

# VIENNA FROM BAROQUE TO NEO-CLASSICISM

## J.F. Hetzendorf von Hohenberg and His Time

*by Susan Gold*

Ideas, styles and fashions cross borders. It is endlessly fascinating to see how differently they emerge, shaped and moulded by the diverse societies, economies and even climates. Baroque in Italy is grandiose, in France it has more grace and in Germany it is at its most exuberant. Austria, at the centre of Europe, was influenced by all these variations. There Baroque retained a certain reticence and was possibly at its most sober, at least as far as the exteriors were concerned.

During the third quarter of the 18th century and in connection with the publications of the works of Piranesi and Winckelmann, interest in antique buildings revived and the Neo-Classical style began to emerge. Simple, easily understood and perceived proportions assumed greater importance and decoration was reduced to a minimum. The change, when it came, was perhaps less abrupt in Austria than in the neighbouring countries.

Fittingly, the leading architects working in Vienna at the time were a polyglot group: an Italian, Isidor Canevale, (three Canevales of the previous generation had worked in Austria during the 17th century) two Frenchmen, Karl von Moreau and Louis de Montoyer, and two Austrians, Josef Kornhaeusl and Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg, on whose work this paper will concentrate. He, more than the others, provided the link between the late Baroque and Rococo and the new style and it was right that his career should begin in the last great palace to be erected in the previous style, in Schoenbrunn, and that he should introduce the new ideas there for the first time.

The villa suburbana, the pleasure palace just outside the city, first appeared in Italy during the Renaissance. Such places of elegant retirement for the rest and recreation of noble families were built by most Renaissance architects in ever increasing numbers. The idea crossed to France and Louis XIV began building Versailles in about 1670. But it crossed the Alps even earlier and the first building of this kind in what is now, but was not then, part of Austria was Hellbrunn near Salzburg, built by the Archbishop. More Italian than German in spirit and safe from the advancing Turkish armies, the prince of the church could afford to recuperate outside the city limits. Vienna was more vulnerable. Since the first Turkish siege in 1529 the city had assumed the role of a frontier town, awaiting the return of the Turkish army which they knew would surely come. And come it did, in 1683, only to be decisively and finally defeated. With the passing of the danger a new epoch began. Within a decade of the year 1700 nearly every noble family



had built a "Garten Palais", a pleasure palace, a villa suburbana, just outside the city walls.

In 1559 the Emperor Maximilian had bought a small hunting lodge west of Vienna on the land on which Schoenbrunn was to be built. It was burnt down in the Turkish Siege in 1683. In 1692-93 Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach submitted his first grandiose design to the Emperor Leopold I for a new building. (Plate I) It is so grandiose that one has to doubt if it was actually intended to be built. The entrance is between two "Trajanic" columns and beyond there is level ground with a tiltyard (a field of the Cloth of Gold?) where the scions of noble families would engage in tournaments, a cascade providing the background. Beyond that, where the ground rises, there are ramps, retaining walls, statuary, another parterre with ponds, fountains, more ramps until finally the huge castle would come into view: a building with a horseshoe-shaped central block, two courtyards behind screens, spread out on the crest of the Schoenbrunn Hill. Was it meant to be taken seriously? Was it intended to flatter the Emperor, to show him that he could, if he wishes, outdo his great French rival and enemy? It was rejected and in 1695-96 building was started on a revised and very modest scheme: the castle had come down from the hill onto the level ground assigned to the tiltyard in the earlier plan. A modest building in comparison, with a flat central block of seventeen bays and two projecting wings of four bays, a flat roof with balustrade and statues was erected. The entrance was now between two modest obelisks leading into a Cour d'Honneur formed by low service wings. This scheme was later found to be too small and two further projecting wings of five bays each were added, increasing the building's horizontality. The design shows a vague sketch of an arcaded folly on top of the hill which was not built. Leopold's successor, Joseph I, loved Schoenbrunn but the next ruler, Charles VI, hardly lived there, preferring the newly built Favorita south of Vienna.

By 1735 excessive damp and constant repairs due to heavy snow falls caused the replacement of the flat roof by one with a steep pitch. The loggia was removed, triangular pediments erected over the two projecting wings, filled with mediocre sculpture and another over the centre sporting a clock! The building had been covered by a sensible waterproof hat thereby losing all its Italianate charm.

It retained its bizarre exterior until the accession of the Empress Maria Theresa, daughter of Charles VI, in 1740 when Nikolaus Pacassi rebuilt it again. He replaced the pitched roofs with low hipped ones, and put back the balustrade and statuary. To accommodate Maria Theresa's large family he inserted a mezzanine

floor between the piano nobile and the top floor. He added another storey of five bays to the central block, recalling Fischer's five-arch loggia, and external balconies, and also altered the outside staircase. This relieved the unrelenting horizontality and restored some of the early Italian appearance. But the top of the hill still awaited its viewstopper.

As entertainments were an essential element of life at Court Pacassi's buildings contained a small court theatre situated in the service buildings surrounding the Cour d'Honneur. The first performance was given in 1747. In 1766-67 the interior was remodelled by Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf, his first important commission. Later that year he was ennobled taking the title of von Hohenberg.

Hetzendorf (or Hetzendorfer) was born in Vienna on 7th February 1732 and died there on 14th December 1816. His father, the painter Johann Samuel Hetzendorfer, had come to Vienna from the Rhineland. His son studied architecture and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, intending to become a scenery painter and designer. He travelled and studied in Germany and Italy. In 1758 he was elected an honorary member of the newly founded Academy of Augsburg. In 1769 he became a professor at the Academy in Vienna and, from 1772, director of the School of Architecture. In 1773 he was elected to the Académie de France in Rome—the first German speaker to be so honoured. In 1776 he was given the title Court Architect and put in charge of all buildings owned by the Imperial family outside the city limits. He became architect to Prince Kaunitz, the Empress's Chancellor and Hofbaudirektor (director of Imperial Buildings) and also a patron of the Academy. Kaunitz seems to have become Hohenberg's protector as he rose, in the time honoured Austrian manner, through the ranks of the civil service, speeded by powerful aristocratic patronage.

Hohenberg's career spanned four reigns, that of Maria Theresa, Josef II, Leopold II and Francis II (Francis I of Austria—he was no longer head of the Holy Roman Empire). Hohenberg was the leading architect of his day and his work forms a link between the Late Baroque-Rococo and Neo-Classicism and looks forward to the Romantic Movement. His buildings give a concrete form to the ideas of the Josephinian era when new concepts of politics, commerce and industry and, above all, religion, were being formulated.

The rebuilding of the Schloss Theatre consisted of the formation of a series of boxes for the ruler's family and the nobility, who had previously watched performances from the stalls. Below these boxes a gallery ran round three sides of the interior. The walls

received paintings of vases and rocaille, and the domed ceiling, an allegorical painting referring to the happy marriage of Maria Theresa's favourite daughter, Maria Christine to the Duke Albert of Saxony (founder of the Albertina Graphic Collection). Contemporaries found these to be crude. They were probably carried out by apprentices and represent one of the last and debased manifestations of the great Baroque tradition. What is new and looks forward to change is the compartmented coving surrounding the ceiling and the pedimented proscenium arch—a temple front. The pediment rests on Ionic orders painted onto the curtain and flanked by illusionist architecture of niches and statues.

Om 1768 Hohenberg made a series of drawings which he submitted to the Academy of Fine Arts in connection with his admission to the Academy of Copper Plate Engravers and dedicated to Pacassi, who was then retiring. They show "deserted landscapes within which fragments of splendid buildings have been scattered".<sup>1</sup> Antique statues seem to have a life of their own and to communicate by their glances with other characters on the scene (soldiers, fairies, witches, devils) and with each other. Piranesi's new and enlarged edition of "*Opere Varie di Architettura*" had been published in 1750, bearing the sub-title "*Opere Sul Gusto degli Antichi Romani*" and Hohenberg must have been aware of this.

Hohenberg next turned his attention to the embellishment of the gardens of Schoenbrunn. We have two designs of 1772 of a very different nature. The first shows a selection of triumphal arches, obelisks and equestrian statues grouped along an axial ascent and occupying the entire width of the slope. (Plate 2) The source of this may well have been Piranesi's reconstruction of the Capitol in Rome. The other, later, design is more rigid and symmetrical. Monuments have been fitted into the vacant "spandrels" between the zigzag paths. This design is flanked by densely wooded areas used like the wings of a stage. (Plate 3)

What was eventually built was dictated by necessity and by the availability of items from a redundant building which could usefully be incorporated into the design. The pond and cascade at the foot of the hill required a substantial head of water, therefore a large pond on the top of the hill was indicated. The imperial family owned a late Renaissance building south of Vienna which was no longer occupied and ripe for demolition. In a letter to her daughter, Marie Antoinette, of 4th May 1773, the Empress complained of the slow progress made in the completion of the park so she may have welcomed the demolition and re-use of the parts to speed things up.<sup>2</sup> Recent investigations of the remains of the demolished building support the theory that the coupled Tuscan columns and

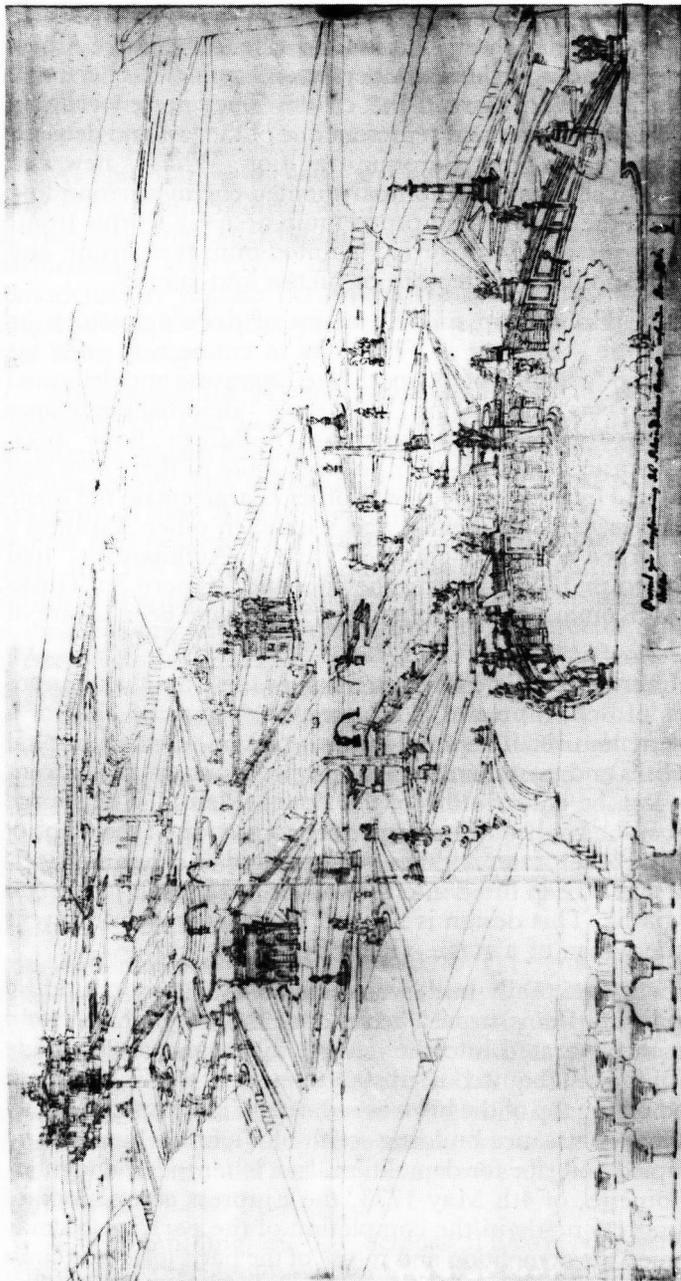


Plate 2  
Project for Embellishing the Schoenbrunn Hill  
(Drawing by J. F. v Hohenberg)

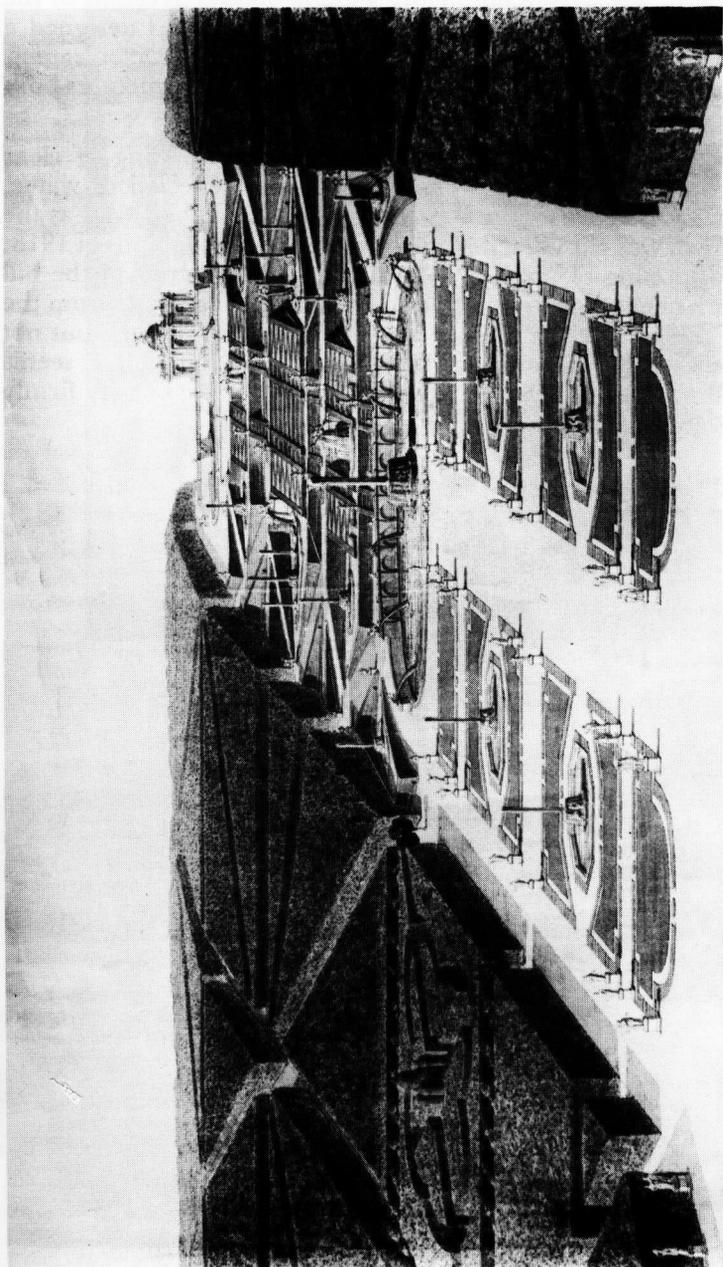


Plate 3  
Garden Project of Schoenbrunn with Gloriette  
(Pen and ink drawing after Hohenberg by K. Schuetz)

the classical frieze decorated with triglyphs and metopes originated from there. They were eminently suitable for the erection of the type of building Hohenberg had envisaged. He had designed a number of ecclesiastical ephemera of the same kind for canonizations and other festive events. They remind us of similar structures built by Inigo Jones at the beginning of the 17th century.

What finally arose in 1775 was an airy building of clear proportions, embellished with sculpture and reflected in water. Originally there was more contrast between solid and void as the central hall was glazed and is still so shown in photographs of 1918. The positioning of the Gloriette just beyond the crest of the hill reveals Hohenberg as a man of the theatre: it is invisible from the foot of the hill, as one ascends the curtain is being raised but not until one reaches the summit is the full building revealed. It seems to float gracefully in the air while the castle below sits very firmly on the ground. (Plate 4)



Plate 4  
View of Schoenbrunn  
(Watercolour by Franz v Alt, signed and dated 1872)



Plate 5  
The Chinese Aviary in Schoenbrunn Park (Photograph)

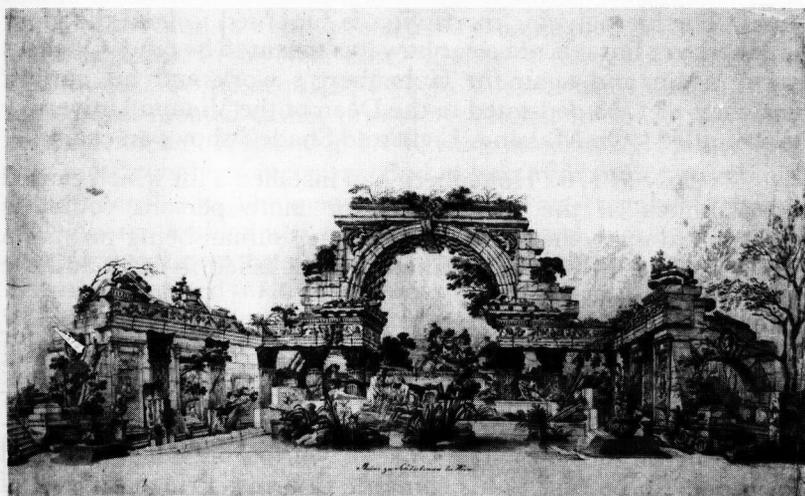


Plate 6  
The Roman Ruin in Schoenbrunn near Vienna  
(Coloured drawing by J.F. v Hohenberg, signed Hohenberg fecit)

There are two lesser known but charming satellite buildings near the Gloriette—the “lesser Gloriette”, a small Neo-Classical building with interior frescoes and the Chinese Aviary. (Plate 5)

On descending by one of the oblique paths which crisscross the slope there appears what looks like a triumphal arch. It is the rear of Hohenberg's “Roman Ruin”. (Plate 6) It was the last of the garden buildings, finished in 1778. This, too, is pure theatre. Seen from the front, there are three distinct planes: the stage is held by an overgrown fountain, the scenery is provided by the decaying arch already partly sunk into the ground, flanked by rocks while the grassy slope provides the backdrop. The “splendid fragments of masonry” are scattered as they were on Piranesi's drawings; a strong proto-Romantic element hints at the transience of earthly fame and glory.

He and other artists of his time appear to have been influenced, not only by Piranesi and Galli Bibiena but also by a Scottish philosopher, Henry Home (later Lord Kames) who published a collection of essays under the title “Elements of Criticism” in Edinburgh in 1769.<sup>3</sup> Home has strong views on garden design, the use of ruins and temples. He insists that the artist should aim at creating a certain mood rather than an impression of beauty. Two more of Hohenberg's works in Schoenbrunn should be mentioned, one decorative, the other simply useful: the “obelisk” was built in 1777. (Plate 7) The verticality of the monument is balanced by the horizontality of the surrounding balustrade. Erected upon a rocky cascade, the obelisk rests on four tortoises and its base is incised with the names of Maria Theresa and her son, Josef. The hieroglyphic inscription is supposed to laud the glory of Habsburg but it is not clear how it is meant to be read. Obelisks occur again and again in Hohenberg's work and his earliest drawings of 1755 dedicated to the Dean of the Vienna University and entitled “On Massing, Light and Shade” shows an example.

As early as 1767 Hohenberg had installed a lift which caused astonishment at the time. “Ten or more persons could be transported up to the fourth floor by one human being turning a wheel.”<sup>4</sup> The lift was unfortunately demolished in 1939 and the machinery discarded.

Apart from the Emperor and Kaunitz he had a third major patron: Baron, later Count, Johann von Fries. Johann Fries came from the Alsace. He served Austria during the Seven Years' War and the Wars of the Spanish Succession, when he handled the so-called English subsidies. The Duke of Marlborough had arranged for money to be sent to his comrade in arms, Prince Eugene of Savoy, for paying his troops on condition that it never, at any time,



Plate 7  
The Obelisk (Watercolour on parchment)

came in the possession of the Court.<sup>5</sup>The Fries bank was used to by-pass it. After the end of the fighting Fries founded metal and textile factories in Vienna and in the suburbs. He also acted as banker for Kaunitz who had started a scheme of exporting Maria Theresa thalers to the Near East. All these activities brought great wealth. In 1773 he acquired Schloss Voeslau near Vienna, then a medieval moated castle, drawn by Vischer in 1672.<sup>6</sup> This had been extended in 1740 and in 1780 Fries commissioned Hohenberg, who may have been recommended to him by Kaunitz, to rebuild and modernize it. The medieval castle had an irregular U shape. Hohenberg doubled the depth of the central block inside the courtyard and gave the building a regular symmetrical ground plan. The newly erected main facade was given Ionic giant pilasters, the wall space above the newly created mezzanine and below the roof acting as entablature. The Gothic chapel became a Great Hall and a new chapel was formed in the south-west outer corner. A turret with clock recalled the medieval appearance. This is a completely convincing Neo-Classical building. The garden was laid out in a classical manner, embellished with a grotto and a cascade. The castle is now the Town Hall of Voeslau, the Great Hall is a restaurant and the grotto, having been used by the occupying Russian troops, in 1944-55 as a garage, was then demolished.

When, in the course of the religious reforms carried out by Josef II, to which we will return later, the Royal Convent behind the Imperial Palace in Vienna and facing the Imperial (now National) Library was dissolved, Fries acquired the ground and commissioned Hohenberg in 1783 to build a townhouse with adjoining tenements. (Plate 8) This caused an architectural scandal. Hohenberg, who was already under attack because of his "purification" (re-Gothicization) of the Augustinian church, came under heavy fire.

A polemical pamphlet appeared in 1786 over the signature of "Architect", a pseudonym of his adversary, Nigrelli. (7) The "box-like" exterior is criticized, also the insignificant entrance and the absence of a piano nobile on the second floor. He said that the facade should have been better articulated, the middle part more elaborately decorated, and the entrance more impressive. Another criticism is that the massing and heavy rustications suggest the Tuscan order, whereas the building had been given a Corinthian cornice with brackets and rosettes. Finally the four vases on pedestals came under attack as being badly placed and pointless.

Hohenberg replied under the pseudonym of "Anti-Architect". In defending the building the following points were put forward. On account of its position, opposite the Imperial Library, it deliberately tried to keep a very low profile so as not to compete with but rather to complement its surroundings. The Palais Fries was not the palace of a nobleman, it was the home of a wealthy grand bourgeois who wished to live comfortably on the second, mezzanine, floor and keep the top floor for entertainment. As to the vases, they represented the four Continents, each personified by its main river, alluding to the owner's far flung trading connections.

Two years later Hohenberg heeded the criticism: the entrance was enlarged and surmounted by a broken pediment and it was flanked by two pairs of caryatids by Zauner, the sculptor with whom Hohenberg liked to work. The windows of the second and third floors were united by stucco decorations. (Plate 9) The offending vases were removed to the park of Voelslau, the Fries country seat, where they still stand.

This episode is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it is an early instance of an architect placing high importance on his client's comfort rather than his prestige. Secondly, it shows "two informed and academically trained architects arguing about the appearance of a building from diametrically opposed positions".<sup>8</sup>

Fries did not see the finished townhouse because he was found drowned in the lake at Voelslau just before its completion. His heir,

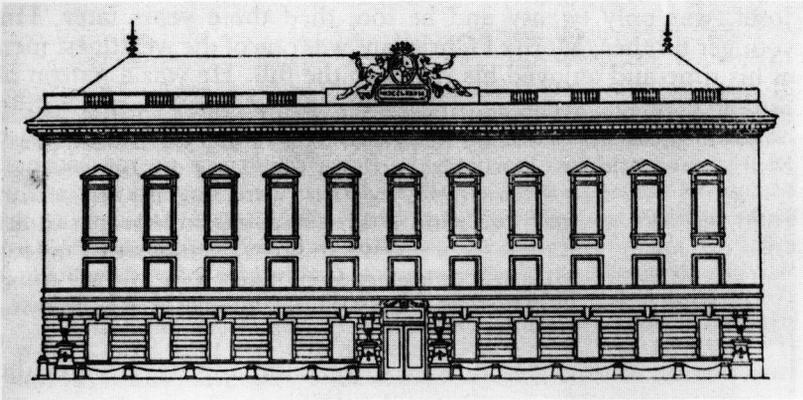


Plate 8  
Palais Pallavicini, Formerly Fries—Front Elevation (Reconstruction by Hainisch)



Plate 9  
Palais Pallavicini, formerly Fries (19th century engraving)

Josef, was only twenty and he too, died three years later. His younger brother, Moritz I Christian, was one of the wealthiest men of his time and enjoyed his riches to the full. He was a patron of Beethoven who dedicated his 7th Symphony and his so-called Spring Sonata for Violin and Piano to him. As Beethoven moved house with great frequency he used the Fries Bank as a postal address. Under Moritz's son, Moritz II, the firm went into liquidation in 1826, rags to rags in three generations. The valuable works of art were dispersed, among them a marble statue by Canova of Theseus and the Minotaur, the first of his works to leave Italy. It had stood in the hall of the controversial townhouse. Angelica Kauffmann had painted a portrait of Josef with the statue. When the firm went into liquidation the statue came to England and has been in the Victoria and Albert Museum since 1962.

The Empress Maria Theresa died in 1780 and was succeeded by her son, Josef II. An intuitive, and pragmatical reformer was replaced by a radical and doctrinaire one. Josef ruled for ten years, the decade of the French Revolution. He knew himself not to be in robust health and he was in a hurry. In 1781 serfdom was abolished. He abolished the estates and strengthened the powers of the civil service. He abolished the guild system, torture and all special courts including the Ecclesiastical Courts and even, in 1787, the death penalty, except for court martials. He granted freedom of worship to non-Catholic sects who were allowed to erect places of worship provided they had no important entrances, towers or bells. He also granted freedom of worship to the Jews. In 1782 he abolished all contemplative religious orders and monasteries. In Vienna eleven monasteries and seven convents were dissolved, their property was confiscated and the churches became parish churches. Austria was divided into dioceses, education was secularized. He reformed the magistracy and the judicature and ordered the first cartographical survey and the printing of maps on a uniform scale of 1:28,000. He founded the General Hospital in 1784, still the largest hospital in Vienna.

In the same year all graveyards within towns and villages were closed by decree and burials had to take place a certain distance away from them. This decree met with opposition and had to be modified. The nobility were not exempted and burials on country estates became fashionable. Zauner, who had been recommended to the Fries family by Kaunitz, had already executed the figures on the townhouse. When Count Josef von Fries died in 1788, aged only 23, the same sculptor was commissioned to make a monument for the new family vault. (Plate 10)

The reforms went, in practice, much further than those decreed. As pilgrimages were forbidden (they had already been

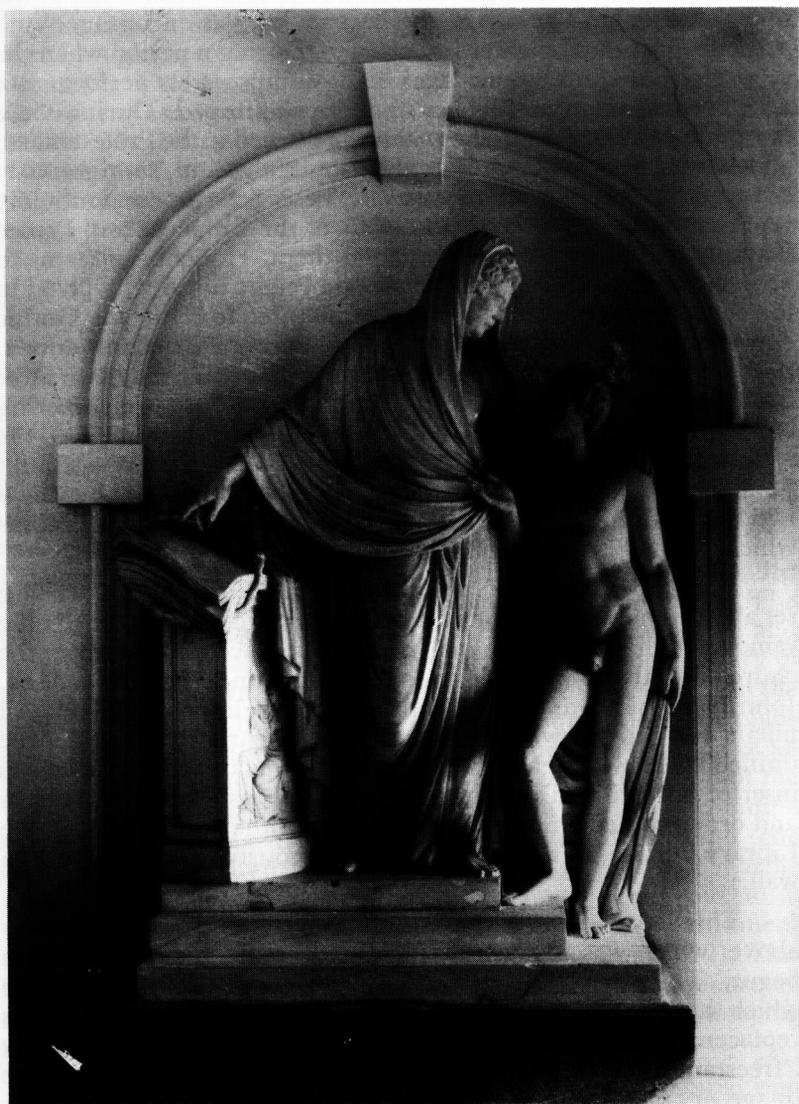


Plate 10  
Statues of Carara Marble from the Vault of the Fries Family in Schloss Voelsau  
by F.A. Zauner, 1788-90

curtailed in 1772 under Maria Theresa) pilgrimage churches lost their *raison d'être*. The worship of saints was discouraged, God alone was to be worshipped. Masses were to be celebrated at the main altar only. The use of the vernacular was encouraged and preaching assumed greater importance. During a period when the most glorious church music was being composed its performance was frowned upon and hymn singing encouraged. During these few years Austria seems to have almost returned to the Protestantism which was so widespread in the late 16th, and so rigorously suppressed in the 17th century. These reforms undoubtedly represented the sincerely held beliefs of the Emperor and Prince Kaunitz, who had partly formulated them. Hohenberg seems to have been in complete agreement and became heavily involved in the church "purifications". These amounted to returning Gothic churches, which had been overlaid by Baroque ornamentations, to their original appearance, or, rather, what was thought to have been the original appearance at the time. It is worth remembering contemporary trends in England. Robert Walpole commenced the remodelling of Strawberry Hill in about 1750. James Wyatt built Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire in 1790. The first church to be tackled was the Court and parish church of the Descalzed Augustinians which adjoins the Imperial Library.

Acting under direct instructions from the Emperor, Hohenberg set about removing the subsidiary chapels. On 21st May 1784 the removal of the Loretto Chapel, occupying space in the body of the church and that of the side chapels was begun. The chapel of St. John Nepomuk was spared initially but was later walled up. All pillars and capitals were given uniform appearance. Thus a large unified space was created. Windows were enlarged and new ones inserted. On 4th and 12th June the Emperor inspected the progress and ordered the forming of a new door on the west wall onto the Library Square. (The entrance had previously been in the north wall.)

This led to the building of a new "Gothic" organ gallery above, which was finished on 9th October. Furnishing was then begun. The altar was removed and the priest asked for the one which had been in a now dissolved Carthusian monastery as replacement. This was later found to be unsuitable and a new "freestanding Roman altar" was designed by Hohenberg. The image of Grace from the dissolved Royal Monastery, the *Mater Admirabilis Maria Thaumaturga*, was incorporated into this altar. The Emperor himself came to look at it on 12th October and found it had been hung too low. He ordered that it be raised and the intervening space filled "with clouds and similar decorations".<sup>9</sup> Nigrelli, under the pseudonym of "Architect" again fired a

broadside. Did Hohenberg not know, he asks with assumed innocence, that clouds were Baroque and therefore unsuitable for a purified Gothic church? Finally statues of two Church Fathers, St. Augustine and St. Ambrose from another redundant monastery were brought in to flank the new altar. It was consecrated on 27th December. On being offered a redundant pulpit it was rejected by Hohenberg as unsuitable for the "new Gothic appearance of the church". It was sold and Hohenberg commissioned a new pulpit "à l'antique".<sup>10</sup> (For antique read Gothic). This was installed on 17th November and the first sermon was preached from it on 6th January 1785.

Finally all burial places and monuments from the lower church were demolished and objects of value returned to their owners.

The next church to be purified by Hohenberg was that of the Minorites—a branch of the Franciscan Order. The entire monastic community was moved to one of the outlying districts of Vienna in 1784 and into the building formerly occupied by the Trinitarian Order which had been abolished. Hohenberg was ordered by the Emperor on 13th April to adapt the buildings to house government offices, archives and a pay office. He later changed his mind and restricted these intentions to the monastic buildings alone. The Emperor handed the church over to the Italian community on 3rd June on condition that it be purified of all superfluous objects. The congregation entrusted the task to Hohenberg, who accepted and declined to charge a fee. Plans were submitted on 2nd January of the following year and building was begun four weeks later. In the specifications, still in the archives of the congregation, the plans are set out: removal of the benches (pews?), old paving and of all monuments, raising the floor level by two feet, demolition of the "scala santa" in order to create space for a new sacristy, "insomma sgombrare tutta la chiesa di quelle pietre di marmo che impiedivano" ("in effect free the church of all pieces of marble which encumber it") (11) The monuments were sold to a stonemason for 102 florins. The saddest loss was the monument to Duchess Blanca (+ 1305), the wife of Duke Rudolf (12). This had been one of the rare and early examples of a *pleureurs* monument, a gravestone covered with tiny, mourning and weeping figures.

Here, too, Hohenberg had created a unified, simple and symmetrical space by inserting concave walls at the east end, blocking off the former choir space. A new "Gothic" pulpit, high altar and organ were installed. This purification had been easier and more successful and it found great acclaim. Hohenberg abstained from the use of clouds and "Architect" remained silent. The monastic buildings were indeed converted to government offices

and so used until demolition (in 1902). The Italian congregations still worship in the church.

The most remarkable ecclesiastical building by Hohenberg is the parish church at Austerlitz in Moravia, now Slavkov in Czechoslovakia. Chancellor Kaunitz, who seems to connect all the people in this story, owned large estates there.

Wenzel Anton, Prince Kaunitz (1711-1794) was Chancellor and Foreign Minister to Maria Theresa, to Josef II and Leopold II. He was an opponent of Prussia and concluded treaties with France, Russia and Turkey. He wished to increase trade, speed up industrialization and to establish an enlightened form of Catholicism in Austria which became known as "Josephinism". As Director of Imperial Buildings and patron of the Academy of Fine Arts he occupied a key position for encouraging and training artists and craftsmen. We have seen that he furthered the careers of both Hohenberg and Zauner. Kaunitz corresponded regularly with Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), the German archaeologist. Many date the beginning of Neo-Classical art to Winckelmann's journey to Rome in 1755 when he published his first book on Greek painting and sculpture. In 1764 he sent reliable accounts of the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In the same year his most famous work, "The History of Ancient Art" was published. He visited Vienna in 1768 and was received with honour by the Empress Maria Theresa. He was murdered soon after in Trieste.

In 1794 part of the parish church at Austerlitz had collapsed and the rest was demolished. Hohenberg was commissioned to build a new parish church which should incorporate all the reforming ideas described above. It was, possibly, the first truly ecumenical church. The building was to express dignity and simplicity. It was to be a place where all Christians, be they Catholics, Protestants or Orthodox, could worship together "without distraction or friction." It was, finally, to incorporate some secular buildings such as the priest's house or a school.

The building which arose on the Market Square had a hexastyle freestanding portico occupying the full width of the building and supporting a pediment. The interior was a single space with shallow piers and recesses, twice as long as wide with a tunnel-vaulted ceiling. It was decorated in pure white, the only touch of colour being the altars in red Salzburg marble, above which white stucco reliefs of biblical scenes were fitted. Two pulpits were placed on both sides between the first and second piers nearest the altar. The priest's and the curate's dwellings functioned as a transept, a square tower equal in height to the width of the transept was to

be built behind the altar—there was no need for either chancel or choir. The entire building is governed by rigid, easily understood proportions of length: width: height. (Plate 11)

The church was not appreciated by the next generation of parishioners. Pater Gregor Wolney writes in 1860: "It is a striking church, certainly the only one of its kind in Moravia. It resembles an antique Greek temple rather than a Catholic church, even the tabernacle is a small temple with Corinthian columns. As the church was to serve all Christian religions there is not a single image of any saint. A collection had to be made in 1850 to buy a painting of the Virgin Mary and to affix the Stations of the Cross to the wall. On account of the soft ground the tower was not built to the intended height. When it had reached roof level building was stopped and it was covered with tiles. As the pulpits were fixed very high the sermons were inaudible and another, lower, pulpit had to be made. The church was plundered by the French in 1805 and robbed again in 1828 . . ." <sup>13</sup> It appears that the church has not been substantially altered as it is described as above in a recently published guidebook. <sup>14</sup>

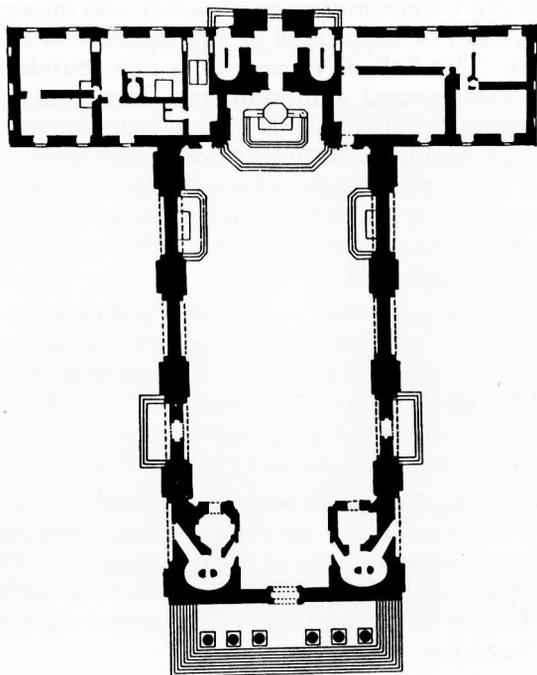


Plate 11

Groundplan of the Parish Church at Austerlitz by Hohenberg 1786-7

Towards the end of his life Hohenberg turned his attention once more to garden buildings and follies. The septuagenarian was still a man of the theatre at heart. Commissioned to embellish the park of yet another imperial residence, the castle of Laxenburg south of Vienna, he created the House of Moods (*Haus der Laune*) in 1800. The building no longer exists but the original model has been preserved in the Historical Museum of the City of Vienna.

It is an octagonal building with four squared-off arms, a stair turret, rusticated, crenellated and decorated with pinnacles and a weather vane. (Plate 12) This is a fun building which would not have looked out of place in the Festival of Britain. On closer inspection the rustications are sheaves of corn, the crenellations medallions of caricatured faces, leaden weights dangle from the pinnacles. The four arms are surmounted by cannons, aviaries and towers, a little "devil" occupies the kitchen in the interior. A "Chinese Bridge", also by Hohenberg and built at the same time, crossed a nearby stream. One year later he built similar follies in the castle of Schoenau an der Tristing, close by Laxenburg-grottoes, cascades and a temple for the Queen of the Night. These buildings are not now open to the public.<sup>15</sup>

Hohenberg's contribution as a teacher was important. From 1771 he was head of the School of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts. The School moved to a new building in 1786. Hohenberg then started a fundamental re-organization of the teaching programme. He designed a three-year course in the theory and practice of building. Architects, who had been restricted to the drawing up of plans, now received practical instruction and were able to supervise the construction of their buildings. The gap between builder and architect narrowed, the architect's influence and status were advanced.

The examination system was revised and concentrated at the Academy. Tradesmen were as much subject to passing exams as architects before they could obtain a licence to trade. A Cabinet resolution of 10th February 1789 states that "Members of the public, who are anxious to build, must be protected from ignorant and incompetent builders, carpenters and the like".

In 1797 and again in 1805 when Bonaparte's army approached Vienna, the students of the Academy formed themselves into a company. Hohenberg was one of the commanding officers. After his death his place at the School of Architecture was taken by Pietro Nobile, an Italian Swiss from the Ticino and a rigid adherent of academic Classicism.

Josef II had died in 1790, his brother, Leopold II, reigned for only two years before he, too, died. He was a more diplomatic



Plate 12  
Haus der Laune in the Park of Schloss Laxenburg, 1780  
(Watercolour by Jakob Alt)

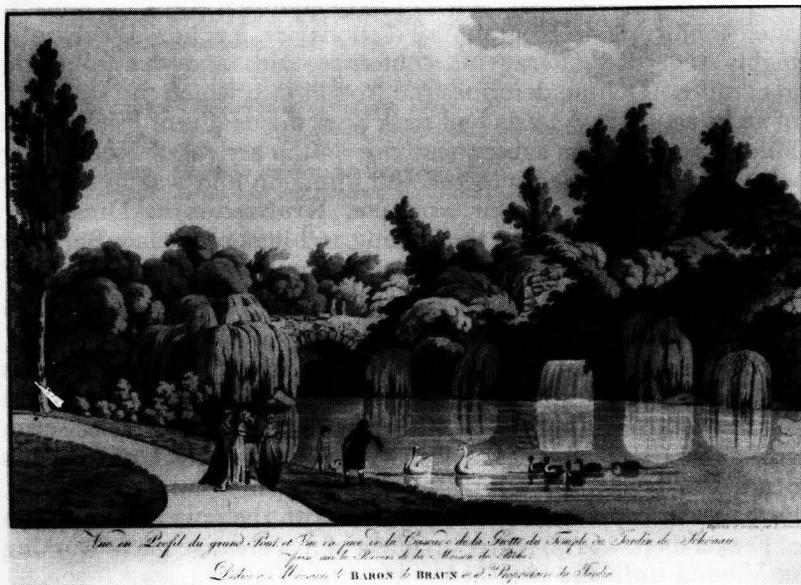


Plate 13  
Schloss Schoenau an der Tristing-Park, Bridge & Cascade

and statesmanlike ruler. The next Emperor, Francis II, the last Roman Emperor and the first Emperor of Austria, was altogether different. The spectacle of the French Revolution—Marie Antoinette had been Josef II's sister—made the Government throw everything into reverse. A year before Hohenberg's death the Congress of Vienna met. After that Austria virtually became a police state. In all things the status quo had to be preserved at all costs. Josef's reforms had surprised and alienated the conservative elements but they had also taken the wind out of the sails of the would-be revolutionaries. The rigid conservatism of Francis certainly drove their sons onto the barricades in 1848.

Little is known about Hohenberg's private life. It seems that he was twice married and died in 1816, a wealthy man, owning the house in which he lived and other properties in Vienna. Because of his wilfulness and obstinacy he was involved in several disputes but he was undoubtedly a man of moral courage. He was able to cast off the late Baroque heritage and to create or redesign buildings with minimal decoration and clear simple proportions. As a man of the theatre he was able to work in any style, as a man of his age he was ruthless and unscholarly when dealing with buildings of a previous period.

Hohenberg's name is now almost unknown in his native country and even less known outside it. There is no biography, only the excellent monograph by Erwin Hainisch and some entries, often conflicting, in biographical dictionaries. Yet he was evidently highly regarded among his contemporaries and the following generation. Dohme describes the trough into which the standard of architecture in Austria had sunk after the deaths of Fischer and Hildebrandt and its subsequent rise on the arrival of Hohenberg who, again, provided impetus and direction and was free of the "empty rhetoric" of, for example, Krubsacius in Dresden.<sup>16</sup> Gidion called Hohenberg the leading architect of the late Baroque Classicism in Vienna during the last quarter of the 18th century.<sup>17</sup>

Neo-Classicism lasted only a short time in Vienna. After 1815 its high-seriousness gave way to the softer, gentler Biedermeier style, the only truly native Austrian style. From a Bach chorale to, perhaps not yet and not quite a waltz, but possibly a German Dance. In the last quarter of the 19th century the great wave of eclecticism arose and swept all these styles along with it. After Hohenberg's death the level of teaching at the Academy sank to a rigid, bureaucratic application of the rules. With the possible exception of Ferstel there was no native architect of real creative talent working in Vienna until the emergence of Otto Wagner.

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## FOOTNOTES

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5. see Sir Nicholas Henderson: *Prince Eugene of Savoy*
6. K. Charbusky: *Von der Wasserburg zum Rathaus* (Town Council of Voeslau) p.7
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14. John Bruke: *Czechoslovakia*, (Batsford, 1976)
15. My entry was barred by a soldier with a sub-machinegun belonging to the Austrian equivalent of the SAS—I did not argue.
16. R. Dohme: *Geschichte der deutschen Baukunst*, 1887
17. S. Gidion: *Late Baroque and Romantic Classicism* (Munich 1922)

All illustrations were provided by the picture archive of the Austrian National Library except pl. 11, which was taken from E. Hainisch, op cit p.49.