JOHN H. ASTINGTON

The site of the show for Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich

The location of the short undated entertainment for Elizabeth I, transcribed by C.E. McGee in REEDN 1980:2, 1-8, can be precisely specified. 'The Turret, entering into the pke at grenewich' was the gatehouse that spanned the Deptford-Woolwich road on the southern side of the palace gardens; it was demolished in 1616 to make way for the Queen's House, designed by Inigo Jones, which still stands on the site. Jones' design preserves the curious plan of a building spanning a road; the disadvantages of noise and of some lack of privacy were clearly felt to be outweighed by the special situation between garden and park. The choice of this site for the elegant classical house may also reflect on its importance in the earlier history of the palace.

Antony Van Den Wyngaerde depicts the gatehouse in both his views of Greenwich palace, drawn in 1558. It is seen most clearly in the sketch drawn from the south, done from the Observatory hill, in which it occupies the centre of the panoramic view, almost directly below the massive central tower which dominates the palace buildings. What Wyngaerde shows is not exactly what one might expect from the word 'Turret': it is not a castellated building, as were the large towers to the west of the tiltyard, and it does not noticeably give the impression of any kind of fortification. The only explanation of its title which might be offered is simply that it projected above the otherwise unbroken line of the garden wall. From the south it appears to be a two-storey house built in two bays, with twin roofs and gables. The lower storey of the western bay contains a large arched gateway; the heavy wooden gates are closed. From the gate a path on which walking figures are depicted rises up the slope towards the viewpoint; though Wyngaerde shows two other paths in the park, one to the east and another to the west, this was the only route directly from the palace, one that probably could be used only by members of the court.

On either side of the southern front of the gatehouse extend fairly high walls, built of brick, behind which lies the road, bounded on the northern side by another...
wall. The two bays of the gatehouse which face the viewer spanned the road, and therefore would be arched in the fashion of an entry-way to an inn-yard to allow wagons and carts to pass through. I will have more to say about the likely proportions of this part of the building below, but that the arched passage under the house was narrower than the full width between the walls can be seen by the presence of windows in the lower storey of the eastern bay: a room, probably for the porter who tended the gate, lay behind them.

On the northern side of the roadway, and therefore lying within the palace grounds, can be seen the remaining parts of the building: two further bays running parallel with the road, the one apparently somewhat narrower, fronting the roadway, with a lower roof, and behind that a bay which corresponds in length to the width of the southern front of the building, with a higher roof. When Wyngaerde drew the palace from the north, from an imaginary bird's-eye viewpoint above the far bank of the river, it is these northern parts of the gatehouse which he depicts: they look like a pair of connected barns. Any resemblance to a 'Turret' from the garden side of the building seems even more fanciful.

The plan of the whole gatehouse block was rectangular, virtually flush with the park wall on the southern side, as it appears from Wyngaerde, and projecting into the garden on the north. On the western side of the rectangle projected the bay which ran alongside the roadway. It was probably built of brick, as so much of Greenwich was, and its style offers no guide to its age. To the workmen who demolished it in 1616 it was simply 'the olde house over the parke gate,' but I would guess that it dates at least from the early sixteenth century, and is possibly older. Some notion of its size can be arrived at by working backwards from later evidence, largely to do with the walls which it spanned. The walls Wyngaerde depicts are solid and high, and were built of red brick; they remain a feature of views of Greenwich until at least the end of the seventeenth century. Though bricklayers were paid in 1636 for 'bringing vpp new Brickwalls ... on each side the newe buildings in the pke' it is evident from a view of some years earlier that the Tudor walls remained the basis for what extended to either side of the Queen's House. What is shown by Hollar in his view of Greenwich in about 1670 corresponds in essential proportions to Wyngaerde's view of more than a hundred years earlier.

If one compares the height of the wall against the gatehouse at the entry to the tiltyard, to the east of the park gate site, in the views of Wyngaerde and Hollar respectively, the proportion can be seen to remain the same: the walls were the same height in Tudor times as they were in the Restoration period.

Assuming, therefore, that the position and height of the walls remained substantially unchanged between 1558 and the 1630s we are immediately provided with one firm measurement, and the indication of a second. The width between the two blocks of the Queen's House is thirty feet, reduced at the point of the central bridge to twenty-five feet. The old gate house similarly spanned a road thirty feet wide, though the width of the passage would be reduced by rooms on the ground level, and by a porch for the gate into the park, on the southern side of the road. A
width of between fifteen and eighteen feet for the passageway would not have been difficult to support. The width and height of the southern front can be estimated by using the height of the walls as a guide. In later views of the Queen's House (Van Stalbemt and Van Belcamp, 1632; Hollar, 1670) the park walls appear to be about twelve feet in height, judging by their proportion to the known height of the first storey of the house: eighteen feet. If the height of the wall in Wyngaerde's sketch is used as a unit to measure the gate house, the building would appear to have been about twenty-seven feet wide on the park front, and about thirty-six feet high to the roof ridges. The large windows on the second storey, which I believe to have belonged to an important part of the building, were about six feet high; the wider western window appears to have been about four and a half feet wide, the eastern one about three feet wide. Putting these various measurements together, one might guess that the length of the entire building, south to north, may have been as much as fifty-seven feet (thirty feet for the roadway, plus two further bays about as wide as those seen on the south), and that the western block which lay alongside the road may have projected about fifteen feet from the rest of the building. The 'Turret' was the size and had something of the appearance of a reasonably large suburban detached house.

As McGee correctly speculates in a note to the text of the Greenwich entertainment, the 'Turret' was identical with the park gate from which Elizabeth watched military exercises in July, 1559. The windows on the second storey of the gatehouse would provide an excellent, sheltered viewing stand for such occasions. Nichols' accounts of these events are worth some attention in the light of what we can piece together about the gatehouse building. On 2 July the citizens of London provided a muster and military manoeuvres in the park, watched by the queen. 'At five of the clock at night the Queen came into the Gallery over the Park Gate, with the Ambassadors, Lords and Ladies, to a great number.' On 10 July there were further martial entertainments by the gentlemen pensioners and certain noblemen, and once again the gatehouse was used: 'About five in the afternoon came the Queen, with the ambassadors and divers lords and ladies, and stood over the Park Gate to see the exercise; and after the combatants ran, chasing one the other. After this the Queen came down into the Park, and took her horse.' Without the evidence of Wyngaerde's sketch we might be inclined to interpret the sense of these accounts to mean that temporary stands were erected over an existing gateway; on the contrary, the 'gallery' was an enclosed room, not an open platform, and it was 'over the Park Gate' in the same sense as was 'the olde house' in the Works account of its demolition, that is to say, it was a permanent, attached feature of the whole building. It was, I believe, a long gallery, in traditional sixteenth-century fashion, and it may have run the entire length of the building, between fifty and sixty feet, with windows at either end to view the park and the garden, and along the sides to watch the comings and goings along the road. It may also have provided a bridge whereby Elizabeth could cross the road dryshod and in privacy. In any event, if the gallery did follow this plan it could have run only along the western bay of the southern front, as can be seen from Wyngaerde's depiction of the roofs. The western
roof continues in an unbroken line until it connects at right angles with that of the northernmost bay, while the eastern roof terminates at a chimney, apparently at the point of junction with the roadside bay: the lower roof of this block can be seen behind it. The gallery perhaps opened out at the southern end, as one would expect, to provide more window space for large parties to view events in the park, although if Wyngaerde's sketch is correct it appears that there may have been a difference in the levels of the second storey floors between the eastern and western bays. The 'gallery,' I believe, lay primarily in the western bay of the gatehouse on the second storey, directly over the gate, and ran north-south over the road. The window above the gate was the Queen's viewpoint for the entertainments in 1559.

The 'Turret' was therefore something more substantial than a mere porter's lodge, and no doubt was the site of a good many more ceremonial occasions than those for which records have survived. It was not mere accident that the show of welcome was acted here: the gatehouse was a nodal point in court traffic, and Wyngaerde's sketch shows it to have provided the theatrical loci appropriate to the devices of the entertainment. In attempting to fit the text to what we see in the drawings, we would first have to know from which direction Elizabeth was approaching the gatehouse, and therefore to what she was being welcomed. In other words, was she safely returning to the palace from riding or hunting in the park, or was she leaving the palace precincts for an outing? If the former occasion were being celebrated, then we can interpret the text of the show directly in terms of what Wyngaerde shows us in his view from the south. Goodwill would appear from the gates 'of a sodayne,' stepping out on to the grass in front of the queen. The concealed choristers, 'being within the turrett,' stood behind an open second storey window, bursting into song on their cue. On the whole I think that the very few suggestions that the text gives about the context of the welcome, though they are far from definitive, make it more likely that the little show was acted in the garden, on the side of the gatehouse building that Wyngaerde has drawn only in a rudimentary way. Goodwill, after all, 'the siluan nymphes hath brought into this place,' which suggests that they have been induced to leave their natural haunts (in the park, if anywhere) to venture into the cultivated world of the garden: Wyngaerde shows it to have been very bare and sternly regimented in 1558. They would more appropriately have come across the border to welcome Elizabeth to the delights of the park, though I realise that this may be an over-ingenious explanation of what is patently a very rough and ready collection of motifs. If the show was indeed acted on the garden side of the road I think we may safely take it that the northern face of the building, though it certainly was not identical with the southern front, also had a gateway on the ground level, with windows above from which the boys could sing. Elizabeth would approach the gatehouse along the central pathway through the garden; Wyngaerde shows it to have left the palace complex near the eastern end of the Great Hall. Her progress could be carefully watched from a concealed post behind one of the second storey windows, and at exactly the right moment the cue would be relayed to Goodwill, standing ready behind the gate like an actor behind the tiring house door.
NOTES

3 Accounts of the Office of the Works, PRO, A.O. 1. 356/2487, quoted in Chettle, 98.
4 A brick-built gatehouse from the late fifteenth century may be seen at the Bishop’s Palace, Hatfield, Herts.
5 PRO, E., 351/3269. Chettle, 104.
6 The painting of Charles I and Henrietta Maria in Greenwich Park, c. 1632, by Adriaen Van Stalbemt and Jan Van Baelcamp, shows the Queen’s House as it was left, with only one storey completed, between 1618 and 1632-3. Another view of the uncompleted house can be seen in the ‘Prospect of London and the Thames from above Greenwich,’ by an unknown artist, painted between 1620 and 1630. Both paintings are reproduced in Chettle, as is the central detail of Hollar’s long engraved view of Greenwich. See above, p 13.
7 McGee, Note 2, p 7.
9 Nichols, I, 73.
10 The long gallery at Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire, is built over the gate house block, and is sixty-eight feet long by about twelve feet wide. It has a large window at the western end and originally had a matching window at the east end; it is glazed along the sides.
11 Perhaps it was used, for example, as the royal viewing stand during the entertainments for the Danish ambassador in 1586, when ‘upon a green, very spacious and large,’ bull and bear baitings were shown. See Nichols, II, 439.
12 In contrast to the decidedly sylvan appearance of the garden in 1632, as shown in Van Stalbemt’s and Van Baelcamp’s picture, the result either of neglect or of a considerable change in horticultural taste.

EILEEN WHITE

The tenements at the Common Hall gates: the mayor’s station for the Corpus Christi Play in York

When the Corpus Christi Play and the other major civic plays were performed in York, the Mayor and his fellow councillors were accustomed to gather together and enjoy a feast at the same time. Exactly where they were in the fifteenth century is not possible to show, but the sixteenth century records — and especially those after 1550 — reveal many details relevant both to the chamber where they met and its location.

The place where they met is not described in the existing records until 1538,