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NOT MORATTICO

JOHN HARRIS

In order to attempt to solve for a second time¹ what might be called the problem of the ‘Morattico Panel’ (Fig. 1), a preamble is necessary.² In 1928 Henry Francis du Pont bought painted panelling from Morattico in the Rappahannock River Valley in Richmond County, Virginia, when the house was demolished in 1927. This had been built by Colonel Charles Grymes, who married Frances Jennings, a daughter of Edmund Jennings, who was born in England in 1659, and ‘came to America at an early age’,³ maybe in 1680, but this is uncertain. Frances was reputedly born in Ripon, Yorkshire, but it is more likely that she was born at Rippon Hall⁴ on the

York River near Colonial Williamsburg. The overmantel painting in the Morattico Room is such a rarity in Colonial America, that it can only be paralleled by the four overmantels in Holly Hill, Maryland, one of which depicts Holly Hill. This fact has encouraged historians to speculate that the house in the Morattico panel could be American, and Waterman suggested that it might be Rippon Hall, but it is not.⁵ The purpose of this admittedly tentative article is to suggest an alternative reason for the overmantel than the belief that it represents a family record of an improbable American house.

I believe the overmantel to be a memory picture



Fig. 1. A detail of the Morattico overmantel painting, showing the warehouses at Hull and the house, Jennings Hall, Silsden. *Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, Delaware.*

commemorating the emigration of the Jennings family to America from their seat at Jennings Hall, Silsden, Yorkshire. They would have sailed from Hull, about sixty miles on the coach road from Silsden. The principal of the family and the father of Edmund Jennings was Sir Edmund Jennings (1626–91) of Ripon, Yorkshire, who is described as educated at Silsden before 1641 after when he entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.⁶ Silsden was obviously a country seat of the Jennings family, in contrast to their house in the market town of Ripon, about forty miles away. What is shown by the unknown painter, with obvious topographical inexactitude, is, from right to left of the painting, a grouping of typical seventeenth-century maritime warehouses that I suggest is Hull, then the astonishing Jennings Hall, and in the background a distant view of a Tudor palace or ecclesiastical building. On the River Humber are two sailing vessels with English flags, and on its banks a windmill.

No lost English house can exceed the curiosity of Jennings Hall, of which the only descriptive comment is by Thomas Whitaker, the historian of Craven, who wrote in 1805, à propos Silsden: ‘Nearby was a mansion house, called Jennings Hall with a considerable estate held under the chief lord of the family called Jennings who about a century ago [i.e. c.1705] sold their property here to the Earl of Thanet⁷, and removed to Ripon’.⁸ This statement obviously authenticates the origin of the colonial name Rippon Hall. It is likely that with the death of Sir Edmund’s first son, the unmarried Jonathan, in 1701, and with his second son established in Virginia, Silsden had become redundant, and hence was sold.

Even from what we know of seventeenth-century English houses, nothing compares to Jennings Hall. Stylistically, it could have been designed at any time between 1650 and 1690, bearing in mind that Sir Edmund had been in the Cavalier Parliament. It conforms in some ways to that classification of Parliamentary architectural style invented by Sir John Summerson as Artisan Mannerism. Rubens’s

Palazzi di Genova (1622), exerted some influence, certainly for the roof works above the main cornice and the ornamental chimneys, but no more than that. The tall three and a half storey cube of eight by three bays, embellished on the front with attached columns almost looking like colonnades, is unprecedented, and is so idiosyncratic that it could never have been invented as a capriccio. The roof works are not unlike those at Wisbech Castle, Cambridgeshire, built for the Parliamentarian John Thurloe,⁹ and Jennings Hall shares with other Artisan Mannerist houses the fashion for a balcony over the front door.

In 1977 Mr J.A. Booth¹⁰ corresponded with me about a possible connection between Jennings Hall and Arthington Hall, about twenty miles away, eastwards towards Leeds. Of Arthington, Ralph Thoresby wrote in his diary under August 1702: ‘Had also a view of the noble edifice at Arthington built by the ingenious Cyril Arthington, Esq. F.R.S., Lord of the manor of Arthington’.¹¹ In Ralph Thoresby’s *Ducatus Leodiensis*,¹² reference is made that Arthington had been inherited from Henry Arthington in 1681, and that Cyril Arthington ‘erected a noble Hall ... and furnish’d it with water conveyed in Pipes of Lead from an Engine he has contrived at his Mill upon the river Wharf, being an ingenious Gentleman, and well seen in hydrostatics’. It was presumably designed c.1695–6, and the date of the building can now be narrowed down, since Cassandra Willoughby saw it unfinished in July 1697.¹³ She was intrigued by its uncommon architecture, and wrote:

‘Saw Mr Arthington’s House, which when finished will be a very pretty Seat, one Front [south] is Built after a manner new to me, which looks pretty and must be very convenient, there is as I remember 10 windows, 4 of which jet out about 2 or 3 yards, and between each of those windows, before the other 2 windows which lye behind is a Stone Pillar which supports a building like Balconies, into which open Sash doors from the Sides of the 4 windows which



Fig. 2. Arthington Hall, Yorkshire, north front. *J. Jones, History and Antiquities of Harewood* (1859) p. 231.

jet out, and when all those doors are open, those little closets or dressing rooms, with the Balconies make a very pleasant Gallery, beside it is a very convenient passage from one room to another without making any of the Bed Chambers a through fair'.

The effect of the triangular windowed bays must almost have been Tudor Revival, and on the north front the central pavilion swept forward with concaves, as if in Piedmont (Fig. 2). So peculiar is all this that Cyril Arthington may have been as 'well seen' in architecture as in hydraulics, for the house looks as alien to the commonality of design at the time as was Jennings Hall. Indeed, they have details in common that may hint that Arthington took details from the Jennings house, such as the attached columns and the Genoese chimney stacks. But there is more to it than this, for over Arthington's central pavilion the cupola of the roof turret has a flat onion roof as on the cupolas on the Jennings wings.

It is uncertain when Arthington was demolished. The present house is seemingly a nineteenth-century encasing around a house built by John Carr in the 1760s and 1770s. It preserves an intriguing relic of Cyril Arthington's novel house, a single Tuscan column embedded in a wall. It invites speculation!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful for fruitful conversations with Richard Hewlings, and to Susan Newton at the Winterthur Foundation.

NOTES

- 1 John Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (revised ed., London, 1985), pp. 98, 147, figs 158a–b.
- 2 This is based upon Thomas Tileston Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia 1706–1776* (Chapel Hill, 1946); on Roy Fuch's paper 'Virginia Rooms at Winterthur', read to the Association of Virginia Antiquities, March 8, 2004; and on an Object Report (1969.1985) by Catharine Christie Dann-Roeber dated 13 July 2006. I am most grateful to the staff at Winterthur for their advice.
- 3 *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography*. Richmond, VA (www.ancestry.com).
- 4 A view of this was drawn by Lefevre James Cranstone in 1860 (Virginia Historical Society).
- 5 Waterman, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 62, 110. He did not know then of the VHS document.
- 6 E. Cruickshanks, S. Handley and D. Hayton, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690–1715*, (Cambridge, 2002), IV, p. 493.
- 7 This would have been Thomas Tufton, sixth Earl of Thanet and Lord de Clifford, who was Lord Lieutenant of Westmorland and Cumberland, and died in 1729.
- 8 Thomas D. Whitaker, *The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven* (Leeds 1805: 1878 ed.), p. 219. The statement is clearly inaccurate in suggesting the family had moved their place of residence to Ripon, for Sir Edmund Jennings's father (d. 1649) was also of Ripon.
- 9 Harris, *op. cit.*, pl. 28.
- 10 Now the Reverend Booth, to whom I am most grateful.
- 11 Ralph Thoresby, *Diary*, ed. J. Hunter (London, 1830), I, p. 382, but see also D.H. Atkinson, *Ralph Thoresby the Topographer; his Town and Times* (Leeds, 1887), II, p. 69. 59–60.
- 12 Thoresby, *Ducatus Leodiensis ... or the Topography of ... Leedes* (1715), p. 158. For Henry Arthington (1655–82), see Basil Duke Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690* (London, 1983), I, pp. 548–9, for his cousin Cyril (c.1665–1724), Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley and D.W. Hayton, *The House of Commons 1690–1715* (Cambridge, 2002).
- 13 See Elizabeth Hagglund, 'Cassandra Willoughby's Visits to Country Houses', *Georgian Group Journal*, XI (2001), p. 191 and figs 1–2.

WILLIAM TALMAN IN LONDON: THE REMODELLING OF BERKELEY HOUSE

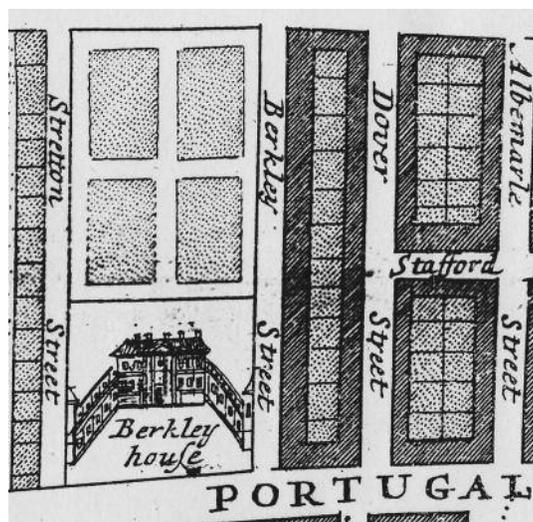
HANNAH WAUGH

Described in 1708 as ‘a Model of what might be done in after Ages’, the great rebuilding of the south and east fronts of Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, in 1687–96 was carried out by William Talman (1650–1719) for William Cavendish, fourth Earl – and, as created in 1694, the first Duke – of Devonshire.¹ During this period, Talman also provided his patron with plans for a London residence, albeit unexecuted, at Lamb’s Conduit Fields. However, it has not previously been recorded that he was further consulted by the Duke with regard to the remodelling of Berkeley House, Piccadilly.² Purchased by the latter in March 1696, Berkeley House had been erected in 1665 to the

designs of Hugh May (1621–84), Comptroller of the King’s Works, Architect to Windsor Castle, and a figure described by Colvin as ‘one of the two or three men who determined the character of English domestic architecture after the Restoration’.³

A brick structure characterised by quadrant wings and a centrepiece of stone Corinthian pilasters and pediment, the Duke’s arrival brought few changes to the exterior fabric of the original building. The contemplated addition of a cupola was not to be followed through. However, in spite of the Duke’s being immediately challenged, and eventually sued, by Lord Normanby as to the legality of his acquisition, alterations to the interior of the house proceeded throughout the forthcoming months: ‘thou wee are not sure to keepe ye house have not less then 30 men at work in pulling up floare &c’, as it was reported that September.⁴ In addition to this relaying of the floors, the remodelling comprised the introduction of new wainscoting: ‘wee have in the new house 4 Good apartments and a larg Dineing Roome and yet not one of them wainscotted’, as Aaron Kinton recounted; the addition of closets and subsidiary rooms to the principal apartments; and the creation of a painted stair.⁵ The residence was also discovered to have ‘little convenience for servants’, and it was probably as a result of this that a new building, rising two floors in height, was by October being constructed towards the rear of the site.⁶

Much of the work was to be executed by craftsmen likewise employed by the Duke in Derbyshire. Joinery was carried out under the direction of Lobb, almost certainly the Henry Lobb responsible for



Berkeley House, Portugal Street, detail from John Strype (ed.), *Survey of London* (1720).

much of the wainscoting at Chatsworth, whilst the painting of the ‘2 passages one each side the Great hall’ and the walls, ceiling and spring of the stairway was entrusted to Louis Laguerre.⁷ The stair was further embellished with plaster details of ciphers and arms. The most interesting connection with the Chatsworth workforce is, however, this reappearance of William Talman, for relations between the Duke and his architect are generally understood to have gravely deteriorated by 1696, following difficulties at Chatsworth largely occasioned by the shortage of money.⁸ Regarding Berkeley House, Talman’s opinions are relayed on proposed alterations to the family apartments, and on details ranging from the quality of the materials to the height of a chimney, and the preferred position of an exterior clock.

‘The Stair-Case, the Apartments and Gardens, are all suitable to the Grandeur of the late Duke who finished it ... [who] had a great Taste in Architecture, Painting and Furniture, from whence you may conclude this a Noble Palace’, John Macky subsequently declared of the house in 1714.⁹ The structure of Berkeley House was, however, to be but short-lived. In 1733 it was damaged by fire, and thereafter rebuilt as the Devonshire House conceived by William Kent.

NOTES

- 1 White Kennet, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral of the Right Noble William Duke of Devonshire*, (London, 1708), p. 139.
- 2 Devonshire MSS., Chatsworth, Whildon Coll. B.V.16 and C.98–C.106A.
- 3 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 686.
- 4 Aaron Kinton to James Whildon, September 24 1696, Whildon Coll. C.98; Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Relation of Historical Affairs*, IV (Oxford, 1857), p. 326. The case was settled in favour of the Duke in December 1697.
- 5 Aaron Kinton to James Whildon, loc. cit.
- 6 John Whildon to James Whildon, March 7 1696, Whildon Coll. B.V.16.
- 7 Aaron Kinton to James Whildon, October 24 1696, Whildon Coll. C.106; ‘Vertue – IV’, *Walpole Society*, XXIV (1935–6), p. 196.
- 8 See Francis Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth* (London, 1949), p. 59.
- 9 John Macky, *A Journey through England* (London, 1714), p. 124.

LORD LYTTLETON'S 'TRUE ATTICK BUILDING' AT HAGLEY HALL: TEMPLE OR PORTICO?

MARTIN GOALEN

For a tiny building, the Greek Doric belvedere built from 1759 for the first Baron Lyttleton to a design provided by James Stuart holds an extraordinary place in the history of architecture: 'the earliest monument of the Greek Revival anywhere in the world' wrote Pevsner and Lang in 1948, a judgement that has survived some sixty years of architectural history almost intact.¹ Slightly less secure, however, is Wittkower's view, from the same year, that 'the model for this Doric Hexastyle temple was the Theseum at Athens.'² Lyttleton did not call

his building a temple. In his much quoted letter to Mrs Montagu of 1758, he described it as 'a true Attick building, a *Portico* [my emphasis] of six Pillars',³ and again, in the next year, writing to Sanderson Miller, under whose supervision the building was being erected, he referred to 'Mr Stuart's Dorick *Portico*' wondering if Stuart had 'yet sent the Drawings for the Capitals, Frieze, &c.'⁴ By 1764, however, not long after completion, the portico was already being characterised by that famous traveller Dr Pococke, as 'the front of the temple of Theseus at Athens'. But Pococke – who was one of the few people in England at that time to have seen the so-called Theseum – had doubts about the authenticity of the imitation, mentioning the profile below the echinus, 'which I do not remember in the original.'⁵

Doubts over the degree of imitation – reflected in the pages of this journal⁶ – have lingered over the years, and, in a recent study of Stuart's garden buildings, Alexander Marr is succinct and unequivocal:

Stuart's Doric Temple at Hagley, trumpeted by many as the first example of the true Greek Doric in British architecture, was in fact filtered through Vitruvius's reconstruction of that Order. The Theseion at Athens, on which Stuart's temple was based, uses a diameter-to-height ratio for the columns of 1:6. Stuart, however, follows Vitruvius with a ratio of 1:7.⁷

This view, originating in an article of 1991 by Michael Bevington, has been repeated since.⁸ However, from inspection (Fig. 1), it is clear that the base-to-height



Fig. 1. The 'Dorick Portico' at Hagley Hall, Worcestershire, by James Stuart, after 1758, with an indication of the column base diameter-to-height ratio. *Martin Goalen*.

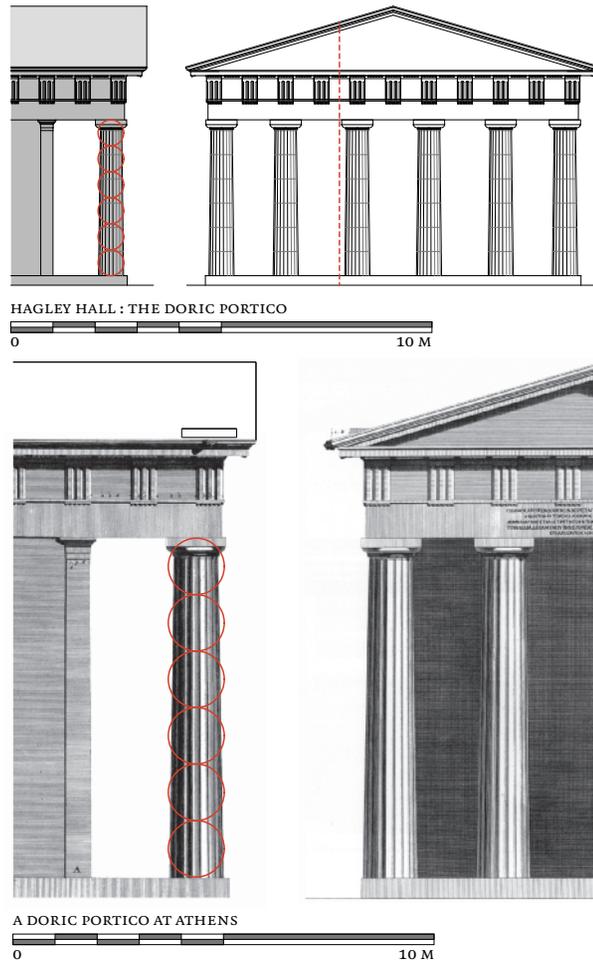


Fig. 2. 'A Doric Portico at Athens' after James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens ...*, London vol. I, 1762, chap. I, pls. IV and III reproduced to a uniform scale (below), and (above) a hexastyle version of the 'Doric Portico at Athens' at the dimensions of the Hagley portico, and drawn to the same scale.

Drawing by Martin Goalen.

ratio at Hagley is, in fact, very close to 1:6 – exactly that of 'A Doric Portico at Athens' (the western gate to the Roman Agora, of c.10 BC), described in the first chapter of Stuart's first volume (Fig. 2). Stuart acknowledged that a column proportion of 1:6 was more slender than any 'found in the ancient temples of this order now extant': the Theseum, for instance, is noticeably stubbier, with a base diameter-to-height ratio of c.1:5.5. Following Vitruvius (V.9.3), Stuart ascribed this slenderness to the fact of building's being secular rather than sacred: a portico rather than a temple.⁹

Not only do the columns at Hagley differ from

those of the Theseum, but – as Pococke suspected – so do the capitals. The unusually prominent banded collar below the echinus is clearly that of the Agora gate: Stuart's 'Doric Portico at Athens' (Figs. 3 & 4). It is tempting to think, then, that it was a copy of Revett's detail of the order of the Agora gate (Fig. 4) that Stuart presented to Lord Lyttleton when responding to his request for 'the Drawings for the Capitals, Frieze, &c.' Only the figured dimensions would need amendment (Stuart's Hagley portico is to that at Athens in a proportion of c.7 inches to 1 ft.), and a change from the tetrastyle of the Agora gate to hexastyle at Hagley is a simple one (Fig. 2).

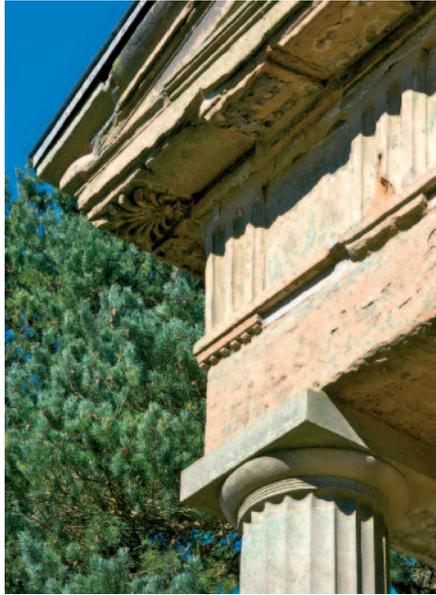


Fig. 3. The 'Dorick Portico' at Hagley Hall, detail of the 'Capitals, Frieze, &c'. *Martin Goalen*.

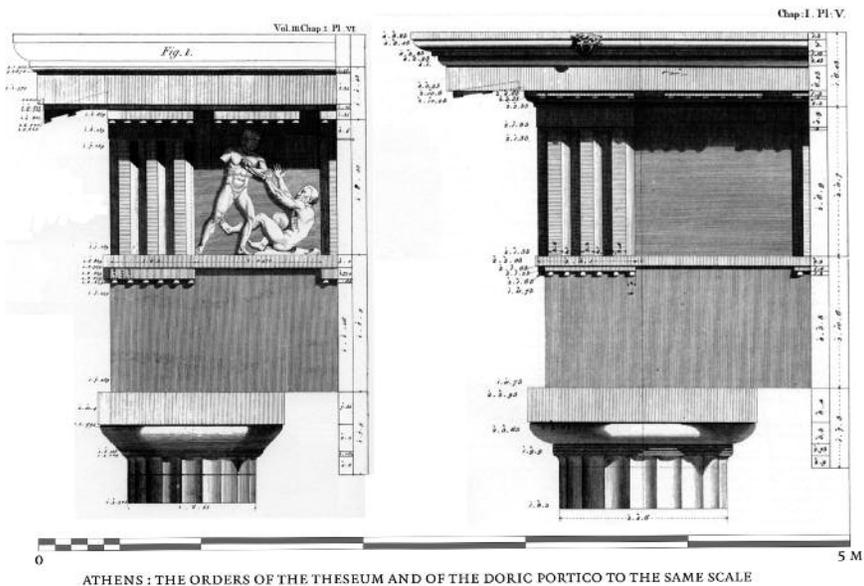


Fig. 4. The Orders of the Theseum and of the Doric Portico at Athens reproduced to a uniform scale, after James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens ...*, London vol. III, 1794, chap. I, pls. VI (left) & vol I, 1762, chap. I, pl. V (right).

So Lyttleton's 'true Attick building' turns out indeed to be modelled quite precisely on an Athenian building: not the Theseum as has been suggested so often, but one that, while predominantly Greek in character, was built at a time when Athens was under Roman rule, some four centuries after the golden age of Pericles, and itself something of an archaeological exercise.¹⁰

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Dr Alexander Marr and to Dr Frank Salmon, both of whose generous responses to my inquiries as to the dimensions of the columns at Hagley encouraged me to pursue the questions addressed in this note. The work grows out of a monograph, *Ancient Greece and Modern Architecture 1758–1958*, to be published this year by Lund Humphries.

NOTES

1. Nikolaus Pevsner and S. Lang, 'Apollo or Baboon', *Architectural Review* 104 (December 1948), pp. 271–279, 275. It would now be more prudent to write 'the earliest *extant* monument': Michael Cousins, 'Athenian Stuart's Doric Porticoes', *The Georgian Group Journal* 14 (2004), pp. 48–54.
2. F. Saxl and R. Wittkower, *British Art and the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 1948), section 78. Lesley Lawrence ('Stuart and Revett: their literary and architectural careers', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 7, no. 2 (1938–39), pp. 128–146, had noted that Hagley 'does not appear to be an exact reproduction of any one building, but ... the Theseum probably inspired it.' (p. 138). The temple that Stuart and his contemporaries knew as the 'Theseum', built 449–444 BC, is now recognised to have been dedicated not to Theseus but to Hephaistos: William Bell Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Ancient Greece* (3rd. ed., London, 1950), p. 180 (and n. 1).
3. Cited Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 48, where full references to the MS sources are given.
4. Cited Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
5. Cited Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 51. Pococke's *A description of the East, and some other countries ...* (London, 1745) has a (loosely drawn and inaccurate) plate of the Theseum at part II, plate 79.
6. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 2004.
7. Alexander Marr, 'The Garden Buildings', Susan Weber Soros (ed.), *James 'Athenian' Stuart 1713–1788: The Rediscovery of Antiquity* (New Haven and London, 2006), pp. 316–52, 321.
8. Michael Bevington, 'The development of the classical revival at Stowe', *Architectura* (Munich), 21, no. 2 (1991), p. 162, and recently commented upon, with justified caution, by Frank Salmon in his introduction to the reprint of the first three volumes of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens ...* (New York, 2008), pp. v–xvii, xiii.
9. *Antiquities*, I, Chapter 1, p. 2. The ratio of 1:5.5 is based on the dimensions given by Stuart in *Antiquities ...*, III, Chap. 1, pl. vi. Dinsmoor's more recent measurements give a proportion of c.1:5.6, and 1:5.5 for the corner columns (1950, p. 338). The Parthenon columns have a ratio of c.1:5.48 (1:5.36 at the corners), *idem*.
10. Such anachronism is not uncommon in Greece under Roman rule (Dinsmoor, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–7): the columns of the near-contemporary temple of Roma and Augustus on the Acropolis (of c.20 BC) are direct imitations of those of the Erechtheum of 421–405 BC (*ibid.*, p. 284, n.1).

THE ORIGINALITY OF JAMES HOBAN

RICHARD HEWLINGS

Originality is not an accolade which has ever been offered to James Hoban, architect of the White House, Washington, DC, in 1792. As early as 1806 Benjamin Latrobe characterised the White House as ‘not even original, but a mutilated copy of a badly designed building near Dublin’. The badly designed building was Richard Castle’s Leinster House of 1745, first named as such by David Bailie Warden, writing more sympathetically in 1816, ‘The President’s House ... resembles Leinster-House in Dublin, and is much admired’.¹ Subsequent critics have modified and enriched this appraisal in detail, by also recording resemblances to plates in Gibbs’s *Book of Architecture* (1728) or Colen Campbell’s *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715–25). Nevertheless, it has been consensual to place the White House as a design of ‘Palladian’ type, characteristic of Great Britain over half a century earlier. Although suitable, *pro tem*, for America’s first monarch, such conservatism in 1792 was soon to be overwhelmed by the more hypnotic radicalism of Latrobe.

From the plan and principal elevation it is difficult to find fault with this verdict. But the east and west ends have two features which have never been mentioned in the extensive scholarly literature on the White House, although one is unusual and the other may even have been unique. The unusual feature is in the centre of the first floor of these elevations, a serliana whose detailing is of Syrian origin. It differs from the canonical type of serliana in having an entablature which is continuous over all three openings, rather than being broken by the arched middle light. The feature which may have

been unique is the window on the second floor of these elevations, a stilted semi-circle, enclosing what might either be regarded as a piece of bar tracery concentric with the outer arch, or as a single mullion/transom of stilted semi-circular form.

The first of these, only recently identified in post-Renaissance British architecture, originated in Syria, proliferated in the Roman Near East, was brought to the west for use in two prominent imperial palaces (Hadrian’s at Tivoli and Diocletian’s at Split), was drawn by Giulio Romano in 1523–4, and used by Pedro Machuca on the palace of Charles V at Granada in 1533, by Borromini in the Palazzo Pamphili in Piazza Navona in 1646–7, and by Cortona on the Corso façade of Sta. Maria in Via Lata, Rome, in 1658–63. It may have been known by Inigo Jones, because versions of it were used by some of those influenced by him, including Wren on St Mary-at-Hill; but one of Machuca’s drawings for the palace of Charles V and a copy of Giulio’s drawing were owned by Lord Burlington, and either may have served as the model for the Syrian serliana at Firl Place, Sussex, attributable to either Roger Morris or Colen Campbell.² Distant buildings and rarely seen drawings, however, composed a fine line of influence, and Syrian serlianas are far rarer than the canonical type, which was easily accessible from the pages of Serlio and Palladio. The second of the two White House window types has never been discussed at all, and its precedents are not known.

The White House was envisaged as a residence for the head of the republic’s executive branch in 1791; a competition for drawings was advertised in

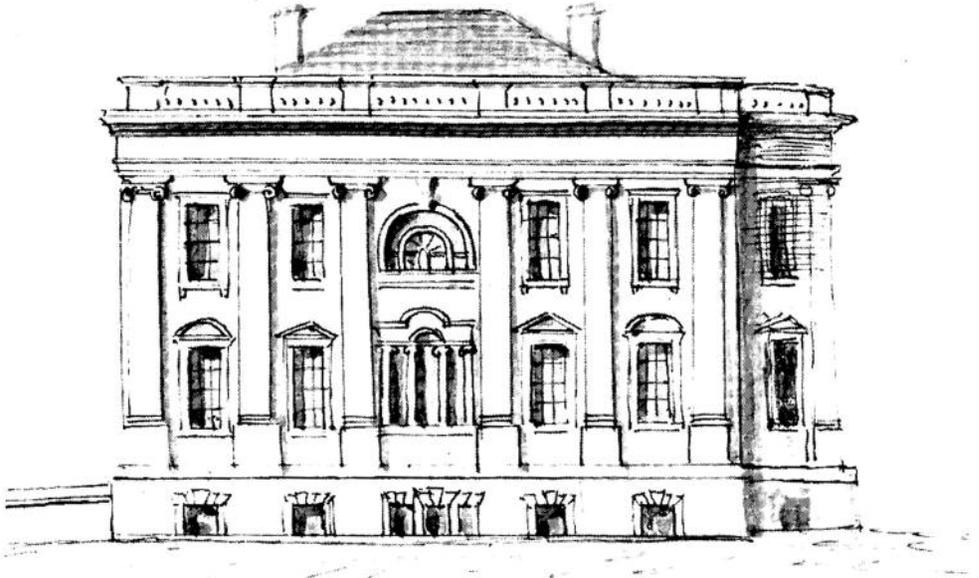


Fig. 1. Samuel Blodgett, junior, sketch of the west end of the White House, Washington DC, before 1805.
White House Collection.

April 1792 and won by Hoban in July; he altered his design at President Washington's desire by October; the cornerstone was laid on October 13; the exterior was reported complete in the fall of 1798; and it was first occupied by President Adams in November 1800. Only two of Hoban's drawings have been identified, presumably made between April and October 1792, and clearly before the later part of 1798.³ These are an elevation of the north front, and a plan of the ground floor; the elevation is irrelevant to the present consideration, but the plan at least shows that Hoban proposed a tripartite window of some sort on the east and west elevations, and there is little cause to be sceptical that it is that which exists today. For an elevation drawing of the west side by Samuel Blodgett junior, made before 1805 (Fig. 1), shows both of the unusual windows.⁴ They are shown again in a drawing by Latrobe, dated 1807 (Fig. 2), which is in part a proposal for alterations and might thus be regarded as less reliable evidence.⁵ But

Latrobe's proposals were not carried out, and in a topographical view made after the fire in August 1814 (Fig. 3) they are easily identifiable by their absence, whereas the two windows are again shown, the upper one fire-damaged.⁶ There is little cause to doubt that they were part of Hoban's design.

Little is known about Hoban's life before 1792, and very little about it before his arrival in America in 1785. But, as the two window types were apparently unprecedented in America, Hoban must have acquired his knowledge of them, or of some feature which inspired them, either from a European building or from a picture of one. He was born in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, in about 1762, and studied in the schools of the Dublin Society, where he was awarded the second premium for his drawings of 'brackets, stairs, roofs etc.'⁷ Thomas Ivory taught in the Dublin Society's schools, and Hoban must have acquired at least his drawing skills from Ivory.⁸ Hoban described himself as 'universally acquainted



Fig. 2. Benjamin Latrobe, elevation of the east end of the White House, Washington DC, with a proposed portico, 1807. *Library of Congress*.

with men of the building line in Ireland, particularly with many able Stone Cutters in Dublin with whom I have been concerned in building, as the Royal Exchange, New Bank, and Custom House'.⁹

The implication is that he worked on these buildings, presumably under Thomas Cooley at the Exchange, Ivory at Newcomen's Bank, and Gandon at the Customs House. It is possible that he acquired knowledge of the two unusual window types from Ivory, Cooley or Gandon, but neither is known to feature in any of their work.¹⁰ It has not been suggested that he visited England or any other European country, but this too is possible, and made more likely by his use of these motifs, of which at least the Syrian serliana was visible in England, if only on buildings which were not very well known. Besides the examples already mentioned, there were versions of Syrian serlianas at Hawnes Park, Bedfordshire; around the Turkish Tent in Vauxhall Gardens; on the street front of the White Friars Hotel at Boreham Street, Sussex; on the ends of the wings at Standlynch (now Trafalgar House), Wiltshire; and on the 'modern Italian loggia' at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire.¹¹

It was, however, possible for Hoban to have seen

illustrations of Syrian serlianas. In common with most of his generation, he would probably have been especially influenced by ancient examples, and one of these, Diocletian's Palace at Split, had been published by Robert Adam in 1764.¹² Diocletian's Palace has Syrian serlianas incorporated into a continuous blind colonnade on the exterior, and a giant serliana forming one side of the peristyle. However, neither of these applications composed a window, as at the White House. But the Syrian

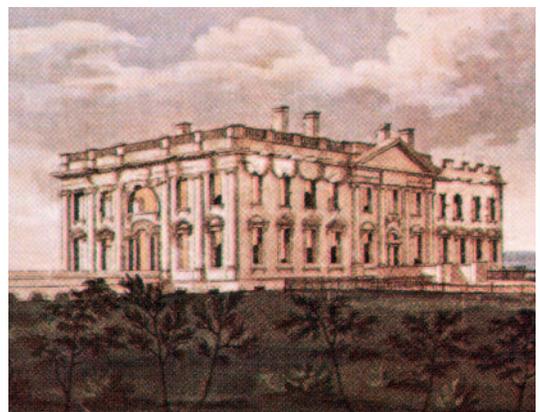


Fig. 3. View of the White House from the north-east after the fire of 1814. *Library of Congress*.

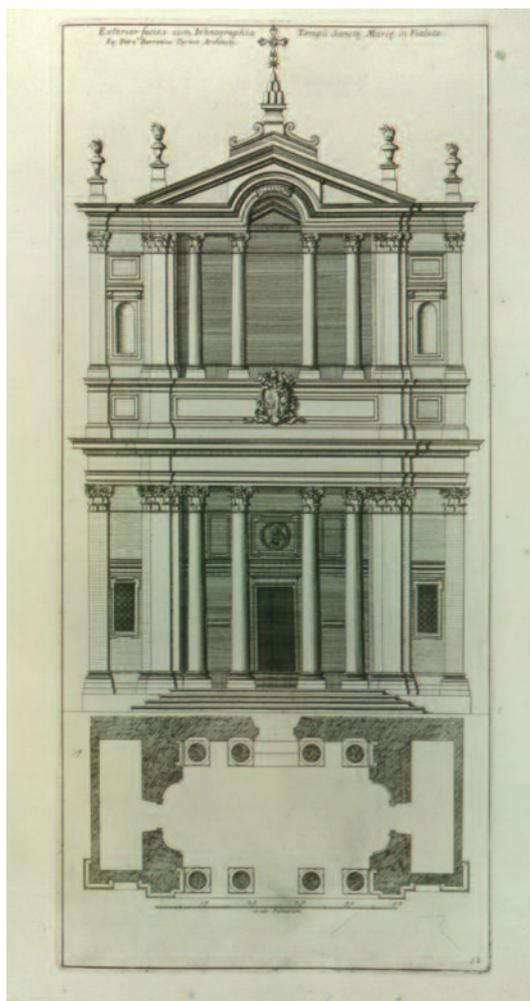


Fig. 4. Giovanni Giacomo Rossi, east elevation of Sta Maria in Via Lata, Rome 1684.

serliana at Sta Maria in Via Lata (Fig. 4) framed a first-floor loggia, more easily transformable into a window. It had been illustrated in at least three publications before Hoban's departure for America, once, by Rossi, in detail.¹³ As a Catholic, Hoban would not have been as hesitant in transferring the details of an ostentatious Counter-Reformation church as his Protestant contemporaries might have been.¹⁴ Not that the latter were entirely inhibited –

William Halfpenny designed a Syrian serliana for the west front of Holy Trinity, Leeds, in 1722, and this was illustrated in Halfpenny's *The Art of Sound Building* in 1725, exactly the sort of book which a carpenter with architectural ability like Hoban might have taken to start a career across the Atlantic.¹⁵

These illustrations may be rare, but illustrations of the other window type appear to be non-existent. It may be Hoban's own invention. Some components or partly realised versions of it were recorded by Palladio, and were illustrated in Lord Burlington's *Fabbriche Antiche*. Plate 19 in this, an elevation of the Baths of Diocletian, shows, among much else, what we now call the 'Diocletian window', a semi-circle with two mullions; it also shows a serliana within a concentric relieving arch; and another version of the latter in which the relieving arch is stilted.¹⁶ The first of these is the generic model. The upper part alone of the second of them would give a window like that on the second floor of the White House. Corrected in the light of the third of them, it would give a near-exact model.

It is not clear from Burlington's, and even Palladio's, drawings whether these openings were really open, glazed, or blind. The first of them had been reproduced by Burlington himself, glazed. So had the second, the serliana glazed, but the surface between the two concentric semi-circles blind. But Robert Taylor had developed the formula by glazing the entire opening, first in the Court Room and West Quadrangle of the Bank of England (1767–72),¹⁷ then in the kitchen of Thorncroft Manor, Leatherhead (after 1763; before 1783), and finally in the kitchen of No 10 Downing Street (1781–3) (Fig. 5).¹⁸ Hoban could have arrived at his window design by omitting the lower part of Taylor's windows. Those at the Bank of England might have been known to him from the younger Thomas Malton's illustrations, published in 1792, the year in which Hoban designed the White House.¹⁹

Further investigation of Hoban's pre-American career may clarify his arrival at these solutions, and

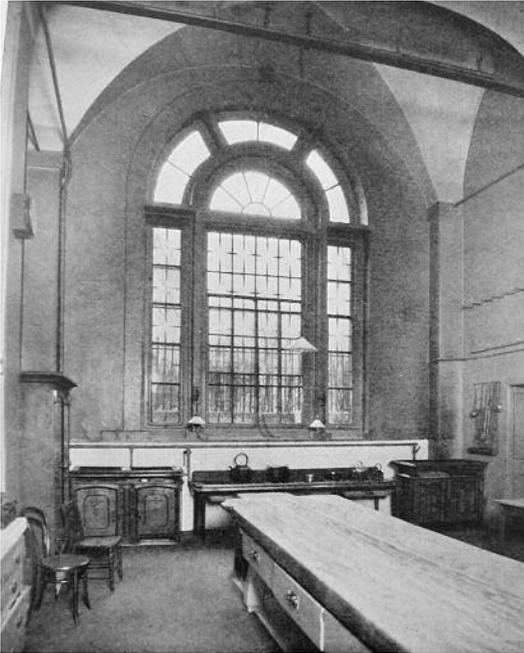


Fig. 5. The kitchen at No. 10 Downing Street, added by Sir Robert Taylor in 1781–83.

confirm or deny his originality in respect of the second window type. But, even without further investigation, the mere identification of these two features suggests that Hoban was better educated and possibly more imaginative than Latrobe, or indeed anyone, has previously considered.

NOTES

- 1 William Ryan and Desmond Guinness, *The White House: an architectural history* (New York et al., 1980), pp. 67–8; William Seale, *The President's House* (Washington, DC, 1986), I, p. 44.
- 2 Richard Hewlings, 'Firle Place: Syria in Sussex', *Georgian Group Journal*, 16 (2008), pp. 149–75.
- 3 Ryan and Guinness, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 34, 55–65, 87, 92 and 93; Seale, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 1–81; Egon Verheyen, 'James Hoban's Design for the White House in the Context of the Planning of the Federal City', *Architectura*, 11 (1981), pp. 69 (Fig. 1), 70 (Fig. 2); Pamela Scott and Antoinette J Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York and Oxford, 1993), pp. 149–52.
- 4 Ryan and Guinness, *op. cit.*, p. 64 (Fig. 45).
- 5 *Ibid.*, plate 9.
- 6 *Ibid.*, plate 10.
- 7 Martin IJ Griffin, 'James Hoban, the Architect and Builder of the White House', *American Catholic Historical Researches*, 3, no. 1 (1907), pp. 35–52; Frederick D Owen, 'The First Government Architect', *The Architectural Record*, 11, pp. 581–9; F[iske] K[imball], 'Hoban, James', in *Dictionary of American Biography*, V (New York, 1932), pp. 91–2; Matthew Baigell, 'James Hoban and the First Bank of the United States', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 28 (May 1969), pp. 135–6; Daniel D Rieff, 'James Hoban', in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (London, 1982), II, pp. 396–7; Seale, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–46, which gives his date of birth as 1758; H Boylan, *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin, 3rd. ed., 1998), p. 180; Pamela Scott, 'Hoban, James', in *American National Biography*, X (New York and Oxford, 1999), pp. 890–1; James D Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America* (Baltimore and London, 2002), III, pp. 1578–9; Ronald M Birse, 'Hoban, James', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography XXVII*, (2004), pp. 369–70.
- 8 John Turpin, *A School of Art in Dublin since the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 49–53; G Willemsen, *The Dublin Society Drawing Schools, Students and Award Winners 1746–1876* (Dublin, 2000).
- 9 Ryan and Guinness, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
- 10 Edward MacParland, *James Gandon* (London, 1985). For Ivory, see *Anthologia Hibernica* (1793), I, p. 334; Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1660–1860* (Dublin,

- 1969), pp. 218–34; Edward McParland, ‘Thomas Ivory’, *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, 17 (January–June 1974), pp. 15–18; D O’Connor, ‘Thomas Ivory’, *Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Year Book* (1992), pp. 68–73; A.M. Rowan, ‘Ivory, Thomas’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XXIX (2004), p. 454. For Cooley, see Craig, *op. cit.*, pp. 195–200; Edward McParland, ‘James Gandon and the Royal Exchange Competition 1768–69’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 102, part 1 (1972), pp. 58–72; Edward McParland, ‘The Early History of James Gandon’s Four Courts’, *Burlington Magazine*, 122 (November 1980), pp. 727–35; A.M. Rowan, ‘Cooley, Thomas’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XIII, 2004, pp. 185–6; Ruth Thorpe, ‘Thomas Cooley before the Dublin Royal Exchange’, *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, 8 (2005), pp. 70–85; John Goodall, ‘A Georgian vision realised; Armagh, Co. Armagh’, *Country Life*, 5 November 2008, pp. 76–81.
- 11 Hewlings, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
- 12 Robert Adam, *The Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro*, London, 1764,
- 13 Hewlings, *op. cit.*, pp. 160–1.
- 14 Scott, *op. cit.*, identifies Hoban’s religious communion by noting that he is credited with establishing the first Catholic church in Washington.
- 15 Hewlings, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
- 16 Ricardo, Conte di Burlington, *Fabbriche Antiche Disegnate di Andrea Palladio*, (Londra, 1730), p. 19.
- 17 Daniel M Abramson, *Building the Bank of England* (New Haven and London, 2005), pp. 66–9, and fig. 67.
- 18 Richard Garnier, ‘Thorncroft Manor, Leatherhead’, *Georgian Group Journal*, 16 (2008), pp. 77–8.
- 19 Marcus Binney, *Sir Robert Taylor* (London, 1984), plate 15. For Malton, see Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 674; Ann Saunders, ‘Malton, Thomas, the elder’ and ‘Malton, Thomas, the younger’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XXXVI (2004), pp. 370–2. The elder Thomas Malton moved to Dublin in 1785; the younger Thomas briefly joined his father there in 1790. Although Hoban advertised his presence in Philadelphia on 25 May 1785, in the same year as the elder Thomas Malton’s move to Dublin [Scott, ‘Hoban’, *cit.*, p. 890], the latter appears to have moved because of previous connections there. Hoban may thus have been acquainted with either of the Maltons, in which case he might have been more easily receptive to their publications.

AN EAST ANGLIAN GOTHIC CONUNDRUM

JOHN HARRIS

This mysterious painting, oil on canvas, has an East Anglian provenance, with Elvetham and Duleep Singh, and is now in the possession of Christopher Foley. The extraordinarily grand collegiate layout is clearly monastic, for it is populated with monks. The architectural allegiances are with Cambridge and Cambridgeshire. One can recollect the New Court of St John's College, Cambridge, 1827, by Rickman, Ely Cathedral, but more pertinently the work of William Wilkins,

notably the colleges of Kings's and Trinity in the early 1820s. What is unmistakable is the painted inscription upon a stone that seems to read in capital letters THETFORD. Alas, due to bitumen, the rest of the inscription or signature is lost. An oil-painted architectural design suggests serious intention. There is not a scrap of evidence that the twelfth Duke of Norfolk, who died in 1842, ever contemplated a Catholic college in a town that at one time did boast a small Cardinal's College.



Design for a monastery or Catholic College intended for a site at Thetford, Norfolk, oil on canvas. *Private Collection.*