Substance over style: Castletown and the protean politics of Irish 'improvement'

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When compared with their counterparts in Britain, Irish buildings constructed during the first half of the eighteenth century have received little academic scrutiny. The perennially beguiling narrative of the primacy of Castletown within the corpus of Irish architectural history – secured through a combination of its supposed architectural novelty, the importance of its patron and his progeny, and, most vitally, the compellingly dramatic story of its later reinvention as the headquarters of the Irish Georgian Society in 1968 – has meant that it has received rather more attention than most.[1] Yet, despite being arguably the most closely scrutinised Irish building of the eighteenth century, recent work has suggested that many fundamental questions remain about its conception, its meaning and its true place in the narrative of Irish architectural history.[2] In the past, commentators have tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the identification of its architect and/or its influence on the development of the form and 'style' of the Irish country house type.[3] In doing so, there has been a general tendency to cast the Castletown project as *sui generis*, a watershed in the conceptualisation of Irish country-house construction and design which had no domestic precedent and which marked a deliberate, conspicuous and definitive architectural and philosophical break with all that had been built before.[4] As a result, writers have struggled to find an imported stylistic model for Castletown, from Palladio's Veneto through the great Renaissance *palazzi* of Rome to the work of Burlington and his circle in England. None could be found which satisfactorily encompassed the full range of unique architectural solecisms which characterise the house, and, indeed, the majority of country houses built in Ireland before 1750.[5]

The task of defining Castletown's architectural style had, it seemed, been made particularly difficult by the tantalising lack of contemporary evidence left by William

1 – Entrance hall, Castletown *(photo: Will Pryce; courtesy Country Life Picture Library)*

Conolly (1662-1729) and his circle as to the stylistic sources they consulted or emulated. Much may be gleaned from the well-known correspondence between George Berkeley (1685-1753) and John Perceval, 1st Earl of Egmont (1683-1748), as to the patriotic motivations behind many of the deliberate decisions made regarding the architect, scale, plan and appearance of the house.[6] 'You will do well', Perceval stated to Berkeley,

> to recommend to [Conolly] the making use of all the marbles he can get of the production of Ireland for his chimneys, for since this house will be the finest Ireland ever saw, and by your description fit for a Prince, I wou'd have it as it were the Epitome of the Kingdom, and all the natural Rarities she affords should have a place there. I wou'd examine the several woods there for inlaying my floors and wainscote with our own Oak and Walnut: my stone stairs should be of black palmers stone, & my buffet adorned with the choicest shells our strands afford. I would even carry my zeal to things of art; my hangings, beds, cabinets & other furniture shou'd be Irish & the very silver that ornamented my locks & grates shou'd be the produce of our own mines.[7]

However, having been so enthusiastically outspoken on these minutiæ, neither Berkeley nor Perceval offered any opinion as to the appropriate architectural 'style' which should be adopted, nor do they refer to any existing architectural model outside Ireland which should be emulated. Indeed, William King (1650-1729) actively advised against the importation of foreign models for Irish country houses, a practice which, he argued, had led to the adoption of what he described as 'inconveniencys'.[8]

In the context of this silence on 'style' or 'model', later writers have generally ascribed discrepancies between any chosen model and Castletown to provincial licentiousness, misunderstanding of European precedent or the *retardataire* tendencies of provincial architects.[9] More recent re-evaluations of architectural classicism, particularly in the work of Barbara Arciszewska and Peter Burke, do not view classicism as a fixed and immutable concept, and instead explore each building within its unique historic, socio-political, geographic and economic context in order to demonstrate that different regions negotiated the language of classicism in order to mediate often contrasting meanings in different ways during different periods.[10] In particular, there has been a growing recognition of what Burke describes as a conscious process of 'hybridization' of classical with native or seemingly anachronistic architectural forms, often to communicate potent messages about the contemporary socio-political context of the building project.[11]

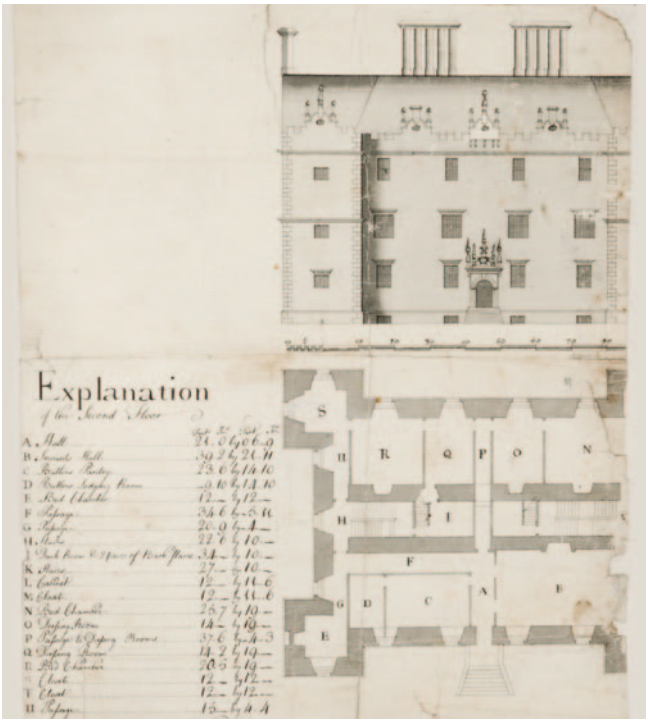
Few considered the highly persuasive value of contemporary silence on 'style', for therein can arguably be found the strongest possible evidence that contemporary viewers simply did not view Castletown within this paradigm. To contemporary viewers, the value and meaning of Castletown was not found by using a visual checklist of appropriate stylistic features that could place it comfortably within the confines of a particular architectural style or related it to an appropriate emulated architectural model. Instead, its importance and message were to be communicated through the adoption of a uniquely

Irish and, most importantly, rational architectural form which would, through its plan, form, function and economy, encapsulate the very essence of an increasingly prosperous, peaceful and politically independent Irish state.

In considering the inherent 'Irishness' of the architectural fruits of these labours, Alistair Rowan has concluded that 'it is hard to discern anything that is specifically Irish' about eighteenth-century Irish country houses.[12] This reflected a general tendency among later commentators to read a narrative of stylistic 'other'ness and colonial possession into all the forms of classicism that developed in eighteenth-century Ireland and to cast all Irish country houses as monuments of a hegemonic attempt to put the relative dominance of the English state on display, thus ignoring the specific mediation and reception of buildings constructed in the period prior to 1750.[13] The definition of architectural 'Irishness' was once again limited to a checklist of architectural features (such as the 'decorative taste' at Castletown or the 'quirk of planning' in the upstairs lobby of Bellamont Forest, county Cavan, which were unique to Ireland and that do not appear on buildings elsewhere. It is only by severing the definition of 'Irishness' from this stylistic architectural paradigm and instead encompassing the complex socio-political and cultural context, which, it will be argued, was consciously mediated through architecture in eighteenth-century Ireland, that the true value and 'Irishness' of Irish eighteenth-century architecture can be ascertained.

In taking Castletown out of this 'stylistic' paradigm, its true significance within an ongoing and protean discourse on Irish 'improvement' can be appreciated. Recent studies on Early Modern attitudes to national self-awareness have stressed the centrality of the concept of 'improvement' to the self-fashioning and promotion of the nation state as being distinct from its neighbours, rivals or colonial motherland.[14] Originally a concept signifying no more than the profitable cultivation of land, in the seventeenth century the term 'improvement' became synonymous with a host of measures aimed at national civic perfection.[15] Critical to the concept was the material progress of the State, but 'improvement' encompassed much more than financial gain; economic growth was merely the means by which a series of moral and socio-political aims could be achieved and empirically measured, including the advancement of manufactures and international trade, the eradication of poverty, the education of the populace, and the promotion of distinct national self-awareness and joint enterprise among the citizenry.[16]

Paul Slack has argued that in seventeenth-century England, 'improvement became a fundamental part of the national culture, governing how the English saw themselves'.[17] Slack has stressed the central importance of economic progress to the concept of English 'improvement', suggesting that the principal character of that kingdom, as distinct from its European neighbours, was found in its mercantile prowess.[18] In Ireland, the discourse surrounding 'improvement' was similarly focused upon the prosperity of the kingdom, secured though increased overseas trade. From an Irish perspective, however, this trade was in turn reliant on the fruits of good native land stewardship, agricultural reform, the development of Irish manufactures, and the benevolent, independent government which



2 – Portumna Castle, county Galway: elevation of the north front and plan of the second (principal) floor

This undated drawing shows the development of an axial spinal space dividing parallel suites of rooms with paired staircases serving either end of the house. (courtesy Royal Irish Academy © RIA)

opposite

3 – Gabriel Beranger, RATHFARNHAM CASTLE

1774, pencil and watercolour

(courtesy National Library of Ireland)

would secure all of these.[19] Irish 'improvement' thus encompassed much more than merely mercantile prosperity.

The establishment of a vibrant class of resident Irish landlords was long recognised as the *sine qua non* of Irish 'improvement'.[20] Writing in 1738, Samuel Madden argued that English absentee landlords had 'used Ireland just as the Spaniards do the Indians and the vast Savannahs of America', thereby laying waste to 'one of the finest countries in the Kingdom'.[21] He therefore extolled Irish landlords to 'build on [their] Estates and encourage [their] tenants to do so'.[22] He declared that these landlords should build in a style which 'not only beautified the face of our country but [gave] heart and life and spirit to our people'.[23] The crucial role of country house architecture within the project of Irish 'improvement' was thus threefold: firstly, it acted as redemptive economic stimulus through the practical processes of construction; secondly, it encouraged the permanent settlement of resident landlords whose financial interests would depend upon Ireland's prosperity; and thirdly, it had a powerful communicative role as a cultural object which would visually assert the increasing self-confidence and independence of the Irish state.

Evidence of the Protestant élite's wish to improve the prosperity of Ireland though the encouragement of permanent familial settlement arguably stretches back to the building projects of Adam Loftus (1533-1605) at Rathfarnham (1583) and Richard de Burgh, 4th Earl of Clanricarde (1572-1635), at Portumna (*c*.1618) (Plates 2, 3). These early

attempts at 'improvement' had concentrated upon reducing the primarily defensive nature of most Irish domestic architecture, thus increasing the desirability of an Irish estate as a permanent residence rather than as a distant asset or defensive bolt-hole. By importing English plans and appearances for these houses, the builders of seventeenth-century Ireland sought to invite favourable comparisons with the relative peace and civility of England.[24] In the 1673 *Present State of Ireland*, the unnamed author stated that the Irish looked with great envy upon the English and 'their goodly houses ... [and] at the improvements they made of their Estates'.[25] Like many other writers, the anonymous author applauds Ireland's larger towns for displaying evidence of English custom through their fine buildings, civic government and manners. Dublin, in past years a 'mean and inconsiderable metropolis', is much extolled as bearing 'in some parts somewhat a like resemblance with that of the City of London'.[26] Similar views were expressed by John Dunton, who in 1699 described Drogheda as 'a handsom, cleane English-like town and the best I have seen in Ireland'.[27] These texts connect respectability, Protestantism and architectural development in a way which conflates the concept of 'Englishness' with a universal project of 'civilisation', and it is arguable that these writers considered the term 'English' not so much as connoting a state of nationality as a state of civility.

In *The Present State of Ireland*, the improvement of English landholdings in Ireland was encouraged on the very practical basis that

> 'by enjoying such plentiful Estates in that Realm, [the English] will thereby be better enabled be to breed up a sufficient number of learned Protestant Lawyers and Divines to serve the Publick which will very much tend to the strengthening of the Civil Government of that Kingdom'.[28]

It is, however, clear that this idea of 'improvement' being derived from English 'civility' was not one which was apparent during the construction of Castletown from 1719. No contemporary writer on the Castletown project invited or proposed any comparison, positive or otherwise, with England. Something had clearly changed in the way 'improvement' was conceptualised.

To understand how the concept of Irish 'improvement' altered over the course of the seventeenth century, it is necessary to consider how Irish attitudes changed towards 'English civility'. Toby Barnard has argued that there was an incremental sense of disenchantment with England during this period, which he characterises as 'a personal journey made by numerous ... settlers from England, Wales and Scotland' as they increasingly realised that their interests, as a unified body, were not necessarily co-existent with those of England.[29] Barnard traces this journey through the critical change in tone across the writings of one such settler, Richard Lawrence. Lawrence had arrived in Ireland as a colonel in Cromwell's army in 1649 and died there in 1684, having established his principal financial and family interests in the kingdom.[30] In *The Interest of England in the Irish Transplantation* (1655) and *England's Great Interest in the Well Planting of Ireland with English People* (1656), the 'Anglicisation' of Ireland through the establishment of plantation settlements along the south-east coast was declared to be in the joint interests of the English living in Ireland and of the colonial motherland, which, by 'the inlargement of the English nation so near itself, would add much to its strength, riches and reputation, much more than the West Indian Plantations'.[31] Through use of this colonial paradigm, it seems clear that Lawrence considered himself, as a settler, thoroughly allied to the English interest. By 1682, however, he had performed something of a *volte face*, penning a stinging critique of English governance in Ireland which he squarely blamed for the abject poverty of the nation, suggesting that in the interests of financial prosperity Ireland should be governed by Irishmen alone.[32] This opinion may well have been coloured by Lawrence's own abortive attempts to establish himself in Irish manufacture, which were largely thwarted by protectionist English trade legislation.[33] This arguably reflects a critical moment in the narrative of Protestant Irish national self-awareness, when the settler population began to think of itself as a unified body engaged in joint enterprise, certainly distinct from the English, and – perhaps – even Irish.

It can be argued that by the time of the publication of William Molyneux's polemic *The Case of Ireland being Bound by Act of Parliament in England* in 1698, such attitudes had crystallised. The context of the work was a sustained campaign on the part of the English legislature to impose restrictions on the trade of Irish woollens which would have crippled the Irish economy and devastated the estates of many settlers who had estab-

lished their principal financial interests there.[34] Molyneux's polemic set out the historical, legislative and legal basis for Irish legislative independence. He considered the nature of the English presence in Ireland and concluded that the assumption of the Lordship of Ireland by Henry II had not been in the manner of a conquest but rather a voluntary submission by the governors, civil and ecclesiastical, of Ireland to the Crown of England, which left the separate legislative apparatus of the kingdom intact under the shared Crown.[35] The proposed trade restrictions were thus cast as a usurpation both of Royal Prerogative and the inviolable independence of the Irish legislature.[36] Most tellingly, however, he argued that even if the assumption was to be considered a just conquest, the aggressor 'gets no Power over those who conquered with him; they fought on his Side, whether as private Soldiers or Commanders, but cannot suffer by the Conquest, but must at least be as much Freemen as they were before.'[37] Thus, only the 'ancient race of the Irish' could have suffered under any conquest by Henry II: 'the English and Britains who came over with him retain'd al the Freedoms and Immunities of Freeborn Subjects; they nor their Descendants could not in reason lose these'.[38] Molyneux asserted that it was

> manifest that the great body of the present People of Ireland are the Proginy of the English and Britains that from time to time have come over into this Kingdom; and there remains but a meer handful of the Ancient Irish at this Day; I may say, not one in a Thousand.

Leaving aside the paradoxical nature of the claim that Ireland was not conquered, but that nonetheless the majority of the population was now composed of the progeny of those who had come over from Britain, it is clear that the Protestant élite had shifted their self-identification from imported bringers of English civility to the very epitome of the Irish nation. No laws, Molyneux argued, could be imposed on these new Irish 'by any Authority of the Parliament of England but by the *Consent* and *Allowance* of the *People of Ireland*' as the civil and ecclesiastical state were settled there '*Regiæ Sublimitatis Authoritate*, solely by the King's Authority and their own good wills'.[39]

Lawrence and Molyneux thus seem to prefigure a period when 'Englishness' in Ireland connoted not 'civility' but rather the hostile mercantile competitor and the usurper of Irish legislative autonomy. This gradual but definitive shift in thinking is clearly reflected in the writings of those directly associated or concerned with the Castletown project. In his scathing attack on the absolutist government of Denmark penned in 1692, Robert, 1st Viscount Molesworth (1656-1725) wrote that London was the 'Epitom of the world' where visitors could learn 'Christian Liberty as well as other Christian Vertues', whereas he described Ireland as his '*pis aller*' in which he would 'perfectly degenerate'.[40] By 1712, however, George Berkeley was moved to write that 'London ... seems to exceed Dublin not so much in the stateliness or beauty of its buildings as in extent.'[41] By 1723, William King (1650-1729) declared London to be, in fact, 'the exemplar and fountain of most of the Luxury, vices and villainies that infect these kingdoms'.[42] He extolled Irishmen not to seek to emulate the great metropolis but instead to concentrate on domes-

tic social improvement through the encouragement of 'fine building' and sound estate management, concepts which he suggested were lacking in England where the concept of 'improvement', centred on material progress alone, had been inevitably corrupted into a state of luxury, indulgence, moral degradation and vice.[43] By 1722, just as Conolly commenced the construction of Castletown, Robert Molesworth, who had suggested the services of Alessandro Galilei three years previously, recanted his previous opinions. In a letter to his brother John, he exclaimed, 'you must not despise an Irish Estate. I was once such a fool to do so ... but I have found ye folly of doing so, & find it to be ye sheet Anchor of ye family.'[44]

The promotion of the resident landlord with his family seat and principal financial interests situated in Ireland remained as central to the eighteenth-century Protestant conceptualisation of 'improvement' as it had done in the previous century. What had changed by 1722 was the means by which the Irish Protestant élite believed that improvement was to be achieved, from the importation of English modes of 'civility' to the patriotic defence of Irish economic and legislative independence.

The timing of Castletown's commencement in 1722 was no mere coincidence. The combined effect of a reduced native threat in the wake of the Treaty of Limerick, the increase in national production brought about by peace following the death of Louis XIV in 1715, and the decline of French militarism and the threat of invasion all made permanent settlement in Ireland a more attractive prospect. Most importantly, however, a growing appreciation among the Protestant population of Ireland, both Whig and Tory, that their landholdings (many of which had been confiscated from Jacobite sympathisers) could only be secured through a pragmatic acceptance of the realpolitik of the Hanoverian Succession meant that by the early 1720s, conditions in Ireland were sufficiently settled for a sustained and prodigious period of country-house construction. As William King reported to James Standhope in November 1715,

> this Kingdom is in perfect peace, for which we have great reason to thank God, the Papists continue very quiet and seem not by anything that appears to be in any disposition to give it disturbance ... As to the Protestants, they are generally unanimous in their zeal for His Majestie.[45]

The substantial demise of the Jacobite interest in Dublin following the purge of the Tory administration and flight of the Duke of Ormonde to the Court of the Pretender in 1715 meant that powerful positions were taken away from many Tory landlords, whose main financial and land interests were situated in England, and given to those whose fortunes had been made in the seventeenth-century settlements and who lived and worked on their Irish estates. These men were precisely those whose interest was best served by a flourishing Irish economy and an independent Irish legislature. Primary among these was Conolly himself.

Thus, in addition to the seventeenth-century desire to encourage familial settlement in Ireland, the archetypal Irish country house became, in the wake of growing dis-

enchantment with the English political and financial interest in Ireland, a potent means of asserting the economic and political independence of the Irish state. This point gained a new urgency following the stinging legislative and judicial humiliation of the Irish parliament by the Declaratory Act of 1719. This Act declared the judicial and legislative supremacy of the parliament of Great Britain over that in Dublin, and must have come as a personal slight to Conolly.[46] It was a critical part of the Irish patriotic project of improvement that the building endeavours of Irish 'patriots' should answer this political challenge by promoting Ireland not as an obdurate subordinate satellite or, indeed, colony of England, but rather as an independent state among the states of Europe.[47] A comparison with England, positive or otherwise, was arguably thus irrelevant. That Irish country houses had to be as grand if not grander than anything seen in contemporary England could be attributed to a defensive colonial mind-set.[48] However, it is important to note the complete lack of any contemporary comparison being made between Castletown and comparable English houses during its construction. Those who contributed to the contemporary discourse on what form Castletown should take were not seeking an 'English', 'anti-English' or even 'Palladian' style. What they sought was a rational Irish architecture which would promote the patriotic project of improvement. This was pivotal to the legitimacy of their governance of Ireland as an independent state among the states of Europe.

The plan for Castletown, though rather implausibly said to be 'chiefly of Mr Conolly's invention', was the product of a species of 'committee of taste' which embraced the architectural opinions of a wide circle of architects, academics, politicians, social reformers and clerics that included Robert and John Molesworth, Edward Lovett Pearce, George Berkeley, Sir John Perceval and Alessandro Galilei.[49] What united this disparate group and arguably motivated Conolly to commence construction was a shared belief in the crucial part the building of Castletown could play in the socio-economic and political discourse surrounding the concept of 'improvement'. They were also united in that each had an association with Anthony Ashley-Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713).[50] Shaftesbury's influential *Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design* firmly asserted architecture's place in mediating, securing and propagating the social, political, religious and economic benefits gained through the Glorious Revolution.[51] Shaftesbury's close association with those advising Conolly during the construction of Castletown, in particular Robert Molesworth whom Shaftesbury described as his 'Oracle in publick affairs ... a through Confident in ... private', meant that his thinking must have provided a convenient framework for their conceptualisation of the long-established project of Irish 'improvement' which was distinctly au courant.[52]

A reading of Shaftesbury's *Letter* reveals many correspondences between his thinking and the protean Irish concept of 'improvement'. Shaftesbury called for a 'national style' of architecture in England which would express the fruits of the Glorious Revolution and the English Constitution whilst providing economic stimulus to the country, mirroring the communicative and redemptive aims of Irish improvement.[53] Echoing the growing clamour against the inefficient and corrupt Office of the Surveyor General in Ireland,

he criticised the political appointment of one Court architect (in his case Wren; in Ireland Burgh) under whom 'we have patiently seen the noblest publick buildings perish'.[54] The most striking parallel with the contemporary conception of the Castletown project can be drawn with his assertion that

> Even those Pieces too are brought under the common Censure, which, tho rais'd by private Men, are of such a Grandure and Magnificence, as to become National Ornaments. The ordinary Man may build his Cottage, or the plain Gentleman his country house according to his fancys: but when a great Man builds, he will find little Quarter from the Publick, if instead of a beautiful Pile, he raises at a vast expense, such a false and counterfeit Piece of Magnificence, as can be justly arraign'd for its Deformity by so many knowing Men in Art, and by the whole People, who, in such a conjecture, readily follow their opinion.[55]

This assertion that the 'great man' owes a patriotic responsibility not to merely build 'according to his fancys' but rather to further the patriotic development of his country is one which was absolutely critical to the Castletown project.

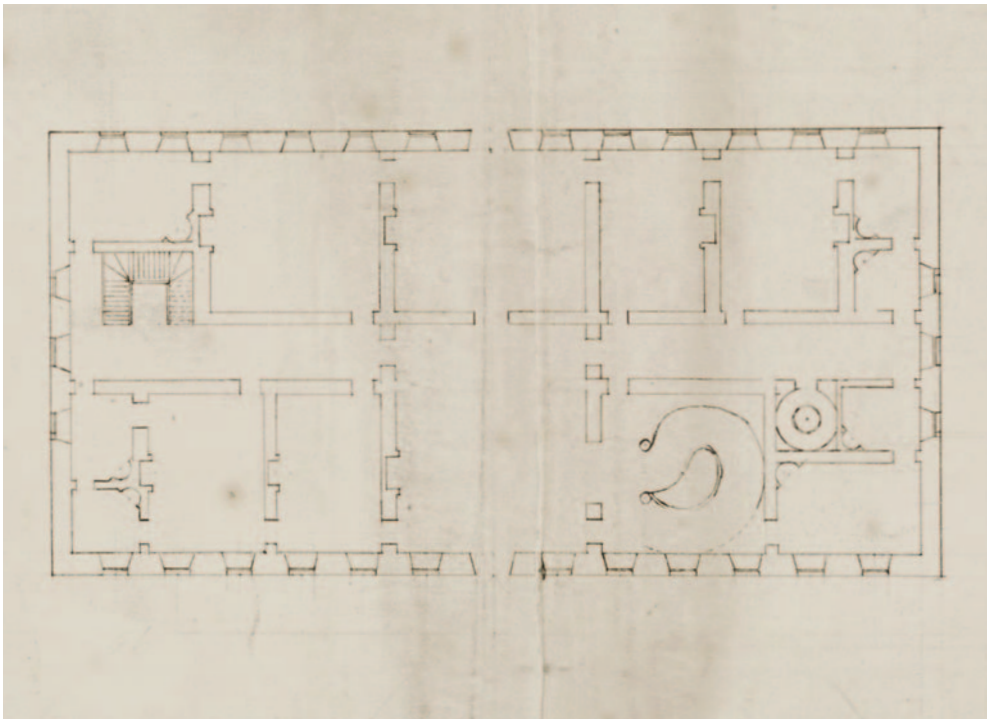
The most striking, and to many writers, frustrating aspect of Shaftesbury's *Letter* is its omission of any description of or model for what this new 'national architecture' would look like. Just as Perceval's letter to Berkeley fails to offer any guidance or model for the appearance of Castletown, so too does Shaftesbury leave the question of appearance and 'style' entirely unconsidered. Later writers on English architecture have tended to read Shaftesbury's letter into a teleological stylistic narrative in which 'Palladianism' inevitably displaced 'artisan mannerism' and the 'Baroque'.[56] Many later writers concluded that Shaftesbury offered little more than platitudes, and thus it inevitably fell to Burlington, Campbell and Kent to give architectural shape to Shaftesbury's philosophical tropes.[57] This singularly ignores the context in which Shaftesbury was writing, and fails to recognise that during this period, several architectural discourses – ranging from the stylistic pluralism of Hawksmoor's historicism seen particularly in his work at the University of Oxford, on the one hand, to the doctrinaire découpage of precisely copied pattern book precedents seen in the works of Burlington and his circle on the other, all set against the background of a growing interest in antiquarianism and a changing conceptualisation of history itself – were being promoted in England and Ireland, with no one being more likely than the others to dominate the form architecture would take.[58] It also leads to a tendency among later historians to overstate the novelty of the new 'style' in which commonalities with the displaced style must be circumvented or ignored. There is arguably a much more satisfactory explanation as to why Shaftesbury and Perceval do not describe in any detail the features of the 'national style' they espoused: they themselves were unsure what this new national architecture would look like, precisely because the precepts upon which it was to be based were not a checklist of architectural features but rather a discourse between architecture, politics and philosophy in which architecture, whatever its form may be, would display and promote the 'Genius of Liberty [and] the

same Laws and Government, by which his Property, and the Rewards of his Pains and Industry are secur'd to him and to his Generation after him'.[59] This represents a much more nuanced definition of 'national style' than any stylistic visual checklist, and could, conceivably, include commonalities with the positive aspects of existing architecture both from within Ireland and copied from foreign precedent.[60] In this, Shaftesbury's architectural desiderata were precisely the same as those expressed by Irish builders. As Shaftesbury wrote of England,

> As her Constitution has grown, and been establish'd, she has in proportion fitted herself for other Improvements. There has been no Anticipation in the Case. And in this surely she must be esteemed wise, as well as happy; that ere she attempted to raise herself any other Taste or Relish, she secur'd herself a right one in Government. She has now the advantage of beginning in other Matters, on a new foot. She has her Models yet to seek, her Scale and Standard to form, with deliberation and good choice.[61]

The significance of the role of Shaftesbury's *Letter* in influencing the development of English architecture has come under significant academic scrutiny in recent years, with Alexander Echlin and William Kelley arguing that it was merely one philosophical discourse among many which sought to reform British architecture in the first years of the eighteenth century.[62] They argue that this discourse was displaced by the thinking of Burlington and had died out, along with the majority of its apologists, by 1726 without ever having formed the philosophical basis of a single building project.[63] What they perhaps failed to consider was the significant role of Shaftesbury's thinking in Ireland. Given Shaftesbury's unusually close relationship with Robert Molesworth, combined with the correlations between Shaftesbury's thinking and the ongoing Irish project of 'improvement', it seems more than arguable that the philosophical cross-pollination led to physical architectural results in Ireland.[64]

The influence of Shaftesbury in Ireland has been given significant consideration in the work of Edward McParland. As early as 1991 he argued that Robert Molesworth and his 'new Junta for architecture', composed of John Molesworth, Alessandro Galilei, Sir George Markham and Sir Thomas Hewett, were the true architectural successors of Shaftesbury – not Burlington – and that they had imported his thinking into Ireland through their professional and familial networks there.[65] It is not a very significant extension of this thinking to suggest that this influence continued in Ireland after 1726 when it is argued it ceased to exercise influence in England. Once Shaftesbury is severed from the orthodox development of 'English Palladianism', it is a small step to argue that the distinctive 'un-Englishness' of Irish country house architecture prior to 1750 is the result of the adoption and adaption of Shaftesbury's philosophy into a protean Irish project of improvement which succeeded in reforming Irish architecture in a way it had failed to do in England.[66] This argument appears to be greatly bolstered if one considers Shaftesbury's argument that his aims could substantially be promoted through two major building pro-



4 – Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, 'Plan for the ground floor of Castletown House as constructed', c.1720
This plan is not exactly as built; see page 73 for a later, more detailed plan.
(© Victoria and Albert Museum, Proby Collection, Vanburgh album E.2124: 165-1992)

jects which he declared to be the 'noblest subjects for Architecture; our Prince's *Palace* and our *House of Parliament*'.[67] If, like many contemporary commentators, one considers Castletown as a 'palace' for Ireland's 'chief governor', both projects had been commenced in Ireland before the end of the 1720s, whilst neither would be achieved in England until over a century later.[68]

So, what is the significance of this recognition of Castletown's place in an ongoing and protean project of patriotic improvement? Primarily, a departure from a 'stylistic' paradigm allows Castletown to be viewed not as something completely *sui generis*, but rather a development reflecting subtle and not so subtle changes in an ongoing discourse on Irish improvement. Many writers have attempted to encompass Castletown within the stylistic category of 'Palladian' through efforts to relate its plan and appearance to what has been deemed 'English Palladianism' or directly to models taken from Palladio's *Quattro Libri*.[69] The primacy of Castletown as 'Ireland's first "Palladian" house' has widely entered common currency. However, this approach has failed to adequately explain seemingly anachronistic references to existing Irish architecture or the 'English Baroque' in its plan and appearance.

In this respect, the axial corridor connecting two secondary servants' staircases is

of particular note (Plate 4). A marked and very rational departure from the Palladian villa model with its interlinked rooms, this corridor allowed free circulation throughout the house without the occupant of any particular room being disturbed. In Ireland, there is evidence of the development of this practical plan as early as the first years of the seventeenth century. At Portumna Castle, county Galway, commenced at some point before 1618, the double-pile main block is planned with two suites of principal rooms arranged horizontally in parallel at each level, separated by a central space with a staircase at each end serving the two ends of the house (Plate 2). Whilst it has not yet developed into the practical axial corridor of Castletown (rather than being connected by a corridor, the staircases are separated by two service rooms and a bisecting corridor connecting front hall to the rear suite of rooms), it is a very small developmental step from the plan of Portumna to the practical rationality of Castletown. Tellingly though, whilst the committee was clearly open to the practical rationality of an axial corridor, the appearance of an enfilade of state rooms terminated by an antechamber at each end and including in their number a state bedroom along with a great hall on the ground floor, in addition to the presence at first-floor level of a long gallery, seem rather more *retardataire*, and undo much of the practical purpose of the axial corridor.

The traditional function of a great hall as a gathering space for an aristocratic household may have been obsolete as early as 1600, but its presence in a great many grand houses after this date was an essential status symbol confirming the builder's seigneurial status.[70] Its distinctly 'anti-Palladian' presence at Castletown, where Conolly was keen to assert his social and political status to his detractors, is thus entirely rational.[71] Furthermore, in offering seigneurial hospitality to his neighbours and tenants in the hall, Conolly had positioned himself as the archetypal benevolent resident landlord central to the project of Irish 'improvement'. The hall at Castletown is the only surviving major internal space to retain the entirety of its original decorative scheme (Plate 1). Fortuitously, it was always intended to be one of the most important interiors in the house, being a semi-public space. At first-floor level, columns and pilasters which at first glance appear to be of the Corinthian order are actually crowned with baskets of flowers, fruit and foliage in place of capitals (Plate 5). This may seem an entirely theatrical addition which completely defies 'Palladian' categorisation, but it is one which stressed the fruits of good land stewardship through reference to hospitality, abundance and plenty. Indeed, in making a conscious and deliberate decision to eschew the employment of the Corinthian Order where its use is prescribed in favour of an almost naturalistic 'anti-architecture', it is arguable that Conolly and the architectural committee were communicating a very specific message about the source of their architectural vocabulary. The Corinthian Order was described in Fréart's *Parallel* as 'the highest degree of perfection to which *Architecture* did ever aspire', and it is described with specific reference to the Callimachus myth and a rather fanciful engraving representing his invention of the order after observing a votive basket of fruits and flowers laid upon acanthus leaves (Plate 6).[72] Fréart's tract, along with Marc-Antoine Laugier's *Essai sur l'Architecture*, which had promoted

5 – Pillar at first-floor level of entrance hall, Castletown, showing capitals composed of baskets of fruit and flowers
(photograph: the author)

6 – Roland Fréart de Chambray (1606-1676), CALLIMACHUS' DISCOVERY OF THE CORINTHIAN ORDER (from Roland Fréart, PARALLELE DE L'ARCHITECTURE ANTIQUE ET DE LA MODERNE (Paris, 1650) 63)

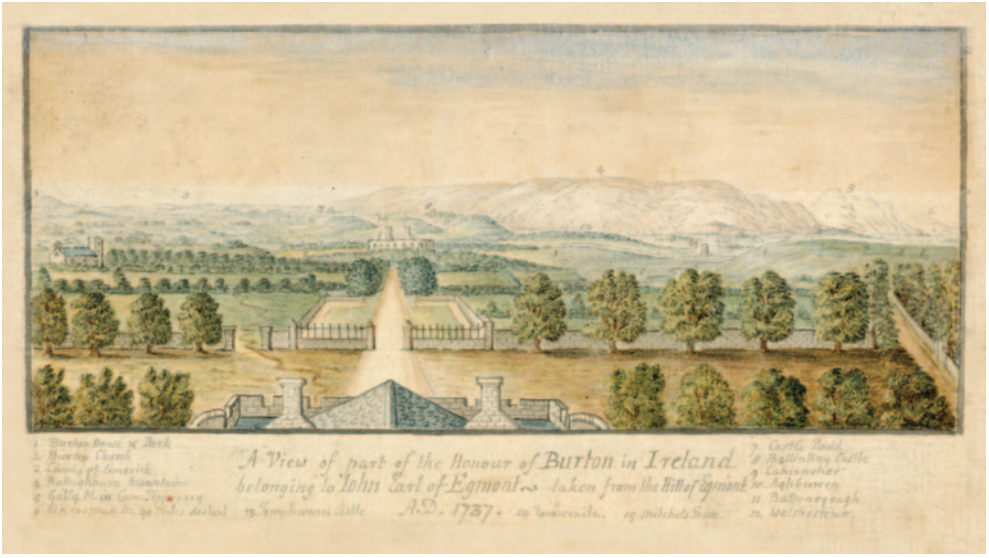
a return to the architectural simplicity of natural form, were of central importance to Shaftesbury and the 'new Junta'. In particular, Fréart's apology for truly ancient 'Greek' architecture was uniquely significant to this group.[73] In Ireland, this thinking was clearly known and promoted, with George Berkeley having declared that 'the old Romans were inferior to the Greeks, and ... the moderns fall infinitely short of both in the grandeur and *simplicity* of taste' after a visit to the Greek ruins of Sicily.[74] In these circumstances, it seems rather less than fanciful to suggest that this unique subversion of the Corinthian Order in Ireland to a state of complete natural simplicity was a means by which Castletown was philosophically situated at the very nexus of the promotion of Shaftesburian architectural thought in a way which would have been visually patent to a contemporary viewer of Molesworth's circle.

As with the seemingly anachronistic great hall, the presence of a long gallery (Plate 7) at first glance seems to be primarily a means of situating Conolly within the aristocratic ruling class. But, as with the iconographic messages in the hall, Conolly appears to have utilised the long gallery as a means of communicating more than this. During his tour of Ireland, John Loveday was keen to draw attention to the contents of the long gallery in

addition to its grandeur.[75] It had been hung not with portraits of Conolly's ancestors, which would have been impossible given his lowly origins, but of his political allies: 'here is a Length of ye Duke of Wharton, another of ye Duke of Grafton Lord Lieutenant, and his Dutchess, but a remarkably good Length-Painting of Lord-Chancellor West, in his Robes', all centred on what was thought to be Garrett Morphey's portrait of King William III which, by family tradition, had been a gift to Conolly from the King himself.[76] This gallery of predominantly political portraits emphasised Conolly's associational links to notable heroes, military champions and great statesmen suggesting a strong allegiance to the Irish patriotic cause.[77] In this respect, the presence of a great hall and long gallery in what has been somewhat uncomfortably deemed a 'Palladian' house may arguably be a rational provision of the requisite tools of state for an Irish seigneurial landlord wishing to self-identify both with the ancient landowning class and with the very current conception of Irish 'improvement'.

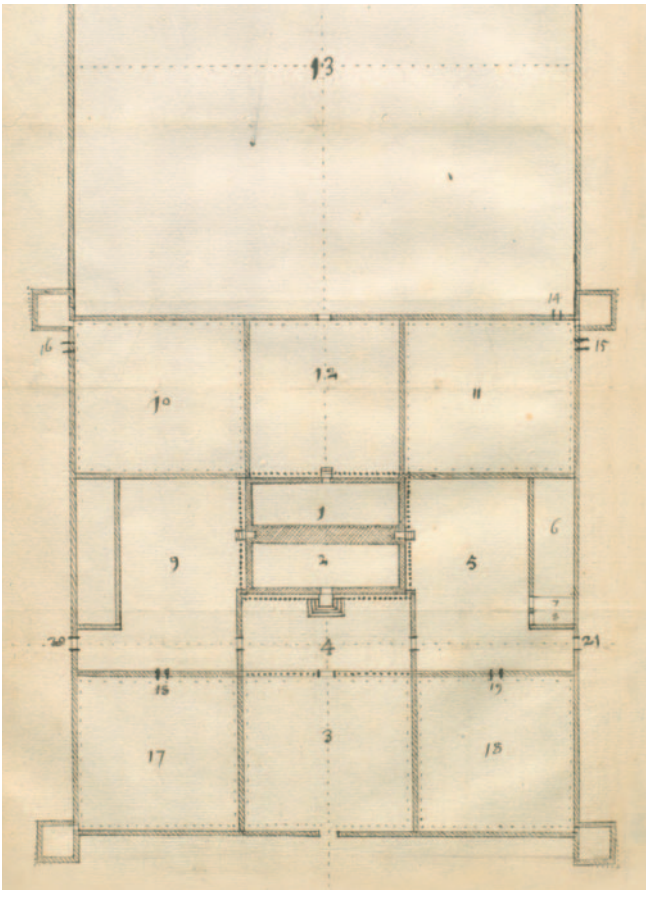
The majority of writers have deemed Castletown to be 'Palladian' principally as a result of the colonnades and terminating pavilions flanking the main block of the house. Desmond Guinness has asserted that 'Classical colonnades were unknown in Ireland when Castletown was built'.[78] He argued that their dual purpose at Castletown – to house utilitarian yards linked in function to the estate farm rather than the house, and, by their

7 – The Long Gallery, Castletown, 1967
(courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)



8 – 'A View of Part of the Honour of Burton in Ireland', 1737

This shows Burton House (in ruins following its destruction in the Williamite Wars) and its surrounding walled courtyards and gardens. (© British Library Board, Add. MS 47009 A f.27)



9 – Plan of Burton House and its surrounding walled courtyards and turrets, 1670

1. & 2. Burton House
3. The Forecourt 84 x 78 feet
4. "A gravl'd court" 84 x 36 feet "for taking coaches and their turning"
5. Stable court; 6. Stables
7. & 8. Two coach houses
9. A court containing a building 60 x 74 feet for brew house, bake house and wash house
10. A court 84 x 78 feet "to lay fyering in"
12. The back court entering the garden 80 x 76 feet
13. The pleasure gardens
17. & 18. Two "waste courts" 78 feet square
(© British Library Board, Add. MS 46948 f. 16b)

attachment to the house, increasing the impact and grandeur of its façade – became a novel, defining and unique feature of the Irish country house type based on Edward Lovett Pearce's study of Palladio in Italy.[79] Whilst it is clear that Pearce investigated this Palladian villa plan during his time in Italy, what is much more interesting is the question of whether this practical, economical and rational plan had, in fact, been developing naturally in Ireland independently of the influence of Palladio.[80] It is arguable that what Guinness has described as the 'economical Palladian plan' of Castletown, in fact, had begun to develop out of adapted defensive bawns as early as the seventeenth century. Originally composed of a simple walled enclosure with defensive towers at each corner, over time the bawn became less a purely defensive feature and more an economical and rational way of relating service buildings to the main house and enclosing formal and working gardens, which can be directly related to the later economic, compact country house plan.[81] Firstly, outbuildings were constructed along the defensive walls parallel to the gable ends of the main house, as at Perceval's Burton Park, near Mallow in county Cork, where two service buildings – one containing stables and the other a brew house, bake house and wash house – were constructed parallel to the main house within adjoining courtyards (Plates 8, 9). Whilst the unfortified house is surrounded by enclosed courtyards and bounded by a defensive wall with four battlemented turrets, the changing way in which these seemingly purely defensive complexes were being considered is clearly evidenced in correspondence from Perceval's builder, Thomas Smith, during construction.[82] The idea of constructing a fortified gate house is rejected on the basis that it would 'blinde the house', whilst the recommendation that the inner courtyard walls be built at a lower height than the outer curtain wall so that the house could be protected from any

10 – Entrance front at Springhill, county Derry, 1680-98
The projecting single-storey extensions with canted bays were added to the main seven-bay house c.1765, replacing right-angled screen walls connecting the service pavilions to the house and forming a three-sided courtyard bawn. (© National Trust Images / Matthew Antrobus)

11 – Elevations of the entrance and garden front at Shannongrove, county Limerick, 1709-20
L-shaped service pavilions extend the horizontal emphasis of the main house.
(courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)

opposite 12 – Willem van der Hagen (d.1745), VIEW OF CARTON HOUSE AS IT APPEARED IN 1687
c.1690, oil on canvas (private collection)

two of the four turrets, 'should any Court be by enemy surpriz'd', may well have been trumped by the requirement that higher walls were 'better for wall fruit'.[83]

Eventually, elongated service buildings joined to the main body of the house by straight or curved screen walls replaced these parallel outer walls entirely. Any pretence at fortified protection was abandoned with the removal of the fourth enclosing wall, creating an open courtyard which could be enclosed with a wooden gate during times of unrest. This plan can be seen to have developed by the time Springhill in county Derry was constructed, with its open courtyard bounded on two sides by elegant curvilinear gabled service pavilions around 1697 (Plate 10). It is still in evidence at Shannongrove, county Limerick, completed around 1720, where the service pavilions are now constructed on an L-shaped plan, the longer arm running on the same axis as the main house, thus greatly increasing the horizontal impact of the entrance façade (Plate 11). Finola O'Kane has argued that Robert Molesworth himself retained elements of an earlier bawn at Breckdenston (near Swords, county Dublin) as late as 1716, and has also explored how Breckdenston's landscape design represented the interests of the 'New Junta'.[84]

The utility of the bawn in these late-seventeenth and early eighteenth-century houses was arguably threefold. Firstly, it demonstrated a physical connection between the landowner and his household and the working estate in a way which fitted the philosophical underpinnings of Irish 'improvement' and the archetype of the resident benevolent landlord at the heart of the estate. Secondly, situating eighteenth-century buildings within an ongoing project of 'improvement' which had started a century earlier communicated messages about the permanency and ongoing legitimacy of the Protestant ruling élite. Finally, and very much related to this, an antiquarian interest in past building types had both a personal and practical purpose in Irish country house building. Like Conolly's great hall and long gallery at Castletown, such references may have silenced any detractor tempted to impugn the settlers as upstarts. On a practical level, it was also much more economical to retain existing structures rather than building anew, particularly when those buildings could have formed an extra defensive measure if required, providing reassurance and peace of mind for the inhabitants.[85] Evidence of the potency of antiquarian interest in existing building types can be found with the improvements carried out by Sir Donat O'Brien at Leamaneh Castle, county Clare, in the years prior to his death in 1717 and the repair and refurnishing of Lohort Castle, county Cork, by the improving Perceval earls of Egmont between 1737 and 1752.[86] In this respect, seemingly anachronistic use of the 'bawn plan' may arguably have had significant personal and political currency in Ireland.

This developing 'bawn plan' could well have informed the plan of the original

Carton House, built close to the site of Castletown by James II's Catholic Lord Lieutenant in 1687, where it arguably reached its apotheosis (Plate 12). Here the service pavilions are presented on the main façade along a horizontal axis, joined to the main body of the house with curved screen walls, thus much increasing the width, impact and grandeur of the entrance front. Any pretence of a defensive purpose is all but abandoned in the decorative ironwork which encloses the vast courtyard.[87] Little scholarly investigation has been expended on the first Carton House of 1687, precisely because it seemed, on the one hand, to encompass a series of architectural features which were 'artisan mannerist' in style, yet nevertheless adopted what at Castletown was deemed to be a radical new 'Palladian' plan on the other. It was therefore very difficult to accommodate in any one architectural narrative, and challenged the primacy of Castletown as Ireland's first house built to this economic, compact plan. In appearance, however, the entrance front of Castletown owes infinitely more to the first Carton than any of Palladio's villas in its massing and the relationship between the main house and pavilions.

It is perhaps not at all fanciful to speculate that the opening of the enclosed bawns at Springhill, Shannongrove and especially Tyrconnell's Carton, each of which promoted an earlier concept of Irish 'improvement', are just as likely a source for the plan of Castletown in an ongoing but changing project of improvement as anything Pearce may have seen in Italy. In this paradigm, there is no conflict between the appearance and the seemingly anachronistic plan of the house, neither of which were designed to be read as novel or 'Palladian', but rather as economical, rational and most of all a uniquely Irish means of demonstrating how a good land steward in the unique cultural and economic circumstances of Ireland should arrange his house and, in doing so, promote Irish prosperity through financial and political independence.

Since academic interest in Castletown was first ignited by Desmond Guinness and Desmond FitzGerald in the 1960s, commentators have struggled to come to terms with its place, and indeed that of much Irish architecture of this period, in the narrative of architectural history. In concentrating upon authorship and style, these academics have arguably missed what was of most importance to those who conceived and constructed Castletown. When the eighteenth-century viewer critically assessed the value, meaning and 'Irishness' of Castletown, they did so not through a check-list of architectural features which stylistically related the building to similar projects in England or elsewhere. Instead, they sought an architecture, whatever its form might be, which would display and promote the philosophical and political conceptualisation of an ongoing, protean and uniquely Irish project of 'improvement'. Castletown's undeniable and pivotal importance in the corpus of Irish architecture, therefore, is not only to be found in the novelty of its appearance or 'style', but also in the role it had in displaying and promoting the axiomatic philosophical and political changes in Protestant self-fashioning and the conceptualisation of Irish 'improvement' which occurred in the first half of the eighteenth century. The building of a wholly new great house was the primary accomplishment, and its aesthetic then responded to a variety of motives – practical, aspirational and ideological. When taken

in this context, seemingly anachronistic references and stylistic solecisms in its plan and appearance become instead a more calculated continuity, and differences between Irish and English architecture in the first half of the eighteenth-century are substantially explained in a way which does not cast Ireland as a provincial and *retardataire* artistic province in the shadow of England. Ireland is instead cast as a kingdom in which a uniquely Irish architecture, founded upon the protean principal of 'improvement', was flourishing and helped fashion the kingdom as distinct and independent among the states of Europe.

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

BL	British Library
TCD	Trinity College Dublin

1 See Desmond Guinness, '"We Have to Save it" – Castletown and the Irish Georgian Society', in Elizabeth Mayes (ed.), *Castletown, Decorative Arts* (OPW, Trim, 2011) 46-49; Desmond Guinness, *Castletown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare: formerly the home of the Conolly family now the headquarters of the Irish Georgian Society* (Celbridge, 1971); Sarah Conolly-Carew, *The Children of Castletown House* (Dublin, 2015) 192-202; Maurice Craig, *Castletown, Co. Kildare* (Celbridge, 1969); Patrick Walsh, *Castletown, Co. Kildare* (Dublin, 2007); Patrick Walsh, *The Making of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy: the life of William Conolly 1662-1729* (Woodbridge, 2010); Patrick Walsh and A.P.W. Malcomson, *The Conolly Archive* (Dublin, 2010).

2 Walsh, *The Making of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy*, 181.

3 Desmond FitzGerald, 'New Light on Castletown, Co. Kildare', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, VII, 1, 1965, 3-9; Maurice Craig and Desmond FitzGerald, 'Castletown, Co. Kildare', *Country Life*, CXLV, no. 3760, 27th March 1969, 722-26, no. 3761, 3rd April 1969, 798-802, and no. 3762, 10th April 1969, 882-85; Edward McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 1991, 210-13; Giles Worsley, 'Castletown, Co. Kildare', *Country Life*, CLXXXVIII, 11, 17th March 1994, 52-57.

4 See, for instance, Desmond Guinness and Charles Lines, *Castletown* [pamphlet] (Castletown, n.d.); Maurice Craig and John Cornforth, 'Castletown, Co. Kildare', *Irish Georgian Society Yearbook*, 1969; McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', 210-13; Alistair Rowan, 'The Irishness of Irish Architecture', *Architectural History*, 40, 1997, 1-23; Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *An Insular Rococo: Architecture, Politics and Society in Ireland and England 1710-1770* (London, 1999), especially at 13; Toby Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: lives and possessions in Ireland 1641-1770* (Yale, 2004) 25-29; Eve Walsh Stoddard, *Positioning Gender and Race in (Post)colonial Plantation Space: Connecting Ireland and the Caribbean* (New York, 2012) 25-50.

5 McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', 210.

6 BL, Add MS 47029, f.126, letter of George Berkeley to Lord Perceval, Dublin, 29th July 1722; BL, Add MS 4029, ff.129-30, letter of Lord Perceval to George Berkeley, Tunbridge, 5th August 1722.

7 BL, Add MS 4029, ff.129-30, letter of Lord Perceval to George Berkeley, Tunbridge, 5th August, 1722.

8 TCD, MS 2535, ff.65-66, letter of William King to Edward Southwell, Dublin, 21st January 1718.

9 Edward McParland, *Public Architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* (Yale, 2001); McParland, 'Eclecticism:

The Provincial's Advantage', 210-13; Worsley, 'Castletown, Co. Kildare', 52-57; Rowan, 'The Irishness of Irish Architecture', 13-14; Mowl and Earnshaw, *An Insular Rococo*, 126-146.

[10] See, for instance, Barbara Arciszewska, 'A Villa Fit for a King: The Role of Palladian Architecture in the Ascendancy of the House of Hanover under George I', *Revue d'Art Canadienne*, 19, nos 1-2, 1992, 41-58; Barbara Arciszewska, *The Hanoverian Court and the Triumph of Palladio: the Palladian revival in Hanover and England c.1700* (Warsaw, 2002); Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (eds), *Articulating British Classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (London, 2004); Barbara Arciszewska, *Classicism and Modernity: architectural thought in eighteenth-century Britain* (Warsaw, 2010); Peter Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance: culture, language, architecture* (Budapest, 2016); Carole Fry, 'The Dissemination of Neo-Palladian Architecture in England', doctoral thesis, University of Bristol, 2006.

[11] Peter Burke, Hybrid Renaissance, 53-76.

[12] Alistair Rowan, 'The Irishness of Irish Architecture', 14-16.

[13] See, for instance, Jacqueline Genet (ed.), *The Big House in Ireland: reality and representation* (Dingle, 1991); Malcolm Kelsall, *Literary Representations of the Irish Country House* (London 2003); Daniel Maudlin, 'Early Colonial Architecture', in G.A. Bremner (ed.), *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire* (Oxford, 2016) 19-50: 43-45; Arthur Parkinson, Mark Scott and Declan Redmond, 'Negotiating Postcolonial Legacies: shifting conservation narratives and residual colonial build heritage in Ireland', *Town Planning Review*, 86, no. 2, 2015, 203-28; Terence Dooley, 'The Destruction of the Country House in Ireland, 1879-1973', in James Raven (ed.), *Lost Mansions: essays on the destruction of the country house* (London, 2015) 44-62; Stoddard, *Positioning Gender and Race in (Post)colonial Plantation Space*, 25-50.

[14] Ciaran Brady and Jane Ohlmeyer, 'Making Good: new perspectives on the English in modern Ireland', in *idem* (eds), *British Interventions in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2004) 1-27; Toby Barnard, 'Interests in Ireland: the "Fanatic Zeal and Irregular Ambition" of Richard Lawrence', in Brady and Ohlmeyer, *British Interventions in Early Modern Ireland*, 299-314; Toby Barnard, *Improving Ireland? Projectors, Prophets and Profiteers, 1641-1786* (Dublin, 2008); Alan Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement* (Yale, 2008); Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: the culture of seventeenth-century politics* (Cambridge, 2000); Paul Slack, *The Invention of Improvement: information and material progress in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 2014).

[15] Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement*, 12-13.

[16] Barnard, *Improving Ireland?*, 12-14

[17] Slack, *The Invention of Improvement*, 1.

[18] *ibid*., 8-9.

[19] Richard Lawrence, *The interest of Ireland in its trade and wealth stated* (Dublin, 1682); Robert Molesworth, *The True Way to Render Ireland Happy & Secure: OR A Discourse wherein it is shewn that 'tis the interest of England and Ireland to Encourage Foreign Protestants to Plant in Ireland* (Dublin, 1697).

[20] Samuel Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland as to their Conduct for the Service of their Country* (Dublin, 1738), see in particular vii; A.P.W. Malcomson, 'Absenteeism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Irish Economic and Social History*, I, no. 1, 1974, 15-35.

[21] *ibid*., 3.

[22] *ibid*.

[23] *ibid*., 10.

[24] Barnard, 'Interests in Ireland', 302.
[25] Anon., *The Present State of Ireland together with some Remarques upon the Ancient State thereof. Likewise a Description of the Chief Towns. With a Map of the Kingdome* (London, 1673) 214.
[26] *ibid*., 276.
[27] John Dunton, *Teague Land or A Merry Ramble to the Wild Irish 1698* (Dublin, 2003) 122.
[28] Anon., *The Present State of Ireland*, 205-06.
[29] Barnard, 'Interests in Ireland', 299.
[30] *ibid*., 299-306.
[31] Richard Lawrence, *The Interest of England in the Irish Transplantation* (London, 1655); Richard Lawrence, *England's Great Interest in the Well Planting of Ireland* (Dublin, 1656).
[32] Richard Lawrence, *The Interest of Ireland in its Trade and Wealth Stated* (Dublin, 1682) 37-39.
[33] Barnard, 'Interests in Ireland', 304.
[34] Francis G. James, 'Irish Colonial Trade in the Eighteenth Century', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 20, no. 4, October 1963, 574-84; Patrick Kelly, 'The Irish Woollen Export Prohibition Act of 1699: Kearney Revisited', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 7, no. 1, 1980, 22-44: 24-26.
[35] William Molyneux, *The Case of Ireland being Bound by Act of Parliament in England Stated by William Mollyneux of Dublin Esq*. (London, 1770) 10-13.
[36] *ibid*.
[37] *ibid*., 14.
[38] *ibid*.
[39] *ibid*., 29.
[40] Robert, Viscount Molesworth, *An Account of Denmark as it was in the Year 1692* (London, 1692) preface.
[41] BL, Add MS 47027, f.16, letter of George Berkeley to Sir John Perceval, London, 26th January 1713.
[42] Christ Church College Oxford, Wake Papers, XIV, no. 214, letter of William King, 8th June 1723.
[43] TCD, MS 2533/273, letter of William King to Robert Molesworth, August 1716. See also Joseph Richardson, 'Archbishop William King (1650-1729): Church Tory and State Whig?', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá Chultúr*, 15, 2000, 54-76.
[44] National Library of Ireland, Microfilm p.3753, letter of Robert, Viscount Molesworth to John Molesworth, London, 20th October 1722.
[45] TCD, MS 2533, f.110, letter of William King to Mr Standhope, Dublin, 1st November, 1715.
[46] Walsh, *The Making of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy*, 169-70.
[47] See BL, Add MS 47027, ff.16-282, the correspondence of George Berkeley and Sir John Perceval; McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', 211.
[48] See John Gerald Simms, *Colonial Nationalism 1698-1776: Molyneux's The State of Ireland – Stated* (Dublin, 1976) 24-36.
[49] BL, Add MS 47029, f.126, letter of George Berkeley to John, Viscount Perceval, Dublin, 29th July 1722.
[50] See Irish Architectural Archive, 2008/44/92, Edward McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the New Junta for Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', lecture given at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, October 1991; Edward McParland, 'Sir Thomas Hewett and the New Junta for Architecture', in Giles Worsley (ed.), *The Role of the Amateur Architect* (London, 1994) 21-26; Edward McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the New Junta for Architecture', in Toby Barnard and Jane Clark (eds), *Lord Burlington, Architecture, Art and Life* (London, 1995) 151-66.
[51] Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, 'A Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design Written from Italy on the Occasion of the Judgment of Hercules to My Lord Somers, Naples, March 6 1712', in Anthony,

Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 3 vols (London, 1732, Bodleian Library copy) III, 95-410. Though penned in 1712, it has been suggested that the letter was not published before 1732 after Conolly's death. However, given that many of those who surrounded Conolly had close personal connections to Shaftesbury, it seems highly likely that he was aware of its content when he commenced plans for Castletown in 1719. See Kerry Downes, 'The Publication of Shaftesbury's "Letter Concerning Design"', *Architectural History*, 27, 1984, 519-23; Alexander Echlin and William Kelley, 'A "Shaftesburian Agenda"? Lord Burlington, Lord Shaftesbury and the intellectual origins of English Palladianism', *Architectural History*, 59, January 2016, 221-52: 225.

52 Letter from Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury to Robert Molesworth, Beachworth, 12th January 1708, in John Toland (ed.), *Letters from the Right Honourable the Late Earl of Shaftesbury to Robert Molesworth Esq. Now the Lord Viscount of that Name* (London, 1721) 25-28: 26.

53 Shaftesbury, 'A Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design', 398.

54 *ibid*., 400.

55 *ibid*., 401-02.

56 John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (Yale, 1993) 293-309. Catherine Arbuthnott, 'Kent's Patrons', in S. Weber (ed.), *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* (Yale, 2013) 63-70.

57 Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 293-309. See also John Wilton-Ely, *Apollo of the Arts: Lord Burlington and his circle* (Nottingham, 1973) 7; Dana Arnold, 'It's a Wonderful Life', in *idem* (ed.), *Belov'd by Evr'y Muse: Richard Boyle 3rd Earl of Burlington and 4th Earl of Cork (1694-1753),* (London, 1994) 5-14: 5; Timothy Mowl, *William Kent: Architect, Designer, Opportunist* (London, 2006).

58 Vaughan Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders* (London, 2007) 33. See Dana Arnold, *Architectural Aesthetics: interpreting Classical antiquity in the eighteenth century* (London, 2013).

59 Shaftesbury, 'A Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design, 402.

60 Rowan, 'The "Irishness" of Irish Architecture', 14-15.

61 Shaftesbury, 'A Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design, 404-05.

62 Echlin and Kelley, 'A Shaftesburian Agenda', 221-52.

63 *ibid*., 233.

64 Letter of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury to Robert Molesworth, Beachworth, 12th January 1708, in John Toland (ed.), *Letters from the Right Honourable the Late Earl of Shaftesbury to Robert Molesworth Esq. Now the Lord Viscount of that Name* (London, W. Wilkins, 1721) 25-28: 26, wherein Shaftesbury exclaims that Molesworth had 'long had [his] Heart, even before [he] knew [him] personally' as a result of his admiration of The State of Denmark.

65 See McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the New Junta for Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Ireland'; McParland, 'Sir Thomas Hewett and the New Junta for Architecture'; McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the New Junta for Architecture', 151-166. This argument is also made by Echlin and Kelley, 'A Shaftesburian Agenda', 228-33.

66 McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', 210.

67 Shaftesbury, 'A Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design, 400.

68 See, for instance, Charles Topham Bowden, *A Tour through Ireland* (Dublin, 1791) 68, where Castletown is described as 'the Seat, or rather Palace, of the Rt. Hon. Mr Conolly', and, more patently, the letter of Alessandro Galilei to Robert, Viscount Molesworth of 1719 wherein he states that he is working on '*i desegni d'un Palazzo di Villa p.il My Lord Governatore di quell regno*'. See Ilaria Toesca, 'Alessandro Galilei in Inghilterra', in Mario Praz (ed.), *English Miscellany*, 30 vols (Rome, 1952) III, 213.

[69] See, in particular, McParland, 'Eclecticism: The Provincial's Advantage', 210-213; Rowan, 'The 'Irishness' of Irish Architecture', 14-16; Stoddard, *Positioning Gender and Race in (Post)colonial Plantation Space*, 25-50.

[70] David Cast, 'Seeing Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 43, no. 4, December 1984, 310-27: 321-22; Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire, *Design and Plan in the Country House: from castle donjons to Palladian boxes* (Yale, 2008) 148.

[71] Philip Luckombe, *A Tour through Ireland* (London, 1783) 42. For contemporary criticisms of Conolly's lowly origins, see Letter from Sir John St. Leger, Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, to Lord Chief Justice Parker, Dublin, 21st February 1717, BL, Add MS 750 and 244 (Stowe Papers); Jonathan Swift, 'A Short Character of His Excellency Thomas Earl of Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with an Account of some smaller facts during his Government which will not be put into the Articles of Impeachment', in Jonathan Swift, *The Works of Jonathan Swift D.D., Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin*, IV (Edinburgh, 1824) 3-29: 28; Letter of Jonathan Swift to John Gay and the Duchess of Queensbury, Powerscourt, 28 August 1731, in F. Elrington Ball (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.,* IV (London, 1913) 258; John Trenchard, 'A Letter from a Soldier to the Commons of England Occasioned by an Address now carrying on by the Protestants in Ireland in order to take away the Fund Appropriated for the Payment of the Army', in *A Collection of State Tracts Publish'd during the Reign of King William III*, II (London, 1706) 773-87: 785-86.

[72] Roland Fréart, *Parallel of the Antient Architecture with the Modern* (trans. John Evelyn), (London, 1664) 62-65.

[73] See Echlin and Kelley, 'A Shaftesburian Agenda', 229-33.

[74] Letter of George Berkeley to Lord Perceval, Rome, 28th July 1718, transcribed in Benjamin Rand (ed.), *Berkeley and Percival: The Correspondence of George Berkeley afterwards Bishop of Cloyne and Sir John Percival afterwards Earl of Egmont* (Cambridge, 1914) 171-73: 172. See Echlin and Kelley, 'A Shaftesburian Agenda', 228-32.

[75] John Loveday, *Diary of a Tour in 1732 through parts of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland* (London, 1890) 49-50.

[76] *ibid*., 50.

[77] Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: family portraiture in 18th-century England* (Yale, 2006) 166.

[78] Guinness and Lines, *Castletown*, 4.

[79] *ibid*.

[80] RIBA Library, cat. no. 2385#, Andrea Palladio, *I Quatro Libri dell'Architettura di Andrea Palladio* (Venice, 1601) annotated by Edward Lovett Pearce during his tour of Italy 1723-24.

[81] Maurice Craig, *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size* (Dublin, 2006) 62.

[82] BL, Add MS 46948, ff.16b-17.

[83] *ibid*., f.17.

[84] Finola O'Kane, *Landscape Design in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: mixing foreign trees with the natives* (Cork, 2004) 10-45.

[85] Barnard, *Improving Ireland,* 123-26.

[86] Finola O'Kane, 'Leamaneh and Dromoland: the O'Brien ambition, Part I: "Improvements ... not so Inconsiderable": the O'Briens' Baroque landscape at Leamaneh Castle, county Clare', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, VII, 2004, 64-79; Barnard, *Improving Ireland*, 125-42.

[87] Patricia McCarthy, *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland* (London, 2016) 12-14.

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