

The Estate in 1710

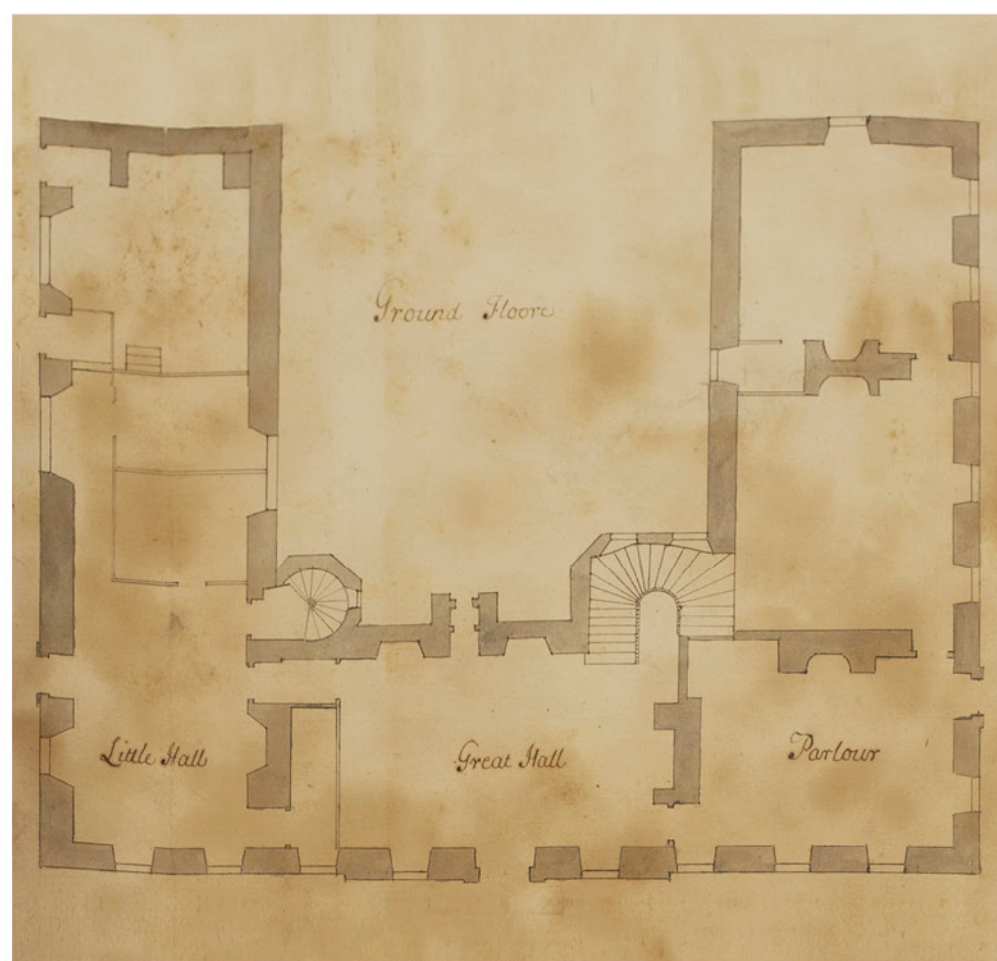
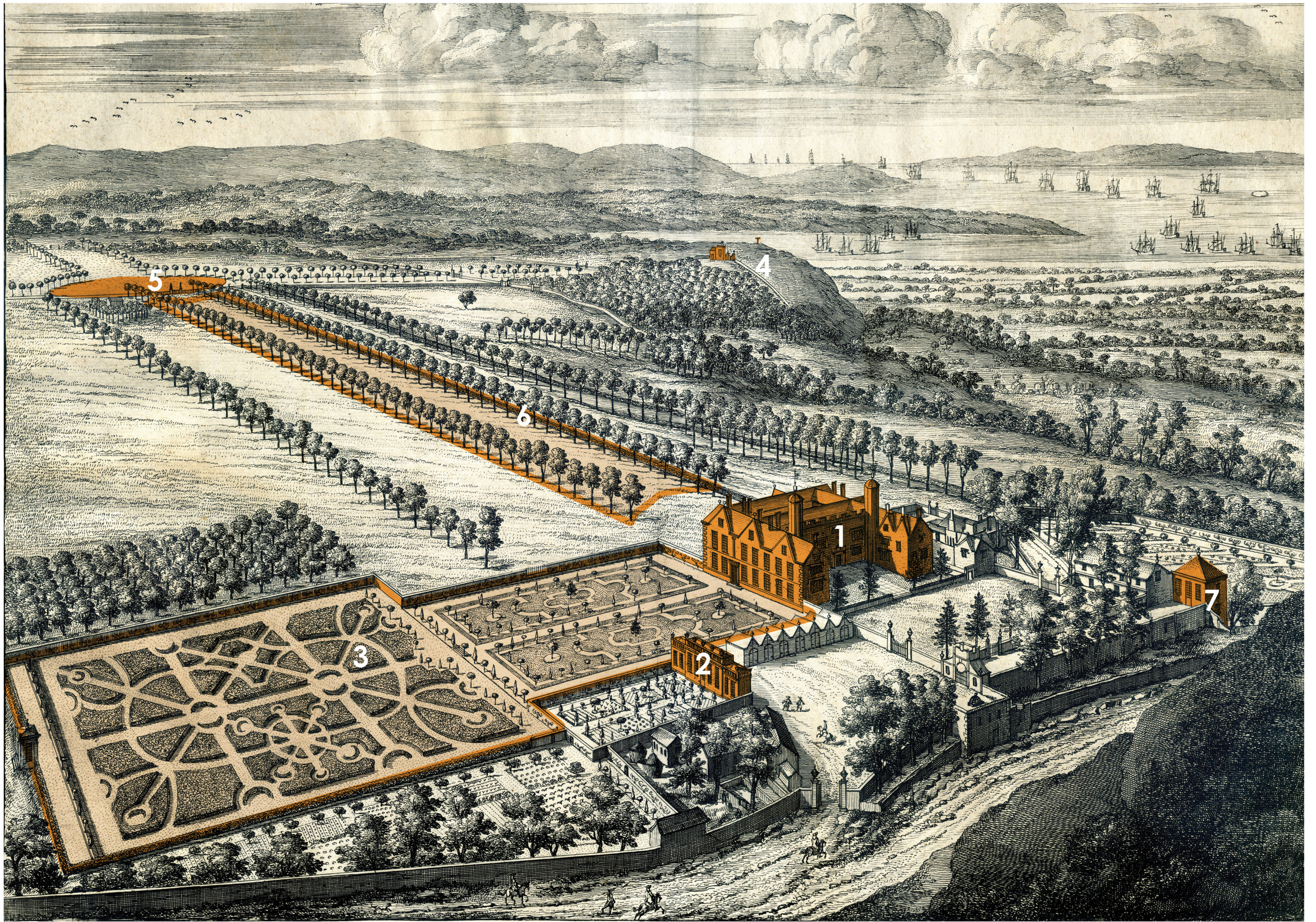
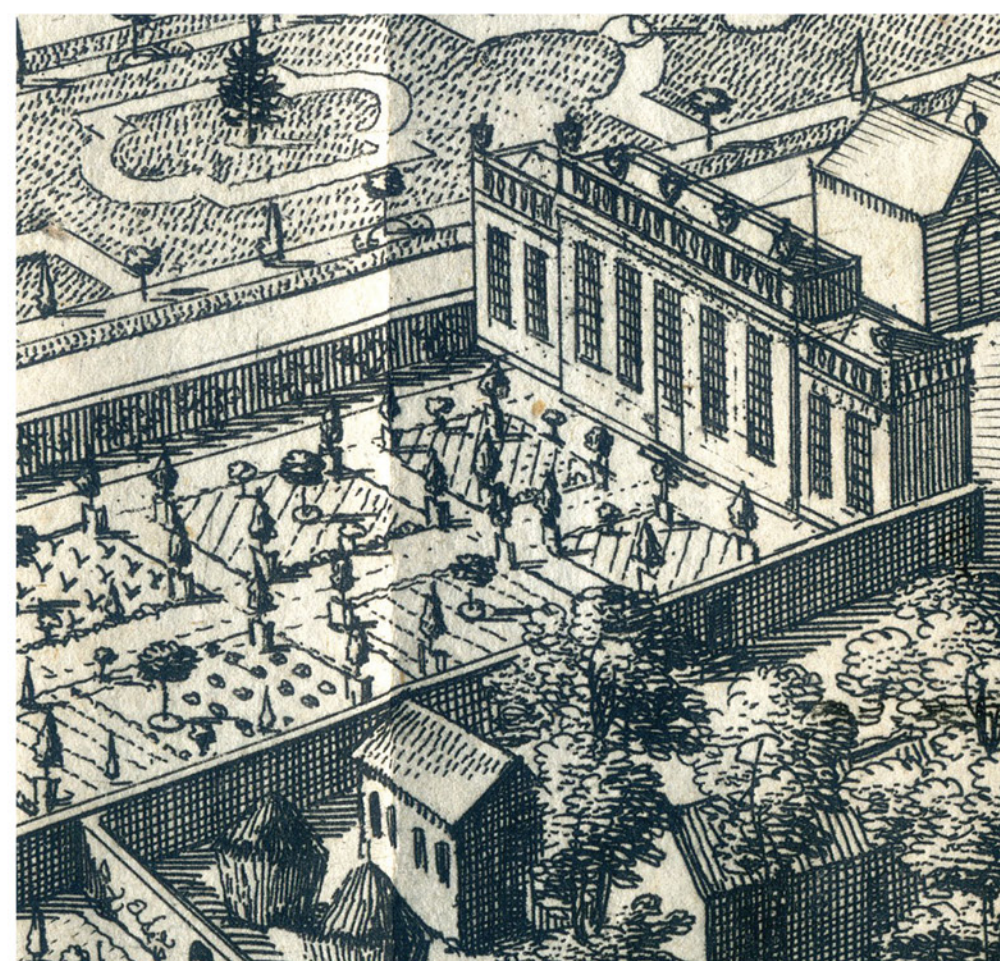


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Plan of the old manor (1)

An aerial view of Kings Weston by Jan Kip, published in Sir Robert Atkyns' book *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* (1712), shows the estate on the eve of its transformation before the Tudor house was swept away and replaced. Its prominent location overlooking the Severn and Avon is emphasised in this engraving.

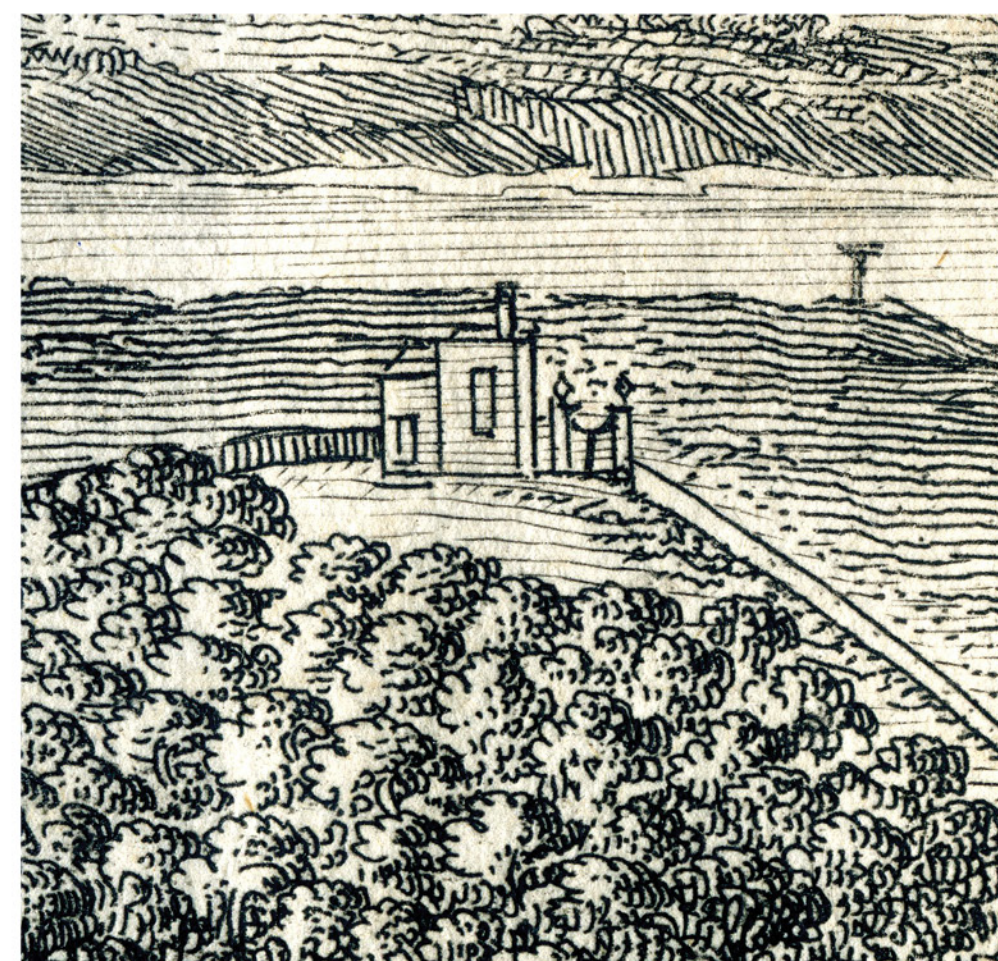
1. The Tudor mansion probably replaced an earlier medieval manor; the foundations of an associated chapel have been identified on the east side of Kings Weston Lane. The old mansion had a pair of tall stair towers that might have inspired the form and appearance of the later house. Robert Southwell was already looking at remodelling this building in 1696 and designs were drawn-up but never executed.



The Orangery (2)

2. A brick-built orangery was built in about 1705 and was stocked with many varieties of peach, nectarine, plumb, grape, figs and 'apricock'. The Southwells had a strong interest in both gardening and agriculture on the Kings Weston estate and were keen to experiment and try new techniques to improve yields. Their purchase of exotic species shows their curiosity and confidence in embellishing their gardens.

3. Formal gardens were laid out to the southwest of the house and focussed symmetrically on the centre of the house. Fashionable parterre and 'wilderness' gardens were laid out towards Kingsweston Hill. In 1685 Robert Southwell wrote to a friend and fellow member of the Royal Society about his recent plantation of yews, hollies and firs, perhaps alluding to the planting of the wilderness gardens.



Penpole Lodge and Dial (4)

4. Penpole Point had always been a prominent landmark for ships entering the River Avon from the Severn. The stone dial, already old by the time the Merchant Venturers expended £5 on its repair in 1668, was probably constructed as a permanent seamark. An early incarnation of Penpole Lodge is shown beyond the boundary of Penpole Wood with a pair of ornamental gates.

5. The Circle formed the focus of the park with a number of avenues radiating from it across the landscape. It remained a constant feature throughout the history of the estate and records show that trees were regularly being replaced throughout the Eighteenth Century. Defined by a ha-ha to the south, it can still be made out in the landscape today, though the axial views of the house along the avenue are now obscured.



Banqueting House (7)

6. A long avenue created an imposing formal approach to the house. Ornamental gates are shown where the main avenue meets the Circle, though the carriage drive actually ran just to the north of it obscured behind the trees.

7. A brick Banqueting House was constructed in 1705 to command the spectacular views over the Severn. Sir Emanuel Moore visited in 1711 and wrote to Edward Southwell: "I was the other day at King's Weston and took Brigadier Gore to show him the place. He is mightily delighted with the situation of the Banqueting House which commanded the most glorious prospect, the owners of the ships in the Road being on board drinking like merry fellows, and firing guns. I treated the Brigadier to some of your claret which was very good. We drank your health; your house is very crazy"