

daughters. The 2nd Earl's only daughter Elizabeth would ultimately bring such of his estates that remained to her husband, Sir Francis Henry Lee of Ditchley. By then, lawyers had found such difficulties, arising from the terms of old Thomas Pope's original grants, from later wills and from the private Acts that had already been passed allowing sales of family lands, that only a further Act of Parliament would resolve them.²⁴ But these problems need not concern us, and ultimately the third of the 3rd Earl's daughters, Frances, married a rising lawyer, Francis North, who would buy out her sisters' interests and acquire the lease of Wroxton. North had a very successful career, rising to Chief Justice and Lord Keeper [of the Great Seal] and ennobled as Baron Guilford in 1683. Just as significantly for the history of the house, a younger brother, Roger North, besides being a lawyer himself was also an amateur architect, wrote extensive notes on architecture (all unpublished until 1981, and some remaining so)²⁵ and the biographies of himself and of three of his brothers, also unpublished in his lifetime.²⁶ These and his architectural writings tell us a great deal about Wroxton and what the Norths did to it.

Faced with a house that was both unfinished and old fashioned, Francis North might well have rebuilt it from scratch. However, Roger North's architectural writings include his views on the alternatives of building a new house or of altering and modernising an old one, in which he drew on his experience both at his own house at Rougham in Norfolk and at his brother's house at Wroxton. To build anew was best, but there was much to be said in favour of modernising an old one. One argument in favour of altering an old house was:

the diversion it affords, and that is not to be slighted... Action and business [are] best employed to gain, but where men are not so much prest, how can [they] be better directed than in contriving and executing benefits or improvements of living, in which all a family, friends, and strangers participate, and the poor are relieved? And this is done, by employing our spare time and money, in mending and adding to our habitation...²⁷

²⁴ National Archives C89/15/23.

²⁵ An edition of much of Roger North's theoretical writings on architecture was published in Howard Colvin and John Newman, eds., *Of Building*, Oxford, 1981.

²⁶ First published in 1742 and 1744, the edition used here is that by Augustus Jessopp, *The Lives of the Right Hon. Francis North ...* by the Hon. Roger North, 3 vv, 1890. More than one draft exists in manuscript; relevant extracts from these are in the Appendix. These are fuller than the published versions.

²⁷ *Of Building*, 29.