

**BUILDING AN IMAGE?
CONSIDERING
THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE
AS AN ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION
OF MIDDLE CLASS VALUES**

by

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ABSTRACT

Mid-nineteenth century England saw an unprecedented building of country houses. This thesis addresses the issues of who was primarily responsible and why the resultant country houses appeared, in both architectural expression and spatial organization, so different from those of preceding periods.

Evidence suggests that a significant number of nineteenth century country houses were financially underwritten by middle class owners. An examination of an exemplar country house, Bear Wood, posits that it was specifically designed and constructed to accommodate certain middle class values, a means by which this expanding and increasingly influential class could contribute towards establishing and legitimating its identity as distinct within the social order. Although a decisive defence cannot be offered against the generally inherent and tacit assumptions that the ambition of the middle class investor was to join the ranks of the established landed aristocracy, it is suggested that many of the innate precepts traditionally associated with the stewardship of a country house were used to underpin the identity of the nineteenth century middle class.

This work reflects the axiom that, despite gradations of wealth and subsequent levels of rank, the unity and influence of the nineteenth century middle class lay in its common adherence to attitudes and values with which it became particularly associated. Whilst it is acknowledged that one country house cannot be considered a prototypical example to represent a heterogeneous middle class, the significant wealth of the owner of Bear Wood did allow him to encapsulate, in architectural form, many of the tenets to which his class commonly subscribed. Evidence of the diversity with which that class represented

itself was extrapolated from Bear Wood, a diversity that ranged from a strident and acicular announcement of entrepreneurial acumen and success, to a succinct and subtle representation of domestic values and standards of propriety.

That so many nineteenth century middle class tenets were to successfully permeate and influence the entire social order, to be emulated at both ends of the social scale, indicates the significance that can be attached to the architectural expression and the spatial organization of a country house like Bear Wood.

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C'est finis!

Of all the great things that the English have invented and made part of the glory of the national character, the most perfect, the most characteristic, the one they have mastered most completely in all its details, so that it has become a compendious illustration of their social genius and their manners, is the well-appointed, well-administered, well-filled country house.

Henry James, "An English New Year", 1879

INTRODUCTION

...Victorian country houses, because of their size, their complexity, their social background, the occasional masterpieces and many curiosities among them, and the mixture of piety, snobbery, romanticism, idealism and pretentiousness that contributed to their making, form a fascinating collection. Seldom can so much money and such exhaustive study have produced a group of buildings that, as private houses, became so soon and painfully obsolete.¹

Because of the construction of unprecedented numbers of country houses, mid-nineteenth century England might be considered to have been the 'golden age' of country house building.² Be these country houses now viewed, as suggested by Mark Girouard as 'occasional masterpieces' or 'many curiosities', there is little doubt that they were large in both number and size and eclectic in distinctive architectural styles and spatial organization.

The focus of this thesis will be to address the issues of who was primarily responsible for the construction of these unprecedented numbers of mid-nineteenth century country houses and why they appeared, both in architectural style and spatial organization, to have been so different from those of preceding periods. Referencing both architectural expression and spatial design, attention will be given to what had been retained, what was

¹ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): v.

² For the purpose of this thesis, the mid-nineteenth century refers to the years circa 1850-1880. By mid-century, the nation was at the cusp of its vigour and economic growth before the depression of the 1880s had begun to take effect. Altick in *Victorian People & Ideas* (1973) considers these years to have been the High Victorian Era that ended in the mid 1870s: 14.

'Well over 1,000, perhaps as many as 2,000 country houses were built between 1835 & 1914'. Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House & Its Plan* (1981): 1. F.M.L. Thompson suggests that a 'reasonable guess' for the standing stock of houses in 1830 was 3000 and that 'some 500 country houses were either built or substantially remodelled between 1835 and 1889'. *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 154 & 155. The effects of the agricultural depression that took root at the beginning of the 1880s did not entirely halt the construction of country houses, although the numbers declined. (This does not apply to 'houses in the country' the numbers of which remained high until World War I). The last great country house to be built was Castle Drago, commissioned from architect Edwin Lutyens by Julius Drew, founder of the Home & Colonial grocery stores. Building eventually ceased in 1930, although the house was never completed to the original plan.

innovative and new and how these innovations and changes might be interpreted within the social context of contemporary nineteenth century England.

So as to allow for a more equitable comparison with country houses from previous centuries, the definition applied to the mid-nineteenth century houses considered will be those situated on an estate that could provide sufficient financial support, rather than being a 'house in the country' wherein the operation of the latter required support with financial input from sources other than its estate. Thus, the mid-nineteenth century country houses studied were the principle residence of the owner, functioned as the family seat and were at the centre of a self-supporting, financially viable estate.³

In a departure from the tradition of previous centuries, when the building of country houses had primarily been undertaken by the aristocratic landowning classes, a significant number of those built in the nineteenth century house belonged to new families.⁴ Historian F.M.L. Thompson estimates that the number underwritten by financial investments made by wealthy members of a rapidly expanding and increasingly influential middle class was at

³ Franklin in *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): Chapter 2 provides information on the size and financial viability of 19th. century estates.

Although the houses considered in this study were all situated on financially viable estates, unlike those of previous centuries, a self-sustaining estate was not essential for many 19th. century country houses. Income was often supplemented by the mineral rights to many estates (as in the case, for example, of Brodsworth Hall, Yorkshire, rebuilt between 1861 and 1863 from the profits of coal mined on the estate). For the long-established landowners, increased industrialization allowed for opportunities to diversify financial assets into such areas as urban and industrial developments (as in the case, for instance, of the Dukes of Westminster and Devonshire who developed urban areas in London and Eastbourne, respectively). In addition there was the growing tendency to invest in foreign stocks (as in the case, for example, of the Duke of Bedford who invested (and subsequently lost) heavily in Russian railways). Many 19th. century middle class owners did not actually depend on the financial viability of their estates, for they had significant incomes derived from entrepreneurial activities outside of their estates.

⁴ Franklin: *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 25.

Paul Langford in *Public Life & the Propertied Englishman* (1991) refers to an emerging 18th. century middle class, but he defines that of the 19th. century as being entrepreneurial: 14.

The fact that the majority of houses were being built by wealthy middle class owners does not mean that the aristocratic landed gentry were idle, but their focus was largely on the remodelling of ancestral homes, rather than on the construction of new ones. For example, the Lyttons remodelled Knebworth in the 1850s, the Bute family started extensive remodelling at Cardiff Castle in 1865, the Beaumonts started work on Carlton Towers in the 1870s.

least half of the total.⁵ That these middle class owners should make considerable investments in the commission and construction of such exceptional numbers of houses leads to an examination of the significance that they evidently attached to the ownership of a country house and its attendant estate. It cannot be denied that many country houses belonging to middle class owners would have been built to rival or emulate either existing houses belonging to the established landed gentry, or those being constructed by other members of the middle class who had been equally successful in their entrepreneurial achievements. Was it, then, that these middle class owners wanted, through the medium of their country houses, to achieve the social standing traditionally associated with aristocratic ownership, or was there an alternative objective? For example, were these mid-nineteenth century houses specifically designed and constructed to accommodate any specific social tenets by which their middle class owners wished to be identified? If this was the case, what, then, were these tenets that became associated with middle class identity and how can they be interpreted through the architectural medium of a country house? Is there evidence that there was a specific and deliberate intent on the part of the middle class owners to use their country houses as a means by which certain of their class ideologies could be established and sustained, so to contribute towards legitimating their identity as a distinct social class, separate and apart from the aristocratic or the working classes?

Whilst the research for this study entailed considering a wide representative selection of mid-nineteenth century country houses built by owners and architects to whom middle class status can be appropriated, the primary focus is on the architecture and the spatial organization of one in particular.⁶ Bear Wood built between 1865 and 1874 on an

⁵ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 155.

⁶ A detailed discussion of middle class status will be presented later in the text.

estate at Sindlesham, near Wokingham in Berkshire will be used as the exemplar in order to address the issues raised. Whilst Bear Wood can be considered an extreme, rather than a typical, expression of middle class values, the financial resources of the owner meant that he could afford to fully express, in architectural form, the tenets to which he subscribed. Hence, Bear Wood provides a particularly readable resource from which to identify many of the values by which the nineteenth century middle class can be identified.

Both the owner, John Walter III and the architect, Robert Kerr, belonged to the middle class.⁷ Both were influential. John Walter, as principal proprietor of the *Times*, a newspaper of 'enormous prestige' with not only the biggest circulation, but one that 'spoke for the middle class', was in a position to exert considerable influence on his readers.⁸ His was a position in which he was respected, a suggestion supported by the fact that he was several times offered the honour of a peerage.⁹ Robert Kerr, too, was in a position to exert considerable influence. In his professional capacity, he was the first president of the Architectural Association, Professor of the Arts of Construction, Kings College, London and, for forty two years, District Surveyor for St. James's, Westminster.¹⁰ In addition, he was author of several literary works, perhaps the most influential of which was *The*

⁷ John Walter III (1818-1894) Robert Kerr (1823-1904).

⁸ That the '*Times* spoke for the middle classes', is an assumption made by Girouard possibly based on the fact that it was considered to be a Tory-biased newspaper, "*Bear Wood, Berkshire*" *Country Life*, October 17, 1968: 965. There is also the presumption that (particularly the middle and upper ranks of the middle class) were pro-Tory, whereas the aristocracy were traditionally presumed to be pro-Whig. The influence of the paper was probably enhanced by the fact that '*The Times* emerged from the (Crimean) war with enormous prestige': 966.

In the latter years of the century, advances in technology meant that the process of printing became cheaper. *The Times* lost ground to the penny-press publications, a fact that substantially reduced Walter's income and that would, ultimately, contribute to the sale of his estate, Bear Wood.

The status that had been applied in the mid-19th. century to the profession of architecture infers that Kerr, too, would have been considered middle class.

⁹ *The Times*, "*Death of Mr Walter*", Monday, November 5, 1894. Kerr declined the offer of a peerage.

¹⁰ *Directory of British Architects 1834-1900*: 524.

Gentleman's House.¹¹ His obituary noted that, in both his writing and in his oratory, Kerr was in the 'possession of a gift [that was] fluent and effective, that he was a man of 'energy and vigour'.¹² Hence, by the media of both his professional position and his publications, he was in a position to exert considerable influence, not only on his professional peers, but also on potential middle class owners of country houses for whom *The Gentleman's House*, in particular, appeared to be a definitive treatise.¹³ For both his architectural peers and potential country house owners, the book provided detailed and specific parameters within which both architect and 'English Gentlemen' were offered detailed instruction and advice on the appropriate architectural design, as well as the spatial organization for their houses.¹⁴

As the contemporary architect, J.J. Stevenson noted:

On the subject of planning houses, 'The English Gentleman's House', by Professor Kerr, contains about all that need by known. The book is large and would bear condensation.¹⁵

And, as if to underscore the influence that a book such as Kerr's would have had on both architects and clients, Stevenson wrote of his own literary works, 'architects have frequently told me that they wished they had such a book as this which they could put into the hands of their employers...'¹⁶

¹¹ Robert Kerr (January 17, 1823-October 21, 1904) born, educated and trained in Aberdeen. FRIBA 1857. President AA 1847-1878, District Surveyor for St. James', London 1862-1902. Published *Newleaf Discourses on the Fine Art of Architecture* (1846) *The Consulting Architect* (1886) *The History of Architecture in all Countries* (1891-1899). Biographical notes, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1900*: 24.

¹² *The Builder*, "The Late Professor Kerr", October 29, 1904: 435.

¹³ As noted in Part I (1.1), it was acknowledged that Walter gave Kerr the commission for Bear Wood based on *The Gentleman's House*.

¹⁴ Kerr first published *The Gentleman's House; or, How to Plan English Residences from the Parsonage to the Palace; with Tables of Accommodation and Cost, and a Series of Selected Plans* in 1864. By 1865, the book had been revised. The second edition included a *Supplement on Works of Alteration, and Additional Plates*.

¹⁵ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 8. Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 2.

However influential the work of Kerr might have been, it is suggested by the architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner that Kerr's 'nimble mind' might have 'turned over' 'thoughts similar to Burgess' and Whites' and even more of Aitchison's and Harris's'.¹⁷ If this was so, then it might be assumed that the advice and suggestions offered by Kerr reflected those of a wider range of architectural thought than those of the author alone and that his literary works can be considered a codification of both past and present notions.

In addition to citing John Walter and Robert Kerr as influential members of the middle class, particular reference will be made to the works of J.J. Stevenson. *House Architecture, Volumes I and II* were published in 1880; although Stevenson notes that he had begun his work 'ten years ago during an interval in the practices of my profession'.¹⁸ Stevenson's works are considered to be a particularly important resource for the purposes of this thesis, for he sometimes concurs with and, thus adds credence to, the advice given by Kerr in 1865 in *The Gentleman's House*. However, presuming that Kerr's work was directed at middle class readers, the fact that Stevenson did not completely concur with Kerr's advocations elucidates the diverse ways in which an expanding, increasingly influential, but far from homogenous, nineteenth century middle class represented itself.

Reference will also be made to the contemporary works of John Ruskin, particularly as his influence spanned the period on which this thesis is focused. A pre-eminent nineteenth century philosopher and thinker, architect, artist, critic and prolific writer John Ruskin, with his affluent, Evangelical Christian, middle class background, reflected many of

¹⁷ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 233.

¹⁸ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): Preface, v. It can be presumed that Stevenson had been influential in the field of architecture for a decade or more before his books went to print.

the values and attitudes on which middle class ethos was based and by which the class has been subsequently identified.¹⁹ As historian, Kristine Garrigan notes, the 'formidable reputation' of Ruskin makes it 'difficult...to reevaluate either Victorian art or architecture without studying Ruskin's imposing works carefully' in that 'no other author has ever been more thoroughly identified with the aesthetic currents of his time'.²⁰

It will be suggested that certain of the ideologies to which both owner and architect of Bear Wood, as representatives of the middle class, apparently subscribed were evident in the architecture and spatial design of a mid-nineteenth century country house. That these middle class tenets were to successfully permeate and influence the entire social order and were, subsequently, to be emulated at both ends of the social scale, indicates the significance that can be attached to a country house like Bear Wood.²¹

Assumptions will be drawn from examining the siting, the architecture and the plan of Bear Wood. Evidence will be sought that certain values associated with the social status of both owner and architect had a very close relationship with the way in which the approach to the house was planned, as well as with the architectural expressions evident in its design and the way in which middle class domestic space was intended to function. By such means, credence can be given to the supposition that a mid-nineteenth century country house, such as the exemplar Bear Wood, was a medium by which certain middle class values could be manifested and maintained, so to enable the class to build an identity by which it would be recognized as a distinct and legitimate in the social order.

¹⁹ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972) devotes Chapter XV to the influence of Ruskin.

²⁰ Garrigan, *Ruskin on Architecture* (1973): xi.

²¹ Walter Creese in *The Search for the Environment* (1966) states that it was 'the eternal ambition of the working class to attain the broad middle class plateau of respectability', an ambition inherent in both the 19th. and the 20th. centuries: 335.

PART I

(1.1) *Middle class identity and its representation in architectural form*

On June 6, 1868, an article in *The Builder* reported, in part:

A very interesting event came off on Saturday last. At Bearwood, in Berkshire... a fine house is being erected from the designs of Professor Kerr, for Mr. John Walter... The building being finished externally, or nearly so, Mr. Walter on that day entertained at dinner the whole of the workmen who are engaged upon it, some 380 in number... In proposing the health of the architect, Mr. Walter said that it was from perusal of Mr. Kerr's book, "The Gentleman's House," he had been led to seek that gentleman's assistance.

An analysis of a country house such as Bear Wood, designed by a middle class architect for a middle class owner, demonstrates the diverse ways in which many of the tenets associated with their class by the mid-nineteenth century were represented in both its architectural expression and its spatial organization.

This diversity of representation is suggested, for example, by the maxims of the architect of Bear Wood, Robert Kerr. On the one hand, he instructed readers of *The Gentleman's House* that 'it must be looked upon as a rule that an English gentleman will desire to avoid obtrusiveness even at the sacrifice of a good deal of that importance which properly belongs to the rank, wealth, education and character of his class'.²² This advice evidently meshed well with the *persona* of Kerr's patron. In the eulogy *The Times* paid to John Walter at the time of his death, he was described as having been a man of 'refined

²² Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 51.

taste', a person of 'principles', of 'judgement', of 'rare sagacity and insight', of 'sincerity of purpose'.²³

On the other hand, to such perceptions of restraint, refinement and integrity must be compared a vocabulary that has also been used to formulate an identity for the Victorian middle class. Kerr, himself, appeared to contradict his maxims for unobtrusiveness and restraint by incorporating terminology such as 'authority, vigour, vivacity, dignity and importance' into his architectural dogma.²⁴ In the present century, the architectural historian, Mark Girouard not only considers such words pertinent, but he has supplemented them with his own 'power, magnificence and display'.²⁵

Such a vocabulary, be it applied to architecture or to the identity of an individual, suggests a nineteenth century middle class that apparently represented itself in diverse ways.

Support for the hypothesis is upheld by the literary critic, Terry Eagleton who theorizes that:

the term 'ideology' is just a convenient way of categorizing under a single heading a whole lot of things we do with signs. The phrase 'bourgeoisie ideology', for example, is simply shorthand for an immense range of discourses scattered in time and space.²⁶

The many ways in which the middle class manifested its ideologies was an indication that it was a far from homogeneous group.²⁷ As a class, it was both complex and disparate

²³ "Death of Mr. Walter", *Times*, Monday, November 5, 1894.

²⁴ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865)

²⁵ Girouard, "Bear Wood, Berkshire, I & II", *Country Life*, October 17 & 24, 1968.

Girouard is cited as a reference primarily because there appears to be little extant documentation to indicate that any significant research has been undertaken on the architectural history of Bear Wood, apart from that published by Girouard. Much of the content of the *Country Life* articles cited later appears under Girouard's authorship in *The Victorian Country House* (1971, revised 1979).

The original name of the estate was documented as Bear Wood, but was used interchangeably in the 19th century references as Bearwood (see *The Builder*).

²⁶ Eagleton, *Ideology: an Introduction* (1991): 193.

²⁷ The first requisite of middle class status was an income above a certain minimum. The figure of £300 per annum was frequently considered the minimum for the normal range of middle class comfort. However,

in a society that was becoming increasingly pluralistic. The middle class was primarily stratified by levels determined by the degree and the source of income, as well as by education, religious affiliation and standards of domestic accommodation.²⁸ Nevertheless, those who claimed middle class status, despite their economic or religious diversity, appeared bound by a commitment to adhere to the imperatives of a common moral code. There was a code based primarily on the Malthusian concept that man would attain his full stature as a rational, responsible being if he embraced moral restraint. At the same time, evidence of middle class entrepreneurial success was displayed in often ostentatious material form as a means by which the rewards for the Puritan-Evangelical ethics of hard work could be publicly demonstrated.²⁹ In the course of the nineteenth century, however, despite the range of economic and social levels that delineated middle class status, a shared adherence to a code of ethics resulted in a doctrine that was to unite its members with a common identity.

the lower strata had incomes of £150-£200 per annum, with some clerks and teachers earning as little as £60. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain* (1979): 106-107.

Sheeran, *Brass Castles* (1993) adopts the criterion used by historian W.D. Rubinstein that an 'affluent gentleman' would be worth £5,000-£10,000. The 'new rich' of 'superior wealth' were worth £100,000 - £150,000. There were also middle class millionaires, *Ibid*: 8.

An important concept was that the income of a middle class family was derived from one wage earner (the male head of the family) whereas the income of a working class family came from several sources of wages from both male and female family members. For examples of working class incomes, see Sheeran: 11-12.

²⁸ Distinctions within the middle class are discussed by Sheeran, *Brass Castles* (1993): 20.

Rubinstein in *Men of Property* (1991) posits that religious affiliation and education were the most important differences between what he terms the 'two middle classes': 620-621. The middle and upper stratas of the middle class were generally presumed to be predominantly affiliated with the Anglican church, those from the lower stratas, with the Dissenting and Evangelical sects.

Rubinstein also argues that there was a distinct geographical distinction with middle class wealth, with that derived from commerce and finance focused on the Home Counties and London, that derived from industry and manufacturing focused on the Midlands and the north of England.

²⁹ Despite a presumed affiliation with Anglican religious ritual, the middle and upper stratas of the middle class believed that Evangelical tenets of hard work brought rewards, a belief that formed part of the common ideologies to which its members subscribed.

Social historians, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall consider that an adherence to the shared ideologies of the middle class emerged from the crises of the turbulent decades of the early nineteenth century.³⁰ Historian Robert Stewart concurs with this, in that the emerging consciousness of class was an indication of the tensions and conflicts that had developed among the 'old interests' with, for example, the ongoing political ascendancy of the Tories.³¹ At the same time, the general usage of the language of class, combined with the emergence of an increasingly influential middle class became, according to J.F.C. Harrison, 'entangled with political struggle and theories of social change'.³² The inherent natural order of things in which the aristocracy, traditionally attributed with confidence, experience and expertise, were expected to govern was being undermined. There was an awareness that the ongoing revolutions in France could be repeated in Britain. Combined with this were such as the Swing Riots in 1815 and 1830, together with the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, indications of an incipient radicalism festering among the lower orders. By 1838, the Chartist Movement that had sought democratic and social change had formalized its principles for reform in the Peoples' Charter.³³ In an effort to counter such signs of unrest among the proletariat, Lord Grey, leader of the Whigs, had introduced the first Reform Act in 1832, the intention of which was to 'associate the middle with the higher orders of society'.³⁴ Combined with the passage of the Poor Laws, the first of which was introduced in 1834, the Act was intended to unite the middle with the upper classes to form a powerful force against the potential of revolution. The tactic was to 'strangle the working

³⁰ Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes* (1987): 18.

³¹ Stewart, *Party & Politics* (1989): 13.

³² Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain* (1979): 31.

³³ Despite the Peoples' Charter, agitation from the Chartist Movement continued over the next decade or

so.

³⁴ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 16.

men's ambitions' by way of the enfranchisement and, consequently, invest a large percentage of the male middle class population with political empowerment.³⁵ Hence, the government of Lord Grey had provided the middle class with a powerful and legitimate means by which its members could voice the beliefs of their own class.

An existence, separate and specific from either the aristocratic or lower classes, fuelled the aspirations of the middle class to imprint its identity on the social order, ambitions that can be seen as concurrent with similar national ambitions in a global context. A national euphoria, grounded on the defeat of Britain's long-standing enemy, the French at Waterloo in 1812, had laid a foundation on which the social constructs of the century were to evolve. The wish to create an orderly, disciplined, regulated and supervised society, the somewhat hegemonic mission to spread beliefs of freedom and ideals of the 'true religion', reflected aspirations that were both national and middle class. With the accession of Victoria in 1837, Britain had embarked on a period of peace and prosperity with ongoing economic growth, generated by rapid advances in technology and industrial developments. This is affirmed by F.M.L. Thompson, who is of the opinion that, by 1830, the Industrial Revolution was over and the nation was 'at least half-way through its drive to maturity, the maturity of a modern, fully industrialized economy'.³⁶

By mid-century, the middle class had coalesced around shared ideologies. To theorists, Antony Easthope and Kate Hall such a common ideology implies a class structure

³⁵ Stewart, *Party & Politics* (1989): 13. Franchise was originally granted to male householders occupying premises with a minimum revenue of £20 per annum. This was later reduced to £10 per annum, which meant that about 20% of the adult male population was enfranchised. By 1884, all male householders over the age of 21 had the vote. The fact that property was made a criterion for franchise contributed to the association of property with a man's worth.

³⁶ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 22.

insofar as it is social and collective. They summarize the concept in terms of Marx and Engels who

developed an account of ideology in terms of 'economic base' and 'ideological superstructure'. If a person's class position is determined by his or her economic position in relation to the mode of production, then this individual will share an ideology representing the economic interests of the class they belong to.³⁷

Against a backdrop of both growing material prosperity and representation, the middle class became increasingly anxious to express an identity distinct from those above and below them in the social order. This set them apart, in particular, from the long-established landed aristocracy who, it was perceived, likely would have inherited many of the propensities of their 'profligate patrician, eighteenth century ancestors'.³⁸ As Kerr noted in his review of the direction that nineteenth century architecture had taken, the 'old philistinism of the Georges' had been 'vanquished'.³⁹ Under the rubric of a 'growing desire for independence from the clientage of landed wealth and power', a middle class owner like John Walter could, through the medium of his country estate and its house, not only implement middle class ideals, but also help identify the values to which he subscribed as being distinct from

³⁷ Easthope & McGowan, *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader* (1992): 42.

³⁸ The 'moral restraint' adhered to by the 19th. century middle class contrasted with Cannadine's perception of the 18th. century 'profligate patrician', who left an inheritance of 'widespread financial embarrassment and heavy indebtedness, the result of heavy and accumulated family charges, electoral extravagance, and the expense of house building'. *The Decline & Fall of the British Aristocracy* (1990): 37.

In turn, the aristocracy distanced themselves from even the wealthiest middle class on the assumption that most of the wealth of the latter was derived from trade, considered a 'vulgar' means of acquiring money. '...the number of aristocrats directly concerned with industry or manufacturing, apart from membership on boards of companies exploiting minerals on their own land, was probably nil'. Rubinstein, *The Victorian Middle Classes* (1977): 621. The same association of vulgarity was not applied to commerce or the professions. With the system of primogeniture inheritance in place, many of the younger sons of the aristocracy earned their living in such fields.

³⁹ "English Architecture Thirty Years Hence". A speech delivered by Kerr on Friday, May 9, 1884 at the sixth and final Meeting of the General Conference of Architects held in London from 5 to 9 May. Published in *Trans. R.I.B.A.*, XXXIV, 1883-4. Reprinted in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 291-314.

those of the aristocratic, or even the working classes.⁴⁰ That the middle class wished to be regarded as a distinctive and separate class was a position bolstered by the expanding number claiming such status.⁴¹

A study of a country house such as Bear Wood indicates that it served as a representation of an image of the middle class transcribed into architectural form. Built in the middle of the nineteenth century, Bear Wood inherited significant historical precedents. These included an understanding of its position as the fulcrum of power at the centre of a landed estate: further, that the country house was a source of influence and patronage, the locus of an authoritative, paternalistic community in which contemporary concepts of social management and political control could be exercised. Under the aegis of both earlier and nineteenth century values, the very existence of a country house could be seen to represent economic achievement, the identity of the owner and status for the family. It also implied a sense of stability and permanence to the family line and resonance to the family name. Its size, its placement within the estate and its architectural style can be interpreted as an indication of the temporal power, as well as the wealth and the individual tastes of its owner.

⁴⁰ Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes* (1987): 18.

Hall suggests that the ambition of the middle class to establish a separate identity was abetted by the working class who, although adopting many middle class ideologies, did not 'adopt them wholesale' and, thus, 'demonstrated [their] independence from middle-class meanings of the term and the creation of a separate and class-specific concept'. *White, Male & Middle Class* (1992): 144.

⁴¹ Hall, *White, Male & Middle Class* (1992) estimates that, by the mid nineteenth century, 25% of the population claimed middle class status: 157.

FIGURE 1

The approach to Bear Wood estate

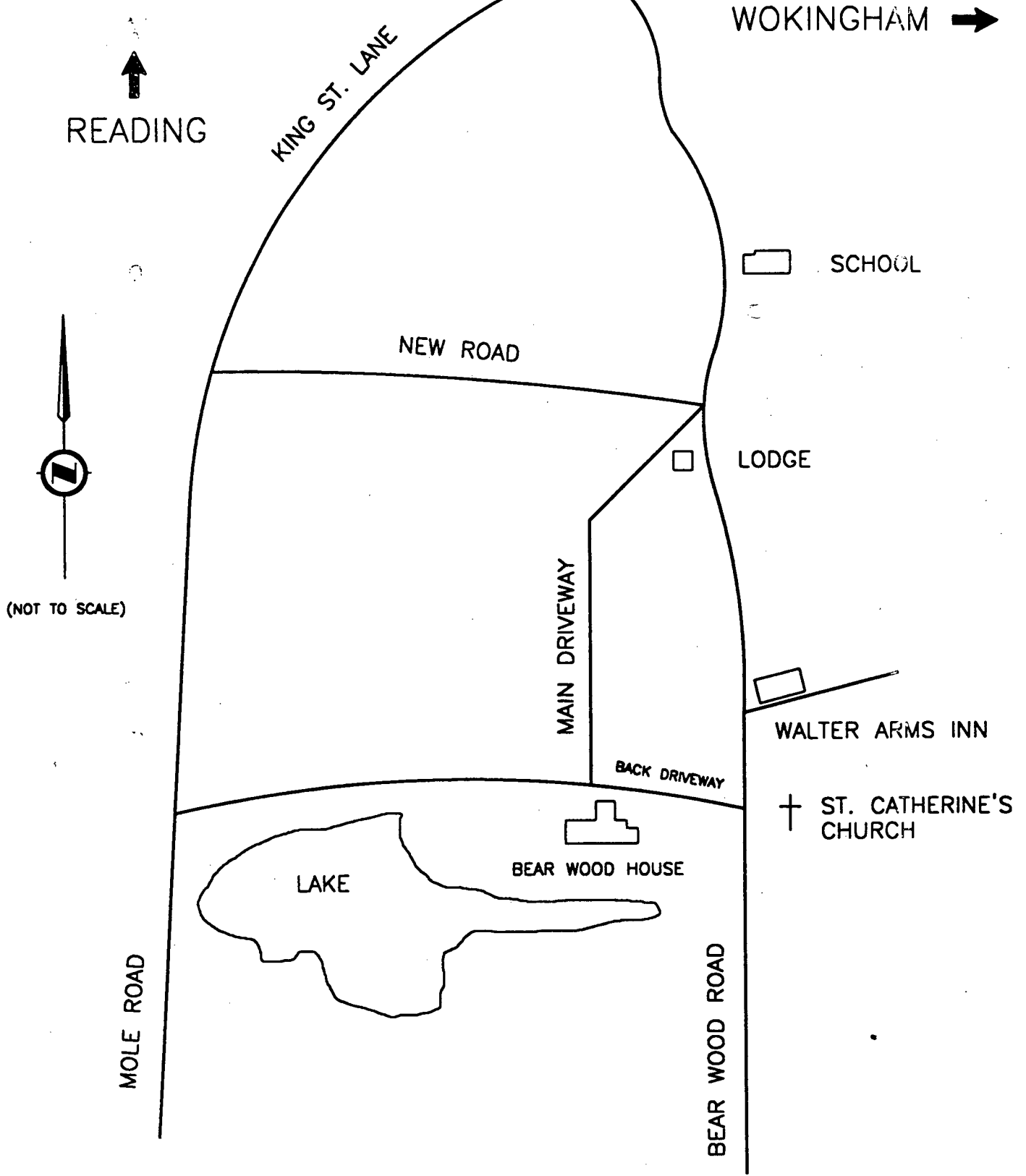


FIGURE 2

Sindlesham Green estate village

↑
READING

KING ST. LANE

WOKINGHAM →

NEW ROAD

BEAR WOOD ROAD

MOLE ROAD



(NOT TO SCALE)

MAIN DRIVEWAY

LODGE

BACK DRIVEWAY

SCHOOL HOUSE

SCHOOL

(BIG HOUSE)

(ONE STOREY)

(ONE STOREY)

(ONE STOREY)

(BIG HOUSE)

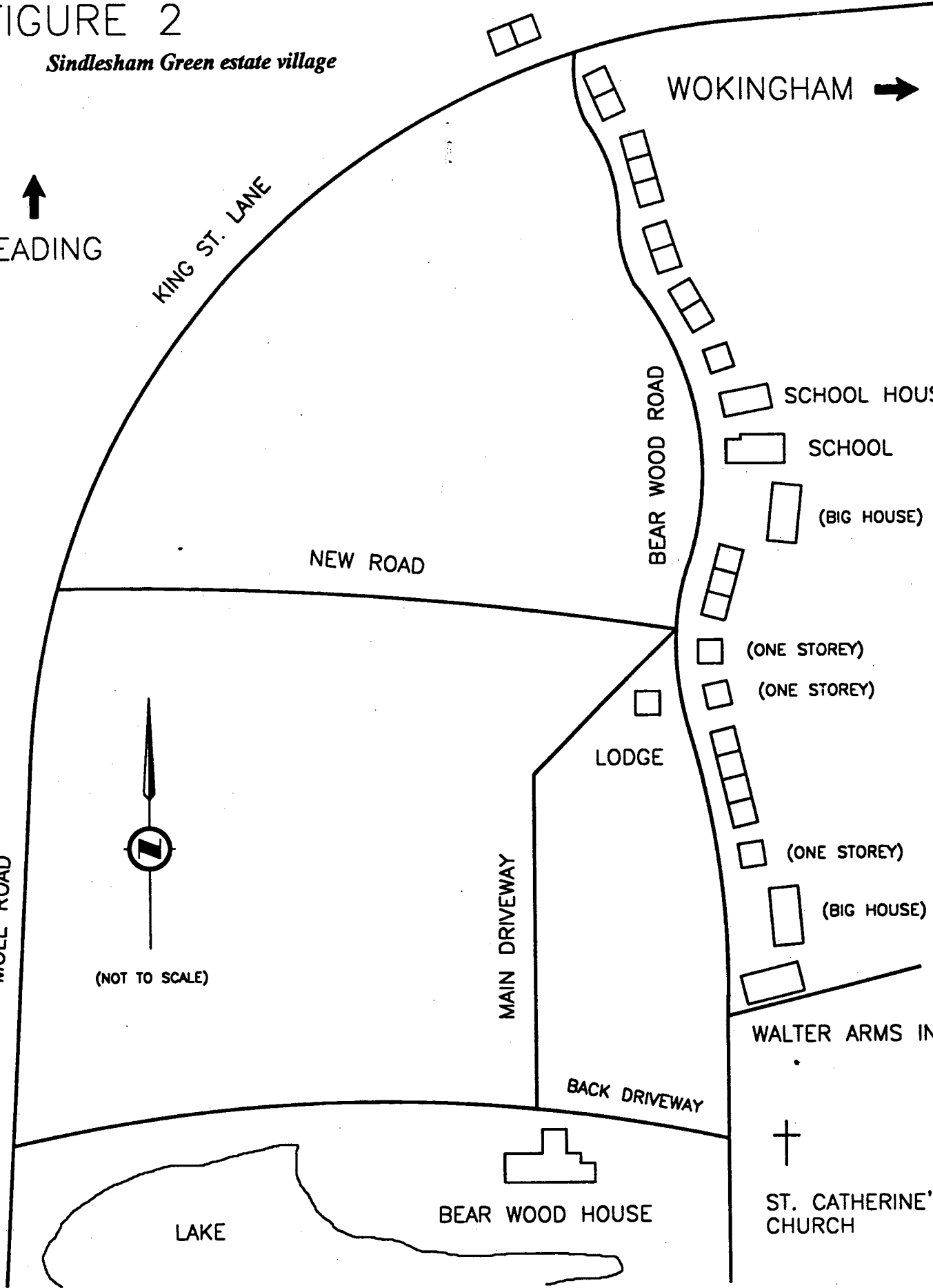
WALTER ARMS INN



ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH

BEAR WOOD HOUSE

LAKE



PART II**(2.1) *The significance of the approach to the gates of a country house***

It would appear that a systematic analysis of the approach to a nineteenth century country house, such as Bear Wood, elucidates the diverse and seemingly contradictory ways in which the middle class represented itself. On the one hand, for example, there would be evidence of moral restraint, on the other, aggressive representations of self-aggrandizement. There would be the representation of refined of taste alongside strident idioms of pomp and splendour. There was the contrast of an adherence to the tenets of privacy and domestic felicity, coupled with a public expression of civic duty that inferred ambitions for social recognition.

A country estate, particularly when belonging to a middle class owner, provided evidence of accumulated wealth, either acquired, or inherited, but sustained as a result of entrepreneurial acumen and success. However, evidence suggests that such wealth was often intended to be mitigated by demonstrations of a philanthropic and moral conscience. Generally undertaken in the name of responsibility, that is a civic duty to society, such demonstrations served to establish a perception of middle class values that was intended to set the nineteenth century country house owner apart from its eighteenth century predecessor.⁴²

⁴² This was both confirmed and affirmed in literary sources. For example, Charlotte Mary Yonge had published *The Daisy Chain* in 1856, at the centre of which were philanthropic deeds. Just over 20 years later, in 1879, Henry James wrote of the philanthropic deed of a country house owner in "*An English New Year*".

In the case of the Walter family, a philanthropic conscience was made very public by the conspicuous construction of, for instance, churches.⁴³ In 1846, approximately twenty years before John Walter III commissioned Bear Wood, his father, John Walter II, had built the church of St. Catherine's at Sindlesham. This was later to form part of the estate village built concurrently with Bear Wood house in 1865.⁴⁴ In 1864, John Walter III continued his father's philanthropic gesture when he endowed the construction of St. Paul's in the nearby town of Wokingham.⁴⁵ He later built an adjacent rectory and, at the end of the century, he and his heir, Arthur, undertook to build St. Paul's Elementary School, Parish Room and Clock Tower.⁴⁶ That John Walter III wished to be perceived as having a philanthropic conscience was substantiated by a statement made in *The Builder* at a ceremony to mark the completion of the exterior of Bear Wood house. At that time, Walter in his 'felicitous addresses...expressed with emphasis the hope that the home there being formed would never become the seat of merely selfish enjoyment, but would long remain a centre of kindly hospitality and social sympathy'.⁴⁷

The Bear Wood estate village of Sindlesham Green, like many earlier estate villages, was purpose-built, rather than having evolved organically over a period of time.⁴⁸ The location of a village adjacent to the approach of an estate was not new, but the existence of earlier villages outside the boundaries of the estate was generally the result of the gradual,

⁴³ In addition to the construction of churches, the owners of estates, as well as wealthy urban residents, frequently undertook the restoration of existing churches.

⁴⁴ John Walter II (1776-1847) son of the founder of *The Times*.

Both churches practiced the Anglican ritual.

⁴⁵ In the opinion of Mark Girouard, this was to 'ease his conscience'. *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 121.

⁴⁶ Lea, *Wokingham, A Pictorial History* (1990): 5.

⁴⁷ *The Builder*, "Bearwood", June 6, 1868.

⁴⁸ Purpose-built estate villages were 'closed' villages under the control of the landowner, whereas the organic growth of 'open' villages was due to the vagaries of demographics.

but consistent, enclosure of land that had been taking place since the fifteenth century. The biggest transformation of the rural landscape had taken place between 1755 and 1779 under Parliamentary Acts that had rapidly accelerated the processes of enclosure and engrossment, as well as the emparkment that had been ongoing for several centuries.⁴⁹ Under the aegis of more efficient and lucrative agricultural methods, these processes had significantly increased the size of country estates. Eighteenth century concerns for the aesthetic appeal of a landscaped park adjacent to the house significantly contributed to estate villages being relocated outside park boundaries and, most importantly, out of sight of the house.⁵⁰ They were displacements that fractured the traditional and ancient system whereby landowners and tenants had lived in close proximity. They were also indicative of the increasing separation of family from servants and of the incipient separation of the public from the private realms in domestic living, actions that were to later form the foundation on which the social tenets adhered to by the nineteenth century middle class were constructed.⁵¹

By its location at the approach to the Bear Wood estate where it was 'likely to catch the eye of visitors',⁵² the nineteenth century village of Sindlesham Green echoed the same intentions of similarly placed villages of the previous century in that its siting provided an impressive and emphatic public introduction to the significance of the owner. The east side

⁴⁹ Between these years, 1,124 Acts of Enclosure were passed. Langford, *Public Life & the Propertied Englishman* (1991): 370.

⁵⁰ The 18th century was a time of noted landscapers such as Lancelot 'Capability' Brown & Humphry Repton.

⁵¹ The list of estate villages relocated in the 18th. century is long, but includes such as Sudbury, Houghton, Lowther, Dyrham, Milton Abbas, Nuneham Courtenay, Castle Howard, Harewood, Kedleston, Blanchard, Coneythorpe & Tremac. In the case of Kedleston, an Act of Parliament was required in 1760 to change the direction of the turnpike during the relocation of the estate village, when cottages, an inn and a mill were destroyed. The ancient church, around which the west wing of the house was built, remained. At Castle Howard, the approach to the Temple of the Four Winds now follows the original route of the village street. 'Hundreds of ad hoc acts' continued to be passed until 1840 so that, by the beginning of Victoria's reign, the majority of aristocrats owned estates of 10,000 acres. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 20.

⁵² Mingay, *A Social History of the English Countryside*, (1990): 182.

of the boundary road, which approached the main gate to Bear Wood from both north and south, was bordered by the houses that made up the village of Sindlesham Green. Hence, the location of the buildings that formed the village was partly intended as an overt announcement of the existence of the estate. As with the estate villages built in the eighteenth century and, like most of those constructed in the nineteenth century, the buildings of the Bear Wood village were architecturally uniform.⁵³ However, unlike many previous estate villages wherein the architecture often reflected that of the country houses they served, the *raison d'être* of the uniform architectural style of a village like Sindlesham Green was intended to infer a sense of community, rather than have any architectural reference to the house. For example, the church, school and inn were afforded prominent siting along the approach road. As noted by the writer, Gillian Darley a nineteenth century estate village would be carefully sited:

Without making any effort to rival the strident and amazingly intricate structure of the house, the village sets the building within its context - the great mansion with the village at its gates - just as eighteenth century equivalents suggested their feudal origins merely by its disposition.⁵⁴

With the exception of the church which was built in Mansfield stone, the houses that made up Sindlesham Green were all, including the lodge at the main gate to the estate, built in a vernacular style of red and black brick, manufactured in brickworks constructed on the estate. The uniform architecture of an estate village such as this added to the impact made

⁵³ A notable exception to the uniform architecture generally employed for estate villages is that of Edensor relocated during the landscaping of the park at Chatsworth by 'Capability' Brown in 1761 and rebuilt in 1839 in an eclectic mix of architectural styles to suit the taste of the 6th. Duke of Devonshire. There are numerous examples of 19th. century estate villages built by middle class owners in conjunction with the construction of country houses. The list includes Waddesdon, Ascott and Mentmore, all built by the banking Rothschild family. Somerleyton was built by a carpet manufacturer, Penrhyn by the owner of slate mines.

⁵⁴ Darley, *Villages of Vision* (1975): 47.

as the estate was approached and provided a means by which the presence, the financial resources and the aesthetic taste of the landowner could be advertised.

In contrast to earlier villages, relocated as the result of emparkment, or to satisfy the aesthetics of the landscape in proximity to the house, a nineteenth century estate village, such as Sindlesham Green, was intended to be a very public proclamation of the beneficence demonstrated by the owner towards his tenants. Such a philanthropic gesture would have reflected nineteenth century middle class dogma whereby notions of duty towards the lower classes were transmuted into the practical provision of, in this case, housing for estate tenants. As a member of the middle class and a disciple of Kerr's noted concern for the 'domestic habits of refined persons', John Walter would have epitomized the contemporary definition of a gentleman.⁵⁵ And, as both gentleman and a middle class nineteenth century estate owner, he would have perceived it as his philanthropic duty to indicate his regard for the welfare of his tenantry by providing them with family homes within a village community.⁵⁶

Despite the fact that the contemporary nineteenth century view of estate villages was that they were a bad investment with poor rent returns often as low as 2 1/2%, an estate village like Sindlesham Green would have been an investment, 'viewed as a convenient means of transferring wealth to a future generation, while conferring current social status'.⁵⁷ Hence, it served a dual purpose in that it not only provided a means by which the status and financial acumen of the owner could be underscored, but it also

⁵⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House*, (1865): 63.

⁵⁶ Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England* (1986): 356.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*: 70. As noted in the Introduction, landowners, both middle class and aristocratic, increasingly derived incomes from entrepreneurial activities outside of their estates. John Walter, for example, derived income from *The Times*.

provided a means by which he could mitigate the philanthropic, social and moral conscience that was integral to middle class ideologies.⁵⁸ Within the context of the village community there was the church to watch over religious morals, the school to provide a rudimentary education, the houses to shelter the family unit and, not least, an inn, a source of leisure and entertainment, but conveniently located for supervision.

Besides such apparent acts of philanthropy and beneficence, there were other motives, among which, as housing historian Enid Gauldie notes, was a 'wish to have on their estates a docile and dependent people'.⁵⁹ Hence, even if purportedly constructed under the rubric of benevolent ideals, an estate village such as Sindlesham Green indicated the control the owner could exercise over its inhabitants. It was he who decided on its site, its architectural details and its plan, as well as who would be desirable tenants and under what constraints they should live; it was he who retained the rights of the advowson for the village church. He, in fact, can be seen to have created a systematically planned, 'sheltered, protected and regimented rural community' by means of which he could impose a notable moral influence on its inhabitants.⁶⁰ As owner, he had the authority and the power to control the economic, religious, social and moral well-being of his tenants.⁶¹

The building of an estate village, therefore, by a middle class estate owner such as John Walter provided a means by which he could enhance both his philanthropic standing as well as his dignity and authority within his community. In architectural terms, such dignity

⁵⁸ There is some evidence to suggest that the Walter family demonstrated a philanthropic conscience. The Twenty Second Report with Statement of Accounts for the years 1880 and 1881 for the Association for the Sale of Work by Ladies of Limited Means lists John W. Walter, Esq., M.P., Bearwood, Wokingham as Treasurer: Mrs. Walter, Bearwood, Wokingham as Honorary Secretary: D/EWL F10 R.O.

⁵⁹ Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations* (1974): 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*: 97.

⁶¹ At Wallington, Northumberland, Sir John Trevelyan built both church and estate village and would allow no Nonconformist worship on the estate, despite it being situated in the area where John Wesley had preached with such influence.

and authority were apparent in the associative hierarchy that appears evident in the building materials used for Sindlesham Green village and Bear Wood house. Whereas the church was built of the Mansfield stone that was also applied as dressings to the main house, unadorned brick was used for the village buildings, as well as for the servants' wing at Bear Wood. Within the context of middle class ideas about hierarchy and morality, did the Walter family consider itself, in its superior position of authority and perceived dignity, to be more upright than either the tenants or the servants, a notion that they manifested in architectural terms?

It might be presumed that John Walter III, like other men in his position of estate ownership, was acting with a very specific motive. It was a means by which he, as a representative of the middle class, could help establish an identity perceived as being separate from the aristocracy. His overt and very public demonstrations of philanthropy towards his tenants was a notable departure from the established landed gentry, who were generally understood to have been neglectful landlords, with little concern for the welfare of their tenants.⁶² In this way, as a representative, he could help establish an identity for the middle class which would set it apart from the established landed gentry.

The life of tenants on an estate like Bear Wood, although sheltered and protected, took place within circumscribed and regimented limits. Their tenancy depended on their continued employment on the estate, as well as on their adherence to the standards of propriety demanded by their landlord.⁶³ As Gauldie notes, 'nineteenth century landed

⁶² A representative of the Enclosures Commission, appointed in 1845, 'mentioned that only the Dukes of Bedford, Rutland and Newcastle, and the Marquis of Exeter as being conspicuously different from the general run of neglectful landlords'. Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations* (1974): 48.

⁶³ As Gauldie notes, these tenants were the 'skilled and privileged country workers', although their accommodation was contingent on their labour being required on the estate. *Cruel Habitations* (1974): 48.

proprietors could with an easy conscience feel that it was not part of their duty to provide homes for the immoral, the undeserving, the socially undesirable'.⁶⁴ Thus, in a position as autocrat, as well as philanthropist, an owner like John Walter would have been well-positioned to impress his middle class values on his tenants. Existing within the proscribed boundaries of middle class ideology, these tenants were usually known for their sobriety and good behaviour, as well as for their moral standards and their work ethic. Constrained by the rules on which their continued tenancy depended, their habits, leisure pursuits, religious and political views were perforce shaped by a deference and obedience to the prevalent ideologies of their landlord.⁶⁵

Not only did the estate village provide a medium by which both the authority and the philanthropic concerns of the owner could be maintained, but it would also appear that it should also serve a more practical purpose. In line with the business acumen by which successful, nineteenth century middle class entrepreneurs were becoming identified, the owner of an estate, in providing shelter for his tenants, could ensure a supply of the necessary skilled labour needed to run his estate efficiently as a financially viable operation.

How, then, did the objectives of a middle class nineteenth century owner who built an estate village differ from those of his landowner counterpart in the previous century? In many ways, they would appear to be similar inasmuch that both can be said to have utilized the location of the village at the approach to their estate as a means by which to provide a positive and very public reinforcement of their status, emphasizing their presence, their

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ This was in contrast to the tenants of 'open' villages who were not confined by the ideologies of the estate owner and who were often considered to be unrestrained in their behaviour. Darley addresses this issue of different behavioural practices between the inhabitants of 'open' and 'closed' villages in *Villages of Vision* (1975).

authority, as well as their aesthetic and architectural tastes. Across the two centuries, there had been little change in the deference and obedience that were required for continued tenancy and employment on the estate. Any differences might, then, be attributed to other objectives that lay behind the construction of estate villages.

Eighteenth century estate villages were generally built as the result of a 'ruthlessly efficient' relocation.⁶⁶ The result, although architecturally uniform and aesthetically pleasing, more often than not concealed overcrowding and a lack of adequate sanitation.⁶⁷ In addition, in many cases, at country houses such as at Dyrham, Nuneham Courtenay and Kedleston, the church remained within the park boundaries at a considerable distance from the relocated estate village, proving inconveniently inaccessible to the villagers. The primary objective of the eighteenth century landowner was that his estate village not encroach within the boundaries established by emparkment, or impede the aesthetics of his park landscape. Unlike his middle class nineteenth century successor, he laid claim to few, if any, philanthropic or benevolent intentions with the construction of the village. Even though its location at the approach to the estate asserted the presence of the owner, it was a motive that did not always appear to be of primary or paramount importance. In many instances, these relocated earlier villages, such as Edensor, the estate village for Chatsworth, were out of sight of both the house and the approach to the estate, so indicating that a crucial factor was a concern for the aesthetics of the landscape, rather than to affirm any philanthropic intentions on the part of the owner.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England* (1986): 361.

⁶⁷ For example, the relocated estate village at Nuneham Courtenay, although architecturally uniform, consisted of two bedroom cottages, each one of which housed at least two families.

⁶⁸ The relocation had taken place during the landscaping of the park in the 18th. century.

Nineteenth century middle class notions of civic responsibility interpreted as 'inexorable demands of Duty' manifested themselves on country estates as apparent concerns for the well-being of tenantry.⁶⁹ No matter what the religious affiliation of its members, prevalent middle class ideologies were aided by a rhetoric that embraced, amongst others, the Puritan-Evangelical work ethic. Cleanliness, order and efficiency, respectability, duty, self-help, prudence, frugality and the sanctuary of the home and family were all upheld as blueprints for society. Under a professed philanthropic agenda aimed at maintaining these middle class ethics, the construction of an estate village was intended to 'raise standards with new houses of more ample dimensions and often with substantial gardens'.⁷⁰

These principles can be seen at work in an analysis of Sindlesham Green. Despite an inferred hierarchy assigned the inhabitants by the existence of single and semi-detached houses, as well as three and four cottage terraces, all had both long front and back gardens attached, so to provide the residents with the opportunity to usefully occupy their non-working hours, as well as to supplement their diets, by raising produce. Walter appears to have subscribed to contemporary social mores, whereby the moral aspects of overcrowding was also of concern. According to Mingay, 'it became increasingly seen as important that children not share their parents' bedroom and that separate bedrooms should be provided for boys and girls'.⁷¹ It would seem that such concerns were accommodated in Sindlesham Green for, even in the terraced houses, there was the provision of at least three bedrooms.⁷²

⁶⁹ Mingay, *The Unquiet Countryside*, Thompson, "Landowners & the Rural Community (1989): 93.

⁷⁰ Mingay, *A Social History of the English Countryside* (1990): 182.

⁷¹ Ibid. Mingay also notes that, despite the apparent concern for overcrowding, the large size of families meant that even the provision of at least three bedrooms did little to mitigate this problem.

⁷² Random enquires made within the village indicate that, indeed, there were at least three bedrooms in the houses.

Good housing conditions and neatness of planning meant that the middle class ethics of cleanliness and health, considered concomitant with middle class values of moral conduct and the sanctity of the family unit, could be implemented and maintained due to the benevolent concerns of an estate owner such as John Walter.

Like his predecessor, the nineteenth century estate owner demonstrated his presence, his prestige, his power and his wealth by means of his country estate. To do so meant that he was prepared to expend vast sums of money on both estate and country house.⁷³ John Walter, even though the second generation owner of the estate, was like many other middle class successful entrepreneurs in that he made a considerable investment in the purchase of land, in the construction of a new house at its centre and a village at its gates.⁷⁴ At the same time as Sindlesham Green was being built concurrently with Bear Wood house, Walter was consolidating his land by purchasing and selling properties in the proximity of the estate.⁷⁵ Between 1840 and 1885, he was to accumulate an estate in the region of 8,000 acres.⁷⁶ The cost of the construction of the house, on which building finally ceased in 1874, was over £200,000. At almost twice the original estimate, it represented a considerable investment on his part, despite his annual income of £50,000.⁷⁷

⁷³ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (1963).

⁷⁴ The original estate of 158 acres was Crown land purchased in 1816 by John Walter II (d. 1847). He added an additional 146 acres shortly after his initial purchase, to compile an estate of just over 300 acres in total. The purchase price was £3,050. Girouard, "Bear Wood, Berkshire", *Country Life*, October 17, 1968: 964.

Although not all estates were purchased, or country houses built with newly minted money, by the 1880s, it was estimated that, for example, over 20% of the landowners in Lancashire had obtained their wealth from industry. Walton, *Late Georgian & Victorian Britain* (1989): 38.

⁷⁵ Walter built a new house on a site west of that built by his father, John Walter II.

⁷⁶ See Appendix A for properties and comparative valuations of the estate when owned by John Walter III.

⁷⁷ See Appendix B for building expenditures for Bear Wood house.

The cost can be equated to the £300 that 'could buy a modest suburban villa' or the £2,000 that 'might be needed for a very large town house'. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (1998): 336.

In *The Gentleman's House* (1865) Kerr devotes 'Part Fifth' to 'Notes on Accommodation and Cost'. He is somewhat equivocal in his advice as to the sum to be invested. He notes, 'it must be frankly admitted that in spite of anxious endeavour to arrive at some standard of judgment or advice, we feel obliged to yield, not

Eulogized as a 'responsible' man of 'principles', of 'sagacity and sincerity of purpose', a man of 'unswerving honesty of purpose, with a disinterested devotion to public welfare', John Walter, through the medium of the estate village at the approach to his country house, was able to publicly demonstrate his 'gentlemanly' middle class notions of a civic conscience and duty.⁷⁸ It would appear that such nineteenth century middle class concepts of *noblesse oblige* were inherently attached to the ownership of a country estate like Bear Wood and provided a means by which middle class social values could be implemented, advertised and sustained. In addition, the construction of Sindlesham Green would have enhanced the capital value of the estate, thus demonstrating the sagacity of the financial acumen of its owner. It would also have contributed to a social order maintained under the auspices of various benevolent and philanthropic duties. No doubt it was hoped that the inferences perceived and interpreted from the presence of an estate village like Sindlesham Green would reflect a social order whereby 'harmony rested on deference and obedience'.⁷⁹

before the delicacy of the subject (because it is merely a matter of business), but before the great variety of the circumstances and the consequent complexity of principles involved'. As a cost estimate, he admitted to a 'practical standard recognized' as 'ten times the rent of the house occupied, taken as leasehold and clear of repairs'. 381-382.

The annual income of John Walter can be compared to what his servants might have earned. At 19th century Blenheim, for instance, an under-housemaid earned £12 per annum, an upper-housemaid, £18. The housekeeper, in the position of a senior servant, earned £50 per annum, the butler, £75. Source: Fowler, *Blenheim Palace* ((1989): 127-128. Briggs in *Victorian Things* (1988) also gives examples of wages earned by domestic staff: 256.

⁷⁸ *Dictionary of National Biography*: 2191.

⁷⁹ Mingay, *The Unquiet Countryside*, Thompson, "Landowners & the Rural Community (1989): 80.

For the nineteenth century middle class, confident and secure in the knowledge that its value system formed the foundation of contemporary society, it was a notion that might have been ordained by God, for had it not been adroitly affirmed in the contemporary hymn,

All Things Bright and Beautiful:

*The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.⁸⁰*

⁸⁰ From *Hymns Ancient & Modern* (London, 1924): 496. Written in 1848 by Cecil Francis Alexander (1818-1895).

PART II

(2.2) *The significance of the driveway approach to the main entrance*

It was generally made quite clear that a country house and its estate was being approached. In some cases, the house was strategically positioned so it could be seen from a considerable distance as, for instance, was Belvoir Castle, high above the expanse of the Vale of Belvoir.⁸¹ Even if the house were hidden from public view, there were definite indications of the approach to it and its estate. It could be that a village, clustered around the approaches to the main gate, provided a very public indication of the existence of an estate. In addition, earlier processes of emparkment had often resulted in clearly and distinctly marked territorial boundaries, so that park areas adjacent to the house were generally contained within walls, with fences or railings defining the boundaries of the more distant parts of the estate. Fences or estate buildings were sometimes painted in estate colours in order to indicate and impress ownership, with the application of family insignia to entrance gates, estate cottages, or even to milestones, providing additional evidence of ownership.⁸²

The entry to a country house estate was usually supported by a lodge. In earlier centuries, gatehouse lodges had performed the important and necessary function of protection. By the eighteenth century, although still providing a means by which entry

⁸¹ The original 11th. century siting would have been for defence purposes. The current house, on which rebuilding started in 1801 and completed c. 1816, was in the Gothic style, under the direction of the architect, Matthew Wyatt.

⁸² While there appears to be no evidence that estate colours were used at Bear Wood, they were used on estates such as Woburn Abbey, Calke Abbey and Waddesdon Manor. In the February 18, 1865 edition of *The Builder*, the obituary to the Duke of Northumberland noted that 'many and many a village may be seen with a crescent painted on every door, indicating that it is ducal property': 114.

could be controlled, their function was primarily perceived as a means by which the immediate approach to the house could be heralded. Their very presence inferred the status of estate and owner. Their architectural design suggested architectural prospects within the gates that symbolized perceptions of erudite status that, over the centuries, had become to be associated with the owners of country houses.

At Blenheim Palace, for example, designed by architect John Vanbrugh to celebrate the victory of the Duke of Malborough at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704, the lodge symbolically took the form of a triumphal arch to mark the entrance to the estate and the approach to the house. During the building of Basildon Park between 1776 and 1783, attention was given to the entrance lodges flanking the main gate to the estate by the architect of the house, John Carr of York. These octagonal lodge buildings built in ashlar stone with round-headed windows were a means by which the classical architecture of the house was introduced, complimented and signified.⁸³ A similar intention can be seen at Kedleston Hall, where the lodges at the North Gate, designed by Robert Adam nearly twenty years earlier, had also implied the architectural glories to be seen at the house within the estate.⁸⁴

As in previous centuries, the very presence of lodges at the entry to nineteenth century country houses such as Bear Wood suggested ownership along with inferred status. To this, can be added the same practical aspect in that they were a means by which entry to the estate could be controlled. However, in many cases, these lodges were not intended to

⁸³ It is interesting to note that, in 1842, the architect J.B. Papworth, felt the need to embellish Carr's lodges. Papworth increased the height by about a third and added rectangular panels carved with garlands and lion's masks. In addition, he heightened the gate-piers and designed elaborate ornaments for them in cast stone. The National Trust, *Basildon Park, Berkshire* (1991): 34-35.

⁸⁴ In 1759, Robert Adam began the rebuilding of a new house at Kedleston.

introduce, or even infer, any architectural glories that might be evident in the country house within the gates: unlike the lodges at Basildon Park or Kedleston, for instance, the lodge at nineteenth century Bear Wood did not reflect the architectural design used for the house. Instead, lodges at the gates of country houses like Bear Wood were often in the same vernacular style as the nearby estate village and constructed of the same building materials. At Bear Wood, the single storey lodge, built of brick with a slate roof, claimed only modest architectural enhancement with stone window lintels and decorative barge-board gables. Neither its architecture nor its unpretentious size signified either the architectural appearance or the magnitude of Bear Wood house. In a similar manner, the pair of lodges at the entrance gates to Waddesdon Manor, built in the 1870s by a member of the Rothschild banking family, were designed by a local architect in a half-timbered vernacular design that reflected an architectural association with the adjacent village, rather than with that of the house.⁸⁵ In reference to the approach to his country house, Ferdinand Rothschild made note of both the vernacular architecture of the lodges, as well as to his philanthropic propensities:

...all the farm buildings, model cottages, and lodges were built by a local architect, Mr Taylor of Bierton. Waddesdon now has its hotel, its village hall and reading-room, its temperance and benefit societies...⁸⁶

Unlike the approach to country houses in the previous century, these nineteenth century lodges built for middle class owners generally offered no indication of what could be expected of the house itself. Neither the lodges at Bear Wood nor at Waddesdon, for

⁸⁵ Waddesdon, designed by the French architect, Gabriel-Hippolyte Destailleur, was built in the French Renaissance architectural style.

⁸⁶ Mrs. James Rothschild, *The Rothschilds at Waddesdon Manor* (1979): 3. The hotel in Waddesdon village was originally constructed to house the artisans working on the house.

instance, can be considered instrumental in heralding either the architecture or the significance of the house within the gates.

Inside the gates, a country house would be approached by a driveway. In the eighteenth century, in particular, a driveway was intended as a means by which the significance of the house could be anticipated upon the approach. Many driveways, particularly those that approached the houses of the aristocracy, such as at Blenheim Palace and Kedleston, took a circuitous route to give an indication of the immensity of the estate. At Castle Howard, the driveway was an absolutely straight five-mile approach on a north-south axis that allowed tantalizing momentary glimpses of the house across the lake, as well as of the Pyramid, the Temple and the Mausoleum on the estate. It was an avenue that ran 'straight as an arrow', that was later, in the mid-nineteenth century, to be further signified at its southernmost point by 'the first signal of the approaching splendour' a 'huge monument...to the 7th. Earl of Carlisle'.⁸⁷ The approach ran through Nicholas Hawksmoor's Carrmire Gate, a rubble-built arch with pyramids, wall, towers and turrets to intersect with Vanbrugh's curtain wall, complete with bastions, mock-fortifications, and eleven different towers. In the centre was the Gatehouse, 'whose massive arch and pyramid [were] Vanbrugh's fanfare to Castle Howard'.⁸⁸ At the intersection of the avenue, on the east-west axis that formed the final approach to the house, was a one hundred foot high obelisk, raised in 1714 as a Column of Victory, ostensibly to celebrate the victories of the Duke of Malborough. Its presence, together with the inscription on its base, formed a

⁸⁷ Castle Howard Estate Ltd., *Castle Howard* (1988): 47. The monument was erected in 1869 by public subscription. It indicates the ongoing process by which the aristocracy publicly aggrandized themselves.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

'suitable introduction to a survey of the domain' to not only provide a fitting tribute to the 3rd. Earl, but also to emphatically imprint his presence as owner of the estate.⁸⁹

The approaches to many aristocratic eighteenth century country houses would offer carefully planned vistas, designed to terminate in architectural structures such as fountains, classical temples or statuary, often designed by the architect himself. These approaches were meant to impress for, according to the historian, Carole Fabricant, they represented, not only the 'aesthetically-cultivated landed gentleman', but that they were also intended to be a very public presentation of wealth represented in aesthetic terms.⁹⁰ As Fabricant also suggests, these carefully planned vistas satisfied eighteenth century demands for 'variety' and 'novelty'. Vanbrugh confirmed this when he recorded 'several noble Lords' reactions' to the approach to Castle Howard:

They are all vastly surprised and taken with the walls and their towers, which they talk much of. I always thought we were sure of that card.⁹¹

In the next century, on her first visit to Blenheim Palace in 1874, Lady Randolph Churchill said of a view created by the eighteenth century landscape artist, 'Capability' Brown, that it had been 'painstakingly designed to take your breath away':

We passed through the entrance archway, and the lovely scenery burst upon me...Looking at the lake, the bridge, the miles of magnificent park studded with

⁸⁹ *Historic Houses of the United Kingdom* (1892) Constance Anderson, "Castle Howard": 199. Charles Howard, 3rd. Earl of Carlisle 1699-1738, builder of Castle Howard.

The inscription read, in part:

If to perfection these plantations rise
If they agreeable my heirs surprise
This faithful pillar will their age declare
As long as time these characters shall spare
Here then with kind remembrance read his name
Who for posterity perform'd the same...

⁹⁰ Fabricant, "The Aesthetics and Politics of Landscape in the Eighteenth Century", *Studies in 18th. Century British Art and Aesthetics* (1985): 72.

⁹¹ *Historic Houses of the United Kingdom* (1892) Constance Anderson, "Castle Howard": 199.

old oaks...the huge and stately palace, I confess, I felt awed. This is the finest view in England.⁹²

The driveway approach around lakes and over architect-designed bridges, such as those to be found at Blenheim and Kedleston, would allow a dramatic view of the house. Not only were these planned and manipulated approaches to eighteenth century country houses intended to emphasize the status and the significance of estate and owner, but they were also meant to increase *frissons* of anticipation for the architectural glories to come.

By contrast, the approach driveway to nineteenth century Bear Wood was comparatively short.⁹³ Approximately a quarter of a mile long, it led for about 120 yards at a slight south-west angle from the main gate and then straight south for a further 330 yards to the entrance to the courtyard in front of the house. It was sheltered by *Wellingtonia* trees and shrubs, the former, possibly, an announcement to the arriving visitor that the owner of Bear Wood was a governor of Wellington College.⁹⁴ Compared to the driveway approaches to earlier country houses, this relatively modest approach was devoid of planned vistas or imposing architectural features. This can be interpreted as an indication that it was not intended to be a means by which to impress the size of the estate, despite it being over

⁹² The Blenheim Estate Office, *Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire* (1973): 2.

⁹³ This was not through lack of land. All the estates considered for this work were of not less than 1,000 acres. John Walter III accumulated 8,000 acres for the Bear Wood estate. See Appendix A.

⁹⁴ Wellington College, a public school attended by the sons of the gentry. On Monday, November 5, 1894, the *Times* published an obituary for John Walter, "*Death of Mr Walter*", in which it was noted that Walter took great pride in his governorship of Wellington College and its association with the Duke of Wellington, for whom Walter had 'great admiration'. Perhaps this was that, as a middle class entrepreneur, Walter subscribed to general public admiration for the Duke, the battle victories of whom, it was considered, had started modern Britain on its path to greatness and prosperity.

It was also noted that Walter had also planted *Wellingtonia* trees at the College. Walter's pride in his association with the school would have also referenced the importance that middle class values attached to the benefits of education for its own class. This is suggested, also, by his philanthropic gesture with the construction of a school as part of the estate village of Sindlesham Green, as well as the school built adjacent to St. Paul's church in nearby Wokingham, although F.M.L. Thompson states that the wealthy classes 'thought of school an instrument for conditioning and controlling the lower orders'. *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 145.

8,000 acres, or to provide an opportunity to build up any prolonged anticipation about the final arrival at the house. In contrast to the sometimes extravagantly planned approaches to the houses of the aristocracy that publicly associated the owner with elegance and wealth, the driveway to a hidden, private Bear Wood can be seen as an indication that the owner wished to be perceived as a person of both dignity and reserve, characteristics that indicated the demeanour of middle class tenets. Added to the fact that the architectural mien of the single lodge at the entrance gate gave no indication of the significance of the house, the absence of a long and visually-manipulated driveway indicated an adherence to the middle class dogma of restraint.

Although there appears to be no documented evidence that Kerr was consulted for the design of the lodge, or for the driveway approach for that matter, it can be presumed that his maxim that 'it must be looked upon as a rule that an English gentleman will desire to avoid obtrusiveness even at the sacrifice of a good deal of that importance' was subscribed to.⁹⁵ At both the approach to the main entrance gate to Bear Wood, as well along the driveway, there was no display or indication of ostentation, or of opulent wealth. Rather, it would appear that the initial approach to the house along the road that bounded the estate was primarily intended to publicly underscore the middle class values to which the owner, in his role of English gentleman, subscribed and by which he would be identified.

The fact that a house such as Bear Wood was set behind estate walls, away from public view, approached by a lodge architecturally expressed in the local vernacular and along a relatively short drive acknowledged the deliberate separation of the house from the public, outside domain. This separation provided a means, both physically as well as

⁹⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 51.

perceptually, by which the private realm could be both disassociated and protected from the public sphere. This intention can be interpreted as the first indication of one of the major tenets on which nineteenth century middle class ideology was based, the maxim of privacy.⁹⁶

It was a maxim that was not evident in the previous century for, although the driveway approach considerably distanced country houses and their inhabitants from the outside world, eighteenth century country houses were intended to be the seat of an ostentatious and very public life-style, even if available only to those of 'suitable' rank. There had long been a tradition of allowing suitable persons 'of quality' to tour these country houses and the adjoining parkland, so providing a means by which the erudite acuity and elite status of the owner could be demonstrated by the architecture and the contents of his house, as well as by the size of his estate.⁹⁷ Writing of the eighteenth century, the historian, Peter Mandler states:

...a remarkable apparatus of country house visiting grew up, held in check only by the still-considerable physical barriers to travel...Visitors were carefully vetted at the lodge gates, their dress, servants, conveyances and calling-cards checked for suitability, before they were shown around house and grounds...From the 1760s, guidebooks to individual properties began to appear...⁹⁸

Despite their distance from the entrance gates, these country houses were available and were intended to be viewed by others who were outside the immediate circle of family or

⁹⁶ It is a maxim with which Kerr deals extensively in his book, but particularly in reference to the spatial organization of the interior, which will be referenced in Part IV of this thesis.

⁹⁷ The majority of the country houses owned by aristocrats were open to tourists, although some required written appointments. Traditionally, it had been the upper servants - the butler or the housekeeper - who had conducted the tours, using the 'tips' as a means of supplementing their incomes. At Blenheim, for example, visitors had toured the estate from the time construction had started on the house. Across the centuries, English novelists such as Fielding, Richardson, Jane Austen, Thackeray, H.G. Wells, Galsworthy and Evelyn Waugh all wrote about the country house. Austen, in particular, refers to 18th century excursions undertaken to tour country houses.

⁹⁸ Mandler, *The Rise and Fall of the Stately Home* (1997): 9.

guests. It was a tradition the aristocratic owners of country houses, unlike contemporary middle class proprietors, were to maintain in the nineteenth century, for many of them continued to open their estates and country houses to visitors. At Blenheim, around mid-century, during the time of the 7th. Duke, a sign inside the Triumphal Arch entrance gate read, 'The Duke of Marlborough begs the persons who may walk through the park to keep to the high road, and not walk on the grass'.⁹⁹ In 1892 it was noted that 'the master of Belvoir allows the public to see nearly everything of interest in the Castle'.¹⁰⁰

It was a tradition, however, that was not to be adopted by nineteenth century middle class owners of country houses for, despite any historical precedents, the issue of privacy was considered, as Kerr put it, to be 'a first principle with the better classes of English people...'¹⁰¹ The fact that the middle class country house owner did not adopt, *carte-blanche*, all the practices of his aristocratic predecessors might indicate that he did not wish to be perceived as indiscriminately emulating the habits and traditions that had been seen as part of ownership. Rather than the self-aggrandizement undertaken by the aristocracy, it would appear that, as a disciple of middle class doctrine, the nineteenth century middle class owner wished to proclaim values that focused on the attributes of restraint and privacy in the domestic realm, rather than on providing opportunities for a public display of rank and status. The driveway approach to the house, as in the case of Bear Wood, can be interpreted as a series of successive steps, each a means by which the inhabitants could consider themselves to be protected away from the public domain and the public eye.

⁹⁹ Fowler, *Blenheim, Biography of a Palace* (1989): 149. The 7th. Duke of Malborough, 1822-1883, suc. 1857.

¹⁰⁰ *Historic Houses of the United Kingdom* (1892) Charles Edwards, "Belvoir Castle": 227.

¹⁰¹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 67.

The final approach to the entrance facade of Bear Wood from between the border of trees was through a narrow gateway into a courtyard surrounded by an eight foot high wall. There were no tantalizing glimpses of the house, no indication of what was to be expected. It was not until this final rampart had been breached that the full impact of the entrance facade of Bear Wood was revealed. Some 200 feet long and extended for a further 120 feet by the servants' wing to the east of the courtyard, the north facade of the house was four stories high, with cellars beneath. With a staircase tower and gables rising for a further two stories, the sudden revelation of the architectural mass of the house would, undoubtedly, have made an impressive and awesome impact.

This entrance front of Bear Wood, by its architecture and by its size, paid tribute to the wealth, the status and the authority of its owner, albeit the impact made by the entrance facade of Bear Wood was the absolute antithesis of the maxims of Robert Kerr, that coupled privacy with the desire to 'avoid obtrusiveness'.¹⁰² These maxims were evident in the immediate approach to a house hidden from public view, past an architecturally modest lodge and along an equally modest driveway. However, the impact made by the impressive entrance facade of the house suggests the diversity of nineteenth century middle class tenets that embraced restraint along with the desire to advertise the rewards of successful entrepreneurialism and hard work.

¹⁰² Ibid.

It would appear that Kerr, as architect of Bear Wood, allowed for both to be accommodated, although never at the expense of that most important middle class tenet, domestic felicity. He instructed his readers:

Let it be again remarked that the character of a gentleman-like Residence is not a matter of magnitude, or of costliness... If, on the other hand, the circumstances of the owner and his tastes are such that the magnitude and refinement ought to expand into state, even grandeur must not be pretentious, or wealth ostentatious, and the attributes of an agreeable English home must never be sacrificed.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Ibid: 66.

PART III
THE EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

(3.1) *The issue of an architectural style*

In what *Style of Architecture* shall you build your house?...The architect himself will generally put this query to his client...[who] is expected to make a choice from amongst half-a-dozen prevailing "styles", all more or less antagonistic to each other, all having their respective adherents and opponents, and all very likely to prove more and more unintelligible the longer they are examined...

These words, written by Robert Kerr in 1865, indicated that the issue of a distinctive architectural style to be considered representative of nineteenth century England had not been resolved.¹⁰⁴ Kerr's statement also indicated that it was an issue that was of much concern for the private, domestic realm as it was for an architectural style considered appropriate for the public sphere.

The issue surrounding an architectural style to characterize the nineteenth century had been inaugurated in the latter part of the previous century, when a changing social structure instigated, in large part by an emerging middle class, had fostered notions of an impending age that was to be both new and different. Debate centred around what would be taxonomically identifiable with the vigorous and vibrant nineteenth century with which the middle class, in particular, identified itself. It was anticipated that the new style was to be the antithesis, as Kerr was later to note, of the 'chaste, elegant, but rather feeble' architecture that had represented the 'philistinism of the Georgians'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 340.

¹⁰⁵ "English Architecture Thirty Years Hence". A speech read by Kerr in 1884. Quoted in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 293.

The architecture associated with this earlier age was to be replaced by one that would reflect a social order becoming increasingly more influenced by the middle class and its values. Such values founded on virtues that included national pride, industry and ambition, an honest common sense, pious Protestant Christianity and domestic felicity had, according to historian, Richard Altick created a 'moral climate in which rectitude, chastity and seriousness had replaced easy going sexual attitudes and gay cynicism'.¹⁰⁶ Added to this was a class that considered itself to be synonymous with the progressive, modern Victorian era, a perception endorsed by Kerr who, in 1846 in his overviews of contemporary architectural styles in *Newleaf Discourses*, had referred to the middle class as 'us railway travelling, Reform-bill people'.¹⁰⁷

On the one hand, there were those who, as the architectural theorist, Peter Collins notes, championed the revival of 'one particular period in history as a pure source of inspiration'.¹⁰⁸ Architects who supported this faction showed a commitment to a particular historical style, be it classical Roman or Greek, the Renaissance, Old English Elizabethan and Jacobean, or Gothic.¹⁰⁹ In country house architecture, William Wilkins, for example, had continued his commitment to the classical Greek Revival Style with The Grange in the early years of the century. Nearly forty years later, Frederick Pepys Cockerell was to design Down Hall as 'a symmetrical, classical house'.¹¹⁰ Salvin referenced the Tudor for such country houses as Scotney Castle in 1837 and Peckforton Castle in mid-century. At the

¹⁰⁶ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 3.

¹⁰⁷ Published in 1846. Quoted in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 219.

¹⁰⁸ Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 118-119.

¹⁰⁹ Girouard states that 'classical styles were losing ground all the time'. *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 52.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 404.

same time, A.W.N. Pugin demonstrated his advocacy for the Gothic at Scarisbrick. For these architects, there was just one distinctly representative style.

In contention there were architects who considered that 'all styles were of equal value, and that the whole notion of stylistic integrity or stylistic tradition was an illusion'.¹¹¹ Architects who represented this faction did not commit to any specific historical style, but referenced a variety, generally according to the demands of their clients. Sir Charles Barry, for instance, produced two designs for Wollaton, the first in 1838 in the Palladian style, the second two years later in the English Elizabethan tradition.¹¹²

It was a rivalry that, as Stevenson observed, 'obscured and rendered almost impossible, an answer to the question' of what constituted an architectural style representative of nineteenth century England.¹¹³ By mid-century, however, although Kerr indicated that the issue of a distinct architectural style for the era had not been resolved, a consensus between the contending parties had been reached. At this time, the consensus for many was for Eclecticism, defined by Collins as the taking of 'tectonic elements from every style and re-amalgamating them according to contemporary needs'.¹¹⁴ In this, Collins echoes Kerr, who had determined Eclecticism to be a 'novel but striking doctrine' that used various architectural models 'indiscriminately and interchangeably' so that it was a 'style of miscellaneous connoisseurship'.¹¹⁵ Stevenson, in turn, saw it as a 'rich pictorial confusion that expressed the spirit of the times'.¹¹⁶ He also appeared to accept the consensus of Eclecticism as a befitting resolution of the issue around an architectural style representative

¹¹¹ Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 117.

¹¹² Harris, *The Architect and the British Country House* (1985): 216.

¹¹³ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 25.

¹¹⁴ Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 118-119.

¹¹⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 49-50 & 342-343.

¹¹⁶ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 62.

of the era for, as he noted, 'there are probably too many opposing modes of thought at present for one style to be a suitable expression of them all'.¹¹⁷ Despite this, Stevenson expressed some pessimism about the eclectic approach:

We have cut ourselves loose from tradition. Instead of accepting and trustfully following the ways and customs handed down to us, we claim to be absolute judges of right, and make our individual preferences laws. It would need omniscience not to fail.¹¹⁸

However, whatever the architectural style, Stevenson felt it should 'express our present civilisation, our modern feelings and ways of thinking'.¹¹⁹

If nineteenth century needs and 'modern ways of thinking' are defined in terms of the middle class and its values, then this architectural eclecticism might be seen to reflect both its heterogeneity and the various ways in which it represented itself. This was particularly true in private, domestic architecture where, in contrast to public buildings, there was the freedom for an independence of spirit that allowed for the expression of personal predilections of taste. The individual tastes expressed in domestic architecture were a means by which many of the values of an owner could be demonstrated.

The compromise that was Eclecticism was a multi-layering of styles, incorporated into one building. Pevsner reiterates an analysis of nineteenth century architecture given by the contemporary critics, Redgrave and Wornum, who described the eclectic style as

free and mixed Renaissance...a modern adaptation of Classicism (primarily Italian) received through a French channel, but with a treatment 'throughout English, massive and bold, picturesque even, when required, substantial and unaffected...'¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid.: 120.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.: 14.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: 121.

¹²⁰ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 234.

'And this', continues Pevsner, with reference to Redgrave and Wornum, 'is the perfect definition of Kerr's *chef-d'oeuvre*, Bearwood...very large, very sensibly planned but externally an ill-disciplined [architectural] mixture...¹²¹ Despite Pevsner's inference that the architectural style of Bear Wood was 'ill-disciplined' and despite Kerr's assertion that the 'present practice of Eclecticism...adopts...[styles] quite indiscriminately and interchangeably', it could be argued that the choice was not random, that instead, it was an architectural compromise, a response to the debates at hand.

The following analysis of the exterior of Bear Wood will confirm this. In spite of what Pevsner perceives to be a capricious choice of eclectic architectural styles, or what Kerr theorized to be the indiscriminate interchanging of different styles, in the architecture of a nineteenth century country house like Bear Wood, can be detected very specific meanings and associations. It will be argued that the incorporation of various styles suggests many of the values to which the middle class owner subscribed and, as such, conveyed much of what the nineteenth century social order represented.

¹²¹ Ibid.

PART III THE EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

(3.2) *The North Entrance Front*

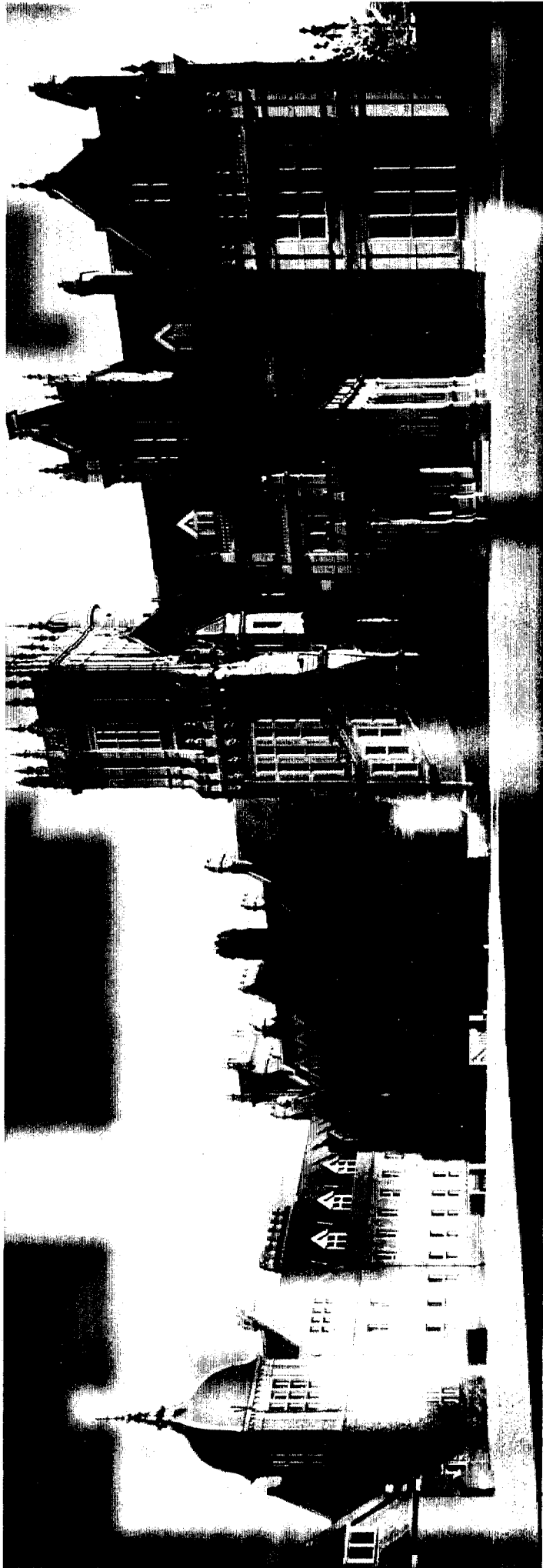
Like many country houses built by the nineteenth century middle class, the immediate approach to Bear Wood appeared to be discrete and unmanipulated. However, the contrast made by the vigorous impact of the sudden revelation of the massive north front of the house can be seen as a public and definite pronouncement of prestige and splendour: the rewards of the entrepreneurial acumen of the owner. Added to this was the inference that such rewards could be similarly achieved through hard and judicious work and the application of diligence and tenacity.

The description that the nineteenth century critics, Redgrave and Wornum gave to contemporary architecture as 'massive', 'bold' and 'substantial' could well have applied to the impressive size of the entrance facade of Bear Wood.¹²² Over three hundred feet in length, the north front supported a staircase 'some 30 feet square at the base', with a *portecochere* and window bays of similar width.¹²³ The four-storey facade was increased for a further two stories by the height of the staircase tower and facade gables.

Although not as large as eighteenth century Castle Howard, Holkham or Kedleston, the impressive size of Bear Wood was, in the same way as were these earlier country houses, material evidence of wealth that, in turn, conferred an elitist status on their owners. Added to this were perceptions of power and authority that, by tradition, were considered the right and the duty of the owners to exercise. As a holder of public office, an owner

¹²² Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 234.

¹²³ *The Builder*, "Bearwood", June 6, 1868.



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Figure 3
Bear Wood House:
north entrance facade

dispensed temporal justice, often from within the house itself, whereas a domestic chapel or estate church meant he held religious authority over his household and tenants.

Traditionally, country houses could be viewed by the public. Particularly in the eighteenth century, this was considered a means by which the significance of the owner could be advertised. In addition to his status, power and authority and his wealth, it was intended that the house represent the eighteenth century owner as a cosmopolitan, well-travelled Man of Taste, long-established and recognized as a leader in society, elegant, confident in his superiority and of his rightful place at the apex of the social order.

Although not intended to be seen by the public visitor, Bear Wood was also intended to convey meanings beyond those of status and wealth. The nineteenth century middle class identified itself with the greatness of the nation. This, translated into patriotism, contributed towards a nostalgia for England's past, the glories of which the middle class associated with its own times and own achievements. Contemporary feelings of patriotism, interpreted into architectural form required, as the nineteenth century architectural critics, Redgrave and Wornum noted, an architecture perceived as being 'throughout English'.¹²⁴ As such, architecture was to reflect prevalent feelings of patriotism and to reject as un-English and alien, the classically inspired architecture associated with the previous century.

Pevsner's assertion that Redgrave and Wornum's analysis of nineteenth century architecture was the 'perfect definition of Bear Wood' indicates the eclectic incorporation of architectural styles that included 'a modern adaptation of Classicism (primarily Italian) received through a French channel.'¹²⁵ This 'French channel', represented by French

¹²⁴ Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 237.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Renaissance architectural elements, are evident on the exterior. There is, for example, the steep-pitch of the roof line, inset dormer windows and the steep, four-sided turret roof above the entrance tower. How, then, could this apparent contraction between an architecture that referenced the French, be compatible with the suggestion that the middle class owner be represented as a patriotic English gentleman?

Kerr appeared to overcome this contradiction by a process of theoretical transmogrification, whereby he translated French Renaissance as 'English Renaissance'. This was legitimate, he argued, because the transmogrification of the French, or even the Italian Renaissance, into the 'English Renaissance' was a process legitimated by common usage. Kerr termed this 'English practice'.¹²⁶ That this might be a specious argument was evident to his professional peers. For instance, the reviewer of *The Gentleman's House* in the February 18, 1865 edition of *The Builder* brought Kerr to task for his logic, noting that the 'circumlocution' of his designation of 'English Renaissance' to what were obviously foreign architectural references meant that he was 'likely to mislead' and that his assertions were 'erroneous'.

An additional explanation as to why French Renaissance architectural elements were incorporated into Bear Wood is that the style may have had some association with the great urban hotels. As Girouard points out, by 1863, 'French style' had become the 'pre-eminent' architecture for many hotels that 'offered the latest refinements of luxury and technology to a predominantly middle class clientele [and] underlined the fact that London was now the commercial centre of the world'.¹²⁷ Often attached to a railway station, these hotels offered a refuge and a retreat from the vicissitudes of travel, in the same way that the

¹²⁶ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 365.

¹²⁷ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 293.

middle class perceived their homes to be a refuge and retreat from the tribulations of the outside world. As a business man, active in the progressive, modern world of commerce, John Walter was also considered to be 'technically-minded'.¹²⁸ The fact that Bear Wood referenced elements of the French Renaissance style of architecture, that the latest technology was used for its construction and the conveniences installed inside the house, indicates that Walter could well have been influenced by these London hotels.¹²⁹ This is especially likely for, in travelling from Paddington station to his home near Reading, John Walter would have been familiar with the architecture and the 'refinements of luxury' of the hotel that formed part of the Paddington railway terminus.¹³⁰

Nineteenth century references to English architecture, be they direct or transmogrified through Kerr's process of the 'common usage' of 'English practice', were also the result of the effects of industrialization during the nineteenth century. These effects, combined with increasing urbanization, contributed to a nostalgia for England's past, particularly for rural traditions and their association with a simpler life now lost to the speed and sophistication of an industrialized world. In architectural terms, this nostalgia, this looking back towards the past, resulted in an architecture that was perceived to reflect Old England.

References to the Elizabethan and its associations with the glory of that past age and its prodigy country houses, were considered particularly appropriate for their nineteenth century counterparts. There was also an element of nationalism in such references. As Kerr noted about the Elizabethan, 'there is, in fact, a strong nationality in it. Here was a style

¹²⁸ *The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", November 5, 1894.

¹²⁹ The issues of technology, comfort and convenience will be discussed in Part IV of this thesis.

¹³⁰ The Great Western Hotel at Paddington was in the French Renaissance style.

which was without dispute the unimported product of the soil...'¹³¹ He pointed out, however, that he and his architectural peers translated, rather than made authentic references, to the past. As he noted, the 'authentic architecture of the period exhibits nothing like the intentional irregularity' of the style used in his 'modern' age.¹³² Based on this, Kerr's interpretation of the style for the entrance porch at Bear Wood can be seen to exactly fit requirements in that it 'exhibit certain leading principles, which distinguish the new Elizabethan from the old'. As he wrote:

...in modern designs...it is generally deemed desirable to produce a certain amount - frequently a very considerable amount - of positive intentional irregularity...in the Entrance-tower there is presented an instance...whereby the building is sought to be grouped, by the formation of one prominent feature, at a prominent point in the composition, and that point not a central point.¹³³

At Bear Wood, Kerr grouped a projecting entrance porch between the mass of the staircase tower and a gabled bay window so that it was a prominent feature exactly opposite the entrance gateway leading into the forecourt.

To the supposition that this reference to Elizabethan architecture inferred associations with past greatness, can be added the suggestion that Bear Wood be regarded as a 'seat of hospitality'.¹³⁴ This, as it has been noted, was a wish expressed by the owner, one that reflected the middle class ethos that the home be considered a welcoming refuge. Perhaps it was that Kerr intended to infer this with the entrance porch offset exactly

¹³¹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 351.

¹³² *Ibid.*: 352.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Expressed by John Walter at the ceremony marking the completion of the house. Reported in *The Builder*, June 6, 1868. Henry-Russell Hitchcock writes of the 'disarmingly middle class inscription, 'welcome' in large letters' on the small gatehouse entrance to Tortworth Court, designed by S.S. Teulon for the Earl of Ducie. *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1954): 236.

opposite the main gateway to Bear Wood so that it appear to reach out to 'embrace' and welcome the arriving visitor.

Nostalgia for England had also been fuelled in the first decades of the century by, for instance, the literary works of Sir Walter Scott as 'the inspiration behind the...idealization of the age of chivalry'.¹³⁵ Alongside this was 'the actual and enormous influence' of Ruskin, who based his doctrine on the 'principal centres' of 'Truth, Beauty and Morality'.¹³⁶ Architecture, noted Ruskin, should be an 'expression of a whole way of life' as well as a reflection of the 'spiritual goodness' of the architect.¹³⁷ Persistent in his doctrine, Ruskin was an influential advocate for the revival of Gothic architecture, a style he considered to be the embodiment of 'true Christian feelings'.¹³⁸

In his theoretical discourse, Kerr itemized the 'characteristics of the Gothic manner, as applied to domestic building in England' for his readers. Many of the Gothic 'characteristics' itemized by Kerr can be identified in the north facade of Bear Wood. There was, for example, evidence of an 'intentional irregularity of plan' which included an 'intentional variety in height' in the roofscape; a 'general verticality of features, emphasized, for instance by the narrow, vertical windows of the staircase tower and the pinnacles surmounting the parapets of the staircase and entrance towers.

The incorporation of architectural elements into Bear Wood to which Gothic characteristics can be applied, might be interpreted as an indication that Kerr wished to acknowledge the Christian principles to which the owner subscribed.¹³⁹ However, the mere

¹³⁵ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 5.

¹³⁶ Ladd, *The Victorian Morality of Art* (1968): 3.

¹³⁷ Williams, *Culture and Society* (1958): 145 & 137.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ It has been noted that John Walter III, built a church and other ecclesiastical buildings.

evidence of the Gothic cannot be considered sufficient to substantiate this, particularly as, in itemizing Gothic architectural characteristics, Kerr made no reference to Christian principles.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps it was that Kerr employed the references to the Gothic more for its aesthetic appeal than for any religious connotation. Or perhaps it was, as Stevenson observed, that the incorporation of such architectural elements into Bear Wood can be attributed to the fact that the 'freedom of the Gothic' had 'got rid of the trammels of Classical rule'.¹⁴¹ As Kerr, himself, had written:

The nineteenth century has introduced Gothicism; it is a powerful, uncompromising, resolute, and sometimes insolent insurrection against this Classicism...¹⁴²

An equally nebulous association between Bear Wood and another of Ruskin's basic principles of Gothic architecture, that of Truth, can be examined. Stevenson was to emulate Ruskin with his mandate that 'materials should show themselves to be what they really are'.¹⁴³ If Kerr did have any intentions of implying the principles of truth, of the honesty of construction to the house, then they might be identified in the exposed brickwork of the facade. Rather than be masked by the deceit of stucco, as had been the practice in the previous century, the brickwork of the main house was only partially concealed by decorative stone dressings. The brickwork of the servants' wing was completely exposed. Whether the exposure of brickwork at Bear Wood was intended to emulate Ruskin's notion of Truth cannot be ascertained. However, from the descriptive vocabulary appropriated to him, it would appear that John Walter III would have considered that he represented the

¹⁴⁰ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): Chapter IX, 367-373.

¹⁴¹ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 331.

¹⁴² Kerr, "English Architecture Thirty Years Hence" in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 295.

¹⁴³ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 28.

honest, upright, moral integrity by which the middle class wished to be identified.¹⁴⁴ Or, perhaps it was that the completely exposed, unadorned brickwork of the servants' swing, was intended to confirm hierarchical differences between the status of the owner and that of the servants.

There can be little doubt that John Walter wished to not only proclaim his status and wealth, but also to represent himself as a vigorous, dignified and responsible member of the middle class. This can be surmized from the impression conveyed by the north entrance front of Bear Wood. The impact it made upon arrival with its massive, impressive size displayed the authority, the importance and the vivacity with which the middle class identified itself. Likewise, the square solidity of the staircase and the *porte-cochere*, the sharp triangular gables, the serried rows of pinnacles surmounting the parapets of the towers, all contributed to the impression of an aggressive and solid masculinity. The shape of the carved shields above the entrance suggested military connotations and an associative masculinity. Such proclamations represented an age of which Kerr said, 'there may be a certain vigour of manliness reserved for the English, which, in an age of increasing manliness and increasing English influence, shall accomplish unexpected results'.¹⁴⁵ As Girouard now notes, this 'vigorous school in architecture goes with the Victorian cult of manliness...of physical and moral fibre'.¹⁴⁶

Although Pevsner might claim that the incorporation of a range of eclectic architectural elements into Bear Wood was 'ill-disciplined', the choice was not random.

¹⁴⁴ See Dictionary of National Biography, *Walter John 1818-1894 & The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", November 5, 1894.

¹⁴⁵ Kerr, "English Architecture Thirty Years Hence" in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 308.

¹⁴⁶ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 56.

The various interpretations that can be applied to the different architectural styles represent many of the middle class values upheld by both owner and architect. However, like the competing voices that had resulted in a consensus for eclectic architecture, there would appear to be no coherent statement discernible in the architectural styles evident in the entrance facade of Bear Wood. Despite the initial impression of status and wealth, there are other messages that can be extrapolated from the architecture, all of which combine to represent a middle class that, both complex and diverse, embodied much of the nineteenth century social order.

**PART III
THE EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE**

(3.3) *The south garden front*

If the architectural references on the north entrance facade of Bear Wood indicated a public proclamation of certain middle class tenets, then the south garden front might be seen to represent the private, domestic realm. This would support the argument that many of the values to which a nineteenth century middle class country house owner subscribed were expressed in diverse ways in architectural form.

Turned away from public view as the house was approached, the south front of Bear Wood stood high overlooking a terrace and gardens leading down to a lake and across the estate. This garden aspect would suggest associations with the feminine, an inference suggested by Ruskin with his notions of femininity linked with nature. In *Sesame and Lilies*, for instance, he wrote of 'womanly beauty...I wish you specially to notice:- "Three years she grew in sun and shower"...Observe', wrote Ruskin, 'it is Nature who is speaking throughout and who says, "while she and I live together"'.¹⁴⁷ Both Kerr and Stevenson reiterated this concept in an architectural context. Kerr equated the aspect for a house directed towards the 'sunshine', the 'lawn', or the 'flower-garden' with the 'ladylike' connotations of 'salubrity', 'cheerfulness' and 'lightness', notions with which Stevenson

¹⁴⁷ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 141. With 'womanly beauty', Ruskin is referring to beauty of the soul, associated with the role of the woman in the domestic realm, rather than to physical beauty. References cited for two of Ruskin's books, *Sesame and Lilies* and *Queen of the Air* are from 1887 publications, although Ruskin noted in Preface (p. viii) of the latter that he had written it in May, 1869 from work 'begun thirty years ago'. The Preface to *Sesame and Lilies* (Eighth Edition in Original Form with New Preface) is dated August 24, 1883. It is, therefore, assumed that the influence of Ruskin's work had been in effect for some 50 years before the 1887 edition.

53a



Figure 4

Bear Wood
House:

South garden
front

concurrent.¹⁴⁸ These associations of femininity with domesticity are attested to by Girouard, who 'suspects' that Kerr, in contrast to the massive, rigorous masculinity of the architecture of the north facade, wanted the south garden front at Bear Wood to be 'gracious and feminine'.¹⁴⁹

The same impression of size given from the driveway approach to the house remained, for the south front stretched along a terrace for nearly 300 feet, to terminate in a water tower and the domestic offices. However, unlike the entrance facade, it would appear that the architecture employed for this garden front was not intended to make the same vigorous impact. In contrast to the square solidity of the main staircase tower, the *porte-cochere* and window bays, the sharp triangular gables and the aggressive serried row of pinnacles reaching upwards from the staircase and entrance porch towers, this south elevation was surmounted by curved gables that reflected, 'the curves of nature'.¹⁵⁰ In a Ruskinian-type association of the feminine with nature, the recessed arched gables were surmounted by carved stone cartouches. However, unlike the crested shields on the entrance facade with their reference to the military, these round and trefoil shapes followed the 'curves of nature'.¹⁵¹ As Stevenson affirmed, one of the primary aims of nineteenth century middle class domestic architecture and ornament was 'to express our domestic life'.¹⁵² The suggestion that this be referenced by nature can be endorsed by the architectural ornament. The carved foliage in the garden facade gables, for instance,

¹⁴⁸ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865) & Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880). Both Kerr and Stevenson particularly referred to these issues in relation to the aspect of rooms designated for use by the female, such as the drawing room and the boudoir. The issue of gender-designated rooms will be addressed in Part IV.

¹⁴⁹ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1974): 122.

¹⁵⁰ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 47.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 69.

'followed the spirit of nature', as did the trefoil cartouches, a shape that, according to Stevenson, would have been 'directly borrowed from the trefoiled grasses of the fields'.¹⁵³

A small tower set into the roofline, as well as the young ladies' staircase tower, were both topped with curved cupolas surmounted by ornamental wrought iron weather vanes. The parapet of the garden staircase tower, unlike the entrance staircase tower which soared above the roofline, was in line with the roof parapet, thus imposing no aggressive interruption on the facade. The four-sided pyramid roof of the garden staircase tower had only corner pinnacles, rather than the serried row on the north towers. Likewise, the parapet of the water tower had just corner pinnacles. The window bays on the south front were angled at the sides, with the one on the immediate west side of the house in a *demi-lune* curve. Rather than the impression of the stolid, square 'boldness, breadth, strength, sternness and virility' given by the north facade, there appeared to be on the south front, with its curved gables and its angled window bays, a movement, an undulation, a rhythm along the length of the house.¹⁵⁴

In the architectural details of the south garden front with, for example, the curved gables, with the seemingly rhythmic effect of the facade and with the cupola-topped towers, architectural references might be made to the Elizabethan.¹⁵⁵ However, rather than it being a patriotic reference to the 'glorious old English times', as has been suggested for its incorporation into the entrance facade, references to the Elizabethan evident in the gables and cupola roofs of the garden facade reflected Kerr's description of a style he considered

¹⁵³ Ibid.: 47 & 48.

¹⁵⁴ Kerr used this terminology in his 1884 retrospective of architecture. Kerr, "English Architecture Thirty Years Hence" in Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972): 296.

¹⁵⁵ In *Country Life*, "Bear Wood, Berkshire - I" (October 17, 1968): 965, Girouard considers it to be an amalgamation of Elizabethan and Jacobean, which he refers to as 'Jacobethan'.

to offer 'variety which is permanently charming...unostentatious and subdued...refined and rendered graceful...and the elegancies of repose elaborated'.¹⁵⁶ Both architectural expression and vocabulary suggest nineteenth century notions of the feminine.

Further evidence indicates that Kerr intended the south front of Bear Wood to represent the private, domestic facade of the house. The roof tower, with its cupola roof and ornamental weather vane, was located immediately above the second floor rooms allocated for the private use of the family.¹⁵⁷ The design of this tower was repeated in the tower at the end of the domestic wing. Perhaps it was that Kerr wished to associate the domestic connotations associated with this wing with the south front in which the family rooms were located.

That the south front should be considered 'gracious and feminine' was also supported by the installation of two carved angels on the garden entrance to the house.¹⁵⁸

Of this statuary, *The Builder* reported:

At the garden entrance, of which a view may be found in the present exhibition of the Royal Academy, two figures of considerable beauty, Night and Morning, modelled, but not yet put into stone, will form a portion of the doorway.¹⁵⁹

Again, it might appear that Kerr was influenced by Ruskin upon whom Coventry Patmore's poem, "*The Angel in the House*" had made an impression.¹⁶⁰ The doorway guarded by the angels at Bear Wood, unlike that at the main entrance made aggressively prominent with the *porte-cochere* extending out into the approach courtyard, was recessed into an entrance

¹⁵⁶ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 351.

¹⁵⁷ A study of these family rooms, that included the nursery, the family bedroom, boudoir and the young ladies apartments will be undertaken in Part IV.

¹⁵⁸ *The Builder*, June 6, 1868, "Bearwood".

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) wrote "*The Angel in the House*" in 1854. Quoted by Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 133.

porch in the facade between two bay windows, both of which angled in towards the domestic interior. This might be interpreted that the angels guarded the entrance to the inner sanctum where, in Ruskinian terms, the 'greatest treasure' was to be found in the domestic realm.¹⁶¹

The contrasts in architectural styles between the north and south facades of Bear Wood were not evident in country houses of the eighteenth century. At Kedleston, for example, Adam designed the north entrance front in the Neo-Classical manner to be the 'grandest Palladian facade in Britain'.¹⁶² For the south garden facade, he also referenced the classical, with the central feature based on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, combined with the low-stepped dome of the Pantheon.¹⁶³ Kedleston, like most eighteenth century country houses, could be viewed by the public visitor, so it might be presumed that both approach and garden facades were designed to be a monumental and grandiose display of the aesthetic sensibilities of the owner, a means by which the power and the prestige associated with country house ownership could be reinforced. As at Blenheim Palace, Castle Howard and Basildon Park, where both approach and garden fronts also referenced classical architecture, these facades were intended to be a public affirmation of the status and erudite acuity of the owners. Unlike the inferences apparent in the garden facade of nineteenth century Bear Wood, there was no reference to middle class tenets that alluded to the private, the domestic, or that appeared to have associative connotations with the 'gracious and feminine'.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ In "*Of Queens' Gardens*", *Sesame and Lilies* (1887) Ruskin states that 'woman's true place and power' is in the home: 138.

¹⁶² Quoted in The National Trust, *Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire* (1993): 10.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1974): 122.

The use of ornament in domestic architecture has always been considered a means by which status and taste could be advertised, a notion as appropriate to nineteenth century country houses as it was to those of the previous century.¹⁶⁵ As Collins states, 'the essence of architectural ornament...is that it was symbolic', that it symbolized power.¹⁶⁶ However, it would appear that, anxious to express a separate and specific identity of class, nineteenth century middle class country house owners adopted styles of domestic architecture and ornament that were intended to represent their values, as well as their individual predilections of taste. Like their predecessors, it was a taste made confident by their wealth and their perceived place in the social order.

The fact that nineteenth century taste has been seen as 'strident' and 'abundant' might be equated to a contemporary increase in consumerism, particularly by the wealthy middle class.¹⁶⁷ It was an increase that reflected England's continuing prosperity for, as Ruskin noted, 'the wealth of a nation is only estimated by what it consumes'.¹⁶⁸ As the nineteenth century progressed, advances in manufacturing processes and transportation made the acquisition of material goods more readily available. However, the 'singularities', the 'novelties' and the 'gaudiness' evident in the goods produced were of concern to Ruskin, who admonished that they were 'corrupting of public taste', as well as 'encouraging public extravagance'.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Collins offers this interpretation in *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 124.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 127.

¹⁶⁷ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 54.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1976): 209. Macleod states that Ruskin echoed the economists Smith and Mill.

¹⁶⁹ Ruskin made these observations in a speech to manufacturers in Bradford. Quoted in Williams, *Culture & Society* (1958): 144.

Despite Ruskin's concern, the 'extravagant public' could justify both their consumerism and their abundant use of ornament. In 1856, had not Owen Jones, for example, stated that 'ornament must necessarily increase with all peoples in the ratio to the progress of civilization'?¹⁷⁰ Hence, under Jones' rubric that the use of ornament be considered the 'natural result of cultural evolution', middle class consumers could be confident that they represented the zenith of the evolutionary process.¹⁷¹ Unrestricted by the parameters imposed by references to the classical, they could represent their predilections of taste with eclectic and individualistic choices. As Gottfried Semper noted in 1869, the 'striving for individuality tends to express itself in adornment'.¹⁷²

In eighteenth century houses, the classical exterior architecture was either severely unadorned, as at Holkham, even though, as Stevenson acknowledged, the 'mere arrangement of masses of building' could produce the 'artistic effects' of ornament.¹⁷³ Others carried applied ornamentation that referenced the classical, as at Castle Howard and Kedleston, with the Greek fret ornament, honeysuckle, the acanthus leaf, or statuary on the parapets and pediments of the buildings, all of which carried connotations of aristocratic taste.¹⁷⁴ By the Victorian era, such architectural ornament was considered un-English, it had no associations with the English countryside and was, thus, not representative of the spirit of the age, or of nineteenth century middle class tastes or values.

¹⁷⁰ Owen Jones, "Grammar of Ornament", quoted in Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 124.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Quoted in Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965): 124.

¹⁷³ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. I* (1880): 44.

¹⁷⁴ Blenheim Palace, in addition to military references, such as the British Lion mauling the French Cockerel, also carried classical statuary as exterior ornamentation.

The eclectic range of architectural styles evident in nineteenth century country houses reflected the similar range of ornamentation applied to the facades. The use of colour as a form of architectural ornament on nineteenth century country houses like the polychrome brick Elvetham Hall, or the diapered red and white facade of Wyfold Court could, perhaps, have been justified as an expression of moral and spiritual integrity.¹⁷⁵ As Ruskin had noted in *Stones of Venice*, 'the purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour best'.¹⁷⁶ Conversely, however, such strident use of colour might be seen as an expression of individual taste, a striving for individuality. Compared to such as Elvetham or Wyfold, the exterior facades of Bear Wood were relatively discrete. Apart from the stone crests on both north and south facades and the carved foliage on the garden front gables, the architectural ornamentation for Bear Wood was of Mansfield stone dressings that, on the main part of the house, partially concealed the brickwork. Single string coursings in the brickwork that delineated the floors were the only ornamentation applied to the domestic wing.

The contrasts between this relatively subdued ornament on Bear Wood and the more strident ornamentation on other contemporary country houses demonstrated, not only individual predilections in taste, but also the many ways in which the nineteenth century middle class represented themselves. As Stevenson noted, architectural ornament was individual, an 'expression of themselves'.¹⁷⁷ This might be applied to Bear Wood, where it would appear there was a very specific attempt on the part of Kerr as architect, to portray

¹⁷⁵ Elvetham Hall, built between 1859 & 1862 by S.S. Teulon for the newly ennobled Lord Calthorpe, made prosperous from investing in Egbaston, a suburb of the industrial city of Birmingham. Wyfold Court, built between 1872 & 1876 by G. Somers Clarke for Edward Hermon, M.P. and cotton manufacturer.

¹⁷⁶ Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, Chapter 5, quoted in Garrigan, *Ruskin on Architecture* (1973): 43.

¹⁷⁷ Stevenson, *House Architecture*, Vol. I (1880): 69.

his patron in a particular way. It would seem that John Walter was to be represented as the epitome of dignified, serious and refined ideals, the personification of a responsible, middle class gentleman owner of a country house.

In his advice for the 'house of a gentleman', Kerr wrote:

...the higher the standard of intellectual eminence, and the more overflowing the supplies of material wealth, the more decided may be the reactionary principle...it involves finish, precision, delicacy, and repose without ostentation of any kind; it is not rich, or elaborate, or sumptuous or gay; it is subdued power which corresponds to cultivated, perhaps satiated, taste.¹⁷⁸

It would appear that he put his advice into practice at Bear Wood. While the size of the house leaves no doubt as to the wealth and status of the owner, the architectural ornamentation can be seen as a means by which the owner, like other contemporary middle class country house owners, represented both the tenets he endorsed, as well as his personal and individual tastes and predilections.

¹⁷⁸ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 86.

Figure 5
Floor plan of Bear Wood House:
GROUND FLOOR

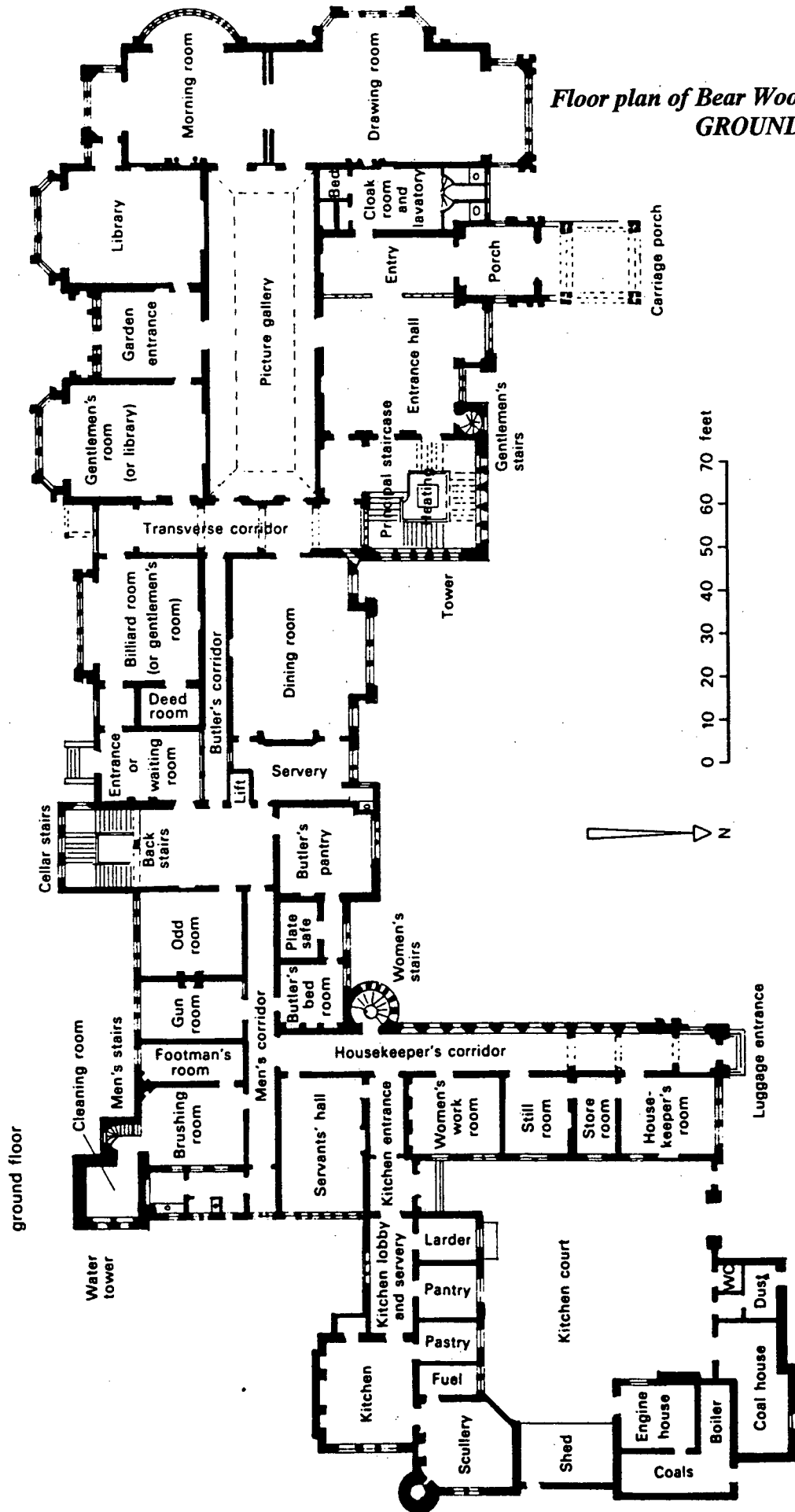
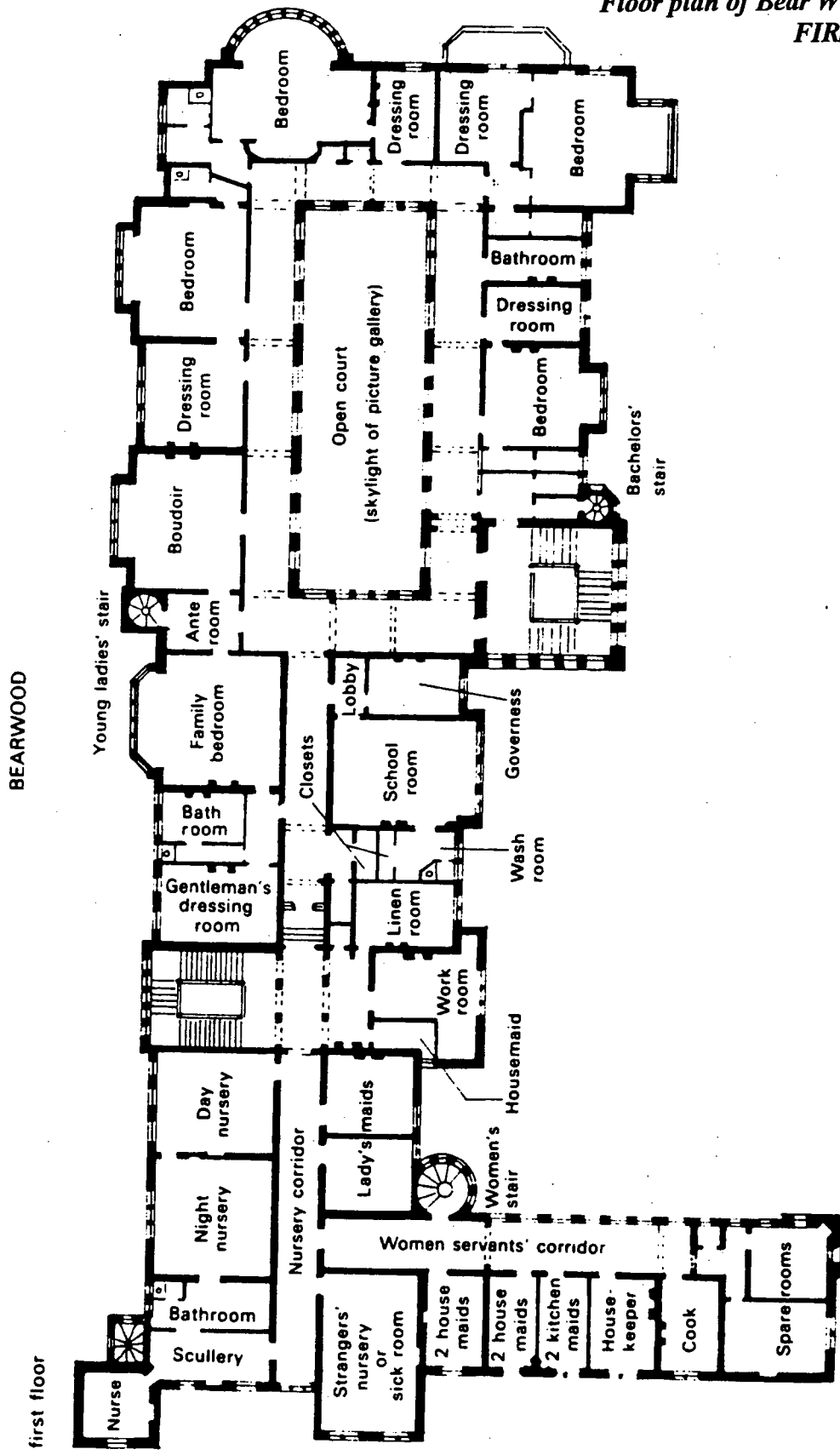


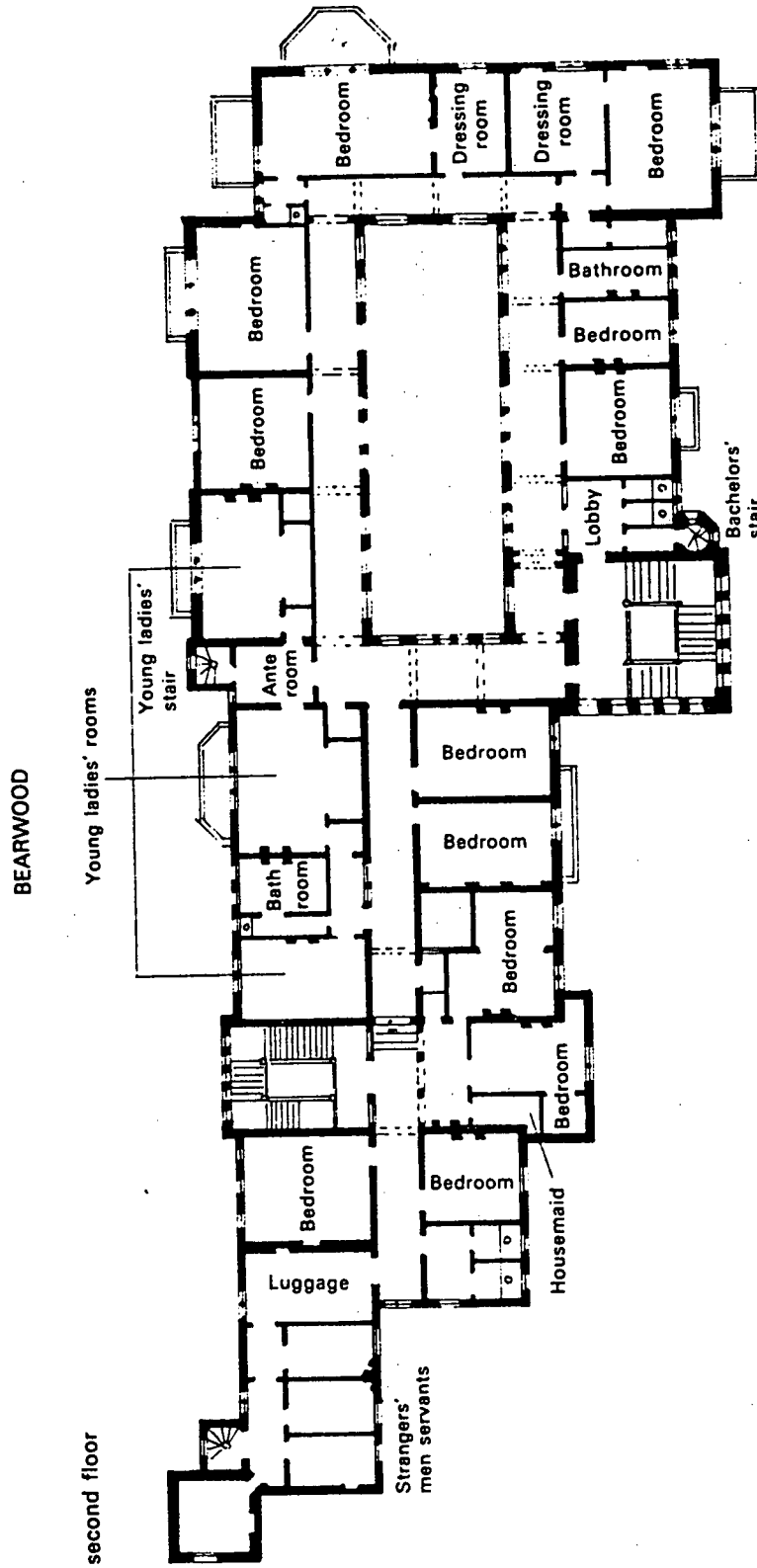
Figure 6
Floor plan of Bear Wood House:
FIRST FLOOR



BEARWOOD

first floor

Figure 7
Floor plan of
Bear Wood House:
SECOND FLOOR



**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.1) *Robert Kerr's consideration of the domestic interior and the primacy of spatial organization*

Let it be again remarked that the character of a gentleman-like Residence is not a matter of magnitude or costliness, but of design...The qualities which an English gentleman of the present day values in his house are comprehensively these:-

- Quiet comfort for his family and guests,-
- Thorough convenience for his domestics,-
- Elegance and importance without ostentation.¹⁷⁹

In a book that offers a wide range and detail of information, from an historical overview of the development of the domestic house to notes on architectural style, from a treatise on considerations of aspect to advice on a system for calculating costs, the major attention given by Robert Kerr in *The Gentleman's House* was on what he termed his "Part Second. The Principles of Plan as Now Established". In the introduction to this section, Kerr clearly advocated that the 'maxims of design' to be considered were the principles applied to the interior plan. These, he noted, were the key principles, although he acknowledged the merits of architectural style, the use of the most modern and scientific methods of construction, as well as the investment to be expended. To further support to his belief in the primacy of the 'maxims of design', he added that 'nothing...will be held to compensate for the want of these less striking but more fastidious characteristics'. In reviewing the book, *The Builder* noted that, for Kerr, it was 'a new era in domestic plan', to be considered under the categories which he laid out as:¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 66.

¹⁸⁰ *The Builder*, "The Gentleman's House", January 28, 1865: 58.

Privacy.
 Comfort.
 Convenience.
 Spaciousness.
 Compactness.
 Light and air.

Salubrity.
 Aspect and prospect.
 Cheerfulness.
 Elegance.
 Importance.
 Ornament.¹⁸¹

For the further edification and instruction of his readers, Kerr examined and exemplified each of these listed 'fastidious characteristics', followed by an equally detailed analysis of each of the domestic spaces he designated for a specific use. It might then be assumed that the detailed and dogmatic attention Kerr gave to the principles of the spatial organization of the domestic interior embodied nineteenth century middle class ideals that the home of an 'English gentleman' should accommodate and implement the tenets to which he commonly subscribed.

¹⁸¹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 67.

**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.2) *Issues of domesticity, the family unit and domestic felicity*

Of the many and diverse ideologies appropriated since the nineteenth century to the middle class it is the institution of the home, with its attendant perceptions of the family unit, that provided a cornerstone on which the identity of that class was constructed. At the turn of the nineteenth century, new perceptions of the family unit, particularly among the more affluent, developed and progressed to culminate, as the social historian, Joan Perkin suggests, in the 'Victorian family' winning a 'reputation as a noble institution upon whose countenance depended all that was fine and stable in Britain'.¹⁸²

During the course of the nineteenth century, the influence of such major social critics as John Ruskin supported notions of domestic felicity and the domestic sphere as being the foundation on which the greatness of the nation was sustained. Perceptions of the domestic sphere as a sanctuary, a refuge, with the family incubated from the anxieties of the outside world, is made clear, for example, in two lectures delivered by Ruskin, published jointly under the title of *Sesame and Lilies*.¹⁸³ Of the family unit and the 'true nature of the home', he wrote:

- it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. By

¹⁸² Perkin, *Victorian Women* (1993): 74.

¹⁸³ The two lectures were: "*Of Kings' Treasures*" & "*Of Queen's Gardens*".

As has been noted, it is presumed that the influence of Ruskin's work had been in effect for some time before 1887.

so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those they can receive with love, - so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light, - shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea; - so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of Home.¹⁸⁴

It was a sentiment both endorsed and manifested during the nineteenth century so that, as architectural historian, Annmarie Adams has since noted, the institution of the family home was to become established as a 'separate sphere, a product of the so-called cult of domesticity', that provided an isolated refuge.¹⁸⁵ This separation provided the middle class with a means by which, both conceptually and physically, it could identify itself as being apart from other social classes. In contrast to the more public lifestyle practiced by the affluent in the domestic realm in earlier centuries, the spatial organization of a middle class family home was adapted to new and very specific ways to accommodate the domestic unit. By 1880, this had been confirmed by J.J. Stevenson, who acknowledged that an overview of 'house-planning' provided a means by which the 'social condition and family life' could be realized in architectural form.¹⁸⁶

In the previous century, details of architectural design and spatial organization, particularly in the homes of the wealthy, had been concerned with the aesthetic rather than with the practical or the efficient, or with the requirements of family or domestic life. The eighteenth century architect specifically allowed for rooms in which the scale and disposition were suitable for the display of sculpture or artworks, collected to underscore the educated and erudite status of the owner.¹⁸⁷ Compared to prevalent nineteenth century

¹⁸⁴ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 136-137.

¹⁸⁵ Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996): 5.

¹⁸⁶ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 2.

¹⁸⁷ For example, Kent had created the Landscape Room at Holkham to house artworks collected by Thomas Coke, 1st. Earl of Leicester during his European Grand Tour. In the 1750s, at both Syon and Osterley,

concerns that domestic space should sustain the requirements of domestic, family life, eighteenth century architects such as Robert Adam had, at Kedleston for instance, focused on the aesthetic. Hence, primary planning considerations were for architectural style, interior design and for the integration of the decorative arts. In contrast to this, nineteenth century architects like Kerr were to focus on the *minutiae* of the spatial organization of the domestic interior to result in what Stevenson later referred to as the 'multifariousness' of 'modern planning' that had become necessary to 'keep pace' with the 'more complicated ways of living'.¹⁸⁸ With a concern for the delegation of interior space for use by either individual, or for a particular function or task, nineteenth century architects provided a blueprint from which contemporary perceptions of domestic life could be implemented. Fuelled by the influence of such as Ruskin, these perceptions were that the domestic sphere be a 'place of Peace', a 'shelter' from all the 'terror, doubt and division' of the outside world'.¹⁸⁹ Through the media of both the architectural design and the spatial organization of their domestic space, the middle class instigated and cultivated the concept that the sanctity of hearth and home shaped a private environment that allowed the family unit to 'shut out the reality of social problems, so to create a fantasy world of security, isolation and comfort'.¹⁹⁰

Robert Adam remodelled the dining rooms to accommodate sculpture. At Newby Hall, a Sculpture Gallery in the Adamesque style was especially constructed in 1765.

¹⁸⁸ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 47.

¹⁸⁹ Adams in *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996) quotes Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* in which he noted his anxieties of the outside world, anxieties that included the 'spread of infection, the rationalization of knowledge, scientific theories of sexual difference, the emancipation of women': 5.

¹⁹⁰ Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996): 5.

The nurturing of domesticity was adopted at the very top echelons of society. Following the death of the Prince Consort in 1861, Queen Victoria mourned the loss of a 'pure, happy, quiet domestic life'. Nevill, *Life in the Court of Queen Victoria* (1984): 1.

This is an argument that can be substantiated, for example, by the image presented in a portrait of William Armstrong of Cragside, who had founded a fortune as 'one of Britain's greatest geniuses and mightiest industrialists'.¹⁹¹ By 1880, when Armstrong's portrait was painted, it would appear that middle class notions of domestic felicity had become firmly entrenched. The picture shows Armstrong in a mood of fireside informality, seated in the inglenook of his dining room, wearing country clothes, reading a newspaper, legs crossed, dogs at his carpet-slipped feet.¹⁹² To support this image of middle class domesticity, of a sheltered, peaceful family life, into the stone over the fireplace was etched 'East West, Hame's [sic] Best'.¹⁹³ Such an image of the sanctity of hearth and home was one to which many of the 'fastidious characteristics' that had been first noted by Kerr in 1865, such as privacy, comfort, cheerfulness, salubrity, can be applied. How, then, might it be seen that Kerr actually accommodated these characteristics, considered both then and later in the century, to be an integral part of middle class domestic felicity, into his spatial organization of the interior of Bear Wood?

It has been suggested earlier in this work that, on the approach to Bear Wood, there were indications that it was intended to be perceived as the seat of the private, domestic life of the Walter family. There was, for example, the short and secluded driveway approach to the house, as well as signifiers of domesticity in the exterior architecture, particularly on the south facade. That the Walter family did subscribe to contemporary middle class notions appropriated to the family unit might be based on a tribute paid to John Walter at the time of his death. At that time it was written, 'I can bear testimony to his private and personal

¹⁹¹ The National Trust, *Cragside* (1994): 5.

¹⁹² Painted by Henry Hetherington Emerson (1831-1895). The National Trust, *Cragside, Northumberland* (1992): 51.

¹⁹³ The portrait remains *in situ* in the dining room at Cragside.

virtues, to the manner in which he performed all the duties of social life - those of husband, father, friend, of Christian, in fact, and general benefactor'.¹⁹⁴ How, then, did Kerr's application of his very specific theoretical architectural maxims to the sphere of domestic space at Bear Wood allow the Walters to reflect nineteenth century middle class ideals of domestic felicity and a private, family life sheltered from the terror, doubt and division of the outside world?

Kerr was adamant that the house of a 'gentleman' be 'divisible into two departments; namely, that of THE FAMILY, and that of THE SERVANTS'.¹⁹⁵ At Bear Wood, provision was made for this with a distinctly separate wing for the servants. The division between family and servants reflected the contemporary perception that England was made up of two societies, between whom, as Disraeli wrote in *Sybil*:

there is no intercourse and no sympathy' who are as ignorant of each other's habits thoughts and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws...THE RICH AND THE POOR.¹⁹⁶

This can be seen to be reflected in the domestic sphere, whereby the spatial organization specifically separated the family (the rich) from the servants (the poor).¹⁹⁷ However, despite this overt separation, but in line with the growing concept of the sanctity of the middle class home as a refuge from the outside world, it was imperative that the apparent felicity of the entire domestic household be maintained.¹⁹⁸ To achieve this, each inhabitant, whether

¹⁹⁴ *The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", Monday, November 5, 1894.

¹⁹⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 64.

¹⁹⁶ Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil* (1845) quoted in Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 11.

¹⁹⁷ It might be posited that the precept applied to society as a whole. When reflected in the home, it was, in effect, 'society writ small'.

¹⁹⁸ The notion of the appearance of domestic harmony was to continue, although Kerr's system of a distinct separation between family and servants was challenged in 1880 by Stevenson. On the subject of unity, Stevenson wrote, 'there must be communication between all the several parts of the house under one roof-shelter. It must be one house, not several'. *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 48.

family, guest or servant, should appear to accept a defined role, with all roles closely related within the spatial organization. The intention was that the domestic unit, operating under a hierarchical *paterfamilias* system, would then emulate middle class ideals of familial harmony.¹⁹⁹ It was an intention supported by the accepted precepts of hierarchy, of both class and gender, on which much of the nineteenth century middle class tenets were based. In addition to this, Kerr's separation of space between family and servants, as well as his detailed designation of task-specific space, would have provided a physically constricted environment that allowed little opportunity for casual social interaction across boundaries, even within what he termed, the 'two departments' of the household.

At Bear Wood, the appearance of domestic harmony was abetted by Kerr's designation of task-specific rooms for the servants. Space allocated to, for instance, the brushing room, the cleaning room, the still room, the scullery or the pastry kitchen, meant separation and isolation for those involved in the work.²⁰⁰ Throughout the range of the servants' wing, Kerr created a multiplicity of subdivisions in both the working and sleeping

¹⁹⁹ Until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, financial independence on the male maintained patriarchal control and, under the law, an economic hegemony. See Perkin, *Victorian Women* (1993): 76 & 114-117. In *White, Male and Middle Class* (1988) Catherine Hall confirms that the property of wealthier married women was sometimes protected by a marriage settlement allowing for partible, rather than primogeniture, inheritance, although the 'forms of female inheritance tended increasingly to be linked to [male] dependence': 98. Further, until the introduction of the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857 under which applications could be heard in specially set up civil courts, marital divorce had required an individual Act of Parliament, thus limiting it to the very wealthy or influential.

²⁰⁰ Section II of Kerr's book addressed 'The Domestic Offices' in what Stevenson regarded as 'multifarious' detail. In addition to the commonplace kitchen and scullery, he also advised on the Cook's Pantry or Dry-Larder, the Meat-Larder, Game & Fish Larders, the Pastry-Room, Salting Room, Smoke-House and Bacon-Larder, the Dairy and Dairy Scullery. For each, he gave detailed suggestions for the correct dimensions of the space, for the apparatus, along with an appropriate layout for fittings and equipment. In similar detail, subsequent Sections offered advice on the Upper Servants' Offices; the Lower Servants Offices; the Laundry Offices; Bakery and Brewery Offices; Cellars, Storage and Outhouses, etc.; the Servants' Private Rooms; and Thororoughfares, Supplementaries, and General Arrangement of Offices. This multiplicity of subdivision of space was implemented in many 19th century country houses in which could be found a myriad of task-specific rooms that included kitchen departments for cleaning vegetables, making pastry, making preserves. There were wet and dry laundries, compartments for coal, oil, wood, ashes, swill and dust. There were rooms for cleaning lamps, boots and knives, as well as the Valet's Brushing Rooms next to the Visitors' Brushing Rooms, even rooms for ironing newspapers.

accommodation spaces allocated to the servants. One intention was that the isolation of the individual into either task-specific or compartmentalized living areas should lessen the interaction between the occupants. This, it might be presumed, would reduce the opportunities for domestic friction to occur whilst, at the same time, contribute to the efficiency and productivity of labour. In addition, it can be seen that, distinguished by their designated use, these rooms allowed for an inferred hierarchy to become associated with that domain and with the servants who worked in, or occupied, them. The floor plan of Bear Wood supports this in that it indicates that the upper servants, the housekeeper, the butler and the cook, were assigned private spaces in which to work and sleep, a designation that contributed to and supported the preferred status of the individual.

**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.3) *On the issue of spaciousness*

Not only did the designation of space for specialized occupancy contribute to the implementation and separation of multifarious domestic units, but the provision for task-specific specialization also contributed to increasing the overall size of the house. The size of a house, as has been noted, was a traditional strategy that inferred status and one that continued to be adhered to in the mid-nineteenth century by middle class country house owners. That the size of a country house was a means by which the status and prestige of the owner could be advertised was a fact of which Kerr was only too aware.²⁰¹ Translated by him into 'spaciousness', and an 'amplitude of space' when applied to the interior, it allowed, as he noted, the 'self-esteem of a man...to expand and acquire vigour under the simple influence of elbow room'.²⁰² In the interior of Bear Wood, Kerr was to provide ample elbow room with a 70 by 24 foot gallery, a 40 by 24 foot dining room and inter-connecting morning and drawing rooms of 96 by 26 feet, for example, all of which supported 15 foot high ceilings.²⁰³

Even allowing for the fact that Bear Wood was a large establishment, Kerr applied the same principle of 'spaciousness' to smaller houses he built for less affluent middle class families. For instance, *The Builder* carried an article on Kerr's plan for Ascot Heath House which he designed for John Delane, John Walter's editor at *The Times*. *The Builder* made

²⁰¹ See arguments presented in Part II (1.2) referring to the massive and impressive entrance facade of Bear Wood.

²⁰² Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 74.

²⁰³ 10'-11' ceilings were considered suitable only for servants.

particular note of the fact that Kerr had designed the public rooms at Ascot Heath so that they could be thrown open 'to provide for occasional receptions of a special character', whereby the 'aggregate suite for receptions attains the extent of nearly 150 ft. of available length', thereby accommodating the owner's requirement for an 'amplitude of space'. At the same time, elucidating the importance that was attached to domestic felicity, it was pointed out that this spaciousness was achieved 'without any sacrifice of the domestic simplicity and convenience of the dwelling for every-day uses'.²⁰⁴ Unlike the equally large, or even larger public rooms in earlier country houses that had been intended to accommodate a markedly public lifestyle, rooms such as these at Bear Wood or Ascot Heath, although comprising an 'amplitude of space', were intended for a more private, domestic lifestyle, primarily for the immediate family and their guests.²⁰⁵ Despite this, the size of the public rooms were a means by which the self-esteem, the status and the prestige of the owners could be affirmed.

However, if this 'amplitude of space' was not intended to accommodate a public lifestyle as it had in earlier country houses, it might be assumed that the objective was to distinguish an identity other than of status and prestige. By the attention Kerr gave to the issue of spaciousness, it would appear that he intended that 'under the simple influence' of 'elbow room' the 'self-esteem of a man' would 'expand and acquire vigour'. And, it was as vigorous and expansive members of a progressive and modern society that mid-nineteenth

²⁰⁴ *The Builder*, "Ascot Heath House", December 19, 1868: 929.

²⁰⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 74.

century middle class owners, such as John Walter or John Delane, wished to be perceived.²⁰⁶

In contrast to this, the issue of spaciousness in the domestic interior was also one of practicality and good, economic common sense, particularly when applied to space allocated to the servants. It was a principle confirmed by Kerr, who advised 'it is manifest that the amount of accommodation must be regulated directly by the list of the servants to be kept. This list being determined, the accommodation has simply to be made to correspond'.²⁰⁷ Despite the notion that the number of servants a family could afford to retain conferred status on the employer, Kerr pointed out that excessive space for domestic chores was not advisable in the interests of either expenditure or efficiency. He cautioned that 'if on the contrary it be the accommodation that is first determined, and this in excess for the sake of completeness, the corresponding excess of servants must inevitably follow, with a long succession of pecuniary consequences'.²⁰⁸

Despite Kerr's advocacy, his floor plan for Bear Wood indicates that the complement of domestic staff in the Walter household was meant to reflect the status and prestige of the family. Space was specifically allocated on the first floor of the servants' wing for at least eleven female domestic staff.²⁰⁹ However, the number of female servants was higher, no doubt, than specified in the floor plan. For instance, accommodation for the

²⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that, by the 1880 edition of Stevenson's *House Architecture*, the notion of self-esteem invigorated by an 'amplitude of space' had changed. Stevenson advocated 'compactness and simplicity' rather than 'numerous staircases, needless corners and tortuous passages': 49.

²⁰⁷ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 74.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*: 201.

There is some irony in Kerr's concern with expenditure, particularly as his original estimate for Bear Wood had doubled by the time of its completion.

²⁰⁹ The sleeping rooms for a nurse, 2 lady's maids, 4 housemaids (2 per room), 2 kitchen maids, the Housekeeper and the Cook female servants are specified.

staff of the nursery, or the laundry staff was not indicated.²¹⁰ Further, Kerr made no specific note of where the male servants were to sleep on the top floor of the servants' wing, in addition to which they often slept in various areas of the house to provide protection for the premises.²¹¹ At Bear Wood, the floor plan indicated sleeping space for a footman in the gentlemen's cloakroom located adjacent to the front entrance, the butler was assigned a bedroom adjacent to the plate safe. Based on the sleeping space indicated for the servants and allowing for unspecified space for additional staff, it can be estimated that Bear Wood might have carried a complement of twenty to twenty five indoor domestic staff.²¹² That the middle class Walter family could afford to employ such an impressive number would, undoubtedly, have conferred status on them. In addition, the number of staff retained might be regarded as a means by which current perceptions that, able to provide the extensive task-specific space necessary to accommodate such a complement of servants, the family could be seen to represent the progressive, modern approach to convenience and efficiency by which the class wished to be identified.

²¹⁰ The floor plan also indicated a bedroom for the governess, although her somewhat ambivalent position between servants and family precludes her from being considered as domestic staff, despite her being so listed at the contemporary country house, Brodsworth Hall. Source: English Heritage: information provided at the house.

²¹¹ In previous centuries, servants had slept close to the family as a form of mutual protection, also to be within earshot before the advent of mechanical bell-systems.

²¹² In *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 87 Franklin considers that, although the numbers varied, there were usually no fewer than 15 indoor servants, with as many as 40, in country houses contemporaneous with Bear Wood. At the lower end of the social scale, a signifier of middle class status was the fact that the family could afford to employ, even if only one maid-of-all-work, a live-in servant. For the aristocracy, the tradition of a large establishment was often upheld: when the 15th. Earl of Derby died in 1893, he acknowledged 727 retainers and servants in his will. Maroon, *The English Country House* (1978): 102.

**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.4) *On the issue of privacy*

Not only did the separation and designation of space within the domestic interior of country houses such as Bear Wood allow for a seemingly harmonious, albeit hierarchical and patriarchal, social system to operate, but the system also accommodated a further requirement of middle class domestic ideology, that of privacy. It was a requirement that proved to be both fundamental and of particular concern in the spatial organization of the middle class domestic sphere. Privacy headed the list of Kerr's 'fastidious characteristics'.²¹³

It is the first principle with the better classes of English people that the Family Rooms shall be essentially private, and as much as possible the Family Thoroughfares. It becomes the foremost of all maxims, therefore... that the Servants' Department shall be separated from the Main House, so that what passes on either side of the boundary shall be both invisible and inaudible on the other.²¹⁴

In Bear Wood, with its distinctly divided departments between family and servants, Kerr put into practice what he advised. 'The idea which underlies all', he wrote, 'is simply this. The family constitute one community, the servants another...each class is entitled to shut its door upon the other and be alone'.²¹⁵ However, Kerr's didactic approach to ensuring privacy was one with which Stevenson, in his works published in 1880, was not entirely in agreement. 'Is not this carrying the separation a little too far?' he asked,

²¹³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 67.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 68.

‘...should the mistress not have the run of her own house? Should not the master know his servants when he meets them?’²¹⁶

Historian, Griselda Pollock is of the opinion that the nineteenth century notion of domestic privacy in spatial terms had ‘certainly existed before the eighteenth century’.²¹⁷ The concept of privacy, with the allocation of separate spaces, can be increasingly discerned in previous centuries in the houses of the wealthy. Stevenson wrote of the provision of ‘privy lodgings’ and ‘privy galleries’ evident in earlier house planning and noted that, as early as the fifteenth century, ‘a change in the social state’ meant that the ‘privee [sic.] parlour’ for family use was established.²¹⁸ This can be seen at Haddon Hall where there was a private parlour leading off the communal great hall. By the turn of the sixteenth century, the architect, Robert Smythson had located private, family lodgings at Hardwick Hall on the second floor, with the public rooms of state on the third and the household on the main floor.²¹⁹ The provision for domestic privacy was further extended towards the end of the seventeenth century with the addition of corridor space, primarily intended for the use of the servants, behind the *enfilade* of public rooms.²²⁰ This can be seen, for instance, at Chatsworth, an Elizabethan house remodelled in 1688.²²¹ As the architectural writer, Robin Evans notes, increasing demands for private space resulted in the division of domestic space into ‘two domains - an inner sanctuary of inhabited, sometimes disconnected rooms, and an

²¹⁶ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 78 & 79.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.* As early as 1604, Sir William Wentworth of Wentworth Woodhouse had advised, ‘Take heed what you speak before them [servants]...’ Quoted in Girouard, *A Country House Companion* 1987): 128.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 36 & 20.

²¹⁹ Haddon Hall, originally a medieval stronghold for the Cavendish family. Hardwick was built at the turn of the 17th. century for Bess of Hardwick, matriarch of the Cavendish family, Dukes of Devonshire.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* In the 17th century, architect Sir Roger Pratt had noted, ‘ordinary servants may never publicly appear in passing to and fro on their occasions there’. Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building* (1997): 71.

²²¹ Haddon Hall, Hardwick Hall & Chatsworth were all built for the Cavendish family and illustrate the growing requirements demonstrated by this one family for increasing privacy in their domestic space.

unoccupied circulation space...that became a recognizably modern definition of privacy'.²²² By the eighteenth century, the separation of private space for the family away from the public areas of the house was more evident in some country houses. At Blenheim, for example, Vanbrugh allocated rooms east of the *enfilade* of state rooms especially for use by the family, whilst at Kedleston, the east wing, detached from the state rooms, was for the family.

Such provisions were, however, exceptional, in that the majority of eighteenth century country houses did not offer such distinct private areas for family use. Kerr recognized this in a review of spatial planning in *The Gentleman's House*. In considering the improvements that the Anglo-Palladian plan, used so extensively for country houses in the eighteenth century, had introduced, Kerr referred to Holkham, begun in 1733. At Holkham, according to Kerr, there had been a lack of progress in the development in the spatial organization of the domestic interior, primarily because there had been relatively little attention paid to ensuring the privacy of the inhabitants. He decried the '*deficiency of ordinary passages*' in the interior of Holkham, as well as what had been the continued 'readiness...universally exhibited to create *thoroughfare-rooms*'.²²³ 'Respecting *privacy*', Kerr continued, again referring to the interior at Holkham, 'the progress had been little...the thoroughfare rooms, for example, might almost be considered retrograde'.²²⁴

By the nineteenth century, the issue of ensuring privacy, particularly in the domestic domain of the middle class, was specific. This echoed Ruskin's concern, largely adopted by the middle class, that family space be a refuge and a sanctuary, apart from the household

²²² Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building* (1997): 75.

²²³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 47-48.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

and the outside world. According to Kerr, it was a 'matter for the architect's care' so much so that, in the design of the domestic interior, he instructed that there should be no 'unrefined arrangements'.²²⁵ It was a notion to which attention continued to be paid throughout the century. In his volumes published in 1880, Stevenson confirmed Kerr's earlier maxim, although he suggested that, rather than an absolute binary division between family and servants, the domestic interior should comprise of 'several distinct divisions - one for the family to live in, another for entertainments - a side for the banquet and a side for the household...- besides the division for the servants'.²²⁶

It has been noted that, despite their heterogeneity, the nineteenth century middle class was unified by their subscription to commonly held values and a sense of a collective social identity. One social more to which claimants to middle class status aspired has been defined by the historian, F.M.L. Thompson as the 'stereotype of respectability'.²²⁷ Under the rubric of privacy, the spatial organization of the middle class domestic realm provided a means by which the appearance of respectability for the family could be contained within an insular and isolated lifestyle, separate from the remainder of the household and apart from the rigours and temptations of outside society. With an adherence to a 'respectable' domestic life, the middle class created an image of familial 'privacy, propriety and prudery', values by which their class was to be identified.²²⁸

²²⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 68.

²²⁶ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 54.

²²⁷ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 176. Thompson notes that, even in the homes of the least affluent members of the middle class where space was at a premium, privacy was maintained by means of territorial space, 'narrowed down to mother's chair and father's chair in the parlour'.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

Adams in *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996) suggests that the requirement for compartmentalized rooms countered what was perceived as the 'seemingly promiscuous lifestyle' of the French. 'Their tradition of interconnected rooms *en suite* was interpreted in England as an affront to common decency': 133.

According to the Foucault, private space allocated to the family unit contributed to an image that also became associated with the Victorian middle class. For Foucault, confinement (applied, in this case, to the designated private family areas) is tantamount to secrecy from which, he argues, emanates notions of restraint and hypocrisy.²²⁹ That privacy becomes tantamount to secrecy is supported by Griselda Pollock, who suggests that the need for secrecy within the family unit evolved with the wish of the landed elite to protect their honour and to keep their reputations publicly unsullied.²³⁰

Unlike the landed gentry, elite and long-established in the social order and confident in the status and prestige of their family lineage, the newly-arrived nineteenth century middle class landowners, with their requirements for domestic privacy, appeared concerned with establishing a reputation of respectability as analogous to their identity. For John Walter and his family, as for others who indicated an adherence to nineteenth century middle class tenets, the need to present an appearance of an unsullied reputation, of respectable propriety, would have nurtured a 'desire for concealment, a predisposition towards secrecy'.²³¹

One arrangement that encroached on the privacy of the family and was a potential means by which familial secrets could be breached, was the tradition whereby the domestic offices had been located in the basement area. So as to avoid a 'Kitchen window [that] in summer weather forms a trap to catch the conversation at the casement of the Drawing room', Kerr advised that the domestic offices be distanced in a separate wing.²³² Kerr also

²²⁹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): 3.

²³⁰ Pollock quotes Amussen, *An Ordered Society* (1988): 89 in, "Living on the stage of the world" in Wilson, *Rethinking Social History* (1993).

²³¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): 89.

²³² Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 68.

noted that spatial arrangements should be such that family and guests should have 'free passageway without encountering the servants unexpectedly'.²³³ Advocated to ensure the privacy of the family, there was also the advantage that such an arrangement would not interrupt the efficiency of the servants' work and so not compromise the smooth running of the domestic machine. Under the aegis of efficiency and apparent domestic harmony, both were important, middle class standards. As Kerr advocated, 'let the servants have access to all their duties without coming unexpectedly upon the family or visitors. On both sides this privacy is highly valued'.²³⁴

Issues of privacy embraced not only the spatial arrangements of the domestic interior, but also the assurance that neither family nor servants overlook the activities of the other. For Kerr, these issues of privacy contributed to what he considered to be the 'salubrity' of domestic arrangements, achieved by judicious architectural planning. 'Extreme care must...be exercised in the disposition of offensive Apartments and

Other issues that contributed to the removal of domestic offices from the basement, such as efficiency or cooking odours are addressed in Part IV (1.7) & (1.9) respectively.

A separate wing for the domestic offices had been made possible in the 18th. century when the invention of the bell pulley system allowed servants to be out of earshot when summoned. Nash, for instance, was in Wales between 1785 and 1796, where he designed country houses, such as Llanerchaeron, with a separate domestic wing grouped around a courtyard. Source: Richard Suggett, *John Nash, Architect*, The National Library of Wales: Aberystwyth, Dyfed, 1995. Advances in technology meant that, by the 1840s, speaking tubes could be installed. (In the December 11, 1874 issue of *The Building News* (p. 711) a correspondent denigrated the effectiveness of speaking tubes. He wrote that he had 'introduced them freely into the house believing they to save much trouble to self and servants, as supplemental to bells'. However, the household consensus was that they were 'a bore'.) By 1865, electric bells were in use and, by 1876, in-house telephones had been installed, both of which allowed the domestic offices to be distanced from the main house. Speaking tubes and in-house telephones were the most efficient as they saved the servants from having to make two journeys to undertake a task.

²³³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 68.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* The demand for privacy, to be achieved, in part, by separating family from servants, was a particularly British requirement that was not echoed to the same extent by Continental middle class families. The latter continued the tradition of living in closer contact with their servants than did the English. Stevenson pointed out that maxims to separate family and servants as advocated by such as Kerr were particularly appropriate to the 'freedom of disposition of country houses' rather than to the 'restriction of town sites'. *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 54.

Outbuildings' he noted.²³⁵ At Bear Wood, he was careful that all outdoor domestic activities were screened by the wing of the domestic offices. Windows were set high on the side of the servants' wing that overlooked the entrance courtyard.²³⁶

In the main part of a country house like Bear Wood, designed to accommodate middle class requirements for domestic privacy, the compartmentalization of space into separate, enclosed areas, to be entered through doorways, often approached via a vestibule area, ensured a measure of seclusion for the occupants. That the middle class would have considered the 'charms' of 'solitude' desirable and appropriate to their identity was confirmed by Stevenson, who noted, the 'opportunity for retirement...has charms only for those with internal mental resources', not for 'uneducated people'.²³⁷

The way in which the public rooms could be accessed accommodated what Stevenson endorsed as 'our love of seclusion and retirement [so that] each room must be isolated'.²³⁸ As Robin Evans notes, in many nineteenth century houses, privacy was achieved by the 'favoured alternative...the terminal room, with only one strategically placed door into the rest of the house', even though architects such as Kerr appeared aware that such an arrangement could often be impractical or inconvenient.²³⁹ The concept of limited access to rooms was a departure from the multiple access doors often installed in one room

²³⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 79.

²³⁶ That servants be invisible to family has been much documented. For example, work in the public rooms had to be completed before family or guests descended, hence the very early start to the working day for domestic staff. F.M.L. Thompson notes that servants in some households, if unexpectedly encountered by family or guests in the main part of the house, were expected to face the wall, with the most extreme example being that a servant would be fired if encountered by the family. *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 156.

²³⁷ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 3.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*: 48.

²³⁹ Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building* (1997): 63. Franklin states that Kerr disapproved of the plan for Mentmore in that the ladies could be trapped in the boudoir with its terminal placement off the drawing room. *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 138.

in the eighteenth century, particularly when required to fulfil the rules of symmetry then governing spatial planning. In nineteenth century Bear Wood, the public rooms were grouped around a central gallery with access limited to each room either by one door, or through a vestibule, or from a corridor. It was a system that accommodated what Stevenson was to refer to in *House Architecture* as a 'characteristic of modern planning'.²⁴⁰ 'We must', noted Stevenson, 'have a separate communication to each room'.²⁴¹ The resultant more enclosed spaces formed a matrix in which circulation space was unified and direct, a departure from the open and extended thoroughfare rooms in houses built in previous centuries.

Whereas the spatial organization of the public rooms in earlier country houses was designed to indulge the aesthetic sensibilities whilst traversing the *enfilade*, the enclosed space of the public rooms in a nineteenth century country house like Bear Wood accommodated a more intimate and private form of entertainment. Even within these enclosed spaces, a further requirement for intimacy and privacy was preferable. As Stevenson advised, the drawing room, for instance, should 'have a number of separate centres, such as deep window recesses or a couple of fireplaces' so allowing the occupants to form into 'separate groups' for more intimate interaction.²⁴² Such advice reflected middle class notions of the home, notions that had been propounded by Ruskin as a private place of sanctuary and refuge.²⁴³ At Bear Wood, the privacy allowed by a limited access to

²⁴⁰ Stevenson, *House Architecture*, Vol. II (1880): 47.

The compartmentalization of space extended beyond the domestic realm, to be evident in public institutions, for example. This indicates the pervasiveness of middle class values into the social order.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid: 58 & 57.

²⁴³ Ruskin alludes to this in both *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Queen of the Air*.

rooms provided the Walter family with the means by which they could put the ideal of domestic privacy into practice.

A survey of plans of country houses built during the nineteenth century indicates that the specific designation of private space for the family unit was commonplace, both in houses designed for middle class owners, as well as in those being remodelled for the aristocracy.²⁴⁴ In fact, such was the importance evidently attached to the provision of separate accommodation for the family that a private wing or suite in a country house was to become a stock essential in the homes of the affluent, an arrangement referred to by Stevenson as a 'separate little house with its own stairs'.²⁴⁵ Perhaps the most extreme provision for family privacy was implemented at Eaton Hall, remodelled by Alfred Waterhouse *circa* 1870 for the Duke of Westminster.²⁴⁶ Waterhouse was to ensure that the ducal family enjoyed maximum privacy: he provided them with a separate and completely self-contained house attached to the main part of Eaton Hall. By 1870, when Waterhouse undertook the remodelling of the house, it was evident that middle class requirements for domestic privacy had permeated the aristocratic lifestyle. It was also apparent that certain middle class tenets of domestic felicity had been adopted: for instance, whenever the Duke returned, the carillon in the clock tower at Eaton Hall played "*Home Sweet Home*".²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ The plans surveyed are in Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981) and in Harris, *The Architect and the British Country House* (1985).

²⁴⁵ In the 19th. century, William Burn (1789-1870) was probably the first architect of country houses to ensure that private, family space was allocated. Stoke Rochford, designed in 1839 for the middle class Turnor family, incorporated such space.

Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 54.

²⁴⁶ Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1908).

²⁴⁷ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1971): 2. The influence of middle class domestic values reached court circles. On July 4, 1872, Queen Victoria noted in her journal that prima donna Adelina Patti's musical rendering of "Home Sweet Home" was 'touching beyond measure'. Nevill, *Life in the Court of Queen Victoria* (1984): 82.

In 1865, at Bear Wood, Kerr had expressed, in architectural form, provisions for familial privacy within the domestic interior and had put into practice what he had advised in *The Gentleman's House*. He delegated private, second floor space for the Walter family, to be entered through an ante room with an interconnecting family bedroom, boudoir, bath room and gentleman's dressing room. Opposite was the school room and adjacent, along the corridor, was the nursery suite. On the floor immediately above the family suite were the young ladies' rooms, connected by the young ladies' staircase. Distinctly separated and protected from the public areas on the main floor and on the opposite side of the house from the main entrance, these family rooms positioned the inhabitants of these private areas within a 'depth into space'.

The architect, Thomas Markus suggests that such a designation of space separates private and public realms and so divides a building into two categories of people, 'inhabitants' and 'visitors', with the former having an investment in power as the 'controllers'; the latter, as subjects of the system and not freely able to penetrate into the 'depth of space', the 'controlled'.²⁴⁸ This division was also evident in the space allocated to the titular head of the household for estate business. At Bear Wood, the entrance or waiting room provided direct access from the exterior to the gentleman's room, so preventing outside 'visitors' from entering the interior spaces of the house.

Such a designation of space was also evident in the public arena. In institutions like hospitals, asylums or prisons, for example, the inhabitants were sequestered within the depth of space, with 'controllers' situated at the approach to the interior supervising access by visitors. In both domestic and public contexts, the 'controllers' were located in a

²⁴⁸ Markus, *Buildings & Power* (1993): 14.

position of power. Whether the 'controllers' be located within the depth of private space, or in a 'controlling' position at the approach to the interior, both arrangements underscore the notion that private space be protected. At the same time, however, the intention was that the strength, the power and the concomitant status of those in control be demonstrated.

The spatial organization in Bear Wood might be used to explain the motivations of John Walter. Eulogized by his heir as a man, 'marked' by the 'qualities of sobriety, sagacity, independence, unswerving honesty of purpose, and disinterested devotion to the public welfare', John Walter epitomized many of the qualities that represented nineteenth century middle class tenets, a primary one of which was a predisposition that private, family space be integrated into the domestic interior.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Dictionary of National Biography, *Walter, John. (1818-1894)*: 716.

At the end of the citation is written, '[Personal knowledge; the authorities cited in the text; information communicated by Mr. Arthur F. Walter.] J.R.T.'. Arthur Walter was the second son and heir of John Walter. With Arthur's contribution to the citation, it can be presumed that the family adhered to many of the values on which the identity of the 19th. century middle class was established. In line with general middle class political right wing leanings, John Walter was noted as having been 'nominally a conservative, though a free-trader [in line with middle class entrepreneurialism] and virtually a Peelite...his political faith...was that of a liberal-conservative': 714.

PART IV THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR

(4.5) *The issue of gender-specific space*

Provisions for privacy in the domestic interior required an increasingly more distinct separation of the private from the public areas. This was not only specifically accommodated in the spatial organization of houses such as Bear Wood, but it also allowed for the implementation of what, by the mid-nineteenth century, was considered to be the 'natural' separation between the female and male spheres in both public and private realms. In the middle class social order, this 'natural' separation deemed the public arena outside the home to be that of the male, 'the seat of masculine enterprise and activity'.²⁵⁰ This was in contrast to the private, domestic realm, 'the proper location of women and children' in which they were expected to operate.²⁵¹ In the words of Ruskin:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest...²⁵²

Historian, Catherine Hall notes that women had an equally defined role:

While middle-class ideologies stressed the moral and managerial aspects of womanhood...wives...were to provide moral inspiration and manage the running of their households...²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Groenewegen, ed., *Feminism and Political Economy in Victorian England* (1994): Barbara Caine, "Feminism and Political Economy in Victorian England - or John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett and Henry Sidgwick Ponder the 'Woman Question'": 38.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 135 & 136.

²⁵³ Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class* (1992): 145.

Ruskin's notion of the woman as helpmeet to her husband was also represented in other ways. For instance, the artist George Hicks painted a triptych, *Woman's Mission* in 1863 in which the devoted wife performs the duty of her expected by society and conforms to contemporary middle class standards of domesticity. Ref: Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996): 216.

The division of the genders had, according to Hall, been considerably influenced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by philosophers, such as Hobbes and Locke, both of whom considered the foundation of the social order to be the 'male-headed family'.²⁵⁴ Added to this was the 'powerful influence' of Rousseau who saw the 'nuclear family and patriarchy as natural'.²⁵⁵ Hence, as the nineteenth century progressed, the position of women, seen in Rousseauian terms as 'physical and sensual, deficient in rationality and incapable of rational thought' became increasingly marginalized from the public, political sphere.²⁵⁶ That these public and private realms were to be perceived as gender-specific was furthered by the first Reform Act in 1832 which, according to Hall, had confirmed men as 'responsible political subjects', while 'women were largely condemned to public silence'.²⁵⁷

The isolation of women from the public sphere had taken place as the Industrial Revolution had increasingly moved the operation of business away from the domestic realm and so lessened their interaction with the public arena. It was a process that corresponded with the emergence of an expanding middle class aimed at establishing a political and cultural identity by which its values could be recognized. The isolation of middle class women from the public arena was furthered in that they were not required to undertake productive employment necessary for the family budget, hence the nineteenth century middle class woman became increasingly invisible to outside society. The degree of leisure and isolation afforded the female family members were a means by which the status of the

²⁵⁴ Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class* (1992): 155.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: 145.

family could be exemplified.²⁵⁸ Consequently, the seclusion of women within the domestic domain became a significant means by which the nineteenth century middle class could not only advertise its identity, but an identity that was separate and apart, particularly from that of the working classes.²⁵⁹

Confined, constrained and protected within the private, domestic realm and subject to the legal autonomy of the patriarchal head of the household, middle class women were left with no formal political voice, no economic autonomy of any significance, no formal place in the public sphere. This was affirmed by the influential opinions of such as John Stuart Mill, who presumed that women were not 'independent adults, able to safeguard their own interests'.²⁶⁰ Instead, a woman claiming middle class status became invested with an identity that positioned her as custodian of the domestic citadel, as 'The Angel in the House'.²⁶¹ Social critics, such as Ruskin had been influential in placing the mantle of the nurturing, maternal female, reverent and dutiful wife, on the shoulders of middle class women.²⁶² Ruskin likened them to the mythical Greek goddess, Athena. Traditionally regarded as the Goddess of Wisdom, Ruskin perceived Athena as 'the directress of human passion, resolution and labour'.²⁶³ For Ruskin, the 'power' of the woman inside the

²⁵⁸ This provided a means by which gradations of rank, based on sources and degrees of income, could be established within the middle class.

²⁵⁹ Towards the end of the century, such as department stores provided a means by which middle class women could interact in the public realm with other women of their class outside the immediate domestic sphere.

²⁶⁰ Groenewegen, ed., *Feminism and Political Economy in Victorian England* (1994): Barbara Caine, "Feminism and Political Economy in Victorian England - or John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett and Henry Sidgwick Ponder the 'Women Question'": 33.

John Stuart Mill, 1806-1873, English philosopher and economist.

²⁶¹ In *Sesame and Lilies* (1887) Ruskin refers to the 1854 poem by Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) "The Angel in the House": 140-141.

²⁶² In *Sesame & Lilies*, Ruskin acknowledged that he was writing for 'people belonging to the upper, or undistressed middle, classes'. Preface: x.

²⁶³ Ruskin, *Queen of the Air* (1887): 121. Ruskin's concept of Athena reflected a specifically Victorian definition.

Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 136.

domestic realm was 'not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision'.²⁶⁴ To Ruskin, the home should be the 'woman's true place and power', a place in which she 'must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise'.²⁶⁵ She was to be both icon and example, selflessly devoted to the virtue of the family, the epitome, in fact, of nineteenth century middle class values.

In architectural terms, the demarcation between the public and the private is evident in a survey of the floor plans of contemporary country houses, of which Bear Wood is an example. Not only does the plan of Bear Wood distinctly separate the two realms, but it also clearly indicates gender-specific areas for both family members and servants. This distinct demarcation of space, evident along gender-designated lines, confirms that the perceived 'natural' separation between male and female realms in the social order was replicated within the middle class home, providing a means by which many middle class ideas of privacy and the attendant maintenance of moral integrity and propriety, could be sustained within the domestic interior.

That Kerr subscribed to and supported this notion of a 'natural' separation between the male and the female spheres of life is evident, both in his theoretical advice and in his actual application of these ideas to the design of the domestic interior. Taking the principal staircase as an example, he deemed it should be central, yet private and

...afford direct passage, for the ladies in particular, from the Public rooms to the Bedrooms; and secondly, the access from the Entrance ought to be equally direct, for the ladies again, when coming from out of doors, - so that they may not have to pass through any great extent of interior thoroughfare...The Principal Staircase, as a rule in any good house, is understood to be closed against the passage up and down of the servants.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 136.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: 138.

²⁶⁶ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 176.

Despite affording the ladies a 'direct passage' 'when coming from out of doors', the principal staircase was, according to Kerr, to be considered as 'no more than an ascent to the Sleeping-rooms of the Main House'.²⁶⁷ This was in contrast to the previous centuries when the principal staircase, as part of the primary route by which the house was entered, had been a significant and very public architectural feature that connected the main entrance to the public rooms located on the *piano noble* floor.²⁶⁸ So important and so significant was this staircase, used by family and guests of both genders, that it was not uncommon for heraldic devices to be integrated into this very public approach to the public rooms in the house. At Knole, for instance, the enlargement of the house in 1603 incorporated a principal staircase, the newel posts of which supported carved leopards, each holding a shield painted with the coat of arms of the Sackville family, as public harbingers of the status of the owner and to add resonance to the family name. At eighteenth century Holkham, the approach to the public rooms was also intended to be impressive. William Kent designed the marble staircase leading from the rustic to the state rooms to be set inside a 'theatrical encircling colonnade, owing something to the Vitruvian-Palladian basilica in the Barbaro Vitruvius' that served not only as a dramatic and awe-inspiring means of access to

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Contemporaries considered that Kerr paid only scant attention to the details of planning in some areas, of which the staircase was one. In the January 7, 1865 issue of *The Builder* noted, 'staircase-planning, the subject of distinct works by other authors, must be considered as quite inadequately treated...' Despite his theoretical advice and, unlike many of his architectural peers, Kerr did not provide a separate staircase for the family at Bear Wood, so it must be presumed that the Principal stair was intended for adult family members, as well as for guests. In *The Gentleman's House*, Kerr refers to a 'Mansion' in 'Berkshire'. He does not name the mansion but the floorplan (with a few minor changes, such as the omission of the lamp room, indicating the Garden entrance hallway as a saloon, as well as a plan for a conservatory) is identical to Bear Wood. Kerr refers to the bachelors' stair as a 'peculiarity': 451. Perhaps it was that Walter demanded this bachelors' stair at Bear Wood, rather than the more usual separate family staircase.

²⁶⁸ In the 16th. and 17th. centuries, there had been an ascending hierarchy with interior space, with the servants on the main floor, the family on the second and the rooms of state on the third. Such an arrangement was used, for example, at Hardwick Hall (c.1580) and Chatsworth (c.1686).

the public rooms, but also referenced the learned status of the owner.²⁶⁹ At Kedleston, Robert Adam designed a double exterior staircase to approach the *piano noble* under a porticoed entrance topped with classical statuary. In all such cases, the intention was that the principal stair be a very public and impressive means by which to introduce both genders to the prestige of the owner as they entered the interior of the house.

By the nineteenth century, the public rooms in country houses were generally located on the main floor, thus negating the need for a principal stair to provide a significant approach. However, for Kerr, this staircase still retained, as he noted, 'enough importance to render it one of the chief features of plan', presumably a reflection of middle class values for, as he stated, 'in some respects it even gains in characteristic value, by being associated exclusively with the privacy of the Sleeping rooms'.²⁷⁰ No longer a means by which to publicly access the interior, the staircase was now considered significant in terms of middle class ideals in that it provided a secluded route by which ladies, in particular, could access the most private, intimate spaces of the house. In fact, at Bear Wood, Kerr distanced the principal staircase discretely out of sight from the main entrance, to be approached through an entry vestibule, across an entrance hall and through an oak screen. Contrary to his maxim that it be no more than a means to approach the Sleeping-rooms, Kerr gave this staircase notable architectural importance with a well and balustrades of carved oak that rose through three stories, to be crowned by a gilded gallery. Above this, light filtered down through stars scattered over golden-coloured glass, perhaps in reference to Ruskin's perception of the intrinsic value of the woman in the home when he wrote of her that 'the

²⁶⁹ Harris, *The Architect and the British Country House* (1985): 132.

²⁷⁰ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 176.

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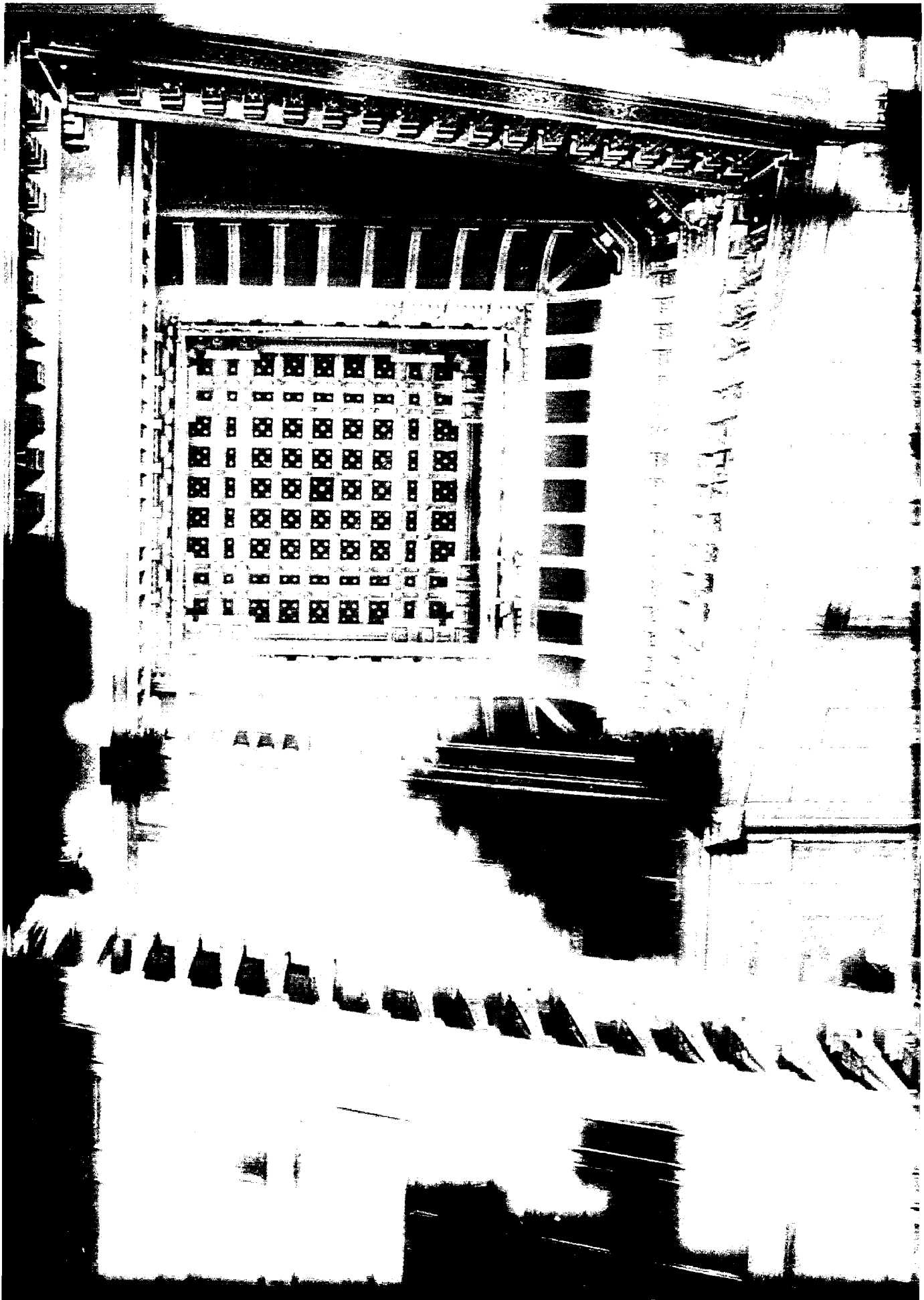


Figure 8
Principal
staircase

stars only may be over her head'.²⁷¹ In *Queen of the Air*, Ruskin wrote of Athena in the Heavens wearing a 'robe of light, saffron colour', suggesting an analogy with the golden light filtering down the staircase of Bear Wood.²⁷² Hence, this principal stair, dedicated for use by the ladies, both family and guests, was a means by which the separation of public from private spheres in the domestic interior of a middle class household could be emphasized. At the same time, however, and in line with the diversity with which the middle class appeared to present itself, the architectural significance given to the principal staircase in Bear Wood indicates that it was also intended to be a statement that underscored both the status and the prestige of the Walter family.

Further, in order to separate the genders within the domestic interior, there was the young ladies' stair that connected their apartments directly to those of their parents'. The Bachelors' spiral stair inside a tower in the angle of the principal staircase combined notions of propriety with practicality in that, as Kerr noted, 'single men can reach their rooms, from perhaps dirty weather outside, without using the chief thoroughfares'.²⁷³ In the domestic wing, the male and female servants were appointed separate staircases that lead to their rooms on separate floors, as well as to their gender-designated corridor routes. For general convenience, Kerr advised there should be a 'Backstairs, running from the bottom to the top of the house' so as to take the 'traffic of servants when carrying out their duties, [as well as] all Nursery traffic' and 'a great deal of family traffic which avoids the Principal Staircase for the sake of privacy'.²⁷⁴ It was an idea undertaken at Bear Wood.

²⁷¹ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 138.

²⁷² Ruskin, *Queen of the Air* (1887). Considering that this work was 'begun thirty-five years ago', it is entirely possible that such as Kerr could have been influenced by Ruskin by the time Bear Wood was begun in 1865.

²⁷³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 177.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 177-178.

In Bear Wood, it can be seen that Kerr's allocation of stair and corridor routes between family and servants, between male and female, not only accommodated middle class requirements for privacy, but also accommodated that 'natural' separation between the genders. This separation of male from female realms within the domestic interior extended further. For instance, space allocated to male family and guests was very specific, whereby Kerr provided a suite of rooms for their use. Included in this suite was the library, next to which was the somewhat ambivalently-designated gentleman's room (or library) off of which was the billiard room (or gentleman's room) and the deed room. Adjacent to the billiard room was a separate entrance waiting room, a discrete space for the operation of estate business, presumably to be undertaken by the male.²⁷⁵ The position of the billiard room at Bear Wood, a room deemed by Stevenson as 'an essential of most country houses, as a means of killing time on wet days', should be sited so that 'men may be at their ease in it smoking and playing in their shirt-sleeves, and to drown the knocking of the balls'.²⁷⁶ However, it would appear that, at the time Bear Wood was built, the game of billiards was not always the exclusive prerogative of the male in that it could also be enjoyed by the ladies. To accommodate this, Stevenson noted that, instead of a separate, male-designated room, 'a billiard-table is placed in the hall, where it is convenient for a pastime, and for the ladies joining in the game'.²⁷⁷ This appeared to be a rather unsuitable alternative, for Stevenson added that 'to regular players...this arrangement is not satisfactory...it renders smoking impossible, else the house would be filled with tobacco fumes, while the exposure

²⁷⁵ Allocation of space in which estate business could be conducted contributed to the image that many 19th century owners wished to convey, that is, a business-like concern for the operation of their land.

²⁷⁶ Stevenson, *House Architecture*, Vol. II (1880): 62.

²⁷⁷ Ibid: 63. Although *House Architecture* was published in 1880, it should be recalled that Stevenson 'began this book ten years ago': Preface: v.

to every caller prevents playing in shirt-sleeves.²⁷⁸ Despite allowances for any compromise, it would appear that the billiard room was essentially considered a male preserve.

There appeared to be no compromise in other spaces included in the suite of rooms at Bear Wood intended for masculine use. Kerr noted that the gun room, for example, was 'indispensable to a Country-House of any pretensions, as a depository for sporting implements'.²⁷⁹ There was little doubt about the gender-designation for the gentlemen's odd room. Not only did Kerr consider its as 'useful for miscellaneous purposes' but, 'in the country more especially, the young gentlemen of the house may find themselves very much at a loss sometimes for an informal place in which "to do as they like"'.²⁸⁰ Opposite the butler's rooms and adjacent to the working space allocated the footmen, the location of the odd room at Bear Wood exactly fitted Kerr's maxims in that it 'ought to be out of the Main House, and not directly amongst the Offices: near the Butler's-Pantry will do; and next the Gun-room will be exactly right'.²⁸¹ Likewise, there was little doubt about who should occupy the smoking room, a room which, according to Stevenson was necessitated by 'modern habits'.²⁸² Bear Wood appears to be the exception, rather than the rule, in that the floor plan does not indicate a smoking room. During the course of the nineteenth century, space specifically allocated for smoking became increasingly integrated into the domestic interior as part of the male domain.²⁸³ Kerr confirmed the purpose of the smoking room by noting:

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid: 229.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 130.

²⁸² Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 64.

One of the first specific spaces for smoking in the domestic interior - the Smoking Room - had been instituted by Victoria and Albert when Osborne House was built in 1843.

²⁸³ In *The Gentleman's House*, Kerr offers advice on the Smoking room, on its 'position, access, prospect and ventilation'. There are numerous instances of space being designated for this increasingly popular

The pitiable resources to which some gentlemen are driven, even in their own houses, in order to enjoy the pestiferous luxury of a cigar, have given rise to the occasional introduction of an apartment specially dedicated to the use of Tobacco.²⁸⁴

Whether a separate space, or incorporated into other male-designated space, such as the billiard room, Kerr instructed that consideration be given to prospect, so that the smoking room 'should be a good one, and well got up. In short, it ought to be a charming chatting - room with smoking allowed'.²⁸⁵

This specific association of space with the masculine had, by the nineteenth century, been appropriated to the dining room, a connotation that was particularly compounded at Bear Wood in a north-facing room solidly encased in carved English oak.²⁸⁶ The sense of gravity and massiveness effected by this room might be seen as an affirmation of its association with the masculine, particularly when considered in contrast to the connotations of femininity implied by Kerr's directives that 'lightness' be sought for a south or west facing drawing room, directives later endorsed by Stevenson who advocated 'an abundance of light' for the drawing room.²⁸⁷ In the north-facing dining room at Bear Wood, the masculine ambience was further compounded, not only by its massiveness and solidity, but

activity in other 19th. century country houses. At Cardiff Castle, remodelled from 1868 onwards by William Burges for Lord Bute, the provision of space for smoking reached what might be considered to be its apotheosis, with both winter and summer smoking rooms installed in the tower designed as a bachelor suite. Source: Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1971): 127.

²⁸⁴ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 129.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*: 130.

At the contemporary country house of Brodsworth Hall, where the billiard room was also designated as the smoking room, 'two large ventilation hatches' had to be installed to provide adequate ventilation. English Heritage: *Brodsworth Hall* (1995): 19.

²⁸⁶ Kerr paid particular attention to 'aspect and prospect' in *The Gentleman's House*. He included a diagram of an Aspect Compass under which was: 'Note. - Throughout the whole treatise, when questions of aspect are under consideration, this diagram will serve for the illustration of the argument': 81. In addition, there was an element of practicality in the dining room facing north so that, as Stevenson put it, 'the sun does not shine in on the guests at meals, necessitating the closing of the blinds'. *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 56.

²⁸⁷ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 107.

Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 58.

by a full length portrait of John Walter firmly built into the wall above the fireplace, perhaps to signify an association between the middle class associations of *paterfamilias* with the domestic hearth.²⁸⁸

Conversely, the drawing room, interconnected to the morning room at Bear Wood was, as Kerr noted, the 'Lady's Apartment essentially', as was the boudoir in the family suite on the first floor.²⁸⁹ In contrast to the masculine associations appropriated to the dining room, the drawing room was considered a feminine domain, for Kerr directed that its 'character' be 'always aimed' at 'especial cheerfulness, refinement of elegance, and what is called lightness as opposed to massiveness...to be entirely *ladylike*'.²⁹⁰ Drawing room, morning room and boudoir all had bay windows and were positioned to catch the afternoon or evening sun, 'so that the ladies may enjoy the most free and direct communication with the open air'.²⁹¹ Kerr paid attention to this space allocated to the ladies, not only to the 'rule that in everything is this...to be entirely ladylike', but also that the windows, 'generally

²⁸⁸ Some 10 feet high and 8 feet wide, this portrait remains *in situ*. It is interesting to compare this portrait to the one painted in 1880 of William Armstrong. Walter stands in formal dress, his hand resting on a copy of *The Times*, a bust of his father on the table. It is a full-length portrait (traditionally associated with royalty or the aristocracy) in a pose that reflects portraits intended to affirm the status and prestige of the sitter. In contrast, the pose adopted in the portrait of Armstrong was intended to illustrate the ideals of domesticity, the way in which the middle class wished to be identified.

It is interesting to note that Armstrong also chose to identify himself with in the dining room, thus indicating that the association of that space with the masculine had continued.

The masculine association appropriated to the dining room probably resulted from the 18th. century tradition whereby the men remained in the dining room following dinner to allow the ladies to retire to the 'with-drawing' room to make tea, recently introduced as an expensive and novel commodity. Hence, the concurrent association of the drawing room as the female domain.

²⁸⁹ Of the boudoir, Stevenson wrote: 'The private room of the lady house is called the BOUDOIR (from *boudoir*, to pout), being apparently destined in French houses to the very commendable purpose of allowing ill-humour to be got rid of in private.' Its use in 19th. century England was evidently perceived to be of a more domestic and practical nature, for Stevenson continued, 'We rather picture an English lady in her retirement engaged in settling her household accounts, in reading, music, sewing, or worsted work.' *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 62.

²⁹⁰ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 107. Although there was this tacit assumption that the drawing room was the female domain, it was used by males (by implied invitation) for certain social rituals, such as afternoon tea, or in the evenings.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*: 107.

formed as casements' should open on the Lawn, Flower-Garden, or Terrace'.²⁹² Such a reference suggests that Kerr integrated, in architectural form, nineteenth century perceptions that associated the feminine with nature. As noted, it was a notion evident in the work of contemporary writers, of which Ruskin was, perhaps, pre-eminently influential. In *Sesame and Lilies*, for instance, he reinforced the association of the feminine with nature with a quotation taken from Coventry Patmore's poem, "*The Angel in the House*":

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown...'²⁹³

To further this association, in *Queen of the Air*, Ruskin likened the goddess Athena to a 'mythical expression of natural phenomena', analogous to the 'ambient air, which included all cloud, and rain, and dew...'²⁹⁴

As an architectural expression of this notion, it would appear that a conservatory, although one was never actually constructed at Bear Wood, also served to underscore the prevalent mid-nineteenth century correlation between female-designated space and nature.²⁹⁵ As Kerr stated in *The Gentleman's House*, the 'intercommunication most usual for a Conservatory is with either the Drawing-room, Boudoir, or Morning-room', leaving little doubt of the inherent connection between a space designed to house plants and flowers and that specifically designated for feminine use.

For the servants, space was not only allocated along gender-designated lines but, as has been noted, was also specifically task-related. Both designations can be regarded as a

²⁹² Ibid: 107 & 109.

²⁹³ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 140.

²⁹⁴ Ruskin, *Queen of the Air* (1887): vii & 48.

²⁹⁵ Based on his plan for a 'Mansion in Berkshire', in *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 451, it would appear that Kerr had originally planned a conservatory to the west of the house, to be entered through an ante-room, from the north bay of the drawing room. It was never built.

means by which the sexual vulnerability of females could be protected, a precaution that was of particular concern to the middle class in the nineteenth century.²⁹⁶ This was recognized by Kerr who advised that 'ordinary' female domestics should share bedroom space of 'small size, suitable for not more than two persons'.²⁹⁷ To further protect the vulnerability of the 'ordinary female domestics', Kerr suggested that they be under the watchful eye of the housekeeper so that the 'Housekeepers Bedroom...ought sometimes to be situated, not exactly amongst the apartments of the women, but rather so as to command the whole of them'...²⁹⁸ This, however, was a maxim that he did not actually follow at Bear Wood, where the housekeeper's room was located further along the corridor from both the rooms allocated to female domestics and the women's stair.²⁹⁹ Kerr inferred no such arrangement was required for the 'ordinary men-servants' in order to protect their vulnerability. He did, however, advocate that 'each man ought properly to have a separate room; or otherwise...to divide a large dormitory into small compartments or boxes by board partitions'.³⁰⁰ This suggests, not only middle class notions of morality, but that in providing even rudimentary privacy, the male servants were perceived to be more superior in the domestic hierarchy. In addition, as F.M.L. Thompson points out, in contrast to the former arrangement wherein the daily life of servants had been contained in attic and basement

²⁹⁶ The number of women employed as domestic servants had increased in proportion to the decline, from the 16th. century onwards, in the prestige associated with the work. Larger households, such as country houses, maintained a higher proportion of male servants than did the smaller households of the less affluent. In 1851, 28% of female servants were under the age of 20. Briggs, *Victorian Things* (1988): 256.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*: 250.

Dormitory space for domestics had, by the nineteenth century, been 'regarded with suspicion and got rid of'. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (1978): 276.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*: 251.

Franklin notes that a similar example, whereby this maxim to protect the vulnerability of female domestics was not followed was at Mentmore, where the housemaids' room was placed between that for the footman and the men's staircase. *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 139.

²⁹⁹ The arrangement that the housekeeper's room should command the housemaids' corridor can, however, be seen at Brodsworth.

rooms, the architectural expression of a separate servants' wing allowed for more space that could be compartmentalized.³⁰¹

The objective to separate the genders by the provision of more private space affected the quotidian working life of the servants in a country house such as Bear Wood. It has been noted that work assigned to either male or female was intended to be undertaken in compartmentalized, task-specific space, with the objective that both efficiency and moral rectitude be maintained. In gender-neutral space, such as the servants' hall, where meals and leisure time were taken, it was presumed that the presence of other servants would provide adequate chaperonage, although, even here, the genders were often separated, with men seated down one side of the table and women down the other.

These principles of the division and compartmentalization of space, or the separation of the genders were to be found in the general structure of society. Throughout the nineteenth century, there had been an ongoing propensity for the government to be divided into departments, prisoners separated and compartmentalized according to their gender or crimes, hospital and asylum patients into wards, again depending on either gender or the nature of their ailment. Such a separation and division between the genders meant that any limitations of interaction were accommodated and enforced by the spatial organization of the facility, thus also avoiding the possibility of moral or physical contagion. Whether in the public arena, or in the domestic interior, the objective was that spatial organization was a means by which moral laxity could be prevented, with the anticipated result that the moral

³⁰⁰ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 250. Presumably to maintain propriety, or an element of privacy, Kerr instructed that each partition be 'six or seven feet high'.

³⁰¹ F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 156.

Thompson also notes that, where space was less plentiful, such as in urban areas, or in the homes of the less wealthy, servants continued to be accommodated in attics and basements and that the use of space remained more communal and less compartmentalized.

management of the individual could be enforced and middle class standards of propriety maintained.³⁰²

The spatial organization of a country house like Bear Wood was not only designed to assist in the maintenance of proscribed moral standards, but it was also a configuration that supported both control and discipline. The specific delegation of space contributed to the appearance of the household functioning by an internally-driven, non-coercive process.³⁰³ Foucault refers to this non-coercive process of discipline and control as being manifested by a 'web of power', whereby each individual is encouraged to perceive himself as being under the surveillance of and, thus, policed by others.³⁰⁴ Hence, the individual, through this non-coercive process, becomes a 'docile body' with consequent internal mechanisms of control, subjugated within the social context and, thus, subject to proscribed standards of propriety.³⁰⁵

It is an argument that can be applied to a domestic household like Bear Wood where, the spatial organization of a nineteenth century house allowed both the instigation and accommodation of middle class values. Although the compartmentalization of this domestic interior did not allow for overt surveillance, as did, for example, the kitchens at both eighteenth century Kedleston and Harewood, wherein the occupants could be observed from balconies overlooking the workspace, the household of Bear Wood would, instead, have been subject to discipline and control under the aegis of individual moral

³⁰² The gender-neutral space of the servants' hall had evolved towards the end of the 17th. century when servants no longer ate in the Great Hall of a country house.

³⁰³ Briggs notes that the specialization and separation of tasks meant that work was 'learned by doing' which, therefore, meant that the worker not only worked in comparative isolation, but also became limited to the field of the job. *Victorian Things* (1988): 256.

³⁰⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): 86.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

management. Such a hypothesis is central to Foucault's analysis of the issue of surveillance.³⁰⁶ Unlike nineteenth century institutions, such as prisons or hospitals, where the occupants were under direct surveillance, the compartmentalization of space, particularly in the domestic offices, meant that similar methods were no longer possible.³⁰⁷ Hence, the individual was expected to exert internal control and discipline. This meant that Kerr's delegation of space in Bear Wood, either for gender-specific occupation, or for task-specific use, would have required a conformity to expected behavioural standards the household.³⁰⁸ The delegation of space could, therefore, be seen as a means by which a seemingly natural, un-coerced solidarity in which each inhabitant accepted a defined role and where all the roles were closely related within the spatial organization was in place.³⁰⁹ As Foucault stated, power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself for its 'success is proportional to its abilities to hide its own mechanisms...'³¹⁰

The intended outcome of designating space was to create a social organization that, in line with contemporary middle class ideology, appeared orderly, harmonious and virtuous. It was a system that demanded, under the auspices of nineteenth century middle class Evangelical religious and moral doctrines, such virtues as a compliant obedience towards authority, based on expectations that virtue and obedience were the inherent duty

³⁰⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): Chapter 3.

³⁰⁷ Although there was compartmentalization in institutions, the spatial organization was such that the occupants were under direct surveillance. In prisons, for instance, a panoptic layout of the interior allowed for this.

³⁰⁸ In the wealthier middle class families, such as the Walter's, boys and young men would have been educated outside of the home environment and, thus, not come under the 'web of power' to the same extent as other household members. Hence, it might be argued that there was a gendered hierarchy of power, particularly in the family unit, with the males dominant over the females.

³⁰⁹ Markus compares and contrasts 'organic solidarity' with 'mechanical solidarity'. The latter is a relationship in which people are considered independent equals with shared beliefs as, for example, in the church. *Buildings & Power* (1973): 13.

³¹⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): 86.

of the individual. It also demanded a sense of obligation towards others, often translated by the middle class into acts of philanthropy.

The virtues of the middle class woman, as exemplar good wife, mother, or daughter ranged from personifying standards of moral excellence to her social accomplishments. The expectations of the female servant included such virtues as industry, frugality, diligence and good management.³¹¹ Whether family member or servant, a woman in a nineteenth century middle class household was expected to function within both the constrictions of such virtues and within the confinements of gender-specific space. This reflected a social order upheld by Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau, as well as Ruskin, an order based on the middle class tenets whereby the 'natural' realm meant a domestic domain sustained by the benevolent and paternal discipline of the male titular head of the household.³¹²

In *Sesame and Lilies*, Ruskin counselled that the 'woman's true place' was in the home.³¹³ In her respective roles of middle class wife and mother, or domestic servant in a middle class household, the female could, in carrying out her domestic duties within the confinement of the domestic sphere, exemplify the values of familial felicity to which the middle class subscribed. Such a system within which the female was expected to exist might be understood in terms of Foucault's assertion that sexual repression coincided with the development of capitalism, to eventually become an integral part of the bourgeois order.³¹⁴ The division of space in a house such as Bear Wood was, no doubt, intended to

³¹¹ Hall discusses such virtues in *White, Male and Middle Class* (1992) Chapter 3.

³¹² Although women were central in the private, domestic sphere, men lived in it and were 'economically and legally the dominant ones within the home and family'. Groenewegan, ed., *Feminism and Political Economy in Victorian England* (1994): Groenewegan, "Women in Political Economy and Women as Political Economists in Victorian England": 14.

³¹³ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 138.

³¹⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1990): 5 & 6. Foucault adjusts the advent of the sexual repression of the female to the 17th century and the first stages of the development of capitalism.

instil 'correct moral, social and religious attitudes'.³¹⁵ Added to this, the designation of gender-specific space contributed to the way in which the nineteenth century middle class could present an image of domestic life that was different from that of the working classes. It was also a means by which the sexual stereotypes inherent in middle class ideology could be reinforced.

³¹⁵ Horn, *Ladies of the Manor* (1991): 24.

PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR

(4.6) *On the issue of children in the domestic sphere*

During the eighteenth century, the effects of industrialization resulted in a changing social order that, at the same time, witnessed a change in attitude towards children. According to historian, J.H. Plumb such a change had actually been in effect from the beginning of the century. The previous 'dominant social attitude', concerned with children's 'relation to God, to their salvation' became, as the eighteenth century progressed, an attitude wherein 'socialization rather than salvation became the new aim'.³¹⁶ In the context of the Enlightenment thought of such as Locke or Rousseau, 'the view of the child' became one that, 'given the right environment and the proper course of education, compassion and benevolence, the essential goodness of the child would triumph over its propensity for evil'.³¹⁷ By the end of the century, this was an attitude towards children that, according to Plumb, was 'spreading steadily among the middle and upper classes'.³¹⁸

At the same time, as F.M.L. Thompson notes, the increasing emergence of the middle class had 'emphasized the importance of class and income differences', both between the various stratas of the middle class, as well as within the social order itself.³¹⁹ By the nineteenth century, changes that had been taking place in the previous century in attitudes towards children meant that many parents, particularly those who now claimed middle class

³¹⁶ Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England" in *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982): 286.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 290.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 291.

³¹⁹ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 118.

status and who were ambitious to establish their identity in the social order, had 'come to look upon their children as vehicles of social emulation', as 'counters' in their 'social aspirations'.³²⁰ A traditional indication of status, long practiced by the aristocracy, had been the removal of children from the home to be raised away from the family.³²¹ However, following the precedent established during the eighteenth century, rather than being raised from birth outside of the parental home, children of wealthy families, both aristocratic and middle class, were now accommodated within the familial sphere, even though they were located apart from the mainstream of daily family life in specifically allocated space.³²² In the homes of the middle class, this was possible only where space and income allowed, so that the ability to provide such accommodation became a means by which its members could identify themselves as being socially distinct, both within their own class, as well as from the working classes.³²³

Nineteenth century attitudes towards children required that, although confined to specifically-allocated space, they be located close to the mother. This reflected the middle class ethos whereby familial felicity was considered a major component of the domestic ideal. It also reflected the role appropriated to the nineteenth century middle class woman

³²⁰ Ibid.: 292 & 300. Plumb also suggests that children, as vehicles for their parents' social aspirations, became a capital investment for parents.

³²¹ Thompson discusses aristocratic practices, particularly prevalent until the 19th. century, of employing mother-substitutes and putting babies out to wet nurses. Ibid. Plumb also cites examples of the children of the wealthy upper classes being raised away from the family home. "*The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England*" in *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982): Chapter Seven.

³²² In *Victorian Women* (1993) Perkin indicates that, at the turn of the 18th. century, there was a fashion for the aristocracy to adopt some of the emerging middle class tenets of becoming more involved with the rearing of their children. An image of a nursemaid holding a child to the mother is cited: 'A satire of the early nineteenth-century fashion amongst women of the *beau monde* for spending more time with their children and even breast feeding'. Ref. Print by James Gillray, "*The Fashionable Mamma: the Convenience of Modern Dress*", Catalogue Reynold, Nicholas Penny, ed., Royal Academy of Art, London, 1986: 393.

³²³ The lack of space in less affluent middle class and working class households precluded separate accommodation for children.

as a personification of contemporary ideals of motherhood. Ruskin regarded that the 'guiding function of the woman' was to instil in her children the virtues by which her class was identified.³²⁴ As Plumb notes, such virtues as sobriety, obedience, industry, thrift, benevolence and compassion, self-improvement and self-discipline, were those of a successful, social man', an ongoing reflection of Enlightenment ideas that represented many of the values to which the nineteenth century middle class subscribed.³²⁵

On the subject of space designated for use by children, Robert Kerr codified contemporary notions when he stated that, 'as against the principle of the withdrawal of children for domestic convenience...the mother will require to have a certain facility of access to them'.³²⁶ This meant that children be located apart from the mainstream of the household, but with, as Kerr put it, an 'intimate connection to the parents' quarter'.³²⁷ This attitude was later echoed in Stevenson's 1880 publications although, perhaps with a more practical eye towards reality, he noted, 'the nursery department should be shut off from the rest of the house; for however interesting children may be, there are times when our appreciation of them is increased by their absence'.³²⁸ However, as Stevenson concurred, 'its position should be near the mistress's bedroom'.³²⁹ Both Kerr and Stevenson indicated that the mandate of the nineteenth century architect was that specific attention be given to

³²⁴ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 135.

³²⁵ Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England" in *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1981): 290 & 291.

³²⁶ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 144.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 70.

Stevenson's statement was reflected by Adams in *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996) where she notes that, after 1870, experts 'saw such interaction as dangerous and unhealthy. It too closely resembled working-class living conditions': 139.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*: 71.

the space designated for children, that it be separate from, but near to, that of the mother, the whole integrated as part of a private, family suite.

In country houses built for middle class owners throughout the nineteenth century, space allocated for children was located either immediately above, or adjacent to, the family suite. A precedent for this was apparent as early as 1840, when William Burn had placed the nursery suite at Stoke Rochford Hall immediately above the rooms allocated to the parents.³³⁰ It was a trend that continued for several more generations. In 1864, Lewis Vulliamy, the architect for Westonbirt, located the nurseries over the private rooms of the parents to create a specific and separate family wing.³³¹ Later in the century, it would appear that convenience and practicality had become major considerations for, as Stevenson advised, the nursery and family suites should 'all be on a level, access to steps or stairs being dangerous for young children, and increasing immensely the trouble of looking after them.'³³²

At Bear Wood, Kerr had anticipated such considerations and had also responded to the mandate that children be in close proximity to the family suite. He placed the nursery suite between the family apartment and the rooms allocated to the female domestics. On the south front of the first floor, but separated from the family apartments by the back stairs, Kerr provided the Walter children with what he called 'self-enclosed' accommodation' with a nursery corridor, a night nursery, a day nursery, a room for nurse, a scullery, a bathroom

³³⁰ William Burn designed Stoke Rochford Hall for Mr & Mrs Turnor. Franklin notes that 'the juxtaposition of the rooms in his houses works as neatly as the cells in a beehive, both in vertical and horizontal relationships'. *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 153.

³³¹ Lewis Vulliamy began Westonbirt for Mr & Mrs Robert Holford in 1863.

³³² Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 70.

Such concerns for practicality and convenience could not always be accommodated, however, particularly in urban areas or in households of the less affluent middle class where space was more limited in the domestic interior. Where space was limited, children continued to be located on the upper-most floors of the house.

and a convenient nearby strangers' nursery or sick room.³³³ Between this suite and the family rooms was the school room, adjacent to which was space conveniently allocated to the governess.³³⁴ For the children of the Walter family, their accommodation, with its 'Garden entrance and Staircase' was such that, as Kerr noted, 'nothing can be a more exquisitely English touch of domestic refinement'.³³⁵ And, in this one phrase, manifested in his plans for Bear Wood, it might be said that Kerr managed to sum up ideologies of patriotism, domesticity and refinement, all of which were integral to the image that nineteenth century middle class families wished to convey.³³⁶

Despite the 'guiding function' of the mother, the responsibilities for the daily regime for children in a family, such as the Walters, devolved upon 'their own special servants'.³³⁷

Of both the spatial arrangements and the regime, F.M.L. Thompson notes that they were

intended to bring children up in a highly structured, orderly, and regimented routine, partly to make life easy for parents by keeping children out of the way except when they were wanted, and partly because this was regarded as the best way to train character and prepare children for their eventual adult duties and responsibilities.³³⁸

Secluded in their private domain, children were under the daily supervision of servants who were also expected to adhere to middle class standards. This meant that, as subordinate members of the household, both were required to obey a regime based on middle class values such as morality, obedience and duty. As Annemarie Adams notes, separated from the mainstream of household life and from adult spaces in the home, 'children who had once

³³³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 146. There were indications in the exterior architecture at Bear Wood that the south front represented the private, domestic area of occupation. See Part III (1.3).

³³⁴ This traditional placement of the governess, neither in the main house, nor in the servants' wing, served to underscore both her financial dependency and her marginalized position in the domestic hierarchy.

³³⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 146.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*: 144.

³³⁷ Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 125.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*: 126.

mingled freely with adults in the public life-style of the Middle Ages' were, largely because of the concept of middle class ethos, not only 'precluded [from] mixing outside one's own [class]' but, under the jurisdiction of a 'strict moral code by which many parents sought to raise their children [meant that it] prohibited the free intercourse that children had hitherto enjoyed'.³³⁹

The wealth of a middle class family such as the Walters at Bear Wood, allowed for the perception of how children should be accommodated in the domestic interior to be implemented to its fullest extent. This meant that the most extensive, compartmentalized, self-enclosed space, entirely separate from the daily activities of the household, could be allocated for the children. However, the fact that such space, however extensive, was a requirement in the spatial planning of the domestic interior can also be seen as an indication of the diversity with which the middle class, whatever its status, represented itself. On the one hand, it would appear that the location of the children in close proximity to the mother inferred that she reflected nineteenth century middle class ideals based on her 'guiding function' and on an apparent intimacy between her and her children. As Adams suggests, she might 'set an example'.³⁴⁰ In such an idealized role, as 'Domina, or House-Lady', Ruskin saw her as the epitome of true womanhood, at the 'centre of order' in the household.³⁴¹ On the other hand, distanced from the quotidian life of the household and raised, primarily, by servants, the children were, as F.M.L. Thompson notes:

subordinate to their parents, around whose convenience and pleasure the whole household revolved; they obeyed parental proxies, even though they were superior to the lower servants; they learnt almost

³³⁹ Adams in *Architecture in the Family Way* quotes historian, Susan Lasdun, *Victorians at Home* (1981): 138.

³⁴⁰ Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996): 139.

³⁴¹ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 165.

from the cradle that their place was to be seen and not heard...³⁴²

This is supported by Adams, who writes of the seclusion of children from adult space, indicating that they were not subjected to any consistent, pervasive influence of the mother. This is illustrated, for example, in contemporary nineteenth century pictorial images of parental involvement with children. In family domestic scenes, a servant was usually depicted in the background inferring, as Adams suggests, that the 'children's occupation of adult space requires the servant's supervision'.³⁴³ Although the degree of the seclusion of the children from the mainstream of the household varied according to the financial resources of the family and the concomitant space for their exclusive use, their separation meant they were supervised to a large extent by servants, rather than entirely by the mother. As Adams notes, the latter arrangement would have 'too closely resembled working-class living conditions'.³⁴⁴ Added to this, the degree by which children could be separated from the adult spaces of the house was a distinct mark of class status in that it indicated that the family could afford the space in which to accommodate them apart from the general household. As Kerr noted, 'in houses where superior servants are to be calculated upon, the care of the mother has only in a small degree to be provided for'.³⁴⁵

Hence, even though largely raised by servants, children, particularly in a wealthier nineteenth century middle class household were accommodated in space especially allocated to them in proximity to that occupied by the mother. It was a system that was intended to not only reflect status, but also reflect middle class values that mother and children

³⁴² Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (1988): 127.

³⁴³ Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996): 138.

For example, "*Many Happy Returns*" painted by W.P. Frith (1819-1909) portrays such a scene. Children who spent too much time with adults were known, somewhat derisively, as parlour-children.

³⁴⁴ Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996): 139.

³⁴⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 144.

represented the idealized family unit, perceived to be an integral component of domestic felicity.

PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR

(4.7) *On the issue of efficient and productive work ethics*

The spatial organization of the domestic interior, particularly with the provision of compartmentalized, task-specific, or even gender-specific space for working areas, was a means by which nineteenth century middle class requirements of an efficient and productive work ethic could be implemented and maintained. In the fields of commerce and manufacturing, as well as in the domestic realm, efficiency, with its resultant productivity, were mandates that conformed to the Evangelical doctrine of the morally redeeming power of hard work, the salutatory benefits of which, both moral and material, lay at the very heart of Victorian middle class dogma.

The effects of industrialization had contributed to expectations, particularly with the capitalist ambitions of an entrepreneurial middle class, that an efficiency of operation should result in increased productivity. Such expectations had been grounded, for example, in the field of manufacturing, where architectural form and spatial organization had accommodated more advanced technology that, in turn, increased efficiency. It was a precedent that had been at the turn of the previous century, for instance, with the construction of factory spaces, such as at Shrewsbury Mill.³⁴⁶ Here, architectural form had specifically accommodated the longer drive shafts of technically advanced machinery which,

³⁴⁶ Shrewsbury Mill built 1796/7 was the first factory to incorporate cast iron columns, beams and window frames. It was also the first in which an optimal shape and building materials were tested to withstand the weight of steam-driven machines, so allowing for an increase in production.

in turn, allowed for a more efficient and convenient placement of the machines and, hence, for increased production.³⁴⁷

As the nineteenth century progressed and the middle class became more influential in the social order, such objectives were transposed into the spatial organization of the domestic sphere. Particularly in the homes of the entrepreneurial middle class, similar capitalist expectations of productivity, based on efficiency and convenience were demanded from those employed in the household. In a house like Bear Wood, in which evidence of many middle class tenets can be identified, it is apparent that the architectural form was designed to accommodate the components by which such demands could be implemented. The floor plan not only indicates this, but it also makes it clear that the spatial organization placed such demands on the servants, rather than on the family household. Kerr advocated a clear demarcation between space allocated to family and servants. For the former, his concerns were for comfort, rather than for efficiency, so that the aspect, salubrity and the prospect of space designated for their use should, as Kerr put it, contribute to the 'pleasantness of the apartment'.³⁴⁸ At Bear Wood, the south-facing apartments overlooked the prospect of terrace, lake and estate, those at the west the formal gardens and croquet lawn, the north, the main driveway approach.

For the domestic offices in which the servants operated, there was no such concern for comfort, pleasantness or salubrity, only that neither aspect nor prospect should deter from the efficiency of their work. The preferable aspect of a kitchen, for example, should face what Kerr noted as the 'Northward cold', to provide good light and so that the interior

³⁴⁷ Technology, such as the introduction of cast iron components and cement, had allowed for this more advanced form of architecture.

³⁴⁸ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 79.

temperature would not be further increased by sunshine.³⁴⁹ At Bear Wood, the kitchen offices faced east, an equally appropriate aspect for, according to Kerr, it was 'exposed to the well-known bitterness of the East wind', an alternative that would have provided the requisite cooler temperatures and so, presumably, have contributed to more productivity on the part of the servants. Kerr also ensured that the prospect of the domestic offices at Bear Wood would not inhibit efficiency, for the rooms in which the servants worked overlooked either the confinements of the Kitchen court, or the laundry and stables.

An efficiency of operation was assisted by the convenience gained by the close proximity of space to which similar functions were prescribed, a system that reflected commercial manufacturing practices. 'Convenience', noted Kerr, 'refers to the active...the component parts' that 'shall enable all the uses and purposes of the establishment to be carried out in perfect harmony'.³⁵⁰ At Bear Wood where, in an affirmation of planning aimed at efficiency, practicality and convenience, the fuel closet was close to the kitchen, the cleaning and brushing rooms centred on the footman's room. The butler's room was adjacent to the plate safe, the servery and the dining room and also overlooked the approach to the carriage porch and the luggage entrance. Next to the luggage entrance was the housekeeper's room, conveniently overlooking the access to both the housekeeper's corridor and the kitchen court. Past the still room and the women's work room, the corridor lead to the kitchen entrance corridor, along which were related offices. There was a housemaids' closet on every floor of Bear Wood, a practice condoned by Stevenson as a 'great convenience...in every house with any pretension to good planning'.³⁵¹ It would

³⁴⁹ Ibid: 82.

³⁵⁰ Ibid: 71.

³⁵¹ Stevenson, *House Architecture*, Vol. II (1880): 97.

appear that the attention paid to the 'good planning' of the spatial organization of the domestic interior confirms that convenience was considered a major factor for an efficiency of operation, a concern that nineteenth century architects, including Kerr, upheld.³⁵² This concern was also apparent to the reviewer of *The Gentleman's House*, in that Kerr's maxims for the design of the domestic interior were endorsed with the statement that 'certainly those sacrificing convenience cannot belong to good architecture'.³⁵³

However efficient or convenient the spatial organization of the domestic interior of a house such as Bear Wood was, productive results also depended on those who operated within that space. Middle class ethos stressed the morally redeeming benefits of hard work, achieved as much by the work ethics of the individual as by the efficiency or convenience of architectural planning. Under the rubric of the Evangelical doctrine reflected in the values to which the middle class subscribed, the efficacy of 'industry and work' was, as Richard Altick notes, 'the moral imperative...identified with that of faith and elevated into a virtual eleventh commandment by Carlyle: "For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work..."'³⁵⁴ Such a moral onus placed on the servants of a middle class domestic household, had, necessarily, to be maintained. Servants were meant to be inspired by adages such as "Waste Not, Want Not" often prominently displayed in kitchens. The onus for self-discipline and management was supported by regulations to which servants were expected to adhere, an expectation often enforced by rules that required, for instance, that 'breakages not mentioned within the day must be made good'.³⁵⁵ As with the tenants

³⁵² A study of floor plans for contemporaneous country houses illustrated in Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981) confirms this.

³⁵³ *The Builder*, "The Gentleman's House", January 7, 1865: 3.

³⁵⁴ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 168 & 169.

³⁵⁵ Briggs, *Victorian Things* (1988): 258.

in the estate village attached to a country house, non-compliance to proscribed standards by the domestic servants could mean termination of employment, an act confirmed by the nineteenth century Reverend Baldwin Brown who remarked upon the 'dependence of the class that supplies our servants'.³⁵⁶

Kerr, in addition to his 'convenient distribution' of space and its organization, gave considerable and detailed advice on the contents of these work-designated spaces to further lend to efficient and productive habits.³⁵⁷ *The Gentleman's House* provided instruction on both dimensions and placement of equipment for, in the interests of convenience, efficiency and practicality, there was, as Kerr insisted, a 'place for everything'.³⁵⁸ His was an objective to not only accommodate efficiency, but that would also subscribe to a further characteristic by which the middle class identified themselves, that of an awareness of progress being made in the fields of technology and science.

This was a tradition that had been in effect over the centuries. In 1610, Robert Bainbridge issued *Some Rules and Orders for the Government of the House of an Earle*. The *Footman's Directory* of 1825 was also a list of rules to be followed. Both quoted in Girouard, *A Country House Companion* (1987): 129 & 135. In country houses such as 18th century Erdigg or Woburn Abbey, rules directed at servants were painted on boards, where they remain *in situ*.

³⁵⁶ Briggs, *Victorian Things* (1988): 259.

³⁵⁷ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 200.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*: 71.

**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.8) *Issues of technology and scientific progress*

It would appear from the copious and detailed advice offered in *The Gentleman's House* that Kerr considered himself to be a man of the modern nineteenth century, who recognized the advantages offered by advances made in both science and technology. Much of Kerr's theoretical advice can be seen to have been put into practice at Bear Wood, perhaps to asseverate perceptions, not only of status and prestige, but also of the grasp that owner and architect had of progressive modernity. Kerr designed Bear Wood for a man who was technically-minded, indeed, 'destined...to effect organic and far-reaching improvements in the mechanical production of 'The Times''³⁵⁹ According to Girouard, Walter had been 'personally responsible for giving *The Times* the most up-to-date printing works in the world'³⁶⁰ Walter's interest in the field was evident when, in 1886, on a voyage to America, he 'spent most of his time in the engine room'³⁶¹

Kerr's mandate that the operation of a gentleman's house be 'that of a great well-oiled machine running on so many cogs, of which the highest possible praise was to say "it ran like clockwork"' was diligently attended to by the incorporation of much of the very latest technology into Bear Wood. As Julian Orbach affirms, Bear Wood was 'built to the most advanced technological standards of the day'³⁶² Requirements for efficiency and productivity in the domestic realm reflected contemporary commercial manufacturing

³⁵⁹ Dictionary of National Biography, "*Walter, John (1818-1894)*: 715.

³⁶⁰ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 122.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Orbach, *Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1987): 52.

practices that depended on technological progress. In the commercial sphere, a focus on maximum production, aided by the combination of time management and efficient machinery, had underwritten the fortunes accumulated by many middle class entrepreneurs. In keeping, John Walter oversaw the installation of mechanically-improved printing presses that increased output for less cost and so subscribed to a mandate for maximum efficiency and production, not only in business, but also in his domestic realm.³⁶³

Nineteenth century concerns for efficiency and practicality were also aided by scientific progress. That the middle class saw themselves as purveyors of such progress is suggested by Kerr who likened the 'character' of the kitchen to that of 'a complicated laboratory'.³⁶⁴ With the integration of advances made by both technology and science into their lifestyles, it might be argued that middle class owners and architects perceived themselves as representing the vigour and progressiveness by which their class wished to be identified. At the same time, however, their application of scientific and technological advances to the domestic interior provided a means by which middle class ideals of efficiency, convenience and comfort could be accommodated. An overview of contemporary issues of the *Building News* supports this.³⁶⁵ Each issue was prefaced by several pages of advertisements for the latest in building supplies and materials that featured an extensively diverse range of items covering the complete spectrum of domestic

³⁶³ Girouard cites other 19th. century middle class owners of country houses who were also 'technically minded', such as Wright at Ormaston, Thorneycroft at Tettenhall and Armstrong at Cragside. *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 18.

³⁶⁴ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 44.

³⁶⁵ Issues surveyed covered 1874 - 1875. The latest in building materials, for instance, offered Dennetts Fire-Proof Construction or Creeke's Patent Capped Drain Pipes.

requirements, from materials suitable for both roof and drainage, to the most up-to-date cooking appliances and plumbing accessories.³⁶⁶

As has been noted, the most modern materials were used in the construction of Bear Wood. In addition, it is apparent that many of the latest advances in scientific progress and technology were incorporated into Kerr's design for the interior. The floor plan indicates 'Heating' at the base of the principal staircase, where a circular, cast iron radiator for central heating was installed.³⁶⁷ Heated with hot water from a boiler in the kitchen court, next to which was the engine house for pumping water from the adjacent water tower, radiators such as this ensured that the comfort of central heating supplemented heat emitted from fireplaces.³⁶⁸ Also included in the floor plan were bathrooms and WCs, indicating that plumbing for water, drainage and sewage was installed on each floor. A gasworks, built by the lake, provided the house with gas lighting.³⁶⁹ A life, located near the back stairs, rather than in the main house, so presumably intended for the convenience of hauling luggage,

³⁶⁶ Other publications supported this. For example, Charles Eastlake published *Hints on Household Taste* in 1878. In 1880, J.J. Stevenson published *House Architecture, Vols. I & II*. With a concern for hygiene, both paid considerable attention to drainage, heating and ventilation, as well as to the use of easily cleaned modern materials, such as encaustic tiles. At Brodsworth Hall, the latest invention of a linoleum manufactured under the name of 'Silentium' made to imitate parquet flooring, was laid in the billiard room. Source: English Heritage, *Brodsworth Hall* (1995): 19.

³⁶⁷ This huge, circular cast iron radiator remains *in situ* at the base of the principal staircase.

³⁶⁸ A 'ponderous' heating apparatus was installed at the cost of over £3,000.00. Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 122.

The incorporation of the latest in scientific progress into country houses continued. Less than a decade later at Wykehurst, E.M. Barry used a cavity wall construction, double-framed fireproof floors of iron and concrete, as well as warm air heating and internal water pipes that supplied water to all floors. The pipes were protected from freezing by running through hot air flues. Source: Mitchell, *Victorian Britain* (1988): 36.

³⁶⁹ Although Kerr does not address them in *The Gentleman's House*, Stevenson in *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880) discusses concerns for heat, ventilation and the contamination of the atmosphere emitted from gas lighting in Chapter XII: "Artificial Lighting": 254-256. The architect, S.S. Teulon (1812-1873) had pioneered the use of gas for domestic lighting at Tortworth, built between 1849 & 1852. In 1878, Cragside, owned by Sir William Armstrong, steel and shipping magnate, became the first domestic building in the world in which electric lights, powered by the estate's water-driven generator, were installed. Armstrong's interest in technology was also evident in the grounds of Cragside, where could be found 'examples of hydraulics and engineering'. The National Trust, *Cragside, Northumberland* (1992): 5.

connected the main with the top floor.³⁷⁰ In 1887, a decade or so after the completion of the house, a private telephone wire was installed at Bear Wood, indicating an ongoing interest on the part of the owner that the latest technological and scientific advances be incorporated into the house.³⁷¹

The integration of technology and scientific progress into nineteenth century country houses was of concern primarily to the middle class, an inclination that set them apart from other classes. Whilst it is obvious that the less affluent members of the middle class and the working classes did not have the financial resources with which to incorporate the latest in technology into their houses, it would appear that, with some exceptions, such as Eaton Hall, where indoor plumbing was installed during remodelling in the 1870s, or Hatfield, where electric light was installed in 1881, few aristocratic country houses boasted technically-advanced appliances.³⁷² Perhaps it was that, for the aristocracy, traditional ways by which their domestic interiors had operated died hard, traditions that could, in the mid-nineteenth century, still be supported by an unlimited supply of cheap domestic labour. Or, perhaps it was, as Girouard suggests, that middle class requirements for domestic comfort and convenience, for efficiency and practicality were generally considered by the aristocracy to be the province of the '*nouveau-riche*, as unhealthy, or, even worse, American'.³⁷³ Issues of domestic comfort, convenience, efficiency and practicality were addressed in detail

³⁷⁰ Until William Armstrong of Cragside pioneered hydraulic power for domestic use in the 1870s, it is likely that the Lift at Bear Wood was originally operated manually.

³⁷¹ Receipts for the annual rental of the private telephone wire from March 15, 1887 to March 14, 1888 show a sum of \$44.15.00. Ref: DE WL F13 RO.

³⁷² Girouard in *The Victorian Country House* (1979) lists 11 country houses that, to his knowledge, had electric light by the 1880s. Of these, only Hatfield (in 1881) Eaton (in 1887) belonged to aristocrats, the remaining 9 having belonged to middle class owners.

³⁷³ *Ibid*: 18. Hare, *The Story of My Life (2nd. series)* (1890).

Both John Walter and Robert Kerr travelled to America. Kerr spent part of his youth in America where, according to Hitchcock, 'as well known to Victorians, radicalism was contagious in all fields of thought'. *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1954): 606.

in the works of both Kerr and Stevenson, primarily, it is suggested, to accommodate middle class requirements in the domestic sphere. Such requirements were to be perceived in the nineteenth century as luxuries associated with the middle class for, as Girouard notes, 'in his interminable country house peregrinations' Augustus Hare 'used the word 'luxurious' almost exclusively for the houses of the new rich'.³⁷⁴

Evidence of the practical application of mechanical science and technology incorporated into a country house like Bear Wood is a means by which its owner can be identified as a man of practicality, in step with the progresses of the age, who represented many of the values by which the middle class wished to be identified. Even if was only the more affluent members of the middle class who were able to be more amenable to incorporate the very latest technological and scientific developments into their homes, it distinguished them with an identity that inferred an active subscription to the progress of modern society. It was an identity that set them, as representatives of the middle class, apart from either the aristocratic or the working classes.

³⁷⁴ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 19. Augustus Hare, *The Story of My Life* (2nd. series) (1890).

PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR

(4.9) *Issues of health, sanitation and hygiene*

In addition to the employment of advanced technology and materials, attention was given during the construction of country houses, like Bear Wood, to other principles on which nineteenth century middle class tenets were founded. Such principles focused on the importance of maintaining standards of health and hygiene, considered by the middle class values to be analogous to moral rectitude. As Robin Evans notes, there developed 'an intimate bond between physical and moral degradation', which meant that it became an imperative that issues of sanitation, health and hygiene be addressed.³⁷⁵

Concerns for the provision of sanitary facilities in the interests of health and hygiene were apparent throughout the social order. As a result, during the century considerable attention was paid to systems of sanitation whereby concerns focused on the efficiency and the location of the arrangements for drainage, water supplies and cesspools, as well as for ventilation and heating.³⁷⁶ Largely underwritten by middle class values, concerns for sanitary arrangements were addressed in the public arena. In state-run institutions such as hospitals, prisons and asylums, used, primarily, by the lower classes, prevalent middle class values that set standards for health and hygiene meant attention to ventilation and heating, as well as access to uncontaminated water and adequate sewerage systems.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Architecture* (1997): 95.

³⁷⁶ Also consistently advertised were Doulton's Closet Pans & Traps awarded "5 medals for progress and merit".

³⁷⁷ In 1861, the death of the Prince Consort from typhoid fever, presumed to have been contracted from the faulty drains at Windsor Castle, had acerbated public concerns for sanitary arrangements, as did recurrent contagious epidemics.

Similar standards for sanitation extended into middle class homes, although such pragmatic concerns were not new or specific to the nineteenth century middle class. The provision of water for domestic use had always been a concern, with the consequent careful siting of houses historically near a supply of water and on raised ground to allow for drainage flow. Mechanical means of pumping water, such as water wheels driven by water or animal power, were in evidence in the seventeenth century, a system later superceded by the invention of steam-powered engines.³⁷⁸ However, although some country houses, such as Blenheim, Woburn or Carlshalton boasted bath houses or plunge baths in the eighteenth century, a concern for hygiene or sanitation was not extensive, even among the wealthy.³⁷⁹ In Girouard's opinion, this was because 'personal cleanliness did not rank high enough', so that the consequent 'lack of progress in sanitation was due to a combination of cheap labour, lack of demand and technical disadvantages'.³⁸⁰

Prevalent middle class standards of health and hygiene were acknowledged by nineteenth century architects and applied to the domestic interior. At Bear Wood, Kerr demonstrated his subscription to such values, not only to the latest advances in technology, but also to demands that middle class standards for sanitary arrangements be accommodated. He installed a total of twenty two water closets at Bear Wood, so following the maxim he addressed in the 'The Supplementaries' section of *The Gentleman's House*. Of 'primary consideration', he wrote about water closets, was to be a 'sufficient

³⁷⁸ At Uppark, the first effective domestic water pump had been installed in 1650. At Greys Court, a donkey wheel was used to raise water from the well. (It remains the only complete one in existence and was in use until electricity was brought onto the estate in the 1920s.)

James Watt perfected the steam engine c. 1764.

³⁷⁹ Carshalton House (1719-1720) was built for Sir John Fellowes, a director of the South Sea Company.

³⁸⁰ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (1978): 256.

number' and 'properly distributed'.³⁸¹ However, this was advice that was later tempered by Stevenson, who remarked that the 'tendency of modern planning has been to increase their number, scattering them all over the house instead of placing a less number in convenient situations'.³⁸² Miasmatic concerns were also an issue to Stevenson in that the 'tendency of modern planning' to increase the number of water closets could prove to be an 'additional source of fever from sewer gas'.³⁸³ However, in the general interests of health and hygiene, as well as in the interests of modesty and moral rectitude, both Kerr and Stevenson concurred that water closets be in 'private situations', together with a ready and abundant supply of water and an efficient means of drainage.³⁸⁴

It would appear that the provision of bathrooms in the houses of the more affluent was not only to appease middle class standards for health and hygiene, but that they were also regarded as a status symbol.³⁸⁵ At Bear Wood, five bathrooms were installed which, despite its large size, was, according to Girouard, 'a very generous supply for a Victorian house'.³⁸⁶ Such a number reflected Kerr's directive that 'no house of any pretensions will be devoid of a *general* Bathroom; and in a large house there must be several of these'.³⁸⁷ The floor plan for Bear Wood indicates that the bathrooms were allocated to family and guests, with none specified for the servants, indicating that Kerr's directive that 'in an establishment of importance, a *Servants' Bath-room* also ought to be provided in their

³⁸¹ Kerr, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1865): 152.

³⁸² Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 74.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ As early as 1778, Joseph Bramah had patented efficient WCs with valves.

The December 14, 1874 edition of *The Building News* carried correspondence dealing with the issue of 'sewer gases and a scientific and safe water-closet': 682.

³⁸⁵ Bathrooms in this context refers to rooms for bathing, not WCs.

³⁸⁶ Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979): 268 & 269. Stoke Rochford, built by the middle class Turnor family had two bathrooms in 1839, whereas, 'as late as 1873, Carlton Towers [owned by the aristocratic Beaumonts] had none'. *Ibid.*: 22.

³⁸⁷ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 150.

department' was not followed.³⁸⁸ Despite this, it might be assumed that the application of contemporary middle class standards of health and hygiene were intended to extend to household servants, an assumption supported by Stevenson, who wrote, 'I think the servants should have the use of a bath', although he cautioned, 'but they will not use it unless it has hot water'.³⁸⁹

In addition to systems for domestic sanitation, Kerr also paid significant theoretical attention to other concerns considered important for maintaining middle class standards, such as ventilation and heating, for the main part of a house as well as for the servants' area. For family and guests, ventilation, along with facilities for heating, were seen in terms of their domestic comfort. As Stevenson confirmed, on the arrangements for 'such as heating and flues, ventilation...the comfort of a house in a great measure depends'.³⁹⁰ Despite such apparent demands for comfort, Stephen Fiske, an American travelling in England in 1869, noted attitudes that 'heated air is considerably unhealthy...The English wrap themselves up to cross the hall as though they were going out of doors...'.³⁹¹ For servants, however, the provision of adequate ventilation and heating was not, Kerr admonished, to be regarded as a 'matter of luxury'.³⁹² Rather, in the interests of their efficiency and productivity, it was important that the health of servants be sustained by adequate standards of ventilation.

Concerns for ventilation were based on contemporary theories of the benefits of fresh air to counter the spread of disease, concerns reflected in Ruskin's anxieties about the

³⁸⁸ Ibid: 151.

The 5 bathrooms installed at Bear Wood were situated as follows: 1 in the family suite, 1 in the nursery, 1 in the young ladies' suite and 1 for guests on each of the two bedroom floors.

³⁸⁹ Stevenson, *House Architecture*, Vol. II (1880): 75.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.: 212.

³⁹¹ Fiske, *English Photographs* (1869): 196-197 quoted in Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979):

27.

³⁹² Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 202.

world outside the domestic sphere, included in which was the spread of infection.³⁹³ In the public realm, theories about the benefits of fresh air had been implemented, for example, in hospitals where the pavilion style of construction and 'Nightingale' wards were designed to allow cross-ventilation. A similarly well-ventilated domestic interior was also important to maintain the health of the servants. In the same way that the presence of servants could, as the architectural historian, Jill Franklin notes, threaten the 'illusion of family privacy and possibly even family purity', so risks of contamination from servants could be a potential threat to familial health.³⁹⁴

In addition, in the interests of efficiency and productivity of servants, Kerr noted in the section entitled 'Light and Air and Salubrity' in *The Gentleman's House* that ventilation 'ought to be placed at a maximum' in the 'Offices' so that the 'labour of service may be performed with advantage'.³⁹⁵ To underscore the importance he attached to the issue of ventilation, he addressed it comprehensively when advising on domestic offices, from kitchen to cloakrooms, from scullery to servants' bedrooms. That heat was of secondary concern and not considered necessary for the comfort of the servants was evidenced by Kerr's advocacy that although 'every [servant's] room ought to have a fireplace, and good light and ventilation', the fireplace was 'for use in case of illness if no more...'³⁹⁶ Reflecting attention being paid to the benefits of fresh air and, presumably, with little regard for heating the interior occupied by servants, he also advised, 'let every room...and every passage be...sufficiently ventilated from the external atmosphere'.³⁹⁷ Water closets,

³⁹³ Adams in *Architecture in the Family Way* (1996) cites Ruskin's anxieties: 5.

³⁹⁴ Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 88. Franklin suggests that 'there is no doubt that the Victorians were terrified of sexual encounters between gentlemen and pretty housemaids'.

³⁹⁵ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (11865): 202.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*: 250 & 251.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

too, were to be 'thoroughly ventilated and directly lighted from the open air'.³⁹⁸ For architects, it was, said Kerr, the 'very best of skilful [sic] design, in the consideration whether the Offices are fresh and wholesome'.³⁹⁹

Architectural concerns for what Kerr cited as a 'fresh and wholesome' domestic environment extended to include other concerns, such as cooking odours. Presumably linked to miasmatic concerns that the atmosphere be salubrious, the 'offensive vapours' 'engendered' by cooking were considered undesirable by middle class standards for health and hygiene.⁴⁰⁰ It was an issue also addressed by Stevenson who noted that 'the thought of the architect' could prevent family and guests from being greeted by the 'sickly odour' of cooking 'in the halls and passages...[or by] an atmosphere [that] has an accumulated taint of perpetual cooking'.⁴⁰¹ As Kerr had noted, the risk of cooking odours penetrating the main part of a house could be minimized by the architect ensuring that provisions be made to intercept them. Such provisions included an efficient means of ventilation, preferably a system of cross-ventilation, together with adequate distance and turns in the route leading from kitchen to dining room. A well-planned ventilation system would, according to Kerr, 'ultimately carry off, but meanwhile...prevent from spreading or even stagnating' offensive odours.⁴⁰²

At Bear Wood, Kerr was able to deal effectively with distancing the kitchen from the dining room by locating it some one hundred and fifty feet from the latter along a circuitous main corridor route, from which it was separated by a kitchen entrance corridor

³⁹⁸ Ibid: 152.

³⁹⁹ Ibid: 202.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 82 & 83.

⁴⁰² Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 202.

and a kitchen lobby.⁴⁰³ That Kerr could do this can be interpreted as an indication of the prestige of the owner in that the financial resources of John Walter meant that the dining room could be so far distanced from the kitchen. The ability to do this in a domestic interior also served to separate the wealthier representatives of the middle class who occupied extensive domestic space from those of the lower orders, for whom the odour of cooking could only be justified by architects as being comforting and inviting. Placing the kitchen in Bear Wood at a distance from the main part of the house, however, was not an architectural innovation. In previous centuries, kitchen pavilions had also been distanced from the main house, as seen at country houses such as Petworth, Uppark or Kedleston.⁴⁰⁴ Then, the primary intention had been to minimize the risk of fire from open cooking ranges from destroying the entire house but, by the mid-nineteenth century when technically-advanced houses such as Bear Wood were constructed, cooking was carried out on closed ranges, thus reducing the risk of fire.⁴⁰⁵

As has been stated, the attention and concern focused on issues of hygiene and health in the nineteenth century sprang from middle class values that subscribed to notions of propriety and common decency, wherein good standards of hygiene were considered

⁴⁰³ Franklin notes that, at Mentmore, 'even by Victorian standards the dinner service route was incomprehensibly torturous'. *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 138. The elimination of cooking smells appeared to take precedence over the serving of hot food, although Stevenson addressed the issue in *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880) when he suggested that, in the service-room adjacent to the dining room, 'it is convenient ...to fix a hot-closet, heated by the general hot-water circulation of the house or by gas, for keeping the dishes which arrive from the kitchen hot till they are wanted...': 97.

⁴⁰⁴ At both Petworth (c. 1680) and Uppark (c. 1750) the kitchen facilities were housed in separate buildings, connected to the house by underground tunnels that not only provided protection from the elements, but kept servants from view. At Kedleston, the kitchen was located in the west wing pavilion, connected to the main house by an enclosed semi-circular colonnade.

⁴⁰⁵ Manufacturers such as H. Walker & Son made the 'Eagle' range, Dinning & Cooke made roasting and oven ranges. By 1872, steam-powered cooking apparatus was in use. Source: The National Trust, *Petworth, the Servants' Quarters* (1997): 9.

analogous to moral decency. The nineteenth century perception that good standards of health and hygiene went hand-in-hand with middle class notions of domestic, familial felicity and moral propriety is inferred by the frequent use of such inspirational adages as 'A Healthy Home is a Happy Home', or 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness'.

Muthesius was to take the analogy of middle class standards of health and hygiene as representing a responsible and harmonious social order one step further. In considering the value of a 'modern English house' as a model, he equated nineteenth century middle class concerns with cleanliness, bathing and bodily hygiene with cultural progress, an equation that, it might be argued, reflected contemporary middle class perceptions of how they wished to be identified.⁴⁰⁶ However, despite this investiture of cultural progress on the middle class, despite the evidence that its values pervaded the social order, there was recognition that the means by which health and hygiene could be maintained in the domestic interior were a prerogative of the affluent. This, too, was to set the middle class apart from the working class for, as Stevenson noted with some perception, 'fresh air and cleanliness are the luxuries of the well fed and well clothed'.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Muthesius, *The English House* (1979): 95. First published as *Das Englische Haus* in 1904/5, it was the result of the time Muthesius had spent in England between 1860 and 1900.

⁴⁰⁷ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 3.

**PART IV
THE DOMESTIC INTERIOR**

(4.10) *The issue of displaying cultural artefacts*

The display of cultural acquisitions in a domestic setting has always been a means by which attributes such as erudite acuity, elite taste, wealth and status could be aesthetically affirmed. By the sixteenth century, the domestic space in which cultural artefacts were exhibited was generally in the form of a long gallery, an enclosed apartment in which exercise could be taken.⁴⁰⁸ A display of portraits was intended to impress the viewer with the status of the family, as well as with images of those of influence connected, in some way, to the owner.⁴⁰⁹ By the eighteenth century, the long gallery often formed part of an entire *enfilade* of public rooms in which a collection of cultural artefacts could be viewed.⁴¹⁰ With this *enfilade* of rooms replaced, in nineteenth century country houses, by a matrix of enclosed spaces, there appeared to be no requirement that the public spaces of the domestic interior serve as repositories in which to specifically display artworks.

This observation might be warranted by a survey of the floor plans for nineteenth century country houses in Franklin's *The Gentleman's Country House*.⁴¹¹ These floor plans reveal that, with the exception of Bear Wood, there was no specific allocation of space in which to display works of art.⁴¹² In spite of this, it cannot be assumed that the affluent

⁴⁰⁸ For example, a long gallery was in place in Longleat by 1572, in Hardwick Hall by 1590 & that at Penshurst Place was finished in 1607.

⁴⁰⁹ This might be considered an antecedent to the signed photographs that were to be similarly displayed in the domestic sphere, particularly in a country house setting.

⁴¹⁰ This was true at Syon, for example, where in 1762 Robert Adam remodelled the Jacobean long gallery to be part of the *enfilade* of rooms that encircled all four sides of the house.

⁴¹¹ Franklin illustrates 10 floor plans, including Bear Wood, for country houses built between 1835 and 1870.

⁴¹² The exception of Bear Wood will be addressed later in the section.

middle class owners of these houses did not purchase or possess artefacts. In fact, both Kerr and Stevenson offered advice on how and where art should be displayed in the domestic interior. Kerr appeared to attach some significance to both ownership and the intrinsic worth of art when he noted that '...a valuable collection of pictures ought to be properly displayed, - not merely put up on the walls of the Family-room at hazard'.⁴¹³ Stevenson acknowledged that 'special galleries for pictures and sculptures' were sometimes necessary but, in line with nineteenth century middle class requirements for private, domestic space, he advised that it be 'better in most cases to use works of art for adorning rooms we live in'.⁴¹⁴

Despite such acknowledgments, it would appear that any provision for the display of cultural artefacts in the domestic interior of nineteenth century country houses was not an architectural priority. This was in contrast to the spatial organization of country houses built in previous centuries, where the architectural form for the interior had accommodated the exhibition of collections of art works so that they could be viewed by a visiting public. By the mid-nineteenth century, a shift in such architectural priorities was evident. For example, in *The Gentleman's House*, a definitive treatise offering a plethora of architectural advice, with a *minutiae* of detailed and comprehensive suggestions, Kerr gave only cursory attention to architectural considerations for the display of cultural artefacts. Compared to the spatial organization of other areas of the domestic interior for which Kerr's discourse offered specific advice that extended to diagrammatic suggestions, even to the dimensions and placement of furniture and equipment, his information on what he referred to as 'Galleries of Art' was markedly sparse. Although he did address the practical issues of

⁴¹³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 451.

⁴¹⁴ Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 65.

lighting, size, and door placement, he indicated that the major consideration in planning such apartments was not for the aesthetic display of works of art. Rather, with concern for contemporary middle class requirements for domestic felicity, he cautioned that the spatial organization be such that 'family comfort not be sacrificed'.⁴¹⁵

Kerr's concern exactly dovetailed with contemporary requirements that both the architectural expression and the spatial organization of a middle class home accommodate one of the most pervasive elements of middle class requirements, that of the insular, family sphere. The concomitant compartmentalization and the division of the domestic interior to provide this private space took precedence over any concerns for the display of cultural artefacts. Instead, as noted by Stevenson, it was expected that works of art be incorporated into the domestic space as a contribution to family comfort or enjoyment, rather than in the specifically designed space found in earlier country houses where they could be viewed in a public manner.

That domestic concerns not be sacrificed for the sake of exhibiting cultural artefacts was evident at Brodsworth, for example. Despite purchasing a large collection of sculpture at the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865, the owner, Charles Thellusson evidently demanded no specific space for the display of either these, or his collection of English and Dutch paintings. Instead, the artworks were dispersed 'as one of the dominating decorative elements' throughout the halls, corridors and rooms of the interior.⁴¹⁶ This would infer that, rather than be exhibited as an impressive indication of the aesthetic taste of the owner, they were intended to add to the comfort and salubrity of domestic life.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ English Heritage, *Brodsworth Hall* (1995): 13.

At Bear Wood, records indicate that some works of art were displayed in the drawing and dining rooms, presumably to also contribute to the domestic enjoyment of family and guests.⁴¹⁷ However, unlike other contemporaneous country houses surveyed, the floor plan for Bear Wood indicates space specifically designated as a picture gallery.⁴¹⁸ Records show that the most valuable accumulation of artworks owned by John Walter were housed in this space.⁴¹⁹ That the incorporation of this gallery at Bear Wood should have been an exceptional demand for the interior of a middle class house was confirmed by Kerr. He made special note that one of the 'peculiarities of design' for a 'Mansion' in 'Berkshire', was because 'the primary basis of the arrangement consists in the demand for a Picture-Gallery'.⁴²⁰ In line with contemporary middle class requirements that the focus of the spatial organization of the domestic interior be on accommodating the family rather than on a display of cultural artefacts, Kerr cautioned his reader that 'to attach such a Gallery to the house as a mere show-place is an idea wanting in that domesticity of motive which ought to pervade everything connected with a private dwelling'.⁴²¹

From this apparent dichotomy between the presence of the picture gallery at Bear Wood and Kerr's concerns that it be a negatively pervasive influence on the domestic interior, it can be speculated that the space was incorporated as a particular requirement of

⁴¹⁷ A catalogue of the pictures at Bear Wood was compiled for the purposes of insurance in 1884. See Appendix A. Girouard includes a late Victorian view of the drawing room at Bear Wood in *The Victorian Country House* (1971): plate 248. The image shows a picture hung over the fireplace, curio cabinets and shelves, displays of porcelain, a portfolio rack and books in the room. (Also, in what might be considered a middle class concern for cultural refinement juxtaposed to requirements for domestic comfort, the room included chairs that ranged from Sheraton-style, to contemporary-style upholstered armchairs, to wicker-work armchairs, to bent-wood occasional chairs. Tables included an eclectic mix of traditional, contemporary and Indian styles.)

⁴¹⁸ See Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981).

⁴¹⁹ See Appendix A. The assumption that the bulk of the collection was housed in the gallery is based on its assessed value compared to the value of those in the drawing and dining rooms.

⁴²⁰ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 451.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

the owner. It would appear that Walter intended it primarily for the display Dutch paintings he had inherited from his father. That this should be considered exceptional was inferred by *The Times*, which made particular reference to Walter's 'own gallery' in which was displayed 'partly collected by his father...an assemblage of masterpieces'.⁴²² To further indicate that this was a somewhat unusual means by which to display an art collection in a contemporary middle class domestic interior, *The Times* evidently felt it necessary to add that Walter 'thoroughly enjoyed discussing its beauties with visitors who had studied the Dutch school'.⁴²³

Like John Walter at Bear Wood, Joseph Neeld, M.P., middle class owner of Grittleton House, was an exception in that he had the interior designed to accommodate his 'large collection of paintings'.⁴²⁴ The result was, as the architectural historian, Henry-Russell Hitchcock notes, that the interior of Grittleton consisted of:

enormous rooms and top-lighted vestibules primarily intended as galleries for the display of his Old Masters and his contemporary English pictures...Both architectural effect and domestic convenience were intentionally subordinated to the client's rather special requirements.⁴²⁵

The galleries in which both Walter and Neeld exhibited their collections can be seen as both exceptional within the context of contemporary nineteenth century architectural design for a country house, as well as an emulation of predecessor country house owners. As such, the galleries at Bear Wood and Grittleton appeared to counter prevalent middle class concerns for domesticity. That the exceptional architectural feature of these galleries was

⁴²² *The Times*, November 5, 1894, "Death of Mr Walter".

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

Because the Walter family would probably have represented middle class values, it must be presumed that these 'visitors' were guests invited by the family, rather than members of the public viewing the house.

⁴²⁴ Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1954): 256-257. Grittleton House, near Cippenham, Wilts. was build c. 1853 by the architect James Thomson, a pupil of J.B. Papworth.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

incorporated into the domestic interior of their houses can be interpreted as an indication of the diverse and, seemingly, contradictory ways in which the middle class often appeared to represent itself. On the one hand, it would seem that cultural acquisitions dispersed throughout the interior of the house were intended to reflect demands for domestic comfort and enjoyment. Conversely, that the spatial organization in these two particular houses included designated space in which to display collections appears to reference intentions from previous centuries that the artworks imply the cultural eruditeness of the owner. However, as the country houses belonging to nineteenth century middle class owners were not available for public viewing, it can be presumed that the display could have only been intended for the private pleasure of the owner, his family and his guests.

In contrast to this is the argument presented in this paper that, in the process of establishing an identity, the nineteenth century middle class often appeared to stridently and ostentatiously advertise its entrepreneurial achievements. Notions of privacy represented the domestic interior as a medium in which to incorporate cultural artefacts in a manner that satisfied such middle class requirements as rectitude and propriety. This meant that the confines of the domestic domain precluded it from being a means by which attributes, such as entrepreneurial success or cultural acuity, could be proclaimed in a public manner. However, despite admonitions from such as Kerr that there be 'elegance and importance without ostentation', there is evidence that the middle class did feel it necessary to display both their cultural acquisitions and their wealth in the public, rather than in the domestic forum. Such evidence is suggested, for example, by the fact that, until the onset of the economic depression in the 1880s, there was an unprecedented number of exhibitions of

artworks, where the contents were either primarily purchased or loaned by middle class collectors.⁴²⁶

In *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, art historian, Dianne Macleod presents numerous case studies of affluent members of the middle class who made considerable investments in the acquisition of artworks.⁴²⁷ John Walter of Bear Wood was in the ranks of such investors. At the time of his death, it was noted that he had been a 'judicious buyer, and a regular visitor to the exhibitions and principal sales' and had accumulated a collection of both inherited and purchased works of noted value.⁴²⁸ In this, he reflected the prosperity of the nation and an increasingly wealthy middle class for, as *The Times* noted, 'commerce and industry [were] the true sources of the greatness of England'.⁴²⁹ In modern, nineteenth century England, economic progress had, in part, been identified by both the availability and the consumption of material goods. As Macleod points out, the Victorian economist, Michael Mulhall considered that England 'had become the richest country in the world' and that Continental visitors such as Hippolyte Taine had observed that there were 'visible signs of prosperity and opulence everywhere'.⁴³⁰ Thus, it would appear that the spoils of commerce and industry, most of which had evolved on the middle class entrepreneur, had been applied to an unprecedented consumption of material goods. Such consumption served the dual purpose of providing evidence of the financial resources of the successful,

⁴²⁶ Macleod in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996) discusses this issue in Chapter 4, "Money and mainstream mid-Victorian values", as does Hoppen in *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (1998) in Chapter 11, "The Business of Culture".

⁴²⁷ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996).

Although they were not necessarily owners of country houses, these investors indicated that a significant proportion of the middle class was investing in cultural artefacts.

⁴²⁸ *The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", November 5, 1894.

See Appendix A; insurance valuations of artworks at Bear Wood.

⁴²⁹ *The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", Monday, November 5, 1894.

⁴³⁰ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996): 209.

middle class entrepreneurial investors, as well as indications of their cultural intellect and aesthetic tastes.⁴³¹

One such collector was John Walter of Bear Wood. It was noted of Walter that he had 'artistic tastes that were not less strongly developed than his aptitudes for business and public affairs', that he was a 'fine judge of pictures, a judicious buyer, and a regular visitor to the exhibitions and principal sales'.⁴³² However, any inferences of conspicuous consumption on the part of Walter would have countered middle class images of restraint and propriety by which he, as a representative of middle class ideals, would wish to be identified. Hence, it might be presumed that any public evidence of cultural acquisitions by middle class investors and collectors, such as Walter, needed to be mitigated by some sort of moral rationale. Perhaps it was that any public indications of expenditures on the acquisition of cultural artefacts could be aligned with philanthropic leanings that combined civic pride with an apparent sense of civic responsibility. This hypothesis can be supported, for example, by the construction of civic buildings, particularly town halls, that provided evidence of both middle class commercial success, together with its now-established responsibilities for the administration of civic affairs.⁴³³ Both the increasing wealth and the political involvement of the middle class resulted in, as historian, Theodore Hoppen notes, 'municipal bodies [that] vied with one another to build impressive town halls...to symbolize the opulence of the city and the great principle of self-government'.⁴³⁴ Such middle class

⁴³¹ Authors such as Briggs, Davidoff and Hall, Girouard and Thompson, for example, all address the issue of 19th. century middle class consumption. Macleod deals specifically with expenditure on art.

⁴³² *The Times*, "Death of Mr Walter", November 5, 1894.

⁴³³ Enfranchisement of male householders had led to the apparent democratic election of candidates for government at the expense of the tradition of the aristocracy 'governing by right'.

⁴³⁴ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (1998): 421. Hoppen cites such as Birmingham (1832) Leeds (1853) Liverpool (1860) and Manchester (1866) as some leading examples. The prosperity of all such cities was founded on industrialization and the entrepreneurial success of the middle class.

ideals of civic pride and duty extended to providing other institutions, like museums, art galleries and churches, ostensibly for the cultural erudition or the salvation of the public at large.⁴³⁵ Such architectural forms, whether civic or otherwise, were designed to express an identity for a middle class that 'reflected' as the historian, Richard Altick notes, 'the appearance of a novel concept in social thinking'.⁴³⁶ By the mid-nineteenth century, the meaning of culture for the middle class had 'come to mean a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual'.⁴³⁷ To the middle class financier, this meant 'not only an individual ideal but a social one as well...an expression...of man's need for institutions which should confirm and constitute his personal efforts'.⁴³⁸

In the case of John Walter, indications of both a civic responsibility and an opportunity to display his cultural acquisitions were apparent in that he lent 'the best' of his pictures, 'some of them more than once', to the winter exhibitions at the Royal Academy.⁴³⁹ Further evidence that he combined gestures of philanthropy and civic responsibility with his aesthetic tastes can be identified in the 'highly inventive' Gothic revival details incorporated into St. Paul's church, Wokingham, the building he endowed in

⁴³⁵ Kerr, in fact, had submitted designs in 1864 for the proposed Museum of Natural History at South Kensington. Biographical notes on Kerr, *Dictionary of National Biography*: 24. Ruskin, along with Dr Henry Acland, 'instigator and promoter of the museum', had been influential in the construction of the Oxford University Museum, completed in 1860. It is noted of Acland that his 'lifelong desire to do good to his fellow men was firmly implanted...by his severely Evangelical upbringing'. *Oxford University Museum* (1991): 4.

⁴³⁶ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 238.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*: 239. Altick quotes historian, Raymond Williams.

⁴³⁹ *The Times*, "Death of Mr. Walter", November 5, 1894.

Hoppen notes that the Royal Academy 'reigned supreme' with its exhibitions. In 1879, 'attendance was not less than 391,197'. *The Mid-Victorian Generation* (1998): 415.

In order that they might be seen by the working classes, many museums, galleries and exhibitions stayed open late on specific evenings and either offered free admission or charged a reduced fee. The latter precedent had been set with the Great Exhibition in 1861.

That Walter was also a Member of Parliament might also be perceived as evidence of a sense of his civic responsibility.

1864.⁴⁴⁰ It would appear that, for John Walter as well as for other wealthy middle class collectors of cultural artefacts, any public exhibition that proclaimed either their individualistic cultural acumen or financial expenditures could be mitigated by philanthropic gestures. For many, such gestures included donations or bequests of their collections to public art galleries or museums.⁴⁴¹ For these collectors, a moral rationale that embraced any gestures of a social conscience expressed in philanthropic deeds, or as civic responsibility and pride would have mitigated any public display of the accumulation of material goods. In addition, philanthropic gestures of civic responsibility and generosity could not but help invest them with social recognition and an identity that set them apart from the self-indulgent habits and extravagant display traditionally associated with the aristocracy.

Although, with some noted exceptions, little architectural consideration was given for the specific display of artworks in the nineteenth century country houses of middle class owners, it is evident that cultural acquisitions did form part of the interior decor. Thus, it might be presumed that such acquisitions were intended to underscore values by which the class wished to be identified, even within the confines of a private, domestic family life. For example, inferences of intellect coupled with refinement would have been conveyed by the display of books. As Stevenson noted, these should be on a 'round table, without which no ladies' drawing room is considered to be complete'.⁴⁴² In addition, Stevenson suggested

⁴⁴⁰ Dictionary of National Biography, "*Walter, John*": 715 notes that 'Walter had a strong native inclination for building', so it might be presumed that his tastes and values influenced the architectural design for the church, as well as for Bear Wood house.

⁴⁴¹ Although there is no evidence that Walter made any such bequests, Macleod in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996) includes an appendix of 'major Victorian collectors', many of whom gave all or part of their collections to public institutions.

⁴⁴² Stevenson, *House Architecture, Vol. II* (1880): 59.

there be cabinets for curiosities, that statuary be in groups, there be stands for folios of engravings and bookcases for works of art, all of which would have inferred a diversity of cultural tastes.⁴⁴³ Combined with the fact that all the house plans surveyed in Franklin's *The Gentleman's Country House* made provision for library space, such suggestions indicate that the middle class owners not only wished to be considered culturally erudite, but that they had the leisure time in which to follow such refined pursuits. This may have been considered particularly relevant for women, for whom leisure was considered a badge of middle class status.⁴⁴⁴ As Ruskin advocated, it benefited the female to 'turn her loose into the... library' so that she might form 'character, moral and intellectual'.⁴⁴⁵

That middle class cultural tastes reflected the values to which its members subscribed and by which they apparently wished to be identified are referenced by the sentimental, domestic narratives, or by the genre studies or moral themes represented in the cultural artefacts they endorsed. Referencing the 'iconic popularity' of such tastes, Altick states that:

the criteria of acceptable art are usually summed up in the term "moral aesthetic"...the...emphasis...was upon theme rather than expression, upon intention and substance rather than technique. The more pleasing a style was, the better; but style should never be so conspicuous as to distract attention from content.⁴⁴⁶

Such nineteenth century middle class standards were indicated, for instance, by the owner of Brodsworth who purchased artworks that revealed his 'taste for contemporary sculpture,

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Perkin in *Victorian Women* (1993) addresses the issue of education for women in Chapter 2.

⁴⁴⁵ Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1887): 153 & 157. In these passages, Ruskin advised on the education of the female.

⁴⁴⁶ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973): 272.

with its often sentimental subject matter'.⁴⁴⁷ Images that referenced the sentimental, along with genre images of domestic felicity, religious and moral propriety, as well as overtones of nationalistic fervour, were topics in demand, to be accommodated by a myriad of themes that ranged from the family group at festive occasions, to family pets, from idyllic pastoral scenes, to the retributions accorded those who strayed outside the boundaries of behaviour befitting middle class standards.⁴⁴⁸

The way in which the majority of middle class owners chose to display their cultural tastes in the domestic sphere adds further credence to the suggestion that their cultural artefacts were considered a means by which class values could be emphasized. Not for them the extensive *enfilade* of public rooms found in earlier country houses with their extravagant, ebullient and exorbitant display of classical taste with its associative intemperate connotations of being the prerogative of the aristocracy.⁴⁴⁹ Not for them eighteenth century references to foreign, un-English tastes.⁴⁵⁰ Instead, for the nineteenth century middle class owner of a country house, the matrix of domestic space afforded an

⁴⁴⁷ English Heritage, *Brodsworth Hall* (1995): 13 refers to Thellusson's 'taste for contemporary sculpture, with its often sentimental subject matter and concentration on intricate details'. Artists such as Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-1873) produced sentimental images of family pets. Samuel Palmer (1805-1881) and Edward John Pointer (1836-1919) painted subjects that ranged from the pastoral to the nationalistic. The Pre-Raphaelite artists, such as Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) and Lord Frederic Leighton (1830-1895) represented moral and religious propriety, as well as idealized images of the family unit or the female figure among their works.

⁴⁴⁸ Although they might appear to counter any notions of nationalism, the Dutch paintings belonging to the owners of Brodsworth and Bear Wood are notable in that they represented connotations domesticity. The influences of middle class propriety extended to the aristocracy. The 7th. Duke of Marlborough removed, among others, nine paintings by Titian, 'The Loves of the Gods', from the hall at Blenheim. In the 1820s and still on public view in the hall, the paintings had been admired by Hazlitt who 'waxed ecstatic on their 'purple light of love, crimsoned blushes, looks bathed in rapture, kisses with immortal sweetness''. In 1861, when subsequently hidden in a room above the steward's office, bake house and store, they were destroyed by fire. Fowler, *Blenheim* (1989): 157.

⁴⁴⁹ The desire for impressive display had long been established by the aristocracy. At 17th. century Chatsworth, for example, a large mirror, in line with the communicating doors and of the same proportions, was placed at the far south end of the state rooms so as to double the apparent length of the *enfilade*.

⁴⁵⁰ In *The Mid-Victorian Generation, "The Business of Culture"* (1998) Hoppen discusses the popularity of practicing British artists, the impressive amounts of money spent on their work and the resultant wealth of the artists.

impression of privacy, comfort and a sober sagacity. Integrated into this space were the cultural artefacts that represented the ethos of a family, serious and responsible representatives of a social class that considered itself to be the backbone of the progressive and modern English nation.

Factored into this, however, must be middle class ambitions to establish an identity for itself in the social order, an identity that not only reflected status concomitant with wealth, but an identity underscored by evidence of aesthetic interests and cultural tastes. The suggestion that the middle class saw its accumulation of cultural artefacts as a means by which to establish an identity is supported by Dianne Macleod, who posits that these middle class investors were 'driven by a need to ascertain social status' and that their resultant collections of artworks 'established a social provenance' for them.⁴⁵¹ As Macleod also suggests, the entrepreneurial success of such investors 'caused them to turn to art as a means of carving out an identity of their own that was distinct...'⁴⁵²

However, in line with middle class tenets based on privacy and domestic felicity, the spatial organization of the interior of nineteenth century country houses was not regarded as a medium by which any distinctive identity of class could be publicly impressed on the social order. As has been noted, however, this was countered in that the middle class, by supporting such as public institutions and exhibitions, established a way in which it could advertise its cultural tastes in the public forum. That this may have been interpreted as an indication of an unrestrained or opulent consumption of material goods was mitigated when presented under a rubric of philanthropic concerns that underscored a sense of civic duty

⁴⁵¹ Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996): 210 & 249.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*: Introductory statement.

and responsibility. In this way, the tenets to which the middle class subscribed could be sustained and an appropriate identity established.

CONCLUSION

That an unprecedented number of the mid-nineteenth century wealthy middle class made a considerable financial investment in the ownership of a country estate and house indicates that they had specific reasons for so doing. In examining their motivations, the generally tacit assumption that the ambition of the nineteenth century middle class investor was to join the ranks of the established landed aristocracy has here been questioned. Instead, evidence suggests that credence be given to the hypothesis that the country house was considered an architectural medium by which a wealthy middle class owner could achieve the objective of constructing, establishing and, ultimately, legitimating the identity of his class as being separate and apart from that of the other social classes.

The intention with this thesis has been to give a meaningful interpretation to the architectural significance of a nineteenth century country house. An analysis of the exemplar, Bear Wood country house and estate, has indicated that the way in which the nineteenth century middle class presented itself can be identified by means of the approach to the country house, the style of architecture employed in its construction and the spatial organization of its interior. Whilst it is acknowledged that the owner and architect of Bear Wood cannot be considered prototypical representatives of a far from homogenous middle class, it has been suggested that both embodied many of the tenets to which that class commonly subscribed. That so many of these values could be so fully played out in a country house such as Bear Wood was due to the considerable financial resources available to John Walter, so providing a particularly clear example from which the arguments and conclusions in this thesis could be presented.

This work has reflected the axiom that, despite gradations of wealth and subsequent levels of rank, the unity of the nineteenth century middle class lay in its common adherence to certain attitudes and values by which it wished to be perceived and identified. However, it has also been posited that there was a diversity in the way in which those claiming middle class status appeared to present themselves. A study of Bear Wood provides an indication that middle class tenets could be expressed in ways that ranged from a strident and acicular announcement of entrepreneurial acumen and success, to a more succinct and subtle representation of domestic values and standards of propriety. Perhaps this diversity of representation was best summed up by Kerr himself who, in his 'considerations' for an English gentleman's house, provided his reader with sufficiently ambivalent architectural advice, so to allow middle class owners to juxtapose the seemingly contradictory images by which they appeared to be identified.⁴⁵³

It is acknowledged that Robert Kerr, as author of the book on which much of this study has been based, was by no means a prolific builder of country houses, as were many of his architectural peers.⁴⁵⁴ However, his influence on contemporary domestic architecture and interior design was acknowledged by contemporaries, particularly after the 1865 publication of his definitive work, *The Gentleman's House*. Considered by *The Builder* to have been 'worked out in a manner that may be called nearly exhaustive of principles and of detail for purposes of information and reference', Kerr's book can also be regarded as his codification of the diversity of attitudes shared by both his professional peers and the middle

⁴⁵³ Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1865): 90.

⁴⁵⁴ In addition to Bear Wood, two more country houses are attributed to Kerr. Ford Manor, Lingfield, Surrey was built in 1868 for Mr. Spender-Clay. Also commissioned after Bear Wood was nearby Ascot Heath House, Berkshire for John Walter's editor of *The Times*, Mr Delane. Kerr's work, previous to these country houses, had been in designing commercial buildings, such as the 1863 National Provident Institution, Gracechurch Street, London.

class readers to whom, it has been assumed, the book was primarily addressed.⁴⁵⁵ This assumption is affirmed by the review in *The Builder* of Kerr's book, wherein it was noted that the work 'certainly assists the comprehension of the ordinary reader and the professional student'.⁴⁵⁶ That it should influence John Walter to the extent that he would commission Kerr to design Bear Wood was remarked upon in the June 6, 1868 edition of the same publication. As both a practicing Professor of Architecture and an actively involved member of newly emerging professional associations, it would appear that Robert Kerr was in a position to both influence his audience, as well as to confer some professional credence to his theoretical maxims.⁴⁵⁷ To some extent, Kerr's influence was to be recognized by his contemporary peers. He was, for example, acknowledged by E.W. Godwin in the July 5, 1872 edition of the *Building News* for, besides his 'loquaciousness' for which he was recognized, his eloquence, both written and orated, appeared to keep his name consistently prominent and at the forefront of contemporary architectural discipline.⁴⁵⁸

Despite their influence, neither owner nor architect of Bear Wood should be considered prototypical. This assumption is based on the understanding that degrees of wealth and the subsequent diverse economic and social backgrounds of those who claimed middle class status contributed to an equally diverse range of tastes and the way in which they were displayed. However, as a wealthy member of the middle class and proprietor of

⁴⁵⁵ *The Builder*, "The Gentleman's House", January 7, 1865: 2.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*: 3.

⁴⁵⁷ For instance, Kerr remained active in RIBA. On February 19, 1875, *The Building News* recorded that Professor Kerr had 'made a few remarks' at an ordinary general meeting. On May 28, 1875, *The Building News* again recorded Kerr as having been in attendance at another ordinary general meeting at RIBA. The Directory of British Architects lists Kerr as an 'influential author'.

⁴⁵⁸ 'We mention him, not because of his works, but because his loquaciousness makes him prominent'. Quoted by Girouard in *The Victorian Country House* (1971): 121 from an article by Godwin, "Modern Architects and their Work": *The Builder*, July 5, 1872.

an influential newspaper, John Walter was in a position to demonstrate many of the social attitudes and values to which he would have subscribed. To this must be added the authority inherent in his role as owner of an estate and country house. It is likely that, as a successful nineteenth century middle class entrepreneur, Walter would have identified himself with the opinion expressed in *The Builder* that Kerr's book was 'eminently designed for those who will read thoughtfully, - that class of progressionists, always ready to be searchers...'⁴⁵⁹ At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that much attributed to the private life of John Walter in this thesis has been speculative rather than substantiated, primarily because any papers on him, outside of what was published in *The Times*, do not appear to be lodged in public archives.⁴⁶⁰ Information published in *The Times*, because of its source, should be considered with caution.

This thesis has suggested that, with the initial approach to the main gate of Bear Wood, the presence, the prestige and the wealth of the owner of the estate were indicated in a very public way. Juxtaposed to this public proclamation of status, the existence of an estate village such as Sindlesham Green, prominently clustered along the approach to the main gate, was a means by which the owner could also advertise his philanthropic concerns. The lodge, with its modest size and vernacular architecture, as well as the truncated length of the driveway, were, unlike the approach to country houses in previous centuries, intended to both underplay any expectations of architectural grandeur, as well as to shelter the privacy of the inhabitants. Such an approach inferred notions of a nineteenth century middle class subscription to privacy and discretion, in contrast to the intentions behind the

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid: 2-3.

⁴⁶⁰ Girouard in his articles in *Country Life*, "Bear Wood, Berkshire" Parts I & II, October 17 & 24, 1968, acknowledges access to family papers in the possession of Mrs. John Walter IV of Hove, Sussex. This appears to be the last reference made to such papers and I was not able to access them.

grandiose and orchestrated approach to many earlier country houses. However, at Bear Wood, nineteenth century notions of privacy and discretion were challenged by the impact made by the sudden and impressive revelation of the entrance facade. This apparent contradiction serves to reaffirm the diversity with which the identity of a middle class owner, like John Walter, was presented.

A study of the theoretical attention given by Kerr to the spatial organization of the domestic interior has provided a significant resource from which to identify that many of the proprieties that formed the basis of nineteenth century middle class identity were both implemented in and sustained by, architectural planning. In addition, the spatial organization of the domestic interior of country houses built in the middle years of the nineteenth century was specifically intended as a means by which the quotidian existence of its inhabitants could be ordered within the parameters of middle class values. This, perhaps, was little different from the objectives behind the spatial organization of previous country houses in that the inhabitants of these earlier houses were also intended to function within the tenets by which the owners operated. However, the focus of these objectives differed. In the previous century in particular, the ambition of owner and architect was primarily to display the wealth, status and standing of the owner within the limits of a strictly defined architectural taste. In that social order, the landed gentry were well established and comfortably confident in an identity that was concomitant with the social class to which they belonged. Hence, the intention with both architecture and spatial organization was that the elite and erudite cultural tastes of the owner be dramatically and spectacularly displayed and available for public viewing.

In contrast, the objective of the builders of nineteenth century country houses belonging to the middle class was that the architectural style and the interior design, although also intended to display wealth, status and standing, accommodate many of the values of everyday life on which the class based its identity. Unlike earlier country houses, wherein the focus was on a strict adherence to what were considered the rules of architecture, at Bear Wood there was a deliberate indication of function through the architectural form. This often indicated distinct hierarchical differences between the inhabitants.

In addition, there was the subscription to middle class notions of domestic felicity and the family unit, which entailed concerns for privacy, coupled with moral, social and religious restraints. There was an adherence to what was perceived to be civic and philanthropic duties that operated under the rubrics of responsibility, efficiency, progressiveness and concerns for salubrity. Added to this, the eclectic and individual cultural predilections and tastes of owner and architect, when expressed in architectural form, were a further means by which they, as representatives of the middle class, could present the values to which they subscribed. All of these factors contributed to an identity intended to be understood as separate and apart from that traditionally associated with the earlier landowning aristocracy.

That issue of architectural eclecticism was a prominent one in nineteenth century England. When reading a paper to the members of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the architect J.J. Stevenson, remarked that 'the individual is now everything in architecture' and that the 'new system subjects the art to the caprices and vagaries of the individual'.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ *The Building News*, January 8, 1875.

This was evident with the general acceptance of Eclecticism as an architectural style that might best represent the era. It can be said of a country house owner like John Walter, wealthy and an acknowledged arbiter of contemporary cultural tastes, that he advertised his confidence in his position and his influence with the incorporation of a range of architectural styles into the design of the house he commissioned.

It has been widely affirmed that members of the Victorian middle class did see themselves as the linchpin located at the very centre of the social order, as missionaries with a self-imposed mandate to establish and maintain the tenets by which they were to be identified. In order to underwrite the credibility of middle class values, it was important that every appearance of stability within their class structure be apparent. Characteristics such as solidarity, authority and dignity were transmogrified into architectural form to be supported by the spatial plan of the domestic interior. The latter, with its emphasis on the separation of the public from the private spheres, as well as on the insularity of the family unit, allowed the deployment of middle class standards of morality and propriety within the home.

In the domestic interior of a house like Bear Wood, it has been identified that middle class ideologies of morality and propriety could be sustained by the binary division of the inhabitants, segregated by both gender and status. Also identified as having been incorporated into the spatial organization of Bear Wood were contemporary middle class attitudes that ranged from comfort to convenience, from concerns for efficiency, to issues of hygiene and sanitation. All were addressed in Kerr's theoretical maxims and expressed in architectural terms in Bear Wood, particularly with the specific attention given to the design for the domestic interior in that it should first accommodate and then sustain, these values.

The ways in which women, children and servants, in particular, contributed to the construction and the implementation of the image that represented the nineteenth century middle class domestic ideal were significant. They were expected to conform to a routine that, it would appear from Bear Wood, was accommodated by a spatial organization that put in place behavioural mechanisms that firmly controlled their interaction within the domestic sphere and, thus, were intended to maintain middle class values.

The fact that so many of the wealthier middle class invested in a country estate and house has lent credence to the assumption that the driving ambition of the nineteenth century middle class owner was to integrate into the ranks of the established landed gentry. Many literary and documented sources endorse the idea that there had traditionally been a certain degree of inter-class mobility. This appears to have accelerated in the nineteenth century in tandem with the rapidly increasing numbers of an influential and wealthy middle class, along with the simultaneous decline in the traditional autonomous authority of the aristocracy. There is no doubt that members of the Victorian *nouveau-riche* did marry, or were promoted, into the ranks of the nobility.⁴⁶² However, less obvious, or at least less considered, has been the focus of this study, which suggests that this was by no means the primary objective behind the unprecedented construction of country houses by the wealthy middle class. Rather, here it has been suggested that the middle class owner used inherent precepts associated with the stewardship of an estate and country house to his advantage. In order to firmly establish the identity of his class in the context of the contemporary social order, he employed the status, prestige and power that were traditionally associated with the ownership of a country estate to express his middle class values, so to legitimate and

⁴⁶² Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House* (1981): 24. In the latter years of the 19th. century, as Lady Stanley of Alderley once put it, 'half the peerage have no grandfathers'.

affirm the position of his class in the nineteenth century English social order. As has been identified at Bear Wood, the medium of architecture was a means by which he could do this.

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"John Walter II, 1776-1847" July 23, 1947

THE *Universal Daily Register* NEWSPAPERFirst Edition (later *The Times* Newspaper)

"To the Public" January 1, 1785

APPENDIX A***The Formation & Dispersal of a Great Nineteenth Century Landed Estate****Source: Berkshire County Record Office***A Statement of Account Showing Sales & Purchases by John Walter Esq. for the last 30 years.****Copy sent to Mr. Walter, 29 May, 1886****(DE WL E38 R.O.)**

Purchases:	July 1840 - 1885
	addendum September, 1888
	£371,765.10.00
Sales:	£126,500.10.00

Title Deeds Relating to Estates in the Several Parishes of Hurst, Arborfield, Wokingham in the County of Berkshire Comprised in the Settlement made on the Marriage of John Walter, Junior Esq. with Miss Emily Frances Court (d. 1858) & Dated the 26th. Day of September, 1842.**(D/EW1 E1 R.O.)****The 73 page Title Deeds Outline the Property Deeded Under the Will of John Walter, Senior.****1903 Schedule of Deeds of Property & Mortgages in the Strong Room at Bear Wood, Berks.**

Listing:	Wokingham	Yateley
	Finchhamstead	Barkham
	Hurst	Sandhurst
	& Miscellaneous Deeds	

January 18, 1884 Catalogue of Pictures at Bear Wood to be Insured by the Sun Insurance Co. Sun Fire Office, Threadneedle Street, EC: Policy 323176.

Annual Premium payable at Christmas: £59.2s.6d

Picture Gallery	£24,475.00
Drawing Room	400.00
Dining Room	1,400.00
Pictures Valued at:	<u>£26,275.00</u>

January 10, 1896 Fine Art & General Insurance Co. Ltd. 90 Cannon Street, EC:Pictures Valued at: £22,670.00**(DEWL F12/13 R.O.)****Sale Plan of the Bear Wood Estate 1912**

Lot 1	House, Lake & Surrounding Woods
Lot 2	Sindlesham Home Farm
Lot 3	Bear Wood Farm & Lummier Hill

for Sale by Private Treaty by Messrs. Knight, Frank & Rutley in conjunction with Messrs. Trollope**(D/EWAL E14 R.O.)**

APPENDIX B

Building accounts & expenditures for the construction of Bear Wood
 Source: Franklin: "The Victorian Country House"

	Pounds Sterling
Bricks: 4,250,00 <i>Made on the estate</i>	6,400.00
Bricklaying:	17,000.00
Stone Trim: <i>Mansfield trim/York paving</i>	17,000.00
Cartage:	850.00
Joinery Work:	40,000.00
Ironwork: <i>Including 4,000.00 on rolled joists</i>	9,000.00
Plumbing & Leadwork:	4,600.00
Stoves & Heating Apparatus:	6,000.00
Painting, Glazing, Gilding:	7,000.00
Plastering:	7,000.00
Wages: (totalling approx. 50% of cost of construction)	
<i>Skilled Men</i>	2.12s.6d per week
<i>Unskilled Labourers</i>	10s. per week
Architect's Commission:	5% of cost + travelling expenses
Architect's Original Estimate:	120,000.00
Final Cost:	>200,000.00
Annual Income of Owner:	50,000.00