



Pair of panelled rooms from Abraham Swan's *A Collection of Designs in Architecture of 1757*. Both are good examples of the prevailing fashion: wide wall panels, with some narrow; flush pedestal-like dado panelling; bold cornice, skirting and cornice-like dado rail.

included instructions for stencilling, thus confirming that this technique had come back into fashion as a means of embellishing painted walls. Nathaniel Whittock, in his *Decorative Painter's and Glazier's Guide of 1827*, confirmed the role that stencilling played in the early-nineteenth century. It was, he wrote, 'the cheapest and most expeditious method of decorating rooms'. Whittock also described the sort of effects aimed at by the early-nineteenth-century stenciller and explained how to achieve them:

The usual way of proceeding is to procure an elegant pattern, containing about four colours ... The stenciller must be careful to trace upon transparent paper ... all the outlines of the subject that is in middle tint; he will on another piece of tracing paper draw the outline of the first shade, and on a third the darkest shade; and on the fourth the strongest lights. When the tracing of the whole is made, they must be transferred to common thin pasteboard ... then cut with a penknife.

Of the designs produced, Whittock wrote, 'The rosette alone makes a neat ornament for a bedroom, if done in white, shaded with brown, on a pink, salmon, blue, or light green ground.' The work was always carried out 'with distemper colour' and varnished.

MOULDINGS

Mouldings, be they on panelling or stucco walls, on doors, dados or staircase tread ends, or on fire surrounds, can be placed in three distinct groups.

First, there are those mouldings – ornate, often of compound form – that are of the late-seventeenth-century Baroque period. These inventive, licentious mouldings do not figure greatly in the history of the modest Georgian town house interior. Then there are the more orthodox mouldings, derived from the Roman and Renaissance representations of the five orders of architecture. These were promoted initially by the Neo-Palladians after about 1715 and became the basic vocabulary of interior decoration until the early 1760s. After 1740, however, the preference for orthodox Palladian mouldings and details

was complemented by a vogue for more exotic forms – notably Chinese and Gothic. Last are those types of mouldings that appear after about 1760 and that reflect the Neo-classical revolution that overthrew the design dogmas of the previous fifty years. Mouldings of this period include not just the then recently discovered Roman and Greek motifs and variations on the standard Renaissance profiles but also Neo-Gothic (as opposed to the historically inaccurate Rococo Gothic of the 1740s) and other influences such as Hindu and Saracenic.

Mouldings can be most usefully described and explained by reference to their type, their location within the house and their uses (for dado rails, fire surrounds or on door architraves). This type of analysis can be pursued best by reference to illustrations of particular examples, but first there are some general points that need to be made about mouldings of all types and categories.

Although they can look very different and bafflingly complex, all moulded decorations are based upon two simple and complementary forms: the curved convex quadrant called the ovolo (also occasionally called the echinus) and the flat-faced right-angular fillet. The quadrant can also be concave (when it is called the cavetto); it may be of different sizes in the same composition; and its outline can be a perfect quarter of a circle or a quarter of a compact or irregular ellipse. An asymmetrical concave curve is obtained by placing two quadrants of different radii together (this is called a scotia). A serpentine curve is formed by setting a concave quadrant next to a convex one (cyma recta when the concave moulding is above the convex and cyma reversa when the reverse is the case. Both are occasionally called ogees, but generally the term 'ogee' refers to the cyma reversa – the usage followed in this book). A quadrant can be continued to form a semi-circular moulding (astragal if small, torus if large); it can be undercut with a quirk to increase the penetration of its curve and give more shadow, and loaded with more or less decoration. Indeed, the terms 'ovolo' and 'echinus' are derived from the decorations with which the quadrant moulding was traditionally embellished: 'ovolo' is from the Latin for 'egg' and 'echinus' means the shell of a chestnut.

The quadrant, in all its forms and combinations, gives character to the moulded composition, be it cornice, dado rail or skirting, but each curved