

distributed copies to friends as directed. This edition had a complex printing history, but the essential points are that it was not published or circulated during Walpole's lifetime, nor was it shown to the many visitors who obtained tickets to be shown Walpole's celebrated and curious house and collection.<sup>2</sup>

# I

For the 1784 edition Walpole provided a preface, a brief but elegant testament of faith, accounting for his use of Gothic ornament at Strawberry Hill, celebrating the great cabinets from which his collection was acquired, noting the miniatures and historic royal portraits and other highlights of the collection, and concluding with a flourish of justification, part whimsical and part defiant, of the "small capricious house ... built to please my own taste, and in some degree to realize my own visions."<sup>3</sup> The body of the text then introduces the house and its setting, and proceeds to describe its interior, room by room. The decorative chimney pieces and plasterwork and other features are recorded, and there is a minute catalogue of the furniture, pictures, sculpture, bronzes, china, and curiosities that each room displayed, while the accompanying engravings show the exterior, the grounds, a number of the chimney pieces, and some of the major rooms.

The detailed account of the house and its contents of the 1784 edition invited extra-illustration, and in Walpole's immediate circle there were a number of sumptuous copies—such as Walpole's own, with the ninety-six quarto pages of the 1784 edition inlaid into an elephant folio expanded to over two hundred pages.<sup>4</sup> He employed a succession of artists to provide illustrations and record his creation at Strawberry Hill, of whom the most prolific were Edward Edwards (1738–1806) and John Carter (1748–1817). Edwards provided watercolors that were engraved for the prints that appear in the 1784 edition of the *Description*, and Carter, an artist, antiquary, and polemist for the conservation of Gothic architecture, worked at Strawberry Hill through the 1780s.

Walpole's copy is matched for richness by that compiled by his correspondent Richard Bull (1721–1805)—but then Bull's commitment to extra-illustration was heroic in its scale, and he illustrated at least sixteen titles from Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press. His copy of the *Description* is enriched by more watercolors by Carter than is Walpole's copy. Various other generously illustrated copies of the *Description* from Walpole's circle are known, including the copy compiled by Carter for himself, which contains his sketches for some of the finished

2. For the complex printing history of the *Description*, see Stephen Clarke, "Lord God! Jesus! What a House!': Describing and Visiting Strawberry Hill," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33.3 (September 2010), 357–380.

3. Horace Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole, youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole Earl of Orford, at Strawberry-Hill near Twickenham, Middlesex. With an Inventory of the Furniture, Pictures, Curiosities, &c.* (Strawberry Hill: Not published, 1784), iv.

4. Walpole's extra-illustrated copy of the *Description* is at the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, 49 3582.