

**WHITEHALL:  
HISTORICAL AND  
ARCHITECTURAL NOTES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649369201

Whitehall: Historical and Architectural Notes by W. J. Loftie

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**W. J. LOFTIE**

**WHITEHALL:  
HISTORICAL AND  
ARCHITECTURAL NOTES**



# WHITEHALL

*HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL NOTES*

By

W. <sup>Master</sup>J. <sup>Arch</sup>LOFTIE

B.A.; F.S.A.



LONDON

SEELEY AND CO. LIMITED, ESSEX STREET, STRAND

NEW YORK: MACMILLAN AND CO.

1895

# WHITEHALL

## CHAPTER I

*Site of Whitehall in the Twelfth Century—Part of Westminster—Hubert de Burgh—York House—Walsley—Henzner—Henry VIII.—His Honour of Westminster—Holbein's Gate—Anne of Cleves—Funeral of Henry VIII.*

WHEN Abbot Laurence, of Westminster, looked out to the northward or north-eastward, he could see no land—as far as the wall of London—which did not belong to him and his house. This was the Abbot who first had leave to assume the mitre, and in 1163 he obtained from Pope Alexander II. the canonisation of Edward the Confessor. When worshippers wished to kneel at the new saint's shrine they had to reach Westminster as best they could. Some, especially those who lived at Charing, or further up the hill, in what was afterwards Hedge Lane, would make their way to the Thames, the best highway in those days. In some seasons, perhaps, the water-courses, which had their origin in the Tyburn, might be dry enough to let them pass, but there were as yet no regular roads and no bridges. One of these water-courses supplied the Abbey, and one ran out where Richmond Terrace is now. We have two documents from which to draw a picture of the ground which was not yet Whitehall. First, we have the evidence afforded by the geographical features of the locality; and, secondly, we have the report of a trial which took place some sixty years ago, when, no doubt, all possible charters and grants and leases and demises were cited. The trial was between the people of Westminster and the people who lived in

Richmond Terrace. Westminster claimed that the Terrace was within the boundaries of St. Margaret. The Terrace claimed that it was extra-parochial, as being on part of the site of the palace of Whitehall. The counsel for Westminster was able to show that Whitehall had been private property before the reign of Henry VIII., and that neither he nor any one else had made it extra-parochial. The verdict, therefore, was in favour of the parishioners of St. Margaret.

We may return to this interesting and instructive report, with its wealth of ancient evidence, and interrogate that much more ancient document, the face of the country. Strange to say, a great deal of that country remains as it was in, say, the reign of Henry III. The green fields and the water-courses are there, though the Abbot in 1250 could no longer look across his own land all the way from Westminster. The divided Tyburn wandered over the green expanse, untroubled with bridges. Two or three small brooks formed here a kind of delta. On the south, one of them ran through Westminster Abbey and divided Thorney Island from Tot Hill. Another ran through the district we call Whitehall. The land between was low and marshy, and even at the present day, when there has been so much levelling up, the statue of Charles I. is upon ground ten feet higher than Parliament Street. If, standing on the future site of Whitehall we looked to the westward, we saw nothing but a vast tract of low green meadow-land. If we looked to the south, we might have seen the new buildings of Westminster Abbey, unless when the Danes had been on the warpath. If we looked to the eastward, we found that the Thames washed up close to our feet.

At this early period, and down to the reign of King Edward I., there were no houses in sight, except those which clustered about the Abbey, those which constituted the village of Charing, and in the far distance the grim walls, the red-tiled roofs, and the church towers of the City. London was more plainly visible than it is now, and on account of a curious bend in the course of the Thames, was nearly as visible from Westminster. By the thirteenth century a great change had come over all the district. The Thames was better confined within its proper limits; some measure of embanking

had been carried out, and a great many alterations in City life, in Church arrangements, and in the King's policy have been detailed in the histories of London. We need not go far into them here. Before 1200, all the land between the Abbot and London belonged to him. By 1222 all was changed, or about to be changed, and the Abbot owned nothing except the advowson of the far-off St. Bride's. St. Bride's belongs to Westminster even now. The King laid claim to certain foreshores on the banks of the Thames. Undoubtedly, they belonged by an ancient grant to the Abbot, but we must take into consideration that what had been only occasionally dry land in the eleventh century was permanently dry in the thirteenth; and the King had conferred, and was conferring, too many benefits on the Abbot and his monks and their church to permit them to dispute his royal, if illegal, pleasure. The Bishop of Exeter formed a little estate of the Outer Temple. From his precincts westward the constant embanking, and especially the formation of the roadway of the Strand, left a wide strip now permanently dry. This strip the King erected into a manor, and bestowed upon his wife's uncle, Count Peter. Peter became Count of Savoy in 1263, and the manor has ever since been called after him. The next of these reclamations was Whitehall. In the lawsuit already mentioned, a document was produced which threw great light on the early history of the district. It relates to the sale by Roger de Ware and Maud, his mother, to Hubert de Burgh, of their land here. Another document was a similar sale by Odo, the King's goldsmith, of an adjoining plot, identified as stretching from the highway to the Thames.

Hubert's choice of a residence was determined, no doubt, because it placed him within easy reach of the city on one side, and of the King's palace on the other. He probably seldom used the road through the newly-constructed King Street, or the other road through the Strand—a road famous for ruts and mud. He went either to Westminster or to London by water, as did his great neighbours in the Savoy, and the bishops who had palaces outside the Bar of the Temple. We often wonder why our ancestors preferred these low-lying places for their houses. The answer is the difficulty they experienced in locomotion by land. The "silent highway" of the Thames



was such a convenience that all who could possibly afford it preferred to be within easy reach of water.

Hubert had no easy part to play. From 1227 he had to do daily battle with the young King, who already, though still a boy, showed signs of the combined obstinacy and incompetence which characterised him through life. Hubert saw the impolicy of yielding to the papal claims. He followed, as Bishop Stubbs remarks, in the footsteps of William Marshall, taking a middle path between the feudal designs of the great nobles and the despotic theories of the late King. In both these particulars he was in opposition to Henry, who was bound to the Pope by his education, and to the retrograde party by his personal prejudices. Hubert served the King too well to please the people, and spared the people too much to satisfy Henry. In 1232 he was dismissed, and his ungrateful master, not content with his dismissal, trumped up a series of charges against him, just as Henry's descendant, Henry VIII., did with regard to Cardinal Wolsey. Hubert had been made Earl of Kent in 1227, and Constable of the Tower of London just before his disgrace—in fact, only a few days before—and during the same month was himself lodged in the Tower as a prisoner. Eventually his lands were restored, but he was not allowed to leave his castle at Devizes; he survived till 1243, when he died, as Matthew Paris relates, "full of days." He had been five times married, and reckoned among his wives the widow of King John, and the sister of Alexander III., king of Scotland; but he left only two children, John, his son, and Margaret, his daughter. The subsequent history of the land now called Whitehall, so far as Hubert was interested in it, may be briefly detailed. Hubert had made a vow to go to the Holy Land and fight the infidel, being himself, as Roger of Wendover says, *Miles strenuus*; but not being able to fulfil his vow, he gave his land at Whitehall, which he describes as being in the parish of St. Margaret's, into the hands of trustees to be sold in aid of an expedition to the Holy Land. The trustees promptly sold it to Walter Grey, archbishop of York, who annexed it to his See. Walter died in 1255, and was succeeded by Sewall Bovill, who had been Dean of York. Thirty archbishops in all held this house, beginning with Walter Grey and ending with

Thomas Wolsey. It is curious to remark that no trace now exists of their occasional residence. It was uniformly called York House, and we may be sure that Wolsey improved it, and built a hall and a chapel similar to those at Hampton Court. One or two old views show us stately and lofty buildings in the half-Gothic, half-Italian style, which is so familiar at Christ Church at Oxford, and at King's College at Cambridge. A large hall was in King Street; that is, outside Holbein's Gate. We see it beyond the gate in Silvestre's view; and it stands up dark and heavy, with its strong buttresses on the left hand, in T. Sandby's view. In the last century, when it had been part of the Treasury buildings for generations, it was newly fronted in stone, and the buttresses turned into pilasters. Since then it has been refronted twice—by Soane in 1824, and by Barry in 1846. Barry greatly increased the length. It would be interesting, but almost impossible, to ascertain if any of the masonry of Wolsey's building still remains within the new walls.

This is, of course, a digression. No part of the Treasury is in Whitehall; but the reason for mentioning it is that its inclusion in the two engravings I have named shows us what, in all probability, Wolsey's other buildings were like. Paul Hentzner, writing in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, says that they were "truly royal." Very little building of any importance went on under Henry VIII, or his three immediate successors, so that Hentzner's allusion must be to what Wolsey left. It is true, as we shall see, that Henry proposed to improve and extend it; but we may rest certain that he added nothing to its magnificence, if we except the gates; as the anonymous author of *Dodsley* remarks, he had a greater taste for pleasure than for elegance of building, and immediately on entering upon possession he ordered a tennis court, a cockpit, and a series of bowling-greens.

But we are going too fast. In the beginning of 1530 Cardinal Wolsey was still in possession, and there are various accounts of how he transferred the palace of his predecessors to the King. Henry was not very scrupulous in matters of this kind. He was much given to breaking the tenth commandment, and especially to coveting his neighbour's house. He had already helped himself to Hampton Court, and a curious anecdote will be found in Thorne's *Environ's*. Lord Windsor

was much attached to his place at Stanwell, which had descended to him from a long line of ancestors. The house, no doubt, was in what agents nowadays call ornamental repair. He entertained the King royally, and Henry, with the kind of gratitude peculiar to him, promptly commanded him to hand it over. He gave in exchange the Manor of Bordesley and the Abbey, which Henry had taken from the monks. Windsor had just laid in a stock of provisions for his Christmas festivities, but he refused to remove them, saying that the King should not find it bare Stanwell when he came to take possession. The curious part of the story is that Henry does not seem ever to have visited it again, and we know that he soon afterwards leased it away. At the time of Wolsey's fall, Henry had been for several years almost without a home in London; his apartments at Westminster were burnt in 1512, and after twenty years, in 1532, he bought the hospital of St. James's-in-the-Fields. Between these dates he would have been without a London palace, except the Tower or Bridewell, but on the fall of Cardinal Wolsey certain illegal formalities were complied with, and Henry became possessed of Whitehall. The gates north and south of the royal precincts were needful on account of the old right of way between Charing—now become Charing Cross—and Westminster; and in 1535 Henry built the church of St. Martin, near to where the royal mews had been from time immemorial, with a view to prevent the constant passage of funerals from the northern to the southern part of St. Margaret's.

In addition, Henry acquired all the land between Charing Cross and an outlying suburb of Westminster known as Little Calais, or Calais. More than this, he annexed all the green to the westward, which I have already mentioned. Abbot Islip had, in fact, nothing left of the great manor which after the Conquest had belonged to Westminster Abbey. The City of London had acquired the great ward of Farringdon Without. The lawyers had the Inner and Middle Temples. The King had inherited from the wife of John of Gaunt all the manor of the Savoy. And now Henry VIII. helped himself to the remainder.

It will be interesting to see the document by which the Abbot conveyed the inheritance of his house to the King. I am tempted

M. H. O.