THE BOOKCASE AND ORGAN SCHEME OF 1766 IN THE LIBRARY AT DANSON

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE AND NOTES FOR ITS RESTORATION

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1. Introduction

The house at the centre of the historic Danson estate is about to undergo the final stage of restoration in a programme of works by English Heritage after a long period of neglect. It is hoped that, in 2003, it will be made open to the public under the local management of the Bexley Heritage Trust. This document discusses both the documentary and fabric evidence for the historical development of the bookcase and organ scheme in the Library at Danson and notes our preferred option for its eventual restoration.

Fundamental to the restoration project is the belief that the principal interest and significance of the house is to be found in its eighteenth century origins. Robert Taylor built the house as a Palladian villa between 1763 and 1766 for a city merchant, John Boyd, who dealt in sugar importation from the West Indies. On the principal floor, especially, there is a commitment to recreate the original interiors of the 1760s. By 1770, however, William Chambers is known to have provided designs for John Boyd at Danson of the house and his possible involvement in the Library scheme is discussed here.

Unfortunately, very little survives in the way of original documentation from the building of the house but despite a major overhaul when the house was acquired from the Johnson family by Alfred Bean in 1862, a great deal of the original fabric survives either *in-situ* or reused within the building. Furthermore, the recent discovery of Sarah Johnson's watercolours of the principal interiors from 1860 greatly assisted the project. They show the rooms prior to the Victorianizing influence of Alfred Bean and, it would appear, after very little alteration since their completion in the 1760s. More recently, from the 1920s onwards, photographic evidence has proven very useful especially because it shows the bookcases *in-situ* prior to their dismantling and the removal of the organ to Hall Place. However, it is worth noting that the photographic coverage did not include the south end of the room.

The 3D reconstruction drawings accompanying this text illustrate the historical development of the breakfront bookcase at the south end of the Library. This cabinet provides a model sequence for understanding the alterations to the other bookcases in the same room. The 3D reconstruction of the two major phases in its development allow the reader to assess the impact and desirability of the proposal to reverse the alterations of the 1860s. The illustrations relate the brickwork of the north wall to the bookcases against the south wall. This is because the pattern of alteration appears to be identical at each end. The reason for choosing the north wall in preference to the south for the purpose of illustration is that the concrete repairs of the early 1990s are less intrusive in the north wall.

This report includes updated extracts from the much fuller account of the historical; development of the house in *The House and Park at Danson, London Borough of Bexley* by Richard Lea and Chris Miele circulated with the draft conservation plan in April 2001.

The notes on the restoration options for the bookcase and organ scheme focus on the possibilities for the recreation of the original 1760s arrangements but also dwell on the reversibility or otherwise of the options under consideration.

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2. *The documentary sources*

The earliest known plan of the house is that published in 1792 by Michaelangelo Taylor, Robert Taylor's son, as one of 32 prints by Thomas Malton illustrating his father's work, Figure 1. The Library plan appears as a mirror of the Dining Room, with the same pattern of recesses in the walls. In the Library however, they are shown deeper than those in the Dining Room.

In 1805, John Boyd's son, John Boyd II, sold the house and estate. The Library was described in the sale catalogue prepared by the auctioneers Peter Coxe, Burrell and Foster:

> .... a Library, of the same dimensions and form as the Parlour, with carved and enriched chimney piece, lofty mahogany bookcases, and noble organ, forming a grand centre in one of the compartments; the enrichments beautifully carved and gilt, and which two rooms [the Dining Room and Library], on either hand, communicate with and lead from and to an elegant octagon Saloon.....

Unfortunately, the reference to gilding is ambiguous. It is not specific on the point of gilding in the Library. Paint analysis has, to date, recovered no evidence to suggest that there was any gilding in the Library but it is possible that all traces were removed from the bookcases in the 1860s, when it appears they were coated in varnish.

In a hand-written inventory of the principal rooms, dated 1805 and probably by John Boyd II, the contents of the Library are listed with their estimated value in pounds.[1]

4 pier glasses	60
2 statuary marble figures on splinths	30
A Venus crouching	15
5 bookcases round the Room	12
The organ at your own price if the rest are all taken	105
2 mahogany chests of 5 drawers with mahogany bookcases on ditto	20
Silk curtains	

One of the watercolours by Sarah Johnson, from 1860, shows the bookcase and organ in the north west corner of the Library, Figure 2. This is particularly helpful, as it shows the bookcase before Alfred Bean added the glass-fronted doors. The organ appears much as it is today.

The sale catalogue of 1862 simply describes the Library as

> .... capital Library, 36ft by 24ft, with carved and enriched chimney-piece, and Organ, ...

The photograph reproduced in the house and estate Sale Catalogue of 1922, shows the north and east walls, probably much as Alfred Bean had them in 1863, Figure 3. The bookcases on the north wall have glass fronted doors with pleated red silk behind the glass, those on the east wall have mirrors. The catalogue description described the Library as follows:

> Library or Music Room, 37 ft by 26ft (including 8 ft bay), with brown and white marble fireplace and two decorative plaques over the doors. At the top of the room stands an Organ, *"Old England fecit 1766,"* having single manual with 10 stops and pumped by hand.

[1] The inventory is now in the collection of Commander William Charter, Lee-on-Solent, a descendent of the Johnson family who occupied the house in the first half of the nineteenth-century.

3. *The Library walls*

More of the masonry and brick shell of the house was exposed in the Library during the works than in the Dining Room, Figure 7. In the Library, as in the Dining Room, Taylor used a triumphal arch motif to articulate the wall surface at each end of the room, Figure 11. With the room only partially stripped of its plaster lining, it was clearly the case for the end walls, where the roundels are located above cupboard recesses either side of a large arched recess. However, it seems likely that this system of articulation was also applied to the fireplace wall, even though only a small area of brickwork was exposed. The two large bookcases either side of the fireplace provide some of the evidence for this interpretation, Figure 5. They are the same size as the centre bookcase in the south wall, which suggests that they are set in similar round arched recesses. That there are roundels above the doors is suggested by symmetry with the west wall where they appear above the windows.

This system of articulation is common in Taylor's works. He used it in the rear and middle rooms at 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields (1754-5),[2] in the libraries at Harleyford (1753-5),[3] and Barlaston (1756-8).[4] In each of these examples, the cupboard recesses were filled with bookcases. At Danson, however, the surviving bookcases are much larger than the recesses and rise from the floor not juts from the dado. This indicates a change of design between the construction of the room's masonry shell and its eventual fitting out. The bonding timbers set within the thickness of the wall would have been intended for the fixing of joinery and moulded plaster detail. The relative heights of the bonding timbers suggest that Taylor planned to fit out the room with a dado rail, skirting, and an architrave at the level of the springing of the round arched recesses.

4. *The suite of bookcases from1766*

It seems, however, that a change of design occurred between the completion of the masonry shell of the house and the installation of the plaster and joinery. Instead of the planned scheme, a suite of seven large mahogany bookcases and an organ was installed. In this report, they are numbered BC1 to BC7, clockwise in plan, starting with the north door on the east wall, Figure 12.[5] Two large pedimented units, BC1 and 2, were set against the east wall either side of the fireplace, Figure 3 and Figure 5. A third, BC4, originally with a pediment matching the other two, was set against the south wall, between two smaller units, B3 and 5, with straight cornices to form a breakfront bookcase, Figure 6. Against the north wall, two of the smaller units, BC6 and 7, were installed either side of the organ.

The original fabric within the bookcase scheme

The bookcases survive substantially intact from the 1760s. Despite alterations made when they were fitted with glazed doors in the 1860s, there is sufficient evidence to attempt a reconstruction of the original 1760s design of the bookcase against the south wall, Figure 13. The observations and reasoning that led to this reconstruction follow.

The detailing of the bookcases and the organ is uniform and indicates that they are contemporary and probably the product of one workshop. The exposed parts of the bookcases are of solid Cuban mahogany, but the linings are of pine. The mahogany moulding details are consistent with the rest of the joinery in the room: the dado and skirting board match those on the walls although the latter are of pine. The cornice is Ionic

2 Binney 1984, plates 69, 70
3 Binney 1984, plate 31
4 Binney 1984, plate 36
5 This system was first adopted in the GLC survey by John Addams in 1972 and has been in use since then.

but the enrichment is bold, with the dentil course treated as a fret, Figure 8. Originally, the bookcases were built with open shelving and it is this arrangement that Sarah Johnson pictured in her watercolour of the north west corner of the Library *c* 1860, Figure 2.

The bookcases are clearly larger than those originally intended by Taylor when the masonry shell of the room was constructed. They do not fit within the recesses in the brickwork of the end walls, Figure 11. Consequently, the backs of the smaller bookcases at each end of the room are specially shaped so that, while the centre of each shelf is deep enough to accommodate real books, at the ends, the shelves are only deep enough for dummy books, Figure 14. In fact, the watercolour by Sarah Johnson shows exactly this arrangement in use, Figure 2. The dummy books either side of the bookcase are neatly ordered, but in the middle third, there is more variation in their distribution, one is leaning, some are horizontal and there are even some gaps between the books.

The carcass of each bookcase consists of two vertical sides jointed to horizontal boards at the levels of the skirting, dado, and top. The sides consist of pine boards 32mm thick, with mahogany, *c* 75x75mm in section, rebated onto the leading edge. The original height of the sides of the centre bookcase against the south wall, BC4, can be seen as a horizontal joint inside the bookcase at the level of the tops of the two flanking bookcases.

The sides of the same bookcase, BC4, have an additional pine board with a thick veneer of mahogany, 4mm thick. This appears to be an addition contemporary with its heightening in the 1860s rather than part of its original construction. It also indicates that the projection of the centre bookcase was increased at that time.

The sides contain evidence for the original shelving system within the bookcases. They were rebated with vertical channels, 12mm deep, 75mm wide, to receive pairs of tenons at the ends of each shelf. The tenons would have been located between timber fillets set within the rebated channels flush with the inner face of the side of the bookcase. The shelves consist of pine boards with mahogany lippings on their leading edge. Although the original tenons were removed from the ends of each shelf, it is still possible to see traces of their outlines as scars.

The rebated channels for the support of the shelves at the front of each bookcase were set at different distances from the front above and below the dado. This suggests that, although the shelves were open above the dado rail, there were cupboard doors below. The original cupboard doors, however, do not survive; the present doors appear to date wholly from the 1860s. When the present cupboard doors were installed, the sides of the bookcases were altered so that the replacement doors concealed the sides, presenting, when closed, a relatively unbroken surface to view. However, because this does not appear to be the original arrangement, it seems more likely that the detailing of the bookcase side above the dado was continued below and the doors were hung on the internal face of the jamb. Comparison with the bookcases at Barlaston, Staffs, would suggest that the original doors had flush boards, not panelled.[6]

The backs of the three larger bookcases, BC1, 2 and 4, were made up as flush panelling divided into sixteen panels, arranged four by four, Figure 14. While the front is planed smooth, the back of the panelling is rough sawn pine, similar to the linings of the doorway to the Saloon. The two lower rails are deeper than the upper two and correspond with the dado and skirting. Although the panelled back of the centre bookcase against the south wall, BC4, appears identical to those on the east wall, BC1 and 2, it is now raised *c* 400 mm from the floor.[7] This fits with the heightening of the bookcase in the 1860s. The back of each of the smaller bookcases, BC3, 5, 6 and 7, is similarly panelled but only in those areas that project into the recesses in the brick wall. The rest of each back is made up simply

6 Binney 1984, plate 36

7 At the time of writing, these units have not been removed from their original position.

with pine boards.

A pediment matching those on the east wall is the most likely original arrangement for the top of the centre bookcase against the south wall, BC4, Figure 13. Although, none of the surviving fragments can be associated with this conjectured pediment, it is likely that parts of the cornice mouldings were incorporated into the block cornice and frieze that replaced it in the 1860s.

The plain mahogany triangular panels set within the pediments of the two bookcases on the east wall, BC1 and 2, appear to be original, Figure 5. However, it seems likely that that conjectured for the south wall, BC4, incorporated a relief carving of a bearded male head seen in profile surrounded by sheaves of corn. This fragment of carved mahogany was incorporated into the block pediment added to the top of the bookcase in the 1860s, Figure 9. The profile is of a generic type but could be read as Homer, a classical icon for learning and very appropriate to a library scheme. Assuming that the carving does derive from the original Library scheme, then its most likely original location is the pediment above the bookcase on the south wall, Figure 13.

The frieze of the entablature added to the same bookcase in the 1860s, included 22 carved mahogany calyces and 23 rosettes that stylistically appear to date from the eighteenth century, Figure 32. Similar fragments incorporated into the frieze at the top of the organ suggest that they derive from the original Library scheme, Figure 19. However, there is no obvious location for them within the original design of the bookcases. It is therefore suggested that they derive from the set of four pier glasses noted in the inventory of 1805.

The cornices, of the two bookcases at the north end of the room, BC6 and 7, were mitred where they met the organ. This is surprising because the cornice does not return along the face of the organ at this level. In fact, the missing sections of straight cornice were infilled with triangular fragments of cornice that appear in a photograph taken in 1967, Figure 4. By this date, the infill sections were beginning to fall away. These cornices, however, are interchangeable with those at the south end of the room above bookcases BC3 and 4. It seems very likely therefore that, during the alterations of the 1860s, the two sets of cornice were swapped over since those at the south end of the room terminate in a square cut.

The tops of the bookcases were secured to the walls with iron or steel fixing nails with flat round heads pierced with three holes for nails. These are consistent with the nails used to secure the timber battens to the internal wall faces to support the plaster and lath linings.

The significance of the Danson bookcases, their date and attribution

Bookcases of this type in mahogany begin to appear in houses of this status from the mid-eighteenth century and their general form can be paralleled in Chippendale's Director of 1754.[8] Batty Langley published a design for a Tuscan breakfront bookcase similar to the arrangement on the south wall in 1741.[9] However, with Robert Adam setting new standards in the designed interior, details of such features within a house of this quality would probably not have been left to a cabinetmaker to work up from pattern books. William Chambers himself provided designs for bookcases and similar fittings at Pembroke House, 1759, The Hoo, Hertfordshire, *c* 1765, and a medal cabinet for Lord Charlemont at the Casino, Marino House, near Dublin, between 1767-8.[10] The relationship between architect and cabinetmaker, however, was not always easy, as is demonstrated by complaints made by Chambers about Chippendale in 1773.[11]

8 Chippendale 1754, plates 42-47
9 Langley 1741, plate 158
10 Harris and Snodin 1997, 163-174
11 Harris and Snodin 1997, 163

The library interiors by Robert Taylor that retain their original bookcases, Harleyford, 1755, Barlaston, 1756-8, predate Danson by almost ten years[12] and although the articulation of the underlying masonry suggests that he originally intended something similar at Danson, it seems more likely the revised design remained his responsibility. In terms of design, the individual bookcases were not unusual for their time. Chippendale's 1754 design is similar to the bookcase on the south wall but his design was for a freestanding piece of furniture with glazed doors. As a suite, the Danson bookcases are permanent fittings; they are not freestanding pieces of furniture that could be moved from one room to another. As architecture, even though they probably constitute a revision to Taylor's original scheme, they are integral to a carefully considered interior design. However, perhaps the strongest argument in support of their attribution to Taylor is that there is no fabric evidence to suggest that a scheme wholly consistent with the underlying masonry was ever executed. The surviving scheme, albeit altered in the 1860s, appears to be primary and therefore dates from the completion of the house in 1766.[13]

In terms of style, the bookcase scheme, with the exception of the organ, is austere and conforms to the strict Palladian creed. Such austerity is more easily associated with Taylor than William Chambers, who provided Boyd with designs for chimneypieces, picture frames, a Greek temple and a bridge across the head of the lake. All of these, however, appear to date from the period of their correspondence about 1770. Furthermore, the chimneypieces, the block pediment added to the entrance door that must surely be attributed to Chambers and possibly the picture frames are all alterations to a completed house. To assign the Library bookcase scheme to Chambers would not only be difficult stylistically but also require his involvement in the house at an earlier date than the surviving documentation would suggest.

5. The Danson organ

Since the 1980s, the Danson organ has been kept in the great hall at Hall Place, Bexley, Figure 18. It deserves mention as an outstanding and rare example of an eighteenth-century domestic organ.[14] Its significance will increase when it is returned to its original setting in the Library or Music Room at Danson. It was a conspicuous feature of the house's interior decoration but would also have figured prominently in its social life.

The organ case

The organ case was not physically attached to the adjacent bookcases. It is a freestanding unit on rollers, which allows it to be brought forward for servicing and tuning. Despite this, the moulding and carving details of the organ case are entirely consistent with those of the bookcases. The dado moulding, skirting and cornice details are continuous with those of the bookcases and there is no apparent difference in the quality of the carving.

The Ionic cornice with the fret dentil course at the tops of the towers is identical to that above the bookcases, but on the organ, it appears with a frieze consisting of two bands of ornament, the upper band, calyx and anthemion, the lower band, calyx and rosette, Figure 19. The calyces in the two bands are slightly different in design, the upper ones being narrower.

12 Binney 1984, plates 30, 36

13 The date for the completion of the house is given by the following: the inscription on the organ; Boyd's correspondence in 1766 refers to Charles Pavillon at work on the Dining Room paintings which implies the house was close to completion; in 1767, Boyd was required to pay window tax on Danson; by a private Act of Parliament in 1762, Boyd was obliged to complete his new house within five years, we have no reason to believe that he failed in this respect For a full discussion of the dating evidence for the house see Lea and Miele 2001

14 Shaw & Scott 1984, 14

The combination of calyx and rosette is associated with the Doric order. It appears, for example, on the neck of the capital in Chambers' drawing of the Doric order, *Treatise on Civil Architecture*, 1759. The juxtaposition of Doric ornamental motifs with an Ionic cornice on the organ and in the modified bookcase entablature may be explained in the context of the Library by the use of the Doric order for the plaster cornice at ceiling level.

Further fragments of carved mahogany calyces and rosettes were reused in the 1860s alterations to the bookcases on the south wall, Figure 32. They probably derive from the four pier glasses listed in the Library in the hand-written inventory of 1805.

Our current understanding of the organ is impaired by an incomplete study of the extent of the alterations to the organ case that may have been carried out in the nineteenth century when an additional stop was added. Overall, it seems unlikely that this alteration would have been accompanied by a major reworking of the organ case but this remains to be confirmed.

The organ maker, 'Old England'

On the console panel above the keyboard is an ivory label inscribed `Old England fecit 1766.' However, the use of the word 'Old' suggests that the label is a later addition. It seems unlikely that either of the two active organ makers with the name of England would refer to themselves as 'Old' in 1766. From the discussion that follows, it is argued that the early nineteenth century provides the most plausible date for both the addition of the inscription and the attribution of the instrument itself.

Because of the inscription, the Danson organ has been attributed to George England[15] one of the most skilled and highly regarded organ builders of his day. However, the history of the England family of organ builders appears to be hazy and there has been uncertainty about when responsibility for the business transferred from one member to another. According to Stephen Bicknell, writing in 1996, George, who is traditionally supposed to have been the organ-maker Richard Bridge's son in law, took over Bridge's business in the late 1750s. George then retired in 1766 and handed on the business to his brother, John, who later went into partnership with Hugh Russell. John was eventually succeeded by his son, George Pike England about 1790. George Pike, born *c* 1765, continued the business until his death in 1815.[16]

The attribution to George England has not generally been questioned, but the noted organ builder Noel Mander, who repaired the instrument in 1959, has challenged the accepted view. In correspondence with the Bexley Town Clerk, he ventured that the Danson organ was probably the work of George's brother John England. Mander pointed out that because John not George had a son, only John could have been described as 'old' in the sense of 'elder'. The ivory inscription, he observed is a later insertion and none like it are known on George's organs. However, they are found on the organs of his nephew, George Pike England, the son of John. Mander concluded that George Pike England repaired the organ sometime in the early nineteenth century, when a keraulophon stop was inserted, and then took the opportunity to acknowledge dutifully the work of his father John with an inscription such as he routinely used.[17] If one accepts Mander's argument, then the Danson organ would be one of John England's very first extant works, a year earlier than that he

15 See for example Bicknell 1996, 203

16 Bicknell 1996, 179 and 215. The England family is also discussed in Wilson 1968, 64-5. The Danson organ is the subject of an article by Gwilym Beechey (Beechey 1969) but the latter is not generally a reliable source.

17 Letter from Mander to the Bexley Town Clerk, 24 December 1958, Hall Place, Local Studies, LABX/DA/4/1/97, `Danson Park Organ Correspondence'. The association of this action with the addition of a Keraulophon stop, however, does not support this argument, since according to one source, the keraulophon stop was an invention of Gray and Davison and first used in 1843, eighteen years after George Pike England's death(Audsley 1905, 1, 540)

built for Wardour Castle in 1767.[18] If, however, we accept that George was probably the elder of the two brothers, George and John, then George Pike might equally have referred to his uncle as 'Old England'. If this is the case, and Stephen Bicknell is right in saying that George retired in 1766, then the Danson organ would be one of George England's last works.[19]

The taste for organ music in houses and the design of organ cases

Before 1750, organs in domestic settings were rare. Musical entertainment in the home usually took the form of suites, sonatas, and related forms played on harpsichord or spinet.[20] Organs were found most commonly in pleasure gardens, theatres and, of course, in churches. The popularity of domestic organs rests almost entirely on one figure, GF Handel, whose organ *concerti* were first widely appreciated at pleasure gardens in the late 1730s and 1740s. Later, Handel's organ music could be heard at three venues, Carlisle House in Soho Square, where subscription concerts were held, and the Pantheon in Oxford Street during the 1760s, and, later still, from 1775, at special rooms in Hanover Square. Other composers of organ *concerti* soon entered the field, John Stanley, Maurice Green, Charles Avison, and Thomas Arne.

Organs were more commonly found in domestic settings after 1760, sometimes in specially designed Music Rooms but also in rooms that had another ostensible purpose such as halls and libraries. In 1760, an added impetus to the domestic organ industry was provided by the posthumous publication of Handel's *concerti* in a format suitable for harpsichord or organ.

Not surprisingly, some architects tried their hand at designing organ cases, one of the earliest being William Kent. It was Robert Adam, however, who did more than any other Georgian architect to assimilate the design of organ cases into the overall decorative ensemble of a room.[21] Easily the most fanciful of these was one of his first attempts, a 1760 design never executed for the west wall of a projected music room in Kedleston Hall, Lord Curzon's country house. Its four uprights were treated as caryatids whose normally architectonic poses have been relaxed as if to reflect the positive benefits of music. The base mouldings link in with those to the door, skirting, and dado rail. That eventually executed was smaller and simpler, though it still relied on female figures.[22] The instrument itself dates from 1758 and was the work of John Schnetzler who specialized in domestic organs.[23] Another Adam organ of note is that found in the entrance hall at Newby Hall of *c* 1771.[24] However, by far his greatest work in this *genre* is that originally provided for the chamber organ destined for the townhouse of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn in St. James's Square and recently auctioned by Phillips.[25] The earliest known drawings for it are dated 24 April 1773, some months before the house itself was finished and some years before the scheme of interior decoration was complete. It was usual for organs to be made well before a case had been obtained. The trades were utterly distinct. This point is worth making because the date on the Danson organ, 1766, may refer to the date the instrument was made and not necessarily the date of its case.

However, although the Danson organ forms part of a designed interior, the Adam organs are significantly different because they are not mannered in the baroque sense but neoclassical. Adam clearly had his way in design and did not pander organ or cabinet making tradition. However, in the wider world, the increased interest in organs meant that by 1766, and

18 Wilson 1968, 67.
19 Bicknell 1996, 179
20 The following discussion relies entirely on M Wilson's survey (Wilson 1968, 10-11, 32-37)
21 Wilson 1968, 15
22 Harris 1987, 36-7.
23 Wilson, 1968, 102. Schnetzler designed instruments for Blickling and Cobham Halls in 1762 and c.1778 respectively.
24 Beard 1978, plate 58
25 Harris E 1995

cabinet-makers had stepped in to meet the demand. Thomas Chippendale's 1762 edition of *The Gentlemen's and Cabinet-Makers Director* contains designs for six organ cases, Figure 22 and Figure 23; Thomas Johnson's 1761 *150 New Designs* has one; Ince and Mayhew's 1759-63 *Universal System of Household Furniture* has another.[26] Almost all of these retain the baroque arrangement of three towers.

In this sense, the Danson case conforms to a tradition that began in the seventeenth-century. It contrasts starkly with the strictly Palladian character of the rest of the house and, it appears from our reconstruction, with the original bookcases. A stricter Palladian approach would not allow cornice at more than one level. The Danson organ is therefore more traditional or conservative than the bookcases that accompany it.

The towers and the 'S' shaped panels between the towers are reminiscent of the much larger organ at Christchurch Spitalfields, by Richard Bridge installed in 1735/6.[27] But the organ at St Stephen Walbrook by George England in 1765, Figure 24 and Figure 25, another three-tower design, has similar panoplies of musical instruments to those at Danson, Figure 20 and Figure 21.[28] The carving of the corbels for the towers and the oval piercing of the panels in front of the pipes decorated with foliage carving are also similar. This is perhaps not surprising as the two organs may be by the same organ maker.

At Danson, it seems that one joinery workshop was responsible for the joinery of both the bookcases and organ case. That they form a coherent scheme suggests that the overall design was the responsibility of the architect, Robert Taylor. That the overall shape of the organ is traditional by Robert Adam's contemporary standards, suggests that Taylor might have been influenced by the organ maker, either George or John England.

6. Alterations to the bookcases and organ, after 1862

Two years after Sarah Johnson painted her watercolours in 1860, Danson house and estate were sold to Alfred Bean. Immediately, he set about refurbishing the house. In the Library, the walls were repainted emerald green and a composition frieze was added below the plaster cornice. He altered the bookcases by adding glazed doors above and plain fronted cupboard doors below the dado, Figure 3. At the south end of the room, he transformed the centre bookcase by replacing its pediment with a block pediment at a higher level. This alteration appears to have been designed to reflect the shape of the organ at the north end of the room, Figure 26 and Figure 27.

The doors above the dado were of two types. The large bookcases either side the fireplace and in the south wall incorporated mirrors. The doors of the smaller bookcases incorporated pleated red silk sandwiched between a glass front and a panelled back. The backs of the doors were flush panelled in mahogany. The glazed doors were hung on lacquered brass hinges, stamped 'HOBBS & CO.' which is consistent with new work in the 1860s.[29]

The installation of the doors, flush with the frames of the bookcases, subtracted from the volume of shelving within each bookcase. In order to compensate for this loss of volume, the backs of the smaller bookcases were altered by the insertion of additional pine battens in the sides so that the back could be set further from the front, Figure 29. The resulting increase in the volume of the carcass required the cutting back and enlargement of the brick

26 Wilson 1968, 20. Ten of Linnell's drawings survive in the Prints and Drawings Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, 92.D.26.

27 SoL 1957, 162

28 Sumner 1962, 178 and RCHM 1929, 196

29 See the notes on the Hobbs & Co hinges used in the Dining Room sideboards in Lea and Miele 2001

recesses in the wall, Figure 30. The rough surfaces were subsequently made good with a coating of plaster containing animal hair.

The back of the blind sash window in the north wall of the Library also appears to have been altered about this time. The original arrangement is not clear but in this alteration planed pine panelling was attached to the back of each of the sash frames.

Below the dado, alterations included the cutting out and setting back of the mahogany jambs. The original doors were probably set within the mahogany jambs. The new cupboard doors below the dado were faced with flat mahogany boards, 4mm thick, mounted on oak ovolo moulded frames. The mahogany boards match the original mahogany. The cupboard doors were hung on lacquered brass hinges with countersunk screws, similar in quality to those on the doors above the dado, but not stamped.

The two smaller bookcases on the south wall, BC3 and 5, were fitted with mahogany fronted specimen drawers with brass knobs in the cupboards under the dado rail. The back, sides, and bottom of each drawer were of oak. Some of the drawers were found to contain fossils. The drawers of the south west bookcase, BC5, are identified with paper labels that give the sources for the fossils at Victorian holiday resorts, such as 'Isle of Wight, 1870 and 1871,' 'Filey, 1868' and 'Alderney, 1869.' We can surmise therefore that Alfred Bean collected the fossils on their family holidays. As a railway engineer, it is perhaps not surprising that Bean should have had a passing interest in geology. The dates on the labels suggest that the bookcases were modified by 1868.

Above the dado, the original shelving system was replaced by an adjustable system, employing paired strips of mahogany, notched like a saw blade. The shelves were supported on trapezium shaped lengths of mahogany fitted between the teeth of the vertical supports. In order to install this system, the original rebates in the sides of the bookcases were filled with plain strips of pine. The central dividers in the three large bookcases show no signs of the original shelving system and therefore appear to date from this phase of work.

The large bookcase in the centre of the south wall, BC4, was heightened by *c* 400mm. This is evident in alterations both to the rear panel and the sides. The construction of the back panel matches that of the bookcases either side of the fireplace. From this comparison, it is clear that the back panel was originally designed to extend throughout the full height of the bookcase. However, the bottom rail of the bookcase in the centre of the south wall, BC4, is currently fixed *c* 400mm above the floor. Two pine boards were added to the bottom of the bookcase to fill in the gap.

The alterations to the sides of the centre bookcase in the south wall, BC4, consist of pine and mahogany additions at its top and additional pieces of pine with mahogany veneers. The additions to the top of the bookcase are consistent with an increase in height of *c* 400mm. The pine with mahogany veneer additions suggest that the centre bookcase was brought forward, 140mm, at the same time

The top of the bookcase, BC4, was given an entablature consisting of a horizontal length of the original cornice set above a frieze incorporating calyces and rosettes, Figure 31. The cornice was probably made up using fragments from the original pediment. The carved mahogany calyces and rosettes in the frieze are reused. The original form of the calyces can be seen in a comparison with those in the frieze at the top of the organ. Those reused in the bookcase frieze appear to have been identical to the lower type. However, in the bookcase frieze, all of the tendril extensions have been broken or cut off and they are so closely spaced that this must have occurred before they were glued in place.

Above the entablature, it seems, there was a block pediment, Figure 9. Although this fragment was found among the other items removed from the house in 1995, it does not appear in any photograph of the house that pre-dates the removal of the bookcases in about

1995. This is probably because there are no photographs of the south end of the Library from this period. However, the cornice and the use of carved mahogany clearly associate it with the Library scheme and its only conceivable location within the room is above the bookcase on the south wall, Figure 13.

The block pediment consists of three sides of a box of mahogany veneered pine to which lengths of the bookcase cornice were fitted. The method of construction is crude, employing glued battens and steel countersunk screws and appears to be Victorian, Figure 10. It is a composite of various fragments of joinery. Furthermore, the box appears to have been extended forward by c 185mm. The cyma-reversa at the bottom of the cymatium is not enriched with waterleaf in the same way as the others in the room. This indicates that it is not a reused item. Furthermore, it extends the full length of the 185mm extension. This moulding and some of the dentils, by the same token, therefore post-date the forward extension of the box.

The fragment of carved mahogany with a bearded male head surrounded by sheaves of corn, discussed above, is glued to the front of the box. The carving is not a complete fragment; the upper edges are broken rather than carved. It is clearly not in its original location since the upper part of the circle enclosing the head, had it survived, would have extended over the bottom edge of the cornice. It has already been suggested above that this fragment derives from the original pediment above the centre bookcase, BC4. Two mahogany brackets, now in the artefact store at the house, were probably fixed either side of the block pediment to mirror those at the top of the organ, Figure 13.

Each jamb of each bookcase above the dado is fitted with an applied strip of mahogany moulded with a cavetto moulding. These strips measure 62x10mm in section and are simply glued to the front face of each jamb. The thickness of the timber associates these features more easily with the work of the 1860s than the 1760s. It is also worth noting that the strips on the front of the centre bookcase on the south wall, BC4, pass over the pieces of mahogany added to the tops of the jambs. These two strips, at least, must therefore post-date the heightening of the bookcase.

7. The preferred options for the restoration of the original bookcase and organ scheme of 1766

Technically, it would be possible to restore the Library bookcase scheme to its appearance in the 1922 sale catalogue photograph, Figure 3. Although we have no photographic image recording the arrangements at the south end of the room, we have been able to reconstruct the appearance of the bookcase against the south wall, Figure 26. Such a restoration would require very little alteration to the joinery.

However, it will be evident from these images that to reinstate the joinery to this phase in its development would restore a strongly Victorian character to the room. This would be contrary to our aim to emphasize the significance of the building's original design. The table on the following page presents our preferred options for restoration.

If this set of options were to be adopted, the bookcase on the south wall would be restored broadly to its appearance as reconstructed for the period 1766 through to *c* 1863, Figure 13, with the exception that the shelving system from Alfred Bean's 1860s alterations would be retained. The details of this shelving system and the Victorian drawers would, however, only be visible when the shelves are empty and the cupboard doors are open, Figure 33, Figure 34, and Figure 35.

	Option	Desirability	Reversibility
1	Return the organ from Hall Place to its original position against the north wall of the Library	This is highly desirable. Working chamber organs from the eighteenth-century are rare, especially those that remain *in-situ.*	The organ is a freestanding unit on castors. Returning it to the Library should cause no damage to its fabric.
2	Reduce the height of the centre bookcase on the south wall, BC4, and reinstate its pediment.	This is very desirable since it would remove the largest Victorian element in the room and substantially restore the Georgian appearance of the bookcases.	The doors can be kept in store, the mortises for the hinges can be filled with appropriate timber fillets. The shelves would have to be enlarged to make them flush with the fronts of the cabinets.
3	Reinstate the bookcases, with open shelves, not with glass-fronted doors.	This would greatly contribute to the Palladian character of the interior. The box pediment arrangement of the 1860s is contrary in spirit, echoing the baroque character of the organ.	The box pediment, cornice and frieze are detachable units and can be held in store. The reduction in height would require saw cuts through the Victorian additions to the sides.
4	Do not remove the Victorian shelving system and reuse the original	Their removal is not highly desirable since it would only be noticeable when the shelves are empty	The original shelves have all been reduced in length. To lengthen every shelf by the length of a tenon would probably require the loss of fabric from the original shelves.
5	Restore the carved head to the pediment above the bookcase on the south wall	This fragment would give added meaning to the library scheme and in turn would gain in significance when viewed in its original context	This item appears to be simply glued onto the box pediment. To reset it in a new pediment should not entail significant damage.
6	Do not remove the Victorian dado cupboard doors and drawers from the cupboards and replace with recreations of the original	Their removal is not seen as desirable because we have no real knowledge of the original dado cupboard doors. The drawers do not detract from the overall appearance of the bookcases. They also provide some insight into Alfred Bean's interests	They could be removed without any significant loss of historic fabric. The Victorian drawers and doors could be held in store.
7	Remove the Victorian mahogany fillets from the fronts of the bookcases	These pieces appear detract from the austere character of the bookcases overall	The fillets appear to be simply glued in place and two have already been removed without harm. Once removed they can be kept in store

8. Suggestions for further research

This report has been compiled without the input of specialists in the history of cabinet making or organs. The advice of both should be sought on the interpretation offered in this report.

The organ case has, to date, only been recorded in photographs. A set of measured drawings of the case would be useful for its management.

This report is based on observations of the bookcases in their present setting. If they are removed to a workshop for conservation, then this would provide an ideal opportunity to check the analysis and interpretation offered in this report.

9. Bibliography

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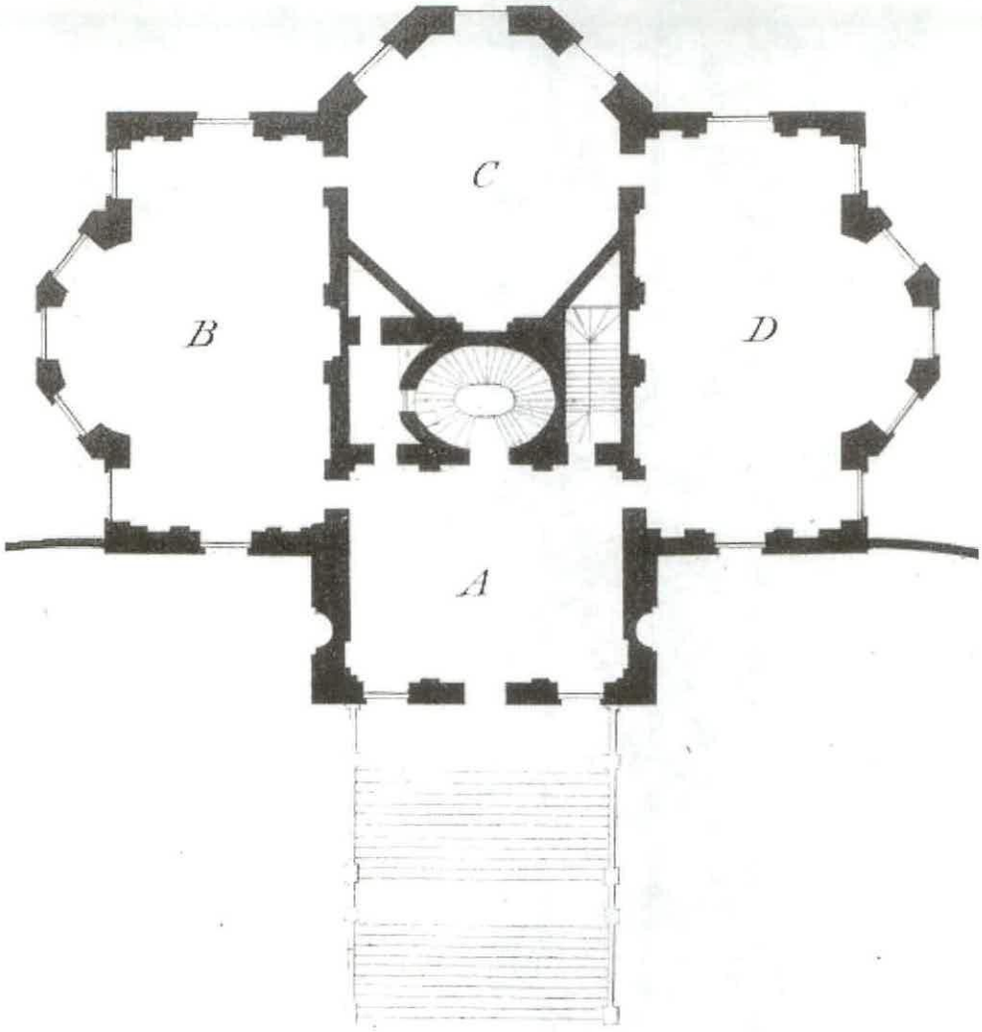


Figure 1, a detail from the *Plan of the principal Story of Danson in Kent* drawn and engraved by Thomas Malton published by MA Taylor in 1790 and again in 1792 as one of 32 works illustrating the work of Robert Taylor. According to the key, the room functions were A, Hall: B, Eating Room: C, Saloon: D, Library.

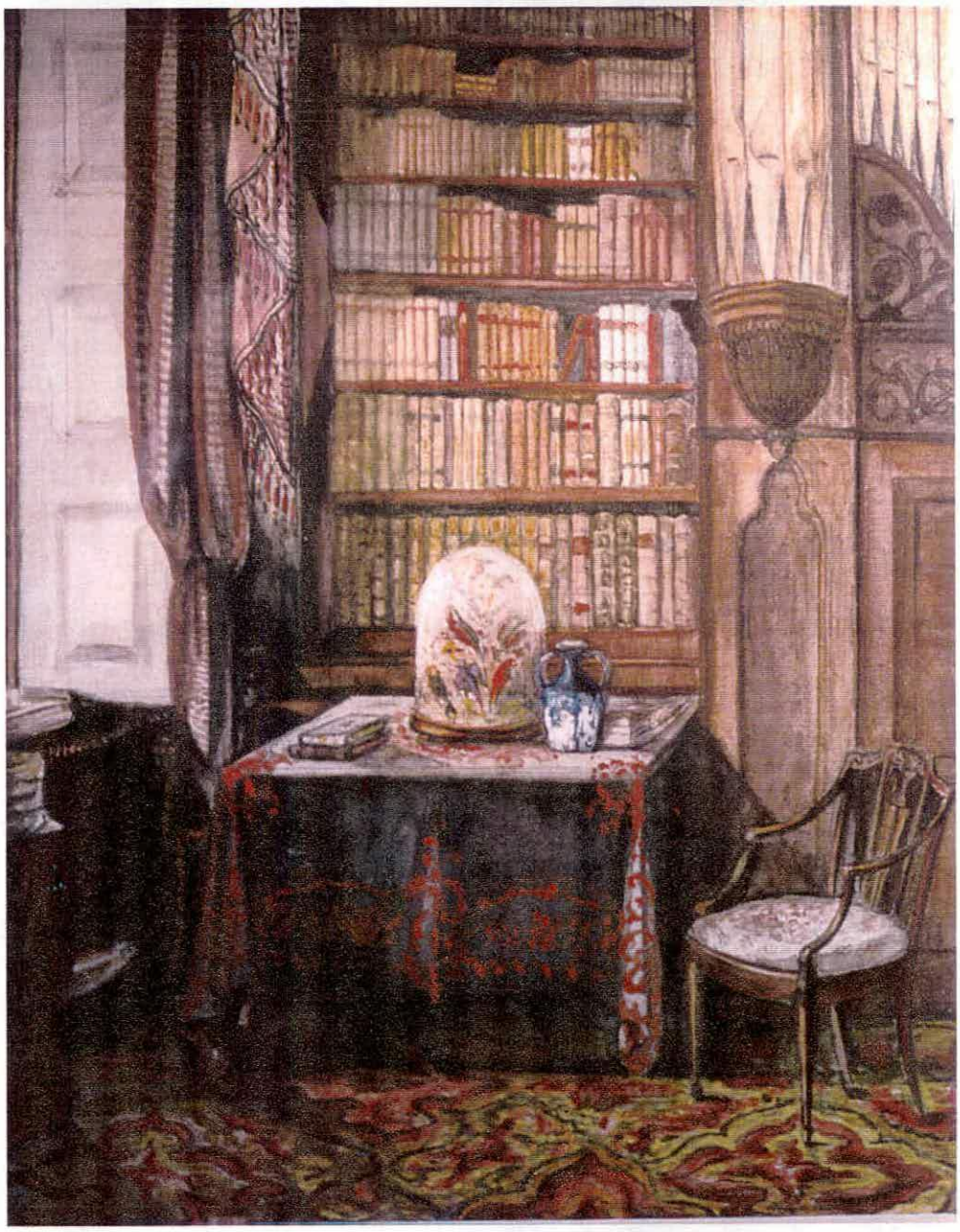


Figure 2, a watercolour by Sarah Johnson from 1860, showing the bookcase and organ in the north west corner of the Library. This is a very significant record because it shows the bookcase prior to the addition of the glass-fronted doors by Alfred Bean after 1862.

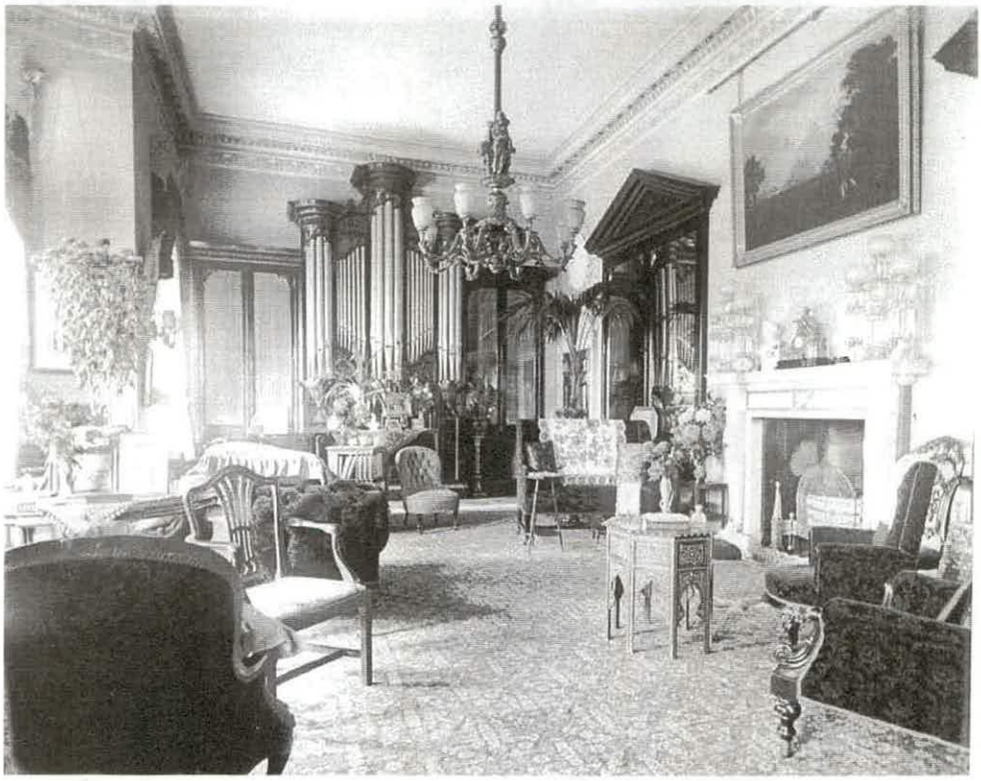


Figure 3, the photograph of the north end of the Library used in the sale catalogue of 1922.

Figure 4, a photograph of the organ in 1967 after its restoration. Note the infill section of cornice beginning to fall away from between the bookcase on the left and the organ.

Figure 5, the Library in January 1998, after restoration of the plaster, with the two pedimented bookcases on the east wall *in-situ* and the two smaller bookcases against the north wall partially dismantled.

Figure 6, the Library, looking south in January 1998, after restoration of the plaster, with the three bookcases partially dismantled and only approximately placed in position.

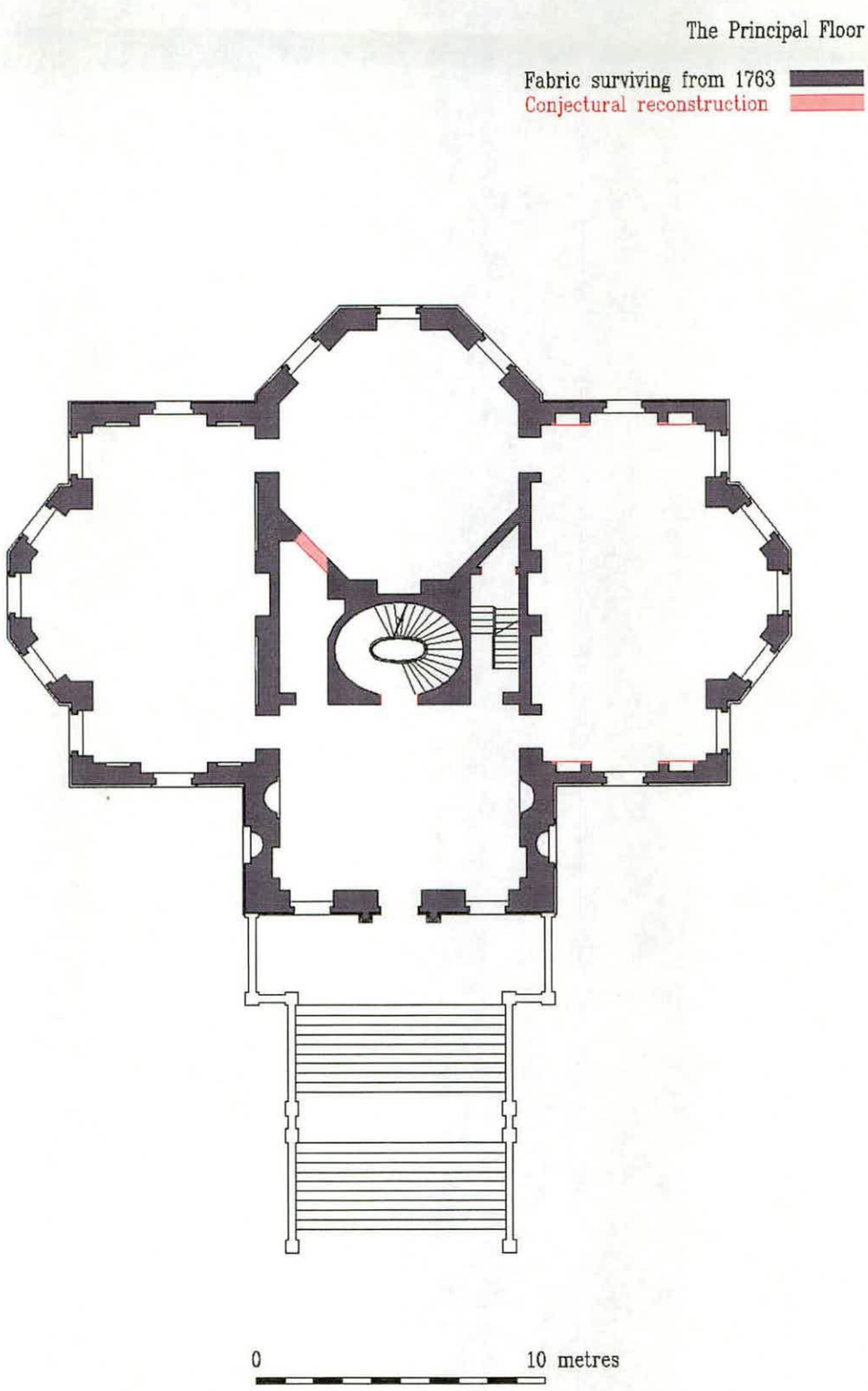


Figure 7, a reconstruction plan of the principal floor as it might have appeared in 1763 before fitting out.

Figure 8, a detail of the cornice above one of the bookcases on the east wall

Figure 9, the block pediment fragment with the relief carving of a classical head surrounded by sheaves of corn.

Figure 10, the back of the block pediment showing the crude Victorian method of assembly using glued battens and screws.

Figure 11, a reconstruction of the north wall of the Library, as it might have appeared in 1763 before fitting out in 1766. The orange coloured brick represents areas that were cut away in the 1860s.

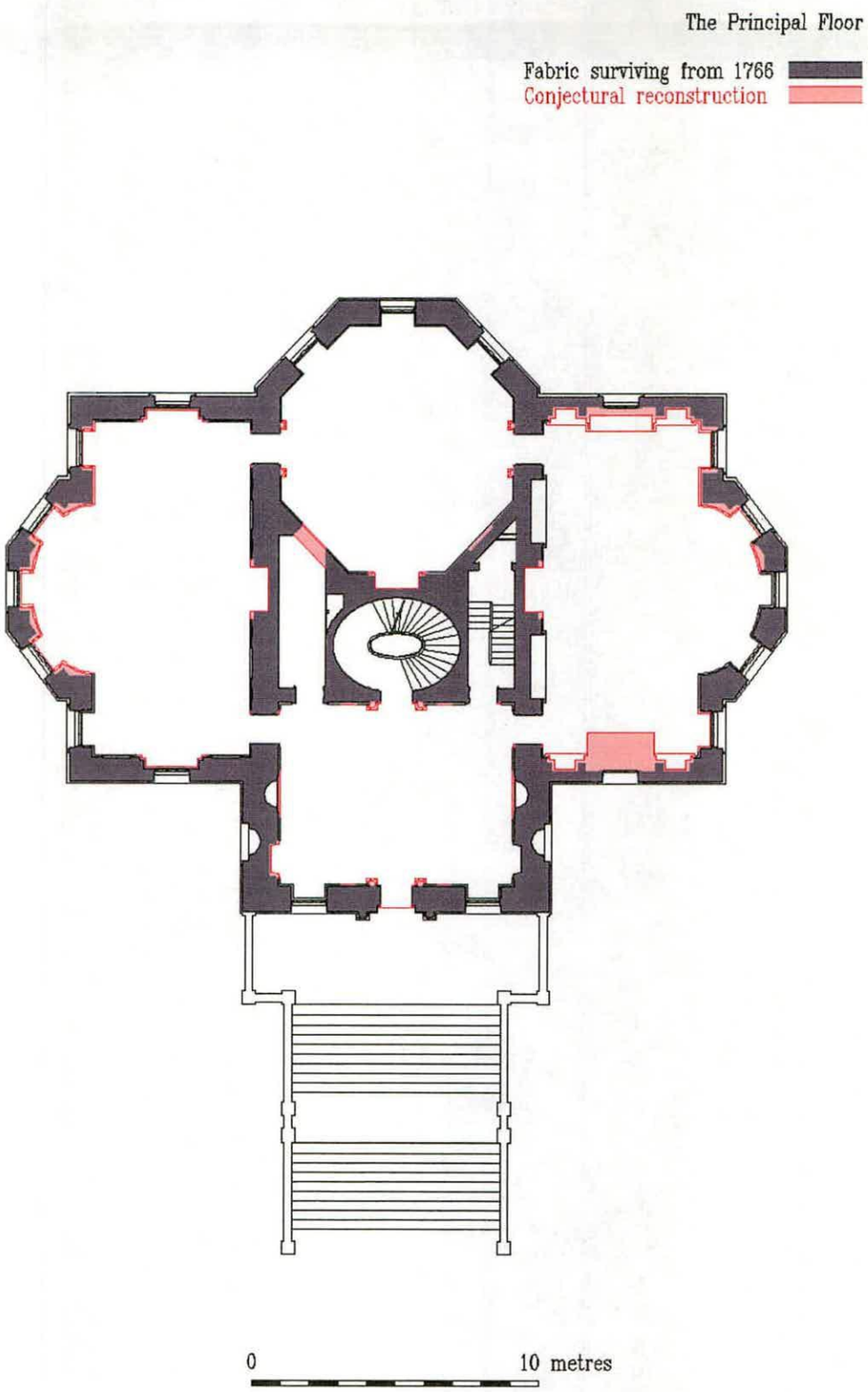


Figure 12, a reconstruction plan of the principal floor as it might have appeared in 1766 after the installation of the bookcases and organ.

Figure 13, a reconstruction of the bookcase on the south wall, BC3, 4 and 5, as it might have appeared when first installed in 1766.

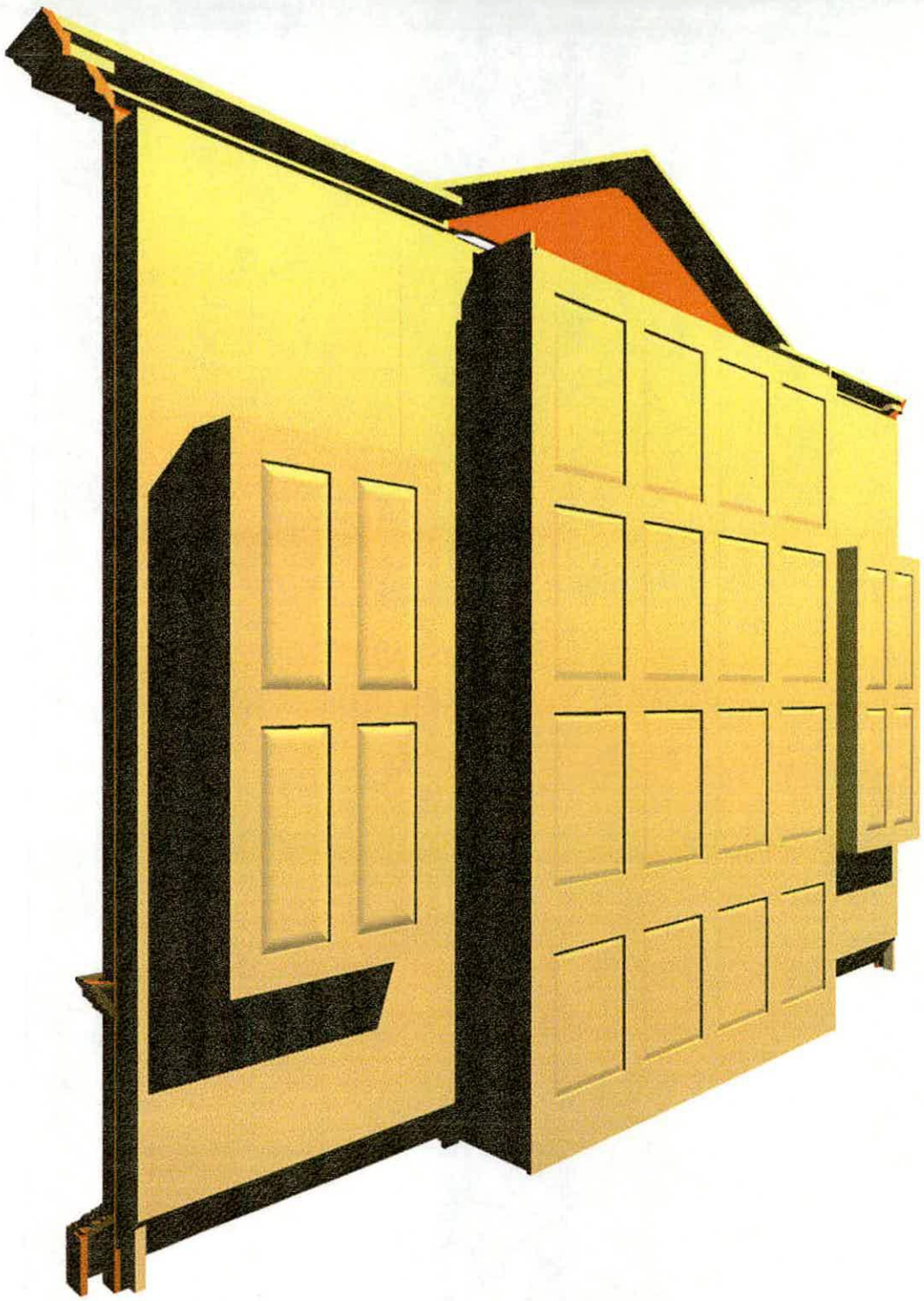
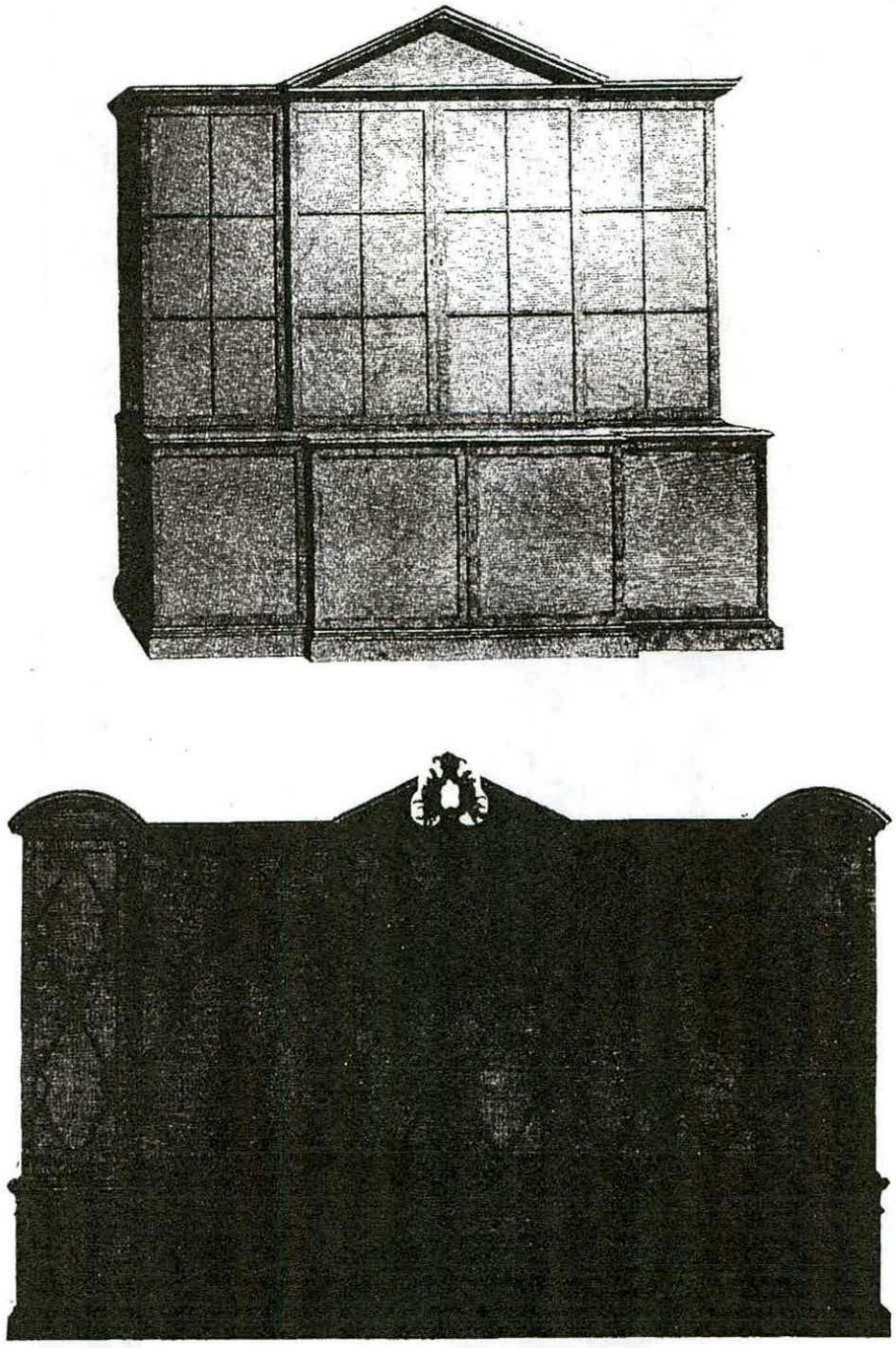


Figure 14, the back of the bookcase against the south wall, BC3, 4 and 5, as it might have appeared when first installed in 1766. In this reconstruction, the back panel of the centre bookcase, BC4, is restored to its original level.

Figure 15, a cupboard door at dado level in the library at Barlaston, during restoration. Note the flush panel construction and long hinges.



Library Bookcases

Figure 16, plate 45 from Chippendale, 1754, two designs for library bookcases.

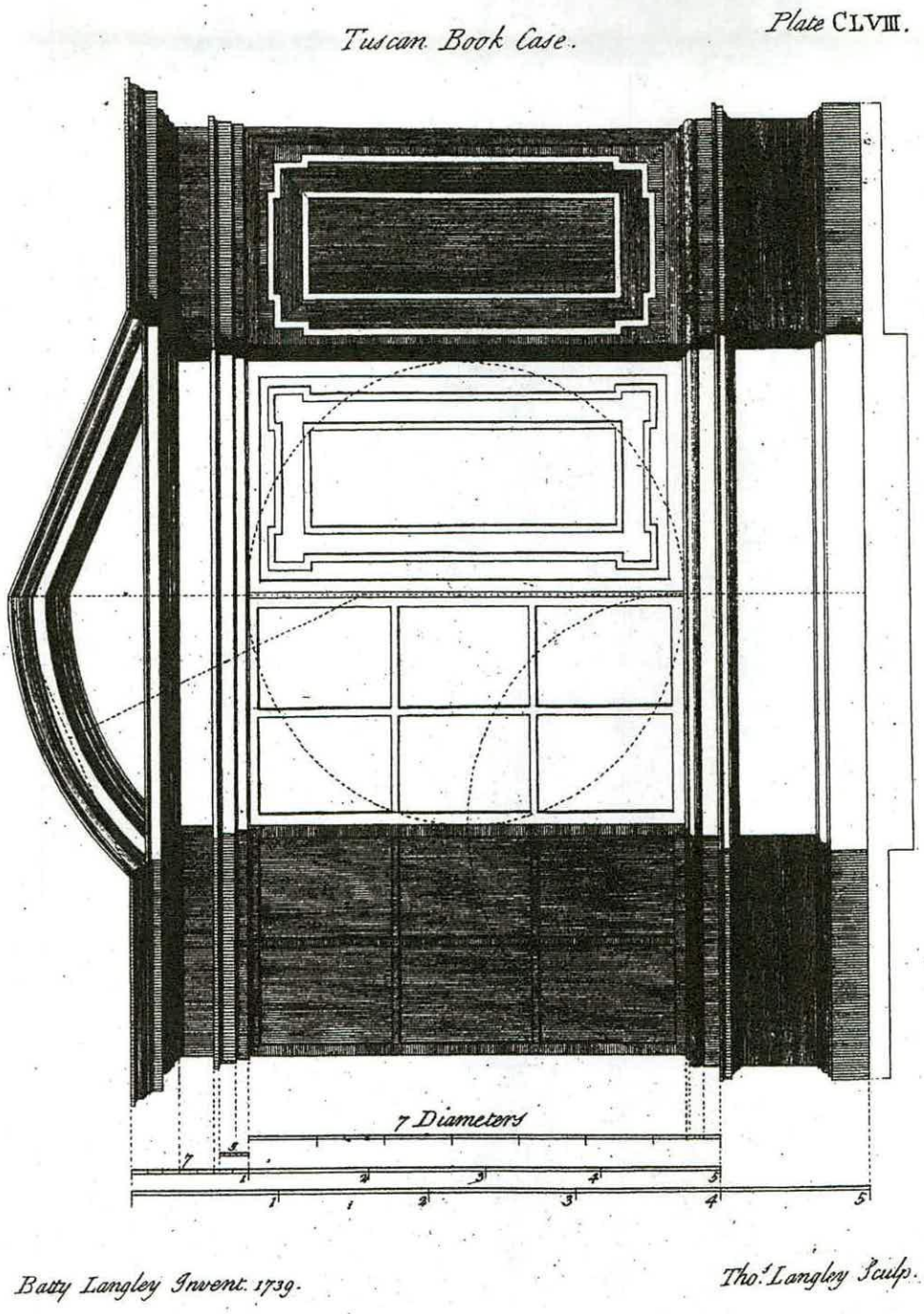


Figure 17, a design for a breakfront bookcase according to the Tuscan order, Batty Langley, 1741, plate CLVIII.

Figure 18, the Danson organ in the great hall at Hall Place, Bexley, June 2001.

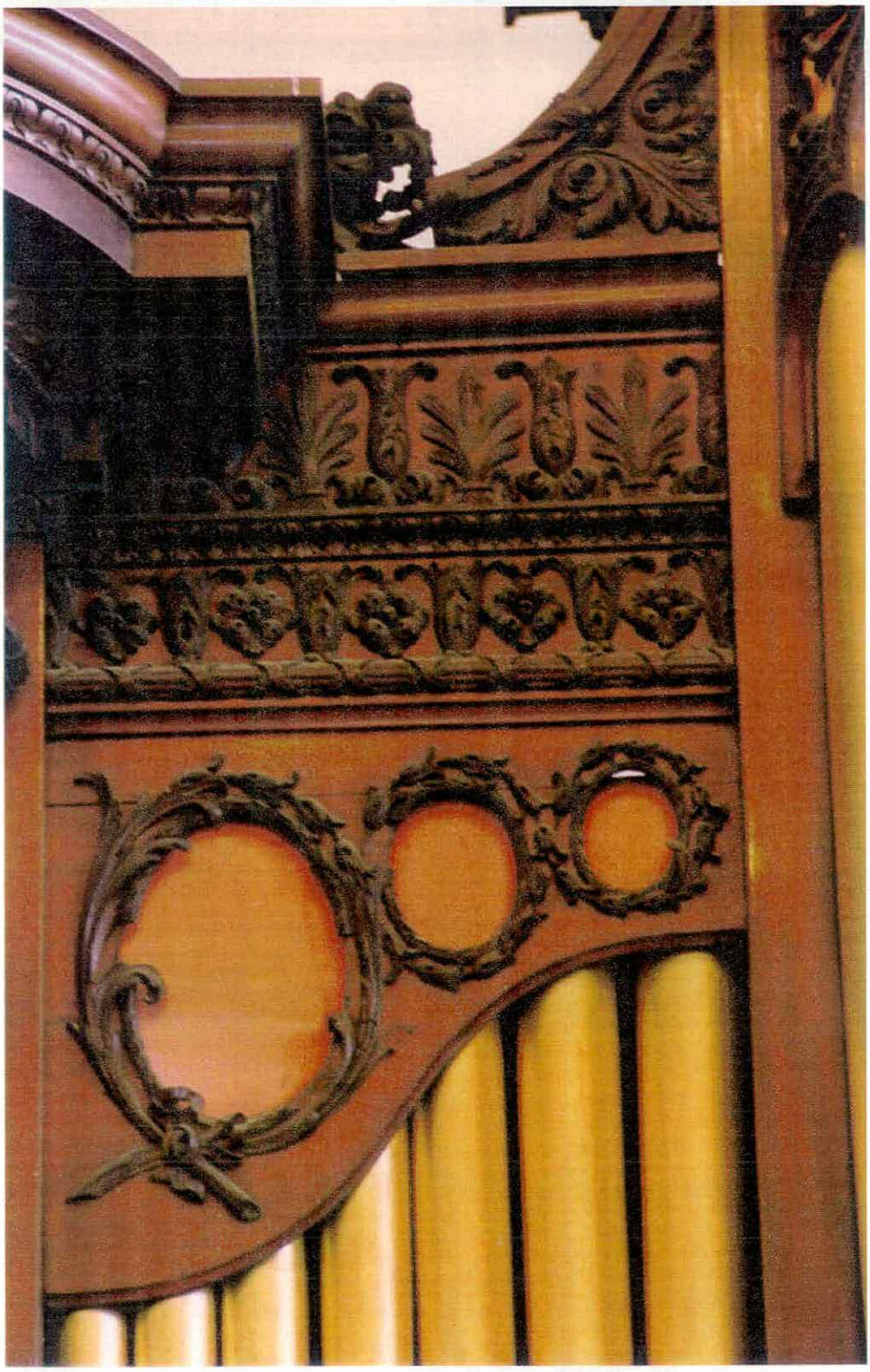


Figure 19, detail of the frieze at the top of the organ.

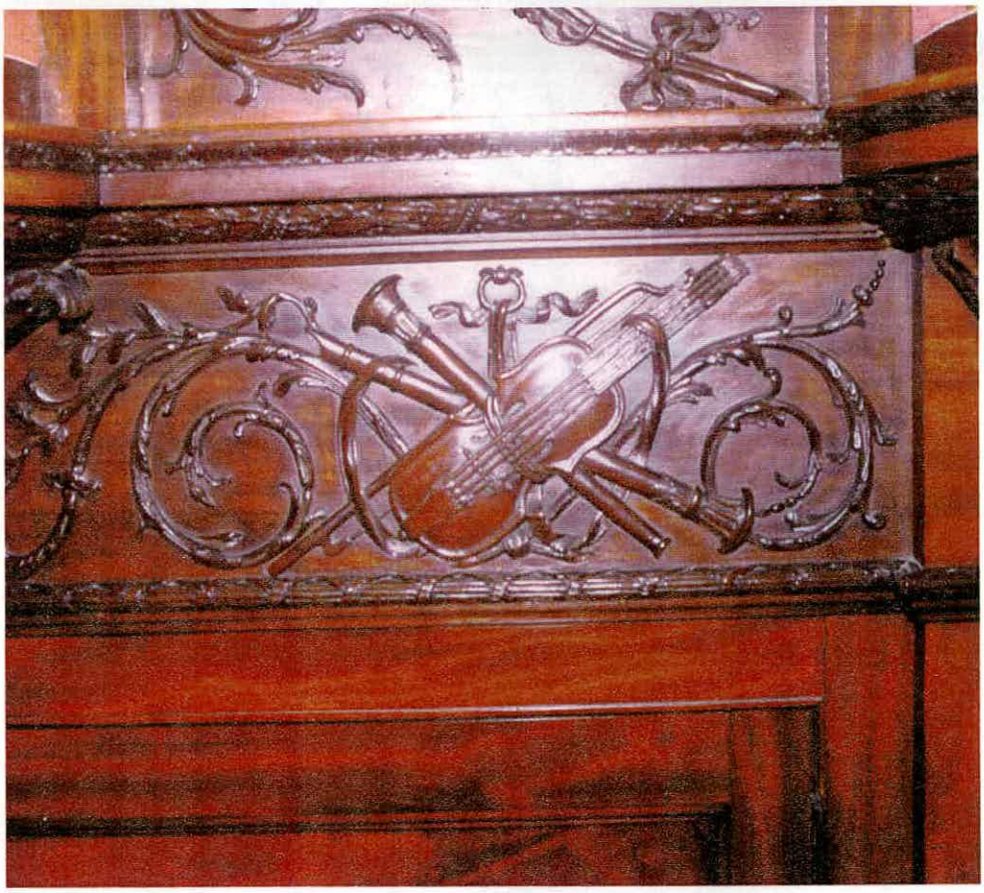


Figure 20, detail of the panoply of musical instruments to the right of the console.

Figure 21, detail of the panoply of musical instruments to the left of the console

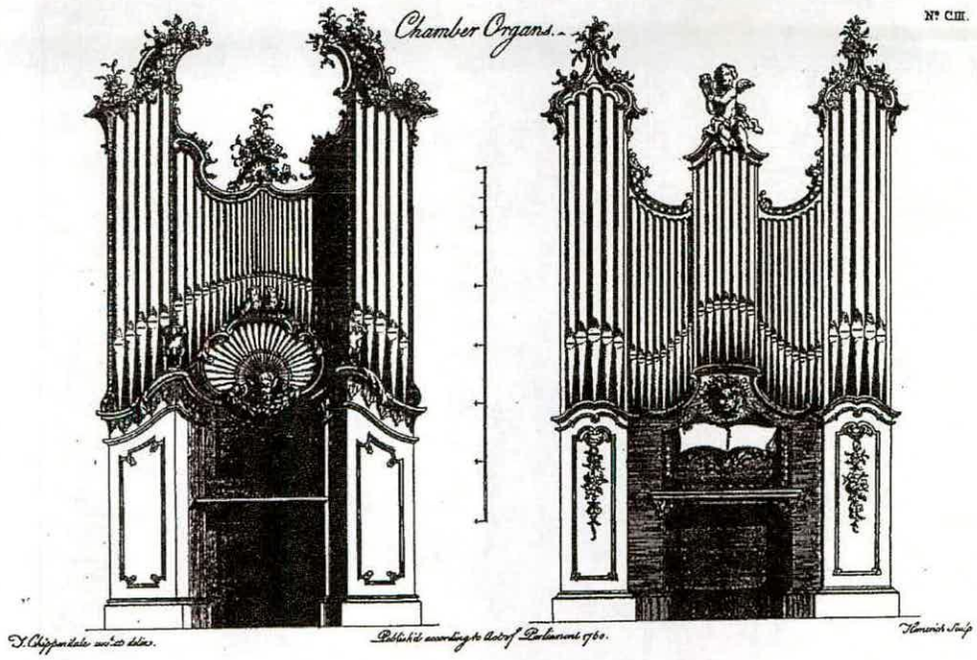


Figure 22, two designs for chamber organs by Thomas Chippendale from his 1762 edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director,* plate CIII

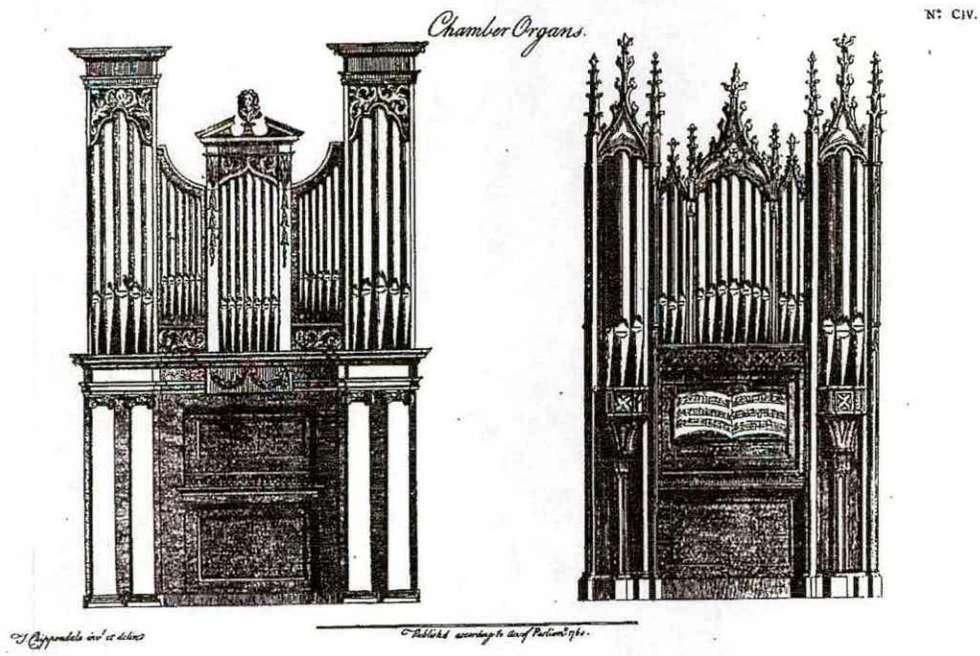


Figure 23, two more designs for chamber organs by Thomas Chippendale from his 1762 edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director*, plate CIV

Figure 24, the organ at St Stephen, Walbrook, City of London, by George England, 1765

Figure 25, detail of the organ at St Stephen, Walbrook, City of London, by George England, 1765

Figure 26, a reconstruction of the bookcase against the south wall, BC3, 4 and 5, as it might have appeared after alteration *c* 1863. Although this bookcase probably survived in this form until the 1990s when it was dismantled, it does not appear in any of the photographs of this room known to the authors.

Figure 27, a reconstruction of the bookcase against the south wall, BC3, 4 and 5, as it might have appeared with its doors open, after alteration *c* 1863.

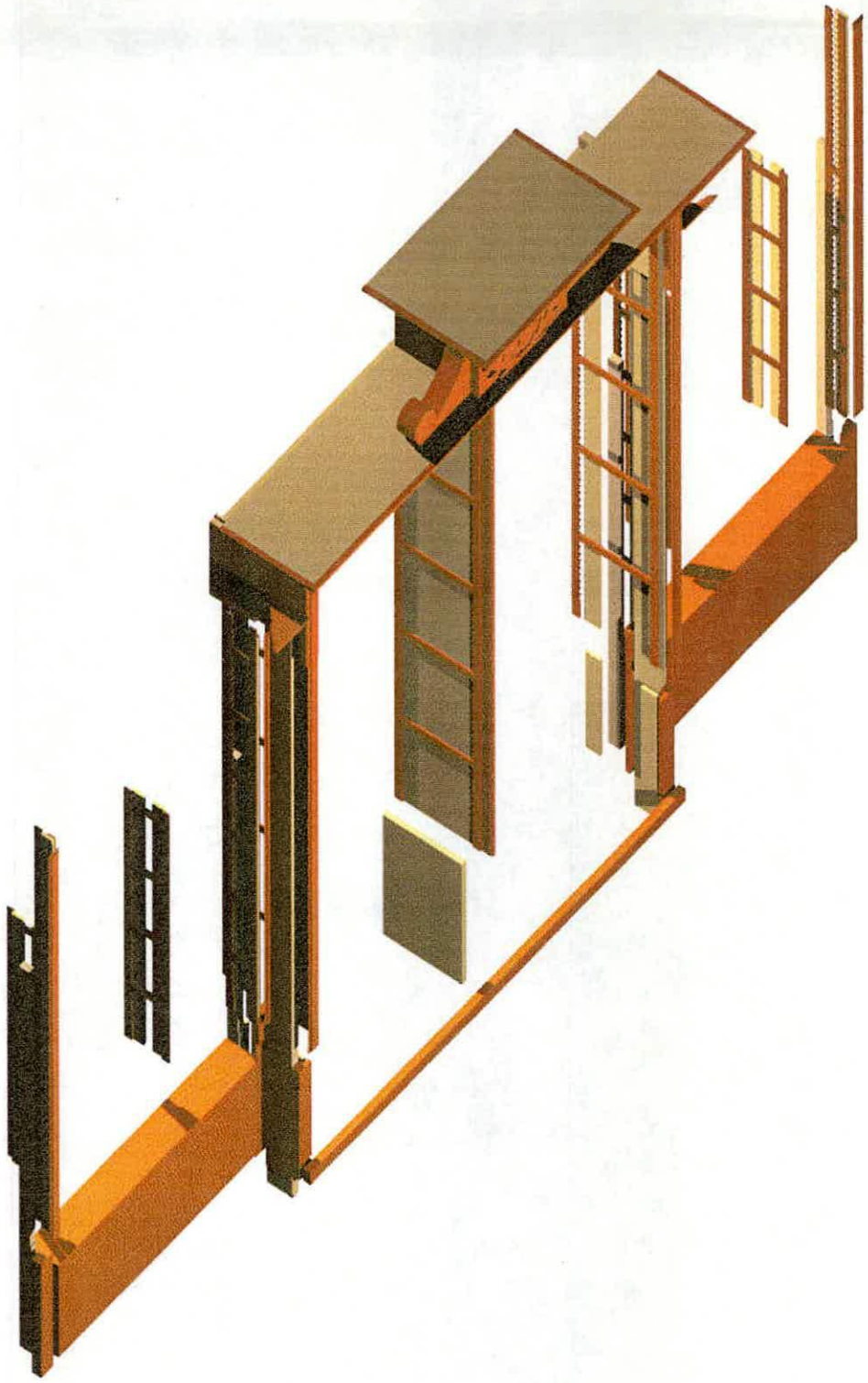


Figure 28, an isometric projection illustrating the new timber introduced after 1862 into the bookcases at the south end of the Library.

For clarity, the shelves, the glass fronted doors and the dado cupboard doors have been omitted.

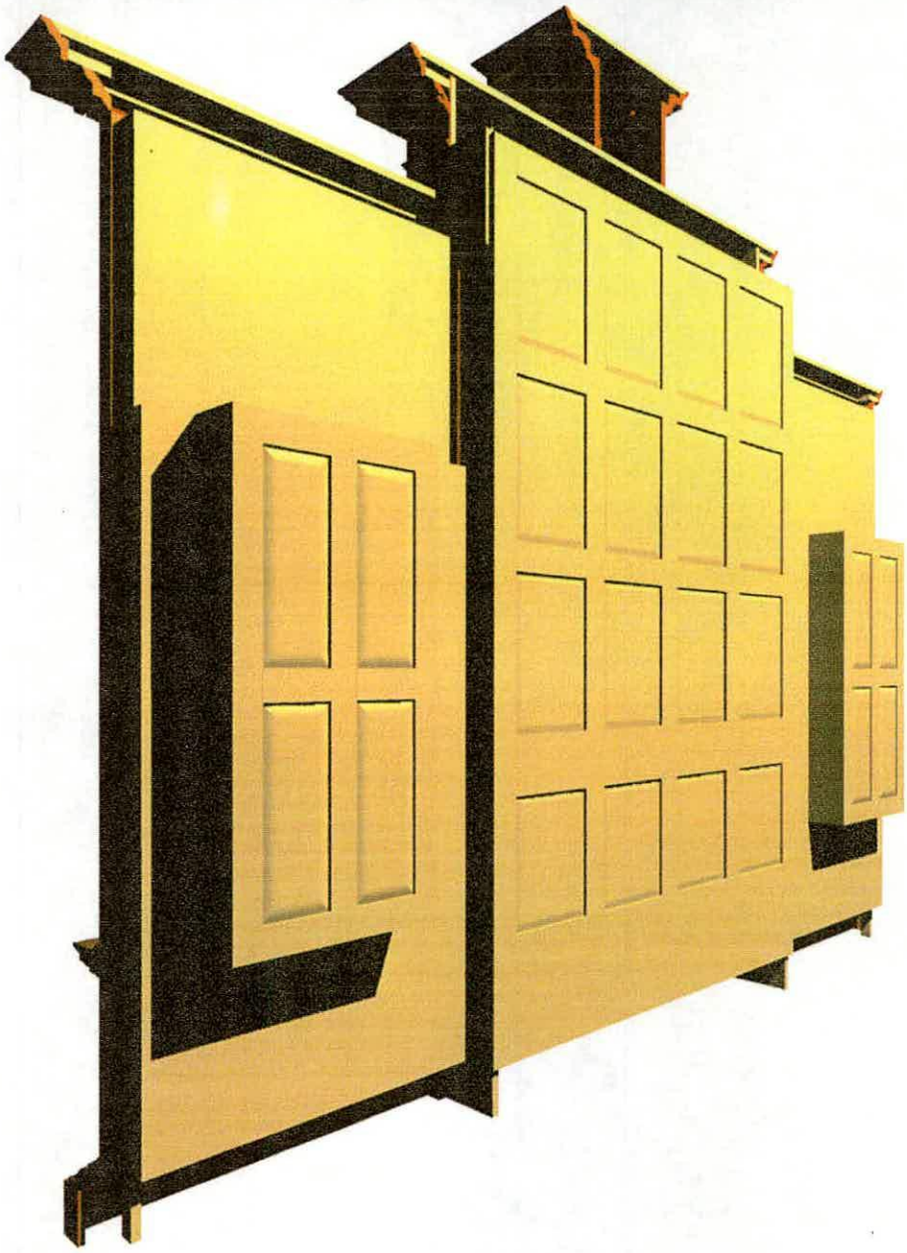


Figure 29, the back of the bookcase against the south wall, BC3, 4 and 5, as it might have appeared after the alterations of *c* 1863.

Figure 30, a reconstruction of the north wall, showing it altered by the removal of brick to receive the modified bookcases, as it might have appeared *c* 1863.

Figure 31, detail of the box cornice from the centre bookcase on the south wall, BC4.

Note, this photograph shows the box cornice on the floor of the Artefact Store, it has been inverted for clarity.

Figure 32, detail of the reused calyx and rosette motifs glued to the face of the box cornice.

Figure 33, a perspective view showing how the bookcases on the south wall would appear if restored according to our preferred options.

Figure 34, a perspective view showing how the bookcases on the south wall would appear with the cupboard doors open if restored according to our preferred options.

Figure 35, a perspective view showing how the back of the bookcase on the south wall would appear if restored according to our preferred options.