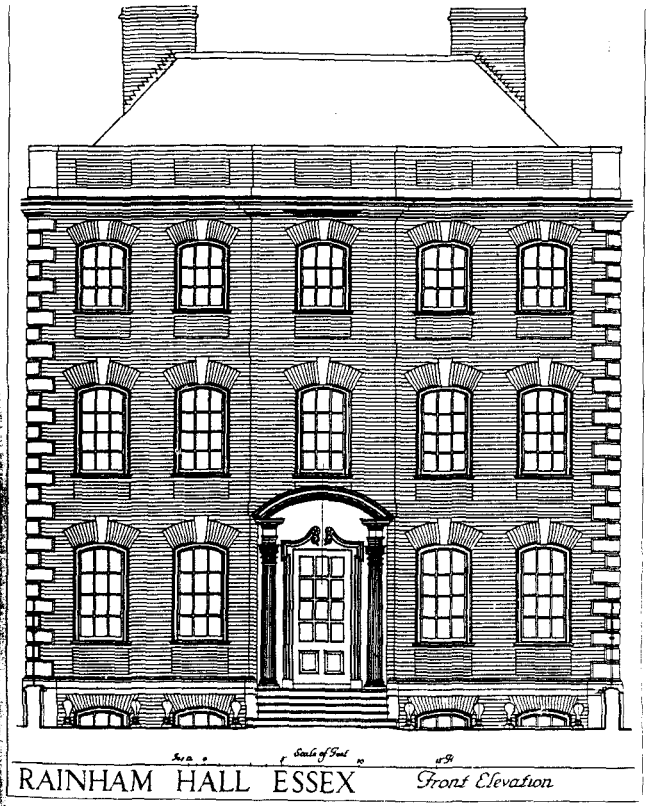
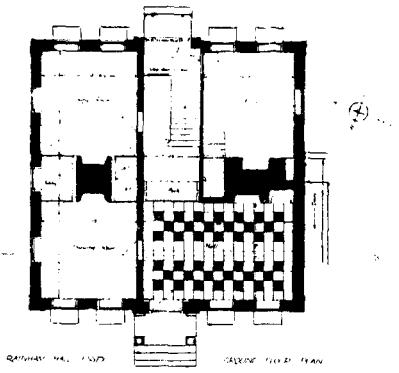
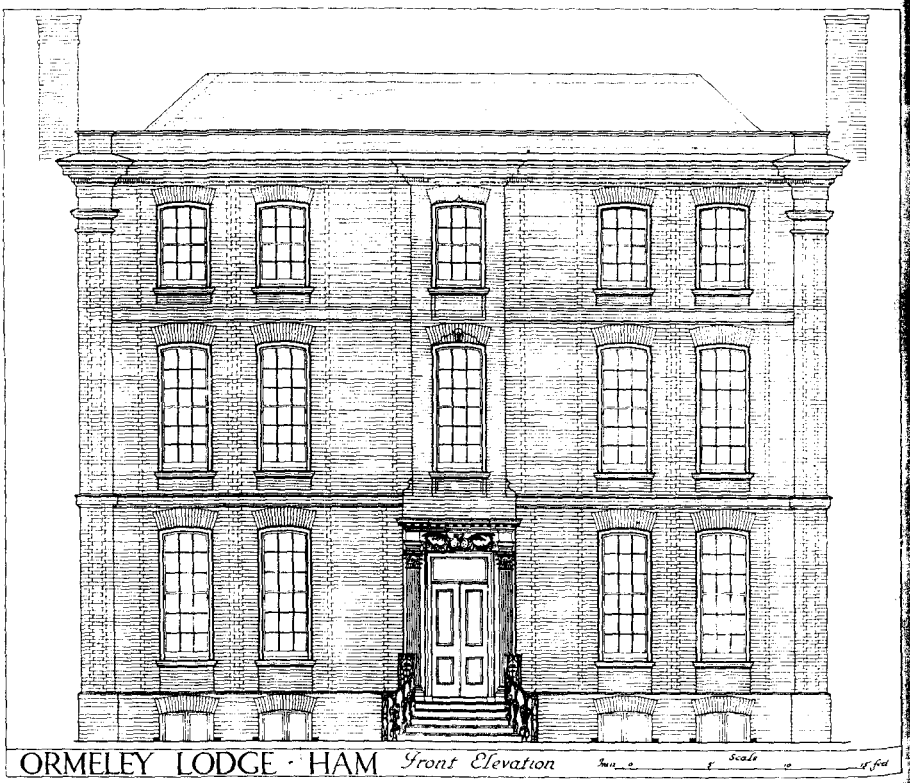
With drawings by Tunstall Small and Christopher J. Woodbridge



bearing the monogram of John Harle and his wife, Mary, in the overthrow (see *Plate 196*); the porch, which is a fine piece of craftsmanship (see *Plate 168*); the enriched wooden cornice above the second-floor windows and the parapet above that cornice built to hide the pitched roof, then considered an unsightly building element. Inside the house, *Plate 78* shows the arch in the entrance hall, leading to the stairs, with double pilasters, panelled soffit and spandrel carving, and also the fireplace elegantly carved in light and dark marble. The niche alongside has fluted pilasters and carving picked out in gilt. *Plate 80* shows the exquisite carving over the door in the hall, and *Plate 83* illustrates the staircase, which has carved string brackets.






ORMELEY LODGE · HAM Front Elevation
Scale

erial for chimneyflues. The kitchen, which in medieval times h[illegible]en banished to a safe but inconvenient distance, could now be brought into the main house and all living rooms could have their own fireplace. As if to advertise the increase in comfort, elaborate chimneys were built of cut and moulded brickwork, even when the rest of the building was of stone and timber.

In the first half of the seventeenth century the brickwork of these lesser houses is often remarkable for the immensely vigorous use of moulded bricks. The rustic classical style of that period lent itself well to brickwork because the simple profiles needed for cornices and other architectural details could easily be provided in the coarsely-moulded bricks then available, while rustication and strapwork could be achieved with similar ease in plain bricks. Peacock's School at Rye (1636), Kew Palace (1631) and Cromwell House, Highgate (1650) are among the best-known examples of this very vigorous handling of surface, though there is hardly a single brick building of the period which cannot show some attractive detail, even if only a tumbled gable-end, or perhaps a stretch of plain walling in English bond.

The Civil War and Commonwealth sent many Englishmen abroad in the mid-seventeenth century, particularly to Holland and the Low Countries, both of which have a strong brick tradition. At the Restoration in 1660 they brought back Dutch building fashions, including a liking for brick. Six years later over 13 000 houses were destroyed in the Great Fire of London and the Act for Rebuilding passed in 1667 decreed that all new houses should be of non-combustible materials, to minimise future risk. A new structural standard of brickwork was thereby established, which was followed not only in London, but in most provincial towns. At the same time, the enormous task of rebuilding demanded, and eventually created, large numbers of skilled bricklayers and other craftsmen, so that the hundred years after 1660 has come to be regarded as the Golden Age of English brickwork.

The presiding genius of the period was certainly Sir Christopher Wren, Surveyor of the Royal Works and one of the Commissioners for the rebuilding of London. As a thorough pragmatist he approved of brick for its durability and once declared 'the Earth about London, rightly managed, will yield as good a brick as were the Roman bricks . . . and will endure in our Air beyond any stone our Island affords.' He realised that the visual impact of his brickwork could be heightened by combining it with other materials, especially white Portland stone. In the Fountain Court at Hampton Court he combined rubbed red brick with the light and dark of carved and moulded stone to produce a cheerful effect. At Chelsea Hospital the compact masses of the stone porticoes are set against larger areas of plain red brick to produce a broader but still lively appearance. Many of the buildings from Wren's Office of Works show a similar mix of brick and stone and the tradition was carried on well into the eighteenth century by important provincial architects like the Smiths of Warwick and the Bastards of Blandford.

At Hampton Court and elsewhere Wren employed very small bricks, about 6in × 2in, rubbed to the finest possible tolerance and merely dipped in lime putty to give a thin white joint; this rubbed and gauged work made an excellent uniform field for his stone ornament. Fine joints are one of the hallmarks of the best of Queen Anne and early Georgian brickwork, along with carved ornament in the form of capitals, cherubs' heads and swags of flowers.

Houses by master bricklayers were craftsmen's showpieces, employing every effect to

6, 7 *Bold surface treatment typical of the first half of the seventeenth century at Cromwell House, Highgate, London.*
8 *Vitrified headers enhance the fine ribbed brickwork of 1725 at Finchcocks in Kent.*



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23 This house in Harpur Street, London WC 1, forms the return front of a terrace of houses belonging to the 1760s in Dombey Street, Bloomsbury, but the unusual window arrangement and the wooden architraves surrounding the windows, suggest that the façade was altered some time in the 1830s. The door and ironwork however, appear to date from the 1760s. Empty since 1971, this house continued to rot while its owner, the Harpur Estate, and the council disputed its future. Now restoration work has begun

