

and in demonstrating the benefits of well-maintained historic gardens – social, economic, environmental and personal. Time too to reconnect with the urban population and to consider other ways of working than the forbidding endowment system and traditional total control. If it costs the Trust £1.7 million to employ a gardener, and still to pay barely acceptable wages, then something must be wrong.

THE ENDURING FRAGMENT:  
THE 'TEMPLE GARDEN' at GUNNERSBURY  
PARK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
By Suzannah Fleming

Gunnery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was centred on a magnificent early Palladian house designed by John Webb in 1658 for John Maynard. In 1800, the estate was divided into thirteen lots and sold to the highest bidders and the house was demolished, along with several fine eighteenth-century garden buildings once belonging to Princess Amelia, daughter of George II, who had bought the estate in 1762. Between 1801 and 1806 Alexander Copland (1774-1834), a successful builder, acquired twelve of the lots to form Gunnersbury Park, and in 1802 built an Italianate villa, *The Large Mansion*, which he expanded in 1816. The remaining large lot in the north-east corner was acquired by Stephen Cosser, who built the smaller of the two villas, Gunnersbury House, *The Small Mansion*. The two estates developed separately, each admired in the journals of the age, until they were reunited under the single ownership of the Rothschilds in 1889. At Gunnersbury we may observe an evolved, predominantly nineteenth-century, development overlaying and utilising the main features of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century estate. One area of interest in this regard is the *Pleasure Grounds* extending to the west of *The Large Mansion*, a section of the garden we might usefully refer to as the *Temple Garden*, which Copland chose to retain and adapt as a complement to his new villa and which survived substantially unaltered through the 90 years of Rothschild ownership from 1835 to 1925. The purpose of this article is to examine the nineteenth-century evolution of this enduring fragment compris-

ing the Temple, Round Pond and Cedar Grove, a survival of the eighteenth century, attributed, at least in part, to William Kent.<sup>1</sup> (fig. 40)

In 1833, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) visited Gunnersbury Park, subsequently writing in his *Gardener's Magazine* that:

This is a fragment of a park, which was laid out by the celebrated Kent about the year 1740. The old features remaining are some fine cedars and two pieces of rather naked water'.<sup>2</sup>

The features Loudon refers to, supposedly carried out during the ownership of Henry Furnese between 1739 and 1756, had swept away much of the earlier formal garden layout.

1833 is an ideal starting point for our historical investigations of Gunnersbury Park in the nineteenth century, being the year before Alexander Copland's death, and two years before the Rothschilds acquired the estate. At this period it is certainly possible to detect some of the changes that were likely to have occurred during Copland's ownership, and especially those after Princess Amelia's death in 1786. Evidence of these changes becomes particularly clear if we compare the plan of 1777 with that of 1835. (figs. 41 & 42) Here we can see that the seventeenth-century John Webb house has been replaced by Copland's villa, positioned at the western extent of the original terrace.<sup>3</sup> In particular, a flower garden at the rear of the Temple has been laid out in the form of concentric circles, the Temple has changed from a rectangular form to a T-shape, and a walled kitchen garden which is not shown on the 1777 plan has appeared to the west beyond the Round Pond.<sup>4</sup>

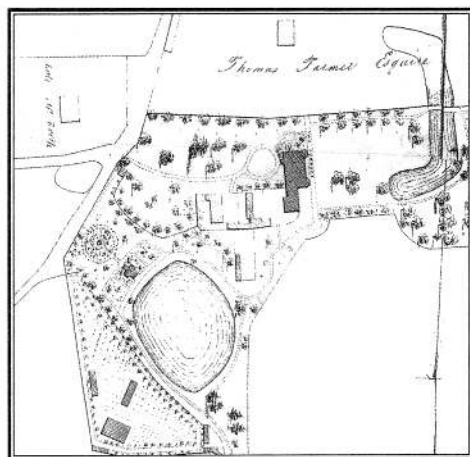
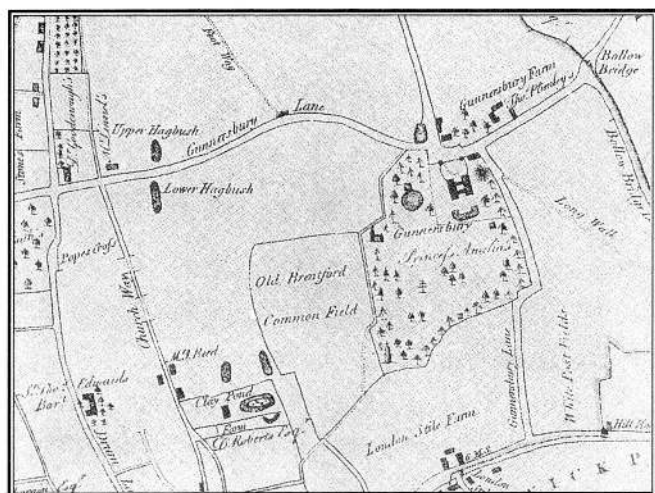
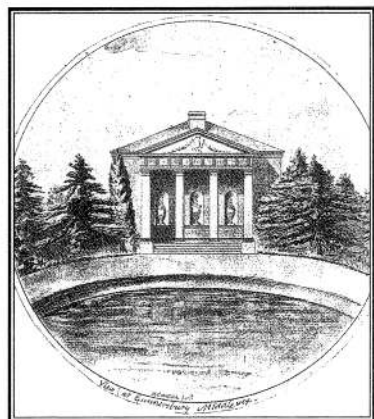
A document recently discovered among the Copland family papers begins to illumi-

<sup>1</sup> 'The most likely survivals from Kent's work are the Round Pond (today a boating lake), excavated in the former orchard to the west of the house, and the shallow Horseshoe Pond to the south. Both exhibit that residual formality characteristic of this transitional phase of English gardening, and both appear in the 1777 Map of the Parish of Ealing.' Roger White, 'As Finely Finished As Anything', reprinted extract from *Country Life*, 11 November 1982, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 518.

<sup>3</sup> 'He purchased in 1801 of the bulk (some 76 acres) of the estate of Gunnersbury, Middlesex, formerly the property of Princess Amelia, for £10,000, and immediately erected a house, enlarged in 1816.' Professor M H Port, Alexander Copland, Extract of entry for *Dictionary of National Biography* (undated), p. 5. Gunnersbury Park Museum Archives (GPMA): Box File 1.

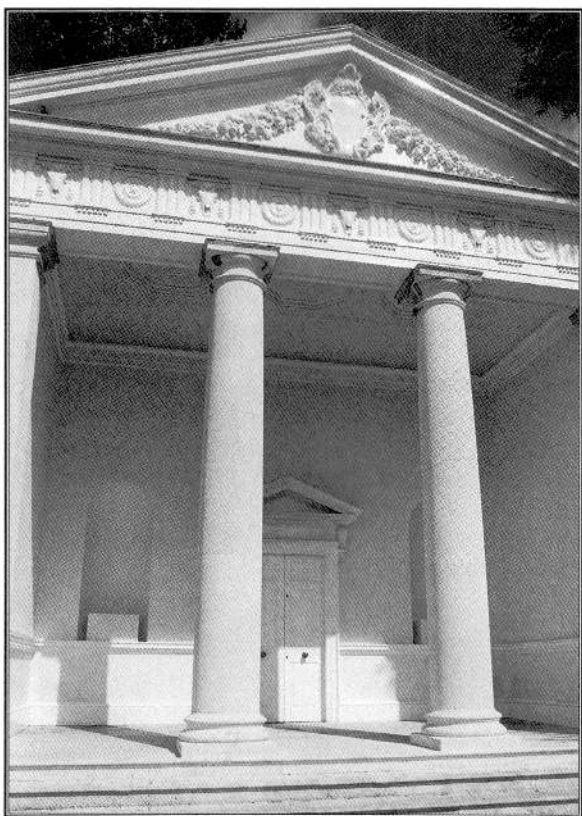
<sup>4</sup> '1809 - took possession of new Kitchen Garden'. From Alexander Copland, *Memoranda Relating to Gunnersbury Estate*, p. 71. Loudon remarked: 'the worst thing about Gunnersbury is the kitchen garden'. *Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

THE 'TEMPLE GARDEN' *at* GUNNERSBURY PARK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

40. View at Gunnersbury, Middlesex, water colour drawing of The Temple by H G Oldfield (18th-century)  
(GUNNERSBURY PARK MUSEUM ARCHIVE)

41. Map of the Parish of Ealing 1777  
(GUNNERSBURY PARK MUSEUM ARCHIVE)

42. Plan of Gunnersbury Park, 1835  
(GUNNERSBURY PARK MUSEUM ARCHIVE)



43. The Temple, Round Pond and Cedar Grove, water colour (early 19th-century)  
(PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE COPLAND-GRIFFITHS)

44. Gunnersbury Temple, 2001  
(PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNAH FLEMING)

nate the more obscure history of the Gunnersbury Estate during the period before the Rothschild ownership. Written by Copland himself in shorthand notes, the *Memoranda Relating to Gunnersbury Estate* briefly records the key events of his 33 years here between 1801 and his death in 1834.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, in its first page he also provides a background history of the earlier development of the garden. In a remarkable statement, he records: '1754 ... The Grounds were laid out by Mr. Brown/Capability'.<sup>6</sup> William Kent was often named in relation to supposed works for Henry Furnese in the early 1740s and this is indeed confirmed by Kent's own correspondence, and a payment.<sup>7</sup> Oddly, Brown has never previously been mentioned in connection with Gunnersbury. In checking Brown's bank records at Drummonds against Henry Furnese's account at Hoares, we find no evidence of any payment having been made.<sup>8</sup> However, Furnese seems to have suffered a sudden and devastating incapacitation in the summer of 1754 when all activity ceases on his bank account until his eventual death in 1756. So if Brown indeed 'laid out the grounds' for Furnese in 1754, he is unlikely to have been paid for his work. It would be easy to automatically dismiss Copland's statement but for the fact that he is quite specific about the year - 1754. We must also take into consideration the close professional relationship between Copland and Henry Holland, Brown's son-in-law and executor, and the fact that Holland had supplied Humphry Repton with documentation relating to his father-in-law's architectural practice for Repton's *Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1803).<sup>9</sup> When Copland died in 1834, Capability Brown's grandson, Lancelot Holland, was one of his executors, confirming, if nothing else, a close tie between their families.<sup>10</sup> However, even if

we are to give credence to Copland's statement, it remains unclear precisely what Brown's work may have entailed here, or even, for that matter, Kent's earlier work.

Visual evidence of what Loudon referred to as 'fine cedars and two pieces of rather naked water' is to be found in one of several early-nineteenth-century watercolours preserved in the Copland family collection which show that the Cedars of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) have matured considerably since the eighteenth-century drawing of The Temple by H G Oldfield.<sup>11</sup> (fig. 43) Although Loudon attributes these cedars to Kent, they could also have been planted later, either as part of Capability Brown's alleged improvements, or even by Princess Amelia's gardener, *Mr Wilson*. Of this period, Copland records:

1756 - Grape House in upper garden built.

Mr. Wilson the Gardener lived 39 years with Princess Amelia and quitted Gunnersbury two years after she died [in 1786]. . . . 1759 - Wall round the park built'.<sup>12</sup>

Assuming that Copland's information is correct, these works were carried out before Princess Amelia bought the estate in 1762. At first, this may seem to invalidate his information regarding the earlier development of the garden. However, Thomas Ripley (d. 1758) is said to have supervised alterations at Gunnersbury on behalf of the Princess, and this was at least four years prior to her finally purchasing the house.<sup>13</sup> Presumably these works were implemented in anticipation of a new royal owner. Overall, she is said to have spent £20,000 on improvements at Gunnersbury.<sup>14</sup> We know that Amelia left £200 in her Will to John Oldfield, who was referred to in the estate papers as her 'Surveyor, responsible for all the buildings erected during her ownership'.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1833 *Gardener's Magazine* article, Loudon described the various features of the garden at that stage:

the straight terrace on the lawn in front of house terminating in an alcove at one end, and, at the

5 *Memoranda Relating to Gunnersbury Estate*. Within the 168 page notebook entitled *Chronological Memoranda*; entries relating to Gunnersbury can be found in pp. 70-77. The original document is in the private collection of the Copland-Griffiths.

6 *Memoranda*, p. 70.

7 *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 1. See also D Lysons, *Environs of London*, vol. II (1795), p. 226; John Dixon Hunt, *William Kent, Landscape Designer* (A Zwemmer Ltd, 1978), pp. 94, 95.

8 The Royal Bank of Scotland Archive, Drummonds account for Lancelot Brown, 1754, DR/427/33, 127, 408, c/f. 137.

9 Dorothy Stroud, *Capability Brown* (Country Life Limited, 1950), p. 47.

10 The Royal Bank of Scotland Archive, Drummonds account for Lancelot Holland and Edward Smirke, Executors of Alexander Copland, 1835 II-L, DR/427/263, 251, c/f. 494.

11 fl. 1787-90.

12 *Memoranda*, p. 70.

13 'She is said to have presented him with a silver vase when he declined payment - the nature of his work is not specified.' John Bold, PhD thesis on John Webb (University of Reading, Department of History of Art, September 1979), Appendix VIII, n. 11, p. 374. (GPM: Box File 1).

14 *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 1, reference to *Environs of London*, vol. II.

15 Papers Relating to Princess Amelia. British Library, Add MS 33135, ff 8-33.

other, passing through a triumphal arch to a winding walk carried along the brow of the hilly part of the grounds, so as to display the leading features of the park and the distant scenery on the one hand; and on the other, highly kept lawn with choice shrubs and all the usual furniture of flowers, basins, fountains, sculpture, rockwork, basket work, seats and trellises; added to these there is a very handsome billiard room [The Temple] containing an organ, a flower garden [behind the Temple], and a large piece of water [The Round Pond].

In particular, the flower garden at the back of The Temple 'with two circular basins of water' is further described in fairly elaborate detail, so as to suggest that this was of particular interest, or even novelty, to Loudon.<sup>16</sup> It is tempting to imagine that this was a remnant of the era of Kent, who is known to have designed a flower-festooned temple for Lady Burlington at Chiswick in the 1730s, also with a concentric circular flower garden and central round basin.<sup>17</sup> An even more unusual attribution would be to Capability Brown, although he is known to have later designed the occasional flower garden for a client, prime examples being a garden intended for the new grounds at *Weston Park*, Staffordshire (1765-68), and another at *Brocklesby*, Lincolnshire (1772).<sup>18</sup> In truth, the description that Loudon offers seems closer to what we might think of as the early nineteenth-century revival of the formal flower garden:

the beds placed on the turf, but surrounded with a margin of the breadth of four inches, of gravel, within which is an edging of box, kept low and flat.

In addition, Loudon's reference to the circular 'arcade of trelliswork consisting of arches of iron, alternately rising and reversed, so as to give the idea of a festooned wreath of flowers'<sup>19</sup> suggests a flower garden somewhat more influenced by Repton than by Kent, and we are particularly reminded of the overall form of Repton's famous design for *The Rosary* at Ashridge Park. Indeed, the garden at Gunnersbury may be of that era, for Copland states: '1810 - April - Flower Garden formed'.<sup>20</sup>

We might suppose that this was created by Copland's head gardener, to whom he refers in an entry in the *Memoranda*: '1808 - 2nd September - Martin Doran, Gardener, first came to me'.<sup>21</sup> Loudon seems to have approved of the scene, for he comments that 'all the forms are perfectly simple, but they are very effective, especially when clothed, as they are now, by the most select plants', going on to say that 'the effect is highly artificial, and appropriate to this description of a flower garden'.<sup>22</sup> Of particular note, he remarks that the beds here are planted completely with various 'blue flowers', and as he toured further around the grounds he reported being struck by 'the various little circular beds'.<sup>23</sup> Loudon offers only fairly minor suggestions involving the circle of festooned work,<sup>24</sup> and slight alterations to the Round Pond.<sup>25</sup> According to Copland's records, he gave Martin Doran 'notice to quit' on 17th May 1832, and by 13th June he noted that 'Mills, Gardener, came to Gunnersbury'.<sup>26</sup> Mr Mills, who is described in Loudon's article as 'well known to be one of the best practical gardeners of the day',<sup>27</sup> was later retained by the Rothschilds,<sup>28</sup> and was probably responsible for recommending to his new employers that Loudon be brought back to advise on improving the northern approach to Gunnersbury Park in 1835.<sup>29</sup>

The *Temple* at Gunnersbury presents a far greater mystery as to its origin. (fig. 44) Previously, on stylistic grounds alone, it was ruled out as having been designed by Kent, although it seemed plausible that he may have

<sup>21</sup> *Memoranda*, p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

<sup>23</sup> 'Among the blue flowers in this flower-garden were *Anagallis Monelli* and *A. latifolia*, the common convolvulus, *Tradescantia*, the blue verberna, the blue lobelia, and the heliotrope.' 'Various little circular beds of *Mesembryanthemum* were eminently beautiful as the sun happened to shine full upon them while we walked round.'

*Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

<sup>24</sup> 'The only defect we found in this circle of festooned work was the want of breadth, which might be easily supplied by means of a few cross wires, so as to retain a more ample mantle of vegetation.'

*Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

<sup>25</sup> 'The piece of water is almost the only formal part of the pleasure-ground. At whatever point you stand, you see the entire outline...'

'It would be easy to vary it by one or two narrow islands along the sides, being careful not to destroy breadth of effect by placing any near the centre, or equidistantly along the margin.'

*Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

<sup>26</sup> *Chronological Memoranda*, p. 110.

<sup>27</sup> *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 519.

<sup>28</sup> Baroness Rothschild, Gunnersbury. The success of Mr Mills at this place...is remarkable'. *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 17 August 1844.

<sup>29</sup> Report relating to scheme by J C Loudon for improving the approach to Gunnersbury, 1835. GPMA: Box File 1 (Rothschild scrap). Plan by J C Loudon showing proposed approach to Gunnersbury Park, 1835. GPMA: FC3 8.17/9-10.

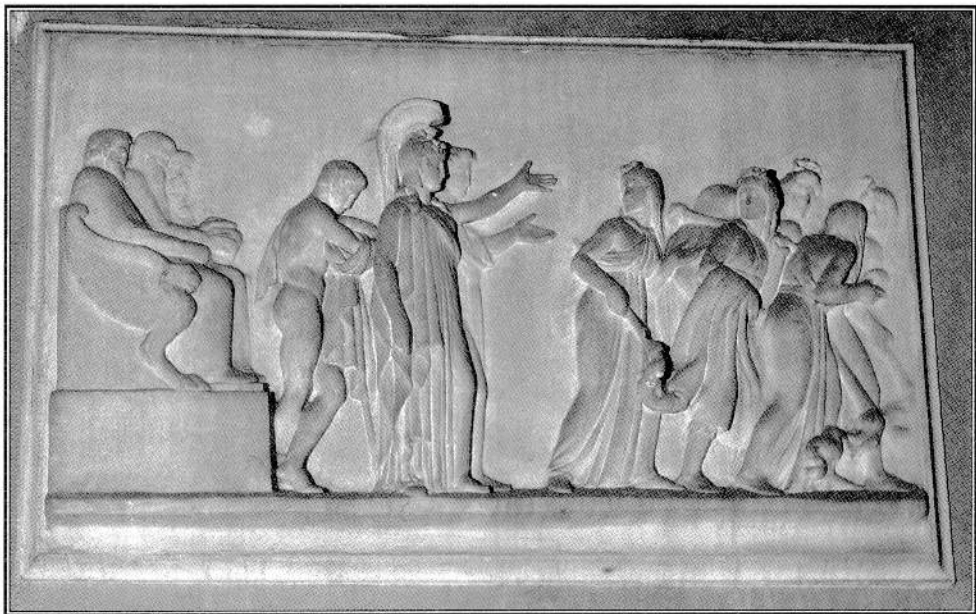
<sup>16</sup> *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 518.

<sup>17</sup> William Kent, *Landscape Designer*, p. 132.

<sup>18</sup> 'Weston Park, Staffordshire: Landscape History', report prepared by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan for Elizabeth Banks Associates, March 1992; Charles Quest-Ritson, *The English Garden - A Social History* (Penguin/Viking, 2001), p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, pp. 518, 519.

<sup>20</sup> *Memoranda*, p. 72.



45. One of the five bas-reliefs formerly in the Gunnersbury Temple  
(COURTESY ENGLISH HERITAGE)

46. Triumphal Arch and Balustrade, watercolour (early 19th-century)  
(PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE COPLAND-GRIFFITHS)



47. One of two classical figures formerly in the Gunnersbury Temple portico,  
to the right of the exterior entrance door  
(COURTESY ENGLISH HERITAGE)

suggested a Temple to his patron Henry Furnese.<sup>30</sup> William Chambers has also previously been put forward as its designer, but only based on the premise that he had been working at Kew in the 1760s and 1770s for Princess Amelia's relatives, and at Roehampton for her great friend and one-time suitor, the second Earl of Bessborough.<sup>31</sup> With the recent discovery of the Copland document, we are presented with a further possibility that Capability Brown was its original architect, perhaps in association with the likes of master mason / builder Henry Holland Senior. It is only on the basis that a Temple is mentioned in the estate papers of Henry Furnese that we may reasonably assume it was built before his death in 1756.<sup>32</sup> However, the building referred to in the Furnese papers might actually be the work of Thomas Ripley for Princess Amelia before she bought the estate, or even that of John Oldfield, listed as her 'surveyor'. We must not entirely rule out Kent since the building bears such a striking similarity to *The Tuscan Pavilion* at Chiswick built in the 1720s, and we could almost begin to suspect a re-construction had taken place at Gunnersbury. H G Oldfield illustrated the portico as purely ornamental, with niches containing Kent-like urns, and no central doorway. Indeed, The Temple shows very obvious signs of having undergone several drastic changes and been adapted for alternative uses over a number of years.<sup>33</sup> At one time it appears to have had as many as six rooms arranged over two storeys, the whole surmounting a vaulted basement, and Princess Amelia is believed to have styled it as an ornamental *Dairy*.<sup>34</sup> The presence of blocked-in upper and lower windows confirms this earlier phase. Copland acquired this section of the garden on a leasehold basis in 1806 from

William Raven Esq.,<sup>35</sup> who up to this stage had been using The Temple as a dwelling.<sup>36</sup> According to Copland's *Memoranda*, the 'Dairy House' was still occupied by a Colonel Stephenson until December in 1811.<sup>37</sup> At some point Copland altered the building, dramatically converting its interior into a large single room (consistent with it becoming a *Billiard Room*).<sup>38</sup> The decoration was finished in the fashionable neo-classical taste, including five *bas-reliefs* in the manner of John Flaxman RA (1755-1826), of which three remain. (fig. 45) It was at this stage that the Temple acquired its present overall form. As a young man Copland had first apprenticed under, and later worked in association with, the architect Richard Holland (1752-1827) and his more renowned cousin Henry Holland (1745-1806), along with his nephew, the builder Henry Rowles.<sup>39</sup> These would seem the most likely candidates, overall, for at least some of the works during Copland's time at Gunnersbury. Yet we may also consider that Copland would have been capable of specifying the various works himself, having trained extensively as an architect. By August 1827, when he finally bought the freehold of this piece of land, he refers to the Temple simply as the *Billiard Room*.<sup>40</sup>

Another mystery is The Triumphal Arch and Balustrade, tentatively known as the 'eighteenth-century Arch,' which has occasionally been associated with Copland's ownership. (fig. 46) Stylistically, it conforms to either the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It is indeed clearly visible in two of the Copland family watercolours of the early nineteenth century, and it appears to have been created as a link between the formal terrace fronting the Mansion and the pleasure grounds to the west, which Copland did not acquire until 1806. However, there is nothing in his *Memoranda*

30 John Webb, pp. 321, 322. GPMA: Box File I.

31 *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 2.

32 'In the Temple a Plaster cast of a Dancing Fawn....orange trees; orange tubs; goldfish; and a swan[*in the Round Pond?*]. Report of the Estate of Henry Furnese and his sister Elizabeth Pierce, 1765. Ealing Library DP. 119.

33 'Far from being the simple, though large, eighteenth-century garden building which it at first appears, it was found during its recent restoration to be a structure which had undergone considerable modifications which began possibly even before the date of its initial completion.' John Webb, Appendix VIII, p. 327, (n. 1: p. 374: this refers to the restoration undertaken by the GLC Historic Buildings Division in the 1970s). GPMA: Box File I.

34 'In the late eighteenth century the building was known as the Dairy, and contained, according to sale particulars of 1787: A Cream-Room set with Galley Tiles and Marble Sideboards. A Churning Room, China Room, Kitchen, and two Chambers.' *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 2.

35 Chronological List of Archives on Gunnersbury Park prepared by Camilla Beresford, April 1994. 94.165. GPMA: Box File I.

36 *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 2.

37 The name W Stephenson appears in Alexander Copland's private bank accounts with numerous payments, both large and small, beginning in 1802, indicating that he was probably carrying out work for Copland over a number of years. The Royal Bank of Scotland Archive, Drummonds private bank account for Alexander Copland (1802-35), DR/427/172 -DR/427/288.

38 'A very handsome billiard room containing an organ'. *Gardener's Magazine*, vol. 9, 1833, p. 518. 'The interior of this temple appears to be used as a billiard room'. John Weale, *London and its Vicinity* (1851), p. 521. GPMA: Box File I. 'The Dairy he later converted into a Billiard Room.' *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 2. '1811 - December - Col. Stephenson left Dairy House'. *Memoranda*, p. 72.

39 Alexander Copland, p. 4. GPMA: Box File I.

40 '1827 - August - Bought the freehold of 4 acres including the Kitchen Garden, Billiard Room & pond, including the Italian - Land and Buildings for £1,820'. *Memoranda*, p. 75.

specifically regarding the building of this feature, leading us to suppose that it may have already existed when he bought the estate. Alternatively, it may have originally been built as one of two terminal alcoves during the time his Mansion was being erected in 1802. Along these lines, Copland notes: '1810 - November - Took down wall of the Kitchen Garden to make terrain at back of Alcove'.<sup>41</sup> The 'wall of the kitchen garden' he refers to may be that of the old Kitchen Garden, for in the previous year he notes: '...took possession of new Kitchen Garden'.<sup>42</sup> It is also possible that the Arch (or *Alcove*) appeared during one of two successive ownerships of Gunnersbury in the 1790s, that of either Gilbert Ironside (1788-92) or Walter Stirling (1792-1800).<sup>43</sup> However, this theory is frustrated when we examine a water-colour of 1792 by William Payne and an engraving of 1797, both clearly illustrating the south front of the John Webb house and in neither image do we see the 'Triumphal Arch and Balustrade'.<sup>44</sup> However, another of William Payne's watercolours shows a classical structure terminating the terrace to the east, bearing a striking resemblance to the *Pebble Alcove* at Stowe.

In 1851, the Rothschilds had reportedly retained the use of The Temple as a 'billiards room', but it also now housed eight fine sandstone figures by the Scottish sculptor, James Thom.<sup>45</sup> These had previously decorated the flower garden at the rear of the Temple, but were thought too fragile to stay in the open. They were probably the same figures that had ornamented a very large flower garden at Twickenham Park until about 1850.<sup>46</sup> By 1880, Baroness de Rothschild was using The Temple

as a summerhouse, and the flower garden was now known as *The Italian Garden*.<sup>47</sup> Evidence of some other items of statuary, previously sited throughout the garden, is found amongst the photographic records of the early twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> One statue not in this photographic record, which formed part of a fountain (the remains of which appears to be still in place near the café), was described in 1851 as *Eve at the fountain*.<sup>49</sup> Copland seems to refer to this feature with an entry in his *Memoranda*: '1830 - April - Eve mounted and Trellis formed'.<sup>50</sup> This may well relate to the Coadestone figure of a *Naiad*, which was still at Gunnersbury until after the war.<sup>51</sup> A further fragment of one of the two classical figures previously positioned within the niches of The Temple portico is today sheltered from vandals in the conservatory of the Large Mansion. (figs. 47 & 48)

In January 1834, Copland noted that 'Cedar tree near Portus blown out of upright'.<sup>52</sup> The venerable old trees of the garden were noted throughout the nineteenth century, particularly the conspicuous Cedars of Lebanon which, by 1880, were of 'magnificent proportions, but bearing marks of the war of elements - planted, it is thought, during the time the grounds were in the possession of Serjeant Maynard'.<sup>53</sup> Of course, if this were true it would mean they were planted as far back as seventy years before William Kent's supposed involvement! The idea may have some validity when we consider a document of 1763 relating to Princess Amelia's acquisition of Gunnersbury Park. In this we find the cedars

41 *Memoranda*, p. 72.

42 *Memoranda*, p. 71.

43 *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 2.

44 *A View of Gunnersbury House from the South*, by William Payne (one of five watercolours commissioned by Walter Stirling in 1792) GPMA: FC3.1760 & 2008-2011. *The Seat of Walter Stirling Esq.*, 1797. Engraving by W Angus after E Dayes. GPMA: FC 3.

45 'It [The Temple] contains at present, however, a most interesting collection of stone figures, illustrative of the *Beggar's Opera*, which formerly stood in the open air, but had unfortunately become so injured by exposure that they are now placed here. They are by Thom, the well known Scots sculptor of 'Tam o'Shanter and Souter Johnnie, and are among the greatest notabilia of the place.' *London and its Vicinity*, p. 521. GPMA: Box File 1. See also *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 22 January 1853, p. 53; and Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851* (1968), pp. 387-8: 'Thom, James, b.1802, d.1850... In 1829 the figures came to London where the critics at once hailed them as inaugurating a new era in sculpture.'

46 *Bleat Retreats - A History of Private Gardens in Richmond upon Thames* (LB Richmond Library, 1984), p. 42.

47 'The interior is chastely arranged and beautifully furnished with Chinese vases, antique chairs, etc, and the walls are ornamental with bas-reliefs, representing the most striking scenes in the history of Greece...' 'The Italian garden at the back of the temple was formerly embellished with eight figures in sandstone of Burns' *Jolly Beggars*, admirably executed by 'Thom.' *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 31 January 1880, p. 147.

48 List of copies of photographs relating to Gunnersbury Park Gardens - from various sources. Items: 85.103/28 - 85.103/75. GPMA: Box File 1.

49 'A walk to the westward from the terrace conducts us along the side of the open park, where we soon arrive at a pleasing recess, in which is a statue of Eve at the fountain. This is very artistically embowered with ivy, and is so far kept out of sight till it is approached as to convey the idea of being a shaded and sacred nook, into which the living mother of mankind, represented in the figure, might have retired.' *London and its Vicinity*, p. 521. GPMA: Box File 1.

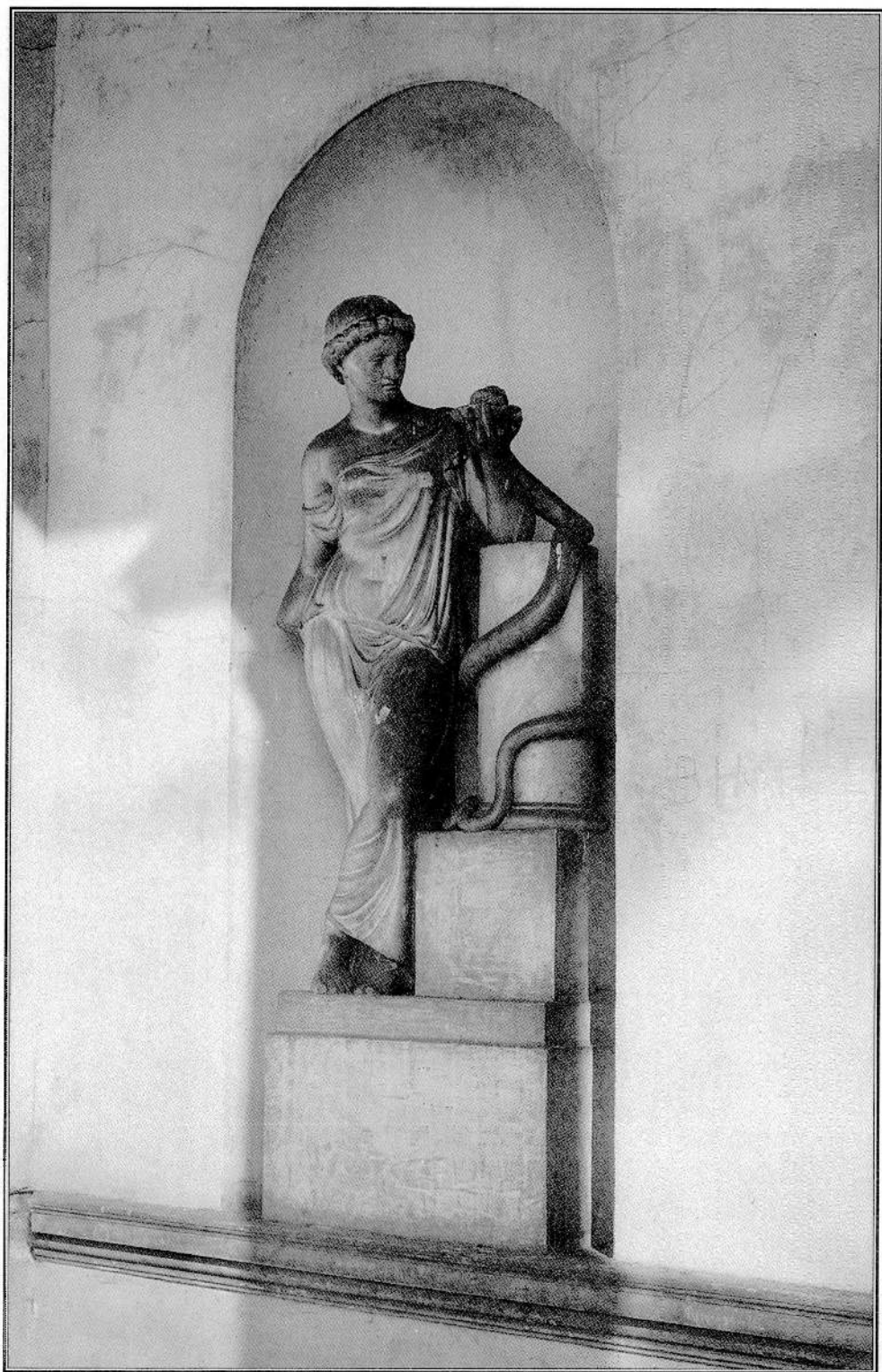
50 *Memoranda*, p. 76.

51 Alison Kelly, *Mrs Coad's Stone* (1990), p. 128.

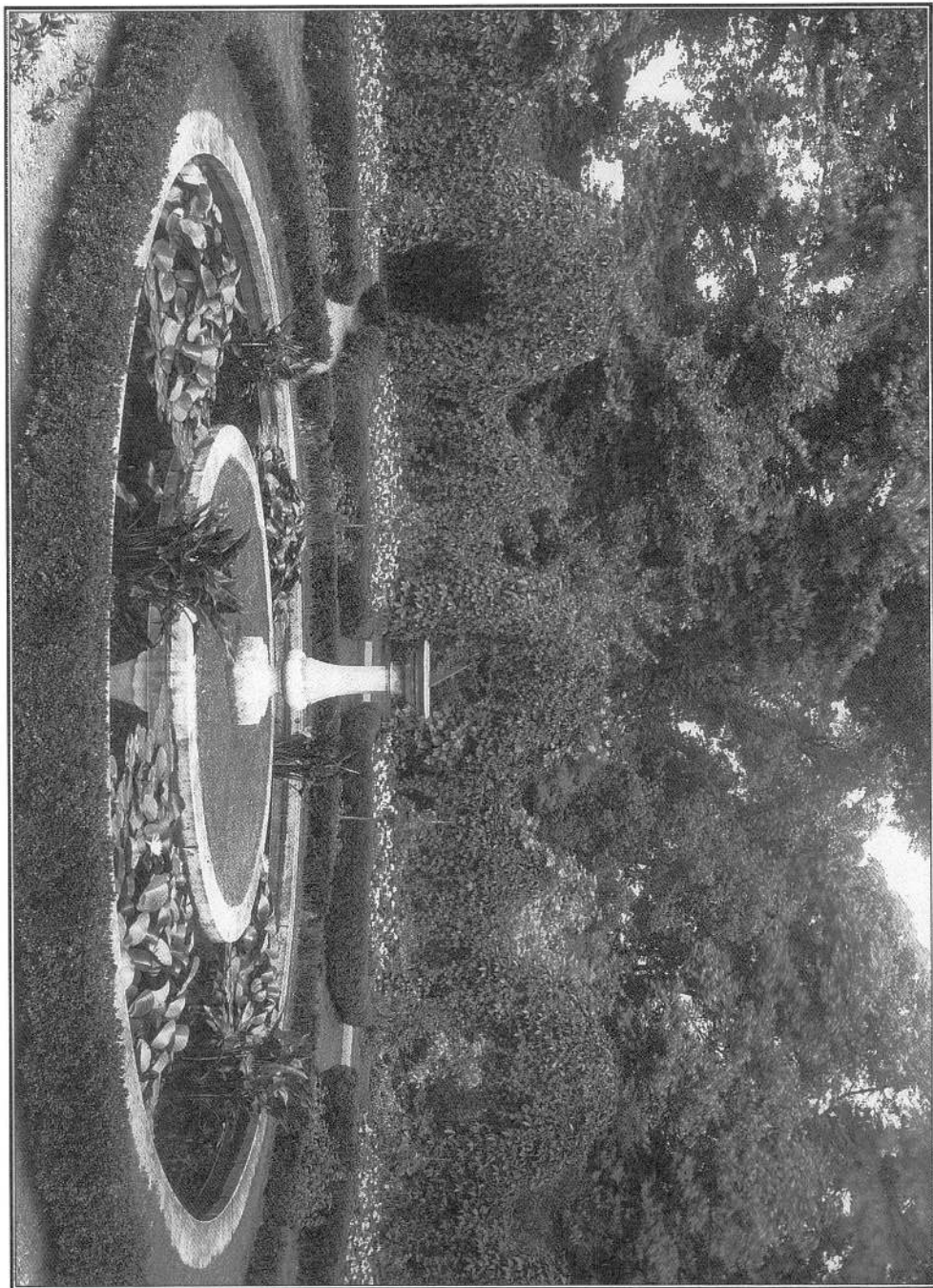
52 *Memoranda*, p. 77.

53 *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 31 January 1880, p. 147. GPMA: Box File 1.

54 'Beautiful park studded with stately cedar, elm, and other forest trees.' *The Abstract of Title of Executors of Will* - ref: Deed of 1763 for Gunnersbury (transcript). GPMA: Box File 1.



48. One of two classical figures formerly in the Gunnersbury Temple portico,  
to left of the exterior entrance door  
(COURTESY ENGLISH HERITAGE)



49. The Italian Garden. Photograph from *Country Life Illustrated*, 24 November 1900  
(GUNNERSBURY PARK MUSEUM ARCHIVE)

were described as 'stately'.<sup>54</sup> Today, the cedars we see are again quite mature, although among them many Atlas Cedars (*Cedrus atlantica Glauca*) and Deodars (*Cedrus deodara*) have been introduced to the scene. A nineteenth-century practice of planting ivy under the large trees was used extensively at Gunnersbury, and particularly under the heavy shade of the massive cedars and elms.<sup>55</sup> It would seem that various climbers were used, as much as anything to disguise the damaged or dead old trees. Also, by 1883 the unnatural appearance of the Round Pond and Horseshoe Pond, which Loudon had previously described as 'two pieces of rather naked water', was again called into question on a point of taste, although it appears that a solution was imminent in the form of 'a few well chosen and properly placed water plants'.<sup>56</sup> Until this time, pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) had offered only a partial solution to the perceived starkness of the Round Pond.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, by 1900 the Flower Garden (now occasionally known as *The Swiss Garden*) was covered with an ample abundance of climbing vegetation, and in its centre was a stone sundial,<sup>58</sup> with the remaining single water basin stocked with hybrid water lilies. (fig. 49) The plantings in the beds had varied over the years to suit the season, and to some extent, the current fashion,<sup>59</sup> while the overall structure of this garden, as in other areas of the pleasure ground, remained essentially unal-

tered since the time of Copland. This is not to say there were not quite significant improvements in store for Gunnersbury in the nineteenth century. Almost immediately after Copland's death, Sydney Smirke designed the *Orangery* and *Stables*, and made proposals for various alterations to the Mansion for Nathan Meyer Rothschild, the founder of the Rothschild merchant bank in England.<sup>60</sup> On this point, it is perhaps worth mentioning an element of continuity between the Copland estate and the Rothschild estate. We know that Copland was closely related through his mother to the Smirkes, Robert and Sydney.<sup>61</sup> Robert Smirke had served as his father's executor and had worked with Copland on at least one major building project.<sup>62</sup> Edward Smirke, together with Lancelot Holland, became Alexander Copland's executors at his death. It is interesting to note that the Rothschilds chose not only to retain the existing head gardener, Mr Mills, but also to commission an architect with such close Copland family connections.

When Loudon described Gunnersbury as 'a fragment of a park', he seemed to hold in fairly high esteem that which remained from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as Copland's adaptations to early nineteenth-century taste. Perhaps more than anything, *The Temple Garden* held an appeal for the owners of Gunnersbury during the Regency and Victorian periods because of its residual formality, a particular characteristic to be observed in some of the work of Kent, and more generally during the early transitional period of the eighteenth-century landscape garden. The old Cedars of Lebanon were admired especially for the way they threw their heavy branches across The Pond as a frame to The Temple.<sup>63</sup> The Temple itself, with its pediment carrying a proud cartouche in the tympanum, could only have been conceived by an architect working within early Palladian terms of reference and, more specifically, to provide his client with a garden building in keeping

<sup>55</sup> *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 31 January 1880, p. 147.

<sup>56</sup> *The Garden*, 3 November 1883, p. 384.

<sup>57</sup> *The Garden*, 3 November 1883, p. 384.

<sup>58</sup> 'Some of the pretty nooks are worked out from Mr Leopold de Rothschild's own designs as, for example, the pretty little country Swiss Garden with sundial in the centre, the idea for which was obtained in a quiet Swiss retreat.' *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 11 August 1906.

<sup>59</sup> 'At the north side of the temple...a small circular flower garden, surrounded with festoons of climbers, on a wire frame, and nearly beneath is a low iron trellis covered with China roses. This flower garden is very nicely furnished with plants in the summer, and the beds are not too crowded. In its neighbourhood there is an immense plant of *Magnolia grandiflora*.' *London and its Vicinity*, p. 522. GPMA: Box File 1. 'The flower garden is, as a matter of course at this season, well filled with flowering plants...Tom Thumb and pink coloured Geraniums in the way of Lady Holmsdale, *Calceolaria viscosissima* and *integrifolia*, *Lobelia lucida*, the white variegated *Alyssum*...two beds of *Agapanthus umbellatus*.... Two rustic baskets elevated on short pedestals and filled with *Fuchsias*...two beds, one of crimson and the other of common China Roses... *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 18 August 1855, p. 551. GPMA: Box File 1. 'in the Italian garden and elsewhere, the beds are filled with good plants tastefully arranged. One bed, though simple, was highly pleasing; it consists of *Salvia patens* and the yellow variegated *Abutilon*. Another noticeable feature of this season is the quantity of *Ampelopsis* growing and hanging about in all sorts of places, hiding the scars that age has inflicted on trees and in some cases entirely screening stumps of trees long since dead.' *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 14 October 1893.

<sup>60</sup> *As Finely Finished As Anything*, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Alexander Copland*, p. 1. GPMA: Box File 1.

<sup>62</sup> 'He [Copland] also worked on Covent Garden Theatre (1809), designed by his cousin (Sir) Robert Smirke.' *Alexander Copland*, p. 4. GPMA: Box File 1.

<sup>63</sup> 'The stately Cedars throwing their huge arms across the roof of an ornamental Tuscan temple, with the vertical lines of which their horizontal boughs beautifully harmonize.' *The Garden*, 26 February 1881, p. 228.

with the old fashioned style of the seventeenth-century John Webb house.<sup>64</sup> We are now left to contemplate whether or not this could have been one of Capability Brown's early architectural works, and indeed, what else Brown may have been responsible for here, if anything at all. In the nineteenth century, a return to a taste for the formal, and more directly for the *Italianate*, allowed for such a scene to be preserved and enhanced. It is not too difficult to imagine that whilst Alexander Copland built his new Tuscan-style villa in 1802 he was also keeping his eye on the historic garden ensemble over the wall, a scene he was apparently content to identify as the work of Brown.

To the Coplands, the Gunnersbury estate provided a spacious family home and a leisurely retreat close to London, where cricket and archery parties were amongst the chief activities of the summer months, and where the game of billiards took centre stage in The Temple.<sup>65</sup> By Rothschild standards, even from the early days of Nathan Meyer Rothschild's ownership, Gunnersbury was a relatively modest estate,<sup>66</sup> but one that the family would eventually greatly expand and improve, without ever destroying any part of the older sections of the garden. The Rothschilds entertained lavishly in the nineteenth century, and Gunnersbury served as the venue for their less formal receptions attended by family, friends, associates and favoured heads of state. Indeed, during the long period of Rothschild ownership, Gunnersbury acquired a highly cultivated and worldly demeanour, something not seen since the end of Princess Amelia's residence. Under the Rothschilds, the estate also earned a reputation for horticultural excellence, particularly in the hands of the head gardeners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mr G Reynolds and Mr James Hudson.<sup>67</sup> At Gunnersbury, we can observe the Victorian trend in gardens towards architectural eclecticism, the *Temple Garden* forming one of the various diverse scenes, others being the *Gothic picturesque* (Potomac Lake and Boathouse by J W Pulham, post 1861),<sup>68</sup> *Rustic picturesque* (The Farm, and Pulham's

alternative design for the Potomac Boathouse, post 1861),<sup>69</sup> *Turkish* (proposed Bath, designed by George Somers Clarke in 1872)<sup>70</sup> and, finally, *Japanese* (circa 1901, by Mr James Hudson).<sup>71</sup>

The fairly recent restoration of The Temple and the more recent restoration of The Italianate Garden and Princess Amelia's Bathhouse marks an exciting phase in historic garden conservation at Gunnersbury. I look forward to hearing of further developments, particularly in the repair of the Triumphal Arch and Balustrade, and possibly the return and restoration of some of the original garden statuary.

### A HISTORY of the ESTATE AND GARDEN at WROTHAM PARK By Alan Simpson

Wrotham Park Estate in Hertfordshire, home of the Byng family for over 250 years, lies beside the Great North Road between Barnet and Potters Bar, some 15 miles from central London. Named to commemorate family connections in Kent, Wrotham Park was built by Admiral John Byng on the site of two much older properties, *Pinchbank* and *Knightsland*. The land, consist-

68 'Baron Lionel Rothschild was able to extend the Park south-westwards in 1861, by the acquisition of copyhold land from the Bishop of London. A large claypit already on the site was adapted to form an ornamental lake, designated the Potomac Pond, and the tile kiln on its banks was cleverly converted into a Gothic tower-cum-boathouse by the addition of octagonal upper stories.' *As Finely Finished As Anything*, p. 3. 'Pulhamite artificial stone or stone cement appears to have been employed on the boat house as window and doorway stone dressings and gothic tracery, on the hood moulds, label stops, reveals and raised corner quoins, as well as the tabling to be found above the first floor which is wider than the rest of the tower the string moulding drip sills are also formed in this material.' *Notes on Pulhamite Survey*, report by Michael Wingate for Swann & Associates (historic plaster and mortar specialist, analysis, plaster condition surveys, research and consultancy), 29 February 1999. GPMA: Box File 1.

69 Elevation of Boat House etc, signed J W Pulham, design showing an alternative single-storey rustic boathouse above an arched bridge/inlet (the bridge inlet and balustrade detail are identical to the present Gothic version as built). Copy of photograph taken from the original drawing in the Rothschild Archives in GPMA: Box File 1. See also index for items: 85.103/28-85.103/75.

70 'One Rothschild scheme which, alas, did not get off the drawing-board was the exotic Turkish bath for which George Somers Clarke, architect of a notable Turkish bath in Jermyn Street, prepared designs in 1872.' *As Finely Finished as Anything*, p. 3. Copies of photographs taken from the original 4 drawings in the Rothschild Archives are in GPMA: Box File 1. See also index for items: 85.103/28-85.103/75.

71 '1876-1919 James Hudson became head gardener [at Gunnersbury House] to H J Atkinson (who styled himself Farmer-Atkinson) and continued under Rothschild for the whole estate, until his retirement in 1919. He laid out the Japanese Gardens as well as other areas.' *Chronological List of Archives on Gunnersbury Park*, GPMA: 94.165. See also: notes and articles on Hudson in GPMA: Box File 1.

1 The site also encompasses part of the field of the Battle of Barnet (1471), one of the last actions in the Wars of the Roses.

64 John Webb, p. 321. GPMA: Box File 1.

65 *Memoranda*, pp. 73, 76.

66 Ann & James Collett-White, *Gunnersbury Park and the Rothschilds* (1994), pp. 15, 25.

67 *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, 27 July 1899.