7. N.M.R., file 77,723.

Chapter One

Introduction: study area, sources and methods

The re-use of monastic buildings in the 16th century is a subject which has been little studied. Despite the vast amount written on medieval monastic buildings, interest generally seems to cease at the Dissolution and few writers have continued the story beyond 1540. This is equally true of archaeologists, documentary and architectural historians. For instance, the splendid series of H.M.S.O. guides to monastic sites prepared by Inspectors of Ancient Monuments for the Office of Works and its successors rarely have much to say about a site after the suppression.

One of the earliest of what could be termed modern, as opposed to antiquarian, accounts of the post-Dissolution history of a monastic site was that of Titchfield (Hants.) by W.H. St John Hope in 1906.¹ St John Hope was attracted to Titchfield by the combination of the extent of the surviving ruins and the unusually detailed documentary sources, which enabled him to reconstruct with great accuracy the sequence of events there. It is perhaps for this reason that St John Hope's account remains a model of its kind, which few later writers have been able to emulate. St John Hope also carried out pioneering studies at many other sites including Fountains and Mount Grace (Yorks.),² although at none of these did he examine the adaptive re-use of the buildings in anything approaching the detail he employed at Titchfield.

St John Hope was by no means the first archaeologist or historian to display a serious academic interest in monastic sites. At Fountains he was able to draw on the

work of R. Walbran in the 1840s and 1850s,³ while the stone-by-stone elevation drawings of its buildings by J. Reeve in the 1870s remain, according to Glyn Coppack "the most complete analysis of any abbey ruin."⁴ However, most 19th-century archaeologists were content simply to follow the lines of walls in their excavations with the aim of uncovering as much of the original monastic lay-out as possible.⁵ Among the exceptions to this rule were A. Lowther and J. Parsons, who at Lewes (Sussex) in the 1840s found clear evidence for the mines used by the Italian engineer, Portinari, to destroy the walls of the Cluniac church.⁶ Their interest in the fate of the church at the suppression may, however, have been brought about by the unusual method of its destruction and in general little interest was shown in this phase of monastic sites.

Even among St John Hope's followers, leading exponents of monastic archaeology such as H. Brakspear at Stanley (Wilts.) and Waverley (Surrey), J. Bilson at Kirkstall (Yorks.) and C. Laing at Bardney (Lincs.) displayed little interest in the post-suppression history of the sites they excavated.⁷ This attitude was also reflected in the activities of the Office of Works, which after the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act in 1911 took several monastic sites into state care and set about their repair and display to the public. As Coppack has recently commented "The effect that this was to have on monastic sites was dramatic,"⁸ and one which remains all too evident even now. Despite radical changes in the management and presentation of such sites in the last few years, the usual image of sites in English Heritage guardianship is still one of ruthlessly mown and manicured lawns with medieval walls heavily repointed in cement-rich mortar and stripped bare of all vegetation.⁹

This approach is not simply one of appearance but in its early days before the First World War and into the 1920s, if not later, also involved the clearing away of

later accretions in an attempt to return the surviving ruins to their "original" form. Not only was such an ambition impossible to achieve, since ruins are as much a product of gradual decay and changes through time as the result of a single cataclysmic event, and by today's criteria it would be highly questionable in conservation terms, but it was intensely destructive of archaeological evidence at sites which were among the best preserved in the country.

As Coppack has shown, the work of Sir Charles Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments from 1913 until 1933, was instrumental in this process.¹⁰ Peers's own interest in and scholarly approach to the sites in his care is exemplified by the many site guides he wrote,¹¹ but his excavations involved the "clearance of all fallen debris, including the evidence for the latest occupation and demolition, (only) stopping at the latest floor levels."¹² Likewise, the concept of bringing a site into guardianship with its emphasis on presenting ruins to the public meant that although the church and claustral buildings were likely to be protected and investigated, the less well-preserved structures and earthworks of the inner and outer courts were often excluded, sometimes as at Buildwas (Shropshire) not even being included within the wider scheduled area.

The attention paid to the church and the least-altered claustral buildings may have been a contributory factor in the general disregard of the post-Dissolution phases of monastic sites. This is typified by the treatment of Rievaulx (Yorks.), a previously largely uninvestigated site, where Peers began major clearance works in 1919. Although Brakspear had earlier shown some interest in the history of the abbey after the suppression,¹³ the post-Dissolution archaeological deposits and alterations to the fabric were swept away in the determination to restore the ruins of the church and recover the full plan of the

medieval claustral buildings.¹⁴ A similar operation took place at Whitby (Yorks.) in the 1920s and must have occurred at many other places throughout the country.

This cavalier attitude to post-medieval features and deposits extended to buildings erected on monastic sites after the Dissolution. Thus in the 1950s the 17th-century farmhouse at Monk Bretton (Yorks.) was systematically dismantled to expose the medieval fabric of the gatehouse from which it had been fashioned.¹⁵ The disappearance of post-suppression features in this way was the result of a desire to understand and (in the case of sites displayed to the public) to present monastic buildings in a form as close to their original appearance as possible. While such an approach was perhaps considered justifiable in the 1950s, it is even less easy to defend the more recent removal of all traces of the post-medieval domestic use of the former lady chapel at the priory church of St Bartholomew, Smithfield in London.¹⁶ Since then the significance of the re-use of monastic buildings as a social phenomenon has been done a further disservice by the decision to remove the post-Dissolution residential elements from the former church of Blackfriars, Gloucester, although it must be admitted that this could have provided the opportunity to investigate how this transformation had been achieved in the first place.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that when restoration programmes take place elsewhere, especially at sites in state guardianship, the post-Dissolution phases of monastic buildings will cease to be regarded as sacrificial.

The 1950s saw the growth of aerial photography of monastic sites by practitioners such as J.K. St Joseph.¹⁸ This drew attention to the outer precinct with its earthworks and outbuildings and was an important factor in the investigation of the monastery as a wider community than that represented simply by church and cloister. This

emphasis on the study of the whole monastic complex roughly co-incided with the emergence of post-medieval archaeology as a discipline in its own right in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁹ One of the first of the new generation of scholars to concern itself with events after the Dissolution was David Baker, whose excavation of the small Benedictine nunnery of Elstow (Beds.) included an examination of the mansion erected by Thomas Hillersden in the early 17th century on the site of a house built from the ruins of the nunnery immediately after the Dissolution.²⁰ Similarly, Edward Johnson's excavations at Sopwell (Herts.) were as much concerned with the post- as the pre-Dissolution phases,²¹ while at Norton (Cheshire) Patrick Greene made a detailed study of the way in which the abbot's lodgings were converted to a new house after the suppression.²² Among other examples of such an approach are Philip Rahtz's work at Bordesley (Worcs.),²³ and at Blackfriars, Gloucester Andrew Saunders has shown how Thomas Bell transformed the Dominican friary into a factory, retaining the church for his own use as a residence.²⁴

It is now standard practice for excavators to pay due regard to the post-monastic phases of religious sites, as shown by Tony Musty at Waltham Abbey (Essex), Rick Turner and Robina McNeil at Vale Royal (Cheshire), Barbara Harbottle at the former Carmelite and Dominican friaries in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and P.M. Christie and J.G. Coad at Denny (Cambs.),²⁵ to name but a few. Nevertheless, the failure in 1989 of even one of the pioneers of post-Dissolution monastic archaeology, Lawrence Butler, to acknowledge the study of the re-use of monastic buildings as one of the research objectives for the "next decades of monastic archaeology" indicates that there may still be some way to go for the topic to be regarded as a priority by archaeologists.²⁶

The results of the excavation of post-Dissolution

deposits and the archaeological analysis of surviving fabric are slowly beginning to be represented in general surveys of medieval and post-medieval archaeology. As recently as 1984, however, the question of the re-cycling of monastic buildings and materials was completely ignored by Helen Clarke in The Archaeology of Medieval England and, although John Steane briefly touches upon the importance of lead to the crown at the time of the Dissolution, he otherwise makes no mention of the topic in The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales (1984), simply contenting himself with the general and rather misleading statement that "Not many complete cloisters survive because after the Dissolution they served no useful purpose and were nearly always destroyed."²⁷

Much happier than this is Colin Platt's treatment of the subject in Medieval England (1978) and The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England (1984) (see below), while a comprehensive review of recent archaeological work on the re-use of monastic buildings appears in David Crossley's Post-Medieval Archaeology (1990). Increasing interest is, however, best illustrated by the devotion of complete chapters to the topic in Coppack's Abbeys and Priories (1990) and Patrick Greene's Medieval Monasteries (1992). This is in marked contrast to Lionel Butler's and Chris Given-Wilson's earlier Medieval Monasteries of Great Britain (1979), which covers much the same ground, albeit from an architectural and historical rather than an archaeological perspective. Apart from these general surveys, there has been rather little in the way of non-site specific archaeological studies, but David Stocker has tackled the issue of the re-cycling of materials, both within a county context across a wide date range and also with particular reference to the Dissolution in Lincoln.²⁸

* * * *

If archaeologists were slow to turn to the examination of post-Dissolution deposits and features in their excavation of monastic sites, much the same attitude towards the post-suppression period was evident among architectural and documentary historians. Indeed, it could be argued that the essentially architectural approach of archaeologists like St John Hope, Brakspear and Peers did much to stifle early investigation of the outer precinct buildings, most of which were by then no more than rubble or marked by earthworks. It is true, however, that documentary historians showed no premature enthusiasm to devote themselves to the study of the 16th-century re-use of monastic buildings. Among those concerned with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, early writers like Cardinal Gasquet in his Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (1906) and A. Savine in The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution (1909) make no reference to the subject and the topic is only summarily treated by Geoffrey Baskerville in English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries (1937), although in fairness it should be pointed out that Baskerville's main concern was to trace the post-Dissolution careers of the ex-religious.

The topic was totally ignored by D. Hay in his study of the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the diocese of Durham,²⁹ but A. Preston, in his transcription of and commentary on a detailed account of the demolition of Reading Abbey in 1549, led the way in showing how documentary sources could be used to illuminate the post-Dissolution history of a particular site.³⁰ The first documentary historian, however, to give serious consideration to the wider question of the re-use of monastic buildings in general was David Knowles in the third volume (1959) of his magisterial The Religious Orders in England. The treatment is necessarily brief in a general survey of this sort and the elegant statement that

"In the main, and especially in the numberless small houses in field, forest and dale, the work of destruction was swift, and the church and cloister of yesterday were left a stripped and gutted ruin" denies the frequency of re-use,³¹ but several residential conversions are cited and Knowles demonstrates a clear understanding of the processes of demolition and re-use.

It is therefore unfortunate that Knowles's example was not followed by other historians of the 16th century. The two volumes covering the period in The Oxford History of England make no reference whatsoever to the re-use of monastic buildings,³² while the topic is conspicuous by its absence from A.G. Dickens's The English Reformation (1964). More surprisingly, the situation is no better in two of the most recent general syntheses, Joyce Youings's Sixteenth-Century England (1984) and John Guy's Tudor England (1988). While it might be argued that extensive treatment of the subject would be out of place in general surveys of the political, social and economic history of the period, its total absence may still reflect a lack of interest among documentary historians.

It is not the case that the wider question of the dispersal of monastic lands has been ignored by historians. This has its own far-ranging literature, including several notable local and regional studies in counties as widespread as Devon, Norfolk and Yorkshire,³³ some of which has been summarised by H. Habbakuk and G.W.O. Woodward as well as in the general surveys referred to above.³⁴ The general history of the Dissolution of the Monasteries has, of course, been addressed by many writers. Among the more useful recent accounts is Youings's The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1971) and the stripping of the Church's wealth is well covered by W.G. Hoskins in The Age of Plunder (1976). Platt's Medieval England (1978) and The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England (1984) contain references to specific

conversion schemes, as does Woodward's The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1966), while Felicity Heal's and Clive Holmes's The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700 (1994) provides the most recent summary of the context in which conversions at gentry level took place.

Many of Woodward's examples come from Yorkshire and it is, perhaps, through local and regional studies that the greatest advances have been made in the last 30 years. J. Oxley led the way with The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary (1965) but, apart from a detailed account of the destruction of Barking Abbey,³⁵ his summary of the re-use of monastic buildings in the county is rather superficial and based mainly on the work of the R.C.H.M. and Nikolaus Pevsner.

More disappointing still in view of its recent date is J.H. Bettey's Suppression of the Monasteries in the West Country (1989). Despite devoting a complete chapter to the careers of the ex-religious and the fate of the former monastic buildings, his survey (which covers the counties of Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire) is of relatively little value. Admittedly, the area covered is a large one but this perhaps reveals the drawbacks to casting the net so wide, at least until detailed local studies have been undertaken. Bettey cites a number of instances where monastic materials were transported some distance for the building of new houses, but in general he over-emphasises the extent of destruction which took place at the Dissolution. Mention is, of course, made of the region's major conversions, such as Forde and Milton Abbas in Dorset and Lacock and Wilton in Wiltshire, but on the whole the choice of conversions included is unadventurous, the lack of first-hand observation noticeable and the limited amount of space given to the topic seems strangely at odds with the number of photographs of converted monastic buildings found throughout the book. This is particularly frustrating given the number and interest of

comparatively obscure sites in the region like Woodspring (Somerset), where part of the church, including the central tower, was converted into a dwelling after the Dissolution, but for which no comprehensive modern account has been published.³⁶ Bettey's treatment of the subject is probably the result of trying to cover too much ground in one book, but one cannot help feeling that a regional study of this sort would have benefited from a more detailed and analytical account of the re-use of monastic buildings from a smaller number of selected sites.

This criticism cannot be made of Steven Pugsley's recent examination of the country house in Devon,³⁷ where the role of the monastic conversion in the development of the Tudor and early Stuart country house is more carefully explored and appreciated. It can only be hoped that similar studies will follow elsewhere.

Specific questions have also been examined recently by historians such as J. Horden, who in his study of former monastic churches in Cumbria has advanced the view that while the status of churches as consecrated buildings could prevent the destruction of parish churches at the Dissolution, monastic churches were regarded "first and foremost as monastic buildings, no different from the secular buildings with which they were in physical proximity" and could, therefore, be demolished unless they had also been used for parochial worship.³⁸ Thus, he argues, it was those churches, such as Lanercost, where the parish had used the nave before the suppression which were most likely to survive wholly or in part after the Dissolution.

* * * *

It might be expected that architectural historians would have started to examine the question of the re-use

of monastic buildings at an earlier date than their documentary colleagues. However, this is not the case. Of the two first reliable modern studies of the period, J. Gotch's Early Renaissance Architecture in England (1914) does not address the subject and T. Garner's and A. Stratton's splendid two-volume The Domestic Architecture of England During the Tudor Period (1929) makes only passing reference to the conversion of monastic buildings in the introduction, although many examples are included in the gazeteer which forms the main part of the book. The topic is also ignored by D.H.S. Cranage in his otherwise excellent Home of the Monk (1934).

In later general works the subject is absent from Sir John Summerson's tour de force, Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830 (1953) and Eric Mercer's English Art, 1553-1625 (1962), but Henry VIII's re-use of monastic buildings as royal houses and the re-cycling of materials in the coastal shore forts is considered by Howard Colvin et al in The History of the King's Works, Vol.IV, 1485-1660 (Pt.II) (1982).

The first general analysis of the re-use of monastic buildings by an architectural historian was by J.C. Dickinson in 1968,³⁹ although he had earlier touched on the subject in his Monastic Life in Medieval England (1961). Dickinson's study was pioneering in that by treating the houses of one order, the Augustinian, he was able to determine the extent and variety of re-use. By this time many individual sites had been thoroughly described by the R.C.H.M., V.C.H., Pevsner and others but Dickinson seems to have been the first to examine the issue within its historical context. His sample is a very large one, "the houses of the English Augustinian canons represent(ing) a quarter of the religious houses in England at the time of the Reformation", and as he rightly points out "only generalities can be offered" until further work has been carried out.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the

"generalities" which Dickinson makes are pertinent. For instance, he highlights the difficulties of converting the redundant church to domestic use, emphasises the number of cases where the former superior's lodging became the basis for a new house on the site, and draws attention to the speed and frequency with which the east claustral range was demolished for the fear that, in the words of one of the new lay owners, "the birds should build therein again."⁴¹ Another innovative aspect of Dickinson's work is that he selected relatively unknown sites among his examples rather than concentrating almost exclusively on the more spectacular conversions as several earlier (and later) commentators have done.

Although not primarily an architectural historian, many useful insights into the process of re-use have been made by Lawrence Stone in a series of books and papers published between 1965 and 1984. Stone's contribution is particularly important for our purposes, because in his study of the aristocracy, Hertfordshire was chosen as a sample area, one paper being entirely devoted to the county's country houses and their owners from 1540 onwards.⁴² In his first book, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641 (1965) to consider the topic, albeit in passing, Stone suggests two reasons why it may have been more common for monastic materials to be re-used elsewhere rather than for the buildings themselves to be converted. First, there was the fear that former monastic property could revert to the crown or the Church and, secondly, there was superstition about "wining, dining and sleeping on once holy ground."⁴³

Stone goes on to suggest that by the 1570s and 1580s there were overwhelming reasons among the aristocracy for building. At long last new owners felt relatively secure in their possessions, had paid off the purchase price of their properties and had surplus money available. These factors, coupled with the emergence of a new architectural

style with its emphasis on symmetry and various technological advances, provided an irresistible urge to build. This stress on the post-1570 period is strangely contradicted in Stone's 1972 paper on Hertfordshire, which notes that "in terms of new construction or substantial rebuilding, the major growth phase...was over by 1580" and that "only in the period 1540-80 does new building or total rebuilding/reconstruction amount to a high proportion of total building activity in this period...the peak of the building boom (being) the 1540s and 1550s when 13 newly built houses entered the sample."⁴⁴

In An Open Elite? England 1540-1880 (1984) Stone emphasises the role of the Dissolution in the creation of Hertfordshire as "a social and political unit...in its own right" when the break-up of the vast St Albans estate made possible the establishment of new private estates. "Few county elites can have been as heavily dependent upon 16th-century and early 17th-century dispersal of Church and crown properties as was that of Hertfordshire...nearly a half of all seats extant in 1640 (being) built on land which had once been in institutional hands, one third on ex-monastic land."⁴⁵

Several of the issues explored by Stone have been elaborated upon by Malcolm Airs in The Making of the English Country House, 1500-1640 (1975), which has recently been republished as The Tudor and Jacobean Country House, A Building History (1995). Airs makes the point that it was the most powerful men and those who played an active part in the Dissolution who were most likely to be the first to build at ex-monastic property. Others preferred to wait and often it was not until the property had been sold again or passed to later generations that it was exploited. "It is not unreasonable to suggest that this further transaction helped to free it from the inhibitions arising from its religious associations". Airs also notes that many houses occupying

former monastic sites "were not begun before the last quarter of the 16th century and some, such as Trentham Hall (Staffs) were not begun until well into the 17th century".⁴⁶

A particularly useful summary of the literature to date from the architectural historian's view-point is contained in chapter seven of Maurice Howard's The Early Tudor Country House (1987). In contrast to many writers, Howard emphasises the extent of conversion to other uses which took place at the Dissolution rather than simply concentrating on the amount of destruction which occurred. Howard also plays down the part of superstition or moral scruples in discouraging the conversion process. Rather, he argues, lay involvement in the running of monasteries before the suppression meant "that there was more continuity between the pre-Dissolution situation with regard to monastic buildings and their post-Dissolution history than is sometimes imagined."⁴⁷

Another important point made by Howard is that early lay owners of former monastic property probably went to some length to conceal the ecclesiastical origins of their new houses: it was left to later restorers to reveal monastic features for antiquarian effect. Howard is also the first writer properly to examine the difficulties of converting individual claustral buildings to domestic use, clearly demonstrating that this was often not so easy as might be supposed.

Rosalys Coope has recently discussed the role of monastic conversions in the emergence and development of the long gallery.⁴⁸ Citing Lacock and Newstead (Notts.) among others, she suggests that the adaptation of the upper floors of claustral ranges could create either "corridor-galleries" serving the rooms opening off the galleries or "recreative galleries" of the type well known at houses like Hardwick (Derbys.) or Chastleton (Oxon.). As Howard says "It would be pushing the point too far to

suggest that monastic conversions first introduced the idea of a sequence of important rooms on an upper floor, not least because this concept was alien to the monastic lay-out...but (these) conversions undoubtedly accelerated the growing importance of the upper floor."⁴⁹

Equally important is Simon Thurley's The Royal Palaces of Tudor England (1993), which not only describes the influential conversions of former monastic property by the crown, but provides new observations on the development of the plan-form of Tudor palaces in the first half of the 16th century, particularly the decline in importance of the great hall. Thurley's book is almost matched in significance by John Schofield's Medieval London Houses (1994), which despite its title contains detailed summaries (many based on the writer's own work) of several post-Dissolution domestic conversions in the capital. Some of these were unusual in that they were to lead to multiple occupancy, as at Holy Trinity, Aldgate but as some of the earliest and most comprehensive to be carried out, their significance for an understanding of the subject as a whole should not be under-estimated.

Finally, Roger Stalley's account of the aftermath of the Dissolution in his The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland (1987) provides some valuable insights and sources of comparison for the process of re-cycling of buildings in England,⁵⁰ but so far comparable studies have not been produced for Wales and Scotland.

* * * *

This summary of the available literature has made little reference to books, papers or monographs on individual monastic sites, and in its attempt to survey the contents of what has been written, has probably (at least in some instances) drawn the line too rigidly

between the work of archaeologists, documentary and architectural historians. Some individual studies, like Frederick Hockey's Beaulieu, King John's Abbey (1976) contain a limited amount of information on the question of re-use, but others like G. Copeland's work at Buckland (Devon),⁵¹ Paul Drury's study of Walden Abbey (Essex), the precursor of Audley End,⁵² or John Hare's excavations at Battle (Sussex) have done much to improve our understanding of the post-Dissolution history of these sites,⁵³ it undoubtedly being no coincidence that these are all investigations which draw on all forms of evidence. Similarly, the descriptions of individual buildings by the R.C.H.M., V.C.H. and Pevsner, particularly those of the V.C.H. where they are supplemented by detailed documentary material, are often the best available accounts of particular sites and form a solid basis of information for analysis and comparison.⁵⁴

* * * *

For the purposes of this thesis the boundaries of the county of Hertfordshire are taken as those of the post-1974 administrative unit. This means that two former monastic sites which were previously partly or wholly in Buckinghamshire, Ashridge and St Margaret's, Nettleden, are included in this study.

Hertfordshire was chosen as a study area for several reasons. First, it is a relatively small county making a detailed examination of the re-use of its former monastic buildings possible. Its proximity to London means that local conditions and circumstances would be likely to encourage re-use. This is in marked contrast to counties more distant from the capital where lower population densities, the relative lack of sizeable towns and the absence of a courtier class might provide less of an

impetus for the adaptation of former monastic buildings to secular use. Also, as recently noted by J.T. Smith,⁵⁵ the county is particularly fortunate in the richness of its 18th- and 19th-century histories and pictorial evidence. This is discussed in greater detail below.

The decision to omit the only monastic institution of the first rank, St Albans, from this study was taken at an early stage. St Albans was a major religious community, the fourth wealthiest monastery in terms of net income in the country in 1535,⁵⁶ and far outstripped any other Hertfordshire house in size and influence at the time of the Dissolution. The next wealthiest community, Ashridge, had an annual net income over five times smaller than that of St Albans and even this was nearly four times higher than that of the third richest institution, King's Langley.

It was therefore felt that to include St Albans would severely distort the balance of the sample and detract from the significance or otherwise of the remaining religious houses. This is not to deny or underrate the importance of St Albans: clearly its influence was far greater and more profound than that of any Hertfordshire house. Its vast land-holdings, particularly in the south and west of the county, were rivalled only by those of St Paul's in the north and east,⁵⁷ while it also held many manors outside the county.⁵⁸ The dissolution of St Albans, including the dispersal of its monks and their post-suppression careers,⁵⁹ is a subject awaiting its own detailed study.⁶⁰

Even without St Albans, there remains a surprisingly high number of monastic institutions in Hertfordshire. There were at least nine hospitals in the county, of which very little is known,⁶¹ while of the regular houses and friaries several were disbanded long before the 16th century. Of these the earliest casualty was the small Benedictine house of Salburn in Standon, which seems to

have become a free chapel by the early 14th century,⁶² while the alien priory at Ware was closed in 1414.⁶³ The collegiate house at Stanstead St Margarets closed in 1431,⁶⁴ and the preceptories of Temple Dinsley and Standon, the properties of the Knights Templars and Hospitallers respectively, do not seem to have survived the 15th century as religious institutions.⁶⁵

The Benedictine nunnery of Rowney, Great Munden ceased to function in 1457, although a perpetual chantry was established in its place,⁶⁶ but Redbourn Priory, founded as a dependent cell of St Albans in the late 12th century,⁶⁷ appears to have survived until the late 15th or early 16th century. A prior, Thomas Albon, is last recorded in 1492,⁶⁸ and the house is not referred to again until 1535 when, described as a cell of St Albans, its annual net value was given as £9 2s.⁶⁹ It is not at all clear, however, what was meant by the priory at this date and, although the site of the house was granted to John Cokks in April 1540,⁷⁰ the royal commissioners in 1537 had described it as uninhabited by religious persons.⁷¹ It therefore seems likely that the land continued to be farmed and presumably some of the buildings were maintained well into the 16th century, but that monastic life had lapsed c.1500.

A similar situation seems to have applied at the Trinitarian friary of Hertford, to which the last certain reference occurs in 1448.⁷² Its site is referred to as a messuage called "le Trynytie" when it was granted to Anthony Denny in August 1540,⁷³ but religious life had apparently come to an end considerably before that date. More certainty attaches to the closure of the Benedictine nunnery of St Mary de Pre near St Albans, which (already deserted by its prioress and nuns) was suppressed by Pope Clement VII in May 1528.⁷⁴ In July Henry VIII granted the house to Wolsey, who used its property (with that of several other monasteries) to augment the endowments of

his newly-founded Cardinal College, Oxford.⁷⁵

Following the decision to omit St Albans from this project, it was also necessary to consider whether to include hospitals and those houses which did not survive until the Dissolution. The decision to exclude the hospitals can be justified on two counts. First, the hospitals were not truly monastic and, perhaps more importantly in a study primarily concerned with the adaptive re-use of buildings, there are no known surviving buildings in the county which can definitely be associated with the medieval hospitals.

These justifications cannot, however, be made for all those houses which did not survive until the Dissolution. A late 15th-century timber-framed barn remains at Standon Friars, a 19th-century house which stands on the site of the preceptory,⁷⁶ and more of this may, of course, be incorporated in the apparently Victorian house. There is good reason to suppose that The Priory in High Street, Redbourn conceals substantial elements of an earlier structure behind its fine early 18th-century facade,⁷⁷ while at Ware, No.9 Church Street (the old rectory), a 17th-century and earlier building, has been claimed to be on the site of the alien priory.⁷⁸

The Church of St Margaret, Stanstead St Margarets, has an imposing Decorated chancel, built for the college established here in c.1316,⁷⁹ and Temple Dinsley, a house of 1714 (although extensively remodelled by Lutyens) is said to stand on the site of a house built in 1542, presumably incorporating the remains of the former preceptory.⁸⁰ At Rowney, Great Munden the rather unprepossessing Victorian house is believed to have a medieval cellar,⁸¹ and even if this not the case, much undoubtedly survived into the early 19th century, as is shown by Buckler's drawing of the site.⁸² Nothing now survives above ground of St Mary de Pre but here too relatively substantial remains were still evident in the

early 19th century.⁸³ There is also an unreliable-looking drawing of the ruins contained in a mid 18th-century manuscript history of St Albans,⁸⁴ while more importantly the exact location of the site is known through aerial photographs.⁸⁵

The essential point to make about all these lesser sites (including the hospitals) is that the information about the buildings which survived the Dissolution comes from published material and an examination of the documentary sources. None of these sites has been visited in any detail for this study and it is probable that exhaustive structural analysis of their remaining buildings (of the kind carried out on those sites which have yielded the data for this thesis) would produce results showing extensive survival of medieval and 16th-century fabric.

Given that seven of the nine religious institutions (excluding hospitals) which failed to survive until the Dissolution appear to have had buildings of pre-Dissolution origin which continued in use well after the Suppression, their omission from this study must be justified. The reason cannot simply be that the remains are too fragmentary to merit inclusion. Such an argument could also be advanced for sites such as Cheshunt and St Margaret's, Nettleden, where nothing now survives above ground, but which survived until the Dissolution and are therefore included in this study. The justification must be that the circumstances of the early closure of these houses was very different from the suppression of the remaining houses at the Dissolution. The conditions surrounding their initial re-use may have been very different from those which prompted the re-use of monastic buildings after c.1540.

It could be argued, of course, that in the case of the Benedictine priories of Redbourn and Rowney and the preceptories of Standon and Temple Dinsley, which as they

are all recorded in the Valor Ecclesiasticus,⁸⁶ seem to have continued in agricultural if not conventual use until the Dissolution,⁸⁷ any modifications which took place after c.1540 can be seen in a similar context to those surrounding the re-use of monastic buildings dissolved between 1536 and 1539. This, however, would be to miss the point of my study, and to allow the inclusion of sites such as Standon and Temple Dinsley would make it impossible not to include the vast numbers of chantries and monastic manors, which would obviously involve research of a very different type and scale.

An argument could also be made for the inclusion of St Mary de Pre in this study as it was a regular house which survived well into the 16th century. Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly suppressed in 1528, its closure being brought about solely to provide further endowments for Cardinal College. Furthermore, it appears that the convent had been deserted since June 1527,⁸⁸ so it is unlikely that it would have survived until the Dissolution even without Wolsey's intervention. Although the circumstances surrounding the re-use of the buildings at St Mary de Pre may not be that different from those pertaining some ten years later, Wolsey's suppressions form a separate chapter in the history of the Dissolution of the monasteries and St Mary de Pre is thus excluded from this study.⁸⁹

The sites which are included are all regular houses or friaries which survived until the Dissolution and are as follows: Ashridge (Bonshommes), Beechwood, formerly St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead (Benedictine nuns), Cheshunt (Benedictine nuns), Hertford (Benedictine), Hitchin (Carmelite), The Biggin, Hitchin (Gilbertine), King's Langley (Dominican), Markyate (Benedictine nuns), Royston (Augustinian), St Margaret's, Nettleden (Benedictine nuns), Sopwell (Benedictine nuns), Ware (Franciscan) and Wymondley (Augustinian).

* * * *

Having defined the area of study and the sources of evidence employed, we must consider the confines and possibilities of the period involved. The survey begins in 1540, chosen as the year in which the last monastery, Waltham Abbey (Essex), surrendered.⁹⁰ The selection of 1600 as the finishing point is more problematic, but can be explained in a number of ways. First, it roughly coincides with the death of Elizabeth in 1603, the last of the Tudor monarchs, and in whose reign the great majority of major monastic conversions were carried out. More important is the perceptible change in plan-form and architectural styles and attitudes at this time. This is a trend which has its roots in the reign of Henry VIII at the royal palaces of Hampton Court and Nonsuch,⁹¹ develops under the influence of Protector Somerset and his circle in the late 1540s and early 1550s,⁹² finds further expression in "prodigy" houses such as Longleat (Wilts.) in the 1570s, Wollaton and Worksop (Notts.) in the 1580s and on a slightly less lavish scale at houses like Conover (Shropshire) and Doddington (Lincs.) in the 1590s.⁹³ Although great courtyard houses continued to be built in the last part of the 16th century, as at Kirby (Northants.) begun in 1570, Theobalds (Herts.) begun in 1564, and even into the early 17th century as at the remodelled Audley End,⁹⁴ the tradition, which stretched back to the 15th century and beyond, was certainly on the wane in late Elizabethan England.

The move towards houses of a compact outward-looking plan, seen in both buildings of the largest scale like Wollaton and Hardwick, built between 1590 and 1597, and at more modest houses like Barlborough Hall, Derbyshire (1583/4), and the now-demolished Heath Old Hall, Yorkshire (c.1585) was reflected in the growing popularity of the E-

or H-shaped house,⁹⁵ which left the courtyard plan of the monastic conversion increasingly obsolete and isolated. Houses with central courtyards continued to be built in the first decade of the 17th century, but now, as at Chastleton (Oxon.) or Burton Agnes (Yorks.), they usually amounted to no more than light wells.⁹⁶ Instead, as Mark Girouard has shown, the emphasis was very much on external show, which at great houses like Hatfield (Herts.) or Blickling (Norfolk) can "supply an almost endless repertory of picturesque groupings."⁹⁷ Even at smaller houses like Charlton House, Greenwich (1607) and the contemporary Holland House, Kensington "a strict symmetry, which was perhaps a contribution of the Renaissance, and a feeling for dramatic massing and recession (itself) a discovery of the Elizabethans" are the hall-marks of these early Jacobean buildings.⁹⁸

This emphasis on external display in later Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture had its roots in the medieval period, not least in the great monastic gatehouses of the 14th and 15th centuries.⁹⁹ But monasteries were essentially inward-looking communities and their buildings reflected this. The main claustral buildings, which were those most frequently chosen for conversion, were often rather irregularly laid out (perhaps as the result of being of different construction dates) and structures such as the frater could often project at right-angles to the rest of the cloister. Similarly, the buildings of the outer court were often insignificant and sprawled over a wide area. Thus, while the courtyard plan of many former monasteries had initially been popular with new lay owners for the ease of conversion, other factors had come to be taken into account by 1600.

The re-use of monastic buildings might have received a fresh impetus around 1600 from the "general predisposition towards nostalgia",¹⁰⁰ typified by Spenser and others, which included in some quarters a melancholy regret for

the passing of the monasteries.¹⁰¹ However, in architecture this took the form of the erection of sham fortresses such as Longford Castle (Wilts.) or Lulworth (Dorset) rather than pseudo-ecclesiastical buildings.¹⁰² Furthermore, the practical difficulties of adapting monastic buildings or conversions to meet the latest architectural styles and fashions meant that, at least at the highest social level, the attempt was largely abandoned by 1600. In some cases, such as Ashridge in 1603/4, it was possible to remodel the already-converted monastic buildings so that from the entrance front they conformed to the fashionable ideal of the H-plan, but even here the details must soon have looked archaic and it is perhaps no coincidence that this was the last full-scale adaptation of a former monastic building in Hertfordshire.

It therefore seems that the increasing dominance of the compact-plan house and to a lesser extent the general collapse of the Gothic architectural tradition by around 1600 provides a logical end-point for this survey. After the beginning of the 17th century, the re-use of monastic buildings can be seen as largely accidental. It might still occur for the first time as a result of local conditions and circumstances, particularly in towns where lack of space could dictate the recycling of otherwise redundant buildings. However, the particular social attitudes and aspirations which had first encouraged the re-use of monastic buildings between 1540 and 1600 were largely extinct after the latter date.

Some former monastic sites experienced another period of activity in the 18th and early 19th centuries, when growing interest in the romantic and the development of antiquarianism led to an appreciation of monastic ruins as objects of the picturesque. This phenomenon was widespread, as evidenced by sites like Bayham in Sussex, Waverley in Surrey and Tintern (Monmouthshire), but was particularly common in Yorkshire, where remote and

magnificent ruins like those of Fountains were incorporated in landscaped parks or, as at Jervaulx, became the focal point of a garden.¹⁰³ Despite early antiquarian interest in several of Hertfordshire's monastic sites, none seems to have been used in this way, which is perhaps not surprising in a county not noted for its wild and dramatic landscapes but which instead, in the words of E.M. Forster, is best described as "England at its quietest, with little emphasis of river and hill... England meditative."¹⁰⁴

* * * *

Several sources of evidence have been used in this study. The principal is the physical fabric of the buildings themselves. Of the 13 sites included, Cheshunt, Hertford Priory and St Margaret's Nettleden have no remains above ground, while the present houses of Ashridge and Beechwood contain only the scantiest fragments of monastic or immediately post-Dissolution fabric. Sopwell is ruinous and the date of the earliest fabric at The Priory, Royston is contentious. But Hitchin Priory, The Biggin, Hitchin, King's Langley, Markyate, Ware and Wymondley all incorporate substantial elements of their monastic predecessors. The relative survival of early fabric is largely reflected in the published literature. No mention is made by Pevsner of Cheshunt, Hertford Priory or St Margaret's, Nettleden and the V.C.H. is exclusively concerned with their documentary history. The early fabric of Ashridge and Beechwood is similarly inadequately treated by both authorities, although the later work in both houses is satisfactorily described, especially by Pevsner.¹⁰⁵ More disappointing though, considering the recent date of the volume, is Pevsner's treatment of the remaining sites. Although basically correct in what little

is mentioned, much of significance has apparently gone unnoticed and none of the accounts runs to more than 22 lines, with most much shorter.

The situation is a little better in J.T. Smith's recent book on Hertfordshire houses. Of the three sites where there are no extant remains, only Cheshunt is mentioned and then only in passing.¹⁰⁶ Ashridge is excluded on the grounds that the "plentiful graphic evidence did not sufficiently elucidate (its) plan and development",¹⁰⁷ and although the later phases at Beechwood are well covered,¹⁰⁸ this site's monastic antecedents are totally ignored. Despite its importance and a rather fuller description in the accompanying inventory volume, Sopwell is summarily treated, as are Hitchin Priory, Ware and Wymondley.¹⁰⁹ Although there is a good detailed description with plans in the inventory, the pre-1600 work at Markyate is dismissed in the book with the words "Nothing significant is known about the house at Markyate Cell, begun by one courtier and completed by another before Elizabeth came to the throne."¹¹⁰ But even this is better than the treatment of The Biggin, Hitchin and King's Langley which are not mentioned at all. The only site to be done anything near justice is Royston,¹¹¹ although in the more detailed description contained in the inventory, there is a noticeable failure to record the full extent of the surviving early fabric.¹¹²

More useful than either Pevsner's or Smith's accounts (and it should be remembered that neither set himself the task of providing exhaustive descriptions of the buildings recorded) are some of the more up-to-date descriptions carried out for the Department of Environment's Resurvey of Listed Buildings.¹¹³ It is therefore unfortunate that only three sites, Beechwood, Markyate and Wymondley, were included in the most recent survey. It is perhaps symptomatic of the Department's earlier surveys that Royston Priory is not even included on the Statutory List

of Historic Buildings, while the description of those buildings which are included are singularly inadequate.¹¹⁴ The V.C.H. and R.C.H.M. can be excused from this sorry state of affairs on the grounds that the volumes for Hertfordshire were amongst the earliest to be compiled and therefore fall well short of the standards set by later volumes. Individual accounts of particular buildings are dealt with under the site descriptions contained in the Appendix.

* * * *

Given that the published material on the physical fabric of the sites covered by this study is generally of relatively little use, it remains to be considered how this source of evidence is treated here. The sites of all the former monastic houses covered by this study have been visited. In two cases, Cheshunt and Hertford, nothing now survives above ground, while at St Margaret's, Nettleden only earthworks occupy the site. Elsewhere, the approach adopted was to make a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of the surviving building or buildings. A comprehensive architectural description was then compiled on site and later written up with the aid of photographs and sketch drawings made on site. In all cases, it was particularly important to carry out a thorough investigation of the roof space, the result of this, as at Royston and Ware, being to provide far more accurate dating than would otherwise have been possible.

Only at Sopwell, Ashridge and Markyate was this approach varied; at Sopwell because the buildings are ruinous, at Ashridge because most of the vast house created by James Wyatt occupies a different part of the site from the old, while at Markyate the owner refused permission to visit the site, as a result of which the

description of the house had to be compiled from photographs and published material alone. The decision to compile ~~comprehensive~~ ^{detailed} descriptive accounts of each building may sometimes seem to result in lengthy and apparently irrelevant accounts of the existing structures. This may particularly appear to be the case at Beechwood and Royston and to a lesser extent at Markyate where the present buildings are outwardly 18th and 19th century in appearance. Nevertheless, as will be seen from the Appendix, all contain substantial elements of earlier structures. It is only by fully understanding and describing the evolution of these buildings that it is possible to establish how much pre-Dissolution fabric may have survived and to what extent (if at all) it was incorporated into post-suppression buildings on these sites. Thus it was held necessary to describe fully all elevations and internal features of buildings which may contain elements of pre- or immediately post-Dissolution structures.

That this approach is justified is shown not only by the site descriptions of Beechwood, Royston and Markyate, but by the equally detailed descriptions of those sites which already published material acknowledges contain substantial fragments of monastic fabric. In particular, the full extent of the medieval parts of Hitchin Priory, Ware and Wymondley is only appreciated by a proper understanding of these buildings (notably the roof structures of Ware and Wymondley, no full accounts of which have hitherto been published), while at The Biggin, Hitchin a detailed examination of the roof structure corroborates Smith's footnote in Pevsner that the present almshouses "possibly incorporate medieval timber framed buildings on a cloister plan."¹¹⁵ Perhaps the most outstanding discovery, however, was the 14th-century gatehouse at King's Langley, converted to domestic use after the Dissolution, which appears to have gone entirely

unnoticed by earlier writers.

It is in this detailed examination of the physical fabric of the surviving buildings that this study breaks the most new ground. Seemingly unpromising exteriors and even interiors, as at Royston, have concealed early roof structures, which provide valuable evidence for the buildings' origins and former functions. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that while every effort has been made to provide as full an architectural description as possible of each building, there have been unavoidable constraints in compiling these. Royston Priory is divided into three houses; Markyate Cell is a private house and (as noted above) permission was not granted for inspection; Ashridge is a Business Management College; Hitchin Priory is a conference centre and offices; Beechwood is a preparatory school; King's Langley is in mixed residential and institutional use, and The Biggin, Hitchin is divided into almshouses, most of which are currently occupied. At the time of inspection only Wymondley (latterly in use as a private house) was empty, its future uncertain, while the ruins at Sopwell were neglected and partly overgrown.

Naturally, these factors all imposed limitations on the extent to which the buildings could be investigated and I am grateful to all owners and occupiers who generously allowed me to tramp through their rooms and crawl through their attics and cellars. (Individual acknowledgments are given in the Appendix). These limitations did mean, however, that while furniture and the like could be and were moved and some disruption to occupants caused, it was not possible to carry out plaster stripping or other invasive recording techniques, which may have answered individual questions. Likewise, all external inspections were carried out from ground level and it should be recognised that examination of some areas of walling at closer quarters may have been rewarding in some instances.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the descriptions contained in the Appendix are the most comprehensive and detailed in existence for the buildings covered by this study. It can be confidently stated that (with the exception of Markyate) no significant part of the fabric of any of these buildings was missed during the site inspections.

* * * *

The documentary evidence used in this study ranges from surveys made by the royal commissioners at the time of the Dissolution and inventories of the former monastic properties made for the new owners, to antiquarian accounts of the 18th century and sales particulars of the 19th century.

Perhaps surprisingly, the later documentary material is often more useful than the contemporary sources. The accounts of the royal visitors and local commissioners are not complete for Hertfordshire, although those that do survive contain useful information on the buildings remaining at the Dissolution and their value.¹¹⁶ The Valor Ecclesiasticus is useful too in recording the incomes of religious houses before the suppression. 16th- and 17th-century grants of sites are usually formalised documents referring to features such as the "gardens, houses, scite and soil" without giving any concrete information on the buildings. Surveys and inventories made for the new owners are sometimes more informative, naming individual buildings and giving their measurements or commenting on their condition,¹¹⁷ but only in the case of Wymondley is relevant information on the buildings contained in the Ministers' Accounts.¹¹⁸

In contrast to official records made for the crown or for the new owners, are descriptive accounts of former

monastic properties. Descriptions made by Leland, who appears to have visited Royston in 1540 or 1541 and other Hertfordshire sites in 1544 or 1545,¹¹⁹ are particularly useful as they offer a first-hand contemporary account of the condition of sites immediately after the Dissolution. Antiquarian interest in the monastic past seems to have developed quickly in the second half of the 16th century,¹²⁰ and while the brief descriptions of former monastic buildings by writers such as Camden or Norden are not particularly useful, a manuscript history of St Albans, compiled in c.1610, which includes a brief account of Sopwell, can be viewed in this context.¹²¹

It is not until the late 17th century, however, with the compilation of Sir Henry Chauncy's History of Hertfordshire, published in 1700, that antiquarianism in Hertfordshire can truly be said to come of age. Nevertheless, Chauncy was not merely concerned with items of antiquarian interest; indeed, he seems to have been anxious to record features which contemporaries would have found impressive and worthy of note just as much, if not more so, than relics of the past. It is perhaps significant that of the many 16th- and 17th-century houses shown in the fine Drapentier engravings accompanying Chauncy's text none is of a monastic conversion.

Antiquarianism is more detectable in Nathaniel Salmon's History of Hertfordshire (1728), although he was primarily interested in the Roman period and his statements on later buildings are often directly taken from Chauncy. More useful for our purposes are the slightly later, unpublished accounts of Browne Willis and William Cole, which provide much valuable information on Ashridge, St Margaret's, Nettleden and Royston respectively.¹²² From the later 18th century, Richard Gough's annotations to his copies of Camden, Chauncy and Salmon provide additional information on several former monastic buildings,¹²³ while, moving into the early 19th century, works like

Brayley's and Britton's Beauties of England and Wales (Hertfordshire is covered in volume seven, 1808) refer to several of the sites with which we are concerned. Nevertheless, the relatively poor survival rate of Hertfordshire monastic buildings into this period, especially in the form of romantic ruins so beloved of late 18th- century and early 19th-century topographical writers, means that such works are not so valuable a source as in counties like Yorkshire. However, the antiquarian writers referred to above by no means form an exhaustive list and mention is made of several others in the site descriptions contained in the Appendix.

The wide range of documentary sources used is a feature of this study. Even apparently unpromising material like 19th- century sales particulars or newspaper accounts of archaeological discoveries (see below) can contain information not available elsewhere. Although some of the claims of antiquarian writers naturally have to be treated cautiously, one soon obtains a strong feeling for those statements which can be treated as reliable or, alternatively, dismissed.

Documentary records made during the 16th century or at a later period pose problems of a different kind. While not liable to the prejudices or perceptions of writers of "history", whose aim might be to prove an argument or create a literary effect, apparently unbiased records can nevertheless be misleading. Royal commissioners or compilers of surveys and inventories may have been tempted to attribute lower values to former religious houses or exaggerate the dilapidated condition of monastic buildings for their own ends. Similarly, grants of monastic sites are stylised documents containing little information on individual buildings, simply because the new owners were aware of what they were obtaining. That which would seem of interest to us now, may well have been regarded as of no consequence by contemporaries of the actual events and

thus have gone unrecorded. Later records, such as inventories, sales particulars or references in deeds, terriers and the like were the product of very different circumstances and their significance for our purposes must therefore be regarded as coincidental to their original purpose.

Finally, the point should be made that, as with all sources of evidence, the wealth of documentary material varies tremendously from one site to another. While to some degree this is likely to be a reflection of a site's relative importance both before and after the Dissolution, it might also be the result of accidental survival. In other words, the absence of documentary material does not necessarily mean that a site was of no significance.

* * * *

Pictorial evidence for Hertfordshire's former monastic houses is particularly plentiful. The earliest graphic representation of a monastic conversion is the birdseye perspective view of Sopwell on a map of c.1600.¹²⁴ There is then a relatively long gap until the next drawing, coincidentally also of Sopwell, in the middle of the 17th century.¹²⁵ The likely reason for the absence of early views of former monastic buildings in Hertfordshire has already been touched upon. The lack of spectacular ruins probably played its part. But it is surprising, nevertheless, that for a house as magnificent as Ashridge there are no surviving drawings earlier than the late 18th century. After this date, the number of known views increases dramatically.

The earliest artist regularly to record former monastic buildings was H.G. Oldfield, active between 1790-1803. There is no evidence to suggest that Oldfield had any special interest in former monastic buildings and in fact

his main purpose was to provide drawings of country houses and churches which would be attractive to potential patrons.¹²⁶ Oldfield's competence as an artist has rightly been called into question,¹²⁷ and as Smith has commented he "took pains to accommodate owners' preferences by a careful choice of viewpoint and by the introduction of discreet planting to screen the stables and service ranges."¹²⁸ Despite this selectivity, however, Oldfield's views seem to be basically accurate. Comparisons with other evidence, including the work of other artists, suggest that his rather uninspiring and pedestrian drawings can generally be taken as reliable representations of the buildings involved.

Far more accomplished than Oldfield's work is that of the Bucklers. Two generations of the family earned their living as artists, John and his sons, John Chessell and George Buckler. Of the three, the first two carried out the most work in Hertfordshire. Like Oldfield, who seems to have worked exclusively in the medium, the Bucklers painted watercolours but they are more usually represented by their pen and ink drawings and preparatory pencil sketches for these. Buckler drawings are notorious for their accuracy and attention to detail,¹²⁹ but even they can be selective in what is shown or omitted and, as Smith has pointed out, there is a suggestion in some cases of an element of archaeological reconstruction rather than literal representation.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, comparison between a Buckler drawing and a surviving building is usually a testimony to the precision of the artist. The Hertfordshire drawings with which we are concerned were mostly made between 1830 and 1840, although a few pre-date 1820.

Many other artists made drawings or engravings of former monastic buildings, and are referred to in the site descriptions contained in the Appendix. But two more merit special mention here. These are Thomas Fisher (?1771-

1836), noteworthy for his meticulous early 19th-century drawings of Cheshunt, Markyate and Ware,¹³¹ and Thomas Luppino, active between 1790 and 1831, whose work includes a sketch of the now-vanished Hertford Priory.¹³²

The work of all the artists mentioned here is particularly important, as much of it pre-dates the demolition or extensive alteration of several of the buildings included in this study. The value of pictorial evidence where the building itself has now gone as at Cheshunt, Hertford, St Margaret's, Nettleden or changed beyond recognition as at Ashridge barely needs mention, but it can be almost as critical where the building still survives. In the latter case the building acts as a check to the accuracy of the drawing and the drawing can also provide useful evidence for changes made to the structure.

As Smith has commented, "where drawings show differences of detail in the same building, reliability is hard to judge."¹³³ This is the case with several of the buildings included in this study, notably in the many views of the north front of the former great hall at Ashridge. Only experience of the competence and limitations of the artist concerned can lead one to a judgment of which representation is to be relied upon in preference to another.

Late 19th- and early 20th-century photographs can be useful in checking the accuracy of drawings and engravings, although in most cases they post-date changes made in the 19th century and are, therefore, less informative than might have been the case. The most useful major collection is the set of photographs taken early this century by A. Whitford Anderson for the V.C.H. (now in Watford Central Library), but there are also collections in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the Hertfordshire Record Office and the Local Studies Library, Hertford.¹³⁴

Map evidence is dealt with separately in most of the

site descriptions contained in the Appendix but its usefulness as a source can be summarised here. Several early estate maps, such as the Sopwell map of c.1600 referred to above, are useful for their pictorial representation of buildings, while later estate, tithe and inclosure maps often show the ground-plans of buildings, sometimes indicating ranges which have now gone and of which little other evidence survives.

More detailed plans of buildings also fall into this category, but it is unfortunate that there are no surviving large-scale plans or even sketch plans of any of the sites included in this study, earlier than the late 17th century. These are the elevation drawings of the pre-1702 house at Beechwood which cast no light on the appearance of the 16th-century house there,¹³⁵ but are at least considerably earlier than for any other site, there not being any other plans earlier than the first part of the 19th century.

* * * *

Archaeological evidence as opposed to antiquarian descriptions of the various sites is relatively slim. Chance discoveries have been made at the majority of the sites and the outlines of the churches at Hertford and King's Langley, along with part of the east end of the church or chapter house at Markyate, were uncovered in the 19th century. Poorly documented excavations took place in the 1950s and 1960s at Cheshunt and The Biggin, Hitchin, the former necessarily amounting to no more than salvage and limited recording in advance of rapid gravel extraction. Only Sopwell has been extensively investigated to anything approaching modern standards, although the excavations carried out in the 1960s have yet to be properly published. Archaeological field evaluations and

trial trenching have been carried out recently at Wymondley, Ware, and to a greater extent at Hertford. Full details of all these excavations are contained in the Appendix.

Aerial photography can also play its part, especially in those cases where the post-Dissolution house does not stand directly on the site of the monastic buildings. Thus relatively well-defined parch-marks of possible buildings can be detected at Ashridge and Markyate, although at Beechwood, where the present house stands at a little distance from the site of the monastic buildings, no crop-marks seem to be present in the adjoining arable fields. No geophysical or other non-invasive surveys are known to have been carried out on any Hertfordshire monastic sites.¹³⁶

REFERENCES

1. W.H. St John Hope, 'The making of Place House at Titchfield, near Southampton in 1538', Arch. Jnl., 63 (1906), 231-43.
2. W.H. St John Hope, 'Fountains Abbey', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 15 (1898/9), 269-402 and 'The architectural history of Mount Grace Charterhouse', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 18 (1905), 270-309.
3. R. Walbran, Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains, I and II, Surtees Soc., 42 (1862) and Surtees Soc., 67 (1876).
4. J.A. Reeve, A Monograph on the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains (1892); also printed in St John Hope, op. cit. (1898/9), (note 2), passim; Coppack (1990), 22.
5. As typified by St John Hope at Alnwick (Northumberland) and Watton (Yorks.). See his 'On the Premonstratensian abbey of St Mary at Alnwick, Northumberland', Arch. Jnl., 44 (1887), 337-46 and 'The Gilbertine priory of Watton in the East Riding of Yorkshire', Arch. Jnl., 58 (1901), 1-34.
6. M.A. Lowther, 'Reports on the antiquities lately found at Lewes' and 'Further report on discoveries at Lewes', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc., 1 & 2 (1846 & 1847), 346-57 & 104-8; see also W.H. Blaauw, 'On the Cluniac priory of St Pancras at Lewes, its priors and monks', Sussex Arch. Collns., 3 (1850), 185-210.

7. H. Brakspear, 'Stanley Abbey', Wilts. Nat. Hist. Mag., 35 (1907/8), 541-81 and Waverley Abbey (1905); J. Bilson and W.H. St John Hope, Architectural Description of Kirkstall Abbey, Publications of the Thoresby Soc., 16 (1907); C.E. Laing, 'Excavations on the site of Bardney Abbey', Assoc. Soc. Reps., 32, pt.i (1913), 21-34. The results of Laing's excavations were fully published by H. Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey', Arch. Jnl., 79 (1922), 1-92.
8. Coppack (1990), 25.
9. See M.W. Thompson, Ruins: their Preservation and Display (1981), 29-34 for an attempt to explain the old Ministry of Works policy on the display of ruins and the "advantages" of closely-mown grass in this context. Recently a new, less clinical approach has been evident at sites such as Jervaulx in Yorkshire. For examples of other sites where a more enlightened approach to interpretation has been adopted, see Greene (1992), 215-26.
10. D.N.B., 1951-60, 800-1.
11. C.R. Peers, H.M.S.O. guides to Byland (1930), Finchale (revd., 1973), Rievaulx (1933) and St Botolph's, Colchester (revd., 1964).
12. Coppack (1990), 25.
13. Ibid, 26.
14. C.R. Peers, H.M.S.O. guide to Rievaulx (1933).
15. R. Graham and R. Gilyard-Beer, H.M.S.O. guide to Monk Bretton (1966).

16. Maurice Barley, Houses and History (1986), 269-70.
17. Ibid, 272. No proper account of the post-Dissolution conversion work has been published, Francis Kelly pers. comm. But see Oliver Rackham, John Blair and Julian Munby, 'The thirteenth-century roofs and floor of the Blackfriars priory at Gloucester', Med. Arch., 22 (1978), 105-22 which, perhaps wisely, offers no comment on the merits of the "restoration" programme.
18. J.K. St Joseph and David Knowles, Monastic Sites from the Air (1952).
19. The Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology was founded in 1967 and its first journal published in that year.
20. Post-Med. Arch., 2 (1968), 183.
21. Med. Arch., 8 (1964), 242; 9 (1965), 179; 10 (1966), 177-80; 11 (1967), 274.
22. Patrick Greene, Norton Priory (1989).
23. Philip Rahtz and Susan Hirst, Bordesley Abbey, Brit. Arch. Rep., 23 (1976); Susan Hirst, D.A. Walsh and S.M. Wright, Bordesley Abbey II, Brit. Arch. Rep., 111 (1983) and G. Astill, 'Monastic research designs: Bordesley Abbey and the Arrow Valley' in Roberta Gilchrist and Harold Mytum (eds.), The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries, Brit. Arch. Rep., 203 (1989), 279-93.
24. Andrew Saunders, 'Blackfriars', Arch. Jnl., 122 (1965), 217-19.

25. A.E.S. Musty, 'Exploratory excavation within the monastic precinct, Waltham Abbey, 1972', Essex Arch. & Hist., 10 (1978), 127-73 and P.J. Huggins, 'Excavations of the collegiate and Augustinian churches, Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1984-87', Arch. Jnl., 146 (1989), 476-537; Post-Med. Arch., 19 (1985), 159-61 and R. Mc Neil and R.C. Turner, 'An architectural and topographical survey of Vale Royal Abbey', Jnl. Chester Arch. Soc., 70 (1990), 51-79; Barbara Harbottle, 'Excavations at the Carmelite friary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1965, 1967', Arch. Aeliana, 4th Ser., 46 (1968), 163-223 and with R. Fraser, 'Black Friars, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, after the Dissolution of the Monasteries', Arch. Aeliana, 5th Ser., 15 (1987), 23-150; P.M. Christie and J.G. Croad, 'Excavations at Denny Abbey', Arch. Jnl., 137 (1980), 138-279 and J. Poster and D. Sherlock, 'Denny Abbey: the nuns' refectory', Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc., 76 (1987), 67-82.
26. Lawrence Butler, 'The archaeology of rural monasteries in England and Wales' in Gilchrist and Mytum, op. cit., (note 23), 1-27. The omission of the re-use of monastic buildings as a research objective is even harder to account for in the postscript to Greene (1992), especially given that writer's exemplary treatment of the subject in chapter eight of the same book.
27. John Steane, The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales (1984), 71.
28. David Stocker and Paul Everson, 'Rubbish recycled: a study of the re-use of stone in Lincolnshire' in David Parsons (ed.), Stone Quarrying and Building in England A.D. 43-1525 (1990), 83-101 and 'The archaeology of

- the Reformation in Lincoln: a case study in the redistribution of building materials in the mid 16th century', Lincs. Hist. & Arch., 25 (1990), 18-32.
29. D. Hay, 'The dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham', Arch. Aeliana, 4th Ser., 15 (1938), 69-114.
30. A.E. Preston, 'The demolition of Reading Abbey', Berks. Arch. Jnl., 39 (1935), 107-44.
31. David Knowles, The Religious Orders of England, iii (1959), 387.
32. J.D. Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558 (1952); J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603 (2nd edn., 1959).
33. J. Kew, 'The disposal of crown lands and the Devon land market, 1536-58', Agricultural Hist. Rev., 18 (1970), 93-105; T.H. Swales, 'The redistribution of the monastic lands in Norfolk at the Dissolution', Norfolk Arch., 34 (1962-66), 14-44; R.B. Smith, Land and Politics in the England of Henry VIII: the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1530-46 (1970).
34. H.J. Habbakuk, 'The market for monastic property, 1539-1603', Economic Hist. Rev., 2nd. Ser., 10 (1957/8), 362-80; G.W.O. Woodward, 'A speculation in monastic lands', English Hist. Rev., 79 (1964), 778-83.
35. J.E. Oxley, The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary (1965), 130.

36. But see Nikolaus Pevsner, North Somerset and Bristol (1958), 343.
37. Steven Pugsley, 'Landed society and the emergence of the country house in Tudor and early Stuart Devon' in T. Gray, M. Rowe and A. Erskine (eds.), Tudor and Stuart Government, Essays Presented to Joyce Youings (1992), 96-118.
38. J. Horden, 'The fate of monastic churches in Cumbria: a consideration of the position at law' in J. Loades (ed.), Monastic Studies (1990), 263.
39. J.C. Dickinson, 'The buildings of the English Austin canons after the Dissolution of the Monasteries', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc., 3rd. Ser., 31 (1968), 60-75.
40. Ibid, 62.
41. Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Great Britain, iii (ed., J.S. Brewer, 1845), 486.
42. L. and J.C. Stone, 'Country houses and their owners in Hertfordshire, 1540-1879' in W.O. Aydelotte, A.C. Bogue and R.W. Fogel (eds.), The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History (1972), 56-123.
43. L. Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641 (1965), 549-50.
44. L. and J.C. Stone, op. cit., (note 42), 108, 117, 120.
45. L. Stone, An Open Elite? England 1540-1880 (1984), 361.
46. Airs (1975), 19.

47. Howard (1987), 143.
48. Rosalys Coope, 'The "long gallery": its origins, development, use and decoration', Archit. Hist., 29 (1986), 43-84.
49. Howard (1987), 156.
50. Roger Stalley, The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland (1987), 227-38.
51. G.W. Copeland, 'Some problems of Buckland Abbey', Trans. Devon. Assoc., 85 (1953), 41-52.
52. Paul Drury, 'Walden into Audley End' in S.R. Bassett (ed.), Saffron Walden: Excavations and Research 1972-80, C.B.A. Res. Rep., 45 (1982), 94-105 and 'No other palace in the kingdom will compare with it: the evolution of Audley End, 1605-1745', Archit. Hist., 23 (1980), 1-39.
53. John Hare, Battle Abbey: the Eastern Range and the Excavations of 1978-80 (1985).
54. See, for instance, the recent accounts of Buckland and Hexham in the second editions of Nikolaus Pevsner's Devon (revd., Bridget Cherry, 1989), 227-9 and Northumberland (revd., J. Grundy, G. McCombie, P. Ryder and H. Welfare, 1992), 318-27 respectively, or the R.C.H.M.'s earlier account of Forde in Dorset, I (1952), 240-6.
55. Smith (1992), 9-11.
56. Val. Eccl., i, 451; Knowles op. cit. (note 31), 473.

57. Doggett (1991), 47-8.
58. See P.R.O., SC6/Hen VIII/1619, 1626-31 for its Hertfordshire possessions.
59. Nicholas Doggett, unpublished paper on the dispersal of the Hertfordshire religious and their post-Dissolution careers.
60. An introductory study has recently been published. Eileen Roberts, The Hill of the Martyr, An Architectural History of St Albans Abbey (1993).
61. Nicholas Doggett, 'Medieval hospitals in Hertfordshire and their dissolution', Herts. Past, 38 (Spring 1995), 8-12.
62. B.L., Add. MS. 6041, fol.73, nos.20-2.
63. Parliamentary Rolls, v (n.d.), 365. For the background to the closure of the alien houses see Platt (1984), 173-8.
64. Cal. Pat. R., 1429-36, 146.
65. V.C.H., iv, 444-6.
66. Dugdale, iv, 343.
67. H.T. Riley (ed.), Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani, ii (1867), 400.
68. B.L., Add. Chart. 34,350.
69. Val. Eccl., i, 451.

70. L.P., xv, g.611 (46).
71. V.C.H., iv, 418.
72. 3rd Rep. of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (1872), App., 251.
73. L.P., xv, g.1027 (25).
74. Dugdale, iii, 361, no.xi.
75. L.P., iv (2), no.4472, (3), nos.5714 and 5786. See Knowles, op. cit. (note 31), 161-4.
76. V.C.H., iii, 350; Pevsner, 273; J.A. Brown, 'The hospice of the Knights Templars at Standon', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 1 (1899-1901), 289-91 and 'Visit of the East Herts. Arch. Soc., September 1930', Ibid, 8 (1928-33), 265-6.
77. Pevsner, 277-8; N.M.R., 79,656.
78. Pevsner, 381; N.M.R., 81,117.
79. Pevsner, 344.
80. Pevsner, 359. The pre-18th-century house is illustrated in Chauncy, ii, between pp.176 and 177.
81. R.C.H.M., 104.
82. B.L., Add. MS. 36,366, fol.136.
83. Jonathan Hunn, pers. comm.

84. Library of Society of Antiquaries, MS. 720, J. Webster, Gleanings of Antiquity from Verolam and St Albans (n.d.), 147.
85. S.M.R., Aerial photographs 3706 and 3906; also many aerial photographs in R.C.H.M. National Library of Air Photographs, Swindon.
86. Val. Eccl., i, 451 (Redbourn); iv, 278 (Rowney); i, 403 (Standon and Temple Dinsley).
87. See W.G. Hoskins, The Age of Plunder (1976), 123-5.
88. P.R.O., E 315/262/79.
89. But see W. Page, 'The history of the monastery of St Mary de Pre', Trans. St Albans and Herts. Archit. and Arch. Soc., (1895/6), 8-18.
90. L.P., xv, no.393 (1); V.C.H., Essex, ii (1907), 170.
91. King's Works, iv, 126-47 and 179-205.
92. Colin Platt, The Architecture of Medieval Britain (1990), 278.
93. Girouard (1983), Chs. 1 to 3; M.R. Airs, The Buildings of Britain, Tudor and Jacobean (1983), Ch. 1.
94. See note 52.
95. Mark Girouard, Hardwick Hall, National Trust Guide (1990) and Girouard (1983), 120-5 (Barlborough and Heath Old Hall).
96. Girouard (1983), 185-91.

97. Ibid, 36.
98. Ibid, 32.
99. Platt, op. cit. (note 92), 148-50.
100. Ibid, 293.
101. See Margaret Aston, 'English ruins and English history: the Dissolution and the sense of the past', Jnl. Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 36 (1973), 231-55.
102. M.W. Thompson, The Decline of the Castle (1987), Ch. 7.
103. For these and other examples see Greene (1992), 202-4. For Bayham, see also Anthony Streeten, Bayham Abbey, Sussex Arch. Soc. Monograph 2 (1983), 50-5.
104. E.M. Forster, Howard's End (1960 Penguin edn.), 185.
105. Pevsner, 237-40 (Ashridge) and 91-3 (Beechwood).
106. Smith (1992), 66.
107. Ibid, xiii.
108. Ibid, passim and Smith (1993), 55-7.
109. Smith (1993), 157.
110. Ibid, 124-7 and Smith (1992), 66.
111. Smith (1992), 62-3.

112. Smith (1993), 150-1.
113. For the background to the resurvey of listed buildings see Martin Robertson et al, 'Listed buildings: the national resurvey of England', Trans. Ancient Monuments Soc., 37 (1993), 21-94.
114. See, for example, the list descriptions of Sopwell, D.O.E. 6th List of Historic Buildings, City of St Albans (1971) and Ware Priory, D.O.E 4th List of Historic Buildings, Ware Urban District (1974).
115. Pevsner, 201n.
116. See, for instance, the suppression accounts of Cheshunt, St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead, Sopwell, Royston and Wymondley; P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
117. See, for example, the surveys of Ashridge (printed in H.J. Todd, The History of the College of Bonhommes of Ashridge (1823), 60-4), Hitchin (P.R.O., SC 12/8/29) and King's Langley (P.R.O., E 315/391 (2)).
118. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1606, m.11.
119. John Chandler, John Leland's Itinerary, Travels in Tudor England (1993), xxx-xxxi.
120. See note 101.
121. John Shrimpton, The Antiquities of Verulam and St Albans (c.1610), MS. history in H.R.O., 66,296.
122. Bodl., MS. Willis, passim (Ashridge and St Margaret's, Nettledean) and B.L., Add. MS. 5820, fols.19v-35 (Royston).

123. Bodl., Gough Gen. Top. 61 (Camden); Gough Herts. 14 (Chauncy); Gough Herts. 11, 16, 17 and 18 (Salmon).
124. H.R.O., IV. A. 25.
125. Ibid, XIII. 30.
126. H.C. Andrews, 'Henry George Oldfield and the Dimsdale collection of Hertfordshire drawings', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 11 (1940-44), 212-24.
127. Stone, op.cit., (note 45), 63.
128. Smith (1992), 11.
129. Julian Munby, 'J.C. Buckler, Tackley's Inn and three medieval houses in Oxford', Oxoniensia, 43 (1978), 123-69.
130. Smith (1992), 11.
131. See J.H. Busby, 'The Hertfordshire drawings of Thomas Fisher (1771?-1836)', Herts. Arch., 1 (1968), 110-16.
132. The Luppino drawings are kept in the Lewis Evans Collection, St Albans Public Library.
133. Smith (1992), 9-11.
134. The photographs in the Bodleian Library are collected together: MS. Top. Eccl. b. 28.
135. Beechwood Park, Flamstead: a collection of plans and drawings dating from the late 17th to the early 20th centuries. According to Smith (1992), 198 most of the collection was still in the possession of Beechwood

Park preparatory school in 1976 but it now appears to have been dispersed.

136. See, for instance, K. Emerick and K. Wilson, 'Fountains Abbey: some interim results of remote sensing', Conservation Bulletin, 18 (October 1992), 7-9.

Chapter Two

Town and country: opportunistic adaptation and re-use

Hertfordshire contains examples of all known types of the adaptive re-use of monastic buildings other than industrial.* The process of re-use in the county began immediately after the Dissolution and continued right up to the end of the period with which we are concerned. Instances of re-use range from the minor adaptation of existing buildings at sites like St Margaret's, Nettleden and King's Langley to the transformation of monastic buildings into major country houses as at Ashridge and Sopwell. In this chapter we are concerned with the first category of sites and the re-use of urban monastic buildings, where different circumstances could lead to a wide variety of new uses.

There are many difficulties in establishing the category to which a re-used monastic site should be ascribed. First, the evidence on which categorisations are made is often fragmentary and can vary tremendously in its extent and reliability from one site to another. As shown in Chapter 1, the sources used in this thesis are extremely diverse and data used for one site, such as that drawn from archaeological excavation, may not exist for another. To take another example, there is historic pictorial evidence for all of the sites included in this study but this ranges from two 19th-century drawings in the case of St Margaret's, Nettleden to sites like Markyate and Sopwell, where there is an abundance of pictorial evidence covering a considerable period of time. It is therefore difficult and perhaps misleading to make direct comparisons between one site and another. Sites like Beechwood and Cheshunt, where the surviving architectural and documentary evidence is slight or non-

existent but which seem to have been relatively important conversions, further illustrate the significance of historical accident in the survival rate of relevant evidence and demonstrate that this must always be taken into account when assessing the past status of a particular site. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to deny that the extent of surviving evidence for sites such as Ashridge and Sopwell, compared with that for sites like St Margaret's, Nettleden or Hertford, is not at least indicative of their relative importance in the second half of the 16th century.

Another point to consider in making assumptions about the status of a site in the half century after the Dissolution is that much of the evidence on which these are based comes from material compiled long after the 16th century. To take pictorial evidence as an example, few Hertfordshire sites were reliably recorded in illustrative form before the late 18th century, by which time important sites such as Wymondley had declined in status to little more than farmhouse level, although there is adequate evidence from other sources to show that the original conversion was carried out at a higher social level.

The relative status of a site could change markedly even within the period with which we are concerned. The first grantees or lessees of monastic property often did little to the buildings they acquired and it was frequently left to the second or even third generation of lay owners to implement major conversion works. This is a theme which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3, particularly with regard to Ashridge and Sopwell, but the same process can also be found in towns at sites like The Biggin in Hitchin, Hitchin Priory and Ware, where changes in ownership in the decades immediately after the suppression seem to have contributed to the postponement of thorough conversion schemes until later in the century. In this context it is also worth remembering that some

sites such as Hertford and Royston, which are now entirely urban, were formerly situated on the fringes of the towns to which they relate, this edge-of-settlement location being a hall-mark of some of the more ambitious conversion schemes like those at Hitchin Priory, Sopwell and Ware, perhaps indicating that the post-Dissolution house at Hertford was of greater importance than some of the other evidence might suggest.

Coupled with changes in the importance of a site, whether in the 16th century or over a longer time span, are the considerable difficulties in accurately dating the various phases of conversion at Hertfordshire's monastic sites. First, the surviving architectural evidence is at best fragmentary or in several cases non-existent, obliging us to rely on incomplete documentary or pictorial evidence, with all the limitations that this can involve. Secondly, even where a building retains fabric or alterations of the period, it is often hard to distinguish work of the late 16th century from that of the mid 16th century, especially in houses below the first rank. It is only rarely, as at The Biggin,¹ that particular fittings or a distinct phase of building work are securely dated or can be directly and without doubt linked to a particular owner.

Developing the issue of the problems of assessing the post-Dissolution status of a site, one has to consider whether much purpose is served by drawing the line too rigidly between a monastic site re-used as a farmstead and one where the buildings were converted into a gentry or courtier house. Even if the evidence allows this distinction to be made, were the sets of circumstances in which re-use occurred so very different in terms of the individual buildings selected for conversion, the time span over which the process took place and the ease with which it was accomplished? In short, should different patterns of re-use be expected at sites of varying status;

how will this be detected in the archaeological, architectural and documentary record and, most importantly, how does this reflect the social and economic conditions of the period? It is these questions that this and the following chapter will attempt to answer.

* * * *

Of the sites included in this study, Hertfordshire has five which are urban in character- Hertford, The Biggin and The Priory in Hitchin, Royston and Ware. Although Sopwell was located on the edge of Tudor St Albans, Sir Richard Lee's extensive remodelling of the former Benedictine nunnery resulted in the creation of a country rather than a town house and Sopwell is therefore considered in the next chapter.

The evidence for the re-use of urban monastic sites in Hertfordshire in the four decades after 1540 is patchy and inconclusive. This may be because the documentary evidence does not survive or that the physical manifestation of this in the buildings themselves has been obscured or swept away by later remodelling. However, the fact that this is in stark contrast to the much fuller evidence for re-use after c.1580 suggests that relatively little was done in the way of major conversion works during the period 1540 to 1580. This does not mean to say, of course, that absolutely nothing was done to the buildings during this time. At Royston, some work appears to have been carried out by the first lay owner of the property, Robert Chester, who having initially rented the house, bought it from the crown in 1540.² Precisely what works Chester undertook it is now impossible to say and it is by no means certain that he retained any of the monastic buildings. Indeed, the sale of the cloister and dormer to Thomas More and John Newport for £24, shortly before the

lease of the property to Chester, seems to reflect their value as building materials,³ suggesting that they were demolished at this time.

It seems that whatever adaptation Chester undertook of any surviving monastic buildings, or any use he made of their materials, was largely complete by 1551 when he entertained Mary of Guise here on her journey from Scotland to France,⁴ by which time it appears that Royston was his principal residence.⁵ The form that Chester's house took can be seen in a sketch-plan of 1578 when the house was considered as a potential resting-place on a royal progress but was dismissed as "a very unnecessary hows for the receipt of her Majesty; yt stand adjoyning to the Church on the south syde thereof, not haveing any pleasaunt p'spects any way..."⁶ The problematic question of whether any of the monastic buildings remained to be incorporated in the house as it was remodelled by Chester's grandson after 1586 is addressed below.

No more certainty attaches to the date or extent of the first conversion scheme at Hitchin Priory. On its suppression in 1538 the site remained in royal hands, Thomas Parrys acting as bailiff for the crown until 1546 when it was granted to Sir Edward Watson and Henry Herdson.⁷ From a survey of 1546 made shortly before the site was granted to Watson and Herdson, it appears that demolition and defacing were particularly thorough at the Dissolution. The survey refers to a "mansion house" comprising the "Frater and Dorter with the Cloister whereon the Frater and Dorter is builded with a kitchen...", the priors's lodging and "two little chambers" for the brothers, along with various other service and outbuildings. Apart from the mansion house which was "in good estate being maynteyned and repayred from tyme to tyme since the dyssolucion", all the buildings are described as "sore decayed" and "verrye

ruynowce in tymber and tyle for lack of reparacions". The church, which is called "superfluous", had been defaced, the steeple broken down and all the lead, freestone, glass and bells were gone.⁸

The details of the grant of the site to Watson and Herdson suggest that they were primarily interested in the building materials,⁹ of which there were many, the presence of Parrys and presumably other servants of the crown apparently having prevented wholesale plundering of the site, although the fact that there was some looting either then or at a later date is shown by the re-use of materials elsewhere in the town.¹⁰ Watson and Herdson do not seem to have engaged in any conversion works and nothing more is known until Watson sold the site to Ralph Radcliffe in 1553.¹¹ It is far from clear what then remained and which buildings Radcliffe chose to convert, although it does appear that even if it had not already been demolished, the detached prior's lodging played no part in his plans.

The 1546 survey states that "one parte of the said church is broken and decayed by wether and the other (had) no manner of leade Belles Freestone nor glasse Remanying", implying that substantial sections still survived, a supposition strengthened by the possibility that its west front is depicted in a birdseye perspective map of the town drawn in c.1700.¹² It therefore seems possible that the walls of the church remained standing in the 1550s, even if the roof was gone, and that they were re-used in a range built on its site, some of which may still be incorporated in the core of the present south range, which was comprehensively remodelled in the 1770s.

The cloister lay to the north of the church, with the dormitory in its usual position on the east side and the frater and kitchen on the north and west respectively. There is a well-documented tradition that apart from converting its buildings to a residence, Radcliffe

established a school in the former friary, the only clue to its precise location being a 17th-century reference to the creation of a stage in a "lower room",¹³ whereas the principal domestic apartments were presumably on the first floor. Although there is nothing in the west range which can be securely dated to the 1550s, its brick mullion windows may be of this period, and as in the north range and the service range which projects at an oblique angle to the north-west, there is much medieval fabric within it. The large open space of the refectory could have made it attractive to Radcliffe as the hall of his new house had it not been situated at right-angles to the entrance range, which in the medieval friary would have been in the west range. The hall may, of course, have been in the east range, but the degree of 18th-century and later rebuilding in this range makes this impossible to prove. The only other possibility was that the hall was located to the south where the church had stood, a suggestion made all the more credible by the fact that the north range has been the entrance range since at least the late 17th century.¹⁴

This interpretation is largely speculative and all that can really be said with confidence is that Radcliffe appears to have carried out some adaptation of the friary buildings, although it will be noticed that the evidence for this comes primarily from documentary sources rather than the building itself. There is undoubtedly mid- to late 16th-century work in the present building but, as we shall see, this could just as easily have been carried out by Radcliffe's son, another Ralph, who owned the house from his father's death in 1559 until his own demise in 1621.¹⁵

* * * *

While the evidence for re-use in the first generation is slight at Royston and Hitchin Priory, it is practically non-existent at Hertford, The Biggin and Ware. The most that can be said is that difficulties in precisely dating the 16th-century work at these three sites mean that it is impossible to be certain that no conversion works took place between 1540 and 1580. Indeed, something must have occurred even if it was only selective demolition and routine maintenance of those parts which were retained. Nevertheless, the surviving architectural and documentary evidence points to the suggestion that major schemes of adaptive re-use were not implemented at these sites until the late 16th century. These three properties are therefore treated in this section along with the evidence for further phases of remodelling at Royston and Hitchin Priory.

All traces of Hertford Priory and the post-medieval house which succeeded it have now gone. Photographic, map and pictorial evidence show that the latter was an L-shaped building of hall and cross-wing plan. While this structure could well have been of medieval or 16th-century origin, all that can be said with total confidence is that it must be earlier than c.1650. The most likely date for its construction (or remodelling if there had been an earlier structure on its site) would appear to be the 1580s. On its suppression in 1538 the priory had been granted to Anthony Denny and it remained with his family until 1578 when it was sold to Thomas Docwra, Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1580.¹⁶ Shortly afterwards it seems to have returned to the Denny family but in 1587 it was sold to Henry Colthurst.¹⁷ A terrier of that year refers to the "newe bilt howse, with a dove howse, boornes and stables, the myll newe bilt...the howsinge dove howse and barnes...bilt within thre years coste a thowson markes...the tennants will not be bought out for

£300...",¹⁸ which suggests that much of the costs must have been borne by the tenants. Certainly, this documentary evidence is not inconsistent with that for the physical appearance of the building.

Although the possibility that Sir Anthony Denny, who died in 1549, might have converted some of the former monastic buildings here into a town house cannot be ruled out, the lack of any surviving references makes this unlikely and the site is just as likely to have been plundered for its building materials in the years immediately after the Dissolution, its proximity to the town centre probably accelerating this process. The evidence, such as it is, tends to point to a relatively low-key use of the site. The building which was to become known as Priory House may have been retained initially as accommodation for the Denny family on visits to the county town, but by the 1580s it appears to have become a tenanted farmhouse and there is nothing to show that this was not also the case earlier in the century. Further work on the house may have been carried out by Martin Trott, who owned the site between c.1590 and 1617.¹⁹

If Priory House was a converted monastic building, the prior's lodging emerges as the most likely candidate. The house was situated some 100 yards to the north of the priory church (the site of which is known) and trial trenching in the immediate vicinity in 1988-9 produced no evidence of any adjoining buildings.²⁰ The location of the building and its apparent isolation are thus perfectly consistent with the likely position of a late medieval prior's house, the riverside setting providing a pleasant retreat for the prior away from the rest of the monastic community.

There is good surviving architectural evidence for 16th-century re-use at Ware Priory, but there are considerable difficulties in pin-pointing the precise date

or dates that conversion works took place. Indeed, there is no particular reason why conversion works here or elsewhere should fall into distinct phases, and it is important to remember that in many cases remodelling and adaptation would have been an ongoing process. This said, it is unusually difficult at Ware to hazard anything but the most approximate dating for the comprehensive conversion which undoubtedly took place. There are two main reasons for this. First, the building itself, although undeniably of medieval date and containing much evidence in its fabric for 14th- and 15th-century work, is covered externally with a hard cement render, which makes it impossible to establish whether openings are original or insertions. The situation is further complicated by a thorough restoration which took place in the mid 19th century, the full effects of which are only realised when one looks at the earlier graphic evidence. To some extent, these problems have been mitigated by a scheme of repair and conversion which took place in 1994. This has revealed some features which can be more closely dated, but as the project was quite rightly conservative, involving the minimum of disturbance and plaster stripping or the removal of Georgian and Victorian features, it was not as revealing as might otherwise have been the case.

The other principal difficulty in establishing exactly when conversion works took place at Ware is the long period of ownership by the Byrch family, of whom very little is known. As will be seen in Chapter 3, we should not look solely to changes of ownership as the time when major works are likely to have been carried out. Adaptation and remodelling could have been undertaken at any time, prompted perhaps by a marriage or birth of an heir, or simply because the owner wished to improve his living standards or impress his neighbours. Nevertheless, the long and apparently uneventful ownership by the Byrch family from 1544 to 1628 provides few key moments to which

one can attribute a particular phase of work.

On its closure in 1538 the former friary was farmed by Robert Byrch and in 1544 it was sold to Thomas Byrch, who is described in the grant as "yeoman of the crown".²¹ Thomas Byrch appears to have been a scrivener and accountant and it has been suggested that he was an agent of Cromwell.²² It is more likely, however, that as Cromwell had been disgraced and dead since 1540, he received the site in recognition of his services to the crown. For the reasons described above, it is far from clear whether Thomas Byrch (or Robert before him) began the work of conversion. It appears that the friary church was demolished soon after the Dissolution, the proximity to the parish church making its retention unnecessary. Of the claustral buildings, the whole of the south range, along with the southern part of the west range and a hall range projecting at right-angles to the west, were retained, and these form the nucleus of the present house.

The south and west ranges were originally open to the roof only from first-floor level and, in common with most Franciscan houses, the claustral walks were integral. The upper floor of the south range was probably the refectory and, as in the post-Dissolution house, the kitchen was probably in the south-west corner of the west range on the ground floor. The function of the four-bay hall range is uncertain. Although physically attached to the west range, it is structurally separate from and slightly later than it, there also being evidence that it was possibly open from ground level to its two western bays. It may have served as guest accommodation. All three ranges have fine 15th-century scissor-braced roofs, possibly originally with crown posts throughout, although it is now only in the hall range that these survive.

There is evidence too that the building was much larger in the 16th century. Apart from the obvious truncation of the west claustral range to the north, its present north

gable being of 18th-century brick, the presence of rather makeshift roof carpentry towards its southern end and 18th-century brick to the south gable (while they may simply represent rebuilding work) suggests that the range once extended further to the south as well, this projection perhaps having served as the infirmary during the monastic period. It also appears from the 17th-century brickwork in the east gable of the south range and the discovery of foundations to the east of this point in 1892,²³ that the south range was also formerly longer, although it seems that the cloister itself returned to the north where the building now ends. This evidence for the house formerly being larger is neatly confirmed by an inventory of 1715,²⁴ which clearly relates to a much bigger building than the present structure.

The apparent fact that the house was much more extensive in the 16th century than later does not mean, of course, that all of the former friary was utilised by the Byrch family. Parts of it may have been allowed to become ruinous and in this connection Weever's statement of 1631 that the house was "A Frierie, whose ruines, not altogether beaten downe, are to be seene at this day", while it may simply refer to the church, is particularly interesting.²⁵ Documentary proof for the involvement of the Byrch family in the conversion of the friary is extremely slight, seemingly being limited to the reference in the verse "The Tale of Two Swannes" (1590) by William Vallans as "Byrches house, that whilom (once) was the Brothers Friers place..."²⁶

The date of the poem roughly corresponds with the date of the panelling recently discovered in two first-floor rooms in the south range. This appears to be mainly in situ and is of c.1600. A slightly earlier date can be given to the cambered heads of the blocked stone window arches, which have been revealed where plaster has been removed from around the later sash windows inserted in

their infill. Both sets of features, while not providing conclusive evidence for a major remodelling at this period certainly show that there was some building activity on the site at about the time of Vallans's poem.

A little more certainty attaches to the date of the 16th-century work at The Biggin, Hitchin. Here it seems that the claustral ranges were retained in a remodelling of the second half of the century. On its suppression in 1538 the former Gilbertine priory remained in royal hands when it was farmed by Robert Marshall and from its apparent decline in value from £13 16s in 1535 to £10 11s 8d in 1544 when it was granted to John Cocks,²⁷ it can be surmised that little was done to the buildings during this time. That Cocks's interest in the property was speculative, or that he was acting as agent for another party with no intention of converting the buildings himself, seems likely from the large number of similar grants of ex-monastic property he received in Hertfordshire and elsewhere and then sold on to others.²⁸

This feeling is strengthened by the fact that there are no further definite documentary references to The Biggin until 1570 when William Croocar bequeathed it in his will to his sons, Thomas and William.²⁹ That William Croocar the younger undertook some work at The Biggin is made clear by the initials "WC" and "IC" (for his wife, Jane) and the date 1585 incised in the contemporary panelling in the first-floor south-west room of the house. This date is consistent with several other features in the building, including the mullioned and transomed windows and the Tuscan columns of the colonnade to the west range. While this does not, of course, rule out the possibility of earlier domestic use of the site, it shows that there was comprehensive remodelling of the buildings into a comfortable, if comparatively modest, manor house at this time, a use which continued during the ownership of Robert

Snagge from c.1587 until his death in 1606.³⁰

The presence of the initials and the date 1585 carved in the panelling acutely demonstrates the pitfalls in tying particular fittings or phases of building work to individual owners, the point being that without such evidence one would be just as likely to attribute the panelling to the period of Snagge's ownership as to Croocar's.

As in most cases where claustral ranges were adapted to residential use after the Dissolution, the principal accommodation was on the first floor. There is evidence to suggest that the church was situated on the south side of the cloister, in which case the dormitory would be represented by the present east range and the refectory by the north range. All four ranges have 15th-century roof structures, the fact that all the ranges are contemporary with each other and thus interconnecting at the same floor and eaves levels making it easier to convert the whole structure to domestic use than would have been the case had the claustral buildings been of different dates and heights.

It is probable that the small size of many claustral garths would have worked against the retention of the cloister's dimensions in the more ambitious remodellings of monastic fabric in the later 16th century. However, this is not likely to have been the case at The Biggin where the relatively modest status of the post-Dissolution house and its position in the centre of Hitchin meant that space would have been at a premium. There is, nevertheless, some suggestion that the late 16th-century house of The Biggin may have been considerably larger than the present structure. First, there was the now-demolished range attached to the south-west corner of the existing building, which cannot have been much later than c.1730 and may well have been considerably earlier.³¹ There is also some indication that, just as the west range has a

colonnade on its inner face, the east range may have been at least partly open on the ground floor. Excavation in 1968-9 revealed signs of a cobbled driveway running under this range, along with traces of various buildings to the east.³² The evidence that there was formerly a gallery in the east range- a feature not commonly found in entrance ranges- further suggests that there may have been an outer court to the east of the present east range. The probability that the former cloister represented the inner courtyard of the new house is indicated, however, by the fine panelled room referred to above, which may have served as a parlour to a first-floor hall in the converted church.

The existing building at Royston Priory also contains some evidence for a phase of remodelling in the last quarter of the 16th century. It appears that at this time the house was of two storeys in three unequal bays of close-studded timber framed construction under a steeply pitched plain tile roof. The house seems to have been open to the roof from the first floor and on this basis and its alignment on a north-south axis, it is tempting to equate those parts of the late 16th-century structure that survive with the west range of the larger double-courtyard house shown in the sketch-plan of 1578, the principal rooms of which were on the first floor. There are, however, several objections to this, not least of which is the fact that the 1578 survey dismissed the house as "a very unnecessary hows for receipt of her Mat.y."³³ As the building was in sufficiently good repair for Robert Chester, who came into possession of the property on attaining his majority in 1586,³⁴ to entertain James I there in 1603,³⁵ it is most likely that the late 16th-century work post-dates 1586. Certainly, little would seem to have done during the time of his father, Edward, who held the property only between 1574 and his death in 1577,³⁶ a suggestion made all the credible by the

unfavourable remarks of the queen's surveyors in 1578.

All this is speculative as it must be remembered that houses could often be quickly refurbished for a royal visit and that the house condemned in 1578 could well have been capable of renovation. The work at Royston, though, may have been more than cosmetic as James decided to rent the house for a year during the preparation of his own hunting lodge in the town, a move which seems to have prompted Chester to live at nearby Cockenach, which became his principal residence until his death in 1640.³⁷

If there are difficulties in establishing the precise date or the instigator of the late 16th-century work at Royston, it is equally difficult to establish whether any parts of the former monastic buildings remained to be incorporated in the post-Dissolution house. In this regard it is unfortunate that the 1578 sketch-plan does not show the position of the house in relation to the church, although the distance of the present building, which as we have seen contains late 16th-century work, from the site of the monastic nave indicates that it is most unlikely to represent any of the claustral buildings. There is absolutely no proof that the house shown on the 1578 sketch-plan has anything to do with the present building, but likewise there is really nothing to suggest that it represents a conversion of the monastic buildings.

Further work also appears to have been carried out at Hitchin Priory in the late 16th century. The evidence for this is fairly limited and, as we have seen, it is difficult to distinguish this work from that undertaken in the middle of the century. All that can be attributed with any certainty to this period is the panelling on the north and west walls of the west range and a small closet with plastered decoration of c.1600 in the former service range, both features which can be identified with the long ownership of Ralph Radcliffe the younger. Whether it was he or his father who was responsible for the blocking of

the claustral arches it is impossible to say (indeed this could have occurred later), but such an action would have been quite consistent with the concealment of medieval features which was often associated with 16th-century monastic conversions.

* * * *

At only two of the sites included in this study did the former monastic church remain in ecclesiastical use after the Dissolution. At Royston, Leland's description appears to make it clear that the nave was demolished shortly after the suppression of the priory in 1537, and it seems likely that this had already taken place by the time the church was bought by the townspeople in 1540.³⁸ That part of the church which survives today is chiefly the chancel, choir and choir aisles of the monastic church, and it seems that relatively little was done to the building in the 60 years after the Dissolution. Although there may be much exaggeration in the reference of 1600 to the church being "utterly ruined and fallen downe to the ground",³⁹ this is probably to some extent a true reflection of the neglect of the church in the second half of the 16th century, while the rebuilding of the tower and north arcade around 1600 was probably a response to this period of inactivity. The statement in the 1578 survey of Priory House that "yt stand(s) adjoyning to the Church on the south syde thereof, not haveing any pleasaunt p'spects any way" suggests, however, that a considerable portion of the nave remained, probably as a ruin, into the last quarter of the 16th century. Whether or not the house shown on the sketch-plan accompanying the survey can be identified with any part of the present house, this suggests that unless it lay considerably to the east, which on the basis of the evidence discussed earlier seems inherently unlikely, it

was the ruined nave which spoilt the house's prospects to the north.

There can be little doubt that the acquisition of the church in 1540 would have placed a considerable strain on the town's resources and this may have been a factor in the decision to abandon the nave and to retain only the eastern end of the church for parochial worship. Indeed, although it is likely that the population of the town, which until 1540 lay in five parishes,⁴⁰ had once worshipped in the nave of the priory church, there is some evidence to suggest that it was already disused and derelict by the time of the Dissolution. Although it was more usual for the nave of a monastic church to be retained after the suppression, if it was already ruinous or dilapidated this would have been sufficient reason to use only the monastic choir and chancel for parochial worship. Certainly, whatever the condition of the nave at Royston, there would have been no incentive to retain the whole building as the parish church of a relatively small town.

At Hertford there is less certainty about the sequence of events after the suppression, partly because nothing now survives above ground of the monastic church or its post-Dissolution successor. It seems that before the Dissolution there was only one church in the parish of St John's, in which the priory was situated, and that this was shared by the monks and the townspeople. Archaeological excavation has revealed the lay-out of this church, which comprised a long aisleless nave with transepts and a possible tower to the crossing.⁴¹ Although not fully supported by the archaeological record, documentary sources suggest that the church was neglected during the Later Middle Ages, and one reason why the original post-Dissolution grantee of the site, Sir Anthony Denny, did not appoint a vicar on obtaining the property in 1538 may have been that the church was in need of

substantial repair, outweighing any profits he would have derived from the advowson. The church then seems to have fallen into disuse and further deterioration took place in its fabric. The refoundation of the church and its rebuilding to a much smaller scale in the 1620s are difficult to explain, beyond the suggestion that this may have been a belated attempt to breathe new life into an impoverished and neglected area of the town. However, although the new building does not seem to have been particularly poorly constructed by the standards of the time, the project was doomed to failure, as is shown by the church's final demolition before the end of the 17th century.⁴²

* * * *

The majority of the rural sites in the Hertfordshire sample are considered in Chapter 3 but the two sites which never seem to have been converted to anything more than a farming use remain to be dealt with here.

The post-Dissolution documentary history of King's Langley suggests relatively low status use of the site in the second half of the 16th century, an indication which is borne out by the archaeological evidence and the surviving buildings. In 1540 the site was granted to Richard Ingworth, suffragan bishop of Dover and former prior of the friary, and in 1546 it passed to John Lord Russell, first earl of Bedford, whose family still held the property in 1556.⁴³ Between 1557 and 1558 the surviving buildings housed a small community of Dominican nuns, after which it returned to the crown, being sold in 1574 to Edward Grimston the elder and younger.⁴⁴ The Grimstons transferred the site to Robert Cresswell, who in turn conveyed it to Francis, second earl of Bedford.⁴⁵ It remained with this family until 1607 when it was sold to

Edward Newport, having most recently been tenanted by Thomas Ewer and Peter Edlin.⁴⁶

It is clear that Ingworth actively petitioned Cromwell for the site, and it is likely that he regarded it as his rightful prize for the part he had played as a royal commissioner in the suppression of friaries throughout southern England.⁴⁷ It is not possible to say whether Ingworth intended to convert the buildings at Langley for his own use, but the facts that the house was the second wealthiest Dominican friary in the country at the time of its suppression,⁴⁸ that Ingworth was not granted any other ex-monastic property, and of his former associations with the house, all mean that this possibility cannot be ruled out. It may be therefore that Ingworth carried out some conversion work to the buildings and that he was prevented from doing more only by his death in 1544.

As little is known about activity at the site during the ownership of John Lord Russell. Towards the end of this period we have a survey of the site carried out in 1555. By then the church was semi-ruinous: "One arche of the sowthe of the seide chaunsell (is) fallen downe", perhaps suggesting that the church had already lost at least part of its south aisle, "the old chapell...on the north seide (?of the nave) is pulled down excepte the walls standing" and there were further dilapidations in the chancel, belfry, lady chapel and "the body of the churche".⁴⁹ There are several references to the stonework, glass and ironwork of the church windows being broken down or "utterly defased", a situation attested by archaeological excavation which has shown that the windows may have been smashed from within.⁵⁰

The survey also suggests that many of the other former monastic buildings were by then in a poor state of repair. The frater, dorter and a "doffe" house are described as "sore decayed" and these and several other structures are defective "bothe in tymber work and tylinge", while the

"ruffe" of the entrance going out of the cloister is "ready to fall downe". A 1556 survey of the adjoining royal manor with its former palace buildings (little used for their original purpose after the late 15th century),⁵¹ paints a similar picture, stating that "divers edifices within the site of the manor are decayed, pulled down and carried away by the farmers".⁵²

It is not known when or by whom the demolition works at Langley were carried out or whether, as seems to have been the case with the palace site, the dilapidation and defacement were largely the result of plunder by local people. It is likely that both occurred and as significant robbing of the site seems to have taken place, this is further suggestion that at least by the 1550s the site was used for farming purposes. Not all removal of building materials from the site, however, was unofficial or unorganised. In 1557 the Dominican nuns were paid £150 by the crown for the stripping of lead from the church roof so that it could be used in the conduit from Windsor Castle to Blakemore Park.⁵³

Furthermore, the 1555 survey shows that not all was destruction and dilapidation by this date, as indicated also by the nuns' use of the site. The survey mentions a "fayre" gatehouse and stables, the garner is "littell in decaye" and the great kitchen and the "housse of effyce" (office) are well repaired, all suggesting a well-run and efficient farm complex in accordance with the stipulation in the 1536 First Act of Suppression "to keep or cause to be kept an honest continual house and household in the same site or precinct, and to occupy yearly as much of the said demesnes in ploughing and tillage of husbandry".⁵⁴ There is nothing surviving above ground which can be identified with the nuns, and their relatively speedy move to Dartford suggests that their stay may never have been intended to be more than temporary.

Turning now to the surviving buildings, these are

entirely consistent with an agricultural use of the site in the second half of the 16th century, both showing signs of low-key remodelling in this period, although as is so often the case it is not possible to give precise dates to the work. The principal building remaining on the site is the long rectangular structure on a north-south axis, traditionally known locally as King John's Bakehouse. Its function during the monastic period is unknown, but it appears to date to the late 14th century and many adaptations were carried out to it during the second half of the 16th century. These included the insertion of the roughly central stack and the flooring over of the northern part of the building, the southern section apparently always having had a first floor. Various suggestions have been made as to the original use of the range, including an infirmary and "housse of effyce", both of which are referred to in building accounts of the 1360s and '70s, the latter with its "great kychen" also occurring in the survey of 1555.⁵⁵ It has also been suggested that it may be the "fayre" stables of the survey, although the fine carpentry of its crown-post roof makes it unlikely that this was its original prime function. There is some evidence to show that the building separated the cloister from the outer court of the friary, in which case it may have served as the refectory or guest house. Whatever its original purpose, there can be little doubt that it was primarily domestic in purpose, a use which would have aided its conversion into a farmhouse in the 16th century, the kitchen on the ground floor of the southern part of the building demonstrating a continuity of use from the monastic into the post-medieval period.

It is difficult to be precise about the relationship of this building to the friary church, save to say that this lay at some considerable distance to the south. As we have seen, the church was already semi-ruinous by the 1550s and in 1591 it is described as completely "ruinated".⁵⁶ It

therefore seems unlikely that it was used as anything more than a source of building materials during the post-Dissolution re-use of the site.

It is rather easier to reconstruct the original appearance of the gatehouse, which is situated in the range running at right-angles to the east at the northern end of the long rectangular range. The gatehouse is of 15th-century date, comprising a jettied timber-framed superstructure over a gateway, the arch of which was constructed of stone on the external side and of timber to the courtyard side. To either side of the gateway there seem to have been chambers. In the 18th century the gatehouse was extended to the south, which means that the inner arch is now embedded in the later structure and concealed from view. This may also have been when the outer arch was infilled. There is nothing to suggest, however, that it did not continue to function as a gatehouse after the suppression, the survival of its late 15th-century crown-post roof suggesting that this occurred with little or no modification to the structure.

Likewise, the relatively sparse evidence for St Margaret's Nunnery, Nettleden, where no building traces survive above ground, makes it difficult to reach any positive conclusions about the re-use of the former monastic buildings after the Dissolution. The house was a poor one and it is perhaps no surprise that the re-use was low-key. John Verney, the original lessee of the site from 1536 to 1538, clearly had little time in which to carry out conversion works and these may have been postponed until the house was leased to Sir John Daunce, lessee from 1538 until his death in 1545.⁵⁷ Daunce's family had the lease of the site until 1630, but the fact that the crown retained ownership of the site until then may have acted as a disincentive for them to carry out any major conversion scheme, and it seems that throughout this

period, as during the long ownership by the Catherall family from the second quarter of the 17th century to c.1800,⁵⁸ the buildings served as no more than a farmhouse and associated farmbuildings.

According to the early 18th-century antiquaries, Browne Willis and Edward Steele, the building then surviving (which seems to be the same building drawn by Lysons a century later) was constructed during the reign of Henry VII,⁵⁹ in which case its relatively recent date would have made it particularly attractive for re-use. The lease to Daunce in 1538 refers to the "church, campanil(e) and cemetery",⁶⁰ while Willis's statement that the church tower stood "ten foot high in the memory of man" suggests that at least parts of the church remained for a considerable time after the Dissolution, even if in ruined form. Whether or not it featured in any conversion scheme at the site is impossible to say.

The building drawn by Lysons is shown in isolation and it is not known how it related to the other former nunnery buildings. It appears, however, to have been a domestic building in origin and although a doorway and lancet window shown in the drawing look earlier, there is no real reason to deny Willis's and Steele's assertion that it was late 15th or early 16th century in date. The V.C.H. is apparently the earliest authority to identify the building as the monastic refectory, but such a use would be entirely consistent with its character.⁶¹ It is conceivable therefore that the refectory was converted to the parlour and hall of a new house, in which use the surviving structure remained in Willis's time.

* * * *

The individual buildings selected for re-use at the sites discussed above encompass the ~~full~~ range of

buildings commonly chosen for re-use. Perhaps not surprisingly the most frequently re-used structures are the refectory and monastic kitchen. The kitchen was obviously just as essential in a post-Dissolution house as in its monastic predecessor and thus the west claustral ranges, which had housed the monastic kitchen and associated offices, continued to serve this purpose at The Biggin, Hitchin Priory, Ware and King's Langley, although it is only at the latter site that clear physical evidence for this survives.

At many former monastic sites the refectory, usually sited on the first floor with an undercroft beneath, was converted into the hall or other domestic apartments of a new house. At none of the sites discussed in this chapter, however, is there unequivocal evidence for the re-use of the refectory as great hall and only at St Margaret's, Nettleden is there any suggestion that this took place. At The Biggin and Hitchin Priory, where the refectory seems to have been situated in the north range, it appears that the hall of the post-monastic house was in the former church, and at Ware it seems that the old guest range was used as the hall in preference to the refectory in the south range. That the former refectory formed an important part of the new house at Ware is suggested, however, by the panelling of c.1600 recently discovered on its first floor, although by this date it appears to have been divided into a series of rooms.

The suggestion that the former church at Hitchin Priory was converted into the hall of the Radcliffes' house is based partly on the fact that it lay directly opposite the north entrance range, which as we have seen had probably housed the refectory on its first floor. At The Biggin the apparent re-use of the church as first-floor hall is harder to explain, as this lay at right-angles to the east range (former dormitory) of what by the second half of the 16th century had become the inner court of a double-

courtyard house accessed from the east. It is perhaps the panelled parlour of 1585 at the west end of this range which provides the best evidence for this use.

Similarly, at Ware it is not immediately obvious why the guest range, which projected at right-angles to the west claustral range, was adapted as the hall of the house created for the Byrch family, although here it is far from clear where the entrance range stood, if indeed one existed at all. At King's Langley the suggestion that the principal surviving building was once the guest hall is derived from the fact that it seems to have been the range separating the inner and outer courts of the Dominican friary. It has also been suggested that this range may have been the refectory or "house of office" and stables, while (as discussed above) it retains evidence for a kitchen at its southern end.

At The Biggin it appears that the east claustral range was re-used in the mid- to late 16th-century house, although its use was primarily confined to that of a corridor gallery linking the principal first-floor apartments of the north and south ranges. At Hitchin Priory no early fabric survives in the east wing of the house but the fact that the central courtyard follows the dimensions of the monastic cloister shows that it must have featured in the original conversion. Also at The Priory, medieval fabric in the former service range which runs at an oblique angle to the north-west of the cloister indicates that this must have formed part of the medieval friary. Its use in this period or in the 16th-century house is unclear, but it may originally have been the monastic cellarium.

Only at Hertford is there any suggestion that the superior's lodging formed the nucleus of the post-Dissolution house and even here the evidence is at best tenuous, while the possibility at The Biggin of what may have been the prior's house, attached to the south-west

corner of the cloister, surviving to be remodelled in the early 18th century is supported on even more fragmentary evidence. Much more certain is the continuing use of the gatehouse at King's Langley, the only example contained in the Hertfordshire sample where the gatehouse is known to have survived the Dissolution. Finally, at Royston it appears that none of the domestic buildings survived to be incorporated in the late 16th-century house built nearby by Robert Chester, although the extremely limited extent to which the 16th-century fabric is visible in the present house makes it impossible to establish whether monastic materials were re-used to a significant extent. If this were the case, as the late 16th-century house was essentially timber framed, re-use would seem to have been confined to the timber work. Indeed, much of the priory stonework was presumably re-used elsewhere following the sale of the cloister as building materials to Thomas More and John Newport in 1537. A similar fate would seem to have befallen the non-claustral buildings at Hitchin Priory when the house was sold to Sir Edward Watson and Henry Herdson in 1546, as their chief interest in the site seems to have been for its value as building materials.

At all the sites discussed above it must be emphasised that the conclusions about which buildings were re-used are based on either the evidence of the surviving buildings themselves or documentary or pictorial evidence often much later than the period with which we are concerned. As a site such as St Margaret's, Nettleden shows, the rate of decay could be very rapid, all above-ground traces of what was a fairly substantial building disappearing within the 19th century, and there is no reason to suppose that a similar pattern of decay cannot have occurred elsewhere between 1540 and 1600. Indeed, we know that several of the houses considered in this chapter were considerably larger in the second half of the 16th century than they were subsequently to become. The late

16th-century houses at The Biggin and Royston were of double-courtyard plan and at Ware the west claustral range not only formerly extended further to the north but to the south of the cloister itself, suggesting that the monastic infirmary may have survived the Dissolution to be incorporated in the house created by the Byrch family.

At all of the sites considered in this chapter none of the buildings selected for re-use seems to have been earlier than the 14th century. The south and west claustral ranges at Ware may date to shortly after the foundation of the priory in 1338, although both seem to have undergone some remodelling in the 15th century when the guest range was added. The long rectangular building at King's Langley is probably late 14th century in origin but the gatehouse seems to be a 15th-century structure. At The Biggin and Hitchin Priory, where all of the claustral ranges and the church appear to have been re-used in the conversions, the buildings seem to be essentially 15th century. At Hertford the building known as The Priory is unlikely to have been earlier than this and the structure which survived into the early 19th century at St Margaret's, Nettleden was probably remodelled in c.1500. It is only at Royston that there is no evidence for the date of the claustral buildings and here, as we have seen, it is more probable that the post-Dissolution house was built on a new site, rather than that it incorporated any of the conventual buildings.

We have varying degrees of information about the owners and lessees of the ex-monastic property considered in this chapter. As with the buildings themselves, this is so varied in depth and quality that it makes comparisons between sites difficult if not impossible. Nevertheless, it is only by attempting to do this that any general patterns or trends may emerge.

At Royston, Robert Chester having rented the house following its closure in 1537 bought the site in 1540.

Born in 1510 of a Hertfordshire family, Chester had first found favour at court as a gentleman usher of the king's chamber.⁶² In 1544 he was at Calais with 25 archers, who formed Henry's bodyguard when he departed for the siege of Boulogne.⁶³ Chester was knighted in 1551 and was made sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1565.⁶⁴ He died in 1574 to be succeeded by his son, Edward. It is likely that the second major phase of 16th-century remodelling at Royston did not occur until after 1586 when Chester's grandson, another Robert, came into possession on reaching the age of 21.⁶⁵ A distinguished poet, whose works include Love's Martyr (1601), Robert was sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1599,⁶⁶ the separate office of sheriff for each county having been created in 1567,⁶⁷ and was sufficiently prominent in court circles to have entertained James I at Royston in 1603, shortly after which he was knighted.⁶⁸

Ralph Radcliffe bought Hitchin Priory in 1553. Radcliffe came from a Lancashire family and was born in 1519. He was a scholar of Jesus College, Cambridge and was best known as a scholar and playwright. He died in 1559 after which his son, also Ralph (1543-1621), seems to have taken over at The Priory.⁶⁹ Very little is known of this Ralph save that he was a bencher of the Inner Temple.⁷⁰ Much more is known of Anthony Denny who bought the site of Hertford Priory on its suppression in 1538 but as it seems unlikely that he carried out much work at Hertford and was more active at Cheshunt, his career is considered in Chapter 3. Denny was succeeded on his death in 1549 by his son, Henry, and it seems that both Hertford and Cheshunt passed to him. Henry died in 1574 but it is not clear whether the Edward Denny who granted Hertford Priory to Thomas Docwra in 1578 was Henry's son, Edward, or Edward, fifth son of Sir Anthony.⁷¹ This, however, is largely irrelevant here as it appears most likely that the remodelling of Priory House before it finally left the ownership of the Denny family in 1587 was carried out

chiefly at the expense of tenants whose names are no longer known.

Robert Byrch had the lease of Ware Priory from its suppression in 1538 and in 1544 the site was bought from the crown by Thomas Byrch. In this grant Byrch is described as a "yeoman of the crown" but, apart from the fact that he seems to have been a scrivener and accountant and presumably servant of the crown, nothing more is known of him or his descendants who continued to own the house until 1628.

John Cocks was granted The Biggin in 1544, but although he was to serve as Sheriff of Hertfordshire and Essex in 1548 and was the recipient of many former monastic lands in both counties,⁷² he seems to have had little interest in the buildings there. It is not known how or when the property was conveyed to William Croocar beyond the possibility that he acquired it through his wife, Luce, whose mother, Mary, was married to Thomas Parrys, who seems to have had an interest in the former priory lands in the 1550s and to be synonymous with the bailiff to the crown at Hitchin Priory before 1546.⁷³ Although Croocar left the house to his sons, Thomas and William, in his will of 1570, Mary Parrys, "widow", was paying rent for The Biggin as late as c.1578.⁷⁴ Her occupation of the buildings may have been the reason why the second William Croocar waited until the 1580s before carrying out the remodelling works suggested by the date "1585" inscribed in the panelling in one of the rooms. Nothing further is known of the Croocar or Parrys families, while all that is known of Robert Snagge who owned the house between c.1587 and his death in 1606 is that he was a lawyer and second son of Thomas Snagge of Letchworth Hall.⁷⁵

The post-Dissolution career of Richard Ingworth as suffragan bishop of Dover is well known but there is little evidence that he carried out major conversion works at King's Langley. Much is also known of the Russell

family, earls of Bedford, who held the property between 1546 and 1556 and again between 1574 and 1607. However, none of the earls seems to have had a direct interest in the house and the low-key conversion scheme there is unlikely to have been due to their personal involvement. A similar situation would have applied at St Margaret's, Nettleden, dissolved in 1536, at which time John Verney, of the prominent Buckinghamshire family, was granted a 21 year lease of the site. This lease was revoked two years later when the property was leased to Sir John Daunce. Already advanced in years when he acquired the lease, Daunce had been Henry VIII's Treasurer of Wars, through which he was involved in the financing of royal works at Camber, Portsmouth and Portchester.⁷⁶ He had also been appointed Commissioner of the Peace for Buckinghamshire in 1536 and for Oxfordshire in 1537.⁷⁷ The Daunces remained as lessees of the property until 1630.

Several general points emerge from all this. First, substantial conversion works were more likely to occur during long periods of ownership by one family. Thus at Royston, Hitchin and Ware, owned by the Chesters, Radcliffes and Byrchs from 1540, 1553 and 1544 respectively, major programmes of remodelling took place before 1600. Some explanation is required as to why this did not also happen at Hertford, King's Langley and St Margaret's, Nettleden. At all three sites it may simply be that the properties were too small and unimportant to interest the Denny, Russell or Daunce families on a personal level, while at the latter, although the lease first to the Verneys and then to the Daunces required the remaining buildings to be maintained in reasonable condition, the fact that it remained in royal ownership may also have served as a disincentive to extensive conversion works. An additional factor against major remodelling at St Margaret's may have been its relative proximity to Nether Winchendon (Bucks.), John Daunce's

principal residence from 1527 until his death in 1545, and where he carried out much rebuilding during the 1530s.⁷⁸ Indeed, that re-use which did occur at St Margaret's may post-date the acquisition of the house at Winchendon by the crown in 1545 or its sale to the Tyringham family in 1574.⁷⁹ Similarly, if the Russells had ever intended to carry out more comprehensive works at King's Langley- they did after all take the trouble to recover the site in 1574- it may have been that the break in their ownership dissuaded them from pursuing this further.

The sample is too small to develop the suggestion further, but Robert Chester and Ralph Radcliffe, as well as their later namesakes, were all young men when they embarked on remodelling schemes at Royston and Hitchin. Finally, at The Biggin it seems that individual family circumstances, principally the longevity of Mary Parrys, may have played their part in the postponement of major refurbishment works until the 1580s.

REFERENCES

1. Panelling in the first-floor room in the south-west corner of the building is dated "1585".
2. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1607; L.P., xiv (1), p.606; xvi, g.379 (60).
3. P.R.O., E 315/361, fols.67-9.
4. Acts of the Privy Council, 1550-52, 406.
5. P.R.O., E 115/86/101.
6. P.R.O., SP 12/125.
7. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1607-15; E 318/(Box 22)/1190.
8. P.R.O., SC 12/8/29.
9. P.R.O., E 318/(Box 22)/1190.
10. R. Hine, The History of Hitchin, i (1927), 147; H.P. Pollard and W.B. Gerish, 'The religious orders in Hitchin', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3, pt.i (1905), 7.
11. V.C.H., iii, 12.
12. B.L., Add. MS. 32,350, fols.71, 73.
13. Anthony Wood, Athenae Oxonienses, i (ed., P. Bliss, 1813), 215.

* The main new uses for former monastic buildings were either religious - as cathedral or parish churches - or domestic (both single and multiple occupancy).

14. See Appendix, pp.146-7.
15. D.N.B., xvi, 576-7; V.C.H., iii, 12.
16. P.R.O., C 66/1193/1783; P.R.O., List & Indexes No.9, List of Sheriffs for England & Wales (1898), 64.
17. P.R.O., C 66/1194/1804; Chauncy, i, 506.
18. B.L., Lansd. MS. 116, fol.48.
19. Chauncy, i, 506.
20. Hester Cooper-Reade, 'Jewson's Yard, Hertford: excavations of St Mary's Priory and St John's Parish Church', Herts. Past, 29 (Autumn, 1990), 29-37.
21. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1618; L.P., xix, no.610 (68).
22. R. Walters, 'Ware Priory', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 1, pt.i (1899), 41.
23. Ibid, 42; H.P. Pollard, 'Franciscan and Benedictine monuments of Ware', in P.C. Standing (ed.), Memorials of Old Hertfordshire (1905), 54.
24. MS. inventory in private ownership. I am grateful to D. Perman for sending me a photocopy of this document.
25. John Weever, Ancient Funerall Monuments (1631), 544.
26. William Vallans, 'A Tale of Two Swannes' (1590), contained in his 'Account of Several Parts of Hartfordshire', which is included as a prefix to Thomas Hearne's 1769 edition of volume five of John Leland's Itinerary (Bodl., Douce HH 169).

27. Val. Eccl., iv, 276; L.P., xix (2), g.166 (25).
28. For example, L.P., xix (1), g.80 (48), g.1035 (97).
29. P.R.O., PCC 11 Holney. There are, however, later unsourced references to the property having been conveyed to Thomas Parrys during Edward VI's reign (Salmon, 162), while in Cocks's will of 1553 (P.R.O., PCC 24 Noodes) the manor of The Biggin had been split between his two sons. Croocar's will shows that his wife's mother was named Mary Parrys, raising the possibility that he received the house through his wife.
30. B.L., Lansd. MS. 54, p.65; P.R.O., PCC 31 Stafford.
31. This range is shown in photographs of 1878 and 1897; Bodl., MS. top. eccl. b.27, fol.53.
32. C.A. Beresford-Webb, 'The Biggin' (n.d. but c.1969), unpublished manuscript, Hitchin Museum.
33. P.R.O., SP 12/125.
34. V.C.H., iii, 260.
35. J. Nichols, Progresses of James I, i (1828), 105.
36. P.R.O. Lists and Indexes No.26, Index of Inquisitions Post Mortem Preserved in the P.R.O., ii (1908), 74.
37. V.C.H., iii, 261.
38. Alfred Kingston, A History of Royston (1906), 71.

39. Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House, pt.x Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. (1904), 135.
40. Statutes of the Realm, iii (1817), 797.
41. Cooper-Reade, op. et loc. cit. (note 20); Hertfordshire Mercury, 2 December 1893.
42. Chauncy, i, 506-7.
43. L.P., xv, no.1032 (p.542); P.R.O., E 315/391, fol.40.
44. Cal. Pat. R., Phil. & Mary, 1555-57, 403 & Cal. Pat. R., 1557-58, 417; P.R.O., C 66/1117/1563.
45. V.C.H., ii, 238.
46. Clutterbuck, iii, 433.
47. L.P., xiii (2), no.1021; David Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, iii (1959), 360-5.
48. Knowles (1953), 185.
49. P.R.O., E 315/391 (2).
50. St John O. Gamlen, 'Medieval window glass from the Priory, King's Langley', Herts. Arch., 3 (1973), 73-7.
51. King's Works, ii, 977; David Neal, 'Excavations at the palace of King's Langley, Hertfordshire 1974-6', Med. Arch., 21 (1977), 124-65.
52. H.R.O., Blackwell papers 20,123.

53. Bodl., Ashmole MS. 1125, fol.70.
54. T. Wright (ed.), Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries (1843), 110-11.
55. P.R.O., E 101/466/3 & 5; Cal. Pat. R., 1364-7, 197-8; Cal. Pat. R., 1370-74, 431.
56. H.R.O, Blackwell papers 20,113.
57. L.P., xiii (1), g.887 (20); Dugdale, iv, 271. Elsewhere, however, it is suggested that Daunce died in 1564, Bodl., MS. Willis 101, p.145.
58. V.C.H., Bucks., iii (1925), 383.
59. Bodl, MS. Willis 101, p.143; MS. Top. gen. e. 79, fols.8-11.
60. L.P., xiii (1), g.887 (20).
61. V.C.H., ii, 317.
62. Kingston, op. cit. (note 38), 61.
63. L.P., xix (2), nos.424, 524 (8).
64. W.A. Shaw, The Knights of England, ii (1906), 65; P.R.O., Lists & Indexes No. 9, List of Sheriffs for England & Wales (1898), 45.
65. V.C.H., iii, 260.
66. D.N.B., iv, 203; P.R.O., List of Sheriffs, 64.
67. Smith (1992), 46.

68. Shaw, op. cit. (note 64), 123.
69. V.C.H., iii, 12.
70. D.N.B., xvi, 576-7.
71. P.R.O., C 66/1193/1783.
72. P.R.O., List of Sheriffs, 45; L.P., xix (1), g.80 (48), g.1035 (97).
73. Pencil transcript by Reginald Hine of a document of 1557, Hitchin Museum. The transcript does not give the location of the original document, but the 18th-century historian, Salmon also refers to the conveyance of The Biggin to Parrys during the reign of Edward VI (Salmon, 162); for Hitchin Priory see P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1607-15.
74. P.R.O., PCC 11 Holney; Hine colln., Hitchin Museum.
75. P.R.O., PCC 31 Stafford; D.N.B., xviii, 610.
76. King's Works, iv, 416, 493, 496; King's Works, iii, 291n. An account of Daunce's career is given in given in C.T. Martin, 'Sir John Daunce's accounts of money received from the treasurer of the king's chamber temp. Henry VIII', Archaeologia, 47 (1883), 295-336.
77. L.P., xi, g.1417 (5); L.P., xii, g.1150 (15).
78. N. Pevsner & Elizabeth Williamson, Buckinghamshire (1994), 449-52.
79. V.C.H., Bucks., iv (1927), 120.

Chapter Three

From monastery to country house: high status conversions

This chapter is concerned with those monastic buildings which were converted into gentry, courtier and royal houses. These form a distinct category from those sites examined in the last chapter. Three of the sites- Markyate, Sopwell and Wymondley- retain substantial elements of the immediately post-Dissolution houses and some physical evidence for the monastic buildings which preceded them. Far less now survives at Ashridge, but the post-Dissolution house swept away by Wyatt's early 19th-century mansion is well recorded in documentary and graphic sources. By comparison, Beechwood and Cheshunt are ill recorded, although at both sites there is enough evidence to enable some reconstruction of post-Dissolution events to be made.

As with those sites considered in Chapter 2, it is helpful to deal first with conversions carried out in the period 1540 to 1580 and then to examine separately those conversions made after 1580. By doing this it is possible to establish something of the rate at which conversions were undertaken and also of the processes which enabled them to take place. Again, there is some overlap between those conversions undertaken in the first generation and those of the second and third generations. Indeed, this is even more noticeable as a general trend in the sites considered in this chapter, suggesting that not only did social, economic and political conditions allow higher status conversions to take place earlier, but that the very status of these sites prompted further programmes of extensive remodelling later in the century.

* * * *

Beechwood and Cheshunt can be described as courtier conversions and at both there is fragmentary evidence for work in the two decades after the suppression. The former Benedictine nunnery of St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead (Beechwood) was leased to Sir John Tregonwell soon after its suppression in 1537. It is not clear whether Tregonwell undertook any conversion of the monastic buildings. His complaint in August 1538 when ejected in favour of Sir Richard Page, to whom the crown gave the manor of Molesey in Surrey in exchange for Beechwood, that he had already spent £120 in necessities for husbandry, hedging, making the ground etc., £40 of which had been paid to the king at the time of the suppression,¹ would seem to refer to general work on the estate rather than to any physical transformation of the buildings themselves, but this does not mean that he was not also involved in conversion works.

Although far from unequivocal proof, the possibility that it may have been Tregonwell's intention to convert at least some of the buildings, including the church, is hinted at by a reference to the "church stepull" in the crown's deed of exchange with Page in September 1538 and then to the "campanile" in the letters patent of the following year.² The absence of any reference to the church in Leland's description of the site, which was probably made in 1544,³ suggests, however, that it did not feature in any conversion which Page may have carried out.

Indeed, there is considerable uncertainty as to whether there was ever a direct conversion of any of the former monastic buildings at Beechwood. In 1548 the house is referred to as the "mansion house Beechwood late callyd the priory of Saint Gyles in the Wood" and in 1564 it is recorded as the "dwelling house now commonly called Beechwood",⁴ suggesting that its monastic antecedents were already beginning to be forgotten. This, of course, is anything but conclusive evidence that the new house of

Beechwood was not fashioned directly from monastic fabric, and a detailed description of the building in a lease of part of it to John Cheyne in 1564 is equally unrevealing in this respect.⁵

However, what little physical or archaeological evidence there is, either for the nunnery or the 16th-century house which succeeded it, also suggests that the latter does not lie directly on the site of the former. The earliest surviving identifiable fabric in the present building dates to the mid- to late 17th century, and although there is some stonework in the cellar which may be of mid-16th-century or earlier origin, there is nothing which can be linked to the monastic phase of the site. The moulded stone fireplace in what is now the housemaster's study is probably pre-Dissolution- certainly it is not much later- but there is nothing to show that it was monastic and it could have come from elsewhere.

The early 18th-century front range of the house appears to occupy virgin ground, further suggestion that the nunnery buildings lay elsewhere. The most likely location for these seems to be approximately 110 yards to the east of the present house, where parch marks of a rectangular building, aligned roughly east-west, have been tentatively identified as the site of the monastic church.⁶

It therefore seems that at Beechwood the decision was taken not to convert the monastic buildings but to erect a new house nearby, very probably using materials from the nunnery. The reason for this is not clear, but the small size of the nunnery at the Dissolution may provide some explanation. The buildings recorded in the inventory made at the house's suppression in 1537- "church (quyre and vestery), parlour, kechyn, high chamber, myddle chamber, buttery and backhowsse"- were not extensive,⁷ and although the church is described as in "good repair", with nothing to suggest that the other buildings were in particularly poor condition, it seems likely that both Tregonwell and

Page were attracted by the site itself rather than by the buildings. Certainly, neither man would have been deterred from sweeping all away and starting afresh.

The difficulty of distinguishing any work which may have been carried out by Tregonwell from that undertaken by his successor has been referred to above. Indeed, it is only in Page's case that we can be at all certain that building work was carried out, and it may have been that whatever his intentions for the property, Tregonwell's tenure was simply too short-lived for him to have embarked on any major construction activity. Even for Page, we have only Leland's statement that "Master Page the knight hath it now ...(and)...hath translatid the house, and now much lyith there" to rely upon.⁸

The latter part of this remark suggests that Page's work was extensive and that Beechwood was his principal residence. Chauncy recites the "...Tradition that in the Infancy of Edward VI he was removed thither by the Advice of his Physitians for some time, and did reside in the said Religious House..."⁹ The date of this stay is unrecorded but it may have provided further incentive, if any were needed, for Page's building work. Page died in 1548 and in March of that year his widow, Elizabeth, leased the house to Sir William Skypwith, whom she was eventually to marry. A lease of 1564 provides some information on the type of house Beechwood had by then become, referring to "the upper end of the house frome the haule porche upward, the great kytchyn, thre Chambers frome a little entre going to the gardine...(and the) great buttery".¹⁰ This suggests a house of some size, although it is not possible to tell whether this was largely the result of Page's work or whether further additions and alterations were made after 1548. All that can really be stated with certainty is that there was extensive building activity at Beechwood in the two decades after the Dissolution.

Not even this can be established beyond doubt at Cheshunt, another small Benedictine nunnery, dissolved in 1536. This is without doubt one of the most poorly documented monastic sites in Hertfordshire. On its suppression it was granted to Anthony Denny, passing on his death in 1549 to his eldest son, Henry, who in 1564 sold the estate to Anthony Throkmerton, Richard Springham and Richard Davys.¹¹ The inventory made at the house's closure lists a "chauncell, quyre, belfery, dortor, halle, chamber over the halle, maydens chamber, buttery, chamber over the buttery, mylke lofte, chese lofte, bruyngge howse, kechyne, my ladys chamber, meanes howsse, priest's chamber and garn(er)".¹²

The recorded annual value of £14 1s and the sale to Anthony Denny of "alle the goods and catalls for £44 7s" suggest that the community was a poor one and the fact that the commissioners valued the church lead at only £2 suggests that the building may have been ruinous before the Dissolution.¹³

Denny is reputed to have been born and to have died at Cheshunt, and as he is not linked with any other house in the immediate vicinity, his death at least is thought to have taken place at the Nunnery, by which name the house continued to be called after the Dissolution.¹⁴ Indeed, Denny seems to have had a direct interest in the house before its closure, the indenture of the nunnery's goods, drawn up in May 1536, being made between the commissioners and Denny, rather than with the prioress.¹⁵

This would all suggest that Denny is likely to have carried out some building work at the nunnery after the Dissolution. Certainly, it would have been a convenient centre from which to administer the considerable estate he put together in Hertfordshire and East Essex from the spoils of monasteries.

Nothing now survives, even below ground, of the nunnery as the whole site was destroyed by gravel extraction in

the 1950s, with only the most minimal of archaeological records being made. Even before that few traces of the nunnery or the house which succeeded it remained. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries large glass houses were erected around the buildings of Nunnery Farm, which itself seems to have been built on the site of Cheshunt Nunnery, a mainly 18th-century house, demolished between 1804 and 1811.¹⁶

This building is known only from brief later 18th-century descriptions and sketch-plans and one late 18th-century and two early 19th-century drawings.¹⁷ These latter drawings are particularly useful and give a good impression of the house's appearance. From the front, the building is entirely 18th century in character but the view of the rear, showing the service areas, depicts a number of earlier ranges. It is not possible to date these accurately, but the more prominent features include a three-storey brick tower which, along with other parts of the building, could belong to the 16th or 17th century. Indeed, there is a possibility that one of the service ranges survived to form Nunnery Farmhouse, when the remainder of the house was demolished.

While this pictorial evidence, along with the discovery of substantial fragments of a mid- to late 16th-century mullion window on the site in the 1950s, are perhaps enough to demonstrate that the house contained 16th-century work, they do not indicate whether this work represented a new house on or near the site of the nunnery or a direct conversion of its former buildings. The extremely fragmentary evidence means that this will never be known. While there may be no particular reason to doubt Richard Gough's assertion that "the principle (sic) staircase (in the house was)...of Denny's time" or his belief, shared by other antiquaries, that the earlier parts of the house were built at or around the time of the Dissolution, this is very little on which to base a

reconstruction of the 16th-century house or the nunnery itself.

Writing in 1823, William Caley states that "The refectory (not listed in the 1536 inventory) was the last building to the nunnery which remained entire".¹⁸ This is probably the same structure which William Ellis noted in 1791 "appears to have been built not long before the Dissolution".¹⁹ It is, of course, quite probable that Caley incorrectly identified the surviving building as the refectory and it may well have been one of the other buildings recorded in the inventory. If the structure was indeed "built not long before the Dissolution", it is likely to have been in good enough condition for it to have been re-used in Denny's new house.

During the 1950s' gravel extraction, fragments of Purbeck marble column-shafts, which are most likely to have come from the monastic church, were found on the site. Their exact find-spot is not known but they appear to have come from an area to the south of the main area archaeologically recorded, which seems to have been that occupied by the post-Dissolution house. The column-shafts may not, of course, have been in their original context when recovered in the 1950s, but their location raises the possibility that the church lay to the south of the 16th-century house. If this was a conversion of the monastic buildings- and there is absolutely nothing to show that the church itself was converted to domestic use- this suggests that the cloister lay to the north of the church. It is equally likely, though, that the 16th-century house was not a direct adaptation of the monastic buildings, but was a new building re-using materials from the nunnery, in which case the cloister may have been in the more usual position to the south. Certainly, a man as powerful and ambitious as Denny would not have been deterred from sweeping all away should it have served his purpose.

The evidence for the immediate post-Dissolution phase

at Cheshunt is clearly extremely tentative. As we shall see, there is equally inconclusive evidence for further activity at the house later in the 16th century, and all that can be stated with confidence is that Denny is likely to have carried out some work here before his death in 1549, with the strong possibility that further work took place under his son, Henry, before 1564.

The surviving architectural evidence and the archaeological and documentary material for the immediate post-Dissolution phase is much more complete at Markyate, another small Benedictine nunnery, which was dissolved by February 1537. Nothing seems to have been done there before 1539 when it was leased for 21 years to Humphrey Bourchier. Having tried unsuccessfully to buy the site, Bourchier died childless in 1540 when the house passed to his widow, Elizabeth. It appears that Bourchier carried out extensive works at Markyate as Leland, who probably saw the house in 1544, writes that "Mergate was a nunnery of late tyme. It standith on a hil in a faire woode hard by Watheling Streate on the est side of it. Humfray Boucher, base sunne to the late lorde Berners, did much coste in translating of the priorie into a maner-place: but he left it nothing endid."²⁰

The house created by Bourchier has been much altered since, with additions of c.1600, the mid-17th century and the 18th century, and it owes its present neo-Elizabethan appearance to a major remodelling by Robert Lugar in 1825/26. Despite this, it is still possible to reconstruct the form of the mid-16th-century house, which seems to have consisted of a long hall range on the south aligned roughly east-west, with cross-wings projecting to the north. The eastern of these may have acted as a service range, the massive projection to the base of the external lateral stack possibly housing a garderobe, while the staircase may have been at the northern end of the west

cross-wing. The hall range was almost certainly of two storeys from the start and may have been heated by a large stack on the north wall. The principal rooms appear to have been on the upper level above an undercroft or semi-basement and it seems that the main entrance was on the south side, probably approached by a flight of steps, giving direct access to the hall range.

The earliest surviving fabric in the present house is in the short wing of chequered stone and flint to the north east and in the lower range on the south side, both of which date to this period. While it is possible that this work could immediately precede the Dissolution, it is quite clear that neither the church nor any of the claustral buildings were converted to domestic use. The east end of the church or possibly chapter house was uncovered in 1805 some 40ft to the west of the terrace to the north of the present house, indicating that the cloister must also have lain at some distance to the west. If the present building is monastic in origin, the only possible candidate which emerges is a detached superior's lodging, although the distance from the remainder of the nunnery buildings and the community's relative poverty and small size at the time of its suppression make this inherently unlikely.

It therefore seems that Bouchier made the decision to start afresh on a new site higher up the hill side, no doubt using the old buildings as a convenient quarry. The east wall of the existing house does in fact incorporate much 13th-century moulded stonework, although it seems likely that a lot of this was only re-used during the remodelling of the east range in the 19th century, very possibly following the discovery of the east end of the church or chapter house in 1805. Elsewhere in the house, material which is almost certainly monastic in origin, was probably recycled at a much earlier period. This includes a beam in the old kitchen, on the end of which was a

carved shield, surviving to be illustrated by Thomas Fisher in 1805.²¹ The flint and stone chequerwork pattern on the north wall of the east range may also be re-used material, although as noted above, its continuation on to the east wall of the same range is more likely to be the result of 19th-century remodelling.

Bourchier's widow married George Ferrers in 1541 but it was not until 1548 that the site was granted to him. During this time, the property presumably remained with the crown and, despite Leland's reference to Bourchier having left it "nothing endid", there is no documentary evidence to suggest that anything further was done. The house remained with the Ferrers family until the mid-17th century, but as the next phase of remodelling does not seem to have occurred until c.1600 this is discussed below.

The Augustinian priory of Wymondley was dissolved in 1537 and passed to James Nedeham, in whose family the property was to remain until 1733. For much of this period the site was little more than a large farm, the converted west end of the former monastic church serving as the farmhouse, but there is some evidence to suggest that in its immediate post-Dissolution phase the site was of higher status.

The principal surviving monastic buildings are the west part of the nave of the Augustinian church, converted with various additions and alterations to domestic use in the 16th century, and the late 15th-century aisled barn, both of which stand within a well-preserved moated enclosure. Outside the moated area are a conduit house to the north east and a dovecote to the north west, both probably of 16th-century date.

Although it has been suggested that the building converted to domestic use is not in fact the church but the western part of a conventual building, possibly the

refectory,²² this is not generally accepted and what remains of the monastic fabric of this structure is perfectly consistent with use as a church. The conversion to domestic use was effected by inserting first and second floors and fireplaces and refenestrating the building with mullioned and transomed windows.

Although a case has been argued for the cloister being in the usual position to the south,²³ it seems more likely that it lay to the north. Evidence for this can be seen in the existing building in the form of a blocked processional door in the north wall and the height of the two 13th-century lancets in the south wall, which do not allow for a cloister walk beneath them. The suppression inventory of 1537 lists a hall, servants' chamber, kitchen, bakehouse, brewhouse, buttery and pantry but it is not possible from this to identify their locations.²⁴ Unless it should be identified as the hall, no mention is made of the refectory but as it is referred to in a bishop's visitation of 1530 as being newly rebuilt, it is unlikely that it failed to survive the Dissolution. This visitation is particularly useful for the light it sheds on the condition of the buildings so shortly before the house's closure.²⁵ It shows that although 100 marks had been spent on repairs to the church since 1520 and two windows at the east end had recently been renewed, the nave and chancel were still in need of further work. The bell tower was being rebuilt after a collapse, and it can be surmised that this was a free-standing structure, presumably at the west end of the church, as there is no record of its collapse having caused damage to the rest of the structure.

Repairs did not stop there. In 1537 Nedeham paid £15 4s 8d to the former prior, John Atow, "for repairs this year made on the house and church buildings of the former priory where they were greatly ruined and defective." Indeed, £5 more than this was set aside for maintenance,

which indicates that repairs were still ongoing after the Dissolution.²⁶ This suggests that Nedeham, who had been managing the priory's financial affairs since April 1537, planned from the start to convert some of its buildings to domestic use. In December 1537 he obtained the lease of the property, but it may not have been until after he bought the site in April 1538 that building works began.

It is not easy to reconstruct the appearance of the house created by Nedeham. It is probable that it was much larger than the remaining structure would indicate. Writing in c.1700, Chauncy states that "this Priory has been a fair old building with cloysters",²⁷ which perhaps suggests that although the cloister had disappeared by then, some vestiges had remained well after the Dissolution. An estate map of 1731 shows the buildings to have been far more extensive than now, especially to the east. It is tempting to equate the formerly greater extent of the house with a survival of the eastern part of the church and it is possible to interpret the roughly cruciform shape of the larger building as following the plan of the church. Certain irregularities suggest, however, that these ranges represent structures added after the Dissolution, albeit on the site of the eastern end of the church. Similarly, if the formerly greater extent of the building does represent the crossing, transepts and quire of the monastic church, they may not have survived as habitable structures but may have been shown on the map simply because their walls remained above ground.

It is unlikely, though, that in such an early conversion Nedeham would have been prepared to tolerate the survival of ruins directly abutting his house—certainly, it is unlikely that he would have displayed any antiquarian interest in such features— and if they did survive, it is more likely that they would have been put to domestic use. This is all the more likely when one

recalls the recent repairs to the church, even though it is not specified to which areas the repairs were carried out. Finally, the current eastern wall of the house is somewhat thinner than those on the north and south, suggesting that originally it may have been internal, although like that on the west it may simply have been rebuilt.

It is, of course, quite possible that the eastern part of the house had become ruinous by 1731, particularly as the status of the site appears to have declined during the 17th century. If Nedeham was prompted to convert the church to domestic use partly on account of its apparently good condition, it is unlikely that he would have ignored the recently rebuilt refectory, especially as its most likely position -directly opposite the church- would have led to the adoption of a convenient and fashionable courtyard plan. If there was a prior's lodging, and it is possible that the reference to a hall in the 1537 inventory is to the refectory, this may have been in the west claustral range. It is likely that, along with the dormitory in the east range, this would have been converted to lodgings as the church appears to have served as the hall and parlour of Nedeham's new house.

Nedeham died in 1544 and it is not possible to tell how much had been accomplished by his death. This is partly because, as is so frequently the case, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between work carried out in the mid-16th century and that undertaken later in the century, a problem exacerbated at Wymondley by an insensitive "restoration" in the 1970s, which destroyed all the 16th-century windows and many other potentially datable features. It is therefore not possible to say whether it was Nedeham or one of his successors who added the short brick range on the south west of the main range. Other elements of the 16th-century house, such as the triple gables on the north front, are more likely to have been

added later and are therefore discussed with other work of the later 16th century, but we can be certain that, with the title to the property assured, Nedeham's successors would have continued to work on the house. Indeed, even if the physical evidence had survived, it is very doubtful that it would be possible to differentiate work carried out for Nedeham before 1544 from that undertaken for his son, John, after that date, and since the work would seem to have been an ongoing process, it is debatable as to whether this would in any case be particularly informative.

It is difficult to visualise the appearance of the mid-16th-century house, but it is worth commenting that Nedeham would probably have gone to some pains to disguise the most obvious ecclesiastical features. Thus, although the lancet windows in the south wall of the former nave are at the right level to serve as first-floor doorways to the south-west range, the ground-floor ceiling cuts across them, and it must be questioned whether they served as such in the 16th-century house. If they did, it is likely that their 13th-century nook-shafts would have been concealed from view.

Of the other former monastic buildings, the barn would have continued in much the same use as before, while it is impossible to tell whether the dovecote, which must date to between the 1520s and 1550s, was built before or after the suppression, although the absence of any reference to it in the 1537 inventory perhaps tips the balance in favour of the latter. The evidence for the date of the conduit house is far from conclusive but points marginally to later in the 16th century, which means that it is discussed below. It is not known when the land to the north of the moated platform was first called "the Park", the name which it is given on the 1731 map, but this probably happened in the mid-16th century. This area of land contains the earthworks of house platforms and

enclosures, demarcated on the west by ponds and a hollow-way on the east. It has been suggested that these are the remains of a tenant settlement linked to the priory,²⁸ which may have been deliberately depopulated by the Nedeams after the Dissolution. Certainly, a fine parkland landscape is just the sort of setting the family would have desired for their new house.

A large park was one of the key components created by Sir Richard Lee at Sopwell, a small Benedictine nunnery just outside St Albans. The house was dissolved in 1537 and was granted to Lee in December 1538, with confirmation in 1540. The suppression inventory records a "hall, kychen, churche and quyre", the confirmation grant also referring to the tower and cemetery of the church.²⁹

Archaeological excavation has provided evidence for lead melting at the site and it is likely that this was carried out as part of the crown's stripping of the site rather than by Lee. Lead was the most valuable building material from the nunnery, being valued at £40 in the Ministers' Accounts for 1537.³⁰ Much of this lead was re-used for the king's manor of The More at nearby Rickmansworth. This was still taking place as late as 1542,³¹ which suggests either that the lead was being stored before removal to The More or, as was usually the case, the sale to a lay owner of the former monastic property excluded the lead. Other building materials were sold in 1538 to John Shreve and Thomas Maydewell, presumably local men, whose purchases included the "Tymber worke in the Quyre" for 40s. Maydewell also bought the "stones in the churche wt the vestery Stuff" for 40s.³²

Lee had been bailiff and farmer of the nunnery since 1534 and as he does not appear to have participated in the purchase of materials before he received the grant of the site, it must be assumed that he was content to see the buildings left as little more than shells. Lee does not

seem to have been in any hurry to begin work on converting the buildings. Leland is thought to have passed through St Albans on his return to London from his north-eastern itinerary in 1539 and makes no mention of Sopwell. However, as he also gives no description of St Albans itself, it would be unwise too read too much into this. In 1550 Lee was granted the greater part of the abbey buildings and there is a persistent tradition that he used materials from there at Sopwell.³³ While this cannot be disproved, it is likely that the remains of the buildings at Sopwell would have provided all that was necessary, at least for the first house which Lee built on the site.

The most likely date for the commencement of Lee's building activity at Sopwell would seem to have been after 1548 when he withdrew from public life and spent almost a decade of retirement in Hertfordshire. The reasons for this delay are not clear. Lee's title to the property was secure, he was prominent in royal service and he had been knighted in 1544, at about which time he became surveyor of the king's works in succession to James Nedeham. Furthermore, as early as 1538 he had acted as advisor to Thomas Wriothesley at Titchfield, one of the earliest and most daring of the first phase of monastic conversions. It may simply have been that he was too busy to attend to Sopwell and wished to wait until he had enough time to devote his energies solely to that project. He also had other houses, including the former alien priory of Newent in Gloucestershire.³⁴

Lee came from a Hertfordshire family and it may have been partly for this reason that he was particularly keen to make Sopwell a house of the first rank. Although it was not until the second phase of remodelling, which probably took place in the late 1560s and 1570s and which is discussed later, that the old monastic plan was discarded completely, Lee never appears to have felt constrained by re-using the fabric of the existing buildings in the

construction of his new house, which, with his experience of building, we can be confident that he was closely involved in and very probably provided the design for himself. This perhaps explains why Lee does not appear to have been overly concerned by the demolitions and dilapidations at Sopwell after 1537 and why, although the buildings seem to have been in reasonable repair at the time of the Dissolution, only their ground-plan and perhaps some of the structural fabric were re-used in the domestic conversion.

The existing ruins on the site relate to the later 16th-century house and this makes it difficult to determine the extent to which any surviving monastic buildings may have been re-used in the first phase of domestic conversion. However, as the site has been archaeologically excavated, albeit that the results have not been properly published, it is possible to say a little more about this first conversion than would otherwise be the case. Nothing is known from documentary sources about the lay-out of the medieval nunnery, but the cloister seems to have been situated in the usual position to the south of the church. This seems to have been rebuilt no earlier than the 14th century, as the remains of an unrelated smaller 12th-century church, which continued in use throughout the 13th century, were also uncovered in the excavations. The nave of the later medieval church and perhaps part of the central tower seem to have provided the floor-plan for the hall of Lee's first house, although the archaeological evidence suggests that the walls themselves were not retained but were rebuilt on the old foundations. A wide fireplace was built in the north wall of the hall, but the excavator does not suggest whether this was of one or two storeys, although in a house of this status by the mid-16th century one would expect the latter.

The dimensions of the medieval cloister seem to have

been followed exactly by the courtyard of the Tudor house, but the walks appear to have been demolished. The east range, which seems to have had an undercroft on the lower level, was also rebuilt on the old foundations and, although the archaeological work was less extensive to the south and west, this also seems to have applied to the south and west ranges. The puzzle remains, however, as to why, given that Lee apparently chose to follow the ground-plan of the medieval nunnery so slavishly, he did not re-use more of its fabric. Even allowing for ten years or so of demolition, decay and perhaps plunder by local people, it is hard to believe that some walls did not remain standing. The sweeping away of the first house by the later building makes it impossible to prove, but one wonders whether the first phase of rebuilding was as total as the excavator of the site would have us believe.

A series of plaster and stone medallions now at Salisbury Hall in the neighbouring parish of Shenley are said to have been purchased by Sir Jeremiah Snow from Sir Harbottle Grimston, who bought Sopwell in 1669 and who is believed to have demolished at least some of its buildings.³⁵ The medallions are of very fine quality and depict the busts of Roman emperors and other figures from classical antiquity. They are almost certainly of English workmanship and would seem to have been expressly commissioned for Lee's Sopwell, but even their general context within the house is unknown. Their exact date is also uncertain. Although their fine quality would seem in some ways to be more in keeping with the more lavish second phase of Sopwell, they are precisely the kind of work associated with the mid-Tudor Renaissance of Protector Somerset and his circle and were perhaps ultimately inspired by the very similar terracotta roundels of the 1520s at Hampton Court.³⁶ As such, they are useful confirmation that even in its first, comparatively modest phase, Sopwell is likely to have been

a house of more than local significance. This is further reflected by the choice of the house as a stopping-place for Elizabeth on a royal progress in 1564.³⁷ The queen's reaction to the house is not known, but as her stay was some years before Lee's second phase of remodelling it can be assumed that the house was of a sufficiently high standard to meet the requirements of even this most demanding of visitors.

Although it is not known when Lee began work on the formal gardens at Sopwell, it is likely that at least some of these were laid out as part of the first phase of operations. It seems, however, that the boundaries of the large park with which Lee surrounded the house and gardens were not defined before the first house was complete and it was not until 1562 that the London Road was diverted around the park.³⁸ Large sections of the wall surrounding the park were made up of moulded stonework and other materials, which probably came from the former nunnery. Further brick and stone in the wall may have come from St Albans Abbey, this also being precisely the time when Nicholas Bacon was removing building materials from the abbey for his new house of Gorhambury a few miles to the west of the town.³⁹

It is not entirely clear what happened in the first phase of domestic re-use at Ashridge. The college of Bonshommes was dissolved in January 1540 and the site was leased to John Norrys for 21 years.⁴⁰ Nothing is known of Norrys and it seems that he simply farmed the land and was responsible for keeping the buildings in good repair, as is shown in a dispute between him and Robert Emys, the last tenant of the former college, in 1540.⁴¹ In 1550 the lease was revoked and the site was granted to Princess Elizabeth, who in 1555 leased the site to Richard Combes for another 21 years.⁴² One reason why the property was leased rather than sold to either Norrys or Combes may

have been that the crown wished to retain ownership of the house but preferred to make others responsible for its day-to-day maintenance.

Henry VIII had visited Ashridge on at least two occasions before the Dissolution, once in 1523 when its pleasures were described in verse by the court poet, John Skelton,⁴³ and again in 1530 when the king gave 7s 6d to the shrine of the "Holy Blood there" and 4s 8d "To Edmonde the footman for so moche by him given in rewards at Ashridge to one that made the dogges to draw water",⁴⁴ which is probably a reference to the use of dogs to lift up water buckets from the deep monastic well.

In August 1543 a meeting of the privy council was held at the house,⁴⁵ and at various times all three of the royal children lived there. In 1544 a letter from Prince Edward's tutor, Dr Richard Cox, complains about living conditions and in the 1540s and first half of the 1550s Princess Elizabeth spent long periods at the house,⁴⁶ its grant to her in 1550 presumably enabling her to make any further changes she saw fit.

Much of the documentary evidence for the buildings at Ashridge comes from later 16th-century sources and, as all of the conventual buildings except a late medieval barn and an early 14th-century undercroft have been swept away by the Gothic fantasy of Wyatt's early 19th-century mansion, it is difficult to reconstruct the appearance of the house during the 1540s and '50s.

It is probable that the relatively recent date of much of the claustral ranges, a large part of which seems to have been reconstructed in the mid-15th century, meant that the principal buildings were still in good condition at the Dissolution, when Ashridge was the second wealthiest monastic community in Hertfordshire.⁴⁷ It therefore seems unlikely that there would have been a pressing need to carry out major alterations to the buildings, which appear already to have offered a

relatively high standard of domestic comfort.

A great deal of work was carried out to the house by Thomas Egerton after 1604 and probably also by the Cheyney family, who owned the house from 1575 to 1602. It is essentially this house which is described by Thomas Baskerville, Browne Willis and other late 17th-century and early 18th-century antiquaries and which also survived to be recorded by Henry Oldfield and other artists before its demolition in the early 19th century.

There is good reason to suppose, however, that whatever the work carried out later, Ashridge was- in Norden's words- "a more stately house" when Elizabeth "lodged (there) as in her owne",⁴⁸ and that this statement was not entirely the result of sycophancy to the monarch. Much of the monastic lay-out is recognisable in Egerton's house and this must therefore also to a large extent reflect its character and appearance during Elizabeth's occupation.

The cloister appears to have lain to the north of the church with the early 14th-century refectory in its northern range. The undercroft of this survives beneath the dining room and drawing room on the south (garden) front of the existing mansion. The refectory certainly served as the great hall of Egerton's house and there is no good reason to suppose that this was not also the case in Elizabeth's time. Indeed, it may have been because the refectory was selected for re-use as the great hall in the first post-Dissolution house that it continued to be used for this purpose in the house's later phases.

A long gallery seems to have occupied the upper level of the north and east cloister walks and, although this is a feature more often associated with late 16th-century and early 17th-century architecture, there are parallels with other converted monastic buildings of the 1540s to suggest that this formed part of the first phase of post-Dissolution re-use.⁴⁹

Working back from later documentary evidence like a

survey of 1575, an inventory of 1701 and a sale catalogue of 1800, it appears that there was an entrance hall in the west claustral range- perhaps the "Maynes Hall of the 1575 survey- which also had a gallery apparently linking with the gallery over the north cloister walk. By the late 18th century the south and west ranges were "divided into suites of rooms", with the upper floor of the south range containing "a suite of four bedrooms", including the apartment traditionally said to have been used by Elizabeth.⁵⁰ This range was presumably on the site of the monastic church, which appears to have survived and perhaps to have remained in at least partial use for some time after the Dissolution. The evidence for this comes from the former presence in the church of the tomb of Sir Ralph Verney, who did not die until 1546, and the reference to its repaired lead roofs in the survey of 1575.⁵¹ There is also a reference in the survey to "Mr Chamberlen's lodging called the Tower", the 30ft-square dimensions of which accord exactly with those of "le steple", recorded in the same survey, making it likely that they were one and the same structure. This then was probably the central tower of the cruciform church, which along with the monastic nave or possibly the north aisle and transept- depending on the lay-out of the medieval church- was converted into the south range of the post-Dissolution house.

If there had been continuing ecclesiastical use of the monastic church after the suppression- as suggested by the Verney tomb- it was probably confined to the choir and this use may have declined or ceased altogether after the departure of Elizabeth in 1554, although it was probably to be another 20 years before the choir was demolished. Indeed, there seems to have been a general deterioration at the house after Elizabeth left and by 1560 many of the buildings were in poor condition. Despite £55 3s 8d having been spent on repairs since the first year of her reign, a



good part was falling down "namely the lodging that Master Treasurer laye in, which accoumpted the fayrest lodging of the howse next where the Quene's highness laye" and £200 would not make "a house meete for her highness to lye in yt three dayes".⁵²

During the 1560s it must be assumed that maintenance was the responsibility of the lessees of the estate and this may have been one of the reasons why it was necessary to spend £67 10s 7d on repairs to the house in preparation for a royal progress through Hertfordshire in 1564.⁵³ It may have been the result of these repairs which attracted the attention of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, Ambassador to France, towards the house. In 1566 he was advised in a letter from Peter Osborne that "Ashridge is worth the having...The situation and walls about it will save you money, and the translating of it will be done with small charge in comparison of building a new house".⁵⁴ It is not known whether Throckmorton displayed any further interest in Ashridge but Osborne's comments are enough to suggest that although it had many attractions, there was felt to be a need for another phase of "translating" to take place.

Meanwhile, the farmbuildings of the former monastery would have continued in agricultural use, including the surviving late 15th-century five-bay timber-framed barn, while, whether or not it was of monastic origin, the dovecote referred to in the 1575 survey, may be identified as the large circular structure shown on an estate map of 1762.⁵⁵ The continuing use of the house between 1575 and the early 17th century is discussed below.

* * * *

It has already been suggested that the former monastic buildings at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate were

effectively demolished during the 1540s and that, although some of their materials were almost certainly re-used, they played no direct part in shaping the new houses erected at these sites. A brief account should, however, be given of the later 16th-century phases of these houses, not only because monastic materials were re-used once more but, more importantly, because this helps to provide a context for Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley where the former monastic plan and building fabric continued to influence the evolution of these houses into the 17th century and beyond.

Very little evidence survives at Beechwood for any building activity carried out by the Smith family, who owned the property between c.1575 and 1628.⁵⁶ There is no identifiable fabric in the present building from before the mid-17th century and the original H-plan is also likely to date to this period. All that is contemporary with the Smiths' ownership of the house is some panelling and an early Jacobean overmantel over the early to mid-16th-century fireplace in the present housemaster's study, but even these could be later imports to the building.

Cheshunt Nunnery remained in the hands of the Denny family until 1564 when Henry Denny sold it to Anthony Throckmerton, Richard Springham and Richard Davys. Nothing is known of these men and this, along with their group purchase of the property, suggests that they were agents acting for another party. How long the house remained in their hands or with their client is also unknown but in 1590 Edward Denny, younger brother of Henry, bought back the estate. Denny did not retain it long, however, selling it to Sir William Cecil in 1592, the property remaining with the Cecils until 1608.⁵⁷ Owing to the extremely fragmentary nature of the data discussed earlier, it is not possible to attribute precise dating to the 16th-century work carried out at Cheshunt or to determine whether it took place in distinct phases. The only

evidence we have for work carried out later rather than earlier in the second half of the century are the tantalising references in William Vallans's A Tale of Two Swannes (1590), which run "From thence to Broxbourne, and to Wormley wood/ And so salute the holy house of Nunnes,/ That late belong'd to captaine Edward Dennie,/ A knight in Ireland of the best accompt/...There now Lord Talbot keepes a noble house". Both the reference to "late belong'd to...Dennie" and to Lord Talbot (presumably the sixth earl of Shrewsbury, who died in 1590) are puzzling, especially the latter as the earl is not known to have had any connection with Cheshunt, and perhaps they should not be relied upon. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the main thrust of Vallans's lines, namely that in around 1590 Cheshunt Nunnery remained a house of the first rank.

The evidence is rather fuller at Markyate for a second phase of remodelling in the later 16th century. As we have seen, it is likely that the first post-Dissolution house on the site was started by Humphrey Bourchier before his death in 1540, but it is also likely that much remained to be carried out by his successor, George Ferrers, between 1548 and his death in 1579. Much of the work undertaken by Ferrers could relate to this first phase, although as the extent of Bourchier's work remains unknown, this is impossible to prove. This first phase of building is, however, quite distinct from the second in which a west range was added to the original house. This is now so much altered by later remodellings that the possibility that it belongs to another burst of activity in the mid-17th century cannot be ruled out, but it is more probable that it was added before c.1600.⁵⁸ The main reason for believing that the west range was an addition to the original building is that it was at a different level to the south range. In the early 17th century a short one-storey and attic range with a timber-framed east gable was added to the north-east corner of the west range.

Several candidates emerge as the possible builder of the west range. It may have been George Ferrers, his son, Julius, between 1579 and his death in 1596 or George's grandson, John, after the latter date. John did not die until 1640 and he is therefore also likely to have added the range to the north-east corner of the west range. Lack of surviving architectural detail means that the answer will never be known.

The absence of specific documentary evidence at Wymondley and the problems of precisely dating the 16th-century work make it difficult to distinguish between the work of James Nedeham before 1544 and that carried out by his son, John, or grandson, George, who owned the property between 1544 and 1591 and from 1591 to 1626 respectively. These are long periods of ownership and it is likely that both men carried out work at the house. Various features can be dated to between c.1590 and c.1600. The most prominent of these are the three gabled ranges, which from their queen-strut roof structures appear to have been added to the north front of the former nave at this time, suggesting that if this was not already the case, the north front had become the main entrance front of the house by this date.

Also dating to c.1600 are the various panelled rooms in the house, the panelling on the north wall of what was formerly a ground-floor passage-way concealing the internal face of the west processional doorway in the north wall of the monastic nave. While the panelling may not be in situ, this raises the possibility that although the post-Dissolution house may have originated with a courtyard plan based on the monastic cloister, it had been reduced in size by c.1600, with the removal of the claustral ranges and the addition of the three smaller gabled projections on the north front.

The suggestion that the house had declined in importance as early as 1600 is not entirely consistent

with some of the features of this period which still remain or formerly existed in the building. For instance, the panelling appears to have been considerably more extensive before the remodelling of the 1970s when much of it was destroyed or replaced by "replica" panelling. It is therefore not possible to date the panelling exactly or even to be sure that it was not brought in from elsewhere at a later date, but the panelling does at least suggest a house of some status.

More revealing of the relative importance of the house at the end of the 16th century was the discovery in 1973-4 of a wall painting in a late medieval traceried recess in the north-east corner of the house. The function of the recess is unclear but the late 16th-century painting of running soldiers in classical armour is work of the highest quality.⁵⁹ It has been suggested that the recess is where the south walk of the cloister should have been,⁶⁰ but as it is situated in what is clearly a late 16th-century addition (the eastern of the three gabled projections), it is much more likely to have been reset. In this case it may have served as the piscina of the chapel which Chauncy says was "consecrated since the Dissolution" and the location of which is not known.⁶¹ As only part of the painting is now visible, it is not possible to say whether the subject depicted was of a secular or religious nature and this suggestion must remain tentative. All that can really be concluded is that although the house seems to have been reduced in scale by the end of the 16th century, it remained an important building, a status that it was to retain throughout the following century during which further improvements were made.⁶²

Before leaving Wymondley mention should be made of the conduit house, which stands some 500 yards to the north-east of the house. Only fragmentary ruins remain and even these are mainly the result of a reconstruction of the

structure by the East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society in c.1905.⁶³ Chauncy records that the conduit provided "sufficient water to turn the spit in the kitchen (of the house) upon all occasions", a purpose it still served in the mid-19th century,⁶⁴ the supply of piped water to the house being the reason for building the conduit in the first place. Although the conduit may be of monastic origin, the conduit house itself seems more likely to have been erected after the Dissolution, what is known of its former roof structure suggesting that it was built towards the end of the 16th century.

The second phase of post-Dissolution remodelling at Sopwell seems to have taken place in the late 1560s or early 1570s, only some 10 to 15 years after work on the first house was complete. In the second phase, although the hall still occupied the site of the church it was considerably widened and the monastic plan was effectively abandoned, giving way to a fashionable double-courtyard plan. It is the remains of this house which is the principal survival on the site today, the ruined walls of the west range, which is of double width at its northern end, and the south wall of the hall standing to a considerable height.

The circumstances which prompted Lee to embark on such a comprehensive remodelling of his comparatively recently finished first house are not known. Whether, as slightly later at Gorhambury,⁶⁵ it could have been at least partly the result of unfavourable remarks during the royal progress of 1564 is purely speculative, while unlike the period during which Lee constructed the first house, its building does not seem to have coincided with any withdrawal by Lee from public life. Lee remained active in royal service virtually until his death in 1575 and similarly it seems from the archaeological evidence that he continued to work on the house, which was still incomplete when he died.

That many of his intentions for the house were by then fulfilled, however, is suggested by the terms of his will (made in 1570) which states that "if any of the persons mentioned in this entail do altar, change, transforme digge cutt downe or deface the said howses, edifices, buyldynges or walles of the mansion house...and shall not within the space of three years next folowinge the said alterynges etc...in like or better form and fashion ereckt buylde upp or make the same againe...from henceforth the sd persons so doing shall forfeit their interest in the premises".⁶⁶ This is a clear reflection of Lee's pride in his house and also perhaps of his anxiety at not having a male heir. This lack of a son may well have been a long-standing concern of Lee's and may have been the reason why in 1557 he had conveyed the estate to trustees for the use of his younger daughter Anne.⁶⁷ It was, however, his elder daughter, Mary, wife of Humphrey Coningsby, who inherited the property, although whether she continued to live there until her death in 1610 is not known.

That the house remained, even in its apparently incomplete state, an important building is suggested by the imposing appearance it presents in a birdseye perspective view on an undated estate map of c.1600,⁶⁸ which ties in quite neatly with the archaeological and surviving architectural evidence. Similarly, in his manuscript History of St Albans (c.1610) John Shrimpton describes Sopwell as "a fair house."⁶⁹ Shrimpton also states that the "stones and cheife stuffe (were)...taken out of the abbey" and makes no mention of the former nunnery buildings.⁷⁰ Although it is quite certain that building materials from the nunnery must have been re-used and it is possible that in its first phase some of the buildings may have been a direct conversion of the monastic structures, Shrimpton is writing so soon after the completion of Lee's second house, that his claim must be treated with some seriousness.

It is conceivable that the supply of building materials from the already extensively-robbed small nunnery may largely have been exhausted by the erection of Lee's first house, forcing him to resort to using materials from the abbey for his much more extensive second stage of remodelling. There are other reasons too for thinking that Lee may have been more likely to re-use material from the abbey in his second house rather than in the first. Lee was granted the greater part of the abbey buildings only in 1550,⁷¹ by which time work was already under way at Sopwell. It might be argued that Lee's sale of the abbey's domestic buildings in 1551 to its last abbot, Richard Boreman, who it seems entertained hopes of refounding the monastic community,⁷² means that he would not have been able to re-use materials from there at Sopwell, but he may, of course, have stockpiled sufficient for his needs. Furthermore, it is likely that after the death of Mary in 1558 and the final abandonment of any plans to re-found the abbey, there were fewer inhibitions to taking stones from the abbey for recycling elsewhere.

At Ashridge it is more difficult to distinguish the later 16th- and early 17th-century work from that carried out for Elizabeth in the 1540s and 1550s, not least because nothing of either period now survives above ground. The transfer of ownership to the Cheyney family in 1575 when, after a series of leases, the property finally left royal hands can probably be regarded as a watershed. As noted above, the tower and possibly the nave of the monastic church appear to have been converted to residential use after the Dissolution, with only the choir remaining as the chapel of the new house. In 1576 the tomb of Sir Ralph Verney and the 15th-century monument of Sir Richard Whittingham were transferred to the nearby church of Aldbury,⁷³ suggesting that the choir was demolished at about this time.

A house of Ashridge's size, however, must have

continued to have had a chapel and it is possible that it was moved to the ground floor of the former monastic nave below the domestic apartments on its first floor, which would explain the otherwise puzzling reference to the church in James I's grant of the site to Sir Thomas Egerton in 1604.⁷⁴ As part of his remodelling of the house, Egerton built a new chapel, which from Gough's late 18th-century account of the house appears to have adjoined the great hall.⁷⁵ A further chapel was built on the south side of the cloister in 1699, thus returning the wheel full circle.⁷⁶

Egerton's rebuilding of Ashridge was so comprehensive that it tends to overshadow the work carried out by the Cheyney family between 1575 and 1602. It is therefore worth remembering Norden's statement that "this place is lately beautified by the Lord Cheyney", although to precisely what this refers is unknown. Egerton's building activity was largely concentrated between 1604 and 1607, the relative speed with which it was carried out suggesting that it was essentially a remodelling and refurbishment of existing fabric. Some additions were made, however, including the lower Dutch-gabled ranges flanking the great hall and the many two-storey canted bay projections on the south side of the house. While it is conceivable that the so-called White Lodge was a rebuilding of the former monastic gatehouse, both it and its companion Red Lodge are more likely to have been built at this time, along with the large outer court to which the White Lodge formed the entrance.

* * * *

As with those sites examined in Chapter 2, structures from the full range of former monastic buildings were selected for re-use at the sites considered above. It is

perhaps significant, however, that less attention appears to have been paid to the monastic plan at these higher status sites. Indeed, at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate it seems likely that, even in the first period of post-Dissolution activity, the monastic buildings were abandoned and used as no more than a convenient building quarry for the new houses erected nearby. In the first phase at Wymondley, the claustral ranges appear to have been retained with the western part of the nave of the monastic church converted into the hall of the new house. At Sopwell too the claustral plan was followed, with the nave and tower of the nunnery church being transformed into the hall of Lee's first house, although here the archaeological evidence suggests that the walls were rebuilt on their old foundations rather than that the monastic buildings themselves were converted. At both sites, however, the cloister was abandoned in the second phase, at Sopwell being replaced with a larger and fashionable double-courtyard plan and at Wymondley apparently being demolished as the house declined in importance.

At Ashridge the cloister was re-used in both the first and the second post-Dissolution mansions. Here the refectory was converted into the great hall, with the nave and tower of the church, along with the east and west claustral ranges, being transformed into domestic apartments. The external elevation of the refectory overlooked a large outer court, which is more likely to have been created after the Dissolution rather than to have served as the outer precinct of the monastery. Various alterations to the refectory, which was now entered through a porch leading to a screens-passage at the lower end, included the addition of projecting ranges with prominent bay windows at each end. These enabled the building to present the outward appearance of a hall with symmetrical cross-wings in the fashionable H-plan.

Internally, the refectory/hall overlooked the former monastic cloister, which now became the inner courtyard of the new house. As shown above, these conversion works probably took place as early as the 1540s or '50s, the former claustral walks, which may always have been integral in the east and west ranges, being raised in height to form corridor galleries around the courtyard, in what must be regarded for its date as a remarkably innovative design, paralleled in other major monastic conversions such as Newstead and Lacock. That the cloister remained to be incorporated in the successive remodellings which took place until all was destroyed by Wyatt in the early 19th century was probably due to its substantial proportions, its description by Thomas Baskerville in 1682 as "a fine cloister remarkable...for having in paint upon the walls some scripture and monkish stories" paying tribute to its qualities.⁷⁷

* * * *

The earliest re-used building among the higher status sites was the church at Wymondley, which from its trussed rafter roof, lancet windows and west processional doorway can be dated to no later than c.1250. Documentary sources suggest that the claustral ranges retained by Nedeham in his conversion of the 1540s had been extensively remodelled in the 15th century with further repairs in the 1520s and '30s. The church and much of the claustral ranges at Sopwell appear from archaeological evidence to have been built in the 14th century with further remodelling in the 15th century. At Ashridge the lancet windows and the surviving vaulted undercroft of the refectory suggest that it was built in the late 13th or early 14th century, while it appears that the majority of the other claustral buildings were reconstructed during

the 15th century.

Far less certainty attaches to the date of the buildings at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate, but as none of them appears to have been converted to secular use after the Dissolution, this is perhaps not directly relevant. Nevertheless, the stray finds of stonework fragments at Cheshunt suggest the former presence of a major 13th-century ecclesiastical building, while at Markyate the discovery in 1805 of what was probably the east end of the church or chapter house, along with various pieces of stonework, shows that considerable work was carried out on the church in the 13th century. Part of a late 12th-century capital was also found at Markyate in 1805 and although its precise context is unknown, it too may have come from the church. The discovery of these stray finds does not, of course, mean that further work was not undertaken on the church in the Later Middle Ages and the age of the claustral buildings remains unknown.

* * * *

It now remains to examine what is known of the lives and careers of those who adapted to new uses the former monastic buildings considered in this chapter. Unlike some of those discussed in the previous chapter, all the new lay owners referred to here had the authority and resources to do what they wished with their new properties. This is reflected in two principal ways. First, these men (for with the exception of Elizabeth they were all men) do not appear to have felt constrained by the fabric or the lay-out of the buildings which they acquired. This is expressed in the most obvious way at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate where the old monastic buildings were unceremoniously swept away and replaced by new houses on or near the sites. At Sopwell, Lee retained

the claustral plan only while it suited him and even in the first building phase it appears that the monastic buildings were effectively demolished and their walls rebuilt on the old foundations. Lee also displayed his disregard for the medieval buildings and also his status and ambition by transforming the church itself into the hall of his new house.

Such motives may also have inspired Nedeham to make the western part of the church at Wymondley the hall of his new home and here it is likely that the good condition and recent date of the claustral ranges ensured their survival. At Ashridge Elizabeth and her successors, the Cheyneys and the Egertons, clearly had the means to demolish the monastic buildings should they have wished to do so and the fact that they did not is adequate testimony to the high quality of the medieval buildings, which is further brought out by the relatively few structural changes made after the initial conversion in the 1540s and early '50s.

The early date of the conversions discussed in this chapter is in marked contrast to the urban and lower status sites considered earlier. The evidence at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate is not particularly good, but at all three places we can be reasonably confident that the new houses built from the materials of these former nunneries were erected within a decade of the Dissolution. At Beechwood, although it seems likely that the principal conversion was carried out by Sir Richard Page after 1538, it is quite possible that some work had been carried out by Sir John Tregonwell before him. This is suggested partly by the pains that Tregonwell took before the Dissolution to secure the property and also his extreme reluctance to relinquish the house to Page.⁷⁸ It is said that Tregonwell, who had been made a privy councillor by 1532 and who took an active role in the suppression of many monasteries, especially in the south

and west, sometimes complained about the lack of reward he received for his services. Nevertheless, his acquisition of Milton Abbey (Dorset) in 1540 must have proved more than adequate compensation for the loss of Beechwood and there, of course, he was able to embark on a major conversion project.⁷⁹

Page's career was less distinguished than Tregonwell's and at the time of Anne Boleyn's execution he was imprisoned in the Tower. Later, however, he was made a privy councillor and lieutenant of the band of gentlemen pensioners. He attended the christening of Prince Edward in October 1537 and the reception for Anne of Cleves at Greenwich in January 1540 and, if Chauncy is to be believed, he was sufficiently favoured by the crown for the prince to stay at Beechwood "for some time" during his bouts of childhood sickness.⁸⁰

Anthony Denny was one of the most prominent men of his generation and his career is well-enough known for no more than a brief outline to be given here. Denny came from a long-established Hertfordshire family and was born at Cheshunt in 1500. After early service as a diplomat under Sir Francis Bryan, he attracted the attention of the king and his early appointments at court included those of groom of the privy chamber and yeoman of the royal wardrobe. Knighted after the Boulogne campaign of 1544, he succeeded in building up a vast landed estate on the spoils of the monasteries, including St Albans and Waltham. An ardent convert to Protestantism, Denny was instrumental in furthering the Reformation and the story of how he had the courage to warn Henry on his death-bed of his imminent end and the need to repent of his sins is proof of the high esteem in which the king held him. Appointed as an executor to Henry's will, he served as a privy councillor and before his death in 1549 as member for Hertfordshire in Edward VI's first parliament.⁸¹

Relatively little is known of Denny's first son and

heir, Henry, who sold Cheshunt Nunnery ten years before his death at the age of 34 in 1574, but his younger brother, Edward (1547-99), who bought back the property in 1590, held a number of important offices, including those of gentleman of the privy chamber to Elizabeth and governor of Kerry and Desmond in Ireland. He was also member of parliament for Liskeard and later for Tregony in Cornwall.⁸²

Little is known of Humphrey Bourchier who began the conversion works at Markyate but who died, childless, in 1540 with his work on the house "nothing ended". He was a member of the king's household, although what position he held is unknown. Otherwise, we simply have Leland's description of him as the "base" (illegitimate) son of the second Lord Berners, who had translated Froissart's Chronicles and was deputy of Calais until his death in 1533.⁸³ Bourchier's widow, Elizabeth, married George Ferrers in 1541, although it was not until 1548 that he obtained the grant of the site. Ferrers was from a Hertfordshire family and as a lawyer renowned for his oratory came to prominence in 1534 for his publication of an English translation of Magna Carta. In 1542 he was returned as M.P. for Plymouth and although he is said to have taken part in the war against France, his most likely role was as a legal advisor to the king, for which he was rewarded with a bequest of 100 marks in Henry's will. Ferrers, who received the grant of several other ex-monastic properties, continued to serve the crown after Henry's death, helping to suppress Wyatt's rebellion in 1554. In 1567 he became escheator for Hertfordshire and Essex and died in 1579, Markyate remaining with his family until the mid-17th century.⁸⁴

The life and career of James Nedeham, granted Wymondley Priory in 1537, are well documented and only a brief outline is necessary here. The son of a London carpenter, Nedeham was an apprentice and then warden of the London

Carpenters' Company, serving with the king's army in France in the 1520s. He later worked for Wolsey and then for the king at York Place, Westminster and following his appointment as chief master carpenter in 1531 and then surveyor of the king's works in 1532, at the Tower of London, Hampton Court, St Augustine's, Canterbury and various coastal forts, among other places. He was also involved in the demolition and conversion of Dartford Priory and Chertsey Abbey and the recycling of materials from the religious houses of Barking and Merton for the royal palaces at Greenwich and Nonsuch, all projects which would have provided useful experience for his work at Wymondley. Nedeham died in September 1544 while on Henry VIII's Boulogne campaign and was buried there.

Although considered a gentleman, Nedeham had a practical knowledge of the building trade, particularly of carpentry, and it may have been partly this, as well as his rapid rise to prominence, which made him enemies among the long-established clerics of the civil service. On several occasions he was accused of financial mismanagement, but nothing was ever proved against him and the charges failed to dent his reputation as a pushing and able administrator.⁸⁵

Virtually nothing is known of Nedeham's son, John, who inherited Wymondley on his father's death and apparently continued to live there until his own death at the age of 70 in 1591, and we have no way of telling whether it was he or his son, George (1557-1626), who made the late 16th-century additions and alterations to the priory.

Nedeham's successor as surveyor of the king's works, Richard Lee, was born in c.1513 of a Hertfordshire family and it is likely that both his father and grandfather were masons. He first came to prominence in the king's army at Calais and from 1536 to 1542 he was surveyor and paymaster of the fortifications there. In 1538 he advised Thomas Wriothesley on the conversion of Titchfield and in 1544 he

was inspecting and advising on royal fortifications in the north, being present at the attack on Edinburgh in the spring of that year. This led to his knighthood in October 1544, at about which time he became surveyor of the king's works.

Lee's passage into the ranks of the elite was certainly aided by his marriage to Margaret, daughter of Sir Richard Grenville who had been with him at Calais, and his own ambitious and forceful personality. In early 1545 he was responsible for the restoration of the defences at Calais and Boulogne, but after 1547 when he accompanied Protector Somerset in his campaign against the Scots, he resigned the post and withdrew from public life for nearly a decade, during which time he built the first house at Sopwell. In 1557, however, Lee returned to royal service and was heavily involved for the next few years in the refortification of Berwick and the Scottish border. In 1560 he prepared plans for Upnor Castle (Kent) and was again involved in works at Berwick. In 1562 Cecil sent Lee to Dieppe and Le Havre and he remained in demand for his work as a military engineer almost until the end of his life, the earl of Essex requesting that he should build a fort near Belfast as late as 1573. Lee died in 1575.⁸⁶

Relatively little is known of Henry, Lord Cheyney who was in his mid-thirties when he acquired Ashridge after it finally left royal ownership in 1575. He had been commissioner of the peace in Kent, where he was a prominent landowner, in 1564 and 1569, a commissioner for enforcing the Act of Uniformity in the dioceses of Lincoln and Peterborough in 1571 and in 1573 he was made Sheriff of Kent.⁸⁷ Although Cheyney died in 1587 his family continued to own Ashridge until 1602 when it passed, through various agents, to Sir Thomas Egerton. Already in his sixties when he bought Ashridge, Egerton was one of the most distinguished political figures of his day, having served as M.P. for his native Cheshire between 1584

and 1587 and being made Attorney-General in 1592. Two years later he was knighted and appointed Master of the Rolls, becoming in 1596 Lord Keeper of the Seal. Shortly after his accession in 1603 James I made Egerton Lord Chancellor, a post he was to hold until his death in 1617.⁸⁸

A number of shared characteristics appear to link the men who acquired the higher status former monastic properties in the first generation after the Dissolution. Of those whose ages are known, all were relatively young, with Tregonwell at the age of 39 being the second oldest recorded recipient of a former monastic property in Hertfordshire at this period, Sir John Daunce referred to in the last chapter being in his fifties when he acquired St Margaret's, Nettleden in 1538. Anthony Denny, Ferrers and Lee were from local families, Denny and Lee having close connections before the Dissolution with the houses which they were to be granted. James Nedeham too was involved with Wymondley before its suppression and it is not surprising that with the added advantage of their prominent positions in the king's service, such men were able to secure the properties they most desired. That an important office at court, a foreknowledge or even an active role in the Dissolution did not always bring a man what he sought is, however, demonstrated by the failure of Bouchier to buy Markyate or of Tregonwell to retain the lease of Beechwood and serve as a reminder that all was ultimately in the gift of the king.

The crown's usual method of disposing of former monastic property in the years immediately after the Dissolution was by lease. Leases were usually for a period of 21 years, although later, especially after 1550, the number of years' purchase was often increased to 30 or more.⁸⁹ Very few outright gifts of monastic sites were made and none is recorded in Hertfordshire. Unlike some of the leases of the lower status sites considered in the

previous chapter, the lease rather than a sale of a site does not seem to have acted as a disincentive to conversion or other building work. At Beechwood and Markyate, the fact that the properties were initially leased rather than sold to their grantees did not prevent an apparently immediate start on building work, while at Wymondley there is nothing to show that it was the transfer from a lease to ownership of the property in 1538 that prompted Nedeham to begin conversion works, although the possibility cannot, of course, be ruled out.

Indeed, whether the grantees were lessees or owners of the property, the real key to major conversion works, as at the lower status sites, was a long period of occupation by an individual or family and the degree of security the grantee felt in his new home. Thus, while work could begin immediately a site was granted to a new lay occupant, as at Beechwood and Markyate, it could be a number of years in a case like Sopwell before conversion works began in earnest. At Ashridge, circumstances were different again, its retention in royal ownership leading to the creation of a house of the first rank in the 1540s and early '50s, followed by a period of abandonment and partial neglect from the mid-'50s to 1575, during which time it was let to a series of tenants, followed by a period of renewed investment and rebuilding, first under the Cheyneys and then from 1604 under the Egertons.

REFERENCES

1. L.P., xiii (2), no.74.
2. Dugdale, iv, 301-2; H.R.O., 17,244.
3. John Chandler, John Leland's Itinerary, Travels in Tudor England (1993), xxx.
4. H.R.O., 17,248; 17,255.
5. H.R.O., 17,255.
6. I.V. Bullard, Flamstead, Its Church and History (1902), 6.
7. P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
8. Leland, i, 104.
9. Chauncy, ii, 514.
10. H.R.O., 17,255.
11. L.P., xi, g.519 (12); P.R.O., C 66/1004/584.
12. P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
13. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1606.
14. H.L.L. Denny, 'Biography of the right honourable Sir Anthony Denny', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3, pt.ii (1906), 210-11.

15. P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
16. Ordnance Survey maps, various editions; Dugdale, iv, 328.
17. H.R.O., Oldfield Drawings, II, 390; B.L., Add. MS. 32,349, fol.45; Bodl., Gough Herts. 16 and 18, MS. notes between pp.10 and 11 of annotated copies of Salmon's History of Hertfordshire belonging to Richard Gough.
18. Dugdale, iv, 328.
19. William Ellis, Campagna of London (1791), 39.
20. Leland, i, 104.
21. B.L., Add. MS. 32,349, fol.6.
22. Smith (1993), 218.
23. Gil Burleigh et al, Wymondley Priory, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation (North Herts. District Council Museums, 1989), 4.
24. P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
25. Noel Farris, The Wymondleys (1989), 157.
26. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1606, m.11.
27. Chauncy, ii, 110.
28. D.O.E. List of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, National Monument Number 11,518.

29. L.P., xii (1), no.571 (1); H.R.O., IV. A. 1; L.P., xv, no.282 (123); P.R.O., E 117/12/30.
30. P.R.O., SC6/Hen. VIII/1606, m.8.
31. Bodl., MS. Rawl. D. 809.
32. P.R.O., E 315/361, fols.63-63b.
33. Cal. Pat. R., Ed. VI, iv, 5; John Shrimpton, The Antiquities of Verulam and St Albans (c.1610), 78: MS. volume in H.R.O., 66,296; D.N.B., xi, 811.
34. John Harvey, English Mediaeval Architects (revd. edn., 1984), 175-7 ; King's Works, iii, 13-14, iv, 410-11.
35. Mark Girouard, 'Salisbury Hall, Hertfordshire- II', Country Life, 126 (29 October, 1959), 711; Pevsner, 322-3; Smith (1993), 157.
36. Simon Thurley, The Royal Palaces of Tudor England (1993), 106-9.
37. P.R.O., E 351/3202.
38. V.C.H., ii, 15, 470.
39. J.S. Rogers, 'The manor and houses at Gorhambury', Trans. St Albans and Herts. Archit. and Arch. Soc., n.s., 4 (1933-5), 41.
40. Knowles (1953), 176; H.J. Todd, The History of the College of Bonhommes at Ashridge (1823), 83.
41. Todd, op. cit., 84-6.

42. Cal. Pat. R., Ed. VI, iii, 238; Todd, op. cit, 31-2; an original copy of the lease is kept in the present house.
43. John Skelton, The Garden of Laurell (1523): see A. Dyce (ed.), The Poetical Works of John Skelton, i (1843), 361-424 and L.J. Lloyd, John Skelton (1938), 123-30.
44. L.P., v, 321, 751.
45. Cal. S.P. Dom., ix, 489.
46. B.L., Harl. MS. 6986, fol.15, Lansd. MS. 1236, fol. 39; Portland MS. II, Historical Manuscripts Comm., 13th Rep. App., pt.2 (1893), 7; Cussans, iii, pt.1, 138.
47. Val. Eccl., iv, 227.
48. John Norden, Speculi Britanniae Pars, The Description of Hartfordshire (1598), 11-12.
49. As at Lacock and Newstead. See Chapter 4.
50. The Topographer, ii, no.3 (March 1790), 150.
51. Todd, op. cit. (note 40), 60-4.
52. P.R.O., SP 12/12/38.
53. P.R.O., E 351/3202.
54. Cal. S.P. Dom., Addenda 1566-79, 16.

55. H.R.O., AH. 2770.
56. Smith (1993), 55.
57. Clutterbuck, ii, 108; V.C.H., iii, 448, 454.
58. Smith (1993), 124-5.
59. Clive Rouse, 'Domestic wall and panel paintings in Hertfordshire', Arch. Jnl., 146 (1989), 448.
60. D.O.E. 54th List of Historic Buildings, District of North Hertfordshire (28 May 1987), 87; Stuart Rigold, 'Wymondley Priory', Med. Arch., 18 (1974), 191.
61. Chauncy, i, 110.
62. George Nedeham was assessed for 16 hearths here in 1662; P.R.O., E 179/375/30.
63. 'Twenty Fourth Excursion', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3 (1906), 230-1.
64. Chauncy, i, 110; V.C.H., iii, 189.
65. Eric Mercer, English Art, 1553-1625 (1962), 14.
66. P.R.O., C 142/189/86.
67. Cal. Pat. R., Philip & Mary, 1557-8, 243.
68. H.R.O., IV. A. 25.
69. Shrimpton, op. et loc. cit. (note 33).

70. Ibid.
71. Cal. Pat. R., Ed. VI, iv, 5.
72. Doggett (1991), 50.
73. See Appendix (Ashridge).
74. Bodl., MS. Willis 102, fol.15v; 40, fols.139-40.
75. Bodl., Gough Herts. 18; MS. account in annotated copy of Salmon's History of Hertfordshire, belonging to Richard Gough, between pp.134-8 of published volume.
76. Todd, op. cit. (note 40), 67.
77. Portland MS. II, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 13th Rep. App., pt.2 (1893), 306.
78. L.P., xi, nos.1390, 1391; xiii (2), no.74.
79. L.P., xv, g.282 (90); Howard, 203.
80. Chauncy, ii, 514.
81. Denny, op. cit. (note 14), 197-216.
82. H.L.L. Denny, 'Biography of Sir Edward Denny', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 2 (1904), 247-60.
83. D.N.B., ii, 920-2.
84. S.T. Bindoff (ed.), The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1509-1558, ii (1982), 129-31.

85. Harvey, op. cit. (note 34), 210-13; King's Works, iii, 10-14.
86. See note 34.
87. Cal. Pat. R., 1560-3, 149; P.R.O., C 66/998/125; C 66/1073/1894; C 66/1077/2161; Cal. S.P. Dom., 1547-80, 471.
88. D.N.B., vi, 579-81.
89. Joyce Youings, Sixteenth-Century England (1984), 161-2. See also Helen Miller, Henry VIII and the English Nobility (1986), ch.7.

Chapter Four

The conversion of monastic buildings: blind alley or wasted opportunity?

It has frequently been stated that the claustral buildings of a former monastery would most easily lend themselves to re-use.¹ Structures such as the dormitory, refectory, kitchen, lay brothers' quarters or guest range were all of domestic character and function and could be adapted with the minimum of difficulty to secular residential use after the Dissolution. This could involve little structural alteration to the fabric and in the case of some buildings, such as the kitchen, the transition from monastic to lay ownership could in theory involve no changes to the building at all. Similarly, the large open space and internal volume of the refectory, whether open to the roof from ground or first floor, was well suited to a new use as the great hall of a secular mansion, as at Ashridge, Cleeve (Somerset) or Horsham St Faith in Norfolk.²

In cases where more than one of these buildings was situated in the claustral ranges and the physical condition of the buildings was good enough to encourage re-use, this could lead to the retention of the claustral lay-out in a new courtyard-plan house. The recycling of these buildings would be even more likely to occur where they had been constructed or rebuilt in the century preceding the Dissolution. While refectories or kitchens erected in the 13th or 14th centuries would usually be obsolete or their fabric in desperate need of repair by the 1530s, buildings post-dating 1400 could often be expected to meet many of the stylistic fashions and functional requirements still evident in such buildings in the first part of the 16th century and, because of their more recent date, they would be likely to be in better

condition than their earlier counterparts.

Although the Hertfordshire sample contains no certain examples, superiors' lodgings were frequently situated in the cloister and were often prime candidates for re-use. Not only were they entirely domestic in character but, as a result of the status of their former occupants, they could be expected to provide more lavish accommodation and a higher standard of privacy and comfort than other claustral buildings. Furthermore, many superiors' lodgings were of very recent date. "As the life-style of an abbot had become increasingly secularized",³ so monastic communities had spent an ever growing proportion of their income on the domestic quarters of their heads. The Benedictines of Milton Abbas (Dorset) and Muchelney (Somerset) built new abbots' lodgings in the years around 1500,⁴ while among the other orders the Augustinian houses of Notley (Bucks.) and St Osyth (Essex) and the Cistercian abbeys of Cleeve, Forde and Fountains provide some of the best examples of this practice.⁵ Equally sumptuous was Abbot King's remodelling of the superior's lodgings at Thame (Oxon.) in the 1530s, further evidence (if any were needed) that Bernard of Clairvaux's directives had been largely forgotten by Cistercian abbots of the 16th century. King's work included a new three-storey tower containing chambers with linenfold-panelled walls and fashionable Renaissance plasterwork. It is no surprise then to find that with very little modification these lodgings formed the nucleus of the post-Dissolution house of Thame Park.⁶

Whether the superior's lodgings formed an integral part of the cloister as at Norton (Cheshire), were totally divorced from it as at Much Wenlock (Shropshire) or as possibly appears to have been the case at Hertford,⁷ or only tenuously linked in cases like The Biggin in Hitchin, Battle, Castle Acre (Norfolk) or Canterbury Cathedral Priory,⁸ they could provide an enormous incentive for re-

use and it is certainly no coincidence that at all these sites extensive remodelling had taken place shortly before the Dissolution.

Although it was usually one or more of the claustral buildings which were most likely to be converted to domestic use after the Dissolution, other buildings could be adapted in this way. Thus it was the gatehouses at King's Langley, Beaulieu (Hants.), Bolton Priory (Yorks.), Bromfield (Shropshire), Montacute and Hinton in Somerset and Maxstoke (Warwicks.) which formed the basis for the post-suppression conversion schemes at these sites, while the gatehouse from Ramsey in Huntingdonshire was dismantled and re-erected at nearby Hinchinbroke (itself a former monastic site) in c.1600.⁹ In towns, however, while the Hertfordshire sample provides no examples, the gatehouse, which so often had provided a very real defence for the monastic community against its secular neighbours, was more likely to find a civic use. For instance, the gatehouse at St Albans became the sessions house and those at Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk) were put to a variety of uses, only the Norman gate tower remaining in ecclesiastical use after the Dissolution as the bell tower of the adjoining Church of St James.¹⁰

In other instances where great courtyard houses emerged from monastic fabric, it may appear surprising that the monastic gatehouse did not survive more often as the gatehouse to the new house. There are, of course, cases like Battle, Michelham (Sussex) and St Osyth's where this did occur,¹¹ but these usually belong to the 1540s and 1550s and by the later Elizabethan period there was a tendency for gatehouses to be broader and lower in keeping with the classical form, as at Burton Agnes in Yorkshire and Charlecote (Warwicks.).¹² This meant that the tall and ostentatious, if sometimes forbidding, medieval gatehouse with its emphasis on display but which so often concealed the buildings behind from view, was not considered

appropriate in a context such as Ashridge where views through to the house beyond were positively encouraged.

While the frequency with which individual claustral buildings were converted to residential use cannot be doubted, it should not be assumed that the process was always straightforward. Although as long ago as 1968 Dickinson estimated that well over half of the houses of Augustinian canons were converted wholly or in part to domestic use and that in the majority of cases this involved the claustral buildings,¹³ the Augustinian order as yet remains the only one to be studied at all systematically, and even in this case, as Dickinson himself admitted, the treatment was far from exhaustive.

What is clear, however, is that it was unusual for complete claustral ranges to be retained in residential conversions. This can be explained in a number of ways. First, in the majority of cases the various ranges of the cloister were of different dates and were not usually directly linked to each other, having different floor and eaves levels. Second, as Howard has pointed out "in the conventional courtyard house, such as Compton Wynyates (Warwicks.), the entrance range faced the largest ground-floor space, the hall, across the court, but in the monastery the western, entrance range faced the subdivided chapter-house range".¹⁴ This meant that the claustral range which most readily lent itself for conversion to the hall of a secular house, the raised frater, would lose some of its potential attraction by its usual position at right-angles to the monastic entrance range, making it unlikely that both ranges would be retained in a conversion to a courtyard house of the first order. In the case of the earlier Cistercian houses where the refectory had characteristically been built on a north-south axis to the south of the south range, the relationship to the western entrance range would be equally inconvenient, as is shown at Netley where it was demolished as part of the

post-Dissolution conversion.¹⁵

In practice, of course, where there were overwhelming reasons to convert the frater into the hall of a new mansion this might simply lead to the abandonment of the old monastic entrance range and the creation of a new entrance range on the site of the church to face the hall. This is well illustrated at Titchfield where it seems that Wriothesley may well have had in mind the contemporary advice of Andrew Boorde, who in his A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Health (1542) wrote "Then devyde the lodgynges by the cyrcuyte of the quadryuyall courte, and let the gate-howse be opposyt or against the hall-dore (not dyrectly) but the hall-dore standynge a base, and the gate-howse in the mydle of the front entrynge in to the place."¹⁶ A plan of precisely this sort also appears to have been created at Ashridge, although here a new courtyard and gatehouse were laid out to the north of the former frater.

In terms of its position with regard to the entrance range, the dormitory might emerge as a strong contender for re-use as the hall of a new house, but although there are instances of this happening as at the Premonstratensian monastery of Egglestone in Yorkshire, the Augustinian house of Launde (Leics.) or in rather different contexts at St Helen's, Bishopsgate in London where Thomas Kendall bought the east claustral range on behalf of the Leathersellers' Company in 1544, or at Whitefriars, Coventry,¹⁷ the dormitory's chances of retention in this way were often blighted by its being placed "inconveniently upstairs and off-centre, stretching beyond the square of the cloister itself",¹⁸ and there are no examples of the east range being re-used as a great hall in the Hertfordshire sample.

Where the east range was retained in the post-Dissolution house it was usually as part of the conversion of the whole cloister as at Ashridge, Sopwell and

Wymondley or, outside the county, at places like Lacock and Newstead, in all of which cases it appears to have been used as domestic apartments. At the urban Hertfordshire sites of The Biggin and Hitchin Priory, the function of the retained east range is unclear, but at the former its narrow width suggests that it served chiefly as a corridor gallery linking the first-floor apartments of the north and south ranges.

Another factor which worked against the retention of the east range was the likelihood that, as it contained two of the buildings most essential to monastic life- the dormitory and the chapter house, it would have been partially demolished at the suppression or at least "defaced" by the king's commissioners to prevent the possibility of the monks returning.¹⁹ This may well account for the disappearance of the east range at many sites, including Ware, where the east range was demolished, although the south and part of the west ranges were retained in the 16th-century house.

It is therefore the case that while "it might seem that adapting the four basic ranges of a cloister into a house would be relatively straightforward",²⁰ there were often considerable difficulties in retaining the whole of the claustral ranges in conversions to courtyard houses. In this respect the Hertfordshire sample appears to be far from typical, with examples of such conversions from the highest rank at Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley to those of a slightly lower social level at The Biggin and Hitchin Priory. It is almost certain that in the relatively rare cases where this did occur elsewhere, as at Lacock or the first post-Dissolution phase of Walden Abbey (Audley End), and apparently at Mottisfont,²¹ this was due to the unusually good condition of the claustral ranges, and this also seems to be the case with the Hertfordshire examples.

In the Hertfordshire sample, the cloisters of Ashridge, Wymondley, The Biggin and Hitchin Priory were all rebuilt

in the 15th century, while at Mottisfont and Walden the satisfactory state of the cloisters probably owed much to the fact that they too had been rebuilt in the 15th century, which is almost certainly the reason why they were left intact at the suppression. At Lacock there was already a passage at upper level on the south side of the cloister connecting the former abbess's chapel in the west range with the dormer in the east range. This somewhat unusual feature probably encouraged the new lay owner, Sir William Sharington, to retain all of the cloister and to build new connecting corridors on the upper floors of the east and north ranges.²²

Similar situations may have existed at Ashridge and Hitchin Priory where the claustral walks were retained in the mid-16th century conversions. The evidence is less clear at Wymondley, while at The Biggin the west claustral walk appears to have been replaced by a timber Tuscan colonnade. At Sopwell, where most of the cloister seems to have been no later than 14th century in date and was therefore perhaps somewhat old-fashioned if not dilapidated by the time of the Dissolution, its age may have been a contributory factor in the decision to demolish and rebuild it on the old foundations. This can be contrasted with Newstead where, although much of the cloister dated to the early 13th century with the west range possibly having been remodelled c.1300,²³ Sir John Byron was not deterred from retaining the whole of it as the nucleus of his new house. As at Lacock, access corridors were formed at first-floor level by building above the old claustral walks although, unlike Lacock, here they were rebuilt, possibly because of structural weakness. "It may well be that Newstead is the only example among converted monasteries where a double-storey cloister/corridor runs around the entire internal court, uninterrupted by a gatehouse, a hall bay window or some other feature."²⁴

These examples of complete cloister conversions are not, of course, the only cases where this occurred, but although the relatively small Hertfordshire sample contains three high status examples- Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley- such conversions were perhaps more common at a slightly lower social level, as at The Biggin and Hitchin Priory in Hertfordshire and elsewhere at Hinchingbroke and Ivychurch (Wilts.), where all of the claustral ranges were initially retained in the post-Dissolution houses.²⁵

Nevertheless, Ashridge, Lacock, Mottisfont and Newstead are particularly interesting. Unlike other places where the whole of the cloister was initially retained, such as Titchfield where Sir Thomas Wriothesley drove his celebrated gatehouse through the nave of the former church, Battle Abbey or Leeze Priory (Essex), the retention of the claustral walks themselves is significant. All are early conversions, Leland's description of the house at Mottisfont as "onperfecte" suggesting that work had already stopped on the death of William, Lord Sandys in 1540,²⁶ while although Leland makes no mention of the work at Lacock in the description of his journey to the west country in 1542,²⁷ it is unlikely that Sharington would have waited much longer than this before starting the work of conversion there. Similarly, although Leland's reference to the ruins at Newstead in 1544 can be taken as an indication that conversion work had yet to begin in earnest,²⁸ the delay was probably only temporary and may have been attributable simply to uncertainty over the stability of the claustral walks. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Ashridge and probably Wymondley too were early conversions. Whatever the exact starting date on all these houses there can be no doubt that they were conversions of the first generation and were carried out by men of far more than local importance, several of whom had been involved in the suppression of the monasteries.

Like Wriothesley at Titchfield and Paulet at Netley,

Sandys, Sharington and Byron knew exactly what they wanted from their new properties and their extensive lobbying of the crown for their acquisition immediately before the Dissolution suggests that they already had a good idea how their architectural ambition could be achieved,²⁹ while the speed with which Nedeham set about the remodelling at Wymondley suggests that he too was similarly motivated. It is indeed unfortunate that the extensive correspondence relating to the transformation of Titchfield is the exception rather than the rule.

If instances of the total re-use of the claustral buildings are relatively rare, a number of explanations can be offered for this. Despite the Hertfordshire and other examples mentioned above, the small size of many cloisters was often a disincentive in conversions of the first rank and it is perhaps no surprise that even in some cases where the new house followed a courtyard plan as at Battle, the monastic cloister was relegated to being little more than a service court, while at Wilton it now appears that the courtyard plan of the mid 16th-century house may not have been based on the dimensions of the monastic cloister at all.³⁰

In the case of friaries where cloisters were already particularly compact owing to the small size of the communities involved, the lack of claustral walks could prove a further disadvantage as the fact that the connecting walks were internal restricted the amount of space available on the ground floor. Nevertheless, as the Hertfordshire conversions of Ware and Hitchin Priory show, this was not an insurmountable difficulty as the principal accommodation of both friaries and their post-Dissolution successors was on the first floor.

The comparative infrequency with which claustral walks at houses of the regular orders were re-used intact or, as at Lacock or Newstead and possibly Ashridge and The Biggin, raised in height to form "corridor-galleries" may

result from their commonly being roofed in lead which would usually have been removed by the royal commissioners before the transfer to lay ownership. Another explanation may be that, while connecting corridors or "cloisters" as they were contemporaneously known are by no means unknown in early Tudor houses like Cadhay (Devon) and Hengrave (Suffolk), they are heavily outnumbered by houses of courtyard plan where there are no corridors connecting the various ranges, examples including Compton Wynyates, Cotehele in Cornwall, Cowdray (Sussex), Ingatestone in Essex, Sutton Place (Surrey) and Temple Newsam (Yorks.).³¹ As Howard has commented "It seems that no early Tudor courtyard house quite took the step of unifying an inner court by means of a continuous cloister until the conversions of the monasteries themselves sometimes dictated the preservation of the monastic arrangement".³² For the reasons explained above, the circumstances in which this could take place were relatively uncommon and may have contributed to the failure of the connecting corridor or gallery to realise its full potential in Elizabethan architecture.

The extent to which claustral or indeed other buildings were re-used may be blurred by the accident of survival and the many rebuildings which have taken place since the Dissolution. This may seem an obvious point but it is worth remembering that many monastic conversions, such as Ashridge or Bermondsey Abbey, south of the Thames in London, are now recorded only through 19th-century or earlier drawings.³³ As explained in Chapter 1, this difficulty is even more acute with regard to monastic conversions than to other classes of medieval or 16th-century building, as post-Dissolution accretions have so often been removed in the desire to see a building returned to its "original" form.

The Hertfordshire sample is further evidence that the instances in which the monastic church was converted to

residential use are far more frequent than has been commonly supposed. Earlier studies such as Copeland's work on Buckland tended to exaggerate the rarity of such conversions but more recently a number of examinations of individual buildings and Howard's general survey have shown that the re-use of the church was in fact relatively widespread. It has sometimes been suggested that the internal volume of the church with the whole structure open to the roof might deter domestic conversion but this would not necessarily be so where the nave or other part of the church was re-used as the great hall of a secular mansion as at Leez Priory or Netley.³⁴ In other cases like Buckland, Hinchinbroke and Mottisfont as well as Sopwell and Wymondley and possibly The Biggin and Hitchin Priory in Hertfordshire, where the nave was converted into a two-storey hall, it was relatively simple to insert a first floor and fireplaces to transform the building in this way. Similarly, at Ashridge where it appears that the former church was transformed into domestic apartments, the conversion was affected in much the same way. Certainly, the tendency to insert first floors and fireplaces into the open halls of secular buildings from the early 16th century onwards would have provided a precedent for similar work to churches and the technical problems posed by such an operation would have been easily overcome by the Tudor builder.

In many cases, however, the church, along with the dormer, chapter house, frater and other claustral buildings would have been "defaced" by the king's commissioners at the suppression. It is important to remember that the reason this was done was simply to render the buildings uninhabitable in order to prevent the monastic community from re-establishing itself. Although in some counties like Lincolnshire the destruction could be very thorough,³⁵ it was more usual for it to amount to no more than breaking the windows and removing the roof

covering, especially if, as at King's Langley or Sopwell, it was of lead. The buildings would then be left to the vagaries of the weather and plunder by local people, who are likely to have viewed the abandoned structures as a convenient source of building materials.

In the event some were soon to mourn the passing of the monasteries- "it was never merie world since"-,³⁶ a trend which was to grow more noticeable by the end of the century, especially among antiquaries and other members of the intelligentsia, and certainly not one confined to those with Catholic sympathies. It was, of course, not only the dispersal of monastic libraries and other treasures and the despoliation of the buildings themselves which were to be seen as a cause for regret, but also the disappearance from English life of the monastery as charitable and social institution. It seems to have been this that was uppermost in the mind of John Shrimpton of St Albans when he wrote in c.1610: "Howsoever these things were applyed and used by the papists, yet were they the gifts and religious offerings of devout men, and therefore ought to have been bestowed to the mentainance of learninge and releife of the poore, and not to mentaine the pride and prodigallity of those to whom both religion lerning and charity was wanting."³⁷ The interest of Shrimpton's contemporary, Sir John Oglander, in the monastic past was more overtly antiquarian in character, leading him to embark on an excavation of the once great Cistercian abbey of Quarr on the Isle of Wight when he inherited the property in 1607.³⁸ Weever and Fuller were by no means the first to criticise the destruction of former church property, and even actual contemporaries of the Dissolution such as Leland and John Bale seem not to have been unaware of the importance of what was being destroyed or looted.³⁹

Melancholic regret for what had gone or antiquarian interest in what remained would not, of course, have had

such strong a grip on the less high-minded. Thus the remains of Repton Priory in Derbyshire were apparently speedily removed one Sunday in Mary's reign by one Gilbert Thacker, determined to "destroy the nest, for fear the birds should build therein again".⁴⁰ Equally typical of the unscrupulous or opportunistic man is the oft-quoted remark of Michael Sherbrook's father when questioned by his son as to why he had removed timber from the bell-frame of Roche Abbey in Yorkshire when he had held the monks in high esteem- "What should I do...might I not as well as others have some Profit of the Spoil of the Abbey? For I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did".⁴¹

Despite the instructions to the king's commissioners that they were to "pull down to the ground all the walls of the churches, stepulls, cloysters, fraterys, dorters, chapter howsys" and the like,⁴² the degree to which the "defacing" of the church and claustral buildings was official government policy is unclear and "as happened so often in Tudor affairs, there were certainly gaps of varying dimensions between central precept and local practice".⁴³ It is particularly likely that buildings would have been spared from major demolition works in cases like Beechwood, Markyate and Wymondley in Hertfordshire or Mottisfont and Titchfield in Hampshire where the site passed quickly from the crown to other hands, although even here the most valuable materials such as lead or the copper from the church's bells were excluded from the conditions of sale or lease and reserved to the king.

Although it is no longer fashionable to ascribe any reluctance to convert the monastic church itself into a house to any moral or religious objections and there is no evidence for this concern in Hertfordshire, such scruples did in fact exist. An example of this is provided by John Crayford's and Ronald Lathom's letter of January 1538 to

Thomas Wriothesley's wife concerning the conversion of Titchfield, suggesting that no harm could come from the sale of "marble stones, aulters, ymages, tables etc." with the words- "Mres (Mistress) Wriothesley nor yo neither be not meticulous ne scrupulous to make sale of such holly (holy) thinge having ensample of a goode devoute bisshop of Rome called Alexander whos epitaphie ys writ after this sorte: vendit Alexander cruces altaria Christi vendere jure potest/ emerat illius prius".⁴⁴ Superstition of this sort is even more likely to have been prevalent among the workmen engaged in the physical process of demolition and conversion. Again Titchfield provides the example, Wriothesley being advised in another letter that one of the carpenters "stayeth from his labour taking down the Church of the Abbey because we wold be loth to adventure wyt hym before the change of the moon".⁴⁵ Nevertheless, instances such as this are likely to have been little more than an irritation to men like Wriothesley or Lee and Nedeham in Hertfordshire and certainly insufficient to thwart ambitious conversion plans.

* * * *

The scale and type of work undertaken at an individual site was to a large extent conditioned by the ideas and aspirations of the new owner. At the Dissolution all former monastic sites passed into royal hands but the great majority were soon leased, sold or granted away. The precise details of this process are not directly relevant to this thesis, but in general the transfer from royal to lay ownership was remarkably quick and it has been estimated that by 1547 almost two-thirds of former monastic property had been alienated in this way. By 1558 this figure had risen to over 75% and the remaining lands were sold by Elizabeth and the early Stuarts.⁴⁶

In the relatively few cases where the crown held on to former monastic property for any significant time, the resulting conversion works could be spectacular as at Ashridge, St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury or Dartford Priory but they could also be low-key as at St Albans where only the Great Court and the stables remained with the crown after 1550, earlier plans for the conversion of the domestic buildings apparently having come to little or nothing.⁴⁷ From the Hertfordshire sample only Ashridge remained in royal hands for some time after the Dissolution, but in general the comparative lack of interest that the crown showed in converting monastic buildings which remained in its ownership may have stemmed from the fact that it had sufficient resources to build afresh rather than needing to adapt outmoded and inconvenient buildings to domestic use.

The same could equally have applied, however, to the first rank of royal favourites and other members of the nobility. Men such as Lee, Wriothesley, Paulet, Nedeham, Sandys, Sir Anthony Denny and Sir Richard Rich in the first generation, and Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Francis Willoughby, Sir Thomas Egerton and Sir John Thynne in the second, all had the means to build on virgin sites and indeed did so, but they all also converted monastic buildings or at least re-used materials from former monasteries to construct new houses. Furthermore, Sandys even abandoned his great house of The Vyne, finished only in the 1520s, in favour of Mottisfont as his principal residence.⁴⁸

A potential trap when considering the residential conversion of former monastic buildings is to assume too readily that if a man was granted a site he would automatically wish to use at least some of the buildings for domestic purposes. As at St Margaret's, Nettleden, however, this may not always have been the case and frequently the grantee may simply have farmed the land and

allowed the buildings to fall into decay or leased them to a local tenant who is likely to have done little or nothing to them. Thus two of the country's best-known monasteries, Rievaulx and Fountains, were effectively ignored by their new owners at the Dissolution, although many of the materials of the latter were re-used in the construction of nearby Fountains Hall by Sir Richard Proctor in the early 17th century.⁴⁹ Likewise, of the many sites acquired by men such as Sir Anthony Denny or Sir Richard Rich, at only a few were houses of the first rank created from their monastic predecessors. For every Buckland, Sopwell or Titchfield there are scores of monastic sites the buildings of which were abandoned or partially demolished and adapted to farming or, in fewer cases, industrial use, while in other instances like Beechwood or Markyate, new country houses were constructed close by, re-using materials from the former monastic buildings.

Another contributory factor to the late conversion of many monastic buildings below the highest social level was the time needed for the families involved to acquire sufficient resources to carry out major works of adaptive re-use. In many cases it was not financially possible to undertake major schemes until the often crippling mortgages with which the property had been purchased in the first place were paid off.⁵⁰ As is now commonly acknowledged, very few former monastic sites were given away by the crown and the great majority were sold or leased.⁵¹ In the years immediately following the Dissolution leases were particularly common and although the Hertfordshire evidence at higher status sites like Beechwood and Markyate does not seem to support this idea, the insecurity of tenure that this provided, plus the fact that the ownership of the property concerned remained with the crown, may have proved a further disincentive to conversion. This certainly appears to have been so at St

Margaret's, Nettleden, and it is unlikely to be coincidental that even at the highest social level there are many cases where conversion was postponed until leases had been superseded by purchase, Wymondley and Newstead being but two examples of this probably widespread practice.⁵²

In other cases, conversion works were not carried out by the families of the original grantees but by succeeding owners, whose families were to own the site for many generations thereafter. Examples of this sort include Thame Park, where after a relatively brief time during which the property formed part of the endowments of the new diocese of Oxford, the original secular grantee, Lord Williams of Thame, seems to have done little to the buildings and it was left to the Wenmans, who bought the site in 1559, to carry out the first major phase of post-monastic work, the family continuing to own the property until early this century.⁵³ Similar patterns can be detected in the Hertfordshire sample at Hitchin Priory and elsewhere at Forde, St Osyth's Priory and Wroxton (Oxon.).⁵⁴ At Ashridge a change of ownership in the early 17th century led to a remodelling of the earlier conversion, while at Audley End this prompted a total reworking of the previous relatively modest conversion.⁵⁵ That it was not always a change in family which prompted major rebuilding work is shown, however, from the Hertfordshire evidence by examples like Markyate and Royston and from further afield by Elstow in Bedfordshire and Wilton. In some cases the original instigator of conversion works could remodel his own work, as did Lee at Sopwell and Sir John Thynne at Longleat.⁵⁶ More rarely a house could be reduced in size towards the end of the century, as seems to have happened at Wymondley.

It is not easy to explain why there are so many instances where ownership by the families of the original post-Dissolution grantees was short-lived. By the middle

of the 17th century writers such as Fuller and Sir Henry Spelman were anxious to ascribe this to what they considered to be the sacrilegious treatment of monastic sites by new lay owners, attributing the misfortunes of various families to their involvement in the demolition and conversion of monastic buildings, while as early as c.1610 John Shrimpton was referring to "the impious sacraledg comitted at that time (the Dissolution) heaven lift not long unpunished, as by many examples I would declare were it not for giving offence to these these envious times".⁵⁷ Spelman, in particular, sought to prove a direct link between the secular use of former monasteries and the downfall of the families concerned,⁵⁸ a connection which C.F.S. Warren still felt obliged to make as late as 1898.⁵⁹ Such conclusions are clearly difficult to sympathise with today and there were, of course, many families which profited from the fall of the monasteries and whose fortunes continued to prosper for many years to follow. Nevertheless, as at The Biggin and King's Langley, there are many instances where former monastic property changed hands with sometimes bewildering frequency during the course of the 16th century.

It was once usual to ascribe rapid changes in ownership of former monastic property to speculation on the part of the new owners,⁶⁰ and the number of instances where exchanges took place between the crown and new owners and among the grantees themselves, particularly during the 1540s,⁶¹ indicates that it would still be unwise to deny that this was a factor. It has now long been recognised, however, that brief periods of apparent ownership by otherwise unknown or relatively lowly men, as at Ashridge, The Biggin or Hitchin Priory, are more often a reflection of the activities of agents who were appointed by their clients to acquire and dispose of properties in an attempt to secure the most desirable sites or to build up compact landholdings.⁶² Thus a number of individuals frequently

appear in the records of the Court of Augmentations who, when also referred to in subsequent deeds of sale or exchange, are revealed to be agents acting for others. The search for the required property may therefore have contributed to a slight delay in the conversion process but it is unlikely to have been a major factor. Its effects would not have been felt much beyond the 1540s and would certainly have been over by the next boom in monastic conversions during the 1570s.

If the rapid turnover of owners after the Dissolution was a factor, however small, in delaying conversion works, the age of the owner at the time he obtained a site may also have played its part. Indeed, it may not be coincidental that, with the exception of Sir Thomas Egerton at Ashridge in the early 17th century, all those men from the Hertfordshire sample whose ages are known when they acquired and converted former monastic property were in fact relatively young. It is also conceivable that those who had been contemporaries of the religious or who had been encouraged by their elders to respect the monks may have been more reluctant than those of a later generation to transform monasteries into secular residences. Thus it might be left to the sons or grandsons of the original grantees to carry out the first major conversion works. That any lingering respect for the religious life was not shared by many of the original grantees is, however, made abundantly clear by the number of men, like Tregonwell at Beechwood or Ingworth at King's Langley, who actively petitioned the crown for the grant of sites at the suppression, while others, such as Denny at Cheshunt and Hertford or Lee at Sopwell, used their pre-Dissolution involvement with particular monasteries to obtain possession at their closure.⁶³ This is a situation which is found outside Hertfordshire, especially at the top of the social scale in the cases of men like Charles Brandon, Thomas Howard and Edward Seymour, who all quickly

used their positions to secure what they wanted.⁶⁴

A frequently overlooked reason for the fact that often little was done to the buildings immediately after the Dissolution may simply be that the buildings themselves were in good condition at the time of suppression and needed little in the way of adaptation to make them suitable for secular residential use. This was, of course, particularly likely to be so where the new use was relatively low-key and did not call for radical modification of the buildings. This was probably the case at King's Langley and St Margaret's, Nettleden and possibly also at Hertford. A similar example can be found in the neighbouring county of Bedfordshire where John Cheney, granted the lease of Harrold Priory in 1537, did little beyond carrying out minor adaptation of the existing buildings. Despite the construction of a new house in the early 17th century, the monastic buildings were still standing in 1614 when the reference to "the auncient mancion house of the said Priory or Mannor of Harrold with the outhouses thereunto belonging" suggests that, although they were abandoned, the buildings still remained in reasonable condition.⁶⁵ A further parallel can be found at Whalley (Lancs.), where the immediately pre-Dissolution abbot's house formed the nucleus of a new country house.⁶⁶

Elsewhere, owners of former monastic property may have delayed or refrained altogether from conversion because they wished to use the building materials to erect a new house on, near, or at some distance from the site. While there can be little doubt that the extent to which monastic stone was re-used away from its original context has been somewhat over-emphasised to the detriment of a proper appreciation of the process of conversion itself,⁶⁷ it should still be recognised that this was an important factor throughout the 16th century and later. Thus just as stone from the Hertfordshire nunneries of Cheshunt, St

Giles in the Wood, Flamstead and Markyate was used to build houses nearby, a similar process can be seen at Chertsey in Surrey and Waltham in Essex.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, John Hynde, grantee of Anglesey Abbey (Cambs.) chose to use stone from there to build the kitchen range at nearby Madingley Hall in the 1540s rather than undertake conversion works at Anglesey itself.⁶⁹ Others, like Thomas Kytson who bought materials from Bromehill Abbey and Thetford Priory in Norfolk and Ixworth Priory in Suffolk for his massive building project at Hengrave, preferred to buy materials from a number of sites,⁷⁰ while to the number of later examples cited by Airs and others, can now be added the recent discovery of 12th-century stonework re-used in the basement of Wollaton House (Notts.), completed only in 1588, which is most likely to have come from nearby Lenton Priory.⁷¹

In 1575 Edward Paston of Binham Priory (Norfolk) refused to sell Nathaniel Bacon stone from there for use in the construction of nearby Stiffkey Hall on the grounds that he was possibly going to use it for a new house himself, this act providing yet further evidence that uncertainty over a site's use could lead to the effective sterilisation of its buildings for many years after the Dissolution, while in the same county as late as 1621 stone from Coxford Abbey was used for the foundations of Raynham Hall.⁷²

* * * *

Brief consideration was given in Chapter 1 to the fact that the circumstances of re-use changed markedly after c.1600 and that after this date it is probably correct to attribute most cases of re-use to convenience and coincidence rather than to anything more significant. One reason for selecting 1600 as the end-point for this study

is the major change in floor-plan and to a lesser extent architectural style which occurs at the beginning of the 17th century. We have seen that by this time the courtyard plan was largely obsolete, even for relatively minor houses, and the trend towards taller houses of compact plan had become firmly established. Although the Gothic style was undergoing a brief revival at this period, classicism was still in the ascendancy and with the appointment of Inigo Jones, who was active in the production of royal masques as early as 1603, to the post of surveyor of the king's works in 1615, its triumph was almost complete.⁷³

As Summerson has written "Three generations participated in the Elizabethan age. First there were the men...of the Burghley generation who, if they had an eye for architecture, would look back to the time when Henry VII's Chapel was still a recent marvel, who remembered the building of Nonsuch and the way that Somerset House had seemed to open up a new and charming future for English building. Second, there was the generation born within a decade, either way, of 1540. They were the real makers of the age...the builders of the prodigy palaces, of Kirby, Holdenby, and Wollaton. Third, there was the generation born around 1570...To them, the Reformation was already history (and) architecture...a living art rather than a 'new fashion'. They were the builders of Audley End, Bramshill, Hatfield, and Blickling: houses in which the discoveries of the previous generation were exploited with supreme confidence and lavish elaboration".⁷⁴

To members of this third generation the houses which their fathers and grandfathers had created from former monasteries must have seemed unfashionable and inconvenient. Reasons which had earlier prompted re-use were of little or no significance by the close of the 16th century. To men born after 1570 the events of the Dissolution and the following 30 years were remote and

irrelevant and converted monastic buildings must have been seen in this light. One has only to compare the irregular and rambling plan of Buckland with the compact plan and symmetrical elevations of the rebuilt Longleat, itself originally fashioned from monastic fabric, to appreciate that even by the 1570s, just as the number of monastic conversions was peaking, the converted monastery was becoming largely irrelevant to architectural innovation and development.

While this is difficult to illustrate from the Hertfordshire evidence, it is better demonstrated at Montacute where, excepting the church, the whole site of the Cluniac monastery was granted to Dr. William Petre in 1539.⁷⁵ The buildings were then leased to John Birt, who appears to have converted the gatehouse into a farmhouse and whose family continued to farm the land until c.1600.⁷⁶ Between c.1590 and 1601 Sir Edward Phelips, Speaker of the House of Commons, was less than a mile away building Montacute House. The significance here is that Phelips, whose family had been in the parish since the late 15th century, and who was to acquire the manor in 1608,⁷⁷ made no attempt to buy the site of the former monastery before starting work on his new house. As a result Abbey House (as the gatehouse was known) became virtually redundant and by 1633 it is described as "almost desolate" because Phelips's son, Sir Robert "seldom makes use of it".⁷⁸ The apparent fact that Sir Edward Phelips did not consider utilising the former abbey gatehouse or conventual buildings as the basis for his new mansion is all the more surprising when one looks at the surviving gatehouse. It is an imposing embattled structure with two-storey ranges to either side of a fan-vaulted gateway with an oriel window above. This carries the carved coat-of-arms of Thomas Chard, prior from 1514-32, showing that the gatehouse had been remodelled shortly before the Dissolution, elegant testimony indeed that even the most

fashionable work of the earlier 16th century (Montacute was the third wealthiest Cluniac house in England in 1535)⁷⁹ was no longer suited to the aspirations or needs of an ambitious builder of the 1590s.

To cite Montacute and other examples is not to deny that the conversion of monastic buildings produced some interesting and occasionally spectacular routes along the by-ways of 16th-century architectural history. But ultimately it was to end in a blind alley. The decline in popularity of the courtyard plan towards the end of the century was partly responsible, but it would be far too simplistic to attribute the failure of the converted monastery to achieve a more significant place in the history of English architecture to this factor alone. There were, after all, a substantial number of courtyard houses of the first rank built after 1570 including the second phases of Cecil's Burghley and Theobalds and the even more extravagant Audley End, rebuilt between 1603 and 1616, which suggest that at the highest social level the courtyard plan was not completely obsolete. Why then did converted monastic buildings not feature more prominently in this final flowering of the courtyard plan? The explanation for this would seem to lie mainly in the comparatively small size of many medieval cloisters. Although monastic cloisters had proved large enough to form the basis for new houses at places like Ashridge, Lacock, Newstead and Wymondley and the earliest phases of Sopwell, Longleat and Audley End, the great majority were quite simply insufficient in scale to be incorporated in the larger double-courtyard houses of the late Elizabethan period. Thus, while as late as 1612 Francis Bacon could write in his influential essay 'Of Building' (which was to be revised many times before taking its final published form in 1625),⁸⁰ that in an ideal "palace" the "inward court...(should be) in the inside, cloistered on all sides, upon decent and beautiful arches, as high as the

first story",⁸¹ it is doubtful whether many former monastic cloisters would have been large or grand enough to meet this requirement.

The post-Dissolution history of the cloister at Longleat provides a good example of this situation. Although it appears to have formed an integral part of Thynne's initial adaptations of the monastic buildings, it was "too small to be used as an internal courtyard of the traditional kind". This seems to have encouraged Thynne to realise the potential of an outward-looking plan, which he "exploited...as the house developed", the monastic cloister becoming no more than a small internal court.⁸² At Longleat, therefore, the presence of a small medieval cloister seems to have had a positive effect on the development of the house's plan, but it must have been far more common for it to have been disregarded completely in the pursuit of a larger double courtyard house, as occurred at Sopwell.⁸³

The smallest monastic cloisters were little bigger than the small courtyards or large light wells found at some early 17th-century houses like Burton Agnes or Chastleton, but such plans were the exception rather than the rule after 1600. From the 1580s onwards the U-plan and the characteristic H-plan became the dominant plan-form in houses as different in scale and ambition as medium-sized manor houses like Pyrton Manor in Oxfordshire, larger houses such as Condover (Shropshire) and Mapledurham (Oxon.), and virtual palaces like Wimbledon House and the colossal Hatfield. In houses of this plan, irrespective of their scale, the straight monastic conversion clearly had no role to play.

Changes in emphasis in the internal planning of great houses also made it difficult for the monastic conversion to suit the needs and aspirations of the most fashionable and ambitious men by 1600. The provision of separate sets of lodgings, those which Summerson has termed "a suite of

two or three rooms suitable for the (temporary) residence of a person of quality",⁸⁴ initially ensured the continuation of the old courtyard plan. In houses of this type the two long sides of the courtyard were dedicated to lodging accommodation, while the side opposite the entrance formed the hall and kitchen ranges. Those ancillary rooms which had now become essential to any substantial house- the summer and winter parlours and perhaps, too, a withdrawing room were also located in this part of the building.

The adaptation of monastic buildings could clearly provide accommodation of this sort, although it is interesting to note that even in the early royal conversions of Rochester and St Augustine's, Canterbury, where all the claustral buildings were initially retained, only one of the claustral ranges was re-used as lodgings.⁸⁵ The reason may simply have been that, as often seems to have occurred elsewhere, the monastic cloister was considered to be too small for this purpose. Certainly such cloisters would have been insufficient for the type of building erected in response to the royal Progresses of Elizabeth's reign so that, at least in the greatest houses, the monastic cloister's route to survival was blocked by its own inadequate dimensions, this surely being the reason for the sweeping away of the cloister in the second phase at Sopwell.

Assuming that it was of sufficient length, the re-use of the upper level of a claustral range could conveniently provide a long gallery and the lower level could be adapted to create an open loggia for summer exercise, while in many cases the great chamber of an Elizabethan house could be accommodated by placing it in the former superior's lodgings. Far greater difficulties were, however, encountered in adapting monastic buildings to the late Elizabethan and Jacobean innovation of placing the hall on a central axis, as at Hardwick and Charlton House,

Greenwich, rather than in its traditional position to left or right of the main entrance. The problems that this caused were not insurmountable when the hall was entered on its long axis but it would have been much more difficult to create a hall from a narrow claustral range if it was desired that the entrance to it should be on its short axis. The only claustral buildings from which a hall entered on its short axis could be devised would be the chapter house or the fraters built at right-angles to the south or north ranges of some early Cistercian houses,⁸⁶ of which there are no examples in the Hertfordshire sample. In any case, few of the latter would have survived by the late 16th century, while those of the former which remained from the demolitions of the Dissolution would have been disadvantaged by their overtly ecclesiastical appearance and their location at the end of the east range.

Thus even at houses as grand as Ashridge, halls which had been created from claustral ranges were beginning to look distinctly archaic by the end of the 16th century, although the way in which the traditional positioning of the hall at Chastleton was concealed externally could in theory just as easily have been achieved in a monastic conversion, as indeed was to some extent the case at Ashridge. Similarly, it would be mistaken to think that the asymmetrically-entered hall disappeared quickly after 1600. As late as 1638 Sir Edmund Wright, a Cheshire merchant who was soon to become Lord Mayor of London, was building Swakeleys (Middx.) in which the hall was still entered in the old asymmetrical way, although as at Chastleton and countless other houses this arrangement was completely concealed by the building's outward symmetry.⁸⁷ Although Summerson is, of course, correct to draw attention to the gulf in taste between court and city that Swakeleys represents, it should also be recognised that by his own standards Wright was an influential and in some

ways sophisticated man. Indeed, it would not be until well after 1650 that the traditional position of the hall would be abandoned in new-built houses.⁸⁸ Furthermore, it perhaps persisted longer in the homes of the gentry and wealthy merchants than in the houses of prosperous yeoman farmers, where the central lobby-entry plan was superseding the old hall and cross-wing plan from the late 16th century onwards.

If changes in the positioning of the hall, which ultimately resulted from its decline in importance,⁸⁹ were difficult to accommodate in monastic conversions, the growing significance of the staircase presented an even greater problem. A grand or ceremonial staircase was becoming an essential ingredient of a house of any pretension from the mid-16th century onwards. Unlike medieval or early Tudor spiral staircases which took up very little space and were well suited to claustral ranges and courtyard houses in general, even an enclosed stair within a square or rectangular tower was greedy by comparison. The only way such stairs could be incorporated in interconnecting ranges without eating into the ranges themselves was by means of extruded corner towers which, if they were not to appear on the outward elevations, then had the effect of impinging on the courtyard instead. Clearly, this was far from desirable, especially where the courtyard was based on the restricted dimensions of the old cloister garth, while if a grand open staircase of the lavish proportions recommended by architectural treatise writers like Francis Bacon and Sir Henry Wotton and found at houses such as Hatfield and Knole was required, this would be impossible to achieve without total remodelling.⁹⁰ It is undoubtedly for such reasons that no grand staircases are found in any of the Hertfordshire monastic conversions.

It is therefore apparent that by 1600 the type of house created by a typical monastic conversion was largely

obsolete. This does not mean to say, of course, that all houses created from former monasteries would have been completely rebuilt after this date or that they would automatically have descended the social scale. As J.T. Smith has written on a slightly later period for Hertfordshire "Many...houses were now sufficiently well built and sufficiently large to outlive the social and economic conditions which produced them; and although...(it might) be unsuitable for the needs of an heir or a new owner, its complete replacement by a house of comparable size represented a waste of resources for all but the very richest".⁹¹ This meant that in most cases there would have to be compromises in terms of the very latest ideas on planning or architectural style and that houses would be modified or rebuilt piecemeal, but it would nevertheless be true to say that the social, political, religious and economic factors which had prompted monastic conversions in the first place were all but extinct by 1600.

It is probably the case that the architectural significance of monastic conversions would have been more far-reaching had circumstances allowed a greater number to take place in the 1540s and early 1550s when the courtyard house was still very much in vogue. Instead, with the exception of a relatively small number of important conversions like Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley, the majority of substantial conversions rather than comparatively simple adaptation of existing buildings to secular purposes took place only in the 1570s and '80s by which time the courtyard house was already approaching terminal decline. Although it was possible for a double-courtyard house such as the post-1568 Longleat to be essentially outward looking in exactly the same way as houses of compact plan like Hardwick and Wollaton, this was considerably more difficult where the size of a house was dictated by the retention of a small monastic cloister

with its inward-looking ranges.

Another possible explanation of why the conversion of monastic buildings ended in an architectural cul-de-sac is that there were few religious houses of the first rank where major conversion works were carried out. Of the 30 or so wealthiest communities at the time of the Dissolution only four- Ramsey, Reading, St Augustine's, Canterbury and Syon- were the subject of a thorough conversion to domestic use. This can be explained partly by the fact that several of the greatest monasteries, including those which had been monastic cathedrals before the suppression- Christ Church, Canterbury, Durham, Ely, Norwich, Winchester and Worcester- became secular cathedrals as did the former abbeys of Chester, Gloucester, Oxford, Peterborough and Westminster.⁹² Even in those cases where the now redundant cloister was not demolished or vandalised at the Dissolution, the new circumstances did not permit single residential use of the former conventual buildings, although many were of course adapted to form accommodation for the new dean and chapter or other associated uses.⁹³

In the cases of Croyland, St Albans and Tewkesbury where the abbey church became parochial after the Dissolution, similar factors applied. But these examples are heavily outnumbered by major monastic churches which were completely abandoned after the Dissolution. This occurred in both town and country and included those at Abingdon, Bury St Edmunds, Cirencester, Evesham, Fountains, Leicester, Lewes, Merton, Reading, Shaftesbury and St Mary's, York, all of which had become ruinous by 1600.⁹⁴

Even at those major monastic houses like Abingdon, Glastonbury and St Albans where there was some domestic re-use not directly connected with a continued religious function of the site in the 16th century, this tended to be piecemeal and unimpressive in scale and vision.⁹⁵ The

only real exceptions to this were at St Augustine's, Canterbury, Ramsey, Reading and Syon. At the former, the buildings were converted to a royal palace in time for the arrival of Anne of Cleves in December 1539; at Syon, Protector Somerset spent some £5000 in transforming the Bridgettine nunnery into a brick quadrangular house; at Reading, a "mansion" was made for the king from the abbot's lodging in the west range; and at Ramsey in the late 16th century, after a period during which the site was used as little more than a source for building materials, the Cromwell family converted the former lady chapel of the Benedictine monastery into a house.⁹⁶

By the second half of the 16th century few, if any, of these houses would have provided accommodation fit for the queen. Elizabeth built no palaces for herself, preferring to rely on her great magnates and courtiers to provide the most sumptuous accommodation during her summer Progresses. Some of the remarks notoriously attributed to the queen and the responses supposedly made by those addressed may be little more than apocryphal, but there can be little doubt that, if uttered, the comment she is reported to have made to Sir Nicholas Bacon on the occasion of her visit to Gorhambury in 1572- "My Lord Keeper, what a little house you have gotten"- prompted him to add the long two-storey west 'cloister' before her second visit in 1577.⁹⁷ Similar circumstances may have prompted Lee's remodelling of his first conversion at Sopwell, while at Theobalds Cecil "came to enterteyne the quene so often there, he was inforced to enlarge it, rather for the quene and her greate traine, and to sett (the) poore on worke, than for pompe or glory".⁹⁸

In such circumstances, where both Cecil and Sir Christopher Hatton "confessed to having spent more than even they could afford on houses which they did not need",⁹⁹ it is perhaps not surprising that the buildings of the largest and wealthiest monasteries, many of them

already old fashioned at the time of the Dissolution or hemmed in by other buildings in crowded urban locations, proved unattractive to those who could have afforded to convert them to domestic use.

It was thus more often monastic houses of the second rank which were selected for re-use. This is amply illustrated from the Hertfordshire sample, in which no houses except Ashridge and Hertford (and then only as a dependent cell of St Albans) were large enough to survive the First Act of Suppression. Elsewhere the same phenomenon can be seen at sites like Hinchinbroke, Horsham St Faith, Mottisfont and Netley, all of which were either poor or not particularly wealthy at the time of the Dissolution and closed before the Second Act of Suppression.¹⁰⁰ All, however, offered considerable advantages to their new lay owners in terms of location, buildings suitable for adaptation, and good wholesome country air. Furthermore, it was not the case that houses of this sort appealed only to the less influential courtiers or to nobility of the second rank, as the activities of Nedeham at Wyndley, Lee at Sopwell, Rich at Leez Priory, Sharington at Lacock and Wriothesley at Titchfield, among others of the first generation, clearly show.

During the 1540s and early 1550s it was still possible for a fashionable house to be created from a direct conversion of monastic buildings but at this time it was only the most powerful and ambitious men in the kingdom who had the resources or the opportunity to carry out such work, thereby limiting the extent to which conversions were undertaken. By the 1560s and '70s a greater number of men were in a position to carry out the adaptation of monastic buildings to domestic use but by then fashions were changing and it was necessary for monastic buildings to be altered far more radically, as the remodelling of sites like Hinchinbroke, Longleat and Sopwell shows, to

enable them to meet the latest ideas in planning or architectural style. After c.1580 it is doubtful whether the effort was still worth making even below the highest social level, as is shown by Sir Stephen Proctor's decision simply to use Fountains Abbey, the buildings and estates of which he had bought in 1597, as a stone quarry for his Fountains Hall which was completed by c.1611 nearby.¹⁰¹ Although Ashridge and Wymondley show that remodelling schemes were still being carried out at the more important monastic conversions as late as c.1600, it is more usual to find examples of late conversions or substantial reworkings of earlier conversions at the homes of the less wealthy members of the gentry or prosperous yeoman farmers. For such men convenience and comfort would have been more pressing concerns than the latest architectural theory, and thus we find evidence for building activity at The Biggin, Hitchin Priory, King's Langley, Royston and Ware in the last two decades of the 16th century.

REFERENCES

1. See, for example, the statement made by Coppack (1990), 137 that "Cloister ranges might easily be converted into a house for the new owner with little effort".
2. Appendix (Ashridge); R. Gilyard-Beer, H.M.S.O. guide to Cleeve Abbey (1959); Nikolaus Pevsner, North-East Norfolk and Norwich (1962), 172; David Sherlock, 'Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-73', Norfolk Arch., 36 (1976), 202-23.
3. Platt (1984), 210.
4. Ibid, 210-11.
5. The relatively little-known site of Notley is described in W.A. Pantin's 'Notley Abbey', Oxoniensia, 6 (1941), 36-41.
6. Walter Godfrey, 'The abbot's parlour, Thame Park', Arch. Jnl., 86 (1929), 59-68; Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, Oxfordshire (1974), 809-11; V.C.H., Oxon., vii (1962), 168-70, 177; a recent study of the building by the R.C.H.M. has yet to be published.
7. Patrick Greene, Norton Priory (1989), 144-5; V.C.H., Shropshire, ii (1973), 46; the prior's lodging at Much Wenlock has recently been redated through dendrochronology to c. 1420, Paul Stamper, pers. comm. Appendix (Hertford).
8. Appendix (The Biggin); Platt (1984), 158-64.

9. Appendix (King's Langley); V.C.H., Hants., iv (1911), 652; Nikolaus Pevsner and David Lloyd, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (1967), 96-7 (Beaulieu); A. Hamilton Thompson, History and Architectural Description of the Priory of St Mary, Bolton-in-Wharfedale, Publications of the Thoresby Soc., 30 (1928), 174-8 (Bolton); V.C.H., Shropshire, ii (1973), 29 (Bromfield); N. Pevsner, North Somerset and Bristol (1958), 204-6 (Montacute); Philip C. Fletcher, 'Recent excavations at Hinton Priory', Proc. Somerset Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc., 96 (1951), 160-5 (Hinton); V.C.H., Warwicks., iv (1947), 136-7 (Maxstoke); N. Pevsner, Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough (1968), 264, 332 (Hinchinbrooke).
10. Doggett (1991), 57; P.L. Drewett and I.W. Stuart, 'Excavations in the Norman gate tower, Bury St Edmunds Abbey', Proc. Suffolk. Inst. Arch., 33 (1973-5), 241-52.
11. Ian Nairn and Nikolaus Pevsner, Sussex (1965), 404 (Battle) and 568-9 (Michelham); Howard (1987), 205 (St Osyth's).
12. Nikolaus Pevsner, Yorkshire: York and the East Riding (1972), 207 (Burton Agnes); N. Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, Warwickshire (1966), 227; Geoffrey Tyack, The Making of the Warwickshire Country House, 1500-1650, Warwicks. Local Hist. Soc. Occasional Paper, No.4 (1982), 33-5 (Charlecote).
13. J.C. Dickinson, 'The buildings of the English Austin canons after the Dissolution of the Monasteries', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc., 3rd. Ser., 31 (1968), 64.
14. Howard (1987), 145.

15. John Hare, 'Netley Abbey: monastery, mansion and ruin', Proc. Hants. Field Club, 49 (1993), 218.
16. Andrew Boorde, A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Health (1542), ed. by F.J. Furnivall and printed in Early English Text Ser., Extra Ser., x (1870), 238.
17. J.F. Hodgson, 'Eggleston Abbey', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 18 (1904-5), 154-7 (Egglestone); Dickinson, op. cit. (note 13), 68-9; Nikolaus Pevsner, Leicestershire and Rutland (2nd edn., revd. Elizabeth Williamson, 1984), 197-8 (Launde); John Schofield, 'Building in religious precincts in London at the Dissolution and after', in Roberta Gilchrist and Harold Mytum (eds.), Recent Advances in Monastic Archaeology, Brit. Arch. Reps., 227 (1993), 38 (St Helen's, Bishopsgate); Charmian Woodfield, 'Finds from the free grammar school at the Whitefriars, Coventry, c.1545-c.1557/8', Post-Med. Arch., 15 (1981), 81-3.
18. Howard (1987), 149.
19. Dickinson, op. cit. (note 13), 72.
20. Howard (1987), 149.
21. See Howard (1987), 225-6 (footnotes 34 and 36) for references to Mottisfont and Lacock. The retention of the medieval cloister of Walden Abbey as the inner (and later only) courtyard of Audley End is graphically shown in plan form in Paul Drury's 'No other palace in the kingdom will compare with it: the evolution of Audley End, 1605-1745', Archit. Hist., 23 (1980), 26.

22. Nikolaus Pevsner, Wiltshire (2nd. edn., revd. Bridget Cherry, 1975), 284-9.
23. Rosalys Coope, Eric Fernie and Maurice Howard, Newstead Abbey. Papers and Discussion From a Day Symposium organised by the Society of Architectural Historians in association with the Thoroton Society (April 1992). I am grateful to Maurice Howard for providing me with a copy of this unpublished document.
24. Ibid.
25. Nikolaus Pevsner, Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough (1968), 264; R.C.H.M., Churches of South-East Wiltshire (1987), 145-53.
26. Howard (1987), 151.
27. John Chandler, John Leland's Itinerary, Travels in Tudor England (1993), 490.
28. Ibid, 354. See also note 23.
29. For instance, in 1536 Sandys was writing to Cromwell from his "new house of Mottisfont which by your help I have of the king's late gift", L.P., xi, no.241.
30. John Hare, Battle Abbey, The Eastern Range and the Excavations of 1978-80 (1985), 38-42. The view that the courtyard plan at Wilton may not follow the dimensions of the medieval cloister was advanced by Paul Drury in his paper 'The origins and development of some country houses converted from monastic buildings', delivered at the 1985 Oxford conference 'Dissolution and Resurrection, the Re-use of Monastic Buildings'. John Bold in Wilton House and the Story

of English Palladianism (1988), 31 appears, however, to accept that the courtyard is based on the form of the monastic cloister. For Walden/Audley End, again see Paul Drury, 'Walden into Audley End' in S.R. Bassett (ed.), Saffron Walden: Excavations and Research 1972-80, C.B.A. Res. Rep., 45 (1982), 104.

31. Howard (1987), 73-83.

32. Ibid, 95.

33. B.L., Add. MS. 24,432-3 (Bermondsey). For Ashridge see Appendix.

34. R.C.H.M., Essex, ii (1921), 158-61 and David Crossley, Post-Medieval Archaeology (1990), 54-5 (Leez); Platt (1984), 240 and Hare, op. cit. (note 15), 217 (Netley). The process of converting the church into a house was also relatively common in Ireland: Roger Stalley, The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland (1987), 228-34.

35. David Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, iii (1959), 385.

36. These are the words of Francis Trigge, a Lincolnshire cleric in 1589, quoted in A.G. Dickens (ed.), Tudor Treatises, Yorks. Arch. Soc. Rec. Ser., 125 (1959), 38.

37. H.R.O., 66,296, John Shrimpton, The Antiquities of Verulam and St Albans (n.d.), 77.

38. Stuart Piggott, Ruins in a Landscape, Essays in Antiquarianism (1976), 113.

39. Margaret Aston, 'English ruins and English history: the Dissolution and the sense of the past', Jnl. Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 36 (1973), 245-6.
40. Thomas Fuller, The Church History of England, iii (ed., J.S. Brewer, 1845), 486.
41. Quoted in Dickens, op. cit. (note 36), 125.
42. Knowles, op. cit. (note 35), 384.
43. Dickinson, op. cit. (note 13), 62.
44. W.H. St John Hope, 'The making of Place House at Titchfield, near Southampton in 1538', Arch. Jnl., 63 (1906), 235. One can only assume that Patrick Greene has not read St John Hope, when he writes of Titchfield "No feelings of sacrilege seem to have troubled Wriothesley" (Greene, 1992, 188). Certainly, they troubled his wife.
45. St John Hope, op. cit., 236.
46. John Guy, Tudor England (1988), 145.
47. For the conversion works at these sites see Appendix (Ashridge); Simon Thurley, 'English Royal Palaces, 1450-1550', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (London, 1991), 247-57 (Dartford) and King's Works, iv, 59-63 and 240 (St Augustine's, Canterbury & St Albans respectively).
48. Howard (1987), 151.
49. Airs (1975), 125; B.L., Harl. MS. 6853, fol.450.
50. Airs (1975), 18.

51. Guy, op. et loc. cit. (note 46).
52. Appendix (Wymondley); Coope, Fernie and Howard, op. cit. (note 23) (Newstead).
53. V.C.H., op. et loc. cit. (note 6).
54. Appendix (Hitchin Priory); R.C.H.M., Dorset, i (1952), 240-6 (Forde); Howard (1987), 205 (St Osyth's); Sherwood and Pevsner, op. cit. (note 9), 862 and V.C.H., Oxon., ix (1969), 172-3 (Wroxton). Other examples of this pattern are given by Airs (1975), 19.
55. For Ashridge see Appendix; Drury, op. cit. (note 30), 97 (Audley End).
56. Appendix (Markyate and Royston); David Baker, 'Excavations at Elstow Abbey, 1965-66', Beds. Arch. Jnl., 3 (1966), 29; Bold, op.cit. (note 30), 33 (Wilton); Appendix (Sopwell); Girouard (1983), Ch.1 (Longleat).
57. Shrimpton, op. et loc. cit. (note 37).
58. Sir Henry Spelman, The History and Fate of Sacrilege, 1632 (published posthumously in 1698), Ch.6.
59. C.F.S. Warren (ed.), An Appendix Bringing the Work The History and Fate of Sacrilege up to the Present Date (1898), 347-8 where he relates the misfortunes of the Egerton family directly to their ownership of former monastic property.
60. S.B. Liljegren, The Fall of the Monasteries and the Social Changes in England (1924), 118-24.

61. W.G. Hoskins, The Age of Plunder (1976), 132-4.
62. H.J. Habbakuk, 'The market for monastic property, 1539-1603', Economic Hist. Rev., 2nd. Ser., 10 (1957/8), 378-80; Knowles, op. cit. (note 35), Ch.32.
63. Appendix (Beechwood, Cheshunt, Hertford, King's Langley, Sopwell).
64. Howard (1987), 138-42; Knowles, op. cit. (note 35), Ch.32.
65. Airs (1975), 18; Beds. R.O., TW 11/110.
66. Owen Ashmore, H.M.S.O. guide to Whalley (1962), 18-19.
67. For a recent example of this see J.H. Bettey, The Suppression of the Monasteries in the West Country (1989), Ch.7. A similar lack of understanding of the complexity of the conversion process is displayed by Mick Aston in his otherwise exemplary Monasteries (1993), 144 where he makes the rather curious assertion that the evidence for conversion to residential use "comes not so much from the buildings themselves, although there are numerous good examples...but from the new interest in the history and archaeology of gardens".
68. Greene (1992), 183 and King's Works, iv, 207-9 (Chertsey); P.J. Huggins, 'Excavations of the collegiate and Augustinian churches, Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1984-87', Arch. Jnl., 146 (1989), 481.
69. S.D.T. Spittle, 'Madingley Hall', Arch. Jnl., 124 (1967), 225.

70. Cambridge University Library: Hengrave Hall Deposit 80.
71. Airs (1975), 125; Simon Thurley, The Royal Palaces of Tudor England (1993), 56; Steven Pugsley, 'Landed society and the emergence of the country house in Tudor and early Stuart Devon' in T. Gray, M. Rowe and A. Erskine (eds.), Tudor and Stuart Government, The Common Estate and Government, Essays Presented to Joyce Youings (1992), 109; Pamela Marshall, 'The archaeological survey at Wollaton Hall: some revelations' in Malcolm Airs (ed.), The Tudor and Jacobean Great House (Oxford University Dept. Continuing Education, Conference Proceedings, 1994), 80 (Lenton).
72. E.R. Sandeen, 'The Building Activities of Sir Nicholas Bacon', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Chicago, 1959), 188. A microfilm copy is deposited in the Bodleian Library (1959 Chicago 9); H.L. Bradfer-Lawrence, 'The building of Raynham Hall', Norfolk Arch., 23 (1927), 101; Linda Campbell, 'Documentary evidence for the building of Raynham Hall', Archit. Hist., 32 (1989), 52-63.
73. Summerson (1977), Chs.7 and 8.
74. Ibid, 111.
75. P.R.O., SC6/Hen VIII/3137, m.24.
76. V.C.H., Somerset, iii (1974), 214.
77. Ibid.

78. J.H. Bates (ed.), The Particular Description of the County of Somerset, Drawn up by Thomas Gerard of Trent, 1633, Somerset Rec. Soc., 15 (1900), 99.
79. Knowles (1953), 98.
80. Francis Bacon, Essays (1955 Everyman edn.), xviii.
81. Ibid, 135-6.
82. Girouard (1983), 56-9.
83. See Appendix (Sopwell).
84. Summerson (1977), 62.
85. Thurley, op. cit. (note 71), 57 (St Augustine's, Canterbury), 115-19 (Rochester); King's Works, iv, 59-63 (St Augustine's) and 234-7 (Rochester).
86. See Peter Fergusson's 'The twelfth-century refectories at Rievaulx and Byland Abbeys' in E.C. Norton and W.D. Park (eds.), Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles (1986), 160-80 where, interestingly, it is pointed out that in the very first Cistercian houses refectories were often located in the north or south claustral range rather than at right-angles to the cloister, as was to become standard practice by the second half of the 12th century.
87. Summerson (1977), 158.
88. Smith (1992), 83.
89. See Thurley, op. cit. (note 71), 113-20 for the earliest manifestations of this.

90. John Newman, 'The development of the staircase in Elizabethan and Jacobean England' in A. Chastel and J. Guillaume (eds.), L'Escalier dans l'architecture de la Renaissance (1985), 175-8.
91. Smith (1992), 83.
92. Taken from the list of religious houses with annual incomes exceeding £1000 at the time of the Valor Ecclesiasticus, printed in Knowles, op. cit. (note 35), 473. See also *ibid*, Ch.31.
93. This is a subject which has received relatively little attention, as typified by Francis Woodman in his otherwise authoritative The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral (1981), 226-30. One of the best general treatments of the topic remains Gerald Cobb's English Cathedrals, The Forgotten Centuries: Restoration and Change from 1530 to the Present Day (1980), while John Crook has explored in some detail the post-Dissolution history of the close at Winchester- 'The Cathedral Priory and Deanery, Winchester', paper read at the 1996 Hampshire Field Club Conference 'Hampshire Monasteries: the Aftermath of the Dissolution'. Earlier studies, such as R.V.H. Burne's Chester Cathedral from its Founding by Henry VIII to the Accession of Queen Victoria (1958) tended to concentrate on spiritual and administrative matters rather than on physical changes to the buildings themselves.
94. A detailed account of the demolition of the church of Reading Abbey, based on a survey of 1549, is given by A.E. Preston in his 'The demolition of Reading Abbey', Berks. Arch. Jnl., 39 (1935), 107-44. The churches at Bury St Edmunds and Cirencester are among a number of

great monastic churches demolished in the years immediately after the Dissolution, the sites of which have been at least partially excavated. See R. Gilyard-Beer, 'The eastern arm of the abbey church at Bury St Edmunds', Proc. Suffolk Inst. Arch., 31 (1967/9), 256-62 and John Wachter, 'Cirencester 1964', Antiquaries Jnl., 45 (1965), 105-10.

95. Thurley, op. cit. (note 71), 56-7. Abingdon was considered but rejected as a house for the king on account of its dilapidated buildings and because there was no land which could "be conveniently imparked for the king's disport and pleasure"; G.H. Cook (ed.), Letters to Cromwell and Others on the Suppression of the Monasteries (1965), 145-6.
96. King's Works, iv, 59-63 (St Augustine's, Canterbury); ibid, 272-3 and Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, London 3: North West (1991), 442-6 (Syon); King's Works, iv, 220-22 (Reading); V.C.H., Hunts., ii (1932), 192-3, N. Pevsner, Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough (1968), 330-2 and Med. Arch., 13 (1969), 246 (Ramsey).
97. D. Lloyd, State Worthies (1779), 355; Smith (1993), 158.
98. F. Peck, Desiderata Curiosa (1779), 25.
99. Summerson (1977), 62-3.
100. Knowles (1953), *passim*.
101. Girouard (1983), 192-7; B.L., Harl. MS. 6853, fol.450.

Chapter Five

Conclusions: the theory of adaptive re-use and suggestions for further work

As shown in Chapter 4, the Hertfordshire evidence largely confirms what is known from elsewhere about the re-use of monastic buildings in the second half of the 16th century. While there may be no major surprises from the Hertfordshire sample, the concentration on the data from a single county is in itself a useful discipline and helps to cast additional light on the complexities and shifts of emphasis in this undoubtedly important, but as yet imperfectly understood, process.

The purpose of this chapter is to draw the various strands together: to examine in more detail what might be termed the theory of adaptive re-use and to offer speculations and suggestions for further work.

* * * *

The Hertfordshire material helps to dispel some of the myths and unfounded generalisations surrounding the question of the re-use of monastic buildings. At all of the sites contained in the sample there is at least some evidence to show re-use after the Dissolution. In all cases save Beechwood, Cheshunt, Markyate and Royston, where new houses appear to have been built nearby from monastic materials, this seems to have taken the form of direct adaptation and conversion of the monastic structures. At Ashridge, Hitchin Priory, King's Langley, Sopwell, Ware and Wymondley this is fairly readily apparent, but at The Biggin, Hitchin, Hertford and St Margaret's, Nettleden the deduction needs to be teased out from a detailed examination of the surviving or now-

demolished buildings or from other sources.

This high level of re-use in a county not noted for the quality of its monastic remains is remarkable. Indeed, it may well be that the high incidence of re-use is a direct result of the comparatively unimposing character of Hertfordshire's religious houses. This is in direct contrast to counties like Yorkshire, where the remote locations and magnificent ecclesiastical architecture of sites like Byland, Fountains and Rievaulx do not seem to have encouraged adaptive re-use. It therefore seems possible to argue that re-use was more likely to occur in areas where monastic buildings were smaller in scale and more conveniently situated. A similar pattern might be expected in counties like Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire, but even here circumstances may have been very different from those in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire was a particularly attractive county in which to build a country house in the second half of the 16th century. This is amply demonstrated throughout the period by houses as varied in ^{date and} scale as Berkhamsted Place, ^(c.1580) Little Gaddesden Manor ⁽¹⁵⁷⁶⁾ and Standon Lordship ⁽¹⁵⁴⁶⁾ to the palaces of Gorhambury ⁽¹⁵⁶³⁻⁴⁾, Hatfield ⁽¹⁶⁰⁷⁻¹²⁾ and Theobalds ⁽¹⁵⁶⁴⁻⁹¹⁾. Indeed, from c.1550 onwards, developing a trend already observable in the 15th century,¹ Hertfordshire experienced a considerable influx of new families, whether of courtiers or merchants, drawn from London by the combined attractions of pleasant countryside and good, wholesome air. By the 17th century this phenomenon was so widespread that Sir Thomas Fuller could comment wittily that "such who buy a house in Hertfordshire pay two years' purchase for the air".² The proximity to the capital, where the court was becoming increasingly permanently based, and the relatively good road system were no doubt also influential in this process.

Two themes emerge from this background. First, the evidence that direct adaptive re-use of monastic buildings

was widespread casts doubt on the generally-held assumption that it was more usual simply to re-cycle materials elsewhere. The importance of the latter practice has been amply demonstrated by David Stocker,³ but others have viewed the evidence less critically and have perhaps concluded too quickly that re-cycling of materials rather than adaptation of monastic buildings was the norm after the Dissolution.⁴ The re-use of materials away from their original context is, of course, not unknown in Hertfordshire, and there are clear signs of this process at most, if not all, of the sites included in the sample. It should also be pointed out that the extent of the process is very difficult to quantify, as without a detailed examination of every historic structure in the vicinity of a former monastery it is impossible to ascertain even the surviving evidence for the recycling of building materials. In addition, some buildings containing re-used stonework will have been demolished and in other cases materials will have been transported considerable distances from their original sites.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that while the evidence for the plunder and re-cycling of materials is unsurprising, the evidence for the adaptive re-use of buildings is more striking. Such re-use appears to have occurred equally at all site types contained in the sample, from urban friaries like Hitchin and Ware, to conversions to farmhouse use at King's Langley, to those of the first rank at Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley.

The comparative unimportance of the re-cycling of monastic materials in Hertfordshire is perhaps also reflected in the relatively slight evidence for demolition at the county's religious sites. There can be little doubt that deliberate programmes of demolition took place at many sites in the second half of the 16th century, and these are clearly hinted at through documentary sources at Ashridge, Hitchin Priory, King's Langley and Sopwell.

However, it is notable that it is only at the latter two sites that the process has been detected archaeologically, although this may simply reflect the relative lack of archaeological investigation at monastic sites in the county rather than anything more significant.

The second theme to emerge from the Hertfordshire sample is the idea that adaptive re-use might be more likely to occur at the less important sites, where the prospects of conversion were financially and physically less daunting. It has already been shown in Chapter 4 that very few of England's wealthiest monastic houses were converted to full residential use and the practical difficulties of converting large churches into domestic accommodation must have been a factor in this. Several churches were, of course, converted in just this way in Hertfordshire. But it is probably significant that, with the possible exception of Ashridge, they were not ecclesiastical buildings of the first order. Indeed, it may be equally significant that where important churches did exist- at King's Langley and Royston- the former was effectively ignored by the post-Dissolution owners and at the other the nave was demolished and the east end remained in religious use.

Certainly, it would have been far easier to convert an aisleless church to two-storey domestic use, whether to form a hall and parlour as at Wymondley, or a lodging range as at Titchfield (Hants.), than would have been the case with an aisled building. Thus, at Netley (Hants.) the hall created from the aisled church was open to the roof, while at Mottisfont, also in Hampshire, and Sopwell the two-storey conversions resulted in the removal of the aisles.

The location of sites was also a major influence on the likelihood that they would be re-used. The position of the priories of Hertford, The Biggin, Hitchin and Royston and the friary at Ware on the edges of their respective towns

was ideal for the apparently relatively modest manor houses that they became. The Carmelite friary at Hitchin was situated at the southern extremity of the medieval town, no doubt as a result of its late foundation, and its extensive precinct was readily transformed into the park, gardens and orchards of the post-Dissolution house. Indeed, it is tempting to attribute the seemingly slightly higher status of Hitchin Priory over the other urban sites in the 16th century- a pre-eminence it had certainly achieved by the 17th century- to the particular attractions and advantages of its edge-of-town location.

This certainly seems to have been the case at Sopwell, where Sir Richard Lee's house, built from the materials and on the site of the former Benedictine nunnery, was located conveniently close to St Albans but sufficiently far from the town to be surrounded by its own extensive parkland. The siting of Ashridge, Beechwood, Markyate and Wymondley are clearly different again and proved suitable for the country houses that they became, while it might be argued that the comparative inaccessibility of St Margaret's, Nettleden was a factor in its becoming no more than a farmhouse.

Thus the positions of the religious houses of The Biggin, Hitchin Priory, Hertford, Royston and Ware in or on the edges of their respective towns may have played their part in the relatively low-key transformations of these sites, while the more attractive locations of Ashridge, Beechwood, Markyate, Sopwell and Wymondley may have been equally instrumental in their conversion into houses of the first rank.

* * * *

If the location and physical setting of sites was an important influence on the type and extent of conversions

undertaken, the resources and aspirations of the new lay owners were equally significant. These naturally varied enormously, although there is a surprising degree of correlation between the practical problems of converting individual buildings and the dates at which this occurred, at whatever social level they took place.

A shared factor between many of the less intensive conversion schemes was the relatively late date in the 16th century that they were carried out. Indeed, it could be argued that a prosperous yeoman farmer or one of the less wealthy members of the gentry would have been more reluctant to indulge in the conversion of monastic buildings in the years immediately after the Dissolution than a favoured courtier or member of the aristocracy, particularly as the former were more likely to be motivated by purely practical concerns such as the condition and suitability of individual buildings for re-use. In short, those lower down the social scale had less to invest and therefore arguably more to lose from premature involvement in conversion schemes than their wealthier and more influential counterparts. Thus, while there is some evidence for conversion works in the first generation at Hitchin Priory and Royston, it is singularly lacking at The Biggin, Hertford, Royston and Ware where no major works of adaptive re-use seem to have taken place until after c.1580. At King's Langley and St Margaret's, Nettleden, lack of precise dating evidence makes it difficult to state exactly when the buildings were adapted to domestic use.

It is surely no coincidence, however, that the conversion of Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley into houses of the first rank took place in the two decades after the Dissolution, albeit with further remodelling later in the century, and there is similar evidence for building activity at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate in the same period. This is mirrored nationally by other early and

innovative conversions like Lacock (Wilts.), Newstead (Notts.) and the Hampshire trio of Mottisfont, Netley and Titchfield, all the work of some of the most powerful and influential men in the kingdom.

* * * *

The first-generation conversions of Sopwell and Wymondley and, to a slightly lesser degree the building of new houses at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate, are a reflection of the atypically high number of grants of former monasteries in Hertfordshire to courtiers and other royal favourites. This can be contrasted with the situation in counties such as Devon and Norfolk, remote from London's influence, where the former monastic lands were just as, if not more, likely to be acquired eventually by members of the gentry or of the aspiring yeoman farmer class.⁵

The crown's grants of former monastic properties to courtiers were no doubt partly caused by the requirement to ensure their continuing support, but the far greater need to gain revenue was probably even more important and it was, of course, courtiers who were able and willing to pay the highest prices. Thus it was in Hertfordshire that the earliest grants were predominantly to courtiers.

As shown in Chapter 4, it has been estimated on a national basis that over 75% of former monastic property had been transferred from royal to lay ownership by 1558.⁶ Hertfordshire was certainly no exception to this pattern, only Ashridge- held until 1575- remaining with the crown for any significant time after the Dissolution. Indeed, it has been noted for the county as a whole that "of 395 manors or similar estates, whose successive owners can be traced through the county histories, 168 (42.5%) were in the hands of the crown in 1540. By 1550 only twelve (7%)

of these 168 properties remained in the hands of the crown",⁷ although it should be pointed out that the number of manors owned by the crown in 1540 had been artificially inflated by the temporary appropriation of monastic manors between 1536 and 1540. However, it is probably significant that by 1700 only 42 of the 395 properties were owned by the same family or institution as in 1540.

This remarkable transfer of ownership was due partly to the widespread sale of privately owned manors, beginning in the 1540s, but the dispersal of former monastic lands through the king was even more significant. During the second half of the 16th century in Hertfordshire, as in many counties, the most likely purchasers of manors, including former monastic ones, were members of the gentry.⁸ Whether from old or new families, men with sufficient means were anxious to build up country estates and the fluid land market provided them with the perfect opportunity to do so. It should be emphasised, however, that the Hertfordshire gentry, while able to buy former monastic manors, were generally excluded from purchasing the buildings and sites of the monasteries themselves, not least because the majority had been bought already by courtiers and other royal favourites.

Many members of the gentry were, of course, royal officials and it is not always easy to distinguish between a man who would be regarded as a courtier and one who would not.⁹ Nevertheless, there is probably a useful distinction to be made between men like Robert Byrch and Sir Robert Chester, both apparently minor figures in the royal household, and the holders of the major offices of state like Denny, Egerton, Lee and Nedeham. Not surprisingly, the status of the man is often reflected in the quality of the house he created from his former monastic property, although as we have already seen there is often not a direct relationship between the pre- and post-Dissolution importance of individual sites. However,

while the relatively modest nature of the post-suppression houses of Hitchin Priory and The Biggin can be seen as an indication of the comparatively limited means of their successful lawyer owners, considerably more influential men like Denny and Sir John Daunce, Henry VIII's Treasurer of Wars, could acquire minor sites such as Hertford Priory and St Margaret's, Nettleton, with which they did little or nothing as they also had other houses elsewhere.

In this context it is probably significant that work on Sopwell was never completed after Lee's death in 1575 and that Wymondley appears to have been reduced in size in c.1600. One explanation for the rebuilding work carried out at Beechwood, Cheshunt and Markyate in the late 16th century may be that they were in any case relatively newly-built houses rather than conversions made obsolete by changing architectural fashions. Another is that, as their then owners were of slightly lesser status than elsewhere, expectations and aspirations were fewer and the houses were still thought worthy of remodelling. Only at Ashridge did an owner of the first rank consider the buildings suitable for further extension and remodelling after 1600.

The contraction or stabilisation at houses of the first order in the late 16th century contrasts markedly with the situation at the urban sites, where the picture is one of rebuilding and expansion in the two decades after 1580. While it is only at Hitchin and Royston that there is evidence for adaptive re-use between 1540 and 1560, there is clear evidence for major schemes of work at Hertford Priory, The Biggin and Ware Priory after c.1580, with further phases of remodelling at Hitchin and Royston before 1600. The sample is perhaps too small to draw definitive conclusions but may suggest that, while men of the highest rank were less prepared to tolerate the somewhat old-fashioned standards that many monastic conversions were seen to represent by the late 16th

century, such buildings could still provide very acceptable houses for those slightly lower down the social ladder.

* * * *

Passing reference was made in Chapter 1 to the probability that when a former monastic building was adapted to secular residential use, the new owner would have gone to some pains to disguise the building's ecclesiastical origins. It is certainly true that the trend for exposing features of historical or archaeological interest in buildings established itself only in the 18th and 19th centuries. Before then fashion usually dictated that every effort should be made to conceal obsolete features and to make a remodelled building appear as up-to-date as possible, thereby accounting for the vast number of timber-framed houses refronted in brick or stone from the 17th century onwards.

The situation may not have been quite so simple, however, in the case of monastic buildings converted to domestic use in the second half of the 16th century. As Malcolm Airs has written, "The cultured mind of the 16th century delighted in anything that could be called 'curious' or 'ingenious'...(for example) in allegory and metaphor which characterise much of the literature and painting of the period (and in)...emblems and devices, in which a philosophical truth or a line of conduct was reduced to an allegorical picture supported by a cryptic motto or some lines of verse".¹⁰

One of the ways that this phenomenon could be developed was through architecture and perhaps its clearest expression can be found in the so-called allegorical buildings of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, among the best-known examples being Longford Castle (Wilts.) and

Sir Thomas Tresham's Triangular Lodge and Lyveden New Build in Northamptonshire.¹¹ It may not therefore be too fanciful to suggest that some monastic conversions should be seen in this light, although in the absence of literary or other documentary material this is impossible to prove. It is conceivable, moreover, that an intellectually sophisticated owner of particular religious persuasions could have taken "delight" in the allegory or symbolism of converting a former monastery to domestic use. Certainly, it is easy to imagine that the physical challenge of conversion, if not the difficulty of concealing the monastic origins of the building, would have appealed both to practical men like Nedeham and Lee in the first generation and to skilled political operators like Egerton towards the end of our period. It is pure speculation, however, whether devotees of the old or new religion would have found greater intellectual and moral fulfilment in making use of former monastic buildings in this way.

* * * *

Various factors could act as a bar to the early re-use of monastic buildings whatever the social level of their new owners. The principal of these was perhaps the religious uncertainty of the period. The accession of Mary in 1553 must have worried many who had acquired former monastic property during the reigns of her father and younger brother. Several religious houses were re-established under her, including Westminster, and a house of Dominican nuns, formerly of Dartford in Kent, was refounded at King's Langley in 1557 before moving back to Dartford in the following year.¹² There were also plans to re-endow several more (including St Albans) which remained unrealised at the time of Mary's death in 1558.¹³ These refoundations were viewed by many at the time as the tip

of the iceberg and there can be little doubt that Mary herself would have liked to have gone much further in the restoration of confiscated Church property, being prevented from so doing only by political expedience and the practical difficulties of unravelling nearly 20 years' secular ownership of former ecclesiastical lands and buildings. How much more she might have achieved in this regard is now only a matter for speculation but the circumstances of her reign were clearly not propitious for the conversion of monastic buildings into country or town houses.

The succession of Elizabeth and the 1559 Act of Uniformity are often viewed as a turning point in the religious climate of the times,¹⁴ but this certitude is only possible with the benefit of hindsight. To contemporaries who had experienced the brief reigns of Edward and Mary and the very different attitudes of the two monarchs and their governments, the early years of Elizabeth's reign can have offered little in the way of security, and it is perhaps no coincidence that nationally the conversion of the great majority of former monastic buildings did not peak until the 1570s and '80s, decades in which much new building work was also undertaken.¹⁵

* * * *

The significance of converted monastic buildings in the development of architectural styles and ideas in the 16th century, both within a county and a national framework, is difficult to assess. Hertfordshire has many examples of town and country houses of this period, several of which have been usefully brought together and compared by J.T. Smith in his recent publications.¹⁶ A particularly relevant comparison can be made between monastic conversions and other houses of courtyard plan, in the

anticipation that the success or ultimate failure of the latter may tell us something about the importance or otherwise of the former.

As Smith has shown, the medieval tradition of the courtyard house lasted well into the 17th century in Hertfordshire, the remodelling of Beechwood, completed only in 1702, representing one of the last examples of this building type. While the medieval relationship of gatehouse to main hall range was retained in this plan-form, there were severe limitations to linear extensions, and it was more convenient to extend the hall range at right-angles to each end, creating an enclosed inner courtyard, with only the outer courts completely or partly open. The converted buildings of a monastic cloister could in theory lend themselves quite easily to such an arrangement, although as pointed out in Chapter 4 there were in fact often practical difficulties in doing this, owing to the frequently different ages and varying heights of the individual buildings in the cloister. Nevertheless, these difficulties could be overcome as the courtyard houses of The Biggin, Hitchin Priory and on a larger scale Ashridge, Sopwell and Wymondley clearly show.

These sites can be seen in the wider context of other 16th-century courtyard houses in the county such as Broxbourne Bury, Hatfield Palace, Standon Lordship, Theobalds and Watton Woodhall, all of which developed in several stages, or the smaller number of houses like Berkhamsted Place and Gorhambury, which were planned and built to a courtyard lay-out from the start.¹⁷

The halls of several of these houses were open to the roof, as at Gorhambury and Knebworth, and this certainly seems to have been the case at Ashridge, while at The Biggin, Sopwell and Wymondley the hall range was probably divided into two storeys. Likewise, it should not be assumed that the hall range would always lie directly opposite the gatehouse range in courtyard-plan houses. At

Standon Lordship, for example, the hall is situated at right-angles to the entrance range and this suggests that at monastic conversions like Hitchin Priory, where the position of the hall is unclear, it would be unwise automatically to deduce that it lay opposite the entrance range. Indeed, at The Biggin it appears that the hall was in the south range of the old priory cloister, the east range having become the entrance range to the inner court of the 16th-century house.

* * * *

The principal reasons why the conversion of former monastic buildings ended in an architectural blind alley towards the end of the 16th century have been outlined in Chapter 4, and it now remains only to offer some speculations and ideas for further work. First, to adopt a similar approach to that taken to the Hertfordshire sample in an investigation of the 16th-century re-use of monastic buildings in another part of the country might produce a very different picture. For example, Hertfordshire's proximity to London and its growing prosperity at this period mean that it is far from being a typical county and in other parts of the country, remote from the capital's influence, where many former monastic buildings were acquired by members of the gentry or yeoman farmer class, rather than by royal favourites or officials, another pattern of re-use is likely to have emerged.

Second, the question of whether Catholics or Protestants were the more likely to convert monastic buildings to domestic use remains open. In theory either group would have found the proposition attractive, Catholics possibly seeing in the re-use of the buildings themselves some continuity with the monastic past, Protestants regarding the secularisation of the buildings

as the triumph of reason and reform over the perceived ignorance and superstition of medieval religion. England had, of course, not become an exclusively Protestant country by the late 16th century and, as various recent studies have shown, adherence to the old religion remained strong in some regions.¹⁸ But the fact that, officially at least, Protestantism was predominant by this time may have been a contributory factor in the peaking of monastic conversions in the 1570s and '80s.

There are, of course, frequently difficulties in establishing whether an individual subscribed to the Protestant or Catholic faith. Some men, such as Sir Richard Rich or Sir William Paulet could switch their adherence to suit the mood of the time, a change in monarch often signalling a shift in allegiance, while others like Wriothesley could disguise their private belief in one creed by a show of public devotion to the other.¹⁹ One barrier to further investigation is the almost total lack of supporting documentary material, followers of the old religion being particularly reluctant to commit to writing anything that might jeopardise their careers or the welfare of their families.²⁰

Another possible area for further work might lie in the marked changes in architectural development and landscape appreciation evident towards the end of the 16th century, several of which are likely to have had implications for the adaptive re-use of monastic buildings, at least at the highest social level. This was precisely the period when the importance of views and vistas was beginning to be valued for the first time, being reflected in the building of look-out towers which, although they seem to have had their origins earlier in the century, were becoming more popular by c.1550 as typified at Bisham Abbey (Berks.), Lacock in Wiltshire and St Osyth's (Essex).²¹ By the time Sir Francis Bacon wrote 'Of Building', the recreational use of the lead flats of parapeted or balustraded roofs

was likewise well established- "As for the tower, I would have it two stories, of eighteen foot high a-piece, above the two wings; and a goodly leads upon the top, railed with statuas interposed...²² In the same spirit, prospect mounds, like that constructed for Bacon's father, Sir Nicholas, at Gorhambury,²³ were raised not only to give views over surrounding formal gardens but over the wider countryside beyond.

Similarly, an elevated position was often considered to be the best location for a new house. As early as 1542 Andrew Boorde was writing in his Compendyous Regyment that "Then he that wyll buylde, let hym make his fundacyon upon a gravaly grownde myxt with clay, or els let hym buylde upon an hyll or a hylles syde".²⁴ While this advice was not necessarily intended to advocate building on a hill-top, such a practice was certainly adopted by Sir Francis Willoughby at Wollaton (Notts.) in the 1580s when he abandoned the valley site of his ancestral home and built anew on the nearby hill.²⁵

The value of a hilly position was increasingly appreciated by architectural treatise writers. Although Sir Henry Wotton warned against the perils of hill-top building in the inclement North, he also wrote in his The Elements of Architecture (1624) that a house should not "be subject to any foggy noysomnesse, from Fenns or Marshes neere adjoyning; nor too Mineral exhalations, from the soile it selfe. Not undigested, for Want of Winde..." Instead, he extolled "the properties of a well chosen Prospect...there is a Lordship likewise of the Eye which being a raunging and Imperious and (I might say) an usurping Sence, can indure no narrow circumscription; but must be fedde with extent and varietie".²⁶

The impracticalities of building on top of a hill were later recognised by Roger North- he considered that the best place to build was at the "medium" between "mountanous country" and the "plain"... "on the side of an

hill, a little rising, and not farr from the bottom"- but he acknowledges that this opinion was not shared by all of his contemporaries: "It was the usage in ancient times, to build low, and neer water, but that is found or thought unwholesome, and the next course is to take the other extream and build, as our age doth, upon the summit of hills, where they are intollerably exposed to weather".²⁷

As North was clearly aware, this predisposition towards building on a hill-top contrasted markedly with the medieval and early Tudor tendency to select a low-lying and sheltered spot, close to abundant and convenient supplies of water and firewood, in which to build a house: features equally sought and exploited by the builders of medieval monasteries. In many cases, of course, the English climate ensured that houses continued to be erected in these sheltered valley locations, and as on many other topics, the advice of architectural treatise writers on siting was not entirely practical. But that the advice went not completely unheeded is demonstrated by a group of hill-top houses built in the North Midlands from the 1580s into the early 17th century. Apart from Wollaton in Nottinghamshire, these included the Derbyshire houses of Chatsworth and Hardwick, as well as a number of rather smaller buildings like Barlborough and The Little Castle at Bolsover, also in Derbyshire, Heath Old Hall in Yorkshire and Wootton Lodge in Staffordshire, all, of course, influenced by, if not directly built to, the designs of Robert Smythson.²⁸

Elsewhere, great magnates were building lodges where they could retreat with their friends and a few essential servants to hunt or to relax from the pressures of public life. Some of these lodges, like Manor Lodge at Worksop (Notts.) or Wothorpe in Cambridgeshire, which Thomas Cecil, Lord Exeter built on a Greek-cross plan in the early 17th century "to retire to out of the dust when his house of Burleigh was sweeping",²⁹ were close to the main

residences of their owners but large enough to provide temporary accommodation when required. Others, like the rather earlier Hunting Tower at Chatsworth, were built as 'stands', points from which to shoot at deer or from which to watch their hunting.³⁰

Several of these buildings, like Robert Cecil's Cranborne in Dorset (1608-11),³¹ were on the sites of medieval hunting lodges, while others, including the earliest of its kind, Mount Edgcumbe in Cornwall (1546),³² Sir Walter Raleigh's Sherborne (Dorset) and Wootton (Staffs.) would soon prove so attractive to their owners that they were enlarged to form their principal residences.³³ Indeed, in both the smaller and the great country house of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the ever increasing emphasis on the compact plan, an innovation that was to become the norm by time of the Restoration,³⁴ meant that there was little or no role for the converted former monastic building.

Many new houses would, of course, yet be built in styles, plan-forms and locations not favoured by the architectural treatise writers or their readers, and many more existing buildings remained to be adapted and remodelled by their owners: certainly, it is true that in all periods (except our own) most construction work has consisted of "alterations, additions or repairs to an older structure".³⁵ Nevertheless, by c.1600 a combination of factors, not least the marked changes in architectural ideas and direction, had created a set of circumstances where, at the highest social level, it was no longer worth the effort to continue to convert former monastic buildings to domestic use.

REFERENCES

1. Lionel Munby, The Hertfordshire Landscape (1977), 139.
2. Thomas Fuller, The Worthies of England (ed., John Freeman, 1952), 229.
3. See Chapter 1, note 28.
4. See, for example, J.H. Bettey, The Suppression of the Monasteries in the West Country (1989), Ch.7.
5. Felicity Heal & Clive Holmes, The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700 (1994), 326; W.G. Hoskins, The Age of Plunder (1976), 137.
6. John Guy, Tudor England (1988), 145.
7. Munby, op. cit. (note 1), 139-40.
8. Heal & Holmes, op. et loc. cit.
9. Ibid.
10. Airs (1975), 3.
11. Summerson (1977), 77-80.
12. See Appendix (King's Langley).
13. David Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, iii (1959), Ch.34.

14. See G.R. Elton, England Under the Tudors (2nd. edn., 1974), 273-4 for an expression of this traditional view.
15. Airs (1975), 18-19.
16. J.T. Smith, English Houses 1200-1800: the Hertfordshire Evidence (1992) and Hertfordshire Houses: Selective Inventory (1993).
17. Smith (1992 & 1993), passim.
18. Two of the most recent studies to show the continuing strength of Catholicism in various regions of the country in the Tudor and Elizabethan period are Eamon Duffy's The Stripping of the Altars, Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580 (1992) and Christopher Haigh's English Reformations, Religion, Politics and Society Under the Tudors (1993).
19. See D.N.B., xvi, 1009-12; xv, 535-9 & xxi, 1063-7 for the religious leanings of Rich, Paulet and Wriothesley. The topic can be explored further through the publications of the Catholic Record Society (Records Series) and its journal, Recusant History. I am grateful to Edward Chaney for drawing my attention to these publications.
20. The difficulties of identifying the true religious persuasions of individuals is comprehensively covered by J.A. Williams in his 'Sources for recusant history (1559-1791) in English official archives', Recusant Hist., 16 (1983), 331-451.
21. Girouard (1983), 106-7.

22. Francis Bacon, Essays (1955 Everyman edn.), 134. See also Paula Henderson, 'Life at the top: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century roofscapes', Country Life, 177 (3 January, 1985), 6-9.
23. Jonathan Hunn, pers. comm.
24. Andrew Boorde, A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Health (1542), ed. by F.J. Furnivall and printed in Early English Text Ser., Extra Ser., x (1870), 238.
25. Airs (1975), 17.
26. Sir Henry Wotton, The Elements of Architecture (1624), 3-4.
27. Roger North, Of Building (eds., Howard Colvin & John Newman, 1981), 89-90.
28. Girouard (1983), passim.
29. Richard Gough, Camden's Britannia, ii (1806 edn.), 292.
30. Girouard (1983), 119.
31. R.C.H.M., Dorset, v (1975), 7-12.
32. Girouard (1983), 97-101.
33. R.C.H.M., Dorset, i (1952), 66-9; Girouard, 199-204.
34. Colin Platt, The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England (1994), passim.
35. L. Stone, An Open Elite? England 1540-1880 (1984), 352.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Add. Chart. | British Library, Additional Charters |
| Add. MS. | British Library, Additional Manuscripts |
| Airs (1975) | Malcolm Airs, <u>The Making of The English Country House 1500-1640</u> (1975) |
| <u>Arch. Jnl.</u> | <u>Archaeological Journal</u> |
| <u>Archit. Hist.</u> | <u>Architectural History</u> |
| <u>Assoc. Soc. Rep.</u> | <u>Associated Societies Reports</u> |
| B.L. | British Library, London |
| Bodl. | Bodleian Library, Oxford |
| Brayley & Britton, vii | E.W. Brayley & J.Britton, <u>The Beauties of England and Wales, Vol.7, Hertfordshire</u> (1808) |
| Brit. Arch. Rep. | British Archaeological Report |
| <u>Cal. Pat. R.</u> | <u>Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office</u> (1903-(in progress)) |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <u>Cal. S.P. Dom.</u> | <u>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth & James I, 12 vols. (1856-72)</u> |
| C.B.A. Res. Rep. | Council for British Archaeology Research Report |
| Chauncy | Henry Chauncy, <u>The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire</u> , 2 vols. (1700, reprinted 1975) |
| Clutterbuck | Robert Clutterbuck, <u>The History and Antiquities of Hertfordshire</u> , 3 vols. (1815-27) |
| Coppack (1990) | Glyn Coppack, <u>Abbeys and Priories</u> (1990) |
| Cussans | J.E. Cussans, <u>The History of Hertfordshire</u> , 3 vols. (1870-81) |
| <u>D.N.B.</u> | <u>Dictionary of National Biography</u> , 22 vols. (revd. edn. 1921/2) |
| Doggett (1991) | Nicholas Doggett, 'The demolition and conversion of former monastic buildings in Hertfordshire at the Dissolution' in D. Jones-Baker (ed.), <u>Hertfordshire in History: Papers Presented to Lionel Munby</u> (1991), 46-64. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Dugdale | William Dugdale (ed.), <u>Monasticon Anglicanum</u> , (re-ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis & B. Bandinel, 6 vols. in 8, 1817- 30) |
| Girouard (1983) | Mark Girouard, <u>Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House</u> (1983) |
| Greene (1992) | Patrick Greene, <u>Medieval Monasteries</u> (1992) |
| Harl. MS. | British Library, Harleian Manuscripts |
| <u>Herts. Arch.</u> | <u>Hertfordshire Archaeology</u> |
| <u>Herts. Past</u> | <u>Hertfordshire's Past</u> |
| Howard (1987) | Maurice Howard, <u>The Early Tudor Country House</u> (1987) |
| H.M.S.O. | Her Majesty's Stationery Office |
| H.R.O. | Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford |
| <u>Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc.</u> | <u>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</u> |
| <u>King's Works</u> | Howard Colvin <u>et al</u> , <u>The History of the King's Works, the Middle Ages & 1485-1660</u> , 4 vols. (1963-82) |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Knowles (1953) | David Knowles & R. Neville Hadcock, <u>Medieval Religious Houses</u> (1953) |
| Lansd. MS. | British Library, Lansdowne Manuscripts |
| Leland | Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed.), <u>The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-43</u> , 5 vols. (1906-10) |
| <u>L.P.</u> | <u>Calendar of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</u> , eds. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner & R.H. Brodie, 21 vols. (1862-1932) |
| <u>Med. Arch.</u> | <u>Medieval Archaeology</u> |
| misc. | miscellaneous |
| n.d. | no date |
| N.M.R. | National Monuments Record, Swindon |
| Pevsner | Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, <u>Hertfordshire</u> (2nd edn., revd. Bridget Cherry, 1977) |
| Platt (1984) | <u>The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England</u> (1984) |
| <u>Post-Med. Arch.</u> | <u>Post-Medieval Archaeology</u> |

~~Platt (1984)~~

~~The Abbeyes and Priories of
Medieval England (1984)~~

~~Post Med. Arch.~~

~~Post-Medieval Archaeology~~

P.R.O.

Public Record Office, London

R.C.H.M.

Royal Commission on Historical
Monuments, An Inventory of the
Historical Monuments in
Hertfordshire (1910). Other
counties are indicated by the
addition of county name,
volume number and publication
date.

Salmon

Nathaniel Salmon, The History
of Hertfordshire (1728)

Smith (1992)

J.T. Smith, English Houses
1200-1800: the Hertfordshire
Evidence (1992)

Smith (1993)

J.T. Smith, Hertfordshire
Houses: Selective Inventory
(1993)

S.M.R.

County Sites and Monuments
Record, Hertford

Statutes of the Realm

The Statutes of the Realm,
from Original Records and
Authentic Manuscripts, 11
vols. in 12 (1810-28)

Summerson (1977)

John Summerson, Architecture
in Britain, 1530-1830 (6th
edn., 1977)

Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc. Transactions of the East
Hertfordshire Archaeological
Society

Val. Eccl.

Valor Ecclesiasticus, eds. J.
Caley & J. Hunter, 6 vols.
(1810-34)

V.C.H.

The Victoria History of the
Counties of England:
Hertfordshire, 4 vols. (1902-
14). Other counties are
indicated by the addition of
the county name with volume
number and publication date.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES (NB- only the principal record classes and collections are cited here).

1. British Library, London

Additional Manuscripts: topographical drawings by the Buckler family and other artists, mainly at Add. MS. 32,349-50 and 36,365-6; description of Royston Priory (1747) by William Cole, Add. MS. 5820, fols.19v-35

Harleian Manuscripts: various

Lansdowne Manuscripts: various, including a 1587 terrier of Hertford Priory, Lansd. MS. 116, fol.48

2. Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London

SC6/Hen. VIII/1606-32: ministers' accounts

SC 12/8/29: survey of Hitchin Priory (1546)

SP/12/125: survey of Royston Priory (1578)

E 117/12/30: suppression inventories of Cheshunt, Royston, St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead, Sopwell and Wymondley

E 315/361: commissioners' returns for Cheshunt, Royston, St Giles in the Wood, Flamstead, Sopwell and Wymondley

E 315/391 (2): survey of King's Langley Friary (1555)

3. Library of Society of Antiquaries, London

MS. 720: Webster, J., Gleanings of Antiquity from Verolam and St Albans (n.d.)

4. Bodleian Library, Oxford

Gough Herts.: annotated books formerly belonging to Richard Gough

Gough MS.: topographical collections and notes by Richard Gough and others

MS. Top. Eccl. b. 28

MS. Willis: topographical collections and notes by Browne Willis

5. Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford

Buckler Drawings: reference by volume and folio number

Oldfield Drawings: reference by volume and folio number

Gerish Collection: collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century newspaper cuttings and other miscellaneous material compiled by W.B. Gerish

Shrimpton, J., The Antiquities of Verulam and St Albans (c.1610): MS. volume, 66,296

6. County Sites and Monuments Record, Hertford

Aerial photograph collection and files and record cards on individual sites and buildings

7. Hertford Museum

Miscellaneous unpublished material on Hertford Priory

8. Hitchin Museum

Miscellaneous unpublished material on The Biggin and Hitchin Priory, mainly collected by Reginald Hine

9. Museum of St Albans

Topographical drawings in the Lewis Evans Collection

10. St Albans Public Library

Luppino drawings in the Lewis Evans Collection

11. Watford Central Library

Photographic collection
12. National Library of Air Photographs, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Swindon

Aerial photographs of individual sites and buildings
13. National Monuments Record, The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Swindon

Files and photographs of individual sites and buildings, accessed by computer catalogue in the public search room

B. PRINTED SOURCES

Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

1. Primary Sources

Acts of the Privy Council, ed. J.R. Dasent, 32 vols. (1890-1970).

Bates, J.H. (ed.), The Particular Description of the County of Somerset, Drawn up by Thomas Gerard of Trent, 1633, Somerset Rec. Soc., 15 (1900).

Boorde, A., A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Health (1542), ed. F.J. Furnivall and printed in Early English Text Ser., Extra Ser., x (1870).

Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House, pt.x Historical Manuscripts Commission Report (1904).

Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office (1903- (in progress)).

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James I, 12 vols. (1856-72).

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Addenda, 1547-65, 1566-79, 1580-1625, 3 vols. (1870-2).

Department of the Environment, Lists of Historic Buildings.

Department of the Environment, Lists of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Dickens, A.G. (ed.), Tudor Treatises, Yorks. Arch. Soc. Rec. Ser., 125 (1959).

Dugdale, W. (ed.), Monasticon Anglicanum, (re-ed. Caley, J., Ellis, H. & Bandinel, B., 6 vols. in 8, 1817-30).

Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, eds. Brewer, J.S., Gairdner, J. & Brodie, R.H., 21 vols. (1862-1932).

Norden, J., Speculi Britanniae Pars, The Description of Hartfordshire (1598).

Portland MS. II, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 13th Rep., App., pt.2 (1893).

Public Record Office, Lists and Indexes No.9, List of Sheriffs for England and Wales (1898).

Public Record Office, Lists and Indexes No.26, Index of Inquisitions Post Mortem Preserved in the P.R.O., vol. ii (1908).

Riley, H.T. (ed.), Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani, 3 vols. (1867).

Rotuli Parliamentorum ut et Petitiones et Placita in Parlamento, 6 vols. with index (1832).

Skelton, J., The Garden of Laurell (1523).

The Statutes of the Realm, from Original Records and Authentic Manuscripts, 11 vols. in 12, (1810-28).

Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (1872).

Toulmin Smith, L. (ed.), The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-43, 5 vols. (1906-10).

Vallans, W., 'A Tale of Two Swannes' (1590), contained in the same writer's 'Account of Several Parts of Hartfordshire', which appears as a prefix to Thomas Hearne's 1769 edition of vol. 5 of John Leland's Itinerary (Bodl., Douce HH 169).

Valor Ecclesiasticus, (eds. Caley, J. and Hunter, J.), 6 vols. (1810-34).

Wright, T. (ed.), Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries, Camden Series, 26 (1843).

2. Secondary Sources

Airs, M.R., The Making of the English Country House 1500-1640 (1975).

The Buildings of Britain, Tudor and Jacobean (1983).

The Tudor and Jacobean Country House, A Building History ^{Stroud,} (1995).

Andrews, H.C, 'Henry George Oldfield and the Dimsdale collection of Hertfordshire Drawings', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 11 (1940-44), 212-24.

Ashmore, O., H.M.S.O. guide to Whalley (1962).

Astill, G., 'Monastic research designs: Bordesley Abbey and the Arrow Valley' in Gilchrist, R. & Mytum, H. (eds.), The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries, Brit. Arch. Rep., 203 ^{Oxford,} (1989), 279-93.

Aston, Margaret, 'English ruins and English history: the Dissolution and the sense of the past', Jnl. Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 36 (1973), 231-55.

Aston, Mick, Monasteries (1993).

Bacon, F., Essays (1955 Everyman edn.)

Baker, D., 'Excavations at Elstow Abbey, 1965-66', Beds. Arch. Jnl., 3 (1966), 22-30.

Barley, M.W., Houses and History (1986).

Baskerville, G., English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries (1937).

Beresford-Webb, C.A., 'The Biggin' (n.d. but c.1969), unpublished manuscript, Hitchin Museum.

Betty, J.H., The Suppression of the Monasteries in the West Country ^{Gloucester,} (1989).

Bilson, J. & St John Hope, W.H., Architectural Description of Kirkstall Abbey, Publications of the Thoresby Soc., 16 (1907).

Bindoff, S.T. (ed.), The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1509-1558, 3 vols. (1982).

Blaauw, W.H., 'On the Cluniac priory of St Pancras at Lewes, its priors and monks', Sussex Arch. Collns., 3 (1850), 185-210.

Black, J.B., The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603 (2nd. edn., ^{Oxford,} 1959).

Bold, J., Wilton House and the Story of English Palladianism (1988).

Bradfer-Lawrence, H.L., 'The building of Raynham Hall', Norfolk Arch., 23 (1927), 93-146.

Brakspear, H., Waverley Abbey (1905).

'Stanley Abbey', Wilts. Nat. Hist. Mag., 35 (1907/8), 541-81.

'Bardney Abbey', Arch. Jnl., 79 (1922), 1-92.

Brayley, E.W. & Britton, J., The Beauties of England and Wales, Vol. 7, Hertfordshire (1808).

Brown, J.A., 'The hospice of The Knights Templars at Standon', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 1 (1899-1901), 289-91.

Bullard, I.V., Flamstead, its Church and History ^{Rochester,} (1902).

Burleigh, G. et al, Wymondley Priory, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation (North Herts. District Council Museums, ^{Hitchin,} 1989).

Burne, R.V.H., Chester Cathedral from its Founding by Henry VIII to the Accession of Queen Victoria (1958).

Busby, J.H., 'The Hertfordshire drawings of Thomas Fisher (1771?-1836)', Herts. Arch., 1 (1968), 110-16.

Butler, Lawrence, 'The archaeology of rural monasteries in England and Wales' in Gilchrist, R. & Mytum H., (eds.), The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries, Brit. Arch. Rep., 203 ^{Oxford,} (1989), 1-27.

Butler, Lionel & Given-Wilson, C., Medieval Monasteries of Great Britain (1979).

Campbell, L., 'Documentary evidence for the building of Raynham Hall', Archit. Hist., 32 (1989), 52-63.

Chandler, J., John Leland's Itinerary, Travels in Tudor England ^{Stroud,} (1993).

Chauncy, H., The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire, 2 vols. (1700, reprinted ^{York} 1975).

Christie, P.M. & Croad, J.G., 'Excavations at Denny Abbey', Arch. Jnl., 137 (1980), 138-279.

Clarke, H., The Archaeology of Medieval England ^{Oxford,} (1984).

Clutterbuck, R., The History and Antiquities of Hertfordshire, 3 vols. (1815-27).

Colvin, H.M. et al, The History of the King's Works, the Middle Ages & 1485-1660, 4 vols. (1963-82).

Cobb, G., English Cathedrals, The Forgotten Centuries: Restoration and Change from 1530 to the Present Day (1980).

Cook, G.H. (ed.), Letters to Cromwell and Others on the Suppression of the Monasteries (1965).

Coope, R., 'The "long gallery": its origins, development, use and decoration', Archit. Hist., 29 (1986), 43-84.

With Fernie, E. & Howard, M., Newstead Abbey. Papers and Discussion From a Day Symposium organised by the Society of Architectural Historians in Association with the Thoroton Society (April 1992).

Cooper-Reade, H., 'Jewson's Yard, Hertford: excavations of St Mary's Priory and St John's Parish Church', Herts. Past, 29 (Autumn 1990), 29-37.

Copeland, G.W., 'Some problems of Buckland Abbey', Trans. Devon. Assoc., 85 (1953), 41-52.

Coppack, G., Abbeys and Priories (1990).

Cranage, D.H.S., Home of the Monk ^{Cambridge,} (1934).

Crossley, D., Post-Medieval Archaeology ^{Leicester,} (1990).

Cussans, J.E., The History of Hertfordshire, 3 vols. (1870-81). ^{reprinted Wakefield 1972}

Denny, H.L.L., 'Biography of Sir Edward Denny', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 2 (1904), 247-60.

'Biography of the right honourable Sir Anthony Denny' Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3, pt.ii (1906), 197-216.

Dickens, A.G., The English Reformation (1964).

Dickinson, J.C., Monastic Life in Medieval England (1961).

'The buildings of the English Austin canons after the Dissolution of the Monasteries', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc., 3rd. Ser., 31 (1968), 60-75.

Dictionary of National Biography, 22 vols. (revd. edn., ^{Oxford} 1921/2).

Dictionary of National Biography, 1951-60 (Oxford, 1971).

Doggett, N.D.B., 'The demolition and conversion of former monastic buildings in Hertfordshire at the Dissolution' in Jones-Baker, D. (ed.), Hertfordshire in History: Papers Presented to Lionel Munby ^{Hertford,} (1991), 46-64.

'Medieval hospitals in Hertfordshire and their dissolution', Herts. Past, 38 (Spring 1995), 8-12.

Unpublished paper on the dispersal of the Hertfordshire religious and their post-Dissolution careers.

Drewett, P.L. & Stuart, I.W., 'Excavations in the Norman gate tower, Bury St Edmunds Abbey', Proc. Suffolk Inst. Arch., 33 (1973-5), 241-52.

Drury, P.J., 'No other palace in the kingdom will compare with it: the evolution of Audley End, 1605-1745', Archit. Hist., 23 (1980), 1-39.

'Walden into Audley End' in Bassett, S.R. (ed.), Saffron Walden: Excavations and Research 1972-80, C.B.A. Res. Rep., 45 (1982), 94-105.

Duffy, E., The Stripping of the Altars, Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580 ^{New Haven: London,} (1992).

Dyce, A. (ed.), The Poetical Works of John Skelton, 2 vols. (1843).

East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, 'Twenty fourth excursion (to Wymondley)', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3 (1906), 230-1.

'Visit of the East. Herts. Arch. Soc. (to Standon), September 1930', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 8 (1928-33), 265-6.

Ellis, W., Campagna of London (1791).

Elton, G.R., England Under the Tudors (2nd. edn., 1974).

Emerick, K. & Wilson, K., 'Fountains Abbey: some interim results of remote sensing', Conservation Bulletin, 18 (October 1992), 7-9.

Farris, N., The Wymondleys ^{Hertford,} (1989).

Fergusson, P., 'The twelfth-century refectories at Rievaulx and Byland Abbeys' in Norton, E.C. & Park, W.D. (eds.), Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles ^{Cambridge,} (1986), 160-80.

Fletcher, P.C., 'Recent excavations at Hinton Priory', Proc. Somerset Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc., 96 (1951), 160-5.

Forster, E.M., Howard's End ^{Harmondsworth,} (1960 Penguin edn.).

Fuller, T., The Church History of Great Britain, 6 vols. (ed. Brewer, J.S., ^{Oxford,} 1845).

The Worthies of England (ed. Freeman, J., 1952).

Garner, T. & Stratton, A., The Domestic Architecture of England During the Tudor Period, 2 vols. (1929).

Gamlen, St John O., 'Medieval window glass from the Priory, King's Langley', Herts. Arch., 3 (1973), 73-7.

Gasquet, F.A., Henry VIII and the English Monasteries (1906).

Gilchrist, R. & Mytum, H., The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries, Brit. Arch. Rep., 203 (Oxford, 1989).

Gilyard-Beer, R., H.M.S.O. guide to Cleeve Abbey (1959).

'The eastern arm of the abbey church at Bury St Edmunds', Proc. Suffolk Inst. Arch., 31 (1967/69), 256-62.

Girouard, M., 'Salisbury Hall, Hertfordshire- II', Country Life, 126 (29 October, 1959), 708-11.

Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House ^{New Haven: London,} (1983).

Hardwick Hall, National Trust Guide (1990).

Godfrey, W., 'The abbot's parlour, Thame Park', Arch. Jnl., 86 (1929), 59-68.

Gotch, J.A., Early Renaissance Architecture in England (1914).

Gough, R., Camden's Britannia, ⁴/₇ vols. (1806).

Graham, R. & Gilyard-Beer, R., H.M.S.O. guide to Monk Bretton (1966).

Greene, J.P., Norton Priory ^{Cambridge,} (1989).

Medieval Monasteries ^{Leicester,} (1992).

Guy, J., Tudor England ^{Oxford,} (1988).

Habbakuk, H.J., 'The market for monastic property, 1539-1603', Economic Hist. Rev., 2nd. Ser., 10 (1957/8), 362-80.

Haigh, C., English Reformations, Religion, Politics and Society Under the Tudors ^{Oxford,} (1993).

Hamilton Thompson, A., History and Architectural Description of the Priory of St Mary, Bolton-in-Wharfedale, Publications of the Thoresby Soc., 30 (1928).

Harbottle, B., 'Excavations at the Carmelite friary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1965, 1967', Arch. Aeliana, 4th Ser., 46 (1968), 163-223.

with Fraser, R., 'Black Friars, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, after the Dissolution of the Monasteries', Arch. Aeliana, 5th Ser., 15 (1987), 23-150.

Hare, J., Battle Abbey, The Eastern Range and the Excavations of 1978-80 (1985).

'Netley Abbey: monastery, mansion and ruin',
Proc. Hants. Field Club, 49 (1993), 207-27.

Harvey, J., English Mediaeval Architects (revd. edn.,
Gloucester, 1984).

Hay. D., 'The dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham', Arch. Aeliana, 4th Ser., 15 (1938), 69-114.

Heal, F. & Holmes, C., The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700 (1994).
Basingstoke: London,

Henderson, P., 'Life at the top: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century roofscapes', Country Life, 177 (3 January, 1985), 6-9.

Hine, R., The History of Hitchin, 2 vols. (1927-9).

Hirst, S., Walsh, D.A. & Wright, S.M., Bordesley Abbey II,
Brit. Arch. Rep., 111 (1983).
Oxford,

Hockey, F., Beaulieu, King John's Abbey (1976).
Old Woking,

Hodgson, J.F., 'Eggleston Abbey', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 18 (1904/5), 129-82.

Horden, J., 'The fate of monastic churches in Cumbria: a consideration of the position at law' in Loades, J. (ed.), Monastic Studies ^{Banger} (1990), 255-66.

Hoskins, W.G., The Age of Plunder (1976).

Howard, M., The Early Tudor Country House (1987).

Huggins, P.J., 'Excavations of the collegiate and Augustinian churches, Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1984-87', Arch. Jnl., 146 (1989), 476-537.

Kew, J., 'The disposal of crown lands and the Devon land market, 1536-58', Agricultural Hist. Rev., 18 (1970), 93-105.

Kingston, A., A History of Royston (1906).

Knowles, M.D., The Religious Orders in England, iii ^{Cambridge} (1959).

with Hadcock, R.N., Medieval Religious Houses (1953).

with St Joseph, ^J R.K.S., Monastic Sites from the Air ^{Cambridge} (1952).

Laing, C.E., 'Excavations on the site of Bardney Abbey', Assoc. Soc. Reps., 32, pt.i (1913), 21-34.

Liljegren, S.B., The Fall of the Monasteries and the Social Changes in England ^{Lund} (1924).

Lloyd, D., State Worthies (1779).

Lloyd, L.J., John Skelton ^{Oxford,} (1938).

Lowther, M.A., 'Reports on the antiquities lately found at Lewes' and 'Further report on discoveries at Lewes', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc., 1 & 2 (1846 & 1847), 346-57 & 104-8.

Mackie, J.D., The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558 ^{Oxford,} (1952).

Marshall, P., 'The archaeological survey at Wollaton Hall: some revelations' in Airs, M.R. (ed.), The Tudor and Jacobean Great House (Oxford University Dept. Continuing Education, Conference Proceedings, 1994), 73-90.

Martin, C.T., 'Sir John Daunce's accounts of money received from the treasurer of the king's chamber temp. Henry VIII', Archaeologia, 47 (1883), 295-336.

McNeil R. & Turner, R.C., 'An architectural and topographical survey of Vale Royal Abbey', Jnl. Chester Arch. Soc., 70 (1990), 51-79.

Mercer, E., English Art 1553-1625 ^{Oxford,} (1962).

Miller, H., Henry VIII and the English Nobility ^{Oxford,} (1986).

Munby, J., 'J.C. Buckler, Tackley's Inn and three medieval houses in Oxford', Oxoniensia, 43 (1978), 123-69.

Munby, L., The Hertfordshire Landscape (1977).

Musty, A.E.S., 'Exploratory excavation within the monastic precinct, Waltham Abbey, 1972', Essex Arch. & Hist., 10 (1978), 127-73.

Neal, D.S., 'Excavations at the palace of King's Langley, Hertfordshire 1974-6', Med. Arch., 21 (1977), 124-65.

Newman, J., 'The development of the staircase in Elizabethan and Jacobean England' in Chastel, A. & Guillaume, J. (eds.), L'Escalier dans l'architecture de la Renaissance ^{Paris} (1985), 175-8.

Nichols, J. (ed.), Progresses of James I, 4 vols. (1828).

North, R., Of Building (eds., Colvin, H.M. & Newman, J., ^{Oxford,} 1981).

Oxley, J.E., The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary ^{Manchester,} (1965).

Page, W., 'The history of the monastery of St Mary de Pre', Trans. St Albans and Herts. Archit. and Arch. Soc., (1895/6), 8-18.

Pantin, W.A., 'Notley Abbey', Oxoniensia, 6 (1941), 36-41.

Peck, F., Desiderata Curiosa (1779).

Peers, C.R., H.M.S.O. guides to Byland (1930), Finchale (revd., 1973), Rievaulx (1933) and St Botolph's, Colchester (revd., 1964).

Pevsner, N., North Somerset and Bristol (1958).

all Harmondsworth

North-East Norfolk and Norwich (1962).

Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough (1968).

Yorkshire: York and the East Riding (1972).

Wiltshire (2nd edn., revd. Cherry, B., 1975).

Hertfordshire (2nd edn., revd. Cherry, B., 1977).

Leicestershire and Rutland (2nd. edn., revd. Williamson, E., 1984).

Devon (2nd edn., revd. Cherry, B., 1989).

Northumberland (2nd edn., revd. Grundy, J. et al, 1992).

Buckinghamshire (2nd edn., revd. Williamson, E., 1994).

with Lloyd, D., Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (1967).

with Nairn, I., Sussex (1965).

With Sherwood, J., Oxfordshire (1974).

With Wedgwood, A., Warwickshire (1966).

With Cherry, B., London 3: North West (1991).

Piggott, S., Ruins in a Landscape, Essays in Antiquarianism ^{Edinburgh,} (1976).

Platt, C.P.S., Medieval England (1978).

Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England (1984).

The Architecture of Medieval Britain ^{New Haven: London,} (1990).

The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart
England (1994).

Pollard, H.P., 'Franciscan and Benedictine monuments of Ware' in Standing, P.C. (ed.), Memorials of Old Hertfordshire (1905), 53-7.

With Gerish, W.B., 'The religious orders in Hitchin', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 3, pt.i (1905), 1-10.

Poster, J. & Sherlock, D., 'Denny Abbey: the nuns' refectory', Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc., 76 (1987), 67-82.

Preston, A.E., 'The demolition of Reading Abbey', Berks. Arch. Jnl., 39 (1935), 107-44.

Pugsley, S., 'Landed society and the emergence of the country house in Tudor and early Stuart Devon' in Gray, T., Rowe, M. & Erskine, A. (eds.), Tudor and Stuart Government, Essays Presented to Joyce Youings ^{Exeter} (1992), 96-118.

Rackham, O., Blair, W.J. & Munby, J., 'The thirteenth-century roofs and floor of the Blackfriars priory at Gloucester', Med. Arch., 22 (1978), 105-22.

Rahtz, P. & Hirst, S., Bordesley Abbey, Brit. Arch. Rep., 23 ^{Oxford} (1976).

Reeve, J.A., A Monograph on the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains (1892).

Rigold, S., 'Wymondley Priory', Med. Arch., 18 (1974), 191.

Roberts, E., The Hill of the Martyr, An Architectural History of St Albans Abbey ^{Dunstable,} (1993).

Robertson, M. et al, 'Listed buildings: the national resurvey of England', Trans. Ancient Monuments Soc., 37 (1993), 21-94.

Rogers, J.S., 'The manor and houses at Gorhambury', Trans. St Albans and Herts. Archit. and Arch. Soc., n.s., 4 (1935), 35-112.

Rouse, C., 'Domestic wall and panel paintings in Hertfordshire', Arch. Jnl., 146 (1989), 423-50.

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire (1910).

Essex, ii (1921).

Dorset, i (1952, reprinted with amendments 1974) & v (1975).

Churches of South-East Wiltshire (1987).

St John Hope, W.H., 'On the Premonstratensian abbey of St Mary at Alnwick, Northumberland', Arch. Jnl., 44 (1887), 337-46.

'Fountains Abbey', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 15 (1898/9), 269-402.

'The Gilbertine priory of Watton in the East Riding of Yorkshire', Arch. Jnl., 58 (1901), 1-34.

'The architectural history of Mount Grace Charterhouse', Yorks. Arch. Jnl., 18 (1905), 270-309.

'The making of Place House at Titchfield, near Southampton in 1538', Arch. Jnl., 63 (1906), 231-43.

St Joseph, J.K.S., — See Knowles, M.D.
Salmon, N., The History of Hertfordshire (1728).

Sandeen, E.R., 'The Building Activities of Sir Nicholas Bacon', unpublished Ph.D thesis (Chicago, 1959). A microfilm copy is deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (1959 Chicago 9).

Saunders, A., 'Blackfriars', Arch. Jnl., 122 (1965), 217-19.

Savine, A., The English Monasteries on the Eve of the Dissolution ^{Oxford,} (1909).

Schofield, J., 'Building in religious precincts in London at the Dissolution and after' in Gilchrist, R. & Mytum, H. (eds.), Recent Advances in Monastic Archaeology, Brit. Arch. Rep., 227 ^{Oxford,} (1993), 29-41.

Medieval London Houses ^{New Haven: London,} (1994).

Shaw, S., 'Account of Ashridge', The Topographer, ii, no.3 (March 1790), 131-54.

Shaw, W.A., The Knights of England, 2 vols. (1906).

Sherlock, D., 'Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-73', Norfolk Arch., 36 (1976), 202-23.

Smith, J.T., English Houses 1200-1800: The Hertfordshire Evidence (1992).

Hertfordshire Houses: Selective Inventory
(1993).

Smith, R.B., Land and Politics in the England of Henry VIII: the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1530-46 ^{Oxford,} (1970).

Spelman, H., The History and Fate of Sacrilege, 1632
(published posthumously in 1698).

Spittle, S.D.T., 'Madingley Hall', Arch. Jnl., 124 (1967),
225-6.

Stalley, R.A., The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland
^{New Haven, London,} (1987).

Steane, J.M., The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales (1984).

Stocker, D. & Everson, P., 'Rubbish recycled: a study of
the re-use of stone in Lincolnshire' in Parsons, D. (ed.),
Stone Quarrying and Building in England A.D.43-1525
(1990), 83-101

'The archaeology of the Reformation in
Lincoln: a case study in the redistribution of
building materials in the mid 16th century',
Lincs. Hist. & Arch., 25 (1990), 18-32.

Stone, L., The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641
^{Oxford,} (1965).

An Open Elite? England 1540-1880 ^{Oxford,} (1984).

With Stone, J.C., 'Country houses and their owners in Hertfordshire, 1540-1879' in Aydelotte, W.O., Bogue, A.C. and Fogel, R.W. (eds.), The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History (1972), 56-123.

Streeten, A.D.F., Bayham Abbey, Sussex Arch. Soc. Monograph 2 ^{Lewes} (1983).

Summerson, J., Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830 (revd. edn., ^{Harmondsworth,} 1977).

Swales, T.H., 'The redistribution of the monastic lands in Norfolk at the Dissolution', Norfolk Arch., 34 (1962-66), 14-44.

Thompson, M.W., Ruins; their Preservation and Display (1981).

The Decline of the Castle ^{Cambridge,} (1987).

Thurley, S., 'English Royal Palaces, 1450-1550', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (London, 1991).

The Royal Palaces of Tudor England ^{New Haven: London,} (1993).

Todd, H.J., The History of the College of Bonhommes at Ashridge (1823).

The Topographer, ii, no. 3 (March 1790), 131-54.

Tyack, G., The Making of the Warwickshire Country House, 1500-1650, Warwicks. Local Hist. Soc. Occasional Paper, No.4 (1982).

The Victoria History of the Counties of England,

Buckinghamshire, iii (1925), iv (1927).

Essex, ii (1907).

Hampshire, iv (1911).

Hertfordshire, 4 vols. (1902-14).

Huntingdonshire, ii (1932).

Oxfordshire, vii (1962), ix (1969).

Shropshire, ii (1973).

Somerset, iii (1974).

Warwickshire, iv (1947).

Wacher, J., 'Cirencester 1964', Antiquaries Jnl., 45 (1965), 105-10.

Walbran, R., Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains, I and II, Surtees Soc., 42 (1862) and 67 (1876).

Walters, R., 'Ware Priory', Trans. East Herts. Arch. Soc., 1, pt.i (1899), 39-43.

Warren, C.F.S. (ed.), An Appendix Bringing the Work the History and Fate of Sacrilege up to the Present Date (1898).

Weever, J., Ancient Funerall Monuments (1631).

Williams, J.A., 'Sources for recusant history (1559-1791) in English official archives', Recusant Hist., 16 (1983), 331-451.

Wood, A., Athenae Oxonienses, 5 vols. (ed., Bliss, P., 1813-20).

Woodfield, C., 'Finds from the free grammar school at the Whitefriars, Coventry, c.1545-c.1557/8', Post-Med. Arch., 15 (1981), 81-159.

Woodman, F., The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral (1981).

Woodward, G.W.O., 'A speculation in monastic lands', English Hist. Rev., 79 (1964), 778-83.

The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1966).

Wotton, H., The Elements of Architecture (1624).

Youngs, J.A., The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1971).

Sixteenth-Century England ^{Harmondsworth,} (1984).