

WOLVERTON HALL: THE ONLY FOLLY IS TO CALL IT A FOLLY

A *folly*; an ornamental building with no practical purpose built in a large garden. Whilst aspects of this definition can be applied to describe Wolverton Hall Folly, it certainly contradicts the 'practical purpose' element with the most appealing of purposes. Wolverton Hall Folly is a retreat for contemplation, an office away from home, a place to entertain and somewhere to enjoy the views, sun and a good book. Can we therefore call this beautiful building a folly?



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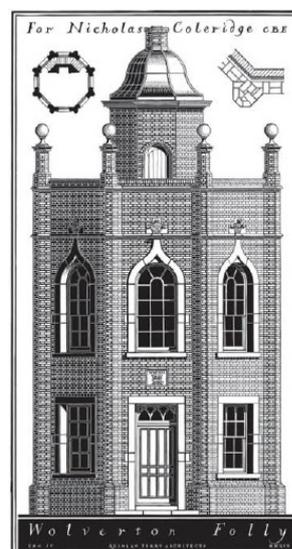
Constructed in an octagonal design, the exquisite architecture was the vision of owner Nicholas Coleridge and his wife, who took inspiration from the 16th Century banqueting house at Long Melford in Suffolk.

Mr Coleridge's vision was safely invested in Quinlan Terry Architects to make it a reality. Who better than Mr Terry, the leading classicist of his generation and a name synonymous with numerous country houses, to impose the grace and splendour deserved of such a project? Unbeknown to Mr Coleridge at the time of appointment, follies are also a keen interest of Mr Terry.

The decision was made to site the folly a few dozen steps from the main house in the beautiful walled garden, a convenient location for its functions as both an office and a room to entertain, as well as a place to enjoy the garden.

Standing 46ft tall with a parapet, the stairs emerge through a turret onto the flat roof with views of the garden and far beyond. Ogee arches surround the upper floor windows and burst out as acanthus leaves, whilst the shaped buttresses on each of the eight corners end in ball finials against the skyline. All the rooms are flooded with light from sash windows.

Brick was really the only choice of material for this inspiring building in order to tie in with the existing 18th Century house, complement its environment and ensure that in years to come no one would suspect the modern age of the folly. Charnwood's ability to tailor-make products to exact specifications with a premium finish made its brick the ideal choice. The orange hues of the Henley Red brick from Michelmersh's Charnwood factory offered the opportunity to introduce a handmade texture which was designed to the specific dimensions of 2", in keeping with the building's mix of Tudor and Georgian design. The brickwork was given wide mortar joints and complemented with stonework to give the façade a brightness.



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Mr Eric Cartwright, Quinlan Terry Architects, added: "Great care was taken in the selection of brick, which needed to be handmade for the 2" Tudor design and all the special shapes required. The Henley Red Blend gave a good colour match with the existing house and had the perfect character and texture to make the building look handmade. The building was rigorously set out and carefully built by J Rigg Construction of Broadway. The brick was also available at an affordable price which was crucial in keeping to a very tight budget."



With an array of special shaped bricks, 24 moulds in total, each one was meticulously drawn in full size for Charnwood's mould makers to replicate. The team at Charnwood carefully constructed the angles and curves needed to create the size and shape of the Folly's features. With over 36,000 bricks and specials it was important to ensure that everything from the plans to production and delivery was organised and seamless.

Responsible for production at Charnwood, Steve Bowns commented: "Our pattern makers used scale 1:1 drawings to handmade the moulds for the varying sizes and shapes of each special to complement the intricacies and fenestration details of the façades of the Folly. Our production team ensured that the technical properties were correct for each brick and a production schedule was drawn up to deliver product in ascending order from lower level angles to the cappings for the parapet. The Folly project is another positive example of high Michelmersh standards, where departments cross-collaborate efficiently to ensure the project was delivered accurately and on time, according to the architect's building plan, using the highest quality handmade products."

Perhaps in the case of Wolverton Hall Folly, an older meaning of the word 'folly' as a delight or favourite abode is much more fitting.