

## James Paine The Architect

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### The Architect



James Paine (1717-1789) was chosen as the architect probably because of the work he was already undertaking in the neighbourhood. He was working for Sir Rowland Winn on the rebuilding of Nostell Priory, (now a National Trust property) south of Wakefield and had designed Heath House in a village nearby. Paine was the son of a carpenter from Andover who had travelled to London to train as an architect. His talents appear to have caught the attention of the Earl of Burlington, an amateur architect with strong Yorkshire connections. It was probably Burlington who recommended him (at the age of 19) as the assistant to the gentleman architect in charge of the work at Nostell.

Paine's success with the Mansion House appears to have led to offers of work from the local gentry. In the Doncaster area, he was involved in the building or alteration of country houses at Cowick, Cusworth, Hickleton, Sandbeck and Wadworth. He subsequently enjoyed a long and successful career in London and around the country, but especially in the North of England.

He published his Plans of Doncaster Mansion House in London in 1751 to publicise his commission. The publication attempted to make the project even more impressive than it was. The published plans show the building flanked by two houses, one supposedly for the recorder (the judge of the borough court) and the other for the town clerk. These can never have formed part of the scheme he was commissioned to carry out, not least because the corporation never owned the land needed to build them. The town clerk was not a full-time employee of the corporation, but was a solicitor in private practice for whom the corporation was only one of his clients, so he would hardly be offered accommodation at public expense. The recorder of the borough at this date was Bryan Cooke of Owston, who had a house of his own in the locality - Owston Hall - that he would scarcely want to give up for the smaller house of Paine's design.

(Incidentally, Paine also deliberately made his work at Cusworth Hall seem more elaborate than it actually was when he published an engraving of the south front of the Hall in 1750. Paine's letters to William Wrightson, the owner of Cusworth Hall, and a copy of the engraving of the south front are to be found at Doncaster Archives.)

The Mansion House as it is today is not entirely as Paine designed it. It has been altered and extended by three later architects, William Lindley, William Hurst and William Butterfield. Their alterations will be described as our tour through the building progresses.