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Badminton Once More

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A study day at Badminton organized by Nicholas Kingsley and Tim Mowl for Architecture & Design in the West of England on 7th April 1994 enabled members to reassess the evidence for the building and development of the great house in the light of evidence uncovered since the papers written by Gervase Jackson-Stops and by myself in the 1980s. By the end there was a broad consensus that, as Howard Colvin put it, we did now know the main lines of route by which the house reached its present state and could make fairly confident attributions to architects and others responsible. The following is a summary of amendments to my own paper which, in the light of the visit and its accompanying discussion, now seem to me necessary.¹

The date of completion of the main blocks of the seventeenth-century house must be put back to *c.* 1670 or even a little earlier. Lucy Abel-Smith discovered a letter in the Badminton archives, dated 23 July 1670, in which the Duke of Somerset describes having seen 'the picture of Badminton front' which had been painted by Hendrick Danckerts.² The picture and a companion piece (probably of the east front) have been lost, but two drawings by Danckerts survive in the British Museum which are almost certainly preparatory studies for the lost paintings. That of the north front shows the house precisely as drawn by Knyff in 1699; in the east view the house appears to be less carefully drawn, and the cupola is impossibly large, but the east façade is again demonstrably that drawn by Knyff.³ (Fig. 1) My suggestion, therefore, that a top-ranking Office of Works team, who were paid large sums in the early 1680s, was responsible for the main seventeenth-century building at Badminton, must be abandoned.⁴ Margaret Richards, during the course of her cataloguing of the Badminton archives, discovered that Beaufort House in Chelsea was rebuilt about 1680; the payments to the Office of Works craftsmen (recorded in the first Duke's account at Child's bank) clearly relate to this. Mr Dickeson, who was paid £20 in 1672 turns out not to have been William Dickenson, Wren's chief clerk, but Dr Edmund Dickenson, a physician.

Timothy Mowl argued further that the two principal fronts of the seventeenth-century house must represent different building operations: the naïve east front, with its relieving arches turned into 'eyebrows' (a misunderstanding perhaps of segmental pediments seen on an engraving) is provincial work in strong contrast to the at least partial sophistication of the north. Henry Somerset (prudently both abjuring his Catholicism and dropping his courtesy title to become plain 'Mr Herbert') had made his peace with Cromwell early in the 1650s and remained on good terms with the Protector till the latter's death. He sat as M.P. for Worcester in 1654–5 and in 1657 made an extremely wealthy marriage, which gave ample funds to enable him to embark on the reconstruction of the house and estate of Badminton which had been devised to him by his half-cousin in 1655. Cromwell however died in 1658, and Herbert's subsequent association with the 'full and free parliament' party, followed by his involvement in the royalist plot in July 1659, led to his imprisonment in the Tower, where he remained until November. The reconstruction of Badminton perhaps therefore did not begin in earnest until after the Restoration (Herbert was one of the 12 commissioners attending the

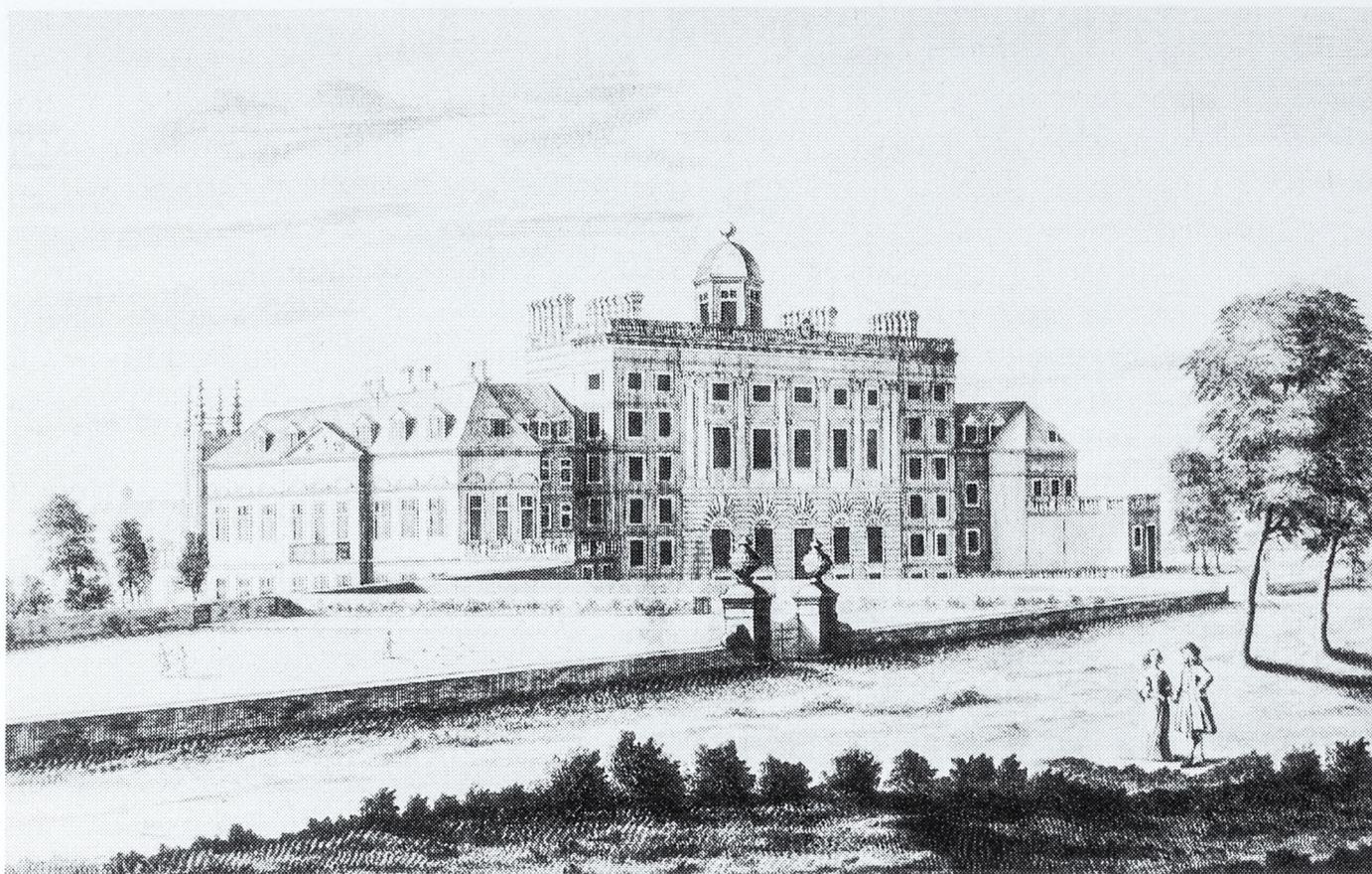


Fig. 1 Badminton, north front as drawn by Kniff, 1699.

king at Breda in May 1660) but was sufficiently advanced for the king to be entertained there in 1663.⁵ The likelihood is therefore that the east wing had been built in the early 1660s, presumably entirely by local talent. The north front was a separate engagement, perhaps embarked on after Herbert had succeeded his father as third Marquess of Worcester in 1667.

As to who was responsible for the design of the enigmatic north front, the debt of the central section to the Queen's Gallery at Somerset House – of which indeed it may count as almost a straight crib – was reacknowledged.⁶ But no-one felt any more inclined than before to credit (or discredit) Webb with the combination of Somerset House and the two 'towers' of five and a half storeys of windows, between which it was sandwiched. Measurement of the thickness of the surviving cross-walls at either end of the hall – six feet at the west, five at the east – confirmed the evidence of a partially surviving plan by Thomas Bateman that masonry from the old house had been absorbed in the new; but it was presumed that the towers of half-storeys were made necessary by a shortage of bedrooms in the single-pile main block.⁷ The first Duke – or some unknown local mason – was thought to be the most likely candidate for the mishmash, though plainly, if an elevation had not been provided by the Office of Works, someone from Badminton must have seen and copied the façade of the Queen's Gallery. [A geographically remote and far less sophisticated northern analogy might be suggested by Hutton-in-the-Forest, Cumberland, where in *c.* 1680 the centre of the medieval house was largely demolished and replaced by a swagger piece of artisan renaissance jammed between two medieval pele-towers which Kip shows converted to regular fenestration, though they never were. One was entirely rebuilt by Salvin.]

How much – and what in particular – was done during the brief reign of the second Duke is probably less certain now than I had supposed. My misinterpretation of the Bateman plan

led me to think that the original great staircase had lain directly behind the east 'tower'; in fact, as Knyff's plan of *c.* 1700 shows, it stood east of this in the subordinate bays between the tower and the back of the east range, and the Bateman plan was a proposal, linked presumably with a contract of February 1713 to the carpenter Robert Bennett who was to make the staircase.⁸ Despite a payment which suggests that he did so, it is by no means clear that the stair shown on Bateman's plan was ever built, or that the recasting of the east tower to accommodate three full storeys with the segmental-headed windows known from the 1745 survey drawing was carried out at this time.⁹

If it was not, then the recasting must have waited for Francis Smith's arrival in 1729 and would have been linked with the known removal of the staircase to the position (a little to the south of the original one) which it maintained until Wyattville's changes in the early nineteenth century. There is otherwise little to alter in the account already given of the Smith phase at Badminton, though attention should be drawn to the fire – of unknown extent – which happened in March 1731 and was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year.¹⁰ Since the existence of Gibbs drawings for the pavilions demonstrated that he had been engaged at some point, I suggested that he might have been the designer of the hall in its present form.¹¹ But this was based partly on the erroneous view that Gibbs designed the hall at Ditchley, which we now know to be by Kent.¹² Kent could not have had anything to do with the hall at Badminton, where he did not arrive until 1745, by which time Edward Poynton, who we know made the doorcase aedicules, had been dead for eight years. In fact the layout of the hall was already essentially predetermined, and all that the designer had to do was to decide on the form of the doorcases and the layout of stucco panels and picture tabernacles. Smith doubtless recalled the Ditchley hall well enough to apply some of its details to Badminton. I am now persuaded however that the ceiling stuccoing, which I had previously thought a later insertion, is, as Gervase Jackson-Stops argued, a completion (though still a late one) of the design for the rest of the hall: in particular the diaper pattern in the corners confirms a Ticinese hand, and we can take this to be that of Giuseppe Artari, whose letter of November 1745 poses however one more problem: he writes that he will put the design for the ceiling into the hand of Mr Gibbs.¹³ Was Gibbs still providing designs for Badminton late in 1745 – after the fourth Duke had engaged Kent – or was the contact between them now maintained through the Duke's active presence among the Radcliffe trustees? The answer to this question may or may not affect the answer to another unsettled one: was it Gibbs who produced the third and final design for the pavilions by providing that for the evidence room? Or is this a superimposition by Stephen Wright of Kent – inspired rustication following the design of the principal entrance doorcase on the north front? The rusticated columns do look as if inspired by the doorcase; but the group of four small drawings of the evidence room are, I still believe, in Gibbs's hand;¹⁴ a scaled-up detail of one interior elevation is however almost certainly by Wright, who was presumably in charge of their actual erection.¹⁵ Another minor query has been prompted by discussion of the late eighteenth-century drawing of the east front, which shows the pediment empty of the carving which I confidently attributed to Poynton.¹⁶ Does this, as has been proposed, mean that the latter in fact dates from Wyattville's changes? In my view it would not suggest his preferred style (apart from that at Claverton, with a small dry cartouche, the Wyattville pediments that I am aware of are empty); and the drawing – which shows the whole run of buildings from the north-east pavilion at the right to the church at the left – belongs to the set for the church which was almost certainly made by Charles Evans, in this case to show the overall layout with his church in position; hence not greatly concerned with fairly small-scale detail;

the (now of course destroyed) pediment on the east end of the church is likewise shown empty of any carving. As a final correction to a final footnote, it should be added that I have since 1984 been able to show that the group of Smith drawings for a church,¹⁷ which I at first supposed to be plans for rebuilding that at Badminton, are in fact for St Mary's, Monmouth, built to one of the variant designs in 1736–7.¹⁸

Warmest thanks are once again due to their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort for allowing us the liberty of critical parts of their house; for help in putting the record straight to Margaret Richards, who has finally put order into the immense archive; to all who took part in the study day, and most particularly to Howard Colvin for his tirelessly generous care in ensuring that nothing important is omitted and nothing spurious or unjustified allowed in.

Editor's Note

It is with great sadness that we have since learned that Her Grace the Duchess of Beaufort has since died.

the enlargement of the structure some yet remain untenanted. Each is calculated to receive five coffins, the price is fifty pounds. Other similar private repositories for the dead were formed when the chapel was erected. To obtain admission it is necessary to remove the pews and the flooring of the chapel. There is also a general receptacle denominated 'the Vestry Vault' wherein on payment of a moderate fee, the remains of frail mortality may securely rest', Heal Coll. A VI, p. 60 (both accounts).

- 29 The new Parish Church of St Pancras, Euston Road (built to replace the old parish church and consecrated in 1822), the Camden Chapel (later All Saints Church, consecrated in 1824) and the Regent Square and Somers Town Chapels (both opened in 1826), see Lee, pp. 44–54.
- 30 St Pancras New Church and the Camden Chapel were thus equipped.
- 31 *The News*, 12 May 1822, quoted in Lee, p. 43.
- 32 *The Morning Chronicle*, 22 June 1822, quoted in Lee, p. 48.
- 33 3 January, 1844. see Langman, vol. 1, p. 70.
- 34 The church is now in occupation by the Rainbow Community. The author would like to thank members of the Community for their courtesy and consideration and for permitting me to inspect the church.

NOTES TO PAGES 103–6

1. For the documentary evidence see: T. S. Rosoman 'The decoration and use of the principal apartments of Chiswick House 1727–70'. *Burlington Magazine*, CXXVII, 1985 pp. 663–77. For the restoration options see: Julius Bryant 'Chiswick House – the inside story. Policies and problems of restoration'. *Apollo*, CXXXVI, 1992 pp. 17–22.
2. Illustrated in John Cornforth 'Chiswick House, London, *Country Life* 16 February 1995 pp. 32–7 fig. 4.
3. Julius Bryant 'Preserving the Mystery: a tercentennial restoration inside Chiswick House' in *Belov'd by Ev'ry Muse* edited by Dana Arnold (Georgian Group 1994) pp. 29–36.

NOTES TO PAGES 107–10

- 1 British Library Add, MSS.21152. A letter from James Dawkins to Josiah Taylor, editor of *The Antiquities of Athens*, Vol. IV, 1830 attributes to Revett 'a very beautiful temple, near the Western Portico, the Temple of Flora, and the Temple in the Island'. Also, Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, London, 1978, p. 684.
- 2 *Dashwood Papers*, West Wycombe Park. An

Inventory dated 1782 lists 'A Register Stove on the Theatre on the Island'.

- 3 Bodleian B12/13 and B12/14. Four payments to Nicholas Revett from Messrs. Croft & Co. on behalf of Lord Le Despencer (the title inherited by Dashwood through his mother in 1763), for amounts of £20.0.0d., £30.0.0d., and £50.0.0d. between February 1778 and November 1780.
- 4 James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, London, 1762, ch. III, pl. III.
- 5 Lesley Lawrence, 'Stuart & Revett; their Literary & Architectural Careers' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1938, p. 144 noted the 'ill-defined capitals faintly suggestive of Egyptian ones'.
- 6 *The Bodleian Gough Misc. Ant. Fol.4/35*. Also Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, London 1978, p. 684.
- 7 Colvin, op. cit., p. 684.
- 8 Vol. I, 1762, Vol. II 1789, Vol. III 1795.
- 9 Colvin, op. cit., p. 684.
- 10 Society of Dilettanti *Minutes vol. 2*, held at the Society of Antiquaries.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556–1785*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 289–90.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 441–6. They were obliged to start work in the northern part of the city on monuments of less importance as their movements '... were dictated to a great extent by the location of a Turkish garrison on the southern ridge of the Acropolis'. The political situation continued to hinder Revett's work on the drawings of the Acropolis and they were incomplete on their return to England in 1754. Stuart's decision to revise his text following Le Roy's publication caused further delay.
- 14 Lawrence, op. cit., p. 131.
- 15 Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'The West Wycombe Landscape' *Country Life*, Vol. CLV, p. 1621. Also, Anne Purchas, *A Building History of West Wycombe Park with a Catalogue of Architectural Drawings* (M.A. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1992) cat. no. 56. Inscribed 'Temple of Winter at the Bottom'.
- 16 Ibid., cat. no. 57. A drawing by Captain Moody for the octagonal roof. Also, Bodleian MS D. D. Dashwood (Bucks) B/12/6/3. An account dated 19th October 1759 to Sir Francis Dashwood, Bart, for £5.0.1½d. for stucco work to the Temple of the Winds from Wm. Parker.
- 17 Harris, op. cit., p. 441. Also, Jackson-Stops loc. cit., p. 1621.

NOTES TO PAGES 111–14

- 1 Published in *Architectural History*, vol. 27, 1984, pp. 163–82.
- 2 See her article in the *Georgian Group Journal* 1993, pp. 78–81.

- 3 See pl. 1a in my paper referred to above.
- 4 Ibid. p. 164.
- 5 ex. inf. *D.N.B.*
- 6 It may be worth recalling that the reasons for attributing the Somerset House design to Webb are set out in *The History of the King's Works*, vol. v, p. 256.
- 7 Gomme, art. cit, pl. 1b.
- 8 ib. p. 165.
- 9 Implied in a further contract of the same date with the mason Thomas Hayward, ib. p. 166.
- 10 p. 130.
- 11 art. cit., p. 169.
- 12 *Architectural History*, vol. 32, 1989, p. 89.
- 13 Quoted by Jackson-Stops, *Country Life*, 9 April 1987, p. 130
- 14 Badminton Drawings 3.8–11, three showing interior elevations and one the plan.
- 15 3.12.

- 16 12.15.
- 17 Badminton drawings 12.5–11.
- 18 See *The Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol. v. 3, 1988, pp. 88–95.

NOTES TO PAGES 115–18

- 1 C. Thacker, forthcoming *Enchanting Paths*.
- 2 Kenneth Woodbridge, *The Stourhead Landscape*, 1986 p. 60.
- 3 Alfred's tower has been carefully measured by Gordon Pickard who looks after it today for the National Trust. Its height is 160 ft, and each side, including the bastion, measures 56 ft. The wall width is 2 ft 9 in at the base. For comparison the Fonthill tower measures just under 100 ft on each side.
- 4 C. Thacker, *The Wildness Pleases: the Origins of Romanticism*, 1983 pp. 199 and 203.