

CARSHALTON WATER TOWER, Carshalton, Grade II Listed



Image Courtesy of: Lynda Savigar

TREASURE DESCRIPTION:

Located in the grounds of Carshalton House, the Tower contained a water-powered pump which supplied water to the main house as well as fountains within the garden. Within the building was a bathroom, an orangery, saloon and robing room plus a long gallery. Hence a social focus for Sir John Fellowes and his guests. The building is almost church-like in appearance or similar to a small chapel.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The article by Donald Johnson which appeared in *Country Life* Magazine on 21st December 1978 states: 'Perhaps the earliest country house bathroom in England to survive in relatively complete condition is that in the base of the water tower at Carshalton House.'

This uniqueness would be significant enough but together with Carshalton House both buildings

still lie in part of the original Charles Bridgeman formal garden.

The Tower itself is responsible for containing a reservoir of water pumped up from a lake, thus providing the house, offices, stables etc. with a more than adequate supply for all their needs.

VOLUNTEER REFLECTIONS

The springhead situated in 'The Hermitage', designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, is being refurbished and once completed will show the source from the Wandle to the Water Tower thus providing a perfect insight to its past workings. There is a possibility that Vanbrugh was also responsible for the design of the Water Tower but to date there is no categorical evidence proving this.

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SIGINIFICANT PEOPLE

Sir John Fellowes bought Carshalton House 1716–24. The Water Tower was erected within the grounds of the house 1719-20. The builders and engineers responsible for the construction of the almost unique structure were: *Gyles Dance* (mason), *Richard Cole* (engineer), *Henry Joynes* (surveyor).

The Water Tower has *Sir John Vanbrugh* influences and records show that Joynes had worked with Vanbrugh at Blenheim which may account for this or maybe Vanburgh himself was involved in the design.

MATERIALS

Externally arched windows, broad pilasters. Tower above centre for east side. Building of brown-yellow brick (red bricks and stone dressings), Portland Stone Keystones.

Internally, blue manganese and marble, tin glazed tiles cover all four walls of the bathroom (shapes follow Chinese and Dutch vase types). Both lined with plain tiles. Marble floor and flight of marble steps. The Delft tiles may be Dutch or equally English.



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References:

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