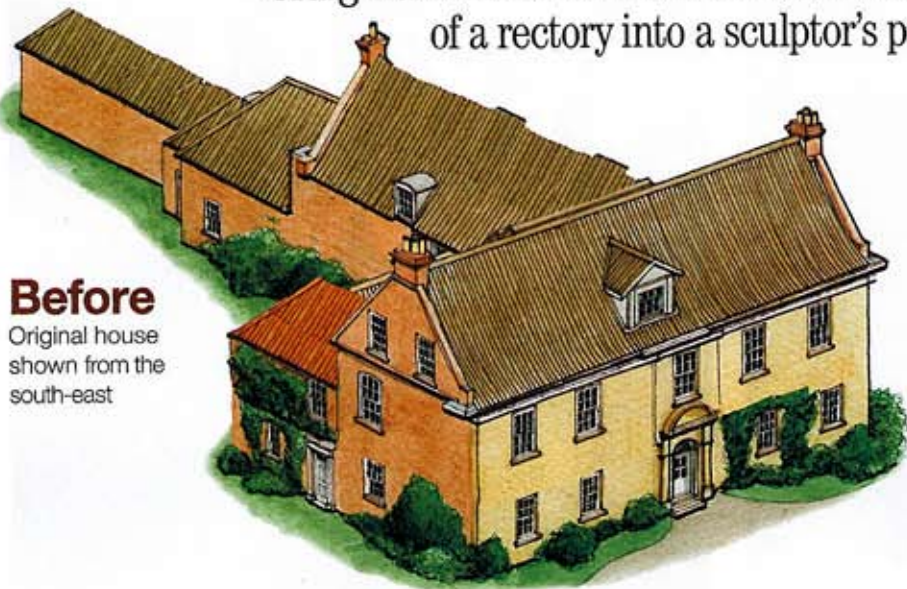


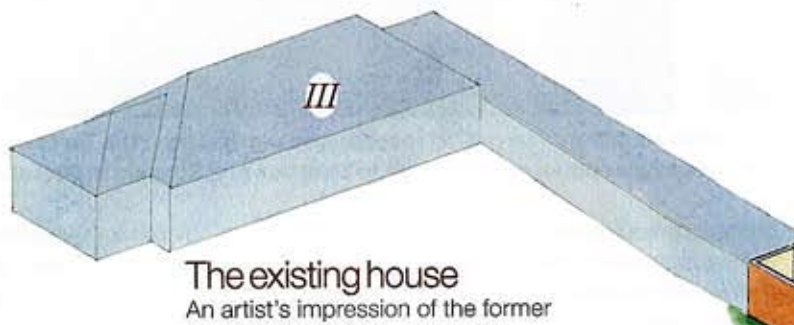
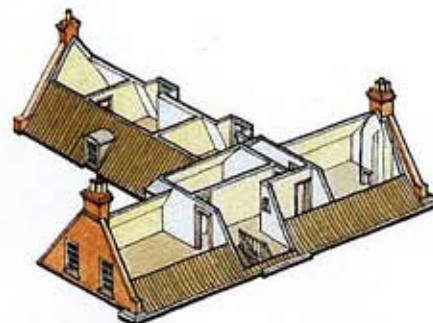
# Radical Classicism

Craig Hamilton outlines his vision for the transformation of a rectory into a sculptor's paradise



## Before

Original house shown from the south-east



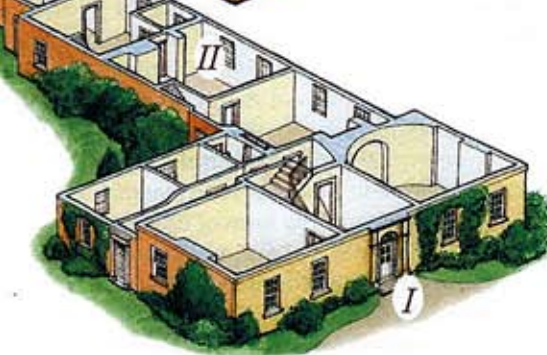
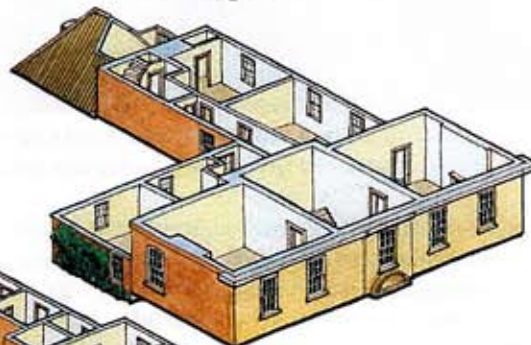
### The existing house

An artist's impression of the former rectory. Three storeys high, the building has eight bedrooms.

*I* Entrance

*II* North-facing family kitchen

*III* Stable block to the rear



**Ptolemy Dean on the existing house**

At first glance, this house might seem to be the most perfect country rectory. It has soft red Georgian brickwork, and a roof of cheerful glazed clay pantiles. The five bays of nicely proportioned sash windows in its main front look over a garden with a large pond. The setting of the house is defined by a thick perimeter of trees. These trees make this a private and reflective place.

The building is arranged in two main ranges set at right angles to one another. The main front faces east,

and the back range, which runs east to west, contains mostly service areas. There are very few windows on the southern side of this range, perhaps an historic arrangement that preserved the rector's garden from being overlooked by his staff. The rooms are, therefore, consigned to a north-facing and a somewhat dark existence.

**'The back-range rooms are north-facing and dark'**

A row of log and garden stores extends further westwards still from the service range towards a driveway and an old stable block.

Inside the main building, there is one particularly fine room situated in the north-east corner, possibly

once the rector's study, with an elegantly curved back wall.

### Buying agent's view Edward Sugden, Property Vision

- This Georgian rectory has a pleasingly symmetrical façade
- It would benefit from a tennis court and swimming pool
- There is potential for further accommodation
- Improvement of the master bedroom and the addition of bathrooms and family bedrooms would add greatly to the house
- It needs a large family room

Existing house illustration by Stephen Conlan

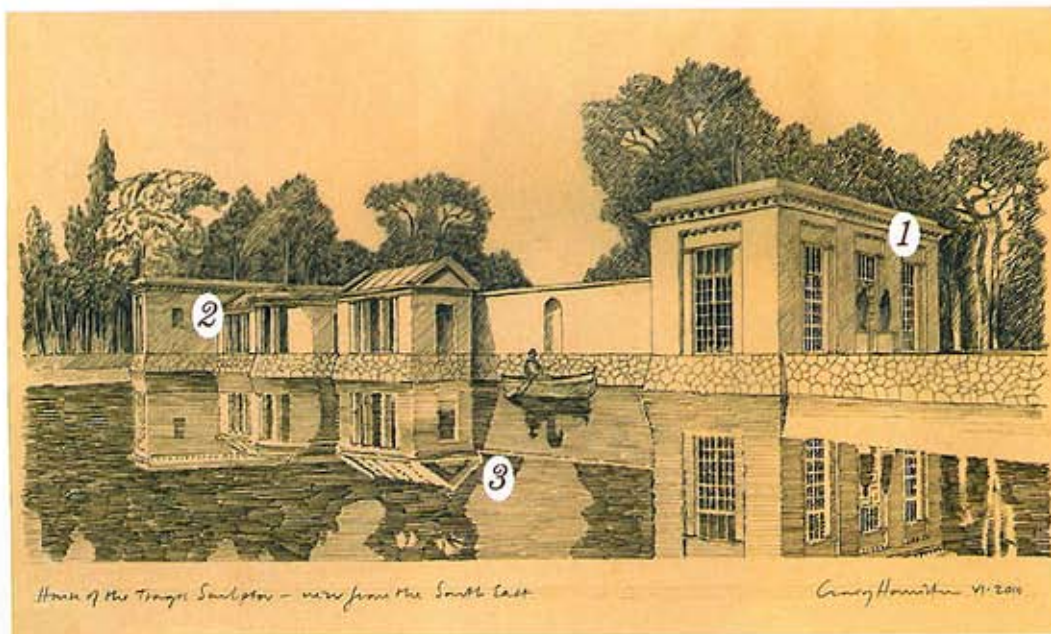
## Craig Hamilton



The founding director of Craig Hamilton Architects ([www.craighamiltonarchitects.com](http://www.craighamiltonarchitects.com)), Mr Hamilton trained under Prof

Barrie Biermann at the University of Natal, Durban, in South Africa. Before setting up his own practice in 1991, he served his apprenticeship with Michael Reardon, cathedral architect to Birmingham and Hereford Cathedrals. The practice specialises in the repair and sensitive extension of historic buildings and has substantial experience in the design of new country houses. Mr Hamilton has established a reputation for progressive Classical design. His practice undertakes projects throughout the UK, and has a small office in London that deals with projects in the city.

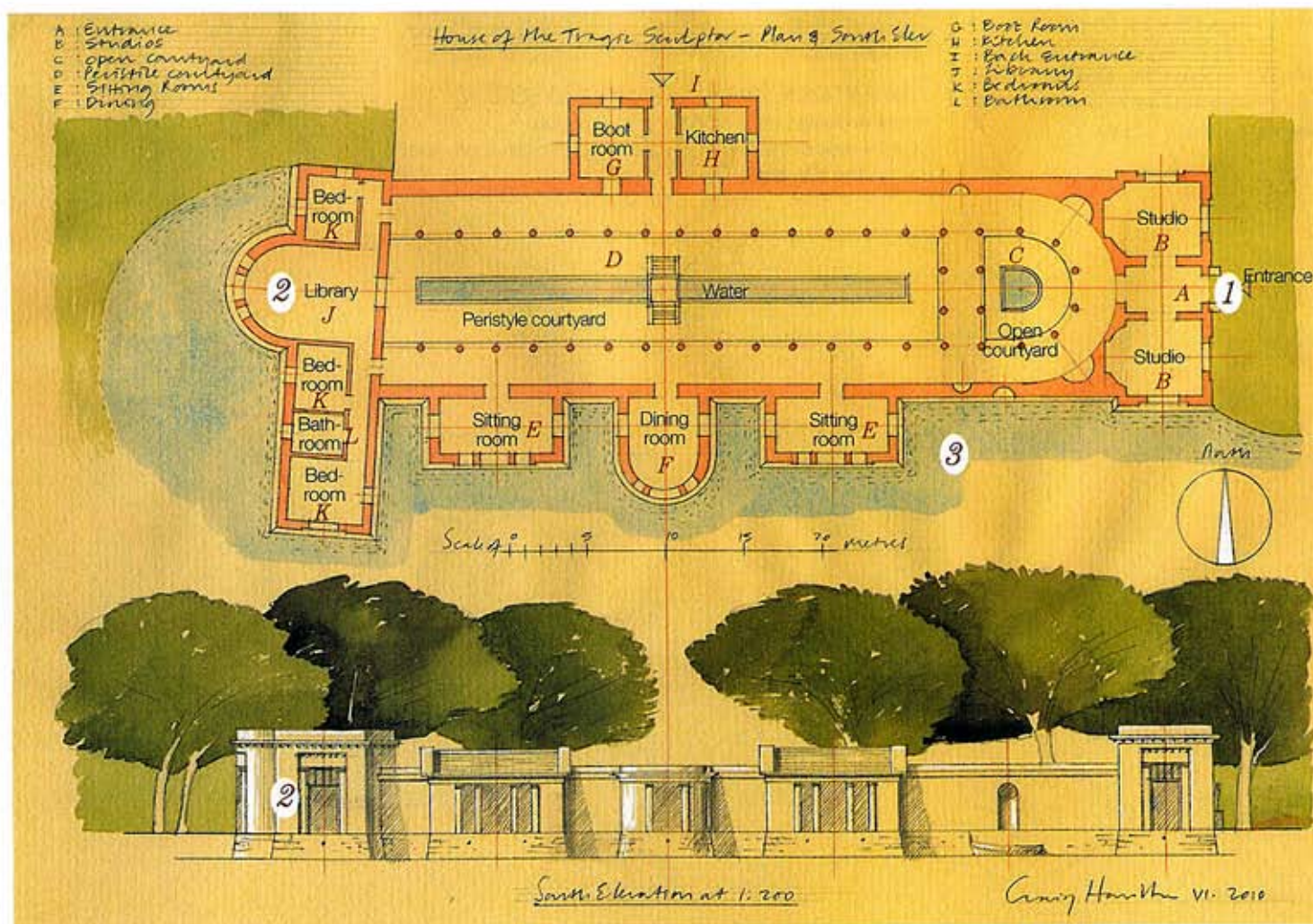
Mr Hamilton's house in Wales is featured on page 126.



### After 'The house of the tragic sculptor'

The transformed house viewed from across the enlarged lake to the south.

1 Position of former entrance, 2 Converted stable block, 3 Lake



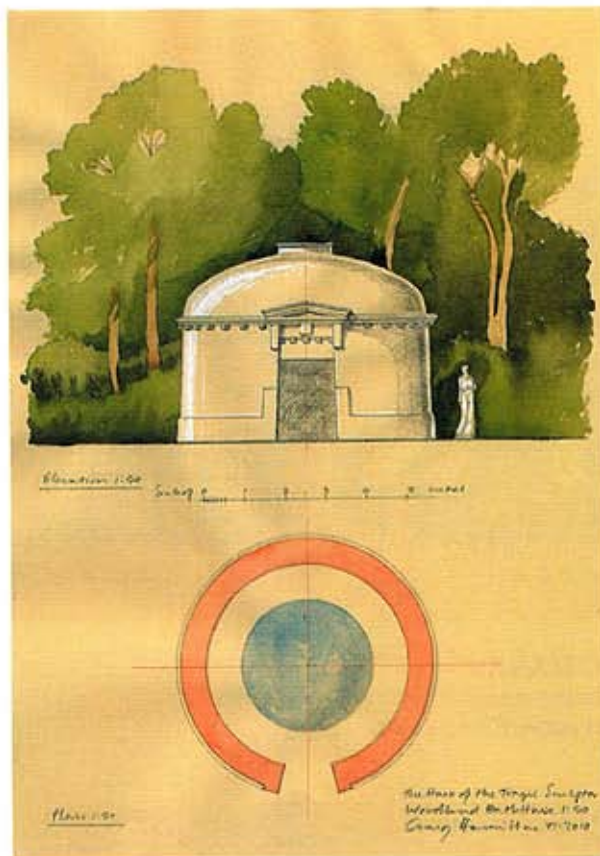
A plan and elevation of the transformed buildings. The façade of the house and a stable range to the rear stand to either end of a large internal courtyard. 1 Position of former and current entrance 2 Converted stable block 3 Lake

**6**OUR design brings about a complete transformation of the house. We have imagined that our client is a sculptor, and have designed the changes accordingly.

All but the front of the house has been removed and linked to the converted stables by means of an open peristyle. The stables themselves have been transformed into the library and bedroom wing. As the client is an artist, all functions are properly separated and linked by open colonnades. To the east is the workplace with the studios. To the west is the library and bedrooms. To the north is the kitchen and back entrance, and to the south, the sitting rooms and the dining room.

The small pond has been vastly enlarged into a lake, which laps up against the south and west façades of the house.

Extensive woodland planting has also been suggested, with openings created within the woodland to the west, south and east. Two monuments and a small bathhouse have been placed within the Elysian fields, where they act as a focus when viewed from the house.

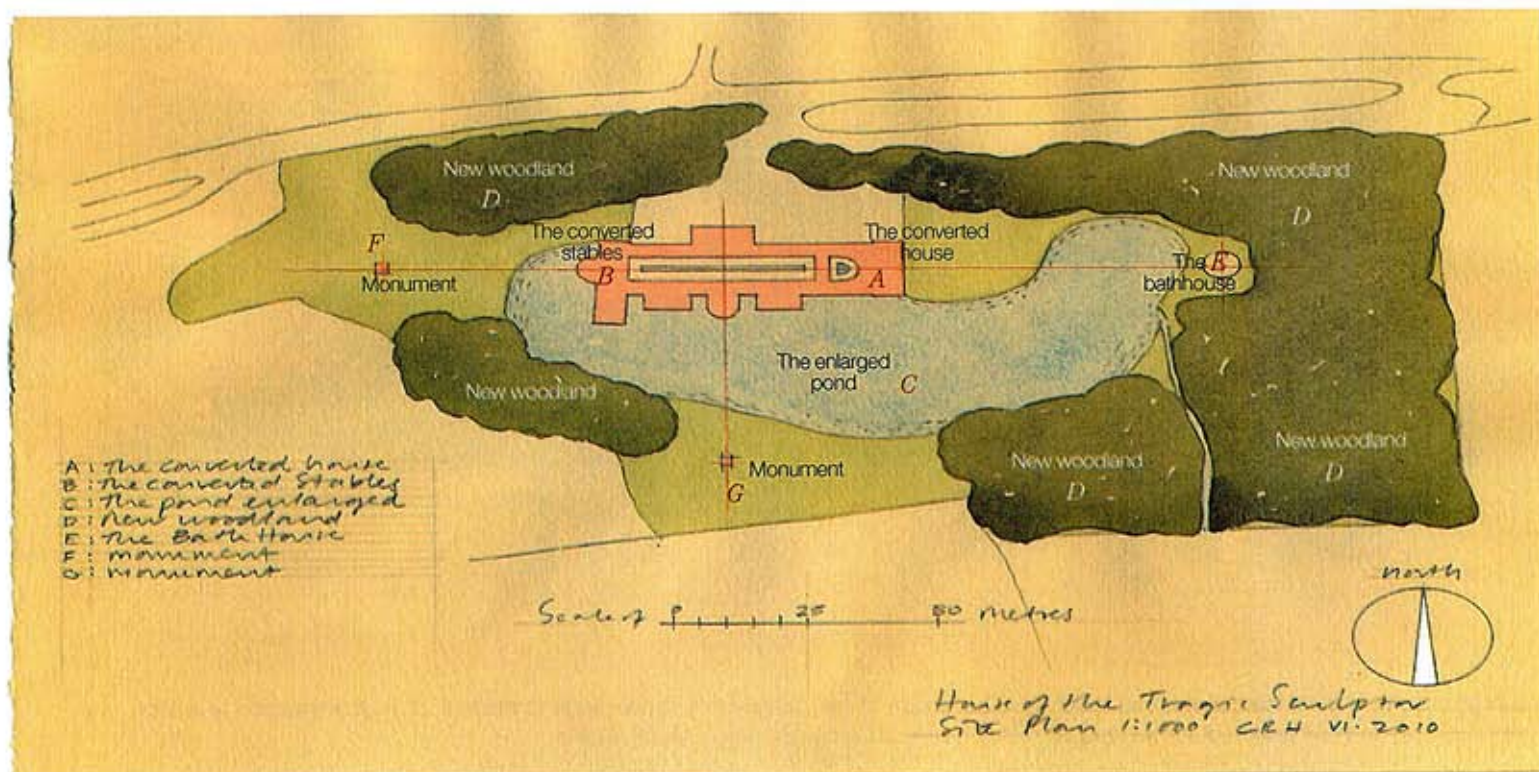
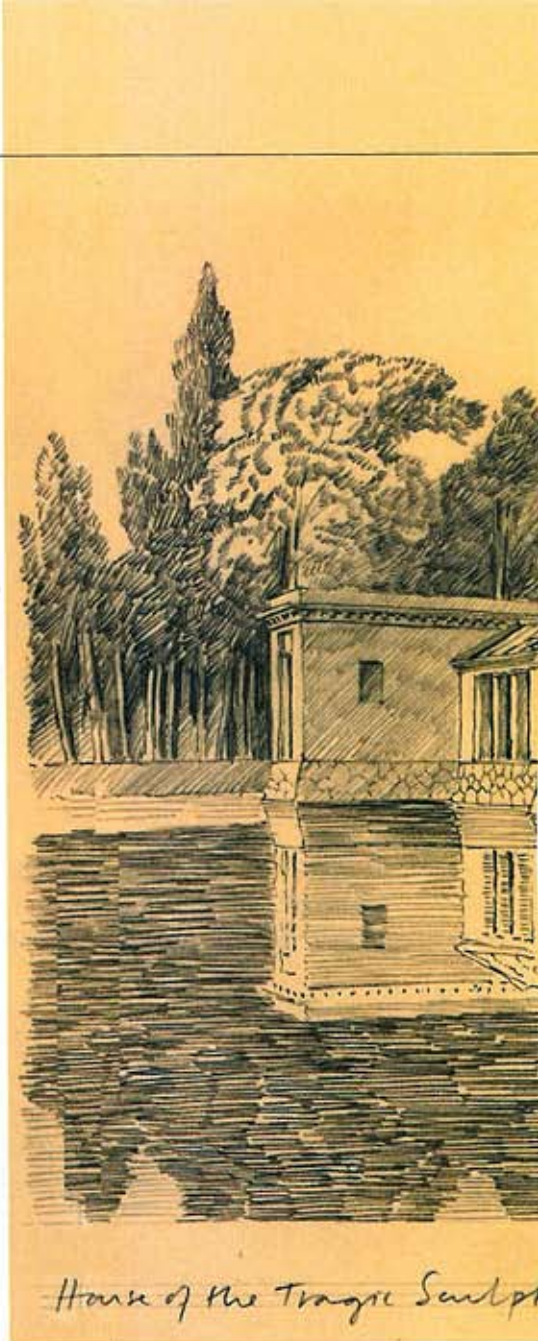


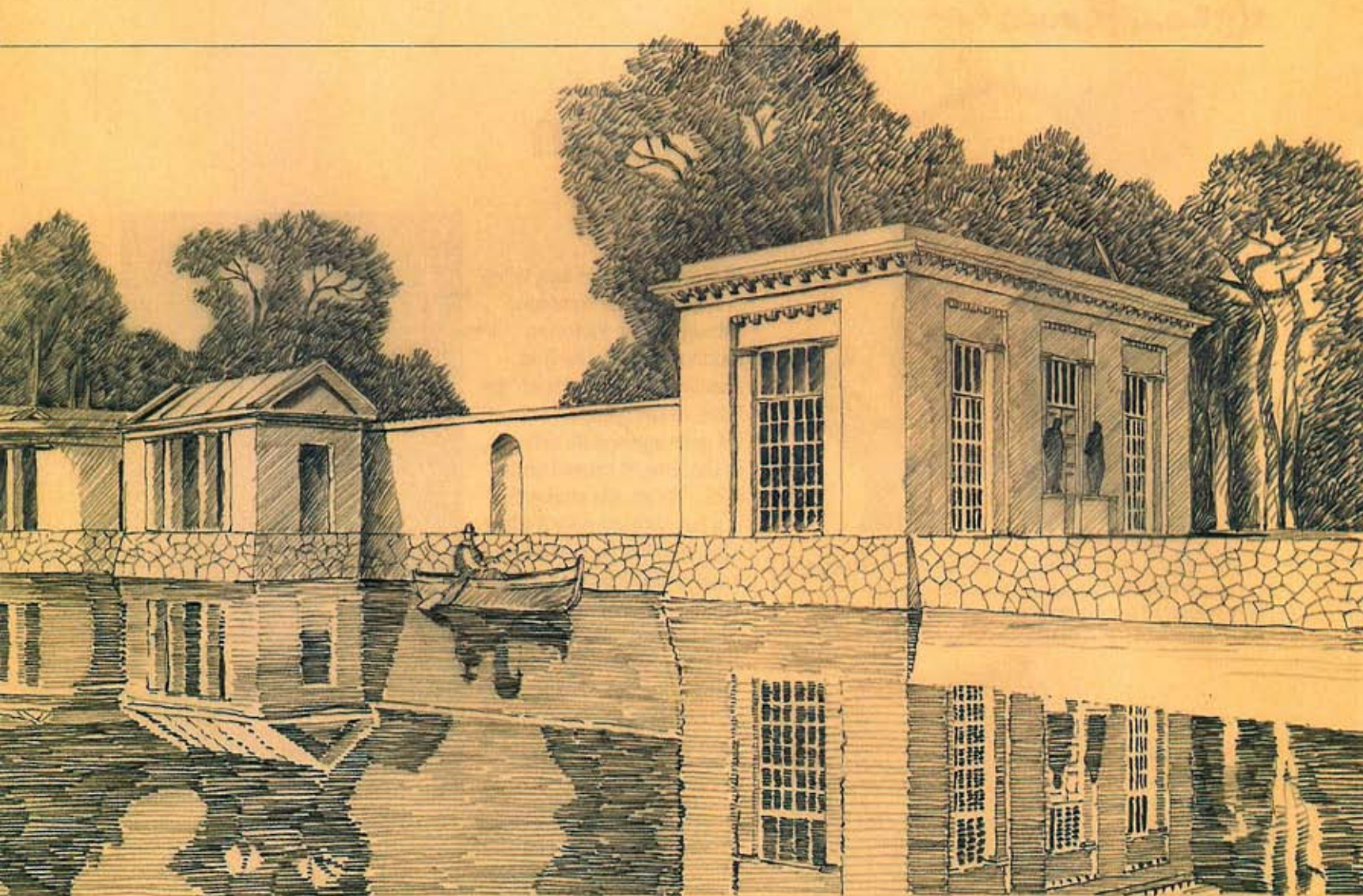
## The remodelled house and its setting

*Above* A design for a woodland bathhouse

*Right* A view of the completed building from the south-east

*Below* The site plan





*— view from the South East*

*Craig Hamilton VI. 2010*


## Ptolemy's verdict

**F**REE of planing and listed-building restrictions, Craig Hamilton has allowed his imagination to wander, creating on this site a 'house of the tragic sculptor'. The old rectory is largely remade and absorbed into a long building that extends from the existing Georgian front of the old rectory to the back of its old stable block behind. Only the skew-plan arrangement of the old stables range reminds us of the former geometry of the previous buildings.

The garden pond has become a great lagoon, more Italian in character than English, but entirely within the 18th-century tradition of Classical enlightenment. In plan, the life of the house is contained by a long peristyle courtyard. Roman in spirit and open to the elements, it is lined by stone columns with a long pool of water down its central axis. At one end of this, in the old house, where once the rector wrote his sermons, there are proposed

sculpting studios lit by huge double-height windows. At the other end, in the old stables, there is an apsidal library where once the rector's horses munched through hay. Sitting rooms have been formed along the southern side in temple-like pavilions that appear to float on the water.

Views have been cut through the enclosing woodland and parkland to glimpse garden structures that are set on key Classical axes. One is a circular bathhouse, top-lit in the style of the Pantheon. It is adorned with a simple, almost primitive, Classical dome of low pitch. Two others are monuments in what has become an Elysian landscape as inspiring of poetry and artistry as those created in the 18th century.

Wonderful and evocative as this place would surely be on a summer's evening, one can but hope that the tragedy of the sculptor does not extend to residence here over a cold winter. 

**Next series:**  
Favourite House,  
starting October 27  
The search for England's  
real dream house,  
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Do you live in the 'perfect' country house? Is there an idyllic family home you know of and have long coveted? Did you grow up somewhere really special? Inspired by the many readers who tell us of the pleasure they take in looking at the houses featured in *COUNTRY LIFE* each week, we will be launching a campaign to find England's Favourite House. We will be scouring the land to find out what it is that makes our country houses so special, celebrating English life along the way. Telephone 020-3148 4449 or email [favourite\\_house@ipcmedia.com](mailto:favourite_house@ipcmedia.com)