



ELVEDEN HALL

STUDENT CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW

Elveden Hall is a large stately home located in Suffolk, in the East of England. It is a Grade 2 Listed Building and is currently owned by Arthur Edward Rory Guinness, 4th Earl of Iveagh.

The story about Elveden Hall is intrinsically linked with the story of its previous owner Duleep Singh. The original construction date is unknown, but the building was seemingly finished in two major phases. The original Georgian house at the core of the whole property is thought to have been built in the 1760s.

Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last ruler of the Sikh Empire, purchased the Elveden Estate in 1863. He set out to rebuild the country house in an Italian style, however rebuilt the interior of the house to resemble a Mughal palace. The building also contained an aviary containing various exotic birds. The architect commissioned by the Maharajah was John Norton, a Gothic revival specialist.



ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES



<https://twitter.com/amanmadra/status/938338007178006528/photo/2>

The existing 18th-century country house was remodelled by John Norton under the instructions of Duleep Singh, who wanted to extend the property with a west wing. Fashionable for English country houses at the time, the external facade of the building was designed in Italianate style. Yet, internally, they employed distinctive Indian architecture.

An east wing was added to the building between 1899 and 1903 by Edward Guinness, 1st Viscount Iveagh. The central India Hall was refitted and Duleep Singh's plaster decoration was replaced by Indian marble.

"The main rooms in the west wing have elaborate wood and plaster decoration, with Hindu and Moorish motifs intermingled with classical forms. The entrance hall and west drawing room have drop-traceried arcading and are heavily encrusted with Hindu ornament." - Historic England

Duleep Singh had died in Paris in 1893, and Elveden was bought by Lord Iveagh, who transformed the house into a palace of Edwardian opulence. He first commissioned William Young, then his son Clyde Young, as architects.

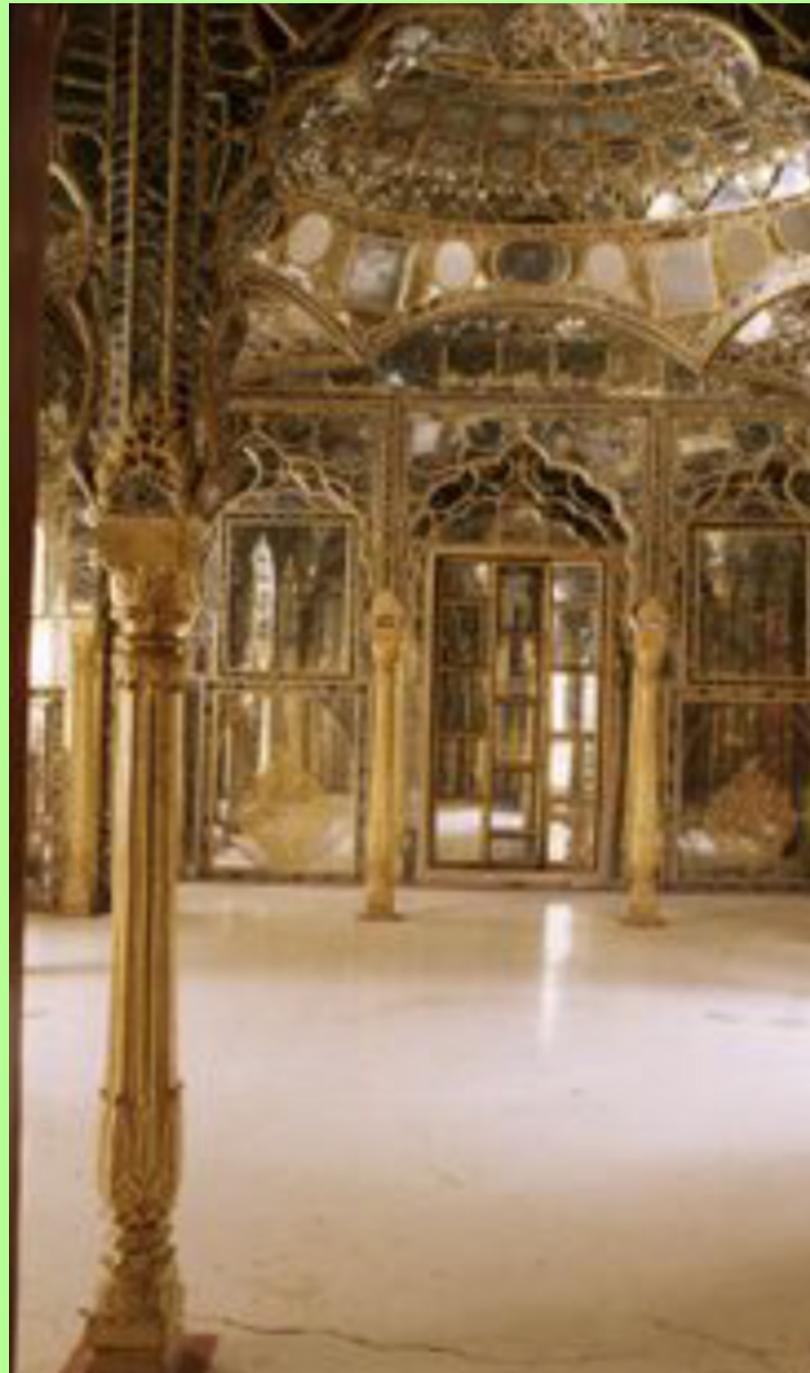
For the work on the Indian Hall they were to be advised by Sir Caspar Purdon Clark, the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum and an architect who had worked in Tehran. He was determined to restore authentic detail at Elveden, wanting to show the best examples of Mughal architecture in England.

Widely considered successful in his mission, the hall is like a great, living pattern book, with examples of both Hindu and Islamic styles accurately and intricately represented all together in one room. The pillars alone are 1,000 years apart in terms of style.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES CONTINUED

According to a typescript history of Elveden by Duleep Singh's son Frederick, which is preserved at the house, the ceilings were copied from palaces in Lahore and Delhi. The interior decoration is typical of 19th-century Rajput architecture, made of plaster. The sources available were described by The Builder as "Bourne's photographs, objects in the India Museum, and details obtained from a collection of watercolour drawings" brought to England by Duleep Singh. The watercolours, many of them by the Austrian artist A. Schoefft, passed to Duleep Singh's daughter, Princess Bamba, and are now in Lahore.

The house was once entered by a Tuscan portico of eight columns. This has now gone, but the front door was later retained as a second entrance. From here, it gives into a lobby, which leads to the hall. The cast-iron balustrade of the staircases were originally lacquered scarlet. This, and all Duleep Singh's work, was painted white at the beginning of the century. Rudimentary scrapes suggest that the plaster columns were generally kept white, although it's considered coloured cement was used and that some painting and gilding work was completed.



USE

HOW HAS THE COMMUNITY USED THE SPACE IN THE PAST, TODAY AND HOW WILL IT BE USED IN THE FUTURE?

PAST

Elveden Hall hosted a wide range of sporting activities, including shooting, which was the Maharaja's favourite. He hosted shooting parties which became popular amongst Royals, including the likes of Prince George, Duke of Cambridge. After the Hall was purchased by Earls of Iveagh, it was used as a headquarters for the USAAF during the Second World War, when the staff quarters were destroyed by bombing.

All the rooms on the north - the dining room, smoking room and billiard room - were for use in the evening. An enfilade made up of a morning room, an anteroom, the library and a drawing room ran along the south-facing garden front. The Maharani's boudoir faced west, which would not have been considered convenient by Victorian planners.

PRESENT

Today, it continues to serve as one of the country's largest farms.

