

HALE CHURCH AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, COVENT GARDEN

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ABSTRACT

Several important stages in the building history of St Mary's Church, Hale are, unusually, recorded in the Church Registers from 1631. Because of its similarity, however, to one of the most famous buildings of Inigo Jones – St Paul's Church, Covent Garden – and because it is known that Thomas Archer later added to the church (but it has not been clear exactly what he did), 'myth' and assumption have coloured the architectural history of the little church. By examination of the different styles and use of building materials, and of late nineteenth-century building specifications not considered before, the various milestones in St Mary's architectural history are more accurately analysed. The possibility of the King's Surveyor, Inigo Jones, or his pupil John Webb, being connected with the Hale design is also considered, particularly in light of the recent discovery of important documents concerning the early history of Covent Garden.

INTRODUCTION

The west façade of St Mary's Church, Hale, in the grounds of Hale Park, Hampshire, bears a startling resemblance to the east and west façades (minus the giant portico of the eastern end) of Inigo Jones's St Paul's Church, Covent Garden (Figs 1 & 2). It is a small, rustic building with similar compositional motifs and the Tuscan order of the much larger St Paul's, and because of this similarity there has been some speculation as to the authorship of the design. Construction on St. Paul's began in July 1631, but it has seemed almost impossible that the King's Surveyor would have had anything to do with the design of the remote little church when he was heavily involved with work in the capital. Furthermore, it is known that St Mary's (hereafter Hale

Church) was rebuilt to replace a medieval chapel in 1631–2, and thus it has been considered that this date was impossibly early for it to be related in design to St Paul's, in Covent Garden, for how could anyone else have copied the style of a major London work that was probably still only on the drawing board? However, with the exception of John Harris (1979, 9, 33, 65, pl. 109), who believes the churches must be related, only tentative links have been made by other architectural historians between Hale Church and Inigo Jones. Peter Burman has written of the 'fascinating possibility' that Jones may have been connected with the little church (1974, 265), while an inference of an 'only perhaps' connection earlier between Jones and Thomas Penruddock (the owner of Hale Park estate and house) has also been arrived at, because of the later 1638 lodge design for 'Mr Penruddock' at Hale Park done by Jones's pupil John Webb (Bold, 1989, 161). Moreover, to add to the confusion another analysis of the church has thought that the nave is medieval, the chancel was added in the seventeenth century, and to this Thomas Archer later added 'the transept' and 're-faced the rest in ashlar' (Whiffen, 1973, 32). Further uncertainty has surrounded the nature and dating of the work on Hale Church by Thomas Archer early in the eighteenth century (Stell, 1966, 199).

The evidence for the dates of re-building the small medieval Hale Church in 1631–2 comes from the Church Register for 1631 (HRO). This states: 'This yeare the Church walls were newly Laid and Raysed But the Church Roof was not laid till the next year following at the cost of Sir Tho: Penruddock, Bart'. In the next year, 1632, the Church Register states that 'This year the Chancel was built at the cost of Sir William Doddington Kt' (the owner of nearby Breamore



Fig. 1 Hale Church (St Mary's), viewed from the west

House). There are some differences between the details of St Paul's and Hale Church as rebuilt in 1631–2. The nave windows of Hale Church are rectangular (round-headed inner stone frames were inserted in 1895), unlike the round-headed windows of St Paul's; and the western facade of Hale has round-headed niches, whereas St Paul's has round-headed windows. Furthermore, Hale Church ceiling was barrel vaulted and plastered, unlike the flat plastered ceiling at the Covent Garden church. Nevertheless, because of the closeness of the dates of erection of the two churches, and the very obvious similarity between them, this paper will attempt to answer two questions – namely, exactly what was the design of Hale Church when it was rebuilt towards the end of 1631, and was there any contemporary link at

all with the design of St Paul's Church in Covent Garden?

An important collection of documents has been discovered recently at Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, which changes our whole understanding of why and how the Covent Garden development came about. One document is dated 3 May, 1629, at Greenwich, and is a much earlier warrant (albeit preliminary) for a royal licence than any previously known. Another document, endorsed 'The contents of the Surveyors plot', is inscribed 'Convent garden 1629' in what is almost certainly the handwriting of Inigo Jones. (Duggan, 2000, 143–5). So it is clear that Jones would have been actively drawing up plans for a church in Covent Garden, at the latest from some time early 1629, and possibly even before that. What this



Fig. 2 St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, viewed from the east

new dating means for Hale Church is that the main inhibiting factor for entertaining any connection of the design of St Paul's with the Hampshire building – that is the time factor – is removed.

The question of design and attribution of Hale Church centres on its present-day appearance as a pastiche by Thomas Archer who bought Hale Park in 1715, and shortly afterwards set about making additions to the church. It has not been clear exactly what he added or changed and what the building was like before he did so, although as Howard Colvin has pointed out (*pers com*), it seems 'the church was in a very poor state of repair when [Archer] both repaired and enlarged it.' This is indicated by part of the inscription on Archer's tomb in the south transept that states 'hanc Ecclesiam Vetustate collapsam stabilivit propriisque sumptibus ampliavit'. By careful examination of Hale Church, and of detailed repair specifications from the late nineteenth century that have not been considered before, however, we can distinguish more precisely what Archer added to the earlier building. It emerges

that the nave was almost certainly already in existence before Archer's time as a small, rustic, single cell Tuscan 'temple', possibly with a small projecting chancel at the eastern end (Fig. 3).

Hale Church Register for 1717 (HRO) states 'That the Church was begun building that is the Addition [sic] that Mr Archer builded'. The influence of Borromini has been noted in many of Archer's designs (Colvin, 1995, 77), and this is evident in the arched doorways of the transepts, with architraves resting on moulded imposts, keystone below an outsized cornice supported on the northern side by the large inturning volutes, and by the triglyphs on the southern end (Figs 4 & 5). The entrance doorway of St Paul's, Deptford, which Archer was building from 1713, is strikingly similar, for example, to the northern transept door of Hale Church. The three chancel windows also have keystones carrying the cornice. These, plus the idiosyncratic door jambs on the transepts, are what have been called 'true Archer motifs' (Pevsner and Lloyd, 1967, 264).

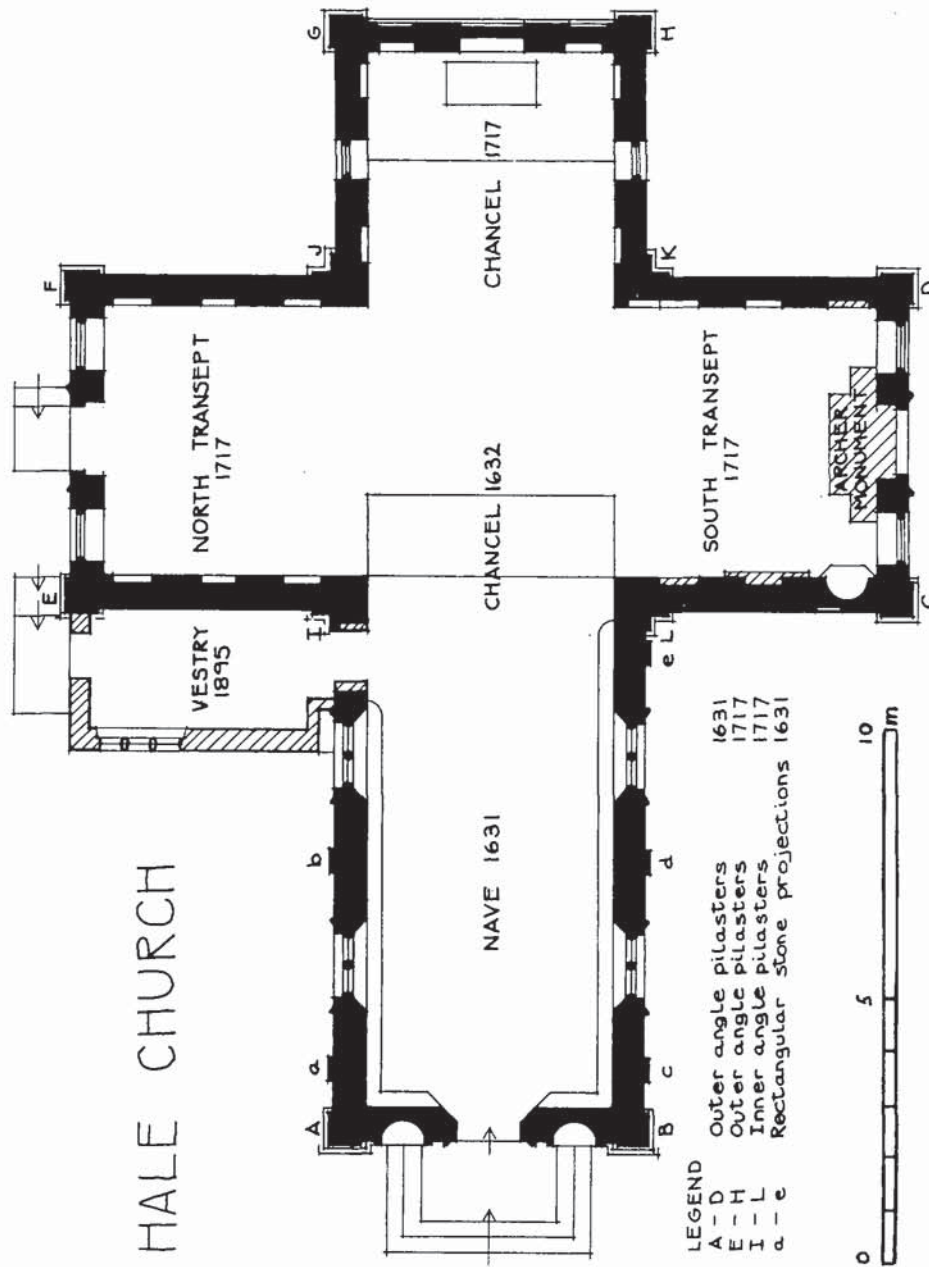


Fig. 3 Hale Church ground plan showing dates of different parts

The nave, however, must be accepted as the 1631 building to which Archer made his 'Addition'. The western facade has no keystone, much plainer door jambs, and what Stell (1966, 201) described as 'a rather inadequate cornice' (see Fig. 1). Above this is a plain architrave with a small flat, projecting fascia, out of which plain wooden mutules support the flat wooden eaves that serve as the Tuscan 'cornice' framing the pediment. The corresponding part of St Paul's Church, Covent Garden is similarly described (*Survey of London* (Sheppard, 1970, 67); and moreover, as Dr Paul Davies writes (pers com), 'the vertical alignment of the mutules in the horizontal and sloping parts of the pediment ... and the 'v' shaped mutule at the ... apex of the pediment [at Hale Church]', are as at St. Paul's. Furthermore, the 'overall conception is close to St. Paul's Covent Garden especially in the use of the Tuscan order with entasis', although the pediment, however, is 'extremely high in relation to its width and has few precedents in Jones's work.' This steeper pitch of Hale Church roof accommodates a barrel-vaulted ceiling of semi-circular section, unlike, for example, the depressed barrel at Jones's Queen's Chapel, St James's Palace, beneath a less steeply sloping roof. The small fascia and mutules of the west façade also continue around the side walls of the nave, but finish abruptly at the inner angle pilasters where the 1631 nave ends, and the transepts, Archer's addition, begin. Archer's entablature is 'complete', with a cymatium instead of the mutules of the nave (see Fig. 1).

The most relevant point of contrast between transepts and nave, however, is the difference between, and the asymmetrical placement of the twelve pilasters on the building. The mouldings of four Tuscan capitals, two on the western end and two on the southern transept end, are different from the capitals on the remaining eight of the building – that is four inner angle pilasters, and the two on the eastern chancel end and the two on the northern transept end (Figs. 6 & 7, and see Fig. 5). The latter eight could be said to be more Doric in character, and Pevsner classifies all twelve as so (1967, 264), probably because it was not noticed that there were two different groups. As we will see in the discussion on the south transept below, however, it seems likely that Archer re-used the

pilasters from the old eastern nave façade, placing these on the face of the southern transept that looks towards Hale Park house. (The placing of the pilasters there may have been simply random, but there is a tradition, according to Patrick Hickman, the present owner of the house, that Thomas Archer and his wife used to enter the church through the doorway of the southern transept. This was later blocked when Archer had his monument (attributed to Sir Henry Cheere (1703–81) by Dr Matthew Craske) erected directly inside, and two flanking doorways (now windows) built). The fact that there were, apparently, no previous inner angle pilasters to re-use is an important point, as it strengthens the contention that the principal body of the older church was a simple oblong.

This is further suggested by the noticeable difference of the respective stonework between the old nave, and the transepts and chancel. The west, north and south faces of the 1631 nave are of local ironstone with stone ashlar dressings. Archer's façades of the transepts and chancel are all ashlar. The ironstone-work of Archer's addition (the north and south walls of the chancel, the east and west walls of the northern transept, and part of the east wall of the south transept), is, as Fig. 4 shows, not as regularly coursed as the nave, and uses more irregular sized pieces of stone. The façades of the transepts and the chancel, and, illogically, the south transept's west wall and the top fifth (only) of the south transept's east wall, were constructed of limestone ashlar (Fig. 8). Archer probably had it in mind to render his additions, but this was not done. *The Victoria History* (Page, 1973, 562), states: 'Stones from the [ruins of the sister] chapel [at South Charford] were granted by the former owners of the advowson to Thomas Archer for his work at Hale Church'; so, if this very probable account is true (and no trace at all remains of South Charford Church), the limestone ashlar and possibly some ironstone were from this source. The date and nature of Archer's additions are confirmed by the presence of two gravestones, one dated 1715, in the west wall of the southern transept. These must have been removed from the adjacent graveyard when Archer extended the building, strongly suggesting that there was no southern transept in existence



Fig. 4 Hale Church viewed from the north



Fig. 5 Hale Church viewed from the south



Fig. 6 Tuscan capital on north-west outer angle



Fig. 7 Doric capital on north-east outer angle

beforehand. The length of the early nave can be determined as, on the exterior of the nave walls, between the west end and the transepts (above and between the windows), are small rectangular stone projections descending from the architrave. The position of the far eastern ones establishes precisely the former end of the building (*see below*) – although the 1632 chancel, perhaps a small rectangular or semi-circular apse, almost certainly projected from the east end of the nave.

Further points concerning the seventeenth-century nave are that the church guide states that at some stage a wooden gallery was removed from the western end, revealing a date of 1683, possibly the date of the gallery erection; and stone benches running the length of the north and south

walls 'appear from the character of the moulded ledges to be 17th rather than early 18th century' (Burman, 1974, 264).

To a small oblong structure and (probably) small chancel, then, Archer added transepts and a new, larger chancel. Two separate transcriptions (1890 and 1897) of the Church Register for the year 1777, appear to show a record of acknowledgement of the sixtieth anniversary of these events for they state, 'Occasional Memoranda The chancel and new part of the church were new roofed and tiled in June 1717' (HRO M447, 81; M449, 215). This statement cannot be found in the entries for 1777 in the (microfiche) Church Register; that year's entries, however, are unusually brief, and so possibly some of the original documents have been lost since *c.* 1890s



Fig. 8 Hale Church viewed from the east

when the transcriptions were done, perhaps when they were repaired in 1909 (Fearon and Williams, 1909, 124). The transcriptions also state that the church had been 'new tiled' in 1766, and 'new ceiled and whitewashed' in 1769, and these entries can be confirmed by the (microfiche) registers.

Much later in 1894 'Specifications for Works ... at Hale Church for Lady Adela Goff' (HRO 21 M65/ 173F/ 1) were drawn up by George Vials, an architect, which involved mainly those wooden parts that Archer had added, that is the roof of the transepts, chancel and (probably) the cupola (as well as the 1894 addition of a vestry, a new pulpit, and new windows to the chancel and gables). The 'Hale Estate Improvement Book 1865-1932' (HRO M447, 299, no.268) states that the church 'was quite rotten in its timbers', but this is qualified by Vials's report in which he wrote that while the roofs of the chancel and transepts were 'to be stripped and the whole of their Timbers to be taken apart together with those of the ceilings and completely removed', the timbers of the nave were 'assumed to be sufficiently sound

for repair' only. In the specification drawings entitled 'Details of proposed new roofs and ceilings' (HRO 21 M65/ 173F/ 1*), Vials shows the required passing braces, struts, ties and rafters for the transepts and chancel in detail, but in his half section of the nave he leaves a void with an inscription, 'Roof timbers assumed to be capable of being repaired' - that is, he had seen no obvious reason (a sagging ridge or rafter lines, for example) to investigate the state of the old nave roof frame. Vials's specifications were very specific - the interior barrel plaster ceiling and ribs cornice were to be replaced with new oak boarding 'fixed on the underside of the Timbers now carrying plastering laths', making it clear that the barrel-roof did not replace an earlier flat ceiling, as has been previously assumed (Stell, 1966, 201). Similarly, there was to be no alteration to the construction of the arch at the eastern end of the nave, only repair to the plasterwork. On the exterior of the old nave roof, following the careful removal of the old tiles, waterproof felt was to be fixed to new straight joint boarding. The Bell



Fig. 9 Hale Church, 1867 (Photograph in the possession of Mr and Mrs Patrick Hickman)

turret, that is the cupola, was to be removed and the roof made good. The old tiles were to be replaced over new deal battens, but the weathered surface of the tiles was not to be interfered with, and any deficiency in such was to be made up with old tiles from the Rectory roof. Importantly, Vialls's specifications single out the old nave roof from the rest of the structure, while the tone of his instructions clearly seems to indicate a certain reverence.

A photograph of 1867 (in the possession of Mr and Mrs Patrick Hickman) (Fig. 9), shows the lantern cupola towards the eastern end of the two bay nave that was removed in 1895. This is also shown in an illustration of the church inscribed 'TN 1833' (WCL *Hampshire Churches and Chapels*, 2, 247, 247a). The history of this feature is less clear, for although it can be said that it would not have

fitted aesthetically on the smaller 1630s building, it must also be observed that its style is hardly Archerian. Vialls's instructions to remove the bell turret, while treating the remainder of the old nave roof with much care, suggests that it was thought not to be 'original'. Conceivably the cupola, and the bell (by William Cockey and dated 1739, and now in the small turret on the north transept), could have been added at this latter date (HRO M449, c. 1897, 197, 221). Interestingly, Vialls's drawings also show an elevation for a new vestry in the corner between the western wall of the north transept and the northern wall of the nave; on this latter wall is shown what was probably one of the original nave windows, a typically early seventeenth-century, cross-framed style with a thin mullion and single transom high up.

In that it appears that Hale Church was, after its

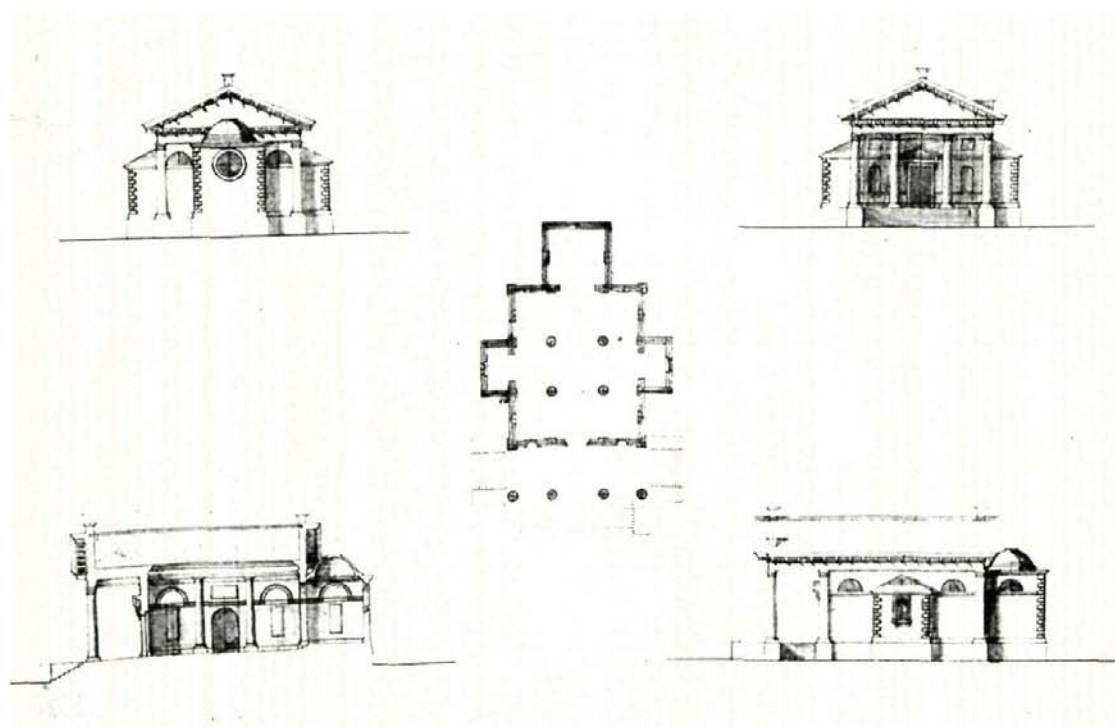


Fig. 10 John Webb, 'Plan, section and three elevations of a centralized church with a Portico'. Published with the kind permission of the Provost and Fellows of Worcester College, Oxford. Photo: The Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art

rebuilding in 1631–32, a rustic single-cell Tuscan temple, closely resembling St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, it follows that the design can only have come originally from the workshop of Inigo Jones. As Gordon Higgott explains (1987, 123), the Tuscan order was the architect's favourite mode around this time. He was using it in continuous fashion at Covent Garden, and had used it for the Park Gate of St James's Palace in 1627, and for the Sculpture Gallery there of 1629–30. In addition, as mentioned above, he had used a (depressed) barrel vaulted ceiling not long before, on his elaborately coffered Queen's Chapel at St. James's Palace. The textual interplay of brick or stone with a contrasting dressing, as is seen on the exterior of the 1631 nave of Hale Church, was an effect Jones obviously liked and used often – at the Banqueting House in Whitehall, St. Paul's Church and the portico houses of Covent Garden, and the (attrib-

uted) house and pavilions at Stoke Bruerne which were being constructed around the same time as Hale with a combination of local ironstone and limestone. Notwithstanding this, the fact that the ashlar dressings at Hale stand relatively proud may suggest that the original intention was to render the walls. The ironstone of the New Forest and south-east Wiltshire was used in the area from medieval times, but Anthony Light has confirmed (pers com) my observation that Hale Church contains proportionately by far the largest percentage of the stone in the fabric of local ecclesiastical buildings, used here for the construction of whole walls. Other churches in the area contain ironstone in various mixtures or courses with flint, rubble, brick and other finer stone.

It has been suggested by Dr Davies that 'someone has got hold of Jones's drawings for St Paul's and scaled them down' (pers com). John

Webb was Jones's very youthful pupil around the period of the design and construction of the little country church, and although it must be considered highly unlikely that he would have been responsible for the 'appropriation' of one of his master's designs to become a relatively naïve architectural interpretation in the remote location at Hale, Webb's later 1638 commission for 'Mr Penruddock's lodge' mentioned above, raises tantalizing suggestions. Therefore it is extremely interesting to consider briefly several of John Webb's designs for small churches, discussed by John Harris and A A Tait (1979, 146 A-D, 65; 167 A-E, 71; 188 A, 77; 240, 90). These certainly appear to be related to not only the Covent Garden church, but also to the evolution of Hale Church. Webb experimented with several similar design details which feature on Hale Church in these drawings – vertically aligned mutules, round-headed niches flanking the entrance door, circular windows, a pediment, and corner pilasters on the side elevation. One of the drawings, a small Tuscan temple-church, is of added interest in that it has a chancel that is a small, astylar, projecting addition (167 A-E, 71) (Fig. 10). Because the chancel at Hale Church was added in 1632, the year after the nave was built, and was probably astylar (in that it seems there were only four Tuscan pilasters from the 1631 church), it is possible that it was similar in plan to the small, astylar chancel shown on Webb's drawing. The 'Hale Estate History of Hale Manor' (c.1897) (HRO M449, vol. 1, 209), states that in the 1894 re-roofing 'evidence as to the form of the ancient structure was given by the abrupt termination of all the old timbers at the end of the aisle adjoining the centre portion of the church [bearing out] the idea that the present chancel and transepts were added at a later period'. Thus it is very probable that the roof of the 1632 chancel was lower than the vaulted nave. Another interesting and relevant point is that the drawing (167 A-E, 71) shows quoining on the transepts and chancel outer corners laid in the same way as it was at St. Paul's, Covent Garden. The *Survey* states (Sheppard, 1970, 68), that this was an 'unorthodox and unconstructional manner [although intentional, according to the building accounts], being equally long or short on both faces' instead of all being

(rectangular) cuboid of one size, but laid alternately with a different sized face dressing the façade or side elevation. Was Webb modifying a drawing directly associated with St. Paul's Church? This drawing is in a group of designs for churches and temples which Harris says (1979, 60), 'might in many ways be taken for the work of a pupil or the youthful Webb' – that is, early in his career with Jones, and around the early 1630s.

If not John Webb's doing, how then was the adapted Jones's – or Webb's – design transferred to the little church in the depths of Hampshire? It may never be known exactly how this came about, but, like many country gentry families, the Penruddock family either owned or rented a London west-end residence for a large part of the seventeenth century. A Captain Penrudick was a rate-paying occupant of Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, between 1636 and c. 1641 (Sheppard, 1970, 241), and a John Penrudake subscribed to a counter-petition in 1638 from 'two hundred and seventy Inhabitants within the ... Chapelrie of Covent Garden' (PRO SP16/402/145). A property indenture at the HRO shows that two grandsons of Thomas Penruddock, Edward and Charles Penrodocke, resided in Covent Garden in the 1670s (HRO 49 M68/308). It is quite possible that the Penruddocks lived in the area and knew Jones and Webb c. 1630, and perhaps the appropriation of Jones's design occurred through this channel. Certainly by 1638 Webb knew the family, when he designed the 'Lodge in a Parke' for 'Mr Penruddock'. Following the death of Thomas Penruddock in 1637, the estate had passed to John Penruddock, who in turn was followed by three sons, Edward, Charles, and lastly George, whose daughter and heir, Elizabeth, wife of Joseph Gage of Firlie, succeeded to the manor. It was their son, Thomas, afterwards Lord Gage of Castlebare in Ireland, who sold the manor to Thomas Archer (Page, 1973, 578).

Whoever was responsible for the conversion in 1631, all of the above points indicate that Hale Church is another example where the dissemination of Jones's ideas can be seen in other buildings. Whether or not the King's Surveyor knew about such an interesting instance as Hale Church, it is clear his designs were accessible to and adapted by not only his pupil, Webb, but by others as well. Of

course, St Mary's at Hale cannot be compared with St Paul's Church on the same basis. It is a miniature harbinger (not to mention its remote and rustic setting), of the grand monumental temple at Covent Garden. But it emerges that, through the date of the Covent Garden plans and the later erection of St. Paul's after Hale Church, the design of the small church is almost definitely derived from Jones's own early plans, and as such should be re-evaluated as a much more historically interesting building than has been previously thought.

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Abbreviations

HRO Hampshire Record Office
PRO Public Record Office
Survey *Survey of London*
WCL Winchester Cathedral Library

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HRO 49 M68/308.
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