

THE FINANCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE EAST ANGLIAN HOUSES OF INDUSTRY

by JOHN SHAW, B.A., PH.D.

INTRODUCTION

BY 1800, EAST ANGLIAN parishes had adopted three contrasting practices for relieving their poor. Many still adhered to the Elizabethan statutes of 1597–98 and 1601 which had made poor relief the responsibility of the individual parish. However, due to numerous weaknesses inherent in this approach others had, after 1782, united with neighbouring parishes to form Gilbert Unions. These Unions, named after the bill's promoter, Thomas Gilbert, were empowered to erect a workhouse which would accommodate children and adults who had been made 'indigent by old age, sickness or infirmities' (Oxley 1974, 82). In addition to these, between 1756 and 1806, a further 437 parishes amalgamated under a series of Local Acts to form fifteen incorporated hundreds. The nine that were located in Suffolk were created between 1756 and 1779 and contained 253 (49 per cent) of the county's parishes. Norfolk fell some distance behind: its six incorporations, formed between 1764 and 1806, included just 184 (26 per cent) of the county's parishes.

TABLE I: THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCORPORATIONS IN SUFFOLK AND NORFOLK
(percentages are expressed in relation to county totals)

Number of Parishes	Acreage	Population			
		1801	1811	1821	1831
		<i>Suffolk</i>			
253 (49%)	401,740 (44%)	90,642 (43%)	104,135 (44%)	117,866 (44%)	106,749* (36%)
		<i>Norfolk</i>			
184 (26%)	287,630 (19%)	51,040 (19%)	56,283 (19%)	65,493 (19%)	73,138 (19%)

* The decline in the 1831 figure for Suffolk was as a result of the disincorporation of Loes and Wilford in 1826.

Each incorporation consisted of between nine and fifty adjoining parishes which united for all aspects of poor relief, forming a single, legally recognised body under the control of a number of elected directors and guardians. Central to the success of each incorporation was the house of industry which was managed by a professional administrative staff. Here the impotent poor were treated relatively humanely while the indolent were set to work in the pauper manufactory. The houses were undoubtedly one of the incorporations' most innovative features. The impact that they had on the administration of the poor in East Anglia meant that 'it was the incorporating movement of the eighteenth century, and not the national reform . . . of 1834, that made a decisive break with the Elizabethan basis of the Old Poor Law' (Digby 1978, 2). The first section of this article considers the methods

by which the incorporations raised the capital required to finance the houses' construction and the implications that this had on the institutions' long-term success. The subsequent sections analyse both the building process and the impact that the houses had on the East Anglian economy.

I

Raising sufficient capital to cover the expense of building and equipping the house of industry was the first major obstacle faced by the newly formed incorporations. There were three sources of funding available to the directors; the assessments levied upon the incorporations' constituent parishes, the use of a tontine scheme, and the raising of capital by the issue of mortgages.

Within the incorporated parishes the poor rate was levied in a manner similar to that found operating in any non-incorporated area, with each inhabitant paying the overseer or churchwarden an assessment based on his wealth. However, the individual parish's contribution to the common fund of the incorporation was determined less equitably. Instead of using the parish's total rateable value as an indicator of wealth, and therefore of its ability to pay, each parish was assessed on the basis of its poor relief expenditure for the seven years prior to incorporation; 'on its poverty rather than its property' (Marshall 1926, 112). This approach was adopted partly because the incorporations framed their legislation on the region's earlier urban Local Acts which had united the parishes of King's Lynn in 1700, Sudbury in 1702, Norwich in 1712 and Bury St Edmunds in 1748, but also because they were following the advice proffered almost half a century earlier by John Cary, the promoter of the Bristol incorporation of 1696:

[Incorporations established] for the maintaining and employing of their poor . . . in the counties must be by uniting one or more hundreds whose parishes must be comprehended in one Poor's Rate, and each of them contribute to the charge thereof; not by bringing them to an equal pound rate on their lands and personal estates . . . but by taxing every parish according to what it paid before . . . (Eden 1797, II, 254–55).

Parochial assessments fulfilled two roles. First, there appears to have been a linkage between an incorporation's assessment income and the capital sum that was borrowed, similar to the relationship between personal income and a house mortgage today. Most of the incorporations' initial capital was between four and five times their annual assessment income.

TABLE II: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CAPITAL RAISED BY THE INCORPORATIONS AND THEIR INCOME FROM ASSESSMENTS

	<i>Annual Parochial Assessment</i>	<i>Initial Capital Raised</i>	<i>Assessment as % of capital</i>
Wangford	£1787 11s. 8d.	£8,450	21
Locs and Wilford	£2069 9s. 9d.	£9,200	23
Stow	£1987 0s. 0d.	£8,000	25
Carlford and Colneis	£1487 13s. 5d.	£6,000	25
Blything	£3084 12s. 11d.	£12,000	26

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The second function of the assessments was to provide the incorporations with an operating income until sufficient profit was derived from their pauper manufactories. Unfortunately in this area the directors' somewhat quixotic aims never became reality, with the percentage of income attributable to assessments actually rising as the manufactories continually failed to make any significant profit. In 1758 Carlford and Colneis obtained 79 per cent of its operating income from assessments but this figure had risen to 90 per cent by 1822. Blything's accounts for 1804-07 reveal that assessments still constituted 88 per cent of income after almost forty years of operation, rising to 98 per cent by 1828. Finally, in Loes and Wilford, where assessments formed 63 per cent of the incorporation's income between 1782 and 1786, this figure had increased to 93 per cent by 1797. Clearly all the incorporations failed in their attempts to use their paupers' labour to stabilise, if not reduce, the poor rates. The gross profit from any pauper manufactory, irrespective of the goods produced, never contributed more than 35 per cent of total income and was generally closer to between 3 and 8 per cent.¹

TABLE III: SIZE OF THE INCORPORATIONS, AND CAPITAL BORROWING AND LAND OWNERSHIP AUTHORISED BY LOCAL ACT²

<i>Incorporation</i>	<i>Date of Incorporation</i>	<i>Number of Parishes</i>	<i>Maximum Borrowing Allowed</i>	<i>Maximum Acreage Allowed</i>	<i>Location of the House of Industry</i>
Carlford and Colneis	1756	28	£6,000	20	Nacton
Blything	1764	46	£15,000	50	Bulcamp
Bosmere and Claydon	1764	35	£10,000	40	Barham
Samford	1764	28	£10,000	40	Tattingstone
Mutford and Lothingland	1764	24	£8,000	50	Oulton
Loddon and Clavering	1764	41	£8,000	40	Heckingham
Wangford	1764	27	£10,000	50	Shipmeadow
Loes and Wilford	1765	33	£10,000	50	Melton
East and West Flegg	1775	20	£6,000	40	Rollsby
Mitford and Launditch	1775	50	£15,000	100	Gressenhall
Forehoe	1776	23	£11,000	150	Wicklewood
Stow	1778	14	£8,000	30	Onchouse
Cosford	1779	18	£10,000	40	Semer
Tunstead and Happing	1785	41	£15,000	200	Smallburgh
Buxton	1806	9	£1,000	22	Buxton
Hartismere, Hoxne and Thredling*	1779	64	£25,000	200	Eye

* This last incorporation was never put into effect.

A second, less popular method of raising capital was through the use of a tontine scheme which operated as a form of life annuity. Such a scheme was adopted by both the Forehoe – which issued 110 shares worth £100 each – and the Flegg incorporation, which issued twenty-five shares of a similar value. In both cases interest was paid on the total value of the subscriptions but was divided amongst the surviving investors so that, as the number of investors declined, the return on the investment increased. The initial return paid to the sixty-one investors involved with the Forehoe scheme at its inception in 1777 was 5 per cent. By 1795 the survivors were receiving 6.4 per cent, rising to 9.3 per cent in 1820, 11 per cent in 1827 and finally 15.3 per cent when the scheme terminated in 1836.³

The third method by which finance could be raised was to issue mortgages secured against the income guaranteed from future poor rates. Normally a return of between 4 and 5 per cent was offered which was comparable to the other investment opportunities then available: local turnpike trusts, such as the Little Yarmouth and the Norwich to Aylsham, offered $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent during the 1760s and 1770s; India bonds, in which the incorporations themselves invested, yielded $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 per cent during the same period, and the Bank Rate remained at $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 per cent.⁴

TABLE IV: ORIGINAL INVESTMENT PROFILES FOR SIX SUFFOLK INCORPORATIONS
(Each figure refers to the number of investors purchasing that value of shares.)

	<i>Carlford and Colneis</i>	<i>Blything</i>	<i>Samford</i>	<i>Wangford</i>	<i>Loes and Wilford</i>	<i>Stow</i>
<i>Dates</i>	1765-8	1764-7	1764-7	1764-8	1766-69	1779-80
<i>Rate offered</i>	$3\frac{1}{2}$ -4%	$4\frac{1}{2}$ %	5%	$4\frac{1}{2}$ %	$4\frac{1}{2}$ %	5%
<i>Total raised</i>	£4,800	£11,800	£7,350	£8,000	£9,200	£5,150
£50				2		1
£100	8	2	1	1	5	5
£150			2	2		2
£200	3	1	3	1	2	5
£300	3	3	1	1	2	2
£400		1	4		1	
£450					1	
£500	1			1	4	
£550				1	1	
£600		2	1		1	2
£650			1			
£700			2	1	1	
£800			1	1		
£1,000	2		1	2	1	
£1,100		1				
£1,300		1				
£2,000				1	1	
£6,500		1				
<i>Total investors</i>	17	12	17	14	20	21

Details of the mortgages issued exist for six of the Suffolk incorporations and, although incomplete, the sample of 101 individuals who invested £65,300 is of a sufficient size for some patterns to be discerned. The most obvious feature is the local nature of the investors: all but three of the sample lived in Suffolk and most of these tended to reside in the incorporation concerned. The majority of the investments were for £300 or less and almost a fifth provided the minimum amount specified by the incorporation. As a result of this there were relatively few substantial investors and most of these were directors of the incorporations concerned and, as such, had a direct interest in its financial success: Sir Thomas Gooch, a Blything director, invested £6,500; Nathaniel Fletcher, a Loes and Wilford director, £2,000; and William Adair, a Wangford director, £2,000.

Investments involving amounts greater than £500 were made almost exclusively by directors and guardians, though there was considerable variation in their involvement. At Blything they provided £9,550 (81 per cent) of the total capital in contrast with the £1,100

(12 per cent) for Loes and Wilford. The degree of interest expressed by women also appears to have been very variable. In contrast with the nine females who placed capital worth £3,200 in Loes and Wilford there were no women investors in Samford and only one in Wangford and two in Blything and Stow. Finally, all but one of the investments were made by individuals, the only institutional investor in the sample being the Ipswich Grey Coat School, which invested £1,000 in the Samford incorporation.⁵

The method of finance adopted was important for the long-term success of the incorporation. At Forchoe, although the rate of return received by the investors remaining in the scheme rose from 5 to 15.3 per cent, the real cost to the incorporation remained constant at £550 per annum, and there were no capital repayments required. However, for those incorporations with a standard mortgage, the speed of repayment was of the utmost importance. Blything and the Loes and Wilford incorporations provide two very contrasting financial histories. In 1767 Blything's annual interest payment on its mortgage of £12,000 was £540, equivalent to 17½ per cent of its assessment income. However, by restricting outdoor relief effectively and minimising its overheads the incorporation's indebtedness had been reduced to £4,600 by 1780, when interest payments represented 7 per cent of its assessment income. In response, parochial assessments were reduced by one-eighth, to £2,698 19s. 8d. in 1781. The whole debt was repaid by 1791. This meant that Blything was in a relatively strong position financially to deal with the economic problems arising after 1795.⁶

Loes and Wilford was far less successful. Here the £9,200 raised between 1766 and 1769 required interest payments of £414 per annum, equating to 20 per cent of its assessment income. However, 'due to some great abuse and mismanagement' in the house the debt, having been reduced to £6,700 by 1782, had reverted to £8,500 by 1785 and was then costing 5 per cent. By 1791 the figure stood at £9,900 and interest payments accounted for 24 per cent of the incorporation's assessment income. By 1809, the debt stood at £10,150, a sum which the incorporation was 'unable to repay . . . or pay the interest on the money borrowed'. The incorporation's weak financial position led to the demand for reform becoming widespread until the parishes were finally disincorporated in 1826.⁷

II

There were several distinct stages to the incorporations' building programmes for constructing the houses of industry. Before building could commence the incorporations had to purchase a suitable piece of land. In ideal circumstances this would have been located in a central parish so as to minimise the travelling required from the more peripheral areas. However, this appears to have been achieved relatively infrequently. Reservations over the advisability of having a workhouse erected in the parish, with all the anticipated legal problems associated with pauper settlement, meant that most local landowners were reluctant to offer their property. For two incorporations this problem was overcome by the generosity of their directors: Carlford and Colneis acquired twenty-five acres of land on Nacton Heath from Admiral Vernon and Philip Broke, and the Fleggs obtained twenty-two acres of land out of Edmund Mapes's manor at Rollesby.⁸

Other incorporations were fortunate enough to obtain replies to the advertisements that they placed in the local newspapers, although the amount that they had to pay per acre varied quite markedly. Samford's directors purchased fifty-two acres at Tattingstone for £550 (£10 11s. per acre); Wangford's purchased forty-four acres at Shipmeadow for £784 11s. (£17 11s. per acre), and Mitford and Launditch's obtained sixty-three acres at

Gressenhall for £1,400 (£22 4s. per acre).⁹ While part of this discrepancy can be explained by the varying quality and location of the land concerned, a considerable element was due to the vendor attempting to maximise his profit by playing on the difficulties that the incorporations faced in obtaining property. In many cases the lack of response from the local gentry forced the incorporations to become totally dependent upon their directors. Even amongst this enlightened and philanthropic group, self-interest was not far below the surface for, whilst some directors requested a reasonable price for their land, others were only too eager to make personal gain from the incorporations' predicament. In contrast with John Rous, Blything's chairman, who sold the incorporation twenty-five acres for £236 (£9 8s. per acre), Colonel Wollaston asked for £598 for the twenty-two acres that he sold to Stow (£27 3s. per acre), and the Revd Mr Jeafferson, a Loes and Wilford director, obtained an exorbitant £852 for his twenty-seven acres (£31 11s. per acre).¹⁰

III

The next problem encountered was architectural. Obviously the design of the house of industry was fundamental to the success of the venture, but there were no suitable buildings in the locality that could be used as a prototype by the directors. Most of the region's paupers were still catered for in small, insalubrious parochial workhouses designed to operate more as a deterrent than as an asylum. In contrast, the new houses of industry had to be multifunctional in design, capable of responding to the needs of several hundred paupers with very different reasons for admission. These experimental buildings had to provide facilities for the care and education of the young, the instruction and employment of the able-bodied, the humane treatment of the aged, the medical care of the sick, and the correction of the indolent and disruptive pauper.

Unfortunately, contemporaneous plans exist only for the house at Heckingham, but there are post-1834 plans for the houses at Smallburgh (1835) and Nacton (1836). Plans drawn in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also exist for several East Anglian houses, but such plans whilst often accurately depicting the overall shape of the building, bear little resemblance to the original internal structure. Further details can be derived from the descriptions written by Sir Frederic Morton Eden and Arthur Young, and from the houses' returns to the Parliamentary questionnaire concerned with institutional relief circulated in 1775-76. The incorporations' minute books are also most useful for they provide details of the directors' actions at each stage of the houses' construction. Finally, many of the houses of industry are still standing and, in a number of cases, alterations to their external appearance have been only slight; particularly good examples remain at Shipmeadow, Onehouse, Bulcamp, Tattingstone and Heckingham.

The first stage of the building process consisted of the submission of plans for the design of the house, with those accepted providing a basis on which tenders could be made by builders. The advertisements for plans placed in the local newspapers contained only the vaguest of specifications. Blything's sole requirement, typical of many of the advertisements, was added by way of a footnote: 'N.B. It is imagined that the said House must contain at least Four Hundred inhabitants.'¹¹ This apparent lack of foresight, despite the innovatory nature of the buildings, could have exposed the directors to manipulation by the architects and builders (Digby 1978, 41). However, two inter-related factors support the contention that the directors were considerably more aware of the current state of the market than has previously been assumed.

First, the design process was evolutionary in nature and proselytization came by successful example. Once the house at Nacton had been erected in 1757, a model -

however unsatisfactory – existed against which subsequent plans could be judged, and the design obtained considerable favourable coverage. The first eulogy was a series of three letters which included a plan of the building, written by Richard Canning, a Nacton director, and published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* between 1761 and 1763. The third, most informative, letter mentions that a saving of £2,093 had accrued to the incorporation since its formation and £500 of the debt had been repaid. Canning made the presumption that the savings could have been far greater if it had not been for four unexpected expenses. There had been the rise in the price of provisions costing the directors 'more to maintain the poor, and forcing many into the house, who would otherwise not have come'. Then there was the cost of clothing the poor, who were admitted 'in a most miserable and filthy condition; they were clothed in rags, and some of them . . . almost literally naked'. Third, there had been a smallpox epidemic in 1759 and, finally, there was the expense associated with the establishment of the hempen cloth and twine spinning manufactory which had generated little initial profit as a result of the inexperience of the inmates and the large quantity of waste that they produced.¹²

Further approbation was forthcoming in 1764 with the publication of Samuel Cooper's *Definitions and Axioms relative to Charity, Charitable Institutions and the Poor Laws*. This duplicated much of the material that appeared in Canning's final letter, and commented favourably on the house's design and layout. The region's newspapers were also complimentary, with the *Norwich Mercury* reporting the 'salutary effects' that the house had had on the incorporation's poor.¹³

In addition, there was a considerable exchange of ideas and comment between the incorporation's directors and the gentry and clergy of the surrounding hundreds. An extant letter from Richard Canning to Stephen White, a director of the Loes and Wilford incorporation, states that the house 'afforded a more comfortable subsistence to the poor, than they would have in their own parishes', whilst at the same time 'sufficiently demonstrating the advantages of it to the rich' (*E.A.M.*, xv, 597–98). The directors of the subsequent incorporations visited this and other East Anglian houses before finalising their own proposals. When future petitions for Local Acts were presented to the Commons' Committee, Nacton's treasurer, William Truelove, often appeared to confirm 'the evidence . . . in relation to the good effects which have arisen from [incorporating]'. All the Suffolk petitions used the success of Nacton as vindication for their own proposals, claiming that it was an 'effectual means of reducing the rate due to the poor maintaining themselves by their labour'.¹⁴ Clearly the promoters were fully aware of the most recent house design and of the prevailing contracted price and so, whilst many of the later buildings were more palatial, this would appear to be merely a reflection of the directors' increasing pretensions rather than the builders' desire to produce more elaborate plans.

The second factor which displays the directors' overall control was the fact that the same surveyor and contractor were generally employed, enabling the former to develop an understanding of the technicalities involved with the houses' construction and allowing him to emerge as a shrewd negotiator on behalf of the directors, whilst the latter acquired a mastery over the building problems encountered. Details of the process involved can be determined for eight of the East Anglian houses. Although several sets of plans were submitted to the Suffolk incorporations their surveyor, John Redgrave, normally approved those tendered by either Thomas Fulcher of Debenham or Matthew Grayston of Woodbridge. As it was usual for a building firm which had already had plans accepted to be in a position to offer the lowest bid, Fulcher and Grayston obtained the contracts for erecting the houses at Bulcamp, Onehouse and Melton and their plans were adopted for the house at Shipmeadow.

Fulcher and Grayston's partnership began with Bulcamp. Fulcher's plans were accepted,

after minor modification, in August 1764 and a request for tenders brought one of £7,945 17s. from Fulcher and a second of £7,847 13s. 5d. from Grayston. Redgrave, after amending the plans, made an estimate of £6,841 16s. 6d. and a re-submission of tenders, based on these new plans, brought a bid of £7,199 8s. from Fulcher and another of £7,193 from Grayston. So, in December 1764, the directors decided to offer the contract to them jointly if Redgrave's lower figure was accepted.¹⁵ However, while negotiations were under way with Blything, the pair had already submitted plans to Wangford's directors in October 1764, which were similarly approved by Redgrave the following May. The partners entered a bid of £4,664, but were underbid by the rival firm of Harris and Fish, who acquired the contract in September 1765 when the latter reduced their tender from £4,060 to £4,000.¹⁶

Fulcher and Grayston then submitted a set of plans for the house at Melton in June 1766. These were initially rejected as too elaborate, with the directors preferring those offered by the firm of Aldis and Lane. Not surprisingly, at a meeting attended by Redgrave thirteen days later the committee was swayed in favour of Fulcher and Grayston's plans. Then, although they were initially underbid by Aldis and Lane, who tendered £4,350, the pair finally obtained the contract at the higher figure of £4,500 when their competitors were forced to withdraw in July 1766. This was to be the partners' last venture: in July 1769 a final payment of £729 was made to Grayston's assignees and the house was completed by another firm.¹⁷ Fulcher, continuing in business alone, had his plans for Onehouse approved in March 1779 and a month later his tender of £5,434 6s. was accepted by the directors.¹⁸

A second firm of builders, Andrew Chandler and Thomas Poulteney, was responsible for the two other Suffolk houses for which records exist. In 1756 they provided the lowest of four tenders, which ranged from £2,240 to £2,869, for Nacton. However, after having had their bid accepted they were forced to withdraw when they realised that they had made a miscalculation; but when their competitors refused to build the house for less than £2,500, their new bid of £2,540 was approved.¹⁹ The firm's second success came with Tattingstone, with their plans being accepted in September 1764 and their tender of £4,029 shortly afterwards.²⁰

A similar process was also used for the Norfolk houses. Five plans were submitted to Forehoe's directors in December 1775, but none was 'an eligible and proper plan', so they requested their surveyor, Richard Miller, to design a set. When these had been approved two tenders were received, with the contract being granted to Charles Elder for £2,300 in December 1776. Suffolk builders also made bids for some of the Norfolk houses, with John Harris of Ipswich signing an agreement with the Loddon and Clavering directors in September 1765. This was the same Harris who had been unsuccessful in obtaining the Wangford contract eleven months earlier, and the existence of this agreement reinforces the idea that only a limited number of specialised builders were involved in the construction of the East Anglian houses.²¹

All the builders were required to provide a surety for double the contract price before the agreements were signed. From the size and frequency of the disbursements made to the firms, it would appear that payment was made on the completion of a specific stage of the house, with up to 50 per cent of the total value being retained until after the satisfactory inspection and valuation of the finished property. Such an approach would have forced the contractors to invest heavily in materials before any payment was received, and this may have had some influence on Grayston's bankruptcy for, at that time, he was in the process of constructing two houses. Unfortunately there are only two contracts surviving which provide details of the payment scheme: that between Andrew Chandler and Samford, and that between John Harris and Loddon and Clavering. Chandler was to be paid three instalments of £500 when the 'naked' ground, chamber, and garret floors had been laid,

with a further £500 when the roof was tiled. The final payment of £2,029 9s. was to be paid when the completed house had been inspected. In addition, he had to allow for bricks and tiles provided by the directors within the contracted price – ordinary bricks at 12s. per thousand, plain tiles at 10s. 6d. per thousand, pantiles at 45s. per thousand, and stock bricks at 15s. per thousand. In Norfolk, Harris's payments were very similar: he was to receive £800 when the brickwork of the main building had reached the water table, a further £1,000 when the chamber floor had been laid, and £1,000 when the principal building had been tiled. The final payment of £1,000 was due when the completed building had been inspected by two independent valuers.²²

Harris's contract, signed on 12 September 1765, also illustrates the speed with which the Loddon and Clavering directors responded to the Suffolk workhouse riots of the preceding August which had resulted in the partial demolition of the house at Bulcamp. A clause, appended to the contract, indemnifies Harris against all loss and damage caused by 'persons assembling in a riotous or tumultuous manner and burning, pulling down, breaking, spoiling, damaging the said buildings . . . or the materials used'. Presumably similar clauses were inserted in all the other post-August 1765 contracts.²³

These documents are also useful in illustrating the minutiae covered by the contract, and specify, amongst other things, the thickness of all internal and external walls, the dimensions of all joists and rafters, the number, size and construction of the stairs, the size and location of all doors and windows, and the type of tiling and paving material to be used. Harris's contract for Heckingham mentions that the internal walls were to be 'wrought fair' using '200 lime to each rod of brickwork', the windows were to be glazed with 'the best Newcastle glass', the house was to be given three coats of chocolate coloured oil paint, and the roof was to be covered with blue Dutch pantiles.²⁴

Despite such details the contracted price was rarely adhered to owing to the tentative nature of the plans, which forced several alterations to be made during the houses' construction. Fulcher and Grayston's contract with Blything's directors for £6,847 16s. 6d. was exceeded by almost £4,500 by the time the house had been completed. During the house's construction a foot was taken off the width of the east wing and two feet added to the west, extra doors and chimneys were added, the windows were altered and over £500 expended on repairs to the partially built house after a mob had caused extensive damage in August 1765. The incorporation also incurred an additional charge of £1,548 for building materials and a further £248 for the erection of a cottage and a shed, the excavation of a cutting to the river Blyth and the erection of a lime and brick kiln. An idea of the sheer size of the undertaking can be ascertained from the fact that over one million bricks and 100,000 pantiles were produced and over 300 chaldrons of lime and 100 chaldrons of coal were burned. This brought the total cost of the shell of the house to £11,033.²⁵

The Loes and Wilford directors also made substantial alterations to their original plans and paid Fulcher and Grayston an additional £1,300 for building a new brewhouse, pest house, bog house and coal bing [*sic*], for whitewashing the house, and digging a well and fitting two pumps. Similar alterations and additions were made by the Samford, Carlford and Colneis and Forehoe incorporations, where the overbudgeting was £800, £500 and £3,252 respectively.²⁶

Once the shell of the house had been completed it needed to be fitted out and clothing and provisions purchased before the first poor could be admitted. The directors preferred to enter into arrangements with tradesmen operating in the hundreds they were to serve before placing the contract elsewhere and the orders were probably the largest that the local suppliers ever received. Some idea of their magnitude can be obtained from Blything's Building Committee which requested tenders for the following amongst other things: a wide range of iron and copper goods and eating utensils; 150 bedsteads,

mattresses, bolsters, coverlids, sheets and blankets; 72 chairs; 1,350 yards of cloth; 448 pairs of shoes; and an extensive range of clothing which included 192 pairs of breeches and hose, 100 coats, gowns, undercoats and caps, 140 shirts and shifts, 72 hats, 50 bonnets, bodices and stomachers. With preference being given to local suppliers the majority of the £2,414 worth of business went to the tradesmen resident in Halesworth, Peasenhall, Southwold, Uggheshall, Wenhaston and Yoxford, all of which are located in Blything hundred, with the only outside supplier being from Wangford hundred. Similar policies were pursued by most of the other houses, with Melton, Tattingstone and Nacton expending £1,244, £1,385 and £855 respectively.²⁷

Most of the East Anglian houses appear to have been designed on some variation of the H-shape that was to become so popular with the architects responsible for designing the post-1834 union workhouses. The houses of industry must have been very impressive structures when compared to the existing parochial poorhouses, a fact that contemporaries such as George Crabbe and Arthur Young were quick to note. Crabbe contrasts the insalubrious parish poorhouse in *The Village*, 'whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door' with the houses of industry mentioned in *The Borough*: 'That giant building . . . that lofty thund'ring hall'. Young also described the houses favourably, noting that all were built 'in as dry, healthy, and pleasant [a] situation, as the vicinity affords . . .'. He mentioned that the inmates' dormitories were 'large, airy and conveniently disposed . . .', the infirmaries were 'large, convenient, airy and comfortable', and the dining halls were 'large, convenient, well ventilated, with two or more fireplaces in them'. Finally he contrasted the houses with 'the hospitable large mansions of our ancestors, in those times when the gentry spent their rents among their neighbours' (Young 1812, 251–53). The details contained in Wangford's submission to the Parliamentary questionnaire of 1775–76 reinforce this last point well. Shipmeadow was an imposing H-shaped, three-storey building which consisted of a central block running north to south and measuring 60ft in length and 20ft wide, with two wings, running west to east, each measuring 210ft by 20ft.²⁸

When contrasted with later post-1834 institutions, 'the difference between the houses of industry . . . and the union workhouses . . . was not so much one of architectural style as the provision, in the former, both of more highly developed welfare arrangements for the impotent poor and of measures for the productive employment of the able-bodied poor' (Digby 1978, 41). The allocation of the sixty-four rooms at Shipmeadow reflects the wide ranging social provision made by its directors. To cater for the two hundred inmates there was a large dining room on the ground floor of the central block served by a kitchen and a dairy, a malt chamber, a brewhouse, a meat and bread room, a granary and a baking office. The clothing and provisions were stored, as in all the other houses of industry, in close proximity to the governor's rooms. The governor's status within the house was reflected in his comparatively spacious quarters, with him being allocated an office, a living room and a bedroom. Nearby was the directors' ornately decorated committee room.

Sick paupers were treated in the surgery and then confined either to one of the six infirmaries provided within the house, or, if suffering from a contagious disease, to the thirty-bed pest house, located some 300 yards away. Children were provided with basic schooling in the first floor schoolroom. Able-bodied paupers were set to work braiding nets for the Yarmouth fleet in one of the five workrooms, and those refusing to work were incarcerated in one of the three cells which also served for restraining lunatics. The family unit was retained by the provision of twenty-nine small married quarters (each 9ft by 8ft 10in). The remainder of the inmates were segregated: there were two rooms for women and nurses, one for girls and single women, and a room for boys and single men. Outside there was a small chapel for religious services and a burial ground. There were also a number of outbuildings, including a 'bogg house' at the end of each wing.²⁹

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The layout of the house at Heckingham was in a similar H-shape. The central block of the main building ran west to east and two wings at either end ran north to south. The ground floor of the central block contained the dining room, the committee room and the school room. The west wing contained three workrooms, two infirmaries, the surgery and the prison and the east wing contained one workroom, the governor's room, the meal room, the bread room and the baking office. Outside was the normal collection of out-buildings; two hog houses, a swill house, two coal stores, a slaughter house, a brew-house, a wash-house, two stables and the drying shed for the linen. A pest-house was built well away from the house to the north-east.³⁰

IV

As previously mentioned, the completion of the house appears to have financially over-stretched just two of the region's fifteen incorporations. Stow's £8,000 was soon exhausted and the directors were forced to guarantee an additional £1,320 before the 1781 amending Act increased its permitted borrowing to £13,000. At Forehoe, extensive alterations to the design of the house meant that the initial ceiling of £11,000 was soon found to be insufficient, and two amending Acts were passed in 1783 and 1789. Even the financially prudent incorporations found that a substantial percentage of their capital was being laid out on erecting and equipping the house. The most successful incorporation was Carlford and Colneis whose directors managed to restrict expenditure to 54 per cent of total borrowing, but the average figure was around 74 per cent.³¹

TABLE V: THE PERCENTAGE OF INITIAL CAPITAL EXPENDED ON ERECTING THE EAST ANGLIAN HOUSES OF INDUSTRY³²

	<i>Total Cost of Building</i> £	<i>Initial Borrowing</i> £	<i>Building as % of Borrowing</i>
Nacton	3,242	6,000	54
Barham	5,574	10,000	56
Shipmeadow	5,095	8,450	60
Heckingham	4,894	7,500	65
Tattingstone	5,608	8,450	66
Oulton	3,900	5,725	68
Melton	6,777	9,200	74
Gressenhall	11,600	15,000	77
Rollesby	2,300	2,800	82
Wicklewood	9,552	11,000	87
Semer	7,000	8,000	88
Bulcamp	11,033	12,000	92
Onchouse	7,634	8,000	95
	84,209		

The total cost of constructing the shell of the house can be calculated for thirteen of the region's incorporations: the nine built in Suffolk cost £55,863 and four of Norfolk's houses totalled £28,346. Assuming that the two remaining Norfolk houses expended 74 per cent of

their capital on construction, their building costs can be estimated at £11,840. This means that the total cost of erecting the shell of the fifteen East Anglian houses was approximately £96,049. Once the building was complete the houses had to be fitted out. Figures for this stage of their construction are available for four of the Suffolk houses; Bulcamp, Melton, Tattingstone and Nacton. For each of these the cost of fitting out the house was approximately 23 per cent of the construction costs, yielding a figure of £22,091 and placing the total cost of building and equipping the houses at £118,140.

The injection of over £118,000 of capital must have had a major impact on the local economy, an impact that was magnified by the concentrated nature of the building programme – £54,480 was expended on the seven houses erected in 1764–65, and £27,542 on the three houses built in 1775–76. The significance of these figures is only fully revealed when they are compared with estimates for the annual increase in *national* social fixed capital for the period (Feinstein 1978, 40–41). Social fixed capital can be described as the nation's stock of public buildings and works and so includes investment on prisons, workhouses, churches, hospitals, schools and sewerage systems. Professor Feinstein recently calculated that the annual investment in social fixed capital for the years 1760–80 was in the region of £80,000. However, this figure obviously includes investment in all the public buildings mentioned above, with repairs to existing and construction of new workhouses comprising just one aspect. Unfortunately, if any degree of accuracy is to be retained, the tentative nature of the research precludes historians for sub-dividing the national figures into their constituent categories. However, using more precise statistics taken from the 19th century, it is reasonable to assume that, at most, workhouses consumed approximately 40 per cent of the nation's investment in social fixed capital, making the annual investment in workhouses equal to approximately £32,000 for the years 1760–80.

It can be argued, therefore, that whilst the seven East Anglian houses erected in 1764–65 constituted just 34 per cent of the nation's investment in social fixed capital, they absorbed a staggering 85 per cent of the investment in workhouses. For the three houses built in 1775–76 the figures are 17 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Clearly, both of these percentages are of an unacceptably high level, emphasising the need to adjust the existing national investment figures upwards quite substantially. (It is generally accepted that national income calculations for this period are rather more of a 'guesstimate' than an estimate, Feinstein himself accepting a margin of error of up to 25 per cent.) Nonetheless, the percentages do illustrate the significance that the houses' building programme had on the provision of institutional relief within 18th-century England. From the mid-1760s until the mid-1770s a significant proportion of the nation's investment in institutional welfare provision was occurring within the relatively sparsely populated counties of Suffolk and Norfolk. With the vast majority of the contracts for their construction and fitting out being placed with local builders and suppliers, their erection must have played an important role in developing the economy of the two counties during those years.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: BUILDING COSTS FOR THE BLYTHING HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, BULCAMP

	£	s	d
Payments to Fulcher and Grayston	8,487	13	10½
Administrative and Legal Costs	712	12	5
Cost of erecting additional outbuildings	247	15	2
Cost of bricks, tiles etc	1,284	2	3½
Cost of lime and chalk etc	264	6	11½
Cost of guards	36	6	5½
<hr/>			
Cost of building shell of the house	11,032	17	1
Fitting out the house and goods paid for until February 1767	2,414	1	3½
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Total cost of construction	13,446	18	4½

(Source: S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1)

APPENDIX II: BUILDING COSTS FOR THE LOES AND WILFORD HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, MELTON

	£	s	d
Payments to Fulcher and Grayston	5,628	12	7
Administrative and Legal Costs	916	9	0
Cost of extra bricks, tiles, chalk etc	268	6	9
<hr/>			
Cost of building shell of the house	6,776	10	1
Fitting out	1,244	4	6
<hr/>			
Total cost of construction	8,057	12	10

(Source: S.R.O.I., ADA 11/AB1/1)

APPENDIX III: BUILDING COSTS FOR THE SAMFORD HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, TATTINGSTONE

	£	s	d
Payments to Chandler	4,817	9	10
Administrative and Legal Costs	790	2	10
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Cost of building shell of the house	5,607	12	8
Fitting out	1,384	17	5
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Total cost of construction	6,992	10	1

(Source: S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1a)

APPENDIX IV: BUILDING COSTS FOR THE CARLFORD AND COLNEIS HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, NACTION

	£	s	d
Payments to Poulteney and Chandler	2,962	12	0
Administrative and Legal Costs	228	7	8
Other costs	51	9	9
<hr/>			
Cost of building shell of the house	3,242	9	5
Fitting out	855	10	4
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Total cost of construction	4,097	19	9
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(Source: S.R.O.I., ADA 10/AC1/1 and ADA10/AC2/1)

NOTES

- 1 S.R.O.I., ADA 10/AC1/1-5, ADA 10/AC2/1, ADA 11/AC1-4; *P.P.*, xxxvii, 222-27.
- 2 Information derived from the various Local Acts.
- 3 N.R.O., C/GP 8/90; Digby 1978, 38.
- 4 Albert 1972, 93-119, 124-25, 175-76, 254-56.
- 5 S.R.O.I., ADA 1/AB3/1-2; S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1; S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1, ADA 8/AB1/1a; S.R.O.L., ADA 9/AB1/1; S.R.O.I., ADA 10/AB1/1; ADA 10/AB3/1-2, ADA 11/AK2/1.
- 6 *P.P.*, xxxvii, 207, 224, 226-27, 259.
- 7 *P.P.*, xxxvii, 263; S.R.O.I., ADA 11/AQ2/1(5).
- 8 S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1; N.R.O., C/GP7/1.
- 9 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1; N.R.O., C/GP 14/1.
- 10 S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1; S.R.O.I., ADA 8/AB1/1a, ADA 11/AB1/1.
- 11 S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1.
- 12 *Gentleman's Magazine*, ii, 524, 578 and iii, 24; Webbs' Coll., vol. 231.
- 13 Burn 1764, 201-02; *Norwich Mercury*, 9 Jun. 1764.
- 14 *C.J.*, xxix, 754, 767, 770-71, 754.
- 15 S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1.
- 16 S.R.O.L., ADA 9/AB1/1.
- 17 S.R.O.I., ADA 11/AB1/1.
- 18 S.R.O.I., ADA 8/AB1/1a.
- 19 S.R.O.I., ADA 10/AB1/1.
- 20 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1.
- 21 N.R.O., C/GP 12/274.
- 22 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AH2/1/1; N.R.O., C/GP 12/274.
- 23 N.R.O., C/GP 12/274.
- 24 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AH2/1/1; N.R.O., C/GP 12/274.
- 25 S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1.
- 26 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1, ADA 10/AB1/1, ADA 11/AB1/1.
- 27 S.R.O.I., ADA 7/AB1/1, ADA 11/AB1/1; S.R.O.L., FC 184/G11/1.
- 28 S.R.O.L., ADA 9/AH4/3/1.
- 29 S.R.O.L., ADA 9/AH4/3/1.
- 30 N.R.O., C/GP 12/274.
- 31 *C.J.*, xxxviii, 134; N.R.O., Kimberley Box 14/94.
- 32 *P.P. (Old Ser.)* ix, 252-55; Eden 1797, ii, 233, 453, 471, 678-79, 684-85; Young 1813, 237-51.

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Printed works: abbreviations

- C.J. *Journals of the House of Commons*.
 E.A.M. *East Anglian Magazine*.
 P.P. *Parliamentary Papers*.
 Webbs' Coll. Webbs' Collection in British Library of Political Science, London.

Abbreviations for MSS

- ADA 1 Blything Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 ADA 2 Bosmere and Claydon Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 ADA 7 Samford Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 ADA 8 Stow Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 ADA 9 Wangford Incorporation records, S.R.O.L.
 ADA 10 Carlford and Colneis Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 ADA 11 Loes and Wilford Incorporation records, S.R.O.I.
 C/GP 7 East and West Flegg Incorporation records, N.R.O.
 C/GP 8 Forehoe Incorporation records, N.R.O.
 C/GP 12 Mitford and Launditch Incorporation records, N.R.O.
 FC 184 Blything Incorporation records among Halesworth parish records, S.R.O.L.
 N.R.O. Norfolk Record Office.
 S.R.O.I. Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch.
 S.R.O.L. Suffolk Record Office, Lowestoft Branch.