John Thorpe’s Designs for Dowsby Hall
and the Red Hall, Bourne

DAVID L. ROBERTS

INTRODUCTION

Sir John Summerson has pointed out that systematic research on all the manors known to have been visited by John Thorpe would probably enable us to identify many more of the plans than has hitherto been possible.

John Thorpe (c.1565 - c.1655) was once regarded as almost the only Elizabethan architect worthy of the name; subsequent research has established his reputation as a surveyor, second only to John Norden, rather at the expense of his over exaggerated importance as an architect. Here, Thorpe’s volume of drawings has been examined for its relationship to two houses in Kesteven, Lincolnshire.

At Dowsby and the Red Hall at Bourne it is possible to trace, even at this distance in time, a circle of landowners consulting Thorpe about their building projects. Although the position of Thorpe as an architect has been argued over for years, it is certain that he had much to do with the planning of these houses from their beginning. Sir William Rigdon was the man for whom Thorpe made a ‘platt’ in the opening years of the seventeenth century, presumably for a house on the Dowsby estate, but more closely resembling the Red Hall at Bourne. It is of interest that the final design for Dowsby appears to be based on a drawing made by Thorpe for a contemporary of Rigdon, Sir Thomas Darrell, of Horystow. The suggested dates in the edited volume of Thorpe drawings allow a period of some twenty years from about 1595 during which the plans of the houses could have been developed.

DOWSBY HALL

The surviving part of the Hall is set amongst trees and the vestiges of its seventeenth century formal gardens. It is dominated by a row of nine grouped chimney stacks rising from the valley between the two ranges of the roof.

The north front is fifty seven feet wide and the originally well balanced composition is marred by blocked, inserted and disfigured mullioned and transomed windows. All this front is
JOHN THORPE'S DESIGNS
DOWSBY HALL. Elevation of the present east front. Evidence of 'put-log' holes for scaffolding and masonry keying indicated. The stacks should be grouped in pairs only, the south tunnel of the surviving stack tunnels is an addition.
JOHN THORPE'S DESIGNS

in limestone rubble laid in courses with ashlar limestone mouldings, cappings and quoin.

The shortened east front, by contrast, is still a very assured composition all in ashlar limestone and of three bays. The north bay has a canted bay window of three lights, with one in each canted face, all divided by two transomes. Over this is a similar window with only one transome. Above, the canted bay is skillfully corbelled out to become a square bay pierced by a five-light mullioned window flanked by single lights in the return faces. The central and southern bays are flat and have ground floor windows of three lights with two transomes and first floor windows with one transome. Over the pier between these two windows is a gable pierced by a four-light mullioned window. The moulding sections of windows, plinth, string course, secondary and principal cornice are finely worked and accurately fitted. The pronounced vertical fracture where the present south wall abuts marks the end of the demolition of the late eighteenth century reduction. This south wall devoid of windows and with a minuscule door in a rustic boarded porch is in startling contrast although it has the same basic double pile elevation as the north wall. The smaller central gable is omitted in the modern wall. Provision has been made for three knopped obelisks to be placed on the kneelers and apex of each original gable and gable.

The edgings to the beds and lawns to the south of the house are in part made up of lengths of quadrant moulded mullion taken from the demolished part of the house. Further mullion fragments are scattered to the west of the house between the garden and the nineteenth century farm complex which is built partly of reused stone though, after an extensive search, none of this stonework was found to contain any worked or moulded fragments.

Alterations to the interior have concealed the original purpose of many of the surviving rooms. The whole of the present east range was originally the hall; the garden door in the south wall would formerly have opened into the screens. Below is cellarium with a beamed ceiling which supports the hall floor. The heaviest oak member of this floor is a reused late medieval cambered tie beam laid on its side which must have supported the step of the dais. The dais would have been lit by the canted bay and the body of the hall by the large flat double transomed windows.

The hall was divided in the late seventeenth century and fitted with raised and bolection moulded panelling. In the nineteenth century a staircase and entrance hall was partitioned off from the upper hall against the spine wall.

Two doors lead through the spine wall to the west range, one at the northern end and one from what would have been the centre of the west wall of the hall. The west range has a large kitchen, service rooms and billiards room adapted from the parlour and part of the original stair.

From the ground floor a back stair leads up past the first floor to the garrets. Where the floor has been removed to accommodate the staircase a seventeenth century stone fireplace is stranded half way up the wall. From the first landing a door, now blocked, led out into the demolished south range. Roughly concealed scars reveal the line of the original stair on the inside of the south wall. The blocked door and the scars would seem to rule out the possibility of a large and ambitious stair having been built.

Little evidence of the seventeenth century work has survived the nineteenth century reconstruction of the first floor apart from a chamfered stone doorcase with pyramid stops on the jambs, and traces of blocked fireplaces of standard seventeenth century type.

The roof which has two floors of garrets, now stripped, is the most important individual piece of evidence and was the main consideration in the early stages of this research. The trusses of the roof on both sides of the double pile are numbered with incised Roman numerals. The northern terminal frames, set three to four inches away from the gable walls, are marked XI on the west range and XII on the east range. The trusses of the roof are almost identical except for the sequence of marking.

The diagram shows the relative positions of the marked trusses.
DAVID L. ROBERTS

TRUSS POSITIONS

North gable wall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td></td>
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<td>VII</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Present gable wall

Trusses I to V missing

Trusses I to VI missing

The lower garret originally had stone moulded fireplaces which still survive, apparently unused.

The central valley between the roofs is reached through a modern trapdoor on to the leads which slope from north to south, as do the similar leads on the roof of the Red Hall, Bourne.

THE ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF EXCAVATION

Having determined that a considerable part of the house had been demolished, an excavation along the line of the east front southwards was necessary to determine the exact length of the original building. The numbering of the roof trusses showed that six trusses were missing and six remained along the line of the facade. It was assumed that the facade was symmetrical and that bays one to five were the mirror image of VII to XII. It was impossible to assess the width of the demolished bay between trusses six and VII without excavation. The first trial trench was opened at a distance of 36 feet south of the present south front, across the line of the east front. A massive limestone rubble foundation was found at a depth of two feet six inches, the roughly squared blocks set in lime mortar. Other trenches were then dug across the facade line at a distance from the first. The trenches, having all revealed the same massive foundations, were opened out, as far as the garden layout would permit, to expose the footing along the entire length. All the ashlar work had been robbed except for one broken block, which remained in situ, marking the return of the original southern front. The line of the foundation of this original front was followed and exposed for five feet to the west; a fragment of patterned parapetting was found lying on the weathering course.

An exploration of the footings under the surviving part of the east front was made to ascertain that the foundation was of the same nature. The existing foundation and intact walling was of the same workmanship but of different design. This difference, primarily of a discrepancy in the height of the weatherings of the foundations and the depth to which the coarse footings extended, was necessitated by the cellars not being continued, originally, under the demolished southern part of the building. The brick garden wall to the west is built over the foundations of the southward continuation of the west facade.

The length of the east facade was just over 88 feet; a precise measurement was impossible owing to the slightly different setting back of the footing weatherings, which must originally have been greater under the south wall, the foundations being shallower. Trial trenches were cut in the area probably occupied by a projecting rectangular porch of a type shown on several of the related drawings. Although the site has been much disturbed by modern drainage pipe trenches sufficient evidence of the same massive foundations was found to support a rectangular porch of the same height as the facade.
DOWSBY HALL. Second floor plan. The dotted lines indicate the position of tie beams and spurs based on the tie beam/floor joints of the first floor. The posts indicated are part of the original queen-post derivative roof. Above the collars of this roof is a third floor of ill lit garrets, both floors were lined with plaster partitions based on the posts and roof timbering. Another fireplace has been discovered recently in the spine wall, west side, between bays VIII and X. Note that the actual numerals cut follow Lincolnshire practice in that they are all additive roman so that no mistake can be made when read upside down.
Dowsby Hall, Lincolnshire, east elevation.
JOHN THORPE'S DESIGNS

Dowthy Hall, Lincolnshire, ground floor plan.
DOWNSBY HALL. The north elevation. All features of the front are recorded except for the modern addition to the west. Note the dated lead 'laundrybox', presumably a later addition repaired or added in the nineteenth century.
JOHN THORPE’S DESIGNS

Apart from the fragment of pargetting already noticed, little was found. A few small sherds of late seventeenth century salt glazed majolica, brush decorated in blue, and brick rubble forming the hardcore of the garden walls laid out immediately after the demolition work of the late eighteenth century, were turned up. This brick could have come from the demolished walling having been used in combination with stonework. The Red Hall at Bourne has walling of brick with stone dressings and the Little Castle at Bolsover, by Smythson, c. 1612, has areas of brickwork amongst the coursed rubble of the interior walling. The cellarage at Dowsby is lined to a large extent with brick as also is the well. A poorly preserved doorcase in brick has moulded ovolo jambs.

THE THORPE DRAWINGS AND THE PLAN OF DOWSBY

The drawings, T 28, in the Thorpe Album are inscribed in pencil, ‘Sr Wm Riggden/ with a staffe at/ 12 pts to y in.’ At first sight the present building appears to be directly related to these two drawings. However, as the house has been considerably reduced in size, this similarity must be held in question. Several factors point to the original large size of the house, apart from the note by Foster ‘that one third of this house still remains’. Firstly, the roof trusses were found to be numbered, showing that five trusses of the west range roof, and six of the east, are missing which corroborates this evidence. Secondly, the gaunt windowless south wall, which appears to be so out of character with the other elevations, makes it obvious that the house has been altered in some way. Thirdly, these are the blocked doorways which led into the southern extension presumed to have existed.

It is known that Sir William Rigdon had an estate at Dowsby which came into the possession of his family through the marriage of his father, Thomas Rigdon of Chartham, Kent, to Anne, the heiress of Anthony Villers, who had inherited the property from his mother, Joan, heiress of Thomas Roos of Dowsby. Presumably these drawings were the projected designs for a more fitting house for the estate but were never realised because Sir William sold the property before building could start.

Having determined by excavation that the original building was some 88 feet by 57 feet, this, together with the double pile characteristic of the house, was taken into account when the Thorpe drawings were searched for any unattributed plans of a similar type: that is Sir John Summerson’s classification SBII, plans related in type by being a single rectangle with staircases within the block. Nine other drawings of type SBII were examined, only three of which have any relevance to the problem. Drawing T110 is unattributed and has many marked similarities, particularly when the pencilled alterations are taken into account, and may in fact be a preliminary study. T136d and ii, of similar type, is attributed with reasonable certainty. From a note on T176, ‘all offices under ground’ it may be inferred that at least one of this type had a basement like the one at Wootherpe, Northamptonshire.

It became increasingly clear that this line of investigation would not provide any evidence for the attribution of the house plan to Thorpe, particularly when the size of the original build is taken into account. The pencil sketch plans of the Thorpe drawings, together with any drawings where major revisions have resulted in a change of the plan as classified, were then examined. Such amendments in almost every case may safely be inferred to have been made in the course of discussion leading to the final designs for his patrons. One particular plan, T45, made between 1607 and about 1612, bears many alterations in pencil which give an SBII characteristic rather than the original U, a courtyard type. This plan, marked in ink, ‘Sr Tho Dorrell/Lincolneshire’ has a marked similarity with the plan of Dowsby as shown by excavation. The corrections delete many features: the canted bays on some fronts, internal divisions; and a major reorganisation of the layout of the rear part of the building, superimposed over the inked original, has been carried out. These corrections are made in a similar manner to those on another drawing, T73, which has also the pencilled note across the deleted features ‘all this
DRAWING FOR SIR THOMAS DARRELL. Presumably for a house intended to be built at Horkstow. T 45 in Sir John Summerson’s classification. This plan appears to form the basis of the east range of Downby Hall.
building superfluous. It would therefore be expected that many alterations to the inked design would be found in the buildings based on these drawings, T45 and T73. The present house has many features worth enumerating in common with both T28i and the amended T45. Firstly the plan, T45, has the same fenestration and basic divisions proved to have existed in the surviving, northern, part of the east range. Further, an inscription ‘turrets over all the cant windowes’ is written to the right of the hall on T45, and may be taken to refer to the features now found over the east and formerly the west front at Dowsby. Secondly, the fireplaces in this range are in a position on T45 which would place them against the spine wall of the present house. Thirdly, the staircase is shown, as it is on all the related plans, in the centre of the west range corresponding with the beam, apparently part of a stair frame, on the first floor of the existing west range, south end. Fourthly, the scale of ‘12 pts to y in’ is applicable to both drawings, giving a measurement of approximately 88 feet, north to south, common to both T45 and the restored plan. The two ranges of the present Dowsby are virtually the same width, east to west, and T28i has the same dimensions, east to west; the asymmetry of the amended T45 having been corrected to give a balanced double pile elevation to the north and south fronts. Although the hall of T45 has the comment ‘too long by five fo’ the hall is now 45 feet by 21 feet six inches as compared with the 45 feet by 23 feet of the drawing. The line, drawn east to west, across the hall of T45 which indicated the probable position of a dais, has been used as the line of the present division of the hall, which is of later date. If all these characteristics are put together it may be seen that the present east range appears based on the east range of T45, and that the west range is a compromise of elements from T45 and T28i, presumably using that staircase design found on T28i rather than that of T45.

In this context, it may be noticed that the men whose names appear on the Thorpe drawings, T28 and T45, Sir William Rigdon and Sir Thomas Darrell were both knighted on the same day, the twenty third of July, 1603. Almost certainly they would have had the opportunity of comparing their projected designs with both each other and John Thorpe. Richard Burrell, however, must have taken over the estate and building project in embryo on his purchase of the estate in 1610; it was for him that the amended plan was made.

THE OWNERS OF DOWSBY

Sir William Rigdon, 1558 - 1610, married Etheldreda Partriche of Sutton, Holland, Lincolnshire, who bore him eight children. He must have proposed the building of a fitting seat for his descendants on the Dowsby estate but sold the property in 1610 before work had commenced. The series of Thorpe drawings leading up to T28i which bears his name, must now be regarded as tentative proposals for this house. Richard Burrell, the new owner, had an amended version of T45 drawn up and work may have started within a few months of the purchase. Burrell may have known Sir Thomas Darrell of Horkstow for whom T45 was originally drawn, having possibly been introduced to him by Rigdon or John Thorpe. This amended drawing, missing from the Thorpe Album, would surely have been in the possession of Burrell’s mason who might have been John’s brother, Thomas Thorpe, of Kings Cliffe. Here again, the revealing fact that some, at least, of Thorpe’s drawings were the basis for other plans, shows that this album must have been a work of reference containing both surveys and original drawings; the surveys being of houses that Thorpe admired and the drawings as records of thought processes that had resulted in good workable house plans.

Richard and Jane Burrell, his wife, settled at Dowsby in the ‘house of twenty chimneys’ which they built. This property was inherited by his son John, who was knighted at Lincoln on the 15th July, 1642. He was an active Royalist who compounded his estates during the Commonwealth Protectorate for £687. His wife, Frances, the daughter of Robert Redmayne,
JOHN THORPE'S DESIGNS

LL.D., chancellor of the Diocese of Norwich, bore him eight children. The eldest, Redmayne Burrell, succeeded to the property and also had to compound his estates in the sum of £770. He was born about 1616 and was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1633. About 1650 he married Rebecca, the daughter of Sir Thomas Gardiner, Kt., Recorder of London. Rebecca and Redmayne Burrell had one son, also Redmayne, who succeeded to the estates on his father’s death in about 1671. The first of Redmayne Burrell (II)’s two wives was Judith, daughter of Sir Thomas Trollope of Casewick, the second was Mary, the daughter of Sir Christopher Clitheroe, K., of London.

Thomas Burrell, the son of Redmayne Burrell (II) and his first wife Judith, was baptised on the 2nd July, 1674. Thomas married, for his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Beaumont Bodenham of Ryhall, Rutland, who died childless. Her death, as her father’s sole heiress, brought together the Ryhall and Dowsby estates. Thomas became Sheriff of Rutland in 1704, presumably because of the Ryhall estate connection. He died, Sir Thomas Burrell, in 1733 aged 60, having taken as his second wife Elizabeth Wright and was succeeded by his second son, Thomas, his first son, John, having died almost at birth in 1714, Thomas Burrell, of Dowsby and Ryhall, Esquire, was Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1739. He was buried, a bachelor, on the 22nd of December, 1763, in the Burrell Chapel in Dowsby Church.

As he was the sole male survivor in the line of succession, the Dowsby and Ryhall estates passed to the heirs of Judith Hyde and Jane Foster. Judith, the daughter of Redmayne Burrell (II), married the Rev. Humphrey Hyde, Rector of Dowsby. Through her death, in November 1706 a moiety of the Burrell estates passed to the Toller family of Billingborough and to the Hurst family of Stamford. Jane, another daughter of Redmayne Burrell (II) and sister of Judith Hyde, was born and baptised at Dowsby on the 25th December, 1677, and married the Rev. Thomas Foster, of Stamford. She died in 1720 and is buried in St. Michael's Church, Stamford. The eldest of her four children sold his property at Ponton, Dowsby and Algarkirk to Edward Bennett of Stamford in 1723. Some property remained in family ownership at Dowsby for longer, the Rev. Kingsman Baskett Foster being listed as a Dowsby landowner in 1842. The Fosters, father and son, were rectors of Dowsby for over ninety years, the patronage still belonging to Ryhall Hall.

The connection of the Ryhall and Dowsby estates was severed when Thomas Foster sold Ryhall to a Col. Pierrepont and Dowsby to a Mr. Green in 1798. It was, presumably, Mr. Green who commenced the partial demolition of the house to convert it into a farmhouse. The house is now the property of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Burtt, to whom the writer is much indebted for their kindness.

THE RED HALL, BOURNE

The Red Hall, Bourne, is, as its name suggests, of deep red brick with stone detailing and flush quoins. Whilst the building of the house is undocumented the date of construction is assumed to be circa 1600 to 1616.13

The house, like Dowsby, is set in the vestiges of its formal gardens which are here much mutilated by railway sidings. Although part of the house was used as a booking office during the life of the railway, the plan and elevations survive to such an extent that it has been thought fit to restore the structure for use as a museum.

The plan14 bears striking resemblance not only to the preliminary studies for Rigdon (Dowsby, T25i and ii), but to the whole series of Thorpe drawings related in type (SBI and ii). The more significant drawings being T182i, Thorpe’s survey of Otford Gate, erected before 1533 (the possible source of these compact plans, SBIi with spine walls), T225, dated 1596, with stair turrets projecting from the side elevations. Several more drawings continue the development from 1595 to 1610 on into the late series.15
THE RED HALL, BOURNE. Ground floor plan based on LAO LLHS/II and a thorough inspection of the building during the course of restoration.
JOHN THORPE’S DESIGNS

As observed, drawings T28i and possibly T28ii are so closely related both in plan and location that they must have been known to the builder of the Red Hall. T195, which bears the closest resemblance to the Red Hall, belongs to the primary series of drawings and is for a timber framed house.

If the dimensions of this plan are compared with those of the Red Hall, bearing in mind the differences of building material and subsequent alterations, the attribution of the design to John Thorpe is much more than conjecture.

A comparison of dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room or features</th>
<th>Red Hall</th>
<th>T195</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main front - external</td>
<td>54' 6''</td>
<td>52'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50'</td>
<td>50' 9''</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side</td>
<td>46'</td>
<td>41'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41'</td>
<td>39'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagonal across plan</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>external</td>
<td>71'</td>
<td>66' 6''</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64' 6''</td>
<td>64' 9''</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>29' 6'' x 18'</td>
<td>28' x 18'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but inscr. 27' x 18'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parlour</td>
<td>19' 6'' x 18'</td>
<td>22' x 18'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>21' x 18'</td>
<td>24' x 18'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>18' x 18'</td>
<td>18' x 18'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stair</td>
<td>18' x 10'</td>
<td>18' x 9'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spine wall, thickness</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>2' to 5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry, width</td>
<td>6' 4''</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only discrepancies remaining concern the fenestration and the location and subdivision of the service room. Sir John Summerson discounted the lateral appendages, that is, the chimney stacks and staircase towers of T195, as crudely executed afterthoughts. They do not appear on T196, the plan of the upper floor.

The fenestration of the Red Hall is irregular, whereas that of T195 is not. The main front of the drawing has canted bays flanking a rectangular porch with two light windows inserted in the piers. Three of these small windows, the outer ones, between the canted bays and the extremities of the façade, are omitted from the Red Hall, because the use of a thicker wall of brick in place of timber framing left insufficient room. One of the windows shown flanking the entrance is omitted because the porch was enlarged to take up the space. Thorpe apparently intended that the rear elevation should have three windows between the canted bays, but in building they were reduced to one. The two indicated as lighting the stair are combined as a four light transomed window; the one shown as lighting the parlour appears to have been left out both in the house and on the plan as revised. The side elevations are close to the unrevised drawing except that four light windows have been substituted.

It would be expected that the type of window actually used in the Red Hall would differ from that indicated on the plan. Over forty of the drawings in the Album have alterations made to the windows; canted and square bays are made to replace flat and vice-versa. It should how-
ever be noted that nineteenth century cantal bays with wooden sashes have recently been removed and the replacements are in stone to match the flat windows in the rest of the building. A fragment of what appears to be a cornice or ‘water table’ is reset near the surviving wooden bay on the north front. This fragment, which now forms part of a mutilated string course, is cantled with a moulding on both faces. The possibility that at least one cantal bay was built cannot be ruled out because this fragment came almost certainly from the header of a window. The flat windows are of six lights and the projected cantal bays have the same number, one on each cantal face and four on the front.

The plan used in this comparison is based on a recent survey LAO LLHS/II. The service room is marked on the position inscribed ‘p’ler’ [parlour] and the parlour in the position labelled ‘lar’ [larder] and ‘but’ [buttery] on Thorpe’s plan. The named function of the two rooms has therefore been transposed by alterations, there being a line of mortices for a partition frame in the place shown on T195 which would have given a wall abutting rather uncomfortably on an intermediate window mullion as drawn. This wall was probably removed in the eighteenth century. The exterior doorway giving access to the passage marked on the original which leads through the buttery and larder still survives but the oven shown in the adjacent wall appears to have been removed.

It is unfortunate that no documentary evidence survives to give an indication of the builder. Gilbert Fisher, grocer, of London owned the Red Hall possibly from 1610 and has been named as a likely builder. It would appear improbable that the rather coarse quality of the Red Hall could be contemporary with the relative polish of the work at Dowsby, and an earlier date, possibly nearer 1595, might be more appropriate. Could Sir William Rigdon have built the house and then sold Dowsby to cover his expenditure?

CONCLUSION

The evidence shows clearly the close identification of these two houses with designs by John Thorpe, who, following a logical development of the compact plan form inspired by Otford, produced a series of drawings based on the ones bound into the book. T28i originally prepared for Sir William Rigdon, was replaced at Dowsby by a variant based on T45, prepared for Sir Thomas Darrell of Horkstow after amendments had been made in the style of T28i. T28i and T45 were presumably used at the discussion leading to the final ‘platt’ for Dowsby. T195, apparently based on T28i and certainly part of the series of development, was used as the plan for the Red Hall. The identification is so close that any revision required for the final draft could have been made mentally and the finished working drawing prepared without further preliminaries.

Several more houses in Kesteven may have connections with Thorpe. The present Manor House at Hougham is a building of similar date. A compact plan, incorporating walling of the medieval house, is roofed with the familiar double pile roof. The Brudenells of Deene acquired the property after a marriage to the Bussy family who had held Hougham for generations. Deene is very close to Thorpe’s home at Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire, and it is possible that here too some association may be traced. Two more, the ‘Priory’, Brant Broughton, and the Manor House, Folkingham, have unusual plans possibly derived from T28 and Wothorpe.

Although there is no direct evidence, the similarity of the stone chimneypieces and certain moulded ashlar work of houses known to be associated with Thorpe would seem to connect him with the supply of these features. The rough walling would presumably be the work of local craftsmen from nearby sources of material, brick at Bourne and rubble at Dowsby. Thorpe would, whilst measuring up for the masonry detail, have been able to compile the collection of surveys in his album. The fireplaces are recognisable by the simple combination of moulding sections and the depressed arch lintel of a perpendicular gothic derivation where the
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Jamb mouldings run out at a chamfer the plain face is sometimes enriched with a finial.

The most sophisticated building to have this type of fireplace is Wothorpe; both Dowby and the Red Hall have examples which slightly differ individually in the design and the dimensions. Some farmhouses and cottages have the best rooms fitted with similar pieces; Newton, Woodside Farm, c. 1625, Great Gonerby, 3, Pond Street, Allington, the Old Manor House, c. 1650, and Bowthorpe Park are examples which illustrate the spread of the distribution area in Kesteven.

It is known that Lincolnshire quarries were leased by masons from Northamptonshire, and the similarity of design may be the result of local craftsmen working alongside their more sophisticated neighbours.

A NOTE ON THE RECONSTRUCTION DRAWING OF THE EAST FRONT

The reconstruction drawing of the facade is based on the evidence of the Thorpe drawings and of the surviving features of the building, with the exception of the projecting rectangular porch shown in the centre of the front which is conjectural, being based on the general character of the elevation, supported by the evidence of foundations extending from the centre some twelve feet to the east. The round arched entrance, as opposed to the straight lintel or depressed arch type, was adopted because the rockery of the nineteenth century garden just across the lawn incorporated several fragments of such an arch. The Red Hall, Bourne, has a porch of this type which strengthens the conjecture of the reconstruction.

The complete elevation is a rectangle 88 feet 6 inches, north to south, by 54 feet 9 inches, approximately, from the original ground line to the ridge of the roof. This rectangle is divided by a string course line produced horizontally from the intersection point of a long diagonal, from the north gable apex to the foot of the wall at the southern extremity, and a short diagonal across half this area, from the middle of the roof to the foot of the wall at the northern extremity. The transom of the first floor window is exactly halfway from the ground line to the ridge. This type of proportional division is shown in Serlio and is probably an indication that an ‘ordinance’ or ‘upright’ was prepared for this front if not for the others.

This paper ends on a note, the proportional division of Serlio, which may appear out of key with the often mundane productions of Thorpe’s work; the Book of Architecture of John Thorpe does include accurate transcriptions and redrawings of the Classical Orders together with competent and intricate exercises in perspective. Alongside Thorpe’s more sophisticated drawings are others where faulty drawing makes open casements droop rather than open and canted bays are shown in naïve perspective. Sir William Rigdon whose house Thorpe was commissioned to design and who was the first member of the ‘circle’ to be discussed is a shadowy figure. Rigdon’s interests seem to have been property and an intelligent appreciation of the fine arts. His work at Spalding, where he married Ethelreda Partrich in 1588, is of special concern here. He is known to have ‘added to and improved’ Holyrood alias Gayton House, now demolished, with the materials of the Master’s or Warden’s House of the Guild of the B.V.M. and St. Thomas. In this house ‘were anciently depicted in perspective views’ the former Priory buildings of Spalding ‘probably at the expense and order of Sir Wm. Rigdon (sic) ...’. Townsend however infers that Rigdon may have had some association with Holyrood but never actually lived in it; the Hobson pedigree states that they occupied the house from the mid-sixteenth century. Sir John Summerson’s call for systematic research on all the manors known to have been visited by John Thorpe has borne fruit, at least in South Lincolnshire: more important is the insight one finds in other fields, of patronage, of Thorpe’s true position as an architect and of the need for more work to be undertaken on the manors and houses in our county.
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Footnotes:

4 A moated site, possibly of the medieval hall, lies to the south east of the present house. The beamed may have formed part of the framing of this house.
5 The sill of the cantilever bay lighting the upper end of the hall was lowered in the later seventeenth century when the floor was levelled and the dais removed. There is a blocked window in the north gable wall which gave added light to the dais, this a mullioned window only with its lintel level with those on the facade.
7 Pedigrees, Rigdon of Dowby', Harl. MS. 1550, fol. 10, MS. C. 1671, Her Majesty's College.
8 Summerson, Sir J., letter to the writer, 28th August, 1969, '...though I am not sure that the upper part of the bay windows at Dowby could legitimately be described as turrets. The projection of the cantilevered windows on the Durrell plan (T45) allows for a different kind of thing.' In this context:
10 Summerson, Sir J., 1966, p. 4. '......conducted the business of a mason with much success.' We find Thomas Thorpe's name associated with Robert Lyminge and Thomas Style in the accounts of Blickling, Norfolk, between 1619 and 1623.'
11 Foster, Rev. Canon, The Burrells of Dowby and Ryhall', (Rotherham, 1885.), p. 6, note 1. The date '1610' was not transcribed with the rest of the statement '.....Richard Burrell who in the latter end of the reign of the immortal Queen Elizabeth or in the beginning of the reign of James Ist, mem 1610, bought th estate of Rigden, who built th house' of twenty chimney's th more to endure the memory of Dr. Redmayne to th family and induce their son John to call his eldest son by his name'.
The original ms. is LAO Misc. Dep.137/1.
This statement would lead one to suppose that Dr. Redmayne had some financial interest in the building project. There may be some unknown association here; the name of Richard Burrell's first wife is not recorded; Jane, his second wife, was daughter of Henry Jaye, Esq., of London and Norwich. (Foster, 1885, p. 7).
12 White's Lincolnshire Directory', (1882), 'Dowby Hall which is occupied by Mr. Seth Ellis Dean is an ancient Elizabethan stone mansion supposed to have been converted to a farmhouse in 1798'.
14 LAO EHS/II (1965).
15 That is: T33, T35, T43, T45 (as revised), T110, T136 (after 1585) T176 (no date indication, but apparently circa 1610), T195 and T196, T226, for example. The late series: T18, T28ii, T47 and T79 for example.
16 Varley, J., p. 64.
18 Wake, J., p. 64.
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22 The description and discussion of the roofs of these houses is being held over until a more comprehensive paper on the subject is prepared. Dowsby has a roof of queen post type constructed of new wood in circa 1610. The Red Hall, Bourne, has an ill fitting, reused, braced collar roof probably from one of the Abbey's ancillary buildings.

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