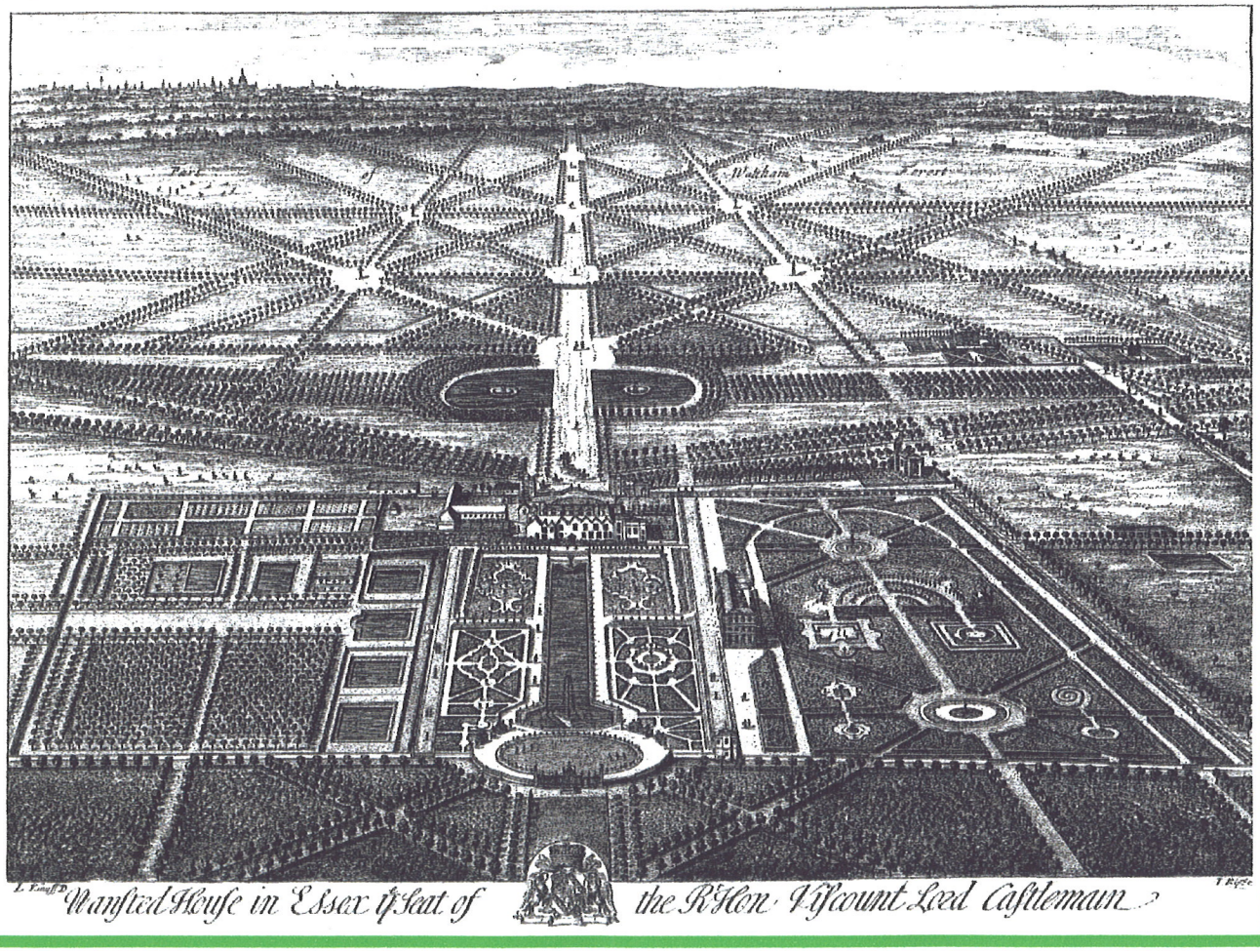
London
Parks & Gardens Trust

The Gardens of Wanstead



Proceedings of a Study Day held at the Temple, Wanstead Park, Greater London

25th September 1999

The Gardens of Wanstead

A Study Day

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The Gardens of Wanstead

Edited by Katherine Myers

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Introduction

Katherine Myers

On the 25 September 1999 the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust held a Study Day on the subject of Wanstead Gardens and Park at the Temple in Wanstead Park.

In 1824 the house was demolished and its contents and materials sold to pay the family's debts, but in 1882 the Corporation of London bought part of the parkland. An adjoining section of it, including the site of the house, is now a golf course. We were fortunate that the Corporation allowed us the use of the Temple, itself part of the landscape design we were studying and an excellent centre from which to explore the park. We are also grateful to the Corporation for their financial assistance and to their staff for practical help in setting up the day. Our thanks go in particular to Patricia Moxey, and to Sally Jeffery and James Clare for guiding us round the park and gaining entrance to the golf course.

It would not have been possible, indeed, to have held the Study Day without the contribution of Sally Jeffery, who so generously shared with us the research she has been undertaking for the Corporation into the gardens and park at Wanstead and allowed us to publish this account of her talk. The importance of her work in bringing into view in such detail the largely vanished house and grounds in all their various transformations will be evident from her text and illustrations. Moreover, the exciting discovery in 2002 of Humphry Repton's Report into Wanstead has necessitated an Appendix; we are grateful to Sir Paul Getty and the Wormsley Library for allowing us to include quotations from it and to reproduce some of Repton's watercolours.

Her talk was put into context by Michael Symes, who from his extensive knowledge of eighteenth century parks and gardens related elements in the design of Wanstead to contemporary developments, showing how its features fitted into a network of influences. He has indicated the most important comparisons in some notes based on his talk.

The Gardens of Wanstead House

Sally Jeffery

Introduction

The park and gardens of Wanstead House in Essex were among the largest and most spectacular in the country, evolving gradually from the late seventeenth century plantations of trees and fishponds, through elaborate parterres, long canals, mounts and mazes by George London in the early eighteenth century, to a vast lake system and more relaxed woodland walks with garden buildings, and finishing with improvements by Repton and Kennedy at the opening of the nineteenth century. However, they have been relatively little studied until recently[1] and still deserve to be better known. This situation stems from the fact that the very grand mansion house at the centre of the estate was sold and demolished in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the timber was felled and the garden design disappeared under scrub and undergrowth. A little like the great gardens at Canons, the Wanstead gardens declined and slept, but were not destroyed. Their framework survives in what is still an open space, and can be rediscovered by observation and research. The major part of the old pleasure gardens is in the ownership of the Corporation of London, which acquired 140 acres and opened them to the public in 1882, while the site of the house itself and its immediate surroundings and approach from the west is occupied by Wanstead Golf Club, which purchased the land in 1920. This article is an expanded version of a lecture given in September 1999 at the Temple at Wanstead Park for the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust and it aims to put on record the research undertaken to date for the Corporation of London, while recognising that further work will undoubtedly reveal more information in the future.

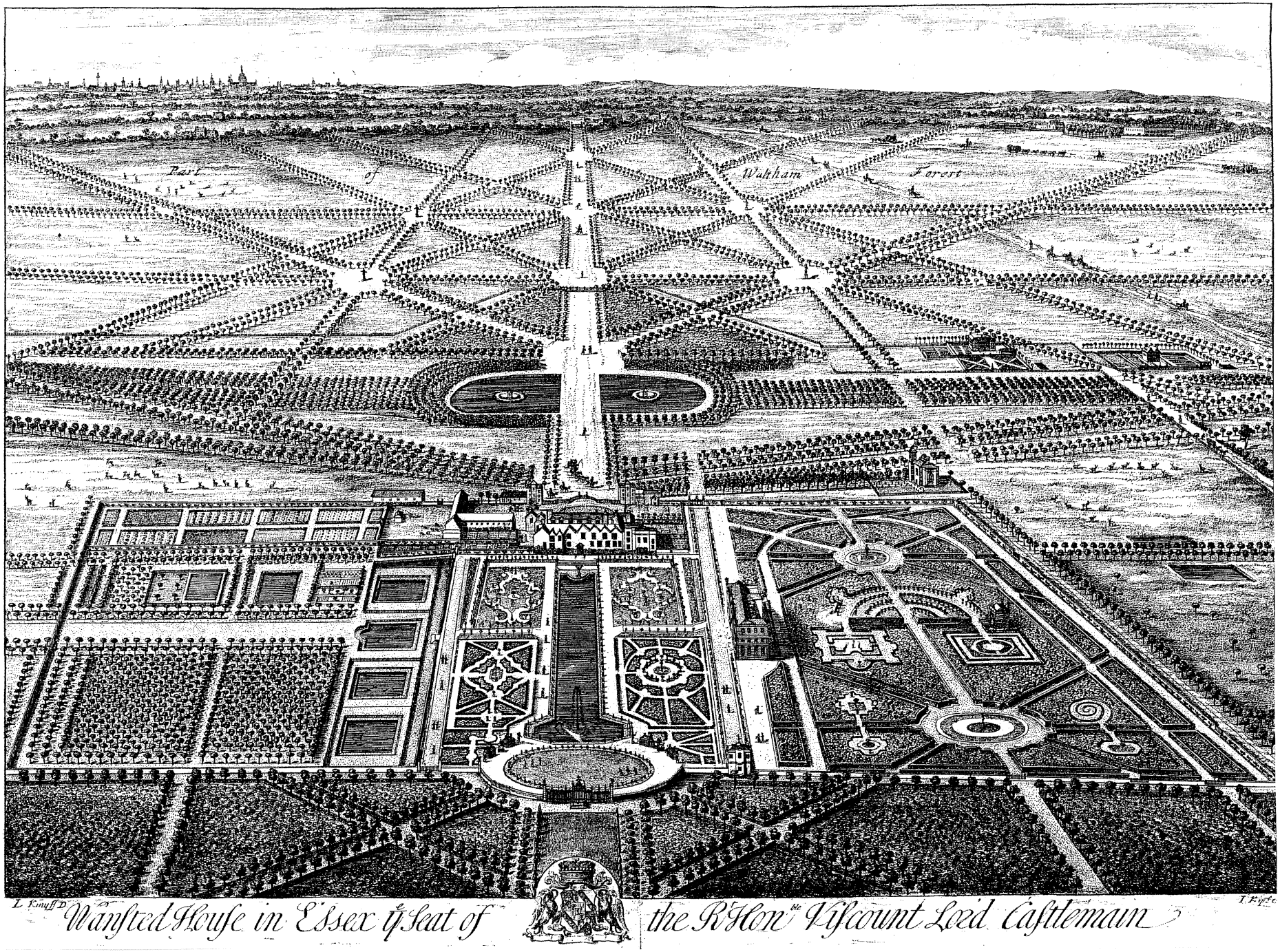
Sir Josiah Child

The Wanstead estate was enclosed early in the sixteenth century when it came into royal ownership and the house then existing was large enough to function as a hunting lodge. It was reported to be 'in great ruin' in 1549 and was said to have been rebuilt or largely so by Lord Rich, Edward VI's Lord Chancellor, who occupied it at the time, and then improved by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who entertained Queen Elizabeth there in 1578. The extent of the estate fluctuated as land changed hands, but about 300 acres of land and the house were reputedly sold for £11,500 in 1673-4 to Sir Josiah Child, who had been living there since at least 1668. The appearance of the old house was recorded by Knyff and Kip just before it was

[1] The house has been more studied than the grounds, but recent literature on the park and gardens includes the account in the *Victoria County History of Essex* volume 6, 1973; Ian Dunlop and Fiske Kimball, 'The Gardens of Wanstead House, Essex, Surviving Remnants of a Famous Georgian Domain', *Country Life*, July 28, 1950, pp. 294-298; Survey for the Corporation of London by John Phibbs and the Debois Landscape Survey Group, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, York, 1990; John Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life*, August 22, 1991, pp. 60-61; and Sally Jeffery, 'Wanstead House and Gardens in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Later Eighteenth Century Great House*, proceedings of a conference at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, January 1997, of which this publication is a greatly expanded version.



1. Attributed to John Riley: Portrait of Sir Josiah Child. National Portrait Gallery.



2. Knyff and Kip: Bird's eye view of Wanstead to the west. From *Nouveau Théâtre de la Grande Bretagne*, 1728.

demolished; it is shown as a large irregular many-gabled courtyard building which had evidently grown over the years. It was one of the largest houses in Essex with 40 hearths.[2]

Sir Josiah Child (1630-1699) was the son of a merchant, and began his career as a merchant's apprentice. His portrait (attributed to John Riley) survives in the National Portrait Gallery, London (*fig. 1*). He was established in Portsmouth by about 1655 as a victualler to the Navy, and became mayor of the city. Later he moved to London and was connected with the East India Company as a director, and later as Deputy Governor and Governor, making a legendary fortune. According to Macaulay, he had an income of £20,000 a year.[3] He was MP for Petersfield, Dartmouth and Ludlow and received a baronetcy in 1678. Although the East India Company had become known for its Whig associations, Child supported the Crown as a Tory when it was politic to do so and great political scheming took place. His writings included *A Treatise on the East India Trade* under the pseudonym 'Philopatris', 1681, and *A New Discourse on Trade*, 1693.[4] Because of its role in importing manufactured silks and dyed and printed textiles, the Company was much reviled by the weavers of Spitalfields. In March 1697, they marched on Wanstead 'and threatned Sir Josia Childs house; but the guards watching them narrowly, and the presse masters carrying several young fellows on board that were going to join them, caused them to disperse'.[5] Such threats may have caused him and his family to feel that they needed a house which afforded better protection. Sir Josiah is commemorated by a large memorial in Wanstead parish church.

He lived in the old house and made new plantations around it which were sufficiently extensive and expensive to be noteworthy. John Evelyn, writing in his diary for 16 March 1683, comments, not without malice:

> I went to see Sir Josiah Child's prodigious Cost in planting of Walnut trees, about his seate, & making fish-ponds, for many miles in Circuite, in Eping-forest, in a Cursed & barren spot; as commonly these over growne & suddenly monied men for the most part seate themselves: He from an ordinary Merchants Apprentice, & managements of the E. India Comp: Stock, being arived to an Estate of ('tis said) 200000 pounds.[6]

A more detailed account of Sir Josiah's work is given in 'A Short Account of Several Gardens near London . . . in . . . December 1691', which tells of the large plantations of walnuts and other trees which were 'much more worth seeing than his gardens, which are but indifferent'. He is reported to have had fruit trees in his enclosures, and vast numbers of elms, ashes and other trees planted in rows in Epping Forest. 'Before his outgate . . . are two large fish-ponds . . . and in the middle of each a house . . .They are said to be well stocked with fish, and so they had need to be if they cost him five thousand pounds, as it is said they did; as also that his plantations cost twice as much.'[7]

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[2] *Victoria County History*, op. cit., and Geo. Tasker,'Wanstead: its Manor and Palace', *Essex Review*, volume vii, 1898, p. 220.

[3] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second,* edited by Sir Charles Firth, volume 5, 1914, p. 2096.

[4] The library at Wanstead included 'Child on Trade', noted in the 1822 sale catalogue of the contents of Wanstead House under 'books' as lot 551, p. 309. A number of copies of this sale catalogue are known, including one at the National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, 23.J and another at Ilford Reference Library. See also Denis Keeling, *Wanstead House: The Owners and their Books*, Wanstead Historical Society, 1994.

[5] Quoted in William Foster, *The East India House*, 1924, p. 73.

[6] *The Diary of John Evelyn*, E. S. de Beer (editor), Oxford, 1955, volume 4, pp. 305-6.

[7] J. Gibson, 'A short Account of several Gardens near London, with remarks on some particulars wherein they excel, or are deficient, upon a View of them in December 1691', in *Archaeologia*, volume XII, 1796, pp. 186-7.

One further early account survives in a poem published in 1702 entitled *Leighton-Stone-Air.*[8] This refers to Wanstead as 'a pleasant Villa in the Forest near Leighton Stone made very delicious by the New Plantations Sir Josiah Child has honoured it with' and mentions 'Chestnut-Avenues' and 'vaulted Grotts', which are explained somewhat enigmatically in a footnote as 'Grotts: Chestnuts and Abel-trees [*Populus alba,* white poplar] most delightfully planted round 2 vast Fish-ponds on the Forrest, projecting their beauty in the Water'.

There is no visual record of just this early stage of the garden, but Leonard Knyff and Johannes Kip made four views, which appeared in their *Supplément du Nouveau Théâtre de la Grande Bretagne* of 1728. They must date from about 1713, just before the old house was taken down. The view to the west shows the 'enclosures' or walled garden south of the house planted with regular rows of fruit trees, the 'outgate' with gatehouse to one side, of which the gate piers survive, and the grand approach avenue running between two ornamental ponds, each with an island containing a small building and stocked with fish (*fig. 2*). Other ponds are visible in the walled garden. Most impressive are the extensive plantings of avenues of trees outside the gates of the house to the west stretching out almost as far as the eye could see. The elderly survivors from this period are sweet chestnuts on cross avenues in the Bushwood area, but different species may have been used for different avenues, including perhaps the walnuts, elms and ashes mentioned above. Avenues to the east were equally impressive (*fig. 3*). The large double avenue on the main axis also shown by Knyff and Kip was planted with an unknown but short-lived species, since it seems to have disappeared by 1725.[9] This represents Sir Josiah's work.

The Child family was extensive, but Sir Josiah was apparently not closely related to the banking Child, Sir Francis, who was Lord Mayor in 1698-9 and purchased Osterley Park in 1713,[10] nor to the John Child who was President of the East India Company's factory at Surat.[11] Sir Josiah was married three times, and had eight children, of whom six survived beyond infancy: three sons and three daughters. The daughters married well, especially Rebecca, whose husband was Marquess of Worcester and later Duke of Beaufort. When Josiah died in 1699, only two sons remained. One was Josiah, his first-born child, and the other Richard, his last-born. Josiah, the second baronet, died in 1704, but had already leased Wanstead and Stonehall for 90 years from 1699 to his half-brother.[12] Thus Sir Richard Child, third baronet, created Viscount Castlemain in 1718 and Earl Tylney in 1732, was seated at Wanstead for fifty years, until his death in 1750, and to him are due the major developments of both house and gardens.

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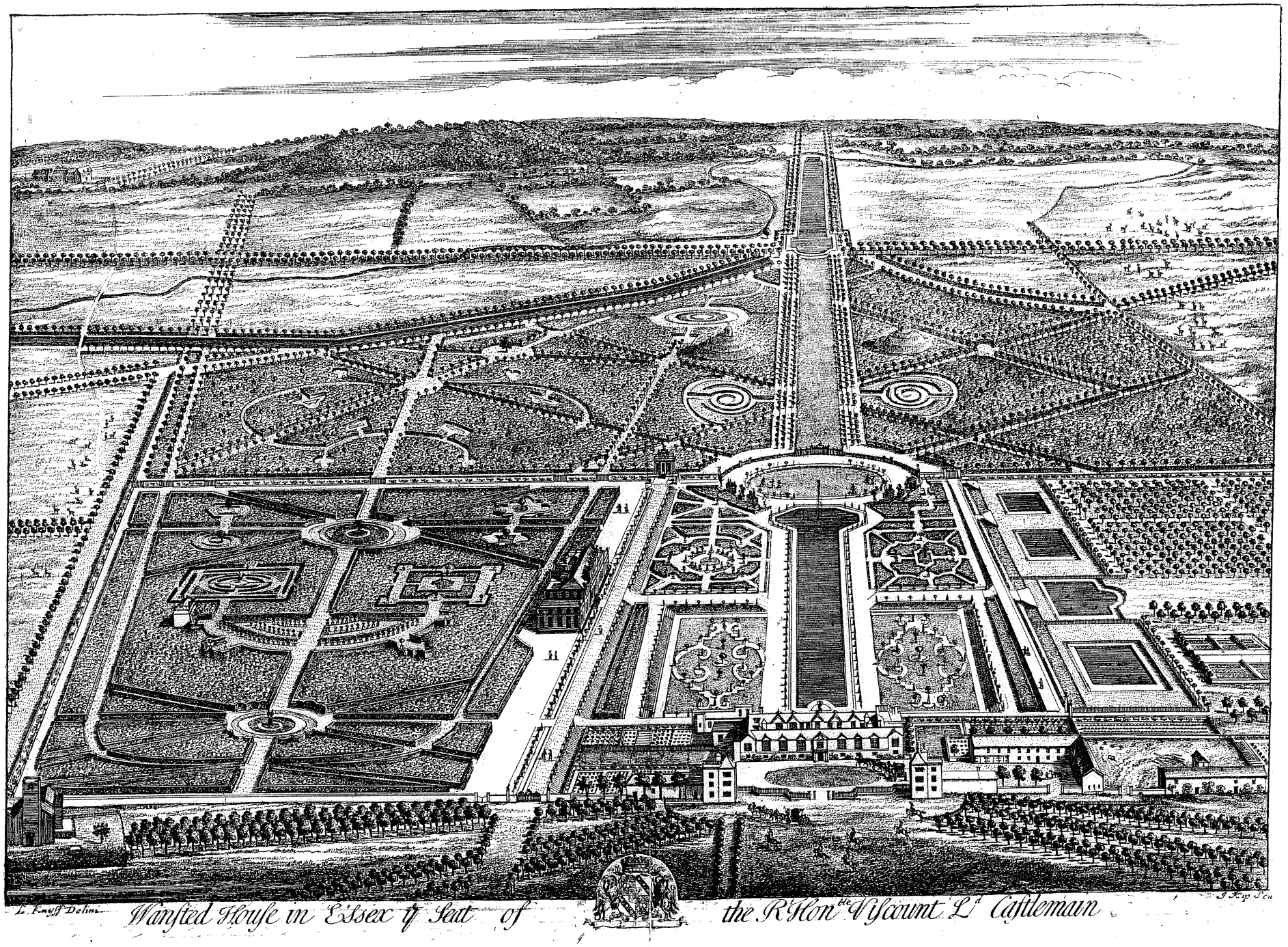
[8] British Library 11626.h.13(6). This is signed 'JHMA'.

[9] Plan by James Cradock dated 1725, Essex Records Office, D/DCw P7. In the later painting attributed to Charles Catton the Elder: Wanstead House from the Orange Tree Garden, of which the location is unknown, young trees planted behind clipped hedges are shown in this location.

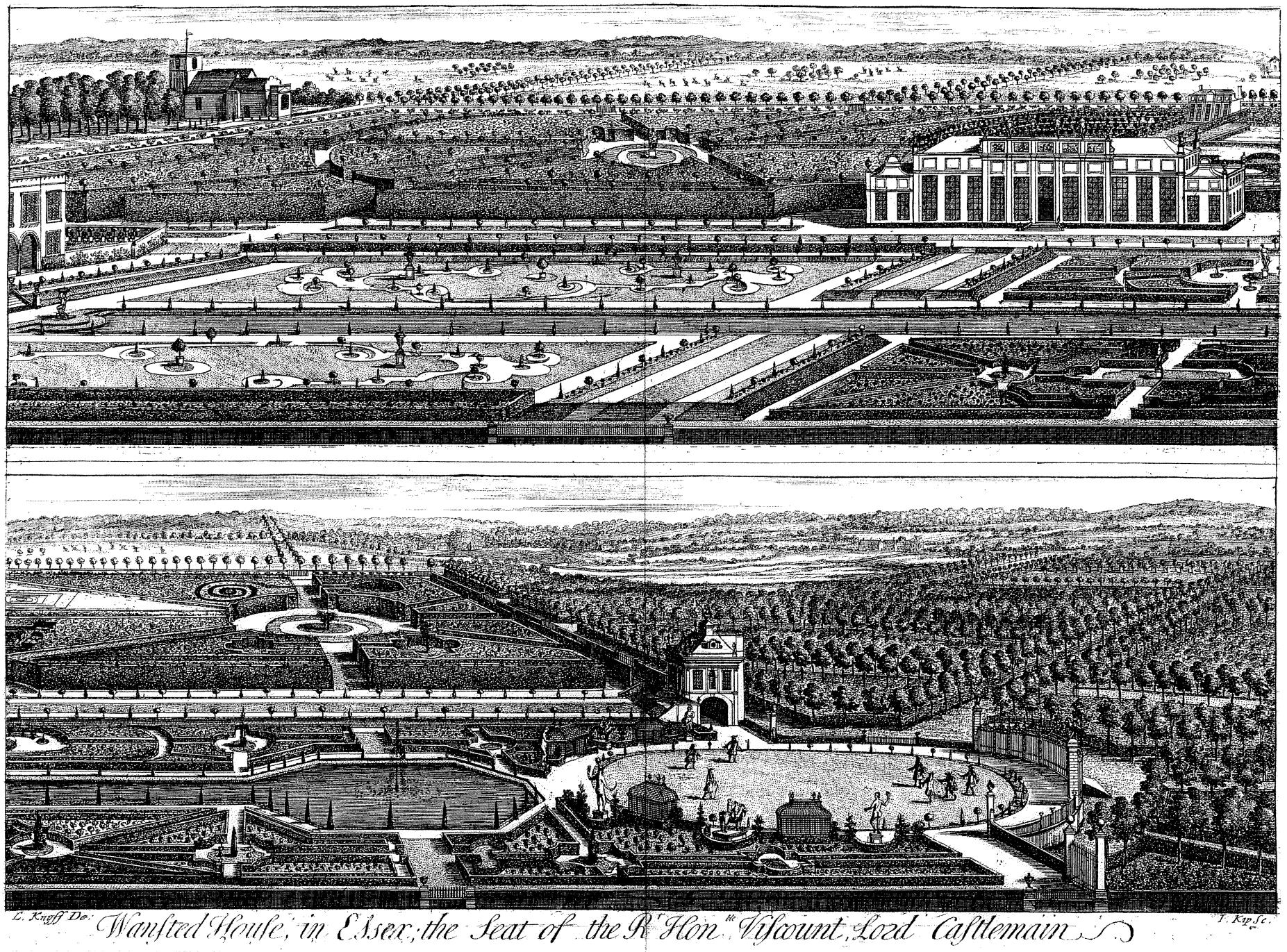
[10] Francis Child of Osterley was the son of Robert of Headington, Wiltshire. F.G. Hilton Price, *A Handbook of London Bankers*, Leadenhall Press, 1890-1, pp. 30-37. However, Sir Richard Child, Sir Josiah's son, did keep an account at Child's Bank. See the section on the bowling green below.

[11] See Robert Williams, 'Vanbrugh's India and his Mausolea for England', in Christopher Ridgway and Robert Williams (editors), *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690-1730*, Sutton, 2000, p. 116.

[12] *Victoria County History*, op. cit., quoting a document in the Essex Records Office, D/DCw T3C/128.



3. Knyff and Kip: Bird's eye view of Wanstead to the east. From *Nouveau Théâtre*.



4. Knyff and Kip: View of Wanstead from the north (in two sections). From *Nouveau Théâtre.*

The Work of George London for Sir Richard Child

Daniel Defoe[13] tells us how 'Sir Josiah Child, as it were prepar'd [Wanstead] in his Life for the Design of his Son . . . by adding to the Advantage of its Situation innumberable rows of Trees, planted in curious Order for Avenues and Visto's, to the House, all leading up to the Place where the old House stood, as to a Center.' He continues: 'In the Place adjoining, his Lordship, while he was yet Sir Richard Child only, and some Years before he began the Foundation of his New House, laid out the most delicious as well as the most spacious pieces of Ground for Gardens that is to be seen in this part of England.'

Sir Richard Child could have begun adding to his father's design from 1699, and probably did begin planning it, but there is no mention of any change before 1702, and the major works seem to have been carried out after that date. This fits well with Defoe's account of the garden being made before 1718 when Child was created Viscount Castlemain and before his new house was begun in about 1715. According to Stephen Switzer, writing in 1718,[14] the work was begun in 1706 and was carried out by George London as one of his 'last undertakings'. Switzer compared the work favourably to that at Blenheim and stated that it was a 'Design worthy of an English Baronet and equal to the greatest French Peer'. An anonymous poem about Wanstead gardens, entitled *Flora Triumphans*, dated 1712/13, refers to the canal, the plantations, the flower and fruit gardens, the two mounts and the 'venerable pile' of the old house. This must therefore mark the date when the enrichment of the garden was nearing completion and Sir Richard was about to turn his attention to a new house.[15]

The gardens close to the house were essentially formal and regular in style with a long central axis. The view to the west, which illustrates Sir Josiah's plantations, also tells us about the impressive undertakings of his son. Apart from the avenues and twin ponds already referred to, the engraving shows the gates and gate-piers (which survive), with the monogram of Sir Richard, marking the main approach avenue to the house, and large statues on plinths at the rond-points where the avenues crossed. John Macky published a description in 1722[16] which included this account:

> You come up to this Palace from the Village of Wanstead by an Avenue of above half a Mile long, from which run nine other smaller Avenues into the Forest, with each a Statue on a Pedestal as big as the Life. I must allow, that in Holland, Statues at the end of an Avenue, where the Country is entirely flat, fix the View. But here, where you have always a rising Ground, or a Village at some great distance to finish your View in, I think the Statues confine and obstruct it.

The statues do not appear on later plans, and must have been removed quite rapidly.

The views to both east and west show the old house and its outbuildings and the parish church further north, and the gardens stretching away to the east. These seem to have remained more or less as seen by Knyff until about 1730, since in addition to Macky and Defoe, there is a detailed account by a visiting Frenchman, Pierre Jacques Fougeroux, apparently written in 1728.[17]

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[13] Daniel Defoe, *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, volume 1, London 1724, pp. 137-8.
[14] *Ichnographia Rustica,* 1718, volume 1, p. 84.
[15] *Flora Triumphans: Wanstead Garden. An Heroick Poem most Humbly Addrest To the Honourable Sir Richard Child, Bar.* Anon. 1712/13. The date of 21 January is written in manuscript beside the year. Simon Wartnaby first drew my attention to this poem.
[16] John Macky, *A Journey through England in Familiar Letters*, second edition, London, 1922, pp. 19-24.
[17] He visited in 1728, and described his impressions in a series of letters. Two almost identical manuscripts

From these sources we can form a picture of the central smooth canal with an octagonal end and high jet of water and the oval bowling green behind. Water was an important and fashionable element of these gardens, with the long canals on the central axis leading to comparisons with Versailles, but flowers, shrubs and topiary were also important. On either side of the canal were parterres of grass cutwork (the 'parterre decoupez' described by the visiting Frenchman in 1728),[18] with elaborate scrolled designs containing gilded lead urns, plants in pots (possibly citrus trees), and yews clipped into cones and spheres, or mushroom shapes, according to the Frenchman. Yews are the only clipped trees he identified, but it would have been usual to include both yews and hollies in such a location. The walks around the house and in the parterres were constructed of small pebbles and gravel (perhaps a kind of binding gravel), which was rolled to give a hard dry surface for walking. Flowers are only visible in borders around this parterre.

To the east and flanking the bowling green were further parterres where the divisions were geometric and edged with low hedges, with pools and statues at their centres. These divisions evidently contained flowering plants, but it is impossible to determine from the engravings what they may have been. Beyond were large wildernesses planted with trees and shrubs on either side of a grassed avenue bordered with triple rows of trees and flanked with a pair of mazes and a pair of mounts with spiralling paths leading to small buildings. Apart from straight avenues traversing the wildernesses diagonally, there were smaller curving, slightly meandering walks which led to clearings or cabinets. These wildernesses were closer to the newly fashionable 'forest gardens' than to the traditional form of wilderness and extended not only to the east but to the north as well. The grassed eastern avenue led to another long canal. To the south were the orchards, kitchen gardens and fishponds.

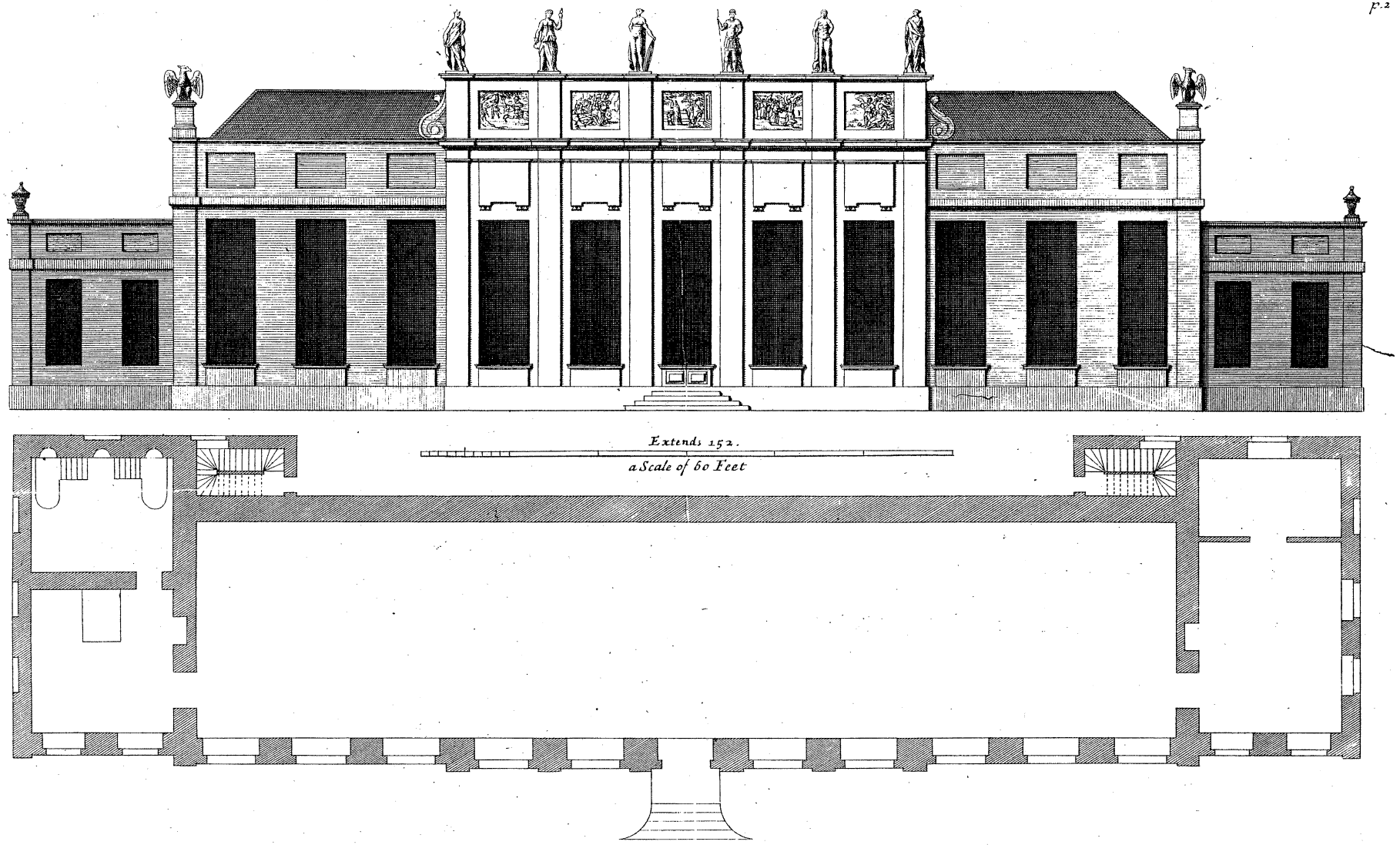
The two views to the north in fact form one continuous panorama and are more detailed (*fig. 4*). They show the raised grass terrace walk overlooking the parterres and canal with a greenhouse set beside it and terminated by a banqueting house. Large wildernesses to the north had openings of various shapes, including circles, squares and ovals, with pools, statues and mazes. According to the Frenchman, the divisions were bounded by 'green walls' or clipped hedges (not as beautiful nor as thick as the tall clipped hedges or 'charmilles' to be seen in France) of variegated Phillyrea[19] and bay or laurel, with flowering shrubs within, and the walks were grassed. Macky calls the terrace a 'fine green Walk which ends in a Banqueting-house: From whence you have four fine Views . . .' He further describes the 'Variety of high-edged Walks, affording delicious Visto's' behind the green house, in one of which 'there is a Vase erected in a Circle'.

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survive, one in the National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, MS 86 NN 2, and the other (which gives the Frenchman's name), in a private collection. I am very grateful to David Coke for information on this matter. It has been suggested that Fougeroux visited earlier than 1728 (perhaps c.1725), and that the manuscript was copied later. (John Harris, *The Palladian Revival: Lord Burlington, His Villa and Garden at Chiswick*, Yale University Press/ Royal Academy 1994, p. 80, and conversation with John Harris, August 2000.)

[18] A 'parterre after ye English Manner', according to John James's 1712 translation into English of Dezallier d'Argenville's *La Théorie et Pratique du Jardinage* (published in France in 1709).

[19] The Frenchman calls this 'filaria'. *Phillyrea latifolia L.* was used at Hampton Court, and 'Phillyrays' were recorded at Blenheim. See Jan Woudstra, 'The Planting of the Privy Garden' in Simon Thurley (editor), 'The King's Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace 1689-1995', *Apollo*, 1995.

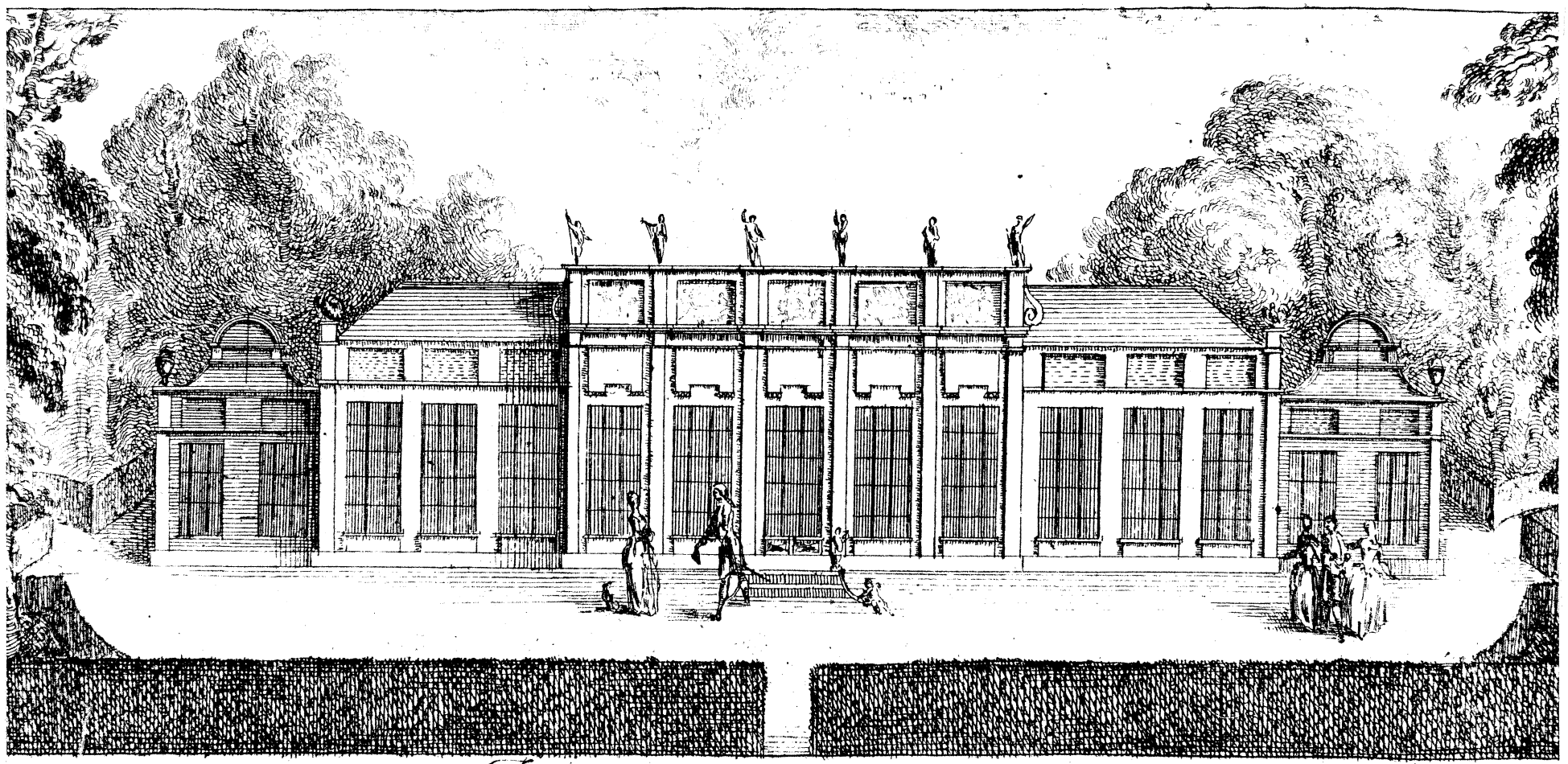


The GreenHouſe *at* WANSTED *in* ESSEX *the Seat of* Sr RICHARD CHILD Baronet Hereditary Warden *of* Waltham Foreſt &c. *to whom this Plate is moſt Humbly Inſcribed.*

L'Orangerie *au* Iardins *de* WANSTED *dans la* Comtée D'ESSEX.

Ca Campbell Delin

5. Plan and elevation of the greenhouse at Wanstead. Published by Colen Campbell in *Vitruvius Britannicus,* volume 1, 1715, plate 27.



6. The greenhouse as illustrated by Rocque on his plan of Wanstead of 1735.

The Greenhouse

Both the pavilion and the greenhouse have been convincingly attributed by John Harris to William Talman.[20] Colen Campbell, who published a plate of the greenhouse in the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* of 1715, says simply that it was designed not by himself, but 'by another Hand'. Talman and London worked together elsewhere, and it is very likely that Richard Child's ambitious schemes for Wanstead included Talman's participation in the garden buildings. Defoe says that 'The Green-House is an excellent Building fit to entertain a Prince; 'tis furnish'd with Stoves and artificial Places for Heat from an Apartment in which is a Bagnio, and other Conveniences, which render it both useful and pleasant.' Campbell's plan shows this apartment, at the west end of the building, with steps leading into two baths (perhaps one cold and one hot), with niches above and between them, probably tiled (*fig. 5*). He also indicates the position of a bed in the adjoining room, which has a fireplace, as does the small apartment at the other end. One of these may have been the panelled apartment described by the Frenchman, decorated with prints. As built, these lower wings of the greenhouse were given elaborate gables, according to the views by Kip and Knyff and Rocque's view of 1735, and the Frenchman tells us that the building was of brick (*fig. 6*). In the poem *Flora Triumphans*, the anonymous writer speaks of 'A Golden Range of flaming Phenix Nests' cresting the roof.[21] Since there are no other visible chimneystacks, it is tempting to think that they served this purpose and could be seen in cold weather with smoke rising from their beds of ashes. Macky mentions that this building was 'finely adorn'd with Statues'. The Frenchman comments that the orangery had a pretty façade in brick, and inside the central room was intended to contain exotic plants which might need protection from the elements. It had a panelled interior with staging for shrubs and plants such as palms and aloes, although he says the oranges were mediocre. That Child used the greenhouse for exotics is confirmed in the poem by references to Flora preparing 'A safe Protection for her nearest Care, Her foreign Favourites (no British Race) . . . Orig'nals from a warmer Southern Smile/ Too hardly naturaliz'd to our bleak Soyl . . . Hither the kind retiring Flora calls/ Her verdant Nurs'ry to their Fortress Walls.'

The Bowling Green

The oval bowling green at the end of the first canal is clearly shown by Knyff and Kip, with a narrow band of planting round the edge with small pyramids and spheres in topiary and a broad walk bordered by low enclosing clipped hedges and wrought-iron railings towards the grass avenue beyond (*fig. 7*). There were four pavilions or arbours made of trellis or ironwork, with seats for spectators. Statues were set in semicircles of clipped hedges between the pavilions. Macky refers to 'Grotto's and Seats, with antique Statues between each Seat' and an iron 'Ballustrade' which separated the bowling green from the long walk, while the Frenchman referred to large iron 'grilles'. These were certainly magnificent, and may have been supplied by Jean Tijou, the French metalworker who worked at Hampton Court and elsewhere. There are payments to Tijou recorded in Richard Child's bank account in 1703, which total £180. Such an amount is very small compared to the sums which would have been charged for such large panels of ironwork,[22] and indeed could refer to something else, but they do confirm that Tijou was involved at Wanstead in one way or another.[23] In view of Richard Child's ambitious schemes for Wanstead, it seems

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[20] John Harris, *William Talman Maverick Architect*, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, p. 45.
[21] *Flora Triumphans*, op. cit. p. 12.
[22] Tijou charged £2,160. 2s. 0d. for the 12 panels in the Fountain Garden at Hampton Court.
[23] The payments are from an account which was held at Child's Bank in the name of Sir Richard Child:

unlikely that he would have accepted second best for anything, and it should therefore be no surprise to find Tijou's name mentioned, especially in conjunction with London and Talman.

The bowling green with its ironwork was dismantled between 1728 when the Frenchman saw it and 1735 when Rocque made his plan of the gardens. The ironwork panels, whether by Tijou or not, could hardly have been thrown away. Were they used elsewhere on the estate? The present entrance to Wanstead Golf Club, which occupies the old service buildings of Wanstead House, has some handsome ironwork at its gates which might possibly be related (*fig. 8*).

The Statues

There were large numbers of statues on the buildings, as well as many statues and other garden ornaments in the formal gardens, around the bowling green and in approach avenues, as can be seen in the engravings of Kip and as mentioned by visitors such as Macky. When the gardens were dismantled, they too may have been placed elsewhere in the grounds; some of them survived until the sale of 1822, when they were dispersed.

The most easily identifiable sculpture is at the head of the canal just below the terrace along the house. This appears to be a blackamoor figure, perhaps holding a sundial (*fig. 9*). A similar looking figure still survives at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire, where it is one of a pair in lead consisting of an 'Indian Slave' and a 'Black Moor', both holding urns, for which John Nost was paid thirty pounds in November 1705.[24] The Wanstead figure may well have been carved in stone since no expense appears to have been spared.[25]

One of the chief sources of inspiration for the sculpture must have been the gardens of Versailles, which contained so many statues and fountains based on classical themes and stories like Aesop's fables. One example is the figure of a monkey mounted on a goat, which appears beside the bowling green at Wanstead (*fig. 10*). A similar group was present in the Labyrinth at Versailles. The statuary is discussed further in the section on sculpture at the Grotto.

Hercules and Omphale

Two over-life-size statues which can be identified were the Hercules and Omphale on either side of the entrance to the front courtyard of Wanstead House. The earliest references to them are from 1722, when the house was nearing completion. George Vertue, in his notebooks, recorded a marble statue of Hercules six foot high finely done in marble for 'Lord Castleman' by 'Delvo' and a statue of Omphale by 'Schemakers' made at the same time.[26] These were two pieces in white marble, one by Laurent Delvaux and the other by Peter Scheemakers, for which Pierre Denis Plumier had made sketches before he died.[27] Presumably they were always intended to flank the

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February 15, 1702/3, payment of £30 to 'Ino Tisjou'; July 20, 1703, payment of £150 to 'Ino Tijou'. These ledgers are now in the archives of the Royal Bank of Scotland, to whom I am grateful for access.

[24] A receipt dated 16 November 1705 is at the house.

[25] Similar figures in both lead and stone survive elsewhere, dating from the 1730s and 1740s. See John Davis, *Antique Garden Ornament*, Antique Collectors' Club, 1991, p. 49.

[26] Vertue Notebooks, *Walpole Society*, volume 18, 1930, p. 101.

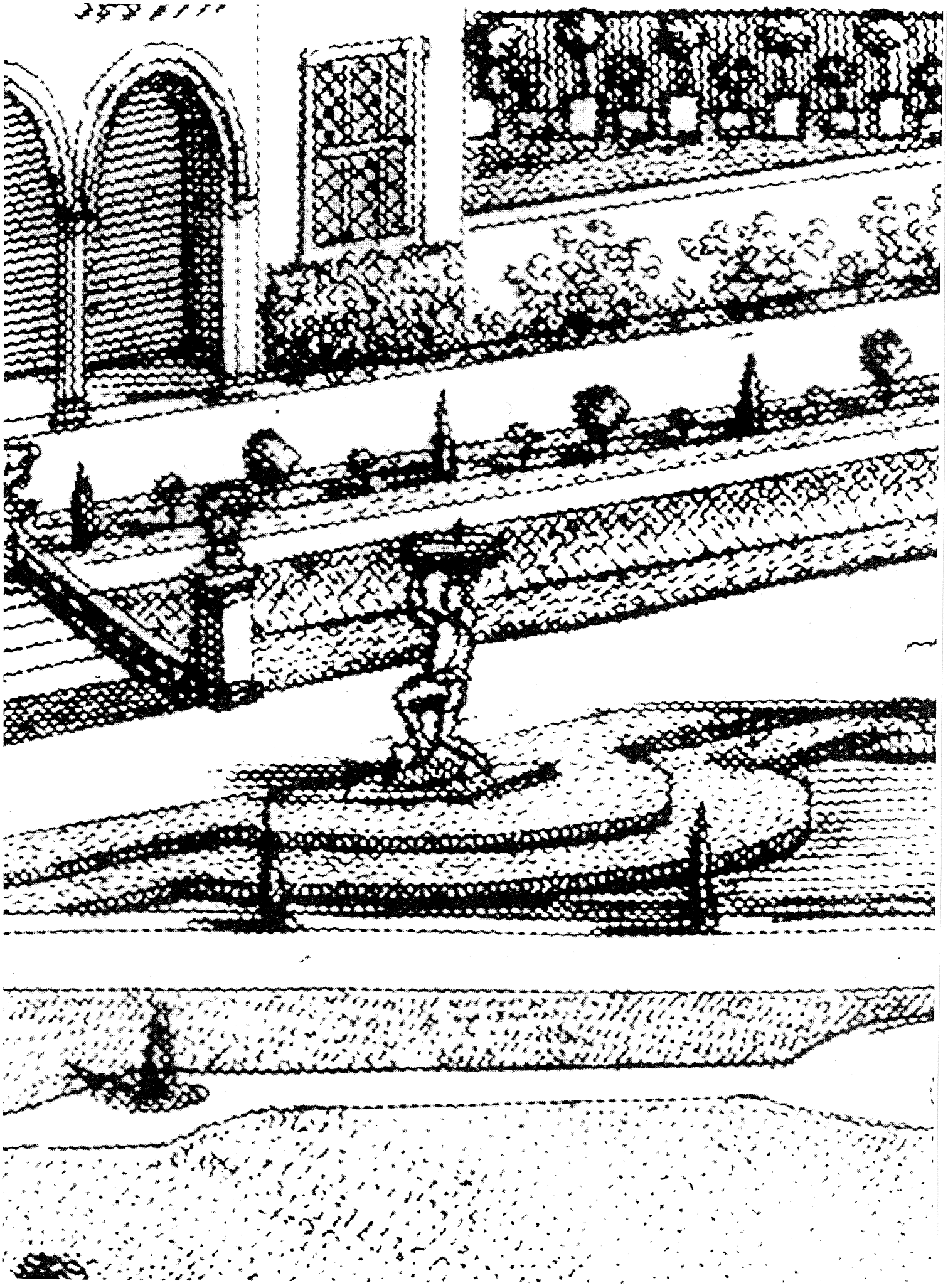
[27] Victoria & Albert Museum, D 1062-1887. I am indebted to Dr Ingrid Roscoe for information from her thesis. See her article 'Peter Scheemakers', in *Walpole Society*, volume 66, 1999, pp. 282-3.



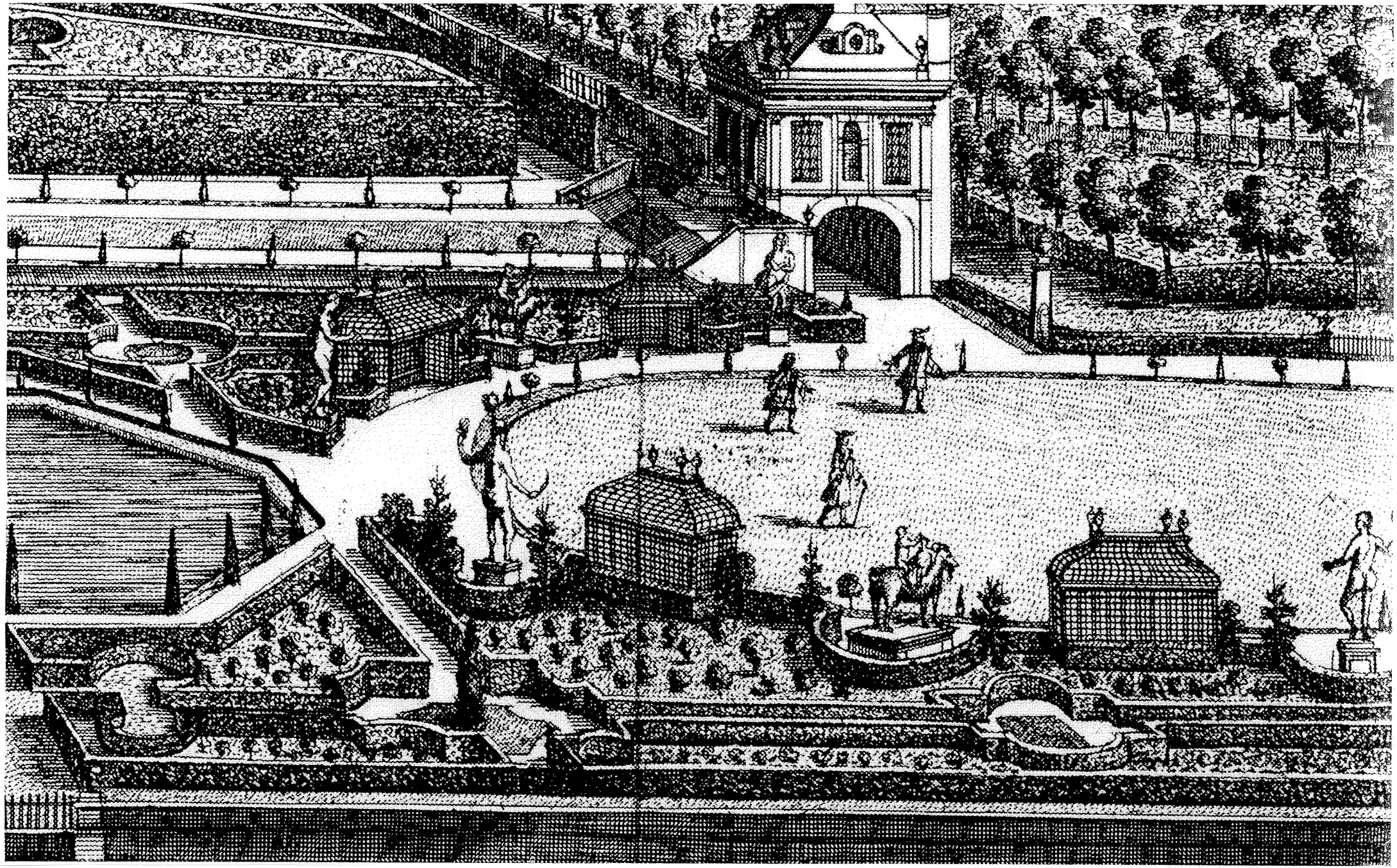
7. The ironwork grilles by the bowling green at Wanstead. Detail from Kip and Knyff's view to the north.



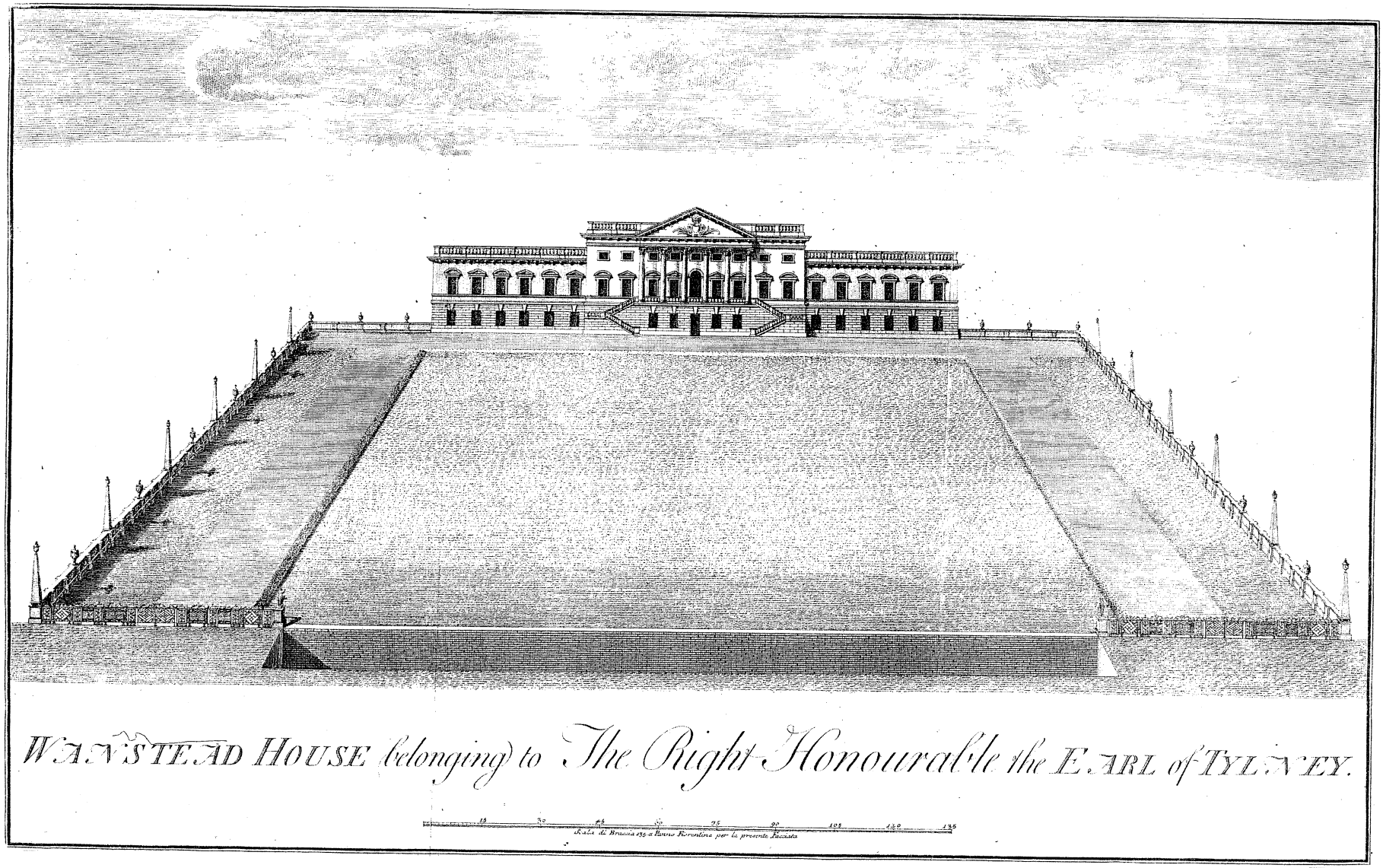
8. Ironwork at the entrance to Wanstead Golf Club.



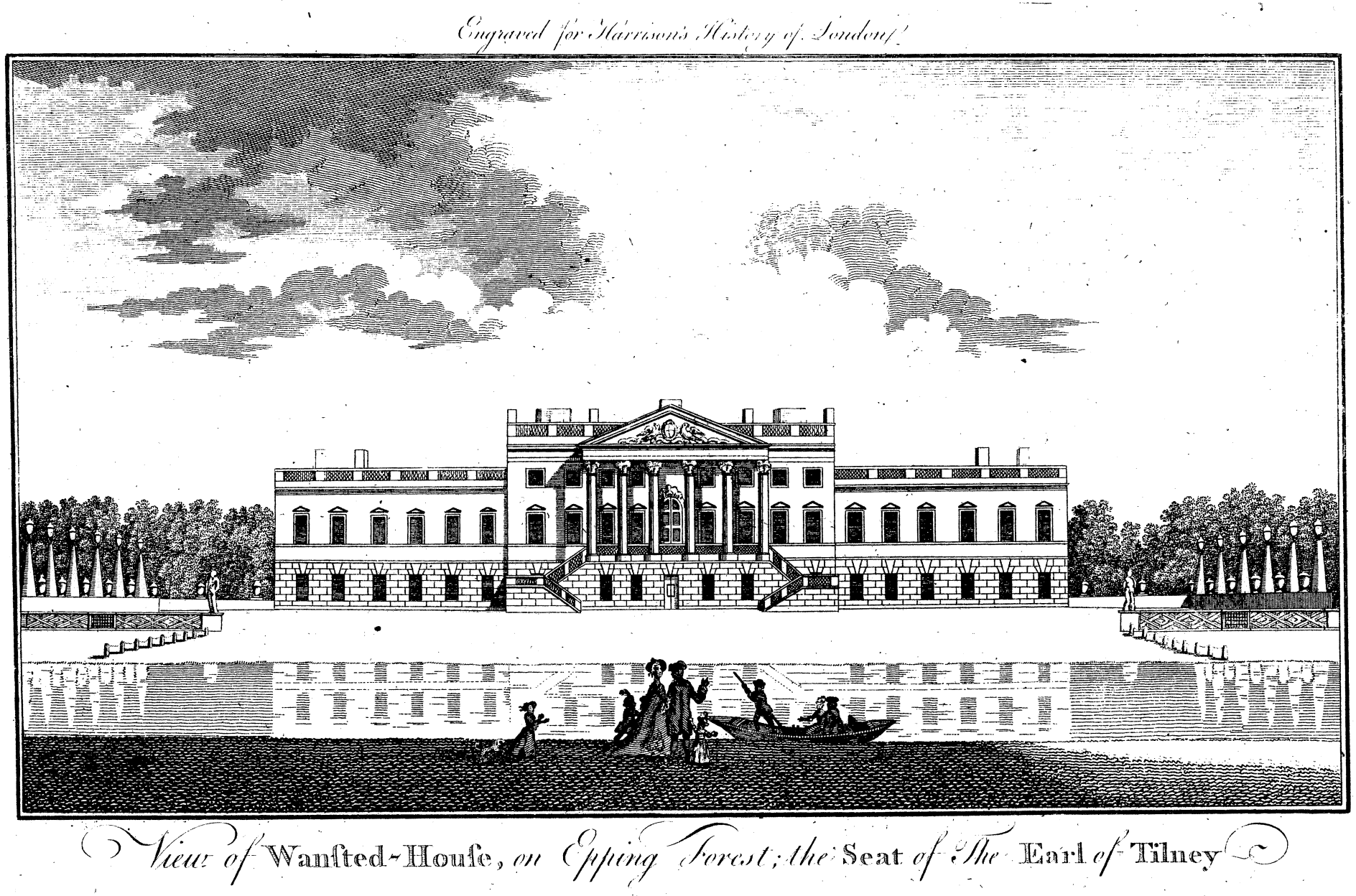
9. The blackamoor holding a sundial. Detail from Kip and Knyff's view to the north.



10. The bowling green with some of the statues. Detail from Knyff and Kip's view to the north.



11. View of Wanstead House from the west, with the entrance courtyard and the statues of Hercules and Omphale. From Morant's *History of Essex*, 1768.



12. View of Wanstead House from the west. From Walter Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster,* 1775.

entrance, but there is no view of them until the engraving of Wanstead prepared for Morant's *History of Essex* of 1768 (*fig. 11*). Here, and in later views,[28] they are shown on stone plinths terminating the two short, low lengths of what was apparently decorative ironwork enclosing the west end of the forecourt (*fig. 12*). They continued to stand there throughout the eighteenth century, and were described in *The Ambulator* of 1774 thus: 'On each side as you approach the house, are two marble statues of Hercules and Venus, with obelisks and vases alternately placed . . .' William Angus, in *Seats of the Nobility and Gentry in Great Britain and Wales*, of 1787, corrects this identification by stating: 'In the Avenue leading from the grand Front of the House to Leytonstone is a circular Piece of Water, which seems equal to the length of the House. On each side, as we approach the House, is a marble Statue; that on the left Hercules, the other Omphale.'

Hercules figures frequently in sculptural programmes, representing great virtue and strength. However, if shown with a distaff, as here, he appears as one of a pair with Omphale, Queen of Lidia, who enslaved him and for whom he laboured at spinning and other household chores.[29] Presumably he also played the tambourine he holds here. The companion piece would have shown Omphale holding Hercules' club and dressed in his lion's skin. This was a somewhat curious choice, but may have been inspired by the example of Versailles, where there was a pair of terms with these subjects in the Parterre des Fleurs.

These two statues remained at Wanstead until the sale of 1822, when they were both attributed to Delvaux in the sale catalogue (page 118, lots 267 and 268), and sold for £21 10s. 6d. and £17 6s. 6d. respectively. The Hercules is now in the gardens of Waddesdon Manor (*fig. 13*).[30] The post-sale history of the Omphale is unknown.

Urns and Vases

A number of impressive urns and vases which ornamented the formal gardens and the house at Wanstead survived at least until 1822 and were sold. 'A pair of handsome lead Vases, with eagle ornaments on the tops, on stone pedestals' were noted as in the American Garden, and a total of eight stone and three lead vases were listed.[31] It is tempting to try to match some of these to the vases shown in the Knyff and Kip engravings on the parterres and in the clearings of the wildernesses.

At the time of the sale in 1822 there were four spectacular marble urns in the Great Hall of Wanstead House at the centre of the entrance front. The sale catalogue correctly gives them as two by Scheemakers and two by Delvaux, describing one as a 'VERY SPLENDID MEDICIAN SHAPED VASE, 4 FEET 6 INCHES HIGH, OF STATUARY MARBLE, FINELY SCULPTURED IN HIGH RELIEF', and giving an approximate subject for each.[32] They were based on similar vases in the Parterre de Latona at Versailles, which were in turn based on the antique Medici and Borghese vases.[33] The four were sold for eighty-four pounds

[28] Walter Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, 1775, opposite p. 577.
[29] For a contemporary account, see Joseph Spence, *Polymetis*, 1747.
[30] Terence Hodgkinson, *The James A. de Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor: Sculpture*, National Trust/ Office du Livre, 1970, pp. 208-9.
[31] Sale catalogue, 1822, lots 270-273 and 274-276, p. 118.
[32] Sale catalogue, 1822, lots 369-372, pp. 124-5.
[33] Ingrid Roscoe, *op. cit.*

at the sale, and were later acquired for Anglesey Abbey, where they are placed out of doors. It is not known whether they were originally placed outside in the gardens at Wanstead, for they were not recorded in the hall until about 1800.[34]

The Mounts

The poem of 1713[35] specifically refers in a footnote to the two mounts 'now raising' with an 'artful spiral Circle round'. Since the mounts were towards the outer limits of the garden at that time, they were among the later features to be constructed. They appear on Knyff and Kip's views with spiral paths and small buildings on top, on either side of the main grassy avenue. The small temples which crowned them are shown in greater detail by Rocque on his plan of 1735, presumably unchanged (*fig. 14*). These two mounts are among the features which survive today in a rather eroded condition and covered with a growth of trees and scrub.

Visitors to the Garden

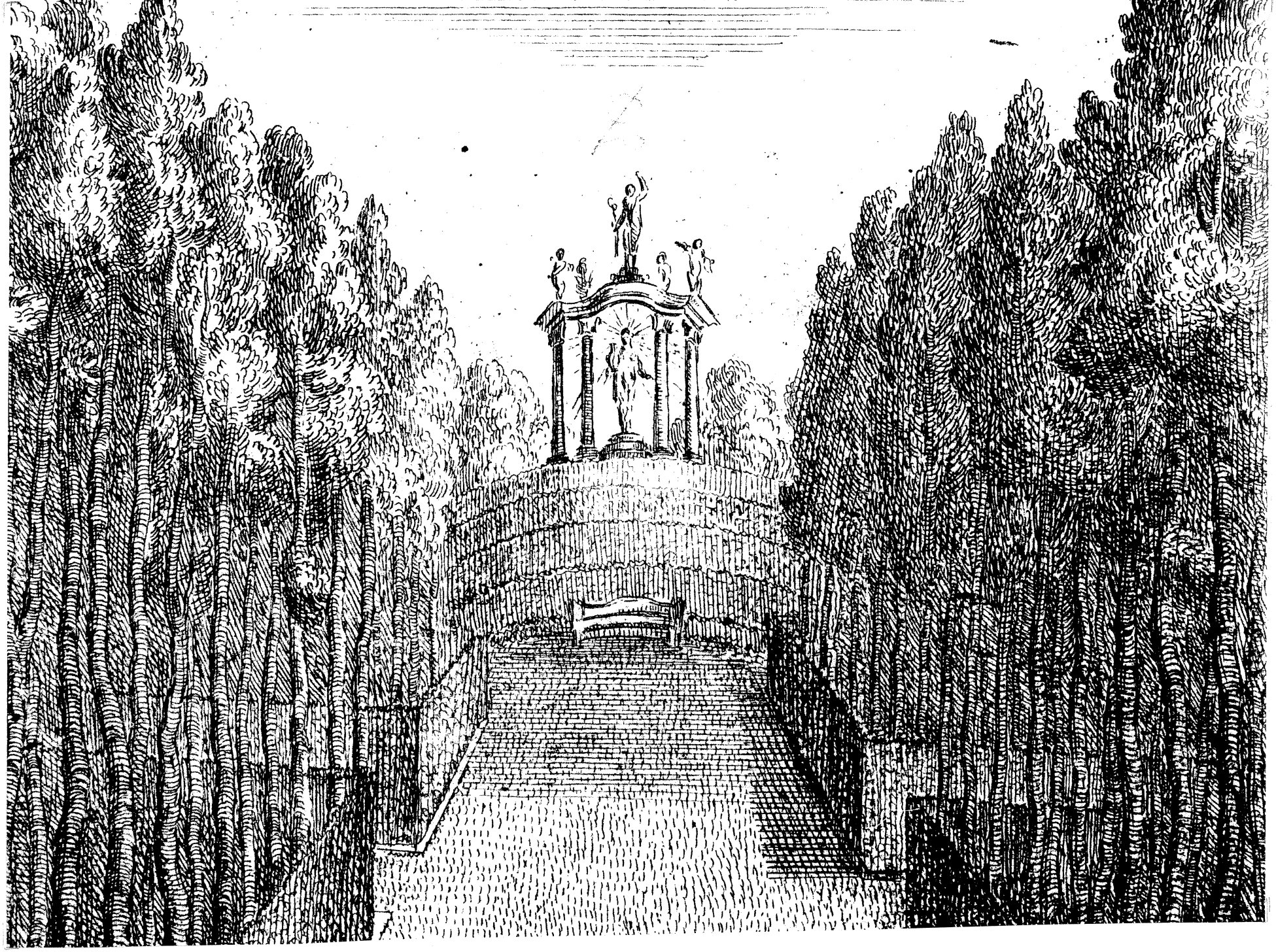
Pierre Jacques Fougeroux and his companions went out to Wanstead from London, leaving by Aldgate and taking the Whitechapel road, passing Bow village and turning off there from the main road.[36] They evidently had no difficulty in gaining admittance to the grounds, like many other tourists, and in fact they visited a number of houses and gardens during the Frenchman's stay. He was in the habit of making very crude plans of the places he saw, and made one for Wanstead, but they may have been done from memory, and their inaccuracies render them very misleading. For Wanstead, the views of Knyff and Kip are much more reliable. What is more instructive, apart from the detailed description, is the interest Fougeroux took in the way the gardens were kept and particularly the maintenance of the lawns. These were rolled regularly by horse-drawn stone rollers and were kept fresh by the temperate climate. Much as he admired the lawns, however, he thought that there was too much grass and that the gardens would benefit from more variety.[37] The range of visitors was great, from those invited by Child to those who came simply to see the sights. The author of *Flora Triumphans* describes (no doubt with a certain amount of poetic exaggeration) how Wanstead attracted crowds arriving daily from London. 'Nay from the Pallace to the Cott, whole Trains/ Down from Proud Quality, to humble Swains/ Like all equal Homagers resort.' Defoe also commented that the gardens were 'so much the Admiration of the Public, that it has been the general Diversion of the Citizens to go out to see them, till the Crouds grew so great that his Lordship was obliged to restrain the shewing them to particular and stated Times.'[38] When the Reverend Shaw visited in 1788, his party was admitted to the gardens and the interior of the house, which was only shown on a Saturday;[39] and Mrs Caroline Lybbe Powys, visiting in 1781, was taken to see Wanstead House ('reckon'd one of the finest houses in the kingdom') by her cousin, who lived at Leytonstone, apparently with as much ease as we might go country-house visiting today.[40]

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[34] *The Ambulator*, ninth edition, 1800, p. 228.
[35] *Flora Triumphans*, op. cit.
[36] See p. 5, note 17.
[37] Description derived from the author's translation of the French.
[38] Defoe, *op. cit.*
[39] John Pinkerton, *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World*, volume 2, 1808, p. 179.
[40] *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon., A.D. 1756 to 1808*, Emily J. Climenson (editor), 1899, pp. 205-6.



13. Laurent Delvaux: The statue of Hercules at Waddesdon.



14. One of the mounts at Wanstead as shown by Rocque on his plan of 1735.

There were special tickets for the visitors. (The sale catalogue of 1822 listed copper plates with engraved borders for printing tickets.)[41]

Sir Richard Child's New House

Child's new house was commissioned from Colen Campbell, who used it as an opportunity to burnish his reputation and to explore the idea of using the antique form of the temple in domestic architecture. At Wanstead he incorporated the temple form as the central part of a palatial house.

His designs for Wanstead House were prominently displayed in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, and there is a drawing, signed by Campbell and dated 1713, which shows the plan of the main floor and the west elevation of the first design.[42] Contacts between Sir Richard and Campbell must have begun before the publication of the first volume in 1715, and it would be interesting to know more of the relationship between client and architect. The first design, published in plan and elevation, was not executed, and was less innovative than that carried out. Campbell says of it: 'This was intended for Wanstead . . . A most charming situation, where are the Noblest Gardens now in the Kingdom.'

He illustrates his second design, which is close to that executed, in three drawings: elevation, section, and plan. Campbell here made his famous claim about Wanstead: 'the front, adorned with a just Hexastyle' was 'the first yet practised in this manner in the Kingdom'. It had a giant Corinthian order, three feet in diameter, a pediment busy with sculpture, figures on the parapet and a prominent cupola. The rustic ground floor was designed fifteen foot high to give the state rooms on the first floor 'a Prospect to these excellent Gardens'. The approach was from the entrance court up stairs each side to the portico.

The cupola was omitted in execution, and the pediments on both sides were ornamented by the arms of the newly ennobled Child. He was created Baron of Newtown, County Donegal, and Viscount Castlemain, County Kerry on 24 April 1718. The crest was an eagle with wings expanded and with a snake entwined around its neck, and the supporters were similarly eagles with snakes. The third design, published by Campbell in volume three of 1725, shows the final form of the house, but with only a simple cartouche and ribbons in the pediment, and with the addition of new corner towers, designed, he says on the plate, in 1721 (*fig. 15*). In the text they are dated 1720. This final embellishment was never constructed, but the dates give an indication that the work was then nearing completion. A good view of the entrance front of the house in 1781 is given by George Robertson and James Fittler (*fig. 16*).

Campbell does not illustrate the garden front of the house, which is consequently much less well known. The temple front there was pilastered, and the windows of the first floor had rusticated surrounds, as at Houghton, more suitable to the country-facing façade of the building, as seen in the view of 1781 by George Robertson and William Lowry (*fig. 17*). The curving steps shown on Campbell's plan were apparently changed in execution to resemble those at the front, but by the

[41] Page 35, lot 31.

[42] The designs were published as follows: volume 1, 1715, plates 21, 22, first design, plan and west front; volume 1, 1715, plates 23, 24-5, 26, 27, second design, plan, west front, section, plan and elevation of the greenhouse 'design'd by another hand'; volume 3, 1725, plates 39-40, west front of second design with new towers, dated 1721 on the plate and 1720 in the notes. The Campbell drawing is in the RIBA Drawings Collection. See John Harris, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 1973, p. 16 (under Colen Campbell).

time the house was demolished in 1823-5 these had been removed and replaced by a small terrace above three small ground floor areas.

The Interior of the House

A description of the interior of the house and its contents can be compiled from a number of sources, which reveal both the arrangement of the apartments and the high fashion and richness of the furnishings and fittings. The authors used here are Colen Campbell himself, in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, volumes one and two; John Macky;[43] Arthur Young,[44] who paid a visit and corresponded with Earl Tylney; John Pinkerton, recording a visit by the Reverend Shaw;[45] *The Ambulator;*[46] and William Gilpin (*fig. 18*).[47] Plans made by John Buckler in 1823[48] show the arrangement of the ground and first floor rooms at the time of the sale, and can be compared to Campbell's plan of 1725.

Macky described it in 1723 as a long body of a house measuring 260 feet, consisting of two storeys, the ground for the family and the upper storey for the rooms of state. The ground floor was entered by a gate under the staircase, and had at its centre a stone lobby supported by fourteen columns, with four apartments of five rooms each. Lord Castlemain's apartment to the right of the door consisted of a parlour with French prints, marble tables and a marble chimney piece, an antechamber with gold and blue brocade, velvet brocaded chairs, marble tables and chimneypiece, a bedchamber and dressing room of crimson damask, and a large closet. The apartment on the right fronting the garden was Lady Castlemain's, and the corresponding apartment to the left was for the entertainment of their friends.

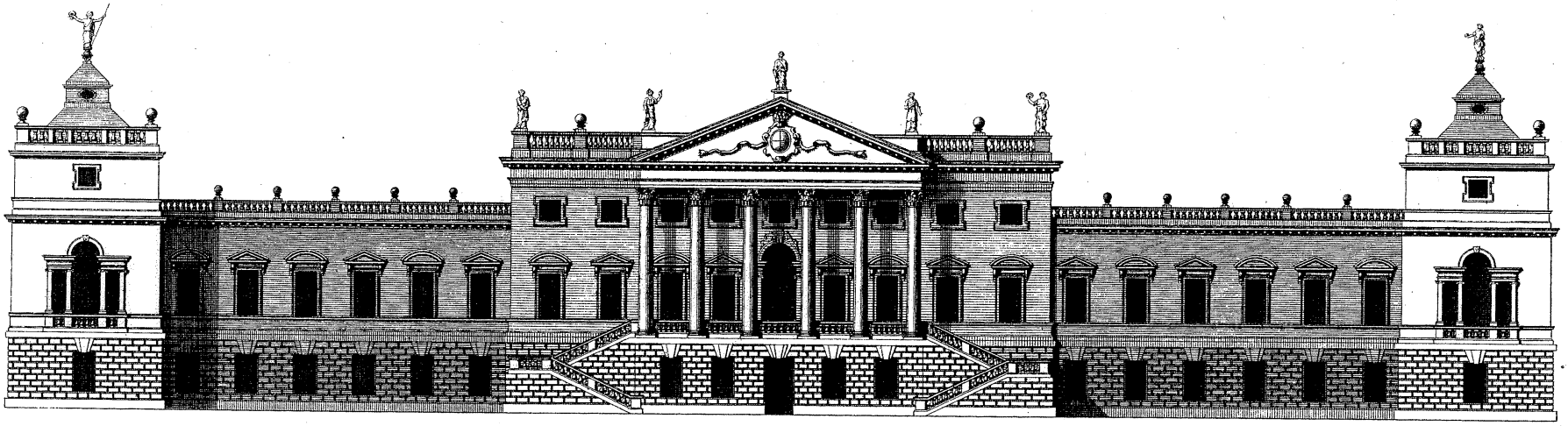
Young, writing in 1772, described the noble arcade under the hall, from which led a common dining parlour, and a breakfast room in the manner of a print room, with prints pasted on a pale yellow coloured paper, with engraved borders, and 'all dispos'd in a manner which displays great taste'. The prints were 'of the very best masters, and the ornaments elegant'.

The plan drawn by Buckler in 1823 just before the house was demolished shows two apartments on the south side, and the north side devoted to rooms for the house steward, the butler, the housekeeper and the 'upper part of the kitchen', which was vaulted and must have occupied space in the cellar also.

Macky did not describe the state storey because it was not complete when he visited, but he noted that the hall and salon were to be finely painted. Pehr Kalm visited in 1748, and described the interiors in a general way as very magnificent, with tapestries, paintings, costly tables, crystal lustres, gilded furniture, statues, 'and what varieties the East and West Indies can supply'. Pinkerton, who published the visit of the Reverend S. Shaw of Queen's College, Cambridge in

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[43] *Op. cit.*
[44] Arthur Young, *A Six Weeks Tour, through the Southern Counties of England & Wales*, third edition, 1772, pp. 229-233.
[45] *Op. cit.*
[46] *Op. cit.*
[47] William Gilpin, *Observations on several parts of the counties of Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, also on several parts of North Wales; relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 1809. The tour, which included Essex, was made in 1769.
[48] John Buckler, British Library, Add MS 36362, ff.115 and 116.



The West front of Wanstead in Essex with the four new Towers, the Seat of the Right Honble the Lord Viscount Castlemain. designd by Colen Campbell Esqr. 1721.

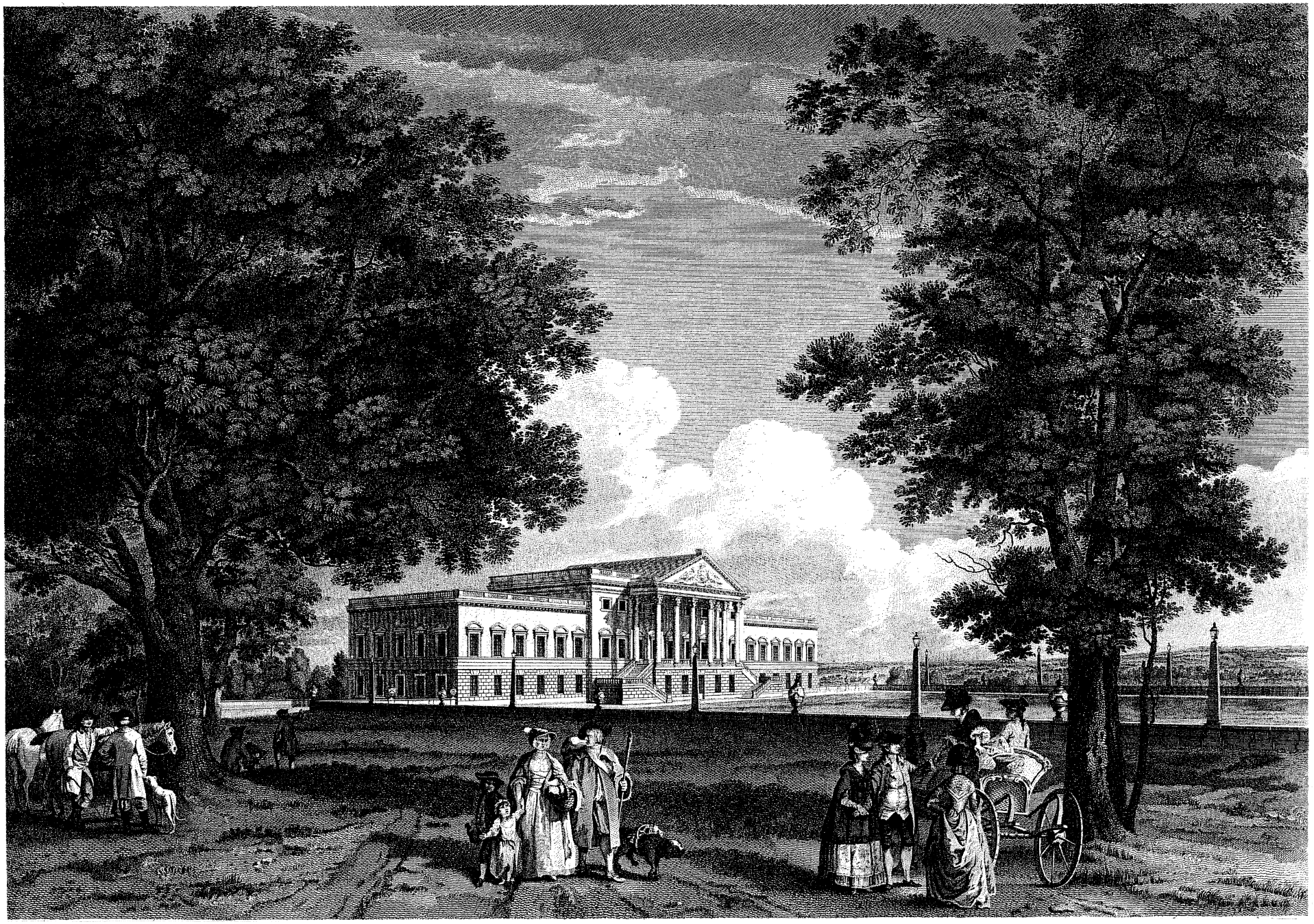
a Scale of 60 feet

5 10 20 30 40 50 60

Ca: Campbell Architectus.

H: Hulsbergh Sculp:

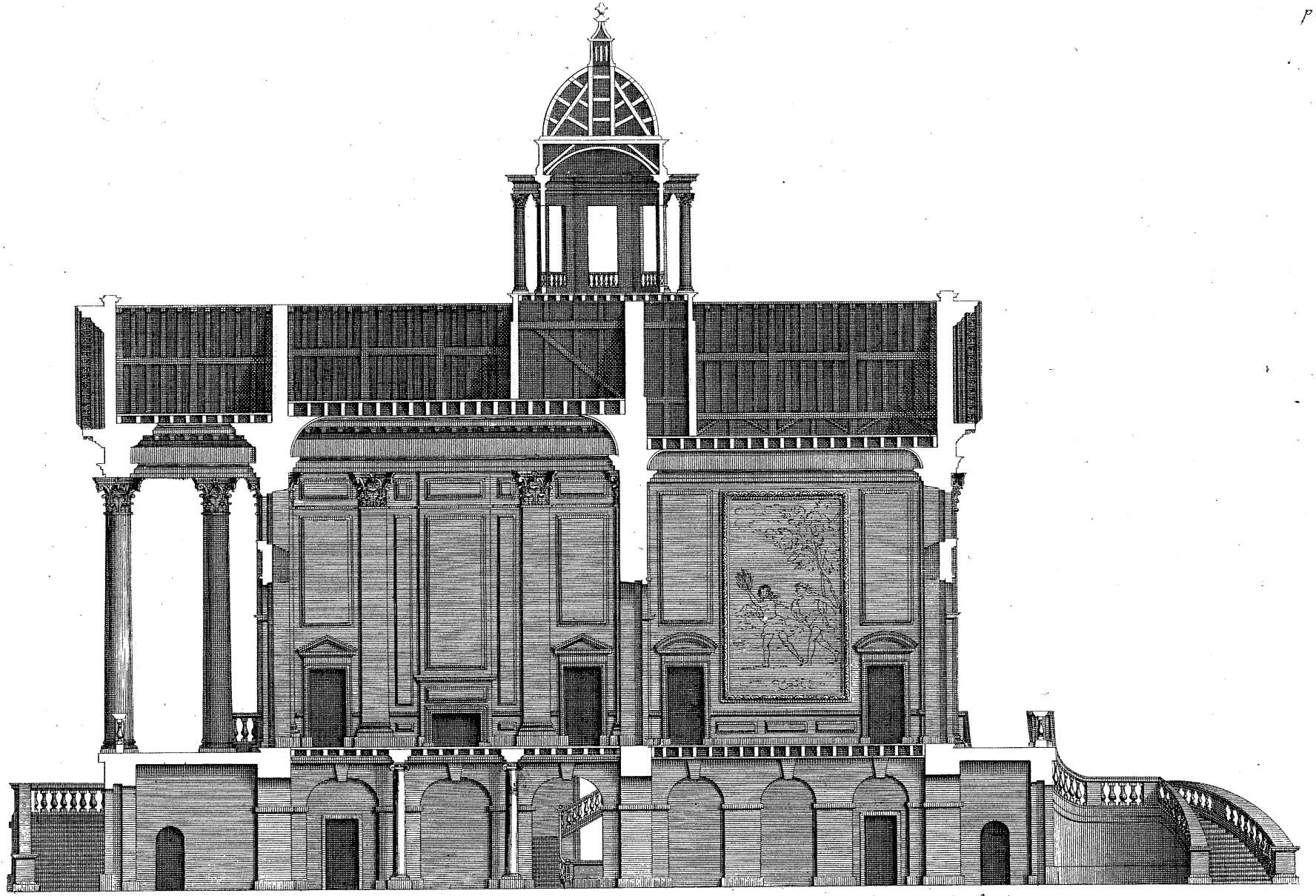
15. The third design for the west front of Wanstead, as executed except or the corner towers, which were not built. Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, volume 3, 1725, plate 39-40.



16. George Robertson and James Fittler: A view of the west front of Wanstead House with the forecourt. 1781.



17. George Robertson and William Lowry: A view of the east front of Wanstead House. 1781.



18. Section through the hall and saloon of Wanstead House as published by Colen Campbell in *Vitruvius Britannicus,* volume 1, 1715, plate 26. The cupola was not built.

1788, also emphasised the elegance and splendour of the interiors, the paintings and the tapestries. Other descriptions of the first floor commence with the hall. The doorcases were 'plain, but little carved, though in a good stile' and the chimneypiece was 'heavy'.[49] The ceiling was painted by Kent with Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night. A medallion over the entrance door held a portrait of Colen Campbell, and Kent's portrait hung within. On the walls were Roman histories by Cassali: Coriolanus, Porsenna, and Pompey taking leave of his family; two Antique Statues and four vases stood in the room.[50] A chandelier 'surmounted by a magnificent Spread Eagle destroying a snake on a rock' made reference to the family arms.[51]

There were four state bedchambers with four sets of rooms leading to them and at the north end 'a decent Chappel', according to Campbell, about which no more is heard. These apartments could be used in different ways according to the entertainment, and various routes around the first floor were possible for visitors and guests. William Gilpin was particularly struck by the convenience of the arrangement whereby the apartments communicated in one grand enfilade, 'but yet each, by the addition of a back stair, becomes a separate apartment'.[52] At the south end Lord Castlemain intended 'a handsome Library', but it was built as a long gallery or ballroom running the whole depth of the house on the south side, which was shown in Hogarth's 'Assembly at Wanstead', 1729-31.[53]

The assembly room was described in 1800 as not a 'flimsy parade of modern folly', but with furniture 'elegantly embossed' and gilded, and gilded ornaments of all kinds 'in the taste of that period'.[54] However, Young in 1772 said, 'I should remark that the gilding being all on brown is by no means set off with such lustre as if on lighter colours.' This was the room remarked upon particularly by the Reverend Shaw. 'The gallery or ball-room, which occupies one end of the house, is superlatively magnificent, its dimensions are 75 by 27, and proportionably high. The furniture, &c. is richly gilt and embossed; the tapestry, story of Telemachus, inimitable'.[55] Everyone remarked on the extensive gilding and the tapestries with the story of Telemachus and Calypso and the battles of Alexander. Over the chimneypiece was a painting of Portia, wife of Brutus, by Schalken.[56]

Young says that 'Wanstead, upon the whole, is one of the noblest houses in England. The magnificence of having four state bed-chambers, with complete apartments to them; and the ball-room are superior to any thing of the kind in Houghton, Holkam, Blenheim, or Wilton: But each of those houses are superior to this in other particulars: and to form a complete palace, something must be taken from all. In respect of elegance, Wanstead is second to Holkam.'

A painting by Nollekens dated 1740 of a family in an interior[57] is traditionally said to show a Wanstead interior, but cannot do so accurately since there were apparently no Venetian windows in

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[49] Young.
[50] *Ambulator.*
[51] Tasker, 1898, volume VII, p. 219, from Pinkerton, 1808, *op. cit.*, p.179.
[52] Gilpin, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[53] In the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It was noted in the sale catalogue of 1822 as item 171, p. 111, 'A View of the Interior of the Ballroom of Wanstead House with a numerous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen'.
[54] George Cooke, *Topographical and Statistical Description of the County of Essex*, c. 1800, p. 127.
[55] Pinkerton, p. 178.
[56] Young.
[57] In a private collection. Illustrated in colour in *Rococo. Art and Design in Hogarth's England*, Trefoil Books/ V & A, 1984, plate XVII and catalogue entry B3.

the house as built. There exist, however, three paintings (discussed later) of the house and grounds which show non-existent wings with such windows, so it is possible that this was painted in the same manner to show a proposed interior.

Walpole wrote to Richard Bentley on 17 July 1755 that he had dined at Wanstead:

> Many years have passed since I saw it. The disposition of the house and the prospect are better than I expected, and very fine: the garden, which they tell you cost as much as the house, that is £100,000 ... is wretched; the furniture fine, but totally without taste: such continencies and incontinencies of Scipio and Alexander, by I don't know whom! such flame-coloured gods and goddesses by Kent! such family-pieces, by - I believe the late Earl himself, for they are as ugly as the children that he really begot! The whole great apartment is of oak, finely carved, unpainted, and has a charming effect. The present Earl is the most generous creature in the world; in the first chamber I entered he offered me four marble tables that lay in cases about the room.[58]

This criticism of the family taste was echoed by Gilpin,[59] who disliked the paintings and commented waspishly that 'paltry copies from great masters take from the dignity of a noble mansion. If the ancestry of such a house had been many years in the possession of it, it may be supposed that they might have collected a few original pictures. If nothing of that kind is found in it, the possessors of the house may be supposed to be an upstart race.'

Much work was done on the interior in the early nineteenth century, when the house was being prepared for the coming of age of Miss Long, the young heiress who was to inherit it, and after her marriage in 1812 complete redecoration was undertaken. 'Mr Wellesley Long Pole, they say, is fitting up Wanstead House in a style of magnificence exceeding even Carlton House. The whole of the interior will present one uniform blaze of burnished gold.'[60] This was to celebrate the baptism of his small son and in preparation for a grand fête for the Duke of Wellington.

Wanstead as built was Campbell's first important work and was to be recognised as a great house throughout its existence. Defoe, like other visitors, thought that the house eclipsed all others in the vicinity. Citizens of London had built a number of fine seats round about, 'but the Lustre seems to be entirely swallow'd up in the magnificent Palace of the Lord Castlemain . . . The Building is all of Portland Stone in the Front, which makes it look extremely Glorious and Magnificent at a distance; it being the particular property of that Stone . . . to grow Whiter and Whiter the longer it stands in the open Air.'[61]

A coach house and stable courtyard were constructed to the north of the house, and survive in part with modifications as the premises of the Wanstead Golf Club, with low pantiled ranges and wrought-iron gate piers.

It was apparently intended to build offices each side of the house, linked by quadrant walls. These are seen in two or three views dated up to about 1740,[62] and Macky, in 1723, wrote that between

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[58] *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, W.S. Lewis (editor), volume 35, 1973, p. 238.
[59] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
[60] Hiram Stead, *Materials for the History of Wanstead House 1650-1900* [title page: *Some Account of Wanstead House in Essex collected between 1897 & 1907 by Hiram Stead (late of Forest Gate) Comprising the earliest printed descriptions, views, notices &c; its Occupants; and its fortunes, and the Village of Wanstead*], Stratford Local Studies Library, E/WAN/728.83; c.1912, Local History Library, Stratford, p. 71, unattributed cutting dated 1814.
[61] Defoe, *op. cit.*
[62] In particular, the view of house and wings on Rocque's plan of 1735.

the 'Bason and the Palace is a spacious Area, on each side of which the Offices are to be built; but the Foundations of them are not yet laid'. Morant, who published his history of the county in 1768, wrote that the house 'was intended to be made still more magnificent, by Wings, raised with colonades answering to the grandeur of the front',[63] but they were apparently never built, and Arthur Young lamented their lack in 1772: 'What a building would it be, were the wings added according to the first design.'[64]

Pehr Kalm, writing in 1748, stated that 'My Lord Tilney had laid out so much on all this [his house and gardens] that he has barely as much left that he can in some sort support his state, or maintain . . . what he has here erected. This was evident both with the house and garden, which had not been fully completed, because the owner's resources did not allow him to incur further expense.'[65] In 1823, the house was stated to have cost more than £360,000,[66] and Walpole in 1755 had said that the garden had cost £100,000.[67]

The Forecourt

Although the wings were not constructed, the courtyard must have been pretty spectacular and apparently unlike others. The old house as shown by Knyff and Kip had railings separating the courtyard from the approach avenue, with an oval piece of turf before the house and a carriage sweep round it. This was replaced by a deep rectangle of grass surrounded by low walls, probably of stone, with alternate obelisks topped by lamps and urns. At the west end, away from the house, was a ha-ha occupying most of the width of the forecourt, and on either side of this elaborate ironwork railings of the same height as the side walls, with pairs of gates. These gave entry to two broad drives which ran across the grass down each side of the forecourt and turned to run along the entrance front of the house. The level of the central area between the drives was slightly lowered to create a sunk lawn. Visitors could thus have driven or ridden up to the steps and entered either the rustic storey or the *piano nobile*. It is unclear exactly how or when this evolved. The statues of Hercules and Omphale were made in the 1720s and we would expect the walls and obelisks to have been erected at the same time, but in fact there are no early views, and a different plan to accommodate the wings is shown by Rocque and in a painting attributed to Catton (*fig. 19*).[68] The final arrangement can be seen particularly well in an undated plan with an Italian scale, published in Morant's *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 1768, volume one. This engraving exists as a separate and earlier print (bound into a copy of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in the Royal Academy collection), which is identical except that the statues are not shown. No other view shows the ha-ha, but the carpet of grass, the drives and the obelisks and urns can be seen in later engravings, and the walls, ironwork and sunk lawn were painted by Repton in 1816.[69]

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[63] Philip Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, volume 1, p. 30.
[64] Arthur Young, *op. cit.*
[65] Peter Kalm, *Kalm's Account of his Visit to England on his Way to America in 1748*, translated by Joseph Lucas, 1892.
[66] *Annual Register*, 1823, p. 65.
[67] Walpole, *op. cit.*
[68] The painting is of the Great Octagon Basin and is in a private collection.
[69] Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, Fragment 26, illustration with flap down.

Astronomical Observations at Wanstead

The parish church of St Mary was situated very close to the house, and the Child family used it and were commemorated there when they died. A particularly magnificent monument was erected to Sir Josiah. The rector from 1707 was James Pound, a former chaplain to the East India Company, who was certainly known to the Childs from his service at Fort St. George. His interests were directed to astronomy, and he made a number of noteworthy observations of eclipses from Wanstead through his fifteen-foot telescope. Furthermore, with the support of Sir Isaac Newton he borrowed Huygens's famous 123-foot glass from the Royal Society, mounted it on a column known as the maypole removed from outside St Mary-le-Strand in London, and proceeded to more interesting observations, particularly of Saturn and Jupiter. His work was continued by his nephew, James Bradley, who also lived at Wanstead.[70]

The church Pound knew was the one visible on the Knyff and Kip views, but with the appointment of Dr Samuel Glasse as rector of Wanstead in 1786, plans were made for rebuilding, and this was carried out to the designs of Thomas Hardwick in 1787-90.

Changes to the Gardens circa 1725 and the New Watercourses

The setting for the new house continued to undergo change during the remainder of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. The gardens created by George London and shown by Kip and Knyff were virtually unchanged when Macky visited before 1722, but alterations were already afoot in 1725. As we might expect, the changes planned soon after the completion of the new house tended towards a softening of the formal grounds surrounding it, while still including very elaborate man-made features such as amphitheatres and mock-fortifications.

Of prime importance were the new pieces of water, which were eventually to stretch in a string along the southern and eastern edges of the gardens from the basin in the west to the canal and the diverted River Roding in the east. The exact dates when all the waterways were created are not recorded, and the work must have taken many years and thousands of man-hours of work between about 1725 and 1745.

The only noteworthy change carried out by 1722 and reported by Macky was the creation of a single octagonal basin by joining the two ponds beside the western approach. This, says Macky, was 'a Bason of Water of near half a Mile in Circumference, on which my Lord keeps a Gondola for his Pleasure'. This basin survives on the land owned by Wanstead Golf Club and local people have stated that there is still a causeway across it about five feet below the surface.[71]

The basin is clearly shown in the painting attributed to Charles Catton the Elder (c.1728-1798),[72] which records the road bordered by trees around it, and the well-ordered young plantations in quincunx groves on either side of the approach (*fig.19*). These works were carried out and may be

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[70] See entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography*; Henry King, *The History of the Telescope*, pp. 63-4; Graham Dixton and Patricia Wilkinson, *The Parish of Wanstead*, 1990.

[71] James Berry and Alan Cornish, *The Lake System of Wanstead Park & the Mystery of the Heronry Pond*, March 1978, typescript report, p. 11.

[72] John Harris, *The Artist and the Country House from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Day*, Sotheby's, 1995, p. 91.



19. Attributed to Charles Catton the Elder, c. 1728-1798: Wanstead House and the great octagon basin. Private collection. Since this painting appears to illustrate plans which were afoot around 1735, particularly the proposed wings, it is difficult to see how this attribution can be supported.



20. James Craddock: Plan of Wanstead Park. Essex Record Office D/DCW P7.

seen on later plans, but the wings, as noted above, were not. Repton later commented on the plantations which had grown up to block the view. 'This wood was originally intended to have been kept low, but it has now outgrown its intention.'[73] Octagonal basins were in fashion following the creation of the gardens at Versailles, and Wanstead's elongated example at the front of the house echoed the earlier one at the back, attached to the long canal.

Leading up to the most distant canal was a long channel of water to the east of the wilderness garden, which probably ended with the mill ('moulin') or engine referred to by the visiting Frenchman in 1728. This was probably water-powered and seems to have served to pump water up to the house. It perhaps fell into disuse when the system of watercourses became more complex, as this spot was later labelled by Rocque 'The Old Engine House' on his 1745 map. The River Roding fed the canals and can be seen flowing further to the east and round the top of the straight canal.

A plan by James Cradock in Essex Record Office[74] shows some of the changes towards more informal pieces of water, which were apparently in hand by 1725 or were about to be made (*fig. 20*). They consisted of channels and islands to the north and south of the eastern straight canal at the bottom of the slope, made by extending and serpentining the watercourses already in existence. Changes were also made around the canal itself. It was originally a long rectangular shape flanked by twin rows of trees. Cradock shows water surrounding this on three sides so that it appears as a canal standing within a larger canal with a shaped end. He marks in red a series of unnamed buildings: one later referred to as the 'Gardener's House' or 'Old Engine House', near the canal,[75] another on a bastioned island to the north, which became known as 'the fortifications', and a third connected with an extensive bastioned earthwork, in an area with vineyards, orchards and groves and labelled as 'Theatres', to its south. Nearly all of these features were shown on later maps more or less in the form indicated by Cradock, which confirms that they were indeed carried out. The only exception is the grassed theatre or earthwork. Its existence is suggested by surviving ridges visible on the archaeological survey, but if it was constructed it cannot have been there for long, for it was unrecorded later.

Another painting attributed to Charles Catton and now owned by Newham Museum Services, which was apparently at Wanstead until the 1822 sale, takes a bird's eye view from the east, and shows the ring of water running round the grounds (*fig. 21*). In the foreground is the straight canal with its two lines of trees on raised banks and water flowing around it, and the grassy avenue rising towards the distant house, which appears a brilliant white in the sunlight, as Defoe said it did. Here can also be seen the buildings marked by Cradock: the fortification, the gardener's house and the grassed theatre beside the water, which, if and when it existed, must have made a convenient landing place for boats. It is interesting to note in this connection that a somewhat similar stepped grass theatre terminated the river at Chiswick House prior to the construction of Kent's cascade.[76]

The series of lakes to the south of the estate appear to have been formed by damming a stream which ran west-east into the River Roding.[77] They were named (from west to east) 'The Great Lake', 'The Reservoir', 'The Horse Field Pond' and 'The Serpentine Ponds' by Rocque

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[73] Humphry Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1816, p. 136.
[74] James Cradock. Plan of Wanstead Park, 1725. Essex Record Office, D/DCW P7.
[75] Marked on Rocque's plan of 1735 and map of 1744-6 respectively with these names.
[76] Shown on Rocque's plan of Chiswick of 1736. I am grateful to Brian Dix for discussions on this subject.
[77] See Berry and Cornish, *op. cit.*

in 1744-6. Cradock's plan does not cover the whole area of the grounds to the south and west, nor the house itself, so it is unclear from this whether these lakes to the south were in existence in 1725. They are first shown on Rocque's plan of 1735, perhaps in the form in which they were then planned, and subsequently on his map of 1744-6 in what became their final shapes (*figs 22, 23*). Apart from minor alterations, they remained thus until Repton made changes in about 1816. The outer line of waterways around the eastern canal seems to have undergone some erosion a little earlier. By 1779[78] the outer line of water only existed in part to the north and east of the canal, and the twin lines of trees were no longer complete by about 1815.[79]

The creation of the lakes was a major undertaking, but a particularly fashionable feature in the transformation of the gardens. Pehr Kalm's account includes the comment that Lord Tylney's difficulty was

> that there was no water; but money could cure all such things. Where, previous to that time there was scarcely anything but a ditch with a little water in it, we now saw a large flowing river, all made with art and human labour. He had had dug about the whole place many ponds, *dammar*, of which one and another resembled a little lake, so that the one which lies in front of the windows of the mansion, and is all artificially made, is so large that they can sail to and fro on it with large boats. [80]

Adam Holt

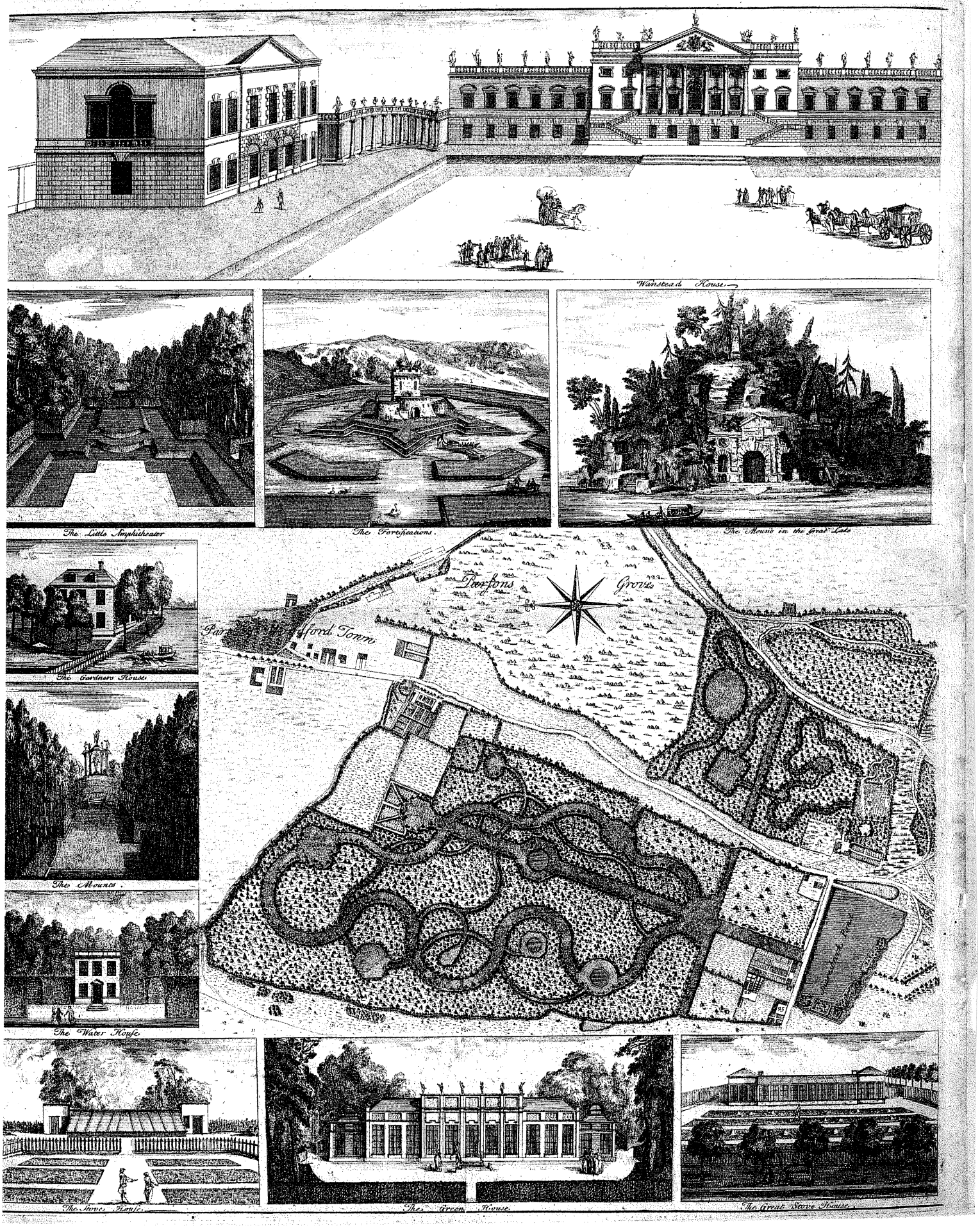
The man in charge of the early hydraulic engineering schemes may have been Adam Holt (d.1750),[81] referred to in 1715 as the 'surveyor of the works' responsible for the destruction of a Roman pavement discovered at Wanstead Park by 'digging holes through it, for planting an avenue of Trees'.[82] He is a shadowy figure, about whose work at Wanstead little is known except that he was recorded as 'Sir Richard Child's Gardiner' at Wanstead in 1713, when he had labourers in the field of an unidentified Quaker to make a canal and a kitchen garden,[83] and that he probably had a nursery in the area, first at Leytonstone and later at Wanstead .[84] He certainly made a survey of John Letheiullier's estate at Aldersbrook in 1723,[85] so seems to have had contacts in the neighbourhood. His may have been a local family who were involved in the estate at Wanstead, since there are frequent references to a Thomas Holt in the bank account of Sir Richard Child from 1702-7.[86] These are extremely difficult to interpret, as only names are given, but large sums of money were involved, and it could be that Thomas Holt was acting as some kind of agent for Child during the making of the gardens. Thomas or Adam Holt may have ingeniously managed to bring water to Wanstead to feed the Basin and eventually the other lakes by channelling it from the

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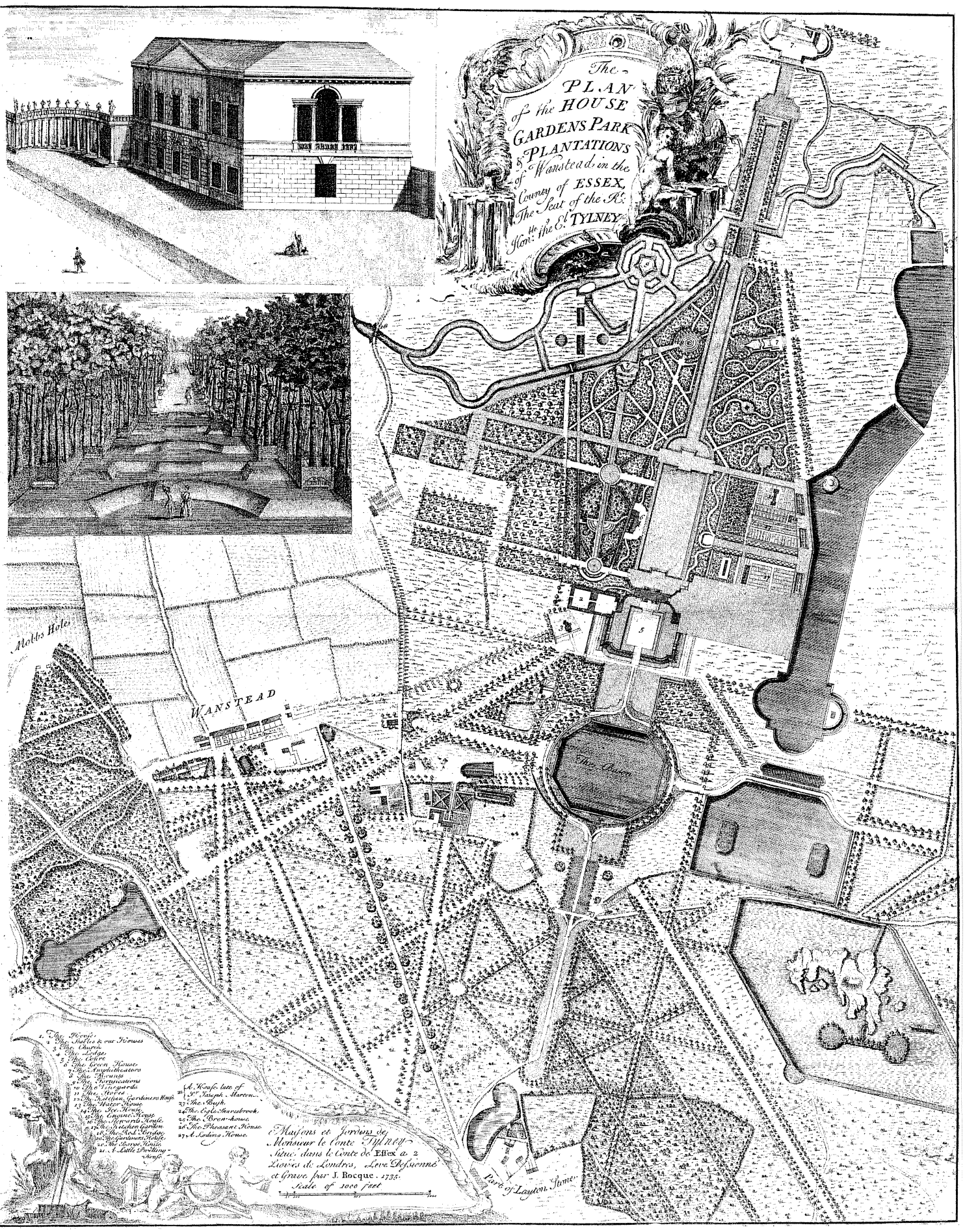
[78] L. Searles, *A Survey of Wanstead Park in Essex the Seat of the Rt Honble Earl Tilney*, ERO D/DCw P59.
[79] Plan of Wanstead Park, ERO D/DCw P61.
[80] *Op. cit.*, p. 175.
[81] Fiona Cowell, 'Adam Holt (1691?-1750), Gardener: His Work at Coopersale House, Essex', *Garden History*, volume 26, no.2, pp. 214-217; John Harvey, *Early Nurserymen*, Phillimore, 1974, p. 81.
[82] Letter from Smart Lethieullier to Dr Charles Lyttelton, British Library Add MS 6183, f.80, read to the Society of Antiquaries November 27 1746, and published in *Archaeologia*, volume 1, p. 73.
[83] W.R. Powell (editor), *Victoria County History of Essex*, volume 6, 1973, p. 325, and Fiona Cowell, *op. cit.*
[84] Cowell, *op. cit.* and Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
[85] Essex Record Office, D/DSA 150.
[86] Held at Child's Bank in the name of Sir Richard Child. The ledgers are now in the archives of the Royal Bank of Scotland.



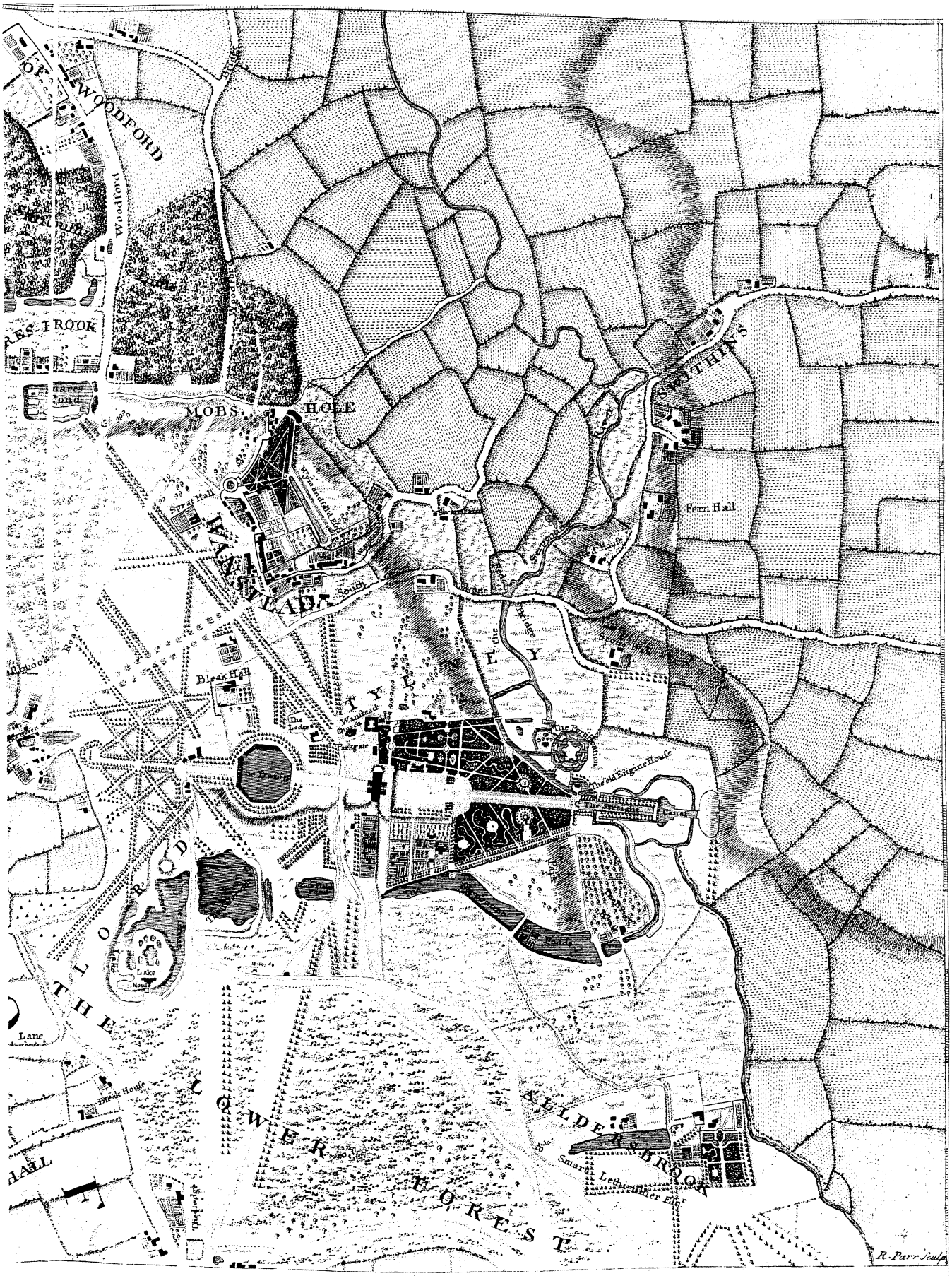
21. Attributed to Charles Catton the Elder: Bird's eye view of Wanstead Park from the east. Newham Museum Services.



22. John Rocque: Plan of the House, Gardens, Park and Plantations of Wanstead in the County of Essex, 1735. (In two sections.) Part one.



22. John Rocque: Plan of the House, Garden, Park and Plantations of Wanstead in the County of Essex, 1735. (In two sections.) Part two.



23. John Rocque: Detail of Wanstead from *An Exact Survey of the City's of London, Westminster Ye Borough of Southwark and the Country near ten miles round,* 1744-6.

Snaresbrook area into an artificial ditch known as the 'River Holt', which followed the contours of the land.[87]

The avenue reported to have been planted under Holt in 1715 can probably be identified with the long double avenue of sweet chestnuts running from the end of the straight canal to the new Serpentine Pond, and clearly shown both by Rocque in 1735 and in the painting of Wanstead from the east discussed above. It provided a link and a vista from one waterway to another, and also framed the view of London on the horizon.

John Rocque's Plan of 1735 and after

When John Rocque made his 'Plan of the House Gardens Park & Plantations of Wanstead in the County of Essex, The Seat of the Rt. Honble. the El. Tylney' in 1735 he showed the full extent of a series of grandiose proposals, some of which were executed and some not. Fortunately, Rocque also included Wanstead on his 1744-6 map of London and its Environs (*fig. 23*).[88] While the 1735 plan shows many projects, Rocque's 1744-6 map records what had actually happened up to that date. This plan of London, which conveniently just squeezes Wanstead into the north-east corner sheet, shows the water features as constructed, with the names used at the time.

Richard Child had taken the surname Tylney when his wife inherited the estates of her maternal grandfather, Francis Tylney of Rotherwick, near Basingstoke. He had subsequently been elevated to an earldom in January 1732 and had then taken the title of Earl Tylney in the Irish peerage. By an Act of Parliament of 1734, his eldest son and his heirs were permitted to bear the name of Tylney. He was evidently ambitious, and there were very ambitious plans afoot for both house and gardens, some of them extremely expensive and never to be realised, such as the wings proposed to surround the sunk forecourt. The major proposals for change began, as noted above, in about 1725, when Cradock made his plan. The latest description yet found of the formal garden close to the house with its canal, parterres, and bowling green and its statues, urns and wrought-iron railings, was the Frenchman's written in 1728. This formal garden had probably been taken away by, or soon after, 1735 and replaced with a great sunk lawn as shown by Rocque.

The new lawn is shown even better in another painting of Wanstead House from the Orange Tree Garden attributed to Catton the Elder, which must date from about 1740 (*fig. 24*). It was sold in the Spencer-Churchill sale of 1965 and its present whereabouts are unknown.[89] This view was taken from the woodland garden on the east, looking across the orange tree garden, which would have been just behind the green-house, or orangery. The painter illustrates the lawn in use as a huge bowling green dominated by the old orangery still in its raised position on the northern side, in front of which an orange-tree 'theatre' was formed by the trees placed out in their tubs.

Rocque also indicates the arrival of meandering walks in the woodland gardens running down beside the grass avenue to the straight canal and the waterways around it, and the construction of two amphitheatres, one overlooking a vista towards the fortification and one leading to the

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[87] James Berry and Alan Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[88] *An Exact Survey of the City's of London, Westminster ye Borough of Southwark and the Country near ten miles round begun in 1741 & ended in 1745 by John Rocque Land Surveyor & Engrav'd by Richard Parr,* in 16 sheets.

[89] Any information on its present location would be welcomed by the author.

southern mount. The amphitheatres were built, the mounts were retained, and much of this layout was executed.

However, the famous island in the shape of the British Isles is not shown on any subsequent plan, and the extensive waterways to the south of the house were much less formal in execution. The island-grotto on the mount in the Great Lake is also something of a puzzle. It is clearly shown on the 1735 plan and it is included on Rocque's later plan of the 1740s (*fig. 25*). However, no description of it has been discovered and there is no subsequent evidence of it, although the island continues to be shown on plans. More of this later.

Work went on over a long period of time, and continued after Rocque had made his plan. Smart Letheuillier, Tylney's neighbour to the south, was a great observer of what went on. In a letter of 27 September 1746 he wrote that 'Ld: Tylney having this Summer made Considerable Alteration in his Park' had disturbed the spot where the Roman pavement had previously been discovered, which was now 'totally changed'.[90]

William Kent at Wanstead

Several commentators mention the presence of Kent at Wanstead to paint the ceilings. The hall was decorated with the Times of Day, and was richly gilded, and 'the pencil of Kent has also adorned several of these ceilings',[91] among them the Saloon.[92] Lord Castlemain also commissioned a full-length portrait of Kent by William Aikman for the hall,[93] which appeared in the sale catalogue (page 124, lot 365) as 'A Portrait of Kent the Artist, who painted many of the ceilings, and gave designs for the interior decorations of Wanstead House'. The dates of 1722, when the Hercules and Omphale were made, and 1723, when Macky reported that the upper storey was to be finely painted, are an indication of the time when Kent might have been present at Wanstead. He was of course to become a very talented garden designer, and this was the moment when he had renewed his acquaintance with Lord Burlington and was working for him at Burlington House. Work at Chiswick soon followed. It is tempting to suggest that he took an interest in the magnificent plans for the Wanstead gardens. Unfortunately, no word of documentation has been found to attach his name firmly to any part of the garden design. However, some of the features shown on Rocque's 1735 plan, particularly the view of the house and wings, the grotto island and others illustrated in the margins, have a flavour of his work, as John Harris has remarked, and Kent should be noted as the possible author of them.[94]

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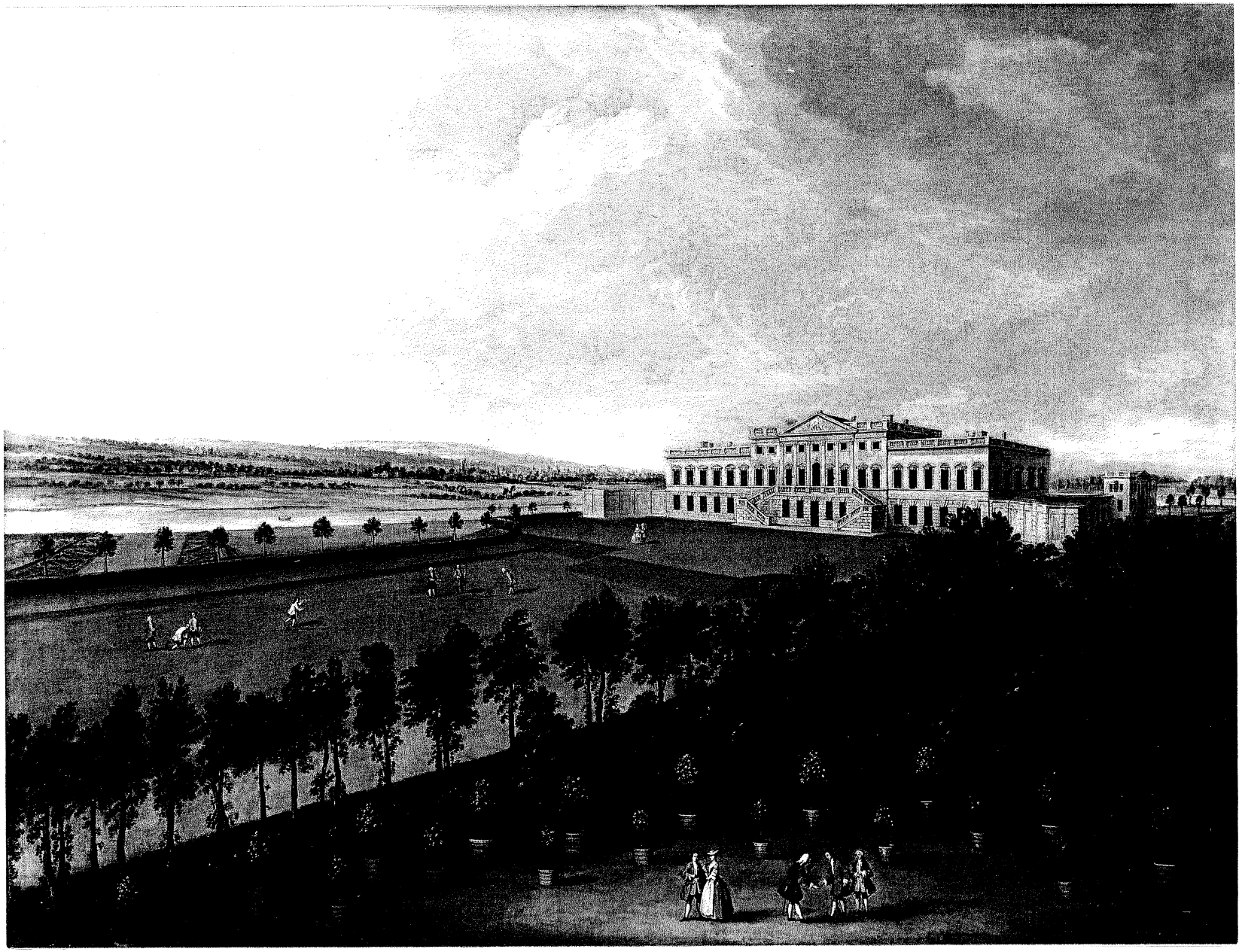
[90] Letter to Dr. Charles Lyttelton in British Library, MS Stowe 752, f.13v. It was published in *Archaeologia*, volume 1, pp. 73-4.

[91] Pinkerton, p. 178.

[92] 'The Saloon is a fine room well finished in stucco, the roof painted by Kent (a very indifferent piece of work) and the ornaments above gilded.' Comment by Sir John Clerk of Penicuick, who visited in 1727, quoted in J. Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle*, 1978, p. 24.

[93] Noted by Vertue, *Walpole Society*, volume XXII, p. 24 as 'Mr. Kent his picture at length done by Mr Eckman & plac'd up in the hall of my Lord Castlemaines in Essex where he has painted much for his Lordship.'

[94] John Harris, 'The Artinatural Style', in *The Rococo in England*, Georgian Group Symposium Proceedings, edited by Charles Hind, V & A 1986, pp. 18-19.



24. Attributed to Charles Catton the Elder: Wanstead House from the orange tree garden. Location unknown.



25. 'The Mount in the Great Lake' or the Island Grotto, as shown by Rocque, 1735.

The Fortification and the Pleasure Boats

The Fortification was illustrated by Rocque on his 1735 plan as one of the marginal views (*fig. 26*). It had angled bastions with three steps up to the platform, which appears to be grassed. The fort itself was perhaps a not very substantial construction, belying its appearance. It was certainly never intended to defend against anything other than mock attacks. The superstructure has disappeared, but its island site remains with the distinctively-shaped bastions. The battlemented tower might have been modelled on the romantic pile of Vanbrugh Castle, Greenwich, designed by Vanbrugh for himself as a castle in miniature and built from 1718, or the mock fortification walls at Castle Howard, also by Vanbrugh, under construction from 1719 to 1725; while the bastions are similar in shape to those used at Tilbury Fort, Essex, built between 1670 and 1683, whose form was adopted for the bastions of the garden at Grimsthorpe by Stephen Switzer. If we accept that the Cradock plan shows what was being constructed in 1725, then this makes the fortification at Wanstead one of the earliest mock forts of this period, and at the forefront of this fashion for fortified elements in gardens.[95]

Such a feature was recorded at West Wycombe Park in 1754, together with various vessels kept on the lake there. The Dashwoods of West Wycombe were, like the Childs, a family of East India and Turkey merchants. They had owned property in Wanstead, and it is interesting that a copy of Rocque's survey plan of Wanstead with the fortification was in the Dashwood collection. A drawing of a fort, attributed by Anne Purchas to Jolivet,[96] is also in the collection. Mock battles could be dangerously realistic. The captain of the snow,[97] the largest ship in the West Wycombe fleet, was reported on one occasion to have 'received damage from the wadding of a gun which occasion'd him to spit blood and so put an end to the battle.' An engraving by William Woollett after William Hannan of 1757 conjures up the pastoral atmosphere of the lake scenery when battles were not in progress, with a sailing ship anchored peacefully and a gondola party landing on the island. At Newstead Abbey there were also mock naval battles on the lake, and Walpole in 1760 reported on 'two silly forts' built there in 1749 by the fifth Lord Byron, followed by a castle facade for the kennel and stable building beside the lake. The battery at Newstead survives but Folly Castle, built in 1749 on the island, has now gone. The fort at Wanstead must have been used in this way.[98]

Entertainments of this kind had been known in Roman times as *naumachia*, and were revived in the Renaissance, when numerous water festivities were held. For example, at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence the courtyard behind the palace was specially flooded to celebrate the marriage of Ferdinando I and Christine of Lorraine in 1589. Eighteen Christian galleons were seen to besiege a Turkish castle on that occasion. In England, such water entertainments became popular in the Tudor period. The famous waterworks at Elvetham, created for the entertainment given by Lord Hertford for Queen Elizabeth I in 1591, involved a specially-dug lake in the shape of a crescent moon. The entertainment was highly emblematic, with the lake representing the Queen as Cynthia the moon goddess, Neptune's Fort on one island the forces of England, and a snail mount on

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[95] See Robert Williams, 'Fortified Gardens', in Christopher Ridgway and Robert Williams (editors), *Sir John Vanbrugh and Landscape Architecture in Baroque England 1690-1730*, Sutton, 2000.

[96] Anne Purchas, 'Maurice-Louis Jolivet's drawings at West Wycombe Park', *Architectural History*, volume 37, 1994, catalogue 3.

[97] A snow is a small sailing vessel.

[98] Gervase Jackson-Stops, 'The West Wycombe Landscape I', *Country Life*, June 20 1974, p. 1619; Rosalys Coope, 'Newstead Abbey in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*, 1979, p. 57. I am grateful to Rosalys Coope and Anne Purchas for discussions on Newstead Abbey and West Wycombe Park.

another the evil forces of Spain. Cannon and numerous vessels driven by both oar and sail took part in the mock battle with its victorious outcome for Neptune's Fort and the Queen.[99]

There are no known written descriptions of the fort at Wanstead, nor of its use, but Rocque clearly illustrates a rowing boat with a canopy at one end moving away from the fortification island, which surely played its part in the summertime entertainments of both the first and second Earls Tylney (*fig. 27*). Since the Child family had such close involvement with the East India Company, perhaps they re-enacted sea battles between their ships and pirate vessels wishing to acquire their valuable cargoes. There are a number of references to pleasure boats. Macky said that Lord Castlemain kept a Gondola on the basin for his pleasure,[100] and Kalm was presumably referring to the basin when he described the lake in front of the house where they sailed 'to and fro ... with large boats' in 1748.[101] The second earl acquired a new boat in 1760 and could not wait to try it out. He wrote to his brother that he was 'very impatient to see a new vessell that is just come to Wanstead, and really the prettiest that ever was built. We purpose to try it this afternoon.'[102] Whether this was destined for the basin or one of the other lakes is not known. In the 1822 Sale Catalogue, under the heading 'Arch and Lakes', six vessels were listed:

70 AN EXCELLENT WELL BUILT FOUR-OARED PLEASURE BOAT with sails, oars, boat-hook, &c.
71 A capital two-oared Ditto, oars, &c.
72 A Ditto
73 A large Fishing Punt
74 Two India Canoes

There were also, interestingly:

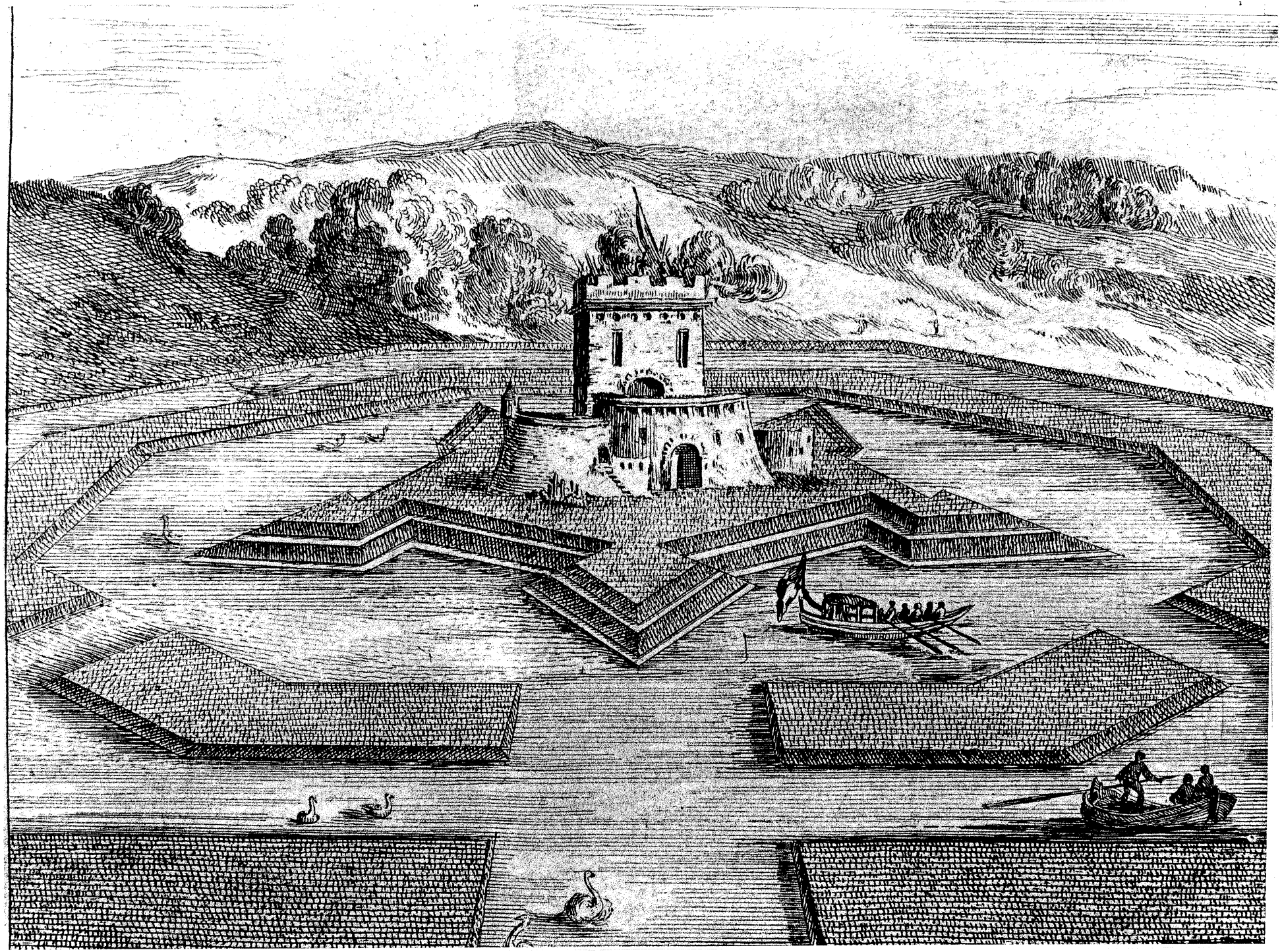
75 *A handsome round Fishing House,* with thatched roof, and seats inside
76 Three rustic Elbow Seats
77 Two fine Swans
78 Three Ditto

All of these grotto items were marked as sold back to Wellesley at the sale.[103]

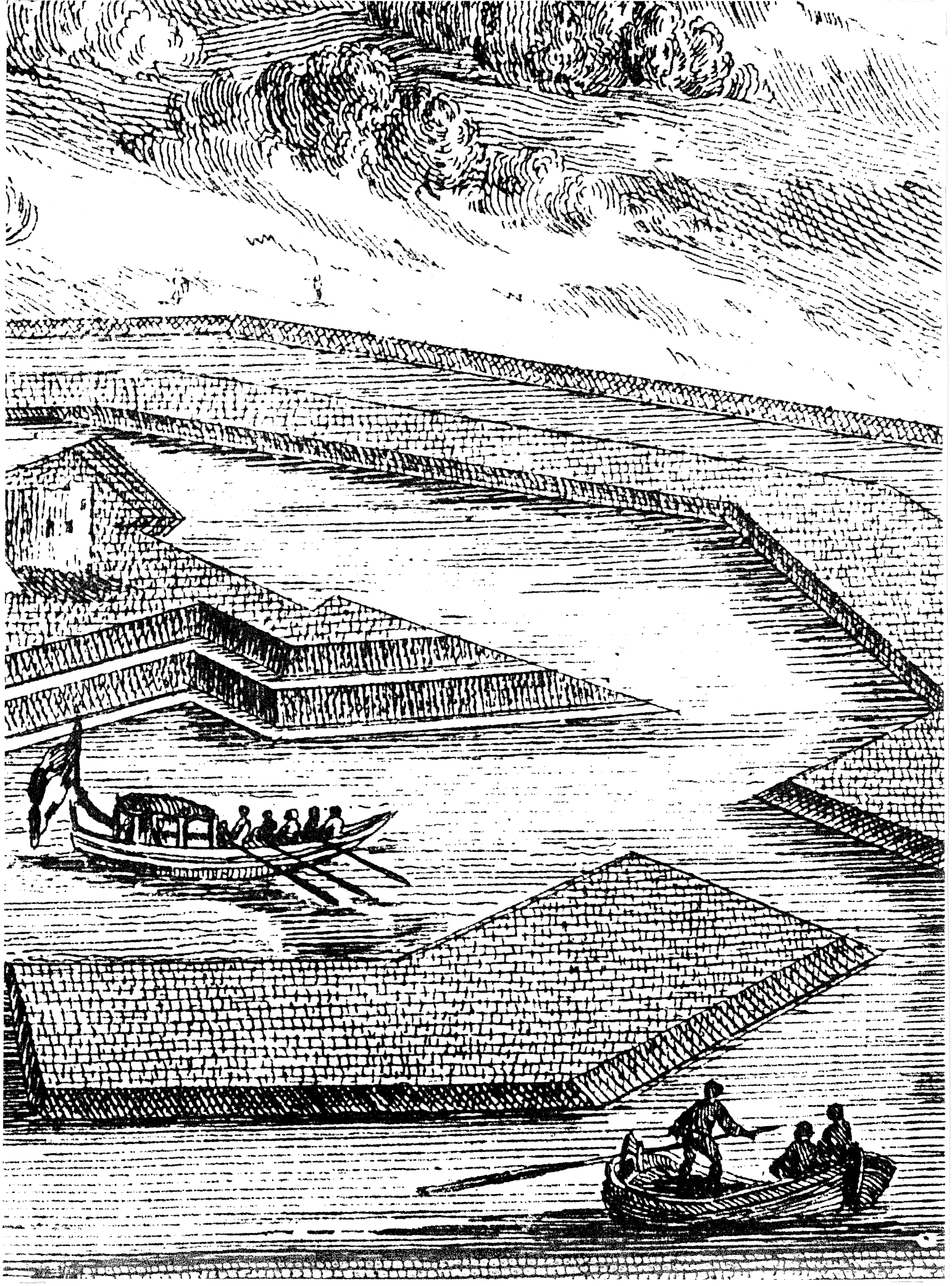
The Second Earl Tylney

John, second Earl Tylney, succeeded to his father's estates in 1750. He was the younger son, his elder brother having died of smallpox. He never married, and increasingly spent his time away from Wanstead, travelling extensively and collecting art treasures. Robert Harvey described him as an 'unhappy man who could not resist the temptations & instigations of a passion, contrary to reason, & at which nature shudders', and a willing exile from his country. He lived almost permanently abroad from the early 1770s, based at his house near the Carmine in Florence, which was considered fine and boasted a print room with yellow paper. He usually wintered in Naples, where

[99] See Jean O'Neill, 'Diversions on the Water', *Country Life,* August 1, 1985, pp. 332-334, and Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England,* Thames & Hudson, 1979, pp. 125-6.
[100] Macky, 1723, *op. cit.*
[101] Kalm, 1748, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
[102] Letter from Lord Tylney to his brother Sir Robert Long at Draycot, 28 July 1760. Redbridge Central Library, archives.
[103] In the copy of the catalogue at Ilford Library.



26. The Fortification as shown by Rocque, 1735.



27. A goldola-type pleasure boat near the fortification. Detail from Rocque, 1735.

he died in 1784.[104] However, in the earlier years of his ownership of Wanstead he was sometimes present and was busy entertaining and beautifying the grounds. Horace Walpole visited and dined in 1755, the Duke of York was given supper and a ball at Wanstead in 1760,[105] and in 1764 'their Majesties in a post-chariot, escorted by a small party . . . went to the seat of Earl Tilney on Epping-forest, and after staying there near two hours, took an airing about the forest . . .'[106] Smart Letheiullier, the observant neighbour at Aldersbrook, nevertheless reported sadly in the summer of 1751 that 'The social amuzements of this Neighbourhood are much Chang'd, for instead of being the Gayest & most Cheerfull spot perhaps to be found in any Country, we are become as retired as if we were in Yorkshire. Tylney you know is gon abroad . . .'[107] He was only 'a little at Wanstead' in the summer of 1756, before going to Bath and then London.[108] In 1759 he was carrying out work on the great basin in front of the house, and had been making considerable improvements. Letheiullier reported again: 'After a six weeks run at Tunbridge which he preferred to Home my good Neighbour is return'd to Wanstead, there are still considerable improvements made since I saw you there last Christmas & I hope that innocent pleasure will steal still more & more upon him. He has executed the Grand Project of emptying the Great Bason before the house, it was judiciously executed by the help of a Syphon – without cutting the Bank, or doing any other damage. There was a vast resort of Company and the Day was very joyous but the disappointmt. with regard to the Fish was very great, there being not more than 100 Brace of Carp taken out & those lank & thin . . .'[109] However, by 1775 Walter Harrison was writing 'The present lord has resided many years in Italy, nor is there any prospect of his returning to England . . .'[110]

The changes which he brought about in the gardens must therefore be dated in the 1750s and 60s, when he was quite often at Wanstead and entertaining illustrious visitors. Two garden buildings in particular are associated with the second Earl, and both apparently date from the 1760s or thereabouts. These are the Temple and the Boathouse-Grotto.

The Temple

Earl Tylney was in Florence in 1753, when the young architect William Chambers was also there.[111] While in Florence, Chambers designed a small garden temple in the Doric order, which he subsequently dedicated to the Earl in his Treatise, with the note in the text that it was 'proposed to be executed in his Lordship's gardens at Wanstead' (*fig. 28*).[112] This suggests that the Earl was at

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[104] See John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800*, Yale UP, 1997, pp. 959-960. Tylney, however, continued to maintain a presence at Wanstead for longer than this reference implies.

[105] Letter from Lord Tylney to his brother, Sir Robert Long, of 11 June 1760. Redbridge Central Library archives.

[106] Hiram Stead, *op. cit.*, cutting from unidentified source, dated 1764.

[107] Smart Letheiullier to Dr Charles Lyttelton, 20 August 1751. British Library, Stowe MS 752, f.54v.

[108] Smart Letheiullier to Dr Charles Lyttelton, 19 October 1756, British Library, Stowe MS 752, f.90r.

[109] Smart Letheiullier to Dr Charles Lyttelton, 25 September 1759, British Library, Stowe MS 752, f.102v.

[110] Walter Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, 1775, p. 577.

[111] Andrew Wilton & Ilaria Bignamini (editors), *The Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, Tate Gallery exhibition catalogue, 1996, p. 234; John Harris & Michael Snodin (editors), *Sir William Chambers*, Courtauld Institute Gallery exhibition catalogue, 1996, pp. 2, 199. Frank Salmon, 'British Architects and the Florentine Academy, 1753-1794', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, volume 34, 1990, part 1/2, pp. 201-202, sets out the sources for the dating of Chambers' stay in Florence.

[112] William Chambers, *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture*. The plate first appeared in the first

that time considering such an addition to his gardens, and although this design was not, as far as we know, carried out, a garden temple was constructed as the focus of the avenue which ran from the Serpentine Ponds to the Straight Canal. The architect of the Temple is at present unknown.[113]

Very little is known for certain of the early history of the Temple - a name which has only been recorded since the late nineteenth century. It did not exist in 1744 when Rocque surveyed the area, but it does appear on a map of 1779 (*fig. 29*).[114] The building appears on the 1779 plan, where it is called a 'Poultry House', with a pond behind it and what could be sheds or outhouses behind that. By 1815 it was in use as a 'Keeper's Lodge, Pheasantry etc.'. These are modest-sounding names for such a place, but there are examples to be found elsewhere of buildings of classical form used for similar purposes. At Lord Burlington's Chiswick Villa, for example, a small plain building ornamented with a pair of classical niches was used as a Deer House, but also served to furnish the landscape elegantly. Robert Adam made a design for a classical pheasant house for Kedleston in 1759. The Temple at Wanstead is built on artificially raised ground so that the centre of the lower storey is invisible from the front, and the ground floor areas are approached from the back (*fig. 30*). The wings are not contemporary and must have been added soon after.[115] The porticoed central section was clearly intended as a feature of the landscape at the end of an avenue of trees and could have been used during garden entertainments, while the discreetly hidden lower storey was used by keepers and the outbuildings for poultry or pheasants. The Temple was built across the existing avenue of trees, to which it provided a visual stop, and it was linked to the other new structure, the boathouse-grotto, by an informal path.

The Boathouse Grotto

Although, as noted above, there is no surviving description of the island grotto illustrated by Rocque, there are a number of reports dating from the early 1760s of another grotto at Wanstead - the boathouse grotto. An 'Inscription for the Grotto in Earl Tilney's Garden at Wanstead' was written in 1764, and in another report of the same year it is stated that '. . . the Earl of Halifax, together with the French Embassador, and twelve or fourteen other Noblemen of distinction, went to view the seat of the Right Hon. Earl Tilney, and the gardens, with the curious grotto at the bottom of them.'[116]

The form of this building echoed to some extent that of the island grotto, and it is possible that the first was taken down to supply material for the second. This survived relatively intact until a fire of 1884, after which it continued to be used as a boathouse. Only the ruined shell now remains, but a sketch by Charles Heathcote Tatham as well as descriptions and early photographs partly record its

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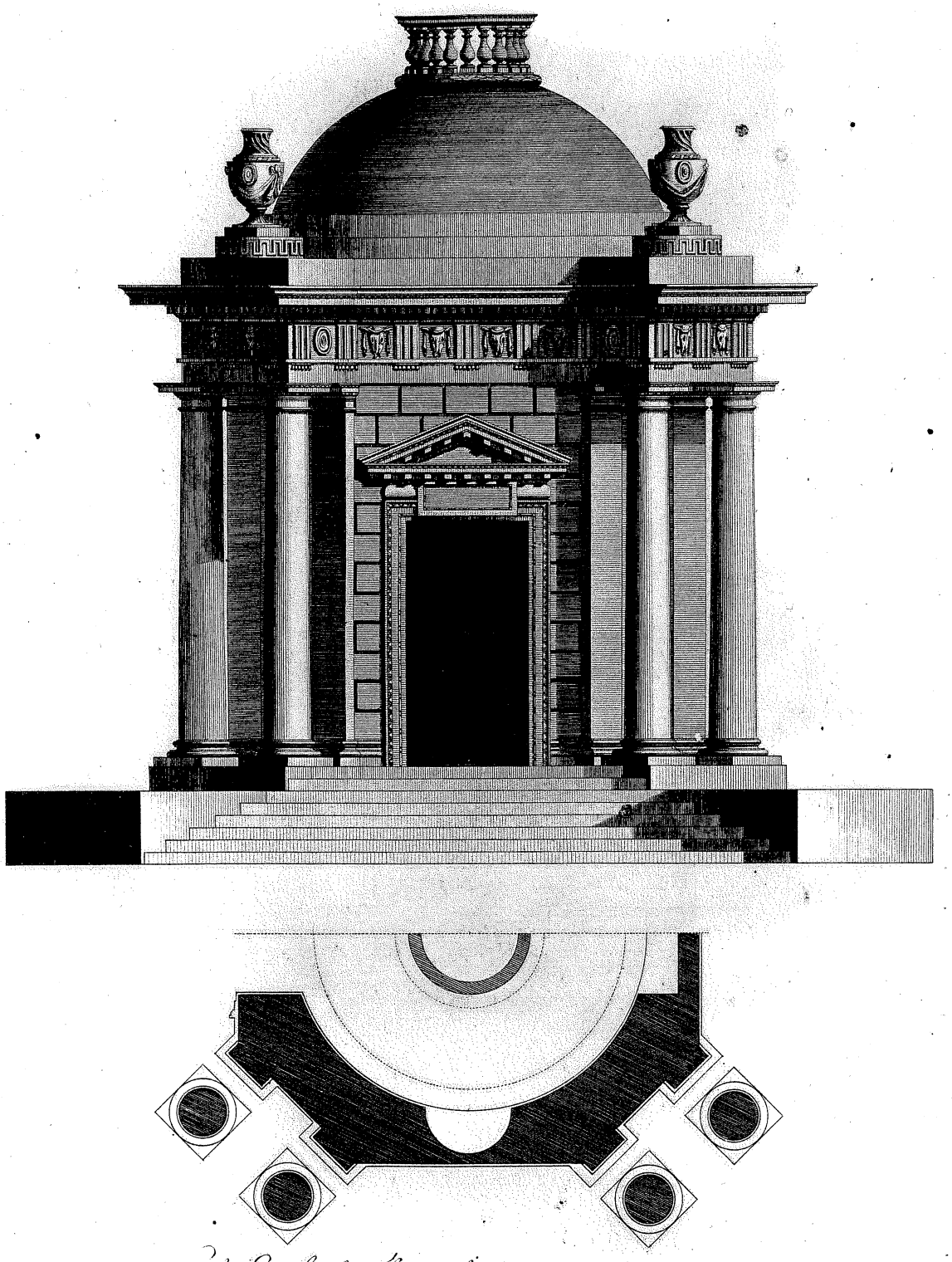
edition of 1759, but the text reference as quoted here is from the third edition of 1791, p. 136.

[113] The only possible, and rather insubstantial, clue is a payment of £25 in March 1762 to a 'Mr. Vardy' on 11 March 1761 from Earl Tylney's bank account at Hoare's Bank, Ledger 58/440, which may refer to the architect John Vardy. He was a close colleague of William Kent, who worked for the first Earl Tylney. Vardy is not a very common name, but without even a first name, this is an extremely tenuous attribution.

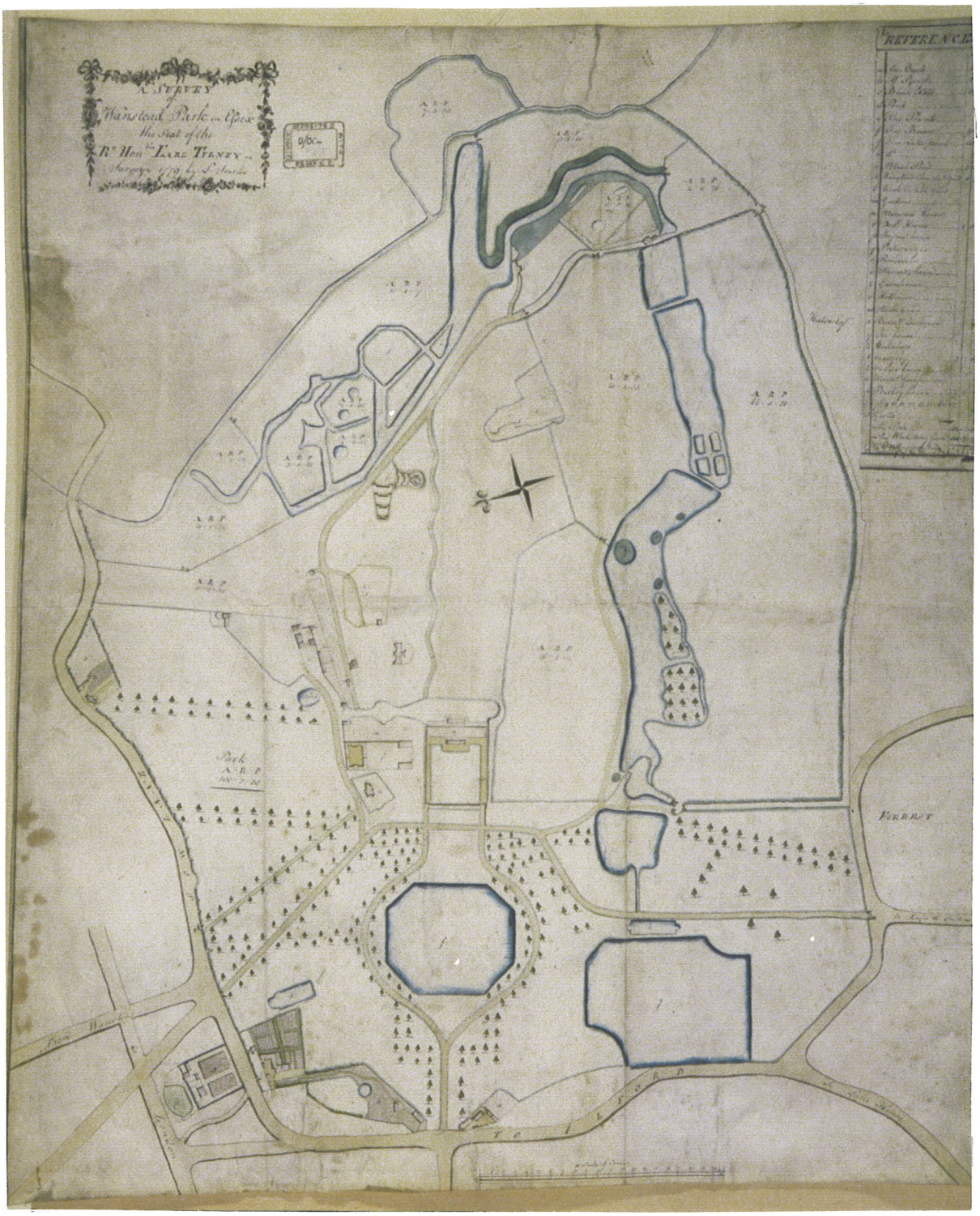
[114] L. Searles, *A Survey of Wanstead Park in Essex the Seat of the Rt Honble Earl Tilney*, ERO D/DCw P59.

[115] During work to the Temple in 1997, exterior penny-struck pointing was found inside the roof space on what must have been an outside wall at one time. The wings at that level must therefore have been built after the main building. This may mean that only the lower storey of the wings was contemporary with the original building and a second storey was added later, or that the Temple was built without wings.

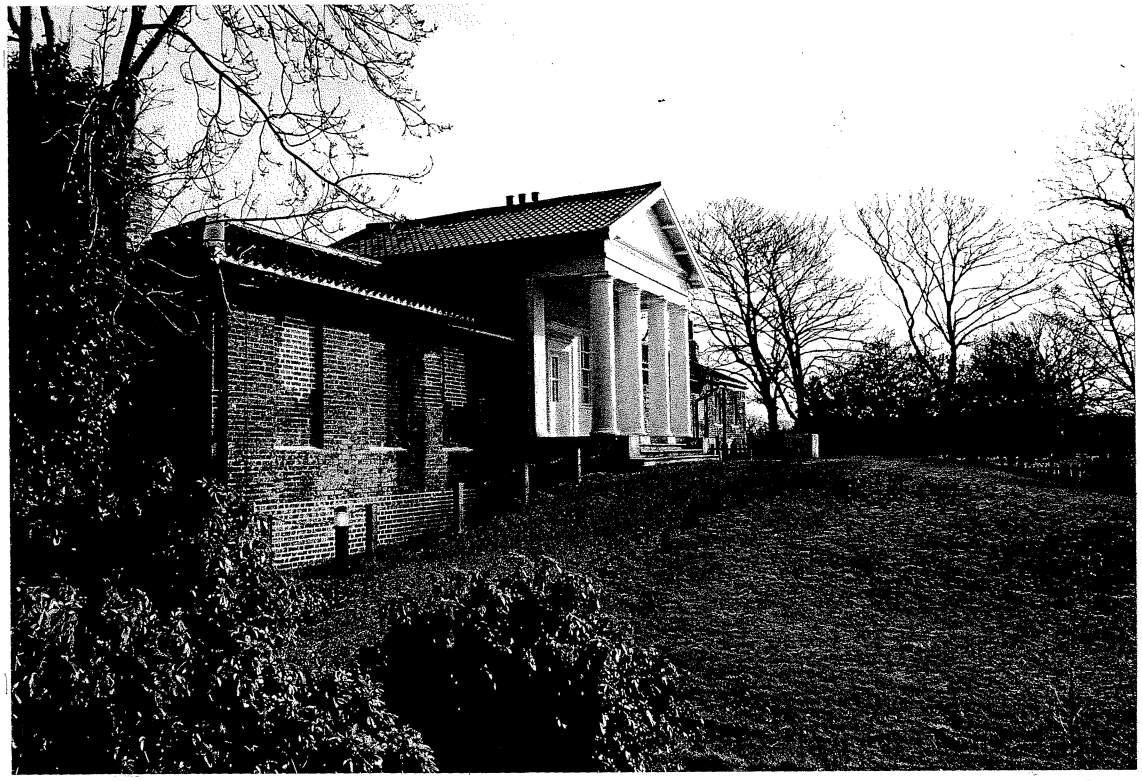
[116] Hiram Stead, *op. cit.*



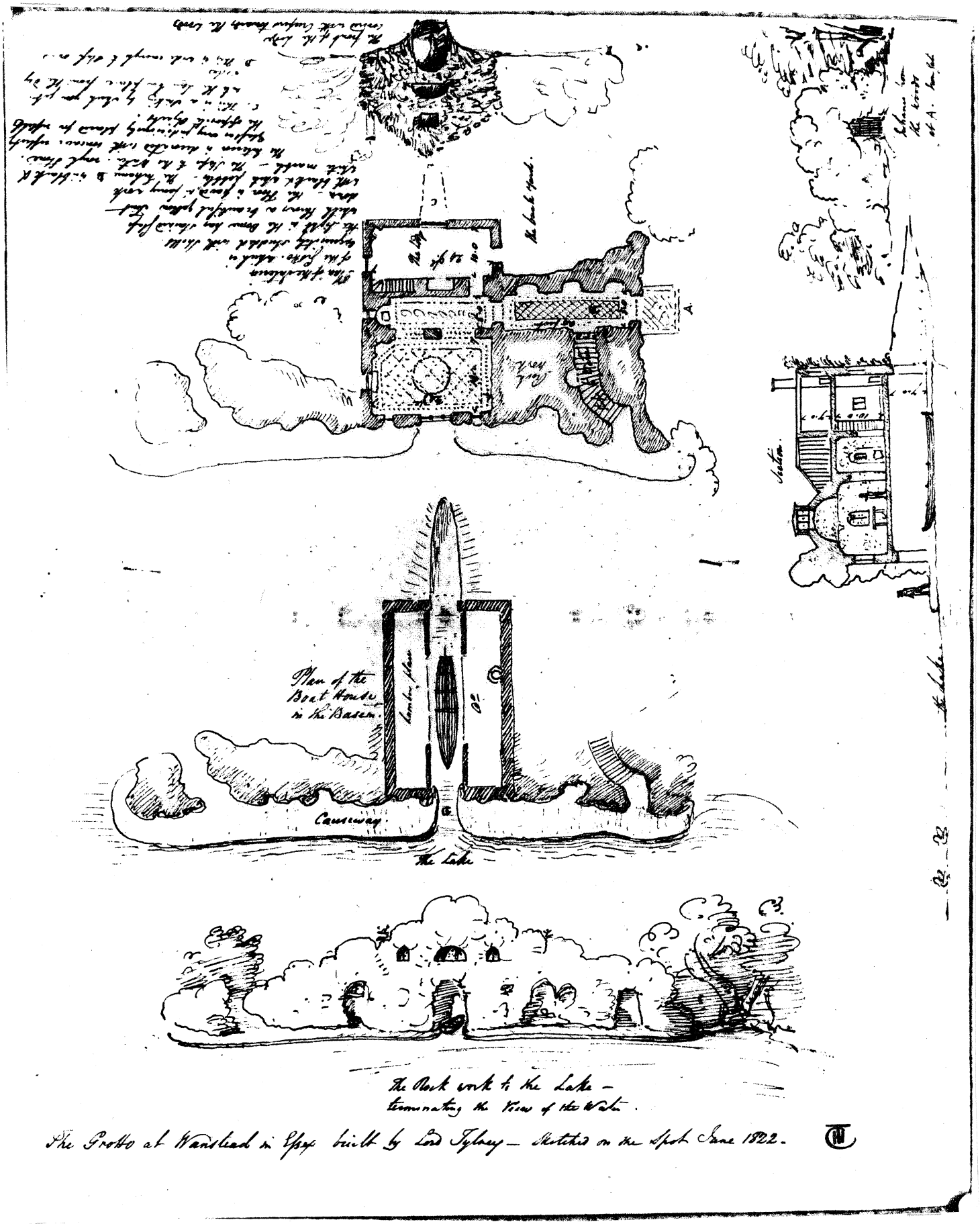
28. William Chambers: A design for a garden temple dedicated to 'the Earl of Tylney', from *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture,* 1759, plate 41.



29. L. Searles: A Survey of Wanstead Park, 1779. Essex Record Office, D/DCw P59.



30. A view of the temple.



31. Charles Heathcote Tatham: A sketch of the grotto at Wanstead, 1822. Private collection.

appearance inside and out (*fig. 31*).[117] Before its construction, the River Roding must have been canalised, so that the lake was no longer part of it and its level could be controlled. This is shown on Searles' plan of 1779, which also shows that the shape of the water here had been modified and made more natural to complement the grotto.

The boathouse-grotto was under construction in the early 1760s. There is a record of 'sending rocks for the grotto' to Earl Tylney, and 'Gift of a pillar out of the Hall at Woolston to Earl Tylney' in a set of accounts of 1760-2,[118] and the building appears on the plan of 1779. The structure was later reported to have cost two thousand pounds, with much more spent on the decoration.[119] It was mentioned in a letter of 1764, which implied that it was complete and that extensive plantations were being made at Wanstead.

I find they are going on with the plantations, the Gardiner told me they had drawn above a thousand plants of shrubbs and of yr own plantations, but there were 2000 more had been bought. I went to the Grotto & it was very neat about it. Tom had hired a man just before to dig it up and clean it.[120]

Facing north on the serpentining course of the River Roding and acting as a focal point in it was a rough façade suggesting a mysterious and ancient rocky dwelling. The ground floor had an open central arch flanked by a niche and an arch each side, and above were windows with a hint of the Gothic style. Below this along the lakeside ran a short causeway paved with pebbles and stones (*fig. 32*). The facade was decorated with various fragments of carved stone and other artefacts. Stone 'Full of Holes like Honeycombs' was used at Pope's Grotto, and was found at Wanstead, as well as other varieties. The eagle of the family coat of arms surmounted the whole. An undated cutting referring to the grotto states that 'upon the apex of its arch there is still the Eagle and the Snake'.[121]

The building consisted of a boathouse below, with access from the lake and a space for storage and for the repair and tarring of boats, and a domed top-lit chamber above, entered by a passage from the side, or from steps by the lakeside. Behind this was a lodge for a keeper facing towards the woods and covered with creeping plants. Archaeological reports have suggested that the single-storey boathouse was built first, followed by the upper storey containing the grotto chamber and lodge. The boathouse was also accessible from the rear side by an arch through which the lake could be glimpsed.

Entrance to the grotto could be gained up a flight of rough stone steps from the lake shore or through an iron gate at the side leading to a passage clad in rockwork and paved with black and white marble, with what appeared to be an altar or sarcophagus at its far end.

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[117] Sketch by Charles Heathcote Tatham, 1822, in a private collection. See John Harris, 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life*, August 22, 1991, pp. 60-61.

[118] Essex Record Office, D/DU 546/2. An antiquary's notebook kept by Alfred Savill of Chigwell Hall.

[119] Robert Havell, *A Series of Picturesque Views of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Seats with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of each Subject*, 1823. By 1882, Edward Walford in *Greater London: A Narrative of its History, its People and its Places*, volume 1, p. 479, was quoting the sum of £40,000 as having been paid for the grotto, but he added that 'it is to be hoped that this is an exaggeration'.

[120] Letter to Earl Tylney dated 25 February 1764 from Draycot. Redbridge Central Library, Ilford, archives. The plantations could have been anywhere, but planting did take place as a backdrop to the Temple at about this time.

[121] Stead, *op. cit.* Fragments of this bird were found at the Grotto.

The main room was crowned by an octagonal lantern with eight squares of stained glass of a 'beautiful yellow tint' and was provided with two convex mirrors and two plates of mirror glass 'very judiciously placed for reflecting the opposite objects'.[122] These included curiosities such as ostrich eggs, 'petrified stones', and terracotta and wax figures.[123] Furniture listed in the 1822 sale catalogue was appropriately rustic, and included two Chinese bamboo chairs.[124] A rustic table is seen below the window in a photograph of the interior before the 1884 fire (*fig. 33*).

Alexander Pope, in creating his famous grotto at Twickenham, and embellishing it after 1740, had introduced natural curiosities such as minerals, shells, fossils and even real stalactites, which set the fashion for such things. Real stalactites were difficult to acquire, but white satiny spar in long narrow flakes was a favourite material for covering the walls and roofs of eighteenth century grottoes in imitation of the stalactite effect. It caught the light and glittered, and the linear formation of the flakes lent itself to the creation of stalactitic forms.

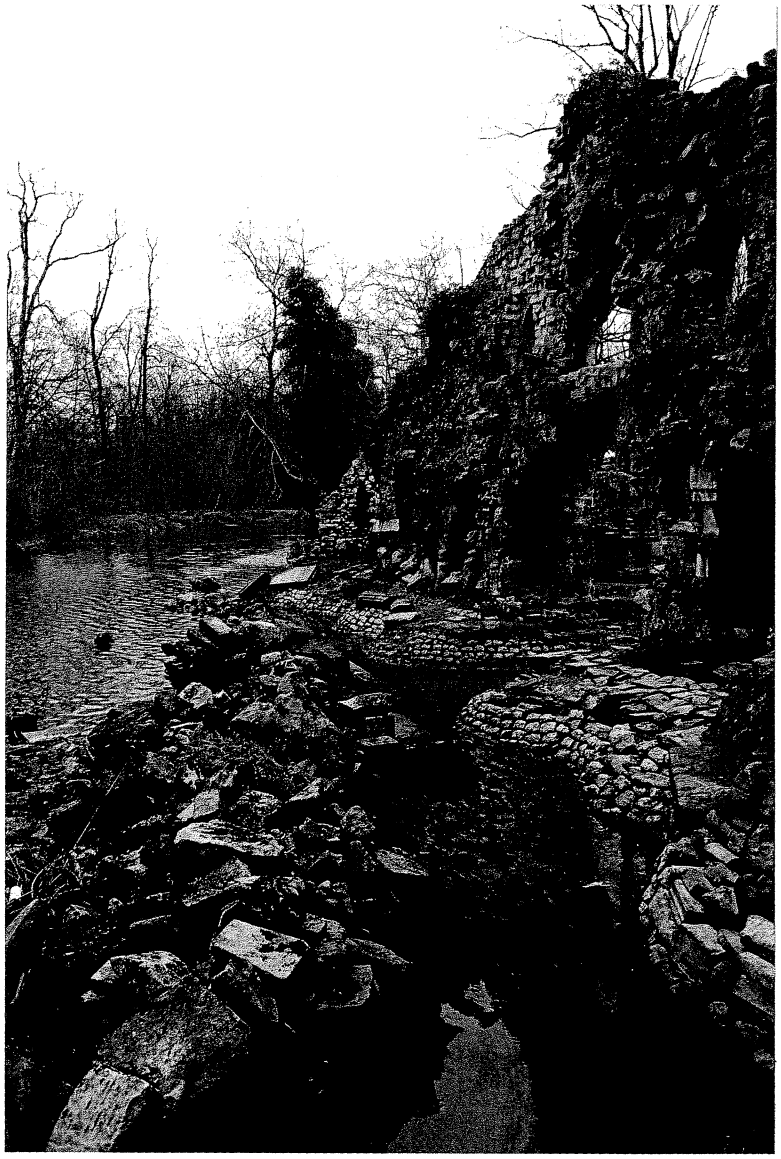
The roof and walls of the main chamber at Wanstead were decorated not only with spar, but with a variety of large oyster, barnacle and *Haliotos* shells, worked flints, misshapen glazed ceramic pieces, brightly-coloured waste glass, coral fragments, minerals to reflect the light and other curiosities such as carved stones and antiquities. The floor of the main chamber was paved with black and white pebbles set in patterns of squares and circles. The story that the knuckle bones of deer were used as paving inside or outside seems to be apocryphal.[125]

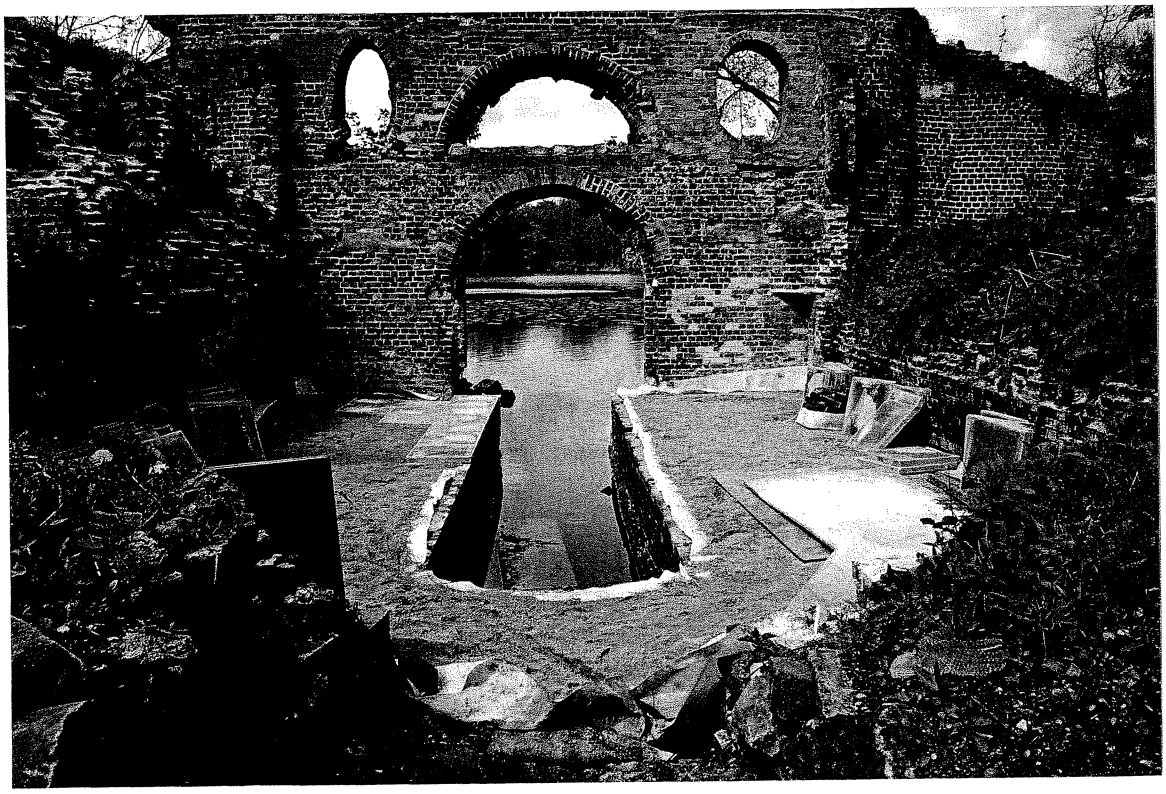
An early description was written in April 1776 by Samuel Curwen, the American loyalist,[126] who noticed the 'very odd and uncommon' gate 'made of a scythe, hedge shears, dung forks, reap hooks, &c'. He then described the 'grotto': 'formed of earth, stone stumps &c excavated . . . into a room about 15 feet in diameter', with a concave roof and 'balcony of glass windows forming a skylight', the roof and walls covered with 'Shells, stones petrifyed substances', the flooring of 'small pebbles not bigger than the top of one's thumb of a variety of colours and figures'; and commented upon the keeper's apartment, 'a beautiful little room or rooms', one 'lined with irregularly laid stones as if dug out of a mine'.

Even before the fire, the grotto was partially denuded of its ornament. During the sale, in 1822, it had to be closed because souvenir-hunters 'conveyed away fragments'.[127] This process went on over the years, but was accelerated after the fire of 1884, which reduced the grotto to a shell and caused the collapse of the main chamber into the boat dock below. However, before that, the Corporation of London opened the Grotto to visitors, and a keeper looked after it.
architectural bits and pieces. Pieces of carved capital, acanthus leaf, and terracotta and stone urns have come to light, which must have become detached and fallen into the water over a number of years. There were also two pieces of the Bathstone eagle which had ornamented the top of the façade, and is just discernible in an old photograph.

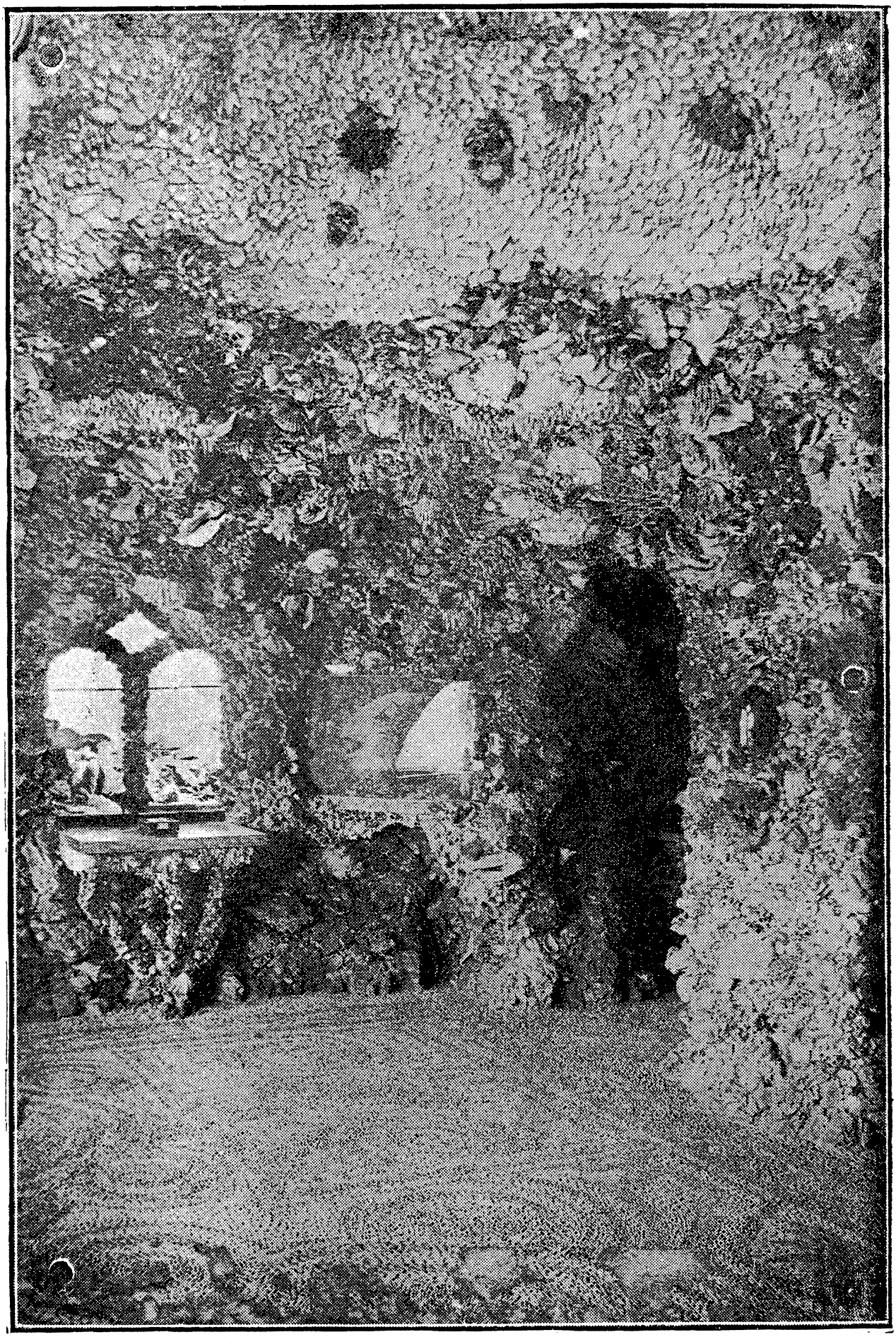
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[122] From the notes on a sketch of the grotto by Charles Heathcote Tatham, dated June 1822. Private collection.
[123] Items 62, 63, 55 and 56, page 387 of the 1822 Sale Catalogue.
[124] Items 47, 49, 50 and 51, page 386.
[125] J. Elsden Tuffs in 'The Grotto, Wanstead Park', an occasional paper, no.4 1970, of the Wanstead Local History Society, states that he found the knuckle bones of deer in front of the entrance, but although sections of pebble paving have been found recently during archaeological work, no trace of bones has reappeared.
[126] John Harris in 'Wanstead's Compelling Vista', *Country Life*, August 22, 1991, p. 62.
[127] Stead, *op. cit.*





32. (a) The causeway by the lake at the Boathouse-Grotto in 1998.
    (b) The boat dock at the grotto, as revealed and consolidated in 1998.



33. A photograph of the grotto chamber before the fire of 1884 by G.W. Dunn of Woodford. From Oliver Dawson, *The Story of Wanstead Park*, 1894.

Sculpture at the Grotto

During work on the grotto in the winter of 1998, while the level of water in the lake was lowered, fragments of stone were visible in the water. These were removed to the bank and a number of sculptures were revealed. Many of the smaller pieces of moulded and carved stone and terracotta came from the façade of the grotto, which was decorated with a variety of rocks, minerals and Large fragments of carved stone figures probably came from the formal garden, although it is difficult to relate them to anything shown in the engravings or items in the sale catalogue. All were badly damaged and difficult to identify but appear to be parts of massive over-life-size figures. They are of Portland stone, and show high quality carving detail. One seems to be part of a crouching figure with head turned back and is possibly a slave or captive figure, or part of a group of wrestlers. The very active and contorted pose is reminiscent of Claude David's 'Prometheus' or 'Vulcan',[128] although the scale is very much larger. Another is clearly the torso of a figure of Andromeda, with chain and padlock visible.

There is no record that they were ever displayed at the grotto, although they may have been shown like fragments of antique statues. One possible explanation for their presence near the grotto might be that they were removed from the great canal garden when it was obliterated from the landscape and were in too damaged a state to be placed elsewhere or sold, and so were thrown into the lake. There are, of course, many other possible scenarios. I hope that further information will come to light.

There is a further twist to the story of statues at the Grotto. Early photographs from around the turn of the nineteenth century show that there were two figures on the façade. These are identifiable as Andromeda and an Allegory of Winter.[129] This Andromeda, however, is not the stone figure recovered from the lake. She is smaller, and the photograph shows that she has a hollow right arm suggesting that she was made of lead. This has recently been confirmed by the discovery of the statue in a private collection. It is similar in pose to the lead Andromeda by John Van Nost the Elder made for the garden at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire, where she was complemented by Perseus on the other side of the main axis.[130] Both of these subjects were popular in the eighteenth century and both probably derived ultimately from statues at Versailles. A large Perseus and Andromeda group was made for the gardens to the designs of Pierre Puget in 1684.[131] An Allegory of Winter by François Girardon was executed in 1675-86. Was there originally a Perseus to rescue the Andromeda? Were the Wanstead figures purchased originally for the formal gardens,[132] or acquired for the grotto in the 1760s, or added later? [133]

Entertainments on the Water

The grotto was just one part of the elaborate permanent scenery at Wanstead against which entertainments were presented. There are very few direct references, but the following description is so exciting that it almost compensates for the lack of others.

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[128] From Narford Hall, Norfolk, now at the V & A.
[129] It is similar in pose to the stone statue in the garden at Saumarez Manor, Guernsey.
[130] John Nost charged £45 for the pair on 16 November 1705. Documents at Melbourne Hall.
[131] Now in the Louvre.
[132] John Van Nost the Elder, or his shop, could have supplied the figure at that time. See Sheila O'Connell, 'The Nosts: a revision of the family history', *Burlington Magazine*, volume 129, December 1987, pp. 802-6.
[133] I am grateful to Malcolm Baker for discussing the sculpture with me.

Many lights appear in the trees and on the water. We are off and have great excitement fishing up treasure (fake) tied to bladders. His Lordship is hailed from the shore by a knight, who we are told is King Arthur, have you the sacrifice my Lord, who answers no, then take my sword and smite the water in front of the grot and see what my wizard has done, take also this dove and when asked, give it to the keeper. Off again to some distance from the grotto, the lights are small and water still, the giant eagle appears and asks, have you the sacrifice, no my Lord answers, so be it and disappears in steam. His Lordship smites the water with King Arthur's sword, all the company are still, a rumble sucking noise comes in front of the opening of the grotto the water as if boiling and to the horror of all the company both on the water and on the shore scream with fright, appearing as though from the depth of hell arose a ghastly coffin covered with slime and other things. Silence as though relief, when suddenly with a creaking and ghostly groaning the lid slid as if off and up sat a terrible apparition with outstretched hand screeching in a hollow voice, give me my gift with such violence, that some of the company fell into the water and had to be saved, and those on the shore scrambled in allways confusion was everywhere. We allmost fainted with fright and was only stayed from the same fate by the hand of his Lordship, who handed the keeper the dove (fake) the keeper shut its hand and with a gurgling noise vanished with a clang of its lid, and all went pitch. Then the roof of the grotto glowed two times lighting the water and the company a little, nothing was to be seen of the keeper or his coffin, as though it did not happen.

This extraordinary entertainment reputedly took place in 1768 and was witnessed by an Italian noblewoman staying at Wanstead House at the time, who is said to have recorded it in her journals.[134]

After the building of the Temple and the boathouse-grotto in the 1760s, Earl Tylney was not much at Wanstead. On his death unmarried in 1784, his fortune and estate, including Wanstead, passed to his sister's son, Sir James Long of Draycot, Wiltshire, who died ten years later. Wanstead then passed to Sir James Long's young son, and on his death in 1805, to his daughter, Catherine Tylney Long, then a minor. Wanstead was meanwhile let to the Prince of Condé, in exile from France.

Catherine Long and William Wellesley Pole

Catherine Long was destined to be one of the wealthiest women in the kingdom on reaching her majority, and had numerous suitors, including, it was rumoured, the Duke of Clarence, who was turned down. Amid great festivities she came of age in 1808, and Wanstead was prepared to receive her. In 1812, she married William Wellesley Pole, nephew of Sir Arthur Wellesley (who later became the Duke of Wellington). William took the name of Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, and Catherine became Catherine Tylney Long Wellesley.

The house was extravagantly redecorated for festivities on the birth of their son and for a fête to welcome the Duke of Wellington in 1814, and it may well have been prior to this occasion that they began to consider changes to the grounds. They consulted both Humphry Repton and Lewis Kennedy in the period 1813-1818, which resulted in large plantations of trees, the draining of the Reservoir, and the formation of an American Garden.

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[134] See Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death, The Common Funeral Since 1450*, Robert Hale, 1991, pp. 104-105. The description has not been checked, since I have so far failed to locate Stuart Campbell-Adams, who provided the information to Julian Litten. Any information on this source would be gratefully received.

Repton at Wanstead

Wanstead is not mentioned by name, but in his *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*[135] Repton refers to 'a place near the capital', and provides an illustration with a flap from which Wanstead may be identified (*figs 34, 35*). Confirmation is provided by Robert Havell, writing in 1823, who reported that the area near the house had been 'lately laid out and adorned as a rich parterre, or flower garden; and as it has been executed to the designs of Mr. Repton, we have every reason to anticipate a tasteful and beautiful result . . .'[136] Repton refers to having been recently consulted, and there is evidence that his association began about three years earlier, in 1813. His first visit was made in April 1813, followed by his report in September of that year.[137] To his chagrin, this remained unbound,[138] although he had hoped that it would have been shown off to influential members of the Wellesley family, and was included in the 1822 sale catalogue[139] as a portfolio of 'Repton's Drawings of Plans for Improving the Grounds at Wanstead House, (15)'. A copy of Repton's *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* of 1803 was also in the library at Wanstead.[140]

His report is carefully worded. It represents a statement of views which he knew might not be particularly welcome and it is interesting because it is a mirror of the admiration with which the grand layout of Wanstead, although considered old-fashioned, was still regarded. Because the original layout was etched so strongly on the landscape, he had to consider how, if at all, to accommodate any modernisation, and how to blend the old and the new - a problem no less difficult in considering present-day conservation of the garden at Wanstead:

> the original plan of this Place must ever (be) strongly traced in many parts . . . and it is impossible to be quite obliterated in conformity with modern styles. It is therefore an object worthy of consideration, whether the original, or a more recent style, be advisable; and how far both may be admitted, without the incongruous mixture of two things so opposite, that they cannot be blended in one rational plan.

He did not recommend sweeping changes. He said: 'It would be absurd in this place to conform to the modern style, of placing the house in the centre of its domain, from which every thing is banished, but the beasts of the forest.' Instead, he suggested that it should be treated according to its character of a 'splendid Palace' in the vicinity of the metropolis, like Versailles, Potsdam or Kensington. He considered the gate opening directly into the forecourt as the 'dressed limit' of such palaces, and he proposed for this area at Wanstead 'the richness of a symmetrical parterre', which would be 'more consonant than a square area of lawn, too small to be fed by flocks and herds, and too large to be considered a bowling-green'. This would be visible from the main first-floor rooms like a 'rich carpet spread under the eye in perfect harmony with the vases and obelisks'. He also suggested a 'clipped fence' to retain privacy. Buckler's view of the house taken

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[135] Published in 1816, Fragment XXVI, pp. 129-36.
[136] Robert Havell, *A Series of Picturesque Views of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Seats with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of each Subject*, 1823.
[137] See Stephen Daniels, *Humphry Repton: Landscape Gardening and the Geography of Georgian England*, Yale UP 1999, p. 251, quoting a letter of Humphry Repton to William Repton of 24 April 1813, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, HM40892.
[138] Letter from Humphry Repton to William Tylney Long Pole Wellesley of 22 September 1813, Beinecke Library, Yale University.
[139] Under Books, lot 447, p. 298.
[140] Under Books, lot 371, p. 292.

in 1823[141] only suggests this feature, but it was executed and the main lines of the parterre are still visible as ridges on the ground (*fig. 36*).

Repton then turned his attention to the wider landscape, including the distant views of London and the dome of St Paul's. These had been visible when the gardens were first planted, but had become obscured by the growth of the trees which he proposed to cut down in order to reveal the lakes and the longer view.

He commented that because the surroundings were relatively flat, the area depended on 'the wood and the water' for its effect, but there was little except formal regularly-spaced woodland in the park and the pieces of water were exposed and looked unnatural, with naked banks. This could be improved by clothing them 'very amply'. The survey of 1990[142] revealed that a great deal of planting was done at this time around the lakes, which made for a more private landscape and increasingly 'furnished' views from the house as the trees grew.

Repton's method for furnishing pleasing clumps of trees and improving views incorporating woodland was shown in two sketches by him[143] and can be very well illustrated in practice at Wanstead. He maintained that the beauty of groups of trees depended on their being planted two or three close together so that their trunks would lean outwards and their branches intermingle. This could be achieved by two or more being planted in the same hole, after having their roots cut to enable them to be brought nearer together. In addition, he often employed lower bushes to give a more furnished appearance, and if these were thorns, as they often were, they would serve as 'nurses' in protecting young trees from animals. Beeches planted in this way survive at Wanstead in areas close to the lakes as Repton recommended. There are also similar plantings of oaks, one of which has a girth of 406 centimetres (about thirteen feet four inches), with about ten trees in the hole.

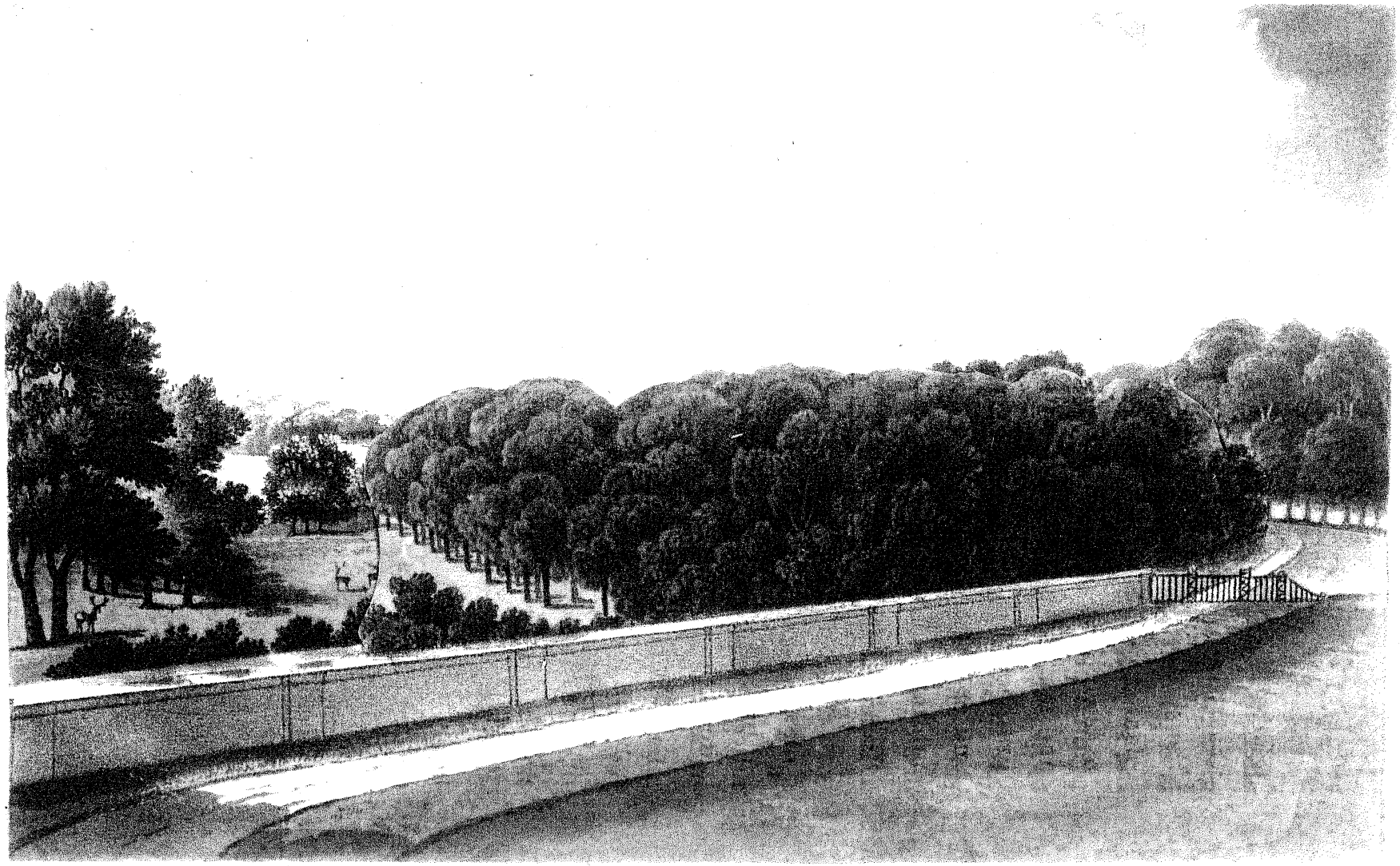
John Doyley's plan of Wanstead of 1815-16[144] shows the Repton parterre clearly, as well as the lake, the grotto island and the other large island on the south-west of the lake, together with new plantings near the water (*fig. 37*). The Reservoir was filled in, probably on his advice, since it is here shown as a field.

Lewis Kennedy

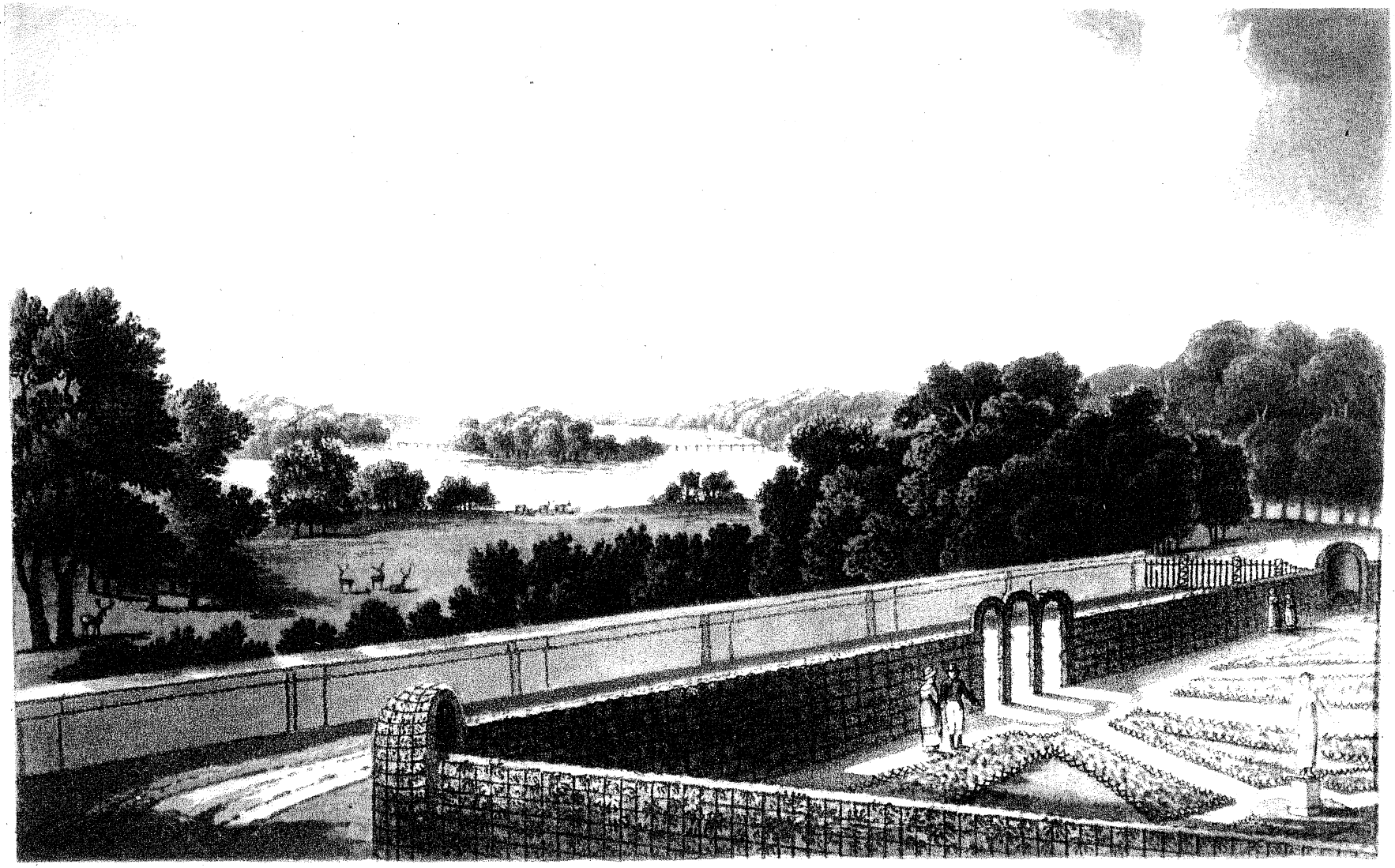
The final episode in the story of the changes to the gardens by the descendents of Josiah Child came in 1818. John Claudius Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* of 1822 noted that the then owner of Wanstead had 'made great improvements; erected extensive hot-houses in the kitchen-garden, and formed one of the largest American gardens in the kingdom, from designs by Lewis Kennedy, Esq.'. It is not quite clear whether all these improvements are attributable to Kennedy, nor exactly where they were. However, it is clear that Kennedy was responsible for the design of the American Gardens, and his *Notitiae*[145] give the date of 1818 for this.

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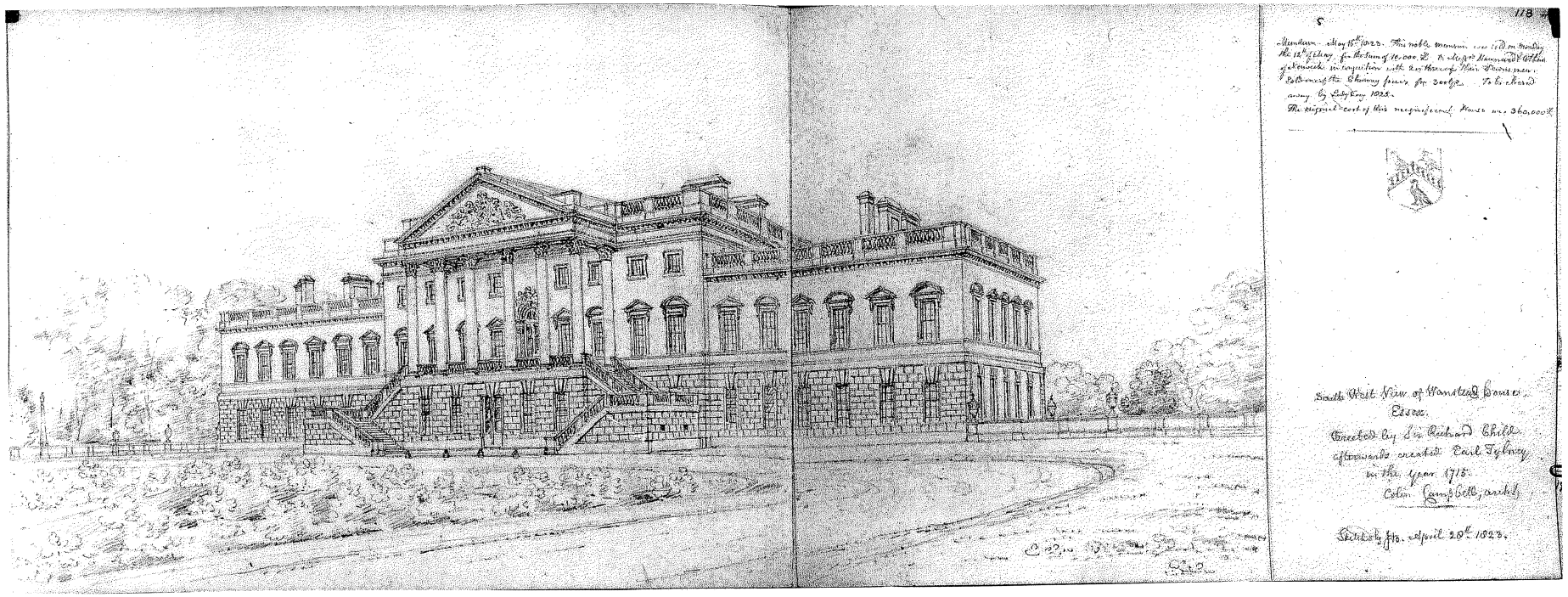
[141] British Library, Add MS 36362, ff.114-118.
[142] Survey for the Corporation of London by Debois Landscape Survey Group, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, York, 1990.
[143] Humphry Repton, *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening,* 1803, pp. 47-48.
[144] ERO D/Dcy P2A.
[145] Private collection.



34. Humphry Repton: View from the south-west corner of Wanstead House, as published in *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening,* 1816.



35. Humphry Repton: View from the south-west corner of Wanstead House as proposed (flap up), showing a corner of the parterre and the view to the lake revealed.



36. John Buckler: View of the west front of Wanstead House, 1823. British Library Add MS 36362, F.117.



37. John Doyley: Plan of Wanstead, c.1815-16. Essex Record Office D/Dcy P2A. This shows the Repton parterre in front of the house and the roughly oval American garden slightly to the north-east.

Lewis Kennedy[146] developed a flourishing career as a landscape gardener in the early nineteenth century, submitting his proposals to his clients in the form of green morocco-bound volumes containing a descriptive hand-written text, a few monochrome sketches and larger watercolours illustrating his ideas. He generally suggested a wide variety of effects and came to specialise in flower gardens. His 'green book' for Wanstead was in the 1822 sale catalogue as lot 407 on page 295, under the title *Notitiae, with illustrative Sketches for American Garden at Wanstead, by Kennedy, original Drawings, &c. most sumptuously bound in green morocco.*
The *Notitiae* introduce Kennedy's ideas very circumspectly. He clearly feels that Wanstead is old-fashioned, but he praises the 'abilities of some of our first masters for Gardening and Architecture' who helped to form the landscape and comments that the 'original style' of the gardens has been preserved. He finds this to be in the 'regular and symmetrical fashion', and proposes something more related to 'nature's free growths'.

He reported that the trees and shrubs in the existing American garden were flourishing, which indicated that the ground was not 'improper'. American gardens required acid soil to accommodate the specimen trees and shrubs from the American continent. Kennedy's plan indicates his ideas for the new area, which would provide a long arbour walk, winding paths, alcoves and seats, a covered walk and a semicircular Italian Garden bordered by a trellised seat and a rock garden.

This principal feature, which he calls, on his watercolour sketch, the 'Rock Italian Garden', would be semicircular in shape, bordered by rockwork and with flower beds in the centre. He had designed something similar for the garden at Chiswick Villa in 1814. The flower beds would be planted with a succession of hardy flowers of low growth, such as pinks, stocks, lilies, iris, and so on, with some small shrubs like daphnes and ericas. The crevices between the rocks were to be filled with plants, such as sedums, wallflowers and plants that grow in rocky situations. Kennedy says that it would be more appropriate to have streamlets of water flowing from vases on the rocks, but concludes that 'in our frozen regions' this would not be practical. He recommends a rustic alcove for the Rock Garden, which would be covered with climbing plants to hang in festoons.

One of the other main features was to be the 'Sinarium' and pheasantries. The Sinarium was for plants requiring heat in winter, which was believed to be the case with camellias, tree peonies, magnolias, nandina and China roses. This would have a pheasantry at each end. The building could be totally removed in summer, leaving the plants in the ground.

John Doyley's plan of 1815-16, already referred to, clearly shows where this American Garden was situated (*fig. 37*). It appears as an island of more intense cultivation to the north of the grassed walk behind the house, circled and crossed by paths. At the time of the sale in 1822, it contained a pair of lead vases with eagle ornaments and a pair of stone pedestals with sculptured tablets. There was also a stone pedestal with a 'curious antique Egyptian stone ornament on the top, sculptured in hieroglyphics'.[147] This was apparently a pyramidion[148] from the tomb of Princess Tia, one of the sisters of Ramesses II. It had been in the collection of Smart Letheiullier, who had bequeathed it to the British Museum, but it did not arrive there and was reported to be in the garden of Sir James

[146] Jan Woudstra, 'Lewis Kennedy, landscape gardener, and his work at Buckhurst Park', *Apollo*, 1992, pp. 215-221.
[147] Sale catalogue, page 118, lot 279, which was not sold.
[148] Pyramidal portion forming the apex of an obelisk.

Tylney Long where it was seen by the Danish scholar, Georg Zoega. Smart Lethieullier may have given the pyramidion to Earl Tylney, who shared his interest in collecting.[149]

The Sale and Demolition of Wanstead House

Catherine and William did not enjoy Wanstead for long, for their financial situation quickly deteriorated until it was out of control. Amid allegations of unbridled extravagance and scandal, the contents of the house were put up for auction in 1822 to satisfy Wellesley's creditors. The sale attracted great crowds and was like a fair, with entry by catalogue, which gave free access to every part of the house. 'Every description of vehicle has been put in requisition, and immense crowds of elegantly dressed females have daily visited the house and grounds', read a newspaper report.[150]

The house itself was sold in 1823, again at auction, for £10,000, the purchaser being bound to clear everything away down to the foundations by Lady Day 1825. The purchasers were Messrs Stannard and Athow of Norwich, with de Carle, Wright and Coleman, also of Norwich. It was announced that they intended to sell everything by lots, and they were reported to have sold a pair of marble chimneypieces for 300 guineas before they left the saleroom.[151]

When the demolition of the house was in progress and later 'a good many memorials came into the possession of residents in the villas of the neighbourhood', as one report puts it.[152] A number of items went to Wanstead House, Cambridge, including a handsome doorcase, a white marble chimneypiece, a wrought-iron stair balustrade, and items of panelling. The rooms from which they came have not yet been identified. The following have been identified as originating or possibly originating in Wanstead House and gardens: a library table in the manner of Kent, now at Chatsworth (lot 26 in the sale catalogue); a giltwood and gesso suite of furniture attributed to James Moore, known as the Wanstead Suite, c.1720;[153] two chimneypieces in the great hall at Chillingham Castle, Northumberland, which were brought in by Sir Jeffrey Wyatville in 1828;[154] four Corinthian capitals and entablature of the portico at Hendon Hall, Hendon, which was described in Keane's *Beauties of Middlesex*, 1850, as having a carriage front 'adorned with pillars and enriched capitals, brought from Wanstead House' (possibly bought by Samuel Ware, an architect, who owned the Hall by 1828, and may have acquired other artefacts from Wanstead such as balustrading, urns and obelisks);[155] ebony chairs said to have gone to Lord Macdonald of the Isles, according to Hiram Stead;[156] an obelisk at The Warren, Loughton, which may have come from the forecourt; two very large stone capitals and two ball finials, as well as some other stone fragments, at Snaresbrook House, Woodford Road, Snaresbrook (which may or may not have some connection with Wanstead House itself, or the Green House, which was in fact taken down in 1799); and a large ball finial at The Temple,

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[149] Information received from Julian Litten and Professor Geoffrey Martin, quoting Zoega, *De origine et usu obeliscorum*, Rome 1797.
[150] Stead, *op. cit.*
[151] Stead, *op. cit.*; RCHME *City of Cambridge*, 1959, part 2, pp. 371-2.
[152] Stead, *op. cit.*
[153] An armchair was shown at *In the Public Eye*, an exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 1999, item 50. The location of the suite is unknown.
[154] See Pevsner, Grundy, McCombie, Ryder, Welfare, *The Buildings of Northumberland*, 1992, p. 229.
[155] See Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North*, Penguin, 1998, pp. 164-5; information from Georgina Green.
[156] *Op. cit.*

Wanstead Park. Fragments of carved stone were reported in the neighbourhood early this century, and some relics in the park itself, used as stepping-stones across the stream connecting the lakes. It remains to be seen what these clues will reveal.[157]

After the demolition of the house, the grounds entered a period of neglect. Some of the timber was felled and sold and the land was used for grazing. Wanstead Park remained in the ownership of the Wellesley family. The acquisition of part of it in 1882 by the Corporation of London as the Conservators of Epping Forest both protected it as an open space and inaugurated a new era for it as a public park. Part was retained by Earl Cowley and then after consideration for speculative housing was sold in 1920 for a golf course.

Conservation at Wanstead Park

Although the features of the historic landscape are not far to seek (they are well preserved as earthworks, with the remnants of old plantings), Wanstead Park has now acquired a particular character of its own, which is very different from even its early nineteenth century form. It is much appreciated as a nature reserve, and the woods and lakes have a wildness which has encroached on the landscape of the past. Dutch Elm Disease and old age have destroyed many trees, as have severe storms.

The Corporation of London commissioned an extensive survey of the park in 1990 from Debois Landscape Survey (*fig. 38*).[158] A phased Management Plan of conservation and improvement has now been commenced. It is not intended to change the present character of the area, but to conserve and enhance those features of the historic landscape which survive and restore others, and to safeguard and extend the ecological richness of the park, with the aim of increasing the public's enjoyment. For example, the mounts and amphitheatres are being cleared of scrub and invasive roots and their yew hedges replanted, overgrown paths and vistas are being cleared and re-cut, a partly-surviving avenue of lime trees in the outpark and other remnants of avenues are being repaired, and the double avenue of sweet chestnuts leading from the Temple to the Heronry Pond (the present name for the westernmost of Rocque's Serpentine Lakes) has been replanted. The second stage of repair and refurbishment of the Temple was completed early in 1997, and the boathouse-grotto is being maintained as a ruin by regular consolidation.

The deterioration of the Heronry Pond has long been a matter of concern to local residents and the Corporation. It is hoped to overcome the problem of severe leaking by installing a water pumping system, which will replenish the Heronry Pond and benefit the other lakes as well. Repair work there is envisaged in the future, to restore the water and the islands. Perhaps the island-grotto there will one day give up its mystery.

This publication is presented as research in progress, and concentrates on the eighteenth century history of the estate. The material on the demise of Wanstead is quite extensive, and I have not yet

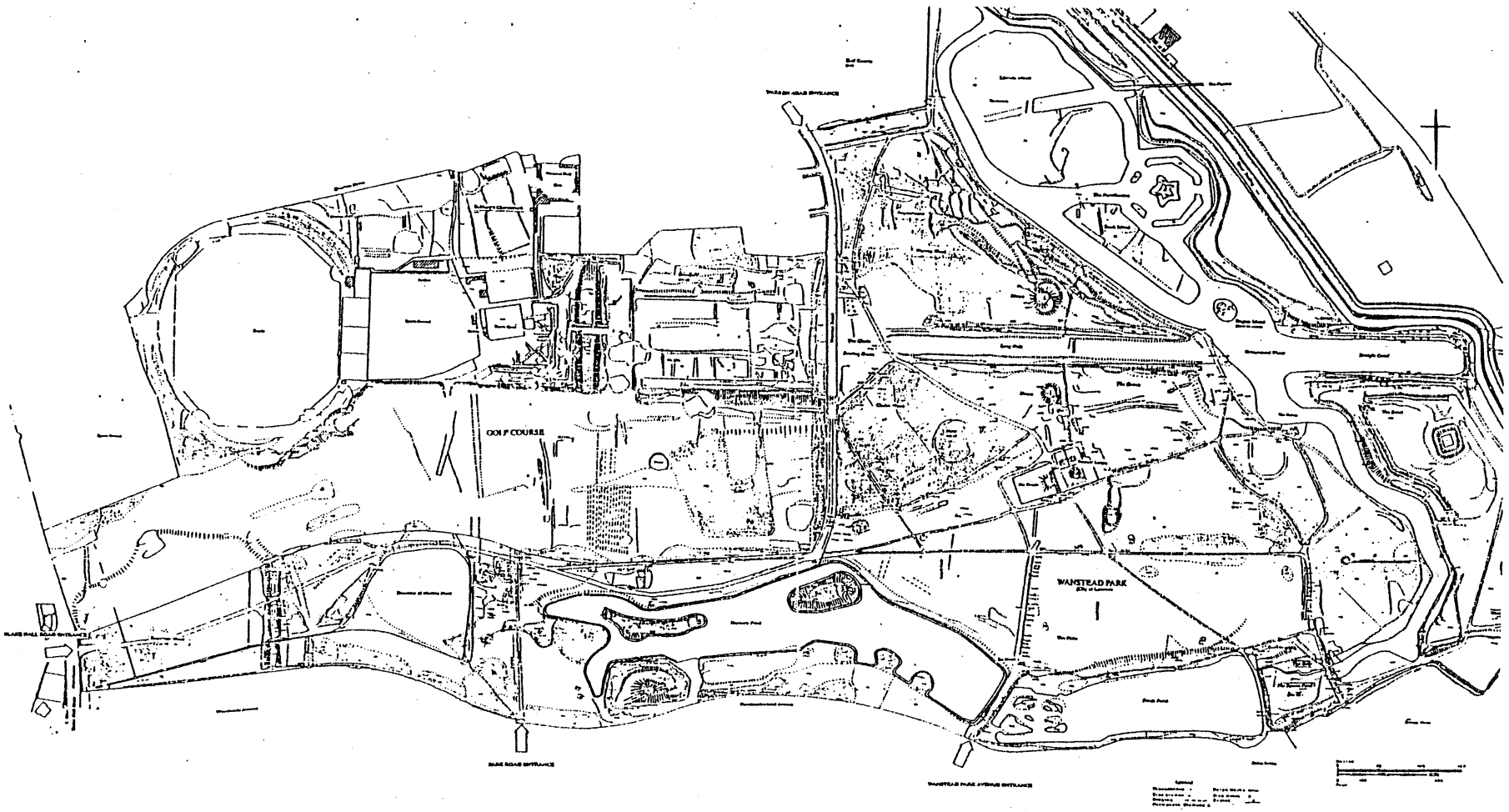
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[157] Baggs, 'The After-Life of Wanstead', *Georgian Group Journal*, volume VI, 1996, pp. 131-133. Hiram Stead includes an unattributed clipping with the comment: 'It is evident, too, that when the demolition of the Great House was in process, or in the period of subsequent neglect and decay, a good many memorials came into the possession of the residents in the villas of the neighbourhood . . .'

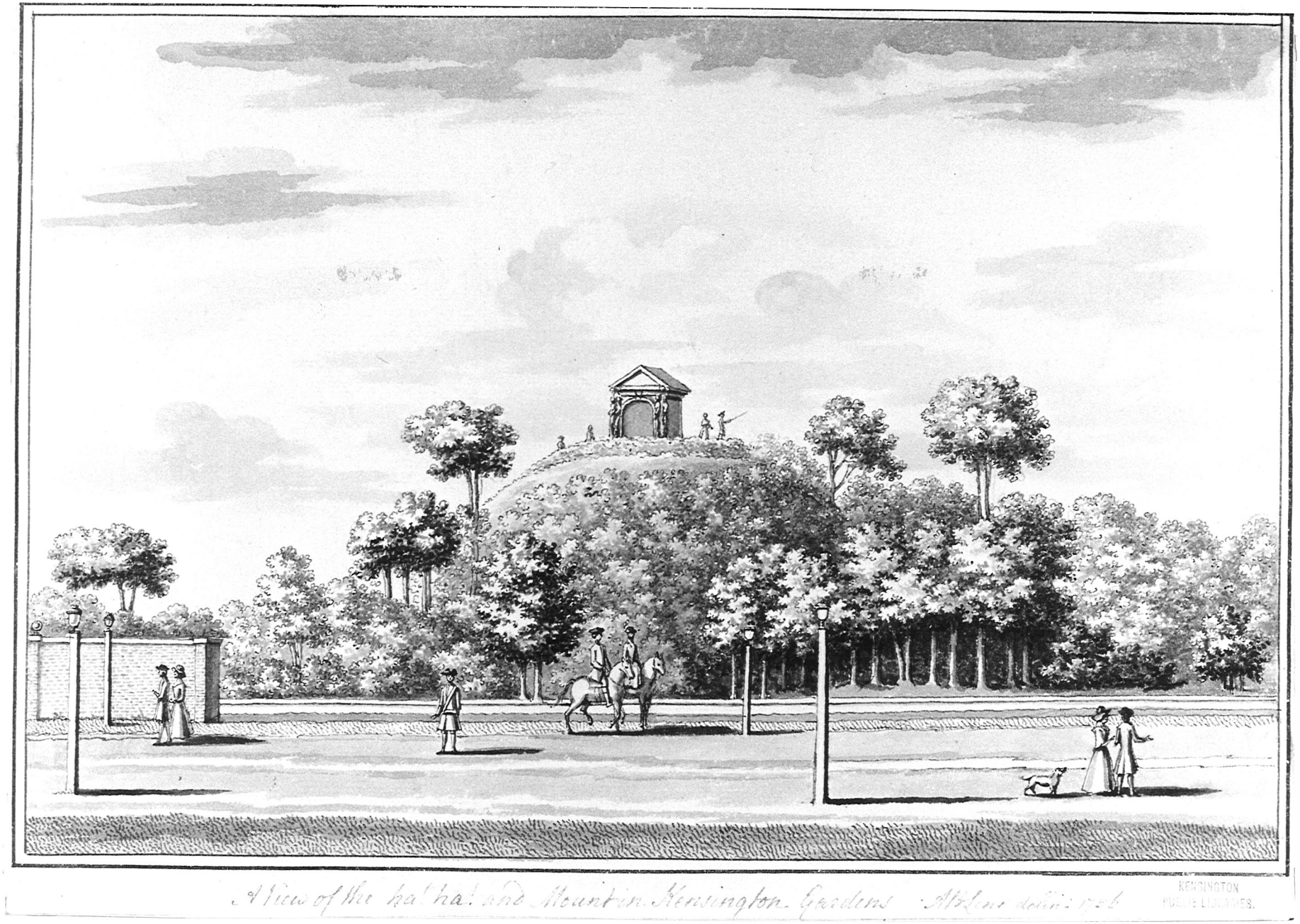
[158] See above, note 1.

had an opportunity to examine all the documents relating to it. There remain numerous questions, particularly about the authorship of the garden designs in the era of the first and second Earls Tylney. I should welcome any further information on all aspects of the history of Wanstead House and gardens.

Finally, I should like to acknowledge with thanks the work of previous scholars, and two in particular who have made considerable contributions to the Wanstead story: John Harris, who has written several times about both house and garden and has been generous in sharing information, and John Phibbs, whose report to the Corporation of London provided the basis for my own research. My thanks also go to colleagues at the Corporation of London, who have encouraged this work and shared information with me, especially Bill Row, James Clare, Julian Kverndal and Tricia Moxey.



38. Debois Landscape Survey Group and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England: Survey plan of the site of Wanstead House and grounds.



39. Bernard Lens: A View of the Ha-ha and Mount in Kensington Gardens, 1726. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Libraries and Arts Service.

Wanstead in Context

Michael Symes

No garden can be created in a vacuum, and Wanstead, however magnificent and lavish it may have been, was of its time and therefore reflected the fashions and impulses of the day. Some comparisons may be suggested, though whether these amount to definite influences in either direction has to be speculation. Certainly there are parallels to many of the features in the gardens, and these will be considered below. A few examples only are given: this overview is not meant to be comprehensive.

One general comparison in terms of its extravagance, fate and proximity to London is with Canons, the subject of an earlier Study Day organised by the London Parks and Gardens Trust. There too an enormous house has disappeared and the estate as created in the eighteenth century is not much more than a site with a few relics. In each case, however, it is possible to achieve a good deal of mental reconstruction of the original layout using the site as it exists today.

The development of the site may be divided into four stages:

1. The Baroque

George London was responsible for the layout of the grand formal garden from 1706, though developments continued for several years. The architect of the greenhouse and some other buildings was William Talman, and the team of London and Talman worked at many estates – Chatsworth, Burghley, Castle Ashby, Dyrham Park, Castle Howard and the two Hampton Courts (Hereford and Middlesex). It was therefore a well-established partnership, with designer and architect familiar with the means to complement each other's work.

The gardens they created at Wanstead contained several elements with parallels elsewhere:

(i) *Mounts.* The idea of a mount in a garden is an old one, stretching back to Tudor times or earlier. The best example of an early mount is at New College, Oxford. Although it might have been expected that they would be out of fashion by the early eighteenth century, a mount was created in Kensington Gardens, where London worked prior to Bridgeman and Kent (*fig. 39*).

(ii) *Ironwork.* The ironwork screen round the bowling green is attributed to Tijou. The screen for which he is famous is still to be seen at Hampton Court (*fig. 40*).

(iii) *Avenues.* The system of great avenues or allées lined with trees was to be found in many estates, one of which was Canons (*fig. 41*).

(iv) *Topiary.* The globes and obelisks cut in the hedges are also to be found in the Dutch-

style garden of Westbury-on-Severn (1690s), which further shares a Banqueting House with Wanstead.

(v) *Canal.* There were many canals in gardens of the time, for example at Wrest Park, Hall Barn, Chatsworth, Hampton Court (*figs 42, 43, 44*). The inspiration probably came from Versailles.

(vi) *Basin.* (This may be post-London). The octagonal shape of the basin to the west of the house is strikingly similar to that of the one in Kensington Gardens (the Round Pond) (*fig. 45*).

2. The Artinatural

In the 1730s the layout was rococo-ised or made artificial with some natural elements. The designer is not known (John Harris postulates Kent). Again there are some striking similarities to what was happening elsewhere:

(i) *The Serpentine.* The lakes to the south were linked and made more natural, and called 'The Serpentine' on Rocque's plan of 1741. The same name is given, of course, to the lake in Kensington Gardens (1731). The linking of a series of ponds is also to be found at Londesborough, East Yorkshire (Lord Burlington's summer residence), where the gardener was Thomas Knowlton, formerly of Canons (*fig. 46*).

(ii) *The Artinatural Layout.* The idea of having a straight axis with winding, wriggling paths to each side was common to many gardens at the time. South Dalton and Londesborough were of this kind (*fig. 47*).

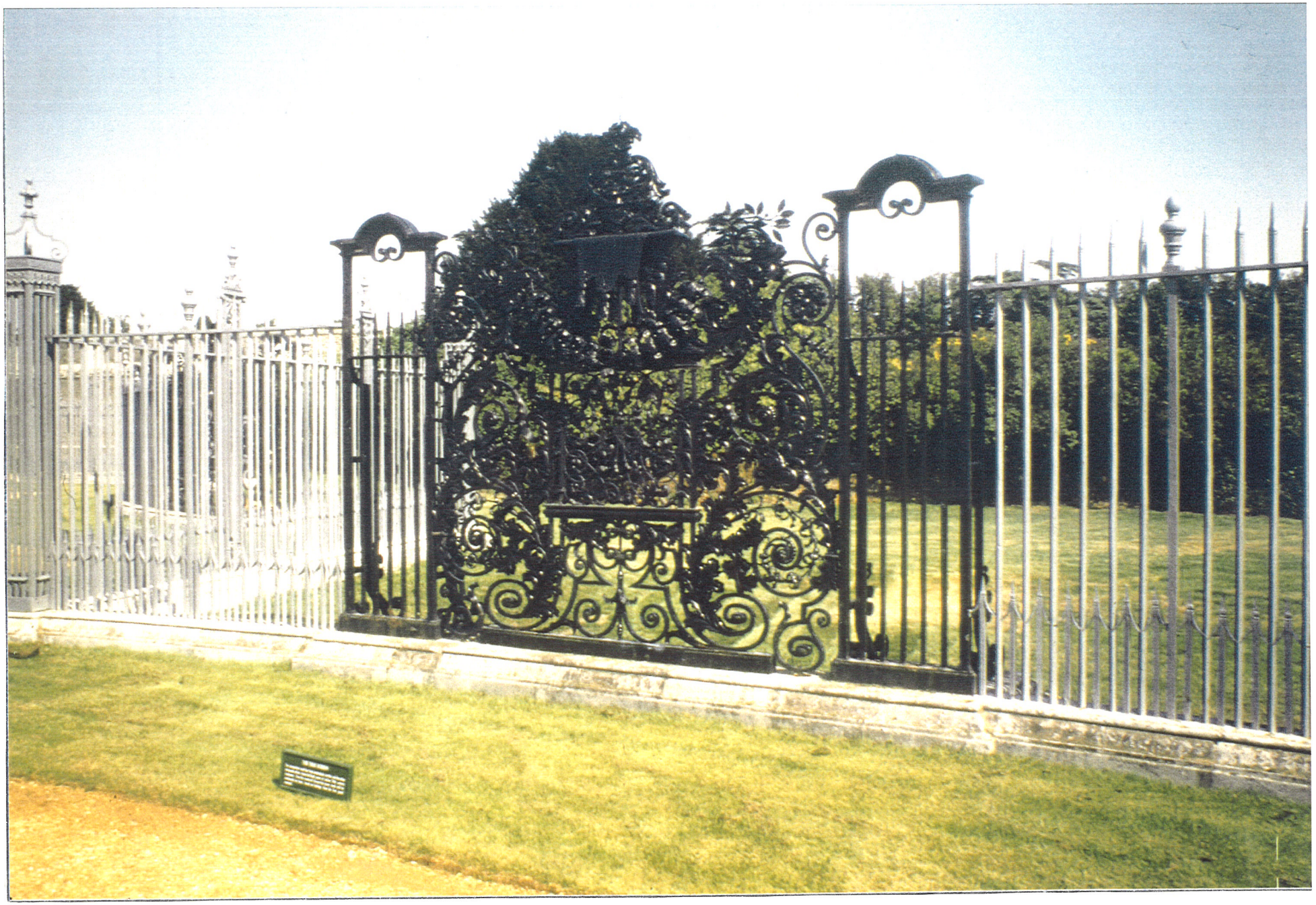
(iii) *Fortifications.* The theatrical or playful fortification probably stems from Vanbrugh's work at Castle Howard or the Military Garden at Blenheim, but there was a complete bailey at Stainborough Castle, South Yorkshire, and arrow-headed bastions can be found at Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire (*figs 48, 49, 50*).

(iv) *The Amphitheatre.* An amphitheatre in the sense of shaped or ramped embankments could be encountered at Claremont, Stowe, Wrest Park and Studley Royal (*fig. 51*).

(v) *Ruins.* The ruins on the island as depicted by Rocque have some similarity to the ruined Hermitages at Richmond Gardens and Stowe (both by Kent) (*figs 52, 53*). The taste for ruins in general gathered momentum later in the century (see, for example, the Ruined Arch at Kew).

3. Towards the Picturesque

The gardens became more natural in appearance from the 1750s and 1760s. From this period is the Grotto Boathouse. There is an intriguing parallel with the grotto boathouse at Fonthill, Wiltshire, the seat of Alderman Beckford, sometime Lord Mayor of London, which is likely to date from the mid-1750s (*fig. 54*).



40. Jean Tijou: Screen, Hampton Court. Photo, Michael Symes.



41. The Site of the Whitchurch Avenue at Canons, Edgware. Photo, Michael Symes.



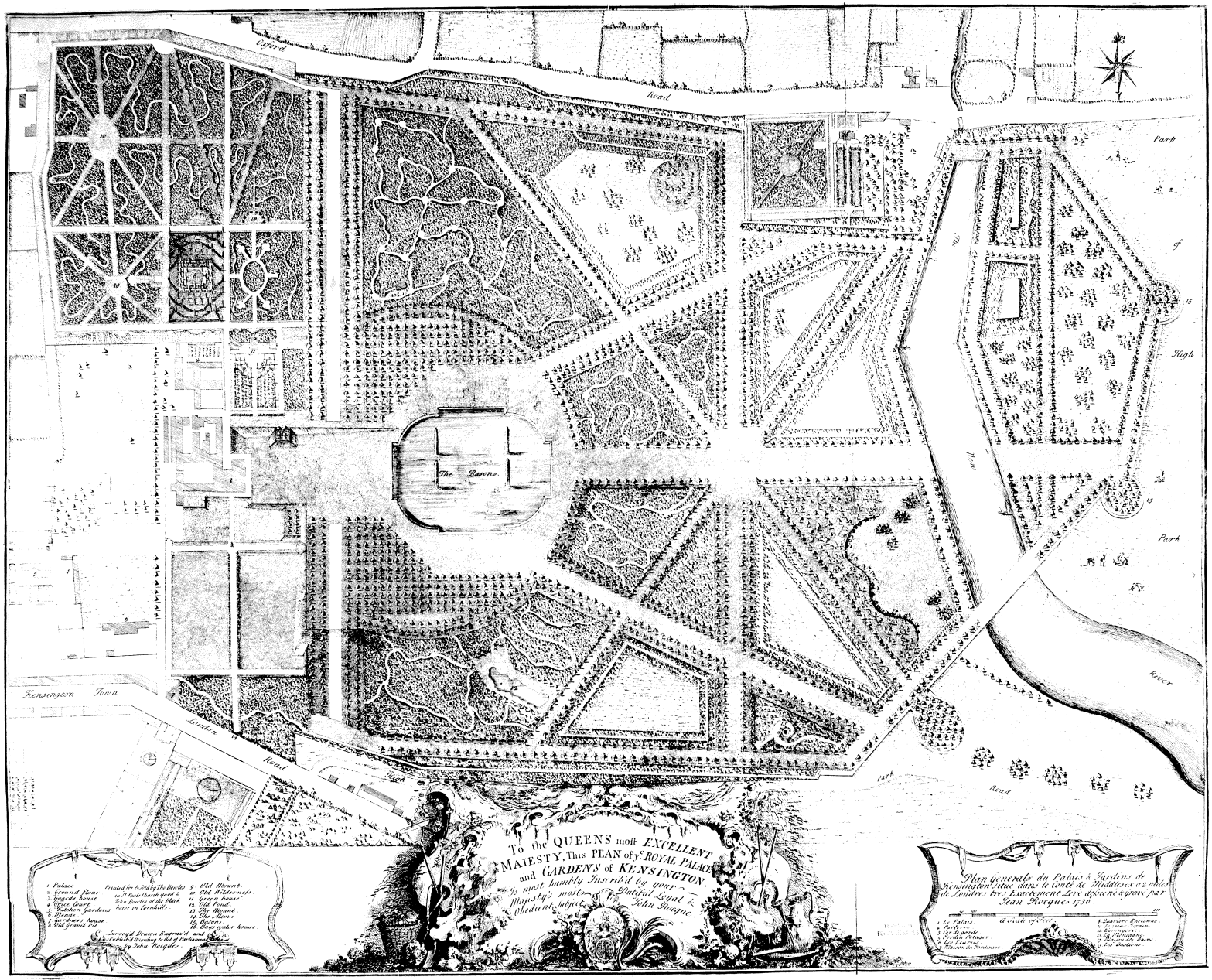
42. Canal, Wrest Park. Photo, Michael Symes.



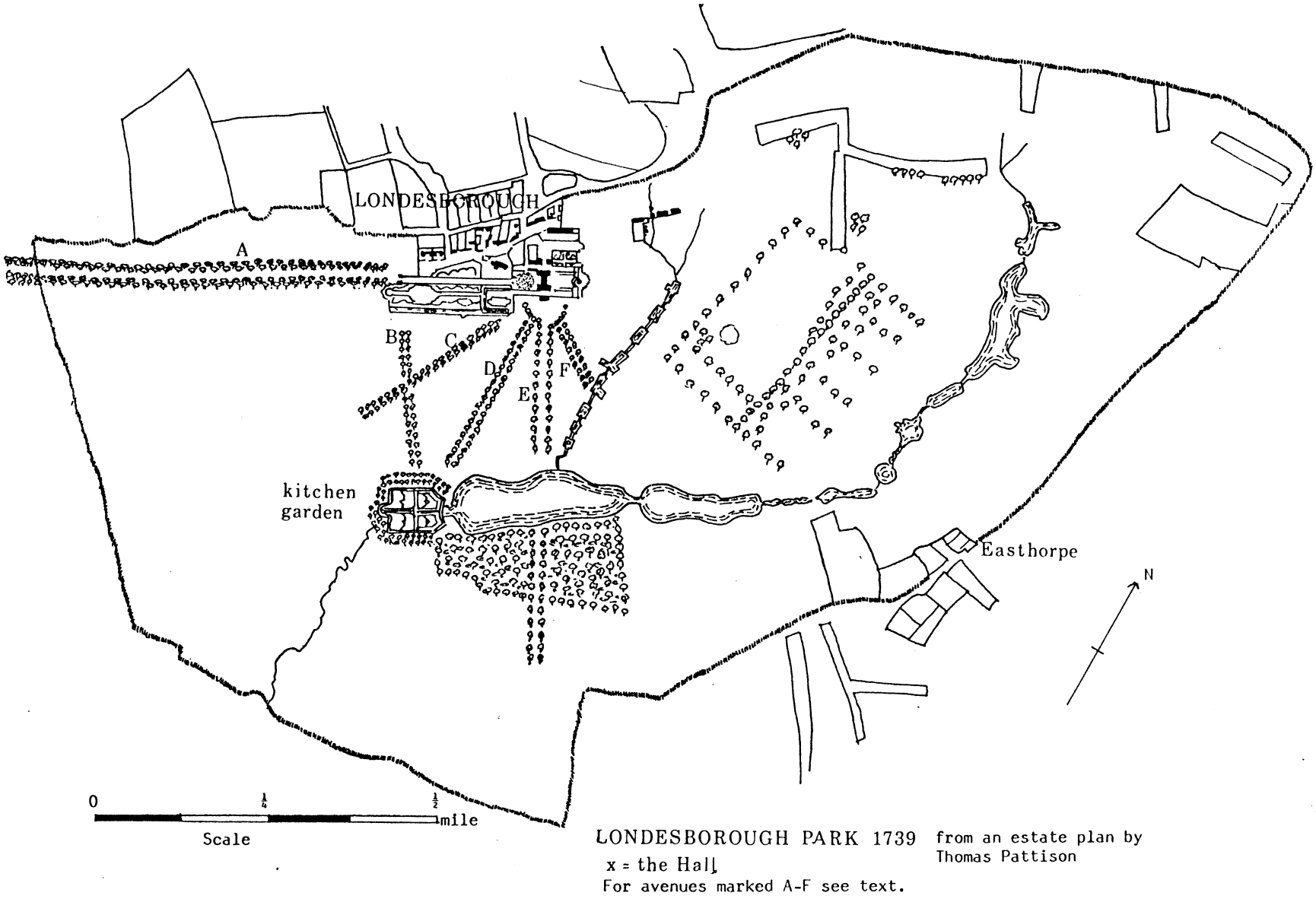
43. Canal, Hall Barn. Photo, Michael Symes.



44. Canal, Chatsworth. Photo, Michael Symes.



45. John Rocque: Plan of the Royal Palace and Gardens of Kensington, 1736. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Libraries and Arts Service.

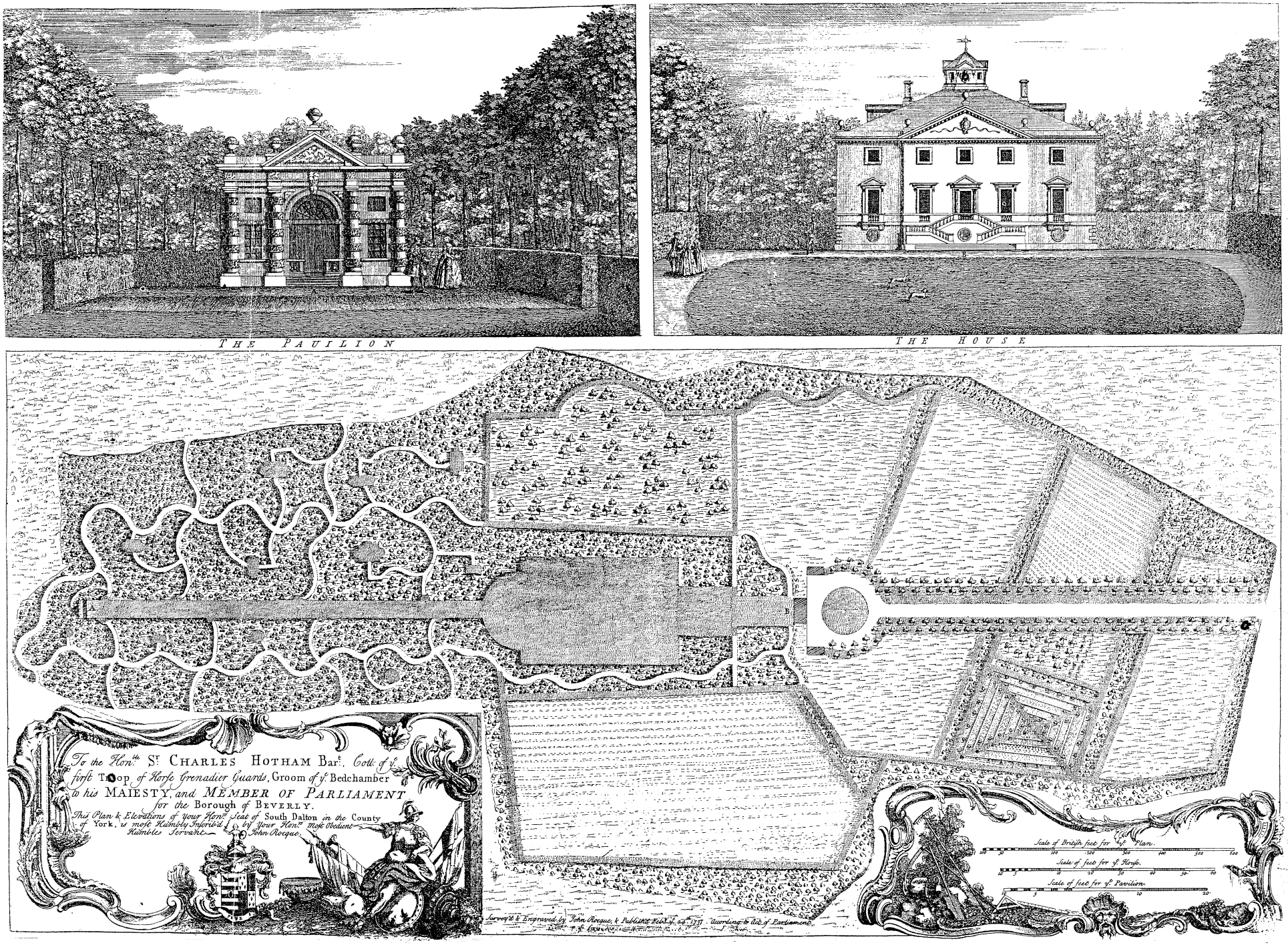


LONDESBOROUGH PARK 1739 from an estate plan by Thomas Pattison

x = the Hall

For avenues marked A-F see text.

46. David Neave: Plan of Londesborough Park in 1739. From an Estate Plan by Thomas Pattison.



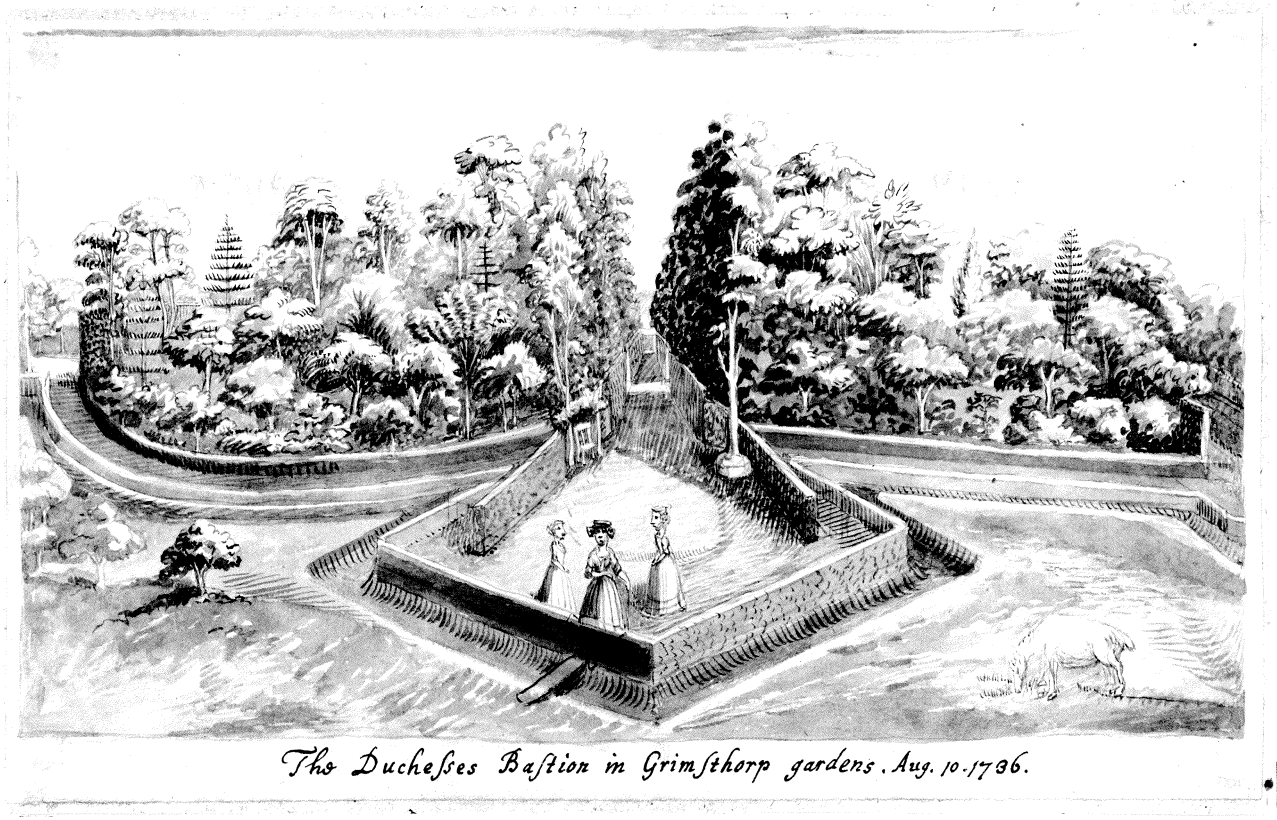
47. John Rocque: Plan of South Dalton, Yorkshire, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, volume IV.



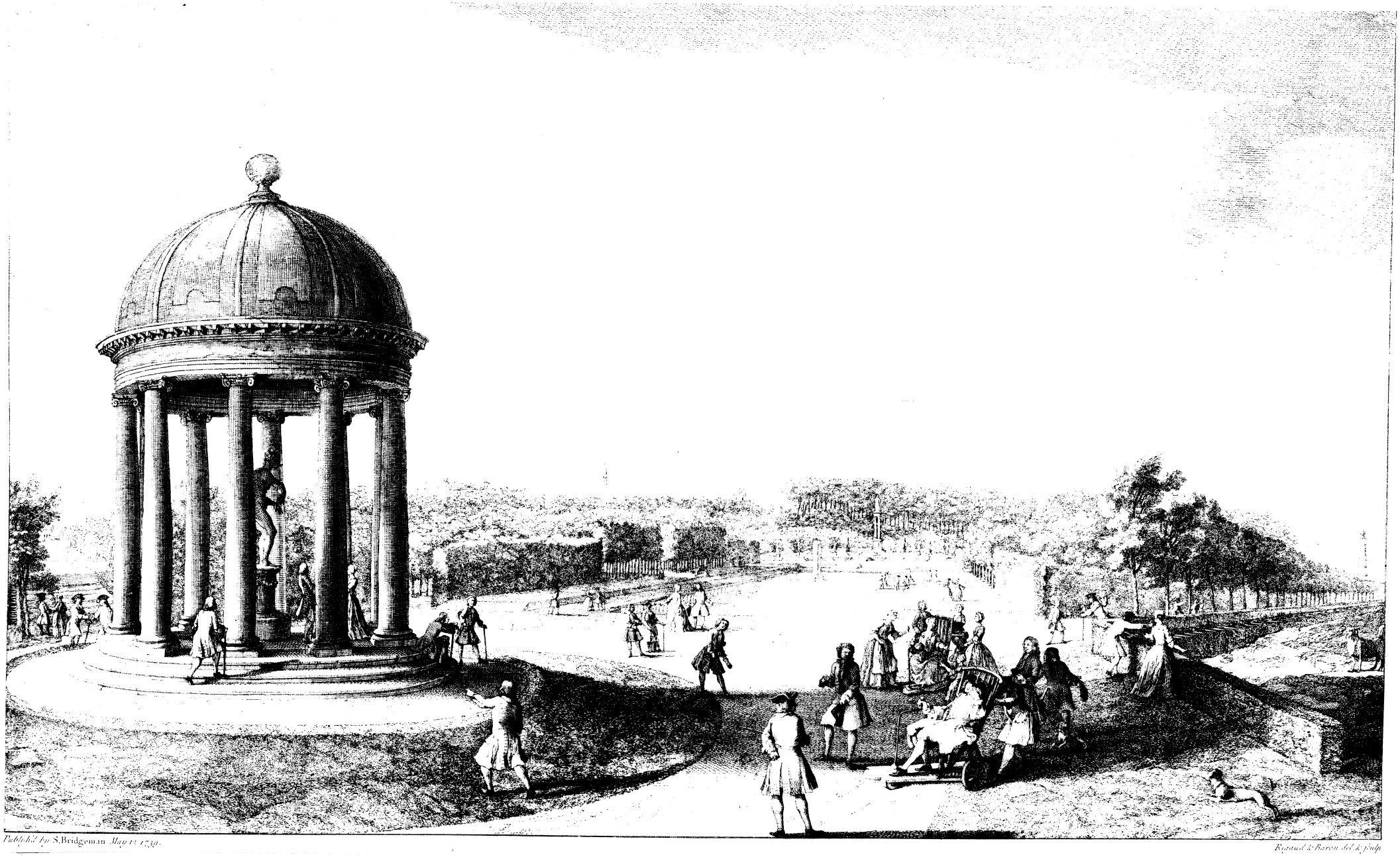
48. Fortifications, Castle Howard, Yorkshire. Photo, Michael Symes.



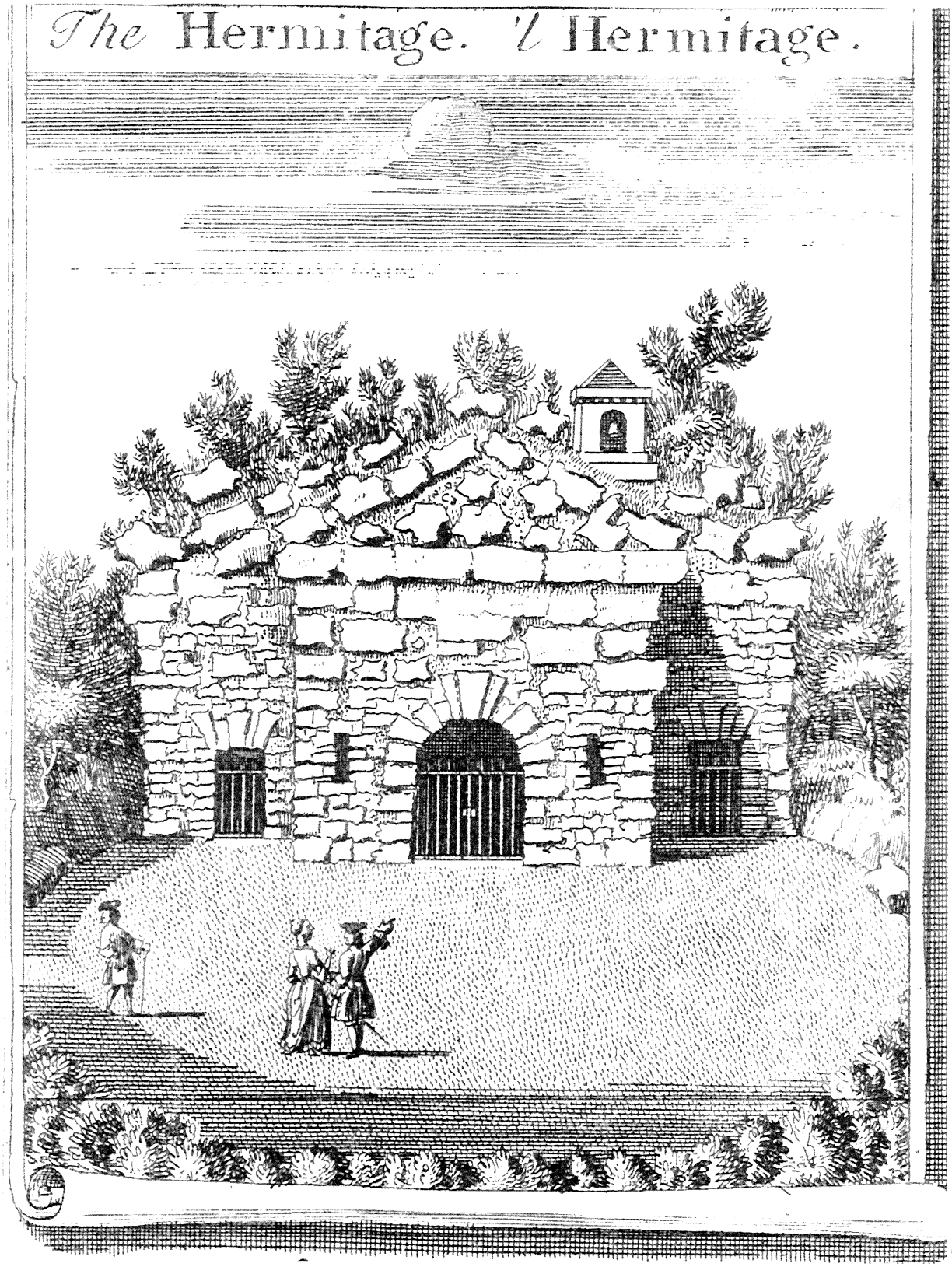
49. Bailey, Stainborough Castle, Yorkshire. Photo, Michael Symes.



50. William Stukeley: Duchesses' Bastion, Grimsthorpe, 1736. Bodleian Library, Oxford.



51. Jacques Rigaud: Stowe, View of the Queen's Theatre from the Rotunda. Engraving, 1739.



52. John Rocque: The Hermitage, detail from A New Plan of Richmond Garden, 1748.



53. Hermitage, Stowe, Buckinghamshire. Photo, Michael Symes.



54. Grotto Boathouse, Fonthill, Wiltshire. Photo, Michael Symes.

4. Humphry Repton

In 1813 Repton produced a Red Book for what he hoped would be a commission to restore his fortunes. Unfortunately, although implemented, the project left him without payment as the owner tumbled spectacularly into bankruptcy. Repton's design, for a flower-parterre bounded by a trellis-hedge, is typical of his late work – the flower gardens at Endsleigh and Ashridge may be mentioned.

Although the purpose of these notes is to set Wanstead in the general context of garden development, it should not be seen as 'just another eighteenth-century garden'. It had its own character, through its size, scale and scope, and, taken with the huge house, fully justified the epithet 'the English Versailles'.

Appendix

Sally Jeffery

Since the above text was written, an exciting development has occurred in the later history of Wanstead Park – the missing Red Book by Humphry Repton was offered for sale from a private collection and has been purchased for the library of Sir Paul Getty.[159] He has been kind enough to make it available for study through his librarian, Bryan Maggs, and the following account can therefore add further to the story of Repton at Wanstead and enables a comparison to be made between the recommendations of Repton and Kennedy. I should like to record here my warmest thanks not only to the owner and his librarian, but also to Fiona Cowell and Georgina Green, who shared the task of transcribing the text and contributed to these conclusions.

Repton at Wanstead: A Continuation

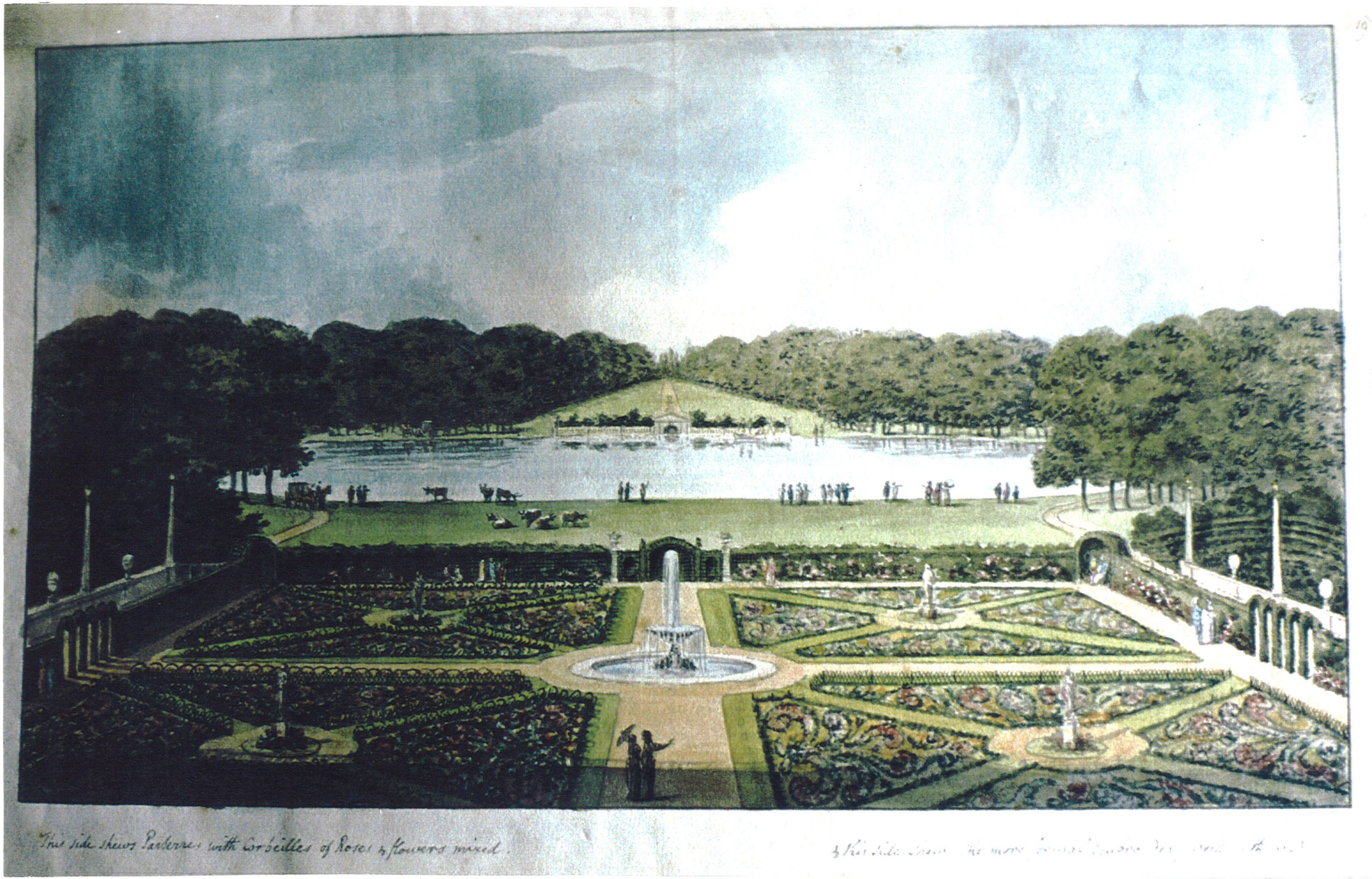
In fact, there is no 'Red' book by Humphry Repton for Wanstead Park. His report was apparently not bound for the Wellesleys, and was included in the Wanstead sale as fifteen drawings, with no mention of text. The text and drawings are now in a brown leather binding which could well date from the time they were purchased at the Wanstead sale in 1822. There are four grey wash sketches incorporated into the text, numbered 1 to 4, and nine watercolours, numbered V to XIII, seven with flaps or overlays, illustrating Repton's proposals. An annotated plan to which he refers is missing, as presumably is one other item to make up the fifteen mentioned in the sale catalogue. In all, both the text and the illustrations with their captions provide invaluable information on the elaborate proposals made, and on how Repton set out the arguments to persuade his client to adopt them. At least three subsequent plans of Wanstead made by the surveyor John Doyley in 1815,[160] 1824[161] (*figs 37 and 58*), and c.1822[162] permit us to form a picture of what was accepted and what was not and to make comparisons with earlier plans and views.

First, we should note that the information about Wanstead available from *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* of 1816 was only a small (though important) part of the report. Repton's letter to William Long Wellesley, which is bound into the front of the report, tells us that he first visited Wanstead House on 8 March 1813, that he worked on his report at Harestreet on 19 April 1813 and that it was 'finally arranged in Septr 1813'. It was apparently Wellesley himself who instructed Repton that he did not wish to destroy, but rather to preserve, 'the original Style of the Place'. The extracts published in *Fragments* are taken from the report almost word for word, and represent the introductory remarks on the ancient and modern styles in gardening, his discussion of the parterre on the west, and of the water seen from the house towards London, where he suggests thinning overgrown trees and

[159] Sir Paul Getty K.B.E. – Wormsley Library.
[160] ERO D/Dcy P2A.
[161] London Borough of Redbridge, Local Studies and Archives. *A Plan of the Parish of Wanstead in the County of Essex*, 1824, John Doyley. I am very grateful to Georgina Green who drew my attention to this plan.
[162] ERO D/Dcw, P61.



55. Humphry Repton: View of the East Terrace, supposed to be taken at the time of some Fête or Publick Day at Wanstead House. Watercolour sketch number VI from the Wanstead report. Sir Paul Getty K.B.E. – Wormsley Library.



56. View towards the West from the House (flap open). Watercolour sketch number VIII from the Wanstead report. Sir Paul Getty K.B.E. – Wormsley Library.

clothing the banks of the lakes. A single illustration with an overlay (*fig. 35*) was made especially for *Fragments,* probably a year or so after the report was written, and represents a modification of sketch number XII in the report. The distant landscape is exactly replicated, but a corner of the proposed parterre has been added, in a different form, simpler than those proposed in the report.

A pair of grey wash sketches illustrating good and bad fencing were included in *Fragments* without any indication that they had come from the Wanstead report. They show the advantages of a half sunk fence consisting of a wall three feet below the surface with a fence of iron or wood on it extending three feet above ground level, which does not interfere with the view but provides good protection. Repton further discusses six different kinds of fence to protect against various kinds of animals.

What do these proposals reveal that is new, and how much of the work was carried out? What can be established in answer to these questions and what remains unresolved?

Repton is particularly concerned with exploiting the prospects from the house, and he discusses these one by one in relation to his watercolour views to the east, the south, the west and to the water. To the east, he wishes to soften the distant view by allowing the deer to graze on the grass, adjusting the planting of trees and introducing a bridge over the far canal. For the nearer view, he suggests a terrace enriched with a balustrade and flowers, and a supplementary sketch of the east terrace 'supposed to be taken at the time of some Fete or Publick Day at Wanstead House' (*fig. 55*), shows how it would be.

The landscape to the south was visible from the principal room of the house but was not displayed to advantage. The water appeared unfinished and a ploughed field and row of trees hid what Repton called the 'offskip'. To improve this, he suggested enlarging the piece of water at the centre of the view and planting trees to lead the eye to the distance. The flap shows 'the manner in which the Water may be finished, & also how the Park may be blended in appearance with the forest &c.'.

The views to the west include an important watercolour showing the whole of the parterre (*fig. 56*), which is not included in *Fragments*. It offers two alternative treatments, the left-hand one with 'Corbeilles of Roses and flowers mixed' and the one to the right with 'more formal Embroidery Work with box &c.', plus a central pool and fountain, statues in the four quarters, arbours at the corners, and arches of greenery in the centre of each side. Behind, to the north, was planned what appears to be a tiered amphitheatre, possibly for the display of exotics, but Repton does not comment on this in the text. The parterre occupies the area between the rows of obelisks and urns of what was the forecourt and was designed to be seen from the first floor of the house. Beyond the octagonal basin is a balustrade or low wall with a pedimented feature to mark the centre, possible containing a grotto, backed by a loosely planted shrubbery 'to prevent the Road's going into the Bason Pool'. This view is supplemented by two further sketches. The first, from the west, shows the basin and entrance front of the house. The second shows the curving road circling the basin to the south. The caption reads: 'In approaching the House, this road is far preferable to that on the North side of the Bason, because it shews the House & the Park to greater advantage'. All of this would have given the approach to the house a greatly enriched and furnished appearance.

Some of Repton's text on the water at Wanstead, together with one view, are included in *Fragments*, but another of his watercolours illustrates his extended comments on this subject, and specifically on the Reservoir Pool and the Lake beyond it. The old quincunx hid almost the whole of the house from view when approached from the public road between the Reservoir Pool and the Lake. The magnificent portico and pediment of the house would be visible once lower planting had replaced the overgrown trees. A pretty iron fence would replace the ordinary paling along the road. The sketch which was reproduced in *Fragments* in slightly modified form (*fig. 35*) is in many ways the most intriguing of all. This shows Reservoir Pool and the Lake opened up into one huge stretch of water, crossed apparently by two bridges. The caption, which was not included in *Fragments*, tells us that the improved view showed 'the Effect of removing the trees which now hide the Lake & also the manner of uniting the two waters'. If the Reservoir Pool and the Lake had been united as in this view, the public road (the present Blake Hall Road) would have run across a bridge, and this would have implied greater changes than the text indicates.

Having dealt with the major viewpoints, Repton's next section examines the 'Gardens & Pleasure ground'. He lists twelve different features with 'distinct Characters', which could be connected to make up a pleasure ground. They could be formed 'partly by restoring the original Style of Gardens and partly by grafting on them New Scenes of variety & contrast where the trees have now outgrown their original intentions'. Probably a plan was included to locate these scenes, which are numbered in the text. Some of these, like the parterre, and the east terrace, had already been discussed and illustrated. Others, like the maze and a 'quincunx cabinet de verdure', remain unknown quantities, although Doyley's plan of 1815 includes a maze plantation to the north of the house.

However, features such as the Berceau Walk, Fruit Wall and Winter Garden can be identified and discussed. The Berceau Walk and a wall parallel to it 'of 750 feet in length which faces the South' are referred to as already existing features. Part of a trellised walk can be seen in Rocque's view of the Water House, and his plan shows it as a straight line measuring some 600 feet, as part of a series of geometric walks around an amphitheatre behind the green house (*fig. 22*). This was no doubt developed as a 'berceau walk' with trees or shrubs trained over it in an upended cradle shape, as the French term implies, and was retained during subsequent changes to that area of the gardens. It can also be seen on John Doyley's later plans (*figs 37 and 58a*) as a double row of trees.

Parallel to this, slightly to the north, ran the old boundary of the gardens. Repton refers to this as a wall; it is shown as a continuous line both in the Kip & Knyff engravings (*fig. 3*) and by Rocque, who also marks a gate across it (*fig. 22*). This old wall can probably be identified today as the one lying behind the gardens of the houses on the north side of Warren Drive, Wanstead. Repton suggests pruning or 'heading' the overgrown trees of the Berceau Walk so that the south face of the wall could receive the sun and be used to grow fruit. This Fruit Wall would also act as a Winter Garden, and the area would be kept locked for safety and privacy. (It can be seen just above the double line of the berceau walk in figure 58a, marked as '212'.) Such places at Wanstead would be 'like treasures in rich Caskets', says Repton, reserved only for those with keys.

Another such place was the American Garden, which, he says, could be 'increased in apparent size without actually enlarging it'. We now have additional proof from Repton that this



57. Humphry Repton: Hint for a bridge from Grove Island to the Main Land North. Grey wash sketch number 4 from the Wanstead report. Sir Paul Getty K.B.E. – Wormsley Library.





58. John Doyley: Two details of a plan of Wanstead, 1824. London Boirough of Redbridge, Local Studies and Archives.
Above: Detail showing the probable location of the Berceau Walk (210), the area occupied by the the American Garden (211), and the wall proposed as a Fruit Wall (212).
Below: Detail showing the area formerly occupied by the Reservoir Pool (221), now planted with trees.

feature already existed, both from the foregoing comment and from another anecdote which he recounts in his text. This is about the Duke of Portland, evidently a previous tenant of Wanstead, who 'when an *im*provident or *too* provident Steward would have sold the plants growing in the American Garden at Wanstead ... ordered them to be purchased and not removed'. We know, from Kennedy's *Notitiae* of 1818, that he himself was responsible for advising on the enlargement of the American Garden. We now know that it was already present when Repton came on the scene and had been there for a number of years, and that he had plans for it, which Kennedy perhaps adopted. In fact, a number of Kennedy's proposals seem to show a knowledge of Repton's report, which he may have seen in the library at Wanstead.

Other features suggested by Repton but about which he gives few details are the enlargement of the Grotto Garden, and two walks, each 'perfectly distinct in character'. The Grotto, says Repton, 'is a sumptuous specimen of its kind, and at such a distance as makes it an object to which the Walks may lead'. The Wood Walk would be from the east terrace of the house 'forming the shortest line to the Grotto' with the water in the distance, while the Sheep Walk would go from the Grotto garden along the banks of the water with a view of the 'riverlike channels and islands judiciously interposed' to the end of the Berceau Walk or the American Garden.

The Island Gardens are also one of the features on Repton's list. These are discussed in a separate section at the end of the report. He evidently disapproved of the 'fanciful islands' which were drawn on Rocque's plan, commenting that 'from the old map it appears that there formerly existed regular models of fortifications, with many puerile Conceits not worth restoring or preserving'. However, having dismissed these and recommending that some of the lesser islands be removed, he accepts that others were beautifully wooded and could be exploited for the views they afforded. He proposes a ferry to cross to the largest island, with two rustic bridges to cross over onto others, and rustic or covered seats set in the most interesting places – especially one to command a view of the Grotto. Two pretty grey wash sketches (one of which is reproduced here as figure 57), show his ideas for these bridges, which were to link Grove Island to the north bank, and to the Great Island. Repton's names for the islands seem not to be recorded elsewhere, though no doubt they were included on his missing plan, so we have to guess which were the 'largest island' or the 'Great Island', 'Grove Island' (from which the Grotto could be seen), 'the Cherry Island' and 'the Strawberry Island'.

The last watercolour bound in with the text is not captioned, but the final feature on Repton's list was 'the Gardens at Highlands'. The separate estate of Highlands was beyond the River Roding to the east, but was included in the Wanstead estate at the time, and the pool shown with a proposed aviary or pheasantry beside it probably portrays one at Highlands. It does not concord with any of the features in Wanstead Park itself.

Repton's proposals were therefore very extensive, and would have been costly to implement in full. It is clear from the two Doyley plans of 1815 and 1824, which follow Repton's report by two years and eleven years respectively, that the proposals were acted upon very selectively. The Berceau Walk and the Grotto and its garden were already there, and remained, but it is unclear whether the Fruit Wall was established. Judging by Kennedy's plan of the existing American Garden, it ran beside the Berceau Walk, and he proposed to enlarge it. However, it is also unclear how many of *his* suggestions were acted upon, and his proposals for garden

buildings do not seem to have been taken up. None of Repton's proposed improvements to the approach road round the basin appear on the later plans, nor does the bridge over the canal, nor the enhanced view to the south. The Reservoir Pool and the Lake beyond it were never united. The two walks from the Grotto are not shown, although they may have been made. Perhaps rustic seats were built on the islands, but the bridges recommended by Repton are not shown. It is interesting to note that Kennedy, whose ideas are generally closely related to those in Repton's report, also proposed a number of rustic seats and a 'Rustic or Swiss bridge', which he intended to build to the right of the Grotto. In spite of the absence of any bridges on later plans, footings can be seen near the Grotto, so perhaps this suggestion was acted upon. Very little appears to have been done to enhance the far canal, which is shown on both Doyley's plans with the triple rows of trees along its length very fragmented, as they had been before Repton's time. Extensive new planting does seem to have taken place to clothe the banks of the pieces of water, however, especially near the Grotto and on the edges of the Reservoir Pool, and the banks of the water generally may have been improved. A comparison with earlier pre-Repton plans indicates that the so-called Square Pond (now called the Dell) was drained and planted with trees.

The two dated Doyley plans make clear that the Reservoir Pool was not drained and filled in until some time after Repton's 1813 report, and he does not mention draining it. On the 1815 plan it is described as 'The Great Pond, now drained', and it is shown as a new plantation on the later Doyley plans (figure 58b shows the area of the Reservoir Pool, marked '221', planted with trees). One problem arises here. Until Repton's report came to light this year, it was thought that he might have recommended draining the Reservoir Pool to make a wood. The famous clump of trees forming the 'Repton Oak' in Reservoir Wood is located almost in the middle of the area once filled by the pool, which was not drained until later. It is therefore unlikely that those trees were planted on Repton's direct advice. Was the practice of planting several trees in a single hole discussed with the Wanstead gardeners when he visited and carried on as estate practice later?

The main innovation was the parterre, but there too questions remain because we have no detailed record of exactly what was done. Neither of Repton's alternative proposals seems to have been followed exactly, but we have incomplete evidence. A faint pencil sketch by Buckler appears to indicate that the trellis and arbours were not planted, and Doyley's plan of 1815 shows little detail except the general outline and the central fountain pool. We do know, however, from both Doyley and the evidence still visible on the ground, that the four quarters were made, with their crossed diagonal paths. It is interesting that when Repton prepared his watercolour of Wanstead for *Fragments* some two years after his report, he drew yet another variation on the planting, perhaps in the knowledge that the scheme had been modified in execution.

The greatest interest of this newly revealed report by Repton is in the descriptions of what might have been. Had its recommendations been followed, the potentially magnificent views to the east, south and west would have been developed, the private areas of the Pleasure Garden would have been linked by walks, and the Island Gardens made easier to visit and more pleasant. As it was, events overtook the Wellesleys, and the gardens at Wanstead, instead of being improved as Repton recommended, fell into decline.

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