

Arbury Hall

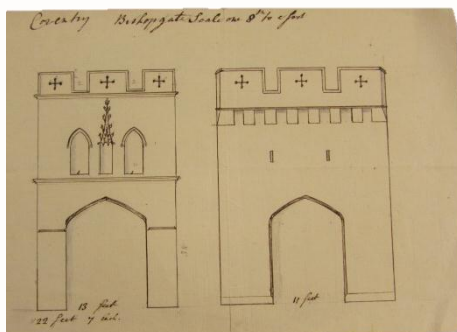
‘...perhaps the finest of all Early Gothic Revival Houses in England’ ¹
([CR764/213/1](#))

Who was responsible for remodelling Arbury Hall in the gothic style?

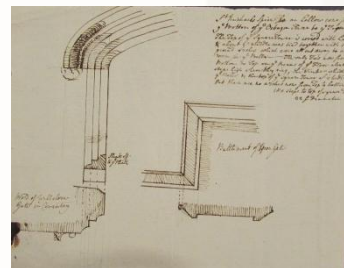
Sir Roger Newdigate (5th Baronet) was known as both a politician and a collector of antiquities whose architectural ideas were influenced by his travels both abroad and throughout England. He was responsible for the rebuilding of Arbury Hall in the Gothic Revival style, altering the Hall over a period of 50 years; it remains today almost exactly as he left it.

Sir Roger inherited Arbury Hall on the death of his brother in 1734, when he was only 14 years old. It remained in his possession until his death in 1805 at the age of 85. Shortly after graduating from Oxford with an MA in 1738, he embarked on a ‘Grand Tour’ of France and Italy, returning with two folio volumes of sketches of ancient buildings. He continued to demonstrate this keen eye for detail with the sketches that he drew as he toured England, with a particular emphasis on ecclesiastical architecture.

The examples on display ([CR764/213/1](#)) are sketches completed by Sir Roger and are predominantly from the local area. They show Sir Roger’s attention to detail within both the drawings and the notes and measurements that are jotted on the sketches. They are only a sample of the drawings that the Record Office hold and were found in a file entitled ‘Many of Sir Roger Newdigate’s plans for altering Arbury’.



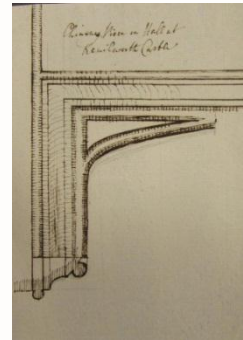
Scale drawing of Bishopgate, Coventry



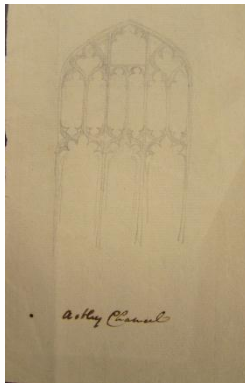
Sketches of details on Spon and Willclose gates in Coventry



Sketch of cornice in Kenilworth Hall



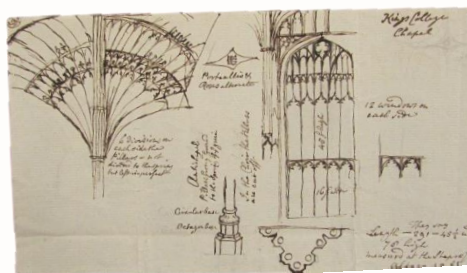
Sketch of a chimney piece,
Kenilworth Castle



Sketch of Astley Chancel



Sketch of mouldings of great arches, with
measurements, of Maxstoke Priory



Sketches of detail in King's College Chapel with notes on measurements and
arrangement

Warwickshire County Record Office, Reference: CR764/213/1

How is Arbury Hall an example of gothic revival architecture?

The 'Gothic Revival' architectural movement began in about 1740 and increased in popularity in the early 19th century. It adopted a number of features that were prevalent in the original gothic designs, including ecclesiastical details such as stained glass, decorative patterns and tracery, finials, lancet windows and hood mouldings to name a few. Using observations from existing gothic buildings as inspiration, Sir Roger Newdigate, along with architects Sanderson Miller and Henry Keene, created the designs that were used in the remodelling of the interior and exterior of the hall.

The first section of the house to be rebuilt in the gothic style was the library bow-window in 1750. However, the areas of Arbury Hall where the gothic plasterwork is said to be at its best are in the Saloon and Dining Room as can be seen in the photograph.



*Photograph showing gothic decoration in the Dining Room at Arbury Hall.
Warwickshire County Record Office, Reference: PH0878.
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Quote used from:

¹ Buildings of England: Warwickshire, N Pevsner and A Wedgwood (1966)

References:

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<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/style-guide-gothic-revival/> Gothic Revival

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