

The Soane-Dance Collaboration, 1771-1799

by JILL LEVER

After the publication for Sir John Soane's Museum of a *Catalogue of the Drawings of George Dance the Younger (1741-1825)* (in 2003) further cataloguing of, and research into, John Soane's early drawings has enabled the reattribution to George Dance of a number of sketch designs previously thought to be by Soane. In particular there are several drawings from the years 1771 to 1784, when Soane was a student and exhibitor at the Royal Academy, a competition entrant, and in the first years of practice. Later sketch designs by Dance for Soane then relate to several phases of the rebuilding of the Bank of England in the 1790s. It has also been possible to identify Robert Baldwin as the draughtsman for many of Soane's early Royal Academy and competition drawings, as well as during Soane's early years in practice, from 1780 to 1785. These discoveries bring to light not only the character of the collaboration between Soane and Dance, but also aspects of architectural practice more generally in the late eighteenth century.

In a lecture given at the RIBA in December 1950, John Summerson spoke of 'the Soane style [as] the work not of one man but of two'.¹ The other man was George Dance, Soane's first employer, and his friend and mentor. They met in 1768 when Soane was fifteen and Dance was twenty-seven; Soane's bricklayer father had died in April and Dance's father in February of that year. While Soane was a reluctant hod-carrier to his bricklayer brother, Dance had inherited the important and lucrative position of Clerk (that is, architect and surveyor) of the City Works. Soane was offered employment by Dance and joined the family household in Chiswell Street, Moorfields, London. He did not have the status of an articulated pupil but was soon copying drawings for the Guildhall office and helping with the additions to Pitshanger Manor. In 1772, seeking wider experience and with Dance's approval, Soane became a salaried assistant (at £60 a year) in Henry Holland's newly established office. His friendship with Dance continued, and indeed the artist and diarist Joseph Farington called him 'Soane's best friend' (5 February 1796).² The older man's influence was commented on by others, and Farington later reported that Sir Francis Bourgeois RA, founder of Dulwich Picture Gallery, had spoken of Soane's 'excessive admiration' of Dance (2 August 1809).³ Again, Farington recorded that John Yenn, architect and RA 'said that to G Dance is imputed this whimsical deviation of Soane from the examples of good taste [...] Yenn in repeating this is repeating the opinion of others' (10 March 1796).⁴

Dance was one of the original members of the Royal Academy of Arts, to which Soane was admitted as a student in architecture on 25 October 1771, six weeks after his eighteenth birthday, and less than three years after the Academy's foundation; 'he was only the twelfth architect to enrol out of a student body of 140'.⁵ The 'Instrument of

Foundation' lists the provisions for students;⁶ these included a 'Library of Books of Architecture, Sculpture, Painting and all the Sciences related thereto [...] open one day in every week' (from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays). For students in architecture there was a 'Professor of Architecture, who shall read annually six public lectures, calculated to form the taste of the students, to instruct them in laws and principles of composition, to point out to them the beauties or faults of celebrated productions, to fit them for an unprejudiced study of books, and for a critical examination of structures'. There was also a 'Professor of Perspective and Geometry who shall read six lectures annually [...] in which all the useful propositions of Geometry, together with the principle of Lineal Aerial Perspective, and also the projection of shadows, reflections, and refraction shall be clearly and fully illustrated; *he shall particularly confine himself to the quickest, easiest and most exact methods of operation*' (author's italics). In addition, the students in architecture had the opportunity to submit drawings for hanging in the annual exhibition, although 'Designs in Architecture which have gained a Premium [Silver or Gold Medal competitions] shall not be admitted to the Exhibition'.⁷

The Royal Academy's aim was to complement the professional training received in an architect's office. Most RA students were articled to practising architects from the age of about sixteen for five or six years. They worked twelve hours a day in the office, on site or running errands, from Monday to Saturday with Sundays free, and sometimes lived on the premises. At the Royal Academy, no studio space was allotted to the young architects and thus there was no scope for critical appraisals of the theoretical projects in progress on the drawing board and no formal occasions for discussion.

The admittance of a student to the Royal Academy was governed by its 'Laws and Regulations', which stated 'That the Terms of Admission for Architects shall be to produce a finished Design of their own Invention done in the Academy to the satisfaction of the Council, and that the student should be entitled to make a Design for Admission by presenting a Design attested to be their own Invention by one of the Academicians, or by any other Professor of Reputation residing in London'.⁸ Thus one design was made within the Royal Academy and another outside. All subsequent designs were made extra-murally with one exception: entrants for the Gold Medal competition had also to make a five-hour sketch design, under the supervision of the Keeper, for a subject not known in advance. The 'unseen' exercise in 1774 was a design for a Temple of Mars; in 1776 it was 'The Door of a church dedicated to the Evangelists', for which, revealing his ambitious nature, Soane drew a façade instead of an entrance and twelve Apostles instead of four Evangelists (Fig. 1).⁹

A Silver Medal was awarded annually to the winner or winners of the measured drawing competition, the subject of which was a selected building within a 10-mile radius of the Royal Academy. Measurements had to be accurate and, if there was any doubt, the dimensions were checked by one or more of the architect Academicians.¹⁰ The building chosen for 1771 was the 'Front next the Thames of the Royal Academy', that is, the Queen's Gallery, Old Somerset House (Fig. 2).¹¹ The date for submission was 1 November 1771 and Soane missed it by a day. Although he presumably measured the building and made fully dimensioned drawings, the final elevation (dated '1770') with its inscribed title in a distinctive lower case is in the hand of Robert Baldwin (fl. 1762–c. 1804), an architect, draughtsman and engraver known to Soane and, in particular, to

George Dance, for whom he had worked.¹² The building chosen for the Silver Medal measured drawing competition of 1772 was 'The Banqueting House at Whitehall', and again Baldwin drew the presentation elevation, inscribing the title with a calligrapher's flourish.¹³ This time Soane gained a Silver Medal.

Soane's first attempt at winning the Gold Medal for a theoretical project ('composition') was in 1774 when the subject was a 'Nobleman's Town House & Offices'. Soane did badly, coming a poor third out of three candidates; only record drawings of the plans survive.¹⁴ Success in the Gold Medal competition was vital to Soane since it offered the possibility of a three-year Travelling Scholarship, funded by George III, of £60 a year and travelling expenses of £30 each way.

The subject set for the Gold Medal competition of 1776 was announced in February and was a 'Triumphal Bridge'. Although Soane must have made many preliminary designs, only one survives. This is an unfinished part-elevation for the entrance front which was not drawn by Soane himself, but by George Dance for Soane (Fig. 3).¹⁵ Containing the essentials of the design submitted to the Royal Academy, it shows the main elements, such as the arch, Corinthian colonnade, domes and pediment, although these are not fully drawn out. The sculpture — including a *columna rostrata*, circular pedestals with trophies and an equestrian statue — are certainly in Dance's fluent hand, as seen, for example, in his characteristic shorthand way of depicting staffage or entourage (the figures, animals, trees, vehicles and so on, which animate an architectural drawing and give an idea of scale). The horizontal and vertical ruled pen lines that define the architecture are by the same hand that made the freehand elements including the sculpture. However, the drawing may represent Dance's summary of Soane's design, to which the older man has simply added his suggestions for sculpture. Some elements, such as the use of a roundel over a niche, can be found in Dance's prize-winning Parma Academy design for a public gallery, 1763.¹⁶

Of the three presentation drawings for the Bridge of Triumph that Soane submitted to the Royal Academy in November 1776, he may have only drawn the plan himself; the labels and dimensions are in his hand, though the inscribed title is by Robert Baldwin. While Soane could perhaps have done some of the line drawing, the fine rendering and the inscriptions of the 'Elevation of Entrance' (Fig. 4) and 'Section through the Center Building' can be attributed to Robert Baldwin.¹⁷ Soane would have settled the design options in his own mind and drawn them out, but, although a competent draughtsman, he could not have made these presentation drawings by himself. The cloudy skies, shaded representation of rusticated masonry and colour palette are found in Baldwin's known work, and the same hand (that is, Baldwin's) continued to make drawings for Soane up to at least 1785. The drawing of some of the sculpture is attributed to Dance. Unusually, for an architect, he drew figures well and, for instance, made more than two hundred portraits (now in the collections of the Royal Academy, British Museum and National Portrait Gallery). 'The Elevation to the River', completed after November 1776 and a very large drawing (almost 8 feet wide), was also by Baldwin but this time without Dance.¹⁸ A copy of that drawing made some years later, to the same scale and with coloured washes, took a Soane pupil twenty-eight days.¹⁹ Baldwin's original 'Elevation to the River' would have taken weeks to do, and at that period Soane was working a twelve-hour, six-day week in Henry Holland's office and so could not have found time

to make such a finished drawing. It is possible that Dance paid some or all of Baldwin's fee. It would have been very evident to the architect members of the Royal Academy that the large, beautifully rendered drawings for the Bridge could not have been done by Soane and it seems that such assistance was an acceptable practice since 'there was nothing in the rules of the Royal Academy against this, it was not the drawing but the design intention that they were looking for'.²⁰

Had Soane not been working on his Triumphal Bridge design on Sunday, 9 June 1776, he would have shared in a boating party at Greenwich and probably drowned in the same accident that cost the life of his friend James King. Saved by diligence, Soane exhibited, in the following year, a design for a mausoleum in memory of his lost 'schoolfellow'. Soane's initial sketch designs, one in an eclectic Egyptian style and the other in a 'Moresque' style, caused amusement among his friends.²¹ Hence the satirical drawings by a fellow Royal Academy student, the sculptor John Flaxman, for 'A Mausoleum adorn'd with Colossal Sculpture being an attempt at something in a new Style' (with a note in George Dance's hand, 'For the Exhibition of 1777'), and another with a pagoda-like design for a 'Mausoleum for Ching Chang Chow Emperor of China'.²² In the same spirit was Dance's design in an Egyptian-Arabian style for 'A surprising antique Edifice in the Middle of the Desert of Arabia adjoin'd wth Colossal figures of exquisite sculpture' that also made fun of Soane's immature first designs for the James King mausoleum.²³ A more positive response from Dance is seen in the several surviving sketch designs he made to help Soane, all of which develop the idea of a domical centre and a base with bold semicircular openings that is seen in Soane's 'Moresque' design. In one sketch design Dance experiments with a coved entrance and a pyramidal rather than a domical roof,²⁴ then stretches the design with a domed centre linked by colonnades to pyramidal pavilions.²⁵ Next, the colonnades are subtracted and the design made more compact (Fig. 5).²⁶ As well as an exercise about compactness versus spread, there is another about height and storeys, so that the drum beneath the dome becomes shorter, taller or a separate storey. Soane took what he needed from Dance's suggestions and although the elevation of the design exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777 is missing there is a copy that shows it as a compact, three-storey building with pyramidal pavilions (Fig. 6); this arrangement is also shown in an X-shaped plan (drawn in a *trompe-l'œil* fashion by Robert Baldwin) that probably accompanied the original drawing.²⁷ Soane had a lifelong habit of reworking previous designs and the plan and elevation for a 'Mausoleum to the Memory of James King', published as plates 17–18 in his *Designs in Architecture* (1778), show a two-storey building.

Soane was awarded the coveted Travelling Scholarship in December 1777 and left for Italy on 18 March 1778, expecting to be away for three years. One of the requirements of the award was that drawings for the Royal Academy's annual exhibition should be sent back to London. Thus Soane took with him some sketch designs for theoretical projects. On one of them he noted, 'Sketch for a House of Parliament [made] before I went abroad!'. He inscribed this comment on an octagonal plan for a building of about 250 feet by 250 feet in which every room is a different and often peculiar shape; the result is clumsy.²⁸ Soane also took to Italy an initial sketch design made for him by Dance for the same subject, a 'British Senate House' or new parliament building.²⁹ A later, more fully worked out design by Dance, presumably sent from London, was dated by Soane 19

August 1778 (Fig. 7).³⁰ This key drawing is masterful, Dance's fertile mind expressed in the additions, erasures, alterations, and strips of paper that enlarged the original drawing sheet, as well as in the design. It offers alternative treatments for the principal elevation while the stretched elliptical plan presents the choice of either short wings or wings extended by colonnades on a semicircular plan, which brings to mind Bernini's piazza in front of St Peter's in Rome. Soane closely followed Dance's design in the drawings he sent back for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1779.³¹ The large, beautifully drawn and rendered plan (Fig. 8), elevation and section are highly finished and Soane must have had help with them. The novel use of sans serif lettering on lugged, tablet-like labels (or *tabula ansata*) on the plan, the rich burnt sienna washes of the elevation, and the subtle washes, lighting and shading of the section, are all wholly uncharacteristic of Soane (or Baldwin) and are therefore owed to another hand — presumably an Italian one.

On the back of his initial sketch design for a British Senate House Dance also made rough alternative studies for the so-called Chatham mausoleum, beginning with a trefoil plan (Fig. 9).³² In fact, Dance's design had nothing to do with the Earl of Chatham (who died on 11 May 1778, nine days after Soane reached Rome) but was another suggestion for a building type that fascinated Soane. A plan drawn much later by Soane (in 1794 or after) has a trefoil form, but with one lobe lengthened to curious effect (Fig. 10).³³ Of the alternative elevations that Dance suggested for the mausoleum, Soane chose the more lateral one as against the tighter pyramidal composition (its form emphasized by a diagrammatic triangle), and variants of this scheme crop up as late as 1832. Though minimal, Dance's rough alternative plans and elevations, section and detail were sufficient for Soane's requirements and exemplify the good understanding that existed between the two men.

When George Dance was in Italy (1758 to 1764) he had entered for the Parma Academy's competition for a 'Public Gallery', the subject set in 1763, and won the Gold Medal. Soane decided that he, in turn, would compete for the Parma Gold Medal. The subject in 1780 was a waterworks or 'Castello d'acqua decorato d'una pubblica fontana'. Combining function with civic ornament was problematic and so was the question of whether or not to 'treat the subject as an Antique Edifice'. Writing from Milan in August 1779, Soane sought advice from Thomas Pitt, an amateur architect and fellow traveller then in Italy, sending alternative sketch designs and asking him 'to point out the most exceptionable parts'.³⁴ Soane proceeded to produce finished designs in which water, trees and sculpture were added by another hand, which Pierre du Prey has identified as that of a Roman painter, Carlo Labruzzi.³⁵ However, Soane decided not to submit an entry to the competition and, uncharacteristically, did not exhibit a drawing for a 'Castello d'acqua' at the Royal Academy. Long afterwards, he published a revised design as a plate in his *Designs for Public and Private Buildings* (1832).³⁶

Despite giving up the competition, from lack either of time, confidence or help from Dance, Soane was set on having some sort of entrée to the Parma Academy. On 9 May 1780, on his way home to England, he stopped at Parma to present a revised elevation of the design for a Bridge of Triumph that had won him the Royal Academy's Gold Medal. A plan and section were later sent from London and Soane received a diploma of honorary membership.³⁷ For this recasting of his Royal Academy design, Soane was helped by Dance, whose five small sketch drawings were either taken by Soane to Italy

or sent from London. In any case, recognizing a weakness in the design made for the Royal Academy, Dance suggested alternative design solutions by employing river stairs where the bridge met the riverbanks. He also replaced Corinthian with Greek Doric, changed the columned drums for shallower versions or propylaea-like gateways (the adopted scheme), and reduced the amount of sculptural ornament.³⁸ The improvements made to Soane's original RA design give the bridge a serene monumentality. In his unpublished 'Description of the residence of Sir John Soane architect' (1835), Soane described these five small drawings as

a series of studies, made in Italy in 1778 [*sic*], of a design for a Triumphal Bridge. From these *pensieri*, finished drawings of the whole design, on a large scale, were made, and presented to the Ducal Academy at Parma, which that celebrated Institution for the promotion of the Fine Arts acknowledged by making me one of its honorary members.³⁹

Soane made no mention of Dance and yet, except for the left-hand side of the elevation showing the rejected proposal (6e), which may be in Soane's hand, the selected elevation (6d) was undoubtedly drawn by Dance, as were the plans (6a–c) (Figs 11, 12). These offered alternative solutions and were made to a small scale and with the columns indicated by brush and ink. An office copy of the design that Soane presented to the Parma Academy shows how closely he followed Dance's suggestions (Fig. 13).

The year after his return from Italy, Soane again collaborated with Dance. This time the subject set for competition concerned prisons for six hundred male and three hundred female convicts, the competition being announced on 23 August 1781 with the hand-in date of 1 November (eventually moved to 1 January 1782). The site was in Battersea fronting the south bank of the Thames. Soane's notes and sketches in his Note Book, taken from John Howard's *The State of prisons in England and Wales with preliminary observations ... of foreign prisons* (2nd edn., 1780) show his interest in radial planning.⁴⁰ The same interest is also seen in the rough drawings by George Dance which Soane pasted into his personal scrapbook (Fig. 14).⁴¹ It is apparent again in the plan of the finished competition design for the men's prison (of which a reduced copy survives) (Fig. 15).

Within the time allowed, the competition conditions were onerous; floor plans, two elevations and at least one section were required for each building. All had to be made to a scale of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to 1 foot, which meant that a section, for instance, was more than 10 feet (3120 mm) wide. Of the surviving competition drawings, two elevations and a section for the larger (men's) prison are in Dance's hand, while those for the smaller (women's) prison were drawn by Robert Baldwin (who also entered the competition independently).⁴² The exact design contributions of Dance and Soane to each of the schemes cannot be known, but the final plan of the men's prison is very close to the sketch plan by Dance and the austere expressive elevations surely came from his imagination (Fig. 16). Hints of his authorship come from the festoon of chains over the entrance, which is a variant design for that at Newgate Prison, while the competition motto — 'Mihi turpe relinqui est' — was used by Dance for his prize-winning Parma Academy submission. In any case, neither of the Soane/Dance designs was placed in the competition and none of the other schemes was carried out.

In the context of competitions, it is interesting to speculate on what may have been Dance's role in the competition of 1777 for St Luke's Hospital for Lunatics, Old Street,

Moorfields, for which Soane entered two designs, with most of the drawings being made by Robert Baldwin.⁴³ None of the competition entries was commissioned and Dance was eventually asked to design the new building, which he did, incorporating some of the planning and elevational treatment from the second design submitted by Soane.

A very different early scheme from Soane's first years in practice was for a rustic dairy, two preliminary designs for which are in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 17). Soane inscribed one 'Lady Craven 1781', and both drawings share the same palette and technique, suggesting that they were made at about the same time and certainly by Dance. Room labels for the 'Lady Craven' drawing are in Dance's hand, while the labelling and notes on the second drawing are by Soane who signed it 'JS Arch^t' and inscribed '... design for a Dairy in the primitive manner of building'.⁴⁴ It is likely that both drawings were made for Lady Craven, and then re-used for the dairy that was a present from Philip Yorke of Hammels Park, Hertfordshire, to his wife, in 1783. Confirmation of Dance's participation in the design comes from an entry in Soane's notebook, recording that on 27 January 1783 he was 'With Mr D[ance] draw^s the dairy'.⁴⁵ In execution, although elements such as the 'pillars [...] proposed to be of the Trunks of Elm Trees with bark on and [...] The Roof to be thatched' were carried out, the Hammels dairy diverged somewhat from Dance's suggested designs (Fig. 18). Soane adopted the three-part plan proposed by Dance but ignored the trefoil plan with three apsidal ends (a favourite plan form of Dance's), or the alternative single apsidal end and two square compartments, and chose instead to have two apsidal-ended compartments and one square one. Dance's wide and shallow pediment with revealed rafter ends became less Italianate and more classically correct with a Doric frieze (with open metopes) and a tighter, more steeply proportioned pediment. Something of the easy grace of Dance's designs was lost.

In 1788, Soane was appointed architect and surveyor to the Bank of England, remaining in that post until 1833. There are sketch designs for the rebuilding and extension of the Bank, made by Dance between 1791 and about 1799. The most important are those for the rebuilding of Robert Taylor's Bank Stock Office, in 1791–92. For Summerson, this was the first and key example of Soane's personal style and one that was achieved with Dance at his elbow. Much has been written about the Bank Stock Office.⁴⁶ Summerson was the first to attribute some related sketch designs to Dance, Daniel Abramson added more, and another has since been found, so that there are sixteen drawings by Dance, together with a survey drawing that has additional sketch details by him.⁴⁷ Dance's contributions to the final design for the Bank Stock Office were, Abramson suggests, 'ideas for [...] the vaulting and lighting schemes, pyramidal composition and reductive ornament'.⁴⁸

Again, in 1794, Dance's rough interior perspectives for the rebuilding of Taylor's Rotunda offered the essentials of the executed scheme: oculus, ribbed dome, lunette-clerestory, alcoves, and incised Greek key pattern.⁴⁹ The following year, as the Rotunda was nearing completion, Dance sent Soane a sketch design for a temporary covering for the dome in a letter which reveals something about the relationship between the two men. It begins, 'The approach of the severe [winter] season makes me think you had better contrive some temporary covering for your Dome tho I am satisfied that your model of covering must ultimately succeed better than it has done on the Bank Stock

Office' (adding 'if possible'), and ends, 'the zeal of friends sometimes borders upon impertinence but as it is the zeal of friendship it may be pardon'd'.⁵⁰ Presumably, Dance had in mind the effects of rain and frost on the lightweight, cone-shaped hollow clay pots used to roof the Bank Stock Office and this may explain why a heavier brick dome was used for the Rotunda. He was concerned that there should be a successful outcome for Soane but had to couch his advice diplomatically.

Surviving subsequent designs by Dance for Soane for the Bank were all for decorative details. Three studies of acroteria for the Lothbury front were made on 18 February 1796.⁵¹ This skyline ornament (for which there is no exact term) consisted of variations on a segmental pediment merging into a scroll on either side. Dance drew and noted the geometry of the design: 'Draw AB passing through the Center of the / Circle at pleasure / make CB Radius & / Describe CD' (Fig. 19).⁵² In execution, the design was more elaborate than Dance's, having double — rather than single — scroll motifs.

Dance also contributed sketch details of a cornice with trefoil and bead mouldings for the eating room of the Accountants' Office at the Bank, and another with stepped moulding and lion masks for the Consols Transfer Office, both in a drawing dated (by Soane) 23 February 1798.⁵³ About a year later Dance drew the details of a panel pilaster with an incised capital with volute, fret and anthemion motifs for the Consols Transfer Office (unexecuted) (Fig. 20).⁵⁴ It was an elaboration of the panel pilasters with incised lines and with a Greek fret above that Dance had designed for the library at Lansdowne House, London, c. 1788–94.⁵⁵ As Summerson noted, Dance invented the feature of incised lines in masonry, although it is Soane who is remembered for them.⁵⁶

As well as looking at handwriting and draughtsmanship for clues to attribution, there are also design aspects in Soane's works that might fairly be seen as originating with Dance. Summerson pointed out the influence of Dance's All Hallows Church (begun in 1765) with its elided cornice and clerestory lunette windows, the pendentive dome with oculus of the Guildhall Common Council Chamber (1777), the shallow cross-vaulted ceiling of the ballroom at Cranbury Park (c. 1780), and the large semicircular windows over segmental arches offering indirect lighting used by Dance for Lansdowne House (c. 1788).⁵⁷ Recently Margaret Richardson has suggested that Dance may have introduced Soane to the use of the Greek Doric order.⁵⁸ That seems to be the case, for early on Soane adopted both the Greek Doric order with fluted columns and the Greek Doric without flutes, alternatively known as the 'Primitivist' order.⁵⁹ The earliest built examples of (fluted) Greek Doric in Europe were James Stuart's garden temple at Hagley, designed in 1758, and another one at Shugborough, c. 1760, as well as the portico added by Nicholas Revett to Trafalgar House, Wiltshire, with a Delian order (that is, fluted at the top and bottom of the shafts) soon after 1766. In Dance's own work, an unexecuted design for a country house of c. 1771 has an unfluted, baseless Doric order.⁶⁰ It was not until 1804–06, when reconstructing Stratton Park, that he used a Primitivist Doric for the portico, drawing full-size details of the capital and entablature.⁶¹

In Soane's student and other theoretical designs, a fluted Greek Doric first appears in sketch designs, drawn by Dance, for the mausoleum in memory of James King. Soane kept to the fluted Doric for the design he exhibited at the Royal Academy in the annual exhibition that opened on 23 April 1777. A day earlier, an open competition for the new St Luke's Hospital for Lunatics in Old Street, Moorfields, was announced and Soane sent

in two entries, the first of which had a giant, baseless Doric order with plain shafts to a pair of double-height windows.⁶² For the so-called Chatham mausoleum, Soane varied between a fluted and an unfluted Greek Doric order, but the designs he published in 1793 and in 1832 are with fluted Greek Doric columns. The revised design for a Bridge of Triumph, presented to the Parma Academy in 1780, was, with its many columns, a striking example of fluted Greek Doric. In other schemes made between 1778 and 1780, Soane used a fluted Greek Doric order for his 'Castello d'acqua' scheme, the Downhill doghouse, and the Downhill mausoleum in the form of a rotunda (fluted but stopped at the bottom), but unfluted Greek Doric (or 'Primitivist') for a chapel and for a mausoleum on an X-plan. Although unfluted Doric can be seen as more 'primitive' than fluted Doric, the Dance/Soane design for a rustic dairy (1783), with its tree-trunk columns, was probably the first built example of a rustic 'Primitivist' order in England.

Of more than fifty surviving drawings made by Dance to help Soane, only two were labelled as such. These are sketch designs for the Rotunda at the Bank of England, inscribed by George Bailey (office assistant 1806–37, curator 1837–60), 'Sketch of M^r G. Dance'.⁶³ Thirty of the fifty drawings are in Soane's personal scrapbook, a volume which also has designs made by Dance for himself. None would have been made after May 1804 when, for example, entries in Soane's Note Books of meetings between the two men almost ceased, with only three meetings recorded between 1806–10. However, a reconciliation was effected by Dance after the death of Mrs Soane in November 1815. Further sketch designs by Dance made for Soane may come to light as research and cataloguing continue.

Mention may be made of the measured drawings that Soane brought back from Italy.⁶⁴ Of these, twenty-five were measured and drawn by Soane and eighty-six are copies made in Italy by Soane or others from various sources. He also made rough measured drawings in a sketchbook of various buildings including, for example, the temples at Paestum.⁶⁵ The measured drawings were made or copied for Soane's own use and copying would have saved a great deal of time. Although George Dance was in Italy for six years, he seems to have spent little time making such drawings; at any rate, his collection (at the Soane Museum) has rather few examples, some of which are copies. However, he did make a number of fine measured drawings of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, which Soane copied after his return from Italy, adding his own signature. Dance must have been irked by such plagiarism since references to it occur at least three times in Joseph Farington's diary.⁶⁶ For example, on 10 February 1797, Farington recorded that

Soane borrowed Dances drawing of the Sybills Temple and copied it, then hung it, inserting his own name for that of Dance, as having drawn it on the spot. Byers [James Byers, 1734–1817, an unsuccessful architect, cicerone and dealer] borrowed the same drawing, from Dance [when both were in Rome], copied it and sold a great number of copies of that as from his own measurements.

Interestingly, Dance never talked to Farington about helping Soane with ideas for designs. Nor could he have done so, for it might have been as damaging for Dance as for Soane.⁶⁷

There is no written evidence among Soane's papers that documents the collaboration between the two architects. Dance's motives stemmed from a wish to help a protégé with no advantages other than talent and ambition, but also because he enjoyed the stimulus

of discussing design and sharing ideas with a keen young mind. From 1768 to 1815 Dance was architect and surveyor to the City of London. It was a secure and well-paid post, Dance receiving 5 per cent on all new buildings and repairs carried out at the expense of the City, and there were other emoluments as well. Despite providing a formally recognized deputy and assistants, this official work was often tedious; it included such things as huts for night watchmen, blocked privies, road straightening, valuations, many surveys and attendance on more than twenty committees. Dance took up portrait drawing as 'a relaxation from the severer studies and more laborious employment of [his] professional life'.⁶⁸ From 1788 he combined public employment with a private practice that included country houses and which brought him sociability and stimulus. Dance made virtually all the drawings himself, which he achieved by rising very early and working before breakfast. The extra income no doubt was useful, but not important, as Dance's family life as a widower with three sons was unpretentious.

Robert Baldwin was essentially an unsuccessful architect who is not known to have built anything. He trained under Matthew Brettingham, assisted Robert Mylne with Blackfriars Bridge (1763–66) and George Dance with Newgate Gaol (1768–c. 1769). Baldwin was also an engraver and, for example, etched a plate of the west front of Newgate Gaol and also engraved and published *Machines and centering used in erecting Black-Friars Bridge* (1787).⁶⁹ The only record of payment made to Baldwin by Soane is an entry in Soane's office 'Note Book No. 5' for 5 January 1803 — 'Baldwin £2.2.0' — and this was likely to have been a charitable gift to the, by then, elderly man. In the course of cataloguing Soane's early drawings, more than fifty have been attributed to Baldwin. Seven drawings relate to Royal Academy student projects and the rest to the first years of practice, in 1777 and between 1780 and 1785. Not all of these are presentation drawings, many being simple plans and elevations, and Baldwin also wrote at least one very long specification.⁷⁰ Soane had no regular office staff until he took on his first pupil in September 1784. Between 1780 and 1785, Soane had fifty-three jobs, some small and some large. During those years he relied on ad hoc help from men such as Thomas Malton (1752–1804), who had been a student at the Royal Academy at the same time as Soane.⁷¹ Payments were also made to 'Pepys', who may have been temporarily seconded from Dance's city office.⁷² Later, in 1787, Soane employed Christopher Ebdon (1744–1824), with whom he had worked in Henry Holland's office, to make presentation drawings for Chillington Hall.⁷³ In the lean times of practice it was — and is — very common for architects 'to take in washing'. Soane did so in 1781 when he was paid 20 guineas by Dance for twenty days' work on the estimates for Newgate Gaol and £15 for ten days' work 'Making 2 Elevations & a Section & / completing the plan of the Stables &c / for the Associated Livery of London'.⁷⁴

Dance was a fluent draughtsman but, though he enjoyed drawing, it was for him a way of visualizing design, and of presenting information to the tradesman. While many of his most beautiful drawings are full-size details, there is often a light-hearted quality about his designs as well as his draughtsmanship (Fig. 21). Dance never made a finished perspective, though he did draw some finished elevations and sections, exhibiting them at the Royal Academy on only four occasions. Baldwin was a fine, accurate draughtsman, bold and sometimes innovative as when he used *trompe-l'œil* for plans, and he had a versatile inscribing hand. Frustrated in his attempts to set up as an architect, he had to

fall back on his drawing and engraving skills in order to make a living. One of only four surviving signed drawings is his section of 'Saint Stephens Walbrook' (with *trompe-l'œil* grained drawing board, curled drawing sheet, sealing wax, drawing pin and fly), given to 'M^r Soan' for 'his Approbation' some time before the architect added an 'e' to his name (in 1784) (Fig. 22).

Soane was a competent but not a distinguished draughtsman, although he had a great admiration for the art (Fig. 23). In his Royal Academy lecture V, Soane told the students that although 'a superior manner of drawing is absolutely necessary' and that it was

impossible not to admire the beauties, and almost magical effects in the architectural drawings of a Clérisseau, a Gandy or a Turner, nonetheless few architects could hope to reach the excellence of those artists without devoting to drawing too much of that time which they ought to employ in the attainment of the higher and more essential qualifications of an architect.⁷⁵

Soane was right, since when all is said and done it is *design* that matters. That Robert Baldwin drew out much of Soane's RA student work is not particularly significant, for the architects who viewed the drawings must have known that they were not made by Soane; this presumably was an acceptable practice for architect students, though not, of course, for the artists. The ethics of Dance's contribution to Soane's designs when a student, competing with others, is a difficult one. As a student it seems that the Academy was looking for unaided design — or so the five-hour *esquisses* would suggest. Yet although student competitions were held and there were twelve public lectures a year, no tuition was provided, so this could only come from the student's employer and, to a degree, from fellow students. In the same lecture V at the Royal Academy, Soane unfavourably compared his student Gold Medal design for a 'Triumphal Bridge' (1776) with Thomas Sandby's earlier design for a 'Bridge of Magnificence' (c. 1760), suggesting that, in future, competition designs submitted by RA students be subject to 'a public discourse [by] the different Professors, pointing out the beauties and defects of each composition, likewise showing wherein it might be improved. Such observations would be particularly useful to the students'.⁷⁶ It seems that here, Soane is arguing for the architecture students receiving the critical appraisal and advice that he may have informally received from George Dance. Can we be certain that, for example, that Sir William Chambers, a founding and leading member of the Royal Academy, never lent a hand to pupils such as James Gandon and John Yenn who went on to become RA Gold Medallists?

It is not now considered wrong for students to seek criticism and advice, as well as to study architectural publications and to visit and analyse the buildings of past and contemporary architects. The point is to understand and learn from such sources and to create something fresh and appropriate. Farington reported of Dance that:

he derided the prejudice of limiting Designs in Architecture within certain rules, which in fact though held out as laws had never been satisfactorily explained.... Architecture unshackled wd. afford the greatest genius the greatest opportunities of producing the most powerful efforts of the human mind.⁷⁷

Dance's role in the younger man's architectural education was the freeing up of Soane's imagination in a way that allowed him to develop his own singular style.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to Margaret Richardson and Pierre du Prey for examining and discussing the drawings attributed to Dance (and to Baldwin). Footnotes with references to Soane Museum drawings give the established drawing number (for example, SM 45/1/10). Some Soane drawings are stored in volumes, but most in plan chests. Catalogue entries for these drawings, some with digital images, can be found online at <http://www.soane.org.uk>.

NOTES

- 1 John Summerson, 'Soane: the Case-History of a Personal Style', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd series, 58 (1951), pp. 83–91 (p. 89).
- 2 *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kathryn Cave (New Haven and London, 1979, 1982), entry for 5 February 1796.
- 3 *Ibid.*, entry for 2 August 1809.
- 4 *Ibid.*, entry for 10 July 1796.
- 5 Nicholas Savage, 'A Royal Academy Student in Architecture', in *John Soane Architect: Master of Space and Light*, ed. Margaret Richardson and MaryAnne Stevens (London, 1999), pp. 86–95 (p. 86).
- 6 Sidney Hutchinson, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768–1986*, 2nd edn. (London, 1986), Appendix A.
- 7 Royal Academy, 'Royal Book 1768–1802', entry for 11 August 1769, Royal Academy archive.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 SM vol. 59/103, 45/1/14.
- 10 Neil Bingham, 'Architecture at the Royal Academy Schools, 1768–1836', *The Education of the Architect: Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Symposium of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain 1993*, ed. Neil Bingham (London, 1993) pp. 5–14 (p. 10).
- 11 SM 74/2/2.
- 12 There are only four known drawings signed by Robert Baldwin. Two are for a new house at Wardour and are dated 1768 (Wiltshire and Swindon Archives). Two are in the Soane Museum: a part-section of 'Saint Stephens Walbrook' (SM vol. 9/7) datable to before 1784, and a plan for a prison, presumed to be for the competition of 1781–82 (SM 58/1/2). In addition, ten of the contract drawings made for Dance's Newgate Gaol in 1768–69 have been attributed to Baldwin (SM D4/4/1–10); see Jill Lever, *Catalogue of the Drawings of George Dance the Younger (1741–1825) ... from the Collection of Sir John Soane's Museum* (London, 2003), pp. 106–08, cat. nos [scheme 32]1–10, 25. Of the measured drawing for the Queen's Gallery by Baldwin, Pierre du Prey has suggested (personal communication, February 2009) that Dance may have contributed to the drawing, for example, adding the shadows that reveal the profile of some of the mouldings.
- 13 SM 74/2/1.
- 14 SM 45/1/26, 45/1/29, 45/1/28, 45/1/27.
- 15 SM 45/1/10.
- 16 SM D4/11/1–8; Lever, *Dance*, pp. 73–78, cat. nos [17]1–8.
- 17 SM 12/5/1–3.
- 18 SM 12/5/4.
- 19 SM 12/5/8. Drawn by James Adams, junior, a pupil in Soane's office from 1806 to 1809. The office 'Day Book' has entries by Adams noting his work on the Triumphal Bridge from 13 April to 15 May 1809, making twenty-eight working days.
- 20 Nicholas Savage, Royal Academy librarian, personal communication, 25 June 2008.
- 21 SM vol. 42/95, 42/90.
- 22 Victoria and Albert Museum: V&A 3436.110r and v.
- 23 SM 69/8/2; Lever, *Dance*, cat. no. [112].
- 24 SM vol. 42/96.
- 25 SM vol. 42/92.
- 26 SM vol. 42/93.
- 27 SM (elevation) vol. 66/33, (plan) 45/1/16.
- 28 SM 45/1/9.
- 29 SM vol. 42/120.
- 30 SM 45/1/13.
- 31 SM 45/1/35, 13/2/5, 13/2/4.
- 32 SM vol. 42/172v.

- 33 SM 45/1/23.
- 34 SM vol. 42/184, 182, 183 rectos and versos.
- 35 SM 45/1/22, 45/1/21, 45/1/20. P. du Prey, *John Soane: the Making of an Architect*, pp. 184–85 (Chicago, 1982). Du Prey commented of the sculptured figures in the design that they ‘possess a lifelike quality far beyond the powers of Soane’s mediocre figure style. It seems certain that Soane, contravening the *concorso* rules on autograph work, used the assistance of his Roman friend, the painter Carlo Labruzzi’.
- 36 John Soane, *Designs for Public and Private Buildings* (expanded and privately circulated edn., London, 1832; all three extant copies in the Sir John Soane Museum), pl. xxxiv*. After Soane returned to London in 1780, he probably discussed his failed ‘Castello d’acqua’ design with Dance for there are two rough designs for a waterworks in Dance’s hand that are quite different in character to Soane’s own designs (SM vol. 42/98, 42/99). There is also a related drawing by Dance that satirizes Labruzzi’s nude sculptured figures (SM vol. 42/102).
- 37 SMC Div. IV P (1).
- 38 SM 86/2/1a–e. These drawings were previously mounted together and framed but were recently dismantled and de-framed because of their fragile condition.
- 39 John Soane, ‘Description of the Residence of Sir John Soane Architect’ (1835), pp. 82–83. The original drawings have not survived at Parma.
- 40 SM SNB1 (pages datable to September 1781).
- 41 SM vol. 42/39r and v, 42/122v.
- 42 SM 13/1/11–18, 20–22. Baldwin’s own surviving plan (SM 58/1/2) has a dull gridiron layout and it unlikely that he contributed anything beyond his excellent drawing skill to Soane’s design.
- 43 SM 13/1/4–10.
- 44 Victoria and Albert Museum, V&A 3306.161, 160. Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, *Sir John Soane: Catalogues of Architectural Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1985), cat. no. [14]77.
- 45 SNB 1.
- 46 Summerson, ‘Soane: the Case-History’; John Summerson, ‘Soane’s Bank Stock Office at the Bank of England’, *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), pp. 135–49; Eva Schumann-Bacia, *John Soane and the Bank of England* (Harlow, 1991), pp. 51–57, 60; Daniel M. Abramson, ‘The Bank of England’, in *John Soane Architect*, ed. Richardson and Stevens, pp. 226–27; Daniel M. Abramson, *Building the Bank of England: Money, Architecture, Society 1694–1942* (New Haven and London, 2005), pp. 101–16.
- 47 SM vol. 74/1, 10/4/19, vol. 60/140, Archives 14/80/1–5, vol. 42/170–77, vol. 42/76–77; Lever, *Dance*, pp. 352–55, cat. nos [99]1–17.
- 48 Abramson, *Bank of England*, p. 218.
- 49 SM vol. 60/2–3; Lever, *Dance*, pp. 355–56, cat. nos [100]1–2.
- 50 SM Archives, 1/40; Lever, *Dance*, p. 356, cat. no. [101].
- 51 SM vol. 42/187–89.
- 52 SM vol. 42/188.
- 53 SM vol. 42/191.
- 54 SM vol. 42/192.
- 55 SM D3/3/3; Lever, *Dance*, p. 196, cat. no. [59]8.
- 56 Summerson, ‘Soane: the Case-History’, p. 88.
- 57 John Summerson, ‘Soane: the Man and the Style’, in *John Soane* (London, 1983), pp. 9–23.
- 58 Personal communication, February 2008.
- 59 David Watkin, *Thomas Hope, 1769–1831, and the Neo-Classical Idea* (London, 1968), pp. 86–87.
- 60 SM D2/8/24–5; Lever, *Dance*, p. 216, cat. nos [69]1–2.
- 61 SM D1/3/35, D1/4/63, D1/3/36; Lever, *Dance*, pp. 269–70, cat. nos [78]58–60.
- 62 SM 13/1/4.
- 63 SM 60/2–3; Lever, *Dance*, pp. 355–56, cat. nos [100]1–2.
- 64 See SM online drawings catalogue — Soane in Italy: measured drawings made or copied, 1778–80.
- 65 See SM online sketchbooks catalogue — sketch/notebook, vol. 39.
- 66 Farington, ‘Diary’. Other comments by Dance recorded by Farington on 5 September 1803 and 4 March 1810.
- 67 *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, entry for 10 February 1797.
- 68 George Dance, Esq., RA, *A Collection of Portraits Sketched from the Life Since the Year 1793, and Engraved in Imitation of the Original Drawings by William Daniell*, A.R.A., 2 vols (London, 1808–14), preface.
- 69 The Newgate print is signed ‘R.Baldwin sculp’; SM D4/4/23; Lever, *Dance*, p. 110, cat. no. [32]25.
- 70 Tendring Hall, Suffolk, dated 7 July 1784, SM 28/3/1A/1–6.

- 71 Gate and lodges at Hamels Park, 1781, SM 62/8/32, vol. 41/42r.
- 72 Soane's office 'Accompt book / from 1781' has a note 'set out with Pepys & Sanders / to Survey' (13 February 1785) and entries of payment to 'Pepys' of 2 guineas on 21 February and 8 March 1785. George Pepys assisted George Dance in the City of London office from about 1774 (D. Stroud, *George Dance Architect, 1741-1825* (London, 1971), pp. 106, 149, 155-56).
- 73 SM 29/1/1-2.
- 74 Soane's office 'Journal 1781-1797', p. 7.
- 75 David Watkin, *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 561 (lecture V).
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 565.
- 77 Farington, 'Diary', 25 March 1804.

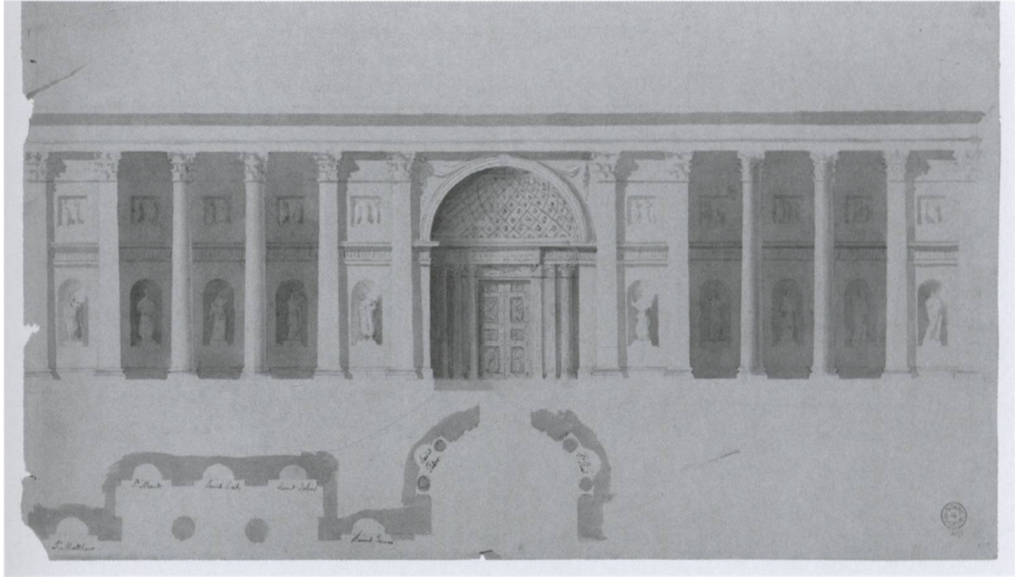


Fig. 1. 'The Door of a Church, dedicated to the Evangelists', a Royal Academy 'unseen' exercise by Soane, and drawn by him, 1776 (Soane Museum 45/1/14)

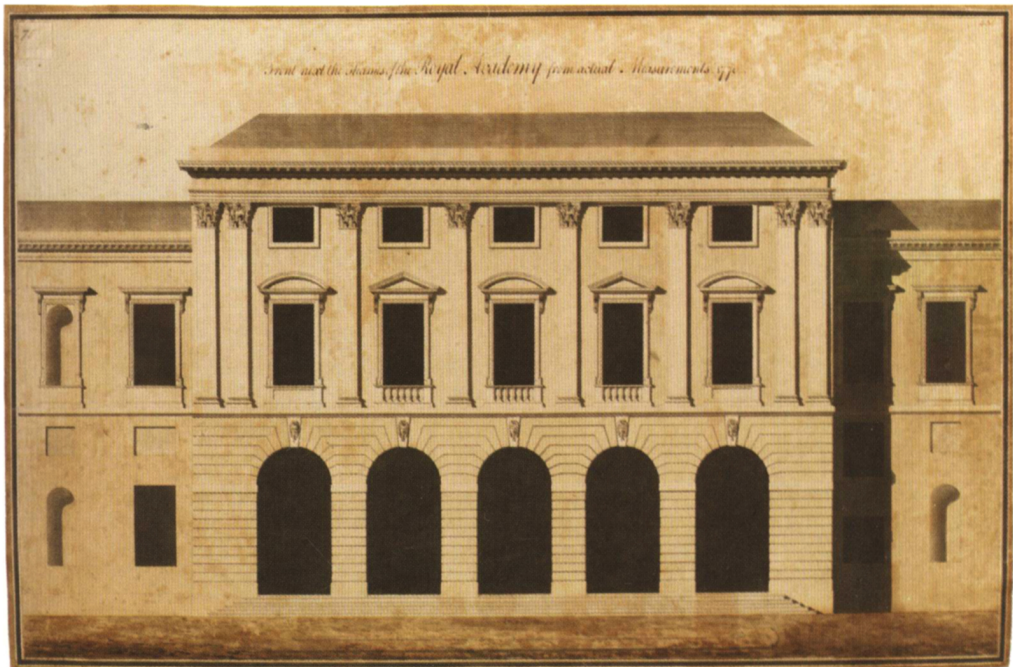


Fig. 2. 'Front next the Thames of the Royal Academy' (the Queen's Gallery, Old Somerset House). A Royal Academy measured drawing exercise by Soane, drawn by Robert Baldwin, 1770 (Soane Museum 74/2/2)

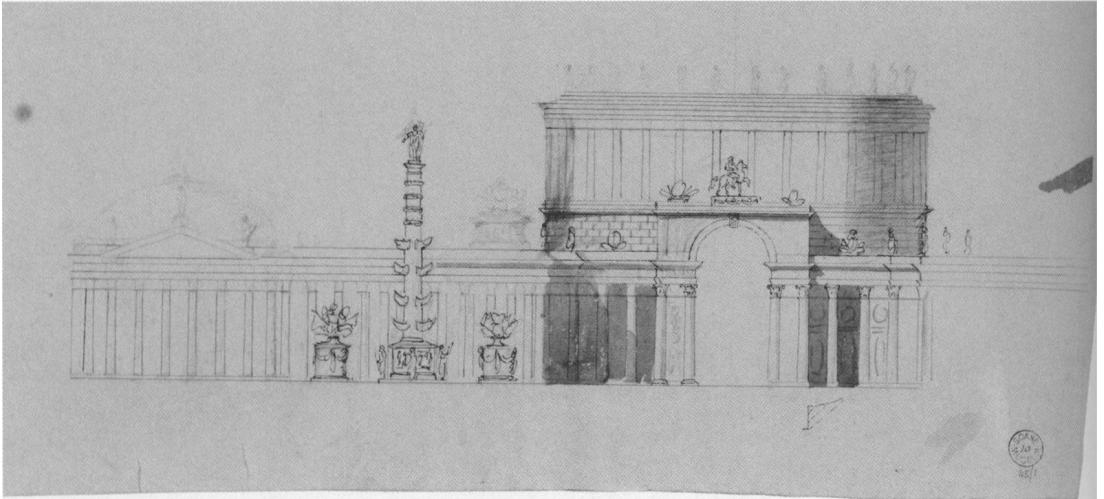


Fig. 3. Preliminary design for a 'Triumphal Bridge' made for Soane by George Dance, 1776 (Soane Museum 45/1/10)

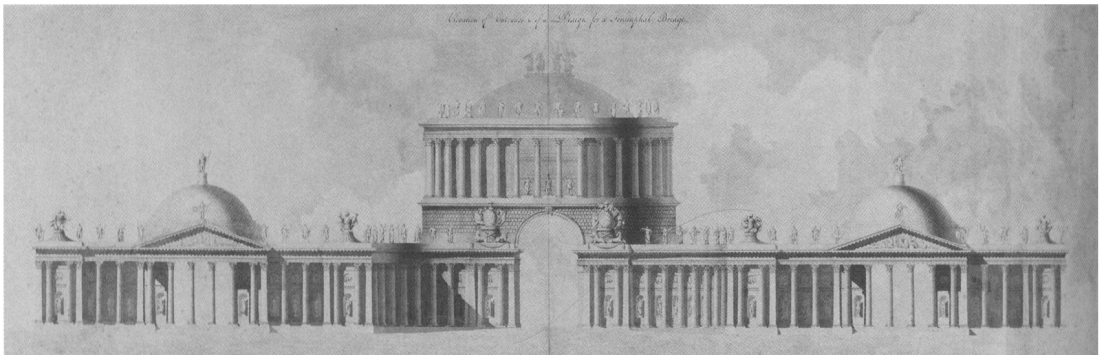


Fig. 4. Royal Academy competition design for a 'Triumphal Bridge' submitted by Soane and drawn by Robert Baldwin and George Dance (Soane Museum 12/5/2)

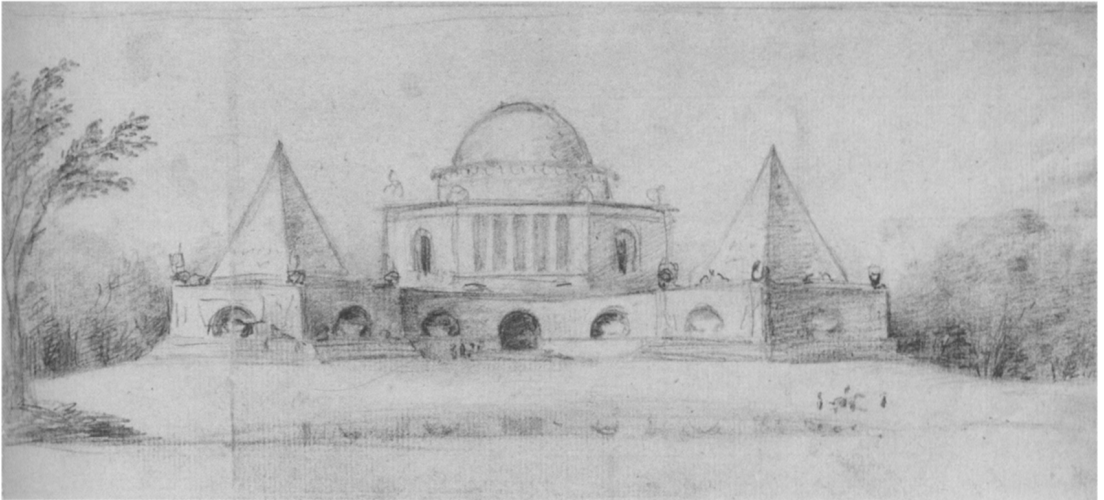


Fig. 5. Sketch design for a mausoleum to the memory of James King made for Soane by George Dance, 1776 (Soane Museum vol. 42/93)

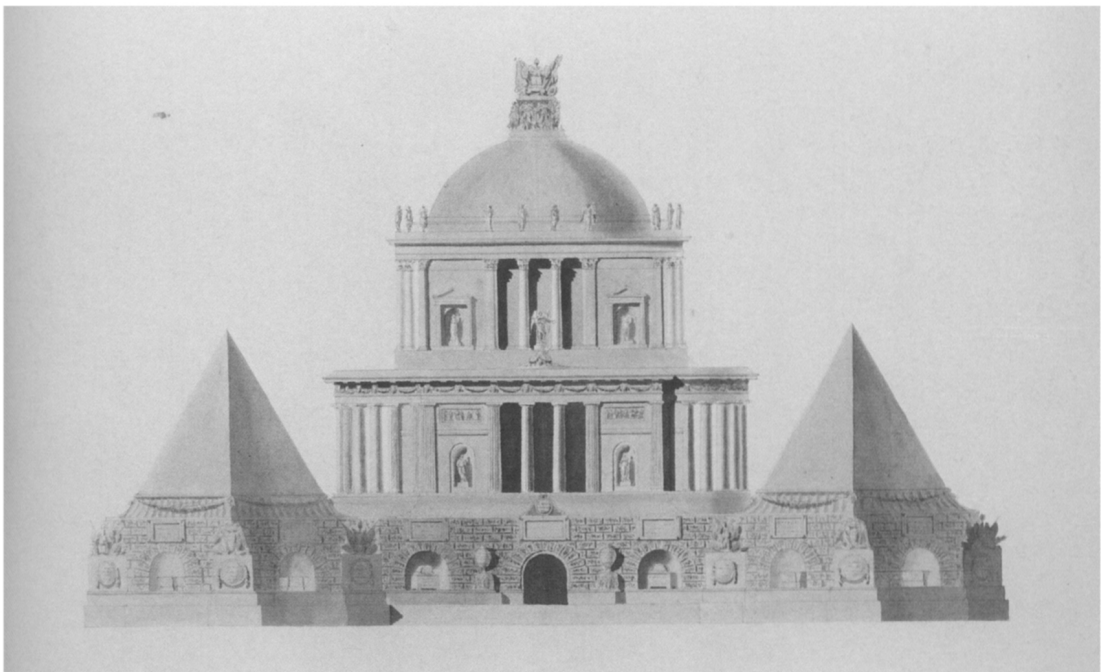


Fig. 6. Record copy of design 'for a Mausoleum to the Memory of James King drowned June 9 1776' by an unidentified pupil. (Soane Museum vol. 66/33)

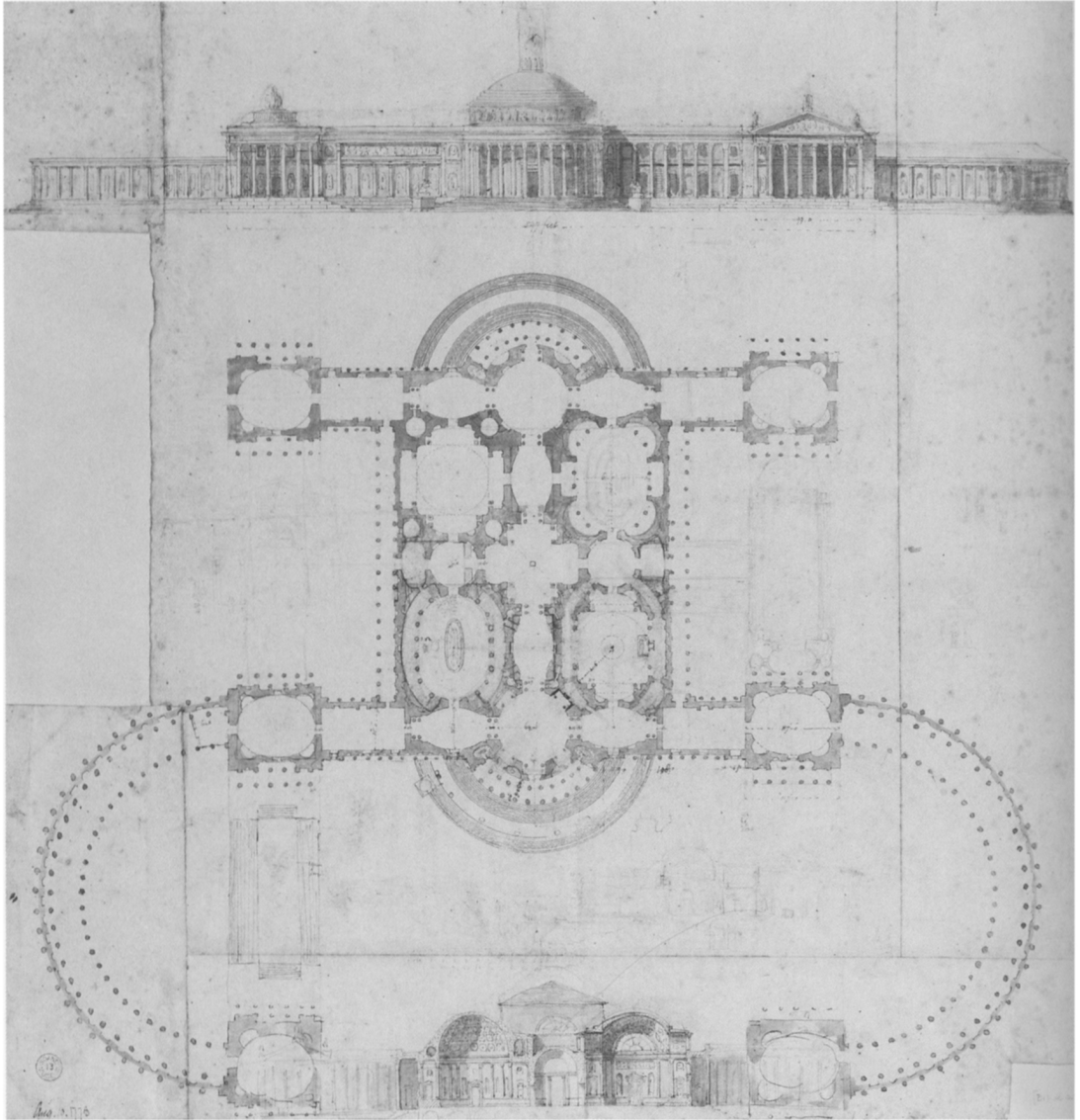


Fig. 7. Design with alternative solutions for a 'British Senate House' made for Soane by George Dance, 1778 (Soane Museum 45/1/13)

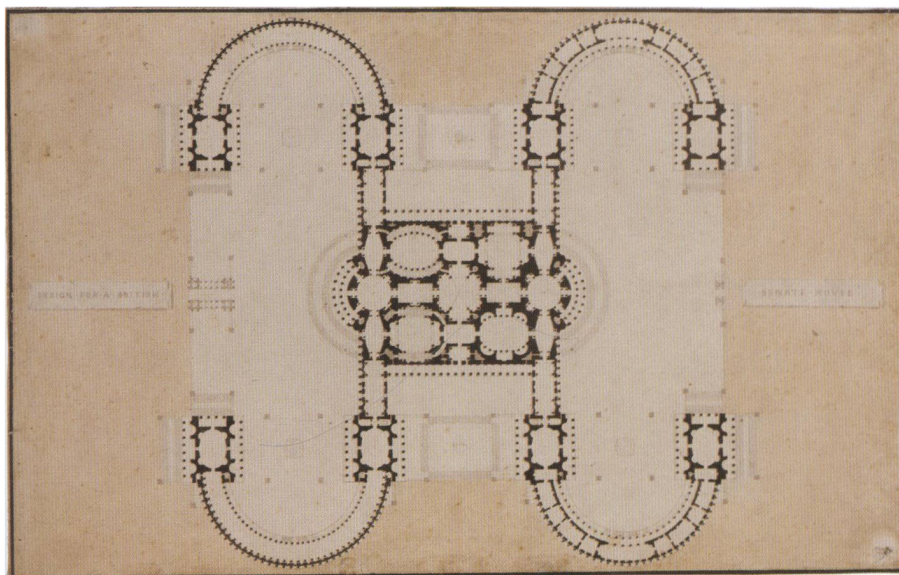


Fig. 8. Plan of 'Design for a British Senate House' drawn by an unidentified (?) Italian hand and exhibited by Soane at the Royal Academy, 1779 (Soane Museum 45/1/35)

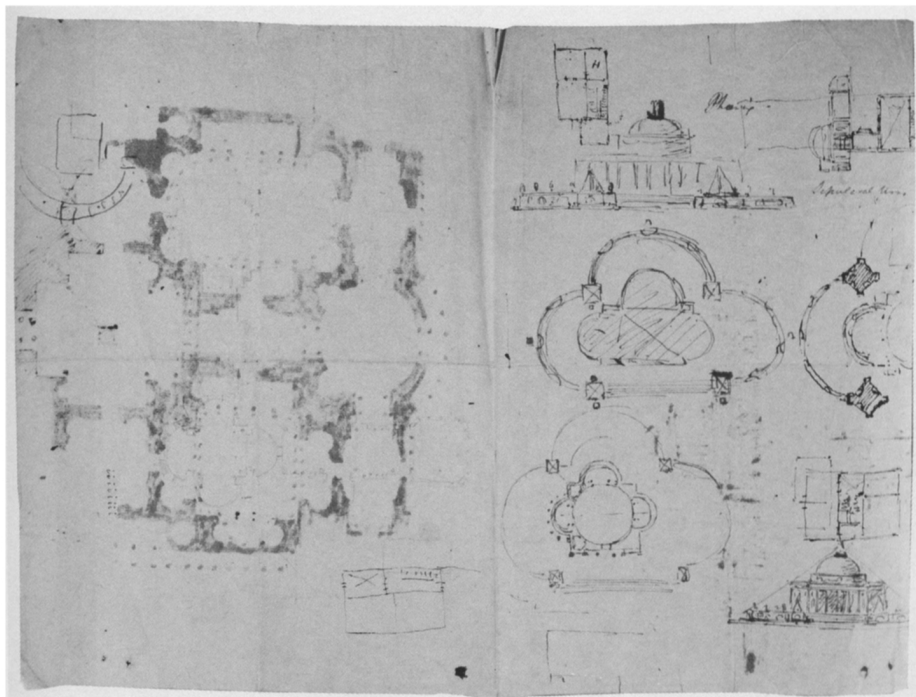


Fig. 9. Rough design for the so-called 'Chatham mausoleum' made for Soane by George Dance, before 18 March 1778 (Soane Museum vol. 42/172v)

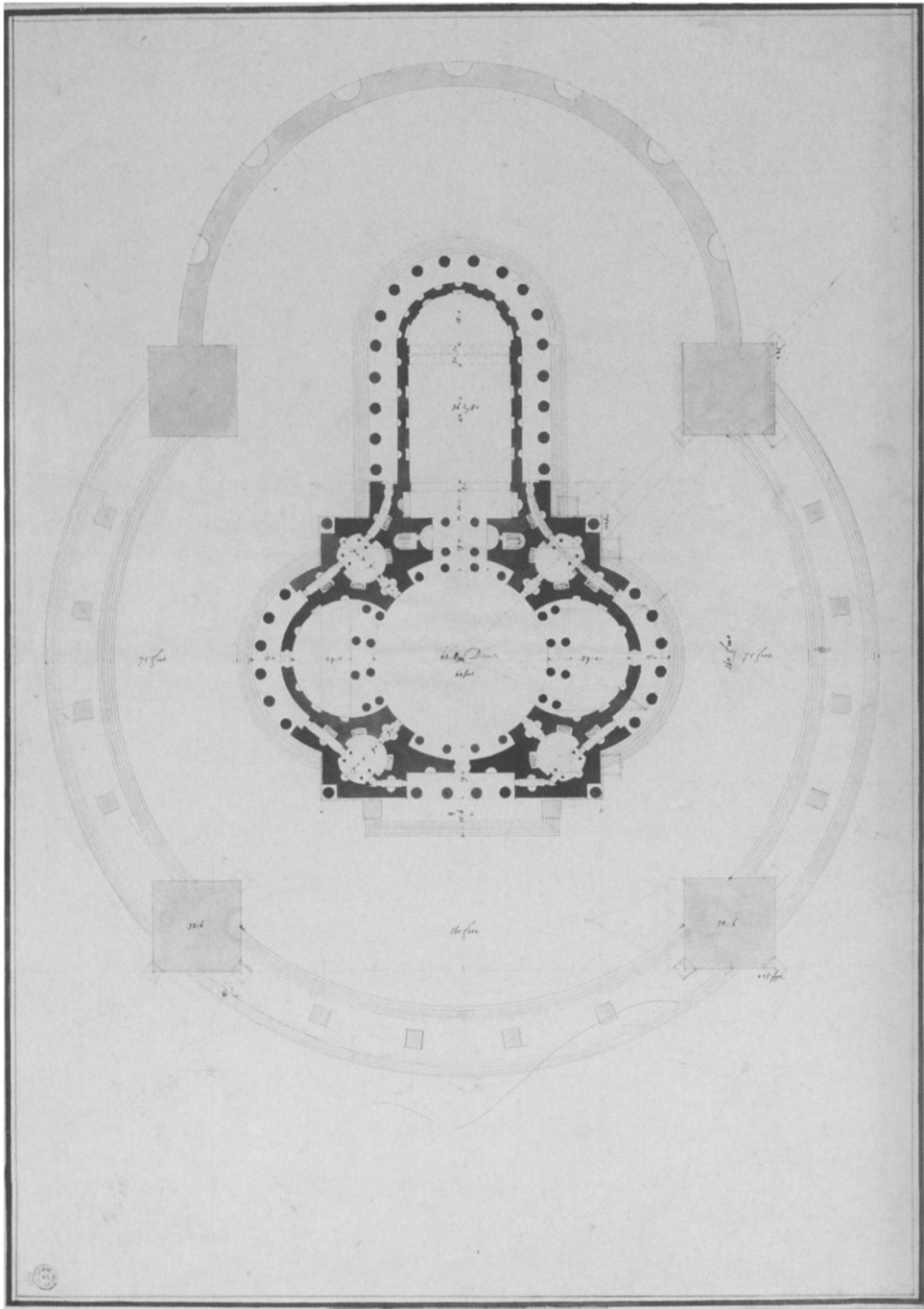


Fig. 10. Later design for the 'Chatham mausoleum' drawn by Soane, 1794 or after. (Soane Museum 45/1/23)

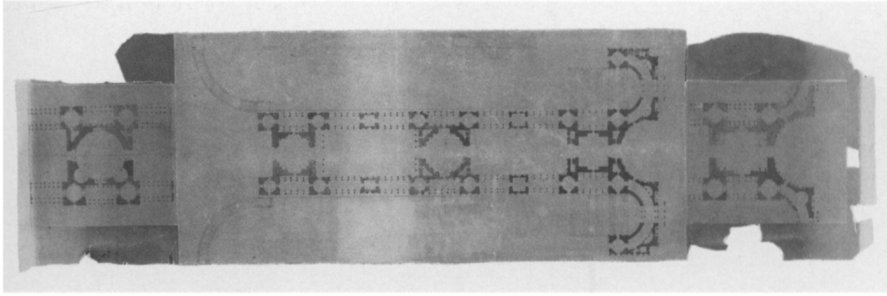


Fig. 11. Preliminary alternative plans for a redesign of a 'Triumphal Bridge' in a Doric style by George Dance, c. 1778–79 (Soane Museum 86/2/1 a–c)

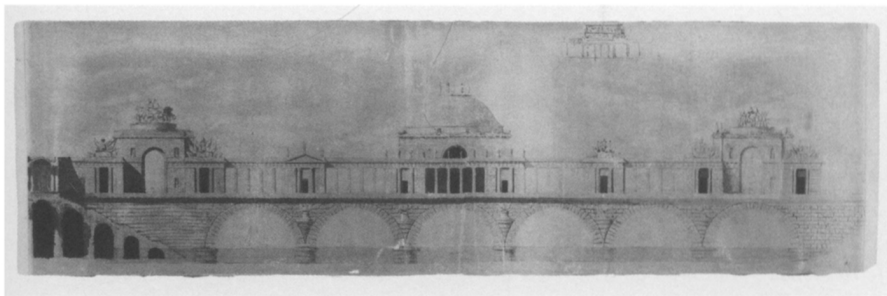


Fig. 12. Preliminary elevation (scheme B) for a redesign of a 'Triumphal Bridge' in a Doric style by George Dance, c. 1778–79 (Soane Museum 86/2/1d)

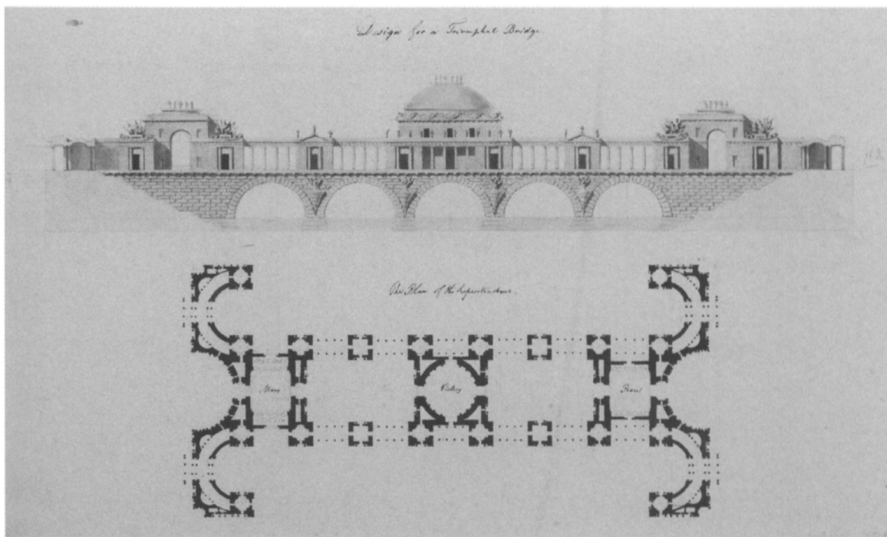


Fig. 13. Record copy of plan and elevation for a 'Triumphal Bridge' in a Doric style presented to the Parma Academy in 1780 (copied in 1796 by Joseph Henry Good, pupil 1795–1800) (Soane Museum vol. 62/1)

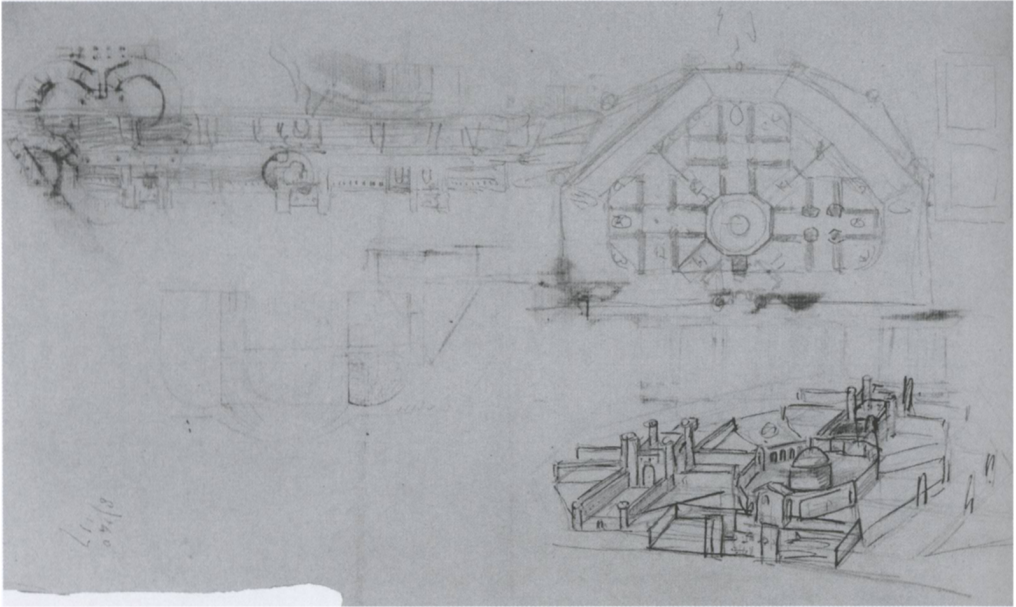


Fig. 14. Sketch plan, bird's-eye view and elevation for Soane by George Dance for a competition for a 'Penitentiary House to contain 600 Male Convicts', 1781 (Soane Museum vol. 42/122v)

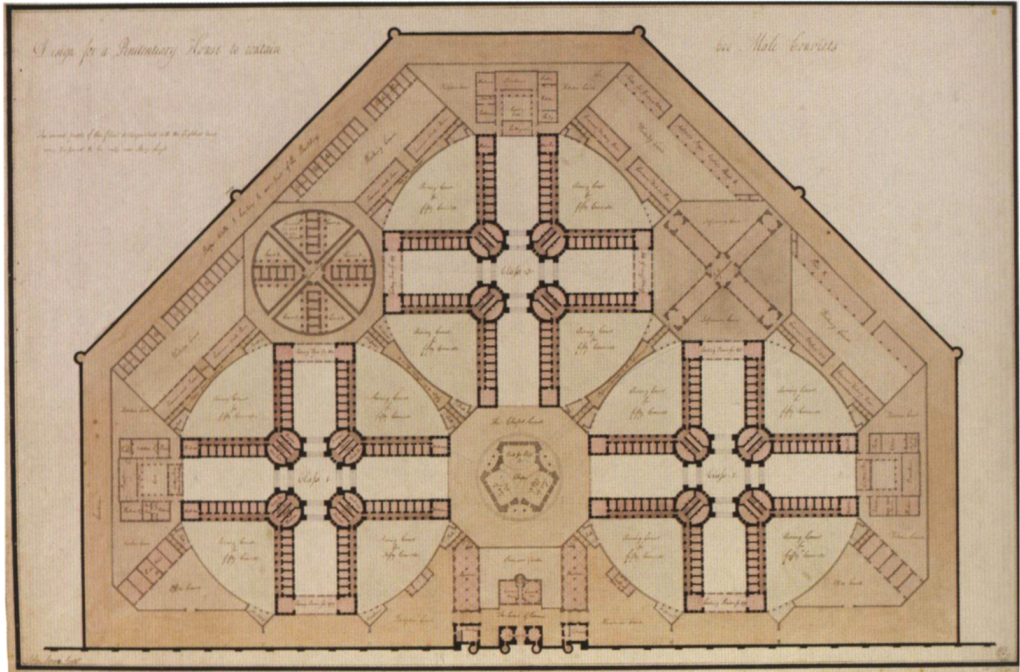


Fig. 15. Reduced copy of plan for a competition for a 'Penitentiary House to contain 600 Male Convicts' made by Robert Baldwin, 1782 (Soane Museum 13/1/16)

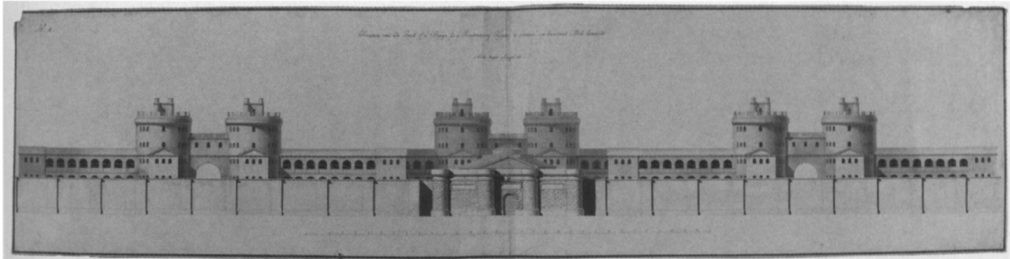


Fig. 16. Elevation for a competition for a 'Penitentiary House to contain 600 Male Convicts' drawn by George Dance, 1781 (Soane Museum 13/1/20)

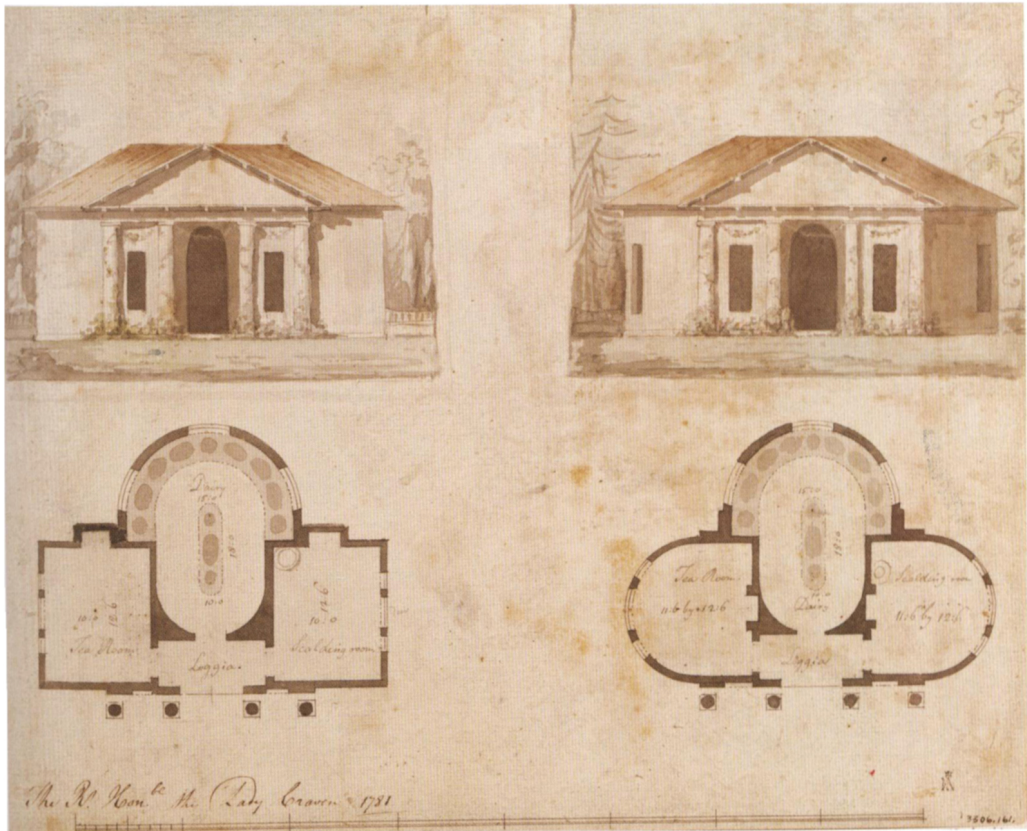


Fig. 17. Alternative plans and perspectives for a dairy in a primitive, rustic style by George Dance for Soane, c. 1781 (Victoria & Albert Museum, 3306.161)

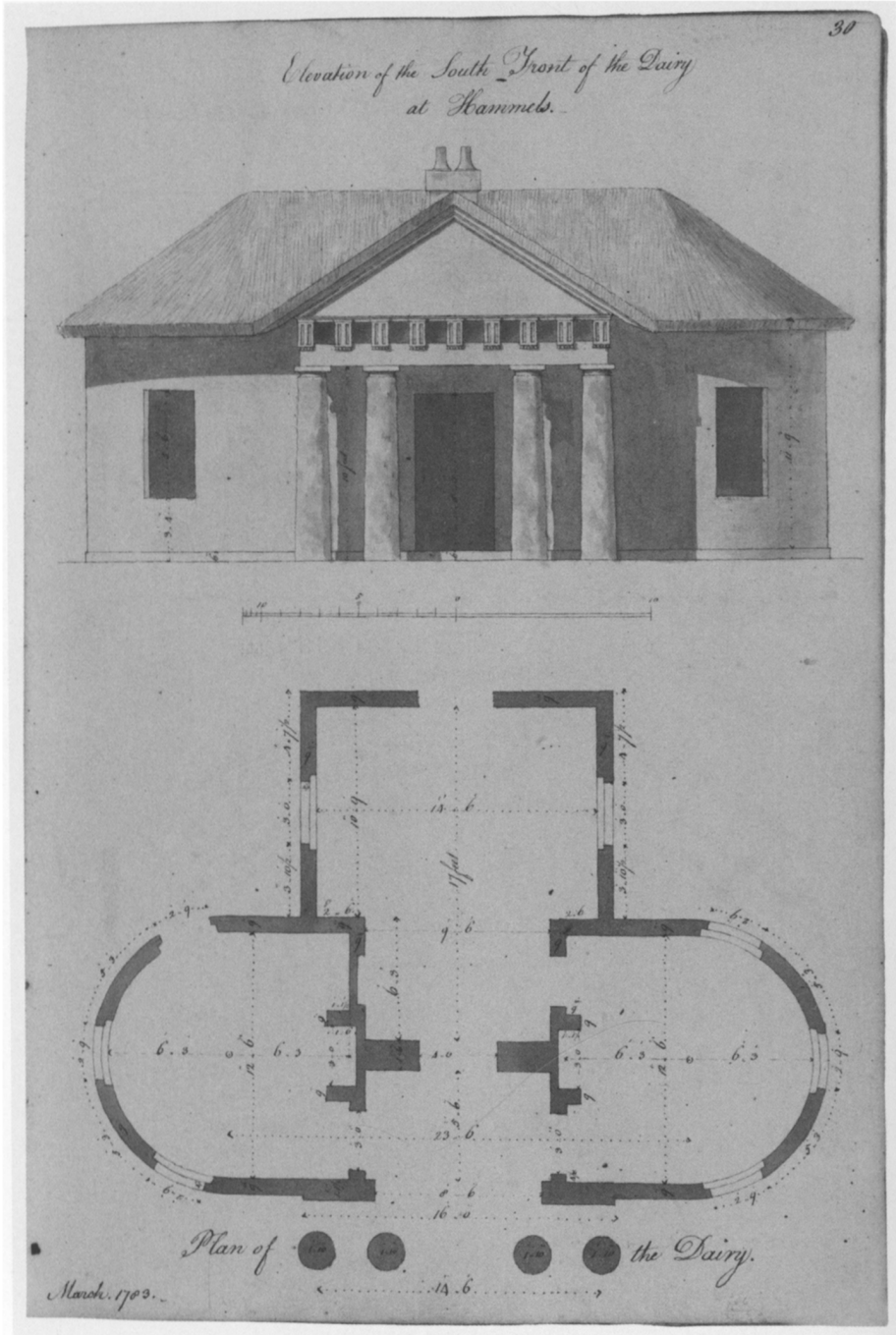


Fig. 18. Record copy of plan and elevation for a dairy in a primitive, rustic style made by Robert Baldwin and originally drawn March 1783 (Soane Museum vol. 41/30r)

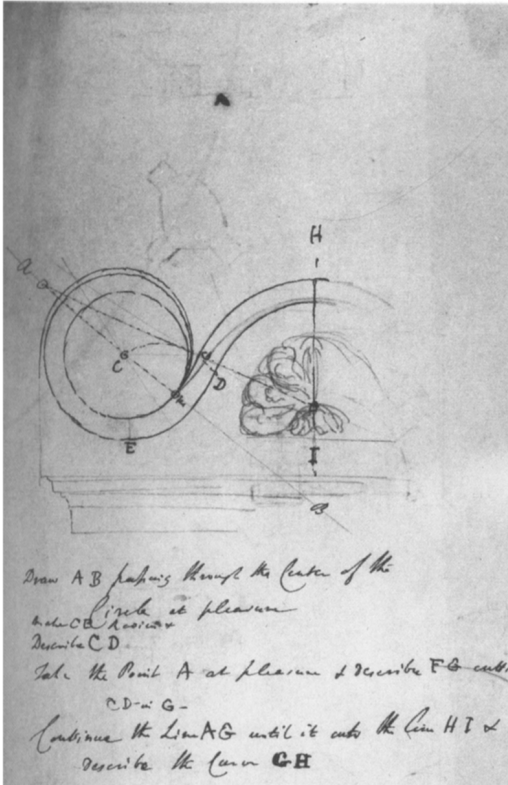


Fig. 19. Sketch design for an acroteria for the Lothbury front of the Bank of England by George Dance for Soane, 18 February 1796 (Soane Museum vol. 42/188)



Fig. 20. Sketch design for a panelled pilaster with incised capital with volute, fret and anthemion motifs for the Consols Transfer House, Bank of England, by George Dance for Soane, c. 1799 (Soane Museum vol. 42/192)

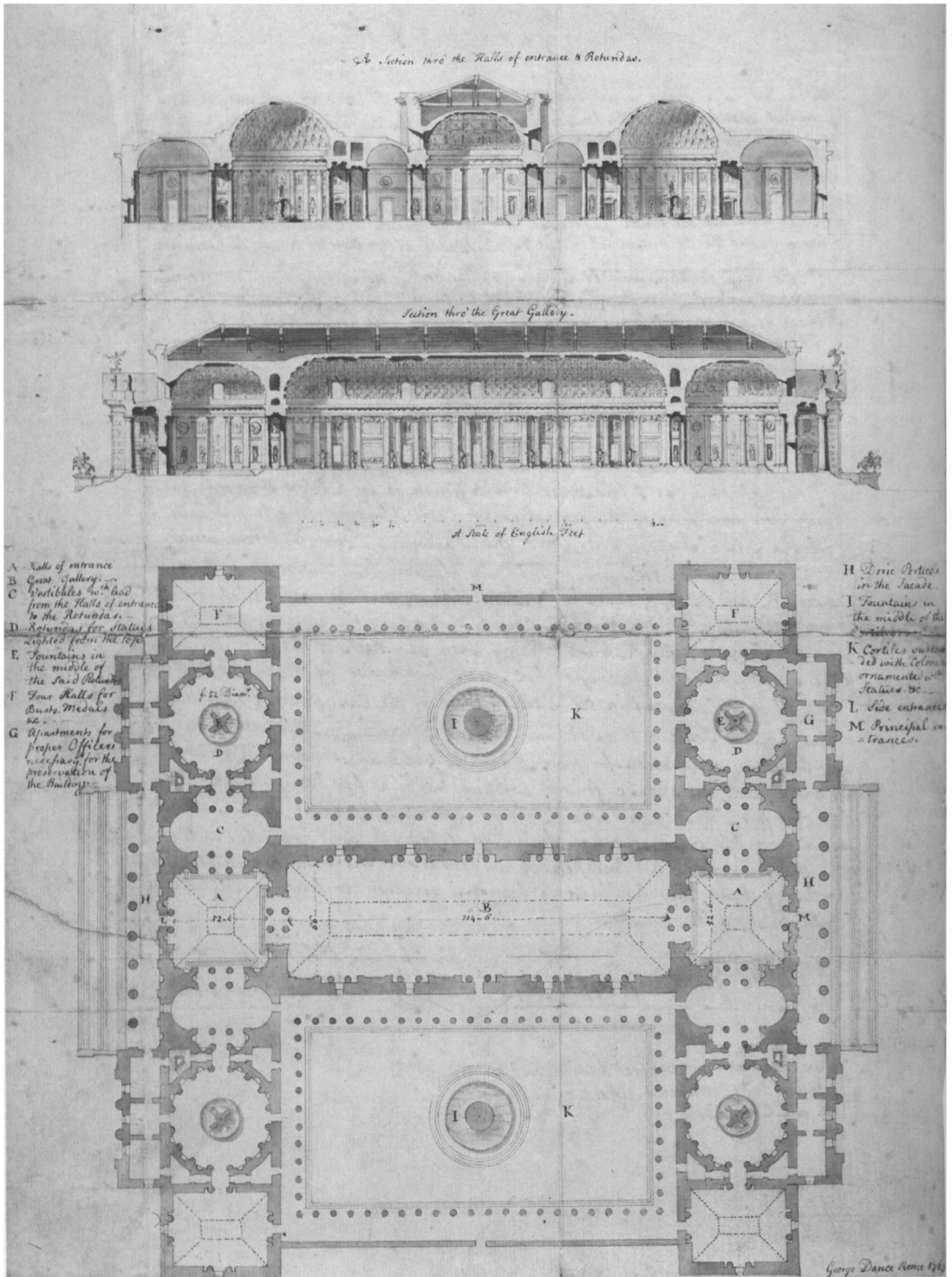


Fig. 21. Reduced copy by George Dance of his competition design for a public gallery awarded the Gold Medal of the Parma Academy in 1763 (Soane Museum D4/11/1)

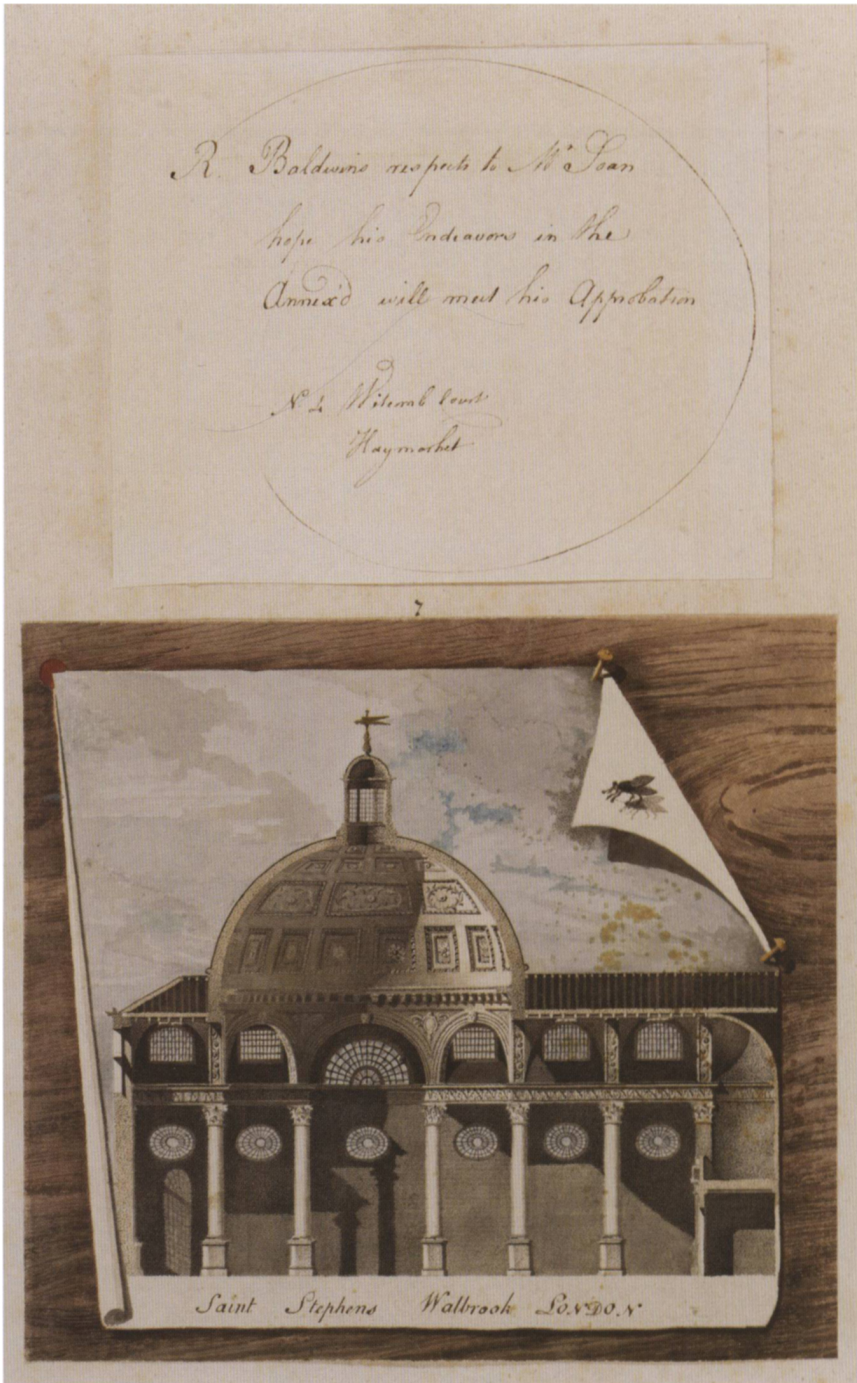


Fig. 22. Robert Baldwin's section of 'Saint Stephens Walbrook' given to Soane for his 'approbation', 1784 or before (Soane Museum vol. 9/7)

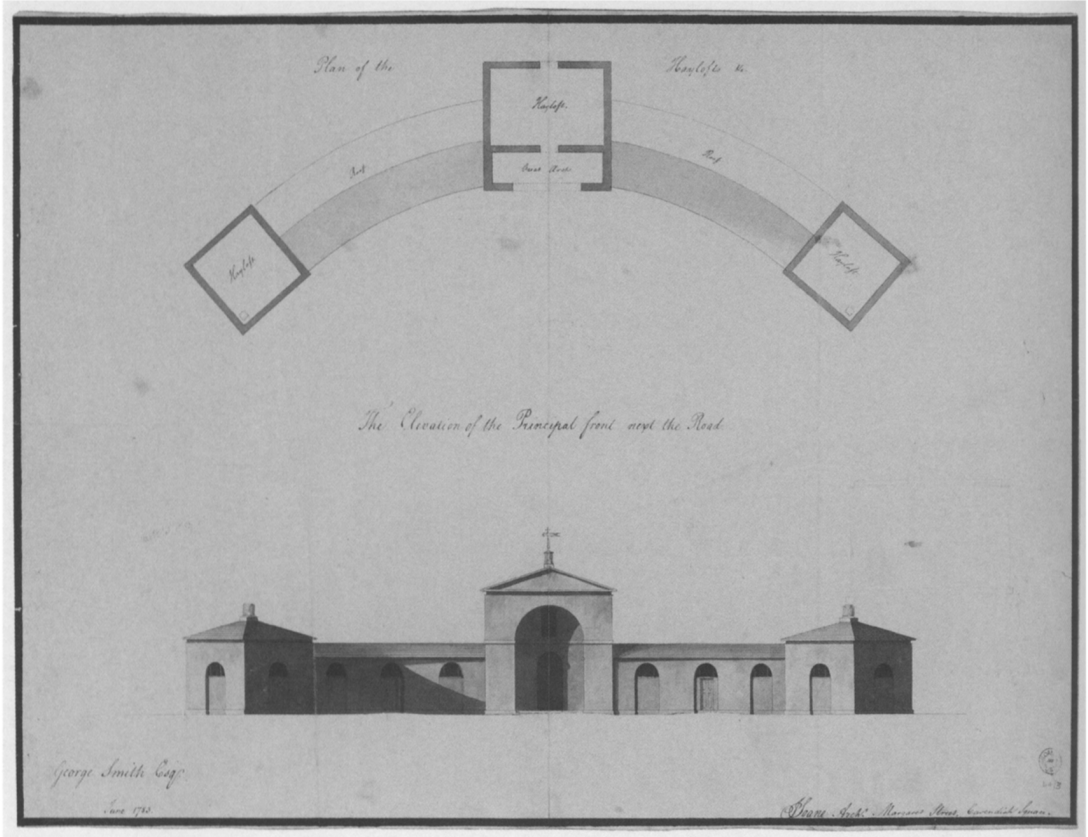


Fig. 23. Design for a cow house for George Smith, Burn Hall, County Durham, June 1783, drawn by Soane (Soane Museum 64/3/100)