The House and Park at Danson London Borough of Bexley

The anatomy of a Georgian suburban estate

DRAFT COPY FOR CIRCULATION WITH DRAFT CONSERVATION PLAN

by

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Contents

List of illustrations

This draft of this report only contains phase plans and sections as illustrations. The following table shows which drawings are included.

	1763	1766	1770	1780	1805	1865	1925	2000
The Kitchen Floor	✓	✓			✓	✓		
The Terrace Floor	✓	✓			✓	✓		
The Principal Floor, floor frame	✓							
The Principal Floor	✓	✓	✓			✓		
The Bedroom Floor, floor frame	✓							
The Bedroom Floor	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
The Attic Floor						✓		
The Roof		✓		✓				
Section 01								✓
Section 07	✓	✓						
Section 11	✓							
Section 14								✓

NOTES ON THE PREPARATION OF THE PHASE PLAN AND SECTION DRAWINGS

The floor plans reproduced here are derived from the 1972 survey for the GLC Historic Buildings Division by John Addams. This hand-measured survey is very accurate in terms of overall dimensions but includes some conjectural detail such as the window heads. The original drawings are now held in the NMR archives at Swindon.

Purcell Miller Tritton digitized this survey with some simplification of detail in 1995 to act as a set of working drawings for their specification for works. The resulting AutoCAD files provided the basic framework for the present set of phase plans. The survey information contained within the files has been edited in the following ways.

1. Hand survey of joinery, by Richard Lea, has provided additional detail.
2. The digitizing has been rationalized where single lines that on the original paper survey read as straight but were translated as multiple parallel lines.
3. Hatching has been added to indicate solidity and to clarify the phasing.

The drawings illustrate the phases of construction identified and described in the report *The House and park at Danson, London Borough of Bexley, the anatomy of a Georgian suburban estate* by Richard Lea and Chris Miele.

In the drawings, fabric shown hatched grey with a black outline remains *in-situ* and dates either from the phase identified by the nominal date at the top of the drawing or an earlier period. Conjectural reconstruction, shown hatched in red with a red outline, did not survive *in-situ* when English Heritage took on the building in 1995. Hence, although there is no doubt that the principal fireplaces are now back in the positions they originally occupied, when English Heritage took on Danson, they had been removed. They are shown therefore in the drawings as conjectural reconstruction.

Each floor plan has been prepared as a separate AutoCAD file (Release 14). However, features within each plan have been assigned within the AutoCAD layering system in such a way that specific combinations of layers within each file generates each of the phase plans.

1.

Introduction and summary

This report is the result of research into the history and physical fabric of Danson House in the London Borough of Bexley along with its associated stable block and park. The house, an outstanding example of a neo-Palladian villa, is the work of the noted architect Sir Robert Taylor. Although it is impossible to be more precise about dates without any building accounts -- none have so far come to light -- documentary and fabric evidence suggested that the carcass of the house was finished in 1762-63 and the interiors somewhat later, probably in 1766. In 1770, Sir William Chambers was called in to enhance the interior decoration -- designing, most notably, the three very fine chimneypieces on the principal floor. Sometime before 1787 Taylor's single-storey canted bays on the east and west sides of the house were heightened. The house is listed Grade I.

Taylor's initial scheme called for a free-standing, cubic villa, with offices and stables at a distance. By 1766 the conception of the house changed, and the architect added a pair of wings to either side of the original block, linked to it by a curving quadrant wall. The wing to the west housed the stables and that to the east offices. The wings were demolished between 1802 and 1804, and replaced by the present block, which reused many of the architectural features from the original wings and may be the work of George Dance the Younger. This structure is listed Grade II*, and like the house on the English Heritage Buildings-at-Risk Register, has been converted for use as a restaurant/public house.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the Danson estate comprised some 600 acres, 200 of which were given over to a fine park in the manner of `Capability' Brown. The question of who exactly designed this park -- which retains much of its original character to the south of the house -- is, like many things connected with Danson, as yet unanswered and possibly unanswerable. Nathaniel Richmond prepared an overall scheme in c.1762, a former assistant of Brown's, but then modified. One Fean Garwood, who is described on his tombstone in Bexley churchyard as `Late Gardener to Sir John Boyd', may have adapted Richmond's plan for the park. Chambers provided designs in 1770 for a single-arch, wooden Palladian Bridge similar to one Chambers fashioned for Kew, to span the head of the sheet of water at the west end of the Danson lake and, in 1773, at the east end of the ornamental `water', a diminutive Roman temple, moved in 1961 to St. Paul's Walden, Bury, in Hertfordshire.

The house was little altered over the next two centuries, with the most far-reaching works being carried out in 1800 by John Boyd's son. He demolished the wings and used the material build the present stable block and in the mid-1860s by Alfred Bean, whose wealth came from railway building. House and park were taken into local authority ownership in 1924 less out of concern for the architectural glories of the estate than to secure the park for the public at a time of rapid suburbanisation.

The house is listed Grade I and the stable block Grade II*. Both were on the Buildings at Risk Register compiled by English Heritage.

English Heritage acquired the lease to the house, stable block and the land in their immediate curtilage in summer 1995, and then initiated a programme of repair. The first phase of works on the house is now (summer 1998) completed. The stable block was converted for use as a restaurant/public house in 1997. Until the long-term future of the

house is secure, English Heritage is committed to maintaining the building.

In 1994, prior to assuming control of the lease, English Heritage commissioned the architects Purcell Miller Tritton to undertake a feasibility study of both structures. Their report, `Danson House and Stables, Bexley' of July 1994 contains a Schedule of Repair, a set of 35 mm colour photographs, and a metric survey of the stables prepared by ELS Land Consultants. This study was used as the basis for subsequent archaeological analysis of the building fabrics.

The present report brings together archaeological and documentary evidence, attempting to knit the two together into a coherent whole. Research commenced early in 1995 and was carried out by Richard Lea and Chris Miele of the Historical Analysis and Research Team of English Heritage.

The purpose of this research and of the resulting report has in the first instance been to inform the decision-making process as well as to influence any future programme of repair and reuse. At the same time this work is intended as a record of the house as English Heritage found it, making more widely available detailed information on the construction of a typical Georgian villa and its estate.

2.

The development of the estate from the thirteenth through to the mid-eighteenth century

Medieval smallholdings and the early estate

In the thirteenth century `Densynton' applied to a small area -- it can scarcely be called a hamlet -- within the Archepiscopal manor of Bexley.[1] Archbishop Pecham's Survey of 1284 describes seven tenants as being of that place, indicating that the scant seventeen acres held among them was by this time well established arable land.[2] The selling 'Densinton' appears in a lay subsidy roll of 1301.[3] In subsidy rolls of 1324 and 1358 there are references to 'Danston', a short step to the modern `Danson, although the spelling was not regularised until the late eighteenth century.[4] It is not possible to locate exactly where these early subsistence farmers lived; however, two later maps show a collection of structures as the east end of the present park lake, on either side of what is now Danson Road. To some extent, it may be possible to determine the field patterns from the traces of ridge and furrow now visible between the house and the tennis courts at the north end of the park.

By 1571, these smallholdings had been amalgamated into something resembling a substantial private estate with close to 100 acres of valuable woodland and perhaps as many again of arable. In that year Matthew Parker, the son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, also Matthew, purchased 'Dansington' for the considerable sum of £500. Parker, who lived modestly in Lambeth in one wing of his father's house, enjoyed the rental income off this land for barely three years. In his will of November 1574 (he died in January 1575), Parker's wife received both his house in Lambeth and the income from 'Danison'. Although the will refers to the property as a 'mannor', it had never been such in law and never would be, but the very use of this term demonstrates that the place and its buildings had gained in status over the previous two centuries.[5] The property quickly passed through the hands of two further Parkers. We know little about a sixteenth-century tenant, one William Kightley, and no more than the name, Richard Cowper, of one from the early seventeenth century.

The emergence of the estate in the seventeenth century

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1 The settlement pattern in Bexley was typical of medieval Kent, which was thickly populated with scattered dwellings rather distinct villages or hamlets. *The Victoria County Histories. A History of Kent*, vol. III (London: St. Catherine's Press, 1932), p. 338.

2 R. Hutcherson, *The History of Danson: From Saxon Settlement to Public Park* (Bexley: 1979), p. 4, where she reprints an extract from this document held at Canterbury Cathedral, Lit MS E24, f. 90. Cranmer granted the manor to Henry VIII in 1534, and the Crown held it until James I granted it to his jeweller, one John Spilman of German origin. It was then sold to William Camden, the great antiquary, who in 1622 executed a deed of gift to Oxford University, in order to apply the manor's income to the maintenance of a lectureship in Modern History. Edward Hasted, *History of Kent* (1778), vol. I, pp. 159-60.

3 Hutcherson, p. 8, cites the original document at the Public Record Office: E/179/123/5. For a transcription see *Annual Reports and Transactions*, Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society, 22 (1926), pp..

4 The Private Act of 1762 which altered the terms of the charitable trust funded out of the rental income of Danson uses the modern spelling in addition to `Daunson' and Daunsington'. 2 George III, no. 35, p. 5.

5 The Private Act of 1762, see note 4, refers to it as `the Manor or reputed Manor'.

A survey of Bexley manor made in 1608 describes Danson as consisting of about 180 acres of wood, pasture and arable land in addition to nine acres on which the house and farm buildings stood.[6] The largest estate was actually the manor proper, Hall Place, which was in possession of 570 acres. Three other estates were somewhat larger than Danson and like Danson developed into genteel seats for retiring Londoners over the next two centuries.[7] The first hard evidence we have concerning improvements to the estate comes in the late seventeenth century. In 1672 the Archbishop of Canterbury conveyed the estate to John Adye of Gray's Inn, Middlesex, who by the time of his death in 1695 held its more than 180 acres free from all encumbrances.[8]

Adye managed to build up an impressive portfolio of properties in West Kent, including holdings at Plumstead, Woolwich, East Wickham, and Welling in addition to Danson. He might also have had a hand in lucrative West End property development, a booming market following the Great Fire. According to his will of July 1695, he owned land near Covent Garden and in the Strand in addition to parcels in the vicinity of St. Paul's.[9]

The estate plan of 1684

An estate plan drawn up in 1684 shows his so-called `Mannor of Danson' occupying an area which corresponds roughly to the outlines of the present day Danson Park, that is, running between Danson Road on the east and Danson Lane on the west.[10] Then the estate consisted mostly of woodlands, some of which were being cleared. The total area was given at just over 146 acres, 40 less than the figure recorded for 1608, though the explanation for this remains unclear. The `Mannor House' and its `yards, orchards, barns, stables, etc.' are shown in a loose grouping along the road which then defined the eastern boundary of the estate, that is, at the east end of the present Lake in a slight depression.

A clearer idea of those estate buildings shown on the 1684 plan is provided by a detailed survey which was drawn up during the tenancy of John Selwyn (see below) and can be dated to 1745. This shows what appears to be a double-ended house on the west side of the Danson-Blendon Road with stables to the north on the other side of the road. Two other buildings are identified: a small house to the north of Danson House proper, and, immediately to the north of Danson stables, a barn which belonged to that house.

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6 Public Record Office, LR/2/218 20-58. Copy in Bexley Local Studies, MAN. 1608.

7 Blendon Hall in the hamlet of Bridgen passed in 1732 to Jacob Sawbridge, a Director of the South Sea Company; it was sold in 1763 to Lady Mary Scott, a daughter of the 4th Earl of Northampton, who then rebuilt it as a `neat and elegant mansion'. At Lamienby, two miles west of Bexley Church, was a grand sixteenth-century house. In 1744 it passed to William Steele, who not only rebuilt it but constructed an elegant 81 acre park. About a half mile north of Danson was Brampton Hall which came into the possession of Peter Warren, a London wine merchant, in 1772. See Hasted, *op cit.*, pp. 160-163.

8 As it was described in his will, witnessed on 4 July 1695. See S. Piper, `An Analysis of the Leases and Other documents relating to the estate of Danson Hill, Kent', typescript, Bexley Local Studies Library, Hall Place, pp. 8 and 9.

9 Piper, pp. 8 and 9.

10 Formerly in the collection of the Local Studies Collection, this map was reprinted in a brochure put out in 1924 by Bexley Urban District. The original has since disappeared. Fortunately a former Hall Place librarian, **first name?** Shaw, has made a usable transcription from the 1924 reproduction. See Bexley Local Studies, P104.

Easily the most significant and telling feature of the estate in 1684 was the large canal, which ran roughly west from the then Danson House and was nearly as long as the present lake (and not far off its present course). The Swedish artist Elias Martin made a view of this from the west, looking towards the house, in c.1768). Although it is only an impressionistic sketch, the artist has captured the look and feel of the older house and its pleasure grounds at the very moment it was about to be made over by Boyd (see below). In 1684, such 'canals' were a new feature of English landscape gardening. Ultimately their use may derive from Holland or perhaps from the famous Grand Canal constructed at the Palace of Fountainbleu in 1607. What was very likely Mollet constructed the first example in this country in St. James's Park in 1660 on the line of steps leading down from Whitehall Palace. In the winter of 1661-62 a far larger canal was constructed to this plan at Hampton Court.[11] These innovative examples suggest that the Danson canal was built between c1660 and 1684 and almost certainly, by Adye himself who, with his interests in West End property, would have known of recent, fashionable developments in town and at court.

Bexley as a London retreat in the seventeenth century

Even before Adye's day Bexley was attractive to Londoners seeking a place of retirement if not quite a suburb. As early as 1537, John Champneys a member of the Skinners's Company who had earlier served as Sheriff and Lord Mayor of London purchased Hall Place. Less grand Londoners began to make their way into the Kentish suburbs somewhat later. In 1688 George Paine, a Freeman of the City and member of the Skinner's Company, let twelve and six acres of land respectively to William Wrayford and Joseph Martin, both of whom are described in the lease as 'London Merchants'.[12] Bexley was only one place in the orbit of the capital that was absorbing city-dwellers in search of status and more salubrious surroundings. Dignified suburban seats were beginning to crop up in Kensington in the late 1680s; later this growth was encouraged by the regular presence of George I who liked to keep court in the Palace from May to July.[13] To the south and west, Richmond and Twickenham developed apace and for the same reasons. The former was particularly popular for its waters, whose discovery in 1696 accelerated the area's development.[14] At Twickenham, ancient houses were rebuilt and new dwellings constructed. Some of the latter having the social character of what would later be recognised as villas.[15] Even the northern reaches of Surrey were affected. The most intensive development took place at Epsom which by 1680 was a thriving spa town, hitting the peak of fashionability in the same years as Kensington, 1690-1710.[16] Apparently, it was common for London merchants and their families to settle at Epsom for the summer, the men travelling into the City or Westminster regularly if not everyday.[17]

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11 D. Jacques and A. J van der Horst, *The Gardens of William and Mary* (London: Christopher Helm, 1988), pp. 18-22, 142-3, 148-9.

12 Bexley Local Studies Collection, Danson Leases, D 3a, dated 20 March 1688.

13 *Survey of London. South Kensington. Kensington Square to Earl's Court*, vol. XLII (London: The Athlone Press, 1986), pp. 1-6. The grandiose Kensington Square was begun c1690 but not completed until 1737. Scarsdale House and Terrace were date to 1690-95.

14 C. Hussey, `Richmond Green, Surrey -- II', *Country Life*, 12 may 1944, pp. 816-9.

15 *The Victoria County History. Middlesex*, vol. III, (London and Oxford: Institute of Historical Research and the University Press, 1962), pp. 139-43.

16 *The Buildings of England. Surrey* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), ed. I. Nairn and N. Pevsner, pp. 49-50.

17 On 7 July 1710 it took von Uffenbach three hours to traverse the 14 miles separating Westminster

The estate in the hands of John Styleman (1652-1734)

The hazy details of Danson's early history begin to come into focus after 1695. Then, Francis Styleman, a Freeman of the City and a member of the Joyners' Company, and one A. Rodriguez, described simply as a 'London Merchant', took the estate in trust for Francis's brother John on a 200-year lease.[18] John Styleman (1652-1734) was then seeking his fortune in India. In 1669, he was named as secretary to the East India Company's Bantam factory. He became factor at Tonquin in 1679 and was then, in the next decade, swept along by the rapid development of Madras's Fort St. George, which received a British style municipal government in 1688. Styleman was criticised for financial irregularities relating to certain public works, but his reputation survived and he served as mayor from 1692 to 1695. At the same time, he was offered a seat on the special Council the British East Indies, retiring from this post in 1698. In the next year, he went back to England.[19]

Styleman lived at Danson for more than twenty years, during which time his second wife, Arabella died (1717). In 1723, following the death of his next wife Henrietta (he had five in all) he decided to lease the property to John Selwyn (1688-1751), whose family seat was Matson just outside Gloucester. At this point Danson encompassed some 250 acres ornamented by 'ponds, springs, canalls, piscaryes'. Timber stocks had been depleted, and Selwyn was obliged to take care with what remained, leaving 'sufficient amount' for the 'necessary reparacions' of estate buildings. Nor was he allowed to 'cut down or fell any such other timber trees as happen to be ornamental to said capital messuage, gardens or walks that now are or shall be made during the present demise'. And he was required to expend at least £1,000 improving the estate within the first ten years of the lease.[20] Selwyn was allowed, however, to enhance the 'buildings, walks or gardens', enlarge the canal or build another one, remove stables and barns from near to the house, or construct any new building, so long as the intention was to increase the park's beauty.[21]

John Styleman's Bequest

Styleman died in 1734, settling all his property as well as the rental income from Danson, £200, on his wife Mary. On her death in 1750, the property was shared out amongst Francis Styleman's descendants. One portion was vested in a charitable trust to erect and maintain almshouses for twelve poor families in the parish of Bexley on land near to St. Mary's Church. The group in the High Street was in occupation after 1755.[22]

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from Epsom. See *London in 1710, from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), trans. by W. H. Quarrel and M. Mare, p. 105. However, Nairn and Pevsner, *op cit.*, cite Defoe's 1725 observation that men drove to town each day as proof that daily commuting between London and Epsom was possible.

18 Bexley Local Studies, Danson Leases, D13, dated 8 June 1697.

19 S. Piper, pp. 10-13. Hutcherson, p. 12, suggests that Styleman's second wife, Arabella (ob. 1717), or his next, Henrietta (ob. 1723), were responsible for what she identifies as `formal gardens' shown on the 1769 Andrews, Dury Map (**exact citation to be regularised**); there is, however, no sign of such a garden on this map, nor I am aware of any documentation which records changes made to the estate in the period of Styleman's occupancy.

20 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, D32 and D32b, dated 20 September 1723.

21 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, D32e, 21-6.

22 R. Hutcherson, p. 14.

John Sewlyn's (1688-1751) Danson

Selwyn was a grand figure, arguably the grandest ever to be associated with the estate. Although the family seat was at Matson, just outside Gloucester, he had close ties to this part of Kent.[23] He was born at Scadbury, and his father, General William Selbourne, was governor of Tilbury Fort. His mother was from Chislehurst. In 1702, when General Selbourne, died Mary his wife (born Farrington), settled at Matson, where she lived until her own death in 1737.[24] Although John, as eldest son, succeeded to Matson, he does not seem to have lived there, nor does he seem to have carried out any significant alterations to the fabric. Selwyn's political career kept him at Westminster, and his townhouse in Cleveland Court, St. James's, became a well-known gathering place for polite society. Danson was the suburban retreat.

By 1723, the year Selwyn leased Danson, he was well on his way to distinguishing himself in public life. In Flanders, he had served as an *aide-de-camp* to the Duke of Marlborough, eventually purchasing a colonetcy for himself in the Duke of Argyll's regiment. On returning to England in 1710, he rose in prominence as a member of the prince's household. In 1720, on the reunion of the Whig party, came a lucrative customs' post, the first of several official appointments. In 1739, he held offices worth £4,600, and in the coming decade, it increased. His alliance with the Duke of the Newcastle led to his being returned as MP for City of Gloucester from 1727 until his death in 1751. The last word falls, suitably, to Horace Walpole. After visiting the Cleveland Court house in 1744, Walpole described Selwyn as a 'shrewd, silent man, humane and reckoned very honest -- he might be so -- if he was he did great honour to the cause, for he had made his court and his fortune with as much dexterity as those who reckon virtue the greatest impediment to worldly excess.'[25]

Colonel Selwyn's correspondence in the British Library shows that by 1737 he was conducting some of his parliamentary business from Danson.[26] Regrettably, nothing in these letters has any bearing on the estate, although one letter to the Duke of Newcastle dated 25 February 1740 contains some advice on gardening and plantations.[27] Nevertheless, Selwyn clearly felt strongly about Danson. He brought his wife and three children to the estate regularly, and his will of 1732 records his wish to be buried in Bexley parish church.[28] In 1739, he made the first of several purchases to enlarge the estate, 13 acres from one Samuel Wyburn for £378.[29] Then, between September 1745 and

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23 *Buildings of England. Gloucestershire. The Vale and the Forest of Dean* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp. 297-8. See also A. Oswald, `Matson House, Gloucestershire', *Country Life*, 8 December 1993, pp. 1993-7.

24 Mary Farrington Selwyn stayed in close touch with her Chislehurst relations, which perhaps explains why John decided on Bexley. See *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XIII (1878-9), pp. 395-7.

25 R. Sedgwick, *The House of Commons, 1715-1754, Members E--Y* (London: HMSO, 1970).

26 The last letter giving Danson as point of origin is dated 3 November 1748. British Library, Add. Ms, `Letters to Lord Hardwicke, 1739-1750', 35,586, f.196; 35,602, f.77; 35,603, f. 55. None of Selwyn's letters in the Duke of Newcastle correspondence at theBritish Library shows Danson as a point of origin.

27 British Library, Add. Ms. 32,696, f.129. The two Selwyn notebooks held at the Hampshire County Record office, 27M87/14 (Rent Rolls of Mr. Selwyn's houses) and 27M87/15 (Account of Burgage Field, Whitchurch), are likewise devoid of references to Danson.

28 Piper, pp. 15-16.

29 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 44 and 45, dated 6 December 1739. The Wyburn family is listed on the 1608 estate survey.

January 1746, Selwyn bought smaller parcels in order to enhance the surroundings of the house. The most important of these was a long, thin plot of just under an acre on the east side of the narrow lane linking Welling High Street to the north with the hamlet of Blendon to the south (this is now the Danson Road).[30] His aim was to move this small lane well away from the house. The lines of the new and old roads are shown in a coloured plan of the house and its surroundings.[31] The inscription in the upper right corner is in Selwyn's hand. This was almost certainly drawn up for leases signed in 1745. Marked 'A' on this plan is the house; its outline suggests a late medieval building with cross wings. The only landscape feature that has survived from this time in this line of the road itself, which at the east end of the lake follows a curving line probably established during Selwyn's day.

We may never know why Selwyn worked so hard to improve the house and estate from 1739, nearly twenty years into his initial lease. The death of his mother at Matson in 1737 and the subsequent leasing of that house to a farmer may have had something to do with it. We do know that his fortunes were on the rise. In 1745, the very year he was negotiating with his neighbours to expand the estate, he was granted 16 tracts of land `in the extreme parts of North Carolina', each totalling about 16,000 acres, although the exploitation of this area's natural resources was just getting underway.[32] His appointment in 1746 as paymaster to the marines was probably worth far more.[33] All that can be said for sure is that by the time of his death in 1751 Selwyn had carried out considerable architectural and landscape improvements at Danson. A plan drawn up in 1753 and affixed to the repairing lease, which John Boyd took from Selwyn's widow, details the extent of these changes.[34]

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30 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 and 56A.

31 Bexley Local Studies, MAP E15.

32 *George Selwyn and the Wits*, p. 56. The son's claim to this land is set out in a petition to the Treasury of 1751, British Library, Ad. Mss. 34,736, f.183.

33 R. Sedgwick, *op cit.*

34 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 67, dated 3 July 1753.

3.

John Boyd and the Danson estate 1753-1800

John Boyd acquires Danson: the lease and plan of 1753

The plan of 1753 records some of the changes Selwyn made to Danson. The house appears as a single square, and although it is hard to say anything definite about such a shadowy building, it is plausible that this structure was entirely new. To judge by the Martin watercolour of fifteen years later, the front of the house probably faced north.[35] The barn close by the house and a small house to its north are gone; the `rivulet' feeding the canal has been buried; and the old road to Blendon has been retained as a looping private drive. In addition, there are three structures in 1753 which are not shown in the 1745 plan; an ice house immediately to the north of main house and, near to the location of an ice house shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1865, a 'Temple' and a 'Chineyes' [sic] house. The latter was located at the far end of the ornamental basin that leads on from the canal and may well date to the building campaign of 1745-51. The pen-and-ink sketch of this building in the Bodleian Library shows stylish, fashionably up-to-date little building.[36] So too was the 'Temple', if it is the one on the plan of Danson made by the Rev. Joseph Spence in spring 1763.

The lease of 1753 contains a schedule of goods and fixtures that came with the house Boyd leased. There was a library with fitted books cases and an adjoining closet, a parlour, drawing room and hall, the latter decorated with 'Old Maps'. Next to the hall was a small bedroom. Three more bedrooms on the first floor accompanied a nursery and 'gallery'. There were servants in the garrets and in the basement, where there was a 'brick hall' leading to a cellar, two servant's halls, a butler's pantry, and a kitchen. Selwyn might have done a lot to bring the accommodation at Danson up to scratch, but the house still had one problem, its location. It stood on the site of the older building, at the bottom of the east-west ridge bisecting the present park. It offered no views of the surrounding countryside and it made no show. Within a decade, Boyd would remedy these defects.

The Boyd family fortune: sugar plantations on St. Christopher

John Boyd (1718-1800) was the son of a largely self-made man, but John does not seem to have had the same love of trade as his father. Bit by bit he withdrew from the family business. Augustus Boyd (1679/70-1765) must have been a tenacious, resourceful character. He was born in Portnacross, County Donegal. The family, which had settled in Ulster in the early part of the seventeenth century, could claim a distant relationship with the Lairds of Kilmarnock, but this did little to enhance the fortunes of young Augustus, whose opportunities were undermined by his family's support for the Stuarts. Frustrated on one side of the Atlantic, he went west in search of a better life, settling in 1700 on St. Christopher (St. Kitts), one of the Leeward Isles, where his maternal uncle, a French Huguenot named Andrew Thauvet, had already set himself up as a sugar planter.[37]

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35 Martin shows what is clearly a gable end; that the front of the house was to the left, or north, can be surmised by the layout of the drive shown on the 1753 lease. The main route from London was Watling Street (Welling High Street) to the north, and hence this was the direction from which carriages would have approached the house.

36 Bodleian Library (Gough Maps 13 fol. 28). As described in Roger White, `Danson Park, Bexley', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 98 (1982), pp. 51-66, at pp. 52-3.

37 The following is taken from D. Hancock, `"Citizen of the World": Commercial Success, Social Development and the Experience of Eighteenth-Century British Merchants Who Traded in America"

Europeans wide had first settled the tiny island, nineteen miles long by six, in the 1620s. It was later divided up between British and French planters. Blessed by a salubrious climate and by first-rate soil, it was in every way perfectly suited for cultivating sugar cane, one of the most valuable crops of the day. Between 1700 and 1770 sugar prices quadrupled, making it, along with its derivative, rum, one of London's most sizeable and valuable imports.[38]

To start, Augustus Boyd managed other people's property, but by 1710 he had acquired a medium-sized plantation, about 150 acres in extent and cultivated by 49 West African slaves. In 1718 he doubled his land holdings and set himself up provisioning other planters. He married in that year, Lucy Peters, the only daughter of a prominent planter and a speaker in the island Assembly. But even this profitable liaison did not guarantee success.[39] In 1730, Augustus was not able to regain possession of 110 acres in the English quarter that had been left him by his uncle. Two years later he failed in a bid for a seat on the Assembly. He decided it was time to return to Britain, leaving his sugar plantations in the care of someone else.

Augustus Boyd's return to London, 1735: commission merchandising for the British West Indies plantations

Augustus Boyd arrived in London in 1735, lodging with his brother-in-law James Pechell, who like his Leeward Isle uncle was also of French Huguenot stock. The two formed a partnership with offices in Broad Street in the City, then an enclave of Scots, Irish and Huguenot merchants.[40] Their business, in the words of David Hancock, was that of 'a commission merchandising firm', supplying goods and services to colonial planters and even selling or re-exporting their produce. Augustus came to act as a 'spokesman for West Indies planters', again according to Hancock, petitioning parliament in the 1730s and later, usually to get trade restrictions removed.[41] In 1745, he set up on his own in Austin Friars to work within a close circle of Irish and Huguenot planters.[42] Although known as Boyd and Co., the firm was essentially just Augustus and his only son John.[43]

The Boyds, like many of their contemporaries, sought both to diversify and integrate their business interests. Hence, planting led to them acting as agents for planters, which in its turn led to lucrative government contracts for military provisions.[44] The West Indies'

(PhD Thesis: Harvard University, 1990), pp. 31-41. See also D. Hancock, *Citizens of the World. London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1996), pp. 46-9.

38 Hancock, 1996, pp. 146-7.

39 Hancock, 1996, pp. 47-8, 146-7.

40 Hancock, 1996, p.88.

41 Hancock, 1996, p. 48.

42 Hancock, 1996, p. 48.

43 Hancock, 1996, p. 106.

44 From 1747 to 1760 Boyd and Co. shipped beef and then sea provisions to the 14,000 British troops at Kingston in Jamaica. Irish beef and butter was sent to Plymouth in 1756-57, at the start of the Seven Years' War. Sea provisions and beef were shipped to the station at Waterford somewhat later, with the last contract finishing in 1764. Waterford was home to Augustus Boyd's brother and cousins who were merchants in that city. Hancock, 1996, pp. 222-3.

sugar plantations that stood at the head of this increasingly complex pyramid of commercial transactions were based on slave labour, and so it was not surprising for Boyd and his associates to become involved in that too. In 1748 a `slave castle', or fortified trading *entrepot,* was purchased by Richard Oswald on behalf of a consortium of investors which included the Boyds. The *entrepot* was on Bance Island in the mouth of the Sierra Leone River. The Royal Africa Company had established it in the 1670s. Their crown-sanctioned monopoly on slave trading collapsed in the 1720s when the commercial demand for sugar, and hence slaves, was beginning to increase dramatically. As the market opened to competition, it was usual for trading to take place on slave ships plying the African coast. Fixed *entrepots* were unusual.

By 1748, the Bance Island factory was much in need of repair, a fact confirmed by a survey undertaken by the associates. Work was delayed by the 1750 African Trade Act, which in addition to setting the terms of the slave trade until its abolition in 1807 called into question the title to properties of the now defunct Royal Africa Company. An Act of 1752 explicitly confirmed the title to Bance Island. Here Augustus Boyd's experience petitioning parliament on behalf of his sugar planter clients may have proved essential. Rebuilding went on over the next four years. Initially the slaves went to satisfy the planting needs of the partners themselves, but by the late 1750s slaves were being supplied on a fully commercial basis, with the business hitting a peak in the years 1757 to 1769, and again in the early 1770s. Something in the order of 10,000 slaves were exported from the factory alone in the late 1760s, roughly 6% of all British exports from Sierra Leone. In 1784, John Boyd's share in the island was sold, and his connection with the business ended.[45]

During the Bance Island episode John Boyd worked his way into the powerful East India Company, serving as a Director during the 1750s and 1760s. But even this work fed the family commission business, since as a Director Boyd could obtain East Indian goods for Boyd and Co.'s West Indian clients.[46] The cycle of trade was truly international.

John Boyd's aspirations

The picture of John Boyd that emerges from David Hancock's work is of someone estranged from his family background, more at ease in his adopted homeland than in the hurly-burly of City commercial life. The younger Boyd sought social integration, and attempted to break out of the circle of business that seems to have defined his father's life. The process started in 1737 when John left the family home for Christ Church College, Oxford, where he read theology. After taking his degree, he embarked on the first of several continental tours, returning to the family's Broad Street house in the early 1740s. He entered business with his father, concentrating particularly on affairs in Westminster, and in 1749, he married Mary Bumpstead, the daughter of a prominent Warwickshire landowner. With her, he had four children in quick succession, John (b.1750), Elizabeth (b.1751), Lucy (b.1753), and Mary (b.1754). A fifth child, Augustus, came in 1758.[47] Augustus remained tied to his narrow circle of West Indian planters. His son's horizons were wider; John got involved with the East India Company, eventually becoming a Director. He built up a picture collection of considerable size, took a townhouse in one of the most elegant districts, commissioned a new house at Danson.[48]

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45 Discussed in detail by Hancock, 1996, pp. 172-215.

46 Hancock, 1996, p. 218.

47 Hutcherson, p. 31, fig. 15.

48 Hancock, 1996, p.56.

The different town establishments kept by father and son demonstrate the difference in aspirations. The first house in Broad Street and then Austin Friars would have combined business and family accommodation in a way typical for its day. Success brought a desire to separate the two; and so, in 1747, Augustus, like many of his contemporaries, leased a house in the near country, Lewisham, really more of an outlying suburb.[49] Hancock refers to this house as a villa but it was not.[50] Lewisham House stood on the south west corner of the junction between Ladywell Road and Lewisham High Street and survived into the late nineteenth century. It appears in several photographs now held in the local record office as a large double pile three-storey house, probably of seven bays. Originally, an Elizabethan building, Boyd occupied it as Sir John Lethieullier, Sheriff of London, remodelled it in 1680 in 1678.[51] Interestingly, John Boyd appears to have been the first to move into the area, since his name appears in the rate books from 1743 until 1754 for a much smaller house apparently a few doors away in Lewisham High Street.[52]

Augustus Boyd did not do as many of his contemporaries, take a genteel terraced house in Mayfair. When finally, in 1760, at the age of 83, he did lease a house in the West End it was near to parliament not court, no. 4, Great George Street. It seems odd that Augustus, who had resolutely kept up his City residence, should lease a house in Westminster at the end of his life instead of retiring to suburban Lewisham. The house might well have been intended for John, or leased at his insistence.[53] The Great George Street House is particularly interesting in relation to Danson House, for if, as Richard Garnier has surmised, Robert Taylor was involved in the development of this street, then we have the first tangible link between the architect and his client at Danson.[54] It was a modest townhouse, less grand than others in this and the surrounding streets. A plain, four-storey structure with a brick front, its exterior was relieved only by the simplest of flat stone bands and a rudimentary modillion cornice.[55] The London County Council team, which surveyed the house before its demolition, noted simple interiors. Although John inherited the house on the death of his father in 1765, he never occupied it. The rate

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49 The parish rate books for St Mary, Lewisham, now held by the Central Library Lewisham, list 'Augustus Boyde Esqre' as resident from 1747 to 1765 with an annual rent of £50 rising to £60. Subsequently, his wife appears in the rate books until her death in 1783. Her death was notified in the the Gentleman's Magazine of that year as 'At Lewisham, Kent, Mrs Boyd, relict of the late Aug. B. esq.: and moth. Of the present Sir John B. bart.'

50 Hancock, 1996, p.287, n. 14

51 John Coulter, *Lewisham and Deptford in old photographs*, 1990, p43

52 There are two John Boydes in the rate books for St Mary, Lewisham. The first, from 1743 to 1754, is listed near to Augustus Boyd. The second, from 1753 onwards listed in the Blackheath area, probably at 3-4 Lloyds Place, (Neil Rhind, *Blackheath Names*, 2nd ed. Aug 1998) appears to be unrelated. Unfortunately, the full series of rate books do not survive.

53 According to Richard Garnier, the Great George Street houses were similar in plan to houses in John Street, Holborn of 1759-61, the attribution of which to Taylor is now accepted by Colvin (3rd edition). It seems likely that Taylor was responsible for the overall plan and disposition of each house not their fitting out. The other piece of evidence linking the Great George Street houses to Taylor is th 27e number of Taylor patrons who first occupied the houses here. In conversation with Chris Miele, September 1996.

54 In conversation with Chris Miele.

55 No. 4 was demolished in 1910 to make way for the Institution of Civil Engineers. *Survey of London*, vol. X, *Parish of St. Margaret's Westminster, part I* (London: Batsford and the London County Council, 1926), p. 31.

books list his mother 'Mrs Boyd of Lewisham' from 1768 to 1783. Boyd's business partner and son-in-law John Trevanion lived there for much of this time.[56]

John Boyd, by contrast, had bigger ideas. The house and estate he let at Danson in 1753 were larger than the house his father had leased in Lewisham and had more room for servants.[57] And while Danson was in the building, Boyd was making plans to rebuild it again on a much grander scale. At the same time, he made concerted efforts to increase the size of the estate.

After his father's death John Boyd sought a grander house in town. In 1767, he took the lease on no. 33 Upper Brook Street, originally erected and occupied in 1756-7. He called in Robert Taylor to remodel the unremarkable house inside and out. Whether this was ever intended for himself is unclear, for in 1769 Boyd had let it to Sir Henry Houghton.[58] Then, in 1772 Boyd leased one of the new houses designed by Taylor in Grafton Street for the Duke. He first occupied No 7 in 1773 but did not live there long, spending increasingly more time at Danson. By 1779, he gave his son John the run of the Grafton Street residence, compensation, it seems, for a reduction in his allowance. In 1792, when the family's fortune was under strain, the elder Boyd sold the house to R. Thornton, an MP and banker, in whose family it remained until 1826.[59] Boyd's house does not survive, but those which do have exceptionally rich interiors and interesting plans. We have no idea how Boyd's house compared with the rest. It was home, however, to many of his pictures, including several views of Danson itself.

John Boyd expands the Danson estate, 1753 to 1784

Boyd must have felt the need for his own house keenly and not merely from the pressure of a rapidly growing family. He was beginning to strike out on his own. In April 1753, just three months before taking the lease at Danson, Boyd became a director of the East India Company and a member of its Court of Directors until 1764. He was especially active in Company affairs over this decade, attending most committee meetings and eventually serving as Deputy Chairman in 1759-60. It was an incredibly profitable period for the Company as huge profits accruing from the French defeat at Plassey in 1757 rolled in.[60] The affairs of Boyd and Co. gradually took up less of his time, as the day-to-day management of the business fell to a trusted associate John Trevanion, who would marry John Boyd's eldest daughter.

The Boyds, John, his wife Mary and the children, could easily have fitted into the house, which had been enlarged by Selwyn between 1745 and 1751. In the period of breakneck expansion at Danson that began in 1759, the year in which Boyd was Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, it seems Boyd was driven less by practical considerations than his desire to distinguish himself as a gentleman, not as a man of business. In 1759, he

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56 Hancock, p. 45.

57 Treasury document reference?

58 *Survey of London*, vol. 40, *The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part II, the Buildings*, ed. FHW. Sheppard (London: the Athlone Press for the Greater London Council, 1980), p. 212.

59 M. Binney, 'Sir Robert Taylor's Grafton Street', *Country Life*, 12 September 1981, pp. 1634-7. London Region Historian's report, Historic Buildings Division, ex Greater London Council; now report WM 261, archive, Historical Analysis and Research Team, English Heritage. John Boyd is listed in the rate books as resident, sometimes as 'Sir', from 1772 to 1800. For the son's residence at Grafton Street, see British Library, Add. Mss., 35,517, fol. 5. In 1785 Boyd the younger wrote that his father `has given me his house in Grafton Street, Add. Mss., 53,535, fo. 46.

60 Hancock, pp. 42-5.

obtained the freehold of the property[61] from Mary Styleman through a series of complex negotiations involving the widow and the trustees of Styleman's charity. The total cost came to £3,500.[62] Roger White has argued that this transaction signalled Boyd's intention to rebuild on a grander scale, but the idea for a new house might have come later.[63] David Hancock has pointed out that becoming a freeholder was often an end in itself for men in Boyd's position, outsiders seeking to build a place for themselves in English society.[64] Nothing could be done until the terms of terms of Styleman's bequest, funded out of the rental income on the old house, were altered and this required an Act of Parliament.

At any rate, over the next few years Boyd concentrated on increasing the size of his new estate. In November 1759, he acquired ten acres of land at Blendon, a hamlet to the south of the estate, for which he paid £240 freehold in November. This brought Danson to 280 acres.[65] Two transactions of 1760, though they concerned small pieces of land, caused him much greater difficulty; but Boyd pressed on, determined to consolidate the verges of his parkland.[66] In 1761, Boyd secured the freehold of more than 65 acres in a pair of transactions totalling £1,066. Most of this purchase was woodland, and part of the payment was in East India Company stock.[67] In this year, he also cleared some of the properties purchased since 1759 of cottages, small gardens, and agricultural buildings.[68] 1762, however, was by far the most important year in the early history of the new estate. In this year Boyd acquired the freehold to four large parcels which, taken together, had formed the largest part of the estate described in 1684 and would form the largest part of the new, elegant parkland.[69] Until 1762, then, Boyd did not even own the future site of the present Danson House, the best site in the park, and it is doubtful he would have commissioned designs for a new house until these transactions were complete. He continued to enlarge the estate over the next two years, though on a much-reduced scale. In these as in all his previous transactions, Boyd was content to take short-term leases as an interim measure; in every case, he had his eye on securing freehold status.[70] Consistent with becoming a man of property, he took a role in local administration. In March 1762, he was made surveyor of highways in the Upland Liberty of the parish. In December, he was elected to the vestry.[71]

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61 R. White, `Danson Park, Bexley', p. 53.

62 Piper, p. 30, and Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 86, 87, and 88.

63 *Op. cit.*

64 Hancock, 1996, p. 274.

65 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 90.

66 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 99, and 101. In order to conclude the latter, which pertained to a negligible amount of land, Boyd had to promise to rebuild the tenant's house and garden within four months and in addition agree a rent well below the value of the property.

67 Bexley Local Studies, Danson leases, DAN 109, 110, and 115.

68 2 George III, 1762, no. 35, p. 7.

69 Danson leases, D32, consisting, to the north of the present lake and encompassing the house and North Lawn, namely Arley's or Arley Wood, consisting of Newgate Field, Middle Field, Barn Field, and Red Pond Field. To the south, nearest the lake, was Two House Spring, Riddens Field or High Riddens, and Little Clays or Clay Field. Danson Leases, D115. The names are taken from the Spence plan

70 Piper, pp. 36-8.

71 He did not attend vestry for all of 1764 and was not reselected as surveyor of highways. Bexley Local Studies, Vestry Minutes, 27 March 1762 and 26 December 1763.

Using the Danson leases in the Bexley Local Studies Collection it is possible to construct a graph showing the number of land transactions John Boyd and his son concluded annually after 1753. The bulk, 49 in all, occurred between 1759 and 1765, with two peaks of activity in 1759 and 1762. From these documents, it is also possible to derive composite maps of the estate showing when Boyd acquired the freehold to particular parcels. After his first burst of activity, there was very little until the period of 1781 to 1784, when Boyd acquired the freehold to 26 properties in all. Most fell outside the boundaries of the Park, in areas now overlaid with interwar development. However, one purchase of 1781, part of what was then known as Great Chapel Field, gave Boyd control of the entire area south of the lake, enabling him, finally, to extend the Park to its final form. Its southern boundary at the Rochester Way is now the divided carriageway of the A2.

Boyd's finances during this period of acquisition were robust, but during the 1760s, they slipped. There was a fall in the price of sugar, the result of world glut. Things did not improve. In 1771, a loan of £9,000, which Boyd had made to associates in order to ensure a friend's election to the East India Company Court of Directors had to be cancelled. Boyd was devastated. In March, he was forced to borrow £5,000 needed to equip seven new plantations on Grenada and Dominica. Soon after another debtor reneged, and then, worst of all, his bank stopped payments on an £18,000 credit. Still, in 1772, there was enough money to lease the house in the Duke of Grafton's Mayfair development[72] and in 1774, Boyd placed his only surviving son John[73] with Sir Robert Murray Keith, the newly appointed British ambassador to Vienna, a very costly undertaking. And in 1775, the entire family went abroad to mark the award of Boyd's baronetcy. They returned with art and antiquities, most notably a three-metre high vase purchased from Piranesi through Sir William Hamilton. It seems to have been installed in the entrance hall at Danson[74] in 1776, the year this great trophy of continental connoisseurship took up its position in the house, circumstances got the better of Boyd. The American Revolution reduced the volume of sugar crossing the Atlantic. His son's budding diplomatic career was brought to an abrupt end.[75] Boyd and Co. went bankrupt in 1777. In 1781, almost none of the sugar from the family plantations found its way to London. Boyd was driven to the brink of despair.[76] The younger Boyd had to rely on his grandmother in Lewisham to keep him `liquid'. He wrote: `I cannot foresee anything like ruin, and if, after all his (Boyd senior's] fortune be reduced by one half of what it is, it will in no measure affect my happiness.'[77] Unfortunately, these troubles most certainly did affect the happiness of his father, who seems by this point to have been suffering from severe, recurring depression.

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72 See Binney, 1981, and London Region Historian's file, WM no. 261.

73 The younger boy, Augustus (born 1758) died suddenly in autumn 1773. See letter from John Boyd I to Sir Robert Murray Keith, British Library, Add. Mss., 35,507, fo. 255, dated 27 July 1774.

74 **Note from Hancock**

75 John Boyd II to Keith, 15 August 1775, British Library, Add. Ms.35, 503, fol.161. The younger Boyd was deeply saddened by this turn of events and seems, consequently, to have developed a strong feeling against his father.

76 Boyd II to Keith, 31 March 1779, British Library Add. Ms. 35,516, fos. 68 and 95, 35,517, fos. 5 and 89.

77 British Library, Add. Ms. 35,517, fo.5.

The elder Boyd had once more to borrow money. In March 1780, he secured £25,000 from one of his East Indian associates, but in December, months before the note was due, his nabob friend called in the debt. The younger Boyd observed his father could not hope to raise even £15,000, since `from gloom, [he has] dissolved all former connections'.[78] Nevertheless, that winter Boyd managed to negotiate a larger sum from a more reliable source, Nathaniel Smith, who had started out as a clerk in the office of Boyd and Co. Smith's £56,000 helped Boyd to `regain his composure', at least for a time and his involvement looks forward to the fate of the house and Park.[79] Smith's sister was the wife of the architect George Dance the Younger, a connection which, in the early years of the next century, may well have led to the architect's involvement at Danson. In any case, the respite gained by Smith's loan was temporary; the unpaid portion had to be renegotiated in 1794.[80] Boyd was not able to discharge the debt in his lifetime, and it passed to his son in the form of a charge upon the estate.

It is remarkable that, after so many very difficult years, Boyd should have ploughed the cash from his 1780 loan into Danson. Smith's £56,000 provided Boyd with the chance to complete his vision for the estate, and for a brief period he bought land on a scale unmatched since the early 1760s. He extended the Park more or less to its present dimensions (roughly 200 acres) bringing the estate total to nearly 600 acres. The younger Boyd observed a brief lifting of his father's spirits in a letter to Keith written in spring 1782.[81] This period probably also included the alterations to the side bays at Danson which would have expanded the upper floor accommodation.

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78 Boyd II to Keith, dated 9 December [1780], British Library, Add. Ms. 35,520, fols. 138-9.

79 Hancock, 1996, pp. 253-4.

80 Danson Leases, D190/1.

81 Dated 14 April 1782, British Library, Add. Ms. 35,542, fol. 108.

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The villa in the park: the first phase of construction, June 1762 to May 1763

The absence of building accounts

Sadly, no building accounts for Danson have come to light. A chronology for the first phase of building must rely on a handful of ancillary documents and, inevitably, conjecture based upon these. The record of survival is little better for later periods, until 1924 when the house and park came into public ownership. In the case of Danson House, or `Danson Hill' to use the name Boyd himself coined, the building fabric remains the best record of what was done.[82]

John Boyd's Private Act of Parliament, 24 June 1762

As noted above, Boyd did not even acquire the freehold to the land on which the new house would be built until 1762. Exactly when he decided to build a new house on a new site is not known. It may have been in 1759, as Roger White has suggested, or earlier still.[83] All that can be said for certain is that on 16 November 1761 the vestry heard a notice from Boyd asking for permission to alter the terms of the charity which was funded out of the Danson estate. Essentially Boyd wanted to make that half of the income derived from the estate earmarked for the charity over into a 'fee-simple' or annual charge of £100, and the vestry heard the petition because it oversaw the charity (the trustees were all members). They agreed an Order subject to three considerations, the most important of which was that Boyd should spend at least £2,500 'in building a capital Messuage and out-Office thereto upon some part of the said premises'. He also had to agree to complete the work within five years of the Act, which was obtained on 24 June 1762.[84]

The Richmond Plan, c1762

In the heady, days of the late 1750s and early 1760s, when trade showed no sign of slackening, either in the West or the East Indies, Boyd aspired to acquire property in the Kentish fringe of London on a lavish scale. He was determined to raise his status and assure a place for himself among the gentry.[85] The Private Act of 1762 cleared the way for Boyd to do exactly what he wished with the better part of 200 acres stretching south of Welling High Street. By 1762 or, at the latest, early spring 1763 Boyd retained Nathaniel Richmond to draw up a scheme for his new park at Danson. 'A plan for the proposed Alterations at Danson Hill...', now in the Bexley Local Studies Collection, has in the past been wrongly attributed to 'Capability' Brown.[86] In 1983, David Jacques

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82 In correspondence, Boyd tended to put the return as simply `Danson'. The earliest recorded use of `Danson Hill' of which I am aware is to be found on the Andrews, Dury and Herbert *Map of Kent* published on 1 January 1769.

83 'Danson Park, Bexley', 1982, p. 53.

84 2 George III, no. 35, p. 3.

85 Private Act of Parliament, 2 George III, no. 35, June 1762, p. 3 and *passim*.

86 Bexley Local Studies, Maps E18. Pen, ink and wash on paper, measuring 900 X 1020 mm. Attributed by D.Stroud to Capability Brown, Stroud D, *Capability Brown* (London, Country Life, 1950) p.10 because of a statement in E.W. Brayley's *Beauties of England* series, *Kent*, 1808, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 556-7. See letter dated 4 February 1960 from Stroud to P. E. Morris, Bexley Local

cautiously gave it to Richmond, because of comments made by the Rev. Joseph Spence on a visit to Danson in May 1763.[87] Recent research by David Brown has firmed up the attribution.[88] Richmond (1724-1784) appears as one of Capability Brown's assistants in 1754, when he lived in Rickmansworth probably in order to assist his master in the design and laying out of Moor Park. He left Brown in 1760, establishing a nursery in Lissom Grove, Marylebone. In 1762, he started on a design for Stoke Park in Buckinghamshire, making Danson one of his early independent works.

The large plan, executed in pen, ink and ink wash, anticipates the final form of the park in several regards, chiefly in the positioning of the lake along the lines of the earlier canal. The new house is shown in its eventual location as well, midway along the east-west ridge which marks the highest point in the park, though whether this was Richmond's doing or Taylor's is not certain. The meandering line of the drive anticipates the present one, although to judge from the evidence of later maps -- Andrews, Dury and Herbert, 1769, the 1799 Ordnance Survey of the London Area, and the 1805-6 plan drawn up in advance of the sale to Johnston,- this was only realised in the early years of the nineteenth century by John Boyd II. Until that time the principal entrance to the estate was from the east, off the lane linking Welling High Street to the hamlet of Blendon, the present day Danson Road.

Although the overall disposition of the landscape features link the design to Brown, a few touches show the hand of a designer trying, straining even, to do something a little different. First, there is the western drive which snakes its way through an open field, then into a dense plantation, before emerging into the north lawn leading up to the main entrance. It was an unusual way of handling the approach, a mannerism of Richmond's perhaps, which served to shield Boyd's lawn from fields at the start of the drive. There is a similar treatment in another design by Richmond from about this time.[89] However, as the composite map of Boyd's acquisitions discussed above demonstrates, they were fields that Boyd never managed to acquire. Another dense plantation closes the view to the south of the lake, and again this boundary reflects the fact that Boyd had failed to obtain the full sweep of land between the park ridge and the principal road to the south.

Most peculiar of all, however, is the proposed form of the lake itself, which is divided into three distinct `reaches' by thickly wooded spits of land laid down on a series of bizarrely rococo, sweeping French curves. The idea to break up the long sheet in this way probably derived from the earlier arrangements, where the long canal leading west from the old house, finished in a `Great Pond' and smaller fish pool. At the west end, before dying into a rivulet, the new three-part water is spanned by a bridge. A gravel path running along the south edge of the lawn finishes here, having started at the eastern verge of the park, in the narrow plantations enclosing the kitchen garden and offices.

The north lawn which stretches down from the ridge to the London-Dover Road is almost entirely treeless, and would have provided a clear view of the pedimented entrance front,

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Studies, DAN: P: 196c. Brayley repeated this information from *The Kentish Travellers Companion* (Rochester and Canterbury, 1776), pp. 19-20: `The disposition of the [lake in the grounds behind the house] is striking and beautiful; and when [the visitor] has examined the [the grounds] he will not fail to pay compliment to the Mr. Brown's superior skill in forming and securing so large a piece of water'.

87 *Georgian Gardens. The Reign of Nature* (London: Batsford, 1983), pp. 84-5.

88 Communication with author, 23 August 1995. Mr Brown is currently engaged in a full-scale study of Richmond's work. I am grateful to him for the information on Richmond which follows.

89 David Brown, communication with the author.

had Boyd been able to buy up the land on the south side of Welling High Street. Although Boyd failed to achieve this wide expanse of lawn, the siting of the house on the ridge ensured that it would be seen from the road. A travel guide published in 1782 captured the effect.

> The house is a pleasing, uniform building, with handsome wings, and contains some fine apartments. The grounds are very beautifully disposed, and adorned with a very grand sheet of water; which, with woods, plantations, and agreeable inequalities of surface compose a very delightful scene. *The house presents itself to the view of every traveller, between the ten and eleven milestones on the Dover Road.*[90]

Richmond proposed siting the stabling on the eastern verge of the estate, giving it its own entrance from the lane linking Welling High Street and the hamlet at Blendon. Robert Morris in Lectures on Architecture of 1734-6 advocated the practice of distancing the stabling and out offices from a great house or villa. His advice reflected the arrangement found in some of the most important neo-Palladian houses of the 1720s, Wanstead, Stourhead, Marble Hill, Whitton Place and Combe Bank. By the middle of the century, fashion was changing.[91] In 1756, Isaac Ware wrote disapprovingly of the old custom, arguing that convenience demanded the messier side of domestic life be brought as near the main house as propriety allowed, for in this way. 'Beauty and use may be consulted together; and, instead of a plain square house, it will be possible, at a small advance in charge, to add wings to the centre and connect them by passages.'[92] Richmond's solution to the problem of where to place the stabling and out offices was, like the swirling embellishments marking his serpentine, somewhat behind the times for the early 1760s.

Joseph Spence's Visit to Danson Hill, the Plan and Description of May 1763.

In May 1763, Joseph Spence (1699-1768) paid a visit to Danson to see how the new park was progressing. Spence -- an Anglican minister who is best remembered for his poetry, translations, literary anecdotes, and friendship with Pope -- developed an amateur interest in gardening in the last twenty years of his life. He travelled from one country house to another, trading on his wit and famous sociability and in the process made extensive notes on the gardens he had enjoyed, critiquing what he saw and slowly building up a theory of landscape gardening.[93] His reputation spread, and by the time he came to Danson Hill in May 1763, gentry and aristocrats engaged in improvement were seeking Spence's critical skills.

Spence's notes on Danson are accompanied by a plan, and the two taken together give a fair picture of the state of the landscape and what was being proposed.[94] First Spence tried

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90 Emphasis added. *The Ambulator; or Stranger's Companion ...* (London: J. Bew, 1782), p. 69.

91 G. Worsley, `The Design and Development of the Stable and Riding House in Great Britain from the Thirteenth Century to 1914', Doctoral thesis (University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1989), pp. 51-6, 62-3, 67-71.

92 *Complete Body of Architecture*, p. 406.

93 *DNB* entry on Spence. See also A. Wright, *Joseph Spence. A Critical Biography* (Chicago: The University Press, 1960), pp. 114-9, 136, 147, and *passim*.

94 The original notes are held in the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA. Osborn Shelves, Spence Papers, Mss. 4/6/171. A transcription of the text was published by R. H. King in `Joseph Spence of Byfleet', *Garden History. The Journal of the Garden History Society*, vol. 8, no. 3 (winter 1980), pp. 77-103, at p. 87. Further notices of Spence's gardening notes were published by King in *Garden History*, vol. 6, no. 3 (winter 1978), pp. 38-64; vol. 7, no. 3 (winter 1979), pp. 29-48; and vol. 8, no. 2 (summer 1980), pp. 44-63.

to capture the large features of the existing landscape. There follows a transcription of these entries. The first set capture the essence of the landscape as found, with the headings describing the view to be seen from that side of the new house. So, for example, the text following the first heading given below, `South Front', records what could be seen looking south from the south, or garden front of the house.

> ***South Front*** Longish Wood, High Trees, part of the Fine Prospect (as before) and other High Trees about the Old House, to East Water, and Home Wood, and distant hills appearing above it, (particularly Knockholt Beeches?), in the middle: -- Wood, & more distant woody Hill, (with the London Road again,) to W.
>
> ***West Front*** Water, Home Wood, and pretty Hill in the distant view, to S.____ Wood, & Shooter's Hill (intersected after the Road by Lawn Hill, which sd. be fully planted, in the middle: -- & the Gentle intersected Hill to the N.
>
> ***North Front*** The Lawn Hill, sloping down very pleasingly and Longish Wood to the East; -- Gentle Hill, more distant, & intersected by L: Hill sinking, & and several Woody Hills, & in particular Shooter's Hill with the London Road to the W.
>
> ***East Front*** The Intersected Hill, (as before,) to N; Longish Wood, (Ditto,) High Trees, and the Lawn, & Opening to a Grand & Beautiful Prospect, in the middle: & Home Wood, to S.

Then followed remarks on how to improve this landscape, which contain the only documentary evidence we have linking Richmond to the project.

> ***North View*** The Bounds there to be more varied and concealed, and knole of the Hill full planted to conceal its shortness, or lowered to let in the Prospect.
>
> ***East View*** A Grove just within the Boundary to join the Hangar Wood, to the Eye, & to take off the straitness [*sic*] of the Line -- Trees to be taken away, where very prejudicial to the Grand Prospect.
>
> ***South View*** The greatest breadth of water to be opposite to the S. Front of the House; & widen again towards its end: To follow the Natural Fall of the ground in conducting the water, as much as can now be done. -- To open the back wood, largely, and variously.
>
> ***West View*** Whether not too much blocked up by the Plantation in Mr. Richmond's Plan, from Wellend Grove down to the little meadows.

The evidence of the `Richmond' and Spence plans

Exactly when Boyd retained Robert Taylor is not known, though on stylistic grounds 1761 seems about right.[95] Taylor's Asgill House in Richmond was begun in that year and it resembles Danson so closely in so many ways as to make it all but certain that the two

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95 The attribution to Taylor is absolutely certain and derives from Thomas Malton Jr's suite of 32 aquatint plates depicting the architect's work and commissioned by his son Michael Angelo, a barrister and later Member of Parliament.

designs were cooked up in the architect's office at roughly the same time. With so little to go on, any evidence at all is worth considering, even the undated plan drawn up by Nathaniel Richmond for the park. Richmond's plan does indeed show a villa where it eventually wound up, but the outline of this building is not exactly comparable to Danson's. So, either Taylor's design went through an early phase, which Richmond happened to be on hand to record, or, and this seems far more likely, the landscape designer, on hearing that his client was building a villa, simply provided something generic in order to give Boyd an idea of how the house and park would interact. The key thing about Richmond's plan is that it does clearly show a villa, a lone building on the only eminence in the park and clearly separated from the offices and stables which have been pushed some distance away to the eastern verge of the park.

How fast things progressed is, like so many of the details of this building, unclear. In May 1763 the Rev. Joseph Spence, a literary figure who developed something of a speciality in landscape architecture (see below), visited Danson, observing the state of landscape and making suggestions for its improvements. He criticised 'Mr Richmond's plan on one or two points and made a little sketch of the estate as he found it. This shows the principal elevation of the villa as built, albeit in skeletal outline. The accompanying inscription, 'The Great Lawn; & c: about Mr Boyd's New House, at Danson,' implies that the house was then a fact. But all is not so simple, because the hand that dated this sheet is not the one that penned the observations made on the spot.[96] Nevertheless, the chronology that emerges from this shadow play of documents is plausible. The eleven months from June 1762 was easily long enough to erect the carcass of a Danson-sized house, and such a structure (unfinished and unfurnished of course) could easily have topped that £2,500 minimum imposed by Boyd's private act. But then, it seems, work stopped. Again, this is surmise, based on a series of indirect but overlapping sources, but it holds up to scrutiny and is, once more, plausible.

The original concept, the villa in a landscaped setting, 1762-3

The Richmond plan of 1762-3 shows the house in splendid isolation, with an area set aside on the east verge of the park for an ample kitchen garden and stabling. Putting the two next to one another was common in the eighteenth century and before, and it made good sense, since the manure was used as fertiliser.[97] The exact form of the stabling in this early phase of the project is not specified in this drawing as stable design usually fell to architects.

By the time of Spence's visit in May 1763, no progress had been made on these new ancillary buildings. There was no pressing need as the older outbuildings in the valley bottom were still extant and appear to have survived for at least another six years, at least according to the 1769 map of Kent.

It is impossible, in the absence of any new documentary evidence, to say whether it was Richmond's decision or Taylor's to separate the stables and out-offices from the main house. In any case, this was not quite in step with the latest thinking on this aspect of great house design, but it was in keeping with what Taylor had done previously. At Harleyford (1753-5) the offices are some distance from the house and linked to the main

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96 Spence Papers, Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, Mss 4/6/171. The date appears to have been added later, but it has been accepted by R.W. King in his analysis of the Yale Spence papers. See *Garden History. The Journal of the Garden History Society*, vol. 8 (no. 3, winter, 1980), pp. 77-103, at p. 87.

97 G. Worsley, `The Design and Development of the Stable and Riding House in Great Britain from the Thirteenth Century to 1914', Ph.D. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1989, p. 41.

building by a brick tunnel of ingenious construction. At Barlaston (1756-58) the stables and offices are also a considerable distance from the main house and hidden from it by a small plantation. Separating main house and stabling was advised by Robert Morris in his *Lectures on Architecture* of 1734-6, reflecting a trend established by a series of important Palladian houses of the 1720s and 1730s (Wanstead, Stourhead, Marble Hill, Whitton Place, and Combe Bank). There were, however, exceptions. James Gibbs published a house with stables close by in his *Book on Architecture* of 1728, and a similar arrangement was used in John James's Wricklemarsh for Sir Gregory Page, erected on a prominent site off the London-Dover Road during the 1720s.[98]

Eventually the best professional advice came to favour James's solution at Wricklemarsh. Isaac Ware disapproved of the old custom of 'distancing' the stables, citing convenience as an authority. In the *Complete Body of Architecture* of 1756 he wrote: 'Beauty and use may be consulted together; and, instead of a plain square house ... it will be possible, at a small advance in charge, to add wings to the centre, and connect them by passages'.[99] James Paine adopted this course at Gosforth in Northumberland, an *ensemble* which is not unlike the stables Taylor eventually constructed.[100] And this is more or less what Taylor decided to do at Danson soon after the Richmond plan was drawn up: provide two wings flanking the house, linked to it by quadrant walls. The design may well date to very early in the history of the new house, but since they do not appear to have been executed until *c.*1766, they will be discussed with the finishing of the house. Phase One Build (see below).

Cessation of the first phase of building, spring 1763

Boyd was spending money at breakneck speed between 1759 and 1762, buying land and building a house, but by summer 1763 the trail of evidence dries up. There are no land transactions for that year, and only minor ones in the following two years. Then, in 1766, there are several pieces of evidence relating to the finishing of the house. (These are discussed below in the section on the finishing of the Phase One Build.) This, taken together with what we know of Boyd's personal circumstances, suggests that the shell of the house sat empty for three years and then was finished in a great burst of activity in 1766.

Lack of money did not bring the work to a standstill. Boyd's resources might have been depleted by three or four years of intense spending on house and park but then the mid-1760s was a boomtime for Boyd and Co., as its coffers filled with the profits from military provisioning and slave trading. And the price of sugar was peaking at about this time, thus making his inherited estates even more valuable. Boyd himself was still a member of the East India Company's Court of Directors and therefore in possession of a healthy amount of its increasingly valuable stock.[101] Of course, it was by no means unusual for a house of this calibre to remain unfinished for many years, with the family continuing to live in the old house or the rustic floor. But more likely, Boyd stopped

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98 G. Worsley, 1989, pp. 24-5, 62-3, 67-71.

99 As cited in Worsley, 1989, p. 70.

100 J. Paine, *Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Houses...*, vol. 1 (1767), pl. 20.

101 Hancock, 1990, 44-5. Boyd served on the Court of Directors from April 1753 to 1764. He twice failed in a bid to become Director, 1765 and 1766, and thereafter seems to have retreated from Company business, although he retained a considerable amount of East India stock. This was depleted in 1769, when a loan of £9,000 of stock to finance the election of a colleague to the post of Director was defaulted.

work when his wife Mary died in March 1763, and that equally the impetus to finish came from his remarriage in 1766. And had there any been shortage of funds, this would have been made up by the death of his father in August 1765. He had settled most of his assets on his only son.

What was the nature of the structure when works ended in spring 1763? What sort of building was Danson meant to be? What were its cultural associations? Here it is worth leaving aside the present narrative to consider the physical characteristics of the building, and after that to consider its style and artistic character.

5.

The building of the house, June 1762 - May 1763

The choice of site

The house is built on London clay, five hundred metres south of Welling High Street, Roman Watling Street and in the eighteenth century the main London-Dover road. Locate d on top of a shallow ridge, which runs parallel to the road, the house commanded views in all directions. Indeed, according to an eyewitness account, the house was plainly visible to travellers along the road. The main front faces north. Facing away from the road, the south front offered views that in the eighteenth century would have been without visible signs of human habitation.

Relocating to the top of the ridge away from the earlier site probably meant that the house would be dependent on spring water obtained from a well. The site of the well has not been established with any real certainty but it seems likely that it was housed in the Kitchen Floor room K5 on the north side of the house under the Entrance Hall. Probably since the early nineteenth century onwards, this room has been used to collect rainwater from the roof. Probably in the mid-nineteenth century, it was lined throughout with a non-porous cement or stucco. This dense lining prevents investigation and probably conceals the opening to the well under the floor. The plan published by Malton in 1790 shows several circular features in the east wing housing the 'Kitchen Offices', and one of these might correspond to a second well head. In 1805 the house was described as 'amply supplied with spring and rain water, and an engine forces the water to the upper apartments as well as to the stables.'[102]

Materials and methods used in the first phase of construction, 1762-3

STONE An attempt to identify the stone used for the ashlar facing of the house was made in 1970 by Dr. F Dimes at the Geology Museum, who described it thus:

> Medium to coarse-grained oolitic limestone, with a mixed matrix of crystalline calcite, and containing a considerable number of comminuted fossils with occasional complete fossils. Some areas of the stone and particularly some ooliths are stained with oxide of iron. The oolites are of a variety of shapes...The nature of the stone also suggests ... that it is of Lincolnshire limestone ... I should suggest the stone came from the Ancaster area.[103]

He also pointed out that a second stone, harder and as yet unidentified, was used for offsets and mouldings.

The Lincolnshire identification has however since been challenged by RW Sanderson who agrees that at least two types of stone were used in the construction of the house. According to Sanderson, the exterior ashlar, dado string and plinth to the balustrade of the front steps are of compact fine shelly limestone which is thought to come from the Wheatley or Headington area of Oxfordshire. If the stone was quarried at Wheatley, it would be a late use of the quarries there.[104] By the late eighteenth century, Headington

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102 *Sale Particulars*, 1805, p5

103 Letter F. G. Dimes, 8 June 1970, in HBMC building files, now English Heritage registered file AR/HB/704(1).

104 Identification made in reports and letters by R W Sanderson including, *Identification of stone samples*

was more active, supplying a great deal of stone for new building at Oxford.[105] Unfortunately, stone is no longer quarried from this locality and it is therefore difficult to make the identification more secure.

Sanderson then identifies the second stone type, used for the pediment, main cornice and window architraves, as an oolitic limestone similar to Bath stone. He suggests that the source for this stone lay in the quarries at Taynton, near Burford in Oxfordshire, accessible to London via the Coombe Brook, River Windrush and Thames.

Ashlar was also used internally at key points in the construction of the walls, around openings principally but also in the window bay returns and the kitchen vault, wherever, in short, stone would have outperformed brick. So, in the wall between the central stair and the entrance hall, we find stone used to form the thin spurs of wall which narrow towards the doorway into the stair. Or, in the dining room and library, the uprights between the large central recesses in the brickwork and the side recesses are also of ashlar, the use of brick once again discounted on structural grounds.

Hardly any of the stone was reused. The most tantalising of these are from fragments from a Doric cornice, quarry waste perhaps, found in the main entrance steps. Other reused fragments probably date from later works.

BRICK The body of the bricks was coloured red or a dark-purple red, although some of the surfaces were yellow brown. They measure 215x100-105x60-65mm. The bricks are generally of a good quality with very few half-bats, a much higher standard of underlying construction than many townhouses of the period where poor quality bricks along with many broken or half bats were routine. The bricks were probably made locally.

MORTAR The white lime mortar bonding the brickwork and ashlar facing contains some flint fragments coloured black and yellow brown. The largest pieces are 8mm in diameter.

STRUCTURAL TIMBER The structural timber used at Danson is either pine or oak and falls into several categories. The oak wall plates are **x**mm; the window lintels are **x** mm. Floor beams are **x**mm Some beams are in effect trussed girders and in order to function properly make use of hardwood blocks. The lintels are also of hard wood, oak in this instance. Wall framing timbers are **x**mm; roof trusses are **x**mm. Here and there, the timbers were branded with the initials 'E+S', probably referring to a timber yard.[106] Floorboards are jointed with pegs, set at approximately 1foot intervals and in the Entrance Hall are lapped to prevent the sand used to bed the stone paving from slipping between the boards.

IRON Iron was used in various ways on the site. Cramps tie the exterior ashlar blocks to each other. The king post construction wall frames rely on a combination of iron stirrups and bolts. The trussed girders feature bolts which are as large as 1" across. Nails were used in a variety of sizes. Battens for the plaster wall linings were fixed with specially made nails, leaf and round headed.

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from Danson Park, Bexley, 4th June 1994 for Purcell Miller Tritton, a letter to J Coath, Purcell Miller Tritton, 6th February 1995, and *Petrographical analysis and identification of decayed stones from Danson House, Bexley Kent*, 27th March 1995. For notes on the Wheatley and Headington quarries see WJ Arkell, *Oxford Stone*, 1947.

105 WJ Arkell, *Oxford Stone*, 1946, Faber and Faber, London

106 These marks were found on the centre rafter above the south bay and on a joist in the attic floor of the north wing.

SLATE The roof was covered in stone slate, greenish blue in colour, probably from Westmoreland. The slates were of varying sizes and thicknesses, and laid in diminishing courses. A point was used to punch holes for wooden pegs. Where the slates were applied to the top of the stone pediment sockets were drilled in the stone and filled with lead. The use of stone slate is interesting in this context. Palladio's villas were roofed with ceramic tiles, and similar tiles were available in London. However, stone was probably seen as a better quality option.

WALL CONSTRUCTION The walls were of brick laid to English bond, faced externally with ashlar. For some courses, the ashlar facing blocks were tied to each other with iron cramps set in lead. The location of these cramps is now apparent because many have rusted, causing the face of the stone to fall away. Cramps were set according to a regular pattern, restricted to certain courses, particularly those immediately below the cornice, the dado and Bedroom Floor windowsills. They are also found in the pediments and entablatures above the windows. This is standard practice in a building of this quality, similar cramps were specified in the masonry contract for the Mansion House in 1739.[107]

Through stones ties the ashlar to the brick, stretching from the face of the wall to inner face. This method worked well. There was no sign that the inner and outer skins were separating. As noted above the uniform brick construction yields to ashlar wherever the wall thickness thin to the point where brick would underperform stone; narrow walls cannot accommodate brick bonding patterns. Externally, all the window and door openings have flat arched heads with keystones, both in the architrave and in the face of the wall above. The internal openings are spanned by segmental relieving arches that are comprised of two courses of brick laid on edge; the lintel under them is of oak. The constructional form of these openings common in buildings of this quality in the period is described and discussed by Isaac Ware.[108]

The exterior, 1762-3

THE COMPOSITION OF THE EXTERIOR As noted above, the building is astylar, that is, the giant order has been omitted. The modillioned cornice is clearly of the Ionic order although the main entrance aedicule is of the Corinthian order.

The elevation is treated in a way that was typical for eighteenth-century houses and villas and derived from Palladio's villa designs of the sixteenth century. It is divided vertically into three parts, a Terrace Floor as rustic, which serves as a base, for the Principal Floor (known as the *piano nobile*) and Bedroom Floor one slice of the Palladian layer cake. The cornice, pediment and roof form the top third of the composition. A stringcourse, continued around the whole house at dado level, forms the windowsills. Variation in the rhythm of the windows was achieved through a hierarchical treatment of the heads. The main axial windows were assigned full pediments, lesser windows, entablatures and the flanking windows in the side elevations were left plain. They seem to have been omitted here on design grounds. The short side elevations have the same number of window openings, five, as the longer entrance and garden elevations, and the effect begins to be unsettling, entirely too busy and open. The omission of the entablature introduces a subtle hierarchy that distracts the eye from this bunching up of window openings. The views by both Barrett (*c.*1766) and Malton (1790) show the arrangement as built except that the plain windows are shown with entablatures. This appears to have been a shared error since the stone work of the heads of these windows show no sign of alteration.

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107 Jeffery S *The Mansion House*, 1993, p.72

108 Ware I, *The Complete Body of Architecture*, 1756-7, plate 13

Below ground level, in the dry areas the exterior of the house was finished in brick. This also appears to have been the case where they were exposed in the areas to the north of the wings since, although the wall faces were partially cut back in 1805, there is no indication that they were ever finished in stone. The ground floor was finished with fluted rusticated ashlar above a plain rectangular plinth. The rusticated ashlar was uniform in size, measuring 303x 660mm (12x26") with variation only where necessitated by window and door openings. There are flat arches above the windows. The quoins around the doors either side of the perron and in the centre of the southern bay were emphasised by pronounced vermiculation.

The plinth course at Principal Floor level is a plain rectangular projection with moulded drip. The face of the stone is plain, not fluted. The dado is faced with large ashlar blocks ring throughout its full height. The original unweathered dado moulding profile was obtained from a fragment found in the demolition rubble from the flat roofed additions and the side bay. Below the window sills, turned stone balusters are set within recesses the width of the window opening. The design of the balusters is broadly Palladian. Balusters are a Renaissance innovation, they did not exist in antiquity, but the predominant form in the sixteenth century was symmetrical top and bottom. The first asymmetrical baluster appears to have been introduced by Michelangelo about 1550.[109] This type became predominant in Palladio's later works from the 1560s and 70s and thus came to be associated with his name. Among his work, those most closely parallel the Danson baluster can be found at the Villa Valmarana-Braga, Vicenza.[110] The popularity of the Palladian baluster in this country in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in stone and as turned timber stair balusters, is probably due its use by Inigo Jones at both the Queen's House and Banqueting House. Rather than through Palladio's *I Quattro Libri* where it is only included at a small scale in four of his plates.[111] By 1756, the Palladian baluster had assumed predominance in almost all of Isaac Ware's illustrations to *A Complete Body of Architecture*. This last volume may provide the precise source for the Danson combination of balusters and windows, since plate 66 illustrates three variations on Ionic windows, two of which are shown with Palladian balusters. In these illustrations, the dado below the window is made to project from the wall face but otherwise the Danson windows can be seen as an assemblage of elements taken from this figure. This design approach is entirely within the framework of advice offered by Ware in his accompanying text on pages 461-463.

The balusters under the windows are repeated in the balustrade around the entrance steps, although most of these were replaced in reconstituted stone, probably in the 1950s (see below). By 1995, the ground level had risen and the steps consequently altered but the original arrangement at the bottom of the flight was evident from the outlines of the steps in the string. There seems to be no physical evidence in the construction of the vaults to suggest that the perron was built narrower than the north front as it is shown in the Malton plan and view. In fact, the Barrett view of *c.*1766 shows the perron as executed. The difference between the Malton drawings and the building as executed suggest that Malton was working from architect's drawings rather than reality. If this is the case, then

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109 For a discussion of the development of the baluster in the Renaissance see Rudolf Wittkower *Palladio and English Palladianism* 1974 pp 41-48. Wittkower identifies the symmetrical baluster as Type I and the asymmetrical version as Type II and specifically attributes it to Palladio

110 Wittkower, R, 1974, fig. 78

111 *Book II*, Plates 4 & 6, Palazzo Porto, Vicenza, Plate 12, Palazzo Valmarana, Vicenza, Plate 16, Palazzo Barabaran da Porto

his plan and view may record an earlier stage in the evolution of Taylor's designs for the house.

The main wall face above the dado was constructed with plain coursed ashlar, without any quoining at the returns. The courses vary in height between 200 and 500 mm. Each course is consistent in height across the elevations and around the returns until broken by a window opening.

On each return of the projecting range on the north elevation is a single apsidal round-headed niche. Neither Barrett's painting, *The Portrait of Danson*, 1766 nor Malton's view suggests that these were originally filled with urns; the tall urns which are there now are almost certainly late Victorian, to judge by their style.[112] Similar niches, incidentally, are to be found on Taylor's houses at Sharpham and Barlaston.

The main cornice matches exactly the ionic cornice, which Palladio chose to illustrate as his ideal, although at Danson, Palladio's enrichment is omitted. It is interesting to note however, that Palladio used this cornice in its unadorned state at La Rotonda near Vicenza. Chambers noted its use there annotating his copy of Palladio's Ionic entablature as *'Ionic Entablature of the villa Capra'* although he reproduced Palladio's enrichments. La Rotonda was known as the Villa Capra, the name by which it was known after 1591.[113] In Ware's edition of *The Four Books,* the cornice was reproduced as plate XX. Isaac Ware also reproduced the same design in block form, without the enrichments, as Taylor used it at Danson.[114]

At Harleyford, Barlaston and Coptfold, Taylor's villas of the later 1750s, there is a parapet around the main roof and above the canted bay. It has been suggested that this was the intention or the case at Danson since the brick walls are continued inside the roof to the soffit of the roof covering. However, the building up of a parapet was probably necessary to achieve the cantilevering of the stone cornice. Above the side bays which are not original to the house though added before 1787 (see below), the cantilever is achieved by iron cramps, which tie it down to the wall face below. There are comparable cornices at Taylor's Asgill, Ottershaw, Chute and Sharpham.

THE WINDOWS In 1995 when the modern stucco window heads removed, sufficient evidence was found to determine the original detailing. From the surviving joints in the stonework, it is clear that the windows in the south wall of the Dining Room and the central west windows in each of the side bays, were originally pedimented. The pulvinated frieze, a feature much favoured by Palladio, survived apparently with very little erosion above the window to the Library. The cornice above the frieze consisted of two courses of stones, 108 and 75 mm thick (4&1/4" and 2"). From the shapes of the stones at each end of the pediment, it is clear that the upper course formed the corona. Above the cornice the two graduated courses of the pediment are 108 and 142 mm thick (4&1/4" and 7&1/2"). The thickness of the lower course matches that of the cornice. The upper course must have included the corona and cimatium. Very slight traces of the original mouldings survived where they returned into the wall face. The traces consist the outlines of parts of the mouldings formed by the clean face (where the mouldings were broken or cut away in the 1950s) and the soot blackened and weathered face of the wall

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[112] They do not appear in Sarah Johnson's watercolour of the north front of the house, *c.*1860. An extra block of stone added to the plinth in the niche to serve as a base, projects beyond the sill. Iron dowels secure the urn

[113] Chambers, *Treatise.1759.* plate facing page 54

[114] Ware I, *The Complete Body of Architecture*, 1756-7, plate 3

face. These traces survived at both ends of the pedimented window to the Dining Room bay and at the south end of the pedimented Library window (the render was not removed from the north end of the Library window). From these fragmentary traces, it was possible to build up a composite outline for almost all of the mouldings of the cornice and pediment.

The lowest moulding in the cornice was a cyma-reversa visible at both ends of the south Dining Room window cornice. Above this was a rectangular moulding which appears to have been a dentil course suggested by the rectangular forms at the top and bottom and from one very slight trace of the moulding between dentils on the return face. The uppermost moulding on this course was an ovolo. Traces survived on both windows. There were no traces of moulding on the fascia course. The outline of the cimatium survived at the return of the pediment for both windows. This would have been a modified profile of the full cimatium projecting outwards from the wall face.

The surviving evidence matches almost exactly the drawing of a cornice in the lower half of Plate XXX in Palladio *The Four Books of Architecture*, published by Isaac Ware in 1738. The only area for which there is absence of physical evidence is in the treatment of the fascia moulding. However, from the comparison with Palladio's drawing, there can be little doubt that the top of the fascia was moulded with anything other than a cyma-reversa. The general form of the pediment is also closely paralleled at Sharpham, another house by Taylor, *c* 1770, where the mouldings are the same although the dentil course is left plain.[115] A photograph of Danson viewed from the south east, *c* 1900, shows a plaque incorporated into the cornice above the centre window to the Saloon. This device is also paralleled at Sharpham and is in addition a feature of Taylor's Asgill House, Danson's near contemporary. Although the detailing of the dentils in the other window heads was consistent, the introduction of the plaque into the design of this window necessitated a slight alteration the spacing and size of the dentils.

The Bedroom Floor windows were made uniform, all square, with the architrave, matching that on the Principal Floor, taken around all four sides. Batty Langley illustrated this as one of several designs for attic floor windows in 1741.[116] The Terrace Floor windows are also square but the size of the opening is reduced by the projection of the rustication beyond the wall face. The pediment in the north elevation was pierced by a plain oculus without an architrave.

THE MAIN ENTRANCE DOOR The main entrance door surround is of the Corinthian order, two columns supporting an entablature enriched with scrolled modillions and rosettes in the coffers. The scrolled block pediment is clearly of a different type of stone and was added to the entablature by William Chambers, after some weathering had taken place.[117] Barrett's painting, *The Portrait of Danson*, 1766, shows the door without the scrolled block pediment. Before the recent restoration, the cornice of the entablature was concealed behind dense hard grey cement stucco or render applied to steel mesh nailed to the original stonework[118]. The original stone had clearly weathered and the mouldings were very roughly dressed back when the stucco was applied *c.*1951. Enough of the original survived, however, to give the overall form of the cornice, the modillions and

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115 See Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984, p 53

116 Batty Langley, *Designs..*, 1741, plate XXXIX

117 See section below on works at Danson attributable to William Chambers

118 Se section below on the stonework repairs of 1951

rosettes set in the coffers survived only as outlines.[119] The present restoration is based on the surviving fabric evidence. The modillions had been wholly removed in 1951. The only surviving evidence for the form of the modillions was the outline of the projection left in the remaining stone. From the dimensions of this outline, it was clear that the modillions were of the type in which the acanthus leave was enclosed within the margins of the scrolls and did not overlay them as shown by Palladio in ideal. A drawn example of the Danson type and a possible source, can be found in James Gibbs *The Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture*, 1732, plate LXIV.

The column shafts consisted of two long lengths of stone not laid according to bed. Both shafts have suffered splitting consequently. Originally, the threshold step was probably set further north than its present location. This would have been necessitated by the applied egg and dart door architrave, which, because of the joinery evidence we assume surrounded the door.

THE ORIGINAL FORM AND HEIGHT OF THE CANTED SIDE BAYS When they were first built, the canted bays on the east and west elevations stood only as high as the Bedroom Floor. Both Barrett and Malton record this arrangement in their views. The flat sides of the house spanned the bays at Bedroom Floor level. The Bedroom Floor itself was supported by a complex system of trussed girders and trussed partition walls. A combination of a large segmental arch and pairs of trussed timber girders spanned the bay. Taylor's Harleyford originally had a similar arrangement, the detail is recorded in a painting by Zuccarelli,[120] although, like Danson, the bay was heightened not long after the house was built. Barlaston, another Taylor house, has a similar arrangement. This was both a design feature and a structural one, since the arch would have been part of the structural system (see below) needed to span the gap in the wall made by the bay itself.

During the recent repairs, a fragment of the original east bay's cornice was found still *in-situ* at its junction with the main wall face. Enough survived to show that it had the same profile as the main cornice but was at two-thirds the scale. The ashlar springing stones for the original segmental arch over the bay also survive *in-situ* above the east bay. There is a corresponding brick arch in the internal wall face. Now covered in plaster, this was photographed in the 1980s.

A pair of large trussed timber girders set in the wall did the real work of spanning the gap in the wall to provide support for the Bedroom Floor. Only the ends of the beams of these trusses survived, along with mortise holes to give an idea of the original configuration of the truss. The crudely truncated remains of these bresumers were set just above the Bedroom Floor. This system is essentially a development of the standard method for spanning window and door openings, where a relieving arch is built into the wall above a timber lintel. The mortises in these bresumers indicate that the system was rather more complicated, that the bresumers were part of a larger trussed girder, a structural form which, as we shall see, occurs elsewhere in the building.

Very slight traces of a stone coloured lime wash or shelter coat were observed behind the scrolled pediment over the entrance door, a feature which William Chambers added in *c.*1770. Hence, a shelter coat was probably applied to the building when it was first constructed.

The proportioning of the exterior elevations Taylor's elevations at Danson reveals the influence of Palladio through his *I Quattro Libri*...probably through Isaac Ware's 1738

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[119] See the section on the restoration of the Entrance Door in 1997 below

[120] This painting is now at now at Squerryes Court, Westerham

1	The modular system of proportioning is based on the diameter of the lower part of the column	p.19 #1	1Mo 0mi	2' 8"	0.813m
2	'The columns, with the capital and base, are nine modules high.'	p.19 #1	9Mo 0mi	24' 0"	7.315m
3	The entablature or the architrave, frieze and cornice is a fifth part of the altitude of the column.	p. 19 #2	1Mo 48mi[122]	4' 9.6"	1.462m
4	The cornice is five twelfths the height of the entablature	p. 20 #6	0Mo 45mi[123]	2' 0"	0.609m
5	Overall height of the columns with capital and base, architrave frieze and cornice	(interpolated)	10Mo 48mi	28' 9.6"	8.778m

Palladio's recommendations are also applied in detail. The profile of the window architrave is formed with a cyma-reversa with a bead moulding and a small rebate. This pattern is illustrated in Ware's edition of the *Four Books of Architecture* by Andrea Palladio, plate XXIV. The correspondence appears to be exact. The depth of the reveal is 8". As a fraction of the window opening, this is one sixth, the minimum dimension recommended by Palladio:

> The pilasters or jambs of the doors and windows must not be less in thickness than the sixth part of the breadth of the void, nor more than the fifth. (I, ch. XXV)

That Taylor did in fact know the standard architectural literature is beyond doubt -- the titles in library are known -- nor can there be any doubt that he resorted to this literature when designing Danson. An instance of direct borrowing is the design of the entablature, which tops every window on the Principal Floor, except for those, and this is a noteworthy refinement, which flank the side bays. The cornice matches that shown in the lower half of plate XXX of Ware's Palladio. Spotting this resemblance was no easy task, as the entablatures had been mutilated in the twentieth century; a description of the physical evidence that enabled the identification and subsequent reconstruction of this lost feature is given below in the section on the windows of the Principal Floor.

Even more interesting is the case of the Corinthian aedicule framing the principal entrance. This consists of two columns supporting an entablature enriched with scrolled modillions with rosettes in the coffers. There is a scroll pediment above, but this is, as we shall see, not original to the design. The form of the doorcase is taken from one designed by Inigo Jones and published by William Chambers in the first part of his *Treatise on Civil Architecture* (1759). This entrance corresponds to Chambers written description in several respects. The aperture 'may be a double square', and indeed, it is, roughly: 4' 3" by 8' 7 1/8" (1330 mm x 2620mm). The architrave is between 1/6 and

[122] Not 1Mo 50mi as annotated on Plate XVI, this appears to be an approximation

[123] The principal plate illustrating this text, Plate XVI, shows a proportionally larger cornice, although both the frieze and architrave are proportioned according to the text.

1/7 the width of the aperture, and the 'top of it must level with the upper part of the astragal of the columns', which is the case. The columns are ten diameters high; 12 7/8" (320mm) and the height 10' 7 1/8" (3230mm). The entablature 'may be two ninths, or one fifth, of the column according to the character of the building': the height of the entablature is 2' 4 1/8" (715mm), almost exactly 2/9 of the column height. It is fitting that Chambers, through whose work Taylor knew this design of Jones', would himself become involved with Danson, adding the scroll pediment in *c.*1770 (see below). In doing this Chambers did not, however, follow his own recommendations from the *Treatise...* where he notes that the 'height of the pediment may be one quarter of its base or somewhat less' the door. Instead, Sir William gave John Boyd something along the lines of what he would soon be providing at Somerset House.

The Kitchen Floor, 1762-3

THE KITCHEN FLOOR PLAN It is likely that two staircases originally provided access to the Kitchen Floor: the service stair immediately west of the main stair and external steps in the area north of the kitchen. The existence of the latter is most open to question. Interestingly, it appears that there was no direct communication between the Terrace Floor and the Kitchen (see below).

All the rooms on the Kitchen floor are vaulted in brick, though the most spectacular space is unquestionably the kitchen itself, which is double-height and extends the full depth of the west portion of the house. The rooms on the west side of this floor were built without windows and were clearly intended as cellars.

THE KITCHEN FLOOR WINDOWS Originally, there were twelve windows on the Kitchen Floor. Nine of these opened into the dry area surrounding the house, one opened into the area on the west side of the house and two opened into the passage beneath the Entrance Steps. The double storey height Kitchen had two sets of windows, one for each floor.

Not one of the Kitchen Floor windows survives in its original form, although the Kitchen windows preserve more of the form of the originals than any other on this floor, although they were converted to cupboards, probably in the 1860s. Externally, these windows are formed in brick and are roughly square, with segmental heads. They were lit by rectangular openings in the vault above the dry area, and may either have been glazed or, perhaps more probably, were fitted with iron grilles or bars. Internally, the window embrasures were larger than the external openings but they too were square and had segmental heads. The reveals, by analogy with the windows on the other floors, were square and the sashes were probably concealed by the rebate. The design probably incorporated shutters, as on the Terrace Floor. The window openings are smaller than those on the floors above. On the west side of the house, there are no traces of any windows in the dry area, blind or blocked.

THE KITCHEN FLOOR ROOMS

The Kitchen, K1, has a groin vault which extends as a tunnel vault to north and south and as an apse to the east over the canted bay. The use of a groin vault above a rectangular room is the second of the seven methods for vaulting a room recommended by Palladio in *I Quattro Libri...*Book I Chap XXIV. Taylor's advance on this method is to apply this method in a room with a canted side bay.

Originally, eleven windows lit the Kitchen, six at basement or Kitchen Floor level and five at Terrace Floor level. At the lower level, there were windows at each end of the east wall, three in the bay and one in the south wall. The openings were square with square reveals and segmental relieving arches above. In the corresponding position in the

north wall, there is a semicircular relieving arch in the original brickwork above the present door. This indicates an original door opening into the kitchen at this point and confirms the existence of an area immediately north of the Kitchen. At Terrace Floor level, the two windows at each end of the east wall were built as blind windows (see description of Terrace Floor windows below).

There is evidence in the bonding of the brickwork of the west wall of the Kitchen for an original, 9'' wall across the south end of the kitchen rising to the level of the Terrace Floor. Probably it is this wall in the photograph taken in the 1930s. Its remains can be seen at the south end of the kitchen west wall. Alterations to the south window in the east wall of the kitchen have removed any trace of its possible junction with the east wall. South of this feature, the brickwork in the west wall appears to be uniform and uninterrupted, indicating that there was no communication with octagonal room, K2, lying to the west. Similarly, at the north end of the Kitchen, there are traces of an original cross wall rising to the level of the Terrace Floor. The two walls are symmetrical about a central axis through the centre of the kitchen. It is therefore clear that the Kitchen was not originally built in its present undivided form. However, how these rooms were used remains to be determined with any degree certainty. It seems likely, however, given the references to a 'scullery' and 'bakehouse' in the 1805 inventory, that the northern division housed the scullery and the southern division the bakehouse. The bakehouse was cited in the later inventories of 1862 and 1923. At Harleyford during the restorations in the 1980s, a similar feature was seen to occupy the south end of the Kitchen.[124]. A similar room at the end of the kitchen at Foremark, Derbyshire has been identified as a pantry in a recent study of country house services.[125] 'Cook's Room' or 'Back Kitchen'[126] are alternative possibilities but these functions may have been housed in room K4.

In the west wall of the kitchen immediately south of the main flue for the range is an iron inspection hatch that indicates a second flue. This is probably associated with the segmental brick arch in the original brickwork immediately below. The precise function of this feature is not clear but it may originally have served as an oven at the side of the main hearth.

The level of the present floor in the Kitchen is two steps higher than it is in the other rooms on the Kitchen Floor. This is probably an alteration made before or contemporary with the installation of the present range in the nineteenth century. No physical evidence for the original floor has been identified other than the level of the windowsills in the east wall.

The present staircase against the north wall, St1, is of cantilevered stone construction with cast iron balusters. Three of the balusters are missing and the treads have been repaired with stone inserts. The quality and design of the stonework is similar to that of the service stairs, St6, and at first sight appears to be original. , However, the design of the cast iron balusters, suggests a mid nineteenth century date. The top three steps have been widened by the addition extra stone. The bottom two steps are terminals and, if the Kitchen floor was raised, must have been reset. However, it is worth noting that if this

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124 Visible in record photographs, cuurently, 11/10/99, in possession of the English Heritage Historical and Analysis Team

125 Sambrook P A and Brears P C, *The Country House Kitchen 1650-1900*, 1996, p46

126 In a design drawing for the basement of Foot's Cray Place recently attributed to David Garrett, a room labelled 'Back Kitchen' is shown in a similar relationship to the kitchen in terms of access, see Colvin H and Harris J *The architect of Foots Cray Place*, The Georgian Group Journal, Vol VII, 1997, pp.1-8

staircase had, at an earlier date continued down to a lower floor level, then its lowest steps would have blocked the door to the area through the north wall. It therefore seems most likely that the steps are original to the house but do not necessarily belong in this location. They may have been removed from the area lying to the north of the Kitchen.

The location of the kitchen must have caused problems for serving food on the Principal floor. Presumably the service stair, St6, was used but the only means of communication with the Dining Room was through the main entrance hall.

The areas either side of the north wing. The dry area on the west side of the house continues north of the north west corner of the west wing. The equivalent area on the east side of the house was altered by the construction of the flat roofed additions in 1805. The original north wall of the kitchen contains a round relieving arch above the present door. This indicates a door instead of a window in this position because the other windows on this floor all have segmental heads. The door was probably located on the north side of the wall and opened in towards the kitchen. The areas probably had stair access to ground level. It is possible that the present staircase in the kitchen was relocated from one of the areas in 1805.

The octagonal room, K2, below the Breakfast Room retains its original slate work surfaces, which span between the four brick columns. These are 38 mm thick, thicker than the 28mm slate shelves against the walls supported by cast iron brackets with a T-section. The brackets are characteristic of the mid-nineteenth-century, and indicate the wall shelves are part of the works of improvement carried out by Bean in *c.*1865 (see below).

There was a door in each of the three walls on the north side of this room. The north west door, D5, retains its original form, as a round arched opening with a large closing rebate on the room side of the wall. The oak six panel door itself also appears to be original, hung on its original hinges and hinge posts. The perforated zinc ventilation panels are probably a later alteration made during the 1860s. Originally, the door was probably flush panelled. The doors in the north and north east walls were probably of the same design. The north east door has however been altered, probably in 1865, when the door was relocated and the arch converted from round to segmental. The original doors are oak six-panelled and flush on the inner face. A round brick arch of two orders survives from a fourth door in the west wall. On the west side of the same wall there is a corresponding arch of one order. Presumably, the door was blocked either before or when the stone shelving was installed in the west room, K12, probably *c* 1865.

In the octagonal bay, there were probably three windows. Iron glazing was inserted into the two west windows and the reveals given splays probably *c* 1865. The east window was probably converted to a door at the same time. There is no reason to suppose that the original form of the windows was different from those in the Kitchen. The brick coursing of the east wall is continuous and appears to be original. This is the only wall in the room without a door or window opening and this indicates that there was no direct access between the Kitchen, K1, and the octagonal room, K2.

The octagonal room K2 is the second largest room on the Kitchen floor. It might therefore be identified as the Scullery, which follows the Kitchen in the description of 1805, but there is no readily identifiable water source.[127] In 1805, the scullery probably occupied the area north of the Kitchen in the basement storey of the additions made in the first years of the nineteenth century and now demolished. The water tank, in K5, is

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[127] *Sale Particulars*, 1805

closer and more accessible to the north end of the kitchen, not the octagonal room. The GLC survey carried out in the early 1970s identified the octagonal room as the Larder, probably because the slate work surfaces were suitable for handling meat. But, in 1763, it was probably intended to serve more than one function. It might have been used as a combined scullery, larder and dairy. These functions require cool work surfaces and good ventilation.

The small room K3 appears to have been a communicating room between the Kitchen K1 and the octagonal room, K2. The bulge in the east wall accommodated the depth of the original Kitchen hearth.

The three Rooms K4,5 and 9 under the north wing are considered here as a group. The placing of the two central piers creates the springing for six groin vaults, which one might expect to have been identical, however, the pattern of the vaulting is asymmetrical about the north-south central axis through the building. The effect of this displacement can be seen most dramatically in the head of the north door, D14, into the larger west room K9. This asymmetry suggests the possibility of a design alteration or that the rooms were assigned specific functions which required a particular set of dimensions. The layout of the rooms does however appear to be original, since the brick coursing is consistent between the piers and the north-south wall dividing the larger room from the two smaller rooms. The wall itself is c 600mm thick. The thickness of the wall does not appear to be necessitated by any structure on the floor above.

The opening in the west wall of the large room K9 was originally a window. The crude cutting away of brickwork below the sill level to form a door, presumably in 1805 when the flat roofed additions were built subsequently enlarged it.

The north east room K5 is now lined out as a water tank or cistern and was fed by rain water collected from the main roof valleys and later probably from the flat roofed additions of 1805. However, the openings in the north and east walls suggest that it was originally intended that the room should have windows. Originally, the rain water pipes from the roof probably fed water butts located in the areas. The pipes were probably adapted in 1805 when the room K5 was altered to become a large cistern. It is possible that the opening in the east wall was originally a door into the area. The room may have functioned as a well house.

The small room K4 has a narrow arched opening in the south wall with a single course of arched bricks. The window opening into the Kitchen in the east wall is so altered with iron lintels and obscured with plaster that it is not possible to tell if there was an original opening in this location.

The west wing, rooms K11, 12, 14 and 15 are vaulted, unlit and unheated. The doors are substantial. They provided secure storage. The slate shelving is attached to the walls with iron brackets of T-section as in the octagonal room, K2, and probably dates from *c.*1865. Originally, there was a door between the southern room, K12, and the octagonal room K2 (see description of K2 above).

The cross passage, K8. The south wall of this passage is finished in ashlar, which surely indicates some status attached to this space and that its function as a significant access route on this floor.

The curving ramped passage links the cross passage to the cellars under the entrance steps. The south end of the vault of the curving passage, room K34, to the cellars below the entrance steps was crudely cut back at its south end in 1805 to fit with the construction of the Kitchen Floor room below the flat roofed addition.

The dry area, K16, was constructed as a brick revetment wall, which arches to meet the main wall of the house at ground level. The result is a narrow vaulted passage, which encircles the house and keeps the walls dry. There are original rectangular openings in the vault that correspond with the windows in the Kitchen and octagonal room, K2. The dry area survives intact around the south side of the house from the north west corner of the west wing to the north east corner of the east wing. On the west side of the house, the dry area continues north of the north west corner of the west wing. The equivalent area on the east side of the house was altered by the construction of the flat roofed additions in 1805. The areas probably had stair access to ground level. It is possible that the present staircase in the kitchen was relocated from one of the areas in 1805.

The Terrace Floor, 1762-3

THE TERRACE FLOOR PLAN The primary access route to the Terrace Floor lies through an arched doorway on either side of the perron. These lead into a cross passage that originally connected by a central door to a secondary entrance hall that sat directly below the entrance hall on the Principal Floor. This area corresponds to what are now Rooms T7, 8, 9, 11, 12. Although this rustic entrance hall, lit by windows on both sides, appears to have been part of the original design concept, it was probably never fitted out in this form but subdivided from the start. In the south wall are three large arches. That in the centre opens into the main stairwell, T15. The one on the right or west, T10, opens onto the service stair that runs through to the Bedroom Floor landing. The east arch probably gave access to the octagonal Breakfast Room, T2 and, through this, the pleasure ground immediately south of the house. It is not clear whether these arrangements are original (see below). The west wing on this floor, Rooms T3,4 and 5, appears to have been a separate apartment. The provision of separate access to this apartment and the service stair seems to be the cause of the subdivision of the rustic entrance hall. The upper floor of the kitchen takes up the eastern half of this floor.

THE TERRACE FLOOR WINDOWS The pattern for the windows on the Terrace floor (W9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27) was of a square opening in four courses of rusticated stonework, below a flat arch of three rusticated voussoirs. The actual size of the window opening is somewhat smaller than that of the Bedroom Floor windows, the difference being caused by the projection of the rusticated masonry.

Most of the rusticated ashlar survives *in-situ*, although *c* 40mm was removed from the face of the rustic floor either side of the north wing and across the north fronts of the east and west wings when the flat roofed additions were built in 1805. Nevertheless, it is clear from the surviving ashlar in this area that there were windows at Terrace Floor level in the north wall of the kitchen, on both sides of the north wing and in the north wall of the west wing. They were vertically aligned with the windows on the upper floors and appear to conform to the window pattern found elsewhere on this floor.

The sash boxes were recessed, and the sash frames were glazed three over three. The southern two windows in the west canted bay retain the most original joinery. Oak was used for the exterior fascia, sashes and sill, pine for the boxes and shutters. The sash frames were pegged. The glazing bars are ovolo-moulded. The plain sills appear to be original, with a rebate flush with the outer face of the bottom rail of the lower sash. The inner bead has probably been replaced (compare with the Bedroom Floor). The original internal shutters survive in the west canted bay. The south window in the bay, W19, retains shutters hung on `H' shaped hinges. They appear to be original. However, if they are original, then there was no projection at sill level into the room although this appears to have required the cutting back of some original brickwork.

Internally, the Terrace Floor windows in the Kitchen, K1/T1, were built with horizontal brick sills. They were cut down to form sloping sills in the 1860s. The original profile is visible as an outline to the cut brickwork in the reveals of the enlarged opening. The blind window at the south end of the east wall of the kitchen (W13) was designed to be glazed and simulate the external appearance of the other Terrace floor windows. Despite being glazed, it was clearly made as a false window. The brick vault above the Kitchen is unbroken in this area. The window opening was designed to accommodate a sash frame set within a recess in the brickwork. Behind the glazing, the recess was plastered and painted black. The north window in the east wall of the Kitchen was probably identical until it was altered when the flat roof additions were made to the Terrace Floor at the front of the house in 1805.

THE TERRACE FLOOR ENTRANCE HALL AREA. The Entrance Hall at Terrace Floor level, now Rooms T7, 8, 9, 11, 12, was originally entered by probably three doors in the north wall and lit by windows in the east and west walls. It seems likely that although this area was originally designed to be one open area, very early on in the life of the house, perhaps even when fitting out of the house that commenced in 1766, it was divided into two rooms. Arriving at a definitive chronology for changes in this area is no easy task, because not enough of the structure could be exposed during the course of analysis. The following observations must of necessity be tentative.

The original north wall of the Terrace Floor entrance hall area (rooms T7, 8, 9) was built with a round arched door opening in the centre. The bricks used in the construction of the wall are coloured purple red, 60-65x210-220x95-105mm. They are laid to English bond in white lime mortar containing flint chips up to 5 mm in size. The arch was formed by two courses of bricks on edge. The opening was lined with pine with flush panelling with bead moulds at the joints and a cyma-reversa architrave on the internal face. The doorleaf was probably made to match the round headed glazed door, D46, in the north side of the passage, T17, which opened into the cellar, T19, under the entrance steps. The two splayed openings either side of the central arch were not built with brick arches. They were cut through the wall, later, probably in 1865. The arches now make it impossible to observe the original form of the wall in this area. It is therefore not clear from the physical evidence whether or not there were original openings in the north wall either side of the central door. However, given the revisions to the design at fitting out stage (see below) it seems most likely that the centre door stood between two other doors of the same size and shape. Door, D47, which appears to be original to the 1760s build but relocated to its present position on the north side of the passage, T17/18, in 1865 (see below) was probably originally located in one of these three openings on the south side of the passage.

The north opening in the brickwork of the west wall of the Entrance Hall area Room, T7 was built with a segmental arch of two courses of headers on edge. The opening was **** wide. From this dimension and the external ashlar, it was clearly for a window although it was converted to become a door into the flat roofed addition to the west in 1805. The south opening in the same wall was for a door. It has a similar segmental arch but it is narrower than the window opening, ***mm wide.

Where the plaster has been removed from the south wall of the Terrace floor Entrance Hall area, the brick construction is similar to that noted above. Bricks, laid on edge, form arches above the openings into the main stairwell and the service stair, and appear to be original. The arch which opens into the closet on the west side of the main stair is of similar proportions and although none of the original brickwork has been exposed, its dimensions indicate that it is original.

At the north end of the east wall of the Terrace Floor entrance hall area, is a window opening which was enlarged to become a door in 1805. The window would have mirrored that in the west wall. The flue in the east wall of the Terrace floor Entrance Hall area was modified to serve the fireplace in the flat roofed addition to the east in 1805. An inspection panel high in the east wall of room T9 now gives access to this flue. Given the difficulties, which would accompany the insertion of such a flue into an existing structure, it seems that this must be an original feature. The most likely location for the fireplace that this flue originally served is in the centre of the east wall of the Terrace Floor entrance hall area. Similarly, the flue in the west wall of the Terrace Floor entrance hall area, adapted in 1805, presumably served a fireplace on the west side of the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area. The door from the Terrace Floor entrance hall area to the kitchen appears to have been created or altered to a round arched opening about 1865. The original treatment of the east wall in this area is not clear. If there was direct access to the kitchen from the Terrace floor, then this is the only possible location for such a door.

THE STAIRWELL AND ACCESS TO THE BREAKFAST ROOM In the curved east wall of the stairwell on the Terrace Floor, T15, the skirting board is missing. The corresponding section of wall viewed from the east in the room, T13, east of the stairwell, is flat between the floor and a height of c 2.07m. Above this level, the wall is curved. On both sides of the flat section of wall, there are vertical cracks in the plaster. These features indicate the existence of a blocked opening in the east wall of the stairwell between the two rooms T15 and T13. This opening is probably an original door.

In the east wall of the room T13, east of the stairwell, opposite the implied door opening leading to the stairs, there are vertical cracks in the plaster and a horizontal crack at lintel height which suggest a corresponding doorway in the east wall of room T13. However, behind the plaster, the brick coursing of the wall is original and continuous. The plaster, covering an area the size of a door, was therefore probably applied following the removal of a doorleaf and architrave for a false door. The continuity in the brickwork shows that this was never more than a false door.

The south wall of the same room is not bonded into the east wall. Although the bricks and mortar appear to be original, it is therefore probably a later insertion, the result of a design change made during the fitting out of the house.

The door opening between the main stairwell and the octagonal room to the south appears to have been cut through the brickwork rather than built as part of the original. This suggests that the octagonal room was not intended to be accessed from the stairwell, as it can be now. Although the present door and surround appear to be original, they too are probably the result of a design alteration or were relocated when the door on the east side of the stairwell was blocked up.

These last two items, taken together, indicate that the original intention was that the octagonal Breakfast Room was to be accessed from the entrance hall on the terrace level, by way of a door in its north east wall and not from the main stairwell. The door in the north west wall of the Breakfast Room links with the Service Stairs and the apartment in the west wing.

The floor of the stairwell was executed in geometrically cut stone.

THE BREAKFAST ROOM. The Breakfast Room is octagonal. The fireplace is in the east wall but, in a room of this size, it is possible that there was a second fireplace in the west wall, although this would require an additional flue, which cannot at present be accounted for. In the south wall is a door, which opens out onto the terrace.

THE APARTMENT IN THE WEST WING. Access to the west wing was obtained via the door in the west wall of the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area and a door from the service stair area. Closers in the brickwork forming the south jamb of this opening confirm that this is an original door. The west wall of Room T3, which passes across the canted bay, is original. The coursing of the bricks in the exposed west face of the wall is continuous with the exterior walls. This wall contains a door opening central to the bay and facing the door to the service stair area. To the south of the door into the bay, a return in the original brickwork indicates a wall enclosing a passage across the wing to the bay. This wall no longer survives, it was probably removed in 1865. The fireplaces in the two rooms either side of the cross passage are approximately central to the east walls of each room.

The Principal Floor, 1762-3

THE PLAN OF DANSON HOUSE, THE `VILLA STYLE' OF SIR ROBERT TAYLOR, AND THE VILLA IDEAL The plan of Danson House is admirably compact, tightly organised around an elliptical, top-lit stair with a more conventional service stair tucked into a rectangular bay immediately to the west. The primary stair rises unbroken from the rustic floor to the colonnaded first-floor landing. Cantilevered and with stone treads, this space is Danson's high drama, a vertiginous shaft culminating in a elliptical dome pierced by an oculus. Made from wood, this dome was originally painted in *trompe l'oeil* fashion to simulate stone coffering (see below). Clustering around the central core of the house on the principal floor are the four rooms which constitute the `circuit'-- entrance hall (north), dining room (east), saloon (south), and library (west). Each one opened into the other, with the exception, obviously, of the entrance hall, which was accessible both from the main entrance and the stair. The passage to the east of the stair, which links the entrance hall with the saloon, was originally used as a closet and apparently did not cut through. On paper this arrangement has a strong geometric character, enhanced by the use of polygonal bays on three sides (south, east, and west), and in this sense it approaches the austerity of a similar centrally planned villa published by Isaac Ware in his *Complete Body of Architecture* of 1756. 'Prismatic' or 'crystalline' are the adjectives commonly applied to this mannerism. The terms are meant to capture the strong, almost modernist feeling for solid geometry, which so many late eighteenth-century villas express.

The essence of the Danson plan -- a cantilevered, top-lit stair surrounded by the principal circuit of rooms -- is found in many of Taylor's villas and has in the past been seen as something of his signature. However, as Giles Worsley has argued, it is wrong to think of it as the creature of any one architect. Matthew Brettingham popularised this sort of stair in his great London townhouses of the late 1740s.[128] Taylor was merely one of a handful of talented architects who took it up more or less simultaneously in the 1750s, and not just in the capital. Indeed, the work of Stiff Leadbetter[129] and James Paine[130],

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128 `Stiff But Not Dull', *Country Life*, 25 July 1991, pp. 90-3, at p. 90. The most notable and influential example was perhaps Norfolk House, St. James's Square, which was finished in stages after 1750 and hugely fashionable. On its influence see M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 194-5. For a detailed description of Norfolk House see *The Survey of London*, vol. 29 (1960), pp. 287-302.

129 Worsley, 1991, pp. 90-3.

130 P. Leach, *James Paine* (London: Zwemmer, 1988), pp.40-1, *et passim*. See also M. Binney, `The Villas of James Paine', Parts I, II, and III, *Country Life*, 20 and 27 February, and 6 March 1969, pp. 406-10, 466-70, and 522-26.

both working largely in the provinces, is comparable to Taylor's villas of the 1750s and 1760s.

Nevertheless, the countervailing tendency to see Taylor's villas as something different, as a distinctive body of work, both more coherent and consistent than that of his contemporaries, deserves serious consideration. Marcus Binney has put this argument most strongly, seeing in Taylor's villa design a process of steady refinement over the 1750s and 1760s. He furthermore suggests that with each project the architect approached, almost by trial and error, nearer and nearer to the ideal arrangement for such buildings.[131] Binney sees a clear division between early and mature villa designs in Taylor's work. Harleyford, built for Sir William Clayton in 1753-55, is a splendid building. It possesses many of those characteristics which we associate with his later designs, a central, top-lit stair, sheer surfaces, and so on, but there are too many subsidiary spaces -- the vaulted vestibule with forced perspective, for example -- and as a result the spatial experience is muddled. It seems just the sort of building you would expect from someone in Taylor's position, young, setting out in a new career, fresh from Rome, head brimming with ideas. It was as if he was trying to dazzle the client with a series of clever conceits rather than pursuing one well-considered course of action. On the outside, Taylor's genius for abstract volumes appears fully formed, as Binney observed. The conspicuous absence of the order, the utter reliance on smooth brickwork relieved here and there by plain stone ornaments of almost utilitarian simplicity, represent a distinct development away from Palladian precedents. Anyone who visits the site with one eye on the early eighteenth-century prototypes will see in an instant the truth of this. The house has a trace of the sublime about it, the result of broad, bare surfaces, and colliding volumes. Coptfold Hall of c1755 (now demolished) comes next, its plan clearly modelled on Harleyford but with three of the four elevations featuring projecting bays, two canted and one elliptical. Barlaston, built for an attorney of Stoke-on-Trent, is different.[132] Its four principal rooms have no fussy excrescences; the spaces follow one from the other simply. But its internal decorations -- presumably executed by local craftsmen according to plans sent up from London -- are still Rococo in feeling, like those at Harleyford. The emergent Neo-classical sensibility, which Binney links to clarity of planning is not found in the details.

Danson and its almost exact contemporary Asgill House (1761-4) inaugurate Taylor's mature phase. The sequence includes Chute Lodge near Andover in Wiltshire (of c.1768; its plan is a close variant of Danson's, though the house is larger), Sharpham House outside Totnes in Devon (c.1770), and Purbrook House outside Portsmouth in Hampshire (again c.1770; and justly famous for being the first British house to be built with an atrium on the Roman model). In these works, the curved bows of the earlier houses have been rejected in favour of the canted bay, which is used in one of the rooms in the circuit as the basis for an octagonal drawing room. The roofs do not have parapets, as in earlier houses, but sit directly on a plainly moulded modillion cornice. Each is faced with ashlaring masonry.[133]

Close analysis of these works, in particular Danson and Asgill, suggests that the divide in Taylor's work is not quite so neat as this. The ornament at Danson is in many places

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131 His landmark article, `The Villas of Sir Robert Taylor' was published in two parts in *Country Life* for 6 and 13 July 1967, pp. 17-21, 78-82. See also the same author's *Sir Robert Taylor. From Rococo to Neoclassicism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984), esp. pp. 17, 39-52.

132 Attributed to Taylor on stylistic grounds by Andor Gomme in `The Architect of Barlaston Hall', *Country Life*, 18 April 1968, pp. 975-9.

133 One wonders whether Taylor had not developed an interest in a quarry from the early 1760s.

characteristic of the London building world of the 1750s and, in the case of the shell motifs in the entrance hall, even earlier. The preponderance of fretted French curves smacks of *chinoisserie* (this is discussed in detail below.) Only after 1765, in, say, the Grafton Street interiors or the Bank of England Court of Directors suite, did Taylor bring the details of his style into line with the new classicism that was being developed by the likes of Chambers and Adam.

Richard Garnier, many of whose attributions have been accepted by Colvin in the revised Biographical Dictionary, has also argued the idea that Taylor had a unique style. Richard Hewlings has come to similar conclusions but using a different methodology, identifying the common features of Taylor's villa designs and then searching for parallels in the work of other eighteenth-century architects. `Taylor's villas,' he has written, `form a discrete group. Although they share features with contemporary buildings, no other buildings combine these features in such a distinctive way'.[134] There is, first of all, the much discussed top-lit, central stair and suite of rooms on the *piano nobile*, or principal floor, which interconnect. Second, there is the daring use of stone cantilevered stairs. Third is the sheer geometrical ingenuity manifested in Taylor's plans, where the inter-relationship of forms and spaces seems to betray a love of economy for its own sake. Fourth, while most villa-architects show a marked preference for projecting bays (either canted or rounded), Taylor applied these features consistently to the rear and side elevations of his houses from the 1760s, and in this way enhanced a feeling for the intrinsic beauty of solid geometry. Finally, and on a more mundane note, there was Taylor's skill at managing domestic arrangements. The quest for a house that gave the impression of singular isolation from the rest of the world made the provision of services difficult. Taylor's solution was to have two service levels, one at the level of the rustic and the other subterranean. Cutting across them was a single, double-height kitchen, usually vaulted and sitting exactly beneath the dining room. An ample and continuous brick area kept the lower area dry. The Phase One Build at Danson is arranged in just this way.

As for the villa-form itself -- an isolated, cubic house almost Roman in its austerity, built in close harmony with the landscape, and designed with a feeling for solid geometry -- this has a venerable and less contentious pedigree. The great tradition of classicism inaugurated by Burlington and Campbell in the early decades of the eighteenth century had at its heart the villa ideal. John Summerson's excellent article of 1960, `The Classical Country House in Eighteenth-Century England', remains the standard source on this subject, though these ideas have been pushed by Giles Worsley in his authoritative study of eighteenth-century British classicism.[135] The key feature, in planning terms, was the tendency for the circulation path through the great rooms to be circular not *en filade* as had been the norm in the previous century. The prototypes are well known. All were designed or built between 1717 and 1730. Colen Campbell's Mereworth and Stourhead, Burlington's design for his own estate in Chiswick, Lord Herbert's precocious Whitehall villa (designed when he was aged 22), Whitton Park by Roger Morris, and Marble Hill in Twickenham (designed by Lord Herbert or Roger Morris or both). Although each was of relatively modest size, the sensibility they manifested worked its way into the Palladian great house, expressing itself in a preference for strongly differentiated central pavilions. With the exception of Lord Herbert's Whitehall villa, these prototypical houses also tended to have the character of a part-time suburban retreat rather than a country seat properly speaking. The point is worth making, for at the end of the century the villa ideal, which had previously worked its way up the architectural scale, would percolate

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[134] An Historical Evaluation of Danson Hill, LB of Bexley, English Heritage report, October 1993, p. 8.

[135] Reprinted in *The Unromantic Castle and Other Essays* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), pp. 81-120.

down the social ladder, influencing the design of the middle-class detached and semi-detached villa. In a very real sense, Taylor's Danson or, for that matter, his roughly contemporary Asgill, were part of this evolutionary process.

THE DIMENSIONS AND PROPORTIONING EMPLOYED IN THE DESIGN OF THE FLOOR PLAN
The standard wall thickness for the Principal Floor is 2'6". The walls on either side of the entrance are, however, thicker, because they incorporate flues and niches.

The Entrance Hall is 26' 8" long by 20', a proportion of 4:3. These proportions are recommended by Vitruvius for the peristyle in a villa, 'Peristyles, lying athwart, should be one third longer than they are deep,...'[136] Palladio also recommends it as a suitable ratio for the planning of a room along with other alternatives. These proportions were also applied in the design of the landing at the top of the stairs and, presumably, the room on the Terrace Floor below the hall before it was subdivided.

The Library and Dining Room, both 18' by 36', are twice as long as they are wide. Vitruvius recommends this ratio, especially for dining rooms. The opening for the bay within the room is half the length of the side of the room. Unlike the Saloon bay, the projecting side bays were not strictly octagonal, although the three long sides are of equal length, the internal angle between the sides is 141 degrees instead of 135 degrees. The overriding factor that determines the geometry in this elevation is that each facet is 9' in length. The interior was finished as an ellipse. The ratio between the long and short diameters of the ellipse is approximately 4:3.

The octagonal Saloon measures 26 x 26'.

The room height throughout the Principal Floor is 16'. The rules for proportioning the height of rooms in relation to length and breadth are not at all simple. Isaac Ware wrote to this effect in 1756[137] but generally favoured rooms in which the height was equal to or exceeded the width. At Danson, this is not the case, each of the principal rooms being lower than it is wide. This is presumably a compromise made at the architect's discretion, but it is worth noting that the use of the foot measure results in relatively simple ratios in the proportions and this appears to have been a goal in itself.

THE PRINCIPAL FLOOR, OBSERVATIONS ON THE METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION. The floor frames throughout the Principal floor were designed to support floor boards running north south, although the Entrance Hall had a stone floor.

The floor frames in the Entrance Hall and Library employ the same system of principal joists, common joists and ceiling joists. The system in the Dining Room is different, because the Kitchen vault dispenses with the need for a ceiling. However, it is not clear, why the Saloon floor is different.

THE ENTRANCE HALL. The brickwork includes cylindrical recesses that match those in the Library and the Dining Room. The east and west walls incorporate niches with arched heads, semicircular in plan. Although recesses were cut into the brick wall faces below the niches when the cast iron radiators were installed, it is clear from the bonding pattern of the remaining bricks that the wall face below the dado in this area was originally flat.[138]

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136 Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, Book VI, chapt. III para. 7

137 Ware I, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, 1756, Chapt. 27, p 327

138 The radiator housings included the date stamp 1883, see text below

The floor frame of the Entrance Hall consists of two north-south main beams, 320x? mm, which support three areas of east-west floor joists. The joists run east west and include principal joists, 320x80mm, and common joists, 220x60mm. The principal joists support the ceiling joists, 60x70mm, which run north south.

Lapped floorboards measuring *x**mm in section were nailed onto the floor frame. Onto the boards a c 40mm thick layer of medium grain yellow sand was laid as a bed for floor slabs, which were then laid on top. The design of the floor, a combination of trapeziums and squares set on the diagonal may have been influenced by a set of alternative designs for floors published by Batty Langley in 1741.[139]

The window openings have timber lintels with relieving arches in the brickwork above. The reveals are square, not splayed. The main entrance door opening is of the same size and construction as the window openings, only set lower in the wall. The other door openings are formed in brickwork with a segmental brick arch of two orders above a timber lintel. The original masonry opening for the door to the main stairs was the same size as the others in the Hall. The opening through the wall was formed in stone but the original lintel was at the same height and above it, the stones were cut to form a keystone. This is consistent with the treatment of the external masonry above the window openings. The enlargement of the door resulted in a door opening the same size as the main entrance door.

Sections of the east and west walls adjacent to the doors into the Dining Room and Library were roughly painted with limewash in an 'IXI' pattern. This appears to have been intended to mark the path of the chimney flues rising within the thickness of the walls from the floor below (see notes on the fireplace opening in the Library below).

THE DINING ROOM The floor of the Dining Room is partly supported by brick columns which sit on top of the brick vault of the kitchen. The floor frame consists of two main beams, 375x320mm, lying approximately east-west which support bridging joists, 230x100mm, running north-south, on top of which the common joists, 100x80mm, run east-west. The southern beam was removed in the 1980s. It was of trussed girder construction. The floorboards were jointed with pegs and their soffits are shaped to fit over the joists.

Above the windows in the east wall are roundels in the brick, which were not used in the final decorations of the room. They match the brick roundels in the Entrance Hall and Library, and it is reasonable to assume that there were similar roundels in each wall of the Dining Room distributed according to the pattern of a triumphal arch as they are in the Library. In the south wall, either side of the window recess, there were rectangular recesses rising from just below dado level. These were probably intended to provide cupboard space as in the Library. There were bonding timbers set in the brickwork for the attachment of the dado (partly now replaced in modern brick) and timber lintels (now replaced in concrete) above the windows. As in the Library, concealed behind the plaster lining, there are probably arched recesses either side of the fireplace but these have not been exposed in the recent round of works. The plan by Malton shows the recesses in this position and in the end walls, which again suggests that he had access to Taylor's original drawings.

Although they were later blocked with joinery, the window openings in the north and south walls were built for functioning windows. Unlike the windows at Bedroom Floor

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[139] Batty Langley, *Designs...*,1741, Plate XCV

level either side of the north wing and in the east wall of the Kitchen at Terrace Floor level, they are not constructed as recesses in the external face of the wall and then filled with false window joinery. Furthermore, they are centred internally, which brings them out of line with the centre of the external elevations. At Harleyford (1753-5), Coptfold (soon after 1755), Barlaston (1756-8) and Asgill House (1761-4), Taylor designed and built the windows in the equivalent positions as blind windows.[140] Consequently they are centred in the external wall face not with the internal wall face. That these windows at Danson were executed as blind windows therefore appears to be a revision of Taylor's original intentions. Malton's plan is interesting in this respect since it shows open, not blind windows in these positions, again this suggests he had access to Taylor's original drawings and was not necessarily trying to illustrate the house as it would have appeared in 1790.

The fireplace opening was built 1480mm and 1430mm high. It has a segmental arch supported by a bent iron strap. Although not much of the original fabric was exposed, there was sufficient to establish its similarity with the original Saloon fireplace opening.

THE SALOON. The floor of the Saloon was repaired in the 1980s, but appears to retain its original design. This consists of two main beams, ***x**mm, spanning east west, which support north-south bridging joists, ***x**mm. On these latter rest the common joists, ***x**mm, and to which the ceiling joists, ***x**mm, are mortised. The northern beam was fixed askew to avoid the flues in the side walls.

Where it has been exposed, the brick and masonry shell of the octagonal Saloon is consistent with the rest of the house and therefore appears to be original to the construction in the period 1762-63. The bricks are red, or dark red with some patches of yellow, and measure 215x100-105x60-65 mm. Bonding timbers are set in the brickwork for the fixing of plaster battens, etc. The lime mortar is white and contains small black and yellow brown flint fragments up to 8mm in size.

The original door openings to the Dining Room and Library were formed with timber lintels with brick segmental relieving arches above. This is the standard pattern used throughout the Principal and Bedroom Floors. The door from the Saloon to the closet east of the Stairwell does not conform to this type and appears to be entirely an insertion dating from the 1860s or later. This means that, originally, the only access to the Saloon was from the Dining Room and Library. This is consistent with the Malton plan of the house published in 1790.

The fireplace in the north wall was built with an opening measuring 1500mm wide, 1480mm high and 430mm deep. Like the other fireplaces on the Principal Floor, it was constructed with a segmental brick arch supported by a bent iron bar.

THE LIBRARY The Library floor frame consists of a long diagonal north-south main beam, 320x320mm, spanning between the jambs of the windows in the north and south walls. It is probably jointed at a point above the dividing wall between the Terrace Floor rooms T3 and T5. The main beam supports principal joists, 335x75mm, and common joists, 215x65mm, running east west. The joists are continued into the bay. The ceiling joists, 75x70mm, are mortised to the principal joists and run north south. Soundproofing was inserted between the floor joists. The pine floorboards are jointed with dowels or pegs.

More of the masonry shell was exposed in the Library than in the Dining Room. In the Library, it is clear that Taylor used a triumphal arch motif to articulate the wall surface.

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[140] See ground plans reproduced in Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984

With the room partially stripped of its plaster lining, it is clearly the case for the end walls, where the roundels are located above cupboard recesses either side of a large arched recess. However, it also seems likely that this motif was applied to the fireplace wall although only a small area of brickwork was exposed above the fireplace. The two bookcases provide the evidence for this interpretation either side of the fireplace. They are the same size as that in the south wall. This suggests that they are set in similar round arched recesses. That there are roundels above the door is suggested by symmetry with the west wall where they appear above the windows. This system of wall articulation is common in Taylor's works of this period. He applied it at 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields (1754-5), Harleyford (1753-5) and Barlaston (1756-8). In each of these houses, the cupboard recesses were filled with bookcases. At Danson, the bookcases are larger than the recesses and rise from the floor not from the dado. Again, this implies a design alteration

The brick structure of the east wall of the Library above the fireplace was exposed during the current restoration works. The bricks were red, dark red, yellow, and measured 220x100-105x60-65mm. They were set in a white lime mortar containing brown and black flint chips up to 5 mm in size. This is consistent with the rest of the house and presumably dates from its construction between 1762 and 1767.

The brickwork around the fireplace is concealed by bricks and mortar associated with the installation of the present chimneypiece. However, it is possible to observe an iron bar of the type used in the construction of the Library and Dining Room fireplaces. This suggests that the fireplace opening was built in the same way as the others and that it too was reduced in size when the chimneypiece was added.

Part of the brick wall face above the fireplace was roughly painted with a white lime wash paint. The painted area corresponds with the outline of the flue rising within the thickness of the wall from the Library fireplace.[141] There are similar markings in the Entrance Hall.

THE STAIRCASE The staircase is of stone cantilevered from the walls. The stair balusters are of wrought iron. The design of the baluster is asymmetrical, based on a bulb or vase with sprouting arabesques. The handrail is of mahogany. The handrail and balustrade were altered, probably in the 1860s, when the handrail for the main flight of stairs was raised by the insertion of a band of circular wrought iron motifs.

The window in the curved wall of the staircase lighting the closet to the east is shown on the Malton plan. This window is curved in plan to match the curve of the wall and is frosted. There is a matching window at a higher level between the main stairwell and the service stairs. These windows appear to be original and are therefore remarkable examples of glass making from the period. They are presumably ground muff glass, that is glass blown as a cylinder, which is then opened out, and in this case, laid out to cool on a curved surface. The frosting is presumably either a product of a grinding process or acid etching. The window frames, probably oak, are moulded with an ovolo.

The Bedroom Floor, 1762-3

The pattern of the floor framing in the Bedroom Floor is more regular than that of the Principal Floor. The floor frames in the two side wings are similar, both have main beams spanning from east-west which support trussed girder bridging beams running north-south. The bridging beams are set into the walls above the jambs of the windows in

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[141] The practice of tracing the path of the chimney flues in limewash was adopted at Pell Wall in Shropshire by Sir John Soane between 1822 and 1829.

the north and south walls. The main beams were originally suspended from the paired trussed girders, which spanned the opening across the canted side bays. Further support was also provided by iron straps attached to the feet of the king posts in the east-west partition walls at Bedroom Floor level.[142]

Lime plaster was laid on laths supported by battens nailed to the sides of the joists. This was presumably intended to provide either fire proofing or sound deadening. Trimmers were provided for the joists where the walls contained chimney flues.

The main beam measure 330x320mm in section, the principal joists 335x100mm, the common joists, longer 225x100mm, and shorter 225x75mm to 280x65mm and the ceiling joists, 65x55mm. The trussed floor girders are composed of two beams measuring *x*x**mm bolted together. Set in trenches cut into the concealed face were two struts measuring *x*x**mm. The struts were held in compression by hard wood wedges driven between them at the centre of the beam. Similar trussed girders were used at the Mansion House probably in 1740 although there the wedges were positioned at the outer ends of the struts.[143] Designs for similar girders were published by Batty Langley in 1741,[144] Isaac Ware, 1756,[145] and William Pain in 1763.[146]

The internal north-south brick walls contain flues rising from the lower floors. The internal east-west walls are stud frames, infilled with brick. The frames were carefully executed and make use of diagonal strutting to function as girders spanning the brick north-south walls. Iron straps, or stirrups, connecting the Bedroom Floor main beams to these frames show that the frames were intended to give additional support to the Bedroom Floor. The design of the framing also makes it clear where doors were intended. There were mortises for additional diagonal struts at the ends of the walls. The struts would have continued into the roofs, above the original single storey height canted bays. William Pain illustrated designs for trussed girder partition walls with the capacity to support the underlying floor in 1763.[147] This method of construction was not unique among Taylor's buildings.[148] The timber framing of the partition walls was infilled with red, orange and purple red bricks measuring 215x60-65x100 mm, set in a white lime mortar containing flint chips up to 5 mm in size. This is the same composition as that used for the main walls.

The door openings through the brick walls on the two sides of the Landing were of two types. The south doors in the east and west walls of the Landing had segmental brick arches of two courses above timber lintels. This pattern of construction was a repetition of that used for the doors on the Principal Floor and the windows on all floors. The doors in the middle of the east and west walls of the landing were of a different type. These two doors and the door between the principal south bedroom, B1, and the bedroom

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142 See section on wall frame construction below

143 Jeffrey S, *The Mansion House*, 1993, pp 74-78

144 Batty Langley, *Designs...*1741, Roofs, plate 1

145 Isaac Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture*, fig 4, plate 14

146 William Pain , *The Builder's Pocket Treasure*, 1763, plate 35

147 William Pain, *The Builder's Pocket Treasure*, 1763, plate 37

148 At Harleyford for example `The construction of these cross-walls, which could not weigh too heavily on the ceilings below, is of special interest: they are giant A-frames infilled with brick' Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984, p46

to the east, B7, had segmental brick arches without timber lintels. The omission of the timber lintels was probably due to the proximity of flues rising from the lower floors within the thickness of the walls.

There were binding plates set in the internal wall face at dado level. However, it appears that the Bedroom Floor rooms were lined in plaster without either a dado rail or timber dado.

THE PLAN OF THE BEDROOM FLOOR In the eastern half of the house, the two bedrooms were separated by two timber framed partition walls set about a metre apart. The design of the framing is consistent with that of the other frames on the same floor, especially those around the stairwell, which are structural. From the design of the two surviving frames between the eastern north and south bedrooms, the space between them was intended for three separate cupboards. The central cupboard was served by a single door in the northern room and the outer two by doors in the southern room. The ceiling joists, which pass above the enclosed cupboard, show no trace of plaster and lath. This combined with the appearance of the timbers and the similarity in design to those around the stairwell, indicate that the frames were original to the building. Thus, the northern room was independent of the southern room, having only one access door from the landing. The southern room however, had a door from the landing and one leading to the principal bedroom. This suggests that the southern room functioned as a boudoir to the principal bedroom and that the northern room was a single bedroom.

The corresponding frame walls between the western two rooms on the Bedroom Floor were altered in the 1920s by the removal of most of the minor vertical studs[149]. Their plan location does not exactly match those on the eastern side of the building. This, however, can be explained in terms of symmetry for individual elevations within the rooms and functions attached to the rooms. The door openings in the framing suggest that the southern room functioned as a bedroom and the northern room as a boudoir attached to it. The intervening space between the frames would have provided cupboard space.

From the design of the framing of the partition wall on the north side of the landing, a single central door entered the north room. The north-south partition wall currently divides this room in two, is clearly not original. The studs used in the framing are not even full height. Two fireplaces heated the room. There is, consequently no obvious location within the room plan for a bed. This room may, then, have been used as a study or as an additional drawing room.

The wall frames either side of the staircase to the attic floor were of the same type of truss construction as the other wall frames on this floor. They also serve to support the roof. This demonstrates that the stairs to the attic were intended for this location. However, there are mortises in the east face of the west north-south floor beam in the attic floor above the staircase to the attic, which suggests that the staircase was reversed.

The original accommodation on the Bedroom Floor therefore comprised the following: the large room in the north wing, entered by the first door facing the head of the main staircase, probably used either as a drawing room or study; the principal bedroom occupying the central bay in the south facade with, to the east, a boudoir attached to it; a second bedroom, probably in the south west corner with a boudoir to the north; and a third bedroom occupying the north east corner.

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149 See section below

THE BEDROOM FLOOR WINDOWS. The windows on the Bedroom Floor were uniform in their external appearance. They were square openings surrounded on all four sides by the same architrave as that used for the Principal Floor windows. Like the Principal Floor windows, the heads had flat arches with, internally, oak lintels below segmental brick arches. The reveals were originally square, they were subsequently cut back as splays (see below). Above all the windows except the blind windows and the north window in the east wall, were voids, which were designed to allow the sashes to rise above the window opening and disappear from view.[150]

THE BEDROOM FLOOR FIREPLACES The fireplace openings on the Bedroom Floor were built to a standard pattern and size. The hearth openings were 1140mm (+ or - 65 mm) 600-640 mm deep and 1200mm tall. The brick wall face above the opening was supported by a segmental arch of two courses of headers on end varying in number between thirteen and sixteen set between two stretchers on end. Originally, segmental iron straps probably supported the arches, but they appear to have been reset when the hearths were reduced in size. The reduction probably occurred when the cast iron grates were installed probably soon after 1863.

THE LANDING. The Landing has an elliptical dome made from pine with a wrought iron and glass skylight above. The dome is supported on a cornice above Ionic columns almost identical to those at Chute Lodge, *c* 1768, also by Taylor. At Chute, the cornice includes a pulvinated frieze. The guilloche motif used at Danson as a soffit moulding was used at Chute in the coffering of the dome. The dome of the lantern is finished with plain panelling. The ribs of the dome are ovolo moulded to the same profile as the window glazing bars. The ribs were carried up into the glazed area at the top of the dome. The top row of panels has been removed. Originally, the panels were painted with images of the 'fulmens', an attribute of Jupiter, interspersed with rosettes.[151]

The Attic Floor, 1762-3

THE FLOOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE ATTIC FLOOR The design of the Attic floor frame is partly determined by the need to support the major roof trusses and restrict their outward thrust. The distribution of the major floor beams above both side wings corresponds with the major roof trusses. These beams act as ties for the trusses. The diagonals are tied into the main beams to resist the outward thrust of the main diagonal roof trusses. Consequently, the top of the floor frame is set flush with the top of the external cornice.

The floor above the principal bedroom, B1, is set higher than the rest of the floor. The frame here sits on top of the cornice. This is to provide extra height for the Principal Bedroom.

THE FLOOR PLAN The attic floor was also fireproofed, and the rooms were plastered. Small fireplaces in the main north-south walls heated all except the north room. The north room was lit by the oculus in the pediment. The other rooms were lit by roof-lights set in the flat central section of the roof, which would not have been visible from the ground. The ceiling in the area around the stair well light was lower than it is now. The original level is given by the mortises in the sides of the trusses on the east and west sides of the stair well.

THE WINDOWS AND ROOF-LIGHTS The oculus (W66) set in the pediment, lit the northern attic room. The upper half of the window opened as a horizontal casement. The ovolo

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150 See notes on the Bedroom Floor window joinery included in the fitting out stage, below

151 See notes on the fitting out of the main staircase, below

mouldings match those in the sash windows on the lower floors. The other rooms on the attic floor and the domed light above the stair well were lit by roof-lights. Above the glazed top of the dome was a glazed roof light. This was made with wrought iron glazing bars.[152]

THE WATER SUPPLY FOR THE UPPER FLOORS Two stones built in to the east wall of the Principal Bedroom at attic floor level appear to be integral to the original construction of the chimney stacks. The floor trimmers of the attic floor respect their location. The stones appear to be designed to provide cantilevered support for a water tank or cistern located on the attic floor above. This tank no longer survives. It was probably made redundant by the much larger tank above the stairs to the attic, which appears to have been installed in the later nineteenth century. The original tank was probably supplied with water pumped from a well. This system is probably that which was in operation in 1805 when the house was described as 'amply supplied with Spring and Rain Water, and an Engine forces the Water to the Upper Apartments as well as to the Stables.'

The Roof, 1762-3

THE DESIGN OF THE ROOF the roof takes the form of a truncated pyramid with chimneystacks rising through the flat central section. The design allowed the void to be used as an attic floor. The chimneystacks, the wall frames on both sides of the stairs to the attic floor and the frame surrounding the central dome above the stairwell give support. The purlins are supported by queen posts. The flat central section is supported by king post trussed girders spanning from north to south supported at their south end by the frame wall on the north side of the staircase between the Bedroom and Attic Floors. The arrangement of trusses against the stack walls avoids the need to set roof timbers in the thickness of the stack walls. The pitch of the roof was probably determined by the choice of stone slates as a roofing material.[153]

THE ROOF TRUSSES The principals, 145x200mm in section, are mortised to the tiebeams in the floor frame. The purlins, 110x110mm in section, are mortised into the side of the principals. At the junction with the purlins, queen struts, 95x90mm in section support the principals. Additional resistance to outward thrust is provided by a strut, 130x110mm in section, between the queen strut and the tie beam and mortised to both.

THE CENTRAL FLAT ROOF The central section of the roof consists of a set of trussed girders. Some of these were radically altered when the ceiling was raised in the central area. The girders survive in their original form against both sides of both stacks. Originally, six of the eight trussed roof girders took this form. The design of the other two, either side of the dome, was modified to allow the dome to rise through to the roof light. The girders comprise two horizontal timbers, both 140x140mm in section, one above the other. The lower timber functions as a tiebeam. A short king post is mortised between the two horizontals and struts rise from the tiebeam, to meet the king post immediately below its junction with the upper member. Movement of the struts is restricted by iron bolts, which pass through the struts and the tie beam. The upper timber is mortised into the side of the horizontal timbers, 140x 150mm in section, which frame the flat section of the roof. These framing timbers are supported in part by the principal rafters and the chimneystacks. The tiebeams of the trussed girders joined to the sides of the principal rafters with a half lap dovetail joint.

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152 The overall structure was later raised to provide ventilation using `L' section steel, perhaps in the 1920s?

153 William Salmon, *Palladio Londinensis*, 1734, plate XXXIII, illustrated various pitches appropriate to different materials

THE CARPENTERS MARKS A very high proportion of carpenters numbering marks used to set out the rafters survive. These are numbered in pairs using tagged Roman numerals, chiselled into the sides of rafters near the junction with the wall plate. The centre rafter above the south bay also bore the mark `*E+S*', burnt into its side at its lower end. They are, perhaps, the initials of the timber yard.

Some of the longer timbers were scarf jointed.

THE ORIGINAL ROOF COVERING The original battens for the hanging of the roof tiles were preserved in-situ under the roof of the east canted bay. Their survival indicates that the rafters were not originally boarded.

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Completing the house, 1765-6

John Boyd's first wife dies in 1763, his father dies in 1765 and he marries Catherine Chapone in 1766

In spring 1763, with the carcass of Danson well under way if not nearing completion, Boyd's wife died and, it seems, work on the house was delayed. The impetus to finish the house might have come from the death of his father in August 1765. The elder Boyd settled the bulk of his estate on John.[154] But it is more likely that Boyd's remarriage at the age of forty-eight, almost exactly a year later, on 1 August 1766, was what finally spurred him into action. Catherine Chapone, a gentry daughter from Charlton in Gloucestershire, was a much younger woman. Of her we know little, but for a comment made by Sir William Hamilton whom she met in Italy in January 1776 on an extended European tour with her family. He described her as a homely woman but with an extremely lively character. The Boyds went on to have three children, James, Sarah and Catherine.[155]

Two months before his marriage, work on the interior of Boyd's house was well underway. In a letter written in June 1766, Boyd noted that a French artist, a little known painter named Charles Pavillon, was on site completing the canvas panels that adorn the dining room.[156] The paintings themselves are signed and dated. Other pieces of evidence indicate that work was proceeding elsewhere in the house. The fine organ in the Library bears an inscription under the fine mahogany case, `1766 Olde England fecit'.[157] Finally, there is the evidence of window tax assessments, which show a threefold increase in the twelve months following June 1766.[158] The nature of the work is such that one would expect it to have been finished in a relatively short space of time, a year perhaps. In any case, documentary evidence confirms that the Library was fully fitted out and in

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154 Hancock, 1990, p.383 note 1

155 Hancock, 1990, p. 55.

156 Hancock, 1996, p. 350, note 26, and p. 369.

157 This was discovered during restorations carried out by N. P. Mander in 1959-1960. A fascinating file of correspondence relating to the fate of the instrument and its eventual restoration for use in Danson is held by the Bexley Local Studies Collection, LABX/DA/4/1/97. `Olde England' has been identified as George England, an important English organ maker who was active from 1740 to 1790, with the Danson organ being cited as one of his earliest surviving domestic instruments. See Michael Wilson, *The English Chamber Organ. History and Development, 1650-1850* (London: Casirer, 1968), pp. 64-5. The date of the piece is wrongly given as 1776 in Gwilym Beechey, `The Organ at Danson Mansion, Bexley, Kent', *Organ*, vol. 48 (Jan. 1969), pp. 128-31. N. P. Mander, however, disputed this attribution in a letter dated 24 November 1958 and held in the Local Studies Collection file cited above. He argued that the organ designer was in fact John England the brother of George. George, he points out, is not known to have had a family and therefore would likely not have been known as `senior', whereas John had a son, the organ builder George Pike England (ob. 1814). Mander felt that George Pike to have added the inscription at some later date when renovating the organ, and, indeed, Mander reported there had been some work carried out on the organ in the early nineteenth century, namely the insertion of a Keraulophon stop. John England is known to have built an organ for Wardour Castle in Wiltshire in 1767, and a comparison between this instrument and the Danson organ would perhaps settle the matter once and for all.

158 Bexley Local Studies, MS 1/1-7. The originals are held in the Kent Archives Office, Maidstone. Unfortunately, the Bexley Poor Rate Returns survive only form October 1790.

use by 1770, which, in the absence of further evidence, must be taken as the *terminus ante quem* for the principal interiors.[159]

That Taylor oversaw this finishing is likely. In 1766 (or early the following year), Boyd was also using Taylor to renovate no. 33 Brook Street in Mayfair. The houses in Brook Street, Upper Brook Street, Grosvenor Street, Upper Grosvenor Street and Grosvenor Square were first occupied during the 1720s and 1730s. By the 1740s, these streets were favoured by members of Parliament. Peers and a higher percentage of titled residents took about 15% of the houses. Some of the establishments were very large. The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair was home to London's *beau monde* by mid-century, quite different in character to Great George Street, which was more suited to Parliament than Court.

In any case the building lease on no. 33 Brook Street is dated 25 September 1736. From 1757 to 1766, the house was occupied rented by Lady Anne Jekyl. Then Boyd's name appears in the ratebooks but he did not take possession until 1767, when there is a jump in rateable value (£66 to £80) indicating a rebuilding. A note in the margin of the ratebook for 1768 records the rent having been paid by Taylor of Spring Gardens, suggesting that Boyd might have vacated the house; perhaps he never even got to the point of considering it his residence. In 1769, Sir Harry Houghton replaced Boyd as the tenant.

Taylor extensively altered the original house, reorganising the elevation around a centrally placed door. Each of the ground-floor openings has a pair Tuscan columns *in antis* and a single pediment (since removed) spanned the three-bay facade. Symmetrical facades were rare among London townhouses, and it is interesting that the use of a pediment in just this way was recommended by Ware in his *Complete Body of Architecture* of 1756. There is a plaster vaulted entrance hall and stairs. Behind the Hall was a large octagonal room, probably a saloon.[160] The plan is shallow, and overall, the house can be said to have been substantial without being grand.

Revision of the original concept, the addition of wings, Taylor, c.1766

By 1766, however, Boyd had moved away from the idea of a villa. Taylor provided wings to either side of the main block, linked to it by curving quadrant walls. A tunnel might have provided the functional link between these blocks and the main house. Sir John Soane in his Ninth Royal Academy Lecture (delivered 2 March 1815) noted the existence of a tunnel. But no physical evidence has been found to support this. This lecture was illustrated by a watercolour view made on 23 October 1812 by RD Chantrell, one of Soane's regular draughtsmen. This 'View of Danson' was based either on an earlier sketch that does not survive or on the plan of the house in Malton's posthumous survey of Taylor's works, which Soane owned.[161] The wings themselves had been demolished more than a decade before (see below).

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159 Hancock, correspondence with author, September 1995.

160 See former London Region Historians's Report on no. 33 Brook Street, now Historical Analysis and Research Team file WM 261. The house is described in vol. 39 of *The Survey of London, The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair* (London: The Athlone Press for the Greater London Council, 1977) pp. 83, 85, 122, and 188-89.

161 I am grateful to Susan Palmer at the Soane Museum for discussing this view (SM 18/5/1) with me and drawing my attention to the 1812 entry in Soane's Day Book. The relevant section in Royal Academy Lecture Nine reads:

> At Danson, a seat of Sir John Boyd's near Welling in Kent, is a villa erected by the late Sir Robert Taylor. It consists of a main building. Communications there certainly are, but of a strange kind, being entirely underground. This does not lessen, on the contrary increases, the objection to detached wings for offices. This kind of building must always appear unfinished, and be damp

When were these wings constructed and why? The first question is easy to answer, at least relatively. They appear on the Andrew Dury and Herbert *Map of Kent* published in 1769, but so are the old offices and stables still standing on the site that would soon be occupied by the lake. These latter were demolished by 1776, the date of the *Kentish Traveller's Companion*, in which the new lake is specifically mentioned.[162] The only secure *terminus ante quem* is 1787, provided by the date of the Courbould view of Danson.

The wings are shown in some detail in the 'Portrait of Danson', now in the possession of the local authority and which hangs in Hall Place. A date of 1775 has previously been accepted for this painting based on Hutcherson's surmise that it was commissioned to commemorate Boyd's award of a baronetcy. However, a date of 1766 can be reasonably deduced from internal evidence, which would suggest that the wings were designed if not built by this year. That these are the work of Taylor is certain, as they are shown in Malton's aquatint perspective of Danson published in Malton's definitive edition of Taylor's works.[163]

The Portrait of Danson, its date and attribution

Boyd is known to have commissioned at least five views of his new house and park, two for Danson itself and three for the walls of his Westminster townhouse.[164] Two of the three surviving pictures contain some information about the park, though in each case it the artist took considerable licence. The earliest, the 'Portrait of Danson,' is in the possession of the local authority and hangs in Hall Place.

The details of the plantings shown in the picture do not correspond to features shown on the 1799 Ordnance Survey, although the artist took care to show the house accurately, and it is possible to pinpoint the exact location from which the view was made).

The `Portrait of Danson' is a large oil painting (44 and 3/4 in. by 66 1/4 in.). It depicts the principal front of the house from the north west and clearly shows its wings containing stables (to the right or west) and offices (to the left or east). Boyd and his family are shown in the fore- and middle ground, while an agricultural implement occupies an important position nearer the picture plane to the left. John Boyd and his family are in the right foreground. Hutcherson argued that the painting was commissioned in 1775 to commemorate Boyd's achievement of a baronetcy, basing her conclusion on the number and age of the children depicted.[165] However, a careful examination of Boyd's family history suggests an earlier date, 1766 or 1767 at the latest.[166] The young woman looking

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and inconvenient.
As reprinted by D. Watkin, *Sir John Soane. Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.620. Neil Burton very kindly the author's attention to this passage.

162 Pp. 19-20.

163 *The architectural designs of Sir Robert Taylor drawn and executed in aquatint by Thomas Malton* (1792).

164 Hancock, 1996, p. 355.

165 Hutcherson, p. 29.

166 The two girls in the right corner looking at the artist are Elizabeth and Lucy, then aged 15 and 13. The eldest boy, John, stands in order of succession nearest his father. He would have been 16 in 1766. The pair of children gambolling in the middle distance are Mary, 12, and Augustus, 8.

over the shoulder of the artist in the right foreground would therefore be Boyd's second wife, Catherine Chapone. If the painting were executed any later, there would be some reference to one or all of the three children Boyd and she had, including James, their first, who was born in 1766 or 1777. The number of children shown, five, is exactly the number Boyd had by his first wife Mary.

Until recently, this picture was attributed, without good reason, to the noted landscape painter Richard Wilson. It is more likely the work of George Barrett the Elder, RA (1732?-1784), who specialised in Romantic landscapes and country house portraits.[167] The catalogue compiled for the auction of Boyd's picture collections lists a view of Danson by Barrett, and a recently discovered letter from Sir John Boyd the younger to the future owner of Danson, John Johnston, refers explicitly to views of the house made by that artist. The diminutive figures of Boyd and his family, which are executed in a different style, were most probably painted by one of Barrett's frequent collaborators, Sawrey Gilpin, RA (1733-1807).[168]

The ideological significance of the wings

The wings fundamentally changed the character of Boyd's Danson, making it grander and more of a country residence than a villa. At this time, a villa was generally considered to provide a retreat in a rural setting from a larger house usually in the town. In part, this decision was informed by new ideas on country house planning. It had been common practice to distance offices and stables from the main house earlier in the century. By 1756, Isaac Ware was recommending the opposite course. In his *Complete Body of Architecture* of that year he wrote:

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167 For Barret see Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kuenstler*, vol. 2. He executed a series of country houses -- Claremont, Cadland Park, Burton Constable Hall, Kedleston, Trentham Park -- which were engraved by W. Watte. His landscape style spanned what was then the expressive range, from Claude to Rosa. He also painted dramatic landscapes in the Lake District, Scotland, and Wales. Boyd owned two of the latter by him. The Witt Picture Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, holds many reproductions of his work (Boxes 91 and 92, British School), among which are a good number of pictures previously attributed to Wilson. The evidence for the attribution to Barret is as follows: first, the sale catalogues advertising the auction of Boyd's large collection of pictures, compiled in 1800 and 1805, list four works by Barret, one of them titled `A Perspective View of Danson'. Boyd owned four Wilsons, which may perhaps explain how, ultimately, the `Danson portrait' came to be attributed to him. See Hancock, 1996, Appendix, pp. 437-43. The second piece of evidence takes the form of a letter John Boyd II wrote to John Johnston following protracted negotiations over the sale of the estate. In it Boyd refers to `two large views of Danson, which were painted before I made the alterations there'. He continues: `I ordered them to be bought in when my Pictures were soldy Coxe [7 and 8 May 1805], thinking the Purchaser of Danson might be glad to have them; If you think proper to call and look at them, you may see them at any time, and if it is your wish to have them, you may do so upon very easy terms -- Should you wish to have them altered according to the present state of the place, *I can recommend Barrett to you*, who lives in [illegible] Street near me, and is Brother [actually son] to him who painted them for my Father.' Emphasis added. This letter, dated 9 September 1806, is in the private collection of a descendant of the Johnston family.

168 A conservator who examined the painting in 1971 concluded it was a nineteenth-century copy, citing as proof the nature of the glazes used and the fact that the figures are painted `without conviction'; however, the presence of two hands is consistent with what is known about Barrett's working methods and his frequent collaboration with Gilpin, and the glazes could well have come later. Of course it is entirely possible that Boyd II took the original with him when he sold the house to Johnston who might have commissioned a copy because he was interested in a record of the building before the construction of the stable blocks. Bean might have done the same. The 1971 survey is open to question because there was no opportunity to inspect the back of the canvas. I am grateful to the curator of Hall Place for calling this survey to my attention.

> Beauty and use may be consulted together; and, instead of a plain square house, ... it will be possible, at a small advance in charge, to add wings to the centre, and connect them by passages.[169]

Of course, with a new wife, there would have been hopes of a new family, and in commenting on the wings in 1797, Edward Hasted observed that they had been built `for the accommodation of a family'.[170]

But this image of grandeur, the theatricality of the forecourt created by the new wings and as recorded by Barrett and later Malton, suggests that the client and architect were motivated by more than merely practical considerations. Danson, revised in the mid-1760s, had become more than a suburban retreat. There is a whiff of the grand country house about it. In Barrett's painting, the house with its long reach, the family and the land are knit together into one seamless whole. There is an air of permanence, of monumentality.

The question is whether Boyd could, in 1766, reasonably lay claim to being of the land. Consider the extent of Boyd's holdings, 600 acres with roughly 60% under cultivation and a complete Home Farm.[171] This was many times greater than the typical suburban parcels at Twickenham or Richmond or even Greenwich. Asgill House, Danson's almost exact contemporary, had a scant eighteen acres of pleasure ground. But 600 acres was not very much when measured against proper country estates.

The correspondence of Boyd's son John now held in the British Library helps a little with this problem. First, it shows that by the late 1770s, Danson was Sir John Boyd's primary place of residence and, furthermore, that he only rarely attended the firm's business in Austin Friars. Neither was he stopping at his grand house in Grafton Street. In 1779 he gave his son free run of the place as a kind of sop for having to cut his allowance.[172] In the schedule drawn up in 1780 concerning a tax on male servants, Boyd's name does not appear under Westminster but it does under Bexley in Kent. Seven male servants were recorded at Danson. At his mother's house in Lewisham, incidentally, the Boyds' earlier suburban retreat, there were three.[173] Danson, then, which started out as a suburban seat, had become a full-time residence closely associated with an agricultural estate.

But why would Boyd, whose wealth was tied to the town, bother to acquire such an estate? As a form of investment, land was very expensive, yet some suburban estates did turn a profit. Still, even if Boyd had made a success of his farm, he knew of easier ways to get a decent return. In fact, the money to be made from Boyd's West Indian sugar alone was staggering in comparison with his domestic farming. In a letter of 1780 in which Boyd's son detailed his father's financial situation, the income from his Danson estate is referred to as `but trifling', £500 net. Whereas the annual combined net income from the St. Kitt's and Grenadan estates is given as £12,000, and this was years after the price of sugar had peaked. In 1780, the viable acreage at Danson totalled roughly 400

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169 As cited in Worsley, 1989, p. 70.

170 E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent...* (2nd ed., Canterbury, 1797), vol. 2, pp. 172-73.

171 A schedule drawn up at the time of the sale of the house, 1805-6, records that oats, wheat and barley were then being grown on the estate. A `flock' is referred to as well as `timberland'. The document is in a private collection.

172 British Library, Add. Mss. 35,516, fos. 68, 95, 125, and 35,517, fos. 3 and 5.

173 Treasury Papers, Public Record Office, Kew, T47/8, pp. 73 and 75.

acres, which on average which meant slightly more than one pound *per* acre. The St. Kitt's plantations had roughly the same acreage but yielded £8,000 annual net profit, and was therefore roughly twenty times more valuable per acre than the Kent estates.

There can be only one plausible explanation for Boyd's frantic land grab, and that is the desire for status, but the nature of the status he achieved is itself unclear. Recent research on landowners in nearby Bromley by Matthew Greenhalgh suggests some answers, though even these are open to debate. In the late eighteenth century true gentry status is thought to have required about 1,000 acres, but in the vicinity of London, where the value of land was higher and the *per capita* income needed to acquire proportionally greater, the figure dropped to as low as 300 acres.[174] In late eighteenth-century Bromley, the ten largest landowners had estates ranging from 90 to 875 acres. Smaller estates here and in the rest of London tended to change hands more often and in the process to be subdivided further. Nevertheless, each of these landowners had achieved, in Greenhalgh's estimation, gentry status. Below the top limit of 875 acres were two Bromley estates comparable to Danson in extent, 698 and 535 acres. References in the Victoria County History volumes for Middlesex confirm this size distribution for the period, though the series authors have not subjected this raw material to synthetic analysis. More investigation of this kind for London's suburban parishes is needed, but in the meantime, it seems right to claim, with some gentle qualification, that Boyd and his ilk formed a hybrid class, suburban country gentlemen.

It is tempting to see the whole process as unique to the eighteenth century or, looking a little further back, a product of early modern mercantilism. However, there is good evidence to show that City of London merchants had been seeking out middling-sized estates in nearby parishes since the thirteenth-century at least, if not earlier.[175] Boyd and his medieval counterparts wanted the same things, the opportunity to mingle with real gentry and aristocracy, to get involved in county administration, to buy a country house with historic associations, or build one, to marry their daughters into the local squirearchy, and thus secure their position. Boyd achieved this integration through his son, who married well and seems to have done little else besides hunt and weekend at country estates in Kent and the West Country where his wife had family.

Taylor or Chambers: the background to the debate

The attribution of the plan and exterior elevations of Danson House to Taylor has never seriously been questioned, but there is some doubt as to the interiors. Sir William Chambers is known to have carried out minor works for Boyd in the early 1770s, works that are partially documented.[176] Most of the letters refer to the garden features built to the architect's designs, a single-arched, wooden bridge copied from a model in the third book of Palladio''s *I Quattro Libri*... and a small Doric temple, since moved to the grounds of James Paine's house at St. Paul's Walden Bury near St. Albans. The final letter in the suite -- from Boyd and dated 12 July 1773 -- suggests Chambers did other works referred to as little 'trifles'.[177] A Chambers drawing now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York confirms that this passing reference might indeed refer to

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174 `Gentleman Landowners and the Middle Classes of Bromley, 1840-1914', Ph.D. thesis, University of Greenwich, 1995, pp.5-7, 12, 33-37.

175 See S. Thrupp's outstanding *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*, 1948, revd. 1962

176 Royal Academy, CHA/1/19, 11 June 1770, and CHA/1/20, 12 July 1773. British Library, Add. Mss. 41,134, fo. 25, and 41,133, fo. 102, 14 and 25 May 1773. On the drawing for the Chimneypiece in the Dining Room see below.

177 Royal Academy Mss., CHA/1/20, dated 12 July 1773.

interior decoration.[178] With minor variations, this is the design for the excellent chimneypiece in the dining room at Danson, labelled 'Eating Room' and, above, 'to draw the Vase for Mr. Boyd'. Like many Chambers' drawings, this one in New York is both undated and undateable either because of style or manner of execution. A Chambers' drawing at the Soane Museum for a picture frame proves that there were other works for Boyd. The pen sketch is labelled on the *recto*: 'Profile and Ornament for the frames over Mr. Boyd's doors. The moulded and enriched frame is elaborated with scrolled acanthus and seashells at the corners. An alternative theme is developed on the *verso* by the addition of *bucranium* as a termination at the corner of the frame.[179] A final, inked-up version of the *recto* design frame is to be found at the Victoria and Albert Museum.[180] It is thought to be in the hand of Chambers' talented chief office assistant John Yenn, and seems to have been installed over the doors in the Saloon at Danson, at least to judge by the *c.*1860 watercolour now in a private collection. There remains the possibility that this frame was intended for Boyd's house in Mayfair.

In 1967, Marcus Binney first suggested that Chambers might have been responsible for all of the interiors, partly mindful of the correspondence between architect and client. But this conclusion was also based on the first and second editions of Hasted's *History of Kent* (1778 and 1797) where it is stated that Boyd gained the freehold to the estate in 1759. Binney took this to mark the start of construction. In fact, as we now know, thanks to Sandra Piper's exhaustive analysis of the Danson lease collection, Boyd gained the freehold only to the southern part of the estate in that year not the portion of the estate which his future house would occupy. Thus, the start of the house is pushed somewhat later, to 1762. In his second edition, Hasted calls attention to changes made while the house was being built, though Chambers' name is not mentioned at all.[181] The final piece of evidence was the Dury and Herbert Map of Kent, published in 1769, which appears to show the stable and office wings. Binney concluded that work on the house had stopped for close to a decade and, when it resumed, Taylor was off the job and Chambers on it.[182] However, by 1981, Binney had revised his view and merely attributed 'certain elements of the interior decoration' to Chambers.[183]

Close analysis of the fabric shows that there was discontinuity in the design of the building as realised in its carcass and in its finishing. The brick shell on the principal floor was clearly constructed to receive a scheme of decoration, which would have been very different to that eventually, executed. The internal elevations were meant to be organised around a triumphal-arch motif, large round-arched recesses flanked by smaller rectangular recess, the spandrels of the putative arch are relieved by cylindrical hollows. In the Library these recesses would have been suitable for bookcases that are subsumed into the architectural framework, such as Taylor designed for Harleyford and Barlaston.

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178 MMA 49.56.19.

179 Soane Museum, 42/3 8.

180 V and A E4984-1910. No. 159 in the Chambers' exhibition at the Courtauld. See plate 256 in J. Harris and M. Snodin, *Sir William Chambers. Architect to George III* (New Haven and London, 1997), p. 171.

181 'The original design for this structure was given by the late ingenious Mr. Taylor, architect of the Bank, but several alterations were found necessary to be made to it, for the accommodation of a family, whilst the house was building, and two wings were added to it for that purpose.' E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent...* (2nd ed., Canterbury, 1797), vol. 2, p. 173.

182 Binney M, *The Villas of Robert Taylor*, 1967, Part I, pp. 18-19

183 Binney M Sir Robert Taylor, 1981, p.48

In the Danson Dining Room, there is a similar formula, though here too the final scheme is utterly different in character. In the Entrance Hall the cylindrical recesses have been battened out and are finished as half-spheres to receive plaster busts. The documentary evidence, scant though it is, points to the work of finishing commencing in 1766, so all we are left with is a rather short gap of three years, hardly a serious lacuna and certainly not unusual in the history of villa and great house building.

John Harris, who like Binney did not have the opportunity to study Danson in exhaustive detail, was circumspect when it came to the question of attribution. The overall style of the interiors was not, in his view, 'Chambersian', but the existence of a Chambers drawing in the Avery Library for the Dining Room chimneypiece made him waiver. His conclusion was cautious.

> Chambers' responsibility for other parts of the interior is proven by the Soane design, which may relate to the Octagon Room [the saloon], where the ceiling is Chambersian.[184]

As for the chimney-pieces in the saloon and library, these 'remarkably sumptuous' works were, according to Harris, 'clearly by Chambers', which has since proved to be the case, with the drawings being located in the Avery Collection at Columbia University in New York. As for the saloon ceiling, this does indeed have affinities with Chambers' work of this time but far more compelling is its close resemblance to a ceiling Taylor designed for Chute in the late 1760s.

In the course of this project, there has been the opportunity to review this question of authorship. One small part of the problem – the 'sumptuous' chimneypieces' -- has been solved by the discovery of new documentary evidence, but ultimately, the attribution rests on a close analysis of the fabric, both what can be seen and what lies underneath the surviving interior decoration. But the problem cannot be solved in isolation, and it has proved necessary to look carefully other interiors carried out by Taylor and Chambers.

A summary of the findings on the division of work between Taylor and Chambers

For the sake of clarity, the results of this analysis are summarised here, before running through the evidence. Quite simply, the bulk of the interiors are the work of Taylor. Chambers was responsible for less than a handful of minor works inside the house.

Secure attributions to Chambers	
i.	Three marble chimney pieces on the principal floor
ii.	Scrolled pediment on the outside of the north front, above the entrance aedicule
iii.	Matching picture frames to be located above the doorcases in the saloon (not extant)
iv.	Single-arched, wooden Palladian bridge at he east end of the lake (demolished)
v.	Temple with Doric portico at the north east corner of the lake (removed to James Paine's St. Paul's Walden Bury, near St. Albans, Herts.)

Attributions to Taylor based on stylistic and fabric and other evidence

[184] Harris J, *Sir William Chambers*, 1970, p. 203.

i. Hanging mirrors to either side of the saloon chimney-piece (removed but recorded in c.1863 watercolour)

ii. Carved and gilded doorcases to the saloon

iii. Pair of gilded mirrors in the dining room, each topped by a pair of gryphons flanking an urn (largely demolished, but carved and gilded wood fragments survive in the possession of the local authority; their original appearance recorded in watercolour of c.1863)

The organ case originally installed in the Library (it has been removed to Hall Place) and dated 1766 may not have been the work of Chambers nor Taylor. The design of cases was for the most part a specialist activity, although Robert Adam made some spectacular designs for instruments at this time. Although the mouldings of the case match the dado and skirting mouldings of the Library scheme, the details of the rest of the case are perhaps less sophisticated than one would expect if either architect had been responsible for the case.

General characteristics of the finishing of the house, 1765-6

REVISIONS TO THE ORIGINAL DESIGN The fitting out of the masonry shell with plaster wall linings and joinery clearly followed a revision of the design intentions embodied in the masonry shell. For some of these changes, it is clear that the original scheme was never carried through to completion, for others the alterations obliterate the fabric evidence for the original design.

LATHS, BATTENS, FIXING NAILS AND PLASTER USED IN THE FITTING OUT The battens applied to the interior brick wall face for the fixing of the laths were of rough unplaned pine of varying dimensions, generally *c* 40x30mm but occasionally 30x50mm or 30x65mm.

The fixing nails for the battens supporting the plaster and lathe were of two types. The most commonly used type had a leaf shaped head. The second type had a round head pierced by three small nail holes. The shafts of the nails were flat in section, *c* 5mm thick, tapering from *c* 12mm. The leaf type appears to be the standard used throughout the house for fixing battens, except on the east and south walls of the south west room on the Bedroom floor where the round type is predominant. The round type was used to secure the tops of the bookcases in the Library, to fix the door surround in the north east bedroom, and to secure the pediment above the front door in the Entrance Hall. It therefore appears that the leaf type nail was the standard for the fitting out of the house but, as this approached completion, the round-headed nail was adopted. This suggests that those items secured with round-headed nails were the last in the sequence.

The formwork for the cornices on the principal floor was composed in the following way. Battens were applied to the wall battens and ceiling joists at the outer edges of the intended cornice. Then profile battens were nailed to these at intervals corresponding with those of the wall battens. A second set of battens was nailed to these forms followed by laths, which completed the boxing in.

The plaster was applied in two coats. The base coat was also run *in-situ* for the cornices. The finish coat was a white lime plaster with some animal hair. This was used for the finish and some of the precast moulded fragments such as egg and dart were set in it while still wet. Some of the other smaller details, like the modillion and guttae, were fixed with additional lime plaster used as glue. Some of the details were precast with iron nails set in them to aid fixing.

The scale of the cornices in the Principal rooms in relation to the height of the Principal Floor raises some interesting questions. All of the plaster cornices are 1 feet deep and all the rooms are 16 foot tall. For the Ionic and Corinthian orders, Palladio recommended that the ratio of the height of the cornice to the height from the base of the order to the top of the cornice should be 1:14.4 and 1:14.5 respectively. At Danson, if the internal elevations are considered as the height of the full order, then in the Saloon where the Corinthian cornice is found, one might expect the room to be 14' 6" tall, which it is not. Alternatively, if the implied order is considered to rise from the dado rail, according to a system in which the order is set on a pedestal, then, given that at Danson the dado is set at 2' 10" above the floor, the expected room height would be 17' 4" tall. The size of the cornice therefore seems therefore to be gauged midway between the two methods of articulating the wall surface.

INSTALLATION OF JOINERY There are several factors which indicate that no joinery was installed in the masonry shell until the revised fitting out scheme had been settled on. The windows in the end walls of the Dining Room and the Library reveal that although the masonry shell had been built so that these windows could be functional, the sashes were made for blind windows. This is in accordance with the wall painting scheme in the Dining Room and the bookcase scheme in the Library. The installation of the bookcases also required some alteration to the masonry shell. By 1767, the window joinery must have been installed because the Window Tax records the house with windows.

The window sashes, sash boxes and sills were of oak and pine. Oak was used for parts exposed to the weather, that is the external fascia boards, the sills and the sashes themselves. The standard internal doors on the Kitchen and Bedroom Floors were of pine construction. The doors on the Kitchen floor had oak frames. The glazed doors in the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area were of oak. Mahogany was used for the doors and some of the joinery on the Principal Floor. Wrought iron cranked butterfly hinges were used for most of the doors. These hinges appear to be standard for houses of this quality and period. Examples of the type have been recorded in detail at the Mansion House.[185]

The fitting out of the Terrace Floor, 1765-6

THE TERRACE FLOOR ENTRANCE HALL AREA The north-south wall between the rooms T7 and T8 in the western half of the entrance hall area, is of brick construction. The bricks are red, measure 65x220x100mm, and are set in a white lime mortar, which contains small fragments of flint and brickearth. At its north end, this wall is neither bonded into the north wall, nor consistent in its coursing. However, it does appear to be set within a vertical cut or recess in the north wall. From the pattern of bricks in the north wall, it is not if this feature is an original recess or a cut. The relationship between the north-south wall and the south wall of the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area has been altered by the insertion of the present arch, probably in 1805. However, there is no trace of a cut or recess in the south wall corresponding with that in the north wall.

The floor frame above the Terrace floor entrance hall area is original. The wall between Rooms T7 and T8 rises to the soffits of the ceiling joists. The ceiling laths respect the wall and they too appear to be original, since there is only one set of nail holes in the soffits of the ceiling joists. The plaster applied to the ceiling is continuous with that applied to the wall between Rooms T7 and T8. The plaster is a very pale grey lime plaster containing lumps of lime up to 5mm in size and animal hair. It is finished with a skim of lime. It therefore appears that the wall between the rooms T7 and T8 was built before the Terrace Floor entrance hall area was originally plastered. It was probably

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[185] Jeffery S, *The Mansion House*, p.130, fig.95

built either to segregate service areas from non-service areas within the house or provide separate access to the apartment in the west wing.

At the same time, the access route from the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area to the Breakfast Room was probably altered form its original course, described above. The revised route put the access door into the Breakfast Room, T2, on the central north south axis through the house.

Rooms T2, T3 and T5 were lined out with plaster on lath on battens, but in the other rooms on this floor, the plaster was applied directly to the brick. Rooms T2 and T3 were also given a plaster cornice of the same kind as that used on the Bedroom Floor in rooms B2 and 3. This simple cornice moulding consists of a large shallow coved moulding above a cyma-reversa. As such it does not conform strictly to the Palladian canon and therefore appears to be a Taylor invention. The use of the cavetto was probably intended to imply the Doric order. The plaster cornice in the north west room T5 is possibly not original.

The stone chimneypiece installed in the Breakfast room T2 was carved with fluted terms, quatrefoil panels, paterae, a rectangular meander along the frieze and an urn below a dentil cornice.[186] A similar fireplace although more elaborate was employed by Taylor in the dining room scheme at The Oaks Carshalton, in conjunction with the plaster plaque scheme which is repeated at Danson in the Library. It is possible that Breakfast Room fireplace is not in its original position in the house and that it was moved to its present location from the Library when the present fireplaces designed by William Chambers were installed on the Principal Floor, probably between 1770 and 1773, see below. William Chambers designed similar chimneypieces[187] but probably the closest parallel can be found at Benacre Hall, Suffolk, built by Matthew Brettingham in the 1760s.[188]

The fireplace in the north west room, T5, has a bold timber egg and dart surround enclosing marble slips. There were similar fireplaces in the north west bedroom, B3, and the north east bedroom B6, but there the surrounds are lugged, implying a higher degree of refinement.

The fitting out of the Principal Floor, 1765-6

THE PRINCIPAL FLOOR WINDOW JOINERY The Principal Floor windows (W30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44) had sashes glazed six over six. The sash box and sash frame construction was virtually identical to that used on the Terrace Floor. The sills were slightly different from those on the Terrace Floor. The rebate was in the middle of the lower sash, instead of between the two. The bottom rail is slightly taller but otherwise the timber sections are remarkably similar. The centre window in the east canted bay (W32) and the two windows in the Entrance Hall (W46, 47) were of the same type except that the top rails of the upper sashes were deeper. This is either a variation within the first phase joinery, a survival of the original basic pattern (and all the others have been altered) or a repair.

The windows to the north and south in the side wings (W29, 35, 39, 45) are blind. They simulate the external appearance of the other windows on the Principal Floor and the joinery matches that of the blind windows on the Terrace Floor and on the Bedroom Floor

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186 According to the 1922 Sale catalogue the fireplace was described as of 'oak and plaster.'

187 Snodin M, *Sir* William *Chambers*, 1996, pl. 84, cat 794

188 Robinson JM, Benacre Hall, Suffolk, *Country Life*, June 1, 2000, pp.126-129

either side of the north wing. The window openings through the masonry shell were built to be operational. They were not intended as blind windows. Instead of plaster lined brick recesses the window openings were blocked with pine panelling.

THE PRINCIPAL FLOOR DOORS The door linings are designed for double doors between the principal rooms. The watercolours of *c* 1855 show some of these in position. The doors in the Entrance Hall were of mahogany. The doors throughout the Principal Floor were six panel except for the main Entrance door and the matching door to the Stairwell which were three panel. The doors in the Entrance Hall were panelled six over six, raised, fielded, and enriched with egg and dart. The panelling on face of the doors facing out of the room into the space between the double doors was left plain and the ovolo mouldings left without enrichment. The filled mortises for cranked butterfly hinges were visible in the edge face at the sides of the doors. Similarly, traces of butterfly hinges on the doorframes were filled with pine. Cranked butterfly hinges were also used on the two half thickness blind doors. Similar hinges were used at the Mansion House in 1750-1 supplied by Richard Molineux[189].

The fitting out of the Entrance Hall, 1765-6

THE PLASTER LINING The room was finished in plaster applied to lathes on vertical battens fixed to the wall with purpose made iron fixing nails having leaf shaped heads. The spacing between the battens is approximately 300mm. The battens passed behind the fixing boards for the skirting, dado and cornice. The plaster, whenever seen in section, appears to have been of one phase. The cornice was run *in-situ*.

The first step in lining out the interior was to fix the vertical battens. They varied in depth between x and x mm, and in some cases, the brickwork was cut back to accommodate the thickness of the batten. The plaster scheme was therefore executed within relatively high tolerances. Horizontal battens were fixed to the verticals for the attachment of the skirting board and dado. The next step was the firring of the ceiling joists to provide a flat surface. Horizontal battens were fixed to the wall battens and ceiling joists at the top and bottom of the intended cornice. Specially shaped timber formers, between 35 and 40 mm in thickness, were then nailed to the two horizontal battens to provide a base profile for the running of the cornice. A further set of battens was then applied to the soffits of these formers. Horizontal battens were attached to the vertical battens for the attachment of the dado rail and skirting board. Laths were then nailed to the battens throughout the room. The laths were then covered in a base coat of coarse lime plaster up to 25mm thick and containing animal hair. The same plaster was used for to provide the base profile for the cornice. It was not possible to tell if the cornice was run before or after the wall or ceiling plaster. The walls and ceiling were finished in a fine white lime plaster and the topcoat of the cornice was run in the same plaster.

The Ionic cornice was built up *in-situ*, the modillions, egg and dart, and waterleaf cyma mouldings were cast and applied. Like the main external cornice, the profile is taken from the Villa Capra, drawn and reproduced by Palladio.[190] The sunburst-ceiling rose included at its centre a rose of leaves, which although damaged, resembled those of the Saloon rose. Its presence suggests a central lighting feature in the room, presumably a chandelier.

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189 Jeffery s, *The Mansion House*, 1993, pp130-1

190 Palladio *I Quattro Libri...* Book 1 pl XX

The niches were plastered as originally intended, the plaster face follows the shape of the brickwork behind, the cylindrical roundels were lined out as hemispherical recesses. The mouldings corresponds with a drawing for an Ionic impost and architrave in Plate XXVII in *The Rules for Drawing the Several Parts of Architecture,* by James Gibbs, 1732. The impost is a slight departure from Palladio who illustrates more complex mouldings in this position although the architrave appears to be Palladian.[191] Taylor's impost is enriched with egg and dart which matches the doors in the room, and water leaf on the cyma-reversa at the top of the moulding.

The lining out of the roundels contrasts with other sites by Taylor where they are plastered as cylindrical roundels, not as hemispheres. This is the only room of three in the house where the roundels included in the brickwork were actually employed in the fitting out. A similar feature can be found in the gallery added to Chesterfield House (now Ranger's House) Blackheath, in 1749-51, probably by Isaac Ware.[192] According to the sale catalogue of 1922, 'round the room are eight plaster busts fitting into circular recesses.'[193] The paint analysis of the roundels suggests that the busts were not installed immediately.

There is an unpainted base coat of plaster above the door architraves behind the pediments and heads. The pediment door-cases to the main entrance and staircase are of the Ionic order. The alteration to the masonry indicates that the designer of the structure did not originally intend a door of this size for this location.

THE JOINERY The skirting is a simple but bold combination of cavetto and torus mouldings. It is close to the Doric pedestal base moulding illustrated by Palladio on the left hand side of his Plate XIV in *I Quattro Libri...* Book I. The difference is in the omission of a fillet moulding between the cavetto and ovolo. The torus is enriched with a flower motif. The dado rail is taken from the right hand side of the same plate, a combination of a fascia moulding with a cyma and cavetto. The cyma moulding is enriched with layered acanthus. The use of the Doric order pedestal mouldings in conjunction with the Ionic cornice is not surprising. They provide a touch of austerity but they are also a continuation of the exterior mouldings. Thus, the Entrance Hall is designed to act as a transitional space, being an interior with some of the characteristics of the exterior.

The window surrounds are reduced to a simple torus moulding at the return between the wall face and the window opening. The torus is enriched with a flower and scroll motif. The shutters are panelled, the four panels corresponding with the glazing of the sashes. The panels are plain, the mouldings, ovolo enriched with egg and dart to match the doors in the room. The shutters are hung on 'H' hinges and they retain their original closing bars. The sashes are ovolo moulded.

The door surrounds and linings are of pine. The architrave consists of cyma-reversa enriched by six-petal flower and a flat ribbon; the cyma finishes in a single bead. This is the simplest profile found on the Principal Floor.

The mahogany doors leading to the other rooms on the Principal Floor and the false doors against the side walls all appear to be original. Although all of the doors were hung with

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191 Palladio *I Quattro Libri...* Book I, pl XVIII

192 Jeffrey S, *The Mansion House*, 1993

193 *The Danson Estate, 1922*, p. 3, sale catalogue for Daniel Smith, Oakley and Garrard, H and RL Cobb and Dann and Lucas, copy held at Hall Place Bexley

replacement hinges in the 1860s, it is clear that the doors originally had mortises in the sides of the stiles to receive cranked butterfly hinges. The mortises were plugged with mahogany fillets, presumably when the doors were hung. The mahogany is very dense and flecked with white calcine in the grain. Identification of species is not easy, but the wood fits the general description of Cuban mahogany.[194]

The doors are of six-panel construction, ovolo moulded with flat panels. The ovolo mouldings on the sides facing into the Entrance Hall are enriched with egg and dart. The reverse side of each door was left with plain ovolo mouldings to match the door linings. The reverse sides of the false doors were left rough sawn and unmoulded. Although these doors now open into shallow cupboards, and the backs of the doors have clearly been covered with fabric, this is probably an alteration of the 1860s, the doors were probably originally simply set against the wall face.[195]

THE MAIN ENTRANCE DOOR The very substantial doorleaf, 58mm thick, appears to be of the same type of mahogany as the others doors on the Principal Floor. The three-panel design and jointing of the stiles and rails appear to be original. The bottom panel is flush on the exterior, the panel enclosed by beads. Internally, the panel is flat. Both the rails and stiles are ovolo moulded enriched with egg and dart. The additional bead in the exterior face of the panel appears to be designed to compensate for the difference in heights between the exterior and internal dado rails.

The jointing of the stiles and rails for the two upper panels is unusual and appears to be original. This indicates that these panels were originally glazed and that the applied bolection mouldings are also original. Internally, the stiles and rails enclosing both panels were ovolo moulded, enriched with egg and dart. Although the egg and dart moulding has been crudely cut away around the upper panel, the pattern of the carving can be clearly seen as scars. Externally, the width of the stiles is greater above the middle rail than below. The change in width occurs immediately above the middle rail. This is clear in the drawing of the doorleaf without the bolection mouldings. For the middle rail and below, the width of the stile is gauged to align with the outer edge of the bolection mouldings. Above the middle rail, the rail is wider to provide a weather-tight joint behind the bolection moulding. The change in the width of the stile cannot be explained by reference to more conventional forms of panelling such as flat panels in the lower part of the door below ovolo moulded panels in the upper half. This confirms that the applied bolection mouldings are integral to the original construction of the door. Use of bolection mouldings at this date is unusual in the context of door or panelling joinery although related forms were current in picture frames. Their appearance at Danson in this context suggests that they were intended to secure glazing.

The construction of the doorframe is remarkable in several respects. It is composed of pine with thick oak veneers glued to its exterior face and reveals. The choice of this combination of materials can perhaps best be explained by reference to the window joinery. The sashes are of oak, as are the sills but of the sash boxes the exterior fascia boards only are of oak, the linings and the inner boards are of pine. This displays a marked preference for oak over pine for exterior use. This is presumably due to oak's better capacity to resist weathering. Pine was probably chosen as a backing material for its greater stability and resistance to warping and shakes. The laminar construction of the doorframe, although unusually early, is consistent with this approach. Although no paint

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194 Personal comment by John Hartley of Tankerdales historic joinery specialists

195 The linings of the cupboards have not been removed during the recent repairs, so it has not been recorded whether or not the brickwork was cut in this area.

survived on the doorframe for analysis, it was probably painted white to match the window joinery.[196]

The frame was constructed using pegged mortise and tenon joints. The method of jointing indicates that the jambs and lintel were dressed and assembled after the oak veneers had been glued to the pine. The composite frame, oak and pine, jambs and lintel measured 58mm in thickness. This again is remarkable since it does not allow for a closing rebate within the thickness of the frame. From the evidence, for the original hinges (see section below) it is clear that the door was set flush with the frame. A closing rebate was therefore most probably provided by the addition of an applied moulding to the exterior face of the doorframe. There is no evidence in the form of nail holes to support this supposition but the reliance on glue in the construction of the laminar doorframe suggests that nails were not considered necessary in such circumstances.

In the side of the door leaf are two mortises, now filled with mahogany slips, originally cut for cranked butterfly hinges and visible in the reveals of the doorframe were the mortises for the hinges to be set in rebates on the face of the doorframe. Cranked hinges of this type were common in buildings of this quality throughout the eighteenth century. They have been recorded in detail at the Mansion House where they were installed between 1749 and 1751.[197]

The lining of the door was fitted with shutters that closed over the glazed part of the door. Their design and construction is consistent with the window shutters and therefore appears to be original. The panelled linings at the backs of the shutter boxes are of the same size as those used in the windows. They pass below the sills of the shutter boxes.

The internal door surround was constructed with an Ionic pediment. It was designed to match the door to the stairwell.

THE DOOR TO THE STAIRWELL Although the surround to the door to the stairwell matches that of the main entrance door it appears to be an alteration to Taylor's original design as expressed in the masonry shell. There is plaster above the door architraves behind the pediments and heads that indicate, like the other doors in the room, the walls were plastered before the door surrounds were fixed in place. The door-cases to the main entrance and the door to the staircase are identical in construction. There are timber lintels below segmental arches in the brickwork above the doorways to the Dining Room, to the rooms either side of the stairwell and the Library. Above the door to the stairwell, a similar lintel at the same height was cut to make a larger doorway. Above this lintel, the wall is of stone construction, which has been crudely cut for the enlarged door. The alteration to the masonry indicates that a door of this size was not originally intended for this location.

THE STYLE AND CHARACTER OF THE ENTRANCE HALL This is the most austere and masculine interior in the suite of principal rooms, which is appropriate to its function as the buffer between the outside and those rooms which are dedicated to more intimate uses. The warm stone colour, not far off the colour of the original stone facing outside, makes the connection explicitly. That the room is paved in stone and was originally unheated underscores this character further.

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196 For a contemporary discussion of the merits of oak and pine see Ware I, *A complete Body of Architecture*, 1756-7, Chapt. 19, pp 74-75

197 Jeffery S, *The Mansion House*, 1993, pp130-1, fig. 95

The elevations show Taylor at his most `Roman' or, if you will, Palladian. Each element -- round-arched recess, hemispherical niches, triglyph tablet, pedimented aedicule, ceiling sunburst -- is treated distinctly, and the design consists in the clear combination of discrete elements.

All of this harkens back to the first generation of Palladians, whose design principles had been kept alive in the intervening years both in real buildings and in treatises. An essential text in this regard is Robert Morris's *Architectural Remembrancer* of 1751. Many of Morris's ideal schemes feature motifs that are not only identical to those found in the entrance hall at Danson but are also combined in the same way.[198] Morris was a passionate advocate for simplicity of design based on the orders and their proportions, and his book appeared at just the right time to influence Taylor who was then giving up sculpture for architecture. What is more Taylor had a copy in his library.[199] The work of James Paine in the 1760s also shows a strong affinity with Morris's Palladianism.[200]

THE FURNISHING OF THE ENTRANCE HALL We have a clearer idea about the furnishing of this room in the late eighteenth century than of any other thanks to the inventory drawn up in 1805 (see below) prior to the sale of the house to John Johnston. The only furniture noted is a pair of `jasper tables', perhaps placed to either side of the main entrance axis. There was a pair of marble statues on stone bases and placed on a painted softwood plinth. One depicted Venus and the other Adonis. Both were 'brought from Rome', suggesting Boyd himself might have acquired them during his grand Continental tour of 1775-76. The pair was repeated in plaster in the same room, underscoring the theme and suggesting a larger iconographic intention. Adonis, said to have been born in a myrrh tree, was a beautiful young man who aroused the passion of Venus, who hid him in a chest, which she gave to Persephone, Queen of Hades, for safekeeping. Persephone, however, was not immune to his charms and decided not to return the gorgeous youth. Zeus intervened, decreeing Adonis should spend four months in Hades and another four with Venus. Adonis willingly chose to spend the remaining four months with his first love. He died young while out hunting a wild boar and was changed into an anemone, a flower without a scent.[201]

Although the two pairs of classical lovers might have been added years after the interior was completed, the choice of subject fits well with the overall iconographic programme of the other principal interiors which explores in different ways the themes of love and marriage. The possibility that this was intended from the start cannot be ruled out for one of the most striking decorative details in the entrance hall are shells cut on the ovolo, and shells of course are attributes of Venus.

The remaining sculptural subjects in this room were, however, much more mundane: marble busts of Lord Chatham and of Lord Camden, each supported on plinths in the form of therms, and 'medusa head'' in marble. The latter may well be identical to the late Antique grotesque mask, known by the Johnston children as 'Old Goffy' (after their

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198 See especially plates 1, 2, 5, 6, and 11. The latter, which shows the principal elevation for a `small garden seat', could well have provided the inspiration for the riverfront elevation of Taylor's Asgill House.

199 See *Books from the library of Sir Robert Taylor in the library of the Taylor Instituion, Oxford* a checklist compiled by DJ Gibson , 1973

200 See Paine's *Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Houses* (London: 1767). Plate 69 in volume 1, a design for a chapel and mausoleum, offers an interesting point of comparison with the entrance hall at Danson.

201 The story is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 10, 300-559, 708-39.

governess). During the nineteenth century it was located somewhere in the pleasure grounds (though there is an alternative location for this, see below under `The Furnishing and Decoration of the Saloon).[202] Originally, there were portrait busts set against the hemispherical niches in the upper part of the wall[203] - this standard Palladian device is found in other Taylor interiors.[204] The delay between completion of the plaster scheme and the installation of the busts indicated by paint analysis, suggests that the busts could also have been among Boyd's Italian purchases.

Further research would make it possible to identify the pieces mentioned in the inventory (the busts of Chatham and Camden, for instance), or at least ones, which might plausibly have been there. For the moment, however, it is easiest to come to a view about the Venus figure and its plaster copy. First, given the widespread taste for ancient sculpture in Britain at this time and that Boyd was in Rome acquiring souvenirs of ancient art in 1775, we might assume that the Venus was a marble copy of one of the ancient statues easily seen in Rome during the eighteenth century.

A likely candidate is the Capitoline Venus (1.87 metres high) presented by Pope Benedict XIV to the Capitoline Museum in 1752 and still there (after a brief spell in Musee Central des Arts, Paris, 1800-1815). In 1762 Winckelmann, the father of art historical scholarship, praised it above the Venus de' Medici in Florence, and in 1785 the English banker and patron of the arts Richard Colt Hoare repeated this judgement.[205] The Standing Venus in the Vatican Museum, although now not widely admired (and criticised in the eighteenth century for its generally clumsy proportions), was well known and copied, largely because some commentators argued that it reproduced the lost Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles.[206] The so-called Celestial Venus, now in the Uffizi, was displayed in the Tribuna in Rome until 1780, and could well have provided the model for the Danson Venus.[207] The least likely candidate was the Crouching Venus (removed to the Uffizi in 1787). And being only .78 metres high, it would have needed a plinth. It was also known through a series of engravings published by Franceso Piranesi.[208] That this was not the one bought for the entrance hall is made likely by the entry in the 1805 inventory for the library, which specifies `a Venus crouching' as if to distinguish this one from the pair in the Hall.

It has been suggested that the so-called Danson Vase now in the possession of the British Museum (where it is known as the Piranesi Vase after the Italian artist sold it to Boyd before 1778) might originally have stood in the entrance hall.[209] This is based on the inscription of the vase which accompanies Piranesi's engraving of it in his famous *I Vasi*:

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202 Information courtesy of Commander William Charter.

203 The 1922 Sale Catalogue refers to eight plaster busts in the Entrance Hall

204 The library at Harleyford, for example.

205 F. Haskell and N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 318-9.

206 Haskell and Penny, pp. 330-1.

207 Haskell and Penny, p. 320.

208 Haskell and Penny, pp. 321-3.

209 This is the clear implication given in Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, p.350, footnote 28; at the time of writing (November 1997) confirmation of the documentary evidence for this is still awaited from Dr. Hancock. Some 70% of Boyd's vase is the work of an eighteenth-century restorer, and for this reason it has been relegated to the Museum store. At the time of writing, however, it is hoped that the Piranesi Vase will be on display in the Great Court of the Musuem. It was exhibited in 1990.

Veduta di Prospettiva per angolo di un'antico Vaso di Marmo con suo Piedestallo, che al presente si vede in Inghilterra nella Villa del Sig. Giovanni Boyd. Fu ritrovato negle Scavi fatti nella Villa Adriana l'anno 1769.

However, 'nella Villa del Sig. Giovanni Boyd' does not necessarily mean literally 'inside' Danson, and might just as easily be taken to mean 'at the villa of John Boyd.' And in any case, we have no idea of the status of Piranesi's remarks. Were they based on a conversation with Boyd at the time of the purchase or on a letter sent after the installation was complete, or was this remark pure invention. Certainly, the only place inside the house that such a large sculpture could have gone was the Entrance Hall on the Principal Floor, and there are precedents for the use of colossal vases in late eighteenth-century interiors. The taste was born of the great Italian collections, where it was common to find figure sculpture and vases together. A contemporary instance of such an arrangement is found in Adam's anteroom at Syon House, where a modern vase in the antique manner sits in the dead centre of the room. This comparison is particularly apt, because this same room at Syon features a exact copy of the central roundel in the Danson library.

We can at least be sure of the Vase's location by the time of the 1805 inventory, which describes a `capital antique Vase supported by three figures on a marble pedestal dug from Adrians [sic] villa' in the Green House. This structure was located to the west of the main house, still within the pleasure grounds. It was designed as a classical temple, probably making use of rusticated columns taken from the quadrant walls of the wings after these had been demolished.

The fact that there is no mention of chandelier suggests there was not one; the 1805 inventory explicitly mentions one in the saloon (see below). There might have been a brass lantern.

The Jasper Tables noted in the 1805 inventory would have been placed directly underneath the niches, possibly on iron brackets. Otherwise the furnishing of such a room would have been sparse, a suite of eight simple hall chairs. These might have been placed on either side of the main entrance and stair entrance; a pair would likely have flanked the niches. The Boyd crest, painted, could well have adorned these. The 1805 inventory also notes three pedestals treated as therms. Something along these lines is shown in the *c.*1860 watercolour of the Dining Room).

Although the Entrance Hall architecture needs no further embellishment, seeming complete, it may well have been adorned with pictures. Boyd had a very large collection of Old Master and contemporary British Paintings (See Appendix for the Catalogue of his works compiled by David Hancock), and he would very likely have used every available space to display them.

The fitting out of the Dining Room, 1765-6

THE PLASTER LINING There is a rough lime plaster base coat, containing animal hair, as in the other rooms on the principal floor. It was finished with a skim of lime. Below the dado rail the detailing for the plaster was the same as in the other rooms on the Principal Floor. The surviving plaster scheme does not make use of the roundels and rectangular cupboard recesses in the brickwork. It was designed to accommodate the figurative oil

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See M. Jones (ed.), *Fake? The Art of Deception* (London: British Museum Publications, exhibition catalogue, 1990), p. 133. It is detailed in A. H. Smith, *A Catalogue of Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum III* (London, 1904), pp. 395-7.

paintings on canvas, which were glued into the flat wall panels directly without stretchers. The panels were of two types. The larger panels, which frame the figurative paintings, have large projecting mouldings, ribbed and entwined with a leaf moulding. The smaller panels with enriched cyma mouldings had floral paintings set in them. The paintings are signed C Pavillon and dated 1766 (see description below). The ceiling appears to have left plain in the centre. There is no evidence to suggest that it was originally made to receive a chandelier. The plaster cornice was built up on vertical formers nailed to a batten at the top of the wall face and to a second batten nailed to the soffits of the ceiling joists. Laths were applied to the formers and the plaster base coat was run *in-situ*. The finish coat was then run and the moulded enrichment, were set in plaster. The cornice is Corinthian and is based on Palladio's *I Quattro Libri*..Book I, Plate XXVIII. This connection is, however, not immediately apparent because of the differences in enrichment. This is significant because it shows that Taylor was not merely following the Palladian model but also interpreting and adapting it to his own requirements. The moulding profile defines the cornice as Corinthian, not the enrichment. The most striking differences are in the treatment of the dentil course and the modillions, both of which are left plain. He also omitted the small coffered panels between the modillions. The result is a cornice that is intentionally pitched somewhere between the Ionic and Corinthian. This is a careful calculation because the Dining Room lies in plan between the Ionic Entrance Hall and the Saloon, which is Corinthian in all its glory. He designed a similar cornice for the dining room at Trewithen, near Truro in Cornwall, for Thomas Hawkins *c.* 1763-4.

THE JOINERY The skirting moulding was cut from a flat timber section and enriched with carving. Small blocks of wood were glued to the back of the moulding to support its angled projection. It was nailed to the lowest horizontal fixing batten. The skirting board was nailed to the skirting moulding. The moulding is derived from the base moulding for Palladio's Composite pedestal,[210] and consists of a cyma-reversa between two beads. The cyma is enriched with petal flowers set in quatrefoils, the beads with reeds wound in ribbon and ball and flower. The dado rail is composed of two pieces of pine glued together. The top section is rectangular, measuring 10x57mm, the lower section is an angled board with mouldings cut on the chamfer. The profile corresponds with the drawing of an impost for Doric order in Palladio's Plate XIV from Book I of *I Quatrro Libri*. The windows in the end walls were blind. As suggested above, this appears to be a modification of the original scheme in which the masonry was designed so that the windows could be functional.

THE ORIGINAL MIRRORS Both watercolours of the Dining Room from *c* 1860 show mirrors at each end of the room in the arched recesses. On stylistic grounds, they appear to be contemporary with the original lining out of the room. The physical evidence for the mirrors survives in the form of an outline in the successive layers of paint applied to the surrounding wall surface once they were fixed in place. The mirrors were evidently surface mounted. The outline in the paint was exposed when the mirrors installed in the 1860s were removed in 1998. Fragments of the original mirrors and of similar mirrors from the Saloon mirrors survive in the Local Studies Collection at Hall Place. They clearly had carved and gilded timber surrounds of very high quality.

ATTRIBUTION OF THE FITTING OUT The lining out of the Saloon appears to be original. There is no evidence to suggest an earlier scheme. The design of the mirrors, especially the inclusion of griffins in the heads of the mirrors in the Dining Room, is paralleled in Taylor's work at the Bank of England but also in Chambers' work. The elaboration

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210 Palladio *I Quattro Libri*... Book I, Plate XXVII

around the Dining Room mirror at the south end of the room is closely paralleled in the frieze used by Chambers on the Charlemont House medal cupboard.[211]

THE FIRST PAINT SCHEME The ceiling was painted white, the cornice creamy white with the cymas and egg and dart mouldings, gilded. The wall face above the dado was a creamy white and the mouldings around the panels were painted white and partially gilded. The wall below the dado was buff. The dado and the moulded section of the skirting were painted white and partially gilded. The skirting board is probably modern.

THE DINING PARLOUR AND THE PAVILLON PAINTINGS This is the most sophisticated and significant interior in the house. The combination of wall paintings, gilding and mirrors must have been dazzling. The iconography of the cycle is also noteworthy, referring to the function of the room, the state of the arts generally, and married love. Though these themes are in themselves not uncommon in interiors of the 1760s, the two central figures in the room, Vertumnus and Pomona are rather unusual, and seem to refer explicitly to Boyd's remarriage in 1766, the date of the paintings.[212]

The painter was an otherwise unknown artist named Charles Pavillon. Born in 1726 in Aix-en-Provence, he is said to have been the grandson of Balthazar Pavillon, a goldsmith and engraver. When Charles arrived in England is not known, but his period of activity seems to have been confined to the second half of the 1760s. In 1767 he was appointed master of the 'Trustees's Academy' at Edinburgh, in succession to William Delacour, and in 1770 exhibited with the Society of Artists there. Through these years, he was active in London as well; in 1768, he was listed, according to Croft-Murray, as living at 'Mr. Inge's, Covent Garden'. He also exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1768 and again in 1770. Pavillon died in Edinburgh in 1772. The Danson paintings, which are signed and dated 1766, are his only known works.[213]

They are executed in oil on canvas originally fixed with size or glue directly onto the recessed plaster panels. A letter from Boyd written in June 1766 refers to them and suggests that Pavillon was living at Danson for the period of their execution.[214] This was not at all unusual.[215] The figure style is reminiscent of Lucca Giordano, while the floral panels have strong affinities with designs used in the Gobelins tapestry workshops at Aix, the artist's birthplace, and it may be that Pavillon spent some time in the Royal tapestry workshops. These floral panels resemble Gobelins tapestry panels in the state bedroom at Holkham Hall as well as to the Dundas tapestries at Moor Park. The painter Zucarelli,

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211 See Harris J and Snodin J, *Sir William Chambers*, 1996 pp 172-3

212 Hancock, 1996, p. 350, no. 26, Charles Pavillon is said to be at work on the wall paintings in the dining room of the house in 1766.

213 See E. Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England, 1537-1837* (London: Country Life, 1962), 2 vols. The Danson paintings are described in vol. 2 at pp. 324-5, although the identification of the figures is not accurate. See also U. Thieme and F. Becke, *Allgemeines Lexikon des Bildenden Kuenstler* (Leipzig: Seeman, 1932), vol. 26. He is also noted in Benizet.

214 Hancock, 1996, p. 350, note 26 and p. 369

215 When decorating Copt Hall in the 1740s Andrea Casali -- who would later provide canvasses for the octagonal room at Taylor's Asgill House -- socialized with the house guests. In 1743 Lady Pomfret commented: 'After supper we all danced to our own singing in order to teach Signor Casal (an Italian they have in the house) English country dances... He is a painter and I fancy as low born as they generally are, though by means of an order he wears (which he tells them was given by the King of Prussia, and which very few people have) and some fine suits of clothes, he passes for the most complete country gentleman in the world.. They tell me he paints more in two hours than any other of his profession can do in a day.' As quoted in C. Hussey, `Asgill House, Richmond, Surrey', *Country Life*, 9 June 1944, pp. day. 992-5, at p. 994.

Pavillon's contemporary, who had come to England to take advantage of the taste for figurative decoration, had links with the Gobelins works. More detailed art historical research is needed to place the Danson cycle in its context, and might even turn up other examples of Pavillon's work.

THE FIGURES IN THE PAINTED CYCLE The precise literary source for the painted cycle is not yet known, but de Troy has been suggested or even Books I and II of Virgil's *Georgics*, which are dedicated to Ceres and Bacchus respectively, who appear in the Danson cycle.[216] Virgil credits Ceres, the goddess of the harvest, with taking man back to the Golden Age. The achievement of Bacchus, the god of the vine and viticulture, is similar as he is responsible for bringing civilisation to the ancient Greeks. In addition to achievement in the arts, these two figures are associated with plenty and pleasure and, therefore, appropriately, with love, for, according to the ancient saying, 'Without Bacchus and Ceres, love grows cold'.

The lynchpin of the cycle is the roughly square picture over the chimneypiece. It depicts a sacrifice to Bacchus, who appears as a marble sculpture sitting astride an altar which is, like the silver and gold jugs in the same picture, very French in feeling. The pedestal is rather suggestive of works by Matthew Bolton of the 1760s. The Bacchic theme is echoed in the square overdoors at either end of the wall. That to the north, or right, shows a pair of cupids holding a tambourine and pan pipes, looking very much though they had been lifted from a Bacchic triumph. The apples here undoubtedly refer to full-size figure of Pomona to the right of the chimneypiece, who, being associated with the harvest, echoes Ceres' meaning. The cupids above the south door signify spring. One pours water onto tender shoots in a large terracotta pot using a very Georgian-looking watering can. The scene is a paraphrase from a Hogarth painting and in this context is meant to conjure Pomona's pendent, the goddess of spring, Flora. The link to consumption, implicit in the central Bacchic sacrifice, is made explicit in the long panels to either side. These show a fruiting grapevine and hops, the 'English grape'.[217]

But the most interesting feature of this wall is the pair of figures facing each other across the sacrificial altar, Vertumnus on the south and Pomona on the north. The story of these ancient Italic gods, associated with the protection of orchards and the ripening of fruit, is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 14, 623-97, 765-71). In order to woo Pomona, Vertumnus, a demi-god, first approached her in rustic dress, then as an old woman, each in turn praising Vertumnus himself, recommending his virtues to Pomona. But reports of his character were not enough to woo her. Only after he revealed his true shape, did she succumb to his charm. The precise moment depicted at Danson is Vertumnus's unmasking, in other words, the consummation of their courtship. The story was popular in seventeenth-century Netherlandish art, where Vertumnus is often depicted as an old woman bending earnestly, sometimes lecherously, over a naked Pomona. She is sometimes accompanied by a tree. The pair also appears in French tapestries of the period and is the subject of at least one sculptural group now found in the sculpture court at the Victoria and Albert Museum but previously installed at Woburn Abbey. Obviously, their story relates to prosperity and agriculture in a general sense, and therefore to the function of the room, but there can be no doubt that a more specific reference to the remarriage of the patron was intended at Danson. This, it will be remembered, took place in 1766, the year the cycle was painted.

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216 I am endebted to John Hardy at Christie's for this discussion.

217 Hops are presented as the English answer to grapes in precisely this way in the ceiling designed by Robert Adam for Osterley Park in 1761.

On the north and south walls are paired figures. Apollo, the god of the sun and patron of the arts, is on the latter, along with his consort Euterpia, the Muse of Lyric poetry, who is shown playing a wind instrument. The globe at Apollo's feet perhaps stands for the harmony of the spheres. The water at his feet is almost certainly the Hippocrene spring, which flowed immediately from the spot on Mount Parnassus where Bellerophon, Apollo's winged horse, alighted. The pair and their attributes may refer to the competition on Mount Parnassus won by Apollo.

Bacchus and Ceres themselves appear on the north wall. Ceres, like Pomona, is a goddess of Italian origin though she came to be associated with the Greek Demeter. Strictly speaking, she represents fertility as the producer of corn; hence, her attributes are sometimes corn, a sickle or cornucopia. When depicted in the presence of Bacchus, she complements the idea of plenty (Venus is also implicated in their association). At Danson, she appears as summer, her eyes sleepy with the heat and her whole frame languid from the work of the harvest. An upturned rake underscores the idea of rest after the harvest. The god of the vine and viticulture, Bacchus is placed beside her, holding a ewer and standing next to a wine krater. At his feet is a basket and ribbon, the latter a reference to his wand, the thyrsus, which is shown in sculptural form in the sacrifice over the chimneypiece.

THE FRUITS AND FLOWERS IN THE PAINTED CYCLE[218] A schedule identifying these different fruits and flowers and the accompanying keyed diagrams may be found at in the Appendix.

The fruits and flowers depicted in the narrow recessed panels can be divided roughly into three groups: those traditionally found in the history of art (grapes, apples, pears); those which are not commonly found in paintings (hops); and, finally, a small number of exotics (lemons, pineapples, pomegranates). While the figure paintings appear to be executed by the same hand and achieve a similar level of completion and quality, the depiction of fruit and flowers varies. The chrysanthemums and dahlias are particularly well done and accurate, but others, such as the lilacs, are so loosely painted as to make certain identification difficult. This might indicate more than one artist was involved or even one or more artists working from different sources, taking their models from books of botanical illustrations in some cases and from works of decoration in others. The same artistic license is found in the depiction of foliage. Few of the leaves match the adjacent fruits and flowers, even the roses, which of course were then common. The theme seems, therefore, to be one of art triumphing over nature, a Rococo idea echoed in the overall character of the decoration.

The presence of fruit obviously relates to the function of the room; the flowers tie into the themes of sowing, harvest, and love already discerned in the figurative pictures. At the same time some fruits and flowers are more explicitly symbolic and can be related quite directly to the classical figures. The rose, found in three panels, is a specific attribute of Venus and is commonly associated with poetry, that is, Apollo. The pomegranate, which appears twice and is another venereal icon, is in one instance paired with a pineapple, whose form recalls that of the pine cone, the distinguishing motif on Bacchus's thyrsus. In this way is the central subject of the room as depicted on the east wall, is repeated in detail. In Greek tradition quince is the fruit of Venus; three of them appear in one panel. Rhubarb appearing in only one panel, was valued for its medicinal value in China and Greece as a cure for venereal disease, although the identification of this species is not certain.

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[218] The following discussion is taken from a report on the panels depicting fruit and flowers commissioned from Dr. Celia Fisher, September 1997.

Most of the varieties depicted in these panels were known in England from the seventeenth century; however, a few would have been recent introductions. Hydrangea, for example, came from America in the mid-eighteenth century. Finer examples from the east would become available in the next century, which suggest that the representations here were probably made from published sources not the plants themselves. The same is true of Wisteria and of Chrysanthemum and Dahlia. The latter were only successfully nurtured at Kew and Chelsea in the 1790s.

The final element in this complex medley of symbols and representations are the elegant birds, which sit and swoop, in the airless backgrounds of the floral panels. In classical allegory, birds are associated with physical love; indeed, in ancient Rome birds were often slang for the male organ. In a general way, then, birds were with the sense of touch as well as, by virtue of their songs, with hearing. Their presence here completes the sequence of five senses in the cycle thus: taste and smell/fruit; sight/flowers; hearing/Apollo's instruments in the pictures and birds; touch/birds.[219]

THE PAVILLON SCHEME AMONG COMPARABLE PAINTED DINING ROOM INTERIORS Bacchic themes comparable to those found in the painted (and sculpted) decoration of the dining parlour at Danson are common in dining rooms. Of the 29 complete painted dining rooms listed by Croft-Murray and executed between 1726 and 1791, five depict Bacchus and Ceres. Bachannalian boys or cupids, the sporting youths who gambol in the overdoors at Danson, are found in another two cases. Love as represented by the story of Cupid and Psyche or in some other form is the explicit subject of another three examples. Sacrifices to Apollo or representations of the Arts occur in another three cases. Thus, we see that the range of themes represented in the dining room paintings at Danson is more or less typical of the day. It is also clear from Croft-Murray's study that the Danson paintings are unusual for featuring nearly full-sized figures. The state of research does not permit greater precision than these tentative conclusions. However, it does strongly suggest that *the Danson cycle is an outstanding example of eighteenth-century decorative painting. For this reason, the highest priority should be accorded to the restoration of this interior, including the reinstatement of the original mirrors and frames shown in the watercolours made by Sarah Jane Johnston in c1860.* An analysis of library decoration based on Croft-Murray's sample shows that very different subjects were common in such rooms. Heads of literary figures and symbolic representations of the Liberal Arts as well as scenes from ancient history were favoured in libraries. The subjects found in drawing rooms/saloons show no such tendency to aggregate.

THE FURNISHING OF THE DINING ROOM Although the Malton plan describes the room as an 'Eating Room,' the 1805 inventory refers to the Dining Room simply as a `Parlour', which reflects the fact that room functions in Georgian houses were not fixed. In any case, it mentions only one piece of furniture, `an oriental spar cistern on [a] marble plinth' carried by three bronze figures. There is mention of a `a fine French urn for ditto' and two further pieces of marble sculpture, though they are not identified in the entry. These were perhaps small pieces, possibly busts, as they were supported by a pair of plinths carved as 'therms'. There is also mention of the 'two large glasses' recorded in the c.1860 watercolour of the interior and which have been attributed in this report (see above) to Taylor on the basis of their resemblance to his designs of c1766 for the Bank of England.

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219 The senses are explicitly depicted in the dining room of Canons House in Middlesex, in decorated made by Charles Simon in c.1725. This same cycle depicts the seasons, Apollo and Cybele. See Croft-Murray, no. 276b.

The furniture, shown in the mid-Victorian watercolour, would appear, then, to have been brought in by the Johnston family. There is no mention of a chandelier. Chambers' vase and candelabra which were designed for the chimneypiece and recorded in the Metropolitan Museum drawing (see above) do not survive; however, even if they were not executed, one would have expected to find candles in this position. There were probably also free-standing standards and perhaps some tapers on smaller tables.

Originally, of course, the room would probably not have had a dining room table, merely a pair of sideboards with urns and possibly a suite of chairs covered in leather or horsehair upholstery. There is room enough for fourteen. The carpet shown in the *c.*1860 watercolour might well have been original. The softwood floorboards seem to have been left exposed, and were very likely rubbed with silver sand. As for lighting, there would probably have been two branches, one for each sideboard, and possibly, another two branches on the mantelshelf of the chimneypiece – Chambers' drawing in the Avery shows a candelabrum formed from an urn.

The fitting out of the Saloon, 1765-6

THE PLASTER LINING The body of the lining out of the Saloon appears to be original. There is no evidence to suggest an earlier scheme. Its design indicates that the walls were to be covered with a stretched fabric, most probably silk damask. This is evident from the timber battens included within the scheme, which are set flush with the plaster face and frame the flat areas of wall. The lining out appears to have been applied according to the following sequence.

Battens, rough sawn, 35-45 mm in width and 30-50 mm depth, set vertically at 330 mm intervals and rising behind the cornice almost the full height of the room were fixed in place with nails with leaf shaped heads. The fixing nails are driven mostly into the mortar joints and wherever possible into the bonding timbers set in the thickness of the wall. Holes from fixing nails, aligned with the vertical lining out battens above and below, in the bonding timbers indicate that the Victorian mirror recesses (see the alterations of *c* 1865 below) were originally plastered over and treated in the same way as the rest of the wall face. Battens planed on three sides and measuring 150x40mm in section were then nailed onto the vertical lining out battens to provide a fixing surface for the skirting, dado rail and the cornice. With the dado and cornice attached, the battens were set so that they presented a margin to the enclosed areas of plaster. Vertical battens set in the angles of the room, half lapped and nailed over the horizontals, were nailed and jointed using a plough and tongue joint. These battens completed the framed margin to the flat areas of wall surface.

The shutter boxes for the windows were attached to the horizontal battens. The large carved bead moulding, which formed an architrave to the window openings, provided a continuation of the flat timber fixing surface around the window openings. This detail differs from that used elsewhere on the Principal Floor.

The laths were fixed to the vertical battens with small nails about 25mm in length and square in section. The laths were split, not sawn. The rough lime plaster base coat, containing animal hair, as in the other rooms on the principal floor, was applied to the laths flush with the second set of battens. It was finished with a skim of lime. Below the dado rail, the detailing for the plaster was the same as in the other rooms on the Principal Floor.

THE JOINERY The skirting moulding was cut from a flat timber section and enriched with carving and small blocks of wood were glued to the back of the moulding to support its angled projection. It was nailed to the lowest horizontal fixing batten. The skirting board

was nailed to the skirting moulding. The moulding is derived from Palladio's drawing illustrating two designs for a base for an Ionic pedestal, Plate XVIII, Book I *I Quattro Libri...* The carved dado rail was assembled from four sections of timber. The top and the cyma moulding were applied. The carved Vitruvian scroll was also carved from a separate piece of timber and glued into a shallow wide rebate. The dado rail was nailed to the horizontal fixing batten. Palladio gives the source for this moulding in *I Quattro Libri...* Book IV, Plate XCVII, which illustrates the Temple of Neptune, in Rome. According to Palladio, the scrolled dado moulding was used there in conjunction with the Corinthian order.

The plaster cornice was built up on vertical formers nailed to a batten at the top of the wall face and to a second batten nailed to the soffits of the ceiling joists. Laths were applied to the formers and the plaster base coat was run *in-situ*. The finish coat was then run and the moulded enrichments, the shells, the dentils, the rosettes and the modillions were set in plaster. The cornice is of the Corinthian order and in profile very close to Palladio's exemplar illustrated in Plate XXIV, Book I of *I Quattro Libri...* although the depth of the modillion course is slightly reduced and compensated for in the dentil and ovolo mouldings. Otherwise, Taylor's variation is in the enrichment. Below the cornice is a plaster anthemion frieze and a carved timber roll and cavetto moulding.

The plaster ceiling is composed of eight radial panels around a central circular panel. The photograph of the Saloon reproduced in the sale catalogue of 1922 shows alternating patterns of arabesques in these panels. Although they have since been removed, their outline survives as mould growth staining both the lining paper applied to the ceiling and the plaster itself. The presence of mould suggests that the arabesques were applied to the ceiling with glue. This distinguishes the work from the original plaster decoration, which was set in wet plaster. The use of glue suggests papier-mâché or composition. That there were no traces of paint between the mould growth and the plaster indicates that the arabesques were applied before the ceiling was painted and that they are in fact primary. The central rosette, moulded in a radiating leaf pattern, is hollow in the centre, which suggests that a central chandelier was intended. The leaf design is similar to that implied by the remains of the Entrance Hall rosette although very little survived there.

This much of the scheme appears to be consistent with the overall design of the house and therefore appears to be the work of Robert Taylor. There is a parallel for the ceiling at Chute Lodge, Wiltshire, designed by Taylor. The Chute ceiling retains its arabesque decoration. The anthemion frieze is also similar to that at Chute.

THE CARVED TIMBER DOOR CASES From the plaster lining to the walls, it appears that the elaborate timber door cases fitted on both sides of the room are smaller than those originally intended. It also seems that it was intended that the door cases would have pediments. The wall face between the lath and plaster and the door-case was made up with plaster containing fragments of brick and tile applied directly to the brick wall face. A triangular section of wall above the entablature of the fitted door-case was made good with lath and plaster which is clearly not of the same phase as the rest of the wall face. The door cases do not appear to have been altered from pediment to entablature, since the uppermost moulding above the cornice is a fully enriched gola and there is no other supporting evidence for alteration. The use of the Corinthian order is consistent with the ceiling cornice. The design of the cornice is again very close to Palladio's model Corinthian cornice illustrated in Plate XXIV of Book I of *I Quattro Libri..* But here the enrichment adheres much more closely to Palladio's exemplar. Both door cases were attached to oversized backing boards set flush with the wall face. The boards continue the fabric fixing surface which frames the plaster wall face.

THE ORIGINAL DAMASK WALL COVERING The walls were clearly designed to be hung with a fabric. Although this was probably removed at the end of the nineteenth century, there is some evidence for the material, its hanging, colour and pattern. Two rows of nails or tacks were driven into the battens framing the wall faces. The spacing between the nails in each row is *c* 25mm. The spacing between the rows on the vertical battens in the angles of the room is also *c* 25. On the horizontal battens above the dado and at below the frieze, the spacing between the two rows is not so well defined. The pattern of nails or tacks is continued on the backing boards for the door cases either side of the room. This suggests that the walls were not covered with fabric until the door cases had been installed.

The nail pattern indicates that either the wall fabric had a calico lining attached with two rows of tacks or two layers of calico were attached by a single row of tacks. Fragments of hessian or calico survive, trapped under the tacks applied to the battens surrounding the wall panels. Further fragments also survive on the backing board above the entablature of the door case on the east wall and behind the carved fillet attached below the main cornice. A third set of iron stained holes, on the vertical battens in the angles of the room, probably derive from screws now removed. This suggests that the wall fabric was stretched around timber or metal strips set in the corners of the room. The absence of any coloured threads suggests the damask was not fixed with nails. In the watercolour, it appears there was a golden coloured gimp or cord attached around the door case in the west wall.

The patterned staining of the plaster wall face above the fireplace appears to derive from the original damask. The pattern implies a 25&1/2" roll width and a repeating pattern of at least 7'. The damask is probably that shown in the watercolour from *c* 1860 of the door from the Saloon into the Library. The fabric appears to have been a pale blue.

THE ORIGINAL MIRRORS The watercolour of the Saloon from *c* 1860 shows a mirror on the north west wall. From its style, it appears to be contemporary with the original lining out of the room. Because the physical evidence indicates that the plaster wall face above the dado was continuous across the north west wall this date, the mirror shown in the watercolour must have been surface mounted. This interpretation is supported by a pattern of nail holes through the plaster surface above the Victorian mirror recess. The nail holes are aligned with the vertical battens to which the plaster and lath are fixed. The same pattern of nail holes occurs in the same position on the north east wall. The two watercolours of the Dining Room show a related pair of mirrors, one at each end of the room. Fragments of either these or the Saloon mirrors survive in the Local Studies Collection at Hall Place. They show that the mirrors had carved and gilded timber surrounds of very high quality.

The size of the mirrors corresponds with the windows on the south side of the room. In this sense, although they were surface mounted, they had an architectural quality and therefore probably belong to the scheme as conceived by Taylor. The detail, especially the inclusion of griffins in the heads of the mirrors in the Dining Room suggests a possible connection with Chambers. The elaboration around the Dining Room mirror at the south end of the room is closely paralleled in the frieze used on the Charlemont House medal cupboard[220] but Taylor also used this motif in a similar context at the Bank of England.

THE FURNISHING OF THE SALOON The printed sale particulars drawn up for the 1805 auction record that the 'Elegant Octagon Saloon, or Chief Apartment' had walls hung

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220 See Harris J and Snodin J, *Sir William Chambers*, 1996 pp 172-3

with 'Blue Silk Damask'. The hand-written inventory made by Boyd during negotiations with Johnston refers in addition to a 'cut glass chandelier for 8 lights' as well as a 'masque [*sic*] of marble' and paintings by Barrett, Vernet, and Wilson. To judge from the c.1860 watercolour of the saloon, there was a gilded frame above the west door, the details of which correspond to the Chambers' drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum noted above. This room would very likely have featured selections from Boyd's large picture collection; it was common to hang pictures on damask, as shown in Zoffany's marvellous portrait of the drawing room of Sir Lawrence Dundas's London house.

Neither the printed nor the hand-written inventories mention the carved and gilded mirrors shown in the c.1860 watercolour of this room. Whereas, Boyd's hand-written inventory explicitly mentions a pair of fixed mirrors in the dining room (removed in the 1860s) and `pier glasses' in the library (see below, whereabouts unknown). This suggests that the mirrors may have been surface mounted not fixed.

The watercolour of the Saloon shows one commode under the mirror, which would have been repeated on the wall on the other side of the chimneypiece. One would have expected to find candelabra on each commode. There would also have been a suite of armchairs, gilded or possibly painted. Indeed, the oval-backed armchairs shown in the watercolour are entirely right for the period and may be original. They bay may have contained a trio of window seats. All the seating furniture would have been covered to match the walls, as would the curtains (probably of the festoon type) on the windows.

The fitting out of the Library, 1765-6

THE PLASTER LINING Pine battens, *c* 35x35-40mm, rough sawn on three sides and planed on the exposed face, were attached to the walls at horizontal intervals of *c* 320mm, with iron cleats with leaf shaped heads driven into the mortar joints. This type of cleat was used throughout the original decoration of the house. One of the battens was positioned at the centre of the wall. Although the original battens were later cut away for the installation of the plaque, it is clear from holes in the mortar joints left by cleats now removed, that the battens were originally continued across this part of the wall face. Laths were nailed to the battens. Some of the laths were exposed in the area where the central plaque had been located. The laths were split, not sawn and not entirely straight. At least one of the exposed laths included a large knot.

The base coat of white lime plaster, applied to the laths, including lumps of lime up to 8mm in size and some animal hair, was *c* 22mm thick. A skim of white lime plaster was applied to the base coat. The finished plaster face wall face was *c* 85 mm proud of the brick wall face. The plaster cornice is Doric and ultimately derived from the Theatre of Marcellus in Rome. However, this cornice appears to have stimulated some debate among those who illustrated it and Taylor's version at Danson is no doubt a personal interpretation. Serlio illustrated it in *The Five Books of Architecture* Book 4, fol. 18, with the cavetto at the top but the mutules recessed and horizontal. The lower parts were also recorded very differently. It seems Taylor took Palladio's model Doric cornice, based on the Theatre of Marcellus and illustrated as Plate XV in Book I of *I Quattro Libri...* He adhered to it in all respects except for the projection of the mutule course and in the use of a cavetto in place of the greater cimatium. Isaac Ware reproduced his version in Plate 17 in *A Complete Body of Architecture* and, it seems, like Palladio, considered the use of the cavetto at the top of the cornice an error based on a misinterpretation of Vitruvius. William Chambers, however, accepted the use of the cavetto but objected to the mutules hanging down. He reproduced the cornice with the ornament in the horizontal position.[221]

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[221] William Chambers, *A Treatise on Civil Architecture*, 1759, p51

The plaster lining of the end walls does not respect the round arch recesses in the brickwork above the windows. It therefore appears that the lining was constructed with the bookcase and organ scheme in mind. This is clearly a departure from the triumphal arch scheme implied by the treatment of the brick shell. The organ, now at Hall Place, Bexleyheath, is dated 1766. The Library therefore appears to have lined by 1766. This is in contrast with the plaster relief scheme on the east wall, which appears to have been installed after the lining out was completed. This is suggested by the empty cleat holes in the brickwork above the fireplace, which line up with the vertical battens above and below and indicate that the wall was originally plastered throughout. The central plaque in the east wall was inserted into a cut made in the plaster lining (see section 3 below).

THE MAHOGANY BOOKCASES AND ORGAN To accommodate the suite of fitted mahogany bookcases and matching organ was installed in the Library, the cupboard recesses in the masonry shell were enlarged, by cutting back of the brick, the rough surfaces were made good with a coating in plaster containing animal hair to receive the bookcases.

Although these remain substantially intact, they have undergone significant alteration. Originally, they were built with open shelving without doors. The dado and skirting board were made to match those on the walls, although the latter were in pine. The centre bookcase in the south wall was probably of the same height as the other bookcases although it may have had a pediment or block pediment. The organ was probably lower.

The exposed parts of the bookcases are of mahogany, and the rest of pine. The cornices, dado and skirting boards of the two bookcases at the north end of the room were mitred for a forward return. The sides of the bookcases were rebated with a channel, *c* 56x15mm, as part of a shelving system in which the shelves were supported by slips of pine set within the rebate.

The organ, now at Hall Place, Bexley, is inscribed `Old England 1766.' It has been assumed that the organ was built for Danson and that it is contemporary with the mahogany bookcases set against the other walls of the Library. The room would then have assumed its alternative title of Music Room. Bookcases of this type in mahogany begin to appear in houses of this status from the mid-C18 and their general form can be paralleled in Chippendale's Director of 1754. Batty Langley published a design for a Tuscan bookcase similar to the arrangement on the south wall in 1741.[222] The organ at Christchurch Spitalfields, by Richard Bridge and installed 1735/6 might have been the source for the tripartite design of the upper half.[223]

THE ELLIPTICAL PLASTER RELIEFS Elliptical plaster plaques framed by branches of oak leaves with acorns survive in the east wall of Library above the doors to the Entrance Hall and the Saloon. They clearly form a pair, both showing female figures in classical antique clothing facing towards the centre of the room. The figure in the plaque above the door to the Entrance Hall has fruit in her left hand and, with her right, holds more fruit in a fold in her dress. She represents spring and summer abundance and is probably derived from an antique representation of the Roman goddess 'Flora'. We must assume that this elliptical plaque was fixed in the same fashion as that above the north door -- see below. This plaque is set to stand *c*.12mm proud of the wall face. The figure in the plaque above the door to the Saloon has a scythe in her right hand and a bound sheaf of

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222 Batty Langley, *Designs...*, 1741, plate CLVIII

223 Survey of London, Spitalfields and Mile End New Town, Vol XXVII, p.162

corn in a fold in her dress supported by her left hand. The scythe and the corn invoke the themes of harvest and autumn. She may represent the Greek goddess 'Ceres.'

The lower part of the plaque fell away during the restoration of the house and exposed some of the fixing details. The plaque had fractured along a line between two iron fixing cleats. The cleats were of tapered flat iron with their heads bent over at the top. They were not of the leaf head type used for the original lining of the walls. The plaque appeared to be set against the original lining laths attached to an original batten. It appears that the original battens and laths were not modified for the installation of this plaque. The cleats were concealed by white plaster.

An identical pair of plaques formed part of a tripartite plaster scheme in the dining room at The Oaks, Carshalton (demolished between 1957 and 1960) attributed to Robert Taylor and probably dating from *c* 1770.[224] The centrepiece of the scheme was a circular plaque identical to that in the closet room, P7, at Danson.

EVIDENCE FOR THE CIRCULAR PLAQUE ABOVE THE FIREPLACE The lath and plaster lining of the wall above the fireplace was cut to receive a roundel, *c* 1050mm diameter. Although the original cut edge of the plaster does not survive, the circular outline is evident in the cut ends of the original lining battens and laths. There is no evidence to suggest that the opening was framed with battens. A further set of four battens, *c* 35-50mm, was applied to the brick wall face in the area of the cut plaster. They were fixed with leaf head cleats of the same type as those used for the original lining of the walls. The battens were applied flat to the wall so that the average projection was *c* 35mm. Laths were applied to the battens in this location. Although they no longer survive *in-situ*, this was evident from the nail holes and some traces of plaster on the battens between the laths. Traces of plaster adhering to the battens indicate that plaster was applied to the laths. However, the irregular distribution of these traces suggests that not all of the laths were covered in plaster, as would have been the case if a base coat had been applied. Instead, the small deposits of fine white plaster, without animal hair, on the brick wall face probably derive from plaster daubs applied to the laths as a cushion to receive the plaque.

In 1997, the circular plaster plaque located in the closet Room P7, was clearly not in its original setting. A comparison with the scheme at The Oaks, Carshalton, indicates that it originally formed part of the Library scheme at Danson, especially when taken alongside the physical evidence surviving in the plaster above the fireplace in the Library. The subject of the relief is a seated, veiled woman having her feet washed by a maidservant. The veil and the act of washing show that she is being prepared for her marriage. The subject is taken from a series of four scenes relating to courtship and marriage recorded from an antique source by Pietro Santi Bartoli and published in the seventeenth century in his volume of engravings *Romanorum Admiranda Monumenta*. An unknown artist reproduced the full cycle of four images in the feigned reliefs at Kedleston working in the 1770s.[225]

The moulded face of the plaque survives intact within a diameter of 1000mm. Outside this area, the surface is slightly recessed as a margin that appears to have been *c* 20mm wide. The outer upper edge is roughly chamfered. Parts of the margin, especially in the lower half of the plaque, were cut away, probably when it was installed in the closet room P7 (see section 7 below). The rear of the plaque is roughly finished with what

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224 Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984, pp 37, 96

225 We are indebted to Dr Alastair Laing of the National Trust for this very helpful piece of information

appear to be triangular trowel marks. There are no other visible marks, such as a signature or date. The plaque is *c* 28mm thick, overall with some parts of the relief sections projecting up to a maximum of 65mm. Given the above evidence and the size of the circular opening in the lining, there can be little doubt that the plaster relief in the closet room P7 was originally positioned above the fireplace in the Library.

Assuming the margin around the plaque was complete when it was first installed in the Library (it was probably cut down when it was installed in the Closet Room P7 in the 1860s), it was set against plaster daubs applied to the laths, resting on the sawn off lining battens. It was then secured with at least two iron fixing cleats driven into the mortar joints between the bricks, above and below the plaque. The cleats were flat, tapered and bent at the broad end. They were of the same type as those used to secure the elliptical plaque above the door to the Saloon. The cleats probably served only to hold the plaque in position while the gap between the plaque and the lining plaster was made good with fresh plaster. From the cutting of the original battens and laths, the fit between the plaque and the lining plaster was a close one. The face of the plaque would have been approximately flush with the plaster wall face.

A plaster moulding probably masked the joint between the plaque and the surrounding plaster. No physical evidence for this moulding survives. The plaster face immediately surrounding the plaque was removed probably when the plaque was relocated to the closet room P7. However, production of the surviving curved outline of the surrounding swags, and the diameter of the plaque itself, assuming the margin to have been covered by the architrave, suggest a moulded architrave, *c* 120mm wide.

A moulded architrave of this type is shown in the photographs of the identical plaque at the Oaks, Carshalton. The moulding there clearly did conceal both the 25mm margin surrounding the plaque and the joint with the wall plaster but it appears to have been wider than that at Danson, measuring *c* 150mm in width. The moulding included an ovolo enriched with egg and dart, a fluted frieze (288 flutes in total) and reeding or an astragal wound with ribbon.

At No 4 Grafton Street, Westminster, 1768-1771 also attributed to Robert Taylor,[226] a similar but simpler fluted architrave (200 flutes in total) was used as a surround to a circular plaster plaque of similar dimensions. This appears to measure *c* 100m in width. The outer moulding is composed of a small cavetto outside a cyma enriched with a waterleaf moulding. The inner moulding is a plain astragal.

The choice of enrichment used on the architrave moulding at Danson was probably determined through consideration of both its relative size and the forms of ornament used elsewhere in the room. In general, at Danson, the vocabulary of enrichment used on the Principal Floor appears to be quite specific. Each room can be characterised according to its ornament.

The Entrance Hall is relatively plain. The Ionic order is expressed in the door cases and the ceiling cornice. Various forms of enrichment occur around the room. These included waterleaf, seashells and petal flower designs. But the egg and dart, used on the doors, window shutters and plaques, is dominant. In the Dining Room, floral and leaf patterns with trefoils dominate. Egg and dart is confined to the heads of the door cases. The order, expressed through the ceiling cornice is Ionic. The Saloon has the widest range of enrichment. The order, expressed in the door cases and ceiling cornice is Corinthian. In the Library, waterleaf enrichment is the dominant form. It occurs throughout the Library

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[226] Binney M, 1984, pp 37, 96

on the mahogany doors, the door architraves, the heads to the doors, the window shutters and skirting. The only use of egg and dart within the room is in the Doric ceiling cornice, derived from the Temple of Marcellus in Rome.

In the absence of any firmer evidence, consideration of the above scheme of ornament, the parallel uses of the plaque at other sites and the implied size of the architrave, the enrichment of the architrave surrounding the circular plaque was probably composed of a cyma-reversa moulding enriched with a waterleaf pattern, fluting, perhaps 240 in total, and a plain astragal. The actual modelling of the waterleaf moulding may have been related to the waterleaf mouldings in the Saloon ceiling.

Careful removal of the layers of paint applied to the plaster wall face around the plaque revealed areas of plaster where the earliest paint layers, including the dark verdigris green layer, did not survive. The resulting outline pattern clearly derives from an arrangement of plaster swags and ribbons which was removed when the plaque was relocated to the closet. The solid outline of the swags indicates that oak branch wreaths matching those surrounding the two flanking plaster reliefs did not surround the central plaque. This suggests that the swags around the central plaque were not related to the other two.

However, at The Oaks, Carshalton, although the design of the foliage was varied between the outer and centre plaques, the nominal species was consistent throughout. At No. 4 Grafton St, where a similar tripartite scheme of plaster reliefs was employed, the foliage was consistent throughout the wall treatment. This suggests that at Danson, although the treatment of the foliage was varied, it was probably oak throughout. The solid outline formed by the swags where they appear to have passed over a roundel below the central plaque is very similar to that formed by the oak leaf and acorn swags carved in stone above the main entrance door. It therefore seems most likely that the swags around the central plaque were composed of oak leaves and acorns matching those around the outer two plaques in size and form but bunched together as in the carved oak leaf decoration above the entrance door.

The pattern revealed by the paint analysis included a ribbon tied in a bow above the central plaque. The branches surrounding the flanking plaques are tied with a similar but smaller ribbon. Ribbons were used above the plaques at The Oaks, Carshalton and generally in eighteenth century plaster schemes, especially to tie branches of swag decoration. Ribbons carved in timber appear on the door cases in the Saloon, room P3, provide a suitable model for reconstruction.

The swags surrounding the central plaque appear to be draped over a circular motif 170mm in diameter. The details of this device do not survive. At the Oaks, Carshalton, a rosette was employed. A suitable model for the roundel at Danson was sought in the other interiors on the Principal Floor. The fluted paterae of a *c* 200 mm diameter used in the Saloon ceiling were considered appropriate as a basis for reconstruction.

The plain ceiling appears to be original, and like the Dining Room, did not have a central rose. The surviving rose was papier-mâché or composition and probably dates from the installation of the gasolier in the late nineteenth century. The cornice was painted off-white in oil paint. The frieze was also painted mossy green. The wall face above the dado was deep emerald green. Dado rail, could this have been gilded? The wall face below the dado rail was flat white. The mossy green colour (or malachite) was applied to the frieze, which extends over the window arches. According to the Sale Particulars of 1805, 'The enrichments beautifully carved and gilt' probably refers to gilding of the bookcases and organ although no traces survived for analysis in 1997.[227]

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[227] *Sale Particulars*, 1805, p4

PARALLELS FOR THE ORIGINAL PLASTER RELIEF SCHEME AND ATTRIBUTION The following table illustrates the use of identical plaques in buildings of the period.

The Oaks, Carshalton, Surrey.	The addition of the dining room to an existing house has been attributed to Robert Taylor by Marcus Binney and dated to c 1770.[228] The three plaques identical to those at Danson make this the closest parallel for the Danson scheme. The link with Danson confirms the attribution of the Oaks scheme to Robert Taylor. The house was demolished between 1957 and 1960.
Syon House, Twickenham, Middlesex	An identical circular plaque was used by Robert Adam c 1765 above the chimneypiece in the Ante-Room at Syon House, Middlesex.[229] The plaque is set within a very elaborate frame and is partially recessed from the wall face. The plaque is currently painted black but it is not known if this is an original paint scheme.
Roxburghe House, Hanover Square, Westminster	Robert Adam used a copy of the circular plaque in the stair well at Roxburghe House, c 1776,[230] but the house was demolished c 1908.
Tabley House, Cheshire	John Carr, at Tabley, used another copy of the circular plaque in the entrance hall giving into the portico, between 1760 and 1770.[231]
Shugborough, Staffordshire	James Stuart, added in 1762 used the circular plaque at Shugborough in the library.[232]
No. 22 Mansfield Street, Westminster	The two elliptical plaques appear in the ceiling above the stairwell at No 22 Mansfield Street in a scheme by Robert Adam, c 1772.[233]
Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing	George Dance used both elliptical plaques at Pitzhanger Manor in 1768 in a two-storey addition to the existing house, which provided a dining room on the ground floor.[234]
Marlborough House, St James, Westminster	An elliptical plaque identical to the figure of Flora above the door to the Entrance Hall was used in the internal alterations to Marlborough House attributed to William Chambers, between 1771 and 1774.[235]
The Bank of England, City of	Robert Taylor used the plaque of the woman with the scythe in the Court Room and associated offices at the Bank of England between 1765 and 1772.

228 Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984, p 37

229 Adam R and J, *The works in architecture of Robert and James Adam*, 1779, Vol II, No IV, pl. VI

230 King D, *The complete works of Robert and James Adam*, 1991, pp 292-294, pl 415

231 Hussey C, *English Country Houses, mid Geogian, 1760-1800*, 1955, pp 55-60, pl 197

232 The library is shown in Hussey, *English Country Houses, mid Geogian, 1760-1800*, 1955, pl 152. The plaque does not appear in this view but according to Dr Michael Turner it is included in the scheme (pers. comm.)

233 King D, *The complete works of Robert and James Adam*, 1991, pp 82-86, pl 109

234 Stroud D, *George Dance Architect, 1741-1825*, 1977, pp 87-89 and fig 21

235 Dr Michael Turner pers. comm.

Quite clearly, the use of these plaques was not restricted to one architect. The plaques are presumably the work of a specialist sculptor/plaster cast maker, probably based in London. The most likely candidate is William Collins, 1721-1793, a pupil of Sir Henry Cheere. That the installation of the central plaque at Danson required the cutting out of the original plaster wall lining does not necessarily imply a change of architect and could have followed hard on the lining of the room. The best parallel for the use of the three plaques at Danson is clearly The Oaks, Carshalton by Robert Taylor.

WHITE PLAQUES ON A DARK GREEN GROUND From paint analysis it appears that the plaques and the surviving oak leaf surrounds were painted white or off-white at least three time before any colour was applied. The earliest layers of paint applied to the wall appear to be dark verdigris green.[236] The plaques and their surrounds would therefore have stood in stark contrast with this background.

THE LIBRARY, ITS STYLE AND SIGNIFICANCE If the attribution of the bulk of the principal interiors to Taylor is accepted, then this must include the present bookcase scheme in the library. As we have seen, their design is fully integrated into that of the room. Nor was it unusual for architects of this period to design furniture of this kind. In 1760, the Earl of Pembroke paid William Chambers for various designs intended for his Whitehall Villa, Pembroke House. Among these is a drawing for a winged bookcase similar in general conception to one of the Danson units. This was the work of Thomas Chippendale and survives today at Wilton House. Somewhat later, the architect and cabinet-maker collaborated again on a winged bookcase, this time for Melbourne House in Piccadilly.[237] In 1764, Sir Lawrence Dundas commissioned a pair of winged bookcases from Robert Adam as part of that architect's furnishing scheme. Again, Chippendale executed them. In fact Chippendale did a great deal to popularise the type through his famous *Gentlemen's and Cabinet-Makers's Director* of 1753, thirteen plates, nos. 88-101,are devoted to bookcases. Plates 90, 91, and 95 are close in form to the pedimented breakfront cases at Danson, though each of these, like the Chambers and Adam designs noted above, have glazed doors of an ornamental pattern.

THE FURNISHING AND DECORATION OF THE LIBRARY Boyd's hand-written inventory mentions four `pier glasses' in the library; these could only have been installed along the west wall, perhaps two on the returns and another two in the bay or all four in the bay. Two `statuary marble figures on plinths' are noted but not their subjects.[238] There was another sculpture, this one identified as 'Venus crouching', which must have been a copy a sculpture that was in the Uffizi since 1787. When Boyd was in Rome, it would have been in the Villa Medici. She was well known from having been engraved as part of a series of antique sculptures by Franceso Piranesi. In 1762, Tommaso Solari made a full-size copy for the gardens at Caserta in Naples (Boyd and his family visited Naples on their 1775-6 tour). Small bronzes of her were offered for sale from about this time.[239] The organ and bookcases are all specified in the 1805 inventory, which also tells us that the windows were hung with 'silk curtains.' There is no mention of a chandelier.

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236 Hughes H, 1997, *English Heritage Danson House Paint Analysis report* in draft

237 C. Gilbert, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale* (New York: Tabard Press, 1978), p.98.

238 This pair might have found their way to the Rev. Johnston's vicarage at North Cray, where they are recorded in a late Victorian or early twentieth-century photograph in the collection of a descendant. See figure 000.

239 Haskell and Penny, pp. 321-3.

The *c.1860* watercolour showing the north west corner of the Library depicts a window desk; there would have been another in a corresponding position south of the bay. The 1805 inventory mentions '2 mahogany chests of 5 drawers with mahogany bookcases on ditto'. There might well have been a large desk here. The watercolour shows a two-part curtain with stiffened fabric pelmets reaching down to the level of the table. Inside is a complementary coloured curtain running on French rods, which enable it to be drawn.

THE DANSON ORGAN Although now removed from the dining room to Hall Place, the organ at Danson deserves some mention here for it is an outstanding and rare example of an eighteenth-century domestic organ. It was a conspicuous feature of the house's interior decoration but would also have figured prominently in its social life..

There can be no doubt that the case was designed to match the bookcases (see discussion of bookcases above). The inscription found inside the organ during its cleaning more than twenty years ago (see below), `Old England fecit 1766', although probably inserted in the early nineteenth century, provides both a plausible date and attribution for the instrument itself but not for the finely carved mahogany case.

THE ORGAN MAKER, 'OLD ENGLAND' On the basis of the inscription discovered behind the music stand in the 1950s (and not inspected by our research and analysis team) the Danson organ has been attributed to George England (*obit.* 1773). England was one of the most skilled and highly regarded organ builders of his day. He married the daughter of Richard Bridge, an organ builder personally recommended by Handel. George is thought to have started in London during the 1750s, eventually brining his nephew into the firm, George Pike England. The earliest surviving instrument by George Pike is said to be that in Dulwich College Chapel of 1760. He also built the organs for St. Stephen's Walbrook in the City of London and for the parish church at Stockport.[240]

The attribution to George England has not been questioned, but there are good reasons to doubt it, and the noted organ builder Noel Mander, who repaired the instrument in 1959, first challenged the accepted view. In correspondence with the Bexley Town Clerk, he ventured that the Danson organ was probably the work of George's brother John England, who was also a prominent figure in the field. Mander pointed out that because John not George had a son, only John could have been described as 'old' in the sense of 'elder'. The plaque, he observed, clearly a later insertion and none like it are known on George's organs. But they are found on the organs of his nephew, George Pike England, the son of John. Mander concluded that George Pike England had repaired the organ sometime in the early nineteenth century (when a keraulophon stop was inserted) and then took the opportunity to acknowledge dutifully the work of his father John with an inscription such as he routinely used.[241] If one accepts Mander's argument, and it is compelling, then the Danson organ would be one of John England's very first extant works, a year earlier than that he built for Wardour Castle in 1767.[242]

THE TASTE FOR ORGAN MUSIC IN HOUSES AND THE DESIGN OF ORGAN CASES Before 1750 organs in domestic settings were rare. Musical entertainment in the home usually

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240 M. Wilson, *The English Chamber Organ. History and Development, 1650-1850* (London: Casirer, 1968), pp. 64-5. The Danson organ is the subject of an article by G. Beechey in *The Organ*, vol. 48 (January 1969), pp. 128-31. The latter is not generally a reliable source.

241 Letter from Mander to the Bexley Town Clerk, 24 December 1958, Hall Place, Locial Studies, LABX/DA/4/1/97, `Danson Park Organ Correspondence'.

242 Wilson, p. 67.

took the form of suites, sonatas and related forms which were played on harpsichord or spinet.[243] Organs were found most commonly in pleasure gardens, theatres and, of course, in churches. The popularity of domestic organs rests almost entirely on one figure, G. F. Handel, whose organ *concerti* were first widely appreciated at pleasure gardens in the late 1730s and 1740s. Later Handel's organ music could be heard at three venues, Carlisle House in Soho Square (where subscription concerts were held) and the Pantheon in Oxford Street during the 1760s, and, later, from 1775, at special rooms in Hanover Square. Other composers of organ *concerti* soon entered the field, John Stanley, Maurice Green, Charles Avison, and Thomas Arne.

Organs were more commonly found in domestic settings after 1760, sometimes in specially designed Music Rooms but also in rooms that had another ostensible purpose such as halls and libraries. In 1760, an added impetus to the domestic organ industry was provided by the posthumous publication of Handel's *concerti* in a format suitable for harpsichord or organ.

Not surprisingly some architects tried their hand at designing organ cases, one of the earliest being William Kent. It was Robert Adam, however, who did more than any other Georgian architect to assimilate the design of organ cases into the overall decorative ensemble of a room.[244] Easily the most fanciful of these was one of his first attempts, a 1760 design never executed for the west wall of a projected music room in Kedleston Hall, Lord Curzon's country house. Its four uprights were treated as caryatids whose normally architectonic poses have been relaxed as if to reflect the positive benefits of music. The base mouldings link in with those to the door, skirting, and dado rail. That eventually executed was smaller and simpler, though it still relied on female figures.[245] The instrument itself dated to 1758 and was the work of John Schnetzler who specialised in domestic organs.[246] Another Adam organ of note is that found in the entrance hall at Newby Hall of c.1771.[247] But by far his greatest work in this *genre* is that originally provided for the chamber organ destined for the townhouse of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn in St. James's Square and recently auctioned by Phillips.[248] The earliest known drawings for it are dated 24 April 1773, some months before the house itself was finished and some years before the scheme of interior decoration was complete. It was usual for organs to be made well before a case had been obtained. The trades were utterly distinct. This point is worth making because the date on the Danson organ, 1766, refers to the date the instrument was made not the date of its case.

The surge in demand for instruments obviously meant a demand for cases, but few owners of chamber organs, Boyd at Danson included, could have anything as elaborate as Adam was providing for his aristocratic clientele. Cabinet-makers stepped in to satisfy the demand. Thomas Chippendale's famous 1753 book, *The Gentlemen's and Cabinet-Makers Director* has designs for six different organ cases; Thomas Johnson's 1761 *150*

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243 The following discussion relies entirely on M. Wilson's survey, pp. 10-11, 32-37, *et passim.*

244 Wilson, p. 15.

245 L. Harris, *Robert Adam and Kedleston* (London: The National Trust, 1987), pp. 36-7.

246 Wilson, p. 102. Schnetzler designed instruments for Blickling and Cobham Halls in 1762 and c.1778 respectively.

247 G. Beard, *The Work of Robert Adam* (Edinburgh and London: Bartholomew and Son, 1978), plate 58.

248 *The Watkin Williams Wynn Chamber Organ by Robert Adam* (London: Phillips, 21 April 1995), text by E. Harris.

New Designs has one; Ince and Mayhew's 1759-63 *Universal System of Household Furniture* has another. But it was John Linnell (ob. 1796) who understood the design of organ cases better than perhaps any of his contemporaries, avoiding architectural conceptions and exposing the pipes.[249]

All this has direct bearing on our understanding of the Danson organ as a piece of interior decoration. For although the mouldings on the base and cornice match the surrounding bookcases (which in turn match the dado and skirting boards in this room), the case is not wholly architectural in conception, and so seems more the design of someone in the cabinet-making trade rather than an architect. The carvings on the case are fussy and do not relate clearly to the overall form of the piece.[250] This might be in part due to some reordering of the carcass in the 1860s when bookcases were altered.

The fitting out of the main staircase, 1765-6

The earliest paint finishes in the main stairwell appear to be stone colours and off-white.

The wooden panels in the staircase dome were originally painted to simulate coffering in which rosette alternate with the symbol of *Jupiter fulmigens*, or Jupiter of the lightning bolt. The motif is copied from the soffit of a Doric exemplar published by Chambers in 1759.[251] Coffering was a common treatment for a dome or deep coving in eighteenth-century architecture. More or less contemporary with Danson is the very grand coffered staircase designed by James Paine for Wardour Castle in Wiltshire (1768-76), where the coffering is octagonal. The grand stair at Althorn in Northamptonshire also features octagonal coffering. Robert Taylor himself was carrying out roof repairs here for the First Earl Spencer in 1772, though the full extent of his works is not known.

Trompe l'oeil effects of the kind found at Danson were introduced into England in the late seventeenth century by Verrio, for whom it was merely one weapon in a Baroque arsenal of spatial illusionism. Louis Laguerre used similar devices in the first decades of the eighteenth century as did James Thornhill, the latter most notably in his three painted rooms for Kensington Palace of 1718-19.[252] There is a fourth, unexecuted design by Thornhill for the cupola room of c.1722 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The job went to William Kent -- it was one of his first -- who had finished off the room with *faux* coffering by 1725.[253] Coffering was particularly suited to Kent's strong, masculine style, and when he could not carry it out in plaster or stone he himself made designs for it to be rendered in paint. One such example was the Queen's staircase at Hampton Court, where his magnificent painted walls simulating sculpture were crowned by coffering picked out in blue and gold (1734-5).[254] Nearer to the City of London, and easier to inspect, was have been the painted coffered staircase at St. Bartholomew's which was executed by Richards and Gibbon in 1735-6.[255]

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249 Wilson, p. 20. Ten of Linnell's drawings survive in the Prints and Drawings Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 92.D.26.

250 The authors are grateful to Stephen Astley at the Soane Museum for discussing the carved ornament of this case with them.

251 Plate opposite p. 17.

252 E. Croft-Murray, vol. 1, p. 54, and vol. 2, no. 234a/14.

253 E. Croft-Murray, vol. 2, no. 27.

254 E. Croft-Murray, vol. 2, no. 233b.

255 E. Croft-Murray, vol. 2, no. 267b.

The fitting out of the Bedroom Floor, 1765-6

THE INTERIOR FINISHES AND FITTINGS The rooms were lined throughout the Bedroom Floor with plaster on lath on battens. Nowhere was there plaster applied to brick. In the principal bedroom, B1, sufficient battens and skirting remained to give the line of the circular plan of the lining in the octagonal bay. The centre of the circle was on the central axis between the door in the east wall and the fireplace in the west.

Although there are bonding timbers within the thickness of the wall at window sill level, for the fixing of a dado rail and the backing board appears in photographs of the principal bedroom, B1, next to the south east window, none of the dado rails survive *in-situ*. Nor do they appear in the historic photographs of rooms B1 and B3. It seems unlikely that there was a dado rail in the Landing, B8, but it is not clear which of the other rooms were fitted dado rails.

The plaster cornices in the bedrooms are recorded in photographs of the 1980s and 1920s. The cornices in the Principal Bedroom, B1, the large room B4/5 and the south east room are variations on the cornice forming part of the Ionic entablature above the columns in the Landing, B8. The cornices in these other rooms do not survive *in-situ*, but in the Principal Bedroom, B1, a tester was attached to the ceiling against the north wall and although it was removed during the stripping out in the 1980s, it has been kept in the house since then. This timber and plaster feature, 'D' shaped in plan, routed a continuation of the bedroom's cornice around the bed which must have been located beneath. The tester preserves the plaster ceiling cornice, which did not otherwise survive the recent stripping out. This cornice has the same profile as the Landing cornice but it is in the enrichment of this profile that Taylor chose to make his variation. In the Principal Bedroom, B1, as in the Landing cornice, four elements are enriched, the cyma-reversa below the cyma is treated as waterleaf, the ovolo is made egg and dart, the dentil course is dentillated and the lowest cyma-reversa is given another leaf moulding. In the south east room, B7, probably intended as a boudoir or dressing room for the principal bedroom, the cornice was repeated but the mouldings were left plain except for the dentil course. In the large room on the north side of the house, B4/5, the cornice was repeated as in the Principal Bedroom, B1, except that the dentil course was left in block. The use of the Ionic cornice and the variation in its enrichment indicates a clear hierarchy in the elaboration of the rooms. The sequence, with the richest first is as follows, Landing, B8, Principal Bedroom, B1, the large room at the front of the house which was probably used as a sitting room, B4/5 , and the south east room, B7, a boudoir, dressing room or ante-room to the Principal Bedroom.

In the two bedrooms on the west side of the house, B2 and B3, an unrelated cornice was used. This cornice has a very simple profile, a shallow cavetto above a cyma-reversa, and is a repetition of the cornice used on the Terrace Floor in the Breakfast Room, T2, and the south west room, T3. The simplicity of this moulding and its lack of enrichment clearly denotes the subordinate position of these rooms in relation to the others on the Bedroom Floor. There is no evidence for the form of the cornice in the remaining bedroom, B6, but given its relative size and position in the plan, it is unlikely that much significance was attached to the room and its decoration. It was probably given a repetition of the cornice in the west rooms, B2 and B3, or a repetition of the cornice in the Terrace Floor room, T5 (if it is original).

The hierarchical approach to the decoration of the rooms is continued in the choice of fireplace design. Unfortunately, the fireplace, FP8, in the Principal Bedroom, B1, was replaced in the later nineteenth century. The second room in the hierarchy, the north

room B4/5, had two fireplaces, FP11 and FP12. The eastern fireplace, FP12, with its coin moulded term like shafts, strigulated frieze and marble slips, is similar to that in the entrance hall at 4 Grafton Street, by Taylor for Lord Villiers in 1775. It is also paralleled by that in the first floor octagonal room at Asgill House and again in the Library at 12 Downing Street.[256] These parallels suggest that the Danson fireplace has lost its original mantelpiece. The western fireplace, FP11, was much plainer. The next in the hierarchy, fireplace FP14, in the south east room B7, has marble slips, and a timber surround enriched with strigulation, egg and dart and paterae and leaf moulded cyma supporting the mantelpiece. The fireplaces in the two west rooms, in line with the treatment of the cornices, signify virtually equal status attached to the two rooms, although the southern room is larger. Both fireplaces have marble slips and lugged timber surrounds enriched with leaf, FP9, and egg and dart, FP10. Besides the difference in the enrichment, the southern fireplace is also given a small plaque. The fireplace FP10 in the north west room B3 appears to be identical to that in room B6, except in the choice of marble. In room B6, a plainer marble was used. The fireplace, FP10, in the northern bedroom, B3, appears to be identical except for a plainer choice of marble. It is interesting to note that the last three fireplaces, although similar to the two in the west wing on the Terrace Floor, are in fact slightly more elaborate.

The surrounds to the doors were also modulated to reflect the status attached to the individual rooms. In Rooms B1, B7, B8 and probably B4/5, the architrave consists of a cyma-reversa with a fillet, a plain frieze and a bead mould. The design is similar to that used for the internal window surrounds, although the mouldings are larger. For the lesser rooms, B2, B3 and B6 a much narrower moulding was employed. This consists simply of an ovolo with a fillet and a bead without a frieze.

THE WINDOW JOINERY The sash frames and boxes from the windows on either side of the west canted bay (W58, 59) appear to have survived in their original form although the surrounding masonry was demolished *c* 1988. Their construction generally matched that on the lower floors but it included an unusual design feature. The pulley stiles were continued within the thickness of the wall in a void above the sash boxes. The upper rail of the upper sashes was made deeper on the floors below. This was probably due to the intended omission of the soffit lining.

The design of the window would have allowed both sashes to pass upwards, leaving the window entirely open.[257] This feature, however, does not appear to have been put into operation, since the holes cut for the insertion of pulley wheels show no traces of spikes or fixings either for pulley wheels or pulley wheel plates. The soffit lining is mortised to the inner lining but not the outer, presumably because it is an alteration.

The north window in the east wall on the Bedroom Floor however appears to have been built without this feature, suggesting that this unusual treatment of the sash window was abandoned before completion of the masonry shell.

All the other windows on this floor, with the exception of the windows in the later raised side bays and the blind windows, (i.e. W9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27) were originally of the same pattern. They have, however, all had their sills replaced (see below). The inner beads were probably refitted at this time (see raised bay windows below).

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256 Garnier R, *Downing Square in the 1770s and 1780s,* Georgian Group Journal, Vol. IX, 1999, p. 148

257 James Paine may have used the same idea at Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, 1770-6, pers Comm. Charles Brooking

There are the traces of `H' shaped hinges for shutters both in the paint on the inner linings and as nail holes. The shutter boxes, which would have been square and fitted within the brick reveals, were removed when the brick reveals were cut back and replaced with splayed ovolo moulded panelled linings.

The two windows either side of the north wing (W61, 65) were blind. Externally, they simulate the other windows on the Bedroom Floor. The sash frames are set in plastered brick recesses. Their timber construction is virtually identical to that of the blind windows on the Terrace Floor. The windows were glazed with crown glass.

The fitting out of the Attic Floor, 1765-6

The fitting out of the Attic Floor appears to have been carried out at the same time as the rest of the house.

THE JOINERY

Not much of the original joinery survives, although there was little in the original scheme.

THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE INTERIORS TO TAYLOR There are two compelling arguments for attributing most of the interiors at Danson to Taylor. The first is based on the internal physical evidence of the building. The second rests on a comparative analysis of the mouldings used with other known works by Taylor or with works that can be attributed to him with a high degree of certainty.

A careful analysis of the interior shows that the wood and plaster decorations are all part of the same build, as will be discussed below. What is perhaps just as relevant is the common stylistic trait of the moulded and carved details on the principal floor. Thus, the calyx and acanthus moulding which features in the pair of entablatures over the main and stair entrance in the entrance hall are repeated in the cyma band of the dining room cornice. This in turn appears in a variant form in the cyma moulding of the capital to the pilasters framing the round-arched recesses in the same room. Another variant of this moulding recurs in the frieze above the library doorcases. A calyx and 'Chinese' fret form, a kind of grotesque ornament, is used in the hall skirting boards as well as in the saloon skirting boards and in the cyma band which tops the palmette frieze in the same room's cornice.

Another characteristic moulding that crops up throughout the principal interiors, though again in somewhat different forms, is the floral ogee. This is used to great effect in the architrave of the dining room doorcases, where it is cut on the cyma. It is varied slightly, in plaster, for the mouldings to the narrow recessed panels that form the setting for the painted decoration in the same room. It is found again, once more in wood, below the fretted dentil cornice on the library doorcases and as the top moulding band in the saloon cornice, this time in plaster. The floral ogee is also a prominent device in the carved saloon doorcases, where it is used as the top band to the cornice and above the architrave. A distant cousin of this device ornaments the top band of the dado rail in the library.

Variations of fret and flower are used in the entrance hall -- architraves to subsidiary principal doorcases, where the details vary -- and in the enriched angle *tori* framing the window recesses in the library and in the top band of the skirting boards in the same room. The torus moulding which forms the bottom band in the saloon cornice (and is carved wood not plaster) is based on this form. The flowers found in the latter are similar in character to the elongated flower that is also found in the calyx and Chinese fret form noted above in the hall skirting board. Permutations of the calyx and fretted motifs

are used for the enrichments to the dining room shutter panels and dado rails. The flower and scroll motif used for the angle *tori* framing the windows recesses in the hall are used, with some variation, in the stairwell dome.

Shells (turned upwards and showing their outer faces) ornament the boldly scaled ovolo mouldings which are a prominent feature of the entrance hall doorcases. This motif reappears, translated into plaster, in the cornice of the saloon where it is used, again on the ovolo, in a band just below the acanthus modillions. The triglyph tablets in the hall are repeated in the entablatures of the dining room doorcases.

THE 'STYLE' OF THE DANSON INTERIORS These motifs are not unique to Taylor's work by any means; however, they and their near variants are found so consistently throughout Danson, and used, moreover, on such a similar scale, that principal interiors have a consistent character or style. Nothing seems out of place or strikes a discordant note. Nor does the fabric show any phasing in execution. There is, then, no stylistic or physical evidence suggesting two designers, apart from the chimneypieces, where the fabric shows evidence of an alteration to the first and only complete decorative scheme. Proving, however, that Taylor was that primary architect is another matter.

In the meantime, a few comments on the style of the Danson interiors are in order, and the best place to begin is with those characteristic mouldings themselves. Most are variations of the calyx and fret. They are flat, linear forms, whose elegant French curves and twists capture the spirit of the Rococo of the 1750s. The fretted dentil in the library is more at home in this context than it is in the new architecture of the next decade, and so too the fretted interlace pattern which is cut into the entablature of the entrance hall's primary doorcases, an instance of Georgian *chinoisserie* not classicism. That Taylor's classicism is related to this mid-century approach to decoration (which is manifest in Harleyford and Barlaston) is well established; indeed, traces of the Rococo linger in his work years after his exterior architecture had begun to move in the direction of international Neo-classicism. This is especially true at Asgill House, Danson's near contemporary, where a shell of Augustan simplicity was relieved on the inside by sinuously curved chimney-pieces. The chimneypieces originally installed at Danson by Taylor were probably closer to those at Asgill than Chambers' replacements. The influence of an earlier decorative style is also apparent in the wonderful runs of shell and dart at Danson, a commonplace in the London building world of the 1740s and particularly favoured by Taylor, as we shall see.[258] The large six-petal flowers found in the entrance hall skirting boards (and with some variations in the library and dining room) also adhere to an earlier type.

Something of the spirit of the Danson interiors, as well as precedents for individual details, is found in the work of Abraham Swan, known primarily for books of designs published after 1745. They show the dual influence of William Kent's Palladianism and the Rococo manner practised by joiners, cabinet-makers and plasterers influenced by French models.[259] Taylor, at least at this stage of his career, showed himself more of first generation Palladian than anything else. The cut and angle of his mouldings are Kentian in feeling. In fact Taylor's use of the triumphal arch motif -- the brick carcass at Danson was built to receive such a decorative scheme -- to organise interior elevations may also trace its origins back to Kent, whose dining room screen wall at Raynham Hall (1725-32) looks forward to Taylor's mature works. However, the most tangible connection between

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258 An identical moulding, for example, is used in the chimney-piece to the so-called Georgian Parlour of the National Trust's Sutton House in Hackney, a scheme which dates to the 1740s.

259 Sir J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830* (London: Penguin Books, seventh rev. ed., 1977), p. 365.

this tradition and Boyd's Danson House is the unheated entrance hall at Danson, where the four elevations are organised around the primary elements of round-arched niche, circular recess, triglyph tablet, and pedimented aedicule. Their orderly combination has strong affinities with the designs published by Robert Morris (1703-54) in *The Architectural Remembrancer...* of 1751.[260] Sir John Summerson described Morris as the designer who bridged the gap between the early Palladians and later ones like Taylor, citing this and other publications as being particularly influential. Certainly, Morris's *Select Architecture* of 1757 would have appeared at the right time to exercise a decisive influence on Taylor.[261] As we have seen already, Morris's advice on the setting out of elevations is pertinent to the exterior elevations at Danson.

This analysis, however, still leaves a few minor points to be resolved. The most significant is raised by the pair of gilded mirrors which once adorned the round-arched recesses at either end of the dining room and appear in the watercolours executed in the early 1860s by Sarah Jane Johnston. The frames, which are topped by gryphons flanking an urn, seem later in style than the surrounding scheme. It has been suggested that the design of these mirrors is 'Chambersian' and, given Chambers' design for the chimney-piece in this room, there is, indeed, a good case for attributing these mirrors to him. However, there are near parallels for every element in the lost mirrors to be found in Taylor's Court Room for the Bank of England, begun in 1765, and therefore roughly contemporary with the completion of the Danson interiors.[262] Another feature these two very different commissions share is the use of the same low-relief plaster plaque, the one showing a woman with a scythe and generally meant to suggest summer (see below). The same can be said of the palmette frieze and the adjacent ceiling in the saloon; the former is a quintessentially neo-classical motif not found in Taylor's interiors of the early `sixties. The latter is more at home with Taylor's later style; indeed, it is a near match to one he designed for Chute in c.1768.

With the completion of the fitting out of Danson in 1766, Taylor was again providing designs for Boyd for the remodelling of 33 Upper Brook Street, executed 1767-8. The similarities and differences between the two houses are significant. At Upper Brook Street, the fireplaces are still in the French Rococo manner, very close to those in Taylor's book of designs now in the Taylorian Institute.[263] This adds weight to the argument that this type was installed at Danson before they were replaced by Chambers a few years later. The panelling scheme in the first floor front room has similarities with the Dining Room at Danson, especially in the treatment of the surrounds to the panels but the main difference lies in the treatment of the cornices. At Danson they adhere strictly to Palladio's exemplars, at Upper Brook there is more variation in the basic profile. Taylor's ability to depart from the Palladian canon is evident throughout work, his adherence to it in this context is a clear indication that Danson was intended as a recreation a Palladian villa.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DANSON INTERIORS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO TAYLOR'S OUEVRE The evidence of the fabric then suggests one designer was

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260 Plates 1, 2, and 11 are especially `Taylorian'; the latter, an elevation for a small garden seat, contains the germ of Taylor's famous riverside elevation at Asgill.

261 *Op. cit.*, p. 364.

262 This was reconstructed on the upper floor of Herbert Baker's new building (1921-37), at which time some of the details were tampered with. The original scheme is recorded in photographs held by the National Monuments Record.

263 A volume of twelve designs for rococo chimneypieces and overmantels by Robert Taylor, now in the Library of the Taylor Institution, Oxford

responsible for the bulk of the principal interiors. In order to establish that designer's identity a comparative analysis between the Danson decorations and known works by Taylor was carried out. This exercise shows a marked resemblance between works which are 'autograph' Taylor or have been convincingly attributed to him, thus, in our view, confirming his authorship for the interiors.

The sequence begins with no. 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields of 1754-5 (and its pair no. 36); the cornices to the ground- and first-floor rear rooms resemble those in the Danson dining room as well as the entablature to the principal doorcases in the entrance hall. No. 58 Artillery Lane, which dates to c1757, also offers many points of contact, but nearer parallels are the houses of 1759-61 in John Street, which Richard Garnier believes to be the work of Taylor.[264] Chimneypieces in nos. 3, 7, and 8 are enriched with variations on the calyx and fret motifs found everywhere at Danson as well as by the floral ogee. Shell and dart is used frequently in these houses as well as in nos. 31-33 (consecutive) and no. 35. So close is the match that it is likely that the same prototype moulding was simply repeated at Danson, probably even using the same carvers. Indeed, Taylor seems to have had a particular fondness for this motif as it recurs in works of the late 1760s, which are otherwise of a very different character.[265]

The houses in John Street merit closer investigation for literally every room recorded by GLC photographers in the 1970s anticipates in one way or another something at Danson.[266] The doorcase to the front ground-floor room of no. 8, for instance, is almost identical to the design of the doorcases in the Danson library. The design of a doorcase in no. 31 (that to the ground-floor rear room) has elements in common with both the library and dining room doorcases in Welling. And in all these houses there is that distant echo of the Rococo, with *chinoisserie* fretwork and interlace inserted here and there. Two rooms in Eltham Lodge, which Taylor is believed to have added to Hugh May's house c.1760, show more points of contact. The soffit to the diaphragm arch at the end of one of these rooms has a running guilloche with a flower in the centre that also appears at the top of the stair of Danson. The same motif is used in the corridor Taylor added to the Truman's Brewery site from many years later, c1775. Indeed, the running guilloche on the soffit is, like the upturned shell motif, something of a Taylor signature feature.

But the best evidence that Taylor not Chambers was responsible for the bulk of the interior decoration at Danson we have only to turn to Asgill House, its almost exact contemporary and one of Taylor's best known works. The Doric cornice found in the Library at Danson is identical to that in the octagonal room at Asgill, both of which are in turn based on the Doric entablature of the Ancient Theatre of Marcellus at Rome.[267] The Dining Room cornice at Danson, with its boldly undercut calyx and acanthus moulding, is very similar in character to the cornice found in the drawing room at Asgill. There is in both houses an undercurrent of *chinoisserie* with some of the same elements repeated. Thus, the 'Chippendale' fretwork found in the entablature of the entrance hall doorcase at Danson is repeated almost line for line in the swelling frieze over the doors in the first-floor octagon at Asgill. This same room contains runs of fret and flower work, which

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264 Garnier in conversation with author, June 1997.

265 See, for example, the wood chimney-piece in the entrance hall of no. 5 Grafton Street.

266 The photographs are in the London Region collection of English Heritage. They are filed under John Street, LB of Camden. Copies as well as the negatives are deposited at London Metropolitan Archives.

267 See discussion above

echo those found in the entrance hall at Danson. Variations on it are found elsewhere in the house close by the Thames. The reed and acanthus moulding which frames the paintings in the Dining Room at Danson are similar to the roundels in the grand first-floor bedroom at Asgill. As for the 'Chinese' scroll and flower (Danson entrance hall, skirting), this appears in the skirting boards of octagonal saloon at Asgill. The first floor landing in the latter features a round-arched, hemicircular niche, identical to the pair in the side walls of the entrance hall at Danson another Taylorian device. The triglyph tablet in the same room adorns the riverfront at Asgill but this is a rather more generic feature than the others in this list. But what is perhaps most striking is the presence of the Taylor's shell and dart motif in not one but two rooms at Asgill, in the cornice to the north drawing room and the door surround to the south room.

The stylistic affinities that run through Asgill and Danson gradually recede from Taylor's work as the decade progresses and his manner begins to change, shedding that Rococo sensibility which is so striking in his work of c1760.

The construction of the service wings, probably 1765-6

A DESCRIPTION OF TAYLOR'S WINGS Two independent wings, each square in plan and attached to the house by a curving quadrant wall pierced by pedimented doorways were added to the house in time to appear in Barrett's painting of 1766. Hasted commented that the wings were added to provide increased family accommodation.[268]

The aquatint view of Danson made by Thomas Malton the Younger and published by Taylor's son Michael Angelo in 1792 is accompanied by a plan, which identifies the west block as stables. Stalls for twelve horses are shown in the north and south range (a considerable number for a house of relatively modest size) and three coaches in the bays of the east wing. Stairs in three of the corner towers indicate a first floor, presumably leading to a hayloft and domestic quarters for the stable hands. The south east tower shows a floor raised three steps above the stable yard, though for what purpose is not clear. The east block is labelled 'Kitchen Offices' in the Malton plan. Again, staircases, two in the south towers, indicate a first floor. A circular form in one of the south towers suggests a bakehouse; in the west range, another indicates the presence of a well and a water butt.

The Barrett view of 1766, which in other respects is highly reliable, indicates that the stables and offices blocks had wood sash windows painted white of a three over three pattern, identical to those in the main house. The round-headed Diocletian windows were divided into three lights by large mullions. Each tower has a pyramidal cap topped by a stack, though probably some of these were ornamental, as the accompanying plan does not indicate fireplaces.

Nothing above ground survives from the original service wings, although the Malton plan is sufficiently detailed to plot their original location on a 1:1250 scale Ordnance Survey sheet. Trial excavation in the present gardens to east and west of the house has revealed robbed out remains of the quadrant wall connecting the wings to the house and greatly disturbed rubble on the site of the south wall of the Kitchen block. The excavation results show that the scale of the wings shown on the Malton plan is not consistent with that of the house. The two wings can be accurately reconstructed using the dimensions of the reconstructed architectural features in the present Stable block.

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[268] See section above on Taylor or Chambers

The facing stones found on these original wings were reused in the present stable block, and the four rusticated arches that form so conspicuous a feature in its design were taken stone for stone from the original. The cornice from the original towers was also recycled, as was the plain band course and the square windows without architraves. The building stone has been identified as `fairly coarse textured calcite ($CaCO_3$) Oolitic Limestone (oosparite unsorted grainstone) of Very Pale Orange (10YR 8/2) tint...'[269] The nearest parallel suggested was a Bath stone from the Combe Down Oolite stratum. A similar stone was used on the house in the modillions of the main cornice and in the window surrounds. To date none of the other decorative features shown in the Barrett or Malton views have been found.

THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE This is discussed in detail above. Here follows a summary.

The Map of Kent by Andrews, Dury and Herbert, published Jan 1st, 1769 shows the house with extensions, although the small scale of this map means that it is not the most reliable source.

The oil painting by Barrett shows the house and completed service wings viewed from the north with John Boyd and his family in the foreground. This can be dated to 1766. The painting does not show any clearly defined tracks, which suggests that the projected layout shown in the *Plan for the proposed alterations...* was not fully executed.

The wings, however, were clearly built by 1787 since they are shown in a view by Corbould of the house and lake, published as Plate 32 in Hasted's Seats of that year.

The wings are detailed in the plan and engraved view by Thomas Malton published in 1790. Comparison between the drawing and the house as it survives proves the use of perspective and the representation of architectural detail is generally very precise and accurate, although there are one or two minor anomalies. In the plan, the functions of the two wings are identified as *'Kitchen Offices'* and *'Stable Offices.'* Both plan and view are annotated *'Designed by Sir Robt. Taylor.'* Malton's views were part of a series comprising thirty-two plates illustrating Taylor's works, which were published posthumously by his son, Michael Angelo Taylor.

From the plan, the stables in the west block provided stalls for twelve horses, in the north and south wings and three coaches in the bays in the east wing. Stairs in three of the corner towers indicate that these were of two stories, although the south east tower is shown without a staircase and the ground floor is shown raised by three steps. The east block was labelled *'Kitchen Offices.'* Staircases in the southern wing indicate that the southern two towers were of two stories. Various circular features suggest a bakehouse in the south tower, a possible well in the west wing, a copper in the south wing and a water butt in the north.

The windows shown in the views of the service wings appear to have had white painted wooden frames. The square windows appear to have been sashes, glazed three over three to match those in the house. The round-headed windows are treated as Diocletian windows, divided into three by two larger mullions. The towers are capped with chimneystacks. Some of these were decorative since the plan does not show a

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[269] Identification made in reports and letters by R W Sanderson, including, *Identification of stone samples from Danson Park, Bexley*, 4th June 1994 for Purcell Miller Tritton, a letter to J Coath, Purcell Miller Tritton, 6th February 1995, and *Petrographical analysis and identification of decayed stones from Danson House, Bexley Kent*, 27th March 1995. For notes on the Wheatley and Headington quarries see WJ Arkell, *Oxford Stone* 1947.

corresponding fireplace. Where they were functional, the flues for must have been cantilevered through the roof voids. The Barrett view shows both blocks with dormer windows but these are omitted from the Malton view. It is difficult to interpret the detailing of the dormers in the Barrett view. It is not clear whether the windows are set in a parapet wall above eaves level or the windows were set back from the lower wall face and contained within the pitch of the roof. This last interpretation may explain their omission from the Malton view.

In his *History and Topography of the County of Kent*, 2nd edition 1797, Hasted noted that while the house was being built 'several alterations were found necessary to be made to it, for the accommodation of a family, and two wings were added to it for that purpose.' Presumably, some of the kitchen functions were originally included in the design of the house.

The relevant sheet of the *Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings of the London Area*, surveyed in 1799 shows the service wings, albeit schematically, still attached to the house. The main access to the house is from the east side of the park. This corresponds with the `*Plan for the proposed alterations....*' although the track to the west side of the park does not appear to have been executed. Two avenues of trees are shown to the west and north of the house.

The historical evidence, principally the Barrett view, which appears to be the earliest view of the house, therefore suggests that the wings are contemporary with the house

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE The disturbed footings for the wall connecting the eastern block containing the kitchen offices were uncovered in a pipe trench dug in October 1996 but nothing above ground survives from the original service wings. There are no surviving scars where the walls linking the service wings abutted the main building. Further excavation in 2000 revealed foundation cuts, filled with disturbed rubble and very few fragments of brick still *in-situ*.

THE FABRIC EVIDENCE CONTAINED WITHIN THE PRESENT STABLE BLOCK The present stable block, however, was clearly built from material reused from the original wings. The four rusticated arches on the stable block identical to the two arches shown in Malton's view, and the five arches shown in Barrett's painting. Malton's plan implies a further sixteen arches but no information survives about their appearance. The reused masonry in the stable block also includes ashlar, the cornice from the corner towers, band course and the plain, square windows without architraves. There are also plain arches, which may have come from inside the original courtyards.

The building stone has been identified as a 'fairly coarse textured calcite ($CaCO_3$) Oolitic Limestone (oosparite unsorted grainstone) of Very Pale Orange (10YR 8/2) tint...' by Robin Sanderson.[270] The nearest known parallel suggested was a Bath stone from the Combe Down Oolite stratum. A similar stone was used on the house for the modillions of the main cornice and for the window surrounds. It possibly comes from the Taynton area near Burford in Gloucestershire.

To date, no fragments from the rusticated arches with pediments and vermiculated columns originally set in the quadrant walls have been found. However, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs of the so-called 'Winter Garden' suggest that these rusticated columns were used to form this small glazed temple, which was new completed in 1805, when the property was sold to John Johnston (see below). The

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[270] see PMT feasibility report 1994 and *subsequent* report by R Sanderson of 27 March 1995

inventory of 1805 also refers to a quantity of stone suitable for building, implying that a considerable amount of the ashlar masonry facing of the original stables survived on site.

Three timbers reused in the first floor of the present stable block appear to be reused from the stalls in Taylor's stable block. They appear to be the posts from the ends of the divisions between the stalls. They were moulded with a sunken convex moulding presumably on the exposed face above the stalls. The posts were painted mid-brown, the sunken moulding was picked out in black. Other reused timbers were recognisable as floor beams.

The `Chapel House', Blackfen Road

The earliest ornamental building in Boyd's new park was the so-called Chapel House, which survives largely intact, but roughcast, on the north side of the old Rochester Way (now the A2), towards the Danson Road side of the park.[271] It is recorded in a watercolour view dated 1768. It is the work of CE Thorpe, a local resident and noted Kentish antiquary.[272] The fabric of the building may well be earlier, for a cottage very close to this site is shown on the 1684 estate plan.[273] Thorpe's view does not do justice to the quality of the Gothic tracery, which is quite sophisticated for its date. It may well have been designed by the architect of the house, Taylor, who designed two Gothic spires in the late 1770s.[274] In the 1780s, he provided designs for a new entrance in the Gothic style for the Bishop's Palace at Salisbury.[275] It seems unlikely that William Chambers, who was active at Danson from 1770 through 1773, would have tried his hand at this sort of building, since, as John Harris has pointed out, 'Chambers had little respect for this type of 'associational style'.[276]

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271 The address is no. 497 Blackfen Road

272 British Library, Add. Ms. 32,353, fo. 247.

273 This point is argued at length in a peculiar publication by G. Groombridge, *Chapel House Daunsington* (Privately printed, 1950?), pp. 4-5, 7, and 9. An apocryphal tale, still repeated locally, claims the house was built as a memorial to a friend of Boyd's who died abroad.

274 St. Peter's Church Wallingford, Berks., 1776-7, and Long Ditton Church, Surrey, 1778. See M. Binney, *Sir Robert Taylor. From Rococo to Neo-Classicism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984), gazetteer and figs. 21 and 22.

275 Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England, *Salisbury. Houses of the Close* (London: HMSO, 1993), pp. 33, 70 and 239.

276 *Sir William Chambers. Knight of the Polar Star* (London: Zwemmer, 1968), pp. 237-8, also pp. 210-1.

7.

William Chambers at Danson, 1770-1773

Correspondence between Boyd and Chambers

Chambers and Boyd were in correspondence over works at Danson in 1770 and again in 1773. A letter to the architect written from Danson on 11 June 1770 refers to designs for a wooden bridge, which would correspond to that eventually built as well as a temple.[277] Three years later the correspondence closes on a friendly note with Chambers vaguely agreeing to a day with his family at Danson, suggesting that he might have befriended Boyd or, as seems more likely, that Boyd was more eager to cultivate Chambers§ acquaintance than Chambers was Boyd's.

That Chambers designed the marble chimneypieces in the principal interiors is beyond question (each is discussed in the sections below devoted to the principal interiors). Harris published the Chambers' drawing for the Dining Room chimneypiece in his monograph. Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, this is labelled `Eating Room' and `to draw the Vase for Mr. Boyd'.[278] The drawing is more or less identical to what was executed, the primary difference being the circular plaque, possibly depicting a Maenad (which would be consistent with the iconography of this room) in place of the rectangular plaque eventually carved (see below for subject). The saloon chimneypiece with its beautifully wrought pair of therms is identical to Chambers' chimneypiece in the State Drawing Room in Marlborough House, London.[279] The Library chimneypiece is plainer than these. A Chambers' drawing matching it is also among the large group of Chambers' chimneypiece drawings in the Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.[280] The original fireplaces on the principal floors were reduced in size to accept the Chambers pieces, which in all likelihood replaced plainer, narrow chimneypieces designed by Taylor. (See the following discussion on the fabric of the Saloon).

Outside the house, we can be sure that Chambers was responsible for the scroll pediment atop the entablature to the principal entrance. It is identical to a motif found in the vaulted entrance of the Strand block of Chambers' Somerset House, and it appears in an unidentified villa design of 1765.[281] This pediment was added to the completed building in a different stone, and the shelter coat of lime wash applied to the ashlaring runs behind it, suggesting that it was added some time after the first phase of construction. Chambers' work in the park is discussed in a separate section.

How Boyd came to use Chambers remains something of a mystery, but his decision to use him and not Taylor reveals something about Boyd's quest for status. Taylor was first and foremost the architect of successful Whig City merchants and bankers (he was himself appointed architect to the Bank of England from about 1764), talented but not a

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277 Royal Academy Mss., CHA/1/19.

278 MMA 49.56.19. and reproduced in Harris J, *Sir William Chambers*, 1970, pl 184

279 Columbia University in the City of New York, Avery Architectural Library, IC/2 9. Reproduced in Harris J, *Sir William Chambers*, 1970, pl. 186.

280 Avery IC/2 5

281 Casino in the style of Peruzzi, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3416, exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1765, and illustrated as plate 23 in Harris and Snodin, p. 199.

tastemaker on the order of a Chambers or, for that matter, an Adam. By choosing Taylor Boyd was playing it safe, using someone whose reputation was firmly established in the circles he and his father knew well. Chambers' designs and Chambers' clientele were both more sophisticated and more international. Since 1757, the year in which he was commissioned to design the grounds at Kew for the Dowager Princess, Chambers' name had carried with it regal associations, a connection underscored by increasingly numerous commissions for the aristocracy. And then there was the matter of Chambers' ties to the Continent, deeper and more long-standing than Taylor's who had spent perhaps a year (1743-44) in Italy, mostly in Rome, as an aspiring sculptor. Chambers spent the 1740s seeing the most remote parts of the world, travelling to India and China as well as northern Europe. On deciding to pursue architecture, he spent a period at J.F. Blondel's Ecoles des Arts in Paris. This led to an extended period of residence in Rome where he got to know the young French designers who would play such an important role in defining the first phase of international Neo-classicism, Le Geay and Le Lorrain primarily. There can be no doubt that Chambers was fashionable and glamorous in a way Taylor simply could not have been.

This fits well with what is known of Boyd's attempt to raise his cultural profile in the 1760s and 1770s. There had been a brief visit to the Continent after leaving Christ Church in Oxford, but then nothing but business in Austin Friars and the Court of the East India Company until 1772. Then, at the age of 56, Boyd made a more serious commitment to enhance his social standing and cultural *nous*. He travelled to Spain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, purchasing art along the way. A few years later came a more extended tour, this time for the whole family, to celebrate the achievement of a baronetcy in 1775. Over the next eighteen months, the Boyds took the Grand Tour, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and southern Germany, Russia, Italy, and the Low Countries. They made contact with at least two of the great names one associates with Georgian cultural tourists: in Rome, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the great artist and dealer from whom Boyd bought the so-called Danson Vase now in the collection of the British Museum and outside Naples he stopped with Sir William Hamilton.[282] In the meantime, he had swapped his father's modest townhouse in Great George Street -- this he gave to his son-in-law and business partner John Trevanion -- for a grand establishment in the Duke of Grafton's exclusive Mayfair development, Grafton Street, itself constructed by Robert Taylor.[283]

The addition of a scrolled block pediment to the main entrance

The scrolls and urn were clearly added as an afterthought to the main door. They are executed in a different type of stone, a dense hard white limestone possibly Portland. The individual stones were not keyed into the surrounding stonework, they were simply held in place with iron cramps set and lime mortar. The top of the original entablature and the ashlar wall face bore some traces of weathering. They also retained some traces of what appeared to be a lime-based stone coloured shelter coat.

The scrolled pediment does not appear in the painting by Barrett, which probably dates from 1766, but it is shown in the view of the house by Malton, published in 1790.

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282 Hancock, 1990, p 350, n.28

283 It is entirely possible that Chambers had a hand in decorating these interiors as there are drawings by him in the Soane Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum's Prints and Drawings Department which are inscribed with Boyd's name but which do not relate to any decorative feature in Danson. Either they are preliminary studies or entirely different designs.

The scrolled block pediment draped with swags above the main entrance door is closely paralleled in Chambers' work at Somerset House in the vestibule which dates from the mid 1776-8[284] but appears as early as 1765 in a design for a casino.[285] Block pediments proliferate in Chambers' work but appear to be absent from Taylor's.

The Dining Room chimneypiece

The Dining Room chimneypiece designed by William Chambers was installed as an alteration to a completed scheme. This is evident from the reduction in the size of the hearth opening accompanying its installation and similarities with the installation of the Saloon chimneypiece. The reduction in the size of the opening was achieved by the insertion of bricks set in lime mortar on both sides and under the arched lintel of the original opening. The marble was secured with fixing nails and lime mortar. There were no signs of original wall fabric fixing boards around the fireplace.

The marble chimneypiece that Chambers provided for the east wall, probably in c.1770, is constructed from motifs that refer to the classical allegories of Pavillon's paintings.[286] The uprights feature the Bacchic thyrsus pending from the mouth of a lion head; it is wreathed by palms. Lions or leopards are often depicting pulling Bacchus's triumphal chariot. In the block above is the lyre, Apollo's instrument, while the lintel is ornamented by swags of Bacchic vines. The ribbon that binds the reeds framing the mouth of the fireplace are a reference to those which tied the tresses of the Maenads, the frenzied female followers of Bacchus. Even the urn shown in the drawing for this chimneypiece[287] relates to the room's programme, as it refers to offerings burnt as part of the ritual sacrifice. The shell motif beneath this vase suggests the presence of Venus or love, a restatement of Bacchus and Ceres.

The principal difference between Chambers' initial design for this chimneypiece and the final work as executed is the central tablet. The drawing in New York shows what appears to be head of a Maenad set in a circular surround. In the course of execution, a rectangular tablet was inserted which was based directly on a figure in the frieze of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates and as published by James 'Athenian' Stuart in his *Antiquities of Athens*, published in 1762.[288] This shows Dionysus (the Greek Bacchus) reclining on drapery and holding a wine bowl. He is stroking the head of lion. The tablet executed for Boyd is identical to this design but has in addition an aged oak and a goat's hide. The former is an attribute of Zeus, whose status as protector of visitors is probably being invoked (and therefore relates to the oak leaf swags on the exterior of the main entrance). The Jovian lightning bolt featured in the *trompe l'oeil* coffering above the central stair. As for goats, they are found in Bacchic triumphs.

Stuart himself reproduced the Bacchic frieze from the Lysicrates Monument in his chimneypiece of 1764-6 for the first-floor drawing room of no. 15 St. James's Square,[289]

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284 Colvin H, *History of the King's Works*, 1982, Vol IV p372

285 Snodin M, *Sir William Chambers*, 1996, p. 173, plate 79, V&A cat. No 745

286 Again, many thanks are due to John Hardy who suggested an interpretation for this piece.

287 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Collection of Northern European Drawings, MMA 46.56.24. The drawing is inscribed in ink 'Eating Room' and in pencil(?) 'the vase for Mr Boyd'

288 See vol. 1, chapter IV, plate iii.

289 D. Watkin, *James `Athenian' Stuart* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), plate 53. This is, according to the accompanying caption, similar to Stuart's chimneypiece for the Ballroom at Spencer House now in the Picture Gallery at Althorp in Northamptonshire.

but more significant is Chambers' use of Stuart's plate as the source for the tablet in the drawing room chimneypiece at Peper Harrow House, a design which dates to c1765. In this case the identity of the carver is known, Chambers' favourite, Joseph Wilton, who was paid £118 for a chimneypiece 'feneer'd with verd. Antique and inlaid fluting of do. the Tablet of Bacchus and Tyger... [*sic*]'.[290] This link with Wilton as well as the high quality of the carving suggests that Wilton carved the dining room chimneypiece at Danson.

The Saloon chimneypiece

The marble chimneypiece, as fitted, required a reduction in the size of the hearth opening. This was achieved by the insertion of bricks set in lime mortar on both sides and under the arched lintel of the original opening. The marble was secured with fixing nails and lime mortar. There were no signs of original wall fabric fixing boards around the fireplace.

The chimneypiece is another Chambers *tour de force*. The quality of the carving is also outstanding and suggests Wilton might also have executed it. The design is identical to one Chambers provided for the saloon at Marlborough House in London, which is known through a drawing in the Avery Library.[291] There is some question as to which was first, as Harris dates Chambers' work at Marlborough House to 1771-74 but, since Chambers was involved at Danson as early as 1770, it may well be that the Danson chimneypiece predates that for the third Duke of Marlborough.[292]

The Danson chimneypiece features two beautifully carved therms. The lintel is adorned with an rectangular tablet depicting the Marriage of Cupid and Pysche as shown on the Marlborough Gem which was published by Bernard de Montfaucon in *Antiquite Expliquee* of 1719. (The English translation of this made by the Rev. David Humphrey appeared two years later.) The Marlborough Gem was one of the most celebrated works of its kind. Chambers was certainly not the only architect to use it. Taylor used it at The Oaks, Carshalton for General John Burgoyne, c 1770.[293]

The gem is made of sardonyx, that is onyx in which white layers alternate with those of sard (a yellow to orange-red cornelian). The Earl of Arundel first brought it to England, Inigo Jones's famous patron whose illustrious art collection was one of the finest private hordes ever assembled in Europe. In acquiring it Howard had had to beat off no less a patron of the arts than Louis XIV, who is reputed to have offered the astonishing sum of £4,000. After Montfaucon, it was illustrated in Philipp von Stosch's *Gemmae Antiquae Caelate* (Amsterdam, 1724) and by the Richardsons in their *Traite de la Peinture et de la Sculpture* (Amsterdam, 1728).[294]

The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche is taken from the late Antique writer Lucius Apuleius (Books 3 and 4 of *The Golden Ass*). Psyche's beauty aroused the envy even of Venus who sent her minion Cupid to arouse Psyche's love in some worthless person. Cupid,

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290 C. Hussey, *English Country Houses, Mid Georgian, 1760-1800* (London: Country Life, 1988 rep. of 1955 edition, 3 vols.), vol.2, pp. 113-4.

291 Avery IC/29

292 Harris, p. 224.

293 Binney M, *Sir Robert Taylor*, 1984, pp 37,96

294 F. Haskell and N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 49 and note.

though, was overcome by her beauty and promptly fell in love with Psyche. Their liaisons took place at his magic palace, always under cover of darkest night. The god made his mortal lover promise never to look on him, hence, she had no idea of his true identity. One night, after lovemaking, overcome by curiosity, she lit an oil lamp and realised his identity. A drop of hot oil woke him and, realising that his lover had broken her promise, he left her. His magic palace disappeared. Desperate, she wandered the earth in search of Cupid, performing increasingly difficult tasks set for her by Venus. Jupiter was so moved by her pleading that he intervened. Lifting her up to heaven, he reunited her with her beloved Cupid and they were married at a festive banquet attended by the gods. The subject was popular among Renaissance Humanists as an allegory of the Soul's search for union with desire, the outcome of which is pleasure and children. The scene is commonly found in Renaissance palaces. In the Marlborough Gem, the antique artist adopted a common strategy of depicting the protagonists not as adults but as sporting cupids. Montfaucon identified the several figures. Cupid himself is shown with a covered head, a reference to the disguising of his identity. Psyche is completely veiled, a reference perhaps to her state of ignorance. She has butterfly wings, as appropriate to role as symbol of the soul. They walk side by side, chained together, towards the marriage couch. An attendant Cupid carries the sacramental torch required to pay homage to Hymen. A cupid behind holds a tray of fruits, a sign of hoped-for fertility in marriage.[295]

Thus, the theme of courtship and marriage explored in the decoration of the dining room is here restated.

The Library chimneypiece

Like the chimneypieces in the Dining Room and Saloon, the Library chimneypiece is an alteration....

The marble chimneypiece in this room can be securely attributed to Chambers because of a drawing in the Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University, New York. Avery no. IC/2 5 is identical to it but is inscribed `for General Burton'. Harris identifies Burton with the Henry (Burton) Conyngham, baronet 1753, Viscount Conyngham, 1756, and made Earl in 1781[296] but Ivan Hall has suggested that Chambers' General Burton was in fact the owner of Haworth Hall outside Hull, which contains a chimneypiece which is identical to the one in Danson library.[297] It is unlikely to predate 1762/3 when General Burton returned a hero from the French and Indian War in Canada. Which came first, Haworth or Danson, has yet to be established, though the design is a clear development of one published in the architect's *Treatise on Civil Architecture,* 1759.[298] Despite being the least ambitious of Chambers' chimneypieces, the quality of the carving is superb, on a par with the other two.

As in the dining room, the chimneypiece refers to the iconography of the rest of the room, which is, as we have seen, related to marriage and fecundity. The lintel features a sheathed sacrificial knife and a torch that is inverted in order to light the Hymenic altar. Likewise, the presence of fish scales on the sheath may be a distant reference to the birth

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295 Montfaucon, vol. 1, pl. CXXI, no. 1, and p. 192.

296 Harris J *Sir William Chambers*, 1970, p 246-7

297 *Ex info.* Ivan Hall.

298 See I. and E. Hall, *Georgian Hull* (York: William Sessions, 1978-9), pp. 77-8, fig. 100 and Chambers W, *Treatise*...1759, Designs for Chimney Pieces, fig.4

of Venus. The lion's paw feet on the beautifully curving volute uprights allude to Bacchus.

It is possible that the watercolour by Sarah Johnson of 1860 shows one of the Chambers picture frames above the door from the Saloon into the Library. It is further possible that the painting is the Barrett *Portrait of Danson*. Its dimensions fit the space above the door.

Changes to Richmond's design and further works in the Park

Unfortunately, we do not know how much of Richmond's plan, if any, was carried out, or even whether Spence's remarks were taken on board. The more outlandish feature of Richmond's proposal, the division of the water into three reaches by means of banks formed into French curves, was certainly abandoned, for the 1799 Ordnance Survey sheet shows a continuous sheet of water. Nor is it possible to say, given the sheer lack of primary documentation relating to the building of the house and laying out of the gardens, exactly where and when works proceeded. Ruth Hutcherson has suggested that the responsibility for the final design actually fell to a third figure, Fean Garwood, who is described as a 'Gardener to Sir John Boyd' on his gravestone in Bexley churchyard, the only one of the staff at Danson to be so commemorated. Apparently, Garwood was not a local man, having come from several estates improved by 'Capability' Brown.'[299] Until new evidence is discovered, the design of Boyd's park cannot be firmly attributed.

Progress with landscaping of the park

Fortunately, enough evidence survives to give some idea when most of the park was laid out and ornamented. The view of the old lake and house at the foot of the hill by Elias Martin from 1768 shows that work had not begun on the new landscaping scheme. The Andrews, Dury, and Herbert *Map of Kent* published in January 1769, also shows the old house at the foot of the hill intact, along with its sequence of lake and ponds stretching out to the west. By June 1770 excavations for the new water were underway, for Boyd wrote to William Chambers reporting that: 'the ground is dug out ready for the Bridge I propose making to terminate my water and that I wish to begin it immediately.'[300] The work was completed by 1776, as we know from a description of the estate published in that year which mentions `large piece of water' and praises the park as a fine work of Brown.[301]

The Bridge and Temple by William Chambers

Boyd asked Chambers to design some ornaments for the large water that was being formed about this time. In June 1770, he asked for a bridge to be placed at the west end of the lake; the foundations were already prepared. As for the bridge

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299 Hutcherson, p. 21. Dorothy Stroud first attributed the landscaping of the park at Danson to Brown in *Capability Brown*, 1950 (Country Life Ltd., London), revised 1957, but in neither edition did she cite any specific evidence. Later, in *Capability Brown*, 1975, (Faber and Faber, Bristol) she was more reticent, saying the delineation of the plan (attributed here to Nathaniel Richmond) was not characteristic while commenting 'The management of the rather flat terrain and fine lake has, however, Brown-ish qualities.' None of these texts make any mention of Fean Garwood.

300 Royal Academy, Chambers Correspondence, CHA/1/19, dated Danson, 11 June 1770.

301 *The Kentish Traveller's Companion* (Rochester and Canterbury, 1776), p. 20.

> I would have it of one arch 30 feet wide. The piers on Butments of Brick and the bridge and rail of wood, not to rise too high, the Passage over 9 feet in the Clear and to bear a Carriage.[302]

The next day Chambers answered.

> Excessive hurry ... has prevented my doing your designs. I am just going to Hertfordshire for some days and on my return will immediately do your temple. In the mean time I have sent you a design of a Bridge whc has scarcely any rise at all. It is a thought of palladios and provided you have it framed by a skilful carpenter will do very well and look very handsome.[303]

As Harris observes, Chambers is referring to the third book of *I Quattro Libri* ...Chapter VIII plates 4-6 where Palladio draws designs for four timber bridges in which the parapets are made as lattice girders created by patterns of intersecting diagonal struts. Chambers had designed one previously for Kew. A month later the design was ready.[304] It appears in the background of Corbould's picturesque view of house and lake, first published in Hasted's *Seats* ... of 1787.[305] This is the only visual record of the bridge, which no longer survives.

Chambers' other contribution to the park was a small temple, which until recently stood on the north side of the lake towards the eastern boundary of the park. There is reference to it in Boyd's letter of 11 June 1770 cited above, in which Chambers is asked for a design. It was completed in May 1773[306], when Chambers wrote, 'if the temple pleases you it will make me very happy'.[307] In 1961, this small building was moved to the grounds of The Bury, St. Paul's Walden, Hertfordshire, where James Paine designed a wing of the house c.1767.

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302 Royal Academy, Chambers Correspondence, CHA/1/19, dated Danson 11 June 1770.

303 Quoted in Harris, *Chambers*, 1970, p. 203.

304 Royal Academy, Chambers Correspondence, CHA/1/20, dated Danson 12 July 1770.

305 Another illustration of it can be found in *The Copper Plate Magazine*, vol. 1

306 British Library, Add. Mss. 41,134, fo. 25, Boyd writing at Danson to Chambers, 14 May 1773.

307 British Library, Add. Ms. 41, 133, fo. 102, 25 May 1773.

8.

The heightening of the canted side bays, c 1780

The house was originally built with single storey side bays, which were raised by 1787 when they were recorded at the higher level in the view published by Corbould. In the original design the cornice above the side bays was set at the level of the Bedroom Floor, in the revised design the main cornice was continued around the raised bays.

Structural alterations

The stone used in the facing of the upper part of the surviving eastern bay is very similar to that used for the main build. Externally, there were no visible breaks in the construction of the facing of the bay at Bedroom Floor level. The facing material looks remarkably uniform. However, with the internal plaster stripped away, differences between the main build of the house and the raised bay are very clear. The masonry of the bay above Bedroom Floor level is not keyed into the flank wall of the house and in 1995, it was possible to see daylight through the joints. The original external ashlar wall face is visible inside the raised bay.

Internally, the brickwork of the raised bay is recognisably different from that of the original build. The mortar of the original building of the house includes pebble. The mortar used in the bay above the Bedroom Floor does not include any pebble but does include flecks of light brown clay.

The original stone facing and associated brickwork of the flank walls above the ground floor bays have, in the last ten years, been cut to form large openings. The surviving masonry above the eastern bay includes the springing for an arch which spanned the opening into the ground floor bay. The two bresumers which spanned the bay at Bedroom Floor level have also been cut back to the sides of the bay and the central sections removed.

The photographs, taken in 1988, show the interior of the raised bays with the stone arch in the flank wall spanning the width of the bay *in-situ*. The original paired trussed girders, which spanned the bays, were cut and the first floor main beams were suspended from iron rods attached to new beams at main cornice level.

The crudeness of this work reveals an extraordinary lack of awareness of the building's structure surely indicates that Taylor cannot have been consulted about the changes. It is a credit to the building's design that it survived such mutilation.

The windows in the raised side bays.

When the canted side bays were heightened, the windows were made to match the existing windows on the Bedroom Floor with slight differences. They were not designed to allow the sashes to pass above the lintel, and the soffit lintel was jointed to both inner and outer linings. The top rail of the upper sash is therefore of the same depth as those on the lower floors. The sills incorporate an extra rebate in their moulding. These windows are informative about the original construction of the first phase windows. Internally, they retain their original square reveals and shutters.

The bedroom floor plan after the raising of the bays

The bays were probably raised to provide light closets for the boudoir attached to the main bedroom and the bedroom/boudoir suite to the west. In the eastern bay the single door from the boudoir would have been nearly central to the bay. When the bay was first raised, the northern bedroom was probably denied access. The door in this position shown in the 1988 photographs is presumably a subsequent alteration, probably from the later C19. The alignments of the partition walls in the western half of the building suggest that, when the western bay was first raised, there were two doors centrally placed in the east wall of the newly created room. One would have connected to the bedroom to the south, the other was probably false or gave access to the cupboard space between the bedroom and boudoir.[308]

The date of the raising of the bays

The bays are first shown at their higher level in a view of the house from the south included as Plate 52 in Hasted's Seats, published in 1787, engraved by Heath from an original drawing by Corbould. Brayley notes in *The Beauties of England and Wales*, 1808, that 'raising the superstructure' had altered the building. This surely refers to the raising of the bays. All that can be said for sure is that the bays were raised by the date of the Corbould view, 1787. Furthermore, we can rule out Taylor as the architect of this change, since it seriously compromised a primary structural element of the building. Looking at Boyd's finances and his expenditure on Danson overall, the years 1780-4 when he made his final additions to the estate seems to be the most likely period in which he would carry out such alterations to the house.

Corbould's view of the house from the south

The view of the house and park by Corbould and published in Hasted's *Seats...* 1787, is, like Barrett's view, a mixture of what could be seen with an idealised image of the landscape. The tree in the right foreground is a standard *repoussoir* device, more likely a trope of the classical landscape as it developed in the wake of Claude than a real tree. The perspective of the lake is somewhat suspect as well, with the bridge by Chambers appearing nearer in the view than it would have in fact from the vantage point taken by the artist. Other details are equally hard to square with what is recorded in later maps, particularly the 1805-06 Estate Plan, which is more detailed than the 1799 Ordnance Survey, but this may be cartographer's fault not the artist's.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1799

The Ordnance Survey map of 1799 captures the principal features of the parkland, in particular the long plantation running east and west from the sides of the house along the ridge line bisecting the north half of the park.[309] An alley of paired trees runs north to Welling High Street from the west wing of the house. The image gives an almost seventeenth-century, regal character to the three plantations converging on the house, regularising what was, to judge by the 1805-6 Estate Plan (see below) a more picturesque arrangement. The principal entrance is from the east, and two plantations along the Blackfen Road interrupt the lawn south of the lake.

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308 Similar alterations were carried out at Harleyford. At Harleyford, the plan is asymmetrical and there is only one canted side bay. However, like Danson, this bay was raised at an early date. It is shown in a painting of the house in its park setting by Zucharelli with the bay at the original level with a Diocletian window above it. Although later alterations have confused the bedroom plan, it is possible to reconstruct the floor plan both before and after the raising of the bay.

309 Taken from *Facsimile of the Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings of the London Area, 1799-1808*, London Topographical Society, no. 144, 1991. Original at 3 in. to the mile. The present illustration enlarged.

The final bill and later eighteenth-century works

The final cost of the work at Danson will probably never be known, but a few documents suggest rough estimates. First, there is the £2,500 mentioned in the 1762, a sum just large enough to pay for the completion of the carcass of the house but far, far too small to cover the cost of decorating and furnishing it. In 1780, in the midst of the long, drawn-out financial crisis, the younger John Boyd estimated that his father had spent 'not less than' £50,000 on 'his house in the country' and some £8,000 to £10,000 on his house in town. The value of other assets he gave as between £35,000 and £40,000.[310] How much of this large sum, £50,000, went on fabric proper, on structural work and fixed decorations? John Boyd II, writing in September of 1805, estimated that £25,000 had been spent 'Mansion, Stables, Gardens, Hothouses, Green House, Pleasure Grounds, and all other Buildings'.[311]

With the exception of some large purchases of land to extend the estate in the first half of the 1780s (see above), we have no evidence of Boyd spending significant amounts on the house or pleasure grounds.

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310 British Library, Add. Mss. 35,520, fos. 138 and 139. Letter dated 9 December [1780?].

311 Estimate attached to a letter from Boyd's solicitors to John Johnston, dated 24 September 1805. Private Collection.

9.

Sir John Boyd II, reshaping Danson, 1800-1806

Soon after the death of his father in 1800, Sir John Boyd II began to change things at Danson. That spring he arranged for some of his father's splendid picture collection to be sold at Phillips in London.[312] The second Sir John then made plans for a series of alterations; in a letter to John Johnston, who purchased Danson in 1805, Boyd refers to 'Drawings of intended additions to Danson'. In another, the old owner wondered whether his successor would carry on 'the work at Danson'.[313] It seems these proposed changes were cut short. How much of this scheme was carried out, and who made the designs and why may never be known. All we have is a dry recitation of fact. Boyd's account at Drummond's Bank shows him drawing large, building-sized amounts between 1802 and 1804.[314] More tangible is the evidence of the Coade Stone chimney pots, helpfully dated 1801.[315] We know that a pair of flat-roofed extensions was built to either side of the perron; these were removed, with listed building consent and on the assumption that they were late Victorian, in the 1970s. Finally, the roof seems to have been overhauled at the same time (see below). The most dramatic change of all, however, was the demolition of Taylor's wings and the construction a new block combining stables with some offices at a distance from the main house. The new building reused some of the older masonry, even repeated the form of the rusticated arches. There was, apparently, a substantial amount of the old ashlaring left over for other projects. The Sale Particulars published in 1805 refer to a 'considerable Quantity of Stone, ready Squared and of the same Quality with that which the Dwelling is Built, which may be applied, if found necessary by the Purchaser, for enlarging or altering the Mansion'.

That same letter mentions a 'Green House', also referred to in the Sale Particulars of 1805 and accompanying map but not illustrated even though the structure must then have been building. It appears in the garden west of the house in later maps and photographs. The first hard record of the thing is the Tithe Map of Bexley Parish in 1844.

The main south front of the Green House had five bays, with paired columns at the ends, making eight columns in total, each of which had two wide bands of vermiculation. They are clearly the same as the Doric or Tuscan columns pictured by Malton flanking the arches through Taylor's original quadrant walls, and so this structure was, like the present stable block, assembled from pieces of the old wings. Indeed, Malton shows a total of eight such columns in Taylor's wings, which means that the design of the Green House was determined by the number of columns reclaimed from the original wings.

The areas on either side of the house which were left bare by the demolition of the wing were eventually planted with trees, and an entirely new plantation was set out around the stable block, shielding it from the main house. A comparison between the 1799 Ordnance Survey and the aforementioned sale plan show the extent of these changes. In 1808, Edward Brayley, the noted topographical writer, reported that the younger Boyd 'pulled

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312 18 and 19 March. See Hancock, 1996, p. 443, note.

313 Letters dated 6 and 9 September 1806. Private Collection.

314 Boyd's accounts were inspected at the Drummonds Archive, Whitehall Branch. DR/427/172, 176, and 182, for the years 1802, 1803, 1804 respectively record large cash payments to himself.

315 The pots survive and are dated 1801.

down the wings of the house, and at a little distance erected a large pile of stabling and offices'.

The significance of the present stable and office block, built 1802-4

What is to be made of the younger Boyd's decision to return his father's grand establishment back to a neat neo-Palladian villa? Certainly, part of the answer lay in that perennial urge felt by all proud new owners to leave their mark on property. There were also practical considerations, such as the great advances in equine medicine introduced by the Scots veterinarian James Clark. His 1788 *Treatise on the Prevention of Diseases Incidental to Horses* set new standards in the proper care of horses and made specific recommendations for the improvement of stable design. There was also changing taste. In the first years of the new century, younger followers were developing Brown's ideas on landscape. Humphrey Repton's 1803 *Observations on the Theory of Landscape Gardening* is strongly in favour of moving stables away from great houses, far enough away to stop unpleasant sights, smells, and sounds but near enough for the architecture of the stable block itself to enhance the setting of the house. There was something to be gained by allowing guests a glimpse of this less refined side of domestic economy, a kind of picturesque *frisson*, a brusque brush with real nature.[316] And this is exactly what the new block at Danson would have done. Arriving by carriage visitors would be treated to a view of its grandly rusticated main elevation, glimpsed through a veil of trees, before arriving at the forecourt of the villa itself. For this reason, the reinstatement of the plantation shown on the 1805-6 estate plan is highly desirable.

The plan of the present block is not exceptional. Stables laid out as a half 'H' are found as commonly as quadrangles in this period. The central cupola with clock was also more or less standard, and there are many cases of domestic ranges being fitted into the same blocks as horses. The material distinguishes it from structures of similar type and date. Ashlar-faced stable buildings are unusual in south east England, yellow or red brick was the preferred material. A comparable example is the stable building at Mote Park in Maidstone, Kent. Built between 1793 and 1801 it was the work of Daniel Alexander, later architect of Maidstone prison, it is faced in Portland stone.

The architect of the present Stable Block

Although the stables make use of earlier ashlaring, the design of the block is well proportioned and elegant. It has been suggested, though never in print, that one of Taylor's pupils, possibly SP Cockerell, may have been responsible. Recent research has put forward another candidate, George Dance the Younger, for it is clear from several leases held in the Bexley Local Studies collection that he had an interest in the estate.

Dance came to be involved with Danson in connection with a mortgage bond for £39,424 which Sir John Boyd and his business partner (and son-in-law) John Trevanion took in 1794. The money came from Captain Nathaniel Smith and his wife Hester, who was sister to George. On the death of her husband, Dance was appointed a trustee of his estate along with Nathaniel Holland of Ashstead in Surrey and Christopher Norris. Which is how Dance came to be named in a lease of August 1800 transferring the obligation of the initial bond of 1794 to Sir John Boyd II?[317] Dance appears again in a lease of December 1802, this time as the vendor of one acre of land in Welling along with Hester Smith and Nathaniel Holland. The purchaser was Sir John Boyd II.[318] Finally, Hester

316 As discussed in G. Worsley, 1989, pp. 165-7.

317 Danson leases, D190/1.

318 Danson leases, D195/6.

Smith, the trustees of her late husband (including Dance) and Boyd are all named in the lease of 22 and 23 July 1806 which gave John Johnston control of Danson and its estates. In this transaction, Dance received £1,000 on behalf of the trustees, though in consideration of what exactly is not specified in the document.[319]

Dance is primarily remembered for his work in the City of London, but towards the end of his illustrious career, he did get involved with country houses. In 1800 came his first commission in this area, remodelling Dorton House for the Marquess of Camden, then, in 1803 and 1804, came East Stratton and Coleorton Hall, both entirely rebuilt according to his designs. Between 1805 and 1812, he undertook alterations to Laxton Hall in Northamptonshire; here the stable block is almost exactly contemporary with that at Danson. Finally, there was the commission to remodel Camden Place in Chislehurst, just a few miles from Bexley and Danson, for Thomas Bonnar in 1807. This work included the design of extensive stabling, since demolished.[320] Other domestic commissions have been attributed to him from about this time, but this area of the architect's work awaits fuller research. Boyd and his son, whose wealth derived from mercantile interests pursued in the City of London, might well have known Dance's work there and perhaps some of his clients. It should also be remembered that Taylor and Dance had links to one another stretching back to the late 1740s, when Dance's father was City surveyor and architect of the Mansion House, where the pediment sculpture was executed by Robert Taylor. The elder Dance and Taylor collaborated on alterations to London Bridge in 1756-60. In 1768 the City Bridge House Commission received plans drawn up jointly by Taylor and the George Dance the younger for alterations to the southern approaches of London Bridge, and in 1774 the two redrafted the London Building Acts. More work is needed to secure the attribution.

The Sale of 1805, the Sale Particulars and the related inventories

The substantial works the younger Boyd carried out in the first years of the nineteenth century suggest that he intended to make Danson his permanent home. So, the decision to sell must have been made suddenly. That a financial reverse was to blame is hinted at in the story told by the credit-debit entries in Boyd's account at Drummond's. In 1800 and 1801, and then from 1803 to 1806, he was only just managing to keep his head above water. The large injection of cash recorded in 1802 is unexplained. Did some or all of this money come from the first auction of his father's massive picture collection? That this should express itself almost at once in expensive changes to the family house suggests that the son was following the example of his father, at least in respect of Danson.[321] By this time another extravagance, the family's house in Grafton Street, had been given up, and in 1805 Boyd was writing Johnston from an address in Baker Street, a much less genteel location.[322] Hanging over the Danson Estate was that mortgage bond of 1794 noted above, the one that led to George Dance becoming involved in the estate. Of course anything could have happened, but the fact that Boyd stopped a programme of works in mid-stream, in 1805, just a few years after they had commenced, bears out this interpretation.

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319 The payment is recorded in a receipt pinned to Danson lease, D203.

320 The designs for this stabling survive in the Dance Cabinet at the Soane Museum , D2/9/8.

321 Drummond's Bank, Archives, Whitehall Branch, DR/427/160 fos. 445-9; 164, fos. 445, 466; 168, fos. 417, 447; 172, fos. 417, 445; 176, fos. 390-2; 182, fos. 390-2; 188, fos. 390-2; 194, fos. 390-2.

322 According to Bexley Local Studies, Danson Leases, D202, 22/23 July 1806.

On 27 June 1805, the auctioneers Peter Coxe, Burrell and Foster sold Danson House, the park, and associated land and buildings in one lot to John Johnston of Newman Street in the West End. The best offer was from one John Johnston (then spelled sometimes with an 'e') for £30,000, although eventually Boyd got him up to just over £36,000. Nearly £1,000 of this extra money was to cover a selection of furnishings, books, and artworks. The rest was to compensate Boyd for agricultural assets, mostly timber, for which Johnston paid more than £5,000 in July 1807.[323] Johnston took possession in July 1806 though he did not take up residence for twelve months.[324] On the lease, his address is given as Newman Street, 'Oxford Road [Street]'.[325]

The Sale particulars (see Appendix) list the freehold acreage 568.3.32. A further 56.3.36 was leasehold, bringing the grand total to 625.3.28. The accompanying plan is an important document in our understanding of the Park's evolution, and the detailed notices of the individual features provide us the only real glimpse of the property in the days of the elder Boyd.

The particulars give a good idea of the ancillary buildings. We learn, for a start, that gates enclosed the stables, had three coach houses and four separate stables providing space for sixteen horses. To the rear was a 'dog kennel for pointers with Boiling House'.

The Home Farm 'or Bailiff's Residence' to the east of the park and its associated farmyard are also described: stabling for twelve horses, a dovecote, granary, cow pens, piggery, and 'large extensive Brick-built Barn' are noted among other things. The adjoining gardens featured a 'Capital Range of Hot-houses and Grapery in three divisions', on the line of today's Bean Road. This is the document, which refers to the 'considerable Quantity of Stone, ready Squared and of the same Quality with that with which the Dwelling is Built, which may be applied, if found necessary by the Purchaser, for enlarging or altering the Mansion,' that is, the ashlaring left over from the demolition of Taylor's wings.

In the possession of one of Johnston's descendants are letters and other documents which passed between him and Boyd at this time and which shed some light on changes made to the estate since he took it over from his father.

One, which is undated, lists sculpture, some furnishings, and their locations:

> The two Jasper tables in the Hall and
> The Antique vase
> Venus Bathing ... Do. [in the Hall]
> The marble statue of Venus and Adonis in the Hall on a deal [?] pedestal
> the three bronze figures supporting [illegible] Cistern with the [illegible cistern]
> which is [illegible] valued at
>
> [The above group was valued at £302.
>
> 3 pictures in the drawing room [valued at £250.

The books in the Library were valued at £550.

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323 Bexley Local Studies, Danson Leases, D217.

324 Bexley Local Studies, Danson Leases, D209-211.

325 Bexley Local Studies, Danson Leases, D202 and 203.

A second inventory, this time dated, '1805', and in the same private collection, expands on this. Since this is of exceptional importance for the history of the interiors, a full transcription is here given.

> The Library [valued at £550]
>
> **[The Hall]** The 2 jasper tables in the Hall; A marble statue of Adonis with a stone base and deal painted pedestal...' 1 ditto of Venus [`brought from Rome' in margin]; two ditto of plaister; a medusa head in statuary marble; a marble bust of Lord Chatham; a ditto of Lord Camden; 2 Therms to support these.
>
> **In the Parlour** The 3 bronze figures supporting an oriental spar cistern on marble plinths; a fine French urn for ditto; 2 statuary marble figures in plinths; 2 Therms for ditto; 2 large glasses.
>
> **Library** 4 pier glasses; 2 statuary marble figures on plinths; a Venus crouching; 5 bookcases round the Room; the Organ at your own price if the rest are taken; 2 mahogany chests of 5 drawers with mahogany bookcases on ditto; silk curtains.
>
> **Temple** A carved marble figure of Venus bathing in a dove marble bath supported [sic]
>
> **Green House** A capital antique Vase supported by 3 figures on a marble pedestal dug from Adrians [sic] villa.
>
> **Drawing Room** Paintings: Verney [*sic*], Wilson, Barrett; a cut glass chandellier for 8 lights; a mosque [*sic*] of marble.
>
> The old stone that is on the premises [from the previous house and demolished stables and offices?] the quantity is unknown and it is therefore proposed to leave it to a mason or builder who can say how many tons it contains -- and what is the value per ton. This may be had if the other things are rejected.
> NB There are some Bronzes not mentioned in this List.
> The vases in the Green House and Temple to be taken at all events.

The 1805-6 Estate Plan

The 1805-6 estate plan [326] shows the estate after the improvements carried out by Sir John Boyd II between c1801 and 1804-5.[327] It was very likely made concerning valuations undertaken in 1805 and 1806 preliminary to the sale of the estate, and is the most detailed of the early plans. The wings formerly to either side of the house are gone, replaced by a single stable block, the present one, to the south east. The area formerly occupied by the wings is newly planted on the east side of the house, while on the west the landscape is bare, though whether a new plantation was planned for here as well is not known. Most interesting is the plantation enclosing the new stable block on three sides. An accompanying schedule provides some detail about the extent and use of the different parcels.

Changes to the house

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326 Unnumbered plan, Bexley Local Studies Collection.

327 The Coade stone chimney pots are dated 1801. Boyd's accounts at Drummond's Bank record large cash payments to himself between 1802 and 1804, see Drummonds Bank Archives, Sir John Boyd Accounts, DR/427/172, 417 and 445; 176, 390-2; 182, 390-2. Letters from Boyd dated 6 and 9 September 1806 refer to recent works and `intended additions to Danson'. Private collection, descendant of John Johnston, who purchased the house in 22 July 1806.

Compensation for the loss of the kitchen services contained within the service wings demolished in 1805 appears to have been made by the construction of a suite of rooms built at basement level within the original areas either side of the north wing and single flat roofed rooms at Terrace floor level. The additions also provided a source of rainwater for a cistern within the kitchen floor room, K5, in the north east corner of the original north wing.

The changes to the Kitchen Floor significantly altered access and circulation in the lower floors of the house. Originally, there had probably been external access to the Kitchen via the area to the north. Similarly, there may well have been a second set of steps in the external area on the west side of the house which would have given access to lower passage across the front of the house, K8. With the construction of the flat roofed additions, the areas were enclosed and the staircases removed. Surprisingly, in addition to the loss of these stairs, the service stair, ST2/6, was blocked off between the Kitchen and Terrace Floors. Access between the floors was then re-routed via a stone staircase, ST3, cut from the Terrace Floor cellar, T19, beneath the main entrance steps to the cross passage, K8, and the staircase, ST1, at the north end of the Kitchen, which probably reused the steps taken from the north west area.

The blocking of the service staircase ST2/6 was composed of red, purple red and orange bricks measuring 60-65x100x210 mm set in beige or buff coloured lime mortar flecked with lime fragments up to 3mm in size and yellow brown brickearth clay. The mortar appeared to contain no sand. The blocking appears to have been most uneconomical in terms of space since it created a void from the dogleg upward between the floors. The plain panelled door cupboard beneath the Terrace Floor flight of the stairs is probably contemporary with this blocking.

The present floor of the Kitchen must have been established at this date. This is apparent from a consideration of the relationship between the door in the north wall of the Kitchen and the termination of the relocated staircase, ST1. Had the floor level been lower, the steps would have blocked the doorway. The present groin vault above this staircase and the round arched opening into the Terrace Floor entrance hall area is rendered with a hard cement render, which probably dates from the 1860s. The evidence for the treatment of the opening through the west wall of the Kitchen associated with the installation of the staircase is now obscured, but it probably took the form of an enlargement of a blind door recess designed to mirror that on the west side of the hall. The balusters, stylistically, belong to a later date, probably the 1860s.

On the east side of the house, walls were built enclosing the former area to create the room K6/7. The eastern wall, built in line with the east wall of the kitchen, included a wide segmental arch. The north and east walls were built in line with the walls of the main house, effectively squaring off the plan. The east wall, however, was built with a large segmental arch that appears to have opened into an area east of the enclosed room. The survival of penny struck pointing the east side of the wall containing the arch indicates that it was external. The walls of this phase were built with red and yellow bricks set in a grey lime mortar containing lumps of lime.

The original east retaining wall of the dry area which lay to the east of the main area was removed and replaced by a revetment wall lying c 1m to the east. The location of this wall, ***m east of the east wall of the kitchen suggests that it was intended to provide external stair access to kitchen floor level. However, no supporting evidence for a staircase in this location was found. At the north end of this area is a small tunnel vaulted chamber.

The head of the door, D1, in the north wall leading from the Kitchen, K1, to the area was altered by the construction of a segmental brick arch of red and yellow bricks set in a brown grey lime mortar containing flint chips up to 10mm in size. An oak doorframe was set in the opening on the south side of the wall and a flush fronted door facing into the kitchen was set within it. The door opened out from the kitchen. This door is smaller and less substantial than the original doors on the Kitchen Floor.

Similarly, alteration were made on the west side of the house, at Kitchen floor level, the original area was converted to a basement room, K10, while the dry area to the west was retained.

At Terrace floor level, the construction of the eastern room, T10, required that the rusticated ashlar and offset plinth course on the north face of the kitchen and the east wall of the north wing be cut back *c* 40mm. The sash window in the north wall of the kitchen was removed and the opening was extended below the sill and a cut was made through the ashlar forming the west jamb to allow the creation of a fireplace in the expanded window opening. The flue was linked to that of the fireplace in the east wall of the Terrace floor entrance hall area, which presumably was abandoned at this date. The fireplace and flue were built in the window opening with red and yellow bricks measuring 225x60-65x95-100mm set in a pale buff coloured lime mortar containing small flecks of lime up to 10mm in size. The segmental arch above the fireplace was formed above a wrought iron strap. A small cupboard recess, 800x500mm wide and 580mm deep was incorporated into the brickwork above the fireplace. It was fitted with a single shelf and lined with a buff coloured plaster containing animal hair and flecks of lime up to 5mm in size, skimmed with a white lime plaster and painted with a pale blue lime wash. Presumably at the same time, a cut was made in the east wall of the Terrace floor entrance hall area to convert the original window to a door opening. South of this door, a vertical cut 200mm wide was made in the east face of the north wing for a lead pipe of large diameter. This presumably took water from the top of the flat roofed addition to feed the water cistern on the kitchen floor.

On the west side of the house in the corresponding quarter of the Terrace floor, in order to create the room T6, the rusticated ashlar was similarly cut back. The window joinery in the north wall of the west wing was removed and the opening expanded downwards to create a door opening. The original window in the west wall of the Terrace floor entrance hall area was removed and the masonry below the sill cut away to create a door opening. The resultant oversized opening was then partly reduced by the insertion of brickwork, which formed the south jamb of the new door. The bricks were red, purple and yellow and set in a pale buff lime mortar. A fireplace was built in the corner between the north and west wing to heat the newly created room. The flue of the fireplace linked up with the flue for the original fireplace in the west wall of the Terrace floor entrance hall.

Rainwater from the traps set in the valleys of the main roof and the roofs of the flat roof additions was ducted into a cistern in the north east corner of the kitchen floor. The water from the drainpipe on the west side of the house was ducted through a lead lined timber pipe supported by large iron staples suspended from the vaults of Room K9.

Further evidence for a major overhaul of the roof is provided by of timber boards, which sit between the rafters and the roof tiles of the house. Originally, the tile battens were fixed directly to the tops of the rafters, an arrangement that survives under the small roof of the raised bay. The same timber boarding appears to have been used in the construction of the stable block. Another helpful cue for dating this roof alteration are the ten Coade Stone, hexagonal chimney pots, some of which are stamped 'COADE & SEALY, LAMBETH, 1801.'

The interiors were redecorated at about this time, although exactly when -- whether during Boyd's tenure, as part of the 'additions', or after Johnston purchased the estate -- is unclear. In the Dining Room, the gilded cornice was overpainted in grey. The wall above the dado was pale turquoise and below pale blue. In the Library, the walls and dado areas were painted blue; so were the doorframes.

While all this was going on, that large heated room above the entrance hall, the one which we surmise was meant as a kind of first-floor sitting room or parlour, was divided in two. The door in the centre of the north landing wall was blocked, and the formerly blind doors made to work. This did a great deal of harm to the structure, since the cutting of two doors led to the removal of the outer diagonal struts. The partition wall between the west and central window was constructed as part of these works. This is confirmed by a reference to the Sale Particulars of 1805, which describe the Bedroom Floor, as having seven bedrooms, the number it would have had if this partition had been made by this date.[328]

Description of the present stable block

The new stable block is described and analysed in a separate English Heritage report, 'The Coach House, Stables and Offices in Danson Park, Bexley: An assessment of the surviving historic fabric and its setting' (Interim report, June 1996) by Richard Lea and Chris Miele.

328 Sale Particulars, 1805

10.

John and Hugh Johnston, 1806 to 1862

John Johnston takes possession

In September, before the sale was completed, Boyd, Johnston and their solicitors were in dispute over the value of agricultural products on the estate, which generated a brief but illuminating correspondence that took in other subjects. On 6 September 1806, Boyd wrote Johnston about a payment he was going to withhold for timber there is a passing reference to the likelihood of Johnston 'carrying on the work at Danson'. On 9 September Boyd wrote again to Johnston following a visit to the latter's City office: 'I hope to be able to give you the Information you require, together with some Points Explanatory of the Vase, Drawings of *intended additions to Danson -- There are at Mr Coxe's in Pall Mall two large Views of Danson, which were painted before I made alterations there.* [Emphasis added]' [329]

Boyd continued:

> I ordered them to be bought in when my Pictures were sold by Coxe, thinking the Purchaser of Danson might be glad to have them; If you think proper to call & look at them, you may see them at any time, & if it is your wish to have them, you may do so upon very easy terms. -- Should you wish to have them altered according to the present state of the place, I can recommend Barrett to you, who lives in [Baker?] Street near me, and is Brother to him who painted them for my Father; he was a pupil to and brought up under his Brother.

The last letter to survive in this suite is from Boyd's solicitors, Shawes and LeBlanc, to Johnston's representative and is dated 24 September 1805. It refers to a recent survey by one Mr. Richardson, the accuracy of which had been disputed by Johnston. It goes on to mention that since this survey 'a good deal of Money has been expended in improving the Land, and it is not a trifling advantage to the Estate that a Lime Kiln has since been erected.' To put pressure on Johnston, Boyd's solicitors let it drop that a certain gentleman, a Mr. Thompson from Portman Square, who 'earnestly desired to see the Premises.'

John Johnston, City merchant

John Johnston (1745-1828) the new owner of Danson had much in common with Sir John Boyd I, its builder. Like the Boyds, the Johnstons had made their way to London from the Scottish Lowlands by way of Northern Ireland in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries. And although the details of the family business are still very hazy, the Johnstons were known to have been merchants in the City of London, with offices in Coleman Street Buildings, and to have had some dealings with the West Indies.[330]

Charles Johnston, John's father, was a person of some standing, though not grand. He married Margaret Smith, the daughter of a local worthy, the Rev. William Smith (or

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329 I am grateful to William Charter of Lee-on-the-Solent for sharing his research on the Johnston family history. The biographical material, which follows is courtesy of him unless otherwise indicated.

330 The business address is confirmed by correspondence between Boyd and Johnston in the private collection of a descendant of the Johnston family.

Smythe), Pastor of Ballee, whose house, Drumcullin, the couple occupied for a short period after his death in July 1747. Charles was well connected with the Protestant Irish hierarchy, acting as land agent to Dean Delany, which is how he came to be mentioned twice in the famous letters written by the Dean's wife. On one occasion, Mrs Delaney described Mrs Johnston, *nee* Smith, and her niece as 'both fine ladies.'[331] Later, in August 1750, she wrote: 'I went with the Dean to Ballee, one of his churches, where he preached, and afterwards dined at Mr. Johnston's, with a table crowded with all sorts of good "things"'.[332] We know only that they married in 1733 and that Charles died in 1776.

Hugh Johnston, the oldest son of Charles and Margaret, established himself as a merchant in the City of London, though exactly when has yet to be determined. The nature of his trading interests also remain uncertain, but we do know that he was involved with the West Indies, with interests on the island of Tobago, though apparently he did not own land there. In 1780 he took in his younger brother John (1745?-1828), forming the firm of H. and J. Johnston with offices in Coleman Street Buildings. At the time, they did not seem to have run a grand establishment, as neither appears in the Treasury survey of male servants of 1780.[333] In 1790, Hugh died intestate and John succeeded to the property and business. In May of that same year, he married Anna Smyth of Liverpool (no relation to his grandmother's family), and the two had seven children. The eldest, Charles (1791-1823) was, remarkably, the only one who died young, which, though sad, is perhaps appropriate as he had spurned the family business to pursue Romantic poetry. His *Sonnets Original and Translated*, published by Murray in the year of his death was praised as a promising first work.

According to a lease of 1806 in the Danson collection, John Johnston had a townhouse in Newman Street, which runs north from Oxford Street. H. and J. Johnston must have been doing well at the time he bought Danson, since in 1807 John took on a new partner, a Mr.Thorley, and in the following year a Mr. McQuoid. Their places were later taken by Johnston's two sons, the oldest surviving son John (1795) and Hugh (1800), in addition to a Mr. John Butler.

The few facts regarding John Johnston that have come down do nothing to flesh out the character of the middle-aged gentleman portrayed in the fine nineteenth-century portrait on porcelain which survives in the collection of a descendant. He was said to have been a loyal churchman (there is a very fine memorial plaque to him in St. Mary the Virgin, Bexley). He took an interest in parish affairs, involving himself in the administration of the Poor Law (1810 and 1821), serving as a churchwarden and in the vestry (1813-4 and 1823), and, finally, towards the end of his life, contributing liberally to the parish school (1827).[334] Hutcherson records that he also helped to build a Chapel of Ease in Oaklands Road, the predecessor of Christ Church Bexleyheath.[335]

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331 Letter written in 21 June 1745 and not in the *Downpatrick Recorder*, for 1868. Copy from Commander William Charter, to author, autumn 1995.

332 *Ibid.*

333 Public Record Office, Kew, T 47/8 (1780). Entries for Middlesex, Westminster and the City of London checked.

334 Extracts from Bexley parish vestry minutes, Local Studies Collection, Bexley.

335 Pp. 37-9. Hutcherson's account of Johnston is inaccurate. He was not, as she claims, a `retired captain' who had served with the 62nd Regiment of Foot, nor is there any evidence to suggest he was active in the Stock Exchange. The name was quite common in the early nineteenth century, according to the *Army Lists* of the period.

Changes to the fabric of the house and park during John Johnston's tenure

We will probably never know how much of the scheme projected by Sir John Boyd II was completed by Johnston. An estate plan drawn up, it is thought, sometime in the mid-1820s, shows that he did alter the landscape significantly, particularly to the north of the house. Essentially, he closed down the view of the house from the London-Dover Road by planting trees north of the entrance elevation. He also intensified the plantings at the west end of the lake. Clumps of trees to the south of the lake were also infilled, creating a firmer border on this side of the park. The great sweep of the Richmond's landscape from the pleasure grounds south of the house, down the hill, and across the water, all that was not touched. There do not appear to have been any significant alterations to the house, which is perhaps not, what one would have expected. Still, Johnston was not a young man when he took Danson and the house had just been redecorated. Certainly, the watercolour views made of the interiors in the early 1860s by one of his granddaughters preliminary to the sale suggest that hardly anything had been touched.

The 1823-30 Estate Plan

The estate plan of 1823-30[336] could well have been drawn up for the 1828 will of John Johnston, who purchased the estate from Sir John Boyd II on 22 July 1806.[337] The plantations following the line of the ridge are extant still. Trees have been planted to the north of the house, enclosing it to a far greater more than would ever have been the case in the eighteenth century. A small conservatory, shown in detail, on later maps (see below) has been built to the west of the house. In later views, it is identified as the `Winter Garden'). A wooded area at the west end of the lake has also been planted, creating another more intimate, enclosed area. Plantations at the north of end of the park have been given a more sinuous line. South of the lake, the scattered groves and clumps have been brought together in infill planting, much as Richmond had proposed in 1762-3.

Hugh Johnston inherits 1828

Hugh Johnston (1800? - 1886) the second son of John, was made a partner in the family's firm in the City in or about 1818. John Johnston's will, drawn up early in 1828 (he died before the end of the year), directed the bulk of his estate, some £38,000, to be invested in Government securities and, then, on his wife Anna, to be divided equally among his surviving sons, John, Hugh and Thomas.[338] Initially Anna, his wife, was given liberty to reside with Hugh at Danson for seven years, with Hugh meeting all expenses (he was given £14,000 outright in consideration of this duty).

A codicil added in November gave Anna the house and estate outright for life in addition to all the goods within it, including the furniture and the library, but only on condition that she reside there and maintain the park and farmland. Ultimately, this must explain how Taylor's interiors escaped alteration during the early Victorian period. Widows in

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336 Map E19, Bexley Local Studies Collection.

337 Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, PROB 1751, 88, dated 21 March 1828. Codicil of 1 November 1828. Johnston died on 24 December. The will was executed in February 1829.

338 Public Record Office, Wills, Chancery Lane, 1829, 1751, section 88. Document signed and witnessed on 23 March 1828. A Codicial substantially altering one of the principal conditions of the will was added on 1 November 1828. Johnston died on 30 December 1828. The will was proved in London on 10 February 1829. He was buried in the vault of the parish church with his eldest son Charles, wife, grandaughter and nephew. There is an elegant Gothic commemorative plaque to them in Bexley parish church.

her position were not likely to spend on a grand scale, and Hugh Johnston, since he did not enjoy possession of the house, would be unlikely to consider modernisation. Of course, paint analysis may overturn this analysis, but for the time being it seems right to think of the house slumbering gently in the three decades before 1860. The hatchment bearing the Johnston arms which is shown on the watercolour of the principal front was probably installed by Hugh Johnston following the death of his mother in November 1860.

As for the son, Hugh, he stayed on in Bexley, building a decent sized house for himself, his wife (Ann Smyth, but no relation to his mother's family) and their children. The exact location of this house, known as `Little Danson', has yet to be verified. But in all likelihood it corresponds to the substantial villa which is shown standing in its own pleasure grounds on the south side of the London-Dover Road, and just east of Welling Village, that is just outside the park itself. Hugh's mother died in November 1860.

For twelve years after his father's death, Hugh Johnston seems to have carried on in the family business without major incident, but, late in 1840, it emerged that the firm's confidential agent, a Mr. Burton, had embezzled £90,000. Although Hugh and his then partner John Butler were able to meet all the creditors and the firm continue trading after the scandal, the event seems to have persuaded Hugh Johnston to give up his partnership and in June 1841 he is said to have withdrawn from all commercial pursuits. The business, however, carried on under the name of H and J Johnston until legal counsel informed Hugh that, so long as the firm continued to trade under his name, a jury might find him liable for business debts. Accordingly, the old firm ceased to trade under its earlier name.

The bulk of the estate was still agricultural. The Tithe assessment and accompanying map provide some idea of how different parts were used in 1839 but shed very little light on the house and stables or even on the state of the parkland from about this time.[339]

The Tithe Apportionment of 1839 and Map of 1844

The Tithe Apportionment (see schedule following) and Map give a detailed picture of land use in 1839-44, although the map is not useful for determining the pattern of planting.[340] The best source for this is, unquestionably, the First Edition Ordnance Survey, of 1863-5.

Table illustrating plot number on the Tithe Map of 1844 with the 1839 descriptions, with areas given in acres, rods and perches.

1275 lower cherry orchard 8.3.0
1276 fruit trees 2.1.0
1277 Garden 1.1.0
1278 House
1279 Barn and Yard 1.2.3
1280 Barn and Yard 1.3.6
1282 Garden Field 4.1.11
1399 The Grove 10.1.19
1340 plantation 1a
1341 plantation 1a

339 Public Record Office, Kew, IR 29/17/27.

340 Public Record Office, Kew, IR 29/17/27.

1342 meadow 30.1.3
1343 plantation 0.2.25
1344 Edward Serle meadow 5.2.3
1346 plantation
1347 plantation 2.25
1348 Nut Johnston
1349 plantation
1350 pasture
1351 stables and yard
1352 plantation 2.0.25
1353 house and pleasure gardens
1353 Lady Wood Arable 13.1.8
1354 plantation 4.2.34
1355 West Grove arable 11.0.5
1355 part of park 37.2.26
1356 plant, shrubbery & meadow
1358 park 51.3.16
1359 chapel field 18.3.26
1360 plantation
1361 chapel cottage and garden
1362 plantation
1364 West Grove Pasture 25.2.34
1365 West Grove 11.0.5
1367 Irwells Cottage and gardens
1375 plantation
1377 Stawe Acre pasture 2.2.18
1378 plantation
1379 cottage and garden
1381 plantation
1382 meadow 7.3.6
1384 Nut Johnstone
1387 Irwells Cottage
1411 Little Danson Field
1412 plantation
1413 plantation
1414 cottage and garden
1415 pond let to Mr Woolaston
1426 Little Danson Place
1427 plantation
1428 meadow
1429 plantation
1431 plantation
1432 pond
1434 30 acres of meadow
1345 plantation 1.17.1
1438 arable let to Henry York
1483 plantation
1489 High Ground 7.1.6
1490 High Ground arable 6.1.20
1491 cottages & garden 1.30
1492 part of Mount Wood 8.2.16
1494 plantation
1496 part of mount wood arable 8.11
1497 mount wood arable 18.1 24
1498 welling field arable 15.3.21

The sale of the Danson Estate, 1862

Norton, Hoggart, and Trist auctioned the Danson Estate in ten lots on 13 June 1862. The Sale Particulars (see Appendix) mention of 'cottages for labourers' which were not noted in the 1805 Sale Particulars, so these must have been built by John or Hugh Johnston, though exactly when and where is difficult to say. So-called 'Little Danson Place' was sold as a separate lot. The principal floor consisted of an Entrance Hall, modest Library (15 X 22 ft.), linked by folding doors to a Dining Room of identical dimensions and having French doors that opened out onto the pleasure grounds. It was then in the occupancy of one William Woolaston, whose tenancy was due to expire in 1863. Hugh Johnston probably moved the family into the main house after his mother died in 1860 and let the smaller house on a short lease.[341]

The Johnston family took some of the items purchased from the Boyds in 1806, primarily the magnificent Danson Vase, now known as the Piranesi Vase in the British Museum. This was offered to the Museum's Trustees in July 1863 for £500 by Hugh Johnston, now of Iridge Place, Hurst Green, Sussex. Although the offer was rejected, the vase was still at the Museum in 1867 in a temporary shed under the great colonnade. Charles Newton, the Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, had become anxious that the vase might leave the country and thought the South Kensington Museum might be interested in purchasing it from Johnston should the British Museum's Trustees still be unwilling. The obstacle seems to have been the extent of Piranesi's restoration. Johnston subsequently offered the item for £100, and the Trustees snapped at this greatly discounted price in 1868.[342]

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341 These Particulars are in the private collection of a descendant of the Bean family.

342 Letter from Christopher Date, Assistant Archivist, British Museum, 13 November 1995.

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Alfred Bean and his widow, 1862 to 1922

Alfred Bean, railway engineer

The new owner of Danson was Alfred Bean (1823-1890), a railway engineer by profession.[343] He started in his father's firm, Bean and Jackson, which in its early days was involved with canal-building; Thomas Jackson had cut his teeth constructing the Birmingham and Liverpool Canal. In 1844, not long after expanding into railway contracting, Alfred's father was killed in an accident on the Caledonian Canal. Thomas Jackson took the twenty-one year old into partnership. Bean's decision to occupy Danson may have been influenced by Jackson, who lived in grand style nearby in Eltham Park. Certainly, their firm had a commercial interest in this part of Kent, having been involved in the construction of the North Kent Railway and in the construction of the Sidcup line in 1866. In the early 1880s, the firm promoted a rail link, which would take in Welling on a route linking Dartford to London. This loop greatly encouraged the development of the area surrounding the estate into a modern commuter suburb.[344] The railway company was established with Bean as the chairman in 1883 and until his death in 1890 it occupied most of his time.

While the source of Bean's wealth was utterly different to Johnston's and Boyd's, it was no less emblematic of the times, and like those earlier owners Bean contributed to the well being of the parish in a way which was appropriate to his position. In 1869 he built a temporary iron mission church at the corner of Hook Lane and made several gifts to the parish church. He also gave generously to the building fund of Christ Church (1872-77 by the architect William Knight of Nottingham). He provided a school building the new church and a site for the local cottage hospital. He was also a member of the Local Government Board and a magistrate. After his death, the family gradually retreated from public life.

Bean's will called for the sale of the outlying parts of the Danson Estate, thus capitalising on the rising property values which he, as promoter of railways in the area, had helped to foster and significantly reducing the agricultural part of Boyd's estate. The development of the land immediately adjoining the park would come after the sale of the estate in 1922.

Alfred Bean undertook significant alterations to the house, particularly to the interior, although there are no exact dates for this. Patent marks on hardware in various rooms give a *terminus post quem* of *c.*1865, and it seems likely that the alterations were carried out soon after the sale in 1862. Remember, the house had been lived in by an ageing widow, and the interiors depicted in the watercolours which are believed to have been made prior to the sale suggest hardly anything had changed since the late eighteenth century. The house was, then, badly behind the times, and no matter how much Bean appreciated its splendid Georgian interiors, he would have insisted, as a matter of course more than anything else, on the latest aids to domestic comfort.

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343 The following is based principally on Hutcherson's account, pp. 44-6.

344 Bexley's development after 1880 is detailed by M. C. Carr, `The Growth and Characteristics of a Metropolitan Suburb: Bexley, N. W. Kent' (Ph.D. thesis: University of London, 1970). A summary can be found in Carr's contribution to *The Rise of Suburbia*, ed. by F.M.L. Thompson (Leicester: The University Press, 1982), pp. 211-59. Presses,

The alterations to the house are, to some extent, characteristic of a man associated with railway construction. Iron is used extensively, as lintels to enlarged window openings with splayed reveals, in prefabricated iron glazing systems, and in the strengthening of failing floor timbers. Large mirrors, typical of railway hotel architecture are installed in the Dining Room, Saloon and Library. New external doors with large panes of glass and newly engineered hinges and locks replace original Georgian door furniture. On the lower floors, the wall surfaces are made good with a dense, hard and unyielding, non-porous, grey and in some places black, cement render. The overhaul reveals a functional interest in the working of the house, fixtures and fitings are made to work, and yet again the access and circulation is reworked.

Alterations to the Kitchen Floor, 1863

The original joinery windows at the south end of the Kitchen, K1, in the south wall at both levels and in the east wall was removed and the internal jambs cut away as splayed reveals. Iron 'L' section girders measuring 150x75mm (6x3") were inserted into the enlarged openings to supported the wall above. A cast iron glazing system was then installed in the opening, set in dense hard grey render. The glazing system is the same as that used in the alterations to the present stable block, which must have been carried out at the same time. Similarly, the windows in the south wall of the octagonal room, K2, were converted to iron glazing in the same fashion. The south east window in the same room was given the same splayed reveals and finished with dense grey render, but instead of the iron glazing, an iron security door was installed. The associated steps leading up to ground level, internal and external are presumably contemporary. The windows, W23, in the west wall of the north west room, K10, and W1, in the north wall of the room K9, were also fitted with iron glazing of the same kind. The glazing system was designed for round headed Diocletian windows, as in the Stable Block; the arched heads do not fit exactly with the segmental heads of the house windows.

The lower windows in the bay of the kitchen were converted to cupboards by the removal of the original sashes and the partial bricking up of the openings to create recesses in the internal wall face. Bricks were set on the internal sills of the recesses to raise the level of the sills. The same operation was performed on the window at the north end of the east wall. A timber shelf was then set in each of the recesses and timber was fixed against the wall face to frame the cupboard doors. The cupboards were then lined with plaster on a base coat of dense hard brown plaster. At the same time, the original horizontal internal sills of the upper windows in the Kitchen were cut down to form steeply raked sills. The cut brickwork was again made good with the same dense hard render.

A cast iron range bearing the stamp, 'Brown and Green's, Patent.' was installed in the Kitchen fireplace. Its installation was accompanied by the insertion of 'L' section iron girders. The girders are of the same type as those used in the window openings. They are set in red bricks in a dense brown lime mortar flecked with lime. The surrounding wall surface was again made good with a dense hard grey cement render. The range is of the closed stove type, commonly referred to as a 'Leamington' after William Flavel of Leamington developed it in the 1820s. The closed stove range was common throughout the nineteenth century.[345] Despite the maker's stamp, this particular range has not been securely dated.[346] The use of 'L' section girders in its installation, however, associates it with the alterations to the Kitchen windows and large glazed doors in the Terrace Floor

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345 Sambrook PA, Brears P, *The Country House Kitchen, 1650-1900*, 1996, pp 109-113

346 Initial inquiries at the Patents Information section of the British Library have not provided a date for the patent.

entrance hall area. In the absence of further dating evidence, it therefore seems reasonable to assume that the range was installed about 1863.

Below the staircase, ST1, in the north west corner of the Kitchen, K1, a window opening in the west wall was either created or enlarged into the small room K4 to the west. Again, the same 'U' section iron girders were used as lintels and a simple, unmoulded casement window was installed in the opening. The cut wall surfaces were made good with dense hard grey render. .

In the octagonal room, K2, in the west wall, the original door leading into the cellar to the west, K12, was removed and the opening blocked with brickwork, leaving a small opening for serving. In the north east wall, the original door opening leading into the connecting room K3 was enlarged with a segmental brick arch of two courses of headers. The bricks used are red and yellow, 230x65x110 mm set in a dense grey brown mortar flecked with lime fragments up to 3mm in size. A new segmental headed door, D3, was installed slightly to the north on a new axis in line with the north wall of the room.

Slate shelving, 28mm thick, was attached to the perimeter walls of the octagonal room, K2, supported on cast iron 'T' section brackets. The cellars K11 and K12, under the west wing, were also fitted with a suite of slate shelving suitable for wine for storage. The shelves were labelled with numbers painted in white. The shelving was set in dense grey render and in places supported by the same type of 'T' section brackets as those used in the octagonal room, K2.

New lever locks were fitted to the two surviving original doors, D5 and D11, in the north west and north walls of the octagonal room K2, the doors, D6, 7 and 8, from the cellars K11, 12 and 15 into the cross passage, K14, and the door, D14, from the passage K8 into K9. The locks had brass name plates stamped 'Hobbs and Co. Lever, Cheapside, London'. The use of this ironmonger links these alterations to those made on the Principal Floor.[347]

Alterations to the Terrace Floor, 1863

A set of five round arched glazed doors set within round arched glazed frames was installed in the Terrace Floor Entrance Passage, T17/18. The glazing of the doors makes use of large sheets of glass uninterrupted by glazing bars. The doors are hung on steel hinges secured with screws. The glazing bars used in the glazed surrounds are moulded with a Grecian ovolo. The doors, D29 and 30, are located at each end of the passage T17/18, across the passage west of the central door into the house (door with no number) and between the passage and the Terrace Floor entrance hall area, doors D28 and 50. The installation of the last two doors required the cutting of large openings through the brickwork of the main north wall of the house. The resulting arches were given large splays. Instead of making good the brickwork with inserted brick arches, iron was again used. The exact form of the iron has not been determined but it is probably flat in section. The reveals were then lined with dense grey and in places black render.

The use of splayed reveals links this work with the creation of the arched opening to the kitchen from the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area. At the head of the staircase, ST1, the doorway from the Kitchen, K1, to the entrance hall area was enlarged as a round arched opening lined with dense grey render. The splayed reveals of this doorway show no signs of a reveal for a timber door frame and it therefore appears that the timber vestibule

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347 See the notes on the date of the hinges used in the construction of the Victorian sideboards in the Dining Room

enclosing room T12 and incorporating the door, D25, also dates from this phase of alterations. The panelling of the upper halves of the timber vestibule and door indicate that they were designed to be glazed. The architrave mouldings are a common form of Grecian cyma.

The original centre door from the passage T17/18 was recast as a window, W27. Again, the cast iron glazing system employed in the Kitchen was installed in the upper half of the opening. The external reveals were given splays and finished in dense grey render. Below the window, in the passage, a bench seat cupboard was fitted. Internally a chest of drawers was installed below the window inside the original door lining. The installation of a window in the centre door into the Terrace Floor Entrance Hall area marks the disuse of the original point of access and signifies a reordering of the circulation in this area.

An iron door was installed in the closet in the north east corner of the Breakfast Room, T2, to convert
it into a safe. The iron frame was set in dense grey render. A dresser was installed along the west wall of the Breakfast Room.

The windows in the Breakfast Room T2, W15 and 16, the south west room, T3, W17 and 18, and the north west room T5, W21 and 22, were altered when their original internal shutters were replaced with splayed panelled timber reveals and vertically sliding shutters.

A door, D41, was installed in the service stair area, T16. The installation of this door created a private apartment out of the Breakfast Room T2, the south west room, T3, and the bay room, T4, which probably housed a bath and WC. The north wall in the south west room, T3, was probably removed at this date resulting in the incorporation of the passage that previously lay between the two rooms in this wing and increasing the size of the southern room, T3.

At the same time the door between the flat roofed addition, room T6 and the room to the south, T5, was partially infilled with brick and a reused sash window stood on its end. The bricks, yellow flecked with purple, red, and purple, measuring 100x220 mm were set in a light grey brown hard dense mortar flecked with lime fragments up to 5 mm in size. The sash window was of the original Terrace Floor type, oak and ovolo moulded. It appears to have been set in the opening to provide borrowed light to the room, T5, to the south.

Victorianizing Taylor's grand interiors, 1863

When it came to one of the real glories of Danson, the principal interiors, Bean and his decorator did everything they could to denature them, everything, that is, short of actually destroying them. And this has been one of the principal curatorial challenges of the project. Until the chance discovery of the 1860s watercolours, the only authoritative images we had of the main rooms were those which had been taken in the 1920s, prior to auction, showing the house at full High Victorian gallop. Here Palladianism has been treated to a heavy coat of High Victorian polish: parquet floors, fancy radiators, glazed doors, florid gasoliers, fibrous plaster fillips, pompous window pelmets, mirrors, all of it answered perfectly by a dense, rich furnishing scheme which was entirely typical of the late nineteenth century. But with the furniture gone, and bits of the underlying fabric exposed, it soon became clear that that a surprising amount of the Georgian interiors survived. Fortunately, Bean had no real approach to the interiors, no strong taste. And he seems to have tinkered with the house in two campaigns, the first almost certainly after he bought the house and the second, roundabout 1883, when he added hot water radiators

to the Entrance Hall and gas lighting throughout the house. Bean's alterations were small, then, in terms of fabric, but their cumulative effect was considerable.

Alterations to the Entrance Hall, 1863

The mahogany doors from the Entrance Hall were fitted with lacquered brass rising hinges with steel spigots.

The main entrance doorframe and door was reworked with a rebate. Stained jamb, smooth tooling. Hinges hung on outside of door to open out - screw holes. Internal shutter for glazed sections of door

A heating flue in the middle of the floor was installed. A recess in the centre stone was filled with a bluish grey mortar compound, which appears to incorporate a heating flue from the floor below.

Alterations to the Dining Room, 1863

A parquetry floor hardwood veneers according to a simple geometric pattern was lain throughout the room. The veneers were set in pitch on hessian laid over the floorboards.[348]

Large mirrors and sideboards were installed in the recesses at each end of the room. The original painted plaster can be seen to pass behind the timber sub-frame supporting the mirror and the dado has been cut short to accommodate the sideboard. The moulding of the dado and the skirting on the sideboards are copies of those used throughout the room. The sideboards are of mahogany with pine used for the concealed parts of the carcass. The mahogany was used in the solid, as lippings, and as veneers of varying thickness. The fitting of lacquered brass hinges and mortise locks formed part of the construction. The exposed plate of the brass mortise lock to one of the cupboard doors decorated with a carving of fish was stamped with the following inscription, `HOBBS & CO, LEVER, 76 CHEAPSIDE, LONDON.' The cupboard doors were of solid mahogany construction, the flat central panel was feathered on the inside face. The rear panels of the cupboards were of pine, planed on both sides and were therefore unlike the rough unfinished work

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348 Parquetry has been in almost continuous use in European great houses since the Renaissance. However, in England it fell from favour during the eighteenth century, and apart from being used as a hard wearing alternative to floor boards in small areas (often stair landings), its is rarely used as a decorative finish. Parquetry came back with a vengeance, and not just in England. From the early nineteenth century, French architects and designers showed renewed interest in the technique. In Prussia Schinkel promoted its use. English interest in the technique revived during the Regency, and in 1844, the government school of designs (forerunner of the South Kensington Collections) bought samples of French work to instruct English makers. Specialist firms were soon established, one of the most successful being Arrowsmiths, which won a medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851. By this date parquetry flooring was available in a wide variety of patterns and colours. The chevron or herring bone was the most popular since it was easily adapted to different room arrangements. It was also the least expensive, though the cost of any form of parquetry relative to other floor coverings was high. It has always been a status floor covering. Although earlier varieties of English parquetry were sound and hard-wearing, most mid-Victorian parquetry flooring was actually rather flimsy. Floors were assembled off site from elements sometimes as thin as 1/8 inch. A thin scrim held the pieces together during transfer from shop to site and then simply bedded down on the old floorboards. From the early 1880s a different and more substantial method was used, where the floorboards would be cut up into short lengths, and then set between the joists just below their top face. A layer of cement would then have been laid and the parquetry pieces (by this date much thicker than the earlier work) would have been bedded on top of this in hot pitch. The older technique neither wore well nor withstood the inevitable movement of joists. The new one was much more durable. The Danson floors were thin and laid on top of scrim, and this is the best indication of their likely date. Sometime after the Beans bought the house is entirely plausible. I am indebted to Clive Wainwright at the Victoria and Albert Museum for much of the above information.

typical of the original bookcases in the Library. They were constructed using steel screws. The carcasses were constructed from discrete demountable units. The top unit was separate from the cupboard unit, which was in turn separate from the plinth. The cupboard doors were hung on brass hinges with steel spigots.

Post Office Directories and Patent Directories enable the precise dating of these works. Hobbs and Co. noted locksmiths, moved to 76 Cheapside in 1858. From 1865, AC Hobbs took J. M. Hart into partnership, giving us a *terminus ante quem*.

Elaborate pelmets were installed above the windows. They were constructed using pine as a base, which was then coated in lime plaster before composition mouldings were applied and painted with gold paint. They were similar in construction to the mirror surrounds and pelmets in the Saloon. This arrangement is shown in the sale catalogue photograph from the early 1920s.

Alterations to the Saloon, 1863

A door was cut through the north east wall of the Saloon linking the Saloon to the closet east of the Stairwell and thus providing a direct route through to the Entrance Hall. The original brickwork above the opening was supported by the insertion of a timber lintel. Fragments of Welsh slate were wedged into the gap between the lintel and the brickwork above. No mortar was introduced into this joint. Slight subsidence of four courses of brickwork and the bonding timber above the inserted lintel appears to have occurred and necessitated the introduction of pine wedges above the bonding timber. A pine doorframe with a large bead moulding on the inner edge was installed in the opening. On the Saloon side of the door, the frame was set flush with the plaster wall face. Above the door, a rectangular recess was cut into the original plaster wall face and lined with planed pine battens. The gap between the battens, the doorframe and the original plaster was made good with a denser white lime plaster. The battens were set to form a rebated recess to receive a panel that was screwed into place with 2&1/2" brass screws with counter-sunk flat heads. The panel had grey felt strips attached to it and was clearly intended as a backing panel for a mirror. A pine door was hung in the opening. On the closet side, the door was of panel construction with ovolo mouldings. On the Saloon side below the dado rail it was finished with a flat panel, above the dado it was of plain panel construction with felt applied to receive a mirror. The mirror was secured by means of a flat `U' section copper strip, which was assembled from lengths of c 300mm brazed together. The door was hung on brass hinges stamped 'CHAS COLLINGE & Co PATENT.'[349] The dado moulding and the skirting were the originals cut and relocated on the door. A matching mirror was installed in the north west wall. The mirror surrounds were constructed from pine with composition mouldings applied. The upper parts were moulded around bent steel rods. The surround was attached to the battens forming the mirror recesses with 2&1/2" flat headed countersunk screws.

A large mirror of similar design and construction was installed above the fireplace. This mirror was surface mounted, secured above the fireplace with brass screws. At the base of the mirror was a carved and gilded timber fillet moulding, which is identical to that attached to the wall face below the frieze. The moulding is shown in the photograph of *c* 1920. As the fillet moulding is an applied feature it is difficult to fix within the historical

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[349] The lack of address attached to the name unfortunately makes it difficult to date these hinges unlikely. The use of a lockmaker other than Hobbs and Co. might imply a later phase of works. Chars. Collinge's Patent Axle Tree Sugar Mill and Engine Manufactory is shown at 64 Westminster Bridge Road in John Tallis's *London Street Views*, 1838-40. Shown on the facade of the building is a sign which reads 'Patent Spherical Hinge Manufactory'

sequence. However, its inclusion as part of the mirror frame suggests that it dates from the late nineteenth century.

Pelmets were matching those in the Dining Room (see above) were installed above the windows. They are pine with applied composition mouldings, similar in style to the mirrors on the north side of the room. This arrangement is shown in the sale catalogue photograph from the early 1920s.

The absence of any nails in the wall face around the door suggests that the original damask as well as its calico (or hessian) backing was removed by this date. The photographs of the Saloon from *c* 1920 show a patterned paper or fabric with a border and decorative applied strips with gadrooning. The repeating pattern implies a paper or roll width of *c* 21".

Alterations to the Library, 1863

A hardwood parquetry floor was laid in the Library similar to that in the Dining Room but according to a different pattern. The border to the parquet floor in the Library was made to fit around the bookcases and organ.

The bookcases were altered by the addition of glazed doors above the dado and by plain fronted doors below the dado. The doors fitted to the bookcases were of two types. The large bookcases either side the fireplace and in the south wall incorporated mirrors. The doors of the smaller bookcases incorporated red satin curtains sandwiched between a glass front and a panelled back. The backs of the doors were flush panelled in mahogany. The tops of the bookcases were secured to the walls with iron or steel fixing nails with flat round heads pierced with three holes for nails. The hinges for the glazed doors are of lacquered brass and are stamped 'HOBBS & CO.'

The installation of the doors, flush with the frames of the bookcases, was accompanied by the cutting back and enlargement of the brick recesses in the wall, and by additions and alterations to the backs of the carcasses to accommodate the original shelving. The back of the blind sash window in the north wall of the Library was altered. The original arrangement is not clear but in this alteration planed pine panelling was attached to the backs of the sash frames.

The installation of the bookcase doors below the dado also required the cutting out and setting back of the sides. The doors were faced with flat mahogany boards mounted on oak cyma moulded frames. The mahogany boards match the original mahogany and are probably reused. Some of the bookcases were fitted with mahogany specimen drawers with brass knobs. Some of the drawers, especially those in the south west bookcase contain fossils. The drawers are labelled with the source locations for the fossils such as 'Isle of Wight, 1870 and 1871,' 'Filey, 1868' and 'Alderney, 1869.' The fossils therefore appear to have been collected on what were probably the Bean family holidays. As an engineer, it is not surprising that Alfred Bean should have had a passing interest in geology. The dates on the labels suggest that the bookcases were modified by 1868.

Above the dado, the original shelving system was replaced by an adjustable system, which employs strips of mahogany, notched like a saw blade. The original rebates in the sides of the bookcases were filled with plain strips of pine. It is clear from this that the sides of the large bookcase in the south wall were heightened by *c* 400mm. The central dividers in the three large bookcases show no signs of the original shelving system and are therefore probably not original.

That the large bookcase in the centre of the south wall was heightened by *c* 400mm, is also evident in the alterations to the rear panel. The pine is rough sawn on its rear face and matches the finish of the linings of the doorway to the Drawing Room. The back panel matches those in the bookcases either side of the fireplace. From this comparison, it is clear that the back panel was intended to extend throughout the full height of the bookcases. The bottom rail of the bookcase in the centre of the south wall is now fixed *c* 400mm above the floor. From this, it appears that this bookcase was the same size as those in the east wall.

A fragment of joinery incorporating a carved head of Homer and a cornice of the type found on the Library bookcases was recovered with other material removed from the house. Its original location is not recorded in any of the known photographs of the house. Presumably, it was in the Library. The only possible location seems to be above the bookcase on the south wall. It is a composite of various fragments of joinery. The box has been extended forward by c 185mm. The gola moulding is not enriched as are the others in the room and extends the full length of the extension. This moulding and some of the dentils therefore post-date the forward extension of the box. The carved head of Homer is not complete and is clearly not in its original location since the lower part of the circle enclosing the head would have extended over the bottom edge of the box.

The plaque was removed intact. This indicates that it was removed with a degree of care and attention. Before the plaque was removed, however, it would have been necessary to remove the architrave that framed the plaque. This does not survive and was probably much more fragile in construction. The swags ribbon and patera were also removed from the plaster wall face with some care. There was very little plaster making good in the affected areas. Presumably, once the projecting plaster was removed, the surface was simply scraped smooth with the existing painted plaster wall face. The circular hole in the plaster was enlarged to an approximate rectangle. The outer vertical edges were aligned with the original lining battens. This presumably allowed the fixing of laths to the original battens for making good the plaster wall face.

The laths attached to the battens for fixing the plaque were removed. Additional battens were nailed to the flat battens and new laths were applied flush with the original lining laths. A dense grey mortar was applied to the new laths and then skimmed with a white lime plaster. The whole area was painted over with a white undercoat and then painted light blue. This appears to have been the first redecoration of the wall since the verdigris was applied.

Alterations to the Closet, 1863

The plaque removed from the Library was set into an east-west wall face, at high level, at the south end of the closet room P7. Originally, there was no access from the closet to the Saloon, the angled north east wall of the Saloon formed the south wall of the closet which gave the closet a trapezoidal plan. The east west wall face, which spanned the width of the room above head level, was an original feature. It was constructed using the same type of brick and mortar as used elsewhere in the house, with a timber lintel and relieving arch which conforms to the standard pattern used throughout the original build. A circular recess *c* 60mm deep and *c* 1060 mm in diameter, was cut into the original lime plaster, brick face, bead moulded fascia board and timber lintel. The space between the soffit of the timber lintel and the ceiling did not allow for the whole of the plaque to be relocated to this position. Consequently the 25mm margin at the bottom of the plaque was cut away. Only one fixing cleat was used to secure the plaque in its new position. Presumably, this was necessary only until the making good plaster had dried. The actual cleat was small in comparison with those used for the original lining work. It measured 90mm in length. It was of flat tapered iron with a head bent over and hammered out flat.

The short length of the nail meant that it could not have penetrated the mortar joint more than *c* 30mm. The projecting timber lintel supported the weight of the plaque. The gap between the plaque and the surrounding brick and plaster was then made good with a base coat of plaster followed by a top coat skim of fine white plaster. The plaque was framed in its new location by the addition of four spandrel shaped pine boards, decorated with composition rosettes and arabesques. The decoration is identical to that on the Library and Dining Room pelmets. This suggests that the resisting of the plaque occurred about 1863.

A timber modillioned cornice was introduced around the rectangular ceiling of the closet room P7. It stopped short of the east-west wall face on which the plaque was set. The cornice was solid in section. The cornice above the east-west wall was nailed to the ceiling *c* 100mm north of the wall face. Hooks at *c* 80mm intervals were screwed into the back of the cornice for the attachment of a curtain. Ionic pilasters were fixed to the side walls of the closet below the timber lintel spanning the room. Like the cornice, these pilasters were idiosyncratically moulded.

The introduction of the plaque, the cornice and the pilasters marks a general upgrading in the status of the closet room P7. Presumably, it also marks a change in its function. The alterations are probably contemporary with the insertion of the door from the closet into the Saloon. The change in the room's status is probably due to its transformation to a principal access route on the Principal Floor. These alterations can probably be dated by the brass hinges on the closet/Saloon door which are stamped 'Chas Collinge Co, Patent.' The plaque, the surrounding wall face and the spandrel decorations were painted off white. Subsequently, a lining paper was applied to the wall face around the plaque and spandrels and painted off white.

Alterations to the Staircase, 1863

The handrail of the main flight of stairs was raised. New mahogany sections were inserted at the top of the stairs from the Terrace Floor and where there had formerly been a ramped section at the top of the stairs. The alteration to the height of the handrail was made by the insertion of a band of wrought -iron circles above the original balusters. The handrail now crashes into the base of the Ionic column at the top of the stairs, instead of meeting the handrail above the Landing balustrade.

Alterations to the Bedroom Floor, 1863

On the Bedroom floor all the windows except for those in the raised bays (*i.e.*, W50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 62, 63) were radically altered. The internal shutters were removed and the brick reveals were cut back and relined with splayed ovolo-moulded panels that were extended around the lintel. Probably at the same time, the windowsills were replaced with a slightly different pattern, which incorporated a drip moulding set back from the outer face of the bottom rail of the lower sash. The inner bead appears to have been refitted so that it projected inside the inner face of the inner lining. Two of the Terrace-Floor windows, the northern window in the west wall of the west wing (W22) and the adjacent window in the canted side bay (W21), received the same sort of treatment, with the addition of vertical shutters that were designed to slide into an area under the sill.

The floor of the main bedroom was strengthened when the main floor beams originally trussed girder construction, were flitched with 'I' section steel girders. This alteration was made leaving the ceiling below intact. The deflection that had already occurred in the ceiling must have been approximately 50mm.

The main bedroom was divided in two by a north-south partition wall. The semicircular ceiling feature against the south wall was left *in-situ*. The window in the south wall was converted by the insertion of a central mullion (see below). A similar conversion was made to the window in the centre window in the west side bay. This probably signifies the sub-division of this room as well, in order to provide toilets. A substantial white and grey veined marble fireplace replaced the original fireplace against the west wall. The spandrels above the central arched opening are elaborated with Italianate foliage carving. The infill between the new surround and the original brick wall was made up with yellow stock bricks measuring 230x70x110mm set in a buff coloured lime mortar which contained fragments of red and yellow brick up to 5mm in size.

A door was inserted between the northern room in the east wing and the side bay. The bay was probably divided into two. Unlike the west bay, the window was not converted to casement. This is probably because the door from the southern room was central to the bay. The most likely position for an inserted partition wall in the east bay is therefore in line with the northern jamb of the central window.

From the scars on the architrave surrounding the door to the landing and the traces of plaster and lathe on the ceiling joists in the bedroom, the third east-west partition wall in the eastern half of the house shown on the GLC survey was an alteration. It was probably added when the raised bays were adapted for use as toilets.

The existing sash windows in the centre of the south bay (W55) and the west bay (W72) were altered by the removal of the sashes and replacement with casements. The new joinery was common to both windows, the differences, most notable in the sills, are due to differences in the existing sashes. Both windows employ heavy central mullions that relate to the installation of partition walls.

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1865

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1 to 2,500, surveyed 1863-4 and Published 1865, shows the estate soon after it was purchased by Alfred Bean in 1862. Bean made a number of small changes to the park and house, which, taken together, added a definite Victorian flavour to the ensemble. He enhanced the existing plantings, adding more trees to the north and west lawns. The south lawn, on both sides of the lake, retained the character it had at the time of the 1823-30 Johnston Map. Bean added a number of lodges in a rustic style, all of which are now gone and a circular summerhouse south of the lake, of which no illustrations are known. Chambers Temple in the north east corner of the lake was transformed into a boathouse with a small dock. The positions of wells and an icehouse (which is perhaps the only survival from the Selwyn's period of tenure) are noted, as are the paths, though exactly when these were laid down is not certain. Boyd had planned a gravel circuit of the south lawn, or at least one is shown on Richmond's plan, running along the eastern verge of the park and coming up through the line of trees stretching west of the house. Some of the paths shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey very likely date to this time, but more than that is difficult to say at this point.

Estate accounts and other documents relating to house and estate during the tenure of Alfred Bean and his descendants (1862-1922) are not known so that, at present, the most reliable documentary record of changes to the landscape during this period is to be found in the sequence of Ordnance Surveys.

The installation of hot water radiators in the Entrance Hall, c 1885

Water heated radiators were installed in the Hall which previously was unheated. The radiators were enclosed within grilles with dado and skirting made to match the originals.

The additional dado sections were distinguishable from the original because they were cut from the solid. The same mouldings were employed in the pedestals on the two long walls. The radiator grilles are stamped with the makers initials and date `RR 1883'. These radiators were removed as part of the scheme of restoration carried out in 1997-98.

The installation of gas lighting, c 1885

The pedestals formerly in the Entrance Hall appear to be associated with the installation of gas lighting. They employ reused planed pine in the carcass. The dado moulding which replicates that on the walls is cut from solid pine which is different to the standard Georgian practice, in which mouldings such as dados and skirting boards are built up from smaller sections of wood not cut from the solid. The Malton plan appears to show pedestals or columns in the position of these pedestals, and it may be that they were designed on this basis.

The pedestals were for four gas lamps in the form of bronze figurines. The figures are now in the store at Hall Place.

Gasoliers were installed in the Entrance Hall, Dining Room, Saloon and Library. That in the Dining Room replaced an oil lamp, which was recorded in the watercolour from *c* 1860. A similar lamp is shown in the 1920s photograph of the Library. The gasoliers were suspended from wrought iron inserted into the floors of the rooms above the Dining Room and the Saloon.

Further research is needed to establish a rough date for the splendid gasoliers. At present, we have no idea of the supply source. It is entirely possible that Bean installed a private gasworks in the park. Many of the early private gasworks were based on the designs of George Bower, which were patented in 1852. In 1855, WC Holmes entered the field. Bower's earliest identified plant was installed in 1858 at Bisham Abbey near Marlow, though it no longer survives. Holmes's plants could be found at Sudbrook Park in Richmond and Coldwaites near Maidenhead, both of 1870. Only one surviving example is known, that at Lockerley Hall in Hampshire, though it is not complete in all regards.[350] Unfortunately, no evidence for such a facility has so far come to light at Danson. Or, Bean could have purchased gas from a commercial supplier. The Blendon Gasworks, a very small concern located about 800 metres from the south east corner of the Park, was nearest. The West Kent Gasworks was located on the north side of the Dover Road. It was the largest in the area in 1865 but further away than that at Blendon. The gasworks at Erith and Eltham would have been too remote.[351]

The installation of a large water tank on the attic floor, c 1885

A large slate sided water tank held together by long iron bolts was installed above the stairs to the attic.[352] The installation of the tank required alteration to the framing of the walls on both sides of the stairwell. The use of square headed nuts and iron or steel rod suggests a date in the later nineteenth century. The need for such a large supply of water was probably improved water pressure and baths on the Bedroom Floor.

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1897

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350 North Thames Gas Board, *Historical Index to Gasworks Past and Present, 1806-1957* (London: Gas Board, 1957), pp. 123-7.

351 I am grateful to Bryan Sturt for discussing gas supply in Kent in the late nineteenth century.

352 Need more information on the plumbing of this tank.

1 to 2,500 Scale,

The map prepared in 1922 for the estate auction

A map was prepared in 1922 for the estate auction, based on the 19?? Ordnance Survey.

13.

Danson House and Park passes into public ownership, 1924

In 1921 Alfred Bean's widow died and in the following year Danson was put up for auction. There were no takers, and the house was withdrawn. When it came up again in 1924 Bexley Urban District Council stepped in, getting the house and park for a mere £16,000, less than half what John Johnston had paid for it in 1805. There was little mention of the house and its associated buildings in the Council Minutes, but it is clear nevertheless that some people appreciated the architecture. The 'Mansion,' which is how the house was described, was the centrepiece of the official opening ceremony held on 13 April 1925. Princess Mary, much in demand at these sorts of ceremonies at the time, was invited to preside. She was met by local councillors and high council officials at the north front of the house, guided through the principal interiors, and then led to a dais on the south lawn in order to deliver her public address, declare the park officially open to the public, and unveil 'the commemorative Sundial'. After a rendition, no doubt stirring, of 'Land of Hope and Glory' she took tea in the saloon. Thus, a house, built by a man with aristocratic pretensions, was taken into public ownership, in the presence of royalty and with the representatives of local people standing, as it were, in Boyd's shoes.

Over the years Bexley UDC, and then the Borough Council, has been criticised for the way it has cared for, or not. The record speaks for itself, though in fairness it must be said that the broad consensus in favour of historic buildings that we now take for granted is recent. And in fairness to Bexley, the house might have been razed when first taken into public ownership. The 1920s was a crisis decade for the country house and genteel villa. Many local authorities purchased great estates for the land primarily and destroyed the accompanying houses, which were seen increasingly as symbols of privilege and wealth and as such out-of-step with modern democracy and popular culture.[353] Some local authorities would perhaps have seen the official opening ceremony at Danson as a betrayal of modern democratic principles.

Still, in official pronouncements, Danson Park was described as the primary amenity. *The Recorder* for 1929 (most of which was given over to a description of the new park gates) put it best, concluding that Danson Park was `a magnificent defence against the remorseless advance of the Brick and Mortar Brigades from London'. There was no mention of the house or the stables, just clear skies, fresh air, and green spaces for ordinary people. Erith, Crayford and Dartford were then being overrun by terraced and semi-detached metroland. Railways, stations, local trains, and 'motorbuses'' were mushrooming. Danson Park gave Bexley a competitive edge, or so Bexley UDC argued.[354] And yet, Bexley did open the house for public viewing from in 1925 for 6d admission charge on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 3 to 6 p.m. The principal rooms were also let for wedding receptions, dances, and 'whist drives'. The 1925 *Souvenir of Danson Park* added that there were proposals for regular Sunday organ recitals in the winter. The minutes of the Parks and Pleasure Grounds Committee from the `thirties confirm that the continued popularity of the house for private dances, receptions, and children's parties, as well as a meeting place for local organisations.[355]

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353 P. Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), Chapter 6, pp. 225-63.

354 No. 1, March 1929, p. 11. Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, DAN 2P:G:F:Ga.

355 See, for example, entry for 14 November 1933, Bexley UDC Minutes, 1933-4, p. 320. See also extracts regarding the house from the Minutes, 1931-71, DAN 2:M. Both can be found in the Local Studies Collection at Hall Place.

The *Bexley Official Guide* for 1935 records only that the principal interiors boasted 'an interesting collection of paintings and furniture', though no illustrations or further details of this installation have yet become known.[356] Easily the most popular attraction of the house was the 'first class tea room' set up in 1925 in the south-facing octagonal room on the ground floor, which in Boyd's day had served as a breakfast/morning room.

On the upper floors a local history museum was installed (this entailed minor structural alterations).[357] By 1939, this consisted of 'collections of British Butterflies, British Birds' Eggs, Coins, South Sea Island Spears, Parish Books of Bexley, Geological and Archaeological collections, and items of general interest'.[358] A resident caretaker had been looking after the museum since 1934.[359] The caretaker lived with his family on the Terrace Floor.

Throughout all this time, there was no programme of repair or maintenance as such, and this, ultimately, was what got the building into trouble. To the extent that there was a policy, it was reactive. Problem, inevitably, mounted on problem. As early as 1933 there was some concern expressed over the condition of the saloon ceiling, which, according to a 1937 survey carried out by the Borough Engineer, was 'badly cracked and dropped to some extent'. The solution had been simply to rope off the floor under the affected area, and the Borough Engineer did not foresee an immediate problem. He commented:

> This defect is long standing, and the floor beneath it has been roped off. Unless the Council requires the full use of this room, in which case all the defective panelling and highly ornamented ceiling will have to be made good, then I suggest that the present arrangement be not altered.[360]

The library ceiling was also cracking, this the result, again quoting from that 1937 Survey, of an 'alteration carried out some eight to ten years ago to that part of the museum immediately over [it]'. The movement was then said to have stopped.

That same Engineer's report of 1937 also notes the state of the room above the library, then used for the museum:

> Here two trussed partitions were exposed when it was proposed some eight to ten years ago to throw the existing two rooms and an intervening closet into one. The base trusses were left owing to the fact that it was found at the time that the floor and also the ceiling structure of the [library] below [were dropping].

The purpose of this very interesting report was not to persuade Bexley UDC to spend money. Quite the reverse. It was intended to assure Councillors that the decision not to spend money on Danson was not going to lead to major failure and/or liability. In 1935,

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356 It is known, however, that the large table in the Great Hall at Hall Place, given by the Countess of Limerick, was installed at Danson from 1937. *Hall Place. A Short History and Guide* (LB of Bexley, Leisure Services Department, 1996), p. 13.

357 They are mentioned in passing by a Borough engineer's report dated 18 January 1937, which can be found in file LABX/DA/4/1/61, Local Studies Collection, Hall Place.

358 *Bexleyheath and District Local Handbook* for 1939, p. 10.

359 Bexley UDC Minutes, 1934, 24 April and 16 May, pp. 48, 122.

360 Report of 18 January 1937, Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, LABX/DA/4/1/61.

Bexley had acquired another historic house and park. Improving the 160 acre estate was a priority for the Council in the early 1950s, and the house underwent a substantial restoration and refurbishment between March 1968 and May 1969 when it opened as the headquarters of the library and museum service. In the long run, it seems, two historic houses were simply too much for the Borough, and in the struggle for funding Hall Place won out, as we shall see.[361]

The conversion of the house for use as a museum by Bexley Council, 1925-36

The main Entrance door was altered again. This time the door was made to open inwards again. In this alteration, the original frame was dressed to provide a flat surface against which a secondary frame of oak frame was installed. The resulting reduction in the size of the door opening required the cutting down of the door by c 50mm overall in height and width. The door was hung on the 1860s bronze hinges, which were relocated. It appears the original dovetail shaped hinge plates were finally removed from the inner face of the doorframe at this point. A pencil inscription in the dovetail mortise for the lower hinge reads `Hinges removed by AGB and AB 1936'.

A large `I' section steel girder was inserted under the ceiling, under the line of the partition walls between the north and south rooms on the Bedroom Floor, some time after the photograph of the interior, included in the 1923 sale catalogue, was taken. Although the relevant area of the ceiling is not included in the main area of view, it does not appear reflected in the mirror at the south end of the room.

The `Holophane' glass lampshades on the brass gasoliers in the Dining Room and in the Library date from the conversion to electricity some time after the sale catalogue photographs were taken. Presumably, Bexley Council installed them.

The wall face above the fireplace was covered with lining paper, painted greyish lime green. Pale blue paint was applied to the wall around the rectangular painting above the mantelpiece shown in the 1950 photograph of the room. This arrangement post-dates the sale catalogue photograph that shows the painting of Boyd in front of the house hanging higher on the wall.

The frame walls between the western two rooms on the Bedroom Floor were stripped of plaster, brick infill, most of the minor vertical studs and painted with a tar based preservative. This alteration is referred to in Bexley's documents as taking place in 1928/9. The frames are shown in this condition in a photograph probably dating from the 1930's in the collection at Hall Place, Bexley.

The Second War and after

In 1938, the Air Raid Precautions Department commandeered part of the house and between 1939 and 1945 the local Civil Defence Headquarters was located in the double-height kitchen. After the war the Parks and Recreation Department set up offices on the first-floor of the house. Apart from the ground floor cafe, public interest in the building plummeted after the war so that when in 1947 the Borough Engineer advised that works were necessary to restore the balustrade to the perron and other `architectural features', requiring the services of a specialist firm, the Council decided that

> In view of the fact that public use of Danson Park has diminished... the Borough Engineer be asked to submit a report on alternative methods of

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361 *Hall Place* (1996), pp. 1, 20, 22.

[carrying out] necessary [works], and produce estimate from Works Department[362]

In 1950 the 'central room' -- the term Bexley tended to apply to the Saloon -- was 'renovated and redecorated', though no details of this work have come to light.[363] In 1952, there was another burst of activity. Estimates were obtained for cleaning and repairing the saloon chandelier, though whether this was the 'cut glass chandelier of eight lights detailed in the 1805 inventory is unclear. This was judged too costly and a modern fitting took its place.[364] The remaining external repairs identified by the Borough Engineer as necessary two years previously were carried out at the same time. The works were estimated at £600.[365]

Repairs, 1951

The pediments and entablatures above the windows were covered with cement render on Expamet steel mesh by 1951 when the house was photographed. The crudely shaped render concealed the original form of the mouldings. The drawing of the pediments in the 1970s GLC Survey by Jack Adams must have been conjectured on the existing rendered mouldings. The resulting conjecture is relatively over-sized.

The windows in the Saloon were altered by the addition of a simply moulded gold painted architrave crudely fixed with nails.

The building history since listing in 1953

In 1953 the building was listed, though this seems to have made little difference to the way either it was cared for or used. From then until 1970 the local authority continued to release funds in drips and drabs as needed. The house itself was still a popular venue for parties and the cafe seems to have been well used. With the restoration of the organ (see below) in 1959 and subsequent recitals, interest in the building was rekindled. However, its ancillary buildings (Chambers' Temple and the stable block) were on the verge of collapse.

Bexley Urban District Council repairs 1953-63

A schedule of more recent repairs taken from the UDC Minutes follows.

1953	Defective drains repaired
1955	Repairs and renovation to cafe
	Roof repairs (cost of £100; supplementary estimate)
1960	'Mansion and other buildings (Town Clerk to inform Mr Giles of the arrangements for the allocation of money for the repair and maintenance of the Mansion and that the Council are satisfied with the use to which the Mansion is put).'

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362 Bexley UDC Minutes, 8 September and 13 October 1947, pp. 657, 736. The defective balustrade was repaired, according to the Minutes for 9 Febnruary 1948 (p. 247), early in the next year.

363 They are noted briefly in the UDC Minutes for 10 July, 18 September, and 27 November 1950, pp. 103, 163, 331.

364 Bexley UDC Minutes, 15 April and 29 December 1952.

365 Bexley UDC Minutes, 29 December 1952.

1961 'Mansion (allegations that ground floor unsafe since it contained long gratings on the east and west sides near the new toilets and the fittings and plumbing were obsolete. Cupboards dilapidated and whole of that part of the Mansion in poor decorative state. Arrangements already made for these to be done. Borough Engineer to report on external condition of the Mansion).'

1962 'Approach to new conveniences (remove pavings in corridor with redundant plumbing)'

1963 'Renovation of exterior (Neonore Stone Cleaning Company Ltd. quoted £802 for treating exterior of Mansion with Santex-stone colouring compound accepted§. ' [A complete schedule of these works survives and is included in the Appendix to this report.]
'External painting (Neonore to paint exterior for £155)'
'Drinking supply (new 1/2" diameter water supply to flat and office accommodation)
'Boarded-up window (to install two new windows on front elevation at estimated £50-£60)'

Internal redecoration, c 1960

By the 1980s, from photographic evidence, the decorative scheme shown in the 1920s photographic had been replaced. The brown patterned paper was glued to the plaster walls. The arabesques in the radial ceiling panels were also removed and the panels were lined with a white texture paper. The pelmets were also removed and a thin architrave moulding with a simple cavetto painted gold and white was applied around the windows. The style of the alterations suggests a date *c* 1955.

The restoration of the Danson Organ, 1958-60

One bright spot in this gloomy catalogue is the story of the organ's restoration. From the 1930s, the organ in the Library was used for musical recitals and was available to competent organists for use during certain hours. In 1951, the instrument came to the notice of Noel Mander at the St. Peter's Organ Works in Hackney, and serving as consultant to the London and Southwark Dioceses of the Church of England. Impressed by its rarity and quality, Mr Mander wanted a chance to restore it, and by 1953 was offering to do it for between £290 and £330. He was familiar with organs made by the England dynasty, having just finished revamping the one by George Pike England in St. Mary Magdalene in Holloway.[366] Bexley did nothing but Mander, to his credit, persisted, arguing that the cost of restoring the piece would only increase the more it was played. Nothing came of his initiative until 1957 when a local resident (and former student at the Royal College of Organists) a Mr Knott, also started to harangue the Council. Mander was still willing to stand by his estimate. The Royal College of Organists wrote in support. Another expert, Mr Arthur Pritchard of Hampstead Garden Suburb wrote a report detailing the historic use of the instrument and arguing that it was fit only for period music and therefore had a limited audience. This helped to fuel some on the Council who felt that the organ should be sold. Knott tried to undo the damage and

366 Correspondence dated 21 November and 17 December 1951, and 12 January 1953. Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, LABX/DA/4/1/97.

suggested that as the instrument was still in its original setting the BBC might be interested as well as recording companies. Authentic music was bound to grow in popularity, he presciently observed.[367]

By this point, though, word was out that Bexley would consider any serious offer and one was forthcoming before the close of 1957 from an organ building firm in Ruislip, JW Walker and Sons. In 1958, a vicar from Biggin Hill in search of an old organ for his new church wrote for details. However, the most serious offer came from Oxford University where the Holywell Music Room was then being reconstructed for the performance of period music on authentic instruments. The Secretary of the University Chest offered £300 for the instrument and another £400 to make good the gap left by its removal. The Rev. Symon at Biggin Hill was asked to match the offer.[368]

Word of these negotiations leaked out and sparked protest. The President of the Kent Archaeological Society and a Fellow of the Antiquaries, PJ Tester (who lived at 2 Willow Court in Bexley) was astonished that the local authority would even consider removing the instrument from its original setting. Then Mander weighed in, once more. Key members of the Council were persuaded and the organ was saved. By October, negotiations with Mander were advancing but the Council was obliged to put the work out to tender. Mander's was the lowest of the eight received, and there is some suggestion that he stuck to his estimate of 1953 in order to have the chance of restoring such a wonderful instrument.[369] The instrument was removed to his Hackney works in February 1959; his report of that month identified only one period of significant alteration, 1855, when Thomas Furcham introduced a Sesquiltera Bass for the original Cornet Treble. The Keraulophon Stop was, he believed, original. Restoring the original Treble put the price up an extra £60 but it was essential in order to make the instrument suitable for authentic eighteenth-century organ music. The work was completed in June and the final bill, including removals and various extras, came to £430. A special recital was held on 3 December and in 1960, there were several special concerts and a great deal of interest from within the musical world. The highpoint was a concert broadcast by the BBC on 14 July 1963.[370]

The removal of the Garden Temple, 1961

Chambers' Garden Temple, a small building of brown brick with a portico of four Doric columns and a slate roof surmounted by an urn, was listed in grade II at the same time as the house, 1953. This meant that its demolition could not go unnoticed, since a formal notice of intention was required by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act to be served upon the relevant county council as well as the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Since there is no record of Bexley ever having spent any money on this elegant little building, it is not surprising that by 1960 the fabric was in serious need of repair. Indeed, it seems to have been overgrown and used as a coal store.

The popular appeal that we have seen that the house enjoyed did not extend to its ancillary buildings and so objections to the scheme had inevitably to come from pressure groups not any member of the public. In late January, soon after learning of the Council's desire to give notice of intention, the Georgian Group contacted the London County Council

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367 LABX/DA/4/1/97, 18 February, 5 and 27 July, 18 November 1957.

368 LABX/DA/4/1/97, 30 November 1957, 20 April, 25 and 30 July, 1 August 1958.

369 LABX/DA/4/1/97, 12 August, 3, 8, and 24 September, 24 October, and 7 November 1958.

370 LABX/DA/4/1/97, 27 February, 29 June 1959, 17 February and 20 November 1960, 17 July 1963.

Planning Officer asking his department to prepare estimates for its repair and wondering if an Historic Buildings Council grant could be obtained for the work. The LCC wanted to be helpful. By this date, its Architects' Department was the leading authority in conservation matters but Bexley was still under the planning jurisdiction of Kent County Council. However, by 1961 the LCC and not Kent were party to negotiations conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (further research is needed to establish why this should have been so several years before Bexley became a London borough). The Borough Architect estimated the cost of repairs at nearly £1000. Early in 1961, the LCC took the view that the building (which no one seems to have realised was a work by Sir William Chambers) was of local rather than countywide significance. It therefore did not object to the notification of intention to demolish, though the Chief Planning Officer (or, very likely, members of his specialist staff) wanted to do something more. In a letter of 15 February 1961, the LCC, citing the continued opposition of the Georgian Group, suggested that perhaps the Temple could be re-erected elsewhere, and so it happened. The Temple was removed to the grounds of the house designed by James Paine at St. Paul's Walden Bury near St. Albans.[371]

External stonework repairs, 1962

On the 20th March 1962, the NeoNore Stone Cleaning Company submitted to Bexley Borough Engineers Department an estimate of £1478 for the erection of scaffolding, cleaning and restoration of Danson Park Mansions.

All elevations were to be cleaned using a continuous fine water spray and brushes. Restoration of decayed stonework was to be in their own reconstructed stone medium, areas of decay to be cut out to a depth of not less than one inch; undercut and reinforced with non-ferrous metal dowels. Pre-cast artificial stone was to be used for replacement.

The bulk of the work was the restoration in reconstructed stone of the moulded elements in the external stonework. These were principally the cornice, string courses and window surrounds. Replacement with pre-cast artificial stone was restricted to the balusters below the window openings. In addition some repointing of open joints was anticipated around doors and windows in the south and east elevations.

A separate estimate of £619 was also submitted for works to the steps leading up to the main entrance. The work anticipated was the re-fixing of the Portland stone treads, replacement of some in artificial stone, restoration and replacement of balusters, plinth and capping. Stones in the centre and top landing were to be re-fixed and repaired using stone salvaged from the bottom landing.

London Borough of Bexley repairs, 1966-71

A schedule of more recent repairs taken from the UDC Minutes follows.

1966 'Mansion (repairs to cafe)'
'Destruction of ornamental vase (cost of replacement of ornamental vase at entrance to mansion would be £130)'

1966 'Mansion (Borough Architect to supply details of cost of provision of new ceiling to storeroom and repairs to a roof)'
'Ornamental vase (pursue claim with Council's insurers)'

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371 Correspondence in Greater London Council Historic Buildings File, `Danson Park, Mansion, Stables and Temple, Bexley, AR/HB/704(I), letters and memoranda dated 18, 20, 21 and 27 January 1960, 10 and 15 February 1961.

1967 ['Civil Defence Corps (approve use of basement as a sector post in connection with revised Civil Defence Operational Plan for borough)']

1970 'Cafe (dry rot present to such an extent that it was considered advisable to close cafe premises to the public. Chairman empowered to authorise any urgent remedial works deemed expedient)'
'Mansion (report of extent of dry rot and remedial works necessary. Approve Chairman's action accepting tender from Rentokil Laboratories in sum of £3,426 for treatment and repair and the carrying out of works to floors, plaster, etc. at a cost of £1,970. Building closed for catering; Borough Engineer to submit report on feasibility of re-locating first floor kitchen on lower ground floor and that tenders be invited from specialist firms for the decoration of the Music, Dining and Octagonal Rooms)'

1971 'Mansion (dry rot found to be very extensive. Rentokil had submitted supplementary estimate of £21,621 (with that already authorised total [making] £27,017) Further difficulties could be encountered. Application made to the Historic Buildings Council for a grant towards restoration. Building to be opened up and dry rot and beetle be treated in entirety; murals to be removed and kept safely; subcommittee on future use of the Mansion)'

Saving the Danson Stables, 1961-1970

At the same time, the Borough Engineer made a structural survey of the Stables. Subsidence, structural fractures, and deteriorated stonework made it, in his view, beyond repair; however, the County Council was not notified of this in 1961 perhaps because the local authority, which was then seeking to demolish the listed temple, did not wish to appear an irresponsible owner of historic buildings. Formal notification came only in 1963. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government did not have a short memory. It was most alarmed by the proposed demolition of such an `important adjunct to a Grade I house'. The Chief Investigator of Historic Buildings himself was sent to talk over the matter with Bexley and the London County Council in February 1964.

This time the LCC was more robust in its defence, reminding Bexley that the stable block was a rare work of Taylor's (its officers still did not realise that the block was built after his death). The Council then instructed its architect to make a report on the building. Eight months later, in October 1964, the LCC architect submitted a report confirming the grave structural defects of the stable block and estimating the cost of repair at £19,730. This had been the conclusion, almost verbatim, of the Borough's Engineer back in 1961. Reading between the lines of the old LCC file it is clear that there was no will to serve a building preservation order on Bexley, so far gone was this building deemed to be. So, when the LCC informed Bexley that it would not serve a BPO, the fate of the stables seemed sealed. Permission to demolish came a year later.

Then nothing happened. The Borough Architect had been intending to erect a new stores and garage building on the site of the stables, but had so reworked the design that new planning permission was required. This was granted on 24 August 1967. Meanwhile, the changing rooms and mess room building for the Parks staff was erected to the west of the stables. Completed in 1965, its design was said to be `typical of similar vandal-proof buildings built throughout the Greater London area for this purpose and can be seen at many major open spaces including Blackheath'.[372]

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372 See proof of evidence submitted by the Borough Engineer and Surveyor to the Public Inquiry held to determine the fate of the stables in 1970. GLC Historic Buildings File, AR/HB/704(I), undated.

When, in September 1969, the Borough finally got around to notifying the newly formed Greater London County Council of its intention to demolish the listed stable block, the climate of opinion had shifted. For the first time local residents, not just the amenity societies, took an active interest in the historic character of the Park and its buildings. So, while the Chief Planning Officer of the GCC was pausing to consider Bexley's notification, he was also being battered by letters from the Georgian Group, Ancient Monuments Society, Bexley Arts Council, the Borough Archivist, and the local historical society. A member of staff informed him that one local activist, Ted Hollamby, Architect to the London Borough of Lambeth, was likely to put up a particularly spirited, and well-informed, campaign. It must be said that the stinging criticisms made by amenity groups and the public were echoed inside the GLC. In an internal advice note to the Chief Planning Officer, a HBD officer wrote:

> the Borough has allowed the building to decay to the point where restoration has become difficult. Other ornamental buildings in the park have been lost in this way. The decision on listed building consent rests solely with the Minister but the views of the HB Board will no doubt be sought. The matter is still under investigation in HB Division...[373]

The GLC was in a good position to take a strong line, having the most sophisticated professional apparatus for dealing with building conservation in the entire nation. This had been given a terrific boost in 1965 by the formation of a special Historic Buildings Division out of the old the Historic Buildings Section of the Architects' Department.[374] (This Division survives, with some changes, as the London Division of English Heritage.) Asked to comment on the proposed demolition, HBD carried out its investigation into the history and structure of the stables using its own staff of specialist historians working in conjunction with the Bexley Local Studies Librarian, PE Morris. This revealed that the extant stable block was of a later build than the house and was almost certainly not by Taylor. The name of SP Cockerell, one of Taylor's pupils, was mentioned, an interesting suggestion which has never been properly investigated. It was also realised that the ashlar masonry was reused from Taylor's original wings.

The Historic Buildings Board, later the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission and recreated as English Heritage in 1983, advised the Minister of Housing and Local Government. Its advice of 20 November 1969 was unequivocal:

> It seems therefore that there is no case for demolishing the listed building on the grounds of the cost of restoring it [then estimated at £29,000] as compared with providing the necessary accommodation in a new building [for storing park maintenance equipment; the estimate was £30,000] and a strong case for retaining the stables and giving a new lease of life.

In order to soften the blow and create a more positive atmosphere, the GLC offered the professional services of its own Historic Buildings Division to Bexley.

But Bexley was unrepentant. Its professional staff told a different story, putting the cost of repair at a staggering £67,750, more than double the figure arrived at by the GLC Architects. In view of the competing claims, the Minister of Housing and Local Government decided to hold a public inquiry on 14 April 1970.

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373 GLC Historic Buildings File, AR/HB/704(I), 10 October 1969.

374 For the history of LCC and then GLC conservation work in London see J. Earl, `London Government: a Record of Custodianship', in M. Hunter, ed., *Preserving the Past. The Rise of Heritage in Modern Britain* (Stroud, Gloucs.: Alan Sutton Ltd., 1996),pp. 57-76.

The Ministry inspector was to resolve three key points:

> the architectural and historic interest of the stables
> the works needed to put the building into a good state of repair
> the possibility of new accommodation required by the Council being provided by the conversion of the stables[375]

Both sides put their cases but in the end the inspector found against the Borough. Consent to demolish was officially refused in August 1970.

The House Reaches Crisis Point

It is clear that the house reached a crisis point in the late 1960s, and that the explanation for a more robust attitude to maintaining the 'Mansion' was not taken at this time was the programme of restoration being pursued at Hall Place.[376] The Report of the 'Danson Mansion Sub-Committee' was read on 3 March 1971. It reads positively. There is a strong commitment to keeping the house in public use, and a recommendation to accept a £22,797 quote from Rentokil Ltd for damp treatment. A £50,000 was to be earmarked for a Building Maintenance Fund. Things seemed to be looking up, but by 1974 the Working Party convened to oversee work to the house had retreated from the earlier commitment, concluding that maintenance and repair costs were too high to meet. Emergency measures were approved, including 'essential work to the roof, and outside treatment to render [the] building weatherproof.'

In the meantime, the preservation lobby was beginning to take an interest in the building's fate. The building's history as a conservation *cause celebre* dates to a 1969 *Country Life* article, which called attention to its plight and demanded decisive action. The recently founded Bexley Civic Society observed, with a jaundiced eye, that the attention paid to the roof was agreed only to avoid potential embarrassment should the Department of Environment decide to serve an urgent repairs notice on the Borough, a power granted in Section 101 of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act.[377]

Moves to save Danson House

Stripping out, 1970-93,

The house was closed to the public and stripped out following the discovery of an extensive outbreak of dry rot. Bonding timbers were replaced with brick and a hard cement mortar. Most of the plaster was stripped from the Attic and Bedroom Floors. Areas of plaster were stripped on the Principal Floor. The organ was transferred to the Great Hall at Hall Place, Bexley.

The house was let to Laurie Taylor who set about its repair. Many of the joinery fixtures and fittings were removed.

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375 GLC to Bexley on behalf of the Minister, 22 January 1970, GLC AR/HB/704(I). This same file contains the various proofs of evidence. These documents can also be found in the files of the Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, DAN 2:P:S:1970.

376 *Hall Place* (1996), pp. 1, 20, 22.

377 Autumn Bulleton of the Bexley Civic Society, October 1974, Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, DAN 2:M.

The flat roofed additions were demolished to ground level and the toilet fittings were removed. Some making good was carried out to make the building watertight. Concrete floors were constructed at ground floor to span the remaining Kitchen floor rooms, K6 and K10. Pink bricks were set in sand cement mortar to form a 220mm thick wall face with a door opening lined with simple steel "L" section door frame in the door opening on the east side of the north wing. The wall face in the south east corner of the Terrace floor room of the west flat roofed addition was made good with pink bricks set in a sand cement mortar.

In the Entrance Hall, there were four to five holes drilled in each of the rear faces of the brick oculi, which were available for inspection. The holes appeared to be c 8-10mm in diameter. They appeared to be relatively clean suggesting that they were modern. It would appear from their circular shape that the flat fixing nails used to secure the battens for the plaster and lathe elsewhere in the room had not been driven into the holes. Other holes similar in diameter and depth were also observed in the modern brickwork surrounding the concrete lintel above the bookcase recess in the north east corner of the room.

14.

English Heritage intervenes, 1994-88

In May 1994, English Heritage, alarmed at the condition of the house, commissioned a feasibility study by the architects Purcell Miller Tritton, to explore the potential cost of repair. In August the decision was made to purchase the house in order to effect its repair. The house was transferred from Bexley to English Heritage in July 1995.

Investigation and analysis, 1995-8

On 17/10/95 Jamie Coath and Mark Hammond from the architects Purcell Miller Tritton removed the render from the pediment above the south window to the Dining Room and part of the render above the window in the centre of the west bay of the Library. The original masonry joints in the pediments were exposed, although the original surfaces were largely eroded or cut back. Some of the deterioration must have been due to the inclusion of iron cramps set in the tops of the stones, very close to the exterior wall face. The cramps were set in lead but rusting had caused expansion and delamination.

During the current programme of restoration works to the Principal floor interiors, building investigation and analysis revealed that the plaster roundel in the closet room P7, east of the stair well on the Principal Floor, was originally hung in the Library, room P4, above the fireplace. The subsequent decision to return the plaque to its original location in the Library allowed the recording of the evidence for its original installation and its relocation to the closet room P7.

The origin of the circular plaque posed a question as soon as investigation of the house began in 1995. That there had been some alterations made to the plaster wall face above the fireplace in the Library was evident from undulations in the wall face. However, it was not possible to investigate these with modern painted lining paper applied to the wall. Furthermore, it appeared that the undulations in the wall face related to a rectangular feature instead of a roundel. The realisation that the scheme at The Oaks, Carshalton, provided an identical parallel use of the three plaques in combination strengthened the case for further investigation.

The removal of the modern painted lining paper exposed the limits of the original plaster and the making good, which followed the removal of the plaque. There was a crack in the wall face where the two types of plaster met. The mechanical removal of paint using scrapers by the English Heritage Paint Conservation Studio team of the earlier layers exposed the outline of the ribbons, swags and paterae. This outline was then traced onto tracing paper and digitised for AutoCAD.

The hard grey making good plaster was removed and the underlying laths photographed. The laths were then removed, the making good battens exposed and the area was photographed and drawn again. The making good battens were then removed and the plaque fixing battens were exposed and recorded. The plaque was photographed *in-situ*. Removal of the making good plaster exposed the single fixing cleat and the cut recess in the wall face. The plaque was photographed again. The cleat was removed and the plaque gently prized away from the plaster fixing daubs. The exposed brick and lintel construction was then drawn and photographed. The careful stripping of paint above the fireplace was undertaken by the English Heritage, Paint Conservation Unit. The unpicking of the Victorian plaster was undertaken by Clifden Conservation, plaster specialists, who also advised on some of the interpretation of the physical evidence. Historical research consisted of a brief scan of the published material on contemporary

houses and plasterwork with special attention given to the work of Robert Taylor and William Chambers.

Repairs and restoration, 1997

Main Entrance door removal of frame and restoration of cornice

The round plaque from the Library was returned to its original position. Laths were fixed again to the original plaque fixing battens. The plaque is to be fixed using screws against these laths with some daubs of plaster so that the face of the plaque is recessed *c* 10mm from the plaster wall face. The surrounding plaster surface will be made good and a moulded architrave made up in sections of about 250mm in length will be applied to conceal the joint between the plaque and the surrounding plaster. The moulding of the architrave will be based on the waterleaf mouldings in the ceiling of the Saloon. The oak leaf swags and acorns were made to resemble the swags above the main entrance door. The ribbons were styled on those on the Saloon doorcases and in the surrounds to the two flanking plaques. The patera was modelled on the patera in the Saloon ceiling.

The making wall surface in the closet was made god with plaster. The cuts in the lintel and fascia board were repaired with one piece of timber and the circular recess in the brickwork was filled with a base coat of plaster and skimmed over. The Victorian timber cornice in the closet was reinstated.

15.

The Park and related buildings in the twentieth century

The local authority has always valued the park. The first significant change during its tenure was the cutting of a new entrance on the line of Watling Street. This was marked by a new set of gates executed by a local firm (Edwards of Dartford) and made from beaten and wrought iron. Copper shields bearing the arms of Bexley UDC; the masonry is Portland stone artificially darkened. These were officially opened on 22 March 1929.[378] From the beginning, Bexley was keen to promote some areas of the Park for sport. Quite early on, Bexley constructed a football pitch, tennis courts, a bowling green, and athletics facilities. An open-air swimming pool was built to the south near to the A2 (Rochester Way) in 1936.[379] Between 1944 and 1963 part of the stable block was used as a sports changing room.

There were several notable enhancements in the `sixties. The popularity of the Hall Place Garden, opened in the early 1950s, suggested the creation of the present Rock Garden, which opened in 1963.[380] In 1964, the Boathouse and Cafe were finished and the purpose-built dressing room and toilet block in the following year. The handsome lodge just within the east gate dates to about this time, as does the golf course.

These alterations, though they are not in keeping with the architecture of the house or the eighteenth-century scheme for the park, mark an important phase in the history of Danson. The local authority, it should be remembered, has owned the house and park for nearly 75 years, longer than the Boyds, the Johnstons, and the Beans. Without Bexley's intervention in 1924, the whole area would almost certainly have been swallowed up a commercial housing development.

Future strategies for the Park, therefore, should pay due regard to those structures and areas, which directly express this municipal character. The design of the Changing Rooms, the Boathouse Cafe, and the east Lodge are good examples of their type. They are useful buildings (the latter is in private ownership). The 'English Garden'' and 'Rock Garden'', though they could not have been imagined by Nathaniel Richmond in the 1760s, have positive aesthetic merit and are popular. It is possible to enhance to Georgian character of the house and park while respecting these areas.

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378 Described in *The Recorder for Bexley, Bexleyheath, and East Wickham*, no. 1 (March 1929), p. 6.

379 M. Scott, `The Story of Danson' (leaflet, LB of Bexley Library and Museums Department, 1982), unpaginated.

380 Local Studies Collection, Hall Place, DAN 2:P:RO:1963.

16.

The results of the paint analysis related to the development of the building

The findings of the paint analysis undertaken by Helen Hughes from the English Heritage Painting Conservation Studio have been integrated into this report in tabular form. The drawing up these tables has resulted in the tentative identification of a series of approximately dated paint schemes for each of the principal rooms. These are, of course, highly interpretative but a series of key events, identified and dated through building analysis, for each room allows surprisingly detailed analysis of the paint strata diagrams.

In the analysis of paint strata from a large number of samples, colour and composition are clearly significant characteristics that alone can sometimes indicate a common paint scheme. Clearly, some features were painted more frequently. In the case of the Library, the joinery had the greatest number of paint layers and this effectively limits the number of identifiable paint schemes. For the joinery, many of the paint layers are repetitious but the occasional material ingredient such as emerald in a single coat of paint can suggest a correspondence with other similarly coloured paint layers.

However, certain features with a known date, such as the removal of the large plaque from above the fireplace in the Library which was immediately followed by a change to a blue and cream scheme, can anchor a sequence in such a way that reduces the number of possible interpretations of the paint layers from before and after this event to within manageable limits.

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Entrance Hall, part 1, schemes 1 to 3

		1			2		3	
		John Boyd I			John Boyd I		John Boyd II	
		1766			1780		1805	
Ceiling bed	EH/3/12a	**white plaster**						
Ceiling rose	EH/1/1	**white plaster**	distemper traces		cream oil paint			
Cornice	EH/3/13	**white plaster**	distemper traces		cream oil paint			off-white
Wall face	EH/18/49a	**plaster**		yellow	yellow	*dirt*		off-white/ cream
Hemi-spherical niches	EH/27/34						**plaster**	off-white
Plaster details	EH/17/46	**plaster**	distemper traces	grey white	grey white	*dirt*		off-white
Joinery	EH/34/16	**wood**	pale cream					off-white/ cream
Skirting behind pedestal	EH/32/13	**wood**	pale cream					off-white
Window sash	EH/23/316	**wood**	wood grain					off-white
Entrance door columns	EH/33/5	**wood**	pale cream					off-white/ cream

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Entrance Hall, part 2, schemes 4 to 12

		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Johnson	Johnson	Johnson	Alfred Bean	Alfred Bean	Bean family	Bexley Council	Bexley Council	Bexley Council
		1820	1830	1850	1865	1885	1900	1925	1935	1955
Ceiling bed	EH/3/12a			off-white distemper	dark cream distemper	grey/ cream	off-white distemper			
Ceiling rose	EH/1/1			off-white distemper	dark cream distemper	grey/ cream	off-white distemper			
Cornice	EH/3/13			off-white distemper	dark cream distemper	grey/ cream	off-white distemper			
Wall face	EH/18/49a		off-white/ cream	off-white/ cream	off-white/ cream	pale pink	off-white	off-white	modern yellow	modern yellow
Hemi-spherical niches	EH/27/34		off-white	off-white	off-white	pale pink	off-white	off-white	modern yellow	modern yellow
Plaster details	EH/17/46	off-white	off-white	off-white	off-white	pale pink	off-white	off-white	modern yellow	modern orange
Joinery	EH/34/16		off-white/ cream	off-white/ cream	off-white/ cream	pale cream		mid cream	modern cream	
Skirting behind pedestal	EH/32/13				off-white					
Window sash	EH/23/316			off-white	wood graining	wood graining	off-white	cream	modern cream	
Entrance door columns	EH/33/5		off-white/ cream		off-white/ cream	grey marbling [381]		cream marbling	wood graining	

[381] Probably intended to match the slate tops of the radiator grilles, introduced after 1883

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Dining Room, part 1, schemes 1 to 5

		1			2	3	4	5		
		John Boyd I			John Boyd II	Johnson	Johnson	Alfred Bean		
		1766			1805	1820	1850	1865		
Ceiling bed	DR/1/2/8	**plaster**	white distemper						white	
Ceiling rose	DR/4							**papier mache**	blue distemper	
Cornice	DR/4/15	**plaster**	warm white						blue distemper	
Wall face	DR/8/36	**plaster**	warm white		light grey	light grey			blue grey	
Dado face	DR/97	**plaster**	warm white		white	white			white	
Panel frames	DR/8/41	**wood**	warm white	gold		distemper			blue white	gold
Joinery	DR/13/57	**wood**	white		white	white	white		white	
Sash windows	DR/16/72a	**oak**	white		white	white			white	

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Dining Room, part 2, schemes 6 to 11

		6	7	8				9	10	11		
		Alfred Bean	Alfred Bean	Bean family				Bexley Council	Bexley Council	Bexley Council		
		1885	1900	1910				1925	1935	1950		
Ceiling bed	DR/1/2/8		distemper	lining paper	distemper					modern white		
Ceiling rose	DR/4	purple distemper	blue distemper		buff distemper			blue distemper	modern green	white	modern blue	gold paint
Cornice	DR/4/15	purple distemper	blue distemper								modern blue	
Wall face	DR/8/36				green			green			blue	
Dado face	DR/97		white		cream			cream				
Panel frames	DR/8/41				yellow	blue	gold					
Joinery	DR/13/57	pink			cream					cream	maroon	
Sash windows	DR/16/72a				cream			cream		cream		

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Saloon, part 1, schemes 1 and 2

		1			2			
		John Boyd 1			Alfred Bean			
		1766			1865			
Ceiling bed	S/7/33	plaster	warm white				distemper	
Ceiling, relief mouldings originally plainly painted	S/4	plaster	warm white				distemper	
Ceiling, original gildings now painted in gold paint	S/10	plaster	warm white	gold			distemper	
Ceiling, original gilding now painted blue	S/22	plaster	warm white	gold				
Cornice, mouldings originally painted white	S/12/172	plaster	warm white					
Cornice, elements retaining original gilding	S/13/177	plaster	warm white	gold				
Cornice elements originally gilded, now painted cream	S/173	plaster	warm white	gold				
Cornice elements originally gilded now painted with gold paint	S/186	plaster	warm white	gold				
Frieze, background	S/217	plaster	white	blue			blue	
Upper carved wood[382] fillet	S/20/241				wood	gesso	gold size	gold
Lower carved wood fillet	S/20/243				wood	white		gold
Joinery, plainly painted elements	S/23/162	wood	white				white/ cream	
Dado rail and skirting	S/22/160	wood	white	gold			white	gold
Plaster dado face	S/24/169	plaster	warm white				white/ cream	

382 According to the strata diagram this has two layers of gold, is this an anomaly? As far as I can tell, the fillet is of the same phase as the Victorian mirrors and pelmets. Have these been sampled for comparison?

Table illustrating the development of paint schemes in the Saloon, part 2, schemes 3 to 5

		3	4	5		
		Bexley Council	Bexley Council	Bexley Council		
		1925	1935	by 1958		
Ceiling bed	S/7/33			cream		
Ceiling, relief mouldings originally plainly painted	S/4	off white		cream	blue	gold paint
Ceiling, original gildings now painted in gold paint	S/10	white	distemper	cream	blue	gold paint
Ceiling, original gilding now painted blue	S/22	white	distemper	cream	blue	
Cornice, mouldings originally painted white	S/12/172		distemper	cream		
Cornice, elements retaining original gilding	S/13/177					
Cornice elements originally gilded, now painted cream	S/173			cream		
Cornice elements originally gilded now painted with gold paint	S/186	white	distemper	cream	blue	gold paint
Frieze, background	S/217				blue	
Upper carved wood fillet	S/20/241					
Lower carved wood fillet	S/20/243					
Joinery, plainly painted elements	S/23/162	white/ cream	white/ cream	beige		gold paint
Dado rail and skirting	S/22/160			beige		
Plaster dado face	S/24/169	white/ cream	white/ cream	white/ cream		white/ cream

Interpretative table illustrating the development of the decorative paint schemes in the Library, Part 1, schemes 1 to 3

		1				2		3	
		John Boyd I				John Boyd II		Alfred Bean	
		1766				1805		1865	
Ceiling rose	MR/1/2							**papier - mache**	cream distemper
Ceiling bed	MR/1/8	**plaster**	distemper						
Cornice	MR/5/36	**plaster**	off-white oil paint						cream/grey distemper
Timber frieze	MR/6/44							**wood**	cream oil paint
Wall face behind frieze	MR/8/62	**plaster**	white u/c	light green	dark green				
Wall face below frieze	MR/8/63	**plaster**	white u/c	light green	dark green				light blue
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/C	**plaster**	white u/c	white u/c	dark green				light blue
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/D	**plaster**	white u/c	white u/c	dark green				light blue
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/A, B & E							**plaster**	light blue
Large plaque	MR/17/2	**plaster**	off-white			off-white			off-white
Small plaques	MR/13AA	**plaster**	off-white			off-white			off-white
Joinery	MR/9/100	**wood**	white			white			white with blue
Dado face	MR/11/11 9	**plaster**	off-white			off-white			off-white
Window frame	MR/9/88	**oak**	wood graining			off-white	*weathering*		off-white

Interpretative table illustrating the development of the decorative paint schemes in the Library, Part 2, schemes 4 to 7

		4	5	6	7	
		Afred Bean	Bean family	Bean family	Bexley Council	
		1885	1900	1910	1925	
Ceiling rose	MR/1/2	green distemper	white distemper	white		white distemper
Ceiling bed	MR/1/8	green oil paint			lining paper	white distemper
Cornice	MR/5/36	(yellow) green distemper	grey distemper	white distemper		yellow
Timber frieze	MR/6/44	green distemper	green emerald distemper[383]			yellow
Wall face behind frieze	MR/8/62					
Wall face below frieze	MR/8/63	coarse green	green emerald	[384]		
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/C	coarse green	green emerald	cream Pb	lining paper	cream Pb
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/D	coarse green	green emerald	cream Pb	lining paper	cream Pb
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/A, B & E	coarse green	green emerald	[385]	lining paper	cream
Large plaque	MR/17/2			off-white	[386]	
Small plaques	MR/13AA	pale green		blued white distemper		gold and blue
Joinery	MR/9/100	white with green	white/green (emerald)	white green		cream/ green
Dado face	MR/11/119	off-white	off-white	off-white		cream
Window frame	MR/9/88		off-white	off-white		

383 Are the other green emeralds not distemper?

384 Lining paper applied and removed taking cream with it above and below?

385 Mirror hung in this position, hence no cream paint?

386 Large plaque removed to closet room P7

Interpretative table illustrating the development of the decorative paint schemes in the Library, Part 3, schemes 8 to 10

		8	9		10	
		Bexley Council	Bexley Council		Bexley Council	
		1935	1948		1955	
Ceiling rose	MR/1/2	grey	cream			gold paint
Ceiling bed	MR/1/8	white	cream distemper			white
Cornice	MR/5/36	white/ green	cream			modern blue
Timber frieze	MR/6/44	white/ green	cream			modern blue
Wall face behind frieze	MR/8/62					
Wall face below frieze	MR/8/63		green zinc	cream	green u/c	blue titanium
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/C	green	green zinc	[387]		
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/D	green	green zinc	cream	green u/c	blue titanium
Wall face above fireplace	MR/12/A, B & E	green	green zinc	[388]		
Large plaque	MR/17/2					modern white
Small plaques	MR/13AA	gold and blue				gold and blue
Joinery	MR/9/100	cream with green	cream		cream	blue green
Dado face	MR/11/119		cream			
Window frame	MR/9/88		cream		modern cream	

[387] Area obscured by large painting shown in 60s photos

[388] Area obscured by large painting shown in 60s photos

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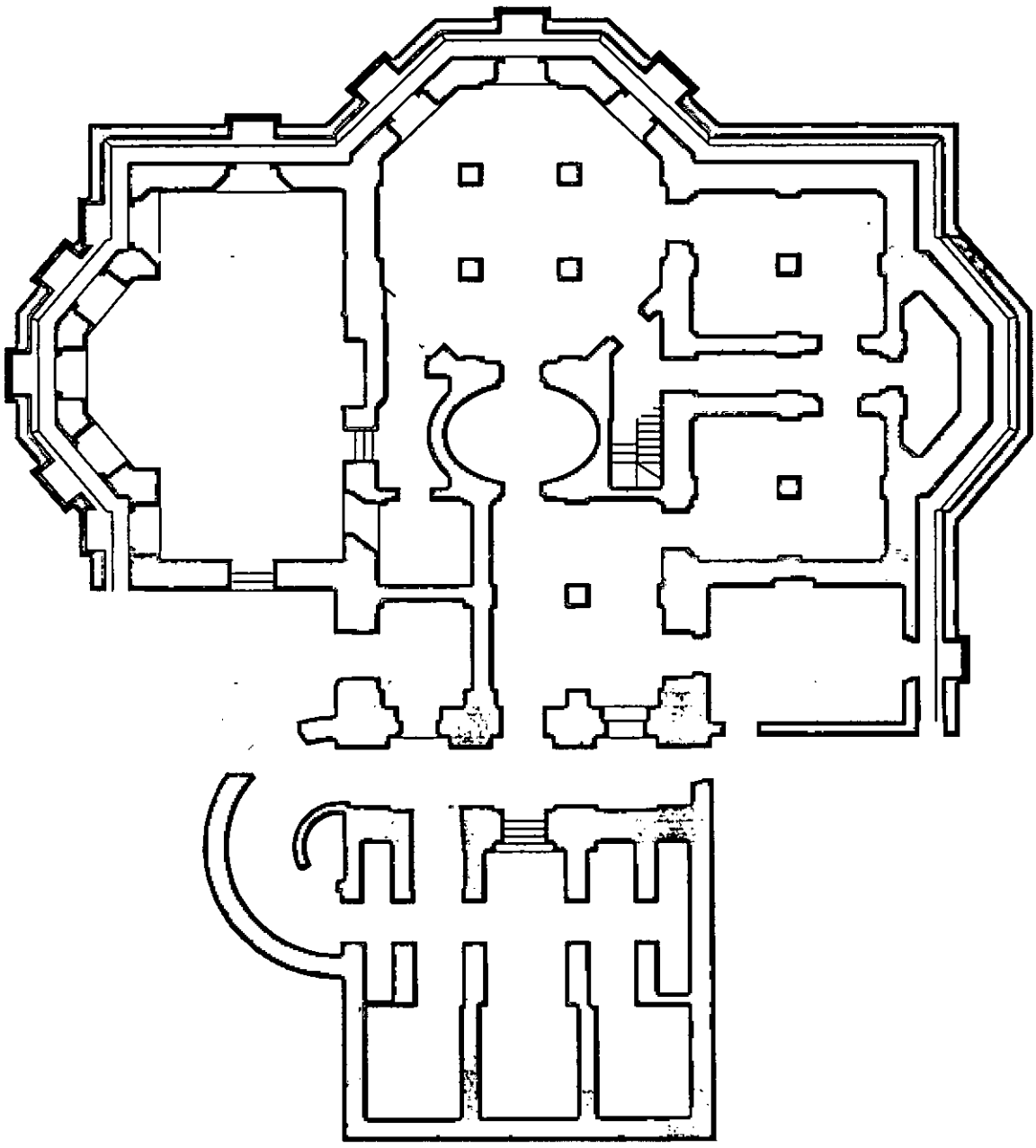
The Kitchen Floor

Fabric surviving from 1763



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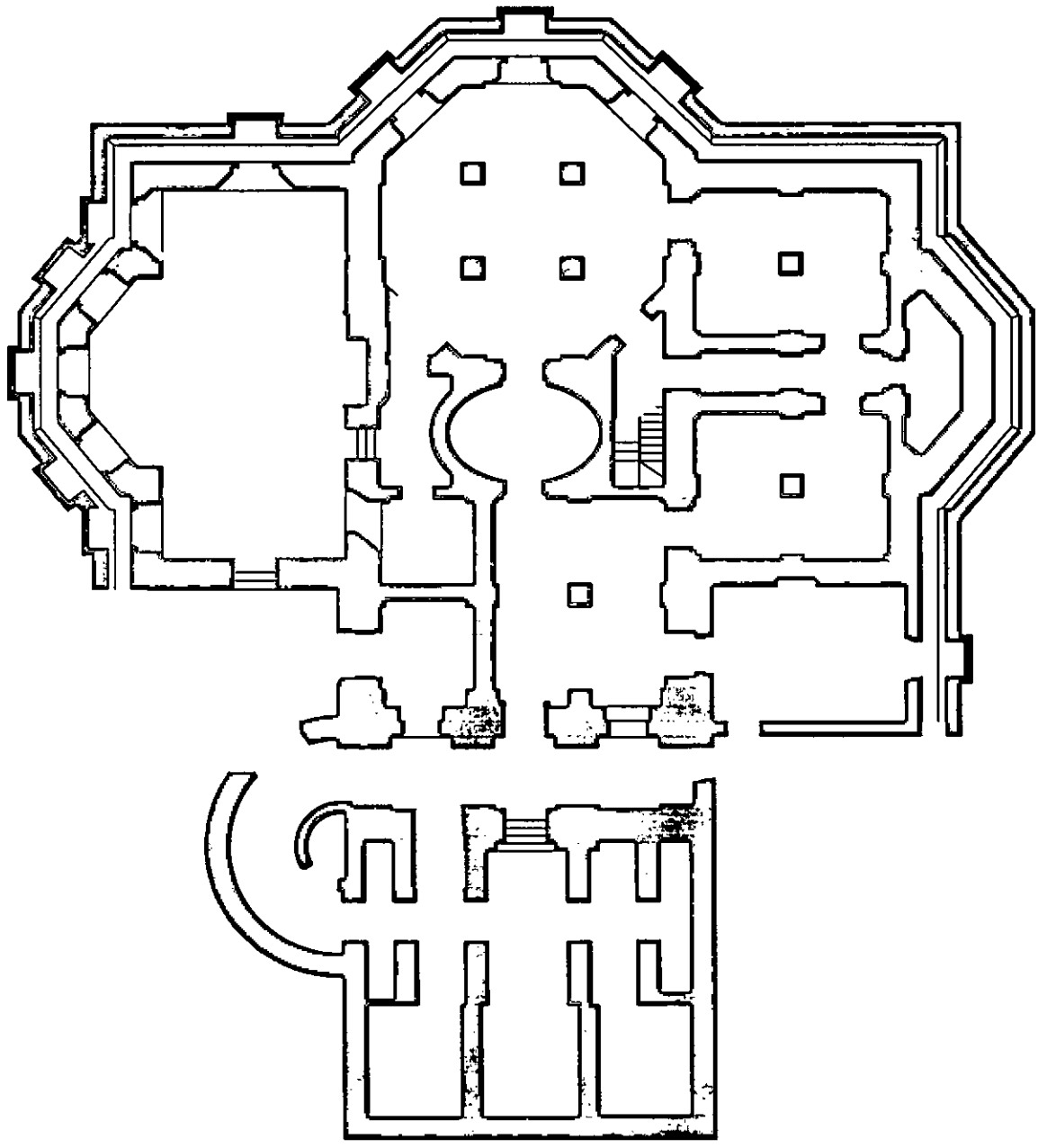
The Kitchen Floor

Fabric surviving from 1766



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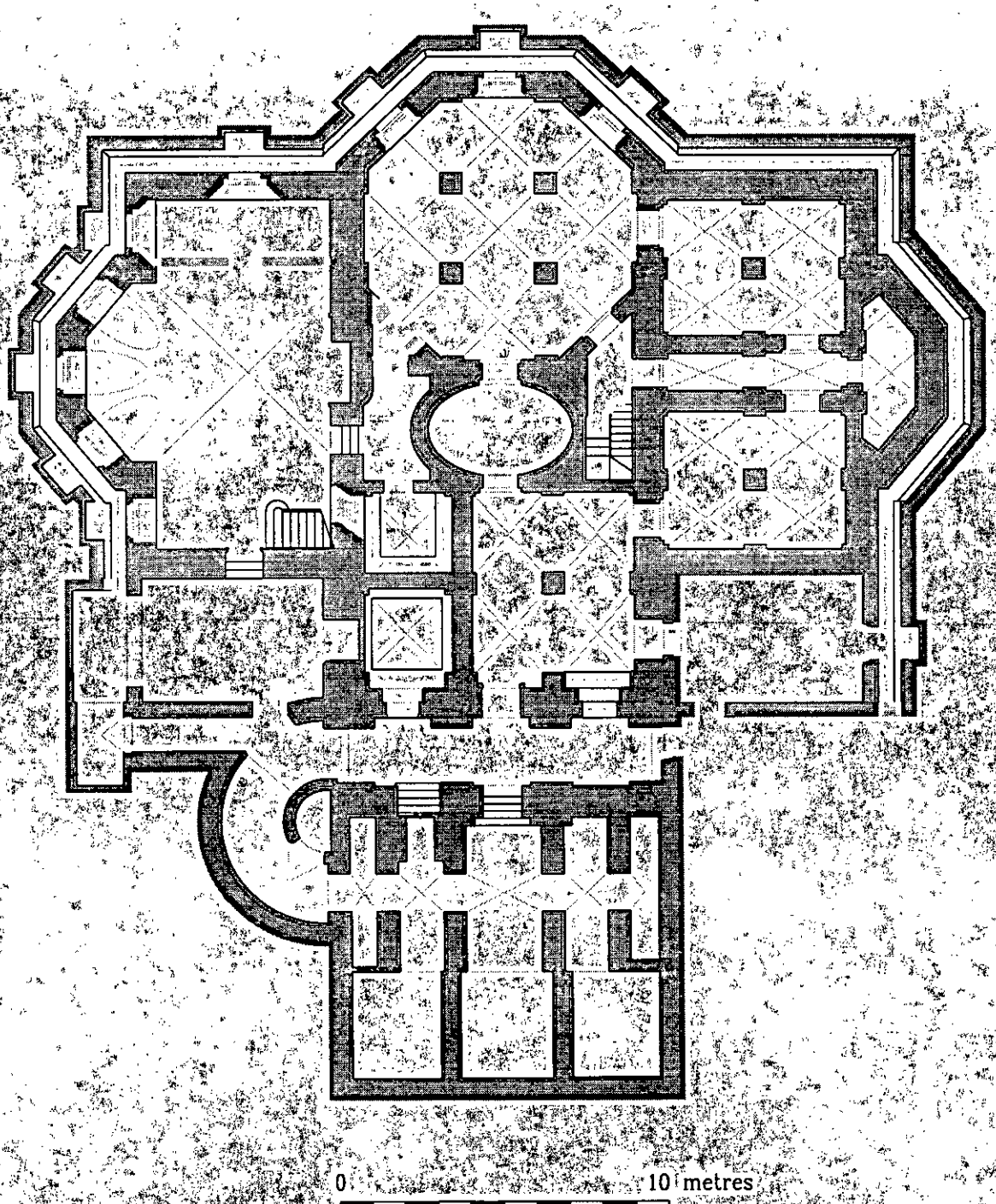
The Kitchen Floor

Fabric surviving from 1805

Conjectural reconstruction



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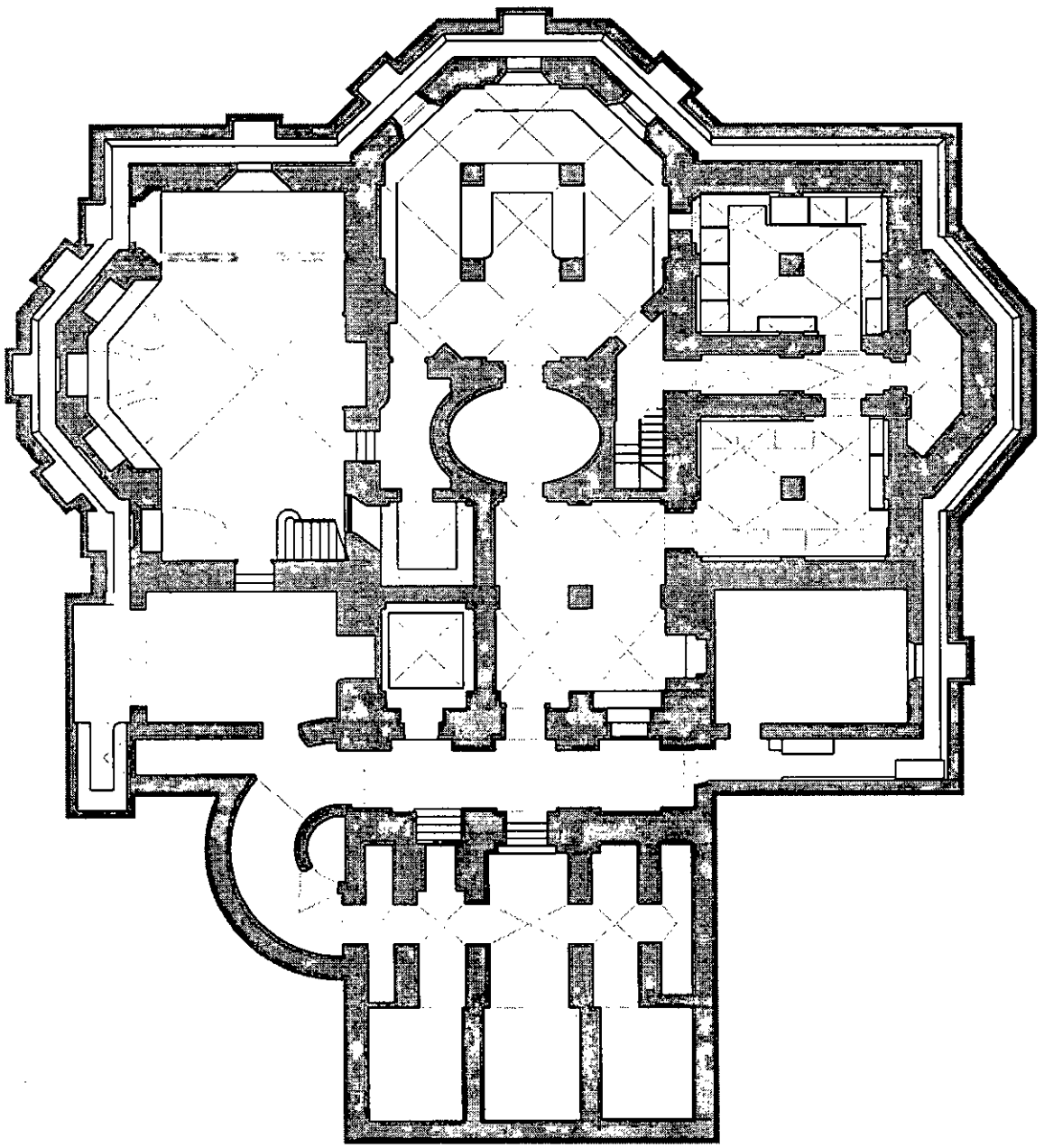
The Kitchen Floor

Fabric surviving from 1865

Conjectural reconstruction



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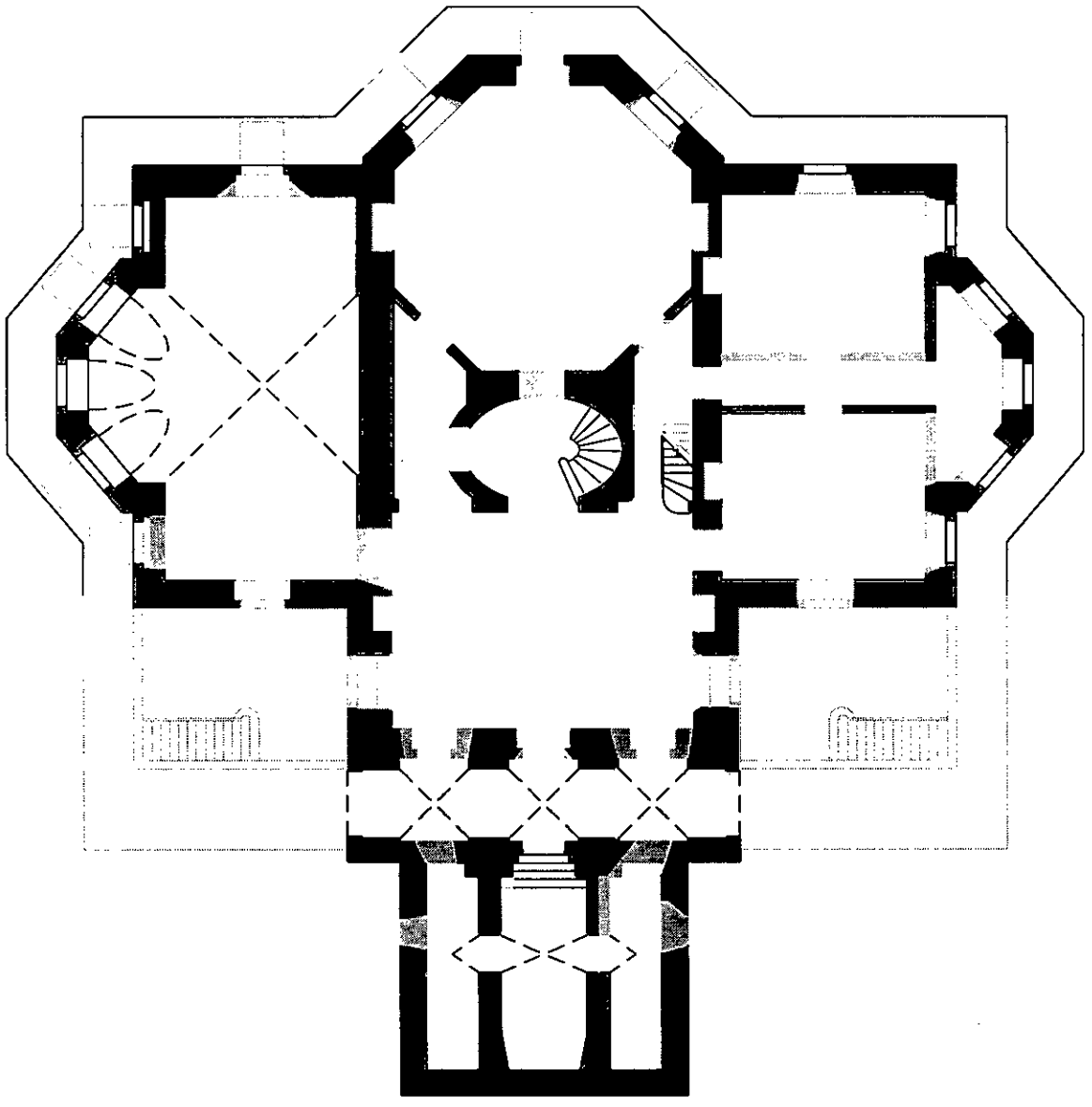
The Terrace Floor

Fabric surving from 1763

Conjectural reconstruction



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The Terrace Floor

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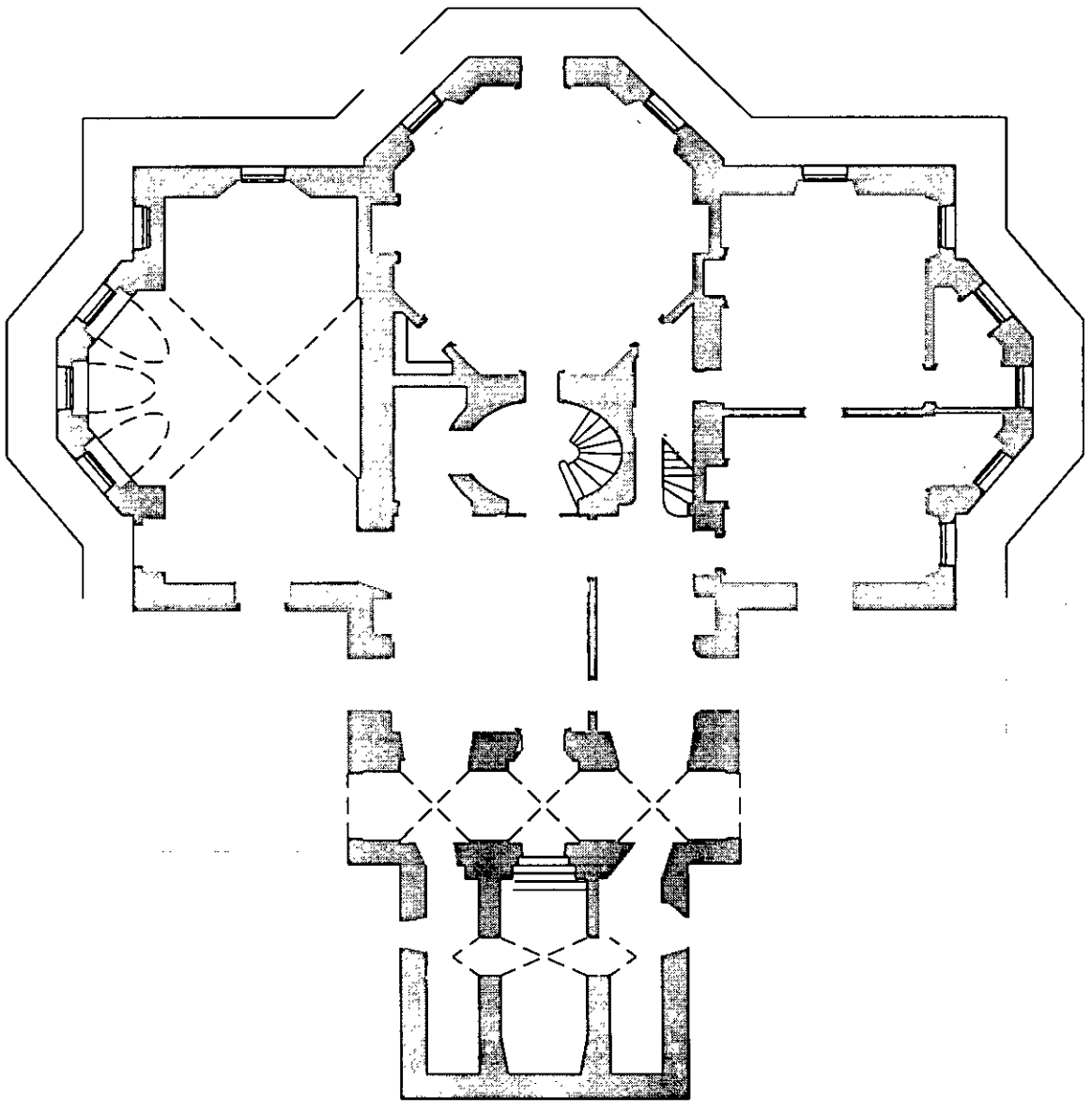

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The Terrace Floor

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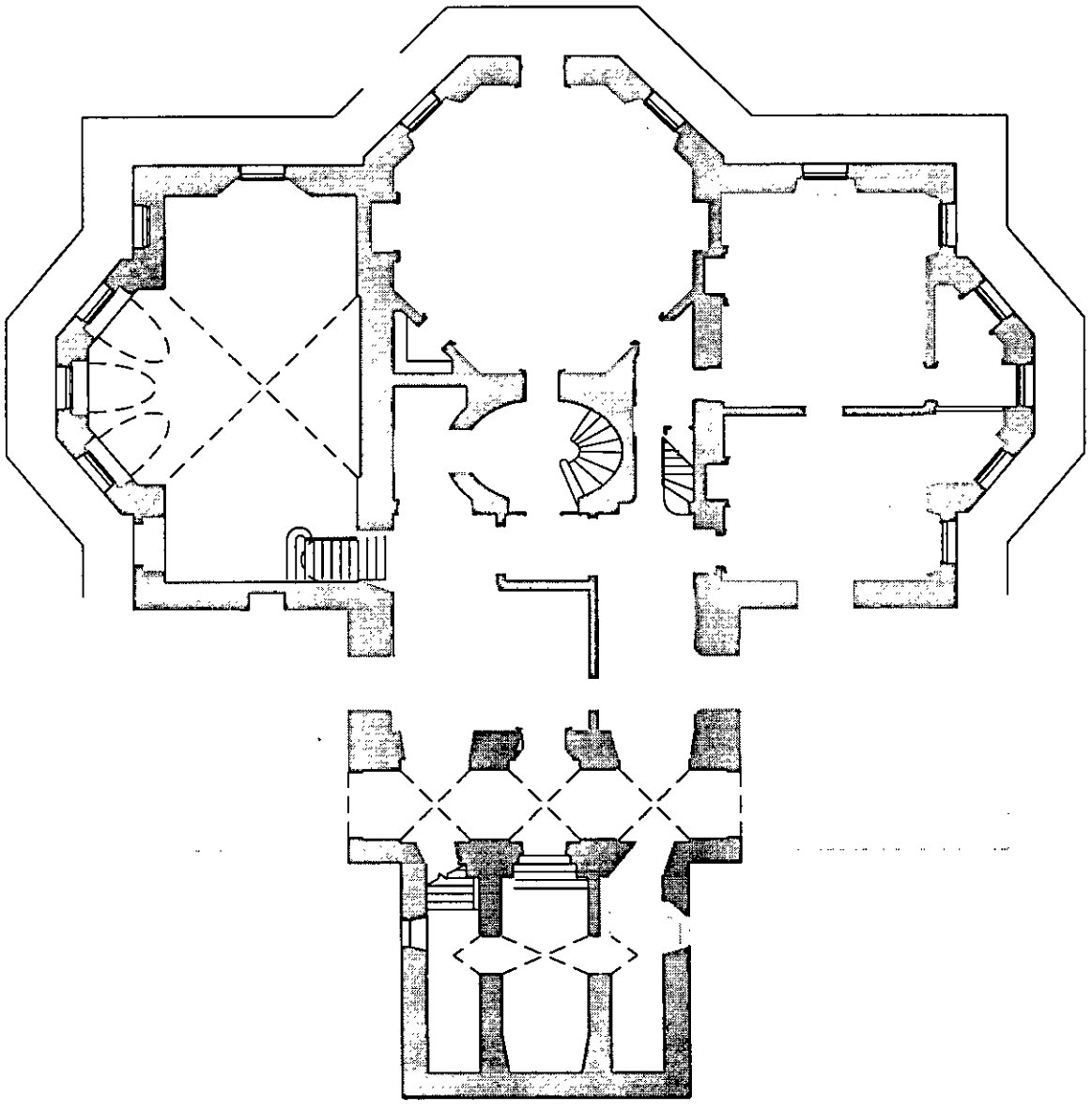

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The Terrace Floor

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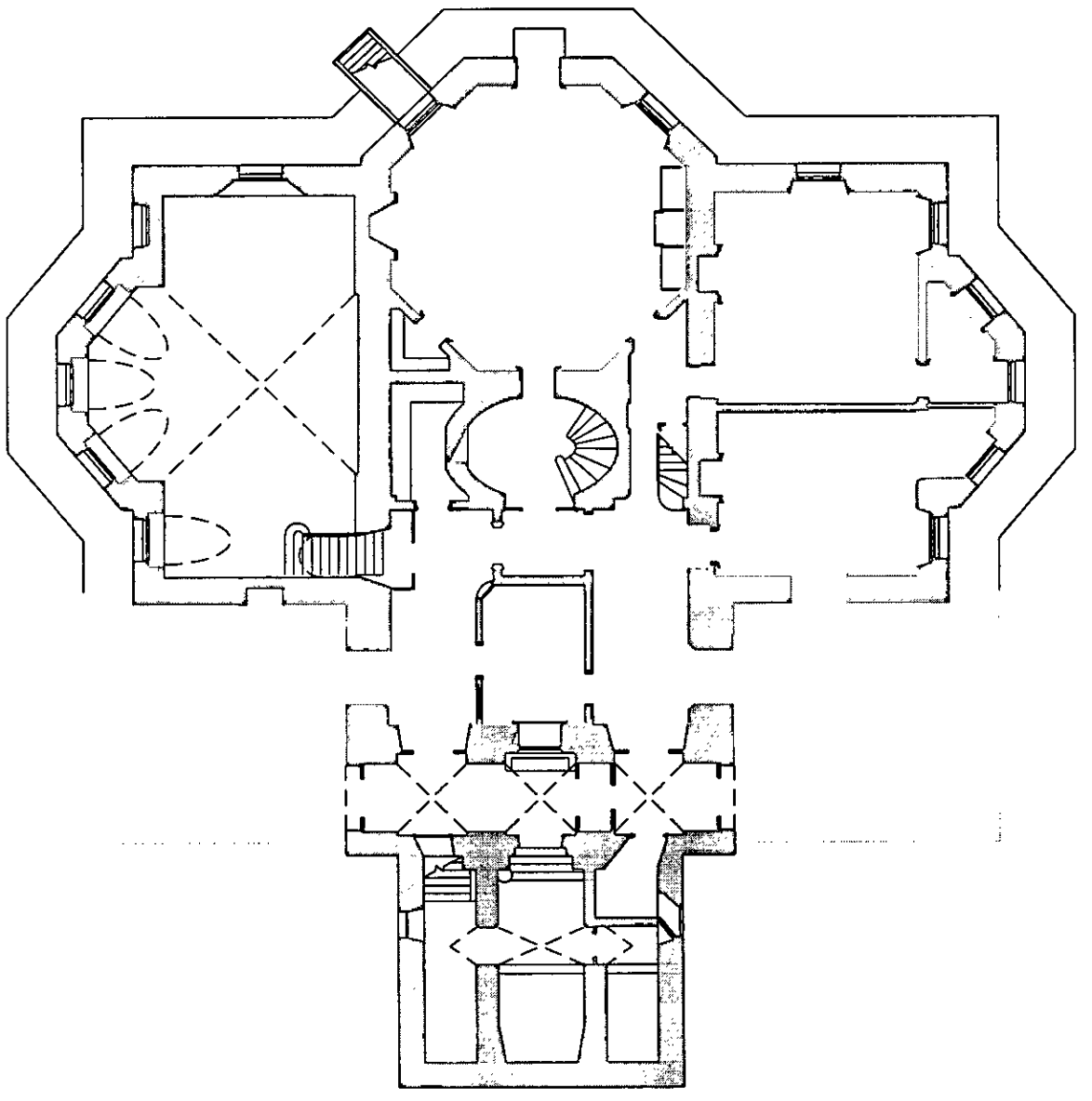

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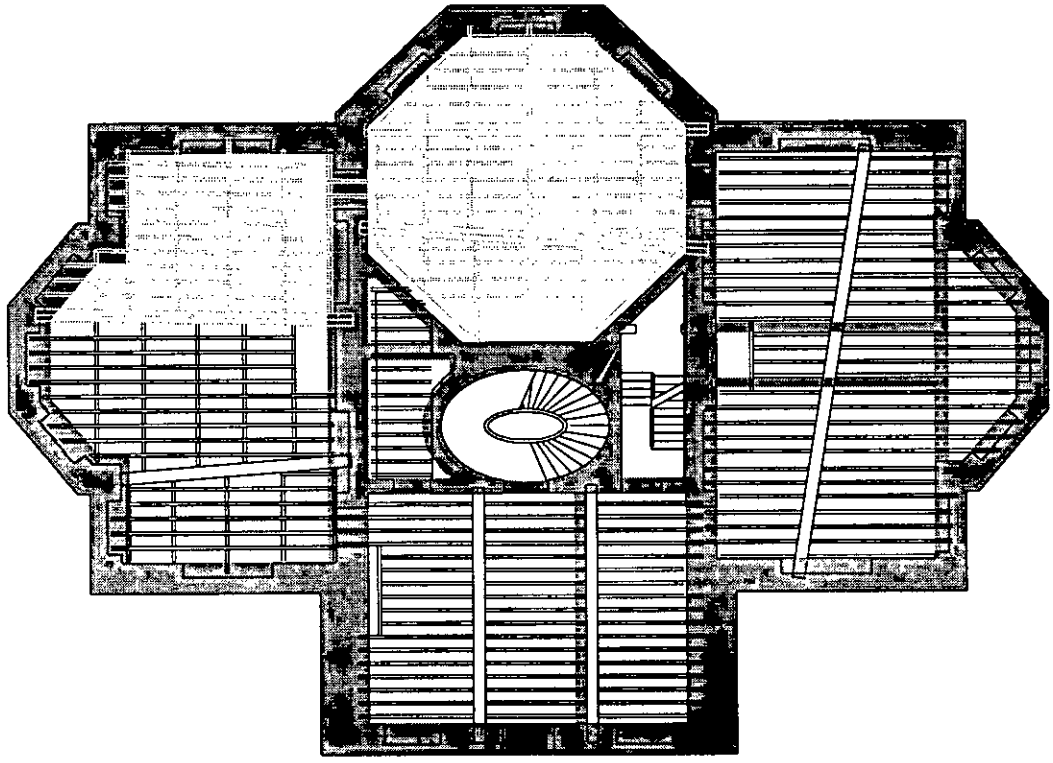
The Principal Floor floor frame

Fabric surviving from 1763

Conjectural reconstruction



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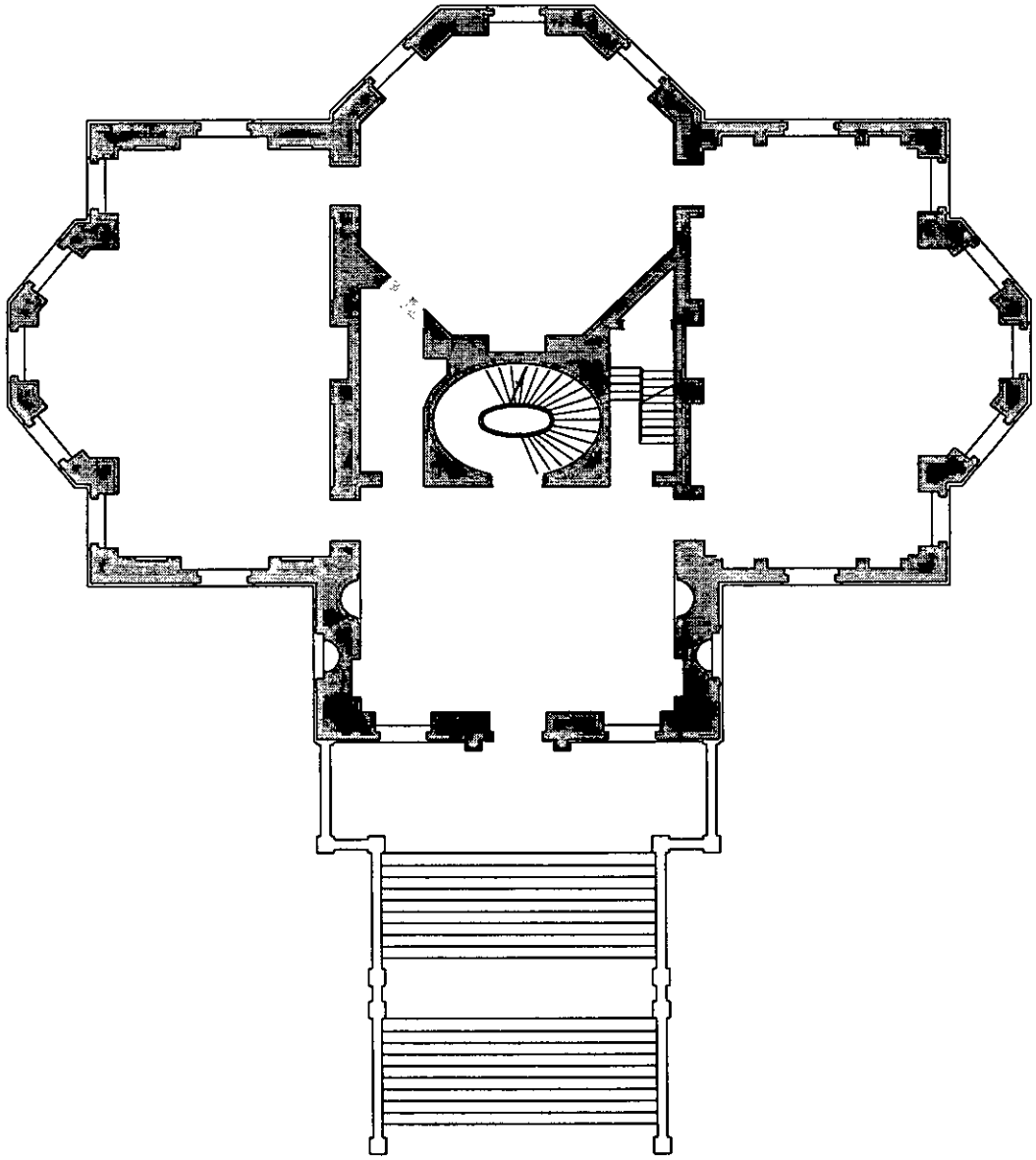
The Principal Floor

Fabric surviving from 1763

Conjectural reconstruction



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The Principal Floor

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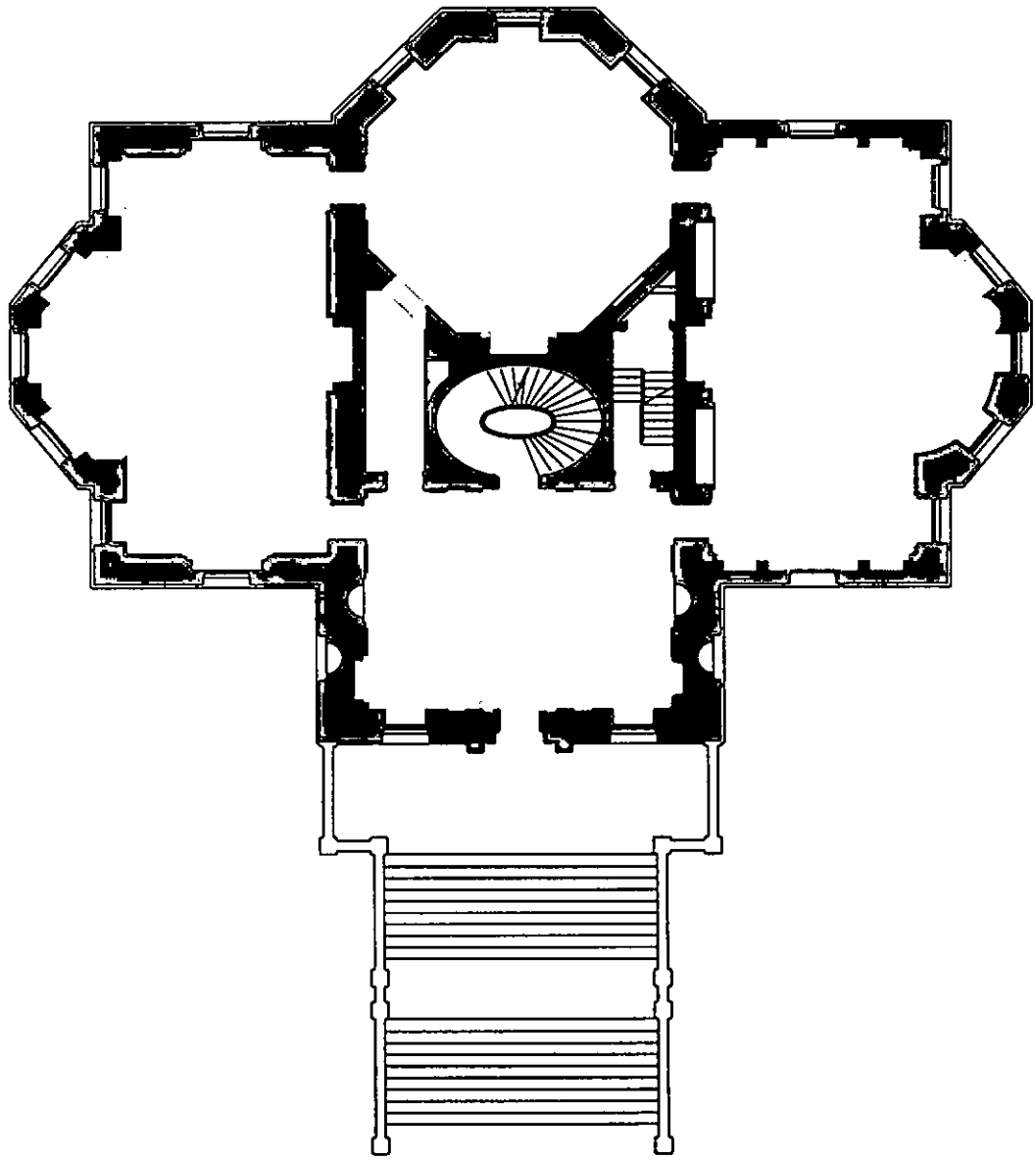

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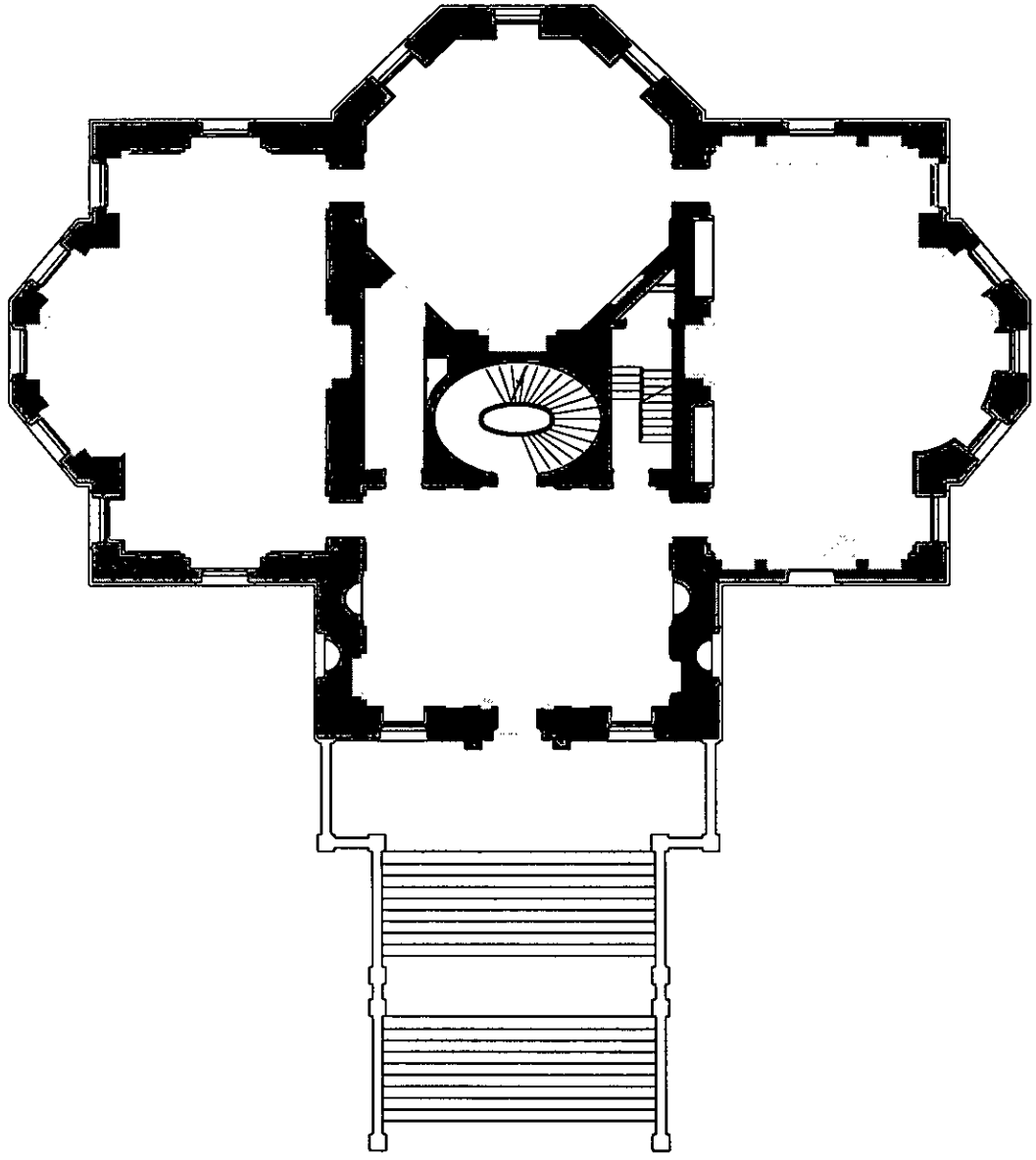
The Principal Floor

Fabric surviving from 1770



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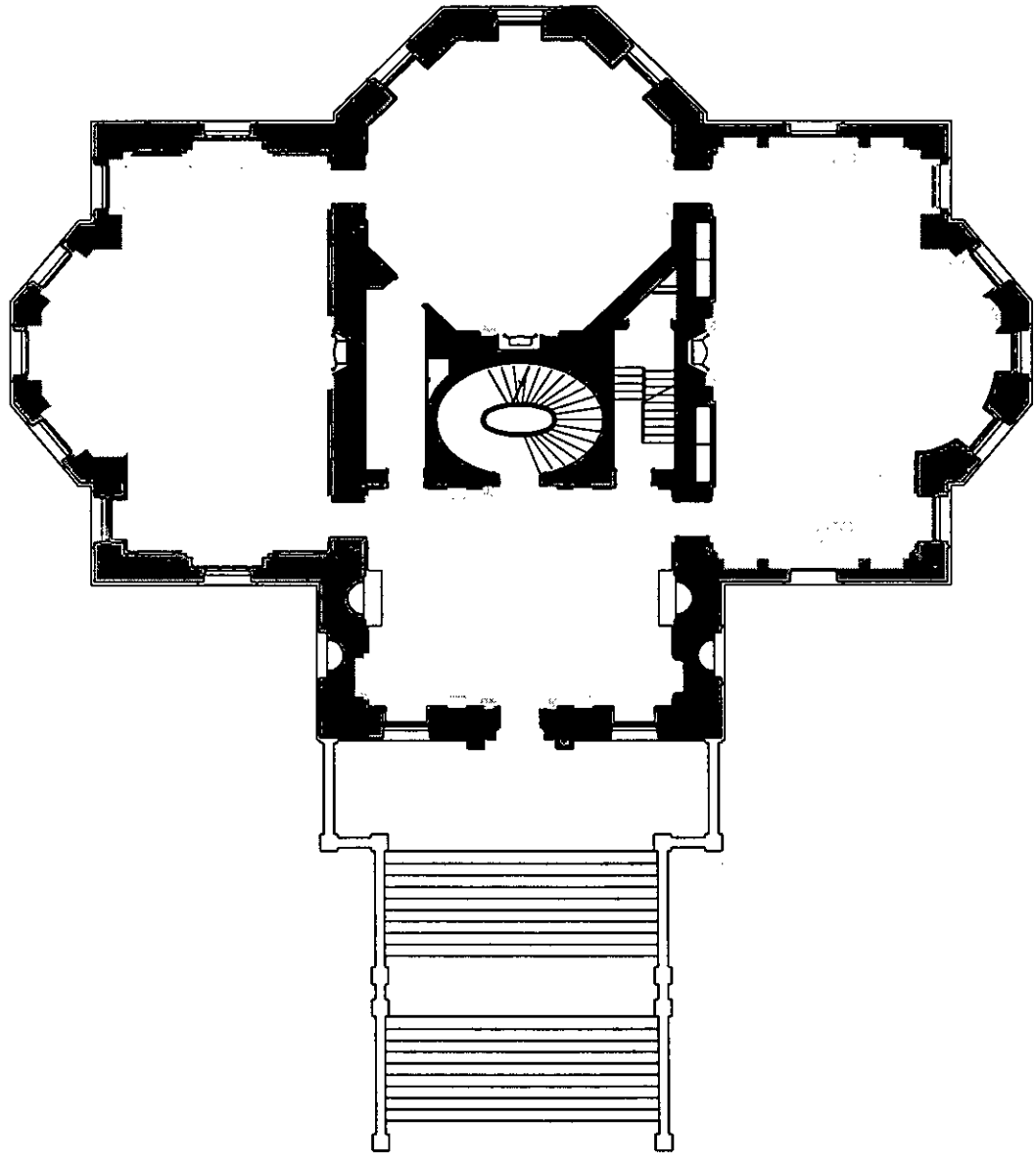
The Principal Floor

Fabric surviving from 1865



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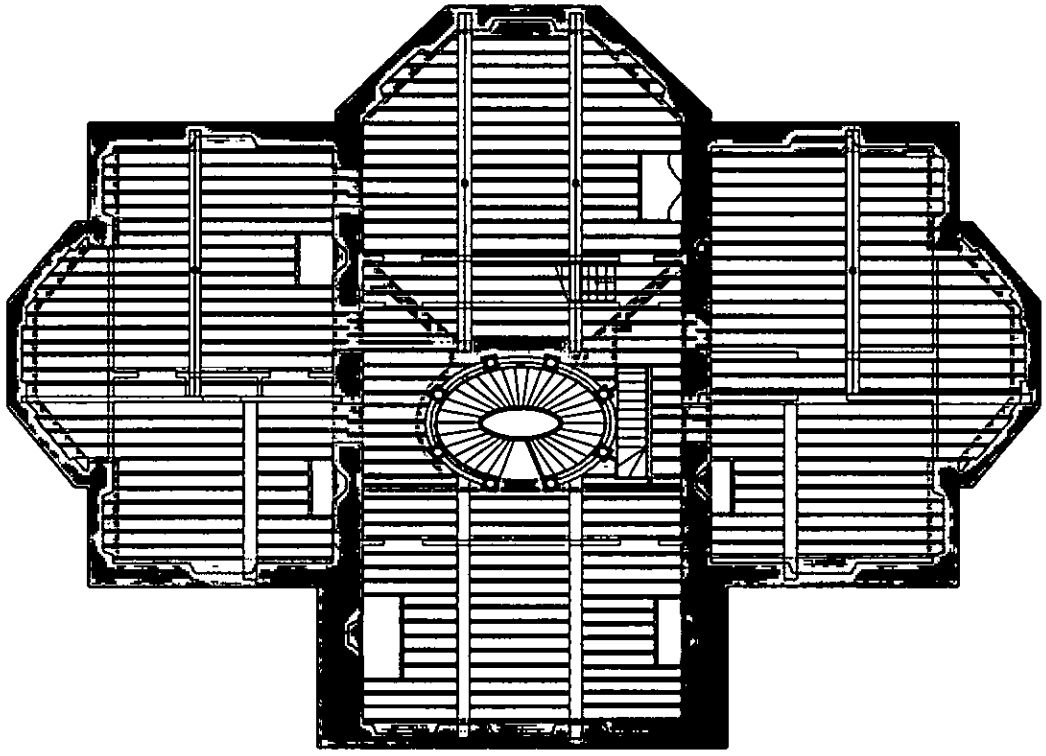
The Bedroom Floor floor frame

Fabric surviving from 1763



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The Bedroom Floor

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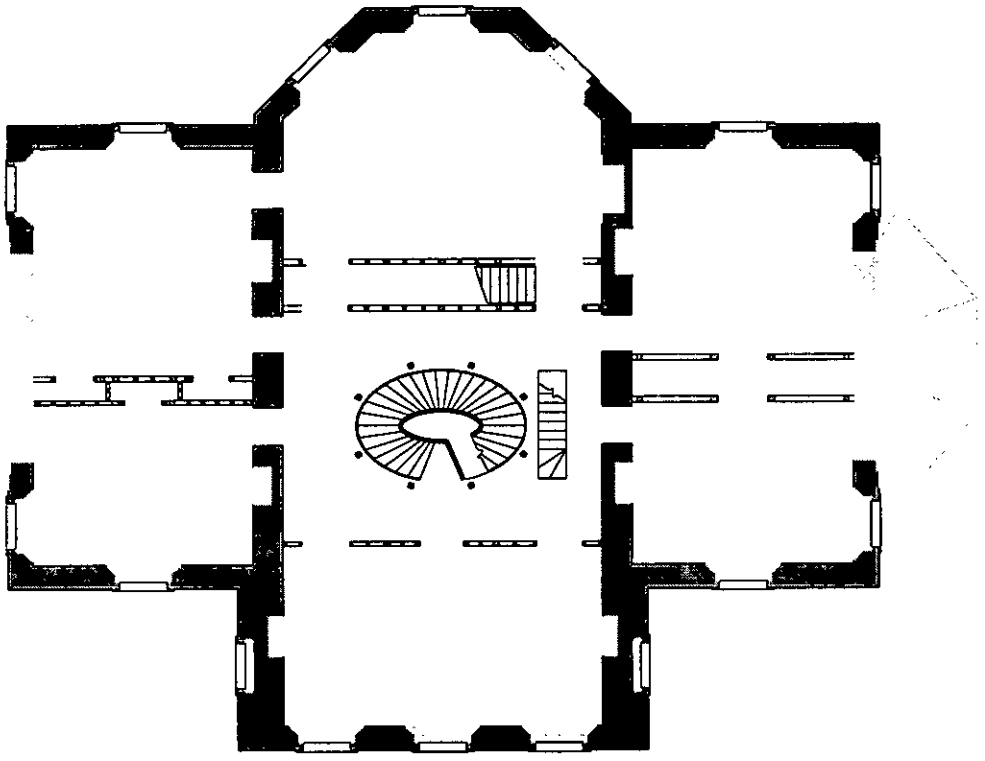

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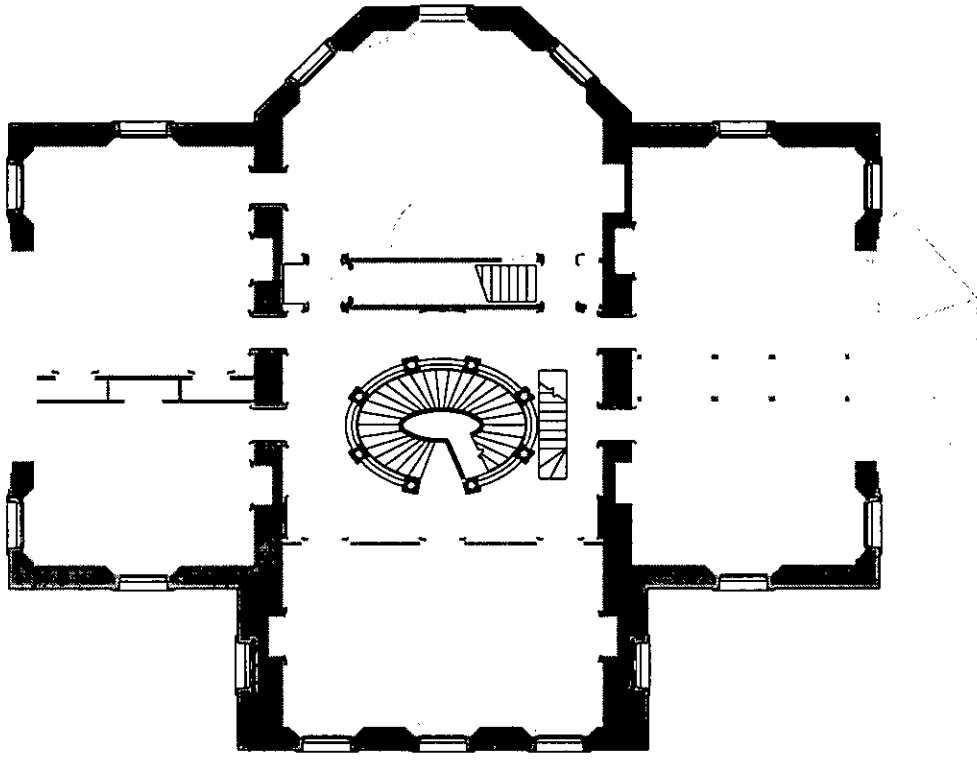
The Bedroom Floor

Fabric surviving from 1766



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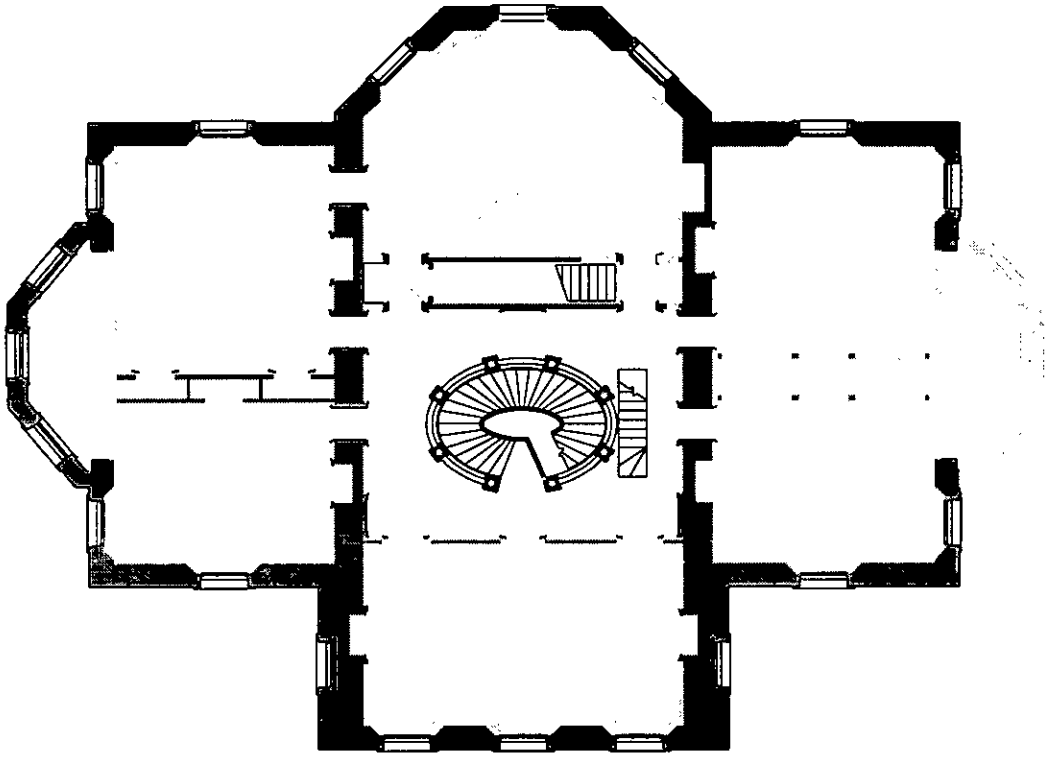
The Bedroom Floor

Fabric surviving from 1780



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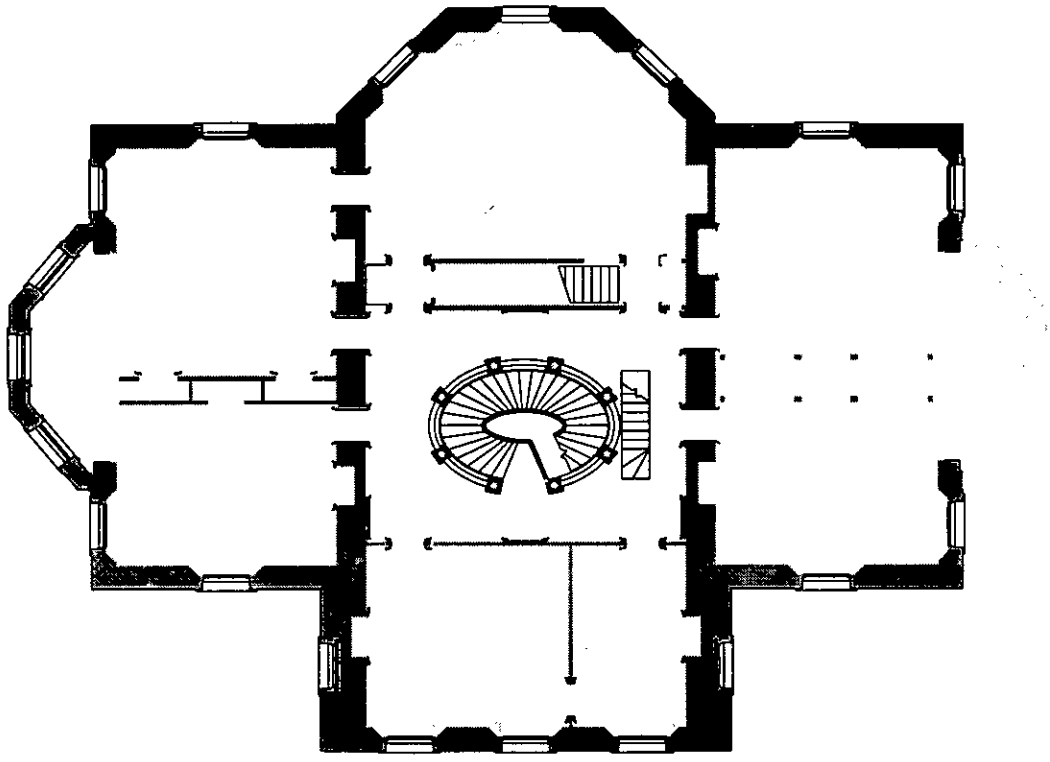
The Bedroom Floor

Fabric surviving from 1805



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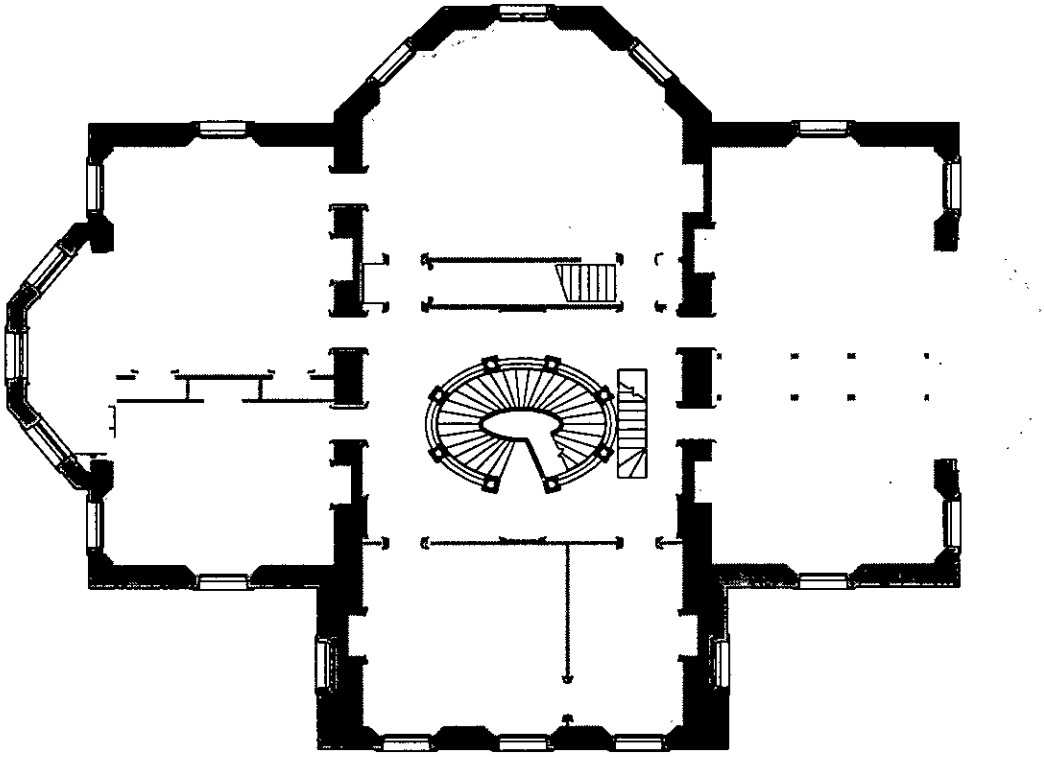
The Bedroom Floor

Fabric surviving from 1865



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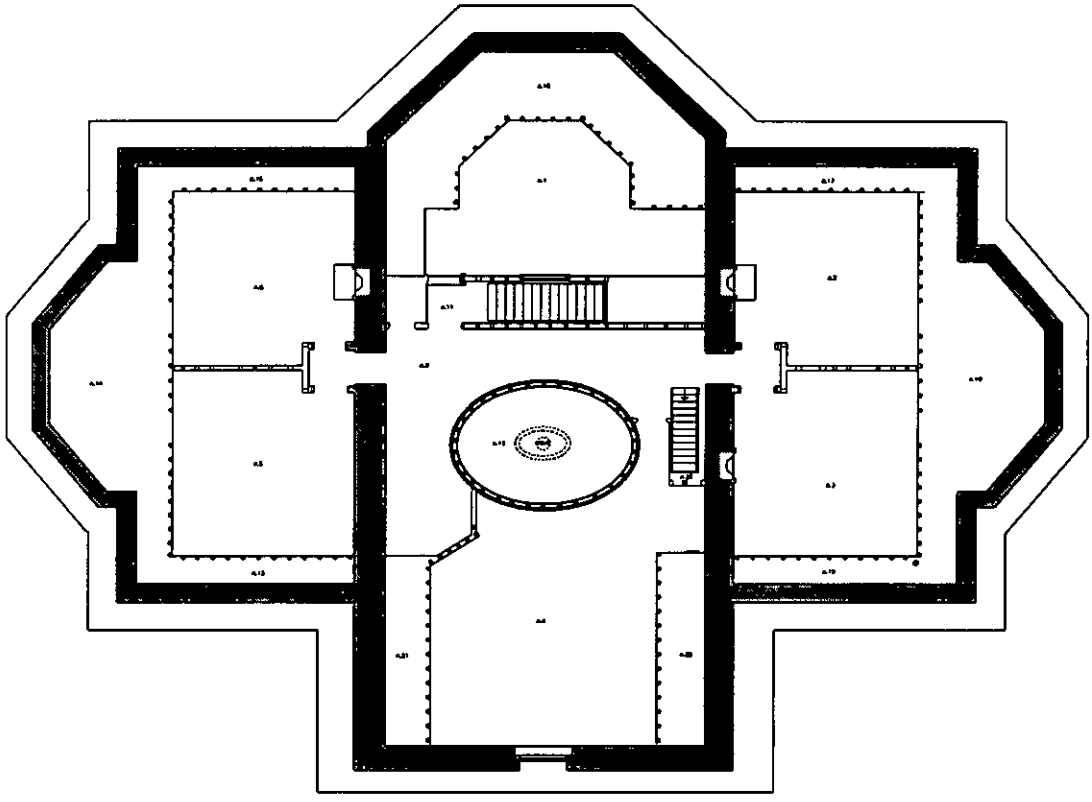
The Attic Floor

Fabric surviving from 1865



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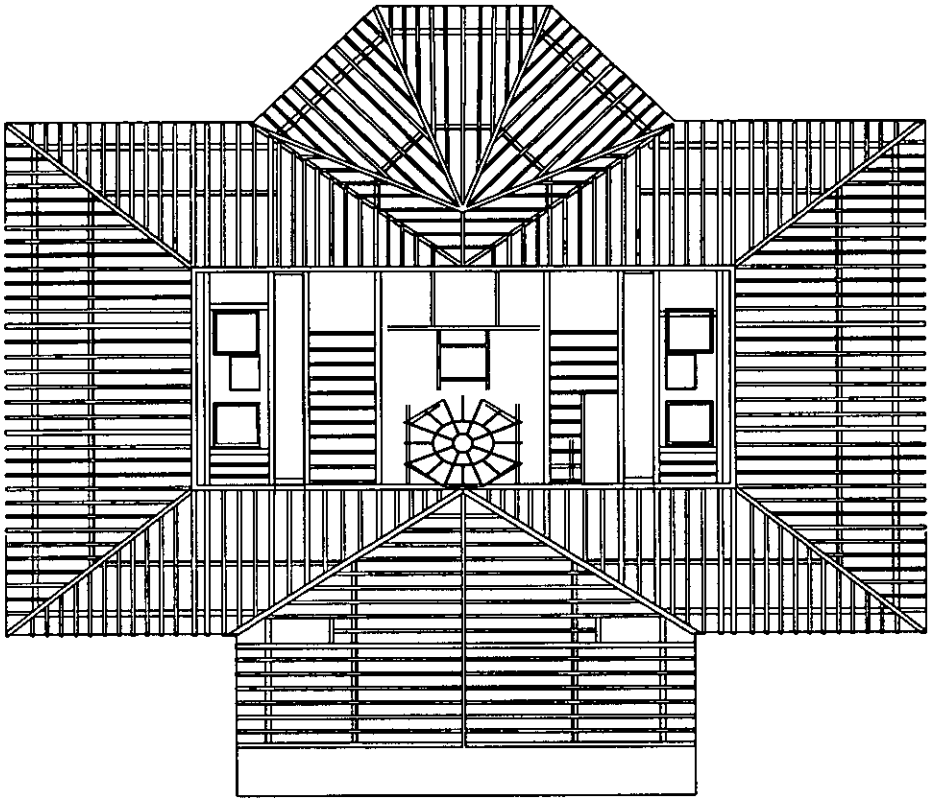
The Roof

Fabric surviving from 1766

Conjectural reconstruction



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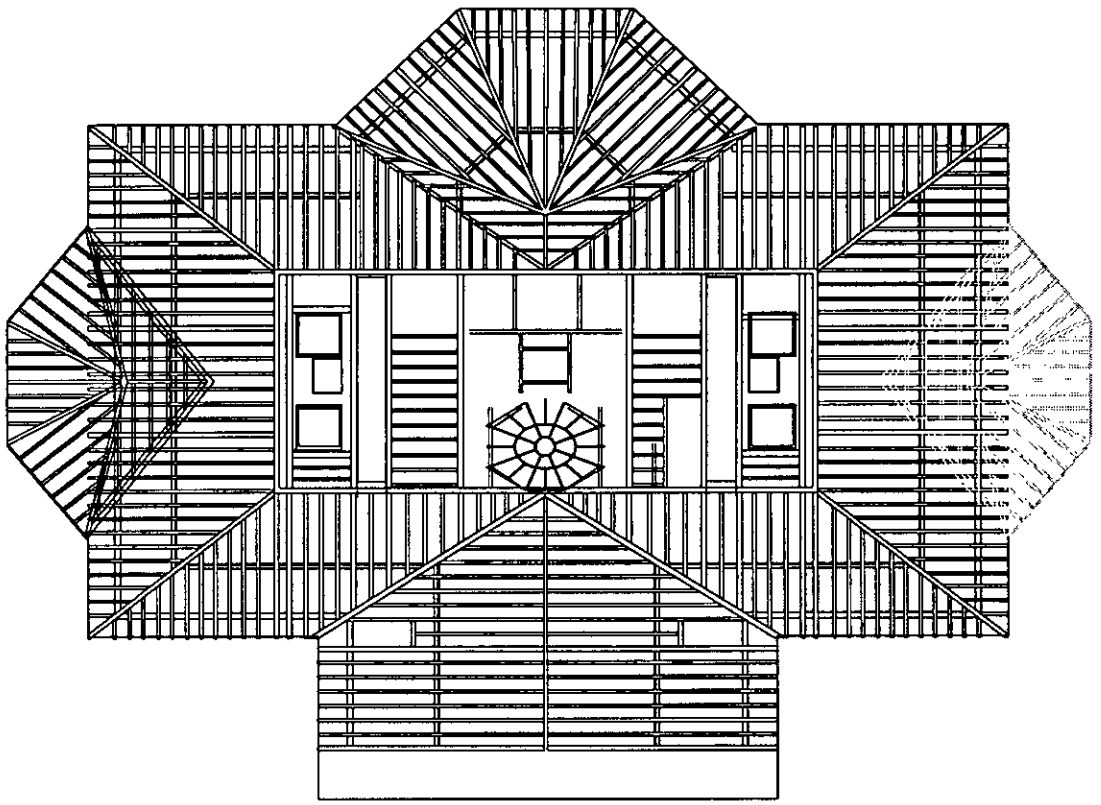
The Roof

Fabric surviving from 1780

Conjectural reconstruction



0 10 metres

The north elevation, section 01

0 10 metres

East-west section, section 07

Fabric surviving from 1763

Conjectural reconstruction

0 10 metres

East-west section, section 07

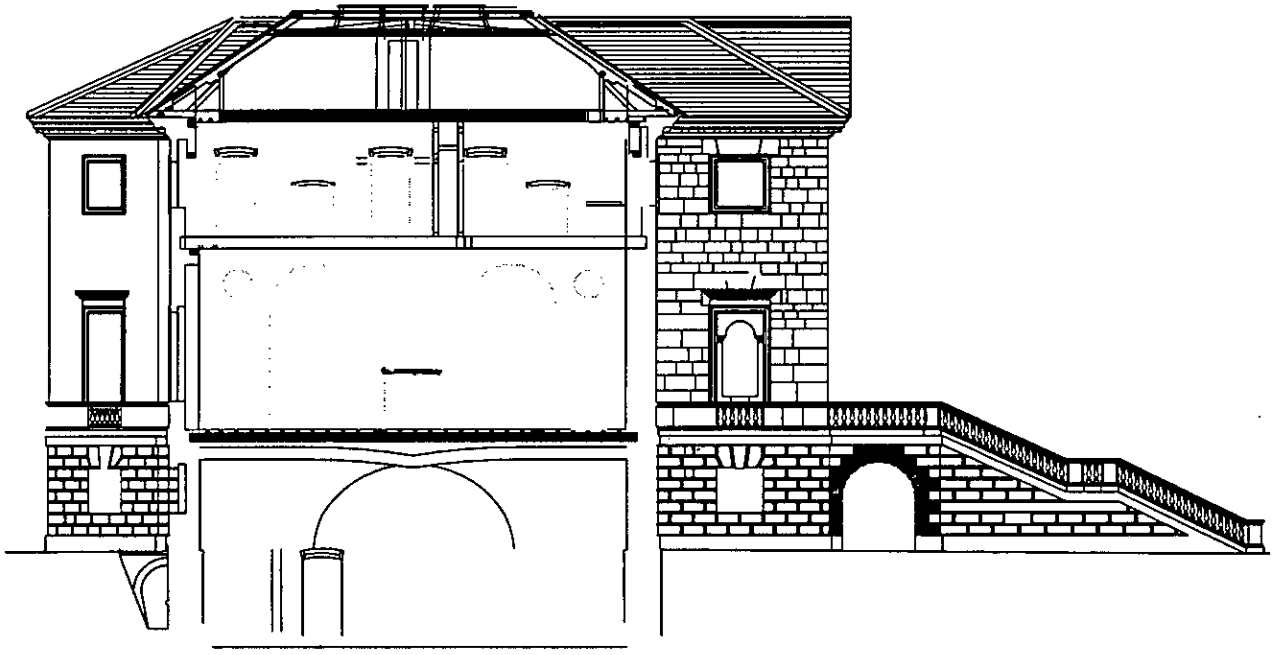
Fabric surviving from 1766

0 10 metres

South-north section, section 11

Fabric surviving from 1763

Conjectural reconstruction



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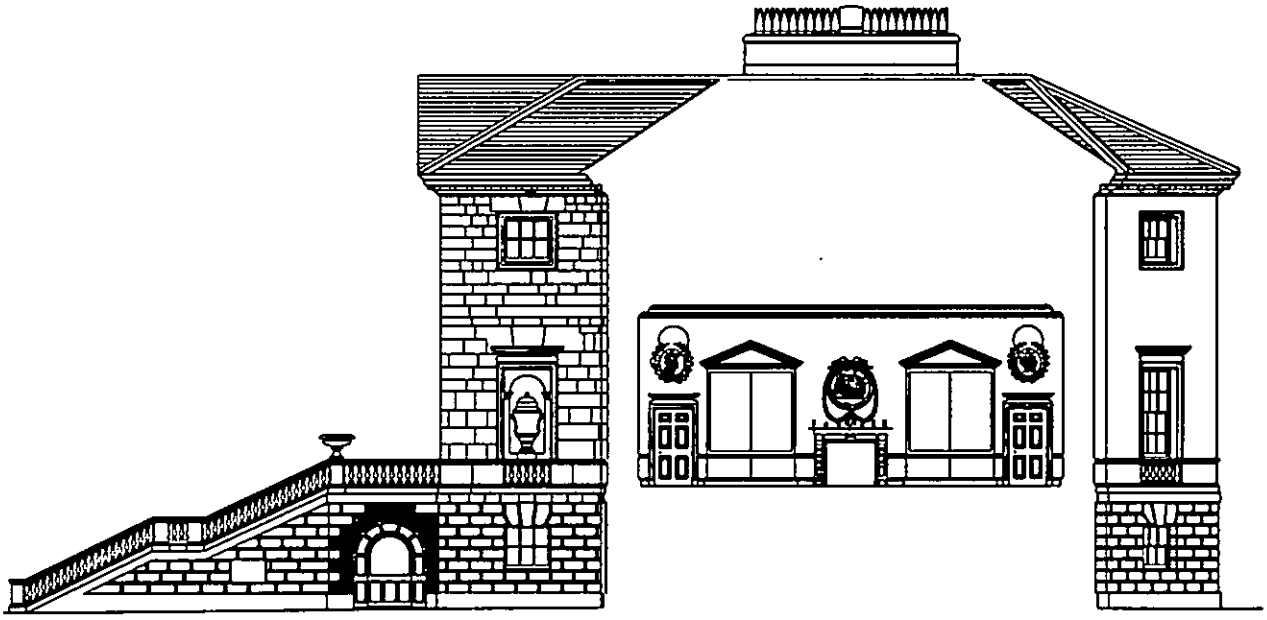
North-south section, section 14



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