

THE GEORGIAN SOCIETY FOR EAST YORKSHIRE



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Edited by Captain A. J. C. Hildyard.

ISSUE No. 1

John Carr of York ~ Architect 1723 -1807

by FRANCIS F. JOHNSON F.S.A.

The recent exhibition in the Ferens Art Gallery devoted to John Carr has not only done timely honour, but focused attention on his important and fascinating career. Unlike many figures of the past, Carr's reputation has never fallen into complete oblivion; however, although many have written about him, we still await a definitive biography.

Born in 1723 at Horbury near Wakefield, the son of a modest stone mason and quarry owner, he had a somewhat meagre education, but his basic training in building skills was thorough going and excellent. His ability, intelligence and agreeable character ensured the rest.

In 1748 he had the good fortune to be employed by Stephen Thompson the Banker, as overseer for the building of his new house, Kirby Hall, Great Ouseburn. Here, the greater part of the designing was done by Lord Burlington, aided by Roger Morris, both of them figures of paramount importance in the world of Architecture at that time. Burlington who took his title from Bridlington was a personality of European significance widely known and appreciated in France and elsewhere. Their influence on John Carr can be seen right through his working life. His classical buildings, lucid and clean, are always basically Palladian.

The competition in 1754 for the Grand Stand on the Knaves-mire at York also marks a further stage in his career. He was fortunate again in winning this, and the fame it brought in its train launched him on his fashionable practice.

The list of his public works includes the Town Halls of Chesterfield and Newark, the latter a very distinguished build-

ing illustrated with a number of Carr's other major works in the Vitruvius Britannicus. In York itself his own house in Skelder-gate (1765) was destroyed a number of years ago but several others of importance remain, and such public buildings as the Assize Courts, female prison (now Castle Museum and Bootham Park Hospital. All these buildings are robust in character and display Carr's uncluttered straightforward classicism. Like most architects, Carr borrowed from various sources, but his synthesis is his own. In a number of details he worked out what was virtually a formula, seen prominently in door-steads and certain interior features.

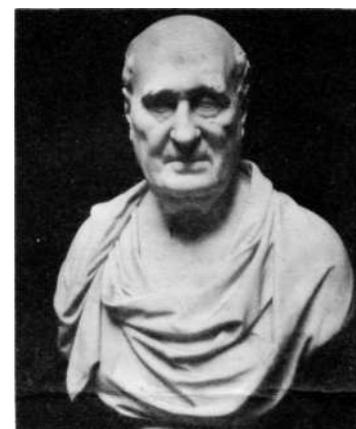
Despite this there is a goodly measure of variety in his work. When given his head, Carr was a sensible and functional planner. His staircases are good, and those made of stone or marble show considerable variety in shape, and their finely detailed iron balustrades. They are usually lighted from the top by an eye or clerestory windows. His wooden staircases mostly follow a rectangular formula based on masonry forms, and are notable for their daring carpentry. Touches of real genius appear in such things as the grand staircase at Wentworth Woodhouse, the Saloon at Ribston, the hexagonal Dining Room at Grimston Garth or the Hall at Raby. (The last two are Gothic). The Ribston interior displays in its splendour the result of Carr's contact with Robert Adam, who did the interior decoration at Harewood where Carr himself designed both the house and the beautiful village.

In the East Riding, we have not many of John Carr's important works, but the best are Everingham Park; the wing added

to Lairgate Hall, Beverley; Grimston Garth and the Stables at Winestead. Fangfoss Hall is probably his, and so are the rebuilding of Boynton Church and alterations to the Hall there. His interiors and other features at Kilnwick were destroyed when that house was sacrificed. He may have supplied the plans for the fascinating pied-a-terre by the sea known once as Hilderthorpe Hall (Flat Top Farm) at Bridlington. This was recently bull-dozed to the ground and nothing saved so far as is known.

Unlike Wood, who moved to Bath, or William Kent and Thomas Ripley who both went to London, John Carr remained firmly in the old Northern metropolis of York, which was not only strategic, but also provided him with a reserve of superb craftsmen whom he employed consistently. Despite this provincial setting, his fame spread far from his native county, and possibly through his Thompson-Croft connections (pointed out by Captain Hildyard) he was invited to design a hospital in Oporto, which still stands. In Ireland he was responsible for Milton House for Lord Fitz-william, and at Basildon in Berkshire, a new mansion for Sir Francis Sykes. There are a number of houses west of the Pennines including the splendid Tabley Hall, Platt Hall and Lytham. Important work was carried out in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and County Durham, and nearer home there were such houses as Heath, Harewood and Burton Constable. The full list is a very long one.

Towards the close of his professional life came Farnley Hall near Leeds, with its severely simple exterior, the main feature of which is one of Carr's favourite octangular bays. Inside this house



Bust of John Carr by Nollekens (By kind permission of City Art Gallery, York and the Courtauld Institute of Art).

Carr's grasp of the Neo-classic idiom reaches its ultimate in the wonderfully elegant and refined interiors.

John Carr was highly competent, industrious, fearless in his dealings, and forthright with his advice. No shadows on his character have come down to us. We know little about his married life, and one would imagine that in such a busy orbit as his, there could be little time for the arts of home. He was a Magistrate, and twice Lord Mayor of York. When the Architects' club was formed in London, he was the only provincial architect who was invited to join. Many of his commissions were princely, and in those days there was little to prevent the architect, or his family, from contracting for parts of the building. His short retirement was spent on tours, visiting his former works with his nieces, who benefited greatly after his death, as he had become, deservedly, very wealthy. His body was laid to rest in the beautiful church which he designed and built, at his own expense, in his native Horbury; a fitting mausoleum for a great man.

**The Restoration of
BLAYDES HOUSE
and it's Particular Problems By ALAN K. BRAY R.I.B.A.**



BEFORE RESTORATION

Many buildings, during their lifetime, sometimes extending through hundreds of years, survive a variety of changes. These might be changes of use, structural alterations and additions, improvements (or so considered by their owners) repair works resulting in some change in appearance, changes in the external environment by development of the area around, repercussions of social events, strikes, wars and fires, alteration in social customs, growth of trees, repercussions from traffic growth, and dilapidation, wear and tear. A great many men and events have influenced Blaydes House over the years, some dealing it not mortal blows but certainly deep injury. Some influences have persisted. Blaydes House has always been a town house, and in particular a house concerned with the sea trade of the port of Hull. Above all, the influence of the original designer has not been lost - - though only saved by determination on the part of your Society.

The outset of the rescuing operations, for it was indeed a rescue, had to be preceded by a complex series of liaisons with the various interested Authorities and responsible bodies in connection with legal procedures, with the Historic Buildings Council and within the Society and its Executive Committee, and the Trustees, with grants, with permissions, with conveyances, with all the paperwork surrounding operations connected with building in the nineteen seventies - rather more than in the eighteenth century.

Problems of Conservation.

First it is important to arrest the ravages of decay, to make secure, and to make wind and weatherproof. These are first priority measures, but such are no more than first aid. Next we must look a little further into the future and consider how long these measures will last and to what extent first aid should be extended into more structural repair, perhaps involving not just externals but the bones as well. But the aim is not to produce a building exactly as it existed when first built - if that, then easier to pull down and reproduce in new material, like a reproduction



AFTER RESTORATION

antique. The word is conserve. If a stone cill is worn, then no matter, but if it is cracked then the crack must be cut out and sealed to prevent further deterioration. If this cannot be done, only then must a new cill be considered. If the crack can be successfully made good then this is a better result than heavy handed and needless replacement; a piece of history will have been preserved.

The most immediate and pressing problem of the repair opera-

tion was the solution of the stability of the north facing wall. Formerly Blaydes House had a neighbour building, built up shoulder to shoulder on its north side. Possibly, over the years, it had had other neighbours, demolished and rebuilt but eventually events conspired that the property to the north was pulled down and was not to be rebuilt, and Blaydes House was left with an open wound. Some of the brickwork from the adjoining property was temporarily left to provide the support which Blaydes House had had so long that it had become used to it and relied on it — the more so as its own gable wall was a pitiful 4/1" thick from ground to apex. With great care the temporary supports were removed, a new foundation made and the old wall thickened out and knitted in to the old with metal anchors and ties, and using a supply of bricks which had been acquired from demolition of a building further down the High Street, that of the old Weights & Measures Office south of Alfred Gelder Street.

Acquisition of these bricks had been no light matter. Careful

ment meanwhile being temporarily shored up. These columns have been carefully repaired and are at present being made ready for refitting into the repaired portico, thus restoring former glory.

A man may consider that if he owns a building, he is entitled to alter it according to his wishes. Certainly this happened in the case of Blaydes House. On the ground and first floor the graceful Georgian box frames and sashes were removed and new round headed openings to Victorian taste made. The results seem eccentric to the onlooker today but were no doubt pleasing to the then owner. Little did he know that one day his building would be acquired by the Georgian Society, and these follies removed. Already the windows on one side of the frontage have been so restored and a start made on those on the other side.

There remains much more to do. Facing the Staithe to the south are areas of decayed brickwork to be rebuilt and decayed joinery to renew. In improving weather the whole roof is to be thoroughly overhauled, layers of



18th CENTURY VIEW

measurements had been taken to establish their suitability for correct coursing, correct appearance and correct period.

The Portico

The entrance porch of Blaydes House, a Doric portico, is one of the finest in the area, but although this portico survived Victorian attentions and later wars and bombs, and fire, it was finally dealt a serious blow by a lorry in 1969 which damaged its fine Doric columns. These were hastily removed at the time by arrangement of the Georgian Society and placed in safekeeping until the time came for comprehensive building repairs, the ped-

encrusted yellow and brown paint to be removed from a fine staircase, the fine staircase Venetian window to restore, flooring to overhaul and protect against rot and beetle, and a host of minor works to attend to.

This is slow work, yet not so slow that the occasional passerby cannot readily perceive progress and already though the work was started in September, 1973, the view from the north is already seemly and the house taking on again its Georgian dignity and air of well being, a vast change from the cowed and hopeless appearance it presented immediately before the work commenced.

THE BLAYDES FAMILY AND
THEIR HOUSE IN
THE HIGH STREET,
KINGSTON UPON HULL.

by Col. R. A. ALEC-SMITH

Blaydes House (No.6 High Street, Hull), which had probably belonged to the family for several generations took its present form in the mid-18th century in the time of Alderman Benjamin Blaydes, whose monogram appears in stucco on the hall ceilings, (see the illustration of this in the Society's Transactions, Vol.111, Part 111, 1954, fig. 12).

The Alderman served the office of Sheriff of Hull in 1768, and that of Mayor in 1771 and 1788. Benjamin was very much a family name of the Blaydes and at least three members of this name served the usual civic offices in the 18th and early 19th centuries, whilst Joseph Blaydes (sic.) was Mayor in 1636. This Joseph is said to have married Anne Booth, of Killingholme, and it was their son, James Blaydes who married Andrew Marvell's sister, Anne.

It is from James that the merchant line in Hull descended. The business partnership with which Alderman Benjamin Blaydes was associated was that of Messrs. Blaydes, Loft, Gee and Company, shipowners and general merchants.

Thomas Haworth, a progenitor of the Haworth-Booth family of Hullbank married in 1713 Mary Blaydes, a daughter and co-heiress of an earlier Benjamin Blaydes, possibly the Benjamin who was Sheriff in 1702. At the Hullbank sale in 1936 a number of Blaydes family portraits were sold, including a full-length of Mary, as a child in a pink dress, and another of her brother, Joseph - a full length showing the boy in blue coat and breeches, with red stockings and buckled shoes, standing in a landscape. The former is now in the possession of Mr. Adrian Haworth-Booth in Surrey, and the latter at The Old Rectory, Winestead.

Another line of the Blaydes, now represented by the family of Page-Turner of Ambrosden, Oxfordshire, were described as of High Paull House in Holderness (this later belonged to Alderman Anthony Bannister, and was demolished many years ago, though one of its lodges still stands) and of Ranby Hall in Nottinghamshire.

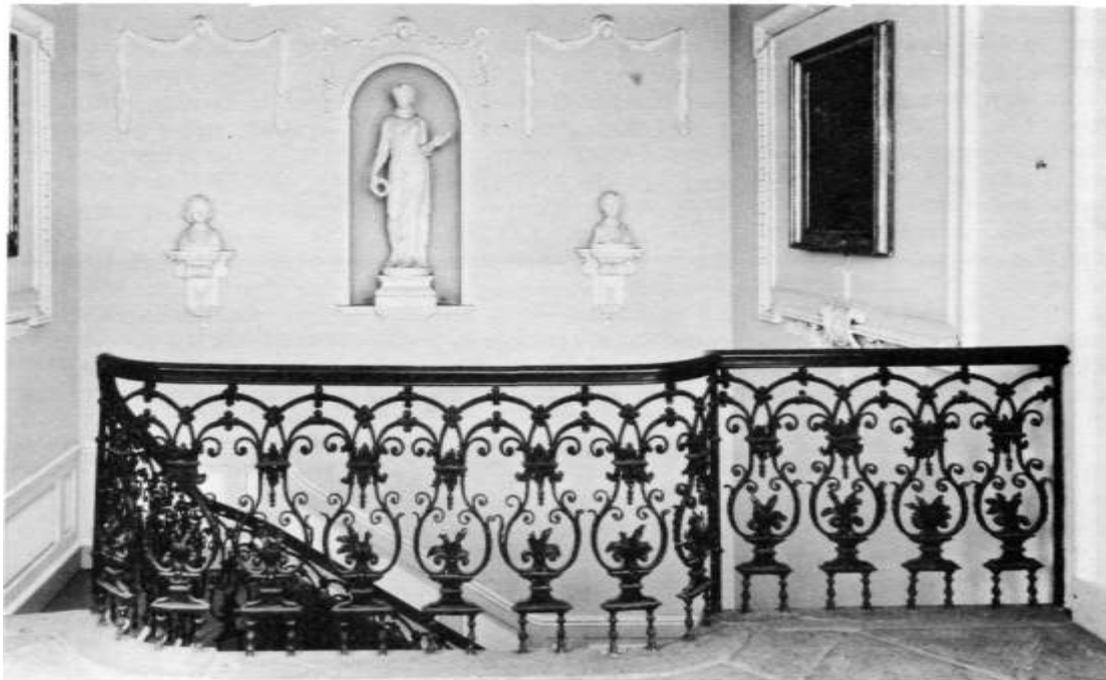
The Blaydes bore for Arms, Azure a saltire between four pheons argent on a chief or a lion passant gules, with the motto Pro Deo rege et patria.

These arms differenced are borne also by Lord Ebbisham, whose father formerly Sir Rowland Blades, of the well-known printers, Blades, East and Blades, was Lord Mayor of London in 1926-27, and was raised to the peerage in 1928.

*In 1971,
Messrs. Gilyott and Scott
very generously presented
Blaydes House
to the Georgian
Society of East Yorkshire.*

The Restoration of the Wrought Iron Balustrade of
MAISTER HOUSE

The High Street, Kingston upon Hull By



BEFORE RESTORATION

ALAN K. BRAY R.I.B.A.

In early 1971 it was decided by the National Trust that the wrought iron balustrade at Maister House was in need of comprehensive repair and redecoration.

This fine ironwork by Bakewell, after 227 years of service appeared at a first glance still in reasonable condition. Close inspection revealed that while the basic structure remained sound, the more decorative portion with slender leaf and foliage shapes, and cover and joint ornament, was in a serious state of disrepair. Wear and tear over the years had resulted in dilapidation which if not halted, would have led to more general decay.

In the 38 decorated baluster units forming the balustrading of the ground to first floor stairway and first floor landing, a leaf motif appears on each side of each unit, that is 76 in all, and out of these, 30 leaves were missing, and of the remainder some were loose, some damaged and a few only in reasonably original form. All the applied decoration could be said to have been in need of repair in this ratio.

To some extent the precise condition of the ironwork was heavily disguised by paint coatings applied over the years, and it was decided to strip the paint coats from a number of baluster units in order more closely to ascertain the true condition of the ironwork, and this was done

very carefully and covered the lowest 11 units and enabled a more accurate assessment of the remedial work required. Subsequently, prices for the restoration work required to the ironwork were obtained from Contractors having the necessary specialist experience, based on a specification of the work required and eventually a tender agreed and a firm of Contractors appointed.

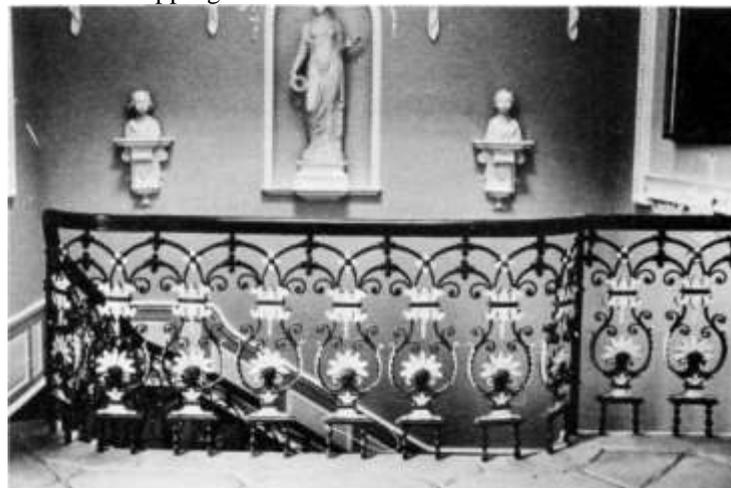
The balustrade around the gallery at second floor level is also of wrought iron construction but due to its much simpler design (that is to say without fine ornament or slender shapes) and also due to its isolation, had received much less wear and did not require any remedial work other than stripping and thor-

ough paint treatment.

The main balustrade however, required very extensive repair and this involved careful removal of the units to the Contractor's work place and re-erection on completion, including also the removal and afterwards re-fixing of the wood handrail, very thorough paint protection of all the metalwork against corrosion and final decoration and gilding.

It is of interest to note that careful paint stripping revealed that the original colour of the balustrade was white, than later it was peacock blue, then red and gilded and after that black on a number of occasions.

All the work is now complete and the balustrade can be seen against a background of walls freshly redecorated.



AFTER RESTORATION

FENESTRATION 1660-1830

by FRANCIS F. JOHNSON F.S.A.

PART 1

This is a brief account of a feature which was of great importance in Georgian Architecture. At the time of writing, windows have come to consist of limitless plate glass, or their conception in smaller units, is based on the appearance of moving vehicles such as buses. The less schematic their arrangement, the better. This anarchy of design due to modern technical advances is in direct contradiction to the approach of the Classical masters and the infinite care and subtlety they devoted to the shapes, details and arrangement of their windows.

The general proportions of the classical window came to us in this country with such architects as Inigo Jones, and through the study of published works such as the treatises of Serlio, Palladio and Scamozzi. Despite the Baroque intervention served by architects like Sir Christopher Wren, Thomas Archer, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Sir John Vanbrugh and others, the accepted system of proportions seems to have been crystallised by the second decade of the 18th Century when Palladianism was coming to the fore, thanks to Colin Campbell's publication *Vitruvius Britannicus*' and the influence of the 3rd Earl of Burlington (Bridlington).

The windows themselves were to some extent standardised but it is astonishing how much variety and subtlety was possible within the accepted canons. Proportions carefully worked out by the theoreticians such as Sir William Chambers, were often subjected to empirical treatment to fit in with practical considerations, and in this connection not infrequently, the blind window was utilised to preserve form and pattern in an elevation. These blind windows are rarely the result of the window tax, since in most instances the owners of a good house were quite able to pay this without embarrassment.

During the ages of Inigo Jones and Wren the traditional method of glazing inherited from the Middle Ages was continued. The small panes of glass or quarries were contained in lead comes as before but instead of being arranged diagonally, lattice fashion, the quarries were rectangular with their long axes vertical. These leaded lights were contained more usually now within painted wooden mullions and transoms than in stone, and were in a great majority of instances composed as units of two lights in contrast to their Elizabethan

forerunners, when three or four lights were common, and anything up to ten possible. A very fine example of this late Stuart fenestration can be seen at Hebblethwaite House, Bridlington, now the Midland Bank in Westgate (fig. 1).

With William and Mary, the Dutch vertical sliding sash window with counter weights made its appearance here, and was something of a revolution, (fig.2) It was completely successful and by the early 18th Century had taken the building world by storm. Made of wood, it was

Sir John Vanbrugh, and others of his school, often used a square patera either carved or plain to cover the meeting. Not only was the sliding sash a success architecturally but it has always been one of the best windows for keeping out driving rain and also for ventilation. The openings containing the windows were usually arched over with beautifully rubbed brickwork, or simple lintols in the stone districts.

The great fire of London in 1666 brought about stringent building regulations in the City. One of these was the recessing

unless the arrangement was an alteration. In numerous houses of an older date this has been done, and at the same time the sashes which had to be renewed due to the increased width of the wooden frame, were made in the newer more delicate fashion with fewer panes of glass. The result of this alteration architecturally in a house of the time of Anne or the early Georges can be disappointing though not always.

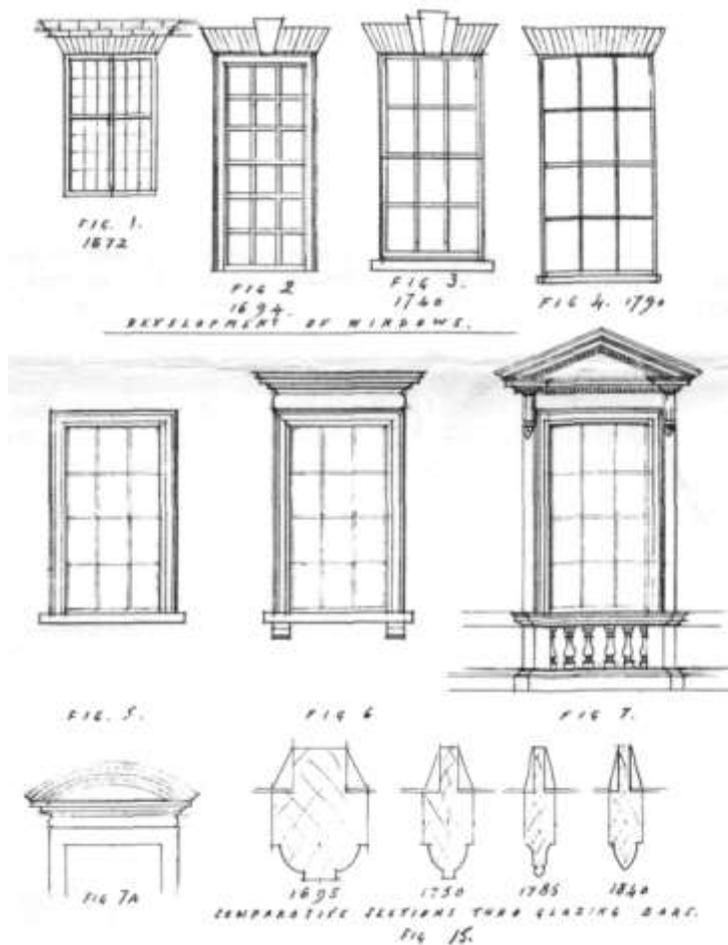
The close grouping of the early sash windows in the Dutch fashion was radically changed by the revival of Palladianism, here the Italian climate, in which this style was cradled, had dictated more wall than window to avoid the entry of excess heat and glare. This point was not without some significance in our northern climate where cold equally needs exclusion. Hardwick Hall "more window than wall", was uninhabitable in an English winter.

An early result of the Italian point of view can be seen in rather exaggerated form at Clandon where the architect Giacomo Leoni has definitely under-windowed the house where the interests of light are concerned. A good balance was eventually reached by our native architects and the greater preponderance of wall did provide the buildings with a quality of repose and serenity.

The British Palladians may have been castigated as puritanical and uninspired, but they were perfectionists. At its worst their work is acceptable, and at its best has a dignity, simple beauty and sweetness of character which is unequalled. Windows could be perfectly plain relying entirely on proportions or they could be embellished with architraves (fig.5) friezes and cornices (fig.6) or consoles and pediments (fig.7). The last were either triangular or segmental (fig.7A).

Windows dressed in this fashion could be used for central emphasis, or on buildings of greater importance in rows, often alternated. The broken pediment as a setting for a cartouche, busto, or urn, which was beloved of the earlier Baroque school, was relegated to the interior and treated

logically as a more fanciful decorative form. Occasionally windows had pilasters and applied columns but these are only found in the richest and most important compositions. There is an infinite variety to be found in the decorative detail of these windows. (To be concluded)



perhaps the most logical infilling of a classically proportioned window yet invented. The lead came disappeared and wooden glazing bars now took their place with correspondingly larger panes of glass. The employment of this simple wooden grillage was highly successful aesthetically, usually resulting in windows three to five panes wide, three panes being generally the most satisfactory. The glazing bars were moulded inside and were usually 2" thick. At the intersections of the bars, the mouldings were mitred, but

of the frames of the new sash windows 4W from the outer face of the wall. This recession though not practiced generally in the country, due to the wish to provide shutters in the thickness of the wall, did lead to the later habit of completely recessing and hiding the sash boxings, whereby a much increased area of glazing was obtained and architecturally an effect of crisp refinement (fig. 3). In London the reveals were usually plastered and painted, but not elsewhere