

Photos courtesy Gunston Hall

Faintly-sketched pencil drawings may be ideas for Dumfries Courthouse

# Experts: Buckland may have designed Dumfries courthouse

*Antonia heroes 12/9/83*

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Small pencil sketches discovered recently at Gunston Hall lead experts to believe that William Buckland may have designed the courthouse built in Dumfries in 1759.

Researchers from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation are conducting an architectural investigation of Gunston Hall. On the back of a piece of interior woodwork, they found "doodlings" believed to be early designs for a courthouse.

Documentation shows that the frieze board over a window in the Palladian Room, on which the sketches were found, on the back, were completed in 1759 — the same year that the courthouse in Dumfries was started.

George Mason, owner of Gunston Plantation, Buckland's employer, was a trustee of the town of Dumfries, and would have had an interest in the courthouse, according to Carl Lounsbury, of Colonial Williamsburg.

Lounsbury said he has a special interest in researching early courthouses and he is convinced that the sketches were done by a designer or architect.

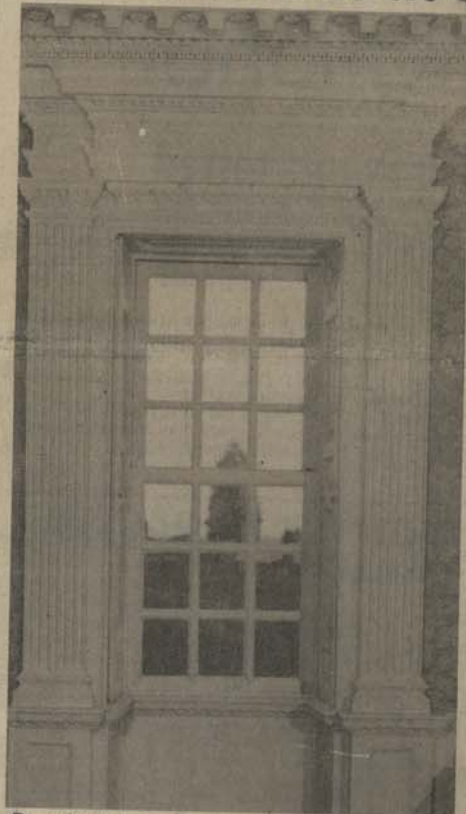
"Whoever did it was familiar with Robert Morris' book and was sophisticated enough to incorporate a lot of shapes in a building," Lounsbury said.

*Architectural Remembrancer*, by Robert Morris was printed in 1751, and Lounsbury said some of the sketches are similar to designs in that book.

The Dumfries Courthouse stood at Fairfax and Duke Streets in Dumfries; and only the foundation remains. No pictures or sketches of the courthouse have ever been found.

The land has remained vacant since 1939 when it was purchased by James Bishop.

Mrs. Bishop said Wednesday that she and her husband received a letter from the Prince William Historical Commission telling of the renewed interest in the courthouse since the sketches were found.



Drawings found under window's molding

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