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# SIR JOHN SOANE AND THE COMPETITION FOR THE DUKE OF YORK MONUMENT

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*This article examines Sir John Soane's entries for the competition to design a monument in memory of Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany, who died in January 1827. The designs, which have been little studied, included a monopteral temple and a monumental archway, and the article examines them, allowing us to see how Soane's ideas were translated by his students faced by tight deadlines. Soane's ultimately unsuccessful entries are also placed in the context of an extremely controversial competition, which was eventually won by Benjamin Dean Wyatt and Sir Richard Westmacott.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Duke of York, the second son of King George III and a military commander and organiser, died of an oedema on 5 January 1827.<sup>1</sup> Unlike his elder brother George IV, he was a popular figure. As Commander-in-Chief from 1798, he based himself at the Horse Guards in London, instituting military reforms that transformed the British Army, and he became a major factor in the defeat of Napoleon in 1815.<sup>2</sup> Like his brother, he was prone to debt, and he died owing £200,000 to his creditors.<sup>3</sup> His death nevertheless sparked a debate about how to memorialise him for services to his country. Many months passed before an official committee was set up in July 1829, and a formal competition to design a monument was then announced.

Many architects and sculptors were invited to compete, including John Soane. He had been Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy since 1806, and was architect to the Bank of England, the Dulwich College Picture Gallery and the Royal Hospital at Chelsea; he was also Attached Architect to the Office of Works from 1813, with numerous responsibilities in Westminster.<sup>4</sup> Here his role included the maintenance and some rebuilding of the royal palaces, including Buckingham House and the Palace of Westminster, where he designed a monumental staircase – the *Scala Regia*, a royal commission – in 1824.<sup>5</sup> Soane had already formulated designs for a monument immediately after the death of the Duke, and he made more for the official competition. They constitute a rarely examined corpus of architectural drawings that deserves greater scrutiny than has hitherto been afforded. Many were mounted in a specific volume (SM Vol. 58) kept in Sir John Soane's house-museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and others were placed on display within the house itself. More were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum some decades after Soane's death, when one of his pupils, Charles James Richardson donated them.

When the Duke died there was national mourning, with the *Courier* newspaper reporting on 15 January 1827 that 'the Army, to a man are panting for an opportunity to testify its respect and admiration towards the illustrious Commander-in-Chief',<sup>6</sup> and meetings were held to discuss



Fig. 1. J. M. Gandy, Design for a monopteral temple, January 1827. SM 63 /4/ 3.  
(© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

a memorial. Some societies, such as the United Services Club in London and the Caledonian United Services Club in Edinburgh, commissioned their own statues,<sup>7</sup> but a national monument was also demanded. Attempts to raise funds by public subscription were headed by the new Commander-in-Chief, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington.<sup>8</sup> But, despite the good intentions, progress was painfully slow.

#### SOANE AND THE DUKE OF YORK

Soane had been an admirer of the Duke of York, who in 1823 had become head of the Prince of Wales Masonic Lodge. Soane was Grand Superintendent of Works to the United Grand Lodge, headed by the

Duke's younger brother, the Duke of Sussex, and was present at his installation.<sup>9</sup> In 1825 Soane placed a bust of the Duke in his 'Monk's Yard' at Lincoln's Inn Fields; and in February 1827,<sup>10</sup> one month after his death, he bought an astronomical clock which he claimed had belonged to him.<sup>11</sup>

Just two days after the Duke's death, Soane conceived the idea for a monopteral temple, dedicated to him. It was drawn by his former draughtsman and perspectivist Joseph Michael Gandy (1771–1843) (Fig. 1),<sup>12</sup> and was to be placed in St James's Park opposite the entrance to the Horse Guards, with William Kent's tower and projecting wings visible behind it. The base has a continuous frieze of processing soldiers, topped by a colonnade of Corinthian columns supporting an architrave. Above the colonnade is a saucer dome, and around

the drum are roundels with portraits in right profile. Pencil emendations are in the form of potential additional roundels. In the centre is a statue of the Duke standing on a plinth. His body seems to be slightly turned to his left, whilst his face is turned frontally, and looking back towards Buckingham Palace. It is executed in brown ink, and part of a design for another unrelated building is on the left-hand side, demonstrating that this was a rapid conception rather than a finished design.

Monopteral temples had been a noted form from classical antiquity, and had been revived during the Renaissance, but they were relatively unknown in Britain.<sup>13</sup> Sir John Vanbrugh's 'Rotunda' for the gardens at Stowe House in Buckinghamshire (1720–1721) and his rotunda at Duncombe Park in Yorkshire were two examples.<sup>14</sup> Both comprised a single set of Ionic columns supporting an architrave

and a dome with an encircling set of three steps; a statue of Venus was placed inside the Stowe Rotunda. Soane designed the Neo-Gothic library in Stowe House for the Duke of Buckingham in 1805–1806,<sup>15</sup> so was presumably familiar with the Rotunda in the grounds; he was an admirer of Vanbrugh, and he praised his work in his Royal Academy lectures.<sup>16</sup> Another inspiration was Palladio's illustration of a similar temple for Daniele de Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius in 1556.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Palladio's drawing featured Corinthian columns on a base with access points, which Soane initially proposed, rather than the Ionic order and open access through the intercolumniations as at Stowe and Duncombe Park. One feature of the Rotunda at Stowe was its position, which afforded views of the gardens and other monuments from every direction. Soane may have attempted to emulate this



Fig. 2. J. M. Gandy, Exterior perspective of a sepulchral chapel in honour of the Duke of York, 1827, SM P275. (© *Sir John Soane's Museum*)

effect in St James's Park, which was overlooked by the Mall, Carlton House Terrace and Buckingham Palace (then under construction) surrounding an insulated setting within parkland, with a close visual link to the Horse Guards, from which the Duke had reorganised the army.

Soane's design differed from orthodox monopteral temples by the addition of a frieze around the base. Placing the frieze here was necessary because it was the only space where it would be conspicuous. Large roundels would suit the drum of the dome, since they would be visible to the viewer. Another variation was the use of an inner colonnade between the intercolumniations of the outer colonnade, making the building seem grander than the earlier versions at Stowe and Duncombe Park.

Soane's first design was not pursued further with watercolours or finished drawings, but it made an appearance in his self-published *Public Improvements to London and Westminster* (1827). He conceived a processional route for George IV to embark on when he arrived from Windsor to go to the Palace of Westminster for the State Opening of Parliament, passing the temple as he processed around St James's Park before turning into Downing Street.

By December 1827, Soane had designed a far more elaborate sepulchral chapel in honour of the Duke for the same location in St James's Park.<sup>18</sup> Plans, elevations, and interior perspectives exist,<sup>19</sup> but the finished design is best illustrated by two framed watercolours by Gandy for the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1828 (Figs. 2–3). The

Fig. 3. J. M. Gandy, Interior perspective of a sepulchral chapel in honour of the Duke of York, 1827, SM P282. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/Hugh Kelly)





sepulchral chapel was a trefoil design, approached by steps on three sides, with the principal entrance being a perron with a Doric tetrastyle portico. It was to be heavily adorned with militaristic sculpture, and it would be topped by a statue, probably of the Duke.<sup>20</sup> The interior would have been circular, and would have had flying screens supported by winged ‘Nike’ caryatids alternating with Ionic capitals on porphyry columns. Pennants and portrait busts are shown around the top, and services would be conducted in the open centre.<sup>21</sup> Since an official competition had yet to be announced, Soane may have seen an opportunity to put himself forward in the public domain before other architects.<sup>22</sup>

Following the Duke’s burial in St George’s Chapel at Windsor, Soane, in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue, called his chapel design a ‘Sepulchral and Military chapel in honour of the Duke of York’. He anticipated, but never designed, ‘lofty catacombs’ beneath the structure to hold the bodies of ‘National heroes... for victories on land and sea’,<sup>23</sup> and saw this design as a combination of monuments: a burial place for national heroes, to honour the Duke, but also a national war memorial,<sup>24</sup> which had been called for ever since 1815. Many other architects had submitted designs for such a memorial, Soane among them.<sup>25</sup> William Wilkins and John Peter Gandy Deering had proposed an army monument in Parliament Square, and Robert Smirke a naval monument in Greenwich, but neither was executed, either due to a severe lack of funds after the Napoleonic Wars, or, as Wilkins suggested, to government indifference.<sup>26</sup> Instead, architects tried to allude to these historic victories through other monuments, including Soane’s idea for triumphal arches at either end of Downing Street, and John Nash’s sculptural programme for the Marble Arch, much of it not executed as first planned.<sup>27</sup>

The sepulchral chapel must also be understood contextually. After the success of his *Scala Regia* at the Palace of Westminster (1824), Soane had hoped to gain more royal commissions. In 1820, George IV

decided he wanted to live in a new palace, and Soane submitted designs for one in Green Park in 1821, going on to make further revisions in subsequent years. But when Buckingham House was chosen as the site of the palace in 1825, John Nash, the King’s favourite architect, was given the commission, and in 1827 he was also commissioned to re-landscape St James’s Park. All these areas were in Soane’s domain as Attached Architect to the Office of Works, so designing a monument to the Duke may have been a way of re-establishing his claim over this area.<sup>28</sup>

#### THE OFFICIAL COMPETITION

In July 1829, two and a half years after the Duke’s death, the committee was finally ready to launch officially the competition for a memorial.<sup>29</sup> It was still headed by the Duke of Wellington, who had resigned his post of Commander-in-Chief in 1828 when he became Prime Minister.<sup>30</sup> From the start the committee favoured the idea of a column surmounted by a colossal statue, to be of the same size as Trajan’s Column in Rome. In April 1828 the Scottish architect William Burn, who in 1823 had completed a monumental column to Viscount Melville in Edinburgh, was asked to submit an estimate of the cost of a column of Aberdeen granite, and of the same height as Trajan’s Column; he estimated a price of £15,000 for a plain column, and £18,000 for one with ornament.<sup>31</sup> Enormous columns in Britain were relatively rare. Sir Christopher Wren’s Monument for the Great Fire of London was the first major example (1671–7),<sup>32</sup> and Sir John Vanbrugh’s column for the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace followed in 1721. In 1785 Sir John Soane designed a seventy-five feet high column for the Evelyn family at Felbridge, Surrey,<sup>33</sup> and in 1781 a column in Savernake Forest was erected by Lord Ailesbury to his uncle and to King George III.<sup>34</sup> More columns were erected during and after the Napoleonic Wars. Columns

to Lord Nelson went up in Dublin (1806) and Great Yarmouth (1819), the latter to designs by William Wilkins, and Viscount Rowland Hill's Column was built on the outskirts of Shrewsbury (1814–16) by Edward Haycock Senior and Thomas Harrison.<sup>35</sup> A column designed by Robert Smirke in honour of the Duke of Wellington was begun in Phoenix Park, Dublin in 1820, but the project ran out of money after three years. In 1816, a year after the Battle of Waterloo, John Nash drew up proposals for a column to the Duke of Wellington to be placed in Waterloo Place at the southern end of Regent Street;<sup>36</sup> another of his designs included a spiral bas-relief.<sup>37</sup> None of Nash's designs were commissioned, but the appetite for constructing monumental columns had been established, and was accelerating during the victorious aftermath of the war.<sup>38</sup>

The committee circulated invitations to those eminent architects and sculptors they wished to compete. The architects were approached first in July 1829,<sup>39</sup> and included Robert Smirke, John Soane, William Wilkins, Benjamin Dean Wyatt, John Nash, Charles Robert Cockerell, John Peter Gandy Deering, Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, and William Burn. The sculptors were called upon later in the competition. The architects submitted their designs to the committee on 8 July, although Soane, Wyattville and Cockerell were not able to attend in person. Wyatt, Nash, Wilkins, and Deering each submitted a column, whereas the record for Wyattville and Cockerell does not mention the type of monument, and Nash submitted both a column and an arch design for Horse Guards (see below).<sup>40</sup> On 14 July a circular clarified the competition elements. A column was still favoured but the Committee did not '*confine artists to that plan*: – they wish that they should consider of, and suggest other plans for the same subject. – but they wish particularly that they should consider of, and estimate the expense of such a Column as is above suggested made of Aberdeenshire, or other Granite.'<sup>41</sup>

## SOANE'S ENTRIES, 1829

### *The Monoportal Temple Revisited*

Soane's early entries for the competition saw him return to his initial temple idea of February 1827; he did not submit a column design, and there is no record of one in the collection. His new drawings show a temple placed in St James's Park,<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 4), axially related both to the central arch of the Horse Guards and to the steps leading up from the Mall to the recently-created Waterloo Place at the bottom of Lower Regent Street. The temple designs represent two basic ideas. The first (Fig. 5) follows the 1827 pattern, with sculpture around the bottom.<sup>43</sup> This version has the portrait roundels from the drum of the dome removed and placed around the base of the monument instead of the earlier processional frieze. A plan beneath shows the double colonnade arrangement, with twenty Corinthian columns on the outside and ten on the inside, placed just within the intercolumniations of the outer columns. A second version restores the earlier 1827 design (Fig. 6),<sup>44</sup> with a frieze of processing figures around the base, and the roundels restored to the drum of the dome. Additionally, a stepped entrance has been added with plinths set within the steps on four corners with *tropaia* (sculpted trophies in the form of ancient armour) set upon them, as reflected in the accompanying plan beneath. A statue on a tall base stands within, looking back towards Buckingham Palace. In this version there only seems to only be an outer colonnade in the Stowe/Duncombe Park tradition.

Both these types were also drawn in highly coloured versions, with more attention to landscape, and there are even barely discernible figures on Horse Guards Parade Ground beyond (Fig. 7).<sup>45</sup> The trophy plinths now have lions guarding the corners, but the plinths have been moved to the middle of each side, rather than on the corners.<sup>46</sup> One of the designs is repeated on a drawing within a ruled border (Fig. 8).<sup>47</sup> It is largely monochromatic, in pen, with colour used

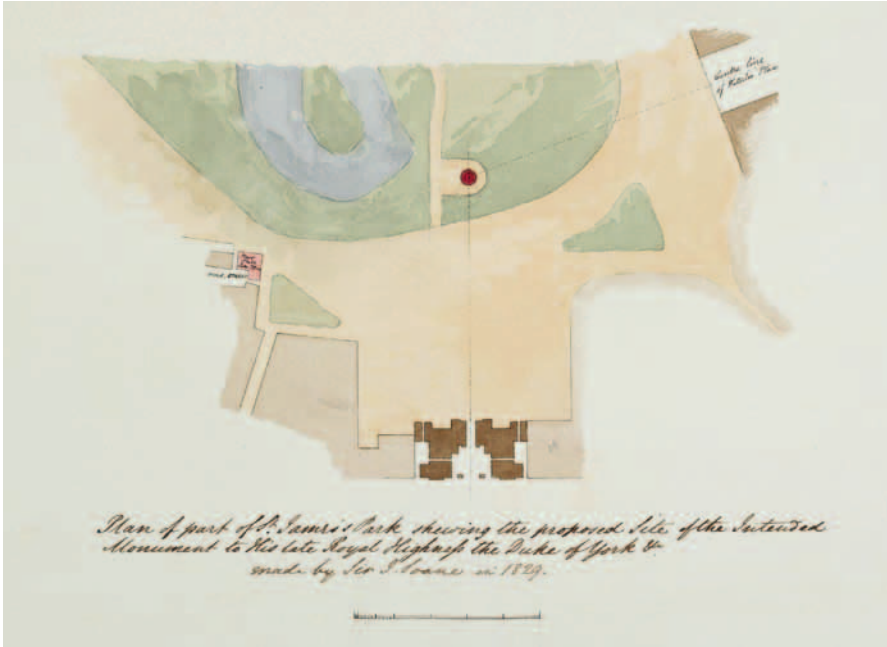


Fig. 4. Soane Office, Site plan for the proposed monopteral temple, July 1829, SM Vol. 58/3. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)



Far left: Fig. 5. Soane Office, Design for a monopteral temple, July 1829, SM Vol. 58/ 1. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)

Left: Fig. 6. Soane Office, Design for a monopteral temple, July 1829, SM Vol. 58/ 2. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)





Fig. 7. Soane Office, Design for a monopertal temple, V&A D.1452-1898. Carlton House Terrace can be seen on the left and the Horse Guards on the right. (© Victoria and Albert Museum)



Fig. 8. Soane Office, Design for a monopertal temple, July 1829, (SM P 355).  
(© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

for the surrounding bushes, and a sprinkling of Cerulean blue in the sky. The drawing is inscribed:

*No.1 / Design for a Monopteral Temple to enshrine a marble Colossal Statue, commemorative of the important Services of / His Late Royal Highness the Duke of York, when Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces.*

*The situation of the Temple is proposed to be determined by a line drawn through the middle of / Waterloo Place, intersected by another line, through the centre archway of Horse Guards.*

In Soane's preface to volume 58, into which many of the drawings were later placed, he explained more about the architectural inspiration for the temple. He cites the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, near Rome, as his major model. He had visited the temple on his Grand Tour and had not only made numerous drawings; he also acquired casts of the Corinthian capitals used on the temple and displayed them in his house.<sup>48</sup> He frequently referenced the temple in his Royal Academy lectures, and he produced drawings for illustration to students. His Tivoli Corner at the Bank of England was based on the temple,<sup>49</sup> though it is ironic that the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli has a *cella* so is technically a *tholos*, not a *monopteros*. Additionally, Soane described the roundels as representing national heroes, although none are specifically named, and that the frieze would be of bronze. In 1827 John Nash had also planned an open temple or rotunda with a fountain in the interior between the two arms of the new Carlton House Terrace, utilising columns from Carlton House, which he was in the process of demolishing.<sup>50</sup> The proposal was not accepted, and one could argue that once again Soane was attempting to subvert Nash by forwarding his own 'rotunda' for the competition, knowing that Nash's Waterloo Place proposal had failed.

When Soane entered the temple design for the competition on 11 July 1829, he also drafted a cheque for £1,000, which was donated to the

committee via Lord Farnborough, whom Soane knew from his earlier involvement on Buckingham House before its transformation into Buckingham Palace. Farnborough read Soane's letter to the committee,<sup>51</sup> and the entrants were notified by the Duke of Wellington that the £22,000 raised would barely be enough to complete both the column and statue. Soane's donation was specifically for the completion of the statue only. The timing of the donation may seem suspicious, but the committee and Colonel Benjamin Charles Stephenson, Soane's direct superior at the Office of the Clerk of Works for Westminster, were exceptionally grateful, and did not see it as inappropriate.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE MONUMENTAL ARCHWAY

A further circular from the committee, dated 13 August 1829, was sent to all the architects stating that 'a Design [had] been suggested to them to erect an arch and statue . . . over the Entrance from the [Whitehall] into the Guard of Horse Guards.'<sup>53</sup> This was the result of an intervention by King George IV and may have been, conveniently, due to his favourite architect, John Nash, sending in an unsolicited design – possibly planned by him and the King – to the committee for their 11 July meeting. The committee acquiesced to the King's wishes, and the architects were told that they had to come up with alternative designs by 29 August, only allowing them three weeks to conceive, design and present their designs: a contentious issue after the competition (see below). Like the other competitors, Soane produced a number of drawings for a monumental archway. His Office Day Book for July and August 1829 records George Bailey and Charles James Richardson producing designs for both the temple, and 'monuments', which can only mean the monumental archway in memory of the Duke. The designs are in both single-point and three-point perspective. Many of them can be read

Fig. 9. Soane Office,  
Design for an entrance  
arch to Horse Guards,  
July 1829, SM Vol.  
58/7. (© Sir John  
Soane's Museum/Ardon  
Ben-Hama)



Fig. 10. Soane Office,  
Design for an entrance  
arch to Horse Guards,  
SM Vol. 58/13.  
(© Sir John Soane's  
Museum/Ardon  
Ben-Hama)

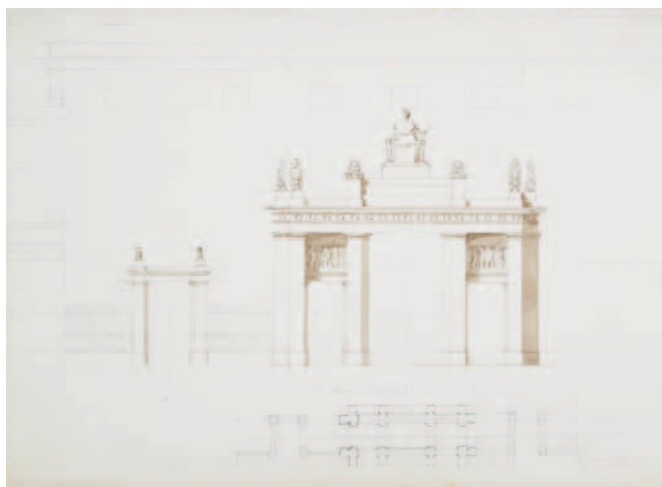


Fig. 11. Soane Office,  
Design for an entrance  
arch to Horse Guards,  
SM Vol. 58/17.  
(© Sir John Soane's  
Museum/Ardon  
Ben-Hama)

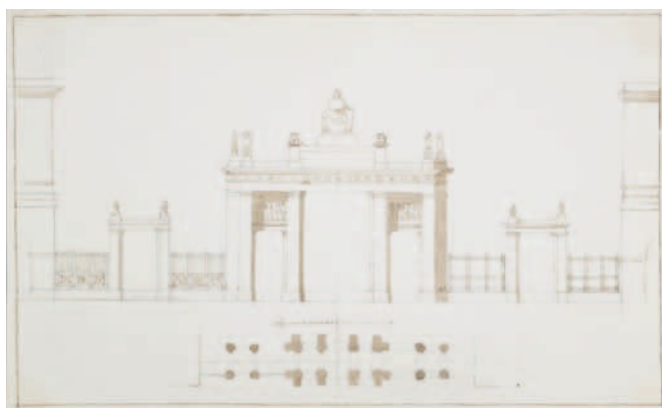




Fig. 12. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/5.  
(© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

as pairs, although some are stand-alone designs. It is extremely difficult to sequence the drawings, since some are undated and they were all produced within a very short time-span.

One design (Design No. 1) (Fig. 9) was dated July 1829,<sup>54</sup> though the architects did not receive instructions for an arch until August. It shows a triple-arched entrance with plain columns, sculptural panels, and *tropaia* on the corners of the side arches. It is surmounted by a set of steps with guardian lions on the plinths on either side, and above is a seated statue, presumably of the Duke, on a throne holding a scroll in his left hand. On either side are sentinel huts, with similar plain columns, helmets on each corner of the roof, and a horse guard inside. The huts are connected to the main arch and the walls of the buildings to the side by railings placed on a stone curb. This design is represented in two single-point perspectives, each with a plan beneath (Figs. 10–11). The inscription beneath the three-point perspective (Fig. 9) relates that the design was influenced by the monument to Thrasyllus in Athens. This fourth-century BC choragic monument was recorded by James ‘the Athenian’ Stuart and Nicholas Revett in

the *Antiquities of Athens*,<sup>55</sup> which Soane cited in his Royal Academy Lectures.<sup>56</sup> The influence is mainly seen with the plain columns, and Soane noted that the Monument to Thrasyllus was the first to use carved wreaths as decoration, which Soane has emulated across the front of the cornice.<sup>57</sup> It is the only instance where Soane cites a specific model for his arch designs.

The other arch designs follow a more tried-and-tested model of the typical Roman triumphal arch with a flat-topped attic roof. Another ‘Design No. 1’ shows a triple-arch arrangement in single-point perspective (Fig. 12). Here the columns are accentuated with a fluting effect, but do not have an obvious capital. The spandrels of the central arch have heraldic figures, whilst the side arches have a wreath with crossed weapons. The arrangement of the figure and lions, with *tropaia* on the corners are maintained, as are the positions of the sentinel huts and the height of the railings. A basic plan is included at the bottom. To confuse matters further, a third ‘Design No. 1’ maintains the triple arch with accentuated columns, but the three-point perspective includes far more sculpture panels consisting of

processing figures which are placed above the side arches and on the sides of the arch (Fig. 13). A less well executed version shows the same details, but here the railings between the arch and sentinel huts have been raised (Fig. 14).

Another design in three-point perspective (Fig. 15) features a triple arch with fluted Corinthian columns on pedestals, sculpted trophies above the side arches and on the side of the arch, *tropaia* on the corners and framing the central arch. However, a tall and wide base with a sculptural panel of a

battle stands above the arch, surmounted by a seated figure of the Duke. The sentinel huts are similar to the other examples, but the *tropaia* are in the form of breastplates, not helmets. This represents the largest scale design for the arch. A similar drawing uses a single-arch design with plain sentinel huts.<sup>58</sup> Yet another design is triple-arched with a more conventional series of Corinthian columns across the front.<sup>59</sup> The spandrels are decorated with figures and a sculpture panel in the form of *tropaia* is above the side arches. On the roof line are *tropaia*, but also a

Fig. 13. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/6. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)



Fig. 14. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/11. (© Sir John Soane's Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)





standing figure is on the left corner. Above is a high plinth with processing figures in relief. There is only one guardian lion, and the Duke is shown in the usual seated position. The columns of the sentinel huts have accentuated fluting and *tropaia* on the corners.

‘Design No. 2’, also dated to July 1829, shows a single-span arch with the columns having one vertical panel (Fig. 16).<sup>60</sup> A console is above the keystone of the arch, and there is decoration in the spandrels. *Tropaia* are absent, and the lions now face to the side, though the Duke is still enthroned

in classical garb atop the arch. The sentinel huts are similar, only without the vertical panel and *tropaia* in the form of helmets are on each corner. This design was drawn-up into a three-point perspective (Fig. 17),<sup>61</sup> also called ‘Design No. 2’, which shows an additional sculpture panel on the side. Another set of single-arch designs in single and three-point perspective are designated ‘Design No. 3’ (Figs. 18–19), again dated to July 1829, and are more elaborate. Fluted Corinthian columns are on high pedestals, and an inscription panel is above the



Fig. 15. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/16. (© Sir John Soane’s Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)



Fig. 16. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM P356. (© Sir John Soane’s Museum/ Ardon Ben-Hama)

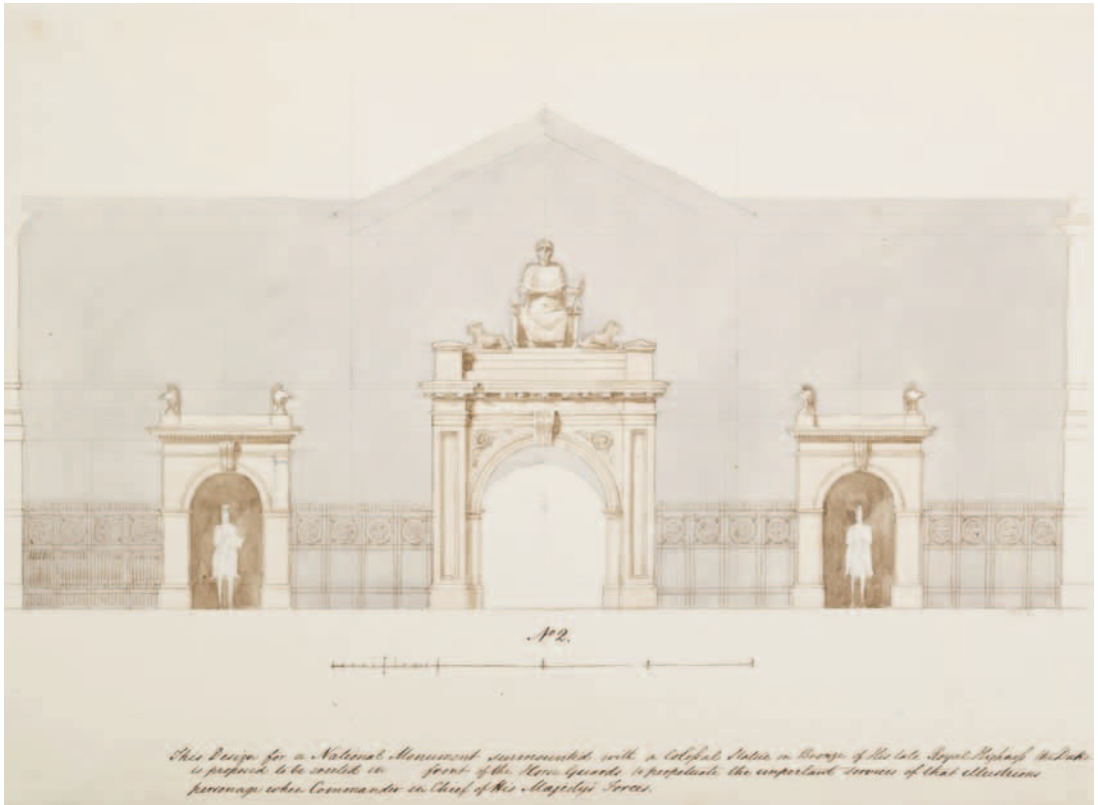


Fig. 17. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/ 14.  
 (© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

central console. The guardian lions are replaced with *tropaia* and a sculpture panel is on the side. The sentinel huts are topped with an elaborate *tropaion*. The railings are low and interrupted by stone plinths carrying lanterns.

The designs vary considerably, and Soane had to consider the budgetary restrictions. The first major concern for Soane was whether to use a single or triple arch. He may have decided that the single-arch designs, especially those drawn up on SM P356 and SM P357 (Figs. 16 and 19) were favoured. The second concern was over how much ornamentation could be placed on the arch. Sometimes the columns are fluted; panel sculpture and mouldings vary

throughout each design, and the form of *tropaia* change regularly. A constant is the position of a seated statue of the Duke on the summit, but even here the apparel changes between classical and contemporary royal ceremonial dress. An additional factor concerning cost was the use of bronze for the statuary. Bronze casting was an expensive process, as would be illustrated by the final statue chosen for the winning entry by Westmacott.

The letter informing Soane and others of the design requirement for the monumental archway was, as already mentioned, dated 13 August 1829. However, 'Designs 2 and 3' (Figs. 16–17; Figs. 18–19) in frontal perspective are both dated to July 1829,



Fig. 18. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM Vol. 58/15.  
 (© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

according to the inscriptions on both. It could be suggested that the committee informed the competitors informally, perhaps at the meeting on 8 July, when Nash first exhibited his archway design, with the circular of 13 August being official confirmation; but this remains a matter for speculation.

In the preface to volume 58, Soane tried to associate both the monopteros and the archway with the wider programme of his processional route. He was attempting to demonstrate how his monuments fitted into an overall scheme for the State Opening of Parliament. The problem was that the scheme was unrealistic: both in scale and expense. Soane

was suggesting a host of other unbuilt edifices, and yet more were rehashes of projects which had been previously rejected.

#### THE OFFICIAL DECISION

The arch designs submitted by all entrants were examined by the committee on 29 August 1829. Only at this point were the sculptors finally asked to submit two statue designs: one to surmount a column, the other to surmount an arch.<sup>62</sup> But when George IV died in June 1830 the committee reverted to its original idea of a column.<sup>63</sup> Therefore,



Fig. 19. Soane Office, Design for an entrance arch to Horse Guards, SM P 357.  
(© Sir John Soane's Museum/Ardon Ben-Hama)

despite all the work, the triumphal arch designs immediately became redundant. In August 1830 the committee whittled down the competing sculptors to Campbell and Westmacott, and Benjamin Dean Wyatt was approached to provide a pared-down estimate for a column.<sup>64</sup> So, when the decision was finally made in December 1830, Wyatt's column design was inevitably chosen, with the statue of the Duke surmounting it by Richard Westmacott.<sup>65</sup> The original idea was for the monument to be in St James's Park opposite the Horse Guards, but Wyatt then suggested it should stand at the top the steps between the two wings of Nash's recently

rebuilt Carlton House Terrace, overlooking the Park.<sup>66</sup> Soane and the others were informed by General Maitland in a letter dated 3 March 1831 that any 'models' sent to the committee by the architects and artists could be collected from Horse Guards.<sup>67</sup>

In 1832, while the column was under construction, one of the entrants, William Wilkins, wrote a letter addressed to Viscount Goderich, the former Prime Minister, and then Colonial Secretary and president of both the Royal Geographic and Royal Literature Societies, which was published openly in the Library of the Fine Arts: or Repertory of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Engraving

vol. III. The letter was ostensibly lobbying for the foundation of an architects' association, and Wilkins used the Duke of York competition as an example of why this was necessary.<sup>68</sup> He argued that too many on the committee were Wellington's men; Benjamin Dean Wyatt had long been Wellington's favourite, having worked with his brother in India, and then with Wellington himself in Dublin. His proposed country house for Wellington, Stratfield Saye (Hampshire), remained unexecuted, but he designed a new façade for the Duke's London residence, Apsley House, which still looks out onto Hyde Park Corner.<sup>69</sup> Wilkins pointed out that the artist Sir Thomas Lawrence, a member of the design committee, had died in January 1830, that Lord Farnborough was ill,<sup>70</sup> and that after George IV's death in the same year that the remainder of the committee had been given a free rein. Additionally, Wilkins claimed that a committee member to whom he had spoken, but whom he did not name, had alleged that the members were not even aware that a meeting to decide the winning entries had been called.<sup>71</sup> He added that the committee did not have the courtesy to write to the unsuccessful applicants until long after the decision had been made,<sup>72</sup> and that any decision should have been finalised by the new King, William IV. Wilkins did not apportion any blame specifically to Wellington, or to Wyatt, blaming other anonymous committee members instead.<sup>73</sup>

It seems likely that Wilkins did not have access to the Committee's Minute Book, which recorded that Lord Farnborough was indeed present for the key meetings, and that he continued on the committee even after the completion of the project.<sup>74</sup> If anything, it seems that Wilkins had taken exception to having to retrieve his drawings, with no recompense for the expense taken in their production. Wilkins explained in his letter that the competitors had gone to great expense to hire perspective artists to produce the arch designs as quickly as possible for the end of August 1829, and

then only for the committee to wait a further eighteen months to announce the winner.<sup>75</sup> Ultimately, Wilkins, Cockerell and Deering were recompensed to the sum of £100 each in 1831.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, on 8 April 1832 the column was ready. Constructed by Nowells of Pimlico, it was made from Aberdeen Granite of three different colours: light grey for the base, a blue-grey for the base of the shaft, and red Peterhead Granite for the remainder of the pillar. However, there was a delay of eighteen months between the completion of the column and the placing of the statue on top. The committee decided that Westmacott's initial bronze statue was too short, which meant that it had to be recast, and it was not finally installed until April 1834, when it was officially unveiled. The column stands at 123 feet 6 inches, and with the statue measuring 13 feet 9 inches, giving a total height of 137 feet 3 inches.<sup>77</sup> Westmacott had intended the statue to face Regent Street, but he was urged by Wellington to place it facing the Horse Guards, and the new King agreed.<sup>78</sup>

#### SOANE'S ROYAL ACADEMY ENTRY, 1831

Despite seemingly already knowing that his design had not been chosen, Soane nevertheless employed Joseph Michael Gandy to produce a large-scale framed watercolour of his temple for the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1831 (Fig. 20). Now free from economic constraints, the watercolour demonstrated how Soane thought the monument could have looked if fully developed. Similar to the design in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 7),<sup>79</sup> it includes steps, a frieze around the base, and roundels on the drum of the dome. The trophies on plinths which are set into the stairs are placed differently, with one moved to directly in front of the statue instead of two projecting either side. Access doors are visible, and set either side of the statue, rather than straight through the sides. Washes and pigment are added; brown for foliage, while the stairs, frieze and statue



are white, and the clouds form a misty autumnal setting. Depicted in the background to the viewer's right is the Horse Guards, and on the left is Carlton House Terrace. In this abstracted, rather than built, context, the temple design was intended to impress viewers, to inspire students and other architects, and to explore ideas about how to design such a distinctive monument. Soane showed that such a temple could be a grand and monumental design, rather than a delicate building like its predecessor at Stowe. With its imposing double colonnade, it could house a large-scale statue, and it could be used in a variety of contexts: country, urban, for deities and for notable individuals. There was also scope for greater adornment through the use of friezes and roundels.

#### CONCLUSION

The death of the Duke of York was followed by a period of national mourning, and calls for a monument to him were made almost immediately. This article has shown how Soane worked through a series of designs, each with variations in form and ornament, to arrive at what he considered the correct entry. The corpus of surviving drawings shows how his office had to work quickly to accommodate the tight deadlines imposed by the committee. The variations are testimony to Soane's imagination, and to the dexterity of his pupils in translating his concepts into a final two-dimensional design ready to be submitted.

Ultimately, the columnar design by Benjamin Dean Wyatt was chosen, with its statue by Richard Westmacott. The competition was controversial, the selection committee headed by the Duke of Wellington, with other members closely associated with him, and Wyatt was his favourite architect. Perhaps anticipating the outcome, Soane had, very early on in the process, ensured some association with the finished monument by making a donation of £1000 for the statue. If he had any cause for regret,



it may be that, by his late seventies, he had only one true royal commission, his *Scala Regia*, to his credit, and even this was part of his wider Parliamentary remit as Attached Architect to the Palace of Westminster. He had been overlooked, even usurped, for other royal projects, even including those on his territory. The competition for the monument to the Duke of York was his last chance to produce a royal monument. But one legacy of his involvement



Fig. 20. J. M. Gandy, Perspective of a monopteral temple in honour of the Duke of York, SM P270.  
(© *Sir John Soane's Museum/Hugh Kelly*)

is the survival of a full record of designs for the competition, which few of the others, except perhaps Benjamin Dean Wyatt's winning column designs held at the Royal Institute of British Architects, can match. And Soane may have been some satisfaction in knowing the finished statue was partially funded by his donation.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Derek Winterbottom, *The Grand Old Duke of York: A Life of Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany 1763–1827* (Barnsley, 2016), pp. 151–154.
- 2 John Watkin, *A Biographical Memoir of Frederick, Duke of York and Albany* (1827), p. 234; Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, pp. 132, 135.
- 3 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p. 154.
- 4 Dorothy Stroud, *Sir John Soane: Architect*. (1996), pp. 216–219, 221–230.
- 5 A. Bolton *The Portrait of Sir John Soane R.A.* (Frome and London, 1927), p. 199; Stroud, *Sir John Soane*, p. 216.
- 6 National Archives (NA), PRO 20/5/1 (1); Philip Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture of Historic Westminster vol. 1. Public Sculpture of Britain*. (Liverpool, 2011), p. 386.
- 7 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p.155.
- 8 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p.155; Ward Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 386. A meeting at the Freemason's Tavern, headed by the Duke of Wellington, already claimed £13,000 in public subscriptions.
- 9 Sir John Soane's Museum (hereafter SM) 2505; D. Burford. 'The Ark of the Masonic Covenant', in F. Saumarez Smith (ed.), *Soane's Ark: Building with Symbols* (Madrid: Factum Foundation for Technology in Conservation, 2017) pp. 19–31.
- 10 SM, vol. 82/7; SM MY18.
- 11 SM, L66; Sir John Soane, *Description of the House and Museum on the North Side of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields the Residence of Sir John Soane*, (1832), p. 21.
- 12 Brian Lukacher, *Joseph Michael Gandy: An Architectural Visionary in Georgian England*. (2006), especially chapter V.
- 13 Vitruvius Bk 4. 8.1. *Fiunt autem aedes rutundae, e quibus aliae monopteroe sine cella columnatae constituuntur*: 'Circular temples are also built, of which some are monoportal, built with columns but not enclosing a cella'; Daniele Barbaro, *I Dieci libri dell' architettura di M. Vitruvio* / tradotti et commentati da Monsignor Barbaro (Venice, 1556), p. 124, drawn by Andrea Palladio.
- 14 Giles Worsley, "'After ye Antique': Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor and Kent' in Christopher Ridgway and Robert Williams (eds.), *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690–1730* (Gloucestershire, 2000,) p. 13, using Perrault's version which was based ultimately on that of Palladio: Claude Perrault (ed.), *Le Dix Livres d'Architecture de Vitruve* (Paris, 1684) Pl. XXXV, Palladio's version.
- 15 Stroud, *Sir John Soane*, pp. 191–193.
- 16 David Watkin, *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures*. (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 337–338, 539 (Lecture V).
- 17 D. Barbaro, *I Dieci libri dell' architettura di M. Vitruvio* (Venice, 1556), p. 124.
- 18 S. Sawyer, 'The Processional Route', in Margaret Richardson and MaryAnne Stevens (eds.), *John Soane Architect: Master of Space and Light*, pp. 252–263 (London: Royal Academy, 1999); R. Rossi, 'Sir John Soane and the Sepulchral Chapel' *Mausolus: The Journal of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust* (Summer 2018), 2019, pp. 13–16.
- 19 Du Prey, *Soane*, pp. 77–78 cat. nos 251–3; V&A 3306.31; V&A3306.32; V&A 3306.33.
- 20 Rossi, *Sepulchral Chapel*, pp. 14–15.
- 21 Rossi, *Sepulchral Chapel*, p. 15. This circular nave should also be seen in the light of earlier Soane mausolea such as that for Noel Desenfans at Charlotte Street, replicated for them and Sir Peter Francis Bourgeois at the Dulwich Picture Gallery: see Tom Drysdale, 'The Desenfans Mausoleum at Charlotte Street', in *Mausolus: The Journal of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust* (Summer 2015), 2016, pp.11–17.
- 22 Rossi, *Sepulchral Chapel*, pp. 16–17.
- 23 John Soane 'Interior of a design for a Sepulchral Chapel' in, *Exhibition of the Royal Academy, the sixtieth* (1828), p. 40, no. 984.
- 24 Rossi, *Sepulchral Chapel*, p. 17.
- 25 SM 15/3/1–5.

- 26 Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. xxiv; William Wilkins, 'A Letter to Lord Viscount Godrich, on the Patronage of the Arts by the English Government' in, *Library of the Fine Arts: or Repertory of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Engraving* vol. III. /No.17 (1832), pp. 479–81.
- 27 SM L91; SM P88; SM P257; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, pp.163–166.
- 28 Rossi, *Sepulchral Chapel*, pp. 17–18.
- 29 John Watkins *A Biographical Memoir of Frederick, Duke of York and Albany* (1827: General Books OCR edition, 2009), p. 292; Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p. 156.
- 30 Other members of the committee included the Duke of Rutland; Sir Thomas Lawrence, portrait painter and President of the Royal Academy; the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Bishops of Durham and London; Lord Castlereagh; Lord Farnborough, the artistic and architectural advisor to the King; General Peregrine Maitland; James St Clair-Erskine, second Earl of Rosslyn, who was also the Lord Privy Seal; and James Maitland, eighth Earl of Lauderdale: Bolton, *Portrait*, p. 427; Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p. 156. There were supposed to be around thirty members in total, although over time the minute book (NA, PRO 20–6/1) shows that some members dropped out and were replaced.
- 31 NA, PRO 20/5/1 (59); Clarisse Godard Desmarest, 'The Melville Monument and the Shaping of the Scottish Metropolis, *Architectural History*, 61 (2018), pp. 105–130.
- 32 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p.156.
- 33 SM 41/56 recto.
- 34 See Cousins, this volume, pp. 105–122.
- 35 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, p. 156.
- 36 SM 17/8/2–3; John Summerson, *The Life and Works of JOHN NASH Architect* (1980), p. 137; Michael Mansbridge, *John Nash: A complete Catalogue*, (1991), pp. 204–5.
- 37 Mansbridge, *John Nash*, p. 204.
- 38 In Napoleonic France, two monumental columns had been erected with a statue of Napoleon on top, the Column of the Grand Armée at Boulogne-sur-mer, and the Colonne Vendôme in Paris with its spiral frieze.
- 39 NA, WORK 20–6/1; SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III L.13.38*; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 387. Burn chose not to submit.
- 40 NA, WORK 20–6/1.
- 41 SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III L.13.39*; Bolton, *Portrait*, p. 428, (My italics).
- 42 A map in Soane's Folio Volume 58 shows two slightly different locations: SM Vol. 58/5; SM Vol. 58/6.
- 43 SM 58/1.
- 44 SM 58/2.
- 45 V&A D.1452–1898; Du Prey, *Soane*, p. 78 no. 255.
- 46 Du Prey, *Soane*, p. 78 no. 254.
- 47 V&A 3307.34; SM P355.
- 48 SM 958; SM 1027.
- 49 SM P118.
- 50 Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. xxv.
- 51 PRO 20–6/1; SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III.L.13. 40–41*; Bolton, *Portrait*, p. 427–8.
- 52 PRO 20–6/1; Soane Archive, *Private Correspondence III L. 13. 42*; reproduced in Bolton, *Portrait*, p. 428: '...this is a most noble & disinterested testimony to your feelings towards the late Duke of York;' (my italics).
- 53 SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III L. 13. 43*.
- 54 SM Vol. 58/7.
- 55 James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens vol. 2* (1798), Chapter IV, plate 6.
- 56 Watkin, *Royal Academy Lectures*, p. 527 (Lecture III).
- 57 Watkin, *Royal Academy Lectures*, p. 282; SM Archives 1/319 fol [2] 3/1/1819. The observation was made in Soane's earlier notes which did not make it into his Royal Academy lectures.
- 58 V&A 3307.36.
- 59 V&A 3306.35.
- 60 SM Vol. 58/12.
- 61 SM P356.
- 62 PRO 20–6/1; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 387. The Committee Minute Book (PRO 20–6/1) records that the following sculptors had been invited to compete: Sir Francis Chantrey, Sir Richard Westmacott, Edward Hodges Baillie, Thomas Campbell, John Edward Carew, Joseph Kendrick, John Gibson, Joseph Gott, Thomas Leverton Donaldson (an architect, rather than a sculptor), and John Graham Lough.
- 63 PRO 20–6/1.
- 64 PRO 20–6/1; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 387.
- 65 PRO 20–6/1; SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III L. 13. 44*; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 387.



- 66 PRO 20-5/1 (81-6); Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 388.
- 67 SM Archive, *Private Correspondence III L. 13. 44.*
- 68 Wilkins, *Patronage of the Arts*, p. 473.
- 69 Wyatt had worked on the interiors at Belvoir Castle for the Duchess of Rutland, whose husband was on the committee: Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, 2016, p. 159; Wilkins 1832, 'Patronage of the Arts', p. 474-5. Wyatt was also noted for his method of ingratiation to gain commissions, as at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1812. An attempt was also made to gain favour with the commission for the Travellers Club in Pall Mall in 1828. Here, along with a courteous rejection letter, Wyatt was diplomatically censured by the committee for the 'handsome offer' that Wyatt made in a letter to them: see John Martin Robinson, *The Travellers Club: A Bicentennial History 1819-2019*, (2019), p. 50.
- 70 Wilkins, 'Patronage of the Arts', p. 474.
- 71 Wilkins, 'Patronage of the Arts', p. 474.
- 72 PRO 20-6/1; Wilkins, 'Patronage of the Arts' p. 475; Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 388. In contrast to other contemporary projects such as the Travellers Club, where the nine competing architects received prompt and polite replies: see Robinson, *Travellers Club*, pp. 47-50.
- 73 Wilkins, 'Patronage of the Arts' p. 474-5. Accusations, again not substantiated, also followed Wellington as he was on the committee which decided on William Railton for the column to Nelson in Trafalgar Square. The design was not universally liked: see Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 276.
- 74 PRO 20-6/1.
- 75 Wilkins, 'Patronage of the Arts' p. 473.
- 76 PRO 20-6/1 the committee agreed payment on 12 April 1831, but Wilkins and Deering did not retrieve their work until March 1833.
- 77 Winterbottom, *Grand Old Duke of York*, 158; PRO 20-6/1 The cost of the bronze statue of York was eventually £4,000.
- 78 PRO 20-5/1 (218-19); Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, p. 388. It would not be until 1926 that a monument would be erected in front of Horse Guards from St James's Park, that being the Guards Division, by Gilbert Ledward and Henry Chalton Bradshaw: see Ward-Jackson, *Public Sculpture*, pp. 74-7.
- 79 V&A D1452-1898.



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