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# WOTTON HOUSE, 1704–12

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*This paper was given as part of the conference at Wotton House, Buckinghamshire, in September 2007 at which Sir Howard Colvin gave his last paper (published vol. XVIII of this Journal). Its purpose was twofold: first to gather together all the relevant information available about the building and its possible designers, and secondly to question the often suggested possibility that the design of Wotton was based on that of Buckingham House. The paper was intended to complement Sir Howard Colvin's paper, putting forward some alternative names for the design.*

On 30 October 1820 Richard Grenville, second Marquis of Buckingham, wrote to his architect, John Soane, announcing the destruction, by fire the previous night, of the early-eighteenth century Wotton House. This letter reads:

‘My dear Sir,  
I beg to see you *immediately* – without a moment's loss of time – Poor Wotton is burned down –  
Yours truly  
Chandos Buckingham.  
Get one of your foremen ready to set off immediately –  
Monday’<sup>1</sup>

The following day Soane followed his client's instructions and dispatched James Cook, one of his most trusted assistants, to the house. The results of Cook's visit – two survey plans, various elevations and a cross-section of the burnt out shell – are still preserved amongst Soane's drawings in the Soane

Museum. These drawings of the house, made before Soane began his major alterations, are of paramount importance for understanding its original form.<sup>2</sup>

This fire had another major consequence for the study of the original house. As William James Smith, the Librarian at Stowe at the time, recalled: ‘Many valuable documents were lost amongst the mass of papers destroyed by the fire, which consumed Wotton House and its contents in October 1820’.<sup>3</sup> And it is because of this that so little is known for certain about the building of this house and about the man who commissioned it, Richard Grenville.

The Grenville family had been associated with the Manor of Wotton since the twelfth century, though it was not until the fourteenth century that they became lords of the manor. Richard Grenville was born in 1646,<sup>4</sup> the eldest son of another Richard Grenville, who supported the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War. On his father's death in 1660, Richard Grenville inherited the estate of nearly 4,000 acres and the manor house, which is recorded in a late-sixteenth century survey map of Wotton Underwood and Lauderhill.<sup>5</sup> It was a traditional sixteenth century manor house with a T-plan and a main brick range with crow-stepped gables. The estate had already been enlarged by Richard Grenville's father and grandfather and he continued the process by acquiring a further 430 acres in the parish of Great Marlow which he purchased from his four cousins, the daughters of Sir John Borlase.<sup>6</sup>

In 1671 Richard Grenville served as Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and in around 1675 he married Eleanor, the daughter of Sir Peter Temple of



Fig. 1. The elaborate carved stone decoration over the (west) garden doorway, including the inscription 'Inchoata - Anno - MDCCIV'. *Pete Smith*.

Stantonbury in Buckinghamshire (now lost within the outskirts of Milton Keynes). This family should not be confused with the Temples of Stowe; though presumably they were distantly related. Eleanor brought a dowry of £2,000, payable over six years. Richard Grenville began to rebuild Wotton House fairly late in life, when he was in his late fifties. In 1710 his eldest son, yet another Richard, married Hester Temple, the sister of Sir Richard Temple fourth baronet, and it was through this marriage that the Stowe and Wotton estates would eventually be amalgamated in 1749.<sup>7</sup> Richard Grenville, the builder of Wotton, died in 1719 at the age of 73. Unfortunately this appears to be all that is known of his life;<sup>8</sup> he held no other public office, either local or national, he never became an MP, and all his papers were presumably consumed in the fire of 1820.

Information about the construction of Wotton House is almost as sparse as the biographical details of Richard Grenville's life. First, the date of construction. Most modern publications, which

discuss Wotton, state unequivocally that the house was built 1704 to 1714.<sup>9</sup> The date 1704 stems from the inscription over the west, garden doorway (Fig. 1), 'INCHOATA - ANNO - MDCCIV' which translates as 'WORK BEGAN 1704'.<sup>10</sup> This can presumably be interpreted to mean that construction began on site in the spring of 1704, and that the design for this new house was most likely finalized in late 1703. This needs to be remembered with reference to Buckingham House, which was definitely designed in 1702, and the often repeated statement that it was the metropolitan model for the design of Wotton House, something which will be discussed in more detail later.<sup>11</sup>

The next date which is associated with Wotton is 1706, which introduces the first of the few craftsmen whom we know were concerned with the building of this house. J C Buckler, the architect and architectural topographer, visited Wotton in 1816 and made various drawings of the house, on one of which he added the following inscription: 'John Keene, Master of the Free Masons at Mr Grenville's work at Wotton

under Bernwood Forest, Novr. 23, 1706'.<sup>12</sup> Gordon Nares in his *Country Life* article interpreted a line on the drawing, which links this inscription to one of the gate-piers, as meaning that this inscription was to be found on the pier. This mistaken interpretation has led many architectural historians to search in vain for the inscription. In fact the words were copied by Buckler from the parish register for Wotton Underwood. The entry for the date quoted, November 23, 1706, reads: 'Mary daughter of John Keene, Master of the Free-Masons at Mr Grenville's work, and of Grace his wife was baptized'.<sup>13</sup> A further entry for June 9, 1708 records the birth of another daughter, Dorothy, to John and Grace Keene, using the same wording for John's occupation. This indicates that Keene was working here at Wotton

from 1704 to at least 1708, when the shell of the main house was probably complete.

The fact that John Keene worked here as a mason is less informative than might be expected, for the simple reason that his name is not associated with the building of any contemporary country houses or other architectural projects. He is not, for example, mentioned in Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* and his name does not appear in Richard Hewlings's index of craftsmen.<sup>14</sup> All that is known for certain about him is that he was apprenticed on January 21 1672/3 to the London mason William Hughes and that he gained his freedom on October 11 1692.<sup>15</sup> The stone carving here at Wotton is of the highest quality (Fig. 1), especially the undercut stone carving in the



Fig. 2. The (north) kitchen pavilion with cupola containing the clock made by Langley Bradley and dated 1707. *Pete Smith.*

pediment over the garden doorway and the intertwined initials 'R G' carved in the frieze below it. This must have been done by an experienced mason of the first rank. The same is true of the carving of the Corinthian capitals of the giant order which forms such an important element of the design. The statement 'Master of the Free-Masons at Mr Grenville's work' does indicate that he was the leading mason on site, who would have been entrusted with the most elaborate carving, though it does seem extraordinary that a mason capable of producing carving of this quality is not recorded in any contemporary documents.

The second craftsman to be identified with the building of Wotton House also appears in the local parish register, which records on May 5, 1707 the baptism of 'Frances daughter of Robert Jackson, Joyner (one of the workmen at Mr Grenville's work)'.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, however, Robert Jackson is not recorded as working on any contemporary buildings. A final entry in the parish registers records

the name of Rowland Noble, 'Carpenter & Sojoneur', suggesting that he was a temporary resident in the village and therefore probably one of the carpenters working at Wotton House. But again his name is not known in connection with any contemporary building works.<sup>17</sup>

Rather more is known about the fourth craftsman associated with Wotton. He was Langley Bradley, the favourite clockmaker of Sir Christopher Wren.<sup>18</sup> The clock at Wotton, which is dated 1707, was made and signed by Bradley and still survives inside the clock tower over the kitchen pavilion (Fig. 2). Bradley was responsible *inter alia* for the clock for St Paul's Cathedral and also for the new works inserted in the Astronomical clock at Hampton Court Palace.<sup>19</sup> He was therefore one of the leading clock makers of his day and a man who had strong links with the Office of Works. The date, 1707, agrees with the other dates and proves that the kitchen pavilion was completed and roofed by this date. It also confirms that major construction work on the house was



Fig. 3. The east entrance gates. The gate piers were probably carved by John Keene and the gates were made by Jean Montigny and delivered in 1712. *Pete Smith.*



Fig. 4. A detail of the iron screen to the Grenville mortuary chapel in All Saints Church, Wotton Underwood, probably also made by Jean Montigny. *Pete Smith.*

nearing completion and that specialist craftsmen were on site adding the final touches.

The penultimate recorded craftsman to work at Wotton was a man of similar reputation, John or Jean Montigny a gatesmith whose career has recently been researched and published by Edward Saunders.<sup>20</sup> Montigny was a friend and associate of Jean Tijou, who presumably also migrated from France as a result of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Edward Saunders has unearthed references in the Stowe Papers which include a letter, dated 12 March 1711, from Sir Richard Temple to his steward, Mr Claridge: ‘When Mr John Montigny brings down the ironwork I desire you will see it weighed and having computed the weight at 10d. a lb. pay him what it amounts to deducting £10 paid him in London.’ It is not clear why Sir Richard should

have paid for these gates; perhaps it was in expectation that his son-in-law would reimburse him, or perhaps they were a gift. A receipt, dated 30 August 1712, also survives amongst the Stowe Papers, recording their final journey to Wotton: ‘Mr Jacobs the sum of 13s for the ironwork . . . for being brought from Henley to Wotton by his teams’.<sup>21</sup>

The ironwork, made in Montigny’s workshop in London, included two side panels, two gates and the ornamental heads or overthrows which still survive *in situ* at Wotton between the gate-piers probably carved by John Keene. These elaborate gates (Fig. 3) are of the highest quality and they reflect the fact that Montigny was responsible for the famous iron balustrade to the stair at Cannons, Middlesex a few years later.<sup>22</sup> Wotton is particularly rich in surviving early-eighteenth century ironwork, most of it



Fig. 5. James Thornhill. Sketch of Wotton House from the south-east, probably made between 1708 and 1711.  
*Reproduced by courtesy of the Buckingham County Museum.*

presumably made by Montigny.<sup>23</sup> Some of the panels of ironwork for the original staircase balustrade at Wotton still survive on the present stair, though radically re-sited by Soane. The original panels have been spaced, but the elaborate panel from the top landing has been reused in full.<sup>24</sup> It is a cunningly designed and executed piece of work allowing the initials R and E, for Richard and Eleanor Grenville, to be read from either side. Other pieces of elaborate ironwork, probably by Montigny, include the balustrades to the steps to the main east and west doorways and the balustrades to the garden steps to the south terrace.

But the best and most elaborate ironwork here at Wotton survives within the local parish church of All Saints, Wotton Underwood. It comprises a gilded screen and gates to the Grenville mortuary chapel, built in 1710 and remodelled and enlarged by George Edmund Street in 1867 (Fig. 4). The screen may have been made for the chapel, though it could have begun life as one of the sets of gates to the gardens. Even more elaborate than the gates to the east forecourt, these gates, with their Corinthian pilasters and capitals, might once have formed part of a screen surrounding the original western garden. James

Thornhill does include a set of railings to the north in his famous topographical view of Wotton though no gates to the west garden (Fig. 5) or the entrance steps. It may simply be that this ironwork had not arrived by the time this drawing was made; most likely between 1708 and 1711. The date of delivery of the east forecourt gates, 1712, indicates that these very specialist items arrived many years after the gate-piers were erected. This might seem a long time to wait, but in fact their delivery appears to have coincided with the completion of the garden, designed by London & Wise, in 1711.<sup>25</sup> The high demand for such ironwork at the time meant that clients often had to wait for the best quality gate-smiths to complete their orders.

The final craftsman, or artist, who is recorded as having worked at Wotton was James Thornhill. Thomas Hearne, who visited Wotton House in 1716, recorded that Thornhill 'lived at Wotton almost continuously for three years whilst painting the stair and the saloon'.<sup>26</sup> This has usually been taken to mean that he worked there from 1710 to 1713, but correspondence between Eleanor Grenville and her son Richard records that Thornhill was paid off in 1711,<sup>27</sup> so he presumably resided at Wotton from 1708



Fig. 6. J C Buckler. Watercolour view of the (east) entrance front of Wotton House, 1818. © *The Wormsley Library*.



Fig. 7. J C Buckler. Watercolour view of the (west) garden front of Wotton House, 1818. © *The Wormsley Library*.



Fig. 8. The elaborate carved stone doorcase on the (west) garden front of Wotton House. *Pete Smith.*



Fig. 9. One of the pair of wooden doorcases at either end of the Lincoln Cathedral Library, built for Dean Honeywood in 1674. *Pete Smith.*

to 1711. For Thornhill to have begun this work the interior of the house must have been largely complete by then. So it is possible to conclude that Wotton House was built between 1704 and 1708 and that the internal decoration and the garden were completed by 1711, with the final element, the gates, arriving the following year.

Whilst working here at Wotton, James Thornhill produced his undated pen and wash sketch of the house and the eastern forecourt (Fig. 5).<sup>28</sup> It shows that originally the gently sloping forecourt was bordered by a slightly raised, flat, U-shaped terrace which linked the main block and the pavilions. It also shows that originally there were stairs at both the south-west and north-west corners of this court, which led down through segment headed doorways into the linking basement corridors. The stair and doorway at the north-west corner have been removed and replaced by a blind oval, and the doorway to the

south-west corner has also been replaced at a later date by another oval window, which has had a later plain doorway cut clumsily into it.

This sketch by Thornhill is not the only surviving topographical evidence of the appearance of Wotton. There are also two fine watercolour views of the house, from the north-east and the south-west, painted by J C Buckler c.1818 (Figs. 6 and 7). These were commissioned by the second Marquis of Buckingham for his privately printed edition of Lysons's *History of Buckinghamshire*.<sup>29</sup> Combined with the surviving structure, they give a clear picture of the original external design of this house, clearly showing the difference in design between the two main fronts. The eastern (entrance) front has a five-bay slightly projecting centre and three-bay flanking side sections, all in brick, with giant ashlar pilasters marking the divisions. But the western (garden) front has a three-bay slightly projecting rusticated stone

centre defined with four giant pilasters and flanked on either side by three-bay brick sections with corner pilasters. Buckler's pictures show that all the first floor windows were reduced in height by Soane. They also show the full attic, which Soane removed, and the particularly striking row of nine tall chimney stacks which rose above the roof-line. The closest parallel to these stacks can be found at Winslow Hall, a few miles to the north-west, which was designed by Christopher Wren in 1699,<sup>30</sup> though similar rows of tall chimney stacks also once existed at Buckingham House and Kiveton Park, Yorkshire.

The façades of Wotton are relatively plain and simple though two surviving features of the design strike one as unusual; the window surrounds and the garden doorcase. The window surrounds have standard outer mouldings but the inner sections are chamfered. This chamfering is an entirely original feature not found on any other contemporary country houses. Though it could be indicative of a local mason harking back to the type of chamfered surrounds found on sixteenth and early-seventeenth century mullion-and-transom windows. The stone door surround to the main garden entrance on the west front is also unusual (Fig. 8). It has a bolection-moulded frame sited in front of the Corinthian columns which support the segmental pediment above, in an odd, slightly uncomfortable manner. This distinctive design feature might be expected to give a clue as to the identity of the house's designer, for only three similar doorways have so far been traced in England.

The probable genesis of this form of doorcase can be found in the doorcases which stand at either end of the Library at San Lorenzo in Florence, designed by Michelangelo in 1524, though they have Doric rather than Corinthian columns.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly the two earliest English examples also stand at either end of a library: the Cathedral Library at Lincoln. These magnificent wooden doorcases, which occupy the virtually the whole of the end walls, bear a striking resemblance to the garden doorcase at Wotton (Fig. 9). The Library was built for the Dean,

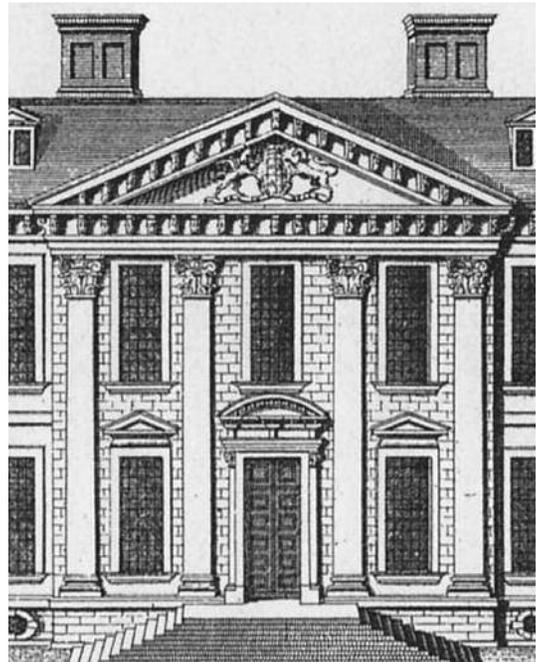


Fig. 10. The entrance doorway to Kiveton House from *Vitruvius Britannicus* Vol. IV (Badeslade & Rocque).

Dr Michael Honeywood, by the builder William Evison in 1674, 'according to Sir Christopher Wren's directions, and Mr Thompson's modell'.<sup>32</sup> This has been interpreted by Kerry Downes to mean that 'the London mason John Thompson was almost certainly responsible for the design',<sup>33</sup> though recent research suggests that Wren may have had rather more involvement than this in the building's design.<sup>34</sup> The surviving contract describes the doorcases as 'large two leaved doors out of the new into the old Library' and they were therefore presumably included in Thompson's model. John Thompson is not known to have designed any other buildings,<sup>35</sup> whilst Wren used a version of this type of doorcase for the portals to the transepts of St Paul's Cathedral, though without the pediment and with a different type of door frame.<sup>36</sup>

The third example of this type of doorcase once existed on the west elevation of Kiveton Park (Fig. 10).

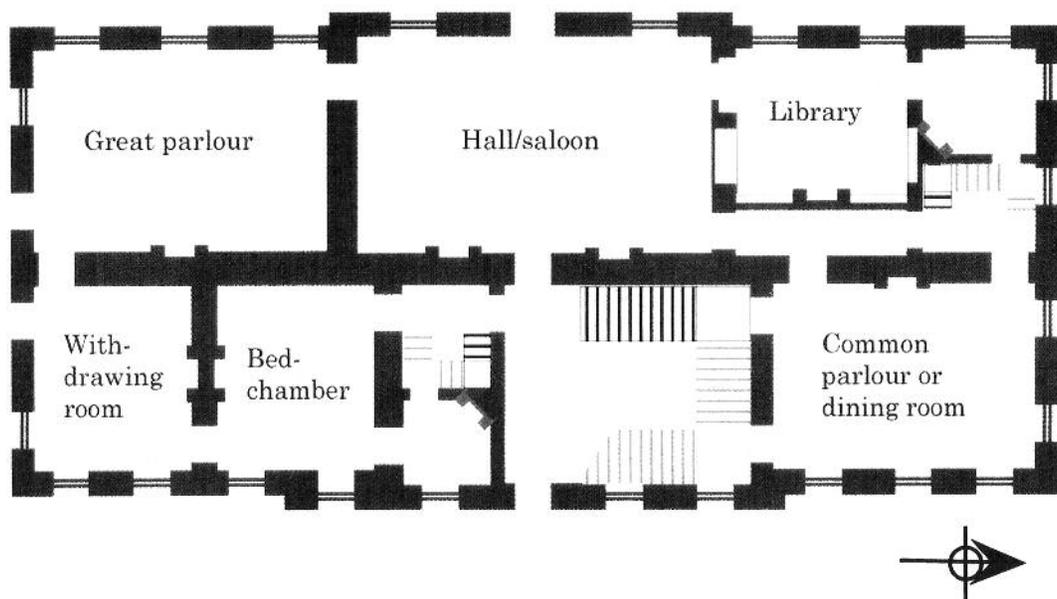


Fig. 11. Reconstruction of the original ground floor plan of Wotton House. *Dr Patricia Smith.*

The contract drawings for this house by Daniel Brand, recently published by Richard Hewlings, show a very similar type of doorcase;<sup>37</sup> though it is not possible to be absolutely certain from this drawing whether the inner frame had a bolection-mould. Brand, a London carpenter, contracted to build Kiveton Park for the first Duke of Leeds in 1698, though its design has usually been attributed to William Talman.<sup>38</sup> The mason mentioned in the contract is Joshua Arnold, though a 'Stone-Cutter, James Hardy' is also referred to, so either of these men may have been responsible for the carving of this doorcase.<sup>39</sup> Howard Colvin has also suggested that John Fitch, mason, may also have worked at Kiveton Park.<sup>40</sup>

The prominence of the main block of the house and the simplicity and modernity of its design is contrasted with, and accentuated by, the more traditional two-storey flanking hipped-roof pavilions (Fig. 2). These pavilions which are surmounted by cupolas actually have more elaborately carved

decoration than the main house. They have elaborate carved stone panels over their main doorways and plain stone panels over their tall cross-casement windows, which contrast with the plain and grand elevations of the main house with its then modern sash windows.

James Cook's basement survey plan identifies the functions of its rooms which probably had not changed since the house was built.<sup>41</sup> It also confirms that the room arrangement in the basement was not altered by Soane and that it survives largely intact to this day. The basement has a central corridor running north-south. Most of the rooms to the north are storerooms and cellars, with brick vaults supported on square brick piers. The largest room, below the hall on the west side, was the Ale Cellar with a further Store Room to the north and a Water Closet in the north-west corner. The slight drop in the ground level to the south allowed for functioning service rooms with fireplaces and flat plaster ceilings at this end. They included the Rent Room in the



Fig. 12. Wotton House from the south, showing the south terrace with central steps and greenhouses.  
*Pete Smith.*

south-west corner and the Steward's Room and the Butler's Pantry with Strong Room off it, on the east side of the corridor. The main room on the east side, which had both a fireplace and brick vaulting, was the Servant's Hall.

Unfortunately Cook's ground floor survey plan does not identify the uses of the rooms, but it does make it possible to reconstruct accurately the room arrangement (Fig.11).<sup>42</sup> The plan is of a type which became relatively common in the second half of the seventeenth century with most of the main rooms arranged along the west garden front: a plan-type derived from French chateau models. It is roughly symmetrical with a large central Hall with a Great Parlour to the south and a Library to north – with its bookcase recesses clearly visible – and a closet and service stair beyond. To the south-east is a three room apartment and another service stair. Whilst the room to the north-east was most likely the Dining Room, since the Kitchen was sited in the north pavilion with an L-plan corridor linking it to the

main house at this corner. The upper floor most likely had four apartments in the corners and the Saloon over the Hall. But without a contemporary inventory for this house it is not possible to be more specific about the room usages.

The only element of this plan which is especially notable is the stair. Wotton did not have a separate entrance hall and stair, or even a linked entrance hall and stair as at Buckingham House; instead these functions were combined here into a single room. This type of combined room was not common in English country house planning in the seventeenth century. Probably the earliest example was at Chevening House, Kent, though here, as Patricia Smith has noted, the stair formed part of the entrance into the garden not the main entrance hall, and the form of the stair itself was also somewhat different.<sup>43</sup> The other early example of this type of combined room is in another house which has strong links with Inigo Jones: Coleshill House, Berkshire (now Oxfordshire). Here the entrance hall contained the



Fig. 13. Paul Sandby (attrib.). West Dean House, Wiltshire showing the garden terrace with central steps and flanking greenhouses. *Forty Hall Museum*.

main stair, though it was a much grander double stair. The closest model for the Wotton arrangement can be found at Frogmore House, Windsor, designed by Hugh May after 1680.<sup>44</sup> Here the same type of three-flight stair rises within the main entrance hall; at Frogmore, though, the first flight rose from the entrance wall whilst at Wotton it rose from the opposite wall. The Frogmore stair even had a similar scheme of illusionist Baroque paintings, though probably painted by Louis Laguerre rather than Thornhill.<sup>45</sup>

Since the stair at Wotton had an iron balustrade it must also have had stone steps, since all other contemporary examples of stairs with iron balusters have stone steps.<sup>46</sup> The walls of this stair were painted by Thornhill probably with a scheme like these at Cannons, Middlesex<sup>47</sup> and at Hanbury Hall, Warwickshire<sup>48</sup> with columned frames containing

pictures on the upper floor and illusionist rusticated stonework below. If this was the case, the stair hall at Wotton, with its painted walls and three-flight stone stair arrangement, must have looked much like the contemporary King's Stair at Hampton Court Palace, though of course on a much smaller scale.<sup>49</sup> The Saloon, also painted by James Thornhill, would have been sited at the centre of the west front, immediately off the painted stair. Presumably most of the remaining rooms at Wotton were panelled, with elaborate plaster ceilings in the most important rooms.

The ground floor reconstruction plan (Fig. 11) has two doorways visible on the south front which are not shown on James Cook's plan,<sup>50</sup> but can be seen in Thornhill's sketch, where the south front can be seen in deep perspective (Fig. 5). They were served by a double-flight stair which linked them to the terrace overlooking the south garden. The land

drops away to the south, and from here a lower south garden is reached by another, even more elaborate, stone stair (Fig. 12). It forms the centrepiece to a long terrace with greenhouses at either end, each with five round-arched openings divided by pilasters, and broader central doorways; the arches to the eastern greenhouse are blind. This terrace and stair are strikingly similar to the terrace which once existed at West Dean House in Wiltshire, recorded in a watercolour attributed to Paul Sandby (Fig. 13); they formed part of the alterations carried out here by William Talman for the fifth Earl of Kingston between 1699 and 1703.<sup>51</sup> At both Wotton and West Dean the stairs are sited at the centre of a long terrace flanked by matching greenhouses, and the basic form of the stairs is similar, both rising from the centre in outward flights to landings and then returning upwards to a central landing.<sup>52</sup> In each there are round-headed alcoves in the centre. There are also similarities to the stair at the centre of the terrace below the west front of Chatsworth House in Derbyshire which was designed by William Talman before 1695.<sup>53</sup>

The similarity between the terrace at West Dean and the terrace at Wotton makes it tempting to suggest that both were designed by William Talman, though whether this can be taken as evidence that Talman designed Wotton House itself must remain an open question. The interior of the greenhouse to the east was enlarged in the late-nineteenth century,

when iron columns and roof beams were inserted and the exterior, along with that of its false counterpart to the west, coated in cement render and given mask heads to their keystones. Presumably the original greenhouse façades were of brick with stone dressings like the original parapet wall which can be seen in Buckler's view of the west front of Wotton (Fig. 7).

In his Buckinghamshire volume of *Magna Britannia*, published in 1802, the Lysons state that Wotton House was 'built after the model of Buckingham House'. This often-repeated statement appears to suggest that Wotton's design is not original, but merely a copy, though if it is a copy it is a very bad one, for apart from the general form of two of their façades these buildings are markedly different. They are both built of brick with stone dressings and they follow the same pattern with a central block flanked by lower wings. The main building is articulated with a giant order and a prominent attic, but the details in almost all other respects are quite different. Buckingham House (Fig. 14) house has more architectural decoration in the form of swags below the central first floor windows and further swags above the central attic windows on the entrance front. The attic was crowned with a partial balustrade, unlike Wotton which had a plain parapet. The external stairs were also very different: Buckingham House had a single broad stair across the entrance front and no stair to the garden, whilst Wotton has small stairs to both

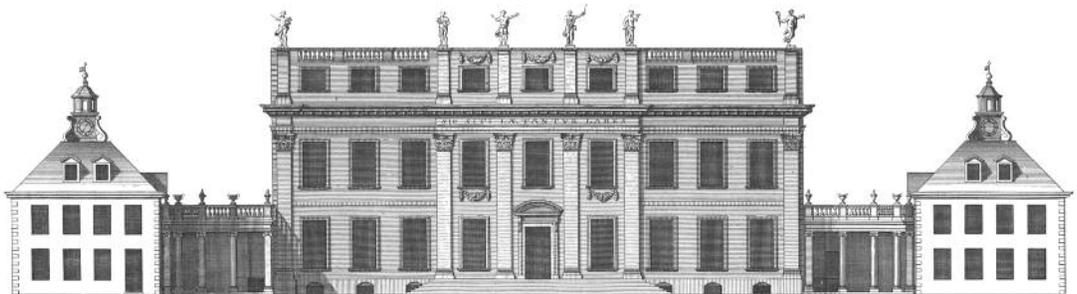


Fig. 14. Buckingham House. The entrance front from *Vitruvius Britannicus* Vol. I (Colen Campbell), reputedly designed by Capt. William Winde.

façades. The links to the pavilions at Buckingham House were far more prominent and were formed of colonnades, whilst those at Wooton are basement corridors hidden behind stone walls decorated with blind oval panels. The flanking pavilions at Buckingham House were completely different from those which survive at Wotton.

The entrance and garden façades at Buckingham House were different from each other, as were the main façades at Wotton, though not in the same way. At Buckingham House the entrance façade was articulated with giant pilasters whilst the west front had none; at Wotton both façades are articulated with a giant order, though it is the garden façade which has the most elaborate articulation with its rusticated stone centrepiece and its four giant pilasters. It is in fact only the garden front at Wotton that closely reflects the entrance front at Buckingham House, though Wotton has a rusticated stone centrepiece while the centrepiece at Buckingham House was of brick.

The fact that Wotton was almost certainly designed earlier than 1704, probably in 1703, suggests that Buckingham House is unlikely to be its direct model. For, if Buckingham House was begun in 1702 then the scaffolding is unlikely to have been removed from the main body of the house before 1704 when its design would have been revealed to other architects and the general public. Only someone who had seen the original designs for Buckingham House could have produced a copy before this date. Whoever designed Wotton House it seems likely that it was designed at the about same time as its supposed metropolitan model and that their similarity of design is more a coincidence of ideas and architectural development, a case of stylistic convergence, rather than a case of direct copying.

Though this paper has clarified our knowledge of the building of Wotton House it has done little towards solving the problem of its authorship. If anything, it has muddied the waters even further by introducing further names into the list of

possibilities. William Winde and William Talman have both been suggested as possible designers of Wotton, based largely on the probability that one of them designed Buckingham House. Michael Bevington explores the possibility that James Thornhill may have been responsible for the design of Wotton in this Journal (see below), and Howard Colvin suggested that John Fitch may have been the designer.<sup>54</sup> Then there is John Keene, the only person in this list whose name is clearly linked to the building process, Daniel Brand, John Thompson and even Christopher Wren. The design of Wotton cannot be assigned to any of these architects or masons with any certainty, though the striking similarity between the southern garden terrace and that at West Dean must make William Talman the most likely choice for the present.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## NOTES

- 1 Ptolemy Dean, *Sir John Soane and the Country Estate* (Aldershot, 1999), pl. 11.16.
- 2 All these drawings are illustrated in colour in William Palin, *Saving Wotton, The Remarkable Story of a Soane Country House* (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 2004), pp. 28-29 and 38, Catalogue Nos. 1-4.
- 3 John Becket, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles* (Manchester, 1994), p. 10.
- 4 Not 1660 as suggested by Giles Worsley, 'Wotton House', *Country Life*, 13 May 2004, p. 108.
- 5 Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California (hereafter HHL); copy in Buckinghamshire Studies Office, BAS Maps 86. See H C Schultz, 'An Elizabethan Map of Wotton Underwood', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1939.
- 6 Becket, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12.
- 7 *VCH Buckinghamshire*, IV, p. 131.
- 8 The only information recorded about Richard's private life concerns the separation and financial dispute between himself and his wife, Eleanor, which is referred to in two contemporary letters dated 1716. Both these letters mention Eleanor's attempt to visit her husband at Wotton and her exclusion by their eldest son, Richard Grenville (1678-1728): Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury, D-X1069/2/9.
- 9 N. Pevsner and E. Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (London, 1994), pp. 764-6.
- 10 In my original paper I failed to translate this Latin inscription and consequently to understand its true significance.
- 11 D. Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Buckinghamshire* (1802), p. 673, states that Wotton House was 'built after the model of Buckingham House'.
- 12 Gordon Nares, 'Wotton House, Buckinghamshire, I', *Country Life*, 1 July, 1949, p. 41; British Library (BL), Add MS. 36359, f. 125.
- 13 I am indebted to George Clarke for bringing these entries in the copies of the parish registers, held amongst the Stowe Papers, to my attention: HHL, ST 32.
- 14 Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (New Haven & London, 2008). I would like to thank Richard Hewlings for allowing me to consult his Index of Craftsmen.
- 15 Guildhall Library, London Apprentices, Vol. 27, Mason's Company, 1663-1805, p. 19; MS. 5308, Mason's Company, List of Freemen, 1677-1795, p. 36.
- 16 HHL, ST 32.
- 17 The names of a number of other carpenters are mentioned in the parish registers, but none are defined as working for Mr Grenville or as sojoneurs, so presumably they were local men living and working within the parish: HHL, ST 32.
- 18 Langley Bradley was apprenticed to Joseph Wise in 1687, became a member of the Clockmaker's Company in 1695 and served as Master from 1726 to 1738, when he was appointed Keeper of St Paul's clock. *Britten's Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers*, revised by G.H. Baillie, C.A. Ilbert and Cecil Clutton, (8<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1973), p. 350.
- 19 Simon Thurley, *Hampton Court, A Social & Architectural History* (New Haven & London, 2003), pp. 215-6.
- 20 Edward Saunders, 'Jean Montigny, A Master Smith', *Georgian Group Journal* 9 (1999), pp. 33-43; Edward Saunders, 'Biographical Dictionary of English Wrought Iron Smiths of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century' (Walpole Society LXVII, 2005), pp. 314-9.
- 21 Saunders, *loc. cit.*, p. 37; HHL, Stowe Accts., STF, Box 64.
- 22 Saunders, *loc. cit.*, pp. 37-38.
- 23 Presumably Montigny did not make the plain spear-head railings flanking these gates which would have been made locally.
- 24 Soane used elegant geometrical style iron balusters for almost all his other country house staircases.
- 25 A series of letters (mostly dated 1711) from Richard Grenville, the younger, to his mother, Eleanor, contain references to his attempts to get George London to reduce his bill: HHL, HM 30573-30577. The basic layout of the garden designed by London and Wise is known from a survey map of c.1767: Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Maps 88, reproduced in Sarah Couch, 'Trees in a Landscape: The Avenues at Wotton', in Patrick Eyres (ed.), 'The Grenville Landscape at Wotton House', *New Arcadian Journal*, 65/66 (2009), pp. 74-5.
- 26 John Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (London, 1979), p. 259.
- 27 HHL, HM 30573-30577.
- 28 Harris, *op. cit.*, pl. 274. The original is in Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury.

- 29 Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Buckinghamshire* (extra-illustrated copy in the Wormsley Library).
- 30 Pete Smith, 'Winslow Hall', in Malcolm Airs and Geoffrey Tyack (eds.), *The Renaissance Villa in England, 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007), pp.223-46.
- 31 Johannes Wilde, *Michelangelo* (Oxford, 1978), pl. 136.
- 32 *Wren Society*, XVII, pp. 76-77 and pl. LXVI. The contract for the building of this library is given here in full though it does not mention the name of the joiner or carpenter who made these doorcases.
- 33 Kerry Downes, *The Architecture of Wren* (London, 1982), pp. 125, n. 159.
- 34 Margaret Bowker, 'Historical survey, 1450-1750' in Dorothy Owen (ed.), *A History of Lincoln Minster* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 197.
- 35 John Thompson (c.1655-1700) worked as a mason on several of Wren's major commissions including the City Churches, Winchester Palace, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace and St Paul's Cathedral. He is also recorded as working at Burghley House in Cambridgeshire from 1682-87: Ingrid Roscoe, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* (New Haven & London, 2009), p. 1255; Eric Till, 'Capability Brown at Burghley', *Country Life*, Oct 6, 1975, pp. 982-5.
- 36 Kerry Downes, *Sir Christopher Wren: the Design of St Paul's Cathedral* (London, 1988), pls. 125-8.
- 37 Elizabeth Hagglund, 'Cassandra Willoughby's visits to Country Houses', *Georgian Group Journal*, 11 (2001), pp. 191-3 and Figs. 3-7. Elizabeth Hagglund assumed that these drawings were by Brand, but Howard Colvin pointed out that these drawings are unsigned and stated that 'It is unlikely that, as has been claimed, these drawings were made by Brand', though without giving any specific reason why he thought so: Howard Colvin, 'Was John Fitch the Architect of Wotton House?', *Georgian Group Journal*, 18 (2010), p. 3.
- 38 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 953.
- 39 Joshua Arnold also worked at Chatsworth: Geoffrey Beard, *Georgian Craftsmen and their Work*, (London, 1966), pp. 184-5. James Hardy supplied chimneypieces for the Hon. Richard Hill in 1703: Roscoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 573-4.
- 40 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 378; Colvin, *Georgian Group Journal*, 18 (2010), p. 3.
- 41 Palin, *op. cit.*, p. 38n (Sir John Soane's Museum, 34/1/5).
- 42 I would like to thank Patricia Smith for allowing me to illustrate her reconstructed ground plan of Wotton.
- 43 Andor Gomme, 'Chevening, The Resolutions', *Georgian Group Journal*, 15 (n.d.), pp. 121-139 and Fig. 2.
- 44 Nicola Smith, 'Frogmore House before James Wyatt', *Antiquaries Journal*, 65, Part II (1985), pp. 402-26, Fig. 4 and pl. LXXXIa.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp.416-7.
- 46 The only examples of stairs which have wooden treads and an iron baluster date from the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth centuries, e.g. Newby Hall, Yorkshire and Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire.
- 47 Painted for James Brydges, Duke of Chandos between 1715 and 1725: Edgar de N. Mayhew, *Sketches by Thornhill* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1967), p. 17 and pls. 22-3.
- 48 Painted c.1710 for Thomas Vernon: Jeffrey Howarth and Gervase Jackson-Stops, *Hanbury Hall*, (National Trust Guidebook, 1994), pp.16-22.
- 49 The King's Stair was designed by Christopher Wren and painted by Antonio Verrio in 1704: Thurley, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13 and pl. 197.
- 50 These doorways were presumably blocked sometime in the later eighteenth century.
- 51 Pete(r) Smith, 'West Dean House, Wiltshire', *Georgian Group Journal*, 9 (1999), pp. 86-106.
- 52 These stairs are not exactly the same. The West Dean stair has an additional set of steps to the centre and the upper flights are divided into two by short landings.
- 53 John Harris, *William Talman, Maverick Architect*, (London, 1982), p. 29 and pl. 24.
- 54 Colvin, *Georgian Group Journal*, 18 (2010), pp. 1-7.