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# NEW LIGHT ON No. 70 WHITEHALL (DORSET HOUSE)

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*This article amplifies and revises one by Richard Hewlings in volume 22 (2014) of this journal. Hewlings convincingly argued that the then Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Hewett, was the designer of the work carried out in 1717–18 at the first Earl Stanhope’s Cockpit lodging at Whitehall Palace (now 70 Whitehall). The current state of some of the rooms was interpolated as surviving from Stanhope’s tenure and, as a rare survival of Hewett’s work, that they were possibly indicative of the ‘pure Grecian taste’ of his New Junta for Architecture. The true character of the extant 18th century rooms is here demonstrated as dating from the 1750s, and that it may allow an attribution to (Sir) Robert Taylor. Executed for the first Duke of Dorset, the motifs in the rooms relate to other works by Taylor, both documented and attributed. Meanwhile a surviving set of four unsigned drawings from the Elton Hall album, already attributed to Sir Edward Lovett Pearce and recently identified as for Dorset House, allows three suggestions: that Pearce, engaged by the Duke of Dorset shortly after he had acquired the apartment in 1725, partly retained the earlier scheme for Stanhope; that the drawings in part show Hewett’s scheme; and that what Taylor encountered at Dorset House influenced him in his own work.*

The detailed history of the apartment at 70 Whitehall was first set out in the *Survey of London* in 1931, and was amplified in 2014, but is worth rehearsing here in order to clarify the succession of architectural campaigns.<sup>1</sup> Held under a crown lease, James Stanhope, first Earl Stanhope (not initially ennobled), was in possession of the premises within the former Cockpit site of Whitehall Palace – subsequently long-known as Dorset House – from 1715 until his death in 1721.<sup>2</sup> His original 31 year lease was granted after he had already expended £1,541 7s. with an undertaking to spend £1200 more. His works, which were extensive, were carried out in 1717–18 and as a result additional premises were confirmed to him under a new Crown lease, including the little garden to the west, besides extra rooms, granted in January 1719. His executors compiled an inventory of the rooms following his death in 1721, in the process listing and naming them. His dowager then remained in occupation until her own death in 1723. Her executors in 1725 sold on to the first Duke of Dorset, who (arguing that his garden was overlooked by other Crown tenants) promptly negotiated a new fifty-year lease, dated 1729, adding the offending premises to those he had acquired from Lady Stanhope’s executors.

The newly-identified drawings by Pearce<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1–4) tie in with the Duke's new lease, especially because (as will be shown) they feature the proposal of an Ionic screen *in antis* that is still extant today, confirming that the new lease was consequent on building works carried out before 1729. The Duke negotiated a fifty-year new lease in 1755, in preparation for which a set of plans of the apartment was drawn up in May 1754, delineating the ground, *piano nobile* (Fig. 5) and chamber floors, and naming the rooms. At least one room on the principal floor, having decoration of a light Rococo character, has been accepted as dating from the mid-1750s and its expense, along with that of associated works, can be deduced as justifying the

extension of the Duke's tenure, as was usual in leases of royal freeholds. The Duke died in 1765 and left the apartment to his younger son, Lord Philip Sackville, later ennobled as Viscount Sackville, who in 1772 petitioned for a new lease. Dorset House was then sublet to the Earl Waldegrave, whose name thence appears in the rate books.

The first Duke of Dorset, though never a government minister, was a significant statesman. A previous envoy to Hanover, he was chosen to travel there in August 1714 to inform the Elector of his proclaimed accession as King of Great Britain and Ireland. Initially, George I favoured him, showering him with honours and appointments:

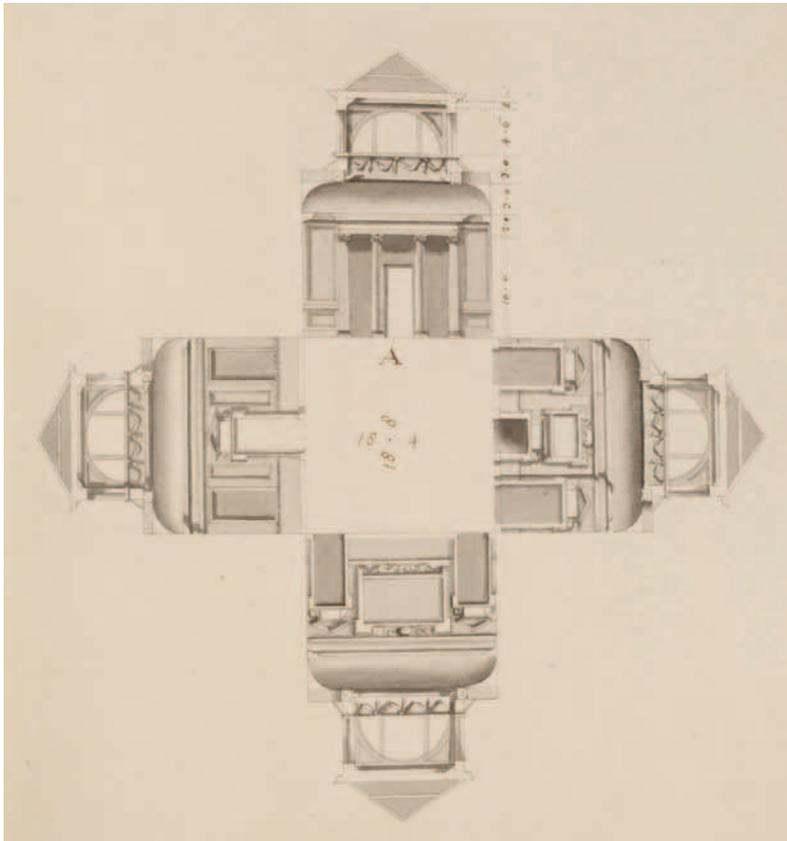


Fig. 1. Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (attrib.), Dorset House, in Whitehall, Room 'A', plan and laid out elevations, with later annotations here attributed to (Sir) Robert Taylor. (*V&A Museum, Elton Hall Album, E.2124:206–1992*)

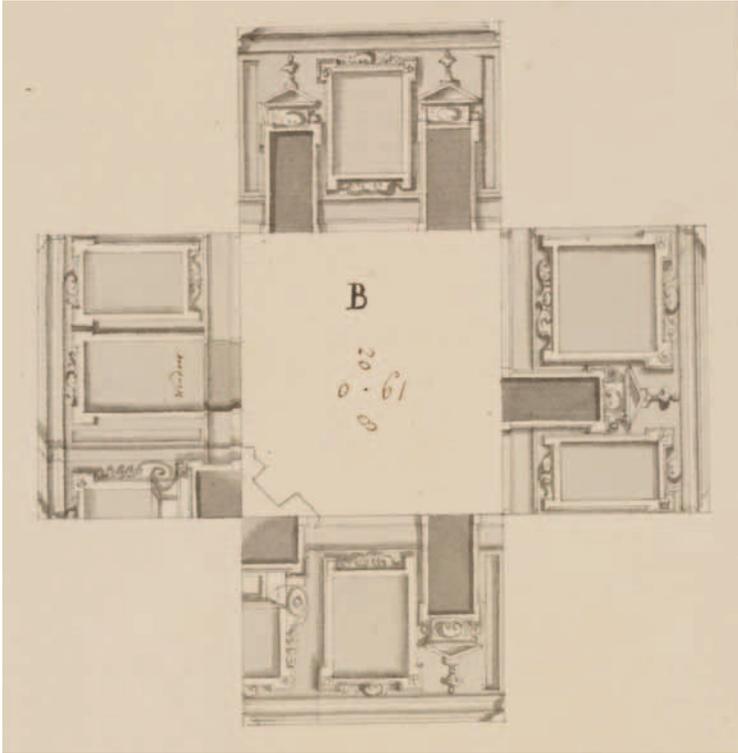


Fig. 2. Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (attrib.), Dorset House, Room 'B', plan and laid out elevations, with later annotations here attributed to (Sir) Robert Taylor. (*V&A Museum, Elton Hall Album, E.2124:142-1992*)

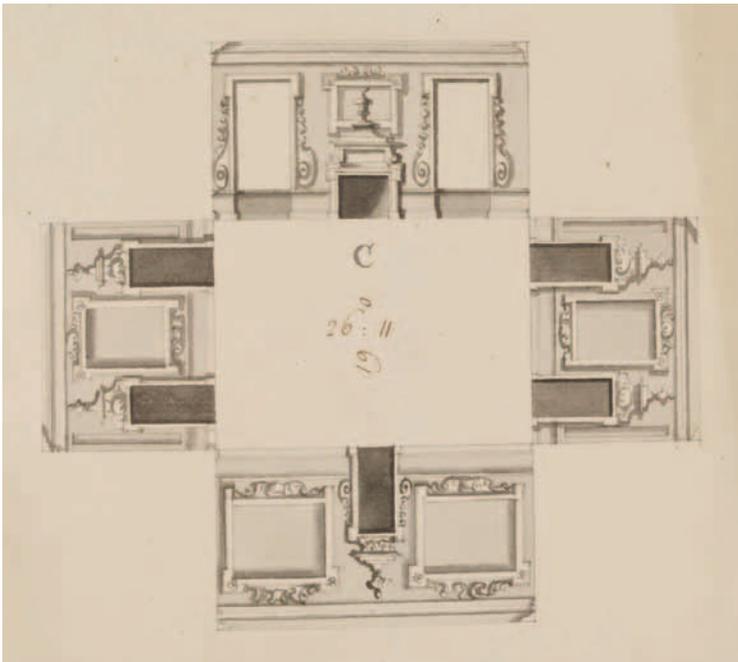
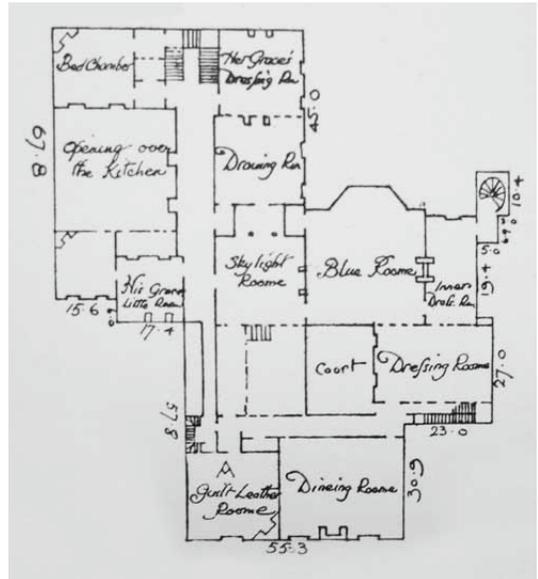
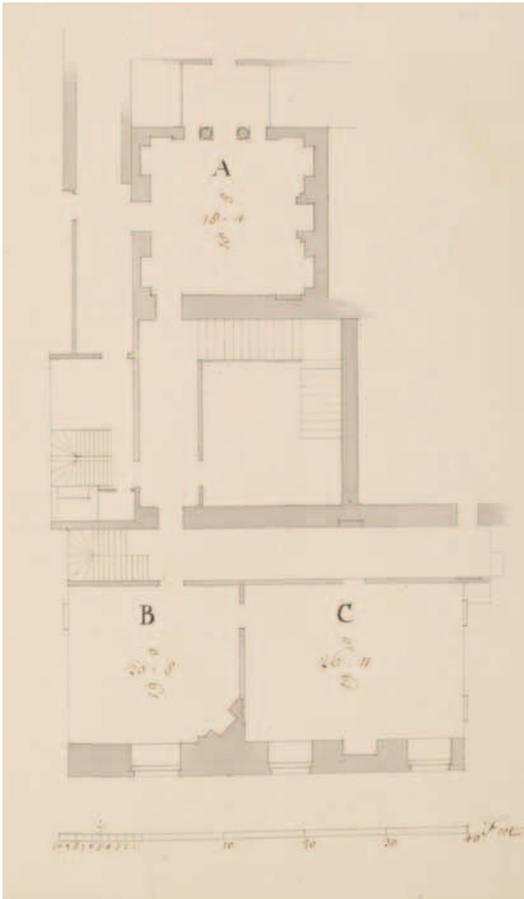


Fig. 3. Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (attrib.), Dorset House, Room 'C', plan and laid out elevations, with later annotations here attributed to (Sir) Robert Taylor. (*V&A Museum, Elton Hall Album, E.2124:208-1992*)



Left: Fig. 4. Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (attrib.), Dorset House, part plan of principal floor, with later annotations here attributed to (Sir) Robert Taylor. (V&A Museum, *Elton Hall Album*, E.2124:68-1992)

Above: Fig. 5. (Sir) Robert Taylor (here attrib.), Dorset House, outline measured plan of principal (first) floor, as existing, May 1754; as redrawn for the *Survey of London*, 1931. (Location of original untraced)

Privy Councillor, Knight of the Garter, Groom of the Stole, Lord Steward, Governor of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports. He carried the sceptre at George I's coronation, and St Edward's Crown at George II's. Despite quarrelling with the king in 1717 and being told his services were no longer required, he was given a dukedom three years after. He served twice as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in 1731-7 and 1751-5, and in the 1750s he was in regular consultation with the Duke of Newcastle on political and other matters.<sup>4</sup>

The first Duke of Dorset's Irish terms partly

coincided with Sir Edward Lovett Pearce's work on the Irish Houses of Parliament, but Pearce's appointment in that role preceded Dorset's arrival at Dublin Castle, building work on the Parliament building having started in 1729.<sup>5</sup> The exact route leading to the connection between the Duke and his architect remains obscure, but by the time of the scheme at Dorset House Pearce was well into his Irish architectural and political career. He settled in Ireland in 1722, but he must have returned, if briefly, to England in about 1725 for his marriage to his first cousin Ann, daughter of his uncle General Thomas

Pearce, of Whitlingham, near Norwich, a Privy Councillor and MP, who also had an Irish career like his son-in-law.

The five surviving eighteenth-century rooms at No. 70 Whitehall are all on the first floor. They comprise the grandest room, called the Blue Room in 1754 (Fig. 5) – dated by Richard Hewlings to the 1750s – and four other rooms adjacent, which Hewlings attributed to Hewett: the Waiting Room, Skylight Room, Drawing Room, Her Grace’s Dressing Room, and the Inner Dressing Room, so named in the plan drawn for Dorset in 1754. It is now

suggested that these five rooms are all part of Dorset’s second building campaign, of the 1750s. Three of them featured in the 1721 inventory drawn up after Lord Stanhope’s death, when they were described as the Waiting Room, the Yellow Mohair Room, and the Yellow Damask Room; the Inner Dressing Room of 1754 does not appear in the 1721 inventory.

The only element shown in the four Elton Hall album room-drawings to survive today is the Ionic screen *in antis* in the Skylight Room; it is here attributed to Pearce. The existing corniced, concave-sided doorheads discussed by Richard Hewlings



Fig. 6. Newcastle House, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Holborn, the library in c.1912. (SoL, III, pl. 96, detail)



Fig. 7. Twickenham House, Abingdon, Oxon., doorcase in entrance hall. (R. Garnier)

Fig. 8. Calehill Park, Little Chart, Kent, entrance hall. (*NMR, Swindon*)

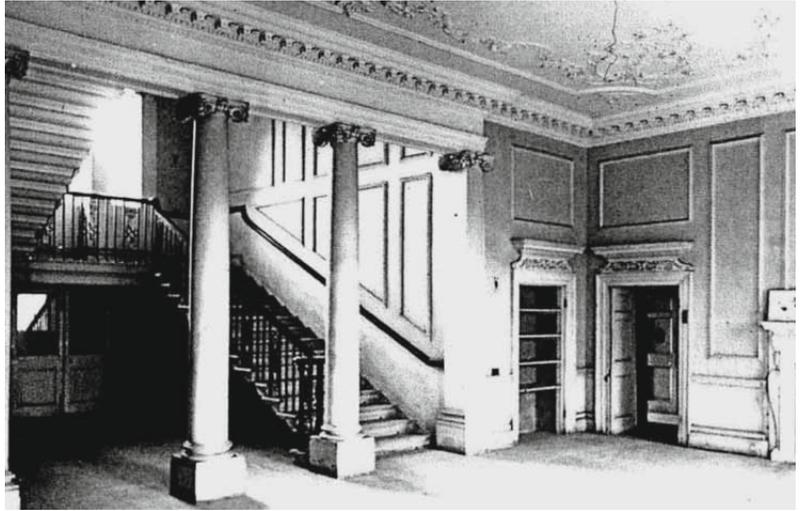
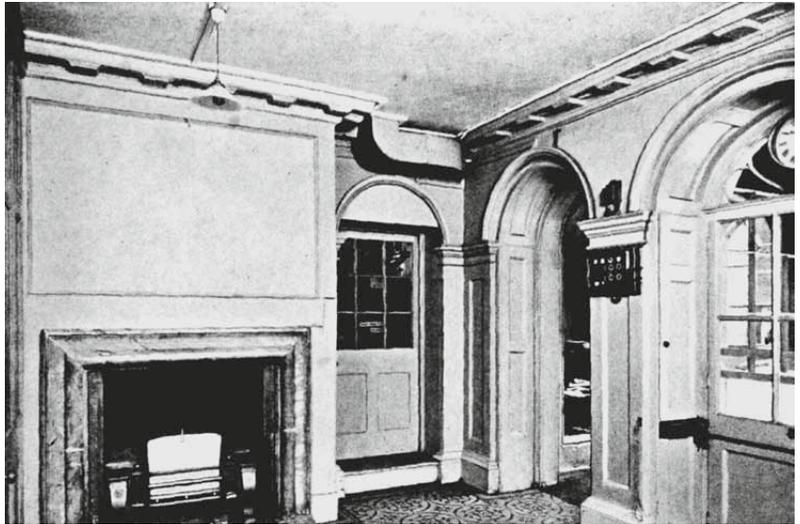


Fig. 9. Pembroke House, Whitehall, London, entrance hall. (*Survey of London, XIII, pl. 72a*)



feature in none of the Pearce drawings, but they are often found in architectural schemes of the 1750s, such as Pembroke House (since demolished),<sup>6</sup> on the opposite side of Whitehall, and Newcastle House, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in London (Fig. 6).<sup>7</sup> They can, or could, be seen at Twickenham House, Abingdon,<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 7), at Fineshade Abbey, in Northamptonshire, of c.1749–55,<sup>9</sup> and Calehill Park, at Little Chart, in Kent (Fig. 8), fitted-out in the mid-1750s. The 'redacted' Doric cornice member,

noted by Hewlings in the Inner Dressing Room at No. 70 Whitehall was used in the 1750s in London in the ground-floor entrance hall at Pembroke House<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 9), and further afield in the library at Harleyford Manor, in Buckinghamshire (c.1755),<sup>11</sup> in the entrance hall at Barlaston Hall (Fig. 10), in Staffordshire (c. mid-1750s), and in the entrance hall at Watlington Park, in Oxfordshire (c. mid-1750s).<sup>12</sup>

The 'Drawing Room' and 'Her Grace's Dressing Room' (Figs. 5 & 11) have chimneybreasts

that break forward twice, against which there are similar chimneypieces with eared slips framed by a conforming simple, moulded architrave simply enriched with egg-and-dart. Their distinctive overmantel decoration consists of related panels having ‘a shouldered architrave and carved enrichment above and below’ and flanking these panels ‘foliage drops are suspended from lions’ masks’ (Fig. 11). These simple chimneypieces are not unusual for the 1750s, and the overmantel panels and flanking drops may be similarly dated. In their grandest form the combination was found in the entrance hall at Fineshade Abbey (Fig. 12), but drops suspended from lions’ masks also featured on the

window piers in the first floor anteroom or lobby, off the staircase at Pembroke House,<sup>13</sup> and can still be seen in the staircase hall at Powderham Castle, in Devon (Fig. 13). Pembroke House was being rebuilt in 1756–8, immediately following the Duke of Dorset’s second campaign of 1754–5 at his Whitehall lodgings; the relevant campaign at Powderham also dates to just after 1755.<sup>14</sup>

There is enough in the foregoing comparisons with the extant mid eighteenth-century rooms at No. 70 Whitehall to suggest that (Sir) Robert Taylor may have been the Duke’s architect for the 1750s scheme. He was the documented designer of Harleyford and Barlaston; and Watlington and



Fig. 10. Barlaston Hall, Staffs., entrance hall. (NMR, Swindon)

Fig. 11. Dorset House, ‘Her Grace’s dressing Room’ (1754 name), ornamented chimneybreast. (Feilden+Mawson)



Fig. 12. Fineshade Abbey, Northants., entrance hall. (NMR, Swindon)

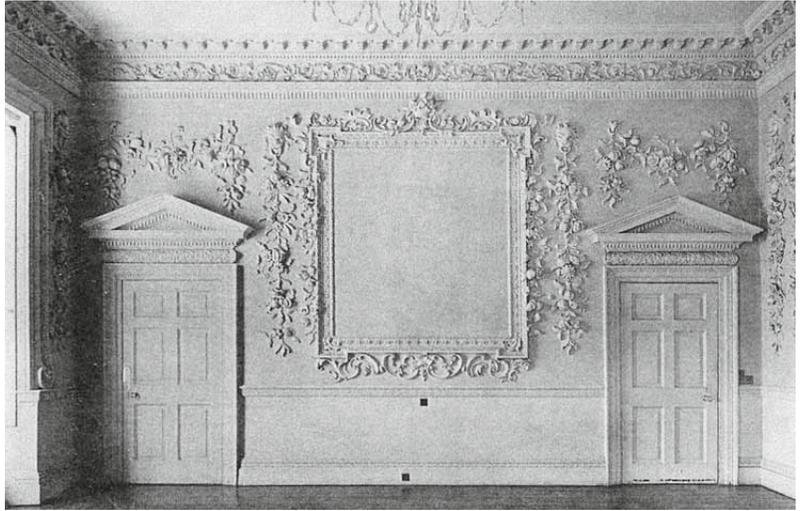


Fig. 13. Powderham Castle, Devon, staircase hall plasterwork, detail. (R. Garnier)



Twickenham House are convincingly attributed to him. At Barlaston, he was recorded as architect in the *Journal of James Caldwell (1759–1838)*, following a conversation with the son of the house's builder, Thomas Mills.<sup>15</sup> The patron at Watlington, John Tilson (d.1779), is confirmed in his own Will as a financier, a director of the Equivalent Company,<sup>16</sup> and his brother-in-law, Henry Lushington (d.1762 during an Indian revolt a year after the Black Hole of Calcutta, which he had survived) is commemorated in a monument by Taylor at the old parish church of Eastbourne, in Sussex.<sup>17</sup> Fineshade was the

property of William Paine King, whose wife's three brothers all employed Taylor, one of them engaging him on at least three occasions.<sup>18</sup> Newcastle House is significant as having been executed for that Macaenas of political maneuvering and patronage the Duke of Newcastle, a Whig, about whom many of Taylor's known and putative clientele circulated; the Duke of Dorset was one of his political correspondents, despite his own Tory affiliation.<sup>19</sup> Taylor worked for Newcastle at his country seat of Clumber Park, in Nottinghamshire,<sup>20</sup> and the Duke may also have engaged Taylor for his London town

house, the *locus operandi* of his political power. Mark Girouard attributed the staircase decoration at Powderham Castle to the Bristol school of plasterwork,<sup>21</sup> but this flies in the face of the fact the three stuccoists there were London men. There is an octagonal paneled door typical of Taylor at the foot of the staircase, and the chimneypiece in the First Library is very closely related to the one by Taylor in his Court Room at the Bank of England, suggesting his involvement here too. Pembroke House also reveals Taylor-like touches on close examination, and merits further elucidation of the design of the rebuilding campaign of 1756 onwards, before the arrival in 1760 of Sir William Chambers.<sup>22</sup>

There are parallels with Taylor's work in the grandest surviving eighteenth-century space at No. 70 Whitehall, the Blue Room (later called the Lord President's room).<sup>23</sup> This is the room to which a canted bay window was added in the mid-1750s campaign (Fig. 14), a feature that might be considered a *sine qua non* for Taylor at this date. The exterior of the bay compares closely with those attributed to Taylor at the backs of contemporary houses in the John Street and Theobalds Row development in Holborn (Fig. 15), projected and built in 1754–60 by John Blagrove, a carpenter and speculative builder.<sup>24</sup> Otherwise, disregarding the exact shape of its central and other panels, whether circular, oval or octagonal, the ceiling of the Blue Room<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 16) follows a formula found at Newcastle House (Fig. 6) and still being used by Taylor in the later 1760s in the Court Room at the Bank of England. The slight ornamentation in the spandrels to the central panel is identical at Dorset House and Newcastle House, while in each case the borders of the central, extended rose contain some of the same decorative elements. The flower-baskets supported by curving trails of foliage centering the longitudinal-strip marginal panels are similarly found in the corner ornamentation of a ceiling of the mid-1750s with a widely accepted attribution to Taylor at 43 Parliament Street, Westminster.<sup>26</sup>

The Ionic screen *in antis* in the top-lit Waiting Room at No. 70 Whitehall features in the Lovett Pearce proposal drawing for the room and so must survive from the earlier of the two campaigns for the Duke of Dorset. It also recurs within Taylor's 1750s *oeuvre*, as at Eltham Lodge, on the outskirts of Greater London, defining the opening between entrance hall and staircase hall (Fig. 17). There was another again at Calehill Park, Little Chart, in Kent, (Fig. 8) similarly between entrance hall and stairs. These suggest that Taylor approved of Pearce's screen, adding it to his stylistic canon and repeating it elsewhere shortly thereafter in other 1750s schemes of his. Curiously, a similar screen occurs at the back

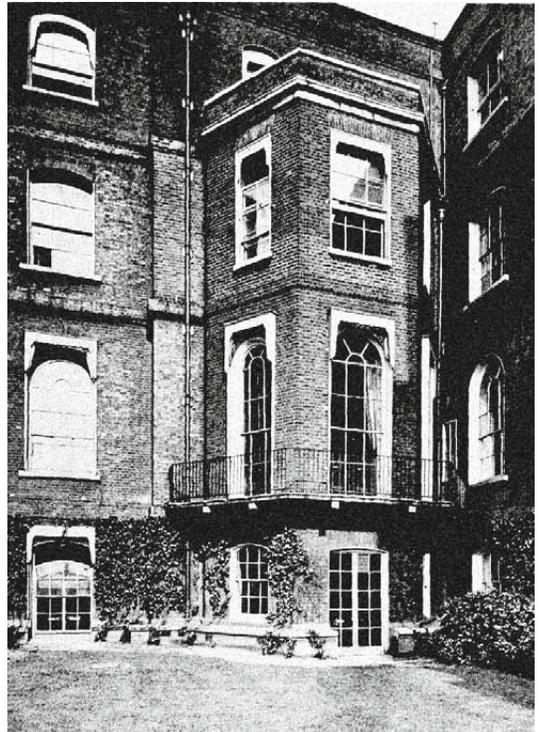


Fig. 14. Dorset House, canted bay added in 1754–5 to design of (Sir) Robert Taylor (here attrib.). (*Survey of London*, XIV, pl. 96)



Fig. 15. No.12-22 Theobalds Road, Holborn, London, backs of houses with canted bays. (*NMR, Swindon*)

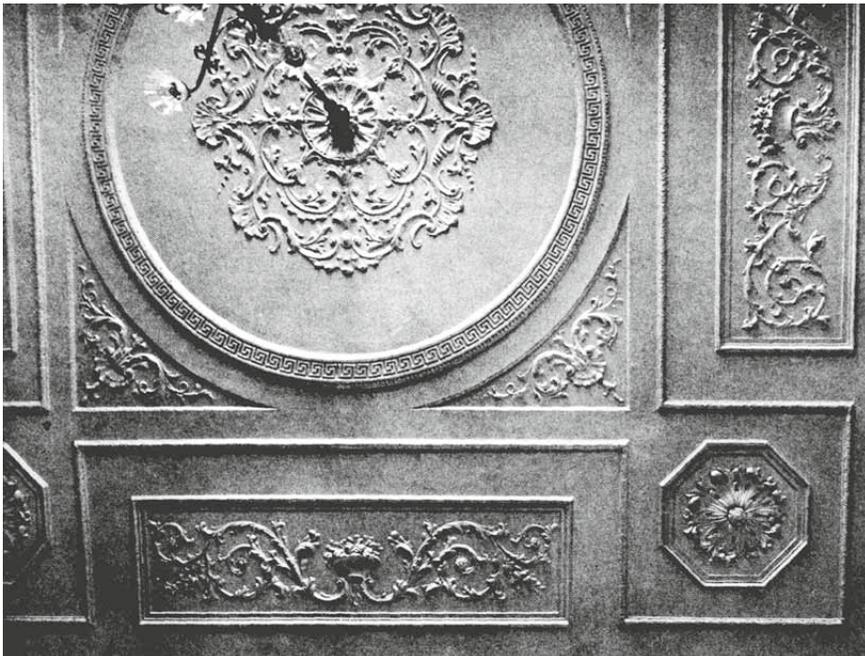


Fig. 16. Dorset House, Blue Room (1754 name), ceiling, detail. (*Survey of London, XVI, pl. 94*)



Fig. 17. Eltham Lodge, SE London (formerly Kent), Ionic screen *in antis* between entrance and stair halls. (R. Garnier)

of the entrance hall at Boconnoc, in Cornwall, the seat of Stanhope's father-in-law, Governor 'Diamond' Pitt, a house whose confusing architectural history has still to be elucidated fully. Boconnoc is clearly something of a palimpsest with subsequent work interposed on pre-existing spaces of earlier character, and the precise date of the screen in the entrance hall there is currently uncertain;<sup>27</sup> its slightly lighter handling, suggesting a somewhat later date than the mid-1750s.

Dorset House, as No. 70 Whitehall was then known, came with no ancillary stabling or coach house, clearly a significant drawback for its prestigious occupants. It is not currently known what arrangements Stanhope had made to secure stabling, but Dorset's solution to the problem in the 1750s onwards has already been published, although its significance had not been realised

until now.<sup>28</sup> A little further south, as part of the reconfiguration of streets immediately north of the Palace of Westminster consequent on the completion of Westminster Bridge in 1749/50, James Mallors, a speculating builder, began the extension westwards of Bridge Street, creating Great George Street, a broad, new street cutting through the pre-existing street pattern as far as Storey's Gate and St James's Park. The northern fringe of this enormous undertaking involved the redevelopment of the previous yard behind the old George coaching inn, fronting onto the west side of King Street, the southern continuation of the old route through Whitehall Palace to Westminster, and so a short walk from Dorset House. To the north behind Mallors's new Great George Street, the former coaching inn yard was redeveloped as stabling for neighbouring householders, and was renamed Blue Boar Yard.

In 1758 the parish rate books record that the Duke took a stable in the new yard, seemingly for one year only, the stable subsequently being shown untenanted until Earl Waldegrave took up residence at Dorset House in 1772.<sup>29</sup> The architectural history of the Mallors development was set out in Volume 12 (2003) of this journal, and the attribution of the design of the whole scheme to Taylor has been widely accepted.<sup>30</sup>

Further circumstantial evidence linking the Duke of Dorset as a patron of Taylor revolves round the Duke's familial connections. In September 1754 – the same year as the three floor plans of Dorset House were drawn up – his younger son, Lord George Sackville (later ennobled as Lord Sackville of Drayton), to whom he was to leave his interest in Dorset House, married Diana Sambrooke. She sprang from a family in which two sisters of the previous generation were respectively the mother and wife of two documented patrons of Taylor, namely John Freeman of Chute Lodge, Wiltshire, and John Gore of Bishopsgate in the City of London.<sup>31</sup> Dorset was also a founding Governor of the Foundling Hospital, where Taylor was one of the 'artists' who gave their services *gratis* in the ornamentation of the hospital buildings.

Four drawings already attributed to Lovett Pearce from the Elton Hall album<sup>32</sup> were recently identified by David Griffin as for Dorset House, but they do not correlate exactly with the extant eighteenth-century rooms. The set comprises a part first floor plan (Fig. 4), orientated with West to the top, and accompanying drawings for three of the spaces within the part plan (Figs. 1, 2, & 3), each again similarly oriented with West to the top. For each the wall elevations are laid out cruciform to a plot of the room. These room drawings are annotated 'A', 'B' and 'C', in bold black ink seriphed Roman capital letters and have their plan dimensions noted cruciform in an assured hand with well-extended, boldly curving upper or lower terminals respectively to the figures 6 and 9, and the figure 4

of diagonally-open form, not closed. The drawing for room A, the Skylight Room in the duke's time, additionally has the heights of the various elements within the elevational treatment (from floor to ceiling bed of the toplight) neatly annotated between dotted lines running off right from the junctions of those elements on the topmost laid-out elevation of the drawing of the wall, namely that with an Ionic screen *in antis*. The part floor plan does not show the current opening into the Blue Room (first recorded in the 1754 plan), allowing the suggestion the Blue Room was part of the addition to the apartment that Dorset had secured by 1729. The part plan bears repeated in the same assured hand both the locational labels A, B, and C and the respective plan dimensions of each room again noted cruciform, and also carries a scale bar at the bottom of the sheet with underslung dimensioning, again with an open-form figure 4, plus the copperplate annotation 'Feet' beyond its right end. The script of neither the initials nor the numerals is in Pearce's manner, nor may be the scale bar on the part plan, its underslung dimensioning seemingly not used by Pearce. All these are here suggested as subsequent annotations by Taylor, added in connection with the subsequent mid-1750s campaign for the Duke of Dorset.

Pearce's scale bars are generally dimensioned *sopra*. An unidentified part plan in the Elton Hall album by Pearce has the room dimensions set cruciform, but in a different way from on the Dorset House set and with numerals again of differing form from those seemingly added to the Dorset House set.<sup>33</sup> However, the exact form of numerals and their exact cruciform layout feature on a plan somewhat later in date (Fig. 18) in the Delapre Abbey estate papers of the Northamptonshire branch of Bouverie family seated there, endorsed on the reverse 'Plan for a New Farm from Mr Rob<sup>t</sup>. Taylor 1769'.<sup>34</sup> Although not previously published as attributable to Taylor, the same numbering script occurs on an outline sketch plan of the staircase space, *c.* early-1760s, at the Townsend family's seat of Honnington Hall,

Warwickshire<sup>35</sup> (Fig. 19), where the adjacent parish church has a monument by Taylor to his putative patron at the house, Joseph Townsend (d.1763). Likewise, an identically styled bold capital letter A in seriated Roman script occurs as late as the early-1770s on Taylor's street elevation drawing for Ely House, Dover Street, in Mayfair, London.<sup>36</sup> The *Survey of London* was remarkably coy about the exact location of the three 1754 plans of Dorset House, which it reproduced only in redrawn facsimile. Nonetheless, the figurework therein appears like an attempt to repeat the same hand as occurs in the arguably later-annotated figurework on the Pearce drawings.<sup>37</sup> The three floor plans of 1754 may therefore be tentatively ascribed to Taylor, but the fact the first floor plan exhibits the canted bay added to the Blue Room would suggest it is truly a working-out, proposal drawing, and not just a record drawing.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately the way the sheets are glued to the leaves of the Elton Hall album prevents discovery of any watermarks, but the laid-grain and slightly brownish-yellow colouration of the paper used for

each seems similar throughout the set; all carry a black-line border. Nonetheless, perhaps two stand apart individually, namely the part plan and that for room 'A', whose line borders appear slighter, being narrower and paler. The drawing for the second of these, that for the Skylight Room, is less sketchy in its delineation of the wall treatment than in those of rooms 'B' and 'C', which might be considered a distinct pair. Having three differing solutions for the articulation of the dado surbase, drawing 'A' at least must be a proposal drawing: that on the elevation with the columned screen having a fielded panel dado, the other three elevations with a running flat face to the surbase panel, and that to the left also with indication of a Vitruvian scroll enrichment to a *flat* dado rail in contrast to the unenriched, but *moulded* rail of the other walls. By contrast, there is nothing immediate to confirm whether drawings 'B' and 'C' are proposals or record drawings, but it might be argued the sketchy nature of the elevations suggests they are record, or survey drawings, a surmise that is backed up by examination of the architectural elements displayed. Besides this the

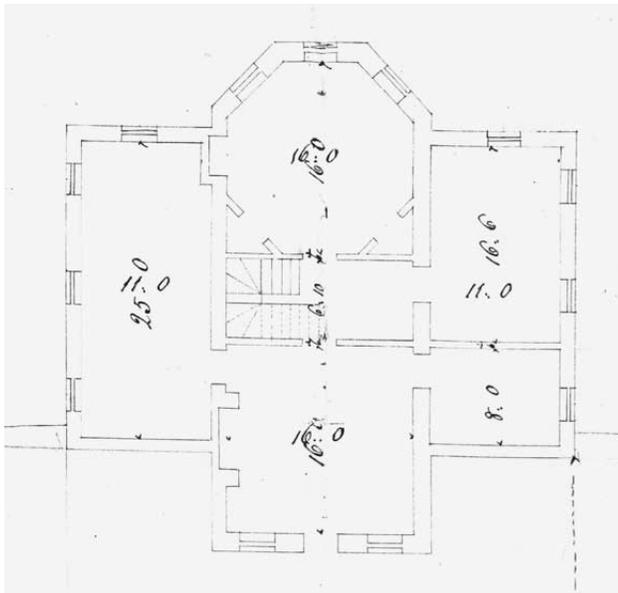


Fig. 18. (Sir) Robert Taylor, proposal plan, details showing figurework, annotated on reverse, 'Plan for new farm from Mr Robert Taylor', c. mid-1760s. (*Northants. County Record Office, B(D)618*)

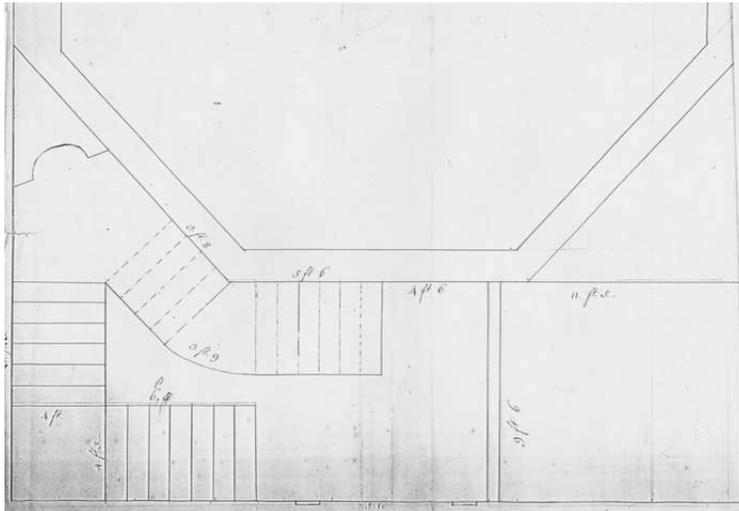


Fig. 19. (Sir) Robert Taylor (here attrib.), Honington Hall [*sic.*], Warks., sketch working-out plan of proposed staircase, c. early 1760s. (*Glos. County Record Office, D1245/FF38/A/1*)

way in which the name of the ‘Gilt Leather Roome’ carries over from Stanhope’s day as late as the 1754 floor plan for Dorset supports the contention that this room, as in room drawing ‘B’, escaped attention in the Duke’s first campaign.

In all three room drawings the architraves to doors, windows and most wall panels are of eared form. In both the putative record drawings for rooms ‘B’ and ‘C’ the articulation of the architraves is in a busier manner than shown in ‘A’. In ‘C’, for the space named the ‘Dineing Roome’ on the 1754 plan and the most elaborately treated room, being larger, the architraves to the doors and window openings have floral drops to their sides, suspended from the eared upper corners and terminating in pronounced volutes seated on the dado rail. The door heads additionally have concave-, or volute-sided decorated tablets or panels with cornices in turn supporting concave-sided, narrower panels or plinths to portrait or idealized busts. The overmantel of the continued chimneypiece has a related, but less ornamented, composition terminating in an urn

fronting a blank panel with rosettes set in the ears of the architrave and indication of (presumably) floral or foliate and shell enrichment above the top rail. The wall panel architraves have heads the same as to the overmantel, whereas their bases have the bottom rail set up slightly from the base of the styles to allow further scrolling ornament set between the bottom rail and the dado rail. In room ‘B’, that marked as the ‘Gilt Leather Roome’ on the 1754 plan, being of smaller plan, the similarly-headed but pedimented door architraves omit the side ornament of those in room ‘C’, but the wall panels, broadly speaking, carry over from the larger room. The angle-chimneypiece similarly carries over from room ‘C’, but omits the surmounting urn in front of the paneled overmantel, whose architrave carries the same side ornamentation as the door and window openings of the former room.

The treatment of room ‘A’, the Skylight Room, is altogether quieter, seemingly simplified compared with the treatment of the other two rooms. The door cases are of the same basic form as in room B, but

omitting the applied decoration to the tablets of the heads, the pediments also omitting the surmounting busts of that other room. The chimneypiece is related but simpler than the other two, omitting both the side ornament as of room 'B' and the urn of that in 'C' to its overmantel panel which is nonetheless still of the same form as the other rooms, as is the large wall panel of the next wall clockwise. There the similarity ends, for besides the Ionic columned screen *in antis*, the remaining two walls have simple rectangular wall panels, fielded and set over either a similarly plain, flat-faced surbase panel (but with the intervening Vitruvian-scroll set dado rail already mentioned), or over a fielded panel dado. The paired rectangular, that is un-eared, shallow niches, reflecting the doors of the opposite wall, stand directly on the Vitruvian scroll enrichment of their dado rail, without an intervening moulding.

A need to open a way through to the newly-acquired Blue Room adjacent may have been the catalyst for the Skylight Room's projected mid-1720s remodeling by Pearce. In the 1754 plan the Blue Room has two more-recent openings from the part of the apartment shown in the Pearce part plan of the mid-1720s which shows no such openings: first the direct route *from* the Skylight Room and secondly *into* the backwater space of the closet to the right of the Ionic screen *in antis*. To follow this argument, that little space would formerly have been accessed from the room known by 1754 as the Drawing Room. Meanwhile the opposing closet in the mid-1750s campaign became a subsidiary way into the Drawing Room, presumably for servants to use.

Concave-sided panels or tablets over doors and chimneypieces, carrying surmounting busts or an urn, can all be seen in the documented work of

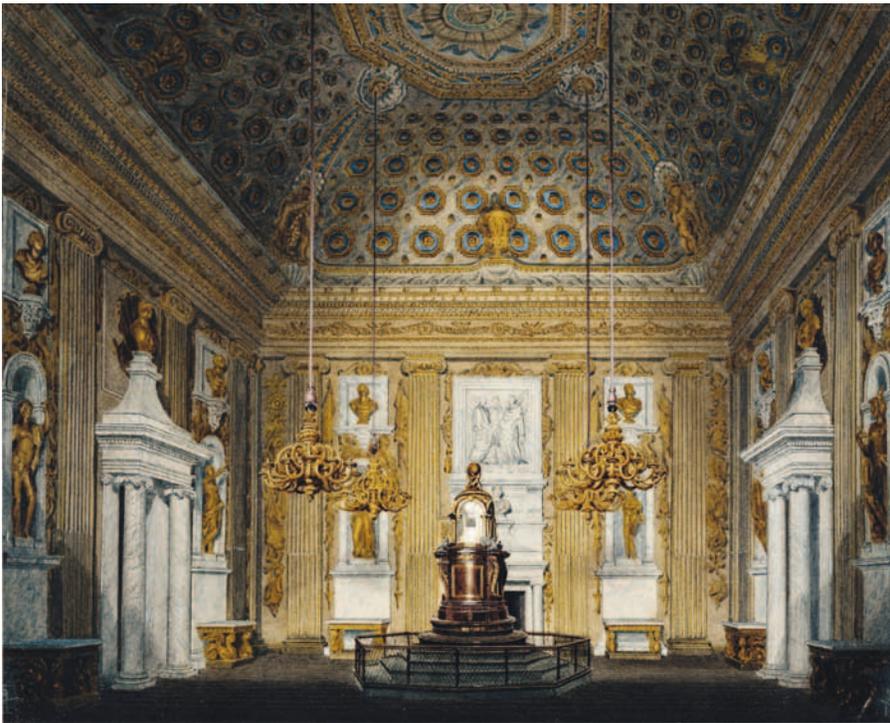


Fig. 20 Pyne, *Royal Residences*, Cupola Room at Kensington Palace, as fitted out by Sir Thomas Hewett.

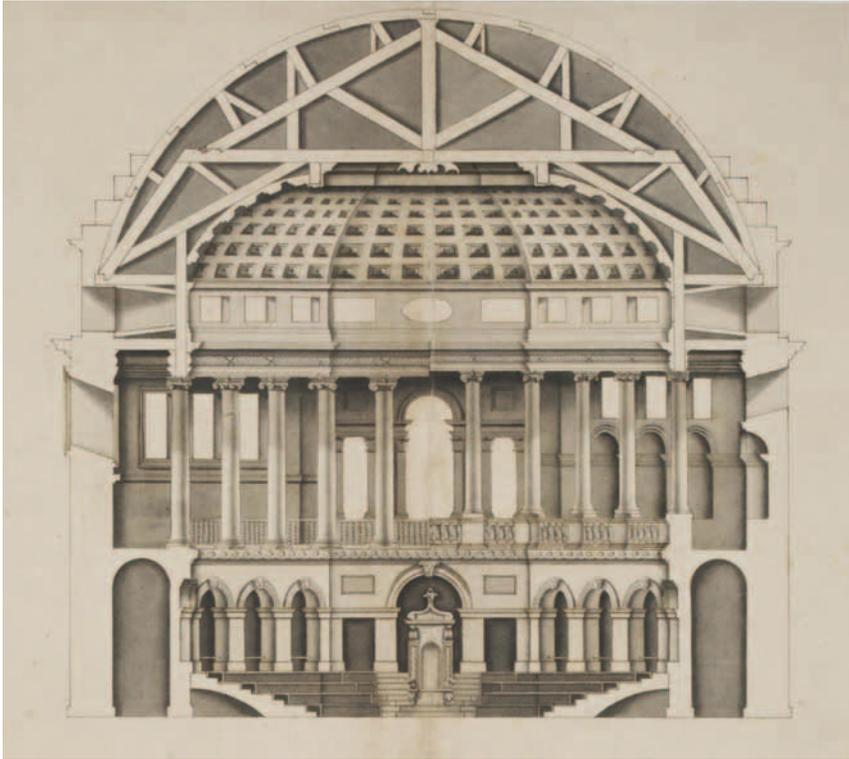


Fig. 21. Richard Castle (attrib.), after Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, Proposal for Richmond Palace, section drawing, detail showing Corinthian screen *in antis* to waiting room. (*V&A, Richmond Palace album, E.2123:6-1992*)

Sir Tomas Hewett, and particularly in the Cupola Room at Kensington Palace, a space cited by Hewlings for comparison with Dorset House. That room has undergone a certain amount of restoration in recent years to return it to its appearance as shown Pyne's *Royal Residences* (Fig. 20), confirming that it was ranged with busts around the upper walls, most on brackets against panels, though those over the doorheads were on plinths with concave fronts and sides, a combination also repeated over the chimneypiece. By contrast, the standing of an architectural member directly on a band of Vitruvian scroll was seen in Pearce's House of Commons chamber in Dublin<sup>39</sup> (Fig. 21). The use of a tetrastyle

columned screen *in antis* (importantly, set *within* the length of the wall, rather than running directly off the flanking side walls), and located in the space leading directly off the principal staircase – so presumably also a waiting room for assembling visitors – was projected by Pearce in the undated proposal drawings for a new palace at Richmond, albeit drafted by Richard Castle, ostensibly to Pearce's design.<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 22) In Dublin it was the colonnade of the upper level of the Commons chamber that stood directly on the band of Vitruvian scroll; the room proposed for Richmond likewise had a coved ceiling as at Dorset House, but the screen itself was to be Corinthian or Composite in contrast to Ionic at the



Fig. 22. Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (attrib.), Proposal for House of Commons Chamber, Irish Houses of Parliament, detail, section drawing of chamber showing alternatives. (*V&A, Elton Hall album, E.2124:1-1992*)

Cockpit lodging. It seems therefore that the drawings for rooms 'C' & 'B' are record drawings of two of the complete suite of rooms in Hewett's scheme for Earl Stanhope, as executed in 1717-18, whereas that for room 'A' represents Pearce's alternative proposals for the Duke of Dorset, executed between the Duke coming into possession of the Cockpit apartment in 1725 and the new lease he was granted in 1729. That it probably dates from the very start of this period is the more likely, as Dorset's acquisition of additional rooms would have required work to link the two previously separately-occupied sets of rooms, as putatively identified above. Meanwhile, the elevational dimensioning noted on drawing 'A' would

make eminent sense in the case of a later architect who needed to relate his proposals for the other three walls against what was being retained, namely the Ionic screen.

Richard Hewlings's recent analysis of Stanhope's apartment cogently argued that Sir Thomas Hewett was the author of the campaign carried out for Earl Stanhope; his account can now be modified and amplified, giving a more detailed and resolved architectural history of the premises in the reigns of George I and II. Tied in with the grants of new Crown leases, three successive schemes by a triplet of knighted Georgian architects can be identified: 1717-18 for Earl Stanhope, by Sir Thomas Hewett;

next sometime in the period 1725–9, a stylistic redaction by Sir Edward Lovett Pearce for the Duke of Dorset; and lastly, in 1754–55, a more thorough stylistic remodeling attributed to Taylor, again for Dorset. The 2014 article on the apartment was an attempt to establish the character of Sir Thomas Hewett’s scheme. It can now be argued that, if not preserved in the hoped-for plastic form of some of the rooms as they stand today, here attributed to Sir Robert Taylor, again for Dorset, the cast of Hewett’s scheme is displayed for posterity within the record drawings ‘B’, and ‘C’ by Pearce, and to a lesser extent in drawing ‘A’. Thus a conflation of the manner demonstrated in the Cupola Room at Kensington Palace and Pearce’s record of the three rooms at Dorset House seems to represent the New Junta’s ‘pure Grecian taste’. And if that surmise is accepted, Pearce’s toning down of that Junta style in the Waiting or Skylight Room for the Duke of Dorset, within five to eight years of the execution of his predecessor’s scheme by Hewett, demonstrates the Duke’s lack of sympathy for the Junta’s particular brand of stylistic didacticism. It is not insignificant that the space that was first altered by the Duke was the first that visitors entered off the staircase and lingered in with time to gaze at the fittings.

With that thought in mind, this redaction can now be seen as a very direct statement by the premier Irish Palladian stylist of a significant architectural shift, placed within a semi-public space within the town residence of a leading statesman. That residence was not only located in the metropolis, but at the heart of Whitehall, the seat of government, effectively part of the interconnected labyrinth comprising the Treasury, its associated offices and the Downing Street base of the Prime Minister. This stylistic shift cannot have gone unnoticed at the time, architecturally analogous to the swift change of government the day after a General Election political upset in modern times. The Skylight Room was after all only just previously, in Stanhope’s occupation, termed the Waiting Room, the space in

which visitors on political or other business were required to wait their audience. To current eyes Hewett’s style is more late-Baroque, and therefore Franco-Italianate, than Grecian in inspiration, whereas Pearce was floating a nascent neo-Palladian style for the Duke of Dorset. Even that later proved insufficient. On the evidence of the 1754 plan, the Duke who had at first in 1725–9 retained Hewett’s ‘Gilt Leather Room’, as delineated in Pearce’s drawing of Room ‘C’, then thirty years later arguably engaged Taylor to recast all the rooms of the apartment in a more thoroughly Palladian fashion, albeit with Rococo touches. In turn what Taylor found at Dorset House proved of influential with him, for he proceeded to re-use elsewhere the motif of an Ionic screen *in antis* he had seemingly first encountered at Dorset House.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Richard Hewlings enthusiastically encouraged my developing ideas on Dorset House in response to his original article of 2014 and has kindly put me in contact with David Griffin who has freely imparted his knowledge of the division of draftsmanship between the Pearce and Castle drawings held at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Nonetheless, the opinions expressed are my own and any errors are mine not theirs. Alan Robson, senior partner of Feilden+Mawson, kindly allowed me to reproduce a photograph.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 *Survey of London* (hereafter *SoL*), XIV (London, 1931), pp. 68–100; R. Hewlings, ‘Lord Stanhope’s Apartment at 70 Whitehall’, *The Georgian Group Journal* (hereafter *GGJ*), 22 (2014), pp. 21–35.
- 2 Originally the site of Henry VIII’s tennis court and cock-fighting pit, and thus known as the Cockpit, this part of Whitehall Palace was pressed

- into increased residential use side-by-side with relocated administrative offices of the government following the fire of 1698 which destroyed the major part of the palace across the roadway (now itself known as Whitehall) formerly put to those uses. The particular location within the Cockpit section of the palace discussed here was subject to a process of ‘occupation creep’. The part originally granted to Stanhope in 1715 was extended in 1719 and enlarged again for the Duke of Dorset in 1729. From this it will be seen that Stanhope’s Apartment was smaller than Dorset House, the latter subsequently being subsumed in the offices of the Privy Council.
- 3 H.M. Colvin and M. Craig, *Architectural Drawings in the Library of Elton Hall by Sir John Vanbrugh and Sir Edward Lovett Pearce* (Roxburghe Club, 1964); H.M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840* (hereafter Colvin, *Dictionary*) (New Haven and London, 2008,) pp. 793–4.
  - 4 E.g: National Archives, Kew (hereafter NA), SP36/31/116, SP63/412/2831, SP63/396/1764, SP63/394/1640, SP63/395/1690.
  - 5 Colvin, *Dictionary*, pp. 793–4.
  - 6 *SoL*, XIII (London, 1930), pl. 77–8.
  - 7 *SoL*, III (London, 1912), pp. 110–18, & pl. 94–6, the three rooms then known as the Peacock Room, Waiting Room and Library.
  - 8 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1027.
  - 9 RCHM (ed: S.D.T. Spittle), *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton*, VI (London, 1984), pp. 222–4.
  - 10 *SoL*, XIII, *cit.*, pl. 73 (top).
  - 11 M. Binney, *Sir Robert Taylor, From Rococo to Neo-Classicism* (London, 1984) (hereafter: Binney, *Taylor*), pl. 30.
  - 12 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1028.
  - 13 Observed and photographed by the author in the mid-1980s; the remainder of the Doric entablature present forms part of the decorative paint scheme executed in 1921 by Philip Tilden for Lionel Brett, Lord Esher (*vide*: N. Pevsner & J. Nairn, *The Buildings of England, Oxfordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 831).
  - 14 M. Girouard, ‘Powderham Castle, II’, *Country Life*, 11 July 1963, p. 80; B. Cherry & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Devon* (London, 1989), p. 694, where the staircase is dated 1754–6.
  - 15 Diary of James Caldwell (1759–1838) of Linley Wood, Talke, Staffordshire, entry for Friday 17th April 1818, ‘At Barlaston, to dinner & staid all night....’ and for Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>, ‘Walked through the Grounds &c. which are very beautiful commanding a very fine feast(?) of Trentham Park, Woods, & Grounds & the surrounding Country. Barlaston is a good House and was built as Mr. Mills informed me from a plan & design of Sr. Rob. Taylor, the father of the present Mr. A. Taylor M.P.’ ([http://www.jjhc.info/caldwelljames1813\\_1821.htm](http://www.jjhc.info/caldwelljames1813_1821.htm); re-accessed 16th Jan 2017). This reference was initially discovered in 2008, just too late to be included in Colvin’s *Dictionary*, final (fourth) edition, of that year.
  - 16 Kew, NA, wills, Prob./11/1051: John Tilson (d.1779); the Equivalent Company (subsequently in 1727 itself the founder of the Royal Bank of Scotland) was set up in 1724 by Royal Charter to administer the £10,000 annual interest payments historically due on the £248,550 worth of debentures issued in ‘equivalent’ compensation for for the share of the English national debt allocated to Scotland in the Act of Union of 1707, plus the losses that ‘privat [*sic.*] persons may sustain by reducing the coin of Scotland to the standard and value of the coin of England. In administering such dividends, the directors of the Equivalent Company performed much the same function as those of the South Sea Company after that organisation’s re-floatation following its disastrous taking on of the English National Debt leading to the South Sea Bubble of 1724.
  - 17 N. Antram & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, East Sussex* (New Haven and London, 2012), p. 338.
  - 18 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1025 (Arno’s Grove), p. 1027 (Chilham mausoleum and Gatton Town Hall), p. 1028 (32 Soho Square); King is commemorated in a wall monument in the south aisle of St Alban’s Abbey, Herts., attributable to either Sir Henry Cheere, or (Sir) Robert Taylor.
  - 19 See note 5, *supra*.
  - 20 Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1026.
  - 21 M. Girouard, ‘Powderham Castle’, *loc. cit.*; G. Beard, *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain* (London, 1975), pp. 207, 212, & 226; G. Beard, *Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England* (London, 1986), *vide* entries on Jenkins, Brown

- and Coney in the alphabetical list of craftsmen. These craftsmen, John Jenkins, William Brown, and Stephen Coney, were London men, suggesting the involvement of a London-based designer.
- 22 *SoL*, XIII, *cit.*, pp. 167–79; S. Brindle, ‘Pembroke House, Whitehall’, *GGJ*, 8 (1998), pp. 88–113. The catalogue of stylistic traits found at Pembroke House matching Taylor’s oeuvre, in addition to the redacted Ionic cornice, concave-sided tops to the dorheads, and lionmasks suspending floral drops, already mentioned, included canted bays to the garden elevations; ogee-undercut steps to the extension of the staircase from first to second floors, contrasting with the square-cut block steps of the lower flights; the arcaded-pilastered wall elevations of the stairhall which compare closely with the photographed treatment of the counting house at Sir George Asgill’s bank at 70 Lombard Street, by Taylor; the plaster wall panels with their concave-indented corners in the first floor anteroom or lobby, which compare with similar ones found at the Great George Street development attributed to Taylor; and the bands of guilloche ornament to the vault of the upper anteroom or lobby on the second floor, so frequently used elsewhere by Taylor early in his architectural career.
- 23 The chimneypiece, by contrast, may survive from an earlier scheme than that of the mid-1750s. It compares closely with the chimneypiece in the Great Room at Marble Hill House, Middlesex, a house built in 1724–9 to the design of the Earl of Pembroke and Roger Morris, but the foliate scrolls in the frieze flanking the central tablet have more of a 1750s’ appearance in comparison with the swags thereat on the Marble Hill chimneypiece. This allows the alternatives that either the Dorset House chimneypiece dates from *c.*1730, if then updated under Taylor in the 1750s, or that the whole is by Taylor in an overtly old-fashioned style.
- 24 R. Garnier, ‘Speculative Housing in 1750s London’, *GGJ*, 12 (2002), pp. 163–214, fig. 8 & 9.
- 25 *SoL*, XIV, *cit.*, pl. 96.
- 26 R. Garnier, ‘Speculative Housing’, *loc. cit.*, pp. 163–4, fig. 30; Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1028.
- 27 P. Beacham & N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Cornwall* (New Haven and London, 2014), pp. 103–6.
- 28 R. Garnier, ‘Speculative Housing’, *loc. cit.*, pp. 163–214, and particularly, lists of residents, p. 186.
- 29 The Duke was noted in the ratebooks for Blue Boar Yard for only one year, either while the conveyancing associated with Mallors’s redevelopment was being finalized, or because the rate collectors then amalgamated the two properties so that the stabling was tied to Dorset House. Taylor has long been known for his role as a *proto* real-estate agent and it would seem that this circumstance should be taken as further evidence of that role. Another local resident, Edmund Keene, Bishop of Chester and then Ely, a repeated patron of Taylor’s, took another of the Blue Boar Yard stables in 1760, while living in Downing Street, having taken up residence in 1758, and similarly disappears from the ratebook entries for the stable yard in 1762, even though he continued living in Downing Street until 1772. See R. Garnier, ‘Speculative Housing’, *loc. cit.*, pp. 176 & 186; R. Garnier, ‘Downing Square in the 1770s and 1780s’, *GGJ*, 9 (1999), pp. 139–57.
- 30 R. Garnier, ‘Speculative Housing’, *loc. cit.*, pp. 163–214; Colvin, *Dictionary*, p. 1028.
- 31 Binney, *Taylor*, p. 347.
- 32 London, V&A Museum, Prints and Drawings Study Room (hereafter V&A), Elton Hall album, E.2124:68–1992 (part plan); E.2124:206–1992 (Room ‘A’); E.2124:142–1992 (Room ‘B’); E.2124:208–1992 (Room ‘C’).
- 33 V&A, *loc. cit.*, E.2124:61–1992.
- 34 Northampton, Woolton Hall Park, Northamptonshire County Record Office, B(D)618.
- 35 Gloucester, Gloucestershire Record Office, D1245/FF38/A/1.
- 36 Cambridge, University Library, EDR/D9/2.
- 37 The location is possibly: NA, Exchequer, Pipe Office, Warrants, Transcripts for Crown Leases, E367/4960 (22 June 1754 – 21 June ’55), or E367/7175 (1755).
- 38 The three floor plans show the canted bay, standing on stilts at ground-floor level, only to the first floor, whereas it exists extending through ground, first, and second floors, seemingly of one build.
- 39 *V&A.*, E.2124:1–1992.
- 40 *V&A.*, Richmond Palace Album, E.2123:4–1992 (plan) and E.2123:6–1992 (section).