

Reassessing the drawings for the Inigo Jones theatre: a Restoration project by John Webb?

by Gordon Higgott

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For over thirty years two drawings for an indoor playhouse at Worcester College Oxford have been associated with the Phoenix or Cockpit theatre in Drury Lane, built in 1616 by Christopher Beeston as an adaptation of a cock fighting pit built in 1609 (Figs 1, 2). For at least seventy years the drawings have been attributed to Inigo Jones (1573-1652). They are part of a large collection of drawings and books that came to Worcester College Oxford in the early 18th century from the collection of Dr George Clark, including many by Jones's assistant, John Webb (1611-72).

Inigo Jones travelled in Italy for an extended period around 1601 and began work as a designer of costumes and settings for the Court of James I and Anne of Denmark in 1605. He travelled to France in 1609 and toured Italy for 14 months from 1613 to 1614 in the company of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. He was appointed Surveyor of the King's Works in 1615, with responsibility for the design of all court entertainments and masques and the design and maintenance of royal buildings. His role included advice on the drafting and enforcement of royal proclamations governing new construction in the cities of London and Westminster. Jones's nephew by marriage, John Webb, joined the Surveyor's office as his assistant in 1628 after an education at the Merchant Taylor's School in London. Much of John Webb's early work under Jones in the 1630s was for the stages and settings of Jones's court masques and plays. Webb was as much a stage designer as an architect: he wrote in 1660 in a Petition to King Charles II for the post of Surveyor, that 'hee was brought up by his unckle Mr Inigo Jones upon his late Majestyes comand in the study of Architecture, as well that wch relates to building as for Masques, Tryumphs and the like.' (See J. Bold, *John Webb: Architectural Theory and Practice in the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 1989, p. 181.)

Webb was a prolific draughtsman and was the inheritor of Jones's collection of books and drawings, including many drawings by the Italian architect, Andrea Palladio (1508-80). Webb added his drawings to this collection but soon after his death in 1672 it was broken up. The largest part descended through Lord Burlington to the Dukes of Devonshire in the eighteenth century, and in 1894 much of it was given on permanent loan to the Royal Institute of British Architects. A large portion, including almost all Jones's designs for masques and many designs for Whitehall Palace, remained at Chatsworth. The other substantial part was bequeathed by Dr George Clarke to Worcester College in 1736. This tripartite division of the material has hampered comparative study of drawings by Jones and Webb.

In 1973, on the four-hundredth anniversary of Jones's birth, an exhibition of Jones's work as architect and masque designer, *King's Arcadia*, was staged in the Banqueting House, Whitehall. The Worcester College indoor playhouse drawings

were published as Inigo Jones designs and dated by John Harris on grounds of style to c.1616-c.1618. The comparisons were with drawings that belonged to, or had been assigned to, the first few years after Jones's return from Italy in 1614, for example a dated elevation of 1616 for the entrance-bay to a country house (*Fig. 3*), and a group of drawings which Harris linked to works for the Prince of Wales (the future King Charles I) at the Prince's Lodging in Newmarket, including designs for the Lodging itself, and a signed elevation for a brew-house or buttery (*Figs 4, 5*).

Harris's authoritative dating opened the way for more detailed scrutiny of the indoor playhouse designs by theatre historians. Glynne Wickham had earlier suggested that the internal planning of the building, with seating at the front sides and back of the stage, but apparently with provision for a scenic stage, seen only from the front, was consistent with what was known of staging at the Salisbury Court Theatre, off Fleet Street, from 1629. However, Iain Mackintosh in 1973, and John Orrell in 1977, argued persuasively that the drawings were for the Phoenix or Cockpit Theatre in Drury Lane. John Orrell argued the case in detail in *The Theatres of Inigo Jones and John Webb*, Cambridge, 1985 (hereafter cited as Orrell, 1985).

Accepting a c.1616-18 date for the drawings, Mackintosh and Orrell associated the design with Beeston's Drury Lane Cockpit for the following reasons:

- The internal dimensions of the central part 'round' of the D-shaped plan were like those of a cockpit, assuming a 12-foot-wide table for the fighting cocks and 6 feet all round for circulation space.
- The extension of this cockpit to form an indoor playhouse would have complied with royal proclamations governing new building close to the King's Highway (Drury Lane), since the additional building added to the 'round' of the cockpit (comprising stage-end and tiring house) would have added about a third of the total (thus complying with regulations governing new work on existing foundations).
- The width of the space between the vertical sides of the stage end is just over 22 feet (*Figs 1, 2*). This corresponds with a width of 22 feet 4 inches in John Webb's design for the proscenium arch for Sir William Davenant's opera *The Siege of Rhodes* (*Fig. 6*). The opera was first performed in August 1656 at Davenant's house, Rutland House, in Aldersgate Street in the City of London. In late 1657 it transferred to the Drury Lane Cockpit in late 1657, and the same scenery was apparently used for Davenant's next play at the Cockpit, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, staged in 1658-59. Webb's proscenium arch (*Fig. 6*) must have been designed for Rutland House, because Davenant says that his room was only 11 feet high, as in the Chatsworth drawing. Davenant also says that the Rutland House stage was 15 feet deep. However, a corresponding set of plans by Webb at the British Library (*Fig. 7*) provides for a stage 18 feet deep. The stage in the Worcester College playhouse drawings is 15 feet deep (*Fig. 1*). The stage of the Drury Lane Cockpit was dismantled in 1649 and rebuilt in 1651. It is argued that Webb prepared his designs for the *Siege of Rhodes* in 1656 with the knowledge that the scenery would be used for a deeper stage at the Cockpit Drury Lane

venue, and that the plan in the British Library is a modification of the original scenery design for this deeper stage. It lacks a *frons scenae*, because this feature would have been destroyed in 1649.

- The square shape of the opening of the stage end (*Fig. 2*) corresponds with the square proportions of Inigo Jones's sketch at Chatsworth for a perspective stage set framed by an arch-headed proscenium arch, inscribed by Jones, 'for y^e cokpitt for my lo Chambralin / 1639' (*Fig. 8*). The reference is to the Lord Chamberlain, Philip Herbert, the fourth earl of Pembroke, who had charge of court entertainments. This design, it is argued, would not have fitted the stage of the Cockpit theatre in Whitehall, as refitted by Inigo Jones in 1629-30. Jones's work is shown in a plan and elevation by John Webb, prepared probably in 1660 for another refitting which retained Jones's earlier work (*Fig. 9*) and this drawing shows a coved ceiling above *frons scenae*, apparently hindering the installation of a tall proscenium arch. The Lord Chamberlain had charge of theatrical performances at the Whitehall Cockpit, but he also had connections with the Drury Lane Cockpit, where William Beeston's company of 'King's and Queen's Boys' were in demand at the court.

All this evidence was circumstantial, however, and the lynch-pin was Harris's stylistic dating of the drawings. The drawings are for a building that is quite large by London standards in the seventeenth century (50 feet high and 40 feet wide), and one which is distinctive, if not unique in shape. Yet nothing resembling this building appears on Wenceslas Hollar's bird's eye view of West London published by Faithorne in 1658, at the time when the Cockpit in Drury Lane was staging Sir William Davenant's opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*. Given Hollar's precision in the depiction of Bankside theatres in his *Long View* of 1647, it would be surprising if he had overlooked so distinctive a building in his survey of west London ten years later. In a recent study (*Theatre Research International*, vol. 13, No. 1, 1988, pp. 30-44), the theatre historian Graham Barlow exhaustively analysed the evidence for properties on the site and concluded that the only space available for the Drury Lane Cockpit was a plot of about 40 feet square. The playhouse would have been confined to this space and attached to one of Beeston's buildings on one of its sides. This evidence appears to rule out any connection between the Worcester College drawings and the Drury Lane site.

Christopher Beeston's extension of the Drury Lane Cockpit in 1616 was initially in defiance of royal proclamations on new buildings near the King's highway. Beeston had also defied the proclamations in the construction of his own house in Clerkenwell. It would seem improbable that the King's Surveyor would have had any part in the design of a building that contravened regulations he himself was charged to enforce or would have worked for a commoner who was in breach of royal proclamations.

While the match between Webb's proscenium arch for the *Siege of Rhodes* and the Worcester College playhouse drawings appears to link them with the staging of Davenant's opera from 1656, it does not prove that they were intended for the Drury Lane Cockpit or Phoenix. The interior of that theatre was dismantled in 1649 and refitted in 1651. We have no means of knowing the appearance or dimensions of its

stage in 1657, save that the outer dimensions of the building were not greater than 40 feet by 40 feet. On the other hand, we do know that Davenant staged his opera again in June 1661 at his new theatre in a conversion of Lisle's Tennis Court near Lincoln's Inn Fields (*Fig. 17*). This building was about 30 feet wide and 75 feet long (see L. Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, Harvard, 1928, pp.120-27). It was capable of housing the original sets for the *Siege of Rhodes*, and of providing more depth for the stage (see below).

It was the lack of depth and height (rather than the lack of width) that Davenant had complained about when he introduced his opera in 1656 ('It has been often wisht that our Scene ... had not been confin'd to eleven foot in height and about fifteen in depth...') (see M. Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, Manchester, 1987, p. 127). The width of these sets (22 feet 4 inches) must have been determined, like their depth and height, by the original room in which they were performed. The increase in depth in the plans in the British Library could reasonably be explained by their having been prepared for the Lisle's Tennis Court building rather than for the Drury Lane Cockpit.

Finally, we cannot rule out the Whitehall 'Cockpit-in-Court' as the obvious location for Jones's proposed proscenium arch and perspective. The visual records we have of the building (a drawing by Anthony van Wyngaerde of the 1550s and an elevation by John Thorpe of the early seventeenth century) indicate that it would have been quite capable of accommodating an arch of these proportions. John Webb's drawing of the interior at Worcester College of about 1660 shows the *frons scenae* as constructed in 1630-32, but it includes a coved ceiling not described in the accounts in 1629-30 (*Fig. 9*). There is no evidence that this cove existed before the 1660s (if it existed then). Without it, there would have been ample space for the proscenium arch in Jones's sketch.

I must now return to the drawings themselves. Who drew them, when were they drawn, and what theatre are they for? In 1988 I completed a Ph.D. thesis at the Courtauld Institute of Art on Inigo Jones's architectural drawings, in which I sought, by technical and stylistic analysis, and by the study of documentary and comparative material, including Jones's many annotations, to establish a secure chronology for the drawings and also to consider Jones's theory of design. Many of these findings were published in 1989 in a new catalogue which I wrote with John Harris to accompany an exhibition in the United States and the Royal Academy of Art, London, in 1989-90 (J. Harris and G. Higgott, *Inigo Jones: Complete Architectural Drawings*, London and New York, 1989; hereafter cited as H & H). One group of drawings which I was able to distinguish from the rest are those in a very neat ruled hand, and which compare closely to Jones's dated design of 1638 for a house in Lothbury at Worcester College (*Fig. 10*, H & H cat. 84). Jones only gradually acquired technical competence in ruled pen drawing after his return from Italy in 1614, and not until the 1630s, in his late fifties and early sixties, did he flourish as a figurative draughtsman, becoming completely assured in the handling of the quill pen and ruler. To this late group, around 1638, I assigned the brew-house design previously dated c.1616, one piece of evidence being the simplified style of signature (typical of Jones's late hand), another being the presence of John Webb's handwriting in the pencilled annotations on the plan (*Fig. 5*, H & H, cat. 90; it has

since been suggested that the design is for a buttery, for the storage and serving of wine). In terms of drawing technique and architectural detail, the Worcester College playhouse drawings are extremely close to the brew-house or buttery design and I therefore assigned them to the same period (*Figs 1 and 2*; H & H cats. 91, 92). In other respects the playhouse drawings appeared to be typical of Jones's mature technique: in their neat under-scoring, their roughly handled washed shading, and even in their method of presentation on two folded sheets of paper (like *Fig. 10*) from a source frequently used by Jones but not intrinsically datable by its watermark.

Sir William Davenant was Jones's collaborator in the production of court masques from 1638 and on 29 March 1639 (nine months before he and Jones staged the last court masque, *Salmacida Spolia* in 1640) he secured from Charles I a warrant to build a playhouse on the north side of Fleet Street, between Fetter Lane and Shoe Lane, not far from the Blackfriars theatre, near Ludgate Hill, and the Salisbury Court (See Edmond, *Davenant*, pp. 75-76, 130-32). The warrant was for 'a Theatre or Playhouse, with necessary tiring and retiring Rooms and other places convenient, containing in the whole forty yards square at the most, wherein Plays, musical entertainments, Scenes or other like Presentments, may be presented'. The licence was for building on a plot no more than 120 by 120 feet, easily large enough to accommodate the Worcester College playhouse design, and the external shell of the building was to be of brick or stone. Davenant did not build his theatre, but the dating of the Worcester College designs to the late 1630s made them candidates for this unexecuted project. The fact that Davenant's licence remained valid in 1661 could have explained why the playhouse was capable of housing John Webb's stage designs for *The Siege of Rhodes*, originally prepared in 1656 (although, as now argued above, the dimensions of those designs must have been the product of the room in which the opera was first performed; they could not have been anticipated in an earlier design).

The Worcester College playhouse design appears to be for the sort of convertible indoor theatre that Davenant would have needed for the presentation of scenic drama from the late 1630s onwards. It could have been used as an open-stage playhouse, like the Swan and the second Globe, for performances of plays, with the audience close up, on all sides, or as a scenic theatre, for performances with changeable perspective scenes, which would have been viewed exclusively from the auditorium. In the latter case, however, the arrangement would have been awkward. All the seating at the sides and back would have been lost, and entrances and exits would have been difficult, with the three doors partly blocked by the back shutter.

I must now reconsider the long-standing attribution of these important drawings to Inigo Jones, on the basis that it can now be shown that the signed design for a brew-house or buttery (*Fig. 5*), to which the playhouse drawings compare most closely, is not an autograph drawing by Inigo Jones. The pencil inscriptions on the drawing are Webb's and until now these have been taken as evidence of the drawing's late date, but not its authorship by Webb. However, in 1999 Howard Burns, a leading authority on the architectural drawings of Palladio and the Palladian tradition, reattributed the drawing to Webb and suggested that, like some of Palladio's designs, it is design for which Jones claimed responsibility, even though he was not himself the draughtsman (See *Palladio and Northern Europe: Books, Travellers, Architects*

(Geneva and Milan, 1999, pp. 134-35). Burn's reattribution can be sustained from comparisons with Webb's work on paper, in particular Webb's mature architectural drawings dating from the late 1640s onwards.

The brew-house or buttery design is formed from three separate sheets of closely matched paper, pasted together in the same fashion, and signed by Jones on the bottom sheet. Below the signature is a prick-marked scale, marked with pencil strokes. This scale corresponds with the pencilled annotations on the drawing, and demonstrates that all three sheets were assembled at the same time. The annotations display John Webb's method of denoting feet and inches as 'fo and 'yn', and his writing of abbreviations such as 'dia' for diameter with a 'secretary' 'd'. Jones's signature corresponds in style with the latest known examples from his hand, for example, the signature on the Temple Bar arch design of 1638 (H & H cat. 83).

Two details of the draughtsmanship are telling. One is the method of shading the roof with wash that is graduated from dark to light from the top downwards. This is characteristic of Webb's mature architectural drawings (after the 1630s) but not of Jones's drawings, and derives from illustrations in Vincenzo Scamozzi's treatise on architecture *L'idea della architettura universale* (1615), an author admired by Webb. Examples include his designs for Durham House of 1649-51 at Worcester College (*Fig. 12*). Another is the firm freehand drawing of the cartouche. Again this is characteristic of Webb and not Jones, and its style is matched on the Durham House elevation. Jones's cartouches are more tentative and sketch-like, one example being his design for a seven-window house (*Fig. 11*), another his chimney-piece design for Somerset House of 1636 (H & H cat. 63). Of particular interest for the dating of the playhouse drawings is Webb's technique of inscribing the design with the numbers of feet and inches separated by dashes rather than colons and with the 'f' of 'fo' looped round at the bottom. This method of inscription appears amongst Webb's dated drawings for Wilton of c.1647-48 (Worcester College, H & T cat. nos. 58-64), and is common from then on, e.g. his designs at Chatsworth of 1665 for the staging of a Court ballet in the Great Hall at Whitehall Palace (see Orrell, 1985, Figs. 29 and 30). However, Webb's early drawings of 1635 to 1641 display a denser and more meticulous technique, in which the 'f' of 'f' is generally written with an unlooped shank, and the numerals for feet and inches are separated by colons rather than dashes (*Fig. 13*). The absence of this technique of annotation on the drawing points to a date around the time of the Wilton designs of c.1647-48, when Webb and Jones were working together, with the latter directing the former in the design of doors and ceilings.

The style of Jones's signature on the drawing points to a date in the 1640s. While it characteristic of his late hand (as exemplified by H & H cat. 83, and Jones's signatures in the accounts for St Paul's Cathedral, 1633-41, in the Guildhall Library, London), it is very shakily written, and strongly suggests the hand of an elderly man, no longer able to draw securely himself, but still able to direct an assistant (although there are no dated examples after 1641).

The brew-house or buttery design must, therefore, date after the early 1640s. One possible date would be 1647-48, when Webb and Jones were working at Wilton

House for Philip Herbert, the fourth Earl of Pembroke, and when Webb was working for another family with which Jones had earlier been associated, that of James Stuart, the Duke of Lennox and Richmond, at Cobham Hall, Kent.

As noted above, the Worcester College playhouse drawings compare very closely with this design in their washed shading technique and in their style of pen drawing. The shading of the roof is identical, and the cartouche over the central door of the *frons scenae* is drawn in exactly the same way (*Fig. 14*). The drawings must be by Webb, not Jones. One detail that confirms Webb's authorship is the handling of the figures in the niches. They are too feebly drawn to be by Jones, and do not compare with examples from the 1630s (*Fig 15*; and his sketch for the Winchester Choir Screen of 1638, H & H, cat. 81).

The closest comparisons are with Webb's mature drawings from the late 1640s onwards. Most of his drawings from this period until the early 1660s are in pen and wash rather than the hatched pen that he favoured in the 1630s. Webb returned to this technique late in his career when he was working on designs for the King Charles Building at Greenwich Palace in 1666-69. Webb's pen-and-wash technique has affinities with Jones's late pen and wash drawings (e.g. *Fig. 11*), and it is not surprising that Webb should have modelled his drawing style on that of Jones. We can compare the drawings with Webb's presentation design for Durham House, Strand, of 1649 (*Fig. 12*), and his designs at Chatsworth House for a new palace at Whitehall, datable to 1660 (*Fig. 16*; see M. Whinney, 'John Webb's drawings for Whitehall Palace', *Walpole Society*, vol. 31 (1942-43), London, 1946, pp. 45-107, pls 21 and 22a). The drawings are unlikely to date to the years immediately following the closure of London theatres in 1648, so we must consider the possibilities shortly before or soon after the Restoration in 1660, when Webb was petitioning King Charles II for the post of Surveyor of the King's Works, and when Davenant (who travelled to Breda to petition the King in April 1660) was urgently seeking to establish his own theatre company and build a new playhouse for plays and the new scenic drama he had pioneered at Rutland House.

The revival of public theatre in London at the Restoration began within weeks of Charles II's return on 29 May with the establishment of a dual monopoly by Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew for the staging of plays. During his exile King Charles II and his courtiers had enjoyed the plays and players of Paris, and during short visits to Brussels and Bruges had seen how tennis court buildings and other enclosed halls could be adapted as scenic theatres. The King was now impatient to have similar things in London, and on 9 July 1660 he issued a warrant to Killigrew to form a King's Company of Players. Ten days later Sir William Davenant drafted a revised warrant for the attorney general, to grant a monopoly to both Killigrew and himself to 'erect Two Companys of Players ... and to purchase or build and erect at their charge as they shall thinke fitt Two Houses or Theatres with all convenient Roomes and other necessaries therto appertaining for the representation of Tragedys, Comedys, Playes, Operas, and all other entertainments of that nature in such convenient places as shall be thought fit by the Surveyor of our Workes ...'. The warrant became effective on 21 August, when it passed the 'privy signet'.

The dimensional match with the stage sets for suggests that the playhouse drawings are speculative designs for a new indoor theatre intended for drama in the Shakespearian tradition, but also capable of being adapted for a production of Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (although the stage would have been uncomfortably shallow, and many seats would have been unusable). If the designs are connected with Davenant's unrealised project for a playhouse in Fleet Street, they could be based on originals by Inigo Jones from c.1639. More probably, however, they are designs prepared by Webb for Davenant in the spring or summer of 1660, when the playwright he was laying plans for a new theatre company. Davenant would have turned for plans to his long-standing collaborator John Webb. Webb would have ensured that his design was capable of housing the scenery he had designed for the *The Siege of Rhodes* at Rutland House. This explains the exact match between the width and depth of the stage of the Worcester College drawings and those of the stage at Rutland House (22 feet 4 inches wide and 15 feet deep). However, the cleanliness of the drawings and the inconsistencies in the treatment of levels and door openings in the plan and sections, point to their being an initial project designs that was never worked up for construction. A date for the drawings beyond the middle of 1661 seems unlikely, because by this time both Davenant and Killigrew had found homes for their new theatre companies in two converted tennis courts near Lincoln's Inn Fields (*Fig. 17*).

Killigrew first took his new company of 'King's Players' to the Red Bull, which they used for performances on 5th – 9th November 1660. On 10 November they moved to the Vere Street Theatre, on the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields (*Fig. 17*). This had originally been Gibbons's tennis court, built 1633-34, and its size is quoted by Leslie Hotson as being 23 feet wide by 64 feet long. The diarist Samuel Pepys – an invaluable source of information for the appearance of the new London indoor playhouses at this time – visited on 20 November and described it as 'the finest playhouse, I believe, that ever was in England'. However, it did not provide for the use of perspective scenes. By June 1661 Davenant's Duke's company had Lisle's Tennis Court (first built in 1656-57), where he opened with the *Siege of Rhodes*. In plan, the building, measuring 30 feet by 75 feet, was more than adequate for the presentation of perspective stage sets like that of the *Siege of Rhodes*, if we assume that the actor entered a stage about 23 feet wide from side doors (*Fig. 7*). From contemporary descriptions we can deduce that it had an actor's stage at the front, and beyond that a perspective stage, probably sloping, for side shutters and back shutters. This suggests an advance on the design in the Worcester College drawings, where there is only an actor's stage and a *frons scenae*.

The revival of Davenant's opera was a spectacular success and soon audiences were deserting Killigrew's theatre. In November 1661 Killigrew acquired a site between Drury Lane and Bridges Street, east of Covent Garden, used in the 1630s as M. Lefevre's 'riding academy'. His new theatre was opened in the summer of 1663 and could accommodate scenery and an actor's stage. If we impose the Webb plan of the site of the first Theatre Royal, as reconstructed in the Survey of London, we find that it fits comfortably, and that its entrances align with the lanes leading to the site from Bridges Street and Drury Lane (*Fig. 19*). However, there is far too much wasted space for the design to have been adopted for this site, and the design itself would not have given Killigrew what he needed: a theatre that could house a

perspective stage behind and actors' stage, a two-part stage of the type drawn by Christopher Wren in his design of c.1673 for a new Theatre Royal, following the fire which destroyed Killigrew's first building in 1672 (Fig. 19), or in Wren's design of c.1664-65 for the conversion of the Great Whitehall as a theatre (*Wren Society*, vol. XII, pl. ??).

More generally, the drawings represent the earliest known example in England to design a public playhouse on classical principles, using the semi-circular auditorium and three-door *frons scenae* of the ancient Roman theatre, as described by Vitruvius in Book V of *De Architectura* and as revived by Palladio at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. Jones had adapted the Whitehall Cockpit on the Vitruvian and Palladian model in 1629-30, but its use had been confined to the court. Webb's strong interest in this tradition is demonstrated by his design at Worcester College for an unidentified theatre based on the Teatro Olimpico (Fig. 20). This design consists of a folded sheet of two drawings, one drawing being a modified copy of Palladio's design for the Teatro Olimpico and the other a revised version in which the *frons scenae* has one opening in centre rather a central opening flanked by smaller side openings (see Orrell, 1985, pp. 160-67). Webb was seeking to adapt the Teatro Olimpico stage to contemporary stage practice in England by transforming Palladio's central arch into a proscenium framing a perspective set, so that the actor's stage could be used with a perspective stage behind. The drawing displays Webb's mature technique for inscribing dimensions and plans and is therefore datable to Webb's to the 1650s or 1660s. It may be a theoretical study, preparatory to the design in the Worcester College drawings, and therefore dating to about 1660.

On this evidence we can place the unidentified indoor playhouse project at the beginning of the Restoration period in 1660, before scenic dramatic had become established practice for the two main theatre companies run by Davenant and Killigrew. More research needs to be done to place the designs in the context of stage practice in 1660, when the initial demand was for the reestablishment of the repertoire of the 1630s: the plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, Webster and others. However, it is clear that, in terms of layout, the design looks back to the tradition established by Inigo Jones rather than forward to the deep, two-part stage of theatres at Dorset Gardens (1669-71) and the second Theatre Royal (1673). As such the Worcester College drawings represents the final flowering of the Renaissance tradition in the design of the English indoor playhouse .

Note: this paper represents work in progress. The author intends a more detailed examination of all the issues surrounding the dating and authorship of the drawings, and the intended purpose of the design. The outcome of this research will be published in a journal of art history, architectural history or theatre history.

Gordon Higgott
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