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THE ANONYMOUS ARCHITECT OF THE INDIA HOUSE

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In an article published in *The Builder* on 15 September 1855, H. B. Hodson, Henry Holland's professional heir, alleged that the designer of the East India Company's London headquarters, had been Henry Holland (1745–1806).¹ For over half a century it had been assumed to have been the work of the Company's Surveyor, Richard Jupp (1728–1799).² According to Hodson:

... although Mr. Jupp was the recognised surveyor to the East-India Company, yet Mr. Holland was the architect or designer of the East-India House in 1799 and 1800 ...³

The limited participation of Holland, and of other architects, has already been recognised.⁴ Jupp was instructed by the Company to seek the assistance of James Wyatt, George Dance and Henry Holland, who submitted their own designs. So did Soane, whose advice Jupp (at some cost to his own dignity) had managed to persuade the Company he need not seek. However, the proposals which the Company accepted in September 1796 are attributed to Jupp, and within a year he had begun to supervise work on the new building. Jupp died on 17 April 1799, after which Henry Holland was elected Surveyor in his place.⁵

Examination of these architects' drawings, however, suggests that Hodson's claim was true, although only up to a point. Despite Jupp's efforts to take sole credit for the new India House, he may actually have acted more in the manner of surveyor than architect by surreptitiously contracting the design of the Leadenhall Street façade to Henry

Holland. The drawings also reveal, however, that Jupp designed the smaller Lime Street façade; that he supervised the building's construction from 1797 to 1799; and that he was largely responsible for the design of the building's new interiors.

In its early years the East India Company was strictly a commercial enterprise, importing and exporting goods from its factories in India.⁶ From 1765, however, when the Company took control of the administration of Bengal, it became increasingly dependent on land taxes.⁷ It thus evolved from a trading organisation to a territorial power in India, with an immense income, large and powerful military and naval forces, and millions of alien subjects.⁸ In 1793 its short-term future was secured by a charter which protected its trading monopoly for a further eighteen years.

The Company was administered by twenty four Directors, organised into three groups of committees. The most important were those which controlled the company's financial and political affairs. These were the Committees of Correspondence, Treasury, Law Suits and the Military Fund. Next in importance were those responsible for the Company's commercial activities. These included the Committees of Buying, Warehouses, Accounts and House. The third group of committees was primarily responsible for shipping, and included the Committees of Shipping, Private Trade and Government Troops & Stores.⁹ It was the Committee of House which was responsible for the building.

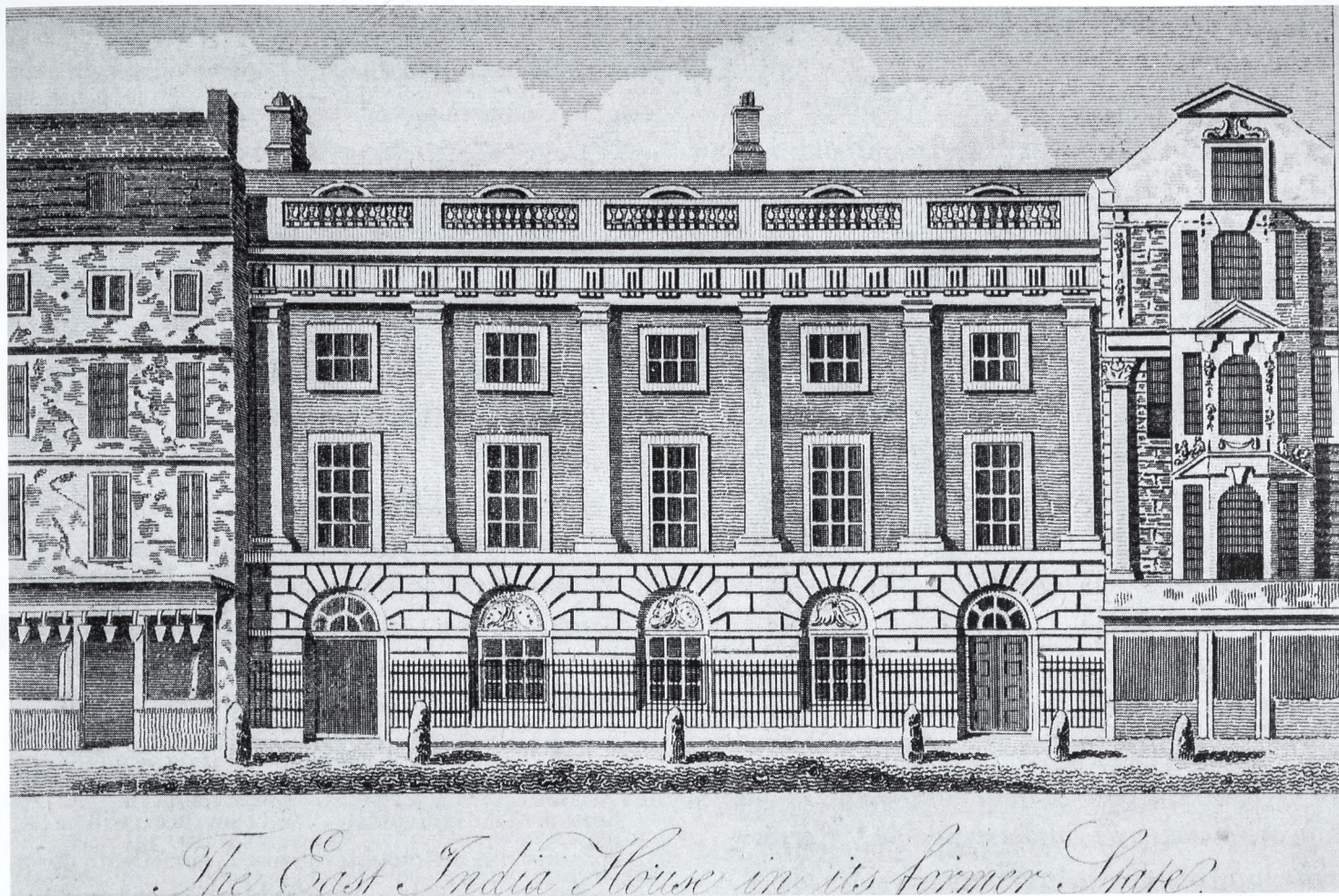


Figure 1. East India House, engraving of the elevation to Leadenhall Street designed by Theodore Jacobsen in 1726–29. *British Library.*

These committees were all housed in the India House, the Company's administrative headquarters and site for the auctions of its imports, which stood on a narrow plot on the south side of Leadenhall Street to the west side of Lime Street. The India House had once been the mansion of Sir William Craven, Lord Mayor of London in 1610,¹⁰ but had been rebuilt by Theodore Jacobsen¹¹ between 1726 and 1729 (Fig. 1). The principal façade was a version of the River Gallery in Old Somerset House, built in 1661–64, and believed to be a design by Inigo Jones.

In 1794, the Court of Directors decided to rebuild and enlarge the India House.¹² Their idea was to absorb all of the property to the east of Jacobsen's building up to Lime Street, to accommodate a new pay office fronting Leadenhall Street, with an additional entrance to the same from Lime

Street; a new library that was to be located over the pay office; a new sale room; new rooms for the respective Committees of Correspondence, Shipping and Warehouses; 'select' rooms for the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, as well as several private rooms for other members of the Court of Directors.¹³ Because three of the plots needed by the Company were owned by charitable organisations, such as Christ's Hospital, an application to Parliament was necessary. Equitable terms were apparently agreed upon with the trustees of the three properties, with the Company releasing enough ground to allow for the widening of Lime Street to 22 feet at its northern end.¹⁴ From 1794–97, the Company's lawyers acquired the various properties needed for the redevelopment.

At an open meeting of the Committee of House on 24 May 1796, Jupp laid before them:

... plans of the proposed buildings to be erected on the Ground adjoining to the India House and of the alterations proposed to be made in the India House.¹⁵

But the Committee evidently had some doubts about the abilities of their architect, although the Company had employed him for nearly 30 years. As a result, the Committee of House, having first gained the support of the Chairman of the Court of Directors, instructed Jupp to 'lay' his plans before George Dance, Jr., James Wyatt and Henry Holland.¹⁶

The Court's decision must have been a blow to Jupp; if the defining characteristic of the architect was to make designs, then the Company was effectively relegating him to the second-class role of surveyor. As both Architect and Surveyor to Guy's Hospital since 1759, and Surveyor to the Dyers' Company since 1768, Jupp's embarrassment in having to consult with his friends and fellow architects on what should have been the culminating commission of his career was understandable.¹⁷ Furthermore Jupp had grown in experience since his appointment as Surveyor to the Company 29 years earlier and had begun to perceive himself as a full-fledged architect; a perception bolstered, no doubt, by his election as an original member to the Architects' Club, established in 1791.¹⁸ According to the resolutions passed at the first meeting of the Club on 20 October 1791, it was resolved:

That no man be proposed to be elected a Member or an Honorary Member . . . unless he be an Academician or Associate of the Royal Academy in London, or has received the Academy's gold medal for Composition in Architecture, or be a Member of the Academies of Rome, Parma, Bologna, Florence or Paris.¹⁹

As Jupp had never become an Academician or Associate of the Royal Academy, he must have been a member of one of the French or Italian academies. He would thus have perceived himself as an equal, both socially and professionally, with architects such as Wyatt, Holland and Dance. He certainly had nothing to do with the Surveyors' Club, founded in 1792.²⁰

By 17 June 1796 word of the Company's decision may have leaked. On this day John Soane wrote a letter to George Dance,²¹ probably because Dance was Clerk of the City Works, in which he said:

If I had the dimensions of the present house and the extent of the ground I should be tempted to amuse myself; can you tell me how to get them without going to Leadenhall Street.²²

Dance, however, could evidently see that Soane's intentions were not limited to amusement and replied:

I know of but one rule that comprehends all moral duties, do as you would be done unto. Under the influence of this principle I cannot do what you desire, I feel that *I ought not* – in every thing that I can serve or oblige you wch [*sic*] does not interfere with the rule of right I shall always from real regard and friendship be eager to stand forward – in this case I wish from my soul you wou'd not add to the mortification of the individual . . . and I am sure it will be consider'd as invidious if you force yourself into this business – I am sure you will not conceive that any motives that relate in the smallest degree to myself actuate me in offering you this advice – at any rate let me not have any thing to do with it.²³

Curiously, both the Minutes of the Court of Directors and those of the Committee of House neglect to mention that Soane was also one of the architects with whom they wished Jupp to consult. The omission of Soane's name from the Committee's Minutes was at Jupp's insistence. This information comes from a letter sent by Soane to Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, on 31 March 1797, which he then had printed for private circulation.²⁴ According to Soane, the Committee of House had actually decided to instruct Jupp to 'apply to' Holland, Wyatt, Dance and Soane to make plans and estimates for the intended improvements at the India House. (Holland, Wyatt and Dance had actually gone so far as to present their respective plans to the Committee even before Soane had been notified). When Jupp was

given these instructions by Hugh Inglis, Chairman of the Court of Directors, he expressed no objection to the measure, provided Soane's name could be omitted from the official Minutes of the Committee of House. Jupp's request met with disapproval, but he felt strongly enough about it to approach each Director separately to request that Soane's name be struck from the Minutes.²⁵

In the expectation that he had thus angered Soane, Jupp requested a meeting with him at Soane's office in the Bank of England on 13 July 1796, where, as Soane recorded, he tried to explain his actions:

... I [Soane] asked him ... if he had objected to the others [Dance, Holland and Wyatt] as well as myself?

[Jupp] said, 'No: I objected only to you.'

And why only to me?

'Because you are a young Gentleman just come into the City, and are so active, you will exert yourself, and make the best plan; and I told the Directors it was for this reason only that I hoped they would not allow you to be applied to.'

And did you not think Messrs. DANCE, HOLLAND, and WYATT, would be equally desirous not to discredit themselves by plans unworthy of them?

'No, no, except yourself ... the others can do nothing in competition with you, it is you only I am afraid of.'²⁶

So afraid was Jupp that, during this meeting, he also told Soane that it would 'kill him' if Soane were to prepare plans for the India House. Soane also observed that, while addressing him, Jupp 'sobbed, he cried incessantly [*sic*] and seem'd much agitated.'²⁷

Jupp felt threatened by Soane, more than by Dance, Holland or Wyatt, because of their difference in age. In 1796, when Jupp was 68, Dance was 55, Holland was 51 and Wyatt was 50, Soane was a comparatively young 43. Not only was Soane acknowledged to have set an extremely high standard of professional conduct which all architects respected,²⁸ but he was the forebear of a new breed

of professional architect, with his own office and an insatiable ambition for new commissions. Jupp, by contrast, seemed to represent the old school. He had a small private practice, designing or remodeling only five country houses in the eighteen years from 1772–1790.²⁹ As such, he remained extremely dependent upon his long-standing surveyorships for his livelihood.

Soane was apparently unmoved by Jupp's words (that is, if he had not invented them). On the contrary, he felt insulted by Jupp's efforts to have his name removed from the list of architects to whom the Court of Directors wished Jupp to apply. He wrote to Dance on the day after the meeting:

... a more base and insidious attempt was never before made to injure the reputation of a man whom he [Jupp] professes to respect, and who never injured him.³⁰

He continued to feel this injury when he wrote to Earl Spencer 8½ months later; the letter of 31 March 1797 continues:

All I request is, that in justification of my character, Mr. JUPP should declare his motives for objecting to me, and to me only, and to hope his motives may be inserted in your Minutes.³¹

But his real motives may have been generally known, for in January 1797 he was accused by the other members of the Architects' Club of undermining Jupp at the India House, and by October had been pressured into resigning his membership.³²

Soane, however, had powerful friends in the Company. These included the Chairman, Hugh Inglis, to whom he appealed on 19 July 1796, and Jacob Bosanquet, a Director who was to rise to the position of Deputy Chairman in 1797 and Chairman in 1798, whom he approached on the following day.³³ Though Soane neglected to record the outcome of these two meetings, he did proceed to make a number of drawings in July 1796 (Fig. 2), though he apparently refrained from presenting them to the Court of Directors. He wrote:

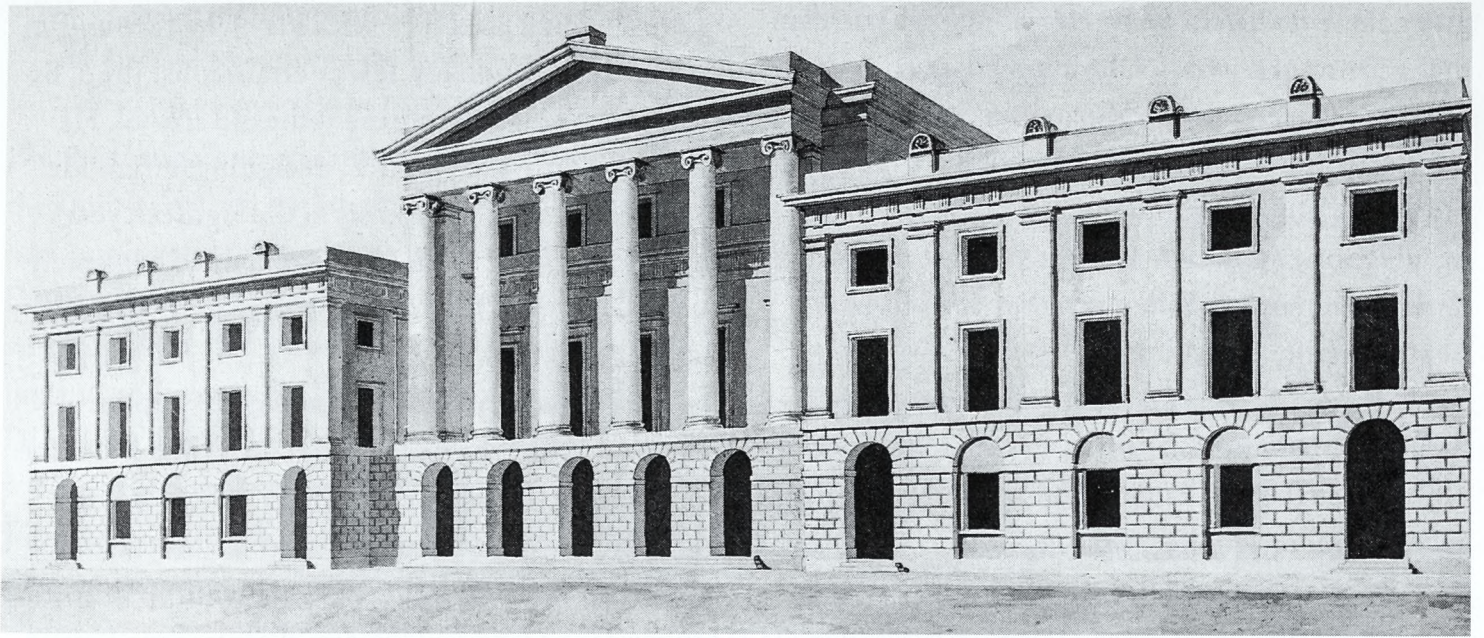


Figure 2. John Soane, East India House, proposed elevation to Leadenhall Street, 1796. *Sir John Soane's Museum.*

... instead of an entire rebuilding, at an expense of about *fifty* thousand pounds, I should only have submitted to the Court of Directors an elevation retaining the character of the Palladian front of the old building, with a corresponding wing, connected together by an appropriate portico in the centre.³⁴

Similarly, in the letter to Spencer in, Soane wrote:

Those gentlemen of taste and science, who have seen the designs I made for the ... façade of the India House, by retaining the *old* original front, and thereby saving an enormous sum for the Company, can best determine which has the fairest claim to public convenience, classical purity, and real magnificence – the plan I should have thought it my duty to recommend, not only on a principle of just economy, but on the authority of one of the most esteemed works of the ancient masters – or that which has since been executed.³⁵

And, indeed, the majority of Soane's signed and dated designs reveal that he proposed to keep the original façade of Jacobsen's building.

Dance and Holland also prepared designs, although none by Wyatt have been identified. The plan and elevation of a design for the main façade of the India House signed by George Dance and preserved in Sir John Soane's Museum (Fig. 3)³⁶ is noteworthy because there does not appear to be

any record of this drawing having been in the Dance Cabinet of Drawings; a cabinet that contained all of the architectural drawings in Dance's office at the time of his death. This cabinet was purchased from the architect's son, Sir Charles Dance, by Soane for £500 in 1836.³⁷ Since Dance's plan and elevation for the India House were not in the Cabinet, they must have been acquired by Soane sometime before Dance's death, presumably as part of Soane's campaign to clear his name.

Dance had designed the semi-Indian-style façade for the Guildhall in 1788–9. For the India House façade, however, he chose to work in the Palladian style. Like Holland and Soane, it appears that Dance intended to keep the carcass of Jacobsen's building and clad it with a different design. What made Dance's elevation different from the others, however, was his proposal for a total reorganization of the façade. He used a giant Corinthian order across the façade, treated in the centre as a projecting six column portico, and forming five bays surmounted by attics at the ends. As such, the design is similar to a recombination of the elements of Webb's Greenwich Palace.

But it is Holland's design for the India House which is particularly interesting, for it appears to

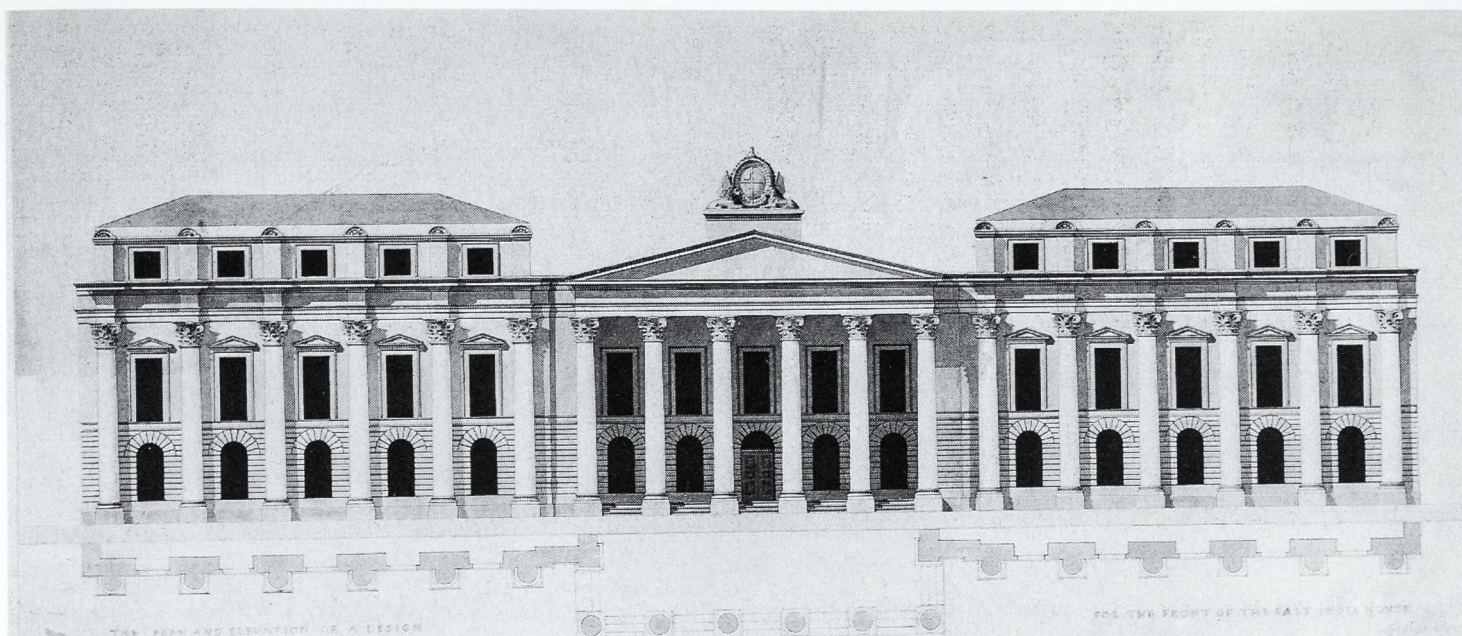


Figure 3. George Dance, Jr., East India House, proposed elevation to Leadenhall Street, 1796. *Sir John Soane's Museum.*

have been the basis for the design which was eventually executed (Fig. 4). It is unknown how Soane managed to acquire Holland's drawing, but it reveals that Holland had prepared a design for which he allowed Jupp to take the credit. This agreement would have been advantageous to them both. While Jupp would have been spared the embarrassment of losing the most important commission of his career, is it possible that Holland remained anonymous in return for a promise of succession to Jupp's position?

Meanwhile, Jupp wrote the following letter to the Court of Directors on 5 August 1796:

[The] confidence which my Honble Masters have honoured me with these *twenty nine years* gave me the pleasing assurance that I should have no Competitor in a building where an opportunity would be afforded me of exerting my abilities, and of gratifying my best feelings as a professional man: but in this hope I fear I am likely to be disappointed; except you Gentlemen are pleased to assist me with your friendship, and permit me now, in the *decline of my life* to enjoy that uninterrupted portion of your and the Honble Court's approbation, which has so long been bestowed upon me, and to be continued on the same footing with my Honble Masters as other Architects are with the public bodies by whom they are employed.

Permit me therefore Honble Sirs to mention in vindication of the present urgency of my Address to you, that there is scarcely any precedent where public bodies have resorted to the opinions of other Architects than their own . . . I have Honble Sirs faithfully served the Company these twenty nine years and have erected for them many public buildings, and neither my skill in the execution of them, nor my integrity in the application of their money have been ever called in question . . .

[In] the designs for the building which I shall have the honor of presenting to the Honble Court . . . I have not only exerted my utmost ability, but I have taken the judgment of those Architects of eminence whom I know are my friends, that I might give to the designs that simplicity and dignity which a building of that magnitude demands.

If after all I should fall under so weighty a disgrace as the Court's resorting to other Architects, the credit to which Honble Sirs you have raised me will be destroyed, and my character as an Artist inevitably lost. I need use no other arguments to awaken your sympathy, or to solicit your friendship.³⁸

Jupp's letter was read by the Court on 9 August. Their reaction was to refer it to the Committee of House, who were instructed to reach agreement upon a plan for rebuilding the India House,



Figure 4. Henry Holland, East India House, proposed elevation to Leadenhall Street, 1796. *Sir John Soane's Museum.*

... under the advice of Mr. Jupp the Company's Surveyor, and to report their Proceedings to the Court.³⁹

On 18 August Jupp appeared before the Committee of House and

... laid before them plans and Elevations for the building on the Ground contiguous to the India House....⁴⁰

On 22 September Jupp received the response he had been hoping for:

Mr. Jupp attended the Committee with the several designs he had prepared by their direction being Plans and Elevations for the proposed additional buildings to the East India House...

And the committee being perfectly satisfied with the Plans now laid before them by Mr. Jupp it was – Resolved unanimously that the order of this committee of the 24 May last for Mr. Jupp to lay plans before other architects be rescinded. And Mr. Jupp stating to the Committee that from the most exact calculations he could now make the whole expense of the additional Buildings would not exceed Forty Seven Thousand Pounds – Resolved that this information be reported to the Court with the Committee's recommendation that Mr. Jupp's Plans now approved be carried into execution.⁴¹

The similarities between Holland's design and the finished building (Fig. 5) are striking. Both have

façades approximately 190 feet long, of stone, with two wings (the western one being the site of the existing Jacobsen building) joined by a hexastyle Ionic portico supporting an entablature and narrative pediment crowned by three seated sculptural groups.⁴² In both, a balustrade runs along the top floor, while the ground and first floors each contain fifteen windows of the same pattern.

The differences between Holland's design and the executed building, by contrast, were small. In the executed building, the portico columns became fluted; the niches in the ground floor of the portico were replaced by windows; the balustrade over the central door was replaced by a pediment; and the western ground floor window was replaced by a door, which led into the Secretary's house.

Jupp, in his letter to the Court of Directors on 5 August, had downplayed Holland's role:

I have taken the judgment of those architects of eminence whom I know are my friends, that I might give to the designs that simplicity and dignity which a building of that magnitude demands.⁴³

Consistent with their initial instructions of 24 May, the Court Minutes maintained the fictitious story that Jupp had been instructed merely to 'lay plans before other architects.'

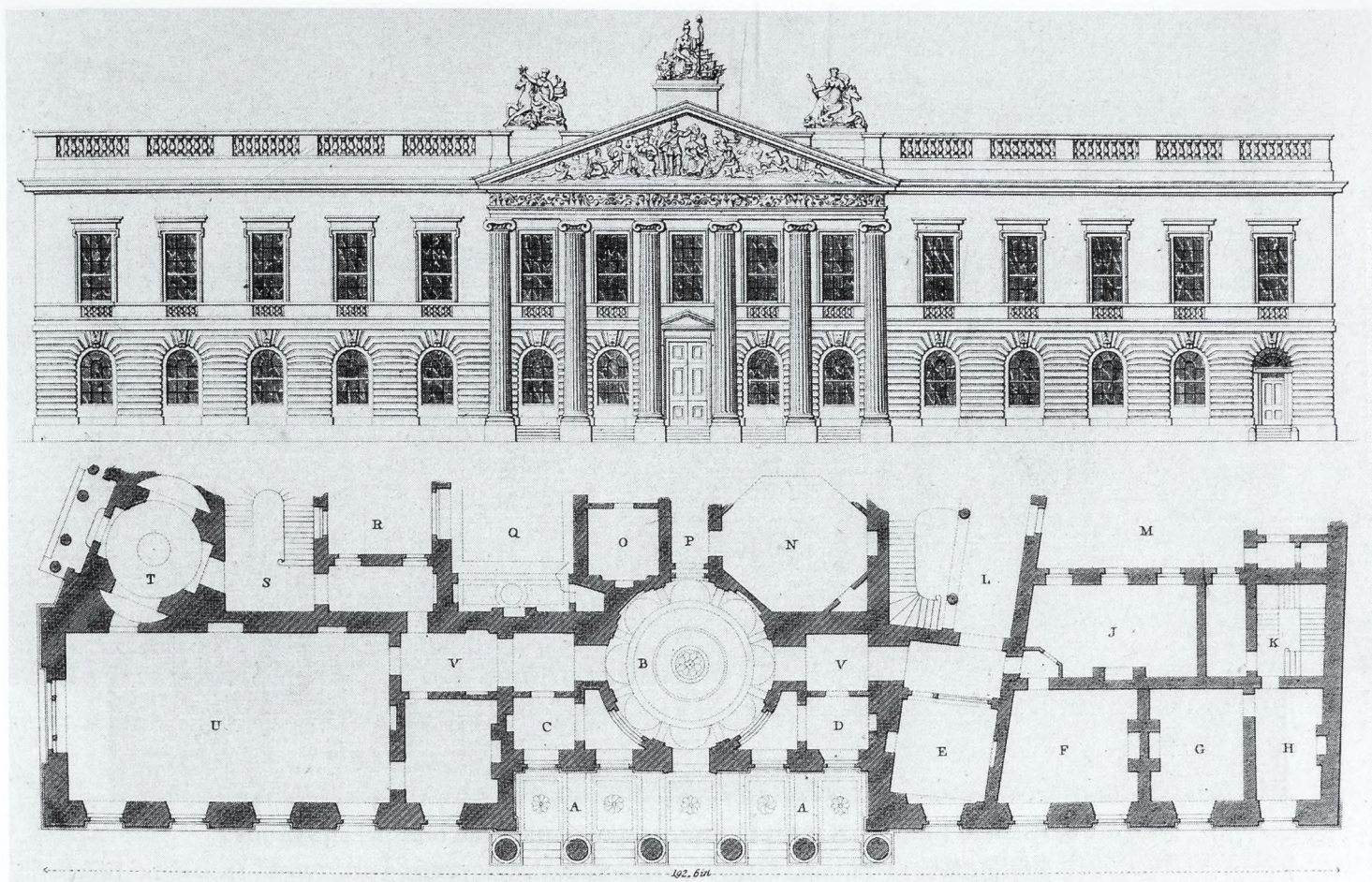


Figure 5. East India House, engraving of the executed elevation to Leadenhall Street, from *Britton and Pugin's Illustrations of the Public Buildings of London*, 1828.

The development of the plan, on the other hand, may have been Jupp's work alone. Although some 220 drawings for the interior are among Holland's papers,⁴⁴ the majority were demonstrably produced by Jupp between 1796 and 17 April 1799. These are the drawings of which Hodson wrote:

... I have had in my possession for these last forty-eight years a collection of working and other drawings of the East-India House, plans, sections, and numerous details at large, which I obtained out of Mr. Henry Holland's office ... in the year 1807, when the establishment was broken up ...⁴⁵

One of them, the office and private room of Thomas Loggan, behind the portico, is initialled by Jupp (Fig. 6). Only three drawings are dated, and two of these dates fall within Jupp's surveyorship. One of these, dated 29 August 1797, is a plan for the New Sale Room, and thus establishes that this part of the

building was planned within Jupp's lifetime. The second is annotated 'Section of the Lime Street Front as settled by Mr. Jupp' from 31 August 1797. The annotation is in Holland's hand, but it indicates that the Lime Street front and the rooms behind it had been planned (and perhaps built) within Jupp's surveyorship.⁴⁶

The third dated drawing is on a pencil sketch for a trial-size plaster cast of an ornament for an unspecified room. It bears the date 15 July, 1800, while an almost identical sketch is dated November 20. These drawings therefore could not have been created by Jupp nor by his office, but were created under the direction of Holland. There are 22 of these nearly identical sketches for plaster ornaments, all of which are on the same type and size paper, seven of which are signed by Charles Middleton, an architect who appears to have worked in Holland's office.⁴⁶

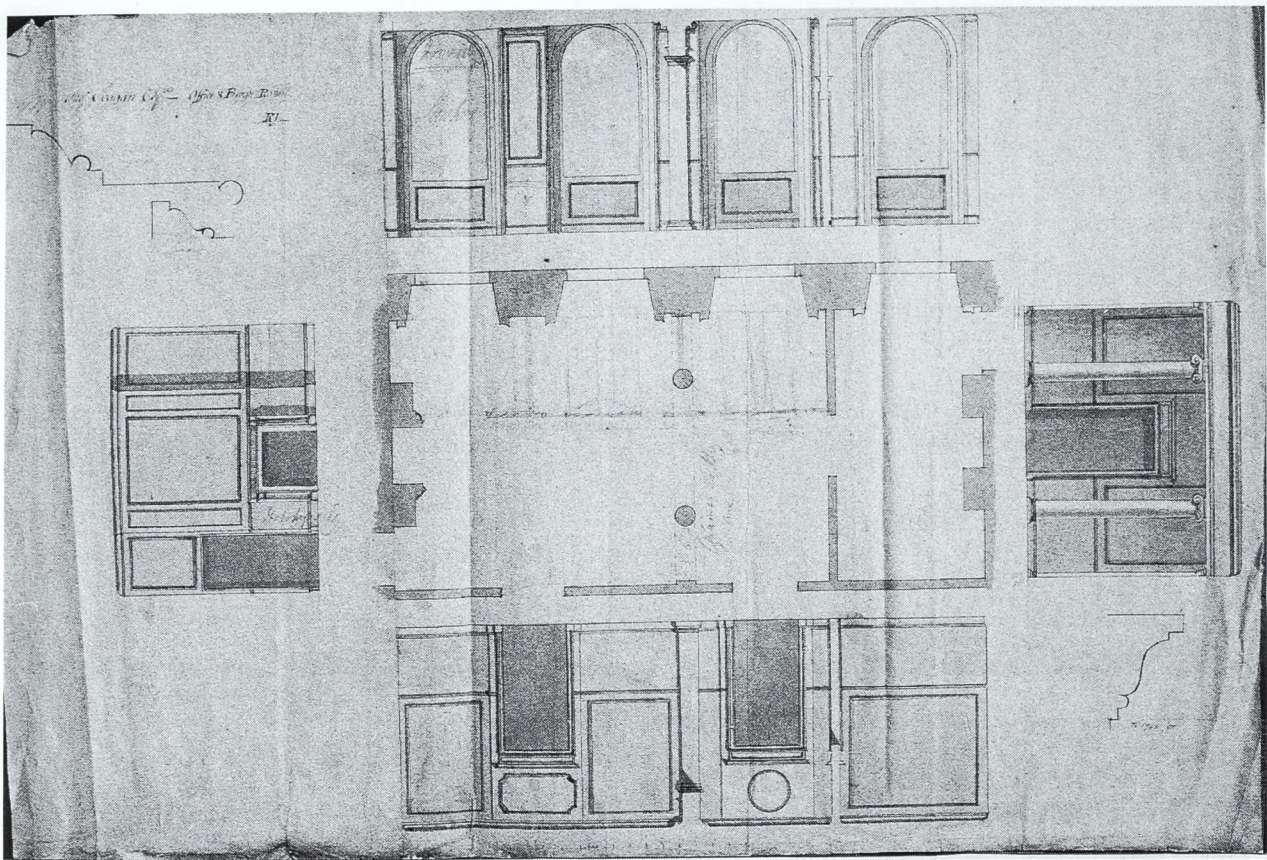


Figure 6. Richard Jupp, East India House, proposed plan and internal elevations of the office of Thomas Loggan. *Victoria and Albert Museum*.

Thus Jupp evidently prepared the bulk of drawings and Holland added others after succeeding Jupp as surveyor on 8 May 1799. It is also clear that the work designed by Jupp had not been completed by the time of his death and was still being carried out as late as 20 November 1800.

Remarkably, as late as 1798,⁴⁷ when the new building was well under construction, Soane continued to prepare designs for the India House, despite the fact that Jupp had been awarded the commission two years earlier.⁴⁸ It is likely that his personal appeal to a number of Directors gave him some hope that his designs might be considered. One of Soane's presentation drawings, dated 26 October 1798, shows how he intended to replicate Jacobsen's building in the east wing (though he added eight antefixes at the roofline above each of the Doric pilasters) and connect the two with a monumental hexastyle Ionic portico supporting a massive dome crowned by free-standing

statues (Fig. 7). The use of such a massive dome would have been impractical, however, as it would have involved rebuilding the entire interior to provide a suitably strong substructure.

But Soane's efforts paid off, for he was at least considered, along with Holland and S. P. Cockerell, as Surveyor to the Company after Jupp's death in April 1799. At the first ballot on 1 May 1799, Holland and Soane both received ten votes, while Cockerell received three.⁴⁹ Another ballot was taken on 8 May, at which, according to Farington, 'Cockerell threw His interest into Holland's scale and Dundass [*sic*] exerted his utmost influence. The Balot [*sic*] then was Holland 15, – on which no other Candidate was proposed, that Number being a majority of the Court.'⁵⁰ Soane's rejected designs and the defeat of his attempt to become the Company's Surveyor may account for his touchy recollection of 'the India House' at his next professional encounter with Henry

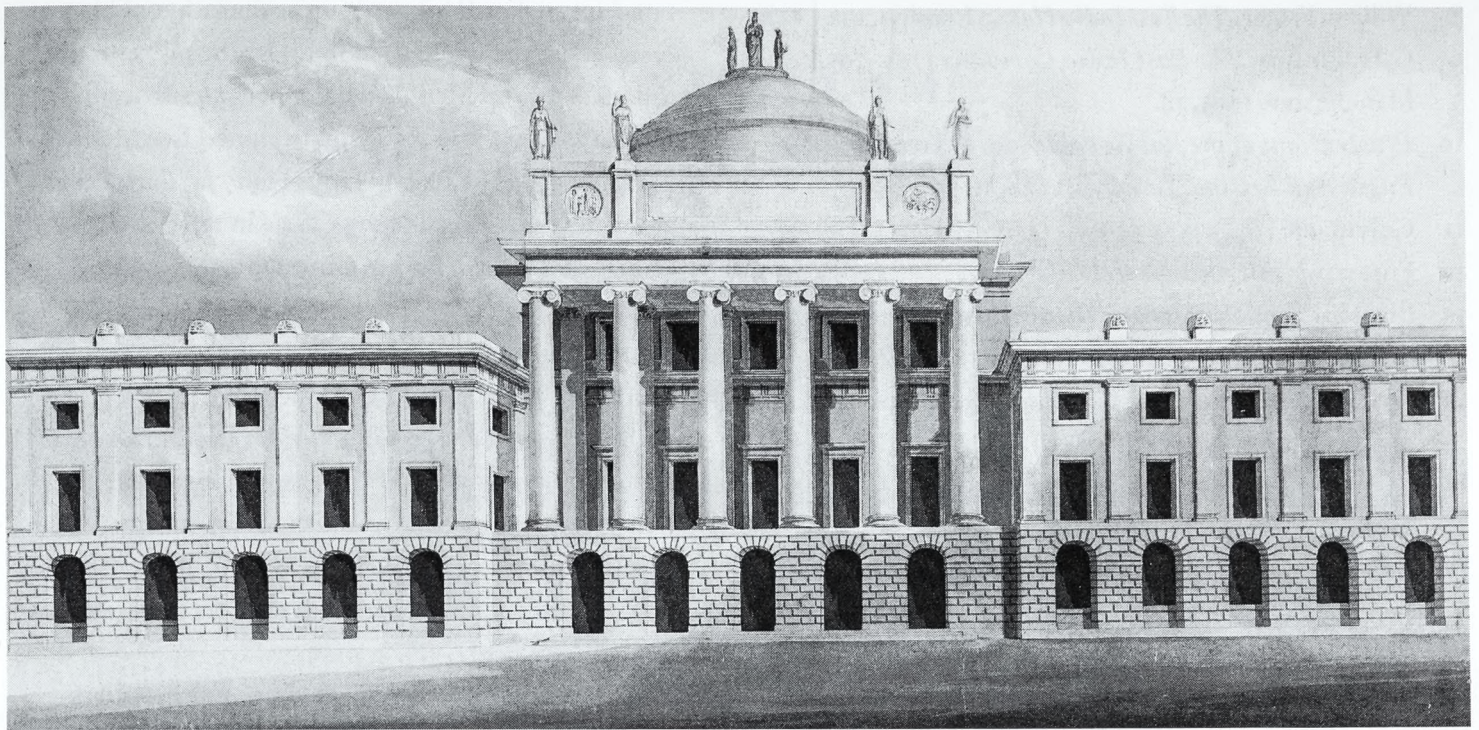


Figure 7. John Soane, East India House, alternative proposal for the Leadenhall Street elevation, 26 October 1798. *Sir John Soane's Museum*.

Holland, at No. 11 Downing Street, in January 1801.⁵¹ He continued to feel injured as late as 1827, the date of the watermarked paper on which Soane had someone transcribe the Committee of House's Minutes relating to the India House.

The existence of Holland's drawing for the principal façade of the India House in Sir John Soane's Museum reveals that he was essentially the designer of the Leadenhall Street front. Holland allowed Jupp to take the credit for his work, which Jupp proceeded to do by exhibiting the design, very slightly altered, at the Royal Academy in 1798. On the other hand, other drawings suggest that Jupp had designed the interior of the India House and supervised its construction over the last three

years of his life. Holland is therefore revealed as the designer of the Leadenhall Street front, but Jupp as the designer of virtually all of the interior of the building, which was largely completed before his death on 17 April 1799.

I am indebted to John Newman at the Courtauld Institute of Art for his help and encouragement over the past year, and to Richard Hewlings for his editorial suggestions. Thanks are also given to Susan Palmer and the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum for allowing me access to and permission to quote from them and to reproduce the drawings illustrated in figs. 2, 3, 4, and 8. Fig 1. is reproduced by courtesy of the British Library; figs. 6 and 7 by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

NOTES

- 1 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, New Haven and London, 1995, 501.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 566.
- 3 H. B. Hodson, 'Holland the Architect,' *The Builder*, XIII, 1855, 437.

- 4 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 567.

- 5 *Idem.*

- 6 Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, New York, 1994, 122.

- 7 *Idem.*

- 8 William Foster, *The East India House*, London, 1924, 137.
- 9 C.H. Philips, *The East India Company 1784–1834*, Manchester, 1961, 12.
- 10 *Illustrations of the Public Buildings of London . . . by Pugin and Britton*, London, 1838, II, 35.
- 11 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 533.
- 12 Foster, *op. cit.*, 136.
- 13 Sir John Soane's Museum [henceforward referred to as Soane], Private Correspondence III–J–12–31.
- 14 Foster, *op. cit.*, 138–39. These arrangements were sanctioned by Act 36 of Geo. III, cap. 119 (May 1796).
- 15 Soane, III–J–12–31.
- 16 *Idem.*
- 17 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 566–67. Jupp's previous commissions were much less in the public eye. He had designed the west wing and remodeled the principal façade of Guy's Hospital; designed Dyers' Hall in Dowgate Hill and Pains Hill House near Cobham, Surrey; remodeled Wilton Park, near Beaconsfield, Bucks; designed Lee Manor House in Kent; and, for the East India Company, designed the Bengal Warehouse in New Street, the warehouses between Houndsditch and Middlesex Streets, and other warehouses on the south side of Crutched Friars.
- 18 Arthur T. Bolton (ed.), *The Portrait of Sir John Soane, R.A.*, London, 1927, 67. The members of the Architects' Club, in addition to Jupp, included James Wyatt, George Dance, Henry Holland, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, William Chambers, Robert Adam, Robert Mylne, James Lewis, Richard Norris, John Soane, John Yenn, Thomas Hardwick, Robert Brettingham, James Paine, John Carr, Nicholas Revett, Thomas Sandby and James Gandon.
- 19 Frank Jenkins, *Architect and Patron*, London, 1961, 113.
- 20 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 39.
- 21 Bolton, *op. cit.*, 65.
- 22 Soane, Private Correspondence III–J–12–2. The designs created by Soane for his 'amusement' are preserved in the Soane Museum, 61/6.
- 23 *Ibid.*, III–J–12–3.
- 24 *Ibid.*, III–J–12.
- 25 *Idem.*
- 26 *Idem.*
- 27 *Idem.*
- 28 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 905. Soane was ' . . . outspoken in condemnation of what he regarded as unprofessional conduct . . . [and] his position as the father of his profession was recognized [in 1835] by the presentation to him of a Gold Medal on behalf of 350 subscribers.'
- 29 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 566–67. Jupp designed Lee Manor House in 1772; Pains Hill House in 1774; Park Farm Place in 1778; Severndroog Castle in 1784; and remodeled Wilton Park around 1790.
- 30 Bolton, *op. cit.*, 66.
- 31 Soane, Private Correspondence III–J–12.
- 32 Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (eds.), *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1979, III, 759, 914. According to Farington, on January 28, 1797 Soane was accused of endeavouring to undermine Jupp at the India House and 'a vote was proposed at the Architects Club to expel underminers.'
- 33 Soane, *Note Books*, vol. 3, p. 45.
- 34 John Soane, *Memoirs of the Professional Life of an Architect*, London, 1835, 26.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 36 Soane, 13/6/2.
- 37 John Summerson, *A New Description of Sir John Soane's Museum*, London, 1991, 75.
- 38 India Office Records [henceforward referred to as IOR], E/1/95.
- 39 IOR, B/123.
- 40 Soane, Private Correspondence III–J–12–31.
- 41 *Idem.*
- 42 The present writer was unable to find any precedent for the seated sculptural groups in London buildings prior to 1796.
- 43 IOR, E/1/95, p. 60.
- 44 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, A.175–76.
- 45 Hodson, *op. cit.*, 437.
- 46 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 652.
- 47 Two of Soane's designs for the India House are dated October 26, 1798 and October 29, 1798. [Soane, 13/6/8 and 13/6/9].
- 48 IOR, B/123.
- 49 Farington, *op. cit.*, 1271.
- 50 *Idem.*
- 51 Richard Hewlings, '11 Downing Street: John Soane's Work for John Eliot (1797–1805),' *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, xxxix, 1995, 58.

JOHN HALLAM: 'A POOR MEAN COUNTRY JOINER'?

ALICE DUGDALE

John Hallam attained a position of responsibility in the Office of Works under the administration of Sir Thomas Hewett.¹ Yet his importance is difficult to assess. On the one hand Vanbrugh dismissed him as 'a poor mean Country Joyner', and described him in terms which suggest that he was Hewett's personal servant.² On the other hand he was responsible for some accomplished and unusual designs for a 'Bath Summer-House' for Sir George Savile of Rufford Abbey, Nottinghamshire, which was built in 1729.

It seems possible that he *was* a joiner. A John Hallam, if not him, perhaps a relative, was employed as a joiner at Chatsworth in 1691.³ Hallam was employed in a subordinate capacity on the 'Greek tempietto'⁴ which Sir Thomas Hewett was building on his own estate at Shireoaks, Nottinghamshire, at the time of his death in 1726; Lady Hewett wrote to Hewett's heir Andrew Thornhaugh, 'I desire you will be so good to paye Mr Hallam & Peter Calten their notes off as soon as you please'.⁵ His responsibility may have been for joinery.

It is also true that Hewett preferred his neighbours. Westby Gill of Carr-holme, Rotherham, just over the border into Yorkshire, was appointed by Hewett to be Deputy Surveyor in place of Colen Campbell, a post which he held until 1735, when he was promoted to Master Carpenter in place of William Kent, a post which he held until his death in 1746.⁶ John Hallam, whose surname suggests that he came from south Yorkshire, may also have been a neighbour.⁷ His only known jobs outside

Hewett's aegis were at Rufford and at Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire, not far from the Yorkshire border.⁸ He was in any case a protégé of Hewett, who employed him to measure the tradesmen's work on the library which Hewett built for the Earl of Sunderland's house in Piccadilly in 1719–20.⁹

In 1719 Sunderland was First Lord of the Treasury.¹⁰ Hewett was appointed Surveyor-General on 24 August; Hallam was appointed Secretary to the Board and Clerk of the Works at Whitehall, Westminster and St James's in September.¹¹ In neither capacity did he design or execute joinery; his responsibilities were for surveying, estimating and examining bills. For example on 19 July 1721 it was 'Ordered. That the Colonnade in St James's Court be examined by Mr Hallam'.¹² The following summer Hallam was asked to estimate repairs at St. James's for the Great Stairs and the lodgings of the Duchess of Kendal and Count de Lips.¹³

The most considerable project he was concerned with at St James's was the scheme 'relating to accommodation to be made at St James's for a Library for His Majesty. An Estimate to be made by Mr Hallam' on 7 November 1722.¹⁴ There was already a small library, over the kitchen in the south-east corner of the palace. The new library was created out of two rooms on the ground floor of the south side of the palace facing the garden. The cost was £451.¹⁵

On 5 June 1723, he was given the invidious task of examining and assessing the bills of Sir James Thornhill, Serjeant Painter, for works at St James's.¹⁶ Thornhill had been asked to appear before the

Board of Works two years previously, but failed to appear. Hallam must have acted promptly and satisfactorily, for Sir James was paid on 11 June.

From the second half of 1723 Sir Thomas Hewett attended Board Meetings less often, instead allowing his Deputy Westby Gill to take his place.¹⁷ At much the same date Hallam's name appears less regularly in the Minutes. Hewett, ill and disillusioned with his position at Court, seems to have retired to his estate at Shireoaks.

On Hewett's death in 1726 Hallam was dismissed, allowing Hawksmoor to reclaim his position as Secretary. Rumours had been circulating as early as September 1725 that Hewett was dead, which led Vanbrugh to write that 'there can be no difficulty in sending him [Hallam] home again to his Wife, who keeps an Alehouse in Nottinghamshire. Besides he has lately been detected in notorious Crimes that wou'd remove him of Course'.¹⁸ There does not seem to be any evidence of notorious deeds, more likely the crimes were those of absence, working for his patron Thomas Hewett.

Despite Vanbrugh, Hallam acted independently as an architect for Sir George Savile, 7th Baronet, in 1729. Sir George inherited Rufford in 1704 and made further alterations to the garden, including the Broad Ride and the Wilderness woodland.¹⁹ His major architectural work was the Bath Summer-House, begun in 1728 and completed the following year.

The building of a bath house at this date was very much in vogue. Cold bathing was thought to be a cure for many problems. Sir John Floyer, MD, recommended it for 'palsies, convulsions, hypocondriacal and gouty pains, rickets, rheumatic pains',²⁰ and others swore by it as a cure for the 'blew devils'.²¹ Dr Cheyne suggested that those 'who can afford it, as regularly to have a Cold Bath at their House to wash their Bodies in, as a Bason to wash their hands; and, constantly, two or three times a Week, Summer and Winter, to go into it. And those that cannot

afford such conveniency, as often as they can, to go into a River or Living Pond, to wash their bodies'.²²

Sir George was not the only landowner in the area to have one. Other bath owners and users include Sir Godfrey Copley at Sprotborough and Viscount Molesworth at Edlington,²³ both in south Yorkshire. The best known surviving bath house of this date is that at Carshalton, referred to by its builder, Sir John Fellowes, as his 'Greenhouse and Bagnio'. This was built around 1719, with a fairly convincing attribution to Henry Joynes, yet another member of the Office of Works.²⁴

At Rufford, the cold bath is actually an open air canal, aligned east/west, flanked by stone paving and enclosed by a high brick wall, with an entry from the north. At the east end the bath terminates within the Summer-House, which it enters between the two central columns of a tetrastyle portico. The other (eastern) side of the Summer-House has a half octagonal plan, projecting into a circular pool with a fountain.

The bath was supplied via a sluice-regulated aqueduct from a reservoir called Blackwalk Pond. The latter had been formed by damming a stream called Rainworth Water, which also supplied the kitchen gardens and the 17th century Fountain Court to the east of the house. The water entered through a culvert at the west end and cascaded down a flight of steps at right angles to the main body of the bath. Directly opposite the steps remain the sluice and drain used for cleansing purposes. The water level in the bath appears to have been regulated by the fountain within the basin east of the Summer-House,²⁵ which was connected by a pipe from the narrow end of the cold bath. The present fountain was erected by the first Baron Savile around 1890.

The cold bath is 85 foot long and 12 foot wide along the majority of its length and constructed of Mansfield stone. Two thirds along, the bath curves in and narrows to about 6 foot wide. The base is paved and the walls are ashlar backed with a diaphragm of

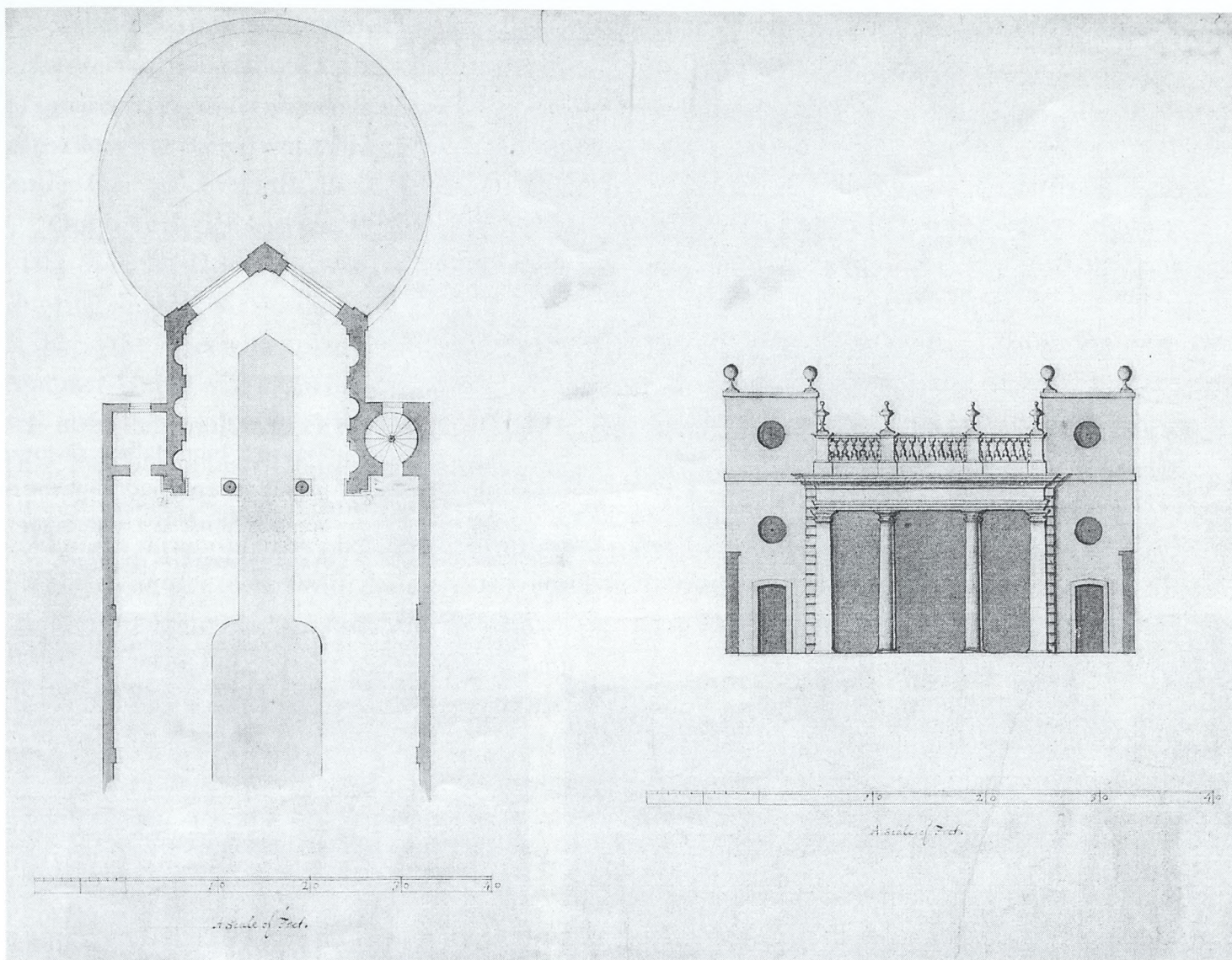


Figure 1. John Hallam, proposal drawing with a plan of east end of the cold bath and summer house and an elevation of the west side of the summer house, 1728. *Nottinghamshire Archives.*

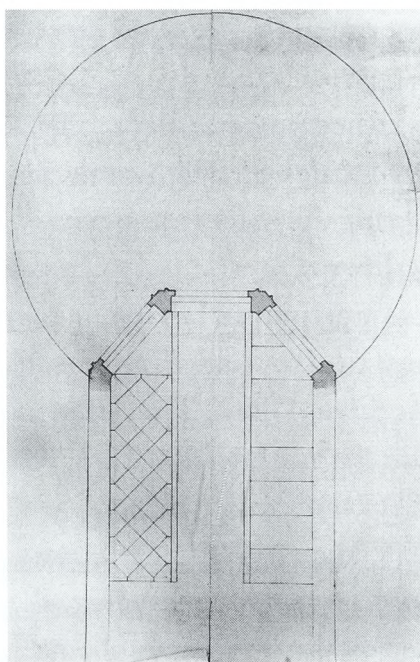


Figure 2. John Hallam, plan of the east end of the cold bath and summer house as built, 1728. *Nottinghamshire Archives.*

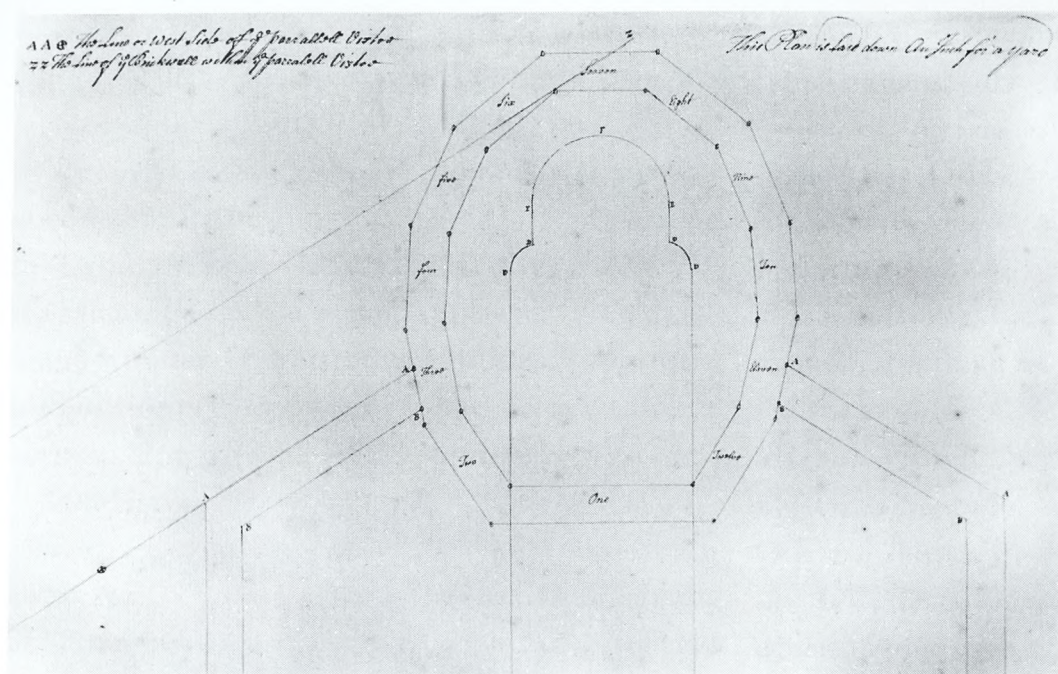


Figure 3. John Hallam, proposed plan of the cold bath showing the summer house as a dodecagon. *Nottinghamshire Archives.*



Figure 4. View of the west elevation of the summer house in 1996, after restoration. *Alice Dugdale.*

clay, making the whole structure water-tight. The depth is graded, from 2 foot at the pavilion end to 6 foot by the steps, allowing the bathers to swim as well as enjoy a quick dip.

The Summer-House is an unusual shape, whose evolution can be traced through drawings in the Nottinghamshire Archives Office. They illustrate a choice of plans for the eastern side of the Summer-House, a half hexagon with two large windows (Fig. 1), a half octagon with three windows (Fig. 2), an irregular figure, and a dodecagon (Fig. 3). Sir George finally settled on the octagonal scheme.

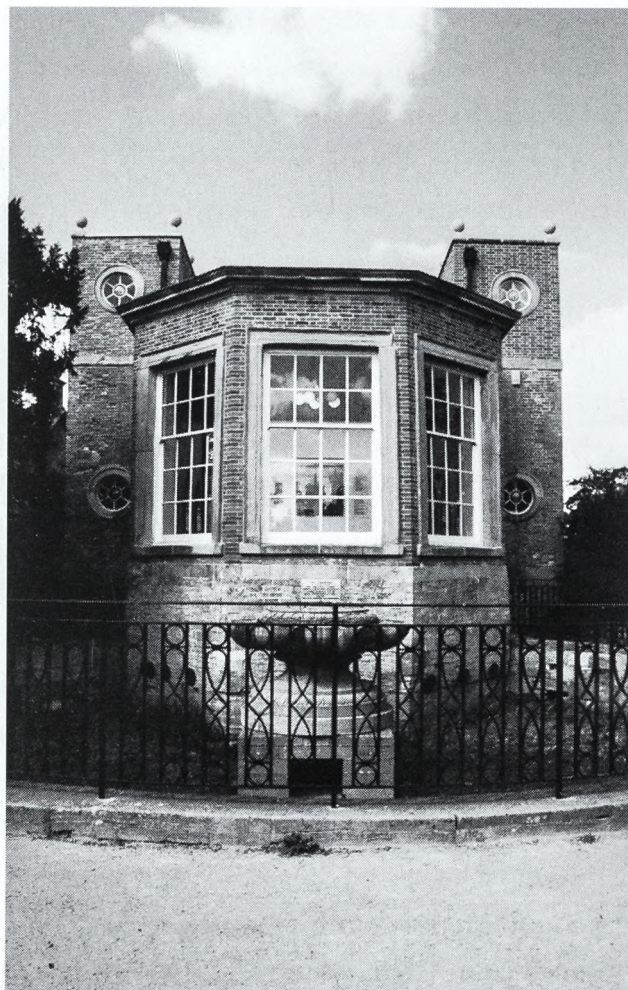


Figure 5. View of the east elevation of the summer house in 1996, showing the fountain added by Lord Savile, c.1890. *Alice Dugdale.*

Hallam also produced alternative paving designs; either rectangular slabs or a diagonal arrangement of squares²⁶ (Fig. 2). It is uncertain which was chosen as the floor was altered when the bath was transformed into an Orangery by the first Baron Savile in the 1890s.

Only one design survives for the west elevation of the Summer-House and that is a highly finished drawing showing the pavilion as it was built (Fig. 1). It shares the sheet with a plan showing the bath and Summer-House with a half hexagonal end, not as was ultimately built with a half octagonal one²⁷ (Fig. 2). The Summer-House is of red brick with stone dressings (Fig. 4). A central loggia with Doric columns is surmounted by a balustrade with urns. Single bay square towers with doorways at ground floor level and circular windows above are surmounted by ball finials at the angles. The tower to the south has a spiral staircase, which would have led onto a flat leaded roof. The ground floor of the north tower may have been used as a changing room or service area. The interior of the pavilion is articulated by three stone-lined niches on either side.

The drawings also include a design for the sash windows which overlook the circular basin²⁸ (Fig. 5). Beyond this lay an axial vista on a grand scale; a drawing suggests that the water ran from the basin via a 7 foot wide serpentine 'meander stream' or 'By-Water',²⁹ interspersed with miniature islands and bridges. This fed a tree-lined canal, now no more than a mutilated fragment in the form of a broken depression which runs for approximately 720 feet and appears to have been 40 foot wide. The garden layout was altered in 1750/1.³⁰

Hallam must have begun the designs in 1728, as the bath was already under construction the following January. On 23 and 24 January 1729 Mr Matthews, the steward, wrote to Sir George Savile that 'The violence of the Frost hath stur'd about 3 Cources of Stone at ye afterwork of ye Cold Bath'.³¹

The Summer-House, however, was not started until the following spring. In March 1729 Mr Matthews

reported, 'On Satterday I went to Mr Hallam & he went to Mansfield to Mr Birch Mason wch. after their Consultation agreed to begin work on the Bath Summer-House'.³²

There was deliberation as to the fashioning of the niches, whether they should be of brick or 'wrought stone'. 'Ye latter they say will be much Better'³³ though the difference in price would be 'Twenty Shillings ye most for each Neach'.³⁴ By 17 April the stone 'Neaches [were] Ready for ye Bath Summer House & John Bloydon is preparing wood work for ye Sashes'.³⁵ It was not until 26 April that the bad weather and heavy frosts abated and 'The weather now begins to favour building'.³⁶

By the end of May, Hallam reported that 'they goe on very well'³⁷ and that the lead should be ordered. By the beginning of July the 'Stairs and Sash Windows and ye Columns Polaster Capps will be finished'.³⁸ The final letter, that of 14 July, records that 'The Columns . . . are set & ye arkitrives layd on and we think ye Roof will be on this week'.³⁹

Work must have then slowed down, as the bill from Mr Birch the mason, dated 30 December 1729, states 'that the floor in the Bath Summer House not being yet paved nor the floor at the . . . foot, nor any Rail or Banister or Urns'.⁴⁰ The total for his work till that date was £98.15*d*.11*s*.

The more recent history of the Bath Summer-House is not so happy. In the late 19th century, the bath was covered over and converted into an Orangery by Lord Savile to house his collection of classical sculpture. After the sale of the Rufford estate to Nottinghamshire Council, it was somewhat neglected. The decay of the building has been speeded by coal mining subsidence. Finally, two years ago, the County Council decided to restore the structure, as long as the building could be made to serve a useful purpose.

A compromise was chosen. The bath has been partially uncovered though the larger part of it and the surrounding enclosure have been paved in a decorative tile and brick design. The Summer-

House loggia has been glazed to provide an exhibition space for sculpture, thus losing the essential relationship between bath and pavilion and what would have been a memorable reflection of architecture in water. The stone-lined niches have become glazed showcases with glass shelving. Ventilation is provided by Ventaxias in the centre of the circular windows.

John Hallam, however, is clearly shown as an architect. The letters reveal his supervisory role, and the drawings illustrate his architectural knowledge, his draughtsmanship and his precise surveying and engineering skills. When he next appears, at Renishaw Hall later in 1729, he was paid for advising on new windows, not for making them.⁴¹ So Vanbrugh may not have been entirely fair.

NOTES

- 1 Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, New Haven & London, 1995, 448
- 2 Geoffrey Webb (ed.), *The Complete Works of Sir John Vanbrugh*, IV (Letters), London, 1928, 169
- 3 Howard Colvin, *op. cit.*, 449
- 4 Howard Colvin, *op. cit.*, 492
- 5 Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Archives Office (henceforward NAO), Savile Foljambe Collection
- 6 London, Public Record Office, T.54/25, 350
- 7 Hallamshire is the historic name for the area in the southern part of Yorkshire surrounding Sheffield
- 8 Christopher Hussey, 'Renishaw Hall – Derbyshire', *Country Life*, LXXXIII, May 7th 1938, 478
- 9 F.H.W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London*, XXXII, London, 1963, 368; John Macky, *A Journey through England*, 3rd ed., London, 1723, I, 175
- 10 G.E.C., *The Complete Peerage*, XII (1), London, 1953, 487
- 11 H.M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, V, London, 1976, 470
- 12 'The Royal Palaces of Winchester, Whitehall, Kensington and St James's', *Wren Society*, VII, 1930, 221
- 13 *Idem.*
- 14 *Ibid.*, 222
- 15 H.M. Colvin, *op. cit.* 242,
- 16 *Wren Society*, *op. cit.* 222
- 17 *Idem.*
- 18 Webb, *op. cit.*, 170
- 19 NAO, DD SR 202/21, Estate map of c.1725; Nottinghamshire County Council, *Rufford, Abbey and Country House*, Nottingham, 1992, 21
- 20 Sir John Floyer, *The History of Cold Bathing*, 1709
- 21 L.M. Dickens & M. Stanton (ed.), *An Eighteenth Century Correspondence*, 1910, 111, Lord Dacre to Sanderson Miller, May 1745
- 22 George Cheyne, *An Essay on Health and Long Life*, London, 1724
- 23 Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, VIII, London, 1913, 237
- 24 A.E. Jones, *The Story of Carshalton House*, 1980, 48
- 25 NAO, DD SR 215/14/1
- 26 NAO, DDSR 202/3
- 27 NAO, XBM 8S
- 28 NAO, DDSR 202/15/4
- 29 NAO, DDSR 211/58/16
- 30 Nottinghamshire County Council, *op. cit.*, 22; also stone dated 1751 at head of culvert
- 31 NAO, DDSR 211/58, un-numbered
- 32 NAO, DDSR 211/14/4
- 33 NAO, DDSR 211/58/16
- 34 NAO, DDSR 211/58/15
- 35 NAO, DDSR 211/58/10
- 36 NAO, DDSR 211/58/9
- 37 NAO, DDSR 211/58/5
- 38 NAO, DDSR 211/58/3
- 39 NAO, DDSR 211/58/1
- 40 NAO, DDSR 215/53
- 41 Hussey, *op. cit.*