

MONUMENTS TO THE MOTHERLAND

The Lost Gothic Houses of John George Howard (1803-1890)¹

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FIG. 1. JOHN GEORGE HOWARD (1803-1890), WATERCOLOUR BY GEORGE D'ALMAINE, 1835. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Nearing the middle of the nineteenth century, the use of the Gothic Revival style for houses had been a mainstay of architecture in England for almost a hundred years. On the outskirts of the Empire, however, the situation was rather different. In the English colony of Upper Canada (present-day Southern Ontario as it was named from 1791-1841), the only known examples of early Gothic houses are few and appear to have existed in the context of present-day Toronto beginning in the 1830s. None of these homes survives, but all seem to have been designed by one of the province's first and most prolific architects, John George Howard [1803-1890] (fig. 1). Although Howard designed a variety of Gothic houses, including small labourers' cottages,² this paper will provide an examination of his designs for the houses of the elite. These homes, in particular, signal an interest in Gothic for associations of prestige, lineage, and the assertion of social standing. Through an examination of a heretofore unexplored aspect of Howard's multi-faceted career (including new attributions), this article will reveal Howard's ability to keep abreast of contemporary architectural developments in England and to produce fashionable homes with desirable associations.

EARLY TORONTO HOUSES

Toronto was settled as an English garrison town in 1793 and was known as York until its incorporation as a city in 1834. As Upper Canada's capital beginning in 1796 and as the province's first-ever city,³ it is no great wonder that many of the most experimental examples of architecture



FIG. 2. THE GRANGE, TORONTO. | JESSICA MACE, 2011.



FIG. 3. STRAWBERRY HILL, TWICKENHAM, MIDDLESEX. | JESSICA MACE, 2012.

would eventually spring up there. The population and, concomitantly, the town's built environment, continued to grow steadily: from a mere four hundred people in 1800,⁴ by "1816 the population was 720 [and] there were 94 one-storey and 23 two-storey houses."⁵ By 1833, a reporter from Montreal remarked: "this year four hundred [buildings] have been built, are building or contracted for within town and suburbs."⁶ Many of these would indeed have been houses, as by the time of York's incorporation the following year, "the population was 9,252 and there were 529 one-storey and 485 two-storey houses."⁷ It is clear that the number of houses in town was multiplying at a rapid rate, but the style for houses appears to have remained rather stagnant, continuing to make use of simply planned houses with a few classical details, such as the Grange of 1817 (fig. 2). Despite the fact that houses such as these had been commonplace in Britain since the early eighteenth century and were likewise the most popular manifestation for houses in the United States, it seems as though many citizens of Upper Canada were content to employ this traditional mode rather than to branch out into something more current and fashionable. Indeed, it appears

as though "new" styles, such as Gothic, despite being in fashion in England for decades, were not yet of interest.

JOHN GEORGE HOWARD'S EARLY CAREER AND INFLUENCES

The English-born architect John George Howard arrived at York in September of 1832 and quickly began to practice architecture. It seems that he was the first, and certainly the most prolific architect in the province to take full advantage of the market for houses and to employ a range of fashionable styles from England. He was certainly well positioned to do so as he was trained as an architect and surveyor in London, England, beginning in 1820, "in the office of an uncle," who is otherwise unidentified, and then entered an apprenticeship with architect John Grayson of London. Following his early training, Howard worked briefly on the rebuilding of Leeds Castle, Kent, and then stayed in the area to work for an architectural firm in Maidstone, "where he remained for some time." This could not have been for long, however, as the rebuilding of the castle began in 1822 and Howard was back working in London in 1824 in the office of William Ford and Samuel Paterson.⁸

At the time of Howard's training in England, a variety of styles were popular, many of which incorporated the aesthetic theory of the picturesque. The so-called Castle Gothic style, in particular, gained popularity in the mid-eighteenth century with houses like Horace Walpole's infamous Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, Middlesex (1748-1790) (fig. 3), which gradually opened the door to all varieties of the Gothic style. Even though Gothic had been revived for houses since the middle of the eighteenth century, with varying degrees of success, it was with John Nash [1752-1835] that it was thoroughly incorporated into the principles of the picturesque. His status as champion of the style was firmly established when he partnered with the picturesque landscape architect Humphry Repton [1752-1818] from 1795 to 1800, as the two men merged picturesque landscapes and architecture into one coherent vision. After the dissolution of the partnership, Nash carried on independently exploiting the Gothic genre for country houses with great success through to the second decade of the nineteenth century, expanding beyond Castle Gothic, for instance with his Tudor-inspired Longner Hall, Shropshire, of 1805-1808 (fig. 4), and with his Rustic



FIG. 4. LONGNER HALL, SHROPSHIRE. | FRANCIS LEACH, 1891, *THE COUNTY SEATS OF SHROPSHIRE; A SERIES OF DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, WITH HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN NOTES, OF THE PRINCIPAL FAMILY MANSIONS, SHROPSHIRE*, EDDOWES'S SHREWSBURY JOURNAL OFFICE, P. 195.



FIG. 5. HOLLAND HOUSE, TORONTO, 1904. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Gothic worker's village and cottages at Blaise Hamlet, near Bristol, of 1810-1811. Although Nash was primarily invested in urban projects in London in the 1820s (including some semi-detached Gothic houses at Park Village West and Park Village East), it is inconceivable that the young John G. Howard, while still in training in London, would not have known of the famous architect's career achievements, particularly as they dotted the city and all reaches of the British countryside.

Part of the appeal of the style was due to the idea that "Gothic houses and castles proclaimed the primacy of landed property in an age of rapid and transformative economic change."⁹ This was also true of the situation in York where these types of concerns were particularly pertinent for wealthy citizens; a house that announced deep ancestral ties to England would have been most appealing in Upper Canada—just as it was in England—in order to preserve and project a certain social status.

HOLLAND HOUSE

One such model as built at York that projected this very image—and perhaps the first to perceptibly break the

stylistic standstill in the province—was Holland House (fig. 5). Little is known about this house because it was demolished in 1904 and plans do not exist. The only surviving evidence consists of a few late nineteenth-century photographs as well as several mentions of the house in Howard's journal. There is some discrepancy with regard to the details surrounding the construction of this house as some sources claim that it was begun in 1831¹⁰ and was Gothicized in 1833 by Howard, while others give him full credit and a firm date of 1832.¹¹ Some believe that Holland House was built as a classically planned house the year before Howard's arrival, although there is no concrete evidence to support the claim for the appearance of the original house. It is likely that these speculations are based on the straightforward composition of the street façade (fig. 6) and on the fact that the pre-existing popular house type in York took the form of a symmetrically planned construction with classical details, much like The Grange of 1817 or Campbell House of 1822 (fig. 7). Whatever the nature of his involvement, it is clear that Howard was—at the very least—responsible for the Gothic character of the house as he specifically mentions in his journal the

cornice (the crenellation),¹² the groins,¹³ and the chimney pots.¹⁴

These Gothic features on the house come across as rather inventive, particularly given the tendency toward reserved, classicizing architecture in the colony at the time. The chimney pots in particular were fanciful in creation, consisting of bulbous stepped corbels, covered with shingles and tiny brackets (fig. 8). This is an example of the type of imaginative and peculiar invention that was only possible, or at least acceptable, in Gothic architecture. Beyond invention, a variety of interpretations of pre-existing Gothic motifs were also used, regardless of historical period or original usage. Crenellation, for example, was used freely, despite the small stature of the house as compared to actual medieval castles, or even to contemporary English country houses for that matter. Incidentally, at Holland House, likely in deference to the climate, Howard used a shorthand version of crenellation for the roofline of the main body of the house; the imitation crenellation is composed of a solid frieze with panels carved out at regular intervals. In effect, this provided the appearance of crenellation (a typically thin and vulnerable feature



FIG. 6. HOLLAND HOUSE, TORONTO, C. 1890. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.



FIG. 7. CAMPBELL HOUSE, TORONTO, PEN AND INK DRAWING AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH, WILLIAM JAMES THOMSON, 1888. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

when built of wood) while, in reality, the detail was massive and sturdy. There is no direct historical authority for any such details, but with its blend of medieval-inspired characteristics, Holland House would have been perceived as inherently English, particularly as contrasted with the typical house at York.

The original owner, Henry John Boulton [1790-1870], was born in England and he immigrated to Canada with his family around 1800, returning to England only briefly to study law. Before the construction of his house, he had risen to prominence in his legal career in Canada, becoming Solicitor General and then Attorney General in 1829. Boulton carried on his family's longstanding tradition of prestige in the legal profession as, previously, his father had held all of the same titles in Upper Canada and as his grandfather was once Master of the Rolls in England.¹⁵ A man with such status and family lineage, not only in Canada but in England as well, surely merited a home to reflect his importance. It is fitting then, in an era that prized such high-profile associations, that Boulton would have wished to make a bold architectural statement and to have his home built to impress.

In order to emphasize the importance of associations and a certain continuity of English heritage in the New World, it should also be noted that the architect Howard's original surname was Corby, and that he changed it upon arriving in Canada, likely to bolster his more desirable ancestral ties.¹⁶ If it was important for a person to secure his rank in the colonies, it was just as important for his home to partake in a similar ideology. As such, naming and the reification of links to the Old World—in any way possible—were of the utmost importance. This is probably one of the reasons that patrons in Upper Canada would have chosen to build a house in the Gothic style. The connection to England and the assertion of a respectable lineage were particularly pertinent for wealthy citizens in British North America, given that the social order was less straightforward than in England and that hierarchies were still in the midst of being assessed and established in this strange new land.

In short, the appearance of Holland House was reminiscent of a tiny castle, recalling Horace Walpole's now-famous proclamation of 1750 in a letter to his friend, Horace Mann: "I am going to build

a little Gothic castle at Strawberry Hill."¹⁷ The house is, indeed, indebted to the Gothic Revival tradition of Strawberry Hill in terms of its form and ornamentation, although it likely owes its appearance to rather more direct English precedents; perhaps most probable are the rebuilding of Leeds Castle by William Baskett [1782-1842] and the country houses of John Nash, such as East Cowes Castle of 1798 to 1810 (figs. 9-10). Howard was certainly intimately familiar with Leeds because he had worked on it and lived nearby for a good period of time. He is also known to have visited the Isle of Wight (at least once) before emigrating from England and so may have seen East Cowes Castle, or residences like it.

Aside from first-hand knowledge of direct models, both homes were published—and Gothic in general was promoted—in contemporary publications. Howard is known to have kept a large library and to have kept up with overseas publications in particular. In 1881, for instance, he donated some of his collection to the Toronto Library. At that date, he bequeathed sixty-one volumes of *The Illustrated London News*, thirty-four volumes of *The Builder*, two of *Picturesque*

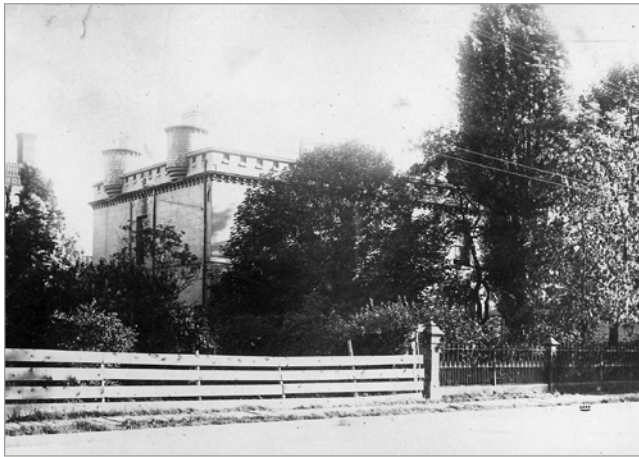


FIG. 8. HOLLAND HOUSE, CHIMNEY DETAIL, PHOTOGRAPH C. 1885. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

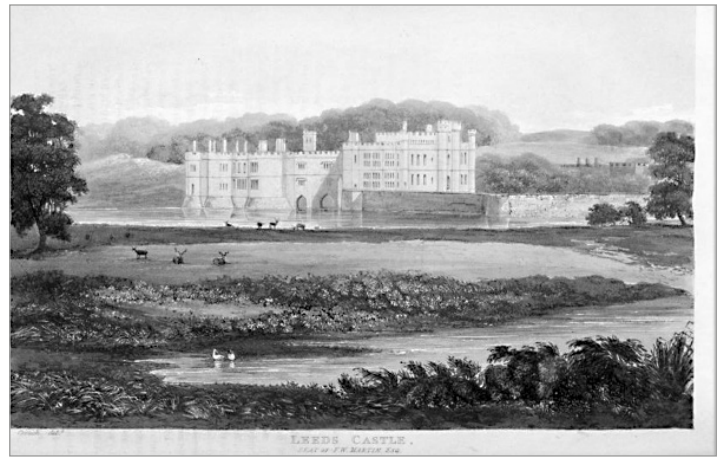


FIG. 9. LEEDS CASTLE, KENT. | *THE REPOSITORY OF ARTS, LITERATURE, FASHIONS, MANUFACTURES, &C., VOL. XII, NO. LXIX, SEPTEMBER 1, 1828, P. 125.*

America, two of *The Antiquities of Ireland*, two of *The History of Wales*, and so on.¹⁸ Not only did Howard own an extensive collection of English magazines and periodicals, but there is evidence that he read them voraciously: a letter from Howard stating as much was published in the January 29, 1870, issue of *The Builder*. In this letter, he announced: "I have been a constant reader of the *Builder* for many years, the number of which have so accumulated as to form almost a library of themselves. I am an old worn-out architect, and have retired to a snug retreat on the north shore of Lake Ontario, and look as regularly for my *Builder* every week as my Sunday's dinner."¹⁹ This dedication to keeping up with architectural news and fashions surely began at a young age, as is alluded in his letter and as is clear from his of-the-moment castellated and picturesque-inspired design for Holland House.

With its emphasis on crenellation and on the use of a turret placed for picturesque effect, it is obvious that the design of Holland House owes its appearance to the contemporary English brand of Gothic. The value of these types of houses was not in the correctness of detail nor in the proper application of motifs, but in the

evocation of the style in the eye of the beholder in order to establish concrete visual ties to ancient England.

ON MATERIALS

Until Holland House, it appears that this associative desire had not yet manifested itself stylistically in Upper Canada. In large part, it seems that this was because the use of certain building materials, up until then, had been sufficient to announce a certain level of wealth. In terms of the hierarchy of materials, stone was the most luxurious material available, followed by brick, both of which were rather costly and difficult to procure in Upper Canada in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The first brick house in York, the Laurent Quetton de St. George House (fig. 11), was not built until 1809 and the first stone house, in 1820 (at Church and Lombard, for James Hunter).²⁰ In these instances, the exterior walls were left unadorned and unpainted so as to flaunt the material itself. Stone houses, at the time, were primarily limited to areas with an abundance of natural stone in the immediate vicinity, such as the eastern part of the province; otherwise, brick was more common. Even so, brick was

difficult to acquire and was out of reach for the average citizen; in the case of the Laurent Quetton de St. George House, for instance, the bricks were imported across Lake Ontario from Oswego, New York.²¹ Elsewhere in Upper Canada, examples in brick and stone do not appear until after the close of the War of 1812 (in 1815) and into the early 1820s, at which time many towns began to rebuild and to become thoroughly settled. The use of brick, therefore, would have been highly prestigious, displaying to the public that the patron had the means to procure this fairly rare material.

While brick was indeed employed at Holland House, it was covered in stucco. Not only was the brick hidden, but the stucco was also scored in imitation of masonry, creating the appearance of something even more sturdy and expensive. Much like its stylistic forbears, going back to Nash's country houses and even as far back as Walpole's Strawberry Hill, there was no consideration given at Holland House for truthful exposure of materials. What mattered in this case was that it created a unique impression in the cityscape and that it was different from the standard classical brick house. That

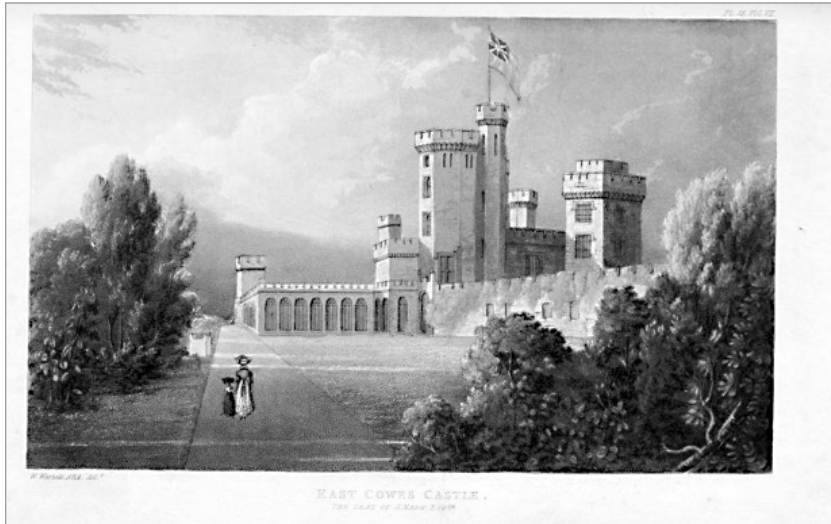


FIG. 10. EAST COWES CASTLE, ISLE OF WIGHT. | *THE REPOSITORY OF ARTS, LITERATURE, FASHIONS, MANUFACTURES, &C., THE THIRD SERIES, VOL. VII, MAY 1, 1826, NO. XLI, P. 249.*

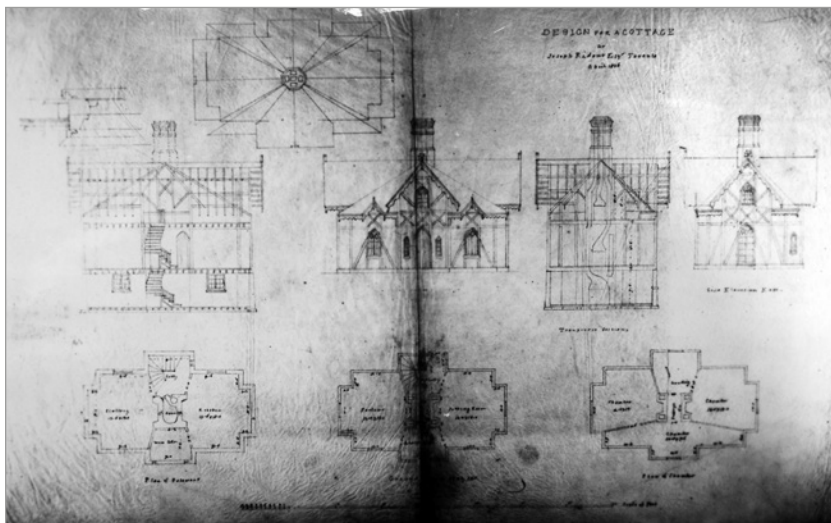


FIG. 12. "COTTAGE FOR JOSEPH RIDOUT," DRAWING 45, JOHN GEORGE HOWARD PAPERS, BALDWIN COLLECTION. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.



FIG. 11. LAURENT QUETTON DE ST. GEORGE HOUSE, YORK, C. 1885. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

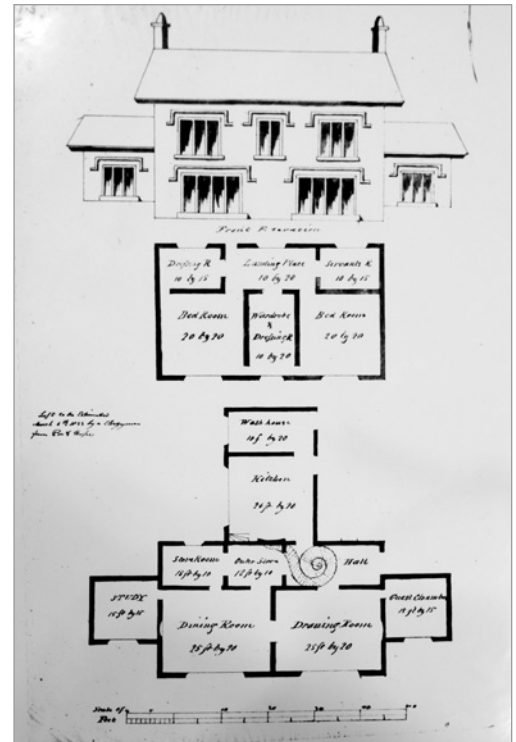


FIG. 13. "HOUSE FOR CLERGYMAN, PORT HOPE," DRAWING 1.5, JOHN GEORGE HOWARD PAPERS, BALDWIN COLLECTION. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Boulton had the means to build in brick and to cover it up so that it masqueraded as stone, shows that he aspired beyond the statements of wealth provided by a brick house. With the greater availability of brick at that time, new avenues could be explored through the building of a house and so the Gothic style was employed at Holland House for reasons of prestige, lineage, and power. Holland

House, then, represents an early Canadian experimentation in Gothic for the purpose of making a social statement.

HOWARD'S INNOVATIVE PLANNING

In addition to ornamental details and stylistic motifs, planning was a crucial element in the building of Gothic houses. The precise plan of Holland House is not known,

although if it was originally a classically planned house of the prevailing York mode, it would be fairly straightforward to deduce. Indeed, its symmetrical and regular appearance from the exterior, even with the entrance placed to one side of the façade, seems to indicate a classical arrangement. If it was Howard's design, however, it complicates the issue as his extant architectural drawings reveal

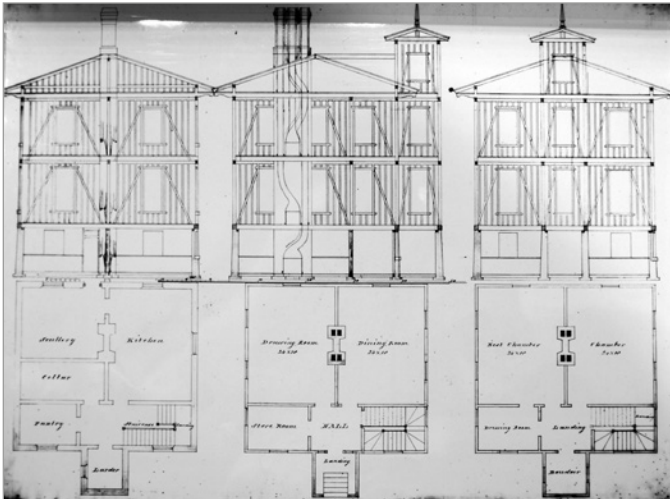


FIG. 14. UNLABELLED, UNDATED, DRAWING 111, JOHN GEORGE HOWARD PAPERS, BALDWIN COLLECTION. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

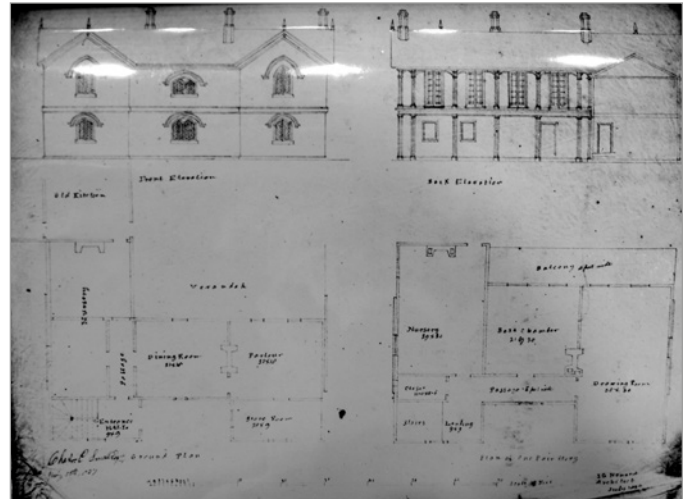


FIG. 15. "ADDITIONS FOR CHARLES C. SMALL," DRAWING 52, JOHN GEORGE HOWARD PAPERS, BALDWIN COLLECTION. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

that he was a rather innovative planner who fully embraced the picturesque and Gothic love of irregularity. His house and cottage creations of all styles—but particularly his Gothic designs—display a tendency toward off-centre or rear entrances, axial corridors, and irregular room shapes even if contained within a standard rectangular form. In a Gothic design of April 1836 for a cottage for Joseph Ridout of Toronto, for instance, Howard made use of a roughly cross-shaped design with a central block of chimneys around which all of the rooms radiated (fig. 12). The walls, moreover, met at the chimneys on the diagonal, thus drastically altering the traditional expectations of right angles in an interior space. Another example of Howard's offbeat planning is a house designed for a clergyman in Port Hope in March of 1833 (fig. 13). The hall and main entrance were hidden to the side of the house, the staircase was planned in a highly unusual spiral arrangement, and it would have been necessary to walk through the drawing room and the dining room in order to get to the study, which would typically have been placed near the main entrance for the reception of guests.

This unorthodox and somewhat inconvenient plan is similar to an unlabelled, undated plan in which the house appears to have been packaged within a fairly standard rectangular plan with a porch, but in which the staircase is found, not in front of the main entrance as would be expected of house planning at the time, but tucked away in the corner (fig. 14). So even though these Howard houses would have looked straightforwardly arranged from the outside, they were, in fact, slightly more complex. As such, they help to demonstrate that despite the similarly straightforward exterior appearance at Holland House, in reality, it is difficult to guess as to the interior arrangement with any degree of certainty.

BERKELEY HOUSE

Beyond these conceivably unexecuted designs,²² it is possible to link Howard to another Gothic design that was actually built. In Howard's papers, there is a sheet of architectural drawings for an addition to an existing house. It is labelled for Charles Small with a date of 1837, and signed by Howard (fig. 15). Although

there is no more information available on this commission (other than a mention in Howard's 1881 memoir, *Incidents in the Life of John G. Howard, Esq.*, for the year 1836), the house closely matches Berkeley House, which was documented in John Ross Robertson's²³ 1894 volume of the *Landmarks of Toronto* (fig. 16) as well as in several paintings and photographs, now in possession of the Toronto Public Library (fig. 17). Demolished in 1925,²⁴ the house once stood at the corners of what are now King and Parliament streets. Robertson mentions that there was an addition that was made to the house by the original owner's son, but to this point in time, it seems that it has not been definitively linked to an architect or to a precise date. That Howard actually carried out this Gothicization of the house (slightly modified from the extant plans) with a rambling extension, for a prominent family with Upper Canadian lineage, is rather significant; Charles Small's father, Major John Small, arrived at York with Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. This signals that it was not just the recently arrived elite who were

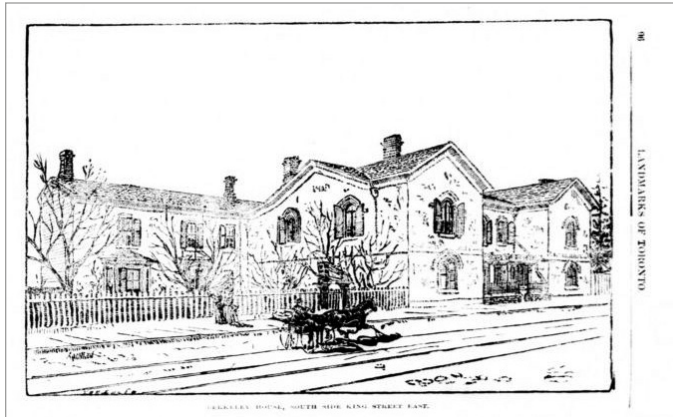


FIG. 16. BERKELEY HOUSE, TORONTO. | JOHN ROSS ROBERTSON, 1894, *LANDMARKS OF TORONTO*, P. 95.

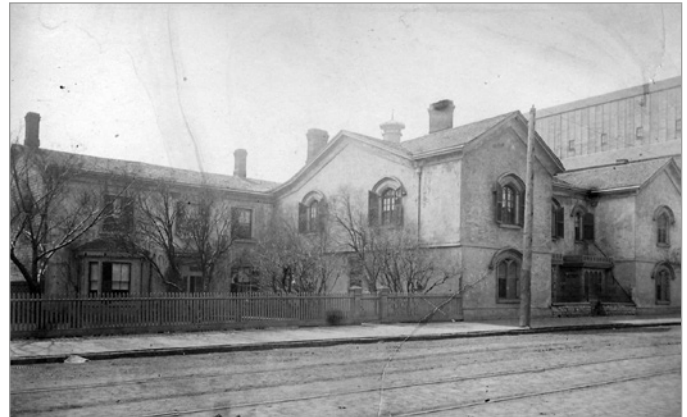


FIG. 17. BERKELEY HOUSE, TORONTO, C. 1885. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.



FIG. 18. CASTLEFIELD, TORONTO, PHOTOGRAPH ATTRIBUTED TO CHARLES A. CROWELL, 1856. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.



FIG. 19. LEEDS CASTLE, KENT. | © SOPHIE TEMPLER, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC-BY-SA-3.0/GFDL, [HTTP://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:LEEDS_CASTLE_(2004A).JPG], ACCESSED JUNE 2013.

interested in the style but that more settled citizens were also becoming interested in the associations of wealth and power that Gothic could provide. It also shows that Howard was the go-to Goth in town and that he was able to carry out different variants of the Gothic style with aplomb. This same type of Old English style can be found in a few of his other undated and unlabelled drawings for twin-gabled façade arrangements, although it is unclear as to whether or not these houses were actually built.

CASTLEFIELD

Beyond the aforementioned projects, the only other known exception to the lack of Gothic in the province for upper-class homes at the time is Castlefield of about 1832-1835 (fig. 18). Like Holland House, it has been demolished and no plans survive. There is no architect recorded for this house, however I contend that it was designed by John G. Howard. The house was constructed while he was most actively working to build up his reputation

after his 1832 immigration and it is also executed in much the same castellated style as Holland House. Perhaps more striking is the fact that Castlefield bears a strong resemblance to the remodeled Leeds Castle in Kent, where Howard worked briefly in the 1820s (fig. 19).²⁵ Although the extent of his work at Leeds is unknown and he himself admitted that his tenure there was rather brief,²⁶ he did continue to live near the castle while he worked for a firm in Maidstone, Kent. As such, it is likely that he would have been

familiar with the completed building, particularly as the exterior shell was finished by the summer of 1822.²⁷

That Howard maintained a continued interest in Leeds Castle throughout his life is underscored by the fact that in his journal in 1867, he recorded that he drew the Castle from a map.²⁸ He revisited the same drawing twelve years later, this time adding colour to it. It is possible that he also brought drawings of the castle with him upon emigration, as he brought numerous paintings and drawings to Upper Canada from his early life and architectural career in England. For instance, the contents of his personal gallery were listed in 1881 and show several of his own designs from the 1820s as well as two drawings by his one-time colleague, Samuel Paterson.²⁹ In his personal papers, there is also a drawing of a door frame by another colleague, William Ford, which is signed and dated from 1828.³⁰ It is possible that among these cherished drawings there might have been at least a sketch of Leeds Castle.

Beyond this, Howard also stated his interest in Leeds Castle in print. In the aforementioned letter of 1870 published in *The Builder*, Howard's main purpose in writing to the magazine was to state his appreciation of an article on the subject of Leeds Castle that was printed in the November 6, 1869, issue.³¹ His continued fascination with Leeds Castle becomes apparent in another work of his, an unidentified design for a courthouse that made use of the exact same clasping octagonal corner turrets (fig. 20). It even made use of crenellation and of the simple lancet windows on the surface of the turret as employed at Leeds Castle. It is clear, then, that these prominent features from the castle were retained in Howard's imagination and in his architectural vocabulary from a young age. These

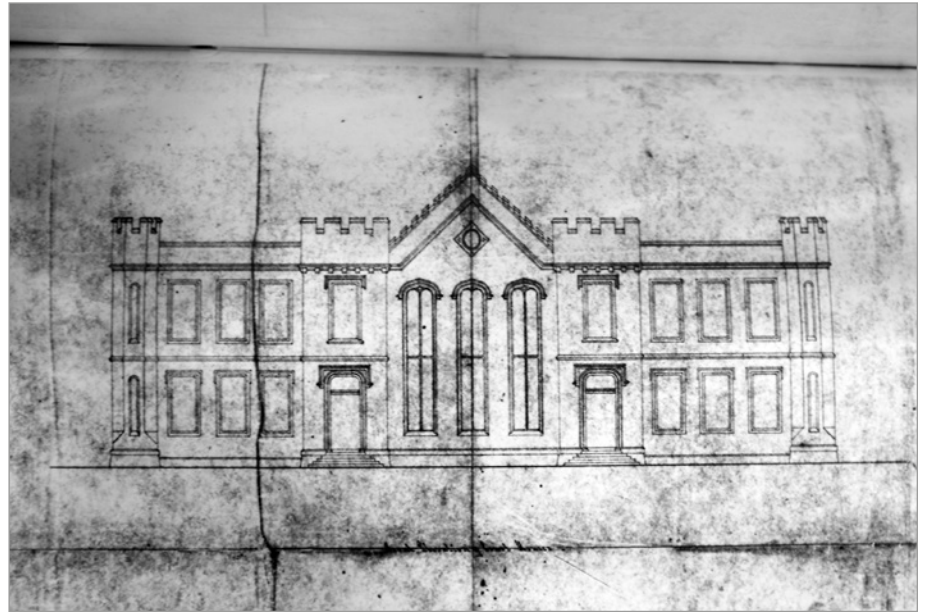


FIG. 20. "DESIGN FOR A COURTHOUSE," DRAWING 446, JOHN GEORGE HOWARD PAPERS, BALDWIN COLLECTION. | COURTESY OF THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY.

activities highlight his seemingly lifelong affinity for the building and suggest that it would not have been out of the question for him to have designed a miniature replica of it at some point in his career.

The scale differs; nevertheless, the massing of the two buildings is identical and many of the details of Castlefield were simply smaller or shorthand versions of what is to be found at Leeds. Perhaps most visibly, both have a central projecting block with clasping octagonal buttresses topped by crenellation. The flanking wings are likewise each terminated by clasping buttresses (turrets of the same form in the case of Leeds) topped by crenellation. Although they are square at Castlefield and octagonal at Leeds, this type of simplification in construction was not uncommon in British North America where skilled labour was less available and where funds were not nearly as abundant as those for an English manor. Because of the difference in scale, the clasping buttresses at

Castlefield could not possibly hold stairs as they do at Leeds. As such, the pointed windows at Leeds were replaced by blind panels at Castlefield. Other ornamental details correspond quite closely, or, at the very least, make use of the same architectural language.

In the absence of textual evidence, the visual evidence indeed makes a strong case for Howard as the architect of the building. Seemingly, the only concrete link between Howard and Castlefield is a note in Howard's journal of 1837, which states that he visited the owner, James Hervey Price, at his home, on March 29. Even though Howard kept a journal of his work, it was often spotty, excluding significant commissions that are known to be his. In fact, he did not even keep a journal for the year of 1835, which is when the building is commonly believed to have been erected, and so his activities at that time are unknown. Furthermore, while he briefly recapitulated the events of 1835 in his memoir of 1888, he left

out several other projects that are certainly his. The memoir, then, does not represent a complete inventory of all of his works, particularly as it was written late in his life.

On the chance that Castlefield was not Howard's design, the responsible architect must have also had a good knowledge of Leeds Castle or had perhaps even seen drawings by Howard. Although there were reproductions of the Castle that were published, most tended, according to the fashion of the time, to show a picturesque view that did not include a head-on illustration of the façade, which is replicated almost exactly in Upper Canada. As such, the builder or architect must have found out about the façade and its minute details through other direct means. Given Howard's familiarity with picturesque Gothic, however, and the fact that he was the only person actively working in Gothic in the city (and possibly in the province), it is almost inconceivable that he would not have been responsible for Castlefield. Howard's 1870 letter to *The Builder*, moreover, states that he had met only two people in Canada West "who knew anything of that castle,"³² lending credence to the idea that Howard may, indeed, have been the only man capable of producing such a close copy.

Like Holland House and the additions to Berkeley House, this little castle was likely built for reasons of prestige. The original owner of the home was James Hervey Price, who, after studying law and moving to Canada from England in 1828, purchased large tracts of land north of York.³³ Much like Boulton of Holland House, Price was a wealthy man and his small version of Leeds Castle helped to project this. One major difference from Holland House, however, is that Castlefield was built at a distance from

the existing city. The house was located approximately four kilometres north of the northernmost border of the newly incorporated City of Toronto (1834) where land would have been cheaper and more readily available than in the rapidly expanding city itself. The property consisted of "two hundred and ten acres extending from Yonge Street to the present Bathurst Street,"³⁴ with present-day Eglinton and Lawrence avenues acting as the north-south borders. In short, this was a massive lot beyond the confines of the city that was much less developed than those found in town. The placement of the house in such picturesque landscape would have been absolutely ideal: it was not in the city, but it was not in rude, untamed nature either, as it was situated near Yonge Street which, at the time, was the major thoroughfare stemming from Lake Ontario and running north through the province. Picturesque tenets held nature dear, after all, but the theory prized controlled nature and so a somewhat groomed landscape as well as proximity to a major city would have been considered assets. In contrast, most other towns and villages in Upper Canada were still being developed at the time and would have been surrounded by rough, sublime nature. As such these locations would have been no place for an architectural trinket such as Castlefield; Gothic houses were to be admired in the landscape, not consumed by it. Perhaps this is another reason why the style appears not to have been very popular in the Upper-Canadian context at large. So, while there was cause for wealthy citizens to establish their lineage, their fashionable nature and their Britishness, it was likely considered frivolous by most to build in the Gothic style in a settler's context.

While little is known of the specific details surrounding the construction of Castlefield, its effect in the landscape

appears to have been notable; its crenellated towers apparently became a Yonge Street landmark known to locals and visitors alike.³⁵ Despite the remarkable appearance of this house, it seems that most other citizens were then content to remain with the brick Georgian house, as examples emerged well into the middle of the nineteenth century. The continued popularity of the classically inspired house was likely due to a number of reasons, most important of which would have been practicality. A compact classical home was relatively easy to build, and this would have been essential in a land of few trained builders and architects. It seems, too, that the brick box was preferred for its ability to endure the North American climate; not only did its simple, central plan allow for the easy heating of space, but there were also no flimsy ornamental elements on the exterior that might have been damaged in inclement weather.

Overall, it appears as though not many risks were taken in the growing metropolis nor in the colony at large. With few exceptions, those who could afford to build in such a novel architectural style were not doing so. Beyond this, with its implied associations of wealth and power, the Gothic style at this point in time was out of reach for many, and as a result Gothic experimentation was not widespread. While it is clear that the colony was growing and developing, the style of architecture was not changing drastically.

Though the examples shown have strong ties to the popular English Gothic Revival, in the context of Canadian architecture, these few Gothic houses should be considered as experiments rather than as the instigators of a trend. In fact, they may well have been the only houses constructed in the Gothic style before the union of the Canadas in 1841, which was

followed by a greater influx of trained architects. There are perhaps numerous reasons as to why there were few houses built in the Gothic style in Upper Canada, but it was not for lack of at least one willing and able architect.

NOTES

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3. West, Bruce, 1967, *Toronto*, Toronto, Doubleday Canada, p. 106.
4. Lundell, Liz, 1997, *The Estates of Old Toronto*, Erin, ON, Boston Mills Press, p. 12; West : 106.
5. Martyn, Lucy Booth, 1982, *The Face of Early Toronto: An Archival Record 1797-1936*, Sutton West, ON, Paget Press, p. 9.
6. West : 134.
7. Martyn, *The Face of Early Toronto...* : 9.
8. Howard, John George, 1888, *Incidents in the Life of John G. Howard, Esq. of Colborne Lodge, High Park, near Toronto, Chiefly Adapted from his Journals*, Toronto, Copp Clark Company, Limited, p. 3.
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10. Shirley Morriss compiled, annotated, and published the handwritten journals of John George Howard. Morriss's explanatory footnote for Howard's entry of January 2, 1833, in the Journal of John G. Howard, claims a start date of 1831 and that Howard was working on "an alteration for Holland House" early in 1833. Morriss, Shirley G. (ed.), 1980, *The Journal of John George Howard, 1833-49*, Toronto, Ontario Heritage Foundation.
11. Hill, Robert G., n.d., "John George Howard," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950*, [www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/architects/view/1532], accessed July 2, 2013; Unknown author, 1885, "Old Toronto Mansions," *Toronto World*, November 16, p. 1.
12. Howard, John George, 1980, *The Journal of John George Howard, 1833-49*, April 12, 1833, in Morriss, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 26.
13. *Id.*, April 4, 1833 : 24.
14. *Id.*, January 18 and January 24, 1833 : 4.
15. Senior, Hereward and Elinor Senior, n.d., "Henry John Boulton," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9. University of Toronto / Université Laval, [www.biographi.ca/en/bio/boulton_henry_john_9E.html], accessed July 2013.
16. Throughout his life, Howard gave several different explanations as to the reason for changing his name. The first story is that he was born out of wedlock, given his step-father's name of Corby, and so changed it to his actual father's name, Howard, upon arriving in Canada. Later in life, he claimed that he changed his name because he was a descendent of Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk, which reinforces the idea that he did so for credibility and prestige. Howard, 1980, vol. I, p. 133.
17. Walpole, Horace, 1961, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, W.S. Lewis (ed.), New Haven, Yale University Press, p. 111.
18. Howard, John George, 1884, *Catalogue of Paintings in the Gallery at Colborne Lodge, High Park; a Donation from John G. Howard, Esq. to the Corporation of the City of Toronto*, May 7, 1881, Toronto, Copp, Clark & co., p. 15.
19. Howard, John George, 1870, "A Note from Toronto," *The Builder*, vol. 28, January 29, p. 90.
20. Robertson, John Ross, 1917, *Landmarks of Canada: What Art Has Done for Canadian History: A Guide to the J. Ross Robertson Historical Collection in the Public Reference Library*, Toronto, Canada, Toronto, s.e., p. 132.
21. Martyn, *The Face of Early Toronto...* : 34.
22. No evidence exists for any of these having been realized, although Howard wrote in his 1881 memoir that he built a frame house on Front Street in 1836 for Joseph D. Ridout. Alternate designs, however, were produced for Ridout's cottage and so it is unclear as to which was actually built, if at all.
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25. Howard, *Incidents in the Life of John G. Howard...* : 3.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Cleggett, David Arthur Henry, 1994, *History of Leeds Castle and its Families*, Maidstone, Kent, Leeds Castle Foundation, p. 165.
28. McManus, Shirley, 1975, *The Life of John George Howard*, Toronto, s.e., p. 58 and Schedule E, p. 7.
29. Howard, *Catalogue of Paintings...* : 6-7.
30. Held in the Baldwin Collection at the Toronto Reference Library.
31. Howard, "A Note from Toronto" : 90.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Gates, Lillian F., n.d., "James Hervey Price," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11, University of Toronto / Université Laval, [www.biographi.ca/en/bio/price_james_hervey_11E.html], accessed July 2, 2013.
34. Martyn, Lucy Booth, 1980, *Aristocratic Toronto: 19th Century Grandeur*, Toronto, Gage, p. 58.
35. Martyn, *The Face of Early Toronto...* : 59.