

the plant labels and entered them onto a database – just over 300 labels in total. Tony then researched the current Latin names for each label, a great piece of work in itself! There are two main types: 30 terracotta labels or 'tallies' made by the Bourne factory. These have a white enamel face with the Latin name hand-painted on it; the rest are oval-shaped metal with raised letters and are fixed to a short stake. Several terracotta examples have a planting date ranging from 1850 to 1871; one example is 'Picea pinsapo Mountains of Grenada Planted 1856'. One of the most significant metal labels bears the inscription 'Cedar of Lebanon Raised from seed brought from Lebanon by JL Gibbs in 1858'.



So what do they tell us? As the majority are for trees (the rest being for shrubs), then we can assume that Tyntesfield's owners, the Gibbs family, were tree people, and this is still evident in the gardens today. We have nine champion trees and a diverse collection of Victorian and early twentieth century trees, not including the ornamental planting on the hillside. The labels give us a valuable insight into what was in the garden and



this will inform us for future planting plans. The collection also demonstrates that the gardeners and the family obviously valued their labels as they were stored and packed away so carefully, much the same as with the contents of the house. There, for example, when a room was redecorated the old fixtures and fittings were not discarded but simply stored in spare rooms and in the basement.

The exciting thing for me is that they are still turning up! The following may sound weird – back in February I had a dream that I found a quantity of old plant labels at work, very sad I know! Then about two days later I was admiring the spring bulbs in Paradise (the Arboretum) when I saw two labels next to a sizeable Yew tree. After further investigation with a trowel, I unearthed 14 in total. I think they had been placed next to the tree by a predecessor to prevent them damaging the blades of the lawnmower, then gradually the tree enveloped them with its roots and leaf mould and there they waited for a sunny day in 2007. Another conundrum is what is significant about 1892? 17 metal labels have this date on them – any ideas let me know! Then there are the fruit labels, but that is another story...



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Huxley, Anthony: *The Illustrated History of Gardening*, Paddington Press, 1978
ISBN 0 7092 0322 5

Photos courtesy of The National Trust

The 'Great Court' at Kings Weston

James Russell

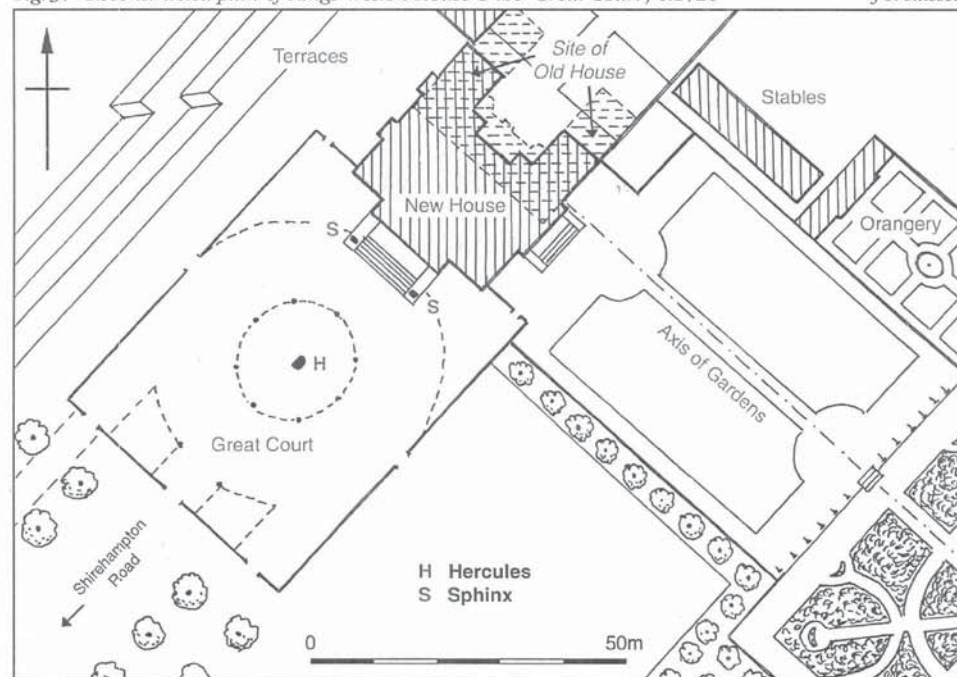
Introduction

In 1679 the diplomat and politician Sir Robert Southwell purchased the Kings Weston estate, on a wooded ridge overlooking the Severn 6km to the north west of Bristol, from the trustees of Sir Humphrey Hooke, a Bristol merchant who had died in 'embarrassed circumstances' in 1677. The house then existing at Kings Weston is depicted (not entirely accurately) in Kip's well-known aerial view of c.1708.¹ It consisted of three wings enclosing an entrance court

facing north east towards Kings Weston Lane. A mid to late 16th century date is suggested by the tall octagonal stair-turrets which occupied the internal angles of this court. Sir Robert devoted most of his energies to the development of an elaborate sequence of formal gardens to the south east of the house and to extensive tree-planting in the park, with results dramatically displayed in Kip's view. It was left to his son Edward, who succeeded in 1702, to turn his attention to the house.

Fig. 37 Reconstructed plan of Kings Weston House & the 'Great Court', c.1720

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Edward Southwell I appears initially to have contemplated a quite limited refacing and remodelling of the existing house, detailed plans and elevations for which survive in the album known as the *Kings Weston Book of Drawings*, now held in the Bristol Record Office.² These drawings, by an unknown hand, remain of importance for the accurate record they provide of the dimensions and general layout of the old house, revealing several significant errors in the better-known depiction by Kip.³ Ultimately, however, they were rejected by Southwell in favour of a total rebuild to the designs of Sir John Vanbrugh.

Work on the new house probably began in 1710. While its dimensions, approximately 90ft (27.4m) square, are very similar to those of the old, a careful comparison between Kip's view and an estate plan of 1720⁴ shows that they do not occupy the same footprint, the site of the new house being displaced southwestward from that of the old by some 15m (Fig. 37). This displacement would have allowed the old house to remain in use for a time while work on the south western half of the new building began alongside on open ground.

A letter from Vanbrugh to Southwell in October 1713⁵ indicates that construction of the outer walls of the new house had by then been completed and the scaffolding removed, although the design of the distinctive arcaded chimney stacks had yet to be finalised. Work on internal details such as the inlaid landing floors of the main staircase was still in progress in 1719.⁶ Between 1763 and

1772 Edward Southwell III employed Robert Mylne to make substantial modifications to Vanbrugh's house and design various outbuildings, including an extensive complex of stables and walled gardens on the far side of Kings Weston Lane.⁷ During the same period he paid Lancelot 'Capability' Brown £84 to advise on improvements to the gardens and park.⁸ While Brown's actual proposals do not appear to have survived, it is evident that they led to a radical simplification of the Kings Weston landscape, clearly shown in Isaac Taylor's superbly detailed estate plans of 1772.⁹ Sir Robert Southwell's formal gardens, which had hitherto survived with only minor alterations, were swept away completely, along with the subject of the present article, the 'Great Court' to the south west of the house.

The 'Great Court'

As already noted, the old Kings Weston House faced north east towards Kings Weston Lane. Its replacement, however faced south west towards Shirehampton Road. The 'Great Court' was intended to provide a suitably impressive prelude to the new house, its high enclosing walls channelling the attention of visitors towards the pedimented entrance front and away from the distracting panoramic views westwards across the Severn estuary. The continued presence of the formal gardens to the south east of the house prevented direct access from the Court to the stables inside the old Kings Weston Lane entrance; after setting down their passengers visiting coachmen would have to return to Shirehampton Road and circumnavigate the park to reach these.

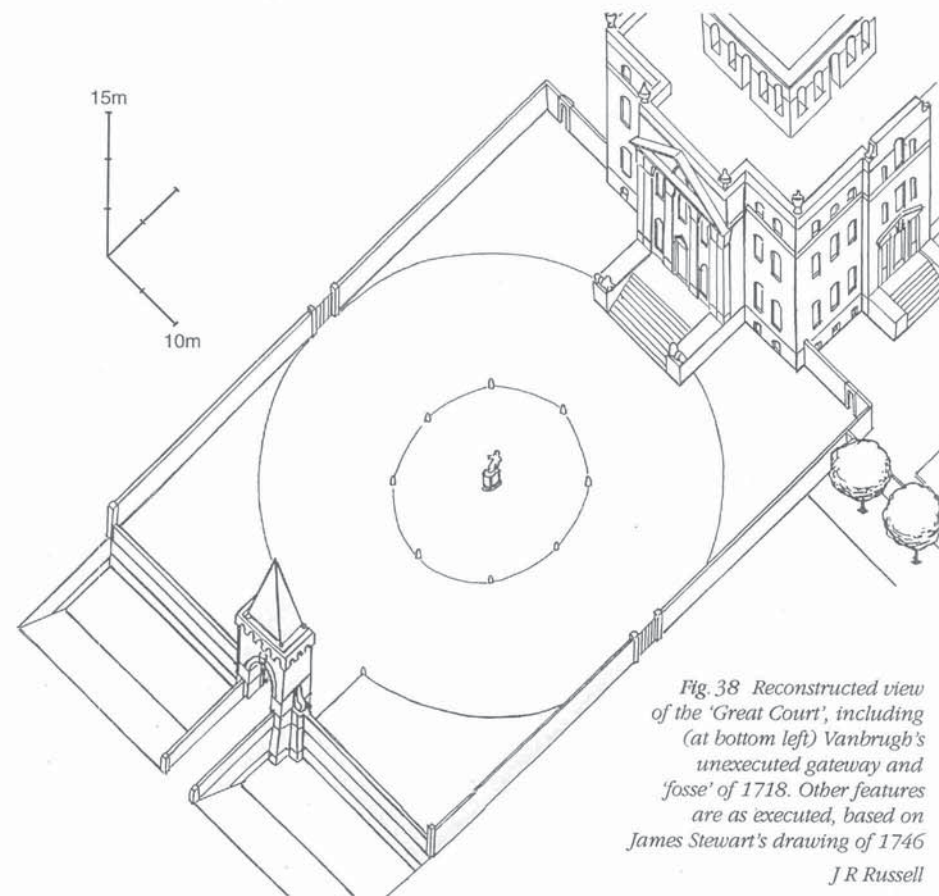


Fig. 38 Reconstructed view of the 'Great Court', including (at bottom left) Vanbrugh's unexecuted gateway and 'fosse' of 1718. Other features are as executed, based on James Stewart's drawing of 1746

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The general layout and dimensions of the 'Great Court' (Fig. 37) can be reconstructed from the 1720 estate map and a naively executed but closely observed sketch of 1746 by the Bristol writing master James Stewart, now in the Bodleian Library.¹⁰ It was rectangular in shape, approximately 150ft (45m) wide and 200ft (60m) long, and was enclosed by a wall 10ft (3m) high. The return walls flanking the house at the north east end of the court were pierced by doorways with segmental arched heads, clearly shown in both Stewart's view and an engraved

elevation of the south west front of the house included in the *Kings Weston Book of Drawings*.¹¹ There seem to have been larger gate-openings, sketchily indicated by Stewart, in the centres of the long north west and south east walls. The 1720 plan suggests that there may have been as many as three gateways in the south west wall, corresponding with the planting beyond the Court, which consisted of four rows of trees extending towards Shirehampton Road and forming a broad central vista flanked by narrower avenues. Only the

most northerly of these gates appears to have been in regular use, giving access to a drive running along the north western avenue, which follows much the same course as the modern track leading away from the house.

The *Book of Drawings* preserves Vanbrugh's proposals, dated February 1718, for a much more elaborate treatment of this south western end of the 'Great Court'.¹² While these proposals were never executed, the dimensioned plans and elevations prepared by Vanbrugh's office allow their intended effect to be reconstructed on paper (Fig. 38). Outside the Court a dry moat or 'fosse' some 55ft (17m) wide was to be excavated; this would have been crossed by a walled causeway leading to a massive arched gate flanked by scrolled buttresses and crowned, above a mediavalising machicolated cornice, by a steep-sided pyramid, Jacobean rather than Egyptian in inspiration and 'resting' on spheres at each corner (Fig. 39). While this extravagant and eclectic conception never escaped from the drawing board, elements of the design were to be successfully recycled by Vanbrugh in his Pyramid Gate at Castle Howard, which has a squatter, more Egyptian-looking pyramid top, and the entrance to the service court at Eastbury House, Dorset. At Kings Weston the machicolated cornice reappears in the surviving Brewhouse to the north east of the house.

Most of the interior of the Court was taken up

by a gravel turning circle with an oval central 'island', the edges of which were defined, according to James Stewart's sketch (Fig. 40), by a series of stone bollards. The *Book of Drawings* includes a set of three variant designs for 'fence-stones', dated April 1719,¹³ which appear to relate to these bollards (Fig. 41). Lying loose on the edge of the car-park north of Kings Weston House are three bollards which are similar in shape to one of these designs (Fig. 41c), with tapering sides and

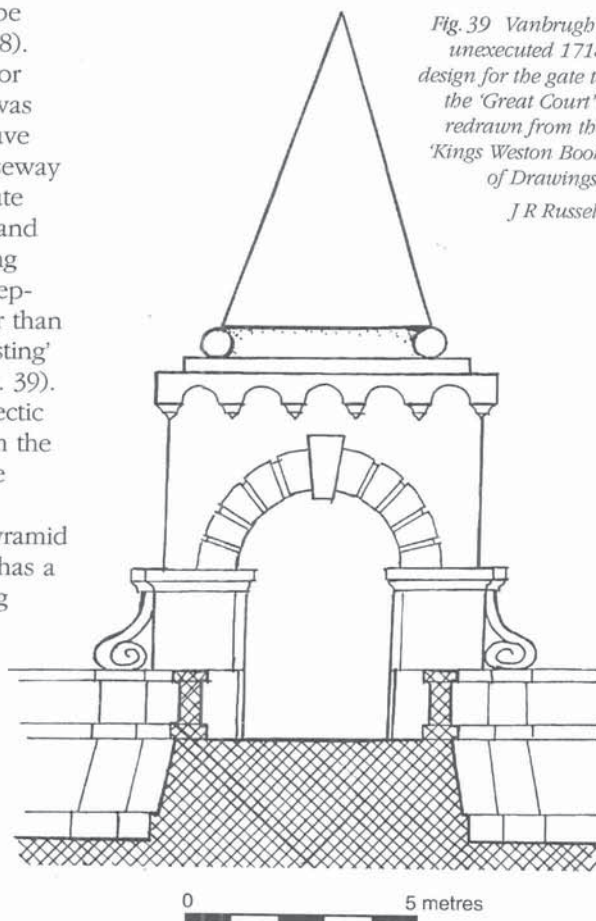


Fig. 39 Vanbrugh's unexecuted 1718 design for the gate to the 'Great Court', redrawn from the 'Kings Weston Book of Drawings'

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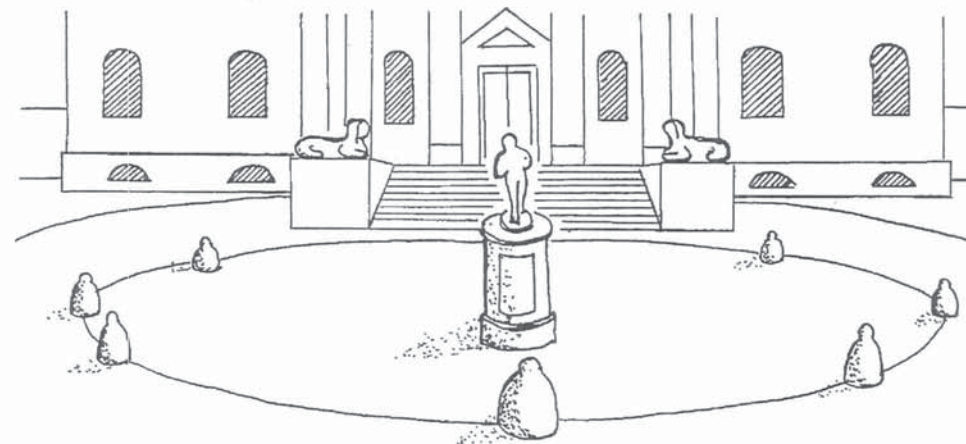


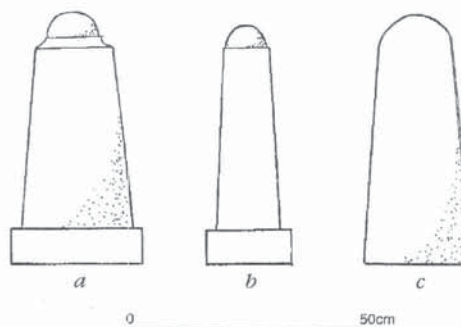
Fig. 40 The centre of the 'Great Court' looking north east, from James Stewart's 1746 drawing, showing sphinxes, bollards & central statue of (?) Hercules.

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smooth rounded tops; two are 90cm high and the third 50cm. Although it is tempting to see these as relics of the 'Great Court', it must be noted that the 'fence-stones' in Stewart's sketch all have clearly defined projections or bosses on their tops; while somewhat similar bosses are present on the other two 1719 designs they are absent from the surviving examples in the car-park, which are therefore more likely to come from some other location.

Fig. 41 Designs of April 1719 for 'fence-stones' at Kings Weston, redrawn from the 'Kings Weston Book of Drawings'

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The Sphinxes

The present flight of shallow stone steps leading up to the south west front of Kings Weston House forms part of Mylne's alterations of the 1760s, as does the elegant double flight giving access to the south east 'garden' entrance. Both flights replaced more massively constructed sets of steps flanked by rectangular plinths or 'cheeks'.¹⁴ The *Book of Drawings* includes a sketch of a sphinx 'for the cheeks of the great steps at Kingsweston'.¹⁵ The sphinx rests on a swagged base, its back covered by an elaborate saddle-cloth on which perches a cheerful, garlanded cupid (Fig. 42). As Kerry Downes has observed¹⁶ this is probably the most lively and accomplished design in the Kings Weston album, being clearly the work of a trained artist rather than the plodding master-masons and drawing-office clerks who seem to have been responsible for the rest of its contents. It is not however an original conception, being closely modelled on a well known pair of sphinxes at Versailles,

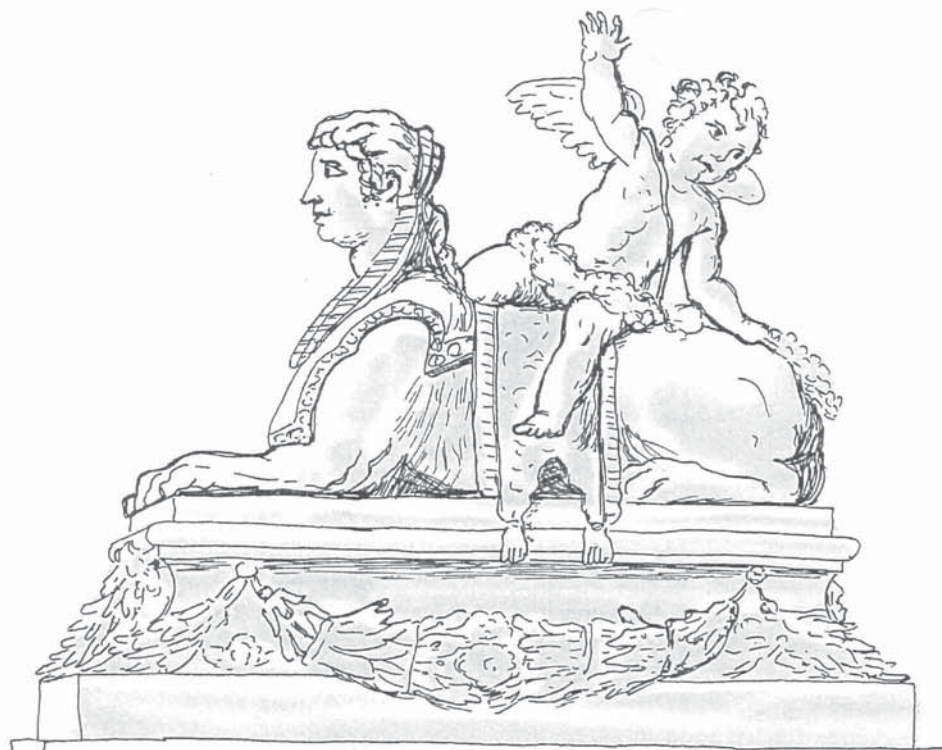


Fig. 42 Design for a sphinx for 'the cheeks of the Great Steps at Kingsweston', redrawn from the 'Kings Weston Book of Drawings'

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which originally flanked the head of the main vista west of the palace but have since been relocated to the *Parterre du Midi*. Dating from the late 1660s, the Versailles sphinxes were sculpted in white marble by Houzeau and Lerambert, with cupids and saddle-cloths in gilded bronze based posthumously on a design by Jacques Sarazin.¹⁷ Back at Kings Weston, James Stewart provides proof that the sphinxes were actually executed; in his 1746 sketch (Fig. 40) they are clearly visible on either side of the south west entrance. There is however no sign of the cupids, which would have needed to be cast in metal as at Versailles and were presumably rejected on grounds of cost.

The Goldney Hercules - a survival from the 'Great Court'?

James Stewart's 1746 drawing (Fig. 40) shows that the 'island' in the middle of the 'Great Court' had at its centre a statue in a bending or crouching posture facing towards the house and raised on a high base with curved ends. The latter seems to correspond with a design in the *Book of Drawings*¹⁸ for the 'Pedestal of Hercules at Kingsweston' (Fig. 44). Douglas Merritt, in his excellent 2002 study of sculpture in Bristol,¹⁹ has drawn attention to the remarkable resemblance, both in its pose and the design of its pedestal, between the statue sketched by Stewart and

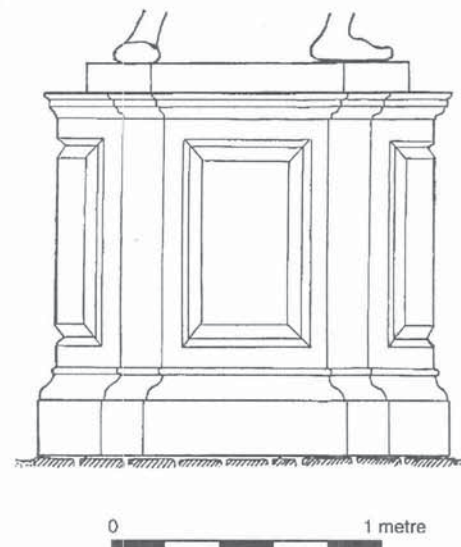
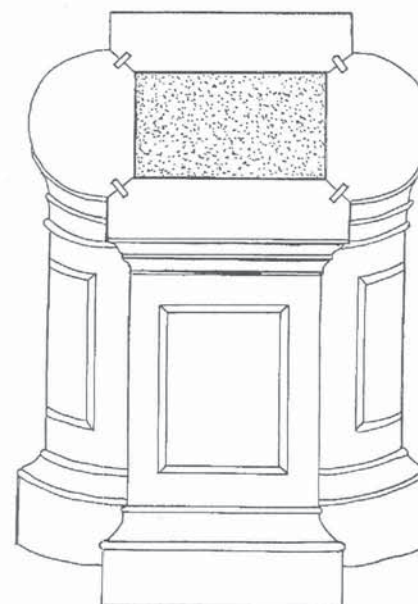


Fig. 43 Measured drawing of the pedestal of the statue of Hercules at Goldney House J R Russell

Fig. 44 Design for the 'Pedestal of Hercules at Kingsweston', redrawn from the 'Kingsweston Book of Drawings' J R Russell



James Russell



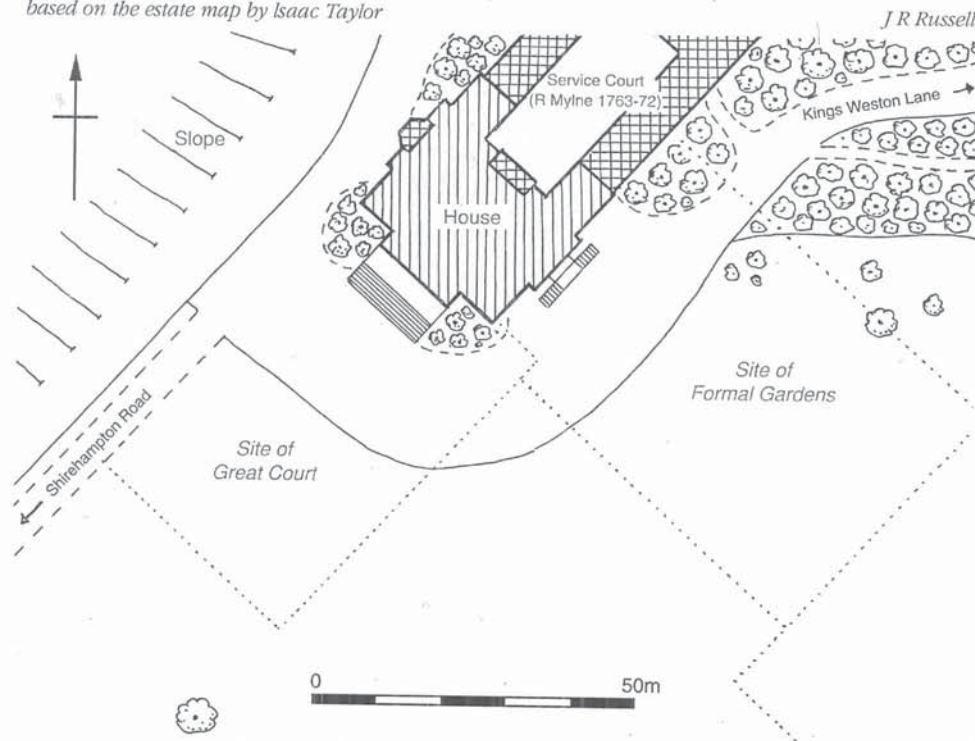
Fig. 45 The statue of Hercules at Goldney House, Clifton, Bristol

the well-known lead figure of Hercules wielding his club, plausibly attributed by Merritt to John Nost, which now adorns the terrace of Thomas Goldney III's garden at Goldney House, Clifton (Fig. 45).

The first mention of the Hercules statue in the Goldney family papers occurs in the inventory prepared after Thomas Goldney's death in 1768.²⁰ The terrace on which it stands had been constructed 'in the rough' in

1753-54.²¹ While documentary proof of the transaction has yet to be found, it seems entirely likely that the statue was disposed of by Southwell to Goldney and transferred to Clifton at some point between these dates. It has to be noted that the base of the Goldney Hercules (Fig. 43) is not, as Merritt has claimed, an exact 'match' for the *Book of Drawings* design; there are in fact quite significant differences between the two both in details and dimensions. This does not however present an insuperable difficulty, since it is quite probable that either the *Book of Drawings* design was altered in execution, or (more likely) that Goldney provided the statue with a new base once it arrived in Clifton.

Fig. 46 Reconstructed plan of the area south of Kings Weston House in 1772, based on the estate map by Isaac Taylor



The Des. tion of the 'Great Court'

As noted earlier, the 'Great Court', together with the formal gardens south east of the house, fell victim to the drastic remodelling of the Kings Weston landscape undertaken during the 1760s under the influence of 'Capability' Brown. Isaac Taylor's plan of 1772 (Fig. 46) shows that by then the Court had been replaced by a simple gravelled apron at the foot of the new steps to the south west entrance installed by Robert Mylne. From here a drive had been constructed round the south east front of the house to allow direct access for coaches to Mylne's new stable block across Kings Weston Lane, while to the north ground levels

had been altered to provide a gradual descent to the terrace overlooking the Severn along the north west front. Although many changes have taken place elsewhere at Kings Weston since 1772, only minor alterations, such as the removal or repositioning of fences, have been made to the landscaping immediately south west of the house. No structural evidence for the former 'Great Court' is to be found above

ground; even at its north east end, where its boundary walls would have joined those of the house, no tell-tale scars or marks seem to have been left on the masonry of the latter. Some traces of the footings of the enclosure walls of the southern half of the Court should however have survived under the parkland grass, and may eventually be recoverable by archaeological excavation or geophysics.

Notes and References

- Atkins 1712, plate facing page 476; Mowl 2002, Fig. 25.
- Bristol Record Office 33746; Downes 1967, Cat. 115-120, Figs. 100-101.
- Kip has, for instance, exaggerated the depth of the central part of the house, suggesting that it was two rooms deep instead of one; he also shows an extra ground floor window on the south east front.
- British Library PS6/1291K Top13/77/1a; Mowl 2002, Fig. 26.
- Transactions, Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 34 (1911), 8-9.
- Downes 1967, Cat. 3, Fig. 32.
- Gotch 1953.
- Stroud 1975, 230.
- Bristol Record Office 26570.
- 'The Front View of Edw Southwell Esq.'s Seat at Kings Weston', 3 April 1746. Bodleian Library MS Gough Somerset 8, fol. 36.
- Downes 1967, Cat. 6, Fig. 1.
- Downes 1967, Cats. 17, 66, Figs. 17-18.
- Downes 1967, Cat. 76, Fig. 45.
- For the south-west steps see C Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus* 1 (1715), plates 47-48. For those on the south east front see Downes 1967, Fig. 10.

- Downes 1967, Cat. 8, Fig. 22.
- Downes 1967, 13.
- Davis 1991, 96; Lablaude 2005, 28, 54.
- Downes 1967, Cat. 22, Fig. 31.
- Merritt 2002, 68.
- Stembridge 1998, 152.
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The Lodge and Compass on Penpole Hill

James Russell

Introduction

In 1679 Sir Robert Southwell, an upwardly mobile Restoration diplomat and politician, purchased the Kingsweston estate, on a wooded ridge overlooking the Severn 6 km to the north west of Bristol, from the trustees of the late Sir Humphrey Hooke, a Bristol merchant who had died in "embarrassed circumstances" in 1677.¹ By the time of his own death in 1702 Sir Robert had transformed the appearance of the estate, undertaking extensive tree-planting and laying out elaborate formal gardens, dramatically depicted in Johannes Kip's birds-eye view of c. 1708.² From 1710 onwards

his son, Edward Southwell I, oversaw the rebuilding of the existing 16th century mansion by Sir John Vanbrugh, who also provided designs for a number of estate and garden buildings.³ In the 1760s Edward Southwell III drastically simplified the layout of the gardens and park with advice from Capability Brown;⁴ the results are meticulously recorded in Isaac Taylor's superb estate plan of 1772.⁵ Between 1763 and 1772 he also employed Robert Mylne to make substantial modifications to Vanbrugh's house and to design various outbuildings, including an extensive

Fig. 9 Plan of Penpole Hill showing location of the Compass and Penpole Lodge.

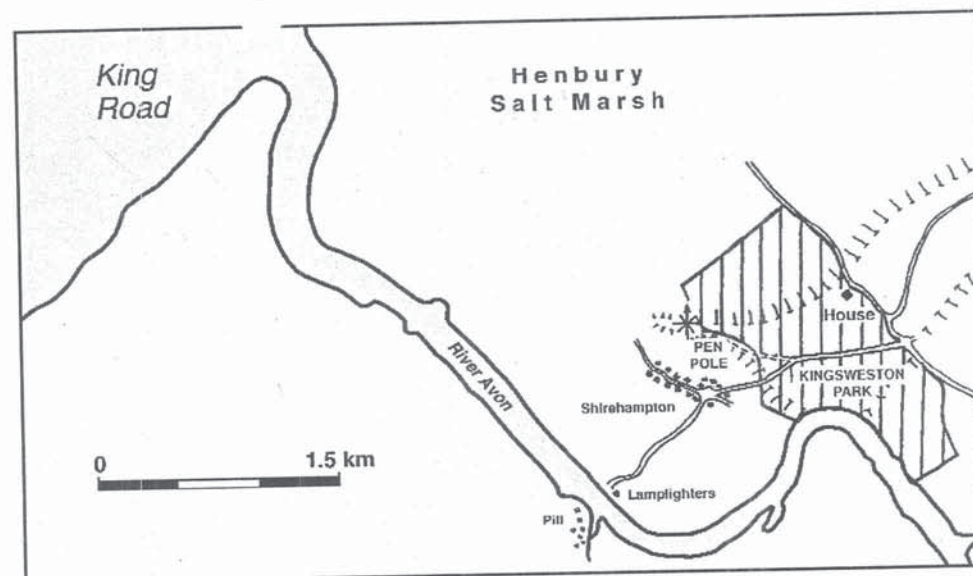
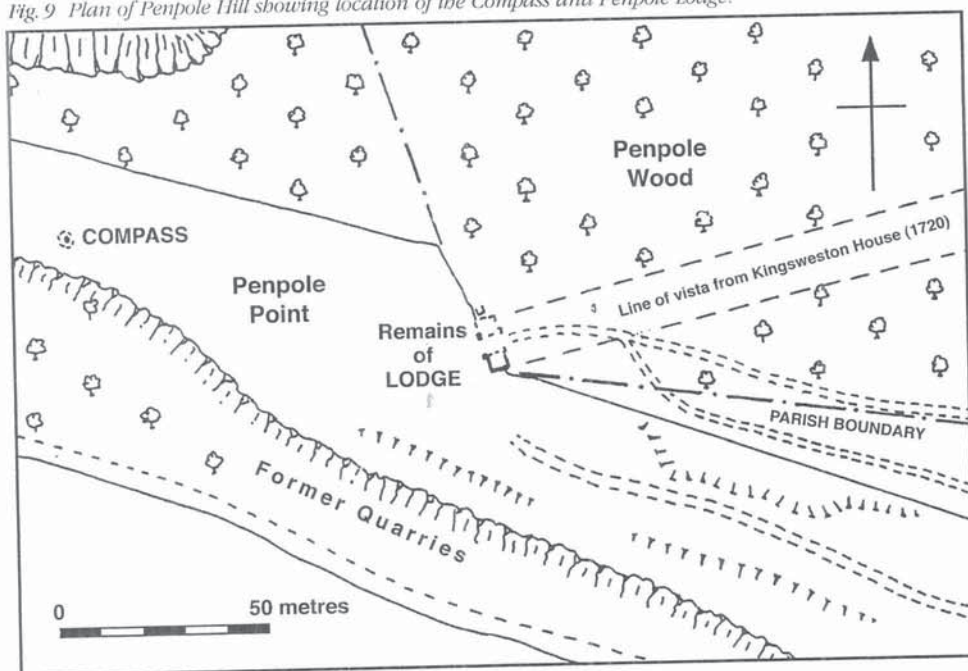


Fig. 10 Plan of the area around Penpole Hill in the 18th century, showing the relationship of the Hill to the River Avon and the King Road anchorage.

complex of stables and kitchen gardens to the north east of Kingsweston Lane.⁶ In 1833 Kingsweston was sold to the Bristol banker Philip John Miles. Since the death of his grandson Philip Napier Miles in 1935 the estate has had a chequered and precarious history in public ownership, with long periods of neglect and decay alternating with attempts at restoration and renewal.

The scholarly literature concerning Kingsweston is already considerable, a notable recent addition being Dr Tim Mowl's characteristically stimulating discussion of the development of the park and gardens in his *Historic Gardens of Gloucestershire*.⁷ This extensive domain nevertheless still offers ample scope for further archaeological and historical research. The present article takes a closer look at two structures on Penpole Hill, an area on the western periphery of the estate (Fig. 9). The Hill is divided into

two parts by the boundary wall of Kingsweston Park, which corresponds roughly with the extremely ancient parochial boundary between Kingsweston, a former Tithing of Henbury Parish, and Shirehampton, a Tithing of Westbury-on-Trym Parish until it achieved separate parochial status in 1844. To the north east, within the park boundary, the slopes of the Hill have been heavily wooded since at least the 17th century. To the south west the Hill tapers into a narrow east-west ridge known as Penpole Point, the slopes of which have been scarred and steepened by the remains of quarrying for carboniferous limestone. The Point has always been unenclosed common land which until the early 20th century was used by the inhabitants of Shirehampton for grazing sheep and cattle.

On the summit of this ridge, 221ft (67m) above sea-level, stands a

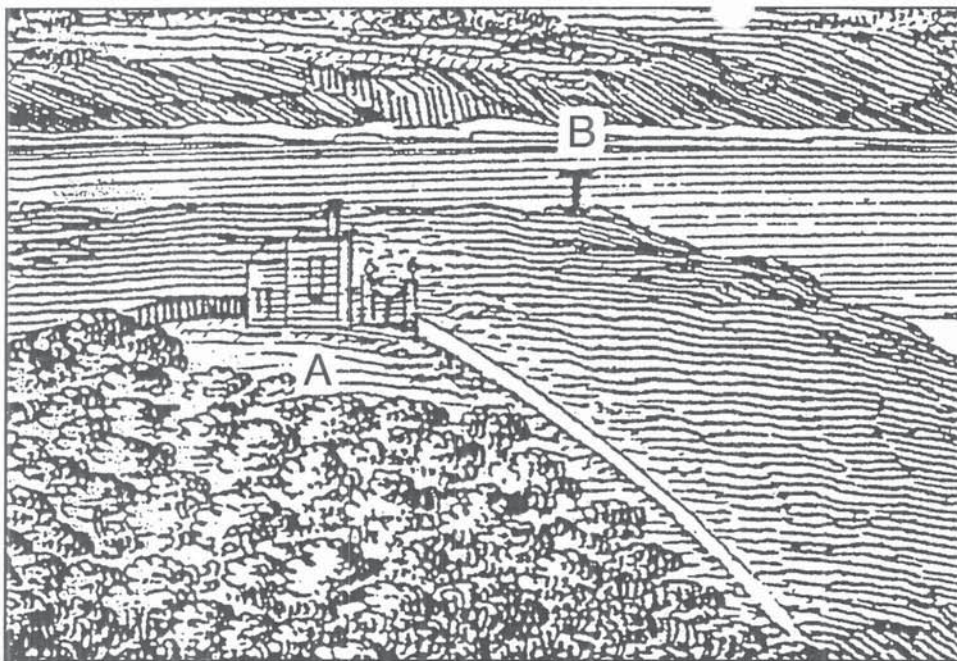


Fig. 11 Enlarged detail from Kip's view of Kingsweston, c. 1708. A: Lodge B: Compass

battered mushroom-shaped stone pillar, encircled by a cast-iron seat. This structure is listed Grade II by English Heritage, who describe it as of "early to mid 19th century" date. There is however good documentary evidence for it being nearly two centuries older. In his 1903 *History of the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol* John Latimer records that in November 1668 the Society voted Sir Humphrey Hooke of Kingsweston £5 towards repairing "the compasse upon Pen Pole Hill; the rest to be made good at his charge".⁸ As Latimer goes on to observe, "this ancient structure, the object of which has puzzled many antiquaries, still occupies its original position". The "Compass" is clearly if schematically depicted as a T-shaped feature in the background of Kip's engraving of c.1708 (Fig. 11).

It might well be asked why the Merchants should have been interested in helping out Sir Humphrey in this way. The answer lies in the proximity of Penpole Hill to the confluence of the Rivers Avon and Severn and the great anchorage of King Road, the gateway of the Port of Bristol where, in the days of sail, ships would wait before attempting the difficult and tortuous journey up the Avon to the quays in the city centre (Fig. 10). Passengers often preferred to leave their ships at King Road and be rowed up the Avon to Shirehampton, whence they could continue into Bristol by land. Among them was William III, who on 6 September 1690 disembarked at King Road following his victory at the Battle of the Boyne; he was accompanied by his newly appointed Secretary of State for

Ireland, Sir Robert Southwell, who was able to bolster his position by entertaining his monarch at Kingsweston.⁹ It may be supposed that Penpole was often thronged with merchants and their agents anxiously waiting for their ships to come in. To these watchers on the exposed hill-top Sir Humphrey's Compass, which originally combined the functions of seat, sundial and weather-vane, would have been of real practical value.

Approximately 100m east of the Compass, set into an angle of the park boundary, are the overgrown and fragmentary remains of Penpole Lodge. This was built, probably in the mid 1720s, to a design by Sir John Vanbrugh, and was demolished in September 1950. It superseded an earlier lodge depicted by Kip (Fig. 11) which comprised two rooms, the larger of which is shown as having a chimney and tall rectangular windows, next to a gateway with urn-topped piers. Vanbrugh's replacement was a much more dramatic and monumental structure with a central gate-tower 17.3m (57 ft) high. Despite its substantial scale the Lodge was never intended as a major entrance to the Kingsweston estate. Also known as the "Breakfast Lodge" or "Breakfasting Room", its primary functions were to provide the Southwell family with a belvedere and place of entertainment and, in its final form, to serve as an eye-catcher to be viewed from Kingsweston House 900m to the east.

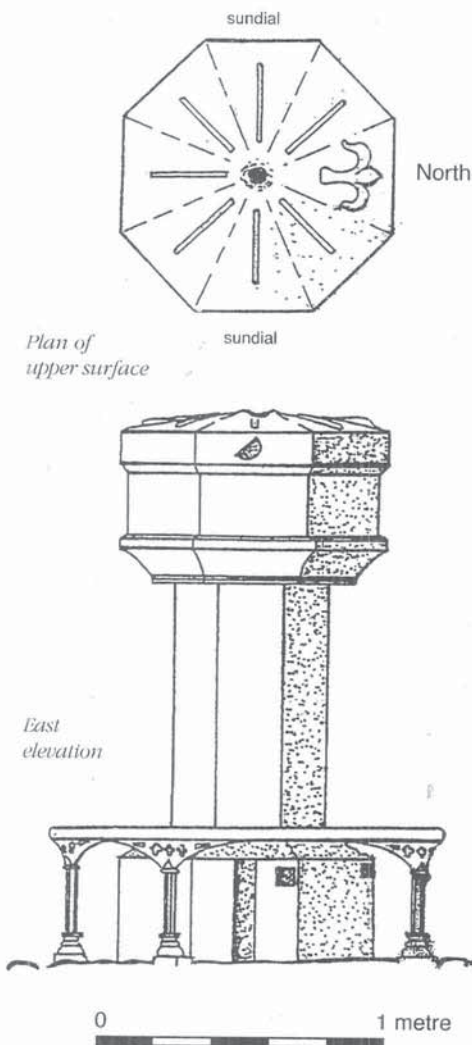
It is likely in addition that the lodge-keeper was always expected to provide shelter and refreshment when needed to those visiting the adjacent hill-top. Initially, as we have seen,

these would have been mainly merchants and the like watching shipping movements along the Severn. Visitor numbers seem however to have grown significantly after 1758, when the road from Bristol through Stoke Bishop, Kingsweston Park and Shirehampton to the important landing-place on the Avon at "Lamplighters" (see Fig. 10) was turnpiked. According to John Latimer "the Shirehampton turnpike opened out the district to the fashionable throng at the Hotwell, and excursions to Kings Weston Inn and Penpole Hill became popular. For the accommodation of visitors to the latter, a building called the Breakfasting Room was erected, the patrons of which were permitted to ramble in the shrubberies of Kingsweston House".¹⁰ It is scarcely surprising that Penpole, with its magnificent views of the Severn and the Welsh hills beyond, should have become a favoured tourist destination as the cult of the Picturesque took hold in the later 18th century. Latimer's comments concerning the Lodge or "Breakfasting Room" are however inaccurate and misleading; it is most unlikely that it was built or rebuilt as late as the 1750s or that it was ever intended specifically to cater for large parties of visitors. This would indeed have been impossible given that the only room in the building suitable for entertaining was the 5-metre square chamber above the gateway. The "shrubberies" referred to by Latimer were presumably those of Penpole Wood; Isaac Taylor's plan of 1772 shows the Wood interlaced with a network of winding paths and small clearings and fenced off at its eastern end to prevent visitors straying further into the estate.

The Compass

(Grid Ref. ST53187730)

The Compass (Fig. 12) is octagonal in plan and consists of three blocks of dressed oolitic limestone - a base, shaft and capstone; it stands approximately 2 metres high. The simple mouldings of the capstone are consistent with a mid-17th century date. The "compass"



proper is formed by the slightly tented upper surface of the capstone which bears a series of radiating raised ribs at 45 degree intervals, with a fleur-de-lys marking the north-point. A worn central socket formerly held the pivot for a weather-vane, the remnants of which are depicted in mid-19th century engravings.¹¹ In the east and west faces of the capstone cornice are the remains of two small sundials, consisting of inclined semi-circular cuttings; no trace survives of figures or divisions which were presumably painted or incised on a plaster coating which has since weathered away. The base of the structure is encircled by a handsome and robust mid-19th century cast-iron seat, supported on four columns of quatrefoil section; according to the Shirehampton historian Ethel Thomas this was provided by "a kind-hearted Clifton resident who remains anonymous".¹² It replaces an earlier wooden seat, the timbers of which were inserted in four vertical slots and eight square sockets cut into the base-stone. Surrounding the Compass is a circular band of cobble-stone paving 2.8m in diameter.

It has to be admitted that in its present weather-worn and graffiti-scarred condition the Compass is not a particularly prepossessing or ornamental structure. It is nevertheless still of considerable historical interest as the only surviving feature at Kingsweston to pre-date the Southwell era, and as a reminder of Bristol's maritime and mercantile heritage.

Fig. 12 Measured drawings of the Compass, Penpole Hill (James Russell).

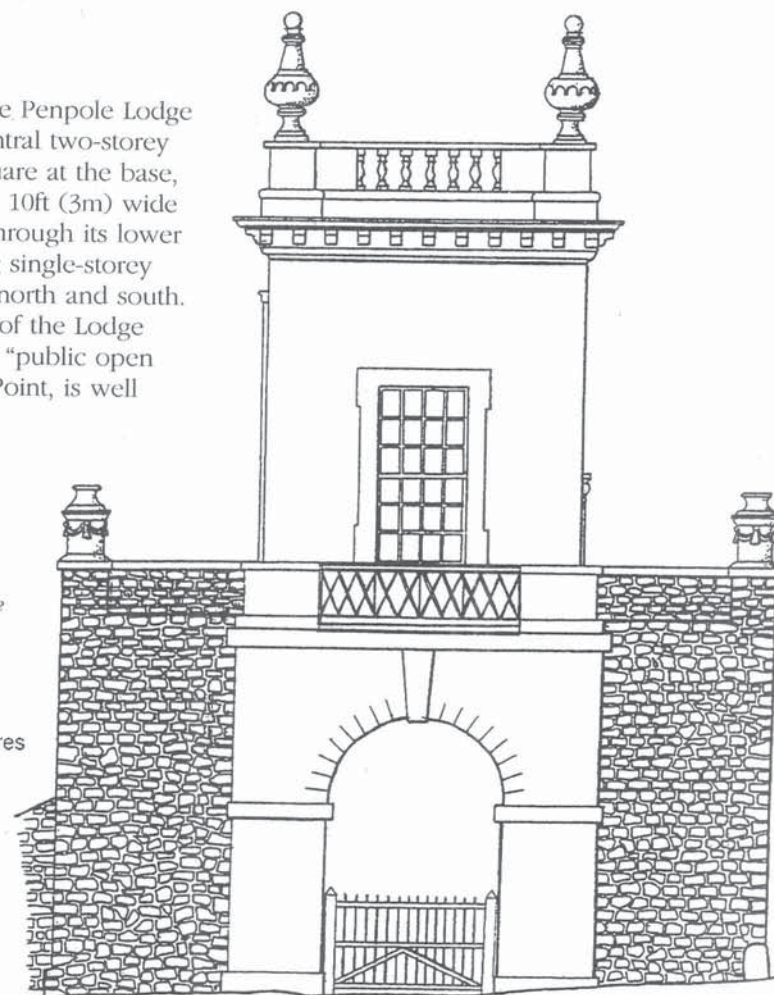
Penpole Lodge

(Grid Ref. ST53287727)

In its final form the Penpole Lodge consisted of a central two-storey tower 20ft (6m) square at the base, with a gate-passage 10ft (3m) wide running east-west through its lower storey, and flanking single-storey wings 10ft wide to north and south. The west elevation of the Lodge (Fig. 13), facing the "public open space" of Penpole Point, is well

Fig. 13 West elevation of Penpole Lodge, reconstructed from photographs. This was the back of the building; the east facade (see Fig. 14) was, more elaborate (James Russell).

0 3 metres



recorded in 19th & 20th century drawings and photographs.¹³ On this side of the building only the central tower was faced in ashlar, contrasting with the windowless rubble walls of the wings. The arched entrance to the gate-passage was completely plain except for an emphasised keystone. Above this the upper storey of the tower was lit by a single tall rectangular window with a plain lugged architrave, cut away at the base

to give access to a light wrought iron balcony. The latter seems to have been added around 1830; it is not shown in an anonymous lithograph of c.1825,¹⁴ but is present in a naive watercolour by J C Addison dated June 1858 in the writer's possession. The tower was topped by a balustraded parapet with bulbous urns above a modillion cornice; the wings had plain parapets with at each corner cylindrical urns or "Roman altars" decorated with swags.

A significant point which seems to have been overlooked in previous discussions of the Lodge is that the relatively plain west facade just described represented the back of the building, and that the principal elevation faced east towards Kingsweston House. While the Kingsweston estate remained in private hands this side of the structure was largely inaccessible to casual visitors, while the encroaching trees of Penpole Wood would have rendered photography difficult, it is extremely fortunate therefore that in 1942 a careful measured drawing of this otherwise unrecorded east elevation was made as a training exercise by a local architectural student, James Ackland. This drawing, which is now preserved in the National Monuments Record, was published by Michael Jenner in 1979.¹⁵ It confirms that this façade was considerably more elaborate in its finish and detailing. The central gate-arch was given a surround of banded rustication, while the wing walls were faced throughout in ashlar and decorated with blind round-arched windows surmounted by roundels. The tower window was topped by a triangular pediment above a pulvinated frieze. As we shall see presently, these details correspond closely with those in a surviving design for the Lodge by Vanbrugh (Fig. 14).

The wings of the Lodge were entered through recessed doorways in the gate-passages. The south wing contained a staircase leading to a platform on the roof from where access to the tower room, the principal apartment in the Lodge, was obtained through a door in its south wall; this

had a moulded arch above capped by an entablature with a pulvinated frieze. A corresponding door in the north wall of the tower seems to have been blocked during the 19th century and partly concealed by a drainpipe.¹⁶ No details seem to be available concerning the decoration or fittings of the tower room. The north wing provided what must have been exceedingly cramped and dismal accommodation for the lodge-keeper, apparently lit only by one or two small north-facing windows. The 1825 lithograph previously referred to depicts the tiled roof and chimney of an outbuilding, foundations of which are still traceable in the undergrowth, adjoining the north wing; in the same illustration another insubstantial lean-to structure, almost certainly a privy, is shown against the outer, western face of the park wall. Isaac Taylor's 1772 estate map shows a square feature, probably a well, in a clearing to the north east of the Lodge.

While the exact date at which the Penpole Lodge was rebuilt in the form just described has yet to be determined, there can now be no doubt about the identity of its designer, Sir John Vanbrugh. Two undated preliminary drawings by Vanbrugh related to the Lodge have survived in a collection at Elton Hall near Peterborough. One is an unrealised project for a pavilion rather than a gate; a double flight of steps leads into a niche-lined lower hall flanked by wings containing respectively a two-seater privy and a spiral staircase leading to an upper chamber lit by Venetian windows.¹⁷ The other, a vigorous but carefully dimensioned sketch in Vanbrugh's own hand,

redrawn here as Fig. 14, combines two variant designs for the Lodge as finally executed.¹⁸ As Michael Jenner has pointed out,¹⁹ the left-hand variant in particular corresponds extremely closely to the east façade of the Lodge as recorded by James Ackland in 1942, the lower storey being built almost exactly as shown by Vanbrugh. Some alterations were made in execution to the upper part of the structure; the forms of the urns were changed while the tower room was heightened and the entablature of its window replaced by a triangular pediment. The right hand half of the sketch shows an extravagant alternative proposal for covering the platforms above the wings with pedimented Ionic porticoes.

It has already been noted that one of the functions of Vanbrugh's Lodge was to serve as an eye-catcher to be viewed from Kingsweston House. An estate plan of 1720²⁰ shows a tree-lined avenue or vista, doubtless newly laid out at Vanbrugh's instigation, running from the House to the Lodge along the steep northern slopes of Penpole Hill. The rebuilding of the Lodge is however unlikely to have commenced before May 1723, when an alternative design for "Penpole Gate" was submitted by the Scots architect Colen Campbell.²¹ Edward Southwell I had evidently given some early encouragement to Campbell, to judge from a fulsome dedication to him in the first volume (1715) of the latter's *Vitruvius Britannicus*,²² and it must be assumed that he decided to give this ambitious apostle of Neo-Palladianism an opportunity to show what he could do before committing himself to Vanbrugh's Lodge design.

In the event Campbell dismally failed to provide any serious competition. His proposal (Fig. 15) deploys several trademark features of the Palladian style which he did so much to promote - a Venetian window and shallow pyramid roof for the tower and ball finials for the wings. However, despite (or perhaps partly because of) this the design appears bland, stunted and insubstantial compared with Vanbrugh's bold and robustly detailed composition. While Campbell has kept the central gateway the same width as Vanbrugh (10ft) he has, for reasons best known to himself, scaled down the other dimensions; thus his tower is 18ft square as against Vanbrugh's 20ft, and his wings 9ft wide instead of Vanbrugh's 10ft. The relationship between the tower and the archway below does not seem to have been fully thought through, the window of the tower room apparently starting at floor-level!

It is probable that once Campbell's designs had been considered and rejected construction of the Lodge proceeded without further delay, and was complete by the time of Vanbrugh's death in 1726. An alternative suggestion put forward in 1953 by Christopher Gotch²³ that the Lodge was actually built some 45 years later by Robert Mylne for Edward Southwell III may be quickly dismissed. It is known from Mylne's journal that he supplied Southwell with designs for lodges on 25 July 1767 and again on 8 May 1771.²⁴ These can however almost certainly be identified with the two Park Lodges which controlled traffic on the Shirehampton Turnpike (the present Shirehampton Road) as it

passed through Kingsweston Park, and which are both clearly marked on Isaac Taylor's plan of 1772. While the eastern lodge (Grid Ref ST 54507720) was rebuilt, probably around 1840, in a vaguely Italianate style²⁵ the other, at the top of Park Hill (Grid Ref ST 53617690) survives unaltered, a modest but charming structure fronted by a tetrastyle Tuscan portico.²⁶ Gotch's claim

that the Penpole Lodge "bad all the outward aspects of Vanbrugh's hand but with the lighter touch which is now known to be Mylne's" is far from convincing. He based his interpretation entirely on photographs of the west elevation, incorrectly assuming that the wrought iron balcony was a primary feature. He seems to have had no knowledge of the east façade, where the distinctive characteristics of

Fig. 14 Design for Penpole Lodge by Sir John Vanbrugh (Elton Hall No. 198). The drawing incorporates two variant designs, the left-hand variant corresponding closely to the east facade of the Lodge as executed (redrawn by James Russell).

0 3 metres



Vanbrugh's style were far more evident, or of the Vanbrugh drawings at Elton Hall, which were not published until 1964.

Penpole Lodge was undoubtedly a building of rare distinction and a fine example of Vanbrugh's inventive and poetic reworking of the language of classical architecture. One of the most memorable images of the Lodge is to be found in Nicholas Pocock's splendid 1785 watercolour of Kingsweston,²⁷ in which it can be glimpsed in the background floating above the trees of Penpole Wood like a Claudean "enchanted castle".

Until World War II the Lodge was maintained in reasonable repair; photographs indicate that between 1933 and his sudden death in 1935 the last "squire" of Kingsweston, Philip Napier Miles, stripped the walls of ivy and installed a fine new set of metal gates to replace the simple wooden gate shown in Fig. 13. For a few years after 1935 it found a welcome new use as the headquarters of the local Scout group.²⁸ During the 1940s, however, decay and systematic vandalism took its toll, and by 1949 the structure had been reduced to a roofless shell from which large areas of stonework had been dislodged. Now in the hands of the Housing Committee of Bristol Corporation, who viewed the Lodge merely as a substandard unit of accommodation, demolition on the grounds of public safety became inevitable, finally taking place in September 1950.²⁹ Substantial remains of the building are however still visible, with parts of the south wing surviving to a height over 4 metres. 🍁

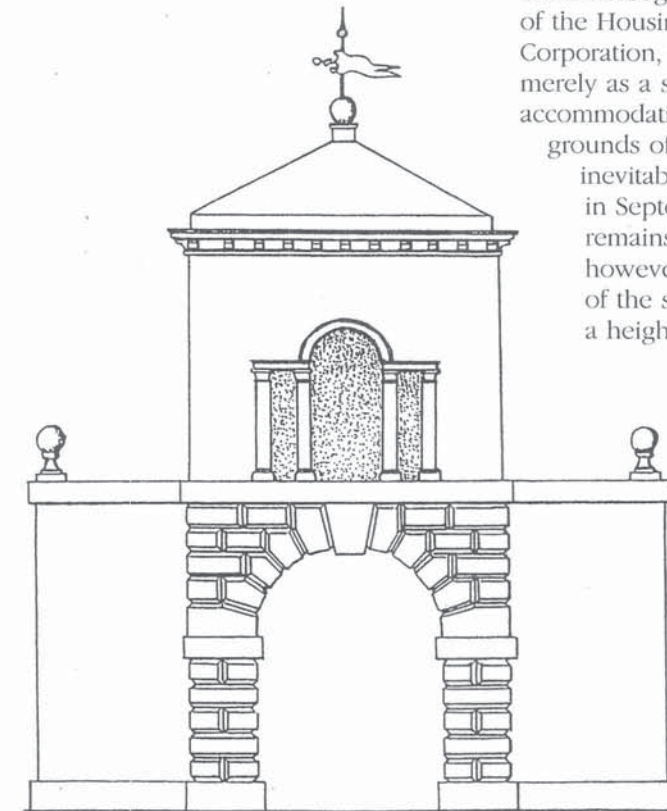


Fig. 15 Rejected design by Colen Campbell for "Penpole Gate" submitted 29 May 1723 (Kings Weston Book of Drawings No. 37; redrawn by James Russell).

0 3 metres

Notes and References

- 1 Latimer 1900, 384.
- 2 Atkyns 1712, plate facing page 476; Mowl 2002, Fig. 25.
- 3 Downes 1967.
- 4 Stroud 1975, 230.
- 5 Bristol Record Office 26570.
- 6 Gotch 1953.
- 7 Mowl 2002, 57-63. Of the many earlier accounts of the architecture of Kingsweston the most detailed and perceptive is that by Michael Jenner in Gomme, Jenner & Little 1979, 107-14, 181-2.
- 8 Latimer 1903, 172.
- 9 Latimer 1900, 459-60.
- 10 Latimer 1893, 331.
- 11 Thomas 1993, Fig. 36.
- 12 Thomas 1993, 53.
- 13 Downes 1967, Fig. 30; Thomas 1993, Fig. 34; Winstone 1961, Plate 157; Winstone 1977, Plate 27.
- 14 Harding & Lambert 1994, Fig. 29.
- 15 Gomme, Jenner & Little 1979, Fig. 86. The drawing has been reproduced in reverse.
- 16 The north face of the tower is most clearly seen in a photograph in *Country Life* 105, 1067, 6 May 1949.
- 17 Colvin & Craig 1964, Cat. 193; Downes 1967, Fig. 28.
- 18 Colvin & Craig 1964, Cat. 198, Plate XXa; Gomme, Jenner & Little 1979, Fig. 85.
- 19 Gomme, Jenner & Little, 1979, 111.
- 20 British Library PS6/1291 K Top 13/77/1a; Mowl 2002, Fig. 26.
- 21 *Kings Weston Book of Drawings*, Bristol Record Office 33746; Downes 1967, Cat. 37, Fig. 29; Mowl & Earnshaw 1985, Fig. 22.
- 22 Downes 1967, 10.
- 23 Gotch 1953, 215.
- 24 Richardson 1955, 79, 90.
- 25 Thomas 1993, Fig. 66.
- 26 Thomas 1993, figs. 67-8.
- 27 Bristol City Art Gal. : Greenacre 1982, 12, 42-3.
- 28 Thomas 1993, 58-60.
- 29 The decay and destruction of the Lodge is described in letters to *Country Life* by Ms R M Clay (Vol 105, 1067, 6 May 1949) and Mr R A Young (Vol 108, 1787, 24 November 1950) and a note by the Council for the Preservation of Ancient Bristol in *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 78, 154.

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Monuments in Stoke Park

Archaeological Excavation and Recording Part One

David Etheridge

Introduction

As part of an ongoing programme of archaeological recording and restoration of Stoke Park House and grounds, four extant monuments created for the park in the 18th century were selected for special treatment. These four monuments are known as: the pond in Barn Wood (also the Horse Pond, SGSMR 14734), the tunnel in Barn Wood (SGSMR 14735), the tunnel in Hermitage Wood (SGSMR 14732), and the Obelisk (SGSMR 14733). Avon Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Kevin Moore Limited to undertake this work in accordance with the requirements of the South Gloucestershire Conservation and Archaeology Officer and the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, to a Scheme of Work approved by the South Gloucestershire Archaeological Officer.

All four of these monuments were created in the 18th century as ornamental features, part of a scheme of landscaping Stoke Park begun in 1743 and ceased in 1801. In particular this landscape is notable for the involvement of Thomas Wright the landscape architect, between 1749 and his death in 1786.

All four monuments were cleared of excess vegetation and overburden of rubble in August 2002, under archaeological supervision. In October

2002 architectural stonework from the tunnel in Hermitage Wood and from the Obelisk was collected and recorded. During November and December 2002 the pond in Barn Wood was cleared and recorded archaeologically with some limited excavation, prior to commencement of operations to remove an overburden of tree roots and stumps. Archaeological excavation and recording of the tunnel in Barn Wood was undertaken between March and April 2003. Limited documentary research was undertaken in November 2003.



The Barn Wood Tunnel

This article deals with only two of the monuments: the Obelisk and the Tunnel in Hermitage Wood; the other two: the Barn Wood pond and tunnel will appear in Part Two in the next Newsletter. Editor

Hedera helix and *Ilex aquifolium*, all of which are either native or had been introduced prior to the garden's inception.

As much of the planting for the main garden was supplied by the Veitch nursery in Exeter it is highly likely that they would also have supplied the latest plant introductions to the Chaplain's garden, especially if it was under the care of the estate gardeners.⁶ An equally possible theory could be that the Reverend Bacon Medley was part of the Edwardian band of ecclesiastical plant and garden enthusiasts such as Canon Ellacombe at Bitton.

Whatever secrets this garden holds, it is a truly charming example of the high Victorian style with added Gothick elements but on a domestic scale. Its heyday only lasted the seventeen years of the Reverend Bacon Medley's chaplaincy, as his death coincided with that of Anthony Gibbs and there are no further records of a Tyntesfield chaplain after 1907.⁷

Future plans for Tyntesfield include the adaptation of the Chaplain's house for holiday lettings which may mean that this garden is not accessible to the majority of visitors to the estate. This use will warrant a certain standard of restoration and care and it is this dichotomy which will shape the extent of any restitution of this unique garden. In the meantime, there is good news to report. To stem the onslaught of the brambles and their ilk, a working party has started to clear the insidious vegetation. This alone may yield more clues to the history of the Chaplain's garden. 🌿

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- 2 Greenhill B.J. *Private Chapel at Tyntesfield*, (Nailsea, 1974) XVII/106
- 3 Greenhill, J. *All Saints Church, Wraxall, Somerset*, (Nailsea, 1963) p. 2.
- 4 U.K Parks and Gardens Database, www.york.ac.uk.
- 5 English Heritage, National Monuments Record, Swindon. 29 April 2002.
- 6 Miller, James. *Fertile Fortune - The story of Tyntesfield*. (London, 2003)
- 7 *Kelly's Directory of Somerset*, 1910

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Inside Penpole Lodge

James Russell

The following note forms a postscript to my article in AGT Newsletter 27 on "The Lodge & Compass on Penpole Hill". In this I described Penpole Lodge on the western edge of the Kingsweston estate (Grid Ref. ST53287727), built around 1725 to a design by Sir John Vanbrugh and demolished in 1950. Special mention was made here of a drawing of 1942 by a then architectural student, James Ackland, which provides a unique and invaluable record of the principal east elevation of the Lodge.¹

In May 2004 I visited the National Monuments Record in Swindon (which had been closed to researchers while my original article was being prepared) and obtained copies of a further three large drawings of the Lodge.² Comprising plans, sections, elevations and full-scale profiles of mouldings, these are stylistically identical to the Ackland drawing and are clearly related to it; they are however all signed "J W Tanner 1944". The most likely explanation for this is that Tanner and Ackland were at the time fellow students and undertook the survey of the Lodge as a joint project.³ Tanner's precise and detailed drawings greatly enhance our understanding of the structure and functioning of the Lodge, and highlight the value of measured surveys in the recording and study of park and garden buildings, an area where reliance on photography is all too widespread. The information they contain has been used to prepare the following revised description of its internal arrangements and the accompanying isometric reconstruction.

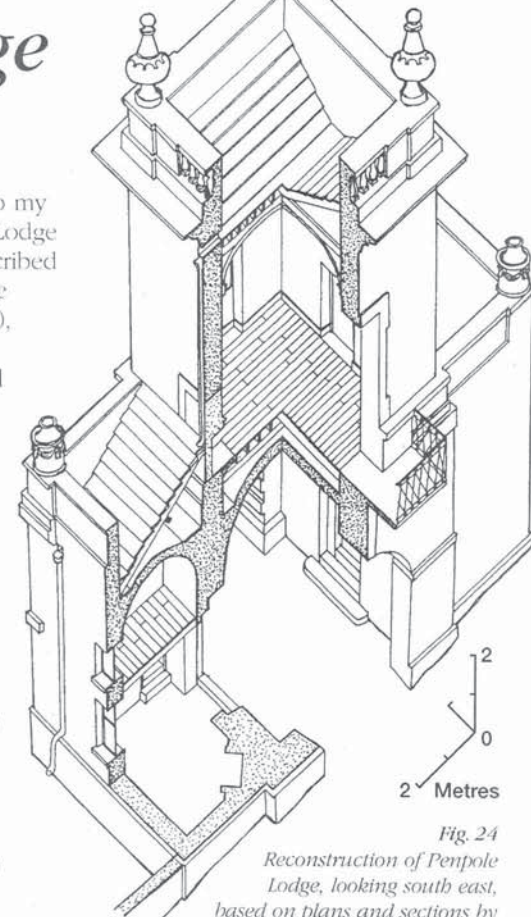


Fig. 24
Reconstruction of Penpole Lodge, looking south east, based on plans and sections by J W Tanner, 1943. (James Russell).

As indicated in my previous article, the Lodge consisted of an east-west gate-passage with a single tower-like room above, flanked by lower wings to north and south. The gate-passage was barrel-vaulted, with recessed doorways in the side walls giving access to the wings. The south wing (largely concealed in the accompanying drawing) was open to the sky and contained a stone staircase with iron railings winding round the interior to emerge on a landing outside the entrance

to the tower room. The north wing provided accommodation for the lodge-keeper, consisting of two very small rooms placed one above the other. The lower room was heated by a fireplace set diagonally in the south-west corner while the bedchamber above had a solid barrel-vaulted ceiling. It appears that the latter was originally intended to support a bedding of earth or rubble for the stone-flagged pavement of a viewing platform, entered through a door in the north wall of the tower room. Subsequently this door was blocked up and a fireplace inserted, while the viewing platform outside was removed and replaced by a pitched tiled roof. To compensate for the loss of this rooftop viewpoint the west window of the tower room was cut away at the base to provide access to a new cantilevered balcony enclosed by wrought iron railings.

Tanner's drawings show that behind Vanbrugh's balustraded parapet the tower room had a tiled valley roof with a central north-south gutter. That this arrangement was secondary, probably replacing an original flat leaded roof, may be judged from the way in which the valley gutter drained through a hole in the north wall of the tower into a down-pipe placed in front of the blocked door already described. Tanner shows that below this new roof-structure the tower room had been provided with a ribbed plaster vault in the 'Gothick' style, resting on a matching cornice decorated with alternate shields and rosettes.

The alterations described above must have been carried out after 1825, as an anonymous lithograph⁴ dating from around that time shows that the north door of the tower room was then still unblocked and that the balcony had not yet been added. They probably formed part of a wider programme of building works around the Kingsweston estate

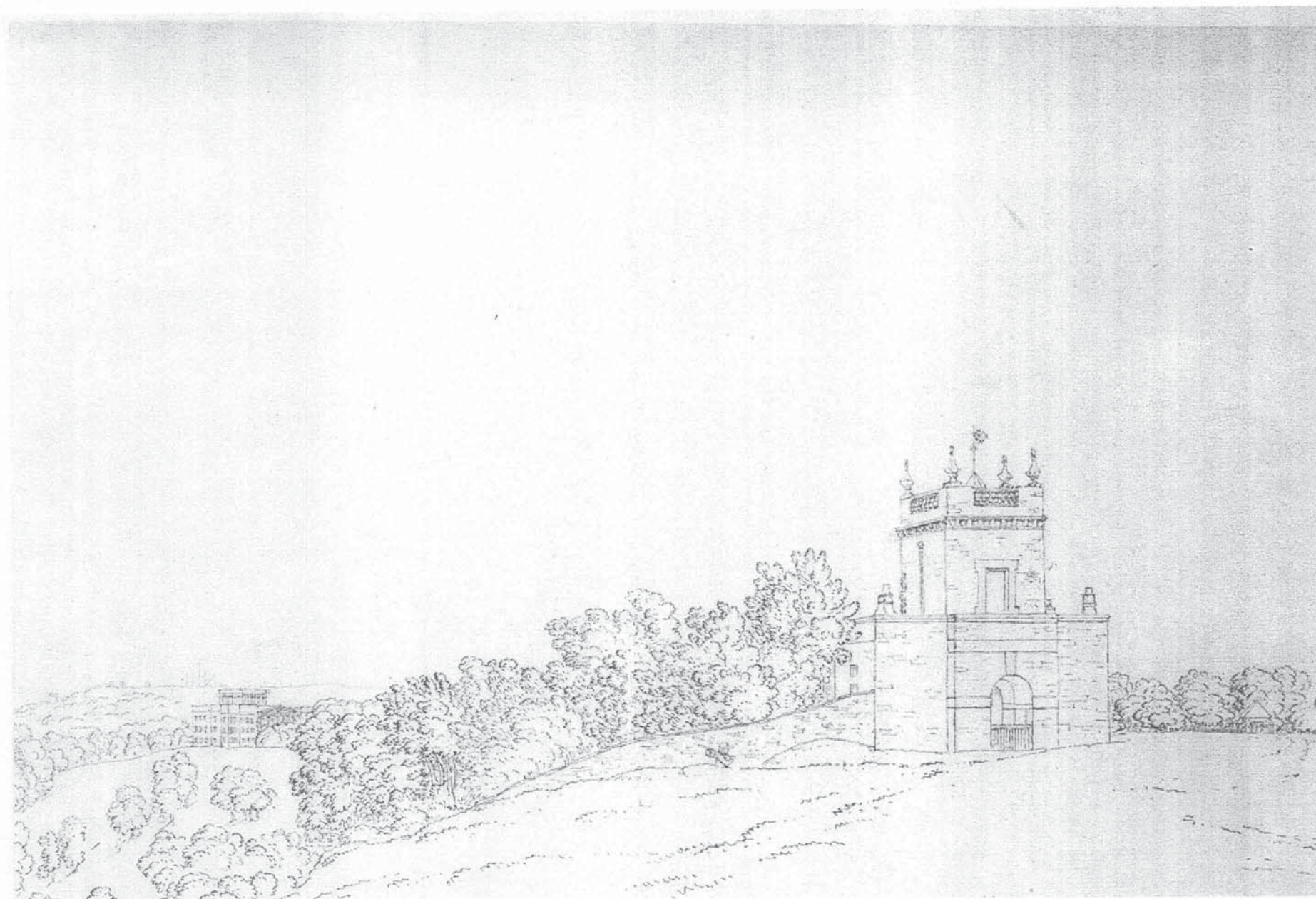
undertaken after its purchase by the wealthy banker P J Miles in 1833. It was presumably only after the insertion of a fireplace in the tower room that the Lodge took on its role as a 'Breakfasting Room' to which the Miles family could repair for refreshment after a morning's ride round their domain. The identity of the architect responsible for the alterations must for the moment remain a matter for speculation. One possible candidate, in view of the 'Gothick' detailing of the tower room ceiling, is however Thomas Hopper (1776-1856), a versatile designer capable of performing with equal facility in the Tudor Gothic as well as Neo-Classical and Neo-Norman modes. Hopper had rebuilt Leigh Court for P J Miles in 1811-14, and has sometimes been credited with the remodelling of Vanbrugh's staircase hall in Kingsweston House, on the admittedly purely circumstantial evidence of the undoubted similarities between Vanbrugh's original staircase and the hall of Amesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, installed by Hopper between 1834 and 1840.⁵ There is clearly scope here for further documentary investigation. 🍀

Notes and References

- 1 Gomme, Jenner & Little 1979, Fig. 86.
- 2 National Monuments Record Ref. 94103273-5.
- 3 I am grateful to Anita Sims for her comments concerning this point.
- 4 Harding & Lambert 1994, Fig. 29.
- 5 Burton 1985, 129-30; Gomme, Jenner & Little 1979, 113 (note).

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SH Grim 1788 AM 15541 f 60 Penrose Lodge