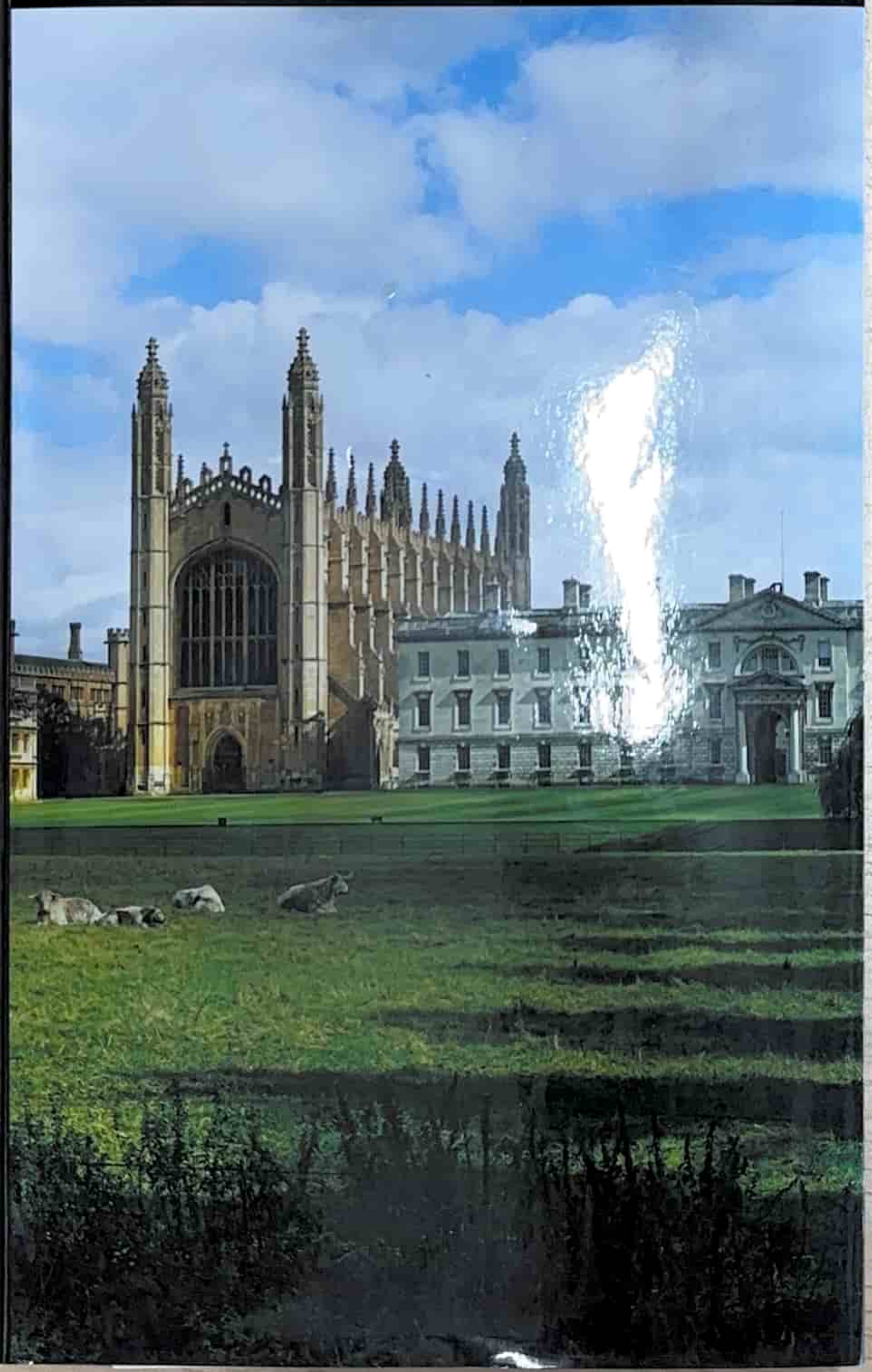
THE BUILDINGS OF ENGLAND

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner



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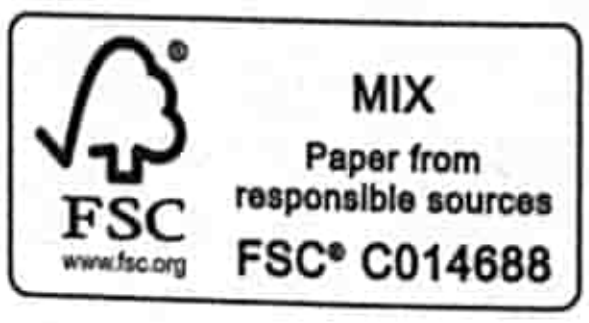


which Colin St John Wilson added to the Architecture Department in 1957–9.

Wilson was a lecturer within the department, appointed by *Professor (Sir) Leslie Martin*, previously the chief architect of the London County Council.* Arriving in 1956, Martin transformed the department into an internationally famous centre of research and design. Cambridge was thus in the forefront of a national movement by which architectural training was taken over by higher education. Martin also nurtured junior talents by means of collaboration, and advised on the choice of architect for very many commissions in Cambridge and beyond. His own teaching fostered a geometrically rigorous architecture of rough brick walls and stepped or terraced sections.

There was a great deal of work to go round, especially for the five NEW COLLEGES. Some of these were absolutely new, others provided homes for existing foundations, such as Fitzwilliam and New Hall. Like the New Universities of the period, they reflected a national policy of expanding higher education (as recommended by the Robbins Report, adopted in 1963), and a broader optimism concerning innovation and social change. Yet each is strikingly different from the others, according to the various programmes, sites and personalities involved.

The largest new college is Churchill (1959–67), conceived in homage of Sir Winston, with a bias to science and engineering. It was built after a competition that crystallized many new architectural concepts among the rising Modernist generation in Britain. The winning scheme by *Richard Sheppard, Robson & Partners* breaks down the convention of residential courts into an informal sequence of small spaces interlinked by covered walks, and bisected by a main axis containing the hall – the last Cambridge hall big enough for the whole college to sit down together – and other shared facilities. The architectural language, clearly distinguishing in its use of brick, pre-cast and board-marked concrete between infill, cladding and framing, is more exacting than the plan. At *Chamberlin, Powell & Bon's* New Hall (for women; now Murray Edwards College), 1962–6, pale brick infill is virtually subordinate to pale concrete framing, while at *Sir Denys Lasdun's* Fitzwilliam College, 1961–7, the residential parts are brick-walled with upright window slots randomly arranged. Both colleges make expressive use of arched or domed concrete roofs, more convincingly at New Hall than at Fitzwilliam. Neither college was completed as planned, but New Hall at least has all its major elements in place. Less heroic and more intimate in scale is *Ralph Erskine's* Clare Hall, 1966–9, which also went furthest in its dismissal of Cambridge traditions: no chapel, no chiaroscuro library, and unsegregated dining for Fellows and postgraduate students. The fabric of this academic village is compact and intricate, its architectural language comparable to Erskine's public housing in Sweden, as befitted a college designed for

* Wilson moved on to head the Department of Architecture in 1959–60, after the untimely death of *Hill Howell*.

In front of the library to the W, SCULPTURE by *Henry Moore*, Falling Warrior (1956–7). Too small (in scale, not conception) to provide the missing central focus. The shiny installation on the lawn is DNA Double Helix by *Charles Jencks*, 2005.

Finally the additions N and S of the main court. To the S is THIRKILL COURT, of 1953–5 by *Scott*, understandably in the same style as his Memorial Court, but smaller. To the N is *van Heyningen & Haward*'s LERNER COURT, 2005–9. Two parts: the GILLESPIE CENTRE (for conferences) on the W side, curt brown brick with square loggia openings, and a mostly residential N range, whose three storeys rise taller than Scott's. The upper storeys are faced in silvery cedar boarding, which helps to manage the extra bulk. The N side has a sawtooth profile of little triangular oriels. STATUE of Confucius, E, by *Wu Weishan*. The architects have also made new passages through the 1930s ranges.

For THE COLONY *see* Chesterton Lane, p. 319; for CLARE COURT *see* Newnham Road, p. 334.

CLARE HALL

Herschel Road

Founded from Clare College in 1965, initially for eighty postgraduate students and forty Fellows, half of whom would be visitors. The concept was radical both socially and academically: shared common rooms and other social spaces, mixed sexes, fully integrated family housing, and a renunciation of collegiate pomp – no dais in hall here. The architect chosen was the British-born *Ralph Erskine* of Sweden. Erskine had connections with Team X, the international alliance of Modernists who rejected the monument-making of Corbusier's generation in favour of a more nuanced concern for human needs; his own method was radical too for its active participation with clients in the process of design. His BUILDINGS of 1966–9 (in conjunction with *Twist & Whitley*) are of brick with much red-stained timbering, intricately planned and linked by little courtyards, like a chunk of some labyrinthine pedestrian city (Pevsner's 'curious hill-villagey compound'). Yet the plan is perfectly clear in its three-fold division, E to W, into zones comprising communal rooms, houses and flats. The President's house spans the middle of the Herschel Road front, part of which is raised over a car-park deck. From here the buildings slope or step down until partly of one floor only, with surprising changes of level and plenty of monopitch roofs. A narrow cross-passage runs E–W to link the three zones. In the architecture there is both roughness and lightness, with suggestions of improvisation and of fantasy: notably the stepped cantilevered balconies facing Family Walk (between the wedge-like block of flats and the courtyard-centred houses), meant to

foster sociability, and the unmissably boxy, monsoon-sized rainwater trunks. Erskine and his Arkitektkontor practice would shortly develop similar ideas and motifs at the Byker Estate on Tyneside, on a heroic scale.

The common rooms face E across SCHOLARS' GARDEN, to ELMSIDE (No. 49 Grange Road). A fine house of 1885 by *E. S. Prior*, tile-hung above the almost continuous ground-floor windows on the garden side. Small S additions for the LIBRARY. To the S the ANTHONY LOW BUILDING, a big garden pavilion of 2000 by *Nicholas Ray Associates*. One corner cut away for the entrance, leaving a slim pier at the angle.

From the 1980s the college expanded W around GARDEN COURT, the garden of another retained late C19 house. Next door to this on Herschel Road, the MICHAEL STOKER BUILDING of 1985–7 by *Hughes & Bicknell*, in consultation with *Erskine*. It slopes down from E to W, answering Erskine's adjacent N–S incline. On the road side the staircase, strikingly projected outwards, climbs the gradient. At the low end a dining room angled diagonally towards the garden, with *Nicholas Ray Associates*' BRIAN PIPPARD BUILDING of 1997–8 on its far side. Another skewed forebuilding here, and a glass-walled entrance and skewed sharp-edged skylight, in an otherwise Erskinian wedge of red brick. SCULPTURE: on Herschel Road, Flame, 2003 by *Helaine Blumenfeld*.

WEST COURT is a large auxiliary site 300 yds W along Herschel Road. Its kernel is Lord Rothschild's bland white house of 1963 (No. 11). To the W this makes a new court with *Nicholas Ray Associates*' additions of 1999–2000 round two and a half sides. Grey metal sheeting as well as white-painted brick here. To the NE, *Cowper Griffith*'s SALJE BUILDING of 2009–10. More assertive, as if in lieu of a gatehouse, with small horizontal wooden slats as an extra motif. Further construction is planned.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE

Trumpington Street

Corpus Christi College was established in 1352. Uniquely among the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, its founders were two town guilds: the guilds of Corpus Christi and St Mary. Besides its academic functions, the college was to pray for the guildsmen's souls, chantry-fashion. (Relations between medieval town and gown were not always so harmonious.) The chief points of interest now are the C14 Old Court and *Wilkins*'s great augmentation of the college of 1823–7, S of Old Court and facing Trumpington Street.

OLD COURT was built quickly and finished by 1377. The first completed college court at Cambridge, it gives to this day the

& Cole, one of whose partners had worked on Cripps Court. On the W side an open loggia, on the N side squash courts etc., on the S side the Fitzpatrick Hall. Their big leaded roofs are obvious progeny of the main hall, the timber lining of the FITZPATRICK HALL also. This is equipped for varied uses, with retractable seating and a stage that can be screened off. On the long sides superimposed corridors with openwork balustrades.

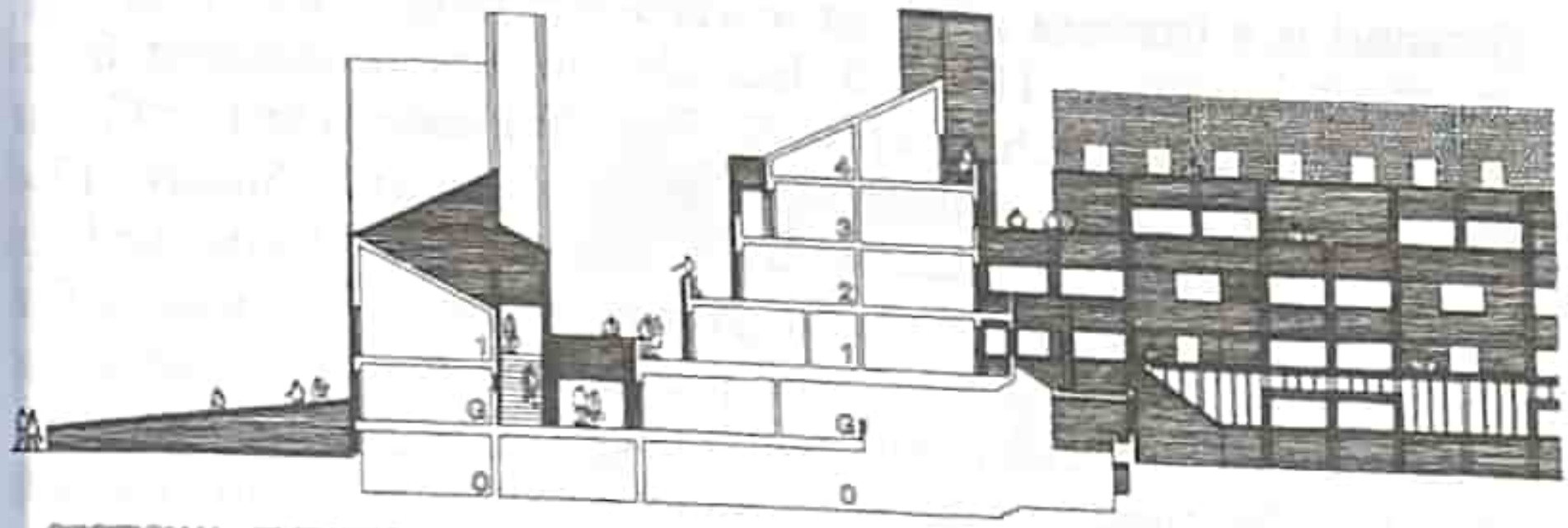
ROBINSON COLLEGE

Grange Road

The newest Cambridge college, founded by the entrepreneur Sir David Robinson and built in 1977–80 all in one go. It was for both men and women from the start, and unlike the Sixties foundations it includes a full complement of undergraduates. The architects were *Gillespie, Kidd & Coia*, i.e. *Isi Metzstein* with *Andy Macmillan*, leading Glaswegian Modernists, whose entrée to collegiate architecture had come at Wadham, Oxford, a few years before. *Yorke Rosenberg Mardall* were executive architects.

The competition for the 12½-acre site of mature gardens and big houses was held in 1974. Several of the projects posited low-rise buildings spreading among the trees, but the victors chose to conserve the gardens by piling everything into a single giant
123 structure, placed along the E side and angled round the S corner. Within this red-brick-faced citadel are all the showpieces of a traditional college – gatehouse, hall, chapel, library – but each is transformed by its placing or swallowing within the whole. It is the climax of the architects' exploration of deep, complex plans and interlocking sections (cf. especially their Cardross seminary, Argyll). The solutions adopted or self-imposed do not always come off, nor was the vision of an entire academic community fully achieved, for Robinson lacks the graduate and Fellows' housing intended to run W and then S from the N end. Yet the building offers an intensity of architectural experience and a heightened sense of communal life to match anything in C20 Cambridge. Communal rather than collegiate, perhaps: castle ward or even ocean liner seem closer than the University's tradition of sequential courts. But local custom is honoured in the end, as the buildings open up towards the wilder gardens beyond.

The concept of the plan is as follows. A green margin with trees separates the building from the road, allowing it to sink by a half-storey into the ground. Accommodation is arranged in two parallel L-shaped ranges, of which the Grange Road side contains mostly communal spaces and offices, the taller garden side and the S return to Herschel Road mostly individual rooms. Between these ranges is a raised and paved circulation deck, like an internal street with court-like widenings at the SE



Robinson College, partial elevation and section.
Drawing, *c.* 1974

entrance and the N end. This sits above a concealed service basement and car park – the latter essential for the vacation conference trade. The facing throughout is rough red Swanage brick, with some tile-hanging in the upper residential parts, and tiled pitched roofs – a rather Neo-vernacular effect. Down-pipes are hidden in triangular brick projections, arranged in insistent rhythms especially along the residential sections (284 study bedrooms, plus some larger sets). These are of stepped section, starting one level up from the inner street, and terra-cing down again as an 'inhabited wall' in the greater descent towards the gardens. As far as possible the circulation in these parts is by walkways rather than corridors, echoing the so-called streets in the sky of mid-C20 social housing, and bring-ing constant animation in term-time.

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A tour can start at the GATEHOUSE at the SE angle. With its blunt half-octagonal end and flagpole, and with its entrance void approached by a broad ramp, this stirs memories of castle approaches: perhaps especially of Lindisfarne Castle in Nor-thumberland as remodelled by Lutyens. Here already is that evocative engagement with non-Modernist prototypes and archetypes which makes Robinson so intriguing, placed as it is at the threshold of the Eighties' turn back to historical forms. To the l. is the LIBRARY, with a giant boxed-out window stepping asymmetrically upwards, three upper windows all stepping in at the bottom, and three slim upright windows projecting beyond the l. angle. All share the same big black glazing grid. The presid-ing spirit here is Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the Glasgow School of Art – as also inside, a tall space with timber book stacks marvellously interlocking with three levels of reading spaces. To the r. of the gatehouse the Grange Road front, made not much less forbidding by its black Mackintoshy trellises applied at intervals (an afterthought to the first design). Two long pentise-like window projections here, serving chapel gallery and offices, with a break in the buildings midway. At the N end a narrow entrance bridge, next to a dank void for the Bin Brook.

Inside the gateway there is to the l. another big stepped window projection to the library, answered on the r. by a big irregular brick projection of which the upper part is the inverted and irregularly stepped window of the CHAPEL. Its portal

beyond is a bravura affair of inward-stepping brickwork, suggestive of interwar Holland, but also in line of descent from the architects' church of St Bride, East Kilbride (1963).* Giant DOOR with bronze embellishment by *Jacqueline Steiger*. The stone-lined interior lacks an easily apprehended form, and its usual entry through the organ gallery at the N end makes for an uncertain approach to – or past – the window and apse (stairs inserted in 2001 now reach the long W gallery directly). But it is the huge STAINED GLASS by *John Piper* with *Patrick Reyntiens*, partly screened by an internal wall, that will be remembered. Its subject is the sun as Glory of God, shining through tumbling foliage. By the same the window in the N chapel, Virgin and Child, after a French Romanesque C12 tympanum. Roughly brushed outlines, intense colours. – Ceramic SCULPTURE, a Deposition, designed by *Piper*. Maker *Geoffrey Eastop*. – Bronze GATE by *J. Steiger*. Foliage plaited through a grid. – Other spaces include a large AUDITORIUM partly within the angle, and the disappointing double-height HALL within the N side, showing towards the garden as big canted or stepped projections respectively. The UMNEY THEATRE was made in 1989 by *Cambridge Design Architects* using part of the service yard under the N end. The bronze SCULPTURE within the main gateway is by *Ben Barre*, 2008.

The lush GARDEN was reshaped by *J. S. Bodfan Gruffydd* from separate house gardens, adding a causeway and bridge over the brook. Certain older houses to the W now go with the college: THORNEYCREEK HOUSE, Old English of 1895, and No. 2 Sylvester Road, 1939 by *Hughes & Bicknell*, Modernist, in light brick. Built for two history professors, Eileen Power and Michael Postan. Also GRADUATE HOUSES of *c.* 1995 (*Thurlow, Carnell & Thornburrow*) and 2007–8 (two, by *IID*), not of special interest.

ST CATHARINE'S COLLEGE

Trumpington Street and Queens' Lane

in charge *John Baker*). This is a long snaky brown-brick range of cant-ended oblongs, irregularly linked in a plan like a giant question mark with its tail to the S. For access there are slat-railed gangways stretching along the inner side. The copper-clad upper storey was added by the architects in 1997–8, together with an extra stack of rooms to the N. This heightening makes the inner court rather dark. At the tip of the tail an octagonal ASSEMBLY ROOM of 1979–81.

Next, in close succession, Clare Hall (including the Grange Road houses) and Robinson College on the W side (pp. 77, 184), King's College School and the University Library, E side (pp. 303, 268). The grey brick complex N of the last is the University's REAL TENNIS CLUB, 1866 by *Fawcett*, extended in 1890 by *Marshall & Vickers*'s big cross-block with its Fair Isle brick patterns.

After that, for some way, all belongs to TRINITY COLLEGE. *David Roberts & Geoffrey Clarke* were appointed in 1969 for the Burrell's Field site, producing two large residential blocks, ADRIAN HOUSE and BUTLER HOUSE, in 1978–9. The placing at forty-five degrees responds to No. 58, an outsized house of *c.* 1908 with a cranked rear wing. Each block is planned as three major squares in line, linked by small canted projections, under separate pavilion roofs. Brown brick, turning to dark-stained timber construction for the Fellows' flats on the fourth storey. It is intelligent and humane, as one would expect – but the real excitement is what followed in 1991–5 from *MacCormac Jamieson Prichard*, the BURRELL'S FIELD development to the E and NE.* The challenge to the architects was to relate the enlargement to the existing blocks, to an existing Edwardian house to the NE, and to the wider setting of mature trees along the Bin Brook. The solution – and it is a brilliant one, as much in its detailed working-out as in the general concept – was to make a raised terrace on the diagonal axis suggested by Roberts & Clarke, but at a slightly lower level, along which the accommodation is placed in formal but richly varied geometrical patterns. This formality is introduced at the entrance N of No. 58, with its gatepiers between twin lodges. Here one must choose between descending l. or r. past Butler House. The basic unit is a square tower of light brown brick and unobtrusive stone detail, corresponding with the 1970s height, and with triangular glazed bays coming out oriel-wise on three sides, as if intersecting diagonally with a sharp glass cube. On the fourth side is the stair-tower, projecting a little further before its diagonal point, and carried up higher to a top bedroom that breaks the roof-line. Six of these blocks are grouped around Butler House, three to each side, not quite symmetrically, with low ranges (each for a Fellow's flat) linking each of the two pairs S of the walk. The second cluster stands beyond, wholly symmetrical this time: a tight grouping of two tall and two shorter blocks around a court, where the axis switches through

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*For which *Patrick Hodgkinson*'s house for Lord Adrian, 1963–4, was demolished.

GROUNDS. *Capability Brown* was commissioned to landscape these in 1756. He cleared what remained of the old village, and sank new and existing roads to remove traffic from view of the Hall. Brown's serpentine LAKE survives, with a sham BRIDGE at the S end. Next to the bridge, a super-Picturesque LODGE of 1908–9, by *Oliver*.

MADINGLEY MANOR, W of High Street. Timber-framed, plastered and thatched. A medieval hall, with inserted floor, between two large jettied cross-wings. High Street has a friendly bungalow TERRACE of 1967 by *Tayler & Green*, who did much of this kind in Norfolk. On Cambridge Road, quirkily detailed SCHOOL, 1844, and former RECTORY, 1877–8 by *Ewan Christian*; drab.

AMERICAN CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL, ¾ m. ESE. The only 114
American military cemetery in the United Kingdom, of 1952–6 by *Perry, Shaw & Hepburn, Kehoe & Dean* of Boston, with *Olmsted Bros*, landscape architects. Entry is by the SW corner, with an elementally plain LODGE of Portland stone. (A balancing building by *Bland, Brown & Cole* is proposed; also a VISITOR CENTRE to the SW; 2012–13.) Ahead is a giant flagpole, the focus of 3,812 burials arranged in concentric quadrants, each marked with a marble cross or Star of David. On axis with the flagpole is a long formal pool placed E–W, screened to the S by a stone WALL carved with the names of 5,127 missing. The wall is animated by four heroic statues designed by *Wheeler Williams* of New York, and is shaded by trees planted informally along the road side. Terminating the pool is the MEMORIAL BUILDING, classically inspired but stripped quite bare. Its N side opens with glazed slots of full height between five big stone pylons. The S side is windowless, and displays a giant relief map showing America's wartime bases in the British Isles (carver *David Kindersley*). The mission to instruct continues on the doors with their bronze models of tanks etc., and with the stone mural map of operations inside. But the E end is screened off as a chapel, with a bold mosaic by *Francis Scott Bradford* of Connecticut representing the Resurrection and Last Judgment. This continues across the ceiling, where angels escort aircraft representing the souls of lost airmen. Mostly blues and gold, the forms Expressionist; the mood not far from the ecumenical transcendence of Powell and Pressburger's film *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946).

The cemetery is undeniably a moving place to visit, and striking too for the differences from the Commonwealth War Graves sites by Lutyens, Reginald Blomfield *et al.* of thirty years before: at once more didactic, and more explicitly religious.

Across from the cemetery gates, COTON COURT, a *Baillie Scott* house of *c.* 1905 (altered). E of the cemetery, a preserved WINDMILL, reconstructed here in 1934–6. Previously at Ellington, where it was rebuilt *c.* 1840, and before that at Easton (both Hunts.). In its C19 form it is a composite mill, with a brick base supporting rollers which take some of the weight of the post mill above. Oldest timber parts of *c.* 1560–70.