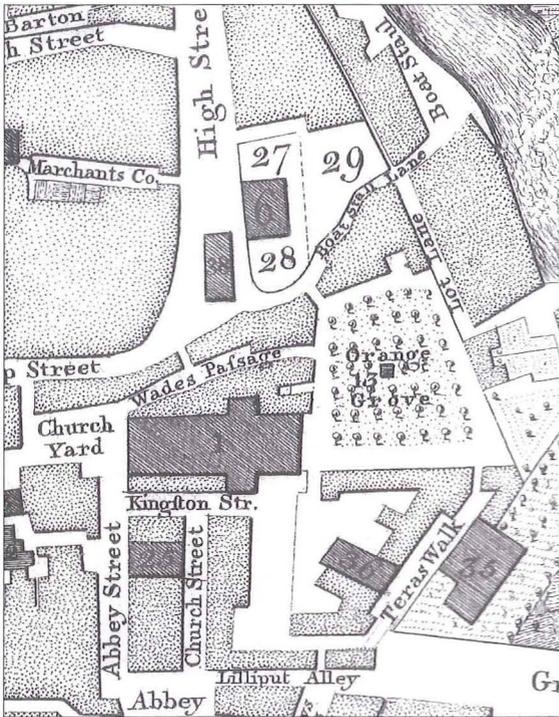


Bath's Second Guildhall c.1630 to 1776

Michael Bishop

Bath has seen three Guildhalls. The first, medieval building stood in the courtyard behind today's Guildhall. The second, dating from the late 1620s, occupied the upper storey of the Tudor Market House in the middle of High Street. This 'Stuart Guildhall', enlarged in the 1720s, stood until 1776. By that time Baldwin's present building, the third Guildhall, was complete, and the old structure was demolished (Fig.1).



Little is known about the Stuart Guildhall, yet over a period of a century and a half its staircase echoed to the footsteps of mayors, city councillors, functionaries both high and lowly, Bathonians of all levels of society as, during the daylight hours, they climbed to the rooms above the arcaded market hall to attend their meetings and conduct their business; rooms which, in the evenings and with candles ablaze and the paraphernalia of administration cleared away, would be transformed into a setting

Fig.1 Detail from 'A New and Correct Plan of the City of Bath, printed by Frederick H. Leake and W. Taylor Booksellers in Bath', c.1776. It captures the moment when the Stuart Guildhall (no.38) still stood alongside Baldwin's new building (no.6). The site of the earliest Guildhall was just below no.29. Nos.27, 28 and 29 indicate respectively the Butter, Green and Meat Markets. (Reproduced by courtesy of Bath Record Office)

for balls and banqueting. By the 1770s, however, its structure had grown increasingly unsafe and was now considered unbefitting the kind of city which Bath had become; down it must come. Ruthless replanning of the city centre was overdue; so was a worthier Guildhall. But few records survive of what the earlier building looked like; and – model-making being one of my interests – I decided to go about things in three stages. First, having read what accounts I could find of the Stuart Guildhall, to marshal the evidence for its appearance; secondly, to make the model; thirdly, to go more closely into the documentary evidence for its history.¹

Sources of information: the visual evidence

Visits to Bath Reference Library and the Victoria Art Gallery proved fruitful. In the end I had photocopies of seventeen different illustrations of my quarry: the two little drawings in the Gilmore map of the 1690s; the watercolour by Edward Eyre, and a crude copy improbably ascribed to G.P. Manners; eleven drawings of the north and west façades, undated, unsigned and hard to categorise, lying halfway between formal elevations and architectural sketches enlivened by little figures to add scale. Two recent views, a fanciful reconstruction by Paul Braddon (1864-1938) and one by R.W.M. Wright (c.1889-1963), were clearly of limited interest only. But what of the rest?

The Gilmore Map

Familiar and frequently reproduced, this 'Mapp or topographical Description of the City of Bath ... exactly Surveyed by ... Joseph Gilmore Teacher of the Mathematicks in the City of Bristol', is best known in its 1731 version 'printed and sold by Thomas Bakewell, Map and printseller of Fleet Street'; but that was its sixth reissue since its initial appearance in 1694 'based on a draft drawn by Gilmore himself and engraved by John Savage'. It shows, from the east, a pictorial view of the city as it was in the early 1690s. Apart from its treasury of information (it includes a list of twenty-two inns) about a small spa town starting to expand, what distinguishes it particularly is its encircling border of thirty-five vignettes: thirty of these depict lodging houses, and of the remainder one shows 'the East Side of the Guild Hall'. This duplicates, though not precisely, what in the key to the map is called 'the Market House' in the High Street. Only the Abbey Church is similarly honoured by appearing twice.

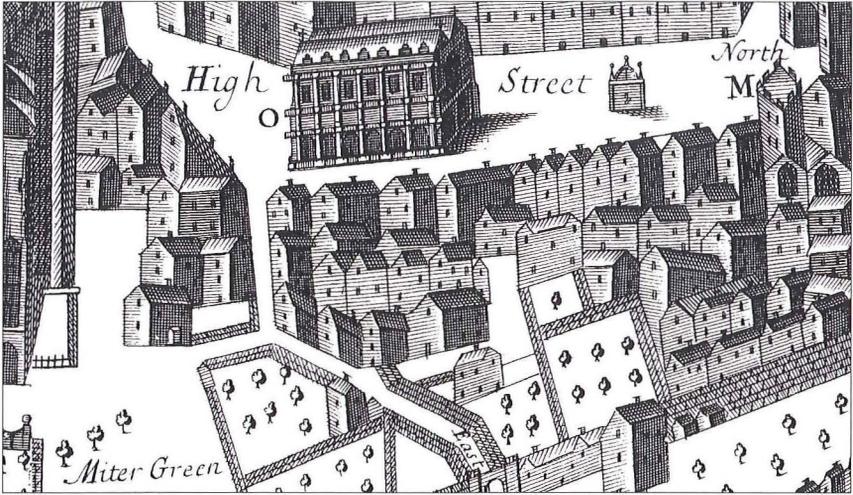
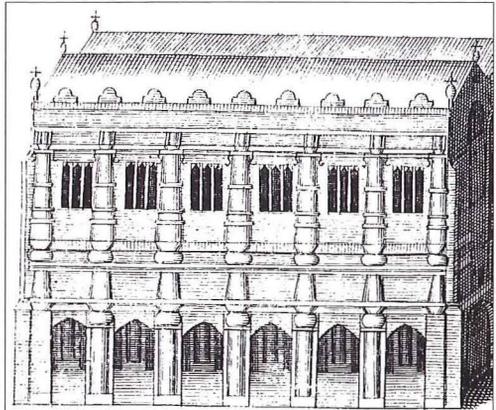


Fig.2a A detail from the main part of Gilmore's map of 1694 showing the Stuart Guildhall from the east. The northern side of the Abbey can be seen on the extreme left, flanked by houses. (Reproduced by courtesy of Bath Record Office)

Close scrutiny of the two versions (figs.2a and 2b) reveals variations, but both show the same basic features: a rectangular building arcaded at ground level, with six arches along the sides and two at the ends and, above the side arches, windows (given tripartite mullions in the more detailed version); buttresses stand at each corner, and at the northern end is a tall, rounded central window. There is a double roof, with twin gables at either end surmounted by finials, and further finials at the four corners; and a scallop decoration runs along the top of the east façade.



The East Side of Guild Hall

Fig.2b A vignette from the border of Gilmore's map showing a second picture of the 'East Side of Guild Hall'. (Reproduced by courtesy of Bath Record Office)

Where the Gilmore versions differ most is in the pilasters flanking the arches below

and the windows above; one version shows only five at ground level and seven (grotesquely bulbous) against the upper story, while the other has seven pilasters at both levels. But such evidence, crucial in what it tells us of a building already sixty years old, is of limited value to a model-maker.

The Eyre watercolour

One of three drawings by Edmund Eyre in the Victoria Art Gallery, this lively little watercolour (7½ins x 10ins) of *High Street, Bath, looking towards the old Guildhall* (Fig.3), presents certain problems: is this an on-the-spot contemporary view of the Stuart Guildhall before its demolition in 1776, or is this – more probably – the painting entitled *The Beginning of the New Town Hall at Bath, 1776* that was shown at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1786?² The purely fanciful classical portal (nothing like Baldwin's) visible to the left of the old Guildhall suggests that the painting is an imaginative reconstruction of what Eyre witnessed ten years earlier, perhaps based on sketches made at that time. An army officer, the artist



Fig.3 Edward Eyre's watercolour of the High Street, dated c.1776 but probably done some years later and showing the Stuart Guildhall shortly before demolition, with Baldwin's new Guildhall rising to its left (Reproduced by courtesy of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath and North East Somerset Council)

is known to have visited Bath annually between 1772 and 1776 for the season, and might even have been in the city on the fateful November day in 1775 when Thomas Warr Atwood, the Chief Architect, fell to his death in a half-demolished building on the site. Atwood's death put an end to years of dilly-dallying, and his brilliant young associate Thomas Baldwin took his place.³ All was set to go ahead with the new Guildhall, and the old building might well have been pulled down during Eyre's final visit in the winter of 1776/7. Certainly building materials saved from the demolition were auctioned off (for a mere £161) at the end of March 1777. In Thomas Malton's version of *The Town Hall at Bath* (c 1777) all trace of the Stuart Guildhall has gone: the street is clear.⁴ Eyre's High Street, by contrast, is full of activity around the doomed old building. From the White Lion Inn on the left a horse emerges; workmen dig up cobblestones, carry a plank or push a barrow; three huts block the right-hand arch, huge doors are propped by the other arch near a parked cart; and in the meantime street life continues, as a coach rattles along and passers-by stroll or lounge. But is what we see less a snapshot than a scene recollected in tranquillity?

The Eleven Elevations

It was obvious that these would be crucial for my model; yet, as I compared the six views of the north end of the old Guildhall, and five views from the west, I found to my surprise that, though they were very nearly identical, each differed marginally from the rest. This was most evident when I scrutinised the little figures glimpsed through the arches: five women, eight men, and two dogs; and outside, a little hunchback apparently posting bills on the north-west buttress. Each version showed the same figures in the same places, but they differed so widely in dress and posture as to leave no doubt that none of my drawings was identical to any other, and that either the original lurked undetected among them or all were copies. All were undated and unsigned: one north elevation was attributed to Henry Venn Lansdown (1806-1860), one north and one west elevation jointly to J. Manners and J.C. Maggs (1819-1896), two announced themselves as the gift of G.H. Manners, one that of the architect Mowbray Green. But I was no nearer to who drew the originals, and when.

There was one straw to clutch at: a drawing of the west front presented to the Victoria Art Gallery in 1984 was recorded as being 'after George Vertue.' George Vertue (1684-1756) was the distinguished 'Engraver and Member of the Society of Antiquaries' who in 1750 published the noble engraving of a *Perspective View of the Abbey Church ... at Bath*,⁵ after

a drawing by his younger brother James, who dedicated the plate to Charles Fourth Duke of Beaufort. James Vertue (1686-1765) had moved from London to Bath for his health, and made his living as a painter, an 'instructor of Ladies and Gentlemen in the Arts of Drawing and Painting' and a seller not only of prints but, curiously, of snuffs and toys. Advertisements in the Bath newspapers show him living variously 'opposite Mr Morgan's Coffee-House in Wade's Passage' (1754), at Mr Page's, Pastry-Cook in Cheap Street (1758) and at West-Gate House (1760), all of them locations within a stone's throw of the Stuart Guildhall.⁶ If the 1984 reference to 'George' Vertue reflects a pardonable confusion of the sibling with his better-known elder brother, it could perhaps be that during his sojourn in Bath James, by now an elderly invalid, emerged from his nearby lodgings to set up his easel and make a record of the perhaps-already-under-threat Guildhall. The dates fit; so too does the putative style of the original drawings.

The examples selected (figs.4 and 5), the cream of a mixed bunch, cannot be precisely dated but, if not themselves the originals, they are copies of originals done in the 1750s or 1760s. They constitute as good evidence as one could hope for, corroborating as they do not only Gilmore and Eyre but also, as we shall see, Wood the Elder. They do moreover furnish hints as to how the old Market House was used now that new markets were being established nearby. Of the thirteen figures with

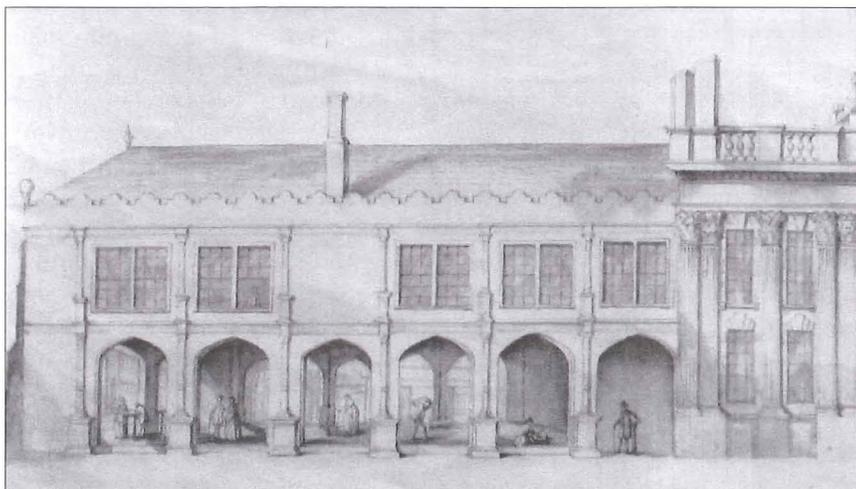


Fig.4 The west side of the Stuart Guildhall, after an anonymous original, c.1750. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath and North East Somerset Council)

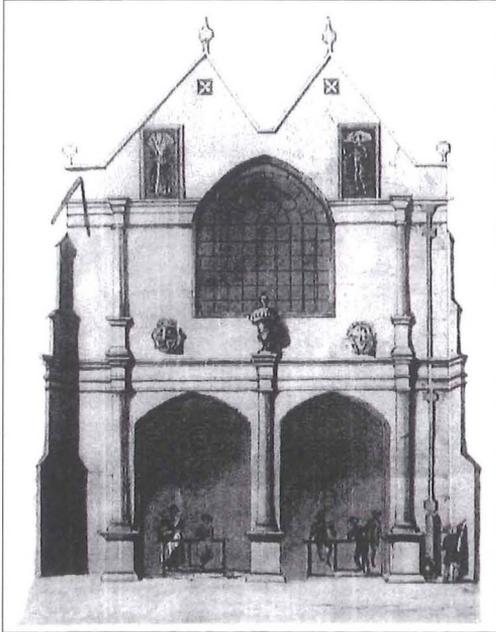


Fig.5 The north façade of the Stuart Guildhall, after an anonymous original, c.1750.
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath and North East Somerset Council)

which the scene has been enlivened, all but four either stroll at leisure or lounge about gossiping. Commercial activity beneath the arcades seems anything but lively: a tall woman in an apron chats with a youth and holds a bowl containing presumably something to sell; two men hold baskets perhaps of saleable produce, one seated on the kerb, the other leaning against a bollard, and a porter in the interior hurries along shouldering a heavy load. And there is a little old bill-poster with his brush and a water-pot filled from a rain-tank at his side. The impression created, perhaps fortuitously, is of a building no longer functioning as a market house; an impression confirmed by further details

which are easily missed: the two northern arches have clearly been closed to wheeled traffic by barriers; and on the west, beneath every arch except the last, there is a substantial kerb. This last arch has no such obstruction but is blocked by a bollard, and might be where the internal staircase had its entrance. A curious feature of the drawings of the west façade, one meticulously reproduced in every version, is the bizarre irregularity of the east-facing arcade as glimpsed through the regularly-spaced western arches. Thanks to my model I was able to ascertain that the original artist had recorded exactly what he saw, and that the distortion (which, curiously, remained uncorrected) was due to his being inevitably over-close to his subject, a mere twenty feet back. This serves to underline the unsatisfactory location of the old Guildhall in the middle of the city's north-south artery; so closely hemmed in by adjacent buildings that only from the north was a reasonably long-distance view possible.

Scales, Measurements and the Model

A scale model cannot be made without a scale, and I was at once aware of a problem: none of my elevations gave any indication of scale except for the human figures under the arches. In them, I decided, lay my answer: I would suppose that the woman selling things in the left-hand arch of the north façade was five feet six inches tall. By that means I could calculate the height of the arches, and so work out a scale. But each version of the north façade gave a different answer, and it was only after much juggling of figures that I felt it reasonable to conclude that the arches were about twelve feet high. It was only later, with the model nearing completion, that I pursued a reference in Trevor Fawcett's first article, to the *Bath Advertiser* of 22 November 1755. I there found, to my delight, the true dimensions of the old Guildhall to the last quarter-inch. My calculations proved to be out by 14%: by my reckoning the building was 29 feet wide and 72 feet long; the true figures turned out to be 24 feet (and half an inch) wide, 62 feet (and three and three-quarter inches) long, while the arches were only 10 feet high. My discovery made no difference to the model itself; but it did mean that I had to change my scale from 72:1 to 60:1 (Fig.6).

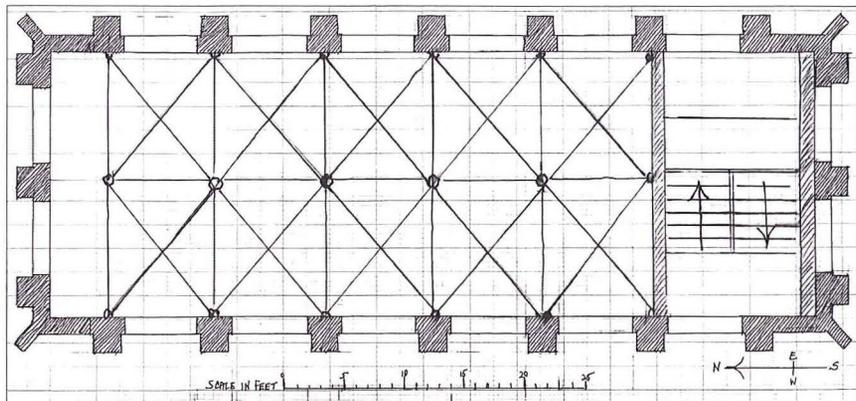
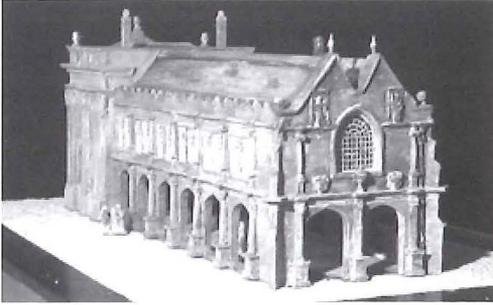


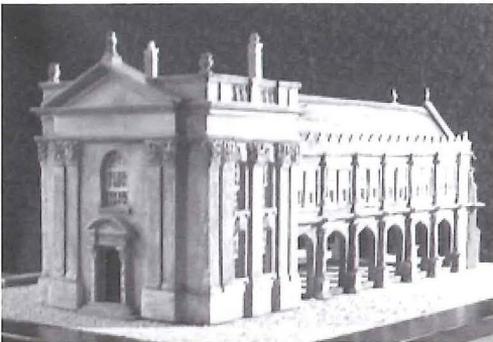
Fig.6 Plan of the Stuart Guildhall, including a hypothetical reconstruction of stairwell and vaulting. (Drawing by the author)

The North and South Fronts

By the 1750s the northern façade harked back to an earlier age, dominated by its large central window and embellished by stone shields (by Thomas Quilly c.1632) representing the royal arms to the left and those of the city to the right; and, high up, by two statues, each in its own



Figs.7a and b. The author's model of the Stuart Guildhall in 1750, (above) as from the north-east; (below) as from the south-east. There are no known views of its south façade, which is here therefore a hypothetical reconstruction (*Photographs by Peter Clulow*)



niche (Fig.7a). To the south, by contrast, we find the recent 1724 extension fronted by a façade in classical style and (presumably: we have no picture) containing the new entrance (Fig.7b). The reasons for this curious double frontage emerge from the history of the building; and that history, though based largely on documentary evidence considered in detail in Part 3, may conveniently be summarised visually at this juncture in order to clarify the main stages of the story (Fig.8). If – and the evidence points in that direction – the Guildhall of the late 1620s (Fig.8b) was a rebuilding on a grander scale of the arcaded Tudor Market House (Fig.8a), then a worthy approach to the new upper hall had to be incorporated into an area

originally surrounded by arches on all four sides. Where, within the Market House, there had been a ladder or open staircase to the loft,⁷ a new, secure stairwell was built, which occupied a fifth part of the groundfloor area,⁸ blocking the arches at the southern end. These were left intact;⁹ but with the prospect from the south now spoilt, and with generous open space to the north as far as the North Gate, the choice of the north front as the main one was natural for the 1620s builders.

As to the nature of the staircase itself, there are tantalisingly infrequent hints in the 1627/8 accounts: John Beacon is twice paid (a total of £1.16.0) for work on the 'stayers', and Nicholas Wilson receives thirteen pence for turning thirteen banisters. Dare we infer from this a wooden staircase with thirteen steps? Security, presumably at the foot and head of a stairwell walled off from the open market, was a consideration: John Gray receives

10/4d for 'door hinges' and five shillings for a lock 'for the door'; and there was an expenditure of ½d on a pair of hinges for the 'little dore'.

By 1750 (Fig.8d) the great window presented an awkward compromise between its pointed Gothic outline and its glazing bars. These, with their semi-circular-topped pattern, had been made to conform to a style ubiquitous in Georgian Bath's grander buildings, and had at some point replaced original casement windows,¹⁰ perhaps when the other windows were sashed in 1718 (Fig.8c) or during the building of the annexe in 1724. It has been suggested that this admittedly ill-proportioned window (8ft 6in by 7ft) results from an enlargement thirty years after the Guildhall was built. That

in fact it was there from the start seems likely, not only from the mention in the 1627/8 Chamberlain's Accounts of a 'great window', but also from a reinterpretation of a Council Minute of 1657:¹¹ there it is agreed that a chimney be built on the east side of the Guildhall and that 'more light be added to the Counsell House'. Why, one wonders, the distinction in the same entry between 'Guildhall' and 'Counsell House' unless they were different locations? The answer lies in a description quoted by Elizabeth Holland, of rooms 'sometymes called the Councell House of the said Cittie'.¹² This refers to the medieval Guildhall, the north end of which was in process of conversion into a new butchers' Shambles: the old name had, it appears, stuck, and was still in use twelve years after the Guildhall had moved into the High Street. The room was still there as late as 1673; and it was surely this, rather than the new Guildhall, that was in need of more light.

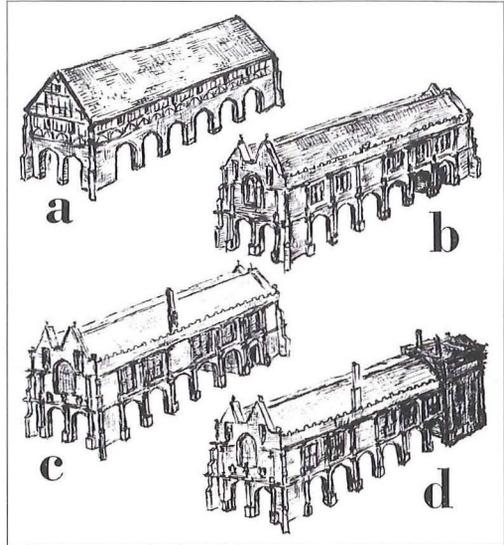


Fig.8. Drawings by the author which show stages in the evolution of the Stuart Guildhall. (a) 1552: The new Tudor Market House. Owing to the lack of conclusive evidence this is only a hypothetical reconstruction. (b) 1630: The new Stuart Guildhall. Note the staircase at the south end. (c) 1720: Note the sashed windows and the extended chimney. (d) 1750: The staircase has gone and the extension added.

Something of the High Street Guildhall that still survives can be seen in the square-topped niches which flank a first-floor window at the bottom of Bath Street opposite the Cross Bath (Fig.9).¹³ Here, battered but still recognisable, are those same statues of King Coel and King Edgar which once adorned the Guildhall's northern façade, in a home now dwarfed by the new Royal Bath building. The choice of King Edgar was a natural one. It was in Bath's Abbey Church of St Peter that – fourteen years after his accession and only two before his death – Edgar was, on 11 May 973, crowned the first King of All England by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. In the words of the *Winchester Chronicle*:

Here was Edgar of Angles Lord
 With courtly pomp hallowed to King

The venue was chosen as lying within a prestigious monastery in a town on the borders of Mercia and Wessex, and the event was long celebrated every Whitsuntide.

The historical Edgar was accompanied by the mythical Coel because the latter – according to the legend as recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth – was himself also, if briefly, king of all Britain before it came into Roman hands on the marriage to Constantius of his daughter Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Popular mythology made him not only a merry old soul (and perhaps he was) but also the founder of Colchester (which he was not: Camulodunum's English name is derived from the river Colne). Not all, it seems, were pleased that Edgar and Coel should have displaced a figure even more deserving of such honour: Bath's legendary founder Bladud. Referring to an old, neglected statue of that Trojan prince which once stood at the North Gate, a satirist in the 1720s was moved to write:



Fig.9 The figures of King Coel and King Edgar which originally adorned the north façade of the Stuart Guildhall and are now at the bottom of Bath Street, on the front of what was built as the House of Antiquities in 1797. (Photograph by Peter Clulow)

Unhappy King, whose Glory thus depends,
 Precarious on the Pleasure of false Friends:
 Ungrateful City! whose unworthy care
 Cannot afford King BLADUD Cloathes to wear!
 Two upstart Princes of a modern Race,
 That scarce in History deserve a Place,
 Our entering street with dazzling Splendour grace:
 One in Imperial Robes of Scarlet Hew,
 Extends his Sceptre to the publick view;
 The other dressed in shining Armour stands,
 And with drawn sword the Market-Place commands.¹⁴

What, I wondered, was a model-maker to do about that unknown south frontage, towering above the narrow space between it and the north side of the Abbey? No picture survives; indeed, no artist could have been much tempted to set up his easel in so cramped and crowded a spot.

There are, to my knowledge, only two near-contemporary references to the architect of the southern extension, and they disagree. Richard Jones, Ralph Allen's devoted Clerk of Works from 1731 to 1764, made City Surveyor in 1767 at the age of sixty-four, writes in his memoir: 'I worked at the new end of the Council Room, built by one Colledge, a Sidmouth Architect in Bath about the year 1725'.¹⁵ Jones of course was recollecting what had happened four decades earlier. But the elder Wood, writing only eighteen years after the event, says of the Guildhall: 'At the opposite end [the south] there is a Heap of Ornamental Work well put together under the Direction of one William Killigrew, a Joiner who laid his Apron aside about the Year 1719; and I can only say this much of them (*sic*), that they incumber rather than adorn an handsome old Edifice.' This Killigrew was, alongside John Harvey, Thomas Greenway and John Strahan, one of Wood's chief competitors, and hence the recipient of what Mowl and Earnshaw call his 'heavy and ungenerous jocularitv';¹⁶ but, unless both architects were at work on the building together, Wood is likely to be the more trustworthy witness here than Jones.

Killigrew's works, like those of Harvey and Strahan, are gone, but Walter Ison illustrated two;¹⁷ and given what can be seen in the west elevations of the old Guildhall (Fig.4) I felt there was justification for the south front I invented for my model. I almost left the south front blank; but I decided to be bold.

The Killigrew annexe has been criticised as incongruous, and certainly it could in no way be regarded as a sympathetic extension of what Wood

described as a 'handsome old edifice'. It was on the other hand wholly in keeping with such other new buildings as 'General Wade's House' just round the corner in Abbey Church Yard, and one feels that Wood's might well have been a fairly lone voice of disapproval. The decision to pull down the old Guildhall a mere half-century after it had been extended was surely taken more because of its location than for stylistic reasons.

Sources of information: the historical evidence

In her important study 'The Earliest Bath Guildhall' (1988),¹⁸ Elizabeth Holland adduces compelling historical evidence that the city's first Guildhall stood close to the Market House, but out of sight behind houses on the east side of the High Street. Here it continued its original function as the civic centre of the city until the first quarter of the seventeenth century. But in 1628/9 serious building work was undertaken at the site of the old Market House. Two basic questions arise: did this involve the demolition of the existing Market House and its replacement by a new building that was to serve as the Guildhall, or was it rather a refurbishing of the older one; and did Inigo Jones play a part in all this, as tradition suggests?

The first question can only be answered if we have some idea of the pre-1620s building. As to its age, documentary evidence unearthed by Elizabeth Holland in the Churchwardens' Roll of St Michael's church at the North Gate, shows that during the financial year 1551/2 forty shillings were paid, by consent of the parish, 'towards the building of the Market House'.¹⁹ There is as yet no corroborative evidence, but such a date accords well with what we can deduce about the earlier building.

We may also consult four pictorial maps of Bath that survive from before 1625: William Smith's 'portraiture' of Bath, published in 1588 but thought by Stephen Bird²⁰ to have been made as early as 1568, when Smith published a map of Bristol; John Speed's map, published in 1610 as an inset to a map of Somerset and perhaps owing something both to Smith and to one of many lost 'engravings of English Cathedral Cities' listed in 1577 (Fig.10); a curious portrayal of some of the city's buildings with captions in French;²¹ and fourthly the 'View of the City' reproduced by John Wood the Elder in his *Essay*, attributed in the first edition to a 1634 'Description' but in his second to a Dr Jones in 1572. Clearly the map is modelled on Speed; clearly, also, Wood's earlier date is belied by its inclusion of Bellot's Hospital, founded in 1609.

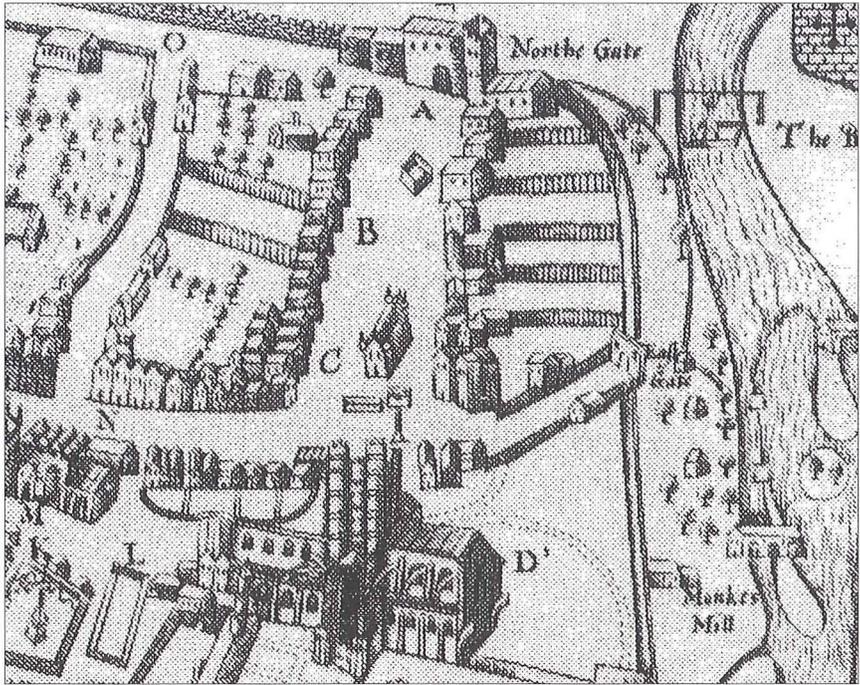


Fig.10 A detail of Speed's 1610 map of Bath showing (C) a stylised Market House in the High Street with stocks and pillory in front of it. (Reproduced by courtesy of Bath Record Office)

So here we have four 'aerial' plans of the city, none exactly datable, all of them depicting Bath at the end of the sixteenth and the start of the seventeenth centuries, and all – if different in detail – patently related to one another. But the information they reveal as to the Tudor Market House is scant indeed. All show, as from the south, a single-gabled building with steeply pitched roof and large central door. In Smith, a huge arched portal occupies most of the frontage; the other three reduce the size of the door, put two windows above and add, at either side of the gable, little protruding turrets. Can we trust this? I suspect that Smith's depiction is no more than the conventional representation of an important building seen in other maps of the period; that Speed, or his immediate source, determined to improve on Smith, made the proportions more credible, and that the other draughtsmen followed where Speed led. It is, I suggest, possible that the Tudor Market House – whether or not beneath a single gable – had from the start the twin arches incorporated into the Stuart

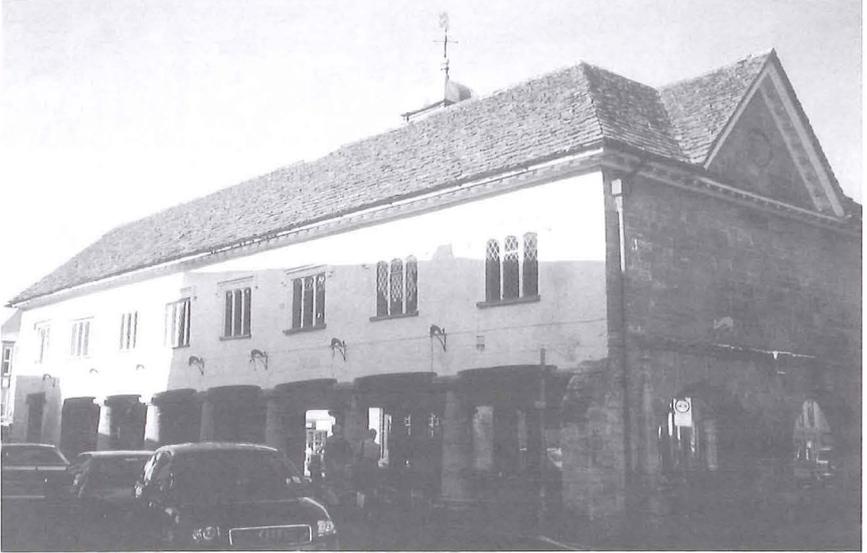


Fig.11 The Market House in Tetbury, dating from the mid-seventeenth century and still retaining features in common with Bath's Stuart Guildhall. (*Photograph by the author*)

Guildhall. We can perhaps get some idea of its appearance by looking at a comparable building that has survived, the Market House in Tetbury, some twenty miles north of Bath (Fig.11). Here, dating from the mid-seventeenth century, is a building which, despite subsequent alteration, bears at least a superficial resemblance to its Bath contemporary. It too lies in the centre of a bustling town; it too consists of a hall, approached by steps on its southern side, above an open colonnaded market with twin arches at its northern end.²²

The second question to be faced is: what contribution, if any, did Inigo Jones make towards the creation of the Stuart Guildhall? Few recent histories fail to mention – if only to cast doubt on it – the ‘tradition’ that the Stuart Guildhall was built ‘after a draft by Inigo Jones’. A few allow for its possibly resting in its predecessor’s foundation; most presuppose that, whoever its architect, it was a new building. My own suggestion is that the Inigo Jones story be set aside, once and for all, as a red herring; and that the Stuart Guildhall, far from being a new building, be seen as a modifying, upgrading, and partial rebuilding of the earlier Market House.

As far as I know, the earliest reference to an Inigo Jones involvement is in the first edition of Wood’s *Essay* of 1742; an assertion repeated, but

not verbatim, in the 1749 and 1765 editions. Stating confidently that the Guildhall was 'rebuilt and finished in the Year 1625', he says it deserves special notice for its having been created 'after a Draught that was given to the Citizens by Inigo Jones.' On the occasion of an official visit to 'view the state of the Baths' (presumably in his capacity as Surveyor to the Prince of Wales), Jones, says Wood, was induced 'by a Natural Inclination to render all the Service in his Power'. This inclination sprang both from his own mother's being a Bathonian (daughter of a leading clothier) and from his being 'closely related' to the mother of George Trim, founder of Trim Street. None of these claims has, I believe, been substantiated from other sources. Wood himself, Bathonian though he was by birth, can adduce no stronger support for what he says than that he had learnt of Inigo's family connection with Bath from one Robert Cole, Lady Elizabeth Hastings' Steward at Bramham Park in Yorkshire. This conversation had taken place eighteen years before the first edition of Wood's *Essay*; the writer had clearly lost contact with Cole (he says of him 'if he is still living'), and his language suggests awareness that this might seem slender evidence for so bold an assertion. He therefore bolsters it with architectural evidence, leaning over backwards as a devoted disciple both of Jones himself and of Jones's own beloved Palladio, to prove to himself as well as to his readers, what he wants so urgently to be true. For example he writes, 'Nobody but Inigo Jones could cause the genuine Pattern of the Ionic Capital to be preserved in Opposition to that which was published by Scamozzi, and copied by People in general', contrasting with unconvincing hyperbole the 'genuine Pattern' of the capitals gracing the Guildhall's upper storey (where 'the Rim of the Volute runs straight along the face'), with the scandalous distortion promoted by Scamozzi, with its 'angular volutes springing out of a bowl'. Wood bolsters his case with further evidence which bears little scrutiny. In his first edition he goes so far as to liken Bath's Guildhall to the Town Hall of Delft, attributing that building to one Cornelius Danckerts, by whom Wood thinks Jones may have been influenced. In subsequent editions this passage is omitted, and it is easy to see why: the architect of the Delft Stadhuis (1618) was in fact Hendrik de Keyser. Cornelis Danckerts de Rij, City Mason of Amsterdam, is known to have worked with de Keyser on various projects in Amsterdam between 1603-20 and might well have been involved in the Delft Town Hall; but that building bears no resemblance whatever to the Bath Guildhall.

So much for that part of Wood's case: the rest is yet thinner in that he attempts to justify the wholly un-Palladian north and south fronts

of the Guildhall, with their two arches and central pillar (described by Michael Forsyth as a 'solecism' in Palladian terms),²³ as having been suggested to Jones by the 'illustrious' five-columned examples of Moses' Tabernacle and 'the Porticoe of Jupiter Arbitrator in Rome'. What Wood glosses over is the extreme unlikelihood of Jones, if he started the design from scratch, opting for a layout so contrary to principles he applied elsewhere. If one bears in mind the preposterous 'prehistory' on which Wood based the ideas underlying his plan for Bath (how, immersed in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Britannic myths, he believed that Bladud was a Pythagorean, and ancient Bath a city dedicated to Apollo in a pre-Roman Britain that was in effect a pre-Hellenic Holy Land, peopled by Druids and Greeks), then one is bound to suspect here too a 'manipulation of data to support a preconceived notion', gently deplored by Mowl and Earnshaw, and suggestive of a self-educated man untrained in academic evaluation and debate. Wood would naturally rejoice if what was, in effect, Bath's first shot at a Palladian building could be shown to be the work of his idol, the great Inigo Jones himself; and one suspects that, in the absence of other evidence, he made up his own.

What is surprising is the speed with which, once promulgated, the story was accepted, though it was, of course, good publicity for a city whose fame was growing every year. A mere seven years after Wood's *Essay* first appeared, Boddeley's *Bath and Bristol Guide*, describing Bath's 'publick Edifices', confidently asserts: 'First, the Guildhall, which is situated in the Market Place, or High Street, was originally designed by Inigo Jones, Architect'. And that same year we find, as the leading article in Stephen Martin's *Bath Advertiser* of Saturday, November 22nd 1755, an unsigned letter (number VI in a series) purporting to be addressed to one Julian Alberti at Florence, and dated 'Bath, July 9th, 1753'. This date takes us back to a point only five years after Wood published his first *Essay*, and one year before his death. Mentioned briefly in connection with the scale of my model, the letter is here worth quoting at greater length.

Describing the impression made on a visitor to Bath as he passes through the North Gate (the 'grand and principal Entrance into the City'), the writer tells how he comes into:

a spacious street called the High Street, near the Market-Place, that runs nearly South, [and] is about 57 feet broad and about 400 feet long. It was originally terminated with the North Front of the Abbey-Church, a front that exceeds all the Pieces of Gothic Architecture I ever saw, being, I

suppose the same with the South Front: but the Land on the North of the Church falling into private Hands, after the Dissolution of Monasteries, so little Regard was paid to the Beauty and Magnificence of the Building that they have blocked up this whole Front with erecting little, low, irregular Houses against it, quite from the East to the West: nay, they have gone so far, that I have seen a Necessary-house in one of the Buttresses of the Church, and an Oven in another ... Though the beauty of this Street is greatly eclipsed by hiding the Front of the Church: yet on entering it one is pleasingly struck with the Front of the Guildhall, which is now built in Middle, and near the Bottom of it; and the lofty and most simple, magnificent Tower of the Abbey rising directly behind it adds greatly to the Prospect. The Guildhall is very pleasing, and I may say in its original State, a magnificent Structure; it was built in the year 1625, after a Design, as I have great Reason to Believe, of that famous English Architect Inigo Jones. The building consisted originally of a Market House, and over it a Sessions-hall, or Court of Justice, and was formed on an Area of two Squares and a half ...

The writer goes on to describe in detail the building's half-columns, Doric supporting Ionic, with inter-columniations, six along the sides and two at the ends. Like Wood he finds a pattern for the unorthodox central-column façade in what he calls the Temple of Jupiter Arbitrator in Rome. He then proceeds to elaborate, maintaining that originally, at both ends, there were windows above each arch with a central column between a pair of flanking columns at either corner, below and above. He also claims that the north end was subsequently ruined by the introduction of a 'large, disproportionable Gothick Window', which destroyed the architect's design and so weakened the structure that the outermost pilasters were removed and replaced by diagonal buttresses. This dubious version of events is rendered more specious by what he says of the upper courtroom, maintaining that when the Mayor was enthroned between the two windows at the north end, this was

of great service to the Court of Justice. Everyone who is conversant with the Effects of Light and Shade, can only imagine how awful the Approach to the Tribunal must be, from the lower End of

the Hall; and when the Culprit was plac'd at the Bar, the Light glaring full in his Face, was of great Assistance to the Magistrate, in forming a Judgment of his Guilt or Innocence'.

This is near-nonsense: light does not glare through north-facing windows, as testified by this same writer who, in his next letter deplores the 'very bad light' at the north end of the hall where, on each side of the great window, excellent pictures hang!²⁴ But he cannot have it both ways.

Our writer seems not only a shaky witness but also an unscrupulous plagiarist, shamelessly lifting chunks of Wood's *Essay* verbatim. In both, for example, we read of 'Architects who fill the World with Whim and Caprice'; and in both, the 1724 annexe is condemned in identical terms as a 'Heap of ornamental Work by one Killigrew, a Joiner'. In other words, what we read in the *Advertiser* is not, as might at first appear, corroboration of Wood: it quotes him, no more; and Wood himself remains the sole source of the Inigo Jones story. Boldly dismissing that, therefore, one asks: what other evidence survives as to what was afoot in the High Street in or about the year 1625?

The Chamberlain's Accounts up to 1630

These, transcribed by the Reverend C.W. Shickle, Master of St. John's Hospital, are to the layman simultaneously marvellous and maddening: they provide precious detail not available elsewhere, yet tell us tantalisingly little. In the Stuart period, entries are in sequence of payments made, but impossible to date precisely. Furthermore, financial years begin on the second or third Friday in October and continue over the following twelve months.

What dare one deduce or surmise? First, 1625 is assuredly not the date of a 'new Guildhall'. Work had clearly been done eight years earlier: the year 1617/18 saw an overall expenditure on the Market House of £14.4.3d, a figure covering stone, timber, tiles, plumbing, ironwork and the services of carpenters and labourers; but that this was simply more-costly-than-usual maintenance of a sixty-year-old building buffeted by daily wear-and-tear is suggested by the fact that after 1617/18 the Market House disappears from the Accounts for seven years. Momentarily, hopes soared when I found that in 1625 a labourer was paid for 'carrying rubbell out of the Market House'. Demolition and site-clearance? No: it was a one-off payment of 3d, a morning's work.

Not until the following financial year, starting in October 1626, are there serious signs of activity: eleven loads of tiles cost 8/6d a load;

timber was bought, and eight loads of stone; and the services of Thomas Grymes were in demand for sawing, as were those of a plumber, a mason and two labourers. Work was clearly afoot: certainly on the roof, possibly on the upper floor. In the following year, between October 1627 and October 1628, the pace is stepped up: we find the names of no fewer than twenty workmen at the site, together with those of three carpenters, two glaziers (one of them a woman), pavers, a painter and a locksmith. Interestingly, the only building materials bought during this year are two consignments of floorboards; while the major recorded payment (apart from £8 on casual labour, representing somewhat under 200 man-hours) was for a glazier (£6.2.10d.). John Beacon, classified as 'labourer' but paid at a higher rate than the casual workman, was in much demand, earning (there are six separate entries) £4.10.10d, largely for work on the new building, though once for work at the 'old hall'. John Butler likewise figures six times, but is much more highly paid, receiving in total £15: surely a master-craftsman perhaps working alongside Walter Symons. Symons was someone of considerable standing: for work on the new Guildhall he receives payments of £5 on three occasions (the last, 'in full satisfaction for works about the Market Hall'); and on a final occasion, well into the year 1628/9, he is paid no less than £10 'towards the building of the New Shambles', the new market complex arising on the site of the now-abandoned original Guildhall. Could we perhaps identify him as a major player in the 'Palladianisation' of the new Guildhall?

Scant reference the following year 1628/9 to work on the new Guildhall suggests that it was nearing completion, an impression confirmed by the expenditure of £4.13.0d on twenty-four loads of cobblestones. The flooring of the arcaded 'market', now being found a new home elsewhere, must surely represent a last stage. These records, slender though they are, suggest that over this period work was concentrated more on the upper floor than the open market below; but that, hand-in-hand with this conversion of the original loft into an area capable of furnishing the space and services the old medieval Guildhall could no longer provide, there was a deliberate attempt to 'Palladianise' the resulting structure, to give it an up-to-date impressiveness worthy of a growing city.

The Council Minutes and the Stuart Guildhall's later years

It was from the Council Minutes that Trevor Fawcett had, from infrequent references to the fabric of the Stuart Guildhall, been able to piece together the story of its later years and sad decline. He generously shared his findings with me, and I was able to locate the minute of 28 December

1657, wherein it was agreed 'that a chimney be built on the east side of the Guildhall'. Later drawings do indeed show a chimney, but on the west side. Perhaps the secretary misheard, or plans changed. A half-century of silence on the Guildhall fabric follows, broken on 27 June 1710 when it was resolved that the Town Hall be sashed and wainscotted. Gilmore's illustrations (figs.2a and 2b) provide our only clue to the appearance of the original windows; were they perhaps lengthened to accommodate the new, fashionable style? As to the second part of the resolution, this must refer either to repairing or replacing existing wainscoting, since the Chamberlain's Accounts of 1627/8 refer to the payment of 5/- to John Bevill for 'colouring the wainscott'. At all events, the resolution was not immediately followed up; and it was not until 16 May 1718 that £100 was given 'towards the work' by Robert Gay of London (subsequently made Honorary Freeman of the City, and Member of Parliament for Bath), whose memory is enshrined in the street which bears his name. Within two years the wainscoting was done and, we learn from the Accounts of 7 September 1720, paid for.

And then on 1 December 1724, in the mayoralty of Thomas Atwood, the Council 'agreed that the Guildhall be added to, subject to such alteration as should be thought proper by this Corporation; all charges to be paid by the Chamber of this City'. Now it was that William Killigrew came to be employed as architect of the extension, work on which was clearly under way six months later when – 10 May 1725 – it was agreed that 'the sum of £200 shall be taken up on bond from this Corporation of Walter Estcourt, Esq., at 11% to pay the workmen employed to finish the additional buildings to the Guildhall'. This work included the demolition of the now superfluous staircase within the old market, which must have left unsightly scars; and within two years, on 11 April 1727, it was agreed that the 'remaining part of the ground under the Guildhall be vaulted in the same manner as the other is, at the charge of the Chamber of this City'. The term 'vaulting' provides important evidence, implying internal columns as at Tetbury.

In spite of improvements and additions, all was far from well with the older part of the building; by 1747 cast-iron props were needed. Eleven years later the roof required repair; and by 1760 the situation was such that on 19 May a decision was taken that the Town Hall 'be newly built in a more commodious place'. Yet progress was sluggish: three years later moves were afoot to purchase land, but it was not until 1764 that a committee of seven was appointed to consider proposals for a new Guildhall. Final plans had still not been decided when, somewhat

prematurely, the Mayor laid a foundation stone on 11 February 1768. Uncertainty continued and when, seven years later, in July 1775, the plans of Warr Atwood (a member of the original committee) were at last adopted, a fierce public controversy erupted. Thomas Jelly and John Palmer put forward what they claimed to be a cheaper and better plan, and the dispute went before an arbitrator from Bristol. Matters were finally resolved only when Atwood's sudden death that same year put a stop to the wranglings, and within a year the new Baldwin building was rising resplendent on the High Street's eastern side. This is Bath's third and present Guildhall.

Such was the protracted sixteen-year finale to the story of the Stuart Guildhall. But before we leave it something should be said of its interior, by way of a postscript. The great hall had been handsomely extended when the 1724 annexe was built; but whether the whole of the floor space above the old market was now given over to a single hall, and just how the extension was laid out, we have no means of knowing. However, by comparing the limited space available in the old building with what the later Baldwin Guildhall provided (its great Banqueting Hall alone covered 3,200 square feet as opposed to its predecessor's 1,800), one sees why by the late eighteenth century the Stuart Guildhall, with its dilapidated older part and hardly capacious extension, was deemed ripe for replacement. In the new building the ground floor alone contained a separate Judiciary Court as well as an office for the Town Clerk, a Records Room, a Weighing House and rooms for jurymen and prisoners; while on the first floor was a separate Council Room. When one looks at its Stuart predecessor one can only marvel that so much was compressed into so small a space, and that from it was administered a city that had, during the building's lifetime, grown tenfold from two to twenty thousand.

One thing we do know of the Stuart building after 1724 is that it had begun to develop another role still played by today's Guildhall: acting not only as the city's civic heart, but also serving as a showplace for paintings and fine plate, and curiosities pertaining to the history of the city – an inchoate municipal art gallery and museum. We hear of portraits of Frederick, Princess of Wales and Princess Augusta on either side of the great window at the north end of the hall, and at the opposite end William Hoare's portrait of Beau Nash over the door, and by it that of General Wade. We hear too of portraits, presented by General Wade himself in 1728, of all the then Aldermen and Councillors. These last, commissioned from the artist Johann van Diest, must have presented

a daunting spectacle: with Mayor, Aldermen, Constables, Bailiffs and other Councilmen, there could well have been up to thirty paintings on display. Eight survive, and each measures 4 feet by 3 feet 4 inches;²⁵ even if hung cheek by jowl they would have occupied much precious wall space in the new wing, for as the model makes clear, there would have been insufficient space between the great hall's windows.

Against this busy background other items also were on display, including not only Roman coins but also the famous Head of Minerva, thought initially to be of Apollo, doubtless to the delight of the elder Wood. In his 1735 *Survey of Bath* he singles out as the most noteworthy feature of the Guildhall, a 'curious Antique Head, supposed of Apollo, dug up in Staul Street in the year 1728'. Not until 1797 would the House of Antiquities be built opposite the Cross Bath to house such finds; the building where today, sole survivors and mute witnesses of the Stuart Guildhall's curious and largely forgotten history, the painted statues of King Coel and King Edgar still gaze out over the city as once they did above the High Street two and a half centuries ago.

Notes

1. I must acknowledge Trevor Fawcett's generous help and advice and his ground-breaking research into the Stuart Guildhall. See in particular the *History of Bath Research Group Newsletter* 17, January 1992 (now available on the Bath Past website) and *Bath Administer'd: Corporation Affairs at the 18th Century Spa* (Ruton, Bath, 2001), p.53.
2. I am indebted to Katharine Wall of the Victoria Art Gallery both for this information and much other help.
3. See Jane Root, 'Thomas Baldwin: His Public Career in Bath 1775-1793', *Bath History* vol.V (Millstream Books, Bath, 1994) pp.80-103.
4. A print of 1779 after Malton's watercolour, c.1777, may be seen in *Images of Bath* by James Lees-Milne and David Ford (Saint Helena Press, Richmond-on-Thames, 1982) no.661.
5. Susan Sloman, *Gainsborough in Bath* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2002), illustrated on p.11.
6. I am grateful to Susan Sloman for her help here.
7. An entry in the Chamberlain's Accounts for 1612/13 records an expenditure of 8/2d on the 'Market Loft Windows'.
8. *Bath Advertiser* No.6, 22 November 1755. In Letter VI: 'stairs out of the Market House ... reduced [the area of] that Room [2 squares and a half] to a double Square'.
9. John Wood, Senior, *Essay towards a Description of Bath*, 3rd edn. (Bathoe and Lownds, 1765), p.317: 'each End [of the Guildhall] contained two of the like apertures'.
10. Chamberlain's Accounts 1627/8: 'to William Dalton for 2 cagements for the great Window'.
11. Council Minutes for 28 December 1657.

12. Elizabeth Holland, 'The Earliest Bath Guildhall', *Bath History*, vol.II (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1988), p.170.
13. This was built by the Corporation in 1797 as the House of Antiquities, to house curiosities previously displayed in the Guildhall. Its architect was John Palmer (1738-1817), who succeeded Thomas Baldwin as City Architect.
14. Quoted in the *Bath and Bristol Guide*, 3rd edn. by Thomas Boddeley, 1755.
15. The memoir is available in Bath Reference Library, in both manuscript and typescript form.
16. T. Mowl and B. Earnshaw, *John Wood, Architect of Obsession* (Millstream Books, Bath, 1988), p.51.
17. Walter Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath* (Faber and Faber, 1948), pp.99, 122.
18. Elizabeth Holland, *op.cit.*, pp.163-179.
19. *ibid.*, p.168.
20. Stephen Bird, 'The Earliest Map of Bath', *Bath History*, vol. I (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1986), p.130 and *passim*. The whole article is of great interest in this connection.
21. Barry Cunliffe, *The City of Bath* (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1986), p.80 illustrates this.
22. David Verey, *Gloucestershire: The Cotswolds*, 2nd edn. (Buildings of England, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986), p.450.
23. Michael Forsyth, *Bath* (Pevsner Architectural Guides, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003), p.174 where the centre of Eveleigh's Camden Crescent is described as 'committing the solecism of having five columns, i.e. an even number of bays'.
24. *Bath Advertiser* No.7, November 29th 1755, Letter VII.
25. One of these (the portrait of Henry Atwood) was included in the exhibition 'Pickpocketing the Rich', Holburne Museum of Art, Bath, 2002, cat. no.1, p.31.