

# The Landmark Trust

## INGESTRE PAVILION, TIXALL, STAFFORDSHIRE

The first evidence of the Pavilion's existence appears on a drawing for a "plan for the intended lawn" proposed for Ingestre in 1756 by Lancelot "Capability" Brown for John, the second Viscount Chetwynd. Here a lightly sketched square outline indicates that the Pavilion was already standing in its present position at the western end of a grassy ride, backing on to the boundary wall of the park.

Of its previous existence we know almost nothing. We do know that John Chetwynd and his brother Walter, the first Viscount, who died in 1735, were both enthusiastic "improvers" of their great estate. It appears that the Pavilion belongs to the period when John was adding to and completing the work of his brother – he later swept much of it away. But although Ingestre was much visited by both tourists and writers, none of them rated the Pavilion as worth more than the barest mention, and no reference to it has been found in the Chetwynd papers.

Although no design drawings for the Pavilion have survived, the RIBA Drawings Collection does hold an unsigned drawing for an unknown pavilion that is not unlike it, but without many of its oddities. For example, the front wall carried statues in niches, together with carved panels and swags, where the real Pavilion has vermiculated masonry; the window details are also different, and the Pavilion is both lower and broader in proportion. We may speculate that this drawing was used as a starting point for the building of the Pavilion, but that the designs were altered during their execution. The changes may have been made by a mason or sculptor engaged on its construction, and a candidate may be the mason-builder Charles Trubshaw, who in 1752 was working at Ingestre on a pedestal and dolphin in the new reservoir. The excellence of the carving of the screen of the Pavilion confirms the skill of the sculptural mason concerned; there is, however, no evidence that Trubshaw was in any way an original architectural designer. The gentleman-architect Sanderson Miller, who designed the Gothick Tower that once stood to the north of the Pavilion (and also the Landmark Trust's Bath House at Walton, near Stratford), may have advised on the design – he was certainly at Ingestre in 1751 – or indeed Lord Chetwynd himself may have suggested the changes to Trubshaw. This, however, is no more than supposition.

An archaeological survey has shown that the original Pavilion was roughly square in plan, and larger than most garden buildings of its type – certainly bigger than necessary for a mere picnicking place, with a central large room surrounded by smaller ones. The number of rooms gave accommodation equivalent to that of a small house, but no evidence of a kitchen or of fireplaces has been found. Perhaps the Pavilion was used only as a summer-house; again, the pattern of its use by the family that built it can only be guessed at.

The Pavilion appears again on a survey map of 1789, and again on a map of the parish of Ingestre drawn up in 1802–3. But in the interim it had suffered drastic changes: more than half of the building – the central saloon and several side rooms – had disappeared, for reasons we can only guess at, leaving just the façade, the loggia and the small rooms on either side.

In this diminished form, it stood undisturbed for the best part of two centuries.

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## RESTORATION BY THE LANDMARK TRUST

The Ingestre estate was broken up and sold off piecemeal in 1960. In 1988, becoming increasingly worried by the rapidly deteriorating state of the Pavilion, the owners of the woods wherein it stands gave it into the hands of the Landmark Trust, a charity that specialises in rescuing buildings of architectural and historic importance.

Scaffolding was put up straight away under the plaster vault, to prevent collapse, but difficulties with services access meant that it was nearly two years before work could begin. Meanwhile the architect Philip Jebb, together with Landmark's founder John Smith, was drawing up designs for the new rooms to be added behind the façade. As before, there was to be one large saloon running through two stories, but otherwise it was to be an entirely new work of Classical architecture. A new staircase was planned for the north side of the loggia, to be linked to the other side of the building by a gallery across the saloon, which would give a new and exciting view of it. The bathrooms could go in the smaller rooms to the south of the loggia, leaving the new larger rooms on either side of the saloon free for the kitchen and bedrooms.

First, however, considerable repairs to the old structure were necessary and urgent. The pediment was leaning outwards and one of the kneelers forming the left-hand end of the pediment was missing altogether. The contractor, Linford-Bridgeman, fitted a huge wooden template to hold the arch while the roof was stripped, its purlins and rafters repaired, and the apex of the pediment taken down and rebuilt. Steel ties, running from front to back, were inserted to hold the pediment in place. The plaster vault was falling, with the plaster skin pulling away from the vault structure itself: while this was repaired the connection between the walls and the vault was temporarily broken, and the vault was jacked up, and then refixed, suspended by ties from the roof structure.

New openings were made into the new buildings from the side rooms on the ground floor, and the central doorway into the loggia was unblocked. The doors themselves are, of course, all new. New door openings had to be made between the side rooms on the first floor and the new addition, but the original openings were left visible, with new surrounds copied from the fragments of the old. Some surviving sections of the old cornice were retained, and missing areas were made up with new to match. The dummy windows in the façade were unblocked, in order to light the ground-floor rooms, and new frames and sashes were provided for the existing window openings on the first floor.

The decorative plaster was badly cracked and broken, with some sections missing altogether. As much as possible was carefully fixed back into position, so that in the end only about 10% had to be renewed – something that at the start had looked an impossibility. The vault was then limewashed, and lead fixed to the architrave and cornice to keep rainwater out.

Some stonework was renewed for structural reasons, but much more was saved and simply rebbed - the temptation to replace worn stones was resisted. The brickwork was repointed, but only where the old mortar had failed. The building therefore still looks its age, but is now sound in wind and limb, and stands ready among the trees to welcome its 21st-century guests.

*The Landmark Trust is a building preservation charity that rescues historic buildings at risk and lets them for holidays. Ingestre Pavilion sleeps up to 6 people. To book the building or any other Landmark property for a holiday, please contact us.*