

NEO CLASSICAL ANATOMY OF FORM

Week 10

Neo Classical Architecture

Neoclassicism

- In 79 CE the huge volcanic eruption of Vesuvius, which towers over the Gulf of Naples in Italy, buried under a rain of ash the Roman provincial town of Pompeii and the smaller, wealthier resort of nearby Herculaneum.
- There they remained for centuries, abandoned, buried and forgotten. Parts of Herculaneum were discovered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only to be reburied.

Neoclassicism

- However, in 1738 the Spanish engineer Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre began the first concerted excavation there after workmen under his direction discovered remains while digging foundations for a palace for the King of Naples.
- In 1748 Alcubierre discovered Pompeii. As the two Roman towns were gradually uncovered, many visitors came from all over Europe to see the extraordinary range of buildings, complete with surviving frescoes and mosaics, everyday household items and, most poignantly, human remains, all frozen in time.

Herculaneum, Italy



Herculaneum, Italy



Herculaneum, Italy



Herculaneum, Italy



Neoclassicism

- The discoveries posed fundamental challenges to received opinion on ancient Roman culture. Little sculpture - conventionally seen as the pinnacle of Roman artistic achievement - was found in the excavations.
- The numerous frescoes were of varying quality and their sometimes sexually explicit content was a surprising revelation to many eighteenth century sensibilities. Moreover, Alcubierres excavation methods - which almost encompassed looting - received harsh criticism from the German art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann especially.
- Nevertheless, the discovery had a defining impact on Neoclassicism, which reflected the spirit of enquiry and challenge to authority posed by contemporary Enlightenment thought.

The 'Primitive Hut'

- As direct, first-hand experience of the Antique, facilitated by the Grand Tour, became an essential part of the education of wealthy young European men, attention was also turning to the origins of ancient architecture. Particularly influential was Abbe MarcAntoine Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753), in which the Jesuit monk put forward the 'primitive hut' as the basis for all 'true' architecture.
- In many ways recapitulating the Vitruvian precept that architecture, as an imitation of nature, Laugier argued that classical architecture had evolved from the 'primitive hut': a simple structure of cross-beams supported by tree trunks. Columns, for Laugier, were therefore a 'natural' derivation of the tree trunks. Pilasters, on the other hand, were deemed 'irrational' and a symptom of architecture's debasement from its core principles.

The 'Primitive Hut'

- Although Laugier's ideas were often fanciful, with little basis in historical fact, they were important in leading the way in a rethinking of architecture from first principles.
- This conceptual approach was the key innovation of Neoclassicism - in stark contrast to the ornamental imitation of the Antique with which it is often associated.

PRIMITIVE HUT



The idea of the primitive hut stems from Vitruvius' *Ten Books of Architecture*, but owes its place in architectural theory to the *Essay on Architecture* published by the Abbé Laugier in 1753. Advocating the 'honest' structural use of the Classical Orders, Laugier proposed a cleansing of architecture by returning to its origins.

Into the Nineteenth Century

- The Industrial Revolution and the advent of new building technologies and materials in the nineteenth century had diverse effects on Neoclassicism, pushing form and theory in new directions.
- By focusing on first principles, Neo classicism could, somewhat counter intuitively, circumvent the conundrum of how to deal with new modern building types.
- However, that argument depended on the efficacy of those principles which, once tested, were revealed to be less than universally applicable.

Into the Nineteenth Century

- It was the German architect and theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-79) who in many ways reconciled Neoclassical principles to the modern age.
- In his *Die Vier Elemente der Baukunst* (The four Elements of Architecture; 1851), Semper argued that architecture was a function of recurring elements that were fundamentally shaped by the processes of their creation: weaving, moulding, carpentry, masonry and metalwork.
- He explained how religious, state and civic institutions - and also industrial ones - created the conditions through which fundamental forms might be given the appropriate architectural expression.

Into the Nineteenth Century

● Neoclassical principles could therefore be used to make architectural sense of rapid technological change: through creating ordered and meaningful forms – in many ways anticipating Modernist Functionalism.

Palladianism

- **Region:** England and America
- **Period:** Eighteenth century
- **Characteristics:** 'Unity of the whole'; Temple front; 'Natural' landscape gardens; Public buildings; Pattern book architecture; Implied order

Palladianism

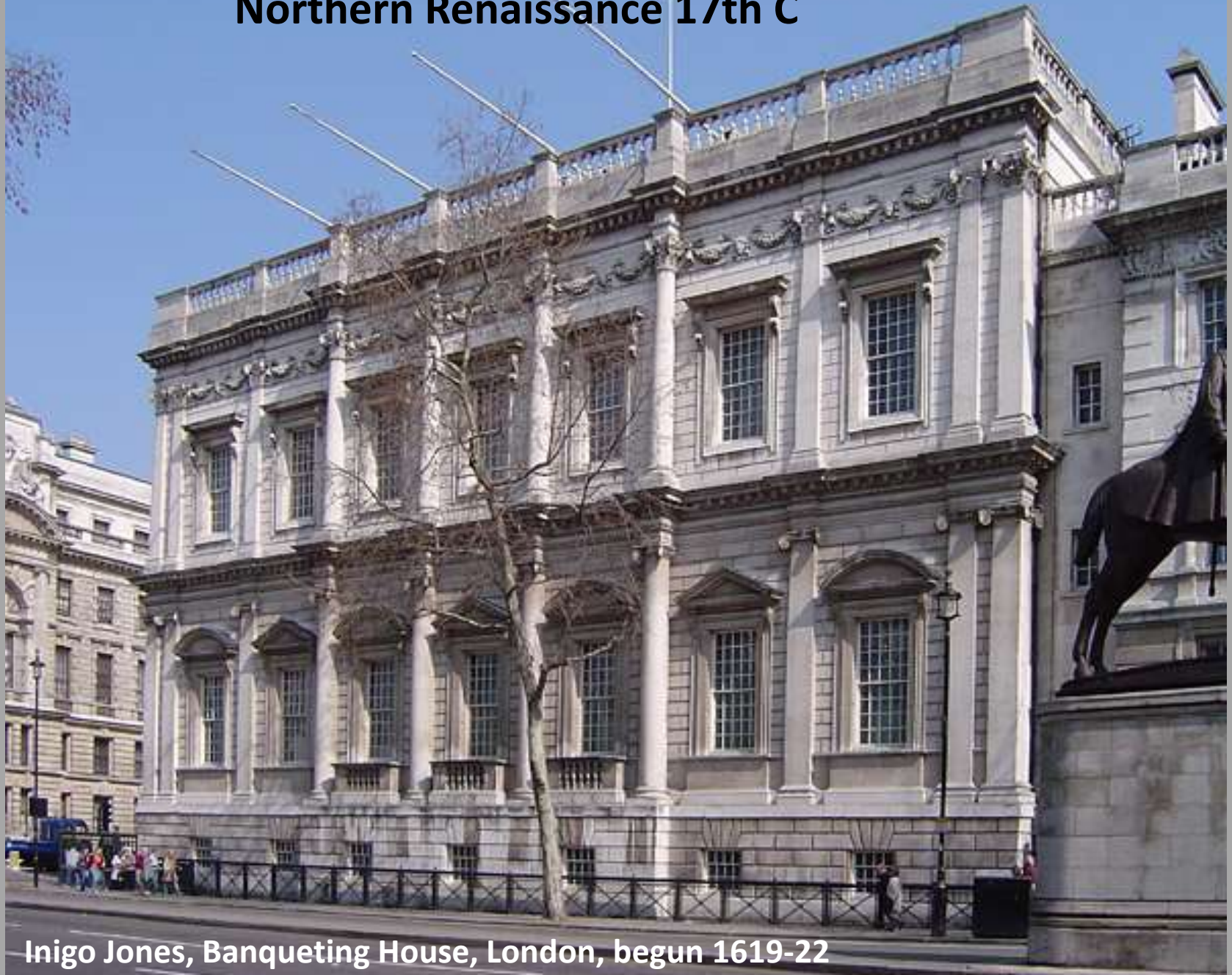
- In 1715 the architect Colen Campbell (1676-1729) published the first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, the renowned architectural 'manifesto' in which he documented the then current state of architecture in Britain, and attempted to formulate and codify a distinctly British architectural style.
- Campbell's exemplar was the Mannerist architect Andrea Palladia, most notable for the villas he designed in Italy's Veneto during the mid sixteenth century.

Palladianism

- Knowledge of Palladio's work had already reached England a century earlier: Inigo Jones had studied Palladio's buildings first-hand in the 1610s and had returned with a number of the great master's drawings.
- Jones put what he learned from Palladia into practice in several works including the Banqueting House at Whitehall (1619-22) and the Queen's House at Greenwich (begun 1616), both in London.
- However, the close association of Jones's brand of Palladianism with the courts of James I (r, 1603-25) and his son Charles I (r, 1625-49) saw it fall from favour with the onset of civil war in England. Sir Christopher Wren held Jones in high regard, yet his empirically derived Baroque architecture departed from Jones's work in theory and form.

Renaissance and Mannerism

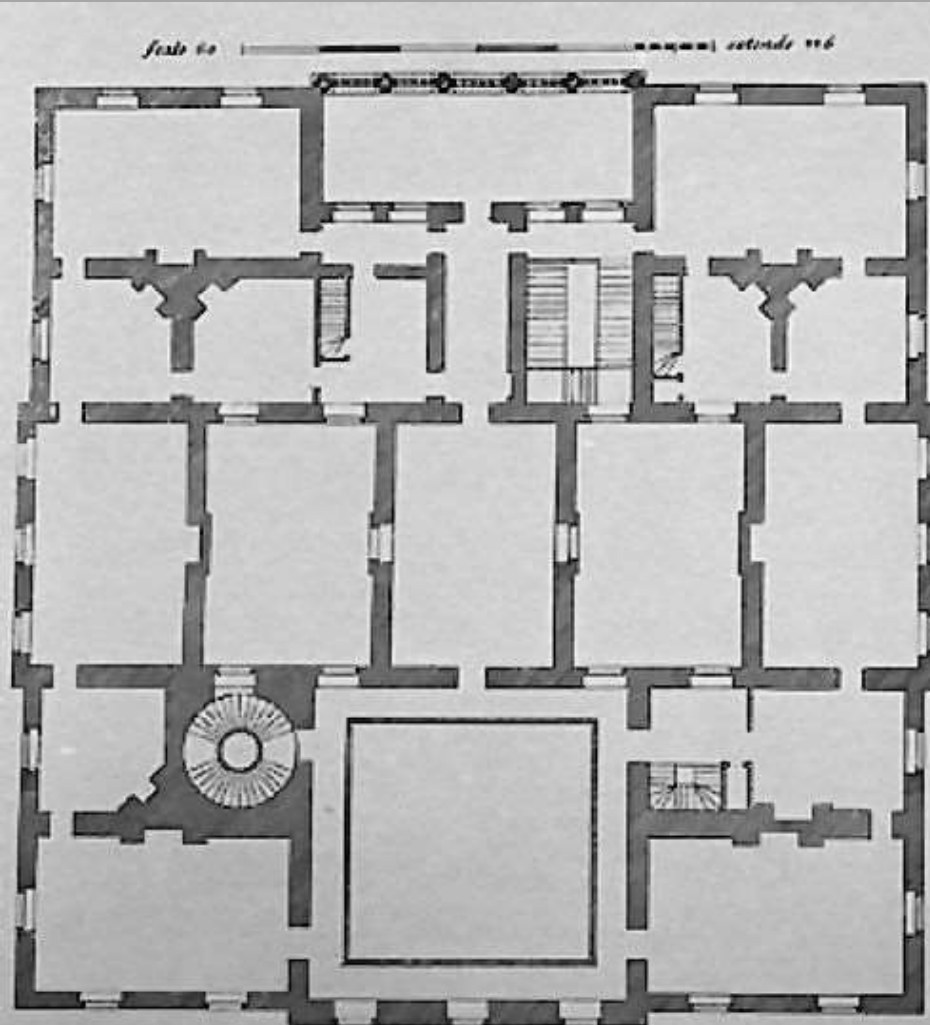
Northern Renaissance 17th C



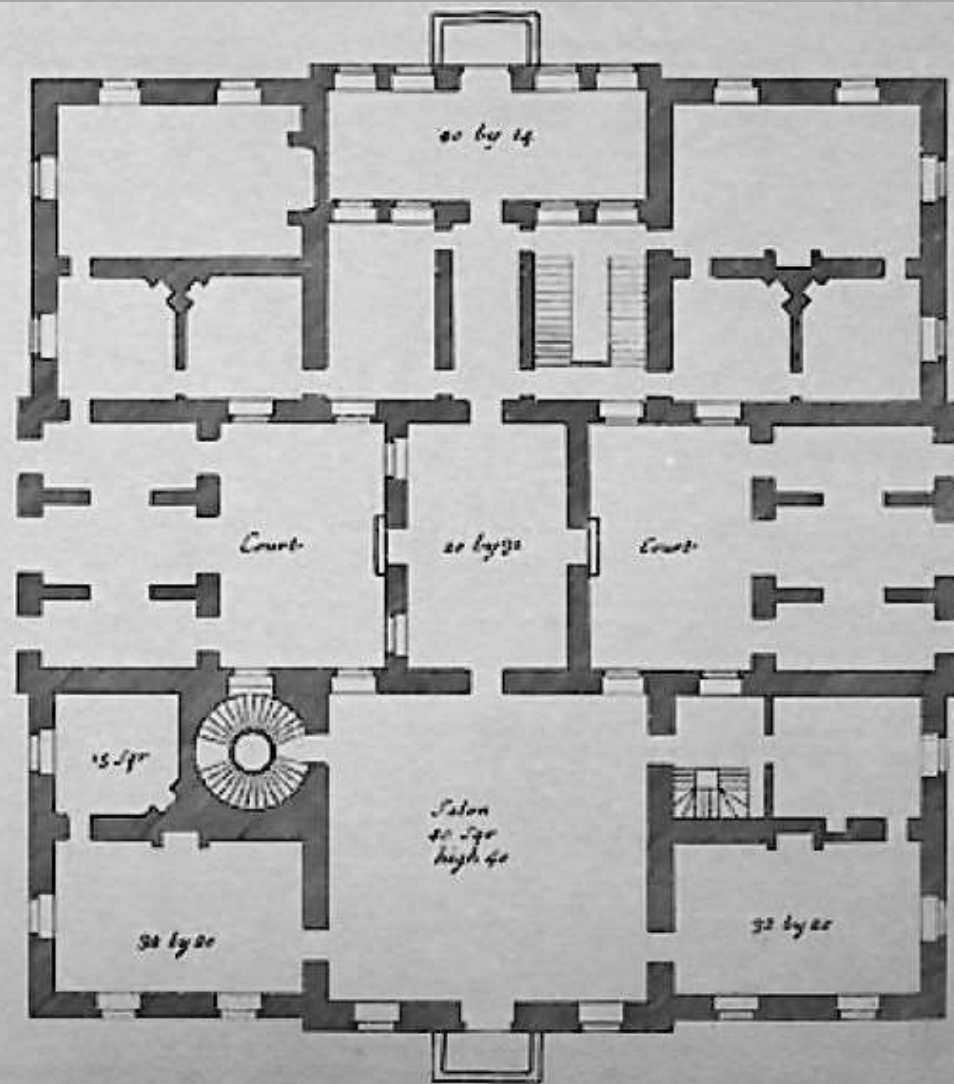
Inigo Jones, Banqueting House, London, begun 1619-22



Inigo Jones, Queens House, London, begun 1616 CE



*Plan of 2^d Second floor
plan de Second Etage*



*The plan of the first story of 2^d Kings House at Greenwich
is most humbly inscribed to W^m Gifford, Esq. Governor of 2^d Hospital*



Inigo Jones, Queens House, London, begun 1616 CE

Palladianism

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Mereworth Castle, Kent 1720-28 CE

Architect: Colen Campbell



Mereworth Castle, Kent 1720-28 CE

Architect: Colen Campbell



Palladian theorist Robert Morris advocated the 'beauty, sweetness and harmony united in the Composition of Ancient Architecture' with all the elements acting together to create a 'unity of the whole'

Monticello, Charlottesville 1769-1809 CE

Architect: Thomas Jefferson



Palladio's ideas reached as far as America where Thomas Jefferson employed Palladian devices, including the temple front in a domestic setting.

Chiswick House 1726CE

Burlington's Chiswick Villa, London (completed 1729), modelled on Palladio's Villa Rotonda (1566-70), and represented the synthesis of his architectural philosophy.



Clandon Park Surrey 1730-33

Giacomo Leoni, despite his deep knowledge of Palladio's architecture, Leoni often fused Baroque and Palladian styles in his work



Palladianism

- Campbell's ideas proved influential on Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, who employed the architect ca. 1718 to remodel the facade of his town house in Piccadilly, London. By this time Burlington had visited Italy, and he would do so again to enable him to formulate his own architectural philosophy. Rather than studying Roman buildings directly as he had Palladio's works, Burlington instead relied on the architect's *I quattro libri dell'architettura*
- (The Four Books of Architecture; 1570), which included systematic surveys of, and abstracted rules from, ancient Roman buildings. Tracing their architectural lineage from the Ancients through their authentic interpreters, Palladio and Jones, Burlington and his aristocratic circle saw themselves as Augustans reborn.
- Moreover, the architectural style that Burlington and his circle created was codified in concepts of harmony, proportion and virtue which, it was thought, only those of a 'noble' sensibility could comprehend – to preclude its emulation by those of lower social ranks .

Syon House, Middlesex, Long Gallery

Robert Adam 1762



Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire 1760-70

Architect -Robert Adam



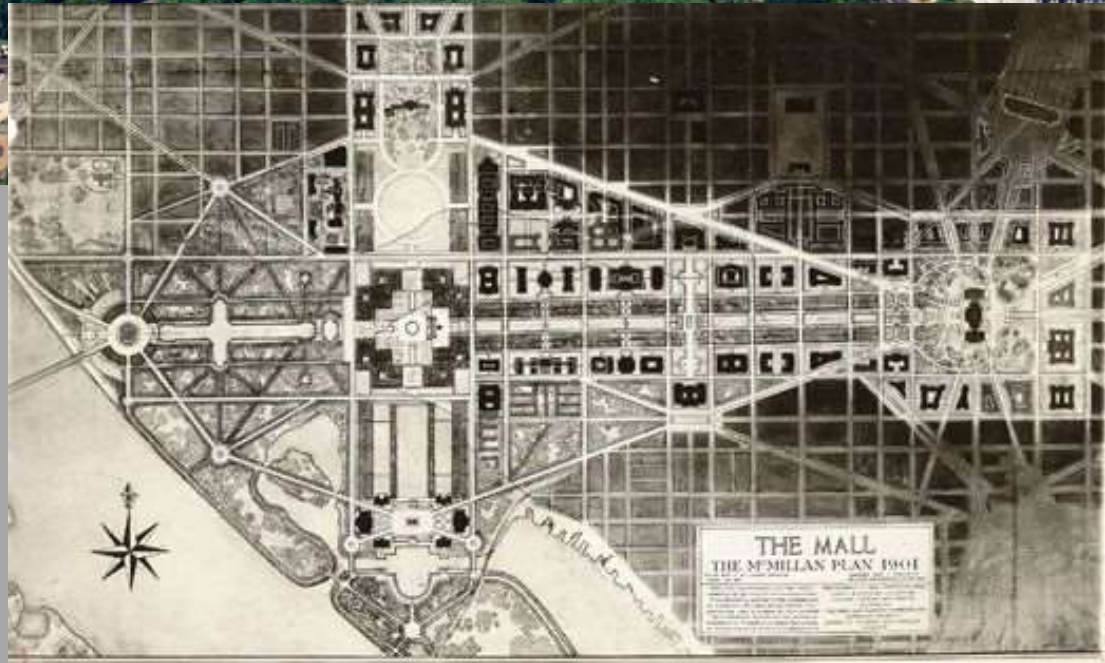
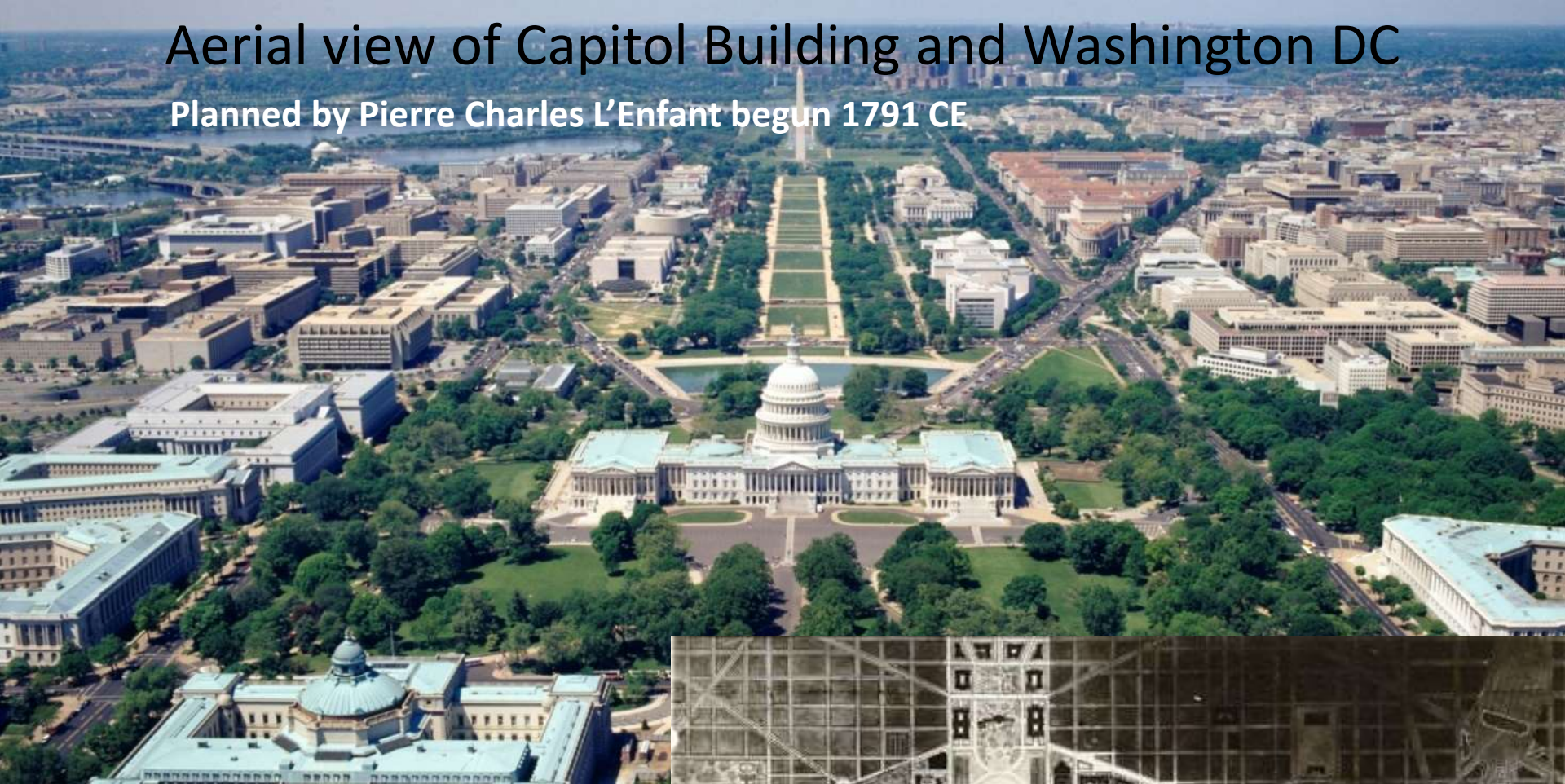
Royal Crescent, Bath 1767-71

Architect –John Wood the Younger



Aerial view of Capitol Building and Washington DC

Planned by Pierre Charles L'Enfant begun 1791 CE



Greek Revival

- **Region:** Europe, especially England and Germany
- **Period:** Mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century
- **Characteristics:** Polychromy; Archaeological accuracy; Greek Doric order; Interpretation; Quotation;
- Commodification of antiquity

Greek Revival

- While Italy, the prime destination for Grand Tourists, contained some important ancient Greek ruins, notably the colony at Paestum, recorded so vividly by Piranesi, Greece itself was much further afield and, during the eighteenth century, still part of the Ottoman Empire.
- So when the two Englishmen James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713-88) and Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) decided in 1748 to venture to Greece, (though they did not start their journey until 1751), they were stepping beyond the usual well-trodden path of the Grand Tour, exploring the relatively unknown; indeed, the spectre of plague actually hastened their return in 1754.

Greek Revival

- In the intervening years they carefully surveyed the ancient remains that they discovered; Revett took detailed measurements and recordings that Stuart then used for the trigonometric reconstructions of his topographical views, which he produced alongside written accounts.
- Several years after their return to England, Stuart and Revett published the first volume of *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762), followed quickly by two more.

Greek Revival

- In its preface Stuart asserted the primacy of Greek culture over Roman, and of Athens in particular: **'Greece is the Place where the most beautiful Edifices were erected and where the purest and most elegant examples of ancient Architecture are to be discovered.'**
- For a work intended in part to advertise its authors' rare and specialist knowledge of Greek antiquities to potential clients, this was an obvious claim to make, yet it also reflected the emerging contemporary belief that Greece was the birthplace of Western civilization.

Greek Revival



The Grange, Northington, England 1804-09 CE
William Wilkins



Polychromy – Painted Room, Spencer House, London 1759-65
James 'Athenian' Stuart

Greek Revival

- One of the principle figures in establishing and promoting interest in Greek culture was the German art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann.
- From an early age Winckelmann had immersed himself in Greek literature and art. In the 1750s he moved to Rome to study its antiquities at first hand. His skills of observation and analysis led him to conclude that many of the works and ideas of Roman art history were actually Greek in origin.
- Partly for that reason he identified Greek culture as the true model for imitation and emulation in his magnum opus, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (The History of the Art of Antiquity), of 1764.

Greek Revival

- Winckelmann 's work was influential all over Europe but was particularly important in Germany, not only for the following generation of scholars and writers such as Immanuel Kant and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, but for architecture too, and notably his fellow Prussian Karl Friedrich Schinkel 1781- 1841).
- Under the patronage of Frederick William III, King of Prussia (r, 1797-1 840), and his son the Crown Prince, later Frederick William IV (r, 1840-61), Schinkel realized several important buildings in Berlin that were designed to align symbolically the Prussian state with the ideals of fifth century Athens.

Greek Revival

- His Schauspielhaus (1818-21), Altes Museum (1823-30) and Bauakademie (1832- 6) put into practice his contention that
- 'if one could preserve the spiritual principle of Greek architecture, [and] bring it to terms with the conditions of our own epoch ... then one could find the most genuine answer to our discussion'

Greek Revival



Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Altes Museum (1823-30)

Greek Revival



Sir Robert Smirke, British Museum , London 1823-52

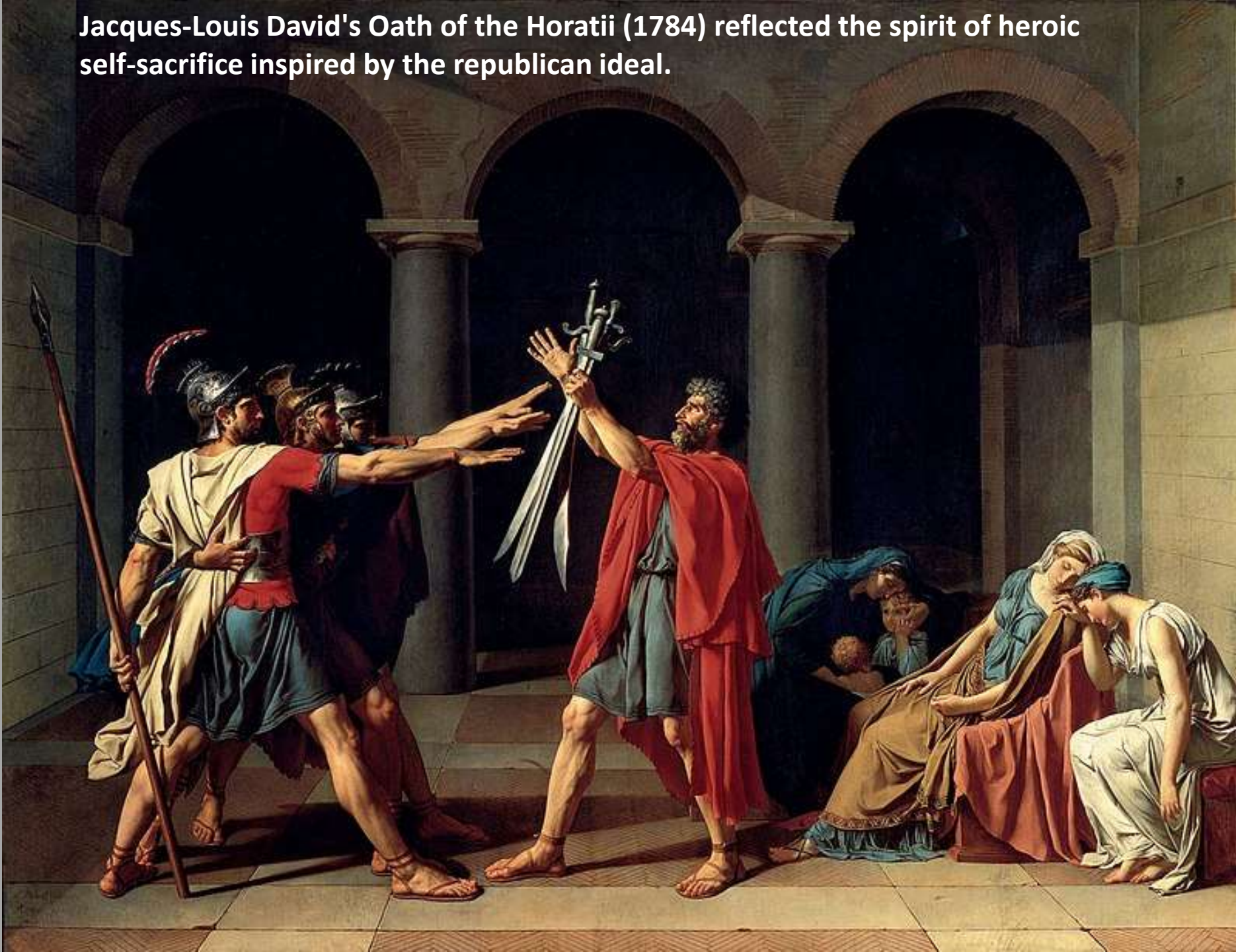
Empire Style

- Region: France
- Period: Late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century
- Characteristics : Corinthian order; Monumentality; Spoliation; Imperial symbolism; Severity; Interiors

Empire Style

- The rise of the public sphere and, more broadly, the spread of Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth century posed fundamental questions for Church and state.
- In France Enlightenment philosophers and theorists both reflected and exploited increasing dissatisfaction with an overbearing Catholic Church and the absolutist Bourbon monarchy .
- In his most influential work, *Du contract social au principes du droit politique* (The Social Contract; 1762).

Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1784) reflected the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice inspired by the republican ideal.



Empire Style

- The great Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocated a civil society in which religious tolerance and democracy flourished and sovereignty was inscribed in the rule of law.
- The rights of the individual, trammelled under absolutism, would be secured through submission to the general will of the people, in which the individual , as one of the people, had an obvious stake - the essence of the social contract.
- The model of the Roman Republic was increasingly idealized in both philosophical and political discourse as well as in art

Empire Style



The classical portico added to the Palais Bourbon in 1806-08 by Napoleon Bonaparte

Empire Style



The **Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel** is a triumphal arch in Paris, located in the Place du Carrousel. It was built between 1806 and 1808 to commemorate Napoleon's military victories of the previous year.

Picturesque

- Region: Europe, especially England and France
- Period: Late eighteenth to early nineteenth century
- Characteristics: Asymmetry; Sham ruins; Painterly; Rustic; Exotic; Picturesque urbanism

John Nash, Cronkhill, Shropshire 1802 CE



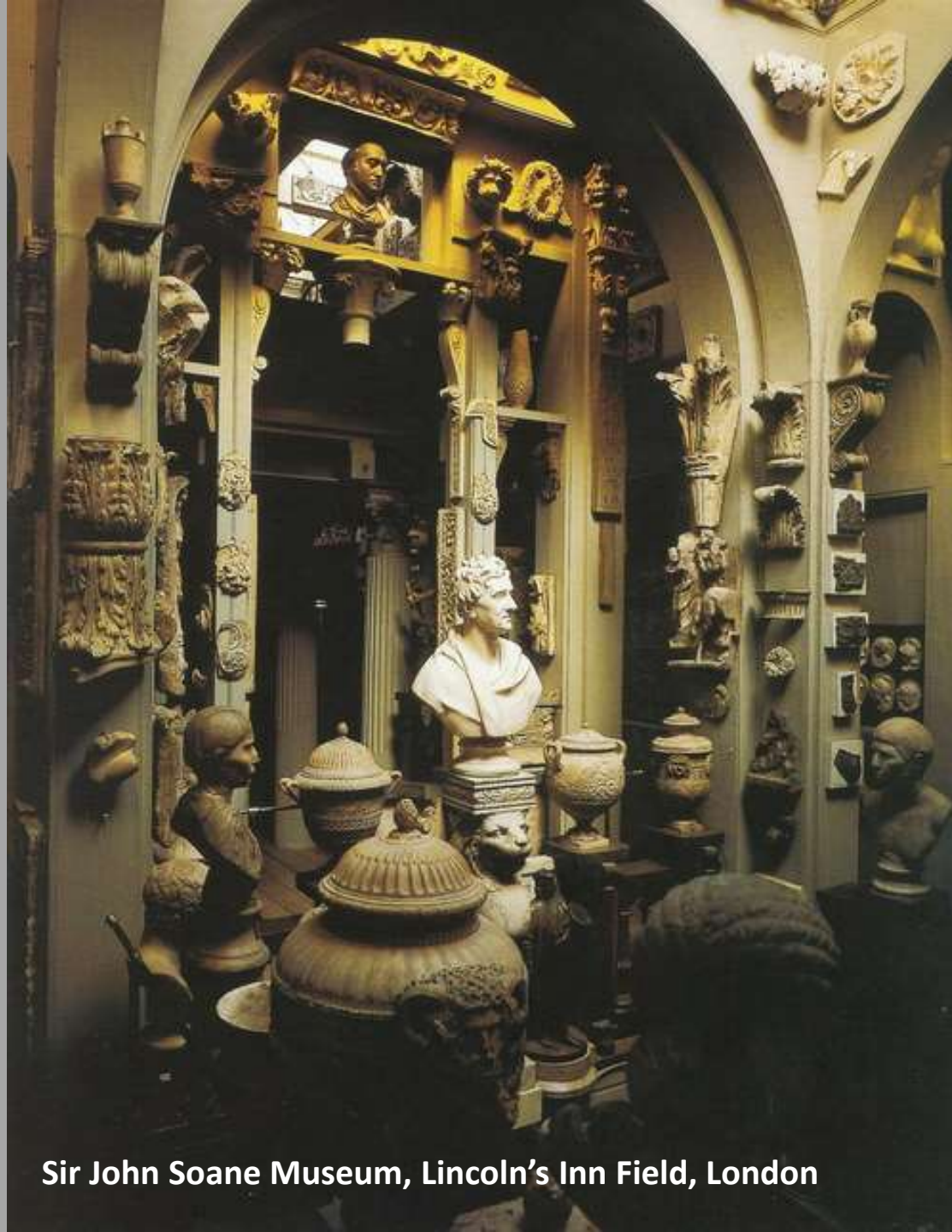
Cronkhill, designed by John Nash, is "the earliest Italianate villa in England".

Sir John Soane Museum



Sir John Soane





Sir John Soane Museum, Lincoln's Inn Field, London



Sir John Soane Bank of England, London by JM Gandy