2. UNDERSTANDING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section sets out the known development of the Library and the collection within this room. The development phases are set out chronologically and situate the history of this room within the wider Hall and estate. To this end, a timeline is provided such that the context of specific alterations can be easily understood.

This section of the CMP also situates the Library within a wider context, providing an overview of its particular function and use across history more generally. A summary of significant volumes within the collection is then set out to identify the breadth of material and subjects covered and to elucidate the provenance of the whole.

2.2 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Blickling Estate encompassing around 2000 hectares (4,760 acres) consists of gently rolling wooded and arable land that adjoins the northern edge of the Norfolk market town of Aylsham. At its centre is Blickling Hall, flanked by two service wings (Grade I). The Library is located on the first floor of the house at the northern extent of the east range. The room, as noted, was originally early-seventeenth-century Long Gallery, and is of monumental scale (37.5m Long x 6.5m wide) and is enclosed by external brickwork walls, 0.85m thick on all but its southern side.

Exterior Elevations:

Approach: One enters the Library from the main hall, ascending the richly decorated great staircase to the Upper Ante-room which is of a more modest scale. The staircase is almost square in plan with a balustrade of oak with carved standards crowned with symbolic figures. This approach serves to enhance the dramatic moment of entering the Library.

Windows: The room is well lit with six stone mullion and transom windows along its eastern side and a further window at the south end of the room. Four of the windows, including the southernmost, are set within bays surmounted by flat, lead clad









Details of the external elevations to the Library. From above: The lead hoppers of 1620 decorated with the initials for Sir Henry Hobart, his wife, Dorothy, their son John and daughter in-law Philippa indicating the dynastic impartance of Hobarts seat.; finnials above each of the bay windows; looking north accross the great staircase.