

presented with a light touch in terms of political significance but as crucial moments of the reuse of space and sometimes physical destruction. The Catholic chapels at Denmark House and St James's were sacked during the civil war, and the Capuchin friars violently removed from the former. Royal patronage of buildings had come to be seen as foreign and absolutist, not just through the formalities at court and its lavish entertainments, but in architectural style. Yet there was continuity during the republican interlude since, as protector from 1653 to 1658, Cromwell had to receive ambassadors and live with his 'first family' in a dignified manner. After the Restoration, monarchy adopted the outward show of continental absolutism with display replacing real political power. The continental practice of placing the royal bed in an alcove, distancing and framing the sovereign in a symbolic way, disguised that he or she actually slept in a private and smaller room nearby. The celebration of sovereigns among the ancient gods in the wall and ceiling paintings of Verrio and Thornhill at Hampton Court and Greenwich gave the later Stuarts a seemingly illustrious, powerful ancestry, but the monarch was in reality in a quasi-mystical yet powerless position, the palaces becoming 'hollow citadels of ceremony'. It is this evolution of the monarchy, played out in changing spaces and styles of building, that is Thurley's main focus.

One charge laid at the door of the great *History of the King's Works* (1963–82) was that, for all its thorough documentary record, it opted out of a 'view', a 'history' of the buildings it chronicled. But this is unfair since it was an official, government-sponsored record of royal expenditure. Thurley gives us both, for having documented royal palaces through monographs, *Houses of Power* and *Palaces of Revolution* provide the broader historical commentary across two centuries that these buildings deserve. There are useful colour illustrations and sufficient black-and-white, though many of the latter are rather pale and indistinct, even allowing for a book of modest physical dimensions. One very welcome feature is the inclusion of plans, both new and modified from the author's detailed plans in earlier books. These plans raise all manner of questions about privacy, security, ceremony and worship for yet further consideration of the royal palaces' variety of form and their continual adaptation.

Maurice Howard is professor emeritus of history of art at the University of Sussex

Frank Kelsall and Timothy Walker, *Nicholas Barbon: Developing London, 1667–1698* (London: London Topographical Society, 2022), vii and 230 pp. incl. colour and b&w ills, ISBN 9780902087736, £35
doi:10.1017/arh.2023.18

Reviewed by ELIZABETH McKELLAR

This very welcome publication provides the most in-depth account to date of the pioneering late seventeenth-century property developer Nicholas Barbon (c. 1638–98). The book is the fruits of a lifetime's work by Frank Kelsall and sits securely on a vast

well of primary research that is exceptional in its scope and depth. As one would expect of a London Topographical Society publication, the book is extremely well illustrated, including very useful annotated maps and plans for most of the developments. The society is to be congratulated for going beyond the scope of its usual output in supporting the publication of a full biography of one of the most important figures in London's urban history.

The period covered by the book represents the totality of Barbon's thirty-year career as a 'projector' of fire insurance and property development, two areas in which his activities were mutually reinforcing. Barbon began his small-scale speculations after the fire of 1666; previously he had studied at Oxford and then qualified as a doctor in the Netherlands. Kelsall and Walker locate Barbon firmly in his family context and provide a balanced account of the ways in which he was both influenced by, and diverged from, his Puritan upbringing as the son of the well-known preacher and parliamentarian Praise God Barbon. One of the strengths of the book is in discussing the religious and political context of the Restoration capital. This is particularly revealing with regard to the circumstances in which Barbon's renowned tracts, such as *An Apology for the Builder* (1685) and *A Discourse of Trade* (1690), were produced. Barbon is equally well known as a political economist, as the authors rightly insist on calling him, who anticipated Adam Smith in his advocacy of the free market and was cited by Karl Marx. They reveal that his publications were often written as interventions in parliamentary political debates, such as over interest rates, land banks and the controversy over the recoinage, especially following his election as MP for Bramber in 1690.

Architectural historians will be keen to discover what new insights can be gleaned from the book about London's growth and Barbon's controversial business practices. Here, again, Kelsall and Walker do not disappoint. The biography provides for the first time in-depth accounts of all Barbon's development sites and operations, as well as the networks of people with whom he worked. These are arranged chronologically showing how he expanded from his early sites in the City, through the redevelopment of Essex and Exeter Houses in the Strand (which formed the financial foundation of his business), to his expansion into the West End in Soho, Westminster and finally Holborn. The latter was to prove his nemesis in the 1690s. His attempt to stitch together a series of sites in different ownerships proved overly ambitious and he over-extended himself financially at a time when both credit and willing builders were in short supply.

The book reinforces the account given by Roger North (c. 1653–1734) — still the most vivid description of the man — that Barbon was primarily a speculator, whose mode of making money was through buildings, and that his primary interest was in the development value of sites. He only acted as a builder, which meant subcontracting the construction work to craftsmen, when he was unable to find others to take on the building leases and was forced to do so. The authors probably go as far as anyone can in untangling Barbon's financing operations and provide an excellent account of the complexities involved in a new credit-based system, founded on the trading of mortgages and leases, but one in which the banking system was embryonic at best. There is also a great deal of new information on the legal context in which the building industry operated, but the authors argue that Barbon's reputation for being litigious has been exaggerated. Although he features in the Court of Chancery records at least twice

as many times as all the other main builders put together, most of his cases never came to trial, suggesting that he settled out of court beforehand. Kelsall and Walker are keen to defend Barbon from accusations of strong-arm tactics — for example, with regard to the battle in Red Lion Fields, they argue that it was the lawyers of Gray's Inn who were to blame for the fight and that his workmen were simply standing their ground. They are also critical of those who opposed new building on the basis of what they deem 'nimbyism' and, in this reviewer's opinion, underplay the environmental pollution and social and psychological dislocation that it caused. The secondary literature regarding this point is not cited, and in general the architectural and social literature (for example, on major issues such as modernity, building practice and house types) is somewhat under-referenced, particularly in comparison with the much fuller citations for the economic and political scholarship.

Although understandably keen to keep a tight focus on its subject, this biography reinforces Barbon's centrality to what I have termed 'The Birth of Modern London'. His position as the most prolific exponent, if not the inventor, of what North called 'this new method of building' comes through clearly, as does his role in using the novel means of financing and inventive manipulation of the leasehold system. His role as one of the most powerful and public advocates of urban commercial society in his writings is advanced even further in this account. It also gives us a new appreciation of his deployment of parliamentary and legal processes to further his property and insurance schemes. Although the authors reject the notion of 'the Barbon house', due to the limited number that he was directly responsible for building, at the same time they acknowledge that the inexorable logic of the system that he pioneered led the way to the modern property market — in which brick boxes are still being churned out in vast numbers in speculative schemes up and down the country today.

Elizabeth McKellar is professor emerita of architectural history at the Open University

Conor Lucey, ed., *House and Home in Georgian Ireland: Spaces and Cultures of Domestic Life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2022), 216 pp. incl. colour ills, ISBN 9781801510264, €45
doi:10.1017/arh.2023.19

Reviewed by ANNA MORAN

The study of domestic life in eighteenth-century Britain, Europe and North America is a rich area of scholarship that has grown considerably in recent years, with pioneering work by scholars such as Amanda Vickery, Bernard Herman, Jon Stobart and Karen Lipsedge. It would be reasonable to expect that domestic life in Ireland during this period would have been subject to similar scrutiny. However, the ways in which rooms and spaces were lived in and experienced in Georgian Ireland have not received the sustained attention they deserve, despite a growing literature on Irish domestic