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Cavendish Square and Spencer House: Neo-classicism, opportunity and nostalgia

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Abstract

The Society of Dilettanti planned a temple-fronted academy of arts on the north side of Cavendish Square in the early 1750s. It can now be shown that stone bought and cut for this building was used in the Green Park elevation of Spencer House (1756–9), shedding new light on design there. The Cavendish Square site stayed empty until speculative pairs of houses were built in 1768–70. Their temple-fronted stone façades, hitherto explained as incorporating stone from the 1750s, must now be understood not as the result of salvage, but as a conscious echo of the abandoned academy project.

Sixty years ago (Sir) John Summerson explained the grandeur of the speculatively built houses of 1768–70 on Cavendish Square’s north side as reflecting the Society of Dilettanti’s plans of the early 1750s for an academy of arts on the site. He suggested that stone intended for the academy was used in the façades, and mentioned this in subsequent editions of *Georgian London*. He also noticed similarities between the houses and Spencer House (1756–9).¹ Research carried out for the Survey of London makes it possible now to recount more fully what happened, and how Spencer House and Cavendish Square are linked.

Cavendish Square to 1757

Cavendish Square was laid out in 1717–18 and its north side taken freehold by James Brydges, the Earl of Carnarvon, soon made the Duke of Chandos. His fortunes stricken after the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720, Chandos pulled back from plans for a palace across the site to build two houses at either end, begun in 1724 and only completed in 1736 when he moved in to the western one (Fig.1). This left vacant the 140ft-wide central frontage – a significant failing, as for anyone arriving from almost anywhere else in London this was the square’s most prominent side and the terminus of its intentionally devised north–south axis with Hanover Square, all the more so as there were then no trees impeding the view. From 1726 Chandos’s Marylebone Basin lay directly to the north, beyond where Queen Anne Street now runs, amid fields that extended up to Marylebone Park and

on to Hampstead. The basin was a water-supply project that failed commercially, but, however dormant, must have been a pleasing amenity. In 1728 John Wood proposed a house for Chandos across the central frontage that might show 'what the Bath stone wou'd do in town',² but this idea went nowhere. Once his house was complete Chandos spent little time at Cavendish Square, and found the presence of building works in the vicinity disagreeable. His empty central plot had been allowed to become a rubbish dump.³

James Ralph's impudent and widely read Burlingtonian polemic in the *Critical Review* in 1734 followed Pope in lauding the Earl and taking Chandos and the Harleys as targets. He made hay with Cavendish Square:

there we shall see the folly of attempting great things, before we are sure we can accomplish little ones. Here 'tis, the modern plague of building was first stayed, and I think the rude, unfinish'd figure of this project should deter others from a like infatuation. When we see any thing like grandeur or beauty going forward, we are uneasy till 'tis finish'd, but when we see it interrupted, or intirely laid aside, we are not only angry with the disappointment, but the author too: I am morally assur'd that more people are displeas'd at seeing this square lie in its present neglected condition, than are entertain'd with what was meant for elegance or ornament in it.⁴

It was in this critical climate that the Society of Dilettanti came into being in the early 1730s. First meetings were in a series of taverns. Horace Walpole

famously summed up the early reputation of the Dilettanti in 1743, identifying it as ‘a club, for which the nominal qualification is having been in Italy, and the real one being drunk; the two chiefs are Lord Middlesex and Sir Francis Dashwood, who were seldom sober the whole time they were in Italy’.⁵

Drunkenness is not in question, it was even minuted, yet there was also formality and seriousness in the way the Dilettanti conducted their affairs as they embraced a mission of improving taste. In March 1742 they resolved to build or procure premises ‘for the more honourable and commodious reception of the Society’, and in May 1743 Middlesex, Sir James Gray, Daniel Boone and Henry Harris were appointed, and immediately joined by Dashwood, to find a ‘proper spot’.⁶ Four years passed before any more was done. A large committee was appointed in May 1747 to find and buy (for £300 or less) ground for a new building to house the Society – that is for its meetings and its collections. The committee, which met at Dashwood’s house in Bolton Street off Piccadilly, included the same men, save Gray who was now a diplomatic resident in Venice. His place was taken by his younger brother, Major George Gray (promoted Lieutenant Colonel in 1749 and Colonel in 1759), the Society’s secretary and treasurer. Among others engaged were George Knapton, the painter and connoisseur, and William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon and later 2nd Earl of Bessborough, a founder member of the Society who from 1740 had a house on the east side of Cavendish Square (now No. 3), as did Simon Harcourt (1st Earl Harcourt), the Society’s first president (part surviving as No. 1A). Chandos had died in

1744 and his son Henry (2nd Duke of Chandos) sold the house at the west end of Cavendish Square's north side in August 1747. By December the committee of Dilettanti had decided to buy the vacant ground adjoining for £400, the money advanced by Dashwood. At this trough in the building cycle land was relatively cheap. The Society thus gained a 137ft 6in central frontage to the square with a plot extending back 232ft or halfway to Queen Anne Street. Joseph Pickford, a mason who had worked frequently with William Kent, was paid for measuring and plans.⁷

By April 1748 Major Gray had designed a wall to enclose the ground. He, Dashwood and Duncannon were entrusted with seeing to this and clearance of the rubbish in preparation for building. William Atkinson, a self-described 'servayor' who was Pickford's partner and step-son, erected walls facing the square and along the plot's north side in 1748–9 for the much larger than anticipated sum of £230. Levelling for a pavement in front and of a 90ft depth behind was done by Thomas Gladwin, a 'digger' or excavation contractor who had been active on the Cavendish–Harley estate since the 1720s. By the end of 1748 Dashwood had ordered the planting of eight elms and six horse chestnuts on the Society's ground, probably its more northerly part. The grey stock-brick and stone-coped wall to the square had central carriage-entrance gates flanked by ball-topped Portland stone piers and arch-headed and stuccoed niches.⁸ This classically articulated but short-lived screen was described in 1761 as 'a handsome wall and gates . . . , which serve to preserve the uniformity of the square'.⁹

Robert Dingley, a wealthy merchant, prominent in the Russia Company and a connoisseur of diverse arts, submitted to his fellow Dilettanti a scheme for the formation of an academy in early 1749. This was probably inspired by John Gwynn's draft scheme for a public academy which emerged from a group of artists who met regularly at the Foundling Hospital of which Dingley was soon to become a governor. The plan was judged worthy of encouragement and there were hopes of royal patronage. Around the same time Dashwood initiated a subscription fund for a building at Cavendish Square, plans for which were to be got in hand. By May the fund stood at £287 10s. An initial absence of pragmatism is suggested by the fact that a year later members inclined to submit plans for the building were asked to include estimates.¹⁰

In March 1751 a committee meeting chaired by Dashwood examined three sets of plans and elevations for the intended building. These were based on proposals by Dashwood, Dingley and Knapton. Dingley's scheme was the best liked and there was a determination to advance to work on the ground within a year. At the same meeting the committee decided to purchase additional property east of the Cavendish Square ground, behind the house then held by Lady Abercorn, for the sake of back access from Chandos Street.¹¹ The architect John Vardy is recorded as having prepared a drawing for a building for the Dilettanti in 1751, later exhibited but no longer extant. He is not mentioned in the Society's records and there is no reason to believe his proposal was favourably received.¹²

The resolve to get on to building failed to hold. The next step in May 1752 was merely (but stirringly) a declaration of neo-classical intent:

to fix upon some Antique Building as a model for that intended by the Society according to the most exact proportions and measurements that can be procured this with a view to prevent the numberless difficulties that may arise in fixing upon any new Modern Plan, as such an undertaking when finish'd must amase [sic] the Curious, and having been approv'd for many ages must naturally put a stop to all Supercilious Criticisms.¹³

This was an important fundamentalist statement, but yet another year passed before a choice of model was formally approved. It was to be the Temple of (Rome and) Augustus at Pola in Istria (now Pula in Croatia), known from James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's evidently remitted record of 1750, made on an expedition from Venice while they were waiting to travel to Greece (Figs 2 and 3). Soon after they did set off in January 1751 Stuart and Revett were elected members of the Society of Dilettanti on the strength of a recommendation from Sir James Gray in Venice. The Augustan building at Pola, originally part of a triad of temples, stands on a podium with steps up to a tetrastyle prostyle Corinthian portico that is 26ft 7in. wide. Its columns, of 2ft 7-8in. diameter, have shafts 22ft 10in. tall (proportions of 1:8.7), and there is a blank or blind circle in the pediment.¹⁴

The committee of Dilettanti ordered that a plan and elevation for Cavendish Square be prepared 'forthwith' on 9 April 1753. A month later Dashwood,

Dingley, Col. Gray and John Howe gained authority to take the project forward and to spend the money in hand.¹⁵ Works commenced with the digging of foundations, begun in May 1753 under the supervision of William Barlow, of a bricklaying family mostly active around Hanover Square (where Dashwood now had his town house) and in Mayfair. Barlow was paid by Dashwood, later reimbursed by the Society for the costs of digging ‘the Foundation of the Temple of Pola.’¹⁶

Dashwood’s group had probably taken designs for the building forward in advance of what is recorded in the Society’s minutes. Dingley’s scheme of 1751 remains unknown, but is likely to have formed the basis for further refinement, no doubt principally emanating from Dashwood and Gray.

Colvin mentions ‘some engraved designs for temples [by Dingley] among the architectural drawings at West Wycombe Park’,¹⁷ but these have not now come to light, at West Wycombe or elsewhere. The choice of Pola as a model might have been made in 1752, but it is not clear in what form and when Stuart and Revett’s record of 1750 was available; it was not published until 1816 in the fourth and posthumous volume of *The Antiquities of Athens*. It is unlikely that intentions gelled as a scheme on which work could begin until early 1753. Two undated and unsigned drawings at West Wycombe Park, Dashwood’s country seat, appear to illustrate progress prior to that point (Figs 4 and 5). A plan shows the whole Cavendish Square site, with a ‘Grand Council Room’ at its centre raised up on a high basement or podium (for a kitchen). This stands behind a large open court or ‘Great Coach Yard’ and a ‘Grand Stair Case’ in a double flight. The temple-like room is set within a

'Terras of Communication' and to its rear further stairs with a landing lead to a large formal garden to the north. Tetrastyle porches front and back are shown as about 28ft 4in. wide. The drawing is not precise enough for column diameters to be closely indicative, but they come out at about 2ft 4in. Flanking the front terrace there are outer pavilions for an 'Academy for Architecture' to the west and an 'Academy for Painting and Sculpture' to the east. Flaps in the drawing permitted the illustration of alternatives, either ground-floor spaces under the academies, to provide lodgings for a cook and porter (west) and 'Receptacles for Modells' or casts of statues (east), along with communal privies under both their staircases, or removal of the outer academy blocks entirely and their substitution with single-storey lodges in the site's outer corners, for the porter (south-west) and the cook (south-east).

The relationship of this plan to work undertaken in 1753 can be interrogated at Cavendish Square. A substantial drop in ground level of about 12–13ft (in what is now Dean's Mews) occurs towards the back of the site. This is not natural, but dug out, most likely for the foundations and podium of the Grand Council Room, further back than is indicated on the plan. An unusual drawing of 1803, one of several eccentric views taken in and around the square by John Claude Nattes, shows the sunken site with two massive piers, probably stone, in front of coach houses at the back (Fig.6). Behind the brick wall beyond the piers a row of cross vaults spanned the property. The piers at least are difficult to account for other than as parts of a substructure of 1753; the coach houses are later.¹⁸

The other early drawing at West Wycombe, an elevation of a heretofore unidentified nature (Fig.5), shows an Ionic portico the proportions of which relative to the whole tally well with the Grand Council Room of the plan. It appears to be an alternative with minimal fenestration and no entrance on the side drawn – it is a strikingly austere block. Using the plan dimensions, though again there is sketchiness in doing this, the 2ft 4in.-diameter column shafts emerge as about 18ft 3in. tall (proportions of 1:7.8). It may be that the circle in the Pola pediment was interpreted as a blocked opening, but links with the Antique model are weak. In relation to the plan the elevation is perhaps an earlier variant that antedates commitment to the model. Rather than the Temple of Pola, the Ionic order and the festooned open oculus seem to reflect Mereworth Castle, the house of 1720–5 built via Colen Campbell for Dashwood’s uncle, John Fane, 7th Earl of Westmorland. The West Wycombe drawings have been convincingly attributed to Maurice-Louis Jolivet who was probably working under Giovanni Niccolo Servandoni in England from 1747, thereby coming to Dashwood’s notice. Servandoni returned to Paris in May 1751, but Jolivet stayed behind and worked for Dashwood.¹⁹ The draughtsman’s hand may have been Jolivet’s, but the scheme he was drawing was doubtless that devised by Dingley, Dashwood and Gray. Design was clearly collaborative, though the engraved designs that Colvin saw might show that Dingley should be identified as the principal author.

There was also an architectural model. In July 1753 Dashwood wrote to Col. Gray, ‘My Model was advanced as far as the Capitals, and my rascally

French architect is run off and has left nothing but his debts, . . . When the Model will be finished I cannot now take upon me to say.’ Four days later Dashwood wrote again to Gray striking an uncertain note that anticipates revisions to the plans, ‘let us build what we will some stone will be necessary’, adding more optimistically ‘notwithstanding my Frenchman is ran away I have all the measures so hope to get the Model finish’d.’²⁰ Jolivet had probably gone to link up with Servandoni in Paris, to work for him again as a *dessinateur*.²¹

Another related design, not taken up, provides confirmation, if needed, that the Society did intend its premises at Cavendish Square to be an academy for the improvement of the arts, in other words that the Gwynn–Dingley scheme of 1749 had been firmly incorporated into ambitions for more than mere meeting rooms and a museum. Stephen Riou, a peripatetic English architect of Huguenot origin, who had been told about the Society’s plans for Cavendish Square by Sir James Gray in Venice around 1751 and subsequently passed time with Stuart and Revett, sent a sketch design of a ‘Building for an Academy of Painting Sculpture and Architecture’ back to England from Istanbul in December 1753 (Fig.7). His idiosyncratic proposal also has a tripartite layout, with an imposing and highly columnar front behind a large open court. It includes 2ft 6in.-diameter columns in its giant-order Corinthian portico.²²

The other important way in which the project advanced in 1753 was by the purchase of Portland stone. Through the offices of Thomas Adye, a stone carver previously employed by the Dilettanti, 88 tons in 111 blocks had

arrived in London by July 1753. John Devall, an eminent mason, was paid for wharfage and the stone was sent on to Cavendish Square.²³ That quantity of stone represented 1,408 cubic feet (a ton equalled 16 cubic feet), about enough for one elevation of the Grand Council Room. Then, in December 1753, Thomas Roper, a foreman at the quarries in Portland, wrote to Adye asking ‘what I must do with the Columns that are made by Your order.’ Stones were often supplied cut and moulded, so reducing their weight for shipping – freight cost as much again as the stone. The cylindrical column pieces or blocks (31 of them weighing 52 tons) stayed in Portland until September 1754 when they were shipped with 41 or 42 more plain blocks, including some for column bases.²⁴ By January 1755 the Society had paid Adye £166 8s 1*d* for Portland stone and its freight. It is not evident where in London this second shipment ended up as at this point things began to fall apart, as will be explained. With respect to stone, Roper wrote to Adye in April 1755 about further column pieces no longer wanted and liability for losses arising. Dashwood had other business in Portland, having ordered sixteen stones for columns at West Wycombe Park in October 1754, supplying the dimensions himself. Of ‘large Scantling’ these were probably destined for West Wycombe’s Roman Doric east portico (Fig.8), where lions flank steps as in Riou’s drawing, deriving there from Michelangelo’s *cordona* at Rome’s Capitoline Hill. This was most likely designed by Dashwood himself, perhaps with Gray. His clerk of works, John Donowell, was executant architect. Adye hoped Dashwood would take the Society’s unwanted stone, but the columns were of the wrong dimensions. Unusually,

Dashwood was advised to have his columns shipped rough and wrought on the spot in West Wycombe. The Society's surplus column pieces were therefore to be cut back to square for 'Casual Block', a loss for which Roper wanted compensation. Adye paid up and was reimbursed another £54 18s 7½*d*, bringing the Society's total outlay on Portland stone to £221 6s 8½*d*. It is not clear that the third consignment was shipped at all.²⁵

In early 1755 matters stood as follows. There was a large hole in the ground at Cavendish Square that probably had the beginnings at least of a Portland stone substructure made from the first shipment of 111 plain blocks (1,408 cubic feet or 88 tons, worth £88 shipped) all of which had been on site since 1753. The second shipment, 41 or 42 blocks (c.530 cubic feet or 33 tons, worth £33 14s shipped) and 31 column pieces (832 cubic feet or 52 tons, worth £42 shipped), almost enough for eight large columns of four blocks each (each of about 107 cubic feet and 6.7 tons), had left Portland in September 1754, but might not have advanced further than Devall's wharf. The third quantity of stone, worth almost £55, probably before freight charges, might have been cut for another ten or more columns, or left or reconstituted as plain blocks of up to as much as 110 tons or 1,760 cubic feet, or some combination of the two. It may still have been in Portland.

The Society's academy project unravelled in 1755. In January a 'Select Committee of Painters, Statuaries, Architects, Gravers, &c.' led by Francis Hayman approached the Dilettanti. This group had emerged from the St Martin's Lane Academy, galvanized no doubt by the work at Cavendish Square. Among its members, many of them leading practitioners, were

Stuart and Revett, only just back in England. The Dilettanti were asked to support a plan for a different and royal academy of arts in an existing building. The proposal received a cautiously positive response in May, the Society asserting a claim to equal standing and the presidency. That helped scupper the alliance as the practitioners did not want to be controlled by amateur gentlemen. Others among their former colleagues, notably William Hogarth, deprecated the academy idea entirely as alien and hierarchical, too French. The dalliance with the Dilettanti, however sincere or devious, helped kill off the Cavendish Square academy; that was perhaps in some measure the point. The ease with which the Dilettanti gave up on their building is perhaps also attributable to other and mundane causes. With so much money paid out for stone the subscription fund had been reduced to £89 11s 8d, nowhere near enough for the project in hand.²⁶ Other important factors arose from an upturn in the building cycle that was especially sharp in the vicinity of Cavendish Square. The value of the Society's property had risen dramatically. Further, in September 1754 George Mercer, a local mason and prolific speculator who in 1751–3 built a stone-fronted and pedimented house just off the square (now 14 Cavendish Place), took the ground north of the Society's site on a long lease from the Duke of Chandos, intending development of the Queen Anne Street frontage with houses. These did follow in the 1760s and survive in part at 9–13 Queen Anne Street. The Society's ground had a central gateway in its north wall, at which the plan at West Wycombe is annotated 'Way to Hampstead'. That the

academy would instead be overlooked by the backs of a row of houses would not have been a welcome development, however unsurprising.²⁷

In early 1756 the Dilettanti decided to procure an apartment in Montague House or Somerset House for their meetings and casts, and to sell their Cavendish Square property through Dashwood and Gray to reinforce the Society's general funds. George Shakespear offered £1,800 for the ground and more for the stone subject to valuation. A master carpenter, Shakespear was the sometimes partner of John Phillips who was at this moment about to begin building a pair of houses on Cavendish Square's west side (now Nos 17 and 18), taken on with John Barlow, bricklayer, and employing Henry Keene as architect. But Shakespear was spurned as the ground was valued at £2,200 (£400 had been paid just eight years earlier). The Society continued to meet in taverns, henceforth at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, and no other buyers for the ground came forward for the time being. A purchaser was found for the Portland stone. In March 1757 Col. Gray received £221 6s 8d, a halfpenny short of what had been paid out, from the hands of 'Mr Spencer'.²⁸

Spencer House

John Spencer (later 1st Earl Spencer) was 22, recently married, enormously wealthy and in the throes of building an ostentatiously magnificent town house on the west side of Green Park. The site for this house had come available after the suicide of Henry Bromley, 1st Baron Montfort on 1

January 1755 in his house on the west side of Cavendish Square (now No. 20). John Vardy, previously employed by Montfort to design a house for the site in St James, bought the building agreement and sold it on to Spencer who retained Vardy's services. Later in 1755 Col. Gray was brought in to advise and supervise. Spencer, who has been called Gray's protégé, was not yet then a member of the Society of Dilettanti, ineligible for not having made his Grand Tour – his step-father, William, 2nd Earl Cowper, was a member. Gray, a gentleman and army officer, checked and approved designs by Vardy, the son of a labourer. From 1758 Vardy was obliged, most likely at Gray's behest, to work alongside James Stuart, who in the same year also took on internal remodelling of Spencer's temple-fronted Thames-side villa in Wimbledon. The building of Spencer House had begun in early 1756; the 'ground floor', possibly in fact the basement, was finished by late September. Assuming a winter break, work on the upper storeys must have been underway or pending in March 1757 when Spencer paid for the stone. John Devall was Spencer's mason, in receipt of payments by February 1757, and the bricklayer was Edward Gray, a major operator (not known to be related to the Dilettanti Grays). The carcass of the house was finished by 1759. Horace Walpole credited Col. Gray rather than Vardy with the design of the west front, as did Thomas Frognall Dibdin, the 2nd Earl Spencer's librarian, who recorded that the shell of the house alone cost the colossal sum of 50,000 guineas, and that it had been 'planned by General Grey, and executed by Vardy'.²⁹

The most remarkable external feature of Spencer House is its columnar west façade, conspicuously facing Green Park and entirely of Portland stone (Fig.9). It was unusual to face a London house with Portland stone, a material generally associated with public or institutional buildings. In the absence of drawings or building accounts, detailed information about the genesis of the design for this elevation is lacking. It is likely to have been settled by 1756 when the 'ground floor' was built. Gray knew that the Dilettanti's stone was available from his first involvement with Spencer in 1755 and he was the medium for its transfer. For him Spencer's project would have been an opportunity to pursue ideas frustrated at Cavendish Square; there can be little doubt that the stone was destined for Spencer House. The decision to use it might have been taken well in advance of the payment, which may coincide with the moment the material was actually needed. The overall quantity that Spencer purchased from the Dilettanti, even if generously estimated, would not have been enough for all of the Green Park elevation, but it would have gone a long way to that end. The second shipment's column pieces or blocks, which had perhaps spent two years at Devall's wharf, would have worked well in this eight-column elevation (Fig.10).

The column shafts at Spencer House are 17ft 3in. tall with diameters slightly tapering for entasis from a maximum of 2ft 6in. Lower blocks rise 5ft 7in., two intermediate blocks each 4ft 6in. further, and upper blocks just 2ft 8in. – odd irregularity. Discounting diminution for entasis, each column uses about 85 cubic feet of stone or around 5.3 tons. Setting this against

the volume and weight of the columns shipped in 1754 (107 cubic feet and 6.7 tons, see above) produces a discrepancy that with 2ft 6in. diameters implies cutting down by about 4ft 6in. This is consonant with the blocks all originally being roughly 5ft 6in. tall for column shafts 21ft 9in. tall, generating the same 1:8.7 diameter to column-shaft ratio as at Pola.

Howsoever the stone Spencer bought was scattered between Devall's wharf, Cavendish Square and Portland, the columns at Spencer House were all but certainly made with the stone intended for those at Cavendish Square.

There are obvious departures from what was to have been built at the square. In lieu of Pola's prostyle tetrastyle Corinthian portico, there are Doric columns, hexastyle in relation to the pediment, made up to eight with outer columns under dossierets, all engaged with the front wall, though still three-quarters round. This is readily understood as opportunistic adaptation of the eight columns that had been meant for two porticoes. The Doric order and its less slender proportions were probably dictated by the overall height of the elevation and the need to cut down. Alternatively, though less likely, Doric could have been a preference, its proportions obliging cutting down and limiting height. Gray also brought the Mereworth-Pola ocular pediment idea from Cavendish Square. The crossed palm branches are a Baroque device that departs from the West Wycombe drawing in detail but not in effect.

In so far as the Spencer House elevation as a whole was conceived as a neo-classical temple front, something for which it has been recognized as an important staging post in the history of neo-classicism, it can be related

closely to the Dilettanti scheme for Cavendish Square and therefore attributed to Gray. However, Spencer House's façade was not a straight lift nor purely neo-classical. More Palladian characteristics were doubtless Vardy's contribution. The rusticated basement and pedimented window architraves echo his drawing of 1754 for a British Museum.³⁰ Vardy's drawing of 1751 for the Dilettanti is not known, but it would be a surprise if it were not similarly Palladian. That is most likely why the Dilettanti did not take it up. There is thus an element of hybrid compromise in the Spencer House elevation. Impressive though it is, it did meet with criticism. The Dodsleys thought the pediment 'being extended over so many columns is too large and heavy'.³¹ Gwynn and Thomas Malton were also critical of the proportions.³²

Cavendish Square from 1759

In the meantime the empty ground at Cavendish Square mouldered. It was not until 1759 that its sale was secured. The purchaser for £1,800 was George Forster Tufnell (1723–98), the dissolution of whose first marriage in 1758 was quickly followed by the death of his father, Samuel Tufnell MP, a wealthy City politician who had acquired an estate (Langleys) in Essex. He left only £3,000 to his second son George 'considering what he is in possession of already'.³³ That inheritance may have stimulated the Cavendish Square purchase a few months later. George Forster Tufnell

became an MP in 1761, remarried in 1767 and became a father in 1769; he was out of Parliament from 1768 to 1774.

Tufnell's Cavendish Square property stayed unbuilt upon until 1768. He was evidently not rash, biding his time on what had been a problem site – perhaps his marriage brought new funds. The building world was hotting up all round on the Portland estate, but his development only started once the Adam brothers had begun to stir the market more deeply further north. One catalyst appears to have been John Elwes, the eccentric and legendarily frugal financier-developer, who bought the freehold of the Cavendish Square property from Tufnell in December 1769 for £5,350. The building of four houses in two pairs had begun in 1768 and was completed in 1770 (Fig. 11).³⁴

The form Tufnell's speculation took is curious, and, in the context of the site's history, striking. When he did build, he did so expensively, or seemingly so, with Portland stone façades and three-quarter columns for applied temple fronts that plainly recall Spencer House, especially in the treatment of the pediments, where palm branches support oculi. But here what Summerson called 'magnificent Corinthian porticos', as if for palazzi, albeit oddly subjoined, disguise mere semi-detached pairs of houses. The use of stone is contemporary with that around the corner for the Adams at Chandos House, which just points up a comparatively old-fashioned as well as over-the-top appearance. Unaware of the sale of stone to Spencer, Summerson mooted the possibility that the stone bought and cut for the Dilettanti fifteen years earlier was used at Cavendish Square. He concluded

roundly, 'One does not lavish Corinthian fronts on speculative houses – unless, indeed, the material for them lies to hand and can be had cheap.'³⁵

It could be that Spencer did leave some loose stone on the site; Nattes's view (Fig.6) suggests he did not take all that he had paid for. Perhaps enough remained to lead Tufnell to countenance the cost of stone façades. However, no trace of any sale of stone from Spencer or his agents to Tufnell has been found in either man's bank account, and logistics and mathematics make it unlikely that any pre-cut column blocks had either been at Cavendish Square or remained unused.³⁶

In July and September 1768 there were complaints to the parish of St Marylebone's Vestry of nuisance and obstruction caused by the sawing and laying of large stones in Cavendish Square. Tufnell undertook to put a stop to this, but in January 1770 he was again reprimanded, this time about stones laid on the footway in front of the houses. He was told to see to it that 'no more Stones be there brought or laid'.³⁷ Were the stones already on site it would be odd if they were repeatedly dragged out into the square for sawing, troublesome for workmen as well as for passers-by. The Cavendish Square columns are taller and thinner than those at Spencer House (Fig.10). The shafts are 18ft 9in. tall, with diameters tapering in from 2ft 4in. The lower blocks are 5ft tall, the intermediate 4ft 7–8in. and the upper 4ft 5in. This regular series of heights suggests that the blocks were cut to be used in this way, but each column constitutes just 80 cubic feet (entasis discounted) or 5 tons, a good deal less in volume than what is implied by what was supplied to the Dilettanti in 1753–4. The Corinthian order is close in

proportions and girth to the Ionic of the West Wycombe elevation. To match Pola's Antique proportions it would need an additional 2ft 4in. in height. Crucially, however, to account for the stone supplied in 1753–4 it would need an extra 6ft, generating disproportionately slender columns.

Tufnell's houses are conventional on plan. The pretence of the fronts was maintained with single central entrances, but these mark the inner bays of standard double-pile rear-stair layouts. Chimneys give away the party walls (Fig.12). The inner houses were entered from the intervening passage, where the brick elevations originally had Doric porches under slightly projecting three-bay pediments, entrance positions that dictated central-stair layouts. All four houses were given identically detailed top-lit cantilevered stone staircases. Otherwise the interiors were smart but unspectacular, more in keeping with the plans than the façades. Tufnell kept the inner west house (No. 13) for himself; its pair appears to have been difficult to let.³⁸

By leaving a gap between the pairs of houses Tufnell was respecting the axis to Hanover Square, and keeping the central site access that had been established by the gate in Gray's screen wall of 1748–9. There were no gardens, just small back yards behind which the central passage opened out to a stable yard (now Dean's Mews) where the Dilettanti had dug the foundations for their academy. The approach and perimeter were graced by arcaded and stone-dressed walls the inner parts of which were revetments to the excavation of 1753. These swept round in quadrants, as is still the case to the west, and enclosed a turning circle and open ground in front of stable and coach-house buildings (Fig.6).³⁹

Who designed and built Tufnell's speculation remains unknown. Given the similarities with Spencer House one candidate is John Devall (1701–74), elderly but still active. He had been building speculatively on the Cavendish–Harley (Portland) estate since 1735 on and near Margaret Street, where he lived. He was the Master of the Masons' Company in 1760 and with his son, also John (1728–94), widely employed in the 1760s.⁴⁰ However, he is not known to have acted as an architect and no evidence has been found to link him to Cavendish Square. Nor has any other firm documentation of the building project emerged. Tufnell might have relied on Elwes's experienced network for construction. A sheet of accounts by Elwes's agent, Conquest Jones, includes a reference to the finishing in 1770 of 'the Butch houses' (conceivably meaning cut-up or divided), along with a large payment (£300) to Edward Gray, the bricklayer encountered at Spencer House, and another to John Bastard, mason. Bastard (1722–78) was a scion of the family of mason-architects that had emerged from Blandford, Dorset. He lived in Marylebone in the 1760s, on Suffolk (now Nassau) Street in a house leased from Elwes while he was engaged in building the Middlesex Hospital; he later moved to what is now New Cavendish Street, his home when he died. Bastard had been the mason-architect for Sir Francis Dashwood's columnar mausoleum of 1764–5 at West Wycombe, and was employed in the rebuilding of the south-west pavilion of the King Charles Building at Greenwich Hospital in 1769–74 under the surveyorship of James Stuart. In 1769 he was party to an assignment from Elwes of eight new houses in Glanville (now Rathbone) Street, an assignee creditor to two bankrupt

Marylebone builders, John Corsar and William Lloyd, and also engaged on Harley Street and Queen Anne Street (where he was active from 1762), working with William Lister, carpenter. Thomas Gayfere, another mason, who also supplied Dashwood with stone in 1766, was a co-creditor with Bastard. When Bastard died in 1778 his 'close friend' Balthazar Burman, a Lincoln's Inn lawyer and witness to Tufnell and Elwes's transaction in 1769, was an executor of his will. Bastard's tomb described him as 'Mason and Architect'.⁴¹ There are links, but Bastard's known connections to the Cavendish Square houses are no more than circumstantial – close associations with Elwes and Burman, contemporary engagements in the vicinity, and, most tantalizingly, ties with Sir Francis Dashwood.

Dashwood (now 11th Baron Le Despencer) was last encountered in this saga organizing the stone for the east portico of West Wycombe Park (Fig.8). His life since then had been famously eventful. There was high political responsibility, as chancellor of the exchequer in 1762–3, and scandal, about orgiastic and sacrilegious practices at Medmenham in 1763. From 1766 he was joint postmaster-general. He had revived the idea of a building for the Society of Dilettanti, approaching George III in 1761 for a site in Green Park for a public sculpture gallery in 'an exact copy of an Antique Temple'.⁴² This gained some traction in 1764, but again ended in failure. Dashwood's urge to erect was not frustrated at West Wycombe. There he had gone column mad, putting up 28 on the south front of the house in 1761–3 and, at his hilltop mausoleum, prominently visible to anyone travelling the London–Oxford road, another 12 three-quarter Portland stone Doric columns.

Summerson more or less attributed the Cavendish Square fronts to James Stuart and compared Lichfield House, 15 St James's Square, of 1764–6, where Stuart designed a carefully proportioned giant Ionic order of half columns, detailed after the Erechtheion in Athens, over a rusticated basement and under a pediment, all in Portland stone, for Thomas Anson, a founder member of the Dilettanti (Fig.13).⁴³ Nothing has been discovered to rule out an attribution of the Cavendish Square houses to Stuart, but neither has anything been found to reinforce it. It cannot hold, if only because of the comparatively squat and 'incorrect' proportions of Tufnell's Corinthian order. Whoever did design the Cavendish Square temple fronts was thinking of but not copying Spencer House, and apparently conscious of but not in thrall to Stuart and Revett's as yet unpublished record from Pola (Figs 2 and 3). The inspirational link must have been drawings and/or the model of the Dilettanti scheme, which was surely tetrastyle Corinthian. This implies contact with either Le Despencer (Dashwood) or Col. Gray and an awareness of the site's history. The former continued to live in Hanover Square, from where the gap on the north side of Cavendish Square would have been clearly visible. Perhaps the existence of the model from 1753 was a spur (via Bastard or otherwise) to urge adaptation of the abandoned academy scheme to the Cavendish Square site fifteen years later.

Responsibility aside, and to paraphrase Summerson – why lavish Corinthian fronts on speculative houses? Summerson's answer no longer works.

Tufnell's houses were praised by John Stewart in 1771 as 'fine examples [of] unity of order enriched with ornament, in fair and high polished materials',⁴⁴

but their grandeur was effectively mocked by his title-page illustration (Fig.14). The object centre stage in Stewart's view was a gilt-lead equestrian statue of the Duke of Cumberland, the 'Butcher' of Culloden. This had been erected in 1770 in the middle of Cavendish Square at the cost of Lt. Gen. William Strobe (c.1698–1776), who had fought under and befriended the Duke, and whose own memorial in Westminster Abbey records him as 'a strenuous assertor of Civil and Religious Liberty'. He was probably a cousin of another William Strobe who had been a founding member of the Society of Dilettanti; Hogarth painted the family. At the time Lt. Gen. Strobe lived on Harley Street, on the north-east corner with Queen Anne Street. The Duke's sister Amelia (who had paid for a lead statue of George III for Berkeley Square in 1766) lived at the west end of the north side of Cavendish Square. Strobe conceived what was London's first outdoor statue of a soldier in 1769 and Lord Bessborough, another of the Dilettanti, mediated with the landowner, the Duke of Portland, to clear permission. In that same year Strobe was alleged to have withheld clothing from his soldiers, a charge of which he was acquitted at a court martial in 1772. The statue was made by John Cheere, who had produced another version of Cumberland for Dublin in 1746. The paunchy figure in modern dress faced north to the exactly contemporary temple fronts. That the statue faced this way, presenting its rear to those who approach the square along the Hanover Square axis, may reflect where Princess Amelia and Strobe lived. It also looked to where the Adams were building, and the way to Scotland. It was immediately ridiculed

on aesthetic grounds; the politics of the gesture appear to have passed without published comment.⁴⁵

Tufnell was not one of the Dilettanti, but in 1770 he was promoted Colonel of the East Middlesex Militia. Unlike Strode he was probably not a veteran of Culloden, but the men no doubt knew each other. Between the two in age was Col. Gray who had helped suppress the Jacobites in the 1740s. Gray was promoted Lieutenant General in 1770 and continued as Secretary and Treasurer of the Society of Dilettanti to 1771. Le Despencer (Dashwood) had ceased to be active with the Dilettanti by 1770, but he too had been a keen promoter of militia, and the first Colonel of the Buckinghamshire Militia from 1757 to 1762.⁴⁶ These military links supply yet more circumstantiality, but networks of gentlemen officers did exist, and relations were not always cordial, betimes descending to the ‘theatrical displays of mutual antagonism [that were] so typical of the Georgian officer corps’.⁴⁷ Another local military gentleman was the intellectual and well-connected (to some pugnacious and bumptious) Scot, Col. (later General) Robert Clerk for whom Robert and James Adam designed and from 1768 built a deliberately French-style *hôtel* a stone’s throw north from Cavendish Square, a few doors away from Strode’s house on Queen Anne Street. Next door to that the same firm began work on a speculation in 1769, the plainly stone-fronted Chandos House.⁴⁸ Further, Lt. Gen. Lord Robert Bertie, Colonel of the 7th Regiment of Foot, built what is now 12 Cavendish Place, a different stone’s throw east, also in 1768–70, and from 1770 Joseph Windham, an active member of the Dilettanti and collaborator with James Stuart on volume two of *The*

Antiquities of Athens, lived within this tight radius at what is now 3 Chandos Street.⁴⁹

As the Adam brothers' presence illustrates, taste had turned. In a revision of James Ralph's critique published in 1783 Cavendish Square again received a disapproving finger wag. Tufnell's houses were judged 'beautiful, when singly considered, [but] exceedingly deficient, when we attempt to guess at the intention of the builder. Their exact resemblance tempts the beholder to conclude, that they were meant as parts of some structure hereafter to be raised; and yet every circumstance about them shews, that they can never, with the least propriety, be made part of any regular or stately edifice.'⁵⁰

This is brutally acute, but the suspicion has to be that 'herebefore' should be substituted for 'hereafter'. The author evidently had no knowledge of how closely the houses reflected what the Dilettanti had wanted to build.

The Society of Dilettanti had become ever more focussed on the study of classical antiquities and the Royal Academy of Arts had been inaugurated in 1768. The Dilettanti's neo-classical temple of the arts was a sorry might-have-been. Tufnell, Strode, Dashwood and Gray are unlikely to have indulged in nostalgia of the sour grapes or consciously retardataire kind, and would not have thought themselves unfashionable. Indeed, as Summerson discussed, Robert Adam deployed temple fronts in the early 1770s for the Society of Arts and at 20 St James's Square, where the order was Corinthian and the mason was Devall. Yet it can be said that the Corinthian temple fronts of Portland stone given to the speculative houses on the north side of Cavendish Square in 1768–70 were less a matter of

architectural salvage, more one of old soldiers wistfully harking back to the lost academy of the Dilettanti.

Conclusion

It is necessary to conclude without a full explanation. Spencer all but certainly used the Dilettanti stone, leaving Tufnell to start almost wholly anew. That being so it is unclear why Tufnell came so close to replicating the temple of the Dilettanti in stone in a speculation. Whatever the reason there can be little doubt that the temple fronts at Spencer House and Cavendish Square with their ocular pediments do both derive closely from the Society of Dilettanti's academy project and Sir Francis Dashwood, Col. George Gray and Robert Dingley's pursuance in 1753 of a purely neo-classical imitation of the Temple of Rome and Augustus at Pola.

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notes. Others who have assisted include Pamela Hunter, Hoare & Co. archivist, Orla O'Brien, RBS archivist, and several colleagues in the Survey of London.

Notes

1 - John Summerson, 'The Society's House: an architectural study', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, CII (Oct. 1954), pp. 920–34.

2 - Huntington Library, Pasadena, Stowe Manuscripts 57/32, f. 49, as noted by Susan Jenkins.

3 - Survey of London, Eastern Marylebone, forthcoming: see also, Charles Henry & Muriel Isabella Collins Baker, *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos, Patron of the Liberal Arts* (Oxford, 1949); Susan Jenkins, *Portrait of a Patron: The Patronage and Collecting of James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos (1674–1744)* (Aldershot, 2007).

4 - James Ralph, *A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues and Ornaments in and around London and Westminster* (London, 1734), p.106: Matthew Craske, 'From Burlington Gate to Billingsgate: James Ralph's attempt to impose Burlingtonian classicism as a canon of public taste', in Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (eds), *Articulating British*

Classicism: New approaches to eighteenth-century architecture (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 97–118.

5 - The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence online.

6 - Lionel Cust and Sidney Colvin (ed.), *History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London, 1914), pp. 45–6.

7 - Society of Antiquaries Library, Dilettanti Society Archives (hereafter DSA), B2 (Minutes, II), 3 May and 6 Dec. 1747; C1 (Minutes and Reports of Committees, I), p. 46: London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), MDR/1748/1/189–90: Ingrid Roscoe *et al.*, *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660–1851* (London and New Haven, 2009), pp. 988–9.

8 - DSA, B2, 6 March, 3 April and 1 May 1748; C1, p. 47; G1 (Correspondence, vol. 1), ff. 93–4, 97–8, 102, 139–41: Roscoe *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

9 - Robert and James Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described* (London, 1761), II, p. 78.

10 - DSA, B2, May 1750; C1, pp. 49, 53; G1, f. 100: John H. Appleby, 'Robert Dingley, F.R.S. (1710–1781): Merchant, Architect, and Pioneering Philanthropist', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, xlv/2 (July 1991), pp. 139–54: Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840*, 4th edition (London and New Haven, 2008), pp. 313–14: Jason M. Kelly, 'The Society of Dilettanti and the Planning of a Museum', 2012 (www.jasonmkelly.com/2012/03/27/the-society-of-dilettanti-and-the

planning-of-a-museum), see also Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (London and New Haven, 2010).

11 - DSA, B2, 3 March and 5 May 1751; C1, pp. 55, 57.

12 - Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 1075.

13 - DSA, B2, 3 May 1752.

14 - James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, I (London, 1762), p. vi and IV (London, 1816), pp. iv, 11–13 and plates: DSA, B2, 1 April 1753: Kerry Bristol, ‘The Social World of James “Athenian” Stuart’, and Frank Salmon, ‘Stuart as Antiquary and Archaeologist in Italy and Greece’ in Susan W. Soros (ed.), *James ‘Athenian’ Stuart 1713–1788: the rediscovery of antiquity* (London and New Haven, 2006), pp. 118 and 152.

15 - DSA, B2, 6 May 1753; C1, p. 59: Cust and Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

16 - DSA, B2, 2 March 1755: G1, f. 103.

17 - Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 314 (first mentioned in the second edition of 1978).

18 - Nottingham University Library Manuscripts (NUL), DL 361: Andrew Byrne, ‘The Georgian Mews’, *The Georgian Group Journal*, XXI (2013), pp. 223–5: Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, *The London Square: gardens in the midst of town* (London and New Haven, 2012), p. 100.

19 - Anne Purchas, ‘Maurice-Louis Jolivet’s Drawings at West Wycombe Park’, *Architectural History*, XXXVII (1994), pp. 68–79.

20 - DSA, G1, ff. 105, 107.

21 - Purchas, *loc. cit.*

22 - James Bettley, 'A Design by Stephen Riou for an Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXVIII/1001 (Aug. 1986), pp. 579, 581–2. Riou lived the last decade of his life in the 1770s close to Cavendish Square at 44 Welbeck Street (Survey of London, forthcoming).

23 - DSA, G1, ff.104–114: Roscoe *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

24 - DSA, G1, ff. 115–21: British Library, Add MS 27587, ff. 1, 16v.

25 - DSA, B2, 1754–5, *passim*; G1, ff. 134, 136: Bodleian Library, MSS D. D. Dashwood c.5, B.11/8/1a, letter from John Tucker in Weymouth to Sir Francis Dashwood, 28 Oct. 1754: James W. P. Campbell, 'The supply of stone for the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral 1675–1710', *Construction History*, XXVIII/2 (2013), pp. 23–49.

26 - DSA, B2, Feb.–May 1755; C1, p. 61; G1, ff. 122–32.

27 - LMA, MDR/1754/4/242–3: Survey of London, forthcoming.

28 - DSA, B2, April–May 1756, March 1757; C1, pp. 65, 67; G1, f. 148: Cust and Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 49: Survey of London, forthcoming.

29 - Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *Aedes Althorpianae; or An Account of the Mansion, Books and Pictures at Althorp, etc*, I (London, 1822), p. lx: Joseph Friedman, *Spencer House: Chronicle of a great London mansion* (London,

1993), pp. 26–8, 66–74, 76–84, 124, 344–5: ed. F. H. W. Sheppard, *Survey of London, XXX: The parish of St James, Westminster: Part One, South of Piccadilly* (London, 1960), pp.518–22: Bristol, *loc. cit.*, Richard Hewlings, ‘The London Houses’, and Julius Bryant, “‘The Purest Taste’ – James ‘Athenian’ Stuart’s Work in Villas and Country Houses’, in Soros (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 187, 197–202, 292–7.

30 – see *Architectural Review*, July 1967, p. 5.

31 - Robert and James Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described, etc*, III (London, 1761), pp. 65–6

32 - *Survey of London, XXX, op. cit.*, p. 520]

33 - The National Archives, PROB11/843/65: LMA, MDR/1759/2/382–4: Centre for Bucks Studies, D-D/A/155. These Tufnells are not to be confused with a seemingly unrelated family of masons and builders – another Samuel Tufnell (d.1765 and sometimes Tuffnell) was master mason to Westminster Abbey and a contractor for the building of Westminster Bridge. See Roscoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 1284–5.

34 - DSA, G1, f. 138: Cust and Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–9: LMA, MDR/1769/7/298: City of Westminster Archives Centre (CWAC), T1/4, 5 July 1768; St Marylebone ratebooks: History of Parliament online: Alexander Gordon, ‘Elwes, John (1714–1789)’, rev. Anita McConnell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

35 - Summerson, *loc. cit.*, pp. 925–6.

- 36 - Hoare & Co., bank ledgers, 1756–1773: Royal Bank of Scotland archives, Drummonds Bank ledgers, 1757–71.
- 37 - CWAC, T1/4, 5 July and 6 Sept 1768; T1/5, pp. 114, 244, 249.
- 38 - CWAC, ratebooks.
- 39 - CWAC, Ashbridge 160/CAV, drawings by Jean Claude Nattes, 1803 and c.1805: NUL, DL 361: Richard Horwood, *Map of London*, 1792–9.
- 40 - Roscoe, *op. cit.*, p. 365: LMA, MDR/1735/4/16.
- 41 - LMA, MDR/1762/4/229; 1764/5/273; 1767/2/457; 1768/1/202–14; 1769/1/349; 1769/2/240; 1769/3/1 and 364; 1769/5/278 and 475; 1769/7/298; 1770/1/390; 1770/5/75: The National Archives, PROB11/915/129; PROB 11/1045/133: British Library, Add MS 38855, ff. 202–5: Bodleian Library, MS D. D. Dashwood c. 5, B.11/8/9–10; c. 6, B.12/6/1a, 2a: West Wycombe Park, C.I. 941/23(13), design for mausoleum by John Bastard, 1764: Colvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–8: John Bold et al, *Greenwich: An Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House* (London and New Haven, 2000), p. 167.
- 42 - Betty Kemp, *Sir Francis Dashwood: An Eighteenth-Century Independent* (London and New York, 1967), p. 101: Kelly, *loc. cit.*
- 43 - *Survey of London, XXIX, The Parish of St James, Westminster, Part Two, North of Piccadilly* (London, 1960), pp. 142–54: Richard Hewlings, 'The London Houses', in Soros (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 234–6.

44 - John Stewart, *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvements of London* (London, 1771), pp. 31–2.

45 - NUL, Pw F 7789: CWAC, ratebooks: *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer*, 29 April–2 May 1769: *Town and Country Magazine*, 1770, p. 612; 1771, pp. 85–6: *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, 11–14 April 1772: Longstaffe-Gowan, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–7. Lacking admirers the statue was taken down in 1868. A replica was mounted on the surviving plinth in 2012, made of soap on a steel armature by the Korean artist Meekyoung Shin as *Written in Soap: A Plinth Project*.

46 - Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 70: Patrick Woodland, ‘Dashwood, Francis, eleventh Baron Le Despencer (1708–1781)’ and L. H. Cust, ‘Gray, Sir James, second baronet (c.1708–1773)’, rev. S. J. Skedd, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004): History of Parliament online.

47 - Alan J. Guy, ‘The army of the Georges 1714–1783’, (eds) David G. Chandler and Ian Beckett, *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, 1994), p. 110.

48 - Colin Thom, ‘Robert Adam’s first Marylebone town house. New light on General Robert Clerk, the Countess of Warwick and their mansion in Mansfield Street’, forthcoming **CHECK**: Tara Judith Sarah Draper, ‘Chandos House’, *The Georgian Group Journal*, VII, 1997, pp. 130–9.

49 – Survey of London, forthcoming.

50 – Anonymous reviser of James Ralph, *A Critical Review of the public buildings etc* (London, 1783), p. 172.

Captions

Fig. 1 - Cavendish Square c.1745 (detail from John Rocque's map of London)

Fig. 2 - View of the Temple of Rome and Augustus, Pola, 1750–6 (gouache by James Stuart, RIBA Library Drawings & Archives Collections)

Fig. 3 – Front elevation of the Temple of Rome and Augustus, Pola (James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, IV, 1816, © Victoria and Albert Museum)

Fig. 4 – Plan for the Society of Dilettanti's buildings at Cavendish Square, c.1752 (West Wycombe Park)

Fig. 5 – Elevation for the Society of Dilettanti's Grand Council Room at Cavendish Square, c.1752 (West Wycombe Park)

Fig. 6 – 'Back of Cavendish Square, London', 1803 (pencil drawing by John Claude Nattes, City of Westminster Archives)

Fig. 7 – Sketch elevation and plan for an Academy of Painting, Sculpture & Architecture, Stephen Riou, 1753 (RIBA Library Drawings & Archives Collections)

Fig. 8 – West Wycombe Park, showing the east portico of 1755, with the mausoleum of 1764–5 on the hill (photographed c.1956 by A. F. Kersting, Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

Fig. 9 – Spencer House, west front of 1756–9 (photographed in 2014 by Lucy Millson-Watkins, © Historic England **CHECK**)

Fig. 10 – Column shafts compared (drawing by Helen Jones)

Fig. 11 – 11–14 Cavendish Square, built 1768–70 (photographed in 2013 by Chris Redgrave, © Historic England)

Fig. 12 – 13–14 Cavendish Square, c.1966 (© Historic England)

Fig. 13 – Lichfield House, 15 St James's Square, 1764–6 (elevation from the Survey of London)

Fig. 14 – Cavendish Square on the title page of John Stewart's *Critical Observations on the Buildings and Improvements of London*, 1771