

Great Houses of Tenby

Perhaps the finest house in Tenby, now no more, was **Sion House**. Designed by the great Regency architect John Nash and built in 1790, was extended and altered before being burnt down in 1938. It was the direct cause of one of the last duels in Britain. [Sion House Part 1](#)

The land on which **Sion House** was built was acquired by the Bristol printer, William Routh, following a disputed will and dubious property transactions [Sion House Part 2](#)

This detail from an etching by Charles Norris shows the old Rectory in the bottom left with Sion House immediately above. At the centre, just beneath the Church, is Croft House, the home of Jacob Richards. It



was Richard's son, William, who was involved in the duel referred to in Sion House Part 1.

At the National Library of Wales there is correspondence from Jacob Richards concerning the purchase of Croft Field for the purpose of building a house. One, to the Rev Mr Willes dated 27th January 1811, says "if you are desirous of disposing of the whole of the Field and roadway through the ruinous House into it". On 13th February he wrote "I should prefer purchasing about 1/4 acre sufficient for a House and Garden but as it is probably Mrs Williams would not like to dispose of a part, I will give One Thousand Pounds for it and the old Ruin, and take my chance for disposing in parcels what may be left after my House is Erected". The ruin referred to was described by Laws as that of the first hotel in Tenby, burnt down in late eighteenth century.



The lower picture is of St John's hospital which after the Reformation was occupied by the Recorde family. It was the Tudor mathematician Robert Recorde who simplified mathematics through the better use of symbols.