

assumed by his son – First Lord of the Treasury from 1770 to 1782, the prime minister under whom the American colonies were lost. The Earl's third wife, whom he married in 1752, brought him Waldershare in Kent, and thereafter he seems to have devoted less time to Wroxton. Nevertheless, what he did at Wroxton before that date involved both the house and the grounds.³⁹ Because of work done by his successors, it is not clear how much he did inside the house, but broadly he seems to have done away with much that Francis and Roger North had done in the 1680s, and used such knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture as was then available to recover the character of the original building.

There are three Jacobean style ceilings in the house, and the overall character of these, as well as certain details, make it clear that none of these are actually from the original house, but that all were probably put in in the mid-eighteenth century. Some of their details give them away, and a further give-away is that they are not made of plaster but of papier-maché, a material never used at the earlier period. But they are surprisingly authentic-looking, and it is a pity that we do not know who designed them, nor the fireplace in the Regency Room which, while obviously not Jacobean, was believed by the late John Cornforth to be eighteenth century.⁴⁰ There are in addition a number of plainer chimneypieces in a gothick style which are more obviously eighteenth century; these, presumably, were put in by Lord Guilford to replace late seventeenth century ones with which the Norths had already replaced the originals. In the nineteenth century these gothick revival chimneypieces were largely embellished by the addition of bits of old carving, but several of them remain. Unlike the ceilings, the gothick chimneypieces could have been produced by any competent mason with access to one of the architectural pattern books, with gothick designs, that were beginning to circulate at around this time.

Other work of Lord Guilford's has probably gone. This probably includes the library which Horace Walpole said had been added by him and which Walpole described as 'a pleasant chamber.' In 1823, this library was described as 'an elegant room fitted up in the Gothic style,'⁴¹ but there is now no room in the house that can confidently be identified

³⁹ For work in the grounds, see Jennifer Meir, *Sanderson Miller and his Landscapes*, 2006, 93-105.

⁴⁰ See John Cornforth, 'Wroxton Abbey, Oxfordshire', *Country Life*, CLXX, 1981, 770-3, 854-7, 1010-13.

⁴¹ Skelton, *op. cit.* (as fn. 5), Bloxham Hundred, p.11.