



THE  
GEORGIAN  
GROUP

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Pete Smith, 'A House by Sir Christopher Wren?  
The Second Newby Hall and its Gardens',  
*The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XVI, 2008,  
pp. 5-30

# A HOUSE BY SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN? THE SECOND NEWBY HALL AND ITS GARDENS

PETE SMITH

Newby Hall, near Ripon in Yorkshire, is justly famous today for the additions and alterations made to the house for William Weddell by a succession of architects, including John Carr of York,<sup>1</sup> Robert Adam<sup>2</sup> and William Belwood<sup>3</sup> in the later eighteenth century. But, long before these architects were brought in, the Newby Hall built for Sir Edward Blackett, 2nd Bt. (1649–1718), was also much admired (Fig. 1). A succession of contemporary visitors described it as ‘the finest house I saw in Yorkshire’,<sup>4</sup> ‘one of the most pleasant and most perfect [houses] that we ever saw’,<sup>5</sup> ‘a stately

beautiful seat, . . . nothing can either add to the contrivance or the situation of [this house]’<sup>6</sup> and ‘The house itself is a Magnificent structure . . . one may pronounce it one of the finest Country seats in ye North of England’.<sup>7</sup> In order to try to understand why this house and its gardens were so much admired it is my intention to address three specific questions in this paper. One, when was the house built and the garden laid out? Two, what did the original house and its garden look like? And three, was the house designed by Sir Christopher Wren?



Fig. 1.  
Newby Hall.  
The west front.  
*Pete Smith.*

## THE DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

In Nikolaus Pevsner's *Buildings of England* volume for the West Riding of Yorkshire, published in 1967, he states that 'Newby Hall, [was] begun in 1705 for Sir Edward Blackett of . . . Newcastle'.<sup>8</sup> Pevsner, like many historians before him, based his dating of the house on Ely Hargrove's *History of the Castle, Town and Forest of Knaresborough and Harrowgate* . . . published before 1800.<sup>9</sup> It is now known, from a number of sources, that this date is incorrect. The earliest and most reliable of these alternative sources is to be found in *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, in which she records that she visited Newby Hall in 1697, and goes on to describe Sir Edward Blackett's house and its garden in detail.<sup>10</sup>

Eileen Harris states that Sir Edward Blackett purchased the Newby estate in 1677,<sup>11</sup> soon after his marriage to his second wife Mary, daughter of Sir John Yorke of Gouldthwaite, Yorkshire. John

Cornforth unearthed a survey of the estate which includes an illustration of the Newby Hall that he acquired.<sup>12</sup> This survey (Fig. 2), which was commissioned by Sir Edward, is dated 21 March 1682/3. It shows a stone house with three gables and mullion windows which was sited in the present south garden closer to the river. More importantly it proves that the old house and its terraced garden were still standing at this time, and that the new house cannot therefore have been begun until after this date. This means that Blackett's new house was definitely built, and the new gardens laid out, sometime between the date of this survey in 1683 and Celia Fiennes's visit in 1697. A house of this size must have taken at least 6 or 7 years to build, from the design stage to the final completion of its internal decoration and its large and complex gardens. This gives us a most likely period of building as between 1686 and 1693. This supposition has recently been

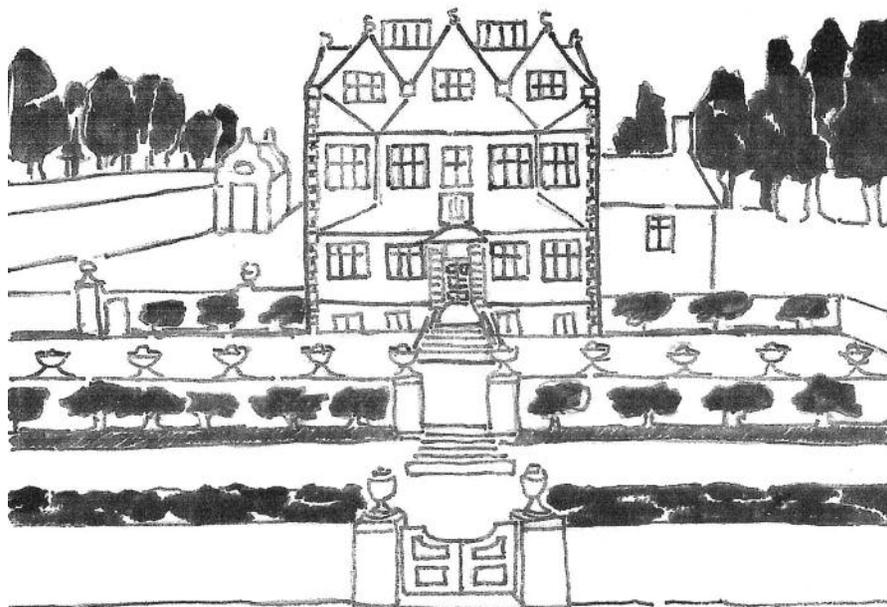


Fig. 2. The first Newby Hall from a survey map dated 21 March 1682/3; re-drawn *Pete Smith*.



Fig. 3. Charles Hall. Engraving. The west front of Newby Hall, c.1700.  
*Mr & Mrs Compton.*

confirmed by the discovery of a manuscript written by Peter Aram, the head gardener at Newby from c.1688 to 1718, entitled *An Account of Gardens in England*, which includes a description of Newby in which he states that 'It was begun in February 1685 and finished in 1689'.<sup>13</sup>

These dates are confirmed by Howard Colvin, who in *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* records payments made to John Etty, a 'leading architect-craftsman in York' in Blackett's surviving *Household Book, 1691-94* for the provision of a 'metal weather vane' in 1693,<sup>14</sup> suggesting that the final touches were being added to the exterior of the house at this time. This book<sup>15</sup> also includes payments to the craftsmen who worked on the house, including John Etty, mason, James Etty, carpenter, Cornelius Barker, Godfrey Simpson, mason, Livermoor, carver, Robert Kaye, ironworker.<sup>16</sup> It informs us that the iron itself was supplied by 'Mr Stephenson of York'. One entry allows us to date the construction of the house even more precisely. Mr Livermoor was paid on 24 December 1691 for

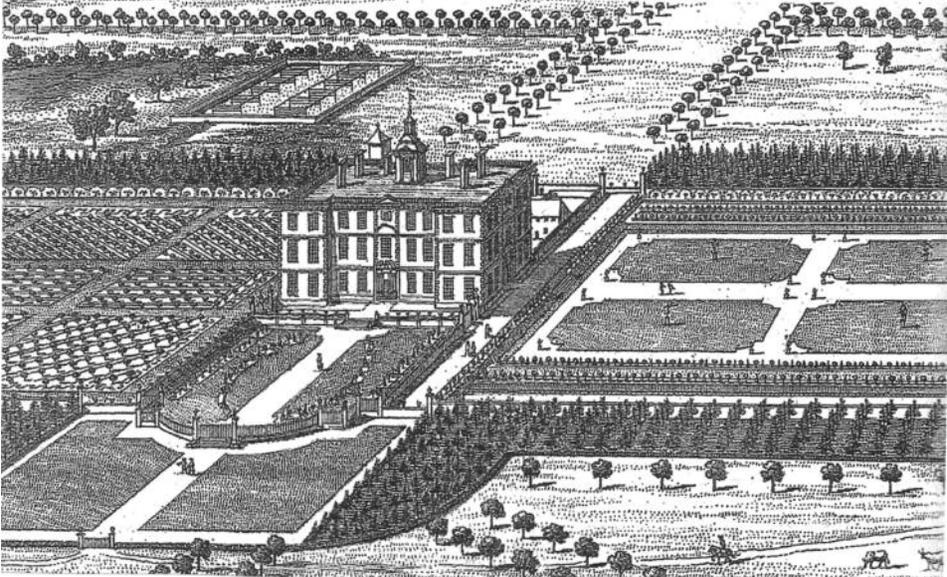
carving two cherubs' heads for the great stair, so that detailed internal decoration was being completed in late 1691. This *Household Book* also contains a reference to the size of the flagstones in the basement 'taken 17 Dec. 1687', indicating that completion of this part of the house was underway at this time. The Blackett Papers record that demolition of the old house took place in 1690,<sup>17</sup> soon after the shell of the new house was completed, to make way for the new gardens which were being laid out at this time. John Harris and Gervase Jackson-Stops record that payments were made by Sir Edward Blackett to George London and Henry Wise, the royal gardeners, for trees between 1690 and 1692.<sup>18</sup> All this evidence confirms Peter Aram's statement that the second Newby Hall was built between 1685 and 1689, suggesting that it was most likely designed in 1684 and that the interiors and garden were finally completed only in the early 1690s, proving beyond reasonable doubt that Newby Hall was designed a full twenty years earlier than Hargrove's suggested date of 1705.



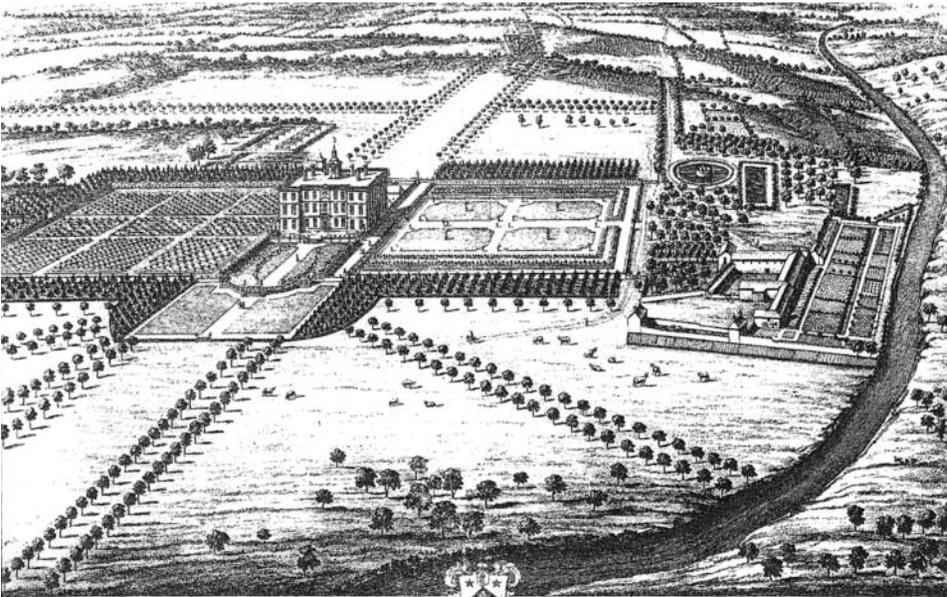
Fig. 4. Charles Hall (attrib.). Painting of the west front of Newby Hall, c.1700. *Mr & Mrs Compton.*



Fig. 5. Charles Hall (attrib.). Detail of painting of the west front of Newby Hall, c.1700. *Mr & Mrs Compton.*



Figs. 6. Kip & Knyff. Engraving. A birds-eye view of Newby Hall from the south-west, 1707.



Figs. 7. Kip & Knyff. Detail from the engraving of a bird's-eye view of Newby Hall from the south-west, 1707.

## NEWBY HALL

What did Sir Edward Blackett's house look like when it was completed? Not only does the basic carcass of the house itself survive; we have three early topographical views of the house, a painting and two engravings, a number of related architectural plans in the Weddell Collection,<sup>19</sup> and six contemporary descriptions. The earliest of the views is the engraving by Charles Hall (Fig. 3), who was paid 'for drawing the house' in January 1695.<sup>20</sup> This engraving was presumably based on his now lost drawing; the fact that it does not show the cupola can only be an omission by the engraver.<sup>21</sup> Hall was presumably also responsible for the painting, which survives at the house (Figs. 4 and 5), of exactly the same view of the west, entrance front.<sup>22</sup> A bird's-eye view of Newby Hall and its gardens (Figs. 6 and 7), drawn by Leonard Knyff and engraved by Johannes Kip was included in *Britannia Illustrata* published in 1707.<sup>23</sup> This engraving, which tells us so much about the layout of the garden, agrees with Hall's views in almost every detail.

The most obvious changes to the exterior of Newby Hall have been the loss of the cupola and the additions to the east in the 18th century and to the north in the 19th century. But the alterations to the original sash windows have also made a major impact on the appearance of the house. All the early

views show that the house originally had sashes on the west front while Peter Aram's description states that the house had 'sashes on all ye 4 fronts'.<sup>24</sup> The present sashes are later 18th century replacements, apart from the five surviving attic windows on the north front which retain their thick glazing-bars (Fig. 8). Originally the whole house would have had sashes with similar glazing-bars. Hall's engraving and painting clearly show that formerly all the windows were linked vertically by raised brick panels with stone sides, which would have given the whole façade a far stronger vertical accent. Almost all these panels were later meticulously removed and today they survive only below the ground floor windows on the west front (Fig. 9) and below a few surviving windows on the east and north fronts



Fig. 8. Newby Hall. The attic windows on the north front with their original glazing bars.  
*Pete Smith.*



Fig. 9. Newby Hall. Detail of the west front, showing the surviving raised panels below the ground floor windows. *Pete Smith.*



Fig. 10. Newby Hall. The south front. *Pete Smith.*

(Fig. 17). The present stone balustrade which runs around the top of the house was definitely replaced in the later eighteenth century, when the hipped roofs were added. The original wooden balustrade with fewer balusters can be clearly seen in Hall's painting (Fig. 5). In fact the whole cornice has been replaced, as Hall's views show a bolder cornice, probably wooden, with far fewer brackets.<sup>25</sup>

All three of these contemporary views show that on the west front the central opening on the top floor was not a window, as it is now, but instead originally contained a square clock face. They also show that the small central triangular pediment, which crowned the slightly projecting central bay, has been

removed. Hall's views show that the central window on the ground floor originally contained panelled double doors with a semi-circular fanlight above and a coat-of-arms in the pediment. The south front has also been altered significantly (Fig. 10). Here all the windows have had their raised panels removed completely, new sashes have been inserted, and on the ground floor the windows have been extended right down to the ground. The central doorway has had its original doors replaced by a large sash and the small pediment which once topped the slightly projecting central bay has been removed. This pediment can just be seen in Knyff & Kip's engraving (Fig. 7). By reinstating all these features



Fig. 11. Reconstruction of the south front of Newby Hall.  
*Pete Smith.*

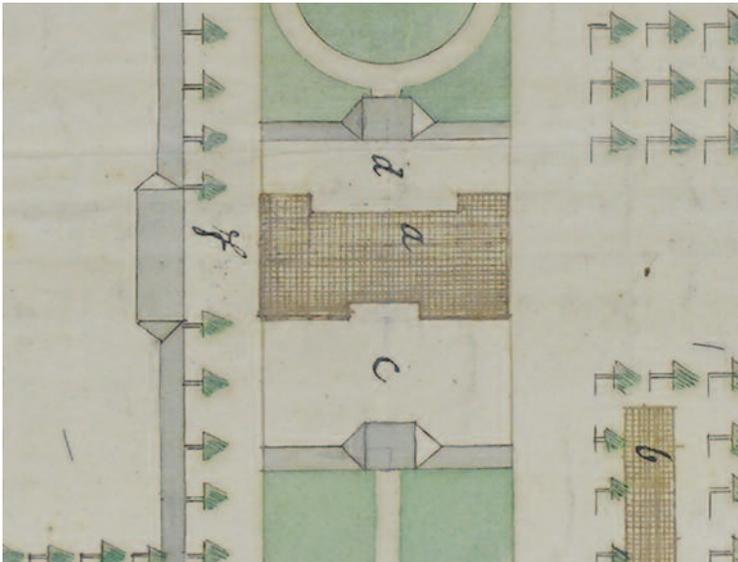


Fig. 12. Detail of a plan for a proposed new garden layout at Newby Hall, showing the original outline plan of Sir Edward Blackett's house, c.1730. *WYAS.*

the original appearance of this front can be accurately reconstructed (Fig. 11).

In the Weddell Drawings Collection, recently acquired by the West Yorkshire Archive Service, there are two drawings which can help us to reconstruct the appearance of the remaining two facades, to the east and north, and also the probable plan of Newby Hall. The first is a garden plan, unsigned and undated, but definitely identifiable as Newby by its topographical layout.<sup>26</sup> It shows the outline of the garden illustrated by Kip & Knyff, but much simplified.<sup>27</sup> This plainer and simpler form of gardening became fashionable in the early eighteenth century, and this drawing almost certainly illustrates a scheme for remodelling the gardens in the 1720s or 30s. More importantly for this discussion this garden plan clearly shows the outline plan of Newby Hall as it was at that time (Fig. 12). This plan of the house – cross-hatched in red ink – shows the long recess on the west front and a corresponding, but narrower, recess on the east front. Interestingly this suggestion of an H-plan form also corresponds with Kip & Knyff’s engraving which shows a similar though very slight recess on the line of the balustrade along the east or back edge of the roof (Fig. 7).

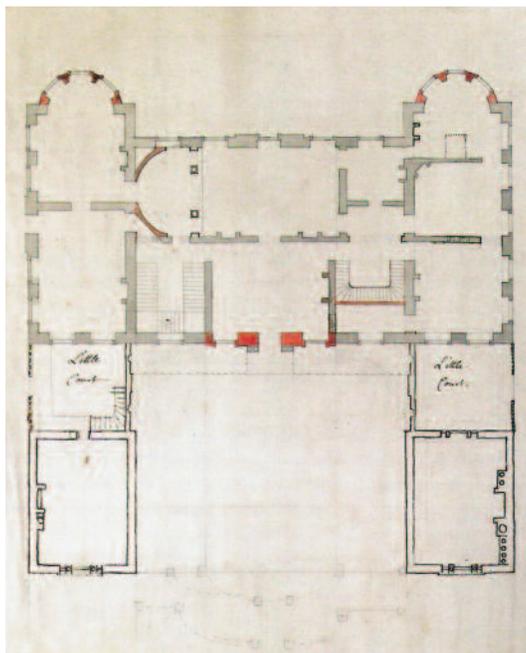


Fig. 13. John Carr of York (attrib.). Ground plan of Newby Hall with proposed alterations shown in black ink and red wash, c.1760. WYAS.

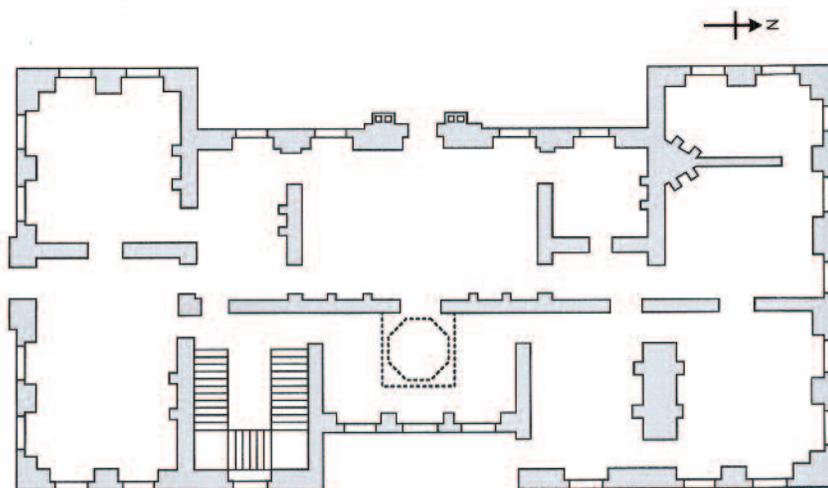


Fig. 14. Conjectural reconstruction of the ground plan of Newby Hall. Pete Smith and Kate Parsons.

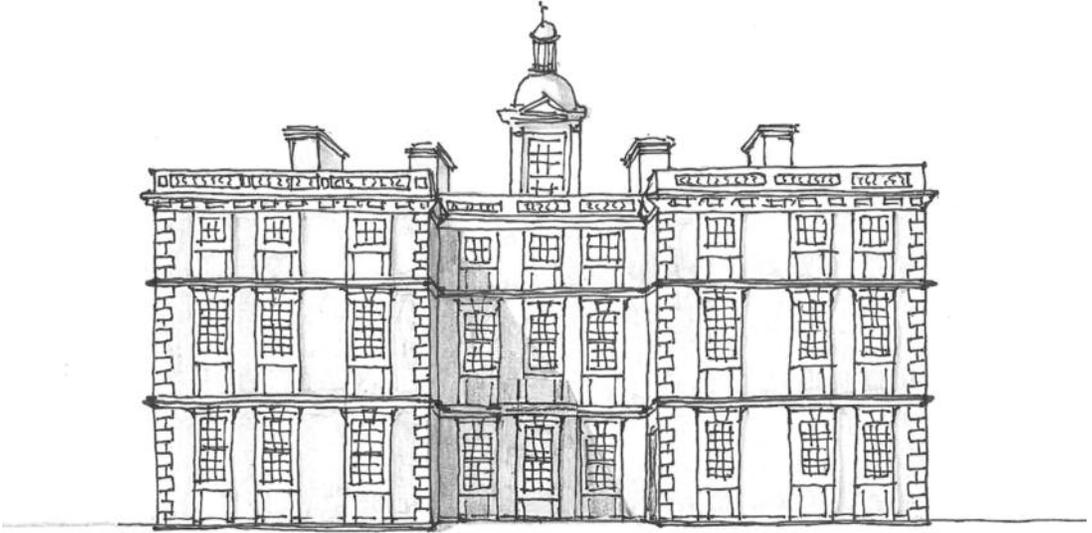


Fig. 15. Conjectural reconstruction of east front of Newby Hall. *Pete Smith.*



Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the north front of Newby Hall. *Pete Smith.*

This is also confirmed by a second drawing from the Weddell Drawings Collection. This drawing is a ground plan of the second Newby Hall with proposed alterations (Fig. 13). It is also unsigned and undated, though it has been attributed to John Carr of York and dated to the mid eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> It shows a number of major alterations added in black ink and highlighted in red wash including a new central section with three openings which stands flush with the remainder of the east front.<sup>29</sup> This section of new wall would have been required only if this three window section had originally been recessed. This drawing also has faint but clearly visible pencil lines which indicate that the original wall was positioned two thirds of the way back – in line with the right side of the proposed fireplace. The fact that the plan also indicates the moving of the double-columned doorcase from the west front to the east suggests that there was no prominent doorcase on the east originally. Instead this plan shows an original opening on what would have been the north return wall, which has been blocked with cross-hatching by Carr. This narrow opening appears to have been a doorway, suggesting that it was the eastern entrance and that the recessed section had three windows and no central doorway. Also marked very faintly on this plan is a square containing an octagon in front of the doorway leading into the hall. As will be discussed below, there is evidence that this octagon represents a staircase immediately below the cupola, which would have made a central doorway very awkward, if not impossible. So, by removing the other proposed alterations like the bow windows, the apsidal end to the hall and the new service staircase from Carr's original drawing, it is possible to produce a conjectural reconstruction of the original ground plan (Fig. 14), although the only rooms whose function can be identified are the 'large hall' which Celia Fiennes mentions and the main stair, where the treads and landings of the original staircase with its scrolled tread ends still survive.<sup>30</sup>

Using this reconstructed ground plan and the



Fig. 17. Newby Hall. The north front, showing the surviving section of the original façade with the raised panels linking the windows. *Pete Smith.*

surviving fabric of the east front it is also possible to produce a conjectural reconstruction of the east façade itself (Fig. 15). The projecting wings on this reconstruction must be correct, but the actual form of the recessed central section is less certain. The ground plan, attributed to John Carr, and the surviving fabric also allow us to reconstruct the original appearance of the north front (Fig. 16). The north front had no central doorway and no central projecting section, though the central windows were slightly emphasised by broader flanking sections of wall. The two eastern bays of this front still survive today, behind the nineteenth century additions (Fig. 17), showing the linking panels below all the surviving windows that once existed on the other façades.

## THE GARDENS

The gardens laid out at Newby Hall were designed by George London and Henry Wise, and the gardener that they dispatched to Yorkshire to superintend the works, Peter Aram, was to remain head gardener here for nearly 30 years.<sup>31</sup> Peter Aram had trained under London and Wise and had worked for them at Fulham Palace, the seat of Dr Henry Compton, Bishop of London, a garden 'generally considered to have the finest collection of exotic trees and shrubs in the country'.<sup>32</sup> Aram, who probably arrived at Newby sometime soon after 1688, received a salary of £16 per annum until 'upon the decease of that Baronet [Sir Edward Blackett who died in 1718] he went and was retained in the service of Sir John Ingilby, Bt. of Ripley'.<sup>33</sup> Peter Aram himself travelled to Holland early in 1696 for Blackett where he acquired, amongst other things, '200 Lime-trees' presumably for the broad avenues planted at Newby.<sup>34</sup> Though Aram was the gardener in charge of these gardens, George London

continued to visit Newby regularly on his annual 'Northern Circuit' at least until 1701.<sup>35</sup> The closeness of the relationship between Sir Edward Blackett and his garden designers is confirmed by the fact that his third son, John, eventually married Patience, the eldest daughter of Henry Wise.<sup>36</sup>

The design and layout of the gardens at Newby are recorded in such detail in the views by Hall and Knyff & Kip that they can be accurately reconstructed (Fig. 18). On the west was the flower garden with its central gravel path flanked by lawns which contained an oval of flower beds with curved railings and gates at its entrance. On the north was the fruit garden divided into nine equal squares with straight and diagonal rows of fruit trees and an exedra beyond. On the east was the kitchen garden and the pair of service buildings with further gates beyond. Whilst on the south was the main garden with a broad terrace in front of the house and four rectangular lawns below surrounded by flower beds and a raised walk. The whole garden was enclosed by brick walls

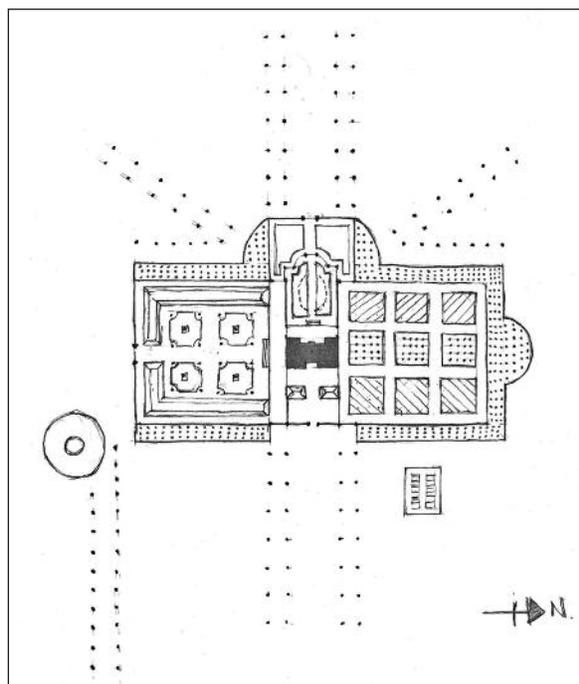


Fig. 18. Reconstruction of the garden plan of Newby Hall. *Pete Smith.*

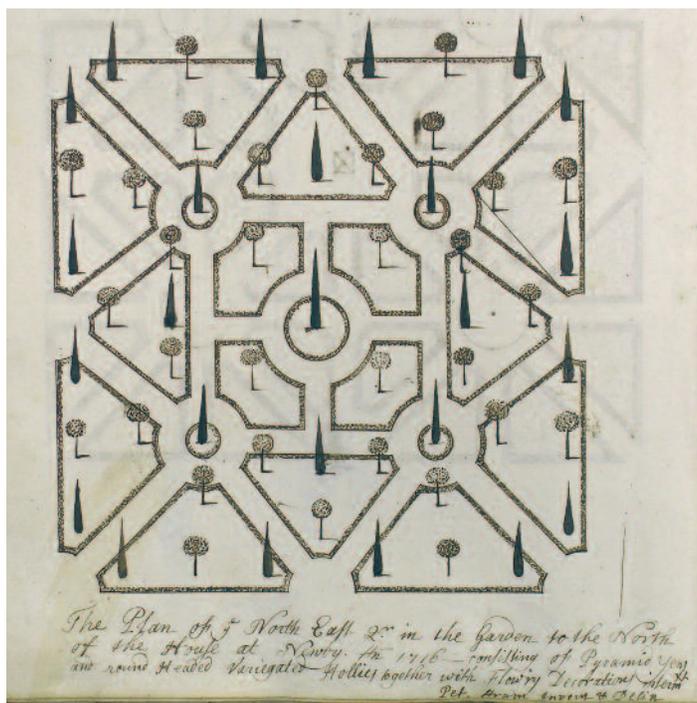


Fig. 19. Peter Aram. Plan of the north-east quadrant of the new north flower garden, dated 1716. WYAS.

lined with espaliered trees and outside these walls banks of trees planted as windbreaks with, beyond, long double avenues of lime trees radiating out into the park. The placing of the new house on this hilltop site allowed for a completely new unified and all-round design of a type rarely achieved at other contemporary gardens.

Peter Aram became an enthusiastic and successful horticulturalist with an especial interest in flowers. In later life he wrote and published a long descriptive poem about the gardens at Studley Royal, entitled *Studley Park. A Poem*.<sup>37</sup> He also compiled a gardening manual *A Practical Treatise of Flowers*, though this was not published until 1985.<sup>38</sup> In this latter volume he gives detailed and practical advice concerning the propagation and cultivation of his favourite garden flowers. He was encouraged in

his passion for flowers by Sir Edward Blackett, who appears to have commissioned Aram to redesign the fruit garden as a further flower garden in 1716. For, surviving with one of the manuscripts of his *Treatise*, is a plan (Fig. 19) captioned

The Plan of ye North East Qr. in the Garden to the North of the House at Newby. An. 1716 - consisting of Pyramid Yews and round Headed Variegated Hollies together with Flow'ry Decorations intermxt. Pet. Aram Invent & Delin.<sup>39</sup>

This ornate quarter was presumably one of four which would have made up this whole new parterre. Its design is complex with circular, triangular and other shaped plots dotted with topiaried trees and edged with flower beds which would no doubt have been planted with a careful selection of Aram's favourite flowering plants.<sup>40</sup>

CONTEMPORARY DESCRIPTIONS OF  
NEWBY HALL AND ITS GARDENS

Apart from the visual, documentary and structural evidence so far discussed there are also a number of contemporary descriptions of Newby which shed new light on both the house and its gardens, and are therefore worth quoting at length. The extensive entry recorded in Celia Fiennes's *Journal* in 1697 for Newby reads

2 mile off is a fine place of Sir Edward Blackets, it looks finely in the approach in the midst of a good parke and a River runs just by it, it stands in the middle and has two large Gardens on each side; you enter one through a large Iron Barr-gate painted green and gold tops and carv'd in severall places, this is fine gravel walks between grass plots 4 square with 5 brass Statues great and small in each Square, and with full borders of flowers and green banks with flower potts; on the other side of the house is just such a Garden, only the walkes are all grass, rowl'd, and the Squares are full of dwarf trees both fruites and green, set cross wayes which lookes very finely; there is a Flower Garden behind the house, in it and beyond it a Landry Close with frames for drying of cloths, wall'd in, there are good Stables and Coach-house and all the offices are very convenient very good Cellars all arch'd ... their kitching pastry and pantry etc. all very convenient; ...

His house is built with bricke and coyn'd with stone, with a flatt Roofe leaded, with Railes and Barristers, and a large Cupelow in the middle; you may see a great way round the country; the front Entrance is 3 gates of iron barres and spikes painted with blew with gold tops, and brick work between the gates and pillars, with stone tops carv'd like flower potts, the pillars all coyn'd with stone; the middle gate is made large in a compass like a halfe Moone; there are four more spaces in the wall open with iron barres and spikes, 2 of which are in each side, into the Gardens, and answers two like them on the other side of the Gardens: the two other are less and are at the end of a terrass walk just along the entrance which you ascend by steps from the middle gate, they are all adorned with brick pillars coyn'd with stone and stone

heads, these are all painted blew and gold tips, from the Tarress you have a Court which leads into the middle of the house into a large hall; over the doore at the entrance is a fine Craving of stone with leaves and flowers with stone pillars and the Armes cutt finely, there is a fine dyal and clock above all; the hall you enter is of fine size and height, 2 dineing rooms and drawing roomes, one for summer with a marble floore, 6 or 7 Chambers off a good size and lofty, so that most of the beds were two foote too low which was pitty they being good beds, one was crimson figured velvet, 2 damaske beds, the rest mohair and camlet; the roomes were mostly wanscoated and painted, the best room was painted just like marble, few rooms were hung, the furniture was very neatley kept, and so was the whole house; the rooffe of the Staires was finely painted, there was severall pictures but not set up...the house is serv'd with water pipes into a Cistern into the garden cellars and all offices; this was the finest house I saw in Yorkshire.<sup>41</sup>

It is remarkable how closely Celia Fiennes's description corresponds with both Kip & Knyff's engraving of the garden layout (Fig. 6) and Hall's views (Figs. 3 & 5). Doubts have sometimes been expressed about the seemingly meticulous accuracy of the gardens which Kip & Knyff depicted in their many bird's-eye view engravings, but in this case Celia Fiennes description confirms the existence of every detail visible in their engraving. Not only this, Celia Fiennes also adds many new snippets of information about the gardens themselves. For example, she tells us that the north garden was planted with 'dwarf trees both fruit and [ever]greens' and that 'the walkes are all grass'. In the south garden she tells us that the statues were made of brass, that paths were 'fine gravel walks' and that the raised beds had 'full borders of flowers and green banks with flower potts'. Fiennes also tells us that the wrought iron gates and railings were painted blue and green and gilded. But perhaps the most unusual detail mentioned is the 'Laundry Close with frames for drying of cloths'; this square walled enclosure equipped with two rows of six permanent timber

drying racks can be clearly seen in Kip & Knyff's engraving, above and to the left of the house. This enclosure was presumably designed to ensure the safety of the very valuable household linen whilst it was drying. She also refers to the 'good Stables and Coach-house' which are just visible to the left of the house, in the rear or east court, as illustrated in Kip & Knyff's engraving (Fig. 7).

As for the house itself, Celia Fiennes confirms that it had a 'flat roof leaded', rather than the present hipped roofs, and that it did indeed have 'a large Cupelow'. She also confirms the existence of the clock and elaborate coat-of-arms in the pediment on the west front. When it comes to the interior Celia Fiennes's description gives us much new information, most of which cannot be verified from any other source. She tells us that it had a large central hall which was panelled and painted in imitation of marble, and that most of the other rooms were also panelled and painted (not hung with tapestry). Her description mentions '2 dining rooms and drawing rooms, one for summer with a marble floor'. The latter must have been at the southern end of the house where the piers to the cellar vaults would have been able to support the weight of a marble floor and the winter rooms were therefore presumably at the north end over the kitchen. Though she mentions '6 or 7 Chambers off' and their various beds, this tantalizing description tells us nothing specific about the position of these rooms within the house. Her description goes on to mention that 'the roof of the Staires was finely painted' which is one fact that is corroborated by the *Household Book* which records that Charles Hall was paid in February 1693 for the 'painted ceiling of the great stair'.<sup>42</sup> Finally this description tells us that the basement contained the kitchen, pastry, pantry and 'very good cellars all arch'd'. Evidence of the original kitchen at the north-east corner of the basement and the vaulted cellars under the southern end of the house still survive today, and can be clearly seen on a surviving basement plan by Peter Atkinson dated 1803.<sup>43</sup>

Our second visitor to Newby Hall was less enthusiastic about what she found. A relatively short description was recorded by Cassandra Willoughby in her *Account of the journeys I have taken & where I have been since March 1695*. Her travels, with her brother, Thomas Willoughby of Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire, included a visit to Newby Hall in 1697, the same year as Celia Fiennes.<sup>44</sup> Cassandra has left the following description:

About 4 miles from St Mungers Well is Sir Edward Blackets house, a Seat talked on all over Yorkshire as one of the finest Houses in England. Indeed it is a neat Pile of Brick Building, not very large, but looks pretty on the outside, but within it, all I found wonderful, was that any man should have laid out so much money upon a House, but not make one good Apartment in it, nay not one very handsome entertaining Room.<sup>45</sup>

The third traveller to leave a record of his visit to Newby was, like Cassandra Willoughby, somewhat less impressed with what he found. John Perceval, later 1st Earl of Egmont, toured England between July and October 1701 and he has left us with this description of his visit:

In the afternoon we went to Ripon, but took Sir Edward Blackett's house in our way. This house, were it not so cry'd up, might pass for a very good one, but the name it has got of being the best in the North prepares travellers to expect a much finer building. The [car]case is of brick and leaded at top. The inside is no finer than the outside having but indifferent furniture. The finest part is in the staircase which is now painting, but it wants light. The gardens are pretty good, and afford much fruit.<sup>46</sup>

What John Perceval is actually saying here, in his grudging way, is that Newby was a very good house with an equally fine interior, but that his expectations had been so hyped, or 'cry'd up' as he puts it, that by the time he visited he was almost inevitably disappointed by what he found. In fact, like Cassandra Willoughby, who described Newby as

‘a Seat talked on all over Yorkshire as one of the finest Houses in England’, Perceval confirms that Newby was generally thought of by contemporary travellers as the ‘best house in the North’. This statement might at first appear surprising, but it should be remembered that almost all the important Baroque houses built in Yorkshire post-date its completion. Castle Howard,<sup>47</sup> Wentworth Castle,<sup>48</sup> Wentworth Woodhouse,<sup>49</sup> Bramham Hall,<sup>50</sup> Beningborough Hall,<sup>51</sup> Kiveton Park,<sup>52</sup> Sprotborough Hall<sup>53</sup> and Duncombe Park<sup>54</sup> were not even begun in 1693. Only Wheatley Hall,<sup>55</sup> Ribston Hall<sup>56</sup> and Bolton Hall<sup>57</sup> would have been completed by this date and of these only Bolton Hall compares in design and scale with Newby, though its long wings and external chimney stacks suggest it was a cruder and less sophisticated design.<sup>58</sup> John Perceval also provides us with one other piece of useful information. He mentions the ‘staircase which is now painting’, referring perhaps to an illusionist scheme of Baroque paintings then being completed, which would have complemented the ceiling which had been painted by Charles Hall before 1693.

Our fourth traveller was a monsieur P. De Blainville, who accompanied William and John Blathwayt on a tour of the north in the summer of 1703.<sup>59</sup> His journal, written in French, was kept for the benefit of their father, William Blathwayt of Dyrham Park in Wiltshire. The relevant entry for July reads:

The 19 Saturday we left this place [Ripon] to dine at the house of the Knight Blakett [Sir Edward Blackett], who received the Gentlemen your sons with very great courtesy; we viewed the house which consists of a main block with two pavilions which are at either end;<sup>60</sup> taking into consideration the siting, the gardens, the prospect, the neatness, the walks, it can pass if not as one of the most spacious one of the most noble, at least as one of the most pleasant and perfect that we ever saw; ... It is situated upon a hill which has 4 equal slopes all contained within the confines of the park; in front of the four facades of the building are

4 gardens to wit a flower bed, a kitchen garden, a stretch of fruit trees, and another lawn, which is adorned with a large number of life-size statues, and all surrounded by breast-high walls and an iron balustrade; the prospect there is pleasing; ... nothing presents itself to view but that which is beautiful and agreeable; ... on every side the avenues consist of walks lined with trees. As for the interior of the house one cannot say the furnishings are luxurious; but they are clean, and the apartments very comfortable, some curious enough things are found there, to wit

A staircase so skilfully contrived that in the space of 8 or 9 feet in diameter it contains 24 flights which comprise 130 steps<sup>61</sup> so placed that one sees from the highest one the lowest one in direct line. A pendulum clock which by means of a wheel with a number of steel nails coming into contact with fixed springs causes eight hammers to strike against eight bells which in their different tones make a complete octave thereby producing various tunes.

The chimney piece is of very fine marble that one might have said on first sight to be mosaic work: but it is quite native. The Knight Blakett drew our attention to this marble as a curiosity which in his opinion surpasses in beauty all the marbles of Europe but I can vouch to having seen more beautiful, although I have not travelled all Europe by far.<sup>62</sup>

This description confirms much of what we already know about Newby, but it also presents us with a slight problem. De Blainville mentions ‘two pavilions which are at either end’ of the house. There could never have been detached buildings at the north and south ends of the house, and it seems certain that this statement refers to the cross-wings or ‘pavillions’, as they would be known on a contemporary French chateau.<sup>63</sup> At first reading the complicated description of the staircase seems incomprehensible, but on closer study it reveals certain facts about the form and siting of this stair. If one could see ‘from the highest one the lowest in direct line’ then it must have had an open well. The use of the word ‘diameter’ does tend to suggest that this staircase was circular or octagonal. If it

comprised '130 steps' it must have gone from the basement all the way up to the roof,<sup>64</sup> and if it had an open well, it can only have been sited immediately below the cupola, which gave the only direct access on to the flat roof. The 24 flights mentioned would fit neatly into the house as built, with 4 flights to the basement, 8 flights to both the ground and first floors and 4 further flights leading through the attic to the roof.

Confirmation of the octagonal form and situation of this open well stair can be found on the plan of proposed alterations to the house attributed to John Carr (Fig. 13), where the faint pencil outline of an octagon within a square can be clearly seen behind the entrance hall – immediately below where the square cupola would have been. John Carr presumably planned to remove this staircase and the cupola in order to create his new entrance hall on the eastern side of the house. The planned removal of this staircase also explains the need for a new service staircase, which is included – outlined in red – as part of these proposed alterations. The other 'curious' feature De Blainville mentions is the clock with its musical carillon, which was presumably linked to the clock clearly displayed above the central doorway on the west front in each of the surviving views of Newby Hall. De Blainville was intrigued by unusual mechanical devices and he mentions a number of them in his journal.

The fifth description of Newby survives in the manuscript written by Peter Aram, which survives amongst the Ingilby Papers, entitled *An Account of Gardens in England*. It was written sometime between 1689 and 1718. The section on Newby Hall reads,

The House so well known by the name of Newby belongs to and is ye usual residence of Sir Edward Blacket Bart. by whom it was built and is still enjoyed [crossed out]. It was begun in February 1685 and finished in 1689. It enjoys an Excellent Air and Situation on a flat & in a fertile part of the County which affords a most delightful prospect every way

having the River Eure (which passeth through York and is there called Ouse) on ye South at a small distance on whose banks lies ye Kitchen Garden and all ye Out Buildings –

The house itself is a Magnificent structure composed of brick and stone & is an oblong square, having a Flat Roof covered with Lead & rail & Balisters quite round and a Fine Cupulo in ye Middle and sash windows on all ye 4 fronts.

It stands in ye Middle of an oblong square containing about eight Akers of Ground (Besides ye Kitchen Garden which is at some distance from it.) well walled about with Brick 11 or 12 foot High. This spot of ground is divided into 2 equal parts besides a fore and back court – The Parterre lying to ye South is adorned with 20 statues of Lead 4 great and 16 little ones, very fine Evergreens, Flowers with Walks of Gravel etc. all kept in good order –

That part which lies to ye North is of equal Dimensions with the Parterre, is divided in Squares by the interspersing of Fine Grass Walks and Hedges of White Thorn along their sides. This Garden is also well furnished with curious – Greens, Some Dwarf Fruit Trees and many other Things both for Ornament and Use too tedious to insist on here, Suffice it to know that what still adds very much to render the Seat yet more delightful is a Grove of Tall Firr trees Surrounding the gardens on all sides but the South, which in ye Midst of Winter gives ye Beholder a delightful idea of ye Spring and Summer, The whole being only considered one may justly pronounce it one of the Finest Country seats in ye Northern parts of England.

A postscript, in the same hand, concludes Aram's description,

Since ye writing of this Sir Edward Blacket ye founder of it died [1718] and left it to his 3rd son [John] who now enjoys it, but not residing there ye Gardens are run out of all order.<sup>65</sup>

This description corresponds exactly with all the previous descriptions of Newby quoted here, and it also adds some new information. Most importantly it gives us the dates of construction and it also tells

us that the house has sashes on ‘all ye 4 fronts’. The views of the house only show the west front with sashes, and this informs us that these technologically advanced and expensive new windows were also used on all the remaining fronts. It also tells us that the brick enclosing wall was ‘11 or 12 foot High’ and that the belt of trees surrounding this wall were, as Kip & Knyff’s engraving suggests, Fir trees. Aram also states that the 20 statues on the south parterre were lead. This appears to contradict Celia Fiennes, who says they were ‘brass’, but it may simply be that they were made of lead and then decorated to look like brass or bronze.

#### SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

Bearing in mind the fact that Ely Hargrove has been proved wrong about the date of Newby, one hesitates to return to his *History of Knaresborough...* for further information. But Hargrove also says of Newby that ‘the situation was chosen and the building designed by Sir Christopher Wren’.<sup>66</sup> However much one might wish that Newby Hall was designed by the foremost architect of his day, this statement needs to be treated with extreme caution. In fact, since the publication of the 20 volumes of *The Wren Society* between 1920 and 1943, which do not even mention Newby Hall, most recent historians have treated his claim with such caution that they have ignored it altogether. Margaret Whinney,<sup>67</sup> Kerry Downes<sup>68</sup> and Liza Jardine,<sup>69</sup> for example, are silent on the subject in their discussions of Wren’s works, and most important of all Newby Hall was not included in Wren’s entry in Colvin’s third edition of *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects*, the most reliable modern catalogue of his works to date.<sup>70</sup> James Elmes did not mention Newby in his *Memoirs of Sir C. Wren*, published in 1823,<sup>71</sup> nor is the house mentioned in Lucy Phillimore’s *Sir Christopher Wren* published in 1881.<sup>72</sup>

But Newby Hall was included occasionally as a

building by Wren in some of the earliest studies of his works. Wyatt Papworth, for example, included Newby Hall as a building by Wren in his *Architectural Dictionary* published 1852–92. Like Inigo Jones, Wren’s name had become linked with a number of country houses during the nineteenth century, though these attributions were often made on the flimsiest historical evidence. Most of these tentative attributions were rejected by the more rigorous scholarship of *The Wren Society*, though some more populist assessments of Wren’s career found it hard to accept that Wren designed virtually no country houses.<sup>73</sup> For example, Martin S. Briggs’ populist monograph *Wren the Incomparable*, published in 1953, refers to Newby Hall amongst ‘several other buildings attributed to Wren on slender evidence’ and concludes that ‘it is possible that some future scholar may unearth evidence which has hitherto escaped the eagle eye and the patient researches of the Wren Society’.<sup>74</sup>

One place where the possibility of Wren’s involvement at Newby has been discussed is in the various articles on Newby Hall which have appeared in *Country Life* over the past hundred years. The first of these, an anonymous article published in 1906, quotes from Hargrove’s *History of Knaresborough...* but goes on to say that his attribution to Wren is ‘a statement for which there is no sufficient warranty’.<sup>75</sup> The second article, published in 1914, and probably written by H Avray Tipping, accepted Hargrove’s date of 1705 and the attribution to Wren completely.<sup>76</sup> In 1937 Christopher Hussey produced a series of three far more detailed articles, the first of which was largely devoted to Blackett’s house. He accepted the date 1705, but took the opposite view to Tipping concerning the attribution to Wren. Hussey stated unequivocally that there was ‘no reason for believing Sir Christopher to have designed the house’, and he goes on to explain that the design is, as he puts it, ‘quite jejune, the kind of thing a local master mason would produce when told of Hampton Court’.<sup>77</sup> But by 1967 Christopher

Hussey had changed his mind. For in his book *English Country Houses, Mid-Georgian, 1760–1800*, he admitted that Newby Hall could have been built before 1705, and went on rather mysteriously to state that ‘confirmation exists for the traditional ascription to Wren’ though without explaining what this confirmation was, or giving any references.<sup>78</sup> John Cornforth, who revisited Newby Hall for *Country Life* in 1979, disagreed with Hussey’s later interpretation, completely rejecting the Wren attribution, though he did note the inaccuracy of the 1705 date and suggested that it was more likely to have been built in the 1680s.<sup>79</sup>

The source for Hargrove’s statement about Wren and the ‘confirmation’ which Christopher Hussey alludes to in his 1967 book can be found in Daniel Defoe’s *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, published in three volumes between 1724 and 1726. The entry for Newby reads,

A mile from this town [Ripon], or less, is a stately beautiful seat, built a few years since by Sir Edward Blackett; the park is extended to the bank of the river Eure, and is sometimes in part laid under water by the river, the water of which they say, coming down from the western mountains, thro’ a marly, loamy soil, fructifies the earth, as the river Nile does the Egyptian fields about grand Cairo, tho’ by their leave not quite so much.

As Sir Edward spared no cost in the building, and Sir Christopher Wren laid out the design, as well as chose the ground for him, you may well believe me the better, when I add, that nothing can either add to the contrivance or the situation; the building is of brick, the avenues, now the trees are grown, are very fine, and the gardens not only well laid out, but well planted, and as well kept; the statues are neat, the parterre beautiful; but, they want fine gravel, the walks cannot show themselves, as in the southern part of England they would. The house has a fine prospect over the country, almost to York, with the river in view most of the way; and makes itself a very noble appearance to the great north road, which lies within two miles of it, at Burrow-bridge.<sup>80</sup>

This description contains the vitally important

statement ‘Sir Christopher Wren laid out the design, as well as chose the ground’. Defoe’s book is not a personal travel diary, instead it is a series of letters or constructed journeys based on his many years of travelling all over Britain. Scholars now generally agree that most of the information he provides is accurate and relatively up-to-date.<sup>81</sup> Certainly everything else in Defoe’s entry for Newby can be corroborated from the other sources discussed above. Apart from at Newby, Daniel Defoe mentions Wren’s name on only three other occasions, all references to buildings definitely known to have been designed by Wren.<sup>82</sup> Defoe must have visited Newby while Wren was still alive, though the first volume of his *Tour* was not published until the year after Wren’s death in 1723. So it can be safely stated that this is contemporary evidence from a generally very reliable source and that therefore Defoe’s claim needs to be taken seriously.

Pushing back the date of construction of the house by almost twenty years may not seem especially significant, but in the fast changing world of architectural fashion at the end of the seventeenth century twenty years could make the difference between a house being in the latest London fashion or just another provincial copy. This is particularly true of the fashion for having an attic storey and a flat roofline, rather than a hipped roof with dormer windows. This new Baroque style of house emerged in the 1680s with the design of houses like Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire,<sup>83</sup> though the most famous and influential example of this new fashion was Hampton Court Palace, designed by Wren in the late 1680s. So our earlier date for Newby means that it too was in the latest Baroque style and that it was almost certainly designed by someone with London connections.<sup>84</sup>

This brings us back to the subject of sash windows. As hinted earlier, the fact that Newby was built with sash windows is significant. The house is described by Peter Aram as having ‘sash windows on all ye 4 fronts’, whilst all three of the early views

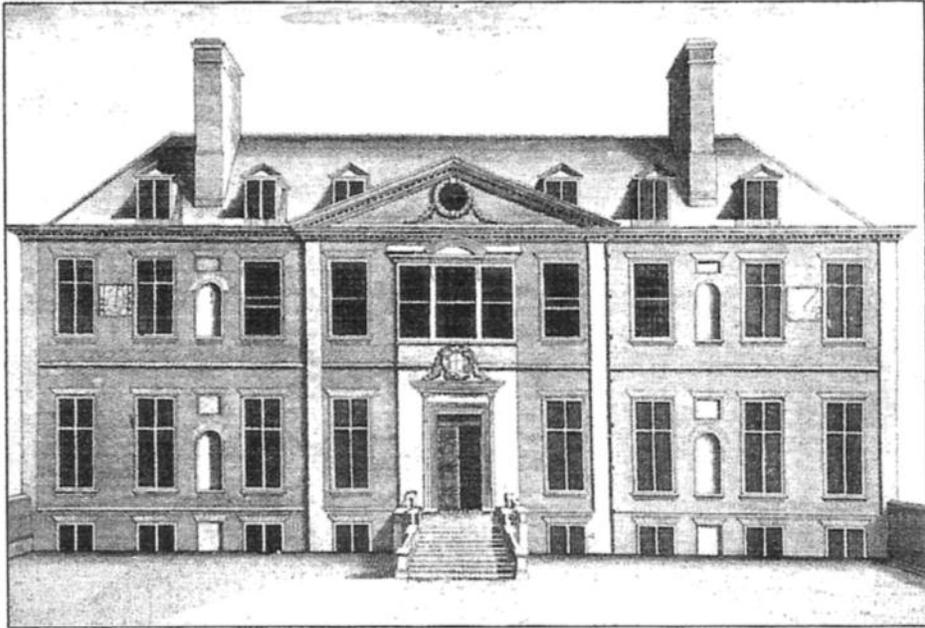


Fig. 20. John Oliver. Engraving. Tring Park, Hertfordshire, showing Wren's use of sashes and casements on the same façade, c.1700. *Pete Smith.*

clearly show sashes on the west front. The vertical sliding sash window, with its pulleys and weights was developed by craftsmen in the Office of the King's Works in around 1672, under the aegis of Wren and his colleague Robert Hooke.<sup>85</sup> Wren and Hooke certainly seem to have been amongst the first architects to have employed this revolutionary new invention. The well-known engraving by John Oliver of Tring Park in Hertfordshire, which was designed by Wren in 1683 at the earliest, shows a house with both sashes and casements (Fig. 20). The sash windows can be seen in the five central windows on the first floor, contrasting strongly with the more old-fashioned casements in the other windows.<sup>86</sup> In other words, sashes were so new at this date that even Wren was only using them sparingly. The fact that Newby, which we now know was designed in 1684, had a complete set of these new sash windows means that its designer was familiar with the very

latest technical developments then being pioneered by Wren and the Office of Works in London. This not only means that Newby was very probably the first country house in Yorkshire to be built with sash windows,<sup>87</sup> it also makes Defoe's claim that Wren was its designer that much more likely.

The same is possibly also true of the 'skilfully contrived staircase' which de Blainville mentions. Wren was an astronomer and inventor as well as an architect, and the fact that this stair was considered 'un escalier si bien pratique' suggests that it was something new and unusual. If it were an octagonal open-well staircase, as seems likely, then it might have been related to the circular 'geometrical' or Dean's Staircase which Wren designed later for St Paul's Cathedral.<sup>88</sup> The inclusion of the advanced plumbing system and water supply which Celia Fiennes mentions in her journal, and the clock and carillon mentioned by De Blainville, might well

indicate an architect with scientific interests like Wren. In other words Newby Hall was a modern house in the most fashionable style which embraced the very latest technology. All this helps to explain the reputation that Newby acquired as ‘the best house in the north’, and it also tends to confirm that the designer of this house was an ingenious architect, who knew all about the latest developments in the Office of Works.

There are two further questions which need to be discussed briefly. Firstly, the quality of workmanship of Newby. It has been suggested by Christopher Hussey that the exterior of the house is not of the high standard of workmanship which the Office of Works and Wren are known for.<sup>89</sup> The brickwork is of good quality, but not of the superb quality of that found at Chelsea Hospital, for example. But there can be no suggestion that Wren actually supervised the construction of the building of Newby; this would have been left in the hands of a local man, like John Etty, who certainly worked at Newby in some capacity. Wren would, at most, have chosen the site and provided detailed designs (as Defoe states). Even the choosing of the site could have been a problem since we have no record of Wren ever having visited Newby. We know that he disliked travel and rarely travelled much further north than Cambridge. According to the Surveyor’s ‘Riding Charges’ or travel expenses, which survive for most of the years between 1669 and 1692, Wren only once travelled north of Bishops Stortford, and that was to Scarborough in October 1682.<sup>90</sup> These records obviously include only his official duties, but if he did visit Newby this would seem to be the most likely moment. Of course, Wren need not necessarily have visited Newby at all; Blackett’s survey of his house and estate in 1683 might have been commissioned for just this purpose. A surviving letter from Wren to John Etty, dated 1688, concerns just such a detailed survey for the ‘palace at Berwick’, carried out by Etty specifically to save Wren the trouble of having to travel to Northumberland. Not

only does this letter establish a direct link between Etty and Wren, at the time that Newby Hall was being built, it also goes on to explain that Wren had shown this survey to the king and ‘told him who I employed and giving you [Etty] the just character you deserve’, which does suggest that he already knew Etty well enough to be able to give him a ‘just character’.<sup>91</sup> John Etty’s documented association with the building works at Newby and also with Wren once again strengthens the case for Wren’s authorship of Newby.

The final problem to be addressed is why Sir Christopher Wren would have designed a house for an unknown Yorkshire landowner like Blackett. The only two country houses definitely designed by Wren are Tring Park, Hertfordshire and Winslow Hall, Buckinghamshire. These two houses were designed for Henry Guy and William Lowndes respectively. Both were successively Secretary to the Treasury and would have had regular business contacts with Wren and an influence over the financing of many of Wren’s important royal and public building projects.<sup>92</sup> John Harris has recently uncovered evidence that Wren also provided designs for Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire and Houghton Hall, Norfolk,<sup>93</sup> both for patrons who could well have been acquainted with Wren.<sup>94</sup> But the same could never be said of Sir Edward Blackett. He was Sheriff of Northumberland, 1679–80, and Member of Parliament for Ripon, 1689–90 and for Northumberland, 1698–1700, but he held no other public office or influential post at court.<sup>95</sup>

However some connection certainly did exist between them, as Richard Hewlings has found that there is a payment to ‘the Servants of Sir Christopher Wren; 7s 6d’ in the Blackett papers for July 1694.<sup>96</sup> Though it is perhaps foolish to speculate about the reasons for this payment, it seems possible that Blackett was rewarding Wren’s household servants for arranging a meeting between him and his architect. Whatever the reason for this payment, it proves that the two men were known to each other,

but it does not explain why Wren would have agreed to design a house for Blackett. The only likely link between them concerned the importation of coal from Newcastle to London. For Sir Edward Blackett was the eldest son of Sir William Blackett Bt., a wealthy merchant, who had made his fortune through the mining of lead and coal. Sir William (who died in 1680) and his third son, also Sir William, were heavily involved in the shipping of this coal to London. Since Wren's City Churches and his beloved St Paul's Cathedral were all paid for from the Coal Tax, which Charles II imposed on coal imported from Newcastle, it would seem likely that Wren, who had at least a vested interest in the importing of this Newcastle coal, may well have had dealings with the Blackett family. This would appear to be the most likely point of contact between this Yorkshire squire and the Surveyor of the King's Works.

#### CONCLUSION

It can now confidently be stated that Sir Edward Blackett's Newby Hall was designed in 1684; construction began in 1685 and it was completed by 1693. It is also possible to reconstruct most of the original external appearance of this house, though less is known for certain about its internal appearance and arrangement. It was a modern and comfortable house with a fashionable garden that was much admired by contemporary visitors. The evidence compiled here does seem to confirm Daniel Defoe's statement that 'Sir Christopher Wren laid out the design as well as chose the ground' for this new house. However it is the recent discovery by Richard Hewlings of a payment by Blackett to Wren's servants, thus establishing a direct link between patron and architect, which does most to confirm Wren's authorship of Newby Hall. In the light of this new discovery, and the recent discovery by John Harris that Wren produced designs for Houghton Hall, Norfolk and Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire, it is perhaps time to re-examine some of the other traditional attributions of country houses which past historians believed were designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper developed from a lecture given at a symposium, *Newby Hall and the Yorkshire Country House*, organised by Dr Kerry Bristol for the Leeds City Art Galleries, in November 2004. This symposium accompanied the exhibition *Drawing from the Past: William Weddell and the Transformation of Newby Hall*, celebrating the acquisition by the West Yorkshire Archives Service of the Newby Hall Archive.

I would particularly like to thank Richard Hewlings, who for a number of years has been studying the Blakett Papers in the Northumberland County Record Office, and who has generously shared his discoveries with me. Gratitude is also due to the late Howard Colvin, Rosalys Coope, Kerry Downes, Anthony Geraghty, Elaine Harwood, Sally Jeffery and Patricia Smith for their comments and assistance. John Harris shared his recent discovery concerning Wren's drawings and David Adshead allowed me to see a pre-publication copy of his book on the Drawings at Wimpole Hall.

I would also like to thank the WYAS, Leeds for permission to quote from Peter Aram's manuscripts, the Gloucestershire Archives for permission to quote from the Blathwayt papers, Mr and Mrs Compton for permission to reproduce Hall's views of Newby and Stuart Hall, the administrator, for his interest and assistance. The staff at the GRO and the staff at the WYAS, Leeds were generous with their assistance.

## NOTES

- 1 Brian Wragg, *The Life and Works of John Carr of York*, Giles Worsley (ed.), York, 2000, 182.
- 2 Eileen Harris, *The Genius of Robert Adam, His Interiors*, New Haven and London, 2001, 212–31.
- 3 J. Low, 'William Belwood; Architect and Surveyor', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 1984, LVI, 131–54.
- 4 Celia Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, Christopher Morris (ed.), London, 1947, 84–85.
- 5 Nora Hardwick, *A diary of the journey through the North of England made by William and John Blathwayt of Dyrham Park*, privately printed 1977, 22. Gloucestershire Record Office (hereafter GRO), D1799, F213.
- 6 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, P. N. Furbank, W. R. Owens and A. J. Coulson (eds.), New Haven and London, 1991, 266.
- 7 Peter Aram, *An Account of Gardens in England*, manuscript copy in the Ingilby Papers, West Yorkshire Archives Service (hereafter WYAS), West Yorkshire Leeds (hereafter WYL) 230/acc. 2922/42, 113.
- 8 Nikolaus Pevsner, 2nd edition revised by Enid Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire, West Riding*, London, 1967, 375–76.
- 9 Ely Hargrove, *The History of the Castle, Town and Forest of Knaresborough with Harrowgate and its medicinal springs: including an account of the most remarkable places, in the neighbourhood; the curious remains of antiquity; elegant buildings; ornamented grounds; and other singular productions of nature and art*. Knaresborough, 6th edition 1809.
- 10 Fiennes, *op. cit.*, 84–85.
- 11 Eileen Harris, 'William Weddell and his Architects', in *Drawing from the Past, William Weddell and the Transformation of Newby Hall*, Leeds Museums and Galleries, 2004, 57.
- 12 John Cornforth, Correspondence, 'Designs for Newby', *Country Life*, July 19, 1979, 173. Northumberland County Record Office (hereafter NCRO), ZBL 269/2.
- 13 Peter Aram, *op. cit.*, 110.
- 14 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840*, Third edition, New Haven and London, 1995, 353–54.

- 15 NCRO, ZBL 273/4. I am grateful to Richard Hewlings for this and the other information from NCRO that is referenced here.
- 16 NCRO, ZBL 269.
- 17 NCRO, ZBL 233/2.
- 18 Knyff & Kip, *Britannia Illustrata*, John Harris & Gervase Jackson-Stops (eds.), Bungay, Suffolk, 1984, 186.
- 19 A further ground plan exists for Newby Hall amongst these drawings, possibly an early design by another architect, but it does not appear to relate to the house as built, WYAS, WYL, NH/D/1/3/1/3/1.
- 20 NCRO, ZBL 269.
- 21 The cupola must have existed by 1695, since Etty was paid in 1693 for the ‘ball, eagle and vane’ which surmounted it. Hall’s painting and Kip & Knyff’s engraving both show the cupola, and Celia Fiennes and Peter Aram both specifically mention the cupola.
- 22 The painting has a deeper foreground than the engraving, occupied by a coach and horses, but otherwise these images are identical, even the figures in the garden occupy the same positions.
- 23 Harris and Jackson-Stops, *op. cit.*, 114–15, pl. 53.
- 24 Peter Aram, *op. cit.*, 110.
- 25 The present stone cornice has plain brackets comparable to the cornice at Kirkstall Grange built in the 1750s by James Paine.
- 26 WYAS, WYL5013/D/1/1/1.
- 27 *Drawing from the Past, William Weddell and the Transformation of Newby Hall*, Leeds Museums and Galleries, 2004, Fig. 23. WYAS, WYL5013//D/1/1/1. The basic shape of the two main gardens has been retained along with the walls and gates, but the raised beds and statues have been removed from the south garden and the planting in the orchard garden has been simplified. The flower garden in front of the house has been replaced by a carriage-turning gravel circle and the stables and coach-house have been removed from the rear court.
- 28 WYAS, WYL 5013/D/1/3/2. Harris, 2004, *op. cit.*, 58.
- 29 John Carr altered the rear, east front, when he turned it into the entrance front. Eventually he brought the central 3 window section a little further forward to make the new eastern entrance hall behind.
- 30 The balusters and handrail were replaced by Robert Adam when the stair was remodelled in 1771.
- 31 *The Life and Trial of Eugene Aram, for the Murder of Daniel Clark, of Knaresborough*, Knaresborough, 1867, 38.
- 32 Peter Aram, *A Practical Treatise of Flowers*, Frank Felsenstein (ed.), Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Literary and Historical Section, Volume XX, Part 1, December 1985, [9] ix.
- 33 *Eugene Aram*, 1867, *op. cit.*, 38.
- 34 NCRO, ZBL273/7.
- 35 David Green, *Gardener to Queen Anne*, London, 1956, 44, n. 2.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 122.
- 37 Thomas Gent, *The Antient and Modern History of the Loyal Town of Rippon*. York, 1733, xvii–xviii.
- 38 Peter Aram, *op. cit.*, [35–104] 1–70. WYAS, Ingilby Papers, WYL 230/Acc2922/43.
- 39 *Ibid.*, pl. 5. WYAS, Ingilby Papers, WYL230/Acc2922/44.
- 40 Frank Felsenstein suggests that this design corresponds with Celia Fiennes’ description but this is incorrect. *Ibid.*, [119–121] 85–87. A similar arrangement of triangular plots was used by John Smythson in his design for Sir Percival Willoughby’s Orchard Garden at Wollaton Hall. Pete Smith, *The Sundial Garden and House-Plan Mount: Two Gardens at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire*, by Robert and John Smythson, *Garden History*, 31: 1, 2003, 1–28, fig. 10.
- 41 Fiennes, *op. cit.*, 84–85.
- 42 NCRO, ZBL 273/2.
- 43 WYAS, NH/D/1/3.
- 44 Elizabeth Hagglund, *Cassandra Willoughby’s Visits to Country Houses*, *Georgian Group Journal*, 2001, 185–202.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 193. Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare’s Birthplace Trust, Stoneleigh MSS, Cassandra Willoughby, *An Account of the Journeys I have taken & where I have been since March 1695*, fols. 9r–10r.
- 46 BL, Add. MS. 47057. I am grateful to Elaine Harwood for transcribing this extract for me.
- 47 Begun 1699. Colvin, *op. cit.*, 1003–07.

- 48 Built c.1710–20. *Ibid.*, 136.
- 49 Completed c.1725, Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses, Early Georgian*, London, 1955, 147–54.
- 50 Built c.1705–10 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 122.
- 51 Built c.1714–16. *Ibid.*, 978.
- 52 Built 1698–1704. *Ibid.*, 953.
- 53 Built c.1696–1700. *Ibid.*, 354.
- 54 Built c.1713. *Ibid.*, 1016.
- 55 Built c.1680. Edward Waterson and Peter Meadows, *Lost Houses of the West Riding*, York, 1998, 78–79.
- 56 Built c.1674. Harris and Jackson-Stops, *op. cit.*, 188–89.
- 57 Rainwater head dated 1678. Jane Hatcher, *Richmondshire Architecture*, York, 1986, 192–93.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 191.
- 59 Hardwick, *op. cit.*, 22–24. GRO, D1799, F213.
- 60 This section of De Blainville’s description is translated by Nora Hardwick as ‘we viewed the house which consists of a main block with two detached buildings which stand at either end.’ This is misleading. The original reads ‘nous vimes la maison on qui consiste en un corps de logis avec deux pavillons qui sont aux deux bouts’ which is more accurately translated as ‘we viewed the house which consists of a main block with two pavilions which are at either end’. I am grateful to Dr Rosalys Coope for her assistance with this interpretation and translation. Hardwick, *op. cit.*, 22. GRO, D1799, F213.
- 61 This section of De Blainville’s description is translated by Nora Hardwick as ‘a flight of 24 stairs which comprise 130 steps’. This is incorrect. The original reads ‘il contient 24 rampes qui comprennent 130 degres’ which is more accurately translated as ‘it contains 24 flights which comprise 130 steps’. I am grateful to Dr Rosalys Coope for her assistance with this translation. Hardwick, *op. cit.*, 23. GRO, D1799, F213.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 22–24. GRO, D1799, F213.
- 63 Many 17th century French chateaux have a main block or ‘corps de logis’ with ‘pavillions’ forming wider blocks at either end – though in France they would be distinguished by separate roofs.
- 64 At only 6 inches per step that would have meant that the staircase rose 65 feet, roughly the distance from the basement floor to the roof. 130 steps would give a rough average of 5 steps per flight.
- 65 Peter Aram, *An Account of Gardens in England*. Manuscript copy in the Ingilby Papers; WYAS, WYL 230/Acc. 2922/42, 110–13, Newby (WR).
- 66 Hargrove, *op. cit.*.
- 67 Margaret Whinney, *Wren*, London, 1971.
- 68 Kerry Downes, *The Architecture of Wren*, London, 1982.
- 69 Lisa Jardine, *On a Grand Scale, The Outstanding Career of Sir Christopher Wren*, London, 2002.
- 70 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 1083–97.
- 71 James Elmes, *Memoirs of the life and Works of Sir Christopher Wren...*, London, 1823.
- 72 Lucy Phillimore, *Sir Christopher Wren...*, London, 1881.
- 73 Fawley Court, Bucks was the only other country house attributed to Wren by the Wren Society. The Wren Society, Volume XVII, Oxford, 1940, 51–53.
- 74 Martin S Briggs, *Wren the Incomparable*, London, 1953, 231.
- 75 Anon, ‘Newby Hall, Yorkshire’, *Country Life*, 20 January 1906, 90.
- 76 H Avary Tipping, ‘Newby Hall, Ripon’, *Country Life*, 13 June 1914, 878.
- 77 Christopher Hussey, ‘Newby Hall I, Yorkshire’, *Country Life*, 12 June 1937, 661.
- 78 Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses, Mid Georgian, 1760–1800*, London, 1956, 141.
- 79 John Cornforth, ‘Newby Hall, North Yorkshire – I’, *Country Life*, 7 June 1979, 1804.
- 80 Defoe, *op. cit.*, 266–67.
- 81 *Ibid.*, viii–ix, n. 5.
- 82 Repairs to Salisbury Cathedral, St Paul’s Cathedral and the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford. Defoe, *op. cit.*, 78, 143–44, 174.
- 83 Colvin, *op. cit.*, 951.
- 84 Newby was not the first house of this type in Yorkshire. Bolton Hall, 1678, was three storeys with a flat roof balustrade and cupola. Hatcher, *op. cit.*, 192–93.
- 85 H J Louw, ‘The Origin of the Sash Window’ *Architectural History*, Vol. 26, 1983, 49–72.
- 86 Pete Smith, ‘Winslow Hall’, *The Renaissance Villa in England, 1500–1700*, Malcolm Airs and

Geoffrey Tyack (eds.), Reading, 2007, 225–28.

- 87 The new wings added to Londesborough Hall, for the 1st Earl of Burlington, in 1676–78 to the designs of Robert Hooke, appear in Kip & Kniff's engraving to have had traditional cross-casement windows. Harris and Jackson-Stops, *op. cit.*, 179, pl. 31.
- 88 Three house plans survive amongst Wren's drawings at All Souls College, Oxford which have open well spiral staircases. Anthony Geraghty, *The Architectural Drawings of Sir Christopher Wren at All Souls College, Oxford: A Complete Catalogue*, Lund Humphries, 2007, 204 and 222, Nos. 340, 341 and 310.
- 89 Hussey, 1937, *op. cit.*, 661.
- 90 The Wren Society, Volume XVIII, Oxford, 1941, 175. Office of Works Records, Vol. 35, 1682/3, 'Scarborough for 2 journeys with a brickmaker £11. 12s. 0d'.
- 91 The Wren Society, *op. cit.*, 68. Letter to 'Mr John Etty at his house in York' dated 'April 5 1688', BL, Stowe 746, fol. 101.
- 92 Pete Smith, *op. cit.*, 223–46.
- 93 See 'Merly Library: A Catalogue of the well known and celebrated library of the late Ralph Willett Esq.' which includes 'A large Parcel of Houghton, Wimpole &c, by Sir C. Wren', December 1813. I would like to thank John Harris for informing me of his discovery. David Adshead, *Wimpole Hall, Architectural drawings and topographical views*, National Trust, 2007, 10 and 148 n. 8.
- 94 The designs for Wimpole Hall were most likely produced for Charles Bodville Robartes, 2nd Earl of Radnor, son-in-law of Sir John Cutler, who was Treasurer to St Paul's Cathedral, a position which would also have brought him into constant contact with Wren. David Adshead, *op. cit.*, 16.
- 95 B. D. Henning (ed.) *The History of Parliament; The House of Commons, 1690–1715, Vol. I*, London, 1983, 221–22.
- 96 NCRO, ZBL, 273/3, 15. I would like to thank Richard Hewlings for informing me of this discovery. He has also pointed out that this reference to 'the servants of Sir Christopher Wren' could be interpreted to mean one of his architectural assistants, such as William Dickinson or Nicholas Hawksmoor.