



THE  
GEORGIAN  
GROUP

---

Steven Brindle, 'Pembroke House, Whitehall',  
*The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. VIII, 1998,  
pp. 88–113

# PEMBROKE HOUSE, WHITEHALL

STEVEN BRINDLE

Pembroke House on Whitehall, the London home of the Earls of Pembroke in the eighteenth century, was destroyed in 1938 to make way for E. Vincent Harris's gigantic Ministry of Defence building. However, four major state-rooms from the house survive, reconstructed within Harris's building. Owing to their inaccessibility to the general public, these fine rooms are one of London's better-kept architectural secrets. Recently, new documentary evidence for various stages of this important house's history has come to light, all of which is interesting, some surprising, and in one particular overturns previously held beliefs. Had this knowledge been available in 1938, demolition would have been harder to justify.

This article will set out to show the following: Pembroke House as first built by Lord Herbert (the future 'Architect Earl').<sup>1</sup> and Colen Campbell was one of the earliest neo-Palladian villas in Britain, in style and plan a transposition of a rural building-form to an urban setting (Fig. 1). It was altered and expanded in complex building-campaigns by the Earl and Roger Morris of c.1730 and c. 1744. It was not pulled down by the 10th Earl of Pembroke, but merely remodelled by the builder Charles Evans in 1756–8, keeping the basic shell of Campbell's villa and much of Morris's work. In 1760, Sir William Chambers was called in to assist with the redecoration of the principal rooms, designing four ceilings, and in 1773 he added a Riding School over the river-side terrace. In 1800–1 a general refurbishment of the house was carried out by James Wyatt, at that time being employed by the 11th Earl at Wilton

House. In 1914, after the decision to build government offices on the site was taken, it was proposed to retain the fine rooms from Pembroke House in the new building, a notably early instance of 'period rooms' being valued as a whole. The rooms' survival in Ministry of Defence Main Building is historically interesting in itself. They embody not only

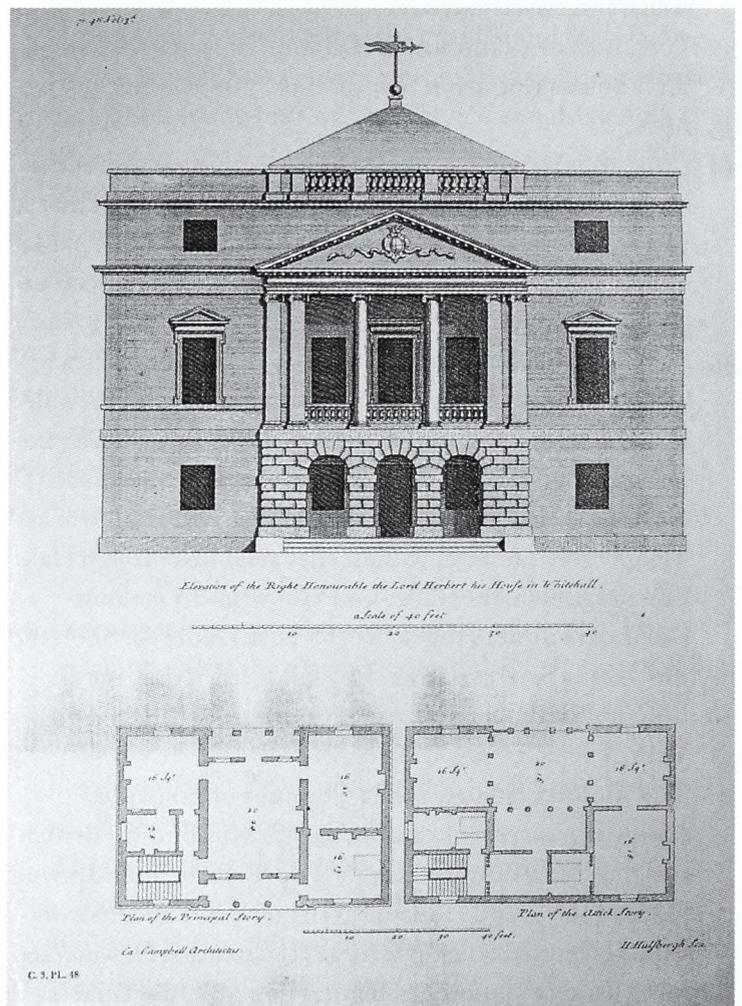


Figure 1. The plan and elevation of Colen Campbell's design for Pembroke House, dated 1724, from volume III of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (London, 1725).

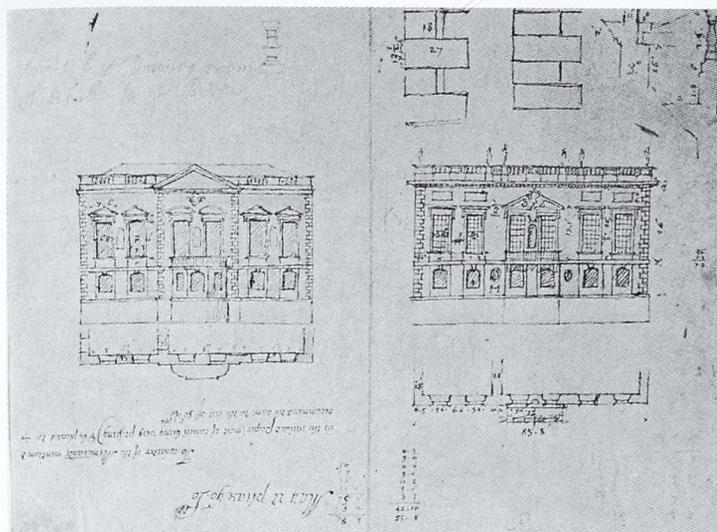


Figure 2. Sir Christopher Wren's sketch designs for the facade of the Queen's Apartment, Whitehall Palace, of 1688, *Survey of London*, XIII, plate 6.

three important ceilings designed by Chambers, but also what is probably work by Morris, hitherto unrecognised. It has in the past been believed that what was demolished in 1938 was the work of Chambers. It can now be shown that it was basically a work by Campbell.

The site of Pembroke House was at the heart of Whitehall Palace; it was directly on the site of the Queen's Apartment, the six-bay block built by Wren in 1688–90, which appears prominently in the middle of Leonard Knyff's view of c. 1695<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2). The great river terrace in front was added, also for Queen Mary II, in 1691.<sup>3</sup> The building was burnt out in the great 1698 fire; and much of the shell was evidently still standing when Lord Herbert leased the site.<sup>4</sup> As the prospects for a general rebuilding of the palace receded, so privileged individuals began to take building leases in the site of the palace. In March 1716 Henry, Lord Herbert, eldest son of the 8th Earl of Pembroke, applied for a 31-year lease of:

a peice of Wast Ground lying within the precincts of the pallace of Whitehall . . . almost covered with heaps of rubbish part of the Ruines of the said Pallace . . .<sup>5</sup>

The plot abutted to the south-west on a passage leading from the former Privy Garden to the river, and to the north on more ruins of the palace; it was

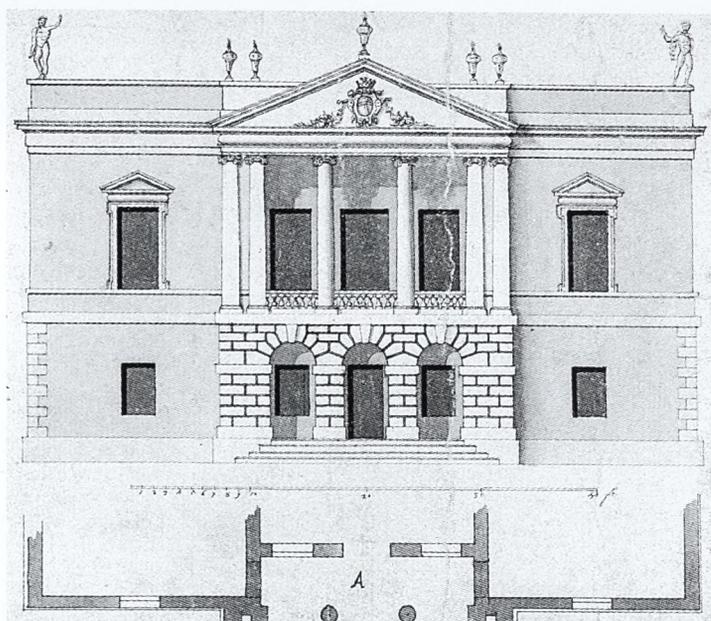


Figure 3. Elevation for the Whitehall facade of Pembroke House, without top storey, signed by Roger Morris. *Wiltshire County Record Office*.

127 feet long on its south-east side, 120 feet on its north-west, and 78 feet wide.<sup>6</sup> To the east was the great Terrace, but this remained Crown property for the moment; Lord Herbert's plot does not seem to have had a river frontage.

The lease was issued on 20 June 1717, and Lord Herbert evidently made the ruins habitable; the rate-books first list him as a resident of Privy Gardens in 1719 (the rate was set on 18 June).<sup>7</sup> Rate-books are a normally reliable source, denoting occupation of premises, not ownership of empty sites. The date is of some significance; if the house illustrated in *Vitruvius Britannicus*<sup>8</sup> really dates from 1717 this would seem to make it the earliest neo-Palladian villa in England, excepting only the work of Jones and Webb<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 1).

However, Campbell himself gives the date 'Anno 1724' under the short paragraph about the house in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, where he claims the house's authorship for himself.<sup>10</sup> A drawing for the house, signed by Campbell and dated 1723, has been noted in the Treasury Library.<sup>11</sup> A small drawing in the Pembroke Papers shows a variation of the facade (lacking the attic storey), signed by Roger Morris; this is suggestive in as much as Morris's

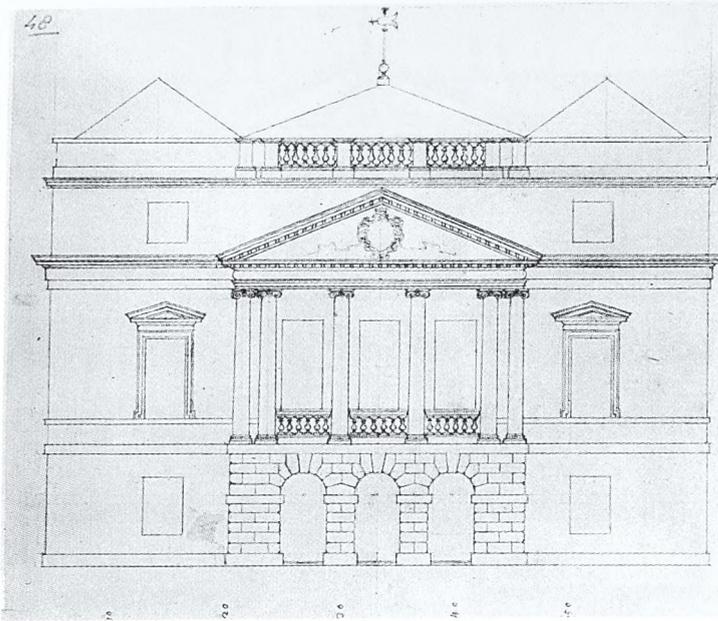


Figure 4. Elevation for the Whitehall facade of Pembroke House, unsigned and undated, but attributable to Roger Morris by the style of the scale. *Sir John Soane's Museum*.

association with the 'Architect Earl' is not known to antedate 1725<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 3). An undated drawing in the Soane Museum, of very high quality, shows the Whitehall elevation of the house very much as it appears in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, with a slight difference in the roofline; this drawing has a very distinctive scale drawn beneath it, which Richard Hewlings considers to be characteristic of Roger Morris's work<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 4).

Most mysterious is a drawing by William Dickinson, signed W. D., dated 24 August 1723<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 5). This is unlabelled, but shows two half-elevations compared side by side. One is almost identical to that of Pembroke House (it shows an octagonal lantern on top instead of a pyramidal roof); the other is for a comparatively old-fashioned building of lower proportions, with a hipped roof and a central Doric portico. This latter design is similar to another drawing by Dickinson, dated 2 September 1723.<sup>15</sup> Dickinson's drawing can perhaps be considered first. Sir Howard Colvin has suggested that this represents Dickinson's and Campbell's rival designs for Pembroke House,<sup>16</sup> but it is hard to interpret two such unequal designs as alternatives for the same building. It is yet harder to imagine a

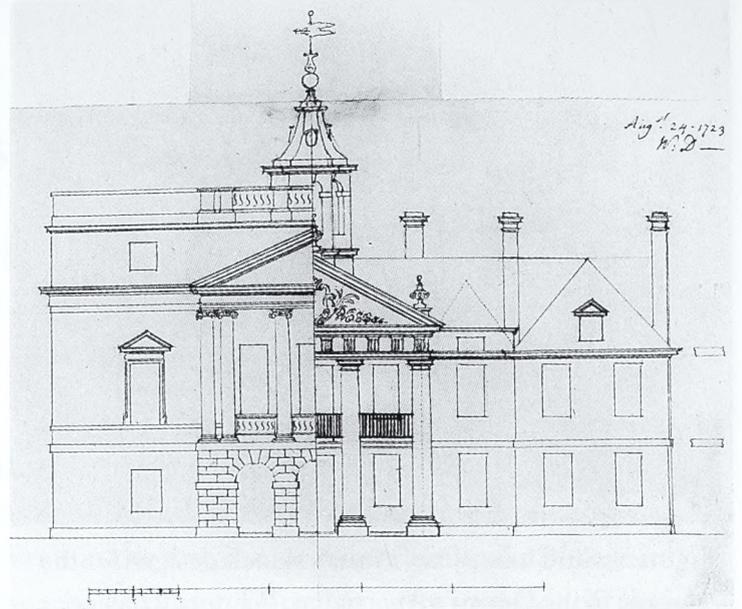


Figure 5. The elevation of Pembroke House, compared to the elevation of an unknown building of late seventeenth century style, by William Dickinson. *Sir John Soane's Museum*.

man of Lord Herbert's interests seriously contemplating building something so outdated as the hipped-roofed house shown here. Another explanation seems to be needed, though it is not obvious what this might be. A drawing contrasting the work of Pratt and May's generation, with that of the new Palladian generation?

Even if we can set Dickinson's puzzling drawing to one side, we are left with the flat contradiction between the rate-books and the designs. The history of the site might help to explain this. What Lord Herbert acquired in 1717 was not an empty site. In 1737 he made a submission to the Treasury, relating to a dispute between him and his then neighbour the Countess of Portland (discussed below). Lord Herbert stated that:

... what was in my first lease called Ruins and Rubbish, is now in my second called Messuage or Tenement, Yards, Mounds, Walls, Terrasses & cetera., because these very Ruins and Rubbish, soon after being granted to me, were repaired by me, and consequently must bear a different discription . . .<sup>17</sup>

A major element of the 'rubbish' was the front wall of the Queen's Apartment, Wren's six-bay building

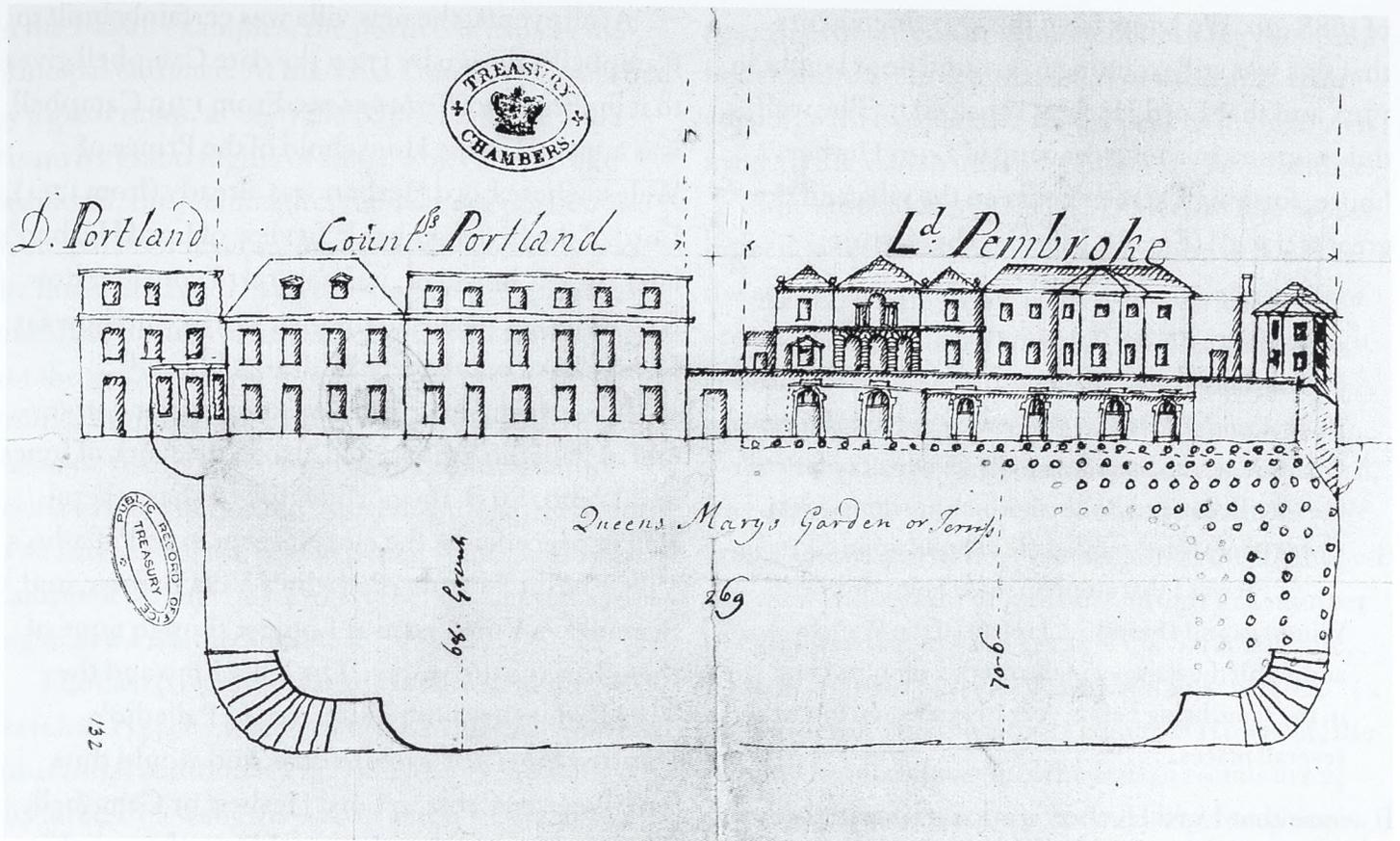


Figure 6. Pembroke House in 1737, a sketch accompanying documents relating to a dispute between Lord Pembroke and the Countess of Portland. *Public Record Office.*

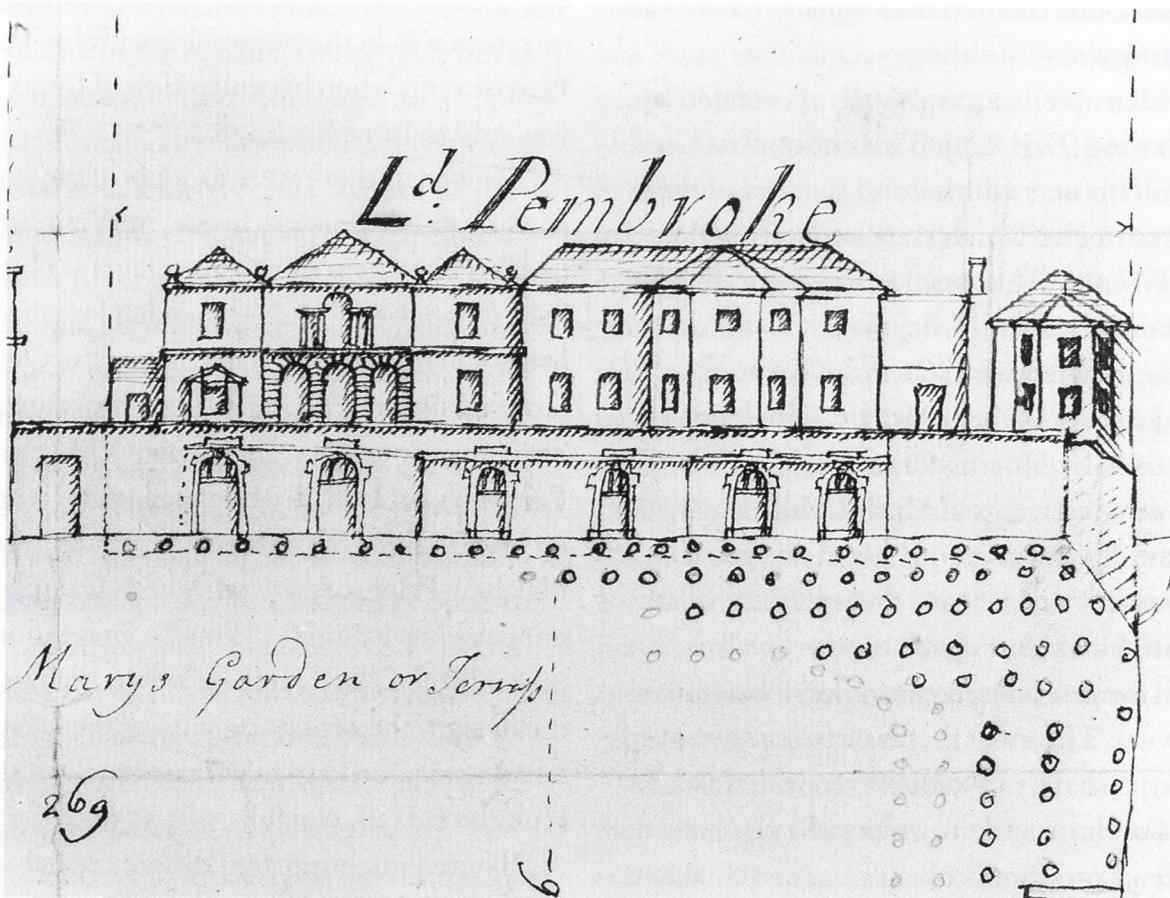


Figure 7. Pembroke House in 1737; detail of figure 6.

of 1688–90. We know from the 1737 documents that this was still standing to ground floor height in 1717, and that Lord Herbert repaired it. The wall duly appears in a 1737 drawing of Lord Herbert's house, forming a screen between the villa and the great terrace<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 6). Lord Herbert wrote:

The wall of my Terrass next Queen Mary's Garden was not a single wall, but had several other walls joyning into it, which together, at the bottom formed Rooms, and the Rooms above were the Apartments of Queen Mary, so that these walls together composed the very Ruins and Rubbish which are the express words of my lease granted me to build upon . . .

. . . It was I that stopt up these holes (formerly Windows and Doors) . . . I repaired the Wall, by adding all the Parapet in the first six months I had it, the same being before very irregular and low in severall places . . .<sup>19</sup>

It seems that Lord Herbert's appearance in the rate-books as early as 1719 refers to his repair of the ruins of the Queen's Apartment. It is unlikely that this could have formed anything more than a temporary solution, and Lord Herbert may already have been contemplating a new building.

The next problem is graphically illustrated by the 1737 drawing (Figs 6, 7). This shows that Lord Herbert built his new villa behind the wall of the Queen's Apartment, which screened it from the river. The Wren wall has been enhanced with what look like Diocletian windows; it is not clear whether these should be ascribed to Campbell or to the Earl's later architect, Roger Morris. Diocletian windows were used by Morris, for instance in his design for the unexecuted wings at Marble Hill House, Twickenham.<sup>20</sup> However, it is not at all clear why Lord Herbert wanted to leave the wall there at all, suffering it to block the superb river views from his house (and, for that matter, the views of his house from the river). The most that we can say by way of explanation, is that by 1737 the Wren wall was a property boundary, and the object of a vigorous dispute between Lord Pembroke (as he then was) and the Countess of Portland, outlined below.

At all events, the new villa was certainly built to Campbell's design by 1724, the date Campbell gives to it in *Vitruvius Britannicus*. From 1719 Campbell was attached to the Household of the Prince of Wales, where Lord Herbert was already (from 1714), Lord of the Bedchamber.<sup>21</sup> In view of Lord Herbert's later career, however, it is natural to consider how far the design relates to his own works, and how far he may have influenced the design himself.

The design incorporates features found in several of Palladio's villas, and also in the work of Jones and Webb. First, the portico *in antis* has several Italian precedents; the closest seem to be Palladio's Villa Emo at Fanzolo, Palladio's Villa Badoer, and Scamozzi's Villa Pisani at Lonigo, though none of these has an attic storey. The Villa Emo and the Villa Badoer are both illustrated in Palladio's *Quattro Libri dell'architettura*, and would thus have been available to Lord Herbert or Campbell; it is not clear whether they could have known the Villa Pisani.<sup>22</sup> The design is also close to a drawing by Inigo Jones, probably an unexecuted design for the Queen's House, Greenwich.<sup>23</sup> The drawing in question was in the possession of John Talman until 1720 or 1721, when his collection of Jones' drawings was sold to Lord Burlington.<sup>24</sup>

However, there were models of the portico *in antis* much closer to home, in Webb's use of a portico *in antis* at upper floor level at Gunnersbury Park (1658–63),<sup>25</sup> and, somewhat less directly, in Jones's loggia on the park-front of the Queen's House (1630–5).<sup>26</sup> Similar first-floor porticos *in antis* appear on Campbell's own Ebberston Lodge, Yorkshire, of 1718,<sup>27</sup> and on an unexecuted design by James Gibbs for Down Hall, Essex, a house for Matthew Prior, of c.1720 (though Campbell may not have known this).<sup>28</sup> Finally, in relation to the possibility of Lord Herbert's own involvement in the design, the central portion of the facade bears a strong similarity to his Water Pavilion at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, of c. 1730.<sup>29</sup>

There is an important difference between the Italian and the English uses of the portico *in antis*.

In the Italian examples, the portico is usually the principal entrance. At the Villa Emo it is approached by a great ramp, at the Villa Badoer and the Villa Pisani by grand flights of steps. For Palladio and Scamozzi, the justification for having a portico at principal floor level seems to have been that it was the main entrance. In all the English designs just cited, the portico is a destination and a viewpoint, not the principal entrance, which is in the ‘rustic’ ground floor below. This is a more decorative and cosmetic use of the ‘temple front’ than Palladio seems to have permitted himself, and may be seen as an instance of the way in which Jones, and later Campbell (or maybe Lord Herbert), adapted and anglicised Palladio’s idioms.

The east (riverside) facade is shown in the sketch of 1737, by which time it had already received substantial additions (Fig. 7). The ground floor is obscured by a wall (the wall of Wren’s Queen’s Apartment, referred to above). The middle three bays of the villa were slightly recessed; on the first floor there is a loggia of three rusticated arches. On the top floor there is what looks like a conventional Venetian window in the middle, though it is not at all clear how this would have fitted into the very low storey height indicated by Campbell’s elevation of the entrance facade. The riverside facade has decorative ball-finials, though these do not appear on any of the views of the entrance facade.

The principal floor and attic plans of Pembroke House were published in *Vitruvius Britannicus*. (Fig. 1) The middle of the first floor is spanned by a saloon, 20 feet by 24, opening into the portico *in antis* on the Whitehall side, and the loggia on the river side. We do not have the ground floor plan, though it seems likely that there may have been an equivalent room there too. This feature, a central room spanning the depth of the building, was unusual in English terms, but there was a near-precedent in James Gibbs’s Sudbrook Park, Petersham, for the Duke of Argyll (1715–19).<sup>30</sup> The feature seems likely to derive from the *androne* of a Venetian villa or palace.<sup>31</sup> To the east were two

rooms, probably an apartment of drawing room and bedchamber. The staircase was in the south-west corner, with two smaller rooms next to it; their plan makes it difficult to interpret either as a bedchamber.

The attic floor was also given over to fine rooms; indeed, one of the mysteries of this house is where the servants could have slept, given that it does not seem to have had a basement. The attic plan is highly individual and interesting. With remarkable prodigality, over half its area is given to a great T-shaped gallery. The central section, 20 foot by 16, was divided by screens of columns from the three arms. The origin of the plan may lie in the T-shaped or cruciform saloon or *androne*, found in a number of Palladian villas, such as the Villa Saracena, the Villa Barbaro at Maser, or the Villa Foscari (‘La Malcontenta’) on the Brenta Canal.<sup>32</sup> However, the parallel is not a close one; the Italian rooms are at principal floor level, and represent the reception-space, as well as the essential circulation space. The Pembroke House gallery, at the top of the house, was hardly a circulation space. In *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Campbell says that ‘the Gallery of the last Story is most magnificently finished, and gives one of the best prospects of the Thames’,<sup>33</sup> yet the elevation suggests that it must have been very low-proportioned. It is reminiscent of the top-floor galleries at Campbell’s Newby Park, or at Lord Herbert’s and Roger Morris’s Marble Hill, though the Pembroke House gallery looks rather more lavishly planned. The rest of the attic floor was taken up by two oddly-planned bedchambers, both of which seem to have had bed-alcoves. Another curious point is the symmetry between two screens of columns, one at the top of the stairs, the other across one bed alcove. On the plan this looks intentional, yet they would surely not have been seen together; nor could these positions have been regarded as equivalent.

Lord Herbert’s villa is a puzzle. First, it was a free-standing villa, an expressly rural building-type, translated to the middle of London. The English and Italian precedents cited above were designed

for rural, or in a couple of cases suburban, settings. Lord Herbert, a Whig descended from a leading Parliamentarian,<sup>34</sup> thus built a rural villa directly on the ruins of the chief metropolitan palace of the House of Stuart, parts of which he deliberately left standing, an act which seems to give a new twist to the expression *rus in urbe*. Of course, it is impossible to say how far this decision represented a conscious 'statement' of any kind.

The house's saloon and the gallery look, in plan, like rooms of parade, until one notes their fairly modest dimensions; this was hardly a house in which to entertain a great company. The one element of the plan that seems capable of clear interpretation is the first floor, where one can discern a suite of saloon, withdrawing room and bedchamber. Otherwise the plan is very hard to understand functionally. The villa never seems to have had a basement, probably explained by its proximity to the river. There was no secondary or service staircase. The centre of the ground floor seems likely to have been taken up by the hall.

It is very hard to see where, in this compact house, the kitchens, offices, or servants' quarters could have been. The answer seems to be that from the outset Lord Herbert repaired elements of the Whitehall Palace ruins to provide a kitchen, offices, servants' quarters and stables. This is rather what his own account, quoted above, suggests. Unfortunately we have no other evidence to go on; the earliest surviving plans of the site show only the new villa in outline. Nevertheless, if Lord Herbert had already provided himself with domestic offices at the outset, this would have enabled him to take an altogether more abstract approach to planning his little villa. There may be a parallel here with Lord Burlington's work at Chiswick, where the existence of the Jacobean house freed him from the necessity of providing domestic offices and everyday accommodation in his new villa. In 1717 Lord Herbert was around 28 and unmarried; Pembroke House is perhaps best understood as a young man's *jeu d'esprit*.

It is perhaps not surprising that, before long, Lord Herbert felt obliged to add to his house. In 1729 he asked for a fresh lease, in view of the money he had spent on the house, and further expenditure he had in mind. The surveyor, Phillips Gybbon, reported that

the Memorialist has at a great expence erected a very good house of 58' 4" in front & 36' 7" in Depth, but has inclosed a greater quantity of Ground than is included in his lease.<sup>35</sup>

Lord Herbert was given a new lease, including the additional space, on 30 February 1730, and he began work soon after.<sup>36</sup> In 1737, he referred to having a conversation with Lady Portland 'about eight years ago . . . when I waited on her, she then complaining of a Bow Window I then built upon my Ground'.<sup>37</sup> On 31 March 1731 Roger Morris received £50 on account 'towards building Outhouses at his House in Privy Garden by me'; in March 1732 Morris received a further £320 for works, and on 6 March 1732 £443 7s 6d 'by sundry bills given in'.<sup>38</sup>

The new work is shown in the 1737 sketch of the house (Fig 7); it was a wing, at least as big as the original villa, three storeys high with a big canted bay or bow window, followed by a narrower wing breaking forward with another canted bay. This large addition, presumed to be of 1729–31 and by Roger Morris, looks strangely indifferent to the original villa (at this time probably only six or seven years old). It was, indeed, in a completely different idiom, asymmetrical and relying for its effect on the canted bays. These had a short pedigree in England; probably the first example built was Talman's at Panton Hall, Lincolnshire of c. 1720.<sup>39</sup> Campbell is known to have retained a Tudor canted bay in his remodelling of Compton Place, Eastbourne, in 1726–7,<sup>40</sup> while Morris designed canted bays at Whitton Place, Middlesex, almost simultaneously, c. 1732.<sup>41</sup>

In 1733, Lord Herbert married, and shortly afterwards succeeded as 9th Earl of Pembroke.<sup>42</sup> By 1737, Lord Pembroke (as we should now call him) was engaged in a highly acrimonious dispute

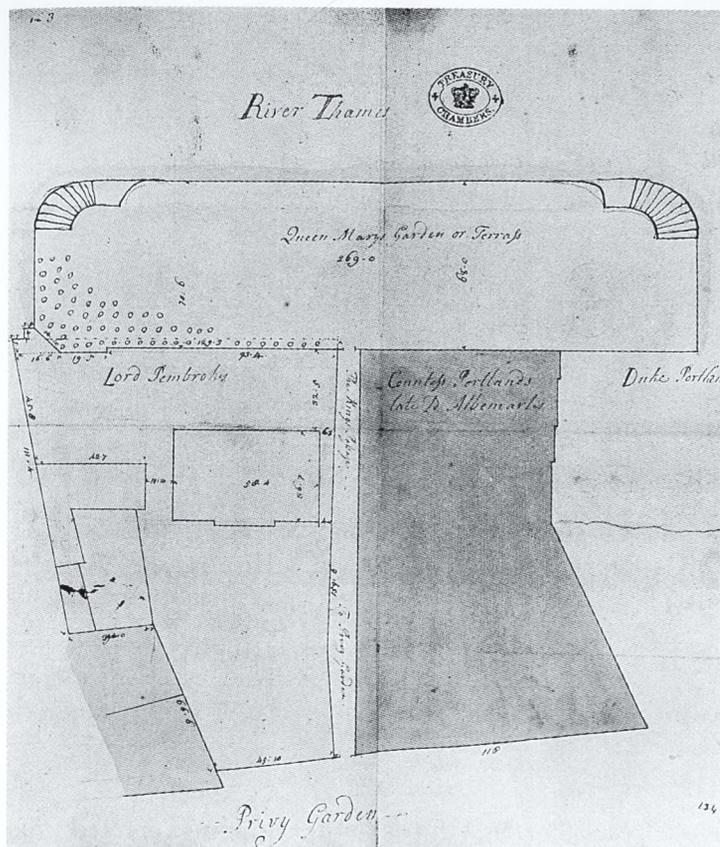


Figure 8. Plan of Pembroke House and its neighbour 1737, accompanying documents relating to the dispute between Lord Pembroke and the Countess of Portland, *Public Record Office*.

with his neighbour, the Dowager Countess of Portland, over the adjacent river terrace. In 1717 the terrace was unenclosed Crown property. In 1737 Lord Pembroke claimed he would not have been so 'unreasonable and invidious to the Neighbours' as to ask for it as part of his site.<sup>43</sup> Lady Portland, occupant of the next house to the south, did not feel any such restraint; she asked for and received a lease of the whole terrace in 1719.<sup>44</sup> This cut Lord Herbert (or Pembroke)'s house off from the water, and the front wall of the old Queen's Apartments became a disputed frontier between warring parties. Lady Portland planted trees on the terrace, taking Lord Pembroke's view.<sup>45</sup> Lord Pembroke's servants made a dung-heap on the terrace.<sup>46</sup> By 1737, both parties were remonstrating with Thomas Walker, the Surveyor General. In June 1737 Walker advised the Treasury that the dispute could only be resolved at law, 'all other methods seeming to me ineffectuall'.<sup>47</sup>

The case did go to court, for Horace Walpole said of Lord Pembroke that

in his lawsuit with my lady Portland he was scurrilously indecent, though to a woman.<sup>48</sup>

The present author has not found the records of the court case itself. However, the Treasury papers themselves contain very interesting material for the history of Pembroke House, some of which has already been referred to.<sup>49</sup> The evidence is not straightforward. For instance, the interesting drawing referred to is accompanied by a plan<sup>50</sup> (Fig 8.). Unfortunately, the plan appears directly to contradict the drawing, as it does not show the north wing of the house at all. The present author is unable to account for this contradiction.

Lord Pembroke may have still been building there in 1738–42; his account book records payments to Morris on 1 September 1738 of £392 19s 11d for unspecified work, and on 8 July 1742 of £113 15s 1d 'to pay all the Bills of my New Timber Building and other repairs in my house'.<sup>51</sup> Where Lady Portland was concerned, Lord Pembroke seems to have won his case, for in 1744 he was given a new lease, including the northern third of the river terrace; the plan accompanying the lease, dated 21 November 1744, is marked 'Part of Queen Mary's Terrace, now to be granted to the Earl of Pembroke'.<sup>52</sup> The 1744 plan also presents difficulties in that, like the 1737 plan, it only shows the Campbell villa; the north wing is not marked at all (Fig 9.).

The word 'stables' appears just to the NW of the house, though there is no indication of the shape of the building. In 1744 the surveyor found that, after the 1730 lease, Lord Herbert had again enclosed more land than he was entitled to, at the west end of his plot, on which he had erected a gateway.<sup>53</sup> The 1744 plan shows the gateway referred to, and it is shown in an engraving, a 'Perspective View of the Privy Garden' of 1741<sup>54</sup> (Fig. 10). This is not an archway, rather a pair of large and very handsome aedicular gate-piers, each with two heavily banded Doric columns framing a niche and supporting a

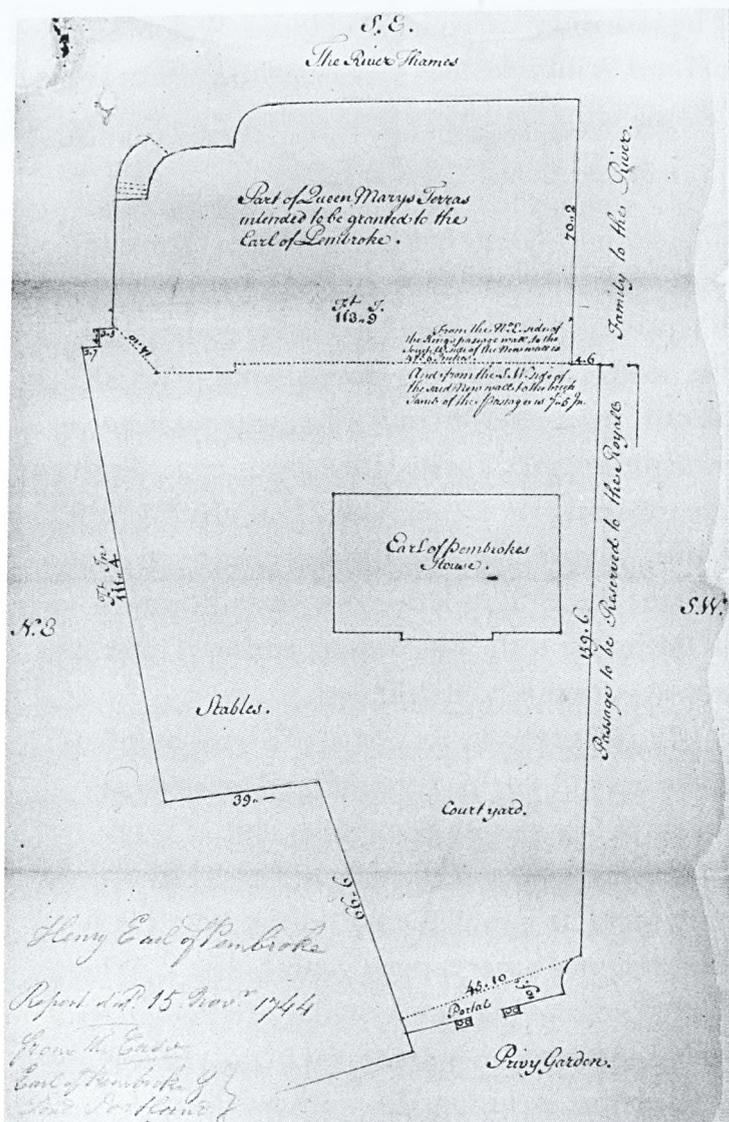


Figure 9. Lease-plan of Pembroke House dated 15 November 1744, *Public Record Office*.

pediment. They are almost identical to gate-piers known to have stood at the Earl's principal seat, Wilton House, an elevation of which was published by Campbell in *Vitruvius Britannicus*<sup>55</sup> (Fig. 11). The very interesting point about these (lost) gates at Wilton, is the strong possibility (probability, even), that they date from de Caux's and Webb's operations there in the 1650s.<sup>56</sup> Lord Pembroke seems to have copied this feature at Whitehall, between 1730 and 1741. The gate-piers are thus attributable to Roger Morris, or to the Earl himself.

The new lease, issued on 27 November 1744, referred to

All that piece or Parcell of Ground situate in or near the Palace of Whitehall with a House, Coach-Houses,

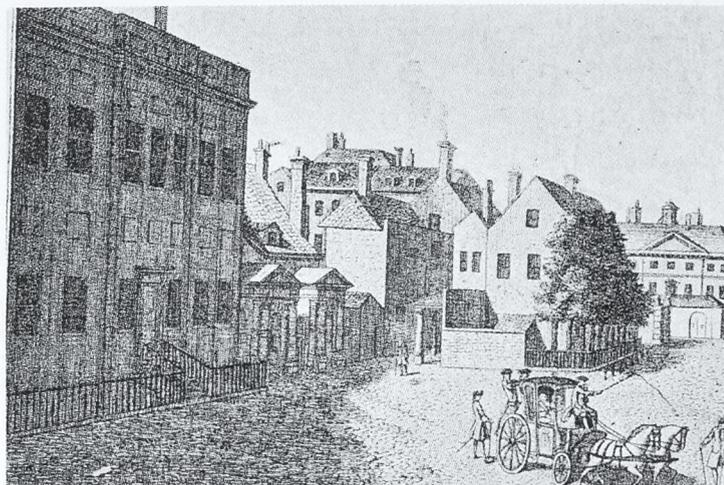


Figure 10. The gates to Pembroke House from the Privy Garden and Whitehall, 1741; detail from an engraving *A Perspective View of Privy Garden*, illustrated in the *Survey of London*, vol. XIII, pl. 8.

Stables, Portall, Offices & other Buildings erected and standing thereon . . .<sup>57</sup>

So there were other buildings there, even though they are not marked on the lease-plan. The new lease, in giving Lord Pembroke a share of the terrace, specifically debarred him from building anything on it over 14 feet in height.<sup>58</sup> The new lease seems to have been the cue for another campaign of work, for the next plan (of 1756) does show a north wing, different from that shown on the 1737 drawing in lacking the larger of the two canted bays<sup>59</sup> (Fig. 12). Otherwise, there is no direct evidence of his building activities in the 1740s.

The 9th Earl died suddenly at Pembroke House on 9 January 1750. Horace Walpole wrote

Mr Whithed has taken my Lord Pembroke's house at Whitehall, a glorious situation, but as madly built as my Lord himself was.<sup>60</sup>

One begins to see what Walpole meant. Lord Pembroke is one of the most celebrated architectural amateurs in English history, but the chaotic history of this, his own house, casts a rather strange light on his judgement. He took a superb site, but he began not by clearing the ruins, but by repairing them. He built a beautiful villa, but left a seventeenth century

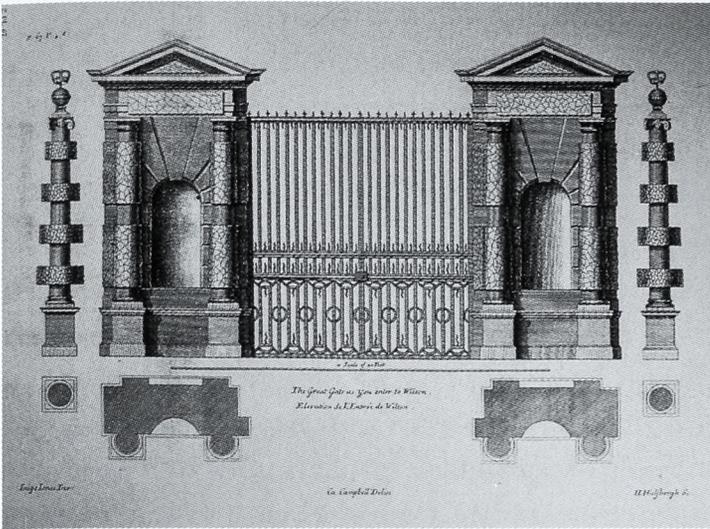
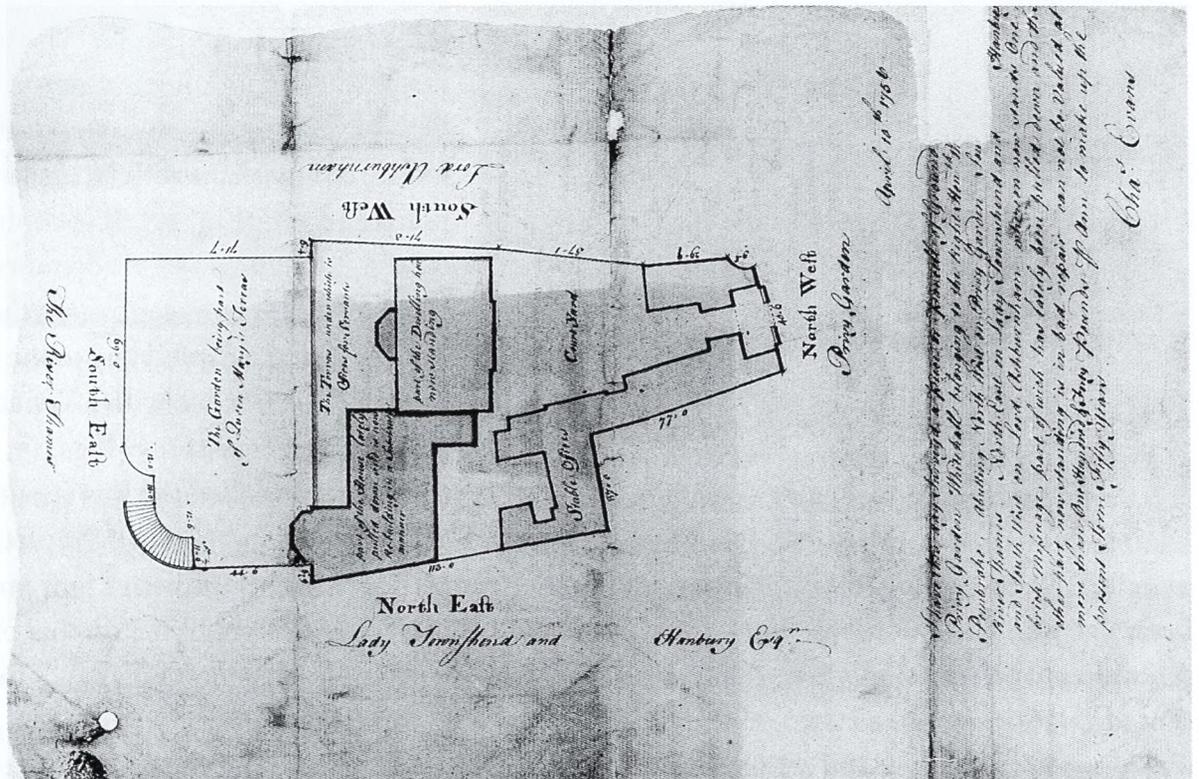


Figure 11. 'The Great Gate as You enter to Wilton', from *Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol. 11, pl. 67.



Figure 12. Lease-plan of Pembroke House signed by Charles Evans, dated 10 April 1756. Public Record Office.



wall standing, cutting it off from the river. The original villa, compact and built at 'great expence' looks more like a pleasance or place of entertainment than a functional residence, and before long he was making additions, marring its symmetry. The additions themselves seem to have been altered at least once. Even so, Lord Pembroke does not seem to have bequeathed his successor a satisfactory town-house, for the 10th Earl proceeded to remodel it again, at a reputed cost of £22,000.<sup>61</sup> Lord Pembroke's treatment of his own house smacks more of a restless *dilettante*

experimenting than of a practical approach to planning a house.

In 1751 the houses in Privy Gardens were valued and a rate set for the first time; Pembroke House was valued at £100 a year, making it one of the most valuable on the street.<sup>62</sup> From 1752–4, the house was let to the Earl of Buckinghamshire.<sup>63</sup> In 1754, its rateable value rose to £200, as part of a general uprating of the street.

When the 10th Earl succeeded his father in 1750, he was 16 years of age.<sup>64</sup> In 1755 or 1756 he would

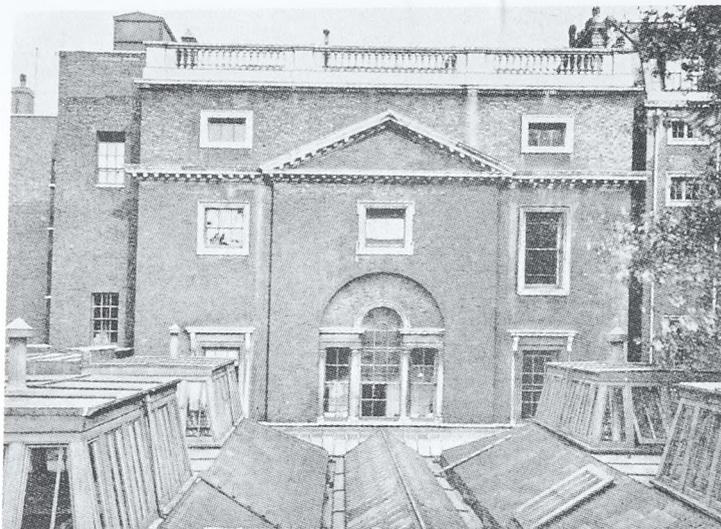


Figure 13. The west (entrance) of Pembroke House, c.1930. *Survey of London*.

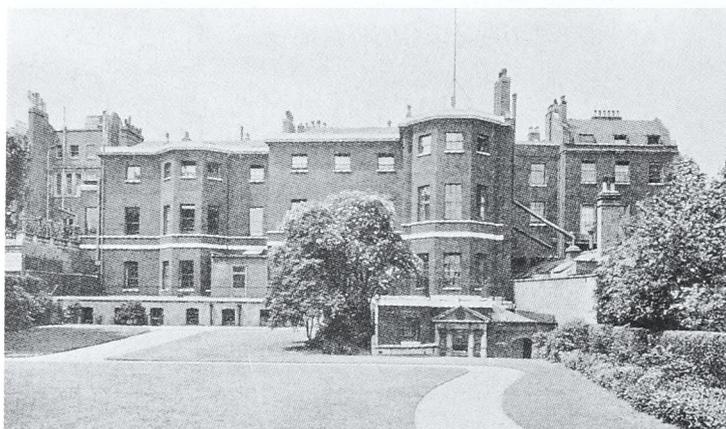


Figure 14. The east (river) front of Pembroke House, c.1930. *Survey of London*.

presumably have attained his majority, and in the latter year the rate-book says 'Earle Pembroke rebuilding'.<sup>65</sup> In the same year, the 10th Earl presented a petition to the Crown, to the effect that he was going to take down and rebuild his father's house, and asking (again) for a fresh lease.<sup>66</sup>

The plan accompanying the new lease shows an irregularly-shaped wing to the north of the original villa, marked: 'part of the house lately pulled down and is now Re-building in a substantial manner.' (Fig. 12) On the 9th Earl's original villa is written 'part of the Dwelling house now standing'. In front of both of these is an area marked 'The Terras under which is Offices for Servants', which seems to relate to the front wall of the Queen's Apartment, as shown on 1737 drawing.<sup>67</sup>

Rebuilding took about two years. The house does not appear in the ratebook for 1757, but the Earl was back in residence by Christmas 1758.<sup>68</sup> Thereafter, its rateable value rose to £300. The 10th Earl's remodelling seems to have gone through two stages, 1756–8, and 1760; Sir William Chambers was only involved in the second of these. In a letter to Chambers of 27 March 1774,<sup>69</sup> the 10th Earl said that the house was built by a Mr Evans, and thus probably the Charles Evans who signed the survey drawing of the house-plot made in 1756<sup>70</sup> (Fig. 12), and presumably the Charles Evans who supervised alterations at 30 Upper Grosvenor Street for Sir Thomas Cave in 1777, and designed Badminton Church for the Duke of Beaufort in 1785.<sup>71</sup>

The 1756 lease-plan itself provides evidence that Evans remodelled, rather than replaced, the Campbell-Morris house, and this seems to be borne out by comparison with later plans, such as a lease plan of 1803<sup>71</sup> (Fig. 27). It is confirmed by various references in the 1757–8 accounts, discussed below. In a nutshell, Evans renovated the Campbell-Morris house, added a canted bay to the river front, replaced the portico with a Venetian window, and added a new top storey (Figs. 13, 14). He also seems to have remodelled the low service buildings around the courtyard, and replaced the 9th Earl's aedicular gatepiers with a new arched portal. This was a fine design, based on that of a Venetian window, with Ionic pilasters (Fig. 15). The resulting house survived until 1938.

The building accounts tend to support the idea that this was a remodelling, not a rebuilding. Masonry work on the rebuilding was carried out by George Mercer; his bill, dated January 12 1764, covers work done 1757–62.<sup>72</sup> The summary of daywork starts with 'Cutting Venetian window for the Joiner, taking down old flatt, resetting plinth front of Stables, taking down front of Gateway, removing old stone taking down old Ashlar next the River, sorting of Chimneypieces, removing them, Cutting out the cap of the Pedestal, under the Venetian Windows . . .'. Furthermore, the plasterer William



Figure 15. The entrance portal of Pembroke House, c. 1930. *Survey of London*.

Perritt was at work in the house even earlier, from 18 October 1755. His Day Bill lists a great variety of individual tasks, from that date until June 6 1761, and commences

To repairing the Cieling in the Stewards Room dubbing out the Walls in my Lord's Bed Chamber making Specimens of Cornies [*sic*] viz. Tuscan, Dorick, Ionick, Corinthian, Composite &c. & putting up the same . . . .<sup>73</sup>

This, too, seems to support the idea that this was a remodelling, not a new build. None of Perritt's individual jobs are dated or priced; they seem to be listed chronologically

taking down and making good the Cornice on each side break of the chimney in the Alcove Room altering the mouldings in the 36 ft room making good work in the Bow room making a Scaffold in the Gallery making good for Paper Men in the Bow Room.<sup>74</sup>

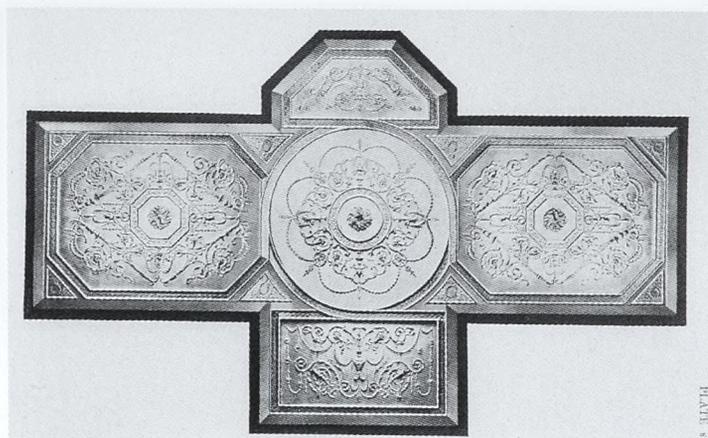


Figure 16. The Saloon or Gallery ceiling, a photomontage of Pembroke House, c. 1930. *Survey of London*.

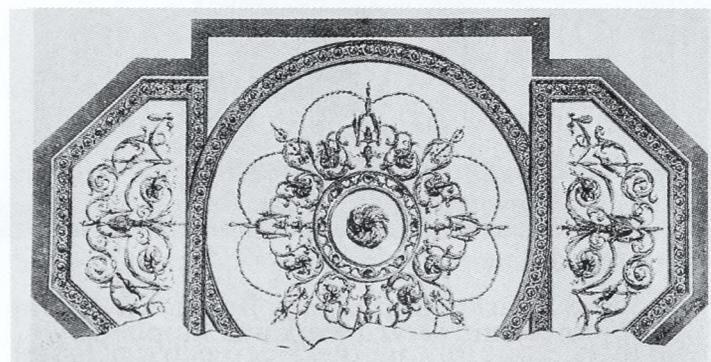


Figure 17. Sir William Chambers, drawing for the ceiling of the Gallery, Pembroke House; this is for a room of a different shape, though there are strong similarities to the ceiling as executed, *Victoria and Albert Museum*.

The paper men were presumably the decorators, Bromwich and Leigh, who were at work in the house from October 1757.<sup>75</sup> From February 1758 they were ornamenting the ceiling of the 'Bow Window Room' with papier-maché. In June they were decorating the ceiling of the 'Long Room' (possibly meaning the Gallery) with papier maché for £27.12s. They decorated the ceiling of the Drawing Room in the same material for £15.15s plus £11.15s. (again, it is not clear which room this is). The ceiling of the Great Staircase cost £46.17s. Hanging the 'Gallery' with 'painted ornaments on a Varnish'd blue ground', 184 square yards at 7s 6d, came to another £69. Several more references to silk paper, green spring paper, and Indian papers, seem to confirm that this was a lavish redecoration; the firm's total bill for 1757-8 came to £287 1s 6d.<sup>76</sup> In 1758, paving work was going on in the stables and the front court.<sup>77</sup>

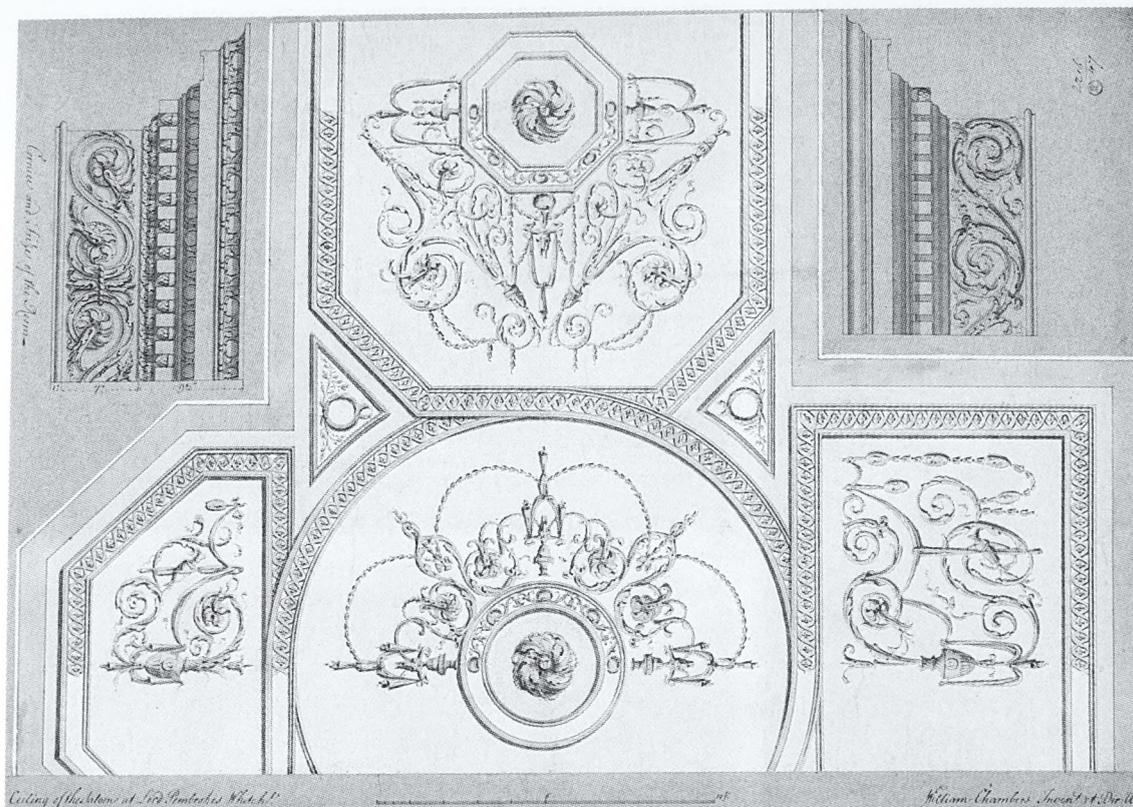


Figure 18. Sir William Chambers, drawing for the cornice and ceiling of the Gallery, Pembroke House, as executed, *Victoria and Albert Museum*.

Fine joinery and carved work was supplied by Thomas Vialls. An undated, but very detailed bill for his work survives.<sup>78</sup> This provides further evidence that the work was a remodelling rather than a replacement of the 9th Earl's house, for there are numerous references to 'mending' and adapting existing work. In the 'Bow Room', tellingly, Vialls charged £1 11s 6d 'to mending of carving in severall places of Ionick Capitalls in Bow Room'; there follows several pieces of work in the 'Bow Room Second Storey'.<sup>79</sup> This is of particular interest, in suggesting that the two splendid bed alcoves which survive in the Ministry of Defence (both of which have Ionic columns of timber) are from the early eighteenth century house, and thus probably the work of the 9th Earl or Morris. By Christmas 1758, as we have seen, the 10th Earl was back in residence.

Sir William Chambers seems to have been working for the 10th Earl at Wilton from 1757.<sup>80</sup> However, he was not employed at Whitehall until 1760, by which time the remodelling had apparently been completed and the main rooms redecorated for over a year. In 1762 Chambers sent in a bill to Lord Pembroke for his services; for 1759 he was paid

£1500 for work on two buildings at Wilton, and for January 1760, he was paid £42.0.0. 'to various designs for fitting up rooms at Whitehall, with attendance and trouble in directing the execution'.<sup>81</sup> Clearly, Chambers was not responsible for the overall remodelling; his work was confined to the improvement of a number of state-rooms, in particular providing new ceiling designs for the Gallery (or Saloon), the 36 Foot Room, the Alcove Room, and the (now destroyed) First Floor Lobby. There is, of course, a difficulty in establishing which room is which, but some at least of these new ceilings would seem to have replaced Bromwich and Leigh's papier-maché ceilings, only completed in 1758.

At this point, it would seem appropriate to discuss the four surviving interiors (see plan, Fig. 30). The Gallery, now Room 27, Ministry of Defence, was the principal first-floor interior, a long room with a square recess on its west side facing its canted bay. Two of the surviving Chambers designs relate to its ceiling (Fig. 16). One is inscribed 'Ceiling in the Gallery at Pembroke House Priv:Garn', signed and dated 'W. Chambers Invt. et Dir: 1760'; it has been cropped on one side (Fig. 17). Although the

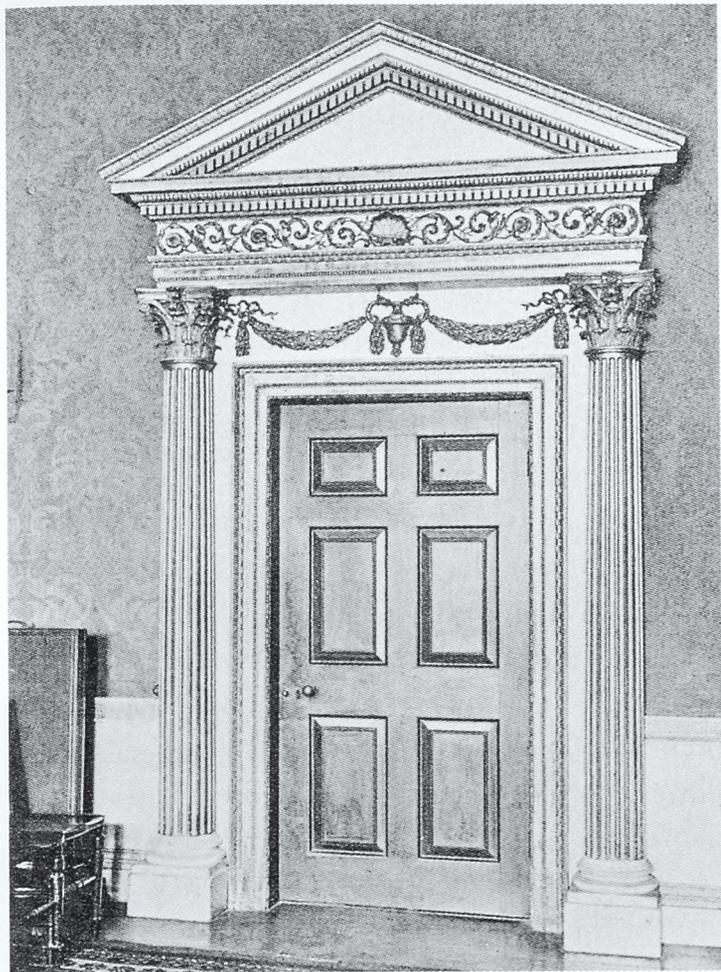


Figure 19. The Saloon doorcase, Pembroke House, c. 1930, *Survey of London*.

design has many features in common with the surviving ceiling, it presents something of a problem; it relates to a quite differently shaped room, with a square central section and canted bays to either side.<sup>82</sup> The other drawing is inscribed ‘Cornice and Frieze of the Rom: Ceiling of the Saloon at Lord Pembrokes Whitehl’, and is also signed and dated 1760 (Fig. 18). This shows the Gallery ceiling exactly as executed (and as it survives), with details of the elaborate modillion cornice and frieze, also as executed.<sup>83</sup>

The Chambers ceilings were all executed by William Perritt, who had been responsible for the plasterwork in the previous (Charles Evans) phase of building work, and was now called back to execute Chambers’ designs. His work here is a superbly confident performance; on the strength of it, Perritt deserves to stand in the first rank of Georgian plasterers.<sup>84</sup> His account is preserved,

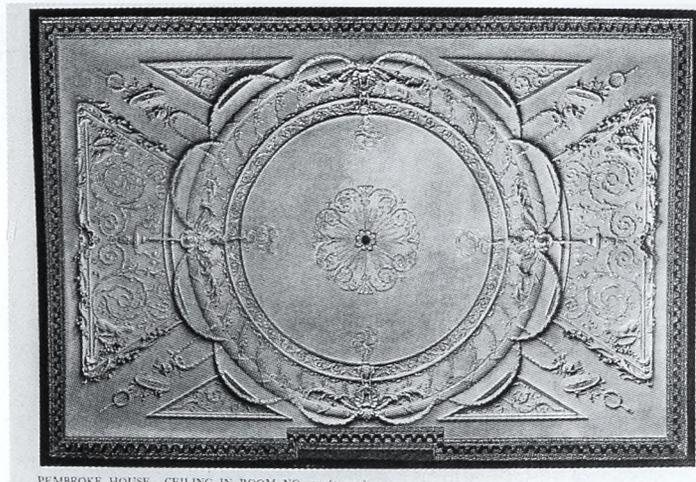


Figure 20. The Dining Room or 36 Foot Room ceiling, Pembroke House, a photomontage c. 1930, *Survey of London*.

and gives a very detailed breakdown of the work, specifying which ceilings were done ‘by order of Mr Chambers’.<sup>85</sup> The first section of his account is ‘in the Gallery’. Every single element is listed and priced, from the floated lath and plaster, to the 41 feet of ‘circular frame enrich with 20G (*sic*), to the 253 superficial feet of cornice ‘enrich with ruffled lead and shells, beads, egg and tongue, dentils and pines, the OG with anticks, flowers and foliage’, to the eight ox-skulls (at 7s 6d each).<sup>86</sup> The account can be exactly matched to the surviving ceiling. The room as originally formed had chimneypieces at either end, though no photograph of these is known, and they were removed in 1938. The central doorcase, from the first floor Lobby, however, was pictured in the *Survey of London* (Fig. 19), and still survives, relocated to one end of the reconstituted room. It is a sumptuous piece, with corinthian attached columns and a pediment. It is not clear to whom it should be attributed, though from its position it would seem likely to date from the Evans or the Chambers period.

Opening out of the Gallery to the north was the ‘36 foot room’ now Room 25, Ministry of Defence; later inventories identify this as the Dining Room.<sup>87</sup> A third ceiling-design, unsigned but attributable to Chambers, has been found in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York;<sup>88</sup> it relates directly to the ceiling

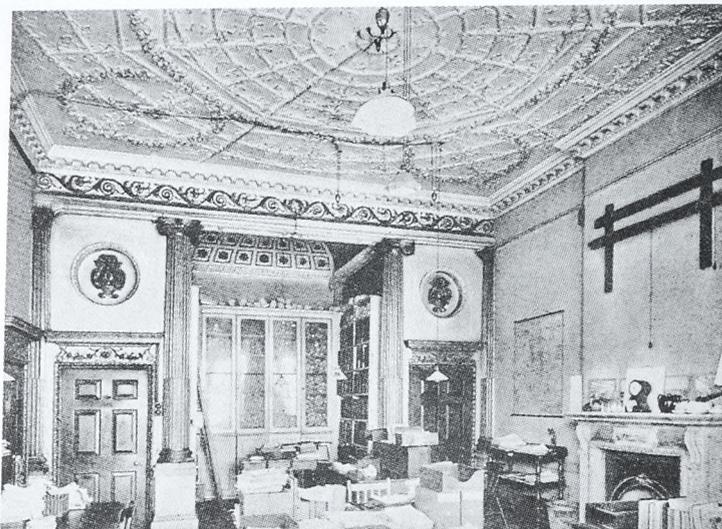


Figure 21. The Lower Alcove Room or Bow Room, Pembroke House, c. 1930, *Survey of London*.

of this room (Fig. 20). Perritt gives a detailed account of the ceiling for the '36 foot room', again 'by order of Mr Chambers'.<sup>89</sup> Again, this lists and prices all the decorative elements of the ceiling, down to the 'No. 4 Sphinks's (*sic*)', the four rams' heads and the four masks, all at 15 shillings each.

Opening north out of the '36 foot room' was the lower of the two bedchambers in the north wing of the house. These are variously referred to in the accounts as the upper and lower Bow Room or Alcove Room. The lower one is now Room 24, Ministry of Defence (Fig. 21). An unsigned drawing in the Pembroke papers shows the plan and wall elevations of this room<sup>90</sup> (Fig. 22). It shows two large break-front bookcases, almost certainly by Thomas Chippendale, installed in the bed-alcove; the bookcases were indeed made, and survive at Wilton House.<sup>91</sup> John Harris and Michael Snodin have attributed the drawing to Chambers' office.<sup>92</sup> The history of these rooms is not quite clear. On the one hand there is the statement on the 1757 lease-plan that this wing was 'now pulled down and is Rebuilding in a substantial manner'. On the other hand is the statement in Thomas Vialls' account to his mending the carving 'in several places of Ionick Capitalls', as noted above. The rooms certainly look Palladian, and there are several similar rooms surviving, known to be by Morris, Campbell and their

contemporaries.<sup>93</sup> The likelihood seems to be that both these rooms were built by Roger Morris for the 9th Earl, though it is not clear whether they would be from the 1730-1 period or of c.1740; it is difficult to relate them to the 1737 drawing; the canted bays shown on it look to be in the wrong positions.

What the Chambers wall-elevation drawing does not show is the room's magnificent plaster ceiling. This ceiling is listed in Perritt's account as that of the 'Bow Window or Alcove Room'.<sup>94</sup> This, too, is 'by order of Mr Chambers', although no drawing for it is known. It is of fantastic elaboration and beauty; a pattern of concentric circular lines represents an arbour entwined with vines. Again, all the elements appear on the bill, and are separately priced; Perritt invoiced for 438 feet and 4 inches of vine leaves and branches, for 75 feet of festoons of foliage and flowers, for two turtle doves (7 shillings and sixpence each) and much else besides. He also provided a new 'Ionick Modillion Cornice enrich'.

The fourth and last of the rooms reconstructed in the Ministry of Defence building is the 'Bow Room Second Storey', now Room 13 (Fig. 23). This is the upper of the two chambers with bed alcoves, and was directly over the lower Bow or Alcove Room (Room 24). The bed alcove here is similar, but not identical to the other, but the same stylistic considerations seem to apply (that is, that it seems attributable to Roger Morris). This room has a rather simpler ceiling of a rococo design, which on stylistic grounds could be attributed to 1744 or 1757, and seems unlikely to be by Chambers.

The only other room in the house which is said in Perritt's account to have been done under Chambers's direction, is the Lobby, which linked the principal staircase to the Gallery<sup>95</sup> (Fig. 24). It had a coffered barrel-vaulted ceiling, with rosette and garland ornaments, which seems to have been dismantled in 1938, though its ultimate fate is unknown.<sup>96</sup>

The staircase itself had an impressive wall-treatment of corinthian pilasters and blind arches (Fig. 25), and a fine rococo ceiling. This seems

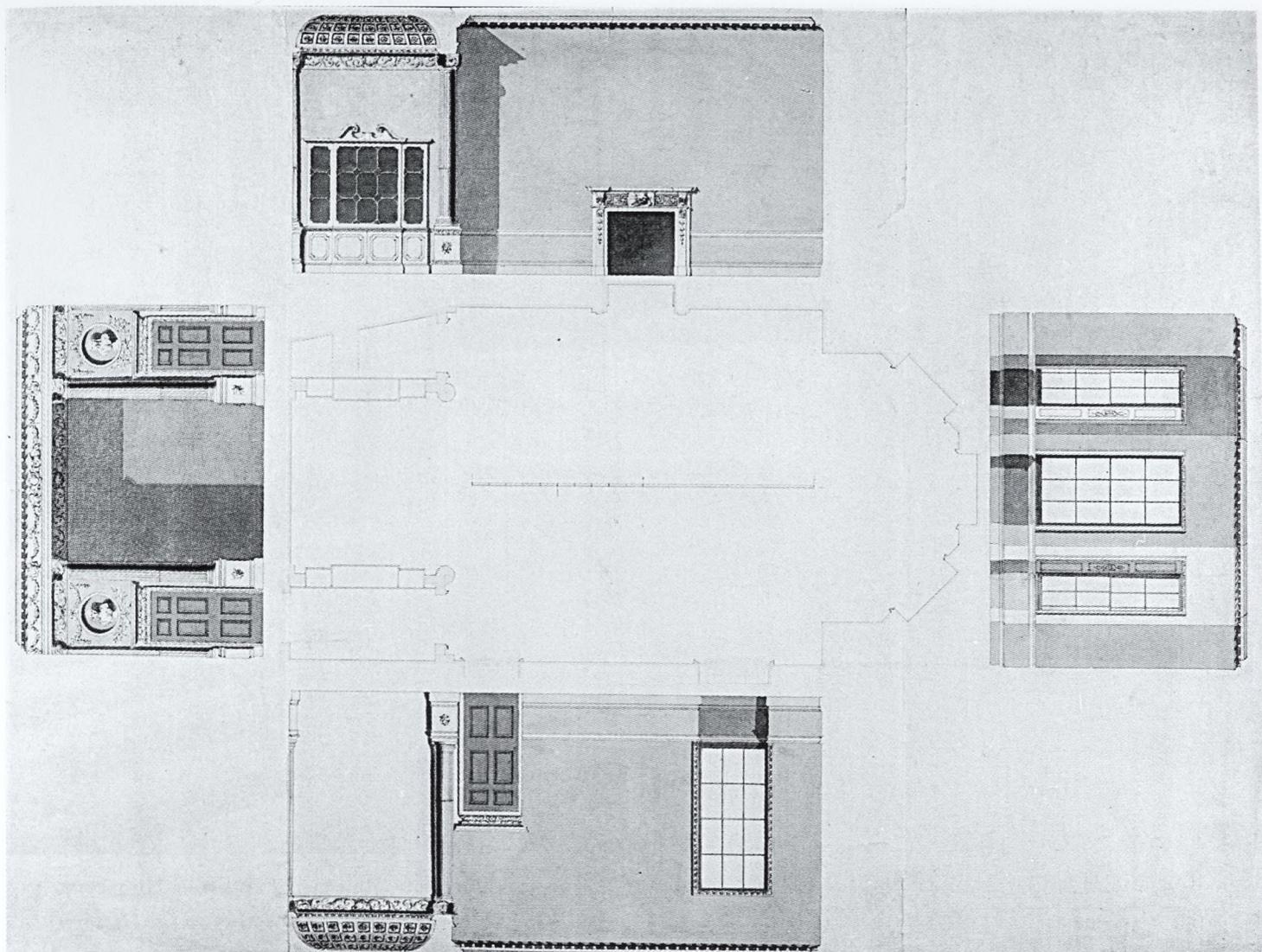


Figure 22. Wall-elevations of the Lower Alcove Room, showing bookcases by Thomas Chippendale in the alcove, attributed to the office of Sir William Chambers, *Wiltshire County Record Office*.

unlikely to be Chambers's work. However, the stair compartment is larger than that shown in the *Vitruvius Britannicus* plan (Fig. 1). The likelihood would seem to be that this was by Evans, with the fine rococo ceiling (Fig. 26) part of the first phase of work by William Perritt.<sup>97</sup>

Chambers returned to Pembroke House in 1773-4, building a large riding-house, a most unusual thing in London, with extra stabling, over the 17th century riverside terrace.<sup>98</sup> A survey plan of 1803 (Fig. 27) shows that the riding-house was a large rectangular room, about 80 feet long by 35 wide, with seven windows towards the Thames;<sup>99</sup> it had a flat leaded roof, so as not to interrupt views from the house, and also, presumably, obeying the injunction

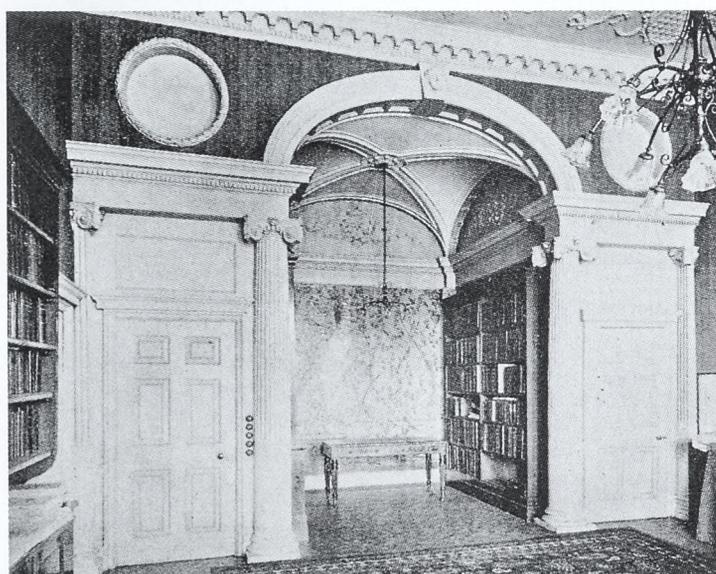


Figure 23. The Upper Alcove Room or Bow Room, Pembroke House, c. 1930, *Survey of London*.



Figure 24. The first floor Lobby, Pembroke House, in the early twentieth century, *Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England*.



Figure 25. The Main Staircase, Pembroke House, early twentieth century, *Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England*.

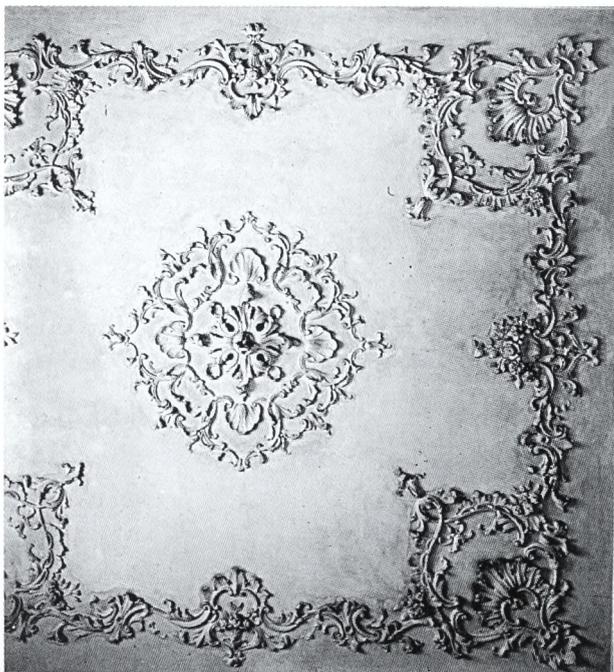


Figure 26. The Staircase ceiling, Pembroke House, early twentieth century, *Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England*.

in the 1744 lease that no building placed on the terrace should be more than 14 feet in height. No documents directly relating to this seem to be known, though in the Pembroke Papers there are number of designs for riding schools, one of them signed 'v. d. inv.' and dated 1755; John Harris has identified 'v. d.' as Chambers's friend, the Marquis de Voyer d'Argenson.<sup>100</sup>

On 18 September 1773, Chambers wrote to the Earl that 'we have already done a good Part of the Flat at Whitehall, and are going on with the rest as fast as the weather will permitt'; and this seems to relate to the lead roof.<sup>101</sup> Chambers wrote that work was nearing completion late in 1773.<sup>102</sup> The post-script to this was a dispute with the plumber over his charges, which seems to have caused Chambers some little trouble.<sup>103</sup>

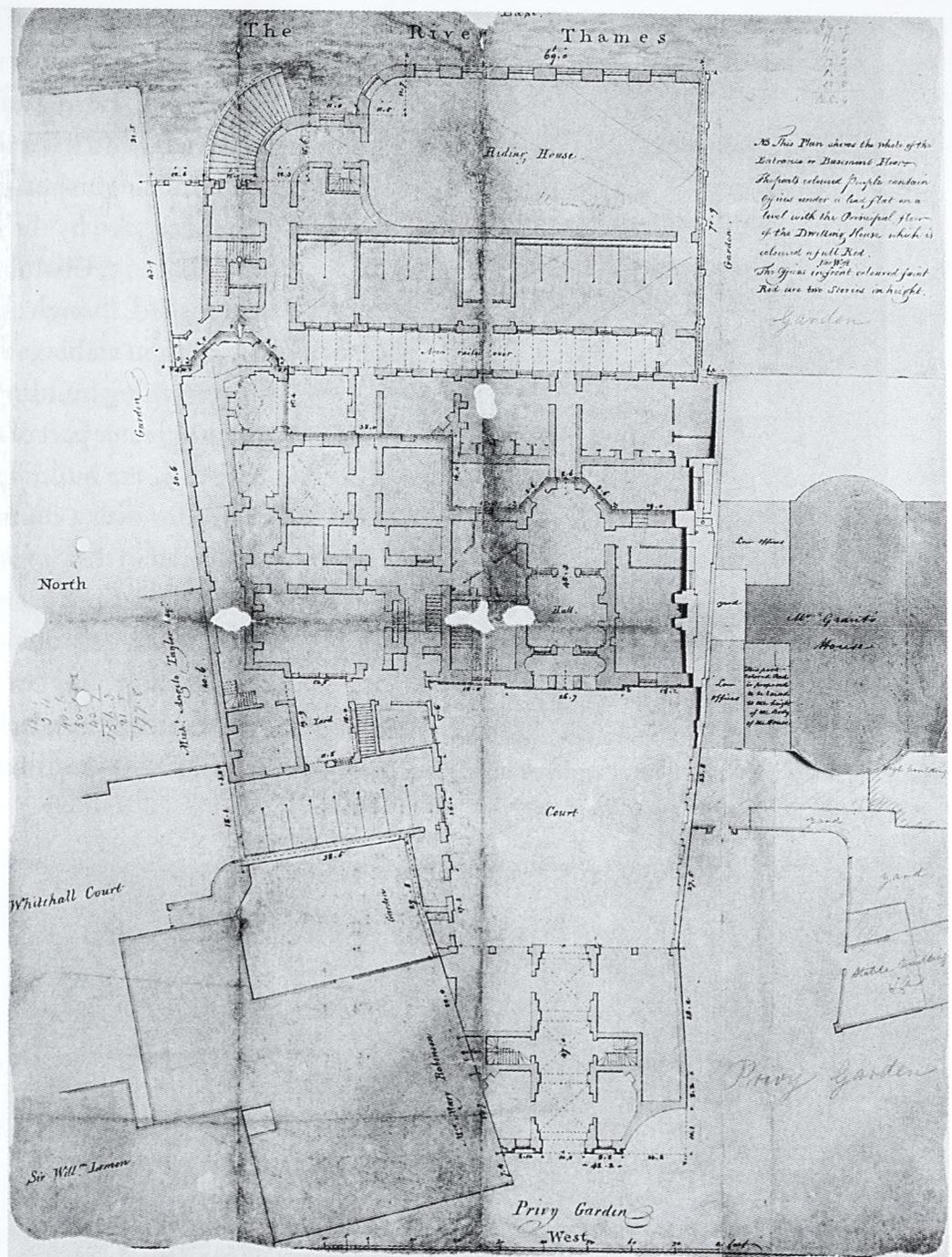


Figure 27. Ground floor plan of Pembroke House 1803, Public Record Office.

At the top of the old Terrace steps leading down to the river there was a fine water-gate (Fig. 28). From the 1803 plan it looks as if this was of a piece with (that is, built at the same time as) the Riding School.<sup>104</sup> Unlike the Riding School, the gate survived until 1938; it was strongly Palladian in character, with its massively blocked Doric columns, but it would certainly seem attributable to Chambers. The column bases survive at the top of the surviving section of Queen Mary's Steps (at the north-east corner of the Ministry of Defence building), and thus have the melancholy distinction of being the

one fragment of Pembroke House to remain visible and *in situ*.

The 10th Earl of Pembroke died on 26 January 1794.<sup>105</sup> In 1800, a thorough repair and refurbishment of the house was carried out for the 11th Earl under the direction of James Wyatt, at that time working at Wilton.<sup>106</sup> The bills for this, in November 1801 came to £890.2s, and were signed off by Wyatt, but none of this seems to have been for new 'fine' work, simply for repairs and maintenance.<sup>107</sup> The house was being put in good order for letting; after this, a new lease was granted to Lord Pembroke in 1803.<sup>108</sup>



Figure 28. The water-gate, Pembroke House c. 1930, *Survey of London*.

However, the Earls of Pembroke never lived there again. The house was successively tenanted by Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Tankerville, and Viscount Goderich, who lived there 1828–30 after his brief and undistinguished period as Prime Minister. He was succeeded by the 4th Earl of Harrington, 1831–51.<sup>109</sup> By 1805, Chambers' Riding House had been demolished, though a plan of that year seems to show the adjacent stables still standing (Fig. 29); in 1818 the remaining buildings on the terrace were cleared, and the greater part of the terrace returned to grass.<sup>110</sup> After this, the buildings seem to have been very little altered for over a century, as is shown by the plan published in the *Survey of London* in 1930 (Fig. 30).

Though the houses in Whitehall Gardens remained largely unaltered through the nineteenth century, appearances were deceptive. Gradually, ownership of the whole area was passing into the hands of the state, the Georgian houses becoming

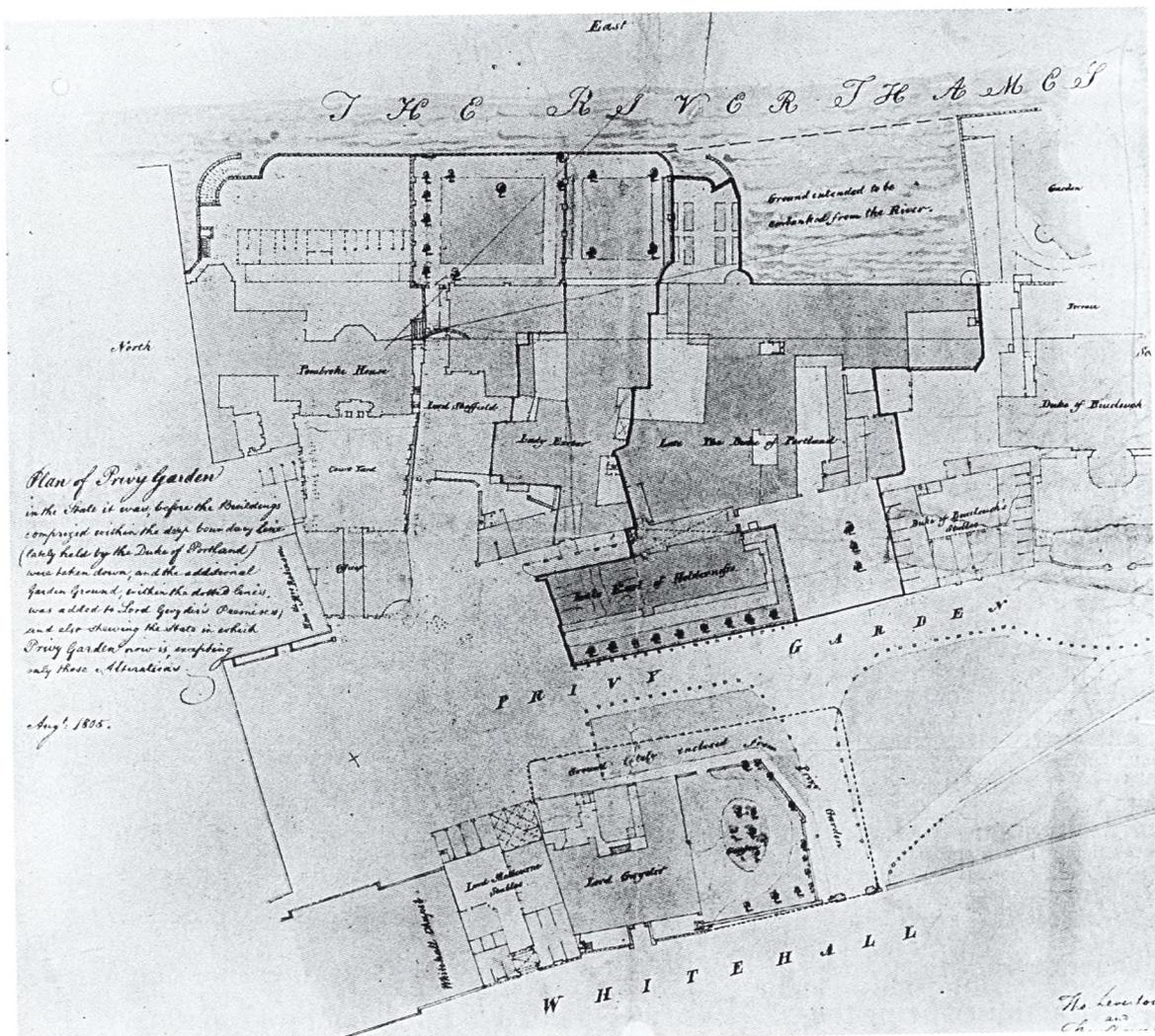


Figure 29. Plan of Privy Garden, showing Pembroke House and its neighbours, 1805, *Public Record Office*.

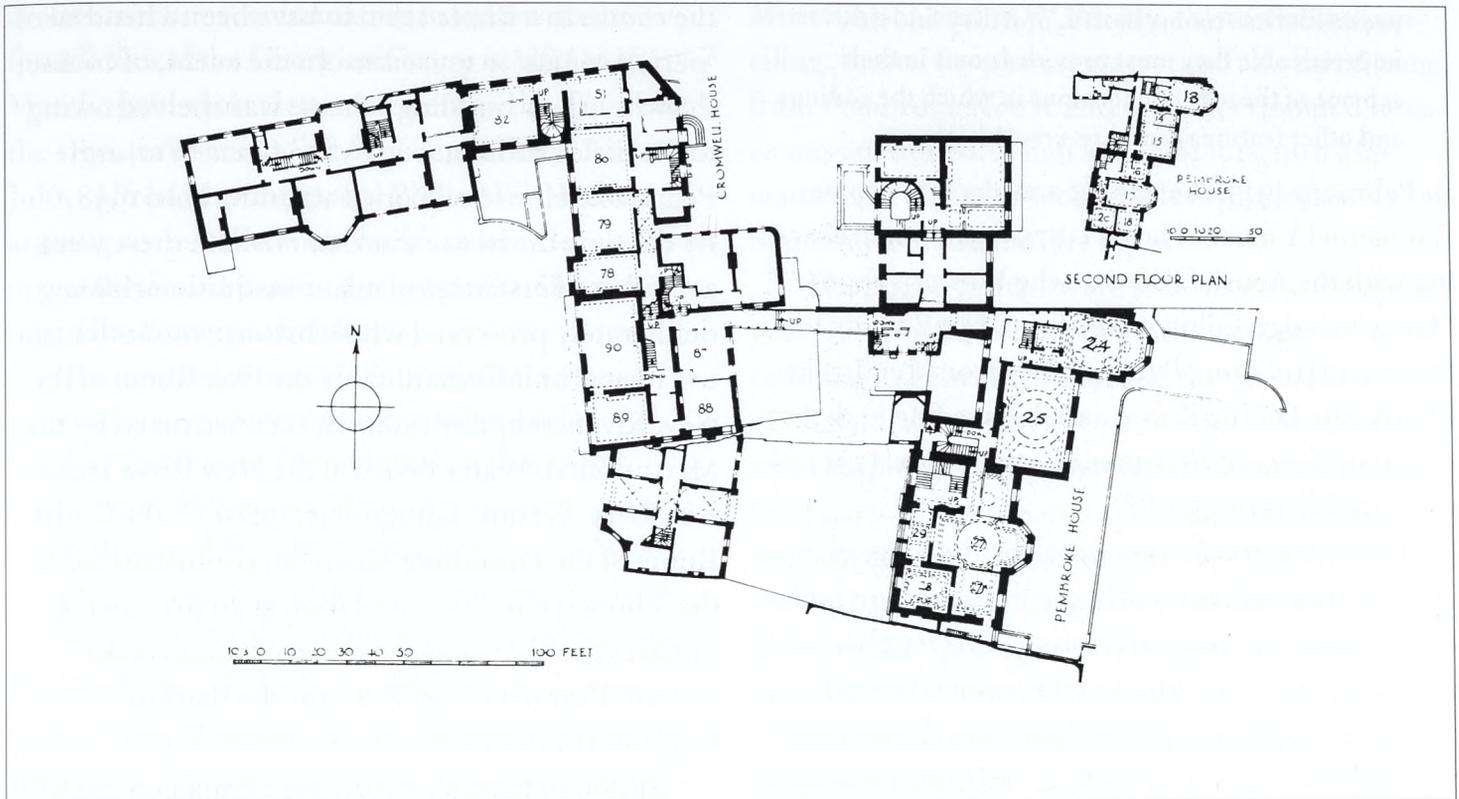


Figure 30. First floor plan of Pembroke House showing the official room numberings, c. 1930, *Survey of London*.

occupied by civil servants; Pembroke House succumbed to this fate in 1851, and was occupied successively by the Copyhold, Enclosure and Tithe Commission Office, then by the War Office, then by the Board of Trade.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, by the end of the century, Whitehall had become the governmental purlieu that we know today. Furthermore, there was a rising demand for purpose-built office space.

The first serious proposal for new offices for the Board of Trade on the Whitehall Gardens site was made in 1911 and received Treasury approval in 1912; from that moment, Pembroke House's doom was written if not sealed.<sup>112</sup> Lord Beauchamp, the First Commissioner of Works, broke with recent Board of Works practice and ordered an architectural competition, perhaps influenced by the highly publicised success of the LCC in organising the competition for County Hall in 1906.<sup>113</sup> The brief assumed the destruction of Whitehall Gardens – of everything behind the Banqueting House and Gwydyr House. Montagu House to the south, occupied by the Ministry of Labour, was to remain standing. The competition was advertised in

September 1913, and three architects (Sir Reginald Blomfield, John Belcher and Aston Webb) appointed as assessors. 187 sketch designs arrived by the end of the year, from which the assessors selected ten.<sup>114</sup>

Instructions for the second stage of competition were sent out in April 1914.<sup>115</sup> The idea of retaining the fine rooms from Pembroke House had formed no part of the original brief. However, on 21 January 1914, H. Llewellyn Smith of the Office of Works wrote to Lord Beauchamp

As you know, there are several beautiful and valuable ceilings, mantels and pieces of iron-work in the present Board of Trade building. I am not sure that any provision was made in the conditions of competition for their preservation, but I should be glad to know that whatever steps are necessary will be taken to do so. If the Office of Works were not the official guardians of the building I should be tempted to press them to make a 'Preservation Order' under the new Act!<sup>116</sup>

Llewellyn Smith's suggestion was taken up, and the second stage brief listed a number of rooms 'which are of Architectural and Historic interest', requiring that competitors should

preserve these rooms *in situ*, or if they find this impracticable they must provide rooms in their scheme of the same dimensions in which the ceilings and other features can be re-erected.<sup>117</sup>

In February 1915, the winner was declared to be Emmanuel Vincent Harris (1879–1971), then serving with the Artists' Rifles on the Western Front.<sup>118</sup> Harris's design followed the brief, by allowing for the reconstruction of three rooms from Pembroke House, the Dining Room and the two fine bedrooms or bow rooms, opening off the grand central corridor of his design.<sup>119</sup>

Llewellyn Smith's proposal for the preservation of the rooms, and the subsequent instruction to the competitors, are very interesting. The emphasis laid on preserving or re-creating the rooms themselves, not just using features from them, and the recognition that they were of historic as well as architectural interest, seem well in advance of their time. In the late nineteenth century a greater awareness and appreciation of Georgian style and decoration had developed out of the Queen Anne movement. By the 1890s, fashionable decorators like Lenygon and Morant or White Allom were creating new 'Georgian' rooms to a high degree of sophistication; it can on occasion be difficult to distinguish between Edwardian 'Georgian' work and the real thing.<sup>120</sup>

However, the idea of preserving or re-using a complete historic interior seems to derive more from museology than from interior design. The South Kensington Museum, which may indeed have invented the concept, bought its first 'period' room in 1869 – a mid-eighteenth century French interior; the museum acquired the Inlaid Room from Sizergh Castle, Westmorland in 1891, and the Jacobean 'Bromley-by-Bow Room', from the Old Palace, Bromley by Bow, in 1908.<sup>121</sup> South Kensington's lead was followed by the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which acquired the first century 'Boscovale Room' in 1903, and two more historic rooms from Switzerland and Venice, in 1906.<sup>122</sup>

Llewellyn Smith and the Office of Works were thus proposing something rather remarkable; in 1914, the only precedents for the idea of preserving

the rooms as a whole seem to have been a handful of 'period rooms' in museums. In the event, of course, the whole new building scheme was shelved owing to the dislocation caused by the Great War, and Pembroke House remained standing until 1938.

By the time the house was demolished, there were a number of instances of major institutions having deliberately preserved whole historic rooms for re-use in new buildings, notably the Oak Room of the New River company's offices, reconstructed by the Metropolitan Water Board at the New River Head, Rosebery Avenue, Islington (c. 1920),<sup>123</sup> the Court Room of the Foundling Hospital, reconstructed by the Thomas Coram Foundation at 40 Brunswick Square (1926),<sup>124</sup> and the reconstruction of Sir Robert Taylor's Court Room at the Bank of England (1921–37).<sup>125</sup>

Although Harris's 1915 design remained unbuilt, sentence of death had been passed on Pembroke House and the rest of Whitehall Gardens. The LCC carried out a detailed survey of them, which was published in the *Survey of London* in 1930.<sup>126</sup>

In 1933 the Office of Works produced a new brief for a much larger building, using the site of Montagu House as well.<sup>127</sup> This time, it was to house both the Air Ministry and the Board of Trade, though the project was generally referred to in the files and the building press as Government Offices, Whitehall Gardens. There was no competition; a committee including the RIBA President, the President of the Royal Academy and the First Commissioner of Works chose the architect. Their choice, in January 1934, again fell on E. Vincent Harris, by then at the height of his career.<sup>128</sup> The brief again included the requirements to retain five rooms (four from Pembroke House and one from Cromwell House, and the Tudor wine cellar from Cromwell House). In March 1936 Harris's designs, which broadly speaking represent the existing building, were published in the architectural press.<sup>129</sup>

The huge scale of the design and the destruction of Whitehall Gardens were alike controversial. The continued destruction of fine Georgian buildings through the 1920s and 30s was at last beginning to

arouse reactions, culminating in 1938 with the foundation of the Georgian Group itself. On 16 March 1938, a joint letter was sent to the *The Times*, the signatories including Sir Gerald Kelly, Augustus John, Alfred Munnings and Philip Wilson Steer, arguing against the Whitehall Gardens development on aesthetic and practical grounds, and for the saving of the Georgian houses:

The resulting salvage of Whitehall Gardens would in some measure mitigate the loss of the Adelphi and Abingdon Street, Devonshire, Lansdowne and Chesterfield Houses, and others in Berkeley, Grosvenor, Portman and St James's Square. Those of Whitehall could be put to admirable employment as apanages [*sic*] of the British and South Kensington Museums.<sup>130</sup>

Francis Howard, the leader of this lobby, wrote to the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, on 16 June 1938. Howard stated that he had an undertaking from Sir William Burrell, the Glasgow shipping magnate and collector, to give his collection to the nation if a suitable location could be found, and that Sir William had expressed an interest in Montagu House, Whitehall. The Prime Minister replied on 1 July that the preparations for the new building were so far advanced that it was 'beyond the bounds of possibility to reverse the decision'.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, the demolition of Pembroke House and the rest of Whitehall Gardens had already begun in June.<sup>132</sup>

The Office of Works had been at work on the question of salvage since 1936, in which year the staircase from Pembroke House was removed and installed in the Queen's House, Greenwich.<sup>133</sup> In 1937 the historic fittings in the doomed buildings were inventoried, and in the spring of 1938 the rooms in Pembroke and Cromwell houses were surveyed and dismantled.<sup>134</sup> An Office of Works photograph album records the process; the ceilings of the two Pembroke House bedrooms, and Chambers's Dining Room ceiling, are all clearly shown being sawn into pieces and boxed.<sup>135</sup>

Numerous measured drawings were made of several interiors, and of over 20 chimneypieces.<sup>136</sup> A number of pieces of decorative ironwork were given to the Victoria and Albert Museum and the

Museum of London.<sup>137</sup> Finally, the rest of the panelling, doors, fireplaces, grates, and all other fittings from Pembroke House and the other doomed houses was auctioned. A first sale of 61 lots, on 2 May, made £248 8s, and a second sale of 555 lots on 12–13 September made another £150.<sup>138</sup>

The boxed fittings were to lie in store for several years. Ground was broken for the new government building in February 1939, and the vast basement of Phase 1 (the northern two-thirds of the building) was completed in 1941, but having reached ground level (so to speak), matters remained there. In 1945–6, Harris carried out revisions to his design,<sup>139</sup> and by 1951 the shell of phase 1 was largely complete. In the 1945 revisions, the original decision to re-use the Pembroke House rooms was ratified. The Georgian rooms were all too high for the rather constrained floor-to-ceiling heights of the building. Harris therefore designed shells to house them, sitting on the spine blocks in the central and northern courtyards.<sup>140</sup> The detailed work to reconstruct the rooms seems, in fact, to have been largely carried out by the Ministry of Works' own architects; numerous drawings show how the new shells were created to house the rooms, the reconstructed wall elevations, windows and doors.<sup>141</sup> The rooms were not reconstructed with absolute fidelity; Rooms 13 and 24 (the upper and lower alcove rooms) lack their fireplaces; Room 25 (the 36 foot room or Dining Room) has a fine Kentian chimneypiece which almost certainly does not belong there, as it bears a Viscount's coronet.<sup>142</sup> Room 27 (the Gallery) was the most radically altered; its central doorway was replaced with a new chimneypiece, while the place of the two chimney pieces was taken by doorcases.

Strangely, the reconstruction of the rooms, though accomplished at evident trouble and expense, does not seem to have received any publicity at all. The reconstructed rooms do not appear in any of the published designs for the building. Nor, when they were rebuilt, does any public announcement seem to have been made; by contrast, the moving of the Henry VIII Wine Cellar was the subject of a press announcement, and on its completion it was briefly

opened to the public.<sup>143</sup> In this strange resurrection, the rooms were stripped even of their names. The numbers by which they have been known ever since do not relate to the plan of Vincent Harris's building; these are the numbers which were given to them while Pembroke House was in office use, carried over into the new building (Fig. 30).

Thus, this vast building, latterly known as Ministry of Defence Main Building, contains reconstructions of four rooms from Pembroke House – the Gallery, the Dining Room, and the two bed-chambers, as well as a fine panelled room from the neighbouring Cromwell House and the Whitehall Palace Wine Cellar. These rooms, among the finest eighteenth century interiors in London, seem to represent the work of two generations. Rooms 13 and 24 with their bed-alcoves are likely to be the work of Roger Morris and the 9th Earl of Pembroke, while the superb ceilings are a documented work of

Sir William Chambers. They represent the last chapter in the long and chequered history of Pembroke House. The author wishes in particular to thank the editor, Mr Richard Hewlings, for much help and encouragement in the writing of this article.

I would like to thank the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Pembroke and Mr R. W. Stedman of the Wilton Estate, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, the trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, and the trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for permission to reproduce illustrations, and the staff of English Heritage's photographic department for their valuable assistance.

Thanks are also due to the staff of the Public Record Office, of Sir John Soane's Museum, Westminster Archive Centre and Wiltshire Country Record Office, for their help during the preparation of this article.

#### NOTES

- 1 *Dictionary of National Biography*, IX, Oxford, 1917 (hereafter DNB), 645; M. P. G. Draper and W. A. Eden, *Marble Hill House*, London, 1970, 20–1; and James Lees-Milne, *Earls of Creation*, London, 1962, 59–100.
- 2 H. M. Colvin (ed.), *History of the King's Works*, v, London 1976, 295, and plate 37.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 296.
- 4 London, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), T.1/295.
- 5 PRO, T.54/24, 185–6.
- 6 PRO, T.54/24, 223.
- 7 London, Westminster Archive Centre, rate-books for the parish of St Margaret and St John (hereafter Westminster rate-books), volumes 337 (1717) (unfoliated); 338 (1718); 339 (1719). From 1719 Lord Herbert appears on the list of occupants of Privy Gardens, between the Countess of Portland and Lady Holderness, and thereafter he appears each year. Unfortunately, no rateable values were assigned to the houses in Privy Gardens until 1751, so one cannot use changes in the value to assess whether the site had been improved.
- 8 Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, III, London, 1725, 9 and pl. 48.
- 9 Jones' unexecuted designs for the Prince's Lodging at Newmarket of 1618–19 have some relation to north Italian villa design [John Harris and Gordon Higgott, *Inigo Jones, Complete Architectural Drawings*, New York, 1989, 103–5]. Webb's Gunnersbury Park, Middlesex, of c.1658–63, demolished in 1801, was to all intents and purposes a villa, and may have been an important architectural precursor for Pembroke House [John Bold, *John Webb*, Oxford, 1990, 160–1]. Lindsay Boynton made a claim for the title of earliest Palladian villa, in his article 'Newby Park, the First Palladian Villa in England' in H. M. Colvin and J. Harris (eds.), *The Country Seat*, Harmondsworth, 1970, 97–105.
- 10 Campbell, *op. cit.*, III, 1725, 9.
- 11 Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, London and New Haven, 1995, 212, says that an original elevation, dated August 1723, is in the Lister Collection in the Treasury Library, Whitehall, no. 52b. The author contacted Mr Donald Lickley, Librarian to the Treasury, who informed him that the drawing could not be found, January 1998.
- 12 Trowbridge, Wiltshire County Record Office (hereafter Wilts CRO), Pembroke Papers, 2057/F6/14.
- 13 London, Sir John Soane's Museum, (hereafter Soane Museum), CXI, 48. The Soane Museum's catalogue attributes the drawing to Dickinson, apparently because

- it came from the same collection as drawings by Dickinson, referred to in the main text, and in the next two endnotes.
- 14 Soane Museum, CXI, 49, published in *Wren Society*, xvii, 1940, pl. 38.
- 15 Soane Museum, CXI, 50, published in *Wren Society*, xvii, pl. 38.
- 16 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 302. The building shown in Dickinson's drawing is a good deal wider, and also lower than the Campbell design for Pembroke House. Its general character is that of the generation of Pratt and May, of the 1670s or 80s. The Tuscan frontispiece does not sit altogether happily with the rest of the facade. Dickinson himself was well-acquainted with modern architectural standards of the day, through his long association with Sir Christopher Wren, and although he undoubtedly represented the older generation, it is a little difficult to believe that this represents a design by Dickinson of 1723.
- 17 PRO, T.1/295, 102.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 108.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 96.
- 20 Draper and Eden, *op. cit.*, pl. 6.
- 21 T. P. Connor, 'Colen Campbell as Architect to the Prince of Wales', *Architectural History*, xxii, 1979, 64; DNB, IX, 645.
- 22 Andrea Palladio, *Quattro Libri dell'architettura*, Venice, 1570, II, pl. 31 (Villa Badoer) and pl. 38 (Villa Emo).
- 23 Harris and Higgott, *op. cit.*, 68–9.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 25 Bold, *op. cit.*, 160–1.
- 26 Harris and Higgott, *op. cit.*, 226–7; G. H. Chettle, *The Queen's House, Greenwich*, London Survey Committee monograph, xiv, London, 1937, 62–3, pls. 33–4.
- 27 Campbell, *op. cit.*, III, pl. 47; Arthur Oswald, 'Ebberton Lodge, Yorkshire', *Country Life*, cxvi, 14 October 1954, 1254; Howard Stutchbury, *The Architecture of Colen Campbell*, Manchester, 1967, 44–7 and pl. 31.
- 28 Terry Friedman, *James Gibbs*, London and New Haven, 1984, 140–1. The plan and entrance elevation of the Down Hall design were published in James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture*, London, 1728, pl. 55.
- 29 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 491; R. Bowden-Smith, *The Water House, Houghton Hall, Norfolk*, 1987.
- 30 Friedman, *op. cit.*, 134–6.
- 31 The closest Palladian precedent for the feature seems to be Palladio's plan for the Villa Thiene at Cicogna of 1554–6, published in *I Quattro Libri* 1570, II, pl. 62.
- This has a square *androne* with a three-bay portico *in antis*, and is cited by Friedman, *op. cit.*, 134–6, as a likely source for Gibbs' plan of Sudbrook Park.
- 32 Palladio, *op. cit.*, 1570, II, pl. 33 (Villa Malcontenta), pl. 34 (Villa Barbaro), pl. 39 (Villa Saracena).
- 33 Campbell, *op. cit.*, III, 1725, 9.
- 34 Philip, 4th Earl of Pembroke, though a leading figure in the court of Charles I, went over to the Parliamentary side on the outbreak of the Civil War, [DNB, IX, 659–63].
- 35 PRO, T.55/2, 18–19.
- 36 PRO, T.55/2, 24–5.
- 37 PRO, T.1/295, 97.
- 38 Wilton, Wilton House, Pembroke Manuscripts, account book in the Library, 'a.c. book nw Corner Shelf 3', notes taken c.1973, and communicated in a letter from Mr T. Connor to Mr R. Hewlings, 11.1.97.
- 39 This and the few other earlier canted bays are listed in Richard Hewlings, 'Leoni's drawings for 22 Arlington Street', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 1992, 25.
- 40 Stutchbury, *op. cit.*, 68.
- 41 Mary Cosh, 'Lord Ilay's Eccentric Building Schemes', *Country Life*, CLII, July 20, 1972, 145.
- 42 DNB, *loc. cit.*. Lord Herbert married Mary, eldest daughter of Richard, Viscount Fitzwilliam.
- 43 PRO, T.1/295, 97.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 103–4.
- 45 *Ibid.*. The trees seem to be marked on the accompanying plan, on p. 109.
- 46 *Ibid.*, Lady Portland claimed the wall for her own, and complained of Lord Pembroke 'pulling down part of the said Wall or fence and sticking lights thro' the same'. These seem to mean the Diocletian windows shown on the accompanying drawing.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 115.
- 48 W. S. Lewis (ed.), *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, xx, Oxford, 1960, 109.
- 49 PRO, T.1/295, 94–5, 115–34. The present author has not had the opportunity to search the records of the Court of Chancery for the record of any case between Lord Pembroke and Lady Portland.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 51 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, A6/3.
- 52 PRO, T.55/7, 13–4; the plan is in PRO, MFC/155. The plan has a dotted line which appears to represent the line of the Wren wall, of the Queen's Apartments.
- 53 The portal is marked on the 1744 plan in PRO, MFC, 155.
- 54 The view, drawn and engraved by J. Maurer and dated 1741, is illustrated as plate 6 in *Survey of London*, XIII, London, 1930.
- 55 Campbell, *op. cit.*, II, 1717, pl. 67, entitled 'The Great

- Gate as you enter to Wilton'. Campbell describes it as 'a Rustick Gate, which may serve for a Model to direct our Workmen on the like Occasion'. See J. Harris, 'An English neo-Palladian episode and its connections with Visentini in Venice', *Architectural History*, xxvii, 1984, 231-6.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 232.
- 57 PRO, T.55/7, 18.
- 58 *Idem.*
- 59 PRO, MFC 155, Part 1.
- 60 Lewis, *op. cit.*, xx, 142.
- 61 PRO, T.55/24, 302-11. John Fordyce, Surveyor General to the Treasury, made a long report on the site in November 1797, describing it as 'a house upon which more than £22,000 has been expended, so very injudiciously, as that the House and Offices are valued at no more than £550 p.a . . . '.
- 62 Westminster rate-books, vol 375.
- 63 *Ibid.*, vols 378, 384 and 388.
- 64 DNB, ix, 645; Horace Walpole remarked on the new Earl being sixteen [Lewis, *op. cit.*, xx, 109].
- 65 Westminster rate-books, vol. 396.
- 66 PRO, T.55/10, p. 81.
- 67 PRO, MFC 155, Part 1.
- 68 Westminster rate-books, vol. 404.
- 69 London, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add. MS 41135 (Letter-Book of Sir William Chambers), f. 14, the Earl of Pembroke to Chambers, 27 March 1774.
- 70 PRO, MFC 155.
- 71 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 355, attributes Pembroke House to this Charles Evans.
- 72 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/A2/5, 'Masonry done for the Rt Hon the Earl of Pembroke at Whitehall - Geo. Mercer'. This is part of a bundle containing several accounts for work at Pembroke House, c. 1755-64.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 'Plasterer's Bill, commenced Oct 18th 1755, Ending June 6th 1761'.
- 74 *Idem.*
- 75 *Ibid.*, bill of 'Bromwich & Leigh, Drs'.
- 76 *Idem.*
- 77 *Ibid.* 'Masonry done for the Rt Hon the Earl of Pembroke at Whitehall Geo. Mercer'.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 'The Earl of Pembroke's Bill to Thos. Vialls' [*sic*].
- 79 *Idem.*
- 80 John Harris, *Sir William Chambers*, London, 1970, 235, 251-2.
- 81 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/H1/3.
- 82 London, Victoria & Albert Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, 2216.24; Harris, *Chambers, cit.*, 235; Michael Snodin, *Sir William Chambers*, Catalogue of Architectural drawings in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1996, 146-7.
- 83 London, Victoria & Albert Museum, 2215.47; Snodin, *op. cit.*, 146-7.
- 84 Geoffrey Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England, 1660-1820*, 1981, 246, reconstructs much of Perritt's *oeuvre*.
- 85 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/A2/5, 'Plasterer's Bill . . .?', *cit.*
- 86 *Idem.*
- 87 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/E4/7-8.
- 88 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1916.10.38. This information was kindly supplied by Mr Michael Snodin.
- 89 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/A2/5.
- 90 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/H3/18.
- 91 Christopher Gilbert, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*, London, 1978, 147-9, discusses the drawing and the bookcases at length.
- 92 John Harris and Michael Snodin (eds.), *Sir William Chambers, architect to King George III*, London, 1996, chapter on furniture by Hugh Roberts, 164.
- 93 Richard Hewlings believes that bed alcoves are particularly characteristic of Campbell's and Morris's architecture, as for instance at Marble Hill House, Twickenham (Lord Pembroke and Morris, 1724-9), Compton Place, Sussex (Campbell, 1726-7), White Lodge, Richmond Park (Morris, 1727), and Fox Hall, Charlton (Morris, c. 1732). There is another example in the Cumberland Suite, Hampton Court Palace, c. 1732, which is sometimes attributed to William Kent.
- 94 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057/A2/5.
- 95 *Idem.*
- 96 English Heritage, Government Historic Buildings Advisory Unit photographic files (ex Ministry of Works), file labelled 'Interiors Whitehall Gardens'. This file contains numerous photographs of the interiors of Pembroke House, taken shortly prior to demolition in 1938, with directions as to their fate. A photograph of the lobby, near the back, is simply marked 'store'. Assuming that its fittings were stored, we do not know what became of them.
- 97 *Ibid.*. The same file contains photographs of the staircase hall at Pembroke House taken in 1938, showing the panelling with corinthian pilasters, and the ceiling, both marked 'store'. Again, we do not know what became of these fittings.
- 98 British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add. MS. 41133, 109-10. Chambers's letters refer to working in the house at Whitehall, without explicitly stating that

- this was on the Riding House. The reference to a new flat lead roof, though, suggests that this was, indeed, the job in hand.
- 99 PRO, MFC 155, Part 1, survey plan of Pembroke House, dated 1803.
- 100 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers, 2057 H3/14; Harris, *Chambers, cit.*, 235.
- 101 British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add. MS. 41133, 109–10.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 114.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 104 The gate does not appear in the 1737 drawing or the 1756 plan, so it seems unlikely to be by Campbell or Morris. It is illustrated in the *Survey of London, cit.*, pl. 66.
- 105 DNB, IX, 646.
- 106 Wilts CRO., Pembroke Papers 2057/A2/6; Colvin, *op. cit.*, 1119.
- 107 Wilts CRO, Pembroke Papers 2057/A2/6. All the craftsmen involved sent in bills; they included Richard Westmacott for stonework, and Francis Bernasconi for plasterwork.
- 108 PRO, T.55/24, 303–11.
- 109 *Survey of London, cit.*, XIII, 176–7.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 170.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 178.
- 112 PRO, WORK, 80/8.
- 113 *Idem.*
- 114 PRO, WORK, 12/204.
- 115 *Idem.*
- 116 PRO, WORK, 12/207.
- 117 *Idem.*
- 118 *Idem.* No biography, or even scholarly article on E. Vincent Harris has ever appeared. A profile ‘The Royal Gold Medallist, 1951’ was published in the *Royal Institute of British Architects’ Journal* in February 1951, and an obituary appeared in the *Guardian* on 3 August 1971.
- 119 Harris’s winning design was published in the *Builder* on 19 February 1915.
- 120 See, e.g., Nicholas Cooper, *The Opulent Eye*, London, 1976; Stephen Calloway, *Twentieth Century Decoration*, London, 1988.
- 121 Information from Dr Clive Wainwright, Victoria & Albert Museum.
- 122 A. Peck *et al.*, *Period Rooms in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1996, 16–23, 58–67.
- 123 Christopher Hibbert and Ben Weinreb, *The London Encyclopaedia*, London, 1983, 542; English Heritage, Historical Analysis and Research Team, files 1SL (Islington) 15.
- 124 Hibbert and Weinreb, *op. cit.*, 292.
- 125 Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 1: The City of London*, Harmondsworth, 276, 280.
- 126 *Survey of London, cit.*, XIII, 167–79.
- 127 The official documents have not been found. See *The Builder*, 20 March 1936, special supplement.
- 128 *Idem.*
- 129 *Idem; Architect and Building News*, 20 March 1936, 357; *Architects’ Journal*, 26 March 1936, 469, 500.
- 130 *The Times*, 16 March 1938.
- 131 PRO, WORK 12/272.
- 132 *Ibid.*
- 133 PRO, WORK 12/269.
- 134 *Ibid.* English Heritage Historic Plans Room, has wall-elevations and drawings of the ceilings for the rooms, 249/1–50.
- 135 London, English Heritage, Government Historic Buildings Advisory Unit, photographic collection, labelled ‘Interiors Whitehall Gardens’; English Heritage Historic Plans Room, nos 249/102–4, are outline drawings of the ceilings, showing how they were cut up into segments.
- 136 London, English Heritage Historic Plans Rooms, Folder 249/1–50.
- 137 PRO, WORK 12/269.
- 138 *Ibid.*
- 139 The files relating to the main construction phases of the building have not been found. Large perspective drawings showing Harris’s revised designs were illustrated in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibitoin of 1946, and published in the *Builder*, 17 May 1946. The work in progress was illustrated in *Building*, for September 1951 and May 1952.
- 140 London, English Heritage Historic Plans Room, drawings for the shells for the historic rooms, 249/158–66.
- 141 *Ibid.*, drawings for reconstruction of the rooms, 249/102–138.
- 142 The chimneypiece was transferred to the room while it was still in Pembroke House. The *Survey of London* thought that it had been brought there from the neighbouring Cadogan House, and that it was by Kent [*loc. cit.*, 173].
- 143 PRO, WORK, 12/273.