

# *An Explosion of Beauty*

## An Online Course on the Art, Architecture & Collections of British Country Houses



### **Session 4: February 7, 2023**

Palladian (1715—60)

Rococo (1730—70)

Chinoiserie (1750—65)



Art & Architecture  
with Curt DiCamillo

# Curt DiCamillo

*Curator of Special Collections*



# PROGRAM

- **Presentation (60 mins.)**
  - What is a country house
  - Overview houses
  - Study houses
- **Q&A (30 mins.)**

# *What is a Country House?*

A country house is a centuries-old institution virtually unique to Britain and Ireland. I define a country house as being a house of a minimum of five bays that, at some point in its history, was the country seat of a landed family.

These houses had an estate (agricultural land) that served as the center for local community life and may have included farmland, villages, or other supporting acreage. Their estates ranged in size from 1,000 to 1 million acres and employed hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people.

9 Bays



**Houghton Hall**  
Norfolk

# *What is a Country House?*

A wonderful snapshot of the British country house comes from Brian Masters, writing in his 1975 book, *The Dukes*:

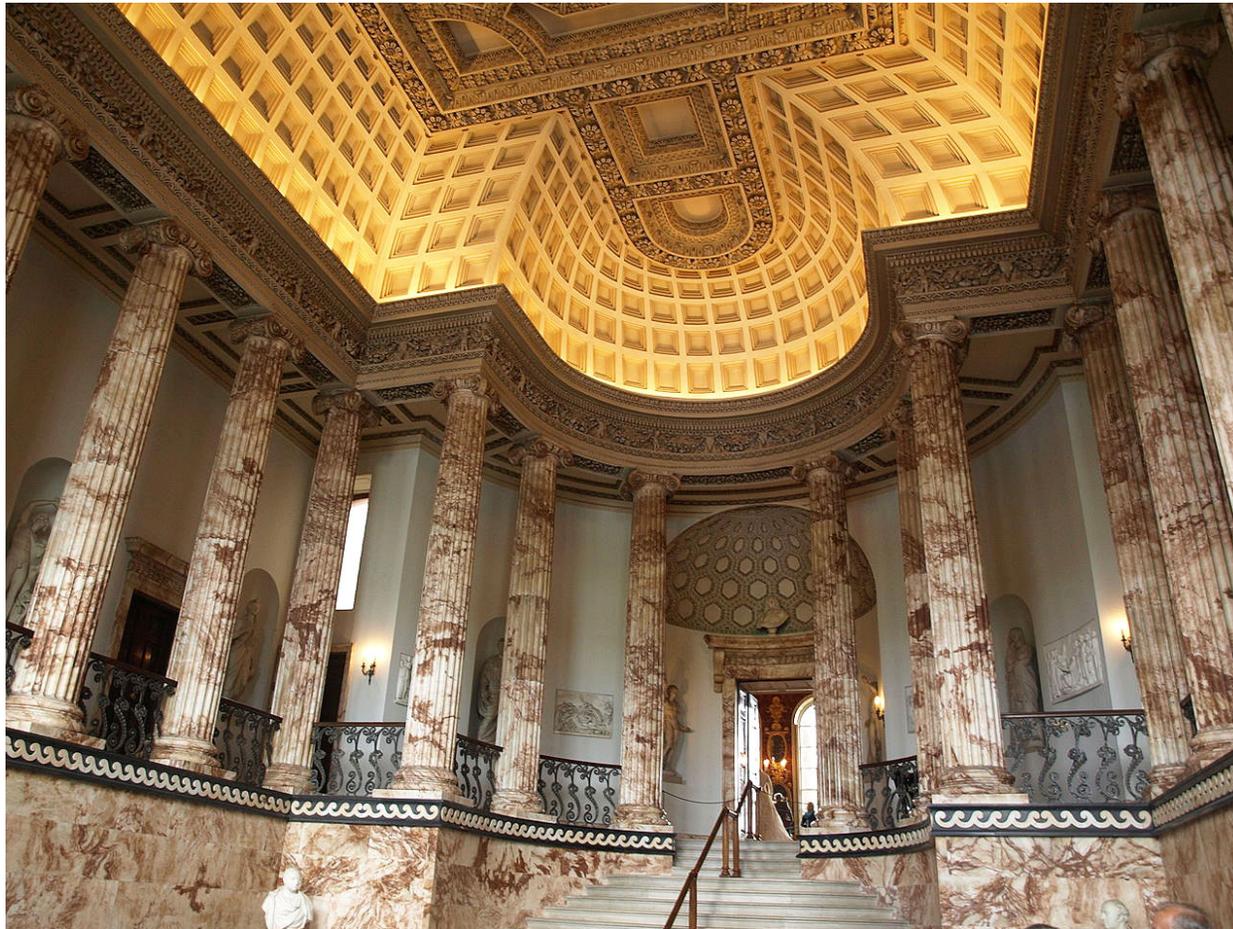
“The large country estate, with the house as its pivot, was (and is) a peculiarly British affair. In many ways it was a perfect example in miniature of the welfare state, self-sufficient and self-protecting, with every member of the ‘family,’ from shepherds to carpenters to kitchen-maids, provided for from cradle to grave.”

Over 350 estates in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland are owned by the National Trust. In Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland owns over 128 properties.



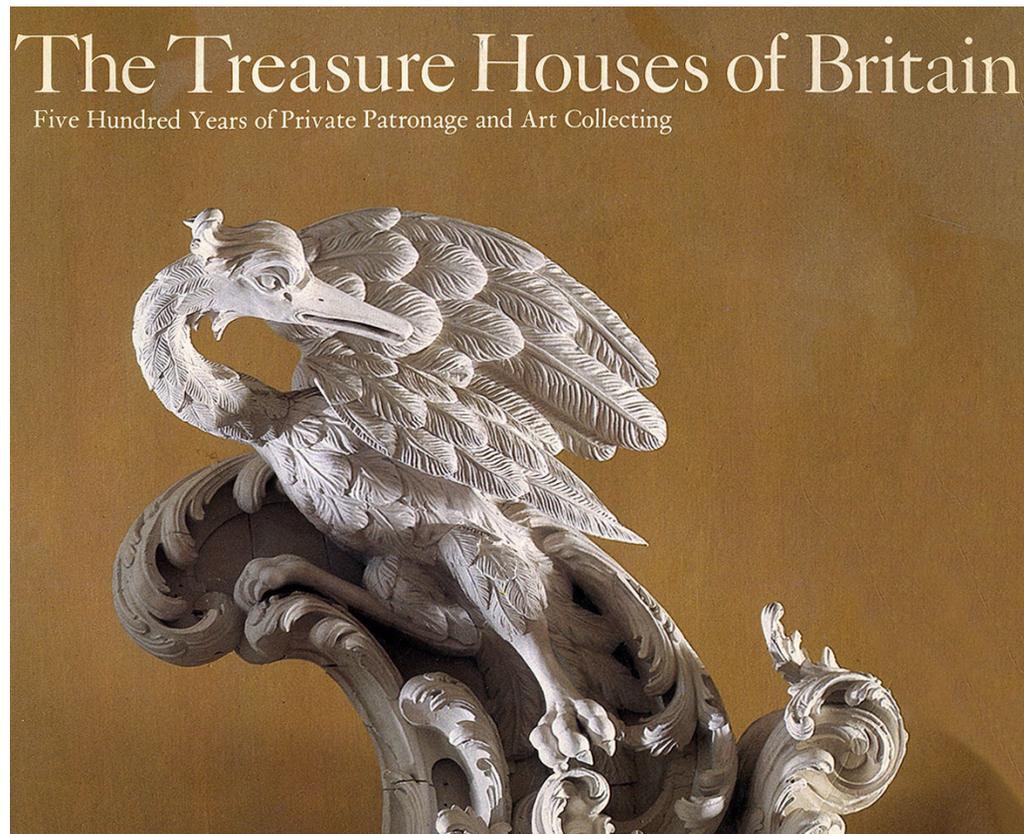
**Blenheim Palace**  
Oxfordshire

The arrangement of houses by dates/stylistic periods is a moving target. Many houses began in one period, but were significantly added to in later centuries, so, in the interest of sanity, I've tried to rationalize these along lines that make sense to me, which means that no one rule defines these categories.



**Holkham Hall**  
Norfolk

One of the most important books for this class is  
the exhibition catalog from  
*The Treasures Houses of Britain*  
held at National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1985-86.



# PALLADIAN



**Andrea Palladio**  
1508—80

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a growing reaction against of the extravagance of the Baroque style. A desire to return to the basic principals of classicism, with its emphasis on restraint, proportion, balance, and the systematic use of the classical orders of architecture, led to the development of Palladianism.

This unique British style was based on the form and ornament of ancient Roman buildings transmitted through the work of the Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio and the 17<sup>th</sup> century British architect Inigo Jones.

Palladian interiors were richly decorated, in contrast to the exteriors, which were plain and austere. The British loved associating the designs of ancient Rome with the growing British Empire.



Andrea Palladio  
**Villa Rotonda**  
Vicenza  
1567—92

Villa Rotonda  
The  
Circular Saloon

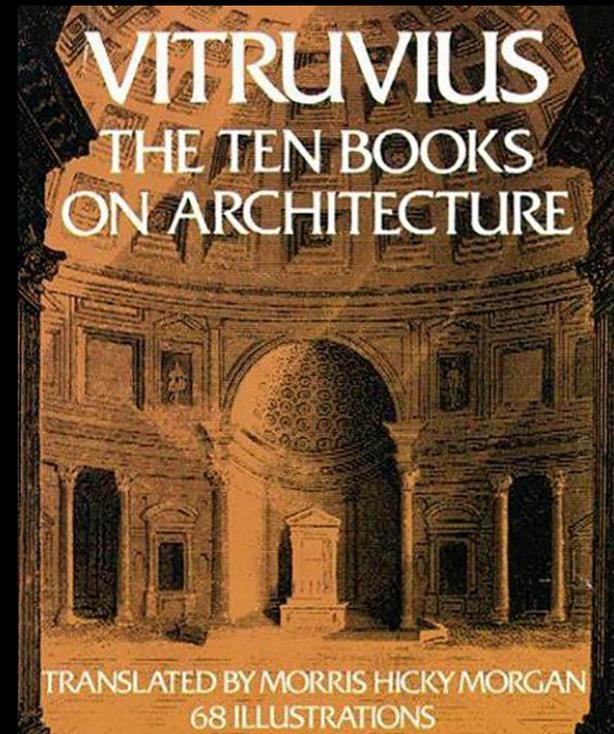


Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, commonly known as Vitruvius, was a 1<sup>st</sup> century BC Roman author, architect, and civil engineer.

He is famous for his multi-volume work, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, which was dedicated to his patron, the Emperor Augustus.

In the books, which were written as a guide for building projects, Vitruvius invented the concept that all buildings should have three attributes: strength, utility, and beauty.

His work was widely copied and survives in dozens of manuscripts from the Middle Ages. The books remain in print today.



VITRUVIUS BRITANNICUS,

OR  
*The British Architect,*  
Containing

The Plans, ELEVATIONS, and Sections  
of the Regular Buildings, both  
PUBLICK and PRIVATE,

IN  
GREAT BRITAIN,

With Variety of New Designs; in 200 large Folio Plates, Engraven  
by the best Hands; and Drawn either from the Buildings themselves,  
or the Original Designs of the Architects;

In II VOLUMES

VOL. I. by Colen Campbell Esq.<sup>r</sup>

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*L'Architecte Britannique,*  
Contenant

Les Plans, ELEVATIONS, & Sections  
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PARTICULIERS que PUBLICS

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Compris en 200 grandes Planches gravez en taille douce par les  
Meilleurs Maitres, et tous ou desinez des Bâtimens memes, ou,  
copiez des Dessesins Originaux des Architectes:

EN DEUX TOMES.

TOME I. Par le Sieur Campbell.

CUM PRIVILEGIO REGIS.

*Sold by the Author over against Douglas Coffee-house in St Martins-lane. John Nicholson in  
Little Britain, Andrew Bell at the Cross-Keys in Cornhil, W. Taylor in Peter-Nofler-Row, Henry  
Clements in St. Pauls Church-yard, And, Jos. Smith in Exeter-Change. LONDON MDCCXV.  
J. Sturt sculp.*

The work of  
Vitruvius in  
Britain

Colen  
Campbell

1715

Rococo emerged as a distinct style in France in the 1720s. By the following decade it was blossoming in Britain, where immigrant artists and craftsmen played a key role in its dissemination.

While classicism was bound by the rules of the architectural orders, Rococo was free of such restrictions. It was a style of extravagant forms and asymmetry that used fruit, flowers, rocks, and shells as design elements.

In Britain the chief promoters of Rococo were artists, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs from the middle class, rather than architects and their noble patrons. Thus, the style was rarely taken up in architecture, though it played an important part in the design of interiors and luxury goods.

Often criticized for its immoderation, the style never took a firm hold in Britain, where it was seen as a product of the French, who were viewed as frivolous, extravagant, and effete.

# ROCOCO



Jean-Honoré Fragonard

*The Swing*

1767

*The Wallace Collection*



Balthasar Neumann  
**The Würzburg Residenz**  
Lower Franconia, Bavaria  
1749—51

# CHINOISERIE



**Blue & White Pagoda Porcelain**

In 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe porcelain, silk, wallpaper, and lacquer from China and Japan were very fashionable. This inspired many British designers and craftsmen to imitate Asian designs and to create their own fanciful versions of the east. The style derived its name from chinois, the French word for Chinese, and featured what, to Europeans, were representations of exotic and mysterious foreign cultures. The designs, which appeared on a wide variety of products, were inspired by influences as diverse as the roofs of Chinese pagodas, Asian landscapes, magnificent birds, and fierce dragons.

For interiors Chinoiserie was particularly used for bedrooms and dressings rooms, which often featured genuine Asian objects such as Chinese wallpaper and porcelain. In architecture, the style most commonly appeared in the form of colorful, richly ornamented garden buildings.



The most celebrated example  
of Chinoiserie in Britain



Sir William Chambers  
**The Pagoda**  
**Kew Gardens**  
London  
1761—62



Jingdezhen Porcelain  
(Jiangxi Province, China)

## Pagoda

(One of four)

1810s

*The Royal Collection*

# Buckingham Palace The Chinese Dining Room





Buckingham Palace  
**The Chinese  
Dining Room**



John Nash  
**The Royal Pavilion**  
Brighton  
1815—23

# Overview Houses

**Badminton House, Gloucestershire, 1660—90** (Palladian, Rococo & Chinoiserie)

**Honington Hall, Warwickshire, 1685** (Rococo)

**Mereworth Castle, Kent, 1720—25** (Palladian)

**Houghton Hall, Norfolk, 1722—35** (Palladian)

**Chiswick House, London, 1725—29** (Palladian)

**Holkham Hall, Norfolk, 1734—62** (Palladian)

**Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire, 1742—46** (Palladian & Rococo)

**Powderham Castle, Devon, circa 1755 staircase** (Rococo)

*Palladian, Rococo & Chinoiserie*



James Gibbs & William Kent  
**Badminton House**  
Gloucestershire  
1660—90



Badminton House  
Francis Smith  
**The Great Hall**  
Circa 1729—30



John Linnell  
**The Badminton Bed**  
Circa 1754  
*Victoria & Albert Museum*



## The Badminton Cabinet

Completed in 1726  
for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Beaufort  
*Liechtenstein: The Princely Collections*

Took 30 men five years to complete.

At 12.5' x 7.5', it is the largest and  
grandest cabinet ever created by the  
Ducal Workshop in Florence.

Sold in 2004 for £19,045,250, making it  
the most expensive non-pictorial work  
of art ever sold at auction.

*Rococo*



William Smith  
**Honington Hall**  
Warwickshire  
1685



Honington Hall  
John Freeman  
**The Octagonal Saloon**  
1751

*Palladian*

Samuel Ware  
**Foots Cray Place**  
Kent  
1752—55  
*Demolished 1950*



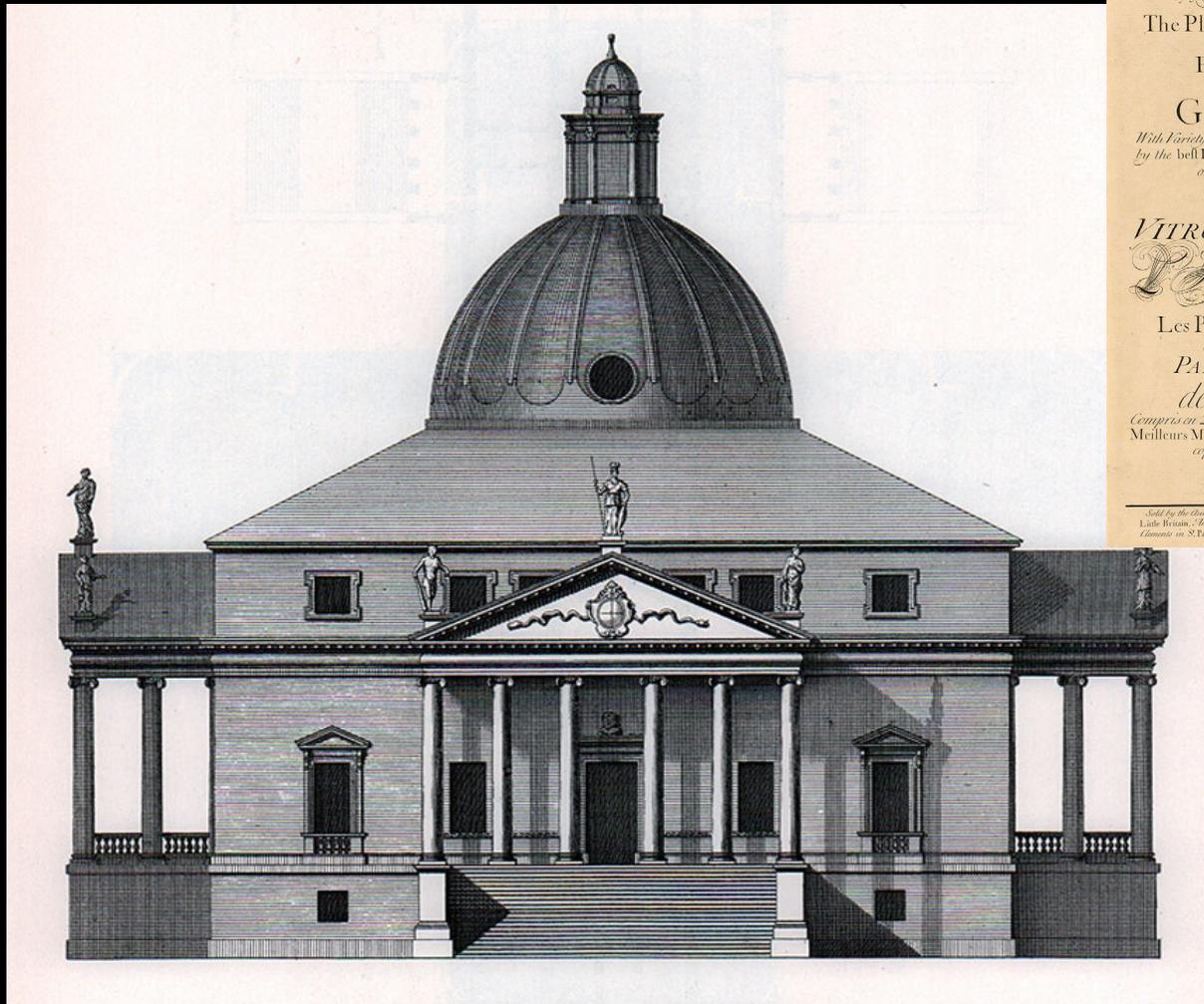
In the 18<sup>th</sup> century  
there were four  
houses built in  
Britain based on  
Palladio's famous  
Villa Rotonda:

Thomas Wright  
**Nuthall Temple**  
Nottinghamshire  
1754—57  
*Demolished 1929*



~ **Mereworth Castle**  
~ **Chiswick House**  
~ **Foots Cray Place**  
~ **Nuthall Temple**

Palladian



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Sold by the Author near opposite Dunghy College-hall in St Martins Lane, John Nicholson in  
Little Britain, Andrew Bell at the Crook-Knives in Cornhill, W. Taylor in Tans-Nether Row, Henry  
Chambers in St Pauls Church-yard, and C. Smith in Essex-Change, LONDON MDCCLXXV. 4 Sheets folio.

Colen Campbell  
Mereworth Castle  
Kent  
1720—25



Antonio Visentini  
*Landscape With a View of Mereworth Castle*  
1746  
*The Royal Collection*



**Mereworth Castle**



**Villa Rotonda**



**Mereworth Castle  
Domed Saloon**



**Villa Rotonda  
Circular Saloon**



George Knapton  
**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of  
Burlington**  
1743

Lord Burlington's hand  
rests on a copy of  
*The Designs of Inigo Jones*,  
while Rysbrack's bust of Jones is  
in the background behind  
the book.

*Palladian*



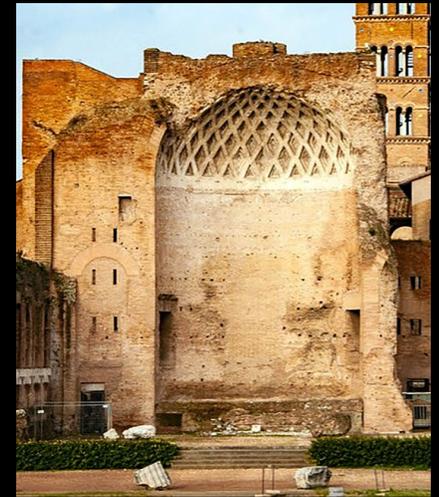
The 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Burlington  
**Chiswick House**  
London  
1725—29



Chiswick House  
**The Entrance Portico**



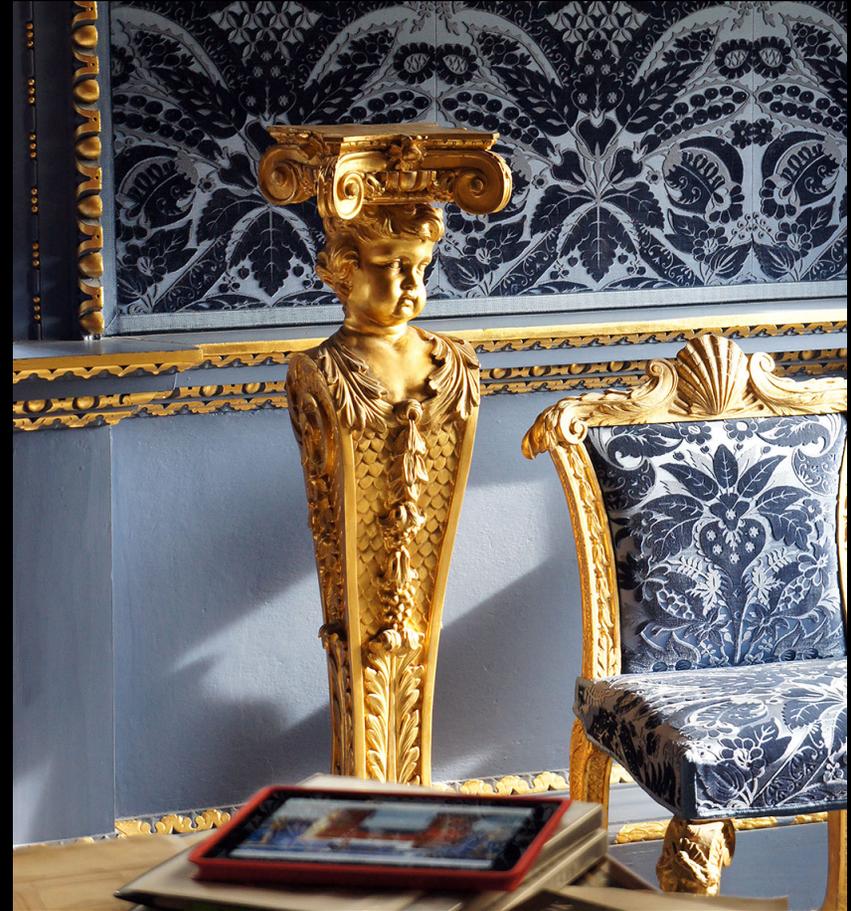
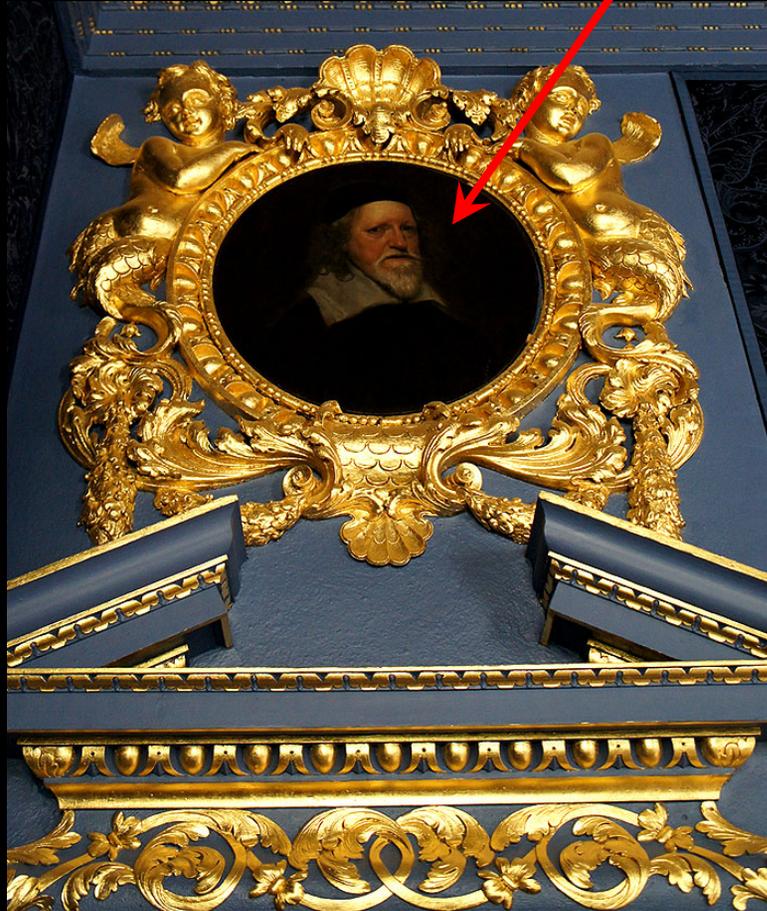
Chiswick House  
**The Gallery**



**Temple of Venus & Roma**  
Rome  
135 AD



Chiswick House  
**The Blue Velvet Room Ceiling**



Chiswick House  
**The Blue Velvet Room**



Chiswick House  
**The Grounds**

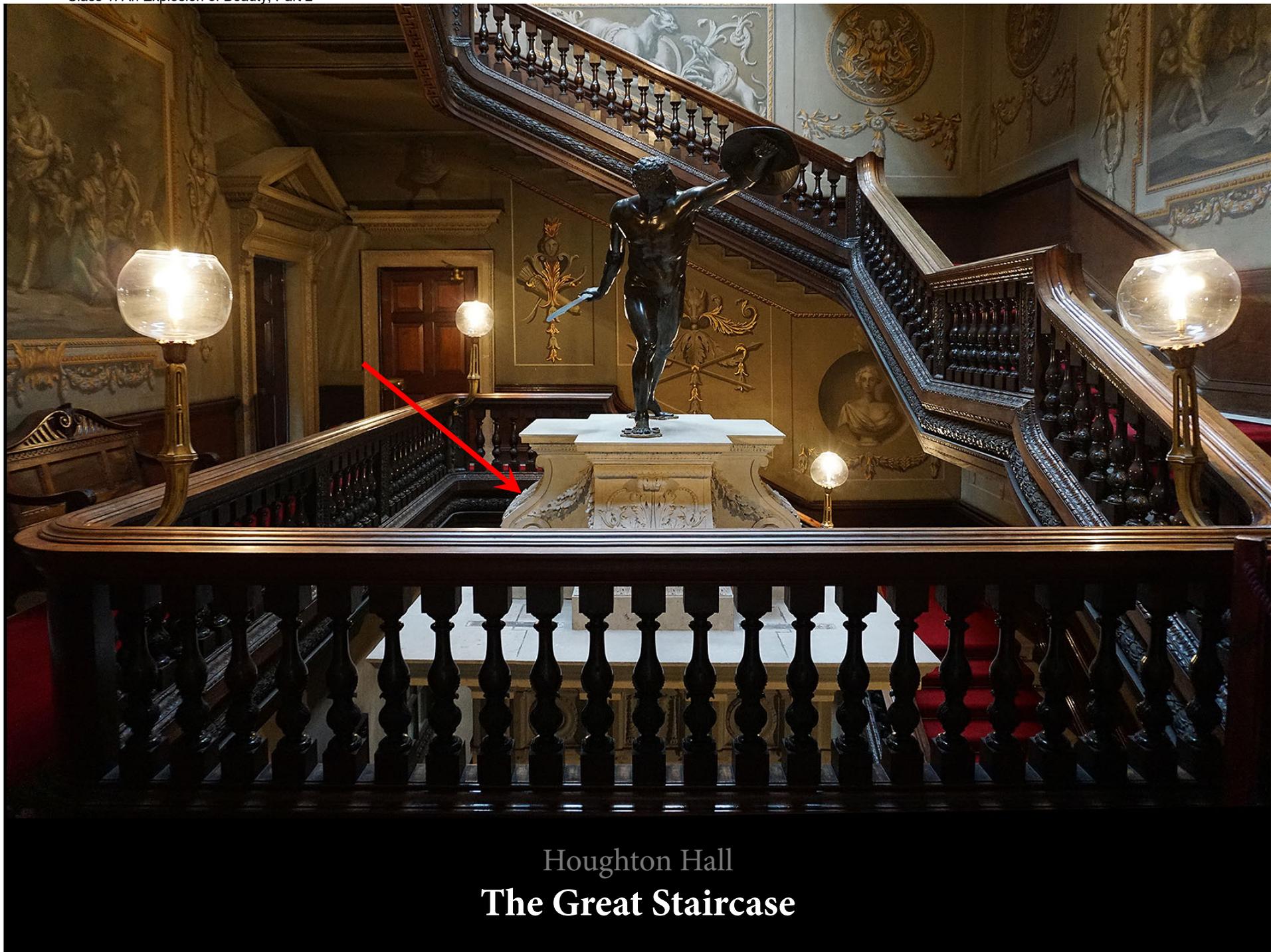
*Palladian*



Colen Campbell, William Kent & James Gibbs  
**Houghton Hall**  
Norfolk  
1722—35

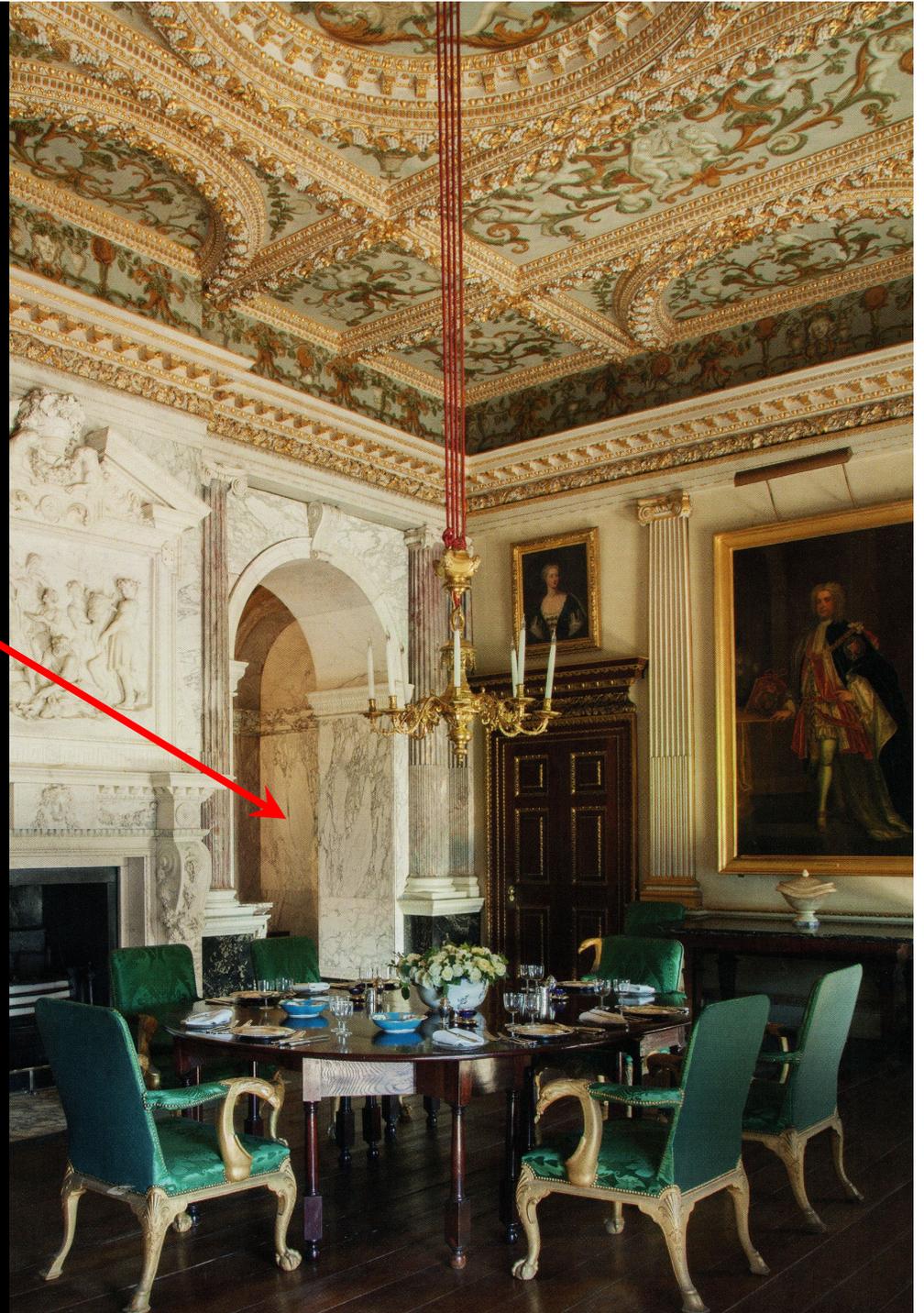


Houghton Hall  
**The West Facade**



Houghton Hall  
**The Great Staircase**

# Houghton Hall The Marble Parlour





Houghton Hall  
**The Stone Hall**



Houghton Hall  
**The Stone Hall Ceiling**

## Houghton Hall The Green Velvet Bedchamber

The bed, designed by William Kent, was made circa 1732 and is one of the most spectacular and original beds of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.





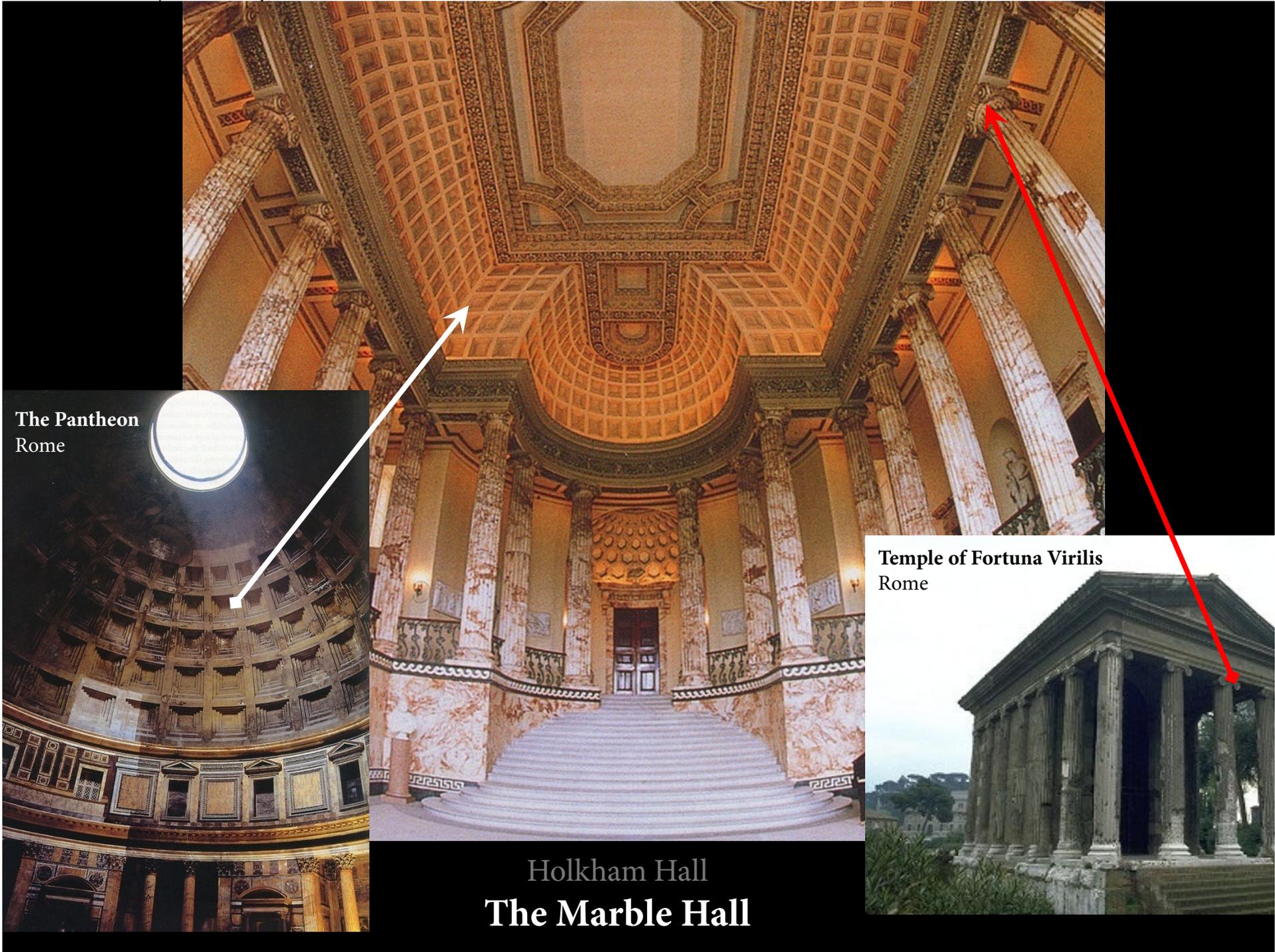
Timothy Richards  
**Houghton Hall Bookends**

“The supreme English example of pure neo-Palladian taste on the grand scale.”

—Richard Wilson & Alan Mackley



William Kent & Lord Burlington  
**Holkham Hall**  
Norfolk  
1734—62



The Pantheon  
Rome

Temple of Fortuna Virilis  
Rome

Holkham Hall  
The Marble Hall



Holkham Hall  
**The Library**

*Palladian & Rococo*



William Smith & John Sanderson  
**Kirtlington Park**  
Oxfordshire  
1742—46

“Arguably the  
most beautiful  
18<sup>th</sup> century room  
in America”

—*Country Life*

Considered one of  
the finest English  
Rococo rooms  
ever created, it  
was sold to the  
Metropolitan  
Museum in 1931.



Kirtlington Park  
John Sanderson, *Architect*  
Thomas Roberts, *Plasterer*  
**The Dining Room**  
1746

These two  
Gothick style  
walnut chairs  
are from a set  
of six that were  
probably made  
for a folly at  
Kirtlington.



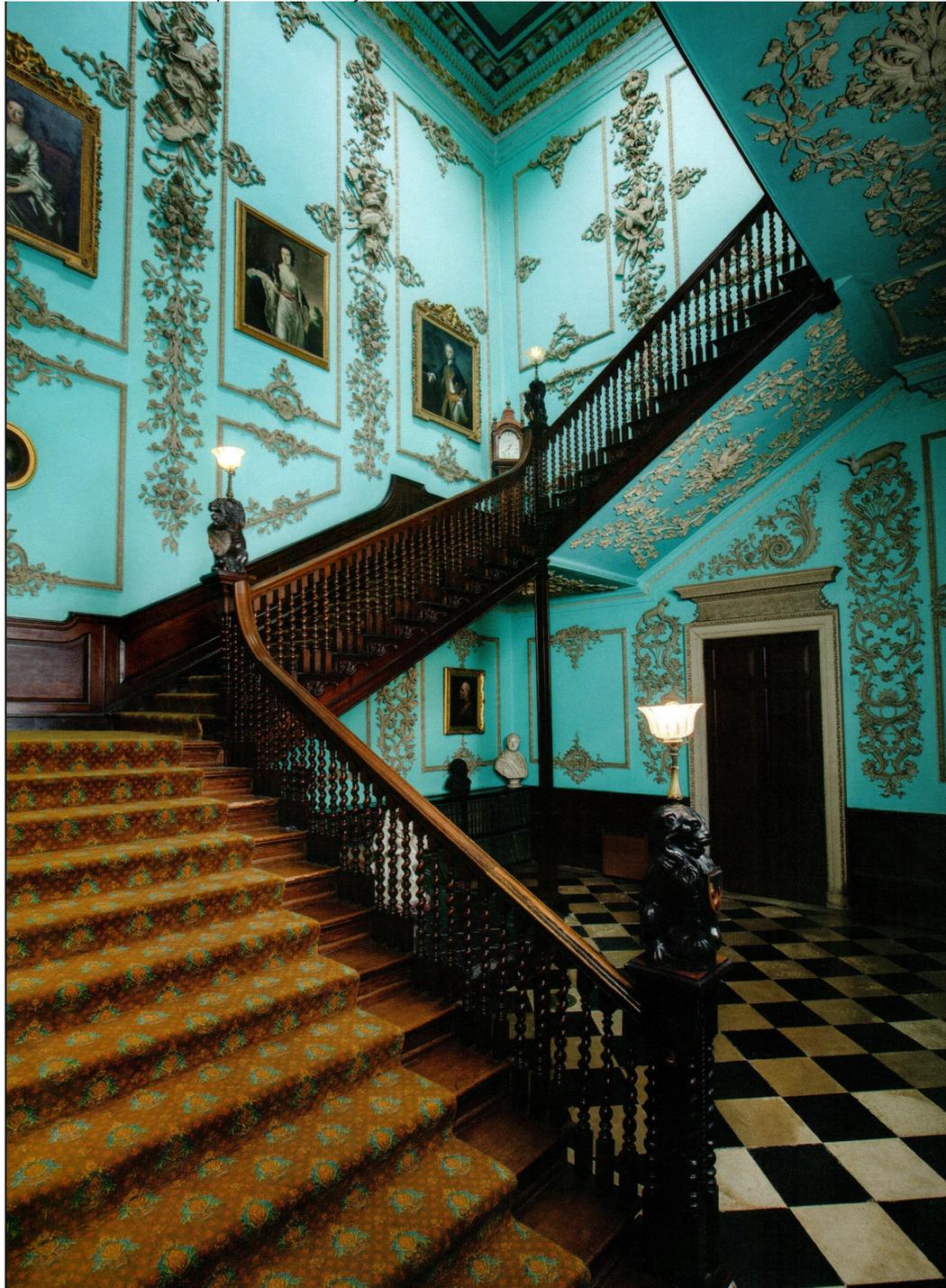
English, Maker Unknown  
**Kirtlington Park Chairs**  
Circa 1760—65  
*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*



## Powderham Castle

Devon

1390—1420

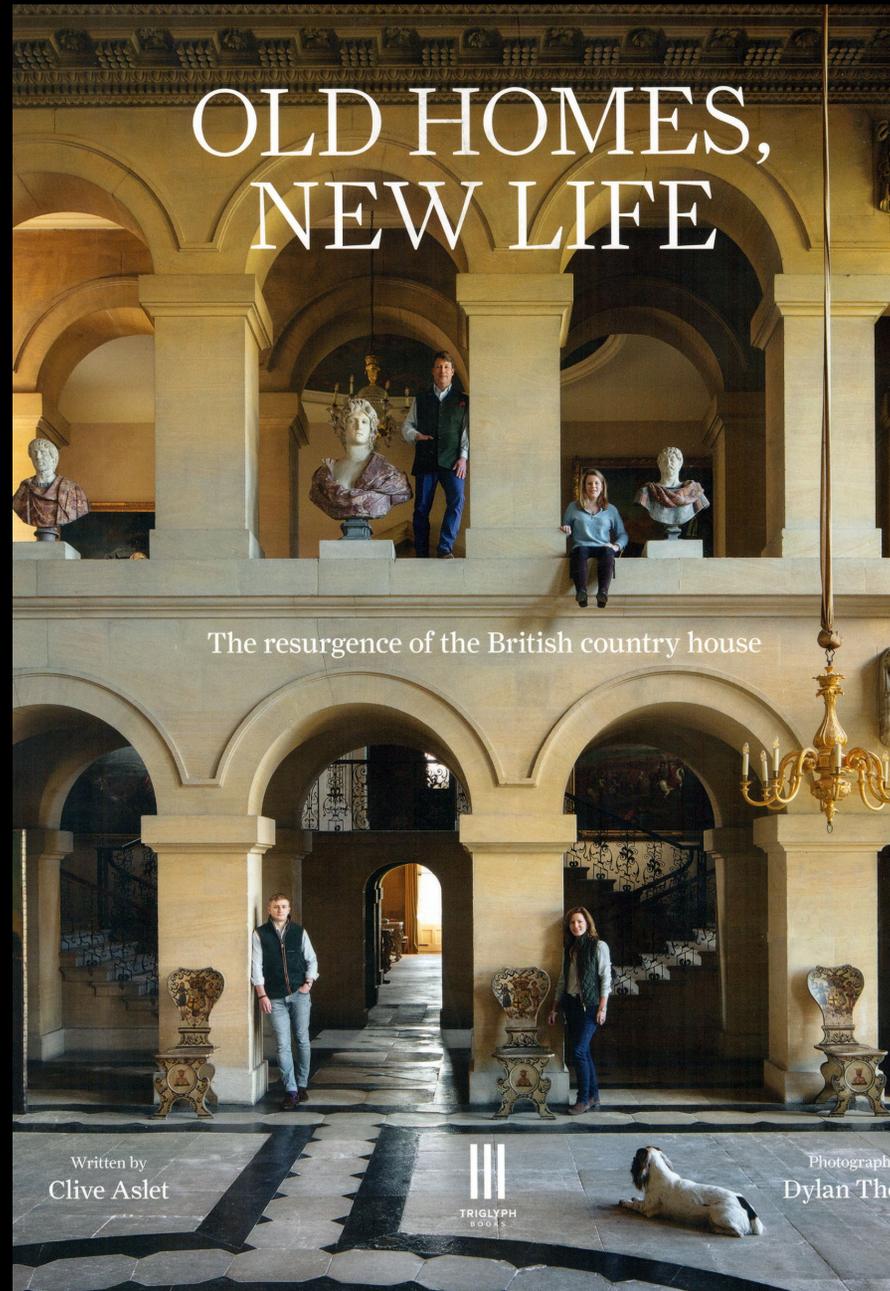


*Rococo*

Powderham Castle  
James Garrett, *Designer*  
John Jenkins, *Plasterer*  
**The Staircase Hall**  
1754—55

Powderham Castle  
**The 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Devon  
with His Daughter Joscelyn**





2020

Q & A



# *Study Houses*

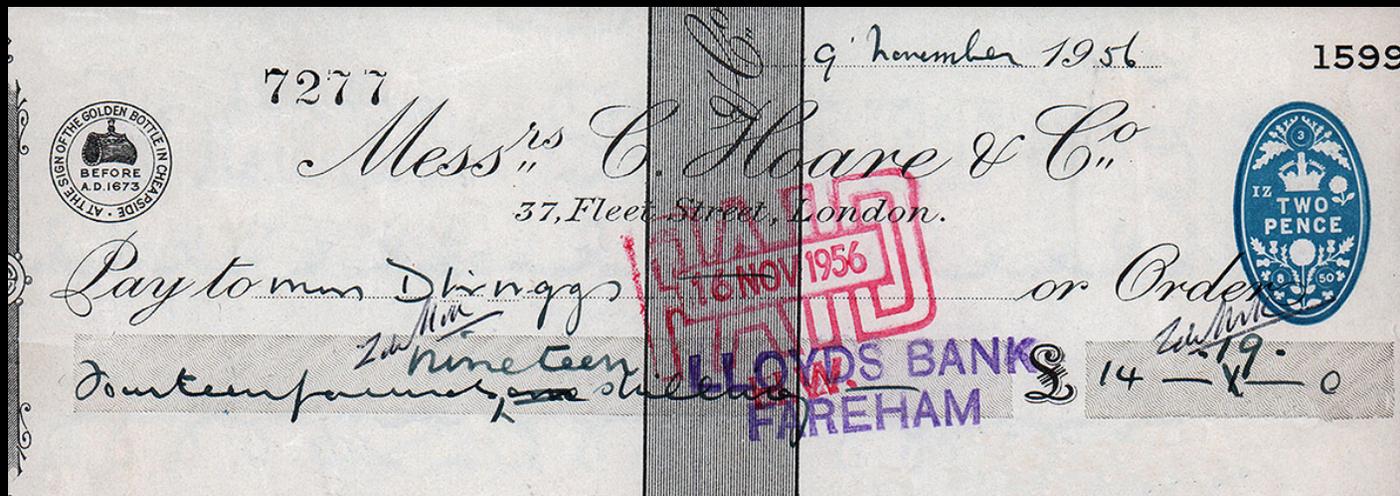
**Stourhead House, Wiltshire, 1720—24** (Palladian)

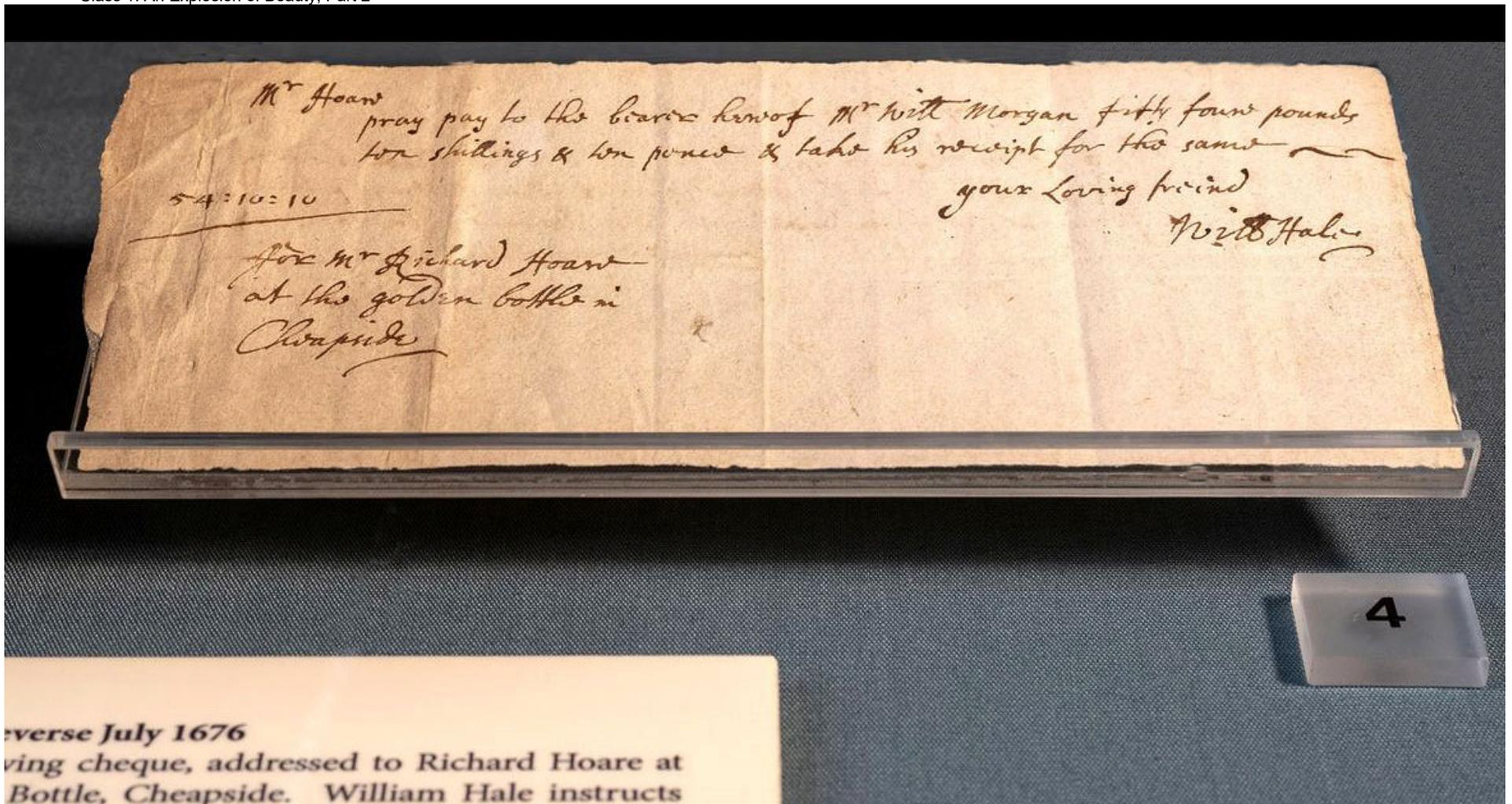
**Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire, 1725—1804** (Palladian)

**Claydon House, Buckinghamshire, 1757—71** (Palladian, Rococo & Chinoiserie)

*C. Hoare & Co.*  
PRIVATE BANKERS SINCE 1672







## One of the World's First Checks

On July 11, 1676 Richard Hoare's friend, William Hale, wrote him a note which reads: "Pray pay to the bearer hereof Mr. Will Morgan fifty-four pounds ten shillings and ten pence and take his receipt for the same."

## 350 years of banking records

The double-headed eagle – emblem of the Hoare family.



## Hoare's Bank Ledger Archives

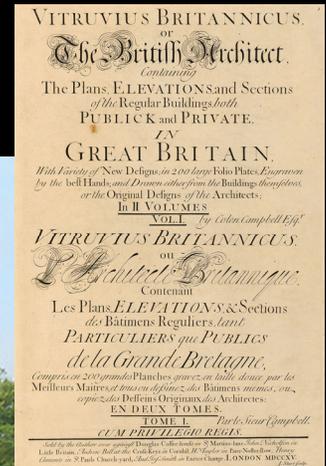


## Hoare's Bank The Dining Room

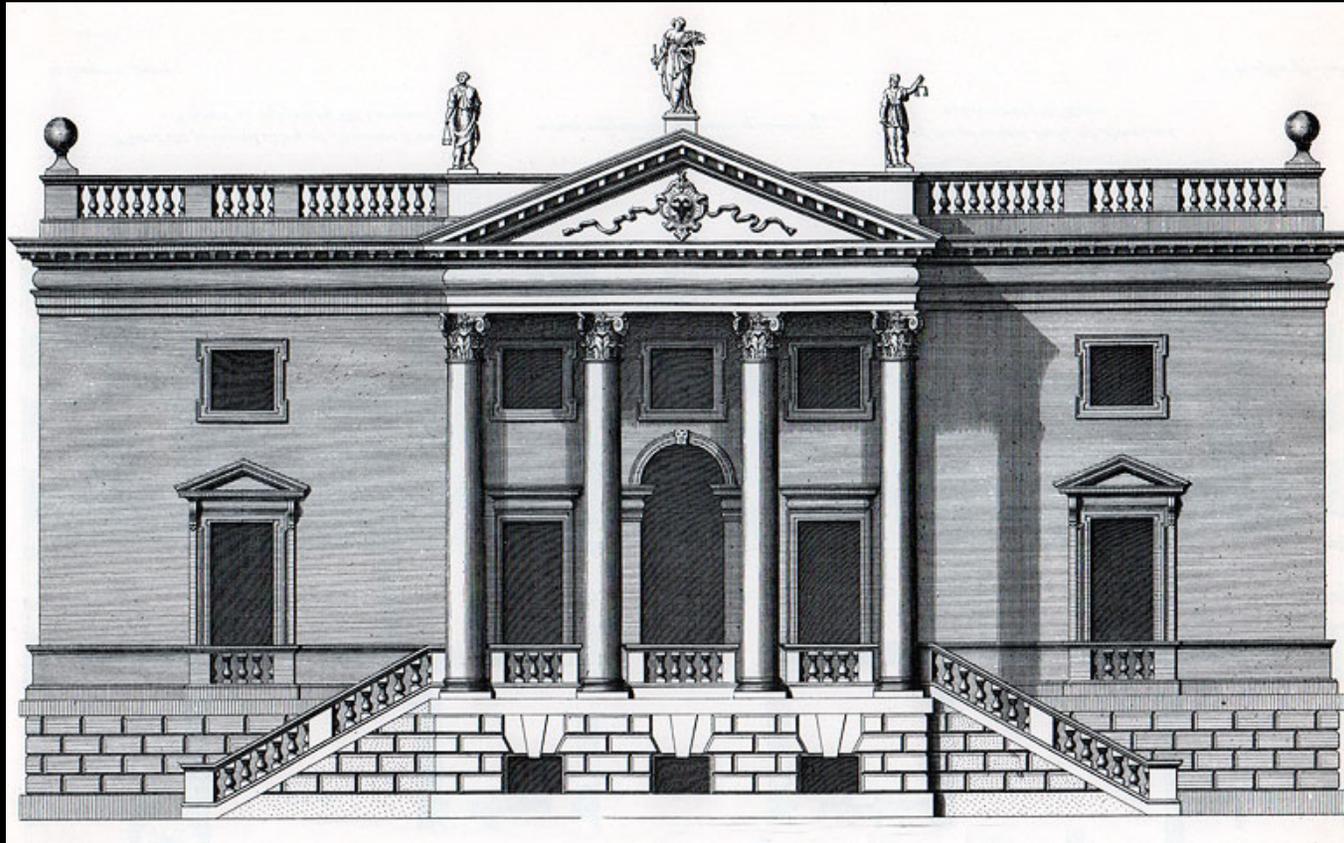
Muskets purchased during the Napoleonic wars to defend the bank adorn the entrance hall, cashiers work behind a 19<sup>th</sup> century oak counter, an adjacent waiting room looks out onto a courtyard garden, and you can partake in a three-course meal with your relationship manager in the bank's dining room

A typical client needs about £5 million in assets to bank with Hoare's and must meet with a partner before an account can be opened.

Palladian



Colen Campbell  
Stourhead House  
Wiltshire  
1720—24



Colen Campbell  
**Stourhead House**  
From the 1725 edition of *Vitruvius Britannicus*



Andrea Palladio  
**Villa Emo, Veneto**  
1558—61



**Stourhead House**



Stourhead House  
**The Entrance Hall**



London, possibly Benjamin Goodison

## **Fox Console Table**

Circa 1740

Painted deal with marble top

## One of the finest Regency libraries in Britain



Stourhead House  
**The Library**



Thomas Chippendale the Younger  
**Mantel Clock**  
Probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Mahogany



Stourhead House  
**The Picture Gallery**



Attributed to Thomas Chippendale the Younger  
**Satinwood Commode**  
Circa 1780—85

Nicolas Poussin  
*Choice of Hercules*  
Circa 1636—37



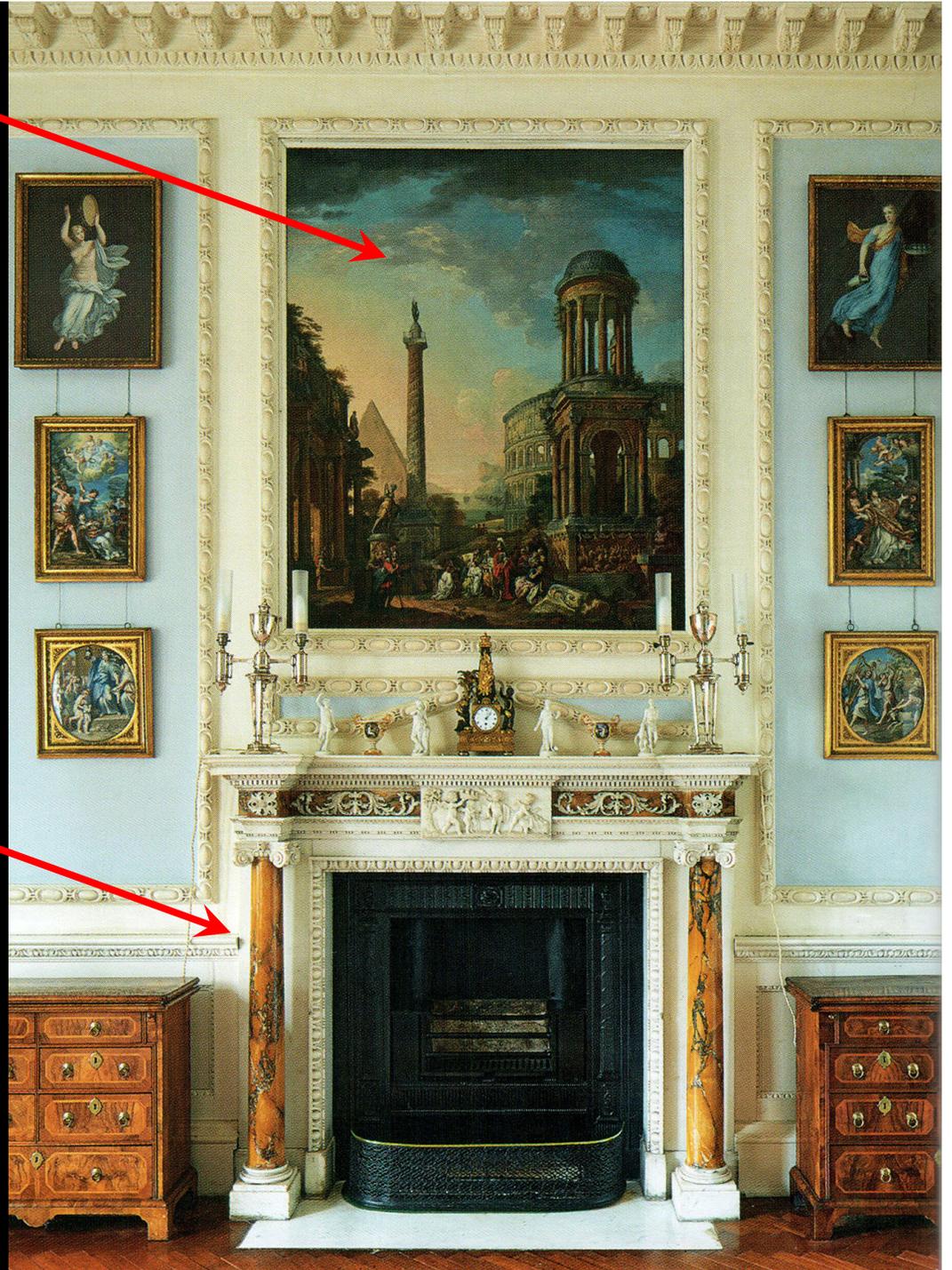


Stourhead House  
**The Music Room**



Francis Harding, after Panini  
*The Interior of St. Peter's at Rome*  
Circa 1730—42

Stourhead House  
The  
Italian Room





Francis Harding  
*Architectural  
Capriccio with the  
Sacrifice of  
Iphigenia*  
1745—54



# Stourhead House The Little Dining Room



Heinrich Mannlich, Bavaria  
**Salver of Cyrus and Queen Tomyris**  
Vermeil, late 17<sup>th</sup> century

The pine stand that holds it was carved in London by Sefferin Alken in 1777



Greco-Roman  
**Jupiter (Zeus)**  
1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD  
Marble

Inspired by the ideal of the Renaissance city, Sixtus launched a far-sighted rebuilding of Rome.

He laid out new streets, installed 27 new fountains, completed the dome of St. Peter's, and planned to convert the Colosseum into a silk-spinning factory.

Sixtus had no appreciation of antiquities, which he destroyed to use as raw material to serve his Christianizing programs.

His foreign policy was regarded as over-ambitious. He was an enthusiastic enforcer of the Counter-Reformation, excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I, and funded the Spanish Armada.



**Sixtus V**

Pope from 1585 until 1590

# PIETRA DURA

Pietra dura is an Italian term for hardstone, specifically for the inlay of fitted and highly polished colored stones to create images. After being cut into different shapes, the stones were glued to a base. Stability was achieved by grooving the undersides of the stones so they interlocked, like a jigsaw puzzle. Many different colored stones, particularly marbles, were used, together with semiprecious and precious stones. The technique first appeared in Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and reached its full maturity in Florence, where the Grand Ducal Workshop was founded for such work in 1588.



Martin Carlin & Dominique Daguerre  
**Pietra Dura Cabinet**

Circa 1778  
*The Royal Collection*



Maker Unknown, Rome  
**The Sixtus Cabinet**  
Circa 1585

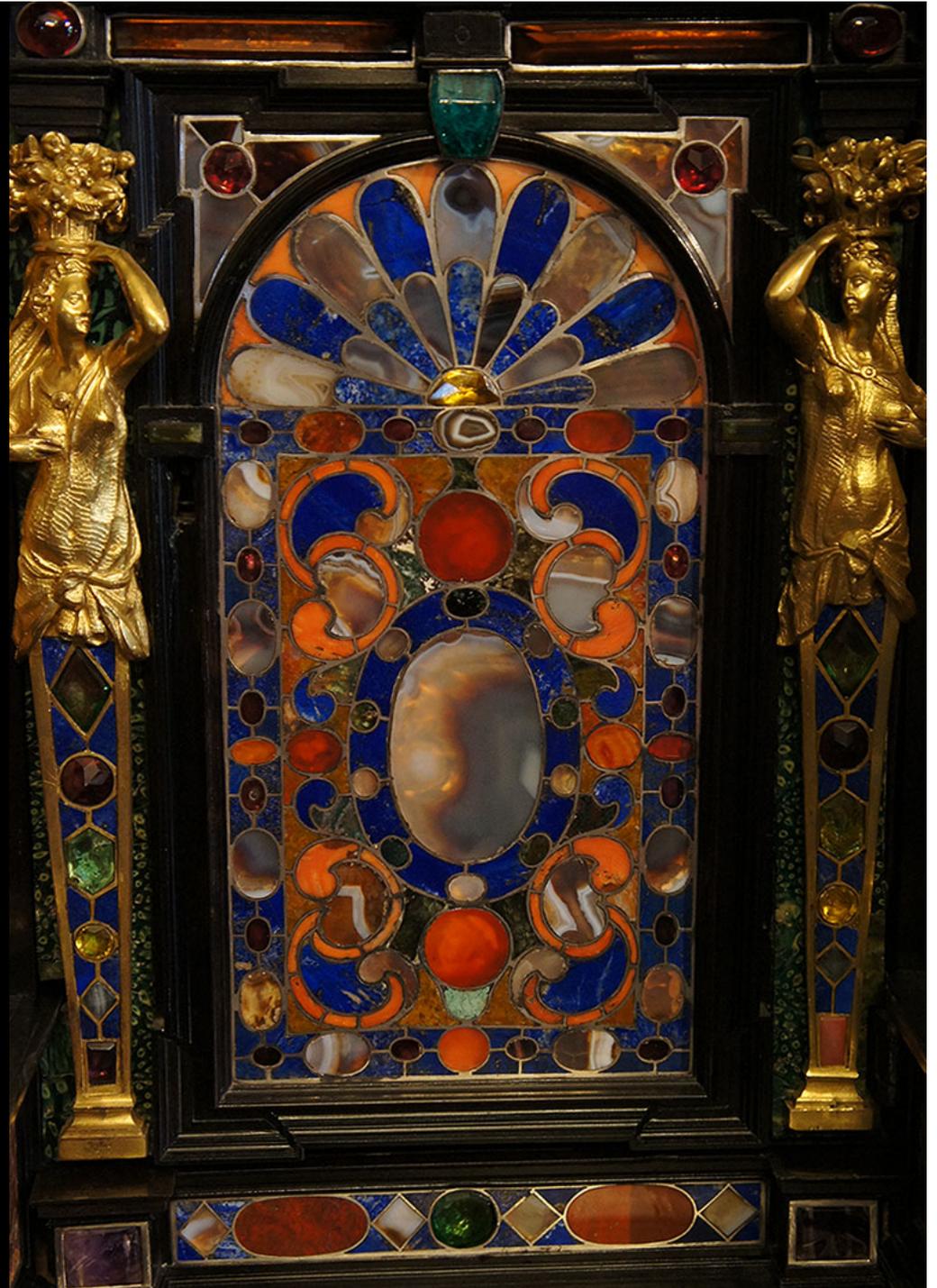
Considered the greatest of all Roman pietra dura cabinets, this almost seven-foot-tall piece of furniture is studded with over 25 different varieties of stones, including emeralds, amethysts, citrines, lapis, and turquoise.

The cabinet, which contains over 125 secret drawers, was made for Pope Sixtus V, who installed it at the Villa Montalto, his magnificent estate on the Esquiline Hill that overlooked the Baths of Diocletian.

The Sixtus Cabinet  
**Secret**  
**Putto Drawer**



The Sixtus Cabinet  
**Detail of the  
Pietra Dura**





Maker Unknown, English  
**Sixtus Cabinet Pedestal**  
1742—43

## Stourhead Garden The Temple of Flora

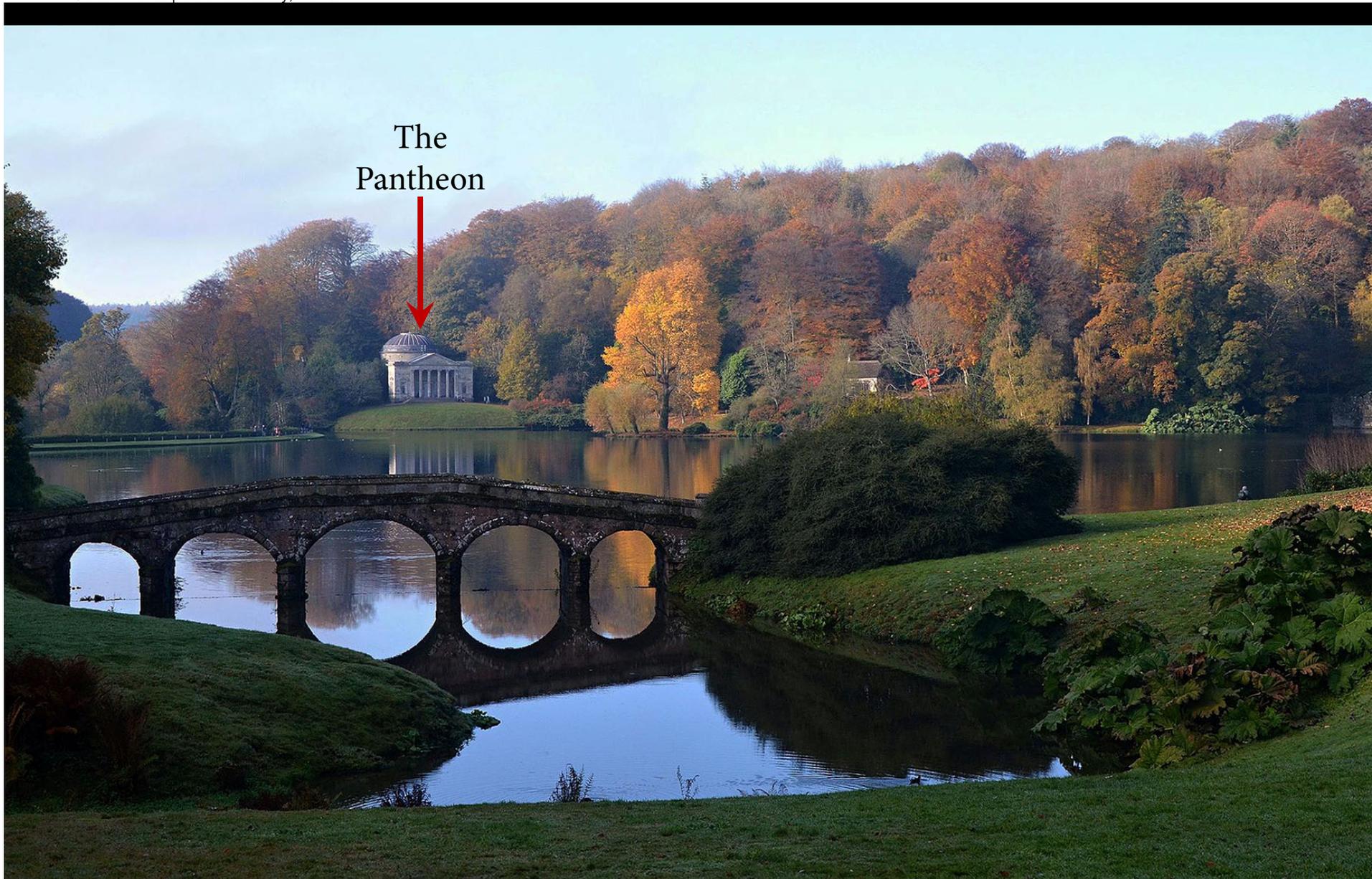
The gardens were laid out between 1741 and 1780 around a large artificial lake and are dotted with temples, grottoes, obelisks, and follies. The design was inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*, the paintings of Claude Lorrain, and the writings of Voltaire.





Ruins of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC  
Temple of Venus  
at Baalbeck

Stourhead Garden  
**The Temple of Apollo**

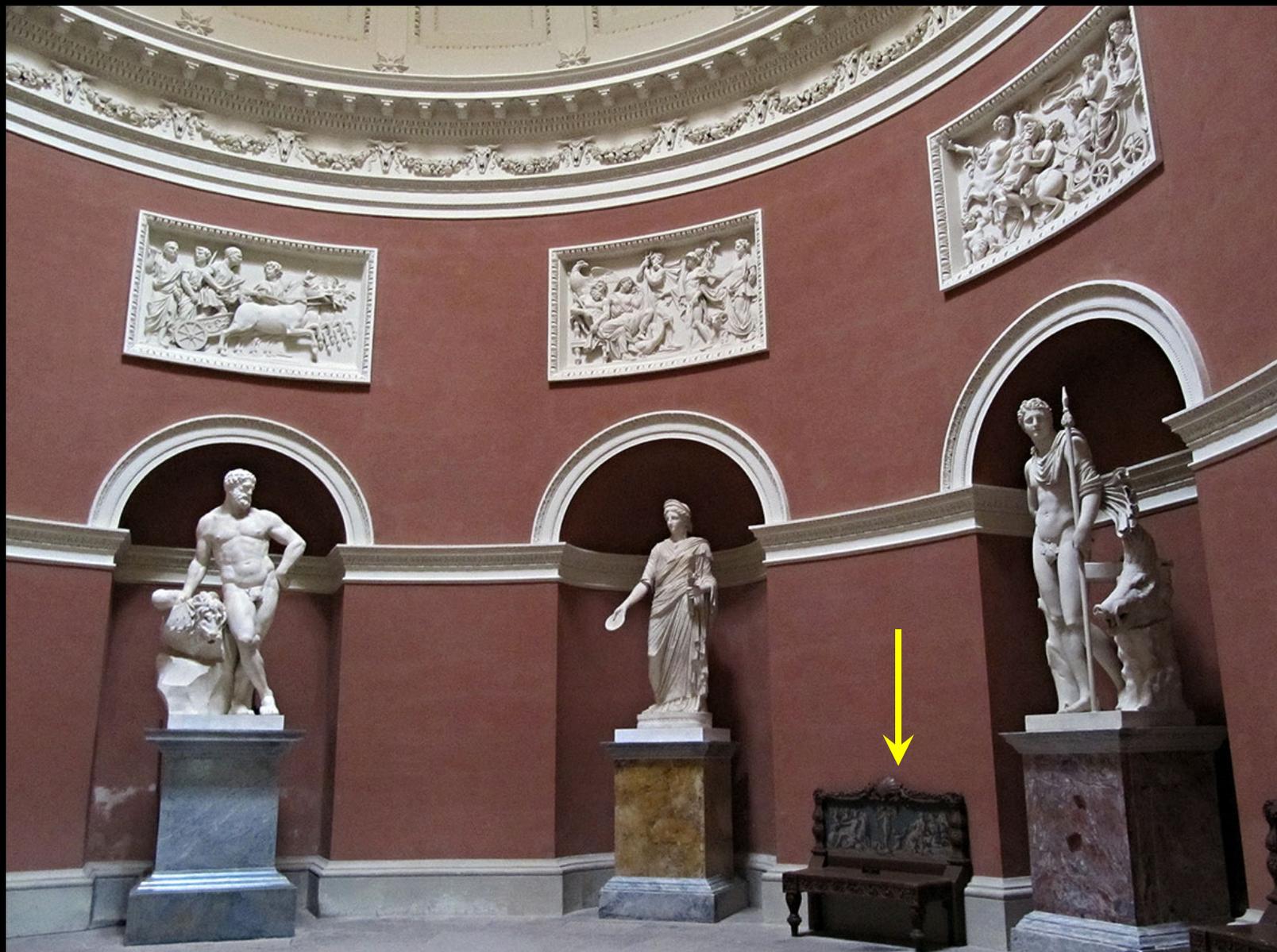


The  
Pantheon

Stourhead Garden  
**The Bridge and the Pantheon**



Stourhead Garden  
**The Pantheon**



Stourhead Garden  
**Interior of the Pantheon**

*Apollo in his Chariot with the Hours and Aurora*  
attributed to William Hoare of Bath



Stourhead Garden

**Settee from the Temple of Apollo**

Circa 1765



“Unquestionably  
the most perfect  
grotto in England”

—*David Adshead*

Stourhead Garden  
**The Sleeping Nymph in the Grotto**



T. Mayer  
**Canova Dinner Plate**  
1840s  
Staffordshire



**The Temple of Aesculapius**  
**Villa Borghese**  
Rome  
1785—92

QgA



*Palladian*



Henry Flitcroft, John Carr & James Stuart

**Wentworth Woodhouse**

Yorkshire

1725—1804

~ 5 miles of underground passages

~ Set in a 19,000-acre estate

~ 365 rooms

~ 1,000 windows



Wentworth Woodhouse  
**Hooper Stand**

98-feet-tall

“...perhaps the most  
beautiful view in Yorkshire”

—*Arthur Young, 1768*



Wentworth Woodhouse  
**The House From Hooper Stand**



Wentworth Woodhouse  
**The Pillared Hall**



“Beyond all comparison, the finest room in England.”  
—Arthur Young, 1768

Wentworth Woodhouse  
**The Great Hall**



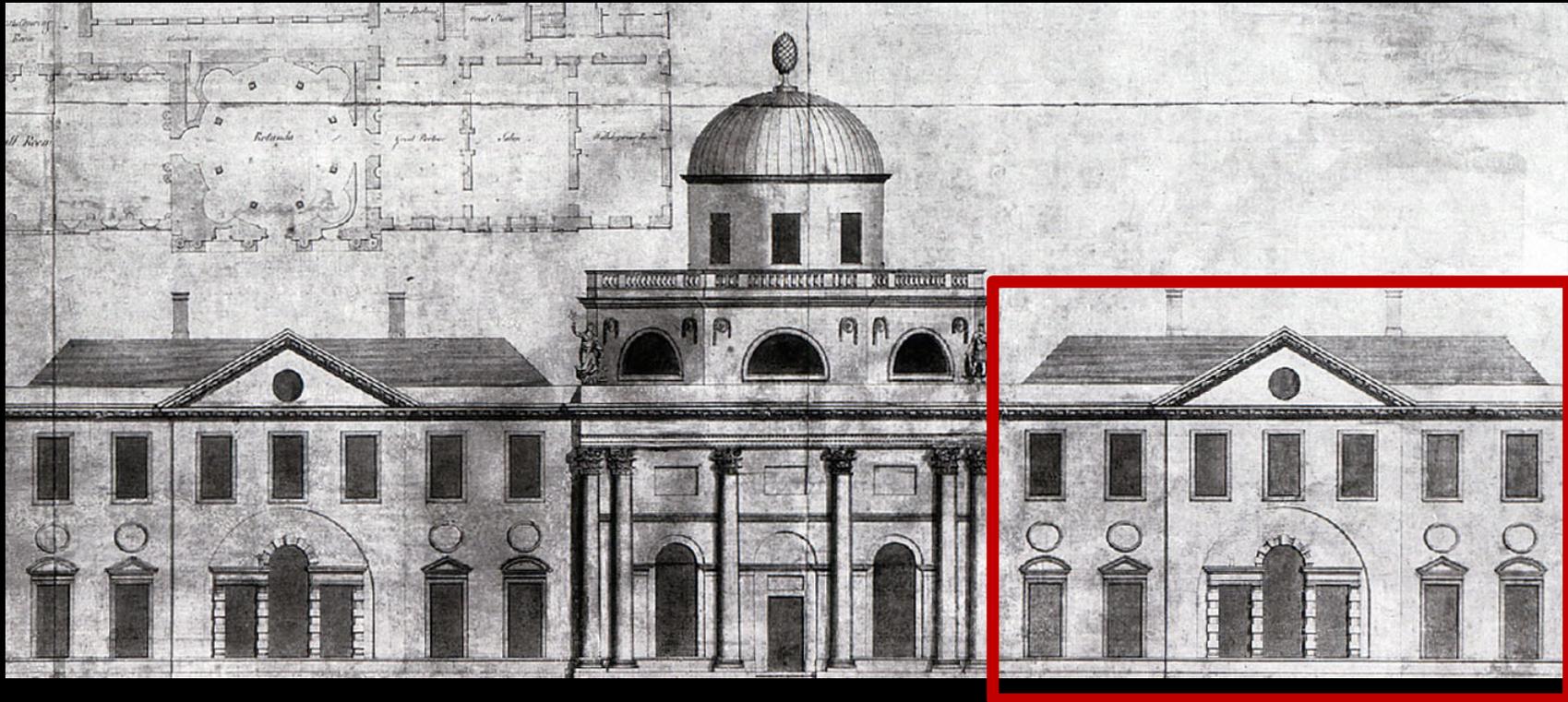
Wentworth Woodhouse  
**The  
Museum Room**



Stone, Coquerel & Legros d'Anisy  
**Wentworth Woodhouse Plate**

Circa 1790

*Palladian, Rococo & Chinoiserie*



Luke Lightfoot & Thomas Robinson

**Claydon House**

Buckinghamshire

1757—71

Some of the most magnificent interiors of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Claydon House  
**The Surviving Southern Wing**

# Claydon House Enfilade of Doorways

1



2



3

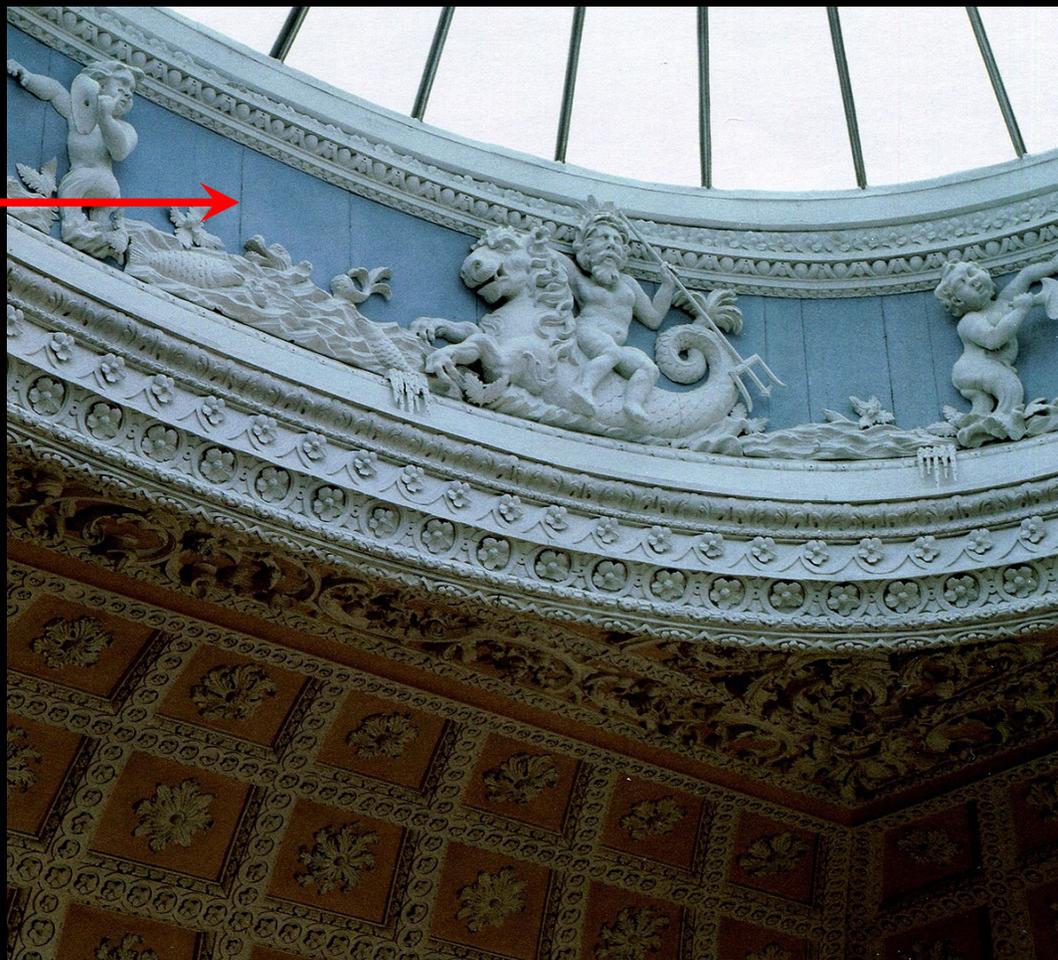
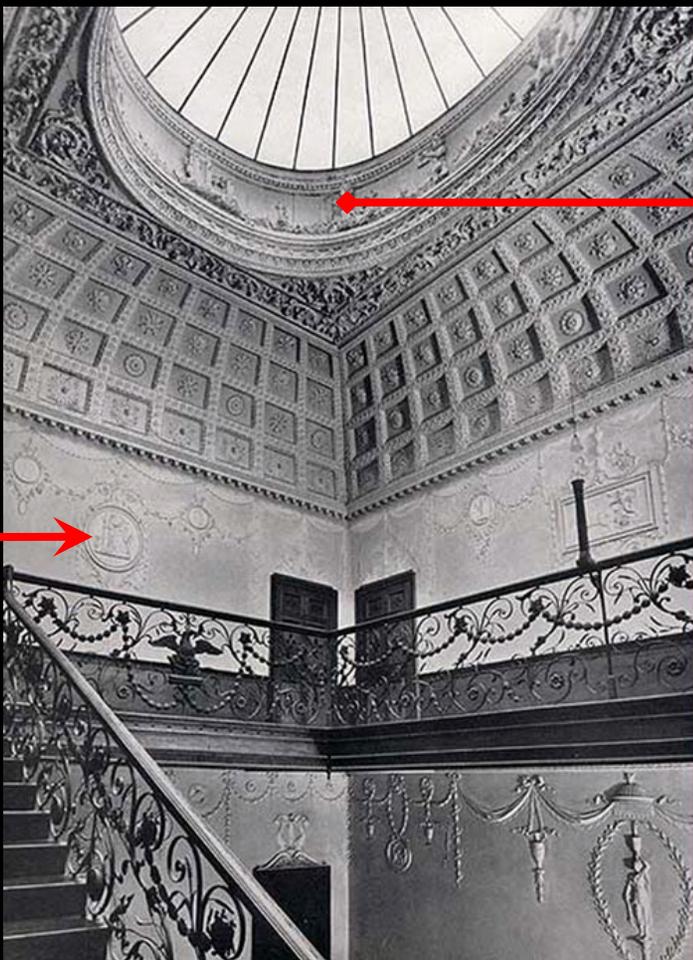




Claydon House  
**The North Hall**

Claydon House  
**The  
Staircase**



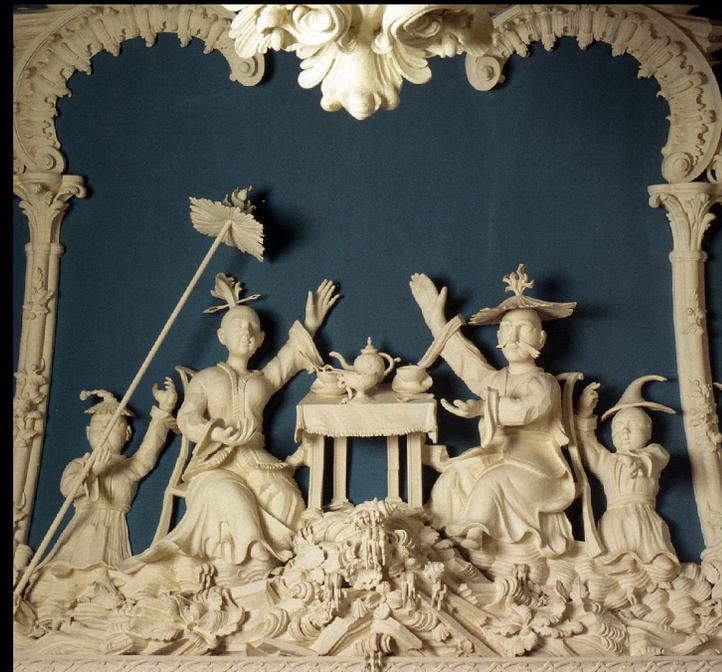


Claydon House  
**The Staircase Hall**



Claydon House  
**The Chinese Room**

An extreme example of Rococo mixed with Chinoiserie, it is one of the most extraordinary rooms in any English country house and among the most fantastic examples of Chinoiserie style to survive anywhere.



Claydon House  
**The Chinese Room**



Claydon House  
**Florence Nightingale's Bedroom**

Sir Harry was devoted to his sister-in-law and was affectionately known in Parliament as “the Member for Florence Nightingale.”



**Sir Harry Verney with his Sister-in-Law,  
Florence Nightingale,  
in the Garden at Claydon**

Q & A





**Art & Architecture**  
with Curt DiCamillo

*Next Session:*

**An Explosion of Beauty, Session 4**

***Neoclassical (1760—90)***

**February 14, 2023**

**4:00 - 5:30 PM EDT**

**[www.AmericanAncestors.org/events](http://www.AmericanAncestors.org/events)**

More information about the houses discussed today can be found on Curt's website:

**[www.TheDiCamillo.com](http://www.TheDiCamillo.com)**

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# An Explosion of Beauty, Part II, 2023

Thank you for registering for the online course, **An Explosion of Beauty: The Art, Architecture, and Collections of British Country Houses, Part II!**

*Nowhere in the world are there so many country houses as in England, matchless for the astonishing variety of their styles and the richness of their collections and furniture.*

This quote from the English architectural historian John Harris sums up what many scholars believe is Britain's greatest and most lasting contribution to world culture: the country house. For centuries the country house held a unique position in English life. Before World War I, the families in these power houses ruled Britain. Not only were their houses the center of productive agricultural estates, their breathtaking interiors were the repositories of jaw-dropping collections of art.

In this three-session online course, Curator of Special Collections and celebrated architectural historian Curt DiCamillo, FRSA will guide you through these stately homes, their interiors, and their world-class art collections. This seminar will span nearly two and a half centuries worth of British decorative arts and style, discussing **Palladian, Rococo, Chinoiserie, Neoclassical, Medieval Revival, Chinese and Indian**, and more.

This course includes three 90-minute classes, access to the slides, and a bibliography. You do not need to attend the live sessions to participate in the course. Each class will be recorded and made available to participants until the end of May 2023.

## INSTRUCTIONS ON JOINING

To join the live sessions, click here: <https://zoom.us/j/94841070212>

# AmericanAncestors.org/explosion-beauty-part-ii-2023



Art & Architecture  
with Curt DiCamillo

*Thank you!*



**Houghton Hall Bookends**



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