

# ST ANNE'S CHURCH, KEW AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL ATTRIBUTIONS

*John Moses* considers what might have influenced its design

ST ANNE'S ON KEW GREEN (image 1) is one of the most attractive churches in our borough. Until 1714, the residents of Kew had no place of worship in Kew itself. In 1710, a group of residents led by Christopher Appleby, a local resident and barrister, had raised £200 and petitioned Queen Anne, as Kew was within the royal manor of Richmond, to be allowed to build a chapel-of-ease. The Queen gave her consent and also £100 towards its cost, though the cost of building the chapel was £500, twice the original estimate.

The chapel of St Anne's was consecrated on 12 May 1714 by the Bishop of Winchester, as Kew was then within the parish of Kingston and the large diocese of Winchester, which had been unaltered since medieval times. The status of the chapel changed in 1769 when St Anne's Kew and St Peter's Petersham – also a chapel attached to the parish of Kingston – were united and became the parish of St Anne's Kew and St Peter's Petersham. This proved to be a somewhat unsatisfactory arrangement,



Image 1: Photograph of St Anne's from the south

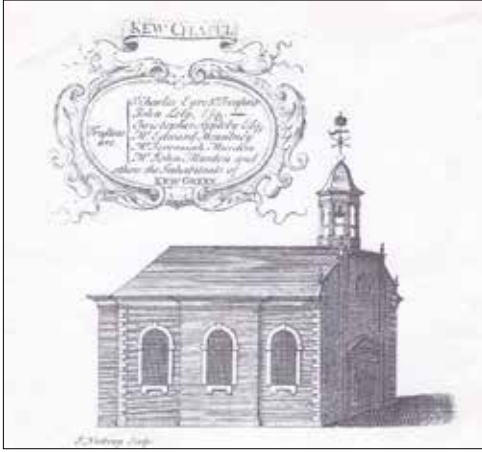


Image 2: Print of St Anne's Chapel-of-Ease 1714

given that there was the much larger parish of Richmond in between, and in 1850 St Anne's became a separate parish church in its own right.

The original chapel (if it had still existed) would have stood right in the middle of the nave of the present church. Its design may well have been based on one of Wren's churches and I think the most likely church is St Edmund, King and Martyr in Lombard Street, completed in 1674. Although this church is much larger, it is very similar in design and in particular they both have three bays and a similar design of fenestration (see images 2 and 3).

Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723), among his many other commissions and responsibilities as the Surveyor of the King's Works, had overall responsibility for the City churches, and oversaw the biggest church building project ever to take place in this country, when 52 churches were built after the 1666 Fire of London. Although he was still at that time the Surveyor of the King's Works, it is doubtful that Wren, then in his eighties, would have had any direct influence on the building of the chapel at Kew, but Appleby, the principal resident promoting the building of the chapel, was a barrister with rooms in the Temple and would very likely have been well acquainted with the building of these new City churches. The chapel at Kew would have almost certainly been too small a project to employ an architect, but we do know that the carpenter was a Mr Martin and the bricklayer



Image 3: The Church of St Edmund, King and Martyr, City of London

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was a Mr Robinson. Wren's own designs were very much based on Roman classical architecture. We know that he had a copy of Palladio's classically inspired *The Four Books of Architecture* in his library as well as other important architectural treatises.

The overall exterior design of the nave was retained in the "Wren" style, when the interior of the church was extended in 1770 by Joshua Kirby. In particular, the "Wren"-style fenestration was retained and continued to be retained in future rebuilding of St Anne's right up to the present day (image 1). Kirby added the north aisle and put in the first row of Tuscan columns.



Image 4: St Anne's west front

The classical style was again retained when King William IV agreed to pay for the rebuilding of the west front in 1837. He commissioned the architect Sir Jeffrey Wyattville to carry out the work at St Anne's. Wyattville also added a further bay when rebuilding the west front, which was in the classical style with the portico having Doric columns (image 4). It has remained unchanged ever since. Wyattville may have looked to the Italian Renaissance for inspiration as, overall, the design of the west front is in some ways very similar to the façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence designed by Leon Battista Alberti (image 5). The façade had been built in about 1460 in the classical style. Alberti promoted this style in his treatise *Ten Books of Architecture*, which he completed in 1453. (However, the church behind Alberti's façade is Gothic and was built in the late 13th century.) Porticos are very common in classical-style architecture such as at St Martin's-in-the-Fields, but a free-standing portico, as St Anne's, is unusual.



Image 5: Façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence

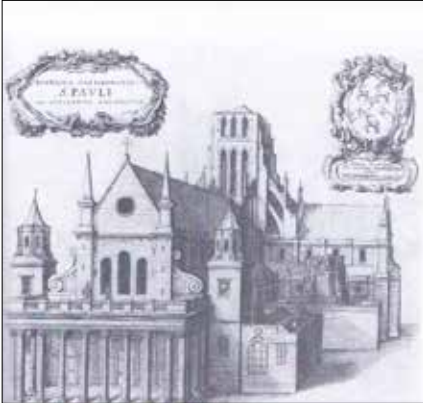


Image 6: Print of Portico of Old St Paul's, designed by Inigo Jones



Image 7: Photograph of the Chapel of Emmanuel College, Cambridge



Image 8: Photograph of the Portinari Chapel of Sant'Eustorgio, Milan

Wyatville may have based it on the portico designed by Inigo Jones for the old St Paul's, though this is on a much larger scale (image 6). It is unlikely that the portico or porte-cochère added to Cambridge Cottage opposite St Anne's influenced him as this was only added three years later in 1840. Wyatville also retained the cupola, which is identical to the original cupola on the chapel at Kew and similar to the one on the chapel of Emmanuel College Cambridge, designed by Wren and completed in 1673 (image 7).

This classical style was again retained when the church was substantially rebuilt in 1884 by Henry Stockwell, who added both the chancel and a further bay. This decision is surprising as the Gothic Revival style was then the favoured style in ecclesiastical architecture. The very influential Camden Society, founded in 1839 and based in Cambridge, promoted the Gothic style as the only proper style for ecclesiastical architecture and said: "About the time of the Reformation, the partial recurrence to classical styles, induced by the vitiated and unhappy taste for Italian architecture, completely corrupted the Gothick Style." An example of this dominance of the Gothic Revival style can be seen at Shipbourne, Kent,

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when an attractive church designed by James Gibbs, built in 1722, was pulled down in 1879 at the request of the local landowner and a Gothic-style church was built in its place.

St Anne's turret, designed by Stockwell, has allusions to Italian Renaissance architecture. It is probably not based on any particular

building, but it appears to be similar in format to the turret on the Portinari chapel of Sant'Eustorgio, Milan by Michelozzo in about 1460 (image 8). The oeil-de-boeuf windows on the turret may also have been a deliberate reference to Wren who used such a design frequently, as at the nearby palace of Hampton Court, which he partially rebuilt (image 9).

The mausoleum in St Anne's, designed by Benjamin Ferrey for the first Duke of Cambridge who had died in 1850, was moved eastwards when Stockwell extended the church. (In 1930 the remains of the first Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were removed to Windsor at the command of Queen Mary.) The exterior of the mausoleum at the east end of the church may possibly be based on a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, whose drawings by then would have probably been in the public realm (image 10).

The interior of St Anne's (image 11) is very much in the classical style, with Tuscan columns in the nave and Ionic and Corinthian columns in the chancel. However, the acanthus leaf decoration on the Tuscan columns is without any classical precedent. We do not know whether Stockwell or Sir Ninian Cooper, who was working on the building in 1906,



Image 9: Photograph of Hampton Court Palace (south front of new palace)

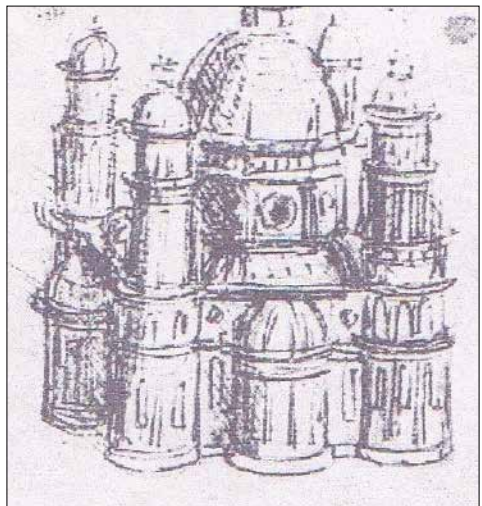


Image 10: Architectural drawing by Leonardo da Vinci



added these. The coved ceiling, put in by Stockwell, may be based on one of the Wren churches, as there are coved ceilings in a number of his churches including St Clement Danes, the chapel of The Royal Hospital Chelsea and St. James's Piccadilly. Overall, in spite of the many changes to St Anne's, the church has retained an overall sense of unity. ■



Image 11: Photograph of the interior of St Anne's

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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