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William and Mary: The Court Divided

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Good evening and welcome to the last in my series of lectures this year with the overall title Theatres of Revolution: The architecture of disruption. Over the last year we have followed the first Stuart King from Scotland, via Denmark to London where he set up and built an extremely unusual suite of residences, you wouldn't even call them palaces; In my second lecture we considered the fortunes of Charles I during the civil war and the way he set up Oxford Colleges and medieval castles to be royal houses. My last lecture looked at Charles II in exile living in the Channel Islands, France and the Low Countries and how he managed to maintain a semblance of regality. Tonight we come to the final Revolution: the so-called glorious revolution of 1688 and, like my last lecture, we will spend much of this evening out of England in the Low Countries, because, of course William III was a Dutchman who came to the British throne as James II fled the country.

But perhaps I should take up the story tonight where I left off last time. Because as Charles II sailed for England to take his Crown in 1660 one of those who saw him off at the quayside in Scheveningen in the Dutch Republic was the nine year old William of Orange, who would, unbeknown to everyone present, one day be King of Britain. In 1660 young William was a ward of the Dutch state and the role of Stadtholder, which his father had held till his sudden death in 1650, was in abeyance. The Stadtholder was not a sovereign head of state, he was the first and supreme servant of the States of Holland and head of the Dutch army. In 1673 William Temple, the English Ambassador to the Hague described the ingredients of the Dutch constitution as 'the freedom of the cities, the sovereignty of the Provinces, the … constitution of the union, and the authority of the princes of Orange'. In other words, the Stadholder's powers relied on a subtle interplay of cities, provinces and the estates general rather than some right to rule through birth.

The House of Orange Nassau, which the William of Orange became head of while in his mother's womb, was a European dynasty closely related to the royal families of England, France and several German princely states. They had substantial private revenues of perhaps a million guilders a year from their estates in the Dutch Republic, France and Germany, maintained a series of magnificent residences and hosted a populous court. The ancient seat of the Nassau dynasty was at Breda, where a massive square, moated castle was begun in the 1530s and furnished by William's grandfather with a great series of tapestries celebrating members of the house of Nassau. By the time William's father became Stadtholder in 1647 the favoured family residence was Honselaersdijk, seven miles from The Hague towards Delft.

Honselaersdijk had been refined over a long period between 1621 and 1646 as the principal summer residence for the Orange court, with space for state receptions and formal events. Set in fine hunting country, it was also furnished with extensive stables. Its layout was heavily influenced by the Palais de Luxembourg. The main block was connected to two pavilions by galleries that made up three sides of a courtyard. A colonnade and gallery closed the fourth side. On the first floor were symmetrical apartments sharing a hall and leading to antechambers. In square pavilions at each corner were the presence chambers, bedchambers and closets, each connected to a long gallery.

While Honselaersdijk was closest thing William's father had to a modern residence of state, he also owned two hunting lodges. Huis ter Nieuburgh was begun, five miles east of the Hague, at Ryijswijk in 1630, as a private lodge, without accommodation for court officials. It was also designed after the French Pavilion system but not in a courtyard - rather as a single range. Here two remote pavilions were linked by galleries to a central block that contained the principal rooms. His other lodge was at Dieren in Gelderland on the south-eastern border of the

excellent hunting grounds of the Veluwe. This was also inherited by William from his father who had purchased it in 1647. In the first part of his reign as Stadholder William spent as much as ten weeks a year here hunting far and wide.

In 1645 William's grandmother had begun Huis ten Bosch (literally House in the Wood) as her dower house. Right beside the Hague, this was designed by Pieter Post, the Stadtholder's official architect, with the assistance of Jacob van Campen who was the chief exponent of Dutch Classical architecture. The house was a square villa with a central domed hall that became a celebration of the Orange family in the way that the Banqueting House at Whitehall was a celebration of the Stuarts. Around the central hall were two sets of apartments each comprising an ante-room, used as a presence chamber with a canopy of state, this led to a bedchamber with a bed of state behind a balustrade, beyond was a large private closet, a smaller closet and a dressing room. Above, on the second floor, was an identical arrangement.

In 1668 William turned eighteen and his minority came to an end. He inherited his estates, their income, and all these residences, apart from Huis ten Bosch in which his grandmother still lived, and which came to him in 1686. At the same time, he entered political life starting to attend meetings of the Council of State as an ordinary member. While William was a rich man, he was also owed considerable sums by the Stuarts who his family had loyally supported during the Civil War and interregnum. It was to reclaim these funds that William accepted an invitation from his uncle, Charles II, in 1670 to travel to England. The twenty-year-old prince arrived at Whitehall in November and was given specially fitted up lodgings in the Cockpit. He remained at the English court until the end of February 1671 being entertained in the most lavish style. He visited Windsor Castle, Oxford and Cambridge, he went to the races at Newmarket, was dined by the Lord Mayor of London and spent many nights at the king's table. On the whole he made a good impression, though he was thought to be a bit dour and reserved. The king encouraged him to get drunk one evening, but William could not hold his drink and ended up smashing the windows of the Maids of Honour's lodgings.

William had no idea that his duplicitous uncle had concluded a secret treaty with France and that he would declare war on the United Provinces the following year. In 1672, as the English led an attack by sea, Louis XIV's armies poured over the border into the Spanish Netherlands and pressed on towards the United Provinces. The Dutch were hopelessly unprepared, and their army collapsed like a deflating balloon; in July 1672 Louis XIV made a triumphal entry into Utrecht. William was now their only hope and, by popular acclaim, was made Captain General of the Dutch army and Stadholder. The situation was catastrophic; described by the English poet, Andrew Marvell, as 'an earthquake, a hurricane and the deluge'. It was not only William's family name that made him first the leader and then the hero of the Dutch fightback, he quickly proved himself to be a talent on campaign and in the council chamber. Nevertheless, his struggle against France would continue for the rest of his life - becoming almost the reason for it.

Peace was concluded with England in early 1674 and a few months later William bought a farmhouse, Huis Soestdijk in the province of Utrecht. While this was certainly to provide new hunting grounds, it was also to establish a seat in the west of the country where the Oranges had little presence. In 1670 William had appointed as his personal architect Maurits Post, the 25-year-old son of the former Stadtholder's architect Pieter Post. Post extended the original farmhouse adding two wings for William and a future consort; unusually, the main rooms were on the ground floor approached, not by a grand staircase, but by a common entrance hall. The consort's side had only an antechamber, a bedchamber and a gallery; William's side had an additional room – a dining room. The exterior was extremely plain and restrained but inside the house was densely decorated with contemporary paintings. Hondecoeter painted two grand hunting still-lifes set in arched niches in the entrance hall. The orange tree in the large garden vase alludes to the House of Orange. The park is populated by all kinds of birds, including peacocks and a turkey.

Although William had inherited fine gardens laid out by his grandfather, at Soestdijk he was to create his own. Gardening became, with hunting, his greatest passion, and Soestdijk was his first experiment, undertaken with the collaboration of Hans Willem Bentinck, his closest friend and fellow gardening fanatic. The house was flanked by two compartments containing a pair of parterres each with a great statue in the middle. The parterres were

bounded by orchards of dwarf fruit trees planted in rows. Great avenues thrust their way out from this inner core penetrating the parkland where deer roamed free.

As well as architecture and gardening, a more peaceful life caused William to think about matrimony. Despite England's double dealing it was clear to him that a marriage with Mary Stuart, Charles II niece, and the Duke of York's eldest daughter would potentially secure him the British throne. Meanwhile Charles II saw the benefits of marrying her to William, cementing his shaky Protestant credentials at home without, he believed, destroying his relationship with France. Before William made his move, he made detailed enquiries into what Mary was like, he had enough trouble in his life, he told the English Ambassador at the Hague, without a wife who might add to it. Fully satisfied with what he heard; William made his way to England in October 1677 to discuss a possible marriage. Now he was head of state and his arrival demanded considerable expense and meticulous planning.

The Stadholder was received by Charles II at Newmarket where he was accommodated in the Duke of Ormond's house and furnished with a retinue of fifty English attendants who joined forty of his own. At Whitehall the Duke of York vacated his lodgings on the waterside at the end of the matted gallery in preparation for William's arrival. The wardrobe refurnished the apartments and hired in new furniture including four large tables set up to feed William's entourage twice a day. Mary's lodgings were at St. James's and it was there that her father told her that she was to marry William in just a few days' time. They married on William's 27th birthday at nine in the evening in Mary's bedroom at St. James's and, after the blessing, she was undressed and taken to her bed. When William was safely tucked in beside her, the king drew the curtains crying 'Now nephew to your work! Hey! St. George for England!' and the couple were left to get to know each other.

William and Mary arrived in Holland in terrible weather after a ghastly crossing; they made straight for Honselaersdijk where Mary and her ladies were escorted to her apartment. What expectations the tall, dark and vivacious fifteen-year-old had is not known. But she was probably pleasantly surprised by the elegant and symmetrical house with its beautiful gardens and well-ordered and compact lodgings. Only the year before, writing to her friend and confidant Frances Apsley, she reflected on what happiness was, and mused 'I could live and be content with a cottage in the country and a cow, a stiff petticoat and waistcoat in the summer, and cloth in winter; a little garden to live upon the fruit & herbs it yields'. Honselaersdijk and her husband's hunting lodges may have fulfilled that fantasy. They were everything her homes at St. James's and Richmond were not. They were domestic, comfortable, modern and clean.

Mary had five days to explore her new home and prepare for her formal entry to the Hague. This was conducted with great splendour by the Estates General and included the obligatory triumphal arches, under which Mary's carriage passed, crushing beneath its wheels the sweet herbs strewn by 24 young virgins. She arrived at the Binnenhof, the official residence of the Stadtholder and seat of government, in English terms, the equivalent to Whitehall and Westminster. Although it belonged to the States of Holland it housed the Stadholder's quarters: a long range containing two suites of apartments one above the other for the Stadholder and his consort. They had been extended and redecorated in 1632-4 and within months of his marriage he had them extended again.

The Stadholder's lodgings were on two floors linked by a large stair that gave access to both. The first room was for the guards and, after an anteroom, there was the so-called great room, that led to a drawing room. Beyond this came William's new rooms, the most important of which was a state bedchamber containing an alcove for a state bed. Beyond a small cabinet was a long gallery at the end of which was a large room called, in the 18th century, the music room. The ceiling of Mary's bedroom, beautifully painted with representations of morning and evening, is all that survives, now in the Rijksmuseum. Although he was brought up in the Binnenhof, William did not like living there, he hated the crowds of suitors; only the theatre would hold him there longer than a few days: he ordered the conversion of the old riding school into a theatre and engaged players from France Italy and Flanders to perform.

The marriage treaty allowed Mary £4,000 a year, a residence in the Hauge, another in the country and freedom to practice as an Anglican. It was this last provision that, from an English point of view, was vital as Mary, who was second in line to the throne, had to be protected from becoming contaminated by Dutch Calvinism. To safeguard

her, the Bishop of London appointed George Hooper, one of the archbishop's chaplains, to be her almoner. When he arrived in the Dutch Republic, soon after Mary, and he found that none of William's houses had private chapels and that, because his residences were so small there was no space to put one near Mary's lodgings. At the Binnenhof Mary vacated her dining room and it was fitted up with a communion table raised up on two steps and a chair for her near it. William, who had been brought up to be a strict Calvinist, was disparaging about the little closet, but Mary diligently said her prayers there every day.

William's household had thirteen noblemen in attendance, twenty-four household officials, twenty-six footmen in green liveries, twenty-two pages dressed in blue satin, crimson and gold, thirty-two manservants, twenty-seven swiss guards in blue cloaks, three chambermaids and fifteen in the kitchens. Mary's household was another forty people mainly comprising her English attendants, in all the combined household was some 200 people, small compared with the English royal household of around 900, but large even for a great nobleman. The Stadholder's household were well cared for and used the Prince's own physicians and were fed at his tables. At Honselaersdijk and Rijswijk there were extensive kitchen gardens and ice houses producing and storing fresh fruit and vegetables for the court.

Like all seventeenth century princes William was obsessed with hunting and kept a large stable, packs of hounds, and a substantial hunting establishment. Although his hunting lodge at Dieren was sufficient for a bachelor, it was no place for the married Stadtholder and in 1678 William ordered that it be extended. In the early 1680s William and Mary spent quite a bit of time there, and at Soestdijk, retreating with a very small company. While William hunted the queen arranged her Chinese porcelain, did needlework with her ladies and tended the gardens. Mary seems to have been seized by the beauty of the Dutch countryside soon after arriving in Holland and quickly acquired an interest in botany and garden design. At Honselaersdijk an orangery was built, and she received each week flowers in season for her apartments. At Dieren, where there had been no garden, new walks, fountains, grottoes and arbours were laid out for Mary to enjoy while William was hunting.

Mary had an intense sense of her regality which was reinforced by the terms of her marriage which insisted that she be treated with all the honour that she was used to in England. One consequence of this was that William was the only one of sufficient rank to dine with her. As William had previously had an open table with eight or ten companions, the newlyweds at first ate separately, Mary in stiff formality and William with his friends. Then a compromise was reached: William kept a table in the middle of the day and in the evening, he retired to dine with Mary banning political or military conversation and joking and laughing with his wife. Their relationship was unusually intimate for people of their rank, they even slept in the same bed.

Mary's sense of status prevented her forming intimate friendships with the ladies of the Dutch Republic and so passed time in her houses and gardens playing cards, doing needlework, enjoying music, reading and at her prayers. Like many a bored millionaire she was a shopaholic and spent recklessly on luxury goods often leading, and sometimes making, the fashion. In theory her dowry was £4,000 a year but William frequently had to top this up. In the Royal Library at Windsor Castle one of her account books details what she spent on everything from jewellery, through gloves and fans to Chinese porcelain. In a marginal note in 1688 she wrote that she hoped William would 'forgive the debts I have made, if God gives me life I shall pay them, as fast as I can, if not I hope the prince will let none be wronged by my follies'. Despite her profligacy anxiety Mary had an extremely happy life noting on her return to England that she 'had no small reason to doubt if ever I should be so happy in my own country'.

The death of Charles II and the accession of James in February 1685 was completely unexpected and, William and Mary suddenly became next in line to the British throne. Soon a stream of visitors came from England, both those opposing the rule of James II and those sent by James hoping to win support. Now, acutely conscious of their new status, William embarked on an aggrandisement of both his court and residences. Mary had always retained a sense of her regality but this markedly increased after Charles II death; it was noted that now she was served at table by kneeling pages.

William and Mary's elevation almost exactly coincided with an influx of architectural talent to their court. Maurits Post, the Stadholder's architect, had died in 1677 and was succeeded by a man of lesser capability, Johan van Swieten. Other than the construction of an orangery at Honselaersdijk no major commissions came his way and his annual salary of just six hundred guilders a year suggests that he was responsible mainly for minor works and maintenance. The important work of new design was passed to the former sculptor turned architect, Jacob Roman, who first was paid for design work in the Stadtholder's accounts in 1684. Five years later, when William was King, Roman was to inherit the post of Stadtholder's architect, at an increased salary of a thousand florins a year, but before that, he already had won William and Mary's confidence and become their principal architectural designer. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes which had given protection to French Protestants (Huguenots). In the resulting exodus of refugees entering holland was the astonishingly talented and versatile 24-year-old designer Daniel Marot who quickly came to the notice of William and Mary. By 1686 he was so integrated into their architectural projects that he was calling himself 'architect to his highness', although he never occupied the position. Before Marot, work of Dutch architects, like those in England, was confined to the architectural shell of a building and patrons, with their upholsterers and suppliers, decorated interiors to their taste. Marot took control of the whole appearance of William and Mary's houses, gardens and court festivities, integrating architecture, furnishing and planting.

From the mid-1680s, the team of Roman and Marot began to transform the setting of the Stadtholder's court. This can be seen most vividly in an engraving Marot made of a party at Huis ten Bosch in 1686. William's grandmother had left the estate to her daughters in 1675 and, for a decade, they had struggled to maintain the house and gardens. In 1686 William was finally able to persuade them to sell it to him for 10,000 guilders. Mary immediately commissioned Marot to redecorate their apartments and, in December that year, threw a tremendous ball in honour of William. Although he was unable to attend, amongst the guests was the Prince of Brandenburg and numerous ambassadors. Marot took control of the event and his engraving shows the Oranjezaal with a ceiling newly painted by him and the princesses royal crowns prominently displayed above each door. He also redecorated William and Mary's apartments re-hanging the walls with silk, painting two ceilings and re-displaying Mary's porcelain collection.

By this stage Roman and Marot were collaborating on a new venture, a hunting box or Lusthof (literally pleasure house) in the Veluwe not far from Dieren called Huis Het Loo. The medieval castle there was purchased in 1684 and William seems to have approached Louis XIV's Académie Royale de l'Architecture for preliminary designs, probably in late 1684, but if plans were sent it is unlikely that they had much influence as Het Loo is entirely within the pre-existing traditions of stately architecture in the Dutch Republic. The work was tendered in April 1685 and the date on the front of the central block is 1686. The house, which was built on a new site, was essentially a Palladian villa like the Villa Thiene. The main block was square and quadrant colonnades linked it to flanking service blocks. It was built around a central hall and stair leading up to a first-floor hall either side of which were two identical three-room apartments - neat, symmetrical and compact. Similar in plan to any number of contemporary small French country houses, it was, in many ways, rather old fashioned.

The biggest changes after 1685 took place at the ancient Nassau seat of Breda. Here William fashioned the only residence that the contemporary English might call a palace. An English visitor went so far as to say that it was equal to Windsor, though smaller. It, with Honselaarsdijk, was the only residence to possess a throne room and after 1685 a complete suite of royal apartments in the English style. Off a great hall there were three ante rooms before a presence chamber with a throne. Beyond this were the state bedchamber, a cabinet and a dressing room. Beyond the backstairs there were more private lodgings. William furnished the castle with dynastic portraits and antique tapestries There were a suite of tapestries woven by Frederick Hendrick representing members of the house of Nassau, William commissioned three more showing himself and Mary. emphasising his lineage and creating the effect of an ancient family home.

So these were the places in which William and Mary lived in the Dutch Republic. Their houses were prefect jewels, set in beautiful gardens. Sparsely, but richly furnished their neat, compact apartments were clean and well ordered. There was no machinery of state, no rules of etiquette, no fawning court, there was no hungry heir: in short

William and Mary enjoyed considerable domestic freedom and while William was not away fighting the French, they made the most of their domestic existence together.

Unlike King James I who came to London ignorant of the workings of the English Court Mary had been born there and William had made three substantial visits; yet neither were much enamoured by what they found when they took up residence in London in 1688. The queen privately expressed her dismay at what she regarded as the vanities of court ceremonial, particularly as it concerned her coronation and ritual in the chapel royal. But more generally they had designed their lives in Holland to be informal, comfortable and free from free from restricting etiquette. Mary regarded their move to England as a 'loss of liberty'.

But William well knew the power of spectacle, pageantry and show and his first few months in England demonstrated that he was a master of it. He entered Exeter at the head of an army, kettledrums beating, trumpets blaring, hautbois blowing, with 200 black troops from Surinam with white feathers in their caps, 200 Laplanders in black armour, hundreds of cavalry with jangling harness, thousands of flags including a huge pennant flying above William's head 'GOD AND THE PROTESTANT RELIGION', and in the midst of it all surrounded by fifty gentlemen and pages was the Prince of Orange. Each step of the way William took every opportunity to meet the monarchical expectations of both the people and the political class.

Whatever William's personal feelings were about the formality and ceremony of the English Court he knew he had to adopt it, first because he had to demonstrate his legitimacy, and royal power in England was inextricably bound up with the ability to play the part of sovereign. But he also wanted to persuade his new subjects to back his war with France and the best way to do that was to be the magnificent monarch they expected. William's court was different from that of his predecessors, not because he was shy, boorish or Dutch, but because it was a court with a unique dual dynamic and one in which the king had regular and frequent absences abroad. As a result, court ceremonial was episodic, marked by his regular departure in early summer and return in the autumn. As William left London political and fashionable society left for the country while Mary held court at Whitehall sustaining a degree of formal activity through the summer.

Despite the king's opponents complaining that England was now over-run with Dutchmen the reality was that William kept his two administrations entirely separate and a tiny number of Dutch gained political posts in England. Six went to the House of Lords, one onto the Privy Council but otherwise the entire political establishment was English. At court, the key posts went to men who had served William in the Netherlands. Most important was the groom of the stool, head of the king's bedchamber, Hans Willem Bentinck, who had served William since being taken on as a page in 1664 aged 14. Bentinck went on to become earl of Portland and the only Dutchman to sit on the Privy Council. His brother in law, Edward Villiers, Mary's master of the horse in Holland, became the earl of Jersey and Lord Chamberlain and William's second cousin, Hendrick van Nassau-Ouwerkerk, became Master of Horse. These appointments ensured that William was surrounded by close friends while the complexities of English Politics remained with the English Privy Council.

The rest of the court, some thousand posts, went to Englishmen. In 1688-9 William oversaw the re-assemblage of a court on the scale of Charles II, undoing the reforms of James II that had slashed numbers. William also ruled that he would adopt the court regulations established by Charles II thus populating the outer rooms and service areas of royal palaces with people who were geared to the smooth functioning of public ceremonial. Some of this was intensely traditional such as the chapters of the Order of the Garter and Garter feasts held at Windsor. Some of the feasts were huge, the most magnificent, the installation of the earl of Portland involved the consumption of 3 oxen, 18 calves, 25 sheep and vast quantities of poultry.

The most important new ceremonies were the leave-taking and welcoming audiences that framed William's annual travels. In either June or July, the king would receive delegations from the City, the church and the judiciary as well as the aristocracy and gentry to bid him bon voyage. On his return, normally in early October, he would receive a ceremonial welcome lasting several days; very large numbers attended these as they signalled the start of the winter court season. Soon after his return was the City of London Mayor Making that included a great water

pageant; William and Mary watched from the Whitehall balcony surrounded by courtiers after receiving the civic party in their apartments.

The traditional court celebration of November 5th acquired extra meaning as it was also the day that William landed in 1688. The king's birthday was on the 14th and so the celebrations were doubled, there was normally a concert and a ball and sometimes dining in public and fireworks; before 1689 these were at held Whitehall but at the end of the reign at Kensington. On this day London was en fete, the shops were closed, church bells rang, and ordinance at The Tower was discharged. In February was Princess Anne's birthday and, after 1694, this was celebrated with balls, normally held at St. James's. In the summer William would sometimes give concerts in the gardens or gallery at Kensington attended by large numbers of courtiers. William and Mary also loved the theatre; Mary would go publicly in Covent Garden, but William enjoyed plays at court and commissioned a theatre to be built in the great hall at Hampton Court. William and Mary, in fact, presided over the most expensive court of any of the Stuart monarchs and, in due course, were to spend more on court architecture too.

In 1689 William found himself at Whitehall; a vast rambling, overpopulated urban residence lying low beside a polluted river and surrounded by hundreds of belching chimneys. This was not the place for a man who loved small houses in the countryside and suffered badly from asthma. Within days William and Mary had moved out of Westminster to Hampton Court. Mary, of course, knew the palace from her childhood but her memories, if they had been fond, were deceptive: she wrote to a Dutch friend, 'At the moment I am in the country in a place which has been badly neglected, it is about four miles from London but lacks many of the commodities of Dieren (although the house has four or five hundred rooms)'. William 'found the air of Hampton Court agreed so well with him, that he resolved to live the greatest part of the year there; but that palace was so very old built and so irregular, that a design was formed of raising new buildings there for the king's and queen's apartments'. The bed of state which had been at Windsor, the official summer residence of Charles and James, was moved to Hampton Court, and Wren was commissioned to come up with a design.

William, melancholic, homesick, and ill was eager to move in as quickly as possible and orders were given for the court to remove from Whitehall to Hampton Court. The decision was met with horror. Keeping the court out of London was bad for the city's economy and dreadful for the sanity of his ministers, all of whom lived in or near Westminster. So the king was persuaded to look for somewhere closer to Whitehall and quickly settled on the 2nd earl of Nottingham's house in Kensington. Just a month after their coronation William bought it, and its surrounding grounds for £20,000. The Jacobean mansion was no more suitable for William and Mary than Tudor Hampton Court and Wren received a second commission from his new masters to modernise and extend Kensington House. Meanwhile the King and queen rented Holland House in Kensington from where Mary urged on both projects.

It was in this way that King William, in a matter of months of his accession, redrew a centuries old pattern of royal habitation. Whitehall was now the centre of the national bureaucracy; Kensington was to be William and Mary's normal town residence and Hampton Court the palace of state. This arrangement replicated their pattern of existence in Dutch Republic: Whitehall was equivalent to the Binnenhof, a little liked official urban residence; Huis ten Bosch and Kensington the suburban residences close to the capital and Hampton Court the treasure house of state more like Honselaersdijk or Het Loo.

In 1689 Kensington House was a compact Jacobean villa with a central hall and rooms to either side. The idea was to enlarge it by the addition of four corner pavilions and a long gallery connected to an entrance on the east. The south-east pavilion was the kings, of three stories with attics linked by a privy stair that ran the full height of the building. On the ground floor were his privy lodgings, above, on the principal floor, his bedchamber and two closets and above these on the second floor more closets. The north-east pavilion was to contain the council chamber and the north-west pavilion was for the queen, arranged similarly to the king's pavilion. The south-west pavilion contained a stair leading up to the principal floor. In the old house was a shared presence chamber leading to the King's and Queen's pavilions. These arrangements were extremely modest by English standards; there was a single room of state and the monarchs' lodgings were all designed to be private. Kensington was closely based

on William and Mary's houses in the Netherlands: Wren had, in fact, designed a residence planned in the Dutch style.

In 1689 Wren, had been Surveyor of the King's Works for 21 years. He had faithfully served both Charles II and James II as a courtier and a Tory, that is to say a supporter of the Church of England and an opponent of the exclusion of Catholic James from the throne. Thus, Wren was deeply implicated with the old regime; his sympathies lay firmly with the expelled James and his hold on the Surveyorship must have been, at best, uncertain. William and Mary's arrival caused a radical redistribution of government and court offices; over half of all court officials lost their posts, almost all replaced by either William's Dutch compatriots or men who could loosely be described as Whig. Wren was neither.

In all this change Mary was the one strand of continuity. The new queen knew how the court worked socially and politically. Her re-establishment of normal Stuart court life was vital in establishing the legitimacy and efficacy of William's reign. So too was the normal and efficient functioning of the Office of Works, including the immediate construction of two palaces and the completion of the Queen's privy lodgings at Whitehall. In the end only two of the personnel of the Office of Works were replaced in the Williamite purge and their head, Sir Christopher, survived. This was probably due to Mary's favour of a die-hard Stuart courtier and her admiration for the now famous architect of St. Paul's. For Mary the completion of the cathedral was a vital part of the spiritual reformation that she believed England badly needed. Wren was central to the cathedral's future, and everyone knew it.

Design work for both Hampton Court and Kensington therefore took place against the background of uncertainty at the Office of Works and Wren's concerted attempt to secure a fruitful and effective modus operandi with his new patrons. Into this mix we know that William and Mary introduced their own architectural advisors. By December 1689 Jacob Roman was already in London and soon afterwards so too was Daniel Marot. These two had led the translation of the Stadholder's architectural image into a kingly one in the Netherlands.

There is no written evidence that Roman's views were sought on either the design of Kensington or Hampton Court, but he understood William and Mary's liking for modest brick-built houses designed on the pavilion principle. It is entirely possible that the final appearance of Kensington owed something to three-way conversations between Queen Mary, Roman and Wren. If its layout was influenced by Roman to reflect the king and queen's domestic preferences, its interiors too reflected their Dutch tastes. The queen's rooms were decorated with 787 pieces of porcelain arranged in the manner of Daniel Marot like the queen's houses in the Netherlands.

Design work for William's houses in Holland and England was undertaken concurrently. Designs and models were prepared wherever William was and were sent back and forth. At Huis de Voorst, built between 1695 and 1700 by William III for Arnold Joost van Keppel (created Lord Albemarle in 1697), a wooden model seems to have been made in England in about 1695 under Jacob Roman's supervision for the approval of William and Lord Albemarle. In December 1700, while William was at Hampton Court, Charles Hopson, his English master joiner, arrived bearing a model he had made of the staircases at Het Loo. But Kensington, as the private residence of William and Mary, may have been singled out for special attention by William and Mary's Dutch design advisors; a point illustrated by the stylistic relationship between Kensington and Het Loo.

Returning to the Dutch Republic as king in 1691 William realised that Het Loo was too small for the entourage that now accompanied him everywhere and ordered that it be re-cast as a royal palace. The design of Kensington was fresh in his mind and, in fact, provided the model. The original quadrant colonnades were removed and, exactly as at Kensington, Roman added two pavilions to the central block at its corners. He then added two further pavilions to link these to the service wings at the front. In plan he had reproduced Kensington, but the effect of gradually receding compartments focussing on the entrance front was more like Winchester or even Versailles in giving it a sense of scale. At the same time the interiors of the new rooms were upgraded. In the first phase Loo had been very much a hunting lodge, its interiors all of painted timber: the ceilings were boarded and painted with simple clouds. The rooms were now given plaster ceilings with deep mouldings of fruit and flowers. Daniel Marot created a suite of remarkable painted and decorated interiors for the new apartments and for the principal rooms in the old building.

Het Loo also had rooms necessary for a Stadholder and his wife who were now king and queen of Great Britain. For Mary there was a large Anglican chapel with a royal seat facing a pulpit and an altar behind a rail; for William there was a new dining room where he could dine in Public. Marot gave special attention to this with rich, deep painted and gilded plaster mouldings and tapestries integrated into wall compartments. On the first floor the original three-room apartment was supplemented by a second apartment of state with an audience chamber, bedchamber and closet. William continued to use the original bedchamber (or slaepcamer) which, after all overlooked the gardens. The new bedchamber (bedcamer) was a state bedchamber and it contained a monumental angel bed (lit d'ange), an extremely tall and grand structure without foot posts and supported invisibly by chains (notionally by angels).

Mary died before she ever saw the second phase of work at het Loo and William did not use it much before 1698 and so their intended long-term pattern of use cannot be known. But it was seventy miles, a good 20 hours ride, from the Hague, and it is clear that, although William needed a small suite of state rooms, the house was, as explained at the time, a place for the king to withdraw to 'free from wars or weary of government' and English travellers certainly thought it 'rather neat than magnificent'.

So looking at Kensington and Het Loo we can see that the monarchy of William and Mary was not the only thing that was international; their buildings were designed as if they were in one country, with the Dutch architects feeding off the English and the English off the Dutch. At the heart of it all however was a tension, the difference between an ancient monarchy that was conservative, cumbersome, bound by its own rules and regulations and the Stadholdership a unique headship of state that was deliberately not monarchical and allowed its holders to live without the straightjacket of courtly protocol.

What William and Mary created in England attempted to bridge the gap. Kensington was essentially a Dutch country house, Hampton Court, when it was finished was an English palace of state. William knew he needed both to be an effective monarch, but he also knew which one he preferred to live in.

The story of William and Mary concludes my survey of Stuart royal houses. It is the last piece in a jigsaw of English monarchy between 1603 and 1702 – a hundred years of Stuart rule and architecture. James I and William III were both brought up in residences where informality reigned. Courts which were small, intensely personal and adapted to the whims of the sovereign. In order to escape the lumbering formality of the English court James built houses outside London including incredibly un-palatial town houses in Royston and Newmarket where he could live an easy, uncomplicated life. William III did the same, constructing out of town palaces that matched his residences in the Dutch Republic. Both hated Whitehall, the largest, grandest, most public and formal palace in all Europe. Charles I and II however were both wedded to the systems of court etiquette and the architectural structures in which they operated. They both loved Whitehall as a setting for both a court, an art collection and a way of life. However, neither of them were able to enjoy it. Both were forced to recreate the stuffy formality and deference of the English court in circumstances of war and exile. This they did with remarkable success given the catastrophic circumstances in which they found themselves.

All four monarchs, embroiled in dynastic and political revolutions, found the context of their lives disrupted and worked hard to create a setting for them that suited their conception of rule. These theatres of rule, compared with those of the Tudor century before and the Georgian one that followed were unusual, complicated and international. But appreciating that helps us understand the Stuart century of revolution

I'm delighted to say that I have been invited back next year for another series of lectures; I shall be staying in Tudor and Stuart England, but looking at the estates of the power-broking families of the age and I shall be starting with the houses and lands of a family that rose to the greatest height and fell with an almighty crash. The Boleyns. I hope I will see you all in September.