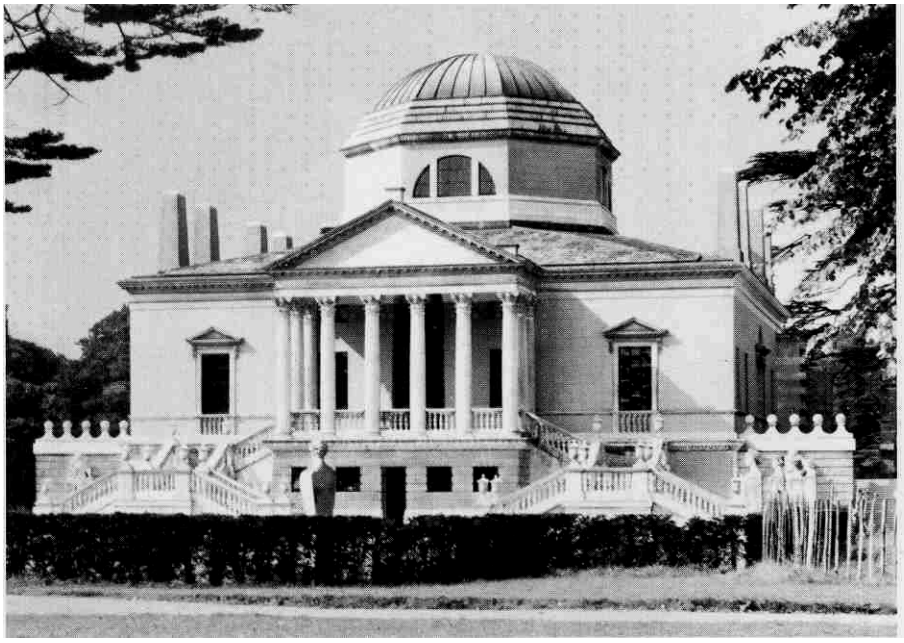
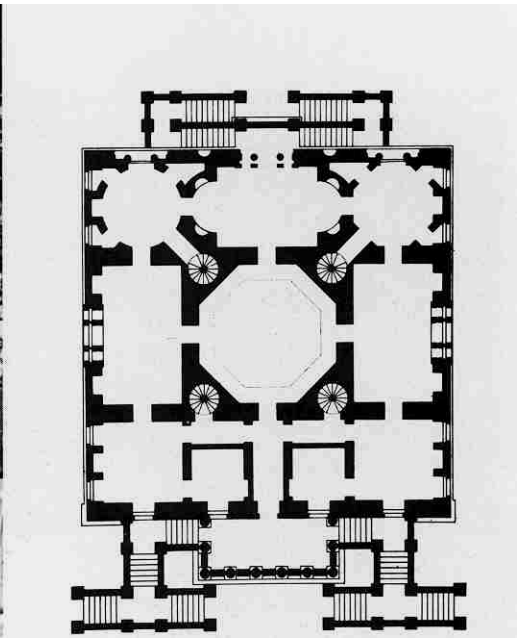
Excerpted from Janson, History of Art, 5th ed., 655-658, 691 – 696.

Neoclassical and Romantic Architecture





868. LORD BURLINGTON and WILLIAM KENT. Chiswick House. Begun 1725.

869. Plan of Chiswick House near London.

England

THE PALLADIAN REVIVAL. England was the birthplace of Neoclassicism in architecture, as it had been in the forefront of painting and sculpture: The earliest sign of this attitude was the Palladian revival in the 1720s, sponsored by the wealthy amateur Richard Boyle, Lord Burlington (1694-1753). Chiswick House (figs. 868 and 869), adapted from the Villa Rotonda (see figs. 702 and 703), is compact, simple, and geometric—the antithesis of the Baroque pomp of Blenheim Palace. What distinguishes this style from earlier classicisms is less its external appearance than its motivation. Instead of merely reasserting the superior authority of the ancients, it claimed to satisfy the demands of reason, and thus to be more "natural" than the Baroque, which at the time was identified with Tory policies by the Whig opposition, thus beginning an association between Neoclassicism and liberal politics that was to continue through the French Revolution. This rationalism helps to explain the abstract, segmented look of Chiswick House. The surfaces are flat and unbroken, the ornament is meager, and the temple portico juts out abruptly from the block-like body of the structure.

THE ENGLISH GARDEN. Should such a villa be set in a geometric, formal garden, like Le Notre's at Versailles? Indeed not, Lord Burlington and his circle maintained. That would be unnatural, hence contrary to reason, so they invented what became known all over Europe as "the English landscape garden. " Carefully planned to look unplanned, with winding paths, irregularly spaced clumps of trees, and little lakes and rivers instead of symmetrical basins and canals, the "reasonable" garden must seem as unbounded, as full of surprise and variety, as nature itself. It must, in a word, be "picturesque," like the landscapes of Claude Lorraine (fig. 811), which English landscape architects now took as their source of inspiration. A standard feature was the inclusion of little temples half concealed by the shrubbery, or artificial ruins, "to draw sorrowful reflections from the soul. "

870. HENRY FLITCROFT and HENRY HOARE. Landscape garden with Temple of Apollo, Stourhead, England. 1744-65

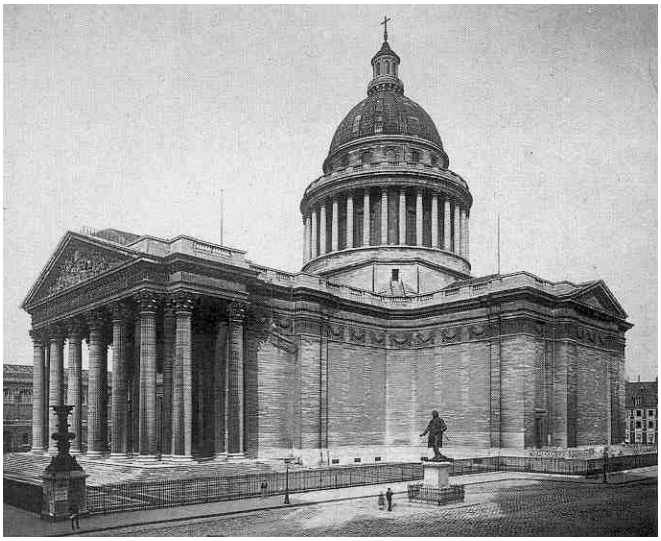
Such sentiments were not new. They had often been expressed before in poetry and painting. But to project them onto nature itself, through

planned irregularity, was a new idea. The landscape garden, a work of art intended not to look like a work of art, blurred the long-established demarcation between artifice and reality, and thus set an important precedent for the revival styles to come. After all, the landscape garden stands in the same relation to nature as a synthetic ruin to an authentic one, or a Neoclassic or Neo-Gothic building to its ancient or medieval model. When the fashion spread to the other side of the Channel, it was welcomed not only as a new way to layout gardens but as a vehicle of Romantic emotion.

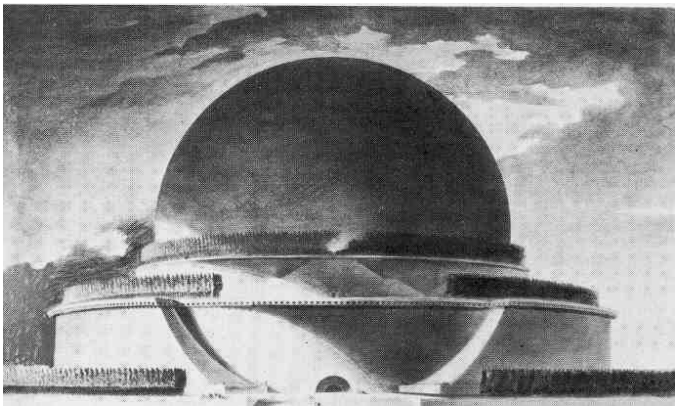
STOURHEAD. Of all the landscape gardens laid out in England in the mid-eighteenth century, the one at Stourhead most nearly retains its original appearance. Its creators, the banker Henry Hoare and the designer Henry Flitcroft (1697-1769), were both enthusiastic followers of Lord Burlington and William Kent. Stourhead is unique not only for its fine preservation but also for the owner's active role in planning every detail of its development. Our view (fig. 870) is across a small lake made by damming the river Stour. High on the far shore is the Temple of Apollo modeled on the Temple of Venus at Baalbek (see fig. 262), which became known in the West only after 1757. Occupying other focal points at Stourhead are a grotto, a Temple of Venus, a Pantheon, a genuine Gothic cross, and a neo-medieval tower built to commemorate King Alfred the Great, the "Father of His People."

France

SOUFFLOT. The rationalist movement came somewhat later in France. Its first great monument, the Pantheon in Paris (fig. 871), by Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780), was built as the church of Ste.-Genevieve, but secularized during the Revolution. As with so much else in eighteenth-century France, the building looks back to the preceding century, in this case Hardouin-Mansart's Church of the Invalides (fig. 819). Its dome, interestingly enough, is derived from St. Paul's
Cathedral in London (see fig. 825), indicating England's new importance for Continental architects. The smooth, sparsely decorated surfaces are abstractly severe, akin to those of Chiswick House (an effect further emphasized by later walling in the windows), while the huge portico is modeled directly on ancient Roman temples. From this coolly precise exterior we would never suspect that Soufflot also had a strong interest in Gothic churches. He admired them, not for the seeming miracles they perform but for their structural elegance—a rationalist version of Guarini's point of view (see fig. 764). His ideal, in fact, was "to combine the classic orders with the lightness so admirably displayed by certain Gothic buildings. " Soufflot, however, did not study Gothic architecture in detail, as later generations of architects would.



871. JACQUES-GERMAIN SOUFFLOT. The Pantheon (Ste.-Genevieve), Paris. 1755-92



872. ETIENNE-LOUIS BOULLEE. Project for a Memorial to Isaac Newton. 1784. Ink and wash drawing, 15 1/2 x 25 1/2". Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

BOULLEE. Etienne-Louis Boullee (1728-1799) was half a generation younger than Soufflot and far more daring. He began as a painter and retired early, but though he built little, his teaching at the Royal Academy helped to create a tradition of visionary architecture that flourished during the last third of the century and the early years of the next. Boullee's ideal was an architecture of "majestic nobility," an effect he sought to achieve by combining huge, simple masses. Most of his designs were for structures on a scale so enormous that they could hardly be built even today.

He hailed the sphere as the perfect form, since no trick of perspective can alter its appearance (except, of course, its apparent size). Thus he projected a memorial to Isaac Newton as a gigantic hollow sphere, mirroring the universe (fig. 872). "0 Newton!" he exclaimed, "I conceived the idea of

surrounding you with your discovery, and thus, somehow, of surrounding you with yourself. " The interior was to be bare, apart from an empty sarcophagus symbolizing the mortal remains of the great man, but the surface of its upper half was pierced by countless small holes, points of light meant to give the illusion of stars. Bathed in deep shadow, Boullee's plan for the memorial to Newton has a striking pictorialism inspired in part by the *Prison Caprices* of Piranesi. Plans such as this have a utopian grandeur that dwarfs the boldest ambitions of earlier architects. Largely forgotten during most of the nineteenth century, Boullee was rediscovered in the early twentieth, when architects again dared to "think the unthinkable."

LEDOUX. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806) was the opposite of Boullee: an architect who built much and turned to theory only late in his career. Yet his work quickly developed visionary qualities that are readily apparent in his most important achievement, the 50 tollgates he designed for the new walls around Paris in 1785-89, of which only four still exist. (The rest were dismantled during the French Revolution.) Our example (fig. 873) shows a remarkable sense of geometry placed at the service of a singular imagination. Ledoux has mounted a huge rotunda on a square base, which is entered through a Greek portico supported by pillars instead of columns. (All four sides are identical in appearance.) Although the structure derives from antiquity, the effect is anything but classical. Visually the portico seems almost crushed by the burden of the rotunda, whose massiveness is barely relieved by the strangely medieval-looking screen of arches over paired columns. Implicit in the radically simplified forms and decidedly odd proportions is a critique of all earlier examples of the same type, from the Roman Pantheon through Soufflot's Ste.-Genevieve (fig.871). The building, nearly Mannerist in its gestures, is among the most peculiar of any before Wright's Guggenheim Museum, which may be regarded as its descendant.

873. CLAUDE-NICOLAS LEDOUX. Barriere de Villette (after restoration), Paris. 1785-89

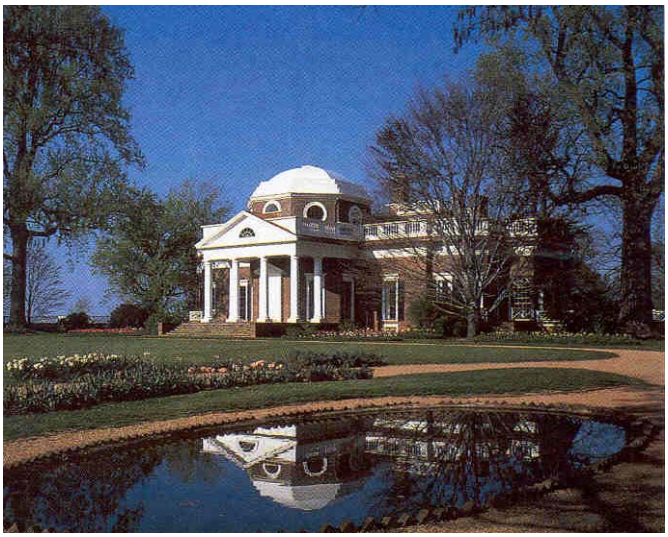
Neoclassicism and the Antique

The mid-eighteenth century was greatly stirred by two experiences: the rediscovery of Greek art as the original source of classic style, and the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, which for the first time revealed the daily life of the ancients and the full range of their arts and crafts. Richly illustrated books about the Acropolis at Athens, the temples at Paestum, and the finds at Herculaneum and Pompeii were published in England and France. Archaeology caught everyone's imagination. From this came a new style of interior decoration. The Greek phase of this revival proved necessarily limited, as only a narrow range of household furnishings was known at second hand from paintings and sculpture, such as our *Grave Stele of Hegeso*. When they wanted to work in a Greek style, designers turned chiefly to architecture, whose vocabulary could be readily adapted to large pieces of furniture where it was commingled with Roman elements. Thus it was, for the most part, a classicism of particulars.

874. ROBERT ADAM. The Library, Kenwood, London. 1767-69

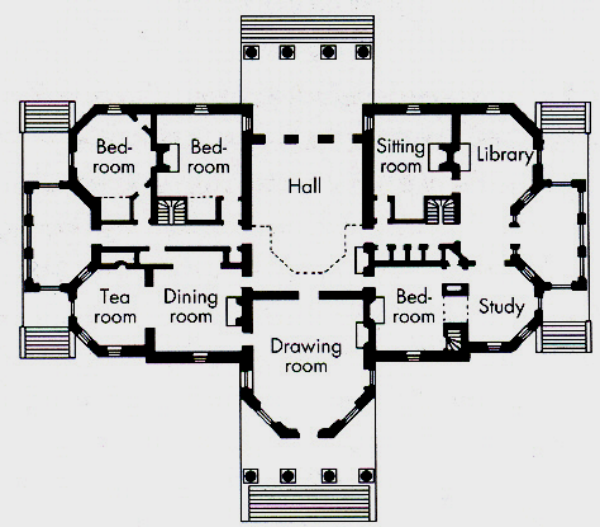
ADAM. The Neoclassical style was epitomized by the work of the Englishman Robert Adam (1728-1792). His friendship with Piranesi in Rome reinforced Adam's goal of arriving at a personal style based on the antique without slavishly imitating it. His genius is seen most fully in the interiors he designed in the 1760s for palatial homes. Because he commanded an extraordinarily wide vocabulary, each room is different; yet the syntax remains distinctive to him. The library wing he added to Kenwood (fig. 874) shows Adam at his finest. Clearly Roman in inspiration (compare fig. 259), it is covered with a barrel vault connected at either end to an apse that is separated by a screen of Corinthian columns. He was concerned above all with movement, but this must be

understood not in terms of Baroque dynamism or Rococo ornamentation but the careful balance of varied shapes and proportions. The play of semi-circles, half-domes, and arches lends an air of festive grace. The library thus provides an apt setting for "the parade, the convenience, and the social pleasures of life," since it was also a room "for receiving company." This intention was in keeping with Adam's personality, which was at ease with the aristocratic milieu in which he moved. The room owes much of its charm to the paintings by Antonio Zucchi (1762-1795), later the husband of Angelica Kauffmann, who also worked for Adam, and the stucco ornament by Adam's plasterer Joseph Rose, which was adapted from Roman examples. The color, too, was in daring contrast to the stark white that was widely preferred for interiors at the time. The effect, stately yet intimate, echoes the delicacy of Rococo interiors (Adam had stayed in Paris in 1754 before going to Rome) but with a characteristically Neoclassic insistence on planar surfaces, symmetry, and geometric precision.



875. THOMAS JEFFERSON. Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia. 1770-84; 1796-1806

876. Plan of Monticello



JEFFERSON. Meanwhile, the Palladianism launched by Lord Burlington had spread overseas to the American Colonies, where it became known as the Georgian style. An example of great distinction is Thomas Jefferson 's house, Monticello (figs. 875 and 876). Built of brick with wood trim, it is not so doctrinaire in design as Chiswick House. (Note the less compact plan and the numerous windows.) Instead of using the Corinthian order, Jefferson (1743-1826) chose the Roman Doric, which Adam had helped to legitimize as an alternative to the stark simplicity favored by Lord Burlington, although the late eighteenth century came to favor the heavier and more austere Greek Doric.

The Classic and Gothic Revivals

The late eighteenth century, as we noted before, had come to favor the heavier and more austere Greek Doric over the Roman. This "Greek revival " phase of Neoclassicism was pioneered on a small scale in England, but was quickly taken up everywhere, since it was believed to embody more of the "noble simplicity and calm grandeur" of classical Greece than did the later, less " masculine " orders. Greek Doric was also the least flexible order, hence particularly difficult to adapt to modern tasks even when combined with Roman or Renaissance elements. Only rarely could Greek Doric architecture furnish a direct model for Neoclassic structures. We instead find adaptations of it combined with elements derived from the other Greek orders.

SCHINKEL. The Altes Museum (Old Museum; fig. 924) by Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) is a spectacular example of the Greek revival. The main entrance looks like a Doric temple seen from the side, but with Ionic columns strung across a Corinthian order. The building is notable for its bold design and refined proportions. Schinkel, an architect of great ability, began as a painter in the style of Caspar David Friedrich (see page 679) and also worked

924. KARL FRIEDRICH SCHINKEL. Altes Museum, Berlin. 1824-28

as a stage designer before joining the Berlin public works office, which he later headed. Hence, he knew well how to infuse architecture with Romantic associations and a theatrical flair worthy of Piranesi. Schinkel's first love was the Gothic, and although most of his public buildings are in a Greek style, they retain a strong element of the picturesque. Here the monumental facade, with its broad expanse of columns, is stretched to an enormous width. The measured cadence is intended to establish a contemplative mood appropriate to viewing art in a repository of antiquities. Schinkel set a precedent that was soon taken up everywhere. He was the first to treat a museum as a temple of the arts. Such an association could find sanction in the classical past: the small *pinakotheke* (picture gallery) at the entrance to the Acropolis. The Altes Museum expresses the veneration of ancient Greece in the land of Winckelmann and Mengs. To the poet Goethe, it remained the pinnacle of civilization. The Altes Museum is, furthermore, testament to the enlightened attitude that gave rise to art museums, galleries, and academies on both sides of the Atlantic during the nineteenth century. At the same time, the Greek style served the imperial ambitions of Prussia, which emerged as a major power at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The imposing grandeur of the Altes Museum proclaims Berlin as the new Athens, with Kaiser Wilhelm III as a modern Pericles.

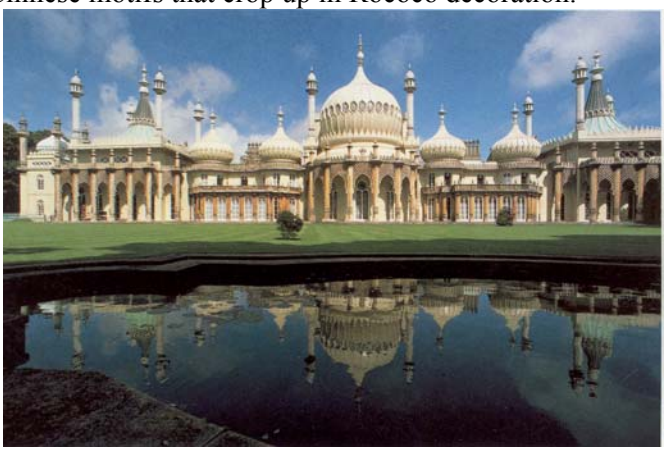
It is characteristic of Romanticism that at the time architects launched the classical revival, they also started a Gothic revival. England was far in advance here, as it was in the development of Romantic literature and painting. Gothic forms had never wholly disappeared in England. They were used on occasion for special purposes, even by Sir Christopher Wren and Sir John Vanbrugh, but these were survivals of an authentic, if outmoded, tradition. The conscious revival, by contrast, was linked with the cult of the picturesque, and with the vogue for medieval (and pseudomedieval) romances.

925. HORACE WALPOLE, with WILLIAM ROBINSON and others. Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. 1749-77

926. Interior, Strawberry Hill

WALPOLE. In this spirit Horace Walpole (1717-1797), midway in the eighteenth century, enlarged and "gothicized" his country house, Strawberry Hill (figs. 925 and 926), a process that took some two decades and involved his circle of friends (including Robert Adam, who was responsible for the round tower). On the exterior, the rambling structure has a studied irregularity that is decidedly picturesque. Inside, most of the elements were copied or faithfully adapted from authentic Gothic sources. The screen in Holbein Chamber (fig. 926) is derived from agate at Rouen, while the chimney is related to a tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. Although Walpole associated the Gothic with the pathos of the sublime, he acknowledged that the house is "pretty and gay." The dainty, flat surfaces remind us strongly of Robert Adam (see page 3): the interior looks almost as if it were decorated with lace-paper doilies. This playfulness, so free of dogma, gives Strawberry Hill its special charm. Gothic here is still an "exotic" style. It appeals because it is strange, but for that very reason it must be "translated," like a medieval romance, or like the Chinese motifs that crop up in Rococo decoration.

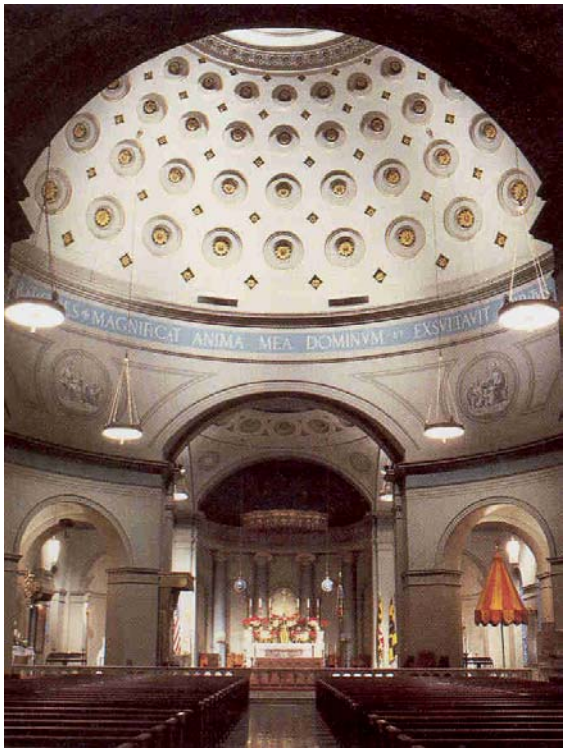
NASH. The Romantic imagination saw the Gothic and the mysterious East in much the same light. The masterpiece in this vein is the Royal Pavilion at Brighton (fig. 927), created half a century.1ater by John Nash (1752-1835). The greatest architect of the English picturesque, he commanded the full range of revival styles, which here have been combined to brilliant effect. The style of this "stately pleasure dome" is a cream-puff version of the Taj Mahal. Over a Neo-Palladian building Nash imposed a facade of cast-iron domes, minarets, and lacy screens, with Chinese and even Gothic motifs thrown in for good measure; hence, it was known as Indian Gothic.

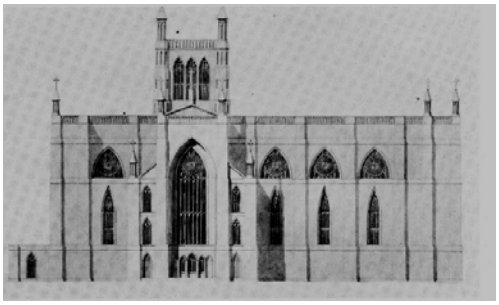


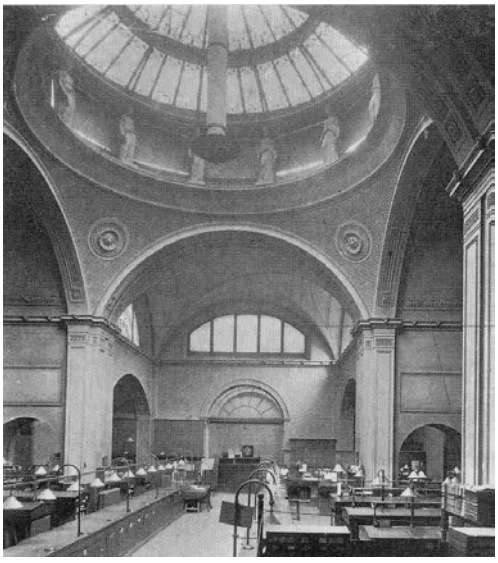
927. JOHN NASH. The Royal Pavilion, Brighton. 1815-18

LATROBE. By 1800 the Gothic was a fully acceptable alternative to the Greek revival as a style for major churches. Benjamin Latrobe (1764-1820), an Anglo-American who under Jefferson became the most influential architect of "Federal" Neoclassicism, submitted a design in each style for the Cathedral in Baltimore. In this he may be called a disciple of the English architect John Soane (1753-1837), who also worked in a variety of revival styles. The Neoclassic one was chosen, but it might well have been the Neo-Gothic. The exterior of the present building (fig. 928) has walls that resemble Soufflot's Pantheon (see page 2), a dome of more severe design, a temple front, and bell towers of disguised Gothic-Baroque ancestry. (The bulbous crowns are not his work.)

928. BENJAMIN LATROBE. Baltimore Cathedral (Basilica of the Assumption), Baltimore, Maryland. Begun 1805
929. (right) Interior, Baltimore Cathedral
930. (below) BENJAMIN LATROBE. Alternative design for Baltimore Cathedral







931. SIR JOHN SOANE. Consols' Office, Bank of England, London (destroyed), 1794

Far more distinguished is the interior (right). Although inspired by the domed and vaulted spaces of ancient Rome, especially the Pantheon, Latrobe was not interested in archaeological correctness. The "muscularity" of Roman structures has been suppressed. The delicate moldings, profiles, and coffers are derived straight from Robert Adam (see page 3); they are no more than linear accents that do not disturb the continuous, abstract surfaces. Here Latrobe shows how much he had learned from Soane's masterpiece, the Bank of England in London, before his departure from that city in 1796. Unfortunately, the bank was largely destroyed in 1927, but it is still known from photographs (left). Like Adam, Soane was enthused by Piranesi's epic architectural fantasies, which he joined with the latest French theories. In Latrobe's Romantic interpretation, the spatial qualities of ancient architecture have acquired the visionary quality of Boullee's memorial to Isaac Newton (see page 2)—vast, pure, sublime. The strangely weightless interior presents almost that combination of classic form and Gothic lightness first postulated by Soufflot. It also shows the free and imaginative look of the mature Neoclassic style, when handled by a gifted architect. Had the Gothic design (fig. 930) been chosen, the exterior might have been more striking, but the interior probably less impressive. Like most Romantic architects seeking the sublime, Latrobe viewed Gothic churches "from the outside in " –as mysterious, looming structures silhouetted against the sky—but nourished his spatial fantasy on Roman monuments.

After 1800, the choice between classical and Gothic modes was more often resolved in favor of Gothic. Nationalist sentiments, strengthened in the Napoleonic wars, became important factors. England, France, and Germany each tended to think that Gothic expressed its particular national genius. Certain theorists (notably John Ruskin) also regarded Gothic as superior for ethical or religious reasons on the grounds that it was "honest" and "Christian."

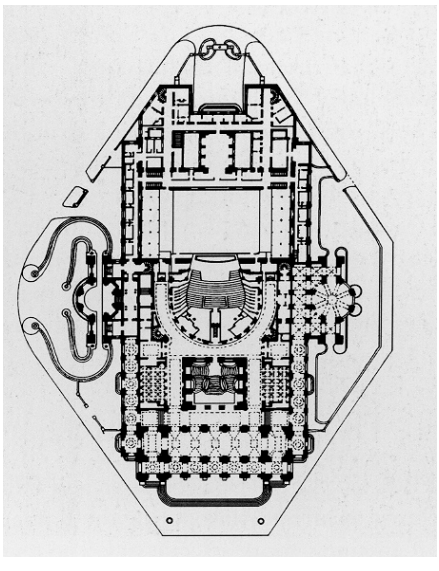
BARRY AND PUGIN. All these considerations lie behind the design by Sir Charles Barry (1785-1860) and A. N. Welby Pugin (1812-1852) for the Houses of Parliament in London, the largest monument of the Gothic revival (fig. 932). As the seat of a large and complex governmental apparatus, but at the same time as a focus of patriotic feeling, it presents a curious mixture: repetitious symmetry governs the main body of the structure and picturesque irregularity its silhouette. The building is indeed a contradiction in terms, for it imposes Pugin's Gothic vocabulary, inspired by the later English Perpendicular (compare fig, 471), onto the classically conceived structure by Barry, with results that satisfied neither. Nevertheless the Houses of Parliament admirably convey the grandeur of Victorian England at the height of its power.

932. SIR CHARLES BARRY and A. N. WELBY PUGIN. The Houses of Parliament, London. Begun 1836

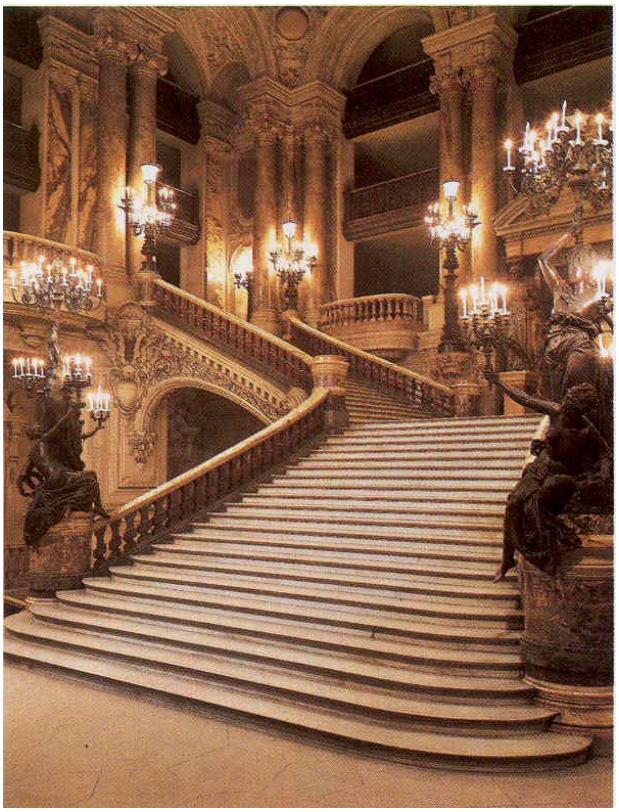
Neo-Baroque

935. CHARLES GARNIER. The Opera, Paris. 1861-74

934. Plan of the Opera



GARNIER. Meanwhile the stylistic alternatives were continually increased for architects by other revivals. When, by mid-century, the Renaissance, and then the Baroque; returned to favor, the revival movement had come full circle: Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque replaced the Neoclassical. This final phase of Romantic architecture, which dominated the years 1850-75 and lingered through 1900, is epitomized in the Paris Opera (figs. 933-35), designed by Charles Garnier (1825-1898). The Opera was the culmination of Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann's plan to modernize Paris under



933. CHARLES GARNIER. Grand Staircase, the Opera, Paris

Napoleon III, for it is the focal point for a series of main avenues that converge on it from all sides. Although the building was not completed until after the fall of the Second Empire, the opulence of its Beaux-Arts style typified the new Paris. The building is a masterpiece of eclecticism. The fluid curves of the Grand Staircase, for example, recall the Vestibule of the Laurentian Library. The massing of the main entrance is reminiscent of Lescot's Square Court of the Louvre. But the paired columns of the facade, "quoted" from Perrault's East Front of the Louvre, are combined with a smaller order, in a fashion suggested by Michelangelo's Palazzo dei Conservatori. The other entrance consists of a temple front. The totality consciously suggests a palace of the arts combined with a temple of the arts. The theatrical effect projects the festive air of a crowd gathering before the opening curtain. Its Neo-Baroque quality derives more from the profusion of sculpture—including Carpeaux's *The Dance*—and ornament than from its architectural vocabulary. The whole building looks "overdressed," its luxurious vulgarity so naive as to be disarming. It reflects the taste of the beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution, newly rich and powerful, who saw themselves as the heirs of the old aristocracy. For a comparably extravagant display, we must turn to Sansovino's Library of St. Mark's, which celebrates the wealth of Venice. Small wonder, then, that magnates found the styles predating the French Revolution more appealing than Neo-classical or Neo-Gothic.