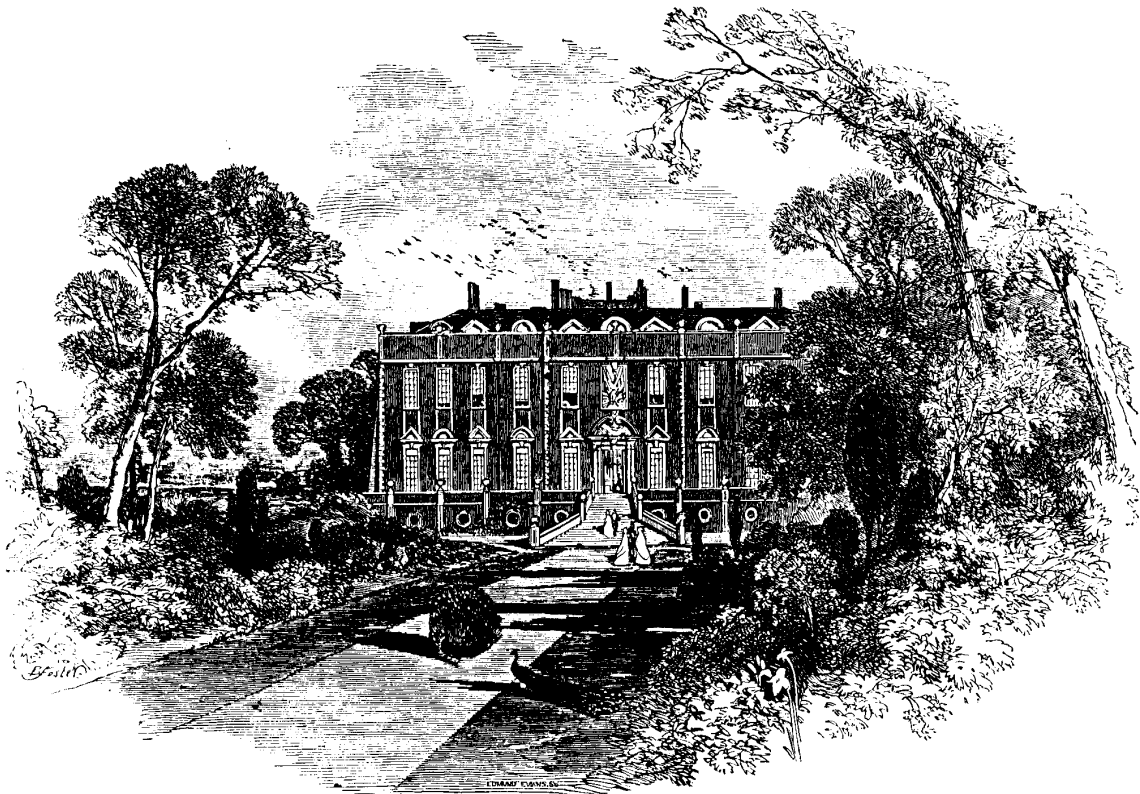


The main building phases of the present Croxteth Hall.

1. *The Elizabethan House c.1575*
2. *The Queen Anne wing 1702 - 1714*
3. *Georgian Additions 1760 - 1805*
4. *Nursery Wing (Architect T.H. Wyatt) 1874 - 1877*
5. *West wing (Architect J. McVicar Anderson) 1902 - 1904*

The house today reflects several phases of building. The remains of what must have been a fairly small Elizabethan house can be seen incorporated into the east wing south of the gatehouse. The Queen Anne wing to the south was completed in the early eighteenth century and marks a period in which the Molyneux family took up permanent residence at Croxteth. Alterations and additions continued and a west wing (since replaced) was added. Several schemes for further enlargement were considered in the early and mid nineteenth century and all involved the demolition of the sixteenth century work. Finally a design by T.H. Wyatt which retained the old house was accepted and building work was carried out between 1874 and 1877. Most of Wyatt's work was in a Victorian Tudor style. However, he was also responsible for the dining room in the southeast and the corresponding entrance block at the opposite end of the Queen Anne wing. Both these additions copied the pattern of the Queen Anne facade and the same technique was used by J. McVicar Anderson when he rebuilt most of the west wing between 1902 and 1904.



CROXTETH HALL, NEAR LIVERPOOL, THE SEAT OF THE EARL OF SEFTON

QUEEN ANNE WING

The Queen Anne or south wing of the Hall has possibly the most interesting architectural features. It is constructed of brick with stone dressings and was built between 1702 and 1714. The main floor stands on a terrace which has big circular and oval windows. The terrace was extended either side of the facade as part of Wyatt's scheme. The windows of the main floor with their alternate triangular and segmental pediments are not well balanced and the spacing becomes cramped at either end of the facade.



The portal features coupled Corinthian columns, a large frieze and an open segmental pediment with the Molyneux coat of arms.

Over the portal was placed a sculptured design of weapons and battle honours (left) recording the family's military past. For 200 years this imposing doorway was the front entrance to Croxteth Hall.

GATEHOUSE AND NURSERY WING (N.E. CORNER & NORTH WING)



This section of the Hall is all part of Wyatt's design carried out between 1874 and 1877. The Victorian Tudor style complements the remaining Elizabethan work and is pleasing but not outstanding architecturally. The arms of the 4th Earl of Sefton (who paid for the wing) are set above the gatehouse arch and a date stone is present over the terrace. The interiors remain largely unaltered.

THE WEST WING (PRESENT FRONT DOOR)

The first west wing seems to have been built about 1760 and consisted of an 'L' shaped addition to the Queen Anne wing. A single storey bakery and brew-house, probably added later, continued the wing northwards. Externally the west wing resembled a Georgian town house. Further alterations are believed to have taken place around 1805.

Wyatt rebuilt part of the wing in the 1870's. The Georgian entrance was lengthened and the facade altered to match that of his new dining room. The adjoining Georgian building was left unaltered externally but the service block was enlarged (to complete a uniform building line from north to south) and was completed in a rustic Tudor style with buttressed walls and very small windows.

The present wing by J. McVicar Anderson was completed between 1902 and 1904. The style united Wyatt's entrance with his north wing. A new, dated, portico with a segmental pediment carrying the coat of arms was erected north of the earlier entrances, no longer affording direct access to the main staircase. The decorative detail on the parapet echoes that of the Queen Anne wing and includes a duplicate of the panel depicting a man, presumed to be the 18th century stonemason.

The interior is quite successful. The Edwardian grand staircase and the main corridor are of particular note.

Centrally above the door is a stone with the monogram and coronet of William Viscount Molyneux, flanked by the peacock feathers of the Molyneux crest. On the underside is the date 1702, (a spout-head dated 1693 on the west side of the terrace is a replacement brought from Altcar and does not give the true date of the building).

Above the coat of arms is a large sculptured panel depicting trophies of war dating from various periods of the Molyneux' military past, and above this again the family crest, a cap with peacock feathers. (The crest together with the Earl's coronet also features on some of the spout-heads.)

The interior was gutted by fire in 1952 and only a few of the rooms have been reinstated.

ELIZABETHAN HOUSE AND VICTORIAN DINING ROOM (EAST WING)

The oldest part of the Hall probably dates from between 1575 and 1600. Although now partly hidden by the kitchens added by Wyatt, some of the gabled upper storey of this brick building remains visible, with stone dressings and mullioned windows. Internally, the Elizabethan house has been altered, although some original wall lines can be traced. A 16th century nail-studded oak door remains, but probably not in its original position.

Wyatt's dining room links the 16th century remains to the work of 1702/14. In the past it has been attributed to McVicar Anderson, but it was Wyatt who first rationalised and reproduced the style of the Queen Anne facade in brick and sandstone. The interior of the room is wood panelled and also features imitation 17th century stucco.

THE COURTYARD

The courtyard serves to emphasise the additive nature of the Hall. The rear of the sixteenth century house would appear to have been enlarged by the addition of two gabled bays. Only the north gable remains, that now occupying the northerly position is a later addition probably added when the earlier second gable was demolished. The single storey building in front also seems to date from this period.

Some early brickwork remains above the bay on the south side although most of the work is nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Interestingly, the line of the doorway on the west side is the same as that which existed in the late eighteenth century. (The coat of arms set above the door came originally from Sefton Hall, the earlier seat of the Molyneux family.) Of Wyatt's work the brick vaulted gatehouse is perhaps most interesting.

ESTATE BUILDINGS

STABLE BLOCK - Late 17th century/early 18th century - pleasant collection of buildings; clock tower and interesting coach wash.

DAIRY - 1861/2 by W.E. Nesfield - fine building with tiled interior and painted ceiling by Albert Moore. (Laundry also by Nesfield, 1864)

HOME FARM - 19th century - a model Victorian Farm.

KENNELS - Several periods - 1902/5 alterations by J. Douglas.