

New to our story...



View from the Great Terrace c.1760

We know that Robert Southwell held the post of Secretary to the Lords of Plantations which gave him unrivalled access to the expanding North American colonies. Letters have been discovered that show that new plants and seeds were being sent back for his gardens at Kings Weston and these were being shared by him with the collector and naturalist Hans Sloane and William Blathwayt at Dyrham.

One of the most important recent discoveries has been the painting shown above. It dates from between 1760-1768 and is a unique view of the north side of the house before Vanbrugh's great terrace was removed. The artist also painted scenes at Stoke Park and may have been Charles Tarrant who later travelled to the Southwell's Irish estates in Kinsale.

This picture shows the move away from the earlier fashion for highly formal gardens. The object of this new picturesque approach was to create an apparently natural, flowing landscape, one which although man made, looked much more like nature than the parterres and trimmed hedges of the 17th-century gardens they replaced.



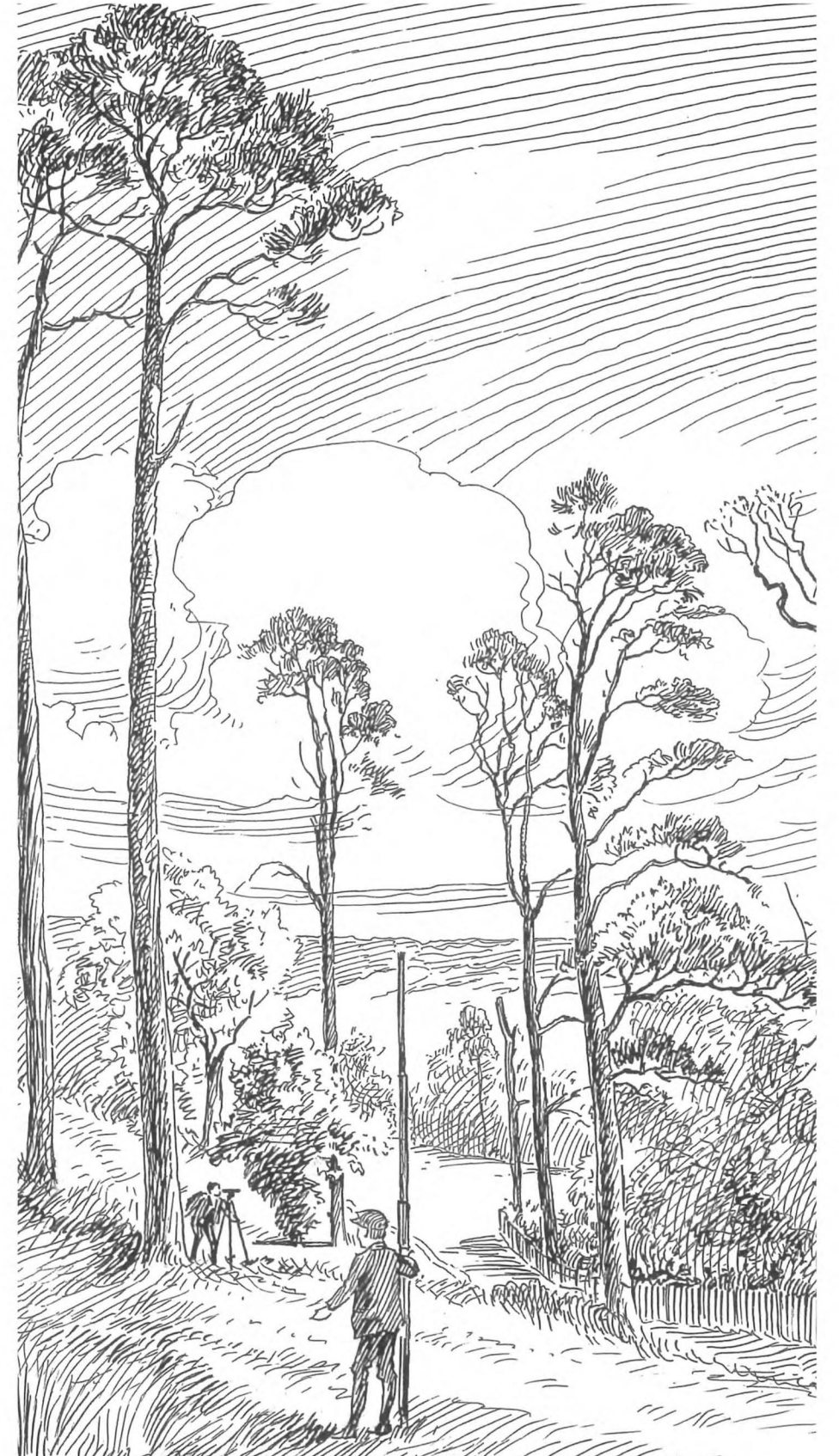
Penpole resurrected

Although several images of the south side of Penpole Lodge exist none have been found of the more ornamental north side that faced the main house. Fortunately a series of drawings were made by J.V. Tanner and James Ackland in 1946 that recorded the building before its demolition. KWAG has produced a computer model showing Vanbrugh's original design based on their survey.



The Great Park circa 1800

A view looking up at the house from the Great Park, roughly where Barrowmead Drive and the Lawrence Weston Estate are today. The tree-covered Tump can be seen on the left. This painting shows the impact of 'Capability' Brown and the Landscape Garden movement on Kings Weston.



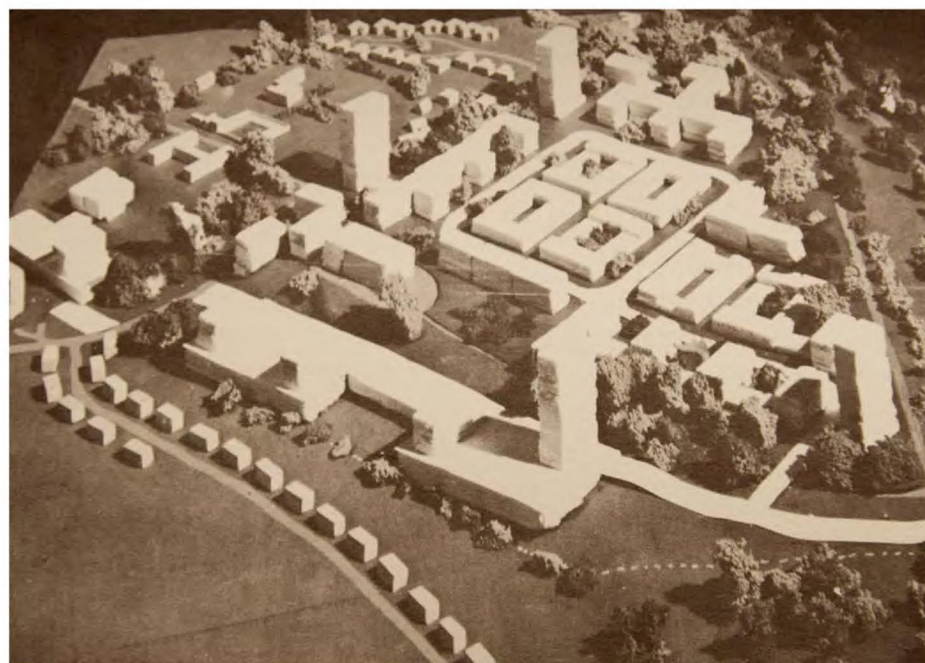
Shirehampton Park 1919

This drawing by Samuel Loxton shows one of the once famous plantations of Scot's Pine in Shirehampton Park on the eve of its destruction. The figures in the foreground are surveying for the Portway that was shortly to slice through the landscaped parkland. Loxton produced several drawings showing unique aspects of the Kings Weston estate.



The Launching of the Great Western

The Impact of the Miles family on Kings Weston and Bristol as a whole was more considerable than previously thought. The Family's involvement in creating the Great Western Steamship Co, SS Great Britain, Great Western Cotton Mill, Royal Western Hotel, Avonmouth Dock, numerous railways, and even Brunel's ill-fated SS Great Eastern, amongst other endeavours, makes Kings Weston one of the Great Western estates!



1960's threat

When the house was occupied by Bristol College of Science and Technology a grandiose plan was hatched to develop Kings Weston as a new polytechnic. It is difficult to pick out Vanbrugh's house in this model of the proposed development in 1964. Almost the entire park is filled with buildings; the same sort of development that was later transferred to Bath when these proposals fell through.



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