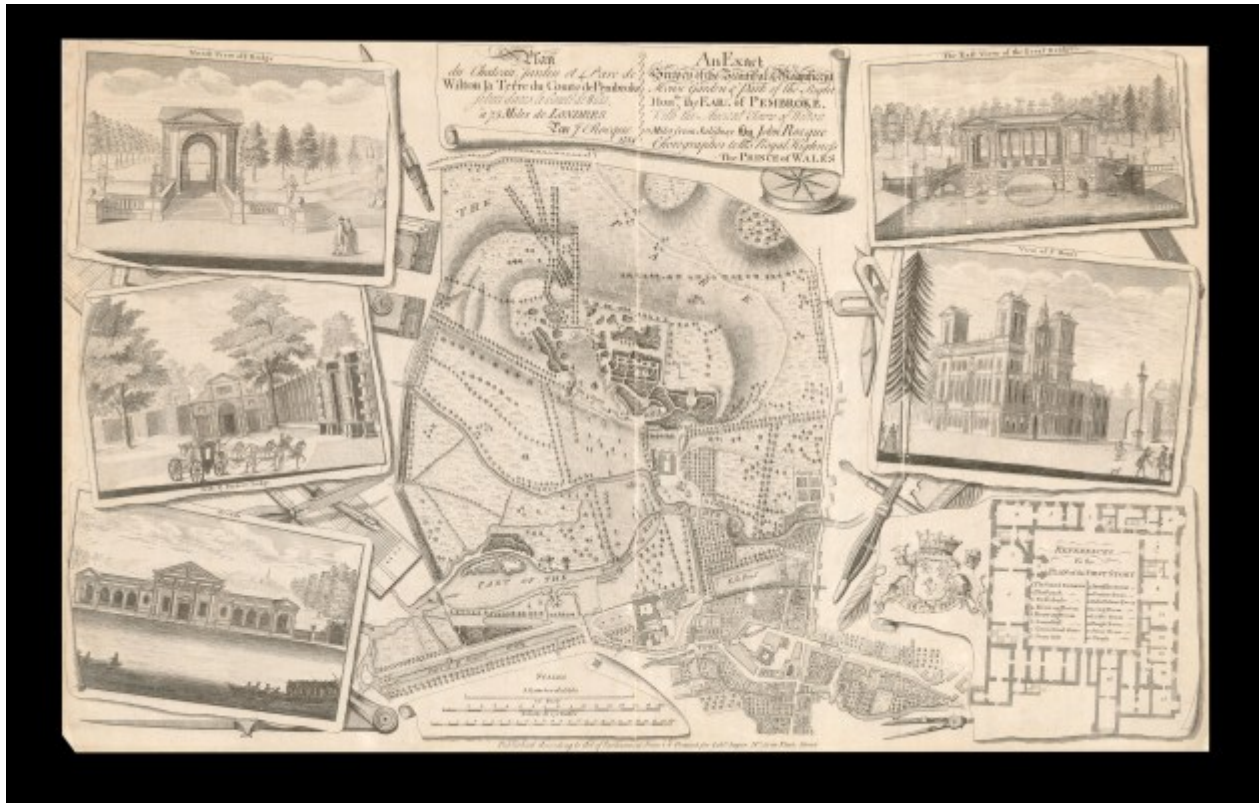




Engraved map with six inset vignettes, tiny tears to left margin, including small loss to bottom left corner, without affecting image.

BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH FOR BRIDGERTON

Plan du chateau, Jardin et Parc de Wilton la Terre du Comte de Pembroke/ An Exact Survey of the Beautiful & Magnificent House, Garden & Park of the Right Hon.ble, the Earl of Pembroke. With the Ancient Town of Wilton 3 Miles from Salisbury.

Author

ROCQUE, John

Publication date

1754 [but c.1770].

Publisher

Printed for Rob.t Sayer, No.53 Fleet Street,

Publication place

[London],

Physical description

Engraved map with six inset vignettes, tiny tears to left margin, including small loss to bottom left corner, without affecting image.

Dimensions

345 by 555mm (13.5 by 21.75 inches).

Notes

An elaborate plan of Wilton Estate, the famous landscaped parkland that would later attract

Hollywood directors.

Showing Wilton House nestled in its extensive gardens, as well as the park and nearby town of Wilton. The locations of the fish pond, kitchens, and even the May Pole are indicated. Vignette insets offer views of the Manor House, Great Bridge, Porters Lodge, and Arcade. One inset reveals a plan of the first story of the house, including the Great Hall, chapel, and “corner room”. The plan and insets seem to “float” on top of several scientific instruments, as if the drawings were placed incidentally on top of a cartographer’s desk.

The title is in parallel French and English text, with the former prosaically modified to accommodate a tourist audience. For instance, the French indicates the distance of Wilton from London, rather than the lesser-known but closer city of Salisbury. It also omits the English compliment of the gardens being “beautiful and magnificent”, as well as the full honorary title of the Earl of Pembroke.

The House

Wilton House was built on the site of a ninth-century nunnery. Following the dissolution of the abbeys, King Henry VIII granted the buildings and property to the 1st Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert (1423-1469). Redesignated by Inigo Jones in the 1630s, most of the house was destroyed by a devastating fire in 1647.

The house was later renovated in neoclassical style by Sir William Chambers (1723-1796), and the gardens redesigned by one of the greatest landscape designers in British history, Capability Brown (1716-1783). By the end of the eighteenth century, Wilton House had cemented its reputation as an exceptional English Palladian home.

Wilton House remains the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, and is open today for tourists, private events, and filming. From the 21 acres of parkland to the famous “Double Cube” stately room, Wilton House can be spotted in ‘Bridgeton’, ‘Tomb Raider’, ‘The Crown’, ‘Emma’, ‘Pride and Prejudice’, and ‘Blackadder’.

The mapmaker

John Rocque (c1704-1762) was a French Huguenot, whose family emigrated from France, first to Switzerland, then to England, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

While his most famous work is his monumental 1746 map of the city of London, which took nine years to produce, he started his career as a “dessinateur de jardins”, producing plans of royal and aristocratic gardens. These were vanity publications, which survive in small numbers, but they served as an important introduction to wealthy patrons.

Rocque followed this with a series of important plans of English cities and towns. As with the estate plans, he was benefiting from the growing wealth in England after the War of the Spanish Succession. Over his career, Rocque produced an enormous and varied number of maps and prints – a contemporary list of 1761 indicating some hundred or so items for sale from the premises in the Strand.

Bibliography

BL Maps, K.Top.43.41.b; Map Forum, fifth issue (2022), ‘Biography: John Rocque’, no.81; Yale Centre for British Art, Folio A G 14 and Folio B G 4.

Provenance

Price: £4500

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