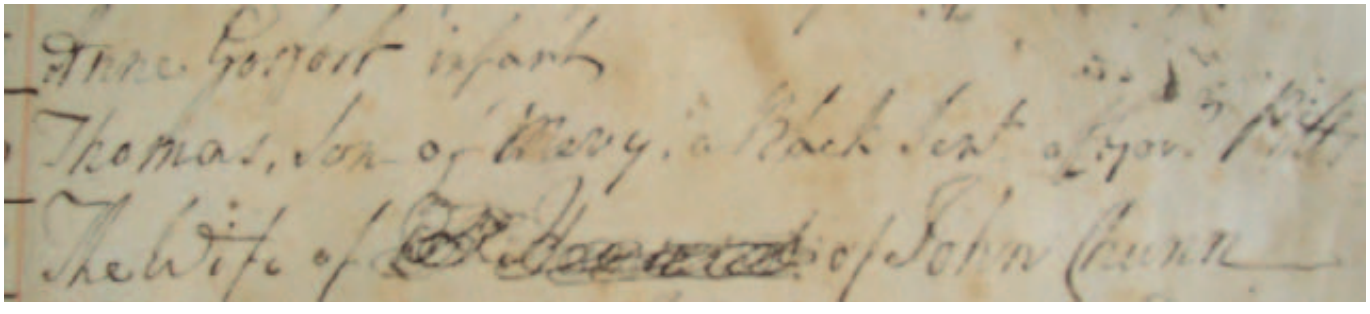
Unknown maker after A. Heckel, **Orleans House Twickenham**, embroidery on silk

Auguste Garverry, **Orleans House**, *c.*1815, watercolour

Unknown artist, **Orleans House**, *c.* 1845, watercolour

Johan Dietzsch
Orleans House
c. 1750
watercolour



Orleans House: A History

This is the story of the riverside property in Twickenham, which came to be known as Orleans House, and the people who lived in, worked in and visited it. The story of the house has been written before, and this book is greatly indebted to previous publications, especially *The History of Orleans House, Twickenham* compiled by Patricia Astley Cooper in 1984. The decision to create a new history came out of a realisation that, 24 years later, we are in a position to tell more and varied stories about our buildings and site, and the individuals and trends which shaped them.

Specifically, the impetus to create this book came out of the *Parallel Views: Black History in Richmond* exhibition held at the gallery in 2007. This year saw commemorations across the country marking the bicentenary of the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade. In Richmond, we set about examining exactly how our picturesque borough linked into this global history – to examine what the slave trade had to do with us. This book comes out of that process of shining a light on unfamiliar, often uncomfortable aspects of our nation's past, and above all of seeing our local history in a global context. Orleans House was not built on slave trade money, but two of its owners were linked to the trade through careers in the Royal Navy and the East India Company, and black servants recorded at the house may well have arrived here through the trade diaspora.

Rather than creating a catalogue of the 2007 exhibition, we wanted to ensure that these findings became a permanent part of the story we tell about our site – that this understanding of our place in a global story was not lost in the aftermath of the bicentenary. The *Parallel Views* research forms one strand in this book; others include a renewed focus upon the architecture, its inspirations and political contexts, and an examination of the mutually-transformational relationship between the house and the exiled Orleans family, particularly Henri Duc d'Aumale. What these strands share is the idea of a local history shaped by international currents, be they economic, aesthetic, political or a synthesis of the above.

We hope you enjoy this book. It is very much a product of a particular moment in the way we think about and write about our history, but we hope it stands the test of time. Our thanks to all who have made this publication possible, especially the Heritage Lottery Fund who have supported it as part of our *Parallel Views* project.

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Orleans House: The Ideal Setting

"Here is an admirable prospect of the most charming part of the Thames, where the eye is entertained by a Thousand Beauties not to be conceived but from this station."[i]

Colen Campbell's 1715 description of the 'prospect' from Orleans House vividly captures the appeal of this Thameside site, on which James Johnston (1655-1737) chose to build what was later known as Orleans House in 1710.

In fact, records show that at least two previous houses had enjoyed the *Thousand Beauties* of the site. The first recorded sixteenth-century property, a *"Pleasant and delightful tenement built with Brick and part with Tymber and fflemish walle and covered with tyle,"* was leased by the Crown in 1567 to Sir Thomas Newenham and later to Andrew Pitcarne, who was responsible for the building of nearby York House and was Groom to the Bedchamber to Charles I. In the seventeenth century, Richard Webb acquired the lease and around 1663 replaced this building with a brick house. In 1671 Mrs. Jane Davies, sister of Lord Berkeley of Stratton, took the property. During this period, William, Duke of Gloucester, son of Queen Anne (then Princess of Denmark), stayed here for a month while convalescing from an illness. During William's stay, he brought with him a 'regiment' of boys, which he used to exercise on the small island opposite the house.

By the eighteenth century, the "classic" village of Twickenham had become a fashionable place to build country retreats. The tranquil green spaces, view from Richmond Hill and riverside walks made it particularly popular with artistic and literary figures. The river, Twickenham's proximity to London, and the court and royal palaces at Kew and Hampton, also made Twickenham an ideal place for courtiers and the wealthy aristocracy to reside. Moving into this fashionable area in 1702, Secretary James Johnston set about transforming both house and garden, beginning the story of building later known as Orleans House.

Augustin Heckel
A View from Richmond Hill up the River Thames with part of Twickenham
c. 1744
engraving

opposite page:
William Marlow
The Thames Looking towards Richmond Hill
c. 1800
oil on canvas

Peter Tillemans
The Thames at Twickenham
c. 1724
oil on canvas

This familiar scene by Flemish artist Peter Tillemans (*c.* 1684-1734) shows the Thameside villas, which characterised our local stretch of river in the eighteenth century, with Alexander Pope's villa in prime position just to the left of the centre. This was the milieu in which Johnston chose to acquire land and build his home. Such imagery evokes a serene environment, an appropriate setting for genteel living and literary endeavour.

In contrast to his idyllic imagery, recent research has revealed that at least four of those who lived within this vista had direct financial links with the slave trade. Robert Cramond the slave trader lived at Crossdeep House, while Alexander Pope and two of his neighbours at The Grove, Philip, Duke of Wharton (1698-1731) and James Craggs the Younger (1686-1721), all invested in the South Sea Company. Investing in slave trading companies such as the South Sea Company, which supplied slaves from British colonies in the Caribbean and North America to Spanish colonies in the Americas, was seen as a sound investment for people from all walks of life. That so many connections can be found within this one painting comes as a shocking reminder of this unacknowledged dimension of our familiar local history. The riverside villas, parks and gardens which gave the Thames its unique character, were products of a society subtly dependent upon enslaved labour, be it to supply the coffee and sugar consumed on riverside lawns or the income to maintain and furnish a lavish lifestyle or help finance literary ventures.

The view is one of three local landscapes painted by Tillemans during the 1720s. It is the earliest complete topographical view of the river frontage in the eighteenth century, and may have been commissioned by Alexander Pope or by John Robartes, later 4th Earl of Radnor.

Architecture

For his new house at Twickenham, Secretary Johnston chose as his architect John James (*c.*1672-1746). As apprentice to Matthew Banckes, the King's Master Carpenter, James had been involved in some of the major royal building projects of the age, carried out under Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723), including Hampton Court Palace, Chelsea Hospital, and the Royal Naval Hospital at Greenwich. Johnston's house was one of James' first independent projects.

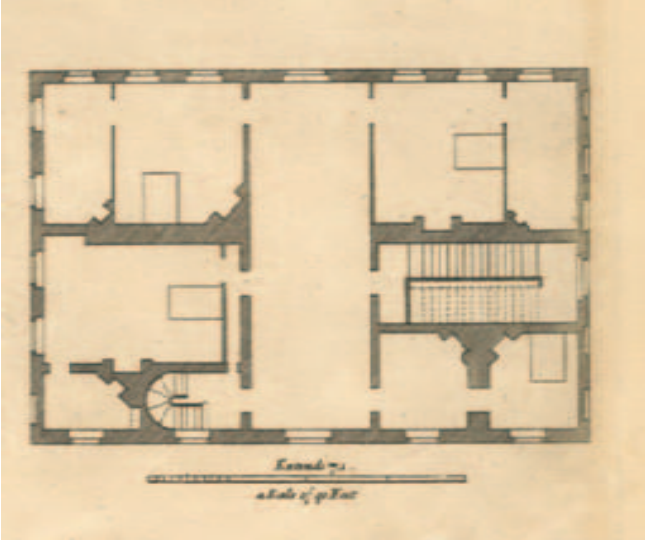
James never travelled abroad but published translations of French and Italian architectural treatises, including Antoine d'Argenville's *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (1709), which he dedicated to James Johnston. This interest in gardening may well have encouraged Johnston to hire James, as he too was developing a reputation as a keen gardener.

In 1710, James designed and built for Johnston a substantial two-storey brick house, with mansard roof, rectangular windows and a central stone entrance surmounted by an arched window surrounded by carved Portland stone floral decoration. The overall effect was one of sober restraint, reflecting James' belief that *"The beautys of architecture may consist with the greatest plainness of structure"*.

Although the house was modified over the years and demolished in 1926, we know James' original building from a number of depictions in Richmond's Borough Art Collection, including an engraving of the property which appeared in Colen Campbell's influential publication *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1715.

The house design is remarkable for its plainness. The successful combination of brick walls, with only key features picked out in white Portland stone, shows the lessons learnt from Wren, who used this Dutch-inspired combination at both Chelsea and Hampton Court, as well as several of the churches he built following the Great Fire of London (1666). However James' treatment is far plainer than any of Wren's examples, with stone restricted to the central bay and window ledges, with no surrounds at all to frame the windows.

This lack of surface decoration, simple mansard roof and contained volumes might respond to Johnston's background as a Presbyterian Scot for whom flamboyant architecture would be too showy. The move away from Wren's ornate surfaces to a calmer appearance might also reflect James' awareness of the shifting trend towards a more restrained Palladian architecture, championed by Colen Campbell and Lord Burlington. The fact that Campbell chose to include the design in his book *Vitruvius Brittanicus* indicates James' success in adapting his formative influences to meet emerging trends.[ii]



above and opposite
Colen Campbell
The Prospect to the Garden of the Hon James Johnston Esq., his house at Twittenham in the county of Middlesex, 1710
coloured engraving

Six years later, Johnston wanted something more than 'plainness': with the arrival of George I and family, with whom Johnston had become friendly during time spent in Hanover, he needed a room fit to entertain royalty. The Octagon Room was born.

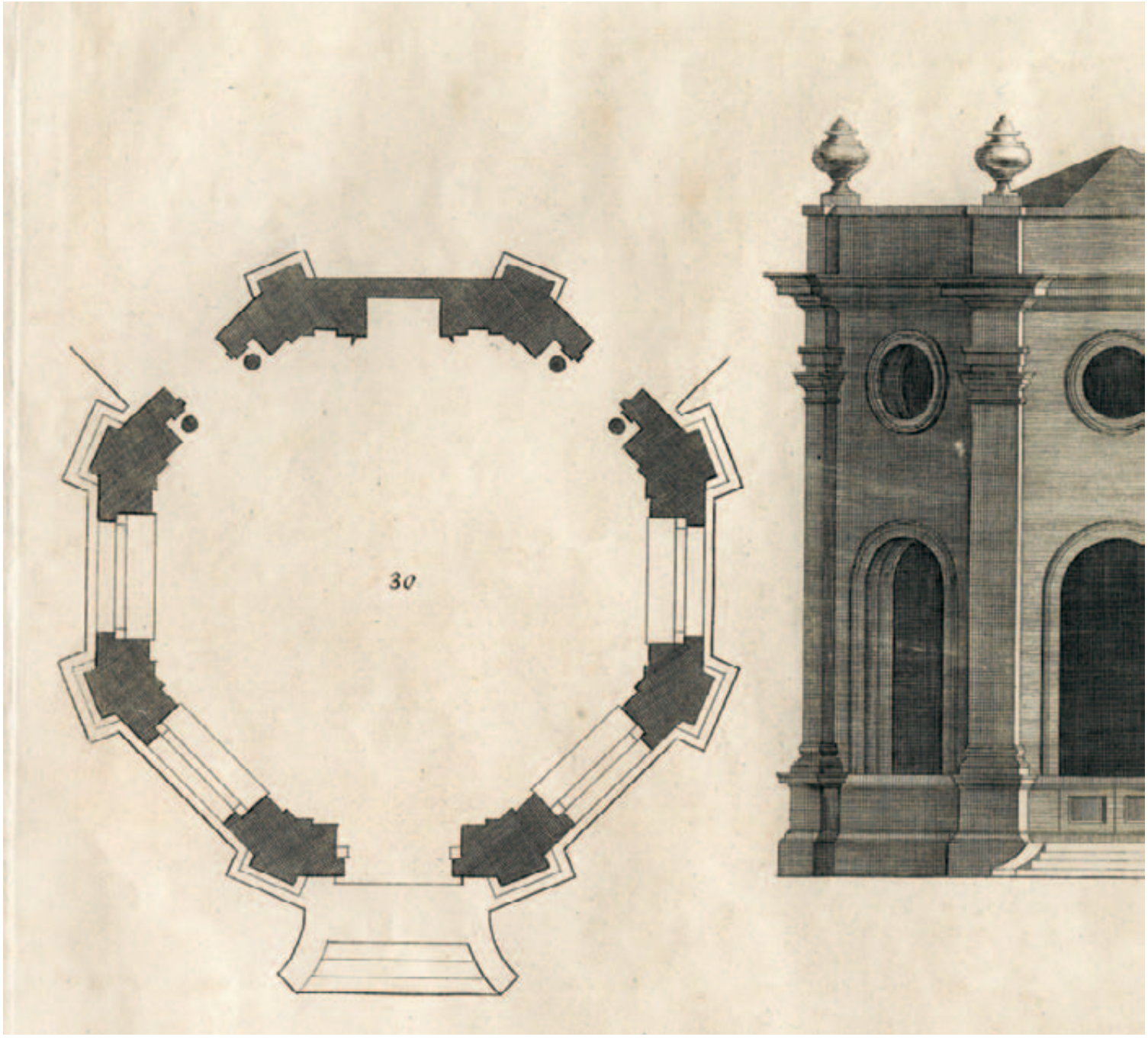
This time, he commissioned James Gibbs (1682-1754). Gibbs, a fellow Scot, was one of the few architects of his generation to have experienced the continental baroque at first hand, having trained in Rome under Carlo Fontana, himself a pupil of leading baroque architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680). The Octagon Room (1716-20) provided a lively counterpoint to James' restrained design. Initially separate from the main house, the Octagon was purpose-built for lavish entertaining, complete with wine cellar (which still exists) and its own attached service buildings including a kitchen, scullery, laundry and a room for fruit. Its complex form, elaborate surface articulation and above all its ornate plasterwork interior, created by renowned Swiss-born *stuccatori* (plasterers) Guiseppe Artari and Giovanni Bagutti, have led to it being described as a 'little masterpiece of the English baroque'. Artari and Bagutti also worked with Gibbs on other projects, including the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (1720-1726), which now overlooks Trafalgar Square.

As well as the ornate moulding, the Octagon interior detail includes reclining female figures in plaster above the chimneypiece, plaster *putti* above the pediments of each of the two original doorways, a portrait bust of George I and relief portraits of the future George II as Prince of Wales and his wife Caroline of Ansbach. Female personifications of the land and sea (shown with pearls across her breast) flank the portrait bust of George I, celebrating his dominion over these two realms. The royal portraits, probably by the sculptor Michael Rysbrack,[iii] make a show of Johnston's loyalty to the new dynasty and reinforce the sense that the room was created to enable Johnston to entertain his royal acquaintances in appropriate splendour.

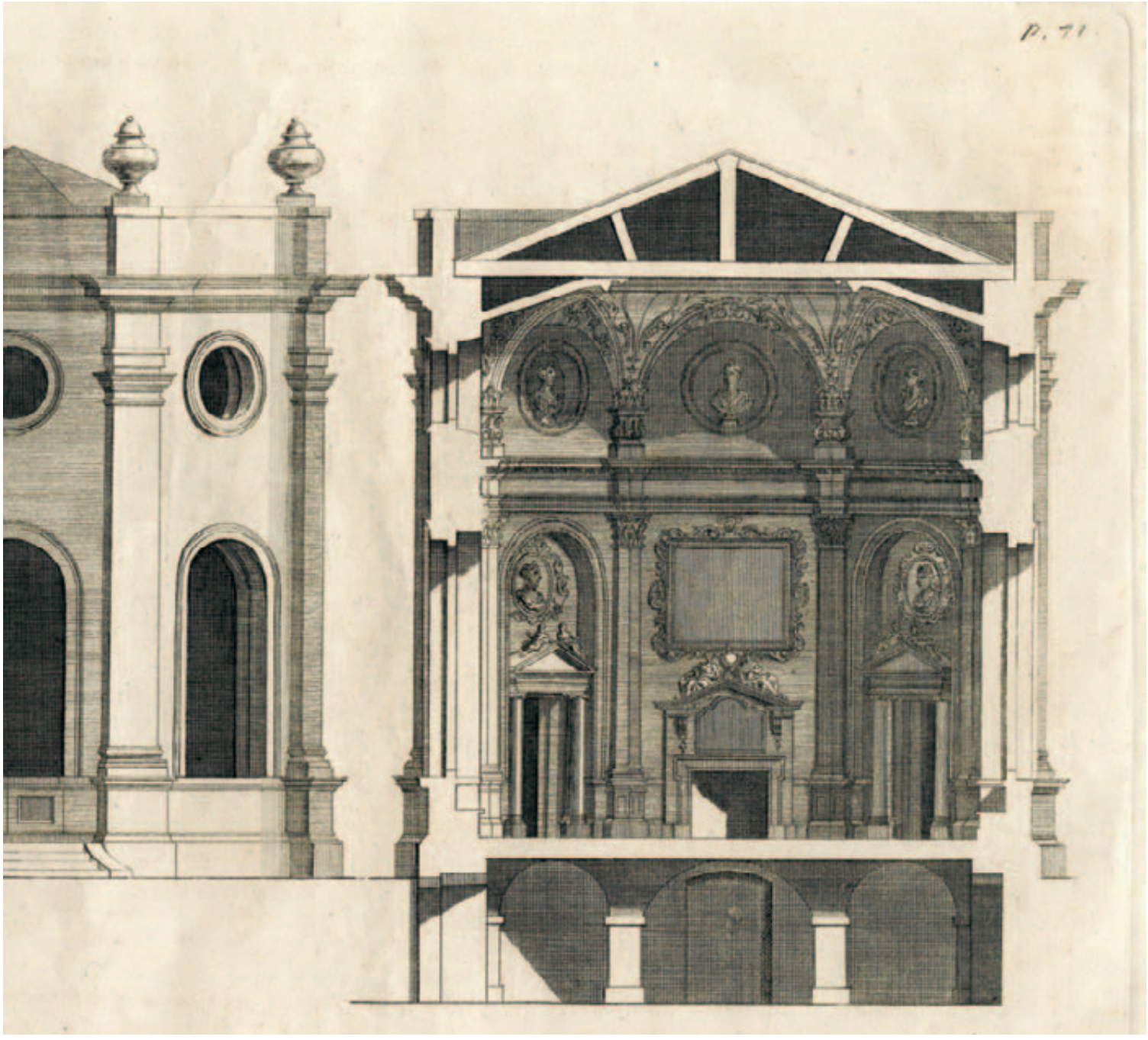
To achieve this lavish effect, Gibbs was forced to import his *stuccatori* from the continent as British craftsmen did not have the experience to create the ornate plaster swirls. Having trained in Rome, Gibbs returned to England in 1709 bringing a continental baroque flair, as demonstrated at St. Mary-le-Strand (1714-17), one of his first major projects following his return. However, his continental style along with the fact that he was Catholic, Scottish and a Tory meant that Gibbs had fallen out of favour for public commissions with the arrival of the German, Protestant, Hanoverian dynasty.

Gibbs may therefore seem an odd choice as architect for a room designed specifically to host the new Hanoverian royals. However, Johnston had known the royal family before their arrival in England and would have been aware that they were accustomed to the lavish, baroque style popular at the German courts. In Hanover, George I's mother Sophia had overseen the creation of the world-famous baroque gardens of Herrenhausen, while in Ansbach, birthplace of the future George II's wife Caroline, her brother was engaged in ambitious baroque building scheme. With this in mind, Gibbs' continental inspired style was likely to impress the Hanoverian royals and make them feel at home.

Unknown photographer, **The Octagon Room, Orleans House ,** 1944, photograph



E. Kirkall after James Gibbs, **Plan of the Octagon Room,** *c.* 1720, engraving



Although the room is generally well preserved, some original features of the room have subsequently vanished, including the ornate baroque carved gilded chandelier, chairs and a painting by Panini of classical ruins, originally sited in the elaborate plaster surround above the fireplace. Paintings such as this were common souvenirs of the Grand Tour. These items can be seen in photographs from as late as the 1940s and their current whereabouts remain a mystery.

Locally, Gibbs built Sudbrooke Park in Petersham (1715-19) and was said to have played a hand in designing Pope's Villa at Cross Deep in Twickenham. His career was a successful one, building St Martin-in-the-Fields (1720-26) and publishing his *Book of Architecture* (1728) which led to many of his designs being copied, particularly in the American Colonies and the Caribbean. The Octagon Room was included in the *Book of Architecture* but does not seem to have become a model for emulation like other featured buildings – perhaps because it was built with such a specific purpose to make a unique political statement in a particular context.

opposite page
Bartholomew Dandridge
James Gibbs
c. 1730
oil on canvas

Thomas Gibson
Mr James Johnston
undated
oil on canvas

Attributed to Mary Beale
Mrs Catherine Johnston
undated
oil on canvas

Residents and visitors

James Johnston (1643-1737), Secretary of State for Scotland under William III, had retired from political life by the time he set about building a home for himself in Twickenham. Johnston had led a chequered political life; his father Archibald Johnston, Lord Warrington, had been executed for treason in 1663 and the family had fled to Holland. Johnston developed links with William of Orange, assisted his invasion of England in 1688 and was appointed Secretary of State for Scotland in 1692 when William became king. Having fallen out of favour with William, who apparently found that *"the freedom of his manners was rather disgusting,"*[iv] he travelled in Europe and became acquainted with the future George I and his family, who he was later to entertain at his new Twickenham home.

At Twickenham, Johnston devoted his time to two passions: gardening, and lavish entertaining. Even before the building of the new house, Johnston's neighbour Lady Isabella Wentworth noted the number of guests he entertained, writing *'Secretary Johnston has a vast deal of company dayly, hear is hardly a day that he has not a coach and six horsis at his doar, and some times twoe or three more. Sure he must have a vast esteat to entertain soe many…'*[v]

Following the completion of the new house and Octagon Room, George I visited in 1724, on which occasion *'The king was pleased to dine in the green house, or rather in a pleasant room which Mr. Johnson built joyning to the green house; from whence is a prospect every way into the most delicious gardens.'*[vi]

Mrs Johnston's portrait has been attributed to the first professional English woman artist, Mary Beale (1633-1699). Recent research may contradict this, as Beale was said to have painted her last work in 1694, two years before Johnston married Catherine. The portrait is said to depict his first wife Catherine Poulett (he later married Lucy, who is recorded as his wife in his will).

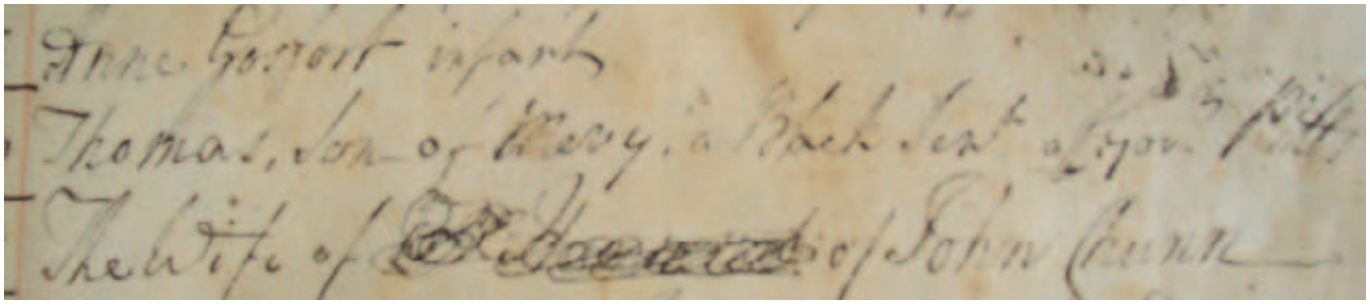
In 1729 Queen Caroline (1683-1737), wife of George II, dined with her children and Mrs. Johnston in the Octagon, enjoying such dishes as venison, vermicelli soup, a chine of lamb, chicken with peaches, and capons with oysters. Queen Caroline knew the local stretch of Thames well, having settled her court at Richmond Lodge on the riverside near Kew. On the occasion of her banquet in the Octagon, the Queen brought her own cook and gold plate, and placed her children carefully, *'the littles ones by ye others that they might serve and help them. The Prince carved for the Queene.'*[vii] With the exception of the young princes, it was a women-only dinner party; Secretary Johnston, Sir Robert Walpole and all the gentlemen-in-waiting dined apart in the hall of the main house, though Johnston did come in to pay his honours to the Queen. Today, a portrait of Queen Caroline hangs in the Octagon.

Unknown artist
Queen Caroline of Ansbach with her son, later the Duke of Cumberland
c. 1730
oil on canvas

Table plan from Queen Caroline's banquet
1729
Richmond Local Studies Collection

After Johnston's death in 1737, his house and gardens were purchased by George Morton Pitt (d.1756), M.P. for Pontefract, who had made his fortune with the East India Company as Governor of Fort St. George, the company's outpost in Madras (now Chennai), India. Parish records show that Pitt's household contained at least one black servant, Mevy, who may have come into Pitt's service through the East India Company's involvement in trafficking people from East Africa to work in the Company's 'factories' in Sumatra and Java. The East India Company dominated this trafficking route, often forgotten in histories of the slave trade, from 1687 until 1832.

Unknown artist
Secretary Pitt
undated
engraving



Extract from parish register of St. Mary's, Twickenham recording the burial of Thomas, son of Mevy, a black servant of Governor Pitt
20 May 1749
London Metropolitan Archives

Boydel, **A View of Governor Pitt's House at Twickenham,** 1753, coloured engraving

Sir George Pocock K.B. (1706-1792), a recently married naval officer, acquired Orleans House around 1764 as a family home to settle in following an action-packed naval career defending British trade interests around the world, including the Transatlantic slave trading 'triangle' linking Britain, West Africa and the Caribbean. In 1744 he had convoyed the 'Africa Trade' on the first leg of the slave trade triangle, protecting the British goods which would be bartered for slaves at Cape Coast Castle, the Royal African Company's headquarters in Africa and the main hub of Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade from 1664 until abolition in 1807. He had been stationed in the Caribbean at the Leeward Islands station in the late 1740s and then saw action against the French off the coast of India during the 1750s, helping to secure communications for the East India Company, who rewarded him by commissioning a portrait in marble to stand in East India House. As commander in chief of a dramatic and ultimately successful mission to capture Havana in 1762, Pocock was entitled to a share of substantial prize money, and it was probably this windfall which allowed him to retire from active service and purchase Orleans House. The house remained with the Pocock family until 1837. Pocock's son (1765-1840), also George, occasionally lived in the property but frequently let it out to tenants including the Gostling Family and, in 1815, Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orleans.

The Gosling family entertained lavishly during their time as tenants. In 1801 they gave a ball for over 250 people, which went on until 5 am, with supper served in the Octagon and the rooms *'tastefully decorated with transparencies and other ornaments'*.

J. Collier
Sir George Pocock. K.B
undated
engraving
From *Hervey's Naval History*

C. R. de Rohan Chabot
Mr and Mrs Gosling's House in Twickenham
undated
watercolour

Pocock suffered mounting debts and was forced to mortgage the house, selling it to Alexander Murray in 1837 and retreating to the continent where he died in Brussels in 1840.

Alexander Murray, as M.P. for Kircudbright, Scotland, revived the Scottish link. He and his wife, Lady Anne, lived at Orleans and commissioned various improvements, but also occasionally let the property out. After his death in 1845, the house was purchased in 1846 by Francis Jack Needham, 2nd Earl of Kilmorey (1787-1880). Kilmorey had purchased part of the Orleans estate 30 years earlier from Pocock. He invested in a number of properties in the borough, including Gordon House in St Margaret's, where he moved his Egyptian-style mausoleum. In 1854, he had commissioned H.E. Kendall to design a mausoleum on a plot he had secured at Brompton Cemetery for the cost of £30,000. It was moved twice before its final resting place in St Margaret's. The mausoleum was built for the Earl's beloved mistress Priscilla Hoste. They had a son, Charles, who was born in 1844 at Cross Deep House, which the Earl then owned.

Kilmorey did not own the Orleans House property for long. In 1852 he sold it to the Directors of Coutts Bank, who were acting for Henri Duc D'Aumale, son of Louis Philippe. His time at Orleans House is examined more fully in the following chapter. Aumale returned to France in 1871 and the house remained empty until 1877, when it was bought by John Dugdale Astley who set about converting it into a luxurious sports and social club. The Orleans Club was short-lived, loosing Astley money, and in 1882 he sold the estate to William Cunard (1825-1906). Cunard had previously bought Mount Lebanon from Astley in 1877. Cunard's occupancy marked the last great days of Orleans House.

A. Glass, Windsor
Francis Jack Needham, 2nd Earl of Kilmorey
undated
photograph
Richmond Local Studies Collection

Henri, Duc d'Aumale
Photograph from Princess Blanche d'Orleans' photograph albums
c. 1863
Gumley House School gift, 2007

Sir John Dugdale Astley
Frontispiece of Astley's autobiography, *'Fifty Years of My Life in the World of Sport'*
1895
Richmond Local Studies Collection

Orleans House: Eighteenth-century developments

Throughout its history, successive owners and residents adapted and changed Orleans House to suit shifts in taste, fashions and practical considerations. Governor Pitt, who acquired the property after Johnston, seems to have been responsible for the creation of the link building connecting the Octagon Room to the main body of the house. By 1797, the link building was apparently being used as a music room. Sir George Pocock transformed both the interior and exterior of the house during his years in residence (1763-1772). He employed architect George Shakespeare (d. 1797) and carpenter John Phillips (c. 1709-1775) to oversee the changes, which included the addition of the three-storey bay window to the riverfront of the house, dramatically altering the character of James' understated façade.

Pocock was also responsible for fitting out the interiors in the latest French-inspired Rococo fashions. Rococo style was characterised by a departure from the ordered vocabulary of classical ornament in favour of freer, asymmetrical arrangements of organic forms. While some in England condemned the style as a frivolous French import, others including William Hogarth enjoyed the serpentine line which dominated the style. The St Martin's Lane Academy, where French Huguenot artists shared ideas with English craftsmen, was at the centre of the Rococo in England, and it was a pupil of this academy, John Linnell (1729-1796), who created Pocock's interiors in 1767. Linnell, a sculptor and furniture maker, created carved chimneypieces, mirror surrounds, columns and lintels for Pocock. Fortunately for us, several of these features were removed from Orleans House during the 1870s by Henri, Duc d'Aumale on his return to France, and installed in the Chateau at Chantilly, thus escaping destruction or dispersal when Orleans House was demolished. Linnell's French-inspired style obviously appealed to Henri, and the Orleans House fireplaces, chimney pieces and mirrors remain in the Pavilion Bullant apartments at Chantilly, a little bit of (French-disguised) English history in France and the sole surviving fragments of the original house.

above and opposite
Eighteenth-century carved decoration from Orleans House, now at Musée Condé, Chantilly

Orleans House: Nineteenth-century developments

Nineteenth-century residents continued to make dramatic changes to the building and grounds. Alexander Murray acquired the house in 1837 and commissioned the architect John Buonarotti Papworth (1775-1847) to carry out alterations. These included changes to the link building, a new gateway (probably never built), and new fittings for the Octagon fireplace. Papworth's alterations to the link building included lengthening the windows, replacing the central door and windows with one large arched opening, and raising the ceiling of the whole central section. The result was a spacious sitting room, with an ornate ceiling, in the middle of the beautifully top-lit link building.

John Buonarotti Papworth
Design for the interior of Orleans House, London
1839
RIBA Library Drawings Collection