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WEST DEAN HOUSE, WILTSHIRE

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The topographical works of both Paul and Thomas Sandby have been a well-known source for architectural historians for many years, and their accurate recording of architectural detail makes their work especially useful in the search for lost buildings. This is most certainly true of a pair of previously unpublished watercolours painted by Thomas Sandby in 1790, depicting the little known and long-demolished West Dean House in

Wiltshire. These watercolours, which are now housed in the Enfield Museum at Forty Hall in north London,¹ are wonderfully detailed and of the highest quality, and they allow us, with the assistance of other evidence, to piece together for the first time something of the architectural history of this intriguing country house. The first (Fig.1) depicts the eastern front of West Dean House, with the now largely demolished church to the right, and

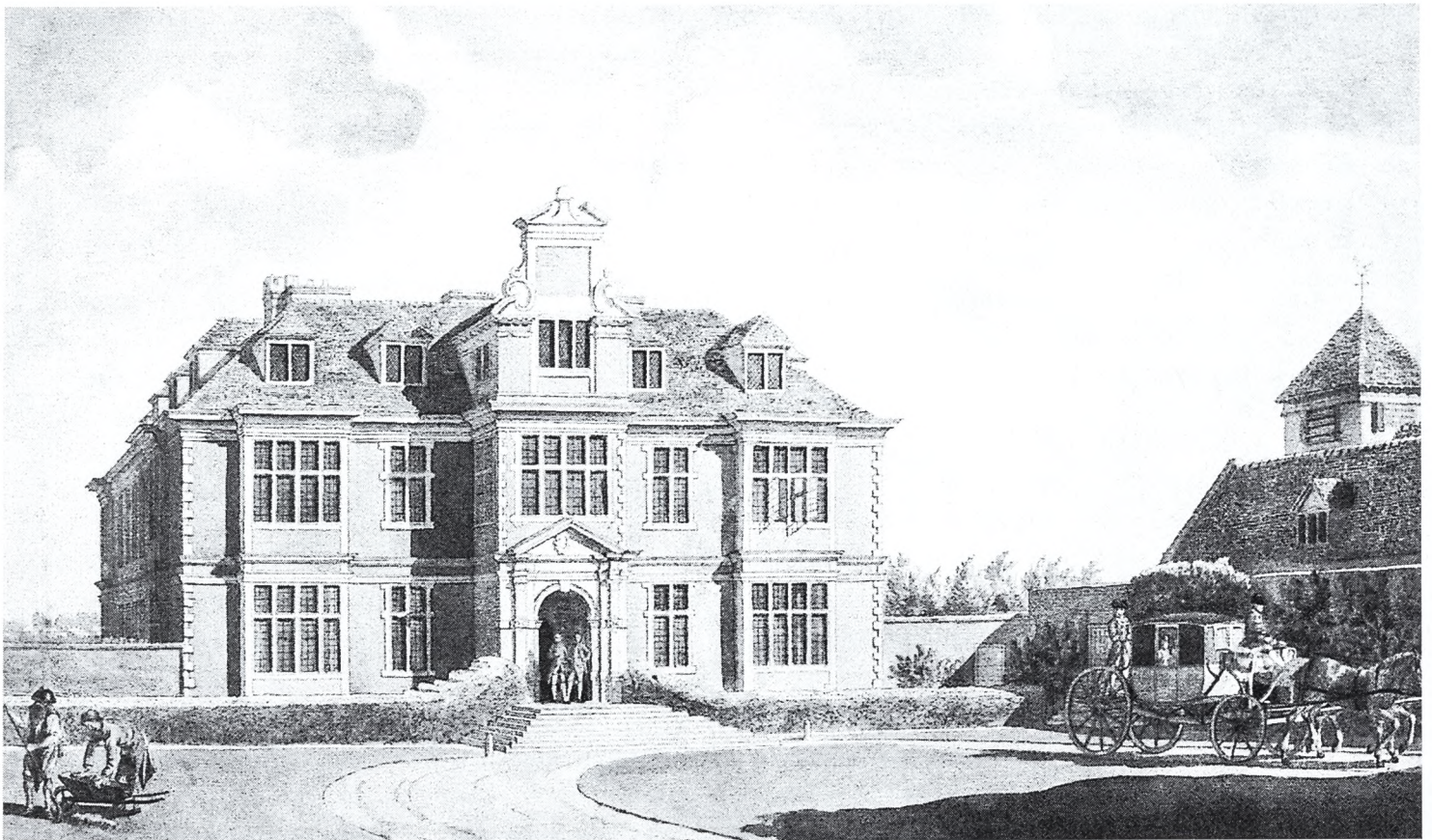


Figure 1. Thomas Sandby, watercolour of the east front, West Dean House, Wiltshire, 1790.
London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.



Figure 2. Thomas Sandby, watercolour of west front and garden terrace, West Dean House, Wiltshire, 1790. *London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.*

the second (Fig. 2) shows an oblique view of the western front set upon a long terrace with a central staircase and matching orangeries at either end. The unusual nature of the original house with its Jacobean-style rectangular bay windows and projecting porch, combined with its Renaissance-style² hipped roof, square plan and basement, together with the dramatic Baroque features of the curved pediment and the huge terrace, makes the survival of these watercolours even more useful to historians.

Further topographical information about this house is provided by a watercolour by J C Buckler of 1805 (Fig. 3), which records the appearance of the largely demolished church, together with the north-east corner of West Dean House.³ A second Buckler view of c1825 (Fig. 4) shows the site of the house

after its demolition with only the original entrance archway standing.⁴ Another view of the garden front dated 1729 survives in the Bodleian Library, but this is too distant and sketchy to contribute anything to our knowledge of the house or terrace.⁵ Three crude, but nonetheless valuable, engraved views of West Dean House were published in the early years of the nineteenth century. The first depicts the west or garden front (Fig. 5) and was reproduced in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1826. It shows the whole of the enormous terrace from a distance, confirming that both orangeries had five columns and four windows each. It also shows that the central terrace steps had large outer niches at the top of the landings on either side, not visible in Sandby's oblique view (Fig. 13). This engraving also



Figure 3. J C Buckler,
West Dean House
from the north-east,
detail of watercolour
of the former West
Dean church, 1805.
*Library of The Wiltshire
Archaeological and
Natural History Society.*



Figure 4. J. C. Buckler, drawing of the ruins of West Dean House, Wiltshire, 1825. *British Museum*.

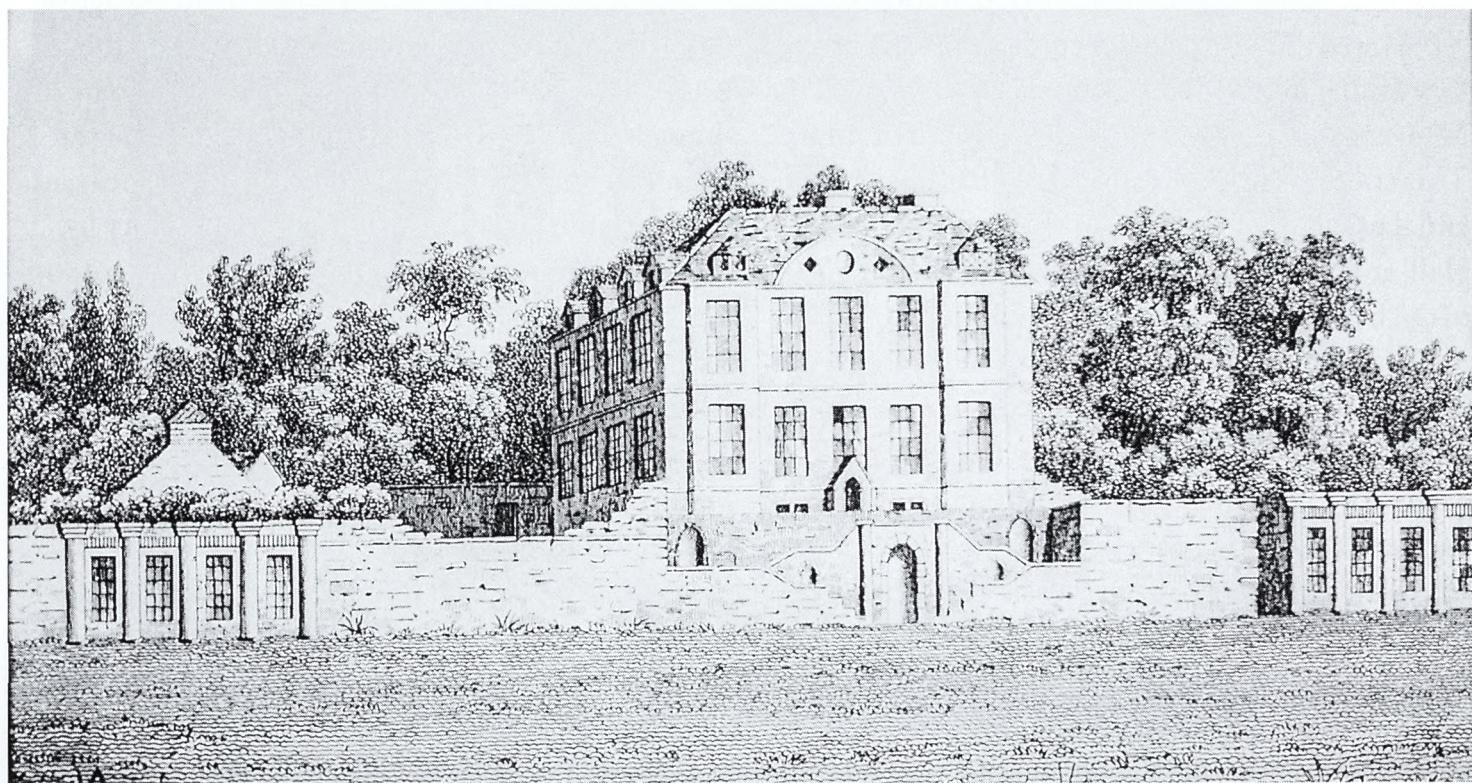


Figure 5. Engraved view of the west front of West Dean House from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1826. *David Bradbury*.

suggests that these orangeries were not symmetrically aligned either side of the steps, but this is a misinterpretation by the engraver of the perspective in the original drawing.⁶ It also clearly shows that the original house had a basement, for either side of the small central porch the tops of single two-light mullioned basement windows are clearly visible. The crudely drawn, pedimented porch was presumably added to this front when the terrace was constructed, to give direct access from the house. The second and third of these engravings of the east and west fronts (Fig. 6 & 7) were published in Sir Richard Colt Hoare's *The History of Modern Wiltshire* of 1841.⁷ The view of the east front is similar to Sandby's watercolour, though taken from a slightly greater distance, showing a screen of iron railings and gates to the forecourt, whose ornate overthrow suggests that they must be part of the alterations carried out around 1700. This view also shows that the elaborate pedimented gable over the porch, clearly visible in Sandby's view, had been removed and replaced with a hipped roof. The view of the west front is very similar to the engraving in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and it is possible that they were taken from the same original source.

As well as these visual records a detailed inventory for the house, dated 1726, survives amongst the Manvers Papers at Nottingham University Library.⁸ This confirms that the house had a basement floor, and that it had such traditional features as a 'great Hall' and a 'long Gallery' but without detailed plans of the house its use is necessarily limited.

Though West Dean House was demolished in 1823, the site still survives under the garden of a modern house, and there are farm buildings still in existence which were part of the former home farm and service buildings, including a huge brick barn which appears to date from the early sixteenth century. With the aid of an early Ordnance Survey map it is possible to reconstruct the position of both the house and the terrace with some accuracy (Fig. 8), enough to deduce that the house itself was approximately 100 feet square. The former garden terrace is

still clearly visible as a steep earth bank covered in bushes and young trees; it is over 300 feet long and gives a first clue to the actual scale of this structure. Some of the original garden walls also survive and one of them contains a plain yet finely carved blocked opening (Fig. 9), which dates from the early eighteenth century.⁹ This opening is a large former window, and its position on the reconstruction of the former layout of the terrace and house (Fig. 8) shows that it stands on the southern side of the former south orangery, and that it was once a side window to this orangery,¹⁰ making it the sole surviving architectural fragment of this once magnificent garden terrace. It is also possible to detect other physical traces of the original garden such as the bowling green, further terraces and fairly extensive former canals.

The only other piece of surviving architectural evidence that relates to the history of this house is the Evelyn Chapel, the former Borbach Chantry or south aisle of the former parish church at West Dean, which houses the splendid monuments to the Evelyn and Pierrepont families, who once owned West Dean House.¹¹

West Dean House was situated in the village of West Dean, nine miles from Stockbridge on the eastern border of Wiltshire, and it was the home to a branch of the Evelyn family for much of the seventeenth century.¹² The Evelyn family's fortunes had been established during the previous century by George Evelyn, who had obtained the royal monopoly on the manufacture of gunpowder.¹³ It was one of George's many grandsons, John Evelyn of Godstone, Surrey, who purchased the West Dean estate in 1618 from the Harcourt family. John had married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of William Stevens of Kingston-upon-Thames, and they had two sons, George and John. It seems to have been something of an Evelyn family tradition that a new estate was purchased for the elder son, whilst the younger inherited the gunpowder business. So it was that the recently acquired West Dean estate passed to George Evelyn on his father's death in

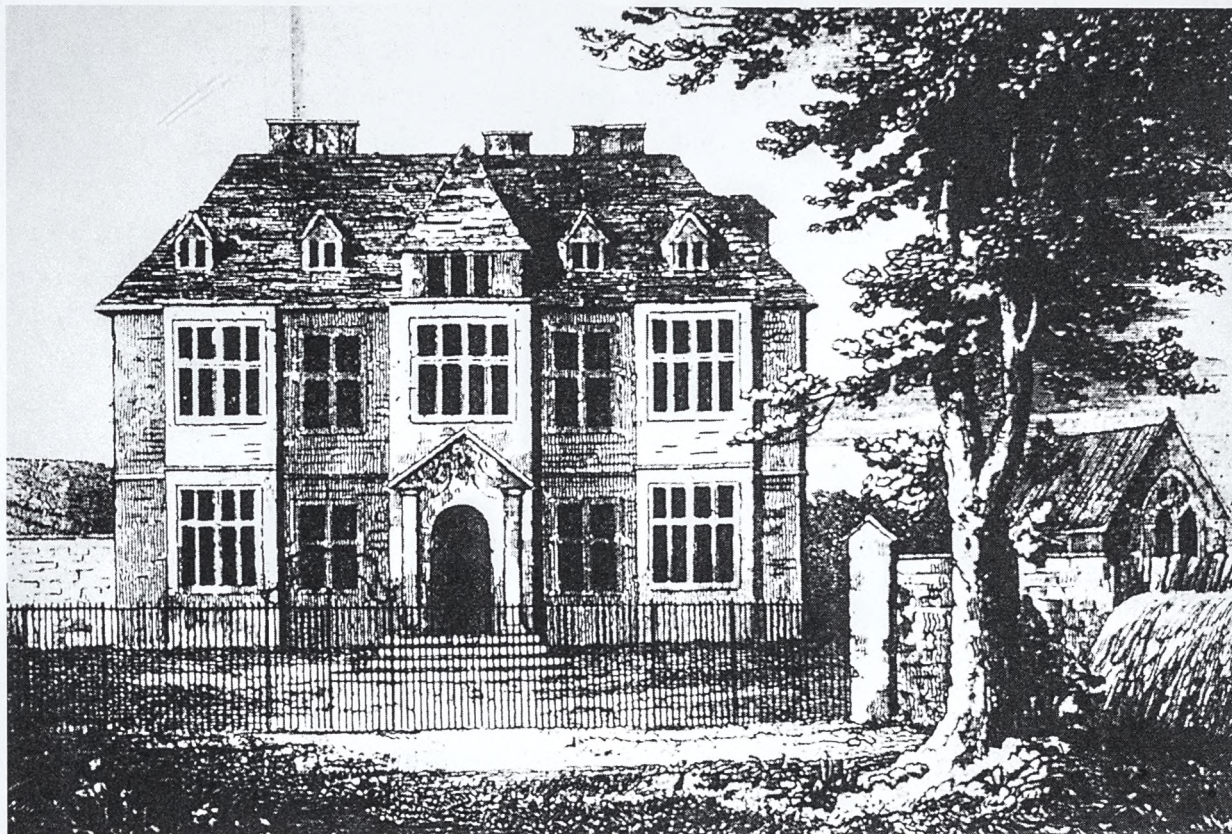


Figure 6. Engraved view of the east front of West Dean House from *The History of Modern Wiltshire* by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 1841. David Bradbury.

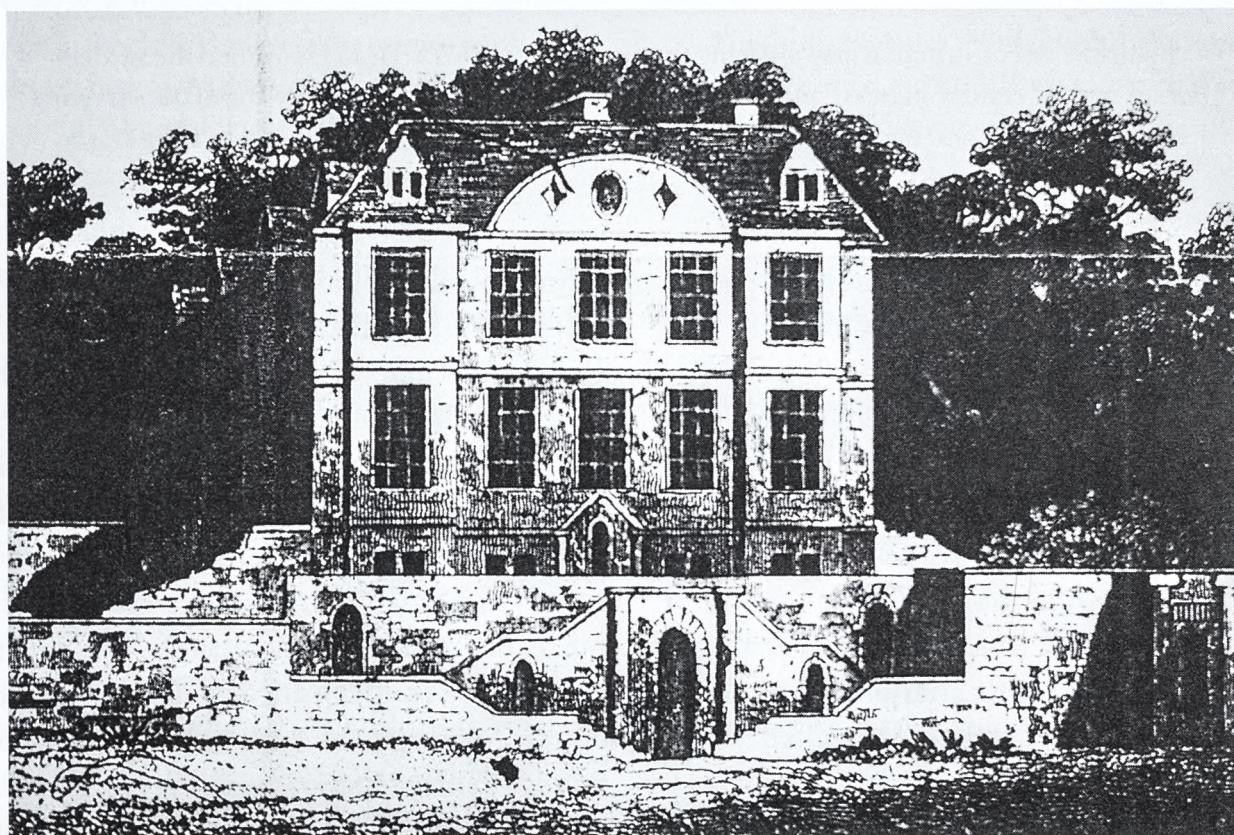


Figure 7. Engraved view of the west front of West Dean House from *The History of Modern Wiltshire* by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 1841. David Bradbury.

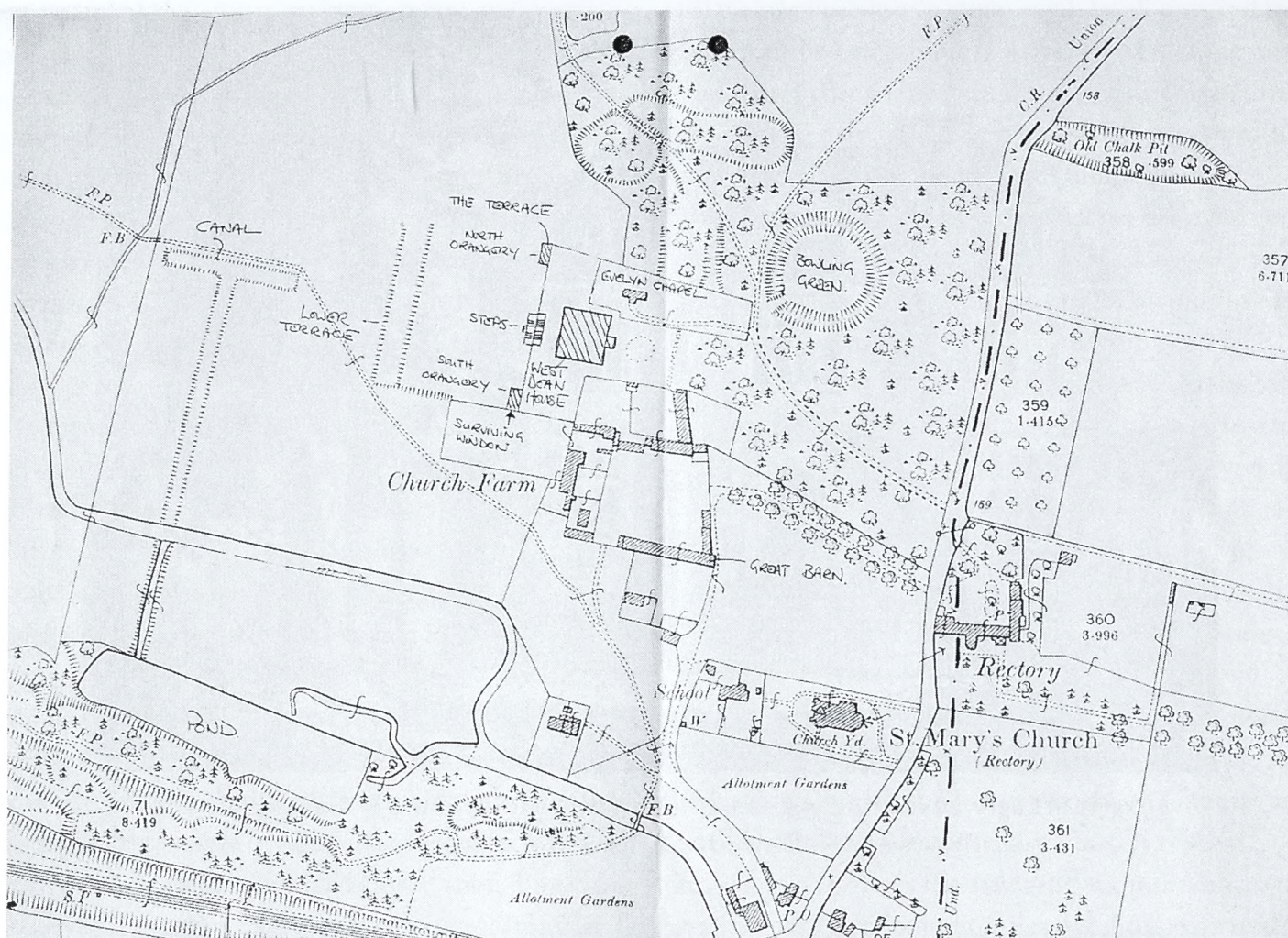


Figure 8. Reconstruction map showing the original site of West Dean House and the garden terrace with its central staircase and flanking conservatories. It also shows the site of the surviving blocked window, and the outline of the former terrace, canals and bowling green. *Peter Smith.*

1627. George, a Clerk in Chancery and first cousin to the diarist John Evelyn, married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir John Rivers of Chafford, Kent. George also purchased the neighbouring manor of Everley in 1634 in order to consolidate his land holdings in the area. He was probably also responsible for the erection of a grand monument (Fig.10) to his father, John Evelyn, in the church at West Dean. This tomb, which has traditionally arranged figures within a wonderfully accurate architectural surround, has been attributed to Nicholas Stone on stylistic grounds.¹⁴ On George's death in 1636 the estate, 'reputedly worth £2,000 per annum, though encumbered with £7,000 pounds worth of debts,' passed to his eldest son,

John Evelyn.¹⁵ John was born in 1601, and was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he obtained his BA in 1619. In 1622 he married Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Robert Coxe, grocer of London. He was knighted in 1623, became MP for Wilton in 1626 and was appointed a JP for Wiltshire in 1637. A Presbyterian, Sir John was a staunch and active supporter of the parliamentary cause, serving on many commissions both locally and nationally throughout the Interregnum. Appointed a Councillor of State in February 1660, 'he was given leave to go into the country on 27 June, and probably did not return.' Sir John died on 26 June 1685, 'a long lived, happy man', who left the West Dean estate to his



Figure 9. Blocked window to the former south conservatory, now in the garden wall to the north-west of Church Farm. *Peter Smith.*



Figure 10. Nicholas Stone (attrib.), the tomb of John Evelyn, died 1627, the Evelyn Chapel, West Dean, Wiltshire. *Peter Smith.*

daughter Elizabeth Pierrepont, so bringing the Evelyn family's ownership of West Dean to an end.

So far no single piece of documentary evidence about the builder or date of the original house at West Dean has come to light, and any one of the above-named members of the Evelyn family could have been responsible for the construction of this house. The building depicted in Sandby's watercolours is a brick house with stone dressings, of two equal storeys raised over a basement, roughly square in plan with a hipped plain tile roof and hipped dormer windows. The east entrance front (Fig.11) seems to have survived unaltered from the early seventeenth century, with its projecting bays and cross mullion windows with iron casements.

The central projecting three storey porch has an entrance archway with a pilastered and pedimented stone surround. This surround is most clearly recorded in the later drawing by Buckler of the ruins of West Dean House (Fig.3). The pilasters are tall and attenuated, standing on short piers, and with significant bands at the impost level of the inner arch. The bands have faceted rustication on impost blocks with small pieces of strapwork ornamentation above and below in a clearly Jacobean style, which confirms that this is almost certainly an early seventeenth century house. The porch (Fig.11) is topped by a more classically accurate and far more complex open pedimented gable which incorporates a panel below it, which, most vexingly, does

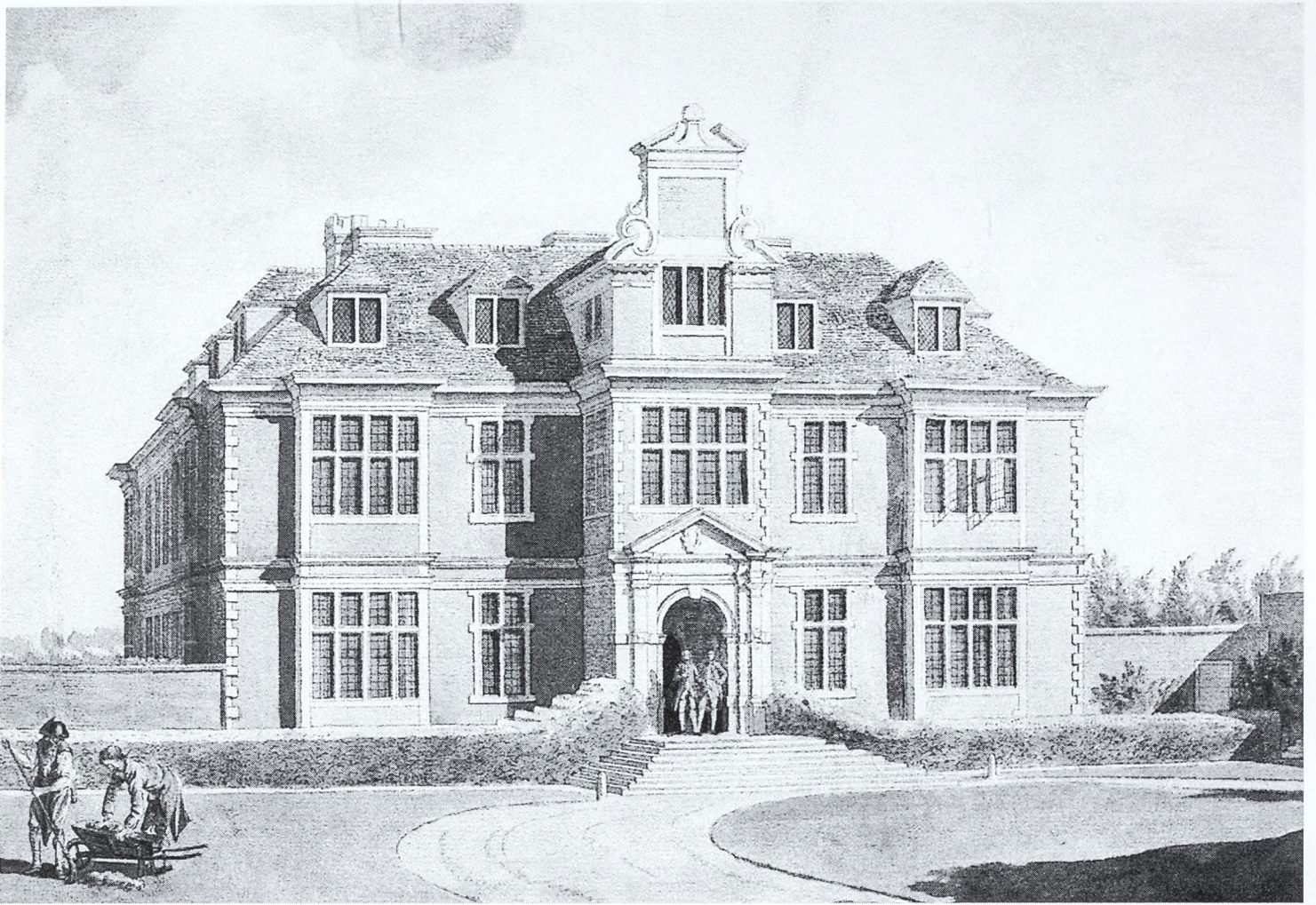


Figure 11. Thomas Sandby, detail of watercolour of the east front, West Dean House, 1790.
London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.

not contain a visible inscription, a coat-of-arms, a set of initials or even a date. All the other architectural details on this facade, the quoins, the first floor entablature with brick frieze, the deeply moulded eaves cornice, the slightly projecting square bays and the hipped dormer windows are continued on all the other facades and must have been part of the original design. The north and west fronts (Fig. 2) have had sashes inserted in their centres, and also into the shallow square bays at either end; bays that had survived on the entrance front, in their original form with four-light cross mullion windows. The south front (Fig. 12), which is only visible very obliquely in Sandby's view of the entrance front, has similar, but not identical square bays at either

end. If Sandby's deeply shaded rendition of this front is completely accurate it had slightly narrower projecting bays which retained their original two-light cross casement windows, with four later sash windows inserted between them. The fact that in its original form the design of this house combines old-fashioned Jacobean and more modern Renaissance-style details suggests that it is probably a very early and experimental example of this newly emerging Renaissance style, like the house in which Sandby's paintings now hang, Forty Hall.

If these suppositions are correct a date as early as 1620 is at least possible for the construction of this house, between 1618, when John Evelyn purchased the estate, and his death in 1627. But around

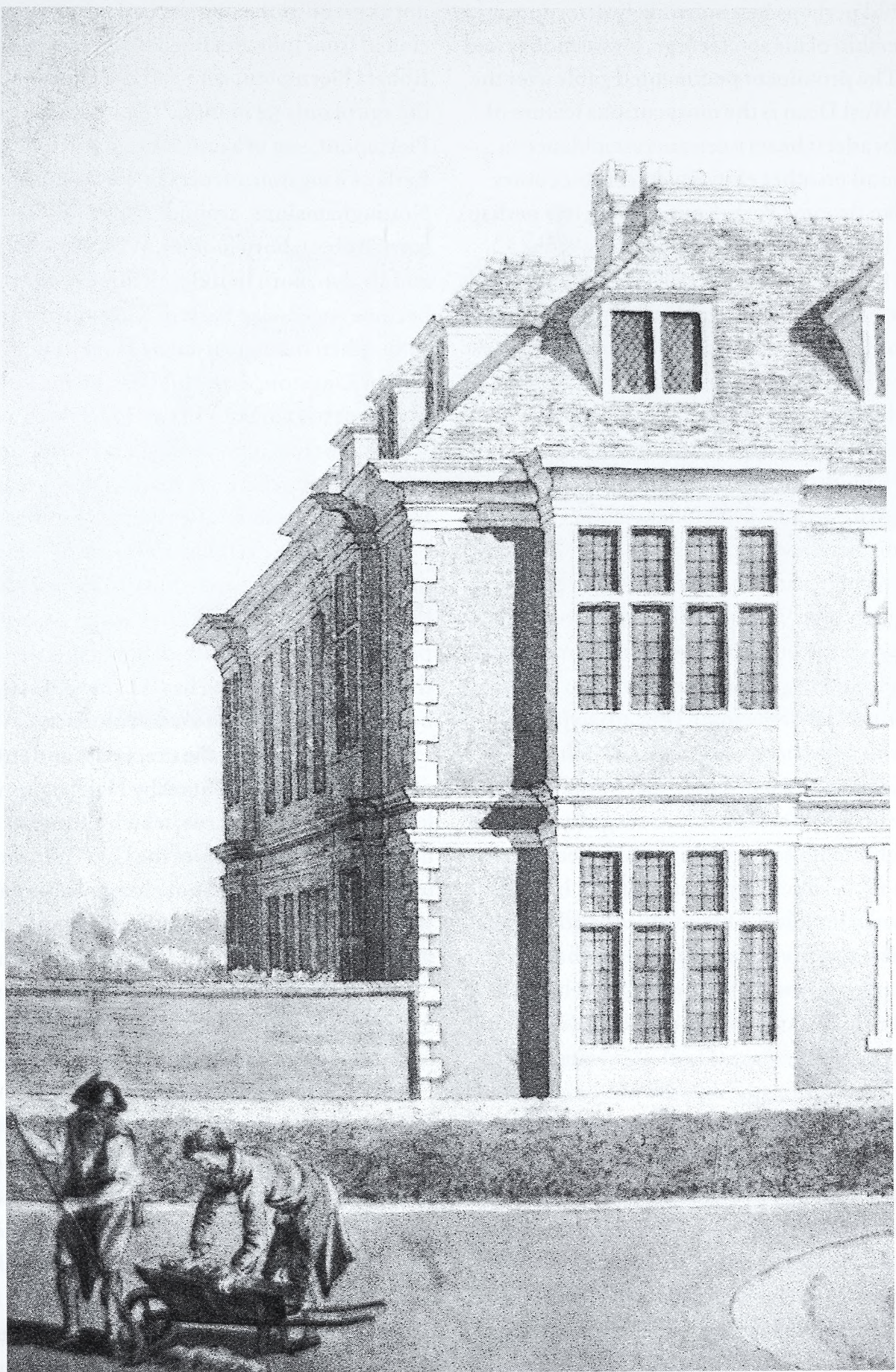


Figure 12. Thomas Sandby, detail of watercolour showing oblique view of the south front, West Dean House, 1790. *London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.*

1630 would perhaps be a more likely date, during the ownership of his son George, between 1627 and 1636.¹⁶ The prominent pedimented gable over the porch at West Dean is the most curious feature of the east facade; it bears a certain resemblance to gables found on other early seventeenth-century houses like Broome Park, Kent, though it is perhaps closer to later examples like the gable over the entrance front at Raynham Hall, Norfolk. The gable is most reminiscent of the gables found on top of tall town houses in Amsterdam, which might suggest a designer who had at least some experience of the latest architectural developments in Holland. Very few architects working in England at this time could claim such knowledge, except perhaps Nicholas Stone, who had studied in Holland and eventually married the daughter of the famous Dutch mason and architect Henrick de Keyser, before returning to England in 1613.¹⁷ There is certainly some similarity between the pediments which decorate the porch gable and the pediments which top the architectural surround of the tomb (Fig.10) to John Evelyn, which has been attributed to Nicholas Stone, and it is at least possible that Stone designed the house here at West Dean.¹⁸ George Evelyn, who presumably commissioned this tomb, died heavily in debt in 1636, which might suggest that he spent large sums on building. On the other hand it is also just possible that West Dean House was built in the later seventeenth century by Sir John Evelyn, when he retired to his estates after the Restoration.¹⁹ Or then again a combination of both these periods. Whatever the answer, perhaps the publication of these views of West Dean and these tentative speculations about its design will bring to light further evidence about the house and its builders.

When Sir John Evelyn died in 1685 all his estates were bequeathed to his daughter Elizabeth; he left only five shillings to his other daughter, Sarah, because of her third marriage to George Saunderson, Lord Castleton, a Tory. The grateful Elizabeth had an elaborate Baroque monument erected in West Dean church to his memory, though

not as grand as the one she had previously commissioned from John Bushnell to her former husband Robert Pierrepont, who had died unexpectedly at the age of only 34 in 1669.²⁰ She had married Robert Pierrepont, son of a junior branch of family of the Earls of Kingston, owners of Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire, around 1658. They had three sons, Robert, born in 1660, William, born in 1662 and Evelyn, born in 1665, all three of whom were to become successive Earls of Kingston. In December 1680, when their great-uncle Henry Pierrepont, 2nd Earl of Kingston, died childless, all his titles and estates passed to the widowed Elizabeth's eldest son, the twenty-year-old Robert Pierrepont, who became the 3rd Earl. He died only two years later in Dieppe in December 1682 and his brother William became the 4th Earl, also at the age of twenty. It was during William's ownership of Thoresby Hall that the house was rebuilt, which brings us to the complex problem of the authorship of this new house, the evidence for which has, I believe, a strong bearing on the later works at West Dean.

The evidence for the exact date and authorship of the rebuilding of Thoresby Hall begins with the local Hearth Tax returns, which show that a large house existed here before the Civil War, and that the number of hearths did not change between 1661 and 1678.²¹ This suggests that Colen Campbell's statement in *Vitruvius Britannicus* that the house was 'built Anno 1671' is incorrect. The evidence from the accounts shows that remodelling work was certainly being carried out here in 1685–87 for the 4th Earl. Historians originally suggested that Campbell's other statement that Thoresby was 'performed by the same hand that afterwards built Chatsworth' meant that William Talman was the architect, but, as Howard Colvin has pointed out, 'the word 'performed' is one that Campbell uses elsewhere of masons, not architects, and it would better fit Benjamin Jackson, who was master mason at Thoresby and at Chatsworth.' He concluded that though Talman may have designed Thoresby, the statement in Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*

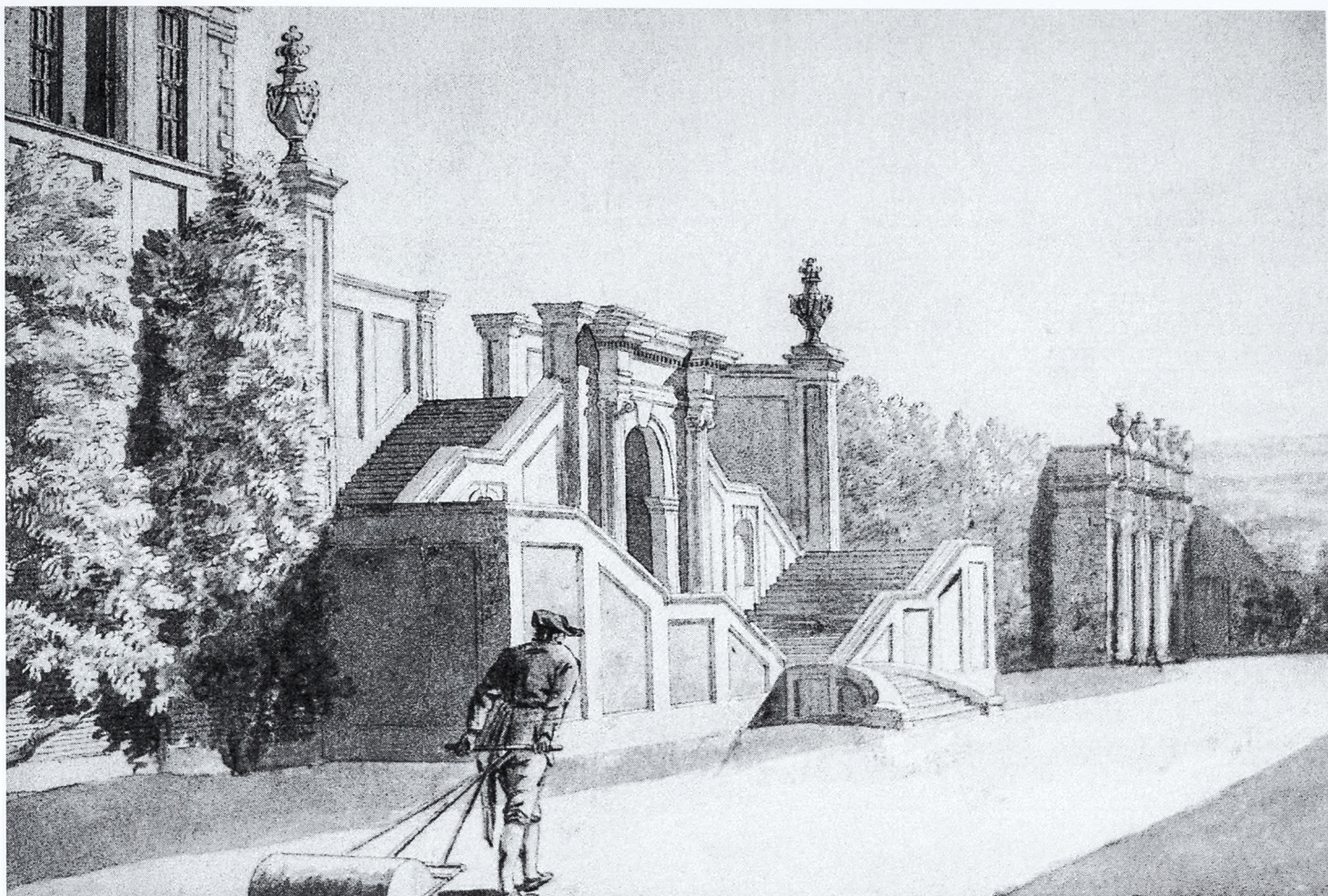


Figure 13. Thomas Sandby, detail of watercolour showing central terrace staircase below the west front, West Dean House, 1790. *London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.*

does not suggest this. The second piece of evidence that links Talman and Thoresby is Sir John Vanbrugh's list of owners who had employed Talman and 'met with vexation and disappointment', which includes the Earl of Kingston. As Howard Colvin has astutely pointed out, Vanbrugh's letter, written in 1703, would have referred to William Pierrepont's youngest brother, Evelyn, who had inherited the title of 5th Earl in 1690. In a letter of 1731 Nicholas Hawksmoor, who was to some extent involved in the remodelling, states that Thoresby 'was burnt down as soon as finished, and that the attic storey was added at the refitting of the house after the fire,' and since a surviving estate map dated 1690 shows the house with its attic, it seems certain that Thoresby Hall was

completed by this date. So if William Talman was employed by the 5th Earl, as Vanbrugh states, it was not at Thoresby. Where else could he have been employed?

Fortunately the inventory for West Dean House is part of a set of inventories for all Evelyn Pierrepont's properties, compiled on his death in 1725, and this shows that he owed seven houses in all.²² Apart from Thoresby and West Dean it includes his London house in Arlington Street, Holme Pierrepont Hall, Nottinghamshire, Acton House, Middlesex, Haslop Hall, Buckinghamshire, and, rather surprisingly, Tong Castle, Staffordshire.²³ The relative importance of these houses can be easily judged from the value of their contents included in the inventories. Thoresby comes first, of course, at

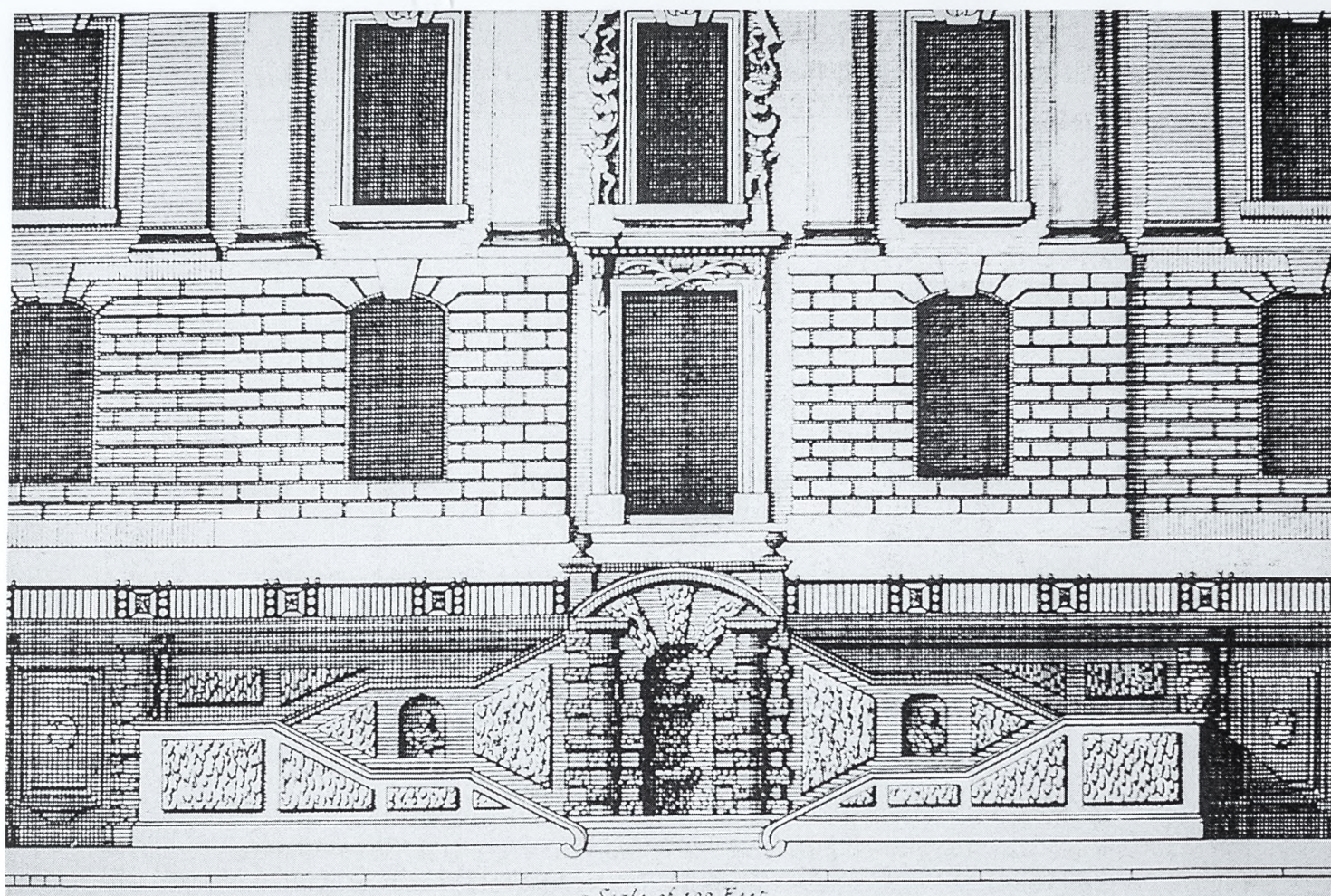


Figure 14. William Talman, the west terrace staircase at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, c.1695, from *Vitruvius Britannicus*. David Bradbury.

£3,086.0.0, then Arlington Street at £2,383.2.6, with West Dean third at £1,725.0.0 and all the others at under £710, making West Dean by far the most likely candidate to have had additions made during the 5th Earl's life time.²⁴ Though the sons of Elizabeth Pierrepont became successive Earls of Kingston their grandfather remained the owner of West Dean until his death in 1685, when the estate passed to his daughter Elizabeth. She lived on at West Dean until her death in 1699, when the estate finally passed to her only surviving son, Evelyn. Though a relatively modest house compared with Thoresby Hall, it was nevertheless the Earl's birthplace and childhood home, and he is known to have 'occasionally resided at West Dean'. His cousin, Sir John Evelyn of Wotton, records in his diary on 20 September 1725 that 'the house [at West Dean] is

old, but has one handsome apartment made by his Grace,' referring to the 5th Earl, who was created Duke of Kingston in 1715. The existence and relative importance of this 'apartment' is confirmed by the inventory which includes an entry for 'the best Appartment and [its] Closett', where the furnishings were valued at £117.8.0, a far higher figure than for any other rooms in the house. In comparison 'the withdrawing Room' contents were valued at £63.13.0, whilst the contents of 'the long Gallery' were only valued at £16.18.0, with £6.0.0 worth of books and the contents of 'the great Hall' a mere £12.10.0. Though the 5th Earl 'became a notable figure in London society', he retained strong connections with Wiltshire, being Deputy Lieutenant in 1701, *Custos Rotulorum* for Wiltshire from 1706 to 1712, and acquiring a town house in Trowbridge



Figure 15. William Talman, the north dummy conservatory at Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, 1701. *Peter Smith.*

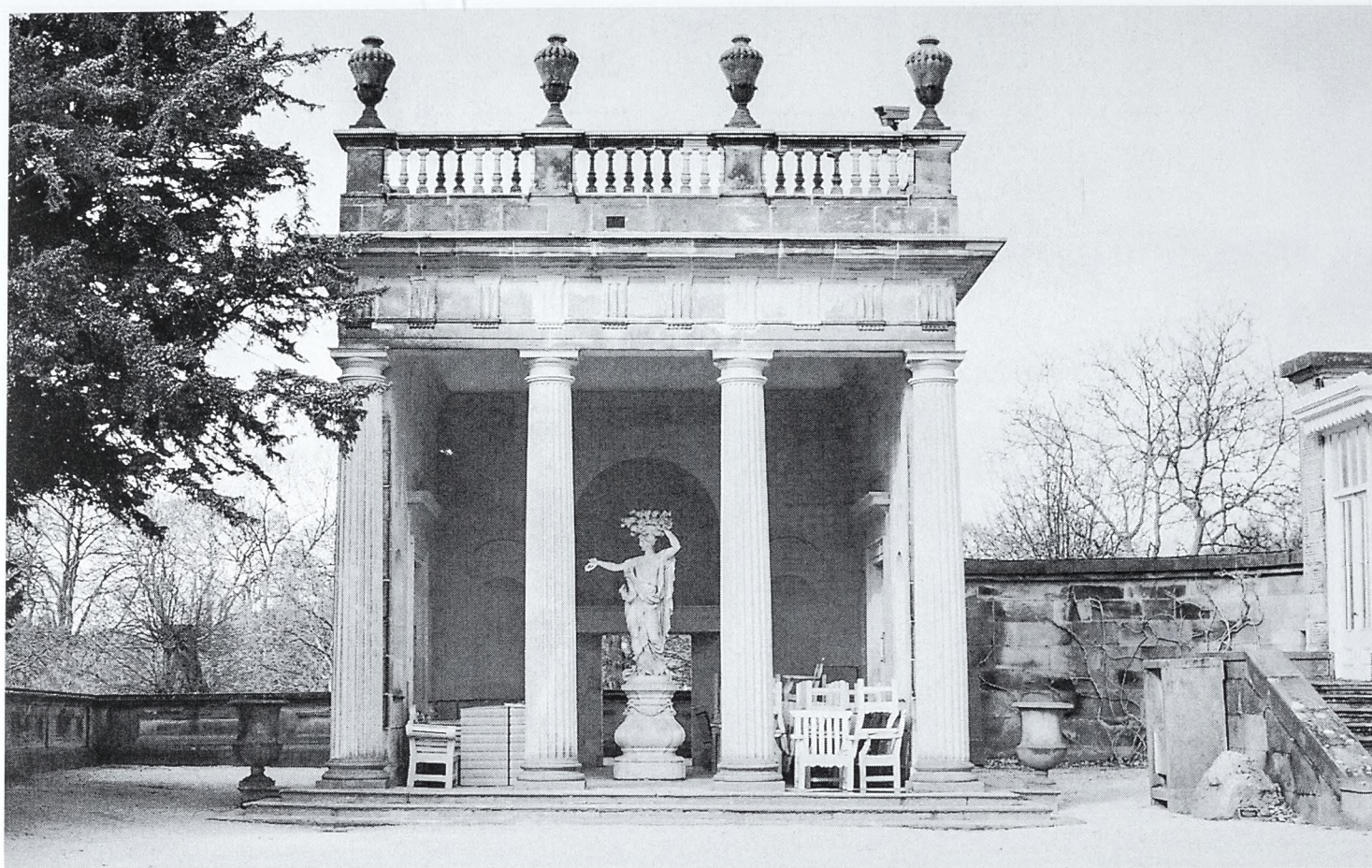


Figure 16. William Talman, the Temple of Flora at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, c.1695. *Peter Smith.*

in 1711.²⁵ In the light of all this evidence it would seem logical to assume that Evelyn Pierrepont was most likely to have employed William Talman here at West Dean House, and this suggestion is clearly born out by the stylistic evidence of the alterations and additions so clearly depicted in Thomas Sandby's watercolours.

The magnificent western terrace and particularly the central staircase (Fig. 13), is very similar to the staircase at the centre of the western terrace at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire (Fig. 14), designed by Talman c1695. The central projecting flight of steps, the central archways with columned surrounds, the double flights of stairs with central landings, the side niches which mark these landings, the extremely low parapets, and the panels which decorate the facades; all these features are common to both these staircases, although, of course, the Chatsworth staircase is made entirely of

stone and decorated with elaborate frosting on the panels and on the rustication. The Chatsworth staircase retains its iron balustrade, which stands on a low parapet; West Dean on the other hand has either lost its iron balustrade or it was never completed. Unlike the Chatsworth staircase, the one at West Dean is partly set back into the terrace walling itself, with tall square piers topped by urns marking the break. Complex external staircases were something of a speciality of Talman's and there are very similar staircases on some of his designs for both Welbeck Abbey and Haughton House, made for the Duke of Newcastle at exactly this time.²⁶

The stylistic evidence of the orangeries is equally strong. The basic idea of framing a facade with matching garden buildings was used by Talman on the entrance front at Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, in 1701, where the real orangery to the south is matched by a dummy copy to the north (Fig. 15).²⁷

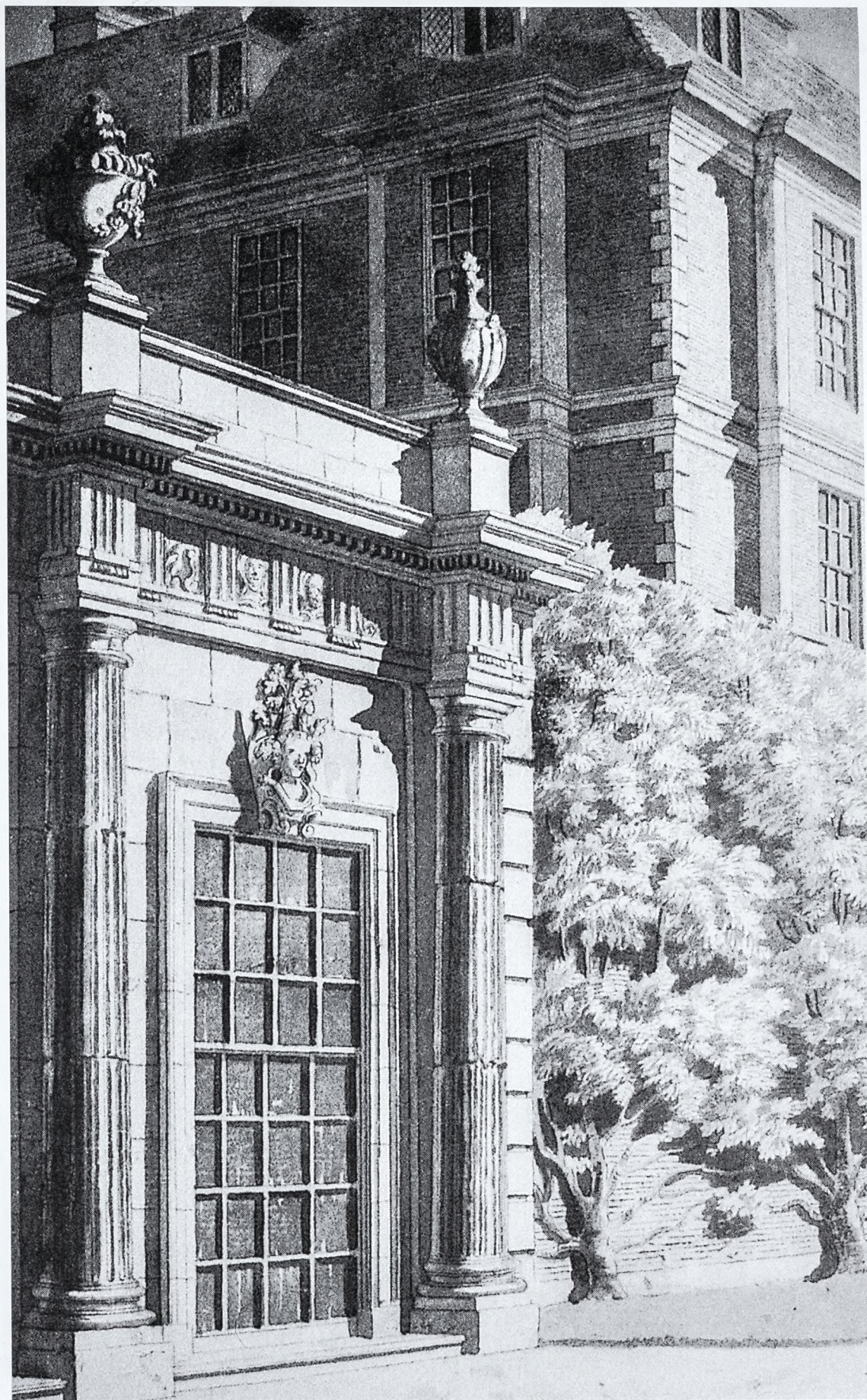


Figure 17. Thomas Sandby, detail of watercolour showing the north conservatory below the west front, West Dean House, 1790. *London Borough of Enfield. Peter Smith.*

But it is the design of the facades of the orangeries that makes this attribution to Talman so convincing. Their facades are very similar to the facade of the Temple of Flora, at Chatsworth (Fig. 16), also by Talman, which uses the same fluted Tuscan order topped with urns. The single bay of the northern orangery, so clearly recorded in Sandby's west view (Fig. 17), is also strikingly similar to the main doorway to Drayton House, Northamptonshire (Fig. 18), designed by Talman in 1702, which has an almost identical elaborately carved keystone with a bust and background of swags. The terrace and conservatories are also topped with a set of very fine urns, always a favourite motif of Talman. Stylistic and documentary evidence conspire to suggest that William Talman designed these additions to West Dean between 1699 and 1703.

The remodelling of the house itself, also for Evelyn Pierrepont, was also presumably by William Talman. The 'one handsome apartment made by his grace', referred to above, must surely have been created at the same time as the external alterations to the house, since it involved replacing the original stone cross casement windows with modern sashes on the north, south and west facades. By far the most dramatic alteration was the addition of the large segmental pediment over the centre of the west facade, obviously intended to give this relatively small facade a stronger emphasis to match the new scale of the 300 foot terrace below. Talman is not known to have used such a large segmental pediment in any of his other designs,²⁸ but the fact that the pediment was clearly designed to integrate the house and the new terrace does suggest that they are likely to have been designed by the same hand. The large segmental pediment is not a particularly common feature in English Baroque architecture, and since we can now be fairly sure this example is by Talman then perhaps he was associated in some way with two other examples nearby, namely Biddesden House, Wiltshire, 15 miles to the north-east, built in 1711 for General John Richmond Webb,²⁹ and the even closer Clarendon Park, Wiltshire, 4 miles to

the west, which was reputedly built in 1737, but about which almost nothing is known for certain.³⁰

The terrace at West Dean was part of an elaborate new garden layout, which is mentioned briefly in three short accounts of the house. The first is in an article in *the Gentleman's Magazine* for October 1826.

Immediately beyond were the pleasure-grounds of considerable extent, where vestiges of the successive tastes of the different proprietors were till very lately easily discovered.

The second is in *The History of Modern Wiltshire* by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, published in 1841.

A bold terrace before the west front, supported on stone-work, highly ornamented, overhung the gardens, on the site of which considerable vestiges of the plantations and bowling greens attest their former extent and decoration.

The third is in *Collections for a History of West Dean* by the Rev G S Master, published in 1884.

Closely adjoining the parish church it [West Dean House] stood in a grove of elm trees, at the top of a succession of terraces and formal gardens facing west, in which direction lay the park, well timbered and adorned with canals in the Dutch manner, fed from a large fish pond, which, with its over hanging bank of yews, formed a prominent feature of the ornamental grounds. The ancient circular entrenchment, already noticed, formed a convenient bowling-green.

Even today some of these garden features are still visible in outline, though they are more clearly discernible on early maps. The reconstruction map (Fig. 8) shows another terrace to the west of Talman's terrace, and beyond, on axis with the centre of the former house, is the outline of a canal. This was linked to the south via another long narrow canal to the canalised stream and then to 'the fish pond, with its overhanging bank of yews.' The 'the ancient circular entrenchment' or camp also still survives 100 yards north-east of the former house. If the terrace was designed by Talman, it is possible that the garden was designed by George London, though it is hard to believe that John Evelyn, the gardener and a relative of the 5th Earl,



Figure 18. William Talman, the central doorway in the courtyard at Drayton House, Northamptonshire, 1702. *Peter Smith.*

was not consulted, especially in the light of the famous terrace he had designed for his brother George at Wotton, in Surrey.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the celebrated daughter of the 1st Duke of Kingston, records in her early letters some of the family's favourite occupations when resident at West Dean, and 'it is traditionally asserted that she eloped with Mr Montagu from this place.' In 1726, on the death of the Duke, the estates passed to his grandson, the fifteen-year-old Evelyn Pierrepont, who became the 2nd and last Duke. His trustees sold the estate of West Dean almost immediately to Sir Arthur Cole, later Lord Ranelagh, who died, aged ninety, at West Dean in 1754.³¹ 'This nobleman left it [West Dean House] to his widow, who resided here till her death, when it descended, in conformity with his lordship's will to the Hon. Mr Moore.'³² The Moore family rarely lived here, and it was tenanted during much of this period 'by the family of Elwyn, Baronets.' At the end of the century West Dean House was let to 'a society of nuns, who fled from Flanders during the Revolution;' but they were so harassed by the 'rudeness and annoyance' of men working on the construction of the intended canal from Salisbury to Southampton that they soon departed. The house was described by John Britton in *The Beauties of England and Wales* in 1814 as 'large, and contains several apartments; but, having been unoccupied for some years, is falling into ruin'.³³ It was finally purchased in 1823³⁴ by a Mr Charles Baring Wall, who immediately began to dismantle the house, sell off the materials, and convert the offices and outbuildings into a farmhouse and homestead.

Though the main house at West Dean has been demolished for nearly two centuries the very high quality of the Thomas Sandby's watercolours combined with the other surviving documentary evidence has allowed us to rediscover this delightful and fascinating country house. The original house, built for the Evelyn family was an intriguing one with its remarkable combination of old and new architectural ideas, which makes it is a sort of 'miss-

ing link' in the history of country house design as it evolved from the Jacobean to a more truly Renaissance style of architecture. It is also quintessentially the house of the new rising gentry, purchased for the eldest son of a fortune founded on the manufacture of gunpowder, which aspired to the respectability of a country estate. Equally fascinating are the alterations carried out at the end of the seventeenth century for their far wealthier and more aristocratic descendant, the eventual Duke of Kingston. From the main seat of a small estate, West Dean House had now become the minor seat of a major landowner, who had other houses including his family's ancestral seat at Thoresby in Nottinghamshire. But this did not mean that the house or estate were neglected. It was still the administrative centre of the Pierrepont's newly acquired Wiltshire estate, and perhaps more importantly it was the Duke's birthplace and childhood home. So, if this attribution to William Talman is accepted, his commission did not require the transformation of the house into another great house like Thoresby. Instead it involved the creation of a house for the occasional residence of a Duke, with 'one good apartment' and a grand garden, including a stupendous terrace with a magnificent staircase and two delightful orangeries. Here at West Dean House the change in function and status of the house and its owners is clearly reflected in the type and extent of the architectural alterations carried out to this property in around 1700. As this house lost its special hold on successive owners, who were not born or brought up here, so the house's importance waned; first it was tenanted, then leased to an institution until it was finally sold and dismantled in 1823.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

- 1 Enfield, Forty Hall Museum, London Borough of Enfield, Ba 73, Ba 74, (600 × 750mm). I would like to thank John Griffin, Museum and Heritage Officer at Forty Hall Museum for his assistance and for permission to reproduce photographs of these watercolours. They were acquired by Forty Hall Museum from J S Maas & Co Ltd in 1967 and they were identified as being of West Dean House, Wiltshire by John Harris in 1968. Two very similar views of the house are included in the Kemm Collection in the Salisbury Museum; these sketchy watercolours are reputed to be nineteenth century copies of the Sandby originals.
- 2 I have consciously used the somewhat old-fashioned term 'Renaissance' to describe the revolutionary new type of house, and its stylistic features, which was emerging at this time. I could have used the term 'Carolean', but this term completely fails to recognize the longevity of this house type, which continued to be popular well into the eighteenth century. For me 'Renaissance' is still the best term available to describe the new purer classicism associated with this new country house style and the architecture of Inigo Jones.
- 3 Devizes, The Library of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Illustrated in Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments for England (hereafter RCHME), *Churches of South-East Wiltshire*. London, 1987, back cover and 245, fig. 570.
- 4 London, British Library, Buckler Drawings. A photograph of this drawing is deposited in the National Monuments Record, Swindon, BB 80/2902.
- 5 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gough Maps, 33, f. 43. I would like to thank Howard Colvin for bringing this drawing to my attention, and advising me of its contents.
- 6 The true symmetry of this terrace can be seen clearly on the reconstruction map of the layout of these buildings (Fig. 8).
- 7 Sir Richard Colt Hoare, *The History of Modern Wiltshire*, 1841.
- 8 Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Hallward Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, M 4882 and M 4883.
- 9 I would like to thank Mrs Parsons, of Church Farm, for allowing me access to her section of the site of the former West Dean House.
- 10 In a report for Church Farm House this opening is described as 'a fine doorway', but close inspection of it on site reveals that it has an original cill well above ground level and that it is in fact a former window opening [RCHME, Lesser Secular Monument Reports, Wiltshire, West Dean, Church Farm House, J A Reeves and N J Moore, 1979].
- 11 RCHME, *Churches of South-East Wiltshire*. London, 1987, 52 and 200-02.
- 12 Colin Fenton, 'The Evelyn Family in Wiltshire', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, LVIII, 1961, 18-24.
- 13 H E Malden (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Surrey*, IV, London, 1912, 286.
- 14 RCHME, *op. cit.*, 201.
- 15 Basil Duke Henning, *The House of Commons, 1660-1690*, London, 1983, 281.
- 16 There are two other very early Renaissance-style hipped roof houses not far away in Berkshire, West Woodhay House built for Sir Benjamin Rudyard in 1636 and Aldermarston Court built for Sir Humphrey Forster in the same year, which may possibly be related to West Dean House [Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'West Woodhay House, Berkshire' *Country Life*, CLXXXI, January 22, 1987, 44-48; Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture Without Kings*, Manchester, 1995, 63-7].
- 17 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1660-1840*, New Haven and London, 1995, 929-31.
- 18 John Stone, third son of Nicholas Stone, designed Chesterton House, Warwickshire, as well as designing church monuments for the Peto family [Howard Colvin, 'Chesterton, Warwickshire', *Architectural Review*, CXVIII, 115-117].
- 19 For example Thorpe Hall, Cambridgeshire, built in 1654, and Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire, built 1659-76, still have Jacobean-style bay windows.
- 20 RCHME, *op. cit.*, 55.
- 21 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1660-1840*, New Haven and London, 1995, 951; John Harris, 'Thoresby House, Nottinghamshire', *Architectural History*, IV, 1961, 10, 21; *ibid.*, 'Thoresby Concluded' *Architectural History*, IV, 1963, 103-5.
- 22 Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Hallward Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Manvers Papers, M 4882 and M 4883.
- 23 The inventory says Staffordshire, though the site of the former Tong Castle is now in Shropshire.
- 24 The Arlington Street house was remodelled 1740-44 by Henry Flitcroft [Colvin, *op. cit.*, 369]. Howard Colvin gives the dates as 'c.1740-2', but payments to Henry

- Flitcroft are recorded in the Manvers Papers from June 1740 to May 1744 [Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Hallward Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Manvers Papers, M 4353, 42]. Holme Pierrepont Hall had a new staircase inserted c1660, but it shows no evidence of having been altered around 1700; major demolition work and alterations took place after 1730 [Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England; Nottinghamshire*, London, 1979, 147–8].
- 25 'A subsidiary manor known as 'Trowbridge Dauntsey', whose principal house stood on a site adjacent to [Thomas] Cooper's house, was acquired in 1711 by the Pierrepont family, Dukes of Kingston' [Michael Lansdown, 'The Lloyds Bank Facade at Trowbridge and its Relation with William Talman's Facade at Dyrham Park', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 1993, 84].
- 26 John Harris, *William Talman, Maverick Architect*, London, 1982, plates 60–69. A very similar staircase was added to the garden facade of St James Palace by Sir Christopher Wren in 1686 [H M Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, v, London, 1976, 236–7, plate 27], and another was built at Claremont House, Surrey, to the designs of Sir John Vanbrugh, 1715–20 [Kerry Downes, *Vanbrugh*, London, 1977, plate 118].
- 27 He may also have used this idea again at Bulstrode Park, Buckinghamshire, where Talman is now known to have worked in 1715 [Colvin, *op.cit.*, 953]. The engraving of the house in *Vitruvius Britannicus* shows that single storey conservatories with pilastered facades had been added, with steps and terraces, either side of an earlier facade [J Badeslade and J Rocque, *Vitruvius Britannicus volume the Fourth*, London, 1739, plate 40–2].
- 28 William Talman designed a small segmental pediment to the niche in the centre of the west terrace staircase at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire (Fig. 14) and another over the main doorway to Swallowfield House, Berkshire [Harris, *op.cit.*, plate 19].
- 29 Lees-Milne, *op.cit.*, 213–18.
- 30 Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England; Wiltshire*, London, 1964, 181.
- 31 The *Accounts and Rentals* for the West Dean estate for 1726–36 survive amongst the Manvers Papers, suggesting that the estate was probably leased to Sir Arthur Cole for these first ten years [Nottingham, University of Nottingham, Hallward Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, M 4348–4358 and M 4509–4548].
- 32 John Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, xv, part 2, London, 1814, 210–11.
- 33 Britton, *op.cit.*, 210–11.
- 34 The date of this sale is given variously as 1819 [G S Masters, 'Collections for a History of West Dean', *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, xx, 1884, 270], and c1823 [*The Gentleman's Magazine*, *op.cit.*, 297].