HOUSES IN ROMAN BRITAIN

A study in architecture and urban society

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HOUSES IN ROMAN BRITAIN: A study in architecture and urban society.

This thesis surveys the evidence for Romano-British houses, with an emphasis on the imported and urban traditions that witness the influence of empire on province. The sample is therefore biased towards high status sites with complex spatial arrangements (i.e. town houses and villas).

Chapter 1 explains the value of architecture in the study of social arrangements.

Chapter 2 sets the Romano-British evidence in context by summarising research on the origins of the Roman house. Although the northwest provinces generated a distinct vernacular tradition this was inspired by architectural concepts developed in the eastern Mediterranean.

Chapter 3 describes construction techniques, and charts a progression from timber and earth-walled buildings to masonry and concrete constructions. Details of building elevation and interior decoration are also considered. Chapter 4 describes the different types of room encountered. Houses were commonly set out over two principal wings, with the main reception rooms found in the rear wing. A portico leading from a front entrance and affording views over gardens and yards usually linked these areas. Building typologies are also described, offering a refinement of previous classificatory systems.

The work concludes with a summary of chronological developments and changing social arrangements (Chapter 6). Britain boasted a distinctive range of local architectural styles that were the product of evolving fashion on the period AD 75-150. It is argued, however, that British society was no more or less 'Roman' than provincial society elsewhere in the empire. From the second century onwards there was a progressive move of social activities from the public sphere to the private one, as houses became increasingly important as a forum for the display of social relationships and as places for the representation and reproduction of wealth.
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f: ditto with porch entrance (Type D.IVe.2), Verulamium 4,1. g: ditto with rear wings of less evident importance (Type D.IVe.3), Winchester 23,1. h: L-shaped town houses with a rear reception wing and 'Silchester' porch where the rear wing is a reduced feature (Type D.IVf.1): Silchester 7,3. i: standard type – where the rear wing consisted of one or two main reception rooms Type (D.IVf.3), Silchester 9,3.

Fig. 73. Building I at Colliton Park, Dorchester. An L-shaped town house with disarticulated wings (Type D.IVe.5). The reception wing, to the west, was a complicated variation on the standard type, whilst the modest suite of main rooms to the south.

Fig. 74. Silchester, House 8,1. An L-shaped town house (Type D.IVf.4). The plan is typical of Silchester. The entrance porch (Room 1, Type E3) was separated from the rest of the house by a portico. The main rooms were arranged in two wings. The wing gable-end to the street contained living rooms which flanked a central reception room (Room 5, type Q) opposite a garden 'porch' (Room 6, type E5). The main reception rooms were set in a separate heated wing at the rear of the building (Rooms 11 and 12; type R).

Fig. 75. U-Shaped town houses. a: Buildings of irregular plan (Type D.Va), Verulamium 28,1-2. b: Buildings set out around a central courtyard (Type D.Vb): Verulamium 4,8.

Fig. 76. Courtyard houses. a: L-shaped buildings with enclosed courtyards (Type D.VI.a.1), Silchester 17,1. b: Two-range houses (Type D.VIa.3), Silchester 6,1. c: L-shaped buildings and workhall (Type D.VI.a.2), Silchester 19,2. d: Buildings with principle ranges of rooms on three sides of a peristyle courtyard (Type D.VIb), Colchester Lion Walk 20.

Fig. 77. Courtyard houses. a: Elongated courtyard (Type D.VIc), Caerwent 2 S. b: Courtyard house without full peristyle (Type D.VId.1), Caerwent
7 N. c: Courtyard house with peristyle (Type D.VId.2), Caerwent
3 S. d: Large courtyard house (Type D.VIe), Verulamium 3,2.


Fig. 79. Cottage’ and ‘corridor’ villas. a: Simple Row villa (Type E.I), Park Street. b: Portico villas with central reception room (E.IIa), Feltwell. c: Portico villa with central room and porch (E.IIb), Ashtead. d: Portico villa with end reception rooms and central hall (E.IId.1), Marshfield. e: Portico villa with end reception room and central passage (E.IIe), Rapsley. f: Portico villa with pseudo-pavilions and central reception rooms (E.IIf), Sparsholt. g: Portico villa with pseudo-pavilion and end reception room (E.IIg1), Pitney.


Fig. 81. L-Shaped and U-shaped villas. a: Whittington Court (Type E. IVb2). b: Atworth (Type E. IVb3). c: Folkstone (Type E.Va)

Fig. 82. The villa at West Park, Rockbourne, Hants (from RCHME 1983). The main building was L-shaped, with a large wing reception room (3) in the N wing.

Fig. 83. The villa at Darenth, Kent (from Payne 1897).

Fig. 84. The courtyard villa at Fishbourne (Type E.VIa) (from Cunliffe 1971)

Fig. 85. The courtyard villa at Chedworth (Type E.VIb).

Fig. 86. The courtyard villa at Bignor (from Frere 1982)
Changing types of wall construction used in the houses of Verulamium as reported on by Frere (1983a). The evidence of partial reconstructions and refurbishments is not included, and as a consequence the figure fails to illustrate some evidence for the use of timber in the later period. Where the date of a house is uncertain the building appears as a fraction divided equally between the relevant columns. The late 3rd century peak includes buildings of c. AD 300, and the early 4th century is consequently under-represented.
Preface

This thesis has taken a long time to complete. The bulk of the research was undertaken more than ten years ago (1985-7), at a time when the subject of Roman domestic architecture seemed neglected. Many important works on the social archaeology of houses and on Roman housing have since appeared (e.g. Wallace-Hadrill 1988; Kent 1990; Samson 1990; de Albentiis 1990; Clarke 1991; Adam 1994; Locoock 1994; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Johnson and Hayes 1996; Lawrence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997), and it has been an interesting challenge to keep abreast of this work.

The initial intention had been to survey contrasting regional patterns of housing throughout the Roman Empire. The need to complete this work imposed pragmatic constraint over such ambition, and the survey is instead restricted to a study of Romano-British houses with an emphasis on the imported and urban traditions that witness the influence of empire on province. Even within this restricted study area much more could have been achieved from a closer measurement of change, and by subjecting such measurement to a broader range of analysis. The adoption of more realistic parameters has, however, made it possible to present an interim overview of what is known about Roman houses in a closely researched province.

The principal objective of this work, as enshrined in its title and explained in Chapter 1, is to approach the study of Romano-British urban society from a study of Romano-British houses. Contextual information was sought from both archaeological and historical sources, and is summarised in Chapter 2. This is drawn on more fully in the most substantial part of the study, which offers detailed descriptions of building form, fabric and function. This description addresses a sample group of houses - deliberately biased towards higher status sites - and describes the methods of construction employed (Chapter 3), the character and likely functions of the most frequently encountered room types (Chapter 4), and the building types identified (Chapter 5).

The work concludes with a discussion that outlines chronological developments and reviews the inferences that can be drawn about changing social arrangements (Chapter 6). A summary catalogue of the main buildings described is appended (index of sites).

Amongst the conclusions that can be drawn, the following points are closest to the heart of this thesis, and deserve early emphasis:
• Roman houses offer insight into economic and social arrangements: evidently so with regard to material aspects of house design, such as functional arrangements and the considered display of wealth and status; and potentially so in fields of study such as belief systems and culture, where a greater degree of interpretation is required in order to derive meaning from the archaeological evidence.

• The reading of Roman houses requires interpretation, and the ancient world at large offers contextual information in the understanding of such houses in Britain. Recent research has tended to seek explanation for the cultural peculiarities of Roman Britain in local and regional tradition (e.g. Hingley 1989). This has helped focus attention on the ways in which Roman culture could be differently interpreted in the different provinces of empire, but has marginalised important sources of contextual evidence such as the writings of Roman authors and the evidence of Italian and Mediterranean architectural traditions. It has also encouraged a view of Romano-British culture that understates its subordination to ideas common throughout the empire. In order to review the role of Roman imperial culture in the creation of Britain's first urban society this thesis gives more weight to the evidence of the Latin sources and the architecture to which those sources refer (i.e. the evidence of Rome, Ostia and Pompeii) than is currently fashionable.

• There is considerable dialogue between the architecture of town houses and villa houses, and the study of these two forms of house can not sensibly be divorced.

• The emergence of Romano-British building types has to be viewed in the context of the current debate on Romanisation and cultural identity: Roman style houses gained currency because of their relevance to emergent Romano-British social and power structures.

• There was a progressive move of social activities from the public sphere to the private one, such that houses became increasingly important as a forum for the development and display of social and political relationships.

• The periods of change in housing fashion and preference in Roman Britain reflect more broadly based patterns of change within the province. These can be
summarised as follows:

**Phase 1**: the introduction of Roman forms of housing at selective, mostly urban, sites in the decades immediately following the conquest.

**Phase 2**: a period of creative dialogue between imported concepts and their indigenous exploitation during the late first and early second centuries AD. By the middle of the second century a distinctive range of Romano-British house-types had been established.

**Phase 3**: a period of more conservative fashion in the late second and third centuries, perhaps reflecting reduced social mobility.

**Phase 4**: a period of increased investment in private reception facilities and high-status interior decoration most evident in the late third and early fourth centuries, and witnessing social competition within a prosperous Romano-British elite.

**Phase 5**: the decline of practices that privileged investment in property as a means of status display from the middle of the fourth century, eventually associated with the more general redundancy of Roman socio-economic models.

- The importance of Celtic, rather than Classical, models of Romano-British social life, has been stressed in recent studies, but attempts to identify a peculiarly British approach to partible inheritance fail to convince. It is argued here that there is no good reason to believe that British society was any more or less 'Roman' (however this might be defined) than provincial society elsewhere in the empire.

- Notwithstanding the clear influence of imported ideas, Britain boasted a distinctive range of local styles of domestic architecture. Regional fashion suggests that Romano-British group identity was more influenced by community of place than by community of class.

Because this work has taken so long to finish some passages of text originally intended for inclusion here have been published elsewhere (Perring 1987, 1989, 1991b, 1991c: Perring and Roskams 1991). Most of these have been excised from the thesis.
(although the chapter on cellars is an edited version of work already published).

Acknowledgements

My interest in Romano-British domestic architecture dates back to excavations at Watling Court in the City of London in 1978-9, and my initial study of London’s early Roman houses owes much to the help of John Schofield and Steve Roskams. I am also grateful to John Wacher for encouraging me to take up a Research Scholarship at the University of Leicester in 1985, and for his guidance during my first two years of research. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill added enormously to the pleasure of my stay at Leicester, and did much to expand my interest in the classical background to Romano-British urbanism. During this period Roger Martlew was kind enough to help in my early experimentation with computerised databases and other colleagues at the University combined to provide a stimulating forum in which to develop ideas.

Since leaving Leicester in 1989 I have had frustratingly little time to concentrate on this study, but have been fortunate to work alongside colleagues able to lighten the burden of my other responsibilities at critical moments. In this regard I would particularly like to thank both the GLAAS team at English Heritage and the AUB/ACRE team in Beirut (especially Helga Seeden) for their patience and their encouragement. My family has made even greater sacrifices to the same end. My parents-in-law (Giuseppina and Renato Merlo) have extended many kindnesses, not least in offering me a refuge from distraction where most of this text was drafted. My thanks are also due to my father and my brother-in-law (Pier-Luigi Baldi) for their help in kind. Above all I am grateful to Stefania for her help in producing the drawings.

Graeme Barker and David Mattingly at Leicester provided the vital service of setting realistic - if oft ignored - deadlines for the completion of this work. Alan McWhirr and the late Ralph Merrifield supplied useful references (on mudbricks and foundation burials respectively). The much-missed Hugh Chapman kindly drew my attention to his valuable paper on the pottery stands from London. Richard Reece and Rob Young made constructive comments on an early draft of the chapter on cellars. Brian Yule briefed me on the results of his excavations in Southwark, as did Peter Rowsome on discoveries at No 1 Poultry in London and Nick Pearson on his work at Tanners Row in York. Ken Quarlman provided material on recent work in Winchester, and Mick
Jones on discoveries in Lincoln. David Mattingly has additionally read through early drafts of this thesis and suggested several improvements. Tim Williams has shown constant interest in this research and been an invaluable source of ideas and help. I am in particular grateful for the notes and drafts he has shown me from his forthcoming volume on Roman London, East of the Walbrook.

Notwithstanding such help many errors remain. In some cases these are the consequence of my stubborn rejection of wiser council, and in others the result of my late introduction of ill-considered revisions. I remain uniquely responsible for all such faults.
Chapter 1. The nature of the study

1.1. The social context of domestic architecture

It is a commonplace that material culture both structures and is structured by practice; that it plays an active role in the social construction of reality (Hodder 1982, 214; Bailey 1990, 28; Giddens 1984, 374). Nowhere is this truer than in architecture: which "has a direct relationship - rather than a merely symbolic one - to social life, since it provides the material preconditions for the patterns of movement, encounters and avoidance, which are the material realisation - as well as sometimes the generator - of social relations" (Hillier and Hanson 1985, ix).

This theme of architecture as both defining, and being defined by, social activity, has been widely addressed in recent archaeological research (e.g. Tilley 1982; Kent 1990). In the ancient world, as in the modern, houses were designed to provide an appropriate environment for the conduct of domestic and social affairs; and such activities found expression in the way that space was arranged and decorated. Buildings are not only shaped by society but impose constraints on social actions. Different forms of behaviour are made more or less appropriate by the suitability of the surroundings, and because of this buildings can be designed to elicit specific responses. In accepting that space is structured to meet the needs of society, and gives shape to social life, it follows that the spatial organisation of a house ought to shed light on social organisation. The extent to which architecture has social meaning has been explored in some detail within the framework of structuralist and post-processual archaeology (Locock 1994; Parker-Pearson and Richards 1994). It is evident that buildings can be studied for social meaning, and that such studies are best built from an appreciation of context (Hodder 1986, 118; Case 1973). To invest space with meaning, to convert house plans into statements about how houses were used, it is necessary to develop and test models of social behaviour. If they are to be robust, and worth exploring in detail, such models should build on what is known or can be inferred about the subject society. In the design of houses, as with any other artefact, meaning and function can be layered and involve a complex series of references, ranging from the self-explanatory to the impenetrably obscure. It is important to
appreciate how far removed design - in this case architecture and interior decoration - can sometimes become from underlying social realities; and to be aware that the space and symbol can be read differently by different groups (Saunders 1986, 248).

What is clear, however, is that message is intended and conveyed. There is semiotic significance in the appearance of houses, and of the spaces structured within and around them. Architecture is a form of non-verbal communication: a crude and unsubtle language perhaps, but a language none-the-less (Rapoport 1976, 10). Recent work in this field has been much influenced by Hillier and Hanson (1984), who have taken the metaphor of language beyond structuralist theory, and developed a variety of descriptions of spatial organisation based on linguistic form.

There is widespread agreement that spatial forms constrain and mediate change, and that within any given community there is likely to have been a common and coherent language of building design. Such language is, however, mediated by use, and transmitted by individuals. There are extremes of difference in the degree to which individuals depend on the space around them, and wish to shape this to their own ends. There is therefore scope for variety, for ‘expedient improvisation’, within the established normative framework (Hodder 1986, 148). Adaptations and exceptions to the established rules will add to the accepted range of building types, and may eventually contribute to the evolution of new forms based on new rules.

The Roman world made blatant use of architectural language. There are few societies which have so richly documented their social arrangements in architectural form: a circumstance parodied in Petronius’ description of the fictional house of Trimalchio, with its overt, and highly personal, use of image and design to make boastful statements about social aspiration and material status. The lavishly decorated Roman house with its complex use of classical form, its hierarchical use of space, and key place in the contemporary conceptual and material landscape, is an obvious artefact to explore for meaning.

There is a dialogue between symbol and function. Like any other manufacture, buildings are created to meet needs. Houses are machines fashioned for the smooth ordering of domestic affairs, and can be studied as such. Various factors influence the design of these machines, and contribute to the articulation of their morphological and
decorative language. These include:

- traditional, ritual and otherwise socially embedded design fashions
- dynamic imitative fashion, driven by peer-group and rank competition
- availability of resources
- specific functional and household requirements
- responsiveness to environment and landscape
- imposed socio-political constraints, including legal controls
- individual taste

Architectural fashion, in particular in the field of interior design, contributes to definitions of social and cultural identity. There is a tension in the evolution of such fashion: the need to conform to the expectations and norms of a peer-group can be offset by desire to imitate fashions of greater social cachet, and will also be influenced by the degree to which individual identity can be expressed within the externally established parameters.

Houses are usually the products of many hands, and their design may involve negotiation between disparate interests: those of architect, builder, client, owner, tenant, neighbouring landowners and the community at large. Houses are often transformed by different generations of tenants, and can have different meanings to different people at different times. The bolder an original architectural statement, the more likely it is to change in impact and meaning as circumstances change.

The recovery of meaning is further complicated by the limits of archaeological inference. It has been observed with reference to the social interpretation of buildings, that although we can show that there are rules from the evidence, we can not use the rules creatively or predictively (Leach 1978). In order to extract a rewarding degree of sense from the houses of Roman Britain - and despite the reservations expressed above this would still seem to be a worthwhile goal - it is necessary to make certain assumptions about the language that is being used. These assumptions can be tested through continued application, and proved in the face of alternative interpretative models, but should not be mistaken for an objective reality.
Spatial and social order

Space in the Roman world was closely measured, mapped and regulated; the considered drawing of paths and limits was not only practically necessary, but was accorded considerable ritual significance deriving from archaic Roman and Etruscan practice (as Rykwert 1976 and Nicolet 1988). The very concern of classical architecture was the establishment of visual order and hierarchy. The rigorously ordered orthogonal street plans, the centuriation of territories attached to colonial settlements, the close and continued adherence to street and property boundaries, the use of town walls and frontier works to mark out boundaries, cadastral documentation and Roman law all testify to the exercise of firm control over the demarcation and use of space. These controls were instituted primarily to facilitate the division of land, the resolution of property disputes, and the assessment of taxation liability, but also reflected a fundamental concern with man's place in the natural landscape. The way in which space was organised also contributed to the creation of a controlled environment and helped shape the social institutions and attitudes vital to the maintenance of social order (Perring 1991c).

Within the ancient world, as in the modern, property - most importantly land - was both the reward of power and the essential means of its replication (Finley 1973). The built environment offers an unambiguous expression of power: walls, gates, signs and paths establish a control over space that is deliberately stated and readily understood. Additionally elements of building decoration and design incorporate references, usually indirect and symbolic (although not necessarily subtle), which testify to the rank and status of owners and communities. Such articulation of worldly power and influence was a clear feature of the Roman house, which had a key role in the generation of social relationships. The letters of Pliny - which include several descriptions of his property in advertisement of his cultural and economic status - indicate a conscious awareness of this fact. The grandest houses could be designed as monuments to their creators (Bodel 1997).

Houses did not simply declare wealth and importance, but were designed to compete for status or legitimate rank within Roman society. Through the use of high culture, involving references that only the educated could decode; through the pursuit of changing fashion where the limits of taste could be redefined to ensure that the
imitation of elite fashion did not lead to its redundancy as a vehicle for the expression of status; and through various mechanisms of social censure and constraint (including sumptuary laws), access to high status houses could be restricted to those deemed socially entitled to enjoy such status by their peers. The display of wealth was not in itself sufficient to win approval and define status.

Attitudes to status display are inclined to change, as more popular devices for expressing status become redundant through over-use, and as changing social pressures increase or reduce the perceived need for such display. Notwithstanding important changes in the detail of building design, Roman domestic architecture, with its references to urban and civilised society and to the ownership of property, clearly remained an essential indicator of social position, and a dynamic mechanism for the display of social identity and rank throughout the Roman period and in all significant parts of the Roman world.

These houses were vehicles for the exercise of patronage: they demanded deference and reinforced the status quo. It has been observed that the systems of rules represented by Classical order can define an environment that appears fixed and inevitable, and thereby denies its transience. This argument has been extensively explored in the context of Georgian architectural refinement in 18th century Virginian society, where the need for order has been described as a response to increased social pressures and stress (Leone 1984, 25). The contribution that ideology and ritual can make to the justification of power structures and social hierarchies has been stressed in a number of studies (as Tilley 1984), which develop on themes outlined by Weber (1958). The premise is that ideology takes social relations and makes them appear resident in nature or history, and thereby gives them a veneer of permanence that protects them from challenge.

Sarah Scott has explored the ideological and social implications of aspects of interior decoration found in Romano-British houses (Scott 1994 – see also Slofstra 1995), and Hingley has developed a model of the Romano-British house as a representation of the cosmos (Hingley 1990). Both studies emphasise the importance of the design of Romano-British houses as a metaphor for power relations within society, and have perhaps taken the available evidence to the limits of reasonable inference. It is
undeniable, however, that Roman mythology, history and religion were exploited by the elite classes to reinforce social order (Hopkins 1978a; Garnsey and Saller 1987, 163ff), and that architecture included important referents to these ideological constructs. The Roman world order found reflection in Classical architectural order, and the palaces of the rich and powerful were designed to contribute to the communication of an essentially ideological message, in which the owner’s position within the social elite was a key motif. A close examination of any of the more substantial Pompeiian houses, and in particular of the wall paintings, mosaics and graffiti found therein, illustrates the wide range of ‘orders’ - religious, natural, architectural, historical, geometrical, mythological, ancestral, etc. - that were drawn on in house design (as Wallace-Hadrill 1988, Clarke 1991). The use of these images was not simply a matter of demonstrating power, but enhanced status by vaunting learning, taste and sophistication. Roman order involved maintaining a balance, a harmony, between forces. Such harmony was both expressed and promoted by order, and the Roman house was designed not just for mortal use, but with a view to the proper place of human society in the order of things. The Gods, and the forces of nature at their disposal, were present in the affairs of men in the Roman world (Beard and Crawford 1985, 25-39). They were actively catered for in the design of domestic space.

Houses and material culture

The building trade was a major industry, and property speculation an important economic activity in many parts of the empire. Investment in land and property was a means of creating, storing and transmitting surplus. The study of how buildings were made, held and exchanged has a significant contribution to make to our understanding of the development of provincial economies.

Domestic buildings are more responsive to, and better reflect, changing fortune than most other types of building. Public architecture is comparatively unresponsive to the passage of time. By contrast private houses are likely to be altered, replaced or rebuilt whenever they change hands. As a rule houses witness change on a generational basis, about every 30 years or so. They consequently provide a more sensitive measure of the urban dynamic than most other forms of archaeological evidence. Since houses are also more common than any other form of structure, they can be studied in larger
sample groups, providing more statistically reliable information.

The study of domestic architecture permits the measurement of change between and within settlements. In particular the changing character of the available housing stock reflects changes in the socio-economic basis of urban society. Occupation sequences from individual buildings have been used to construct models of social and economic change, but these are limited by our imperfect understanding of the way in which buildings changed. Certain classes of building and room with specific functions are likely to have had atypical trajectories of use because of their specialised nature.
1.2. The character of the evidence

Previous studies of Roman housing

Until recently the domestic architecture of the Roman provinces was a neglected aspect of archaeological study. This was in part because such buildings form so large a part of the record that their particular importance could be overlooked, but was also a sad consequence of the mistaken equation of unimpressive with unimportant. A selective preference for the more attractive of Roman ruins had given credibility to the accusation that "archaeology fails us, for no one has sought fame through the excavation of a slum" (MacMullen 1974, 93). In overviews of Roman provincial architecture it remained possible to deal with houses from the point of view of Vitruvius, illustrated by the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum (as McKay 1975, Ward-Perkins 1981 and Sear 1982).

Studies of the Romano-British villas have, however, been well served by both archaeological fieldwork and synthetic review (Rivet 1969, Percival 1976, Branigan 1976, Todd 1978, Black 1987, Branigan and Miles 1988, Scott 1993, JT Smith 1997). Surprisingly these have made little use of the comparative evidence from the towns, and there is a dearth of works addressing the general theme of Romano-British housing (although see Walthew 1975, Perring 1987 and Blagg 1990c). Elsewhere in the Roman provinces the study of villa architecture has received less attention, and as Blagg has noted studies of Roman housing have concentrated on the evidence of the more fully developed and better preserved buildings of the fourth century and later (Blagg 1990c, 194). Earlier buildings have generally been seen as simpler, and have not always been studied in detail because buried beneath the remains of later houses.

Because of these limitations, some of which can only be addressed by more purposive fieldwork, the study of Roman housing remains dominated by static models and written sources. The wealth of information recovered from sites such as Pompeii and Herculaneum must properly inform any general study of Roman housing, but the limitations of such evidence are legion. It is in particular unfortunate that the spatial and temporal range of the available information is so narrow. One of the most interesting aspects of the archaeological study of houses is the prospect it offers to study social change. The evidence for change at Pompeii and Herculaneum can only
be interpreted with difficulty and can not be taken beyond AD 79.

A body of documentary evidence supplements the archaeological study of these type-sites. Sources include the writings of Vitruvius, Pliny, Petrarch and Juvenal. These texts are literary constructs and were not intended to provide factual evidence on house design (Bergman 1995, 408). There are therefore problems in relating such evidence to the less perfect but more typical sample of housing revealed by archaeology. Within limits these sources have, however, allowed historians to reconstruct daily life in Ancient Rome providing invaluable insight into the social uses made of the buildings revealed in the excavations in Roman Italy (e.g. Carcopino 1941).

There is similarly a growing body of published work on domestic buildings in late Roman North Africa and the east (Ellis 1988, Thébert 1987, Saliou 1994). Here too archaeological evidence is supplemented by a range of legal and historical sources that provide contextual information for the buildings revealed. The illustration of houses on a number of mosaic pavements from North Africa adds valuable detail (Prêcheur-Canonge 1961, Sarnowski 1978; Duval 1986).

These regional studies provide valuable comparative information for this study. Reece has, however, warned against over-dependence on models developed from the Italian evidence (Reece 1988, 72). Other sources relevant to social and domestic arrangements in Britain must also be explored. These include comparative data from prehistoric and medieval society, and in particular the Celtic and Germanic architectural traditions. These sources have been given considerable weight in some recent studies of Romano-British rural settlement (notably those of JT Smith and Hingley), to the extent that it is now perhaps necessary to stress the danger of seeing more that is Medieval in Roman Britain than the evidence sustains.

The sample

Archaeological excavation has been well supported in Britain over the last 50 years, and there is a wealth of material available on which to base research. Notwithstanding this there are significant limitations to the evidence.

It seems somewhat churlish to complain that Romano-British houses survive only as
ruins, it could hardly be otherwise! There are, however, ruins and ruins, and one of the key problems to confront in this study is the scarcity of complete building plans. The scarcity of detailed stratigraphic accounts of the development of town houses from the province is in part a reflection of the absence of any modern, large-scale, excavation of such houses. Recent investigations have been driven by the requirements of rescue excavation. Since it is rare in the extreme for a modern building plot to coincide with an ancient one - especially in the urban environment - those buildings excavated within the constraints of rescue archaeology have been recorded as fragments only. There are thousands of these building fragments, frequently well studied and tightly dated, but their value is limited by their incomplete nature.

The more complete plans available for study derive from earlier programs of research that took place on green-field sites, such as the abandoned towns of Silchester, Verulamium and Caerwent, or on deserted villa sites. In most cases these excavations took place without the benefit of close stratigraphic control, and the published reports lack much of the detail required. Most of these buildings cannot be dated reliably, and evidence for timber and earth constructions was often missed. It is also unusual to have detailed information on underlying sequences - only the latest buildings on the site were fully exposed. There is a further problem to address in the interpretation of these later Roman buildings: because of the comparative longevity of their use the surviving remains will usually incorporate many phases of reconstruction and redecoration. The published evidence unusually allows for a coherent reconstruction of the ways in which the buildings were altered, and it is often difficult to establish how much of the observed plan was derived from such later alteration. It is therefore the case that where we have good evidence for building plan we usually have poor evidence for building sequence.

The bias of the evidence is towards the failed settlements and higher status buildings which were more attractive to study, and more readily recognised, when the bulk of field research was undertaken. This places severe limitations on the extent to which generalisations can be made from such evidence.

Even where more complete building plans have been recovered it is unusual for the walls to have survived to a sufficient height throughout the building to provide a
complete set of doorways. Of all of the Roman buildings excavated in Britain, only one - the Roman villa at Newport (fig. 45) - appears to present a plan complete in all relevant detail at ground floor level, and even here it is not possible to establish whether or not there had been an upper floor. Although fifty or so other buildings present plans which require only a modest amount of reconstruction in order to give a similar level of detail this remains a small and partial sample. Elsewhere patterns of building use can only be reconstructed with difficulty.

It is not possible to propose realistic estimates of the number of Roman houses built in Britain. A recent survey of the evidence from rural Britain listed some 2,250 Roman period buildings, most of which were of a high-status character (Scott 1993). There would be little point in attempting to count the number of building fragments uncovered in the excavations of urban and village ('small-town') sites, although this too would involve several thousands of examples. This sample, although numerically large, forms a small and unrepresentative sample of the original population. It also includes many structures that contribute little, if at all, to the arguments advanced here because of their incompleteness and/or inadequate dating.

Instead a selective choice has been made of the buildings worthy of closer attention. There is an intentional bias towards the higher status, more Roman, and more urban constructions (town houses and villas). These, it is believed, have a clearer contribution to make towards the proposed study of Romano-British society. It is certainly the case that more complex structures involve more complex and more socially revealing uses of space. There is more chance of understanding some part of the meaning of a building where there is a larger architectural vocabulary, and a clearer intent to communicate.

In accepting this bias, in part imposed by the evidence itself, this study can no longer be presented as a comprehensive survey of the houses of the subject area. Only a small minority of the provincial population would have lived in towns; and it has been estimated that even in southern Britain villas did not form more than 15 per cent of the total number of settlements (Hingley 1989, 4 fn 22).

Within these limits a large sample of the available evidence can be exploited. Five key urban sites have been studied in particular detail:
London. London merits close attention because of the importance of the site and the detail with which it has been studied (Perring 1991b). It was the largest, most evidently Romanized and most commercially significant site in Britain, as well as the seat of a series of administrative functions. Fragments of over 200 buildings found in more than 50 stratigraphic excavations by the Museum of London between 1976 and 1990 were examined in detail in preparing this thesis (Museum of London archive reports - these are now summarised in Schofield 1998; see also Perring and Roskams 1991; Milne 1992; Dillon 1989; Williams in preparation). This study generated a wealth of structural information pertinent to the development of Romano-British building technique, especially in the first period of Roman settlement, and permits the close dating of many significant developments in the province’s vernacular architecture.

Colchester. Although similar in some regards to London - as an early urban settlement of a highly Romanized character - the site was accorded a different juridical status in the writings of Tacitus, who referred to the site as a Roman colony in AD 60; the first such in Britain (Annales 14. 33). This town was also the subject of an extensive programme of rescue excavation in the 1970s and 1980s, and has good evidence for building sequence that usefully supplements that from London. Over one hundred buildings have been described in recent reports produced by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (Crummy 1984 and 1992), and these have been extensively drawn on in this study. Because of the quality of the stratigraphic evidence obtained, these structures are important to the dating of the early development of Britain’s more complex house types.

Verulamium. Excavations by Wheeler and Frere make this one of the best studied towns of Roman Britain, and good evidence is available for both building plan and sequence - although some of the phasing proposed by Wheeler is now considered to over-simplify the town’s development (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936; Frere 1972; Frere 1983a). Over 100 buildings are described in these reports, although in some cases the structural detail is less thoroughly reported than would now be the case.

Silchester. A site of lesser status to those referred to above, this was still an
urban site of considerable importance in the early Roman period because of its assumed association with the establishment of an Atrabatic client kingdom (Wacher 1975), and the early progress of civil urbanisation that has been identified in recent excavations (Fulford 1985). This abandoned site was largely excavated a century ago, and has the richest body of evidence for building plan and form (Fox and St. John Hope 1890, and successive reports in Archaeologia to 1909). The sample is biased towards masonry constructions and is largely undated (although more could perhaps be made of the datable mosaic pavements in suggesting building chronologies than has been attempted here).

Caerwent. Although this is one of the smaller and more remote towns in the province, it has produced archaeological evidence of a similar quality to that from Silchester (Ashby et al. 1901, and successive reports in Archaeologia down to 1911). More recent excavations by Richard Brewer have clarified some aspects of building sequence although the results of this work are still in the process of analysis (Brewer 1990).

In addition to these principal urban sites remains of complete or near complete town houses are also known from excavations at Wroxeter, Dorchester, Lincoln, Winchester, Caistor-by-Norwich and Cirencester. Smaller towns and roadside settlements are represented here by finds from Hibaldstow, Sapperton and Corbridge. Altogether it was possible to identify some 200 reasonably complete town house plans for detailed attention in this survey, although only a small minority of these can be dated with precision. Detailed information on structural sequence, and building technique, has also been recovered from numerous other urban excavations (as notably at Carlisle, Chichester, Canterbury and Leicester), and is drawn on in this report where appropriate.

A more selective approach to the evidence of Romano-British villas is possible because of the ready availability of series of exhaustive surveys of evidence (a definition of the term 'villa' is briefly considered below p. 31). Attention has therefore concentrated on the best preserved and most informative sites, of which over one hundred are discussed here. Although not comprehensive, this selection offers a reasonably thorough coverage of the material relevant to the themes addressed.
The index of buildings includes most complete examples of Romano-British town houses and villas to have been published. It has not always been possible to provide a thorough reassessment of the published evidence. Most of the sites have been the subject of previous synthetic review, and it is assumed that where such review failed to find fault with an original dating framework then this can stand. It is appreciated that this approach carries considerable risk, and where the dates are of central importance to the arguments presented here a more circumspect approach has been adopted. It is nonetheless the case that some of the dates assigned to individual building phases that have been followed in this report - especially on the villa sites where the quantity of dating evidence and the quality of the stratigraphic associations is sometimes poor - may not be as robust and reliable as references here imply.
• heating (hypocausts and hearths)
• other fixtures and fittings (apses, ovens, etc.)
• accessibility (distance from the main building entrance/public spaces, and ease of accessibility from other rooms within the building)
• permeability (number and width of doorways/openings)
• association (relationship to adjacent areas and spaces)

The measurement of these aspects of design introduces a large number of variables and the consequent complexity can frustrate any classificatory description. There is wide diversity, both in the layout and decoration of individual rooms and in the building plans. The most essential conclusion that can be drawn is that no two Romano-British houses are known to be identical. Barry Kemp, in describing the Egyptian houses of el-Armana, summarises the problem thus: "locked within this very diversity is a rich amount of information of a sort not to be found from other sources ... the degree of freedom, however, circumscribed, within which the houses were built is likely to reflect not only individual preferences but also some share of the broader matters of status and social relationships which combine to make a profile of a society. However, the notion that some of this information can be abstracted and put to good use demands a certain optimism" (Kemp 1977, 127).

Individual Roman houses were intentionally made as different one from the other as was reasonably possible, and it is difficult to identify patterns of room arrangements that allow for typological analysis (Bergmann 1995, 413; Förtsch 1993). Despite these problems the volume of data from Britain and the repeated emphasis given to certain design elements suggest that some typological definition can be achieved. Although the metrical data can be grouped for the purposes of simplification, and the variables weighted to emphasise more significant characteristics, the process of generating a typology from such information is extremely cumbersome. During the early stages of this work much effort was expended on the collection of measurements
in the hope that a definition of house typologies could be derived from statistical inference, using techniques such as cluster analysis and seriation. Both the volume of data and the inescapable subjectivity of some descriptions defeated this effort. Consequently a typology of rooms has been developed on the basis of a more openly subjective analysis of the available information (see fig. 47 below). The descriptive data has instead been used to test and illustrate - rather than uniquely define - this typology.

The information of location, association and context has been particularly useful in the definition of room types. This has introduced a level of interpretative stress to the proposed classification of Romano-British domestic space, in which - inevitably - room function is given greatest weight. Ordinarily any architect would describe space by function, and a proper objective of this study is to permit the reconstruction of such functional descriptions. In the attribution of suggested functions to particular types of rooms it is necessary to make assumptions about the activities that took place in the houses being studied. The problems of such an approach are legion (see, for instance, Allison 1993), and care has been taken to ensure that the interpretative structures are supported by the archaeological evidence rather than imposed on it.

In proposing typologies predicated on the assumption that different functions attached to different spaces it is important to note that there would necessarily have been flexibility in the use of domestic space (see Leach 1997, 59). An illustration of this is found in the letters of Pliny, who refers to a room that could serve either as a large cubiculum (bedroom) or as a moderate-sized cenatio (dining room) (Pliny Letters 2,17). The characteristics of this room were such that either use was possible. Roman furniture was highly portable and room use could easily be transformed. In spacious houses rooms can be set aside for specialised functions, and the presence of these will in turn reduce the functional range of an otherwise standard room type. The specialisation of space and the creation of redundancy can be used to demonstrate wealth and status and does not always need functional explanation (see also Riggsby 1997, 54). On the other hand more cramped properties may see several activities which would normally be housed in separate rooms compressed into a single space. There was considerable scope for the aggregation and segregation of activities. These are considerations that will frustrate the search for common patterns.
The statistical analysis of finds distributions appears to offer an alternative means of describing spatial variation. The potential of such studies is considerable in contexts where there is a close association between objects and the places where they are found. Recent studies of artefact distribution at Pompeii have done much to illustrate the value that such studies can have in adding to our understanding of patterns of occupation within buildings (Allison 1993). Hoffman has used also variations in the distribution of features and finds within barrack blocks to define different areas of functional activity within Centurions' quarters (Hoffman 1995, 131-4). This has shown a concentration of higher status finds in areas with higher status architectural features.

A detailed study has been made of the evidence of artefact distribution within the aisled Roman building at Lodge Farm, North Wamborough. Complex models of social arrangements have been built on the evidence of the 'artefactual signature' of this building (Hingley 1990, 43-5 following Applebaum 1972). These approaches are undoubtedly worth pursuing but are fraught with difficulty because of the many assumptions that must be made in order to exploit the evidence (and see Smith 1997, 37 for a telling critique of the flaws in the interpretations that have been proposed). In the first place most archaeological finds recovered from house sites derive from reworked contexts. There is still much to be learnt about the mechanisms by which objects enter the archaeological record, but there is no doubt that the bulk of material found on urban sites derives from middens and rubbish pits, and from deposits which were associated with building activity. Even where we are able to isolate contexts containing primary deposits the information can be difficult to use. Objects that were deliberately discarded will end up in areas where rubbish is accepted, and these are not usually the areas where they had been used. Rubbish sorting took place, and results in a biased sample. It is also the case that rubbish is more likely to accumulate in parts of the house which have been abandoned or are under repair. Such assemblages are more likely to derive from the temporary and atypical activities of such phases rather than reflect on primary use. It is, of course, useful for the purposes of this study to know which areas were kept clean, and which received rubbish - but in most cases meaning can not be taken much beyond this level.

The detailed evidence of the finds is most evidently worth pursuing where the
assemblages were clearly stored or used in the space where they were found. Fire destruction horizons and sub-floor storage or hiding places are contexts which best repay attention. Even in these instances care needs to be exercised in ascribing meaning to the finds.

**Building descriptions**

The most useful tools for the purposes of descriptive comparison are:

- **Size** (total area, number of rooms)
- **Quality** (most easily measured through the types of flooring employed)
- **Form** (pathway analysis, presence/absence of architectural features such as wings)
- **Fabric** (techniques of wall construction)
- **Architectural detail** (presence/absence key types of room or architectural feature)

In attempting to establish a morphic language, whereby the rules for the generation of patterns of space are reduced to a replicable set of syntactical rules, Hillier and Hanson (1984) have developed various useful methods for representing and measuring space. These are generally concerned with describing the relationships between elementary spaces in the formation of more complex structures - and have been gaining in popularity in archaeological studies (as Foster 1989; Laurence 1994, 115-6; Grahame 1997 - and see Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, 30). They therefore merit some attention here. The ideas advanced by Hillier and Hanson seem over-dependent on ideal-types, present over-simplified accounts of the processes by which spatial complexity is generated, and can not provide an all-embracing theory of settlement morphology (see Leach 1978 for a critique); they have, however, significantly expanded the descriptive language available. One of the most useful techniques they describe involves the analysis ('gamma analysis') of flow diagrams ('justified permeability maps'). These illustrate pathways between rooms and spaces ('cells'), and provide a measure of how easily any given room could be reached from the other rooms ('relative asymmetry', otherwise RA). In order to achieve a comparative measure between rooms in different buildings RA is obtained by the formula:
RA = 2 (mean depth -1) / no. of spaces in system -2

The mean depth is calculated by adding together the number of spaces (cells) intervening between one room and all other rooms in the system, and dividing this by the total number of spaces in the system.

Such analysis can reveal patterns of relationships that are not immediately evident from plans. Diagrams showing known and assumed relationships between rooms (coded according to interpretative type) are used as extensively here as the evidence permits (see figs. 45, 46 and 60). Although differences in patterns of spatial use, as illustrated by pathway analysis, can usefully be examined for their social implications, Chapman has sounded a cautionary note. He points out that physical constraints can influence building layout, in particular narrow urban plots are likely to demand greater internal permeability because of the problems of arranging external lateral access (Chapman 1990, 99). Full ‘gamma analysis’ was only attempted for those buildings where the pattern of access can be securely reconstructed. This has been less useful to this study than was first hoped (fig. 45 shows the results obtained from the analysis of the house at Newport). Although it would be interesting to apply the approaches adopted by Grahame (1997) in his study of the House of the Faun at Pompeii to the Romano-British evidence, this would only be a useful exercise if some of the more complex houses could be included in the survey. Unfortunately we do not have a complete record of the doorways found in any of these buildings, and an exercise taken forward on the basis of an interpretative reconstruction of the evidence would be largely meaningless.

A computerised database of room descriptions and a related database of house types were compiled as part of this study. Many problems were encountered, due in part to the over-ambitious scope of the original research programme. This aspect of the work was abandoned when the metrical data collected was stolen. It is also unfortunate that it was not possible to digitise individual plans of the buildings under study, giving object identity to the individual rooms in the development of a computerised Geographic Information System. Such techniques were not readily available when this survey was undertaken, but would have speeded the analysis of the building plans and allowed for a more sophisticated illustration of the evidence. These therefore remain
This study instead concentrates on the social meaning that can be extracted from the evidence of room design in the more sophisticated and complex Romano-British houses. It is more concerned with systems of meaning than typologies of form, but establishes elements of a descriptive language that can be used as a basis for more detailed metrical studies. The main contribution made here to the description of houses is in the classification of the construction techniques employed and through the identification of different types of rooms. These descriptive elements do not in themselves replace established building typologies but suggest some different ways in which the houses can be understood. The suggestions advanced in this thesis make it possible to describe buildings in three separate ways: by the way in which they were built (Chapter 3), by the range of activities they were designed to house (Chapter 4), and by the general characteristics of building morphology (Chapter 5). This evidence, and most especially that of building use, is instead drawn on here to provide evidence for the reconstruction of the social practices and domestic arrangements that characterised Romano-British elite society (as set out in Chapter 6).

In reviewing possible meanings it is first necessary to look to the ancient world at large in order to identify similarities and contrasts that might cast light on the Romano-British evidence. Our main interest here is in tracing the extent to which the classical world provides a valid model for the interpretation of Romano-British houses. This is the purpose of the following chapter which therefore concentrates on the evidence of Roman Italy, but also explores a range of other architectural traditions that might possibly have influenced Romano-British fashion.
Chapter 2. Housing in the Ancient world

This brief chapter summarises current thinking on the origins and nature of the Roman house. Its purpose is to set the Romano-British evidence in its wider context. In the process it draws attention to some core features of the palatial forms of architecture that emerged from the Hellenistic and Asiatic east which appear to have had an abiding influence on Roman provincial architectural fashion.

It is one of the central arguments of this work that elite houses built in Britain under the Romans could have been used in a very Roman fashion. This is most evident in the importance accorded to the portico/peristyle - a feature characteristic of Hellenistic elite housing which Rome introduced to the northern provinces - but can also be traced in the use of reception rooms and baths. The emphasis placed on processional and liminal architecture was a particular characteristic of the Roman interpretation of the Hellenistic house and was evidently adopted in Britain. It is also possible to identify common approaches in the ways in which room-suites were designed to accommodate a plurality of socially active players within a single building.

This chapter seeks to understand the underlying logic of the Roman house, by exploring both the origins of such house-types and what is known about their use from contemporary sources. Because of this interest in matching the archaeological evidence to the contextual information the work of scholars working on the archaeology of the house in Roman Italy is given particular emphasis here. The evidence of Roman Gaul is not explored in equivalent detail. This is in part because current scholarship has not yet achieved an equivalent level of synthesis and in part because the area is less well served by ancient sources. It is consequently possible that the importance of Hellenistic building types introduced directly into southern Gaul are given less emphasis here than they deserve. It is more certainly the case that a more detailed review of the Gallic evidence would provide further information on the genesis of particular approaches to construction technique and building layout.
2.1. The Graeco-Roman house

The Hellenistic background

Rome’s adoption of the Classical ideal was considerably influenced by ideas imported from the Greek east, such that Roman Italy can be described as a ‘normal, if creative, zone of Hellenistic culture’ (Kuttner 1993). Notwithstanding the vital mediatory influence of Etruscan and Italian architecture, the origins of the Roman house derive from Greek and Asiatic prototypes. It was from the eastern end of the Mediterranean that the traditions of palatial architecture involving complex hierarchies of spatial arrangements and interior design were first introduced to Europe. Elements of the design of Bronze Age palaces - most obviously including their courtyard layouts, the widespread use of wall paintings, and the provision of private bathrooms - were repeated in the houses of the wealthy throughout antiquity. One of the most significant building types of the Greek Bronze Age was the megaron, a hall entered through a porch flanked by columns (fig. 1). This building form established several of the principles that continued to influence Greek, Hellenistic and then Roman building design: in particular the importance of a formal façade and a hierarchical use of space to guide the visitor to principal reception areas.

Asian architectural traditions, from which the Greek ones were essentially derived, were also extensively drawn upon. Intriguingly a sixth-century BC palace building at the Aeolic city of Larisa, essentially a megaron in imitation of a Persian form of palace known as a *bit hilani*, presented a façade of a porch with a colonnade linking two square corner towers (containing stairs). This has an uncanny coincidental resemblance to the winged-corridor villa (fig. 1, Lawrence 1973, 239). Such traditions played an important part in the evolution of the courtyard house; the dominant architectural form in cities around the Mediterranean throughout antiquity, and have continued to exert a strong influence on building design along the eastern and southern littoral of the Mediterranean down to modern times.

Within the Greek and Hellenistic cities of the eastern Mediterranean blocks of houses with common party walls occupied the insulae formed by the orthogonal street grid. Such houses are illustrated by the evidence of the planned fifth-century town of Olynthus where street blocks measuring about 36.6 m. by 91.4 m. (40 x 100 yards),
were divided into a series of adjoining courtyard houses - built with mudbrick walls over stone footings - about 20 m. square containing six or more rooms (fig. 2; Robinson 1946). In each house rooms were arranged around two or more sides of a courtyard behind a veranda. There was no axial symmetry to the layout of these buildings, in which the entrance to courtyard was likely to be flanked by a small porter's lodge. The main dining room or Andron was located at one corner of the building, where light could be taken from more than one side. Classical sources indicate that houses were separated into men’s and women’s quarters (andronitis and gunaikonitis), although this is difficult to identify archaeologically (Jameson 1990, 104; Nevett 1994).

The courtyard house proved a remarkably resilient building type, and changed little over a period of some thousand years, notwithstanding wide-ranging changes in many spheres of life. The remarkable unity of Mediterranean architecture might be considered to be a consequence of the social homogeneity and political co-operation of the region's elite.

The Atrium-Peristyle house.

There is presently too little in the way of good archaeological data to confidently describe the origins and evolution of Roman house forms (although see Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 221 for a summary of important progress that is being made in this field). It seems likely, however, that Etruscan and Italian departures from regional traditions of Iron Age building design (as represented by remains on sites such as Marzabotto and Veii) were inspired by Hellenic models imported to Italy by way of the Greek settlements in south Italy. This took place in the orientalising period of the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Boethius 1978, 75-94). The replacement of circular timber structures with rectangular structures built first in timber and then with stone footings, as at the northwest gate of Veii (Ward-Perkins 1959), that took place at this time, finds close parallel in Britain's own 'orientalising' period after the Roman conquest.

By the end of the seventh century large courtyard buildings appear on some sites in central Italy. The villa-like complex at Murlo near Siena is an important example (Holloway 1994, 55-9; fig. 3). This high-status tile roofed building covered an area approximately 60m square, with ranges of rooms reached from a portico built around
three sides of the central courtyard. In Rome itself the main period of change dates to
the late 7th and early 6th centuries, at a time when the city is supposed to have been
under Etruscan rule. Previously houses here consisted of oval and sub-timber huts of
the type found on the Palatine hill (fig. 4; Puglisi 1951). Subsequently ashlar walled
and tile roofed buildings were increasingly in evidence. Excavation of the Regia in the
Forum, has revealed a sequence of two and three roomed structures set behind a
portico within a courtyard: a house type identified on several other sites of this period
(Holloway 1994, 63; Brown 1974-5, 15-36).

The best-documented form of Roman house is the late republican *atrium*-peristyle
house. The *atrium* house plan would appear to have its roots in the archaic period of
central Italy, and recent excavations alongside the via Sacra under the direction of A.
Carandini have revealed an early example of the form dating to the 6th century BC
(Carandini 1988; 1990). Another example of this date has been described from
excavations at Roselle (Donati 1994). There is no direct parallel for this building type
from the eastern Mediterranean or in North Africa (Thébert 1987, 325-6), although it
has been noted that the open spaces of the courtyard buildings from this region may be
more similar in character and function to the atrium than has long been supposed
(Allison 1993, 6-7; and see Wallace-Hadrill 1997).

Two strands of evidence are generally brought to bear in the description this class of
structure. Many hundreds of such buildings, buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD
79, have been excavated at the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum - and these have
been studied in considerable detail (as Wallace-Hadrill 1990; Clarke 1991; Wallace-
Hadrill 1994). This archaeological evidence is supplemented by the detailed writings
of Vitruvius on the architecture of Rome *circa* AD 25 (*On Architecture*). The
evidence from these two sources is not wholly consistent, and this has caused problems
where the documentary information is used uncritically (see Allison 1993).

Nonetheless a particular regional variant of a Roman and Italian tradition of domestic
architecture can be described in some detail from these sources.

These buildings were dominated by a single large covered forecourt (*atrium*) - which
was rarely entirely roofed-over and often contained a central basin for water catchment
(*impluvium*) - which provided access to a series of smaller rooms around its margins.
Early texts suggest that the *atrium* was the focus of many household activities, including cooking, weaving and was where the household shrine was located. There are different schools of thought as to how this building form first evolved. The debate has concentrated on whether the central forecourt may have had its origins in open courtyards which were subsequently covered over or whether light wells had been inserted into covered spaces (Patroni 1941 – and see Wallace-Hadrill 1997). These arguments are of peripheral interest here since the later Republican buildings, more likely to have served as models in the development of provincial architectural fashion, were of a different form. By this date the better quality town houses had additionally been equipped with a large open garden surrounded by a colonnade (the peristyle) towards the rear of the building. The introduction of the colonnaded garden is considered to have been inspired by Greek practice (perhaps rooted in the use of the *gymnasia* and *palaestra*), and at Pompeii to date to the period after *circa* 180 BC (Boethius 1978, 187). Three stages of architectural evolution can be proposed (as Dickmann 1997). Prior to the introduction of the peristyle the atrium served as the principal focus of the house in much the same fashion of the central courtyards of contemporary Hellenistic houses. Initially the Pompeian peristyle was treated as an additional facility: a courtyard added to the rear of the house and chiefly suitable for the promenade (*ambulatio*). By the end of the 2nd century BC, however, the peristyle was more likely to be surrounded by the main rooms of the house, and had become an integral part of the reception and circulation space that distinguished higher status houses.

Notwithstanding problems in the detailed interpretation of room function, and the archaeological evidence for widespread divergence from the ideal type, the principal elements of the Vitruvian house can be recognised in many Pompeian buildings. The House of the Faun at Pompeii is perhaps the most famous example of this type of building (fig. 5). These houses offered an ordered progression from the street, where entrance was gained through a narrow passage (sometimes described as the *fauces*, or ‘throat’, of the building although this term may not be entirely appropriate, see Leach 1997, 53), which lead into the covered forecourt sometimes flanked by one or two wings (*alae*). A reception room (*tablinum*) was frequently placed centrally opposite the entrance, and divided the forecourt from the garden beyond. The garden was
surrounded by the better-decorated and more impressive rooms of the house and clearly functioned as the main core of the house. Forecourt and garden provided light and focus for the surrounding reception rooms, and allowed for free circulation through the house. At the time of the eruption at Pompeii the forecourt and adjacent reception rooms (including the tablinum), seemed to have lost in importance to the peristyle garden and surrounding rooms. The evolution of this building type in Italy after AD 79 is less well documented. Although the Severan (early third century), marble plan of Rome (the Formae Urbis Romanae), illustrates several buildings of atrium-peristyle form, many of these would have been survivals from earlier periods (Rodríguez-Almeida 1980).

The arrangement and decoration of these Pompeian houses was apparently designed to emphasise the importance of certain vistas, and a series of focal points providing framed views can be found in many buildings (garden features and wall paintings seem to have had particular use in this regard). Light entering the house from both forecourt and garden would draw attention to such views, the most commonly significant one of which was obtained from the entrance. As will be argued further below, this emphasis on aspect and vista is central to the design of Romano-British houses, and may relate to the public nature of certain domestic functions.

The Roman house was evidently designed around needs of Roman social practice, and this involved a very public approach to domestic space. Roman literature makes frequent reference to the entertainment of clients and friends (Carcopino 1941 remains the most readable of the condensed accounts of such social practice; see also Gardner and Weideman 1991). A contrast can be drawn with Greek practice in which the house seems to have had less significance as a means of demonstrating social position to clients and friends (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 55). Social functions attached to the Roman house included:

- receiving clients (as at the morning salutatio, and for which rooms such as the atrium, tablinum and oecus were required)
- entertaining and ritual feasting (in the triclinium and other dining areas – including the symposium)
- intimate meetings (in the bedroom or baths)
• cultural gatherings (poetry readings and the like)
• participating in religious rites (both in cult rooms and at the household lares and penates)

Wallace-Hadrill has emphasised the significance that should be attached to the grant of privileged access to the more intimate spaces and activities within the house: "the dominant concern in articulating domestic space was to provide a suitable context for the differentiation of activities of a more public and more private nature" (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59). A useful parallel is drawn with ancien régime France, with its prescribed hierarchy of house types. Wallace-Hadrill identifies two principal axes of distinction between the types of domestic space referred to by Vitruvius: allowing the identification of contrasts between grand and humble, and private and public (such that an atrium is considered grand and public, a dining room grand and private, a corridor as humble and public, etc.). A structured approach to these distinctions allowed for 'an ascent in privilege' as the more honoured visitor progressed towards the most intimate parts of the house. This concept can usefully be applied to the Romano-British evidence where the arrangement of porches, porticoes and reception rooms established a form of processional architecture designed to demonstrate the standing of the owner and host (see below p. 121 and p. 244).

The insulae of Imperial Rome.

The multi-storied apartment blocks of Rome and Ostia, commonly referred to as insula houses (Packer 1971) evidence a separate tradition of Roman domestic architecture. This form of housing, which was made possible by developments in building techniques, in particular in the use of cement construction, was developed in response to urban overcrowding. At Ostia such multi-storied houses were essentially a second century phenomenon, but at Rome multi-storied buildings were common from late Republican times and it is here that the type first developed (Meiggs 1973; Ward-Perkins 1981,145-6). There has been some speculation as to when and how this happened, with particular reference to the extent to which the design of atrium houses had any influence on their genesis (Calza 1953, Packer 1971).

A key feature of apartment housing was that light was obtained not from courtyards and openings within the building, but from large windows onto the street. Principal
rooms were often located at the corners of buildings to best exploit such lighting, and commonly, rooms were built around three sides of a central room the fourth side of which faced the street. Although such rooms could in some places have functioned in a similar fashion to the traditional atrium, they were often little more than corridors linking more important rooms at either end; an arrangement illustrated by the Garden House at Ostia (fig. 6). The design of these buildings was perhaps influenced by earlier, low status, houses. This argument was developed by Packer in his description of Ostian building types, who identified a class of simple atrium house (Packer 1971, type IIc) in which the entrance forecourts had been fully roofed over (a testudinate atrium). Smaller Pompeian houses – ‘row houses’ - have subsequently been the subject of important studies by Hoffman (1980) and Nappo (1997). It appears that in their earlier phases these houses, terraced rows of which were being built in the late 3rd – early 2nd centuries BC, were initially laid out with an open courtyard. Only in later phases, and as a consequence of increased building density, were these spaces eventually enclosed as upper stories were built.

It not certain that these earlier developments influenced the architecture of Ostia, but it is safe to assume that the pressures to build upwards encouraged the roofing-over of forecourts and that this contributed to the reduced emphasis given to such space. A parallel can be drawn with the development of the medieval hall. Here too a space that in early buildings had served as the main focal and gathering point for household affairs became little more than a circulation area, as functions devolved to increasingly specialised surrounding rooms.

Apartment houses would not always have allowed for the complex social uses that were found in atrium-peristyle houses. There was less scope for a hierarchical procession of space, and distinctions between private and public space were necessarily less subtle. It is, in any case, clear that many apartment houses were of lower social status. These buildings were rarely provided with water supply or private sewage, and were usually left unheated. In most phases the ground floor flats had no kitchens or separate latrines. Flats on the upper stories were more poorly decorated than ground floor ones. The higher one ascended the poorer the perceived quality of the accommodation. Juvenal has choice words on the unattractiveness of living in, or even passing alongside, such houses (Satires 3, 268-277).
Most Romans lived in such accommodation. According to contemporary lists there were some 46,000 apartment blocks (insula) to 1,790 town houses (domus) in fourth-century Rome, although it has been estimated that the town houses occupied one third of the residential space and their households would have been disproportionately large (MacMullen 1974, 168).

The residents of the apartment blocks had social aspirations, and these houses usually included reception areas. Mosaic floors, and painted walls were designed to impress visitors and guests. In this regard Rome and Pompeii present a similar picture. Despite Vitruvius' belief that the man of average wealth had little call to offer hospitality (On Architecture 6, 5.1-2), it is clear that reception activities were important to most city dwellers. This was also a feature of early Romano-British towns (in Chapter 5 it will be shown that low-status strip buildings in Roman Britain could also include small suites of reception rooms).

Courtyard Houses.

There was little need to build apartment blocks in Ostia after the population of the city went into decline. New properties in the later town were, once again, laid out over only one or two floors. These third and fourth-century buildings usefully illustrate the later Roman style of town house. The atrium with a central impluvium had disappeared from use, and although some smaller houses remained of similar design to the apartment houses, the better buildings were courtyard houses and were very clearly influenced by earlier Mediterranean traditions. These houses were entered by way of a vestibule or corridor that gave access to a central courtyard, from which major rooms were easily reached.

These later houses were more likely to be provided with one or sometimes two larger and more magnificent reception rooms, with an open aspect to the peristyle or courtyard. The House of Fortuna Annonaria, and the House of Cupid and Psyche illustrate the type, and show how much emphasis was placed on the main reception room (fig. 6). This room may have replaced the function of the tablinum, allowing also for the abandonment of the atrium as an architectural feature (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 90).

Although only now in widespread use, this approach to the design of houses also had
clear roots in Roman architecture of the first century. Some Pompeiian houses, notably the House of the Menander, had unusually large reception rooms associated with peristyles. Domitian's palace on Rome's Palatine hill was provided with grand audience rooms opening onto a central court. Since the taste and patronage of the Imperial household had a major influence on cultural and artistic development in the Roman world it is likely the preferences of the imperial family would have had an important influence on fashion in domestic architecture. From Hadrian onwards the Roman emperors were ever more attracted to Hellenistic forms.

Roman houses were far less ordered than is sometimes assumed. Most buildings were irregular in plan and showed considerable variation in detail. This was not just the case with smaller town houses tucked awkwardly into the available urban space, but is also a characteristic of larger houses. Many later Roman houses were characterised by a complex series of courtyards, peristyles, corridors and reception rooms. For example access to the main reception rooms of the 4th/5th century 'House of the Fountains' in the Beirut Souks were reached via four separate peristyle courts (Perring 1998). The approach to domestic space in these Byzantine houses finds close parallel in the contemporary approaches to urban design (see MacDonald 1986). The routes through houses and towns were established not by symmetrical planning but by a procession of impressively designed public spaces.

The design of Nero's *domus aurea* can perhaps be seen to have had an influence: this palace consisted of a group of interlocked blocks, each with strong internal logic but combining in complicated and asymmetrical patterns. Hadrian's villa at Tivoli is a further illustration. Although this building complex was designed around a number of key vistas with highly symmetrical elements, the overall plan of the complex lacks evident coherence (fig. 7). The point that needs to be made here is that Roman houses were not laid out with rigid symmetry, but were designed to comprise a hierarchy of reception areas linked by porticoes and corridors. Similar approaches to domestic space – although generally on a more modest scale – can be reconstructed from the Romano-British evidence. This is an issue that will be considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

A feature which can be observed in some later contexts in the eastern Mediterranean,
supported by what evidence we have for juridical concerns of the period (as in the *Digest*), was to provide for the physical separation of different properties (Saliou 1994, 263-4). Where in early classical cities most smaller properties within a block were separated from their neighbours by common party walls, there seem to be more later houses with an eavesdrip on the boundary, such that separate roofs and separate load-bearing walls reduced the interdependence between neighbouring buildings.

**Villas**

The term villa has been subject to many definitions (see Percival 1976, 14-5), but is used here to describe country houses designed to display high status through the use of architectural motifs of Graeco-Roman inspiration. It is not unreasonable to hope that most buildings that meet this definition would have been considered villas by their owners, if not always recognised as such by others.

There was a very close relationship between villa architecture and urban architecture, and although the rural landscape of Italy and Greece had long been populated by small farmsteads (Potter 1979; Osborne 1987; Jameson 1990, 103) villa development was essentially a product of the introduction of urban values into the countryside. The social and economic life of the Roman elite depended on an involvement in both town and country affairs, and it would not have been possible to function at the higher social levels without owning houses in both town and country. This need for a country residence, for villas, was more evidently a feature of Italian urban society than it had been in the earlier Hellenistic world. In the Greek speaking east villas were generally a Roman introduction of late date (Rossiter 1989).

A descriptive typology of the Italian (essentially Campanian) villa was proposed by Rostovtzeff (1957) on the basis of the evidence of the Pompeiian sites, supplemented by the writings of Varro and Columella, and is followed in most contemporary studies. Some villas were exclusively places for luxurious living and entertaining, especially those in suburban or maritime locations. More commonly the villa was also a place of agricultural activity where sophisticated reception and living quarters of a country house (the *pars urbana*) were set alongside a working farm (the *pars rusticae*). In some cases the farm buildings stood alone, and although of impressive scale were not attached to a luxurious residence. For these the Rostovtzeff model, supported by the
evidence of classical sources, presumes the presence of a large slave run estate.

These different circumstances generated a wide variety of building form. The suburban and maritime villas - such as Oplontis, the villa of the Mysteries outside Pompeii or Hadrian's villa at Tivoli - are amongst the most palatial of Roman houses (fig. 8). As the most costly, luxurious and extensive of Roman establishments, clearly given over to entertaining on a large scale, these would have been built following latest fashion, and it has been argued that such houses would have influenced developments in urban architecture (D'Arms 1970; Zanker 1979).

The writings of Pliny and other Roman authors make it clear that it was common for members of the elite to own a multiplicity of villas. The scattered nature of land holding in Italy - where "in many regions we find persons holding lands not contiguous but individual lots in various places, separated by several holdings" (Siculus Flaccus, 152) - added emphasis to the need for bailiffs and slave labour (or later share cropping) to work these estates. The land register of the Ligures Baebiani, a town near Circeello, describe some 300 properties, where 37 owners held more than one property, and one owned 26 properties (MacMullen 1974, 5; Duncan-Jones 1976). The transmission of architectural ideas would have owed much to these complex patterns of ownership.

In several important respects villas were similar in design to contemporary town houses. Those of the late republic and early empire were frequently built around a central circulation and reception space identical in its main characteristics to the urban atrium-peristyle of the period, as in the villas at Settefinestre, Boscoreale, and elsewhere (Carandini and Ricci 1985; Carrington 1931). The porticoes and peristyles were given greater prominence and importance in such buildings in the period after the social war (late republic), and it was after this period that most of the grander villas were built. Many of these early villas did not survive the second century (see below), and in the later Roman period greater emphasis was given to the group of principal reception rooms opening onto the peristyle or courtyard, as at Piazza Armerina (fig. 9; Wilson 1983).

There were, however, many significant differences between the layout of town houses and villas in Roman Italy. Villas were designed to provide views out onto the
surrounding countryside as was rarely possible in town, and this was reflected in their aspect and facade (see p. 115). Loggias, verandas and colonnades were built around the house, the plan of which was adapted to present well-lit corner rooms. Space was not a constraint, and villas could benefit from the addition of long projecting wings, and a variety of outhouses and separate units. This was especially the case with the maritime villas, where the sea view was highly valued; a preference made evident not only in the choice of villa sites in early imperial Italy, but also in a range of Byzantine texts (Clarke 1991, 20; Hemsoll 1990, 14-5; Saliou 1994, 238-247). Town houses were more likely to draw light into the buildings from secure and secluded inner courtyards, with the perimeter area occupied by the shops and workshops that made best use of the street frontages. Such plots offered little scope for growth and extension. In addition to the storage and working areas needed on those villas that served as farms (the majority), and the accommodation required for a larger household and workforce, villas were also more likely to be provided with baths. In the city it remained fashionable to frequent large public baths, but these were not available in the countryside.

These several differences of circumstance account for many of the differences that can be identified between the domestic arrangements of urban and rural buildings.

**Romano-Gallic domestic architecture.**

Roman culture reached Britain by way of Gaul, and it is the Gallic interpretation of Rome that might be expected to have had the greatest influence on developments in the province. The southern parts of Gaul had been much influenced by Greece prior to the Roman conquest, by way of the Greek colony at Marseilles. The Southern Gauls were also incorporated into the Roman world at a comparatively early date (consequent on the establishment of the Roman colony at *Narbo Martius*, Narbonne, in 118 BC), and Provence was consequently more clearly part of the classical Mediterranean world than was Gallia Belgica. It was only under Augustus - little more than a generation prior to the Roman conquest of Britain - that the process of Romanisation was set firmly under way in the more remote parts of Gaul (Wightman 1985, 77).

The evidence for the penetration of Greek ideas beyond the immediate Marseilles hinterland and into pre-Roman Gaul is illustrated by the early diffusion of the fashion
for initially mudbrick and subsequently masonry construction (de Chazelles et al. 1985). The technique of building houses with walls of air-dried bricks had origins in the middle-east and was apparently introduced to Italy and Gaul by Greek colonists, although Iron age houses near Rome had been built with cob walls from at least the eighth century BC (Bietti Sestieri et al. 1990). Throughout the Mediterranean parts of Spain, Italy and Gaul houses built of mudbricks over stone footings are first evident in the seventh/sixth century BC (André 1976, 95-128; Arcelin and Buchenschutz 1985). Probably influenced by developments in Magna Graecia, the Etruscans were building mudbrick houses at Metaponto in the seventh century BC.

The most notable penetration of these Greek influenced techniques into northern Europe, is represented by the mudbrick walled hillfort at La Heuneburg (Kimmig 1983). Some house plans of classical form, such as the stone built peristyle house in Ensérune (Herault), are also found in hilltop settlements of the late second century BC (Gallet de Santerre 1978).

Hellenistic style peristyle houses, dating from the first century BC have been identified in number of towns (as Goudineau 1979, 239-48), but these are more likely to be a consequence of the early progress of the Romanisation rather than a direct continuity of Massiliot influence (Blagg 1990c, 203). Outside of Provence the earliest evidence for the development of domestic architecture in the classical tradition dates to the period immediately after the Roman conquest. Courtyard houses, and peristyle houses with impluvia, are found into the Flavian period, as at Autun and Beauvais (Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1986; Frézouls 1982, 168). The late first century BC houses of Lyons provide some of the best evidence for the urban architectural fashions of this period and clearly influenced subsequent architectural developments in both Gaul and Britain (Desbat 1985, see below p. 68). It is notable, however, that types of building common in the south of Gaul are not widely found in the north. This may reflect both the later progress of Romanisation and the lack of a previous classical tradition in the region.

As in Britain and Italy the early phases of domestic construction in towns were dominated by constructions in timber and clay and the poor survival of such structures has made it difficult to describe full building plans. A distinction can be drawn between strip buildings (discussed further below) and larger town-houses with
courtyards and mosaic pavements (e.g. the third century town-house found below the courtyard of the Kaserthermem at Trier: Wightman 1985, 89).

The villas of Roman Gaul undoubtedly exercised a close influence on Romano-British domestic architecture and J.T. Smith (1997) has described this at some length in his recent review of this subject. No full review of this subject is attempted here but some features of Gallic villa design merit brief mention. The peristyle was an important feature in several of the more palatial Gallic villas, of which Montmaurin (Haute Garrone) is perhaps the best known and most spectacular (Fouet 1969). In its earliest phase a central peristyle was given greatest architectural emphasis and presented a plan which showed the clear influence of Roman atrium-peristyle villas of the type mentioned above. In a later phase a magnificent curved portico was added to the south-east façade of the house. This treatment illustrates the way in which the façade portico was increasingly used as a principal settings for the ambulatio and had come to replace some of the functions of the enclosed peristyle (this argument is taken further forward in the discussion of the Romano-British evidence below p. 117). A different architectural approach is illustrated by the villa at Anthee, one of a series of like buildings found in the Somme valley (Agache 1978; Smitt 1997, 295-9). Here the main villa house was surrounded by a series of lesser houses and buildings flanking an elongated trapezoidal forecourt. These large establishments are of interest both for their unusual emphasis on axial symmetry (see further below p. 117) and for the way in which they incorporated several separate houses – potentially providing accommodation for several households (see also below p. 255).

The subject of Romano-Gallic domestic architecture is an even greater one than that tackled here, and vernacular architecture in Gaul is perhaps even less well served by works of synthesis than Roman Britain. It is therefore difficult to do proper justice to this important field of study in the current work.

Strip buildings

A building type well represented in urban, suburban and roadside settlements in the northwest provinces is the simple rectangular strip building, with its shop to the front and living quarters to the rear (fig. 10). This building type is not common in Roman Italy, where the smaller commercial premises were built as one with the larger town
houses which they flanked. Shops in Ostia and Herculaneum have many of the design characteristics of these buildings (Boethius 1960, 162; Perring and Roskams 1991, fig. 90), but not the same building form. The preference for a complete physical separation of the shops and houses seems to have been a later and more provincial fashion. It is unfortunate that so little work has been published on the Roman structures found in suburban and road-side sites in Italy, but it seems likely that strip buildings were only common in the northwest provinces where 'winged-corridor' villas were preferred and atrium-peristyle houses were uncommon. There is a crisp fault-line between these architectural regions.

Strip-buildings were common in vici and roadside sites in Gallia Belgica and at military sites along the Rhine frontier. Excavations at Grobbendonk (De Boe 1986, see also Vermeulen 1995) have revealed a structural progression from simple rectangular timber Claudian buildings showing distinct similarities to agricultural structures of the period. Several of these houses were built with two-aisles in a type common in the region, with more complex house-types evident in the later first and second centuries. These later types included masonry elements and a more complex division of internal space. Strip-buildings may represent an adaptation of a rural building type to provide workshop and commercial space. This process probably first occurred in the piecemeal development of sites along the Roman frontier, where there was less incentive for landlords to invest in the construction of rows of houses more typical of the Roman Mediterranean.

Related building types.

Several related building types might shed light on domestic arrangements. Traditions of military building are particularly relevant to Britain, and the influence of military design will be considered further below. Some of the earliest high-status residences in the Britain would have housed senior officials with the Roman army. The plans of commanders, tribunes and centurions houses are known from a variety of sites although they have not been studied as a group. Senior officials were sometimes housed in buildings of courtyard design. Important examples from Britain include the Commandant's house at Housesteads (Neal 1982, 157; Johnson 1983), and the courtyard house at South Shields (Hodgson 1996). This latter, although not typical,
offers useful information about the arrangement of domestic space in Roman Britain.

Centurions' quarters were, of course, of more modest design. At Valkenburg, where the type is well illustrated by a fairly large number of well preserved buildings, the Centurion's house consisted of two or three principal rooms reached from a larger front room which was entered directly from the street (Glasbergen 1972). In a recent study, three types of centurions' quarters have been identified (Hoffman 1995). The most common is a type in which a central corridor linked most of the rooms with larger rooms at either end of the building (fig. 11). On average the buildings contained some 6-12 rooms, excluding corridors. In all types there is usually one large reception room decorated to a higher standard at the back of the house (Hoffman 1995, 128-9).

These buildings did not contain rooms decorated to a high standard, which is hardly surprising in the circumstances, and the nature of social activity within most parts of the military camp would have been very different in character to affairs in civilian settlements. Rank and status were clearly marked by dress and insignia, and by the position of one's quarters within the camp. Social interaction would necessarily have taken place in the public arena through the daily rituals of military life. Private quarters had a much reduced role in both the display of status and as vehicles for social contact except amongst the senior ranks (although the situation changed in the later Roman period when the character of military life changed - this is an area where further research could usefully be undertaken on the basis of recent results obtained from excavations at sites such as Birdoswald and South Shields).

Another building type that has usefully been studied for its potential to shed light on domestic arrangements is the class of courtyard building usually identified as a mansio (Drury 1982). These buildings, which it is suggested were used to house travelling imperial officials, contribute useful evidence to the study of room suites (see p. 157). Monastic buildings similarly provided living quarters, and the monastic cell was based on the late Roman bedchamber.
2.2. The non-Roman house

Houses of the British pre-Roman Iron Age.

The dominant building form in Iron Age Britain (LPRIA) was the circular ‘hut’ (fig. 66). In the Southeast these were typically built with earth-fast supports of round-sectioned timbers, placed at irregular intervals in a circle about 6m. in diameter (Cunliffe 1978, 174-8). These supported the roof, but the eaves were taken on down beyond this ring of posts to an insubstantial wall built close to where the eaves reached ground level. The space within these buildings was therefore separated between a high roofed main central area, and a lower area between the ring of posts and the outer wall. Calculations show that in a typical building there would have been approximately 14m² of space in the central area, and 19m² in the outer one. In later houses posts were generally larger and more regularly spaced, and substantial porches were frequently used to provide a more imposing entrance. There is little other evidence for any other internal divisions of space.

It is generally, and understandably, assumed that the large central area, where the hearths were most frequently placed, was likely to have been more public - a circulation space suitable also for communal and reception activities, whilst the fringes of such rooms were more suited for storage, sleeping and privacy. This simple ordering of space is made much of by Hingley who sees evidence amongst the aisled buildings of Roman Britain for similar approaches, and talks of a "broad trend of continuity from Iron Age to Romano-British house forms" (Hingley 1990, 132-3). This almost certainly understates the changes in attitudes to the arrangement of space of this period, but where circular spaces were simply replaced by rectangular ones social practices could have remained unchanged. This is likely to have been the case where it can be demonstrated that details of interior design and use are constant despite the change in form, but the evidence for such continuity is rare (see Hingley 1990, note 3). Houses of Iron Age form continued to be built at many low-status rural settlements during the Roman interlude (see p. 201).

In Clarke’s famous study of the Glastonbury lake village evidence was adduced for the use of a repeated module, with house-groups consisting of two large round huts (which it could be suggested had been occupied by males) and a single smaller hut
(possibly occupied by families), with associated working and storage areas and granaries (Clarke 1972). Altogether about seven of these compounds were identified, each of which was thought to have housed around 20 people. This attempt to reconstruct the evidence for past communities from spatial information has been challenged. The evidence that Clarke was using can be shown to be unreliable, and recent improvements in our understanding of these sorts of buildings have failed to support his thesis (Barrett 1987). It remains the case that Iron age huts were grouped into compounds (Hingley 1989, 55ff; Foster 1989).

Direct comparison of the household arrangements represented by late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) buildings with those of the Roman period are difficult because complex spatial hierarchies can be achieved through the aggregation of huts in patterns that can not always be identified from the archaeological evidence. Each Iron age hut could house a hierarchy of activities without leaving clear evidence of the fact, and these huts could in turn have functioned in a similar fashion to individual rooms or suites of rooms in the Roman period houses (Rivet 1964, 108; Drewett 1982). A much quoted example is that of the transformation from native to Roman styles of housing at Park Street in Hertfordshire, where two Iron Age houses were replaced by a small villa building with six rooms (fig. 12). The villa may have offered two to three times the amount of space, but could have housed a similar set of social arrangements.

Some LPRIA houses in southeast Britain were built to a rectangular rather than circular plan. At Park Street the later Roman villa was built over a site where sub-rectangular timber houses built with wattle and daub walls set on sleeper beams with puddled chalk and clay floors been burnt down, perhaps in the revolt of AD 60, only to be replaced by circular huts with wattle and daub walls. One of the few sites where such buildings have been studied in detail is at Skeleton Green, Herts. (Partridge 1981, 37-40). These post-built houses had wattle and daub walls, and were probably floored with planks and roofed with thatch (fig. 13). Timber ground beams may have been used in some instances. Some entrances were emphasised by the provision of porches, but no complex internal arrangements of space were identified. Most of the buildings were single roomed, although one structure was divided into two parts. Four of the structures, Buildings 4-7 of Period II, appeared to form a group linked by pathways. Some other sites where buildings were possibly arranged in similar groups are cited by
Black, although the evidence is limited (Black 1987, 20-21). The difference in form would have changed the character of the domestic space, and involved the use of a different range of building techniques, and so must be considered a significant alteration. However, it is only the change in form that distinguishes these buildings from others of the period, and it is not at all clear how differently they might or might not have been used.

Rectangular houses were a late innovation, largely restricted to Hertfordshire and Essex. These buildings were similar in style to the pre-Roman houses of the adjacent parts of continental Europe, which were also rectangular timber buildings with wattle and daub walls, and few internal partitions. It seems likely that this fashion was associated with a range of other changes in southeast Britain at the time which reflected growing cross-channel contact, perhaps even immigration from Gaul (Haselgrove 1984).

The innovations of the Roman period saw the introduction of very different forms of building, representing a strikingly different attitude to the use of space, and it will be argued below that such attitudes reflected the changed social and economic circumstances promoted by the Roman administration.

**Other “native” traditions of the northwest**

Elsewhere in northwest Europe aisled (or basilical) post-built longhouses were common (fig. 14). In terms of the durability of the fashion and the extended area of its influence, this was the regional equivalent to the courtyard house. The type was common to Scandinavia, Germany and Holland prior to and during the Roman period, and to a certain extent in the subsequent migration period. Such buildings were also present in ‘native’ style settlements within the empire’s borders, as at Rijswijk between the first and third centuries AD (Bloemers 1985, 140). Recent research has suggested a southern boundary to the distribution of this Northwest European Wohnstätter running through central Belgium (Roymans 1995, 50-1).

Typically the longhouses were up to 24-28 m. long (80-90 feet) but no more than 6-9.2 m. wide (20-30 feet). These narrow timber buildings generally had living quarters at one end, with stalls for animals at the other. The living quarters usually consisted of a large rectangular hall with a central hearth, and were often separated from the rest of
the house by a cross passage. The animals were quartered in stalls set in the aisles of
the building, which was divided longitudinally by a central passage. Wattle and daub
walls and earth floors were common, and there was little evident attention to
decorative order (Trier 1969; Dixon 1982; James et al. 1984). The buildings were
sometimes round-cornered.

Some impression of the social and domestic arrangements represented by these
buildings can be obtained from Norse sagas and early English sources. The hall could
be a key location for gatherings and provided a focal point for social life. They were a
product of particular types of social arrangement. Attempts have been made to
identify hall-based extended families in some Romano-British settlements (this
argument is a particular interest of both J.T. Smith and R. Hingley and is the subject of
detailed consideration below and 255). Although aisled buildings were popular on
many Romano-British sites (see p. 204) and these included large workrooms and halls
(see p. 169), these buildings were of very different form to the northern European
longhouse and did not normally include the characteristic cross-passage or any stalls
for livestock. There is no good reason to believe that the longhouse had any direct
influence on domestic architecture in Britain before the Anglo-Saxon conquest.

The English house of the early Saxon period was usually shorter and smaller than the
continental long-house, with a roof supported by wall-posts rather than by aisle posts.
These buildings are also characterised by side entrances and the presence of a small
subdivision at one end (fig. 15). The origins of this, the ‘Chalton-type’ house, and the
reasons for the comparative scarcity in England of the Continental style aisled long-
house, have been the subject of debate (Dixon 1982; James et al. 1984; Hamerow
1994). Some scholars have sought Romano-British influences in these Saxon period
houses, but these are difficult to demonstrate. There is some possibility that the
preference for a separate end room in these Saxon houses was influenced by earlier
Roman taste, but the evidence is unconvincing. Parallels for the English evidence can
instead be found in Germanic contexts (examples from Dutch sites such as Wijster
have been cited), and the emergence of Anglo-Saxon variations to the Continental
norm can be explained through reference to social changes consequent on the
migrations themselves (Hamerow 1994, 169-173).
It is similarly unlikely that the sunken-floored buildings, or grubenhauser, that are found on fifth century and later sites in Britain were anything other than a late and sub-Roman import - of Germanic origin - with little relationship to earlier building traditions in the province. The Romano-British house was a parenthetical departure: as little influenced by what went before, as it was to influence what came after (the reasons why this may have been the case are explored further below p. 276).

This chapter has provided a brief description of the influences and ideas that can be traced in the domestic architecture of the period, and to which reference can be made in suggesting explanations for the architectural patterns evident in Roman Britain. Although the northwest provinces generated a distinct vernacular tradition – and the extent to which this was fundamentally influenced by Roman concepts of domestic life can be disputed - there were several important points of common reference with the Mediterranean world. Important examples include the use of mudbrick architecture and the development of processional architecture based on the portico and these are issues that will be developed further in the following chapters.
Chapter 3. Construction techniques

3.1. The construction process

Plans and measures

Roman litigation and legal codes indicate that planning controls could be exercised over the height, boundaries, ownership and maintenance of buildings, and over rights of access and light (see Saliou 1994). Town magistrates were additionally concerned to record property holdings for the purposes of taxation and to define the various rights, liabilities and responsibilities that stemmed from property ownership (such as access to civic office). This necessitated the keeping of detailed public records (as held in the tabularium).

Vitruvius (On Architecture 1, 2.2) describes the use of plans by Roman architects, and fragments of several plans have been found inscribed in marble. The best known of these is the Severan plan of the city of Rome (Rodríguez-Almeida 1980). The cadaster of the Roman settlement at Orange, with its record of the centuriation of the urban territory, is another important example (Piganiol 1962, 329-36). Several plans of individual buildings have survived (Evans 1994, 163-4 lists evidence from Roman Italy; and for other sources see Haselberger 1997 and Alston 1997). Baths and funerary monuments were popular subjects, but houses were not.

It is probable that plans were employed in the design of Romano-British town houses (although it is perhaps unlikely that these existed as measured drawings). In his review of the evidence of the Insula 14 shops at Verulamium, Frere concluded that the replication of certain elements of building layout from one phase to the next was the consequence of detailed record keeping (Frere 1983a, 29: fig. 16). In London there is similarly widespread evidence for properties being accurately recreated after destructive interludes. An example is the Period 8 reconstruction at Newgate Street, where Building M reclaimed the precise position of Building J which had been obliterated by the Hadrianic fire. In the late first-century construction of Building F at Watling Court the various stages of building preparation accurately anticipated the layout of the final building, and it is difficult to see how this could have been achieved
without the use of records (Perring and Roskams 1991, 69-70). It has been noted that there is stronger evidence for such continuity within the urban, as opposed to suburban, parts of London (Williams in preparation).

Boundary ditches marking out the plots, and from which measurements could have been made, are common features. At Dorchester, for instance, ditches were used to mark out a series of plots when the relevant part of town was first laid out for settlement. These seem to have been respected by most subsequent phases of alteration and change, down to the end of the Roman period (Woodward et al. 1993). Posts may have been used in marking-out building plots during the construction of Flavian houses in London (Perring and Roskams 1991, 61, 70).

Buildings were likely to have been laid out to set proportions. Certain multiples of integral measures, notably 8, 12 and 20 ft. were also likely to have been given greater currency (Dilke 1985, 9). The issue of which units of measure were used in Roman Britain has been exhaustively covered in a series of papers in Britannia (Frere 1977, 87-103; Walthew 1978; Duncan Jones 1980; Millett 1982; Walthew 1987). Hyginus suggests that two units of measure were in common use in the northwest provinces: a standard Roman foot (subdivided into sixteen digits), the pes Monetalis (pm) which was equivalent to 291-297 mm, and a longer northern foot, the pes Drusianus of 332/333 mm. Considerable effort has been expended on finding buildings that may have been laid out to one or the other of these measures. A survey of 95 measures found in the accurately surveyed house plans of late first and early second-century London showed that certain ranges were preferred: these involved the use of multiples of 15, 12, 10 and 4 times 327 mm. +/- 6 mm. (Perring and Roskams 1991, 70). Walthew (1987) instead argues for the use of units of 7.5 and 3.75 pm in house plans. The more general survey of the plans of Roman villas and town houses, suggests a frequent preference for building blocks 7.5-9.5 m. wide, and for rooms set out to a 2:3 ratio.

The evidence is unsatisfactory and several factors limit the chances of establishing which foot measures were actually used:

1. many of the plans which are sufficiently complete for a survey of measurements to be undertaken are not accurate enough for this purpose (Millett 1982).
2. houses were built without close attention to geometric detail, such that few rooms are square and few walls straight.

3. we do not know where original survey points were located: on the inside corner of a wall, at its mid-point, on the outside corner, etc.

4. odd fractions and multiples of units were used - as illustrated by the measures shown on a mosaic showing a plan of a bath (as displayed in the Capitoline Museum at Rome) - frustrating the search for whole numbers and repeated lengths.

5. we can not be sure that the builders and architects involved did not find themselves working with poor copies of the standard measures in question, unwittingly introducing their own slightly short or long versions.

6. a greater dependence on systems of proportion than on precise measures has been noted in the layout of military buildings in Roman-Britain (Evans 1994), and could also have applied in civilian contexts.

Reliable and replicated measures were, however, necessarily used in town planning and in the prefabrication of building material. An actus (120 feet) based on the standard Roman foot (pm) can be identified in the layout of Roman Colchester, and seems to have had broader currency in town planning (Crummy 1988). The design of several public buildings, and elements of monumental architecture, can also be satisfactorily described in terms of ratios and proportions derived from the use of this standard foot. The same foot measure was undoubtedly used in the production of fired brick and tile, as is illustrated by the divisibility of most brick dimensions by 148 mm. (0.5 pm). The standard would appear to have been used in the on-site manufacture of air-dried bricks at various sites in early Roman Britain (below p. 63 and 69). This usage is consistent with the reference that Vitruvius makes to the Lydian brick of one and a half feet by one foot (On Architecture 2, 3.3). The recent study of a timber-framed building from the Courage’s Brewery site in Southwark has shown that most of the timbers used here were cut to standard dimensions including 1 pm, 1.5 pm and 3 pm (Brigham et al. 1995, 25). It has been suggested that this building may have been prefabricated, and initially constructed in a framing-yard before re-erection on site. The elevation of the aisled building at Meonstoke appears also to have been planned using this measure, with the facade divided into decorative registers 7.5 pm high (King and Potter 1990).
It would seem to be an unnecessary inconvenience to try to plan a building using a different type of measure to that used for all the prefabricated materials. It is therefore likely that most buildings were laid out according to a scheme of relative proportions specific to the site, but that when measurements were taken these were normally in pm.

Building works

Architects are named in inscriptions from Roman Britain: Amandus at Birrens (*RIB* 2091); and Quintus at Carrawburgh (*RIB* 1542); and a surveyor made an altar dedication at Piercebridge (*RIB* 1024; see Dilke 1971, Dilke 1985, and Adam 1994, 8-19 for surveying practices); but we do not know to what extent such figures were also involved in private constructions. Judged by practice elsewhere the owner may have been closely involved in the design: “Everything depends on the plasterwork being in keeping, I shall see to it myself ... I disapproved of one or two vaults and ordered them to be altered” (*Cicero Ad Quintum fratrem*, 3.1.1-2).

In Roman Italy building labour could be supplied by the freedmen and slaves of the owner’s private estate, although there is sufficient evidence for the operation of hired building contractors in Roman Italy for this to have more probably been the norm (*Cicero Ad Atticum*, 14.3.1; Cato *de re Rustica*, 14; and various references in the *Digest*; see also Ling 1985 for a detailed summary). There were all sorts of specialist artisans who could be involved, and there were Roman *collegia* (guilds) of *fabri tignuarii* (woodworkers and subsequently general construction workers), *pavimentarii* (paviers), *structores* (builders), *subrutores* (demolition men), and others.

In Roman Britain a lower level of demand might have reduced the scope for the development of specialist trades, but many areas of work required specialist competence. The evidence of building technique illustrates the involvement of skilled craftsmen. Skills newly introduced to Britain after the Roman conquest included those of mosaic laying, fresco painting, the building of heating systems, and stonemasonry. The construction of earth-built structures also needed skills unavailable locally prior to the conquest. Rapid post-conquest changes in joinery (see below) point also to the introduction of specialist carpenters.

Most craftsmen are known only by their works, although an inscription was set up in Bath by the Gallic stonemason Priscus (*RIB* 149). For mosaicists these works are
reasonably eloquent since the artistic 'signatures' of different schools can be identified. Each school seems to have served a particular urban community and its villas (Smith 1969).

The use of building materials in the villa at Fishbourne illustrated an early appreciation of the potential of different kinds of local stone, even in the absence of a local masonry building tradition (Cunliffe 1971; Greene 1986, 152-3). The principle of local self-sufficiency in materials was consistently adhered to, and the presence of imported building materials represents a particular luxury (see p. 74). In this the strictures of Vitruvius seem to have been closely heeded: "Economy depends on the proper management of materials and of site, as well as a thrifty balancing of cost and common sense in the construction of works. This will be observed if, in the first place, the architect does not demand things which can not be found or made ready without great expense" (On Architecture 1, 2.8)

A few builders' tools have survived. One of the most valuable of these is the bronze try-square (norma) found in the construction levels of a second-century building at Canterbury, probably a joiner's tool (Chapman 1979, 403-7). The various saws, chisels, planes, adzes and plasterer's floats that have been found in metalwork hoards and ritual deposits, illustrate the use of a sophisticated tool kit (Liversidge 1968, 188-90). We have no evidence from Roman Britain for the pulleys and lifting machines used to manoeuvre the larger stone blocks and building materials (for which see Ling 1985, 19-22), which are in any case most unlikely to have been employed on domestic building projects.

Timber scaffolds were widely used (Adam 1994, 81-7). Putlog holes are commonly recorded, as in masonry constructions at Verulamium (Frere 1983a, 249). These housed horizontal beams that were temporarily socketed into the rising walls, and served as joists beneath the temporary wooden working floors for masons. The absence of putlog holes from many other masonry walls, however, suggests that many scaffolds were built without taking support from the masonry wall under construction. Wall paintings in the tomb of Trebius Justus at Rome illustrates a Roman building site with men working from a free-standing mason's scaffold reached by a ladder (MacDonald 1965, 147). Postholes likely to have supported the upright timbers of
such scaffoldings were evident in the construction of the fourth-century villa and bath house at Feltwell (Gurney 1986, 1-48). Scaffolds used in the construction of the Roman forum at London were built over timber base plates, set parallel to and some 600 mm. distant from the wall being built. These base plates were lapped at 2 m. intervals by perpendicular buttressed standards which would have supported working platforms (Milne 1992, 22). Rows of posts alongside load-bearing earth walls in buildings in early Roman London may have held temporary roof supports (Perring and Roskams 1991, 87-88).

A more intimate record of the construction process was found in the mortar floor of a house at Dorchester, where an adult and child had left footprints in the cement (Woodward et al. 1993, 65, 117).

In a survey of the building of the fortress at Inchtuthill, Elizabeth Shirley, has attempted an estimate of the labour and materials required. She suggests that a properly supplied team of about 40 men would have taken four weeks to build a barrack block (Shirley 1996, 125). This can be used as a base-line in assessing the demands of building private houses of similar scale (see also Faulkner 1997 on estimates of quantities for the construction of Roman houses at Verulamium).
3.2. **Timber buildings**

**Timber use and supply**

Most Romano-British houses were built of wood, and building in timber remained the most popular form of vernacular architecture from pre-Roman times to the later medieval period. The supply of timber was an important concern throughout the Roman world (Meiggs 1982; Adam 1994, 90-101). In Britain oak was preferred for structural timbers, and hazel and birch rods from short rotation coppicing were extensively used in wattle panels. Other wood sometimes used in Romano-British buildings included ash, alder and elm (Dark and Dark 1997, 38-40; Hanson 1978). Wood from young, fast-growing, trees was exploited in the construction of timber-framed buildings, and included sapwood, suggesting that durability was not a primary concern. Unseasoned timber obtained by coppicing within managed woodlands supplied the bulk of demand in early Roman London, although wildwood sources were also exploited (Goodburn 1992; Brigham *et al.* 1995, 33-47). In a study of the timber supply in the north of the province Hanson has concluded that military stockpiles were not used, and that the main demand was for unseasoned wood which was in ready supply (Hanson 1978). Unseasoned timbers could be felled on demand, or speculatively against prompt sale. The documented early second-century dispute over the ownership of a wood in Kent, shows that the commercial value of such property was well recognised (RIB 2446.1-31; Frere and Tomlin 1992; Hassall and Tomlin 1994, 302-3).

Even towards the end of the third century large timbers were abundantly available for use as oak piles in the construction of London’s public buildings and waterfronts (Williams 1993; Milne 1985, 65-7). A trend towards the use of younger and smaller trees in some later waterfronts, might indicate that the earlier profligate use of massive timbers had taken its toll but could equally reflect changes in carpentry practice (Brigham 1990, 150-1).

**Earth-fast and irregular timber structures.**

The simplest and most widely diffused form of timber construction involved setting uprights into the ground and using these earth-fast timbers to support the roof.
Some constructions were built without principal posts, and relied for support on wattle and daub walls built around stakes set at irregular intervals. These were typically small buildings with walls no more than 100 mm. wide, in which round-sectioned timbers, infrequently more than 80 mm. in diameter, were driven 100-250 mm. into the ground at 150-500 mm. intervals. These uprights served as rods for horizontally woven wattle sails, which were coated by clay daub tempered with grass-like material (fig. 17). Basketwork walls of this type, in which the support of the roof did not rely on the rigidity of individual vertical members, had been used in Britain since the Bronze Age (e.g. Brean Down: Bell 1990, 51-3).

At Castle Street in Carlisle a small 4-roomed building of this type (Building 1627, measuring 8 m. by 3.6 m.), was built outside the fort c. AD 73. Substantial parts of the collapsed wattle and daub wall from a similar building, of Claudio-Neronian date, were found at Balkerne Lane, Colchester (Crummy 1984, 23, 105-7). Contemporary circular structures in the suburbs of London were built with wattle and daub superstructures, again without any use of principal posts, although these may have been pens rather than roofed buildings (Perring and Roskams 1991, 74-6).

Another of the buildings erected c. AD 50-60 at Newgate Street (Building B), was rectangular with irregularly spaced timber posts (including squared and circular elements), set up to 3.3 m. apart. These posts are more likely to have provided direct support for the roof and served as a framework for wattle and daub walls similar to those described above, although burnt daub from destruction layers indicated that diagonal bracing elements were also used. The early Neronian building in Insula 17 at Verulamium is likely to have been of similar type. It is possible that some of these irregular walls were capped by longitudinal wall-plates supporting rafters (although see Smith 1982 and Charles 1982 for a discussion of the problems involved). The use of squared timbers and nails within the walls at Newgate Street may have been a consequence of complicated arrangements made at wall-plate level, but without better evidence this can only be a matter for speculation. Apart from the occasional use of nails there is little to separate these buildings from pre-conquest wattle and daub structures such as those found at Skeleton Green (Partridge 1981).

Irregular buildings were common in the earliest phases of settlement, and were often
soon replaced by structures with larger posts set out with greater regularity. In these the timber uprights were typically 100-350 mm. across, and set at intervals of 500 mm., although there is considerable variation and larger buildings used bigger posts set further apart. These buildings were still frequently built with circular-sectioned uprights supporting horizontally woven wattle walls, as in late first-century military buildings at Ribchester and Castleford (Wilson 1970, 281, plate 32A; Abramson 1988, 44-6). A common design variation involved using a narrow palisade trench - subsequently backfilled with soil or gravel - along the wall-line to assist in the setting out and planting of the individual posts. Although particularly popular on military sites (Richmond 1961, 15), the use of this technique at Wroxeter distinguishes the earliest phase of civil building (Webster 1988, 137-9). Other examples from civil contexts include a late first-century building found on the Courage Brewery site in Southwark, where the foundation trench was 1 m. deep, and a contemporary building from Castle Street, Carlisle (1090) which was built with round sectioned posts set in a continuous trench at 360 to 400 mm. intervals with horizontally woven hazel rods (fig. 18).

Few such structures have been studied in sufficient detail to permit an analysis of post spacing, from which evidence it would be possible to reconstruct elements of superstructure and roof. Some were built with the posts on one side of the building paired by posts on the other, such that the weight of the roof could have been carried by pairs of rafters resting on the opposed posts and joined together in an A-frame (fig. 19). Examples of this include Building 2 at 15-23 Southwark Street, Southwark, and the extension (Room 6) of Building 45 at the Balkerne Lane site in Colchester. The scarcity of evidence for regular spacing, or for the pairing of posts in other contemporary buildings in these towns, may in part be a consequence of the inadequacies of the archaeological evidence. Better examples have been obtained from the timber outbuildings associated with villas, such as Buildings 53 and 55 at Gorhambury, which were set out with great regularity (Neal et al. 1990, figs. 69 and 103).

Buildings with earth fast posts and wattle and daub walls remained popular on low status sites throughout the Roman period, although such buildings were rare in larger cities after the second century. This perhaps reflects the rarity of low status buildings in these settlements rather than any change in building fashion. Second-century
buildings formed of squared posts set into pits have been found at both Carlisle and York (McCarthy 1991, 44-7; Frere 1985, 279), and many aisled buildings were similarly built of large squared timbers set into post pits (see Hadman 1978).

These buildings were generally short-lived. On several sites in London there were three or four phases of timber building in the decade before AD 60 (Williams in preparation; Chapman and Johnson 1973), and the average life span of late first and early second-century post-built houses at Ironmonger Lane was less than 10 years (Perring and Roskams 1991, 57-61).

**Timber frames**

Our knowledge of timber-framed building techniques has been immeasurably advanced by recent discoveries, in particular at Carlisle and London where ground conditions have preserved many timbers. It is now clear that a common wall type in Romano-British towns during the late first and early second centuries consisted of a close studded timber frame with wattle-and-daub or mudbrick infill (mud and stud).

The best evidence derives from the study of 37 oak timbers re-used as piles in a late second or early third-century masonry building at Cannon Street, London (fig. 20; Goodburn 1992). Amongst these timbers were six studs, ten plates, three diagonal braces, one corner post, one top plate and one plate with evidence of a junction with a partition plate. These had apparently been taken from the same, late first or early second-century building, which had stood for at least 15 years before demolition. Most timbers had been cut from whole logs (boxed heart), taken from young trees. The walls were built over base-plates, which had been jointed together. Studs about 2.2 m. long, with projecting tenons, were set into mortices cut into the base plate at intervals of approximately 520-620 mm. (edge to edge). A top-plate was inserted over these upright studs, and diagonal bracing inserted (diagonal braces are also known from the timber gate at Vindolanda: Birley 1977, 112). The top and base plates were 110 mm. deep, such that in total the wall stood about 2.4 m. high. Tie beams were used to brace the building at ceiling level. The jointing shows this to have been of ‘normal assembly’, in which the wall plate was laid before the tie beams. It was the combined mass of the wall, as much as the load-bearing capacity of individual studs, that supported the roof. The nature of the joints and the lack of pegs suggest that the
walls were not pre-assembled, but were built up piecemeal on site. Wattle and daub panels were inserted between the uprights and the wall further reinforced by nailing planks to its outside face (see below).

Three base plates similar to those described above, 100-160 mm. across and cut by mortice holes at intervals of 220-300 mm., were found at Copthall Avenue in a mid second-century building (Maloney 1990; Perring and Roskams 1991, 72-3; Museum of London: COV87). A timber stud from another such building was re-used in the waterfront constructions at Pudding Lane, and measured 2.3 m. long (excluding the tenons, one of which was 180-200 mm. long). Impressions preserved in burnt daub illustrate that similar timber-framed constructions were widely employed throughout London at this period (as in internal partitions in Building D at Watling Court and in the rear extension to Building K at Newgate Street). The collapsed timber-framed partition from Building K at Newgate Street in London was built with studs 100-180 mm. across set at 420-600 mm. intervals, and infilled with mudbrick (see p. 64).

The lower part of another well preserved timber-framed structure built c. AD 153 was found at the Courage Brewery site in Southwark (fig. 21; Brigham et al. 1995).

Simple unsecured joints were employed. Wall posts with tenons set into a ground beam were set at 0.9m centres: scantlings measuring 110-20 x 40-60 mm. alternated with slightly larger timbers measuring 135-40 x 60-80 mm. The corner posts of the building were more substantial, measuring up to 100 x 180 mm. There was no evidence for the use of any cross-bracing, but this building, which was partly sunken, was clad with boards which would have reinforced the structure. It has been suggested that it was a prefabricated structure, first put together in an assembly yard before being built on site. Three strands of evidence for this are presented:

- the timbers had dried out after being prepared, as evidenced by end grain splitting and by the occasional use of nails to reinforce some of the joist ends, suggesting that they had shrunk and distorted before final assembly.

- no woodworking debris was found on site

- the building had been laid out in a regular fashion to standard measures.

Since each joint was individually worked some form of marking would have been
required. No evidence for such marking was found although pigments could have been used. The evidence certainly suggests pre-assembly but is not conclusive and on-site design is not impossible.

The bulk of the evidence from London comes from buildings of the period c. AD 70-160, and it is not yet certain that the type of timber framing described above was much used before this period, although this is probable. Timber-framed constructions were commonplace in Claudio-Neronian Colchester, where burnt daub from buildings destroyed in AD 60/61 (as at Lion Walk and Balkerne Lane), preserved the imprint of base plates supporting studs at 550 mm. centres (400 mm. apart) (Crummy 1984, 8, 104-5). Several buildings of this period at Verulamium were also built over timber ground beams, although some of the details of the construction are less clear (Frere 1972, 8). In the later first-century and early to mid second-century buildings at Verulamium timber-framed walls were widely used, and generally measured 200-300 mm. across, with studs at 380-450 mm. intervals (Frere 1972, 6; 1983, 239, pl. 38). At Castle Street, in Carlisle, the earlier earth-fast post constructions were replaced by a timber-framed building (Building 806), in c. AD 105 (McCarthy 1991). The timber frame was supported by oak baulks, and incorporated square sectioned oak studs about 100 mm. in diameter at 260-420 mm. intervals. In this building the roof load was not carried by the frame, but by larger posts recessed into the sill beams.

Villas were more often built with timber-framed walls than is generally recognised. Some timber structures at villa sites were high-status buildings, as demonstrated by the quality of their decoration, the complexity of their plans (e.g. Boxmoor and Chilgrove 2), and the presence of high-status finds and facilities (such as the baths at Gadebridge). One of the best examples is the early building at Boxmoor where the base plates overlapped by some 250 mm. at the corners (in a similar manner to the London buildings), and supported studs at 600 mm. intervals by means of the familiar mortice and tenon joint (Neal 1974-6, 57-8). The longest surviving stud was some 2.15 m. high and some cross braces also survived. The infill was of wattle and daub.

The lavish decoration found in the massive timber-framed Hadrianic building (the Commanding Officer's house) in the fort at Vindolanda - which was built with exceptionally large oak ground beams and uprights (up to 330 mm. wide and 280 mm.
thick) - further illustrates the use of timber framing in high status buildings (Frere 1992, 270).

From the evidence summarised above it is possible to suggest that the standard framed partition was made of timbers measuring approximately 100 x 150 mm., cut to lengths which allowed the construction of panels about eight foot high (in pm), and were close studded at one or two foot intervals (i.e. 300-600 mm. apart, with the 2 ft spacing preferred where a wattle and daub panel was to be inserted). This compares with the average interval of 500-600 mm. between studs in the timber-framed wattle and daub buildings of Roman Lyons (Desbat 1985).

Identical timber-framed structures to the standard London type described above had been built in AD 40-41 at the Roman auxiliary fort at Valkenburg on the Rhine estuary (Glasbergen 1972). There has been some debate about whether such buildings were substantially pre-fabricated. The casual approach to rectilinearity evidenced by the buildings at Valkenburg seems inconsistent with the requirements of pre-assembly and it is here more probable that the final carpentry took place on site. Pre-fabrication is also argued to be unlikely in the construction of timber buildings at military sites (Hanson 1982, 179).

In contrast the lightweight sunken structure found at the Courage Brewery site in Southwark, where some evidence can be adduced for pre-assembly, was differently designed. This building had slighter timber uprights (scantlings) than was normal, and these were set wider apart than was typical, at 3 ft. intervals. These differences suggest that a higher level of technical skill was employed, allowing for a more economic use of materials. The Courage Brewery building, which belongs to the mid second century, is one of the latest for which detailed evidence is available. It is possible that carpentry techniques had evolved in London to allow these changes of approach.

The use of a timber frame represented an enormous improvement over earth fast post construction. It is normal to find that the first phase of Romano-British urban settlement relied extensively on earth-fast structures, in which squared timbers and carpentered joints were exceptional, but that timber-framed buildings employing sophisticated carpentry soon replaced these. This pattern of change was witnessed on
most of the sites referred to above (Museum of London: CLE 81; Williams in preparation; Frere 1983a, 195-202; McCarthy 1991). On some sites the changes in building techniques were accompanied by a greater level of expenditure on interior decoration. The framed buildings were not, however, very much more durable. The small diameter timbers of unseasoned wood, where used in the main load-bearing walls “might realistically be expected to last no more than about 5 years at ground level” (Goodburn 1992, 192). These were cheap buildings, popular in contexts where short-term values prevailed. Many of London’s first inhabitants evidently chose to rebuild their properties once every 5-10 years, and in Insula 14 at Verulamium the timber-framed buildings were rebuilt four times in the period AD 75-150, with two or three floor renewals per phase (Frere 1972, 5).

On most villa sites (although not in the earliest building at Boxmoor), the timber-framed walls were set over stone foundations (see p. 60). This allowed for much longer usage. Similarly in the better townhouses, as Watling Court Building D at London, wattle and daub timber-framed partitions were only used for internal partitions, and the main walls were of sturdier construction.

In most cases the timber frames were not left exposed in the medieval fashion, but had been covered by daub, plaster or boards (see 3.6 below). Ceramic pottery stands found in early Roman levels in London appear, however, to have been modelled on timber buildings, showing the exposed timbers of cross-braced panels (Chapman 1981). It has also been suggested that a graffito on a Roman tile from Hucclecote illustrates a timber-framed structure (Davey 1961), although alternative interpretations are possible (fig. 22, see p. 78).

**Carpentry**

The study of London’s timber structures has shown that the conquest brought about a radical advance in woodworking skills. The Romans introduced the frame-saw to Britain, with its teeth set in a straight blade, offering significant advantage over concave bladed pre-Roman equivalents. These included the large two-man and cross-cut types (Liversidge 1968, 188-9). Planks were sawn over a trestle by cutting from both ends of a square-hewn saw baulk: there is no evidence for pit sawing (Brigham et al. 1995, 43). New technologies of sawing along and across the grain appeared, and an
organised timber trade was established. In this period timber-frame building, the dead straight line, all square and level all first appear (Goodburn 1995). The carpenter’s plane also made its appearance at this time, and examples have been found in Verulamium, Silchester and Caerwent (Liversidge 1968, 190-1).

The following carpentry joints have been documented in London (Goodburn 1992, 197-8; Brigham et al. 1995, 50 - and for evidence from elsewhere in Roman Britain see Weeks 1982):

- Bird’s mouth - examples from waterfront quays in Southwark (fig. 23.8)
- Square mortice and bareface tenon (including through and not through mortices) - for joining studs to plates (fig. 23.1-3)
- Edge halved scarf with one dovetail butt for joining base plates (and see also Caruana 1983 for Carlisle) (fig. 23.9)
- Cross halving - to join base plates (fig. 23.6)
- Oblique halving - for studs and diagonal bracing
- Lap joint for ends of minor joists
- Lap dovetail - for top-plates, tie beams and ends of major joists (fig. 23.5)
- Half lap dovetail - for base plate corner joints transfixed by corner post mortice
- Rebate - for receiving cladding planks into corner posts (fig. 23.4)
- Sloping rectangular recess - for insertion of lathe/stave into studs (fig. 23.7)
- Edge trenching to accommodate wall planks crossing the line of a beam
- Through splayed overlaps (not fastened in a scarf joint) for the ends of wall planks
- Tongue and groove - for joining planks to beams

Prior to the conquest simple mortice and tenon joints were probably common. Examples dated to c. 700 BC have been found in the Somerset Levels, and to the first century BC at Glastonbury (Coles, Heal and Orme 1978, Bulleid and Gray 1911). The equivalent Roman joint was differently executed, involving much more precise and tightly cut squared joints (Goodburn 1995, 45).

Further to the likely widespread use of wooden pegs, Iron nails were occasionally used
to reinforce Romano-British timber joints (as Perring and Roskams 1991 94-5; Goodburn 1995, 45; Frere 1972, 8), although this was not standard practice. Nails were also commonly used to attach wall planking to studs and may also have been used in fixing roofing materials. Their use on this scale was a Roman introduction.

Foundations for framed buildings

Most timber-framed houses were built over consolidated building platforms (composed of clay, chalk, gravel or hard-core according to availability). These were usually considered sufficient to protect structures from movement. The indifference shown to the risks of subsidence posed by building over the backfilled brickearth quarry behind Building K at Newgate Street may reflect a lack of interest in durability rather than technical incompetence (Perring and Roskams 1991, 69).

In circumstances of particular ground instability piles were used. Clusters of 3-4 short cleft oak piles commonly supported the timber base-plates of houses in London’s marshy Walbrook valley (Grimes 1968, 96; Goodburn 1995, 45). In the foundation of Building F at Watling Court, piles were not used to support individual walls but at regular intervals across the unstable area as part of a general preparation of the site. Piling seems to have been used with greater frequency beneath wattle and daub walls than beneath brickearth ones.

Timber chocks (as in London and Carlisle), and stone pads (as at Wanborough and Wroxeter) were also sometimes used for baseplate levelling (Anderson and Wacher 1980, 119-121; McCarthy 1991; Webster 1988, 137-9; Goodburn 1995, 45).

Not all framed buildings relied on the use of continuous timber base-plates. An alternative foundation treatment consisted of lining the narrow foundation trenches with planks, reinforced with paired wooden piles, and using these rather than a base plate to hold the studs fast. Walls of this type were first used in the centre of London before the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60/61 (Philp 1977, 7-9), and were still being built in the middle of the second century (Museum of London: CNL 81).

In another variation studs were jointed into discontinuous timber pads. At Watling Court, London the principal uprights of a wattle and daub building, destroyed c. AD 60, had been built over timber pads about 600 mm. across and 1.2 m. long, set at
intervals of 1.2-1.5 m. (Perring and Roskams 1991, 72). In post Boudiccan rebuilding at Eastcheap post pads supported by piles were set at regular intervals along a trench (Museum of London: EST 83; Williams in preparation). The technique may have been in use as late as c. AD 130, at Milk Street, where pits 300-800 mm. by 1.0-1.4 m. may have contained post pads, although these were more likely to have been joists supporting a raised timber floor. These features were similar to those employed in the construction of Building 10 at Gorhambury (Neal et al. 1990, 29). At Vindolanda short pad-like lengths of sleeper beams were used beneath squared uprights (Birley 1977, 113), and this was also the case in the mid second-century construction of House 27,2A at Verulamium, where less deeply buried timber ground beams supported the wall infill (Frere 1983a, 204-5).

Many timber-framed structures were set over stone footings, as at Caistor (Atkinson 1932). It is often difficult to establish whether the masonry foundations encountered on archaeological sites had supported superstructures in earth, timber or masonry. Smith (1982) has drawn attention to the fact that broad concrete footings interpreted as foundations for timber-framed structures probably supported earth-walled superstructures (as at Lockleys, Chilgrove, and Denton). Since timber-framed walls were unlikely to be any wider than 300 mm., there is no good reason why footings for such walls should be wider. There are, however, instances where offset courses had been used to reduce broad masonry footings, often about 600 mm. wide, to narrower sleeper-walls that served as the foundations of a timber-framed building. Examples of such footings were found in House 23,1 at Winchester (Zant 1993, 80-1), and in a first-century timber building built over clay and cobble footings at Wroxeter (Bushe-Fox 1916, 4-5). The impressions of a timber base plate laid over the cement of a wall footing 450-500 mm. wide were noted in Building 59 at Balkerne Lane, Colchester (Crummy 1984, 131). In these cases timber-framed superstructure were built over unnecessarily wide footings. Perhaps the builders of these houses thought that these wider footings helped spread the building load or compensated for local ground instability, although there is no good reason to believe that they would have done so.

Williams (1971, 175), in his study of building materials in southeast Roman-Britain, identified three types of half timbering:
• a masonry dwarf wall built between the upstanding posts of a timber structure. Williams cites examples from Verulamium, Lakenheath and Cherry Hinton, but there is a possibility that some of these were cases of masonry nogging between earth fast posts.

• a wall footing at Silchester, presenting a 10 in. (250 mm.) wide slot in the upper surface of the masonry footings, apparently a housing for the base of a timber frame.

• a dwarf wall capped with a tile course to provide a flat base for the timber construction. The use of tile capping was also frequently associated with earth built walls, as at Watling Court Building H/K (Perring and Roskams 1991, 37), and in none of the instances cited by Williams can it be established that timber framing had actually been employed.

None of these types was in common use, and in the vast majority of cases where timber-framed walls were set over stone footings the ground beams rested on the smooth upper surface of the masonry, without any particular form of surfacing or housing.

**Wattle and daub panels**

Some timber-framed buildings incorporated wattle panels similar to those used in the earth-fast constructions. These consisted of a lattice of round sectioned rods and sails (see p. 51): examples include buildings from Colchester (Balkerne Lane, Building 41), Verulamium (Insula 14) and Southwark (Toppings Wharf) (Frere 1972, 6-8; Sheldon 1974).

Frequently, however, a very different type of wattle was associated with the use of timber framing (Perring and Roskams 1991 74-7; Goodburn 1992; Crummy 1984). Circular-sectioned sails (10-18 mm. in diameter), were woven vertically around square-sectioned horizontal rods slotted into vertical notches cut in the sides of the studs (fig. 20). The horizontal rods measured 12 mm. deep by 25-42 mm. wide and were set at intervals of about 550-600 mm., such that there were four of these cross members between base plate and top plate. It is possible that the wattle panels were pre-assembled and dropped into place. Similar vertically woven panels involving squared rods have been recorded at Verulamium, where the lowest rod was 200 mm.
above the base plate, and Corbridge (Frere 1972, 6-8; Richmond and Gillam 1953, 218; see also Graham 1988, fig. 13a). Panels of this type were in use by AD 60 at Colchester, and were still being built in early second-century Verulamium.

A variation on this type is represented by daub fragments from the destruction of Building H at Watling Court in London, which preserved the impressions of a series of overlapping horizontal squared rods or lathes (Perring and Roskams 1991, fig. 65).

All of these wattle and daub walls were about 100 mm. thick, exclusive of any plaster, timber or clay facing. The daub, which was well mixed and grass tempered, completely encased the wattle, and was also taken across the outside face of the timber frame, which some cases was subsequently faced and secured with horizontal 'weatherboard' planking (see below). The Cannon Street timbers illustrate that the inside face of the timber frame remained exposed within the rooms of the house (Goodburn 1992, 201), but elsewhere this face too was daubed over in preparation for the decorative finish (Crummy 1984, 22 and see further below).

Vitruvius describes the limitations of wattle and daub buildings: "The more it saves in time and gains in space, the greater and the more general is the disaster that it may cause; for it is made to catch fire, like torches.... And, in the stucco covering, too, it makes cracks from the inside by the arrangement of its studs and girts. For these swell with moisture as they are daubed, and then contract as they dry, and, by their shrinking, cause the solid stucco to split. But since some are obliged to use it either to save time or money, or for partitions on an unsupported span, the proper method of construction is as follows. Give it a high foundation so that it may nowhere come in contact with the broken stone-work composing the floor; for if it is sunk in this, it rots in the course of time, then settles and sags forward, and so breaks through the surface of the stucco covering." (On Architecture 2, 8.20).

The contexts in which wattle and daub was used in Roman Britain reflects this attitude, and in most high-status buildings the technique was relegated to internal partitions, or the walls were protected by means of masonry plinths (see p. 60). At Watling Court in London timber-framed walls were only used as internal partitions within the Flavian adobe walled houses, closely following a design adopted in Augustan houses at Lyon (Desbat 1981, 55-8).
Partitions of plaster applied directly to bundled reeds or wattles have been recorded in Roman constructions in Italy, and Vitruvius describes something similar in his discussion of the plastering of a vault (Pagani 1991, 136-7; Vitruvius 2, 4.2-3). The plastered wattle partitions used in the jettied upper storey of the Casa a Graticcio at Herculaneum is a well known example. The technique was rarely used in Roman Britain, although plaster found in Colliton Park, Dorchester preserved the impression of reeds on the reverse side and was possibly derived from a partition of this form, although it could have come from a ceiling (RCHM 1970; Drew and Selby 1937).

Mud and stud

In mud and stud walls the infill between the timber uprights was formed of mud or clay rather than wattle. The mud was usually introduced in the form of grass-tempered air-dried bricks, the use of which was apparently a Roman introduction to Britain.

Mud and stud walls combine the techniques of timber construction, described above, with those of earth-walled construction described below. The earliest such walls are found in pre-Boudiccan levels. In one building of this period in London, at 5-12 Fenchurch Street, timber studs were set a plank lined palisade trench which had been packed with cobbles set in brickearth, with mudbrick infill above (Hammer 1985, 7-9). The pre-Boudiccan use of mudbrick is also attested at both Verulamium (in the earliest phases of the buildings excavated in Insula 13 in 1987 by W. H. Manning, R. Niblett and C. Saunders), and Colchester (Crummy 1984, 20-24). Partitions within the first-century barracks at Gloucester were also of plastered mud and stud construction (Hassall and Rhodes 1975, 20).

Most of the bricks used in mud and stud partitions measured 420-480 by 150-180 by 70-80 mm.: equivalent to 1 ft. 6 in. long by 6 in. wide and 3 in. deep (Perring and Roskams 1991, 77-8). There was considerable width variation, however, and some walls used bricks as narrow as 100 mm. across, and others bricks up to 250 mm. wide (the bricks used in adobe walls showed even greater variation, see below). Bricks were formed by mixing clay with water and grass, and pressing the resultant slurry into a wooden mould before leaving it to dry (McGann 1987, 1). The moulds were open at top and bottom, and the underside of the bricks sometimes retain the impressions of the straw or sand on which they were placed while drying.
Contextual evidence suggests that mud and stud construction was considered superior to wattle and daub since its use was initially confined to a comparatively small number of high quality buildings. The technique became more widely diffused during the Flavian period, gaining particular currency in the buildings of the early second century. Partitions used in the rear extension of an early second-century commercial property in Newgate Street (Building K), showed the use of mudbricks within close studded partitions set over timber ground beams. The studs were set one brick length apart. A stack of bricks 17 courses high had collapsed from one of the walls (fig. 24). The volume of destruction debris from the building suggested that the walls here had originally stood some 3.3 m. high (Perring and Roskams 1991, 77-78). Collapsed second-century mud and stud partitions at Verulamium, with posts set 380-410 mm. apart, centre to centre, had stood over 3.66 m. high (Frere 1983a, 238-9, pl. 37b). In some instances the technique was still used on high status sites into the later Roman period. At Bignor a clay wall building of late second or early third century may have been of this type (Frere 1982, 146).

Mud and stud walls were not always built over timber base plates. In a minority of constructions the walls were instead set into timber lined trenches which held the uprights in place (Museum of London: CNL 81, Williams in preparation). In many other cases the uprights were earth-fast. A building of this type was uncovered at Watling Court (Building F). There was no evident order to the spacing of the uprights, and it is possible that the roof had been supported by the mass of the wall rather than by specific structural timbers. It was possible to identify individual mudbricks at the base of the partitions in this building and it is likely that in most cases the mud of the mud and stud walls derived from air-dried bricks. In most cases the timbers and bricks were completely encased by a skim of daub applied with a float. In some buildings there were so few studs that their structural significance may be questioned, and these buildings ought to perhaps be considered earth-walled (see further below).

Masonry nogging

Although the use of stone as an infill between timber uprights, known otherwise as masonry nogging or in classical contexts as opus gallicum, is well known from pre-Roman contexts in Gaul the technique was rarely employed in Roman Britain. At
Cirencester a collapsed internal half-timbered wall in House 6.5, was built with dry laid stonework between closely spaced studs (fig. 25: Goodburn 1976, 354). Other examples include partitions at Caerleon and Verulamium (Zienkiewicz 1993, 40-43; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 140), although in these buildings the masonry construction probably supported a wattle and daub superstructure.

At Colchester a watching brief at the Cups Hotel site uncovered part of a timber-framed building (Building 152), with close set studs (0.3-0.35m apart) where the infill consisted of broken tile set in mortar (Crummy 1992, 330). This semi-basemented building was destroyed in AD 60/1.

Stave built walls and timber cladding.

At Tanners Row in York the main walls of a second-century building consisted of squared timber uprights, some earth-fast others set over timber base-plates, with horizontal planks nailed onto their outside face (Frere 1985, 279, pl. 23; Pearson pers. comm.). This is a structural approach reminiscent of the balloon frame structures popular in the United States in the 19th century. A similar second-century building found at the Old Grapes Lane site in Carlisle, had a wall of oak uprights supporting horizontal planking (McCarthy et al. 1982, 82), and at Castle Street a building of c. AD 105 was walled with horizontal planks laid between the posts (McCarthy 1991).

Stave-built walls have also been found in London. Several late first - early second-century structures built in this fashion known from the Walbrook valley, as at Bucklersbury and Lothbury (Frere 1991, 266; Rowsome pers. comm.), and from the excavations below the second-century forum (Milne and Wardle 1995, 38). The external face of the timber-framed walls of the mid second-century sunken building found at the Courage Brewery site in Southwark were reinforced with horizontal square-edged boards, 35-38 mm. thick and 250-450 mm. wide set on edge (fig. 21; Dillon 1989, 229-231). These were chamfered at the ends to improve the join, and were housed by a rebate in the corner posts. Boards were also used to form a skirting on the inner face of one wall. It is not known if this pattern of wall planking continued above ground level, although this seems likely.

Boarded walls have also been noted at Vindolanda and Heronbridge (Frere 1992, 270; Mason 1989, 129), and would account for several discoveries of collapsed planking.
nailed to structural timbers, as at Chelmsford and Verulamium (Drury 1975, 165; Frere 1972, fig. 3 and 75). In most cases the planks were set edge to edge, although overlapping weatherboarding was reportedly used in military constructions at Wroxeter (Frere 1986, 391).

In some cases planks formed both sides of the wall. Flavian wall lines at Ironmonger Lane (the second and third phases of period II), were represented by parallel lines of decayed timber planking 100 mm. apart (Museum of London: IRO 79), and this approach was adopted in the construction of timber walled cellars in Colchester (Crummy 1984, 23).

Internal partitions formed of planks nailed to both sides of a row of small studs have been recorded in earth-walled buildings in London. At Newgate Street a partition of this type stood at least 2.6 m. high between Rooms 1 and 2 of Building K. At Milk Street the planks and nails of a partition were found in Hadrianic levels (Museum of London: MLK 76 and GPO 75). Internal partitions in a building excavated in Fenchurch Street were also plank built (as Hammer 1985, 7-8).

Planks were commonly employed to clad timber-framed buildings with wattle and daub infill. A timber-framed wattle and daub wall in Southwark was reinforced by horizontal planking applied to its outer face, and held in place by further squared uprights against outer face of wall (Graham 1988, fig. 13a). Iron nails were instead used to fasten external plank sheathing, 200-350 mm. wide, to the timber-framed building represented by the timbers found re-used at Cannon Street, London (fig. 20, see p. 53; Goodburn 1992, 193, 201). The nailing pattern suggests that the planks were set edge to edge, and not overlapping. Similar planking was also frequently attached to mud and stud walls as has been recorded on several sites in London (Museum of London: BIS 82 and EST 83; Williams in preparation; Perring and Roskams 1990; Graham 1988, fig. 13a).

It is not clear if the planking was confined to the lower parts of these earth walls, where it protected the clay from eavesdrip splash, or extended to the eaves. Cladding added to the structural stability of a building, and offered additional security against pests, thieves and the elements.

Although horizontal plank-sheathing was more widely used vertical planking has also
been recorded at military sites in Roman Britain, including Pel Llystn and Carlisle (Hanson 1982, 180).

Cruck construction

It is considered likely by some scholars, that cruck construction - best known as the medieval alternative to timber-framed construction and involving curved or angled timbers such that the rafters supporting the roof effectively sprang from, rather than rested on, the load-bearing uprights - was employed in Roman houses (Fig. 26; Green 1982; Paunier 1985, 118). The examples given come from small agricultural buildings in and beyond the German borders of Gaul (as at Westick bei Kamen and Wijster in Germany, and at Sévery in Switzerland: Trier 1969; van Es 1965; Weidmann 1983, 301-5), and from small towns and rural sites in East Anglia (as at Godmanchester and Eaton Socon in Cambridgeshire, see Green 1982). The evidence is inconclusive, and cruck building was not a mainstream building type amongst the Romanised communities of Britain.
3.3. Earth-walled buildings

The supply of building materials

In the early towns and villas of Roman Britain earth walls were evidently considered superior to timber ones, no doubt for their greater durability and better resistance to fire (see McIntosh 1977, 63). There was no pre-Roman tradition of earth-walled construction in southeast Britain, and the use of such walls was a Roman innovation deriving from continental practice of Hellenistic inspiration (above p. 35). Mud-brick had been in common use at Rome (see Dio Cassius 39.61). Both Cato (On Agriculture 14) and Vitruvius (On Architecture 2, 3.2) gave practical advice on how to build with the material, emphasising both the problems of settlement and the value of masonry foundations. The use of these techniques on high-status Italian sites is illustrated by the evidence of early-imperial buildings at via Tomasso Grossi in Milan (Perring 1991a), and the villa at San Giovenale (Poulsen 1960, 313 ff.). Although better represented in Republican contexts, earth-walled buildings continued to be found into the later Roman period (as at Ventimiglia, see Pallarés 1986), by which time building in timber had returned to popularity. Britain was most influenced by Gallic practice, and the Augustan buildings of Lyon provide numerous parallels in matters of construction detail to the Flavian houses of London and Verulamium (Desbat 1985).

The sandy clays best suited for mud wall constructions are found throughout much of southeast England. Where possible clay pits were dug adjacent to the construction sites. The quarry at Newgate Street, London is a good illustration. About 100 cubic metres of clay were extracted from a pit 7 m. by 7 m. and 2.2 m. deep to the rear of the building site (Perring and Roskams 1991, 67). The manufacture of dried bricks took place at the side of the quarry, as illustrated by the presence of discards within its backfills.

In later periods access to suitable quarry sites diminished, and more complex mechanisms of supply were developed. Before the end of the first century AD some earth walls in the more intensely developed parts of London were built with material recovered from earlier earth-walled constructions, as illustrated by fragments of wall plaster re-mixed through the brickearth (e.g. Watling Court, Building D). These details of construction technique have received less attention on sites outside London,
but it is unlikely that the approaches were very different.

Adobe/mudbrick

Adobe or clay lump construction involved building load-bearing walls from air-dried bricks, without timber supports. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between adobe walls that contained minor timber elements, and mud and stud walls where the timber frame carried the roof load.

The earliest Romano-British mud-walled buildings were found in pre-Boudiccan contexts in both London and Colchester and were probably built by the army (Boddington and Marsden 1987; Crummy 1984, 22, 37; Perring 1991b, 12). The main walls of these buildings were built of brickearth-bonded air-dried bricks, set over timber ground-beams which rested on trench-built concrete foundations (580-650 mm. wide, and 0.3-1.10 m. deep) (fig. 27). The colonists at Colchester inherited the building type from the fortress and some early civilian use of the technique is known, as at Lion Walk.

In London the bricks in these walls were similar to those used in the mud-and-stud walls, but at Colchester the clay may not always have been grass tempered and a wider but thinner brick was used. Here the standard was approximately 430 by 290 by 50 mm., equivalent to 1 ft. 6 in. x 1 ft. x 2 ft.: the 'Lydian' brick. These walls find close parallel in the Augustan constructions at Lyon (at the rue des Farges and Verbe Incarne sites), where adobe walls (with blocks measuring 1 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft.) were set over masonry/concrete footings (Desbat 1981, 55-8; 1985, 75). Air-dried bricks of similar dimensions (460 by 230-300 by 150 mm.) were also used in 19th century Cambridge (McGann 1987), at which time it took approximately two days to make the 1000 odd bricks needed to make a house. Smaller bricks have also been found in early contexts at Colchester. Examples include bricks measuring 222 by 185 by 95 mm. at Lion Walk, and 330 by 279 by 38 mm. at North Hill (Crummy 1984, 22; Dunnett 1966, 31). The practice of making the bricks on the construction site permitted significant variation of brick size from one site to the next.

The best earth-walled town houses were built in the late first and second centuries. In contrast with the short-lived timber walled buildings some of these earth-walled town houses stood for over 40 years. The expensively decorated Flavian buildings at
Watling Court in London and the early second town house at Blue Boar Lane in Leicester illustrate the high standards that could be achieved. Clay walled buildings of this date have also been noted in Dover, Canterbury, Verulamium and Cirencester (Philp 1989; Wacher 1995, 196; Frere 1983a, 161-6; Wacher 1963, 16-19). These better town houses found contemporary imitation in the villas at Farningham and Lullingstone, where thick clay walls were set over stone foundations in the period from c. AD 80 (Period I), and in the second-century villa at Norfolk Street, Leicester.

These buildings were similar to the early buildings referred to above, although it was no longer usual to find a timber base plate intervening between the masonry dwarf wall and the mudbrick superstructure. It was also usual to find that the masonry elements incorporated a greater proportion of better quality stone, and less cement. These footings were typically 0.40-0.60 m. wide and 0.5-1.2 m. high, of which 0.35-0.55 m. projected above the ground level. Wider bricks were also widely favoured in later adobe constructions, as in the town house at Blue Boar Lane in Leicester (250-300 mm. wide), and the villa at Norfolk Street, Leicester (400-500 mm. wide). Many of the construction details find direct parallel in Gallic architectural practice, and all structural details recorded in Building D at Watling Court can also be seen in a town house excavated in Chartres, Place des Halles (Coulon and Jolly 1985, 98-9).

Building H at Watling Court, a two-storied earth-built house with mosaics and painted walls, was built late in the first century. The main walls were set over foundations of re-used roofing tiles (tegulae laid with the flanges facing outwards to form the side of the wall, and bonded by brick earth) built-up some 300 mm. above ground level (fig. 28f). Air-dried bricks were laid lengthways across this foundation in a header bond to form a wall which, with a daub scrim, was about 480-500 mm. wide. Tile within the collapsed building debris is likely to have come from another tile course, perhaps at eaves level where it may have formed an architrave. A villa at St. Osyth appears to have been built using the same style of tile plinth, a rare parallel for the type.

Evidence of a masonry architrave set over a clay wall has also been recovered from a Roman building excavated at Great Chesterford in Essex (Brinson 1963).

Lesser partitions within these building were formed of timber-framed walls with wattle and daub infill, and by walls of dried bricks laid end-on-end, stretcher fashion, both with and without timber uprights. The buildings described above were unusual for the
width and solidity of their walls, and most of the mudbrick walls of early Roman London were narrower, forms of bricks laid end-to-end with occasional timber uprights. Early in the second century most walls were of this type. A similar picture emerges from the evidence of both Verulamium and Colchester, although there are contexts in which timber-framed buildings with wattle and daub infill remained more popular.

**Pisé**

There is some debate as to the extent to which walls of true pisé construction were found in the Roman west (Desbat 1981; Desbat 1985). The technique makes use of dry earth, usually without the addition of straw, which was rammed into compaction between strong shuttering. The characteristics of such walls are that they are at least 400 mm. wide, the width required to allow the builders to gain access to the wall to tread and pound between the boards, and the battens used to hold the shuttering in place leave narrow slots through the wall (Odouze 1985, 85). Although Pliny and Varro describe the construction technique, suggesting it to have a Spanish origin (Varro *De Re Rustica* 1,14; Pliny *Natural History* 25, 48), efforts to find evidence for its use in Romano-Gallic constructions have failed.

The main advantages of pisé over adobe are that it can use a greater variety of types of earth, and it requires much less water. Neither of these advantages would have carried much weight at most of the sites considered here where clays suitable for adobe could be found and water was plentiful.

One building alone suggests that this technique can be identified in Romano-British domestic architecture. The 480-560 mm. wide masonry sleeper-walls of House 21,2 at Verulamium, built about AD 180, were designed to receive an earth superstructure. In the upper part of the wall thin horizontal transverse slots had contained timber battens up to 100 mm. by 76 mm., but some much smaller, which crossed the wall at 1.2 m. (c. 4 ft.) intervals (fig. 29).

**Cob**

In cob walls the mixed clay and straw (or whatever else could be found to temper the clay), once adequately puddled, was used directly in the construction of the walls
rather than formed into bricks. The wall was built up in layers, or lifts, each of which had to be properly beaten down and dried out before the next layer could be laid. Although cob walls did not have the same breadth of appeal to Romano-British builders, there are some clear examples of their use.

It seems likely that the technique was more widely diffused on the less Romanised and more British sites. At Godmanchester cob walls 0.6-1.2 m. wide were commonly built around wattle hurdles in continuation of pre-Roman practice (Green 1982, 96). Cob walling was common in the fens (Philips 1970).

The technique was, however, used in an early second-century strip building at Newgate Street in London (Building K, see Perring and Roskams 1991, 78-9). Although of modest design and status this was evidently a Roman style building. The east wall of the building survived best and consisted of a 6.5 m. length of brickearth built with converging rather than parallel sides, such that the north end of the wall was 0.7 m. wide, but its south end measured no more than 0.25-0.3 m. across (fig. 28e). Thin layers of trample within the body of the wall marked the differences between lifts no more than 100-200mm thick. A series of small stake-holes within the body of the wall may have been the remains of a skimpy wattle framework.

The earth-walled building that replaced the early timber-framed villa at Boxmoor in the early to mid second century has also been described as cob-walled, set over chalk foundations 450mm (18 in.) wide and 600mm (2 ft.) deep. This house was furnished with painted walls and hypocausts before being rebuilt sometime in the third century (Neal 1970, 159). Cob walling on stone footings has also been described as the most common construction type in Dorchester on Thames (Rowley and Brown 1981, 3). At Vindolanda a variation on this type involved the use of timber and wattle hurdles either side of a 600 mm. (2 ft.) wide trench, with the gap between filled by puddled clay (Birley 1977, 113). At Winchester clay blocks were used to form a bank to reinforce a masonry wall of Building 8,9a.

**Earth and gravel foundations**

Earth-filled foundation trenches may also have been employed in the construction of some first-century buildings. Such foundations were a rarity in the Roman world, although this is exaggerated by the deficiencies of archaeological recording. The
technique is well documented in late Republican and early Imperial contexts in north Italy, where it was identified during excavations in Milan (Perring 1991a, 135-6), and was also employed in early Roman buildings in Cyrenaica (Lloyd 1985, 57). The object of these foundations was to remove poorly consolidated and/or poorly drained soils and replace them with compacted gravel and silt laid in horizontal bands. This was intended to reduce the risk of settlement, and was used in preference to timber piling. The technique was almost exclusively used where the walls were not fully masonry built, and is most commonly found in association with earth-walled buildings.

Three possible instances of compacted earth-filled foundation trenches have been found in first-century contexts in London. At Philpot Lane vertical sided earth filled trenches 1 m. wide and 0.65 m. deep may have served this function (Williams in preparation; Museum of London: PHI 81). At 15-23 Southwark Street trenches 2.5m wide and 0.5m deep marked out the plan of a complicated - possibly public - structure of the period prior to AD 70 and have tentatively been identified as earth foundations (Cowan 1995). More recently work at 68-71 Fenchurch Street has identified rammed gravel foundations beneath timber ground beams (Esmonde-Cleary 1998, 410).

At Lion Walk, Colchester the walls of Building 20, were set over packed gravel in continuous foundation trenches: the upper 300 mm. of one foundation contained fragments of tile bedded horizontally, with other tiles laid over this with upright flanges coinciding with the limits of the wall. In a variation on this technique several late first-century buildings at Colchester were built over closely spaced gravel filled pits up to 0.6m deep, set out along the lines of the timber ground plates (Culver Street Buildings 95-6 and 104-9: Crummy 1992, 30, 69, 74). Gravel bedding layers continued to be used beneath later masonry foundations in Colchester (Crummy 1992, 31).

A gravel-filled foundation trench was employed in the foundations of a second-century building recorded during a watching brief at Canterbury (Esmonde Cleary 1997, 452), and rammed-earth foundation pits may possibly have been used beneath wall foundations at the Brooks site in Winchester (F1665 and 2066 - Zant 1993, 59).
3.4. **Masonry and concrete constructions**

**Building materials**

This is not an appropriate place for a detailed study of the exploitation of building stone in Roman Britain, which would add little of substance to existing regional reviews (Williams 1971a; Williams 1971b; Buckland 1988; Blagg 1990b). The point has already been made that locally available materials were generally adapted for use, and only particular need or rare extravagance obliged the Roman builder to go far in pursuit of building stone (rarely more than 20 miles according to Blagg 1990b, 48). Fishbourne was a notable exception with its wide range of early stone imports, including the imported Corinthian capitals. Even London with its easy access to a major port relied to a large extent on the poor range of building stone on offer in the Kentish hinterland (Perring and Roskams 1991, 67). Throughout Britain the favoured stones were those that were not only the most readily available but the most easily worked. More stone houses were built of limestone, in one form or another, than of anything else.

Many quarries were located within the property of the villa or house under construction. Where the most readily available stone was not suitable for finer detail, as was often the case, greater effort was made to import suitable stone from the nearest convenient source. As a consequence different types of stone were sometimes used for quoins and architectural details (Branigan 1976). The best materials were needed by the greatest patrons, and the most important quarries were in imperial ownership. The exploitation of materials for public projects established mechanisms that subsidised their use in private construction projects. This was no doubt the way in which more expensive marble veneers found their way to Britain (Branigan 1976; Pritchard 1986; Buckland 1988), and on a more modest scale may have contributed to the distribution of Purbeck marble. Marble imports - always a rarity - were most common in the late first and early second centuries. It is likely that domestic architectural fashion would have been influenced by access to materials made more easily available because of supply mechanisms established for public construction projects (see below).

The detailed procedures adopted for quarrying depended on the character of the
material being addressed. The various tools (chisels, axes, adzes and files), and techniques (wedging, splitting, etc.), that stonemasons deployed in extracting and shaping the stone blocks have been described in detail by Blagg (1976) and Adam (1994). It is also evident that much detailed preparation of the stone was carried out at the quarry rather than on the building site, a device to reduce the costs and problems associated with transporting the stone. For later construction projects the disused walls of earlier buildings frequently provided the most convenient source of stone, and this was a contributing factor to the more heterogeneous nature of later stone walls.

The supply of brick and tile is an even more complex subject which can only be touched on most briefly here: “a bewildering range of methods of organizing brick supplies has been deduced from their stamps” (Greene 1986, 150; see McWhirr 1979). Brick and tile was required for both military and public building projects, and this had a major impact on the early development of the industry. Military kilns were in operation in Britain by the end of the 50s and brick was used in the Neronian bathhouse at Exeter. Private demand was both stimulated and supported by such public initiatives.

The concrete constructions and plasters depended on the lime produced in kilns. Wood burning periodic or ‘flare’ kilns, perhaps large enough to have produced lime on a commercial scale, have been excavated at Weekely, Northants and Helpson (Jackson 1973; Wild 1974, 157).

Masonry foundations

It has already been noted that masonry foundations were used in timber-framed and earth buildings (p. 60). Three kinds of masonry foundation are commonly encountered: concreted rubble, pitched stone or coursed stone. These differences in approach were essentially dictated by the availability of building materials. Where stone was in short supply a rubble concrete was more likely to be preferred, whilst where there was plentiful good quality stone there was no problem in laying the foundations in regular courses. The use of pitched foundations prevailed where the available stone was of poor quality (Williams 1971b, 115).

In most cases foundations filled the width of a purpose-built trench. Concrete structures were sometimes formed within timber shuttering, as illustrated by negative
impressions preserved on concrete footings like those at Fish Street Hill in London (Bateman 1986). Here the cement was poured in as a slurry, as was the case with the masonry plinths for the adobe walls in the Colchester fortress (Crummy 1977), in the earliest buildings beneath the forum in London (Boddington and Marsden 1987), and in the later construction of House 14.1 at Verulamium (Frere 1972, 6). More frequently, however, the rubble was laid in rough courses. Sprung arch foundations, although common in medieval contexts are rarely encountered in Roman houses. House 3.1 at Verulamium, in which a brick lined relieving arch was found within the footings, provides an example (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, pl. 99B).

Crushed stone, chalk and gravel were sometimes used as alternatives and in later Roman London pile rafts capped by alternating courses of crushed chalk and ragstone were used in the foundations of masonry structures, as in the construction of a large apse-ended fourth-century building at 25-30 Lime Street. Foundations of a second-century chalk walled extension to a building excavated at No 1 Poultry, London were set over a lattice of crossed timbers at the base of the construction trench (Rowsome pers. comm.), a civilian precursor of the timber foundation rafts used in late third-century public constructions (Williams 1993). Close piling at the base of masonry foundation trenches was a particular characteristic of late 3rd and 4th century constructions at several other sites (e.g. Building 127 at Culver Street, Colchester: Crummy 1992, 112).

Masonry superstructures

Most of the better preserved walls found in recent excavations are those which lined cellars (see p. 270), although there is a growing body of documentation for wall-collapse (see further below). Upstanding structures are naturally more poorly represented. The bath-block at Beauport Park (Brodribb and Cleere 1988) is a notable exception (although not a domestic structure it is unlikely to have differed significantly from a civilian bath-house), and parts of buildings have occasionally survived to a significant height on terraced sites, as at Charlton Kings where walls stood 2.9 m. high.

Most Romano-British masonry structures consisted of mortared rubble concrete (*septaria*), frequently faced by small squared blocks laid in regular (or near regular) courses (*petit appareil*). In a few of the better constructions the quality of the
dressing is such that the walls can be termed ashlar, but most are more properly
described as rough-faced coursed rubble (Hill 1981, 2-3). A common Roman practice,
particularly evident in public constructions and found throughout the empire, was to
insert tile or stone bonding courses across the full width of the wall at regular intervals
up its height. This technique had appeared in Roman Gaul prior to the Claudian
conquest of Britain (Desbat 1992), and seems initially to have been a feature of public
architecture before being widely adopted in domestic architecture, especially in the
second and third centuries AD. The tile courses, usually two or three tiles thick, were
used to provide even lifts and spread weakness, and to help drying off the different lifts
of concrete whilst building work was in progress. Apart from offering a certain
convenience during the process of construction they were perhaps more decorative
than functional, and indeed in some cases would have introduced fault lines to the
structure. The technique was essentially developed for use in concrete rather than
masonry constructions. At Feltwell in Norfolk a collapsed flint wall at least 2.6 m.
high, set over a tapered plinth, had contained two such tile bonding courses within its
height. A wall collapse found in the cellar of Building 22 at Lion Walk, Colchester,
consisted of concreted stonework with double tile courses at 400-500 mm. intervals.
This wall fragment also incorporated a timber stud. (Crummy 1984, 66). The cellar
wall recorded at 25-6 Lime Street in London (dated c. AD 125-150), was typical of the
masonry constructions of London, with its roughly coursed squared ragstone blocks
separated by tile string courses at 650mm (2 ft.) intervals. In this particular example
tegulae were vertically mortared to the exposed inside wall of this cellar, perhaps as
part of a damp-proofing exercise.

Box-flue tiles which were primarily used to form conduits for the hot air generated
through the firing of hypocaust systems, were also on occasion used within the
thickness of masonry walls as a form of cavity walling (as at Woodchester).

Romano-British concrete walls were given visual and structural character through the
use of stone quoins at corners and around doors and windows. Examples include
Colliton Park, Dorchester and House 8,10 at Winchester where limestone ashlar quoins
were employed on walls of coursed flint set over chalk and flint footings. Elsewhere -
and prevalently in urban contexts - brick was used for this purpose, and the 600 mm.
wide flint wall footings at Silchester were typically reinforced with brick quoins.
Herringbone and pitched stone walls were inferior to coursed rubble. One such wall was found at Barnsley Park, where rough courses of counter-pitched stones were employed alongside coursed rubble constructions (Webster 1981, pl. 1 and 2). Similar herringbone constructions were found in houses at Caerwent, Lufton and Chilgrove II, as well as being popular in the Nene Valley area (Wild 1974, 159). In House 22,2 at Cirencester both standing elements of walls, and parts of wall collapse, illustrate the use of courses of pitched stonework - herringbone fashion - alternating with coursed rubble string courses (McWhirr 1986, figs. 38 and 46). At Redlands Farm, Stanwick a collapsed gable wall of herringbone construction had been heightened with a rather crudely executed coursed rubble addition, with a course of tegulae and imbrices marking an offset at the base of the pediment (fig. 30. Keevill 1995).

Another collapsed gable wall, from an early fourth-century extension to the aisled building at Meonstoke, in Hampshire, had originally stood some 10 m. high, was set over foundations 1 m. thick and 2 m. deep (Frere 1990, 355, 357; King and Potter 1990). The facade included a register of clerestory windows separated by mortared columns, 2.5 m. above ground level (fig. 31). A tile ‘hood’ projecting 200 mm. protected the windows from the rain, above which, in the gable of the building, was a second register of blind-arcading, with tile arches separated by pilasters with greenstone bases and capitals. Most of the architectural details were executed in red tile separated by thick bands of white mortar.

A graffito found on wall plaster from Hucclecote had until recently been thought to illustrate the gable end of a half timbered house. It is alternatively possible that the features shown - two arches beneath a pair of parallel horizontal lines divided by a series of vertical elements - were brick and tile elements within a masonry wall similar to that found at Meonstoke (fig. 22. Davey 1961, 41).

It has already been noted (p. 75), that repairs and rebuilds were often of poorer quality than the original constructions, as at Chedworth and Whittington Court, where the later stonework was larger and not so well dressed (Williams 1971b, 102). This was often a consequence of the reuse of earlier building material, and can not be assumed to be evidence of decadence.

In Roman Italy concrete walls were frequently faced with tiles and bricks, laid in one of
a distinctive range of styles, as opus incertum, opus reticulatum and opus testaceum (see Sear 1982, 74). Although such characteristic wall types were occasionally found elsewhere in the empire in the first and second centuries AD they do not appear in Roman Britain.

Columns and pilasters

Lathe turned stone columns were employed in the construction of peristyles and porches in some town houses and villas (Williams 1971, 192; Blagg 1982, 137; Branigan 1976). This was a minority preference and columns have been found on only one in four of villa sites with mosaic pavements (Blagg 1996, 11). Most Romano-British column shafts (63% according to the figures published by Blagg) have diameters no more than 350 mm (fig. 32). Blagg has suggested that ‘dwarf’ columns were sometimes used in verandas (Blagg 1996; Blagg 1982, see p.131). Miniature Tuscan columns, 0.8-1.21 m. high, perhaps designed to stand over a low wall have been found at Dorchester, Colliton Park (RCHM 1970; Drew and Selby 1937), and in various villas, including Bignor, Spoonley Wood, Westcotes and Great Witcombe (Blagg 1982). Peristyles using full-size columns can only be suggested for Fishbourne and Chedworth. Many of the individual examples of columns found in Britain were perhaps derived from entrance porches. Corinthian capitals were the most frequent alternative to the Tuscan and their design shows Gallic influence (Blagg 1984). Indeed in the period down to c. AD 75 it seem likely that immigrant Gallic craftsmen were responsible for sculpting the few items of decorative architectural ornament known from Roman-Britain (Blagg 1980b, 28). Such capitals were not often found in domestic contexts, and the villa at Fishbourne remains a rare example.

Where lathe-turned columns were absent other materials were employed in their place. At Piddington the columns of the portico were made of stone discs which had been plastered over, with crude mouldings to form bases and capitals. These columns were set over a low stone wall. Plastered brickwork columns were widely used as an alternative to stone shafts, especially in urban contexts as at Colchester and Verulamium (see Williams 1971, 192, Blagg 1979). Other architectural features were also executed in brick and plaster, as the engaged pilaster from House 27,2 at Verulamium (Frere 1983a, 216), and the comparative fragility of such structures is
likely to have ensured their under representation in the archaeological record. Stucco work is considered below p. 97.
3.5. **Roofs and superstructures**

**Upper floors and the evidence of superstructure**

The extent to which upper stories were found in Romano-British houses is disputed. Neal has argued that upper stories were sometimes present in aisled buildings, in the projecting pavilions of villas and in town houses (Neal 1982). This has not convinced JT Smith who has pointed to the absence of archaeological evidence for staircases (1997, 10).

Several aisled buildings were built to a height that could have accommodated an upper storey. Wall collapse shows that the gable of the aisled building at Meonstoke stood 10 m. high (fig. 31), whilst stonework collapsed from the fourth-century building at Carsington suggests a wall 11.5 m. high to the gable (Ling 1992). These were impressive structures, and the elaborate design of the Meonstoke building has already been described.

Roof venting hearths and ovens found in aisled buildings suggest, however, that upper floors were unlikely to have been inserted as a matter of course. Reception rooms placed in such buildings may also have extended to the full height of the building to exploit clerestory lighting (see p. 153). It is likely that any mezzanine or upper floors would have been restricted to certain bays. This is the arrangement of the modern Italian *portico rustico*, which offers a close structural parallel. In these modern buildings the upper areas are usually designed for storage and reached by ladders rather than fixed stairways, archaeological proof of such use would be difficult to obtain.

In many aisled buildings in the Nene valley the gable foundations were wider than those of the side walls. This was the case at Mansfield Woodhouse and Denton, where the gable wall foundation was reinforced with pitched stone footings 900 mm. wide (the side walls were only 600 mm. wide). It has been suggested that this might have been caused by the construction of tall masonry ends to buildings otherwise of timber-framed construction although this seems improbable (Wild 1974, 159). A similar suggestion has been made for strip buildings at Lincoln, St. Marks (Jones 1981, 94). The end walls of House 7,4 at Silchester were also twice the width of the side walls (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 205), whilst the gable walls of the Feltwell villa were
buttressed (Gurney 1986, 1-48). The reinforcement of end walls was thought by Smith to illustrate a weakness in roof construction (Smith 1982, 9). It is notable that the collapse of gable walls - as at Meonstoke, Carsington, Redlands Farm, Batten Hanger and Dorchester (Building 1) - is not matched by evidence for the collapse of side walls. This has implications for roof construction (see below).

Aisled structures were not the only imposing houses found in the Romano-British countryside. A reception room in the eastern wing at Redlands Farm, Stanwick had been enlarged in a late phase of alteration. The collapsed wall from this room, 6.6 m. high from ground level to the gable (fig. 30), showed that the ridge of the roof ran along the central axis of the wing, at right angles to the main block. Similarly the wall collapse from Building 1 in Colliton Park, Dorchester indicates that the wing reception room stood over 5 m. high. In all of these cases, however, it is likely that the greater height obtained was exploited to create a lofty reception area and that upper floors would not have been present.

At several sites, buttresses were added to heighten or emphasise reception rooms. This seems to have been the reason for buttressing the octagonal rooms at Lufton and Maidstone (below p. 182), and there can be little doubt that this was also true of the large apse-ended reception room (which measured 7.3 m. by at least 9.75 m.), added to the corner of the villa at Box in Wiltshire (Brakspear 1908, 18).

Buttresses also supported heated corner ‘pavilion’ wings at Darenth (Room 18) and Stroud (Room 12), and the wings of the villa at Folkestone were also supported by buttresses (DJ Smith 1978, 126). The Period 5 projecting wings at Gadebridge (Rooms 18 and 27) were instead built with broader foundations (Neal 1982, 161). Reinforced walls in wing rooms at Beadlam and Brislington may have supported timber stairs but might alternatively have reinforced taller structures (see p. 152).

Some evidence can be adduced for the reinforcement of walls in several other wing rooms at villas (e.g. Cromhall, Frocester, Gayton Thorpe, Hambledon, King’s Weston and Walton on the Hill), and these rooms were possibly taller than other parts of the houses to which they attached (Neal 1982, 153-70). North African mosaics illustrate villa facades with the corner pavilions appearing as small towers (fig. 33. Sarnowski 1978, Neal 1982). This is also the impression given by the building illustrated in a
Trier wall painting, although the accuracy of the reconstruction of this has been questioned by Roger Ling (fig. 34, see White 1970).

Terraces at the villas at Witcombe, Lockleys and Gadebridge Park, were exploited to allow the insertion of lower floors beneath at least one wing (Neal 1982, 154-6; below p. 184), and at Lockleys the presence of an upper floor above the terraced room was illustrated by the collapse of two concrete floors, as if the roof had fallen first and carried the ceiling of the lower room as it fell.

It remains the case that villas were probably usually single storied. One possible exception to this is provided by the villa at Frocester where the depth of the foundations, up to 2.6 m. deep, supporting the central block is best explained if this were an unusually massive structure (Gracie 1970). Stone platforms outside buildings at Beadlam (Room 1), Rudston and Langton might have supported external stairs (Stead 1971, 182), but other functions can be suggested and this evidence adds little to the discussion here. The buttresses recorded at Woodchester, Witcombe, Boxmoor and Ditchley appear to have been built to counteract downward pressures due to the terraced location of these villas (Williams b 1971, 117), but may also have been exploited for decorative effect. Smaller buttresses found adjacent to various villa bathhouses but are most likely to have supported raised water tanks.

The urban evidence is of a different character. The early second-century destruction debris of Building H at Watling Court included part of a tessellated pavement that had most probably collapsed from an upper floor, this unusual discovery was consistent with the evidence of the structure itself, which was built with unusually sturdy mudbrick walls (p. 70). Although some of the mud and stud structures in Lyon are likely to have supported two storey structures, as at the Verbe Incarné site (Desbat 1981), there is no evidence that this was often the case in Britain. The surviving timbers from London’s timber-framed houses were all from single storey structures about 2.4-2.5 m. high. The volume of brickearth used in the construction of buildings at Newgate Street and Watling Court, as estimated from both the extraction quarries and the destruction horizons, is also consistent with buildings of this height (Perring and Roskams 1991, 78). The volume and character of the destruction debris at Boxmoor and from many of the buildings at Verulamium supports the argument that
most of the timber buildings were bungalows. The design of the wall paintings from House 21,2 at Verulamium indicates that the corridor wall they had decorated was only 1.82 m. high (Davey and Ling 1982, 31), although one suspects that the rooms reached by the corridor would have had higher ceilings.

A fragment of a mosaic pavement found in the debris of House 1 in Insula 6 at Colchester might have fallen from an upper room, although other explanations are possible. Some of the mid second-century stone footings at Watling Court were sufficiently substantial to have supported two storey buildings, as the 1 m. wide walls of Building Q. The evidence of wall width is, however, difficult to use with confidence. It has been observed at Ostia that wall thickness can sometimes be used as a guide to building height, here walls 2 ft. thick (590 mm.) are considered likely to support buildings 3-4 storeys high, whilst those only 1-1.5 ft. thick (370-440 mm.) are likely to be those of buildings 1 or 2 storeys high (Meiggs 1973, 255). The masonry foundations of most Romano-British masonry were 400-600 mm. wide, but as mentioned above (p. 152) it is often difficult to establish what kind of wall was built above.

Some strip buildings may have had upper stories or mezzanine floors. Not only would this be consistent with evidence from the shops of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but it would account for the porticoes at Caerwent and Wroxeter which are likely to have supported upper floors. This was not a universal feature and some of the timber strip-buildings from London and Verulamium were single storey constructions.

At Pompeii upper floors were often later additions and lower status rooms. In most Roman houses upper floors were usually lesser floors. The best rooms, the dining rooms and halls, were usually on the ground floor (see p. 29, although see also Pliny, *Letters* 2.17 on a dining room and bedroom on an upper floor in his villa at Laurentium). Only in densely populated towns, such as Ostia was space at such a premium that reception rooms were commonly placed in upper floors (as the Caseggiate del Serapide 3,10,3, where a mosaic was laid in a third floor apartment). Even there the upper floors were usually used for lower status flats, for storage and bedrooms (Packer 1971, 61). It reflects on the crowded nature of early Roman London that houses such as Building H at Watling Court were provided with
decorated upper rooms, and this is likely to have been exceptional.

Since pressures on building space in Britain were not such as to necessitate the use of upper floors, and the building traditions imported by Rome and prevalent in Britain before the conquest generally preferred to place most facilities on a ground floor, it is reasonable to assume that most Romano-British houses were single storey.

We have few illustrations of Romano-British houses with which to supplement the archaeological evidence. The ambiguous testimony of the Hucclecote graffiti has already been described (p. 78). A mosaic pavement found in the villa at Brading, in the Isle of Wight, shows a small single-storey structure with a low pitch roof, entered by a large door in the gable-end (fig. 35). This is perhaps most likely to represent a small shrine or temple (Ling 1991, 151; Witts 1994, 114-5). A couple of pottery stands manufactured in the London area are of greater interest, and appear to show small single storey buildings with round-headed doors and windows pierced through walls divided into a series of cross-braced panels (fig. 36; Chapman 1981). Reference can also usefully be made to the stone shrines (aediculae) sculpted in the form of small houses (evidently ‘winged-corridor’ villas) found at several sites in the Rhine area (collections of the Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, Luxembourg; JT Smith 1997, Figs. 20 and 34; Massy 1989, 107). These show tall but single-storey structures, with clerestory lighting – generally with square-headed windows - sometimes set above the line of the portico façade.

Doors and windows

Several villas and town houses were entered through substantial porches (p. 124). These were emphasised by flanking columns or pillars that probably supported an entablature and pediment, in the fashion of the better porches at Pompeii. Usually only the foundations of these features survive, as at Silchester where the vestibule to House 8.1 was flanked by tile bases nearly 4m apart, each slightly over 1 m. wide and projecting into the street 0.80 m. Some of the stone columns described above p. 79 probably came from such doorways, where engaged columns of plastered brick were also used (Blagg 1979).

Stone thresholds suggest that doors were usually hung on a pivot and socket and were bolted. Little evidence for this arrangement has been recovered from Britain, although
thresholds have been found at both Silchester and Caerwent, and at some villas. The entrance to House 3 N at Caerwent was through a double door 1.2 m. (4 ft.) wide, with a central bolt-hole (fig. 37). Iron pivot-shoes and sockets were found at Silchester, and can be recognised at some other sites (Boon 1974, 204), but the absence of appropriate metalwork in some of the fire destruction horizons in London and Verulamium suggests that some doors were hung on timber pivots without the benefit of metal reinforcement (Perring and Roskams 1991, 95-6; Meates 1979, 64).

Doorways are usually represented by timber thresholds 1.0-1.75 m. wide (somewhat wider than is typical today). Doors were probably hung from hinges or brackets set into the woodwork of the jamb's. It can be assumed that the doors to timber buildings were normally formed by square frames jointed into the rest of the framework, although the round-headed openings shown on the ceramic stands from London calls this into question.

The folding door found at Dewlish is a rare discovery and its full study and publication is awaited with interest. Three planed and rebated oak boards were held together by horizontal oak ledges secured with hooked iron nails, but nothing survived of the hinges or pivots on which the door had been hung. Other traces of doors have tentatively been identified at Batten Hanger; re-used as the floor of a mortar mixing pit at Leadenhall Court in London (Milne 1992, 21); and in burnt debris at Wroxeter (Webster 1988, 139-140). Part of a door was also found at No 1 Poultry in London, and a plank-built cross-braced Roman door was found re-used as a floor in the Roman fort at Chesterholm (Hanson 1982, 180).

Excavations in Bucklersbury in London in 1987 produced evidence for the use of removable shutter partitions (Museum of London BUC 87; Rowsome pers. comm.), and at Catterick a threshold supporting timber uprights with a slot for wooden shutters was found in a street-side shop (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 45-6). Such removable shutters were a common element in shops and workshops elsewhere in the Roman world. The timber shutter of a shop in via dell' Abbondanza at Pompeii (ix, 7, 10), has been preserved in a plaster cast and shows how the vertical interlocking planks were socketed into a groove in the baseplate and secured by horizontal iron bars.

The arch was a popular motif in Romano-British domestic architecture. Fragments of
several windows and arches have been found in the collapse and destruction debris of stone built houses. An arcade divided the hall and corridor of the villa at King’s Weston, see below, and arches commonly divided the multi-chambered reception rooms (see p. 137). A fragment of an arch, originally 1.75 m. wide by 2.5 m. high and constructed of tile and tufa, had collapsed into the hypocaust of Room 8 at Boxmoor, and had perhaps come from one of the doors into this room (Neal 1974-6, 57-8). An arch from the villa at Woodchester had a span of c. 1.5 m. Fallen masonry in front of the veranda at Dewlish included the shattered remains of a semi-circular brick arch together with fragments of a plaster cornice, and at Combley on the Isle of Wight a round-headed tufa arch had fallen in mass from a doorway. An arch with part of a fallen wall and vault was also found in the robbed baths at Sparsholt.

The collapsed wall at Meonstoke, described above, contained an arcade of 3 round-headed tile clerestory windows measuring 2.8 x 1 m. (fig. 31). Clerestory windows above the line of a corridor roof are also implied by chalk voussoirs of windows 700 mm. in diameter from Verulamium House 21,2. This offered raised lighting for the reception room (Room 4), which was likely to have been more than 4.9 m. high. Similar round-headed windows are represented by the voussoirs (the wedge shaped stones used to form arches) found at sites such as Whittington Court and Boxmoor. A small round-headed window was also identified in the collapsed gable wall of the villa at Stanwick (Keevill 1996). Wall collapse at Colchester, Lion Walk, Building 22 included part of an arched lintel in brick from a window (or door). There is also a suggestion that round-headed windows may even have been used in comparatively modest establishments, such as the late Roman building at Bradley Hill (Leech 1981, 182). Arched window heads carved from stone slabs, and sometimes decorated to illustrate spandrels, are known from some forts in the north of Britain (Blagg 1996, 11; Bidwell 1996, 26).

The archaeological record is almost certainly biased: masonry arches are robust and easily identified. Squared opening are more likely to have been formed by the use of timber frames: these do not survive, but the pictorial evidence shows that they were common throughout the Roman world. Both the Trier wall painting referred to above and Trajan’s column show buildings with square rather than arched windows and doors.
Even if the evidence presented here is unrepresentative it is still clear that the arch had particular significance in house design, as is further indicated by the use of apses in reception rooms. The apse and arch were familiar icons from Roman public architecture, and were transmitted into the design of the western church. The importance of apse and arch has been considered at length by Baldwin Smith (1956), who describes them as an "architectural ideogram denoting a sacrum palatium as the seat of government and the place from which emanated the divine wisdom of the state" (p. 10-11). This perhaps exaggerates their importance, but these motifs had currency in places where Roman authority was most evident, especially in civic and religious architecture. The developed domestic architecture of Roman-Britain sits squarely within this tradition, where the use of apse and arch located and framed the activities of the Romano-British magnate (Bek 1983, 91).

In town few windows looked onto the street, but where they did we assume that the windows would have been small and protected. Iron window grills of a type commonly used throughout the western provinces have been found at various sites, including London, Silchester, Verulamium, Wall, Dunston and the Hinton St Mary villa (Webster 1959, 10-14; Painter 1966, 102; Boon 1974, 206-7; Milne 1985 fig. 46; Perring and Roskams 1991, fig. 84). Typically these consisted of three or four horizontal bars fixed to a similar number of vertical ones, with the ends turned over to fit into a wooden window frame (fig. 38). The windows that they had protected were rectangular, almost square, and measured 500-700 mm. across.

Wooden frames may have been placed in some windows (for which see the mouldings on the stone sill of the window at Colliton Park, Dorchester), and window glass was used widely if sparingly (Boon 1974, 207). Panes of glass up to 400 mm. across have been found on Romano-British sites (Harden 1961). Window glass first entered domestic use in Pompeii during the course of the first century BC, but its main use was in the baths. Most windows were instead unglazed, but could be closed by shutters (Mau 1899, 239). This seems very likely to have been the situation in Britain, and where larger quantities of window glass are found on domestic sites, as in Room 40 at Bignor, the provenance is likely to have been the baths. The windows at Meonstoke were unglazed, but were in part protected from the elements by a projecting tile hood 200 mm. deep.
Further ventilation was perhaps provided by small ground-level openings. Small rectangular openings, 300-460 mm. across, were set at floor level through the walls at Watling Court and Newgate Street in London (Perring and Roskams 1991, 96-7; 103), and in Houses 4.4; 20,1; 21,1 and 22,1 at Verulamium (Frere 1983a, 134, 150, 190; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 100). A hole formed by an imbrex let at floor level through the wall of House 1,2 at Silchester, and similar features in reception rooms at the villas of Chedworth and Brading may have also served as drains to facilitate floor washing (Fox and St John Hope 1890, 738; Price and Hilton 1881, 18; Richmond 1959, 10). Small arched openings buried within wall foundations were also employed for drainage purposes (as Cunliffe 1971a, 134; Frere 1983a, 247). It is also possible that louvered openings would have been found at eave's level to improve lighting and ventilation.

**Roofs**

Since no antique roofs have survived in Britain, and the archaeological evidence is generally poor, it is necessary to draw heavily on the evidence from other parts of the ancient world in order to suggest a description of roofing arrangements.

Greek temple roofs were primarily purlin roofs, with short-length rafters slotted onto large axial purlins resting on walls and struts from below (Hodge 1960). The king-post roof was possibly a Hellenistic innovation, but is first positively attested by a bronze copy in the second-century AD porch of the Pantheon at Rome. In this form of roof the lesser purlins and rafters were supported by large principal rafters, which were prevented from lateral movement by tie-beams across the width of the covered area. These were in turn prevented from bowing by a king-post suspended from the apex of the roof. This roof type facilitated the development of basilical architecture, and allowed the construction of buildings such as the Trier basilica with a 27.5 m. span. This tradition is best illustrated through palaeochristian church architecture, and the Constantinian roof of Old St Peter's, Rome would appear to have rested on double trusses with a scarfed tie beam and pendant king-posts (Choisy 1873). In St Paul's (fuori Lateran) at Rome trusses were formed of paired rafters braced by both a tie-beam and above this a straining beam which supported a central king-post (Adam 1990, Rondelet 1814, pl. 76). These trusses spanned a width of 24.25 and were set at
3.33m intervals along the length of the church. Vitruvius provided a description of roof carpentry broadly consistent with this evidence: "The upper parts of all buildings contain timber work to which various names are applied... The main beams are those which are laid upon columns, pilasters and antae; tie-beams and rafters are found in the framing. Under the roofs, if the span is pretty large, are the tiebeams and struts; if it is of moderate extent, only the ridge pole, with the principal rafters extending to the outer edges of the eaves. Over the principal rafters are the purlins, and then above these and under the roof tiles come the common rafters, extending so far that the walls are covered by their projection" (Vitruvius On Architecture 4, 2.1).

Most private houses in Roman Britain had no need of complex roof carpentry. The roof span was typically in the order of 8 or 9 metres, and timbers of this length were available. In some earth-fast post constructions there is clear evidence for post-pairing (see p.52), and such paired supports are most likely to have taken coupled principal rafters (fig. 19). Similar paired rafters could also have rested on the close-studded wall plates used in timber-framed constructions. The absence of substantial supports within the framed walls of the building found at Courage's Brewery in Southwark indicates that the roof here had not been supported on heavy principal rafters or trusses (fig. 21: Brigham et al. 1995, 31). The use of paired rafters braced by collar beams to form A-frames, has therefore been suggested for this building. Tie-beams were not used here, although tie-beam assembly is likely elsewhere. It seems likely that simple close-coupled roofs were the most common in Roman Britain.

At Pompeii rafters resting on purlins which extended from one gable to the other supported simple roofs (Adam 1990, 205-13), and it seems probable that this unsophisticated approach was also adopted in several Romano-British structures. The evidence of the reinforced gable-end walls (above p. 81) suggests that in some instances these end walls had been designed to take the main weight of the roof. This would have been necessary if heavy longitudinal purlins had run the length of the roof and supported the rafters. The collapsed gable walls which have now been found on several Romano-British sites indicates an outward thrust at the gable end which would be consistent with the pressures brought to bear by a sagging purlin roof.

Some halls and aisled buildings were over 20 m. long (up to 25 m. at sites such as
Barnsley Park), and it would have been harder to find ridge poles and purlins of this length (although not impossible). The discovery of reused Roman hip rafters at Scole in Norfolk indicates that hipped roofs were used in Roman Britain (Flitcroft and Tester 1994, 321), although this was not the case in those buildings where collapsed gable walls have been found. The aediculae built in the form of small houses that were used in the area of Luxembourg also illustrate a general preference to take roofs to a gable-end.

At Meonstoke the slate roof had a pitch of 47.5 degrees, the roof at Welney one of 45 degrees, and at Carsington one of 40 degrees (King and Potter 1990; Phillips 1970, 233; Ling 1992). These may have been typical of aisled buildings, and since thatch will not function effectively at a lesser gradient steep pitched roofs may have been commonplace where thatch prevailed. By contrast the gable end wall found collapsed at Redlands Farm, was pitched at 22.5 degrees and supported a tile roof (Keevill 1995, 28). This lower roof pitch is more consistent with Classical preference shown in temple and church roofing.

Ceramic tile was used as a roofing material soon after the conquest and tiled roofs were found on timber-framed wattle and daub buildings in pre-Boudiccan Colchester (Crummy 1984, 22). In the vast majority of cases such roofs consisted of squared flanged tegulae, capped by curved imbrices. It is possible that imbrex only roofs were used, although this has not been demonstrated for the buildings considered in detail here. In southwest Britain stone became a more popular roofing material than ceramic tile from the middle of the second century in both town houses and villas (Williams 1971b, who cites examples from Gloucester and villas such as Hucclecote). This fashion extended east to Silchester - where hexagonal stone slabs were preferred - and Winchester (Boon 1974, 203; Zant 1994, 80), and has also been documented in the suburbs of Lincoln where slate replaced tile on the roofs of strip buildings in the fourth century (Jones 1981, 97). It was less marked in the Southeast where ceramic tile was still common in the later Roman period. Stone slates were commonly nailed into place, as illustrated by slates found in Cirencester and at the villa at Tarrant Hinton where traces of lichen indicate the manner in which the slates had overlapped (McWhirr 1986; Giles 1981, 91).
Roof tiles were sometimes hexagonal or pentagonal rather than rectangular. The use of tiles of different colours in the same roof has been noted at Fishbourne and London (where red and yellow was used) and Piddington (which featured blue and yellow), and these colours may have been exploited to form different decorative patterns (de la Bedoyere 1991, 25-6). At Sparsholt, the roof was composed of grey limestone slates and red tiles (Johnston 1969, 17). Decorative finials or ventilators- made of terracotta or carved stone - have been found on some sites (Lowther 1976, 40-1; Blagg 1979; Blagg 1977, 52-4). In a couple of instances these had clearly been attached to the roof. These finials were conical or square, with vents that allowed them to function as small louvers or chimney pots, although it can not be shown they were used as such. Additional decorative embellishment was rare, and ceramic antefixes were not normally used in domestic architecture (see Blagg 1979; 1980a).

It is assumed that thatch was commonly used on lower status Romano-British sites, where ceramic and stone roofing tiles are rare. A collapsed thatch roof has tentatively been identified in London (Grimes 1968, 97). The absence of tile or stone roof collapse over many of the houses in London and Colchester which had been destroyed by fire in AD 60 and in the Hadrianic fire at London, similarly implies the use of organic materials at roof level (Perring and Roskams 1991, 95; Crummy 1984). An implement identified as a Roman thatching hook was found at Silchester (Boon 1974, 200-203), and it has been suggested that stones found around the perimeter of a late second-century building at may have been anchor stones that had fallen from a thatch roof (Green 1959, 25). The regional use of thatch is supported by Caesar’s description of his winter quarters having been built with ‘roofs of straw in Gallic fashion’ (Caesar DBG 5,43), and the roof shown on the winged corridor building depicted on the Trier wall-painting, with its steep incline and thick eaves, looks more like thatch than tile (fig. 34).

A small building shown on the Aurelian column at Rome appears to have been stave built, with small windows and a roof of shingles or thatch (and see also a reference to the early use of shingles at Rome in Pliny Letters 16. 36). At the Courage Brewery site in Southwark four fragments of oak board which may have been wooden shingles, 2 mm. thick and measuring 250-350 mm. by 115-140 mm., were found within the timber building of c. AD 153 (Dillon 1989, 229-231;). These were square, and pierced
by nail holes for attachment, but might have been fragments from broken clapboards.

The eaves of Roman roofs did not normally project significantly beyond the wall line. Where buildings were built side by side, the gap between structures could be as little as 200 mm. apart, the maximum by which the eaves could have overhung. This was surprisingly the case in some earth-walled houses: the eavesdrip gullies from Newgate Street and Watling Court were set 100-300 mm. away from the wall (Perring and Roskams 1991, 95).

The hot rooms of baths were usually vaulted, as in the second-century complex at Winchester Palace, Southwark (Mackenna and Ling 1991, 159). In most cases these would have been concrete barrel vaults constructed over a timber frame, as shown by the collapsed vaulting in Rooms 4 and 5 of the bath-house at Beauport Park (Brodribb and Cleere 1988, 226). Some cellars were also vaulted, as illustrated by the vaulted roof at Burham. The sockets and putlog holes found in some masonry cellars might have supported frames used in vault construction. Vaults were otherwise rare in Romano-British houses, notwithstanding their wide use at Ostia and Rome (see Boethius 1960 and Adam 1990, 192-5). The unusual vaulted room (Room 27) that was added in a late phase of reconstruction in House 34,1 at Silchester is an exception. The room had unusually thick walls (up to 900 mm. across). Its vaulted roof, remains of which were found collapsed over the floor, had been formed of hollow tile voussoirs cemented with thick mortar joints and plastered over to form the ceiling. A similar roof may have been built over the underground corridor, Room 11, of House 28,1 at Verulamium (see Frere 1983a, plate 47). This evidence for domestic vaults adds little to the information from public buildings where vaults were more commonly found (see Mason 1990).
3.6. Wall decoration

Decorative keying

Two or three clay scrims were commonly applied to the faces of earth walls, and sometimes also to wattle and daub and mud and stud constructions. These were often finished off with an impressed herringbone, diamond-lozenge or, more rarely, circular pattern (fig. 27). The design was commonly applied by a roller die, which at Lullingstone measured 300-370 mm. wide and was operated upwards. Most of the diamond patterns were formed in this manner. The chevron designs were more frequently incised directly onto the clay scrim. Decoration of this character has been found in first and second-century contexts in Colchester (Crummy 1984, 23-4, 159), Verulamium (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 140; Frere 1972, 6), Caerwent (Boon 1974, 199), Silchester (St John Hope 1902, 25), London (Grimes 1968, 137; Perring and Roskams 1991, 84-5), and Wroxeter (Bushe-Fox 1913); as well as at the villas at Lullingstone and Norfolk Street and elsewhere (Gregory 1973, 268-9). This was a construction detail imported from Gaul, closely paralleled in Augustan Lyon (Desbat 1985).

The patterns sometimes provided a keying for plaster decoration, but frequently served as decoration in their own right, similar to the pargetted wall plaster designs popular in Tudor England. At Colchester pre-Boudiccan keyed daub in Building 8 at Lion Walk involved a dado, probably formed by a roller stamp, of the diamond-lozenge pattern 280 mm. wide. This was separated from an upper wall decoration of incised diagonal bands by horizontal lines formed by impressing string into the still wet clay.

Painted wall and ceiling plaster

In his review of the social arrangements of the Pompeiian house Andrew Wallace-Hadrill emphasised the importance of the study of wall-paintings "to see how form and function guide the social flow of activity around the house, raising or dropping social barriers in the way of the actors concerned" (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 77).

Unfortunately schemes of decoration can rarely be reconstructed for individual Romano-British rooms and never for whole buildings. It is not possible to isolate any particularly British or Celtic influences on the decorative styles employed in fresco
painting that were unambiguously Classical.

The better prepared frescos were executed on a wall plaster about 10 mm. deep, laid in 2 or 3 coats of thoroughly slaked lime mortar with a fine aggregate, to which hydraulic materials such as crushed brick were sometimes added. Powdered marble or calcium was used to produce the final surface, which could be polished to a high sheen, possibly helped by the addition of calcite to the pigments. Red, black and green schemes of decoration were preferred, and were usually set in panels above a dado no more than 800 mm. high that was decorated in imitation of stone or marble cladding. A cornice border would generally have been found above the coloured panels (Davey and Ling 1982, 52-62). The inspiration for this decorative approach was architectural: drawing in particular on the lavishly decorated interiors of public buildings and palaces. The use of colour reflected a hierarchy of status, in which white was the least valued colour, yellow and red were of medium status, and blue and black schemes were restricted to the very best rooms. Ceilings were also painted, and where evidence survives the decorative schemes involved repeat patterns of geometric shapes, including roundels, octagons and squares, mostly on a white ground.

Painted wall decorations are found in a small proportion of the earliest town houses to have been built in Britain. In London fragments of red- and green-painted wall-plaster were recovered from beneath Boudiccan destruction debris in the town centre (Philp 1977), and the registers of the Museum of London suggest that slightly fewer than one house in ten had painted walls at this time. At Verulamium the decoration of a corridor or portico of a stone founded building, perhaps a bath house, included a polychrome still-life featuring a lyre, quiver and bow - the symbols of Apollo (excavations at the 6 Bells site in Insula 19: Davey and Ling 1982). At Lion Walk, Colchester a contemporary civilian building (Building 8) had a wall of red, green and black panels above a marbled dado (Crummy 1984, 42). Some Neronian painted wall plaster has also been recovered from select villas, most notably Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971b, 52).

Flavian decoration of this character was more widespread. Good urban examples have been recovered from London and Cirencester (Perring and Roskams 1991, 85-7; Davey and Ling 1982, No. 8), and villas so decorated at this time include the timber-
decorative schemes of this period include rooms in the villas at Sparsholt (architectural illusion), Bignor Room 28B (rich use of imitation marbles); Rudston room with Charioteer mosaic (perspective decoration) (Davey and Ling 1982). Figurative and mythological scenes were perhaps more popular in the heated end rooms (see p. 137), as at Kingscote (Swain and Ling 1981).

The other main place where painted wall plaster is found is in the portico leading from the entrance to the main rooms (see p. 131). Examples include the peopled scroll from Room 3 in House 21,2 at Verulamium (Frere 1982, 161-3), and the fresco with people in an architectural landscape which decorated the corridor of a house in Insula 16 at Leicester (Wacher 1959). Baths were also sometimes decorated: especially with marine scenes, as in the villas at Sparsholt, Southwell and Winterton (Davey and Ling No 37; 34; 49).

The increased popularity of mythological and figurative scenes in the late third and fourth centuries is in some respects similar to changes in fashion seen in Italy in the late republic, when the second style of wall painting - based largely on architectural imagery - gave way to the third style with its use of panel paintings of mythological and other scenes. It has been suggested that this might reflect the changing self image of the aristocracy, with the introduction of an art of private spaces replacing one of public spaces (Wallace-Hadrill 1988).

Stuccos and veneers

Stucco was rarely used in Britain under the Romans, and its domestic use was restricted to the better villas (as Bignor, Fishbourne, Gorhambury, Latimer and Headington), where architectural details and figurative decorations were sometimes sculpted in plaster (Ling 1976). The use of imported marble cladding was similarly an unusual extravagance. In London wall veneers of continental marbles were first used in buildings of the late first century - and Purbeck marble had been used in the decoration of a pre-Flavian building - but are found with greater frequency in early to mid second century deposits (Pritchard 1986, 185-6). The early palatial villas of the south-coast, most notably Fishbourne, were also provided with walls veneered with imported marble at an early date (Cunliffe 1971b, 33). Other villas where marble veneers have been found include Folkestone (baths), Box, Chedworth, Hucclecote,
North Wraxhall and Woodchester.

Wall mosaics are even more rarely attested. Second-century plunge baths in London and Colchester, and at the villa at Wingham in Kent, were lined with white tesserae, sometimes above a coloured border (Milne 1985, 139; Hull 1958, 208; Dowker 1882, 136). Other wall mosaics may have been present at Greetwell, Lincs. and East Malling, Kent (Liversidge 1968, 284), but no surviving examples of decorative wall mosaics have been found.

**External finishing**

External limewash rendering was widely used in Roman Italy, as at Pompeii, and has been documented in several instances in Roman Britain. In London the external walls of timber and clay-walled houses at Leadenhall Court and Watling Court were plastered over and painted in white (Milne 1992, 77; Milne and Wardle 1995, 52; Museum of London: WAT 78). This was also the case with a house found at Blue Boar Lane in Leicester and the villa at King’s Weston (Wacher 1959, 78; Boon 1950, 30). A collapsed clay wall from a house at Great Chesterford in Essex was similarly rendered with whitewash (Brinson 1963), whilst the walls of barrack blocks at South Shields were daubed in clay and whitewashed (Bidwell 1996, 19). The collapsed masonry gable wall of the aisled building Batten Hanger had been externally faced in plaster (Keevill 1995, 31), and plaster was also recorded on the outside of House 8,4 at Silchester (Fox and St John Hope 1894, 221). The columns of the villa at Piddington were instead painted in three colours: red with purple-brown bands and white details (Bidwell 1996, 27). Colour was also employed to create a red base to the exterior wall of the Painted House at Dover. These were unusual treatments, but illustrate that some Romano-British houses may have been highly colourful.

Rendering was also found on public buildings, as the red-painted temple at Maiden Castle and Hadrian’s Wall which had been whitewashed. This practice was probably widespread but not universal (Blagg 1996, 14; King 1996).

The use of timber cladding has already been described (above p. 65) and would have had an important visual impact in the earlier Romano-British towns. Many masonry walls, especially those of better ashlar construction, would have been left exposed. Rendering of a wall at Gadebridge Park involved the use of scored lines to imitate
ashlar blocks for decorative effect (Neal 1974, pl. 5b). Similar effects were achieved in the cellar at Burham. Visual effects were also achieved through the different approaches adopted to pointing: ribbon pointing and heavy scoring are both attested in Roman Britain, although the evidence has been obtained from public buildings (Bidwell 1996, 20; Blagg 1996, 14). This is also the case for the use of rusticated masonry.
3.7. Floors

Earth and timber floors

The evidence of floors is often central to the identification of status and function, but in many excavation reports it is difficult to establish whether the absence of a cement-based floor indicates the presence of a low status room or was the consequence of truncation.

Earth floors were standard, but higher status rooms were provided with more durable floors. Boon has summarised the evidence from Silchester. His figures for the number of floors: 7 timber, 3 clay, 9 mortar, 18 *opus signinum*, 59 tessellated, 41 mosaic, 64 hypocaust; accurately reflects the respective proportions of the different types of cemented floors used in the late Roman town, but understates the numbers of earth and timber floors that would have been found at this time (Boon 1974). In earlier periods mortar and *opus signinum* floors were generally more frequently encountered than tessellated ones.

Different degrees of care were exercised in laying earth floors. The contrast between the Newgate Street and Watling Court sites in London is instructive (Perring and Roskams 1991, 69). At Newgate Street floors in the late first and early second-century strip buildings were formed by compacted debris from earlier buildings. Purpose laid floors were rare, and consisted of thin layers of clay or gravel. In contrast the more sophisticated town houses at Watling Court were built over brickearth construction slabs up to 800 mm. thick laid in 2 or 3 bands of compacted earth - separated by thin gravel spreads introduced to consolidate and drain the foundation slab. These were laid after the walls had been built and in preparation for the surface. This laborious approach is closely paralleled in contemporary constructions at Chartres and Milan (Coulon and Jolly 1985, 98-9; Perring 1991a, 126).

Straw floors have been recorded in a military building of Flavian-Trajanic date at Ribchester (Wilson 1970, 281). It is likely that rushes and grasses once covered many earth floors, but evidence is difficult to obtain.

Timber floors can also be difficult to identify on dry sites, but there is mounting evidence to suggest that they were widely used in Roman Britain. At the Courage
Brewery site in Southwark a plank floor was laid over joists at 500 mm. intervals. The planks were 300 and 450 mm. wide and the joists were dovetailed or lap-jointed into the sill beams. The planks were rebated into a central beam across the middle of the building (Dillon 1989, 229-231). This building may have been a waterfront warehouse, which was also the context of the oak plank floor found at Pudding Lane on the other side of the Thames (Milne 1985). Plank floors have also been recorded on domestic sites in London (Williams in preparation; Grimes 1968, 137; Museum of London: BUC 87; Rowsome pers. comm.), and elsewhere (Frere 1989, 286; Crummy 1984, 23, 119; Frere 1972, 74-5; St John Hope 1897, 420-1).

Stone, tile and cement floors

Stone flagged floors are found in areas where suitable paving stone was readily available (but are therefore rare in the Southeast). Such floors were preferred in working and service areas. This is well illustrated in the houses of Caerwent, where flagged floors were found in corridors (Room 8, House 15 S; Room 6, House 2 S), and workrooms (Room 3, House 19 N).

Another floor used in corridors and other busy areas consisted of tiles laid in a herringbone pattern, otherwise known as opus spicatum. Such floors are rare in Roman Britain, and Williams was aware of only eight examples from the southeast of the province (Williams 1971, 179; for reference to such floors in centurions’ blocks see Hoffman 1995, 118). Excavations at Well Court in London produced evidence for another (Perring and Roskams 1991, 54, 88), and the villa at Piddington had such a floor in the corridor (Selkirk and Selkirk 1996, 58). Most examples date to the second and third centuries. Although normally composed of red bricks the herringbone floor laid in the house in Insula 18 at Colchester was executed in both red and black (Dunnett 1966, 39).

Tessellated pavements, usually executed in red, were widely used in similar contexts to the mortar and tile floors. Durable tessellated pavements were particularly popular in the corridors of later Romano-British villas, where simple mosaic designs were also sometimes used (see p. 134).

Lime-based cement floors, employing a wide range of different types of aggregate according to individual circumstance, were common in the better Romano-British
houses. In modest houses a mortar floor was more likely to mark out a high status room than be an indication that the room in question was subject to greater use. The use of a high proportion of crushed and broken tile in the aggregate is the characterising feature of *opus signinum* (or terrazzo), a particularly durable type of mortar floor in which polished tile fragments gave the floor a red (or occasionally buff) finish. The earliest dated urban appearance of this floor type is from pre-Flavian contexts in London, at Queen Victoria Street (Richardson 1988, 387). In slightly later contexts in the same part of London a mosaic inlay pattern had been set into the *opus signinum* (Smith in Perring and Roskams 1991). This floor type, particularly popular in Italy in the late Republic, may have been present at a small number of other early Roman sites in southern Britain (as Southwick, Maidstone and Silchester: Winbolt 1932, 31; Charles 1847, 87; Boon 1974, 55), but did not see widespread adoption in the province. At Verulamium *opus signinum* floors were rare before the second century, where a variation on the type involved mixing the pounded tile with chalk rather than mortar (Frere 1972, 78, 80). Quarter-round red-painted cement and *opus signinum* fillets were used as a form of skirting around the borders of decorated rooms (Boon 1974, 213; Frere 1983a, 94; Perring and Roskams 1991, 88).

Stone inlay pavements composed of imported marble (*opus sectile*), were an early but short-lived fashion restricted to the very highest status sites and little known after the end of the first century. The best evidence for this type of floor comes from Fishbourne and other villas along the south coast. Some houses in London, Silchester and Canterbury were also decorated in this fashion, although there is little evidence of the contexts in which these floors were found (Cunliffe 1971, 33; Williams 1971, 180; Clarke 1982, 210-211; Pritchard 1986, 177).

**Mosaics**

The importance of mosaic design for the social analysis of villas has been given proper emphasis by Sarah Scott (Scott 1994), and several of the comments made about the decorative role of painted wall plaster (p. 94) also apply to mosaics. There is little point in attempting here anything more than the baldest summary of this complex theme.

As with the *opus sectile* pavements the early use of mosaic reflects a precocious and
expensive taste, found mainly on sites which have also produced evidence for the involvement of Roman merchants or military supply (i.e in London and at Fishbourne). The Claudio-Neronian, or early Flavian, 'proto palace' at Fishbourne has produced the best series of the characteristic black and white designs of this period. Other fragmentary pavements of this date have been found in the late first and early second-century town houses of London (Marsden 1976, 43; Boddington 1979, 26; Merrifield 1965, site 106; Frere 1989, 305; Smith in Perring and Roskams 1991; Perring 1991b, 41). Other early mosaic pavements have been found in Kent, as at the villa at Eccles (Detsicas 1983).

During the second-century mosaics were increasingly common in houses in the more prosperous towns of this period - most notably London, Verulamium and Colchester - but they remained a rarity in the countryside (although at least 20 villa sites with mosaics of this period are known). The pavements of this period were generally coloured, and involved the use of geometric backgrounds, panels of vases, and in some cases animals. Symbols of conviviality and of plenty (vine leaves, cantharii, etc.) were especially popular and would have been particularly suitable in dining rooms. In London several attractive mosaic pavements have been dated to the early third century and it seems likely that they were the product of a school of mosaicists based there (Jones 1988, 10; Perring 1991b, 102).

Most Romano-British mosaics were laid in the fourth century, in particular in the first half of that century. Villas mosaics of this date considerably outnumber those known from urban contexts. This clearly reflects the exaggerated archaeological attention that villas have received and the greater ease with which their pavements can be uncovered, but it may also reflect a real if less marked disparity in numbers. Several schools of mosaicists of this period, based on the main urban centres, have been identified (DJ Smith 1969). The better mosaic designs incorporated figures and scenes drawn from Graeco-Roman mythology, displaying a considerable understanding of the religious and literary background (DJ Smith 1977). There is a particular concentration of houses with more complex pavements in the Southwest, especially in Somerset and Devon.

The popularity of scenes in which the beasts of earth and sea are shown subdued by
figures such as Orpheus, Apollo and Neptune, and of images with Bacchic associations is notable. There are also frequent references within these scenes - both direct and indirect - to the hunt and to seasonal bounty. Many messages were conveyed: the patron announced good taste and education, and represented an authority rooted in the traditions and power systems of the Roman world, and suggested a mastery over the forces of nature on which prosperity depended. The range of symbols used suggests that many pavements were designed to contribute to conspicuous display attendant on the Roman supper party (see p. 137). The better pavements were laid in the more important reception rooms, and this assumption is integral to many of the interpretations offered below.

Hypocausts

Underfloor heating was first introduced into Britain in the baths attached to forts and similar establishments (as at Exeter c. AD 60-65: Bidwell 1980), and subsequently in the public baths of the emergent towns. Heated baths houses were also found attached to some better pre-Flavian villas (see p. 175), but only towards the end of the first century were heated rooms found in other domestic contexts.

Hypocausts were heated from furnaces set in an adjacent room or against an outside wall of the building, from which hot air was circulated beneath the floor and up through flues set within the walls. There were three principal types of underfloor arrangement (see Degbomont 1984, 118-129 and Williams 1971):

- pillar hypocausts - where the floor was raised by a series of columns (pilae)
- channel hypocausts - where the hot air was directed along channels radiating from the main flue
- composite hypocausts - where a central pillared chamber fed a series of radiating channels

There were several variations on these types. Pillars were most frequently formed of stacks of square tiles, nine inches square, but circular and octagonal tile pilae are also known. The use of circular pillars waned in popularity through the Roman period, and the few Romano-British examples date to the earlier period (as Cowan 1995). Box tiles set on end and filled with clay or mortar were also used. Stone plinths often
supported hypocaust floors, and were preferred to ceramic pilae where stone was easily found. The use of stone in hypocausts reflects the use of stone instead of ceramic tiles on roofs.

Rooms with pillared hypocausts were hotter than those with channels, and were most usually found in hot baths. Otherwise pillared hypocausts feature in some early houses, although heated rooms were rare outside baths in the first century. The absence of hypocaust floors from the late first-century town houses in London, as those at Watling Court, is notable. Even at Fishbourne the earliest (Period 1) heated rooms were restricted to a bath-house, and we know of only one small pillared hypocaust in the domestic quarters of the late first-century villa (Room W11).

Heated domestic rooms were found in early second-century London. Examples include 15-23 Southwark Street and Winchester Palace in Southwark (fig. 39). London was characteristically precocious. Domestic heated rooms were first evident in Winchester towards the end of the second century (e.g. House 23,1), and in Verulamium were not widely found until the third century (e.g. Houses 18,1 and 28,1).

Channelled hypocausts first appear in mid second-century villas. Their introduction seems to have been linked to the increased emphasis placed on the type ‘R’ reception rooms (p. 137). This type of hypocaust was less difficult to fire and offered less intense heat. Lined in stone or tile according to the availability of these materials, these channelled hypocausts were widely used in later villas and town houses, especially in the fourth century. In this later period pillared hypocausts were generally restricted to bath-houses, although there were also some small heated rooms where pillared floors were preferred. There has been speculation as to the function of these rooms which gave a heat that perhaps exceeded the needs of domestic comfort (Black 1985), although it is possible that this preference reflects problems that obtained in making efficient use of small channel hypocausts.

One of the earliest Romano-British channelled hypocausts was laid in the early second century in a reception room in the Gorhambury villa (fig. 40). Close set channels were formed between a series of parallel sleeper walls that supported the floor. This was one of a small group of hypocausts in which close-set channels, usually laid out to a grid although sometimes of labyrinthine design, provided almost as much under-floor
circulation space as the pillared hypocausts. Examples include Room 8 of Building 4,8 at Verulamium, House 8,9b at Winchester, and rooms in the villas at Titsey Park, Llantwit Major and Darenth (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, pl. 32; Zant 1993, fig. 71; Leveson-Gower 1869; Nash-Williams 1951; Payne 1897, Block C Room 27).

Hypocaust floors with less closely set channels were being built by the end of the second-century, as at Ely (Wheeler 1921, 73; see also Williams 1971b, 112). After this date most channelled hypocausts were of a dendritic form, with a large central flue leading from the furnace to a chamber at the centre of the room feeding smaller channels directed towards its four corners. In these floors it was normal to establish a rectangular chamber in the middle of the room, and these were often large enough to require the insertion of pillared supports for the floor. This composite form of heated floor involving the use of both channels and pillars - the 'union jack' hypocaust - was widely used in the larger heated rooms of later Roman houses. When the villa at Gorhambury was rebuilt in c. AD 160-180 the main reception room was laid out with one of these 'union jack' hypocausts (fig. 40), whilst a similar floor was laid in the early third-century (Period 3) rebuilding of the north wing of the villa at Fishbourne.

An alternative approach - influenced by both the union-jack and grided types - involved dispensing with the central chamber but adding a range of further secondary channels to a broad central flue. House 22,2 at Beeches Rd. in Cirencester illustrates, in its different rooms, the range of different patterns that could be achieved.
3.8. **Fixtures and fittings**

**Hearths and ovens**

Hearths and ovens were the most common fixtures in Romano-British houses, especially in the earlier period. The use of hypocaust floors in later town houses may have reduced the need for hearths and there is evidence to suggest that portable braziers (the main source of heat in many houses at Pompeii, see Mau 1899, 239), were widely used in later domestic contexts (Crummy 1984, 25; Boon 1974, 210).

The simplest hearths were small affairs set directly over the ground or on a small clay base, and were usually circular between 300-500 mm. in diameter and hollowed up to 80 mm. deep. The provision of a small tile base was a common sophistication. These features were set in a variety of locations, and some simple buildings had centrally placed hearths, as at Godmanchester (Green 1982). It has been suggested that the use of floor-level hearths, rather than raised features, might in some cases have facilitated the use of heavy hanging cauldrons (Casey and Hoffman 1998, 118).

Outside of the workshops where these simple structures proliferated, most hearths at urban and villa sites consisted of small tile or stone platforms set against a wall. In a regional survey Johnston (1978, 82-8), identified a range of common types (fig. 41: to which can be added examples described by Crummy 1984, and Perring and Roskams 1991, 97-8). Hearths were sometimes recessed into the wall against which they were built, and cheek-walls were sometimes built either side of the platform. In more complex examples the hearth was set within a semi-circular breastwork up to 800 mm. across. These structures were built either in similar fashion to the walls against which they were set, or were built of tile and coated with plaster or daub. Hearths of this form are also frequently found in Romano-Gallic houses (Degbomont 1984, 17-8). These structures might have supported horizontal bars from which cooking pots could have been hung, and may also have supported corbelled hoods to funnel smoke out of the building. Such an arrangement has been suggested for hearths in the villas at Star and Sparsholt (Johnston 1978). At Colchester, Balkerne Lane, timber posts may also have supported hoods over hearths in Buildings 40-46 (Crummy 1984, 107).

It is likely that in most cases the hypocausts and fireplaces vented under the eaves
rather than through roof-top chimneys, although the smoke from centrally placed hearths at sites such as North Warnborough and Carisbrooke must have gone up through the roof.

The more carefully built fireplaces were found in living rooms. Such fire-places were not a common feature of houses in Roman Italy but are known from Gallic sites such as Alesia (Adam 1990, 59). Kitchens, workrooms and other service areas were instead provided with ovens, consisting of rectangular structures enclosing a narrow flue or keyhole-shaped central furnace, typically 300-500 mm. deep and 1.0-1.5 m. long (Perring and Roskams 1991, 98; Crummy 1984, 25; etc.). These were usually tile-built with wattle and daub superstructures. A more complex form of oven, involving the provision of a drying floor and commonly including a T-shaped flue design, has been widely recognised on rural sites (Morris 1979). These ‘corn driers’ may have been used in both the parching of grain for storage and as malting ovens (van der Veen 1989). Although most evidently associated with the processing of agricultural surplus there may have been social or functional aspects to the use of these ovens that resulted in them being built within the residential wings of some late Romano-British houses. They were a particular feature of porticoes and corridors.

Hypocaust furnaces might also have been used as domestic ovens. The furnaces which heated the bath-houses were used as boilers to supply steam and hot water for the ‘Turkish’ bath. Tile or stone platforms were therefore built to support water tanks that were suspended on iron beams (Wacher 1971). Fittings associated with the hearths and ovens include fuel boxes and ash pits (as Frere 1972, 17).

**Lararia and other fittings**

A group of small structures in Romano-British houses which may have functioned as domestic shrines (*lararia*) has been described by Boon (1983):

- **Type A.** Cupboard like structures with side walls and an open front that could have been closed off by a wooden door. Examples include a masonry structure (1 m. x 0.75-0.9 m.) to the rear of the Insula 14 shops at Verulamium; a 2 m. square base with tile coursed and quoined flint walls in House 14,2 at Silchester; and a small clay walled feature within Building F at Watling Court in London.
• Type B. Low platforms on which items were set. These have been noted at House 8 S at Caerwent; Watling Court, London; and in the Lullingstone cellar.

• Type C. Stone pillars or plinths. Such features were present in Room 3 of Catterick House 8.5; at Segontium; in an early third-century strip building at Chelmsford (Drury 1975); and at Bignor. A stone altar was also found in Room 15 at Box.

• Type D. Hearth-like recessed niches, alcoves or small apses. Examples of this type from civilian contexts have been recorded at Chilgrove; Dorchester and Colliton Park. Something similar may have been present in Room 12 at Chedworth where fragments of two small statues were found in a recess. Niches were widely used to contain sacred images and lararia (Boyce 1937, 14; Boon 1983, 33-55; Mau 1899, 262). At Lullingstone three female figures painted at the back of a niche, one with water spurting from her nipples and another pouring water from a jug, have been identified as water nymphs (Toynbee 1964, 220-1).

There are too few examples to establish a chronology for the use of these features, which were located in a variety of different kinds of rooms, and their identification as lararia can not be confirmed from the archaeological evidence.

Small vessels let into the floors of some rooms may have been placed as votive deposits. There were few permanent household fittings although upright storage jars were fixtures in some houses (as at Colchester: Crummy 1984, 63). At Fishbourne a group of pots - one containing lentils - was found crushed in fire debris from a late third-century conflagration. The disturbed character of the assemblage, and some iron angle brackets found at the same location, suggest that the pots had sat on a wooden tray or box above the floor (Cunliffe 1971, 188). At Pompeii cooking utensils and food containers were generally stored on tripods and shelves (Mau 1899, 260-2). In second-century fire horizons at both London and Verulamium groups of pots have been found were they originally stood on the ground (Frere 1972, 17-18; Perring and Roskams 1991, 15).

A more substantial storage feature is represented by the sunken strong box found in the room next to the hall at Brislington (Barker 1900), and some smaller sunken containers are referred to in the discussion of cellars (p. 186), but these are unusual features.
Char marks on the structural timbers from the framed building re-used at Cannon Street (p. 53), shows that lamps had been mounted on brackets nailed to the sides of the exposed timbers (Goodburn 1992). One of these mountings had been 1.15 m. above floor level, and another, perhaps for a bedside or working light, was placed only 560 mm. high. Such wall mountings are likely to have been common, but the archaeological record is reticent on such matters.

Stone and timber benches were built along the sides of some larger rooms. The bench around the 'audience' chamber at Fishbourne is the most notable example and a similar row of postholes supporting a bench was recorded at Boughspring. Stone benches were also a feature of outbuildings in the villa at Westland and behind town houses in Silchester (as House 19,2).

Although stone stairs were commonly employed to address minor changes of level (as at Witcombe), timber staircases are more likely to have been used to reach upper floors and lofts. Evidence for one of these was preserved in the plaster rendering of the cellar in the villa at Piddington. Part of a timber stair tread was also found in the Hadrianic timber-framed building on the site of the 'Commanding Officer's house' at Vindolanda (Frere 1992, 270).

After the hearths referred to above the most common fixtures were those associated with water supply and drainage. These were usually found in external areas, and along with rubbish and latrine pits no attempt is made here to offer a thorough study of the evidence. It is evident, however, that outside of the bath-houses - where fountains and pools were found in the better houses - few domestic buildings were supplied with running water. Latrines such as those attached to House 28,1 at Verulamium and the domestic bath suite at Pudding Lane in London were also a rarity (Frere 1983a, 247; Milne 1985, 139-40).

**Foundation offerings and infant burials**

Animal carcasses were buried during the construction of numerous Romano-British houses. Dogs were interred beneath houses at London and Winchester (Perring and Roskams 1991, 69-70; Cunliffe 1964, 43; Zant 1993, 61), and sheep beneath Building 6 at Leadenhall Court in London and in the villa at King’s Weston (Milne 1992, 15; Boon 1967, 14). A wild boar was used in the construction of a conquest period fort at
Chelmsford (Goodburn 1976, 342), and at Bourton Grounds Temple, Buckingham a horse skull was found under a threshold dated to the 3rd-4th centuries (Luff nd). A foundation offering of pots containing fish bones and shells was associated with the construction of a hypocaust floor in House 23,3 at Winchester (Zant 1993, 113). Various small pots found under the floors of Romano-British houses may have contained further votive deposits of this nature.

Neo-natal burials have been found in service areas inside or immediately adjacent to several villas and town houses (see Scott 1991; and for further evidence from urban sites see Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 138-9; Crummy 1984, 119; Zant 1993, 33; and McWhirr 1986, 38, 13). Contrary to some suggestions this burial practice was not ‘remarkably un-Roman’ (Hingley 1997, following Scott 1991). Pliny mentions the Roman practice of burying infants under the eaves of the house (Natural History 7,15), and the implication of other ancient sources is that it was thought fonder to keep these unfortunates at home than to dispatch them to a cemetery (Fulgentius Sermones Antiqui 7).

Domestic infant burial was a significant act. The arrival of a new child marked an important moment in the ritual life of the Roman household, especially during the first nine days of life before the infant was named. Varro describes the Roman custom of celebrating the arrival of a baby with a nocturnal attack on the domestic threshold to dispatch evil spirits. Death in its turn demanded the ceremonial purification of the house (Ogilvie 1969, 13, 102-3). Given the importance of both childbirth and death it is inconceivable that the choice of where to bury the dead infant was casual or insignificant. Although these observations are drawn from our knowledge of Roman social practice it is difficult to believe that things were otherwise in Britain, although we lack the supporting testimony of any written sources.

Infant burials are most frequently found in service areas, especially in kitchens and other areas where agricultural products were processed, although corridors were also used to this end (Scott 1991, and see below p.173). Roman kitchens were normally closely associated with the household gods, fertility and prosperity sprang from this focal point and this was where household shrines were most usually located. The underworld also held enormous significance in Roman fertility ritual, and it seems likely
that infant graves were placed where the spirits could contribute most effectively to the prosperity and care of the living.

This summary description of fixtures and fittings concludes the descriptive survey of the fabric and appearance of Romano-British houses. It is evident that these houses were the products of imported ideas and techniques, and that the structure and appearance of these buildings changed considerably through both time and space. This is most clearly demonstrated by the changed approaches to the use of building materials and construction techniques, but can also be shown in approaches to interior decoration. These important observations are central to the arguments developed in this thesis, and will be returned to in more detail in the concluding chapter. The proposed study of social arrangements can not, however, be taken much further without a detailed analysis of the ways in which Romano-British houses were used, and this is the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 4. Building plans

4.1. The plot

Boundaries

The ordering of space was necessarily hierarchical and the Roman landscape was regimented by a series of potent boundaries: dividing sacred from profane, urban from rural, and domestic from public. These were used to order society from the earliest days of Rome, and their importance was recognised in a variety of rules and rituals. The city was itself a ritual enclosure - within which sacred laws enabled the government of civic affairs - and the concept of boundary and the sanctity of the urbs were powerful instruments in shaping social behaviour. Rykwert has drawn attention to the force of the town boundary “a forbidden tract of earth charged with menacing power”, and the way in which entering through the gates of a city could be seen as a religious act (Rykwert 1976, 137-9). Although such boundaries needed to be marked, and hence the importance attached to gates, doorways, and arches in the Roman world, it was not always necessary to define them with walls.

Concepts of procession, entry and penetration were integral to the social and spatial orders established within Roman cities, and the built environment presented a variety of contrived settings in which rituals of passage and induction could take place. This can be seen in the religious and triumphal processions of Rome, where celebrants navigated a constructed ritual landscape in a series of liminal leaps. Such concepts were readily imported into the house: in so many regards an idealised and rationalised form of urban space (Rykwert 1976, 24-6).

Villas were usually enclosed by a bank and ditch, which like the walls of a town offered a protection that if essentially symbolic could also be converted to practical use. The boundaries established the identity and status of the site and emphasised its ‘urban’ character: a feature taken to extreme in the imitation town wall built around the Roman villa at Settefinestre (Carandini and Ricci 1985). The attribution of potency to significant boundaries was not a peculiarly Roman practice, and a long prehistoric tradition of ritual deposition at liminal contexts in Britain is well documented (as in the
ditches around enclosed sites or in rivers). Higher status Iron Age settlement sites in southeast Britain were set within ditched enclosures (Bowden and McComish 1987).

In contrast urban plots were constrained by the street system, and could be influenced by the commercial value of street frontages (Laurence 1994a). Patterns of access and the values ascribed to streets constrained the ways in which town houses could develop. This was a significant factor in the evolution of the architecture of strip-buildings which were designed to exploit narrow plots of land set square to busy streets (p. 198). There are conflicting patterns of urban layout in Roman Britain which reflect different pressures on space, and are likely to have influenced house design. Three different arrangements can be identified:

- densely populated sites with few open areas, where houses occupied most available locations. This was a characteristic of several early Romano-British towns, with London the most extreme example.

- sites where development pressure was limited to the arterial roads and which were otherwise sparsely occupied. This settlement pattern was typical of suburbs and roadside villages (small towns).

- sites with a generally open aspect - Garden cities - in which town houses were set amidst open space, and where houses could be designed with respect to the wider landscape. Most late Roman towns conformed, at least in part, to this model which is perhaps best illustrated by the plan of Silchester (fig. 42).

It is unlikely that many urban plots were much smaller than the 7.6 m. by 40 m. recorded at Middlewich, Cheshire - which measurements are typical of most strip buildings. Many properties were very considerably larger, even within roadside settlements property widths up to 46m across have been reconstructed (RF Smith 1987, 30-2). It is striking how few Romano-British houses shared a party wall with their neighbour, in marked contrast to housing blocks of cities throughout the Mediterranean (see p. 23). It is possible that the block of shops in Insula 14 at Verulamium and some of the converted barrack blocks at Colchester may have seen several properties crowded under a single roof and separated by party walls (Frere 1972; Crummy, 1984, 25), but these are exceptions to the general rule.

None of these urban constraints applied to villas, which were located with respect to a
variety of social and topographic concerns: including past settlement pattern, access to resources, distance from town, ease of access, views afforded by site, etc. (Hodder and Millett 1980; Sheldon et al. 1993). Since villas were not placed on main roads — arguably deferring to Columella’s view that villas should avoid main roads to escape the burden of having to entertain travellers (1, 5.7), (see p. 137) - there were few externally imposed constraints over villa design.

Orientation and aspect

Villas were consistently located to take advantage of southerly or easterly views. From a sample of 87 Romano-British villa sites, all but 14 (i.e. approximately 88%) were found to face south, southeast or east; with most of the remainder orientated to exploit southwest views. None looked north. A similar pattern has been identified in the villas of Roman Picardy (Agache 1978, 352; Haselgrove 1995). These houses were turned to the sun, and in particular towards the morning sun. This had also been pre-Roman practice: the doorways of British roundhouses were usually orientated towards sunrise and especially in the direction of midwinter sunrise and the equinox (Oswald 1991; Haselgrove 1995, fig. 5). Many other architectural traditions - far removed from Roman Britain - reflect this basic human preference (see Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, 14-5). It is perhaps more significant that the pattern of design favoured in Roman Britain showed less interest in the point of the winter solstice and a less precise concern with the direction of sunrise than had been evident in the early development of the British roundhouse.

Vitruvius recommends that houses in the northern provinces should have a warm exposure (On Architecture 6, 4.1; and see also Pliny Letters 5,6), and several Roman texts explicitly acknowledge the importance of a sunny aspect. The value placed on Tuscan sunshine has not diminished to this day, and according to contemporary Italian proverb ‘dove non entra il sole entra il dottore’ (Baedeker 1897, xviii). A Romano-British house that caught first light was more salubrious than one that could not, and architects strived to obtain this advantage. It is harder to argue, however, that the pre-Roman foundation rituals and belief systems, which gave emphasis to the precise point of sunrise, persisted as a direct influence in the Roman period.

Because of the preferences described above particular explanatory factors should be
sought where villas turned their backs to the sun. In his review of Hertfordshire villas, David Neal noted a fourth-century tendency to move facades from one side of the house to the other, whilst making alterations in the layout of the courtyards. Although he is uncertain as to the reasons for these changes, Neal observed that the effect was to change the aspect of these buildings from an inward looking one, with the courtyard as the focal point, to an external one where the surrounding estate could be surveyed. The introduction of tower-like rooms at Gadebridge and the reversal of the outer courtyard from the south to the north side of the building were seen to support this suggestion (Neal 1974-6, 125-6).

Given the evident value of a southerly or easterly aspect in villa architecture the orientation of town houses is also a subject of interest. The study of the plan of Silchester is particularly rewarding in this regard (fig. 42). It has long been recognised that a number of properties in Silchester were not aligned with the street grid (as Berry 1951). Having dismissed the possibility that this was a consequence of different phases of urban planning, Walthew suggests that issues of cardinal orientation might influence some odd urban property alignments. The alignment of houses such as 16,2 at Silchester might have been governed by the wish to achieve a southeastward aspect (Walthew 1975). There was a fairly consistently applied interest in arranging the houses in Silchester around open space in such a way that the principal wings faced either south or east. Reception quarters were generally at the southern ends of wings with an easterly aspect, whilst the main residential quarters were within a south-facing wing. In order to achieve this arrangement, houses with a main entrance to the west presented plans that offered a near mirror image of those with entrances to the east. Cardinal aspect was clearly more important than left-right distinction. A similar, if less marked, emphasis emerges from the study of the layout of houses at both Wroxeter and Colchester (as evident in plans by Wilson 1984; Hull 1958, fig. 81).

The premium placed on a sea view has been noted above (p. 34), and was probably an influence in the location of coastal villas like that at Folkestone. Other Romano-British villas were located to take advantage of river views and headwater locations (of which Witcombe is a good example). Sources and views of water were of evident importance in Roman-Britain, as elsewhere in the empire, and this was clearly an influence on garden design (see p. 191).
It is argued below that the 'winged corridor' facade can be explained through reference to the architecture of the peristyle house, and that a principal concern was to obtain a proper range of aspects and views from the building. Several recent studies have properly stressed the importance in the Roman house of the views of landscapes through the portico onto the countryside which patrons and guests could enjoy from the main reception rooms (Clarke 1991, 16; Ellis 1995, 168; Dickmann 1997). Views of the house obtained from a distance were generally of secondary importance, and in town may have had no importance at all.

A pair of adjacent town houses in Roman Herculaneum, the House of the Stags and House of the Mosaic Atrium (Tram Tanh Tin 1988), provide useful points of reference (fig. 43). These commanded an impressive sea view, and to exploit this the main reception rooms were arranged around a garden terrace overlooking the sea. As was normal the main entrances were found against the street and the garden terrace could only be reached by passing through the house. Set high on the terrace the main reception rooms were only easily visible from the garden itself. The design of the building facade adopted in this circumstance was almost identical to that subsequently favoured by the architects of Romano-British villas. Projecting rooms were placed at opposite ends of the facade, central to which stood an imposing freestanding porch. Here the central porch was not a principal entrance and the facade was not designed to impress those approaching the house. The projecting rooms were instead placed where the best views and prospects could be obtained, and the central porch provided a focal point at which house and garden met. The owners of these houses may have enjoyed knowing that an impression of the architectural refinement achieved could be obtained from the sea, but these features were designed principally for the benefit of those entertained in the house itself.

The use of symmetry in house plans

The portico (or corridor) has often been viewed as a superficial decorative addition to the house facade, designed either to display the house or to conceal its private rooms, but of indifferent importance to the function of the building. This view derives from the work of Swoboda (1918), reinforced by the evidence of the villa at Mayen where there was little evident relationship between the portico facade and the hall-house to
which it was attached (Oelmann 1928). It has been widely adopted in descriptions of Romano-British domestic architecture (Blagg 1991, 10; Smith 1997, 13). The importance of the portico as a setting for reception activities such as the *ambulatio*, and to frame views obtained from the house has instead been understated.

Symmetry is an important element of classical architecture, emphasised in the writings of Vitruvius (as 1, 1.4; 6, 2.1), but its importance to domestic architecture can be exaggerated. Blagg notes that the symmetrical relationship of the villa and its subsidiary buildings along a central axis is a feature of some palatial villas in the northwest provinces. This was particularly evident in early empire Gallic villas (Agache 1975), and Blagg notes that axial symmetry was not so important in Italian villas or in Roman Britain (Blagg 1990c). British examples of the type are, however, known (as at Gorhambury: see also Rodwell and Rodwell 1985, although some of the examples given here depend on an uncomfortable degree of speculative reconstruction), and symmetrical axial planning is evident in the layout of central courtyards and gardens.

JT Smith, in an influential but highly contentious paper, has seen this group of villas to conform to a classical ideal which he suggests requires "symmetry of elevation and plan; the planning of buildings and of sites as a whole in regular geometric figures; strong emphasis on a central axis of approach; and the monumental grouping of buildings" (JT Smith 1978a, 150 – and elaborated in Smith 1997). Smith proceeds to use the evidence for entrances which do not exploit an axial path as evidence of 'un-Roman' practice despite the lack of evidence for axiality in Roman house design (see below p. 194). In several of the villas which he describes as having two entrances (e.g. Winkel Seeb), access circumscribes rather than bisects a forecourt, following a spatial arrangement not dissimilar to that found peristyle houses. The extreme conclusion seen to follow from this evidence, that "there can be only one explanation, that this palatial establishment was occupied by joint proprietors", is considered and rejected below (see p. 255. Rippengal 1993 also offers a well argued critique of the flawed logic on which Smith has based his argument).

Symmetry was not a primary objective in the layout of Roman houses, and when found addresses the harmony of individual spaces and vistas but not the whole (the example
of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli springs to mind). The reinterpretation of the classical canon in the 1st century gave greater weight to overall symmetry, but even in this later period it can be argued that "the aim was to achieve balance, rather than true symmetry, within a framework with many discordant elements" (Locock 1994, 244-5).

Few surviving Roman houses present a fully symmetrical facade and none a wholly symmetrical plan. What mattered more was the social flow around the house, and this depended on patterns of entry, movement, pause and welcome.

**Layout and function**

The main components of the Romano-British house were:

- entrances
- porticoes and corridors
- dining rooms
- main reception and audience rooms
- baths
- suites of living and sleeping quarters
- service areas
- other reception areas
- gardens and courtyards

A more detailed description of these parts of the house is attempted in the rest of this chapter (and see fig. 47). This description is based in part on the identification of commonly repeated patterns of design, and in part on the evidence of distinctive types of room (following the approach to building description set out in chapter 1.3).

Although it addresses most of the key parts of the house it makes no attempt to offer a comprehensive typological description of every single room found in every house. The more complex the building the more opportunity for individual elements of design, and in the face of such variety it becomes impossible to impose a meaningful typology. This problem is at its most acute in the ancillary wings attached to some of the larger houses, where additional reception, service and working areas were usually provided. It may well be that a closer analysis of such space than has been attempted here would identify additional classes of rooms for individual description.
It is clearly evident, however, that a considerable amount of space was set aside for reception activities. In the period 5B villa at Boxmoor, for instance, nearly two thirds of the house was given over to the portico and two reception rooms. This was not unusual. In a fourth-century house (22,1) at Cirencester (McWhirr 1986) almost a third of the house was taken up by the baths, whilst another third was occupied by a large wing reception room. Here there were only a couple of rooms left over to serve as the residential quarters, with another two or three service rooms to the rear. Ancillary structures and upstairs rooms may have provided additional space in archaeologically invisible areas, but the relative importance of reception space can not be denied.

Particular emphasis was placed on three main facilities: dining halls, colonnades and baths. The development and subsequent improvement of these facilities was a prime concern. In this the British patron was following a Roman model. Tacitus informs us that in the late first century: “the Britons were seduced into alluring vices: to the lounge, the bath, the well appointed dinner table” (Agricola 21). This seduction evidently involved the construction of the necessary facilities. According to Juvenal “Your great man will spend ... upon his baths, and something more on the colonnade ... Elsewhere let a banqueting hall arise” (Satire 7, 178).

Another point which merits brief consideration is the cardinal and corporal identity of the house. The importance of a southerly aspect may have been reflected in the layout of space within the house, taking account of the identification of certain parts of the building as left and right, top and bottom. Generally space projected from the body is biased towards front and right: the future is ahead and up, and the past behind and below (Tuan 1977). No consistent pattern of left/right preferences emerge from the evidence of Romano-British houses reviewed here, and the differences observed are such that any generalisations made must be treated with caution. But where the constraints of the urban plot did not apply, or could be overcome, there appears to have been a slight preference for the following use of space:

- left: favoured for public facilities such as the baths or audience room.
- left of centre: occupied by a larger domestic suite
- centre: the domestic core of the house, and point of contact between house and
garden.

• right of centre: occupied by a more discrete domestic suite
• right: the dominant and more intimate reception facilities (dining rooms, etc.)

Pathway analysis

Romano-British town houses, like their Italian counterparts, defined a hierarchy of reception and movement. Three types of signal were employed:

• open spaces and light established focal points, and encouraged movement towards and through public spaces.
• decorative order identified areas of higher and lower status, and limited the embarrassment of unwitting trespass beyond appropriate confines
• thresholds, screens and doors prevented unlicensed movement

These architectural signals belonged to three types of domestic space:

entrances: control over access was established by thresholds and porches - such features marked critical boundaries between different domestic realms.

pathways: a hierarchy of porticoes and corridors articulated focal points established at entrances to main rooms and gardens.

reception areas: there were several discrete reception areas in the Romano-British house, and distinctions can be drawn between these according to hierarchies of intimacy and luxury.

This description of Romano-British space can equally be applied to the atrium-peristyle houses of Roman Italy (see above p. 24) and it is suggested that similar social activities were catered for. In both regions houses allowed for an 'ascent in privilege', in which the more privileged guest passed a succession of lesser stations en route to the warmest welcome obtained at the furthest and most intimate part of the house (Wallace-Hadrill 1994). Peristyles, gardens, archways, views, paintings and mosaics marked a progression towards an innermost sanctum - probably a dining room - where the top table was found within the impressive frame of a monumental apse. To reach this objective the visitor might have to make as many as six 90 degree turns, passing as many thresholds, and cover a distance of up to 80m. from the street (e.g. fig. 44). The
object of this lengthy passage was not to deter or impede, since the route was clearly marked: instead it declared the importance and standing of the host. The house mirrored the city and offered an armature of focal spaces articulated by porticoes that guided the visitor from a formal gateway to its ceremonial heart (as MacDonald 1986).

The portico was one of the most important features of the Romano-British house, as demonstrated by the amount of space it occupied and the attention given to its redesign in phases of alteration. Corridors are vital, dynamic, spaces designed to direct movement, and to manipulate social encounters (Clarke 1991). In most town houses they established a linear progression from a front entrance to the main reception rooms to the rear. They defined focal points where important rooms could be accessed, or views of the garden obtained. A similar pattern of use can be proposed for the villa, although the emphasis on a linear progression through the portico was less marked because of the alternative possibility of using the garden entrance at the centre of the facade.

The absence of an axial view through the building is consistent with classical practice. From the fifth century BC the typical Greek house had been secluded from public view by a bent entrance (Lawrence 1973, 238 ff.). In many Roman houses the more magnificent reception rooms could only be approached by similarly navigating an L-shaped entrance route, as for instance the House of the Fortuna Annonaria at Ostia (fig. 6A).

Notwithstanding the elaborate nature of the entrance arrangements the courtyard and corridor house created ‘permeable’ space, in which it was relatively easy to get from one part of the building to another. Most rooms within the house could be reached from the corridor, and the main patterns of access did not differ significantly between town and country, or from the mid second to the mid fourth centuries. Normally the main corridor gave direct access to the most important reception facilities: the baths, dining rooms and reception halls. By their very nature the heated rooms in the baths were remote from the entrance, and in some instances the addition of extra chambers around the principal room of the dining suite gave such areas a semblance of privacy. These characteristics give these rooms a higher RA (relative asymmetry) value as obtained from the ‘gamma analysis’ techniques of Hillier and Hanson (see p. 19). This
exercise has been taken forward in one illustrative example (figs. 45) and a series of access diagrams has also been prepared (see p. 46). These show the way in which most space was easily reached from the portico. The use of antechambers gave greater privacy to some of the domestic suites, as described below p. 157, although were still of easy public access tucked between the main reception rooms. The need to provide a controlled street entrance and to best exploit the garden views, added to the complexity of the town house and reduced the accessibility of domestic and reception quarters in the houses at Silchester and Verulamium. This illustrates a real difference between town and country living, where the villa precinct was more effective in establishing social controls than the town wall, and permitted a more open building plan as a consequence (see Perring 1991c and below).

The suggestion has been made that less secure householders, in communities under greater social tension, are inclined to protect domestic space and introduce more blocks - doorways, corridors and vestibules - on entry and movement (Glassie 1975). Sarah Scott (1994) has ventured to suggest that the use of the corridor facade was a demonstration of just such stress and reserve. The matter is not straightforward. On one hand the corridor served to unite and integrate the domestic space - and can be viewed as an important area for social interaction - but on the other it controlled and influenced movement within the house. It is tempting to blame the changes in architecture evident in the mid second century, when many of the more structured approaches to the housing of reception activities were adopted, on social responses to the economic changes of the period. But these architectural differences also witness the continuing Romanisation of British social practice.
4.2. **Entrances**

**Porches (E rooms)**

It is argued here that the better Romano-British houses included of a series of specialist reception areas (dining rooms and baths) and that these were linked by the portico which was itself a key part of the reception space. It has also been noted that the portico allowed for an almost processional route through the house, directing the privileged guest to the higher status rooms. For the house to work in this fashion the main entrance was critically important: an ascent in privilege could hardly be achieved if the innocent visitor arrived at the tradesman’s entrance. Houses could have more than one entrance, but the articulation of reception space demanded that one took precedence over the others. The main entrance to the house, like the city gate, was a place for architectural emphasis. This can be seen particularly clearly in the archaeological evidence from Britain, where gateways and porches were accorded more importance than was typically the case elsewhere in the Roman empire.

Porches were also significant features in pre-Roman houses (p. 39), although there is no evidence that Roman fashion was directly influenced by this earlier practice. At sites where LPRIA houses were replaced by Romanised buildings the earliest Roman houses were not provided with a porch, which was usually a later addition (e.g. Piddington). Although porches were found in some early houses, like the late first-century villa at Fishbourne, they were rare before the start of the second century. Only in the fourth century was the porch a standard feature of the new built villa.

Town houses were usually set perpendicular to the street with an entrance at the gable-end frontage. In many such houses the front door opened directly into a portico or corridor along the side of the house. At Verulamium, in particular, little effort seems to have been made to mark this entrance with a separate porch (e.g. Houses 3,1 and 4,2 - see fig. 71a and d). Although this was a characteristic of smaller houses, some larger buildings also lacked an entrance porch, as House 12 S at Caerwent.

Villas were usually entered halfway along the length of a front portico. A porch at this central location had particular importance in defining views onto the gardens, and elaborate structures were more often placed here even when they could not have been
used as main entrances.

Villas could also be entered by a doorway at the gable end. The end-entrance was more common than is recognised in the literature (see JT Smith 1997, 54-6), and discussions of the architecture of ‘winged-corridor’ villas which assume that “the entrance to the house ... was now in the corridor, and central” (DJ Smith 1978, 120), or that “the flanking wings act to guide the visitor unambiguously towards the central main entrance” (Scott 1990, 160), can be questioned. A reconstruction of the original layout of the Northchurch villa indicates that the main entrance may have been from the end of the corridor rather than from a centrally placed porch. Rapsley had a central porch but was also accessible through a discrete entrance at the end of the portico. Similarly there were lesser service entrances at the ends of corridors at Stroud (Room 10), Chedworth and Spoonley Wood. Other instances where a doorway may have been placed at this end location can be reconstructed from the evidence of paths leading to the house. For example the villa at Brough Hill, Settrington was set in an enclosure with an entrance facing one end of the villa and not its middle. Side doors are also likely to have provided a more useful entrance where the formal porch was relatively inaccessible (as Darenth, see p.127)

Simple porches (Type E1).

Most porches were small constructions with foundations of one of the following types:

- **Type E1a**: a pair of free-standing rectangular pedestals or foundations either side of the doorway (fig. 49a).
- **Type E1b**: foundations of a similar type which had been set forward from the line of the front wall of the house (fig. 49b).
- **Type E1c**: parallel wall footings projecting from the wall line to either side of the doorway (fig. 49c).

In all cases the foundations are likely to have supported columns or pillars surmounted by a gable-end pediment (see p. 85), in the style of the roofs shown on the house-like shrines from the Rhine-Moselle area (Collections of the Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, Luxembourg; JT Smith 1997, Figs. 20 and 34; Massy 1989, 107).

These simple structures were characteristically no more than one metre deep. Some
incorporated a low flight of steps, as at Fishbourne where the porch was set over two timber steps. The porch into House 22,2 at Cirencester incorporated three stone steps, and was surrounded by a stone gutter.

**Deep porches (Type E2).**

The porches described above were small structures attached to a main door. In several buildings a larger entrance chamber was placed at this location. These were of two principal types:

- **Type E2a:** porches deeper than the corridor which projected forward from the building facade (fig. 49d). Structures of this type could have supported a low tower, standing taller than the flanking portico. At Boughspring all four walls of the porch contained wide doorways: giving access to the portico to either side and to a reception room opposite the front door.

- **Type E2b:** rooms formed within the depth of the portico (fig. 49e). It is possible that these were given visual emphasis by projecting a gable at right angles to the line of the portico.

**Gatehouse porches (Type E3).**

At Silchester rectangular entrance chambers, emphasised by flanking pier bases, were commonly set beside the street some distance from the house, to which they were joined by an extended portico (fig. 49f). These chambers were usually roughly square, fairly large (3.8 - 4.2 m. across), with substantial pier or column bases flanking an entrance almost as wide as the room. A small 'lodge' (room type T1, below) was sometimes attached to these porches. This style of entrance was popular in Silchester but rare elsewhere, although the 'shop' linked by a corridor to House 6,2 at Verulamium was probably an entrance of this type, built c. AD 300.

In several cases the arrangement of corridors meant that these gatehouse rooms, when viewed from within the building, had the characteristics of a corner pavilion. Silchester House 27, 2 is illustrative (see fig. 62c): here the wing formed by the entrance room (Room 1), was balanced by the projecting reception room at the far end of the building (Room 16).
Wing entrances (Type E4).

Large entrance chambers in a wing at one end of a villa facade can be recognised from the pillars or column bases flanking main doors at Darenth and Chilgrove (fig. 50a). Similarly the main entrance to the Witcombe villa was through an end wing where a simple porch (Type E1c, Room 31: fig. 50d) was attached to a larger entrance chamber (Room 28). This use of one of the ‘wings’ of the facade as an entrance may have been an influence in the design of Verulamium House 28, 3A, where Room 3 might have been a small entrance chamber (Frere 1982, fig. 94). Pavilion ‘wings’ were only occasionally entrances, and were put to a variety of other uses (see p. 137 and 217).

Garden porches (Type E5).

Porches opening onto courtyards or gardens were a feature of several late Romano-British town houses (fig. 49f and fig. 50b). These rooms ignored the main streets and opened onto secluded gardens (as in Verulamium), or were approached across courtyards that intervened between house and street (as in Caerwent). These rooms were generally open to the main corridor and easily reached from an adjacent reception room. A similar type of room was more commonly built at villas, where they stood at the centre of the portico and looked out over the garden or yard in front of the house.

Such rooms were often fairly large: at Verulamium they ranged in size from 1.75 x 3.6 m. to 4.6 x 4.6 m., with the shorter length representing the depth of the projection and the greater one the width of the entrance. In town houses these rooms were often decorated with mosaics and were usually better decorated than the corridor onto which they opened. The earliest rooms of this type date to the mid second century (perhaps c. AD 120-150), as at the Ashstead villa and in House 2,1 in Verulamium.

The preferred arrangement placed these rooms symmetrical to both internal and external space. In towns they were frequently arranged with regard to internal symmetry alone, whilst in villas it was more important that these rooms were placed centrally to the main facade. Where porches were set asymmetrical to the building facade – as frequently the case at Verulamium but rare elsewhere – they were usually displaced towards the end of the building most easily reached from street or courtyard.
The commonest association with reception space was for the porch to be opposite a central room (type Q), and only rarely were porches built opposite wing reception rooms (type R).

The layout of House 21.2 at Verulamium (fig. 51), although atypical in other respects, illustrates the relationship between the portico (Room 2), main reception room (Room 4) and projecting 'garden' porch (Room 1). Similar arrangements can be seen in Verulamium Houses 3,2 and 28. Superficially the layout recalls the positioning of a chancel beyond transepts (formed by the corridor). The arrangement seems not dissimilar to that found in Pliny's villa at Laurentinum where “There is also a room (cubiculum) which has folding doors opening onto the arcade... Opposite the intervening wall is an... alcove (zotheca) which can be thrown into the room by folding back its... doors and curtains... or closed off... it is large enough to hold a couch and two armchairs, and has the sea at its foot” (Letters 2,17).

Frere (1983) describes the projecting rooms of this type at Verulamium as either porches (Houses 21,2 and 27,2), or porter's lodges (House 28,1). There are some problems with such interpretations because the room is awkwardly placed for public access (as Room 12 of House 28,1, where the wall along the street 27/28 is best interpreted as a garden wall). The presence of rooms of this type opening onto completely enclosed courtyards, as in House 2 S at Caerwent, indicates that this room was not - at least in an urban context - a main entrance (and see also Room 31 at Wroxeter Site 6, as shown on Fig. 48).

Like the south or east facing principal corridor, with which it was generally associated, this form of room would seem to have been most frequently placed to exploit an aspect or view obtained from the building (the importance of such views has already been considered, above p. 115). In towns its primary purpose was perhaps associated with movement within the building. It provided a focal point along the principal corridor, affording views across the garden or court around which the rooms were arranged. Only where access to the house was arranged to cross the central garden, as in House 6 S at Caerwent, were these porches also used as principal entrances.

Villa porches of this type - as at Boughspring, Brislington and Dewlish - were usually smaller than the urban examples described above, and less likely to be decorated with
mosaic pavements. Small square rooms likely to have been used as porches were similarly placed opposite central reception rooms at Ashtead, Camborne, and Lufton. There also appears to be a western bias in their distribution, although the sample is too small for this to be established with confidence.

There were some villas where these rooms were not used as main entrances. At Bignor and Chedworth, two of the larger courtyard villas, porches were found in contexts which suggest that they were unlikely to have been principal entrances but may have given access to the courtyard. Richmond suggested that the room at Chedworth might have been a lodge for the villa steward or dispensator (Richmond 1959, 8).

Since several of the rooms seem unlikely to have been approached directly, but were instead axially arranged with garden features, it seems possible that these too were designed more to link house with garden than to provide for formal entry. As at Caerwent the more modest house may have been obliged to achieve both results with the same architectural elements, but in which the space in front of the house was considered the equivalent to a peristyle court, rather than part of the outside world.

It has additionally been suggested that some of these projecting rooms may have been cult rooms (Rodwell 1980, 219). They were set at an important boundary, between house and garden, and the ritual significance of boundaries has already been emphasised. Additionally they were suitably located with respect to both reception and circulation areas, to have offered a useful focus for household ritual (it is worth recalling that the Pompeiian atrium was a favoured place for the location of household shrines). Although these places might have offered an attractive location for small domestic shrines, there is little evidence with which to test the hypothesis.

Garden pavilions (Type E6).

In Silchester - where eight projecting porches faced south and east, and none faced north - the two west facing rooms were of a slightly different form to those described above. These projected further into the courtyard, and were built to stand as independent structures linked to the main corridor by a short passage, as House 34,1 (fig. 50c).
Pseudo porches (Type E7).

In the villa at Witcombe the equivalent room was set above a terrace line and did not allow entrance to the villa (fig. 50d). The associated drainage system suggests that this projecting room had contained a fountain or water basin. A classic example of this style of pseudo-porch, an architectural feature that provided a visual but not physical link between house and garden, was attached to a terrace veranda overlooking the garden of the house of Loreius Tiburtinus at Pompeii. The design of this Pompeii garden terrace could easily be copied to the facade of a Romano-British house without seeming the least out of place.

Entrance lobbies (Type E8).

Entrances to courtyard buildings differed from those of other houses, since the courtyard could only be reached by penetrating the front range of the building. Although small cross passages were generally found in this situation, as in House 2 S at Caerwent (see p. 164), larger entrance halls have also been recorded. The neighbouring property at Caerwent, House 3 S, is an example of this alternative approach and exploited a single hall-like space penetrated by wide doorways to both street and courtyard (fig. 77).

The entrance in the east wing of the Period 2 villa at Fishbourne was similarly conceived, although of much grander design. This room measured 30m by 13.4m and may have included a peristyle. At the far end of the room stood a pool. The late 3rd or 4th century courtyard house in the fort at South Shields offers a distant parallel (Hodgson 1996, 135). Here the entrance to the house was effected through an entrance court 7m. by 6.50m. in which six columns defined a central area containing a water tank. This building, like that at Fishbourne, stands outside the mainstream of Romano-British architectural fashion and betrays a range of Mediterranean influences.

Porticoes and corridors (C Rooms)

Street-side porticoes (Type C1).

Porticoes open to the street were rare in Roman Britain. None has been found at Silchester, and at Verulamium timber-built corridors were only found along the facade
of shops in Insula 13 and 14 and House 18,1. More extensive walkways were built outside houses at Colchester, as Buildings 20-22 at Lion Walk, and possibly alongside the fourth-century shops in Insula 5 at Cirencester. Equivalent facilities at Caerwent, alongside House 2 S, incorporated a flagstone floor. It is uncertain if these were public or private spaces.

At Gloucester a more imposing structure was built in the second century. This consisted of a colonnaded portico over 5 m. deep with columns measuring 0.51 m. in diameter set at 3.6 m. intervals (Hunter 1981). The best example of a portico flanking a private house is that of the house on Site 6 at Wroxeter (fig. 48). This was 5-6 m. deep, with a streetside colonnade set over irregular pier bases formed of re-used cramped stones at intervals of 4-6 m. (centre to centre), with corresponding piers in the front wall of the building. Fragments of a tile arch had collapsed from the arcaded superstructure.

At Caerwent porticoes 3-4 m. deep with rectangular piers at 3-4 m. intervals were added to the facades of two adjacent strip buildings beneath House 16 S (fig. 67g). A similar arrangement was noted in the strip buildings excavated in 1912 at Sites 1-5 in Wroxeter. In both examples the objective was to provide a covered pavement in front of individual stalls, not a continuous ambulatory from shop to shop. These constructions might have supported first floor balconies, similar to those from Delos and Pompeii via di Nola (Bruneau 1978, 120; Spinazzola 1953, 115, 123; Saliou 1994, 204-6).

In all cases porticoes were an adjunct of the property to which they were attached, as was the case in most Western provinces. This contrasts with practice in the eastern empire where the portico was a public facility to which individual buildings conformed (Ward Perkins 1981, 143).

**Domestic porticoes (Type C2).**

A principal longitudinal passage - a portico - was the most common feature of the Romano-British house and has been much discussed in considerations of the evolution of provincial building types. Such discussions have concentrated on evidence for the introduction of corridors, and on the evolution of 'winged-corridor' facades (Berry 1951; JT Smith 1978a; Walthew 1975; Scott 1994; see p. 216 and p. 226).
The Romano-British portico uniquely articulated the rooms of the house. It usually faced south or east onto a courtyard or garden (see p. 115), and in towns care was taken to avoid overlooking the street or the side wall of an adjacent property.

Porticoes and peristyles were present in Britain as early as AD 65-75 (Blagg 1990c). Examples of the former are represented at Eccles and Mileoak, and of the latter by houses at Fishbourne and Angmering. Initially these were not standard features, but after c. AD 100 it was exceptional for villas not to have a portico. Although there are instances where the portico appears to have been a later addition, as at Clear Cupboard and Farningham, in some such cases earlier timber built structures may have eluded identification.

Five design types are evident:

- **Type C2a**: a portico that extended the full length of the house, or was taken to projecting pavilions or wings at the ends of the house. This was the standard type.

- **Type C2b**: verandas taken around the projecting wings of a house, and sometimes to the rear as well, thereby encircling the house.

- **Type C2c**: pseudo-peristyles built around two or more sides of a winged building and partly enclosing an open space.

- **Type C2d**: peristyles around three or four sides of an enclosed courtyard.

- **Type C2e**: corridors within the roof-line of the house.

There was little evidence for typological development in the use of corridors. Most types were present at most times, and different choices reflect differences in circumstance, especially those of situation. The rarity of porticoes in early towns may reflect the more crowded nature of these settlements, where there was less opportunity to obtain suitable aspects (see chapter 6.1).

Buildings laid out over several wings were usually articulated by a portico that embraced a garden or yard (type C2c). In courtyard buildings the peristyle normally extended around all four sides of the open space (type C2d). The veranda-portico (type C2b), in which a portico completely encircled a house, was a rare feature (e.g. Gadebridge Period 3), although it was not uncommon to have separate porticoes to
front and back of the house. Such arrangements were ill suited to the urban environment, although House 4,8 at Verulamium has characteristics of the form (Walthew 1975).

These porticoes were inspired by the peristyle of classical tradition (see further the discussion of the Italian evidence above p. 24). Illustrations of villa facades - as on a wall painting from Trier (fig. 33: White 1970), on the stone model of a house found at Fontoy-Moderwiese, Lorraine (Massy 1989; see also JT Smith 1997, Figs. 20 and 34) and in north African mosaics (Sarnowski 1978) - show columnated porticoes along the building facades. Evidence of this kind has been found at Fishbourne, where the columns of the colonnade around the peristyle were generally 0.42 m. in diameter and 3.96 m. high, set at 3.58 m. intervals over a ground-level stylobate (Cunliffe 1971, 121). Another building with a substantial colonnade was House 3 S at Caerwent where the columns were 0.43 m. in diameter and set at 3.35 m. intervals. At Ditchley parts of columns originally at least 3.5 m. tall are thought to have belonged to the facade. Porticoes at Chedworth and King’s Weston were more modest in scale, with columns 0.3-0.35 m. in diameter set 2.10-2.5 m. apart (see Blagg 1982, 137). At King’s Weston an arcade set over these columns divided the corridor from the main room behind. The corridor facade of the villa at Ridgwell was set over rectangular tile bases which were also set about 2.15 m. apart, whilst that at Brixworth was built of posts at intervals of only 1.3-2 m. The evidence of the lathe-turned stone columns (p. 79) suggests that some structures were perhaps formed of small columns set over a low wall in the fashion of a monastic cloister, as illustrated by arrangements at Piddington and Llantwit Major. Fragments of curved parapets with open-work S designs have been found at Chedworth and Witcombe, and may derive from the more elaborate ornamental decoration of the porticoes.

The portico was usually given a handsome floor, although inferior to pavements in the main reception rooms. From the second century tessellated pavements were common in this context, perhaps preferred as much for their durability as their quality. In the fourth century some porticoes also included mosaic panels. This had not commonly been the case beforehand, and perhaps reflects the increased status of such areas in the reception activities of the later Romano-British house.
The best corridor pavements flanked the better rooms, as in House 1,2 at Silchester and in the villas at Bignor and Bucknowle, or were set into a central panel, such as the Orpheus mosaic at Brading. Porticoes also housed attractive wall-paintings, as shown by the red and purple schemes found in House 21,2 at Verulamium. In House 14,2 at Silchester the best corridor pavement was reserved for the part of the portico (Room 14) which joined the main wing with the rear reception wing.

Sarah Scott has observed that most corridor pavements had simple repetitive patterns, not intended for lengthy scrutiny, and that these would have encouraged linear movement (S Scott 1994, 90-92). The same has been said of corridors at Ostia and Pompeii (Clarke 1991, 16). As the Orpheus mosaic at Brading illustrates this was not always the case. There were focal points within the corridors, which were not simply places of passage. Indeed the use of meander key patterns, as in the entrance corridor at Sparsholt, could arguably have been a token barrier to movement: a degraded labyrinth maze symbolically denying passage (Rykwert 1976, 145-8).

Views obtained from corridors perhaps provided more important visual foci than the decorative features within them. A main purpose of the Italian portico was to afford a view, as in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii (fig. 8). This suburban villa was built on a terrace overlooking the sea, and here the portico was not part of the entrance but instead linked a bath suite in one wing and dining room in the other with a central tablinum and atrium. This was the locus for an ambulatio (Clarke 1991, 19). Romano-British houses were similarly arranged.

The occasional presence of ovens, including corn-drying ovens, in porticoes requires further explanation. Such features have been recorded in the porticoes of villas at Brading, Ely, King’s Weston and Lufton. They were added towards one end of the corridors in question, usually in the course of the fourth century. Hearths and ovens are also evident in some of the later town house corridors, as at Silchester in Houses 9,3 and 16,1 and in House 23,1 at Winchester. These may reflect changes in the character of villas towards the end of the Roman period. Corridors, however, had had a longer history of use as working areas and kitchens (see below). It is also instructive to recollect that the Roman atrium, the function of which was in part replaced by the peristyle, was not only a circulation and reception space but also used in food
preparation and cooking. It was not unusual for kitchens in Roman houses to be inserted into circulation areas also designed as reception space.

The undoubted importance of the Romano-British domestic portico reflects a Roman obsession with processional architecture. The peristyle mediated between natural and human domains - and the portico penetrated a series of potent thresholds (see Knight 1994, 140-3). This can be described as liminal space with ritual connotations.

Covered walks (Type C3).

Some passageways crossed open space to link freestanding buildings. These were often used to link a grand porch with a main house set back from the street frontage: a particular feature in the design of the houses at Silchester. Two characteristics can be used to define sub-types:

- **Type C3a**: corridors along the boundary between street and garden, often used to enclose the garden.
- **Type C3b**: corridors that bisected garden space.

Both types are found in House 1,2 at Silchester. Here one corridor crossed directly from the entrance to the main reception wing, bypassing the domestic quarters. Other type C3b corridors were found in Silchester Houses 24,2 (fig. 44) and 23,2. A few villas similarly employed corridors to link freestanding structures, an example of which is found in the Period 3 house at Whittington Court.

In contrast to the arrangement represented by the above examples several properties at Caerwent could only be reached from the street by crossing an open courtyard (see p. 215). At Verulamium, where there was perhaps less flexibility in building layout because of the density of occupation, houses were more likely to be square to the streets with the main corridors on one side entered directly from the street.

Apsidal ended corridors (Type C4).

An apse terminated some corridors. A good example is the underground corridor of House 28,1 at Verulamium (see p. 185). Another, to the rear of the Maidstone villa, included a mosaic pavement and was aligned with the apse facing east. This room measured 13.5 m. by 3 m. The purpose was presumably to focus attention on an
object framed by the apse. Other apse-ended corridors have been recorded at Bignor, where they were associated with the peristyle courtyard (fig. 86). The transverse corridor at the entrance to the Caerwent temple (Ashby et al. 1910) offers a parallel. This corridor type was used to decorate entrances in better villas elsewhere in the late Roman world, a famous example being the room with the mosaic of the Great Hunt at Piazza Armerina (fig. 9, Room 26; Wilson 1983, 24). Too few examples have been found from Roman Britain to add usefully to the chronology of the form.
4.3. Principal reception rooms

Main reception rooms were usually marked out by the quality of their decoration, if not also by their scale and position. Important rooms were found at several locations within the house and it seems likely that different uses were sometimes intended.

- Rooms located towards the back of the house, or in a lateral wing (type R). This was a common location for the most lavishly decorated room of the house and the usual destination of the portico. It is proposed that these were primarily used as dining rooms.

- Alternatively the main room of the house was found in a more central location (type Q). Such rooms were often easily reached from outside space and it is suggested that in some cases these may have been used as grand audience halls.

- In a minority of houses rooms set towards the front of the main wing of the building may also have been used in reception activities (Type D). These were perhaps similar in function to the smaller reception rooms sometimes associated with the portico or house entrance (Type T).

- Reception rooms were also found inside aisled buildings and strip buildings. These are separately described (Types M and N).

End rooms (R rooms)

In town houses the main reception room was most commonly at the rear of the building. These varied considerably in form and detail, but were often:

- placed in a separate wing
- designed to take light or offer views, from several sides, often by means of a projecting extension
- amongst the best decorated rooms of the house
- heated by means of a hypocaust floor
- significantly longer than they were wide - a feature sometimes achieved by establishing an arched opening between two adjacent rooms which were joined to form a single reception area
• entered through one of the longer sides of the room
• associated with an adjacent cross passage or service room (room type L)
• the most likely room within the house to have witnessed rebuilding (usually enlargement).

Many of these characteristics are also evident in reception rooms at villas, where a room or suite of this type commonly dominated one wing. In both town and country there was a preference for placing these rooms to best exploit the southeast aspect of the house. In the villas this was more commonly the right-hand end of the building as viewed from the courtyard/garden, where it was often placed in opposition to a bath-block in the left-hand wing (as at West Park, Rockbourne; Llantwit Major; Bignor; Chedworth and Darenth. This was also the arrangement adopted in Building 4 at Caister-by-Norwich).

Several types of arrangement are evident (Fig. 52), on the basis of which the following typology is proposed.

- **Type R1:** a large room at the far end of the main building range.
- **Type R2:** a smaller ‘corner pavilion’ room, added to and projecting from main body of the building. These are generally smaller than the other type R rooms and some examples of the type conflate with those of type T2.
- **Type R3:** a single long room forming a separate or projecting wing, at the end of the house.
- **Type R4:** bipartite rooms of similar location and proportion to the R3 space described above.
- **Type R5:** a suite of rooms, most usually arranged to form an L-shaped group, formed by adding smaller projecting rooms to a large main room at the end of the building (as type R1).

The different elements within the R4 and R5 rooms can be categorised as follows:

- **a:** the larger central room in the group
- **b:** a projecting ‘pavilion’ room different from the R2 room only by merit of its association with an R4a or R5a main room.
- c: additional small apsidal or rectangular projecting rooms, often heated, not occupying the position on the principal facade usually taken by the R4b/R5b room.

The quality of these wing reception rooms is marked by a number of architectural features. These included the frequent use of hypocaust and mosaic floors and wall paintings, the use of apse-ended rooms and arched openings between rooms, their location commanding the best views from the house, the arrangement of corridors which served such rooms, and the frequency with which they were improved and enlarged (e.g. Rooms 9 and 10 in House 5,3 at Silchester; and Room 10 in the villa at Box). A minority of villas had reception facilities at both ends of the house. At King’s Weston, for instance, a pair of highly decorated rooms were built adjacent to baths at west end of building, but a small heated chamber at the east end of the building could also have been a reception room.

The late first-century villa at Farningham (Manor House site) was perhaps the earliest of the houses considered here to have its best decorated room (Room 13) in a side wing. Although similar rooms were found in some late first and early second century villas - as Boxmoor and Ely - this was an unusual arrangement for the period. Such rooms can also be identified in Houses 3,2A and 3,2B at Verulamium which were dated by Wheeler to the Flavian period but have more cautiously been assigned to the period c. AD 100 by Frere (1983a, 10). The contrasting absence of any evident emphasis on end-of-wing reception rooms in the Period 2 villa at Fishbourne and in Watling Court Building D is significant, in both of these late first-century houses the main reception rooms were placed centrally (see below).

The first common provision of end reception rooms dates to the early second century, as in House 4,2 at Verulamium that was destroyed by fire c. AD 155. A chronology involving the introduction of end reception rooms to town houses early in the second century finds broad confirmation in the information available from London and Colchester. None of the Flavian buildings from Watling Court in London contained an R-type reception room, whilst an early second-century building at Milk Street (probably c. AD 125-160) contained a mosaic floored reception room to the rear of the building, which appeared to project onto open space. Large reception rooms were added to the rear of the strip buildings recently excavated at No. 1 Poultry at about the
same date (see below). At Colchester the mid second-century corridor building excavated at Middleborough (Building 70), apparently contained a reception suite at its southwest end. In the earlier part of the century these rooms were generally of simple type, but more complex forms developed during the later part of the century. The evidence of the mosaic floors suggests that apsidal-ended end reception rooms were built in houses at Silchester before the end of the second century (e.g. House 27,1 - see Boon 1974, 194).

Villas illustrate a similar and contemporary typological development. The room with the multi-faceted apse that was found above the cellar at the south end of the early second-century villa at Gorhambury was one of the first wing reception rooms to have been designed to dominate domestic reception arrangements. It is interesting to note that the equivalent room in the later villa on this site (c. AD 160-180) was one of the first of the type to be heated with a hypocaust (see fig. 40). By the end of the century villas such as those at Faversham (Period 3) and Boughspring illustrate the wide diffusion of heated room suites set in wings at the southernmost extremity of the building.

The most complex arrangements were later: as finds early illustration in the layout of Rooms 19 and 22 in House 28, 1-2 at Verulamium, dated c. 215 (fig. 55), and in the late third-century group formed by Rooms 4-6 in House 1,3. From the middle of the second century onwards very large reception suites were found at the back of some town houses. The heated rooms in the west range of House 4,8 at Verulamium were considered by Wheeler to have formed a bath suite but the design was wholly of a type with the suites of heated reception rooms described here. The full length of the west wing was taken up by three interconnecting chambers (Rooms 6 to 8) with a combined internal length of 23.6m. Two smaller rooms were attached to this suite which had a total area of some 187.5m². These rooms were clearly separated from the main range of living rooms to the north by a large furnace room which probably also served as a kitchen (see below). Building 1 at Colliton Park, Dorchester was a town house of competing ambition (see fig. 73). The west range of this building contained a complex of lavishly decorated chambers in which a fairly typical extended reception suite (Room 10/15 = room type R5a; Room 15 = R5b; Room 8 = R5c), had been enlarged by the addition of a further block of three rooms (Rooms 16-18) reached by a hall added to
the rear of the main room. In total the suite had a floor area of 155m². John Wacher identifies these as the main living quarters (Wacher 1995, 329), although these seem more likely to have been found in the south range.

The most complex arrangements were found in fourth-century courtyard villas. Impressive reception suites, including rooms containing ornamental water basins (piscina), have been found at both Chedworth (fig. 85: Rooms 22-24) and Bignor (the suite incorporating Rooms 3, 7 and 26: fig. 86). Although there is some possibility that these may have provided a very different kind of facility, they included all of the principal characteristics of this group. The use of ornamental basins within houses was not a common fashion in Roman Britain, but was comparatively widespread in Italy: several houses at Stobi had polygonal water basins in their dining rooms (Wiseman 1973), and considerable emphasis was placed on aquatic furniture in the design of triclinia at Pompeii. A similar approach has been noted in the design of villas in the Trier area (Slofstra 1995, 84-6).

Before considering the character of the reception activities likely to have taken place in these rooms some further attention to their decoration is warranted. At Withington the large reception room with the Orpheus mosaic was left open to the portico, in a fashion otherwise more characteristic of the centrally placed reception rooms discussed below. In several other cases the rooms were entered through a wide double door, as in Room 1 of House 17,2 at Silchester, where the doorway was 1.5m wide. The openings between intercommunicating rooms (types R4 and R5), that were in general between about 3.2 m. and 3.65 m. wide, are most likely to have been arched. At Llantwit Major a line of arch stones, or voussoirs, was found from such an arch at the junction of Rooms 8 and 9 (see p. 86), and it is likely that the short walls noted elsewhere would have supported similar structures (see DJ Smith 1978). Such arches would have framed views from one room to the next and were important architectural features, reflecting the status and importance of these rooms.

These rooms were often richly decorated in the full classical tradition, especially in the fourth century. The Hinton St Mary mosaic showing Christ came from a bipartite reception room (type R5), as did the Bacchus mosaic from Frampton (Walters 1996, 157-8 describes a group of 4th century rooms of this type from the Dorset-Wiltshire
area). The best of the Bignor pavements, including the winter mosaic and the Venus and gladiators mosaic, came from a suite of rooms likely to belong to this group. The Tyche mosaic and figurative painted wall plaster at Brantingham were from a similar architectural context (Liversidge et al. 1973), as was the Medusa mosaic in the apsidal room at Dalton Parlours. The faun and bacchantes in Room 11 at Chedworth may have been a feature within a suite of end reception rooms in this building. In the villa at Kingscote a fourth-century heated tripartite room group had been added to the rear of a simpler third-century rectangular block. In this the projecting room had been decorated with a mosaic containing a bust of Venus and a figurative wall painting possibly showing Achilles on Skyros (Kingscote Archaeological Association 1977-80). Many other examples could be cited. DJ Smith has noted that the mosaic designs in these rooms were not generally related to their entrances (1978, 128), and that the pavements were instead designed to be viewed from within the room. The overwhelming majority of figurative decorative schemes found in Romano-British houses had been located in end reception rooms of the type described here.

There is a widespread assumption, throughout the archaeological literature, that the finest reception room in a house would usually be the dining room. Interpretative comments to this effect have appeared in print for many of the rooms referred to here (as Radford 1936 for Ditchley; Richmond 1959, 5 for Chedworth; Toynbee 1964 for Hinton St Mary). The people of Britain were undoubtedly fond of the table. Feasting was an important method of obtaining and demonstrating status in the Celtic world (as Diodorus Siculus V, 28.3-4), and many of the prestige items imported into Britain prior to the Roman conquest were destined for use at the table (Cunliffe 1988, 147-52; Trow 1990, 103; Partridge 1981). Rome too was slave to its stomach, and the importance of 'ritual feasting' emerges from numerous literary references. The conquest of Britain reinforced the tendency towards the Romanisation of dining practice and this is documented in the archaeological record by changing dietary preference and the large scale importation of table wares and foods (King 1984).

These changing tastes were no doubt the spur to Tacitus' reference to the seduction of Britons to the well-appointed dinner table (Agricola 21).

The Roman feast was an occasion for entertainment: "You may look .. for a troop of Spanish maidens to win applause by immodest dance and song... My feast.... will
provide other performances than these...” (Juvenal Satires 11, 162). This significant social forum, requiring considerable expenditure on exotic dishes and expensive tableware and involving the presence of both family and guests, demanded an appropriately large and well-decorated space.

From Greek times the andron or oecus, used as a dining room, was likely to be the largest and best decorated room in the house. At Olynthus such rooms were usually placed at the corner of the house so that they could be lit from two sides (Robinson 1946). References in classical sources indicate that it was common practice to locate principal dining rooms at the end of a colonnade, in locations that could be illuminated from several sides. Pliny, describing his villa in Tuscany, wrote that “from the end of the colonnade (porticus) projects a dining room (triclinium): through its folding doors it looks on to the end of the terrace” (Letters 5,6). Ammianus Marcellinus describes guests passing the columns of a portico to reach the dining room (Historiae 28:4, 10-3). Gregory of Nyssa visiting a villa in Anatolia in the late fourth century dined in a hall (oecus) which was “high roofed and well lit from all sides” and decorated with colourful pictures”, which he reached by means of a colonnade (stoa) which passed around an inner courtyard (propylaeon) (Letters 20; see also Rossiter 1989, 107). These authors were writing at different times about very different parts of the empire, but their descriptions show remarkable consistency. In the Roman world a guest normally reached a dining room by way of a colonnade, and having done so would expect to arrive in a large decorated room of open aspect.

Other characteristics of the end reception rooms described above accord with what we know of Roman dining rooms. Vitruvius wrote that dining rooms should be twice as long as wide, and although few builders ever seem to have worked exactly according to Vitruvius' prescripts, the general proportions of most type R rooms are closer to these proportions than not.

The typical late Roman dining room consisted of a large rectangular room, set opposite a peristyle, with a large apse at the back (Rebuffat 1969; Dunbabin 1991, Prima Ricotti 1987, Ellis 1995, 169). In such rooms the diners reclined on a semi-circular couch, within an apse, whilst the larger room to the front was for entertainers (musicians, acrobats, players and the like), and slaves to serve on the guests. An
illustration of this arrangement is shown in the Vienna Genesis, whilst its use in Britain is illustrated in the representations of funeral banquets shown on tombstones from South Shields and Chester (Liversidge 1955). These depict the deceased reclining on a standard form of Roman couch, with curved head and foot rests, set within the backdrop of an apse surmounted by a cupola (fig. 54).

The clearest evidence for the installation of a fixed dining couch in a Romano-British house comes from excavations of a courtyard house in the fort at South Shields (Hodgson 1996). A dining room (Room 7) was located to the rear of the building at the furthest end of the portico from the entrance, and overlooking a central courtyard. It was the largest room in the house (measuring an impressive 10m by 6.6m). Flagstones set into the *opus signinum* floor of this room marked the position of three couches opposite the room's entrance.

Apsidal extensions were commonly added to wing reception rooms in late third and fourth-century Romano-British houses (see Ellis 1995). These lavishly decorated rooms resembled late-Roman dining rooms, where the apse would have housed a semi-circular dining couch or *stibadium* (Dunbabin 1991). Since this style of dining room is not supposed to have become popular until the fourth century it is interesting to note the diffusion in Britain of apsidal-ended reception rooms from the late first century onwards. The use of apsidal reception rooms at Hadrian's villa at Tivoli and in the villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii - figs. 7 and 8 - represent part of the same late first and early second-century fashion. The villa at Faversham was precociously redesigned to have an apsidal ended wing reception room in the second half of the second century, but otherwise most of the early apses were found in central rather than wing reception rooms, as described further below p. 147ff. Unusually large and deep apses were a particular feature of the wing reception rooms in the houses of Silchester: the apse at the end of the reception room (Room 2) in House 1,2 at Silchester was an impressive 7.25 m. across. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that these Silchester apses, at least some of which are likely to pre-date the fourth century, would have housed supper parties. It is, of course, possible that they would have done so without the benefit of the semi-circular couch, but there is also a distinct possibility that Britain was one of the earlier places to see this fashion develop. The evidence of some of the mosaics laid in the apses considered here (as in the villas at Dalton Parlours, Dewlish,
Lullingstone, Frampton and Littlecote), supports the suggestion that these too were used to house such dining couches.

At Roman dinner parties of the early empire, the preferred gathering was of 9 guests, accommodated three to a couch on three sides of the room, leaving the fourth side for the entertainers and servants. This trio of trios was considered particularly fortunate, although even by the time of Petronius' Trimalchio much larger and more ostentatious dinner parties were coming into vogue. The supper party was also an occasion for the whole household to gather, including women and children (Thébert 1987, 366).

According to Suetonius, Caesar held supper parties in more than one room, allowing for different groupings composed of guests of different status (Caesar, 48). This might help explain the tendency towards reception suites consisting of smaller rooms, each adequate for a small party of guests, arranged around the sides of a larger central room.

The arrangement of mosaics and heated areas supports the notion that the larger central space was open and to be admired. A mosaic design faced the head table, whilst the smaller rooms were heated for comfort but had lesser pavements with wide borders where the couches and tables could be placed. There are some instances where pillar hypocausts in the small rooms would have allowed a more intense heat than comfortable for dining, and these might alternatively have been used as sweat rooms (sudatoria). This would not have been a sensible addition to a dining suite, and it seems more likely that their presence instead gave scope for these rooms to be turned to different functions at different times of the day.

The decoration of these rooms was vivid, cultured and impressive, and it is difficult to resist the temptation to seek further meaning from the designs chosen (as Scott 1994). Petronius' description of dinner with Trimalchio - in which dishes represented signs of zodiac, hunting paraphernalia accompanied the game course, slaves dressed as Bacchus served grapes - parodies the Roman host's use of symbolic references to enhance status (Satyricon 15, 35; 15, 40). In this example images drawn from classical mythology demonstrated nature's abundance made slave to man's command.

The Romano-British patron evidently wished to demonstrate command of the classical idiom and the pavements and paintings would have complemented the readings and
recitals that took place in these rooms as part of the *symposium* following the meal (for which see Pliny *Letters* 8,12). Many Romano-British mosaics offer appropriate literary and cultural allusions. This can in part explain the popularity of scenes such as those showing Orpheus/Apollo playing the lyre (although see Scott 1994). Water, used both for washing and to mix with wine, played an important part in the social ritual attached to the use of dining rooms for the *symposium* (Dunbabin 1993; Slofstra 1995, 81), and this suggests a contexts for some of the features described above.

Religious and cultic meaning would also have been obtained from some pavements. Esmonde-Cleary was sufficiently impressed by the symbolism of the Hinton St Mary and Frampton pavements to suggest that these rooms could have been private chapels, where the apsidal antechambers might have offered space to the catechumens (Esmonde-Cleary 1989, 125; *contra*, and more credibly, see Ellis 1995). It is worth noting the suggestion that the Christian Eucharist can be viewed as an extension of the Roman symposium (Slofstra 1995, 89): the late antique dining room may have provided the setting for the early Christian gatherings and influenced the early form of church architecture.

In buildings with more than one dining suite it is not only possible that other reception activities were represented, but that different dining rooms had been provided for use at different times of day or in different seasons, in accordance with more extravagant Roman taste.

**Central rooms (Q rooms)**

A separate tradition in the provision of a main reception area involved placing a large room in a central location, with ready access to the main entrance (fig. 53). The rooms at this location were similar to the wing reception rooms described above, and there may have been considerable overlap of function. There were, however, significant design differences. In addition to the distinctive characteristics of location, access and aspect, these rooms were infrequently provided with underfloor heating. In the third and fourth centuries it was also common for houses to have both central and wing reception rooms which suggests that by this date these rooms offered different and complementary reception facilities.

Several features were common to rooms of this type and these include:
• Formal decoration, often of a high quality
• Wide, symmetrically placed, main doorway
• Easy access from a principal entrance to the building.
• Unlikely to have been provided with underfloor heating (although braziers may have been used, as at Sparsholt)
• Some better decorated rooms provided with an apse opposite the main door
• Can be poorly integrated with rest of building
• Close relationships with associated circulation/entrance space, and in particular with pavilion porches open to a garden or forecourt.

Three sub-types can be recognised on the basis of room morphology:

**Type Q1:** where the room occupied the width of the wing within which it was located.

**Type Q2:** where the room projected beyond the line of the rear wall of the wing, usually by means of an apse.

**Type Q3:** where the rear projection was effected by means of a second chamber (Qc) projecting from the main room (Qa).

In several villas such rooms were the largest and best decorated in the house, and sometimes the only reception room of note. Examples include the apsidal-ended rooms of villas at Wendons Ambo, Lullingstone and Norfolk Street (Leicester); double-chambered rooms as those of Ashtead, Park Street and Northchurch, and unusually large and well decorated rooms such as at Gayton Thorpe, Folkestone and Wellow.

It has been noted that wing reception rooms were rare before the middle of the second century, and in this early period it seems likely that the central reception rooms were used in their place. The villas at Fishbourne and Southwick were both built around central reception rooms before AD 100, as was Building D at Watling Court in London. The villas at Folkestone, Ashtead, Witcombe and Gayton Thorpe may all have been built within the following 50 years or so, at a time when the use of wing reception rooms was largely restricted to a few urban sites and the villas around Verulamium. The apsidal ended central reception rooms in Houses 2,1 and 3,2 at
Verulamium can also be dated to second century, and an apsidal ended mosaic floored reception room found in a timber-framed building excavated at Gutter Lane which was destroyed in AD 125 is most likely to have been built c. AD 100 (Museum of London 1988, 30).

It is also worth noting that the houses at Northchurch, Park Street and Lullingstone were built in the first century AD, and that the early to mid fourth-century enlargement of central reception rooms at these sites (to form double chambered rooms reminiscent of those found at end of wing locations), may reflect a pattern of use established in the earlier phases. This would not, however, seem to have been the case at Woodchester where one of the most magnificent reception rooms found in any Romano-British house was added to the building in the early fourth century (see below). In some instances a rectangular heated extension was added to the rear of these rooms at a late date (e.g. Building 19 at Colchester and House 8,9 at Winchester).

The central reception room at Dewlish (Room 11), not only had a large apse and a mosaic pavement showing hunting scenes but also was separated from the corridor end entrance porch by a complicated timber-framed division with folding doors. The room would not have been out of place in a courtyard house in the Roman east, where dining rooms opened wide to the portico but could be closed off by folding doors (Ellis 1988). It also finds parallel in the villas of Gaul (see examples in Deletang 1982). These parallels suggest that some of these central reception rooms could have been used as dining rooms.

The main room of the Period 2 villa at Fishbourne (Room W14), where the finest mosaics were located, was instead an audience hall (Cunliffe 1971). The mosaic stopped short of the apse wall, suggesting that a timber bench was built here as part of the original plan. Cunliffe’s identification was based on parallels that could be drawn with Domitian’s Palace in Rome, where the audience chamber which measured 30 m. by 37 m. was apsidal ended. Audience chambers, deriving inspiration from the architecture of public basilicas, have been identified in the more opulent private houses of the later empire (as Ellis 1988; Erim 1969; Thebert 1987, 378; Wilson 1983). Such rooms would have been suitable for gatherings of the family council (as Cicero In Defence of Cluentius 175-8), as well as being places for the head of the household to
receive petitions and settle disputes (as Pliny *Letters* 9,15).

The central reception room at Woodchester is unlikely to have been a dining room. Some 14.4 m. square this is the largest reception room known from a Romano-British house. The elaborate mosaic pavement of Orpheus encircled by animals, allegedly the largest Roman mosaic known north of the Alps, was set over a hypocaust with flues 1.2 m. high. Foundations for four central pillars may have supported an upper gallery and the room was built with unusually thick walls (c. 1 m. thick) which might indicate that it had been built to a greater height than rest of the wing. It is probable that doorways had been set at the mid point of all four walls, an arrangement inappropriate for a dining room since it would have isolated diners in the middle or towards the corners of the room. There were two heated heated R style rooms elsewhere within this villa (Rooms 31 and 32) better suited to have been a dining room.

The central location was an appropriate place for a principal reception room, which could be axially arranged with the garden entrance. In some villas this room is likely to have been used as a dining room but that this may have been an unusual use once the fashion for placing heated dining rooms in a separate wing was widely adopted. There were several villas where the central reception room remained the larger and better decorated room, but where a heated wing reception room was also found (e.g. Chilgrove 1 and Frocester). Similarly there were sites where a central reception room was overshadowed by a larger and better decorated room on the wing, as was the case at Brading and Newport (Stone 1929). Finally there were villas with reception quarters in the wings, but no centrally located reception room of evident significance, as at Beadlam and Brantingham.

The most common choice was to provide both types of room (illustrated by the late second-century House 23,1 in Winchester), and here the rooms probably served different functions. This situation finds close parallel in the arrangement of domestic space at Ostia, where wall paintings and mosaic pavements mark out two main reception rooms in most apartments (see above p. 28). A larger and more accessible room suitable for use as a *tablinum* was found near to the main entrance, whilst the other main reception room was placed at the back of the apartment and is usually considered to have been a *triclinium*, as at the House of the Painted Ceiling (Meiggs
1973, 247). Similar arrangements can be identified at some Italian villas, as San Rocco, Francolise where the reception room placed axially central opposite the entrance has been interpreted as a *tablinum*, whilst an adjacent bipartite room has been considered more likely to be a *triclinium*. Centurion’s quarters in Roman forts were also sometimes designed with two opposed reception rooms at either end (Hoffman 1995). A duality in reception requirements, between dining rooms and audience rooms, is also implied in the distinction drawn between the *oecus* and *triclinium* on one part, and the *atrium* and *tablinum* on the other.

A separation of functions, involving audience halls and dining rooms, would account for the archaeological evidence from Roman Britain. Granted that such a distinction can be made, and in the light of the weight of circumstantial evidence in favour of viewing heated end/rear rooms as dining rooms, the central reception rooms were likely to have been used as audience halls providing facilities equivalent to those of the early Roman *tablinum*. For a contrary view see Black (Black 1985; Black 1987, 50) who argues, without the benefit of a consideration of the urban evidence, that the heated wing reception rooms were more likely to have been living rooms and the central rooms were dining rooms.

**Front rooms (D rooms)**

A similar room to the central reception rooms described above, but set at the front of the building, has been noted in some town houses. The southern part of House 28,1-2 at Verulamium provides illustration (fig. 55): a main reception room (Room 1), at the entrance to the building overlooked a portico (Room 2) with a pavilion porch opposite (Room 12). A narrow cross passage (Room 3) ran to one side of the reception room. This entrance reception area was separated from the other reception rooms by a series of low status rooms. House 4,1 at Verulamium was designed in similar fashion. It seems likely that some of these front rooms were used in a similar way to the central (Q1) rooms and may have been audience halls, perhaps used for a morning salutation where clients called on their patrons.

The distinguishing characteristics of these front rooms include their location, comparative size and relationship with circulation space. The provision of a front reception room rather than a central audience chamber would seem a natural design
response to the different patterns of access prevailing in town. There are, however, several rooms at this critical location in the Romano-British town house of more uncertain type.

Central reception rooms were not a standard feature of the townhouse, and where present were infrequently decorated to high standard. This may reflect a greater reliance on public facilities for the reception activities for which these rooms were designed. In town less importance was attached to the provision of a second reception area, except in the most ostentatious houses.

Just as there were a few town houses provided with a central reception room (including several courtyard houses at Caerwent), so there were a few villas with front room reception rooms (as Atworth, Rapsley and Lufton). In these buildings the main entrance was at one end of the wing rather than central.

Rooms attached to entrances (T rooms)
In several houses near square rooms were found adjacent to the entrance corridor, and were otherwise poorly integrated with the domestic space. Rooms of this type have been identified as offices, waiting rooms, gatehouses or porter’s lodges. They could equally have been used to receive guests or clients at some remove from the main reception and residential quarters. A parallel can be drawn with arrangements noted in some Islamic houses (e.g. Revault 1967), where a separate room near the entrance was reserved for the reception of guests to protect the privacy of the inner courtyards. The term lodge is used here for convenience, and with no particular confidence. Three types of such room can be described.

Gatehouse lodges (Type T1)
Small rooms were commonly attached to the type E3 gateway porches at Silchester (fig. 56a). One of these rooms was unusually also heated by hypocaust floor (Room 10 in House 31,1), which might suggest that it served a more significant role in the reception activities of this house. In a few cases a second room was also provided at this location (as in House 23,2 at Silchester).
Wing 'pavilion' lodges (Type T2)

There are several instances where one of the pavilion 'wings' of a portico facade was entered independently of the rest of the house, as Room 8 at Lockleys (type T2a: fig. 56b), or was reached from the main veranda corridor but was otherwise poorly integrated with the main reception or living quarters (type T2b, fig. 56c). In a significant number of cases, as at Whatley Combe, Langton and Littlecote, these rooms had hypocaust pavements (sometimes the only such pavements in the house), and this suggests that they were used for the reception of guests. In many smaller villas it is difficult to distinguish between rooms of this type and smaller wing reception rooms (type R) and there may have been some conflation of function.

Masonry foundations were built to one side of several wing pavilion rooms, either as rectangular platforms or as walls set parallel and close to one of the sides of the room. Features of this kind were recorded at Beadlam, Brislington, North Wraxhall, Newport and Walton on the Hill. It is possible that in some instances such features had supported timber stairs. Stairways at Ostia were generally built of timber and set over masonry platforms (Packer 1971, 29), and at Pompeii it was not unusual to find a stairway inserted into one of the small square rooms flanking the entrance (as in the House of the Menander). This explanation fails to convince. The rooms were of higher quality than might be expected for stairwells and the masonry constructions were excessive for timber stairs. Alternatively these foundations might have buttressed tall walls, and the possibility that 'wing' rooms had upper stories is considered further below (see also Neal 1982). One further possibility, and perhaps the most attractive, is that these features supported fixed benches. If this were the case these rooms might possibly have been waiting rooms associated with the morning salutatatio.

Corridor lodges (Type T3)

Small chambers were also sometimes formed by partitioning off other parts of the portico, and although more distant from the entrance areas than the types of room described above these were well placed to control movement through the building.

Reception in strip buildings (M rooms)

Several strip buildings contained better quality rooms at the back of the house, often
distinguished by the use of mortar or tessellated floors, and by painted decoration on the walls (fig. 57).

Such rooms were in evidence in London by c. 95 AD, when the Period 7 rebuilding at Newgate introduced mortar floored reception rooms with white painted walls at the back of Buildings J and K (fig. 68). The earlier strip buildings on the site had been entirely functional in their layout (Buildings F and H of Period 5-6). In some instances these rear living and reception rooms formed a separate projecting wing (as Silchester 9 B2). Stone built additions to the rear of the second-century strip buildings recently excavated at No 1 Poultry suggest that here too such houses were being improved by the addition of reception facilities. By the fourth century these reception rooms had been redesigned to include apses, hypocaust floors and mosaic pavements, as for example in the civilian settlement at Malton (Mitchelson 1964).

There is a distinct possibility that the addition of rear reception rooms to strip buildings from the late first century onwards set the fashion for the wing reception rooms which were added to second-century town houses.

Reception in aisled buildings and ancillary structures (N rooms)

Expensively decorated reception rooms were sometimes found within aisled buildings (see p. 204). These were frequently arranged in groups and shared several of the characteristics of the type-R reception rooms. None of the examples considered here was earlier than third century in date.

The main reception room in such groups (type N1) was usually within the central nave at the far end of the structure, exploiting the higher roofed area. Where the aisled building was part of a larger building complex this reception room was placed at the end closest to the main house (normally the north). Perhaps clerestory lighting compensated for the poorer aspect of these northern rooms, or perhaps a southern aspect was of less significance in the use of these rooms than was the case for the R-type rooms. These main (N1) rooms were frequently decorated to high standards, and sometimes heated with hypocaust floors. Smaller reception rooms in the adjacent aisles (type N2) could also be heated (more probably so where the larger room was not heated) and decorated with mosaic pavements. A couple of the better rooms in aisled buildings in Hampshire were instead furnished with small hearths of the type also
commonly found in London (Clanville and Carisbrooke, see Johnston 1978). At Chilgrove 2 the N1 room was notable both for the unusual nature of the mosaic decoration, involving a series of wheel or circle motifs possibly of ritual significance. The same room was also equipped with a small niche in one wall, and such features are frequently found in association with cult rooms (see p. 185).

Where an aisled building equipped with a major reception room was set beside a main villa house this house did not usually contain a wing (type R) reception room. This would appear to have been the case at Sparsholt, Littlecote and Chilgrove.

One of the most startling examples of an N1 type room, both because of the quality of the mosaic pavement and the architectural complexity of the building, is the fourth-century trichoncal room at Littlecote (dated to c. AD 360). This consisted of two main chambers separated by a wide arched opening, with apses placed around all three remaining sides of the inner chamber (a variation, therefore, on the design of the type R5 room). A well-executed mosaic of Orpheus surrounded by animals was laid on the floor, and incorporated a variety of other decorative elements: including the figures of other deities (perhaps Aphrodite, Nemesis, Demeter and Persephone representing the ages of man), and wine vessels and vine scrolls. There has been unconvincing and poorly supported speculation that this may have been an Orphic church (Selkirk and Selkirk 1981). Elsewhere in the Roman world triconch and multi apsed halls were a common element in fourth and fifth-century domestic architecture, and were primarily used as dining rooms (Lavin 1962). The form is thought to have its origins in late third-century Gaul, and would seem to develop from the apsidal ended type-R rooms described above. There is, of course, no reason why the Littlecote room could not have been both a dining room and a cult room. For instance meetings of the arval acta, a brotherhood dedicated to fertility rituals, took place around the supper table in the house of the master of the order (Beard 1985, 114-162), and early Christian gatherings focused on the ritual sharing of bread in the eucharist. It may not be so much that the Littlecote room looks like a church, but that the first churches were dining rooms. Although the evidence for a cultic use of the Littlecote room is not particularly good it is instructive to consider the possible role that villas may have had as meeting places for cults, burial clubs, collegia and guilds. We know virtually nothing about such associations in Roman Britain, but it is unlikely that they would have operated without
the patronage of the land-owning classes.

The decision to locate the main dining room, and associated reception rooms, in an aisled building can be explained in any variety of ways without need to find explanation in the particular requirements of cultic or collegiate activity. These aisled buildings were generally designed as high-ceilinged building, set wing-like to one side of the main house, and fully equipped with kitchens and ovens. All of these characteristics, and the ready availability of the large areas that were increasingly fashionable in the later period, would have made these attractive locations for a dining room.

Nor should it be assumed that the construction of a dining or cult room testifies directly to the wealth or status of the occupants of the building. Elsewhere in the Roman world reception activities took place at properties where the owner was not resident: feast days, rent-collection and a variety of administrative and social activities required gatherings in an audience or dinner hall. Even on estates run exclusively by an absentee landlord, the bailiff could: "confer distinction on any slave... by inviting him to dinner on a festival day....[but] not receive anyone as a guest unless he is an amicus or close relative of the master" (Columella 1,8).

On balance it seems likely that the reception rooms in aisled buildings were similar in function to the wing reception rooms, and that the late fashion for making larger and taller wing rooms had sometimes been met by locating these rooms within the aisled structures, where lofty internal spaces could perhaps be achieved more easily. This could only be done, however, at the expense of the garden views that was otherwise such an important element in the layout of principal rooms.

Other examples where principal reception rooms may have been found in a separate building block from the main house include Room15/Block E at Darenth (fig. 83). This free-standing building set to one end of the main wing of the villa measured 14.6 x 4.6m internally, with a central doorway nearly 3.7 m. Features which suggest that this had not been a simple barn or store include the fine painted wall plaster found within the room, and its position flanked by other high status rooms. Opposite the doorway a rectangular addition to the back of the main wall, slightly over 1m. deep and nearly 4.6 m. long, may have been a buttress, but seems more likely to have supported a recessed podium. A free-standing room of similar proportions at Whittington Court (Room 10,
which was 13.2 x 5 m. internally) was even more evidently an important reception room. This had a mosaic pavement and was linked with the main house by a mosaic paved covered way. Other sites where similar if less well decorated rooms have been found include the villas at Ham Hill and Woolaston.
4.4. The living quarters

Room sets and suites

Common patterns of room association offer one of the best ways of studying lesser rooms, which frequently lack diagnostic features. Various observers have attempted to identify room suites within the Romano-British house (as Black 1987, 24). In the most thorough of these studies Drury has suggested that there were 6 different room sets evident in the plans of mansiones (Drury 1982; fig. 58). The range of possibilities is actually greater and the Drury typology omits patterns that occur frequently in town houses. The chief problem encountered in any such analysis is that complete patterns of doorways can not be reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence, and it is not possible to distinguish interconnected suites from commonly repeated patterns of adjacency.

No two Romano-British houses were identical, but the most commonly repeated arrangement involved setting small rooms either side of a large central room, which rooms were in turn flanked by large rooms at the ends of a principal wing. In smaller houses these three larger rooms, at the ends and middle of the block, included the main reception rooms (fig. 59). In these cases one of the end rooms was usually a wing reception room (of type R), whilst the central room was a reception hall (of type Q). More rarely the other larger room, at the opposite end of the block from the dining room, may have been a D style reception room although this space was generally dedicated to more practical use (with lower quality floors and hearths and ovens often found here). It has been noted that “the nuclear block plan represents a plan evolved to meet the basic housing requirements of the Romano-British or Gallo-Roman landed family. It was to provide the main model for urban housing, as well as the unit from which most later and larger villas developed” (Blagg 1990c, 202-3).

Although elements of this arrangement are sometimes evident in Gallo-Roman villas (for which see plans in Agache 1975), the overall plan was essentially a Romano-British peculiarity.

In larger houses the more important reception facilities were displaced to a separate wing. In these cases the central and flanking rooms were not dispensed with, but formed lesser reception or living areas. These are more fully discussed below as ‘lesser
reception rooms' (P rooms), and can sometimes be described in terms of their location at the front, centre or rear of the wing (front = P/D, middle = P/Q and rear = P/R, see below). An illustration of the separation of the reception quarters from a suite of living rooms is found in the design of Building 1 at Colliton Park, Dorchester (fig. 73), where there was no direct communication between the reception rooms to the west and a smaller suite of living rooms to the south.

The smaller rooms mentioned above were of four basic types defined by size and proportion. The use of cross walls, parallel to the long-sides of the house, allowed the separation of a small front room or antechamber (A room) from a rear chamber (B room). It was usually the case that the antechamber provided access to at least one of the larger rooms flanking it, and in some cases to the rooms on both sides. The use of antechambers to link the rooms to the sides and rear was the most common way of forming sets of rooms. Alternatively a narrow lobby or cross passage (L room), was set between the larger rooms. Such chambers were most commonly found alongside the wing reception rooms (the P/R room), to which they sometimes provided access. A fourth room-type sometime found sandwiched between two larger rooms ran the full depth of the wing but was broader than the L-room and occupied an area similar to that of a combined antechamber and rear chamber (Y room).

Good examples of houses built with three larger rooms sandwiching smaller rooms of the types described above are found in both town houses and villas. These include Houses 8,1 and 27,1 at Silchester, House 3 S at Caerwent, House 6,1 at Verulamium and the villas at Newport and Sparsholt (fig. 59). A reduced version of the same arrangement involved omitting one of the end rooms and the adjacent small rooms or passageway. In these houses the principal wing consisted of two larger reception rooms (P/D and P/R rooms) flanking an antechamber (A room) and rear chamber (B room). This plan was rarely encountered in the countryside but was common in some towns, notably Caerwent (as Houses 4 S, 14 S and 17 N).

Suites formed of groups of two to five of the above room types can be identified in Romano-British houses of all dates. A range of examples where most doorways can be identified is shown on figs. 60 and 61. Notwithstanding the variety of approach to the design of these domestic suites four similar arrangements account for the majority of
the evidence (Sets 1, 2, 7 and 8). Since screens invisible to archaeological scrutiny might sometimes have been used to divide the Y and L rooms into forward and aft chambers the main difference between these different room suites was whether they included one or two larger reception rooms. The typologies proposed by Black (1987) are not evidently supported by these better preserved examples of room suites, which indicate greater complexity than he describes.

The suggestion that some of these suites served as the main living rooms and sleeping quarters of the house (as Nash-Williams 1951, 106), is supported by the limited evidence available. The three-roomed suite in the villa at Pitney was clearly the most important part of the house, and was marked as such by mosaics. The principal room in this suite was a wing reception room (type R), which was reached from an adjacent antechamber (type A) which also provided access to a smaller chamber (type B). A simple form of this three roomed suite - involving a larger reception room (type M), a narrow service area (type L/A) and a smaller rear chamber (type B/Y) - was found to the rear of several of the better decorated strip buildings.

Many larger houses had included two or more such suites. At both Newport and Sparsholt similar suites were set either side of the central reception room: each of these included an antechamber and rear chamber with a larger room to one side (fig. 59). In both buildings the suite to the right of the central reception room took up more space than that to the left. It has been suggested that the presence of multiple room suites is evidence of complex patterns of ownership (most forcefully by JT Smith 1997, 48 – see below p. 255). This was not necessarily the case. It was unusual for the larger villas and town houses of Roman Italy not to have several suites formed of bedrooms and reception rooms and there is little question here of multiple ownership. The villa of the Mysteries outside Pompeii offers a good example. The two three-room suites formed by Rooms 6, 7 and 8; and Rooms 3, 4 and 5 (fig. 8), show close similarities to the Romano-British examples. Similar evidence can also be found for multiple suites in several of the houses of Pompeii and at Settefinestre three two-roomed suites of bedrooms linked to reception rooms are easily identified from the plan (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 90).

The archaeological evidence accords with the literary sources. In several letters Pliny
refers to rooms within his villas grouped into suites (diaetae). A bedroom suite in his villas at Laurentium is described as containing a room (cubiculum) for use at night which was heated by an adjacent furnace (hypocauston), and associated with an anteroom (procoteon) and a second room (cubiculum) (Letters 2, 17). Another letter refers to a suite (diaeta) in which an unlit bedroom (dormitorium cubiculum) was next to an informal dining room (cenatio) for entertaining personal friends (Pliny Letters 5, 6).

Such sources make it clear that husband and wife reigned separately over their own domestic and sleeping quarters (see also Carcopino 1941, 184). Privileged house-guests might also have found need to make use of extended private quarters, as might also have been the case for socially active relatives (parents and offspring). These various requirements, reinforced by domestic habits which could involve using different suites in different seasons or for different times of the day, readily account for the provision of several separate suites in the houses of Roman Italy. Large houses containing several suites were the consequence: the fictional house described by Petronius contained four dining rooms and twenty bedrooms (Satyricon 14, 77). The complex arrangements found in some Romano-British houses could be accounted for by a similar structured profligacy in the use of domestic space.

Lesser reception rooms and living rooms (P rooms)

The larger rooms associated with domestic room-suites, other than the grand reception rooms, were typically about 4.6 m. wide and 5.8 m. long. These were large enough to have been reception rooms (typical American-English dining and living rooms supposedly measure 4.6 x 5.5 m.: Scheflen 1976, 195-7), and were accompanied by smaller rooms more likely to have been bedchambers. The standard of decoration varied according to the quality of the building, although such rooms were often provided with mortar or tessellated floors and painted walls.

It has already been noted that such rooms were sometimes found in the central and wing locations otherwise favoured by principal reception rooms and that some overlap in function can be suggested. Many suites contained two rooms of this type (and a few three). These rooms were sometimes fitted with a fireplaces (e.g. Rooms 29 and 27 at Bignor (fig. 86); Room 1 at Beadlam; Room 4 at Camborne; Room 2 in Building 1 at
Colliton Park, Dorchester (fig. 73); Room 7 at Brislington and Room 6 in House 27,2 at Silchester). Fireplaces were not commonly found in other types of room in Romano-British houses, although such features were characteristic of the London ‘bed-sitting’ rooms (type F, see below). In all of the instances cited above the rooms with fireplaces were in suites which did not include an obvious bedchamber (such as the type B rooms, see further below). It is therefore tempting to suggest that in some instances these rooms heated by a fixed fireplace may also have provided sleeping quarters.

**Antechambers (A rooms)**

These were small rectangular rooms, usually 1.5 - 2.9 m. deep and 2 - 5 m. wide. In some instances all four walls of the room were pierced by doorways (as in House 3 S at Caerwent: fig. 59). The pavements in these rooms were not generally of high status, although tessellated floors were found here in more luxurious houses. Such rooms were antechambers giving access to the other rooms in the suite. In some instances they may also have been used as a small kitchen and toilet. Ovens and a soakaway were found in an antechamber at Frocester, and at Box a drain in the equivalent room was supposed by the excavator to have been used for ‘the necessary convenience’. A tile lined hearth and the furnace for the hypocaust in the adjacent reception room were found in Room 8a of House 8,9b at Winchester, although in this case the room may have been used only as a kitchen and not provided access to the adjacent rooms. The same may also have been true of Room 11 in the villa at Ashtead, which contained a hearth, oven and pit.

**Rear chambers (B rooms)**

Small rectangular rooms (type B1) were commonly set behind type-A antechambers, and were usually next to a reception room. In smaller houses these rooms were commonly flanked by a Q/P central reception room to one side and a R/P wing reception room on the other (fig. 59). Rooms at this location generally measured about 1.55 - 3 m. by 2 - 4.6 m., and were only slightly longer than they were broad. Exceptionally, slightly larger rooms were provided: as in House 17,1 at Silchester where the room measured 4.3 m. by 4.9 m. In a significant minority of examples these rooms were heated by hypocausts. This was more often the case in the countryside
where more than one in four (28%) of the rooms of this type had underfloor heating (examples include Rooms 24 and 28 at Spoonley Wood and possibly Room W11 of the villa at Fishbourne) whilst in the towns this was only the case in less than 14% of such rooms (as Room 16 in House 23,2 at Silchester). Only bath-houses and principal wing reception rooms were more likely to have had underfloor heating. In some cases these rooms were also well decorated, although rarely to the standard of the main receptions rooms. This was the case at Sparsholt, where the hypocaust in Room 11 supported a mosaic, and at Box where the relevant room (Room 8) contained a mosaic pavement and yellow painted walls. In at least two cases foundation deposits were placed in pots set beneath the floors of rooms possibly of this type (as Farningham II and Lullingstone).

From the evidence of their scale and comfort it seems most likely that these rooms were bedchambers, as first suggested for a room of this type more than a century ago (Chedworth Room 13: Fox 1887, 328). This is, however, impossible to prove. It might alternatively be the case that some of these small rooms were instead small private dining rooms, similar to the heated projecting rooms sometimes found associated with the wing-reception rooms (type R4/5c, as described above). Black has suggested that such small heated chambers, which he terms hypocauston following a reference in Pliny, were intended to heat adjacent rooms (Black 1985).

The archaeological evidence is inadequate, but it would be consistent with what we know of the Roman house to find the main bedroom to be a heated and well decorated room associated with a suite of rooms at heart of the house. Roman bedrooms were places for conducting intimate business and had a role in the reception activities of the Roman patron (Pliny Letters 2, 20; Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59 n. 44; Riggsby 1997). At Pompeii the main bedchamber was often attached to an important reception area, whilst small private bedrooms in North African houses were often dispersed with reception rooms around the peristyle (Thèbért 1987). Even in the warmer circumstances of Roman Ostia bedrooms were sometimes heated, as was probably the case in the House of the Fortuna Annonaria where Room 9 is thought to have been a bedroom (Boersma 1985).

The Italian sites and sources suggest that the Roman bedchamber was sparsely
furnished. Furniture included a couch, chest and chamber pot: the wicker chairs used for the morning toilet are shown on some Romano-British reliefs (see Liversidge 1955); but none of these features leave archaeological trace. Although a mattress measuring 1.92m x 0.97 m. was found burnt within Building 8 at Colchester, Lion Walk the plan of the building within which it was found could not be reconstructed (Crummy 1984, 42). In Roman Italy the position of beds can sometimes be reconstructed from the layout of the wall and floor decorations (as Mau 1899, 256). In the third period villa at Fishbourne a disproportionate amount of plain border was noted on the sides of the mosaics in Rooms N5A, N8 and N13 and N11, but the evidence is inclusive, and the building also contained small heated Rooms, N6 and N8, with all the characteristics of the B1 type room described above.

A slightly different architectural approach (type B2) involved adding a smaller heated chamber to the back of the wing, breaking the line of service rooms and corridors more usually found here (see further below). Room 11 in House 1,2 at Silchester is illustrative of the type. Several other town houses were provided with similar but unheated rooms, as Room 7 in House 21,2 and Room 8 in House 9,3 at Silchester. Although these were perhaps more likely to have been service rooms and stores it is possible that some were also bedchambers.

Other small chambers (Y rooms)

Not all houses contained an arrangement of rooms involving an antechamber with a square room behind. Sometimes the appropriate part of the house (i.e. adjacent to the central reception room), was instead occupied by a rectangular room (type Y1), which although markedly narrower than its neighbours was more spacious than the cross-passages described below (L rooms). These generally measured 3.25 - 4.6m. wide and 4.1 - 5.7m. long (with width: length proportions of about 3:4). Examples were found at the villas at Boxmoor and Feltwell, in both of which the central reception rooms were flanked by rooms of this type (fig. 79b). The provision of several doorways through two or three walls of rooms of this type suggests that they were primarily antechambers (as Room 5 in House 27,2 at Silchester and Room 22 of the adjacent House 27,1). A rectangular oven in Room 8 at Dewlish reinforces the evidence that rooms of this type were used similarly to the type A antechambers. In a minority of
examples these rooms were more private, and had under-floor heating (as Room 6 in the villa at Atworth), and in these cases it seems more likely that they should be seen to have replaced the type B rear chamber.

It therefore seems likely that rooms of this type stood place of the antechamber and rear chamber arrangement where one or other of these rooms was not needed, or where the division between the more private space and the circulation and service area had been achieved by a lightweight screen or partition.

Similarly proportioned rooms were sometimes found in other locations, most often at one end of the main wing of the building (type Y2). Although these did not form part of the main domestic suites they might have provided further accommodation, perhaps of a lower status. These rooms were less likely to have been heated or decorated, and were of a more functional nature - as Room 9a at Sparsholt which was also a stoke-room for the adjacent hypocaust.

Narrow rooms (L Rooms)

Transverse-lobbies (Type L1)

Narrow rooms were frequently found in both villas and town houses. Because so little of the superstructure survives it is unclear how many of these were corridors taken through the depth of the house or which served as antechambers to rooms to either side, and how many were not corridors at all. Most of the cases where it can be shown that these narrow rooms were used as corridors and antechambers within suites of associated rooms are illustrated on figs. 59-61. The following typology can be suggested.

- **Type L1a**: corridors leading to baths at the rear of a building and therefore penetrating its depth (as Room 22 at Llantwit Major - see fig. 62a - and Room 7 in the villa at Latimer).

- **Type L1b**: corridors from the street to a type C2 corridor on the opposite side of the house (as Room 5 and possibly Room 3 in House 28,1-2 at Verulamium: fig. 62b).

- **Type L1c**: passageways flanking a principal reception room or group of reception rooms which improved circulation around these rooms - usually by
linking service rooms to the rear of the building with the entrance. In some cases these passageways were used as an antechamber to the main room. These narrow rooms are found in association with both wing reception rooms (type R; e.g. Room 13 in House 27,2 at Silchester fig. 62c) and central reception rooms (type Q; e.g. Room W13 in the Period 2 building at Fishbourne). In several villas such rooms were placed on both sides of the main central room (as at Gayton Thorpe, Wellow, Worplesdon, Fishbourne, North Leigh and West Park, Rockbourne). These antechambers may in some instances also have housed service facilities similar to those provided by the narrow service rooms described below (type L1d). There may have been some duplication of function between these rooms and ‘antechambers’ (type A). For an extended discussion see Smith 1997, 48.

- **Type L1d**: narrow rooms like those above but which were closed off and could not have been used as corridors (e.g. Room 2 in Building K at Newgate Street, see fig. 68).

Circumstantial evidence suggests that these narrow rooms served a range of functions. Excavators have proposed that they were on used as corridors, antechambers, stairs, closets, kitchens, furnace chambers and shrines. Both Hingley (1989, 31) and Todd (1981), have also suggested that in some instances passages could also have been used to divide service quarters from living quarters. It is possible that these narrow chambers sometimes served all of these functions.

Many L1c-d rooms were conveniently located to provide services facilities. The use of braziers and chamber-pots mean that fixtures and fittings will not always survive to reveal their function, but at Folkestone the narrow room adjacent to a possible kitchen and leading to the baths contained a stone basin and seems likely to have been a toilet. The use of some narrow rooms as kitchens is in particular suggested by Room 2 in Building K at Newgate Street, which contained a series of hearths and had been provided with a vent in the rear wall (fig. 68). The room at Newgate is closely paralleled in form, location and arrangement with a kitchen and closet in House IV, 10:11 at Herculaneum (Perring and Roskams 1991, fig. 90). At Pompeii kitchens were generally small and placed where they would not interfere with the rest of the building and often also served as closets (Mau 1899, 260-2; Jansen 1997, 128; Foss 1997).
Latrines had been set to the back of small narrow chambers leading off the entrance passage from at least the second century BC, as evident in the plans of Hellenistic houses at Delos.

In the houses of Roman Italy the kitchen was also the principal focus for household religion: niche shrines were commonly placed here and the Lares, Penates and Genius were often painted on the wall next to hearth (Clarke 1991, 9; Foss 1997). Shrines at Pompeii were commonly located in circulation areas and rooms of passage. Some of the narrow Romano-British rooms considered here may similarly have had ritual use. Receptacles which may have been designed to receive votive deposits, as represented by pots sunk into the floors, were found in such rooms at Dewlish (Room 17) and Sparsholt (Rooms 5/6). Infant burials were also commonly found in these locations and other areas which may have served as kitchens (E. Scott 1991). More significantly Room 9 in House 14,2 at Silchester contained a rectangular structure which has credibly been interpreted as a lararia (above p. 108). This was a narrow room of type L1d, which may previously have been used as a kitchen before the insertion of the supposed shrine. The architectural importance of the room was emphasised by projecting it forward from the line of the adjacent rooms, and diverting the portico to respect this.

It is difficult to establish whether these cross-passages also contained stairs to upper floors as has sometimes been suggested. At Building K from the Newgate Street site in London a row of postholes down one side of the room might have supported a timber stair but this could alternatively have supported a scaffold during a phase of repair to the roof. Similar rows of post-holes in the narrow room at Gadebridge (Room 25) and in a room of this form in the villa at Boughspring are open to similar interpretation. In all cases the scale of the construction seems excessive for a lightweight internal staircase, and it would not necessarily be possible to recognise a stairwell from the evidence of foundations alone. It is notable, however, that the passages described here were similar in size and location to the space which in some modern houses is given over to the entrance hall and stairwell. An understair can sometimes be a convenient site for a kitchen and latrine. Examples from Italian sites include Room 16 of the house of the Fortuna Annonaria at Ostia (Boersma 1985), and the room adjacent to the triclinium of the Casa dell'Ara I.aterizia at Herculaneum (for
Pompeian examples see Foss 1997, 206).

Generalising from this evidence (and from that of other corridor and kitchen areas within Romano-British houses - see above p. 135), it is possible to suggest an association between passages, cooking and ritual activities in some Romano-British houses. Hearths, thresholds and burials were all sometimes associated with Roman fertility ritual (Rykwert 1976).

Central lobbies (Type L2)

An unusual, and possibly late, fashion involved placing a small cross passage or hallway in the place more normally occupied by the central reception rooms. These small rectangular rooms - such as Room b at Ridgwell, Room E at Yatton, Room Q3 in House 22,1 at Cirencester and perhaps Room 3 at Whittington Court - may indicate a significant variation over the standard entrance arrangements. One possibility is that in these few Romano-British villas, the central reception space represented by the type Q rooms had become an entrance lobby and circulation area rather than a reception room.

Bedsitting rooms’ (F rooms)

Rows of small rectangular rooms, heated by a fixed fireplace, were a characteristic of the densely populated quarters of early Roman London. Typically these rooms measured 3-4 m. square, and were reached from a veranda corridor alongside the building. It is possible that these were one-roomed lodgings, small bed-sitting rooms designed for rental income. A row of narrow single storey buildings, separated by narrow alleys, was squeezed together behind the early forum at London (Brigham et al. 1987, 19). Since these lay in an area later used for public buildings it is possible that they had always been on public property and provided the city with rents. Similar rooms for rent may also have been set to the back of one of the workshops found in excavations at Newgate Street (Building K). Here a row of three small square rooms measuring 2.9 - 3.0 m. by 3.3 - 3.44 m., each with a fireplace built against one wall, were set off a corridor (fig. 68). This corridor was reached by a side entrance and there was no evident communication between these rooms and the rest of the building. These rooms were of a similar size and character to the rooms within the barracks at
some fort sites, as at Wallsend where the rooms were approximately 3.6 m. square (Goodburn 1976, 306-7), although only half the size of some of those found in the larger barracks at Colchester.

This evidence is similar to that obtained from the crowded cities of Roman Italy, where "families could rent single rooms in barrack-like structures of the type found in working-class areas of Ostia. Here the object was to get the maximum density of occupancy consonant with the provision of the single amenity of light. The result was the development of long, corriored structures divided into cubicles with flimsy partitions" (Casey 1985, 44). Similar rows of self-contained rooms may have accommodated slaves in patrician houses like the House of the Menander at Pompeii and the villa at Settefinestre (George 1997).
4.5. The service quarters

Central Halls (X rooms).

Several villas were laid out around a large central room (fig. 63). Although it has been suggested that such spaces might have been yards, it has been conclusively demonstrated that these were large rooms, or halls, similar to a type common in Germany (Branigan 1976; Oelmann 1921 64-73; JT Smith 1978b, 351-8; Smith 1997, 23-45).

Unlike the Germanic parallels for the type, the Romano-British halls were notably longer than they were wide (drawing on the continental evidence a distinction can be established between broad and narrow halls). In the broader survey of hall buildings undertaken by JT Smith architectural distinctions can also be drawn between wide-nave halls and ridge post halls (Smith 1997, 37-40). These narrow halls were typically less than 7m wide. Such rooms dominated the buildings within which they were located, and in many instances provided the bulk of the domestic space. They were not only larger than the ‘audience rooms’ described above (Q rooms), but were usually undecorated and more likely to contain hearths, hypocaust furnaces, ovens and other domestic features (e.g. Great Staughton). At Chiddingfold a tank had been placed near the centre of the room (Black 1987, fig. 13; Gower and Gower 1984). Crudely paved floors at villas such as Littleton, Cherington and Colerne suggest that these rooms were subjected to fairly heavy use. It seems likely that they provided access to some of the surrounding rooms.

In the buildings at Cox Green and Wraxall these central rooms were sub-divided into smaller rooms, and there is a possibility that slightly built timber screens and partitions may have escaped recognition in other rooms of this type.

In several villas (e.g. Brislington), the halls opened onto the main corridors. The design of the villa at King’s Weston, was unusual and deserves further consideration. It had a large central room, 6.5 m. by 16.6 m., which was divided from the facade corridor by an arcade in which stone Tuscan columns set at 1.6-1.8 m. intervals supported a series of arches formed of white-painted voussoirs (Boon 1950). This architectural detail suggests that the room behind was a public part of the building.
The provision of rooms of this type was essentially a late Roman phenomenon, with little and disputed evidence for their presence in villas in Britain prior to the late third century. Although these rooms are generally a characteristic of villa sites it is interesting to note that Room 5 of Building IV at Caistor-By-Norwich similarly conforms to the summary description given above.

It has frequently been assumed that these Romano-British halls were places of social gathering, along the lines of the medieval hall: ‘halls have important implications for social and economic life. They suggest the existence of a household larger than the nuclear family and indeed larger than the three-generation family, something more like a kin-group engaged in working a considerable tract of land’ (JT Smith 1978b, 358). Attempts to define and describe the social arrangements represented by halls are, however, open to dispute (see JT Smith 1985 and Webster and Smith 1987 on contradictory interpretations of the villa at Barnsley Park). On the assumption that halls were used as reception rooms the locations of hearths and doorways have been used to reconstruct social arrangements (JT Smith 1997). Centrally located hearths might suggest a community not overly concerned with distinctions of rank. This was a characteristic of some broad halls of the Mayen type, but is rarely found in the main houses at Romano-British sites. More normally the hearths were placed closer to one end of the room than the other, and in these situations might possibly have distinguished an inferior lower-end, from a smaller upper-end. Alternatively hearths were displaced to one corner or side of the room, where they were unable to provide a clear focus for social activity.

These interpretations are predicated on an assumed reception function, but in several Romano-British hall buildings it is clear that the main reception activities took place elsewhere. Reception activities were often directed towards rooms that flanked the hall, which was instead a service area. Good examples of this arrangement include the villas at Langton and Dalton Parlours. There is therefore a strong possibility that many of the rooms identified as halls in Romano-British houses were essentially workrooms and kitchens. Only in the simplest buildings, where no better facilities existed, is it likely that these main rooms were also used as dining rooms.

The Romano-British hall might find parallel not only in the Gallo-Germanic building
traditions represented by the broader halls typified by the villa at Mayen (Oelman 1921 64-73), but also in the Roman tradition represented by the atrium. The atrium could be as much a kitchen and workroom as a reception room.

Other ‘Workrooms’ (W rooms)

Many other houses also had large rooms decorated and equipped in a fashion that suggests that they were also used as working and storage areas. The following types of such space can be defined on the basis of location:

- **Type W1**: the main room of an outbuilding.
- **Type W2**: a smaller room found attached to the type W1 room in an outbuilding
- **Type W3**: front rooms
- **Type W4**: the main working area inside strip buildings
- **Type W5**: the similar space found inside most aisled buildings

Outbuildings containing a large front room and smaller rear room (rooms W1 and W2) were common at both Silchester and Verulamium. These barn-like structures were sometimes provided with an exceptionally wide entrance, as House 19,2 at Silchester which also contained a water tank. The same was true of the equivalent rooms in House 1,2, the door to which was 2m wide.

The large outbuilding to the rear of House 22,1 at Cirencester (which measured 13.5 x 6 m. internally) was provided with foundations nearly 1m across. These were much wider than those of the main building and it seems likely that this was a taller structure. House 22,2 at Cirencester was an aisled building, but was otherwise of similar form. Finds from this building included an iron coulter and bone weaving tablets. It is tempting to see these buildings as urban barns of a similar type to that attached to the House of the Menander at Pompeii (Ling 1983). Typologically the building form shows close affinities with both the urban strip-buildings and the rural aisled-houses.

The work spaces inside these aisled and strip buildings (type W4 and W5) generally stretched the full width of the building and much of its length. Ovens and hearths were commonly found in these areas. Smaller work-rooms (W3) were set at the front
of some town houses. It is likely that in many cases these work areas were also kitchens. It is possible that in some instances rooms at this location would have been used as shops. Rooms 1 to 4 at Colchester Lion Walk, Building 20, could possibly have been small shop-units. The best of these was entered across a purbeck marble threshold for a door 2.5m across and had painted walls. Small irregular shops have been found at the front of strip buildings but are not considered in detail here.

**Principal kitchens (U rooms)**

Most service facilities were tucked into corridors or antechambers adjacent to the rooms they served (p.134). Such small corridor-conveniences provided facilities for basic food preparation and the toilet: drawing unhygienically on the same water supply.

Some larger kitchens have also been identified. These were commonly close to the angle between the two main wings of the house and were often adjacent to wing reception rooms (P/R rooms). Examples include Room 28 at Gadebridge (Period 3), Room 40 at Bignor (fig. 86), Room 28 at Folkestone, Room 10 at Chedworth (fig. 85), Room 9 at Cox Green, Room D at Yatton, and possibly Room 3 at Cambourne. Room 3 in Building 1 at Colliton Park, Dorchester was also a kitchen (fig. 73).

The small furnace rooms placed to the sides and rear of many houses to fire hypocausts were probably occasional kitchens. At Bancroft a kitchen was also provisionally identified in an outhouse adjacent to rear baths. Similar cook-houses are likely to have been found in the working areas within aisled building. Easy access to ovens in estate outbuildings may account for the lack of space given to villa kitchens. In town a similar lack of provision is more likely to reflect the use of commercial bakeries and taverns.

**Lesser corridors and service areas (V Rooms)**

Corridors with earthen or low-status floors, often partitioned-off to form small rooms, were commonly built at the back of houses. These were often 'lean-to' structures used as service corridors and storage areas. Three types are clearly represented:

- **Type V1:** corridors and passageways
- **Type V2:** small low-status rooms
• **Type V3: furnaces**

In House 23,1 at Winchester an unusually wide rear corridor extended the full length of the house and terminated in a small room which may have served as a kitchen. It is tempting to reconstruct a traffic of slaves or servants in such spaces: a similar use of service corridors and stairways marked out the houses of gentry in the 17th and 18th centuries. There are, however, instances where these corridors may have provided an alternative entrance to the principal rooms, and in Period 3 at Gadebridge and at Boxmoor these rear corridors formed part of encircling type C2b corridors. In several instances rear corridors also provided access to private baths.

One of the earlier urban examples of a rear corridor comes from the early Flavian Building D at Watling Court (Room 13). At Verulamium several buildings were equipped with a lesser corridor, essentially a rear corridor, alongside the street frontage. Room 10 in House 4,1 and Room 37 in House 3,2 are illustrative. It seems likely, however, that these were primarily concerned with improving service access within the building, rather than intended to provide access from the street itself. Even in unusual instances where streetside corridors gave access to the main rooms - as was apparently the case with Room 24, in House 27,1 at Silchester - the poor quality of the pavements laid in the corridor and the existence of separate access to those rooms is an indication that this was a service entrance.

Infant burials were found beneath the floors of these rooms in several houses (as in Room 11 at Bucknowle). This was sufficiently frequently the case for it to be suggested that there was a positive preference for disposing of such remains in kitchens and service areas (Scott 1991; and see above p.110).

**Latrines (Z rooms)**

Latrines flushed by running water are easily recognised. The masonry drainage channels which survive usually supported a timber framework with seats. Such superior facilities were rare in domestic contexts. They were most frequently associated with bath-houses, although latrines were also found attached to some larger town houses, as House 28,1 at Verulamium (fig. 55, Room 4) and the house at Site 6 at Wroxeter. These latrines were found in peripheral areas, often added to the side or back of the house (as Room 9 at Chedworth), and were reached independently of the
main corridors. They do not present evidence for having also been used as kitchens, and were probably designed as 'public' parts of the house.

Small outhouses, set over latrine pits some distance from the main house, and are likely to have been common on rural sites (as Gorhambury).
4.6. Ancillary reception facilities

Baths (H rooms)

The baths came second only to the dinner table as a place of regular social gathering, and the construction of urban baths was a key act of public benefaction. The taste would appear to have been acquired from early Greek practice, with origin in the Greek gymnasium, and developed from mid fourth century BC onwards. The main typological and technical developments took place in central Italy in the period c.100 BC (Fabricotti 1976). The heated baths remained a central aspect of urban life in the Byzantine east, and outlived the empire as 'Turkish' baths.

Roman baths were first built in Britain in military and public facilities. In Britain, as elsewhere, the baths were more of an urban than a domestic habit. Early public baths, of Neronian date, have been excavated at Silchester and Exeter (Frere 1987, 232; Bidwell 1979). The modest nature of public baths in Britain has been attributed to the influence of the simpler, military, bath-house: in which the main rooms were arranged in a single row progressing from changing and cold rooms towards warm and hot ones (fig. 64). In German typologies this axial arrangement of rooms is known as a Reihentyp. Other more complex public baths were laid out in what are known as ring, half-axial and imperial types.

The construction of private bath suites was more commonly a rural practice, influenced by the desire to introduce urban amenities to rural life. The earliest known examples from Romano-British villas, as at Angmering and Eccles, are likely to be of Neronian date and sufficiently early for it to be unlikely that they were built in imitation of British urban practice. It is more likely that the builders of these early houses were influenced by contemporary practice in neighbouring provinces. The bath suites found in Romano-British villas find close parallel in the villa baths at continental sites, such as the villa Arianna in Varano, Stabiae (Yegul 1995, 63-4).

The basic pattern of the Romano-British domestic bathing suite consisted of one unheated entrance room which is likely to have been a changing room and provided access to the rooms beyond (type H1 - apodytrium). The character of this room differed according to circumstance: in the better bath-houses it was likely to be larger
than any of the other rooms in the suite and was often at least twice as long as wide. In more cramped circumstances, however, it could be little more than a corridor. This room was frequently decorated with a mosaic pavement, usually with aquatic references. Better examples of the type include Room 13 at Lufton and Room 25 at Dewlish. At Beadlam the equivalent room had benches built around the side walls, supporting the identification of this as a changing room. These rooms were commonly located in one of the projecting corner pavilions, and could be found at the opposite (usually left) end of the portico to the wing reception rooms (as at Dewlish, Beadlem, Newport, etc.). Where this was the case the portico led directly to main doorway to the baths. A common alternative to this, where the baths were set at the rear of the house rather than to one side, was to approach the baths through a cross passage near the middle of the range. In other cases, as will be described further below, the bathhouse was a free standing structure found a small distance from the main house.

In the more complex bath-suites the entrance room provided access to another unheated room, the cold room (type H2 - frigidarium). This usually contained a cold plunge bath: sometimes in the middle of the room, sometimes to one side. These ranged from simple square basins to D-shaped and octagonal pools, and although some were large enough for friends to share a splash (like the bath at Dewlish, which was 3.6 m. wide), they were too small to have been swimming pools. The pool at Halstock, which measured 7.93 x 4.5 m., was an exception to this. Equally exceptional was the large open-air pool at Gadebridge.

The rooms were sometimes designed to reflect the shape of the central pool: the most impressive example of this was at Lufton (Rooms 14 and 15), with its elaborate buttressed octagonal room. This room finds close parallel in the octagonal frigidarium with a central pool at Viterbo (Yegul 1995, 387-9). The presence of similar arrangements at Holcombe and Dewlish suggests this to have been a fashion favoured in southwest Britain in the late third and fourth centuries (see Walters 1996 who additionally suggests architectural links with the octagonal rooms used at Great Witcombe, Keynsham and Woodchester). These octagonal cold rooms with a central plunge bath anticipate the design of early church baptisteries, such as the octagonal baptistery of Constantine at Rome.
It was generally the case that the better quality houses had better baths, and that these included cold plunge baths set in separate rooms rather than added to the side of the entrance rooms (Bignor and Chedworth can be added to the examples already cited above). These cold rooms were less likely to be decorated with mosaic pavements than the entrance chamber and changing room. In contrast the simplest bath-houses made do with a small plunge bath attached to the entrance room (as Room 9 at Chilgrove), where the functions of cold room and changing room were conflated.

In most cases the hot rooms were reached directly from the cold rooms (as at Llantwit Major). In some instances, however, the cold room with plunge bath was not set in a series with these other rooms, in these cases the bather had to return to the entrance room where the warm and hot rooms were reached by passing through a different door. This arrangement was more common in the more sophisticated bath-houses (as Bignor and Lufton).

The heated bath-rooms were smaller than most other rooms found in the Romano-British house, and were usually made D-shaped by the addition of an apse at one end. In a minority of cases apses were added to both ends of the room. These rooms were vaulted. Hollow brick voussoirs used to form the barrel-vaults have been found at sites such as Sparsholt (see also Brodribb 1979), where window glass has also been found. Fragments of window glass are sufficiently commonly elsewhere for it to seem likely that most heated baths had glazed windows.

Commonly two, and sometimes three, of these small barrel-vaulted chambers were arranged in sequence. The first of these spaces, furthest from the furnace, would have been a warm room rather than a hot one (type H3 - tepidarium), and was less frequently built with an apse than the hot rooms beyond (compare Room 2 at Newport with Room 9 at Lufton and Room 25 at Llantwit Major). Some warm rooms were also equipped with small plunge baths (as perhaps at Atworth and West Park, Rockbourne). This warm room was dispensed with in the simplest, utility, arrangements. The final two chambers were usually opened together to form a single hot room with a double barrel vault (type H4a/b - caldarium).

A hot plunge bath was frequently placed next to the innermost, hottest, part of this room. In some arrangements, as at Chedworth, the final hot room was a single rather
than double vaulted chamber. Beyond these rooms lay the furnace, over which was placed the vat of water which provided the hot steam that characterised these 'Turkish' baths.

In a few bath houses a fourth and slightly larger heated room (type H5), apparently a dry heated room rather than a steam one, was separately reached from the cold room (as Room 28 at Llantwit Major and Room 7 at Lufton). In two early bath-houses in the southeast of the province, at Ashtead and Eccles, particular emphasis was given to the dry-heat rooms. These were large circular structures reached from the entrance room by a separate corridor (fig. 64). The Eccles baths are likely to have been of Neronian date, whilst those at Ashtead were probably built early in the second century (Black 1987, 105-116). The use of round rooms for sweat bathing was of Greek origin, and gained particular popularity in military contexts where such rooms often stood independently of the rest of the bath suite (as at Kempten and Weissenburg in Germany, see Yegul 1995).

A further, and rarer, sophistication, involved the addition of one or two large mosaic paved heated reception rooms to one end of the bath wing (as at Lufton and Bignor, and perhaps Chedworth Room 8). Although these rooms (type H/R) could have been used in much the same way as any other large reception room (see type R), their close association with the baths may indicate a more specific function.

Small latrines were attached to some of the larger baths complexes, as at Norton Disney and Witcombe, although this was a less common practice than one might expect.

The smallest bath-houses consisted of no more than a cold room at the front with a single or double barrel-vaulted hot room behind. Several examples of this 'utility' type have been identified in a survey of the villas of Hampshire, where the form was widely adopted (Johnston 1978, 78-80). The 'standard' baths involved the addition of a changing room and warm room to form a row of rooms through which the bather would have to pass (effectively the Rheintyp form of baths referred to above). Two more complex types of baths are found. In the first of these a dry-heat room, entered from the cold room, was added to an otherwise standard suite of rooms. In the second the cold room did not form part of a progression of rooms, but was separately entered
from a larger changing room, and contained an ornamental plunge bath. In both of these more complex types the room separated from the sequence of steam rooms was often made the subject of particular architectural attention.

The earliest domestic baths were set in detached buildings on one side or the other of the forecourt area, or at Ashtead in a rather dominant position in front of the building. This structural isolation of the bath-house made sense when the main villa was built of timber, or thatch roofed. Bath-houses were often the first part of the house to be stone-built (see further below). The construction of stone built bath blocks, set some distance from the associated timber villa may be one of the reasons that in several cases baths have been discovered without trace of an attached house.

The early integration of bath houses into the domestic accommodation, as at Fishbourne and Southwick was therefore an unusual feature. In the earlier period it was also the case that baths were frequently better decorated than the rest of the house, as was apparently the case at Farningham 2, Eccles and Folkestone. These features combine to suggest that the baths were given particular emphasis in the reception activities of the period.

The integration of bath-houses into the main houses was essentially a feature of the second century, at which time baths were added onto the back of existing villas, as at Northchurch and West Park, Rockbourne. Villas newly built in this period, as at Hucclecote and Latimer, were provided with bath-houses as part of the main building from the outset. As has already been mentioned these bath blocks were generally built either on the wing, or to the rear, of the building. The addition of such baths was also frequently undertaken at the same time as the addition of a winged corridor facade, as at Cox Green and Holme House, Manfield.

One of the most notable features of the program of second-century and later villa improvement, was the construction of more than one bath block at the same house. In most such cases one of the baths was clearly a principal bath suite laid out to one of the more complex plans described above, in a very public part of the villa complex and more lavishly decorated; whilst the second baths were smaller, and perhaps more private, tucked away behind or to one side of the house. This was the situation at both Ashtead in the late second century, and Bignor in the fourth (fig. 86). The larger baths
were often in a separate bath-house, or at the far end of an independent wing, and could be reached without having to go through the house itself, as at Witcombe. Exceptionally there were a few sites, as North Leigh, where three bath-houses had been built.

David Neal has suggested that at Gadebridge the second bath-house may have been built for the benefit of estate workers (as Columella *Res Rusticae* 1.620). Separate bath facilities may sometimes have been needed to provide for both sexes, although this is unlikely to have been a pressing need in domestic contexts. The villa baths seem to have provided a public facility. This would make sense of the scale, location, and duplication of such facilities.

Small bath-houses were also sometimes built within aisled buildings. Examples include the well-decorated baths at Combley, Isle of Wight, and at Sparsholt. The typology and chronology of such constructions showed no significant differences to the other bath-houses, and it seems likely that these too were of a more public nature.

Baths were seldom found in town houses. Individual excavators have often been reluctant to interpret urban bath-houses as private domestic structures, preferring to see them as facilities attached to inns and public buildings, but most of the smaller bath complexes from London were probably attached to private houses (Perring 1991b, 73). At Pudding Lane a masonry building put up *circa* AD 125/130 contained a small bath-block with a mosaic-lined apsidal plunge-bath and a room with a latrine (Building 6). The heated room with a vaulted ceiling and underfloor heating found in the excavations at Winchester Palace in Southwark, also dated to the second century, is likely to have been part of a bath-house. A heated room with a cold plunge was also found in a masonry addition to a second-century timber strip building at Poultry (Rowsome pers. comm.). Another bath-block found in London near Cheapside consisted of three principal rooms: a cold room with plunge bath, warm and hot room (Marsden 1976). The hot room, which measured 4.9 x 6 m., had an apse at one end and a hot bath to one side. An early to mid second-century date for these baths is perhaps more likely than the first century date more normally proposed (Perring 1991b, 73). An early third-century bath suite, from a town house in London near Billingsgate (Marsden 1980, 151-5), was also of a simple if rather unusual form.
These were entered from a vestibule to either side of which were apsidal-ended heated rooms, and beyond which was a cold room with a water-tank against one wall.

Unusually a small baths may also have been added to the rear of one of the strip buildings at No. 1 Poultry, where a heated room and small plunge bath were added in the early fourth century. Several other cold-plunges have been recorded in London and probably indicate the location of other bath-houses (RCHME 1928, 112, 144).

At Colchester a mosaic lined apsidal plunge bath similar to that at Pudding Lane in London was found in Insula 33. Other small private baths suites were attached to a second-century town house at Broadgate, Lincoln; at the Marlowe Car Park site in Canterbury; in the late third-century House 5,1 at Verulamium; in House 4,4 at Verulamium; and in Building 4 in Caistor-by-Norwich. The arrangement of Rooms 7-11 in House 1,2 at Silchester also looks suspiciously like a private bath-suite. It is not clear if the bathing facilities found in some of the small towns were associated with houses or were attached to public buildings (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 20 and fig. 5).

At Cirencester, in the excavations at Bingham Hall Gardens, part of an unusual late Roman Octagonal heated building was found attached to a small bath suite and was seemingly associated with a private house (Rennie 1986). A room from the palatial building complex at Winchester Palace, Southwark was perhaps of a similar type (although Brian Yule, the excavator, is unconvinced by this argument).

As has already been mentioned townsfolk were more likely to use the available public facilities than build private baths. The public nature of the baths was one of its social attractions. Private baths were rare in town houses in most parts of the empire, although the baths at the House of the Menander in Pompeii illustrate the occasional presence of such facilities from fairly early times, and Petronius puts private baths in the fictional house of Trimalchio (xiv, 73). In north Africa the provision of private baths has been suggested to be a fairly late feature, and a sign of social distancing as the richer townsfolk no longer felt it appropriate to mix in public baths (Thébert 1987, 377).

It is therefore interesting to note that there is no evidence for any greater preference for private bath-houses in later Romano-British houses, and if anything the fashion for
the construction and equipment of such facilities was on the wane in the fourth century.

**Octagonal and circular rooms (J rooms)**

Most Romano-British roundhouses were low-status structures built following pre-Roman traditions (see above p. 41 and below p. 201). There were, however, exceptions to this, where circular structures were associated with reception areas on high status sites. Several classes of octagonal and circular buildings are known: these include small shrines (S rooms), cold rooms attached to bath suites (H2 rooms), and dry hot rooms in baths (type H5 rooms). Further to these can be counted a small number of circular (type J1) and octagonal (type J2), heated and unheated reception rooms, which defy easy classification. Such rooms were usually set to one side of a main villa house with a view across a villa forecourt. The favoured location for these rooms was just beyond and slightly to the front of, the wing of the main house. At both Stroud and Great Casterton no main villa house has been found and they accompanied aisled buildings (fig. 65). The rooms concerned could be either free standing or attached to an end wing of the main house.

The excavators of these structures have tended to prefer functional explanations. Those at Ditchley and Langton were described as threshing floors (Radford 1936, 45-6), and the heated room at Great Casterton was thought to be a corn dryer. This interpretation was achieved by ignoring the quarter-round moulding around the edge of the floor and the coloured painted wall plaster in the destruction debris. This room was similar to the circular heated room with a channel hypocaust found in the baths at Fontaines-Saléès near Vézelay (Yegul 1995, 386), and there is a distinct possibility that these rooms were free-standing sweat baths different only to the H5 rooms by virtue of being set further away from the main bath complex.

This may also have been the case for the large heated octagonal room at Maidstone; a room which was supported by substantial buttresses and was likely to have towered above the rest of the house. The use of octagonal and irregular spaces had been introduced to Roman domestic architecture in houses such as Nero's Golden House at Rome, and the rooms associated with the more complex bath-houses described above illustrate the use of such forms in a Romano-British context.
The unusual apse-ended octagonal room at Witcombe and the similar room at Walton on the Hill, may have had similar use to these free-standing octagonal rooms. These rooms occupied central locations towards the rear of their houses, and were similar in many respects to the central reception rooms (type Q) but for their location and shape.

Some of the circular masonry rooms without underfloor heating (as at Shakenoak and Redlands) were instead probably Roman variations on an Iron Age theme and used as outhouses attached to the main villa house (see p. 201). Rodwell has argued that some of these buildings, including that at Stroud, were shrines (Rodwell 1980, 219). Since temples were often circular or octagonal, and shrines featured in a number of Roman gardens (see p. 195), this is an attractive suggestion. There are also some similarities between the location of the Woolaston room, and the oddly located type R reception room at Colerne. These rooms attached to one wing of the building might just have been associated with dining suites although they would have made inconvenient dining rooms.

**Cellars (K rooms)**

Cellars and sunken rooms are rare in Romano-British houses and their presence marks a deliberate architectural preference (see Perring 1989, of which this is an updated summary). Because cellars are better preserved than other rooms they can be described in unusual detail. Types include:

- full cellars (type K1);
- half cellars (type K2);
- terraced rooms (type K3).

Most cellars were built c. AD 70-155, and few were constructed after the second century. Cellars were particularly popular in the towns of London, Colchester and Verulamium and in the villas around Verulamium in North Kent and in the upper Thames and Cotswolds (Perring 1989, fig. 1).

Town cellars were usually set behind otherwise unexceptional houses. This could reflect the limited availability of space along the street frontages or a concern for road stability, and is not necessarily relevant to the ways in which the cellars were used. Buildings along the main streets were, however, more likely to have been provided
with cellars than houses in the more remote parts of town. Villa cellars were usually at one end of the main house: as part of the principal range of rooms, beneath the corridor facade, or below a projecting wing. This arrangement was repeated too often (on at least 14 sites) to be other than a planned architectural feature.

Most cellars were rectangular with a width to length ratio of approximately 2 to 3, some 60% of all examples were both less than 5 m. wide and 7 m. long. These rooms were usually slightly smaller than the principal rooms of the buildings in which they were set. There were also long and narrow 'corridor' cellars (less than 3.6 m. wide but between 7 and 13 m. long); and unusually large cellars (between 7 and 13 m. long but between 3.8 and 7.0 m. wide).

Narrow rooms were built alongside several of the large cellars. At Witcombe and Gadebridge Park the large terraced rooms were flanked by a “corridor” on one side and an aisle on the other and had plans reminiscent of a basilica, Verulamium extramural site S also had a corridor along one side. The long corridor at Burham may have turned a corner before reaching the cellar, apparently a deliberate preference for a narrow and twisting entrance. Long corridors were also used to reach several of the smaller cellars (as in Period 2 at Lullingstone).

Cellars were usually reached from an open area or a corridor to which there was easy public access. In several cases they were not connected to the residential parts of the building, even where such access would have been easy to arrange (as at Barton Court Farm). Descending ramps lead into several cellars, although some of these may have supported stairs (as at Gorhambury). Otherwise timber or masonry stairs were provided, except where the terracing allowed direct entry from the lower level.

Two sites present important differences. The villas at Witcombe and Rivenhall had several subterranean rooms, with cellars difficult to reach from public space, and unusually large terraced rooms in the more standard positions at the ends of the projecting wings. It is possible that here there was a separation between smaller more intimate rooms and larger more public ones.

Little is known of the relationship between cellars and the rooms above them. In several instances collapsed painted wall plaster indicated that the upper room had been an important reception room. The Lullingstone house church is a famous example,
whilst stucco and marble veneers were found at Gorhambury, Verulamium extramural site S and Colchester, Culver Street.

Some cellars had windows, although these were usually small and would have given a miserable light. Two larger openings have been interpreted as loading ramps (at Burham and Chalk), but there is no convincing reason why these might not have served as windows. At Lullingstone an opening into the Period 1 cellar has also been interpreted as a loading ramp, this sloped opening 1m wide was more than 1.2 m. above the cellar floor level and gave access to the reception area. The half cellared timber building excavated on the Courage Brewery site in Southwark was approached by a ramp (Dillon 1989).

Some cellars were modestly decorated. Most walls were white- or yellow-painted and more complex and schemes are rare (Verulamium Houses 1,1, 21,1, 22,1, and extramural site S Rooms 9 and 10; Leicester, Norfolk Street; London Forum site F16 and F17; Lullingstone Period 3; Chalk Period 2; Hartlip; Gorhambury; and Gadebridge Park Period 5; Leicester, Norfolk Street and Gadebridge Park Period 6). The Period 2 decoration at Lullingstone included palm trees with dates, at Hartlip there were red-painted rooms and at Witcombe (Room 1) panels of different colours were observed. Other cellars had walls rendered but not painted and the dressed chalk at Burham represents attention to decorative effect.

Niches have been noted in cellars at several sites (Verulamium Houses 8,2, 21,1, and 28,1; London, 25-6 Lime Street; Leicester, Southgate Street; Lullingstone Period 2; Chalk; Burham; South Street, Whitstable; Park Street; Shakenoak; Witcombe Room 1). Most were found singly and in groups of 2 or 3, with one instance where five were arranged along a single wall. The small apse at the end of the corridor “shrine” at Verulamium and the square recess at the end of Room 10 at Verulamium extramural site S were focal elements and would have been suitable places for cult figures. The apses at Gorhambury and Ridgeons Gardens, Cambridge were perhaps too large for such a use but similarly served to concentrate attention on a specific part of the room. Whatever the function of these various niches and apses they served as an architectural embellishment and would not have been built if they were not to be seen. They are therefore more likely to have been added to reception rather than service rooms.
A significant aspect of cellar design is the presence of a water supply. At Witcombe (Room 1) and the Colchester “Mithraeum” the arrangements leave no doubt that running water was a dominant feature and the springs were of fundamental importance in the location of the cellars. The importance of the well at Lullingstone was shown by its central position in the room and by the references to water in the painting in the niche (see above). Springs were also found in the excavation of the cellars at Burham and Faversham, but it is not known to what extent they were exploited. Running water was channelled to the terraced room at Gadebridge Park and was one of the factors which prompted David Neal (1974, 21) to suggest that this may have been a stable. In House 28,1 at Verulamium water had been directed beside one end of the underground corridor, although this may have been the coincidental consequence of the need to supply an adjacent latrine. The terraced south wing at Chedworth was set next to a latrine and water channels were noted beside the cellars at Norfolk St., Leicester and Stanwick. Other relevant features include drains in the cellar at Plaxtol, sumps at Verulamium 14,5 and London, Well Court and floor level openings in cellars at Shakenoak and Verulamium Houses 1,1.

Pits inside the entrances of cellars of Verulamium 14,5 and at Well Court, could have been water-containers. Similar containers might have been formed by walls around the spring at the Colchester “Mithraeum”, and by a low cross foundation at the far end of the narrow room (Room 12) of the cellar at Verulamium extramural site S. Five depressions in the floor of the Richborough cellar may have been left by round-bottomed amphorae (Bushe-Fox 1949, 50).

There were few other architectural features of note. In some cellars, notably the terraced room at Gadebridge Park, hearths and timber partitions were inserted during later phases. Scars in the rendering of the cellar of House 1,1 at Verulamium could have been left by timber shelves but might alternatively have been caused by construction scaffolds. With the exception of a couple of larger pits most of the features dug through the floors of the cellars were probably burials or votive deposits (see below).

There is also, unusually, some possibility that the objects buried in the cellars may give evidence for function (although see p. 18). The cellar of House 14,5 at Verulamium
contained an exceptional number of small finds, many placed in the wooden box inside the entrance, possibly a scrap-metal dealer's hoard but alternatively as votive offerings (Frere 1972, 106; Perring 1989, 286-7). An altar was formed in the cellar at Lullingstone, where marble busts had been set over a low platform. At Witcombe a stone placed just within doorway, and separated from the pavement by a border of brick tiles, was thought to have been the base of an altar. The cellar at Water Newton contained three carved stone blocks that may have been used in a similar way to the plinths at Lullingstone. The cellar at Cambridge, Ridgeons Gardens has been published as a shrine: an interpretation based on the evidence of a series of votive burials.

Small pots had been set into the walls or floors of at least four other cellars (Verulamium 8,2; Colchester Lion Walk; Colchester Balkerne Lane B65; and perhaps Gorhambury), probably for votive purposes. Two infant burials were also found in the cellar at Colchester, Lion Walk.

Cellars were usually found in the reception areas of houses. The investment in decorative features, such as wall paintings and niches, suggests that the rooms were reception rather than service rooms. Although it can be argued that white-painted cellars were do decorated to keep them cool for storage purposes.

Most cellars belonged to early and highly Romanised houses, with the greatest concentration in the earliest and most cosmopolitan towns. It seems likely that the Romano-British cellars were inspired by ideas introduced from cellar using parts of Gaul (Cortet 1971). Since few cellars were built and their distribution was limited, it seems that these ideas did not spread widely.

It was evidently important for many cellars to be easily reached from public space but less important that they should communicate with other parts of the building. This might indicate that they housed activities that could be conducted independently of the rest of the house. As is argued further below this might suit some classes of ritual use. It has been suggested on various occasions that cellars were cult rooms, although the argument that most were used for storage has found broader support (Rodwell 1980, 232; Johnston 1972, 121-2).

The house church above the deep room at Lullingstone and the church over the Rivenhall cellar attest the Christian reuse of cellar sites. Cellars were used as places of
worship elsewhere in the empire (see below), and were unsuitable for most other forms of public use. The evidence of the loose finds, votive deposits and the later Christian associations of some sites combines with the architectural evidence to suggest that the cellars may have been used for religious purposes.

The alternative argument, that cellars were used as stores and stables, is poorly supported by the evidence. The presence of amphorae and grain in some cellars is inconclusive; these finds were not necessarily associated with the original cellar use and could in any case have been brought into service in water and fertility cults (Alcock 1965, 11-2; Perring 1989, 290-1). Some cellars were appropriately located for storing wines and oils used in the adjacent reception rooms, those at Faversham and Ditches could have been used in this way, but in most instances the lack of suitable access ruined the advantage of proximity. Whilst some terraced rooms may have been used as stables they were unusually situated for such use. Some cellars were quite possibly used as workrooms during their later phases but there is no evidence to suggest that any were originally intended for such use. The construction of a cellar involves considerable effort and such rooms can be difficult to maintain, especially when built next to natural springs.

Since it is usually easier to extend a building than to build a cellar it is reasonable to assume that cellars were built for an important reason, it is difficult to see why the needs of storage or workspace would require such extra effort. There is, of course, a distinct possibility that cellars served as both cult rooms and stores; these functions can be complimentary since fertility cults were directly concerned with the harvesting of agricultural produce.

There can be little doubt that water was important in the use of some cellars. From the evidence of the effort expended on the installation of water channels and drains at Chedworth, Gadebridge Park, and the Colchester "Mithraeum", it is likely that running water was preferred. It is furthermore possible that votive deposits of ironwork and weaponry were made in some of the cellars. These are characteristics of Celtic fertility cults. Wait (1985, 262-3) lists four sets of ritual behaviour indicative of such cults in Iron Age Britain and these include the deposition of votives in watery contexts and the use of ritual shafts (see also Manning 1972; Alcock 1965). The Thames region, in
which most of the cellars were situated, was one of the most popular areas for the votive deposition of weaponry and there was a resurgence of this activity in the first century BC. Late Iron age ritual shafts also show a marked concentration along the Thames valley, especially in Surrey and Kent, and in the Roman period such shafts were still most popular in southeast Britain. On one of the sites discussed here, the Ridgeons Gardens site at Cambridge, a series of ritual shafts containing dog and infant burials had been dug after the cellar “shrine” had been backfilled.

Celtic fertility cults were usually subordinate to tutelary goddesses and there are indications that female deities were the object of veneration in some cellars (as evidenced by the painted “nymphae” at Lullingstone). Cellars in Italy and Gaul were also used in the worship of unnamed mother goddesses (Packer 1971, 126; Le Gall 1963, 168-72; Boon 1983), although the figure of a bearded male deity bearing fruits in a cellar niche at Entrains-sur-Nohains (Nievre) (Cortet 1971, 176) suggests that gods were also recognised in these places. The pipeclay figurines of “Venus”, generally taken to represent Celtic mother goddesses, are relevant to this discussion since in Gaul they are found associated with sacred springs and were closely connected with both water cults and burial rites. In Britain no such association has been established but it is clear that like the ritual shafts these figurines were more popular in the southeast of the province (Jenkins 1958, 60-76).

The combination of underground chambers, running water, tutelary goddesses and votive offerings was important in the Hellenistic period worship of Isis. Some cellars were designed to be flooded by fresh water; a symbol of fertility and life beyond the grave. Others may have served in the finding of Osiris festival, to store cult equipment, and in initiation rites (Wild 1981; Griffiths 1975, 296-307. Plutarch (De Isis et Osiris, 20, 359) also refers to secret underground vesting rooms used by adherents to the cult of Isis. These cellars (as at Gortyn and Thessalonica) incorporated a number of architectural features (corridors, water containers, niches, painted walls, etc.) characteristic of the Romano-British cellars (Wild 1981, 40-4, 190-4).

An entrance chamber over a cellar at the temple of Isis at Pompeii was decorated with reliefs likely to have had a symbolic relevance to the ritual use of the room below (Wild 1981, 44-7, 77). One of the scenes shows Venus seducing Mars. The identification of
Venus with Isis is a common one and the message was probably that of the victory of the goddess and her cult over war. The other relief probably shows Perseus freeing Andromeda, and might relate to the finding of Osiris myth that celebrates an annual victory of life and fertility. Inside the entrance chamber was a basin that collected rainwater and in heavy rain would have flooded into the crypt below.

It is possible that the ceremonies conducted in the cellar were based on the central concepts of submission and release. The former symbolised by certain votive offerings and the latter by fresh water. These concepts were important in the initiation rites of the cult "performed in the manner of a voluntary death and of a life obtained by grace" (Apuleius, Metamorphoses xi, 21). The initiate who might have been identified with Osiris was reborn at dawn after an overnight burial in ceremonies that were probably conducted in underground chambers (Griffiths 1975, 396-407).

The use of subterranean rooms was not restricted to the cult of Isis. Underground chambers had had a long history of use in fertility cults in Rome (Rykwert 1976, 58-9; Bloch 1960, 134), and in many of the mystery cults (Vermaseren 1977, 22; Mylonas 1961; Livy, 39, xiii, 13). A subterranean room near the porta maggiore at Rome (with a long entrance corridor, nave, apse, and aisles) was decorated with stucco reliefs suggestive of both Cybeline and Dionysiac cults (Vermaseren 1977, 30), and has been interpreted as a meeting place of the Neopythagoreans (Carcopino 1926). This mix of elements reflects the widespread syncretization of the Oriental cults in the Roman period.

In conclusion it is likely that some Romano-British cellars were cult rooms. Circumstantial evidence suggests they were used in fertility cults, and some features imply that they could have been used in initiation rites.
4.7. Gardens and open areas

Gardens and yards (G spaces)

Gardens were important to the design Romano-British houses, more so than one might suspect from references in the archaeological literature. The dominance of man over nature is a recurring theme in Roman literature and art, and is reflected in Romano-British villas by the popularity of mosaics showing hunting scenes and topics such as Orpheus taming beasts with his music (Scott 1994). This is also evident in the emphasis placed on the arrangement of porticoes and porches to exploit garden views. The popularity of pastoral and garden scenes framed by architectural fantasies in the wall-paintings of Pompeii indicates something of the importance of these views. There was a dialogue between Roman artifice and the natural world, in which gardens played an important role. These open spaces not only offered light and focus, but could offer a contrived representation of the natural world made subject to Roman order - where “peristyles measured out nature like a templum” (MacDonald 1986).

Our ignorance about gardens in Romano-British towns is a matter of concern, and the situation in villa studies is little better. Only one garden can be reconstructed in detail, and this the unusual example of Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971, 120-33;).

The absence of evidence for early gardens in Romano-British towns is particularly frustrating. The character of modern urban rescue archaeology is ill suited to advance this area of study, and the more recently excavated fragments of city gardens are likely to reach publication as a form of ‘dark earth’, if at all. These layers of grey and brown silty soil are commonly found in late antique and early medieval contexts in British towns, and although there are many different views as to how they formed it seems reasonably certain that they indicate the presence of open space (Perring 1991, 78). Some dark earth horizons may have owed their origin to the digging-over and enriching of gardens - although it is not possible to draw a distinction between market gardens and domestic ones. It was certainly the case that much open space in Pompeii was given over to orchards, market gardens and vinyards (Jashemski 1979, 43-8), and some of the root and stakeholes found beneath the dark earth in London were of similar character (Perring 1991b, 79). The increased frequency with which layers of dark earth are found in horizons of the later Roman period, from the second century
onwards, supports the view that gardens were more common after this date.

The evidence of the close packed town houses in Flavian London suggests that gardens were rare during the early phases of settlement. It is also likely that those towns converted from military sites, as Colchester, would have had little by way of open space. It is therefore possible that the fashion for gardens in Romano-British cities was slow to develop.

From the second century onwards most Romano-British houses overlooked an enclosed garden or yard. The views obtained from the house were given both frame and focus by the built surroundings. There was considerable variation in the shape, size and proportions of these gardens and yards, the definition of which is in many cases complicated by the poverty of the archaeological evidence. A summary typology of form can be proposed:

- **Type G1.** Peristyle courtyards. Rectangular or trapezoidal courtyards enclosed within a building, and framed along two or more sides by a peristyle.
- **Type G2.** Courtyards. As above but without the peristyle.
- **Type G3.** Irregular courtyards. Courtyards which, although fully enclosed, were of irregular layout.
- **Type G4.** Side yards. Walled areas attached to one side of a building, rather than enclosed within it.
- **Type G5.** Forecourts. Open areas in front of a building enclosed, to greater or lesser degree, by a variety of buildings, outhouses, and associated walls.
- **Type G6.** Enclosures and precincts. Areas not limited by the building ranges themselves, but by the precinct boundaries or property plot within which the house was set.

Inevitably the larger open areas were most frequently found on rural properties, whilst irregular courtyards and yards were more frequently found in towns. Curiously the preference for side yards (type G4), seems to have been restricted to Caerwent (p.215). Some of the houses treated here as peristyle courtyards are rather irregular examples of the form, in particular because of the fashion for building projecting porches, and putting emphasis on rooms at the corner of the courtyard. This design
An ornamental pond and other features associated with a villa at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, produced macrofossils of spruce, box and yew amongst a variety of plant remains (Murphy in Going 1997, 42). This preference for perennial species reflects Italian fashion where the evergreen symbolised fertility and renewal (Knight 1994, 141).

The formal design of the Fishbourne garden was almost certainly atypical, but we can not reconstruct detailed garden layouts at many other sites. The courtyards attached to many smaller villas appear to have been more functional in character, and some courtyards were laid out with hard-surfaces (as at Turkdean where the yard was cobbled). The areas immediately in front of the later Roman town houses excavated in Winchester and Cirencester were also cobbled, and areas of planting were in some cases restricted to borders. Architectural features found in the open spaces surrounding villas and town houses - including pools, shrines and towers - illustrate, however, a wide concern with landscape design.

A focal feature in many Roman courtyard gardens was the central piscina. The presence of water, or some visual references to the presence of water, was a common element to many garden vistas. As has already been mentioned some Romano-British villas were designed to exploit river or sea views (p. 34). Further to this several gardens were adorned with pools and springs to match Italian fashion. This influenced villa design in Gaul, as illustrated at a number of sites (see Slofstra 1995; JT Smith 1978a). The large pool dominating the facade of the first-century villa at Eccles is the most extreme instance of this form of landscape architecture, although the late Roman pool at Darenth runs a close second. At Darenth the pool (Room 66 - see Fig. 83) had taken the place of the axial approach road, and was set perpendicular to the principal villa facade, along the central axis of the villa forecourt (see also DJ Smith 1978, 122). At the end of this pool stood a small structure covering a well (an S type room, see further below), which in turn was located in front of a monumental gateway, apparently a decorative feature rather than a significant entrance. Viewed from the house the small building standing at the end of the stretch of water would have been framed by the gateway behind. The suggestion that this had been the shrine of the nymph of the spring is credible (Smith ibid). Similar small, free-standing structures - both open-fronted and apsidal ended - were also built over springs at Chedworth and
Rapsley, although not in such focal positions. Rectangular pools or cisterns were also found in front of the villas at Bancroft, Gadebridge and Fishbourne, whilst the well at Ditchley and the fishponds at Shakenoak were visible from their respective buildings. The possibility that the type E room at Witcombe housed a fountain or nymphaeum has already been mentioned, and it has similarly been observed that a lead-lined basin at Downton may have been part of a water shrine set in axial position in front of the main reception room.

It seems likely that the foundations of the smaller water basins of the type found in the gardens of some Pompeiian houses would not always leave recognisable archaeological trace, and features set at some distance from the villa houses would not always fall within the excavated areas. It is consequently likely that the examples mentioned above do not represent the full extent of this fashion.

Town house gardens do not provide such a rich variety of water-related features, and this may partly reflect an inadequacy in the water supply to many Romano-British towns. A large pool, possibly with a fountain, was set in the courtyard of a large building in London that has been interpreted as the governor's palace, although this interpretation is not wholly convincing and this may have been some other form of public building (Marsden 1975; Perring 1991b, 30-3).

**Garden buildings (S rooms)**

Although there is little published evidence for pools and fountains in town house gardens, some small free-standing structures may have been designed as garden features in a similar feature to the Darenth structure described above. Most of the relevant evidence derives from the excavations at Silchester. The most substantial garden structure here was Block I, built next to House 23,2. This measured 5.5 x 5.2 m. externally with walls 0.75 m. thick. These substantial foundations suggest that it been a tall structure, perhaps a tower. A doorway into the east side of the structure was flanked by two large stone blocks likely to have supported columns, and a rectangular 'porch-like' extension was added here in a later phase. The inside face of the wall footings had been rebated to take timbers, presumably part of a timber floor over an underfloor void or pit.

This building formed a significant focal point within the garden, and it would have been
clearly visible from the house’s main reception rooms, if not also from the street. The excavators were of the view that this was a small shrine. Gardens are appropriate locations for small outdoor shrines, in which the dialogue between nature and order - established in the layout of peristyle and garden - could sensibly have been extended.

A similar but less elaborate structure in the garden of House 1,2 had walls approximately 600 mm. thick. These too were much wider than those of the house itself. Here it was suggested in the original excavation report that this was a raised water tank, as was also proposed for Room 28 of House 19,2 - another garden structure with unusually thick walls (in this case about 900 mm. across). The Block 1 structure associated with House 18a had walls over 400m wide. Such buildings are not common in the other Romano-British towns to have been studied in detail. A building in the garden of House 4,1 at Verulamium and another associated with House 13 S at Caerwent offers rare parallels. A small buttressed building found in the excavations at Culver Street (Building 125) in Colchester was also probably of this type, and has been interpreted as a tower granary (Crummy 1992, 108-9). It measured about 7m. square and was most probably built in the second century.

Some other structures found at villas merit brief mention. A buttressed masonry building (Building 28) stood opposite the wing reception room of the villa at Gorhambury. This measured 6.4 x 6.8 m. externally, with footings 750 mm. wide, with a 2 m. wide porch suggested by footings for flanking masonry piers. This has been interpreted as a tower granary. An apsed outbuilding outside the Preston Court villa at Beddingham - an altogether much slighter construction - has instead been interpreted as a shrine.

One further possibility is that some of these structures might have been dovecotes. Large tower-like dovecotes were a common feature of medieval gardens, and frequently of imposing design. Masonry towers - whether built as water-towers, dovecotes, granaries or shrines - are distinctive landmarks. The emphasis placed on such features in Romano-British gardens can be compared to the importance accorded free-standing Egyptian style towers in the sacro-idyllic landscapes of early imperial wall-paintings of Italy.

This description of garden architecture concludes the survey of domestic space.
Although several of the interpretations proposed in this chapter are speculative, it has been possible to describe some of the principal features of Romano-British social life from the architectural evidence. Indeed these descriptions of individual types of rooms may offer a more useful tool for the study of Romano-British architecture than generalised classifications of building types. Before attempting to draw conclusions from the evidence that has been summarised in this chapter it is, however, first necessary to review the evidence for building form. The following chapter is therefore dedicated to the issue of building typology, and in particular to the evidence of hierarchies of morphological complexity that can be identified in the villas and town houses of Roman Britain.
Chapter 5. House types

All houses shared elements of common inspiration, notably through the repeated use of certain essential room types, but each was designed to express a unique individuality. Notwithstanding this it is possible to identify recurrent design characteristics. For instance at Caerwent it was common practice to approach the building across an open forecourt. At Silchester it was instead usual to place an entrance porch on the street and link this to the main rooms by a long corridor (above p.126). In Dorchester, however, it was sometimes impossible to move from the reception rooms to the main living quarters without having to leave the shelter of the building. These features characterise different regional types, but do not distinguish between the house styles found within those regions.

Previous attempts to establish building typologies – based almost exclusively on the evidence of villas - have described hierarchies of complexity, based on aspects of building morphology. Defining characteristics have been taken to be the addition of corridors, wings and courtyards to a nuclear main block: hence cottage villas, corridor houses, winged-corridor houses and courtyard houses (Collingwood and Richmond 1969). Such typologies are widely accepted in the published literature, as are the distinctions drawn between villas, town houses, strip buildings, aisled buildings and roundhouses.

In a recent study JT Smith offers an extensive critique of previous attempts to classify villa plans (Smith 1997, 6-9). He has proposed a refined typological classification and a revised terminology (row-type house in place of cottage villa; Porticus-with-Pavilions in place of ‘winged-corridor’, etc.). His description of the architecture is structured to lend weight to his particular arguments about social structure. Smith gives greatest emphasis to a contrast between buildings dominated by central ‘halls’ and those that were instead divided into rows of more evenly sized units. In this the architectural significance of the portico (the key element of the ‘winged-corridor’ façade) is considered a secondary feature. This approach is effectively the reverse of that taken by Richmond. Other architectural features, such as bath-houses and end-of-wing reception rooms, are not given any weight at all in either of these systems of
Where several variables compete equally to give defining identity to the house it will always be something of an arbitrary decision which to treat as the more important. The classification proposed here essentially follows the structure set out by Richmond, but has been amended to absorb some of the terminological improvements suggested by Smith. This is in part because the Richmond classification still dominates the published literature and in part because there is no compelling evidence to believe that the provision of a central hall is more socially revealing than the use of a portico. The descriptions offered here have, however, been designed to isolate small groups of highly similar structures. The different sub-types can, therefore, be brought together in different combinations to support different classifications.

The variables reviewed in order to propose this typology were ranked as follows:

- **General morphology**: Roundhouses and ailed buildings are sufficiently morphologically distinct to be easily defined as distinct building types.

- **Context**: Town houses, villa-houses and strip-buildings, are more subjective house ‘types’, the identification of which is primarily influenced by the evidence of context. Although there are areas of morphological overlap it is, however, generally the case that the different residential environments generated very different types of house. A more neutral descriptive typology, which ignored the evidence of context, would make the process of description more complicated without significantly improving the robustness of the classification proposed.

- **Morphological complexity**: Within each class of building (as defined above), houses can be ranked according to design complexity. The addition of building ranges to form L-shaped, U-shaped, and courtyard buildings is the most immediate measure of complexity. In simpler buildings the presence/absence of reception space defines sub-types.

- **Arrangement of circulation space**: the presence of a portico, the emphasis given to corner pavilions, and other details of the entrance arrangements further define regional and chronological developments.
These features appear to be more useful in this regard than other details of design.

- **Arrangement of the principal rooms**: the various approaches evident in the location and design of the more dominant rooms (including halls, central reception rooms and end of wing rooms) allow for a further definition of types (see the discussion in chapter 4.3).

- **Other characteristics**: further distinctions between sub-types can be defined through characteristics of design. The layout of forecourts, porches, cross-passages, baths and working areas are sometimes sufficiently distinctive to be used to this end.

The various typological distinctions described here are of limited utility in establishing chronologies of building type. Most of the differences relate to the different uses to which the buildings were put, in particular to the range of social activities practised and the scale of accommodation provided. Other features illustrate particular regional approaches to building design. For these reasons a discussion of the chronology of building development is reserved for Chapter 6 below.
5.1. **Roundhouses**

At the time of the Roman conquest most Britons lived in circular buildings and the evidence for this has already been summarised above (p. 39). Native building traditions persisted on smaller farmstead sites which show little evident change from the LPRIA to the early Roman period (fig. 66: for more detail on the houses illustrated and the types represented see Hingley 1989 from which the illustration is drawn). These buildings are not given detailed attention here.

Small circular timber structures were also built in the suburbs that sprang-up outside the first Roman towns, notably outside London (Perring and Roskams 1991, 100; Museum of London: PUB 80 and CID 90; Sheldon 1974, 10-12), Silchester (Cotton 1947, 124) and Lincoln (Jones 1981, 86-7). These were usually out-houses and short-lived, and probably reflect the presence of Britons attracted to the margins of the new towns during the first phase of their urban growth. These low status outhouses are not closely relevant to the themes presented here.

Although rectangular buildings dominated the Romano-British countryside from the second century onwards, roundhouses continued in use into the fourth century in some regions. This was notably the case in the Fens, where Iron Age building traditions survived in rural areas (as at Rampton and Breaston - see Todd 1973), although second century and later houses here were increasingly built over stone footings which perhaps supported earth-walled and/or timber superstructures. These later stone founded circular buildings were a feature of a Midlands region, with numerous examples recovered from work in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire and others known in Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire (unpublished paper by G. Keevill and P. Booth). The distribution matches the likely area of influence of the Corieltauvi (Millett 1990, 67), although further examples are also known from the northeast of the province, including villas in North Yorkshire and County Durham (see Bidwell 1985, 28-31). Although essentially a rural phenomenon similar circular buildings were also found in the same region in some ‘small towns’, where such buildings were evident down to the fourth century, as at Towcester and Alcester (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 17).

Circular buildings have also been found on sites on Hadrian’s Wall, most strikingly at
Vindolanda where as many as thirty such buildings may have been built to the north of the praetentura early in the third century (Bidwell 1985, 28-31). It is tentatively argued that these were houses accommodating a civilian work force under military control, and for whatever reason they were built they illustrate the use of roundhouses in a very Roman context.

Some circular houses may have been a later Roman reintroduction, used for lesser buildings on higher status villa sites. One such was Redlands Farm, Stanwick, where stone structures up to 14.5 m. in diameter were built as outhouses and served a range of industrial and residential functions. Some were designed to permit wheeled access, as demonstrated by the wheel-ruts which crossed the 4.1m wide threshold to Building H at Winterton and as has been suggested for the buildings at Redlands Farm, Stanwick (unpublished paper by G. Keevill and P. Booth). By contrast the porch into the circular building at Shakenoak suggests that this was more likely to have been used as a dwelling, and hearths have also been found in several of these buildings. Like the aisled buildings the later Roman circular houses were built over substantial stone foundations (often more than 600 mm. wide) and were likely to have been high roofed. These roundhouses appear to have been similar in functional range to the aisled buildings, and the building type would appear to have been used deliberately to manifest social or functional differences.

The use of circular structures does not necessarily represent an unbroken tradition of use from the pre-Roman period. Roman roundhouses were built using different construction techniques to those preferred in the LPRIA, including the greater use of stone footings and the use of squared timbers in contexts where round-sectioned ones were previously used, as in the second-century structures at the Kirk Sink villa site. These later circular houses were also more likely to have been found as outbuildings rather than as principal residences, or were used for certain specific functions, such as temples and shrines or in association with bath-houses (above p. 182). It is therefore possible that although outwardly pre-Roman in design, these roundhouses were essentially Roman in character. This might explain why the roundhouse did not return to widespread fashion when other aspects of Celtic culture were revived in the post-Roman period.
Roundhouses were usually found on low status sites or as outhouses on higher status settlements, and may have been generally replaced in function by aisled buildings. They were infrequently used as high-status buildings and Romanised sites, and since this is essentially a review of the character of elite and urban society they are of only peripheral relevance to the central themes of this thesis.
5.2. Aisled buildings

Rectangular aisled buildings are found on many Romano-British sites, and the architectural type may have been developed within the province (Hadman 1978; Scott 1990). An aisled building from Lixhe in Belgium provides a late parallel for the Romano-British evidence (Van Ossel 1992, 291), but most aisled structures from this region were of different form. It has already been established that the Romano-British aisled building differed significantly in layout and character from the contemporary longhouses popular in northwestern Europe (above p. 41). It is more probable that the Romano-British aisled house represented a local development of a building type that was first found in the pre-conquest Romanising phases of high-status sites in Southeast Britain. This is suggested by an early example of this type of building found in immediately pre-Roman contexts at Gorhambury (Neal et al. 1990).

Hingley notes (1990, 136) that aisled buildings shared several structural features with the Iron Age roundhouses, notably the use of central posts, axial entrances and central hearths. Both types of house were also designed with lofty internal spaces and an imposing external aspect (p. 81). There is a marked possibility that aisled buildings were directly influenced by roundhouse design. If this were the case it is possible that the introduction of aisled buildings represented a deliberate attempt to place the facilities normally found in a roundhouse into a rectangular structure of more fashionable (i.e. Romanised) external appearance. It is perhaps relevant that one of the regions where aisled buildings were most popular - the Fens - is also the area where roundhouses continued longest in use.

Two basic types of aisled building have been defined:

B.I. Simple undivided aisled houses comprising a single open room.

B.II. A developed, and later, type with a distinct suite of rooms at one end.

This basic typological development is similar to that noted in the strip buildings, and some later buildings similarly included attractively decorated high-status reception rooms. Typically these buildings were about twice as long as they were wide, although a significant number were of longer, narrower form.

Aisled buildings were often first built in timber, and subsequently rebuilt with masonry
foundations. These buildings were frequently divided into an upper end with partitioned rooms and larger open lower end - a plan type poorly represented in continental European sites (Smith 1964a). The lack of evidence for stalls, dung or drainage militates indicates that aisled buildings were probably not used primarily as cattle byres. The wide entrances commonly found in such buildings suggests, however, that they may have been used as stables and workshops.

Many simpler aisled buildings were put to agricultural use (Applebaum 1972, Morris 1979, Hingley 1989). Such structures are commonly found on villa estates, usually subordinate to a main house. Storage and industrial uses are also well attested by both features and finds. In particular various types of oven are commonly found. But where the aisled buildings included a suite of smaller rooms these usually included an area dedicated to residential use.

Regional groupings of aisled buildings have been noted in Hampshire and in the Fens (especially in the Nene Valley around Northamptonshire and Peterbourgh), extending northwards to the Humber (for the Hampshire buildings see DJ Smith 1978, 126; for those in the Nene Valley see Wild 1974). In Hampshire these free-standing buildings commonly included reception features and were set at right angles to a winged corridor house within a walled enclosure, an arrangement largely restricted to this region (see fig. 65). In the Nene valley timber and stone founded aisled buildings were one of the most common building types in the third and fourth centuries. There is less evidence here for internal subdivision and the addition of higher status rooms. Many of the buildings were similarly proportioned, with the width of the nave equal to the sum of the two aisles, and the length of the structure twice its width.

Two interpretative models are current:

1. Richmond views the aisled house as part of the villa rustica, housing the estate workers and providing facilities for agricultural storage and processing, with the owner resident elsewhere (Richmond 1969, 65).

2. In contrast Applebaum prefers to see these buildings as the homes of extended families who could also own property (Applebaum 1972).

The first aisled building at Sparsholt, which was probably built in the second century,
preceded the construction of the 'main' winged-corridor house and contained a bath block and tessellated rooms at one end (a pattern repeated at Chilgrove and elsewhere). Although an earlier structure the aisled building took a 'secondary' position within the courtyard (i.e. not the principal site opposite the entrance with the southeast aspect). The winged-corridor house that was subsequently built on the favoured site was never provided with a bath suite of its own. Here as elsewhere it seems probable that certain reception rooms placed in the aisled building were for the common use of inhabitants within both structures.

Principal reception rooms were sometimes found in aisled houses (see p. 153). Where aisled buildings were found alongside winged-corridor buildings it seems likely that functions were distributed between such structures as most convenient, with public and working areas exploiting the loftier (better ventilated and more imposing) structure of the aisled building, with the private rooms and suites in the 'main' house. It is notable that in almost all instances where aisled and winged-corridor structures are found alongside each other the 'winged-corridor' house has the dominant position and favoured aspect with regard to the courtyards and gardens.

The elaborate and imposing design of the building at Meonstoke and the massive nature of many aisled buildings (see above p. 81; King 1996), show that these were important monuments in the Romano-British landscape. Villa estates were places where agricultural wealth was stored. In a world where famine was a constant threat the manifestation of extravagant surplus spoke powerfully of the benefits accruing from the existing social order. The importance of such abundance has been emphasised by Purcell who observes that storerooms in the Roman tradition were intended to impress (1995, 169). It is probable that many aisled buildings were used as barns and granaries. The emphasis given to scale and height most probably referred to the importance of villa estates in producing and storing agricultural wealth.

This provides a possible explanation for the scale of investment made in the construction of both villa houses (as places of elite residence), and aisled buildings (as places of wealth storage). It seems likely that an exaggerated emphasis on the architecture of storage would have attended estates where the owners were less regularly resident, and therefore less able to define and reinforce their position through
social activity (as represented in the architecture of villa houses). If this were the case it offers some support for the model proposed by Richmond. Regions where aisled buildings were dominant were perhaps regions characterised by absentee landlords. This makes it unlikely that imposing aisled buildings housed extended families that were also owners of the land.

Aisled buildings also provided domestic and workshop accommodation in many small towns (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 20). In London excavations close to the site of the forum, at 5-12 Fenchurch Street, uncovered part of an early Flavian aisled building with timber and brick earth walls set on gravel and mortar foundations. It probably measured 19m by at least 11m, with an aisle 2.2m wide. A room with an opus signinum floor and wall paintings, consisting of an architectural illusionistic scheme with a standing female figure, was added in the early second century (Rhodes 1987b, 169-72). An adjacent room contained amphoras and flagons, but little tableware, and might perhaps have been a kitchen. Other aisled buildings from urban contexts include Dorchester, Building 12,3 at Cirencester; and Silchester Building 18,3.
5.3. Strip buildings

Rectangular blocks, set gable-end to streets, characterised suburban and street side settlements (including civilian settlements found outside the gates of forts), where they were usually the dominant (if not only) building form. Similar blocks were also found along principal streets inside the main towns. Buildings of this type were found soon after the Roman conquest and examples destroyed in the revolt of AD 60-61 are known from sites in London (as at No 1 Poultry, Newgate Street and Leadenhall Court), and Colchester (as at Balkerne Lane, Buildings 44-6).

Following the work of Boethius (1960, 137ff.), strip buildings are usually considered to have an Italian origin (see p. 36; Wacher 1975, 63-4; Stambaugh 1989, 174), and to have been a feature of urban sites throughout the empire (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 45). A close analysis of the plans of towns such as Pompeii and Herculaneum provides few and poor examples of buildings of the type. The normal pattern of development in the Mediterranean provinces involved blocks of houses (insulae) including several shops and houses divided by a network of party walls. These blocks were very different to the free standing rectangular buildings described here which were more typical of the northwest provinces than of the empire in general.

Strip buildings were common in the small towns and roadside settlements of Gaul and especially in the canabae of forts along the Rhine (as at Nimègue). It is likely that the form of the building-type introduced to Britain owed much to architectural developments in this region. Strip buildings were not really an urban form at all, they belong best in the suburban or extra-mural vicus, and have a military and utilitarian aspect. The basic elements of their design show similarities with the rectangular halls commonly used as stables, factories and stores at both villa and urban sites, and which as hall-houses, were widely used on low-status sites in Roman-Britain.

Strip buildings were typically crowded close together, with eavesdrips between the buildings rarely more than 1 m. across. Groups of such buildings appear to have been laid out and rebuilt together in roadside settlements at Lincoln and Heronbridge. In later developments groups of three strip buildings at two sites in Caerwent (18 N and 16 S) were subsequently remodelled to form a single house. It is possible that here and elsewhere groups of strip buildings lay within a single property. In Lincoln's southern
suburb two strip buildings appear to have been built as one, with a common party wall. A similar design was apparently adopted in the construction of the flanking strip buildings on Sites 2 and 3 in Wroxeter. The common ownership of groups of shops set in block was also observed in Verulamium - Insula 14, although the plan recovered of the earlier phases is too incomplete to be reliably used for detailed analysis.

Strip houses remained in widespread use until the end of the Roman period. Good examples of fourth-century strip building have been recorded at Admiral's Walk in Cirencester, Lincoln St Marks and Caerwent.

Although the descriptions which follow concentrate on the evidence of roadside settlements and suburbs, the classifications offered can equally be applied to the simple rectangular halls found in other locations.

C.I. Halls

Some strip buildings consisted of a single, large central hall (Type C.Ia: fig. 67a). There are numerous examples from the civilian settlements outside and succeeding forts in the northern part of the province, as at Corbridge (Bishop and Dore 1988, figs 3 and 5). Examples from towns in the southern part of the province include House 3,1-2 at Verulamium, and Houses 22,B1 and 25,B1 at Silchester. These buildings were generally smaller than other strip buildings, with internal areas of 75-115m², and in some instances may have been workshops or stables attached to neighbouring residences. Characteristic features include hearths, drains and - where stone was plentiful - flagged floors.

A simple development of the form involved partitioning off a single rectangular room at the back of the building (type C.Ib: fig. 67b). This utilitarian approach is typical of the civilian sites outside the gates of Roman forts, and also evident at sites such as Houses 1,2 and 28,3B at Verulamium. This perhaps allowed for some separation of working and living quarters. A similar division of space can be identified in several of the ancillary buildings found associated with the larger town houses (hence the distinction drawn between rooms of type W1 and W2 above p. 171).

Most strip buildings were designed around a large central area often containing ovens and hearths occupying the bulk of the building's space and likely to have been a
workshop (see p. 169). Small rectangular rooms were typically added to the rear where the main living and reception quarters were located (Type C.Ic). Strip buildings were usually 6-11 m. wide and 15-35 m. long (commonly 8-9 m. wide by 20-28 m. long), although some early timber examples were as little as 4m. across.

The workshops were usually entered directly from the street. Large ovens were often built against one of the side walls, most usually on the right hand side of the building. These were often situated roughly half way along the building and in several cases were built next to a doorway from the adjacent alleyway which occupied the space between one building and its neighbour. The doorway here gave access to the reception rooms to the rear of the building without the need to pass along the full length of the workshop and may have improved the draw of the adjacent fire. Larger workrooms were not infrequently subdivided by timber partitions during the later phases of a building’s use, often to create two or three working areas (for other complex internal arrangements see further below). A typical example of this is found in Sapperton 4 (see also House 9,B4 at Silchester, and Building K at Newgate Street, London).

Rear rooms were usually formed by partitioning off parts of the back of the house, usually at the time of construction although sometimes in the course of later alteration. On smaller plots, where space was at a premium, these living quarters were found in rear extensions. Such extensions were common in London: the houses at Newgate Street (Buildings J and K) were typical (fig. 68). Similar rear extensions were found behind strip buildings in Caerwent (as the three houses in 8 S), but this approach was not commonplace in the roadside settlements where larger plots allowed for bigger buildings within which suitable space for the living quarters could be more easily found.

More elaborate building techniques were sometimes employed in the construction of rear extensions. Building 46 at Balkerne Lane in Colchester is illustrative. This slightly built Claudio-Neronian wattle and daub structure was improved by a rear extension built with post-in-trench walls (Room 6). Building J at Newgate Street in London, another wattle and daub construction, had an earth-walled rear extension containing three reception rooms. The sharpest contrast between the quality of the
construction techniques employed was found in the third-century masonry extensions added to the timber strip buildings at No 1 Poultry in London.

The complexity of the living quarters can be measured by the number of rooms provided. The most common arrangement (type C.Ic.1: fig. 67c) involved one larger and better decorated room, sometimes with mortar floors and painted walls (type M rooms, see above p. 151), with an adjacent narrower service room (a type A/L room). These rooms were usually reached directly from the workshop. Sapperton 4 is again a good example (others include Silchester 11,B4; 9,B4; 10,B5). In more complex buildings a third room (perhaps equivalent to a B/Y room) was added behind the larger reception room (type C.Ic.2: fig. 67d). Three-roomed suites of this nature are well represented at Caerwent (Houses 8 S, 14 N, etc.), and mirror the sleeping/reception quarters found in villas and town houses (see p. 157). Only rarely were more than three rooms provided in this part of the building, although a more complicated arrangements were occasionally found in larger towns as Silchester 9,B3 (type C.Ic.3: fig. 67e).

In extreme cases the reception quarters were fitted out to include a small room heated by a hypocaust floor (as Caerwent 18 N; Room 6 in House 9,B3 at Silchester; and Site I at Wroxeter). There has been some speculation that these heated rooms may have served some industrial function (R. Brewer, pers. comm.). The presence of a plunge bath attached to the heated room set behind the strip building at No. 1 Poultry shows this to have been a private bath (see p. 175). Another unusual feature more normally associated with high status housing was the apse built on one side of Sapperton 3.

Not all strip buildings followed the basic pattern of a main working area with smaller living rooms behind. The main variation - best represented by various buildings excavated at Caerwent - involved inserting smaller rooms at the front of the workshop (Type C.Id). Usually one or two rooms were found here. These were perhaps shops (type C.Id.1: fig. 67f), but more complex types involved the further addition of porticoes and corridors (type C.Id.2: fig. 67g). Strip buildings in continental Europe were often laid out with shop-counters open to the street, as at Schwarzenacker in Gallia Belgica (Kolling 1972, 238-57). Although the evidence from Britain is less conclusive, it is difficult to place any alternative interpretation on the rooms at the
front of House 16 S at Caerwent and Sites 1-5 at Wroxeter (see p.131). In both of
these cases a portico along the street frontage gave covered access to the supposed
shops. On a more modest scale something similar seems to have been attempted in the
house on Site 3 at Hibaldstow.

Longitudinal porticoes were rarely found in strip buildings, although a reception room
to the rear of an early third-century strip building at Chelmsford was reached by a
corridor (Drury 1975). In several instances, however, it seems likely that the timber
internal partitions within the building screened off passages from a front entrance to
the rear reception rooms (Type C.Ie: fig. 67h). This was perhaps the purpose of
partitions added in the strip buildings excavated at Lincoln St. Marks. A strip building
in Insula at 8 at Caerwent was also laid-out with a side corridor (Caerwent 8 S).

A Caerwent style of setting buildings alongside a forecourt influenced the design of
some strip buildings. At least two such buildings were built alongside yards (Type
C.If: fig. 67i). House 9 N at Caerwent was otherwise a fairly standard strip house,
with a central workroom dividing small rooms at the front from others at the back.
House 13 N was more unusual, and a row of pillars along one side of this building
divided the main workroom from a single aisle on the opposite side of the house to the
forecourt.

Rows of rooms were found behind the larger ‘workrooms’ at Silchester 5,1 and
Heronbridge 1 provide a more ambitious level of accommodation normally attempted
(Type C.Ig: fig. 67j). The building type is something of a hybrid between the
workshop/hall strip buildings and the row-type buildings described below.

C.II. Row-houses

All of the types described above include a large central workroom, even though in
some instances the insertion of internal partitions had sometimes reduced this
considerably in size by the time the buildings went out of use.

There were, however, some strip buildings which never contained a main room, and in
most of these the building had been divided into series of roughly equally proportioned
rooms arranged in a single row.

Early examples of small row-houses include a three-roomed house at No. 1 Poultry
(Type C.IIa. fig. 69a), and a building of similar general proportions was found at Site 27 in Vindolanda. These were of identical appearance to the simple town houses described below, but are included here because of their street-side context. There were, however, longer rows of rooms in a small number of houses. An early example is Building 44 from the excavations at Balkerne Lane, Colchester.

Long row-houses were built behind London’s early forum. Six narrow strip buildings, up to 30m long, were found at Leadenhall Court. Some were divided into a series of small square rooms, each with a hearth placed centrally against one side wall (Type C.IIb. fig. 69b). These rooms were not interconnecting, but separately entered from its own yard (Milne 1992, 73-7). In these cases the buildings appear to have been given over entirely to cramped accommodation, with no main workrooms. It seems likely that these were rows of rooms for rent. A similar, but much shorter, row of rooms was attached to the rear of Building K at Newgate Street in London.

C.III. Halls with porticoes

Some Silchester strip buildings (Houses 5, B1; 5,2 and 19,1: fig. 69), were equipped with a portico (fig. 69c). In all cases these were found in buildings which had other architectural features suggesting that they were intended to receive guests. These included living rooms with high quality pavements, and House 5,2 included a separate wing with a full suite of living rooms and an entrance porch.

C.IV. With a projecting rear-wing

Exceptionally living rooms were added not to the rear of the building but on one side of the house, an approach principally illustrated by examples from Silchester (Houses 9, B2 and 19, B1: fig. 69d). There is a distinctively ‘tower-like’ look to these rooms. Although it has not been possible to date the development of this type there is some possibility that the introduction of rear reception rooms to strip buildings contributed to the evolution of the winged and L-shaped town houses (see further below), or was alternatively an attempt to mimic this more sophisticated building form in a lower status context.

C.V. Central corridor buildings

Another unusual building type is represented by the corridor house found in Vicus I at
Vindolanda (Birley 1977, 70). A central corridor divides two independent series of rooms, not dissimilar to the row houses described as type IIa above (fig. 69e). This arrangement was similar to that in the rear part of Heronbridge I, and might also have been found in the 4th house of Insula I at No. 1 Poultry in London (although this was smaller and the plan requires a certain degree of reconstruction). These houses are reminiscent of brothels in Pompeii, and a similar function can not wholly be discounted. These houses would also have been admirably suited to serve as inns or rented rooms.

C.VI. **Aisled**

Some larger strip buildings had timber aisles, and there is overlap between this building form and the aisled buildings described above. Examples of this type are largely restricted to sites along Ermine Street in Lincolnshire (fig. 69f and fig. 69g). These include Building IV at Hibaldstow, which was probably a half-timbered structure with aisles formed by large circular posts. Further south, at Lincoln St Marks, a half-timbered strip building with timber aisles was rebuilt in stone in the late third century. Glass found in a half-timbered aisled strip building at Sapperton (Site 2), suggests that this may have had clerestory lighting.

Apart from this regional group there were also a couple of other strip buildings with internal pier-bases that may have carried an aisle. These included House 13 N at Caerwent and House 5,B1 at Silchester.

C.VII. **Pseudo-insula (blocks of shops)**

Early Romano-British towns contained complex rectangular timber buildings given over to a series of small rooms including workrooms and shops. These were not strictly strip buildings but are described here for convenience. Examples of such buildings include structures behind the early London forum (e.g. Building 6 at Leadenhall Court) and from the early civilian phases of Roman Colchester (e.g. Building 94 at Culver Street). Full plans of these buildings - which were at least 13m wide - have not been recovered, and it is difficult to make any useful suggestions about the ways in which they might have functioned. An exception to this is represented by the evidence of the shops found at Verulamium Insula 14 (fig. 16). Here enough
survived to allow for the detailed description of a series of narrow commercial
tenancies that had perhaps placed beneath a single roof, although the architectural
descriptions depend on an uncomfortable degree of plan reconstruction.

5.4. Town houses

D.I. Row-houses

Many of the more rudimentary structures found in towns were out-houses and strip-buildings of the types described above. There were, however, some simple row-houses without porticoes which were of slightly more ambitious design. When found in the countryside such buildings are usually described as 'cottage villas', following Richmond's classification. It was unusual for a row-house not to have a portico after the close of the first century and most of these buildings were probably the product of atypical circumstances.

Four types of such house are provisionally identified (fig. 70), within which the basic three-roomed nucleus is a common feature (see p. 157). The simplest buildings consisted of a row of two or three rooms (room-type P), in which the central rooms were sometimes slightly smaller than the flanking ones (type D.Ia.1: not illustrated and broadly equivalent to the type C:IIa houses). Examples include the three-roomed House 29,B3 at Silchester (although a timber corridor might have eluded identification in excavation), and a small fourth-century 3-roomed building excavated at Dorchester on Thames (this measured 6m. x 12.4m.: Frere 1964, 121). A more elaborate version of the type involved placing emphasis on a central doorway (type D.Ia.2: fig. 70a). This was the case in Building 4 at Colliton Park, Dorchester, where the central room provided access to the two end rooms. In this example the central room was comparatively large and was perhaps designed in imitation of a central hall (type Q room), but elsewhere smaller rooms and antechambers were preferred at this location (as Silchester 22,2).

Some slightly larger houses of the same basic type could contain up to half a dozen rooms (Type D.Ib: fig. 70b). In these situations some reception facilities were given greater emphasis, as indicated by the heated room in House 17,4 at Silchester and by the larger end reception room (type R room) at the north end of House 6,B1 at
Silchester.

A fashion for entering the houses at Caerwent by way of a forecourt, rather than directly from the street, gave rise to a particular form of house (Type D.Ic: fig. 70c). In a few instances the portico facade of this building type was dispensed with, and in these buildings the first room to be encountered on entrance from the forecourt was either a large central room (as Caerwent House 23 N) or an anteroom (as Caerwent 6 N).

A more complicated type of row-house is represented by Building F found in the excavations at Watling Court (Type D.Id: fig. 70d). Too little of the plan of this building was recovered to permit close description but traces of at least a dozen rooms were recorded. Most buildings of similar complexity incorporated a corridor-peristyle, but this structure was of unusually early date (late 1st-early 2nd century) and was located in a heavily built-up area, which features might explain the absence of a corridor.

D.II Row-houses with a portico (‘corridor houses’)

Some simple two or three roomed houses were given porticoes (Type D.IIa: fig. 71a). More usually, however, the portico took visitors to a large rear reception room (type R) which had been added to the core group of rooms. A distinction can be drawn between houses of this type which contained a small core group and a single main reception room (type D.IIb.1: fig. 71b - House 22,5 at Silchester is another example); those where the core group was given additional emphasis through the provision of an antechamber (room type A) but where the portico and rear reception room were less dominant (type D.IIb.2: fig. 71c); and those where the rear reception area was of exaggerated importance and included a suite of two or more rooms (type D.IIb.3: fig. 71d). House 4,2 at Verulamium - built in the late second century - is perhaps the best preserved example of this last type, where the rear room contained a finely decorated pavement and was reached by way of a cross passage or ‘lobby’.

In some houses the portico had been partitioned off at its ends to form an entry chamber beside the street (room type E1/E4) and a small room at the far end of the corridor (room type T2). These rooms occupied the place of the corner pavilions common to the ‘winged-corridor’ building façade. Some of these ‘pseudo-winged’
houses were built around a single small suite of living rooms (type D.IIC.1: fig. 71e), but they more commonly contained two or more separate suites (type D.IIC.2: fig. 71f). House 6,1 from Verulamium included two main groups of rooms, each including an antechamber, rear-chamber and main room (room-types A, B and P). Other more complex features found at houses of this type include the bathhouse added to House 4,4 at Verulamium. A couple of houses excavated at Caerwent were of similar internal layout but were entered across an intervening yard (Type D.IID: fig. 71g).

**D.III ‘Winged-corridor’ (porticus-with-pavilion) houses**

Although essentially a rural building form ‘winged-corridor’ houses have also been found in small towns and roadside settlements, as at Droitwich, Camerton, Hibbaldstow, Great Chesterford and Margidunum (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 18 and fig. 3). Their presence in larger towns appears to be late feature, and all of the datable examples identified in this survey were built in the 4th century.

The standard layout of these buildings involved a principal wing reception room (type R), usually with a lesser reception room at the central location (type Q). Amongst the smaller buildings of the type (type D.IIIA.1: fig. 49b), is an example from Winchester (House 23.3). The plan of this house is wholly indistinguishable from a series of like villas and includes a central porch leading to a reception room flanked by smaller rooms. More complicated buildings of the type (type D.IIIA.2) are illustrated by the houses excavated at Beeches Road in Cirencester (not illustrated). Here the wing rooms were also the largest and best decorated, but a more complicated arrangement of smaller rooms – probably associated with two (if not more) suites of more private rooms - had reduced the central rooms to a lesser role. There is also one clear example, Building 4 at Castor, of a town house designed with a winged-corridor façade and a central ‘hall’ (type D.IIIb - not illustrated).

**D.IV L-shaped houses**

Most masonry houses known from excavations in the principal Romano-British towns incorporated two or more separate wings. An L-shaped plan was commonly achieved through the addition of a rear reception wing, containing one or more large reception rooms. From the middle of the second century onwards this was the typical Romano-
British town house, and buildings of this type account for the bulk of the published evidence (although irregular types of timber-built row and corridor houses may actually have been the more common).

The simplest of buildings consisted of a core group of three or four rooms, to which a single room had been added at one corner. In some instances this additional room was a heated reception room. The absence of a corridor is an unusual feature (Type D.IVa: fig. 72a), and more normally a portico lead to a rear wing reception room (Type D.IVb: fig. 72b).

In some buildings a large 'work-hall' arrangement (including rooms of types W1 and W2) exploited the street frontage: an arrangement best represented at Silchester (Type D.IVc: fig. 72c). The location and character of this wing suggest that it might have contained stables and a household workshop. In the best examples of the type (as House 29,1), the entrance to the house was achieved through a narrow entrance (type E8) which separated the streetside wing from the principal rooms perpendicular to the street. Otherwise the plans of these houses were typical of the row-type house and included 3-4 roomed suites and rear reception rooms.

At Caerwent houses were usually approached across a forecourt, to one side of which there often stood a separate 'work-hall' wing (with W1 and W2 type rooms). Houses of this type were fairly small, and not dominated by the larger rear reception rooms common to most other L-shaped buildings. At least one house did not include a portico (type D.IVd.1: Caerwent House 4 S, not illustrated), although this was usually a standard feature (type D.IVd.2: fig. 72d).

The commonest type of L-shaped house incorporated a main suite of rooms in a wing set perpendicular to the street. A portico alongside this block ran from the street to a rear wing containing the principal reception rooms. Several variations on the standard design have been noted. These include:

- **Type D.IVe.1**: houses of standard design (fig. 72e).
- **Type D.IVe.2**: houses with a porch adjacent to the street (fig. 72f).
- **Type D.IVe.3**: houses where the rear wings were given less emphasis (fig. 72g).
• **Type D.IVe.4:** where the rows of rooms were unusually long: a feature of houses at Verulamium (not illustrated - Houses 4,10 and 4,7 are examples).

• **Type D.IVe.5:** where the two wings were poorly articulated: perhaps a characteristic of houses at Dorchester (fig. 73).

A significant variation on the standard arrangement involved the addition of a further corridor or portico to separate the entrance porch from the main body of the house. This approach was very widely adopted at Silchester, where the following sub-types can be identified:

• **Type D.IVf.1:** where the rear wing is a reduced feature (fig. 72h).

• **Type D.IVf.2:** where the main reception room was not in the rear wing but centrally located (not illustrated).

• **Type D.IVf.3:** the standard type – where the rear wing consisted of one or two main reception rooms (fig. 72i).

• **Type D.IVf.4:** complex types in which two or more separate suites can be identified in the main row.

House 8,1 at Silchester – one of the complex examples of this building type - is in some respects the classic Silchester house (fig. 74). It contains all of the design features employed in the better houses (Houses 1,2; 24,1; 27,1 and 27,2 are more complicated examples of the same type). An imposing entrance porch was built onto the street (type E3) and gave access to a portico (type C3), which linked the entrance with the main rooms. The main wing was dominated by a central ‘audience’ room (type Q), either side of which were three-roomed living suites: each containing a main room (type P – perhaps a living room) and two smaller ones (types A and B – respectively an antechamber and bedroom). The suite furthest from the street was the larger and better decorated of the two: these were perhaps the living rooms of the master of the house. Opposite the central reception room was a porch/veranda (type E6) which opened onto the garden or courtyard. The portico continued beyond the main wing to enclose the third side of the garden/yard and gave access to a rear wing. Here, in a separate structure and remote from the street, was a suite of three impressive reception rooms (type R): a main service and circulation area lead to an
apse-ended room — or place of honour - to one side, and to a large heated chamber on the other. This was surely the main dining room. Beyond these reception rooms, and concealed from the corridor-peristyle was a larger hall: a low status room (type W) providing the house with storage and working space and where the kitchens were probably found. The design of the main wing, with its two private suites of rooms and central reception room, was typical of many Romano-British houses and similar plans can be traced in villas and town houses throughout the province. Both the entrance and the design of the rear reception rooms were, instead, clearly influenced by fashions particular to Silchester.

It is interesting to note that even the later houses in Silchester continue to use space in what was essentially an urban fashion, despite the declining urban pressures. The influence of strip buildings is reflected in the way that the principal range was almost always built with its gable end towards the street and by the continued preference to place the main reception rooms in a separate wing attached to the back of the house. Even where present, as in House 8,1 at Silchester, the central reception room was rarely accorded an equivalent status to the rear one.

Several L-shaped houses were of irregular design. These include houses where the addition of later extensions within restricted building plots resulted in the unusual placement of a reception wing towards the front of the house (as in the later phases of Houses 7,2 and 28,1 at Silchester). In other irregular L-shaped houses rooms of uncertain type were added close to the entrance — perhaps associated with commercial activity conducted from these rooms (which may explain the plans of Houses 26,3 and 18,2 at Silchester).

D.V Houses with three main building ranges

Houses arranged over three of more building ranges were rare in Romano-British towns, although several may have been present in Colchester from the middle of the second century (e.g. Buildings 70 and 123 - although these are more usually reconstructed as courtyard houses). These buildings were essentially bigger and more complex versions of the L-shaped houses described above. Such houses included functional rooms in a streetside range, living quarters in a range set gable-end to the street and a range of reception rooms in a rear wing. A distinction can be drawn
between those houses laid out to a regular plan, and those where the wings were unevenly arranged.

Complex arrangements of rooms over three disjointed wings include Silchester House 23,2 and Verulamium House 28,1-2 (Type D.Va: fig. 75a). These houses shared a preference for extensive porticoes, but did not contain a significantly increased amount of accommodation over the L-shaped buildings described above. The additional wing was mainly used to augment the working space alongside the street. House 24,2 at Silchester was an exception to this, and may have contained as many as four different suites of living rooms.

In the more symmetrically arranged houses the wings were laid out with a portico around three sides of a rectangular garden or courtyard (Type D.Va: fig. 75b). Few complete plans of such U-shaped houses are known. House 4,8 from Verulamium illustrates that these houses included a similar range of room types to that found in smaller houses. Here too the additional streetside wing seems to have been added to increase the available working space. The extensive heated suite to the rear of the house, containing as many as six separate rooms and several times larger than the arrangements found at Silchester, can still be treated as single reception suite. This was separated from the main range of the house by a large room that probably served as a kitchen, beyond which lay two or perhaps three suites of smaller rooms. The entrance range, although poorly preserved, is perhaps most likely to have housed working and storage space.

Several U-shaped houses at Caerwent were created by linking adjacent houses (Type D.Vc: not illustrated). This complicated building history makes it difficult to describe their working arrangements.

D.VI Courtyard houses

The earliest courtyard house identified in this survey was built in Colchester prior to the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60 (Lion Walk, Building 8). This appears to have had three ranges of rooms set around a central courtyard although the plan is incomplete and these elements may not have all been part of the same house (Crummy 1984, 36). Otherwise courtyard houses were only evident from the middle of the second century, as at Balkerne Lane, Buildings 19 and 20 (Crummy 1984, 25).
The plans of several irregular courtyard houses involved the addition of walls and ranges to the buildings which otherwise betrayed a range of similarities to the L-shaped and U-shaped houses described above (fig. 76). These irregular courtyard houses with rooms set around only two or three sides of the courtyard were of several types. These included:

- Row-houses of simple design (i.e. a 3-roomed suite with a rear reception room) but where the provision of a complex entrance involving a porch and corridor, and the addition of other ancillary features were exploited to enclose a central courtyard (type D.VIa.1: fig. 76a)

- L-shaped buildings otherwise conforming to the range of types described under type D.IV above, but in which a further wing of low-status or service rooms had been added to form a U-shaped building and an enclosing wall was further placed to define a courtyard (type D.VIa.2 fig. 76c).

- Houses formed of two parallel ranges perpendicular to the street (and laid out with better rooms to the rear) linked to front and back by entrance corridors and garden walls (type D.VIa.3 fig. 76b).

- Buildings in which the main accommodation was found in a single extended range of rooms, but where a main reception room stood apart and the corridors which linked this with the main range and with the entrance arrangements enclosed a courtyard (type D.VIa.4 - not illustrated).

In U-shaped buildings (Type D.VIb: fig. 76d) a corridor-peristyle enclosed three sides of a courtyard (but not normally its fourth side against the main street). The plans of these houses suggest the presence of several suites of rooms (perhaps as many as five separate suites in Verulamium House 27.2).

A particular type of house is represented by an elongated courtyard (Type D.VIc: fig. 77a). As was normal a main range of rooms was set perpendicular to the street, with a further range of principal reception rooms to the rear. A lesser group of service rooms was set alongside the street, whilst the fourth side of the courtyard was enclosed by irregular groups of small rooms and garden walls. The unusual characteristic was the length of the main range, which could also include a principal
reception room (type Q room), with flanking suites of more private rooms. The rear reception wing was also made more elaborate in these houses, and could include an apsidal ended room. This house type has been found in both Wroxeter and Caerwent, where its unusual size has resulted in the suggestion that it may have been an inn or mansio (Wacher 1995, 382).

Symmetrical courtyard houses, with ranges enclosing all four sides, were a rarity confined in large part to the later period and the western part of the province. It has also been noted that most known examples of this type of house occur in the coloniae, although the sample is a small one (Hodgson 1996, 147). Two basic types can be described: houses with rooms on all four sides of the central courtyard but in which the peristyle did not link all four wings (type D.VId.1. fig. 77b) and houses where the peristyle neatly defined the central garden (type D.VId.2. fig. 77c). The house found at 13-17 Berkley St. in Gloucester (House 1.18) is the earliest of this type yet to be closely dated and was probably built in the mid-second century. Caerwent 3 S is also an important example. The rear wing of this house included a central reception room connected to a principal suite of rooms to the left (including an antechamber, rear chamber and main room) with a two-roomed group to the right. As was usually the case the rooms against the street frontage were of low-status and may have included stores, stables and workrooms. The remains of Cirencester 25,1 (found beneath the Abbey Grounds) are also worthy of note: here three sides of a third-century or later courtyard building were found with a peristyle of columns supported on a stylobate. House 14,1 at Silchester is an interesting variant on the type, since the main reception wing here (containing Rooms 22-29) was designed in the style of a ‘winged-corridor’ house but also formed one wing of a peristyle house. Most peristyle houses showed the influence of local Romano-British architectural styles, and were elaborate versions of Romano-British house types rather than wholly imported forms.

One large courtyard house - House 3,2 at Verulaumium was of such regular form and unusual size that it can be treated as a separate class of building (Type D.VIe: fig. 77d). Thirty-two rooms were neatly arranged around a near-square central peristyle. The symmetry and order of the building is such that it must have functioned differently to most of the houses described above. Even here, however, some of the basic features of the Romano-British house can be recognised. A rear reception room is
evident (R-type - Room 33), whilst a main range of rooms incorporated a larger suite (Rooms 25 and 31) which could have functioned as a central ‘audience’ chamber (Q-type).

Forts also contained courtyard houses. The house excavated at South Shields (Hodgson 1996) has already been referred to. Essentially this included a narrow entrance wing (also containing a bath-house), a long range of rooms perpendicular to the entrance consisting of two suites of interconnected living rooms, and a rear reception wing including a main reception suite equipped with a hot room and a large dining room with couches. The other long wing contained a kitchen and stable. Notwithstanding the Mediterranean parallels properly suggested for this building, the arrangement of space was consistent with Romano-British architectural taste.
5.5. Villa houses

There are several synthetic reviews of villa plans in Britain (most recently JT Smith 1997), and this study proposes no significant alternatives to the typologies presently in use. A summary description of villa types is offered, however, to complete this review of building types.

E.I Row-houses (‘cottage’ villas)

The simplest Roman style houses found in the countryside were rectangular hall-like structures of similar layout to the strip buildings described above (examples are illustrated in fig. 78). There were also a small number of row-houses based on the standard suite of living rooms. Although it was exceptional for such suites not to be set behind a portico this had been the case at a few early villas, as possibly at Park Street in the late first century (type E.I: fig. 79a). Other examples include Brixworth and Ditches. A feature of these early row-house villas built without a portico was the lack of emphasis on either a central or ‘wing’ reception room. These buildings contained the core domestic suite, but lacked the reception features that were subsequently to form such an important part of the Romano-British house. Porticoes were frequently added to these early buildings in later phases of alteration and improvement, as for instance at Farningham II where a narrow front portico was built c. AD 100, at which time a bath-house was also added.

There may also have been one or two later buildings where porticoes were not provided (as at Rudston). There is no obvious reason why this was the case (although in some instances lightweight timber structures may have eluded identification).

E.II Houses with a portico (‘corridor’ villas)

Most Romano-British villas were instead built containing the standard ranges of rooms set behind a portico. In the simplest such design (type E.IIa: fig. 79b) the architectural emphasis was on a central reception room (room type Q), and although these houses could contain a heated end-room such end rooms were generally smaller. The importance of the central room could be further indicated by a substantial porch (room type E6) looking out over the forecourt or garden (type E.IIb: fig. 79c).
An alternative approach involved placing the emphasis on a large reception room at the end of the main block (room type R). There were several different uses made of the central parts of such houses. In some cases this area was taken up by a suite of three or four living rooms, which could be approached by a central porch (type E.IIc: see fig. 52d). Elsewhere this was the location of a central workroom or hall (room type X) (type E.IId: fig. 79d - Dalton Parlours is another fine example). In a couple of instances this was instead the site of a passageway (room type L1a) linking the entrance with a bath suite behind the house (type E.IIe: fig. 79f).

On the whole the preference for a central reception room was more evident in the Southeast and in the earlier periods, whilst the use of wing reception rooms was most popular in the Southwest during the fourth century.

Villas were typically of more complicated design. Normally a small room flanked the portico at one or both of its ends. These rooms formed the corner pavilions characteristic of the ‘winged corridor’ facade. In several buildings these corner rooms did not project beyond the line of the corridor, and it is not known if they were given architectural emphasis. The evidence of the aedicule from Fontoy-Moderwiese (JT Smith 1997, fig. 20; Massy 1989) suggests that such rooms could have been separately roofed to present gable-end pediments. In some later houses projecting rooms within the main part of the house formed the ‘pseudo-wings’ (DJ Smith 1978, 121).

These pseudo-wings served different functions (see the discussion of room types T2, E4 and R2), but often included a heated reception room. These houses can be further classified according to the location of the main reception room. It is possible to distinguish between buildings with an important central reception room (type E.IIf.1: fig. 79f), those with dominant end reception rooms (type E.IIg: fig. 79g), those where both types of room were present (type E.IIf.2: not illustrated, examples include Downton and possibly Dewlish), and those where a more complex arrangement of internal space makes it difficult to distinguish either.

E.III ‘Winged-corridor’ (porticus-with-pavilion) houses

The most popular villa design in Roman Britain involved making an exaggerated architectural feature of the corner pavilions, and setting these forward from the line of the portico to establish a full ‘winged-corridor’ facade. This style of villa made its first
appearance in Britain in the late first century AD at sites such as Shakenoak (Building B), Ditchley and Boxmoor. At many sites the arrangement was a second-century addition to a building of simpler form (as at Lockleys, Park Street, Clear Cupboard, Frocester and Cox Green), but from the middle of the second century it was normal for new-built villas to include the winged corridor facade (as High Wycombe and Gadebridge - see Neal 1974, 90-1). A similar development is documented in Belgium (Van Ossel 1992), and the ‘winged-corridor’ facade was a characteristic feature of the northwest provinces (see JT Smith 1997).

The projection of the corner pavilion did not necessarily have a significant impact on the character of domestic arrangements, but it gave them more space. In several cases the end reception rooms (type R rooms) could be enlarged. It is likely that these developments in the arrangement of villa facades were related to the introduction of wing reception rooms to the rear of some town houses. Projecting rooms were much in fashion in the second century.

As in most villa houses the standard arrangement involved a central reception room flanked by living rooms with further reception rooms at the ends of the wing (type E.IIIa.1: fig. 80a). The villa at Newport is a classic example of this plan type (fig. 59). Although are differences in the degree of emphasis placed on the respective reception facilities, it was usual for the houses to have both a central reception room and a wing reception room.

At some villas the ‘winged-corridor’ facade was irregularly arranged, with a projecting room found at only one end of the portico (type E.IIIa.2: fig. 80b). This demonstrates that the important feature of this arrangement was to provide a projecting room rather than to establish a symmetrical facade. The late Roman villa at Bramdean was of this type. Here the projecting room was a large heated room with a mosaic pavement suitable for a dining room (the subject was Hercules and Anteus and the design also included a cantharus). This particular plan closely followed the L-shaped arrangement typical of the town houses of this period. Minor variations are represented by the addition of rooms to the back of the building, sometimes including corridors and projecting rooms (type E.IIIa.3: fig. 80c). Although these were usually service rooms there were some instances where the villas may have included a second
Portico. In other cases projecting rooms at the back of the house allowed for the enlargement of the principal reception rooms. In a couple of examples these included impressive apsidal projections to the central reception room (type E.IIIa.4: fig. 80d). The second portico built to the rear of some villas could also be flanked by corner-pavilions, to produce an H-block villa plan, as at High Wycombe and Gayton Thorpe (type E.IIIb: fig. 80e).

A few ‘winged-corridor’ villas did not have an imposing central reception room, and suites of smaller rooms occupied this part of the building (type E.IIIc: not illustrated here, but examples include the houses at Watergate and Bancroft). Alternatively a larger hall or workroom was found at this location. These hall villas were of two main types: those with a symmetrical facade and an emphasis on a principal end or wing reception room (type E.IIIId.1: fig. 80f), and those of more irregular form in which the reception rooms were often arranged in a row added to the rear of the house (type E.IIIId.2: fig. 80g - Colerene and Woolaston are other good examples of this type).

**E.IV L-shaped houses**

Although not a common rural building type there were several L-shaped villa houses, a building class missed by Collingwood in his classification (Branigan 1976, 51). Like their urban counterparts these buildings were sometimes the product of setting the main reception rooms in a separate wing. The villas at Llantwit Major and West Park (Rockbourne) were both rather grand houses of this type (see also buildings of type E.IIIa.2 above), and contained impressive end reception rooms in a separate wing from the main residential suite (type E.IVa: fig. 82).

Most L-shaped houses were instead the awkward products of using a portico to link two separate buildings. In many of these the principal part of the villa, which can be recognised by its privileged location within the compound (exploiting the southeast aspect) and by the presence of better mosaic pavements, was unusually small. Much of the accommodation had been displaced to the adjacent structure, often a part-converted aisled building or hall. Examples of this type have been found at Bucknowle and Norton Disney (type E.IVb.1: not illustrated). At Whittington Court the domestic and service quarters were instead relegated to the back of the house and the adjacent hall exploited as large reception room (type E.IVb.2: fig. 81a). Larger
villas incorporating two main wings linked by a portico (type E. IVb.3: fig. 81b) illustrate a complex variety of arrangements.

E.V Villas with three building ranges
Most villas with three principal ranges were extended versions of the ‘winged-corridor’ villa, in which further rooms had been added to the corner pavilions to form extended wings (type E.Va: fig. 81c). It was frequently the case that the one side range contained a hall and associated service rooms, whilst the other was occupied by a group of end reception rooms. A central reception room flanked by two suites of private rooms usually dominated the main range (as at Spoonley Wood). In most of these buildings the portico extended around all three sides of an enclosed central courtyard with an unusually close regard to symmetry. Bow fronted wings were a particular feature of winged-corridor villas and buildings of this type in Kent (including Folkestone, Maidstone and Faversham). Villas at Engleton and Ridgwell also employed this feature.

A more complicated layout was represented by the villa at Darenth, in which the wings were formed by separate ranges linked to the central range by a portico (type E.Vb: fig. 83). Notwithstanding the scale of this building, which contained 63 rooms, the arrangement of space followed a common pattern. The west wing contained baths and kitchens, and was essentially a service ‘front’ wing. The main range contained audience rooms and a principal suite of living rooms (Rooms 17-19). The east wing included numerous hypocaust floors and a possible dining suite (based around Rooms 9 and 10), and can be considered the equivalent of an end reception wing.

E.VI Courtyard villas
Although courtyard villas were built in Britain soon after the conquest, at Angmering and Fishbourne, these early constructions may not have had an important influence on the subsequent development of Romano-British villa types. These first-century villas were formally laid out around a central peristyles (type E.VIa: fig. 84) and included a bewildering complexity of room suites. The north wing at Fishbourne contained at least two extensive suites (Rooms N1 - N5, and Rooms N9 - N14) flanking a central reception room (Room N7); whilst the main rooms were more likely to have been
located in the west wing flanking the main audience room (W 14).

The great villas of the later Roman period - such as North Leigh, Woodchester, Bignor and Chedworth - were also laid out around a central courtyard but this was the end result of several phases of rebuilding, in which the central peristyle was not part of the original design concept (type E.VIb: figs. 85 and 86). These houses usually consisted of L-shaped or 'winged-corridor' buildings to which further porticoes and walls had been added in the later 3rd or 4th centuries to enclose the central yard (see Clarke 1982, 219; Todd 1978, 205).

The approach finds parallel elsewhere in the later Roman world. The magnificent fourth-century villa at Piazza Armerina (Wilson 1983) was built not as a single block but as a series of separate units loosely arranged around a central open space designed as an irregular peristyle. Here too the main reception wing stood opposite the entrance and included a centrally located audience hall.

These larger buildings could contain several suites of living rooms. At some sites rows of such rooms were laid out at some distance from the core of the house. Chedworth is a good example of this arrangement, and three of four suites of rooms appear to have been located next to the main reception rooms in the south range (see Fig. 85).

This brief summary of the different types of Romano-British house concludes the description of the archaeological evidence. It has been possible to describe Romano-British houses in three separate ways in this survey: by construction type (Chapter 3), by the different approaches to the use of domestic space witnessed in the rooms provided (Chapter 4), and by the more general characteristics of building morphology (this chapter). As a consequence the house at Newport can therefore be characterised as a stone building, as a winged-corridor villa (a type E.IIIa. house), and as containing a standard range of reception and living rooms (a P-A-B-Q-A-B-P/R main wing supplemented by a C-R/T entrance and an H1-H2-H3-H4a-H4b bath suite).

These descriptive systems provide information for the review of the nature of Romano-British society that is attempted in the following chapter. In particular they all contribute to our understanding of the progress of Romanisation and the evolving nature of social competition and wealth display in elite housing in Britain under the
Romans. Several important details concerning the chronology of change require further attention and this also provides an opportunity to place the different aspects of building design in their broader context. This theme is the first to be addressed in the chapter that follows.
Chapter 6. Discussion

6.1 A chronological overview

Claudio-Neronian houses

The army was a primary agent in introducing Roman architectural form to Britain and the earliest known Roman structures are from military contexts, as at Richborough and Hod Hill. The patronage of Rome’s commanders and quartermasters provided an early model of Roman life. The fort was a partial mirror of urban society, complete with public buildings and a hierarchy of housing that borrowed on civilian forms and motifs, and once established was a focus of social relations extending far beyond the camp walls.

The economic impact of the Roman army and the indirect contribution it made to the urban impulse is well-documented (Millett 1990b; Rivet 1969). Veterans exercised a particular influence: as immigrant settlers, as mediators between civilian and military life, and as investors in local business (see Poulter 1987). The extent to which the army was directly involved in building the earliest Romano-British towns is more disputed. Within the coloniae the early civilian buildings followed the plans of the legionary barracks which had preceded them and some military buildings were retained for civilian use. Evidence for this has been adduced at Gloucester, Colchester and Wroxeter (Hurst 1972, 66-7; Crummy 1984; Crummy 1988; Webster 1988, 137). This approach allowed for a fast and inexpensive settlement of veterans in the formation of a civilian settlement, and established an extremely modest style of town house for the first citizens.

It has also been suggested that shops in early Roman Verulamium were built c. AD 50 with the assistance of the army (Frere 1972, 12). This argument relies on superficial similarities between the plan and structural design of shops in Insula 14 and a barrack-block, but fails to convince (Perring 1987, 147-8; Millett 1990b, 72; Perring and Roskams 1991,106). It is more likely that the first Roman houses were built on private initiative using imported skills. Blagg’s work on the use of decorative stonework suggests that the army had little direct involvement in early programmes of civilian
building, which in any case took place at a time when army engineers were distracted by the needs of military campaigns (Blagg 1980b, 1984 and 1991). It is similarly difficult to credit military craftsmen with the later first-century wall paintings and mosaics pavements found in towns and villas, and these were almost certainly the work of immigrant Gallic and Italian artists (see above p. 94 and 102). On the other hand, the striking similarities between the timber-framed constructions of the earlier fort at Valkenburg and the first civilian Romano-British timber-framed constructions (as described above p. 56), suggests that the skilled carpenters employed in building Britain’s first Roman houses may have first learnt their trade in the army. It seems likely that many of the artisans and traders to crowd the newly established towns of Roman Britain would have been discharged veterans.

The first Roman style buildings (c. AD 50-60) were built of timber and earth. The range of building techniques employed in this period are described in some detail in Chapter 3 above and the discussion which follows is based closely on this evidence. An impressive variety of approaches were evident but most of the techniques employed borrowed on imported ideas. It is not difficult to find reasons for the early popularity of a vernacular tradition based on the use of earth and timber. These materials lend themselves to fast and economical construction and do not depend on the industrialised production of building materials or the development of new systems of production and supply. In particular such buildings are easy to adapt to changing circumstances.

Evidence for stone buildings of the Claudian phase is lacking in Britain. The first use of concrete foundations, as in pre AD 60 earth-walled structures at London and Colchester, may have been restricted to military and public constructions (for which see p. 69). Even the higher status houses of this period had wattle and daub walls, earth floors and thatch roofs; whilst window glass was rarely used. In the commonest structural type the roof load seems to have been taken by earth fast principal posts driven into the ground. Timber framing was an architectural sophistication, and ground beams were employed in the better buildings (as the villas at Fishbourne and Gorhambury).

Numerous sites witness a development from earth-fast to timber-framed construction during the first century (Perring and Roskams 1991 81; Goodburn 1976, 342). A
similar shift in fashion is evident within the first half century or so of the Roman conquest in Gaul, and in the low countries is considered to represent the adoption of more Roman, as opposed to native, construction techniques (Bloemers 1985, 134). Although there are some instances where this is likely to have been the case in Britain, as in the transition from Period 3 to Period 5 at Newgate Street in London (Perring and Roskams 1991, 5-11), Roman builders were not averse to using earth-fast post construction techniques (as described above p. 50). Because of this it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between construction styles introduced in the LPRIA pre-conquest phase (in the Gallic/Belgic idiom), and those more directly a consequence of the Roman presence. This finds illustration in the comparison of the pre-Roman remains at Skeleton Green and those of the Neronian post-built structure in Insula 17 at Verulamium (Partridge 1981 37-52; Frere 1983a, 105-7). A brief review of the available evidence for other high-status rectangular timber structures of the early conquest period which can not conveniently be described as either Roman or British has been published by Black (1987, 20-23).

The use of painted wall plaster and mortar floors marks out the more clearly Romanised structures (see above p. 94). These include the Period 1 b complex at Fishbourne and the pre-Flavian structures at Watling Court, Queen Victoria Street and Fenchurch Street in London (Perring 1991b, 11). Claudian wall plaster associated with window glass and roof tile was also found at Insula 17 Verulamium (Frere 1983a, 105), and similar finds were made in pre-AD 60 contexts in Building 8 at Lion walk in Colchester (Crummy 1984, 40-2).

It has been noted that as few as one in ten of the houses in Neronian London contained rooms decorated with painted walls. These early town houses reflect the hastily assembled nature of the new Romano-British urban communities. It appears that the private house, like the town itself (see Blagg 1990a), was not a significant place in the competition for status. This may in part reflect the absence of an established urban aristocracy that felt compelled to invest in such forms of display, and is consistent with pre-Roman fashion. It is more likely that these early urban communities had undeveloped and impermanent social hierarchies, in which much power remained in the hands of transitory forces - agents and representatives of the military forces and of foreign based investors - which were unlikely to see these communities as necessary
places for status display.

The first villas and town houses

The first evidence for conspicuous expenditure on domestic architecture dates c. AD 65-75 and is found in the design of early villa sites in the southeast of the province. A group of sites along the south-coast has justly been given emphasis in reviews of the architecture of this period (as Todd 1978 and Blagg 1990c). The proto-palace at Fishbourne is the best known of these, but contemporary buildings that may have competed in quality are known or suspected at Angmering, Southwick, Eastwick and Pulborough (all in Sussex). Fishbourne, which had been laid out with wide corridors around a central courtyard, was provided with a stone bath-house and was decorated with mosaic and opus sectile floors, painted walls and ornamental stonework which were clearly the product of immigrant craftsmen. In addition to the remarkable sophistication of their decoration these south-coast villas were also atypical in form and scale. The emphasis placed on the central courtyard at these Sussex sites was not otherwise a common feature of early villas in Britain (see above p. 229). Todd, in reviewing the evidence of these early palatial villas concluded that the early ostentation of these houses and the Roman character of their coastal location and decoration, suggests mercantile and immigrant influence in their development (Todd 1978). The construction of early villas on sites directly or indirectly associated with military supply - as apparently at Fishbourne, Fringringhoe and Eccles - is similarly suggestive (but contra see Black 1994).

Despite the tantalising evidence of epigraphic sources the alternative suggestion that the Fishbourne villa may have been built as a palace for the British client-king Cogidubnus (Cunliffe 1971a), remains resistant to proof from the available archaeological evidence. Millett has drawn attention to the evidence of mid to late first-century villas built within late pre-Roman Iron Age aristocratic estates (Millett 1990b, 96-7). Several such villas were built within enclosures directly associated with important oppida complexes. Fishbourne itself was possibly one of these because of its relationship to Chichester (Millett is unconvinced that there was a direct relationship between the phase of military settlement here and the later villa). Others are found at Ditches (Bagendon), Gorhambury (Verulamium), and possibly also Ditchley and
Shakenoak (Silchester). At Gorhambury the first Romanised building, a simple three-room structure built with earth-fast posts, replaced a circular building before AD 60. The close association of these villas with pre-Roman aristocratic estates, and their proximity to emergent urban centres, supports the suggestion that these Roman style houses were built for a native aristocracy establishing its position within the new social-order.

With the exception of the group of palatial villas along the south-coast reception facilities within the first Romano-British villas were given little emphasis. The typical house consisted of a single row of rooms forming a long and narrow block, usually about 25-30 m. long and containing 5 or 6 rooms (as represented by the type E.I and E.II houses described above p. 225). Corridors and bath-houses were common but not built as standard, and end-of-block reception rooms were more modestly proportioned and discretely decorated than was later the fashion. These early row-houses established a style of housing that remained in use throughout the Roman period in Britain. Other important early examples include Eccles, Mileoak, Boxmoor, Park Street and Lockleys. The contrast between these and the palatial coastal villas might suggest that there was little direct overlap between the social groups represented by these two types of housing. Because of these marked differences the rank-size graph for villas in Roman Britain shows a much sharper fall-off in the late first century than in subsequent periods (Gregson 1982a).

Even in the smallest and most modest villas the importance of the portico was soon evident (e.g. type E.II houses, and see p. 131). Many houses that had been built without this facility in the first phase of villa construction were extended or rebuilt to include it. Early instances of this taking place include the rebuilding of the villas at Farningham II, Faversham, Shakenoak and Piddington. In the second century and thereafter it was most unusual for villas not to have a portico. This was an important element of reception space, both as a podium affording significant views and as a processional way linking key reception areas within the house (the importance of this feature of Roman domestic architecture is discussed in full above p. 121). The addition of a portico did not necessarily have any bearing on arrangements for privacy and segregation within the house (contra Rivet 1969).
Aside from the evidence of interior decoration the use of porticoes was the first clear architectural manifestation of the wide diffusion of Roman concepts of status display and patronage. The bath-houses built in the period after AD 65 give a similar picture, as do the large apsidal-ended receptions rooms found at the centre of villas at Fishbourne and Southwick before the end of the first century (Q-type rooms – see above p.146). This combination of features indicates that “these households had adopted Roman-style habits of dining and bathing” (Ellis 1995, 169).

The first bath-houses and apsidal halls in public basilicas in Romano-British towns were themselves a product of late Neronian and Flavian building programmes, and it is possible that the developments in domestic architecture described above were broadly contemporaneous. Although these architectural references and preferences were of urban origin, it seems likely that their use in Britain was not directly inspired by local urban exemplars. The first use of Roman domestic architecture to display status was more marked in the countryside than it was in town, as Blagg has suggested ‘a nurturing of the traditional rural power base might explain why urban development was initially much slower’ (Blagg 1990c).

London was something of an exception, since here numerous Flavian town houses were lavishly decorated. One of the most comprehensively studied of these was House D at Watling Court. This was most probably built in the period AD 70-80, and contained a large central reception room and several other reception rooms decorated with mosaic floors and painted walls. Small fragments of high quality Roman houses of this period are also known from several other sites in the central and western part of the settlement although few of these have been published in more than summary form (Perring 1991b 40-41; Williams forthcoming). Like many of the better early villas, such as those at Fishbourne and Lullingstone, these houses were built with earth walls set over masonry foundations. Unfortunately most of the excavated fragments are so small that few plans can be reconstructed. Although some corridors are present the crowded nature of the early city reduced the scope for exploiting gardens and vistas in the rural fashion. The room along the south side of Building H at Watling Court (Room 3) is an early Flavian example of a portico-corridor that may have been designed for use as reception space. Most other late first-century corridors known in London, such as that within the timber-framed strip building from site 1 of the Courage
Brewery excavations in Southwark, are more likely to have been service corridors. The apse-ended mosaic floored reception room from the clay-walled structure destroyed in the Hadrianic fire at Gutter Lane, and probably built in the late first or very early second century, provides further evidence for the early provision of reception rooms of complex design in Roman London.

Colchester and Verulamium are the other urban sites where one might expect to find early evidence for an investment in urban property. Although the majority of early buildings excavated in these settlements were timber structures of indeterminate form and modest appearance there are some signs that here too the Flavian period saw an advance in the complexity and quality of urban housing. Building 51 from the Balkerne Lane site - which is dated to the Neronian or early Flavian period - incorporated a corridor with plastered walls which lead to a larger end-room (Crummy 1984, 119). Although an otherwise undistinguished building the position of this house in Colchester’s western suburb, set some distance back from but overlooking a principal Roman road, suggests that this might better be considered a suburban villa than a town house.

At Verulamium two early town houses in Insula 3 (Buildings A and B beneath House 3,2) were built with flint wall footings and some *opus signinum* floors. These houses were also laid out with main corridors leading to large reception rooms at the end of the block. Wheeler preferred a date of *circa* AD 70 for these houses, although Frere has suggested that an early second century date is more probable (Frere 1983a, 10). House 8,16 in Winchester is a more securely dated example of a timber-framed Flavian town house with its main rooms laid out in a row behind a south-facing portico (Zant 1993, 31-4). At Canterbury the corridor building from the Butchery Lane site is thought likely to have been built shortly after c. 90 - although a date in the second century is possible.

Two early timber-framed houses are now also known from Dorchester (Woodward et al., 1993: Buildings 477 and 5502). These are considered likely to have been pre-Flavian in date and both appear to have consisted of rectangular blocks flanked by a veranda or corridor 1.5 - 2.0m wide (perhaps simple type D.II houses, see above p. 216). There is a case to be made, however, for suggesting that these were service
corridors rather than parts of the reception space.

**The emergence of mature building types**

*Building in stone*

The first masonry structures found associated with private houses were free-standing bath-houses attached to villas like those at Angmering and Eccles. These had probably been built by c. AD 65 (Detsicas 1965, 71-83; Black 1987, 87-9). Concrete was otherwise restricted to the foundations of half-timbered or earth-walled constructions. Such structures date from the period AD 65-75, as at Mileoak. The late Neronian or early Flavian period 1c ‘proto-palace’ at Fishbourne included masonry elements, especially in the construction of the baths, but plastered daub from destruction debris shows that elsewhere the building had been half-timbered (Cunliffe 1971a, 67). It seems likely that most late first-century villas were either earth-walled (as Lullingstone) or timber-framed (as Boxmoor), although frequently only the masonry footings survived for archaeological record. Cellars in these villas were, however, lined with stone.

The techniques employed in these masonry constructions are discussed at length above p. 74. The use of stone represented a significant choice, requiring an investment in mechanisms for the exploitation of suitable quarries, systems of procurement and supply, and a suitable level of technical familiarity with masonry construction.

Because of the poor survival of elements of superstructure it is difficult to accurately chart the introduction of full masonry construction. The Period 2 villa at Fishbourne had neatly built walls of stone and probably dates c. AD 75/85 (although Black 1987, 84-6: prefers a date closer to the end of the century). The villa at Eccles may also have had a stone superstructure, although the published interim reports leave this uncertain. In most other cases villas were not built in stone until the early second century. The villa at Wall in Staffordshire illustrates a common pattern of architectural improvement. Here a wattle and daub timber building was replaced in the Flavian period by a timber building with painted walls and glazed windows. This was in turn replaced in the early second century by a structure of similar sophistication but with stone foundations.
The introduction of stone construction to London is well documented. No masonry structures are known from the first phase of settlement at London, although earth-walled storehouses adjacent to the forum were set over concrete footings (see p. 60). Soon after the revolt, probably in AD 63, a series of stone warehouses was built beside the waterfront (Brigham et. al. 1996). The stone and brick forum basilica was probably built in the early 70s, and several other masonry public buildings of this period are surmised (Perring 1991b, 23ff; Bateman 1986, 233-8; Cowan 1995). By the end of the first century a large apsidal-ended building constructed of stone and tile had been built over a waterfront site facing the Roman city from the south bank of the Thames (Yule 1989, 33-5). The function of this building is disputed, but a strong case can be made for it to have been a palatial suburban villa built for a public official.

On lesser domestic sites stone was introduced piece-meal, first in foundations, then for cellars and bathhouses and finally for the upper parts of the houses. Flavian houses with stone foundations have been recorded at several locations, including: 54-58 Lombard Street, Watling Court, Gateway House, Suffolk House, St Swithin's Lane, Nicholas Lane (this author's observations during construction work in 1979), and Clements Lane. It is likely that some of these houses had been built by AD 80. At Gateway House and Watling Court stone walls from at least two houses survived over 1 m. tall beneath the Hadrianic fire debris, and foundations of another stone building were recorded at Milk Street. It seems reasonably certain that stone houses were found in London by c. AD 100. Such houses were more commonplace following the rebuilding of the city after the Hadrianic fire c. AD 125. At Pudding Lane a masonry and tile walled building was built at this time (Building 6). Contemporary masonry buildings have been found at Watling Court, Gateway House, 3-5 Bishopsgate, and possibly also at Paternoster Square (Perring and Roskams 1991, Shepherd 1986 and 1987, Milne et al. 1984). In some cases private bath-houses were also built. Timber and clay-walled buildings were widely replaced by stone structures, often large buildings with mosaic and hypocaust floors, in the late second and early third century (Heathcote 1989, 51; Butcher 1982; Jones 1988, 4; Marsden 1980, 151-5; Hobley and Schofield 1977, 56; Dennis 1978, 291-422; Frere 1983a, 310, 313; Heard 1989).

Other Romano-British cities were even slower to adopt masonry construction, even where stone was more easily available. Late first-century masonry foundations, which
had probably supported timber-framed structures, have been recorded at Canterbury (Williams and Frere 1948) and Winchester (Zant 1993, 44-5), and possibly at Verulamium (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 140). Generally, however, timber-framed houses were not replaced by more substantial stone-founded ones until after c. AD 120 (fig. 87). Structural sequences involving the replacement of timber structures with masonry founded ones of mid second-century date have been recorded at sites in Canterbury (Goodburn 1979a, 336; Blockley et al. 1995), Cirencester (Hurst 1972, 39-49; Wacher 1962, 9-11); Chichester (Down 1971, 132-3), York (Schofield and Palliser 1981, 110-111), Heronbridge (Mason 1989, 129) and Winchester (Cunliffe 1964, 42; Winchester Museums Service Archive: 126 High Street). A later second or third-century date for a similar transformation has been documented at sites in Gloucester (Frere 1984, 314; Hunter 1963, 27), Lincoln (MJJ Jones pers. com.); Exeter (Wilson 1972, 344), Dorchester (Woodward et al 1993), and Dorchester on Thames (Frere 1964, 121).

The character and chronology of this change suggests that the choice to build in stone was as much a matter of fashion as of economics. The use of stone initially evidenced the high status of the site, with palatial houses at Fishbourne and in London the first to adopt a construction technique previously restricted to public buildings (such as the Claudian temple at Colchester and the Neronian baths at Silchester). Some of the better villas were soon to follow this fashion, as was also the case in other parts of London. Other towns were slower to adopt these changes. By the end of the third century, however, it was unusual not to find most town houses built with stone foundations. This was even the case for the shops and workshops found in suburbs and roadside settlements (as at Heronbridge and Lincoln). The decision to build in stone marked a distinct change in approach to the uses of property. Stone buildings were less easy to adapt and change, and suggested a more permanent and static approach to domestic arrangements. These more durable constructions also facilitated the use of buildings as a means of storing and disposing of wealth (Gregson 1982).

A similar architectural progression has been observed in other northwest provinces; where the first Romanised houses were often built of timber, sometimes replaced by earth-walled constructions. Stone building was usually restricted to public constructions, and only became widely used in domestic context many decades after
Urban sequences of this nature are commonly recorded in Gaul, where in Belgica the main shift towards masonry construction took place in the mid-first century (Wightman 1985, 66; Bloemers 1990, 75; Blouet et al. 1985, 111; Paunier 1985, 124; Wightman 1970, 73; Hatt 1958, 324-5). Similar sequences have also been recorded in Milan (Perring 1991a, 105ff).

With the advent of a popular tradition of masonry walling, the use of clay-walled construction went into decline. Amongst the latest high-status structures known to have been built with clay block or adobe walls were the Period I villa at Bignor, c. 190-200, and the Dover Painted House (Buildings C8 and C10) of c. 180/200. Mud and stud continued in use in both Colchester and London, but in lesser circumstances. This change in emphasis has encouraged the view that building with clay walls was essentially a failed experiment (Williams 1971, 176). This is a cruel verdict, however, since earth-walled construction had been employed in many of the best Romano-British houses for several generations. Indeed some of the very best houses in first century Roman Britain were built with clay walls (including the villa at Fishbourne and the Flavian town houses at Watling Court in London – see above p. 69 where the evidence is set out in detail). There are several good reasons why such buildings may have declined in popularity with Romano-British architects. Although the use of unfired brick allowed for more rapid construction earth walls can be expensive to maintain. Once stone became more readily available, as the requirements of public building established mechanisms for its exploitation, the advantages of building in clay were diminished. It was also the case that access to brickearth quarries within the cities would have declined as the built-area expanded. The fires which destroyed the early Romano-British towns would also have made it impossible to recycle the clay used in earlier walls and may have contributed to the shift towards masonry construction that followed the Hadrianic fire in London and the Antonine fire in Verulamium.

The use of masonry was the most evident of several ways in which building quality was improved in the course of the second century. Floor mosaics and wall veneers of continental marbles were also more common than previously, especially in urban contexts (Pritchard 1986, 186). Hypocaust floors, which in the first century were restricted to bath-houses and villas of rare quality, were also built in domestic contexts in early second-century London (Cowan 1995; Yule 1989; Museum of London: PPO
The influence of villa architecture on the design of town-houses

These better decorated second-century town houses made more extravagant use of the available urban space. The use of more expensive building materials, and in particular of masonry footings, was frequently linked to the introduction of more complex house plans. Villas had been designed with a view to exploiting the gardens and open spaces that could be arranged around them from their first introduction to Britain c. AD 65.

The most evident sophistication of the villa plan was the winged-corridor (porticus-with-pavilion) facade that came into standard use towards the end of the first century, as discussed in Chapter 5 (above p. 226). Considerable attention has been given to the fact that similar plans were not introduced into towns in Roman Britain until somewhat later, and it has been suggested that: "villa-dwellings exhibit a higher degree of Romanisation than their urban counterparts until roughly the mid second century" (Walthew 1975, 189).

Notwithstanding the evidence of some of the precocious examples described above, the earliest common use of porticoes in town houses can be dated to the first half of the second century (for which see the discussion of type C2 rooms above p. 131). This is illustrated by the sequences recorded on several sites in Colchester. At Culver Street irregular Flavian buildings were replaced in the period after AD 100-125 by a series of houses with masonry foundations which were designed with extensive corridor-porticoes (Houses 112 and 114: Crummy 1992, 31-2). Another early timber-framed corridor-house is Building 69 from the Middlesborough site at Colchester, which is also likely to have been built early in the second century. In Canterbury the buildings excavated in the Marlowe Car Park illustrate a very similar sequence. Here the houses with masonry foundations and corridor-porticoes (e.g. Building R11 - which was also a winged building) were a feature of reconstruction dated AD 100/110-125.

First-century towns seem to have been dominated by lower status housing. The shops, workshops and mean apartments known from London, Colchester and Verulamium were unlikely places for the display of status through architectural extravagance. Flavian London also contained expensively decorated town houses. The plans of these unusual buildings do not find close parallel in other Romano-British
towns. It is possible that the unusually crowded nature of Flavian London denied architects the space to build the winged houses exploiting gardens and vistas that were subsequently fashionable. Initially the best town houses were more likely to have been laid out with an internal courtyard or peristyle (type D.VI houses, as described above p. 221). Part of an early second-century courtyard house was found in Lothbury (Frere 1991, 266), and the contemporary buildings at Gateway House seem likely to have incorporated a central courtyard. Early second-century peristyle and courtyard houses have also been recorded at Colchester (Building 123), and Leicester (Blue Boar Lane).

At Colchester the earliest winged building (a type D.IV house, see above p. 217) yet to have been identified is Building 59 from the excavations at Balkeme Lane, and this is dated c. AD 125. Building 6 from the site at Pudding Lane in London was built at about the same time and would also appear to have been a winged building. At Verulamium House 28,3A, another early example of an urban winged corridor house, was built c. AD 130-150.

There seems little doubt that the plans of these town houses were influenced by developments which had taken place 20-30 years previously in villa architecture, although developments in the reception facilities added to the rear of strip buildings from the early second century may also have had an important influence. The houses of Silchester have been described as "rural homes transported to the city and adapted" (Grimal and Woloch 1983, 91). This relationship was not an unusual one. Villas were likely to be more expensively decorated than townhouses, and were consequently more advanced in matters of fashion and design. Studies of domestic architecture in Roman Italy have made note of the way in which town houses were modelled to imitate villas (Clarke 1991, 23; Zanker 1979; Hemsoll 1990, 13).

New approaches to reception in the private house

The evolution of the large rear dining rooms (type R rooms) was also essentially feature of the early second century. It has been established in Chapter 4 (above p. 137) that the first common provision of end reception rooms dates to the period AD 125-150. The shift in emphasis away from central reception rooms (Q rooms) reflects a change in the nature of status display. This appears to have been a very similar change
to that witnessed in Italy in the late republic, when rooms arranged around the peristyle were given decorative emphasis at the expense of the atrium and tablinum (see p. 24). In both cases the revised architectural design enhanced the processional nature of the domestic setting (the importance of this theme is stressed at several points in Chapter 4, as p. 121). Furthermore it suggests that the dinner party and symposium were considered more central to the display of status than the public reception activity which took place in the audience hall in the later periods, but that the opposite had perhaps applied previously. This was a feature in the changing nature of power relations and public life that took place in Britain in the second century (for which see further below p. 276). Notwithstanding these changes the audience room (Q room) remained an important feature in many villa houses (for which see the discussion above p. 146). This presumably reflects on the ways in which villas were designed to provide a range of functions that in the towns would have been provided in the public fora (this argument is developed further below p. 267).

New types of porch design were also introduced in the mid second century (notably the type E5 garden porch, see above p. 127). These were also used to contribute to a more complex hierarchy of processional space and to add emphasis to the boundaries between the built environment and natural space. Another design change of the early to mid second century involved the integration of bath-houses into private domestic space. Previously bath-houses were more usually built as free-standing buildings of easier public access (see the discussion of H rooms above p. 175).

From the period 75-125 AD onwards most town houses and villas were equipped with expensive reception facilities. The social life of the province relied on the patronage exercised at the supper table and in the baths, and this was common to all urban parts of Roman Britain. These social requirements had a direct impact on Romano-British architecture and the period AD 125-150 witnessed a series of significant changes in architectural fashion which were fundamental to the shape of the later Romano-British house. It is important to note that these changes took place within the province and represented the culmination of a longer period of architectural innovation. This observation is an important one and will be explored further below (p. 271).
Changes in the character of towns

Many of the most handsomely decorated town houses of the second and third centuries stood on sites previously occupied by properties engaged in some form of commercial activity. This might witness no more than the social upgrading of a particular part of settlement were it not for the fact that the commercial properties were not replaced elsewhere. At Colchester, Verulamium, and London more buildings were in occupation and more industrial hearths and ovens in use in the late first century than in any equivalent period (data from Crummy 1984 for Colchester, Frere 1983a for Verulamium, Perring and Roskams 1991 for London).

In London the changes were so rapid and marked that the period can be considered one of serious contraction, with evidence of widespread desertion between AD 150 and 200 (Perring 1991b 76ff; Marsden and West 1992). There is no reason to believe that a depopulation of London was accompanied by a phase of decay and dereliction, indeed the clearance of redundant shops suggests the opposite. The archaeological remains of the shops and workshops of early Roman London are sometimes buried beneath dark earth. Dark earth was formed in different ways at different times, but on some sites can be dated to the third and fourth centuries and occupied open areas surrounding late Roman town houses. Boundary walls sometimes separated areas of dark-earth from the streets and imply that the open areas were private gardens (Perring and Roskams 1991).

Verulamium also lost much of its early commercial vigour, with the urban landscape transformed from a crowded agglomeration of timber buildings into a garden city dotted with handsome town houses (Walthew 1983, 213-224; Frere 1983a, 10-16; Stead and Rigby 1989, 11). There were far fewer shops and workshops, and such buildings occupied a much smaller proportion of the urban area. Similarly late Roman Cirencester has been described as “a city with well-built and lavishly decorated houses, with no separate accommodation for the less affluent members of society”, where those employed in menial tasks seem likely to have lived in the houses of the rich (McWhirr 1988, 83). Alterations in late Roman Caerwent saw shops and workshops along the main roads into town give way to larger courtyard buildings (as in Insula 16s, Ashby et al. 1911, 427-48), and the proportion of commercial to elite property declined. Judged by the evidence of plan up to a third of late Roman
properties in Caerwent might still, however, have had a commercial function.

Changes of a similar character - although sometimes of much later date - were evident in most other towns in Britain: as at Chichester (Down 1978, 41-175), Exeter (Bidwell 1980, 53-6), Lincoln (Jones 1985, 92); Richborough (Cunliffe 1968, 243) and Gloucester (Hurst 1988, 70). Strip buildings and workshops never entirely disappeared from these towns, but fewer such buildings were evidently needed to service the urban population.

Many prosperous towns elsewhere in the empire witnessed second-century contraction. Important examples include the cities of Lyon, Milan, Ostia and Cosa. In Belgica third-century urban contraction is now well documented at sites such as Amiens, Metz and Reims (Bayard and Massy 1983; Wightman 1985, 99). Villa estates also suffered economic difficulties at this period; a phenomenon evident in Tuscany and Picardy towards the end of the second century (Carandini and Ricci 1985; Agache 1975), and elsewhere in Gaul in the third century (Percival 1976, 46; Galliou 1983). The problems of the contraction of this period are also recognised in contemporary legal sources (Digest 43.8.7, Digest 1.17.7).

Although different factors will have influenced individual urban trajectories it is also possible to identify some common features. Many towns were transformed, with a reduced emphasis on functional, productive and commercial space. The loss of commercial vigour may have encouraged landed classes to take a more active role in urban life. Large urban plots could now be formed without any significant loss of rents. This neglect of commercial requirements is perhaps the most significant aspect of the structural changes of the second century and perhaps encouraged the development of the more complex house plans typical of later Romano-British towns.

Later developments

The main forms of Romano-British house had been established by the end of the second century. During the late second century the villa habit penetrated deeper into the British countryside and the earlier clustering of villas around the more important urban centres was less marked (Millett 1990b, 117; Gregson 1982). The majority of later second-century villas were medium-sized winged corridor villas (type E.III), and some earlier villas were improved by the addition of corridors and wings (as at
Lockleys, Boughspring, Park Street and Faversham). From the mid third century there is some suggestion that smaller estates were swallowed up by larger ones (as has been proposed for Shakenoak), but in general the pattern of building evolution was unchanged from earlier periods. The fourth-century villas at both Feltwell and Barton Court Farm were built in a style indistinguishable from the villas of the late first and early second centuries. For the most part building alterations dated to the late third and early fourth centuries involved adding bath-houses, corridors and wings to houses where these had not previously been present.

More late Roman villas (following the definition above p. 31), especially those of the late third or early fourth centuries, are known than early ones. The extensive building programmes of the period in the decades around AD 300 can sometimes obscure the fact that many of the architectural ideas emphasised in the buildings of this period had been anticipated in houses of the previous century.

The construction of numerous smaller houses in this period contributed to a progressive reduction in the average house size. It can be suggested that the popularisation of Roman architectural idiom represented by this trend resulted in some dilution of the social prestige which derived from the possession of a villa (as Millett 1990b, 186). The greater emphasis placed on interior decoration and on the provision of magnificent reception rooms - as illustrated by the evidence of mosaic pavements and the construction of ever-larger reception rooms at sites such as Chedworth, Northchurch, Chilgrove and West Park, Rockbourne - was perhaps an elite response to the challenge.

Although average villa size was reduced, a few very large establishments were built in the fourth century. The large type E.VIb courtyard villas at Bignor, North Leigh and Woodchester were exceptionally impressive. The situation in some respects mirrored that of the first century, when rare villas of unusual magnificence such as Fishbourne stood apart from the normal run of country houses.

Branigan has argued that the fourth-century emergence of luxurious villas may have been due to the immigration of wealthy Gauls (Branigan 1973, Branigan 1976), but this is unsubstantiated (see Smith 1983) and the architecture of these buildings fits comfortably within the Romano-British tradition, even if their scale was unusual.
Indeed it is difficult to find any significant evolution of building form and type after the middle of the second century other than that explicable by the changing circumstances of individual sites (although it should perhaps be stressed that this is not necessarily true of interior decoration, which witnessed important changes in this period).

Although the period circa AD 300 witnessed the construction of new houses in several towns these new buildings were not significantly different from their third-century predecessors. Wheeler identified a ‘Constantinian renaissance’ at Verulamium (and see Faulkner 1997, illus. 3), and although Frere’s work suggests that the term may be something of an exaggeration there are many other sites which also show investment in sophisticated urban property in the years around AD 300. For instance the Greyhound Yard site in Dorchester went through considerable change at this time, with the construction of winged and aisled masonry founded buildings. At Winchester early fourth-century houses were put up in Insulae 8 and 23, although the dating evidence for these has yet to be published. In London too there is also widespread evidence for the construction of masonry founded houses in the period AD 280 to 350, especially in the suburb of Southwark (Merrifield 1965 site 331; Merrifield 1955, 113-34; Dillon 1988; Graham 1988, 49; Dennis 1978, 311).

It has been noted that these fourth-century town houses did not show the size or complexity of the larger villas, and that this might indicate that “the curiales were principally based on their country estates, and .... town houses may only have been in seasonal use” (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 108-9). In the fourth century social display through architectural elaboration was most evident in the private house and the best houses were in the countryside. This represented a change over earlier town-based structures, possible because power was personal to a small élite and with the decline in the importance of municipal government the tribal aristocracies were able to withdraw from town life in a return to the LPRIA pattern: a case of “power acting through central persons rather than central places... the later Roman villas of Britain should be seen as a new manifestation of the traditional power structure, .. now directed... towards personalized rather than communal display” (Millett 1990b, 196).

An association can be suggested with changed administrative and taxation structures. For instance a greater dependence on taxes in kind, such as the anonna, after
Diocletian's tax reforms made towns less central to the taxation process. Villas may instead have had a more important role in the collection of such taxes, as has been suggested from the evidence of large grain-stores in some late villas (Black 1987).

The increased investment in interior design and enlarged reception facilities in the late third and early fourth centuries may also have social implications. This was not simply a period that wished to give architectural dimension to contemporary prosperity, this prosperity was being described in very particular ways. It has already been established (in the architectural discussions above p. 81 and 204) that many of the large aisled buildings of this period were given exaggerated architectural emphasis. Meonstoke is the obvious example. It has already been suggested here that this was a way of drawing attention to the abundance represented by the storage of agricultural surplus. The mosaic pavements of the period, most particularly those showing Orpheus taming beasts, made a similar point (see Scott 1994). Elite power was rooted in its ability to command surplus: by the promise of prosperity. Roman architecture was always concerned with this theme, and ritual in the Roman house was always closely concerned with fertility and fortune. The evidence of lararia (above p. 108), water cults (above p. 186), infant burials (above p. 173), and garden features (including S-room structures and the use of evergreen shrubs, see above p. 191) can all be called on in support of this observation. Fourth-century Britain may have had good cause to celebrate its agricultural productivity. Much has been made of the grain shipments from Britain which the emperor-to-be Julian dispatched to supply the army on the Rhine (Ammianus Marecellinus 18,2,3).

There is, however, something almost over-anxious about the emphasis placed on brash expressions of rural plenty. Whilst this may have been an architectural response to internal social tensions caused by increased wealth this is not entirely satisfactory as an explanation. It is alternatively possible that the Romano-British countryside retained bitter memories of recent famines past, and that the architectural propaganda was in the vein of the FEL. TEMP. REPARATIO announced on the coin of the period. The design preferences of the fourth century may have been as much a reaction to past concerns as a reflection of contemporary social stresses.
The end of the Roman house in Britain

Although masonry was preferred in the construction of most high status buildings, timber walling was not wholly rejected. Villas were built with timber-framed wattle and daub walls in the late third and early fourth centuries at Gayhurst, Great Casterton, Bratton Seymour and Latimer. At Colchester, in particular, wattle and daub buildings remained common even in late periods (Crummy 1984, 23). A few timber and clay walled shops and workshops were also standing in third-century London, especially on the edges of the town and on public sites. Clay and timber buildings of this period have been noted north of the forum (Milne 1992), at 76-86 Bishopsgate (DUA 1987, 46; Williams in preparation), at 43 London Wall (Maloney 1990), and over the levelled remains of the public baths at Huggin Hill (P. Rowsome and D. Malt pers. comm.; Marsden 1976). At Verulamium a corridor house (House 21,3), could still be built with timber-framed walls in the mid-third century (Frere 1983a, 176-7).

Indeed it is possible that towards the end of the fourth-century timber building was returning to fashion. This has been noted on domestic sites in Verulamium (Niblett 1993, 99; Faulkner 1997) and Gloucester (Heighway and Garrod 1980, 78), and fourth-century timber buildings were erected over the remains of the baths at Canterbury and Wroxeter (Blockley and Day 1979, 270; Barker 1975, 106-117). Several late Roman timber structures were set over public buildings, the sites of which may have remained public property (see Mackreth 1987, 139). At Carmarthen stone houses were replaced in timber in the late Roman period (Rankov 1982, 329-30). This process finds parallel outside Britain, and there was a marked shift towards building in timber in areas where brick constructions had previously been the standard in fifth-century Italy.

The late fourth century saw a marked decline in the number of villas and town houses in occupation. In the countryside the average size of villas was slightly smaller than previously (Gregson 1982): apparently because more large villas had gone into disuse than smaller ones. Millett sees this as illustrative of the robust nature of smaller villa economies (Millett 1990b, 186). Alternatively it may reflect the fact that the larger establishments were more likely to have been owned by the most powerful members of society, who were also those most likely to have held multiple holdings, who were no longer interested in maintaining houses on so many of their estates.
There has been some suggestion that there was a movement from the countryside into the protection of the cities during the later fourth century (Detsicas 1983, 182; Reece 1980), but there is no real evidence for this having happened. Later Romano-British towns were left with only a handful of houses which were not obviously mansions or palaces. In the later fourth-century Verulamium may have contained no more than twenty or thirty houses, most of them the houses of the rich. At Caerwent and Silchester there were no more than fifteen or so large fourth-century houses. Todd sees this as reflecting the presence of a stable but limited number of powerful families running the late civic government (Todd 1989). Similar evidence of late fourth contraction has been obtained from almost all Romano-British cities, as Chichester (Down 1978, 331-40), Colchester (Crummy 1984, 19,70), Exeter (Bidwell 1980, 67-76), and London (Perring 1991b, 125).

The character of reception activities also underwent change in some houses. This was most evident in the blocking-off of front corridors into rooms at villas such as Frocester and Spoonley Wood, and at various sites where former living rooms either went out of use or were converted to new uses. Several “corn-drying” ovens in the corridors and reception rooms of town houses may also have been inserted in this period - although the tradition of placing ovens in circulation areas was long established (see p. 135). It is also perhaps significant that some very late town houses dispensed with the portico (house type D.Ia.1, above p. 215): examples include the latest version of House 14,3B at Verulamium (fig. 72a) and the fourth-century building from Dorchester on Thames (Frere 1964). This particular feature of social practice was perhaps becoming archaic in smaller houses in later Roman Britain. The declining importance of the portico-corridor suggests that processional architecture was no longer a standard feature of status display.

These several features suggest that the nature of social competition was changing. There were fewer high-status houses in occupation and several of those that survived were less important as vehicles for the display of status. There are several different reasons why this might have been the case. Town-life appears to have been of diminished importance in late Roman Britain and the urban values of the Roman house would therefore have had less political value. Social cohesion and power may instead have come to focus on the dominal estate and extended household. If access to
power did not depend on the ties of patronage and dependancy that were a central feature of Roman political life, and if there were fewer aristocratic guests to receive and impress, then the palatial house was a less necessary thing.

Few high-status Roman houses survived recognisably into the fifth century. Some sites may have continued in occupation, and there is no doubt that both towns and villas retained an important symbolic significance within the landscape (which may be why some villas were chosen as sites of burial grounds) but the Romano-British house did not survive as a viable architectural form. Social competition in post-Roman Britain was differently structured and most aspects of classical display were rejected.
6.2 The Romano-British Household

In Chapter 1.3 it was argued that it should be possible to reconstruct social arrangements from the evidence of the plans of Roman houses. In order to do so it was considered necessary to speculate about the different ways in which the rooms were used and might have been articulated within the house. Chapter 4 therefore set out a detailed description of the different types of rooms found in Romano-British houses. Altogether eighty-two different types were defined (see fig. 47), in a classification which could use further refinement but provides a descriptive basis for further work. Through the identification of common patterns of arrangement it has also been possible to identify and describe domestic and reception suites (above p. 157). It has also been possible to recognise more popular arrangements of such suites of rooms, most notably in the way in which a rear reception wing was often separated from a main wing containing the residential quarters. Most previous descriptions of the Roman house have provided typologies of the different ways in which these principal wings could be arranged (as summarised in Chapter 5) rather than explore the meaning that could be extracted from a comparison of the different preferences in room design.

Several of the more important features of the Romano-British house revealed in this study have already been described in the chronological summary which introduced this chapter. Two issues, in particular, demand further attention. In the first place we need to review the evidence of room suites and arrangements to better describe the likely composition and internal structure of the Romano-British household. It will be argued here that the room suites and domestic arrangements identified were not evidently different to those found in the Roman house in Italy – and that we are not therefore able to conclude that different patterns of family structure and tenure applied in Britain. Finally our attention can turn to the critical issue of how power and status was expressed in Roman-Britain. Here it is concluded that Romano-British houses provided a setting for a society that subscribed to the Roman urban ideal and creatively drew on Roman architectural tradition in the display of rank and power. In both areas of study the evidence of house design has an important contribution to make, but also needs to be set into its broader context.
Kinship groups

There have been several attempts to reconstruct social arrangements in Roman Britain from the archaeological evidence, and much attention has been given to the contextual information provided by both Classical and Celtic sources. Unfortunately the sources are indirect and the archaeological evidence inconclusive.

In the light of the subsequent history of the province it is reasonable to conclude that there were parts of Roman Britain where social custom remained British (Stevens 1966 108-28). Welsh law, the codification of which has traditionally been ascribed to the tenth century, describes systems of land holding of likely Celtic descent (Jones 1972, 320-39). In these systems the extended family, which could include all male descendants of a common great-grandfather, numbering also wives and unmarried children (rich individuals might exceptionally have had more than one wife), was of greater social importance than the nuclear one (Herlihy 1985). Such families are likely to have given rise to large and complex households, or groups of related households. Additionally partible inheritance encouraged the generational subdivision of ever-smaller parcels of land between more and more descendants of an estate’s founder. It has been suggested that some Romano-British houses might present evidence for social arrangements influenced by these native traditions of family and tribal structure (Charles-Edwards 1972, JT Smith 1978a).

The relevance of the Celtic sources - which are both late and peripheral - has been questioned (as Todd 1978, 198). The implication of Caesar’s writings is that southern Britain had a stratified society with a developed patron-client system similar to that of Gaul (Caesar DBG 1,4; 1,17-18; 6,11-13; 8, 40). Unfortunately this source is equally problematic since Caesar’s terms of reference were so evidently Romano-centric: it is inevitable that he would interpret social custom in a way that he could understand.

The ‘unit-system’ villa

In a closely argued and influential series of papers JT Smith has suggested that villas in Britain, Germany and Gaul flouted basic standards of classical architecture in order to express the needs of a social order which was based on a joint occupancy of settlements which in turn derived from the joint ownership of land (JT Smith 1978a after Hemp and Gresham 1942, 98; and now Smith 1997). In his view this may have
been a consequence of the continued primacy of extended family kin groups: the outward form of the buildings was Roman but the nature of the family structure and life within had retained a different and local form.

Smith's argument has received support from Black (1987), Reece (1988), Hingley (1989) and de la Bedoyere (1991). In the process the suggestion that some villas were occupied by more than one family of similar status has been applied to some of the most Romanised of buildings, including even the villas at Fishbourne and Southwick (Black 1987, 28).

In reaching his view Smith first argued that 'every villa should be regarded as an expression, however humble, of classical architecture, and that consequently any deviation from the accepted tenets of that architecture is significant'. The main evidence presented for deviation is a lack of evident symmetry in building facades in the northwest provinces. This fails to give due weight to the fact that the symmetrical house facade was more an invention of the 17th century classical revival than a standard element of Roman house design (see p. 117).

In several villas different suites of rooms were set to either side of a principal room at the central axes of the building, as at Gadebridge where there were also two entrance 'porches' associated with these separate suites. At Boxted in each of two three-cell units two subdivided rooms flank a middle room. Such suites were common throughout the Roman world (for which see the discussion in Chapter 2 and examples such as that illustrated here in fig. 8), where they may have provided separate private quarters for the master and mistress of the house, for guests and for use in different seasons. The Romano-British bedroom suites typically included an antechamber, bedroom and reception room (an A-B-P suite or one of the many variants on the type as shown on fig. 60-61). It has been argued above (p. 157) that such suites could similarly have served the different social requirements of individuals within the household. Smith prefers to interpret the two suites as evidence for the permanent residence of two family groups and draws parallels with the 'Unit System' house, where the division of an inheritance would result in two households being established on a single site.

At other sites the presence of two or more bath-houses has been seen as possible proof
of the existence of two households, although here it is instead possible to argue that
different baths were provided for more public and more private uses. It is wholly
consistent with Roman social practice to have provided facilities for the segregated
entertainment of different groups of relatives, guests, clients and dependants.

Villa complexes based on two adjacent houses, one of which contained superior
reception facilities, present more compelling evidence for the presence of separate
family units, although here too the evidence can be challenged. Relevant sites include
the villas at Newton St Loe, Halstock, Gayton Thorpe, Marshfield, Paulton and
Beadlam. Smith cites several other examples and provides a range of continental
parallels from the northern parts of Gaul. It has been argued, however, that in many of
these sites these separate buildings may have provided separate facilities rather than
parallel residences. Rippengal - who has identified a series of flaws in the arguments of
JT Smith (1993) - has noted the very different arrangements of space found inside
some of the adjacent buildings usually described as paired unit-system houses. In
several instances the two adjacent buildings could have functioned as two wings of a
single property. At Beadlam, for instance, the west house contained a bath suite and a
residential suite, whilst the north wing included a series of larger reception rooms.
This arrangement comfortably duplicates the facilities found in the two principal wings
of contemporary town houses.

Two other strands of evidence have also been drawn on to support the suggestion that
extended families were a feature of villa society in Roman Britain. The first of these is
that similar arrangements are also evident in the arrangement of some high-status pre-
Roman settlements, such as Glastonbury. The evidence from Glastonbury has,
however, been reassessed and can no longer be used to support this argument (Barrett
1987).

The second is a text found inscribed on a mosaic from the villa at Thruxton. The
dedication refers to ‘qvintvs natalivs natalinlivs et bodeni’, where the ‘bodeni’ referred
to might arguably be a kinship group (Black 1987, 81 followed by Hingley 1989).
Alternative readings can, however, be advanced and it is perhaps more probable that
Bodeni was a reference to Q. Natalius Natalinus’ signum, or extra name, of Bodenus
or Bodenius (Birley 1979, 139; Birley 1993, 239).
In sum there is no convincing evidence that any Romano-British villas were designed as unit houses, although it is also impossible to prove that none was.

Roman family structure

There is a surprising assumption made in some studies (as Esmonde Cleary 1989, 114), that the division of inheritance was a Celtic peculiarity, rather than standard practice within ancient society. Unless otherwise directed, Roman property passed to all children in equal proportions on the death of a father, although such inheritance was not automatic from the mother until the late second century AD. References in the Code of Justinian witness various problems associated with inheritance law (see Gardner and Wiedman 1991, 117-142), and by the Classical period most Romans left wills.

Literary evidence indicates that the Roman household was based on a small family unit of father, mother and dependant children, "next comes the relationship between brothers, between cousin’s ...; since these relatives cannot be contained within one household, they leave to found other households." (Cicero De Beneficiis 1, 54). It was exceptional for adult sons to live with their fathers and for adult brothers and sisters to share a common household. Roman families were consequently smaller than has sometimes been imagined. The combination of a high death rate and low rate of social reproduction (with an average age gap between father and child of as much as 40 years), also meant that many families were short-lived. Indeed it has been suggested that a high number of Roman parents - perhaps 60% - were not survived by a male heir (Hopkins 1983, ix; Garnsey and Sailer 1987, 129).

It has been argued that the evidence of tombstone dedications suggests that in the western provinces 'the nuclear family was the primary focus of certain types of familial obligation. Grandparents, uncles and other extended family members appear too infrequently as commemorators for us to believe that they were regarded as part of the core familial unit' (Saller and Shaw 1984, 124-156). Sibling and extended family dedications are also rarer than dedications from outside the family. This pattern extended to Roman Britain where, from 98 relationships described, 80% were from within the nuclear family; 6% from extended family relationships; 11% from other heirs; and 3% servile. The validity of the inferences drawn from this evidence has been
challenged because the measure is of relationships between pairs of people not family structures (Martin 1996). It is also difficult to draw a sharp distinction between nuclear and extended family structures when no such clear distinction is found in the terminology used in Classical sources. It remains the case, however, that "when a man or woman could not rely on his nuclear family for a funeral dedication he or she usually turned to unrelated friends or dependants rather than more distant relatives" (Saller and Shaw 1984). It is also important to note that the tombstone evidence from Roman Britain is consistent with the broader pattern of dedications found in the western empire and that this supports the view that family units were generally small (Martin 1996, 53). The extended kinship group is not in evidence.

Partible inheritance does not automatically give rise to extended kinship groups, and such systems were generally alien to the Roman experience.

Although the Unit System can sometimes illustrate the workings of partible inheritance this is not always the case. The Unit System house may also reflect the need to keep an elder son at his father's side after his marriage without causing friction between the separate households (Gresham 1971, 175). As Millett has noted the construction of two adjacent houses at some sites could witness the presence of the separate but adjacent nuclear households of a proprietor and his heir; or the architectural manifestation of a separation of administrative functions (involving an heir, bailiff, or tenant) to cover periods of absence of the proprietor (Millett 1990, 198-9).

If, instead, the houses described by JT Smith had been extended and subdivided to accommodate separate units of an extended family (in equal or unequal relationship), it is surprising that this process of sub-division did not continue. Villas would have become villages, as each new generation witnessed a further fragmentation of the property. This did not occur to any significant scale.

Stevens (1947) suggested that the Celtic kinship structure might have extended throughout the less overtly Romanised parts of Britain, which he defined as those areas without patterned mosaics. This convenient division of the country between Roman and Celtic spheres is difficult to put to the test, but the examples presented by JT Smith awkwardly include many higher status sites in lowland areas where Roman models of land-ownership are more likely to have applied.
The urban evidence is also unhelpful to those who would see Celtic patterns of ownership. Several larger town houses include two or more different and asymmetrical suites of rooms that conform to the pattern described by JT Smith. These, however, are found in the richest and most Romanised town houses, whilst in the lower-status roadside settlements the workshops and houses show no evidence for plot or building division along unit-system lines (Smith 1987, 110). This is perhaps the reverse of what would be expected.

It is instead possible to understand Romano-British houses through reference to the classical evidence. Britain shared elements of a common cultural heritage with a Celtic world that had extended south of the Alps. One of the striking features of this period is how many points of similarity there are between Roman and native in the northwest. Despite pronounced regional differences, the domestic architecture in Britain is consistent with the picture that derives from Roman documentary sources. Property law in Britain, like elsewhere in the empire, could have been based on partible inheritance and individual ownership; and the main social unit could have been the nuclear family.

Inheritance and land ownership

Citizenship, in Britain as elsewhere, was subject to Roman law. Caracalla’s edict of 212, which extended citizenship to all, was, according to Dio, aimed at increasing revenue from estate duties. It could only have been effective in this purpose if property could be bequeathed and inherited in accordance with Roman law: in the context of which the alienability of property would have been a constant corrective to any ‘native’ tendency towards clan-based ownership. The evidence of legal disputes and the discretionary powers open to local administrations suggest that conflicts between Roman and local law were not always resolved, but that this was exceptional (as Stevens 1947).

Evidence for Roman land ownership is clear enough, and references to the sale and transfer of title other than through inheritance are common (e.g. Pliny Letters 2,15; 6,3; 1, 24; Juvenal Satires 3, 223). The ideal of the ancient city-state was for citizens to have sufficient economic independence to play a full part in public life, and this relied on the ownership of land. Roman law therefore recognised a freedom to sell or
testate land, although some restrictions were placed on this to limit the social consequences of disinheri tion (as the Lex Falcidia of 40 BC that established that heirs had a right to not less than one quarter of the estate). Although Roman law could accommodate joint land holding, it encouraged the private ownership of land and gave considerable powers over inheritance to the testator. In a Roman will of AD 108 part of an estate was left jointly to a group of freedmen: ‘...since however [I have divided the ground] into so many parts and they all [cannot equally] possess the whole that is left [to them .... I appoint as curators ...’ (Gardner and Wiedemann, 1991). This was an unusual circumstance.

It has been argued that effective private control of land was established in Britain before the Roman conquest (Gregson 1982). According to Tacitus (Annales 14, 31) the Icenian king Prasutagus left a will which naming his two daughters and Nero as co-heirs, although the source can not be relied upon to have understood the legal framework within which this took place. Land grants would have accompanied the foundation of the coloniae at Colchester, Lincoln, Gloucester and York, whilst the confiscations which preceded the Icenian revolt are also described by Tacitus. The imperial family would have owned extensive estates in Britain as they did throughout the empire, and the life of Saint Melania the younger refers to her ownership of land in various provinces including Britain (Applebaum 1972, 23). A writing tablet discovered in reclamation dumps beside the Walbrook in London preserved part of the text of a legal document of the 14th of March AD 114, concerning a dispute over the ownership of a wood in civitate Cantiacorum (Kent). It refers to the previous purchase of the wood for 40 denarii, ownership of which was claimed by Lucius Iulius Betucus (RIB 2446.1-31; Frere and Tomlin 1992; Hassall and Tomlin 1994, 302-3). A wooden tablet that was found in a well at Chew Park villa also seems to record the sale of land (Turner 1956, 117-8).

There is therefore ample evidence to suggest that at least in some parts of Britain land was owned, sold and bequeathed in the same fashion as elsewhere in the Roman world.

Bailiffs and tenants

Classical sources debate the respective merits of using tenant farmers or stewards to manage estates, reflecting dispersed nature of land-holdings in Roman Italy (as Pliny
Letters 3.19; Columella 1.7; Pliny Letters 9.36). We do not know if this also applied in Britain since the documentation does not exist (Reece 1988, 67-71).

We know, however, that at least some property in Britain was owned from abroad and therefore farmed by tenants. Imperial estates, which it has been estimated formed 15% of the total land within the empire (Jones, 1964), would have been worked by tenants. An inscription from the villa at Combe Down, near Bath, refers to Naevius (Aug. lib., adiutor procc.), a freeman and assistant to the procurators, who restored a principia. This building was perhaps part of an imperial estate of which Naevius was the administrator (RIB 179: Birley 1979, 147). We also know that the late Roman system of tied tenants or coloni applied in Britain (Jones 1973, 795-808).

It is not necessarily the case that these forms of land-holding would have generated different patterns of housing, although it is held more likely that tenant farmers were less likely to invest in status display than owner farmers. The classical sources suggest that bailiff’s residences could also have competed for opulence with the houses occupied by landowners (Millett 1990b, 189).

Bailiff-run estates on the Italian model required separate ‘urban’ quarters for the owner and for the day-to-day administration of the estate by the bailiff (above p. 33). As a consequence it has been suggested that the lesser buildings found on some Gallic villa estates may have housed bailiffs (Wightman 1985, 114). This could equally apply to some of the Romano-British sites laid-out with two related houses. The possibility that some aisled buildings accommodated bailiffs is addressed above p. 204. In the absence of epigraphic support this remains a matter of speculation.

Rented property

The role of rented housing is similarly uncertain. Rented housing may have provided for all but a small proportion of the urban population in antiquity (Casey 1985, 43), and even the wealthy sometimes preferred to rent in town (Juvenal Satires 3, 223). Investment in urban property was therefore a significant economic activity: “town property brings good returns but it is terribly risky. If there were any way of stopping houses perpetually burning down at Rome I would sell my farms and buy town property every time” (Aulus Gellus, Noctes Atticae, xv.1.1-3).
In the late republic the speculative redevelopment of run-down urban property was clearly profitable, attracting investment from the likes of Crassus and Cicero (Plutarch, *Crassus* 2.2-4; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 14.9). Subsequently the emphasis of legislation is on repair and maintenance, with speculative housing redevelopment only permitted as a result of fire, collapse or resale (Laurence 1994b, 76; Strabo, 5.3.7). Third-century legislation implies instead that by this date the profit motive was no longer adequate to guarantee urban renewal.

London's comparatively large urban population may have encouraged land-owners to become landlords and several houses of c. AD 100 could have been designed for multiple occupancy. This may well have been the case in the rows of small 'bed-sitting rooms' found attached to strip buildings at Newgate Street and Leadenhall Court (above p. 167). It can also be argued for Building F at Watling Court, where there may have been some replication of self-contained room suites. The evidence from other Romano-British cities offers less to work on.

**Gender distinctions**

The evidence of room suites implies that in better houses more than one member of the household had private rooms into which guests could be received. The architectural evidence compares closely to that of Roman Italy, where sources indicate that the lady of the house frequently had her own rooms. Since it has been observed that women in Roman Britain had a stronger position in law than their contemporaries in Rome (Allason-Jones 1990), similar arrangements would not have been out of place in Romano-British houses.

This involved the parallel - but not necessarily equal - exercise of social patronage. It is much harder to find evidence for more systematic division by gender. Much has been made of the absence of any evident differences of age or gender in the atrium-persityle houses of Roman Campania. The segregation of womenfolk within the house was seen as a Greek habit, and had little in place in contemporary writings on Roman households and society (see sources cited by Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 50-1). It has, in any case, already been noted that the archaeological evidence for the presence of separate quarters for men and women in the Greek house is unconvincing (see Jameson 1990, 104).
A few references do, however, infer that some parts of the house were more readily associated with one sex than the other. These include Plutarch's account of affairs in the 'women's quarter' (gynaikonitis) of Cato's household (Cato the Younger, 24-5), and a reference by Sidonius Apollinaris (Letters 2.2.10) to 'a very cool chamber' at the end of the portico 'where a chattering crowd of female dependants and nursemaids spread a feast for the gods'. According to Procopius (Histories 5, 2.6-15), a 6th century Ostrogothic prince of Italy 'started howling and went off to the men's part of the palace'. Ray Laurence has proposed that 'gender divisions which are spatially indistinct were emphasised temporally' (Laurence 1994b, 131). It does indeed seem likely that the different sexes would have exploited houses differently according to prescribed social roles.

The arrangements that prevailed in Roman Britain may have been different where the extended family was the norm (see p. 254). A division into distinct male and female sections may have occurred where (if) extended families formed large communal groups. An attempt has been made to identify such divisions from the evidence of finds' distributions in the aisled house at Lodge Farm, North Wamborough. Since certain classes of finds that are more readily associated with the domestic activities of one sex or the other do not distribute evenly across the site it has been concluded that "the extended family ... was allocated distinct areas according to gender" (Hingley 1989, 45; based on the evidence presented in Liddell 1931 and following Applebaum 1972). Since rubbish is not usually left in primary working areas there is a suspicion that these finds were not associated with the use of the building but its abandonment (see p.18 on the problems associated with the evidence of finds distributions). The classification of artefacts into male/female is also not entirely convincing since the 'male' objects such as knives, spears and ironmongery may have been used in outdoor/workshop environments whilst the 'female' combs, shuttles and spindle-whorls may dominate in domestic environments. The North Wamborough evidence might instead illustrate the presence of a large 'workshop' and a series of smaller living rooms with no particular emphasis on gender.

Household size

It is difficult to make any reliable estimate as to the size of population likely to have
been found in the different classes of building described here. Large households were not uncommon in the Roman world (Treggiari 1975, 48-77). Further to the problems of establishing whether or not extended families were found in Romano-British houses there is also the issue of domestic servants and slaves to address. The epigraphic record leaves little doubt that slaves were commonly found in the province. The evidence of urban cemeteries, where males outnumbered females by two or three to one (e.g. Perring 1991b, 120-3), might possibly be a consequence of the large number of slaves found in towns, since in urban households male slaves frequently outnumbered females by two or three to one (Harris 1980, 119).

Three different approaches to estimating population size have commonly been employed:

- Density per cubic metre of living space
- Density per room
- Capita average per house

Hingley has estimated that the aisled building at Lodge Farm, North Warnborough might have housed some 30-60 residents (a population density of one person for every 10 square metres, following ratios described by Cook and Heizer). Packer, in his survey of Ostia (1971), instead assumes the presence of one person for each cubiculum: a figure that Meiggs has doubled. A more useful figure for Roman urban population density derives from the work of Wallace-Hadrill at Pompeii (1994), which suggests an average number of 6-8 inhabitants per house and a density of one person per 35-45m² (with an average house size of 271m²). As a rule of thumb Wallace-Hadrill settles on an average figure one inhabitant per room.

There was considerable variety in house size in Roman Britain and the available sample is almost certainly biased towards larger properties. Smaller town houses measuring less than 100m² and containing fewer than five rooms are likely to have been the most common. Better houses containing reception facilities more usually contained 8-10 rooms with an average size slightly less than 250m². Houses of this scale - which compare closely with the average Pompeian houses described by Wallace-Hadrill - were common throughout all of the towns described here, and many of the more
modest villas were similarly proportioned. Centurion’s quarters were typically 230-259m² – and were normally occupied by well-off men, who may have had families and slaves living with them (Hoffman 1995, 111).

Larger houses could contain in excess of 40 rooms, extending over an area in excess of 1700m², but these were in the minority. At Silchester, for instance, only eight houses had more than 25 rooms (i.e. about 6% of the total). Here too the evidence from the Romano-British towns, most of which is of the later period (i.e. later than the middle of the second century), is similar to that described by Wallace-Hadrill in his study of Pompeii (1994). Although late Romano-British urban households had similar demands on space to their earlier Italian equivalents, and illustrate a similar ranking of scale, it is not possible to draw the same conclusions about the social composition of the Romano-British towns. These were smaller settlements, and to make up magisterial numbers it seems likely that curial office would have extended much further down the scale. The style of life that Wallace-Hadrill can attribute to a Pompeian plebs media, admittedly one which was modelled on that of the aristocratic villa and involved the display of wealth in luxurious domestic architecture, would in Britain have been enjoyed by an urban class of higher rank. In Britain as in Italy the place for wealth display par excellence was the villa. In later Roman Britain the largest villas were commonly twice the size of the largest houses in the nearest important town.
6.3 Romano-British society

In drawing this work to a close some final remarks can be offered on the nature of Romano-British urban society. This is necessarily a brief review of a complex theme, in which the architectural evidence is at best partial. There are also many important observations presented above which are not directly relevant to this particular theme and which are therefore not repeated here. This is instead a contribution of some ideas and thoughts about the way in which social life in Roman Britain can be understood from the evidence of Romano-British houses.

Town and country

The building of Roman houses was a characteristic of urban society. The better town houses and villas described here were almost certainly the property of an elite that was resident in both town and country. Just as the town house gave the rural gentry access to the social and economic benefits of civic life, so the villa took urban values into the countryside.

Participation in Roman civic life depended on the ownership of urban property (Abbott and Johnson 1926). For instance at Tarentum it was a requirement to maintain a house in town or within a mile of it - the size of house was specified as 1500 tiles which has been seen as approximately equivalent to 140m² (Hassall 1979, 243). On the other hand productive land was both the principal source of social power and the main place to invest surplus wealth.

Towns and villas were the scene of social life throughout the Roman period, but ‘we don’t know whether those who built town houses ... were landed gentry moving to the towns or an urban mercantile class aspiring to the gentry’s standards’ (Blagg 1990c, 207). Rivet (1964) - working from the writings of Varro, Virgil and Columella - saw the Roman villa as the country estate of a town-dweller. It is now more widely believed that town life in Roman-Britain remained subordinate to the countryside (as Drinkwater 1983, 190). Town houses were perhaps used by ‘the head of the family and his household as he attended to the business of the civitas, or participated in the social round. This could have been seasonal; the population of the ‘large’ towns my therefore have fluctuated in numbers and social composition through the year’
Such social arrangements might account for the design of some of the smaller town houses, better suited as occasional lodgings.

Notwithstanding the rural basis for the generation of wealth and power in provincial Roman Britain, villa distribution reflected urban influence. Expenditure on villa decoration is more evident in areas which had seen higher levels of investment in urban facilities (indicated by town walls and inscriptions) (Millett 1990b, 195). Administratively important centres also had a shallow fall-off in density of villas around them, while centres without administrative status had a more rapid fall-off (Hodder and Millett 1980). Villas were built in imitation of towns and provided urban facilities within the countryside. The villa - with its baths and walls - was in some respects a more important symbol of the Roman urban order than the town house. In the towns status and power could be declared through public buildings and facilities. The private house only became important in the later period, when public facilities were no longer given equivalent architectural emphasis. In the countryside status more directly attached to the individual landowner from the outset. The constraints and limitations of crowded urban sites may have added to the tendency to treat the villa as a more important site for the display of social status.

Private and public space

In a society where rank was indicated by and reinforced by social patronage the house was necessarily a public place (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 46). The exercise of power relied on direct social contact; Rome knew of no institutional surrogates for human interaction. The Roman aristocracy therefore needed ample domestic space for the exercise of its public duties, and the greater the social position the greater the number of visitors received. The obligations of the host - the burdens of hospitium - were considerable (Livy 25, 18). Houseguests were commonly entertained (Fronto, Letters to his friends 1,3), and since the upper classes could travel with a significant entourage private houses could be crowded with visitors.

Roman domestic space was designed to accommodate the interplay of social relationships within complex households that could include several powerful figures within the same family, as well as important and less important guests. Such a model can perhaps explain the evidence of those houses in Roman-Britain that contained
several 'private' suites of living rooms. Separate spatial domains could be established within a single household in order to define separately functioning private worlds (see further Grahame 1997). Privacy permitted the avoidance of power, and the design of the Roman house appears to have acknowledged this need.

Vitruvius gives a full description of the way in which domestic space could be both private and public: 'Those rooms no one is allowed to enter are considered 'private': bedrooms, dining rooms, bathrooms and so on. But the public rooms are those which people have a right to go into without being invited: entrance halls, courtyards, porticoes and so on. It follows that men of average wealth do not need entrance courts, tablina, or atriums built in grand style because such men are more apt to discharge their social obligations by going round to others than have others come to them.... Those engaged in oratory or public speaking need larger and finer houses with room for those who come to hear them. And those of the highest status, who are involved in politics and the struggle for office and have to appear in public, must have high and impressive entrance-halls, wide courtyards and wide porticoes ... to show off visibly how important they are' (On Architecture 6, 5.1-2).

Pliny's descriptions of his domestic routine suggest a distinction between morning and evening reception activities. Spaces clustered around the entrance to the house were for morning use, whilst areas of private entertainment were reached through the peristyle and were for evening use. The front part of the house consisted of more austere halls (atria), with greater luxury on show in the inner reception rooms. A hierarchy of social interaction is evident, from the public salutatio to the private cena and the intimacies of the bedroom (see Tacitus, dialogues 3.1; 14.7; Seneca de ira 3.8.6; Pliny Letters 5,3; Cicero verr. 3.133). A similar hierarchy can be reconstructed from the Romano-British evidence. This is evident in the way in which audience chambers (Q rooms) might be found near the front porch, but the main reception rooms (R rooms—above p. 137) were instead found in a separate wing to the rear of the house. The importance of the processional route through the Romano-British house has already been described. This was most extravagantly the case at Silchester where the grand route through the house started at the gatehouse porch (E3 room) and lead along extensive covered walks (C3 rooms) and porticoes (C2 rooms), past garden porches (E5 rooms) and audience chambers (Q rooms), and the entrances to several
suites of private rooms, to the extensive suites of heated dining rooms which overlooked the gardens (R rooms).

As in Italy distinction between private and public space within the house were made evident by both scale and allusion. Larger reception rooms could be very public - explicitly basilical - in their design (e.g. the Casa dell’Atrio a mosaico: Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 60-1). Many details of domestic design - as in the use of apses, pediments, peristyles and columns - were directly imported to Roman houses from public contexts. The apse was particularly potent in this context, because of the common use of the semi-cupula as a frame in various public contexts (recess of caldarium in baths, cult image recess, tribunal in basilica, etc.).

These were the areas which were favoured for building improvement in Romano British houses. The most commonly documented changes to houses included:

- addition of corridor or winged corridor facade - or enclosure of open area to make courtyard
- addition, enlargement or improvement of R room - including raising height
- addition of bath block
- addition of mosaics or hypocausts
- general enlargement, in particular addition of new wings.

These were all design features associated with reception activities.

The Roman house was the centre of many public functions but few of these could be divorced from the other parts of the building: areas for dining and for the reception of clients and guests were necessarily linked to the service quarters and the more intimate parts of the house. The social activities most easily separated from the residence of a patron were bathing and worshipping, hence the many public baths and temples. The location and entry arrangements of many villa bath-blocks suggests that they were for public use, and it is just as likely that facilities for public worship would have been attached to private houses. There are many social advantages to the patron in making clear his superior position in the religious affairs of a community. It is surely only because of their comparative architectural anonymity that so few cult rooms, house churches and the like can be recognised in private houses.
Romanisation

There is a school of thought that views the adoption of Roman fashion in Britain as unconvincing and superficial: a veneer applied to unreformed native culture (as Rivet 1964, 110; followed by Reece, Trow, JT Smith, Hingley and others). This permits the view that change "occurs in the ephemeral aspects of architecture (the shape of the building, the trend from timber-built to stone-built structures and the addition of ornate facades), while the basic spatial concept remains the same. ... Roman contact transformed indigenous social structure rather than replacing it" (Hingley 1990, 139).

A distinction has been proposed between a Romanised cultural superstructure (including language, law, finance and administration) and a native social substructure (Reece 1990). Following from this some studies of the evidence from Roman Britain have sought evidence for resistance, for a cultural rejection of Roman impositions (Hingley 1997). The term resistance is perhaps unhelpful - it implies a clear divide between value systems that could be either accepted or rejected, when the competing interests of class and community were not so simply defined (Whittaker 1997, 149). In any case buildings were a product of the exercise of power over resources and the landscape. Since power was almost invariably in the hands of those that supported and benefited from the rule of Rome, we should not expect to see resistance to Roman cultural patterns expressed in architectural design.

The Roman conquest of Britain brought about a whole-scale change in building fashion on high status sites. This was not just a matter of outward appearance, but is evident in form and fabric. The arrangement of space, both with regard to the hierarchy of reception activities and in the space set aside for sleeping and private quarters, can be described within Roman terms. One of the central themes of this thesis has been the argument that houses in Roman Britain were designed to provide a setting for social behaviour which followed Roman practice (for which see Chapter 2). A contrast can be drawn with the impact of the British in India. Here a distinct form of native city housing, with large courtyard houses following traditional design and with space for extended multi-generational family, existed separately from a civil station architecture consisting of bungalows for nuclear families based on western models (King 1976). No equivalent distinctions can be found in Roman-Britain. Wealthy Britons lived in
houses that would equally have suited Roman immigrants.

In all areas amenable to archaeological study the Romano-British house testifies to the integration of Britain into the Romano-Hellenistic world. Where conflicting cultural preferences can be suggested (as in the choice of roundhouses as opposed to rectangular ones, or in particular approaches to ritual burial), these can be explained as internal to Romano-British power systems. An assertion of distinct and local identities is not in itself evidence for either acceptance or rejection of imperial control. Although building forms were not imported without change, British society appears to have found little difficult in adapting to Romanised lifestyle. Approaches to the use of decorative motif, particularly in the field of mosaic design and in the applied arts, imply a ready understanding of the classical message. In late antique Britain "reception facilities and associated social behaviour were as those found anywhere in the Roman Empire" (Ellis 1995, 163). This does not mean that social arrangements were significantly different to those that had previously pertained. The writings of Caesar encourage us to believe that many aspects of pre-Roman social arrangements in Gaul and Britain - in particular the emphasis placed on patronage and ritual in maintaining social power - had elements in common with contemporary Roman practice.

Architecture, language, religion and art demonstrate a thorough but creative adoption of Roman cultural values. Full cultural integration - in which objects are used correctly and their cultural value properly recognised - can be achieved by a system of substitution where the new elements are embraced without substantive change and displace those which previously pertained (van der Leeuw 1983). The evidence from Roman Britain is of this character: "we are left with the ... impression that Romanisation of the wealthy social elite in the lowland zone of the province was considerably more than just a thin veneer" (Hanson 1994, 160).

There is currently some debate as to the extent to which this process of Romanisation was a product of internal forces - an indigenous impulse to copy and adapt (as Millett 1990b) - or was actively promoted by the imperial administration (Woolf 1995; Whittaker 1995, 152; Hanson 1997). The evidence suggests that both forces were at work. Tacitus, in a widely quoted reference to Roman Britain, claimed that his uncle Agricola 'encouraged individuals and assisted communities to build temples, fora and
private houses...... Competition for honour took the place of compulsion’ (Tacitus Agricola 21). It seems likely that the building changes described here were both willed by the administration and effected by peer-group competition (see also Whittaker 1997, 159).

The impact of imperial policy on the progress of Romanisation is most particularly evident in public fashion. This author has suggested elsewhere that the period of vigorous development in London in the early Flavian period, under Hadrian and again circa AD 200 were perhaps consequent on the political attention given to British affairs at these times (Perring 1991b). The domestic architecture described here illustrates a more complex pattern of development. Change took place progressively. Although the pace of change was fastest in the period AD 75-125, Romano-British domestic architecture was the product of a sequence of developments which started circa AD 50 but were not fully complete until after AD 155. This was not the direct product of a moment of imperial will, but a dynamic process of change which may have taken inspiration from outside forces but must also have had its own momentum. It generated a recognisably British form of Romano-Hellenistic culture.

Cultural adaptation and change was not simply a dialogue between Roman and native. It was a central feature of Roman cultural life throughout the empire. The need to pursue latest fashion was a function of the competitive display expected in Roman social arrangements. Romans paraded rank whenever they entertained, and the Hellenising tastes of the Roman aristocracy provided a common cultural language (Garnsey and Saller 1987, 116-7). The writings of Petronius provide explicit testimony to the Roman awareness of the social function of domestic architecture and decoration. Trimalchio’s house presented “a succession of signs... which not only reflected on the standing of Trimalchio but conspired to enhance it” (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 43- 52). Rome’s leading citizens invested in luxuria to reinforce social position, such that it could be argued that “most people think that to be deprived of the chance to display their wealth is to be deprived of wealth itself” (Plutarch Cato maior 18.4). Fashion was driven by the need for higher ranked citizens to search out new means of displaying status in order to maintain a distinction of taste between themselves and the imitative aspirations of social inferiors (Cicero de Legibus 3. 30-1). This process was particularly evident in periods of social change, which explains why the house of
Lepidus could be one of Rome’s finest in 78 BC but fail to rank as one of the best hundred in the city a generation later (Pliny *Natural History* 36.110).

Public architecture had a significant impact on private fashion. New ideas were introduced in this sphere and ushered from public to private by imperial and local patronage (Stahl and Stahl 1976). In Rome sacred architecture influenced late republican domestic architecture, where the architectural idiom of religious monuments was exploited to exalt aristocrats whose houses contributed to their political identity (Coarelli 1983, 191-217). Early developments in Romano-British architecture – in particular in the investment in masonry construction - followed this path.

There is evidence for an indigenous development of building form in Roman Britain, but these were a consequence of imported ideas. The complexity of ties between Rome and its empire were such that many influences were at work. These included:

1. institutional importation: a consequence of imperial patronage and military building programmes.
2. movement of peoples: ideas introduced with the immigration of patrons and craftsmen
3. direct copying: based on plans, drawings and eye-witness accounts.
4. indirect copying: drawing on styles indirectly derived from distant prototypes
5. innovative transmission: involving the creative adaptation of imported forms.

Whilst it is sometimes possible to isolate the point of origin of particular styles and ideas, it is much harder to establish the mechanisms of transmission. The main sources of Roman ideas in Britain were themselves of provincial origin. The systems of patronage that operated in Britain gave greater potency to Romano-Gallic models than to those derived from Italy or the eastern Mediterranean (Reece 1988, 9).

The emulation of Roman models was an essential part of the acculturation process (Millett 1990a, 38). Roman administration relied on a native elite grouped in ‘city-state’ communities that governed on Rome’s behalf. Elite power remained in traditional hands, but was reinforced by identification with Rome. Emulation of Roman fashion set the elite apart from the rest of society and could consequently contribute to the maintenance of power, at least until such time as this language of
superiority was debased through overuse.

Architecture defined status and demonstrated power. It spoke of the favourable relations with power held by an elite whose authority now derived from Rome (Trow 1990), and articulated the relationship between power and the command of surplus that both ensured prosperity and underpinned the conspicuous consumption needed in the exercise of patron-client relations. New forms of display were needed because of the dislocations caused by conquest. Chief amongst these disruptions was the suppression of warfare, a vital conduit for elite competition and patronage in the pre-conquest period. Similarly the flood of new imports would have devalued status display based on prestige goods, whilst changes in the control of trade and the increased social mobility of mercantile classes would all have challenged the existing status quo. New ways of establishing and defining a social hierarchy were required, and in this context investment in property and facilities eventually became an important outlet for competition. Architecture became a key status symbol, in which “continental craftsmen and would have provided a forceful demonstration of the owner’s links to influential patrons” (Trow 1990, 114; see also Haselgrove 1987).

This status seeking entailed an acceptance of urban obligations and values. Wealth was pumped into land, the ownership of which was the principal direction for surplus capital and a vehicle for status display. The design of Romano-British houses was a consequence of competitive expenditure, involving investment in buildings, mosaics and wall paintings. These vehicles for expression were explicitly Roman, and established or celebrated the owner’s dominance over land and nature.

In Britain the main period of acculturation can be dated to the period after c. AD 65. New building forms developed rapidly for another century and a half, in a period of competitive improvement. As had previously occurred in the Romanisation of the towns of Spain and Gaul the main changes took place approximately one generation after conquest (see also Wolf 1995). Roughly half the villas in Belgica were built in the second half of the first century (Wightman 1985).

The ability to build houses was limited to landowners, and houses were therefore a restricted means of status display. Changing fashion might allow certain forms to become redundant, although it is interesting to note that in the Romano-British
countryside models fashionable in the second century AD were still being copied in the fourth. This could imply that beyond the process of initial Romanisation there was a limited need to advance social status through building design. Villa owners were able to maintain social status through reference to traditional architectural forms. Decorative elements, such as wall paintings and mosaics, saw more rapid stylistic development. Changing fashion in these fields does suggest a degree of social competition, but even here the pace of change was unremarkable. Only in the years around AD 300 do we see much change in the period that stretched from the middle of the second century to the end of the fourth century. The contrast with the rapid change evident in Britain in the century following the conquest, or in late Republican and early Imperial Italy, is striking. From the middle of the second century onwards the picture might be one of a small and comparatively secure elite, competing within itself.

Rank and social integration

Power systems in Roman Britain would have depended on the patronage networks that permeated all Roman society (Sailer 1982, 14). Roman houses were evidently important spheres of social interaction within these networks of patronage. The congregation of clients at patron’s home provided a visual demonstration of social hierarchy (e.g. Ammianus Marcellinus Historiae 28:4, 10-3), and the public representation of success and power in buildings and ceremonies reinforced social order (Nippel 1984, 20-29). It has been suggested that in the northwest provinces “the development of the villa system implied the transformation of tribal relations of dependency into patron-client relationships modelled after the Roman example” (Slofstra 1983, 95).

In the very first Romano-British towns there is little evidence that status was demonstrated through rituals attached to the private houses, most of which buildings were not built to last. The elite class had perhaps little expectation of permanent residence in these new cities. Status may instead have been represented through other forms of consumption and display. This latter is suggested by the presence of high status goods and jewellery in the early finds assemblages. These were perhaps transient communities of merchants and officials and not yet a focus for the elite of the
Improvements in urban architecture in the first half of the second century witness the social ambitions of an elite property-owning class. It is not immediately clear if this was the consequence of increased urban prosperity, which had permitted the emergence of local elites and provided the resources for an increasingly extravagant investment in competitive display, or whether the faltering fortunes of urban merchants had made it easier for a landed aristocracy previously aloof from urban affairs to assert their social primacy in this increasingly important political forum. On balance the evidence from the larger towns suggests the latter (this argument is discussed at length in Perring 1991b).

Pattern of dedications from Roman Britain show an emphasis on corporate bodies at the expense of the individual, perhaps indicating an absence of serious competition for power and a consequent lack of emphasis on status competition (Blagg 1990a, see also Millett 1990b, 82-4): "The northern European pattern indicates a social organisation in which power was both largely personal and limited to a small social group. It was thus not the object of the same inter-family rivalry..."

The point has already been made (above p. 244) that some of the changes evident in second-century Roman Britain can be compared to developments in architectural formality in early Imperial Italy. The shift of architectural emphasis from atrium to peristyle in the Pompeian house and the tendency towards a more formalised organisation of space, as in the layout of gardens, reflected changing social attitudes in the Augustan period (Jashemski 1979, 43-8); the more hierarchical and formalised use of space implies an increased concern for social distinctions. At Ostia a clear change in the nature of the housing - from a mix of rich and poor, commercial and residential in the early imperial insulae, to a city dominated by the domus houses of the rich in the later empire - was itself the product of the changes of the second century. Epigraphic evidence illuminates the social context of these architectural changes; the social fluidity and commercial vigour of the early empire was followed by a widening gulf between rich and poor (Meiggs 1973, 235-262).

Eleanor Scott (1990) has suggested that the development of 'winged-corridor' facades and gateways in Romano-British villas might reflect social changes brought about by
vulnerability to threat of 'market forces': 'the general trend was for the erection of symmetrical facades that obscured the rooms and thresholds behind them. The winged corridor facades and later the courtyards acted as buffer zones between the private family rooms and the outside world'. A different view of the social function of the portico has, however, been described here. This was an architectural feature that reflected Roman social practice and was not necessarily concerned with privacy. The layering of social encounters achieved by the portico was part of the Roman norm and conveys no particular message about the vulnerability or otherwise of the Romano-British elite.

One of the most striking features evident from this survey is the way each Romano-British town developed its own very clear architectural identity (some of the features which establish different local architectural styles are described above p. 198), and how the different regions were marked by local fashions in building design (although these were less marked than the differences between the towns). This was most notably a product of the architectural innovations of the late first and second centuries, but appears to have held true throughout most of the Roman period. Within these different communities the same architectural motifs were usually employed in both the larger and the smaller houses. The richest and most powerful families of Roman Silchester were more concerned to own a house that conformed to local ideas of architectural swank than any foreign concepts of the same. Society remained a local matter where competition for status took place within the community. These also appear to have been comparatively well-integrated places. Only in the very first Romano-British cities can it be argued that there was any zoning of class and function and even here the evidence is inconclusive.

The modern pattern of urban settlement generally involves zoning by function and class, where 'spatial separation by lifestyle reduces the potential [for conflict] and promotes social stability' (La Gory 1983, 183). This was not the case in the ancient world. Studies of the economic and social indicators presented by the evidence of the houses of Pompeii (Raper 1977, Wallace-Hadrill), suggest that, beyond a general attraction of commercial activities to principal streets and corner locations, most areas showed mixed uses and accommodated rich and poor alike. This might suggest a world in which the ties of familia and clientela were more essential than any
identification with class or economic interests; the clustering of houses of dependants around the large house of a *paterfamilias* was a feature of medieval urban society in the Mediterranean (Heers 1977, 146). For the most part Romano-British cities were simply not large enough to have generated a segmentary society, beyond the fact that the main arterial roads leading into towns and flanking the main public buildings were liable to be more attractive to commercial uses.

Architectural changes of the second century witnessed a shift from the social mobility of the immediate post-conquest period, to a more established and conservative community. Urban commerce appears to have become less important and more subordinate to the interests of the landed classes. Where wealth and good taste were previously expressed in the public sphere, with the consequent emphasis on public architecture, later Roman society placed greater importance on the individual. The increase in wealth and social complexity that came with empire contributed to the development of an increasingly segmentary society in which the aristocracy was less able to integrate all parts of the population (Nicolet 1980, 390). “The whole political organization .. encouraged a conservative search for status; it might keep the aristocracy turned towards Rome while deepening the gulf between them and the lower levels of society” (Wightman 1985, 188). Earlier ideas of community, built from the social structures of the city state, were to become increasingly irrelevant as ‘*sums of money that had been spent on the townsfolk in the previous century were invested in more private living and on more frankly egotistical forms of competition for status*’ (Brown 1971, 66). Private houses and palaces became more important than public buildings. Later Romano-British houses followed pattern established in the earlier period, although increased emphasis was placed on the dining room whilst formal audience rooms were accorded less significance. Their extravagant reception suites dominated these houses. Wealth came to be used to define the social divide rather than bridge it; this was not just evident in the buildings of the period but also in social custom, dress and literature (MacMullen 1976, 72-3; Brown 1971, 64-6). Leone, in a discussion of Georgian domestic architecture which seems equally appropriate to the Roman house, points out that in conjunction with other aspects of material culture ‘*the individualisation and privatisation achieved through doors, distance, chairs, hyphens, wings, place-settings, and gardens - all created the inhibitions, withdrawal and*
isolation needed to prevent any attack on the established order' (Leone 1984, 27, see also Isaac 1982). These elements had long been evident in the houses of the rich, but in the later Roman town which contained fewer shops and houses of the poor, and cared less for its public buildings and spaces, the social uses of the houses of the rich must have dominated urban life in way that would not previously have been possible.

A useful distinction can be drawn between architecture designed to promote public interaction and that which instead constrained such activity (Perring 1991c). Several features suggest that there was a subtle change in emphasis from strategies of inclusion to ones of exclusion in the later Romano-British town. These changes, it is suggested, formed part of a process which eventually saw most towns decline in significance as centres for social cohesion, a decline which was matched by an increase in the importance of the private house or villa as the centre for elite social interaction. They were perhaps linked to a reduction in the role of town-based trade as a means of generating wealth and promoting social change; there is evidence to suggest that some later Roman towns were positively inhospitable to marketing activities.

The local elite remained responsible for raising taxes, now generally collected in kind rather than cash, but civic office had for many become more of a burden than an honour; and those who could do so gained exemption from the duties of magistracy. By the end of the third century military officers and administrators had largely replaced traditional aristocracy at the head of the empire and were dominant in those cities that retained an administrative role. Provincial aristocracies were still made up of land-owning families but these were increasingly able to direct their affairs from the countryside. The political and social life of later Roman cities may have come to involve no more than a handful of leading families and state officials. The later Romano-British urban habit was arguably little more than an affectation of the rich, built on a variety of administrative rituals.

In Chapter 2 the point was made that the Romano-British house was a parenthetical departure which owed little to the architecture of the Iron Age and which had little influence on what came after. A central argument of this thesis is that Romano-British houses can be placed within the same Hellenistic architectural tradition that characterised most of the Roman world. The truth of this statement is transparent in
matters of construction technique and interior design. Chapter 3 of this study described a series of features (hypocausts, mosaics, clay-walls, wall paintings, tile roofs, etc.) that are wholly characteristic of Roman architecture but had no place in Britain before or after the Roman interlude. There is more scope for this view to be contested in matters of social arrangement. It is undeniably the case that the various house types described in Chapter 5 would appear out of place if transferred to other parts of the Roman world. They belonged to a peculiarly British tradition that borrowed from Rome and Gaul, but which evolved within Britain and was in particular a consequence of the architectural experimentation evident in house design in the British countryside in the period down to circa AD 150. The fact that Britain witnessed a period of creative adaptation of Roman architectural forms does not necessarily mean, however, that these buildings were somehow un-Roman. Local identities were differently declared through divergent uses of Classical design throughout the Roman world. This was almost certainly as true of Italy itself as of the frontier provinces.

The close attention given to room design in Chapter 4 has illustrated how the buildings could have been designed against the same range of social needs and household arrangements that were found in Rome itself. The same can not be said of the houses known to have been built in Britain before and after the Roman interlude. These did not place a similar emphasis on the use of domestic space to articulate and replicate social power. Several features were missing. Barbarian houses were not used to build processional routes framed by a series of potent portels (gateways and arches which measured nature and defined urbanity). Power was not so manifestly declared and surplus wealth was differently directed.

The houses that have been described here owed their architectural complexity to their social function. They were designed as monuments to the prosperity and surplus that flowed from the established social order, and as theatres for highly regulated social interaction. These were very Roman buildings, used in ways that would have been familiar to contemporary elite society throughout the Roman world but which had no place in defining social order where the Roman urban ideology was not accepted. The messages that these buildings conveyed, and the social practices that they housed, belonged firmly to the Roman world. When Britain no longer belonged to that world,
and with the rejection of the Roman urban model of social life, these structures were inevitably redundant. The particular patterns of social life that Rome introduced to Britain were never revived and in some respects the palatial Roman house has never been matched.
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Fig 1. Restored plan of the sixth century BC acropolis at Larisa, illustrating the palace complex containing a megaron and a building with a portico and projecting corner towers perhaps modelled on an Asiatic style of palace (from Lawrence 1973).

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h: clay wall over stone footings from Building D at Watling Court;  
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Fig. 43. Roman houses at Herculaneum. The House of the Mosaic Atrium (left) and House of the Stags (from Ward Perkins 1981).
Fig. 44. House 24,2 at Silchester (from Fox and St John Hope 1901). This shows one of the complex entrance arrangements typical of Silchester. A porch next to the street (Room 1) was linked to the house by a long portico (Room 4 - and note also the space given over to other corridors and porticoes, including Rooms 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17 and 18). The house was composed of two main ranges. Within one of these can be seen the suites of smaller rooms characteristic of the living quarters of the Romano-British house (Rooms 18, 20, 21 and 22 might have formed the principal suite). The other wing included a series of heated rooms at its far end (Rooms 11, 33 and 36). The arrangement of rooms at the east end of the building was unusual but includes a ‘wing-pavilion’ heated room (Room 27) of a type familiar from the plans of some villas. A large barn-like structure (containing Rooms 36 and 37) stood to the north, and is likely to have provided storage and working facilities.
Fig. 45. Pathway analysis of the Roman villa at Newport. a: the plan of the villa; b: an access map; c: an interpretative access map (for codes see fig. 47); d: the Relative Asymmetry values of these rooms. A low RA value shows that the portico (VII) was readily accessible whilst the high RA figures for the heated rooms in the baths (III and IV) show that these were comparatively remote and potentially more private. These findings occasion no surprise.
Fig. 46. Interpretative access maps for some better preserved Romano-British houses (for codes see fig. 47). a: Spoonley Wood (for a plan see fig. 53c and 61); b: Silchester 8,1 (for plan see fig. 52e, 59a and 74).
ENTRANCE ARRANGEMENTS

E: Porches
   E1: Simple porch
       a - flanking pedestals/piers
       b - projecting flanking pedestals
       c - projecting side walls
   E2: Deep porch
       a - projecting from corridor
       b - within line of corridor
   E3: Gatehouse porches
   E4: Wing Entrance
   E5: Garden porches
   E6: Garden pavilions
   E7: Pseudo porches
   E8: Entrance lobbies

C: Porticoes
   C1: Street-side porticoes
   C2: Domestic porticoes
       a - standard
       b - taken around wings
       c - winged
       d - courtyard
       e - internal
   C3: Covered walks
       a - between street and open area
       b - bisecting garden space
   C4: Apsidal ended corridors

PRINCIPAL RECEPTION ROOMS

T: Lodges
   T1: Gatehouse Lodges
   T2: Wing Lodges
       a - independent entrance
       b - entrance from corridor
   T3: Corridor Lodges

R: Dining rooms
   R1: Large 'end' room
   R2: projecting 'pavilion' room
   R3: wing
   R4: bipartite.
   R5: suite
       a: central room
       b: facade projection
       c: rear/side projections

Q: Audience rooms
   Q1: standard
   Q2: extended to rear
   Q3: bipartite/chambered

D: Front rooms

M: Reception in strip buildings

N: Reception in aisled buildings
   N1: main room
   N2: smaller rooms

LIVING QUARTERS

P: Lesser reception rooms:
   P/D: Front of wing

P/Q: Middle of wing
   P/R: End of wing

A: Antechambers
B: Rear chambers (bedrooms)
Y: Other small chambers
   Y1: In place of A/B rooms
   Y2: At end of wing
L: Narrow rooms
   L1: Transverse lobbies.
       a - leading to baths
       b - linking street to portico
       c - flanking principal room
       d - services
   L2: Central lobbies

F: Bedsitting rooms

HALLS KITCHENS AND SERVICES

X: Central Halls

W: Workrooms
   W1: main room in wing/outhouse
   W2: associated smaller room
   W3: front rooms
   W4: in strip buildings
   W5: in aisled buildings

U: Kitchens

V: Rear corridors and service areas
   V1 Corridors
   V2 Small rooms/stores
   V3 Furnaces

Z: Latrines

OTHER RECEPTION AREAS

H: Baths
   H1: changing room/entrance
   H2: cold room
   H3: warm room
   H4: hot room
       a: outer chamber
       b: inner chamber
   H5: dry-heat rooms

H/R: reception room next to baths

J: Octagonal and circular rooms
   J1: circular
   J2: octagonal

K: Cellars
   K1: full cellars
   K2: half cellars
   K3: terraced

G: Gardens
   G1. Peristyle courtyard
   G2. Courtyard without peristyle
   G3. Irregular courtyards
   G4. Yards
   G5. Forecourts
   G6. Enclosures/precincts

S: Garden Buildings

Fig. 47 The main types of room.
Fig. 48. Wroxeter Site 6, illustrating the streetside portico. The houses behind this had been rebuilt on several occasions and are here illustrated in their later phase (from Bushe-Fox 1916). The main living quarters were in the wing gable-end to the street with heated rooms facing a ‘garden porch’ (Room 31).
Fig. 49. Some principal types of porch, at 1:500 (see also fig 50). a: Gayton Thorpe (Type E1a); b: Winchester 23,3 (Type E1b); c: Bancroft (Type E1c); d: Boughspring (Type E2a); e: Silchester 16,1 (Type E2b); f: Silchester 8,1 (Types E3 and E5).
Fig. 50. Further types of porches (in red).  a: Darenth (Type E4 - shows only the main wing of the villa, for a complete plan see fig. 83); b: Ashstead (Type E5); c: Silchester 34,1 (Type E6); d: Witcombe (Type E1c and E7). Scale 1:500.
Fig. 51. The reception wing of House 21,2 at Verulamium (from Frere 1983). The main portico (Rooms 2 and 3), of this late second century house reached a rear reception room (Room 4) which faced a garden porch (Room 1).
Fig. 52. Rear reception rooms (R rooms). a: Silchester 7,3 (type R1); b: Newport (type R2); c: Silchester 21,1 (type R3); d: Withington (type R4 - this illustration omits the bath-block); e: Silchester 8,1 (type R4).
Fig. 53. Central reception rooms (Q rooms). a: Ashtead (Q1); b: Gayton Thorpe (Q2) c: Spoonley Wood (Q3).
Fig. 54. Tombstone of Aelia Aeliana found at South Shields and representing the deceased reclining on a couch and framed by an apse (Yorkshire Museum).

Fig. 55. House 28, 1-2 at Verulamium (from Frere 1983). A reception suite by the front entrance to this building included a front room (Room 1) facing a porch (Room 12). This was separated from the probable living quarters (Rooms 8-10) by a group of lower status rooms (Rooms 4-7). Heated reception rooms and further living rooms were placed in a separate, rear, wing (Rooms 13-22). House 28.2 was appropriately located to have served as the stable-block and workrooms of this property.
Fig. 56. Chambers associated with entrances and porticoes (type T rooms: ‘lodges’).

a: Silchester 21,1 (type T1); b: Lockleys (type T2a); c: Pitney (type T2b).
Fig. 57. The villa at Chilgrove (Chilgrove 2 - from Down 1979). The main reception room (type N1) was apparently found within the aisled building (Room 7), although the suite of rooms found in the adjacent house included a principal room (type P/R) at one end (Rooms 1a and 1b).

Fig. 58. Some commonly identified suites of rooms found within Mansiones in Roman-Britain (from Drury 1982)
Fig. 59. The most common arrangement of space in the main wings of Romano-British houses (for letter codes see fig. 47). a: Silchester House 8,1; b: Silchester House 27,1; c: Caerwent, House 3 S; d: Verulamium House 6,1; e: Newport; f: Sparsholt.
Fig. 60. Room suites. Set 1 (J/L+P/R). a: Caerwent 3 S; b: Silchester 24,2; c: Silchester 27,1; d: Farningham. Set 2 (A+B+P/Q/R). a and b: Newport c: Silchester 27,1; d: Pitney. Set 3 (A+Y+L) Latimer. Set 4 (L+P/Q+Y) Latimer. Set 5 (P/Q+Y+L) Brislington. Set 6 (Y+Y+P) Latimer. Set 7 (P/Q+L+P/R) a: West Park; b: Verulamium 1,1, c: Silchester 27,1.
Fig. 62. Narrow rooms and transverse-lobbies. a: Llantwit Major (Room 22, Type L1a). b: House 28,1-2 at Verulamium (Room 5, Type L1b). c: House 27,2 at Silchester (Room 13, Type L1c).
Fig. 63. The villa at King’s Weston, Glos. (from Boon 1967). This villa was laid out around a central hall (Room X - of type X), separated from the portico (Room VII) by an arcade. A bi-partite end reception room (Room VI - type R) next to a small bath suite (Rooms I-V) dominated the western end of the building. A smaller heated reception room (Room XI - type T2) occupied the wing pavilion at the other end of the building.
Fig. 64. Some domestic bath-houses. a: Dewlish; b: Llantwit; c: Beadlam. Rooms shown include entrance chambers (H1), cold rooms (H2), warm rooms (H3), hot rooms (H4a and H4b), and ancillary heated rooms (H5). Features shown include hot (h) and cold (c) plunge baths. Furnaces were located in adjacent rooms (V3).
Fig. 65. The aisled building at Stroud, Hants (from Williams 1908). Illustrating also the use of a circular building (type J room) in a context where this may have been associated with the reception activities of the estate.
Fig. 66. Round-houses (from Hingley 1990). a: Winterton (Humbs); b: Thorplands (Northants); c: Gorhambury (Herts); d: Whitton (S. Glam.); e: Penrith (Cumbria); f: Trethurgy (Corn.).
Fig. 67. Strip buildings. Workshop/hall types.  
a: Single-roomed buildings (Type C.Ia), Silchester 22, B1.  
b: Two-roomed buildings (C.Ib), Verulamium 1,2.  
c: Buildings with a two-roomed rear suite (C.Ic.1), Silchester 9, B4.  
d: Buildings with a three-roomed rear suite (C.Ic.2), Caerwent 24 N.  
e: Buildings with an extended suite of rooms to rear (C.Ic.3): Silchester 9, B3.  
f: with shops to the front (C.Id.1): Hibaldstow 3.  
g: with a street-side portico (C.Id.2): Caerwent 16 S.  
h: with internal screen corridors (C.Ie), Lincoln St. Marks 2.  
i: with yards (C.If), Caerwent 13 N.  
j: workshops and row buildings (C.IG), Heronbridge 1.
Strip buildings at Newgate Street, London (Buildings Type C1(c.3)).
Fig. 69. Strip buildings. a: small row-type strip buildings (Type C.IIa), London No. 1 Poultry. b: long row-type strip buildings (Type C.IIb), London Leadenhall Ct. 12. c: corridor and hall buildings (Type C.III), Silchester 5, B1. d: strip buildings with a projecting rear wing (Type C.IV), Silchester 19 B1. e: central corridor buildings (Type C.V), Vindolanda vicus, Anima Mea house. f: aisled strip buildings with open hall (Type C.Vla), Sapperton 2. g: aisled strip buildings with rooms to rear (Type C.Vlb), Hibaldstow 4.
Fig. 70. Row-type town houses. a: Small houses with an entrance porch or lobby (Type D.Ia.2), Dorchester, Colliton Park. b: Small houses with a rear reception room (Type D.Ib), Silchester 17,4. c: Caerwent 'yard' houses (Type D.Ic), Caerwent 23 N. d: Complex type (Type D.Id), Watling Court, Building F.
Fig. 71. Row-type town houses with porticoes. a: Small houses (Type D.IIa), Verulamium 3,1 (first phase). b: Corridor houses with rear receptions rooms (Type D.IIb.1), Caerwent 24 N (first phase). c: Corridor houses with rear reception rooms and principal domestic suite (Type D.IIb.2), Silchester 10, B6. d: Corridor houses with enlarged rear reception suites (Type D.IIb.3), Verulamium 4,2. e: Simple pseudo-winged houses (Type D.IIc.1), Verulamium 1,1. f: Complex pseudo-winged houses (Type D.IIc.2), Verulamium 6,1. g: Caerwent ‘yard’ houses (Type D.IId), Caerwent 14 S.
Fig. 72. L-Shaped town houses (row-houses). a: with one-room extension but no portico (Type D.IVa.), Verulamium 14, 3B. b: with one-room extension (Type D.IVb), Verulamium 14,3A. c: with front wing (D.IVc) Silchester 18,1. d: with front wing and yard (D.IVd.2), Caerwent 6 S. e: with rear reception wings (D.IVe.1), Silchester 7,4. f: ditto with porch entrance (D.IVe.2), Verulamium 4,1. g: ditto with reduced rear wing (D.IVe.3), Winchester 23,1. h: with reduced rear wing and ‘Silchester’ porch (D.IVf.1): Silchester 7,3. i: standard type (D.IVf.3), Silchester 9,3.
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Fig. 73. Building I at Colliton Park, Dorchester. An L-Shaped town houses with disarticulated wings (Type D.IVe.5). The reception wing, to the west, was a complicated variation on the standard type, whilst the modest suite of main rooms to the south.

Fig. 74. Silchester, House 8.1. An L-Shaped town houses (Type D.IVf.4). The plan is typical of Silchester. The entrance porch (Room 1, Type E3) was separated from the rest of the house by a portico. The main rooms were arranged in two wings. That gable-end to the street contained living rooms which flanked a central reception room (Room 5, type Q) opposite a garden ‘porch’ (Room 6, type E5). The main reception rooms were set in a separate heated wing at the rear of the building (Rooms 11 and 12; type R).
Fig. 75. U-Shaped town houses. a: Buildings of irregular plan (Type D.Va), Verulamium 28,1-2. b: Buildings set out around a central courtyard (Type D.Vb): Verulamium 4,8.
Fig. 76. Courtyard houses. a: L-shaped buildings with courtyards (Type D.VI.a.1), Silchester 17,1. b: Two-range houses (D.Vla.3), Silchester 6,1. c: L-shaped buildings and workhall (D.VI.a.2), Silchester 19,2. d: Buildings with ranges on three sides of a peristyle courtyard (D.VIb), Colchester Lion Walk 20.
Fig. 77. Courtyard houses. a: Elongated (Type D.VIa), Caerwent 2 S. b: without full peristyle (VId.1), Caerwent 7 N. c: with peristyle (D.VId.2), Caerwent 3 S. d: Large (D.Vle), Verulamium 3,2.
Fig. 79. 'Cottage' and 'corridor' villas. a: Simple Row villa (Type E.I), Park Street. b: Portico villas with central reception room (E.IIa), Feltwell. c: Portico villa with central room and porch (E.IIb), Ashtead. d: Portico villa with end reception rooms and central hall (E.IId.1), Marshfield. e: Portico villa with end reception room and central passage (E.IIe), Rapsley. f: Portico villa with pseudo-pavilions and central reception rooms (E.IIf), Sparsholt. g: Portico villa with pseudo-pavilion and end reception room (E.IIg1), Pitney.
Fig. 81. L-Shaped and U-shaped villas. a: Whittington Court (Type E. IVb2). b: Atworth (Type E. IVb3). c: Folkstone (Type E. Va)
Fig. 82. The villa at West Park, Rockbourne, Hants (from RCHME 1983). The main building was L-shaped, with a large wing reception room (3) in the N wing.
Fig. 83. The villa at Darenth, Kent (from Payne 1897).
Fig. 84. The courtyard villa at Fishbourne (Type E.VIa) (from Cunliffe 1971)
Fig. 85. The courtyard villa at Chedworth (Type E.VIb).
Fig. 86. The courtyard villar at Bignor (from Frere 1982)
Fig. 87. Changing types of wall construction used in the houses of Verulamium as reported on by Frere (1983a). The evidence of partial reconstructions and refurbishments is not included, and as a consequence the figure fails to illustrate some evidence for the use of timber in the later period. Where the date of a house is uncertain the building appears as a fraction divided equally between the relevant columns. The late 3rd century peak includes buildings of c. AD 300, and the early 4th century is consequently under-represented.