

BEAUDESERT, STAFFORDSHIRE

by *Howard Colvin*

The demolition of Beaudesert Hall in 1935 deprived England of a notable Elizabethan mansion and Staffordshire of one of its great county seats. The loss can to some extent be made good on paper, thanks partly to the documentary evidence afforded by the Paget family archives, and partly to the work of previous topographers and architectural writers from the time of the Reverend Stebbing Shaw (1798) to that of H. Avray Tipping (1919). The following paper is therefore an attempt to write the architectural history of a vanished building from surviving documents, drawings and photographs. There are inevitably some problems that only an examination of the fabric could have solved, and others which drawings or descriptions unknown to the writer may yet elucidate. But, in a volume dedicated to the Chairman of one of the Historic Buildings Councils, it seemed worth while to attempt to put together what is readily ascertainable about the principal seat of his Paget ancestors.

The name 'Beaudesert', recorded as early as the thirteenth century, is evidence that a wild and uncultivated terrain could already give pleasure long before the Romantic Movement drew attention to picturesque beauties. How far that pleasure was derived from the contemplation of nature and how far from the pursuit of the game that it harboured may be debated, but the medieval park of Beaudesert formed part of Cannock Chase, a hunting preserve belonging to the bishops of Lichfield. This estate Bishop Richard Sampson was in 1546 induced to surrender to the Crown in return for benefices nominally of equal value. The instigator and beneficiary of this dubious transaction was Sir William Paget, Henry VIII's Secretary of State, to whom the property was promptly conveyed by letters patent, ratified by Act of Parliament the same day. Whatever his religious beliefs may have been (he is reputed to have been a conservative in these matters) Paget clearly had no scruples about sharing in the plunder of the church. For at the same time he acquired several manors in the neighbourhood surrendered by the Bishop of Chester at his behest, together with the lands and buildings of the dissolved abbey of Burton-on-Trent, briefly re-established as a collegiate church in 1541 only to fall a victim to Paget's rapacity four years later.² The result was to establish him as a major landowner in Staffordshire, a county of which his father may have been a native.³

With the Cannock estate Paget took over the episcopal manor-house of Beaudesert. That this was a building of some size and importance may be inferred from the medieval great hall, which survived within the Paget mansion until its demolition. Eighty feet long and twenty-two feet wide, it was a hall of

baronial rather than merely manorial size, but as no-one seems to have examined it carefully before it was pulled down, it is now impossible either to describe it accurately or to date it precisely. According to W. Niven, the author of a valuable book on Staffordshire country houses, published in 1882,⁴ a good deal more medieval masonry was then still recognisable 'at the rear, and amongst the offices', but none of this can now be readily identified on the plan, and the episcopal chapel is known to have been demolished in 1578.⁵

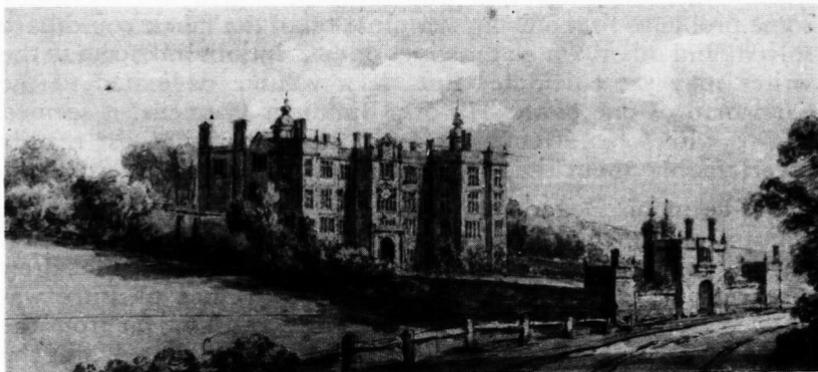


Fig. 2. Beaudesert. The east front in 1770, a water-colour drawing by N.J. Dall in the William Salt Library, Stafford (Staffordshire Views).

Although he took the title of Lord Paget of Beaudesert, the first Lord (d.1563) does not seem to have done much building there. At Burton-on-Trent he converted some part of the former abbey into a house, and had licence to fortify it.⁶ That he regarded this as more than just an old-fashioned 'licence to crenellate' is shown by a contemporary plan of the abbey on which Tudor artillery bastions have been sketched in.⁷ And at Uxbridge in Middlesex he built the house (demolished in the eighteenth century) from which his descendants were later to take one of their titles. But at Beaudesert the bishop's house seems to have satisfied his needs and those of his elder son Henry, 2nd Lord Paget, who died in 1568. It fell to his younger son Thomas, 3rd Lord Paget, to convert the episcopal manor-house into an Elizabeth mansion.

As early as 1573 a carpenter called John Greaves had entered into an agreement with Lord Paget to remake or relay various floors at Beaudesert and to carry out other alterations there 'according to the severall plotts thereof made', for the sum of £8 10s.⁸ In 1576 Greaves claimed payment for additional work that

he had performed in connection with a subsequent bargain. Old and new cellars, a new gallery and twenty-seven doors are mentioned incidentally in his petition, and he also claimed to have spent a whole day helping the masons 'in getting up a mantlestone'.⁹ From an account of 1575/6 we learn that plasterers, joiners, glaziers and plumbers were also at work and that 'The garden [was] begun the third of September'.¹⁰ From 1576/7 to 1580/1 the accounts of Lord Paget's Receiver, William Warde, record expenditure 'about your Lordship's buyldings at Beaudesart' which amounted in 1576/7 to £35, in 1577/8 to £129 14s., in 1578/9 to £302 0s. 6d., in 1579/80 to £305 13s. 4d., and in 1580/1 to £129 13s. 4d." But additional expenditure on building that was apparently not accounted for by Warde is vouched for by two surviving records of 1578-9, which indicate considerable activity, both in demolition (notably of the old chapel) and in new construction. Stone was being quarried at Rugeley, earth was being dug locally to make bricks, more of which were purchased at Lichfield, heavy timber was being drawn up by 'great ropes', brick chimney shafts were being hewn, the roof of the long gallery was being tiled, and iron casements were being bought in Staffordshire and Worcestershire.¹² A further account of 1580 records payments to plumbers casting lead and laying gutters, to plasterers plastering 'all the upper storie in the toppe of the house with partitions', and to glaziers at work on the windows. The purchase of madder 'to paynte the chymneyes and the House' shows that here as elsewhere the natural colour of the brickwork was enhanced by artificial reddening.¹³

The total outlay on what was evidently a piecemeal reconstruction extending over nine or ten years cannot now be calculated, but the names of the principal craftsmen are known: they were John Brymsmede, freemason, John Greaves of Callingwood (near Burton-on-Trent), carpenter,¹⁴ and William Harrison and Thomas Tylte, bricklayers. Which if any of them made the 'plottes' is not stated, but someone called John Mulcaster appears to have acted in a supervisory capacity, perhaps as clerk of works or surveyor. He witnessed the carpenter's agreement in 1573: as 'Mr. Mulcaster' he was paid £8 for unspecified services connected with the building in 1579/80 and as 'John Mulcaster' received 40s. 'for his dyet' in May 1581.¹⁵ It is just possible that he was the man of this name who was a 'pensioner' at Peterhouse, Cambridge in 1554.¹⁶

The effect of these works was to demolish most of the medieval manor-house with the exception of the Great Hall, and to hide the latter behind a completely new range of building placed rather awkwardly at right-angles to it. This new range,

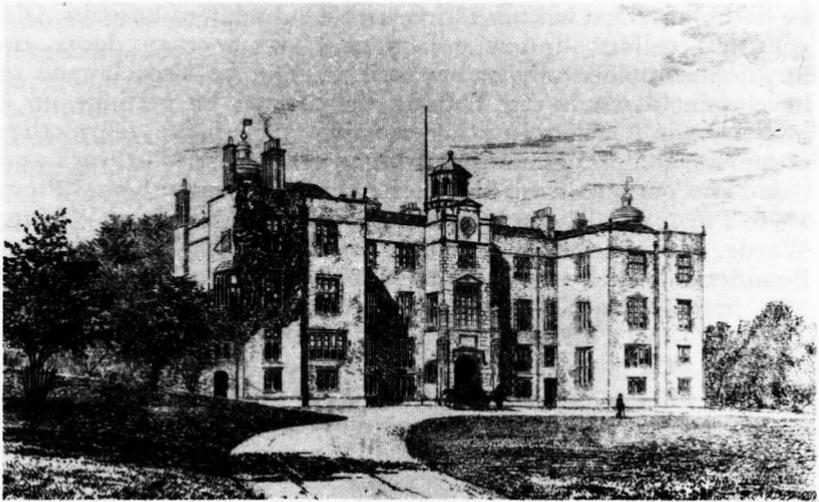


Fig. 3. Beaudesert. The east front in 1881, from an etching by W. Niven in his *Illustrations of Old Staffordshire Houses* (1882).

facing east, was of a characteristic Elizabethan type, with projecting wings and a central porch rising to the full height of the house. A slight offset in the face of each wing corresponded to an internal division but produced an effect of recession rather less effective than in some other houses of this type such as Worksop Manor (completed 1586) or New Hall, Pontefract (dated 1591). Inside, the finest room was the Great or Long Gallery, which occupied the whole of the front elevation on the first floor between the wings, and included a bay window above the porch (fig. 6). On the north side a return wing contained the Kitchen and other offices, but if a corresponding wing was intended on the south it was never erected. For in November 1583 the works at Beaudesert came to an abrupt end when Lord Paget fled to Paris. A zealous Papist in religion, he had fallen under suspicion of political as well as religious disaffection and in France and Spain his commitment to the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots, became open. Attainder followed, his barony and his family estates were declared forfeit (March 1587), and it was not until the accession of James I that his son William was restored to his lands and honours.¹⁷ Meanwhile Beaudesert stood incomplete and unfurnished. In 1585 the contents were dispersed by the government, some being sold and some sent to Tutbury Castle. The inventory of 'Household stuff and other things' drawn up by the High Sheriff survives. It includes bricks valued at £40, and wainscot, some 'wrought', but 'not sett up', and some

'unwrought', to the value of £11 13s. 4d.¹⁸ Later in the same year it occurred to the government that the house at Beaudesert might serve as an alternative place of confinement for Mary, Queen of Scots, then at Tutbury. But her guardian, Sir Amyas Poulet, told Walsingham that 'the house at Beaudesert is not yet finished and so unfurnished as it hath not so much as one stool or bedstead in it'. As for Lord Paget's other house at Burton, that was 'so ruinous as it will not be repaired in a short time'. Besides, its buildings were 'scattered, and adjoining to a very poor town, full of bad neighbours'.¹⁹

It must have been the 4th Lord Paget who, besides making the house habitable, built the walled forecourt in the form shown in Dr. Plot's engraving of 1686 (fig. 1) and also in N.J. Dall's drawing of 1770 (fig. 2). For among the Paget archives there is an alternative plan for the forecourt and gatehouse annotated in a hand of the reign of James I (fig. 5). It shows a gatehouse of similar character to the one that was built, but without the two turrets flanking the inner archway, and a balustraded terrace like the one shown by Plot, but in a more forward position. The buildings shown by Plot could well have been built by Lord Paget some time after he recovered the estate in fee in 1604.

Following the 4th Lord Paget's death in 1628 we have no evidence of any substantial alterations at Beaudesert until the reign of George III. Certainly Plot's engraving of 1686 (fig. 1) shows no feature of the main front that is later than the early seventeenth century, and this is borne out by the description left by Celia Fiennes, who visited Beaudesert soon after 1700.

'The house is old, but the front very regular, [with] 3 juttings out [and] large compass windows, a good little parlour out of the hall, another large one, withdrawing roome and bed chamber and good back staires and entrys large light [and] fit for attendance; then you go up and enter a dineing roome drawing roome and chamber, a long gallery that is the length of the house and broad and which adds to its greatness . . . here at each end is two good Chambers of State, lofty, with anty chambers and for servants, and back staires; there are many very good roomes of a second rate which if well furnish'd would look well; the leads are a great many stepps up, on the top a large Cupulo of windows, and the walls round the leads are so high a person of a middle stature cannot look over them scarce when on tiptoe . . .'²⁰

Most of the features mentioned by Miss Fiennes can be recognised either in the plans or in Plot's engraving, though in the latter none of the windows has a round or 'compas' head, and the 'large cupulo' must be hidden behind the central frontispiece, the two bobbin-like cupolas being merely terminations to the two

newel staircases which served the two 'Chambers of State', one in each wing.

When Celia Fiennes visited Beaudesert it belonged to the sixth Lord Paget, most of whose life was spent on foreign embassies. His son, the seventh Baron Paget and first Earl of Uxbridge, was in early life active in politics, and does not appear to have resided regularly at Beaudesert, for in 1742, the last year of his life, he was in correspondence with his steward there about 'furnishing and repaireing of Beaudesert Hall'. 'There was', wrote the latter, 'something absolutely necessary to be done . . . for instance, there were no Curtain Rods to the Parlours, dineing Roome, withdrawing Roome, nor Chambers', while matting was needed for the floors, some of which were only of plaster. The stone floors of the Hall and Kitchen were relaid, the Dining Room was wainscotted, and £85 17s. 8d. were paid to an upholsterer called Richard Mothershaw, 'a person who is employed by Sir Walter Bagots and all the familys of distinction in this Country, and has done his work very well'.²¹

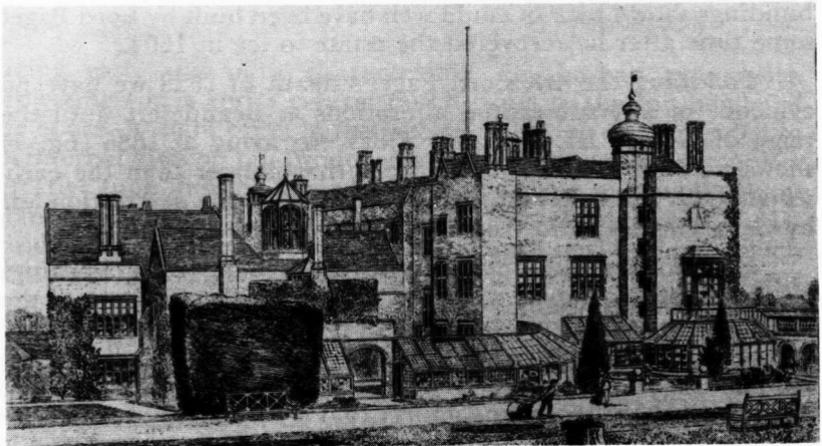


Fig. 4. Beaudesert. The south side in 1881, from an etching by W. Niven in his *Illustrations of Old Staffordshire Houses* (1882).

It was not, however, until the time of the 1st Earl of Uxbridge of the second creation, who succeeded in 1769 and died in 1812, that there is evidence of any major alterations to the Elizabethan house. These alterations were carried out in 1771-2 and are documented by plans, letters and a large bundle of vouchers. They were designed, executed and supervised by members of the Wyatt family, then the leading architects and master-builders in Staffordshire. The family, indeed, had close

connections with Beaudesert, for Lord Uxbridge employed as his agent first William Wyatt of Sinai Park near Burton (d. 1772) and then his son Samuel (1736-1807). The head of the building firm was William's brother Benjamin (d. 1772) and the work at Beaudesert was supervised by the latter's son Samuel (1737-1807), a carpenter by trade who was later to become an architect of some distinction. At this date it was, however, Samuel's younger brother James (1746-1813) who was the principal architect of the family. James was then at the outset of a career which was to bring him to the top of his profession. There is reason to think that he had helped his father and brothers to design the neo-classical town hall (since destroyed) which they had just built for Lord Uxbridge at Burton-on-Trent,²² and he was almost certainly the author of a set of drawings, dating probably from 1771, which shows how Beaudesert could be enlarged and remodelled to provide the amenities of a Georgian country house.²³ In the projecting wings the two 'Chambers of State' noticed by Celia Fiennes, each consisting of an ante-chamber, bedchamber and closet, were to be converted, one into a large Dining Room (on the north), the other into a matching Drawing Room (on the south), a new principal staircase was to be provided, the Great Hall was to be embellished in the Gothick style, and a new south wing was to be added in order to provide a Library and additional bedrooms. Only part of this scheme was carried out, and that part is shown on a 'Plan of the Principal Story of Beaudesert Hall as the same is proposed to be alter'd', dated January 1771, and now in the William Salt Library at Stafford. This comprises the gutting of the first and attic floors of the north-east wing to form a large Dining Room 42 feet long and 28 feet high, the provision of the new Great Staircase, the alterations to the Great Hall, and the remodelling of a room at the rear of the house to provide an apsidal library on the ground floor and over it a large and elegant Dressing Room for Lady Paget (as she then was, the earldom not yet having been revived in favour of her husband). All this was accomplished in 1771-2 by the Wyatt firm (cf. fig. 6). On 19 January 1771 Samuel Wyatt wrote to say that he had 'got between 40 and 50 men at work at Beaudesert, we have made a large breach in the House at the North end of the Gallery'.²⁴

The vouchers²⁵ show that all the woodwork was supplied by the Wyatt firm, and that several of the other craftsmen were ones who, like Samuel Wyatt himself, had recently been employed at Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, notably John Devall, statuary mason, and the plasterers Joseph Rose junior and Thomas Denston. No drawings of the decorative features survive among the Paget archives, but Joseph Rose's sketch-book, preserved at Harewood House, contains a copy of 'Mr. Wyatt's desine' for the

ceiling of the Dining Room, dated 18 August 1771, and shows that it was almost identical to the ceiling which James Wyatt designed for the staircase hall at Heaton Hall in Lancashire, built in 1772.²⁶ This ceiling was, of course, neo-classical in character, but the decoration of the Great Hall was Gothic and is historically important as an early essay in the style of which James Wyatt was later to be the acknowledged master. The ground-floor plan shows at one end a music gallery supported by quadrilobed Gothic columns, probably similar to those Wyatt was to design in the Stone Hall at Sheffield Park, Sussex, a few years later. Their capitals were of stucco, made by Joseph Rose ('Gothick Capitals to two whole and two three-quarter Columns in the Hall'), whose account also charges for 'The Gothick Finishings over 5 Doors in the Hall', while Joseph Wyatt (yet another member of the family) supplied 'two very large and rich Gothick Chimney Pieces of Roach Abbey Stone for the Hall' for £130. There is, unfortunately, no known drawing showing the interior of the Great Hall as remodelled by Wyatt, and the accounts give no clue as to the form of the ceiling, except that it was of plaster. It appears, however, to have taken the form of a simulated vault, for a 'lofty groined roof' is referred to in Neale's *Seats*, in a volume published in 1820. In the Gothic window at the west end of the hall there were the arms of the first Lord Paget, with the garter round them, and those of his wife Anne Preston, but whether of Tudor or later manufacture is not stated.

Externally the only significant changes were the addition to the central projection of a leaded cupola, and the application to the brickwork of a stucco into whose composition milk entered largely.²⁷ Two pictorial plates forming part of the famous dinner-service made for the Empress Catherine of Russia by Josiah Wedgwood in the 1770s and now in the Hermitage Museum, show the exterior of the house before and after the stuccoing.²⁸ A third plate shows the new stables, which stood at some distance from the house, and were planned in the form of a crescent with terminal pavilions. According to Pitt's *Topographical History of Staffordshire* (1817) they were 'built of beautiful white stone', and the masons were given a shilling with which to buy drink when work started on 11 May 1771. The building was ready for plastering by May 1776.²⁹

While the Wyatts were busy in the house, the park was being remodelled by William Emes, a garden designer who was much employed in the Midlands to create picturesque landscapes in the manner of 'Capability' Brown. Emes, who lived near Derby, had as neighbours the Mundys of Markeaton, and his work at Beaudesert was praised by F.N.C. Mundy in the poem on *Needwood Forest* which he published in 1776:

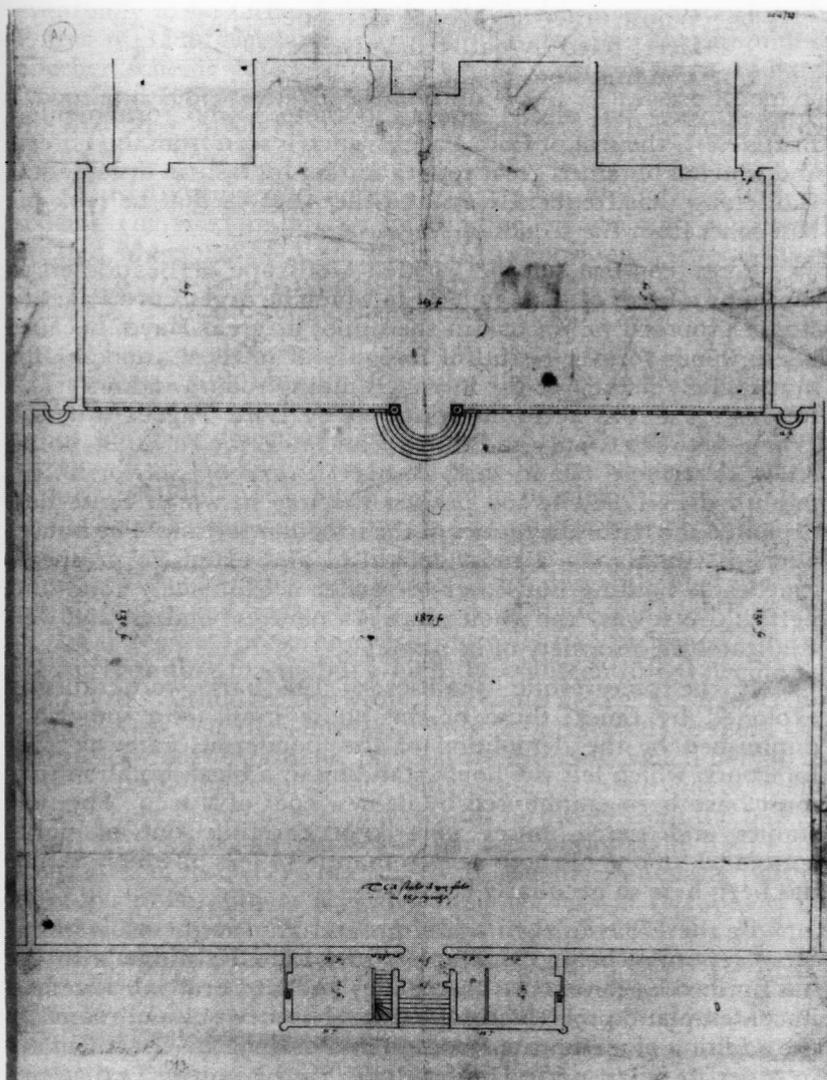


Fig. 5. Beaudesert. Early 17th-century design for addition of gatehouse and forecourt (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection CC4/23).

EMES, who yon desert wild explor'd,
 And to it's name the scene restor'd;
 Whose art is nature's law maintained,
 Whose order negligence restrained,
 Here, fixed by native beauty, trac'd
 The first steps of the Goddess, Taste;

'Mr. Emes', he added in a footnote, 'who ornamented *Beaudesert*, the seat of Lord Paget, which is seen from the Forest, and who has obtained great reputation for his taste in ornamental Gardening, has frequently assured the Author, that he took his best hints from the scenes of *Needwood*'.

Emes' concern for the wooded landscape of *Beaudesert* is shown by a letter of 10 May 1771 in which he urges Lord Paget to stop a proposed fall of oak in the upper or great Hayes because 'these woods form a beautiful foreground to the Cannock Hills immediately in view of the intended dining room windows'. The forester's axe was accordingly stayed by Lord Paget's orders.³⁰ When, between twenty and thirty years later, the Revd. Stebbing Shaw described *Beaudesert* in his *History of Staffordshire*, published in 1798, he too praised the way in which Emes had exploited the natural beauties of the irregular terrain. The house, he said, commands 'a most delightful and extensive prospect, that wants nothing but water to render it exquisitely good and perfect'. As it was, 'the whole place is a paradise undrest and well vindicates the propriety of its name'.

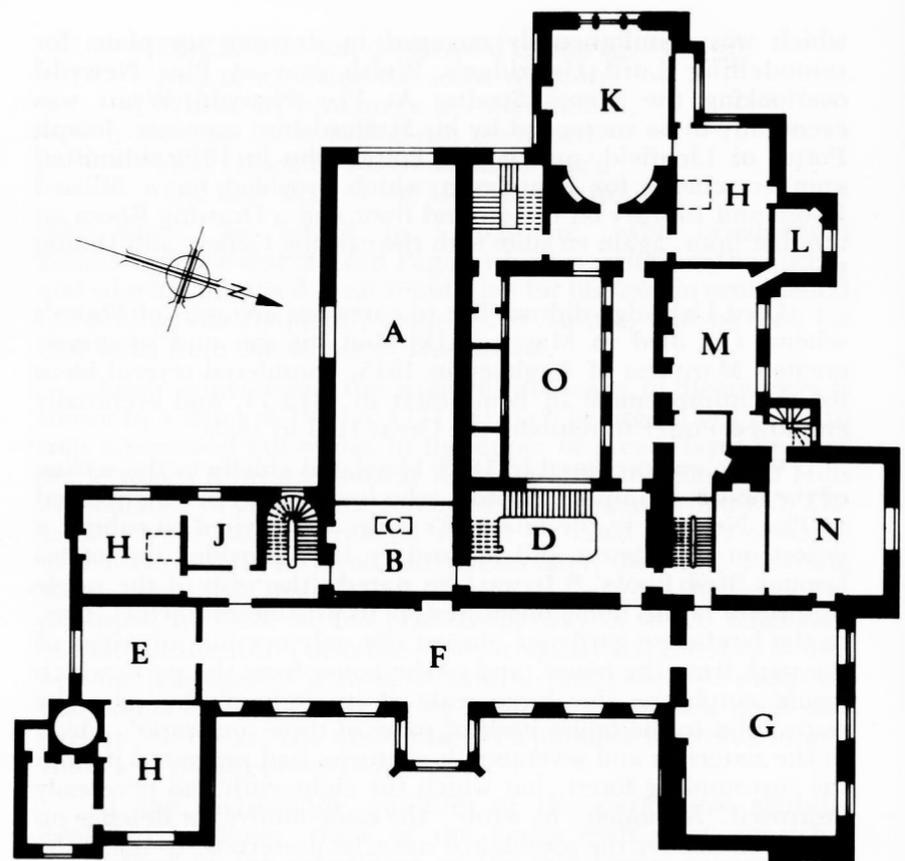
If the picturesque qualities of the park were skilfully exploited by Emes, those of the house itself were somewhat diminished by the demolition of the 'ponderous gateway' and forecourt, which left the house standing in a bleak isolation that must have been emphasised by its new coat of stucco. The new stables and coach-houses were kept carefully out of sight, concealed 'in one of those deep romantic valleys of which nature has been here so peculiarly lavish'.

By the 1790s further 'additions and improvements' were (as Shaw reported) being contemplated by Lord Uxbridge 'after he has finished his new house in Anglesey'. What Lord Uxbridge had in contemplation was the completion of his new suite of rooms by the addition of a Drawing Room to the south of the Great Gallery in order to balance the Dining Room to the north. Two sets of drawings show how this might be done. One, on Whatman paper watermarked 1794, shows the south-east wing remodelled in exactly the same way as the north-east one to provide a spacious Drawing Room, and behind it a set of new private rooms, some looking south and others west over a colonnaded greenhouse.³¹ These drawings were evidently a product of James Wyatt's office,

which was simultaneously engaged in drawing up plans for remodelling Lord Uxbridge's Welsh seat at Plas Newydd overlooking the Menai Straits. At Plas Newydd Wyatt was eventually to be succeeded by his Staffordshire associate, Joseph Potter of Lichfield, and it was Potter who in 1811 submitted another scheme for Beaudesert which provided for a Billiard Room and Library on the ground floor and a Drawing Room on the first floor, again en suite with the existing Gallery and Dining Room.³²

Lord Uxbridge did not live to carry out any part of Potter's scheme (he died in March 1812), but his son and successor, created Marquess of Anglesey in 1815, considered several ideas for the improvement of Beaudesert in 1813-14, and eventually employed Potter to remodel the Great Hall in 1826.

What was proposed in 1813-14 related chiefly to the setting of the house. Humphry Repton, who had already been employed at Plas Newydd in the late earl's time, was invited to submit a report on Beaudesert and in January 1814 provided one of his famous 'Red Books'.³³ It was, he stated, 'the wish of the noble proprietor of this noble pile to restore its pristine character'. This, to the landscape-gardener, meant not only opening up views of the park from the house, and of the house from the park, which would emphasise the 'large scale of its domain', but also the restoration to the house itself of some of those 'outworks', which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had protected it from the surrounding forest, but which the eighteenth had heedlessly destroyed. 'Although', he wrote, 'the same motive for defence no longer exists, yet the semblance must be preserved, to mark the limits betwixt the gardens, or pleasure-grounds, which belong to man, and the forest, or desert, which belongs to the wild denizens of the chase'. Such a reversion to semi-formality from the barren sward of a Georgian landscape park sweeping right up to the front door of its owner's mansion was, of course, a regular part of Repton's philosophy as a garden designer, but at Beaudesert he could claim historical as well as aesthetic justification for the idea of reconstituting the forecourt in some form. A before-and-after aquatint with flap shows a stone terrace commanding the promised view, and in a footnote Repton acknowledged the help of 'my ingenious friend, John Shaw, esq.' in designing it with due regard to 'ancient form'. The architect John Shaw (1776-1832) was indeed something of an expert in the design of domestic architecture in a late Gothic or Elizabethan style. An unsigned design for an intended Entrance Court dated 1814 may well be his work.³⁴ It was not carried out, but in the same year he designed the Grand Lodge at the Lichfield entrance to the park, and in 1819 the Marquess employed him to design stables for his



10 0 50
Scale of Feet

5 0 15
Scale of Metres

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|
| A | Great Hall | H | Bedrooms |
| B | Gallery | J | Dressing Room |
| C | Organ | K | Lady Uxbridge's Dressing Room |
| D | Great Staircase | L | Servant's Room |
| E | Ante-Room | M | Nursery |
| F | Great Gallery | N | Children's Rooms |
| G | Dining Room | O | Court |

Fig. 6. Beaudesert. Plan of the first floor at the end of the 18th century, showing the alterations carried out in 1771-2. Before that date the right-hand wing (G) would have been more or less identical in plan to the left-hand one (H). Based on the plans listed in the Appendix.

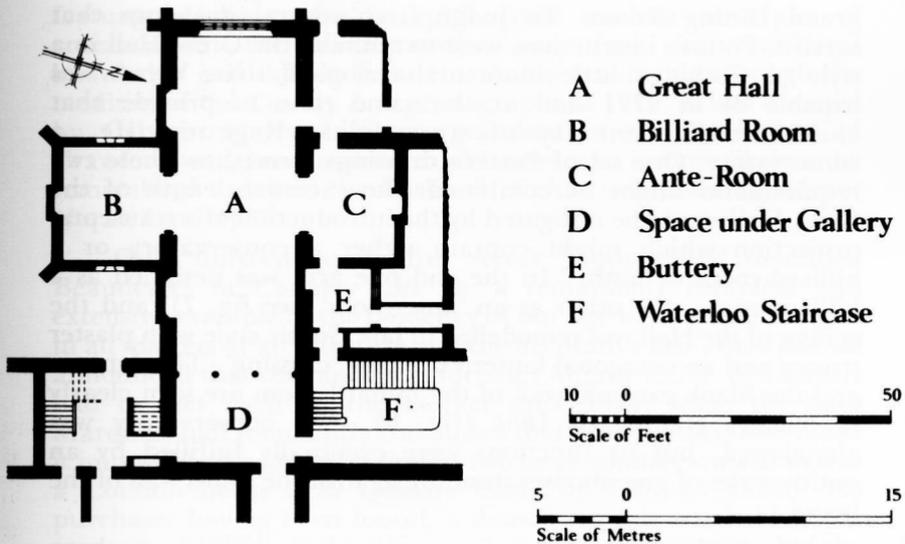


Fig. 7. Beaudesert. Plan of the Great Hall as remodelled by Joseph Potter in 1826.
Based on Potter's drawings in the Staffordshire Record Office.

London mansion.³⁵ It may have been under Shaw's direction that about this time the exterior of the house was freed from its coating of Georgian stucco.

Although Repton was chiefly concerned with the relationship between the house and its setting, he also volunteered some remarks about the interior of the house itself. Here he wanted to turn back the clock and use the Great Hall once more as a Dining Room: it would, he said, 'be a violation of all archaeological good taste to dine in any other'. The new Dining Room, he suggested, would be better employed as a Music or Drawing Room, 'to be used *en suite* with the venerable gallery of magnificence and comfort, now transformed into the library'.³⁶

For the moment all thoughts of improvement must have been put aside while the Earl of Uxbridge played that part in the Battle of Waterloo which lost him a leg and gained him a Marquessate. But Repton's elegant and persuasive pages were not without effect, and although his proposals for an entrance-court and terrace were never implemented, his principal recommendations for the rearrangement of the house were carried out in the 1820s under Joseph Potter's direction. The Dining Room was transformed into the Yellow Drawing Room, recessed bookcases enabled the Long Gallery to serve a secondary function as a Library, and the Great Hall was remodelled as a

grand Dining Room. To judge from several drawings that survive, Potter's instructions were to remodel the Great Hall in a style of Gothic a little more archaeological than Wyatt was capable of in 1771 and at the same time to provide that characteristic amenity of upper-class Regency life, a conservatory. One set of Potter's drawings shows how these two requirements might be combined: the excessive length of the Great Hall would be mitigated by the introduction of a transeptal projection which might contain either a conservatory or a billiard-room or both.³⁷ In the end one arm was designed as a billiard-room, the other as an 'ante-room' (see fig. 7), and the ceiling of the Hall was remodelled in late Gothic style with plaster trusses and an octagonal lantern over the 'crossing'. This lantern and the blank external wall of the billiard-room are seen clearly in Niven's etching of 1881 (fig. 4). The conservatory was abandoned, but its functions were eventually fulfilled by an untidy series of greenhouses standing against the south wall of the house.

No further alterations of any consequence appear to have been carried out during the lifetime of the first Marquess of Anglesey, who died in 1854. Though references to 'the Waterloo Staircase' might suggest that he remodelled the principal staircase, a plan of 'the Grand or Waterloo Staircase'³⁸ shows a staircase corresponding in every essential to the one seen in Wyatt's plan of 1771, and the name appears to have been due to the hanging in the stair-well of a huge painting of the Battle of Waterloo by Denis Dighton, now at Plas Newydd, rather than to any major reconstruction of the staircase itself.

Describing the house as he saw it in May 1881, Niven does not mention any work of more recent date than the early nineteenth century, and in this condition it appears to have remained until the interior was seriously damaged by fire in November 1909. In the restoration that followed all vestiges of Wyatt's and Potter's works were eliminated, and the interior was reconstructed as a series of 'period' rooms ranging in purported date from late medieval (in the Great Hall) to 'Queen Anne' (in the bedroom of that name). In the Hall Wyatt's Gothic screen was replaced by a genuine fifteenth-century one (now in the Burrell Collection at Glasgow) believed to have been of East Anglian origin. The Gallery, liberated from its function as a library, reassumed an Elizabethan character, a new library beneath it was 'got up in the Jacobean manner', while the Yellow Drawing Room emerged as a pastiche of the Commonwealth interiors of Thorpe Hall, with a mantelpiece 'suggested by, although not reproduced from, that in the small drawing-room at Forde Abbey'. Sizergh, Plas Mawr and Tyttenhanger were the sources of other decorative

features. However far in spirit from modern principles of conservation, the transformation was done with sufficient knowledge and skill to look remarkably convincing through the medium of the *Country Life* photographs of 1919. It was directed by Captain Harry Lindsay, grandson of the 24th Earl of Crawford, an amateur restorer of houses who is more likely to be remembered today as the husband of that well-known gardener Norah Lindsay.³⁹

Only thirteen years after Avray Tipping had described Beaudesert in *Country Life* as 'a remarkably complete and extensive example of the tendency of our age to re-create the past in all matters of architecture and the decorative arts', that journal announced that the house was for sale (August 1932). Beaudesert had in fact been on the market since 1924, when the sixth Marquess had reluctantly concluded that post-war taxation made it impossible for him to maintain two large country seats as well as a London house (170 Queen's Gate, by Norman Shaw). No purchaser having been found, a demolition sale was held in the summer of 1935⁴⁰, and nothing now remains above ground of the buildings described in this article.

The loss, without adequate record, of so considerable a house as Beaudesert, must be deplored. As a specimen of late Elizabethan or Jacobean architecture it cannot ever have been quite the equal of Ingestre or Wootton Lodge. Externally a good deal restored and internally completely remodelled after the fire of 1909, it was no longer an authentic example of its purported period. Nevertheless as the country residence of one of the heroes of the Napoleonic Wars it had historical associations of the kind which in recent years have made Broadlands a minor national shrine. Above all, it was the focal point of a landscape whose beauties, both natural and artificial, are attested by every topographical writer. All of the house and much of the landscape have vanished. But their archives have fortunately been preserved, and by depositing them in the County Record Office at Stafford the present Marquess of Anglesey has made it possible to reconstruct at least the principal episodes in their history.⁴¹

APPENDIX

NOTE ON THE PRINCIPAL PLANS OF BEAUDESERT PRIOR TO 1800

1. Plan of proposed gatehouse and forecourt, early 17th century (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection, CC4/23).
2. 'Plan of the Principal Story of Beaudesert Hall as the same is proposed to the alter'd Jany. 1771' (William Salt Library, Stafford).

3. Set of plans drawn on Whatman paper with black border and dated between 1769 and 1784 by reference to 'Lady Paget's Dressing Room'. Probably drawn in 1771.

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| Ground Floor (i.e. Basement) plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/6 |
| Second Story (i.e. Ground Floor) plan | R.I.B.A. Drawings Coll. CC4/20 |
| Principal Story (i.e. First Floor) plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/7 |
| Attic Story plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/9 |
4. Set of plans on Whatman paper watermarked 1794, showing proposed alterations to south side of house.

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| Basement plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/2 |
| Principal Story (i.e. Ground Floor) plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/3 |
| Chamber Story (i.e. First Floor) plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/4 |
| Attic Story plan | Staffs. R.O. D603/5 |
1. E. Ekwall, *Dictionary of English Place Names* (1960), p.33.
2. *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, ed. Brewer, xxi (1), no. 149 (39), xxi (2), nos. 182, 199 (133-7), 332 (76), 770 (5); *V.C.H. Staffs* v, p.54.
3. G.E.C., *Complete Peerage* x, p.276, note b.
4. W. Niven, *Illustrations of Old Staffordshire Houses* (1882), p.12.
5. Staffordshire Record Office, Paget papers, D(W)1734/3/4/106.
6. *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xxi(1), no. 149(39).
7. Deposited in the R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection in London together with several other unidentified sixteenth-century plans from the Paget archives. In 1584, after the forfeiture of the 3rd Lord Paget, 2 'feild peices' and 5 barrels of gunpowder were found at Burton-on-Trent and 14 'feild peices' at Beaudesert (P.R.O. E101/521/20).
8. S[taffs] R[ecord] O[ffice], D(W)1734/3/4/79.
9. S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/4/101.
10. S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/4/100.
11. S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/1/14,15 and 34.
12. S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/4/106,109.
13. S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/4/119.
14. John Greaves was subsequently employed by the 4th Lord Paget on alterations to the house at Burton-on-Trent in 1606 (D(W)1734/3/4/225) and in 1591 he was called in to deal with the collapse of the roof of the newly-built Shire Hall at Stafford (Malcolm Airs, *The Making of the English Country House 1500-1640*, 1975, p.136).

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| S.R.O., D(W)1734/3/1/34. | |
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15. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, pt.1, vol. iii (1924), p.226.
17. G.E.C. *Complete Peerage*, x.
18. P.R.O., E101/521/20.
19. *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, ed. John Morris (1874), pp.72, 74.
20. *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. C. Morris (1949), pp.333-4.
21. S.R.O., D603/K/4/3, ff. 60, 63.
22. For the Wyatts see J.M. Robinson, *The Wyatts, an Architectural Dynasty* (1979) and my *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (1978).
23. For these drawings see the Appendix, No. 3.
24. S.R.O., D603/K/9/1, f.26.
25. S.R.O., D603/F/3/9/1.
26. J.M. Robinson, *Samuel Wyatt* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis 1973), p.66.
27. S.R.O., D603/F/3/9/1, no. 14.
28. The earlier ceramic view of the house was evidently based on the water-colour of 1770 by N.J. Dall (Fig. 2), which is squared up for transfer, for it corresponds in every essential, even to the inclusion of the funeral hatchment of the late Earl of Uxbridge over the front doorway. The later ceramic view is perfunctory in character and unreliable in detail.

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| S.R.O., D603/F/3/10/11. | |
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29. S.R.O., D603/K/9/1, ff. 33, 40, 42.
31. See Appendix, no. 4.
32. S.R.O. D603, plans nos. 10-13.

33. I have used the extracts from it printed by Repton in his *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, published in 1816 and reprinted by J.C. Loudon in his edition of Repton's works, published in 1840, pp.445-452.
34. S.R.O., D603, plan no. 26.
35. H. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (1978), p.729. Shaw exhibited the lodge at the Royal Academy in 1814 as his work, but in the Staffordshire Record Office there are drawings by Potter for a very similar lodge dated 1812 (D603, plans 68-70).
36. Outline plans and elevations of the gallery show the bookcases recessed into the walls (D603, plan 15). Above them hang the series of paintings, perhaps by Laguerre, representing the battles fought by John, Duke of Marlborough, that are now at Plas Newydd.
37. S.R.O., D603, plans 27, 28, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 53, 59.
38. S.R.O., D603, plan 22.
39. *Country Life*, vol. 46, 22-29 Nov. 1919. For information about Capt. Harry Lindsay I am indebted to Mr. John Cornforth.
40. Sale Catalogue in the William Salt Library, Stafford (B/2/6).
41. I am grateful to Mr. F.B. Stitt, formerly the County Archivist, and his colleagues for their help in producing the documents upon which this paper is based, and also to Mr. John Harris, the Curator of the R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection, for making the Paget drawings in his care available to me.