

and straight runs, necessary to maintain headroom under the sloping roof.

The apparent simplicity of the plan is deceptive. By dividing a conventional central hall into three compartments, Latrobe both resolved complex circulation problems at this institutional residence and demonstrated that the central-hall *parti* offered much greater spatial flexibility than was ever exhibited in conventional American houses. Furthermore, even though he was forced to leave the rear facade windowless, he apparently intended—based on the presence of large, fanlight transoms and sidelights as well as doors—to use his complicated stair compartments to flood the core of the house with light. However, lighting the stairs would have required a skylight or roof monitor, and neither of these is shown in the front elevation or transverse section.

Although he left its roof asymmetrical because of its connection with the adjacent hospital building, Latrobe's proposed front elevation is striking. The cellar story is rusticated, the only time Latrobe used this typically Palladian device in a residence. The principal story is lit by three Venetian windows, the outboard ones having Latrobe's distinctive lintel-atop-corner-blocks motif and the central one capped by a low pediment, perhaps a reference to the central hall, also resting on corner blocks. On the chamber story, Latrobe placed three single windows and, at the cornice, exposed the rafter ends. Simple and self-assured, the composition is as bold as any he ever proposed. However, because of its scale, and because of the War of 1812, Latrobe's initial design for the Marine Hospital came to naught.<sup>35</sup>

The Navy Department shelved the project, then revived it in the fall of 1815, but for a new site. The remaining evidence for Latrobe's second scheme includes a first-floor plan of the complex that shows four residential buildings: one for the chief surgeon, one for the second officer, one for the principal officer, and one divided into two zones for the matron and steward.<sup>36</sup> Obviously conceived in haste at a time when Latrobe was busy at the U.S. Capitol and working surreptitiously on the Baltimore Exchange, this second scheme is interesting but adds nothing to our knowledge of his domestic designs. Three of the four residences have three-compartment, central-hall-like spaces and that for the chief surgeon includes a huge basilican-form consulting room and library reminiscent at a smaller scale of Latrobe's proposal for the Library of Congress when it was to be a part of the Capitol. It is clear that he still saw his principal task to be the hierarchical separation and ordering of traffic within the requisite central-hall *parti* for such institutional buildings. The elevations also conform to his 1812 thinking but lack the rustication and include windows in the garret story.

### Latrobe's Consummate Rotunda House with Scenery

The Pope Villa is perhaps Latrobe's most important house. Of his three surviving houses in the United States, it is the only freestanding suburban villa. Less circumscribed by tradition and function than a country house, or by the constraints of an urban site than a town house, the villa was an ornamental and progressive domestic type that encouraged experimental design. Designed in the maturity of Latrobe's career, the Pope Villa synthesizes three major themes in his domestic work: those of the rational house, the rotunda villa, and the scenery house. Of all Latrobe's houses, the Pope Villa came closest to his ideal of a "rational house for America," representing his responses to the environmental and social contexts of the United States. These responses included the unusual but pragmatic decision to internalize service functions and to locate them in the first story, with the public rooms in the second story. As a rotunda plan, the Pope Villa harks back to the Palladian-villa revival of eighteenth-century Britain and beyond, to the original rotunda villas of Andrea Palladio. Unlike the axial hierarchies and symmetries of Palladian villas, however, the Pope Villa has an asymmetrical spatial sequence and a variety of visual surprises, Latrobe's interior "scenery," an idea that he derived from picturesque landscape design.

Of Latrobe's surviving houses, the Pope Villa is the most fully documented. A relatively complete set of original drawings survives, and because Lexington was some distance from Latrobe's Washington, D.C., office, he wrote several letters to the Pops and their local builder.<sup>37</sup> Latrobe never visited Lexington and thus did not supervise construction of the Pope Villa. As a result, it does not exhibit the consistent detailing he preferred. However, it exhibits his revolutionary theoretical principles and spatial distributions, while its detailing displays the richness of a local, vernacular tradition. The interaction of Latrobe's avant-garde design with its Kentucky context occurred both during the building of the house and later, as subsequent owners adapted it to conform to Kentucky's more conservative social and spatial preferences. The villa was thus altered several times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and finally suffered a damaging fire in 1987, after which the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation acquired and saved it. The philosophical challenges and physical difficulties of its restoration have placed it again in the national view.

THE POPE VILLA

John Pope (1770–1845) was born in Prince William County, Virginia. When he was 9 years old, he moved with his parents to the far western country, then known as Kentucky County, Virginia.<sup>38</sup> The Popes were among the early settlers at the Falls of the Ohio River, which became Louisville, Kentucky. At around 10 years old, Pope lost his right arm in a cornstalk mill, an accident that closed farming to him and decided him on a career in the law. He studied law in Lexington and began practice in Shelbyville around the time Kentucky achieved statehood in 1792. Sometime in the 1790s, Pope married the first of three wives, Anne Henry Christian (d. 1806), a niece of Patrick Henry of Virginia. In 1798, he was elected to the Kentucky Senate and in both 1800 and 1804 served as a presidential elector for Thomas Jefferson. In 1803, he moved permanently to Lexington where he practiced law and in 1802 and 1806 won seats in the Kentucky House of Representatives. In 1806, Kentuckians elected Pope to the U.S. Senate where he served from 1807 to 1813. Henry Clay opposed Pope's Senate race, the first act of a lifelong political rivalry between the two men.<sup>39</sup> Although Pope held later elected and appointed offices, including that of territorial governor of Arkansas, his Senate term of 1807–1813 remained the high point of his political career. During this time, he met Latrobe, married again, and built his Lexington villa.

Pope arrived in Washington in October 1807, a supporter of Jefferson, who was then in his second term as president. Latrobe had been Jefferson's Surveyor of the Public Buildings since 1803, supervising the completion of both the President's House and the U.S. Capitol Building. If Pope did not immediately meet Latrobe as architect of the Capitol he soon met him through their mutual interest in internal improvements, specifically transportation systems linking the eastern and western states. Jefferson encouraged the exploration and development of the transmontane West through his sponsorship of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the 1803 Louisiana Purchase; in 1807, he and Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin proposed to reserve excess treasury funds for internal improvements. Gallatin consulted Latrobe, who recommended a comprehensive system of canals and roads. Gallatin included Latrobe's proposals in his own report of 1808, known as the "Gallatin Plan." Pope supported the plan and worked closely with Latrobe to compose a bill for funding its proposed improvements. The Pope-Porter Bill, as it was called, arrived in Congress in January 1810, sponsored by Pope in the Senate and by Representative Peter Buell Porter of western New York State in the House. The bill proposed construction of more than a dozen canals and four overland roads linking rivers in the east, west, north, and south.<sup>40</sup>

Among its proposals, the bill revived the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal project in which Latrobe had a financial stake. For this and the friendship engendered by their joint work, Latrobe, contradicting his own professional advice, designed the senator's new house for free.<sup>41</sup>

Pope's recent marriage motivated him to build. His first wife had died in 1806, before his Senate term began; in 1809–1810 he courted and married Eliza Johnson of Washington, D.C.<sup>42</sup> Christened Elizabeth Jennet Dorcas Johnson (ca. 1782–1818) but known as Eliza, she came from mixed American and English parentage. Descended from a prominent Maryland family, Eliza's father, Joshua Johnson, pursued a mercantile career and in 1771 arrived in London to represent the Anglo-American trade of his firm, Wallace, Davidson, and Johnson. He married an English wife, Catherine Nuth, and they had seven daughters and a son. Their second daughter, Louisa Catherine, married John Quincy Adams in 1797, eventually making John Pope brother-in-law to the sixth president.<sup>43</sup> Eliza, the seventh child, may have been born in Nantes, France, where the family lived from 1778 to 1783, during the American Revolution. The Johnsons returned to England in 1783, and in 1790, President Washington appointed Johnson American consul-general in London.<sup>44</sup> During the 1790s, the family kept a town house with eleven servants and entertained a brilliant company from international diplomatic and business circles.

Unwise investments during the volatile period of the French Revolution brought the Johnsons to a financial crisis, and they fled London in 1797, when Eliza was about 15. Moving to Washington, D.C., their position was ambivalent. On the one hand, they were impoverished, while on the other they were intermarried with the Adamses, the first citizens of the new Federal City. President John Adams appointed Johnson Postmaster of the District of Columbia, which kept the family from destitution until Johnson's death in 1802.<sup>45</sup> From 1803 to 1808, John Quincy Adams was U.S. senator from Massachusetts and, despite her family's poverty, Eliza Johnson moved in the highest Washington circles; on several occasions, the younger Johnson sisters dined with Louisa Catherine and John Quincy Adams at Thomas Jefferson's White House.<sup>46</sup>

Eliza Johnson and John Pope met in the arena of Washington political society. He was 39 or 40 years old, she about 28.<sup>47</sup> When they married, on 10 February 1810, Pope was at the height of his popularity and influence. They undoubtedly anticipated his reelection to the Senate and perhaps offers of further public office. This meant spending winters in Washington, while Congress was in session, and summers in Kentucky, maintaining

Pope's political base. The latter would require of Eliza the sort of entertaining at which her mother excelled in London. This agenda set the program for the Popes' new Lexington villa: an elegant facility for seasonal occupancy, with a large capacity for public entertaining—a combined house and entertaining pavilion.

If Eliza Pope had apprehensions about life in the western country, she may have been pleasantly surprised. She found Lexington in 1810 to be the major metropolis of the American West and a city both larger and in some ways more urbane than Washington, D.C. Founded in 1775, the town first developed as a wilderness fortress but quickly became the mercantile and manufacturing center of the West.<sup>48</sup> Although it was not on a navigable river, Lexington lay astride major arteries of overland trade and migration amid the beautiful and fertile Bluegrass Region. Lexington's population in 1810 exceeded four thousand; larger than both Washington and its rival western cities, including St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Louisville, and Cincinnati. By 1815, its population had increased to between 6,000 and 7,000; in that year, *Niles' Register* predicted it would be "the greatest inland city in the western world."<sup>49</sup> Known as the "Philadelphia" or the "Athens" of the West, the city was also a social and cultural center. The years between 1810 and 1815, when the Popes built their villa, marked Lexington's historical high point. By 1820, the introduction of steamboats to western rivers meant that the inland city declined in importance while its rival river cities surpassed it.

The Popes purchased their villa site in 1810 or 1811, although the deed was not made out until 1814, after the house was built, and not formally recorded until 1831.<sup>50</sup> The tract, containing slightly more than ten acres, lay southeast of the town grid, less than a mile from the courthouse square. Situated between the city and the surrounding countryside, this suburban site was among the first in a ring of early-nineteenth-century villas that encircled the city.<sup>51</sup> The plot was a trapezoid, with one angled side, bounded on the north by the diagonal extension of High Street into Tate's Creek Road; on the west by Van Pelt (now Rose) Street and on the south and east by adjoining properties, although Maxwell Street soon extended along its southern boundary. The earliest maps and views showing the site (some including the villa) date from the 1830s to 1850s (fig. 6.13).<sup>52</sup>

The tract sloped gently into the valley of a creek known as the Town Branch, a fork of Elkhorn Creek, which flowed beyond the Popes' north property line. The land rose from the creek to a gentle knoll on which the Popes situated their villa. The most beautiful views from the site were to the north

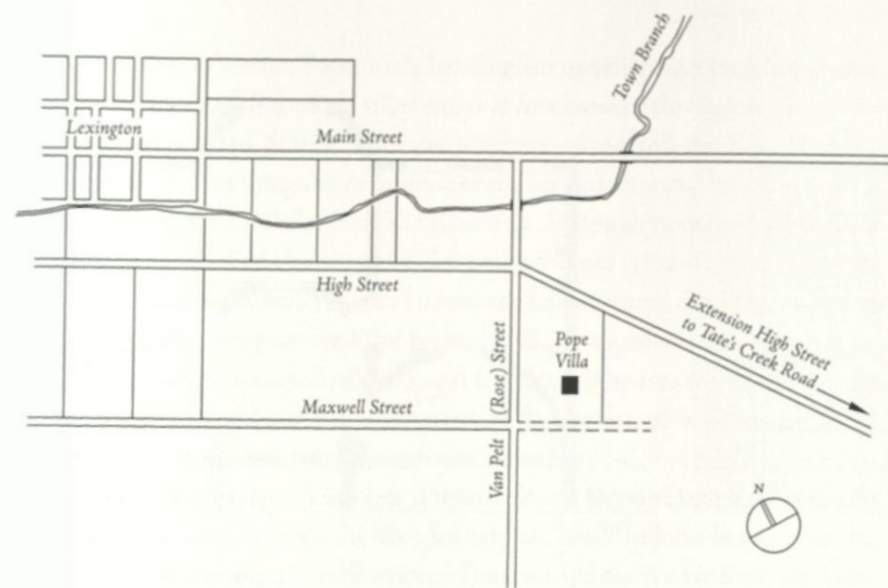
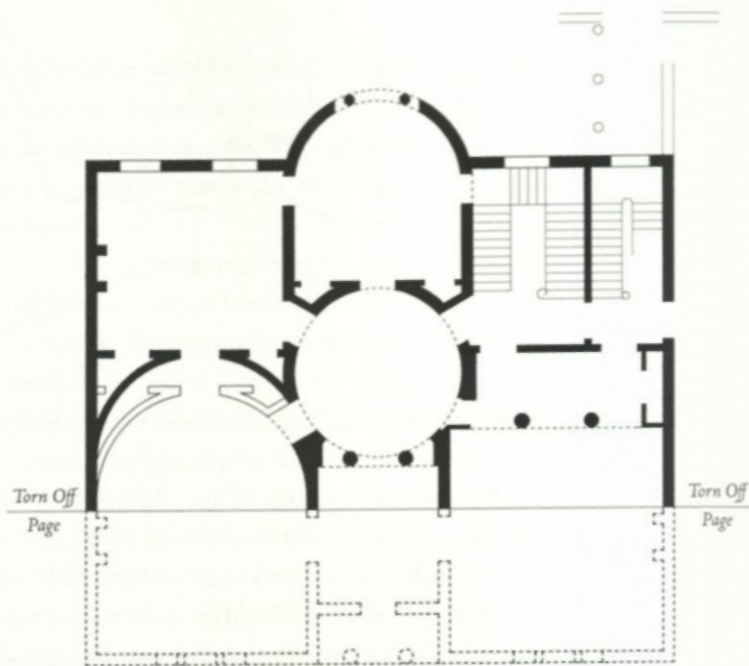
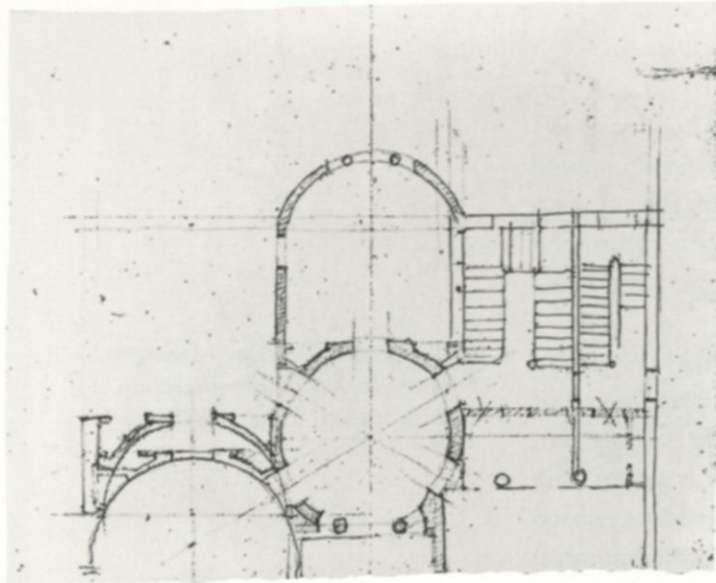


Fig. 6.13. Pope Villa site near Lexington, Kentucky, in early nineteenth century. (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams)

toward the valley of the Town Branch and the most convenient approach from town was from the northwest corner of the lot. These twin determinants influenced the Popes' decision to orient the entrance front of the house to the north and to have the major public rooms and the largest windows on that front; these factors, in turn, affected Latrobe's planning of the villa.

Latrobe's first surviving letter to John Pope, dated 3 January 1811, indicates that the design process for the house had begun in the previous year.<sup>53</sup> Possibly the earliest document to survive from this design process is a floor plan, sketched in pencil by Latrobe (fig. 6.14).<sup>54</sup> Unlabeled and undated, it is bound in the architect's sketchbook, and may date from the latter part of 1810. The lower portion of the sketch is missing, the page having been torn away, but it is possible to reconstruct it (fig. 6.15). If this sketch was for the Pope Villa, it would seem that from an early date both clients and architect contemplated a rotunda plan.

The idea of the "rotunda villa," a house with a circular, domed space at the center of a square plan, originated with sixteenth-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio and was revived in eighteenth-century England in a few prominent, neo-Palladian villas such as Lord Burlington's Chiswick (ca. 1725–1729).<sup>55</sup> From their Italian origin to their English revival these villas, with their beautiful, abstract geometries, performed especially as secondary residences, on the edges of towns, accommodating elegant activities above the everyday level of domestic functioning, such as entertaining and art collecting



(figs. 6.16–6.17). Eliza Pope, with her English upbringing, may have known some of the English rotunda villas either at first hand or through publications.

In the United States, Thomas Jefferson advocated the rotunda villa. Between 1772 and 1803, he designed several rotunda houses, based in greater or lesser degree on Palladio's Villa Rotonda. Although none were built, they included two designs for Virginia Governors' houses (1772–1773), a design for the President's House (1792), and a rotunda house "suited to a Public Officer" (1803).<sup>56</sup> Jefferson perceived the rotunda villa as appropriate for the houses of democratically elected officials and the rotunda spaces as suitable for the reception of official company. It is possible that he shared his ideas with John and Eliza Pope because both knew the president.<sup>57</sup>

The high quality of Latrobe's ultimate design for the Pope Villa is in part attributable to Eliza Pope. In his 3 January 1811 letter to John Pope, the architect acknowledged her contribution: "The enclosed plans were ready on Monday [31 December 1810] . . . I should be glad to explain them to Mrs. Pope, to whose ideas I have endeavored to conform them, very much to the improvement of the taste & convenience of the building."<sup>58</sup> The plans to which Latrobe refers in this letter were probably refinements in the evolution of the rotunda house, which perhaps began with the sketch plan discussed previously. Three sheets of drawings by Latrobe survive for the Pope Villa (now in the Library of Congress); they are probably his own office record of the drawings he sent to the Popes with his letter of 3 January 1811. They show variant two-story and three-story versions of a rotunda villa (figs. 6.18–6.20; plate 13).<sup>59</sup> It is an adventurous design and one which Latrobe evidently developed more in collaboration with Eliza Pope than with her husband. Its unorthodoxy gave John Pope pause. He must have expressed his doubts to Latrobe, for on 18 January 1811, the architect sent a sharp letter indicating his irritation at the senator's indecision:

Dr. Sir,

Your having consulted me about your house has failed accomplishing either your or my aim. I sincerely hoped to have been of service to you, but I fear I have only perplexed and bewildered you. This is always the case unless either the person intending to build has a determined plan of his own, or is determined to abide by a plan suggested to him. The house of Mr. Calvert appears to please you best. Permit me to suggest to you the adoption of this plan at once. It is not in my opinion a very good or a very cheap plan, tho' it was made up out of one of my own. But it is not a very bad one, & if you will adopt it please let me know & I will send out a Man for you who will measure it, & you shall have the drawings to send to Kentucky in a few days. Or if you adopt one of the two in Mrs. Pope's possession,

Fig. 6.14. (Opposite, top left) Latrobe unlabeled pencil sketch, ca. 1810; possibly an early phase of the Pope Villa design process. (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams, redrawn, with lines enhanced from the original in Latrobe sketchbook IX, Maryland Historical Society)

Fig. 6.15. (Opposite, top right) Hypothetical reconstruction of Latrobe's sketch plan (seen in 6.14). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams)

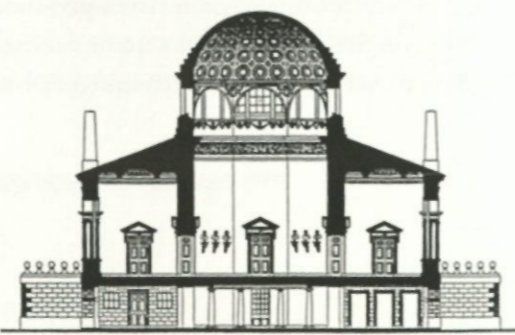
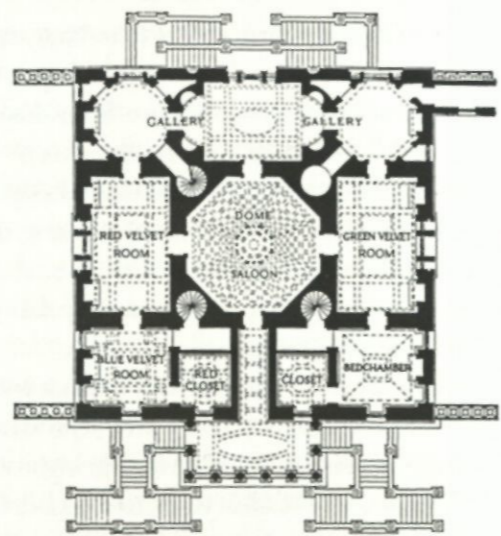
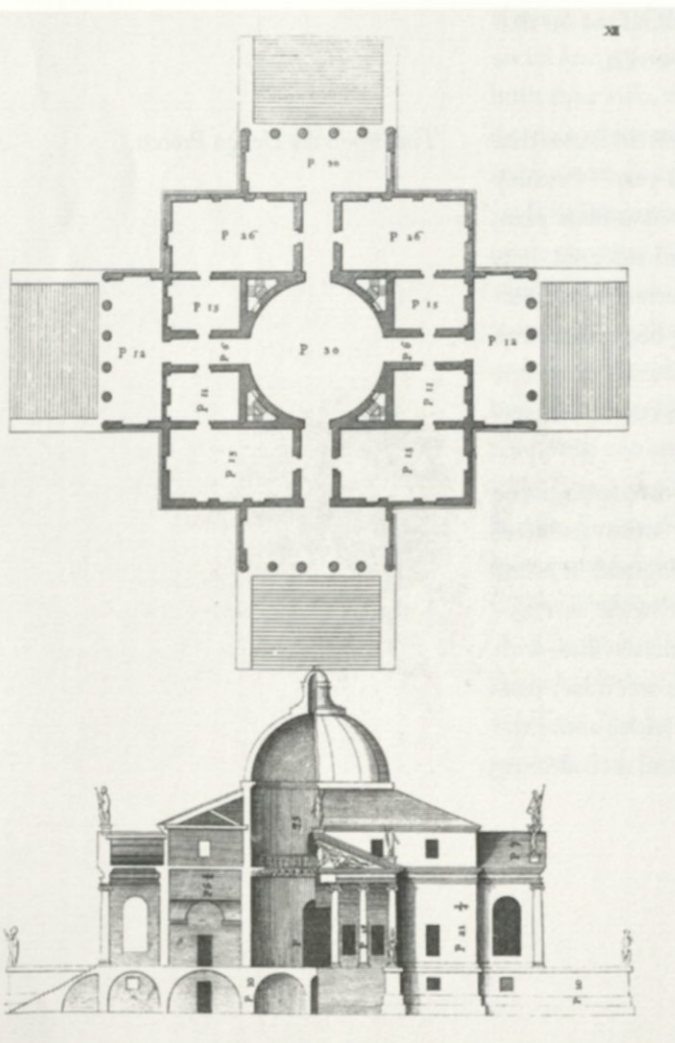


Fig. 6.16. (Opposite, bottom left) Villa Rotonda by Andrea Palladio, Vicenza, Italy, 1550s. Principal floor plan, above; combined section and elevation, below. (From Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture*, first published Venice, 1570; this from the 1738 edition published by Isaac Ware in London. Dover Pictorial Archive Series)

Fig. 6.17. (Opposite, bottom right) Chiswick, villa of Lord Burlington, Middlesex, England, ca. 1725–29. (top) Principal floor plan; (bottom) section. (Drawings by Gordon Cullen, from John Charleton, *A History and Description of Chiswick House*, 1958; London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1978)

there will not be any further delay. But it is necessary to decide on something now. The more friends you consult the further you will be from your object, *those* who have never built, or never lived in a good house will be the most fruitful in projects and the most persuasive & persevering.<sup>60</sup>

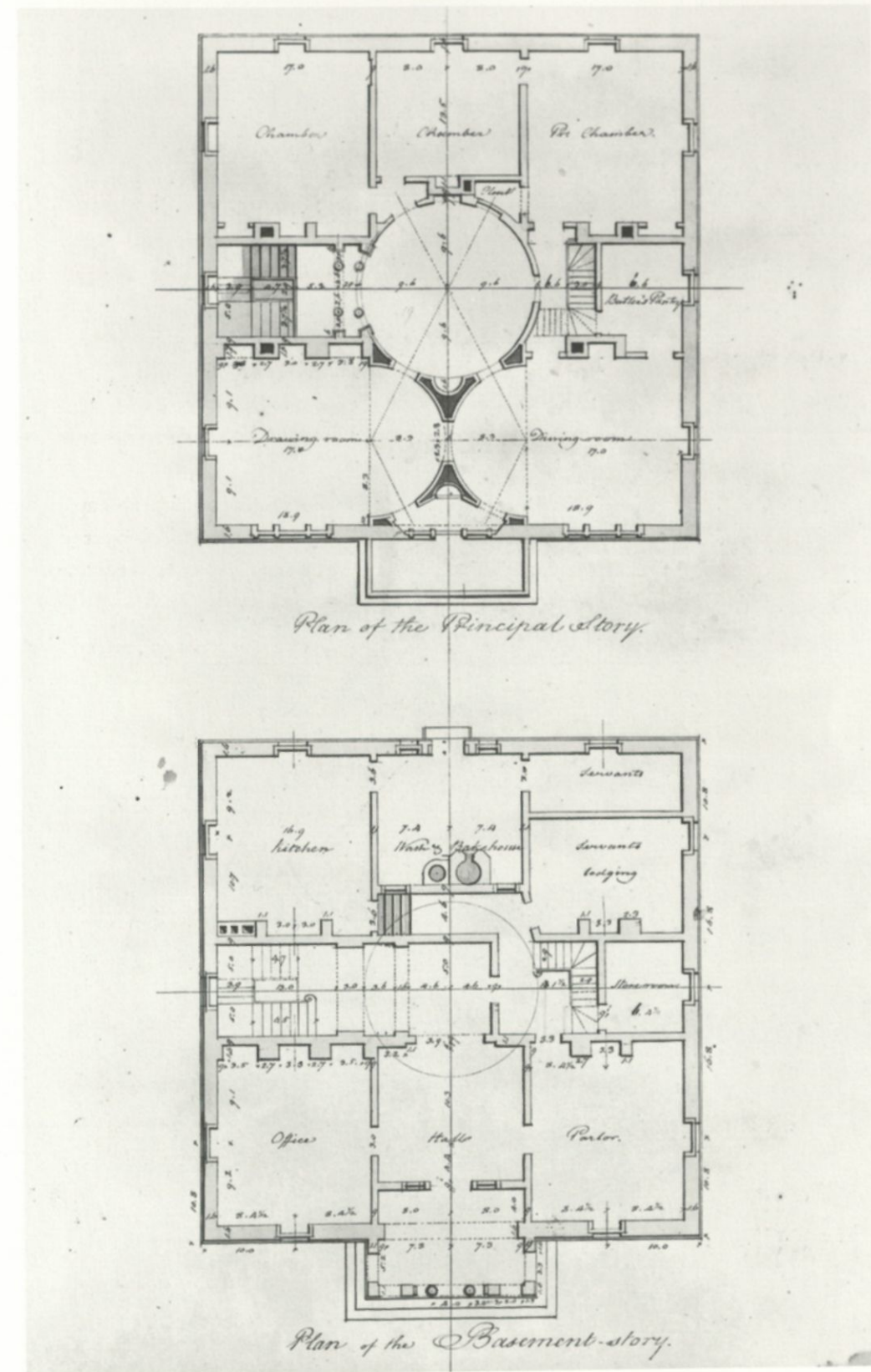
"The house of Mr. Calvert," for which Pope had expressed admiration, was Riversdale, at Bladensburg, Maryland, built in 1801–1807 by the Stier and Calvert families. In 1811, it was the home of George Calvert and his wife Rosalie (Stier) Calvert (see Chapter 5). Riversdale as built had a far more conservative plan than the rotunda villa that Latrobe was designing for the Popes. Although Latrobe had done initial plans for Riversdale, which included a circular, rotunda-like gallery in the second story and canted bays on the garden front, the Stiers had modified his plans into a house with purely rectilinear rooms.<sup>61</sup>

Latrobe's letter to Pope had its intended effect (perhaps aided by Eliza Pope's intervention with her husband), for the villa project was shortly back on its original track. On 30 January 1811, Latrobe wrote to Pope:

Enclosed are the two plans I sent to you last Saturday [26 January], but which came back, as you were not at the Senate. I hope they will be in time for this day's post. By the next you shall have the Elevation and Bill of Scantling, with such account of the sashes, frames & doors as will enable your Carpenter to provide his materials.<sup>62</sup>

For Latrobe to be preparing specifications so that the Popes' Lexington builder could obtain lumber for construction suggests that the clients had approved one of the "two [plans] in Mrs. Pope's possession," which Latrobe had mentioned in his letter of 18 January 1811. The bill of scantling that Latrobe sent on 1 February 1811 comprised a list of the wooden framing elements for the first two stories of the house, including floor joists and floorboards, studs for partition walls, and door and window frames and sash.<sup>63</sup> It specified a two-story house, proving that by 30 January 1811, the Popes had decided to build the two-story version of the villa. The "two plans" that Latrobe transmitted to John Pope with this letter of 30 January 1811 were probably the final first- and second-floor plans for this two-story villa. These final floor plans, transmitted by Pope to his Lexington builder, are lost. Latrobe's surviving drawings for the Pope Villa probably represent the penultimate phase of the design process—the variant options for either a two-story or a three-story villa that the architect likely sent to the clients with his letter of 3 January 1811 ("The enclosed plans") and which he again mentioned in his letter of 18 January (the "two in Mrs. Pope's possession") and from which the clients selected the two-story variant.

Fig. 6.18. Latrobe floor plans (north to the bottom) for Pope Villa, Lexington, Kentucky, signed and dated "B. H. Latrobe Jany. 1811." (Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs)



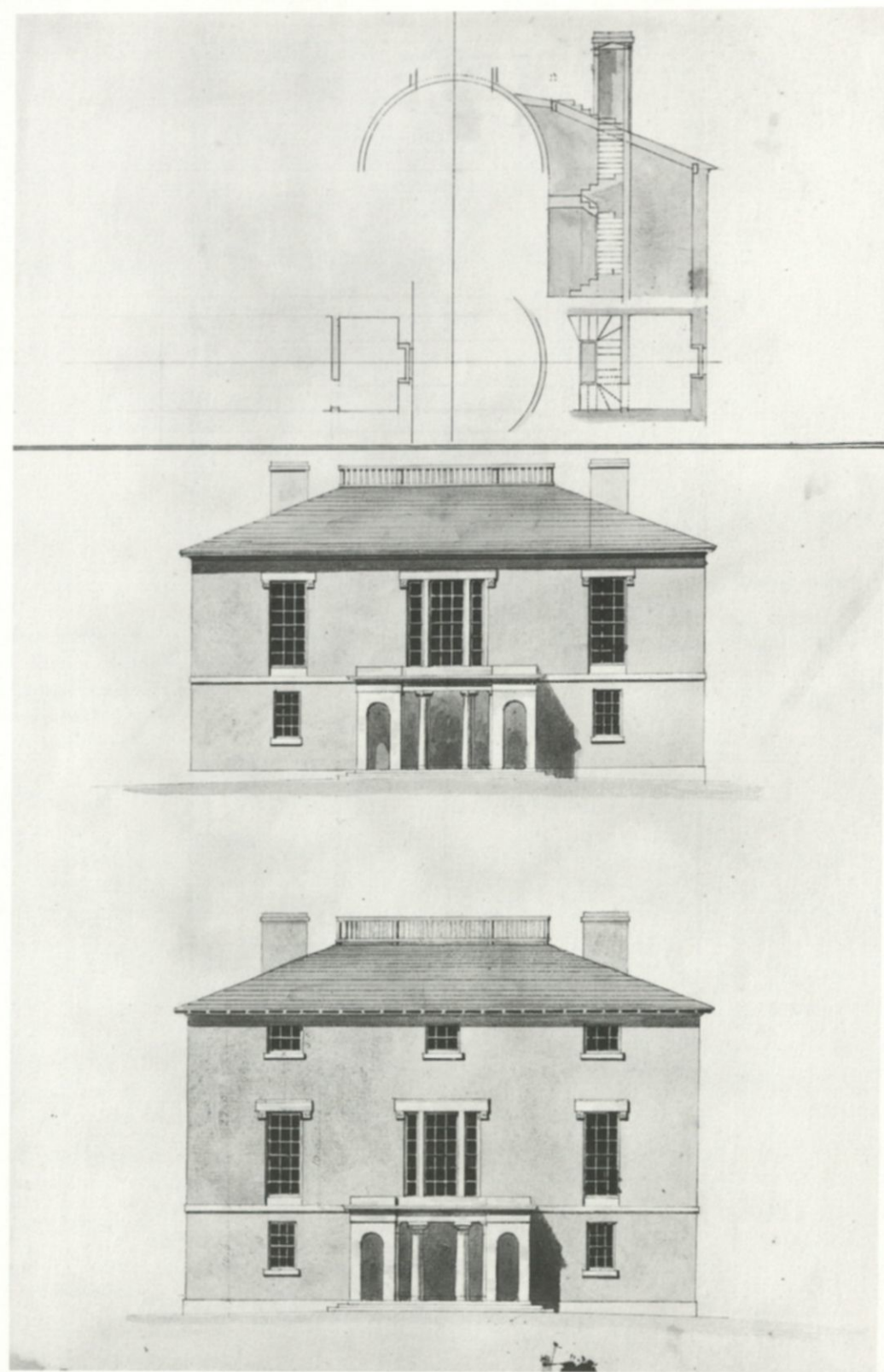


Fig. 6.19. Latrobe elevations and partial plan / section for Pope Villa, undated but ca. 1811. (Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs)

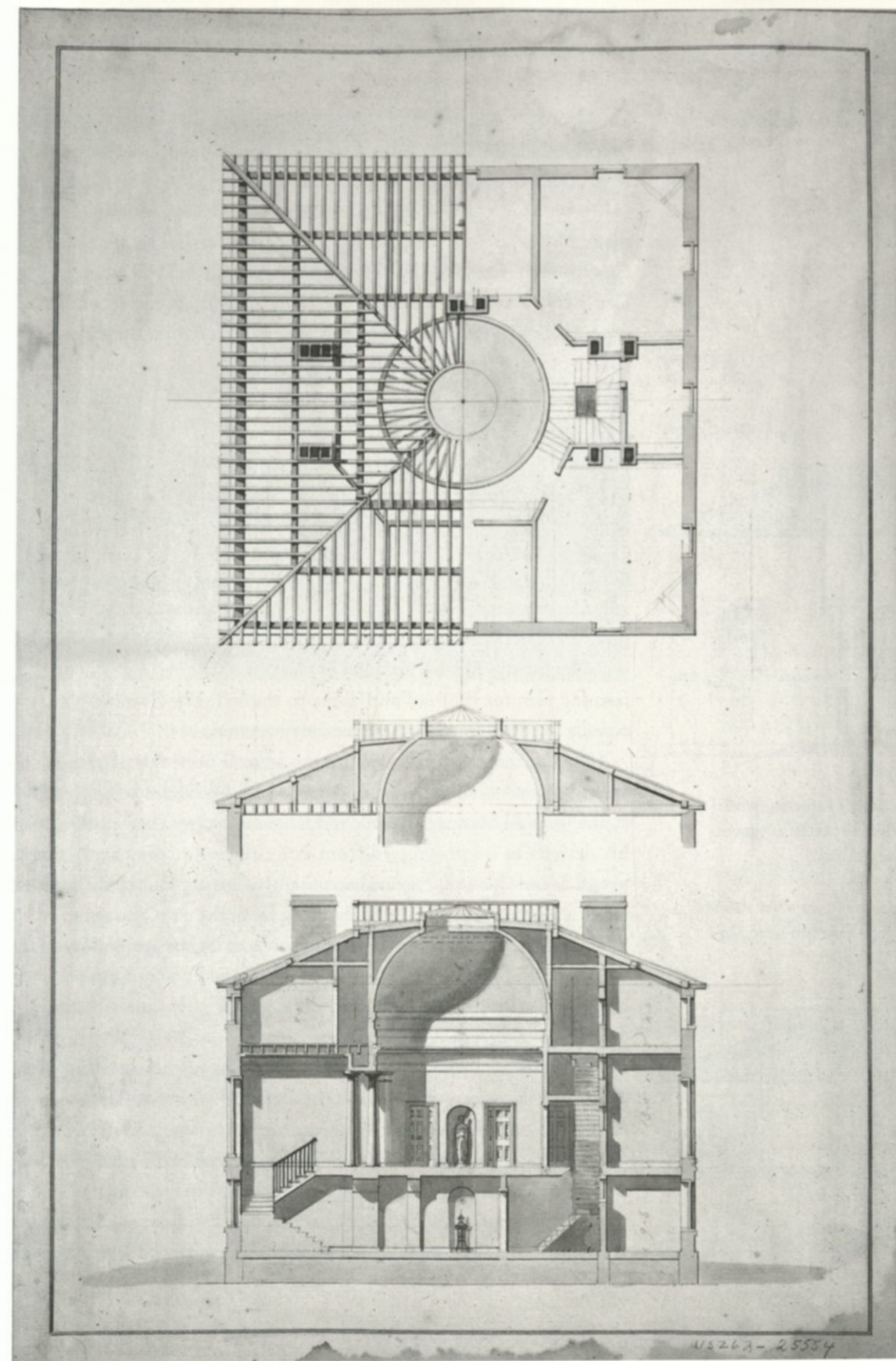


Fig. 6.20. Latrobe sections and attic / roof-framing plan of Pope Villa, undated, but ca. 1811. (Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs)

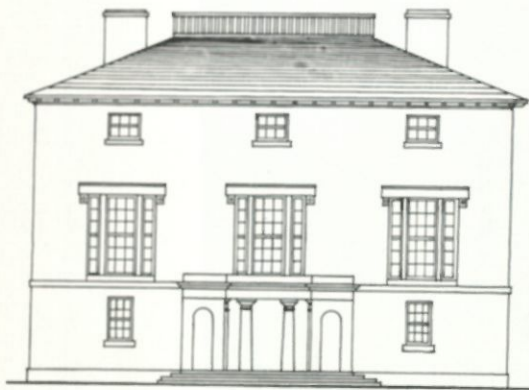
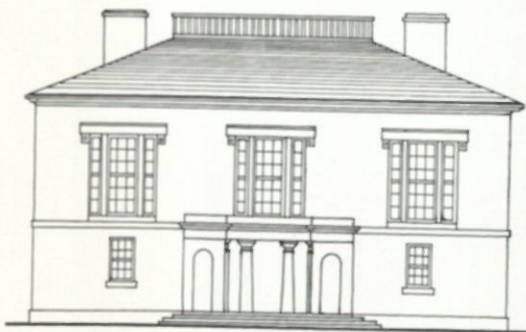


Fig. 6.21. Reconstruction of three-story version of Pope Villa with three Venetian windows. (Patrick Snadon / Lejla Vujicic)

Fig. 6.22. Reconstruction of two-story version of Pope Villa with three Venetian windows. (Patrick Snadon / Lejla Vujicic)



Latrobe's surviving drawings of the Pope Villa have an elegance of finish that suggests their suitability for presentation to clients, although they may also have been Latrobe's office records of his design process. They are of ink lines cast with shadows and highlighted with watercolor washes to represent materials and even some interior colors (pink washes for plan and section cuts through masonry, yellow for wood framing, and pale blue for the surface of the dome). The 1 February 1811 bill of scantling corresponds with the floor-plan drawings (and with the house as built); thus, the three surviving sheets of drawings in the Library of Congress represent Latrobe's near-final solution for the Pope Villa. The floor-plan sheet is signed and dated "B. H. Latrobe Jany. 1811."<sup>64</sup> Neither of the accompanying sheets is dated. One shows the two variants of the house in elevation, with the three-story version below and the two-story version above. At the top of this sheet are partial plans and sections of the service staircase as it continues from the second story to the attic and roof of the three-story villa.<sup>65</sup> The third sheet of drawings depicts an east-west, transverse section through the three-story villa. A schematic, partial section through the dome and attic of the two-story version is positioned above it. At the top of this sheet is a divided drawing showing the third-story plan of the three-story villa to the right and a framing plan for the roof and dome to the left. The framing plan applied equally to either the two- or three-story versions of the villa.

The three sheets of drawings seem to have been executed more or less at the same time, though there are minor discrepancies among them. This is not unusual because Latrobe often continued making modifications to his designs as he progressed from one drawing to another.<sup>66</sup> The most noticeable of these discrepancies is that the second-story plan shows three triple windows in the front facade, while both the two- and three-story elevations show a central triple window flanked by single windows. Latrobe may have preferred the single side windows or he may simply have given his clients a design option. In the bill of scantling, he called the triple windows "Venetian windows"; they must have appealed to the clients, for the villa as built contained all three. On the basis of the surviving drawings then, four elevations are possible: the alternative two- and three-story versions with one central, Venetian window as shown in Latrobe's surviving elevations and alternate two- and three-story versions with three Venetian windows as shown in the plan (figs. 6.21, 6.22). The two-story version, with three Venetian windows above the "basement" story, recalls the garden facade of Chiswick, which perhaps both Latrobe and Eliza Pope knew

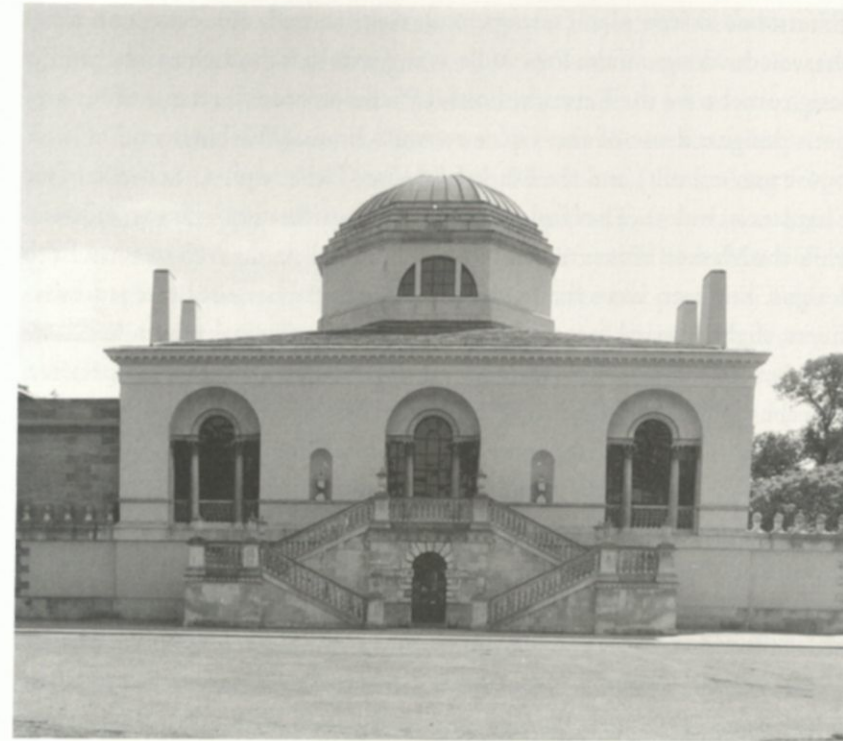


Fig. 6.23. Garden front of Chiswick, Lord Burlington's Villa, Middlesex, England (ca. 1725-1729), with three Venetian windows. (Patrick Snadon)

(figs. 6.17 and 6.23). In his letter of 30 January 1811, in which he conveyed the final floor plans to John Pope, Latrobe also promised to send "the Elevation" along with the bill of scantling, which he sent on 1 February 1811. This final elevation is lost, but it must have been close to the hypothetical elevation in figure 6.22.

Although Latrobe's surviving drawings for the first and second floors would serve equally well for either the two- or three-story versions of the villa, in the elevation and section drawings he emphasized the three-story scheme and presented the two-story scheme as an alternative. Although the Popes chose the two-story villa, it is possible that Latrobe preferred the three-story version. It allowed for a more elaborate development of the domed rotunda, with a deep, double entablature (the upper one suggesting a false parapet), giving the space rather vertical proportions. The third story would have contained seven sizable rooms that may have been intended for bedchambers, storage, or servants' rooms. The lesser expense of a two-story house may have been a factor in the Popes' decision, but the two-story scheme seems generally better suited to their program and their site, having more of the character of a suburban villa.

If Latrobe's sketch plan (see figs. 6.14–6.15) actually represents an early phase in the design of the Pope Villa, it suggests that the architect began his design process for the Kentucky house by reference to at least two of his previous designs: those of the Tayloe rotunda house (Washington, D.C., ca. 1796–1799, unbuilt) and the Markoe House (Philadelphia, 1808–1811) (see Chapters 4 and 5). The Tayloe designs had a two-story tribune rotunda, while the Markoe House merely had a circular hall on the second story. Both designs, however, were for town houses with partially submerged basements, slightly raised first stories containing the principal rooms, and bedchambers in their second stories. If this sketch plan is for the Pope Villa, Latrobe quickly abandoned it, realizing that the Popes' suburban site allowed for a fuller development of his "rational house," with its services in a ground-level first story, its public rooms above in the second story, and a more four-fronted, villa-like character (the sketch plan, like a town house, appears to have blank sidewalls). In the sketch plan, the first-story entrance hall and rotunda caused the public rooms to be somewhat isolated from each other (the dining room, presumably on the right side in front of the stairs, with the drawing room on the left—opposite but similar suites of rooms occur on the first floor of the Markoe House). By the time he drew the January 1811 plans, Latrobe had eliminated the submerged basement (as in the Tayloe and Markoe designs), located the services on the first story (which he labels the "Basement Story"), and elevated the public rooms to the second (or "Principal") story, producing a more rational, functional, and pleasing design. By placing the rotunda on the second story rather than the first, he turned it from a mere hall that divided the plan into an integral part of the public room circuit. In the Pope Villa plans, Latrobe for the first time successfully fused a "rotunda house" with his "rational house." One innovation that he did carry from the sketch plan into the later Pope Villa plans was the design for the rotunda itself, with its large, column-screened entry (echoing the Markoe House's second-story hall) and its doorways placed at diagonal, 60-degree angles rather than the more static, cross-axial, 90-degree angles of his previous rotunda plans. In addition to being his most sophisticated rotunda plan, the Pope Villa is Latrobe's most completely achieved rational house, as it represents the first time he persuaded American clients to place all of the services within the main block, in a low first story, with the major public rooms above in the second story.<sup>67</sup>

Latrobe's surviving drawings show a house of 54 feet to a side: a square villa capped by a hipped roof, with elevations of an austere elegance. The location

of service and family rooms in the first story, with major public rooms on the second story, is reflected in the elevation, with its small windows below and giant, Venetian windows above. The resulting facade is unorthodox, even "upside-down" in its inversion of the usual American house formula (principal rooms on the first floor and bedchambers above), yet striking for its broad, planar surfaces and its reliance on pure, proportionate relationships of solids and voids. The projecting, one-story portico, with its unfluted Doric columns *in antis* between arched and slightly outset end pavilions, helps to anchor the monumental upper story and to create a focal point for entry. In Latrobe's three-story version of the elevation the eaves exhibit exposed rafter ends, hinting at a "Tuscan" simplicity. Indeed, the Pope Villa facade, in its nearly astylar boldness and economy of composition, combines "Tuscan" and "Grecian" characters. But this simplicity is an illusion, for the regularity of the elevations masks the asymmetries of the plans and spaces behind. The three-bay facade also conceals the fact that there are two principal rooms behind it in the second story. Finally, the climactic feature of the villa, its second-story, domed rotunda, is nowhere revealed on the exterior and is experienced as a complete surprise inside the villa. The simple geometries of the elevations act at once to reveal the rational distribution of functions within the house and to simplify, even conceal, the spatial complexity of its plans. The serenity of the Pope Villa exteriors is thus an artifice in the service of a "rational" simplicity and a "picturesque" agenda of surprise.

Latrobe's major innovations in the Pope Villa plans are his treatment of the service spaces and his scenic route to the domed rotunda. He not only located the service spaces on the first floor, for ease of access, but within the main block of the villa, thus avoiding the standard American custom of appending a kitchen and other service spaces behind the house, in an ell wing, an arrangement he called "the frying pan plan" (the frontal block resembling a "pan" and the service ell a "handle").<sup>68</sup> He objected to this plan because the service wing spoiled one facade; destroyed the views from the rear rooms of the house; encouraged an undesirable, rear service yard (where servants hung laundry, etc.); created circulation problems within the plan, and was the most expensive method of obtaining square footage relative to the wall area and roofing materials employed. Latrobe termed his rational alternative, the "Basement story plan"; in it, the first-story basement included not only the kitchen and its associated service rooms but informal rooms for the family, such as an office for the gentleman and a household parlor for the lady, close to her servants, while the public rooms occupied the grander principal story above. This



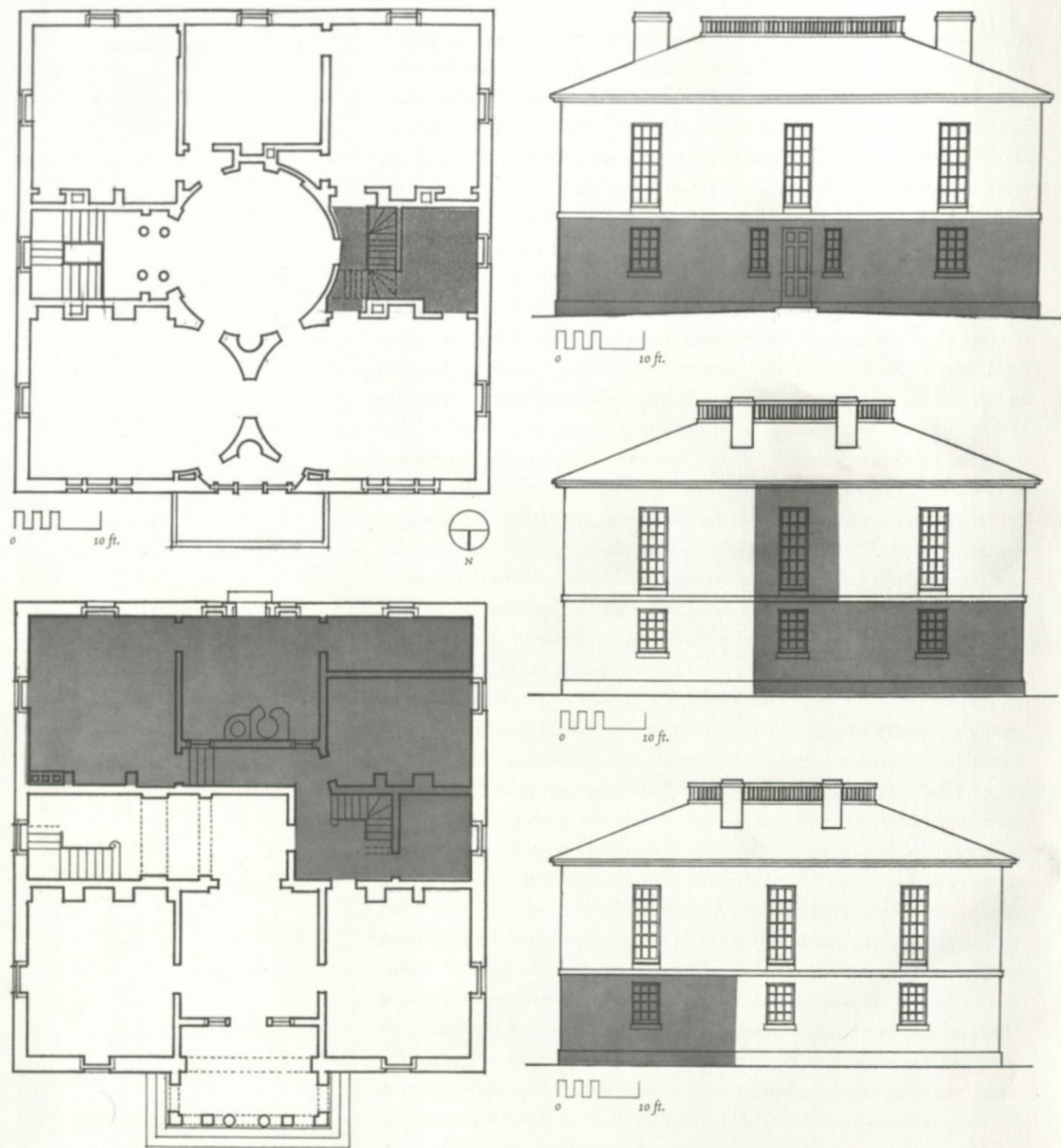


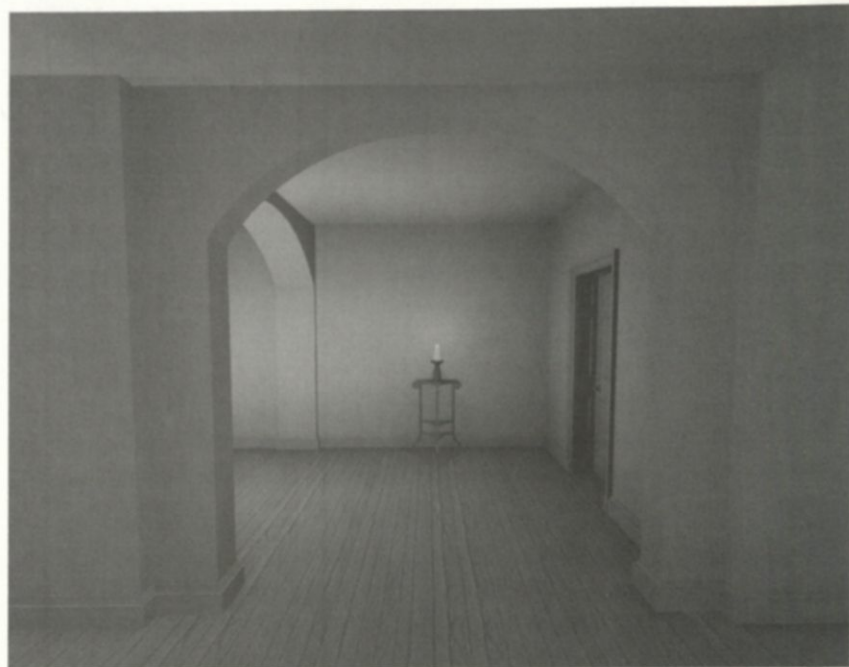
Fig. 6.24. Plans and rear and side elevations of Pope Villa with concealed, asymmetrical service portions shaded. First-story plan (lower left), second-story plan (upper left); rear / south elevation (upper right), west / side elevation (middle right), and east / side elevation (lower right). (Michael Fazio)

arrangement, Latrobe said: "gives the husband *his Castle* on the ground floor, the wife her breakfasting parlor or housekeepers room, if she pleases, her kitchen, scullery, storeroom, larders, pantry snug around her; her drawing room, Antichamber or sitting room, dining room, on the principal floor, and all her chamber arrangements above stairs, or perhaps, if the house is large enough, on the principal floor."<sup>69</sup>

This passage describes exactly what Latrobe achieved in the Pope Villa.<sup>70</sup> Across the south, or rear, facade, in the at-grade basement he internalized the kitchen, the "Wash & Bake house," and two rooms for servants.<sup>71</sup> The service spaces of the villa are thus entirely concealed within the main block, visible neither from the exterior nor from the public spaces of the interior (fig. 6.24). Although these service rooms are carefully segregated and hidden from the family and the public rooms, they are conveniently connected to them. Here Latrobe relied on his knowledge of eighteenth-century French domestic planning, which similarly separated and concealed the servants' spaces and circulation routes, through *dégagement*, while ingeniously linking them at critical points to the family and public rooms.

Flanking the hall on the north, or entrance, front of the house were the "family" spaces: an "Office" to the left and a "Parlor" to the right. Reminiscent of French planning, in which houses were "gendered," the left-hand office was undoubtedly Senator Pope's "Castle"; his room, isolated from the rest of the house, for business, politics, and male company, while the room to the right was Eliza Pope's parlor, where she received company informally and conducted her household affairs—essentially the nerve center of the house. It may have served for family dining as well because in his bill of scantling Latrobe lists it as a "Breakfast Room."<sup>72</sup> This parlor-breakfast room connects through the service stair, immediately behind, to the rear service zone of the house. To the right of the service stair is a "Store room"; beyond it is a short transverse corridor (with internal windows to receive "borrowed light" from the wash and bake room behind), connecting the service stair and "Servants lodging" with the kitchen. At the east end of this corridor, four steps descend into the kitchen, indicating that Latrobe planned the floors of the kitchen, wash and bake room, and rear servants' room, to be approximately two feet below the first-floor level, meaning that they were to have either brick or earthen floors, both for convenience (spills would not damage them) and fireproofing.<sup>73</sup> The kitchen contains a large cooking fireplace and small stew stoves. The wash and bake room has a large chimney, oven, and vat. A lateral wall divides the servants' lodging into two unequal spaces, a larger front room with a fireplace and

Fig. 6.25. Hypothetical reconstruction of lower hall of Pope Villa as Latrobe intended it. (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)



a smaller, unheated back room. This division may indicate segregation by function (living and sleeping quarters in front and other functions such as dining behind), by gender (female servants in front, male behind), by task (house servants in front, kitchen and /or outdoor servants behind), or by family status (married servants and children in front, single servants behind). While occupying the villa the Popes owned from four to five enslaved adult African Americans (with from two to five children); they may have been the servants for whom these spaces were planned, though that is not certain.<sup>74</sup>

The ground-level basement story of the Pope Villa eliminated the partially submerged basement typical of most American houses and its associated exterior staircase up to the principal floor, a stair that Latrobe observed became dangerous in bad weather. A drawback of Latrobe's rational "Basement Plan" is the distance from the ground-level entry up to the public rooms in the second story. At the Pope Villa, Latrobe turned this potential defect into a virtue through his creation of a brilliant, scenic sequence. His principles of interior scenery derived ultimately from the aesthetics of eighteenth-century English landscape design that advocated an asymmetrical, "picturesque" route through nature, characterized by continuously changing "pictures" or views.<sup>75</sup>

The route in the Pope Villa, from the first-story entry to the public rooms above, exemplifies such interior scenery. Visitors arrived at the portico,

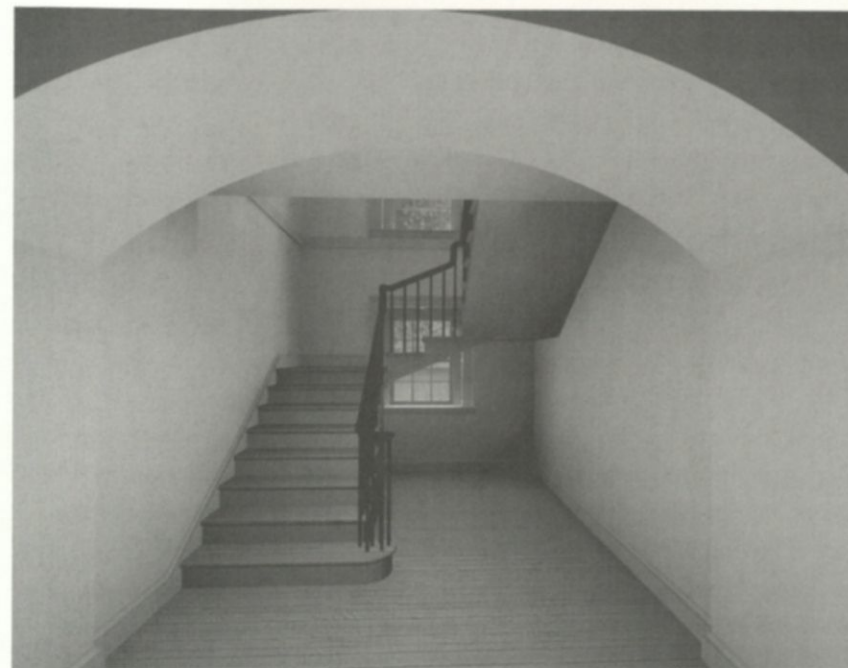


Fig. 6.26. Hypothetical reconstruction of staircase of Pope Villa as Latrobe intended it. (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

the space of which interpenetrates the facade of the house by means of a segmental brick arch that supports the wall above, represented in the plan by double, dotted lines. Beyond this is a spacious square hall, lit by the sidelights of the front door, the first in a series of low, rectilinear rooms in the ground story. Next is an inner hall of 9 feet to a side, a small square at the heart of the plan. Here the entrance axis turns. To the left, through two segmental arches (shown in plan by dotted lines and in the section by shadows cast on the rear wall), rises the U-shaped principal staircase; to the right is a door to the service stair. The lighting would be subdued in the inner hall; in the section drawing (though not in the plan) Latrobe shows an arched niche in its rear wall and within it what appears to be an antique tripod table, its top fashioned like the volutes of an Ionic capital, supporting an oil lamp for nighttime use. By day, windows in the outer wall of the stairwell lit the stair and the lower hall (figs. 6.25, 6.26).

The staircase ascends around an open, rectangular well, doubling back toward the center of the house. On the final stair run occurs the most scenic moment in the villa: a double screen of unfluted Doric columns enframes the entrance to the domed rotunda beyond, which is top-lit by an oculus-skylight (figs. 6.27–6.29; plate 14). The low, dim, rectangular spaces of the first story provide an effective prelude to the spectacle of this high, bright, curvilinear

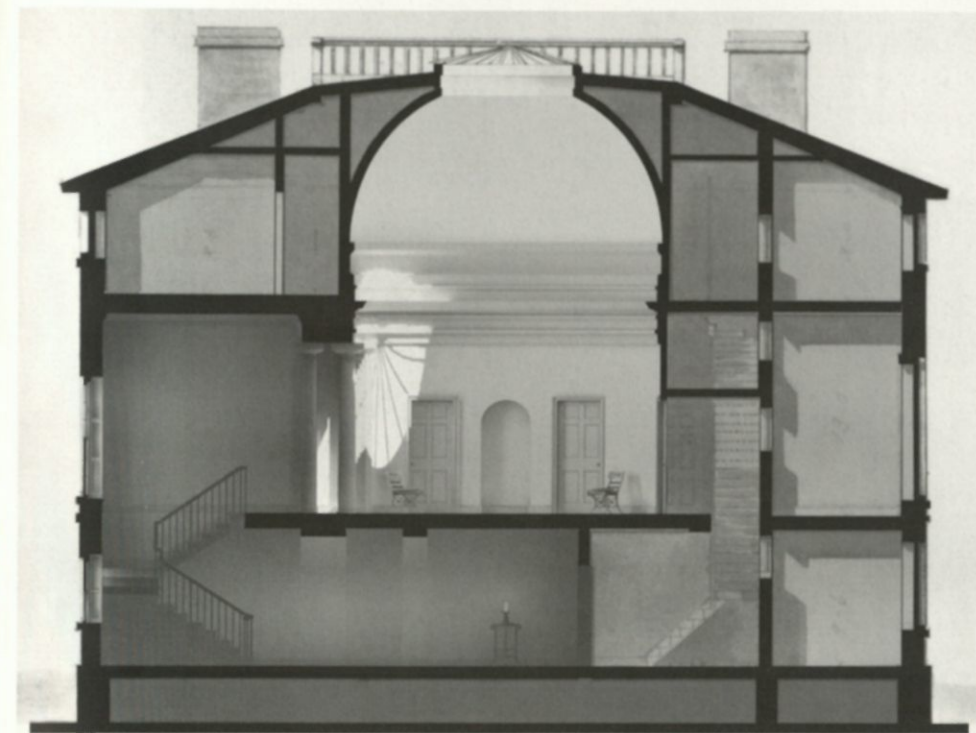
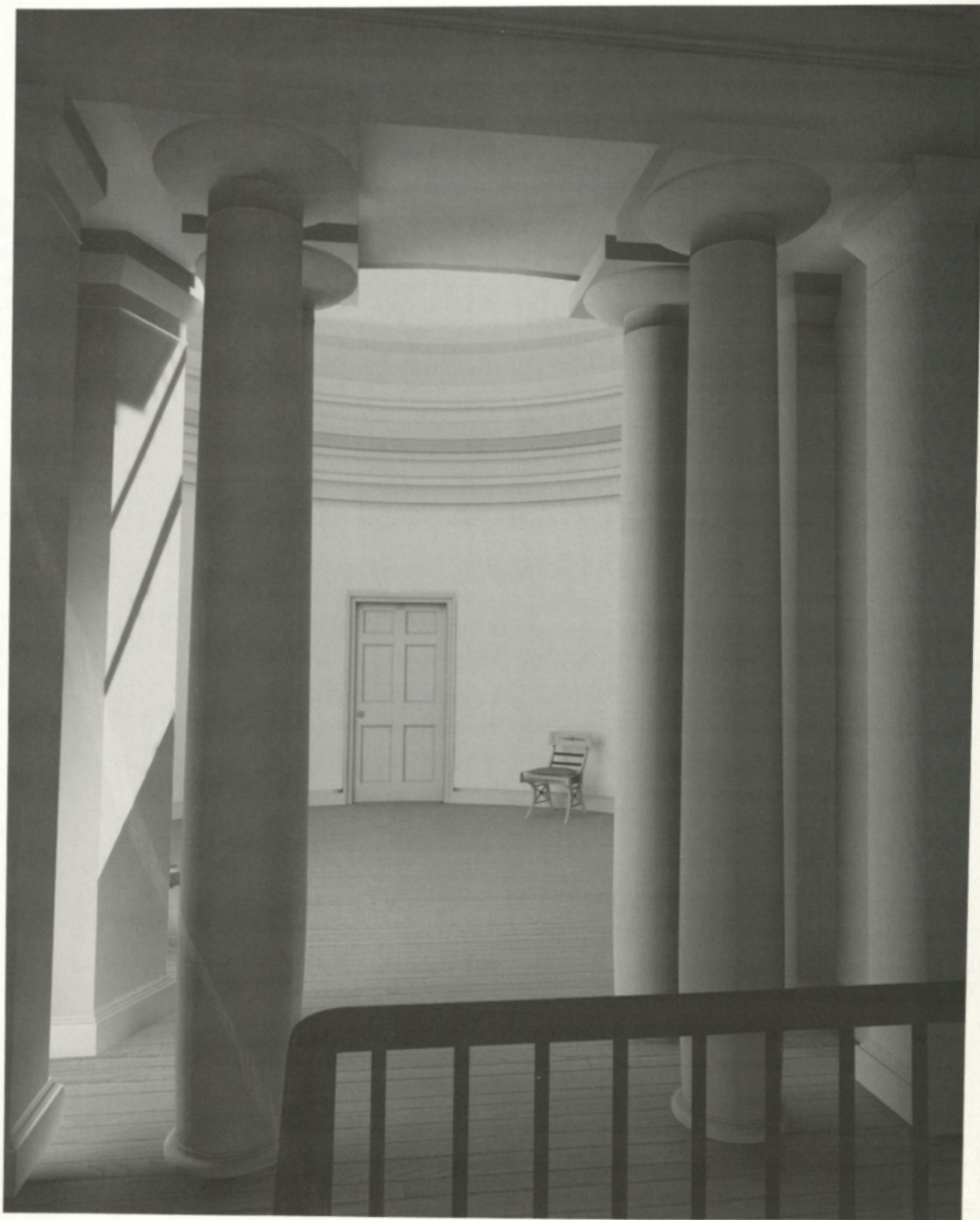


Fig. 6.27. (*Opposite*) Hypothetical reconstruction of column-screened entry to Pope Villa second-story rotunda. (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Fig. 6.28. (*Top*) Pope Villa section, cut from east to west, showing the changing effects of light along the public route from lower entrance hall up the main stairs to the rotunda (based on Latrobe's original three-story section drawing). (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

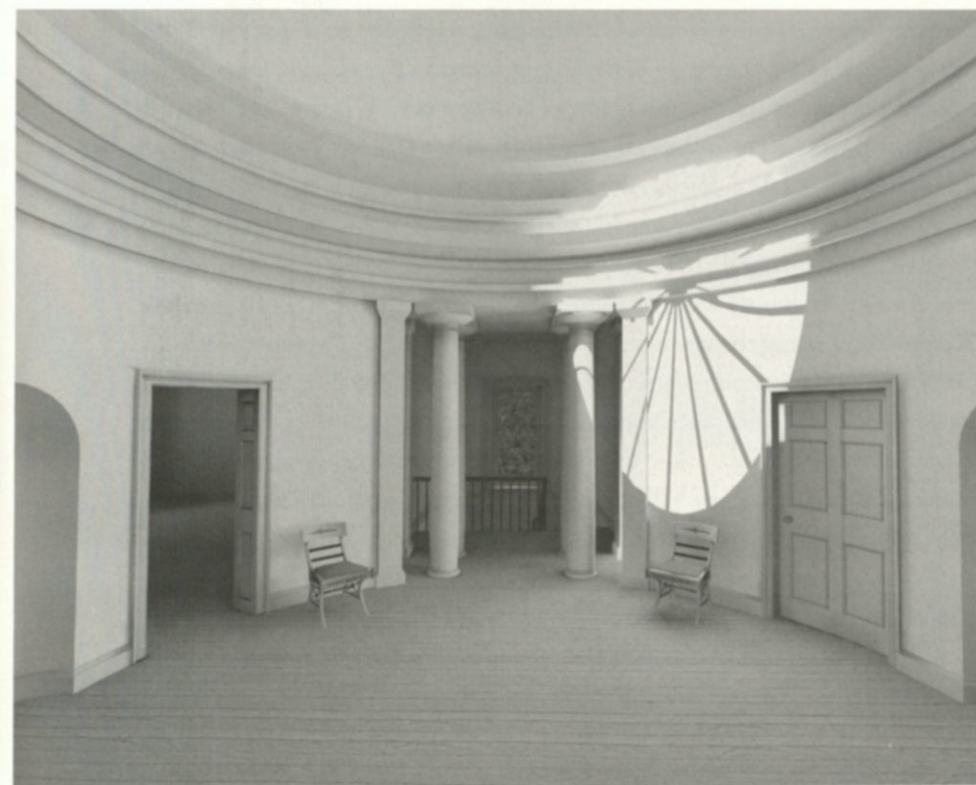


Fig. 6.29. (*Bottom*) Hypothetical reconstruction of Pope Villa second story rotunda as Latrobe intended it. (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Fig. 6.30. Interior view of the Pantheon, Rome, by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, from his *Veduta di Roma*, published between 1748–1778. (*Oeuvres choisies de J. B. Piranesi*, Paris, A. Vincent, 1913)



space, which comes as a complete surprise, no hint of it being given either on the exterior or in the lower story. One imagines the Popes receiving visitors in this dramatic space. The view of the top-lit rotunda through the silhouetted column screen echoes the scenographic interior perspective of the Roman Pantheon published by eighteenth-century Italian engraver Giovanni Battista Piranesi in his *Veduta di Roma*, a view which Latrobe surely knew (fig. 6.30).<sup>76</sup>

By 1811, Latrobe had become highly proficient at this sort of picturesque neoclassicism. The scenic route at the Pope Villa resembled his similar sequence in the south wing of the U.S. Capitol Building—familiar to the Popes—comprising the vestibules and stairs from the entrance in the eastern portico up to the rotunda-vestibule of the House of Representatives chamber. Latrobe took particular pride in this sequence, completed in 1807, claiming that it was “entirely original . . . and contains the greatest variety of scenery in the building.”<sup>77</sup> Like the Pope Villa sequence, this route began in a recessed portico (on the east front of the Capitol), moved through two lower halls, left up a U-shaped stair, to reemerge in the domed, top-lit rotunda-vestibule that connected the House chamber to the left with the central rotunda of the building to the right (fig. 6.31). In the Pope Villa plan, Latrobe refined this scenic route and heightened its surprise by revealing the rotunda only on the final

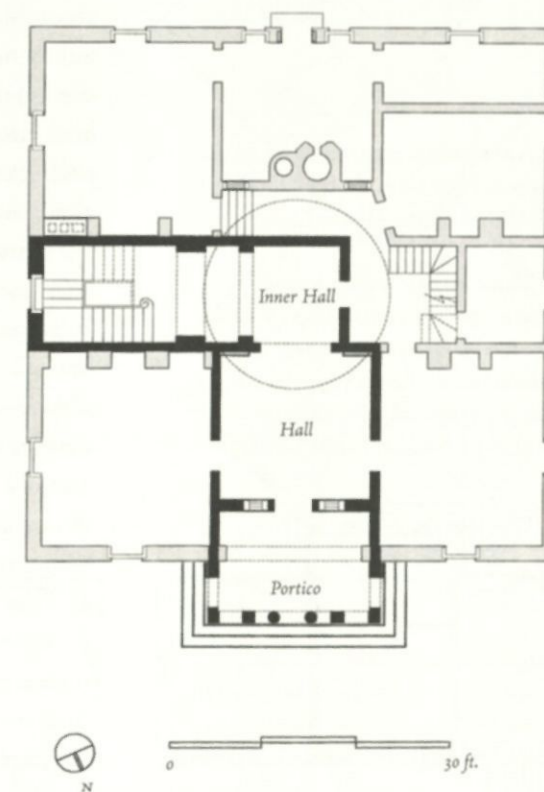
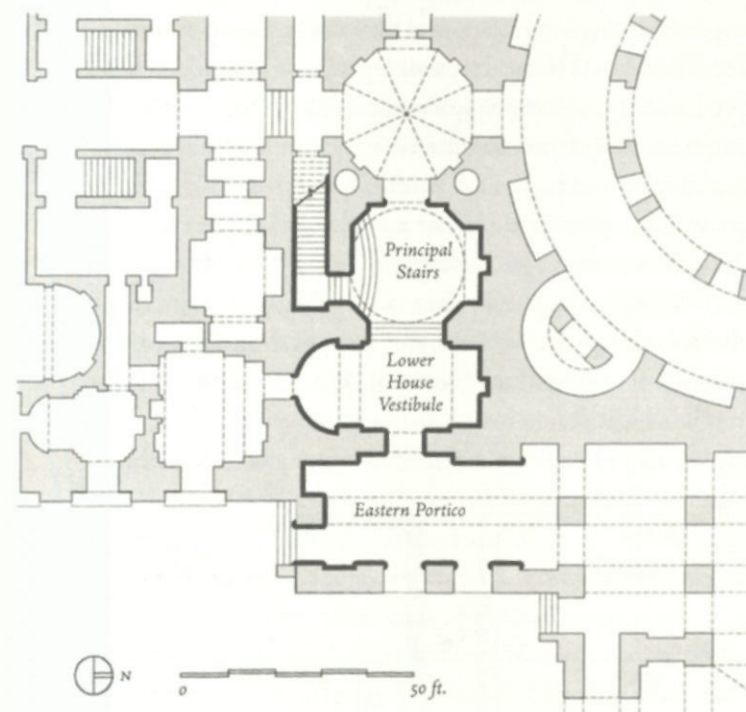
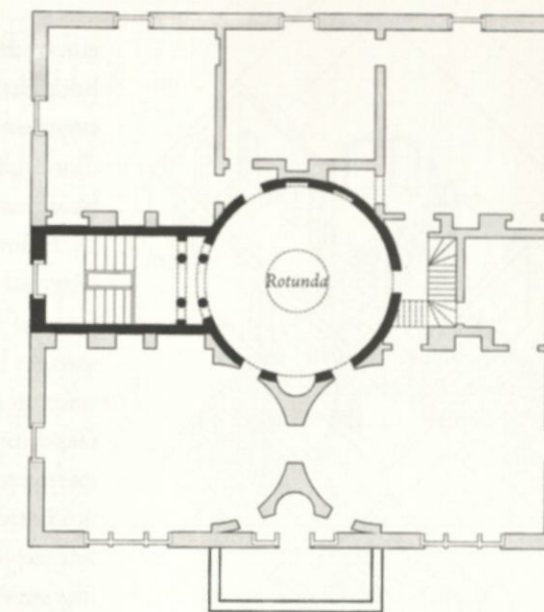
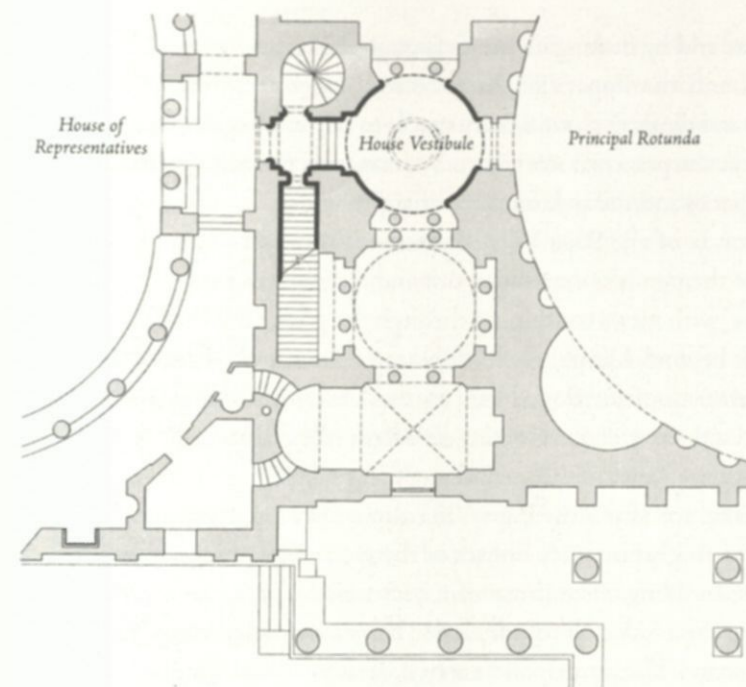


Fig. 6.31. Comparison of Latrobe’s scenic route in the south wing of U.S. Capitol Building (left) with the similar scenic route at Pope Villa (right). (First-story plans below, second-story plans above.) (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams)

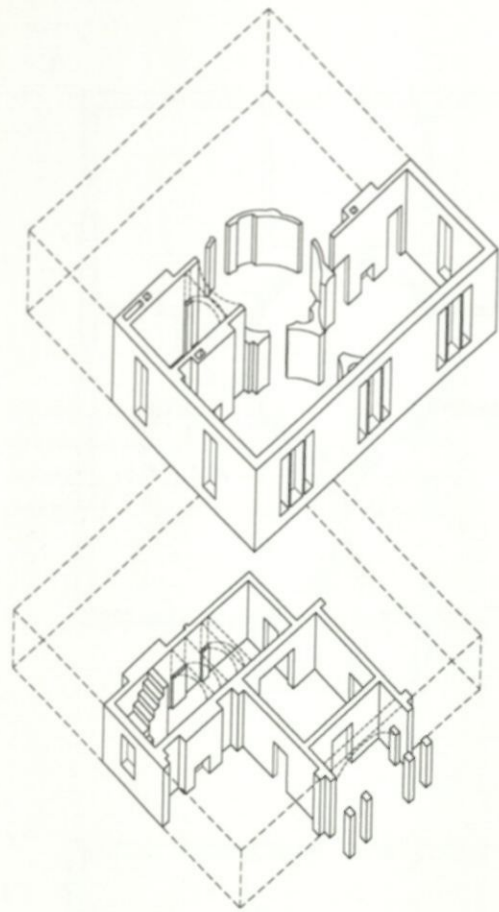
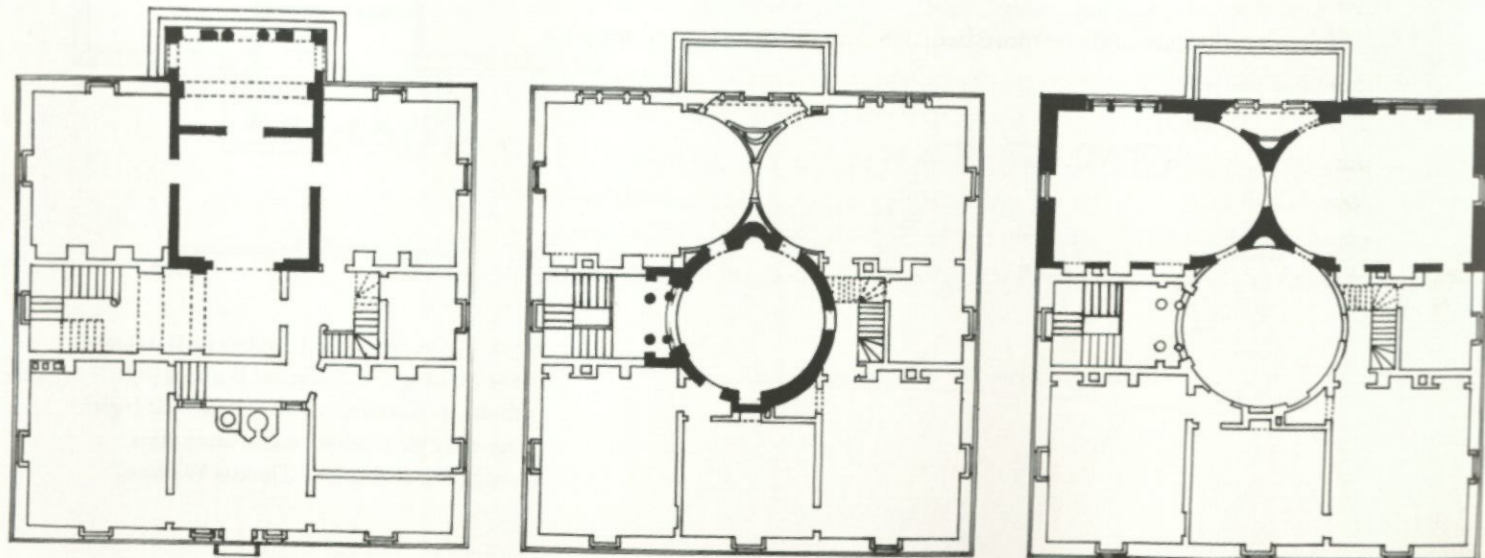


Fig. 6.32. Axonometric reconstruction of the scenic route at Pope Villa. (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; with Allison Chan)

Fig. 6.33. Three antique building types submerged within the plan of Pope Villa. (left) first story: Greek prostyle temple; (center) second story: Roman circular temple / pantheon; (right) second story: Roman basilicas. (Patrick Snadon / Lejla Vujicic)



run of the staircase and by making its entry through the column screen.<sup>78</sup> In both the Capitol and the Pope Villa Latrobe thus led visitors through a sequence of small and dimly lit ground-story spaces to arrive at large, brilliantly illuminated ones in the principal story, thereby increasing the monumentality of the major spaces and the apparent size of the buildings.<sup>79</sup>

From the rotunda of the Pope Villa, the scenery continues along twin diagonal axes into the pendant drawing-room and dining-room suite at the front of the house, with views continuing through the great triple windows into the landscape beyond. Latrobe skillfully adapted his rational house theories to the imperatives of the Popes' site; visitors entered the villa's north facade on the ground story and, traversing its scenic route, returned to the north front and its fine views in the second story (fig. 6.32).<sup>80</sup>

Latrobe's internal scenery at the Pope Villa also refines a concept that he had explored in his English country houses of the 1790s: that of incorporating small antique buildings, like those of a picturesque park, within the house itself. At the Pope Villa, Latrobe included three antique building types along the scenic route. The portico and entry hall may be read in plan as a small Greek prostyle temple, interpenetrating the facade of the house;<sup>81</sup> the second-story rotunda may be read as a miniature circular Roman temple, or pantheon, entered from the side, with the column screen as its portico; and the apsidal drawing and dining rooms, entered diagonally, are like back-to-back Roman basilicas (fig. 6.33).<sup>82</sup> Like the garden pavilions in a picturesque park, these antique buildings are strategically submerged within the plan along the public route for heightened scenic effect.

Latrobe achieved this extraordinary incidence of scenery within the Pope Villa by changing the floor plans of the house completely between the first and second stories and by creating a great variety of room shapes with a minimum of wall *poché*. His engineering expertise made both achievements possible. Few of the brick bearing walls in the lower story of the villa continue into the upper story; in place of continuous vertical walls, Latrobe used light,

hollow, wood and plaster construction ("thin-wall *poché*") for the curved walls in the second story and rested them on the upstairs floor plate. Finally, he ingeniously framed the roof around the void of the dome, using its wooden ribs and some vertical posts to support the roof beams and rafters (fig. 6.34). Although Latrobe initially preferred solid masonry for walls and floors and deplored the American custom of light wooden framing, by this time he had reached an accommodation with this construction system and exploited it to brilliant effect.

Latrobe advocated three major entertaining rooms for American houses: one for music and dancing, one for card playing and conversation, and one for dining and refreshments. His public suite of rotunda, drawing room, and dining room at the Pope Villa accommodated these activities and formed an effective circuit with a compact, triangular circulation pattern and striking diagonal views (see fig. 6.37). In the bill of scantling, Latrobe referred to the rotunda as the "saloon"; he thus meant it not only as a dramatic place for greeting visitors but as an integral part of the public room circuit.<sup>83</sup> He apparently planned to heat the rotunda by the device of a classically draped, female figure in the niche on the south wall, probably intended as a cast-iron stove flued into the chimney behind. Perhaps she represented Hestia or Vesta, Graeco-Roman goddess of the household fire (see fig. 6.20).

In the basilican drawing room-dining room suite, Latrobe intended the rooms to be cubic volumes, with triple windows and fireplaces centered on opposite walls. Their apsidal ends, covered by shallow, plaster-and-lath half-domes, would read as geometrically distinct volumes appended to them (figs. 6.35-6.36). These semidomed apses act as places to pause when entering the rooms, so that observers might enjoy their proportions as if from an outside vantage point.<sup>84</sup> The apsidal ends of these rooms also captured and concealed the central tripartite window of the facade within an alcove-like space. Curved doors led from the two rooms into the alcove and then, through the central window, to the roof of the portico, which Latrobe may have intended as a balcony for taking air and views (like those of Ashdown and the Markoe House).

Latrobe advocated one or more bedchambers in the principal story for reasons of convenience and to accommodate family members who might be ill. Although he devoted the second story of the Pope Villa primarily to public entertaining rooms, he located three bedchambers across the rear, or south, facade. The right-hand one he labeled on the plan "Pr. Chamber" (probably "Principal"), surely the Popes' own bedchamber. The other bedchambers are entered through a small triangular vestibule; for the principal

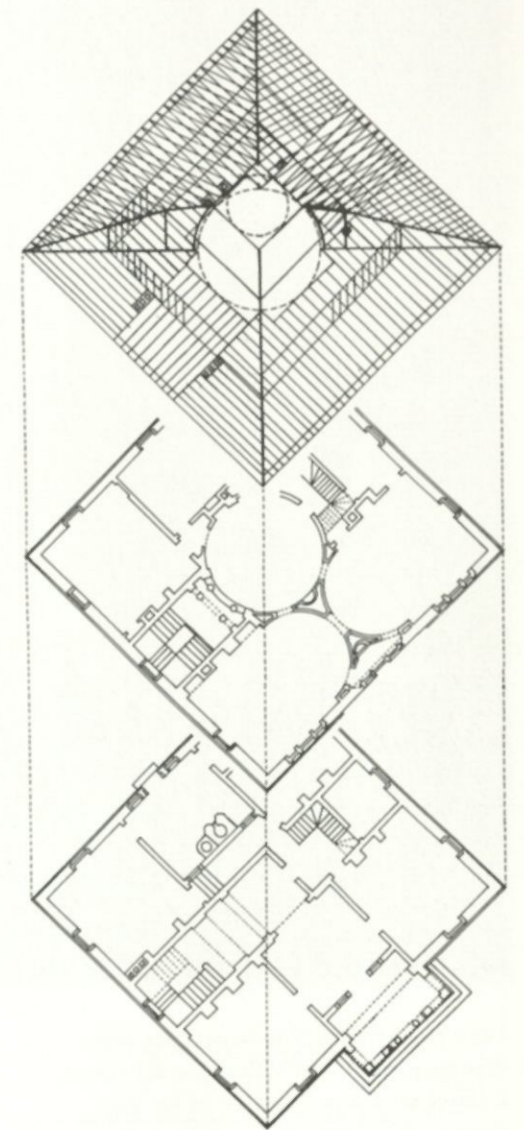


Fig. 6.34. Axonometric diagram illustrating the differing floor and roof levels of Pope Villa, and Latrobe's intentional discontinuities among them. (Patrick Snadon / Lejla Vujicic)

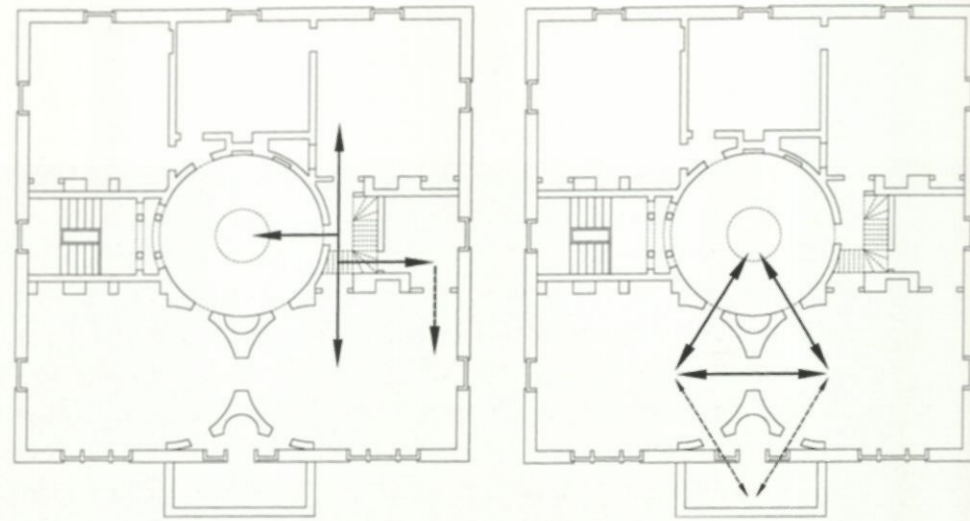


Fig. 6.35. Hypothetical reconstruction of the drawing room at Pope Villa as Latrobe intended it (furniture designed by Latrobe for other project, added here only for scale). (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)



Fig. 6.36. Hypothetical reconstruction of the dining room at Pope Villa as Latrobe intended it (furniture designed by Latrobe for other projects; added here only for scale). (Digitally reconstructed by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions, from Latrobe's drawings in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Fig. 6.37. Diagram of circulation routes in second story of Pope Villa. The public "circuit" of rooms (left); service circulation (right). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams)



chamber, this space is a "closet" (with a false door sealing it off from the rotunda), the "Principal chamber" being entered either from the back stair or through the smaller central chamber, which perhaps acted as Eliza Pope's "antichamber" or upstairs sitting room (it could also have served as a nursery).

The principal bedchamber is directly connected to the lower floor service *dégage*ment through the service stair and its upper landing. The small space of this upper landing is cleverly located to serve both the public rooms and principal bedchamber. To the right, it opens into the "Butler's Pantry" (where the plates and china were kept and food arriving from the first-story kitchen could be prepared for serving in the dining room); to the front, it opens directly into the dining room (so servants removing courses could bypass the butler's pantry); to the rear it opens into the principal bedchamber; and to the left into the rotunda and the public rooms beyond (fig. 6.37). This small space creates efficient, radial service circulation on the second story and recalls similar circulation cells from the houses of Latrobe's London employer, architect S. P. Cockerell.<sup>85</sup>

At the Pope Villa, Latrobe ingeniously segregated the spaces and circulation of the different "populations" of the house: family, visitors, and servants. In addition, he "rationalized" the neo-Palladian rotunda villa for the American context and suffused it with picturesque planning. The Popes' decision to accept Latrobe's rational-rotunda house, with its internalized services, its ground-story basement, its second-story principal rooms, its picturesque sequence, its concealed rotunda, and its unorthodox facade composition, represents an extraordinarily adventurous act of architectural patronage.

Latrobe's correspondence with the Popes suggests that they planned to commence construction of their villa in the spring of 1811. Although there was no possibility of Latrobe's supervising it, or even visiting the site, he intended to control the building process through drawings and letters. Some he would deliver to the Popes in Washington, some he would mail to them in Lexington, and some he would send to the Popes' Lexington builder.

By late January 1811, Latrobe had conveyed to the Popes the final floor plans for the first and second stories of their villa.<sup>86</sup> Soon after, he sent them the final elevation and the first bill of scantling listing the necessary wooden elements for the first two stories.<sup>87</sup> Then, on 1 March 1811, Latrobe addressed a letter directly to the Popes' Lexington builder, Asa Wilgus, along with an additional bill of scantling, providing dimensions for the window sash and the wooden elements necessary for the attic, dome, and roof framing. This letter to Wilgus is the only document that identifies him as the builder of the Pope Villa, and it shows how Latrobe intended to direct a building process occurring hundreds of miles away across the Allegheny Mountains:

Sir,

I shall send you from time to time working drawings of every part of the roof and the rest of the carpentry. The bill of Scantling is only a guide for you to procure the materials. If I were near you, much less drawing and writing would answer the purpose, but as I shall probably never see Mr. Pope's house, it is necessary that my house on paper & yours in solid work should go up exactly alike. I therefore pray you to write to me on every doubt you may have, & not fear being trouble to me. I shall punctually answer your letters. I wish all the joiners work to be put upon *Grounds*. Have you ever used that method? If not, pray let me know as I will fully explain it. When you have once used it you will never work otherwise.<sup>88</sup>

Wilgus is a little known but important figure in the history of the Pope Villa and the building trades in early Lexington. Born in New Jersey about 1760, he came to Lexington around 1800. He was thus in his early 50s when he built the Pope Villa. Latrobe, in his 30 January 1811 letter to Pope mentions "your carpenter," which suggests that Wilgus was trained in that trade. But by the first two decades of the nineteenth century, he had developed diverse business interests, including real estate ownership (perhaps related to speculative building), road construction, and hotel and tavern management. It seems likely, from the range of his activities and from the tone of Latrobe's letter to him, that Wilgus was not simply the "carpenter" of the villa but its construction supervisor and general contractor. He may have

subcontracted or coordinated the work of other craftsmen, including stone-masons and brick masons, framing carpenters or joiners, and finish carpenters and plasterers, or he may have had his own construction crew of regular craftsmen.<sup>89</sup>

Latrobe, with his drawings and letters, represented the methods and goals of one of the earliest professional architects in the United States, while Wilgus represented the older tradition of the vernacular builder-architect working within a local context. Each man had differing expectations of the building process. Latrobe sought to control every aspect through detailed drawings and instructions, whereas Wilgus was accustomed to building with few or no drawings and creating his solutions and details by reference to his own experience, his builders' handbooks, or to local examples.

Between Latrobe's letter to Wilgus of 7 March 1811 and late July 1811, no correspondence regarding the villa survives. John Pope was in Lexington from approximately April through October 1811 and so probably involved in the building process.<sup>90</sup> Eliza Pope either stayed in or returned early to Washington, for in late July 1811, she visited Latrobe in his office at the Capitol and requested further drawings for the villa. This took Latrobe by surprise, for he had been unaware that construction was proceeding. On 28 July 1811, he addressed a letter to John Pope in Lexington, expressing his displeasure that building had gone on without his direction:

Mrs. Pope did me the honor last week to call upon me for the drawings of your house which are necessary to compleat it according to the plans with which I presented you last winter. My last letter to you<sup>91</sup> stated that if you permitted me to employ a young gentleman of my acquaintance to make them, it should be done immediately, but in answer to this request you informed me that you had received intelligence from Lexington that the house would cost infinitely more than my estimate, & you were besides engaged in considering a variety of other projects offered to you, so that it would certainly have been an intrusion on my part at the time to have pressed the subject farther, as I had no interest whatever in the design but what arose from the pleasure of mutual kindness. I regret now exceedingly that you were not more explicit, and that you have actually proceeded to build without the necessary drawings & that it is highly probable that your house never will be in point of cheapness or elegance what I intended.

In consequence however of Mrs. Pope's information, I have caused the necessary drawings to be made for the roof & shall from time to time continue to send others so that in a fortnight [two weeks] from this time all the drawings will leave this [office]. I shall afterwards be absent to the Northward for a short time & probably shall not hear from you. But I will give you information enough so that you

may chuse what you will use or reject, and not be at a loss. Having still to examine the copies I have just obtained for your use before the post goes out I can at present only assure you of the sincere regard with which I am

Your faithful h[um]ble ser[van]t  
B. Henry Latrobe<sup>92</sup>

Latrobe transmitted the roof drawings to Eliza Pope with the promise of other drawings in a few days.<sup>93</sup> She may either have mailed them to Kentucky or have departed for Lexington with them.

Latrobe's letter suggests that John Pope and Asa Wilgus, both on the construction site in Lexington, had carried up the basic structure of the villa through the first two stories, relying on Latrobe's first and second floor plans and at least one elevation drawing given by the architect to Pope in February 1811. However, they had reached an impasse when it came time for the complex wooden framing of the roof and dome. Eliza Pope, to keep the construction proceeding smoothly, had intervened at a critical moment. The attic and roof structure of the villa had to be framed around the void of the concealed dome, the wooden ribs of which acted as structural elements to support the central portion of the roof, while the central skylight-oculus acted as a compression ring for both the dome ribs and the central roof rafters. This was certainly the first time the Lexington builder had faced such framing conditions (see figs. 6.20–6.34).

Although Latrobe was irritated to have lost control of the construction process for four months and would have preferred delivering more detailed drawings at regular intervals, Pope and Wilgus undoubtedly felt that the floor plans and elevation that they had in hand were sufficient to begin construction and, indeed, they carried the house up to the roof with considerable fidelity to Latrobe's plans. The surviving roof framing of the villa indicates that Latrobe's drawings for it did arrive in time for its construction according to his specifications. What other drawings Latrobe may have sent are not known, but some of them may have arrived too late to be incorporated, for certain details of the villa were not what he intended.

Both John and Eliza Pope were in Lexington by the fall of 1811 for, on 10 October, they jointly sold 135 town lots that they owned in Frankfort, Kentucky, for \$3,000.00, presumably to pay for ongoing construction.<sup>94</sup> The Popes returned to Washington, D.C., in November 1811.<sup>95</sup> Construction of the villa undoubtedly continued through 1812. On their return journey to Lexington in the summer of 1812, the Popes stayed with Pope's friend and fellow



senator, Thomas Worthington and his wife, Eleanor, at Adena, their Latrobe-designed house near Chillicothe, Ohio. Worthington recorded in his diary on 5 August 1812 that "Mr. Pope and family start on toward home this morning."<sup>96</sup> The Popes surely found their Lexington villa well along when they arrived. Although Pope himself remained in Lexington only from August through October 1812, Eliza may have been there longer to oversee interior finish details such as wood and plasterwork, painting, and wallpapering.

As the final construction drawings that Latrobe gave to the Popes and those that he may have sent directly to Lexington do not survive, we cannot know exactly how the house as built compared with his final plans. But the house itself may be compared to the surviving Library of Congress drawings (probably Latrobe's penultimate designs retained as his office records) (see figs. 6.18–6.20). Some differences are apparent between the house as built and the drawings. These differences may be attributable to any of four circumstances: first, to changes that Latrobe himself may have made between the surviving ("penultimate") drawings and the final drawings that arrived in Lexington; second, to the fact that some of Latrobe's detailed construction drawings may have arrived after John Pope and Asa Wilgus had carried the building too far to use them; third, to changes that the Popes may have suggested to their builder during the construction process; and fourth, to changes that the builder may have made on his own initiative. Most of the changes attributable to the Popes and their builder are evident, for they vary from Latrobe's practices and preferences.

Latrobe's second-story floor plan shows (though the elevations do not) that he actually designed three giant, triple, or "Venetian," windows for the upper story of the front facade. His floor plan shows the Venetian windows of the drawing and dining rooms centered on the axis of the mantelpieces of those rooms so that, in the elevation, these windows aligned with the vertical centerlines of the small windows of the first story below and the chimneystacks on the roof above (see figs. 6.18 and 6.22). The Popes and their builder moved these outer Venetian windows approximately 2 feet inward, toward the center of the facade (fig. 6.38). One can only speculate why. Possibly the builder preferred a regular spacing of windows and wall piers in the second story. As executed, each window is about 10 feet wide and each wall pier 6, creating a modular alternation of roughly 6 feet–10 feet–6 feet–10 feet–6 feet–10 feet–6 feet across the facade, with 24 feet of combined wall and 30 feet of combined window area. The clients and their builder also altered Latrobe's intended spatial configuration for the drawing and dining

rooms behind those windows and may have moved the windows off-axis to respond to that change. Latrobe designed those rooms as squares in plan (slightly more than 18 feet to a side) with flat ceilings and the back-to-back semidomed apses appended to them (see figs. 6.35–6.36). During construction, the Popes and their builder eliminated Latrobe's shallow, plaster half-domes, instead carrying the flat ceilings into the half-circular apses and running continuous plaster cornices around the combined whole.<sup>97</sup> Eliminating the half-domes threw the spatial geometries of square and half-circle into one continuous space, the elongated proportions of which may have persuaded the Popes and their builder to move the windows inward on the wall in an attempt to center them more on the total length of the resulting rooms (see figs. 6.51, 6.52).

Other differences exist between the front facade of the house as built and Latrobe's surviving elevation drawings. Latrobe intended the lower story to be 9 feet 6 inches in height and the upper story 13 feet; the Popes and their builder made the first story 10 feet and the second story 12 feet 9 inches in height. This altered the proportions of the facade slightly. Also, the protruding window lintels, resting on rosette blocks, of the principal story windows, and the belt course between first and second stories (which appear on Latrobe's surviving drawings), were eliminated in the house as built. Latrobe himself may have deleted these elements in the final drawings.<sup>98</sup> All the windows of the Pope Villa as built are spanned by simple, flat brick arches set flush within the Flemish-bond brick walls.

Latrobe's surviving elevations for the Pope Villa show the one-story entrance portico veined like stone, while in plan it is tinted pink, his convention for masonry. He probably hoped for this portico to be of ashlar stone or at the least of brick and stucco scored and tinted to simulate stone. The early portico of the villa survived no later than the mid-nineteenth century, and no record of its appearance remains. Archaeological evidence of it survives below ground in the form of four brick piers, spaced equidistantly.<sup>99</sup> The lightness of these piers suggests that the superstructure of the portico was of wood, not masonry, construction. The local builder may have executed it essentially as Latrobe depicted it, but he may have translated it into wood; or, as suggested by the equidistant spacing of the surviving piers, he may have eliminated Latrobe's arched end pavilions and have executed the portico with four equally spaced wooden columns (fig. 6.39). The arched end pavilions of Latrobe's portico would have concealed the wide, structural, brick arch in the wall of the house behind. The builder imposed a wooden, elliptical arch

Fig. 6.38. Hypothetical reconstruction of entrance (north) facade of Pope Villa as built, 1811–1812 (with speculative portico modified from Latrobe's drawings in Library of Congress to fit the house as built). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)

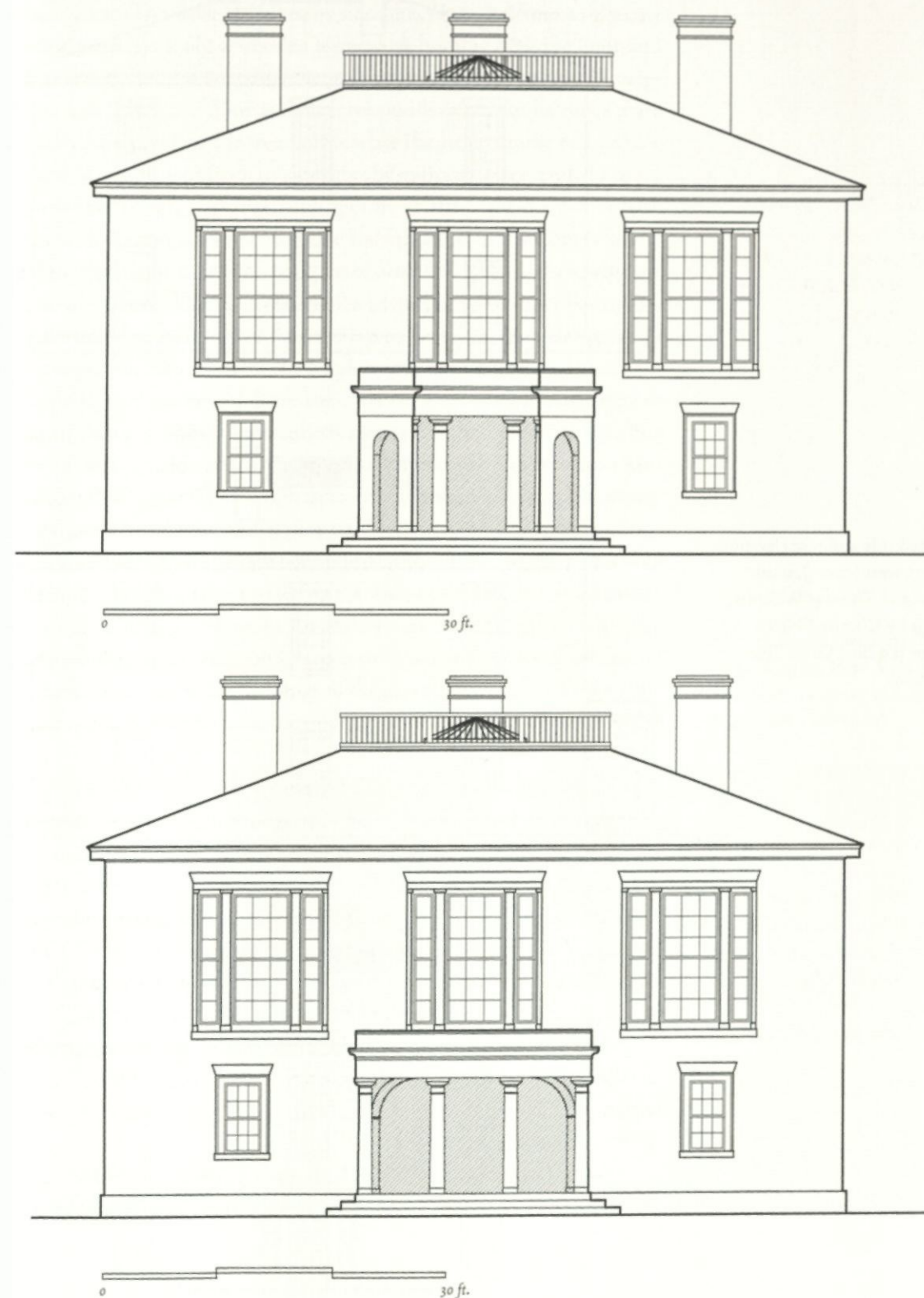
over this segmental brick arch and elaborated it with elegant but, by Latrobe's standards, old-fashioned moldings and a wooden keystone. Latrobe objected to elliptical forms as structurally irrational and would not have sanctioned this decorative wood overlay.

No drawings by Latrobe survive for the side and rear elevations of the villa. In the house as built, the second-story windows of the side and rear facades, though not as tall as the triple windows in the front, are significantly taller than the windows of the first story, maintaining the hierarchical supremacy of the second floor on all the facades (fig. 6.40). The east window of the first-story kitchen, as shown in Latrobe's floor plan, was made into a door as built, a functional change that facilitated the arrival of supplies to the kitchen but sacrificed the symmetry of the east elevation. That this exterior kitchen door opened to the east rather than to the south, or rear, suggests either that the Popes and their builder felt that preserving the symmetry of the south facade was more important than that of the east, or that the inevitable outbuildings of a Kentucky villa of this period, such as ice- and smokehouses, may have been located east of the main house rather than behind it to the south. Despite the internal kitchen, wash-bake room, and servants' rooms, some of the villa's services must have been housed in outbuildings. In maps and photographs of the villa from the mid-nineteenth century on, outbuildings are evident, mostly east of the main house (see fig. 6.54). The villa site was ultimately bounded by roads on the north, west, and south, so the east front was the least conspicuous facade and may have been sacrificed to service activities.

On the verso of the Pope Villa floor-plan sheet, Latrobe sketched in pencil the plan and elevation of a small structure that may have been a quick study for an outbuilding for the Popes (fig. 6.41). It is a cruciform, hip-roofed building, with a large central door; horizontal lines in the elevation suggest wooden construction, either of clapboards, boards laid flush and grooved, or logs. If of log construction and indeed related to the Pope Villa project, Latrobe may have intended a consciously "primitive" outbuilding as a witty reference to the recent frontier building traditions of Kentucky. The Popes kept a four-wheeled carriage and three horses; this sketch may have been for a stable and carriage house with quarters for outdoor servants. The composition and massing of this small building echoed that of the villa itself. There is no record of its having been built.

The rear elevation of the Pope Villa was a monumental and austere three-bay composition with five symmetrical windows and a central door to the

Fig. 6.39. Hypothetical reconstruction of the facade of Pope Villa as built (with speculative four-column portico, as the local builder may have completed it as based on archaeological evidence on-site). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)



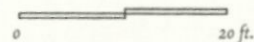
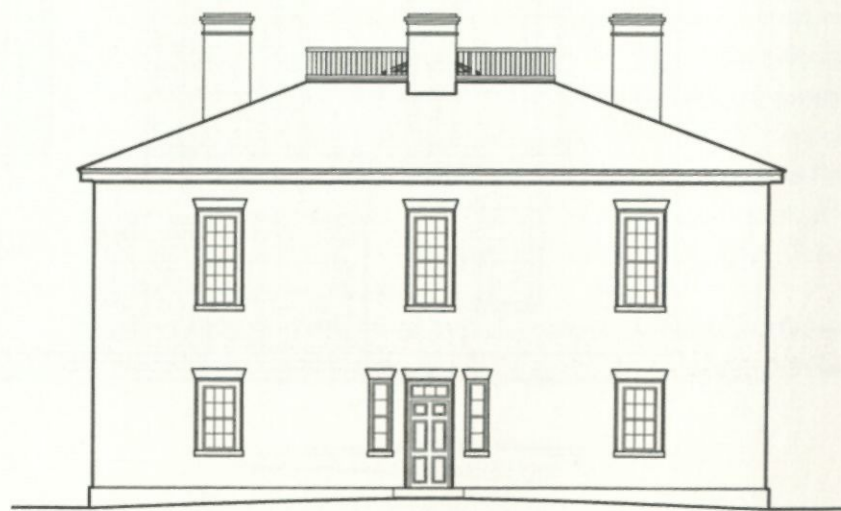
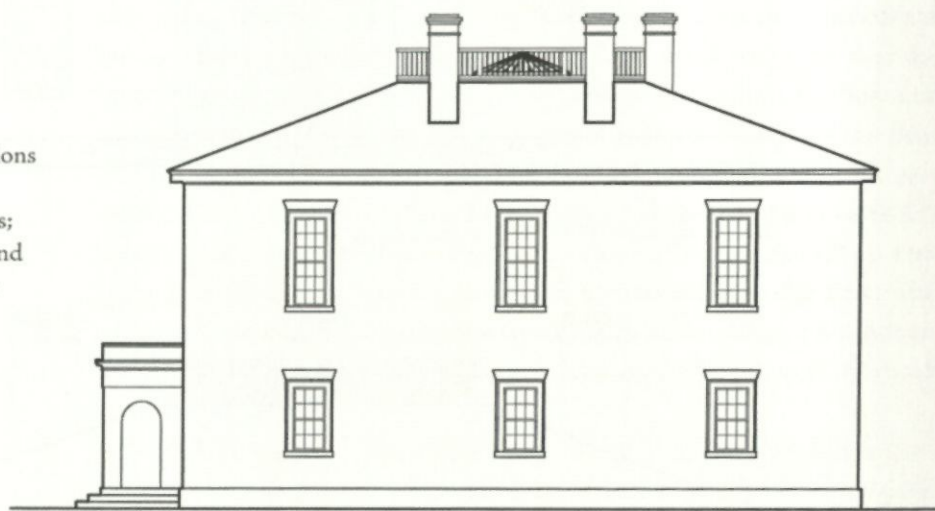
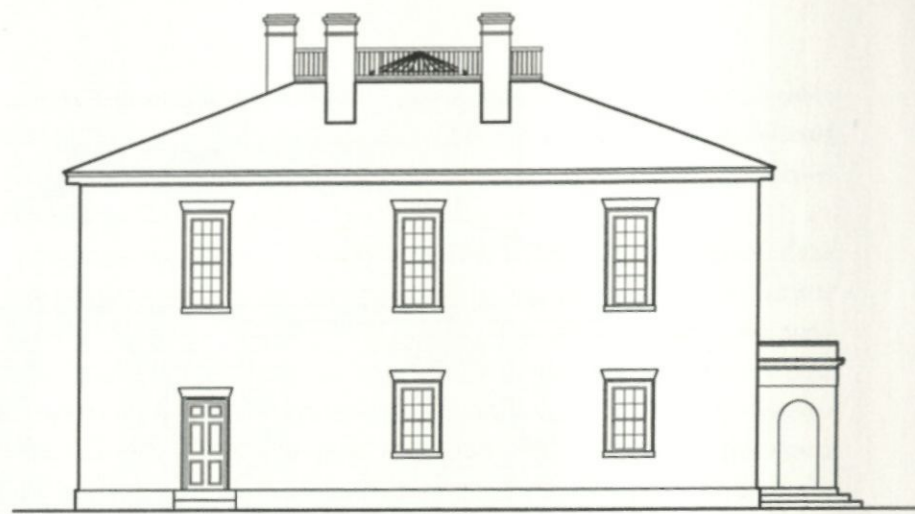


Fig. 6.40. Reconstructed side and rear elevations of Pope Villa: east (*top*), west (*center*), south (*bottom*). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)

wash-bake room. This door is flanked by sidelights separated from it by structural brick piers. Typically, a wooden framework holding both the door and sidelights was placed within a single, large masonry opening (as was the original front door). This rear door as built corresponds exactly to Latrobe's plan; presumably he so designed it to accommodate the heavy traffic of a service door, as isolating the door from its sidelights by masonry piers created a more solid arrangement. This arrangement appears as the front door of several later Kentucky houses and may indicate the influence of the Pope Villa.<sup>100</sup>

A deviation from Latrobe's practice occurred in the exterior window frames of the Pope Villa. Latrobe preferred to partially conceal window frames behind a brick curtain. The outer layer of brick in the wall acted as a reveal behind which he recessed the windows so that only a slender margin of the wooden frame showed from the exterior. This system originated in eighteenth-century London, intended to prevent the spread of fire, but Latrobe preferred it for its aesthetic qualities because the recession and diminution of the woodwork emphasized the elegant planarity of masonry wall surfaces.<sup>101</sup> Although this detail appears schematically in Latrobe's floor plans for the Pope Villa, it does not appear in the house as built, possibly because Pope and his builder carried up the walls of the villa before Latrobe's construction drawings arrived in Lexington and thus failed to create the necessary brick "pockets" to the sides and top of the windows for recessing the frames. Like most Kentucky buildings of the period, the Pope Villa window frames sit wholly within the masonry openings (although recessed from the

Fig. 6.41. Pencil sketch by Latrobe of possible outbuilding for Pope Villa (on verso of floor plan sheet). (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

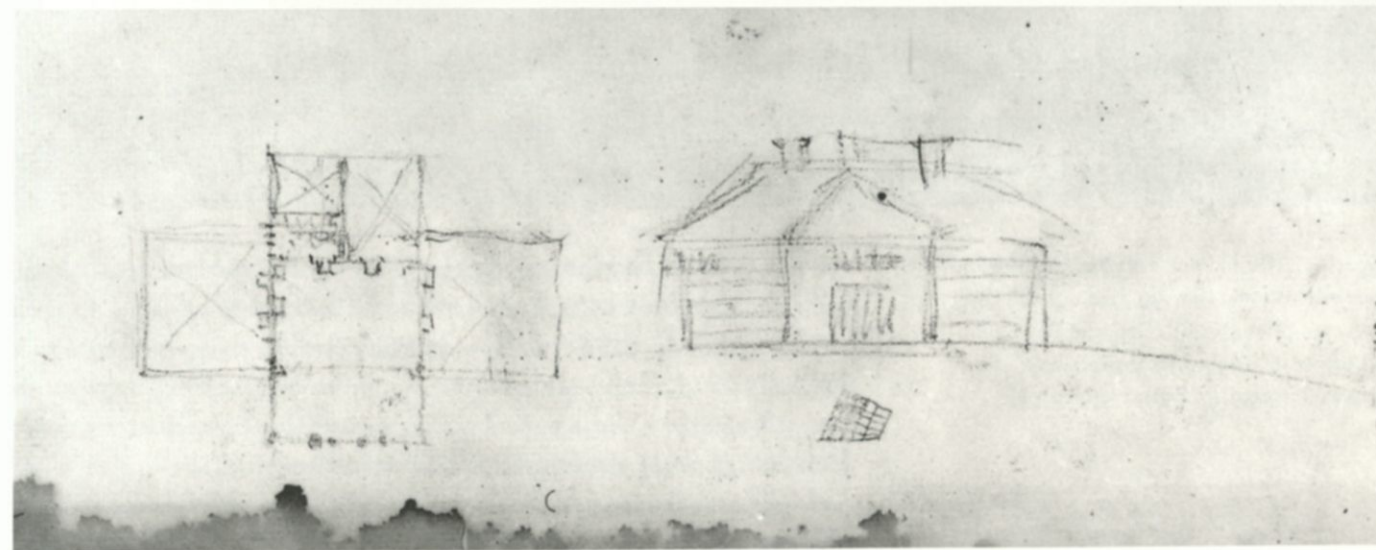




Fig. 6.42. (Above) Pope Villa Facade in 2002; partially restored (portico missing). (Michael Freeman photograph). (Opposite) Pope Villa facade in 2005 with Latrobe version of the portico restored. (© Scott Heisy, 2005)

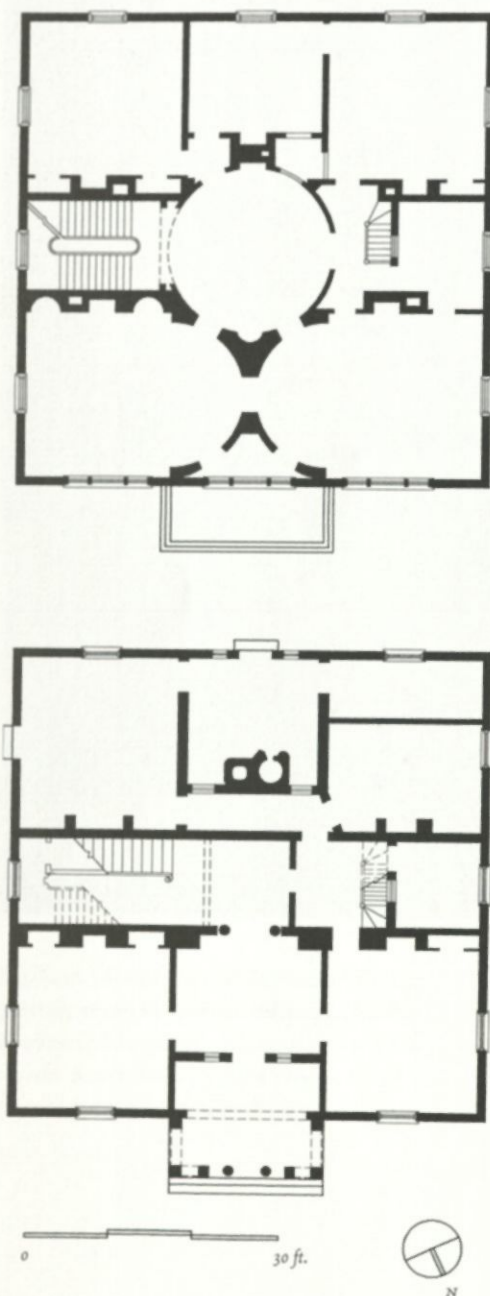
wall face as Latrobe preferred), thus revealing the full width of the wooden frames on the exterior (fig. 6.42). Despite these departures from Latrobe's practices, however, the Pope Villa externally exhibits the proportions and simplicity that Latrobe advocated for American houses. The front facade especially, with its smaller windows below and giant Venetian windows above, exemplified Latrobe's "rational house for America."

Inside the villa, the first- and second-story plans closely follow Latrobe's surviving drawings (fig. 6.43). Although altered by later owners, the first-story



service rooms were built as Latrobe planned across the back of the house, even though it is uncertain whether their floors were at a lower level as he intended.<sup>102</sup> Pope's office and Eliza Pope's parlor flanked the entrance hall at the front of the house and the progression from the portico to the inner hall is as Latrobe intended. Slight deviations occurred in the transition from the inner hall to the stair. In the left-hand passage from inner hall to stair, Latrobe had intended two shallow arches (like that behind the front portico) to span the passage (figs. 6.18, 6.20, and 6.26). He perhaps meant these arches

Fig. 6.43. Pope Villa floor plans as built, 1811–1812. (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)



to be of lath and plaster, but it is also possible that he intended them to be of brick or of thickened wooden beams in order to aid the second-story floor joists in supporting the walls and columns around the rotunda because the lower and upper walls do not correspond. Traces of brick pilasters survive on the sidewalls of the lower stair hall that might have supported wooden beams or brick arches, but they were removed before the stair was installed. The lower flight of the stair extended farther toward the center of the villa than Latrobe's plan shows and so necessitated their removal, a design change seemingly made during construction. The resulting stair was less steep and the landing without the intermediate steps shown in Latrobe's plan.<sup>103</sup>

The rise of the stair as built was also reversed from the direction shown in Latrobe's drawings so that it began on the south instead of the north wall of the stairwell. The direction of the service stair was also reversed from that shown in Latrobe's plans. Latrobe's drawings show the service stair ascending through the second story to the attic and roof deck, while the main stair stopped at the second floor. In the villa as built, however, the service stair terminated at the second floor, while the main stair extended to the attic and roof. There may be various reasons for these changes. John Pope's missing right arm may explain the gentler rise of the main stair and its reversed direction. In the stair as built, the handrail would be on his left when ascending; so, too, the service stair, which the family perhaps used as the everyday route between their downstairs rooms and bedchambers. The stair changes may also have resulted from the altered access to the attic and roof. When the Popes rejected the three-story villa in favor of the two-story one and Latrobe eliminated the third-story attic rooms (some of which may have been planned for servants), it reduced the need for the service stair to connect to the attic. That the main stair itself rose to the attic and roof suggests that the Popes used the roof deck as a "belvedere," or viewing platform, which functioned in conjunction with the entertaining rooms on the second story. Also, because the main stair is on the east side of the villa, its emergence on the roof in a pent or hatch would have been the least visible from the public roads on the other sides of the site.<sup>104</sup>

At the top of the main stair, in the entrance to the rotunda, Latrobe's drawings depict a double screen of columns with responding pilasters against the walls of the opening (figs. 6.18, 6.20). The freestanding columns and their pilasters carry entablatures around the tops of the stair well and the rotunda; in the rotunda, this entablature is capped by a cornice and an upper entablature (or false parapet) from which springs the dome. Latrobe designed

this elaborate apparatus, exhibited in his section drawing, for the three-story villa. He positioned his drawing for the roof and dome of the two-story scheme above the three-story version and depicted a lower and simpler dome.

If Latrobe sent a final section drawing of the two-story villa to Lexington, it has been lost, but its intent may be recreated by splicing Latrobe's surviving two-story section of the attic and dome onto the three-story villa (fig. 6.44). It is obvious from this "composite" drawing that the column screen and its entablature could have survived in the two-story villa simply by the elimination of the upper entablature. But Latrobe may have considered the column screen too elaborate for this lower, simpler rotunda and have eliminated it. In the house as built, this was the case (figs. 6.45–6.46; plate 16). From the top of the stairs, one enters the rotunda through a large, elliptical-arched opening (fig. 6.47; plate 15). Had Latrobe designed this simpler solution he would have employed a segmental rather than an elliptical arch; but, as in the arch behind the portico, the builder may have transformed Latrobe's segmental arch into an ellipse, reflective of his more old-fashioned preferences. A segmental arch as the entrance to the rotunda would have been consistent with the series of segmental arches that Latrobe planned from the recessed portico through the lower hall. Thus, Latrobe's final solution for the opening between stair and rotunda may be close to that built.<sup>105</sup>

In the completed villa, a simple plaster cornice encircles the base of the dome. The rotunda is 19 feet in diameter and approximately 22 feet in height, with an oculus-skylight at the apex of the dome. This oculus was about 9 feet in diameter, set within a deep, reeded band of plaster. The original skylight perhaps contained multiple triangular panes rising to a conical point.<sup>106</sup> The central section of the hipped roof had a shallower pitch than the outer planes; the skylight rose slightly above it, but was concealed on the exterior by the roof balustrade. The central roof deck was originally covered with painted canvas acting as a "floor" for walking on (like interior painted floorcloths of the period). This shallow deck and skylight may eventually have leaked, for sometime before the 1850s, the central deck was built up to conform to the slope of the outer roof planes, making the entire roof a simple pyramid, and the oculus-skylight was replaced by a small, domed cupola (see fig. 6.54).

On the villa's interiors, the most notable departures from Latrobe's designs occurred in the decorative detailing of ornamental wood and plaster. Most of the surviving woodwork and plaster in the villa is quite simple, as Latrobe preferred, but in the rotunda and drawing room the local builder elaborated the decorative detailing (figs. 6.48–6.49).<sup>107</sup> Although this fanciful

Fig. 6.44. Hypothetical composite east-west section of Pope Villa, created by "splicing" the two-story dome on the three-story villa section from Latrobe's original drawings (in fig. 6.20). (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from Latrobe's original drawings, Library of Congress)

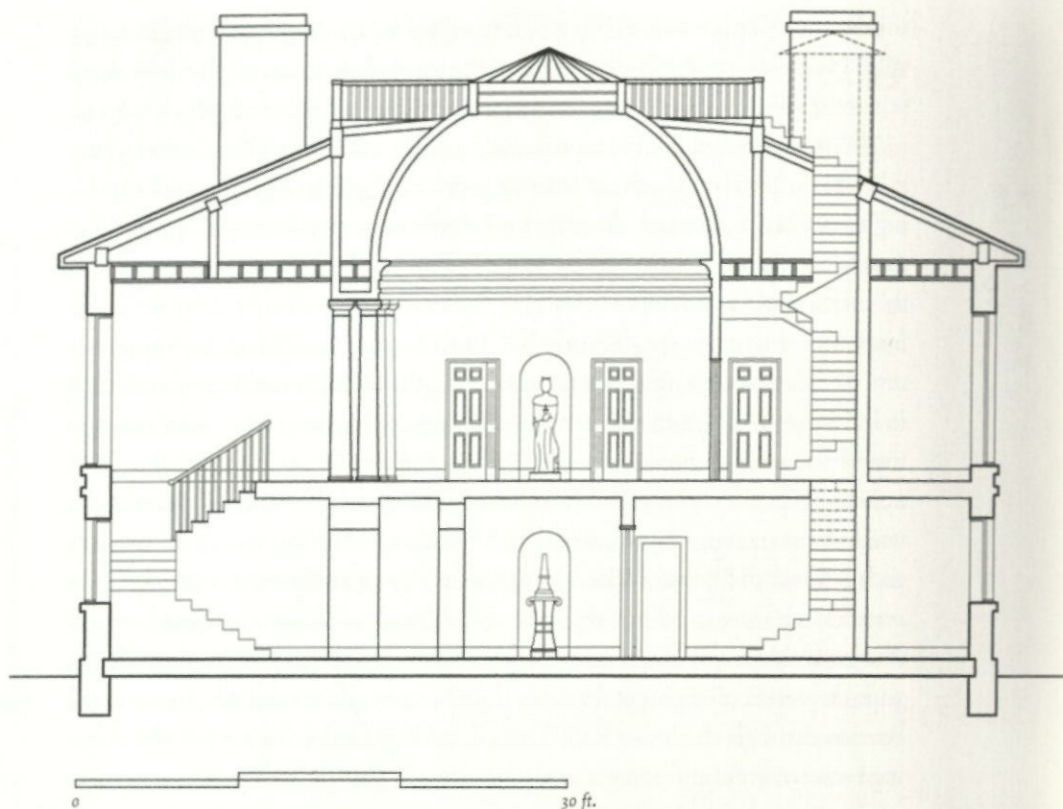


Fig. 6.45. East-west section of Pope Villa as built, 1811–1812. (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)

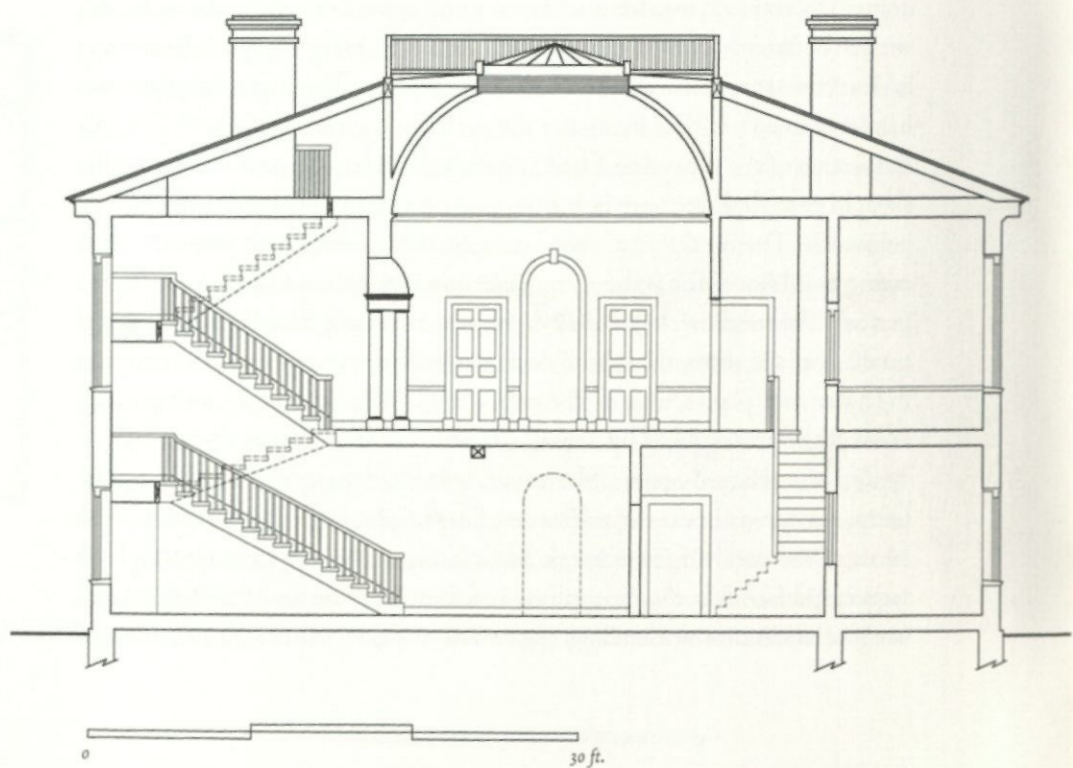


Fig. 6.46. Pope Villa rotunda interior, looking north toward the twin doors of dining and drawing rooms (2002 photograph shows the effects of the 1987 fire and subsequent conservation work; the plaster and wood dome was almost entirely destroyed). (Michael Freeman photograph)

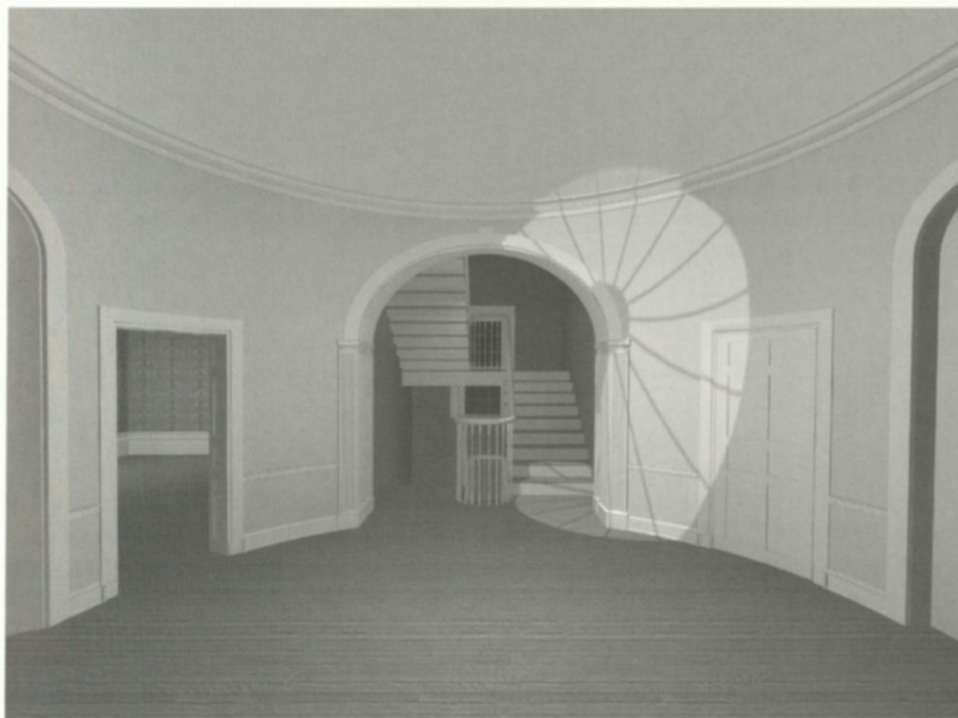


Fig. 6.47. Hypothetical reconstruction of Pope Villa rotunda as built, looking east toward the entrance arch and principal staircase. (Digitally reconstructed by Stephanie Hawk; final image by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions)

Fig. 6.48. Detail of surviving chair rail in rotunda of Pope Villa. (Michael Freeman photograph)



Fig. 6.49. Detail of surviving niche in drawing room of Pope Villa. (Michael Freeman photograph)



ornamentation would not have suited Latrobe's reductivist taste, it is a beautiful regional interpretation of the older decorative neoclassicism that originated with English architect Robert Adam (1728–1792) and arrived in America through architectural patternbooks. The wooden frames of the niches in the rotunda and drawing room display some of the finest woodcarving to survive from the Federal period in Kentucky, including chisel, gouge, and drill work in the form of rosettes, vines, reeding, stylized drapery swags, and beaded keystones. The wooden chair rail in the rotunda is especially engaging; it contains swags of gouge-work bellflowers gathered between rosettes in the centers of which are the heads of handwrought nails used to affix the rail to the wall—a lovely synthesis of ornamentation and construction. The plaster frieze in the drawing room is adorned with vines and flowers intertwined with ropes of pearls. Latrobe preferred simple linear moldings and edges articulated only by a bead to create geometric continuity of forms and surfaces. The dining room of the Pope Villa, with its more simple moldings and lack of ornament, would have pleased him more.

That the local builder elaborated some of Latrobe's interiors is not surprising. For one thing, the Popes probably desired more ornament than Latrobe's elegant but austere classicism afforded (perhaps to show that they were not trying to economize); for another, builders like Asa Wilgus created buildings either with no architectural drawings or the most schematic of them, which they and their clients then enriched with details drawn from builders' guides or their own fancy. The very simplicity of Latrobe's drawings as they arrived in Lexington probably seemed to the local craftsmen an invitation to engage in this vernacular-enriching process.

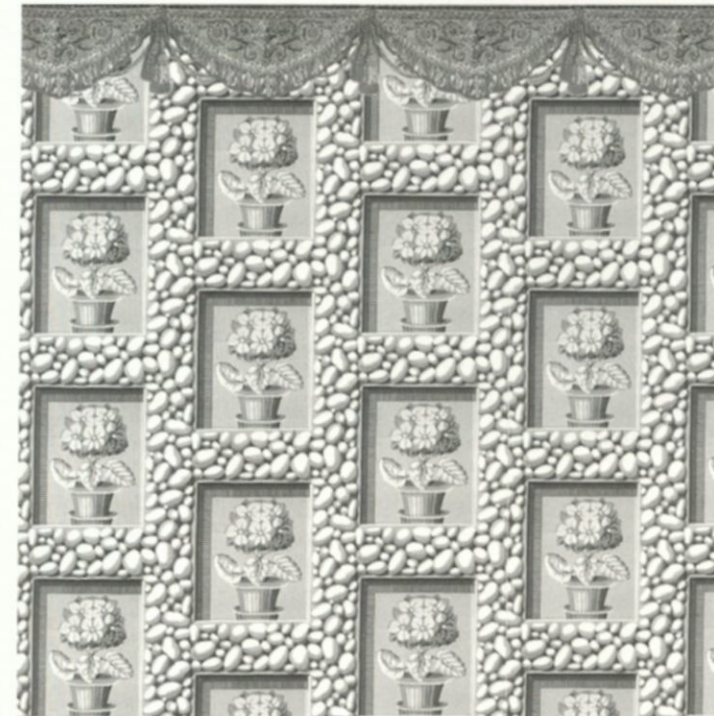
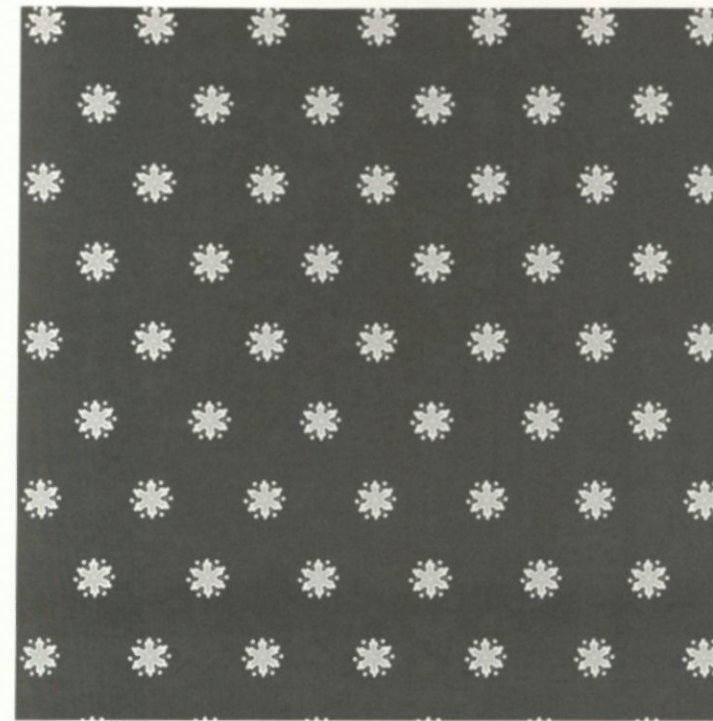
The Pope Villa restoration has recovered numerous samples of original paint and wallpapers; of Latrobe's surviving houses it is the most thoroughly documented in terms of its original decorative schemes.<sup>108</sup> Eliza Pope surely chose these early paints and papers, perhaps with advice from Latrobe, as he and the Popes were in Washington periodically throughout 1812–1813, during the completion of the house.<sup>109</sup> The paint colors were a subtle palette of whites, yellows, grays, and pale greens, while the early wallpapers were bolder. They are a mixture of American, English, and French papers; Eliza Pope could have obtained them in Lexington, Washington, D.C., or other Eastern cities (fig. 6.50). Two Federal period papers survive in the first story: in Senator Pope's office was a geometric paper with white, starlike designs on a blue ground (English or American, ca. 1800–1815); from the entrance hall up the staircase ran a paper with stylized palmettos

arranged in a stalklike fashion, alternating with bellflowers and vertical stripes, in gray-blues and golds on white.

The curved walls of the rotunda were apparently covered with a solid yellow paper; the woodwork was white and the dome perhaps painted a pale blue (see fig. 6.47). These colors recall those in the rotunda of Latrobe's Bank of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia (1798–1805) and may therefore reflect his suggestions.<sup>110</sup> Although Latrobe seemed to prefer solid-colored walls to enhance the broad geometries of his spatial volumes, the Popes papered their basilican-form drawing- and dining-room suite in patterned papers. The drawing room had an overall drapery paper in subtle whites and blue-greens, creating the illusion of fashionable tent rooms; the dining room had an American paper *en grisaille* (monochrome grays) with stone-patterned frames surrounding window-like openings with potted flowers against a sky-blue background. Atop the dining room walls, an American border paper in blues and oranges emulated swagged drapery (figs. 6.51, 6.52; plate 17).<sup>111</sup>

The Popes built their villa with a relatively high degree of fidelity to Latrobe's plans and intentions, although their departures, including the splendid interior detailing and decoration, represent their tastes and that of their local builder. If Lexington had its influence on the villa, however, the villa also influenced the course of Kentucky architecture. Because Latrobe's sophisticated planning was so contrary to Kentucky custom (where, like much of America, the central-hall plan with rear service ell predominated) and because it was hidden from most eyes, it had little regional effect.<sup>112</sup> But the exterior of the villa exercised considerable influence. Not only did Latrobe's unusual rear-door design with its odd, separated sidelights reappear as the front door of several Kentucky houses, the major compositional features of the house, including its hipped roof, its three-bay composition, and its giant, Venetian windows, reappeared so often in central Kentucky houses of the 1820s–1860s as to constitute a unique, Bluegrass villa type.<sup>113</sup> Later Kentucky houses did not follow Latrobe's unusual placement of public rooms in the second story, however, so when local builders emulated his triple windows, they always occurred in the first story and sometimes in the second; if used in the second story, they fronted the bedchambers, negating Latrobe's compositional use of them on the exterior to denote major public rooms in the second story. Despite the regional influence of Latrobe's exterior, however, Kentucky had the final word on the Pope Villa. Throughout the nineteenth century, later owners sought to bring it into conformity with the planning conventions of more standard Kentucky, and American, houses.

Fig. 6.50. Samples of original wallpapers preserved from Pope Villa: (clockwise from top left) Senator Pope's office paper; lower hall and staircase paper with border paper; later cornucopia paper (ca. 1830s–1840s) found in Senator Pope's office. Dining-room paper with drapery border paper. (Digital reconstructions by John Cheng from preserved original fragments in the collection of the Blue Grass Trust-Pope Villa Archive)





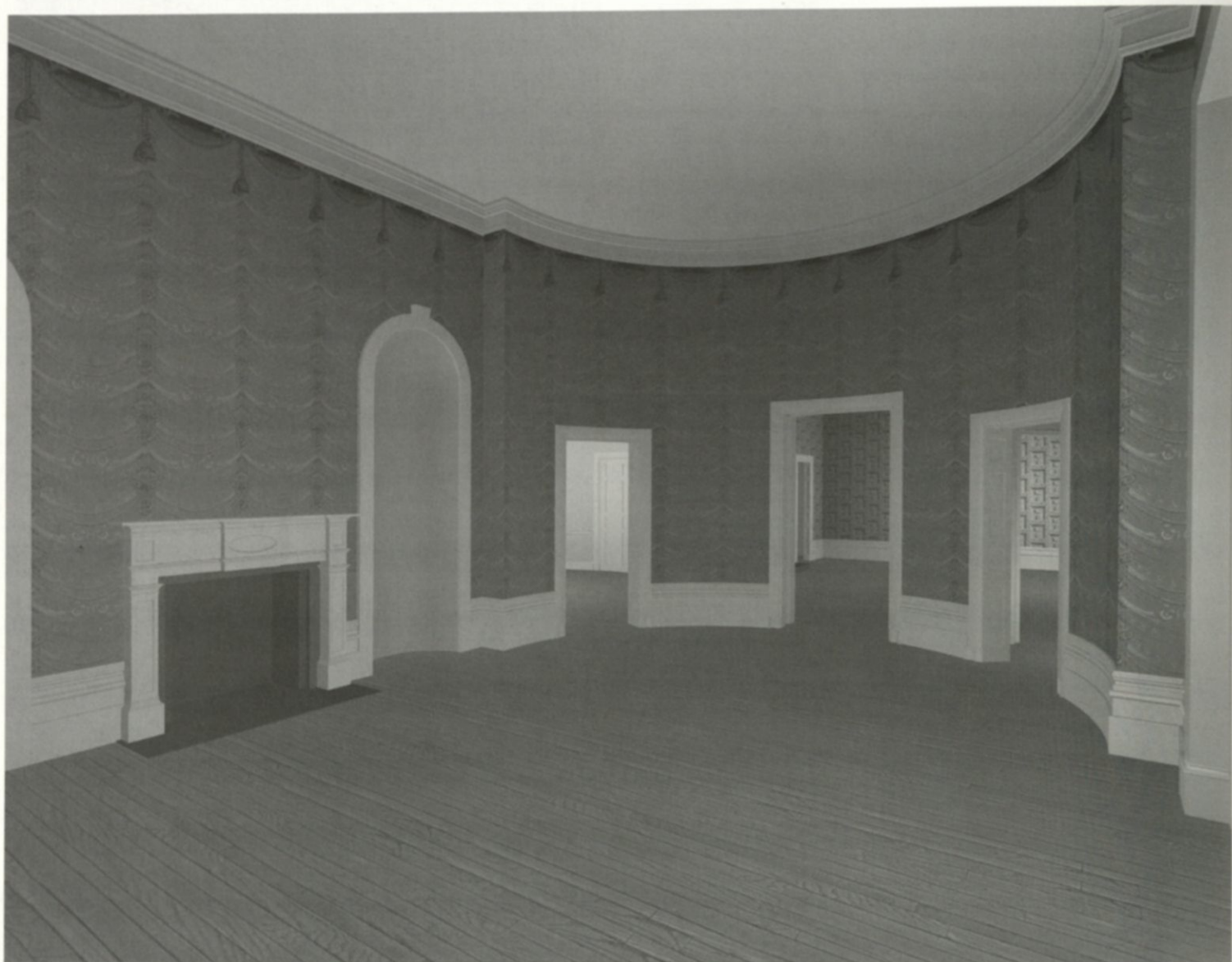


Fig. 6.51. Hypothetical reconstruction of Pope Villa drawing room as built, ca. 1811–1812, with its original drapery wallpaper recreated. (Room digitally reconstructed by Stephanie Hawk, wallpaper reconstructed by John Cheng; final image by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions)

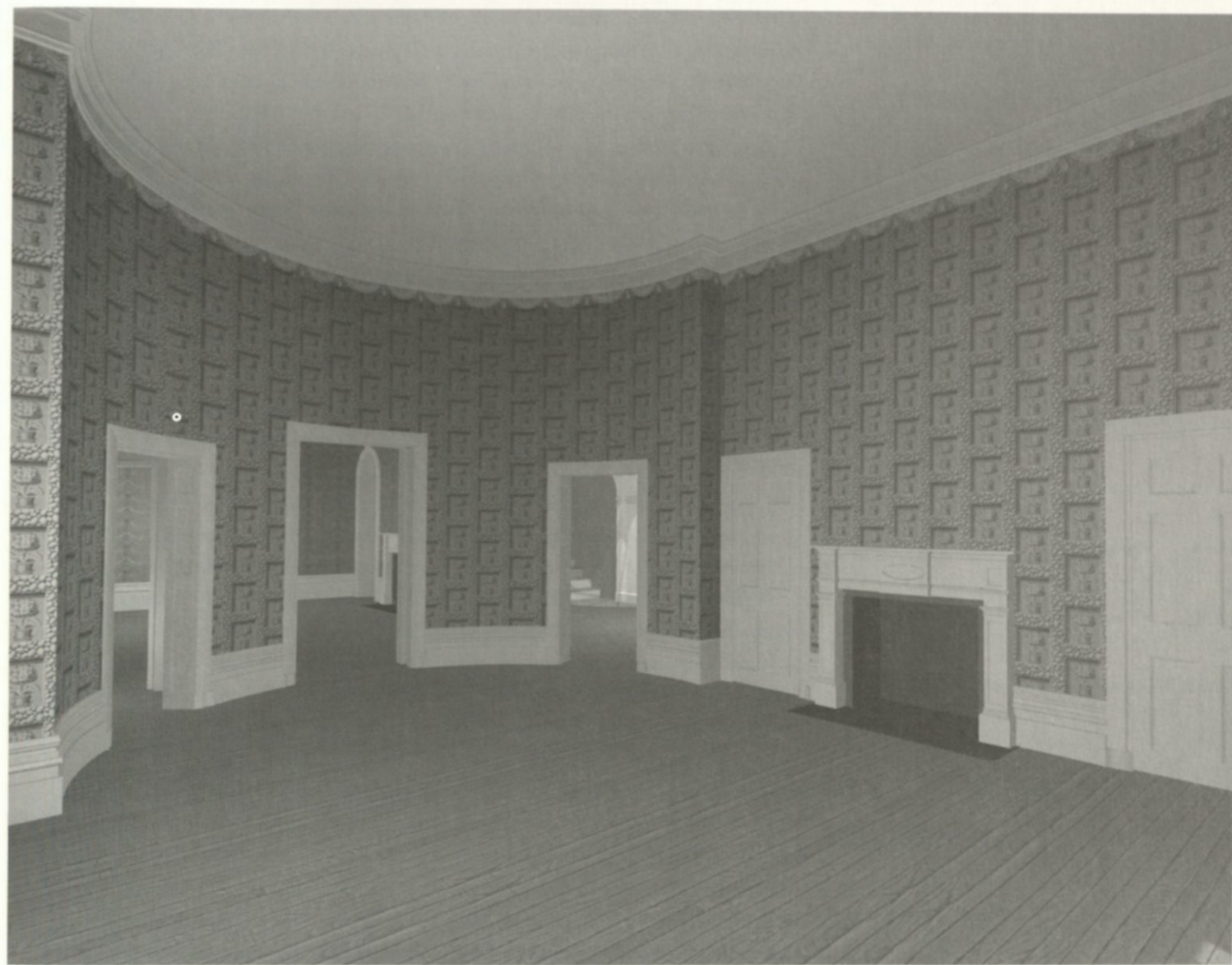
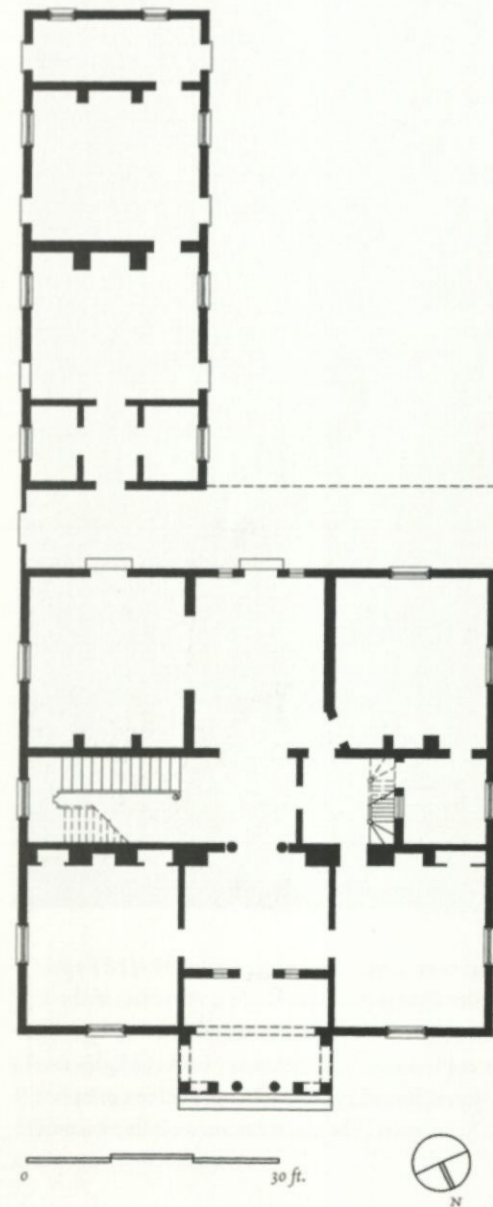


Fig. 6.52. Hypothetical reconstruction of Pope Villa dining room as built, ca. 1811–1812, with its original wallpaper recreated. (Room digitally reconstructed by Stephanie Hawk; wallpaper reconstructed by John Cheng; final image by Christopher Fahrmeier / Animated Resolutions)

The Pope Villa proved more lasting than the political career it was intended to celebrate. Pope reached the height of his national influence in 1811, but within a year had become a political pariah through his opposition to the War of 1812 with Britain, an extremely popular cause with his Kentucky constituents. Henry Clay and his Republican supporters tarred Pope as a "Tory," a "relapsed Federalist," a "high-toned Aristocrat," and burned him in effigy in some Kentucky towns. His half-English wife and unusual new villa, designed by an English-born architect, did not help his cause. When his Senate term expired in 1813, Pope stepped down.<sup>114</sup> He returned to Lexington, his new house completed and his political career in ruins.

The Popes, with a new house designed for entertaining, probably saw little of it. Aside from Pope's political setbacks, Eliza Pope became twice pregnant in quick succession and bore two daughters.<sup>115</sup> The Popes cannot have resided in the new house long. In 1816, Kentucky Governor Gabriel Slaughter controversially appointed Pope Secretary of State. In this year, the Popes moved to Frankfort, where Pope virtually ran the state government until 1819. He and Latrobe remained on good terms and in 1817 Pope requested designs for a state arsenal for Frankfort. Latrobe sent plans that were apparently never built.<sup>116</sup> Eliza Pope died in 1818, too early to see her sister, Louisa Catherine, become First Lady when her husband, John Quincy Adams, became President in 1825. Pope lived until 1845. He remarried, served again in both houses of the Kentucky legislature, was appointed by President Andrew Jackson as third territorial governor of Arkansas, and moved to Little Rock in 1829-1835, where he built the first permanent Arkansas Statehouse, designed by Kentucky architect Gideon Shryock, a professional grandchild of Latrobe's, having trained in the Philadelphia office of Latrobe's pupil William Strickland. Between 1839 and 1843, Pope served in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Although he owned the Lexington villa until 1836, Pope evidently never returned to it after Eliza's death in 1818. Instead, he rented it out. In 1818, James Prentiss, the owner of a large woolen mill in Lexington, resided there.<sup>117</sup> By June 1818, Major William S. Dallam had leased the house from Pope for four hundred dollars a year. The excellence of the villa for entertaining evidently recommended it to Dallam as, on 4 July 1819, he hosted a lavish dinner there for his longtime friend, President James Monroe, who was passing through Lexington on his tour of the southern states.<sup>118</sup> Dallam left the house soon after and Pope continued to rent it, first to William R. Morton and then to William T. Barry and his wife, Catherine.<sup>119</sup>



Barry served as Kentucky Lieutenant Governor, U.S. Senator, U.S. Postmaster-General, and Minister to Spain. The Barrys evidently used the villa as the Popes had intended: as a seasonal residence and entertaining pavilion. Barry died en route to Spain in 1835, resulting in the first known inventory of the house.<sup>120</sup> After Barry's death, his widow returned to Lexington and in 1836 purchased the villa from John Pope. Although he lived in it for less than four years, Pope retained ownership of the house for more than a quarter century.<sup>121</sup>

The villa probably changed in minor ways down to 1836, but following Pope's sale of it, alterations began in earnest. In 1838, Catherine and William Barry leased the house to Captain Henry Johnson and his wife Elizabeth. Johnson was the younger brother of Richard Mentor Johnson, then vice president in the administration of Martin Van Buren. In 1843, the Johnsons purchased the villa and began a major remodeling.<sup>122</sup> In addition to updating it with new Greek Revival detailing, such as an Ionic frontispiece at the entry door, the Johnsons' remodeling brought the house closer to Kentucky domestic traditions by reversing many of the more unusual features of Latrobe's rational-house plan. The Johnsons owned plantations in Mississippi and resided there part of the year; they may have been more conservative than the Popes and perhaps considered having their enslaved African American servants residing and working in the main house to be unacceptable. They built a rear service ell into which they moved the kitchen, perhaps converting Latrobe's original, first-story kitchen into a downstairs dining room. More dramatically, they broke through the spaces of Latrobe's rear service *dégagement* to run a central hall from front to rear in the first story. This eliminated the chimney of the wash-bake room and with it the flues in the second story that served the rotunda and the central bedchamber behind it (fig. 6.53). As the Johnsons used the villa as a summer house, spending their winters in Mississippi, heating these upper rooms was unimportant. Finally, they turned Latrobe's upstairs drawing-dining room suite into Greek Revival-style double parlors with matching, black-marble mantelpieces.<sup>123</sup> Ironically, the Johnsons' Greek Revival details were more consistent with Latrobe's simple aesthetic than the original woodwork and mantelpieces installed by the Popes. By the 1840s, Kentucky (and America) had caught up with Latrobe's precocious introduction of Grecian forms but not with Latrobe's unorthodox planning; the Johnson remodeling made the Pope Villa into what Latrobe, with his "rational house for America," had most resisted: a traditional center-hall plan with a rear service ell. An 1855 map shows the villa in outline, with its added service ell, and an 1857 bird's-eye view of Lexington shows it from the rear, or

Fig. 6.53. Floor plans of Pope Villa after a ca. 1840s remodeling by the Johnson Family, which created a central hall and rear service ell wing. (Opposite) first floor; (bottom) second floor (Patrick Snadon / Thomas Williams; adapted from drawings by Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann for the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation)

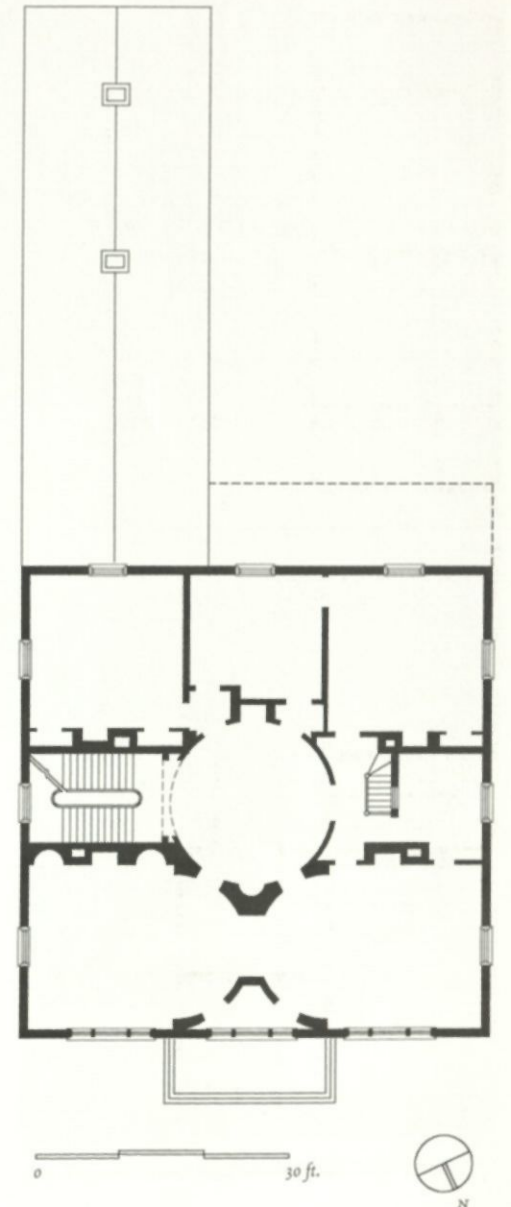


Fig. 6.54. 1857 Bird's-eye view of Lexington showing Pope Villa from the south (with later roof cupola, rear ell wing, and outbuildings). "View of the City of Lexington, Ky, 1857, Lithographed by Middleton, Wallace & Co., Cincinnati, O, Published by J. T. Palmatary." (University of Kentucky Special Collections Library)



south, with its added service ell, its altered roofline with added cupola, and a considerable collection of outbuildings (fig. 6.54).

The Pope Villa sold twice again in 1856 and in 1860; other changes may have occurred but are undocumented.<sup>124</sup> In 1865, Joseph Sowyel Woolfolk and his wife, Lucy, purchased the villa. Their heirs would own the house until 1914, the longest tenancy in its history. Woolfolk was a prosperous Kentucky farmer and a Mississippi plantation owner who dealt in real estate, insurance, and coal and became part owner of the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. The Woolfolks immediately began a major remodeling. Whereas the Johnsons' remodeling had primarily changed the villa's floor plan and interiors, the Woolfolks' remodeling most affected its exterior. They retained Lexington architect Thomas Lewinski to update the villa in the then-fashionable Italianate style.<sup>125</sup> He added bay windows to the sides, a cast-iron veranda to the front, and raised broad gables on the north, east, and west sides of the roof, while extending the eaves to rest on ornamental brackets. He altered the windows on the front facade by opening French doors onto the veranda from the first-story rooms, while reducing the width of the side windows in the second story and centering them above the French doors. He inserted arched, cast-iron hoodmolds within all the front windows in the second story. He added a first-story bedroom on the west side of the house and a rear veranda on the south. A photograph of the villa, taken in the early twentieth century, shows the accumulated alterations, including the rebuilt pyramidal roof and cupola, the Johnsons' rear service ell, and Lewinski's Italianate modifications for the Woolfolks (fig. 6.55). Like the 1840s remodeling by the Johnsons, the Woolfolks' modifications brought Latrobe's "rational house" into further conformity with Kentucky domestic-planning traditions. By reducing the size of the giant, second-story Venetian windows and by elaborating Latrobe's first-story "basement" with larger windows and verandas, the Woolfolks attempted to raise the status of the first floor to that of a principal story.

In 1900, the Woolfolks divided the (by then) almost thirteen-acre site of the Pope Villa—now well within the city limits—into forty lots. A new street, Grosvenor Avenue, bisected the site and the address of the Pope Villa became 326 Grosvenor Avenue, which it remains today.<sup>126</sup> Lots were sold and houses built, forming the present context of the villa within a neighborhood of moderate-sized, early-twentieth-century residences.

In 1914, the Woolfolk heirs sold the Pope Villa itself, on its reduced lot, to owners who, in 1916–1917, converted it into a genteel apartment house containing four large units (fig. 6.56).<sup>127</sup> This extreme remodeling marked the end



Fig. 6.55. Photograph of Pope Villa ca. 1914, from the northeast, showing accumulated 1840s and 1865 remodelings. (Louis Nollau; University of Kentucky Special Collections Library)

of the villa as a single-family residence. Two-story brick porches serving the apartments replaced the Woolfolks' cast-iron veranda; a new, two-story wing at the rear of the house replaced the Johnson's one-story, kitchen ell; the original main staircase was demolished and a new staircase constructed from the front hall into the rotunda, which was subdivided to serve as vestibules to the upstairs apartments. The Popes' basilican-form drawing and dining rooms were divided into four rooms and a new window cut into the facade to light one of them. Ironically, while the Woolfolk subdivision and the apartment conversion seem destructive of the integrity of the villa, both episodes served to preserve it within a rapidly changing physical and economic context. As an apartment house it survived throughout the twentieth century.<sup>128</sup>



Fig. 6.56. Photograph of Pope Villa after apartment-house conversion of 1916–1917. (Transylvania University Archives, Lexington)

In 1917, contemporary with the apartment conversion, Lexington judge and historian Charles Kerr (1863–1950) wrote a paper about the villa and its occupants, especially the famous dinner given there for President Monroe in 1819. Kerr's essay described this event and correctly attributed the house to Latrobe—the first published account linking the villa to its original architect. He may have recorded an oral tradition passed down through the owners of the house and perhaps gained his information from the Woolfolks, who had lived there until 1914. He cited Latrobe's work in Washington and used the architect's growing reputation to construct a historical pedigree for the Pope Villa.<sup>129</sup>

This early-twentieth-century attribution of the house to Latrobe relied on unsubstantiated oral tradition; in the 1940s, Clay Lancaster (1917–2000),

Kentucky's first trained architectural historian, documented the connection. He began his research on the Pope Villa as part of a larger study of the antebellum architecture of Kentucky and the Bluegrass Region. Between 1940 and 1942, he measured and photographed the house and reconstructed its original appearance insofar as possible, given the complex overlays of its multiple remodelings. He restored its original floor plans with surprising accuracy, but he assumed that the exterior had resembled a more conventional Kentucky Federal house. Lancaster published his initial findings in 1944 in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and speculated that Thomas Jefferson had influenced the villa, a reasonable assumption as Jefferson had advocated rotunda-plan houses, had designed other houses for Kentucky, and as John Pope had been a presidential elector for Jefferson and had begun his U.S. Senate term during Jefferson's presidency.<sup>130</sup> Shortly after publishing this article, Lancaster discovered Latrobe's original drawings for the Pope Villa. He was then Ware Librarian and assistant to Talbot Hamlin at the Avery Architectural Library of Columbia University in New York. In 1945, the Avery received photographic copies of a group of architectural drawings by Latrobe that the Library of Congress had acquired from the architect's descendants. Among these drawings were domestic designs assumed to be for unknown houses in Virginia. Among them, Lancaster found Latrobe's unlabeled designs for the Pope Villa and recognized them as the Lexington house that he had documented. Lancaster published his new findings in a second article for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, in 1946, entitled "Latrobe and the John Pope House."<sup>131</sup> Although the plans of the villa as Lancaster had reconstructed them corresponded closely with Latrobe's drawings, he and everyone who followed him assumed that the exterior had been greatly modified in execution by the Popes' Lexington builder.<sup>132</sup>

While Lancaster produced his scholarship on the Pope Villa, his mentor, Talbot Hamlin, had begun research for his eventual Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (1955). For his account of the Pope Villa, Hamlin relied on Lancaster's work and added to it his own discovery of Latrobe's letters concerning the house, then in the possession of Latrobe's descendants. Although Hamlin never visited the site, he praised Latrobe's plans for the villa, calling them "delightful," "varied," "monumental," "brilliant," and "one of the most tightly knit" of all the architect's domestic designs. On the basis of Lancaster's reconstructions, however, he too assumed that the local builder had departed significantly from Latrobe's designs for the exterior.<sup>133</sup> Even as Lancaster's articles and Hamlin's book established a pedigree—albeit a flawed

one—for the Lexington villa, it underwent further remodeling. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw it subdivided from four to ten apartments; it gained a second rear wing and became a rabbit warren of small spaces (fig. 6.57).<sup>134</sup>

Lancaster's and Hamlin's scholarship helped the villa survive its greatest crisis when, on October 22, 1987, it caught fire and burned. The fire began in a first-floor apartment, burned up through Latrobe's hollow-*poché* walls of the second story, spread into the attic, and destroyed much of the roof (fig. 6.58). Armed with copies of Latrobe's drawings and Lancaster's and Hamlin's accounts, a group of local preservationists and historians entered the burned house the next day. The fire had performed dual functions of destruction and revelation. By burning away some of the fabric of the later remodelings, the fire revealed that the villa conformed more closely to Latrobe's designs than anyone had supposed: a lost Latrobe design had returned from oblivion.

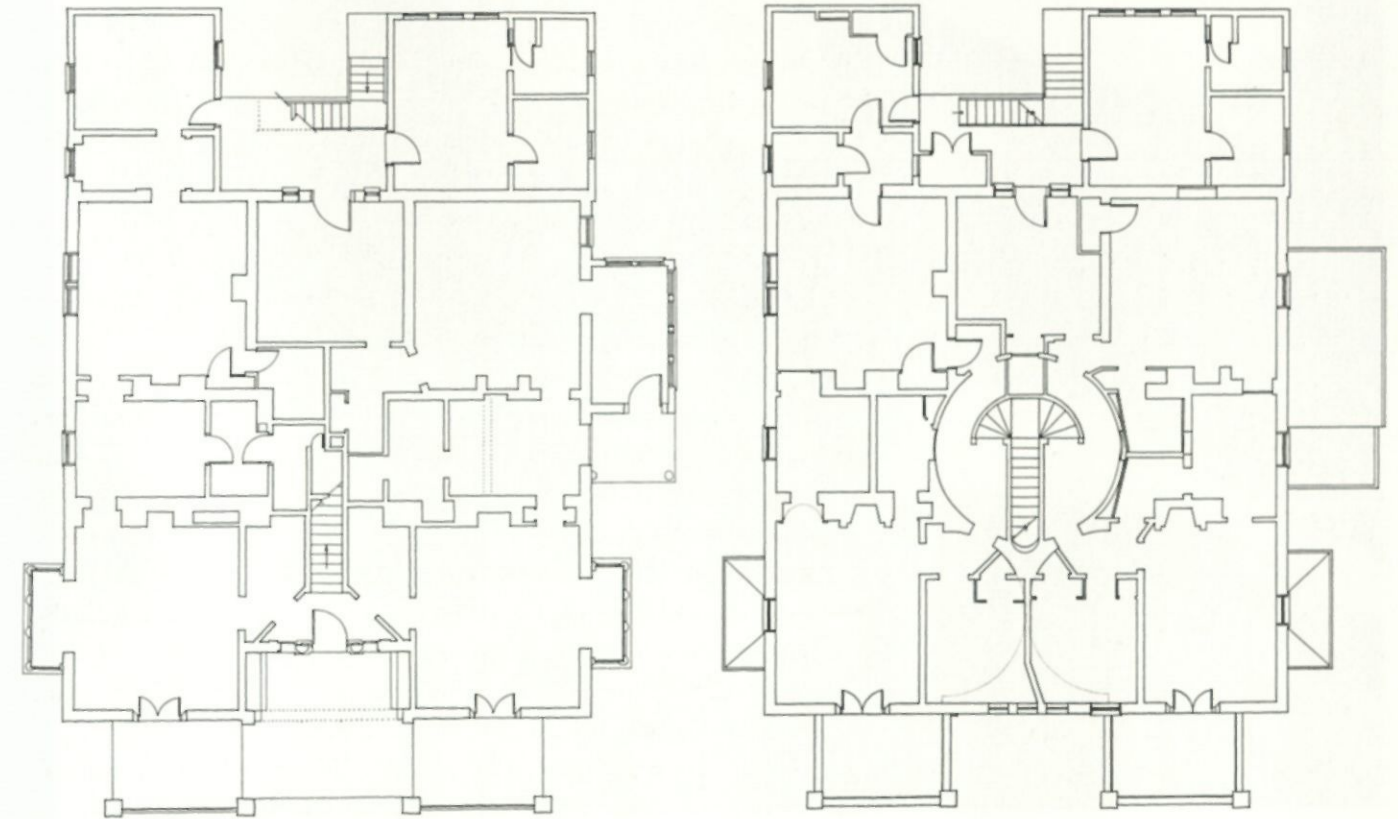
The damaged building was drifting toward demolition when, on December 30, 1987, the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation acquired it, constructed a temporary canvas roof, and began fund-raising for a permanent roof. Despite these efforts, the house stood open to the weather for several months. Much damage accrued from the fire, the water used to extinguish it, and subsequent exposure to the elements. The multiple remodelings of the villa complicated efforts to preserve it. The trust retained Charles Phillips and Joseph Oppermann, preservation architects of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to document and stabilize the house while John Lee, of Annapolis, Maryland, led a team of conservators to treat its existing fabric.<sup>135</sup>

Because of the tenuousness of much of the surviving fabric in the house, the decision was made to remove waterlogged and rotting twentieth-century partition walls and other elements, so that the earlier materials could be dried out and conserved. As the twentieth-century additions were stripped away, the architects and conservators discovered that much original building fabric, such as door frames, moldings, and other millwork, had been cut up and reused within the 20th-century walls, so that the gradual removal of later fabric revealed ever more about the earlier design of the house. A long period of investigation and documentation ensued, paralleled by conservation of the surviving fabric, with the highest priority placed on the earliest materials (but with documentation and preservation of later-nineteenth-century construction as funds permitted). Because of the damage to the house and the fragility of its surviving fabric, experimental and progressive conservation practices developed, including the creation of special adhesives and consolidants for plaster conservation, innovative methods for analyzing original mortar (and

new, cost-effective ways of preserving it), and experimental methods for consolidating broken and partial brick units within existing masonry walls. The Blue Grass Trust has trained numerous students and craftspeople on the site, and conservation techniques developed there are now being used more widely.

The near fidelity of the house to Latrobe's surviving drawings, the low survival rate of his houses and their consequent rarity, and the fact that much of the fabric and the integrity of the later-nineteenth-century remodelings of the villa had been compromised by the twentieth-century apartment remodelings and by the fire, determined the Blue Grass Trust's course of action. A flexible, eclectic, restoration philosophy for the house developed, whereby missing elements, if evidence survives to document them, may be restored to the Latrobe-Pope period. But where inadequate evidence remains to restore missing Federal period elements or details, elements from the 1840s and 1860s remodelings may be indefinitely retained, and where elements such as the main staircase are missing, they may be simulated with reversible, freestanding, modern designs that recreate the original spatial

Fig. 6.57. Floor plans of Pope Villa showing subdivision into ten apartments; (left) first floor; (right) second floor. (1987; Lisa Agentis, Allison Chan, Patrick Snadon)



and circulation experiences of the villa but leave the remaining evidence of the missing original elements in view. The fragile integrity of the house suggests that it must not be overwhelmed with new material typical of a more traditional restoration. Some interiors may be stabilized and used in their unrestored condition, as laboratories for the study of early Kentucky building materials and construction technologies.

The Pope Villa will probably never be a traditional house museum and may become a part of the graduate historic preservation program at the University of Kentucky. While open to visitors and tourists, it could serve as preservation laboratories and galleries—perhaps augmented by the acquisition of neighboring properties. The Blue Grass Trust hopes that the villa will remain a functioning organism; part restoration, part adaptive use, and part preserved ruin, so that the fascinating and sometimes tragic history of Latrobe's most "rational house for America" may be in evidence for those who use and visit it.

Fig. 6.58. Photograph of Pope Villa attic and roof after fire of 1987. Remains of dome and rotunda (center) with early twentieth-century partitions and ceiling; beyond, temporary wooden bracing of chimneys after fire. (Patrick Snadon, 1987)



## A Rational House for the Military

After relocating to Pittsburgh in 1813 to work with Robert Fulton on steamboat designs, Latrobe took on both public and private architectural projects there. In 1814, he hurriedly devised plans for the U.S. Allegheny Arsenal after builder-draftsman Thomas Pope, whom he had recommended for the commission, was unable to reach an agreement with arsenal officials on just compensation for his professional services.<sup>136</sup> Latrobe's drawings describe a linear range of buildings to be placed across the southeast edge of the site in Lawrenceville, north of Pittsburgh, along the Allegheny River. He chose for his *parti*, a Palladian, five-part composition consisting of the central, cruciform arsenal building with long gun-carriage sheds to each side and terminating at end pavilions, one housing the commandant and the other housing the remaining officers. Among Latrobe's drawings for the arsenal complex are ground-story and chamber-story plans and a front (southeast) elevation for the commandant's quarters (fig. 6.59) and a ground-story plan and rear or "Yard" (northwest) elevation for the officers' quarters.

Latrobe designed the arsenal at the height of his powers of formal synthesis, combining economy of expression with richness of spatial ordering and experience. The ground-story plan of the commandant's quarters is possibly quite similar to that of the Waln House but is wider and shallower. Its configuration is also similar to the Pope Villa and the retro intervention that Latrobe proposed for the President's House. The plan is organized around three, tangentially related, semicircular half-domed apses, each a part of a basilican-form unit and each carefully positioned to deny a single, axial entry and, instead, to produce dual entries at 45-degree angles into the principal rooms. The apparent simplicity of this scheme belies the simultaneous solution of several problems of residential design, in this case on an institutional level, with which Latrobe had been concerned throughout his career: the convenient provision of a kitchen and kitchen offices without resorting to traditional outbuildings; the hierarchical distribution of primary and secondary spaces; the elegant accommodation of multiple room shapes without the use of thick-wall *poché*; and the creation of interior scenery.

First, as in many of his plans, Latrobe divided this one into two, scenic layers, but in this case gave each a distinctive geometry. The layer of secondary spaces to the northwest and adjacent to the yard is completely orthogonal; the layer of principal rooms to the southeast contains the curves of the three apses. Second, by inserting a longitudinal side hall between the house and its

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