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NEO-CLASSICAL DISPLAY IN THE SUBURBS: INVESTIGATING GEORGE BUBB DODINGTON'S PATRONAGE AND TASTE

CLARE HORNSBY

This article examines the circumstances of the rebuilding, interior decoration and development of George Bubb Dodington's Hammersmith villa. In the context of a change of architect and in the light of new archival evidence, examination is made of Dodington's social and patronage networks and his aesthetic aspirations and a hypothesis relating to the commission of capriccio overdoors is re-examined. The change in designer was a pivotal moment; it was emblematic of an eclectic approach to the adoption of classicising architectural styles, as was the commission of a Doric garden pavilion, here confirmed as designed and built by the office of Robert Adam.

'The villa constructed on the margin of our great river and in the vicinage of the metropolis affords a fine opportunity for a display of taste.'

The villa at Hammersmith owned and refurbished by George Bubb Dodington is an unusual architectural refurbishment project in England of the mid 1700s in one particular respect – it included a sculpture gallery designed by a Franco-Italian architect, Giovanni Niccolò Servandoni. He was well-known in contemporary French artistic circles as the winner of the competition to build a new facade for the prestigious church of S. Sulpice in Paris; his innovative and thoroughly classicising solution was



Fig. 1. *View of Brandenburg House from the river*, from J.N. Brewer, *The Beauties of England and Wales: London and Middlesex* (London, 1816), vol 1, pp. 116–7.
(Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London)

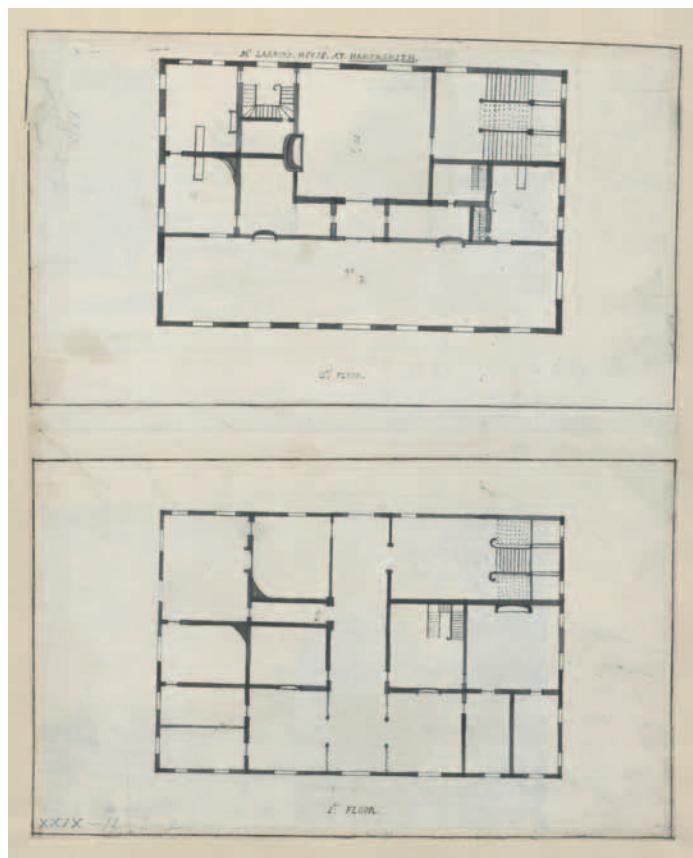


Fig. 2. Plans, in Indian ink, of two of the floors of Mr Lannoy's house at Hammersmith.

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the subject of much discussion amongst academicians and theorists: was it 'Greek' or 'Roman'? More importantly, was it 'French'?² Servandoni was also famous as a set designer for the Paris Opéra and of temporary architecture erected for both public and private festivities.³ How he came to be working in England for a wealthy politician, taking over an existing project from the architect Roger Morris, is one of the themes of this article. The gallery and its antique furnishings were the focus of this author's 1991 article that featured the correspondence between Dodington and Cardinal Albani relating to the selection and acquisition of the sculptures that were

eventually installed.⁴ Here, it is the vicissitudes of the commission for refurbishment and the connections between the patron and his two architects which will be discussed within the broader context of mid eighteenth-century use of the classical model.

New archival evidence will show that the patron was undecided as to how his gallery should be decorated at a late stage in the work, when he was already resident. An examination of Fulham parish rate books and court rolls has assisted in the clarification of the occupation history of the house. This newly revealed dating context enables a reconsideration of a hypothesis regarding the

origin of the commission of a series of Venetian paintings of English buildings: a proposal that their original destination was to have been this gallery and that they were rejected when Servandoni replaced Morris.⁵ This account hopes to show that George Bubb Dodington possessed a more nuanced approach to aesthetics – and awareness of taste – than is usually assumed; a later commission by him of the office of Robert Adam for the design of a fine Doric garden ‘temple’ reveals the breadth of his architectural interests.

Dodington’s money originated in his mother’s family; he was the heir of an uncle from whom he then took his surname and a magnificent country seat in Dorset designed and left unfinished by Vanbrugh. At various stages in a long political career he came to wield, then lose, great influence over Frederick, Prince of Wales, and rose to prominence in the Navy Office, making a few friends but many enemies. Keeping his wealth intact, he was a keen builder in Dorset at Eastbury, in London at Pall Mall and at Hammersmith, and was a member of the Society of Dilettanti and companion in revelry of Sir Francis Dashwood and Paul Whitehead at the Hell Fire Club. He is generally presented in a negative light, as a self-serving political placeman, an overweight vulgarian and social climber, some if not all of which was true. After spending his early adulthood abroad on the Grand Tour and on a prestigious diplomatic posting to Spain, he became an MP and gained the control of several Dorset seats in the Commons; he was ever eager for a peerage, which desire was fulfilled only a year before his death in 1762 at the age of 71.⁶ Despite the negative aspects of his character and habits, he was well-travelled, well-educated and as cultured and ambitious in matters of taste as he was in politics. The Hammersmith villa is not only a revelatory commission in itself, the gallery being a bold exercise in lavish Roman décor set within a standard English Neo-Palladian building refurbishment, but it is also important in that it reveals the patron’s extensive and

pan-European connections – political alliances and social bonds formed throughout his career at home and abroad.⁷

The house, which was given different names at various times, is now no longer extant.⁸ As ‘The Great House’, it was originally built for the wealthy merchant – and slaver – and loyal supporter of Charles I, Sir Nicholas Crispe, in the first years of the new reign c.1626.⁹ In 1705 it is described thus:¹⁰ ‘The building is very lofty, regular, and magnificent, after the modern manner, built with brick, cornered with stone, and has a handsome cupola at the top. It contains several large handsome rooms, very spacious, and finely finished.’ No view of the house at this period exists, but we have a ground and first floor plan, mentioned by John Harris (Fig. 2),¹¹ it has been the object of some attention over the years, principally in volumes of descriptions of the environs of London.¹² Dodington, whose occupancy will be examined in detail below, later gave it the ironic name of ‘La Trappe’ – a reference to the silent order of monks, so unlike his spirited and gossipy guests. After his death it became famous as the residence of Elizabeth Berkeley, Lady Craven, widow of the sixth Earl who had built Craven Cottage, a nearby riverside retreat, in 1780.¹³ She had married her lover to become the Margravine of Anspach; at this point the name of the house was changed to the nobler ‘Brandenburgh House’. Alterations and additions were made by its lady owner, who was both glamorous and infamous, painted by Reynolds and Romney amongst others, and entertained there in style until she departed for Naples in 1806.¹⁴ Subsequently Queen Caroline, the separated wife of King George IV, lived at the house. It was situated in the gardens and orchards by the Thames on the Middlesex side, just south of the brook marking the boundary between Fulham and Hammersmith (Fig. 3).¹⁵ Its river front faced due west and the gallery was on the opposite, eastern side.

The history of the site and the house is complex, but here only the early eighteenth-century ownership



Fig. 3. *An Exact Survey of the citys of London Westminster ye Borough of Southwark and the Country near ten miles round*, J. Rocque 1746 (detail). (Wikimedia commons)

is examined, since it is material to the discussion regarding the dating of Dodington's first residence and the architectural refurbishment he undertook. In the early years of the century it was owned by Sir Timothy Lannoy, a merchant, and was inherited by his son James who died in 1723.¹⁶ James had married Jane, daughter of Thomas Frederick, a wealthy resident of Downing Street.¹⁷ Jane had charge of the Hammersmith estate after her remarriage to the Duke of Atholl in 1726,¹⁸ but she was anxious to sell the property, which had been left in trust in James Lannoy's will to their only child Leonora; she petitioned the House of Lords to change the trust to enable it to be sold.¹⁹ The Atholls used the house, as well as a London residence, but by 1741, as noted in the parish rate books, it was empty;²⁰ the couple then separated and the Duke went to Scotland with the army.²¹ Combining the rate book evidence with details from court documents, some clarity emerges. The petition by the Duchess to the House of Lords was in 1736 and the hearing in November 1742, when

her daughter Leonora had come of age.²² The Lord Chancellor gave his written opinion then that the house should be sold; it was already empty, as we have seen, and remained so until early 1748; the rate books and court roll then show Dodington as the resident.²³

The fact that it was habitable by that time implies that the principal part of the work at the house was already completed.²⁴

DODINGTON'S ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS AND FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES

Early in the 1730s Dodington established a connection with Roger Morris, the pupil of Colen Campbell and collaborator of the 'Architect Earl' of Pembroke. Morris was given the commission to design the Dodington town house in Pall Mall in 1731–2.²⁵ This coincided with the purchase and then refurbishment of neighbouring Carlton House by the Prince of Wales; Dodington lent Frederick £5000 towards the cost of buying it from Lord Burlington.²⁶ Both Frederick and Dodington had good reason to foster their mutual connection; the former needed money, the latter acted in the hope of future influence. Morris was Dodington's chosen man; after both the architect and patron had returned from a tour in Italy in 1732–3, possibly together,²⁷ he completed interiors for Dodington's Dorset country seat, Eastbury Park, which had been left unfinished by Vanbrugh. It is therefore natural that Dodington should turn to Morris for a villa design when the time was right.

It is likely that his interest in acquiring another property dated from December 1744, when he gained the lucrative and prestigious post of Treasurer of the Navy and had money to spend on building and refurbishment.²⁸ Creating a stylish suburban villa was part of his networking strategy: to live in an aristocratic manner in the countryside yet conveniently close to Westminster, surrounded by the houses of royalty and nobility, vigorously

pursuing social interactions with a varied and international circle while pushing hard for a peerage.²⁹ His urgent drive for preferment and the complexity of factional politics strained his relations with the Prince, but he was aware of the need to 'play both sides' in case of an early accession by Frederick – there was a *rapprochement* at the time of the work at Hammersmith. Frederick was often at Kew, in a house designed by Kent, and Dodington visited him there.³⁰ By 1750, the *quid pro quo* between the two was art, more specifically the services of Servandoni, then working for Dodington.³¹ Francis Vivian is in no doubt that Frederick wanted for Kew what Dodington was building at Hammersmith – a sculpture gallery: 'Frederick was anxious to retain his [Servandoni's] services at this time. The best way, clearly, was through Dodington.'³² As Dodington diary's recounts, the years 1749–51 were full of planning for the presumed-to-be imminent accession to the throne, and he was brokering deals for future employment for himself and his friends, including his close associates Sir Francis Dashwood and Henry Furnese, who were to be found often at his houses, both in London and the country.³³ The hopes of many were dashed by Prince Frederick's sudden death in 1751.

Roger Morris made designs for the refurbishment for the house at Hammersmith, aiming for the effect of Palladian symmetry he had created earlier in his career, for example in designing Marble Hill at Twickenham.³⁴ The Morris interventions for Dodington resulted in a major reworking and regularisation of the Jacobean brick house, changing it into a neo-Palladian villa (compare figs. 2 and 4). The exteriors were stuccoed and the interior disposition of rooms on both floors was altered. He inserted two staircases and placed them in the centre of the house and articulated the ground floor spaces with columned screens; on the first floor he laid out a salon facing the river. The existing gallery on the opposite side of the house was also amplified and reordered more symmetrically.

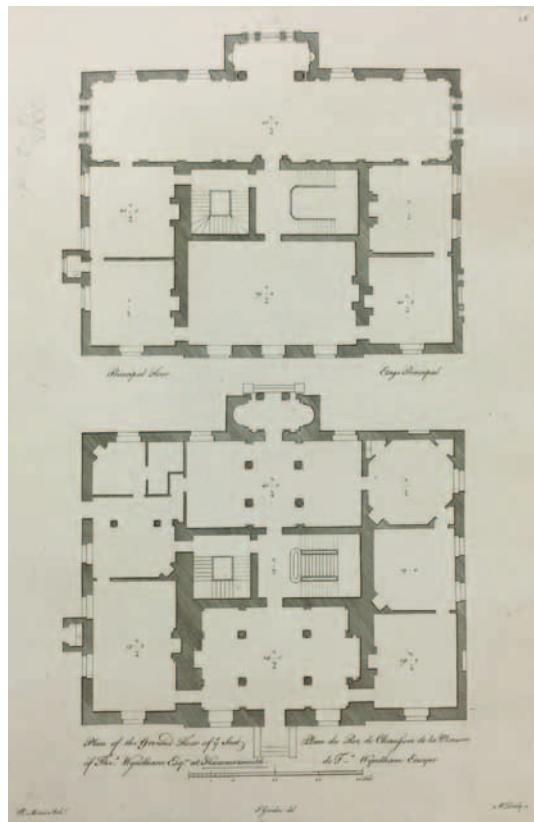


Fig. 4. Plan of ground and first floor at La Trappe,
Vitruvius Britannicus vol IV pl. 26.

That Servandoni then took over as architect at La Trappe is clearly attested by the attribution of the interior elevation of the east wall of the gallery, published in *Vitruvius Britannicus*.³⁵ The plans and elevation of the river façade were given to Morris, whose role was almost certainly reduced during 1748 since he died in January of the next year.³⁶

A connection made with Morris during his first London period may have helped to bring Servandoni to the project. As young men – they were exact contemporaries, born in 1695 – Servandoni and Morris worked at neighbouring houses in Old Burlington Street in 1722–3 and would have come into contact there.³⁷ Dodington no doubt was aware that,

with Servandoni as the new architect at his villa, he would have an artist whose extravagant Italianate style chimed well with his personal tastes, so he secured his services. Servandoni proposed antique statues and supplied large French mirrors for the gallery, thereby changing the artistic direction of the interior towards Roman marble magnificence and away from the restrained English version of Palladianism.³⁸ As Dodington wrote to Cardinal Albani in May 1750:³⁹ ‘J’ay aupres de moy un Nommé Servandoni qui s’est assez fait connaitre en de la des Monts, comme Architecte qui me paroit, dans la Stérilité des Sciences où nous vivons, d’avoir du Genie. Il établit ma Galerie.’ Dodington’s comment on the sterile state of affairs in the ‘sciences’ in England (in the French meaning, including the arts and architecture) here echoes the opinions of the French critic Abbé Le Blanc whose visit to England in the late 1740s led to the publication of a famous epistolary tirade against the state of the arts in England as compared to France.⁴⁰ He wrote:

‘You are acquainted with the Vitruvius Britannicus don’t you think the author of that work has had all the remarkable buildings in England designed and engraved on purpose to show us that architecture is a science which is not yet naturalised here? It is one of those that depend on taste and therefore may be still a long time foreign in this island.’

The sculptures for the gallery have already been studied,⁴¹ but that was not the only interior lavishly decorated for Dodington. The salon on the river front was the setting for a chimneypiece whose design was clearly prompted by the proximity of the Thames: ‘The state drawing-room ... is 38 feet by 23, and 30 feet in height ... the ceiling of this room was painted for Lord Melcombe [Dodington], by whom also the very costly chimney-piece, representing (in white marble) the marriage of the Thames and Isis, was put up.’⁴² There was another chimneypiece for the bedroom suite made in marble imitating icicles.⁴³ Other decorative details are often mentioned whenever Dodington is discussed, in

order to ridicule him; they need not be repeated – suffice it to say he spared no expense to glamourise the decor. But before addressing the hypothesis relating to the original interior design, the complex social and patronage context around Dodington connecting his architects, his neighbours and his friends abroad needs to be explored.

CHARLES FREDERICK AND THE GREEN PARK FIREWORKS PROJECT

The former Crispe/Lannoy estate was extensive, and on part of it, to the south of the original ‘Great House’, was another house owned by a member of the Frederick family: Charles, later Sir Charles, a nephew of Jane, Duchess of Atholl mentioned above. He was a noted antiquary and officer of the Board of the Ordnance.⁴⁴ It is very likely that Dodington knew this distinguished and wealthy family, either before or after the work began at La Trappe – Charles Frederick had been in Rome at the same time as Dodington’s close friend Sir Francis Dashwood.⁴⁵ Frederick had sat to the painter Andrea Casali in Rome in 1738, and was one of those who encouraged him to come to live and work in London.⁴⁶ Ten years later, as part of his role at the Board of Ordnance, Charles Frederick organised the fireworks display for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. This was formally signed in October 1748 and the design of the structure was soon settled; construction began on 7 November 1748.⁴⁷ Frederick’s protégé Casali had an important role as one of the four artists working on the huge ‘Machine’ built in Green Park, designed by Servandoni who had recently arrived in England.⁴⁸ The other artists employed were Andrea Soldi and Andien de Clermont.⁴⁹ In addition, the Master Carpenter of the Ordnance since 1734, who would have been responsible for the design of the framework of the building, was none other than Roger Morris.⁵⁰ So, as well as working for Dodington, both Morris and Servandoni had roles

in the fireworks design; we can now see a web of connections forming – the arrival of Servandoni in February 1747 was a catalyst for several projects.

Servandoni's second English period is better documented than his first in the 1720s. He arrived in London at a time in his career when his position in Paris was no longer secure. He had been replaced as *Premier Peintre Décorateur* at the Opéra by François Boucher, while in architecture his major work, the facade of the church of S. Sulpice, paused after the completion of the first two levels in June 1745. He was looking elsewhere for commissions and so travelled to Lisbon.⁵¹ There he made contact with the wealthy group of traders, the English Factory, who commissioned him to design a temporary festival hall in celebration of the victory at Culloden in 1745.⁵² This prestigious British commission led him to London where he was employed as set designer at Covent Garden Theatre, then flourishing under the management of John Rich.⁵³ Servandoni's fame as designer in Paris would have preceded him to London, thanks particularly to the account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the Lisbon *fête*. These circumstances led to his employment for the fireworks design by Frederick and may also explain how he was chosen as architect by the latter's Hammersmith neighbour Dodington. Thanks to some recently discovered letters, more evidence can be added that dates Dodington's occupation of the villa and reveals his indecision regarding the way to finish the gallery; exactly the situation that would pertain when a new designer joined an ongoing project. The departure of Morris and arrival of Servandoni was the stimulus for the replacement of any pre-existing interior plan; the possibility of that plan including the incorporation of overdoor paintings into the gallery will be discussed below.

Dodington, having been envoy in Madrid and well-travelled in Italy, had a wide international correspondence. One of his regular correspondents was the Florentine Marchese Abbate Antonio Niccolini (1701–1769)⁵⁴; Dodington probably first

met Niccolini during his stay in Florence in 1732.⁵⁵ The Marchese then came to England and spent nearly two years here, apparently in exile from the Court, between 1746 and the end of June 1748; he then returned to Florence. While in London, he kept company with the Whig opposition to the King – notably Dodington – and his circle also included some individuals already mentioned: Lord Pembroke and Charles Frederick. In June 1747, Walpole wrote to Mann: 'Niccolini, who is next to [the duchess of Queensbury] in absurdity and importance, is gone electioneering with Dodington'.⁵⁶ In the Archivio Niccolini in Florence there are many letters from Dodington dating from Niccolini's return to Italy. Mostly on the subject of politics, both British and Continental, some references are made in these letters to domestic and artistic matters.

Crucial for the dating of works at the house in Hammersmith is a letter written on 22 May 1748 which Dodington concludes by saying: 'N'oubliez pas la galerie et si le hasard vous présente quelque Moyen de l'achever et de l'embellir a des conditions qui soient de ma portée'.⁵⁷ That he talks here about 'finishing and embellishment', already in May 1748, suggests that the structure of the gallery is complete and it lacks only its decoration. In another letter, from March 1749 (N.S.) Dodington writes to Niccolini from Hammersmith itself, offering him accommodation in his villa should he need to return to London in the near future: 'Vous trouverez à Hammersmith & à Eastbury, vous et Votre Domestiques, un Appartement propre & commode au moins pour trois Quarts de l'Année'.⁵⁸ Offering to host the Marchese and his entourage for an extended period means that Dodington was certainly settled in at the villa by this date.

By mid 1748, the date of the first of these letters, Servandoni had been in London for over a year; he and Dodington had met by then – perhaps through Morris, Charles Frederick or indeed via Niccolini, recently in England and, like Servandoni, a Florentine by birth. No doubt the architect



Fig. 5. Antonio Visentini and Francesco Zuccarelli, *View of the Pavilion or Bagnio at Eastbury*, 1746.
(Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2017)

suggested to Dodington ways in which the gallery could be made more dramatic, more ‘Roman’, the development of the patron’s taste matching his high ambitions and deep pockets. The reference in this letter to the gallery marks the point at which, under Servandoni’s influence, Dodington was ready to fully embrace Roman taste. As noted by Walpole in letters exchanged with Horace Mann in Florence, the magnificent inlaid marble floor ordered at this time, designed in England – it is likely that Servandoni was responsible⁵⁹ – was manufactured in Florence and took a long time to complete.⁶⁰ Mann commented to Dodington: ‘The fame of your pavement since it has been publicly seen has been spread in these parts ... all agree that ... it excels that of the Barberini [sic] Palace at Rome.’⁶¹ In addition, the accent of the gallery became even more aspirationally classical once the antique marble statues acquired after 1750 via Cardinal Albani were added to the overall concept.

THE CASE FOR A DODINGTON COMMISSION FOR THE VISENTINI PAINTINGS

The evidence presented here leads to the conclusion that the newly-refurbished house was occupied earlier than previously assumed by scholars, including Harris;⁶² crucially this implies that the planning between patron and architect must also have taken place earlier. Harris suggested that Dodington’s original idea had been to include eleven overdoors showing English Neo-Palladian buildings into an interior decorative scheme, highly appropriate for the style that Morris followed in the design of the exterior.⁶³ The paintings, in which the architecture is painted by Venetian *veduta* artist Antonio Visentini, with backgrounds and *staffage* by Francesco Zuccarelli, are an array of notable English buildings, including Burlington House, Stourhead and Somerset House;⁶⁴ these Palladian and classically-inspired buildings are



Fig. 6. Antonio Visentini and Francesco Zuccarelli, *Landscape with a Triumphal Arch to George II*, 1746.
(Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2017)

shown situated in imaginary Italian rural settings, a visual disjunct common in the genre of *capriccio* view paintings. Harris proposed that the pictures, although painted in Venice, may not in fact have been destined for Consul Smith for one of his homes (the villa at Mogliano or the palazzo in Venice)⁶⁵ but were a commission by Dodington, stimulated by his association with Roger Morris during their Grand Tour travels to Italy in the early 1730s.⁶⁶ As decorative view paintings they would work particularly well for a residence in a countryside location, as Hammersmith was at the time.

Harris's argument for the Dodington connection is based around the presence of a group of drawings and prints at the back of a volume of architectural drawings at Windsor by Visentini.⁶⁷ They include drawings by Roger Morris: the Bridge at Wilton, Eastbury and one of a triumphal arch for the park there; also included is a copy of Vertue's print of the

1749 fireworks display designed by Servandoni. Harris references the scholarship of Anthony Blunt amongst others who had already connected the Windsor drawings to the overdoors, and traces the connection between Roger Morris and Dodington in the 1730s.⁶⁸ He notes that even though most of the pictures are of buildings included in *Vitruvius Britannicus* and are painted based on the plates, for two of them the highly unusual subject-matter is only really appropriate if the series were to have been a Dodington commission; the *View of the Pavilion or Bagnio at Eastbury* (Fig. 5) and the *Landscape with a Triumphal Arch to George II* (Fig. 6) make full sense only in this context.⁶⁹ In his discussion, Harris argued persuasively for the connection between Morris and Dodington and importance of the drawings the architect made for Eastbury while in Italy, particularly those including the triumphal arch (Fig. 7).⁷⁰ In the end, he ruled out the drawings as providing a definitive answer to the

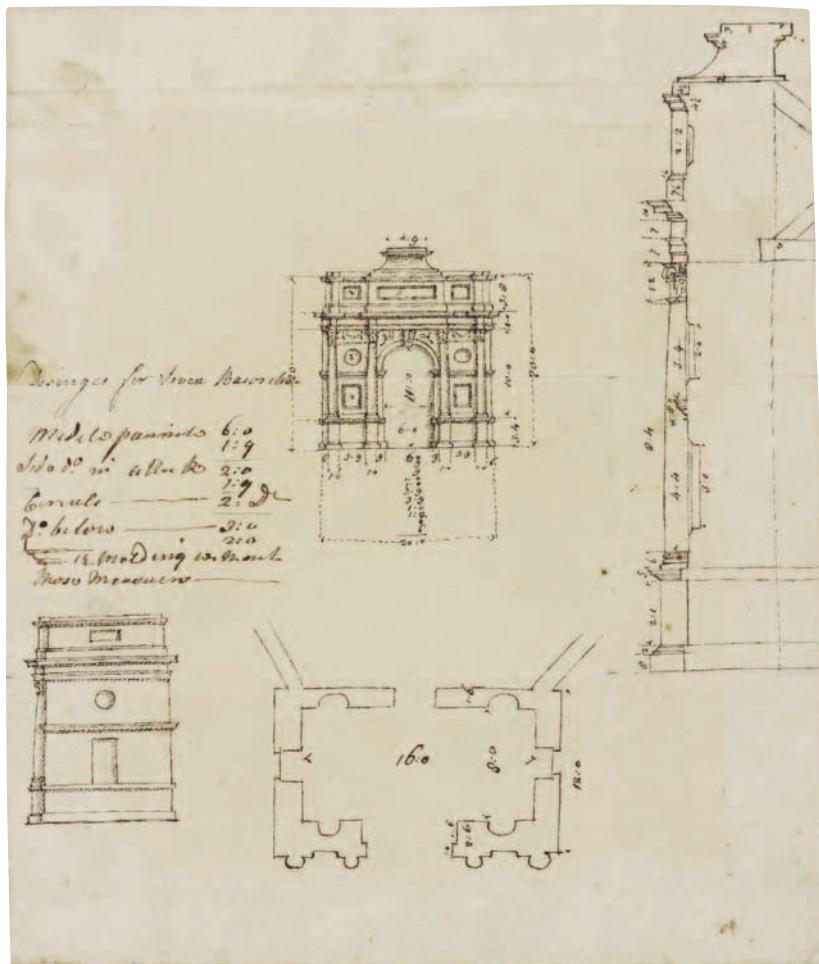


Fig. 7 Triumphal arch for Eastbury, Roger Morris, Visentini volume 187, 10570.
(Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2017)

conundrum of the paintings' original commission, since the presumed date of Dodington's arrival at the villa – 1749 – is not compatible with the 1746 date that appears, along with the signature, on several of the paintings.⁷¹ However, taking into consideration the fact that the house was built, if not completely fitted out, by early 1748 (meaning that the first plans for the refurbishment must have been made at least a year earlier) it is in fact quite possible that the Visentinis

had been originally intended to decorate the gallery at Hammersmith but were set aside when the patron changed his mind, consequent to the change of architect; hence they remained with Consul Smith in Venice.⁷²

Whilst acknowledging the weight of scholarship that points to the commission of these paintings by Smith (principally based on his earlier commission of Canaletto to paint a set of thirteen overdoors

Fig. 8. Plan of first floor at La Trappe, *Vitruvius Britannicus* vol IV pl. 26. (author's photograph and annotations)

Central
1 Triumphal arch
2 Wilton Bridge
3 Pavilion at Whitehall [?]

Right side
4 Mereworth
6 General Wade's house
8 Stourhead bagnio and Chiswick temple
10 Lindsay House

Left side
5 Burlington House
7 Banqueting House
9 Bagnio at Eastbury
11 Old Somerset House

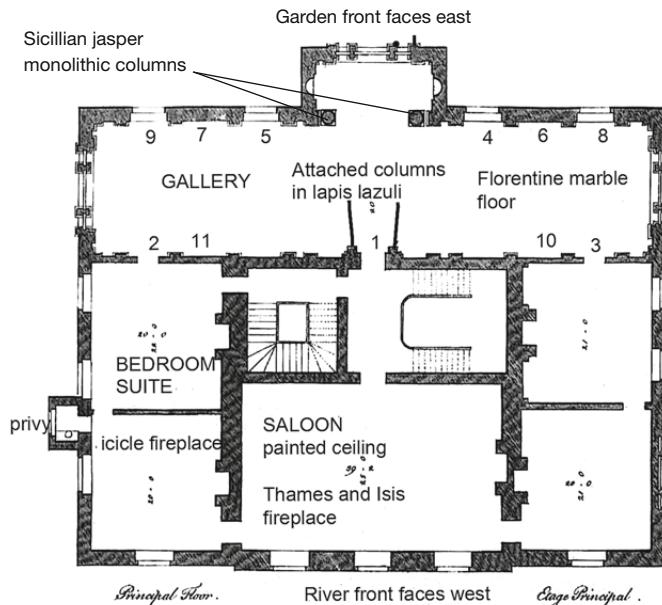


Fig. 9. Elevation of gallery at La Trappe highlighting the panels; *Vitruvius Britannicus* vol. IV pl. 28-9. (author's photograph and annotations)

depicting – mainly but not exclusively – Venetian buildings by Palladio,⁷³ it is nevertheless worth exploring how the English set might have worked in the decoration of the Hammersmith gallery.⁷⁴ The published plan and elevation (Figs. 8 and 9) can be used to sketch a hypothesis for the arrangement of the paintings; this is elaborated in the Appendix. Irrespective of the origin of the commission, these intriguing landscapes can be viewed as an intellectual

exercise in promotion of the Neo-Palladian reform of architecture in England, or as a celebration of its fruits. In the latter case, the pictures would have functioned as *bella figura* pieces for Dodington: the fame of some of the best recent English buildings reflecting their glory on him. In the time-honoured tradition of emulating canonical examples they would have added lustre, affirmed his own taste, and acted as a homage to the memory of his Italian travels.



Fig. 10. Possibly Agostino Brunias, *Design for finishing the Door Side of a Circular Room For the Honble The Lord Melcombe In his Lordships Garden near Hammersmith, 1762*, SM Adam volume 19/125. (© Sir John Soane's Museum, London 2017)

GEORGE BUBB DODINGTON – AN ECLECTIC NEO-CLASSICIST?

The evidence for a Dodington origin for the commission of the overdoors remains circumstantial, despite the newly discovered sources on dating; the case has been re-examined here to point out what the 1748 interior design revolution may have involved. That there was a significant development in taste is clear; Dodington became attracted by a more full-bodied and authentic continental classicism than that offered by the typically diluted English Neo-Palladianism.

Bearing witness to even further diversity in his architectural taste is the suite of nine drawings for a garden pavilion drawn by the office of Robert Adam in 1762.⁷⁵ We know that there were extensive gardens laid out at La Trappe; apart from the area near the house, further parcels of land – associated with, but separate from, the property – are referenced, the title of which came to Dodington in June 1748. The gardens also feature in the advertisement for the Christie's sale of the estate after the death of Thomas Wyndham, Dodington's heir.⁷⁶ These drawings, probably in the hand of Adam office draughtsman

Agostino Brunias, are for a circular Doric temple-pavilion with a rectangular portico; its precise location in the gardens is not known. There are two ceiling designs, three elevations of the room, one with chimney piece and one with door case, and a portico ceiling (Fig. 10). A comparison between these designs and that of the ceiling of the gallery as shown in *Vitruvius Britannicus* reveals no echoing of specific stylistic features from the villa to the pavilion; the patron was not looking to the Adam office to produce a design in harmony with the work done fifteen years previously by Morris or by Servandoni, but rather to build something rich and fine in the ‘house style’.⁷⁷ These drawings reveal that Dodington followed fashion in architecture well after the house was rebuilt and its interior decorated. At La Trappe his taste embraced a wide range of Neoclassical design – from the demure Neo-Palladian, through the bold Roman to the educated, elegant classicism that was the hallmark of the Adam office.

George Bubb Dodington’s patronage at Hammersmith exemplifies a type of aspirational display associated with the rising *nouveaux-riches* breaking into the established political and social elite, a rise aided by money and connections made abroad, primarily on the tour in Italy. Although Dodington was no ‘architect-nobleman’ like Lords Burlington or Pembroke – he was not a true aristocrat and not an innovator, nor even a connoisseur – certainly and self-consciously he aimed to acquire and display ‘Taste’, using both objects and architecture to this end.⁷⁸ The breadth and range of his classicising leanings as expressed in his architectural commissioning is notable and reveals that eighteenth-century taste cannot be pigeonholed by outdated stylistic boundaries, an argument so ably put by the late Giles Worsley.⁷⁹ Dodington’s commissioning can be seen as a snapshot of the way that changing tastes in design, developed via interconnecting social and political networks, affected existing architectural projects.

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APPENDIX – HYPOTHESIS FOR THE

ARRANGEMENT OF THE VISENTINI PICTURES

We can assume the existence of overdoor wall panels – onto which the pictures could have been hung – opposite the panels below the frieze, as shown on the interior elevation in *Vitruvius Britannicus*. Based on the scale, these panels would measure approx. 60 in. wide and 24 in. high, that is, 155 × 60 cm. This is slightly larger than the paintings which are mostly c.130 × 80 cm. The measurements cannot be exact; nevertheless they are close and the overall layout tallies with the three distinct types of composition found within the set: central, right and left hand arrangement.

The doors into the two flanking rooms and onto the central hall would have suited the centrally planned images: the ‘Triumphal arch’ (no. 1) is fitting for the main entrance leading from the gallery through the hall to the salon, with the image of King George II on horseback perched on the arch, dominating the room; with ‘Wilton bridge’ (no. 2) also a centrally planned composition and perhaps ‘Whitehall pavilion’ (no. 3) above the side doors. The composition of the latter picture is not verifiable as it is lost.⁸⁰

The positioning of the buildings depicted in the remainder of the paintings – half of them have the buildings on the right, the other half on the left – makes sense visually when arranged as in the annotated plans (Figs. 8 and 9); since the gallery faced due east, the shadows cast across the buildings

also fit. In addition, there are clear pairings between the pictures, suggested by Munz.⁸¹ The plan here includes other interior design features mentioned in the accounts of the house.

Right hand side:

- no. 4. Mereworth
- no. 6. General Wade's house
- no. 8. Stourhead *bagnio*
- no. 10. Lindsay House

Left hand side:

- no. 5. Burlington House
- no. 7. Banqueting House
- no. 9. *Bagnio* at Eastbury
- no. 11. Old Somerset House

ENDNOTES

- 1 From J. Norris Brewer, *London and Middlesex* (London 1816), vol. 1, p. 115.
- 2 Summarised in R. Middleton, 'The Abbé de Cordemoy and the Graeco-Gothic Ideal: A Prelude to Romantic Classicism', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 25, nos. 3/4 (July – December 1962) p. 280–283.
- 3 F. Guidoboni, 'Giovanni Niccolò Servandoni (1695–1766) architetto' (PhD dissertation, Sapienza Università di Roma/Université Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne 2014), esp. vol. 1 pp. 392–5 for career chronology.
- 4 See C. Hornsby, 'The Life and Work of Giovanni Niccolò Servandoni (1695–1766)', (PhD dissertation, University of Bristol, 1989) and 'Antiquarian Extravagance in Hammersmith: The Sculpture Gallery of George "Bubb" Dodington', *Apollo*, 134, no. 358 (December 1991), pp. 410–414.
- 5 J. Harris, 'An English Neo-Palladian Episode and Its Connections with Visentini in Venice', *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), pp. 231–240.
- 6 The usual suspect in eighteenth-century character assassinations can be held partly responsible for the thoroughly negative view: see H. Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II* edited by Lord Holland, (London 1819), vol. 1, Appendix p. 438. For a summary of his life and career see L. Sanders, *Patron and place-hunter: a study of George Bubb Dodington, lord Melcombe*, (London 1919), and A. Hanham, 'Dodington, George Bubb, Baron Melcombe (1690/91–1762)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004; online edn, May 2009). [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/7752>, accessed 24 Oct 2016].
- 7 For a balanced summary of Dodington's character see F. Vivian, *A life of Frederick, Prince of Wales, 1707–1751 – a connoisseur of the arts* (Lewiston New York 2006), p. 216.
- 8 One of the most thorough summaries of the history of the site was made for the developer St George which recently built a large multi-use block there, Fulham Reach, see: Fulham_hammersmith_riverside_a1_cpw_complete_set_first_10_s.pdf [accessed 16 October 2017].
- 9 Sanders *op. cit.*, n. 6, p. 162; E. Walford, 'Hammersmith', in *Old and New London* vol. 6 (London, 1878) in British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol6/pp529–548> [accessed 14 October 2016].
- 10 J. Bowack, *Antiquities of Middlesex*, part 2, (London 1705), p. 35.
- 11 Harris *op. cit.*, n. 5; 'Mr Lannoy's House' pre-1748, British Library, Ktop XXIX 12–2-g; the plans are oriented with the river front at the top, the long gallery on the first floor (here called '2nd floor') is on the opposite side.
- 12 Walford, Brewer and Bowack *op. cit.*; D. Lysons, 'Fulham', in *The Environs of London: Volume 2, County of Middlesex* (London, 1795) in British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-environs/vol2/pp344–424> [accessed 19 October 2016]; T. Faulkner, *An historical and topographical account of Fulham: including the hamlet of Hammersmith*, (London 1813), pp. 278–9, C. J. Féret, *Old and New Fulham*, (London 1900) vol. 3, ch. 7, and, more recently, A. MacNaghten, 'A vanished Thames-side mansion, Brandenburg House, Hammersmith', *Country Life* (Nov. 6 1969) pp. 1195–1198.
- 13 Elizabeth would have been familiar with La Trappe from staying at the neighbouring Cottage during her marriage. See *Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group Newsletter*

- (Spring 2002) p. 5, online: <http://www.hfhbg.org.uk/newsletters/Newsletter-07-Spr-02.pdf> [accessed June 2 2017].
- 14 K. Turner, 'Elizabeth, margravine of Brandenburg (1750–1828)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004; online edn., May 2010) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/article/576> [accessed 12 June 2017].
- 15 It is here referred to as being in Hammersmith, following modern usage. The family tombs of owners of the site are in Fulham parish church; Hammersmith was then a hamlet in that parish. See D. Jamieson, *Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group Newsletter*, no. 16, spring 2007.
- 16 Lysons *op. cit.*, n. 12 p. 324.
- 17 Entry on Thomas Frederick in W. Betham, *The baronetage of England*, vol 3 (London 1830), p. 200.
- 18 Entry on Jane Frederick in <http://www.thepeerage.com/p2202.htm#i22014> [accessed June 12 2017].
- 19 '3 March 1735 D. Atholl, &c. Petition referred to Judges' in *Journals of the House of Lords* vol. 24 (H.M. Stationery Office) p. 601. Subsequent decision in Chancery by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, see T. Leach, *Modern Reports or Select Cases* (London 1795), vol. 9, p. 406.
- 20 Hammersmith and Fulham Archive, Rate Book PAF/1/24, August 1741; this is the last date when the Duke of Atholl is noted as paying the parish rate.
- 21 Fèret *op. cit.*, n. 12 and for the Atholls <http://www.thepeerage.com/p2125.htm#i21248> [accessed April 2 2017].
- 22 *Op. cit.*, n. 19.
- 23 It was rated 'Empty' for the last time in September 1747. The Fulham Court Roll at London Metropolitan Archive, DL/D/B005/MS10832/064 has him being 'admitted to the premises' January 1748. The copyhold lease he held had been surrendered by Leonora Lannoy; the court rolls indicated she was still the owner of much of the estate and was selling portions to others in 1748. The reference for the actual sale of the house has not been found on the court roll.
- 24 In his diary, published by his nephew in 1784 (*The diary of the late George Bubb Dodington, baron of Melcombe Regis from March 8, 1749, to February 6, 1761* p. 9), Dodington writes of sleeping at Gunnersbury until 12th October 1749, when he notes 'Arrived in Hammersmith'; he clearly waited until his private rooms were furnished before sleeping in the new house. Meanwhile, the literature confusingly gives three possible dates for the sale to Dodington – 1740, 1748 and 1749. According to the rate books, in 1740 the Atholls were still in occupation; 1748 and 49 are possible but if so, Dodington purchased after he was already in residence. Brewer follows Faulkner and gives 1740. Lysons has 1748, Fèret has 1749; all *op. cit.*, n. 12.
- 25 S. Parissien, 'Roger & Robert Morris', (D. Phil. dissertation Oxford 1989), p. 174; H. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (London 2008) pp. 705–10; on the Pall Mall house see T.P. Connor, 'Bubo's House', *Architectural History*, vol. 27 (1984), pp. 111–7.
- 26 Vivian *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 140. Burlington was promoting his protégé William Kent, and Kent designed the innovative garden for Carlton House.
- 27 J. Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800: Compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive* (New Haven and London 1997), p. 683.
- 28 R. Sedgwick, *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715–54* (London 1970). <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/research/members/members-1715–1754/p.502> [accessed 23 April 2017].
- 29 See J. Carswell, *The old cause: three biographical studies in Whiggism* (London 1954), p. 214, and the Diary *op. cit.*, n. 24 p. 87 for names of some regular guests; they included the Marquis de Mirepoix, who was the French Ambassador and a neighbour at Fulham.
- 30 The White House at Kew; Vivian *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 132.
- 31 Guidoboni *op. cit.*, n. 3.
- 32 Vivian *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 388.
- 33 Diary *op. cit.*, n. 24, for example p. 40. A further connection between Dodington and Servandoni is the presence of a suite of fine architectural drawings by the latter in the collection formed by Sir Francis Dashwood, second Baronet., at West Wycombe Park. The complex architectural history of the rebuilding of West Wycombe – also involving Roger Morris – is closely related to Dashwood's social networks; the present writer is preparing an essay on this subject for publication in 2019.

- 34 However, see Parisien *op. cit.*, n. 36, p. 174 on ‘Vanbrughian’ elements in the exterior elevations of La Trappe.
- 35 J. Woolfe and J. Gandon, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol.4 (London 1767–71), pls. 26–29.
- 36 Colvin *op. cit.*, n. 25, p. 707.
- 37 Guidoboni *op. cit.*, n. 3, vol. 1, pp. 23–6. Colvin *op. cit.*, n. 25 notes that Morris was working on No. 30; Servandoni’s intervention – paintings for the staircase at the house of Richard Arundell in collaboration with Dietrich Ernst Andre – was at No. 34.
- 38 Additionally, Servandoni’s authorship of a design for the marble pavement made in Florence (see below n. 59) is probable but cannot be proved. The change in style would be the case whether or not the Visentini view paintings – discussed at the end of this article – formed part of the design. See Hornsby *op. cit.*, n. 4.
- 39 Vienna Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv, Rom-Vatican Fasz 138, pp. 141–149 (quotation from Fasz 143, 3/5/1750, quoted in Hornsby, *op. cit.*, n. 4).
- 40 J.B. Le Blanc *Letters on the English and French nations ... Tr. from the original French* (London 1747) vol. 1, p. 279, ‘Letter XXXVI to the Count of C **’; (French edition vol. 2, p. 41).
- 41 Hornsby *op. cit.*, n. 4.
- 42 Lysons *op. cit.*, n. 12. The Thames and Isis design was very common whenever a reference to the river was appropriate, but a notable coincidence is the fact that statues of the two river gods appear, exactly at this time, on the contemporary Servandoni fireworks structure discussed below: ‘On the first Half-pace of the great Stair-case on the Right-hand is the Figure of Tame; on the Left Isis, each reclining on an Urn. ... These Statues were all designed by Chevalier Andrea Casali.’ From *A Description of the Machine for the Fireworks: With All Its Ornaments ... published by the Board of Ordnance* (London 1749), pp. 5–6. Also, exactly at this time, two statues of these river gods were proposed to decorate Westminster Bridge, as shown in a painting by Canaletto: *Westminster Bridge with the Lord Mayor’s Procession, 1746–7*; see P. B. Kerber, *Eyewitness Views: Making History in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Los Angeles 2017), p. 124.
- 43 Walpole *Memoirs op. cit.*, n. 6, vol. 1, p. 441: ‘The chimney-piece was hung with spars representing icicles round the fire, and a bed of purple, lined with orange, was crowned by a dome of peacock’s feathers.’
- 44 See Lysons *op. cit.*, n. 12 for location of the Frederick residence: ‘The house which he occupied was a part of the Crispe estate’; for his artistic concerns and travels see J. Spier and J. Kagan, ‘Sir Charles Frederick and the forgery of ancient coins in eighteenth-century Rome’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 12/1 (2000) and Ingamells *op. cit.*, n. 27, p. 381.
- 45 Ingamells *op. cit.*, n. 27, p. 278.
- 46 Casali’s portrait of Frederick dates from 1748, ‘Vertue Notebooks Volume III’, *The Walpole Society* vol. 22 (1933–1934), p. 107.
- 47 *Gentleman’s Magazine* vol. 19 (April 26 1749), pp. 185–6.
- 48 See *Description of the Machine, op. cit.*, n. 42, p. 7.
- 49 A diary kept by the engraver George Vertue details his difficulties in the preparations of publications related to the Fireworks, from November 1748 onwards. There seems to have been no love lost between the Italians on the project – Casali, Servandoni and Soldi along with Ruggieri and Sarti, makers of the fireworks – and the English patrons. Vertue comments particularly on Servandoni’s high-handed manner. See BL Add. MS 203090, ff. 97–104. These pages were left out when the Vertue notebooks were published, see ‘Vertue notebooks Volume VI’ *The Walpole Society*, vol. 30, (1951–1952), p. xxii; this writer is planning an article about the diary.
- 50 For Morris as Master Carpenter, see Colvin *op. cit.*, n. 25, p. 706. The name of his son James who inherited the office appears on the front page of the *Description*.
- 51 Guidoboni *op. cit.*, n. 3, p. 393.
- 52 ‘An exact Account of the late magnificent Feast, given by English Factory at Lisbon ...’, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 16 (1746) p. 473–474.
- 53 BL, Egerton MSS 2267–2272, Covent Garden Accounts 1747–1749; esp. Eg. 2268, f. 142; Eg. 2269, f. 78.
- 54 Antonio Maria Niccolini, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 78 (2013), online http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-maria-niccolini_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [accessed June 21 2017].

- 55 Niccolini was noted for his connections with the first Italian Masonic Lodge established there. Dodington may have been a member; he certainly was close to members who then went on to form the Society of Dilettanti. For these connections see J. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti*, (London and New Haven 2009), pp. 17–18 and his Appendix. Francis Dashwood also corresponded with Niccolini.
- 56 *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (New Haven 1937–1983), vol. 19, p. 240, 26 June 1747. See also vol. 19, p. 398, n. 33 referencing a letter from Gray to Walpole (19 or 26 August 1747): ‘Nicolini with a whole coach full of Chattichees [referring to Catholics] has been at Cambridge...’
- 57 Archivio Niccolini di Camugliano 22/5/48 ANC, Fondo antico, 277, ins. 15, 01, iv. This reference to the work on the gallery interior design implies that by this date Servandoni was involved.
- 58 *Ibid.* 27/3/49; ANC, Fondo antico, 277, ins. 15, 03, 2v.
- 59 Mann to Albani, Vienna archive *op. cit.*, n. 39, I, 144, 8 settembre 1750: ‘Quant au pavé j'avoue que le dessein auroit pu etre plus beau si Monsieur Dodington en avait fait faire un en Italie mais il me l'envoya d'Angleterre ainsi je n'y ai eu d'autre part que de la faire executer.’
- 60 Walpole letters, *op. cit.*, n. 56, vol. 20, p. 54, Friday 23 May 1749: ‘Mr Dodington, from the intimacy which his marble pavement that I am making here has created, has announced to me his resignation.’
- 61 See Walpole letters, *ibid.*, n. 2: ‘The pavement was on its way in 1751 (post 4 June 1751 NS) and was apparently the pavement about which Mann wrote, 29 July 1753 (presumably to Bubb Dodington; the letter is now WSL).’
- 62 Harris *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 235.
- 63 The paintings are now in the Royal Collection and were published most recently in the context of the exhibition ‘Canaletto & the Art of Venice’ at The Queen’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace, May 2017 – Nov. 2017; catalogue by R. Razzall, and L. Whitaker (London 2017).
- 64 See appendix for the full list of subjects. Two of the original series are not in the Royal Collection; *The Bridge at Wilton* is at Würzburg and *A pavilion at Whitehall designed by Inigo Jones* has been missing since the drafting of the Italian list. See N. Munz in Razzall and Whitaker, *op. cit.*, n. 62, pp. 300–307.
- 65 G. Knox, ‘Consul Smith's villa at Mogliano: Antonio Visentini and Francesco Zuccarelli’, *Apollo*, 143 (June 1996) p. 37.
- 66 Ingamells, *op. cit.*, n. 27 p. 304.
- 67 A. Visentini *Admiranda Artis Architectura Varia* vol. 187 (unpaginated).
- 68 A. Blunt, ‘A neo-Palladian Programme Executed by Visentini and Zuccarelli for Consul Smith’, *Burlington Magazine* 100, no. 665 (August 1958) p. 284.
- 69 In relation to another of the series, the *Capriccio with a view of Mereworth Castle*, it should be noted that, although Mereworth is the *ne plus ultra* of Neo-Palladian architecture and therefore an obvious choice for the series, it also has a strong Dodington connection. It was built by his associate and sometime Parliamentary colleague John Fane, later Lord Westmoreland, who was the uncle, guardian and artistic mentor of his intimate, Sir Francis Dashwood.
- 70 Harris *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 234: ‘The case for the pictures having been painted for Hammersmith collapses because they are dated 1746, two years before Dodington bought the old house and commissioned Morris to rebuild it around the existing carcass. It is very tempting to strain credulity by suggesting how the commission could have been intended for this house, that in 1748 when it was only tenanted by the Duke and Duchess of Atholl, it had already been promised to Dodington who had commissioned Morris for designs.’ However, we have already seen evidence that it was **not** tenanted by the Atholls from 1741–1748.
- 71 Harris *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 234. Sanders *op. cit.*, n. 6 references BL Add. MS. 32718, f. 191 for a request from Dodington to the duke of Newcastle some time in 1749, asking for permission to ride through the park to Hammersmith to visit the house during the works.
- 72 Harris’s enthusiasm for his hypothesis diminished, see ‘The Neo-Palladians and mid-century landscape’ in J. Martineau, and A. Robison, (eds.), *The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven and London 1994).

- 73 See W. Barcham, ‘Canaletto and a Commission from Consul Smith’, *The Art Bulletin*, 59/3, September 1977 p. 385.
- 74 Knox *op. cit.*, n. 65, p. 33 proposed a layout for the Zuccarelli landscapes in the Smith collection; his example is followed in the proposed layout illustrated here.
- 75 Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, Adam volumes 11/87–89 (ceilings), 19/122–126 (elevations), 22/207 (chimneypiece).
- 76 Hammersmith and Fulham Archive, Rate Book PAF/1/24, June 21 1748, p. 229 v., a first reference to ‘Geo. Bubb Doddington Esq. for Grass-Ground’. The completed gardens are described in A.M. Broadley and L. Melville (eds.) *The beautiful Lady Craven: the original memoirs* (London 1914), vol. 2, p. 107; Christie’s Sale November 19 1777.
- 77 Contrary to previous assumptions, the pavilion was built. Its stone structural elements, rich architectural and sculptural marble fittings, an unattributed ceiling painting – presumably circular – and four others ‘for the angles’ – are listed on p. 28 of the demolition sale catalogue (Phillips, *A Catalogue of the valuable building materials ... Brandenburgh House 15 May 1822* Hammersmith and Fulham Archive F 728–3 BRA).
- 78 On the role of taste as societal self-definition see D. Arnold, *The Georgian Country House* (Stroud, new edition 2013), pp. 115–6.
- 79 G. Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain: the heroic age* (London and New Haven 1995, p. 45) correcting the ‘standard view’ of Neoclassicism as being a late eighteenth century phenomenon and especially pp. 258–9 on the equality of Greek and Roman sources in English taste in mid-century.
- 80 The Inigo Jones Whitehall pavilions were three-bay structures, as can be seen in drawings by Henry Flitcroft from original drawings prepared by John Webb for the first volume of *The Designs of Inigo Jones ...* (London 1727), vol. 22 [vol. 84], ff. 7, 8 (great court facade) 24, 25 (park facade); pls. 11, 12, 38, 39. This would pair well with the rhythm of the painting of ‘Wilton Bridge’.
- 81 Munz in Razzall and Whitaker *op. cit.*, n. 62, p. 300. Titles of the pictures here are mine and are used for brevity.