

‘Justly celebrated’



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View from Kingsweston Hill, by Samuel Jackson. c.1785 The chimneys of the House, the stables, and Penpole Lodge can all be identified in this classic view of the Kings Weston estate.



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Wood Lodge in 1788

The Southwell family maintained a strong interest in updating and developing the gardens throughout the Eighteenth Century. Wood Lodge, seen here in a painting by Hieronymus Grimm of 1789, introduced an early measure of rustic informality to the drive towards Penpole Point.

The garden designer and mathematician Thomas Wright worked extensively at Stoke Park near Stapleton for the Berkeley Family between 1750 and 1768; the Berkeleys and Southwells were close friends. Wright visited Kings Weston on several occasions and may have been responsible for designing Wood Lodge and other features on the estate in the 1750s. A quarry garden, circular viewing mound, a now-lost arbour, and a picturesque path, all in Penpole Wood, may be his work. Wood Lodge exists today, but in a much-altered form.



The Stables on Napier Miles Road

Edward Southwell III (1738-1777) later 20th Baron de Clifford took a keen interest in updating Kings Weston. Remoulding it as a political powerhouse, an entertainment venue designed to cajole votes out of the electorate, he commissioned the architect Robert Mylne to make major alterations inside and out.

The new fashion for more naturalistic landscape gardens in the mid eighteenth century had seen Kings Weston's rigid avenues and geometrical parterres gradually deformed. By 1772 Vanbrugh's Great Terrace had been erased and the dense collection of buildings and service courts east of the house also been cleared away to create a more dignified setting for the house. Mylne replaced these buildings with a new complex on the opposite side of Kings Weston Lane. The new stables, carriage house, walled gardens and pond were planned and laid-out to an integrated design which was completed by about 1765

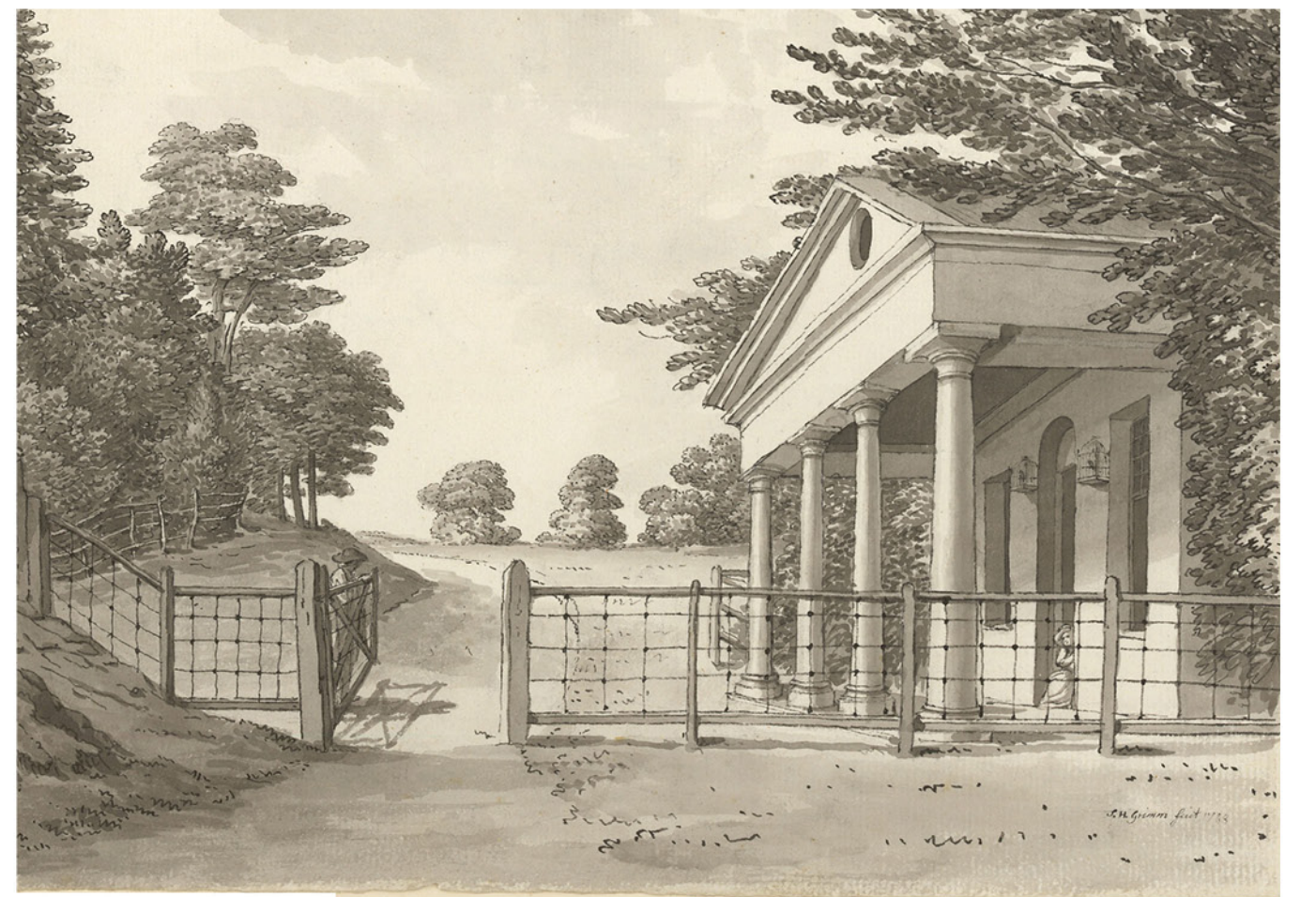


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Shirehampton Lodge in 1788

Robert Mylne's last contribution was Shirehampton Lodge, seen here in 1789: he had designed it for Southwell in 1771 and 'made him a present of it'. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown visited Kings Weston three times in 1777 and produced designs for the land around the house and 'terras' for which he charged £84, though his contributions to the existing landscape can only have been minimal.

The fame of the landscape was already well established and parties of visitors from the Hotwells, Clifton, and Bath were frequent. Published guides rarely failed to mention the dramatic setting and unparalleled views over the Severn and Avon. One description of 1793 enthused that the 'infinite variety of verdure observable in different spots of this sublime landscape renders it one of the first in the kingdom'. A gardener was employed specifically to show visitors around and advertised times were published for the inspection of the Southwells' collection of paintings. In 1832 the estate was sold to the Miles family for the then-huge sum of £210,000.



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