

APPENDIX VII

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements are due to:

Mrs. Mace of the R.I.B.A. Library, Mr. Fodrio of the R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection and the staff of the Brighton Polytechnic Library at Mithras House for assistance given.

Sir John Summerson and Dr. Mordaunt Crook for kindly answering specific questions

Mr. John Warren for a great deal of help and advice

Mr. Raymond Wood for much relevant material

The Huth Family, Mrs. O.L. Boord, Mr. Gerald Boord and Mrs. P. Hobbs for all their help and interest

Mr. Giles Waterfield for advice and encouragement.

HOW DOES WYKEHURST EXEMPLIFY THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE
IN THE LATER 19TH CENTURY?

WYKEHURST, BOLNEY, SUSSEX 1872-4

CLIENT: HENRY HUTH 1815-1878

ARCHITECT: EDWARD MIDDLETON BARRY 1830-1880

BUILDERS: Wm. CUBITT & CO. COST: £35,000

1 An interesting aspect of 19th century architecture is the complex inter-
weaving of personal, literary and other influences. This applies particularly
to the sizeable country house where site, planning and economic restrictions
are at a minimum giving client and architect the greatest scope. Take, for
example, Wykehurst in Sussex, designed for a German/Spanish bibliophile with
an Austrian wife by an architect who 'aimed at being a man of his day, neither
a Greek nor a Goth'.

3 Edward Middleton Barry, son of Sir Charles and pupil of Thomas Henry Wyatt,
believed that the taste for pure Gothic was 'only a passing fashion unsuited to
the architectural demands of the present day'. Yet he was no slave to classic-
ism as is shown by his designs for St. Giles' School, Endell Street (1859-60)
and The Law Courts (1867). He completed the Houses of Parliament after his
5 father's death in 1850 and had his own flourishing architectural practice.
Among his works were the Covent Garden and Malta Opera Houses and he also executed
designs for the Paris Opera competition though it is believed that these were
never submitted. More than a quarter of his total work was in country houses.

He had, however, many disappointments in his career. 1866/7 in particular
were poor years. He lost the competition for the Albert Memorial and although
he was judged the winner of the Law Courts competition, it was said that no one
approved his elevations though his planning was superior to all and the commission
was finally given to Street.

6 'He was fobbed off with the additions to the National Gallery but his
plans were much restricted in execution and he was desolate at never having
the opportunity to execute the best thing he ever designed. There is no
doubt that the results of these competitions rankled in his mind to the
day of his death and may even be said to have hastened his end.'

He was elected Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy in 1873 on the
retirement of Sir George Gilbert Scott and died in the middle of a Committee
Meeting asking, 'Who is it?'. Perhaps he was seeking the identity of yet
another rival threatening to deprive him of a merited commission.

After that they did not go down till Eddy went on Easter Monday April 17th & Augusta and the rest of the children on 20th. H.H. went down on 23rd - Sat-Tues.

Then more weekends at Wykehurst until Augusta and family returned to London on May 11th

Back for Weekend at W. June 3rd

Sat. July 8th-12th Eddy, Alfred and Dicky to W.

Again the 3 boys 15th and Augusta and other children on 17th & H.H. weekendened. He was now 50 years old.

Nov. 25th 1865 at Wykehurst. Out shooting with Weekes.

Unfortunately the diaries cease on 29th Nov. 1865

Extracts from the diaries of Henry Huth

He arrived in England 1846 having been sent to Vienna from Hamburg by his father, Frederick Huth, who started the merchant bank in London. He had met and married Augusta Westenholz. ... They had 6 children, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1852 & 1858. 3 boys and 3 girls.

They lived in London at Sussex Place. From there he went daily - usually on foot or by cab, to the office and on his way home called on the book-sellers and collected his library.

Details of the installing of bookcases and arranging them.

At last the library at Sussex Place was too small and he began looking at bigger houses. Several houses mentioned.

Then on February 3rd 1864 saw 30 Princes Gate. Made an offer which was accepted.

Each summer they rented various houses in the country for holidays - up to 3 months. He commenting when his holiday was up.

New bookcases were ordered for 30 Princes Gate and house furniture etc. They moved in on June 25th 1864. So spent 6 months doing it up.

June 6th 1864. Saw Mr. Weekes for 1st time about Wykehursts.

June 7th 'Went down to Wykehurst with Dicky (2nd son) & back.

June 8th 'Took Augusta down to Wykehurst and back'.

June 17th 'Went down alone to Wykehurst & back'.

June and July and August they rented a house at Long Ditton, Surbiton.

30th August 1864 'Augusta & Children left Long Ditton for Bolney in carriage and arrived the same day'.

He was at 30 Princes Gate and dined at Simpson's that day.

Sept. 2nd 'To Wykehurst. Began holidays.

September 30th 'I to London to settle with Weekes. Met him at his solicitors. Returned to Wykehurst.'

October 11th 'We all returned to town from Haywards Heath.'

That autumn they were still furnishing 30 Princes Gate from Messrs. Jackson & Graham

Sat, Oct. 29th '2 o'clock train to Haywards Heath and so to Wykehurst.' (with Dicky & returned Monday)

Sat, Nov. 19th Another weekend. This time with Genny, a year old than Dicky

December 2nd With Dicky to Wykehurst for weekend.

Sat. Dec. 17th 'To Wykehurst with Genny and Dicky - W.E.

December 26th Eddy and Oscar to Wykehurst.

Sat 31st December To Wykehurst.

Sun Jan 1st. 1865 'At Wykehurst, Augusta and most children there too (and Oscar)

Augusta and children returned Jan 4th 1865.

Jan 22nd-23rd Another weekend at Wykehurst with Alfred and Dicky. Eddy having returned to school Jan. 6th.

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65 Henry Huth, on the other hand, can have had few complaints. Son of John Frederick Huth, founder of the prosperous mercantile house of Frederick Huth & Co., he was allowed to leave his father's office when it became apparent that the work was affecting his health and he spent ten years in travel and residence abroad - Germany, Austria, the United States and Mexico. He rejoined his father's firm in 1849 when maturity seems to have brought with it some kind of immunity to the drudgery. He had married in 1844, Augusta Louisa Charlotte von Westenholz of Waldenstein Castle, near Graz in Austria and they had six children. His diaries (1851-1865) record the even tenor of his life. Although his wife was something of an invalid and he was often left to dine alone, this was perhaps no great hardship. He invariably called at one of his favourite book dealers on the way home from the office and would then have had the opportunity to examine any new acquisitions.

7 In his book, The Victorian Country House, Mark Girouard puts Henry Huth and Wykehurst into his section on the Nouveau Riche among the guano baggers and the ostrich feather importers but, far from being an upstart, Huth was descended from a family long-established in Mecklenburg-Strelitz; no vulgar ignoramus, he was fluent in the classics, Persian, Arabic and Hindustani and a discriminating collector. Among his paintings he numbered a fine Cranach portrait of Melancthon, two Holbeins, (one of Sir Thomas More now in the Frick) and three Velasquez. While in Mexico he acquired an Inca Cup now in the British Museum. His choice of Francois Premier style for Wykehurst reflects perhaps the fashion of the age for research into the antique, a serious archaeological interest in the period rather than any wish for ostentation.

In 1864, shortly after his father's death, when Henry's first house in Sussex Place became too small for the growing number of books and children, he bought both 30 Princes Gate and Wykehurst. In the London house, he installed book cases modelled on those at the British Museum so this was obviously intended to be the main residence.

The family had always rented a country house for the three months summer holiday and may have been looking for a permanent base. (The Prince of Wales had bought Sandringham in 1862 giving an added social cachet to estate ownership.) On 6th June 1864, Huth notes: Saw Weekes for the first time about Wykehurst.

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Augusta and the children then went down to inspect the property and obviously approved because on September 30th he writes: 'To London to settle with Weekes. Met him at his solicitors.' Huth must have passed the property on his frequent trips to Brighton and admired the superb site, high on a hill overlooking the Sussex Weald. Weekes gave the place its name, combining 'Wyke', the ancient spelling of Weekes with 'hurst', meaning a hill, wood or wooded hill. In 1936, Miss E.T. Greenyer, the then owner, made apparently fruitless enquiries about the old house in Sussex Notes and Queries. It must have been a fairly modest dwelling since it is not mentioned in History of Castles, Mansions and Manors of West Sussex⁽⁷⁾ and the Huths used to call it their 'country cottage'. All that is left on the spot where the original house stood is a rough stone inscribed TL 1694.

66 Over the years, Huth and his son acquired more outlying land including the
67 village of Bolney and the estate was almost self-sufficient. Building materials
were furnished by the brickyard, the timberyard and the yellow sandstone of Hill
House quarry. There was a distillery for village beer and later a gas house.
The laundry was near the old stables - a normal practice since both functions
required an ample water supply, but one which resulted in an inconveniently high
rate of pregnancy among laundry maids.⁽⁸⁾ This may account for the fact that the
8 first new building at Wykehurst was the 1869 stableblock in a style possibly in
keeping with the original house and sited well away from the laundry. The
family believe that the old house was burnt down around 1870 when Huth was 55
and thinking of retiring from the bank. This might have decided him to rebuild
his country retreat as his main residence but the choice of style may not have
been easy.

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The bitter battle between Gothic and Classic was fought as fiercely by outsiders as by the architects themselves who were not averse to switching sides in order to secure important commissions.⁽⁹⁾ Gothic had perhaps the widest range of supporters. Wordsworth encouraged the return to untamed nature and Sir Walter Scott had glamourised Gothic buildings - together completing the country house picture. Landscape gardeners of the period generally preferred a Gothic centrepiece since the classic seemed to call for rigidly formal French or Italian parterres. The Church of England favoured the christianizing element of the style which had always been primarily an ecclesiastical mode - as symbolic opposition to the classicism of the dissenters. In its first stage the revival

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was based on English Gothic and these elements of church and state admirably suited the new industrialists who were equally dedicated to reading the bible and making money. Classicism meanwhile was losing ground. The percentage of country houses built in this style fell from 32% in 1850-4 to 16% in 1860-4. (13)

A Georgian revival of the 1850s, probably encouraged by yet another writer, Charlotte M. Yonge, 'offered an alternative to the palazzo style of the Whig grandees on the one hand & the Gothic of the romantic or religious on the other.' (14) At this time there was also a Francois Premier revival in France which is significant when tracing the sources of E.M. Barry's inspiration in the early 1860s. By the mid 1860s, Victorian Gothic, now at the stage of borrowing from medieval French and Italian, was at its climax and Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860) and C.R. Cockerell (1788-1863), the well-known classicists, lately dead. In 1869, in Culture and Anarchy, Matthew Arnold wrote a withering indictment of the middle classes:

'Consider these people then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tone of their voices; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?' (15)

The younger generation of Victorians, reacting against their parents' taste, turned from the foreign to the English and the so-called 'Queen Anne'; from toughness and vigour to delicacy and refinement. However, not everybody bothered about Arnold. In 1887, Mary Gladstone recorded in her diaries that at Waddesdon, in spite of all the superb objets d'art, the only reading matter was twenty improper French novels. (16)

For a selection of country house styles around 1870, it is worth looking at Strong, Binney & Harris' Destruction of the Country House. (17) The demolition hammer has been indiscriminate. There is Leyswood, the medieval manor built by R. Norman Shaw in 1868; Gothic Eaton Hall built for the Duke of Westminster by Alfred Waterhouse in 1870; Guys Cliffe of 1871 built by John Gibson in neo-Elizabethan; Rounton Grange built by Philip Webb in 1872 - Queen Anne influence with vaguely pagoda roofs; Coombe Warren built in neo-Jacobean by George Devey in 1870; Newnham Paddox 'frenchified' by T.H. Wyatt, Barry's master in 1875 and finally Normanhurst, Francois Premier built in 1867 by Habershon, Brock & Webb. Meanwhile E.M. Barry was restoring and adding to Crewe Hall, Cheshire in neo-Elizabethan and Matthew Wyatt was building Possingworth for Louis Huth, Henry's younger brother, in 'congested Gothic'. (18)

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Victorian clients usually chose their architects in one of two ways, either through features in the architectural press and exhibitions at the Royal Academy or through personal recommendation or acquaintanceship. In Huth's case it could have been either. By Sir John Summerson's reckoning, Barry was the most illustrated architect of the 1860s, even ahead of Sir George Gilbert Scott.⁽¹¹⁾ It is also likely that Huth knew city merchant John Cattley and city brewer C.J.F. Combe for whom Barry was already working, or that he had visited the architect's Charing Cross or Cannon Street Hotels and appreciated the planning, amenities and up-to-date technology. On the other hand, he may have had no particular style in mind at the time and therefore selected an architect who 'devoted himself to no style but handled all with success.'⁽¹²⁾

The two men had much in common. Both were third sons of highly successful fathers; they enjoyed travel, were keenly interested in scientific matters and disliked vulgar ostentation. 'The expenditure we prize is that of the brain rather than that of the purse.'⁽¹³⁾ Neither lived long after the completion of Wykehurst.

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In the R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection there is a Jacobean design for Wykehurst with vaguely French roofs and cornices, dated 17th June 1871. At the Royal Academy in 1872, Barry exhibited the design for the present house along with those for Shabden, Nr. Chipstead, Surrey (1870-73) for Cattley and Cobham Park (1870-3), Esher, Surrey for Combe both with French influence. In a lecture on March 6th, 1879, Barry justified his choice of transitional renaissance style: '

'Chambord and its kindred chateaux offer many suggestions to us in respect of civil architecture, particularly where a certain dignity is required without sacrifice of domestic comfort. The style is more flexible than that of Palladio or Vignola and, adopting as it does, the round arch, numerous and ample windows, both arched and square-headed openings and a horizontal treatment generally, it seems to offer solutions of many difficulties in our modern architecture. No one on the other hand, can accuse it of tameness or monotony with its high roofs, dormers, turrets, arcades and chimneys such as are to be seen at Chambord or Chenonceau.'

Having found this 'solution' and used it both for his hotels and for the Shabden and Cobham designs, why then should Barry produce the Jacobean elevation for Huth? It was probably Huth's idea. As a close friend of Whistler and of Thackeray 'who prepared the ground for Queen Anne', he was sympathetic to the current reaction against the large, the flamboyant and the foreign. There was also another consideration. Many of the foreign contingent drawn to England in the wake of Prince Albert or after the rich pickings to be had from the industrial revolution, had 'gone to the country' in the 1850s. Sussex was a favourite county because it was close both to London and the continent with which they probably still had business or family ties. Pike's 1910 book on Sussex in the XXth Century, reveals that they almost invariably chose Elizabethan or Jacobean for their houses, perhaps in deference to their host country and in an attempt to tone down their own foreignness.

They either bought the genuine article like Ludwig Breitmeyer with 16th century Cuckfield Park, (the 'Rookwood' of Harrison Ainsworth's novel); or copied it like the Montefiores who had connections with the Meyers and the Rothschilds and rebuilt Worth Park in neo-Elizabethan in 1856. Outside Sussex, the Rothschilds again chose neo-Elizabethan for Mentmore in 1857. In 1866, Louis Huth, the first of the family to build an English country house, broke tradition at Possingworth with 'foreign Gothic' - a style that was out of favour with the 'progressives'. Jacobean, on the other hand, was acceptable and had been less exploited than Elizabethan in the past thirty years. It must have appeared to solve Huth's ~~unique~~ dilemma as a progressive foreigner.

However, whereas Barry's neo-Elizabethan Crewe Hall is stately and imposing - his Jacobean design for Wykehurst is not. It bears a resemblance to an undated, unidentified drawing by Sir Charles Barry, also at the R.I.B.A. which may indicate a half-hearted interest on Edward's part, given his current preoccupation with Francois Premier and this may account for the feebleness of the design.

Whatever the reasons for Huth rejecting the Jacobean and deciding on the transitional renaissance of the rival classic camp, he was one of the first, if not the first foreigner to adopt the style - setting a fashion that was then followed by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild at Waddesdon (1874-89) - 'among big houses of the period closest to Wykehurst'. The Baron went one step further however, and used a French architect, Destailleur - in common with some English clients of the time - for example, John Corbett for whom Auguste Tronquois had built Chateau Impney in 1869-75. The Huths were not housed in 'Queen Anne'

17 style until the third generation when Alfred, 'reacting strongly against his father's taste,'⁽²⁾ commissioned R. Norman Shaw to build Bolney House, Ennismore Gardens (1883-5).

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The style Francois Premier is the early period of the French Renaissance and the special character of this transitional style lies in the combination of gothic and renaissance features to form a picturesque ensemble. The influence of traditional Gothic craftsmanship is pronounced; it shows less influence of ancient Rome in the treatment of detail and ornament than the Italian Renaissance of the period. It is less stately and horizontal,⁽³⁾ more picturesque and vertical. The principle buildings in France were castles in the country round Paris and on the Loire.

10 Mark Girouard comments that Wykehurst as completed was so much more competent than the Jacobean design, and the outside so much more consistently French than Barry's hotels that 'one wonders whether Barry had brought in expert assistance in the interval.'⁽⁴⁾ Sir John Summerson used Wykehurst as an illustration for a lecture on Francois Premier in Victorian England that was unfortunately not published. He does not see why Barry should not have the credit for the design. 'At Charing Cross and Cannon Street he was'nt trying to be Francois Premier but rather to produce a modern building to suit the occasion with Francois Premier as an influence. At Wykehurst, he set out to do a real period piece which is probably what Huth wanted.' If there were expert assistance, it may have come from R. Phené Spiers, one of the very few English architects with Beaux Arts training - a modest and self-effacing man of definite ability who may well have ghosted for other architects.⁽⁵⁾

9 Yet, given Barry's proven ability in planning and massing - Wykehurst can surely be attributed to him. In invention and imagination he was not perhaps significantly original but here, careful selection and rejection of detail combined with a sense of proportion, were the chief requirements. One of the most consistent features of the Loire Chateaux is the internal courtyard. Barry omitted this and drew the elements together avoiding the awful sprawl of Normanhurst. The unity he achieved can perhaps best be appreciated on the garden front which has something in common with the entrance front of Le Lude. The bays of Wykehurst reflect the drums of the original fortress, the central loggia, with the courtyard eliminated, becomes the base for the strong central feature of this facade. The first and second stories echoing in reduced form

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23 the elements of the entrance front though the small turrets may have been taken from the rather eccentric Evraud tower at Fontevraud.

24-30 The entrance front has much in common with Chenonceau. 'I know of nothing better than those noble French doorways', wrote Barry. The central dormer window at Wykehurst resembles the side dormers of the French castle although 29 the order is ionic rather than composite and the pilasters are more strongly defined. The balustrading on the 2nd floor and above the door is similar in shape though not in detailing. The flanking turrets reinforce the likeness although Barry's romanesque keystone arches at the top suggest Victorian leisure to admire the view while the closed French towers are reminders of their former defensive purpose. That Barry was conscious of the obsolete nature of this feature is clear:

'The projecting turrets with conical tops, so often to be met with in the great country houses of Europe, had become meaningless as a provision for defence, but they were still cherished not only as an architectural ornament but as an outward sign of social importance. This is still the case for, to the present day, a Frenchman of position thinks his chateau incomplete without the characteristic tourelles.'

Perhaps this is why at Wykehurst he deliberately altered the effect.

32 The main staircase is expressed externally by a tower as in many
24 renaissance castles, but Barry's fenestration recalls the chapel on the facade at Chenonceau, continuing the resemblance to this particular building. Also an ironical reminder that climbing and prayer were characteristic Victorian pre-occupations. The window details seem to come from a drawing at the R.I.B.A. of Parliament Chambers, Elevation towards Embankment, dated 22nd March 1866. On either side of the staircase tower, two mythical
33 creatures are carved in the gothic tradition. This would have pleased Ruskin who encouraged the return to the individual touch of the medieval craftsman. They are not unlike the varied and amusing animal carvings at the window heads of John Giles' Langham Hotel, (1864-6) in Portland Place.

30 To the left of the staircase tower, the square tower that rises above it acts as a strong terminal element to the facade - a feature common to many later
34 Loire chateaux, notably Montgeoffroy in proportion and effect although the window details are quite different. On the east side of this tower is a boast
2 carrying the Huth's coat of arms.

The Victorian skyline was exceedingly lively. Girouard suggests that the classicists had to introduce the French mansard roof as their answer to the Goths and Barry uses a restraint that gives interest without profusion.

35 'In examining the design of Caprarola, I ventured to remark on the monotony of its skyline and to suggest how it could have been avoided. At Chambord we have the opposite extreme with a multiplicity of circular and pyramidal roofs and other details which is confusing and even bewildering in variety of outline.'

18 Barry keeps his chimneys simple and similar but retains interest with a variety of dormer windows. Those on the garden front recall Sully-Le-Chateau in particular.

With so much borrowed, there are nevertheless personal touches of Barry's own. The first floor loggia on the west front provides another angle from which to enjoy the spectacular view over the Sussex Weald. The bell is hung neatly between the two scullery chimneys disguised as the bell tower - an ingenious solution which transforms a functional element into an effective architectural feature and at the same time adding another function. The bell was used to summon the family from the far corners of the estate and would presumably have brought help from the village in case of fire.

37 The morning room bay window with the carving above, also found at Shabden though without the cornice, adds an almost 'Queen Anne' feature to the grand foreign entrance front - perhaps a concession to the English environment. 39 Colour is used to good effect on the exterior. The yellow sandstone is responsive to changing light and the red tiles of the roof provide a cheerful contrast to counteract the somewhat gothic flavour - the suggestion of belfreys and hooting owls that has made the house so popular recently as a background for horror films. 36 The balustrading, stone steps and 280ft terrace on the garden side blend harmoniously with the surrounding parkland to provide a natural setting for the house.

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41 A Victorian architect might change his elevations to suit his client but his natural preference is often betrayed in the plan. Wykehurst's plan is classical in its symmetry, a fact not revealed by the entrance elevation. 'From the shelving nature of the site and the character of the soil, a basement was thought necessary', and this area, with its windows barred for security, housed the servants leaving the ground floor manageable in size and shape. The myriad sub-divisions in large Victorian houses arose from a desire

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to make them both moral and efficient. Each household function had its separate area and there were often separate zones for men and women, as can be seen in the plan for Stanmore. These warrens often render such houses unsuitable for modern occupation. At Wykehurst, the basement has simply been abandoned but still functions usefully in keeping the building above dampfree. The kitchen and scullery were at basement level but outside the main building; there is an open delivery yard at this level and open air passages which pass round the whole house.

The hall is reached through an entrance lobby and continues the Francois Premier theme with its vast fireplace, coffered ceiling and walls faced with stone. It is single-storied, unlike those being built by Nesfield and Shaw at the time. On the chimneypiece are shields bearing the family initials; Henry, Augusta, Edward, Alfred, Richard, Augusta and Louise. The third daughter, Manuela, had died in 1871 and so was not included. The initial H is found here as throughout the house on everything from balconies to furniture - a favourite habit of Queen Victoria's. The circular niche above the shields was designed to carry a clock rather than the more usual painting or bas-relief.

On either side of the entrance lobby there is access to the towers flanking the front door. One of these contained a staircase by which the servants could reach the front door without passing through the house, returning to their subterranean quarters like the workers in Fritz Lang's film, 'Metropolis'. To the left of the hall, the stone triple arcade leads to the principal staircase with its oak carved and moulded balustrade and 7ft risers. This arcade appears again in Cobham Park where the two side arches are closed by low wooden balustrading, and Barry may have taken the idea from Flixton Hall, Suffolk built by Anthony Salvin in 1844. The lower walls of the staircase well were originally covered with tooled and painted Spanish leather which did not survive the House's period of decay.

The drawing room with its large looking-glass and Louis XV decoration is similar to the salon at Montgeoffroy, except for the four free standing marble columns whose function is purely decorative since they carry no weight and the gilt capitals are hollow. Here the walls were once covered with embroidered white satin which matched the curtains as can be seen in Fig. 51. The fireplace is not that illustrated in the Building News of March 12th, 1875. This may have been because the Huths judged it too elaborate for the chosen style of decoration or because the antique consoles were used elsewhere.

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There is a massive composite cabinet still in the family's possession, which has four 16th century Italian carved wooden caryatids supporting the topmost shelf and it is possible that these were originally intended to flank the fireplace, although the resemblance is not exact.

41 The formal axis of the plan is the long central corridor which runs from
54, 62 the hall right and left. To the right is the Adam library, the largest room in the house. Opposite to it is the morning room and next to that, nearest the hall, the schoolroom which is an unusual arrangement but, by the time the house was completed, the youngest Huth child was 18 so this room became, as planned, the boudoir, adding an extra apartment to the female provinces.

52, 53 The dining room is panelled in 16th century carved walnut, said to have been commissioned by Catherine de Medici for the cardinal's palace in Florence. Of 42 carved wooden columns, dated and numbered, only 28 were placed in this room and the rest used, either singly or in pairs, to flank the bedroom fireplaces. The Huths seem to have set a fashion for boiseries which became almost obligatory for millionaire financiers houses after this date.⁽³⁶⁾ Waddesdon for instance, contains French boiseries bought in Paris from the Hotel de Biron (now the Musée Rodin).

42 Beyond the serving room, next to the dining room, is the masculine zone which faithfully reflects the state of country house planning at the time. The presence of an office indicates the serious approach taken by the new businessmen owners to running an estate; the smoking room and billiard room are separate but adjacent. There is no gunroom; this was probably in the servants quarters as at Stanmore and elsewhere. It was not until the 1890s that shooting developed from a recreation into a rite with organized drives. Huth suitably acquired a pair of Purdeys shortly after buying Wykehurst but his diary entries record only casual shoots with Weekes rather than the epic massacres of later years when the smoking room was turned into the gunroom and a keeper's lodge was built in the woods.

The variation in style of the principal apartments at Wykehurst is an illustration of the Victorian love of variety. It seems the ladies liked to change their setting as often as their dress - at least four times daily before meals. At Mentmore for example, the main rooms are Francois Premier, Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI. It is likely that interior decorations were carried out by J.G. Grace, one of the most important of 19th century furniture makers and interior decorators. Barry certainly used them at Shabden, finished a year

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before Wykehurst. The Huth's also bought furniture from Jackson & Graham whose cabinet and looking-glass for the Paris Exhibition of 1855 is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum. A carved wood and glass screen with the initials AW and HH was made by Jetley and Co., of 8 North Audley Street, Designers & Manufacturers, who may also have assembled the cabinet with caryatids. Much of the furniture at Wykehurst was tailor-made - sometimes using items from Huth's collection - for example the cabinet with Vernet Martin panels in Fig. 51.

Barry believed that architectural progress was to be effected by the developments of science and technology while the artist must be able to draw at will from the great storehouse of archaeology to provide the cultural overlay. Wykehurst exemplifies this principle. Individual clients are more willing to experiment or take risks and with the Huth's as clients, given Henry's interest in science, the house incorporated everything that high Victorian technology had to offer. The experience Barry had gained in planning his two hotels was here put to good use. The bedroom floors were divided up into self-contained suites each with its own bathroom, sitting room and balcony. There was an efficient hot water supply to all floors from the kitchen range. The house was heated by warm air, water pipes ran internally and were kept from freezing by being run through one of the hot air flues. There were lifts for luggage, coal and food. The food lift and basement, exterior kitchen helped solve one of the Victorian architects greatest problems - that of food smells. Ventilation flues were not yet wholly successful and tended to let cold air in rather than foul air out. The answer was usually a kitchen far from the dining room and cold food, at best re-heated. At Wykehurst, the food only had to cross a passage to the lift which came up into the serving room.

The house was an early example of cavity wall construction and had double framed fireproof floors of concrete and iron; there were folding external shutters built into the thickness of the walls and all the chimneys could be swept from the basement. The roof had double partitioning and framing and was insulated and sound-proofed. There are sash plate glass windows except behind balconies when French casements are used. Drainage is into a cesspit in the park and originally there was oil lighting. Henry Huth was not an eccentric like his brother Louis who would change wigs to enliven a dull dinner party and there were no whimsical innovations at Wykehurst. Unlike Batchford, which Sir Edmund Beckett designed for himself, where the lavatory doors would not open

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until the chain had been pulled; ⁽⁴⁰⁾ an invention that has not been adequately exploited.

Up until the 1870s, a considerable number of Victorian country houses were built in the 18th century manner by a mixture of direct labour and small separate contracts co-ordinated on the site by the clerk of the works. With the more complicated technological requirements of the modern house, this was proving unsatisfactory. As was becoming the practice, Wykehurst was built by a large firm, Wm. Cubitt and Co. of Gray's Inn Road, who had built Osborn House for Queen Victoria. The clerk of the works was Mr. Thomas Buckle and the cost was £35,000. (4)

Henry Huth died in 1878 and the house passed to his eldest son Edward, the library to Alfred. The agricultural slump of 1879-94 started the rot for large country houses, especially those dependent on estate income, and the 1st World War depleted the fortunes of those, like the Huths, who had investments inside Germany. In 1924 the house was sold to Miss E.T. Greenyer and her sister who ran it as a hotel during the 1930s. Leased to the Canadian Army during the war, it was abandoned after 1945. When final preparations were underway for its demolition, Mr. Doyle arranged for a preservation order and bought it in 1971. Mr. John Warren of The Architectural and Planning Partnership, drew up plans and acted as advisor. The house was in an appalling condition. Lead had been stolen from the roof and water had poured inside. One and a half acres of new flooring, 9,000 gallons of fungicide and £200,000 later, this massive restoration work was completed. The alterations were minimal. The top floor and part of the first floor were converted into flats and a separate entrance made on the ground floor as can be seen on plan I. Bathroom and kitchen fittings were added as necessary. The wall of the bedroom at the top of the stairs on the first floor was demolished, eliminating the passage, and an enormous sheet of plate glass fitted from floor to ceiling against the stair balustrading. The glass roof over the passageway by the first floor stairs was completely removed to bring more light into what is now the entrance to some of the flats. Here rainwater drainage is through existing pipes marked on the plan VI. The billiard room has no floor for Mr. Doyle had planned an indoor swimming pool which was not built when he sold the property in 1978. The impressive stone eagles of the forecourt gateposts were added by one of the film companies. Inside, the oak book cases in the library were painted white and the general colouring throughout is now lighter than the original.

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'Historians often tend to emphasise the advanced or progressive styles of a particular period and while these may be the most interesting and rewarding to study, much may be omitted which would help give us a more balanced view.'

Barry may not have been an architect of the first rank, nor a significantly original thinker but, coming from the centre of the classic group, he is representative of their attitudes of the time. As Sir John Summerson wrote: Francois Premier was one of the main influences in English architecture from 1870 onwards. P.M. Barry was an early starter and is interesting for that reason. The Architect in 1880, found him lacking in 'delicacy and restraint' in his use of the style but was principally referring to Temple Gardens on the Thames Embankment which is indeed elaborate and shows a lacey development of Wykehurst's open turrets.

Barry was one of the few distinguished architects of his day interested in the new types of buildings such as railway stations, factories and hotels, and the problems they posed. Admittedly he confined his venture in this field to hotels, but unlike his contemporaries who were more interested in facades and grand interiors than planning Barry was a master planner. He did one building in iron and glass - the Floral Hall at Covent Garden, but his opinion of such constructions was not progressive:

'We cannot rank such buildings as the Crystal Palace among works of architecture. It is not architectural for it does not comply with the essential principles of architecture.'

This characteristic Victorian confidence in principles may have stemmed from 'an early and continued delight in the reading of Pugin's True Principles.'

Wykehurst, built towards the end of his life, is an important example of his work. Designed at the height of the Victorian country house building boom 1870-4, it offers a valuable comparison with houses by architects of the English domestic Revival - Nesfield, Shaw, Webb, Godwin, etc. Because of its period casing, the inside planning and technology of the house have often been ignored in spite of its superiority over many of the dark rambling warrens of its more stylistically progressive contemporaries. It is both earlier and more of an entity than the better-known Waddesdon which is marred by the addition of several later wings, its elements combined with less sensitivity.

The house also offers an interesting example of the influence of clients on an architect. Barry was prepared to use style influence as his 'cultural overlay' but Francois Premier diluted, as in his hotels, Shabden and Cobham, is

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rather insipid. Huth seems to have shared the progressives belief in 'discriminating eclecticism guided by artistic sensibility' - hence Wykehurst - Francois Premier full strength and much more lively.

The Builder saw Wykehurst as 'wavering too much between Gothic and Italian feeling to produce a quite homogeneous effect', but seems to have overlooked the fact that this transitional factor is the very essence of Francois Premier style. As Sir John Betjeman wrote to Mr. Warren on the completion of the restoration work:

'I can see that it is one of Mr. Barry's best works and the more I see of his work, the more I admire it.'

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NOTES

1. Dictionary of National Biography - Barry p74
2. *ibid.*
3. R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection
4. The Builder 1880 p.148
5. Toovey, Quaritch, Lilley or Pickering. He specialised in early Spanish, German and English works and rare bibles. Occasionally he gave what he called 'Philobiblon breakfasts.'
6. Clarendon Press 1971
7. By Dudley Elwes, George Cay, Charles J. Robinson. In the Sussex Collection at the Brighton Reference Library.
8. Mark Girouard - Sunday Times Colour Supplement. Article on his book Life in the English Country House - published London, October 1978
9. Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) built the Home & Foreign Offices, Whitehall (1868-73) in an opulent Italian Renaissance Palace style by ministerial request. Sir Charles Barry obliged with a gothic Houses of Parliament when it 'was found that England's civil liberties rested on the achievements of the Middle Ages and it was right and proper to erect the shrine of British freedom in the gothic style.' - Gombrich History of Art p.378
10. Victorian Country House, M. Girouard p.33
11. Sweetness & Light, M. Girouard OUP 1977 p. 10
12. Matthew Arnold, Culture & Anarchy 1869 p. 13
13. Victorian Country House p. 135. Mary Gladstone, Her Diaries & Letters, ed. Lucy Masterman, London 1930 p.361
14. London, 1974
15. Brother of T.H. Wyatt
16. Who's Who in Architecture edited J.M. Richards London 1977 p.355
17. The London Building World of the 1860s, John Summerson, London 1973
18. Dictionary of National Biography - Barry p.74
19. Builder 1880 p. 123
20. Barry's Lectures ed. Alfred Barry 1881
21. Sweetness & Light p.11 Thackeray died in 1863
22. Louis Huth 1821-1905, brother of Henry. Collector of blue china. Mrs. Louis Huth, painted by Whistler, now in Cowdray Park
23. Drawing C4/34
24. Builder, July 20th 1872. 'The style of the architecture is based on that of the French Châteaux on the Loire.' It was always known in the Huth family as a 'modified copy of Chenonceau'.
25. Victorian Country House p. 135
26. R. Norman Shaw, by Andrew Saint, Yale University Press 1976 p.453
27. In spite of Barry's statement to the contrary - see bottom of p. 5.
28. Victorian Country House p. 135
29. *ibid.* p. 134
30. The Builder, Jan. 22nd 1880, p.123
31. Barry's Lectures, ed. Alfred Barry 1881 p.424
32. *ibid.* p. 423
33. At Crewe Hall, the bell tower is an elaborate lanterne. Far left of skyline in Fig. 15
34. Not unlike that of Coleshill, 1662. Burnt 1952 Fig. 56

NOTES contd.

35. Building News, March 5th 1875
36. Victorian Country House p. 135
37. The three lodges at the entrances to the park are also very different. Fig. 40b may have served the original house. Fig 38 and 40a are interesting variations on features taken from the main house.
38. Architectural Ideology in Britain 1835-1914 by R. McLeod, London 1971 p.33
39. Sir Edmund Beckett. 'A Book on Building' 1876 p. 55 'Hollow walls are now at last generally admitted to be expedient though architects are still wonderfully slow to propose them.
40. Victorian Country House p.18
41. In 1971, 1st floor flat on offer at £36,500 for 99 year lease. Fig. 64
42. 'Hell House', 'Demons of the Mind', 'Count Down' and 'Blood will have Blood'. were all made at Wykehurst. It was Canadian Army Headquarters in 'Oh What a Lovely War'.
43. A 305 Unit 19 by G. Newman p.6.
44. The Architect: Jan 31st 1880
45. Victorian Architecture ed. Peter Ferriday: Victorian Prolegomena by N. Pevsner p24.
46. ibid.
47. Builder 1880 p. 124
48. Architectural Ideology in Britain 1835-1914, R. McLeod p. 32
49. See inside back cover.
50. Sweetness & Light p.5
51. Builder 1880 p. 149