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THE GREENHOUSE AT WANSTEAD

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The greenhouse at Wanstead House, Greater London (formerly in Essex), was one of the more important buildings in the garden landscape created there in the early-eighteenth century. Documents allow for a reconstruction of its external and internal layout, which is undertaken with reference to the partly surviving greenhouse at Castle Ashby. An attempt is also made to reconstruct its bathroom or 'bagnio', using complementary evidence from the Carshalton House Water Tower, which may have been influenced by the client's visit to Wanstead in 1714 and 1716.

In the Heroic poem 'Flora Triumphans', dedicated to Sir Richard Child, the creator of the landscape at Wanstead, an anonymous poet spends a substantial part describing the greenhouse.¹ He or she tells us that this is:

'A stately PILE [which] oerlooks the Crystal Fount
Views in the watry Glas its Towry Front:
Not all for proud Magnificence; no less
A Sanctuary to reliev'd distress'

It is a 'fortress', into which Flora calls her 'verdant Nursery', or her 'foreign favourites', when 'The keen Forces of the stormy North/ Al blustering from their Winter Camp, pour forth'. To counteract these keen forces, the poet tells us that Child has provided for Nature 'a safe protection for her nearest care'.

The prominence of the greenhouse in the Wanstead poem is a testament to its role within the landscape, and it is the purpose of this paper to review that role in some detail. To give some idea of the grandeur of this lost building, particular

reference will be made to a surviving but reduced greenhouse façade at Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, and also to two greenhouses at Carshalton, formerly in Surrey but now in the London Borough of Sutton.

HISTORY AND LANDSCAPE

The history of the Wanstead greenhouse spans almost the whole of the eighteenth century. It was probably of recent construction when the poem was written, in about 1713, but was demolished in July and August 1799, when its contents and materials were itemised in a sale catalogue, and carted off site after the auction within a fortnight.² In addition to these excellent sources of information, there are the bird's-eye views published by Kip and Knyff drawn about 1713,³ Colen Campbell's plan and elevation of 1715,⁴ Rocque's plans and views of 1735 and 1744–6,⁵ and other later maps and topographical descriptions, all of which allow a full study of its position and structure within the Wanstead landscape.⁶

The greenhouse has been attributed to William Talman by John Harris, based on architectural comparisons with greenhouses at Chatsworth, Dawley (Middlesex), Wimpole Hall (Cambridgeshire), Castle Ashby and elsewhere, all set within gardens associated with George London.⁷ London died before Christmas 1713, and his admirer Stephen Switzer attributed the landscape at Wanstead to London as one of his final projects.⁸ The famous views by Kip and Knyff show the greenhouse in its landscape context (Fig. 1). The major axis of the

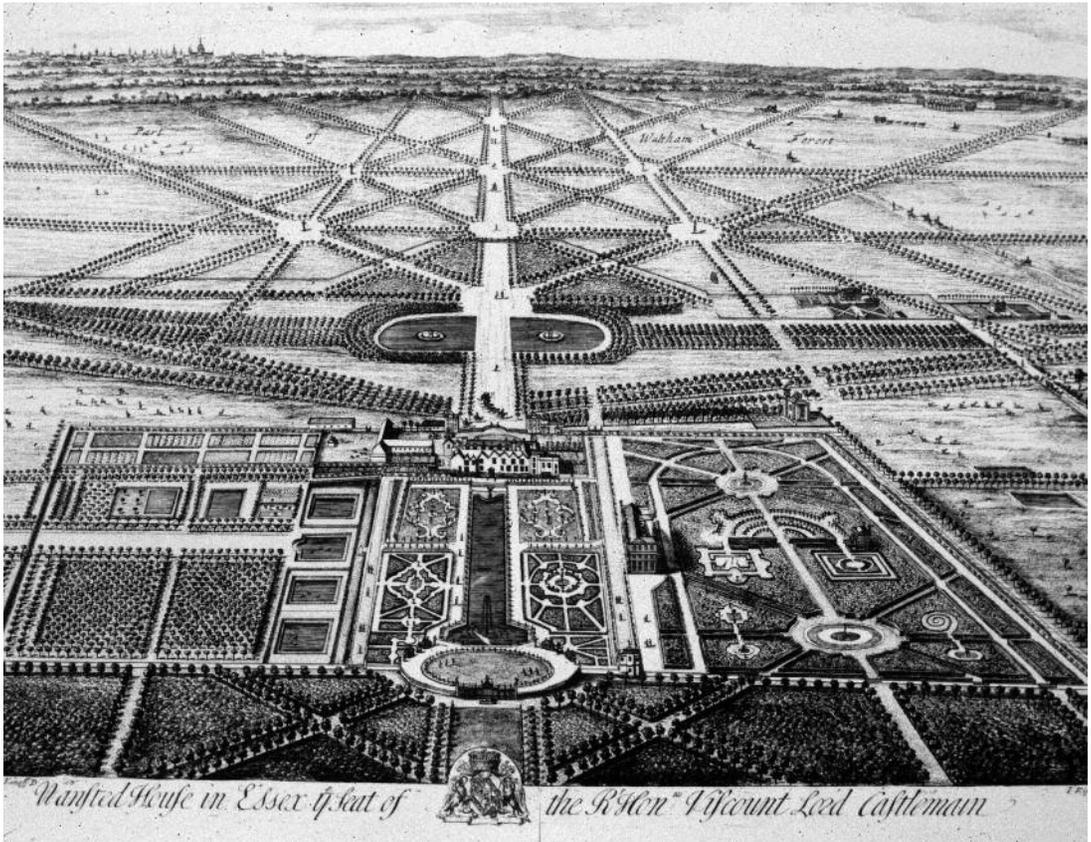


Fig. 1. Wanstead from the east c.1713, from John Kip and Leonard Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata . . . , or Nouveau Theatre de la Grande Bretagne*. By kind permission of the Essex Record Office.

garden is aligned on the old house, soon to be replaced by Colen Campbell's Palladian mansion, while the greenhouse, a bystander to the north looks on. It faces a long formal canal, and behind it, there are parterres fringed with low hedges and cut by symmetrical paths leading to intimate closets. Threading through these is an avenue connecting rond-points, later extending to an amphitheatre further east.

By contrast, other roughly contemporary greenhouses, like those at Wimpole Hall, Dawley, Chatsworth, Buckingham House (London), Wentworth Woodhouse (Yorkshire), Felbrigg

(Norfolk) and Castle Ashby, were intimately attached to small gardens in which they played the prominent role.⁹ The greenhouse at Castle Ashby, for example, dominated a small area of garden known by 1700 as the Greenhouse Garden, or 'My Lady's New Garden', laid out for the Earl and Countess of Northampton with short formal walks aligned on the centre and end bays of the building.¹⁰ At Dyrham, the Talman greenhouse was attached to the southern end of the main block of the house, and was the focus of the main axis of the garden terminating in the fine cascade descending the hill to the south.¹¹

Wanstead's formal landscape, like that of Dyrham, was softened considerably by the later eighteenth century. Searles' 1779 estate map¹² shows the area immediately around the greenhouse. To the south of it a minor sinuous path replaces the earlier east-west axis, while to the north lie the Steward's House and cluster of workshops, hot-houses, stack yard and ice house (Fig. 2). Further north was the engine house containing a horse-powered engine, drawing water from a pool or well to its side. It is difficult to understand at first why the greenhouse and hot houses were demolished in 1799 and their stock sold, as this event cannot be linked to any particular landscaping phase, and was conducted during a period of trusteeship for the owner, Sir James Tylney-Long. However, the continuing process of landscape informalisation at Wanstead may have seen the greenhouse as an obstruction, while the removal of the intensive maintenance costs of the buildings and stock would have been welcome. A total of £671.7s. 10d. was raised for the greenhouse and stock, although the large iron roller and four watering pots recorded in the building in an inventory of 1795 were not included in the sale.¹³ The site of the greenhouse was close to the American Plantation created in the early-nineteenth century, and now lies within the grounds of Wanstead Golf Club.

THE EXTERIOR

Campbell's engraving of the south elevation, published in 1715, shows a fifteen-bay building 152 ft. long, divided into five compartments in the rhythm 2:3:5:3:2, diminishing in height and receding in building line (Fig. 3). The building is raised on a deep plinth, and approached by a flight of six steps with coping sold for £5.10s at auction in 1799. Analysis must start with the central eleven bays, comprising the long greenhouse room. Access is through the central bay, which has short panelled doors below the bottom sash. The central five bays,

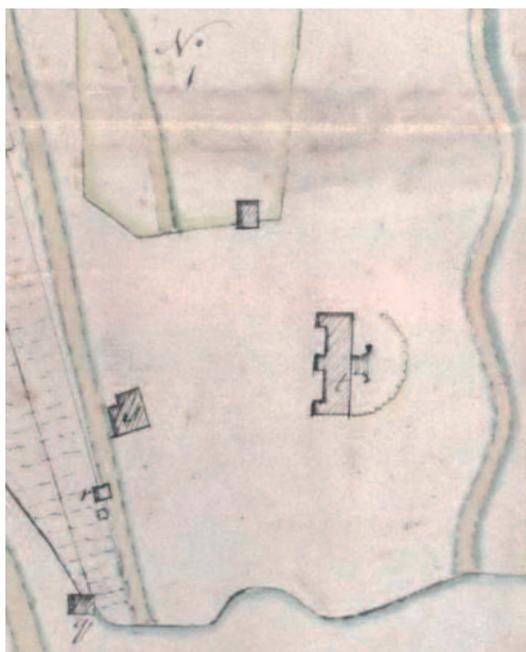


Fig. 2. L. Searles, *A survey of Wanstead Park*, 1779. Essex Record Office, D/DCw P59.

approximately 24 ft. high, are articulated with Doric pilasters, enclosing the tall 15-ft. high square-headed windows surmounted by plain raised panels with guttae underneath. Horizontal decoration is kept to a minimum; a simple plat-band separates the three side windows on either side of the central section from the panels above them. Over the five central bays is a panelled parapet with unidentified scenes in relief, as in the greenhouse at Wimpole, flanked by large consoles; on the skyline are statues, including a Farnese Hercules and a Roman soldier in the centre. Neither the parapet reliefs nor the statuary appear in the 1799 sale. The piers of the projecting central bays are slightly broader than the others, and Campbell's engraving suggests that the whole central section was faced in stone, or rendered. However, all other illustrations, including Kip and Knyff's in 1713 (Fig. 4), and a description by a visitor, Pierre Jacques Foucheroux in 1728, indicate the facade was completely

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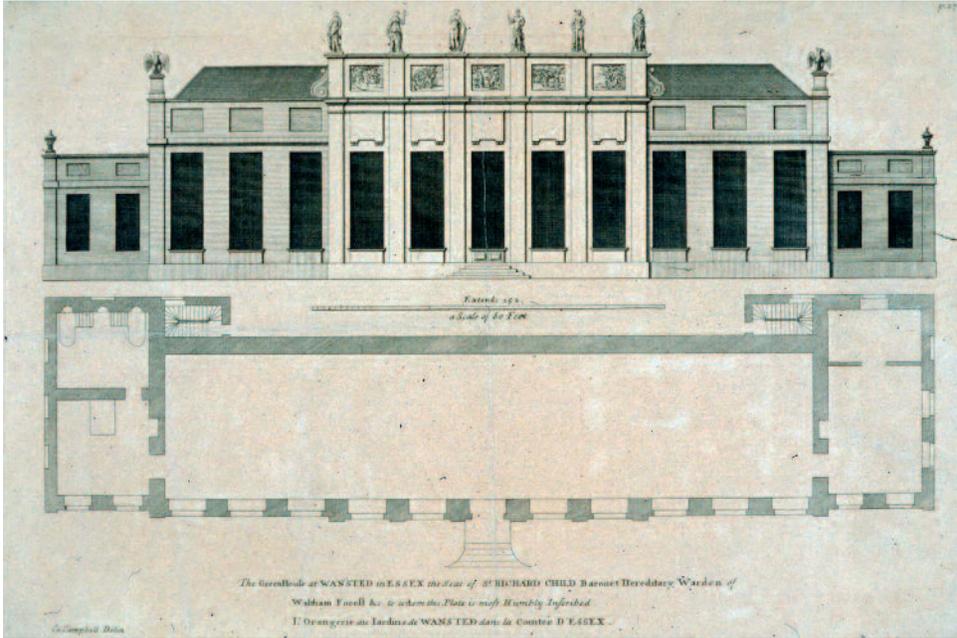


Fig. 3. The Wanstead greenhouse, from Colen Campbell *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715) 1, pl. 27.

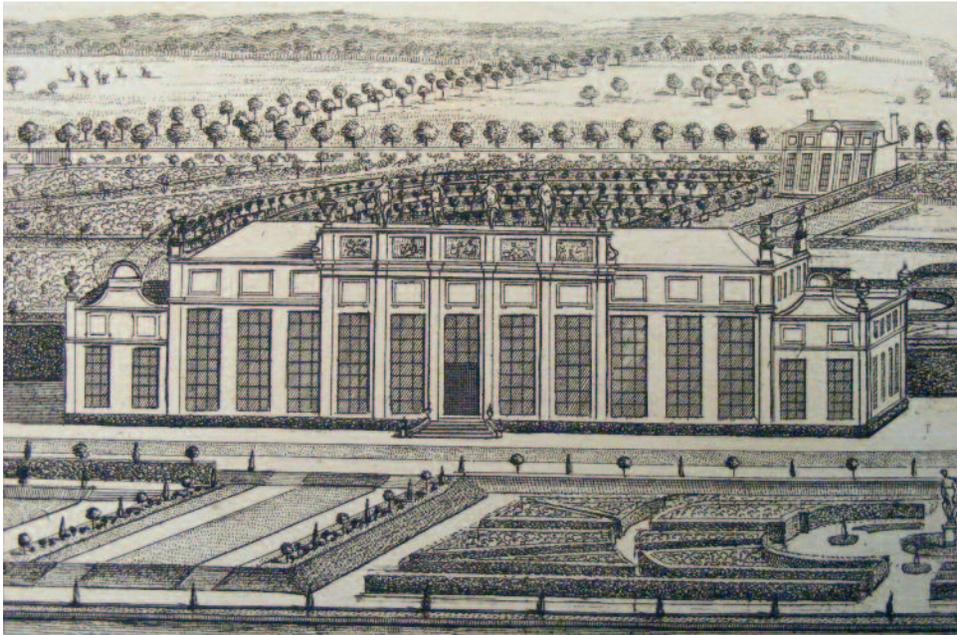


Fig. 4. The greenhouse at Wanstead from the south, c.1713, by John Kip and Leonard Knyff.



Fig. 5. Castle Ashby greenhouse from the south-east.
Author, by kind permission of the Marquess of Northampton.



Fig. 6. Castle Ashby, the central triple bay from south.
Author, by kind permission of the Marquess of Northampton.

of brick.¹⁴ The flanking three bays to each side of the five-bay centre continue the basic design of the windows and panels seen in Kip and Knyff's elevations, although the panels are shown as sunken by Campbell in 1715 and Rocque in 1735, and are separated from the windows below by the plat-band. At the extreme ends, raised high above, outspread winged eagles or phoenixes terminate the hipped roof structure of the greenhouse room.

CASTLE ASHBY: A COMPARISON

A good comparison for this eleven-bay central part of the Wanstead facade can be found at Castle Ashby, where the greenhouse was built in 1695 for the Earl of Northampton on land taken out of the churchyard in 1689. It was severely reduced in size in 1874, soon after the building of Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt's Orangery, and only part of the thirteen-bay south facade, *c.*141 ft. long, remains, its projecting triple-bay centre retained to its full height of *c.*26.24 ft. while the outer bays were drastically reduced in height (Fig. 5). As at Wanstead, a similar emphasis on the central bays is made (Fig. 6). Ashlar stonework is employed for the stepped parapet, while the roughly coursed stonework of the remainder may have been originally rendered. The parapet is decorated by small brackets, topped with pineapples of Coade stone, probably replicas of stone originals, and displays a large cartouche of arms, also of Coade stone and dateable to the turn of the nineteenth century. Beneath this is rectangular recessed panelling, as at Dawley and Wanstead, but emphasised here by stone dressings with a three-quarter roll. This moulding is also found around the windows, which reach to ground level, unlike other contemporary greenhouses including Wanstead. As at Wanstead, the piers enclosing the central bays are broader than the rest, but here there are quoins to mark the breaking forward of the central bays.¹⁵ Entrance to the building was through all three

central bays, which contained doors provided in May 1695.¹⁶

Wanstead differs from Castle Ashby in the inclusion of significantly lower, flat roofed, two-bay apartments or pavilions attached to the ends of the greenhouse room, again with panels set above the windows, and each terminated by a decorative urn on a short pedestal. There is conflicting evidence for the existence of gables; Campbell in 1715 shows none, but Kip and Knyff in 1713 (Fig. 4), and the marginal illustrations on John Rocque's map of 1735 show free-standing shaped gables, creating a stark contrast from the rest of the angular composition of the facade and further distancing the pavilions from the greenhouse room. Campbell's plan of the east and west pavilions indicate that the west elevation had blind window openings. Measurement of Searles's block plan of 1779 suggests that both side pavilions had been demolished by that date; certainly the measurements and description of the materials auctioned in 1799 do not include references to either pavilion.

There are no clear views of the north elevation. Campbell's engraving shows a symmetrical facade with projecting pavilion/staircase wings, but Rocque's map of 1735 suggests an irregular extension to the east, and Searles's 1779 map indicates the presence of a central projection of equal depth and width to the staircase towers, which were retained when the pavilions were demolished. The staircases allowed access to three fruit rooms in the roof space noted in the 1799 sale catalogue, lit by north-facing dormer windows shown in the detail of Kip and Knyff's bird's eye view from the east.¹⁷

THE INTERIOR: THE GREENHOUSE ROOM AND THE SIDE PAVILIONS

There is more difficulty in assessing the internal arrangement of the greenhouse, including the heating system. At Wanstead, the 1713 poet found

‘a Winter Urn
With gentler Flames light up to warm not burn:
All one fair Charity Pile, a cherishing Stove
To her whole Darling Nursury above’.¹⁸

A decade or so later Fougereux records that the greenhouse ‘is panelled inside and fitted with staging for shrubs and plants from the Indies, palms, aloes &c’ and ‘indifferent’ Orange Trees. This recalls Switzer’s description of Dyrham as having ‘Several rows of Scaffolds one above another . . . on the Topmost whereof are plac’d the most tender, but largest plants; and the shrubs, Flowers &c. below, so as to make the figure of a slope, with walks between the whole length, for the gardener to examine into the health and state of his numerous vegetables’.¹⁹ In 1799, the Wanstead greenhouse contained ‘17 tressels, a quantity of fir plank, and sundry blocks’, sold for £3.4s. The walls were lined with forty eight sections of ‘strong framed wainscoting with raised panels and ovolo mouldings . . . plinth and dado mouldings’ surmounted by ‘wood cornice mouldings’; the window embrasures were also lined with panelling and window seats. There is no evidence to suggest that this was any different from the panelling seen by Fougereux in 1728. The flagstone pavement of the greenhouse room, covering over 290 square yards, was sold for £26, 14s. 4d. in 1799.²⁰

Fougereux’s reference to palms, aloes, and Orange trees introduces the greens themselves. The sale catalogue from 1799 is the best indication of the quality and quantity of the stock kept at Wanstead at any point during the eighteenth century. Preliminary analysis by Jenny Milledge suggests that much of the stock was scented, creating within the greenhouse room a perfumed atmosphere much appreciated by the owner and visitors alike. In addition to the 38

Myrtles and 92 Orange Trees, which raised high prices at the auction, there were well-established Jasmines, Yuccas and Philadelphus amongst more recent later eighteenth century introductions, such as the Tea Tree, Aucuba and the winter flowering *Daphne Odora*. The stock from the greenhouse raised £274, 8s. 6d.²¹

Daniel Defoe’s description of Wanstead in 1724 tantalizingly refers to the heating system keeping these greens alive during the winter; the greenhouse – ‘an excellent building fit to entertain a prince’ – is ‘furnished with stoves and artificial Places for heat from an Apartment in which is a bagnio, and other Conveniences, which render it both useful and pleasant’.²² Apart from confirming stoves in the plural, his description further suggests that there was a heating system within the bathing apartments at the west end of the building, although no indication of this appears on Campbell’s engraving. There is no evidence for an undercroft at Wanstead like that at Dyrham, where Switzer records several stoves set at convenient distances to enable a uniform heat passing through to the room above.²³ But the 1713 poet’s reference at Wanstead to the heating of the ‘darling nursury above’ by the ‘Winter Urn’ may suggest some form of underfloor heating, perhaps generated through ducts by the ‘stove hole’ or ‘stove house’ recorded in the east half of the building in the 1799 sale catalogue.²⁴ This may have been situated in the vicinity of the east staircase, and may be the building indicated on Rocque’s 1735 map, and possibly Searles’s central projection to the north. The 1799 sale catalogue is a very detailed document, but makes no mention of the furnace or pipework of a heating system.

When spring awakes the fires are extinguished and, as the 1713 poet tells us, Flora opens the gates of her greenhouse: ‘See from those walls her fair battalion pour/ To their revisited dear Sun once more’²⁵, leaving, one suspects, the greenhouse room virtually empty, the staging dismantled for the summer. Expensively lined with panelling, and

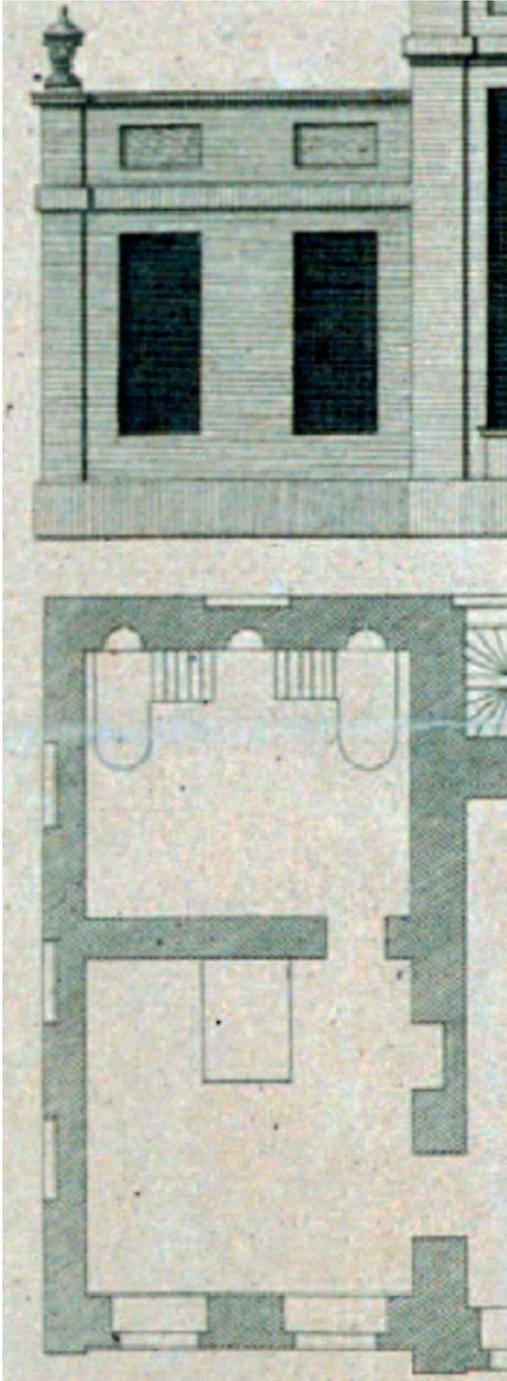


Fig. 7. The bathing section of the Wanstead greenhouse. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*.

equipped with window seats, the room now provided the owner with one of the largest spaces for entertainment on his estate. The Orangery at Kensington Palace, used by Queen Anne for summer supper parties, is a well-known parallel.²⁶ The internal furnishings of similar rooms further suggest this dual use; an inventory at Dyrham in 1710, for example, shows that the greenhouse or Orangery was decorated by over 80 prints, furnished by nine wooden bottomed chairs, two tables and two green carpets.²⁷

At each end of the greenhouse room, the pavilions continue the theme of entertainment. Campbell's plan provides the detail for the internal layout of the west pavilion as a bathing room or Bagnio with bedchamber (Fig. 7). The bathing room at the rear of the pavilion measures some 16ft. by 13 ft. As Campbell shows the room as windowless, light was either admitted through the ceiling or was provided solely by candles or oil lamps. The layout is centered on two identical or paired baths, of a long 'D' shape in plan, measuring about 3 ft. by 6 ft. Following the details of Campbell's plan, the baths appear to have been sunk into the floor and were entered by six steps leading down from a central landing 3 ft. wide. This landing is emphasised by the central of three niches set in the north wall above it; the outer niches are aligned on the baths and set about 9 ft. apart. There are no other features in the room; the adjacent room to the south has a bed and a large fireplace, and is lit by the southern windows.

By comparison, the symmetrically placed east apartment is well lit by windows and lightly partitioned into two unequal rooms, one heated by a large fireplace. There is no other indication of its designed use, although Foucheroux states that to the side of the greenhouse room 'there are cool rooms, panelled and decorated with prints'.²⁸ It is not possible to assign this description with certainty to either element within the east or west pavilions; it may well apply to both. Blondel notes that a bathroom complex should be situated away from the midday sun, as the purpose of it is to require

coolness.²⁹ It seems most likely that Fougereux visited Wanstead during the winter when the greenhouse room was stocked with plants and shrubs, and by comparison to that heated room these apartments may have indeed been cool.

There are a few contemporary examples of greenhouses with attached closets. In 1703 that at Dyrham was decorated with thread hangings, pictures and a ceiling painting, and was furnished with stools and a writing table and heated by a fireplace.³⁰ At Buckingham House, a closet attached to the greenhouse was stacked with books marked in a particular way so that the simplest of footmen could retrieve one for his master, the Duke of Buckingham.³¹ The range of greenhouses at Buckingham House also included a bathing room, and were presumably part of the formal garden laid out by Henry Wise in the early 1700s while the house was being rebuilt, possibly with Talman's involvement.

CARSHALTON PARK AND CARSHALTON HOUSE: A COMPARISON

Finding parallels for the more intricate layout and detail of the Wanstead greenhouse and its bathing pavilion is not easy, so it is somewhat remarkable that two buildings, parallels in their separate ways, can be found in Carshalton, nestling at the bottom of the dip-slope of the North Downs to the south of London. The greenhouse at Carshalton Park, south of the village, was designed by Giacomo Leoni for Thomas Scawen, nephew and son of a Bank of England Governor and Director by the mid 1720s.³² Never built, this building would have incorporated a optimistically open fourteen-bay greenhouse room of the Ionic order flanked by three bay pavilions or apartments or containing the gardener's bedchamber to the east, and a bathing room with bedchamber above to the west. The greenhouse room contained 'a lake for watering the plants with warm water'

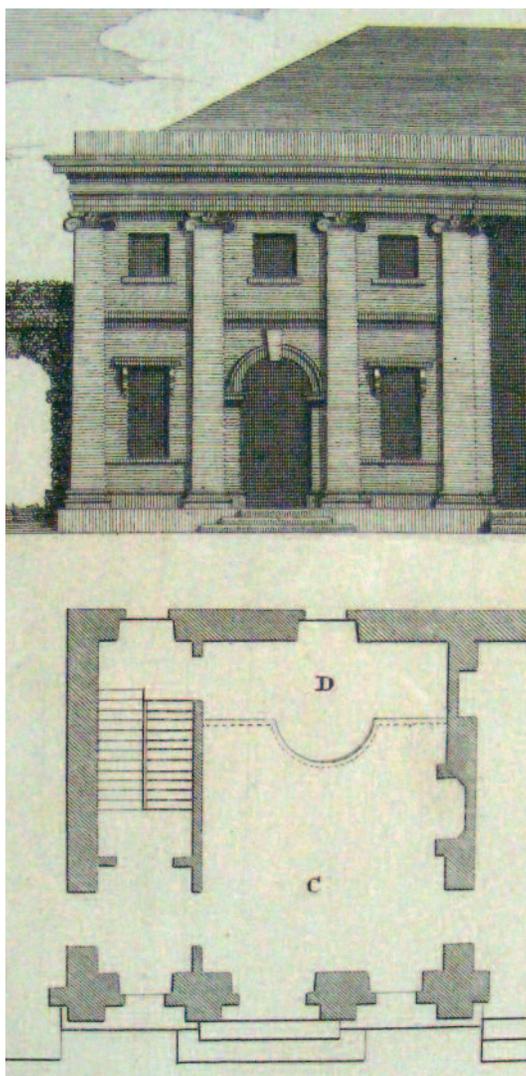


Fig. 8. The Carshalton Park greenhouse, from Giacomo Leoni, *The Architecture of Leon Battista Alberti*, II, pl. 13. By kind permission of London Borough of Sutton Archives.

positioned centrally at the rear in a projection. The bathing apartment, measuring some 22½ ft. by 16½ ft. contained 'a bagno both of hot and cold water' along its north wall (Fig. 8), but the layout details are not comparable with Wanstead. Where the building bears a resemblance to Wanstead is in the positioning of



Fig. 9. The bathroom in the Carshalton Water Tower. David Wrightson, by kind permission of the Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust.

the apartments at opposite ends of the greenhouse room: an arrangement later followed at Blickling (Norfolk) and Kew.

At the end of the century the London architect George Richardson published ‘several elegant and extensive designs of Green-houses and Orangeries, with rooms adjoining, in form of Garden-Temples, for the purpose of reading, eating fruit, and drinking tea, which additional rooms make the whole designs appear with much greater importance and advantage than if they were to stand alone, they become properly connected and conveniently situated with the Green-houses, exhibiting uniform and regular building’³³ One of his designs with a rectangular

bath is ornamented with a three-bay panelled parapet infilled with sculpted reliefs, a design evidently looking back to those of Wanstead and Castle Ashby.³⁴ The differences between Carshalton Park and Wanstead are in the architectural treatment of the facades and the bath layout, and most significantly in the adoption of the apartments under the greenhouse roof, making a more cohesive design. At Wanstead, the pavilions are distinct elements, which in their singularity could almost be conceived as additions to the design, until their demolition prior to the final demolition of the remainder of the structure in 1799.

To the north-west of Carshalton Park, different again in architectural style and also in plan, is the Vanbrughian Water Tower or pavilion at Carshalton House, probably built in 1717 for Sir John Fellowes of the South Sea Company, but certainly structurally complete by at least 1720.³⁵ Here all the rooms are incorporated within the one structure with no major external demarcation, the five-bay greenhouse room or orangery presenting a uniform frontage to the south. Central to the building is the tower which once contained a lead cistern, supplied with pumped water from a spring below. The bathing apartments – the bathing room and attached dressing or robing room – are placed along the northern side of the building, the bathroom to the west, and are connected to the greenhouse room by a ‘saloon’ or dining room, originally decorated with a coved ceiling and retaining tall niches with marble seats (Fig. 9).

Recent research amongst the Fellowes of Shotesham papers in the Norfolk Record Office, coupled with the surviving structure, suggests that the layout of the bathing room provides the nearest parallel to that at Wanstead. As a result of the collapse of the South Sea Company, the property of the directors was itemised in 1720, and published in 1721, when the building was recorded as having ‘neither Furniture, nor Greens of any Kind’.³⁶ When the decision was taken to sell the contents of the house and garden, commissioners appointed to

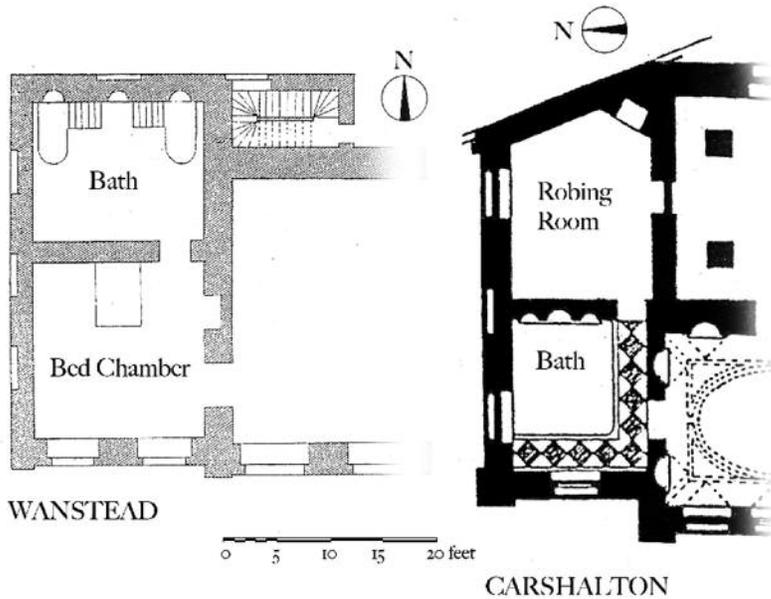


Fig. 10. Comparative ground plans of bathing arrangements at Wanstead and Carshalton.

conduct a second inventory in 1722 included a valuation of both functional and decorative items and materials used around the estate that would have to be physically dismantled or stripped out if a sale for salvage materials was envisaged.³⁷ This included the Stable Turret clock mechanism, all garden statuary and the water engine, wheel and lead pipework in the Water Tower. The door furniture and ‘severall doores in the house’ were also included. In many inventories, these materials are often considered as structural parts of the buildings and therefore not described. The commissioners recognized this and were in two minds about their inclusion; they suggested to their superiors that this particular section could either be printed for the contents sale in October 1722, or included in the sale of the house, which finally occurred in July 1724. The latter course was accepted, and the details of these items only survive in manuscript form, as the estate sale particulars have not yet been found.

The unpublished description describes the

bathing room at the Carshalton Water Tower as ‘lined wth galley tyles paved wth marble & two marble baths with two large brass Cocks.’ A view of the present interior shows that these ‘galley’ or decorative tin-glazed flower vase tiles, of Dutch manufacture, are logically arranged around all four walls in imitation of wainscot, including the east wall containing three niches (Fig. 9). The fine quality of the tilework around the niches is comparable to that around the walls, and there is no reason to believe that they are a later modification.

As Carshalton and Wanstead both have a combination of three niches and two baths, further comparison of details is necessary (Fig. 10). In terms of floor area Carshalton is slightly smaller at 175 against 205 sq. ft. Accepting the triple niched wall as the focal point in each room, it should be noted that the central axes of the rooms differ, Carshalton being longer, Wanstead broader. The central niche at Carshalton is wider than its companions; and the three are grouped close together to allow for the

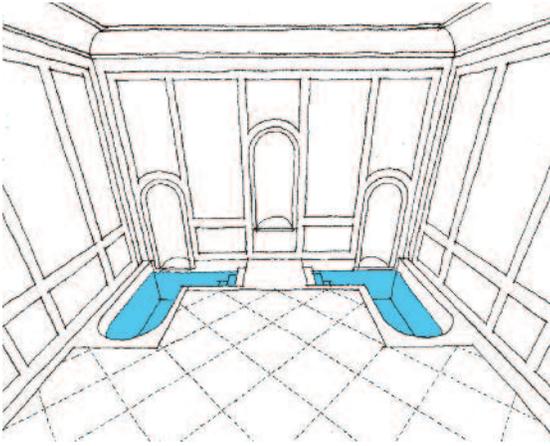


Fig. 11 (above). The Wanstead bathroom *c.*1715, reconstruction drawing. *David Wrightson.*

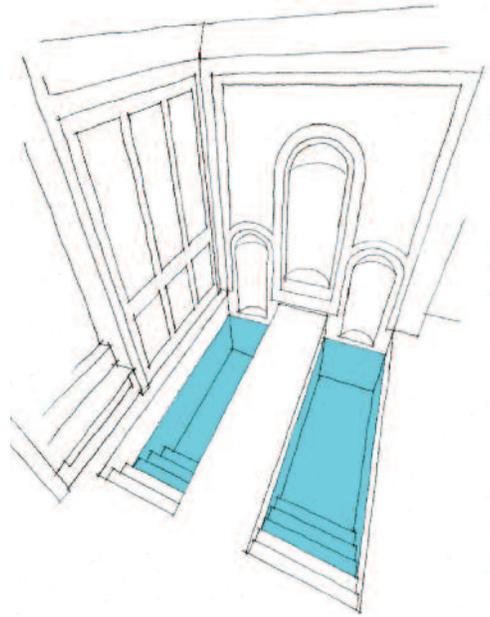


Fig. 12 (right). The Carshalton bathroom *c.*1720, reconstruction drawing. *David Wrightson.*

doorway through to the robing room. At Wanstead, Campbell's plan indicates that the niches are of identical width and more widely spaced.

With two marble baths mentioned in 1722 the present large plunge bath at Carshalton must be a later modification. However, a note of caution has to be sounded: Ian Betts from Museum of London Archaeology suggests that the plain greenish-grey tiles crudely applied within it are possibly later seventeenth century. However, plain tiles are notoriously difficult to date as they were manufactured continuously without variation over long periods. These tiles form a significant part of the bath walls, but there are also other tiles of differing origins and presumably dates, and with the various patchings make interpretation of the construction of the bath difficult. The possibility that there was a building incorporating a bath on this site before the Water Tower was constructed is unlikely, and not supported by surviving documentary evidence. The present bath is not mentioned until 1815;³⁸ it is likely that it was inserted for Sir George Amyand and his trustees

(at Carshalton 1754–67) and the Hon. Thomas Walpole (1767–1782) by Sir Robert Taylor, who may have been responsible for the redecoration of the southern rooms of the mansion during the mid/late eighteenth century.³⁹

The manuscript inventory description of 1722 allows for two interpretations of the arrangement of the baths. The first accepts that there were indeed 'two marble baths', i.e. free-standing single stone items, as illustrated in metal form by Jacques-François Blondel in 1737.⁴⁰ The phrase 'two marble baths' would appear to imply this, in comparison to the remainder of the room 'lined wth galley tyles paved wth marble'. Yet no baths were mentioned in the first inventory of 1721, and a fundamental argument against them concerns the level of the cills of the outer niches, set in tiles, which are positioned about one-and-a-half ft. below floor level. To sensibly accommodate these low cills – one cannot imagine them being too close to the floor – and the free-standing baths, the present bathroom floor level would have to be lowered significantly, making it far

lower than the floor levels in the saloon and robing rooms next door, and rendering the window seats in the west and north walls – which are at the same level as the niches in the saloon – purely decorative. Assuming that at least part of the floor in the bathroom was at the same level as the doorways in the south and east walls, the free-standing baths would have to be placed in a sunken area similar to the present bath but larger, to accommodate the wall thickness of each bath and the steps needed to permit the bather to descend to the floor level. Once there, to gain their immersion, the bather would then have had to ascend the side of the bath. How these baths related to the outer, lower niches, and in particular the middle, upper niche, can only be guessed at; it is assumed that they would be aligned to preserve the symmetry of the room dictated by the niches.

The second, more plausible arrangement follows that of Wanstead, where there was a level floor with sunken baths. In this arrangement the baths themselves become part of the architectural structure of the room, which both minimizes their presence and maximizes their accessibility in contrast to free-standing baths, while creating a simple symmetrical layout. These baths are likely to have been constructed of large marble blocks, although it is possible that the bath could have been cut from a single marble block – imported at great cost and inconvenience – and inserted into the floor. The east ends of the two sunken baths would have abutted the two outer niches, making the latter a directly functional as well as a decorative feature. The flight of six steps into the Wanstead baths – at an estimated 8 in. a step – would suggest the baths were roughly 4 ft. or more deep, which is roughly the depth of the present bath at Carshalton (at 4 ½ ft.). The levels of the floor, present bath floor, and niche sills at Carshalton are thus likely to be similar to the original elevations in both buildings. It is not known where the brass cocks, or water taps, were situated; the present pipe system through the south side of the bath, which enters just above the top step, must be a later modification of the

original system. It is possible that the taps existed just below the cills of the niches, in an area now replaced by later tilework. If accepted, this would further imply that the niche cills lay above the water surface of the baths, where they may have had an important function to contain vessels of spices, oils and ointments used during bathing. If below the waterline, they could have seated a bather partly immersed in the water. The cill of the central niche above the landing, set at the same level as the west and north window seats, would have been used for the same purpose.

**THE BAGNIOS AT WANSTEAD
AND CARSHALTON:
A RECONSTRUCTION**

The bathing rooms at Carshalton and Wanstead, with their particular sources of evidence, give mutually compatible information about their interior layouts, allowing a tentative reconstruction of the original arrangements for both. For Wanstead, David Wrightson has therefore based the niche wall elevation on that at Carshalton, dovetailing it with Campbell's plan. Thus the outer niche cills below floor level are accommodated by the baths (Fig. 11). The walls are shown as if panelled, as suggested by Foucheroux. Although not mentioned, tiles may have been used decoratively as at Carshalton in the form of panelling, although painted wood panelling would have sufficed, even in warm, moist conditions, as suggested by Blondel for simpler rooms.⁴¹ Wrightson's conjectural reconstruction of Carshalton assumes the same sunken bath arrangement as at Wanstead, but the narrowness of the room constricts the width of the landing between the baths to some 3 ft. across, leaving no space to easily accommodate two flights of steps into the baths themselves. In this version, the steps have therefore been placed at the west end of the baths, although other less convincing layouts could be shown (Fig. 12).

FINAL DISCUSSION

If one accepts the preferred arrangement detailed above, the rarity of the triple niche/paired bath combination, limited at present to Wanstead and Carshalton House, could be used as an argument to suggest that Carshalton was modelled in its basic design on Wanstead. No doubt the publication of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1715 would have made the Wanstead design publicly available, and thus easy to copy and rework. There does not seem to be any particular financial or social link between Child and Wanstead, and Fellowes and Carshalton, apart from that of both being concerned with the East India Company in particular, and the London mercantile world in general. However, there is evidence in Fellowes's own petty cash book, found amongst the Shotesham archive, of a visit to 'Sir Richard Child's garden' on the 23rd August 1714, and a second visit on July 22nd 1716, soon after his purchase of the Carshalton estate but before final legal arrangements had been completed which would have allowed construction and landscaping to begin, from January 1717.⁴² Although Fellowes does record visiting other places with great gardens, including Hampton Court, Wanstead appears to have been his only specified garden destination. Is it possible that Fellowes, seeing the Wanstead greenhouse and bathroom, decided to base his own bagnio at his new estate on similar lines, and, with Campbell's work to hand, to invite his own architect to adapt the design for his own water pavilion? Fellowes's petty cash book records his frequent visits to bagnios and his treatment there by cupping and there can be little doubt that he had more than a passing interest in bathing.⁴³

It is interesting to speculate why two single-person baths were provided at both Wanstead and Carshalton. Dr Samuel Haworth's description of the Duke's Bath in London mentions waters of differing temperatures – allowed for the washing, then rinsing of the body – and the addition of various chemicals or perfumes, produced in a nearby laboratory on the

site.⁴⁴ Blondel further links the concept of two baths in the one bathroom with the social side of bathing; he informs us that two baths would allow two people to keep each other company, allowing them to amuse themselves in privacy.⁴⁵ The public bagnios in London also provided bathers with lodgings; they could enjoy hospitality in addition to the various bathing and medical treatments available, with or without the company of their fellow lodgers.⁴⁶ Therefore, it can be concluded that at both Wanstead and Carshalton the private bagnio and bedchamber provided single or companionable bathing, although a major difference between them is the order of privacy accorded to the bathers. There is no obvious fenestration at Wanstead but Carshalton is, by contrast, well lit.

Finally, it should be noted that the combination of a bathing apartment and the greenhouse/orangery within a single building is fairly rare. This is somewhat surprising, as both elements would require water and often heat, which could be commonly supplied within the one building. To Wanstead and the two Carshaltons can be added the almost contemporary but lesser examples at Wentworth Woodhouse and Buckingham House, noted above.⁴⁷ Blondel again provides some social context otherwise apparently lacking in contemporary literature; to his design for a free-standing orangery he attaches a complex bathing apartment on the western side, as at Wanstead and Carshalton Park, but considers the orangery as the gallery to his bathing apartment during the summer, while bathers could walk amongst the decorative orange trees in the greenhouse during the winter.⁴⁸ Evidently, he considered the coupling of greenhouse room and bathing room a most suitable and beneficial arrangement, increasing the value of the building as a desirable destination within the landscape.

CONCLUSION

The greenhouse at Wanstead was a more complex structure than the 1713 poet revealed. Externally, it served as a visual feature within, and probably a viewing platform for, the garden landscape. As a greenhouse, it sheltered plants in the winter, while in the summer its empty room could be used for assemblies and entertainments. The east pavilion could have been used for a variety of functions, just as the saloon in the Water Tower at Carshalton House, or the small library at Buckingham House, while to the west the bathing apartments provided both individual and companionable bathing. The greenhouse was, in effect, an entertainment venue for the owner and his friends, offering a variety of social conversations in which business and pleasure could be undertaken and enjoyed. Although the 1713 poet was right to see the greenhouse as a sanctuary for plants in the winter, it was Defoe who identified its true role as an ‘excellent building fit to entertain a Prince’.

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NOTES

- 1 Anon *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden. An Heroick Poem most Humbly address to the Honourable Sir Richard Child, Bart* (London, 1712/1713) p. 12.
- 2 Essex Record Office (hereafter ERO), B284. ‘*A Catalogue of about 100 Orange and Lemon Trees, Shrubs of various sorts, Pine Plants, Melon Frames and the valuable Building Materials of a Large Lofty Greenhouse and two Hothouses . . . to be sold . . . on Monday the 22nd July 1799, and following day, at Eleven O’Clock . . .*’
- 3 John Kip and Leonard Knyff *Britannia Illustrata . . . , or Nouveau Theatre de la Grande Bretagne* (London, 1728).
- 4 Colen Campbell *Vitruvius Britannicus* (London, 1715), 1, pl. 27.
- 5 John Rocque ‘*Plan of the house, gardens, Park and Plantations of Wanstead in the County of Essex*’ (1735), and ‘*An exact survey of the Citys of London, Westminster Ye Borough of Southwark and the Country near ten miles round*’ (London, 1744–6).
- 6 For the background history and development, see Sally Jeffery ‘The Gardens of Wanstead’, in K. Myers (ed) *The Gardens of Wanstead, Proceedings of a Study Day held at the Temple, Wanstead Park, Greater London* (London 2003), pp. 10–42.
- 7 John Harris *William Talman, Maverick Architect* (London, 1982).
- 8 Stephen Switzer *Ichnographia Rustica* (1718), I, p. 84.
- 9 See Harris, *op. cit.*, for illustrations of Wimpole Hall, Dawley, and Chatsworth. For Buckingham House see Peter Coats *The Gardens of Buckingham Palace* (London, 1978), p. 41, and Wentworth Woodhouse see Susan Kellerman, ‘Use and Ornament: Bath Houses in Yorkshire Gardens and Parks, c.1688–1815’, in Susan Kellerman (ed.) *With Abundance and Variety: Yorkshire Gardens and Gardeners across Five Centuries*, (Yorkshire Gardens Trust, 2009). The inclusion of Felbrigg is based on the writer’s own observation on site.
- 10 For Castle Ashby, see W.B. Compton, Marquess of Northampton, *History of the Comptons of Compton*

- Wynyates* (London, 1930), pp. 139–40, and more generally, Peter McKay, ‘George London at Castle Ashby’ *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 61 (2008); pp. 56–64.
- 11 John Kip ‘Dyrham, the Seat of William Blathwait Esq’ (1712).
 - 12 ERO, D/DCw P59; L Searles *A survey of Wanstead Park* (1779).
 - 13 ERO, B284, ‘A Catalogue of about 100 Orange and Lemon Trees, Shrubs of various sorts, Pine Plants, Melon Frames and the valuable Building Materials of a Large Lofty Greenhouse and two Hothouses . . . to be sold . . . on Monday the 22nd July 1799, and following day, at Eleven O’Clock’.
 - 14 National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum MS 86 NN 2, quoted in Sally Jeffery *op.cit.*, especially footnote 17.
 - 15 See Compton, *op. cit.*, pp. 139–40. The writer is especially grateful to Peter McKay, formerly Archivist at Castle Ashby, for information concerning the later modifications to this building.
 - 16 Information from Peter McKay.
 - 17 ERO, B284, lots 90–2 (p. 11).
 - 18 Anon, *Flora Triumphans . . . op. cit.*, p. 13.
 - 19 Switzer, *op. cit.* III, p. 114.
 - 20 ERO, B284, lots 45 (p. 7), 76–7 (p. 10) and 62–3 (p. 9).
 - 21 ERO B284, lots 1–44 (pp. 3–7).
 - 22 Daniel Defoe, *Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*, I (London 1724), p. 138.
 - 23 Switzer, *op. cit.* III, p. 114.
 - 24 ERO B284, lots 92 and 96 (p. 11).
 - 25 Anon *Flora Triumphans . . . op. cit.*, p. 13.
 - 26 Edward Impey, *Kensington Palace, the official Illustrated History* (London 2003), p. 52.
 - 27 The National Trust *Dyrham Park* (London 1997), p. 30; K.M. Walton ‘An Inventory of 1710 from Dyrham Park’, *Furniture History*, 22 (1986), pp. 25–80.
 - 28 National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum MS 86 NN 2 (see note 14 above).
 - 29 Jacques-François Blondel, *De la Distribution des Maisons De Plaisance et de la Decoration des Edifices en General* (Paris 1737, reprint Farnborough 1967). I, part 1, p. 72.
 - 30 The National Trust, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
 - 31 Peter Coats, *The Gardens of Buckingham Palace* (London 1978), p. 36. The Duke of Buckingham writes of ‘the little closet of Books at the end of that Green-house which besides their being so near, are ranked in such a method, that by its mark, a very Irish footman may fetch any book I want.’
 - 32 Giacomo Leoni, *The Architecture of Leon Battista Alberti* (London, 1726) II, pl. 13.
 - 33 George Richardson, *New Designs in Architecture consisting of Plans, Elevations and Sections for various buildings . . .* (London 1792). p. ii.
 - 34 *Ibid.*, p. 29 and pl. 32.
 - 35 A.C. Skelton, ‘The Carshalton Water Tiled Bath – a study in Anglo-Dutch Tiles’ *Journal of the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society* 7 (1998), pp. 30–34.
 - 36 *The Particular and Inventory Of All and Singular the Lands (etc) of Sir John Fellowes Bart . . .* (London 1721) p 27.
 - 37 Norfolk Record Office (hereafter NRO), Fellowes of Shotesham Collection, FEL 704 554 x 1, f. 7.
 - 38 ‘The Particulars of a valuable Freehold estate. . . which will be sold at auction . . . on Tuesday June 20th 1815 . . .’ London Borough of Sutton Archives, LG 48/63/1, p. 27.
 - 39 The writer is grateful to Richard Garnier for this information, and for discussion about the development of the mansion during the eighteenth century.
 - 40 Blondel, *op. cit.*, I, part 1, pl. 10; II, part 2, pl. 82, p. 132.
 - 41 Blondel, *op. cit.*, I, part 1, p. 74.
 - 42 NRO, FEL 696 554 x 6. ff. 10, 16.
 - 43 NRO FEL 696 554 x 6. According to his pocket-book Fellowes first attends on 28 August 1712 (fol. 2), his last; ‘to cupping at ye Bagnio’ on 18 November 1719 (fol. 18) cost him 8s. By that date his Water Tower at Carshalton almost certainly would have been completed.
 - 44 Dr Samuel Haworth, *A description of the Duke’s bagnio and of the mineral bath and new spaw thereunto belonging, with an account of the use of sweating, rubbing, bathing and the medicinal virtues of the spaw* (London 1683) especially pp. 17–20.
 - 45 Blondel, *op. cit.*, I, part 1, p. 75.
 - 46 Keevil, J. J. ‘The Bagnio in London, 1648–1725’. *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 7:3 (New York 1952), pp. 250–7, based on The National Archives, E101 528/19, ‘A waste book apparently of a keeper of a bagnio’.
 - 47 For Wentworth Woodhouse see Kellerman, *op. cit.* For Buckingham House, see Peter Coats, *op. cit.* (1978) p. 36.
 - 48 Blondel, *op. cit.*, I, part 1, p. 74.