

# Drawing Out the Censors' Room

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## ABSTRACT

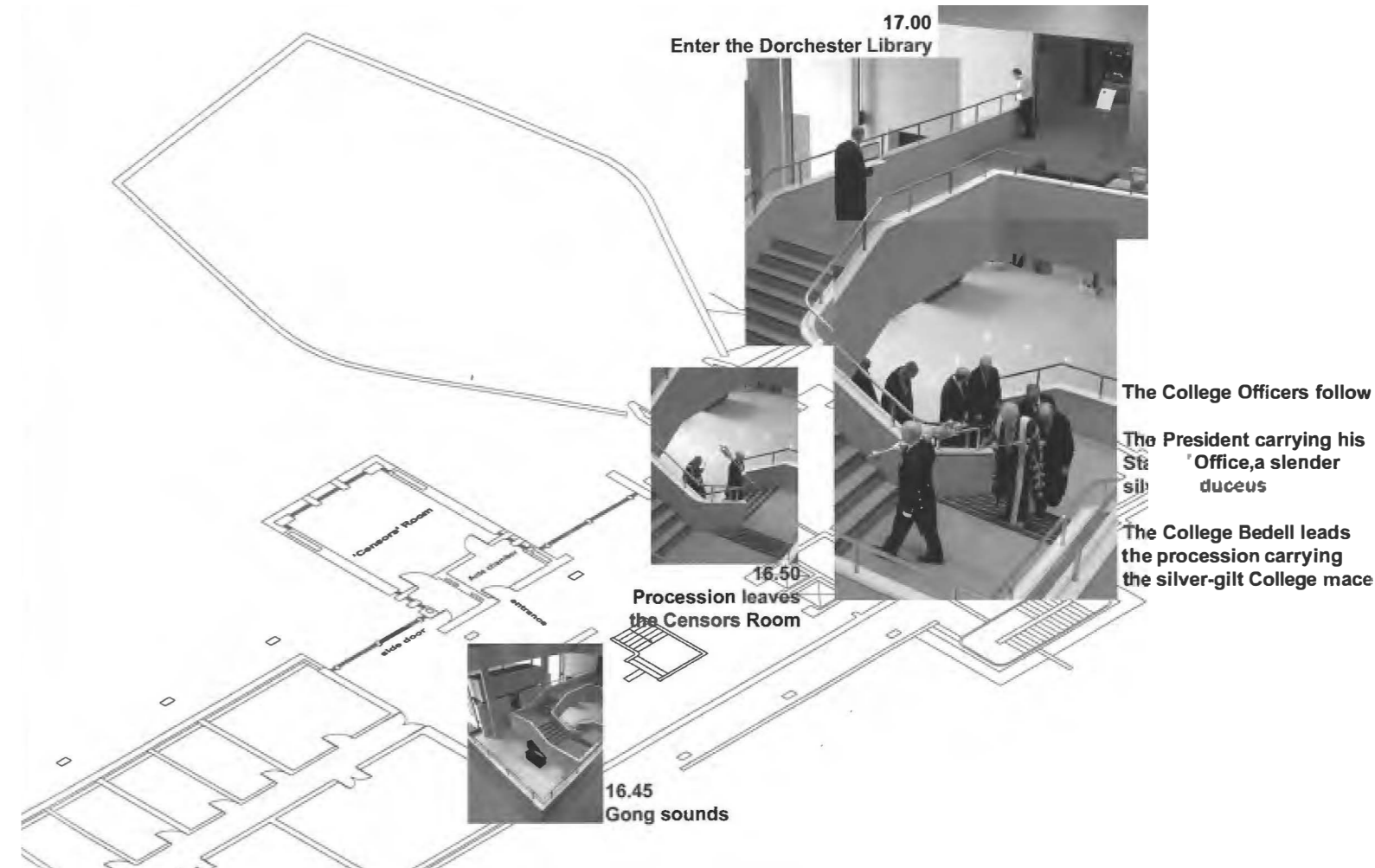
Psychoanalysts make a distinction between an actual space and the memory of a space; one's house and the psychic construct of home. The latter, constructed from experiences of the childhood home(s), is a place that holds us, contains us, and is instrumental to functions of anchoring, identity and refueling' and can be referred to as the 'first house.'<sup>2</sup> A gap exists between the actual space and the 'first house' as the mind distorts the relationship between actual form and the space in one's memory; although a childhood home may still exist, it is, at the same time, unreachable. Not only do buildings and particularly their interiors evolve over time through change in use and wear and tear, but so too does the inhabitant. While there are conventions governing the drawing of the structure of a house, the topography of these other less tangible interiors is unstable to say the least and offers an absorbing but slippery territory for any attempt at representation. This paper attempts a description of a 'first house,' not of an individual but of an institution, the Royal College of Physicians, London, focusing in particular on a panelled interior known as the Censors' Room. This paneling has moved with the Physicians over the years, being installed in three consecutive buildings. The proposition is that the 'first house' offers a useful analogy to interiority both as an intellectual construct and in the challenges it sets up in terms of representation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Royal College of Physicians describes itself as a longstanding independent professional membership organisation representing over 27,000 physicians in the UK and internationally. The Grade I listed building at Regent's Park, that houses them today, was designed for the Physicians by the architect Denys Lasdun and opened in 1964 to critical acclaim. The venerable institution, of the Royal College of Physicians is housed in a modernist masterpiece that both complements yet contrasts with the Regency Nash Terraces that surround it; the architecture, like the institution embodying both tradition and innovation.

But this is just one version of the story. The Royal College of Physicians received its charter in 1518 from King Henry VIII and has moved location five times over its lifetime, Lasdun's building being its fifth home. What attracted me to the case study was Lasdun's description of a building designed from the inside out where 'The most significant feature of the College design is the placing of its formal

interior spaces; the Library, Staircase Hall, Dining Hall and the Censors' Room.'<sup>3</sup> Before beginning to design, Lasdun 'set about soaking the atmosphere of the college,'<sup>4</sup> observing the official functions, traditions and ceremonies. He did not start with how the building should look but rather with how it was used. The physicians recall that 'he never asked 'What do you want?' but always 'what do you do?''<sup>5</sup> He then divided the spaces into two groups defined by use; those that were 'fixed and unchangeable'<sup>6</sup> and contained all 'the clobber of the ancestral memories'<sup>7</sup> and 'those that were susceptible to change'<sup>8</sup> such as offices and laboratories, which he placed in structurally independent zones, so as to 'be altered, adapted, and extended through a century of occupation.'<sup>9</sup>



Above  
Figure 1: Ro Spankie, New Fellows Day. The President and College Officers led by the College Bedell process from the Censors' Room up the grand staircase to the Dorchester Library, 2012

The clobber that Lasdun mentions is not so much actual stuff but rather the tradition and ceremonies that are integral to the identity of the Royal College, in particular a ceremonial route connecting the Censors' Room, where candidates take their viva voce before being admitted to the college, the Staircase Hall and the Library (Figure 1).

In a lecture entitled 'The First House' architectural theorist Mark Cousins explained that 'first houses leave ineradicable traces of what spatial relations are, and what the body's place in those spatial relations might be. They lay down an initial phantasy<sup>10</sup> of what the first house is, in respect to all subsequent houses.'<sup>11</sup> He suggested that this phantasy affects the arrangement of all subsequent spaces and every time someone moves 'when they arrange the new room they manage to introduce a kind of patterned repetition which defies formal analysis... However differently the rooms are shaped and sized, however differently they have furnished it, there remains some mysterious repetition.'<sup>12</sup>

In asking the Physicians what they did rather than what they wanted, Lasdun was not only exhibiting a modernist interest in function he was also attempting to separate function from form, retaining particular rituals and ceremonies while proposing a radically different architecture to house them. However the spatial relations suggested by these rituals and ceremonies are more powerful than they might appear and thus his modernist plan, despite its seemingly open and indeterminate layout, contains the trace of a more hierarchical, classical plan and the sequence of autonomous rooms that implies.<sup>13</sup> This paper suggests it is this trace, rather than the image or form of the previous homes, that is analogous to the 'mysterious repetition' described by Cousins.

#### METHODOLOGY: DRAWING OUT

'It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.' Sherlock Holmes<sup>14</sup>

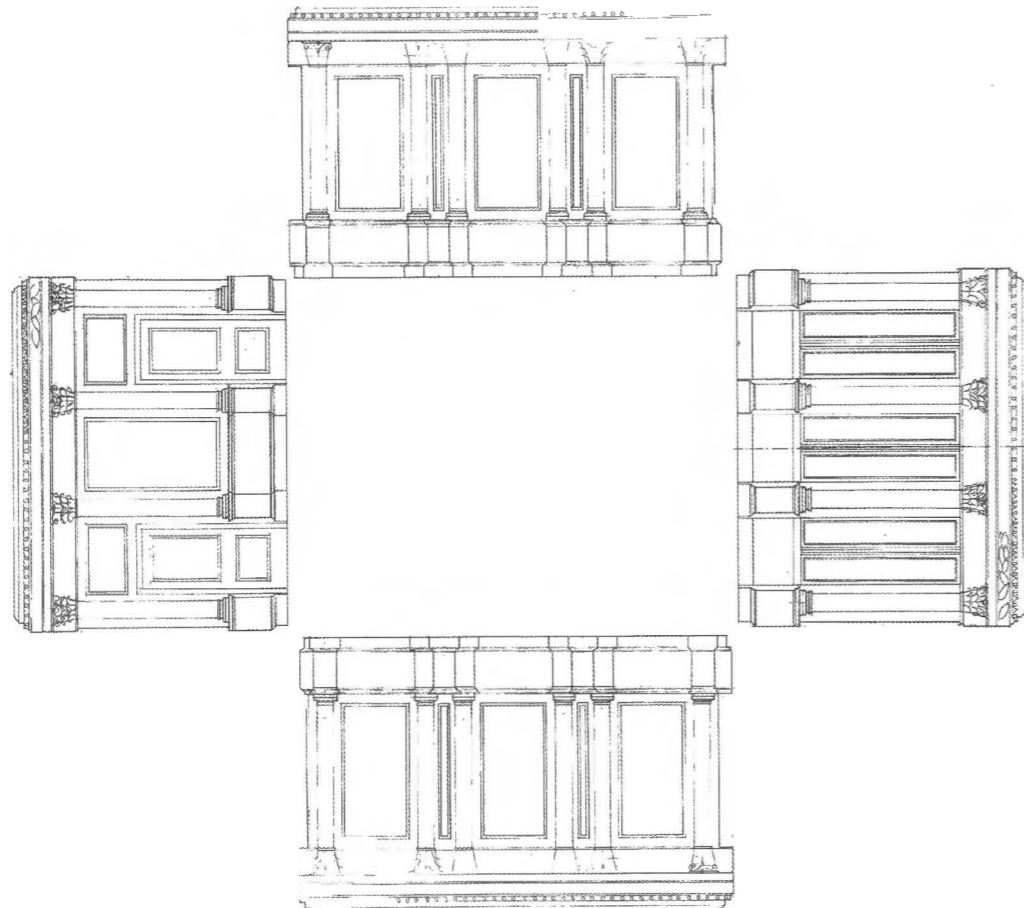
There was one piece of 'clobber' in particular that the Physicians were determined to keep: the Censors' Room. This interior has moved three times; not fantastically in the sense of the Holy House<sup>15</sup> nor programmatically in the sense one may have slept in many rooms in one's house, nor even as a financial spolia such as the *Robert Adam Room* (1763) found in Richard Rogers's *Lloyd's Building* (1986). This room, defined by the oak panelling that lines its interior surface (see figure 2), originates from the third of the physicians' homes and was literally picked up and moved as part of the furniture and fittings each time the Physicians moved. In doing so, on two occasions it preceded its host building, subverting the traditional relationship between an interior and its architectural shell. Lasdun articulated the Censors' Room significance by placing it in the glazed south facade, suspended between inside and outside, 'seen and felt to be the unchallenged focal point of the building,'<sup>16</sup> its exterior defined by its interior.



Above  
Figure 2: Ro Spankie, Censors' Room as seen today; photographs arranged as developed surface interior, 2010.

So the investigation starts with the Censors' Room, the most tangible clue to the Physicians' first house. The word 'detect' stems from the Latin *de-tegere*, to unroof, and the original figure of the detective was the lame devil Asmodeus, the devil of observation, who took the roofs off houses to spy on the lives inside.<sup>17</sup> The Censors' Room is an autonomous room, a closed box that hides its identity until you enter it and I have chosen to approach this case study like Asmodeus, opening up the box to spy inside.

I started with conventional historical research. The Physicians own an excellent archive where the history of the College is well documented and accessible. Lasdun's original drawings still exist in the Lasdun Archive, held at the RIBA Drawings Library. What is noteworthy is that, although the Censors' Room is such an important reference, the panelling was never drawn. It is always referred to a specialist subcontractor through a system of notes and references, as if by already existing it does not need to be designed or drawn out. The name of the specialist subcontractor is not recorded, nor is there any reference to their drawings.



However Regent's Park contains the original panelling, so the starting point was to measure up and draw out the room as it is seen today (Figure 3). I then researched and drew out the earlier reiterations of the room, believing the sum of these would suggest the arrangement of the 'first house' (Figures 6, 7 and 8). All the drawings are developed surface interiors, a technique that allows one to open up or unfold the box-like nature of the room.<sup>18</sup> These drawings are analytical in the sense they make things visible that may not have been apparent in the narrative and text-based history/story, but they are also speculative because the lack of conclusive evidence means some things have to be estimated.

In addition to the archive, there is a less documented oral history that has grown up around the College. It should be clarified that this study is concerned as much with the story as the history. The objective is not to establish the truth as such but rather to understand why the story has grown as it has, and like the detective, consider what truths might be hidden in the fictions. In a search for an appropriate language with which to discuss interiors, the truth is not important in the sense it was to architectural modernists. Interiors have always contained secrets and gaps, veneers and concealed services, it is acceptable to lie. Likewise, the stories that have grown up around the space were constructed for a purpose and reveal as much about the Royal College of Physicians as the facts do.

While measuring the Censors' Room, I overheard various fellows coming in with guests explaining the role of the room. Invisible until entered, and totally unexpected in its white modern shell, the guests express surprise at the room's existence, its importance apparent in the patina and lustre of its surfaces. I overheard that the panels predate the Great Fire of London (one guest remarked that with its convector heaters, double-glazing and electric socket points, 'it doesn't look that old'), that they originate from the Physicians' first house and that the great Sir Christopher Wren designed them. Although I later discovered none of this to be true, I understand these stories as important in providing authenticity through reference to notable figures and events and adding mystique to the Physicians' first house'.

## WHAT IS THE CENSORS' ROOM?

In architectural histories the interiors are often under described and a researcher will look to other sources. The following two descriptions use the conventions of the guidebook and the inventory as a reflection of this.

## THE GUIDEBOOK

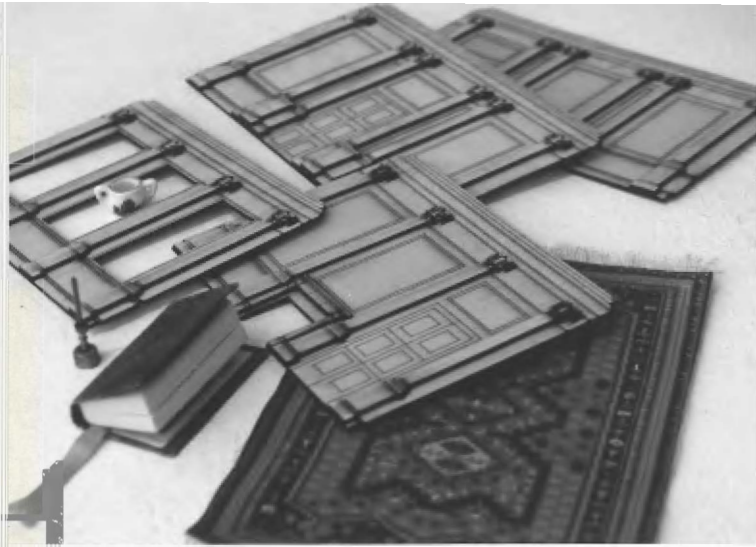
The word censor was the name of the Roman magistrate who was responsible for the Roman census, the *Regimen Morum* (the public morality), and state finances. At the Royal College of Physicians the Censor's role was to examine prospective candidates and censure malpractice, an

*Opposite*

Figure 3: Ro Spankie, Measured drawing of the Censors' Room at Regent's Park. 1964-Present Day, Developed Surface Interior, 2010. Pencil on tracing paper.

important role as the fellowship is the College and the entrance exam is the gateway. The final viva voce examination, held in the Censors' Room,<sup>19</sup> was 'legendary in its difficulty and importance, and if you failed you could never reach the top of your field. If you passed, on the other hand, you were admitted to the prestigious body and its luxurious premises.'<sup>20</sup> In past centuries the candidate was expected to be fluent in both Greek and Latin (and to answer questions posed in either language), and to 'be able to demonstrate they were 'groundedly learned' not only in the practice of medicine, but also all the great subjects of the Age of Learning, such as mathematics and natural philosophy.'<sup>21</sup> In its present configuration 'after the viva the candidates were sent into the ante chamber, then handed a slip of paper which baldly said 'yes' or 'no'. If 'yes' they became members of the College and went back into the Censors' Room, if 'no' they had to exit ignominiously out of the side door!'<sup>22</sup>

The room has been described as the heart<sup>23</sup> of the college and the 'inner sanctum.'<sup>24</sup> These metaphors underlie the importance of its role and it was this metaphorical role that Lasdun referred to as fixed and unchangeable while describing more conventional architectural form as transient.



## THE INVENTORY OF THE FURNITURE AND EFFECTS

'The Censors' Room...has walls paneled 'in the most elegant manner' with fine Spanish oak, designed by Robert Hooke and carved by Thomas Young and William Sheffield.'<sup>26</sup> The panels originate from a building on Warwick Lane in the City of London constructed in 1675. In the seventeenth century, the word seeling was not used as it is today, but meant either the covering of the walls or ceiling of a room to make them draught-proof, or even the material used to provide such a covering, and was a luxury item. The panelling should be understood as a 'seeling' in this sense. In an inventory of May 1900 it is described as 'The very valuable Antique Oak Panelling with fluted Pilasters, Carved Capitals and Frieze.'<sup>27</sup>

In its present form it consists of four sections of oak panels, or wainscoting, measuring 19'6ft x 27'1¾ft x 15ft high. It is constructed in panelled bays broken by recessed fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals. In each bay hangs a portrait of a fellow/censor starting with Henry VIII the founder. A plinth runs around the room at a height of 3ft, stepping forward in front of the double pilasters to form a pedestal for busts of further honorable fellows. At one end are two doors opening to separate antechambers, one leading onto the Staircase Hall, the other to the ignominious side door. At the opposite end there are three windows looking out to the herb garden. There is also a narrow slit window at each corner. The 1900 inventory lists everything belonging to the room (72 entries) down to '3 glass inkpots' and 'a 12" ivory paper cutter'.<sup>28</sup> Today the room contains only the panels and portraits, a splendid gilt chandelier, and a large table and chairs, which, when not in use, are pushed back against the wall.

## HISTORY/STORY

'The child is father of the man.'<sup>29</sup> - William Wordsworth

These descriptions portray the Censors' Room as it can be seen today. However, they give only tantalising clues to its role in the story of the 'first house'. When studying a historical figure one might go back to their childhood for clues as to their character,

likewise to understand the significance of the Censors' Room, one must go back to its conception. What becomes clear is that, like the College itself, the room evolved rather than being designed, and its role is symbolic rather than functional in an architectural sense. What follows is a description of each of the reiterations of the room that over time became the Censors' Room.

## VERSION 1: KNIGHTRIDER STREET 1518-1614: THE CONCEPTION

The College of Physicians was founded in 1518 by Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) physician to Henry VII and Henry VIII, based on comparable foundations he had seen in Italy. The idea was to 'rescue the medical art from the hands of illiterate monks and empirics' and other 'common artificers, as smiths, weavers and women.'<sup>30</sup> Originally consisting of six physicians, the College operated from a parlour, council-room and library in Linacre's own house in Knightrider Street, south of St Paul's Cathedral, within the walls of the City of London. The fellows describe their present building as their home and this tradition probably stems from the fact the first building literally was.

## VERSION 2: AMEN CORNER 1614-1666: INTERIOR AS A BACKDROP

In 1614 the college moved to a house at Amen Corner just northwest of St Paul's Cathedral. Again, Amen Corner was a home very much in the sense one understands home today, a freestanding house on a site by the city wall with a gated entrance and a garden. However, it also contained more specific uses, such as a chemical laboratory and botanical library, as well as an anatomy theatre. In 1650, physician and fellow William Harvey<sup>31</sup> commissioned Inigo Jones and his assistant John Webb to build an extension containing a library, a repository for samples and rarities and a great parlour for the fellows to meet, beneath.

Not much was known about this building, until six of Webb's drawings were discovered in Worcester College, Oxford, in 1970.<sup>32</sup> These drawings are beautifully drawn out in ink and wash, describing in some detail the interior elevations. The fact that the interiors were so carefully designed is unusual. At the time, with an important building such as this, the architect might design the chimney piece, the door case and the window-surrounds and other fixed features but 'the concept of an architect as a person of a superior intellect and status who could co-ordinate an enterprise to produce stylistic unity was still in its infancy, and this was particularly so with regard to the interior.'<sup>33</sup> However, Inigo Jones had made his name as a masque and set designer at the court of Charles I and clearly understood the interior's role as a backdrop to set the scene. The elevations show paneling and bookcases of fine books complemented by artifacts, portraits and statues, a display of knowledge, education and research.

A physicians practice was one of diagnosis based on knowledge. This was in contrast to the rival Company of Barber-Surgeons who welded the knife. The fact Harvey chose a library-cum-museum-cum-meeting room as an outward expression of the College as opposed to

Opposite  
Figure 4: Ro Spankie, Model of Censors' Room at its previous home Pall Mall East (1825-1964), 2010. Image based on a description in an 'Inventory of the Furniture and Effects' from 1900 held in the Royal College of Physicians Archive.<sup>25</sup>

the anatomy theatre Jones had been asked to design for the Barber-Surgeons shows how interiors were used to embody the institution. The Museum Harveianum as it became known, was the first purpose-built building for the Physicians and once built it became the reference point for each subsequent building.

### VERSION 3: WARWICK LANE 1675 – 1825: INTERIOR AS MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY

Tragically, just ten years after it was completed the Museum Harveianum and most of its contents, including the majority of the books, were destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666. The Museum Harveianum was lost but the memory or phantasy that it embodied wasn't. However, the original architect Inigo Jones was dead (1573-1652) and his assistant John Webb, (1611-1672) was aging. In 1670 the College commissioned Robert Hooke to design a new building. A new site was secured a few streets north on Warwick Lane, 'near Newgate Prison from which many of its anatomical subjects came.'<sup>34</sup>

Hooke was first and foremost a scientist, being both Curator of Experiments at the newly formed Royal Society and Professor of Geometry at Gresham College. Following the Great Fire, Hooke and his more renowned colleague Christopher Wren had both been appointed City Surveyors and worked together on many projects including *St Paul's Cathedral* (1677-1697) and *The Monument* (1673-77). Hooke's role in these projects was that of surveyor and engineer and it is probably for this reason that for many years the Royal College of Physicians at Warwick Lane was accredited to 'its great architect, Sir Christopher Wren.'<sup>35</sup>

Hooke was, however, a fine draughtsman and when his illustrated book of observations through a microscope, *Micrographia* had first appeared, it had caused a sensation.<sup>36</sup> Samuel Pepys records in his diary that it was 'the most ingenious booke that ever I read in my life.'<sup>37</sup>

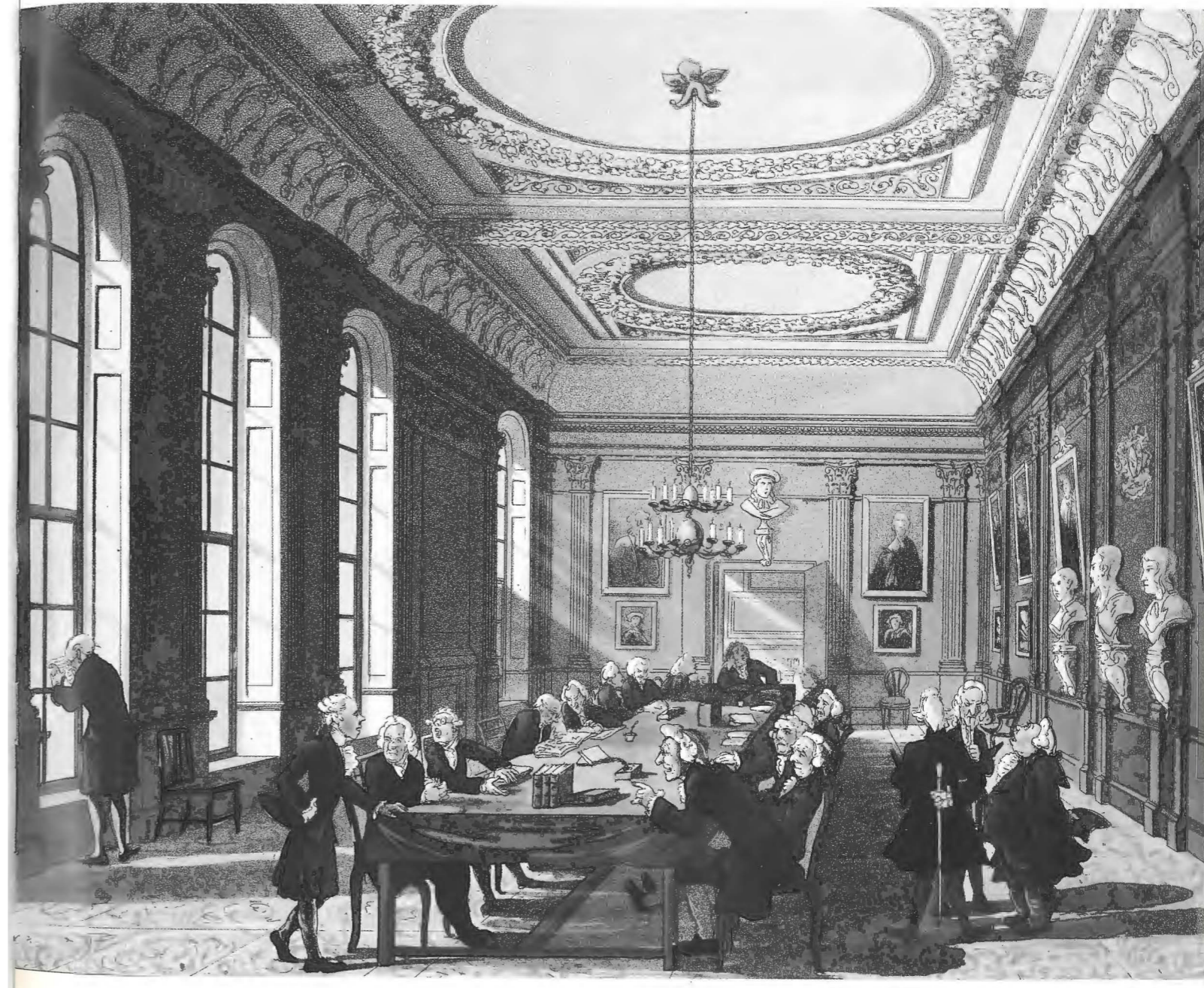
'The words platforme and platte were used in this period for plan, and the word model was used in the sense of design, which included certainly a plan and probably an elevation as well.'<sup>38</sup>

There are no known drawings by Hooke of the Royal College of Physicians and the architectural drawings by him in RIBA Drawings Library, are line drawings done in brown ink and are curiously diagrammatic compared with the beautifully observed detailed drawings produced for *Micrographia*. To what extent Hooke, (who had a different sensibility to Inigo Jones), would have designed the interiors is uncertain as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century such tasks were often left to independent contractors who each had their own traditions and their own book of patterns.

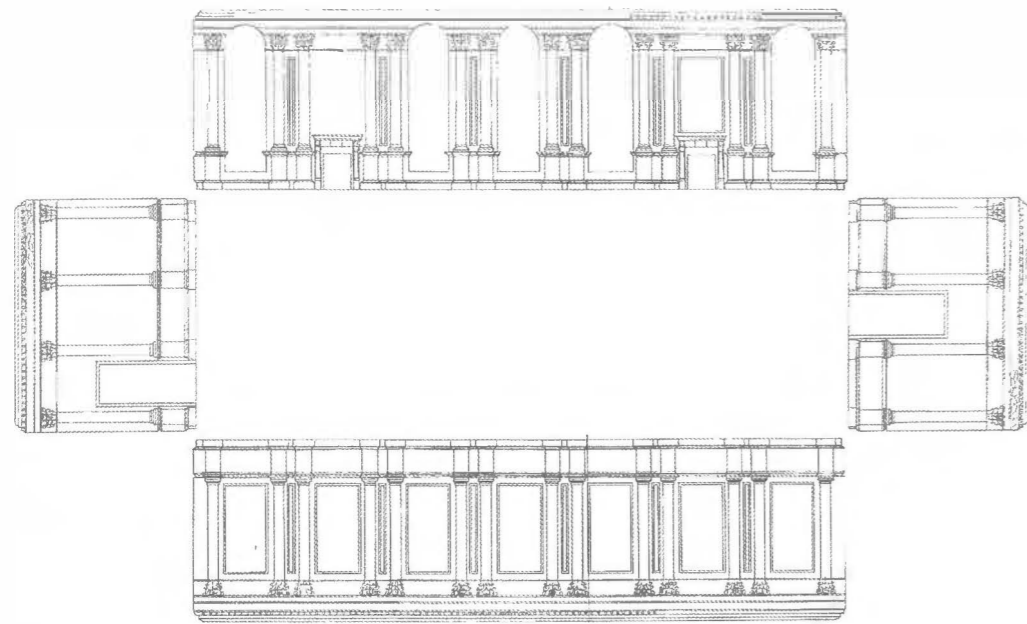
Evidence that does exist<sup>39</sup> shows Hooke's design for Warwick Lane (now demolished) was more collegiate than the College's previous two homes; the building wrapped around an enclosed courtyard that was entered from beneath an anatomy theatre. The main façade was onto this courtyard rather than to the street, its entrance leading directly into the hall, and through to a much diminished Library. Going up the great stair one reached the first floor dominated by the Great Hall and passing through that was the Censors' Room. On the second floor was a garret where herbs were dried for a dispensary. In the basement were the laboratory, the repository and kitchens. Accommodation for fellows formed the two side wings.

The most compelling evidence for the origin of the panels comes from a coloured print of 1808 that shows that the panelling found in the Censors' Room today originally lined the Great Hall or grand public gallery on the first floor (Figure 5). Using the dimensions of the surviving oak panels at Regent's Park, referring to the print and a sketch plan (c.1883) found in the archive,<sup>41</sup> I drew out the developed surface interior of the Great Hall at Warwick Lane (Figure 6). Through a process of measurement, deduction and speculation one can estimate the Great Hall to have been 22ft wide x 61ft long x 15ft high.

The print is from Rudolph Ackermann's *The Microcosm of London: London in Miniature*, a publication that portrayed London through the interiors of its establishments, institutions and places of entertainment. Ackermann's proposition was that interiors could be understood as a microcosm of London and society as a whole. Key to his idea was that the illustrations would describe how the



Above  
Figure 5: Augustus Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson, *The Great Hall, The College of Physicians*. Subject date 1678.  
Image date 1808. RIBA Library Photographs Collection.<sup>40</sup>



interiors were used; so he hired architectural draftsman Augustus Pugin to draw the interiors and the satirist Thomas Rowlandson to draw in the figures, taking care to show the 'general air and particular carriage, habits &c of such characters as are likely to make up the majority in particular places.'<sup>42</sup>

The scene depicted in the print shows the Great Room set up to examine candidates. The accompanying text reads:

The large hall, which is finely represented in this print, is a handsome, well-proportioned room; if any fault may be found it is rather too low. The physicians are sitting at a long table, and appear to be employed in the examination of a candidate. The eager disputatious attitude of the figure which is represented as leaning forward, in the act of interrogating the candidate, is finely contrasted with the two figures on his right hand, one of which seems to have gathered up his features into a supercilious indifference as to what is passing before him, and indicates at the same time a self-acknowledged superiority of intellect. The irritable, anxious figure of the candidate is well imagined; and one of the learned physicians, on his left, who appears to be calling for an answer to the question he has put, seems, by multiplying the attack, to increase the no small embarrassment of the poor examinant.<sup>43</sup>

This print connects the entrance examination to the panels, the Great Hall having the role of the Censors' Room of today. The name is surprisingly fluid and the same room is known variously as the 'Coenaculum, Ann 1676, The Great Room, Leagh 1697, Great Hall, Hatton 1708.'<sup>44</sup> In 1808 Ackermann titles the print the 'Long Gallery' and from 1825 the panels line a room known as the Censors' Room. There are strong echoes of the Museum Harveianum. The library was lost but the idea of a long gallery-style space, with busts of noted fellows, is resonant with it. As depicted, the Great Hall was arranged enfilade, with long windows with arched openings looking onto a garden and two fireplaces along one side. Whether this was a request from the physicians or Hooke's possible personal knowledge of the Museum Harveianum is not known but what is clear is that by repeating the arrangement, the Physicians were also clarifying the role/layout of their institution.

#### VERSION 4: PALL MALL EAST 1825 – 1964: ROMANTIC FRAGMENT

The Royal College of Physicians remained at Warwick Lane for a hundred and fifty years, the longest it has remained anywhere. However, by the eighteenth century London had changed and polite society had moved out of the medieval city into new developments to the west. Warwick Lane had become an inconvenient location for clients and, added to this, having sold part of the garden in 1770 to the City of London, the latest Newgate Prison building was only twenty-four feet away from the back windows.

The president of the College at the time, a Sir Henry Hallford, was physician to George III, George IV, William IV and young Queen Victoria. His position meant that he had the contacts to arrange the move to the fashionable West End, and a new building was commissioned on Pall Mall East, from architect Robert Smirke, a student of John Soane, who was working on the British Museum.

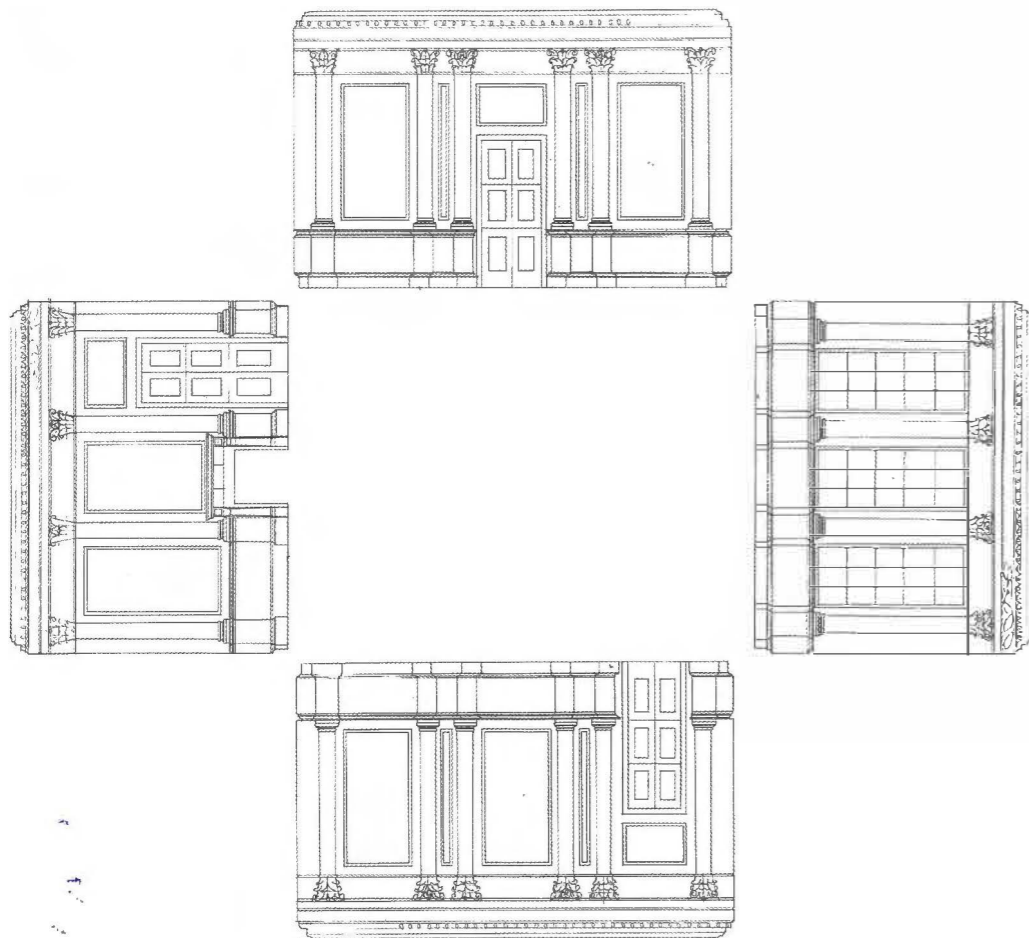
The site was smaller than the previous one and the building Smirke designed had to play two roles, firstly to house the College and secondly (and perhaps more importantly in Smirke's mind) to form one side of a fashionable new public square. Smirke combined the Royal College of Physicians with the Union Club, unifying the two institutions behind a single façade that formed the west side of John Nash's newly planned Trafalgar Square.<sup>45</sup> The entrance to each institution was articulated on opposite ends of the block.

The role of the College had also changed. Smirke's design did not include an anatomy theatre, laboratory or apothecary; these more public and practical functions were now being located in the newly formed medical teaching institutions. No longer a 'house', there was no courtyard and no garden. Despite these changes, the College prided itself on its traditions and on not being merely a gentleman's club. Its neo-Hellenic Ionic colonnade (as opposed to the Roman orders preferred by Inigo Jones and Robert Hooke) expressed its more serious nature. These changes were reflected in the internal layout. The library, which had been substantially increased by this time, was on the first floor reached by a symmetrical double-stair, and formed the largest volume in the building.

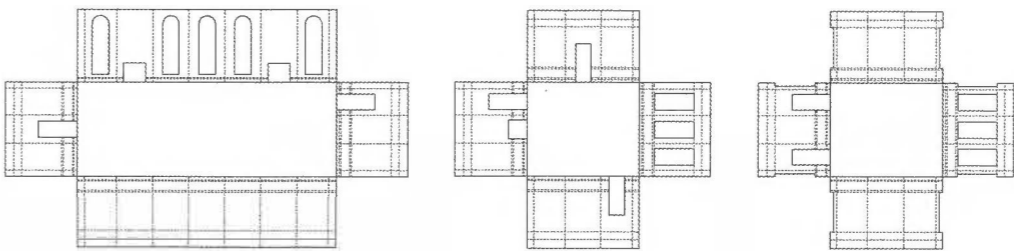
**Opposite**  
Figure 6: Ro Spankie, *The Great Hall at Warwick Lane 1675 – 1825, 2010*. Developed surface interior.  
Pencil on tracing paper.

'Adjoining the library and facing eastwards across Trafalgar Square was the Censors' Room, where officers of the college held meetings and oral examinations. Its walls are (were) panelled in the most elegant manner with fine Spanish Oak, which had been removed from Warwick Lane before the move in 1825.'<sup>46</sup>

Photographs of the room reveal that in the move from Warwick Lane, the panelling had been ruthlessly cut down and the seven bays length reduced to three. Only one of the fireplaces remained and changes to the windows, dictated by the neo-Hellenic façade, meant the openings were now square rather than arched. Reflecting changes in society the room was no longer a thoroughfare.<sup>47</sup> It could be entered through one of three doors: from the grand staircase, from the library or through a side door which lead to the back stairs, presumably for the discreet movement of servants and possibly for failed candidates. The height of the panelling resisted change, but the room that the panels now lined was more of a sombre and private study rather than a Great Hall or long gallery. While still the backdrop for the viva voce, on successfully passing the exam, a new fellow would go through the door to the far greater double-height space of the library with all its promise of knowledge and fellowship. This was a journey that Lasdun further dramatised with a symbolic ascension up the grand staircase to the library (Figure 1).



There are no contemporary drawings for the Royal College of Physicians, Pall Mall East. The RIBA Drawing library holds drawings of other interiors by Robert Smirke. These are executed in pencil and wash and are concerned primarily with neoclassical surface decoration such as drapes, furnishings and fittings, wall coverings and plasterwork. Again, therefore, I drew a developed surface interior, based on measurements of the existing panels, photographs of the room at Pall Mall East, and plans found in a guidebook to the building in the Royal College of Physicians Archive.



CONCLUSION

This paper does not propose techniques such as the developed surface interior as a means to draw out interiority, rather as a means of presenting evidence of the fluidity inherent in it. The story of the panels is one of tradition and continuity, their value being placed on their authenticity and age in the history/stories of the physicians. But as the three developed surfaces reveal, the panelling has been altered and rearranged many times, unwittingly drawing out the shifting nature of a 'first house' (see figure 8). Lasdun, while emphasising tradition and continuity, made significant changes during the dismantling and reassembly process during the move to Regent's Park: the fireplace went, the three doors were reduced to two and, in a poetic modernist twist, the corners of the room are cut away to form windows, perhaps a reference to Frank Lloyd Wright's call for the destruction the box.<sup>48</sup> This single act destroyed the autonomous nature of the room at its point of greatest strength, transforming the panelling from a seeling into four freestanding planar entities.

One could conclude Smirke and Lasdun cut their cloth to fit, altering the panelling to suit their purpose. But, conversely, they also cut their coat according to their cloth and the panelling dictated the size of the subsequent rooms, retaining the domestic scale and low ceiling of the original gallery. Looked at over a length of time one can see the interior of a 'first house' has a more symbiotic and powerful relationship to the architectural shell than conventional interiors are traditionally accredited.

Mark Cousins suggests that the phantasy of the first house affects the arrangement of all subsequent spaces leaving 'ineradicable traces of what spatial relations are, and what the body's place in those spatial relations might be.'<sup>49</sup> Looking back over the reiterations one can begin to see that the

*Opposite*  
Figure 7: Ro Spankie, Censors' Room at Pall Mall East 1825 – 1964, 2010. Developed surface interior. Pencil on tracing paper.

*Above*  
Figure 8: Ro Spankie, Diagram Comparing Developed Surface Interiors of the Censors' Room at Warwick Lane 1675 – 1825, Pall Mall East 1825 – 1964 and Regent's Park 1964 – Present Day, 2012.

trace of the earlier interiors, not only to construct the physician's identity, the fine books, portraits and artefacts representing 'self-acknowledged superiority of intellect',<sup>50</sup> but more importantly the panelling/entrance exam acts as a gateway that a fellow must pass through to achieve that identity, a symbolic journey connecting the Censors' Room, and the Staircase Hall to the Library. Four architects (Jones, Hooke, Smirke and Lasdun), living in different centuries, with differing concerns and methods of practice, each make their mark, change the layout, the proportions and the style, yet at some level repeat the arrangements retaining the core repetition, intriguingly suggesting an institution has an embedded memory.

In his autobiography Sigmund Freud describes how he attempted to 'picture the apparatus of the mind as being built up of a number of functional systems whose inter-relations may be expressed in spatial terms, without reference, of course, to the anatomy of the brain.'<sup>51</sup> He describes this approach as the 'topographical method.'<sup>52</sup> This paper concludes by proposing such a method for representing the Physician's 'first house', where the inter-relations of key elements, while best expressed in spatial terms, function without reference to the orthographic representations and measurements of the respective architectures. Such a method makes sense of Denys Lasdun's proposal that 'the clobber of the ancestral memories'<sup>53</sup> should be considered fixed and unchangeable while more conventional architectural elements are transient. Actual buildings are ephemeral, first houses last forever.

## NOTES

1. Salman Akhtar, *Homes of Childhood: Spaces of Love, Dread, and Play*. Paper given at Analytical Spaces: Architecture, Art and Psychoanalysis Conference, Freud Museum, London, July 14, 2012.
2. Mark Cousins, "The First House," (Transcript of Lecture) in *Arch-Text 1*, ed. Duncan McCorquodale, (London: Black Dog Publishing Ltd, 1993), 35-38.
3. Denys Lasdun, "Lecture given at the Royal College of Physicians," July 2, 1996 in *Journal of RCP*, Vol 30, No. 4, July/Aug 1996: 293.
4. Asa Briggs, *A History of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, Vol 4. 1948-1983 (Oxford University Press, 2005), 1408.
5. Ibid.
6. Denys Lasdun, "An Architect's Approach to architecture," Lecture given at RIBA, February 9, 1965 in *Architectural Design* June 1965: 272.
7. Denys Lasdun, "A sense of place and time," *The Listener*, February 17, 1966, 229.
8. Lasdun, "An Architect's Approach to architecture," 272.
9. Ibid.
10. When used in psychoanalytic writings in the English language, 'phantasy' (with the 'ph' spelling) generally refers to the unconscious psychic content of the drives. Fantasy with an 'f' spelling is used to refer to more conscious psychic content such as daydreaming and products of the imagination.
11. Cousins, "The First House," 37.
12. Ibid.
13. When Lasdun trained at Architectural Association in the 1930s the curriculum was still modeled on the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Lasdun later acknowledged that this classical training had left an impression on him. Barnabas Calder, *Denys Lasdun's Royal college of Physicians, A Monumental Act of Faith* (London: Royal College of Physicians, 2008), 20.
14. Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. A Scandal in Bohemia 1892," in *Sherlock Holmes The Complete Stories* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006), 431.
15. The Holy House refers to the scene of the Annunciation, a house in Nazareth. It is claimed to have been miraculously transported by angels to various locations. i.e. *Holy House at Walsingham, in Norfolk UK and 'Holy House' of Loreto in Italy*.
16. Lasdun, "An Architect's Approach to architecture," 272.
17. Kate Summerscale, *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008), 157.
18. Robin Evans, "The Developed Surface: an enquiry into the Brief Life of an Eighteenth-Century Drawing Technique," in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), 195-231.
19. Due to the increase in the number of new fellows being examined, the viva voce examination is no longer held in the Censors' Room.
20. Calder, *Denys Lasdun's Royal College of Physicians*, 40.
21. Caroline Moss-Gibbons, *Royal College of Physicians: London Open House 2002* (Royal College of Physicians, 2002).
22. Ibid.

23. The physicians own a collection of 17th century Anatomical tables showing circulatory and nervous systems (constructed with real body parts removed from corpses and varnished onto boards.) Lasdun was intrigued by the tables as a metaphor both for the institution and his own design (see Denys Lasdun, "Lecture given at the Royal College of Physicians," 293) and used an image of them on the poster for a lecture he gave at the Architectural Association, February 20, 1964.
24. Lasdun, "Lecture given at the Royal College of Physicians," 294.
25. An Inventory of the furniture and Effects upon the Premises of The Royal College of Physicians Pall Mall East, Trafalgar Square, SW. May 1900. Held in the Royal College of Physicians Archive, MS2210.
26. Briggs, *A History of the Royal College of Physicians*, 1402.
27. An Inventory of the furniture and Effects, 1900.
28. Ibid.
29. William Wordsworth, "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold," in *Poems: In Two Volumes. Vol 2* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), 44.
30. Rudolph Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London: London in Miniature. Vol 1, 2nd edition* (London: R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 101 Strand, 1835), 132.
31. William Harvey was author of *De Motu Cordis* (1628) the first description of the circulation of blood.
32. For a description of Jones and Webb's Museum Harveianum see: Roger Gaskell, *Designing a library in 1651: John Webb's drawings for the library of the London College of Physicians* (Stockholm, Festschrift for Ove Hagelin, 2010), 1-15.
33. Peter Thornton, *Authentic Décor The Domestic Interior 1620-1920* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1984), 19.
34. Peter Ackroyd, *London the Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2000), 209.
35. Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London*, 132.
36. Robert Hooke, *Micrographia: Or some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies made by Magnifying Glasses with Observation and Inquires thereupon* (London: J. Martyn and J. Allestry, 1665).
37. Samuel Pepys, *The Shorter Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham (London, Penguin Classics 1986), January 21, 1665, 464.
38. Alfred Gotch, *Inigo Jones* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1928), 94.
39. Cuttings from: James Elmes. Sir Christopher Wren and his Times (London 1832) 451-2 and Henry Chamberlain, A new and compleat history and survey of the cities of London and Westminster; Vol 3, (London, J. Cooke 1768) 76: in F.J. Farre's *Album of Illustrations for The History of the Royal College of Physicians 1883*. Held in the Royal College of Physicians Archive, MS2210.
40. Image originally published in Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London: Plate 20*.
41. Hand drawn sketch "plan of the public rooms at Warwick Lane" in F.J. Farre's *Album of Illustrations for The History of the Royal College of Physicians 1883*. Held in the Royal College of Physicians Archive, MS2210.
42. Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London*, ppiii
43. Ibid., 134-5.
44. A note on hand-drawn sketch 'plan of the public rooms at Warwick Lane' states "'Coenaculium' Ann 1676, 'The Great Room' Leugh 1697, 'Great Hall' Hatton 1708.

45. The building is now Canada House, part of the Canadian High Commission.

46. Gordon Nares, "The Royal College of Physicians," *Country life*, March 27, 1953, 908.

47. For a discussion of the development of the use of the corridor or passage rather than enfilade arrangements see: Robin Evans, "Figures, Doors and Passages," in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), 55-91.

48. Harold Allen Brooks, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Destruction of the Box," in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (March, 1979): 7-14.

49. Cousins, 'The First House,' 37.

50. Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London*, 134-5.

51. Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1935), 57-8.

52. Ibid., 58.

53. Lasdun, "An Architect's Approach to architecture," 272.