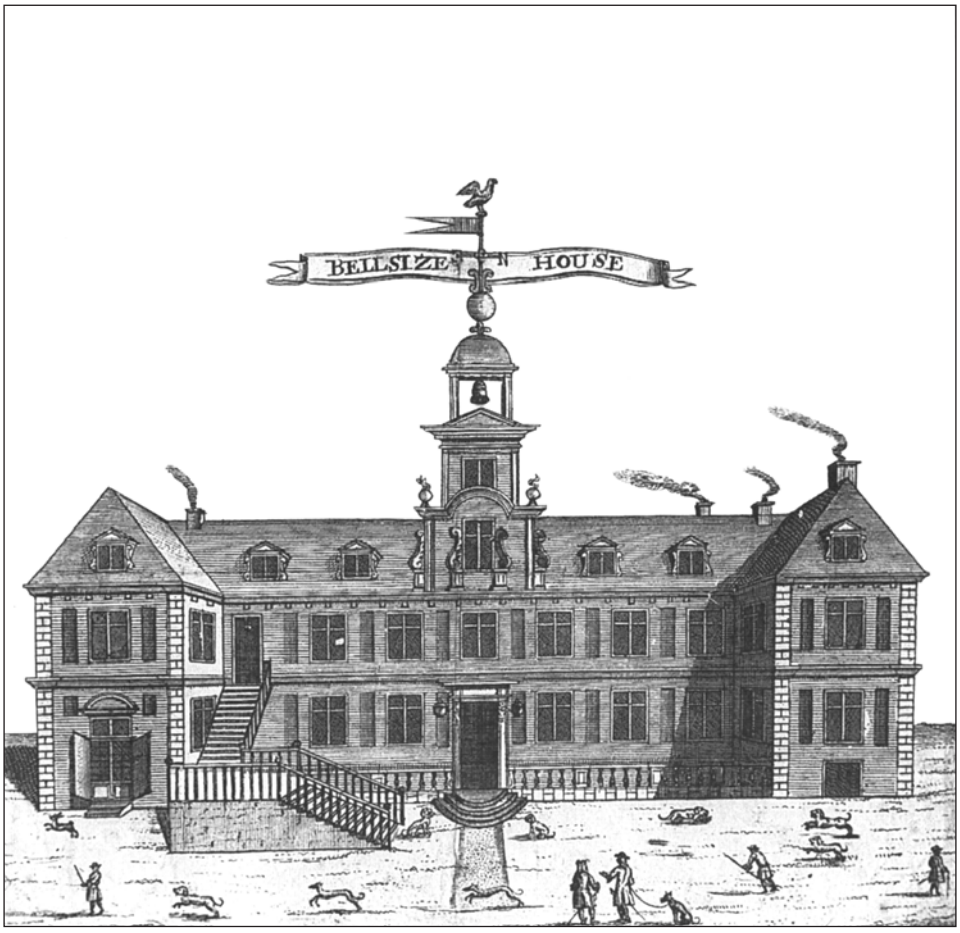


1 – Belsize House, c *1720*
(courtesy Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

The Irish in London: post-Restoration suburban houses

CAROLINE KNIGHT

Considerable research is being undertaken into Ireland's architectural history, but there is another aspect that is sometimes overlooked: the houses which aristocratic Irish families leased, bought, or inherited in England. This article is concerned with a particular type of house, which could loosely be described as a suburban villa, that is, neither the London house nor the country estate of a family, but a moderately sized house and garden in the vicinity of the capital. Defoe sums up their purpose:

> These fine houses ... are not, at least very few of them, the Mansion-Houses of families, the Ancient Residences of Ancestors, the Capital Messuages of Estates; nor have the rich possessors any Lands to a considerable Value about them; but these are all Houses of Retreat ... Gentlemen's meer Summer-Houses, or Citizen's Country Houses, whither they retire from the hurry of business ... to draw their breath in a clean air and to divert themselves and their families in the hot weather.[1]

Combined with this sense of privacy and retreat was the advantage of proximity to London and to the court. Many of the Scots who accompanied James I to London after 1603 had established themselves in and around London during the early seventeenth century; the Irish were to do so slightly later.

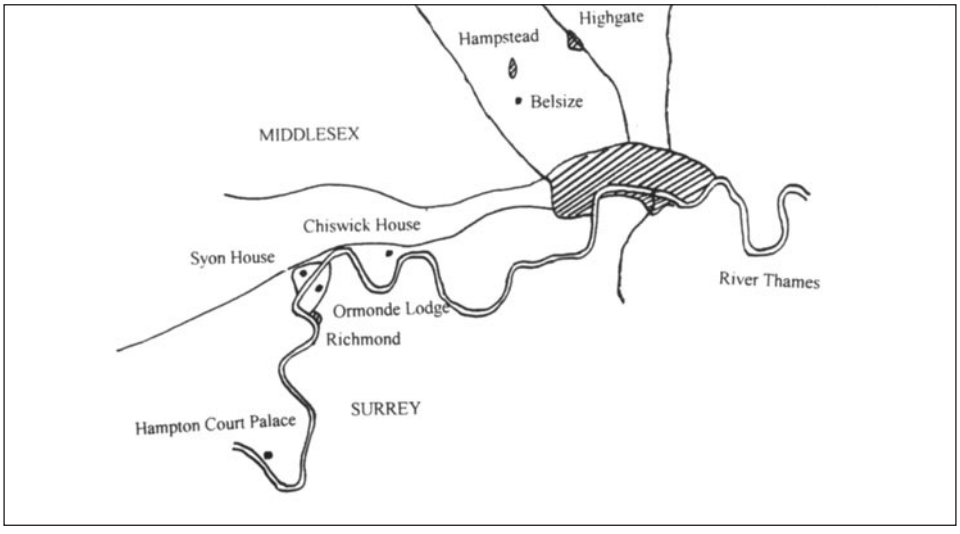
As England became increasingly prosperous through the sixteenth century, villages within about ten miles of the capital were scattered with the fine houses of rich City merchants and of courtiers. Some areas were particularly fashionable, especially Hackney and Highgate to the north of the City, and the easily accessible villages along the Thames such as Chelsea, Chiswick, Kew and Richmond. The later Stuarts and the Hanoverians no longer favoured the royal palaces to the east of London such as Greenwich or Eltham; instead, when not at Whitehall or St. James's they moved westwards along the Thames to Richmond and Hampton Court, each of which had gardens and two large hunting parks. Londoners followed, and by the

early eighteenth century it was the Thames-side villages which became the favourite retreats of the rich.

The three houses with which I am concerned all belonged to Irish courtiers in the period between the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the death of Queen Anne in 1714. They are Daniel O'Neill's Belsize House in Hampstead, the 1st Earl of Burlington's Chiswick House, and the 2nd Duke of Ormonde's Ormonde Lodge in Richmond (Plate 2). Apart from their Irish owners and their proximity to London, these houses have little in common architecturally: Belsize was a new house, rebuilt after the Restoration and leased from the Church; Chiswick was a Jacobean house, which had already had many different owners when Burlington bought it in 1682; and Ormonde Lodge was a royal hunting lodge, altered by Ormonde before reverting to the Crown at his downfall in 1715. All three of these houses have gone, although the villa we see today at Chiswick was an addition of the 1720's to the Jacobean house. Belsize was demolished in the mid-eighteenth century and the site redeveloped a century later with substantial stuccoed houses; Ormonde Lodge was demolished in 1772 and the grounds incorporated into what is now the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. This is fairly typical of the fate of such houses: many were demolished and their grounds covered with speculative building; sometimes the house went but the gardens were made into a public park; and just occasionally – as at Chiswick – a building of exceptional architectural interest has been saved, together with its immediate surroundings.

2 – Map of the environs of London

showing the relative positions of Belsize House, Chiswick House and Ormonde Lodge



BELSIZE HOUSE

Daniel O'Neill (1612?-1664) was one of the few Irishmen to make his fortune directly through the sinecures he held as a result of his favour at court.[2] He belonged to an ancient Irish family who had been kings of Ulster but whose circumstances were greatly reduced. His father, Con O'Neill of Clandeboye, had already lost part of his estates through dubious dealings with two Scots who successfully claimed the remainder of the land over the next few years. Meanwhile Daniel was made a ward in Chancery to ensure his father's loyalty to the crown, and was taken to England to be brought up as a Protestant. He was the only member of his family not to be a Roman Catholic. This English upbringing gave him useful connections, and with his charm, intelligence and good looks he was able to make full use of them. Clarendon described him:

> Daniel O'Neile ... had a natural insinuation and address, which made him acceptable in the best company. He was a great observer and discerner of men's nature's and humours, and was very dexterous in compliance where he found it useful ... And though his inclinations were to ease and luxury, his industry was indefatigable, when his honour required it, or his particular interest ... made it necessary or convenient.[3]

As the younger son, Daniel had to make his own living and he decided on a military career, dividing his time between Britain and the Netherlands, where he was in contact with Elizabeth of Bohemia and fought bravely at the capture of Breda. By the outbreak of the Civil War he was an experienced soldier, diplomat and courtier, indispensable to the King. After many adventures during the war – imprisonment, escape, missions abroad, accompanying Charles II in his invasion of Scotland – he ended up in The Hague with the influential position of Groom of the Bedchamber to the exiled Charles II.

At the Restoration, O'Neill's loyalty was amply rewarded with sinecures, and it was these which made him wealthy enough to rebuild Belsize 'at vast expense', according to Evelyn.[4] His considerable income derived entirely from royal favour as he and his brother had been unable to reclaim their Irish inheritance, and even after his brother's death in the Civil War he had an income of only £160 per annum. As well as an annual pension of £500, he was given the monopoly of manufacturing gunpowder for the Crown, and was part of a syndicate with the right to mine north of the Trent and in Wales, but, most lucrative of all, he was made Postmaster-General in March 1663 – a post which he could not have held unless he were a

member of the Church of England. For farming the posts he paid the Crown the considerable sum of £21,500 per annum, and was then entitled to any profits he could make. He also had a rich wife, having recently married the beautiful widow Katherine Wotton, created Countess of Chesterfield in her own right in 1660. She too was a courtier, having been part of the royal household in The Hague since 1641.[5] She had inherited her father's fine house at Boughton Malherbe in Kent, which she and O'Neill used as their country house. In addition, she had a London house at Spring Gardens in St. James's where her married daughter lived. As Lady Chesterfield was Lady in Waiting to Catherine of Braganza, they were also entitled to lodgings in Whitehall Palace, and it was here that O'Neill died.[6] So Belsize was for occasional use as a retreat from London.

Belsize House, when O'Neill took it over, was a large brick courtyard house, dating from about 1496. As its name implies, it enjoyed a fine position on the southern slopes of Hampstead Hill, sheltered, sunny and comparatively accessible, unlike the remote and as yet unfashionable village of Hampstead perched on the hill above (Plate 1). The property belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster but had been leased to the distinguished Waad family from the mid-sixteenth century until they had lost possession under the Commonwealth. In spite of their efforts to reclaim it at the Restoration, they failed to dislodge the Parliamentarian Colonel Downes, and it was Daniel O'Neill who took out a new lease. This has usually been dated to about 1663, but it was actually on 28 January 1661 that the Chapter ordered that a lease be drawn up for twenty-one years 'for Mr.Oneale under the old rents and Covenants'.[7] Another Westminster document records an indenture of February 1661 made between 'Daniell Oneale one of the Grooms of his Maiesties Bedchamber' and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster of

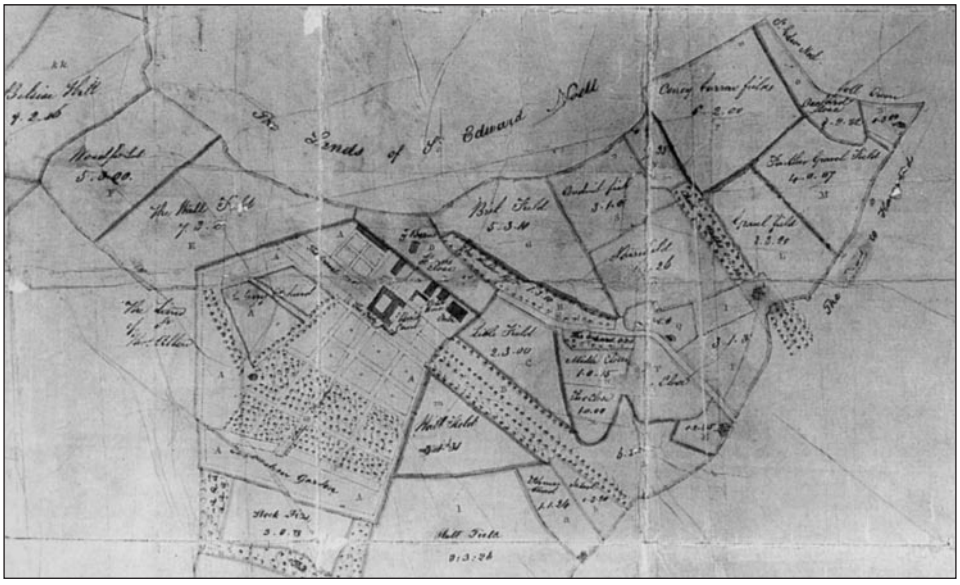
> their Mannor ... and messuage of Bellsess situate ... in the parish of Hamsteed in the Countie of Middlx. together with all and singular the houses Tenemts Buildings lands Tylehouses meadows pastures hedgerows woods underwoods with sufficient Timber to bee taken from time to time for the maintenance of the aforesaid houses and all the ponds orchards and gardens with all and singular their profitts ...'

He paid the Dean and Chapter an annual rent of £38 5s 8d.[8] Usually these suburban houses had perhaps ten to thirty acres of gardens and fields, but Belsize had enough land to be a modest estate. The acreage is not given in these documents, but a map of 1713 shows the same estate with land stretching south into St John's Wood in the parish of Paddington, and gives the acreage as 233 acres.[9]

Documents relating to his new house are sparse, but there are two pieces of visual evidence: a map of 1679 and a print of about 1720 (Plate 1). This print shows

3 – Detail of Belsize and Hampstead from Rocque, 12
(courtesy London Topographical Society)

4 – Detail from 'A Mapp of the mannor of Belsize ... by Will. Gent Surveyor 1679'
pen and ink with some coloured wash outlines
(courtesy Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre)



a typical Restoration house, presumably built of brick with stone quoins, rather Dutch in style, with two equal storeys over a semi-basement and with attics in a high hipped roof, the centre of which is crowned by a cupola. But this façade is deceptive: the 1679 map shows that it is only one side of a large courtyard house. This must be a rebuilding on the same site of the fifteenth-century house. The map allows us to work out its size: it was a substantial house approximately 40 x 37 metres (121 x 110 ft). The staircase seen in the print which clumsily connected the first floor to the gardens is the product of its conversion in 1720 into a place of entertainment, but otherwise there are few obvious changes from O'Neill's time. The Hearth Tax returns are a useful guide to the size of a house, but the 1664 returns (the most detailed for the late seventeenth century) register only sixteen hearths, suggesting that work was still in progress then.[10] O'Neill died in 1664 leaving Belsize to his wife. When she died there in 1667 she left to her younger son

> Charles Henry Lord Wootton all ... the Lease and Estate of and in the mannor of Belsize ... and my House scituate in the parish of Hampstead and all the money plate Jewells and ffurniture that I shall leave therein ... and all ... my Lease and Estate in the said Woods called St. John's Wood...

The will has a codicil which gives a little information about her belongings and her considerable wealth. She left to the King and Queen two of her most precious possessions: Charles II was to receive the 'Greate Pourslane Pott which is in my Gallery at Belsize and my blacke Indian Skreene', and the Queen was to receive 'my two Wyreworked candlesticks and a silver perfuming pot', though these are not specified as being at Belsize.[11] This impression of exotic furniture is confirmed by Evelyn: 'The furniture is very particular for Indian cabinets, Porcelane and other solid and noble moveables, the Gallery very fine.' [12]

Like so many of these suburban houses, the twenty-five acres of gardens were lavishly laid out, and we can get some idea of them from the map drawn by William Gent in 1679 (Plate 4). This shows the double avenue flanking the drive from Haverstock Hill (replanted with plane trees, this survives today as Belsize Avenue), the courtyard house behind a walled forecourt, and the irregular wall enclosing the gardens. Beyond the house was a straight walk, with the orangery marked as the long, low building facing south. To the south side of the house were formal areas, with the less formal 'Wilderness' beyond. The former consisted of grassed squares with a vase or statue in the centre of each, and below that the Wilderness was divided by straight paths with a fountain at the intersection. The service buildings were to the north-east of the house – a laundry, water house and stables inside the main enclosure and a barn outside. Pepys described the gardens in 1668 as 'wonderful fine; too good for the house, the gardens are; being endeed the

most noble that ever I saw – and rare Orange and Lemon trees',[13] while Evelyn was less complimentary, describing in 1676 'the Gardens very large but ill-kept, yet Woody and chargeable; the mould a cold weeping clay, not answering the expense.'[14]

The splendid house did not last long. The Earl of Chesterfield sublet it in 1704 to an unscrupulous entrepreneur called Charles Povey, who extracted as much profit as he could by stripping the place of such assets as its timber and even the leadwork of the house.[15] Povey in turn sublet it to James Howell in 1720, and it briefly flourished as a fashionable place of entertainment such as Ranelagh Gardens was later to become. In 1733 the Chesterfields applied to the Dean and Chapter for permission to demolish Belsize 'which is by length of time and many accidents so decayed as to be brought into a ruinous condition and not to be supported without a very great Expense.' Permission to demolish was granted, but on condition that the house be replaced.[16] The exact date of demolition is not known: Rocque's map was prepared between 1741 and 1745, and still shows the courtyard house with its walled gardens, orangery and outbuildings (Plate 3). At some stage during the 1740s, a much smaller Belsize House was built, possibly incorporating part of O'Neill's house. In the early nineteenth century the land was split into smaller parcels and a new house was built on a different site, much closer to Haverstock Hill. From 1853 the site of the house and grounds was gradually developed with a mixture of detached and terraced houses, and today only a clutch of street names such as Belsize Park and Belsize Square record the existence of the house and gardens.

This house was only very briefly in Irish ownership, being left at O'Neill's death to his widow and then to his stepson, but it was O'Neill who made the decision to rebuild the old house and make it more splendid and up to date. In contrast, the Earl of Burlington was content to leave the old house he bought at Chiswick comparatively unaltered, and it was only about 1726 that his descendant, the 3rd Earl of Burlington, added the present Chiswick House to the earlier one.

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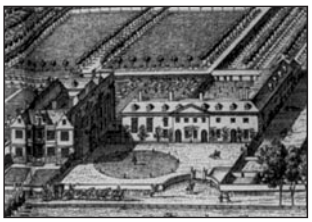
CHISWICK HOUSE



Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Burlington (1612-1698), was also 2nd Earl of Cork in the Irish peerage. Unlike O'Neill but like Ormonde, he was immensely rich through the rent roll of his huge estates. He was born and brought up in Ireland, the eldest surviving son of the powerful Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork, a Protestant who had gone to Ireland in the late sixteenth century and had acquired enormous estates in Munster, with Lismore Castle as his main seat. He arranged good marriages for his large family, but Richard's was perhaps the most financially rewarding, his marriage to the English heiress Elizabeth Clifford bringing him vast estates in the north of England, including the Londesborough, Skipton and Bolton Abbey estates in Yorkshire. This Yorkshire link was recognised in his English peerage that he was given in 1665, as Burlington was the alternative name for Bridlington in the East Riding. With these vast estates and the local responsibilities which went with them – Burlington had two spells as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire – and a seat in the English House of Lords, he increasingly spent his time in England, although regularly visiting Dublin and keeping a careful watch over his Irish estates. In 1667 he bought the partly built Burlington House in Piccadilly, next to Lord Clarendon's splendid new town house, and soon after gave up his Dublin house. With his country estates far away in Ireland and in the north of England he also needed a house near London for his growing family, and in 1682 he paid Sir Edward Seymour, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the substantial sum of £4,800 for 'a Messuage and severall Lands ... at Chiswick in ye County of Middlx'.[17] The outbuildings included new stables and a coach house which Seymour had built that same year.

The house at Chiswick had been built in the early years of the seventeenth century by Sir Edward Wardour, and had then changed hands many times before Burlington bought it.[18] The riverside village of Chiswick was half a mile away to the east, and the house faced a quiet lane which skirted the water-meadows by the Thames.[19] It was a courtyard house, slightly smaller than Belsize, described by Bowack in 1706 as

> a noble antient Seat ... after the antient manner very regular and Strong. It has very many spacious rooms in it, and large gardens behind. In this Seat formerly dwelt James Duke of Monmouth, it afterwards was purchas'd by the Right Honourable the Earl of Burlington where he Liv'd and Dy'd; his son the late Earl us'd commonly to dwell there during the Summer Season.[20]

Its site was much more 'suburban' than Belsize. Chiswick House was flanked to the west by Sutton Court, Lord Fauconberg's house, and to the east, Sir Stephen Fox's house, rebuilt by Hugh May in 1682-84, was even closer.[21] This meant that the gardens were mainly behind the house, and amounted to only fifteen acres, with a few other scattered plots of land which were rented in the parish.

As so often with lost seventeenth-century houses, there is little visual evidence for the original house, no known plan or inventory, and practically no contemporary comment. The house was demolished by the 5th Duke of Devonshire in 1788 to make way for the new wings he added to the 3rd Earl's villa.[22] The main source for the early house is the Kip engraving of about 1710 (Plate 5). Kip shows a substantial brick courtyard house of two storeys with attics; the attic windows are set in shaped gables and the roofline is punctuated by tall chimneys. A small walled forecourt opened onto the road, beyond which an avenue led down to the water-meadows by the Thames. Service buildings, rebuilt by Kip's time, were to the side, and a formal garden was laid out behind and beside the house. The boundary with Fauconberg's house was a small stream, the Bollo Brook, which was enlarged into the present lake by the 3rd Earl. There appear to be no garden buildings; the large orangery to the right of the house belonged to the adjoining property. The axis of the gardens behind the house is preserved in the gardens of Chiswick House today, where the eighteenth-century villa is not aligned on the main avenue.

It seems unlikely that the 1st Earl made any important alterations to the house. He was notoriously frugal in his habits and unlikely to spend large sums on Chiswick, which he must have considered as much less important than his country seat. Having completed his London house, he began major works on both house and grounds at Londesborough in 1672.[23] This substantial late-sixteenth-century house was finely sited on the southern slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds. Robert Hooke was possibly employed by Burlington to update and enlarge it, and to lay out the large formal gardens on three sides of the house. A Kip view of about 1700 shows the formal gardens, possibly also designed by Hooke, on three sides of the house. The 6th Duke of Devonshire demolished the house in 1818, but as so often there was no incentive to level the gardens, so some of the hillside terraces can still be seen, and traces of avenues.[24]

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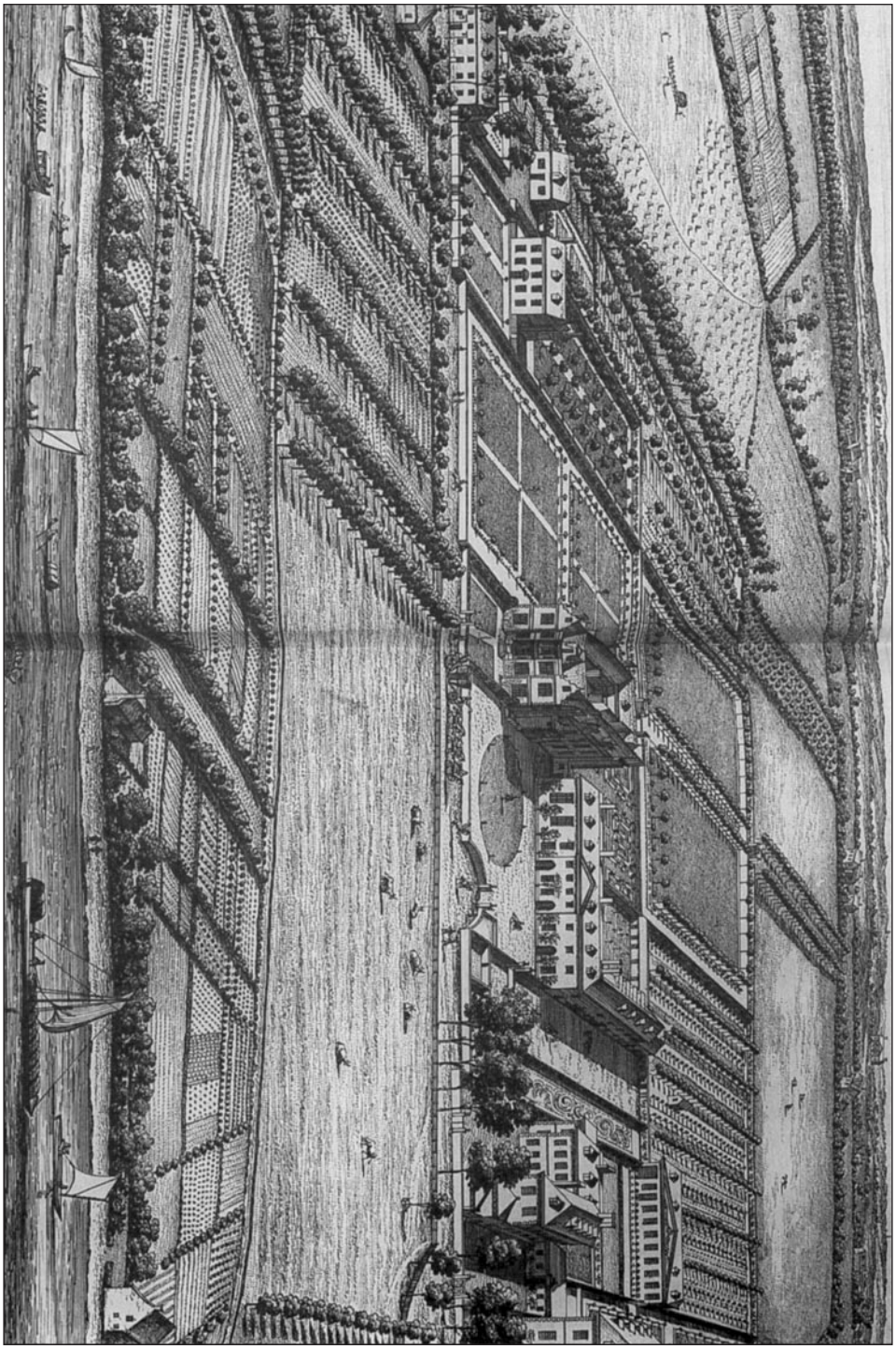
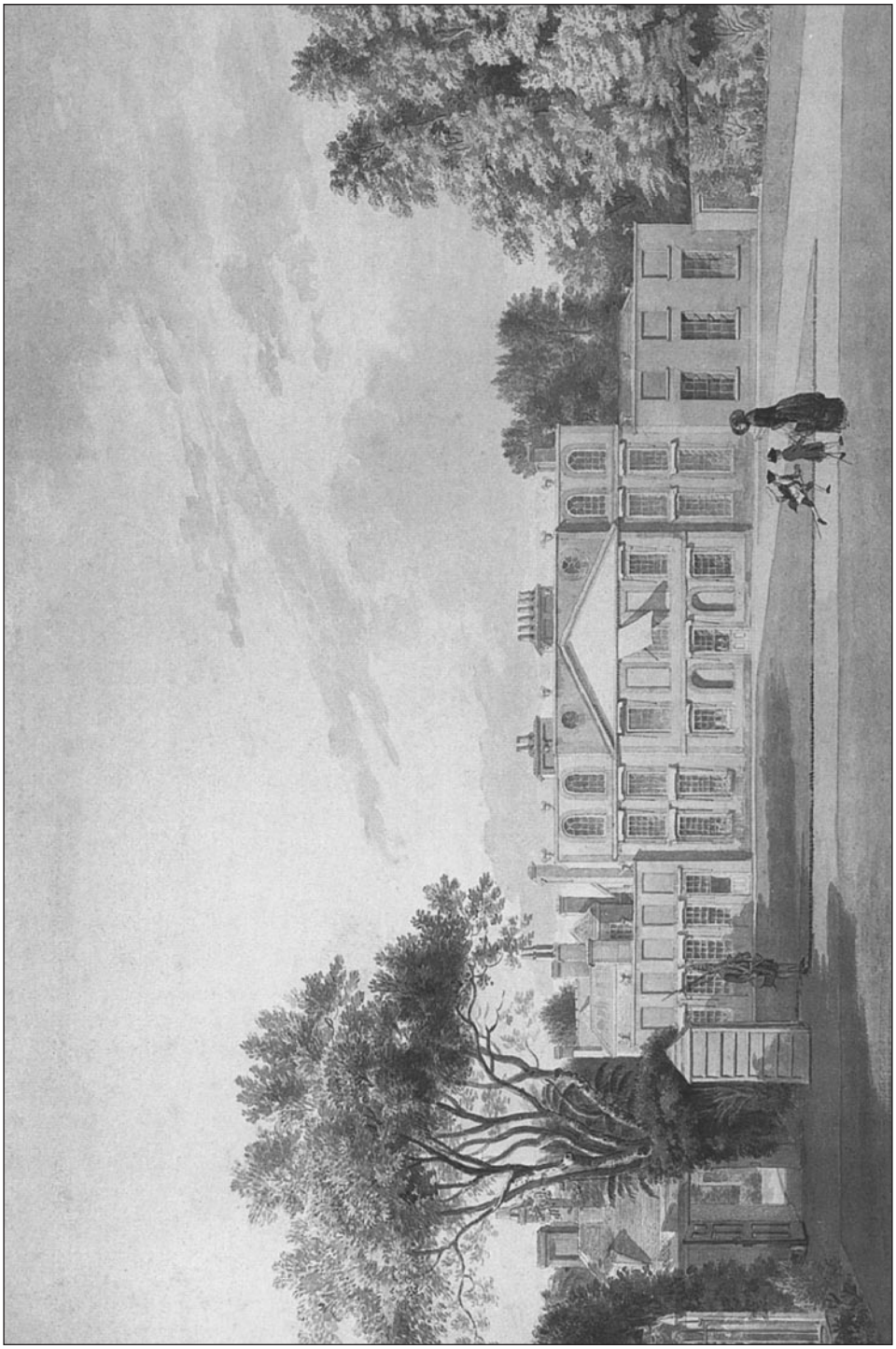
page 70 *5 – Kip, view of Chiswick, c 1710*
(courtesy Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

page 71 *6 – Thomas Sandby, Ormonde or Richmond Lodge, Kew, c 1770?*
(The Royal Collection, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)





ORMONDE LODGE

The lack of information about Chiswick is in stark contrast to the records of Ormonde Lodge, where, due to the impeachment of the Duke of Ormonde, a full inventory was made of the saleable contents of his house and garden in 1716. This house was Crown property, attached to Richmond Palace on the Thames (Plate 7). This is a detail of Rocque's 1746 map (and was therefore surveyed after alterations to the gardens made by Queen Caroline). It shows the position of the house – it is across the Thames from 'the Duke of Somerset's Syon House', and about a mile north of the village of Richmond. The Palace at Richmond was no longer in royal use during the reign of William and Mary. Instead William III, who loved hunting, improved the lodge in the Old Deer Park, known as Richmond Lodge, for himself, and also updated the gardens.[25] These lodges were often held by the Ranger of the Park, and it was through his post as Ranger that Ormonde had the opportunity to take out a lease after William's death.

James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde (1665-1745) was much more closely involved with Irish affairs than either O'Neill or Burlington. He came from one of the great Irish families, most of whom were Roman Catholics, although he was a Protestant, and a patron of Swift.[26] The Ormondes had large estates at Kilkenny, Dunmore and Clonmel, with a rent roll estimated at £25,000 per annum in 1688. His main country house was the ancient Kilkenny Castle, but he also had lodgings in Dublin Castle. As Lord Butler of Moore Park he was also entitled to sit in the English House of Lords, and from 1685 to 1688 he was a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to James II.[27] In spite of this, he supported his cousin William of Orange in 1688 – Ormonde's mother was Dutch – and fought for him in Ireland, Flanders and Spain. With the accession of Queen Anne he was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and later replaced Marlborough as her Commander-in-Chief. He remained high in the Queen's favour, so much so that she insisted he did not risk his life nor her armies while in command in Europe. The manner in which he followed her secret instructions and failed to support the allies – which included Hanover – was later to be the one of the charges against him. After the accession of George I he was immediately dismissed, and the House of Commons voted by a narrow majority to impeach him. He avoided his trial by fleeing to Paris in 1715, where he joined the court of the Old Pretender. He died in Avignon in 1745.

In 1682 – the year in which he married his first wife, Lord Burlington's niece – he bought a fine London house in the newly developed St James's Square. He also

had lodgings in Whitehall Palace. Richmond, 'the prettiest place in the world',[28] would have been a convenient retreat between Hampton Court – much used by Queen Anne – and London. He was granted a ninety-nine year lease on the lodge and various pieces of ground in May 1704.[29] When he went into exile in 1715 and was later impeached in his absence, his property and goods were forfeit, and it is due to the detailed inventories drawn up for the Forfeit Estates Commissioners that we know so much about his house and its furnishings. There are no known depictions of the house in Ormonde's time, but a later eighteenth-century watercolour of the south front gives us some idea of its appearance (Plate 6). It was a brick house with two ranges divided by an entrance forecourt on the east side, a service courtyard to the west, and a central core of hall and staircases. The advantage of this plan was that all the main rooms overlooked the gardens, either north to the Thames or south towards Richmond; the disadvantage was the rather awkward circulation.

As a busy man, constantly on the move between his Irish estates, court duties and military commands, Ormonde could not oversee the alterations he wished to make to his new house, so various Irish friends and relations supervised the work. There are references to his brother-in-law and cousin, the 1st Earl of Grantham, and in one of the latter's letters is a tantalising entry which might be to the architect Sir John Vanbrugh. Grantham writes, '*J'ay paye, selon vos ordres, a M. Van Brugh cinquante guinées*.' [30] Grantham was helped in his supervision by the Earl of Arran, Ormonde's younger brother, and by the Earl of Ranelagh. The latter described himself as Ormonde's *surintendant*, although his history of financial mismanagement and extravagance makes him seem a brave choice.[31] Their letters to Ormonde throw some light on the expensive works on both house and gardens which, in spite of William III's recent expenditure, were begun at once. There is no mention of the Duchess of Ormonde making any contribution to the changes, [32] nor are there any references to an architect (apart from the payment above to Vanbrugh), but a carpenter called Churchill was in charge of the works. This was almost certainly John Churchill, Master Carpenter at the Office of Works from 1706 to 1715. Ranelagh went down from London for occasional visits on site, dealt with the accounts and with payments to the various bricklayers, plumbers, slaters, smiths and carpenters, and reported back to Ormonde on progress.

The garden front of the house was to be redesigned with Churchill in charge of the estimates. In December 1704, Ranelagh sent Ormonde a 'draught for the garden front ... under the upright of the front you will find as much of the grounde plotte as is necessary to make everything cleare.' Another letter explains that this was simply a refacing of the existing front, 'a new coat', as Ranelagh puts it, with arched 'sachée windows' in rubbed brickwork. This probably means the north front, overlooking the more important riverside gardens; the arched windows may be sim-

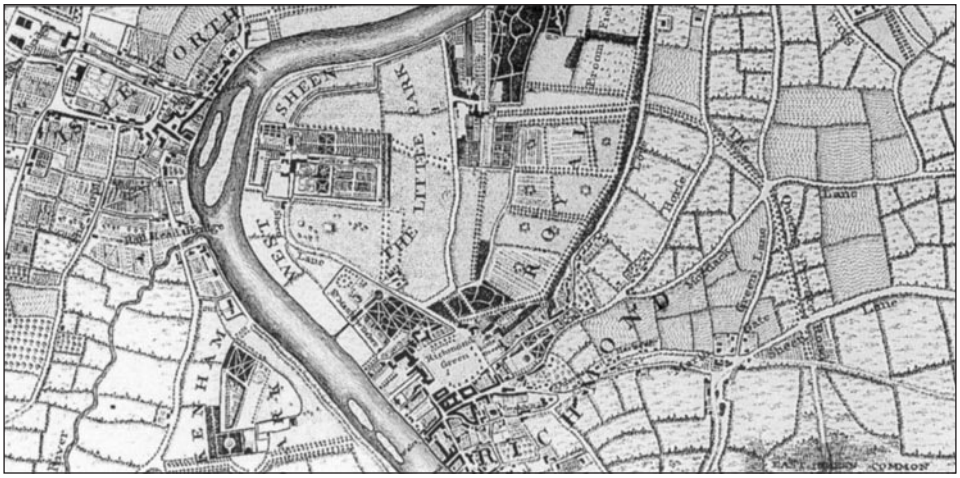
ilar to the arched second-floor windows which can be seen in the Sandby water-colour of the south front. (There is no known illustration of the north front.) A letter from Grantham in February 1705 tells Ormonde that

> *Tous s'avance beaucoup a Richemont; on a abattu tout ce qu'il y avoit a abattre et toutte la peinture est presque finie. My Lord Ranela a été hier avec moi pour ordonner votre ameublement, on nous a promis que tout servit fait dans un mois; esperre que vous trouverrés a votre gré.*[33]

Expensive work in the gardens included building two new 'green houses' to shelter orange trees. As at the exactly contemporary Kensington Palace orangery, these were to be wainscoted and well floored to serve as summer rooms when the trees were outdoors. Ranelagh suggests using best Swedish marble for the floors 'much handsomer [than tiles] when your orange trees are removed', but it turned out to be unobtainable in London that year, so an inferior stone was used instead. When the contents were inventoried in 1716 there were one hundred large and eighty-four small orange trees, worth a total of £48, as well as pomegranates, 'Malibo nutt trees', myrtles and bay trees.

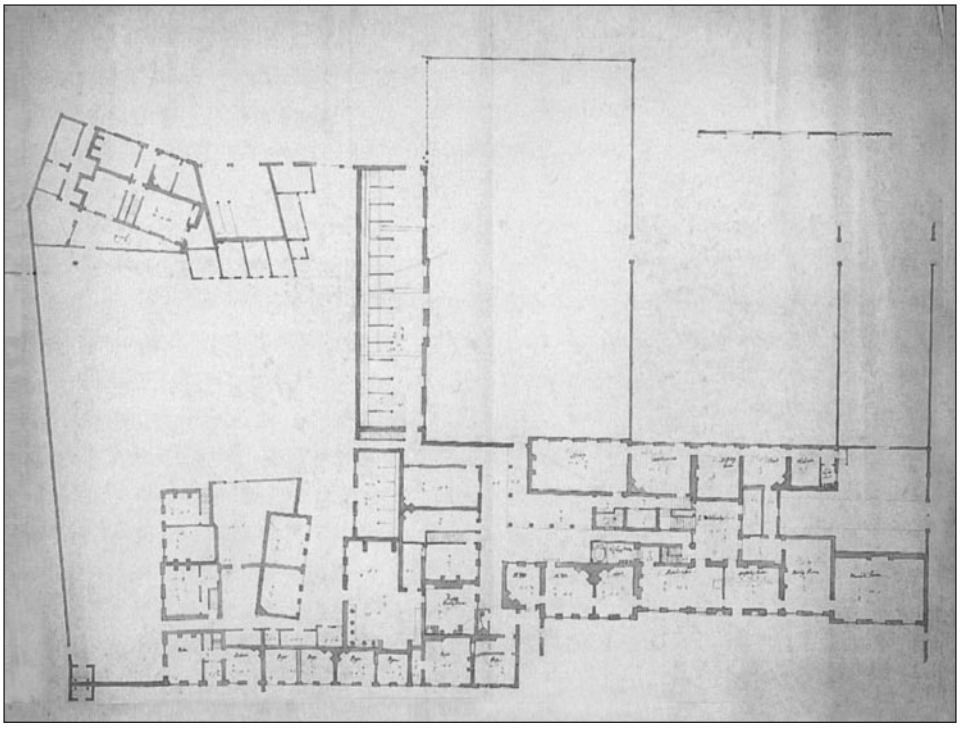
Creating a terrace and a pond in the gardens involved considerable amounts of earth-moving, and Ranelagh had to point out to Ormonde how high wages were compared to Ireland, 'particularly in the digging and removal of earth, for there hands are cheap, but here very deare, especially soe neare London as Richmond is'.[34] In charge of the garden alterations were 'Ingeneer O'Brien', who seems to have been in overall charge of the garden works, and Reading 'the leveller' with his team of labourers. They dug a 'great pond' to be fed from springs beneath it, which was then to be stocked with fish. The river walk had a summer house overlooking the Thames, which can be seen on Rocque's map, almost opposite the gardens of Syon House. According to the Forfeit Estates Commissioners, this was comfortably furnished, with '8 leather chairs' and a couch worth £7, two Dutch 'sea-peices' worth £4, an overmantel mirror and sconces and '2 small oval tables'. There were also '18 Leaden Gilt flower potts' worth £22 arranged along the wall of the 'Little Garden', perhaps that to the south of the house.[35] Outside the immediate garden was a 'plantation' stocked with young trees, fenced off with pales and 'planted with quick sette which will hinder rabbits and hares from attaquing them'. Macky described the gardens in 1722:

> There is a fine avenue that runs from the Front of the house to the Town of Richmond, at half a mile's distance one way, and from the other front to the River-side, both inclosed with Ballustrades of Iron. The Gardens are very spacious and well-kept. There is a fine Terrace towards the River. But above



7 – Detail of Richmond Old Park and Thames from Rocque, 15
(courtesy London Topographical Society)

8 – The ground floor of Ormonde Lodge, Kew, together with its service buildings
(The Royal Collection, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)



> all the Wood cut out into Walks, with the plenty of Birds singing in it, makes it one of the most delicious Habitations.[36]

The house would need furnishing, and in January 1705 Ranelagh had begun considering 'the furnishing [of] your apartment at Richmond' together with Grantham and the craftsmen. By mid-June he was able to tell Ormonde that

> he will find his Marly ready to receive him ... Your four commissioners [Ranelagh, Grantham, Kendall and Arran] dined [at Richmond] yesterday to see your own apartment entirely furnished ... Your bathing apartment will also be ready and furnished by the end of next week, and though we cannot assure you as yet that you shall not see workmen there when you first visit it, yet you may depend upon it they shall not trouble you with their noise.[37]

Turning to the inventory prepared by the Forfeit Estates Commissioners, we can get some idea of the layout and furnishing of this house.[38] There is also a series of plans of the house and service buildings in the Royal Library which probably date from about 1771-72, that is, just before its demolition (Plate 8). Combining the information from these two sources, we can build up a picture of the house, which with all its alterations was curiously haphazard in its planning. The Sandby watercolour shows an addition to the right, marked on the plan as 'Musick Room' and the plan shows another large room marked 'Library' on the north front; both of these rooms were probably added by George III, as was the narrow entrance hall. Other changes, such as the 'Bagnio' which projected into the colonnaded service courtyard, were probably made by Queen Caroline, but the other rooms seem little changed from Ormonde's time.

In 1716 Lord Grantham was living in part of the house and had signed an agreement with the government not to remove any contents; he had brought in a few pieces of his own furniture, which are noted in the draft but omitted in the final copy. Although not large, Ormonde Lodge was luxuriously furnished, with a valuable Tompion clock in the entrance-cum-staircase hall, marked 'Antichamber' on the plan.

The great dining room, marked 'Dining Room' (to the west of the music room addition) was furnished with a set of twelve crimson damask chairs, and would have been brilliantly lit by '7 large oval glass sconces double branch't'. The paintings here were considered important enough to list specifically; as usual these are described by subject matter rather than by artist. There were two overdoor paintings with half-lengths of Dutch admirals, a 'large picture of the Holy Family' over the chimney-piece and another one opposite, and portraits, including one of the 1st Duke of Ormonde. Adjoining, marked 'Dressing Room', was the Little Dining

Room, and a small 'Sideboard Room' could be used for either. This had a 'white marble cistern & black marble Stand' and the 'Japan Iron cistern' may have been fitted into the niche marked on the plan.

The ground-floor apartment of yellow damask bedchamber, dressing room and closet had the most expensive furnishings, with the bed protected by case curtains and the matching settee, chairs and stools by covers. The dressing room had specified oil paintings: '2 sea pieces and a still life'. Beyond it another 'Closet within the dressing room' contained a number of 'Indian pictures' as well as a glazed bookcase of walnut and several maps, and beyond was the 'Closet for Necessary House' with its close stool. These rooms were probably the 'Dressing Room' and 'Closet' on the north front, and the two small closets beyond. The rather male furnishings – sea paintings, maps and a bookcase – suggest that this may have been Ormonde's own apartment.

On the south front was the well furnished 'Room leading to the Garden' which had a 'flowered damask couch' and matching stools, and no less than four pier glasses 'in glass frames'. This was probably the room marked 'Bedroom' on the south front, between the little dining room and the closets beyond. There is no saloon in the inventory, but this room, with its expensive furnishings and tapestry hangings, may well have served as the withdrawing room. Beyond lay the 'Bagnio' with its expensive 'blew and white calico bed lin'd', but with no information as to the bathing arrangements.[39]

The staircase was lit by a hanging lantern, and was decorated with '5 Indian pieces in Pannells'. This may have been similar to the almost contemporary Japan Room in Buckingham House, where black lacquer panels were inset as part of the decorative scheme.[40] At the top of the stairs was hung a plan of the house. On the first floor was the 'First bed chamber' which had a bed hung with green flowered silk, walls hung with silk and white damask curtains. This was followed by 'My Lord's bedchamber' probably referring to that used by Grantham, and 'My Lady's Closet'. There is no identifiable reference either to the Duke's or Duchess's bedchambers, dressing rooms or closets, again suggesting that Ormonde's rooms were below, the only other well furnished room being that of Lady Frances Coote with its tapestry hangings and blue damask bed with matching window curtains. The rest of the first-floor bedrooms were more modestly furnished and apparently belonged to members of the household. Footmen slept in the garret.

Only three rooms had tapestry: the 'Room leading to the garden,' Lady Frances Coote's bedchamber, and the housekeeper's room. None is described, but they were respectively valued at £18, £3 and £4, the latter two presumably of indifferent quality. The high value of the tapestry in the 'Room leading to the Garden' again suggests it was the withdrawing room, for which tapestry would have been a

suitable wall-covering. The house was full of pictures – oil paintings, prints, maps, and at least sixty-seven 'Indian pictures' in various of the main rooms. There is no clue as to the subject matter of these, and only one reference to size – the little dining room had '16 Indian pictures Great & Small'. The latter could possibly have been Indian miniatures; certainly some were imported into Europe during the seventeenth century, especially via the Netherlands, and Ormonde with his Dutch connections and military service abroad could have inherited or bought them. But the term Indian is used so loosely at this time that it is also possible that they were Chinese, though these would have been much rarer.[41] He clearly shared the fashionable taste for the exotic oriental style as the inventory listed sets of japanned furniture as well as the staircase panels. Not surprisingly, there was also a strong Dutch influence in the furnishings, with a Delft pot in the great dining room fireplace, Dutch chairs and Dutch paintings.

After the sale of Ormonde's goods, his brother the Earl of Arran was allowed by Parliament to buy his estates, but he did not keep Ormonde Lodge, selling it in July 1719:

> Yesterday the house of the late Duke of Ormonde at Richmond was put to sale at Auction before the Commissioners of forfeited estates and bought by the Prince [of Wales and later George II] for £600. No body bid upon his Royal Highness.[42]

Macky describes it at this time as 'a perfect Trianon ... It does not appear with the Grandeur of a Royal Palace, but is very neat and pretty.' [43] It became one of the favourite retreats of George II and Queen Caroline, and in 1727 it was settled on the latter as her dower house. It was after this that Queen Caroline laid out her celebrated gardens with the help of William Kent, keeping some features of the older layout but adding winding walks and curious garden buildings such as the Hermitage and Merlin's Cave.[44] The house was demolished by George III in 1772 when he planned his great new palace at the northern end of Kew Gardens.

These three owners were the earliest Irish courtiers to establish themselves near London, but later in the eighteenth century there were a few other Irish aristocrats who acquired houses in the vicinity of the capital. The Earl of Grantham, whom we have already seen advising Ormonde on his building projects, bought Grove House in Chiswick, probably in the late 1740s. He died in 1754. Another Irishman, Lord Dunkerron, joined him in the same parish, buying Heathfield House in 1747. He died three years later. The common factor with both these owners was their age – these men found the environs of London both peaceful and convenient; they did not need large family houses such as Belsize or Chiswick House, nor elaborate and expensive gardens such as those at Ormonde Lodge.

CONCLUSION

The cult of the country house and the expansion of London have combined to diminish the importance of these suburban houses to us today. But in their time they were conspicuous and well known. Kip's views included several of these suburban houses as well as many substantial country seats. Belsize was unusual in not being on a main route out of London, but Chiswick and Ormonde Lodge could be seen by anyone travelling along the Thames. Throughout the eighteenth century, foreigners described seeing them: Saussure, 'going down the river from Hampton Court to London', mentioned Chiswick as one of the principal houses which could be seen along the river. Ormonde Lodge he referred to as 'small, but in good taste', and praised its gardens.[45] Modest in scale some of them may have been, but they were lavishly and comfortably furnished, as we have seen from Ormonde's inventory. It was easy to see the latest fashions in London, simple to order fine quality goods, less expensive to redecorate and furnish a comparatively small house than a great country one. Perhaps there was also a sense in which the state rooms of a great country house should display a formal and traditional style, while in a lesser house decoration could be both more informal and more fashionable.

For garden enthusiasts also there were many advantages over the country. The landscape along the Thames might be too flat for dramatic views, but the houses along its banks themselves provided the interest: Ormonde Lodge looked across the Thames to the park and ancient silhouette of Syon House. The gentle climate of the Thames valley allowed the cultivation of exotic plants, and nurseries such as that at Brompton were set up to supply native plants, as well as those imported from Holland or newly discovered in more remote places.[46] Garden enthusiasts could meet to discuss the latest botanical discoveries, and could easily visit each other's gardens, just as Evelyn called in to look at Belsize. Lastly, it is worth considering whether these three houses – owned, altered and embellished by Irish owners – are in any way recognisably Irish in their appearance, furnishings or surroundings. They are not. Houses like these were changing hands throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and were bought by royalty, courtiers and merchants, whether of Continental, Scottish, English or Irish origin. These suburban houses reflected the personal preferences of their owners, not their origins.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to Dr Jane Fenlon for drawing my attention to the inventories of Ormonde Lodge, and for her help on various aspects of the patronage of the Duke of Ormonde.

ABBREVIATIONS

HMC	Historic Manuscripts Commission
Kip	*Britannia Illustrata*, or *Views of several of the Queen's Palaces and also of the Principal Seats of the Nobility & Gentry of Great Britain* (London 1714)
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
PRO	Public Record Office
Rocque	John Rocque, *An Exact Survey of the City's of London & Westminster ye Borough of Southwark & the Country 10 Miles round London* (London 1746; reprinted London Topographical Society 1971)
WAM	Westminster Abbey Muniments

Dates are new style.

ENDNOTES

1 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London 1724) 126.

2 D.F. Cregan 'An Irish Cavalier:Daniel O'Neill', *Studia Hibernica*, 3 and 4 (1964) and 5 (1965). These articles contain detailed research into O'Neill's family background, education and politics, as well as covering his exploits as a soldier both before and during the Civil War. The coverage of his last few years is relatively cursory.

3 Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion & Civil Wars in England*, 8 vols (Oxford 1826) v, 98-99.

4 Guy de la Bédoyère, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Bangor 1994) 239. Entry for 21 June 1676.

5 Katherine Wotton married first Henry Stanhope, by whom she had one surviving son who later inherited Belsize. She married secondly the Dutch Jan van der Kerchhove; their son Lord Wotton inherited Belsize on his mother's death. Kerchove died in March 1660, and his widow was given her title in May, *Complete Peerage* (1913) ii, 106; iii, 180-81. The exact date of her marriage to O'Neill is unknown, but was probably soon afterwards.

6 He was buried at Boughton Malherbe, and there are fragments of his splendid tomb in the church. See J. Newman, *West Kent & The Weald, Buildings of England* (1969)167. In her will the Countess of Chesterfield asks her son Philip Earl of Chesterfield to erect the monument,

the total cost not to exceed £300.

7 WAM Chapter Act Book, 1660-1662. This entry proves that Bushell's lease, given in 1642 to his wife Lady Anne Waad for twenty-one years, had not expired when O'Neill's lease was granted.

8 WAM Lease Book XVI, *A Register booke of all Leases & grants*... f 173.

9 WAM Map no. 12450 by Grove. This was probably commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster at the death in January 1714 of Philip Stanhope, 2nd Earl of Chesterfield, who had inherited Belsize after the death of his step-brother, Lord Wotton.

10 LMA MR/TH/3 has the 1664 Hearth Tax returns for Hampstead. Colonel Daniel O'Neill heads the list with sixteen hearths. The largest house in the parish is Lady Vane's with twenty-four hearths. A large courtyard house such as Belsize would be likely to have about that number. T.J. Barratt in his *Annals of Hampstead*, 3 vols (London 1912) iii, 366, gives O'Neill's as seven, and misreads Lady Vane as Lady Ware.

11 PROB/11 323 Will of the Countess of Chesterfield. She also left a considerable amount of gold and silver plate, cash and jewellery. £1,000 at Belsize she had set aside to renew the lease of Belsize, and this was bequeathed to her son Lord Wotton for that purpose. O'Neill's will (PROB/11 315) leaves Belsize to his wife but gives no further details.

12 *Diary of John Evelyn*, 239.

13 R. Latham and W. Matthews, eds, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 11 vols (London 1970-1983) ix, 281. Pepys visited it when it was owned by Charles Henry Kirkhoven (as he anglicised his name), the son of the Countess of Chesterfield by her second husband. Charles was created Lord Wotton in 1650 and given the Irish title Earl of Bellomont in 1680 (although he was not Irish by birth, his father being Dutch). Entry for 17 August 1668.

14 *Diary of John Evelyn*, 239, as above.

15 WAM 16486. An anonymous letter of complaint about Povey's depradations was sent to Chesterfield in 1714. WAM 16483 is Povey's letter refuting this.

16 WAM Lease Book XXXIV, f 577.

17 The 'Bill of Sale & Surrender for the Estate at Chiswick' is dated 11 December 1682. See Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, L/32/1.

18 These constant changes of ownership are a feature of these suburban houses. Between Sir Edward Wardour and Sir Edward Seymour, the house was owned by Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset; Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; John Poulett, Lord Poulett; John and Elizabeth Ashburnham; James, Duke of Monmouth; Charles, Lord Gerrard; and Richard Jones, Lord Ranelagh (who was Burlington's nephew and who features in this article supervising works at Ormonde Lodge). See *Victoria County History, Middlesex* (Oxford 1982) vii, 74. After being bought by Lord Burlington it passed by descent to the Dukes of Devonshire, and remained in their possession until they sold it in 1929 to Middlesex County Council.

19 The present Chiswick House used to be much closer to the road. Under the 6th Duke of Devonshire, the road was moved towards the Thames to give the house more privacy.

20 John Bowack, *Antiquities of Middlesex* (London 1706).

21 Both Sutton Court and Sir Stephen Fox's house were later absorbed into the grounds of Chiswick House.

22 There is also a Rigaud drawing of *c* 1728 which shows the old house with the alterations to the façade and to one side carried out by the 3rd Earl of Burlington, but we can still see the Jacobean features of the old brick house.

[23] Information on Burlington's finances and estates are taken from T.C. Barnard, 'Land & the Limits of Loyalty', *Lord Burlington: Art, Architecture & Life* (London 1995) 167-200.

[24] The Kip print is reproduced in N. Pevsner & D. Neave, *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding, The Buildings of England* (London 1995) 603.

[25] See H.M. Colvin, ed., *The History of the King's Works*, 6 vols (London 1976) v, for a general history of Richmond Lodge and its surroundings.

[26] His grandfather, the 1st Duke, had been taken to England like O'Neill and brought up as a Protestant. See J.C. Beckett, *The Cavalier Duke: A Life of James, Duke of Ormonde 1610-1688* (Belfast 1990).

[27] Vicary Gibbs, ed., *The Complete Peerage* (London 1913) x, 157-61. In 1661 his grandfather had bought Moor Park in Hertfordshire as his suburban house, but was so deeply in debt that it was sold in 1670.

[28] *HMC New Series* (London 1920) viii, 79. Letter from Sir Richard Coxe to Ormonde dated 25 May 1704.

[29] *Calendar of Treasury Books 1704-1705* (London 1938) ixx, 169.

[30] *HMC New Series*, viii, 140. Letter from the Earl of Grantham to Ormonde, dated 24 February 1705. Vanbrugh was Comptroller of the Office of Works at this time, and it is therefore possible that he would have been involved in the project.

[31] Richard Jones, 1st Earl of Ranelagh (1641-1712), also Irish, had been a powerful figure at the court of Charles II and under William and Mary. While Treasurer of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, he built Ranelagh House for himself on adjoining land. He was in charge of royal parks and their buildings from 1700-1702, and would therefore have been responsible for the lodge and Old Deer Park. In 1703 he had been expelled from the House of Commons for misappropriation of funds. He 'hath no great Estate, yet hath spent more money, built more fine Houses, and laid out more on Household-Furniture and Gardening than any other nobleman in England.' J. Macky, 'Characters', *Roxburghe Club* (1895) 67.

[32] The Duke of Ormonde in 1685 had married his second wife Mary Somerset, daughter of the Duke of Beaufort and a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne. She died in 1733.

[33] *HMC New Series*, viii, 140, as above. Henry d'Auverquerque, 1st Earl of Grantham (*c* 1672-1754) was born in Holland and was related to Ormonde through the latter's Dutch mother, Emilia van Beverwaert; he would have been equally fluent in Dutch and French. He explains that the work is progressing well, painting is nearly finished, and that he and Ranelagh have been ordering furnishings. He hopes the work will be completed to Ormonde's satisfaction within a month.

[34] *HMC 7th Report*, ii, appendix, 774-76. Reading was to be paid two instalments of £100 each in 1705, with the balance later.

[35] This and other references to the appraisals drawn up for the Forfeit Estates Commission come from PRO FEC 1/879, and FEC 1/887. The former is a draft for the latter (see note 32).

[36] John Macky, *A Journey through England* (London 1723) 66.

[37] *HMC New Series*, viii, 160. Letter from Ranelagh to Ormonde in Ireland dated 16 June 1705.

[38] PRO FEC 1/880 'An exact appraisment of the Goods of the late Duke of Ormond in his late Dwelling House at Old Richmond Park in the County of Surrey Viz. August 4th 1716.'

[39] The inventory records 'In the Yard. An Engine with pipes and cocks to fling up ye Water for the use of the house' valued at £21. There is a bath clearly marked on the plan, but this was probably installed by Queen Caroline.

[40] These panels were recorded by Pyne in 1820, and are illustrated in D. Watkin, *The Royal Interiors of Regency England* (London 1984) 86.

[41] I am grateful to Robert Skelton for his help over imports of Indian works of art into western Europe during the seventeenth century.

[42] Pue's *Occurrences*, xvi, no. 58, 14 July 1719.

[43] Macky, *Journey*, i, 66.

[44] William Kent's garden buildings are described in Colvin's *History of the King's Works*, v, 221-24.

[45] C. de Saussure, *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I and George II*, translated and edited by von Muyden (London 1902) 143, 146

[46] Stephen Switzer in his *Gardener's Recreation* (1715) 49, states that London & Wise's business at the Brompton Nursery was valued at £30-40,000 per year.

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