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## News from the Center . . . . . 1, 8

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*Virginia.* Details on the VCU symposium (Nov. 21) and CPSA's Albemarle County, Virginia, bus tour (Nov. 22) will also be posted on the CPSA website ([www.palladiancenter.org](http://www.palladiancenter.org)) and mailed to members as soon as they become available.



Not a Jefferson favorite

# William Pain built a popular Palladian bridge to America

by Calder Loth

Inigo Jones’ introduction of Palladianism into England in the early 17th century created a fashion for Palladian-style buildings which grew into a fad, if not a rage, during the next century.

The restrained, dignified classicism of Palladianism provided the perfect ambience for the 18th-century ‘Augustan Age,’ a time when English writers and politicians considered themselves the inheritors of ancient classical culture. Palladio’s 1570 treatise, *I Quattro Libri dell’ Architettura* [Four Books on Architecture], became the guide for the requisite new look of English architecture.

Eighteenth-century British architects produced more than a half-dozen versions Palladio’s treatise, either in whole or in part--and not always true to the original. In addition, architects such as Colen Campbell, James Gibbs and Sir William Chambers published design books with their own versions of neo-Palladian buildings. Indeed, the Palladian label carried such cachet that at least two of the period’s builder/architects, William Salmon and William Pain, unashamedly incorporated ‘Palladio’ into the titles of their patternbooks. This compulsion to lend their publications the Palladian imprimatur helped make them popular works. Salmon’s *Palladio Londinensis* of 1734 went through eight editions. William Pain’s *Pain’s British Palladio*, published in 1786, enjoyed six editions.

*Pain’s British Palladio* was one of nine patternbooks produced by this English joiner/architect. Little is known of William Pain apart from his books and that he lived in London. No extant building has been identified as being designed or built by Pain. We have no image of him, and it is only a guess that he was born in the 1730s and died sometime after 1794. Yet his publications had a widespread influence on our country’s architecture. The demand for his books in America exceeded that of any other English architectural writer.<sup>1</sup>

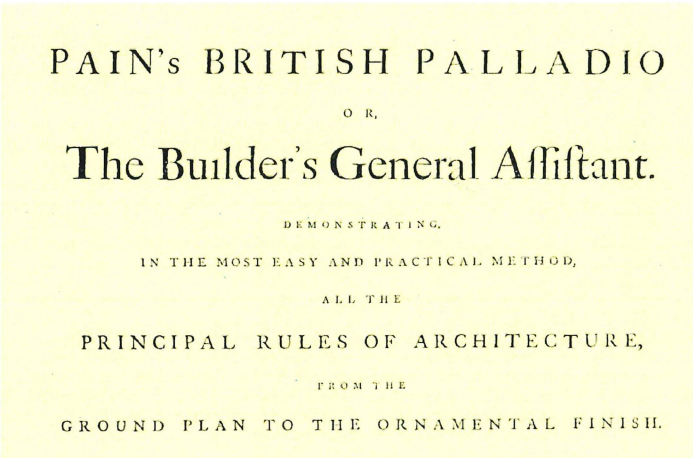


FIG.1. Title page (detail), *Pain’s British Palladio* (1786).

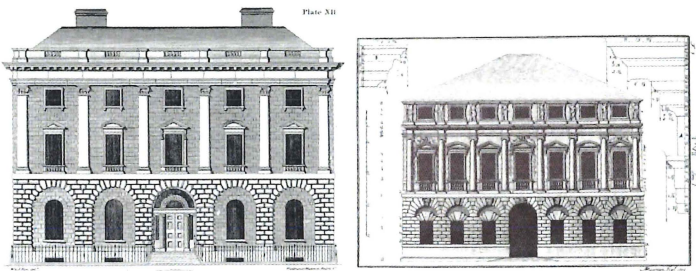


FIG. 2. (left) Plate 11 (detail), *Pain’s British Palladio*.

FIG. 3. (right) Palazzo Iseppo Porto, Book 1, Table 7, *Le Fabbriche e i Disegni di Andrea Palladio* (1776-1782).

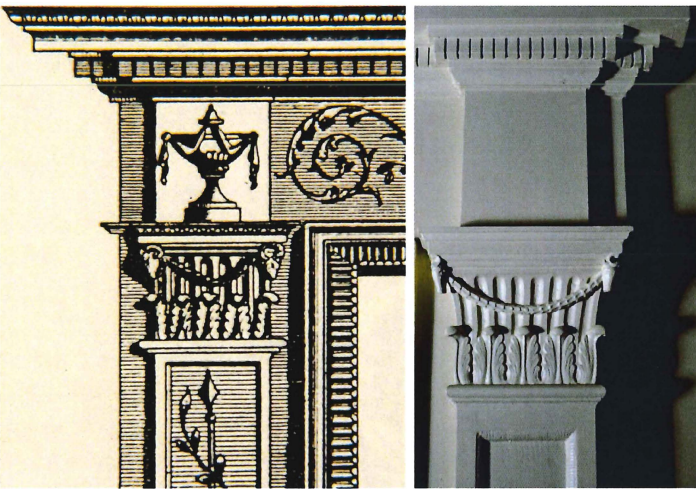


FIG. 4. (left) Plate 30 (detail), *Pain’s British Palladio*.

FIG. 5. (right) Pilaster capital, Belle Grove, Frederick County, Virginia.

What, we might ask, is Palladian about a book titled *Pain’s British Palladio*, and how did it affect American buildings? As with several of Pain’s other books, *Pain’s British Palladio* is primarily a patternbook for interior details, mostly intricately embellished mantels, doorways, and friezes, all with an Adamesque character. The book’s subtitle, *The Builder’s General Assistant*, tells us that the work was intended for those doing the construction—the carpenters and joiners. However, interspersed among its plates of interior details are designs for five large houses with an Anglo-Palladian cast. The one with the strongest Palladian character is a five-bay townhouse with its ground floor treated as a rusticated arcade. FIG. 2. Pilasters frame the bays of the main floor and its windows are topped by alternating triangular and segmental pediments, a favorite Palladian device. The scheme compares vaguely with Palladio’s Palazzo Iseppo Porto, which Pain might have known from *Quattro Libri*, or more likely from Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi’s *Le Fabbriche e I Disegni di Andrea Palladio* [Buildings and Designs of Andrea Palladio] (1776-1782), which shows the whole facade.<sup>2</sup> FIG. 3.

None of these five house designs has any obvious connection with an American building. It is in the details of Pain’s designs for mantels, doorways, and other interior features that we see definite links to specific American works. To illustrate this point, we will look at several small details in Federal-period buildings and link them to portions of designs in *British Palladio*. We start with Belle Grove, the 1797 plantation house near Winchester, Virginia, built for Maj. Isaac Hite, Jr. and his wife, Nelly Conway Madison Hite, the sister of James Madison. Madison wrote to his friend Thomas Jefferson, asking for advice

forest fire in 1890 left it a massive brick shell. The National Register application for the ruins notes the surviving architectural features of the English-bond brick exterior including a Gibbs-style baroque architrave, radiating voussoirs over the windows, corner quoins, and a rounded water table.

While the main parish church of St. John’s Berkeley has disappeared, its ‘chapel of ease’ survives in another area of the parish near the ferry crossing of Strawberry. This small brick building, later covered in stucco, is all that remains of the small planned town of Childsbury established in 1707 near the junction of the Eastern and Western Branches of the Cooper River. The simple rectangular Strawberry Chapel, measuring 43 by 33 feet and covered by a jerkinhead roof, was erected by 1740. FIG. 3. With windows surmounted by compass-headed transoms, double central doors on the south façade, and smaller doors on the west entrance, its most distinguished classical features are its ox-eye windows in the east and west ends framed by raised voussoirs.

The first of the churches built outside Charleston was actually the wooden structure for St. Thomas Parish, dating from 1702. It was soon replaced by a new brick building begun in 1708 and, by an Act of the Assembly, was combined with the Huguenot parish of French settlers nearby, whose congregation and parish was named St. Denis. See FIG. 4. Measuring 37½ by 27½ feet, the church has double doors on the south and north walls and a smaller single door on the west gable end. In the 1720s, the Rev. Thomas Hasell, described it as having ‘a handsome porch on each side upon Columns,’ adding a classical touch seen on later churches such as St. Stephen’s, described below.

A fire destroyed the original church in 1819 and the present structure was constructed, possibly within the earlier walls, in a simple but decidedly neoclassical manner with closed pediment gable ends, semi-circular transoms and lunette windows, and a coved cornice. In a decayed state by the end of the 19th century, the church and its 18th-century vestry house were restored with certain alterations by a nearby plantation owner.

While the principal 18th-century parish church of St. Thomas was destroyed and rebuilt, Pompion Hill Chapel, a distinguished Georgian structure built as its ‘chapel of ease’ on the bank of the Eastern Branch of the Cooper River, survives in its mostly original state. FIG. 5. Erected between 1763 and 1765, Pompion Hill Chapel was one of the most sophisticated brick churches built in the lowcountry of South Carolina in the late colonial period. The 35 by 45 foot structure with its jerkinhead roof, compass-headed windows, and projecting chancel with a Venetian window, exhibits a high degree of original fabric. Its Flemish-bonded brickwork was supplied by Zachariah Villepontoux, who had supplied the brick a few years earlier for St. Michael’s Church in Charleston. The unusually placed pulpit on the end opposite the chancel survives as the interior’s most spectacular feature. Attributed by the late furniture expert John Bivins to carpenter William Axson, whose name with Masonic compass and square symbols also mark the exterior brickwork, it has had little damage or alteration in its history. The Rev. Alexander Garden, in letters to the SPG, noted the construction in 1764 of ‘a very handsome & commodious brick Chappel’ and the next year wrote of the last details of completion, and the retention of a workman to execute a ‘new and compleat pulpit of cedar.’ The workman drew directly from plate 114 of Batty Langley’s *The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs* (London, 1740), but the rich quality of the

canopy with surmounting dove, supporting Corinthian columns, inlaid lightwood sunbursts, and openwork carving on the pulpit base attest to his great skill. Few small colonial American churches exhibit the quality and surviving fabric of Pompion Hill.

Two remaining parish churches relate in period and decoration to Pompion Hill. Most closely relevant in craftsmanship is St. Stephen’s Church, in a parish divided from St. James Santee some years before its construction in 1767-69. FIG. 7. When earlier construction ceased due to inferior bricks, Francis Villepontoux, of the same brickmaking family that supplied Pompion Hill, produced bricks sufficient for building the 50- by 40-foot church. Villepontoux and William Axson, who also left their names and various Masonic symbols incised in brick on the building, constructed a superlative Georgian building. Although its gambrel roof terminates in curvilinear gable ends (an Anglo-Dutch feature on several lowcountry churches), brick pilasters divide the bays, punched with windows surmounted by semi-circular transoms, and support a very deep wood entablature. It is one of the most ambitious of the regional churches and shares many of their features. Set in a brick arch in the center of the east wall, the Venetian window lights the chancel within. A Doric entablature with Tablets of the Law flanks the window, patterned on Plate 51 of Batty Langley’s *The City and Country Builder’s and Workman’s Treasury of Designs*. FIG. 8. The window is surmounted by a pediment ornamented with gilded rays.

Southeast of St. Stephen’s, near the coast, survives the contemporary parish church from which its territory had been carved. Facing a dirt road near historic Hampton Plantation, St. James, Santee Church, is yet another amazing survival of a large (55 x 30 foot) ecclesiastical structure based on Georgian Palladian models. See FIG. 6. Its Flemish bond brick façade is ornamented by twin pedimented porticos on the front and rear elevations, with four molded brick Doric columns supporting a similarly executed brick pediment. Following the precedents of St. Philip’s and St. Michael’s Churches in Charleston, this church with its porches is a lone, intact rural survivor, since the porticoed church at St. Thomas and St. Denis was replaced and the other major example, the more massive Sheldon Church in Prince William’s Parish, one hundred miles to the south, was burned by Union troops in 1865 and stands today as a ruin.

The unpainted plaster interior of St. James retains amazing survivals of unpainted pine woodwork including box pews with raised paneling, window architraves with raised keystones, and a modillion cornice under the coved ceiling, but various alterations in the 1840s and especially around 1870 brought the loss of the original pulpit and chancel.

While a tour of all South Carolina colonial churches and their ruins would necessitate ranging far south to Beaufort, north to Georgetown and Cheraw, as well as northwest to Clarendon County, the amazing concentration of those on the Cooper and Ashley Rivers offers a remarkable feast of some of the earliest classical architecture surviving in America.

JONATHAN POSTON, Director of Hay House in Macon, Georgia, a property of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, is author of *The Buildings of Charleston* (Univ. of S. C. Press, 1997). He expresses his indebtedness to Carl Lounsbury for his prior research on this topic.



Continued from page 5

fittings and is richly decorated with a number of symbols of early Anglican piety that were rarely used and have scarcely survived elsewhere in America.' The 49 x 39-foot brick building with its jerkinhead roof replaced an earlier wooden structure and was under construction for more than a decade. Although the gathering of materials had begun as early as 1707, it was not until 1719, through funds subscribed by planter Arthur Middleton, that the building was completed and dedicated. Highly influenced by the classical architecture of the reign of Queen Anne, St. James with its florid Baroque ornamentation is unique among American church buildings. The church was a central symbol, if not a fervent place of worship, for the political party of Anglican Barbadians opposed to the Lords Proprietors. This congregation, dominated by Goose Creek rice planters, rarely numbered more than one hundred whites and enslaved Africans.

The ministers of the parish, like most others in Colonial South Carolina, represented the Anglican Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). An early rector, the Rev. Richard Ludlam, observed that St. James excelled 'in beauty, all other Churches at present in the Province except St. Philips in Charles Town and that in contrast to the nicely finished brickwork of the walls, the corners were finished in plasterwork in imitation of Hewed Stone, as are the 3 Door Cases, Wst, No and So and 9 handsome arched windows are plaistered answerably.' Cherub heads surmount the heavy architraves of the arched windows. Stucco pilasters on the north and south walls support projecting segmental arched pediments, while the main entrance on the west façade consists of double doors within a stuccoed and pedimented Doric architrave. In the tympanum of the pediment, the symbol of the SPG—a pelican tearing out her heart to feed her young—surmounts a frieze of flaming hearts.

As Ludlam wrote, 'The body of the church is adorned with two rows of round pillars, painted marble, together with an altar piece decently beautified with paintings and guildings grave and commendable.' Enclosed within the center bay of the east wall is a polychrome altarpiece, described by Lounsbury as 'perhaps the most ambitious ecclesiastical decorative plasterwork to survive from the American colonies.' Though now partially blocked by the early nineteenth-century pulpit, staircase, and sounding board, the altarpiece consists of Corinthian plaster pilasters supporting a broken pediment and framing a central window surmounted by the arms of King George I, an extraordinary survival. Just below the royal arms, the keystone of the central window's plastered double architrave consists of a pair of cherubs holding an open Bible. Various Biblical verses worked in plaster, following a practice in 17th-century English parish churches, constitute yet another rare survival. Marble tablets of the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Decalogue from 1758, early polychrome plaster memorial tablets, marble monuments and a rare colonial hatchment add to the interior's evocative atmosphere. First renewed in the 1840s, the building was heavily damaged in the Earthquake of 1886, extensively restored again thereafter and again in 1931. In the most recent restoration of the church in the 1990s, the stucco has been returned to its correct color and composition, with the conservation of the altarpiece.

In another part of the Cooper River, St. John's Berkeley Parish Church was also established, like neighboring St. James, by the Church Act of 1706. St. John's served the considerable planters of wealth along the Western Branch of the Cooper River. The first church building was begun by 1710 on lands donated by the proprietary Colleton family of nearby Fairlawn Barony and by Colonel Thomas Broughton of Mulberry Plantation. Revolutionary War leaders Henry Laurens and General William Moultrie were both later communicants of the parish. After being gutted in a fire in 1755, the church was rebuilt, probably within the prior walls. When completed, the building was 60 x 40 feet in dimension, the largest of all the rural parish church buildings. Sadly, the church was partially lost in the Civil War and a



FIG. 5. Pompion Hill Chapel (1763-1765), St. Thomas and St. Denis Parish, Berkeley County, S. C.



FIG. 6. Santee Chapel (1768), St. James Parish, Charleston County, S. C.



FIG. 7. St. Stephen's Church (1767-1769), Berkeley County, S. C.

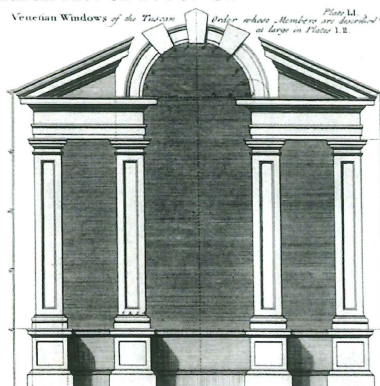


FIG. 8. (left) Batty Langley, *The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury* (London, 1740), Plate 51; (right) interior, St. Stephen's Church.



on Belle Grove's design. We don't know how or whether Jefferson responded, but he definitely had no influence on the interior. In Belle Grove's parlor, we find pilaster capitals copied from those on a doorway design on Plate 30 of Pain's book. FIG. 4. The capital is an embellished version of a modified Corinthian capital published by Robert Adam in his 1764 folio on Diocletian's Palace. Pain's additions include the rams' heads joined by a husk swag. The capital was replicated in Belle Grove, although the rams have since lost some of their horns. FIG. 5. The craftsmen for this work have not been documented but they clearly were working with Pain's plate.

A favorite motif for the Late Georgian mantels was the tureen, usually displayed in the central panel of the frieze. Pain illustrates mantels with tureens in several of his patternbooks. We are not sure whether Pain considered his tureens as representing serving dishes, or if they were inspired by the designs of ancient cinerary urns. The tureen in the mantel on Plate 11 of *British Palladio* has served as the design source for dozens of mantel tureens in the eastern United States. FIG. 6. We find a near match on a mantel in Rosedale, an 1815 plantation house in Charlotte, North Carolina. FIG. 7. The Rosedale urn is slightly simplified by the omission of Pain's central husk swags. Various other decorative details in Rosedale are derived from Pain's books, although its exterior is vaguely Palladian with its three-part massing and two-tier portico.

Pain's mantel design on Plate 10 of *British Palladio* incorporates compact stylized Corinthian pilaster capitals. FIG. 8. Almost square in elevation, the capitals have three acanthus leaves between which spring tight volutes on stems. Since we find versions of this capital on mantels scattered through central Virginia, we might speculate that the plate was in the possession of a craftsman as a loose sheet.<sup>3</sup> The decorations on these mantels are carved wood, not applied composition ornaments, as is more frequently the case. Offering a very close match are the capitals on the dining room mantel in Redlands, a c. 1792 plantation mansion south of Charlottesville. FIG. 9. Numerous other details on Redlands' mantels follow Pain designs, although none replicates a Pain mantel in its entirety.

Plate 21 of *British Palladio* offers a richly decorated mantel with scrolled consoles topping the end pilasters and supporting the mantel shelf. FIG. 10. Stylized leaves lap over the top half of each console. The consoles end in a tight scroll at the bottom. Consoles of this type are a common device for classical architecture. Palladio used similar consoles, minus the overlapping leaves, on the doorways of the La Rotonda. FIG. 11. Since Palladio did not illustrate La Rotonda's doorway, we cannot say that Pain was inspired by Palladio in his use of this device. Nevertheless, as with the tureen motif, we have numerous consoles in Federal-period houses closely following Pain's illustrations. Near matches are the consoles on the interior doorways of the 1826 John Marshall Warwick house in Lynchburg, Virginia. FIG. 12. Like the La Rotonda consoles, the Warwick consoles have an acanthus leaf suspended below the bottom scroll. Similar consoles decorate a mantel in the 1815 Lynchburg mansion, Point of Honor, which also sports a mantel with a tureen in its central panel. The two houses likely shared craftsmen.

In addition to mantels and doorways, Pain offered illustrations for staircase designs. On Plate 42 he provides an elevation of a run of stairs, each with a different bracket to offer choices. FIG. 13. The bracket with scrolled scallops labeled '2' on Pain's plate has served as the basis for stair brackets as far apart as the William Gibbes house in Charleston, South

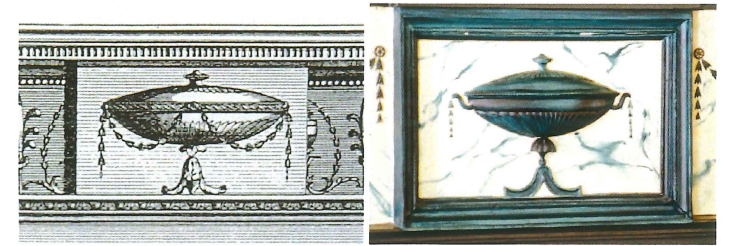


FIG. 6. (left) Plate 11 (detail), Pain's *British Palladio*.

FIG. 7. (right) Parlor mantel detail, Rosedale, Charlotte, North Carolina.

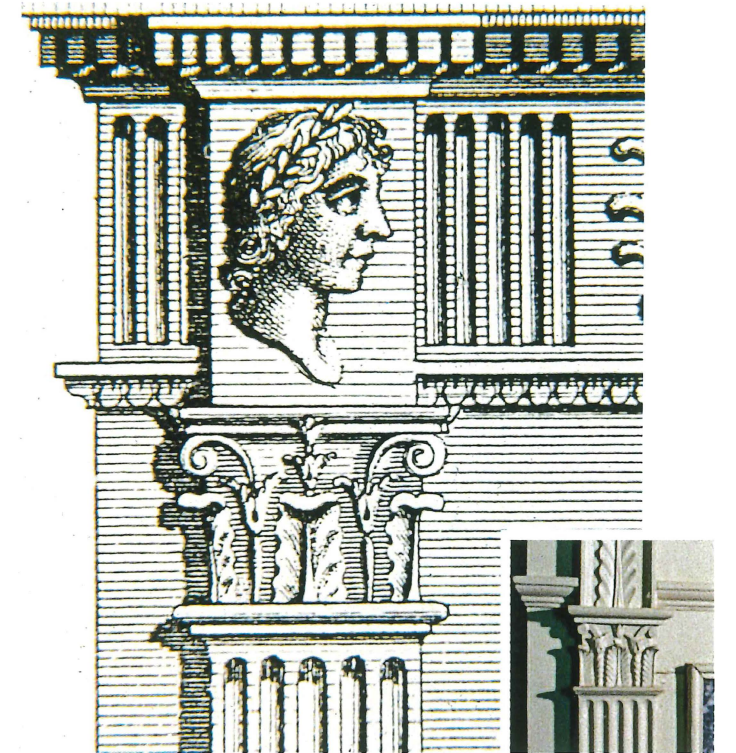


FIG. 8. (left) Plate 10 (detail), Pain's *British Palladio*.

FIG. 9. (inset, lower right) Dining room mantel pilaster capital, Redlands, Albemarle County, Virginia.

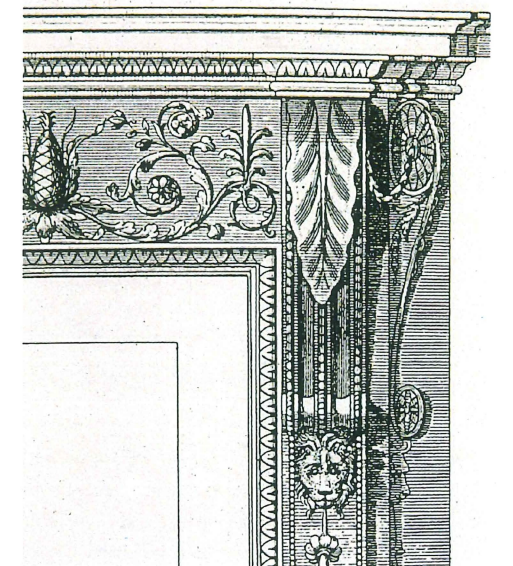


FIG. 10. Plate 21 (detail), Pain's *British Palladio*.



Carolina, and the Plumb-Bronson house in Hudson, New York. The latter dwelling, built in 1812 for Samuel Plumb, has its Pain brackets somewhat compressed to fit a tightly spiraled staircase. FIG 14. The house is attributed to the architect/builder Barnabas Waterman, and was extensively remodeled in 1839 by Alexander Jackson Davis. Davis left the brackets intact but changed the balusters. Davis also retained the front doorway, decorated with consoles following the console design on the mantel shown in FIG. 10.

While we have focused here on a sampling of details from *Pain's British Palladio*, we need to note that American builders in the Federal period were making liberal use of scores of details found as well in other William Pain patternbooks. Many fine Federal houses up and down the east coast are liberally embellished with Pain decorations, some in compositions combining details from more than one of Pain's publications. Although four of his patternbooks were printed in New York and Boston, *British Palladio* was not among them. Priced at sixteen shillings unbound, it was the most costly of his books and a high price at the time. Nevertheless, it might be safe to claim that William Pain had more influence on the architecture of the Early Republic than Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson was no fan of William Pain. He owned none of his patternbooks and none was on his list of recommended architectural works for the University of Virginia library. Jefferson, of course, considered Palladio's *Quattro Libri* to be the authoritative source for building design, and believed that authentic Palladianism should provide the primary inspiration for the architecture of the new nation. Pain represented a second-string, Late-Georgian idiom which Jefferson eschewed, a mode that to Jefferson's mind was anything but Palladian. Despite his best efforts to encourage Palladian-style designs for his native Virginia, the homes of many of his friends and neighbors were replete with decorations mined by local builders and artisans from Pain's books. Ironically, Reuben Perry, one of Jefferson's workmen at Poplar Forest, Jefferson's Bedford County retreat, was not wholly beholden to his client's Palladian proclivities. The schedule of Perry's property, dated June 9, 1819, and recorded in the Lynchburg Clerk's Office, lists '1 book Biddle's architecture. . . 2 Paine's [sic] Do.'<sup>4</sup> Any evidence that Perry sneaked a Pain detail into Poplar Forest's woodwork was destroyed when Poplar Forest burned in 1845.

Notes

1. Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 339.
2. Palladio illustrates only three bays of the Palazzo Iseppo Porto façade in *Quattro Libri* and with sculptural decorations which were never added.
3. Many 18th-century books were sold by booksellers unbound, allowing purchasers to have the pages bound according to their own tastes and pocketbooks. Hence, some books remained unbound, allowing the illustrated pages to be circulated and used as single sheets.
4. 'Biddle's architecture' refers to Owen Biddle's *The Young Carpenter's Assistant* (Philadelphia, 1805). Biddle's manual was among the earliest patternbooks produced by an American. This work was often used in tandem with Pain's books. We find individual mantels in Virginia combining elements from both Pain and Biddle.

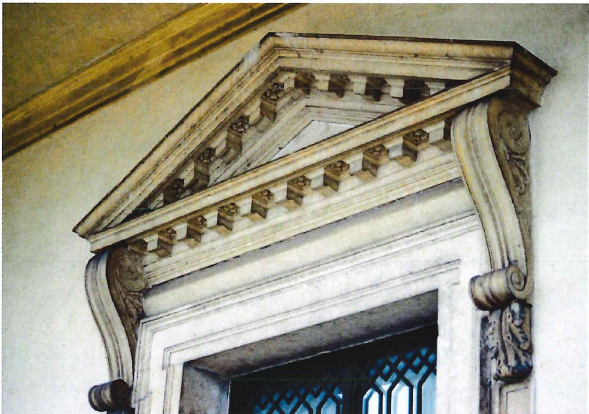


FIG. 11. Doorway detail, La Rotonda, Vicenza, Italy.



FIG. 12. Doorway, John Marshall Warwick house, Lynchburg, Virginia.

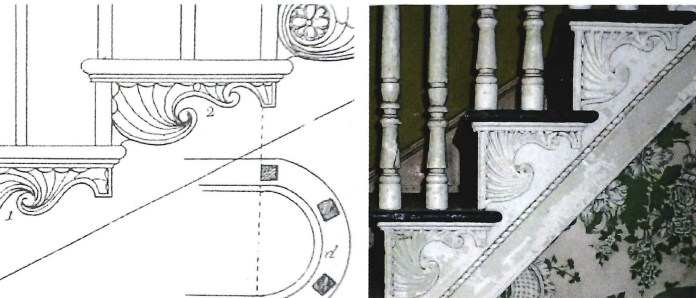


FIG. 13. (left) Plate 42 (detail), *Pain's British Palladio*.

FIG. 14. (right) Stair brackets, Plumb-Bronson House, Hudson, New York.

All illustrations are by the author, except Fig. 14, which is courtesy of John Mesick.

CALDER LOTH, Senior Architectural Historian of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, is an Executive Vice President of the Center for Palladian Studies in America, Inc., and a member of its board of directors. He co-curated the 2010-2011 exhibition 'Palladio and his Legacy' at the Morgan Library in New York.

Politics, religion and architecture

# Church Act of 1706 led to architectural gems in parishes around Charleston

by Jonathan H. Poston

In the first decade of the 1700s, a fortuitous intersection of politics, religion and architecture led to construction of a necklace of precocious parish churches and chapels surrounding Charleston, South Carolina.

The colony of Carolina had no 'established religion' from its founding in 1670 until 1704, when membership in the colonial assembly became limited to Anglicans. Two years later the Church Act of 1706 confirmed Anglicanism as the official religion of the province and divided the province into ten parishes for both religious and government purposes (expanding to 21 by the time of the American Revolution). The move led to an immediate flurry of church and chapel construction in the newly created parishes surrounding Charleston. The construction wave began at a time of expanding interest in classical and Palladian architecture in England, which resulted in the new parish churches, today largely isolated and overlooked, becoming early pioneers in the use of many classical motifs in America, initially in combination with Queen Anne baroque elements.

The Lords Proprietor who founded Carolina intended for their colony to be governed in a landed hierarchy. They encouraged the settlement and toleration of various religious groups from England and the Continent in addition to Anglicans. Soon, however, the colony came to be dominated by a party of Anglican planters who wished to model the real and political landscape on a system of parishes and single-crop economy like that found in the English sugar islands, a plan ultimately realized by passage of the Church Act.

Planters in the more established planting districts, such as St. James Goose Creek and various areas along the Cooper River stretching northeast of Charleston, planned major churches and satellite 'chapels of ease,' as did the planters in other settled areas, such as the Ashley River region northwest of the city.

Charleston itself was engaged by 1711 in the construction of its new St. Philip's Church, replacing a simple cypress structure of the 1680s. (See D. Gobel, 'Charleston's second St. Philip's was a pioneer in church design,' *Palladiana*, v. 7, no. 2.) This principal Anglican church, built to serve the Colony's leaders and mercantile elite, became the ultimate symbol of the established church and eventually of the dissolution of proprietary rule and institution of direct royal governance in 1720.

Outside Charleston, the construction of various parish churches and chapels proceeded apace. Remarkably, ten of these churches and chapels survive today, as well as substantial 18th-century masonry ruins of eight more. St. Andrew's Church on the Ashley River continues as the earliest surviving masonry example, built in the same year as the Church Act of 1706. FIG. 1. Within two decades the structure was doubled in size, to the form of a Greek cross, and ornamented with an Ionic style altarpiece. The church was rebuilt after a fire in 1764 and then refitted with some changes in the 1850s.

Although the other churches discussed here are not cruciform, they generally follow the pattern of English 17th-century churches with a meeting house plan, boxier than their longitudinal counterparts in Virginia. The simple brick façade of Old St. Andrew's with its gable roofs, arched windows and doors with voussoirs contrasts with the ornamented classical design of St. James, Goose Creek, the second parish church, planned within the year after its construction. FIG. 2.

As Carl Lounsbury has written, despite many years of neglect, wars, hurricanes, and earthquakes, 'St. James, Goose Creek, retains many of its early

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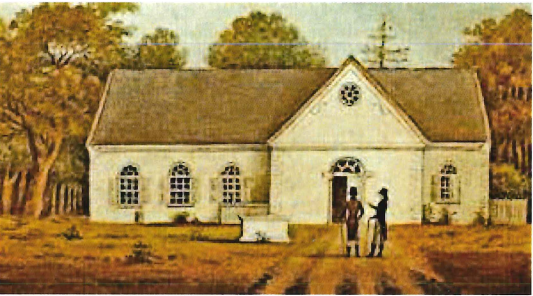


FIG. 1. Charles Fraser, watercolor (1800), St. Andrew's Parish Church (1706, with later enlargements), Charleston County, S. C. Carolina Art Association.



FIG. 2. St. James, Goose Creek Church (c. 1707-1719), Berkeley County, S. C.



Fig. 3. Strawberry Chapel (1740s), St. John's Parish, Berkeley County, S. C.



Fig. 4. St. Thomas and St. Denis Church, Berkeley County, S. C.