

# Lathom House, Lancashire: Architectural Fragments Survey

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**Castle Studies Trust**  
Advancing the Understanding of Castles



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## 1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This commissioned work funded by Castle Studies Trust in collaboration with Kingmaker 1485/ Bluestone Archaeology was begun with an inspection of stones on 14 April, and a further day on 1 May 2017 of on-site public interpretation and discussion as excavations progressed. The following report represents the main body of work, from which a public lecture was delivered to an audience of around 100 people on the evening of 25 October at Lathom Park Chapel.

The brief submitted to the Castle Studies Trust by Bluestone Archaeology is as follows:

- To undertake a programme of detailed recording of the reused architectural fragments recovered from the 1997-2009 investigations, and any newly excavated masonry that may be discovered in 2017.
- Firstly, this should identify the appearance of the architectural embellishments of the late-medieval house.
- Secondly, it [the worked stone] may shed light on the broader context of the house in terms of architectural influences.
- The worked stone would be marked with a unique number.
- The worked stone would be inspected, assessed, photographed and described in detail by the specialist.

## 2.0 LATHOM HOUSE: HISTORY

### 2:1 OUTLINE HISTORY

Lathom House is a fragmentary survival of a Grade II\*-listed wing of a house that in turn replaced a late medieval house, significantly but not totally destroyed at the civil war. Its general situation is on a ridge of Carboniferous Millstone grit from which local building stone is derived.

In her BAA paper “The Northern Court” of 1999, Jennifer Lewis regarded Lathom to be “important as a group of late medieval buildings about which little is known” for “not a single trace can now with confidence be identified on the ground.”

The precise origins and layout of Lathom House have to date been unclear, a lacuna this report is intended to help redress.

A manor was recorded in Domesday though there is no proof it can be associated with this property. A house existed prior to the fifteenth century, parts of which may have remained when Thomas Stanley, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Derby and the last styled ‘King of Mann’ married Margaret Beaufort before November 1482.

For a King of Mann to marry the mother of a claimant to the throne, who then enabled the ascent of Henry VII as a kingmaker by committing troops at Bosworth in August 1485, propelled Stanley to the foremost echelons of society. Yet references to the building of Lathom House are so scarce as to be frequently glossed over. The IHR reference is as follows:

*Sir Thomas de Lathom, the younger, succeeded his father in 1370. He was the Sir Oskell of the Lathom legend. He made an enfeoffment of his estates in 1376. He paid his quota of the aid to make the duke of Lancaster's son a knight in 1378. Two years later he was pardoned certain offences committed within the forest of West Derby, Joan his wife and Edward their son being included in the grant. His wife Joan was daughter of Hugh Venables of Kinderton; his children were Thomas, Edward, Isabel, Margaret, and Katherine. He died at the beginning of 1382, having been lord of Lathom for twelve years.*

*His son and heir Thomas had a shorter tenure, dying about eighteen months afterwards; his heiress was a daughter Ellen, born two months after his death. The widow afterwards married Sir John de Dalton. The heiress became a ward to the duke of Lancaster; she was still living in 1387, but died before*

*the end of 1390, when the duke ordered John de Audlem and Richard de Longbarrow to continue in possession until further orders.*

*After her death the Lathom manors reverted to the younger children of Sir Thomas, and Edward having died, Sir John Stanley received them in right of his wife Isabel.*

*The manor continued to descend in the Stanley family until the sale about 1717. Lathom was their principal residence until its destruction in the Civil Wars, after which Knowsley took its place, though William, the ninth earl of Derby, had some intention of rebuilding it.*

*A very complete survey of the manor is contained in the compotus rolls of 13–14 Henry VIII, when the family estates were in the king's hands through the minority of Edward, the third earl of Derby*

This lack of understanding on the principal monument of a noble family alone presents a compelling case for the value of research on the location and character of Lathom House.

The *terminus ante quem* for this study is the Stanleys' full transfer to Knowsley Hall after 1717, when the estates at Lathom were sold to Henry Furness in 1721 who in turn sold them to Thomas Bootle MP, KC, Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Bootle commissioned the new hall designed by Leoni. This was dismantled in the 1920s, whereupon reused stones from the medieval house began to be discovered.



Lathom House as built from 1725, demolished 200 years later.

## 2.1 SELECT HISTORICAL SOURCES

The architecture of Lathom House prior to its slighting in the mid seventeenth century and final demolition in the early eighteenth century is only vaguely described, while no illustration is known to exist. However, a picture can be built through accumulated references, while a misericord at Manchester Cathedral long thought to represent Lathom does stand up as a simplified interpretation of what literature and documents describe.

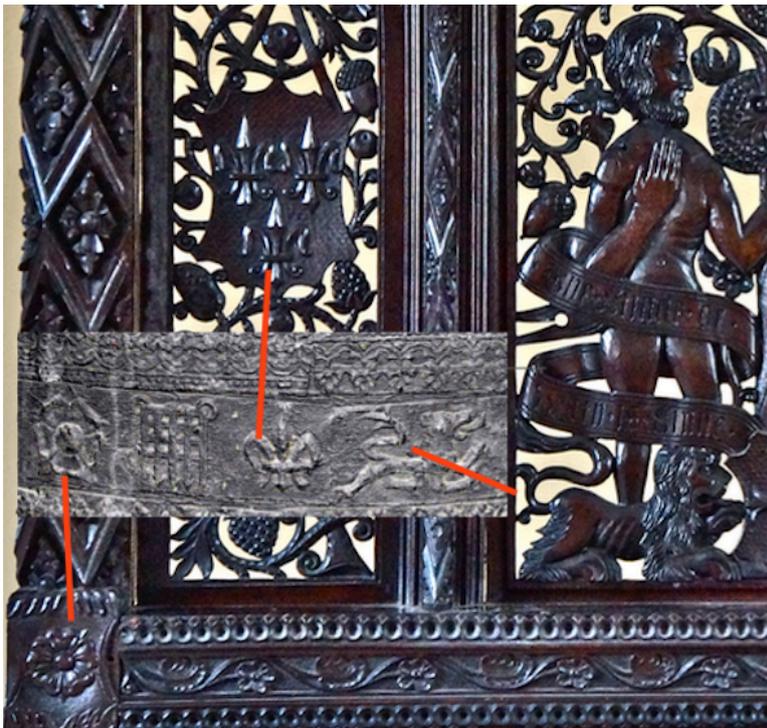
### c. 1495- 1500:

A set of misericords at Manchester's Collegiate church (now Cathedral) commissioned under the aegis of Warden James Stanley reputedly shows details of Lathom. Below is a gatehouse, then a polygonal tower encircled by a ring of mural towers; thirdly, another similar gatehouse at St George's Chapel Windsor, as a caveat that some details are generic. However, the polygonal tower is very specific and matches further evidence. It also shows a gable end or pediment over the gatehouse and a turret of two stages, whereas Windsor's example does not.



1495: Royal visit by Henry VII and Elizabeth of York

Henry VII took his state bed from Westminster and left it at Lathom soon after the execution of William Stanley, Lord Chamberlain. Thomas Stanley's own bed is a simplified version of the royal bed. The detail and decoration may have been influential on carved stonework, as Thomas Stanley's bed copied its major features, and the heraldic details in the bell in Ormskirk Church may also indicate its influence.



Inset- Ormskirk's bell, its heraldic details showing consonance with the details on the state bed left at Lathom c. 1495. Masonry may have been similarly influenced.

c.1513: Ballads and poems record nine towers inside and outside the walls, and recent building:

'Nyne towers thou bearest on hye,  
And other nyne thou bearest in the utter walles  
Within may be lodged kynges three'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Poems Concerning the Stanley Family (Earls of Derby) 1485-1520* Ian Forbes Baird, Ph.D. thesis in English, University of Birmingham (1989), p. 259

And suggest its total rebuilding and enlargement:

'[...] pulled it down, and from the ground  
New builded Lathom Hall,  
So spacious that it can receive  
Two kings, their trains and all.'<sup>2</sup>

The Stanley Poem claimed it inspired Henry VII's rebuilding of Richmond Palace of c. 1497-1501.

1540: John Leland

*'Lathom, most part of stone. The chiefest house of the earl of Derby. Two miles from Ormskirk'*

1562: Bishop Stanley of Sodor and Man claimed that Thomas Stanley had 'built Lathom Hall out of the ground'.

1572: The epithet 'the Northern Court' was used to describe Lathom in the will of Edward, 3rd earl of Derby in 1572 (Lewis 1999, 150)

1587-90: The household recorded at 118 servants, and 140 servants.

1594: On 12 July, an inventory of the goods made, describing the location of the main bedchamber:

In ye Chamber at ye westend of the middle warde

Item. j standinge bed with tester & vallance embrodred with my Lords Armes [£]20-00-00

In the Chamber aboue at th'estend of the middle warde.// [£]13-06-08

Item. j one standinge bedsted with tester and vallance of Crimson velvet imbrodred

1617: James I visited Lathom.

1640s:

Samuel Rutter was a chaplain at Lathom and an eyewitness of the house during the Civil War when the house was standing on:

*'a flat, upon moorish, springy and spumous ground, and was encompassed with a strong wall of two yards thick; upon the walls were nine towers, flanking each other, and in every tower were six pieces of ordnance, that played three one way, three the other: without the wall was a moat eight yards wide, and two yards deep; upon the back of the moat, between the wall and the grass, was a strong row of palisades around<sup>3</sup>. Besides all these there was a high, strong tower, called the Eagle Tower, in the midst of the house, surmounting all the rest; and the gate-house also had two high and strong buildings, with a strong tower on each side of it; and in the entrance to the first court, on top of these towers, were placed the best and choicest marksmen, who usually attended the earl in his hunting and other sports, as huntsmen, keepers, fowlers and the like; who continually kept*

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<sup>2</sup> 'The Kaleidoscope: or, Literary and Scientific Mirror', Liverpool, 1821 p. 414

<sup>3</sup> Celia Feinnes on Windsor, 1698: "This is fenced with iron palisades painted" See also archaeological report for the Georgian West Wing excavations, S. Baldwin 2010: "A row of staggered pointed timbers were observed in the black silty fills at the bottom of the moat. They were probably formed into a defensive palisade during the English Civil War in 1644. They could also have been the original moat revetment timbers or piling for some sort of bridge."

*watch, with screwed guns and long fowling-pieces, upon these towers, to the great annoyance and loss of the enemy, especially of their commanders, who were frequently killed in their trenches, or as they came or went to or from them. Besides all that has hitherto been said of the walls, towers, moat &c, there is something so particular and romantic in the general situation of this house, as if nature herself had formed it for a strong-hold, or place of security; for, before the house, to the south and south-west, is a rising ground so near it, as to overlook the top of it, from which it falls so quick, that nothing planted against it on those sides can touch it further than the front wall; and on the north and east sides, there is another rising ground, even to the edge of the moat, and then falls away so quick, that you can scarce, as the distance of a carbine shot, see the house over that height; so that all the batteries placed there, are so far below it, as to be of little service against it: and, let us observe, by the way, that the uncommon situation of it may be compared to the palm of a man's hand, flat in the middle, and covered with a rising round about it, and so near to it, that the enemy, during the siege, were never able to raise a battery against it, so as to make a breach in the wall practicable to enter the house by way of storm."*

1664-5: Hearth Tax appears to list two working hearths at Lathom, so that part of it survived the Civil War. The following year reference was made to 17 hearths, suggesting a period of rapid rebuilding.

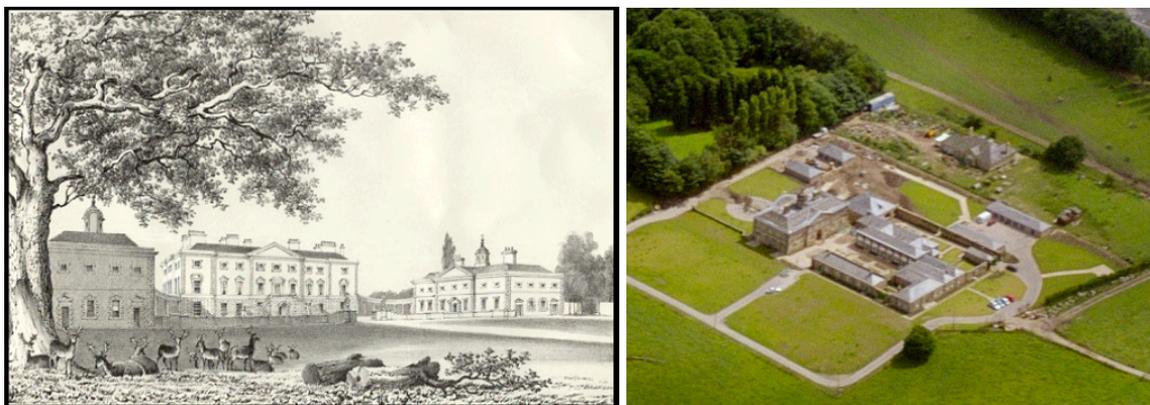
1670/1:

At the Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service a letter dated 13 March 1670/1 was located using on-line catalogues. It was sent from Thomas Matley at Lancaster, to Somerford Oldfield in Somerford, Cheshire, and relates to Oldfield's plans to repair and extend his house at Claythorpe, Westmorland. In passing, Matley refers to the current difficulty in obtaining workmen, as:

*'you cannot get masons and carpent[er]s for the works bicause the all such workmen take soo much worke in winter as will [per?]force to keep them in imployment all the summer following, and now all the masons in this part of the country are imployed in the buildinge up the Eagle tower at Lathom' (C&CAL S DSS 1/7/81(1))*

Early C18th Century: Thomas Pennant

Lathom was "even inhabited at the beginning of this [i.e. the eighteenth] century when the Eagle Tower and some parts of the wooden house were still standing"



c. 1725 Levelling of the site and rebuilding into a Palladian mansion

1825: Baines in 'History, directory, and gazetteer, of the County Palatine of Lancaster, V2, Liverpool' (p. 457)

describes from uncertain sources the house at the time of Henry VII's visit in July-August 1495, as having 'eighteen towers, nine in the outer and as many in the inner wall, the whole surmounted by a deep fosse, eight yards wide and two deep, immediately within which, and beyond the drawbridge, was a strong gateway, and in the centre a lofty tower, called the Eagle Tower'

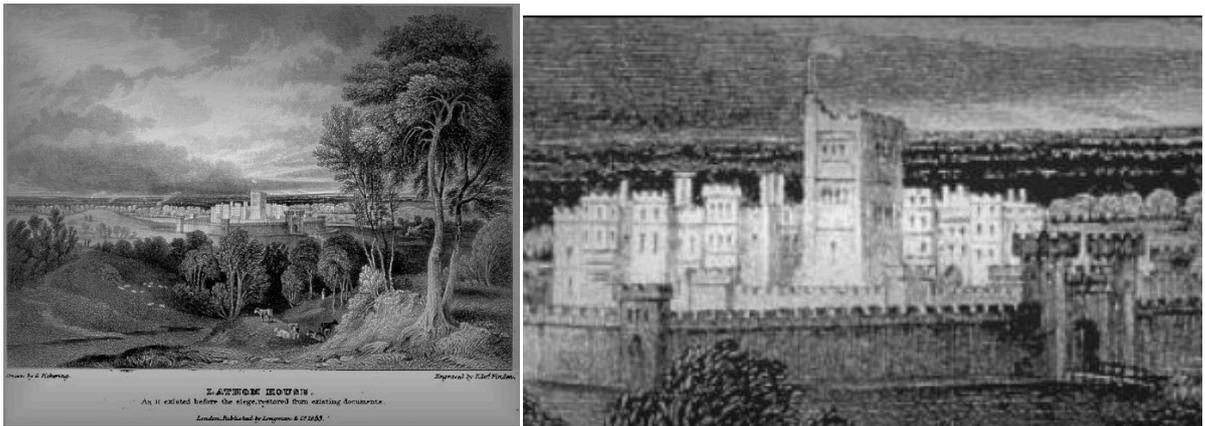
1828:

John Nichols: "The ancient Lathom, the celebrated seat of nobility and hospitality, stood between the north-east offices of the present house and the kitchen gardens"

(*The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent festivities of King James the First etc.* Vol III)

1853:

Longman published an engraving of a speculative reconstruction that has influenced subsequent interpretations.



Later texts have tended to reiterate those sources, and none have offered a sound basis for reconstruction, pending further archaeological analyses.

### 3.0 INTERPRETATIONS

#### 3.1 INTERPRETATION: LOCATION

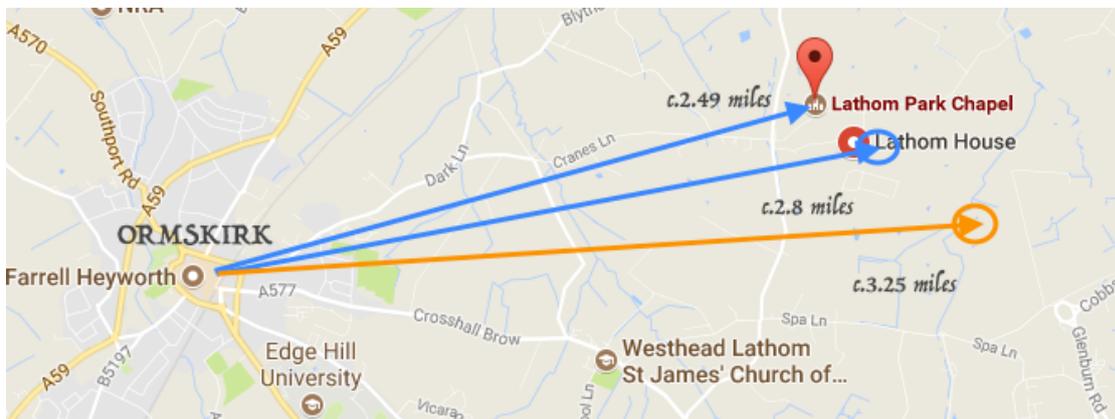
The quality of interpretation of any ex-situ carved masonry depends on understanding its context and whether it is in-situ or ex-situ.

Context has proved a thorny issue at Lathom House because its location has been disputed, rival theories focusing on two different sites half a mile apart.

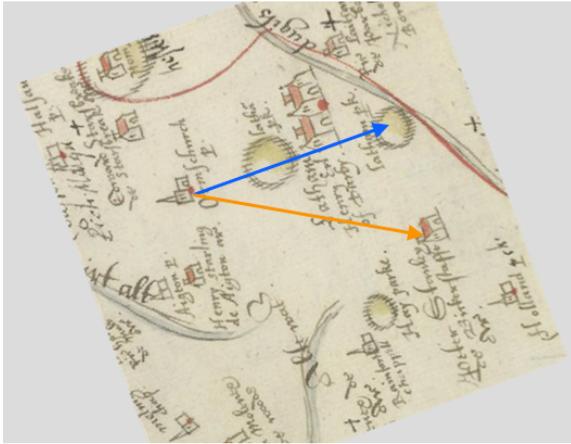
One interpretation of Rutter's description of it having been built on marshy ground has been taken to relate to a site at Spa Roughs Wood, which features earthworks known as 'Cromwell's Trench'. This marked in orange; the area under present investigation and proposed as the correct location is circled in blue.



John Leland described the extant house as 'two miles from Ormskirk'. The site by Lathom House is 2.8 miles; its chapel somewhat less distant, at 2.49 miles.



A similar relationship is shown in two maps of the 1590s

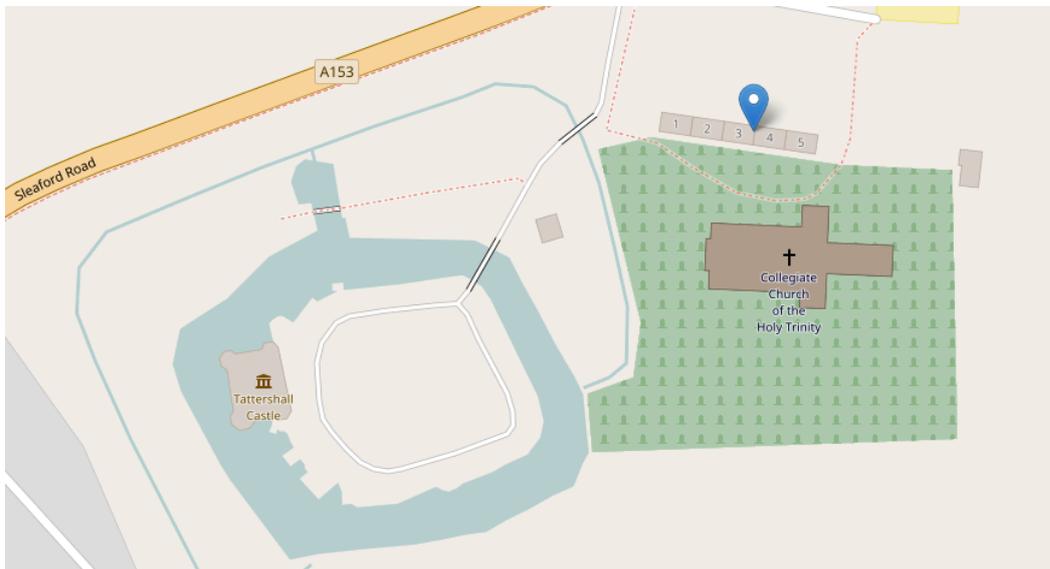


Lord Burghley's Atlas, 1595



William Smith 1598

A pertinent factor in its location is the relationship between the chapel (and associated almshouses of c.1504-9) and the great house, for almshouses were conspicuous displays of charity and munificence: at another notable late medieval northern house of the 1440s at Tattershall (Lincs) they were set in close proximity to the castle, by the entrance road. Tattershall's comparison is particularly apt as it came under the ownership of Margaret Beaufort in a grant of March 1487, which may just predate Lathom's rebuilding, though her energies seem to have been most fully expended in the college only after 1501 (Jones & Underwood *The King's Mother*, p.131).



Most compellingly, the immediate post civil-war era, the apparent future 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby (born 1655) was portrayed by a garden feature with the background context of the chapel and almshouses, their form confirmed in a later drawing by Humphrey Repton (below). They would be shown at the correct, if foreshortened, angle if this were drawn from the site of the present Lathom House Gardens.



William Richard George Stanley, 9th Earl of Derby (c. 1655 – 5 November 1702), styled Lord Strange from 1655 to 1672 showing the turreted chapel c. 1659 (c) Knowsley Collection, reproduced with permission; Humphrey Repton showing the chapel with the dome decayed/ removed (c) Lancashire Record Office, reproduced with permission

The alternative site at ‘Cromwell’s Trench’ is over three miles (c. 3.25 miles) from Ormskirk, rather than Stow’s two miles. Its distance from the almshouses and chapel would render the two sites unrelatable.

Should ‘Cromwell’s Trench’ have historical veracity, Cromwell’s troops would not have built a trench on the site of a castle they were besieging: too close, and they would themselves be vulnerable. Firing required an elevated position, and within a range of about half a mile.<sup>4</sup>

The Civil War diary, ‘A Journal of the Siege of Lathom House’ reputedly by Edward Halsall explains that on Tuesday 12 March 1644, Lieutenant Key left Lathom House and ‘marched up to their works without a shot, then firing upon them in their trenches they quickly left their holes’. This confirms the Parliamentarians’ trenches were indeed in an elevated position.

If these relative locations are correct, with the orientation of Lathom House facing Ormskirk, then the trenches in Spa Wood would be behind Lathom, and indeed the diary continues to explain that on March 17 “Lieutenant Heape[...] issued out of the back gates to surprise the enemy in their new trenches.”

### 3.2 INTERPRETATION: SETTING OF THE HOUSE

Rutter’s curious description does not necessarily refer to a spectacular natural hollow of suspicious steepness and regularity in an otherwise fairly level landscape, which is indeed ‘moorish’, and especially wet in winter. Instead, as Rutter’s explicit theme is Lathom’s defensibility, he is possibly describing the mansion being set at the base of earthworks, most likely defences having been massed around it during the seventeenth century so that close-range ground-level cannon fire would be frustrated.

<sup>4</sup> The drakes developed in the 1620s were the most common cannon (especially the demi culverin), and theories on their range differ: a ‘theoretical range of 1,500 yards’, and ‘an effective range of 550m’: just under half a mile.



Rutter: "the uncommon situation of it may be compared to the palm of a man's hand, flat in the middle, and covered with a rising round about it, and so near to it, that the enemy, during the siege, were never able to raise a battery against it" Castle Rising, Norfolk is still defended by just such an earthen bank, as were many other castles. Civil War defences certainly included such earthworks and 'palisadoes' which could well resemble the palm of a hand.

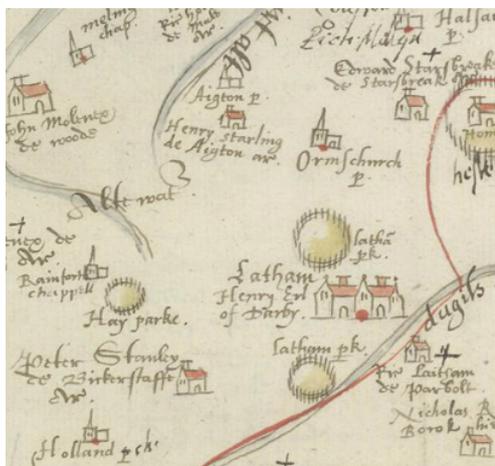
By their nature, subsequently cleared earthworks are impossible to trace, and the intensive development of terraced gardens for Leoni's eighteenth-century house required some leveling. [SB: 'Evidence from the 2009 evaluation suggests that Leoni raised the levels to 'float' his Palladian house above the medieval levels on the north side. Levels on the south side may well have been truncated.']

If these tall banks were indeed such lost earthworks, provided for temporary defence in lieu of a hilltop advantage, we might expect water capture and 'springy' ground within and without. This need not relate to the site's topography in the fifteenth century or earlier.

### 3.3 INTERPRETATION: CASTLE OR HOUSE?

Lathom is usually referred to in sources not as a castle, but a mansion or house.

As shown in Lord Burghley's 1595 plan, it is represented by the convention of a house, whereas known castles were shown by a different convention, of four square towers and crenellations.



We can surmise that Lathom may have had the accoutrements of a castle- a gatehouse, crenellations and mural towers- yet carried the reputation and comforts of a great house. Therefore defence may not have been its primary function, but the presentation of ancestral pedigree in the secure and impressive seat of the Earls of Derby. The expression was probably

more a living legacy of soldier-kingmakers, and the certain use of the focal Eagle Tower as a museum of Bosworth-era artifacts [Dr Stephen Lloyd, Knowsley, pers. comm.] testifying the role Thomas Stanley held in the elevation of a king borne of Margaret Beaufort can only promote such a reading. The presence of the king's marriage bed after 1495 and Stanley's copying this court mode for his own bed places it yet more securely as a royal house rather than a defensive fortress borne of insecurity, and masonry types might be expected to span both typologies.

What form did the focal Eagle Tower take, and what did its name signify?

### 3.4 INTEPRETATION: THE EAGLE TOWER



Lord Burghley's 1576 vellum map of Lancashire showing the Lathom House Eagle Tower with a cupola and ball finial



Giacomo Leoni's 1725 West Wing of Lathom House, Cupola with ball finial

William Cecil, Lord Burghley had a map of Lancashire produced in 1576. Its depiction of Lathom shows a focal tower, with crenellations and a ball finial, perhaps with a turret behind. This bears some resemblance to the depiction at Manchester Cathedral.



Manchester Cathedral: Left- The Dean's stall, with the Eagle and Child legend of Lathom; Centre- elephant with a castle, the focal tower attributed as the Eagle Tower of Lathom, given the similar gatehouse. Another Elephant and Castle at St George's Chapel, Windsor. The Warden's Stall-end, Manchester, showing yet again a gabled, two-stage turreted gatehouse.

Rutter explained that Lathom was:

*"encompassed with a strong wall of two yards thick; upon the walls were nine towers, flanking each other, and in every tower were six pieces of ordnance, that played three one way, three the other"*

The most secure physical description of the Eagle Tower lies in the 1645 sequestration accounts.

[ 400 ]

*An Account of what Floors and Wainscots were sold by the Officers put in by Colonel Booth, at LATHAM-HOUSE, viz.*

In the Eagle-tower, three floors, in measure 74 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ each, the two } l. s. d.	
highest at 12d. per yard,	7 9 0
The third floor, 74 yards, at 1s. 2d. per yard, — — —	1 7 0
The Tower of Madness, 25 yards, at 12d. per yard. — — —	1 5 0
The Tower at the Kitchen-bridge, one floor 34 yards, at 12d. per yard, 1 14	0 10 8
The other floor, 32 yards, at 4d. per yard, — — —	0 16 0
The Little Tower next it, two floors, 15 yards, — — —	1 16 0
The next tower to that in the corner, two floors, 36 yards, — — —	0 6 6
The Chapel Tower, one floor, 16 yards, — — —	1 16 0
In the Private Tower, one floor, 16 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ , — — —	0 6 6
The floor in the lowest room, Eagle Tower, 70 yards, — — —	4 1 8
Wainscot of the fame room, 159 yards, at 1s. 6d. per yard, — — —	16 0 0
The wainscot in the room adjoining, 83 yards, at 1s. 6d. per yard, — 6	19 0 0
The floor in the fame room, 27 yards, at 1s. 2d. per yard, — — —	1 16 0
The floor in the Middle Ward, 111 yards, at 1s. per yard, — — —	5 11 0
<i>Total,</i>	51 7 10

From these, Jennifer Lewis has reconstructed a tower of five stages, on the basis that the lowest floor was stone. However, the lowest floor could have been a cellar rather than the ground level Lewis supposes.

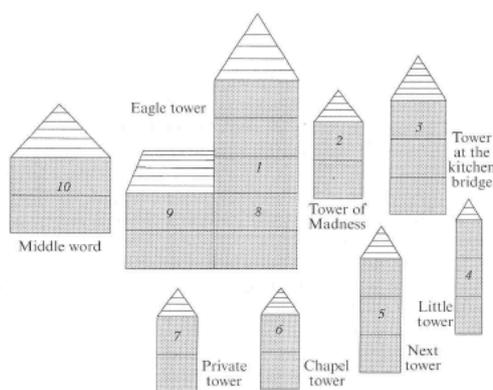


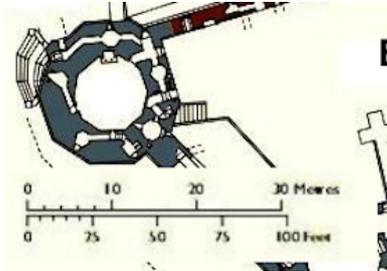
FIG. 2. Conjectural arrangement of the buildings based on orders for disposal of fittings, 1645. Notional arrangement of the towers: numbers indicate the building sequence cited in the Parliamentarian orders to dismantle; and assuming ground floors to be stone-flagged and floors sold were at first floor level or higher; i.e. the 'lowest floor' in the Eagle Tower was at first floor.

According to these accounts, it certainly had four floors of timber. Three timber floors were 74  $\frac{1}{2}$  square yards; viz. 8.7 yards square, or 26 feet square internally, the 'third floor' smaller at 74 square yards, the lower floor probably within thicker walls at 70 yards or 8.4 yards square or 25 ft square. 159 yards of wainscot from this lower room would indeed equate to wall panelling at just over 6 ft height around its perimeter.

The lower floor's boarded and wainscoted room indeed had a 'room adjoining' of 83 yards, but this is larger than the main space.

Does this inventory refer just to the main chambers, which were likely supplemented by ancillary spaces such as garderobes? Might such have been flagged rather than boarded, hence not mentioned? If the ancillary room were external to the tower- and the lack of reference to such rooms above it would suggest so- then the internal floor area of the main accommodation in Latham's Eagle Tower would be 680 sq ft. on each storey, just over 2,700 square feet in all.

Rutter refers specifically to the 'Eagle Tower' at the 'midst' of the building, being between two courtyards. Caernarfon Castle had the archetypal Eagle Tower, begun around 1283, of ten sides with three towers. It was composed of three floors over a fourth floor as an entry level, each of which was around 75 square yards internally, extremely close to the 74 ½ square yards of Lathom's Eagle Tower. Four expressed floors may have been common to both.



Caernarfon's influence was broad. By the early fourteenth century, the Bishop's Palace at Lichfield had borrowed the polygonal form of the then new tower accompanied by mural paintings in the Bishop's Palace Great Hall showing Edward I and his military knights. Its position in a royal forest half way between Westminster and Caernarfon makes this royal station an obvious representative of the Edwardian campaign in Wales, and the imperial reputation of Caernarfon was unlikely to have been forgotten.

As far as Lathom is concerned, the 1576 Burghley MS map of Lancashire and the Bishop of Hulme's misericord made for Warden James Stanley (1485-1506) in Manchester Cathedral show a similarly proportioned (roughly 1.5:1 height-width) polygonal tower, with a ball finial, encircled by a curtain wall with regularly-set mural towers. Given four and three mural towers are visible from one side, a total of nine mural towers as described by Rutter and evidenced by the Parliamentary survey (if we include the gatehouses) would not be unreasonable.

Burghley's map also shows tall chimneys, and possibly a turret behind the finial similar to Caernarfon.

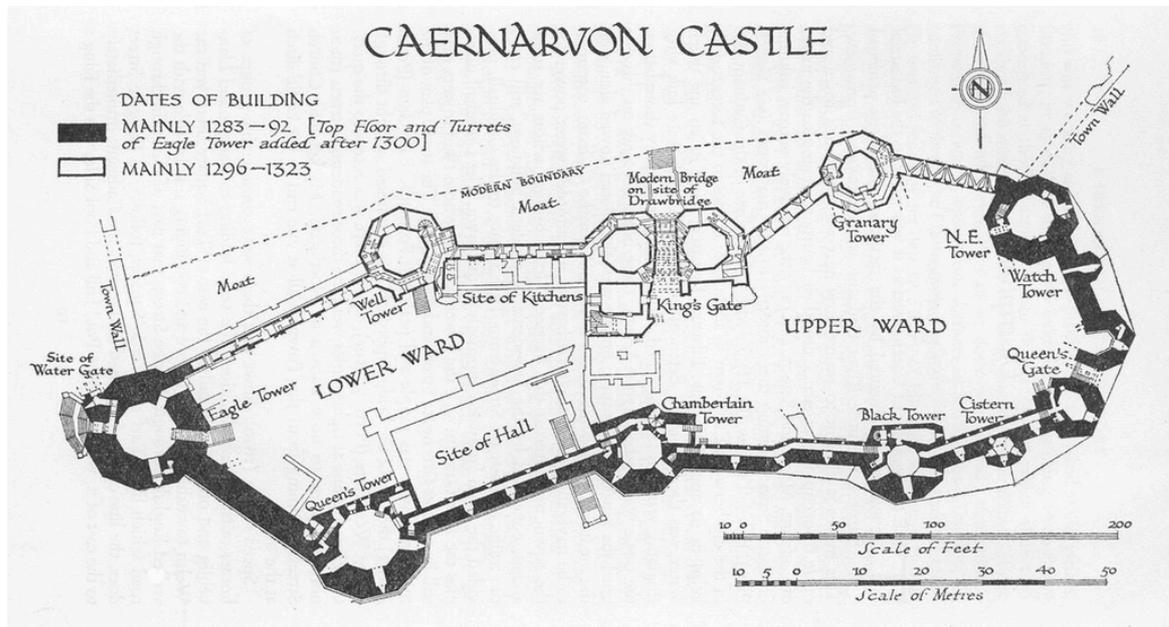


Caernarfon Castle, elevation and section; Lichfield Bishop's Palace tower (early C14); Misericord in Manchester Cathedral, c. 1500; Map showing Lathom House.

Furthermore, Edward Stanley's early sixteenth-century Hornby Castle bears a striking resemblance to the towers of Caernarfon, of polygonal form and plain battlements, with an elevated turret. The turret appears to have been part of Lord Wemyss' remodelling, c. 1743 but upon early walls, and we might assume Lathom held a substantial influence on Hornby.



Caernarfon Castle, Eagle and Queen's Tower compared with Horby Castle, Lancashire, however substantially rebuilt in the eighteenth century (c. 1743).



Caernarfon Castle, Plan from Ministry of Works guidebook.

The comparison extends to plan form. Caernarfon Castle has nine main towers/gatehouses plus the smaller Cistern Tower and Watch Tower. Lathom is attributed with nine towers, if we also include its gatehouses.

Therefore, the coincidence of the name of the Eagle Tower at Lathom and Caernarfon, their internal areas, polygonal form and external proportions, as well as a comparable number of towers in the curtain walls, plus a consonance with Hornby Castle all now strongly suggest Caernarfon was a primary influence on Lathom. This choice may well have embodied an imperial character of destined Welsh kingship in the household of Margaret Beaufort and Thomas Stanley.

This claim is supported by the fact the Stanleys were directly responsible for Caernarfon, the mayoralty of the town assumed by John Stanley from 1427-1461.

Caernarfon was perhaps used by the Stanleys as a staging-post for the Isle of Man, their titular right as 'Kings of Man'. William Stanley was made Chief Justiciar of North Wales in 1483, with grants of land from Richard III. He was also made mayor of Caernarfon and Constable of Caernarfon Castle, bringing it directly into the custodianship of the family,

and this may suggest a *terminus post quem* for construction. (John Leland claimed William Stanley made improvements at Chirk Castle, perhaps building the chapel.)

Caernarfon's influence is therefore evidenced through both form and circumstance, though the two sites could have been planned differently: Lathom's polygonal keep was possibly central ('in the midst', said Ruter; 'in the centre' as per Baines [1825] though 100 years after its loss), though it is possibly it tended toward peripheral while still being surrounded by a ring of towers and viewed as 'in the midst' of them. Stephen Baldwin suggests the proximity of the Eagle Tower to the West Wing would have placed it 'in the general area of the 18th century West Wing building'. This area provides a target for further excavation.

How does this new assessment of its relationship to Caernarfon help in identifying masonry? Military architecture and its masonry details evolved between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in terms of improved standards of domesticity, masonry styles and the technology of warfare and its consequent expression, so we would not expect to see Caernarfon-era details a couple of hundred years after the event. There are a number of further pertinent exemplars that may have influenced such a planning concept in the 1480s.

### 3.5 INTERPRETATION: ROYAL CASTLES IN THE NORTH AND WEST

#### 3.5.1 MIDDLEHAM CASTLE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

As Duke of Gloucester, Richard III stayed at Middleham, Wensleydale (85 miles NE of Lathom) when a child in the household of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (1428-71) and again after marrying his daughter Anne Neville. Middleham was his home and early political base- though he never visited after his coronation in 1483. Nonetheless, the castle remained in royal ownership until the early seventeenth century making it a conspicuous monument to Yorkist ambitions.

Its ruined remains are those of a later twelfth-century keep of two storeys and later projecting chapel tower surrounded by a square courtyard with external ranges of accommodation punctuated by mural towers. The tantalizing possibility emerges that Lathom was a Lancastrian response to Middleham, using a Welsh-imperialist vocabulary of a polygonal 'Eagle Tower' to update the residential keep. The label 'The Northern Court' first recorded in the sixteenth century may be older, coined to imply such rivalry with this royal northern house.



### 3.5.2. RAGLAN, USK (167 miles south of Lathom)

The young Henry VII spent eight of his formative years- from the age of four in 1461 to twelve in 1469- at Raglan near Monmouth, the house of the Yorkist Sir William Herbert. Margaret Beaufort is known to have visited him here.

Raglan features a polygonal (hexagonal) keep, on the exterior of the castle. It was probably begun in the 1430s or 1440s, expressly for superior lodgings. Matthew Johnson has argued for its emulation of Caernarfon, being an imperial mode when Herbert (as 'ap Thomas') was the first Welsh earl, regarded as 'the national deliverer'.

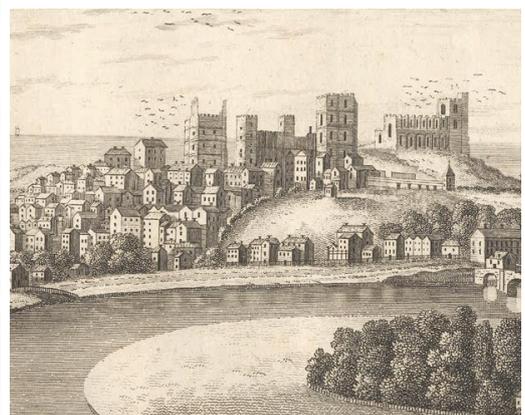
### 3.5.3 PEMBROKE

Margaret Beaufort's familiarity with Pembroke, as the birthplace of Henry VII in 1452, must have left a vivid impression. It features a severe round keep surrounded by a curtain wall with mural towers.



### 3.5.4 LANCASTER CASTLE

The gatehouse at Lancaster bears the arms of Henry V as Prince of Wales (1407-13), the most impressive castle entry of its age. Its turrets give the impression of two layers, which may be a typology whereby nine towers of Lathom could resemble eighteen. Its square keep is squat, however, and an unlikely influence.



### 3.6: INTERPRETATION: OTHER FIFTEENTH-CENTURY KEEP RESIDENCES

A distinctive group of brick keep-residences may have offered a significant influence in the fifteenth century.

Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire (Ralph Cromwell, c. 1430-40); Farnham and Esher in Surrey (Bishop of Winchester William Waynflete); and Buckden Palace in Huntingdonshire (Bishop of Lincoln Thomas Rotherham [1472 -1480] and John Russell [1480 – 1494]) belong to a group of brick keeps that spans secular and ecclesiastical patronage. As previously mentioned, Tattershall was under the ownership of Margaret Beaufort.



This type is usually attributed to the coeval influence of French donjon residences by soldiers (contemporary with Raglan) with the court circle's adoption of brick after its royal debut at Eton College in 1440. Henry VII's Greenwich Palace featured a brick tower lodging.

However, the royal character of Lathom's patronage is unlikely to have emulated these too closely. There remains the claim made for Richmond.

#### 3.6.1 RICHMOND PALACE

Despite the claim that Henry VII used Lathom as a model for Richmond for its rebuilding in 1497-1501, what is known about their form and arrangement are quite separate. Richmond's vast outer courts; parallel, and similar hall and chapel; a square block with irregular integral turrets for lodgings and a galleried Privy Garden leading to a monastery has almost nothing to do with what we know of Lathom as a tall tower with a ring of mural towers and moat. The reference is likely to have been hyperbolic, but a definitive answer demands further excavation.



Richmond Palace as it stood in the early sixteenth century, model at Richmond Museum.

It stands to reason that the principal political terms of reference for Lathom must have related to Thomas Stanley as a Lancastrian kingmaker at Bosworth, and Margaret Beaufort as the Lancastrian King's Mother. From Lancashire, the northern and Welsh royal houses more likely provided the apt terms of reference.

#### 4.0 HISTORY OF RECENT EXCAVATIONS

**4.1 1996:** Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (now Oxford Archaeology North) carried out a desk-based-assessment, building survey and field evaluation at the West Wing site. The field evaluation in the paddock to the south of the West Wing building identified a wide and deep rock-cut ditch thought to be the backfilled late-medieval moat. No medieval structures were found on that occasion.

**4.2 October 1997 to March 2000:** Archaeological investigations were undertaken inside, and adjacent to, the West Wing of Lathom House by The Lathom & District Archaeological Society. The west wing of Lathom House is a Grade II\* Listed building and is all that remains above ground of the Palladian country house designed in 1725 by the renowned Italian architect Giacomo Leoni. At the time of the survey in 1997 the building was in an advanced state of dereliction but was considered to be of great architectural and historical importance. The restoration work then underway afforded archaeologists the opportunity to assess the archaeological potential of the site.



**4.3 1998:** Archaeological Services (WYAS) and the Lathom and District Archaeological Society undertook a geophysical and ground probing radar survey of the Pleasure Garden; an additional plot to the north on farmland was also surveyed. Results and data from that survey revealed areas of high resistance possibly caused by spreads of demolition rubble, and a broad linear low resistance anomaly possibly locating an infilled moat arm. GPR profiles undertaken by Leeds University revealed several potential upstanding features thought to represent masonry footings with other profiles identifying what were thought to be broad ditches and banks (WYAS Report No.613, October 1998).

**4.4 July 2001:** The first opportunity for an archaeological investigation of the moated platform to the east of the West Wing. Two large trenches were excavated, in advance of a sewer treatment plant, by Matrix Archaeology and LUAU. These trenches revealed the presence of massive walls and other extensive medieval and post-medieval features.

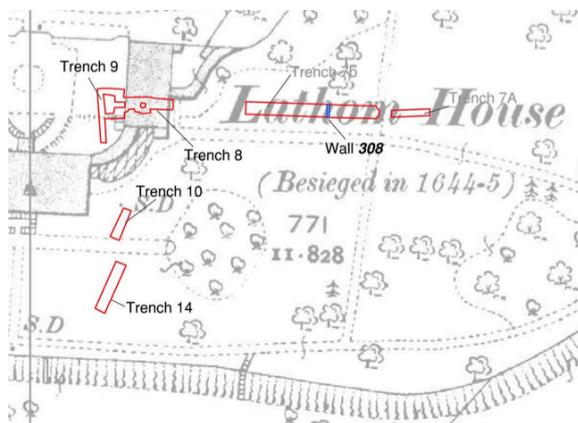
**4.5** During September 2002, following an application to construct a pair of garage blocks on the site of the main part of the eighteenth-century house, Matrix Archaeology was commissioned to excavate three evaluation trenches at this location. These revealed that substantial footings of the eighteenth-century house had survived, and also that there were footings related to an earlier, possibly medieval, building on the same site. Subsequently, in March 2003, Matrix Archaeology undertook an area excavation of the westernmost third of the eighteenth-century house site. The partial ground plan of the Leoni house, including cellared areas, was exposed; and within this were four earlier walls, of red sandstone construction. Two of these extended from north to south, and were associated with an extensive area of cobbling. The third ran from east to west, and its rubble core had been refaced with eighteenth-century brickwork. The fourth survived as a basal course set within a shallow footing trench, and seemed to indicate a small tower or turret. The east-west wall appeared to be the same wall as described by the Revd. T. Buxton in 1889, which was said to be an 'ancient wall' of rubble construction, including a

window of ecclesiastical appearance, which was revealed during work at the first floor level within the eighteenth-century house (Fletcher 2004, unpublished report).

**4.6 1997-2000:** Excavations confirmed the position of the western defences of the 15th century Lathom House which were slighted soon after its surrender to Parliamentary forces in December 1645.

**4.7 2009:** The Lathom Park Trust undertook a programme of trial-trenching in the former pleasure garden of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Lathom House which revealed evidence of pre-Repton landscaping including a massive sunken fence or retaining wall. Trench 14 in the south-west corner of the garden cut through civil war demolition containing numerous musket balls; below this layer we found what may be the earliest phase of Lathom House: medieval walls, cobbled floors, a courtyard and what appeared to be a path leading to the threshold of a large medieval building.

(Report [https://library.thehumanjourney.net/1707/1/L10169\\_LathomParkGardens\\_FullRep.pdf](https://library.thehumanjourney.net/1707/1/L10169_LathomParkGardens_FullRep.pdf))

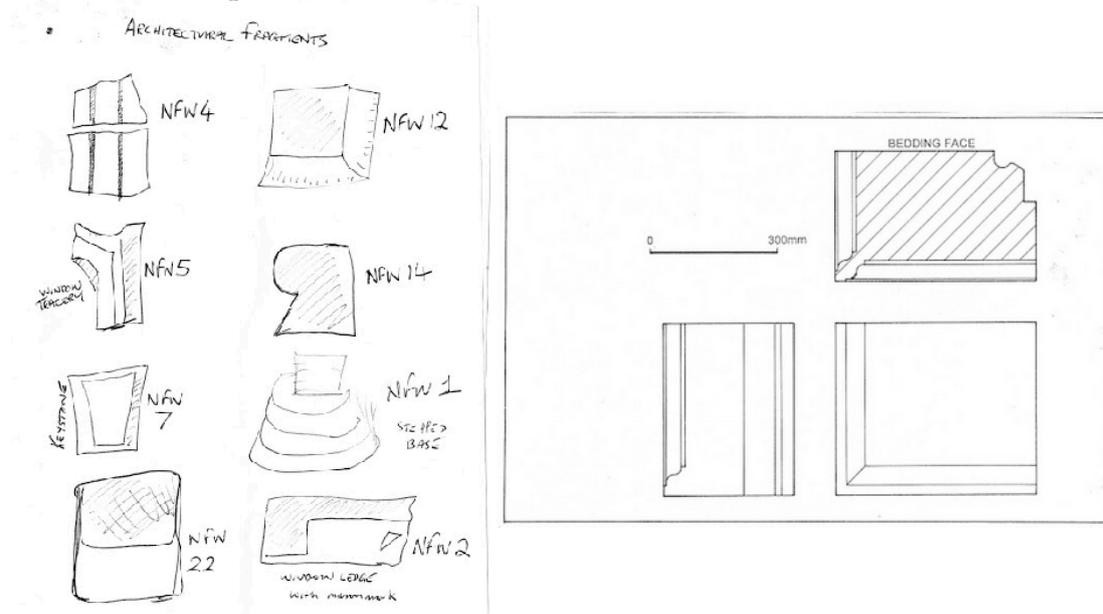


Trench 9, looking south to sixteenth/seventeenth century floor surfaces; Trench 14, looking south to cobbles

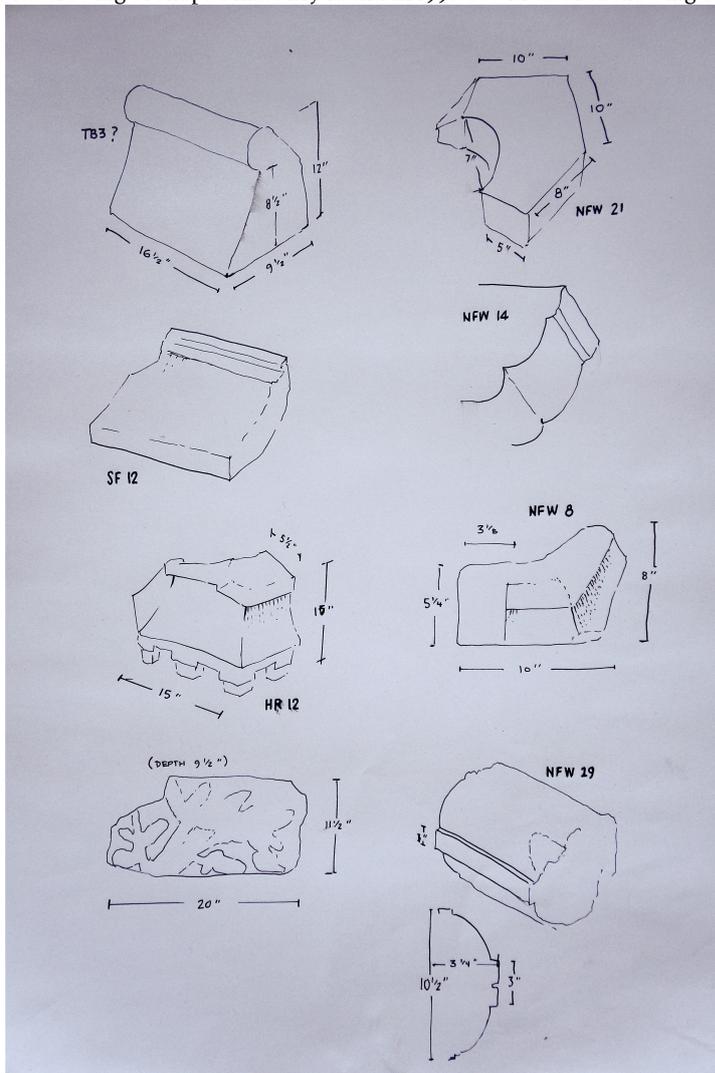
**4.8 2017:** Lathom Pleasure Garden run by Bluestone Archaeology and the Lathom Castle community excavation team (April & August).



numbered list was provided for the cut stones, with rudimentary drawings of some of the stones and descriptions as followed below.



Site drawing of shaped masonry found in 1996-8 Measured drawing of shaped masonry found in 1999



Sketches of some principal referenced stones with measurements, by Jonathan Foyle 2017.

These are accompanied by photographs, commentary and dated comparators.

## 5.2: RECOVERED ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS FOUND AT THE WEST WING SITE 1996/2000

Items found in the North Front Wall (NFW) during and after demolition in 1996. Some of these items may have come out of the construction trench 'A', excavated to facilitate new concrete footings for the replacement wall.

**NFW1 Decorative door jamb/column and stepped base, in 5 pieces (not available to inspect). Found in rubble fill.**



Squarely stepped socles/bases are not typical of medieval architecture. They are closer to the concepts shown in Carolingian manuscript illustrations and the simplified classicism of provincial Roman structures. The illustration on the below left right shows blocks excavated at



Roman grave/ shrines at Seahouses, and Segontium (Caernarfon).

Technically the base is not a complete, detached circle, but is a 'D' plan, attached to a wall with a spur, which partly remains. And apparently, at least one of the column drums associated with it had a spur.



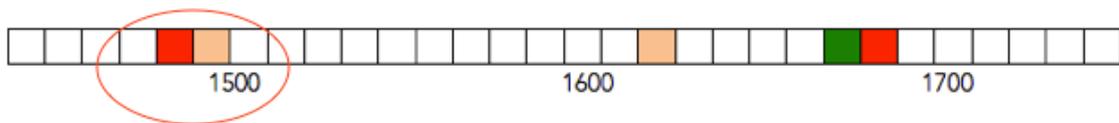
Blythburgh, Suffolk: attached stoup (c. 1450)

**NFW2 Window sill, with mason mark**

**(Lost)**



Of a type consistent with early C16 windows including the school of William Vertue, at e.g. St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London, and Hampton Court before 1528.



**NFW3 Moulding, unidentified, with mason mark (triangle)**

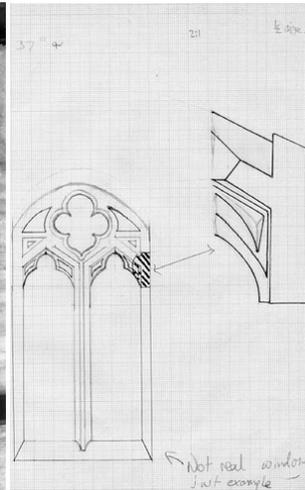
**(Lost)**

**NFW4 Moulding, moulded both sides, jamb? In 2 pieces**

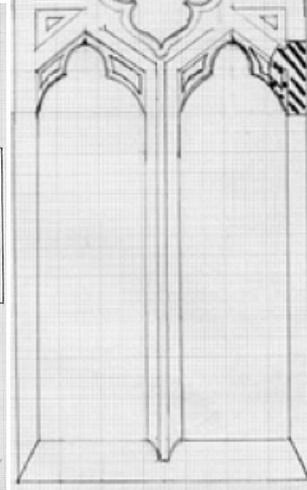
**(Lost)**



**NFW5 Window tracery, small**



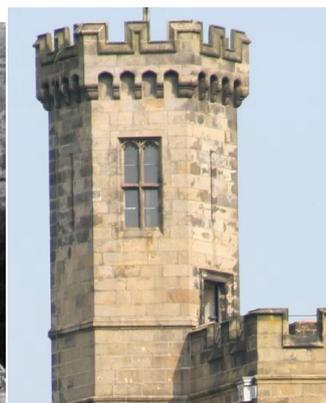
**(Lost)**



Sketch by Paul Smith, Lathom Archaeological Society

The fragment clearly indicates a cusp beneath a straight, angled head. There is no suggestion of a light above what is a section of spandrel moulding. It could therefore simply have been from a window set beneath a flat lintel, of one or two lights or more. The cusping suggests origins in the context of a chapel—though Hornby Castle features cusps in its tower.

**NFW6 Merlon (Photo only)**



Comparisons can be made between this merlon and those of Edward Stanley's Hornby Castle as rebuilt by Lord Wemyss c. 1743, and the apparent depiction of Lathom's gatehouse on the Warden's stall at Manchester Cathedral.

This section is consistent with other generically C15- early C16 examples from the same template.

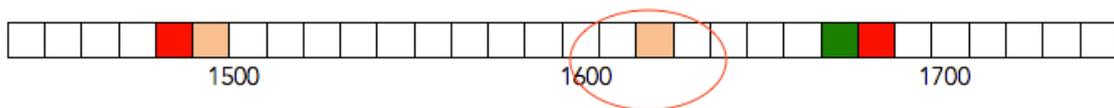
**NFW7 Keystone, large (Photo only)**



Potentially 17th century, though so plain as to be undiagnostic. Curious that its function is denied by being applied to a rectangular block rather than a wedge-shaped voussoir; it is therefore decorative rather than structural, relating it to Elizabethan-Jacobean classicism of the kind seen at e.g. Wollaton Hall, Notts c.1580-88. Its context within salvaged mullion blocks ostensibly of the same type of stone may relate it to the same construction phase.



Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire (attrib Robert Smythson), c.1580-88.

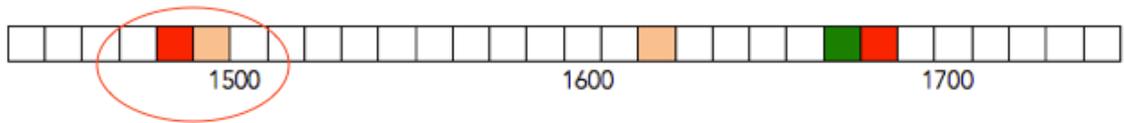


### NFW8 Hoodmould

10" x 8", light grey sandstone. "From deep under the WW north front wall, therefore sealed c.1725-30" (SB)  
Compares closely with Hornby Church, the patronage of James Stanley



Fragment no. NFW8; St Margaret's Hornby, Lancs. Stanley workshop after c.1514, label stop



**NFW9 Mullion (Photo only)**



Early C17 type.

NFW10 Window sill

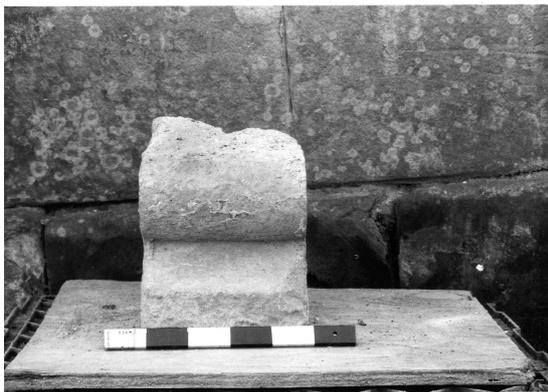
NFW11 Door jamb, large

NFW12 Capstone?



NFW13 Capstone, small fragment

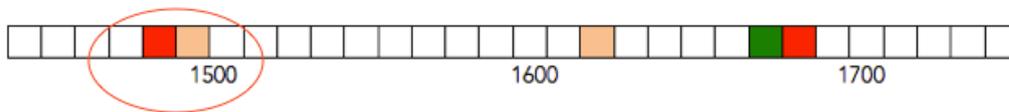
NFW14 Corbel?



Comparable to simpler corbels for crenellations, but much smaller and with a fillet at the outer face, a refinement. Would therefore likelier have supported a projecting feature like a niche rather than supporting main parapets. However, note that its fillet is similar to the early C17 moulding (NFW 12), raising the possibility that it may be castellar revivalism.



NFW 14; Lancaster Castle parapets; Hornby Castle's C18 parapets (were they based on early models?)



- NFW15 Door jamb
- NFW16 Merlon, damaged
- NFW17 Merlon, damaged
- NFW18 Moulding?, small
- NFW19 Door jamb, with mason mark
- NFW20 Moulding, poss. jamb?
- NFW21 Stone cap? with part of hole
- NFW22 Door jamb
- NFW23 Knoll off a merlon?, in 2 pieces
- NFW24 Door jamb ?
- NFW25 Keystone, small
- NFW26 Merlon, damaged (Photo only)



- NFW27 Merlon, damaged
- NFW28 Stone plaque?, with inscription (AD) (Photo only)

The letter forms are the only diagnostic feature of this slab, which appear to be a capital 'A' and capital 'D'. The curved form of the 'D' and the vertical right stem of the 'A' recall monumental inscriptions of the C13-C14.



Fragment compared with the memorial slab to Richard de Lindon, d. c. 1255, possibly cut c. 1300 at Easton-on-the-Hill, near Stamford.

NFW29 Mullion (context uncertain)  
 NFW30 Moulding?

### 5:3 Construction trench 'B' (TB), June 1997

TB1 Length of worked stone?

TB2 Door jamb

TB3 Merlon, large

TB4 Worked stone?

TB5 Worked stone

TB6 Worked stone?

### 5.4 ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS RECOVERED Sept. 1997

Items found in the South Front Wall (SFW) during and after demolition

SFW1 Mullion, jamb, with glazing bar and channel

SFW2 Pre- Georgian door/window sill, later lead flashing slot

SFW3 Pre-Georgian door/window sill, later lead flashing slot

SFW4 Mullion? Large (Photo only)



Difficult to diagnose from this evidence, but seems to be a side view of a section of mullion.

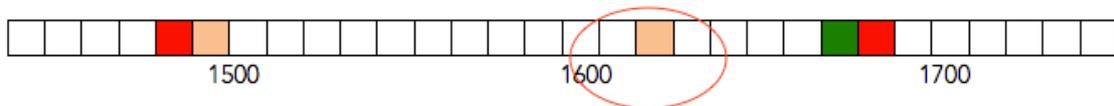
**SFW5 “Cornice, small, poss. Victorian” (Photos only)**

Found in the rubble core, West Wing south front corner at 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Probably an architrave, possibly en suite with the C17 ovolo mullions, and also possibly with the keystone NFW7. (SB: ‘this was given to them by Ken Hughes the stone mason who wished to see them in the stone collection.’)

The profile compares with northern classicism at the end of the C16- see a similar *cyma reversa* profile used at Wollaton c.1580-88 as an exemplar (though as isolated corbels rather than an architrave.) Lathom’s has a rounded ‘torus’ moulding at the base.



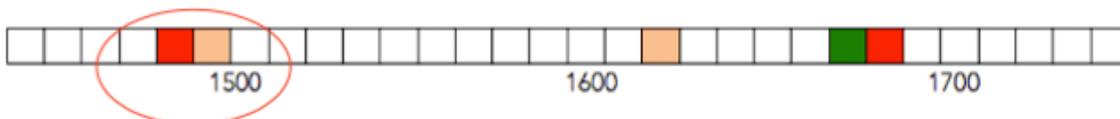
Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire, Robert Smythson.



**SFW6 Moulding?, large**

**SFW7 Merlon, damaged**

Typical merlon design of an external sloping face. Numerous examples of the same type. Compares with Lancaster Castle gatehouse.

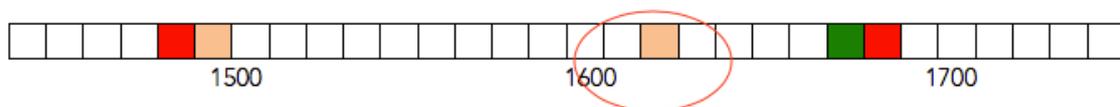


- SFW8 Merlon, damaged
- SFW9 Merlon, damaged
- SFW10 Merlon, damaged
- SFW11 Merlon, complete
- SFW12 Sill and jamb, in 2 pieces

Inspected. The sill and jamb are consistent with the window treatment of Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley, built after August 1600.



SFW demonstrating consistent pattern with other retrieved mullions from Lathom, and Gawthorpe Hall near Burnley of after c.1600.



SFW13 Door jamb

SFW14 Mullion

SFW15 Mullion jamb/window sill?

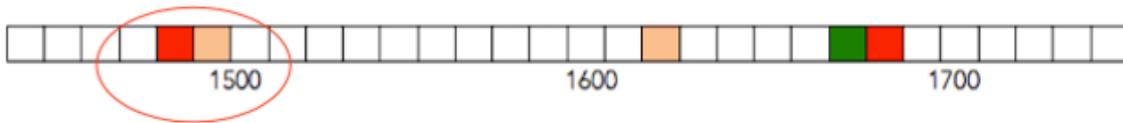
SFW16 Window sill

SFW17 Tracery, Gothic?

Flat-headed, possibly single or numerous lights. Compares with C14 and C15 windows. Suggests an origin in a chapel or ecclesiastical structure.



Small clerestory lights of Bolton-by-Bowland church, Lancashire



SFW18 Mullion

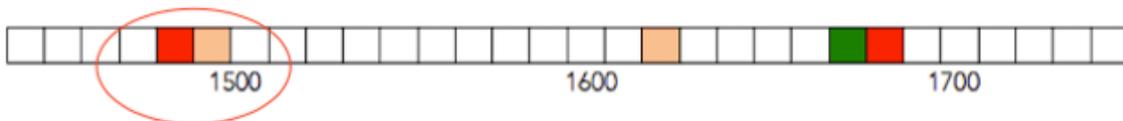
SFW19 Worked stone?, in 3 pieces

SFW20 Decorative moulding/

SFW21 Door jamb, with mortise hole

SFW22 Mullion, with plaster, lead and glass (Photo only)

As SFW12





**5:5 ITEMS FOUND IN THE WEST WING HARNESS ROOM (HR) during excavation in 1998**

**HR1 Mullion**

**HR2 Drip mould**

**HR3 Mullion**

**HR4 Mullion with mortise hole**

**HR5 Mullion**

**HR6 Window sill/jamb**

Photo only. Resembles SFW12



**HR7 Window jamb**

**HR8 Moulding**

**HR9 Mullion**

**HR10 Mullion**

**HR11 Door jamb**

**HR12 Stone chimney cap, with crenels**

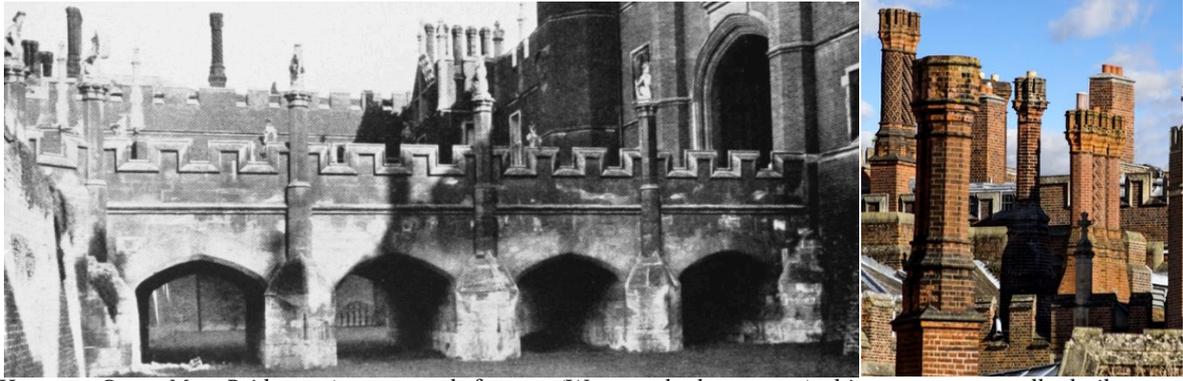
Found in Trench E in the West Wing Harness Room, 1997.  
Inspected. 380mm per side, 400 mm height.



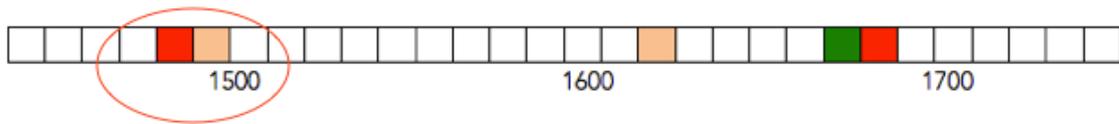
Corbel on the tower of St Chad, Wybunbury, Cheshire, begun c.1470.



Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, c. 1550; Steeton Hall, North Yorkshire (1360 and later); Melbury House, Dorset (after 1546)



Hampton Court: Moat Bridge 1536, as restored after 1910 (Wynngaerde shows none); chimneys, c.1517-35, all rebuilt.



## 5:6 UNCATALOGUED ITEMS

Fragment, oak leaf and acorn (not numbered)

“From demolition of the West Wing extension off the SW corner wall c.1998” (SB)

An important fragment of oak and acorn which may be significant of the Stanley family emblem of an eagle and child, shown with oak branches and acorns- this being an intrinsic symbol of male fertility and issue. Seacombe (1875) describes its origin thus:

“The Eagle, as represented in the Stanley's Crest, has actually made a prey of the child; whereas Sir Thomas Latham's Crest implies a miraculous preservation of it, as the child is supposed to be brought there by that bird of prey, so consequently its safety would be attributed to an extraordinary providential dispensation.”(See also *Collectanea topographica et genealogica*, Volume 7, 1841)

A misericord of c. 1495 in Manchester associates this legend with the gate of the castle, which is likely to indicate its original location as a panel or tympanum.



500mm x 290mm



Photographed in May 2017.



Marsden, Huddersfield (40 miles due east of Lathom); Manchester Cathedral misericord showing the eagle and child within what are symbolically, oak trees set at the gate of Lathom Castle.

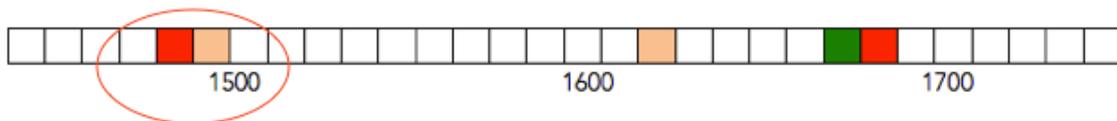


Bolton-le-Moor, oak misericord with Stanley 'eagle and child' emblem, later C15; similar panel, early C16, sold by Period Oak Antiques



Stone panel, 62 cms x 43 cms, in the garden of a house on Hall Lane, Lathom.

A further more substantial fragment of this panel, retaining three sides of its rectangular form can be found in the garden of a house on Hall Lane (inspected on 25 October 2017). It includes a return demonstrating the method by which it was keyed into the wall masonry.



## 5.7 SIGNIFICANT MASONRY FRAGMENTS FOUND IN 1999

Report:

Watching brief: Water Pipeline, Lathom House, Near Ormskirk

Report by Archaeological Services WYAS, March 1999

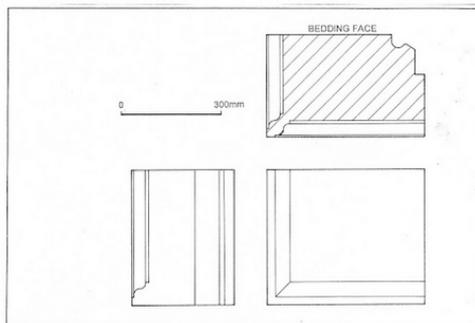
### Artefact Record

Two large blocks of red (actually yellow, SB comment 9-10-17) sandstone were recovered from a depth of over 0.9m in the moat fills against the southern-edge of the moat, near to the southern-edge of the trench. One of these was very large and unworked, the other was of some interest (Figure 3). Rectangular in shape, it measured 0.48 x 0.41 x 0.31m, and had been worked with two distinctively different types of moulding. Firstly, two contiguous faces had been worked to form corners of recessed panels with a classical ogee surround. Secondly and probably unrelated functionally, the opposing corner of the block was moulded in a fashion suggestive of a door surround. This block has been placed with the other worked stone fragments within the West Wing.

### Interpretation

The presence of a block of high quality architectural stonework in the (moat) fills is intriguing. One could suggest that it had been deemed 'not fit for purpose' and dumped in the moat in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but its evident re-use could suggest an original location either within the late-medieval house, or within the putative building works of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby in c.1700.

The assemblage of masonry is glimpsed in the photograph below. Amongst numerous rectilinear blocks are several that represent classical architraves. Below left is the architrave of an Ionic or Corinthian order; on the right the stone reported,





Fragment of probable architrave; monument to Rowland Berkeley at Spetchley, Worcestershire showing similar (1611).

## 5.8 SIGNIFICANT MASONRY FRAGMENTS FOUND IN 2017

Found 4 August Attributed number: Lathom 2017/01

Fragment of a stone swag, probably a garden ornament, second half of the seventeenth century. Deeply cut, and unusually so for Baroque-period carving Lancashire.



Fragment of a stone swag; plasterwork at Ham House, Surrey, after 1639.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Much of Lathom's ex-situ masonry is not available for inspection, but fortunately many of the most diagnostic pieces have been stored on site and were available to view.

The picture that emerges is of two main phases of construction: the later fifteenth century and the years around 1580-1620, with secondary evidence for work either side of the civil war.

This is all consistent with what we know of Lathom's documentary history.

It strongly suggests that Lathom drew on the influence of Carnarfon, with an emphasis on the symbolic value of the Eagle Tower. It may also have based its chapel of after c. 1500 in a comparable position to that at Tattershall Castle as a result of Margaret Beaufort's patronage of both sites.

Importantly, the copious evidence for Lathom's adoption of fashionably large windows around c.1600 would seem at odds with the presumption of its impregnable, castellar quality. The late fifteenth-century building would itself have been very unusual as a seriously fortified

house. But even if this were the case, it likely did not remain so into the seventeenth century because of this fenestration, and its protracted year-long siege may have been as indebted to substantial earthworks thwarting cannon fire and a sizeable retinue firing from towers of an advantageous height, as the massiveness of its walls.

Future investigations will no doubt concentrate on the Eagle Tower, with a view to demolition rubble possibly offering clues to which fragments are relatable to this focal structure. If a concentration of window mullions exists here, it may yet reveal the c. 1600 campaign to have aimed at the better illumination of this massive structure, while the external walls remained more solid, though this is unlikely in a post-Armada period unthreatened by foreign invasion and yet by civil war.

On the other hand, the clear evidence for the post-civil war survival of the Eagle Tower may suggest that its masonry was more deliberately picked apart for the footings of Leoni's house where much of the work to date has been discovered. Other, more damaged towers may have been pushed into the moat, and these deposits could yet emerge within a closely relatable context.

A further prize is the identification of the related towers as listed in the Parliamentary sequestration accounts, not least finding the footings of the gatehouse which probably held the oak leaf panel. This will orientate the entire structure. The cobbled surface excavated in the garden is probably service/ kitchen courts, the direction of travel from Ormskirk via the chapel prioritising the show facades with fine chimneys and gatehouse.

## 7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our thanks to:

Mr Bill Kenyon, of Bispham Hall who kindly allowed access to the worked stone for the present study.

Lathom Park Trust for their prior stewardship of the Lathom worked stone collection.

The landowner of Lathom Gardens for his help and interest in the project.

Paul Sherman for his help in relocating the worked stone to Lathom Gardens.

Andrew and Elizabeth Beeston for their help in providing access to Lathom Park Chapel for the public presentation of the worked stone project.

Dr Jonathan Foyle with Stephen Baldwin

6 December 2017

