

The Estate in 1720

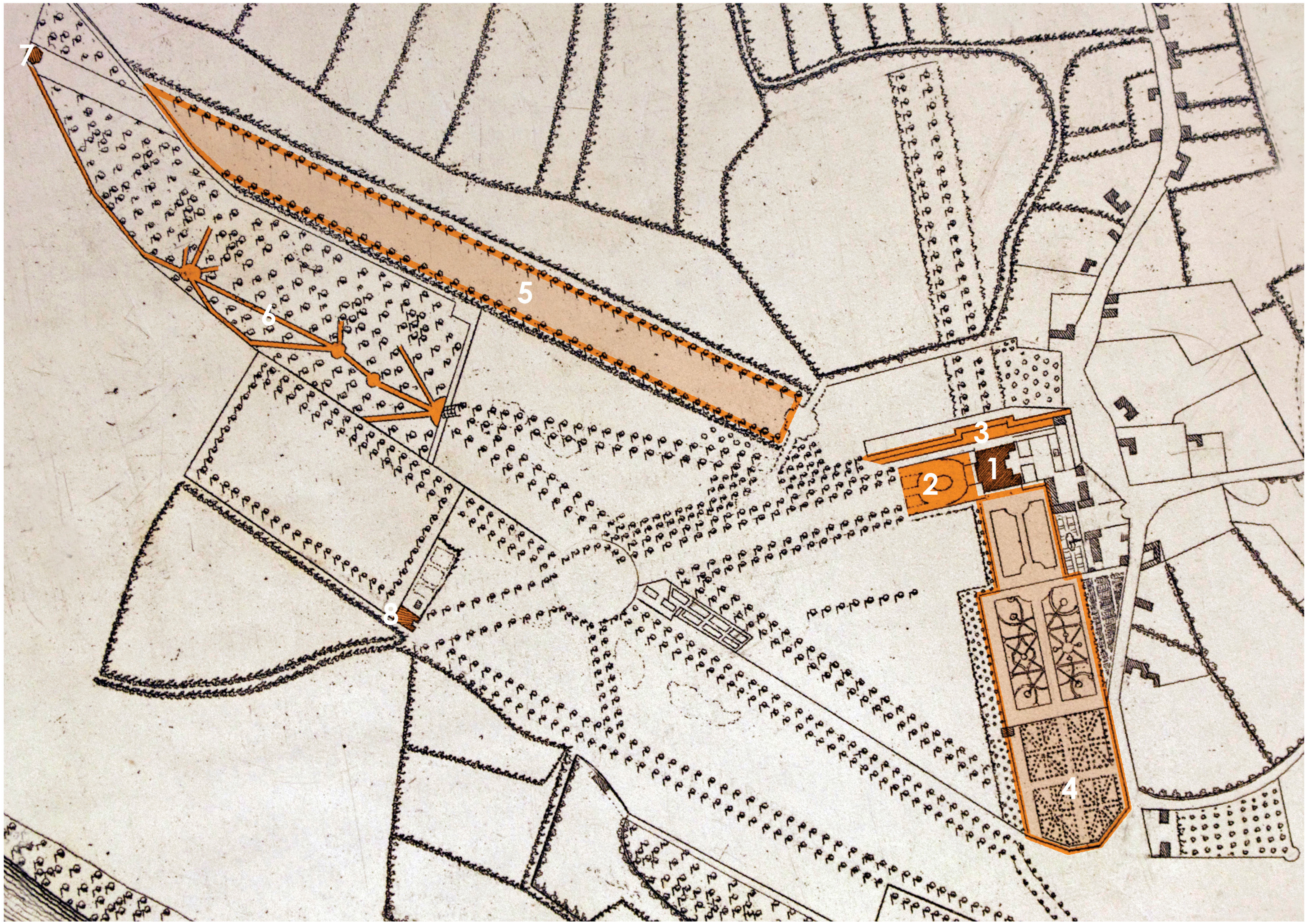


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W. Haleff's 1720 Estate Plan. This engraved plan of the estate captures its appearance shortly before major changes were made to the landscape.

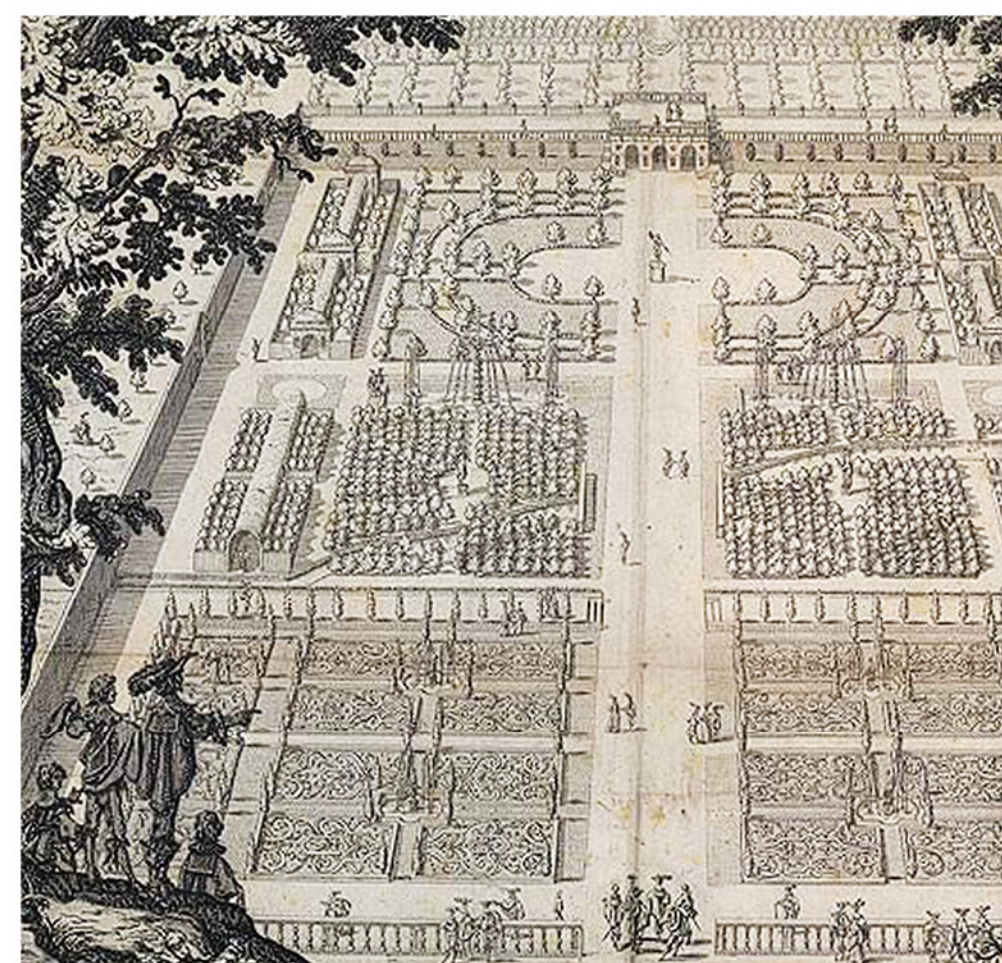
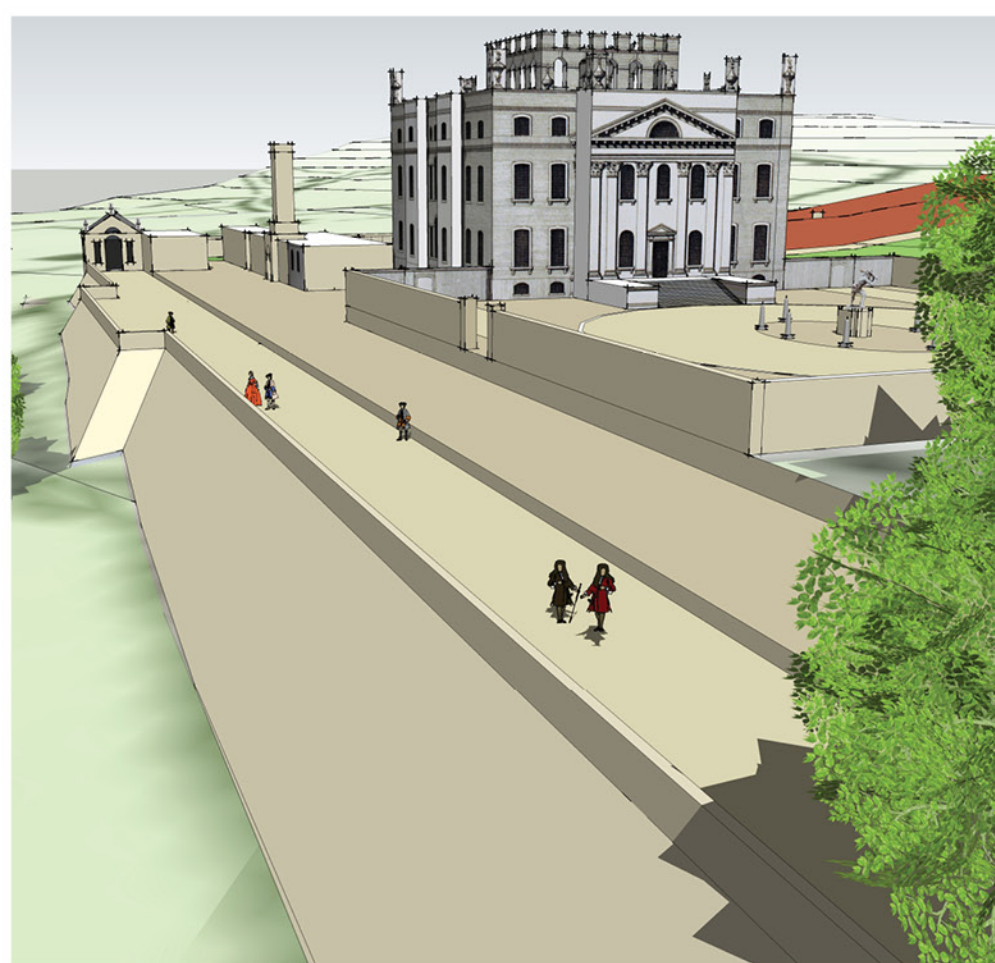
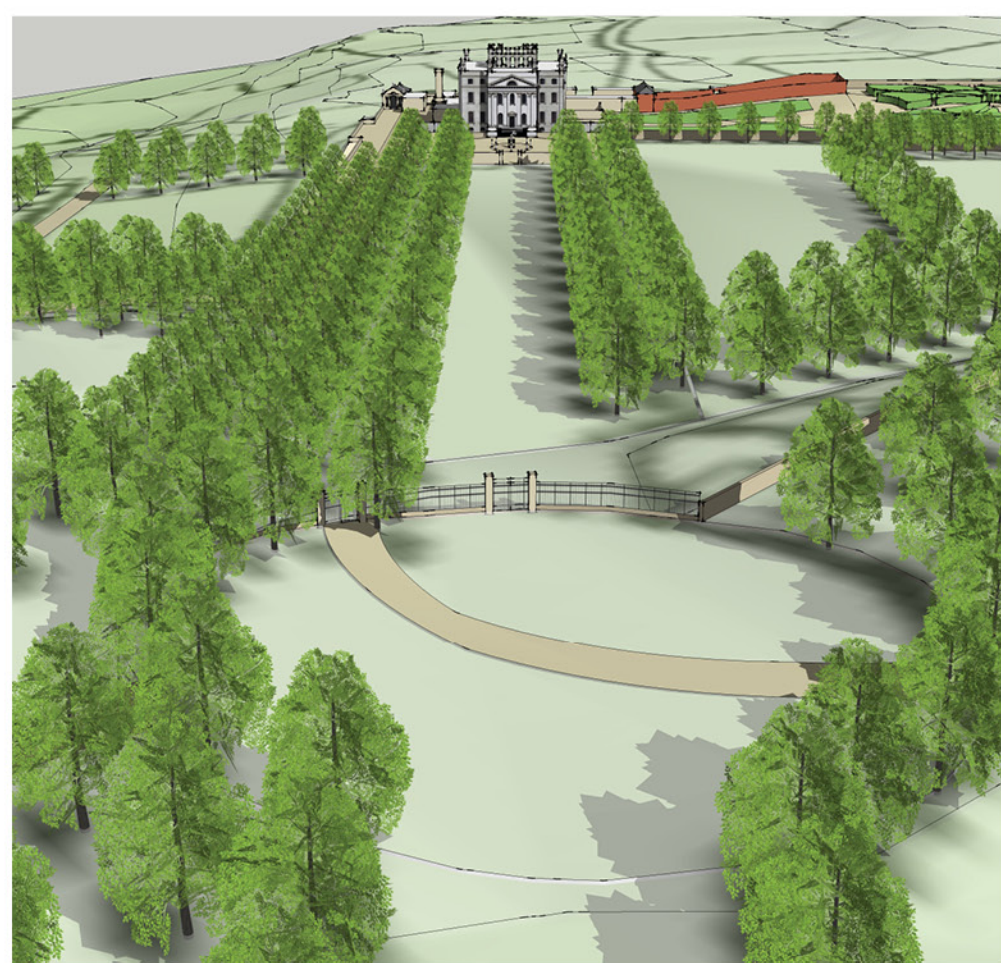


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Towards the Great Court (2)

The Great Terrace (3)

Wilton House gardens (4)

The Hexagon (7)

1. Vanbrugh's new house in the Baroque style is complete and, although occupying a similar location to the earlier building, it was built with the new entrance hall in front of the old house. The south-eastern garden axis was now misaligned with the centre of the house and the formal gardens are likely to have been torn up and remodelled on a new axis soon after 1720 because of this.

2. The Great Court, the formal setting for the main entrance, was approached from the 'Circle' by a long double avenue of lime trees. Some of these trees survive at the far west end.

3. The Terrace was colossal! Echoing a Renaissance fortification

complete with a bastion, it stood in excess of 20ft above the slope of the hill in some places and gave spectacular views over the Severn for which the estate became famed. The Loggia was built at the end of the long walk along the top of this mock fortification.

4. Although not shown on the earlier Kip engraving this grove is likely to have existed, but been omitted for artistic reasons. The gardens would have reflected the famous gardens of Wilton House, Wiltshire, which followed the same pattern of parterre and 'wilderness' gardens culminating in a grove of fruit trees. As at Wilton a raised terrace would have looked back towards the house from the end of the chain of gardens.

5. A long avenue has been planted along the bottom edge of the hill skirting Penpole Wood before cutting into it at its western end. Other avenues have been introduced to add to the imposing effect of the park.

6. Formal paths have been established through Penpole Wood. From circular saloons scattered along them radiating openings are cut through the woodland to focus on views across the Severn. Statues and other features may have provided focus for these spaces and the edges of the paths might have been marked with hedges of yew or other evergreens.

7. The Hexagon should not be confused with the better-

known Penpole Lodge which was yet to be built in 1720. The Hexagon was constructed lower down the slope and accessed by a ramp whose remains still exist. It provided the focus for the avenue stretching from the house (5) and would have enjoyed views out over the Avon in the opposite direction. Although it may have been a bathhouse, little more is known about this building.

8. Another mystery building occupied a site at the end of the main avenue where it joined the road from Shirehampton. It might have been intended as an early gate lodge, or simply as an eye-catcher at the park boundary.