

Stiff Leadbetter

by

GILES WORSLEY

Shortly before his untimely death on 17 January 2006, Giles Worsley submitted this article on the eighteenth-century builder and architect Stiff Leadbetter. As well as an essay on Leadbetter's life, career and architectural practice, there are appended a list of works and a catalogue of drawings. Unfortunately, Giles did not have time to check the references or select illustrations, but we believe that even without his final polish the article will be of great interest and will provide invaluable source material for future researchers. The editor is indebted to John Harris and John Bold for their assistance and comments on the text.*

** Fulsome obituaries detailing his contribution to architectural history appeared in The Daily Telegraph (19 January 2006), The Independent (20 January 2006), The Times (21 January 2006) and The Guardian (26 January 2006).*

CAREER¹

On April 19, 1732 the small medieval church of Eton in Buckinghamshire saw the christening of Henry Leadbetter, son of Stiff Leadbetter. It is unlikely to have been a grand affair, for the father was a poor carpenter, recently arrived in Eton, newly married and now trying to establish himself as a self-employed workman. Thirty-four years later when he died he presented a different figure, able to leave legacies valued in thousands of pounds. For the previous ten years he had been one of the busiest architects and builders in the country, leaving the area around Eton dotted with handsome new houses in a career which stretched as far as Hertfordshire, Somerset, Gloucester and Worcestershire. Only two months earlier he had signed an agreement to build seventeen houses on the Duke of Bedford's Bloomsbury estate. He could describe himself as Stiff Leadbetter, Gent., was a trustee of the Eton Parish Almshouses, and treasurer of the Colnbrook Turnpike Trust. He owned four houses bought for investment in Eton as well as his own house and wharf there, a house in London, and a farm at Cookham where he spent much of his time. It was a solid achievement for a man who had been apprenticed as a carpenter in the small Hampshire village of Sherfield-on-Loddon for the small sum of £5 in 1719.² But it was a career that took a long time to develop. Leadbetter was nearly forty when he had his first recorded independent commission, and it was not until he was nearly fifty that he established himself as anything more than a small provincial builder.

A study of Leadbetter must rely primarily on scattered references among papers relating to the various buildings with which he was involved, for no Leadbetter papers or collection of drawings is known to survive. Of particular value, however, is his account at Hoare's Bank in London, opened in 1741 and closed by his executors in 1767. It is possible, with discretion, to use the account to suggest a list of new attributions. Without corroborative evidence these must remain unproved, but in Leadbetter's case his concentration in a very small area of south Buckinghamshire allows us to make the link where a payment is made by someone who owned property in that area, and to

be fairly confident of that attribution if other evidence survives to show that work was carried out.

Leadbetter's origins are obscure, although the name Leadbetter is a relatively common one in Lancashire and Cheshire, and Howard Colvin plausibly suggests that his Christian name may be explained by relationship to Thomas Stiff, a London carpenter of the late seventeenth century.³ We do not know when he was born or where, but it was probably in 1704 or 1705 and it is possible that he was the son of William Leadbutter, tailor, of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.⁴

Leadbetter's first known employment, in 1726, the year his apprenticeship probably ended, was as chief carpenter adding a third story to Baylies House, two miles north of Eton in Buckinghamshire, for Francis Godolphin, Provost of Eton College. On Godolphin's death in 1733 Leadbetter returned again to carry out further alterations for his son Sidney Godolphin. Eton and Godolphin were to be two permanent factors in his life. When Leadbetter married in 1731 he described himself as being 'of Eton', and in 1734 he was described as 'the College Carpenter', although it was not until 1740 that the college's accounts reveal him to be the college's regular carpenter. This was not a salaried position, but the college was always in need of minor work, bringing Leadbetter a small but steady income. In 1744 he leased Eton College's wharf on the Thames, which was to be his work-yard and home for the rest of his life. The marriage, to Elizabeth Hill, daughter of a London timber merchant, did not last long. She died, presumably in childbirth, in 1737, having produced five children, only two of which lived more than a year.

Little is known of these early years of Leadbetter's career, and it was not until 1743 that his first independent commission is recorded, a survey and possible alterations to Taplow Court for the Earl of Inchiquin in 1743. Then in 1745 he took on his first major building work, alterations and repairs totalling £2,160 at Bulstrode Park, Buckinghamshire, six miles north of Eton, for the second Duke of Portland. Bulstrode was the beginning of an important relationship for Leadbetter, who was to return there several times, and was to be employed repeatedly on the Duke of Portlands' other estates.

It was not entirely Leadbetter's fault that his career was slow to develop. The 1740s were appalling years for builders and architects as the War of the Spanish Succession effectively brought nearly all building to a halt. It was only with the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 that things changed, leading to a marked building boom in the 1750s. Leadbetter was not slow to seize the opportunities of the revived London housing market, building six houses in Berwick Street on the Duke of Portland's Soho estate between 1749 and 1755. Elsewhere in the first years of peace he was employed on repairs and alterations rather than new work.

Leadbetter's career finally took off in about 1754, when he was about fifty. Until then he had been a provincial builder with a few speculative housing sites in London. By the end of the decade he had designed and built, or was building, eight substantial houses, two major hospitals and been appointed to the distinguished post of Surveyor to St Paul's Cathedral. It was a dramatic change.

Three substantial commissions in short succession launched this new career: Foley House on the Portland Estate north of Oxford Street in London, for which the building

lease came into effect at Christmas 1753; Russell Farm, a villa built for the dowager Countess of Essex near Watford in about 1754; and Langley Park in Buckinghamshire, three miles from Eton, for the third Duke of Marlborough, begun in 1756.

The year 1756 was a good one for Leadbetter, despite the outbreak of the Seven Years War with France. This time war does not seem to have affected the building of country houses. To Foley House, Russell Farm, Langley Park, and work for the Duke of Portland at Bulstrode and on his Theobalds estate in Hertfordshire, Leadbetter was able to add new houses at Hatchlands (Fig. 1), Surrey, for Admiral Boscawen and Nuneham Park (Fig. 2), Oxfordshire, for Earl Harcourt. To cap it all, Leadbetter was appointed Surveyor of the Fabric to St Paul's Cathedral.

The following year brought Leadbetter the Gloucester General Infirmary and Pomfret House, London's only Gothic town house. Next, 1758 saw the building of Elvills, an early Gothic villa on the far side of Windsor Great Park, for Sir John Elwill, and the start of work on Leadbetter's most expensive house, the extensive remodelling of Shardeloes, near Amersham in Buckinghamshire, twelve miles north of Eton. In 1759



Fig. 1

Hatchlands, Surrey, 1998

Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Photograph by A.F. Kersting (K.G. 30428)

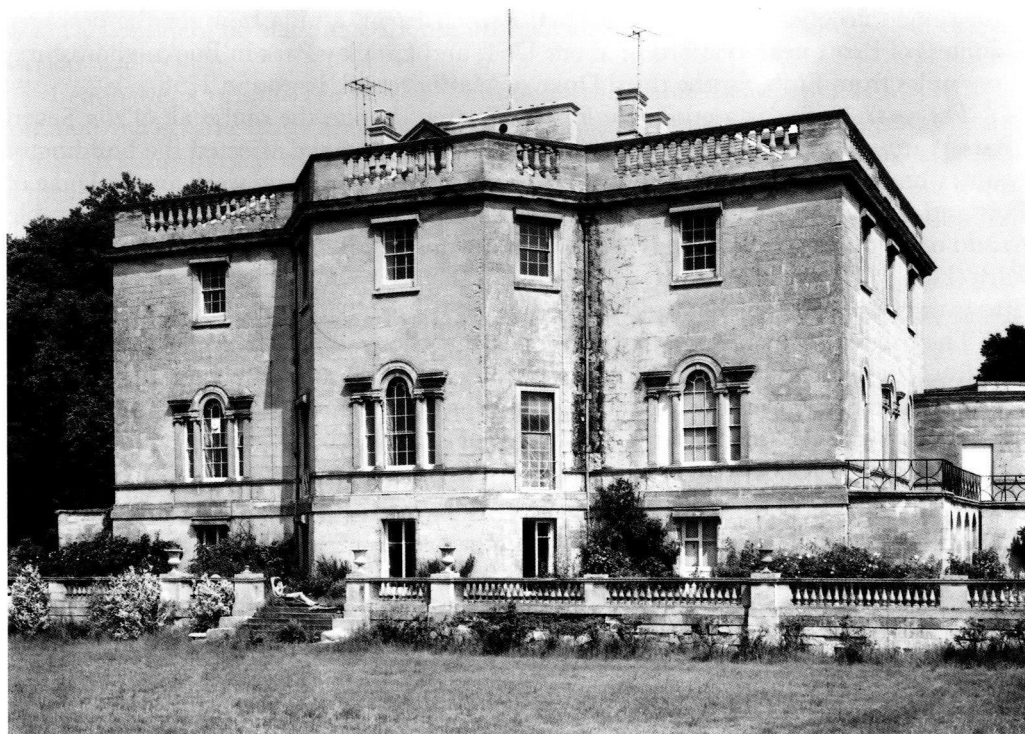


Fig. 2
Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, west front, 1965
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Leadbetter was commissioned to build the new Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford and began adding an extra story to the Cloister Court at Eton College.

Perhaps the peak of Leadbetter's career came in 1759. He had at least seven major contracts in hand, Nuneham Park, Pomfret House, Gloucester Infirmary, Elvills, Shardeloes, the Cloister Court at Eton College, and the Radcliffe Infirmary. Other work included a survey of the Archbishop of Canterbury's woods in Kent and repairs for the archbishop, presumably to Lambeth Palace. Thus it is not surprising that he was forced to respond to an enquiry from Sir William Lee of Hartwell House near Aylesbury by saying that 'the Multiplicity of my Engagements renders it impossible for me to deliver you an estimate at present; As an Affair of that Consequence requires Mature Deliberation; to prevent an Error, which might prove Detrimental to you Interest; And am doubtfull it will not be in my Power to complete it in less than 2 Months'. Disappointed, Lee was forced to turn instead to Henry Keene.

The work did not let up. In 1760 the foundations were laid for the Portland Chapel in London, while the Bishop of Worcester turned to Leadbetter to survey – and subsequently alter – Hartlebury Castle as well as the Bishop's Palace in Worcester.



Fig. 3

Newton Park, Somerset, entrance front, 1957

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Photograph by Derek Sherborn

The following year, which saw work begin on Newton Park (Fig. 3), near Bath, for Joseph Langton, and also at Syon Park, Middlesex, for the Duke of Northumberland, Leadbetter was forced to write apologetically to William Drake that 'It gives me great Concern, that the Multiplicity of my Engagements, (which now draw to a Conclusion) has given you Reason to complain of my neglecting Your Business; but beg leave to assure you that every thing in my Power shall be done to expedite your Works pursuant to your Desire; & hope when Completed I shall have the Honor of giving you Satisfaction'.

Leadbetter's last big job was at Fulham Palace, seat of the Bishop of London, which was largely rebuilt from 1764. Work was completed in July 1766. A month later Leadbetter died on August 18 at Eton. The death was unexpected. Leadbetter had just signed an agreement to build seventeen houses in Charlotte Street on the Duke of Bedford's Bloomsbury estate and there were also plans afoot to rebuild the west wing of the Duke of Bedford's seat at Woburn Abbey which Leadbetter reported to be in parlous condition, but compared to what the situation might have been like in the late 1750s it did not prove too difficult to wind up his affairs.

Leadbetter's will, which had been made in February 1764, showed how he had begun to accumulate property. In Eton there was the wharf and accompanying house leased from the Provost of Eton, as well as the recently purchased lease of four tenements in the town of Eton. In London there was the lease of the tenement and workshop in Berwick Street. Leadbetter also had a lease of Spencer's Farm at Cookham. The bulk of his property, £3,000, Leadbetter left to his son Henry.

PATRONAGE

Leadbetter died at Eton, but his will was at Spencer's Farm, so his clerk James Lawes set out to retrieve it, but he was so anxious that there should be no disputes that he took it to Francis Godolphin, now Lord Godolphin and well into his eighties, so that it could be opened in his presence. This suggests that Lawes was aware that Leadbetter had some form of client relationship with Godolphin. This would not be surprising, for patronage was a vital aspect of eighteenth-century society, for architects and builders as anyone else. One of the most rewarding aspects of studying Leadbetter is watching the connections that link his buildings, the chains of patronage that brought him commissions, and the strong geographical framework that characterises much of his work. Proving the links between patrons can be hard without documentary evidence of recommendation, but certain patterns do emerge from a study of Leadbetter's work.

Two principal networks of patronage are discernable, and these, together with a number of lesser connections, can be used to explain nearly all Leadbetter's commissions. The first is based around a series of inter-related aristocratic families centred on Francis Godolphin; the second on Leadbetter's home at Eton.

Godolphin seems to have been central to Leadbetter's career. He and his father were Leadbetter's first patrons and it may have been Godolphin, son of the late provost, who recommended Leadbetter to the provost and fellows of Eton as a carpenter, although as a resident in the parish he would have been an obvious choice. More significantly, it was presumably Godolphin who recommended Leadbetter to the Duke of Portland. Although Bulstrode was only six miles from Eton, the duke is unlikely to have chosen the otherwise untried builder for such major repairs without recommendation from someone who knew his abilities. This was probably Francis Godolphin. Godolphin was not only a close neighbour of the duke's at Baylies, and as someone who had relatively recently carried out major building work an obvious person to consult about local builders, but had married the duke's aunt, Lady Barbara Bentinck.

The Portland connection brought Leadbetter a steady stream of work from the duke at Bulstrode, Theobalds, Portland House, and on the Portland estate in London, including the Portland Chapel, as well as from his relatives. The Countess of Oxford, the sale of whose Dover Street house Leadbetter handled, was the duke's mother-in-law, while Lord Foley, for whom he built Foley House, on land leased from the Portland estate, was a first cousin of Lady Oxford's late husband.

The Godolphins had maintained close connections with the Marlboroughs since the time of the first duke and first earl. Francis Godolphin was a neighbour of the Duke of Marlborough and was related to him through his first cousin the Second Earl of Godolphin, for many years a trustee of the Marlborough family. The Duke of Marlborough's sister married the Fourth Duke of Bedford, who became one of his trustees and therefore responsible for commissioning Leadbetter at Langley Park. Leadbetter later drew up plans for rebuilding the west wing of Woburn Abbey for the duke, and agreed to build seventeen houses in Charlotte Street on his estate in Bloomsbury in June 1766. The Duke of Bedford's sister, the Countess of Essex (whose husband was a first cousin of the Duke of Portland), employed Leadbetter at Russell Farm *c.*1753 and it is unlikely to be coincidence that her nephew, the Third Viscount Midleton, employed Leadbetter from 1752, probably at Peper Harow.

The Countess of Essex was certainly responsible for one further commission. Admiral Boscawen (who was a first cousin once removed of Godolphin and a second cousin of the Duke of Marlborough) took Russell Farm as the model for Hatchlands. This led in turn to further commissions. Sir John Elwill, for whom Leadbetter built Elvills at Englefield Green, six miles from Eton, from 1758, was a close friend of the Boscawens. Occasionally he used to put to sea on short voyages with the admiral and in 1748 had rented out his house to Fanny Boscawen. Boscawen may have been responsible for another commission in 1758, for in that year Leadbetter's account records the payment of £500 from Edmund Mason. This was probably Edmund Mason, Chief Clerk of the Admiralty and a friend of Boscawen's, whom Mrs Boscawen mentions had a house in Datchet, only a mile from Leadbetter's wharf.

It would be interesting to know how Leadbetter came to be employed to build the Gloucester Infirmary in 1757. Gloucester is well outside his usual sphere of influence, and it is hard to believe that there was not some form of introduction to draw him in. In its turn the Gloucester Infirmary led to yet more commissions. James Johnson, the Bishop of Gloucester was the president of the hospital appeal as well as one of the trustees, and chaired all major decisions relating to its erection. Johnson was subsequently translated to the see of Worcester in 1759, where he employed Leadbetter to survey his palace at Hartlebury and to carry out extensive alterations and repairs to it and to his palace in Worcester. Among the four members of the select committee set up to supervise the erection of the Gloucester Infirmary was the Duke of Beaufort, who subsequently employed Leadbetter as the agent managing Beaufort Buildings in the Strand. When Beaufort House in Grosvenor Street was sold to the Duke of Cumberland it was Leadbetter whom the duchess, now widowed, employed to value the house in 1761. A few years later the duchess's son-in-law the Seventh Earl of Northampton employed Leadbetter to carry out repairs to his house at No. 7 Grosvenor Square. Leadbetter's commission to build the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford must have been the result of his Gloucester commission, and this again led to further work, this time for the chairman of the Radcliffe Trustees, the Earl of Lichfield, for whom he probably designed a temple at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire.

Leadbetter had a further network of ecclesiastical patrons, thanks to his position as Surveyor of St Paul's Cathedral. He was appointed surveyor following the dismissal of Henry Flitcroft in 1756. The moving force behind the reform of the running of the cathedral was the Dean of St Paul's, Thomas Secker, who had been appointed to the post in 1750 and held it in conjunction with the bishopric of Oxford to which he had been appointed in 1737. As it was Secker who was determined to have 'an honest & able surveyor of the Fabrick', it was probably he who was the moving force behind Leadbetter's appointment, although technically it was in the gift of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London and the Lord Mayor of London.

Leadbetter must have fulfilled Secker's conditions for on his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1758 it was to Leadbetter that he turned, both to carry out necessary building repairs and to supervise a major survey of the benefice's woods in Kent which were being badly, and probably corruptly, managed. And as Surveyor of St Paul's, the Bishop of London's cathedral, he was the obvious person to turn to

draw up the dilapidations survey of the bishop's seat, Fulham Palace, for Bishop Hayter in 1761. Hayter's successor Bishop Osbaldeston commissioned designs from him for remodelling the palace, and although these came to nothing Leadbetter was called in again in 1764, this time for Bishop Herrick, for whom he did a survey of dilapidations at Fulham and the bishop's former residence at Peterborough, and subsequently rebuilt much of Fulham Palace.

A large percentage of Leadbetter's work can be explained in geographical rather than personal terms. Eton proved to be an ideal base, for not only did he get work from the college – regular repairs and adding an extra story to the Cloister Court – but, as Joseph Pote wrote in 1755, Windsor (to which Eton is adjacent) was surrounded by villages 'where many Gentlemen of Fortune and Distinction have their country Retirements, and their Houses of Pleasure'. These villas formed a constant reservoir of work. Elvills seems to have been the only villa Leadbetter built south of the Thames, but there are a string of houses within five miles of Eton on the north side of the river with which he was involved, including possible work for Edmund Mason at Datchet, Langley Park for the Duke of Marlborough from 1755, and work at Stoke Place for General George Howard in 1765, at Stoke Park for Thomas Penn in 1766, and possibly for the Earl of Tankerville at Dorney Court, two miles to the west of Eton, in 1753-4.

There is no evidence that William Drake had any connection with any of Leadbetter's patrons, so the commission to remodel Shardeloes, thirteen miles north of Eton, in 1758 was probably given to him because of his growing local renown, and because of the economies which the use of his wharf would have allowed. The same may well be true of Culham Court, also thirteen miles from Eton. Presumably Lord Harcourt chose Leadbetter for similar reasons. At twenty-two miles Nuneham Park was further away than most of Leadbetter's work, but still within an easy range of Eton.

The one commission that is difficult to explain is that for Joseph Langton at Newton Park in Somerset. Langton does not appear to be connected with any of Leadbetter's main patrons and Newton is well outside his normal geographical range.

It is interesting to note, however, that unlike the great majority of his leading contemporaries or immediate predecessors, Leadbetter owed nothing to the circle of Lord Burlington and never held any post connected with the Office of Works. In this he heralds a time that was imminent when membership of the Office of Works would no longer be the key to a leading architectural career.

WORKING PRACTICE

Perhaps paradoxically, much of the interest of studying Stiff Leadbetter lies in the fact that he was not exceptional, that he was not an innovator, but is typical of the great mass of builders and architects who formed the core of the Georgian architectural profession.

It is possible to build up a picture of the way Leadbetter's office operated from accounts and contracts, and above all from surviving architectural drawings, which were used to control the building process. Different drawings served different purposes whether they were surveys of existing work, the architect's own conceptual designs, presentation drawings to clients, contract drawings, working drawings for craftsmen or record drawings. Approximately ninety drawings from Leadbetter's office are known, thirty-nine of them relating to Fulham Palace.

The first step in any commission would have been to carry out a survey. For a new house the site was measured and any variations of height noted. Building surveys tended to be very simple drawings, dimensions set on paper in rough lines, like the survey of the stables at Fulham Palace dated April 30, 1762. A survey might be left in this basic form. However, for more important buildings, especially one where it was planned to keep at least part of the existing structure, this sketch would then be drawn up more neatly in the office. This was the case with the survey of Fulham Palace itself, a much more complex building than the stables, where it was only intended to make alterations. Leadbetter presumably needed this survey to discuss possibilities with the bishop. Two undated drawings, one of the ground floor of the entire palace, one of the first floor of the inner court survive, the latter inscribed 'taken per Hawkes' (that is John Hawks).

Having made the survey, the proposal was drawn up and presented to the client. Three drawings of the same scheme for proposed alterations to Fulham Palace survive in different stages of presentability. The first, dated May 1763, is roughly worked out, and is presumably Leadbetter's initial design. This would have then been passed on to a clerk to draw up neatly, and bears the instruction 'NB Draw plan to scale $\frac{7}{8}$ of an Inch to 10ft'. Two versions were produced, both dated July 14, 1763. One, neat but with no special concern for the presentation, was intended for the office. The other is much more carefully presented with the walls washed in grey, and an alternative treatment for the ante-room shown on a flap. This is inscribed 'Plan of Alterations Propos'd for the Rt Honble & Revd Lord Bishop of London to his Lordships Palace at Fulham, July 14, 1763' and was clearly intended for the bishop. An annotation on the first drawing confirms this: 'NB a copy of this with elevation of North East Front were sent to Mr Henry Leadbetter pr Windsor Coach for him to deliver to my Lord July 15 1763'.

Presentation drawings are the drawings most likely to survive because they were often kept by the client while working drawings seldom survived the ravages of the building site. At Langley Park Leadbetter presented two alternative schemes to the Duke of Marlborough, both dated August 11, 1755. One showed the house with two and a half storeys, the other with two storeys and garrets. The latter is much as built, but minor changes were made to the fenestration and plan. At Nuneham the first dated drawing is of the west front and is inscribed 'Draw'd fair & Sent to Lord Harcourt & plans etc dated 7 May 1756'. This must be Leadbetter's own drawing which would then have been neatly redrawn for Lord Harcourt.

At Eton College Leadbetter's presentation drawings, one for the east elevation of the Cloister Court dated August 11, 1758, and two floor plans dated December 9, 1758, were accepted without alteration and were then cited in the contract: 'Proposals for Erecting Attick Storey for the Revd The Provist & Fellows of Eton College agreeable to Elevation of East Front dated the 11th day of Augst 1758; also to Plan of Attick Storey etc dated the 9th day of Decr 1758'. They thus changed from being presentation to contract drawings. The same process can be seen at Shardeloes where the contract dated May 29, 1758, cites 'a plan and elevation of such building dated 18 March 1758 signed by William Drake and Stiff Leadbetter'. However, the Shardeloes contract shows that details of internal decoration had yet to be decided, referring to ornaments in the ceiling of the hall and elsewhere which were to be erected in plaster agreeable to such drawings as Mr Drake shall approve.

Once the client had accepted the design and contracts had been signed the architect had to produce sufficient drawings for the craftsmen to set to work. At Fulham Leadbetter's initial scheme had been prevented by the death of Bishop Osbaldeston, but his successor was equally keen to build, although to a different plan. Leadbetter's rough design for this scheme survives, bearing a note reporting that a copy dated July 6, 1764, had been delivered to the bishop. This must have met with approval, for the next drawing in the sequence, dated August 4, 1764, shows the same plan but heavily annotated with information concerning building. This bears a note stating that two copies had been drawn for the bricklayers and for Shotter the carpenter. These are clearly the initial working drawings setting out the proposed work for the main contractors.

This drawing uses colour to make a structural point. Generally, Leadbetter makes little use of colour, relying solely on pen or pencil, although by 1764 leading architects were using colour coding both to distinguish between existing structure and proposed new work and to identify different materials. Leadbetter does not use colour to distinguish between old and new work, but he does use it to show the different sorts of brick that are to be used.

As work at Fulham progressed Leadbetter's office provided a continual series of drawings for the craftsmen. The next to survive is another heavily annotated working drawing dated August 23. This was the plan for framing the bedchamber floor, and a copy was sent to John Shotter. On the same day a large-scale plan of the bow window was made, with a copy being delivered to the workmen. These were followed by the plan and section of the roof structure on September 8; a plan of the east front, a detailed drawing of the battlements and a design for the cornice and coping inscribed on the back 'prepare 150ft of this coping of different lengths' and 'No 16 Pieces of coping each 2ft long', all dated October 4. Another undated drawing is inscribed 'No 5 Cornices to be wrought in Plaister at the Bishop of London's Palace at Fulham'. The same process is repeated time after time. Most of these are clearly office copies and bear annotations that the relevant drawings have been sent to appropriate workmen, but in a couple of cases the working drawing survives, identifiable by its thicker paper which meant that it was less likely to be torn or damaged on site. Only one apparent design drawing survives, showing five cornices roughly presented but with dimensions. This was presumably done by Leadbetter and intended to be redone by one of his clerks.

Not all Leadbetter's drawings are for proposed work. In February 1761, Leadbetter wrote to William Drake of Shardeloes that he had 'delivered plans of your best rooms to Mr Adams about the middle of last month and as soon as he has made designs for the ceilings &c (which you approve) I will immediately send as many plasterers as can be employed'. These drawings are now in the Soane Museum and were intended for Robert Adam to plot his decoration.

From these drawings one can see a clear pattern emerging. Leadbetter would make a rough first drawing which would then be redrawn more neatly by a clerk, the degree of elegance depending on for whom it was intended. Copies of all major drawings were kept in the office, while drawings for craftsmen would be executed on rougher cartridge paper. There is no evidence, however, that Leadbetter had a policy of keeping record drawings, copies of designs whether executed or unexecuted kept in the office for future

consultation. The copies Leadbetter had made were to keep control of work in hand, not for future use. Two record drawings of Langley Park do survive, among the collection of Thomas Worsley, Surveyor General of the Board of Works from 1760. However, these would not have been made by Leadbetter for his own use but for presentation, either by Leadbetter or perhaps by the Duke of Marlborough. As a result these are drawn much more carefully than any of Leadbetter's other drawings.

Two of Leadbetter's contracts survive, that for adding a storey to the Cloister Court at Eton College and that for remodelling Shardeloes. The Shardeloes contract, which was signed on May 29, 1758, is very full, setting out when work was to begin, what was to be done, who was to provide what materials, how payment was to be made and when work was to be completed. It starts with the general dimensions of the house and then work to be done on the vaults before listing each room and what was to be done in it. The Large Parlour, for instance, was to have an Ionic entablature wrought in plaster and fully enriched; the walls between the top of the surbase and the foot of the entablature were to be completed with hard stucco upon lath with ornaments in plaster in the round panels – the designs for these, and the ornaments in the ceiling, were to be approved by Drake and were not to exceed £115; the doors were to be framed with deal and wrought with mouldings; the base and surbase moulding and doors and dressings to doors and window shutters and architrave round windows were to be carved in a neat manner not exceeding £45; the entablature and stucco woodwork (the doors excepted) were to be painted four times in oil of dead white and the doors were to be chocolate colour. Similar instructions followed for each room.

Drake was to provide rough timber for framing, lintels and bond timbers, rough elm for centering and bracketing; lath for lathing and plastering; bricks and lime; scaffolding; expense of all water and land carriage. Chimneypieces, locks, fastenings to doors and dressers, and shelves and cupboards were excepted from the contract. The total cost was to be £4,300 for material and labour exclusive of old materials. Work was to be completed on or before September 29, 1760, and payment was to be in set instalments: £500 was to be paid when the foundations were laid; £500 when the walls were sixteen feet high; £500 when the floor of the garrets was fixed; and £700 when the roof was covered. This was to be followed by £500 on March 25, 1759; £500 on September 29; £600 on March 25, 1760 and £500 when work was completed, which according to the contract was to be on or before September 29 that year. Leadbetter's account at Hoare's does not specify these payments, but one can identify subsequent payments made when Leadbetter was working on the house to Adam's designs: £500 in October 1762 and February 1763; £1,000 in May 1763; £500 in November; £200 in October 1764; £500 in November and then a further £500 in February, May, June, August and December 1765, making a total of £5,700. Final payment at Shardeloes was so delayed that interest charges totalled £2,163 17s 6d on a bill of £15,484 14s 5d.

Payment by instalments was standard practice, allowing Leadbetter sufficient funds to buy in materials and pay his men to execute the joiners and carpenters work which he carried out directly, and to make regular payments to the other craftsmen.

No evidence survives to suggest that Leadbetter was ever paid solely for designs, and it is unclear whether he ever carried out substantial work in a purely supervisory

role without also doing the carpenters' or joiners' work. The final account for work at Fulham is precise in its division of responsibilities. Leadbetter was paid £50 for viewing and settling dilapidations at Fulham and Peterborough. On work carried out he was paid five percent of all costs except carpenters' and joiners' work for making plans, giving directions, measuring and making out the bills. As these totalled £2,348 he was paid £117 8s. He was separately paid £1,815 5s 10d for carpenters' and joiners' work.

The detailed Nuneham accounts allow one to trace how Leadbetter passed on payments to craftsmen, and the substantial credit the system allowed the patron. Payments at Nuneham were divided into two sections. As elsewhere, Leadbetter received regular payments on account: £300 in November 1756; £400 in June 1757; £300 in March 1758; £400 in August 1758; £600 in July 1759. Then, with work on the body of the house largely complete, he presented an account of work so far in a letter dated January 2, 1761. This was settled by Harcourt with £815 10s on February 9, 1761.

Included with this were full statements of payments made to the principal contractors, and sums outstanding, together with the sums he had expended on carpenters' and joiners' work. Thus starting in 1756, John Hooper, one of the two masons, had been paid £25 in August, £25 in September, £20 in October, £30 in November, £40 in January 1757, £20 in March, £70 in April, £40 in June, £20 in August, £30 in September, £40 in November, £30 in February 1758, £60 in July, £30 in August. Belcher the other mason and Bird the bricklayer were paid in similar instalments. Leadbetter's ability to advance money was clearly important. By November 1756, when he was paid £300 by Harcourt, he had already paid out £291 to craftsmen (£70 to Hooper, £191 to Bird and £30 to Belcher) without including any payments on his own account.

When Leadbetter presented his account in January 1761, the last payments to the contractors had been on June 4, 1759. By that date Bird had been paid £519 10s and was owed a balance of £192 9s 6³/₄d; Belcher had received £230, leaving a balance of £68 18s 7d; Hooper has been paid £540. On his own account Leadbetter had spent £1,526 for timber, sawing, carriage, locks, hinges, carpenters labour and nails on house and wings up to January 1, 1761. In all Leadbetter had spent £2,815 10s and received only £2,000. This bill did not include the money he had spent on joiner's work.

With these bills paid, Leadbetter was again paid regularly on account – £500 in September 1761, £300 in January 1762, £400 in October 1762, £500 in April 1763. A final account for £573 presented in September 1762 was settled in full on April 17, 1763.

Timber was prepared at Eton. Thus the account for Fulham Palace includes payments for work prepared by carpenters and joiners at Eton, while one of the Fulham Palace drawings, for the stairs at the end of the gallery, is annotated 'To be prepared at Eton April 19, 1765'. Similarly, writing to William Drake in February 1761 Leadbetter promised that 'the joyners work shall be forwarded at Shardeloes and by Preparations at Eton will all possible expedition'. Other materials were trans-shipped via Eton. At Shardeloes, for instance, the tiles and lead came via Eton. Drawings were made in the London house where there was also a workshop which was used for preparing some joiners' work. A reference in the Fulham Palace account mentions joiners' time preparing works in London for Fulham.

Leadbetter's will, drawn up in February 1764, gives an idea of his regular workforce at that time. After his son Henry, who clearly played an important part in running the business, his most important employee was James Lawes, his clerk. He had two foremen, a wharfinger, three joiners and a carpenter. There is no evidence that Leadbetter ever took on an apprentice.

One person who appears a couple of times is Mr Smith, described as 'agent to Mr Leadbette', who measured the work done by John Hooper on the temple at Ditchley. At Nuneham he was paid for twenty-four days measuring and abstracting the bricklayers, plasterers, slaters and masons work, but not the carpenters and joiners work.

Unfortunately, accounts do not survive from enough houses to give a complete assessment of Leadbetter's relations with different craftsmen, although certain names reappear.

The Shardeloes contract specifies the interiors Leadbetter was to execute for William Drake, competent but unimpressive Classical rooms. The interiors of Langley Park show the sort of rooms Drake had in mind. If fashion-conscious patrons wanted something a little more ambitious they sought outside assistance. Thus Lord Harcourt turned to James Stuart, newly returned from Athens, to provide designs for fitting up Nuneham Park, while Admiral Boscawen turned halfway through fitting up Hatchlands to Robert Adam who had just arrived from Italy. At Pomfret House Lady Pomfret probably relied on Richard Biggs to design the remarkable Gothic interiors. With a new fashion clearly emerging Drake must have felt his newly finished interiors somewhat outdated and turned to Robert Adam to provide him with something more ambitious. But whoever provided the designs it was Leadbetter who executed the work. Leadbetter was clearly unworried by this artistic interference and must have got on well with these architect-decorators, for he not only collaborated with Adam at Hatchlands and Shardeloes but at Syon where he was probably brought in by Adam to execute the building work.

Leadbetter was also a surveyor, that is a measurer and valuer of buildings. He was paid £50 a year to manage the Beaufort estate in London, valued Beaufort House for the Duchess of Beaufort before it was sold to the Duke of Cumberland in 1761, and when Lord Foley and the Duke of Portland were discussing the lease of thirty-seven acres north of Foley House, Leadbetter was employed as an impartial surveyor at Dover Street. As surveyor of St Paul's Cathedral, for which he received a salary of £50, Leadbetter's duties were carefully set down. He was to survey the whole of the building every six months and any part of it when occasion required or the Dean and Chapter directed. He was then to agree with proper workmen – approved by the dean and chapter – to make necessary repairs and order them accordingly.

STYLE AND PLANNING

Leadbetter has traditionally been dismissed without serious examination as a dull architect, and a superficial glance at his work might seem to confirm such a view. His buildings are plain and have none of the self-conscious stylistic sophistication found in the work of contemporaries such as James Paine, Sir William Chambers or Robert Adam. However, it should be remembered that Leadbetter's career as a designer was short, only a decade, from about 1753 to 1763. Thus one should not expect the same

development of style from Leadbetter that might be found in an architect designing over a career of forty years.

Much of the interest in Leadbetter as an architect lies not in his elevations but in his planning. He was a central figure during a period of rapid change in country house design in which the villa replaced the great house with axial state apartments as the principal type of seat for landed families. Indeed, Nuneham Park of 1756 was probably the first such seat designed as a villa (Figs 4 and 5). This was only achieved by altering the way the villa was planned. Until the 1750s the Palladian villa was essentially axial, with a central hall and saloon flanked on either side by further suites of rooms. In the 1750s this changed to a centralised plan with a top-lit staircase around which all the rooms radiated. Such plans – which derive from the family wing at Holkham Hall, Norfolk – first emerge in the London houses of Matthew Brettingham, executant architect at Holkham, particularly Norfolk House in St James's Square, of 1748-52. They were swiftly transposed to villa design during the middle years of the 1750s. The development happens so quickly that it cannot be ascribed to a single individual, but at Langley Park and Nuneham Park in 1755 and 1756 Leadbetter was certainly among the first to experiment with this plan.

Leadbetter's five new villas – Langley Park, Nuneham Park, Newton Park, Russell Farm and Hatchlands – provide a series of alternatives in which the key family rooms

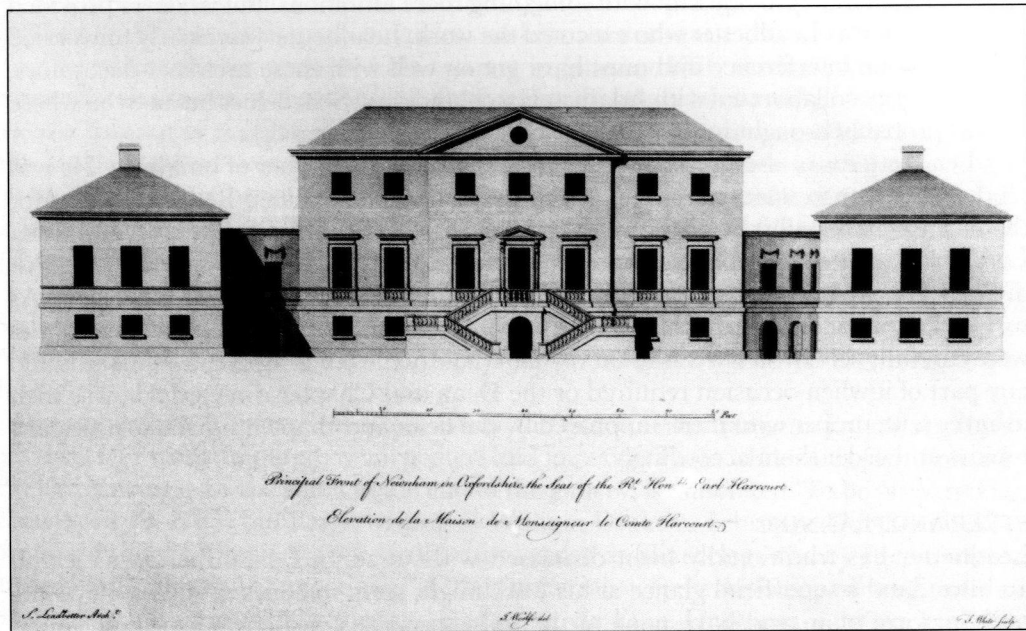


Fig. 4
Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, principal front, *Virtruvius Britannicus* V, 1771
Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art, London (890/33(31))

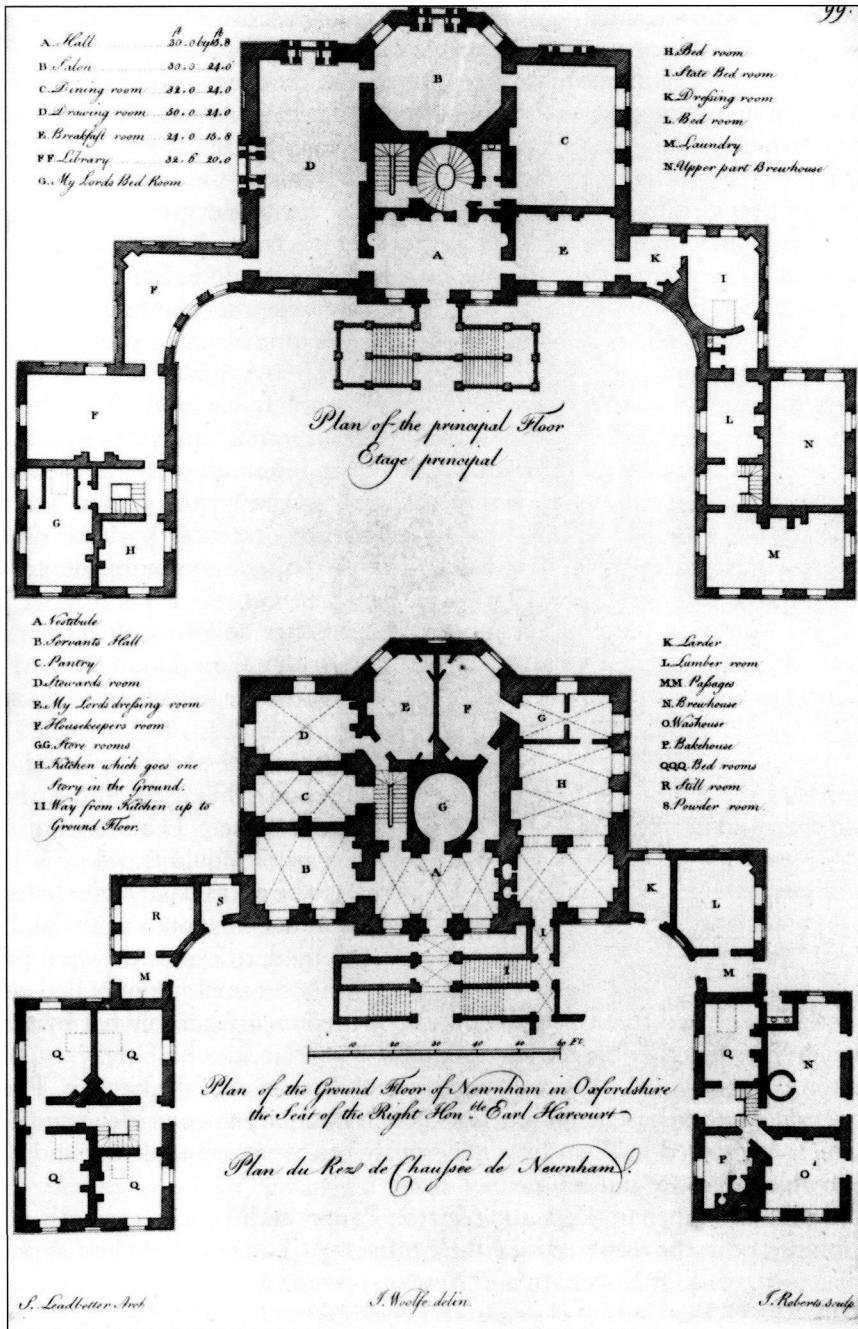


Fig. 5
Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, ground and principal floor plans, *Vitruvius Britannicus* V, 1771
Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art, London (890/33/(29))

were compressed into a central block of apparently modest dimensions, while providing extensive offices in basements and wings. At Langley Park the plan revolved around the central top-lit staircase, with the main reception rooms, the dressing room, dining parlour and ante-room being to the left of the hall, and the duke's private apartment, dressing room, bedchamber, closet, and what appears to have been a bath to the right. The two ranges are joined by the large drawing room in the centre of the south front.

Lady Pomfret visiting Langley Park in 1759 noted with a degree of surprise that 'It is a large plain stone building with three pair of stairs, & many Rooms, but nothing like an Apartment'. The main stairs rise majestically from ground to first floor and would have been intended for use only by the family. At first floor a colonnaded gallery then ran around it providing access to all the bedrooms. Behind the main stairs lay the back stairs, this time rising from the basement to the attic. There was also a further backstairs serving the duke's apartment. This was more handsomely scaled than the backstairs, which suggests it was partly a service stair, but also perhaps intended for the duke's personal use. Off the hall, overlooking the front door, is a small room labelled as being for the servants to wait in but which probably also served for the porter. There were three water-closets, one for the duke, easily serviced by one set of backstairs, and two more behind the main stairs where they could be used by the company but serviced by the main backstairs.

Lady Pomfret went on to comment 'there is another building join'd by a cover'd passage, in which is a kitchen, capacious enough to dress a Coronation Dinner, & with all conveniences imaginable for the 'Cooks', as also for all the 'Servants''. This suggests that Langley was designed for entertaining.

At Nuneham Park the kitchen was placed in the basement under the house because Lord Harcourt insisted on maintaining a rustic and 'piano nobile', something which was falling out of fashion, and which Leadbetter did not use elsewhere. Leadbetter minimised the effect of smells by ensuring that there was no way these could travel up within the house. The kitchen had separate access and food had to be carried out of the house along a covered passage under the external stairs and then into the house again and up the backstairs to the dining room. Although tortuous to modern eyes, this was a price the eighteenth-century was prepared to pay to prevent houses smelling of boiled cabbage. Leadbetter also ensured that the kitchen did not become unbearably hot by sinking it below the level of the other basements making it a storey-and-a-half high.

Newton Park provided a third alternative to the question of the kitchen. The house sits on extensive vaulted basements, but the kitchen was placed in one of the two flanking wings, which are linked to them by a generously proportioned underground passage, which also gives access to the house.

Langley Park, Nuneham Park and Newton Park remain true to the basic Classical ideal of symmetry in the disposition of their offices. At Langley the house appeared to stand on its own, while at Nuneham and Newton offices were placed in flanking wings. However, at Russell Farm and at Hatchlands Leadbetter presented an alternative solution by abandoning the constraints of symmetry and placing the kitchen and attendant offices in an asymmetrical wing attached to one corner of the house. In time, as the demands of Classical symmetry became less pressing, such asymmetrical wings became increasingly

common, first among lesser houses and villas and then for seats. Eventually the idea of an independent office wing became standard, but Leadbetter was certainly a pioneer in their use.

As these two houses were not intended for grand entertaining Leadbetter did not bother with a large entrance hall, relying instead on a relatively narrow vestibule. And instead of a top-lit staircase (which is structurally complex), he used one lit by a Serlian window (Fig. 6). At Hatchlands careful use is made of differing floor levels to maximise the space available, while not making the house too large. Along the garden front where the main reception rooms were placed, the house is only two storeys high. On the other two fronts, however, the rooms are lower allowing an attic floor. The smells of the kitchen were minimised by placing it at the end of the office wing and making the only access between it and the body of the house an external covered passage.

Leadbetter's exteriors are without exception plain and restrained. The only example of a portico on his buildings was at Shardeloes where it was added by Adam. The nearest he comes to a stylistic reference is in the occasional Diocletian window, as in the pediment on the entrance front at Newton Park, or the Venetian windows at Nuneham Park, although their exact form follows a drawing by James Stuart. Windows, particularly first-floor windows, are commonly set in the bare wall without architrave, and of his houses only Newton Park may originally have had a balustrade – those at Langley Park and Nuneham Park are later additions. But this does not mean that Leadbetter's houses lack architectural interest, for their exteriors express his innovative planning. Realising that with a centrally planned house the axial dominance of the entrance and garden façades no longer prevailed, Leadbetter made every façade of equal importance, something

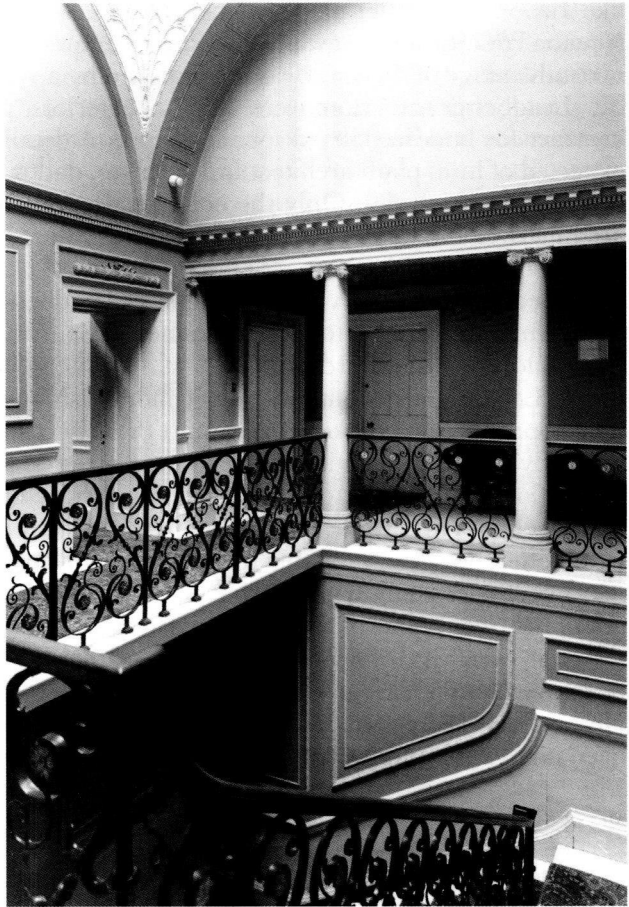


Fig. 6

Newton Park, Somerset, staircase, 1991
 Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art, London
 Photograph by A.F. Kersting (K.H. 22102)

that Dr Pococke noted with a certain surprise at Langley Park in 1757, commenting that 'the Duke of Marlborough has built a very handsome new house of hewn stone, with four fronts'. This was something that Sir Robert Taylor was discovering at the same time, and like Taylor, Leadbetter made extensive use of canted bays, giving accent to façades. At Newton Park, Leadbetter was not worried if a canted bay added to one end of the house to take advantage of the view was not matched by a symmetrical bay on the other end.

Leadbetter's interiors were, like his exteriors, practical but unadventurous. The contract for building Shardeloes spells out in detail the sort of decoration his clients expected of him: plain architectural cornices, dados, skirting boards, handsome doors, decent chimneypieces. Only the occasional extravagance is to be found, such as the arching over the bookcases in the library at Shardeloes, modelled on William Kent's library for Queen Charlotte at St James's Palace of 1736-7, engravings of which had been published. The best surviving example of Leadbetter's interiors are those at Langley Park, which are similar to those described at Shardeloes, but with a touch of Rococo in the spandrels of the staircase.

If Leadbetter's clients wanted a more fashionable approach to decoration then they approached men like James Stuart or Robert Adam, newly returned from Greece and Italy full of exciting ideas, but whose untried status meant they were best tested on decoration not on the practicalities of construction. Thus James Stuart was called in to fit up Nuneham Park, while Robert Adam was set to work at Hatchlands and Shardeloes. Leadbetter, however, probably remained responsible for the execution.

Leadbetter's buildings are what one might expect from someone trained as a builder, not in the finer points of architecture. He shows little interest in style, both internal and external, even his Gothic work is largely perfunctory, but in practical matters of planning he shows remarkable ingenuity whether adapting existing fabrics or building from scratch. His houses show repeated variations on similar problems and reveal Leadbetter to have been innovative and probably pioneering in his planning.

NOTES

1. For references to specific projects see Leadbetter's catalogue of works.
2. Public Record Office, IR 1/46 fl 16. His master, Henry Leadbetter, is listed as being of Thurfield in Hampshire. No such place appears to exist, and 'Thurfield' is almost certainly a misspelling – is there almost a suggestion of a lisp? – for Sherfield-on-Loddon as a Henry Leadbetter of Sherfield-on-Loddon, carpenter, is recorded marrying Ann Harris of Odiham in 1725, and setting up a tombstone for her in 1754 (information from Miss P. M. Andrews, Archivist, Hampshire County Record Office).
3. Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* (New Haven and London, 1995), 603.
4. Assuming that Leadbetter was apprenticed around the usual age of fourteen then he would have been born in about 1704 or 1705. When he applied for a wedding licence in May 1731 he declared that he was above twenty-five which means that he must have been born before May 1706. A family of Leadbuters is recorded in Aylesbury, the county town of Buckinghamshire, during this decade, with William Leadbuter, tailor, having a succession of children, Anne in 1705, Hannah in 1706, Henry in 1707, James in 1709, William in 1711 and John in 1715. Stiff could possibly be the eldest child, born before the family settled in Aylesbury, as William Leadbetter did not marry in the town. We know from Stiff Leadbetter's will that he had two brothers called William and John living in 1764. An Aylesbury upbringing would help explain why Stiff Leadbetter settled at Eton in the same county.

CATALOGUE OF LEADBETTER'S WORK

BULSTRODE HOUSE, BUCKS.

Major repairs including a new roof for 2nd Duke of Portland, 1744-9; pigeon house 1751; alterations to the south front 1756. Demolished 1862.

Leadbetter was paid £2,610 between September 18, 1745 and March 14, 1749, for major repairs including a new roof. Subsequently he was paid £351 in 1751 for building the birdhouse and pigeon house; £35 7s 6d in 1754 for 'work done at Bulstrode'; and £352 18s 8d for carpenters' and joiners' work during alterations to the basement rooms in the south front.

Nottingham University Library, Portland London Collection, Box 13/5, box 29.

CULHAM COURT, OXFORDSHIRE

New house for Richard Michell, c.1766.

An undated building schedule for Culham Court has an annotation on its cover referring to a payment of £250 to 'exors of Leadbetter'. The house was to cost £3,976. Thomas Conway made a payment of £250 to Leadbetter in March 1766. Mrs Lybbe Powys commented in 1771 that the house was not yet finished, perhaps in part because of Leadbetter's death. Though most of the interiors of the house are compatible with Leadbetter's work, some of it is in a more advanced style that suggests Sir William Chambers and was probably carried out after Leadbetter's death. The sale catalogue of Chambers's drawings includes lot 93 'Thirteen, Mr Michell's House, Sir J. Reynolds House and various'.

W. H. Smith Archive BER/1/9; John Harris, *Sir William Chambers* (London, 1970), 186, 203. I am grateful to Mrs Phillada Ballard for drawing my attention to Culham Court and its documentation.

HOUSE IN DATCHET, BUCKS.

Attributed: Work for Edmund Mason, 1758.

Edmund Mason, Chief Clerk to the Admiralty was a friend of the Boscawens and lived at Datchet. Leadbetter's bank account records the payment of £500 by Edmund Mason in 1758.

PRO PROB 11/989/258; Hoare's bank £500, 1758; Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Admiral's Wife* (London, 1940), 92.

DITCHLEY PARK, OXON.

Attributed: Temple for 3rd Earl of Lichfield, 1759-62.

In 1763 Leadbetter examined the mason's bill for work on the Temple, built 1759-62 as part of an extension to the park, and may have been responsible for its design.

Lee of Ditchley Papers, Oxford Record Office, DIL I/p/3t-u.

DORNEY COURT, BUCKS.

Attributed: Alterations for 3rd Earl of Tankerville, 1753-4.

Tankerville paid Leadbetter £160 in 1753-54, probably for alterations to Dorney Court near Eton which he was certainly renting in 1755.

Hoare's bank £160, 1753-4; Joseph Pote, *Les Delices de Windsore* (Eton, 1755), 91.

ELVILLS, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, SURREY

New house for Sir John Elwill, Bt, 1758-63. Altered and extended in the nineteenth century. Now known as Castle Hill.

A Gothic cornice and dado survive in the drawing room and one bedroom, and octagonal glazing bars remain in one window now in a light well. Sir John Elwill was M.P. for Guildford 1747-68 and a friend of Admiral Boscawen. Although a member of an Exeter family he had no seat in Devon but lived at Englefield Green having inherited land in Surrey through his mother. Leadbetter received £5,100 between June 27, 1758 and October 12, 1763.

Hoare's bank £5,100, 1758-63; £58, 1766; Owen Manning and William Bray, *The History and Topography of the County of Surrey ... Illustrated by upwards of six thousand drawings* (London, 1847), XIX, opposite p. 252; Frederic Turner, *Egham, Surrey* (Egham, 1926), 208, 214-6; W. Watts, *Seats of the Nobility and Gentry*, (London, 1784), pl. lxvi.

ETON COLLEGE, BUCKS.

Extra floor added to the Cloister, 1759-61; extension to Provost's Lodging for Dr Barnard, 1765.

Leadbetter carried out regular carpentry repairs for the college from the death of Mr Griffin in 1740 until his own death. In 1758 he entered into an agreement to add an extra storey to the Cloister, and was also responsible for the Provost's new building in 1765 for which the Fellows voted £500 in 1766.

Eton College Audit Books 1740-66; ECR 65/311-313, 'Proposals for Erecting Attick Storey for the Revd The Provost & Fellows of Eton College agreeable to Elevation of East Front dated the 11th day of Augst 1758; also to Plan of Attick Storey etc dated the 9th day of Decr 1758'.

GLOUCESTER, THE GENERAL INFIRMARY

Hospital built to the design of Luke Singleton 1757-62. Demolished 1984.

A subscription was opened to build a County Hospital in 1754, and in 1755 it was decided that the hospital be built to the designs of Luke Singleton, a local gentleman who played a significant part in the establishment and running of the hospital. He can probably be linked with the Mr Singleton who owned the hospital in Gloucester in the mid 1720s. In April 1755 tenders were invited for constructing the hospital, and in August 1756 notice was given to craftsmen that 'a person will attend at the Bell Hotel on 17th September to contract with them for erecting a hospital for Gloucester'; this was presumably Leadbetter. Building began in 1757 and the hospital was opened on July 18, 1761, although work was not completed until 1762. The total cost was £6,200.

Gloucester Record Office, H.O.19/1/1-2; HO19/8/1; Gloucester Library, Abstracts from the *Gloucester Journal* 1754-56; George Whitcombe, *The General Infirmary at Gloucester* (Gloucester, 1903), 18; Victoria County History, *Gloucester*, IV (London, 1988), 269, pl. 46.

HARTLEBURY CASTLE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Repairs and alterations for James Johnson, Bishop of Worcester, 1759.

James Johnson, formerly Bishop of Gloucester and a moving force in the erection of the Gloucester Infirmary, was appointed Bishop of Worcester in 1759. He first visited Hartlebury Castle in February 1760 when, according to his chaplain 'The House, Offices, Fences and Park were in a very neglected and bad state; part of the House ruinous; which [the chaplain continues] made it necessary for the present Bishop to repair every part of the buildings, and in most places he has much ornamented and improved it'. A survey plan dated June 1760 is in Leadbetter's hand, and a bill of his for unspecified work totalling £319 5s 11½d survives. Leadbetter was therefore probably responsible for the complete repair of the palace described in detail by the chaplain, and for improvements including the erection of the hall staircase, decoration of the Rococo dining room and installation of pointed windows similar to those at Fulham Palace on the entrance front.

E. H. Pearce, *Hartlebury Castle* (London, 1926), 247-53; R. O. Walker, *Hartlebury, Worcestershire* (Hartlebury, 1987), 10-1; James Lees-Milne, 'Hartlebury Castle, Worcester', *Country Life*, September 23, 1971.

HATCHLANDS, SURREY

New house for Admiral Boscawen, 1757-9. Altered 1797.

The Boscawens bought Hatchlands in 1750 and were discussing building with Leadbetter in 1755 and in June 1756 were hoping to start building as soon as possible. The existing house was demolished in January 1757, and by August 1757 the house was ready for the roof. Much of the interior was fitted up by Robert Adam from 1758, and the family moved in in November 1759.

Sir John Soane's Museum 35/80, 'Plan of the first floor for the Honble Edwd Boscawen Esq March 6, 1757'; Peter Kemp (ed.), 'Boscawen's Letters to his wife 1755-56', *Naval Miscellany*, IV, 1952; Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Admiral's Wife* (London, 1940), 160, 247, 249, 259, 281-3.

LANGLEY PARK, BUCKS.

New house for 3rd Duke of Marlborough, 1755-8. Altered and extended.

The trustees of the Duke of Marlborough were empowered to rebuild Langley Park under an act of Parliament of 1756. Work began in December 1756 and a total of £5,500 was paid to Leadbetter by November 2, 1758.

Buckinghamshire Record Office D 31 F5/1-16, alternative proposals for Langley Park, August 11, 1755, plans for stables and offices April 27, 1758; Worsley Mss, Hovingham Hall, record drawings of Langley Park; British Library, Althorp Papers D47-48; Simon Houfe, 'A Taste for the Gothick', *Country Life*, March 24, 1977; Giles Worsley, 'Stiff but not dull', *Country Life*, 25 July 1991.

BEDFORD HOUSE, LONDON

Repairs for 4th Duke of Bedford, 1766.

In June 1766 Leadbetter wrote to Percival Beaumont saying that he had the painter's bill for nearly £600 for work at Bedford House.

Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford Estate Archives, R 3/327.

BEAUFORT BUILDINGS, STRAND, LONDON

Repairs for the Trustees of the 4th Duke of Beaufort.

Leadbetter was paid £50 a year by the trustees to manage their London property, and there are also payments for carpenter's and joiner's work.

Badminton Archives, PB 3/18,19.

FOLEY HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, LONDON

New house for 2nd Lord Foley, c.1754-62. Demolished c.1815.

The 2nd Duke of Portland leased the site of Foley House in Marylebone to his cousin Lord Foley from Christmas 1753. According to a statement Lord Foley made in court in 1765 work began a short time after the date of the lease and cost £30,000. Leadbetter was paid £1,000 by Foley in 1758, and in that year a revised lease described the house as 'then built or building'. The new lease directed that work should be finished by Ladyday 1765, and completion can be dated to 1762, the year rates were first paid. This is also the date inscribed on a drawing in the Sir John Soane's Museum for the ceiling of one of the two oval rooms on the north front. Leadbetter was responsible for surveying the adjacent land included in the 1758 lease and suggesting a reasonable rent, being seen as a neutral figure who had already worked for the Duke of Portland, Edward Harley his trustee and Lord Foley. However, a subsequent dispute over the terms of the lease between Lord Foley and the 3rd Duke of Portland, who felt that the agreement was unduly weighted in Foley's favour, ended in court in 1765.

PRO C12/1230/28, C12/35/31; Hoare's Bank £1000, 1758; Sir John Soane's Museum Vol. 11/90, Drawer 36/6 and 36/36; Acts of Parliament, Private Bills, 7 George 3, 1767, I, 53; C. H. Smith, 'The Site of Foley House', *Builder*, xxi (1863), 703; F. H. W. Sheppard, *Local Government in St Marylebone 1688-1825* (London, 1958), 105-6; Hermione Hobhouse, *A History of Regent Street* (London, 1975), 32, illus. The design inscribed as being for Lord Foley in the Fauntleroy Pennant in the Sir John Soane's Museum is not by Leadbetter and unlikely to have been for Foley House.

FULHAM PALACE, FULHAM, LONDON

Unexecuted scheme to rebuild stable and coach house and to remodel the palace for Richard Osbaldeston, Bishop of London, 1762-3. Chapel court rebuilt and stables altered for Bishop Terrick, 1764-6. Palace extensively altered by S. P. Cockerell 1814-5.

Leadbetter surveyed the palace for dilapidations for Bishop Hayter in 1761, and may have carried out the necessary repairs as dilapidations carried out in 1762 for Hayter's successor Osbaldeston shows that £500 worth of work must have been carried out in

the meantime. Plans were also drawn up for new stables and coach houses in May 1762, and for alterations to the palace in July 1763, but nothing seems to have been done by the time Osbaldeston died in May 1764. He was succeeded by Bishop Terrick for whom Leadbetter carried out dilapidation surveys at Fulham Palace and at his former palace in Peterborough. Osbaldeston had left £1,000 towards the repair of the palace and Terrick created a new chapel, library and reception rooms. The chapel was fitted up with wainscot and painted glass brought from the chapel of London House in the City of London. The total cost of repairs was £4,163 2s 11d. Leadbetter executed the carpenters' and joiners' work and supervised the whole commission.

Lambeth Palace Library, Hayter 2, Osbaldeston 2, Terrick 17-19, including 'Accounts of expenditure on repairs at Fulham Palace, July 1764-July 1766 with receipts of money owing to the executors of Stiff Leadbetter'; Thomas Faulkener, *An Historical and Topographical Account of Fulham* (London, 1813), 175, 179, 187; 'Fulham Palace, Middlesex', *Country Life*, February 9, 1929, fig. 13.

NO.7 GROSVENOR SQUARE, WESTMINSTER, LONDON
Repairs for 7th Earl of Northampton, c.1764. Demolished.
Survey of London, XL (1980), 123.

NO. 23 GROSVENOR STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON
Attributed: Alterations for Dr Jeremiah Milles, 1762.
Milles paid Leadbetter £200 in 1762, presumably for alterations to No. 23 Grosvenor Street where he lived from 1745 to 1771. Alternatively it could have been for work on the rectory at Merstham, Surrey, where he was rector from 1745 to 1785 and indeed rebuilt much of the rectory. However, according to the rector in 1809, apparently citing a building contract, that work was carried out in 1768.

Hoare's bank £200, 1762; *Survey of London*, XL (1980), 40; Rev. Owen Manning and William Bray, *History of Surrey*, II (London, 1809), 261, 264.

LAMBETH PALACE, LAMBETH, LONDON
Possible repairs for Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1759.
Secker's autobiography records that he paid £905 on account to Leadbetter 'chiefly & I believe almost wholly, for repairs'. These were presumably repairs to Lambeth Palace, which he occupied as archbishop from 1758. In the same year he also paid Leadbetter for supervising the surveying of his woods in Kent. Secker was previously Dean of St Paul's and would have known Leadbetter through his position as Surveyor to the Fabric.

J. S. Macauley and R. W. Greaves (ed.), *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Lawrence, 1989), 39, 41; Lambeth Palace Library, TS 5, TS 140.

POMFRET HOUSE, NO. 18 ARLINGTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON
New house with Richard Biggs for Countess of Pomfret, 1757-60. Demolished 1920.
On April 26, 1756, Lady Pomfret 'went alone to Mr Leadbetter to settle my Place for

Building', the site became vacant in February 1757 and work began in March. In October 1758 Lady Pomfret 'walk'd thro' her house for the first time, and in the spring of 1760 'Mr Leadbetter came' and Lady Pomfret 'went over the House with him'. In December 1760 'Mr Leadbetter came afterword and brought his Account'. It would appear that Leadbetter was acting in conjunction with Richard Biggs, Clerk of Works at Windsor Castle.

John Harris, 'Lady Pomfret's House: the Case for Richard Biggs', *Georgian Group Journal* (1991), 45-9.

PORTLAND CHAPEL, GREAT PORTLAND STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON

New Chapel, 1760-6. Demolished 1906.

The Portland Chapel was built as a proprietary chapel by the Duke of Portland on the site of the Marylebone basin as part of the Portland estate's development of the area around Great Portland Street. The scheme was mooted in 1758 and the foundations were laid in 1760. The chapel, which cost £5,000 and held 600 sittings, was completed in 1766. It was renamed St Paul's Church in 1831.

Westminster Libraries, Ashbridge Collection, 243; Thomas Smith, *A Topographical and Historical Account of the Parish of St Mary-le-Bone* (London, 1833), 124; *Daily Telegraph*, November 5, 1906; *Builder* April 25, 1908.

PORTLAND HOUSE, WHITEHALL, WESTMINSTER, LONDON

Alterations for 2nd Duke of Portland, 1753-4. Demolished 1805.

Leadbetter was paid a total of £740 for carpenters' and joiners' work on Portland House from May 24, 1753 to May 22, 1754.

Portland London Collection, Nottingham University Library, Box 29; *Survey of London*, XIII (1930), 187-8.

MAIDENHEAD BRIDGE, BERKS.

Repairs, 1750-2. Rebuilt 1772.

On March 12, 1750 Maidenhead Corporation signed a contract for repairing the bridge over the Thames at a cost of £600 with Leadbetter. The total cost was £764 9s 2d.

Berkshire Record Office, M/AB 3, M/FZ 2,3; J. W. Walker, *A History of Maidenhead* (1931), 13.

NEWTON PARK, SOMERSET

New house for Joseph Langton, c.1761-2. Extended.

Plans were afoot for Leadbetter to build a new house and Lancelot Brown to landscape the ground in March 1761. Work may already have been underway as the house was roofed by March 1762.

Hoare's Bank £54, 1753; £100, 1760; Warwickshire Record Office, Lucy Papers, L6/1461, 1463, 1464; Giles Worsley, 'Stiff but not dull', *Country Life*, 25 July 1991.

NUNEHAM PARK, OXFORD

New house for 1st Earl Harcourt, 1756-61. Further work 1766. Altered and extended. Work began in 1756 and was essentially complete by 1761. The house was designed by Leadbetter, who also carried out the carpenter's and joiner's work, but with details of the Venetian windows from drawings of the Aqueduct of Hadrian at Athens by James Stuart who also fitted up the interior.

Harcourt Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, C286; Sir John Soane's Museum, 34/32-38 preliminary designs; Harcourt Papers, Stanton Harcourt, working drawings; Hoare's Bank £2,100, 1756-66; *Vitruvius Britannicus*, V (London, 1771), pls. 99-100; Giles Worsley, 'Nuneham Park Revisited', *Country Life*, January 3, 1985.

OXFORD, RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY

New Hospital, 1759-66.

The Radcliffe Trustees decided to build a hospital at Oxford in April 1758 and delegated responsibility for giving directions to the Earl of Lichfield and William Cartwright. Leadbetter produced plans in March 1759 and an agreement to build was reached in May 1759. The project was to cost £5,692 10s. In all £8,811 2s 11d was paid to Leadbetter and to his executors as the hospital was not completed at his death, although the trustees reduced the final bill by £271 2s 11d. John Sanderson completed the hospital receiving a further £1,500 by 1772.

Minutes of the Radcliffe Trustees, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS DD Radcliffe Trust C51.

PEPER HAROW, SURREY

Possible works, c.1752-5 for 3rd Viscount Midleton.

According to a surviving ledger at Child's Bank, Leadbetter was paid £1,670 between 1752 and 1755 by Lord and Lady Midleton. Lord Midleton succeeded his father in 1747, came of age in 1751 and married the following year. The subsequent ledger covering the years after 1755 does not survive so it is unknown if work continued. It is unclear whether the work is for Peper Harow or the Midleton's London house, but Peper Harow is more likely. Further improvements were probably made to the old house at Peper Harow by William Chambers in 1760-1 before he built a new house there from 1765.

Child's Bank Archives, information courtesy of Fiona Cowell and Philip Winterbotham.

RUSSELL FARM, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

New house for the Dowager Countess of Essex, c. 1753-4. Badly damaged by fire 1978. The Dowager Countess of Essex was forced to set up her own household in 1753 when her son the 4th Earl came of age. She built a new house adjacent to Cassiobury Park, the seat of the Earls of Essex, on a property known as Tooley's. This she renamed Russell Farm – she had been born a Russell and was the sister of the 4th Duke of Bedford. Repeated references in the letters of the Boscawens of Hatchlands make it clear that this house, which formed the model for Hatchlands, was built by Leadbetter. The house, which was later renamed Russell's, passed to Lady Essex's two unmarried daughters and

on the death of Lady Anne Capel was left to the Earl of Essex. It was subsequently let and remained a private house until the Second World War after which it was used by Hertfordshire County Council as an Old Peoples' Home until it was badly damaged by fire in 1978. It had previously suffered unfortunate alteration.

Public Record Office PROB 11/1118; Peter Kemp (ed.), 'Boscawen's Letters to his wife 1755-56', *Naval Miscellany*, IV, 1952; Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Admiral's Wife* (London, 1940), 151, 160; Watford Museum, postcard dated 1909; Simon Houfe, 'Antiquarian Inclinations', *Country Life*, March 31, 1977.

SHARDELOES HOUSE, BUCKS.

Reconstruction for William Drake, 1758-66.

Leadbetter contracted to reconstruct Shardeloes for £4,300 in 1758, but the house was altered and interior fitted up to the designs of Robert Adam from 1761 and the total cost in 1765 came to £15,484 14s 5d with interest of £2,163 17s 6d.

Sir John Soane's Museum, 31/97-98, 100, 102-03, 105-07; Drake Mss, Buckinghamshire Record Office, D/D/5/6 'Proposals for Erecting an Additional building for William Drake Esq at Shardeloes in the County of Bucks Answerable to Plan and Elevation dated 18th day of March 1758 which is to be completed on or before 29th day of September in the year 1760 S. Leadbetter'; D/DR/5/10 Account of money paid to Several Artificers from the beginning of building 1758 to 1 January 1765; D/D/5/11/1-6; Hoare's Bank £5,700, 1762-65; G. Eland (ed.), *Shardeloes Papers* (London, 1947), 129-34.

STOKE PARK, BUCKS.

Alterations for Thomas Penn, 1766. Demolished 1789.

Penn bought Stoke Park on the death of Viscountess Cobham in 1760. He employed Leadbetter to repair the principal rooms 'restoring and preserving their ancient character'.

V. Penn, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Stoke Park* (1813), 42, 45.

STOKE PLACE, BUCKS.

Attributed: Work for General George Howard, 1765-6.

General Howard bought Stoke Place in 1764 and immediately carried out improvements, also paying £550 to Lancelot Brown in 1765-6.

Hoare's Bank £500, 1765-66; Bucks. County Record Office, Howard-Vyse Papers; V. Penn, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Stoke Park* (1813), 46, 96; George Lipscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham* (London, 1847), IV, 561.

SYON HOUSE, MIDDLESEX

Building work for 2nd Earl of Northumberland, 1761-3.

Robert Adam extensively remodelled Syon House for the Earl, subsequently Duke, of Northumberland, from 1761-5. Leadbetter was obviously one of the builders involved although it is unclear whether he was the main contractor as he was when working with Adam at Shardeloes. The year's account for new alterations at Syon from March 1, 1761,

to March 1, 1762, include a bill of £267 3s from Leadbetter for carpenters' wages dated May 1761 which was settled in April 1762. On September 18, 1762, Thomas Butler, the earl's steward, spent money on coach hire to London to meet Mr Leadbetter's man. On October 28, 1763, £90 was paid to Mr Leadbetter for his repairs to the house lent to Messrs Hammersmith and Brix.

(Information from Mr Gervase Jackson-Stops.) Leadbetter's bank account also records a payment of £500 in 1763 from the earl. Alnwick Papers, Class U, Division III, 5 (18), Division I/41. Hoare's Bank £500, 1763.

TAPLOW COURT, BUCKS.

Unexecuted proposal for new offices for Earl of Inchiquin, 1743.

'Proposals for building new Offices for the Right Honble. the Earl of Inchiquin at Taplow Court dec. 1743' costing £506 14s 4½d endorsed in a different but contemporary hand 'By Mr Ledbetter of Eaton' and plan and elevation endorsed 'Never Built' in the Cliveden Album, together with two survey drawings of the first floor and attic.

Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'The Cliveden Album II', *Architectural History*, 20 (1977), 71, 77, pls. 56-8.

THEOBALDS, HERTFORDSHIRE

New farm house and alterations or repairs to three others 1756-8 for Duke of Portland, 1757 and 1758.

Leadbetter built a new farm house for Robert Waddilove in 1756 for £456 6s. He also repaired Dennis Kearney's house for £172 6d 5½d. He was paid for further lesser work in 1758.

Portland London Collection, Nottingham University Library, Box 9/10, box 30.

WORCESTER, BISHOP'S PALACE

Repairs and addition of 'a room with a bow window to the river' for James Johnson, Bishop of Worcester, probably c.1760.

'Account of what was done at Hartlebury Castle and the Palace by Bishop Johnson' at Hartlebury Castle.

WOBURN ABBEY, BEDFORDSHIRE

Unexecuted design for rebuilding the west wing for 4th Duke of Bedford, 1765.

V&A 7076.11.

LONDON SPECULATIVE HOUSING

BERWICK STREET, SOHO

1749 lease of three-house site at north-east end of Berwick Street from Duke of Portland.

1753 lease of three sites on the west side of Berwick Street from Duke of Portland, one sold back to the duke in 1756, the others sold in 1757 and 1759.

Leadbetter took a large site for a ground rent of £12 10s at the north end of Berwick Street on the east side in 1749, building himself a house and workshop by 1751. Eventually two further houses were added. He took three sites on the west side of Berwick Street in 1753 at a total cost of £1,498 3s 6½d, which were completed by February 1755, largely using craftsmen who had also taken building leases on houses in the street at the same time. In November 1755 he was negotiating to sell the house on the junction with Noel Street to the Duke of Portland for use by the Collector of Rents of the Soho estate. He put forward a memorandum suggesting various minor works to the house to make it decent in December 1755 and was paid £600 for it in March 1756. The leases on the other two houses were sold in 1757 and 1759.

Greater London Record Office, MDR 1749/3/670; 1756/2/419; 1757/3/489; 1759/2/76; Portland London Collection, Nottingham University Library. Box 1, box 29.

CHARLOTTE STREET, BLOOMSBURY

Unexecuted agreement to build seventeen houses, 1766.

Bedford Papers, Robert Palmer to Duke of Bedford, June 1766, in Palmer's Letter Book I 99, quoted by D. J. Olsen, *Town Planning* (New Haven and London, 1982), 44.

WHARTON HOUSE, DOVER STREET

Bought from Countess of Oxford and sold immediately to the Earl of Halifax and William Ffolkes as trustees for Sir Edward Hussey-Montagu (later Earl of Beaulieu), 1755.

Greater London Record Office, MDR 1755 2/453-6.

SURVEYS

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S KENT WOODS

Survey for Archbishop Secker, 1759, by William Child organised by Leadbetter. Lambeth Palace Library TS140.

BEAUFORT BUILDINGS, STRAND, LONDON

Valuation for sale November 1760-March 1761.

Badminton Archives, PB 2/1,8.

BEAUFORT HOUSE, LONDON

Valuation for Duchess of Bedford, 1761.

According to a letter Leadbetter wrote to Norborne Berkeley (the duchess's brother and one of the trustees) he had a difference of opinion with Henry Flitcroft over the valuation.

Beaufort Papers, Gloucester Record Office, Fm T/B 127, Fm K 4/24.

FULHAM PALACE, LONDON

Survey for Bishop Hayter, 1761.

Lambeth Palace Library, Hayter 2, 'Estimates of dilapidations at Fulham Palace, surveyed by Stiff Leadbetter, Surveyor, 14 November 1761'.

FULHAM PALACE, LONDON

Survey for Bishop Terrick, 1764.

Lambeth Palace Library, Terrick 18, 'To Viewing & Settling Dilapidations at the Pallaces of Fulham & Peterborough including Journeys and measuring'.

HARTLEBURY CASTLE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Survey for Bishop Johnson, 1760.

R. O. Walker, *Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire* (Hartlebury, 1987), 10-1.

BISHOP'S PALACE, PETERBOROUGH

Survey for Bishop Terrick, 1764.

Lambeth Palace Library, Terrick 18, 'To Viewing & Settling Dilapidations at the Pallaces of Fulham & Peterborough including Journeys and measuring'.

LIST OF LEADBETTER DRAWINGS

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

Langley Park, Buckinghamshire

D31 F5, 1-11, 13-16: Alternative proposals for the house, plans and elevations, August 11, 1755; 12, Plan of basement drains, March 4, 1758; 5-7, 17, plans and elevation for offices and stables, April 27, 1758.

CLIVEDEN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Taplow House, Buckinghamshire

Cliveden Album 35-7: Ground plan and elevation for an office wing at Taplow Court, 1743; Plan of the 2nd floor of Taplow Court, c.1743; Plan of the attic storey of Taplow Court, c.1743.

Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'The Cliveden Album II', *Architectural History*, 20 (1977), 71-2, 76, pls. 56-8.

ETON COLLEGE LIBRARY, BUCKS.

Eton College, Buckinghamshire

ECR 65/312-3: plans of the first floor of the proposed attic floor of the Cloister Court, December 9, 1758.

HARCOURT PAPERS, STANTON HARCOURT, OXFORDSHIRE

Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire

Working drawings. Photographs in Conway Library, Courtauld Institute.

Giles Worsley, 'Nuneham Park Revisited', *Country Life*, January 3, 1985, Fig. 5.

HARTLEBURY CASTLE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

'Plan of the Principal Floor of the Rt Revd the Lord Bishop of Worcesters Palace at Hartlebury June 1760'.

R. O. Walker, *Hartlebury, Worcestershire* (Hartlebury, 1987), 10-1 (where it is mistakenly captioned 1720).

LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY, LONDON

Fulham Palace, London

Terrick 19: 39 plans and sketches of alterations at Fulham Palace commissioned by Bishop Terrick and his predecessor, 1762-6.

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM, LONDON

Hatchlands, Surrey

35/80: 'Plan of the first floor for the Honble Edward Boscawen Esq March 6 1757'.

Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire

34/32-38: Elevations of the four façades and plans of the principal, attic and garret floors.

Shardeloes House, Buckinghamshire

31/97: Plan dated May 2, 1759.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire

7076.11 (Q2C): 'Plan of Principal Story of West Wing proposed to be Rebuilt for his Grace The Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey Sept 1765'.

WORSLEY PAPERS, HOVINGHAM HALL, YORKSHIRE

Langley Park, Buckinghamshire

Plan of the principal floor and two elevations.