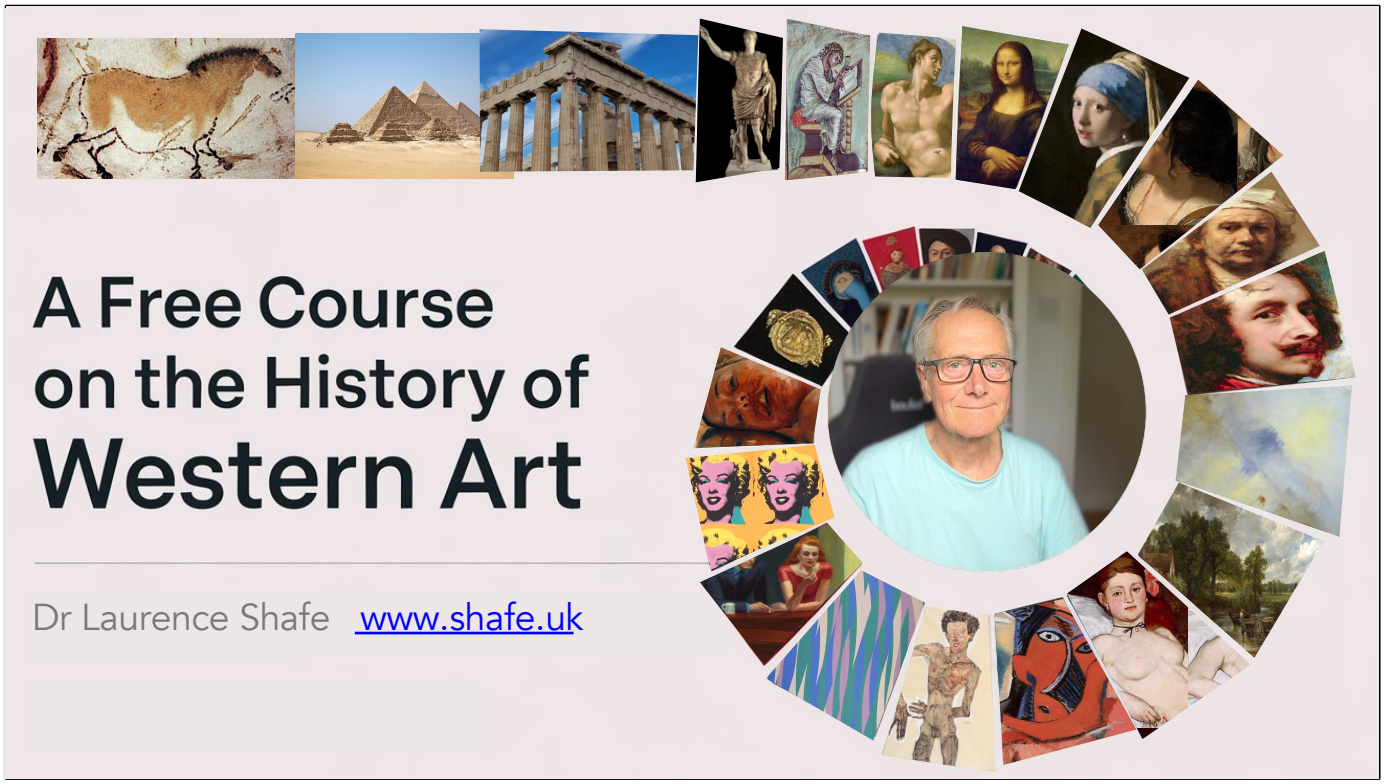

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Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680)
The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa
1647-52

16-06 Restoration England - Wren and the English Baroque

DR. LAURENCE SHAFE WWW.SHAFE.UK

- This lecture traces the full arc of English Baroque — from its Catholic continental roots in Bernini, Borromini, and Caravaggio, through to the distinctly Protestant restraint that shaped Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral and Hampton Court, and onward to the theatrical ambitions of Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor, and Archer at Blenheim, Castle Howard, and beyond. We will see how a style born in Rome was transformed, on English soil, into something altogether more severe, more civic, and more aristocratic.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680)
The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa
1647-52
Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa, 1647-52, Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

English Baroque grew from a very different cultural soil than the exuberant Catholic world that produced its most celebrated interior — and understanding that contrast sharpens both traditions. **Gian Lorenzo Bernini** completed the **Cornaro Chapel** in **Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome** in **1652**, designing it for the Venetian Cardinal **Federico Cornaro**. At its centre sits his sculpted group depicting the vision of **Saint Teresa of Ávila**, canonised in 1622. In her autobiography, Teresa describes an angel piercing her with a golden spear: "The pain was so great that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain that I could not wish to be rid of it." Bernini translates that text into marble — Teresa's body yielding, her face suspended between agony and ecstasy. The chapel frames this vision theatrically. Flanking the altar, marble boxes contain high-relief portraits of Cornaro family members, shown conversing as though watching from theatre boxes. The staging is entirely deliberate. Bernini attended mass daily and aligned fully with the **Council of Trent's** directive that religious art must teach, move, and serve as Counter-Reformation propaganda. His work demonstrates what that theology looked like when given sculptural form: doctrine made visceral. Historian **Rudolf Wittkower** identified Bernini as the single figure who defined Baroque sculpture so completely that contemporaries operated in his shadow.

Notes

This chapel and statue is one of the highpoints of the Baroque. The Baroque is described as a style that used exaggerated motion and clear, easily interpreted detail to produce drama, tension, exuberance, and grandeur.

The chapel was designed by Bernini for the Venetian Cardinal Federico Cornaro (1579-1653). It shows a scene from the life of Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) who had recently been canonised in 1622. In her autobiography the Carmelite nun describes how angel holding pierced her with a long spear of gold. She writes, 'The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it.' Bernini is attempting to express the facial and bodily equivalent of divine joy and spiritual enlightenment. Some later historians have concentrated on the physical, sensual and 'orgiastic' elements of the work.

One key adjective used when describing the baroque is 'theatrical' and this work contains witnesses in boxes as if in a theatre. Either side of the altar there are marble boxes containing members of the Cornaro family as witnesses. The boxes contain life-size high-relief donor portraits of male members such as Cardinal Federico Cornaro and Doge Giovanni I Cornaro. They are shown discussing the event in boxes as if at the theatre.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) was perhaps the greatest sculptor of the 17th century and an outstanding architect. Bernini created the Baroque style of sculpture and developed it to such an extent that other artists are of only minor importance in a discussion of that style. Bernini's work was shaped by his fervent Roman Catholicism (he attended mass every day and took communion twice a week). He agreed with the recommendations of the Council of Trent (1545-63) that the purpose of religious art was to teach and inspire the faithful and to serve as propaganda for the Roman Catholic church. This meant that religious art should always be intelligible and realistic, and serve as an emotional stimulus to piety. Bernini's death marked the end of Italy's artistic hegemony (dominance) in Europe.

What is the Baroque?

The Baroque was an artistic style that uses exaggerated motion, bold masses, curved shapes, strong lines and easily interpreted detail to produce drama, emotion, tension and grandeur. It began in Rome about 1600 and spread to

the rest of Europe. Little attention is payment to symmetry and proportion unlike the strict, classical Palladian style.

The word baroque is thought to be derived from the Portuguese word 'barroco', Spanish 'barroco', or French 'baroque', all of which refer to a 'rough or imperfect pearl'. The term 'Baroque' was initially used in a derogatory sense, to underline the excesses of its emphasis and ornament. In particular, the term was used to describe its eccentric redundancy and noisy abundance of details, which sharply contrasted the clear and sober rationality of the Renaissance.

In art history it has become common to describe any art that is full of movement and energy as 'Baroque'. Sir John Boardman, for example, describes the ancient sculpture Laocoön and his Sons as 'one of the finest examples of the Hellenistic baroque', and a later phase of Imperial Roman sculpture is also often called 'Baroque'.

The popularity and success of the Baroque style was encouraged by the Catholic Church, which had decided at the time of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), in response to the Protestant Reformation, that the arts should communicate religious themes in direct and emotional involvement. The new energy and realism of Catholic art and its direct appeal to emotion was one of the tools of the Counter-Reformation.

The aristocracy also saw the dramatic style of Baroque architecture and art as a means of impressing visitors and expressing triumph, power and control. Baroque palaces are built around an entrance of courts, grand staircases and reception rooms of sequentially increasing opulence.

Council of Trent (1545-1563)

The Council of Trent established at least one direct power through a decree promulgated in the last session to fix a standard for church art and the responsibility for maintaining that standard. "The Holy Council prohibits placing in churches any image inspired by false doctrine that might mislead the simple.... To eliminate all lures of impurity and lasciviousness, images must not be decked in shameless beauty.... To enforce this decision, the Holy Council prohibits setting up in any place or church, no matter what its exemptions, any irregular image unless authorized by the bishop." Veronese was summoned before the Holy Office ten years later for including irrelevant and undignified objects in a religious painting; Caravaggio also had several

pictures rejected by the churches that had ordered them

Francesco Borromini (1599-1667)
San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Saint Charles at the Four Fountains)
1634-1646
Quirinal Hill, Rome

Francesco Borromini (1599-1667), San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Saint Charles at the Four Fountains), 1634-1646, Quirinal Hill, Rome

San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane marks the moment **Francesco Borromini** announced himself as a force entirely distinct from his great rival **Gian Lorenzo Bernini**. Receiving the commission in **1634** under the patronage of **Cardinal Francesco Barberini**, Borromini designed this church and monastic complex on the **Quirinal Hill** for the Spanish Trinitarians, an order dedicated to freeing Christian slaves. Where Bernini was a charming courtier who moved effortlessly among wealthy patrons, Borromini was melancholic, reclusive, and quick-tempered — traits that repeatedly constrained his career. Born Francesco Castelli, son of a stonemason, he later adopted the surname Borromini, likely in homage to **Cardinal Saint Charles Borromeo**. He died by suicide and was never interred in the personal crypt he had designed within this very church. Alongside Bernini and **Pietro da Cortona**, Borromini shaped Roman **Baroque** architecture, yet his idiosyncratic vision attracted sustained critical dismissal until a major reassessment from the late nineteenth century onwards. Scholars now recognise in his work a structural intelligence surpassing his contemporaries, combined with deep mathematical precision and extraordinary emotional intensity — qualities San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane displays from its undulating façade to its intricate coffered dome.

Notes

This church was designed by Bernini's rival Francesco Borromini. It was his first

independent commission and is an iconic masterpiece of Baroque architecture, built as part of a complex of monastic buildings on the Quirinal Hill for the Spanish Trinitarians, an order dedicated to the freeing of Christian slaves. He received the commission in 1634, under the patronage of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, whose palace was across the road.

Bernini, Borromini and Pietro da Cortona were the three leading Roman Baroque architects. Borromini was a dark, reclusive character. He had a deeper understanding of structures than Bernini and Cortona but his career was constrained by his personality. Unlike Bernini who was a charming courtier and mixed easily with the wealthy patrons who gave him commissions, Borromini was both melancholic and quick in temper which resulted in him withdrawing from certain jobs, and his death was by suicide. His suicide meant that he was never buried in the personal crypt he designed in San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane.

Borromini was the son of a stonemason and began his career as a stonemason. He was born Francesco Castelli and later changed his name to his mother's family name perhaps out of respect for Cardinal St. Charles Borromeo.

His work was idiosyncratic and not as influential as Bernini's architecture. Later critics dismissed Borromini's work but from the late nineteenth century onwards, interest has revived and his architecture is now appreciated for its inventiveness, deep mathematical precision and overall emotional impact. San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane was his first major independent commission and the church, cloister and monastic buildings were for the Spanish Trinitarians, a religious order whose mission was to free Christian slaves.

Notes

The Quattro Fontane (the Four Fountains) is an ensemble of four late Renaissance fountains located at the intersection of Via delle Quattro Fontane and Via del Quirinale in Rome. They were commissioned by Pope Sixtus V and built at the direction of Muzio Mattei, and were installed between 1588 and 1593. The figure we see represents the river Tiber in front of an oak tree and its is the work of Domenico Fontana (1543-1607), an Italian architect. The she wolf representing Rome was a later addition. The other three fountains

are the River Aniene (a tributary of the Tiber), the goddess Diana representing Chastity and the goddess Juno representing Strength (but they may also represent rivers).

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio
(1571–1610)
Supper at Emmaus
1601
139 x 195 cm
National Gallery, London

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610), Supper at Emmaus, 1601, 139 x 195 cm, National Gallery, London

Caravaggio, born in Milan in 1571, fused intense physical observation with a radical contrast of light and dark — a technique now called **tenebrism** — to produce some of the most electrically charged religious paintings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Rather than idealising sacred figures, he painted them as ordinary men and women, dirty feet and all, a choice that was genuinely provocative at the time. His life matched the violence of his work. A contemporary in Rome, **Floris Claes van Dijk**, writing in 1601, described him as ever ready for a fight and most awkward to get along with. That instability culminated on the 29th of May 1606, when Caravaggio killed a young man and subsequently fled Rome with a papal death sentence against him. He died in 1610, still in exile. Yet his influence was immediate. The **Caravaggisti** — painters who adopted his dramatic lighting and unsparing naturalism — became the defining avant-garde of the early seventeenth century. **Orazio Gentileschi** and **Giovanni Baglione** were among the earliest followers. Orazio's daughter **Artemisia Gentileschi**, born in 1593, proved one of the most gifted of all, absorbing Caravaggio's method and pushing it in a fiercely independent direction.

Notes

Caravaggio's innovation was a radical naturalism that combined close physical observation with a dramatic, even theatrical, use of chiaroscuro which came to be

known as tenebrism (the shift from light to dark with little intermediate value).

He was jailed on several occasions, vandalized his own apartment, and ultimately had a death sentence pronounced against him by the Pope after killing a young man, possibly unintentionally, on May 29, 1606.

One published account of him at the time was, 'after a fortnight's work he will swagger about for a month or two with a sword at his side and a servant following him, from one ball-court to the next, ever ready to engage in a fight or an argument, so that it is most awkward to get along with him.' (written by Floris Claes van Dijk, a contemporary in Rome in 1601).

Caravaggio's painting had an immediate effect on young artists and Caravaggism became the cutting edge trend. Early Caravaggisti include Orazio Gentileschi and Giovanni Baglione. Orazio Gentileschi, despite being considerably older, was the only one of these artists to live much beyond 1620, and ended up as court painter to Charles I of England. His daughter Artemisia Gentileschi was also close to Caravaggio, and one of the most gifted of the movement.

Notes

Caravaggio (1571–1610), born and trained in Milan, stands as one of the most original and influential contributors to late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century European painting. Controversially, he not only painted figures, even those of classical or religious themes, in contemporary clothing, or as ordinary living men and women, but his inclusion of the seedier side of life (such as dirty feet) was in marked contrast to the usual trend of the time which was to idealise the religious or classical figure by treating it with the decorum considered appropriate to its status. His use of light and shadow was emulated by the Caravaggisti, the followers of Caravaggio, such as Orazio Gentileschi(1563–1639), Artemisia Gentileschi (1592-1652/3),[2] Mattia Preti, Carlo Saraceni and Bartolomeo Manfredi.

Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) came from Bologna where, with his brothers Agostino Carracci (1557–1602) and Ludovico Carracci (1555–1619), he set up an influential studio or academy to train painters.

Emmaus is a town mentioned in the Gospel of St. Luke where Jesus appeared after his death and resurrection before two of his disciples while they were walking down the road to Emmaus. One of the disciples was Cleopas and the

other is unnamed. They do not recognise Jesus on the road but suddenly recognise him when he breaks the bread after they have invited him to supper. Some traditions maintain that Cleopas is the brother of Joseph.

Paolo de Matteis (1662-1728)
The Triumph of the Immaculate
1710-17
160.3 x 252.5 cm
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Paolo de Matteis (1662-1728), The Triumph of the Immaculate, 1710-17, 160.3 x 252.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

From Italian Baroque architecture, we move now to its counterpart in fresco and dome painting. **Paolo de Matteis** was born in Cilento near Salerno and built his career first in Rome, where the Spanish ambassador recognised his talent and brought him to **Naples**. There he trained under **Luca Giordano**, and within a decade had achieved international renown, working across Paris, Calabria, and Genoa. De Matteis developed a delicate, graceful style that consciously moved away from the raw vigour of earlier Baroque painting. **The Triumph of the Immaculate** is a preparatory study for the dome of **Gesù Nuovo in Naples**, and it reads as a structured descent from the divine to the earthly. At the apex, God radiates brilliant light downward through **Christ**, past angels bathing in radiance, then through bishops and priests straining toward that light. The pope appears at the right — notably diminished — while below him a ruler commands earthly affairs in partial shadow. At the lowest register, workers face downward, away from God entirely. Throughout every level, outstretched arms and bold gestures drive constant movement. De Matteis was directly enacting the **Council of Trent's** directive that religious art must engage lay audiences emotionally and remain immediately legible.

Notes

Italian Baroque architecture was mentioned earlier and this is an example of Italian

Baroque fresco.

Two of the leading figures in the emergence of Baroque painting in Italy were Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci.

This is one example of an interior by Paolo de Matteis who was born in Cilento near Salerno, and died in Naples. Some time before 1683 he launched his career in Rome where he was 'discovered' by the Spanish ambassador who was transferred to Naples taking Matteis with him. In Naples he trained with Francesco di Maria, then with Luca Giordano. Within ten years he was an internationally famous artist. From 1702 to 1705, de' Matteis worked in Paris, Calabria, and Genoa. In Genoa, he painted an Immaculate Conception with St. Jerome Appearing to St. Sevrio.

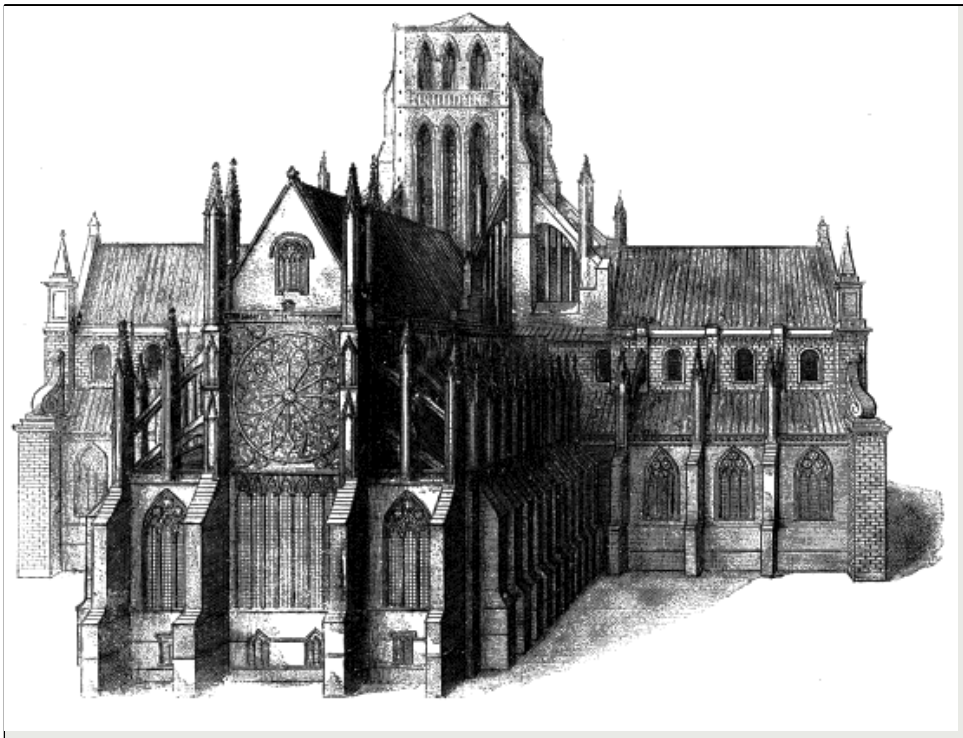
Matteis developed a delicate, graceful style that broke with the vigour of the Baroque and he was known for his speed and virtuosity.

The Triumph of the Immaculate is a preparatory study for the dome of Gesù Nuovo, Naples. It is full of detail and was like the graphic novel of its day. We descend from the brilliant light and bright colours of heaven to the shadows and drab colours of the earth. The painting is full of drama. We see God at the top with Jesus below him as the central element. God's light is filling heaven and reaching down into the shadows below. The angels bathe in God's light while below them bishops and priests seek guidance from the light. The pope is shown on the right on a cloud but is an insignificant figure. Below is either King Solomon meeting the Queen of Sheba or the Holy Roman Emperor. They are shown partially in shadow but caring for their people and demonstrating their command of earthly matters. At the lowest level Matteis shows workers engaged in earthly activities with their faces turned downwards away from God. The figures are full of motion at all levels, another element of the baroque, with outstretched arms and exaggerated gestures. The painting enacts the Council of Trent ruling that works of art must engage with the laity, engage with the emotions and be easily understood.

References

Getty Museum

https://societysight.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/painting-paolo-de-matteiss-the-triumph-of-the-immaculate/



Unknown
Old St. Paul's Cathedral from the south

Unknown, Old St. Paul's Cathedral from the south

A Christian place of worship has stood on **Ludgate Hill** since around 600, making this one of the oldest sacred sites in London. The **Norman cathedral begun in 1087** replaced an Anglo-Saxon building lost to fire, and for centuries Old St. Paul's ranked among the longest churches in the world, with the tallest spire and some of the finest stained glass in Europe. Its popularity as a pilgrimage destination rested largely on the tomb of **St. Erkenwald**, the seventh-century Bishop of London. Over successive centuries the Norman east end was rebuilt in **Gothic style**, but the building's fortunes declined sharply after **Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries**, which stripped away shrines, decoration, and glass alike. A lightning strike destroyed the spire in **1561**, and poor repairs left the structure dangerously weakened by the early 1600s. The nave aisle had meanwhile become "Paul's Walk", the informal centre of London's commercial gossip, while **St. Paul's Cross** in the churchyard served evangelical preachers. **Inigo Jones** added a new west portico before the Civil War halted all work, and during the **Commonwealth period** the building was defaced, stabled with horses, and stripped of irreplaceable documents — leaving it in a state of near ruin.

Notes

There was a church dedicated to St. Paul on Ludgate Hill from about 600.

Old St. Paul’s Cathedral was begun in 1087 when a fire destroyed the previous Anglo-Saxon Cathedral and most of London. Work recommenced slowly and was

set back by another fire in 1135/6. It was consecrated in 1240 and completed about 1350. The original style was Norman, like Durham Cathedral, with rounded arches and massive columns. It was one of the longest churches in the world and had the highest spire in the world and some of the finest stained glass. The Norman east end was demolished in the 14th and 15h centuries and replaced by the latest Gothic style. It was a popular pilgrimage site as it contained the tomb of St. Erkenwald (Bishop of London, 673-695).

Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries led to the destruction of all its decoration, its shrines and its stained glass. In 1561 the spire was destroyed by a lightning strike but repair work was sub-standard and by the early 1600s it was dangerous and in need of repair. It became more secular in use and 'Paul's walk', the nave aisle, became the centre of business life and gossip. After the Reformation, St. Paul's Cross in the churchyard became the centre for radical, evangelical preaching.

Repair work by Inigo Jones included a new portico for the west end but all work was halted by the Civil War. During the Commonwealth period it was defaced, mistreated and used as a stable and valuable documents were dispersed and destroyed. There is a story that Cromwell considered giving it to the Jewish community to turn into a synagogue.

St Paul's Cathedral today
London

St Paul's Cathedral today, London

The **Great Fire of 1666** destroyed the already-damaged medieval St Paul's and handed **Christopher Wren** the task of rebuilding it entirely. Demolition of the ruins proved gruelling — molten lead had fused the stones together — and Wren briefly resorted to gunpowder before switching to battering rams after workers were killed. Construction of the new cathedral began in **1675**. The approved Warrant Design blended Gothic structure with what Wren called his "better manner of architecture," drawing on **Inigo Jones**'s earlier classical portico. Royal permission to make ornamental changes gave Wren latitude to depart significantly from that approved plan, most notably in adding the great **dome**, one of the largest in the world. The cathedral was declared complete in **1710**. Reactions divided sharply: **James Wright** celebrated it in verse, while critics detected something "un-English" in the gilded capitals and heavy arches, too close in spirit to **St Peter's Basilica** in Rome. Wren's Latin epitaph, translated as "Reader, if you seek his memorial, look around you," remains the definitive verdict. His work places him at the centre of **English Baroque**, a style distinct from continental models in its clarity and restrained classicism, shaped by his parallel careers as astronomer, anatomist, and founding fellow of the **Royal Society**.

Notes

After the Restoration Christopher Wren was attempting to continue the restoration when it was destroyed by the Great Fire in 1666. Wren wanted to rebuild it in a

classical style but he was opposed by the clergy and citizens of the city. After the fire Wren warned it was impossible to restore but an attempt was made leading to the collapse of the west end. They called back Wren to rebuild it in a modern style. Demolition began in 1668 but was extremely difficult as the molten lead had bonded all the stones together. Wren had to use the then modern technique of resorting to gunpowder but several workers were killed and switched to battering rams. The new cathedral was started in 1675. Wren's approved 'Warrant design' combined Gothic with his 'better manner of architecture', featuring a portico influenced by Inigo Jones' addition to the old cathedral. However, Wren received permission from the king to make 'ornamental changes' to the submitted design, and over the course of the construction he made significant alterations, including the addition of the famous dome. The Cathedral was declared complete in 1710. Reactions were mixed James Wright (1643–1713) wrote 'Without, within, below, above the eye/ Is filled with unrestrained delight.' But others were less approving, noting its similarity to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome: 'There was an air of Popery about the gilded capitals, the heavy arches ... They were unfamiliar, un-English.'

'Reader, if you seek his memorial, look around you.' is the English translation of Wren's Latin epitaph. The dome is one of the world's largest, and St Paul's was the capital's tallest building until the 1960s. Wren's tomb is in the crypt with those of the Duke of Wellington and Admiral Lord Nelson. Nelson's black sarcophagus was originally commissioned for Cardinal Wolsey around 1524 before he fell out of favour with Henry VIII.

Christopher Wren (1632-1723) is the most highly acclaimed of British architects and was responsible for 52 London churches including St. Paul's Cathedral. Educated in Latin and Aristotelian physics at the University of Oxford, Wren was a notable anatomist, astronomer, geometer, and mathematician-physicist, as well as an architect. He was a founder of the Royal Society (president 1680–82), and his scientific work was highly regarded by Isaac Newton and Blaise Pascal.

A Brief History of English Architecture

Stonehenge

Roman villas

Anglo-Saxon churches, Earls Barton

Norman or Romanesque castles and cathedrals, Tower of London, Norwich Castle, Durham Cathedral

Gothic Early English c. 1180-1275 (Canterbury Cathedral, Westminster Abbey), Decorated style (Lincoln Cathedral, west front of York Minster, the crossing of Ely Cathedral and Exeter Cathedral) consisting of the Geometric (1250-90) and the Curvilinear (1290-1350). The distinction describes the evolution of window tracery from tracery containing circles to a curvilinear design without circles (west front York Minster). The final period was the Perpendicular or Rectilinear (c. 1350-1550) of Gloucester, Winchester Cathedrals, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Henry VII's chapel Westminster Abbey. The Reformation ended church building in the Gothic style.

Vernacular, moated manor house, Ightham Moat, Wealden hall house, Alfriston Clergy house

Tudor palaces, Hampton Court Palace, Layer Marney Tower

Prodigy House with increasing use of classical elements, annual progresses, Robert Smythson. Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, Montacute House (1598), Nonsuch Palace, Surrey, Burghley House, Lincolnshire, Longleat House, Wiltshire, Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, Sutton Place, Surrey, East Barsham Manor, Norfolk, Layer Marney Hall, Essex

Inigo Jones innovative Palladian style, the Queens House, the Banqueting Hall, a clean, symmetrical and simple classical style.

The 1600s saw the advance of classicism

English Baroque (1666-1711), St Paul's Cathedral, Castle Howard, an ornate, elaborate, ornamented classical style, see below

Georgian, austere classicism, Italian Palladianism

Neoclassical – Woburn Abbey, Kedleston Hall

Planned approach – Robert Adam, William Chambers, James Wyatt, John Wood

Regency

Victorian fragmentation – Gothic revival and classical

English Baroque

English Baroque is a term used to refer to developments in English

architecture that were parallel to the evolution of Baroque architecture in continental Europe roughly between the Great Fire of London (1666) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713).

Baroque taste, which was influential in mid-17th century France, made little impact in England until some years into the Restoration period.

Sir Christopher Wren led the development of the English Baroque style, which differed from the continental models by clarity of design and subtle taste for classicism. Following the Great Fire of London, Wren rebuilt fifty two churches. His most ambitious work was St Paul's Cathedral (1675–1711), which can be compared with the most dynamic Baroque churches of Italy and France. The Palladian tradition of Inigo Jones is combined with contemporary continental tastes. Less influential were attempts to combine the Berniniesque style onto British church architecture (e.g., by Thomas Archer in St. John's, Smith Square, 1728). Colen Campbell's influential book Vitruvius Britannicus introduced a more symmetrical and classical style. Colen Campbell (1676–1729) was a pioneering Scottish architect and architectural writer, credited as a founder of the Georgian style. For most of his career, he resided in Italy and England.

Although Christopher Wren was also active in secular architecture, the first truly Baroque country house in England was built to a design by William Talman at Chatsworth, starting in 1687. The culmination of Baroque architectural forms comes with Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor. Each was capable of a fully developed architectural statement, yet they preferred to work in tandem, most notably at Castle Howard (1699) and Blenheim Palace (1705). Appuldurcombe House, Isle of Wight, now in ruins, but conserved by English Heritage, must also be mentioned.

Thomas Archer (1668-1743)
St John's, Smith Square
1728
Smith Square, Westminster, London

Thomas Archer (1668-1743), St John's, Smith Square, 1728, Smith Square, Westminster, London

St John's, Smith Square stands as one of the defining achievements of **English Baroque architecture**, completed in **1728** to a design by **Thomas Archer**. Archer's path to architecture was unconventional: a country gentleman educated at Oxford, he undertook the Grand Tour of Europe before securing a court appointment as Groom Porter under **Queen Anne**, licensing gambling at court rather than drawing buildings. His architectural output remained small, yet distinctively personal — shaped above all by the Italian influence of **Borromini**, absorbed during his European travels. St John's was commissioned under the **Fifty New Churches Act of 1711**, a Tory-backed scheme to reinforce the Anglican Church's presence in London and Westminster, funded by a coal tax. Archer joined a commission that included **Hawksmoor**, Vanbrugh, and Wren. The site in Westminster was purchased in **1713**, though construction proceeded slowly and the final cost reached £40,875. The church's four corner towers gave rise to its nickname, **Queen Anne's Footstool** — legend holds that Anne kicked over her footstool and declared "Like that!" when asked for her vision. In reality, the towers were structural, countering subsidence. Charles Dickens later described the building as a petrified monster lying on its back: even hostile reactions confirm how forcefully Archer's design commands attention.

Notes

St John's, Smith Square, is a former church in the centre of Smith Square, Westminster, London. Sold to a charitable Trust as a ruin following firebombing in the Second World War, it was restored as a concert hall.

This grade I listed church was designed by Thomas Archer and was completed in 1728. It is regarded as one of the finest works of English Baroque architecture, and features four corner towers and monumental broken pediments. It is often referred to as 'Queen Anne's Footstool' because as legend has it, when Archer was designing the church he asked the Queen what she wanted it to look like. She kicked over her footstool and said 'Like that!', giving rise to the building's four corner towers.

Notes

In 1710, the long period of Whig domination of British politics ended as the Tories swept to power under the rallying cry of "The Church in Danger". Under the Tories' plan to strengthen the position of the Anglican Church and in the face of widespread damage to church buildings after a storm in November 1710, Parliament concluded that 50 new churches would be necessary in the cities of London and Westminster. An Act of Parliament in 1711 levied a tax on coal imports into the Port of London to fund the scheme and appointed a commission to oversee the project. Archer was appointed to this commission alongside, amongst others, Hawksmoor, Vanburgh and Wren. The site for St. John's was acquired from Henry Smith (who was also Treasurer to the Commissioners) in June 1713 for £700 and building commenced immediately. However, work proceeded slowly and the church was finally completed and consecrated in 1728. In total, the building had cost £40,875.

St John's famous nickname 'Queen Anne's Footstool' was coined early in its history. According to legend, Archer consulted the ailing Queen Anne about his designs for the new church. The Queen, not noted for her interest in architecture, petulantly kicked over her footstool, pointed at its upturned shape and snapped "Like that!" The towers were, in fact, added to stabilise the building against subsidence.

The architectural style of St John's, Smith Square has always provoked a reaction in the viewer, not always complimentary. An 18th-century commentator thought the new church "singular, not to say whimsical" and, later, Charles Dickens, in Our Mutual Friend, described it as appearing to be "some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its legs in the

air". However today St John's is regarded as one of the masterpieces of English Baroque architecture.

The building was designed by Thomas Archer (1668-1743). We know that his family were country gentry, but nothing is known about his architectural training. After the usual education for a cultivated young gentleman - three years at Oxford followed by the Grand Tour of Europe - he made his way as a courtier being appointed to the post of Groom Porter by Queen Anne in 1705. As such, he was responsible for licensing all gambling at court (including tennis, dice and billiards). He retained this post for the rest of his life under her successors George I and George II and, in addition, acquired the sinecure of Comptroller of Customs of Newcastle in 1715. Not surprisingly, he became a wealthy man and on his death he left a legacy of £100,000 to his nephew in addition to property in London, Hampshire and Warwickshire. Possibly as a result of this wealth and the distractions of Court life, his architectural output was small - including some work at Chatsworth; Roehampton House (part of Queen Mary's Hospital, until converted to flats in 2009-13); St Philip's Church, Birmingham (now the Cathedral) and St Paul's Church, Deptford. However, the idiosyncratic personal style, which is the hallmark of St John’s, distinguishes all of his work. While his contemporaries included Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, Archer's style owes most to the Italian influences he experienced on his Grand Tour, primarily that of Borromini.

Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and William Talman (1650-1719)
Hampton Court, south facade
1689-1702
Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey

Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and William Talman (1650-1719), Hampton Court, south facade, 1689-1702, Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey

Picking up from the broader story of William and Mary's reign, their most visible architectural legacy took shape at Hampton Court. **William III** and **Mary II** commissioned **Sir Christopher Wren** in 1689 to rebuild the palace, though Wren's sweeping plan to demolish the entire Tudor structure was never fully realised. A catastrophic collapse of the south range in December of that year, caused by rushed construction and poor mortar, killed two workmen and set the project back. Mary's death in 1694 halted work entirely, and only the destruction of Whitehall Palace in 1698 pushed William to finally complete the building. He bypassed Wren's estimate and appointed **William Talman**, who finished the King's Apartments under budget. The result was a complete transformation of Hampton Court's east and south facades, the Tudor towers replaced by the grand **Baroque** exteriors still visible from the Formal Gardens. Inside, **Grinling Gibbons** — born in Holland to English parents and introduced to Wren through the diarist John Evelyn — carved the fireplaces and architectural mouldings, while **Antonio Verrio** painted the celebrated ceiling cycles. Outside, **Jean Tijou** supplied gilded wrought-iron screens for the re-landscaped gardens. William spent £131,000 on the palace and never lived to enjoy it, dying in **1702** from injuries sustained after a fall in Hampton Court Park.

Notes

Soon after their accession to the English throne, King William III (reigned 1689-1702) and Queen Mary II (reigned 1689-94) commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to rebuild Hampton Court.

Wren's original plan was to demolish the entire Tudor palace, except for the Great Hall. Neither the time nor the money proved available for this ambitious undertaking. Wren had to be content with rebuilding the king's and queen's main apartments on the south and east sides of the palace, on the site of the old Tudor lodgings.

Work began in May 1689. William wanted rapid results, but in December, because of the excessive speed of building and the poor quality of the mortar used, a large section of the south range collapsed, killing two workmen and injuring eleven.

William was devastated in late 1694 when Mary died. Work stopped, leaving the new buildings as an empty brick shell with bare walls and floors.

As Whitehall Palace burned down in 1698, William stepped up his efforts to finish the new palace. Instead of accepting Wren’s estimate for finishing the work, however, the king appointed Wren’s deputy. William Talman, who had offered a lower price, eventually finished William’s new King’s Apartments under budget.

Wren and Talman completely transformed the east and south facades of Hampton Court, replacing Tudor towers and chimneys with the grand and elegant baroque exteriors that dominate the Formal Gardens today.

Inside, Grinling Gibbons carved elegant fireplaces and architectural mouldings and Antonio Verrio painted triumphant and colourful ceilings.

Outside, the gardens were also dug up and re-landscaped. They were filled with new plants, including Queen Mary’s own collection of exotic plants from around the world, and bordered by gilded wrought-iron screens by Jean Tijou, and a new Banqueting House by the river, again decorated by Verrio.

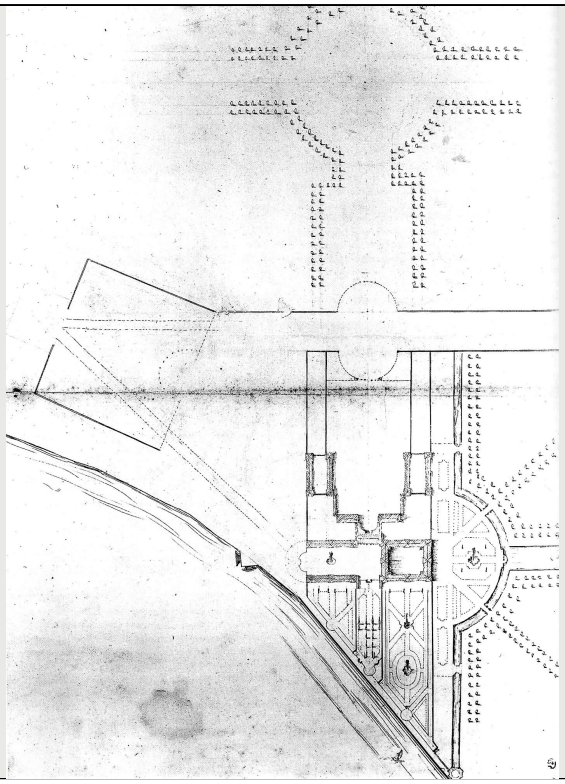
Ironically, the King who did more than any other to shape Hampton Court as it is today did not live to enjoy his new palace.

William died at Kensington Palace from complications after a bad fall from his horse in Hampton Court Park in 1702.

During his reign he spent £131,000 on the palace.

Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721) was a Dutch-British sculptor and wood carver

known for his work at Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, St. Paul's cathedral, Petworth House and many other country houses. He was born and educated in Holland of English parents. Most of his work is lime wood decorative surrounds but he also produced furniture and worked in stone. By the time he was established he had a large workshop. Gibbons rented a cottage from John Evelyn, the diarist, and one Evelyn saw him carving and immediately introduced him to Christopher Wren and King Charles II who gave him his first commission in the dining room of Windsor Castle.



Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736)
Christopher Wren's great scheme for Hampton Court Palace
1689

Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736), Christopher Wren's great scheme for Hampton Court Palace, 1689

Following our look at the Palace's Tudor foundations, we turn to its most ambitious reinvention. This drawing is the earliest surviving record of **Christopher Wren's** grand design to transform **Hampton Court** into the largest **Baroque** palace in Europe. Wren envisaged demolishing nearly the entire Tudor complex and replacing it with a sweeping symmetrical composition that would have rivalled **Versailles** itself. The scheme was extraordinary in its reach. Wren extended his vision across the **River Thames**, planning a substantial retreat lodge in what is now **Thames Ditton**, positioned between present-day Surbiton and the Kingston bypass. The infrastructure to support such a complex already existed: **Charles I** had engineered the **Longford River** to carry fresh water from the River Coln, routed around the western and southern edges of the Heathrow basin and through **Bushy Park** directly to the Palace grounds. **William III**, who commissioned Wren in the sixteen-nineties, ran out of money before the full vision could be realised. Only the King's and Queen's State Apartments were completed. What you see in this drawing, then, is not what was built but what was lost — a continental ambition that the English treasury refused to fund.

Notes

This is the earliest and most important drawing of Christopher Wren's grand scheme to create the grandest Baroque palace in Europe. There was not enough

money and it was only partly implemented.

Imagine the road relocated and the whole area one grand palace. The scheme extended over the river and Wren planned a large lodge in the middle of what is now suburban Thames Ditton near what is now the Kingston-by-pass..

Notes

Charles I had already constructed the Longford River to take water from the Coln at Colnbrook, around the west and then the south of what is now Heathrow airport, through Bushy Park to the Palace grounds.

A trianon (a retreat) in Thames Ditton was part of the scheme. It would have been a large lodge between what is now Surbiton station and the Kingston by-pass.

Jean Tijou (dates unknown)
Gates, Hampton Court
c. 1689
Hampton Court Palace, Hampton Court

Jean Tijou (dates unknown), Gates, Hampton Court, c. 1689, Hampton Court Palace, Hampton Court

Rooted in the flourishing tradition of French Huguenot craftsmanship that reshaped English decorative arts after 1685, **Jean Tijou** stands as the defining figure in English Baroque ironwork. His biography is inseparable from his output: everything known about him comes directly from the buildings he shaped. Arriving in England around **1689**, he quickly secured royal patronage, producing gates and railings for **Hampton Court Palace** under **William and Mary**. That royal commission opened doors to the era's most ambitious architectural projects. He forged the screens and grilles of **St. Paul's Cathedral** in close collaboration with **Sir Christopher Wren**, and worked across the great country houses — Easton Neston, Burghley, and **Chatsworth**. At Chatsworth, his surviving work includes the balustrade of the upper grand staircase and the celebrated **Golden Gates**, relocated to the park's north entrance during the nineteenth century. In **1693** Tijou published his *New Book of Drawings*, a pattern book that disseminated his vocabulary of acanthus scrollwork, masks, and forged foliage to a generation of English smiths. He remained active in England until around 1711, leaving a body of work that permanently elevated ironwork within the hierarchy of English Baroque design.

Notes

Jean Tijou was a French Huguenot ironworker. He is known solely through his work

in England, where he worked on several of the key English Baroque buildings. He arrived in England in c.1689 and enjoyed the patronage of William and Mary for whom he made gates and railings for Hampton Court Palace.

He produced the screens and grilles of St. Paul's Cathedral for Sir Christopher Wren, and worked at country houses such as Easton Neston, Burghley and Chatsworth. At Chatsworth his surviving works include the balustrade of the upper flight of the grand staircase and the set of gates known as the Golden Gates, which were moved to their present location at the north entrance to the park in the 19th century. Tijou published his New Book of Drawings in 1693 and continued to work in England until around 1711.

Antonio Verrio (c.1636-1707)
King's Staircase, Hampton Court
Hampton Court Palace, London

Antonio Verrio (c.1636-1707), King's Staircase, Hampton Court, Hampton Court Palace, London

Antonio Verrio, born in Lecce in the heel of Italy, trained across the peninsula before moving to Toulouse and then Paris. In 1672, on the recommendation of the English Ambassador, he arrived in London and rapidly secured aristocratic commissions, including work at Ham House. **Charles II** became his first royal patron, engaging Verrio to paint twenty ceilings and three staircases at **Windsor Castle**, though only three ceilings survive today. William III initially refused to retain him, and Verrio worked at **Burghley House** and **Chatsworth** during those years. William eventually overrode the **Test Act** and brought him to **Hampton Court Palace**, where Verrio painted the King's Staircase, the King's Great Bedchamber, the King's Little Bedchamber, the Banqueting House, and the Queen's Drawing Room. After William's death in 1702, Queen Anne continued to employ him, and the Queen's Drawing Room stands as his final commission. He retired on a pension of two hundred pounds a year with lodgings at Hampton Court. Verrio's enduring contribution was the introduction of **Baroque mural painting** into England, a decorative language that directly shaped the work of painters such as **James Lighthill**.

Notes

Verrio was born in Lecce (‘lech-ay’) in the heel of Italy. He trained in Italy and moved to Toulouse when he was 29 and then to Paris five years later. In 1672,

when he was 36 he moved to London on the recommendation of the English Ambassador in Paris and worked on a number of aristocratic houses including Ham House. He quickly acquired the patronage of Charles II and was engaged to paint 20 ceiling s and three staircases at Windsor Castle (only three ceilings survive). He was not retained by William II and worked at Burghley House and Chatsworth. William finally overrode the Test Act and employed him to paint Hampton Court Palace. On William's death in 1702 he continued to work for Queen Anne and his last commission was the Queen's Drawing Room. He retired on a pension of £200 a year and lodgings at Hampton Court. Verrio introduced Baroque mural painting into England and influenced painters such as James Lighthill.

Verrio painted five rooms in William III's Apartments at Hampton Court as well as the King's Staircase, the Kings Great Bedchamber, the Banqueting House, the King's Little Bedchamber and the Queen's Drawing Room.

Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707)
Ceiling, King's Stairs, Hampton Court Palace
c. 1700
Hampton Court Palace, Surrey

Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707), Ceiling, King's Stairs, Hampton Court Palace, c. 1700, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey

Turning now from the painted ceilings above to the staircase below, we see **Antonio Verrio's** most elaborate surviving scheme at **Hampton Court Palace**. On the walls of the **King's Staircase**, Verrio placed **William III** in triumphal mode, presiding over a group of Roman emperors who represent the King's Catholic enemies, whilst a banquet of the gods above signals the peace and prosperity William's reign had brought to England. The ironwork framing this ascent is equally remarkable: the ornate balustrade was forged by **Jean Tijou**, a French smith who arrived in England with William and Mary and remained active here until around 1712. Tijou also designed the celebrated golden gates at the river end of the Privy Garden, installed in **1701** and currently undergoing restoration. Inside the adjacent Banqueting House, Verrio painted further scenes that later generations deemed indecent. A resident of the palace apartments a century ago requested that the offending nymphs be painted over — a request, fortunately, that was never carried out. Instead, large pieces of furniture were positioned strategically in front of the figures, preserving Verrio's work for the conservation campaigns that would eventually follow.

Notes

The King's Staircase is probably the most elaborate example of Verrio's work. In the scheme for the staircase Verrio showed William III in triumphal mode,

dominating a group of Roman emperors who represent the King's Catholic enemies, as well as a banquet of the Gods denoting the peace and plenty William had brought.

In later years some of the scenes Verrio painted inside Hampton Court's Banqueting House were regarded as being indecent and one hundred years ago an occupant of the palace apartments asked that they be painted over. Luckily this request wasn't obliged, but instead large pieces of furniture were placed in front of the naked nymphs.

Notes

The balustrade of the King's Stairs at Hampton Court Palace was created by Jean Tijou. Tijou arrived in England with William III and Mary II and was active in England from about 1688-1712. He designed the golden gates at the river end of the Privy Garden which were installed in 1701 and are currently being restored.

Christopher Wren (1632-1723)
Old Royal Naval College
1696-1712
Architecture
Greenwich, London

Christopher Wren (1632-1723), Old Royal Naval College, 1696-1712, Greenwich, London

The **Old Royal Naval College** stands at the heart of **Maritime Greenwich**, part of what UNESCO designates the finest architectural and landscape ensemble in the British Isles. **Christopher Wren** and **Nicholas Hawksmoor** began work here in **1696**, donating their labour without fee on a hospital for disabled sailors. **John Vanbrugh** later succeeded them, and construction continued until **1752**. Queen Mary intervened to have the original designs altered, splitting the buildings into two separate ranges so that her view of the Thames from **Inigo Jones's Queen's House** remained unobstructed — a decision that shaped the dramatic open vista we see today. The college closed as a hospital in 1869 after nearly two centuries of service. Before Wren ever laid a foundation, the ground beneath had carried the **medieval Palace of Placentia**, begun by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1428, and later a favoured residence of the Tudor monarchs. To appreciate the full sweep of the composition — paired colonnaded wings framing the Queen's House against the hill of **Greenwich Park** — cross to the **Isle of Dogs** on the opposite bank and look back.

Notes

The centrepiece of 'Maritime Greenwich', described by Unesco as the 'finest and most dramatically sited architectural and landscape ensemble in the British Isles'. Beginning in 1696, Wren and Hawksmoor worked for nothing on what was

originally a hospital for sailors, succeeded by John Vanbrugh and others, until 1752. Queen Mary had the plans modified and the buildings split up when she realised they would block her view of the Thames from Queen's House. For the best overview, head for the opposite bank, on the Isle of Dogs.

Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and built between 1696 and 1712, designed to serve as the Greenwich Hospital, a home for disabled sailors which had closed in 1869. The site of the former hospital had once been occupied by the medieval Palace of Placentia, or "Palace at Greenwich", begun by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1428.

James Thornhill (1675-1734)
The Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College
1708-1727
Paint on dry plaster
Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich

James Thornhill (1675-1734), The Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, 1708-1727, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich

The **Painted Hall** at the **Old Royal Naval College** in Greenwich stands as the greatest painted architectural interior produced by an English artist. Designed by **Sir Christopher Wren** and **Nicholas Hawksmoor** from 1698 and built within King William Court, it was conceived as a dining hall for naval veterans residing at the Royal Hospital for Seamen. **Sir James Thornhill** began its extraordinary decoration in **1708**, working directly onto dry plaster under instruction to celebrate British maritime power at every turn. His programme blends classical mythology, Christian allegory, and contemporary politics into a single overwhelming vision. In the central ceiling oval, King William and Queen Mary reign enthroned in heaven, while a defeated **Louis XIV** cowers beneath William's foot. Astronomers including **John Flamsteed**, the first Astronomer Royal, appear alongside figures representing navigation, reinforcing the navy's dependence on science. Thornhill completed the work after **19 years**, receiving a knighthood in **1720**. The hall proved too magnificent for everyday dining and instead became a celebrated attraction, with Greenwich Pensioners serving as guides. In **1806**, three months after the **Battle of Trafalgar**, the body of **Horatio Nelson** was brought here to lie in state, drawing over 30,000 mourners across three days.

Notes

The Painted Hall is often described as the ‘finest dining hall in Europe’. Designed

by Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor, it was originally intended as an eating space for the naval veterans who lived here at the Royal Hospital for Seamen. Its exuberant wall and ceiling decorations are by Sir James Thornhill and pay tribute to British maritime power.

The Painted Hall sits within the King William Court. Wren submitted designs in 1698 and the roof and dome were in place five years later. When in 1708 James Thornhill began decorating the interior, he was instructed to include many references to the importance of the navy in Britain's fortunes.

His 'great and laborious undertaking' was completed after 19 years, by which time the Painted Hall was felt to be far too grand for its original purpose. Respectable visitors were allowed admittance, after paying a small fee, and the residents of the Royal Hospital – Greenwich Pensioners – acted as tour guides.

Thornhill was paid only £3 per square yard (about one square metre) for the ceiling, and just £1 per square yard for the walls. However, he did receive a knighthood in 1720 and his legacy is the finest painted architectural interior by an English artist.

Key facts

In 1806, 3 months after the Battle of Trafalgar the previous October, the body of Horatio Nelson was brought to lie in state in the Painted Hall.

Between 1824 and 1936, it was known as the National Gallery of Naval Art, with over 300 naval-themed paintings on display.

In 1939, it was used for dining (including breakfast) by the officers of the Royal Naval College.

Notes

James Thornhill, who also painted the interior of the dome in St Paul's Cathedral, began his commission to decorate the Painted Hall in 1708. He was instructed to include as many references as possible to the importance of the navy in Britain's fortunes. He shows his remarkable skill in the use of trompe l'oeil painting throughout, and makes full use of perspective. He painted directly on to dry plaster, working on what must have been rather precarious scaffolding. For his 'great and laborious undertaking', Thornhill was paid just £3 per square yard (approximately one square metre) for the ceiling and £1 per square yard for the walls. The result, after 19 years of labour, is the finest painted architectural interior by an English artist, and

Thornhill was knighted in 1720.

The vestibule. If you look up into the cupola you will see a personification of the four winds, and lower down the monograms of the members of the royal family most involved with the building of the Royal Hospital for Seamen; William and Mary, Anne and George. Plaques show donations made by benefactors towards the cost of the buildings.

The lower hall. In the main central oval, Thornhill concentrates on showing the triumph of Peace and Liberty over the forces of Tyranny. He creates a complex mix of contemporary and classical history, ancient Greek mythology, Christian allegory and traditional symbolism. Enthroned in heaven are King William and Queen Mary. Above, the sun god Apollo sheds his light, while Peace, with her doves and lambs, hands an olive branch to William. He in turn hands the red cap of liberty to the kneeling figure of Europe. Below William's foot, clutching a broken sword, is the defeated French ruler, Louis XIV. To the left, the Spirit of Architecture holds Wren's design for this building, while Time bears up the naked figure of Truth. At the bottom of the oval, the goddess Minerva/Athena and Hercules/Heracles hurl the Vices out of this vision of heaven. Signs of the zodiac and the four seasons are positioned around the edge of the oval, signifying the passing of time.

Signs and symbols. There are ships at either end of the lower hall, with a captured Spanish galleon, full of booty, at the east, while to the west the Blenheim, a British man of war, has gun ports open ready for action. A recurring motif is one of astronomy and its importance to navigation. At the east end of the hall are famous astronomers: Sir John Flamsteed (the first Astronomer Royal) and his assistant, Thomas Weston, Copernicus and Tycho Brahe, while at the west end figures from the ancient world, including Archimedes, represent navigation and geography.

The upper hall. The upper hall is reached through the arch carrying Hawksmoor's beautifully designed Royal Arms and gilded signs of the Zodiac. Thornhill's paintings here reflect Britain's triumph as a maritime power. The central ceiling panel shows Victory saluting Queen Anne and her husband George of Denmark. The four corners of the world (Australasia had yet to be encountered by Europeans) look inwards.

The west wall. Here Thornhill shows Britain's new royal family from Hanover in Germany. George I is surrounded by his children and grandchildren. The distinctive dome of Wren's St Paul's Cathedral looms large in the background. Thornhill himself appears in the bottom righthand corner with

his paintbrushes and palette. Although the composition of this wall was certainly by Thornhill, it was probably painted by his highly skilled assistant Dietrich André.

South and north walls. The south wall to your left shows William of Orange arriving in Torbay in 1688, to take the position of joint monarch with his wife Mary. On the north wall, we see George I arriving at Greenwich to claim the throne in 1714.

Nelson and the Painted Hall. Three months after the battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805, Nelson's body was brought back to Greenwich and taken to the Painted Hall to lie in state. During three days in January, over 30,000 members of the public came to pay their respects to the great naval hero. On 8 January, his body was then taken by river to the Admiralty for the state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral. A plaque marks the spot where his body lay. The Nelson Room, to the left of the upper hall, contains a short exhibition about Nelson and his connection to Greenwich which includes a life-size replica of the statue on top of Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square.

References

Marketing literature and website, 'Painted Hall' Old Royal Naval College

Christopher Wren (1632–1723)
St. Clements, Eastcheap
1683–1687
Clement's Lane, London

Christopher Wren (1632–1723), St. Clements, Eastcheap, 1683–1687, Clement's Lane, London

Having surveyed the broader sweep of Wren's rebuilding programme, we turn now to two of his London churches in detail. **St Clement Eastcheap**, tucked into Clement's Lane just off King William Street near **London Bridge**, takes its dedication from **Saint Clement**, ordained Bishop of Rome in **93 AD**. Legend holds he was martyred by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea, making him a patron saint of sailors. That dedication, combined with its proximity to the port of London, points to a site of considerable antiquity — Roman remains have been uncovered here, and the church receives a possible mention in a charter by **William the Conqueror** dated **1067**. The building was consumed by the **Great Fire of 1666**, which started just 150 metres away in **Thomas Farriner's** bakery on Pudding Lane, ultimately destroying over 13,000 houses and 87 parish churches. **Wren's** rebuilt church now stands at the centre of a gentle rivalry: St Clement Eastcheap and St Clement Danes in Westminster both claim to be the church celebrated in the nursery rhyme *Oranges and Lemons*. St Clement Danes rings out the traditional tune three times daily, pressing its case with considerable conviction.

Notes

I will consider just two of the 50 odd churches Wren designed in London. Many of his churches were destroyed in the Blitz or demolished in 1860 when the number

of City churches was reduced.

The first is a City church, St. Clements in Clement's Lane just off King William Street and close to London Bridge. Clement was a disciple of St Peter the Apostle and was ordained as Bishop of Rome in the year 93 AD. By legend, Clement was martyred by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea, which led to his adoption as a patron saint of sailors. Its dedication to the patron saint of sailors and its location near the port of London indicates it may have originally been a Roman building and Roman remains have been found at a depth of 12-15 feet. The church is possibly mentioned in a charter by William the Conqueror in 1067.

It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and is only 150 metres from Thomas Farriner's bakery in Pudding Lane where the fire started. The fire consumed 13,200 houses and 87 parish churches and displaced 70-80,000 people partly because of Thomas Bloodworth, the Lord Mayor of London, delayed creating fire breaks. Rumours spread that the fire was started by foreigners, focused on the French and Dutch, and later Catholics. A simple-minded French watchmaker, Robert Hubert, claimed he started the fire and was hanged at Tyburn but it was later discovered he was on board a ship in the North Sea when the fire started.

Eastcheap was one of the main streets of medieval London. The word 'cheap' derives from the Saxon word for market and Eastcheap was so named to distinguish it from Westcheap, later to become Cheapside.

St Clement Eastcheap considers itself to be the church referred to in the nursery rhyme that begins "Oranges and lemons / Say the bells of St Clement's". It should be noted that the only other church dedicated to St Clement, St Clement Danes Church, Westminster, also considers itself to be the church and its bells ring out the traditional tune of the nursery rhyme three times a day.

Christopher Wren (1632–1723)
St James's Church, Piccadilly
1672–1684
Red brick with Portland stone dressing
Piccadilly, London

Christopher Wren (1632–1723), St James's Church, Piccadilly, 1672–1684, Piccadilly, London

Beyond the City boundary, Wren's work took on a different character, and **St. James's Church, Piccadilly** shows exactly why his reputation extended across London. **Henry Jermyn, 1st Earl of St. Albans**, received this land for residential development in **1662** and reserved a plot for a parish church. Wren was appointed in **1672**, and the building was consecrated in **1684**. The congregation it served grew notable over time: **Mary Beale**, one of the first professional women painters in Britain, was buried here in 1699, and the poet and artist **William Blake** was baptised here in 1757. The structure pairs red brick with **Portland stone** dressing, a combination that gives the exterior its restrained authority. Inside, galleries on three sides rest on square pillars, while the nave's barrel vault is carried by **Corinthian columns**, drawing the eye firmly eastward. Two furnishing elements demand close attention: the carved marble font and the limewood reredos, both executed by **Grinling Gibbons**, whose naturalistic carving in wood and stone remained unmatched in late seventeenth-century England. The church sustained severe damage during the Second World War but has since been restored.

Notes

Wren designed four churches outside the City, St. Anne's Church, Soho, St. Clement Danes, Westminster, the Chapel of the Royal Hospital Chlsea and St. James's Church, Piccadilly.

In 1662, Henry Jermyn, 1st Earl of St. Albans was granted this land for residential development on the outskirts of London and he set aside land for a parish church. Wren was appointed in 1672 and the church was consecrated in 1684. In 1685 the parish of St. James was created for the church. Mary Beale, one of the first professional women artists, was buried in the church in 1699. William Blake was baptised in the church in 1757. It was severely damaged in WWII.

St. James's Church, Piccadilly is red brick with Portland stone dressing. The church's interior has galleries on three sides supported by square pillars, and the nave has a barrel vault supported by Corinthian columns. The carved marble font and limewood reredos are both notable examples of the work of Grinling Gibbons.

William Talman (1650-1719), Thomas Archer (1668-1743), Jeffry Wyattville, Joseph Paxton, James Paine
Chatsworth House, south façade
1696
Architecture
Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

William Talman (1650-1719), Thomas Archer (1668-1743), Jeffry Wyattville, Joseph Paxton, James Paine, Chatsworth House, south façade, 1696, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Chatsworth House stands on the east bank of the river Derwent in Derbyshire, the ancestral seat of the Cavendish family since 1549. The original Tudor mansion was built by **Bess of Hardwick** in the 1560s, though the building we see today is principally the work of **William Talman**, whose south and east fronts were complete by **1696** for **William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire**. Architectural historian **Sir John Summerson** described the result as inaugurating "an artistic revolution which is the counterpart of the political revolution in which the Earl was so prominent a leader." The south front is genuinely revolutionary for an English house: no attics, no hipped roof, just two main storeys over a rusticated basement, with **Ionic pilasters**, a heavy entablature, and a bold balustrade giving the facade a dramatic, sculptural weight. Talman had trained under **Christopher Wren** and served as Comptroller of the King's Works from 1689, yet his difficult reputation cost him further commissions. Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, so disliked Talman that he turned instead to **John Vanbrugh** for **Castle Howard**, a decision that reshaped the entire trajectory of English **Baroque architecture**.

Notes

Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Chatsworth is the seat of the Duke of Devonshire and has been home to the

Cavendish family since 1549.

On the east bank of the river Derwent, the grand 126-room Chatsworth looks across to the hills that fringe the Wye valley, and is the work of baroque architects William Talman and Thomas Archer, as well as the later Jeffry Wyatville. The only surviving facade is Talman's eastern side, though a rich suite of baroque state rooms stretches across the south front. Archer's work can be seen in the Cascade House, a temple at the top of a water feature in the grounds.

The original Tudor mansion was built by Bess of Hardwick (c. 1527-1608) in the 1560s. It was one of her three properties at Chatsworth, Hardwick and Chelsea.

The south and east fronts were rebuilt under the order of William Talman and were complete by 1696 for William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire. The 1st Duke's Chatsworth was a key building in the development of English Baroque architecture.

According to the architectural historian Sir John Summerson, "It inaugurates an artistic revolution which is the counterpart of the political revolution in which the Earl was so prominent a leader."

The design of the south front was revolutionary for an English house, with no attics or hipped roof, but instead two main stories supported by a rusticated basement. The facade is dramatic and sculptural with ionic pilasters and a heavy entablature and balustrade. The existing heavy and angular stone stairs from the first floor down to the garden are a 19th-century replacement of an elegant curved double staircase.

William Talman was an English architect and landscape designer. He was a pupil of Christopher Wren and from 1689 became Comptroller of the King’s Works. He worked with Wren on the rebuilding of Hampton Court Palace and its gardens and by proposing a cheaper interior decoration scheme won a commission that Wren expected to receive. His principal work is Chatsworth House, considered to be the first baroque private house in Britain and he may have been the architect of St. Anne’s Church, Soho. Talman was viewed by many as surly, rude and difficult to get on with. One of those who felt so was Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, who thus chose John Vanbrugh, not Talman as his architect for Castle Howard (Vanbrugh had also been Talman's replacement as Comptroller of the Royal Works in May 1702.)

References

Thomas Archer (1668-1743)
Chatsworth House, north façade
1707
Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Thomas Archer (1668-1743), Chatsworth House, north façade, 1707, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

The **1st Duke of Devonshire** earned his title in **1694** as reward for backing **William of Orange**, having spent the reign of James II in forced retirement at Chatsworth — a political exile that directly triggered one of England's most ambitious domestic rebuilding campaigns. Work began in **1687**, with the Duke initially intending only to reconstruct the south wing, retaining the Elizabethan courtyard plan despite its growing unfashionability. He proceeded front by front: the East Front came first, incorporating the Painted Hall and Long Gallery, then the West Front between **1699 and 1702**, and finally the North Front, completed in **1707** shortly before his death. The west and north fronts are attributed to **Thomas Archer**, possibly working alongside the Duke himself. Archer is an architect too easily overshadowed by **John Vanbrugh** and **Nicholas Hawksmoor**, yet historian **John Summerson** judged his churches — **St John's Smith Square** in Westminster and **St Philip's Birmingham** — as representing the most advanced Baroque style ever attempted in England. The 1st Duke also commissioned sweeping parterre gardens from **George London** and **Henry Wise**, the latter subsequently appointed Royal Gardener at Kensington Palace by Queen Anne.

Notes

Thomas Archer (1668-1743). The west and north fronts may have been the work of Thomas Archer, possibly in collaboration with the Duke himself.

The 4th Earl of Devonshire, who was to become the 1st Duke in 1694 for helping to put William of Orange on the English throne, was an advanced Whig and was forced to retire to Chatsworth during the reign of King James II. This called for a rebuilding of the house, which began in 1687. Cavendish initially planned to reconstruct only the south wing with the State Apartments, so he decided to retain the Elizabethan courtyard plan, despite the fact that this layout was becoming increasingly unfashionable. He enjoyed building and reconstructed the East Front, that included the Painted Hall and Long Gallery, followed by the rebuilding of the West Front from 1699 to 1702. The North Front was completed in 1707 just before the Duke died. The 1st Duke also had large parterre gardens designed by George London and Henry Wise, who was later appointed by Queen Anne to the post of Royal Gardner at Kensington Palace.

Thomas Archer was a Baroque English architect now overshadowed by John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor. As we have seen he was architect for St. John's Church, Westminster and also St. Philip, Birmingham (now Birmingham Cathedral) both of which the famous architectural historian John Summerson described as representing 'the most advanced Baroque style ever attempted in England'.

Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707)
The Incredulity of Thomas (Doubting Thomas)
1694
Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707), The Incredulity of Thomas (Doubting Thomas), 1694, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

Louis Laguerre, trained in Paris under **Charles Le Brun**, arrived in England in 1683 and became one of the foremost decorative painters of his generation. His ceiling painting of Christ in Glory crowns the chapel here, part of a broader career that took him to Blenheim Palace, Petworth House, Burghley House, and Chatsworth. Laguerre's family connections shaped his professional world directly: his father-in-law, the ironworker **Jean Tijou**, whose active career ran from 1688 to 1712, made the iron balustrades in this very space, paid £528 for the commission, and later produced the celebrated screens and grilles for **St Paul's Cathedral**. The chapel's painted scheme began when Laguerre and Ricard were engaged in January 1689, likely under **Antonio Verrio**, who arrived in November 1690 and completed the great chamber, staircase, and altarpiece by September 1692, receiving £469. Verrio's altarpiece painting, **The Incredulity of Thomas**, dated 1694, remains the devotional centrepiece of one of the best-preserved Baroque interiors in the house. **James Thornhill**, Laguerre's great rival in English history painting, was also employed at Chatsworth, contributing the Fall of Phaeton on the back staircase and scenes in the antechamber to the Duke's dressing room.

Notes

Louis Laguerre (1663-1721)

This painting on the chapel ceiling shows Christ in Glory by Louis

Laguerre. Laguerre was trained in Paris under Charles Le Brun and came to England in 1683. He first worked with Verrio and then on his own. He rivalled James Thornhill in the field of history painting. His wall paintings can be found in Blenheim Palace, Marlborough House, Petworth House, Burghley House, Fetcham Park House and Chatsworth House.

Jean Tijou (active 1688-1712)

Tijou, the ironworker at Hampton Court, whose daughter was the wife of Laguerre, made the iron balustrades and was paid £528. He also made the screens and grilles for St. Paul's Cathedral.

Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707)

Laguerre and Ricard were engaged in January 1689 possibly by Antonio Verrio, prior to him arriving in November 1690. The altarpiece painting at Chatsworth of The Incredulity of Thomas is regarded as one of Verrio's masterpieces. The chapel at Chatsworth is one of the best preserved baroque rooms in the house. By September 1692 Verrio had finished the great chamber, staircase and altarpiece. He was paid £469. Verrio employed a Monsieur Huyd, Mr. Highmore (serjeant painter to William III) and a painter called Price.

Damien Hirst

Damien Hirst's eight-foot tall bronze sculpture 'Saint Bartholomew, Exquisite Pain' was on loan to Chatsworth from 2009, positioned within the magnificent alabaster altarpiece of Chatsworth's chapel. Above it the carved figures of 'Faith' and 'Justice' can be seen flanking Antonio Verrio's painting of The Incredulity of Thomas (1694).

James Thornhill (1675/6-1734)

James Thornhill was also employed but probably later and he painted Fall of Phaeton on the back staircase, the Rape of the Sabines and Perseus and Andromeda in an antechamber to the Duke's dressing room

Pieter Tillemans (1684-1734)
A panoramic view of Chatsworth House and Park
c. 1700
66.3 x 173.1 cm
Private collection

Pieter Tillemans (1684-1734), A panoramic view of Chatsworth House and Park, c. 1700, 66.3 x 173.1 cm, Private collection

Alongside rebuilding the house, the **1st Duke of Devonshire** transformed Chatsworth's grounds into a fully realised baroque landscape between **1684 and 1707**, integrating architecture, water, and sculpture into a unified design. The **Cascade**, begun in **1696** and rebuilt on a grander scale in 1701, remains the garden's defining feature. Its 24 stone steps are each cut to a slightly different profile, so the flowing water produces a distinct sound from every one. **Thomas Archer** crowned the composition in 1703 with the baroque Cascade House at the summit, and a major restoration completed in 1996 required ten thousand hours of skilled labour. The **Canal Pond**, dug in 1702, extends over three hundred yards to the south of the house, anchoring the landscape's geometry. Closer to the house, the **Seahorse Fountain** once marked the centre of the main parterre, while the Willow Tree Fountain — a brass-piped imitation tree that drenches unsuspecting visitors — charmed the writer **Celia Fiennes**, who recorded its effect in her diary with evident delight. **Flora's Temple**, built in 1695 and relocated in 1760, closes the broad walk to the north, housing **Caius Gabriel Cibber's** statue of the goddess Flora.

Notes

1st Duke's garden (1684–1707). At the same time as he was rebuilding the house, the 1st Duke also created baroque gardens. It featured numerous parterres cut

into the slopes above the house, and many fountains, garden buildings and classical sculptures. The principal surviving features from this time are:

The Cascade and Cascade House is a set of stone steps over which water flows from a set of fountains at the top. It was built in 1696 and rebuilt on a grander scale in 1701. In 1703 a grand baroque Temple or Cascade House designed by Thomas Archer was added at the top. A major restoration of both the Cascade and the Cascade House in 1994–1996 took 10,000 man-hours of work. In 2004 the Cascade was voted the best water feature in England by a panel of 45 garden experts organised by Country Life. It has 24 cut steps, each slightly different and with a variety of textures so that each gives a different sound when water runs over and down them.

The Canal Pond, dug in 1702, is a 314-yard (287 m)-long rectangular lake to the south of the house.

The Seahorse Fountain is a sculptural fountain in a circular pond on the lawn between the house and the Canal Pond. Originally, it was the centrepiece of the main parterre.

The Willow Tree Fountain is an imitation tree that squirts water on the unsuspecting from its branches. The writer Celia Fiennes wrote in her diary: "There ... in the middle of ye grove stands a fine willow tree, the leaves, barke and all looks very naturall, ye roote is full of rubbish or great stones to appearance and all on a sudden by ye turning of a sluice it rains from each leafe and from the branches like a shower, it being made of brass and pipes to each leafe, but in appearance is exactly like any willow." The tree has been replaced twice and then restored in 1983.

The First Duke's greenhouse is a long, low building with ten arched windows and a temple-like centrepiece. It has been moved from its original site overlooking the 1st Duke's bowling green to the northern edge of the main lawn and is now fronted by a rose garden.

Flora's Temple is a classical temple built in 1695 and moved to its present site at the northern end of the broad walk in 1760. It contains a statue of the goddess Flora by Caius Gabriel Cibber.

The West Garden—now the family's private garden with modern planting in a three-section formal structure—is mainly a creation of the 1st Duke's time, but the layout is not original.

Notes

Elizabethan garden: The house and garden were first constructed by Sir William Cavendish and Bess of Hardwick in 1555. The Elizabethan garden was much smaller than the modern garden is now. There were terraces to the east of the house where the main lawn is now, ponds and fountains to the south, and fishponds to the west by the river. The main visual remnant of this time is a squat stone tower known as Queen Mary's Bower on account of a legend that Mary, Queen of Scots, was allowed to take the air there while she was a prisoner at Chatsworth. The bower is now outside the garden wall in the park. Some of the retaining walls of the West Garden also date to this era, but they were reconstructed and extended later.

Tillemans's painting sold at Christies in 2012 for £265,250

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and
Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736)
Blenheim Palace
1705–1722
Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736), Blenheim Palace, 1705–1722, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England

Blenheim Palace, begun in 1705 and completed around 1722, stands as the defining monument of the English Baroque, a theatrical style absorbed from Catholic Europe and disciplined into something altogether more severe on Protestant English soil. The state funded much of the build as a reward to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, for his victories during the War of the Spanish Succession, above all the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. John Vanbrugh, soldier, playwright, and Whig provocateur, brought to architecture the same restless radicalism he showed everywhere else in life. His collaborator Nicholas Hawksmoor, a darker and more intense talent who rose from humble Nottinghamshire beginnings through years working under Christopher Wren, completed the palace after Vanbrugh was dismissed. The Duchess of Marlborough drove him out through relentless disputes over his extravagance, and Vanbrugh departed in fury. The south portico pediment announces the building's swagger: its flat top carries a thirty-ton marble bust of Louis XIV, looted from Tournai in 1709, a deliberate, triumphant break with convention. Lancelot "Capability" Brown later reshaped the grounds, and the palace has served the Spencer-Churchill family ever since, birthplace included.

Notes

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736)

Winston Churchill's family seat was begun by John Vanbrugh in 1705 and completed almost two decades later by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Much of the bill was footed by the state, in honour of the Duke of Marlborough's wartime victories. Vanbrugh was sacked mid-build, but Blenheim's combination of severity and magnificence is a monument to a great architect as well as a great soldier.

Vanbrugh had many arguments with the Duchess who wanted the Palace to be a comfortable country house for her family, I made Mr. Vanbrugh my enemy by the constant disputes I had with him to prevent his extravagance As a result of these arguments Vanbrugh resigned before the palace was completed in November 1716. He wrote, You have your end Madam, for I will never trouble you more Unless the Duke of Marlborough recovers so far, to shelter me from such intolerable Treatment.

"Capability" Brown landscaped the grounds.

Blenheim Palace is a monumental country house situated in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. It is the principal residence of the dukes of Marlborough, and the only non-royal non-episcopal country house in England to hold the title of palace. The palace, one of England's largest houses, was built between 1705 and circa 1722.

The building of the palace was originally intended to be a reward to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, from a grateful nation for the duke's military triumphs against the French and Bavarians during the War of the Spanish Succession, culminating in the 1704 Battle of Blenheim. However, soon after its construction began, the palace was to become the subject of political infighting; this led to Marlborough's exile, the fall from power of his duchess, and lasting damage to the reputation of the architect Sir John Vanbrugh.

Designed in the rare, and short-lived, English Baroque style, architectural appreciation of the palace is as divided today as it was in the 1720s. It is unique in its combined usage as a family home, mausoleum and national monument. The palace is also notable as the birthplace and ancestral home of Sir Winston Churchill.

Following the palace's completion, it became the home of the Churchill, later Spencer-Churchill, family for the next 300 years, and various members of the family have in that period wrought changes, in the interiors, park and gardens. At the end of the 19th century, the palace was saved from ruin by funds gained from the 9th Duke of Marlborough's marriage to American

railroad heiress Consuelo Vanderbilt.

(Click) The pediment over the south portico is a complete break from the convention. The flat top is decorated by a trophy bearing the marble bust of Louis XIV looted by Marlborough from Tournai in 1709, weighing 30 tons. The positioning of the bust was an innovative new design in the decoration of a pediment.

Architects of the age: Nicholas Hawksmoor and John Vanbrugh

Both pupils of Christopher Wren, Hawksmoor (1661-1736) and Vanbrugh (1664-1726) were the hugely imaginative masters of the English baroque, a theatrical style adopted from Catholic Italy and France and transformed, and disciplined, in Protestant England. Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh (pictured) worked together on some of our finest monumental buildings, notably Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, and Castle Howard, Yorkshire.

Vanbrugh, born in Chester, led a dashing life. A dramatist – who wrote The Provok'd Wife while a prisoner in the Bastille, he was also a soldier, famous wit and man about town. His Seaton Delaval, recently saved for the nation, is a wonder. John Soane, one of England's most inventive architects, described "Van" as the "Shakespeare of architecture". He was a radical throughout his life and was a Whig and part of the scheme to remove James II, put William III on the throne and restore parliamentary democracy. His sexually explicit plays defended the rights of women in marriage and offended many sections of society. He was a member of the Kit-Kat Club which presented itself as a drinking club for wits but recently some historians belief it was the secret organisation that was the active force behind the Glorious Revolution.

Hawskmoor, by contrast, was an altogether darker and more intense talent. Born in humble circumstances in Nottinghamshire, Hawksmoor's work with Wren at St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, is outstanding. But his solo work – Easton Neston House (1682-1702), five London churches, notably Christ Church, Spitalfields (1714-29) and the circular Mausoleum at Castle Howard (1729-42), are laws to themselves; the work of true genius.

The War of the Spanish Succession

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) was a major European conflict of the early 18th century, triggered by the death in 1700 of the last Habsburg King of Spain, the infirm and childless Charles II. In his will he gave the crown to the French prince Philip of Anjou. It was the first world war of modern times with theatres of war in Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, and at sea. The English, the Dutch and the Austrians formally declared war in May 1702. By the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and of the Treaty of Rastatt (1714) the Spanish empire was partitioned between the major and minor powers.

James Thornhill (1675-1734)
Marlborough kneeling to Britannia (ceiling of the Hall, Blenheim Palace)
1716
Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

James Thornhill (1675-1734), Marlborough kneeling to Britannia (ceiling of the Hall, Blenheim Palace), 1716, Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

The great hall at **Blenheim Palace** announces its ambitions through sheer scale — 67 feet high and clad in stone carvings by **Grinling Gibbons** — yet it functions architecturally as an ante-room to the saloon beyond. **James Thornhill** painted the ceiling in **1716**, showing the **Duke of Marlborough** kneeling before Britannia, dressed as Mars and proffering a map of the **Battle of Blenheim**, with Fame and allegorical figures of Europe arranged above him. The saloon tells a more tangled story. The Duchess suspected Thornhill of overcharging and replaced him with **Louis Laguerre**, who painted an elaborate trompe l'oeil scheme timed to coincide with the **Peace of Utrecht**. Laguerre tucked a self-portrait beside Dean Jones, the Duke's chaplain and another of the Duchess's enemies — tolerated, she admitted, because he played a good hand at cards. Near one doorway he added French spies, conspicuously wide-eyed and large-eared. Of the four marble door-cases displaying the Duke's crest as a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, only one is by Gibbons; the Duchess had cheaper craftsmen copy the remaining three indistinguishably. The long library, **180 feet** in length and designed by **Christopher Wren**, completes the sequence with a ceiling of saucer domes Thornhill never got to paint.

Notes

There are staircases of various sizes and grandeur in the central block, but none

are designed on the same scale of magnificence as the palace. James Thornhill painted the ceiling of the hall in 1716. It depicts Marlborough kneeling to Britannia and proffering a map of the Battle of Blenheim. The Duke is dressed as Mars and Britannia represents Queen Anne. Directly above the Duke is Fame surrounded by angels and the horse with the surrounding figures represent the countries of Europe. Below are the weapons and soldiers of war. The hall is 67 ft (20 m) high, and remarkable chiefly for its size and for its stone carvings by Gibbons, yet in spite of its immense size it is merely a vast ante-room to the saloon.

Saloon

The saloon was also to have been painted by Thornhill, but the Duchess suspected him of overcharging, so the commission was given to Louis Laguerre. This room is an example of three-dimensional painting, or trompe l'œil, "trick-the-eye", a fashionable painting technique at the time. The Peace Treaty of Utrecht was about to be signed, so all the elements in the painting represent the coming of peace. The domed ceiling is an allegorical representation of Peace: John Churchill is in the chariot, he holds a zigzag thunderbolt of war, and the woman who holds back his arm represents Peace. The walls depict all the nations of the world who have come together peacefully. Laguerre also included a self-portrait placing himself next to Dean Jones, chaplain to the 1st Duke, another enemy of the Duchess, although she tolerated him in the household because he could play a good hand at cards. To the right of the doorway leading into the first stateroom, Laguerre included the French spies, said to have big ears and eyes because they may still be spying. Of the four marble door-cases in the room displaying the Duke's crest as a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, only one is by Gibbons, the other three were copied indistinguishably by the Duchess's cheaper craftsmen.

The Library

The third remarkable room is the long library designed by Christopher Wren, (H), 180 ft (55 m) long, which was intended as a picture gallery. The ceiling has saucer domes, which were to have been painted by Thornhill, had the Duchess not upset him. The palace, and in particular this room, was furnished with the many valuable artefacts the Duke had been given, or sequestered as the spoils of war, including a fine art collection. Here in the library, rewriting

history in her own indomitable style, the Duchess set up a larger than life statue of Queen Anne, its base recording their friendship.

References

Photograph of ceiling, Ian Forbes

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736)
Castle Howard
1699–1811
Architecture
Castle Howard, North Yorkshire, England

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736), Castle Howard, 1699–1811, Castle Howard, North Yorkshire, England

Castle Howard, rising from the North Yorkshire landscape fifteen miles north of York, announces itself through a skyline of coronets, cherubs, urns, and a commanding dome. **John Vanbrugh** accepted it as his first architectural commission in **1699**, designing the structure for **Charles Howard, the third Earl of Carlisle**, on the site of the ruined Henderskelfe Castle. The project stretched across more than a century, reaching completion only in 1811, by which point later generations of the Howard family had discarded significant portions of Vanbrugh's original intentions. The house's 145 rooms make it one of the largest country houses in England. Disaster struck on the ninth of November **1940**, when fire destroyed the dome, the central hall, and the east-side state rooms, taking with it two Tintorettos and **Antonio Pellegrini's** paintings of the Fall of Phaeton. By 1961 the dome was rebuilt, and Pellegrini's composition was recreated on its interior surface — a remarkable act of architectural and pictorial restoration. The Howard family have occupied the house continuously for over three centuries. Wider audiences recognise it as the fictional Brideshead, the decaying aristocratic seat at the centre of **Granada Television's 1981** adaptation of **Evelyn Waugh's** novel.

Notes

The 145-room Castle Howard was John Vanbrugh's first commission as an architect, exuberantly decorated with coronets, cherubs, urns, a dome and a

temple of the Four Winds. Begun in 1699 under the third Earl of Carlisle, it was not completed until 1811, by which time the Carlisles were throwing much of Vanbrugh's masterplans out of the window. The structure was still impressive enough to feature in the TV series Brideshead Revisited, as the lost home of the aristocratic Marchmains.

Castle Howard is a stately home in North Yorkshire, England, 15 miles (24 km) north of York. It is a private residence, the home of the Carlisle branch of the Howard family for more than 300 years.

Castle Howard is not a true castle, but this term is also used for English country houses erected on the site of a former military castle.

It is familiar to television and film audiences as the fictional "Brideshead", both in Granada Television's 1981 adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited

Building of Castle Howard began in 1699 and took over 100 years to complete to a design by Sir John Vanbrugh for the 3rd Earl of Carlisle. The site was that of the ruined Henderskelfe Castle, which had come into the Howard family in 1566 through the marriage to Lord Dacre's widow of Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk.

A large part of the house was destroyed by a fire which broke out on 9 November 1940. The dome, the central hall, the dining room and the state rooms on the east side were entirely destroyed. Paintings depicting the Fall of Phaeton by Antonio Pellegrini were also damaged. In total, twenty pictures (including two Tintorettos and several valuable mirrors) were lost. In 1960–61 the dome was rebuilt and in the following couple of years, Pellegrini's Fall of Phaeton was recreated on the underside of the dome. The East Wing remains a shell, although it has been restored externally. Castle Howard is one of the largest country houses in England, with a total of 145 rooms.

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)
Castle Howard, Temple of the Four Winds
1725-1728
Castle Howard, Yorkshire

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), Castle Howard, Temple of the Four Winds, 1725-1728, Castle Howard, Yorkshire

Castle Howard subordinates nothing to spectacle. Where **Versailles** demanded massive earth-moving to announce **Louis XIV's** absolute dominion over nature, **Castle Howard** works with the rolling Yorkshire landscape, preserving its existing character rather than erasing it. The **genius loci**, the spirit of the place, is honoured rather than subjugated. **Wray Wood**, a medieval woodland, was retained intact, and the **Temple of the Four Winds** was positioned on a hilltop precisely to remind visitors that Atlantic and North Sea winds converge on this spot. Martin Calder, in *Experiencing the Garden in the Eighteenth Century*, reads this sensitivity as ideologically deliberate. In France, power resided in the crown; in England it resided in the aristocracy who commanded both the House of Lords and, through younger sons, the House of Commons. **Edmund Burke**, the Irish-born philosopher writing in the eighteenth century, described English country houses as records of the constitution. Death is written openly into this landscape: the **Mausoleum** celebrates ancestral continuity, just as **Vanbrugh** preserved the Gothic ruins of Woodstock Manor at **Blenheim Palace**. Monarchy performs transformation; aristocracy performs permanence. The country house became the site where national history and cultural life extended outward from the court into the land itself.

Notes

At Castle Howard, unlike Versailles, the house is incorporated in the landscape rather than dominating it. At Versaille the landscape was altered by massive earth-moving works, at Castle Howard the rolling slopes of the countryside were maintained.

The genius loci or 'spirit of the place' is valued at Castle Howard not subjugated. The Temple of the Four Winds is located on a hilltop to remind the visitor that here winds blowing off the North Sea meet those blowing from the Atlantic. Wray Wood, an ancient medieval wood, was retained. The design was conceived to retain the personality of the place. At Versaille, the Sun King, transformed a marsh into a garden to show that absolute monarchy could change a cesspit into paradise.

Death appears in the landscape at Castle Howard in the form of a mausoleum to celebrate the ancestry of an ancient family. Vanburgh did the same at Blenheim Palace when he conserved the Gothic ruins of old Woodstock Manor. Why? The power in France lay with the absolute monarch. In England in lay with the aristocracy that ran the House of Lords and through younger sons the House of Commons. The Irish-born philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) defined the English country houses as 'records of the constitution'. The country house reflected the history of the nation as cultural life spread out from the court into the great houses of the aristocracy.

Two major garden buildings are set into this landscape: the Temple of the Four Winds at the end of the garden, and the Mausoleum in the park. There is also a lake on either side of the house. There is an arboretum called Ray Wood, and the walled garden contains decorative rose and flower gardens. Further buildings outside the preserved gardens include the ruined Pyramid currently undergoing restoration, an Obelisk and several follies and eye catchers in the form of fortifications.

References

Martin Calder, Experiencing the garden in the Eighteenth Century (p.66-68)

Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736)
Mausoleum
1729
Castle Howard, Yorkshire

Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736), Mausoleum, 1729, Castle Howard, Yorkshire

The **Hawksmoor Mausoleum** stands ninety feet tall, carried on a colonnade of twenty pillars, and ranks among the finest free-standing funerary structures in northern Europe. **Nicholas Hawksmoor** received the commission and work began in **1729**, yet the building was not completed until after both Hawksmoor and the **3rd Earl of Carlisle** had died — a reminder that architecture of this ambition routinely outlasted its creators. The Earl himself was first buried in the local parish church and only later re-interred here, the mausoleum finally fulfilling the purpose for which it was conceived. The structure remains the private burial place of the **Howard family** to this day, sitting nearly a mile from the house and closed to general visitors. From the waterfall at **Temple Basin**, however, the silhouette reads clearly across the landscape, and the curatorial team leads special public visits for those who wish to see it close at hand. That distance from the house is no accident — Hawksmoor positioned the building to be experienced as a destination, a deliberate pause in the designed landscape that asks you to contemplate mortality at the far edge of the estate.

Notes

The Mausoleum rises 90 feet into the air and is supported by a colonnade of 20 pillars. Designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, it is one the finest free-standing mausoleums in northern Europe.

Building began in 1729 but was not completed until after the deaths of both

Hawskmoor and the 3rd Earl, who was originally buried in the local parish church and re-interred in the mausoleum six years later.

Still the private burial place of the Howard family and nearly one mile from the house, the Mausoleum is not accessible during a visit. However, it is easy to see from the waterfall at Temple Basin and the curatorial team does lead special visits for the public.

John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)
Seaton Delaval from north
1718-1728
Seaton Delaval Hall,
Northumberland, England

Delaval Hall, Northumberland, England

Seaton Delaval Hall, completed in 1728 in Northumberland, stands as the final country house John Vanbrugh designed, and the one that best demonstrates the full ambition of his architectural vision. Neither Vanbrugh nor his patron, Admiral George Delaval, lived to see it finished — a conclusion as dramatic as the building itself. Delaval was a naval officer and diplomat who died wealthy despite inheriting almost nothing from his father. Vanbrugh designed the hall from 1718, and the relationship between patron and architect shaped a building of striking theatrical force. The grounds include a mausoleum for Delaval, whose death was attributed, depending on the account, either to a fall from his horse or a blow from a laundry maid. The house passed through heirs who occupied it only intermittently, and in 1822 a fire — reputedly started by jackdaws nesting in the chimneys — gutted the central block, leaving a shell that remains unrestored to this day. The scorched interior walls are still visible. Yet the exteriors survive intact, and the National Trust, which now owns the property, regards them as among the finest examples of English Baroque architecture in the country.

Notes

The End of a (Brief) Era

John Vanbrugh's last country house, and for many his finest work. Both Vanbrugh and the owner, Admiral George Delaval had died by the time it was finished in

1728.

It was built for Admiral George Delaval (c. 1667-1723) a successful diplomat and naval officer who although he was left only £100 by his father died a rich man. The grounds house a mausoleum for a Admiral George Delaval who supposedly died either from falling from his horse or after being kicked in a "vital organ" by a laundry maid.

The interior still bears the marks of a fire in 1822, supposedly caused by jackdaws nesting in the chimneys, but the exteriors remain a perfect example of English baroque.

Seaton Delaval Hall is a Grade I listed country house in Northumberland, England. It is near the coast just north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Located between Seaton Sluice and Seaton Delaval, it was designed by Sir John Vanbrugh in 1718 for Admiral George Delaval and is now owned by the National Trust.

Since completion of the house in 1728, it has had an unfortunate history. Neither architect nor patron lived to see its completion; it then passed through a succession of heirs, being lived in only intermittently. Most damagingly of all, in 1822 the central block was gutted by fire, and has remained an empty shell ever since.

John Vanbrugh
(1664-1726)
Seaton Delaval from
north
1718-1728

16-06 Restoration England - Wren and the English Baroque

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John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), Seaton Delaval from north, 1718-1728

- English Baroque emerged from a Protestant culture that demanded restraint even as it reached toward Continental grandeur. From Wren's St Paul's and Hampton Court through Vanbrugh's Castle Howard and Blenheim, and on to Hawksmoor's mausoleum and the scorched shell of Seaton Delaval, this lecture has traced a style defined by tension — between theatricality and sobriety, Catholic precedent and Anglican purpose, royal ambition and aristocratic permanence. That productive friction is what makes English Baroque distinctively, unmistakably itself.

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