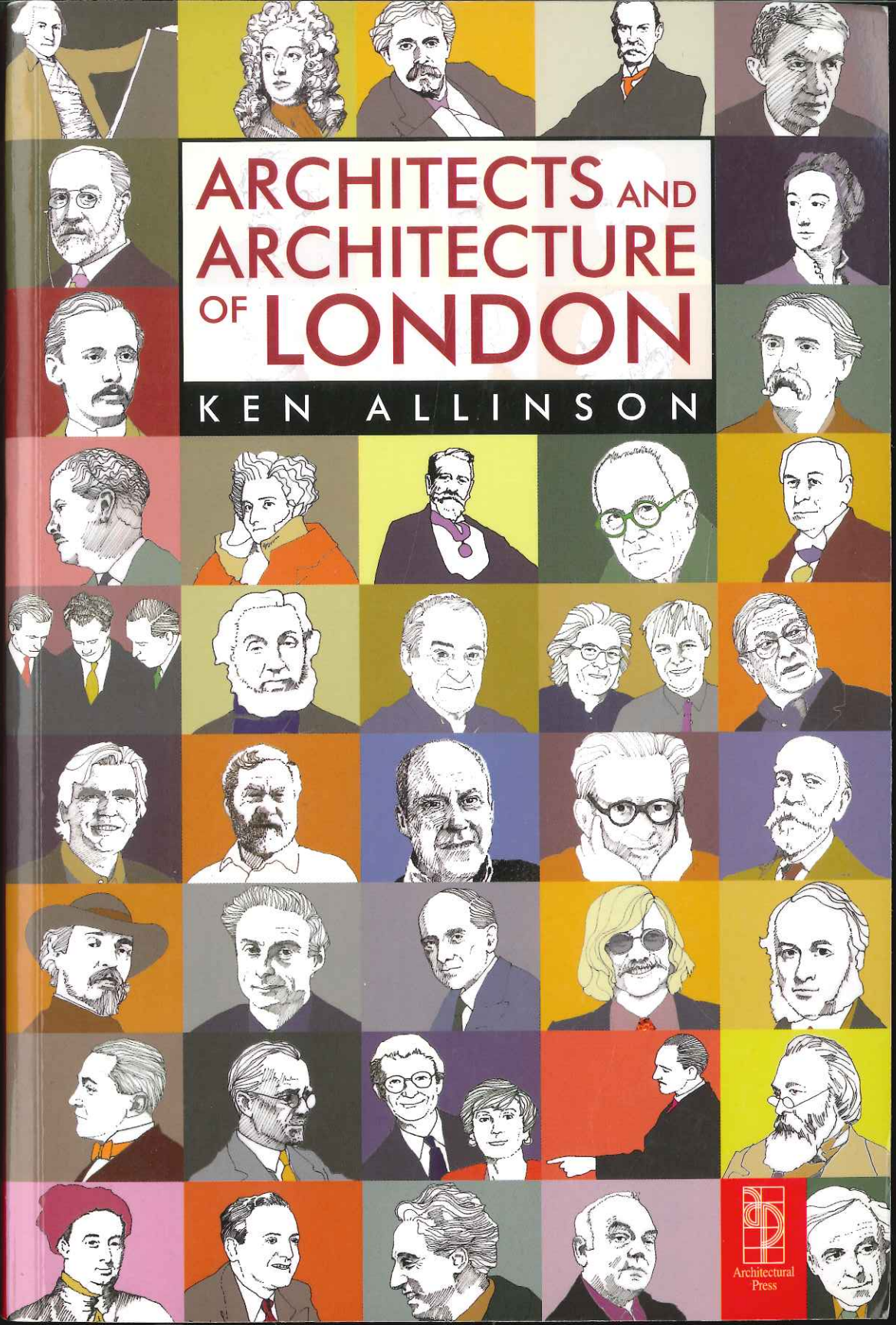

ARCHITECTS AND ARCHITECTURE OF LONDON
KEN ALLINSON
Architectural Press

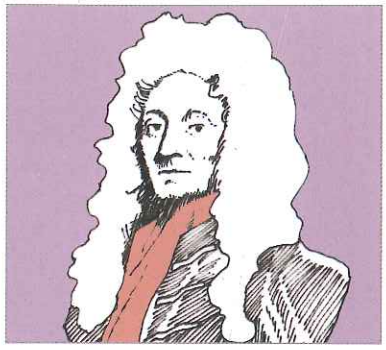
Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice

"If you seek my monument, look around you."

Sir Christopher Wren 1632–1723

Wren's extant London buildings include:

- **The City and other parish and guild churches.** See page 54.
- **The Monument**, 1671-76, King William Street, the City. Wren and Hooke.
- **Royal Observatory**, 1675-1676, Greenwich Park. Now added to with work by Allies & Morrison (2008)
- **St Paul's Cathedral**, 1675-1711. Ludgate Hill, the City. Access during a service is free; otherwise there is a charge.
- **Chelsea Royal Hospital**, 1681-86. Royal Hospital Road. Also, some out-buildings by Soane, 1809-17.
- **Hampton Court Palace,** East and South Wings, 1689-1695.
- **Kensington Palace**, 1689-95 and 1702. Kensington Palace Gardens.
- **Morden College**, 1695-1700. Off St Germain's Place, Blackheath. This attribution is uncertain, but the building was built by Edward Strong, one of Wren's favourite masons.
- **Royal Naval Hospital for Seamen**, 1696-1702, Greenwich. This has a magnificent painted hall and chapel to visit, as well as the architecture as a whole (now, in part, Greenwich University and Trinity School of Music).
- **Marlborough House**, between the Mall and Pall Mall (opp. St James' Palace), 1709-11. Lower two storeys; third storey added by William Chambers, 1771-74; entrance 'hall' and some interior work by Pennethorne, 1860-62.
- **Chapter House**, St Paul's 1712-14. St Paul's Cathedral.



When, at the height of the Empire, national wealth and nationalist sentiments, high Edwardian architectural fashions sought to free themselves from the respective excesses of Ruskinian morality and the 'freestyle' in order to find inspirational sources that might serve national tastes and architectural predilections, they turned not to Inigo Jones, but to Sir Christopher Wren. From this inspiration was born 'Wrenaissance', a term alluding to a body of inclinations and preferences seeking to resolve the issue of a style suited to the age (i.e. a response to the *Zeitgeist*) by employing Wren's Baroque work as a suitably authentic bench-mark.

To this day, Wren remains the most famous of English architects. His initially privileged childhood was rudely interrupted by the Civil Wars (1642-51), depriving the family of income and, because of his father's role in the court of Charles I, threatening their lives. Nevertheless, Wren received a good education (apart from frequent interruptions) and, at fifteen years old, he was assisting in anatomical researches at Oxford. At eighteen he had formally entered Wadham College, where mentors admired his prodigious skills as an inventive assistant in mathematical and medical research. But his youth was not an easy time and Wren's experiences appear to have engendered a later preoccupation with survival, success and significance (which, as we shall repeatedly see, is hardly uncommon to architects). Small of stature and of slight build, this charming man was preoccupied with fame and permanent memorials and consistently determined to be an author who distinguished the enduring from the ephemeral in a manner that was as much personal as philosophical. (Just as, we are told, he was much concerned to turn his talents and industry into the security of capital assets – an ambition in which he was not entirely successful.)

In the following years Wren's research studies continued to call upon his intelligence and inventiveness through the years of the Commonwealth, under Cromwell – who

was instrumental in securing Wren the position of chair of astronomy at Gresham College in London (1657). His inventions during this period included devices for surveying, musical and acoustical instruments, developments in fishing, underwater construction and submarine navigation, and experiments in print-making. In his lectures he was conscious of what he referred to as the 'new philosophy' and opined that mathematics, *"being built upon the impregnable Foundations of Geometry and Arithmetick, are the only Truths, that can sink into the Mind of Man, void of all Uncertainty; and all other Discourses participate more or less of truth, according as their Subjects are more or less capable of Mathematical Demonstration."* And he condemned what he ca *Fancies of ... astrological Medic and 'quack astrologers).'* Such se out of place today.

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***Above**: The dome of Wren's Saint Paul's Cathedral: still London's most significant building, even after three hundred years. It's remarkable survival of World War II bombing, when all around was flattened, made the building even more famous and gave it an aura it still possesses.*

All buildings in the immediate vicinity are kept comparatively low (to about seven or eight stories) and a number of 'viewing corridors' are kept unobstructed from various high points around London to the dome. Thus the presence of the dome has a direct impact upon the politics of where tall buildings can be located and pragmatically underscores the Cathedral's symbolic status.

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Our prodigy later moved to a chair in astronomy at Oxford, in the year of the Restoration of Charles II, 1660 – at which the young Wren, largely as a consequence of his family's role in the court of Charles I, played a not insignificant ceremonial role. Charles at this time sought to bring together the grand figures of Gresham and Wadham as a reconciliatory grouping known as the Royal Society and Wren naturally figured significantly in unfolding developments. It was now – simply as exercises in applied mathematics – that he was drawn into challenges that stretched his inventiveness from science to defences and other building works. Her was also asked to design the Sheldonian Theatre (1663-9), as well as other works at Oxford and, at the request of the King, to propose a redesign of Whitehall Palace (1664) and a new dome for St Paul's Cathedral (upon which Inigo Jones had expended much effort).

Over the five-year period between 1661-66 Wren was to become thoroughly familiar with architectural issues and to challenges, drawing upon his belief that the practice of science called upon imagination as well as intuition and logic. This entailed, at the age of 33, a visit to Paris – then a European centre for creativity that had overtaken Rome and Venice – for the purposes of studying its architecture. Here, Wren met with Mansart, le Vau and the great Italian architect, Bernini (1598-1680).

Having missed the Great Plague of 1665, Wren returned to London in time to witness the horrific Great Fire of 1666 that destroyed much of the City and, in particular, left old St Paul's as a burned-out shell. But Wren also returned to London with an English interpretation of then current French debate on beauty in design. For example, he now believed that, as he put it, *"There are two causes of Beauty: Natural and Customary. Natural is from Geometry, consisting in Uniformity (that is Equality) and Proportion. Customary Beauty is begotten by the Use of our Senses to those objects which are usually pleasing to us for other causes, as Familiarity or particular Inclination breeds Love to Things not always themselves lovely: Here lies the great occasion of Errors, but always true to the Test is Natural or Geometrical Beauty. Geometrical figures are naturally more beautiful than irregular ones; the square, the circle are the most beautiful, next the parallelogram and the oval. There are only two beautiful positions in straight lines, perpendicular and horizontal; this is from nature and consequently necessary, no other than upright being firm."*

There is, in other words, a crucial difference between significant matters rooted in what is orderly and immutable, and contrasting, customary habits of mind, i.e. between a rational consideration of eternal and lawful issues in relation to what is creaturely, modish and customary (or 'arbitrary'). Nevertheless, Wren was no

pedant when it came to the precedents of the Ancients: drawing was a pragmatic research tool, geometry was important, but there was to be no subscription to arcane numerical theory; Vitruvius was important but every design had to be derived from first principles in the sense that it constituted the challenge of a situated idealism. He was, oddly, as much an empiricist as an idealist.

Turning to the Fire, Wren immediately engaged himself in the task of rebuilding and, in 1669, was appointed as the King's Surveyor and there began the fruitful years of an exceptionally long architectural career that lasted until fashions changed with the accession of George I to the throne in 1714, although Wren's Baroque tastes were, by then, quite out of fashion.

Between 1669-71 Wren designed a new customs house (a formal building representing the presence of the Crown with the City – a place that was still, in effect, a state within a state) and, a formal western entrance to the City at Temple Bar (1667-72). There followed the Monument to the Great Fire (with Hooke; 1671-6), the Greenwich Observatory (1675-6), Chelsea Hospital (1685-93), work at Hampton Court and Kensington Palace (1689 on), the Royal Naval Hospital at Greenwich (1696 on), St Paul's Cathedral and designs for some City churches replacing those destroyed by the Fire. Other works included St Clement Danes in the Strand, St James' in Piccadilly, and St Anne's in Soho.

These designs were disparate and inventive, invariably pragmatic and sometimes idealistic. Most were completed by 1690. Church steeples were added in the 20-30 years afterward, with Wren's own design of St Mary-le-Bow (1680) setting a fine example of what could be achieved. This work was, of course, undertaken by a team and Robert Hooke's name is significant, particularly during the 1670's and '80's. Nicholas Hawksmoor arrived in the office in 1684 and rapidly rose to an important position. Similarly, John Vanbrugh played a later role in the office, especially in the early 1700s up to the time when an ageing Wren was effectively dismissed from office. By 1711, when he suffered a serious illness, his style of work and dominance of the Crown's works was distinctly out of fashion.

Wren was dismissed in 1718 and died in 1723. Near his tomb in St Paul's crypt is a wall plaque reading: "*If you seek his monument, look around you*". However, by then, what was around the tomb was unsuited to the inclinations of a neo-Palladian 'Rule of Taste' that was to be the obsession of the eighteenth century. Ironically, this was to become the capriciousness of customary tastes (pretending to be anything but that) which vanquished 'natural order' in its Baroque guise and it was left to later generations to elevate Wren to his current high status as both scientist and architect.

During Wren's lifetime London was a small boom town. Between 1540-1650 its population grew five to sixfold and these inhabitants were increasingly reliant upon distant markets and nascent industrial enterprises. By 1700 the population had grown by another 50% and was approximately 600,000. That rate of growth was not sustained during the eighteenth century, despite London's expansion into the West End in the form of the architectural novelties of regular streets and squares of brick buildings. It is against this background Wren set about creating St Paul's Cathedral and the programme of parish churches.

***Above**: St Martin's, Ludgate Hill, a somewhat neglected but nevertheless interesting example of Wren's City churches, illustrating the architectural ingenuity with which liturgical demands were accommodated to difficult sites. See page 57. One sees this tradition masterfully continued in Butterfield's All Saints, Margaret Street (see page 167).*

the minster in the east
St Paul's Cathedral

The two most important churches in Lo
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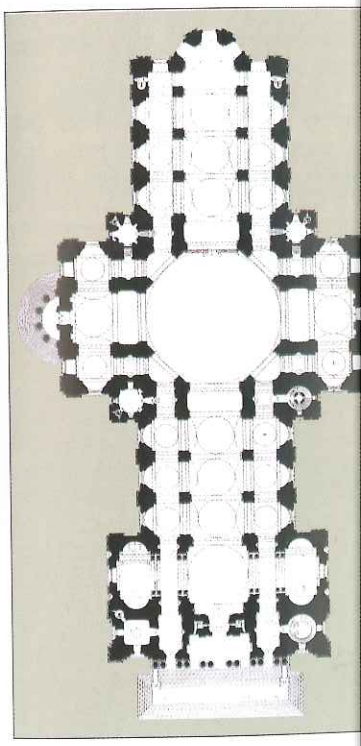

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the minster in the east
St Paul's Cathedral

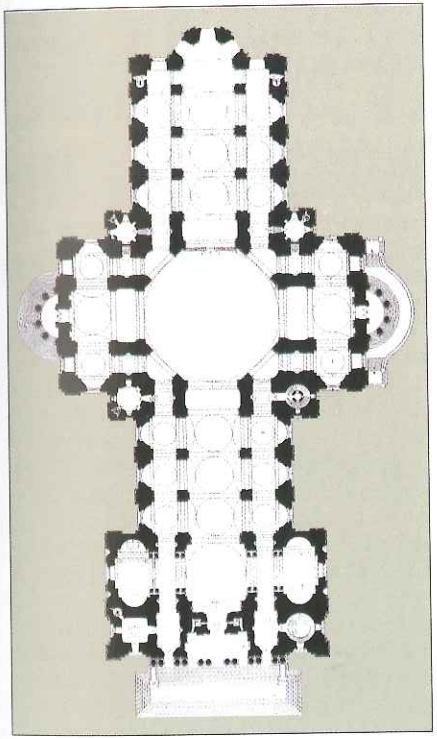
The two most important churches in London are St Paul's Cathedral – the minster in the east – and St Peter's, the abbey in the west, at Westminster. Both are key to London's urban topography and the politics of relations between the historic trading City in the east and the life of the English Crown and its court, Parliament and the civil service, and the Church located in what was once the low-lying, marshy lands at Westminster. Between these two locations is a ceremonial civic route from Buckingham Palace in the west, along the Strand and Fleet Street to St Paul's – a route used, for example, by Prince Charles for his marriage to Princess Diana. On such an occasion that route emerges from the urban fabric and then, afterward, in a characteristic English fashion, quietly sinks back into invisibility.

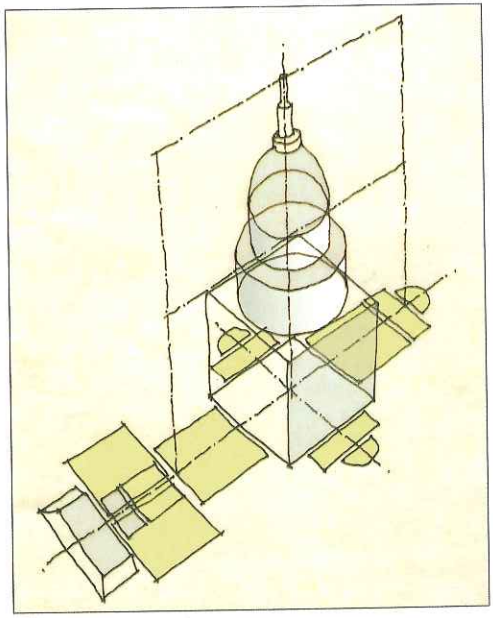
St Paul's is also important in another sense: its dome is central to a planning concept that has engendered a set of 'viewing corridors' from London's high points to the dome itself. Current intentions are that tall buildings should not intrude into these invisible corridors – a policy indicative of the significance given to St Paul's: the building is as important now (if for more mundane reasons) as it was in its Gothic form some four hundred years ago.

The present grandeur of the church is self-evident. It also has a long history that extends back to mythic origins as a Roman temple, then later as a wooden Saxon church, becoming a stone building in 632. After a fire of 1087, its fourth rebuilding was in the form of a Norman church. By the 1630s, the latter had become the distressed building Inigo Jones was called upon to repair – a work finally gutted by the Great Fire of 1666.

Wren came to the project of rebuilding in 1668 which, from an optimistic beginning, quickly became immured in controversy that had, at its heart, liturgical traditions and aesthetic preferences set against a baroque radicalism that aspired toward a bi-symmetrical and centralist design. Three different designs resulted in a so-called 'warrant' design and 'Great Model' finally being approved in 1675, but Wren cleverly obtained permission from the King to institute 'ornamental' changes. It was a ruse employed to disguise the works

***Below**: the architecture of St Paul's begins and ends in complex geometric ordering centred on the dome and the employment of modules that are at once geometric, spatial, perspectival and structural. The plan has the dome as its central feature; to the east is the choir and apse; to the west is the nave and, as it were, the entry module that is the portico and steps; to the north and south of the dome are the transepts and their apsidal entrance doors that strive to equalise the overall symmetry of a plan that has been forced to elongate itself.*





and actually make major changes over subsequent years up to the building's final completion in 1710. London then had an ornament to its fabric that could make a claim to European standing. It also had a dominant addition to its skyline that, ever since, has served a symbolic role only the most insensitive can fail to acknowledge and respect.

As realised, the building is not the centrally planned church Wren would have preferred and is, in fact, fundamentally a medieval plan suited to an established form of liturgy that the clerics did not want disrupted: 'custom' had been in conflict with Wren's notion of 'Positive' law and the architect did not have things entirely his own way. This is not only apparent in the long Latin cross of the plan, but also in the high outer screen walls that, from street level, conceal side buttressing to the nave. But, among all the design's features, it is the dome that is literally, metaphorically and symbolically prominent – an urban ornament modelled upon the ancient Roman Pantheon and deliberately intended to be symbolic of Protestant rivalry to the Catholic achievement of the dome of St Peter's, in Rome.

Overall, the architecture of St Paul's is a complex mix of liturgical, spatial, scenic and structural considerations that resolve themselves into a three-dimensional geometry not only striving to reconcile what Wren's Positive and Customary causes of beauty, but to do so with integrity and, importantly, without contradiction, i.e., as a resolved unity of composition and consideration. To the extent that liturgical politics allowed it, Wren gave the design a central emphasis married to the axial demands of the Latin cross. This is principally achieved by the drama given to the cathedral's vertical axis which clearly demonstrates Wren's concern with the pragmatics of those optical distortions which qualify the perceived ideality of abstract geometries. He sought to bring everything within his control, leaving nothing to accident and giving everything over to invention in that 'grand manner' which, to Edwin Lutyens, was to be the only kind of architectural gamesmanship worth playing. Here was a glorious symbol of civilised order: each part in its place within a harmonised and ordered whole. Here was architecture in all its lawful truthfulness, glorious and pretentious, arrogant and proud, product of a great nation and its Christian faith, the achievement of a heroic author and, above all, a counterpoint to the so-called arbitrary and customary life at its feet.

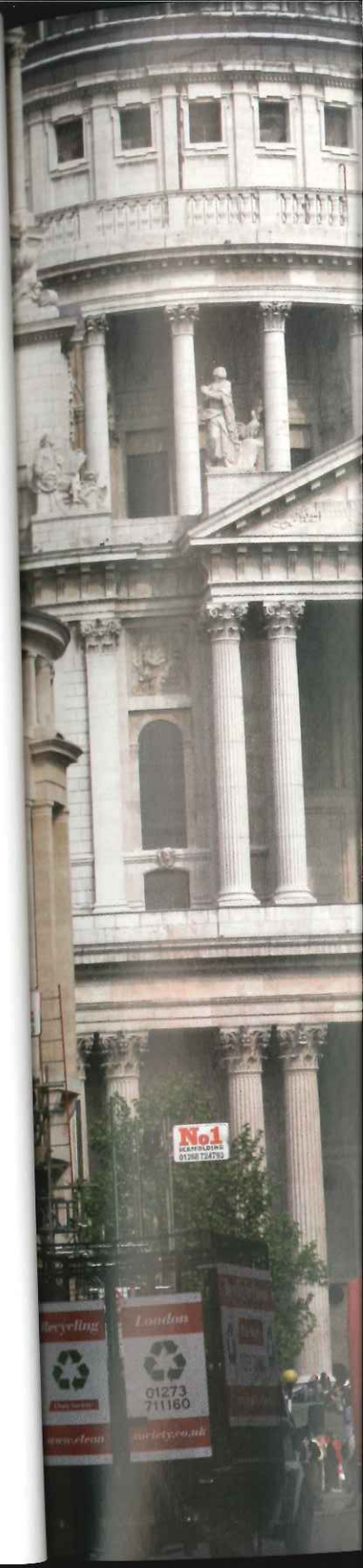
One should also note that the building is witness to the abstractions of power and money. It cost over £738,000 – an enormous sum in those days – and would never have been realised except for the established power of both church and monarch. Millennium Domes and Olympic stadia aren't quite of the same stuff simply because they lack such implicit philosophical content and intention: Wren's fundamental belief in the opposition of Natural Law (what is "Positive') to all that is merely Customary.

One of the most overlooked aspect of St Paul's is its most obvious: its scale (see, for example, the photo of the west façade, opposite). Few other London buildings manage to articulate the ordering of their fabric so grandly. It piles up, overwhelming the hubris of adjacent office buildings and bearing witness to Londoner's capacity to acknowledge the glory of their God. This orderly pile is crowned by the clever design of the dome: in itself, an architectural game of internal realities versus external perceptions informed by Wren's obsession with issues of 'optiks' mediating the difficult structural challenges presented by such a construction. The net result is a consummate tectonic that weights and prioritises the disparate parts of the whole in accord with the kinds of encounters experienced.

It is fundamental to such consummate gamesmanship that the architect is at once 'head in the clouds and feet on the ground'. While this may lend some people to read – rightly or wrongly – all kinds of arcane geometric and number symbolism into the architecture of St Paul's, such a viewpoint is always in danger of missing the key point: that Wren succeeded in *realising* profound significance in the ordering of space and structural form. Few buildings are similarly witness to such an achievement: at once an external perception (what stands within the public realm), an internal one (whose focus is beneath the dome), and a resolution of them both as three-dimensional form: of ideality and customary usage, of the symbolic and the mundane, structural integrity and the pragmatics of project management. The building stands there and says, "Someone once did this".

Perhaps all this is epitomised by the dome (see the sketch and photo overleaf). Its first reality is a clear differentiation between external and internal experiences – pragmatic, yes, but also exhibiting a design approach that is consistent with the scheme for the cathedral as a whole. The in-betweenness of these dualistic considerations is a clever structural exercise of domes within a dome that expertly addresses structural issues whilst delivering a geometric reconciliation of inside and outside form.

That the dome remains valued as perhaps the most significant feature of London's skyline can be attributed to many things, but so long as this remains true St Paul's will also stand witness to a long architectural tradition that instrumental values have threatened ever since the cathedral was completed. Mistakenly and irrationally or not, we demand such architectures – of whatever form and stylistic consideration. We thirst for their reassuring significance as motionless civilised works standing fast against all that is unknown and mutable. The alternative is an architecture of mere equipmentality, passing agreeableness and aesthetic entertainment. On the



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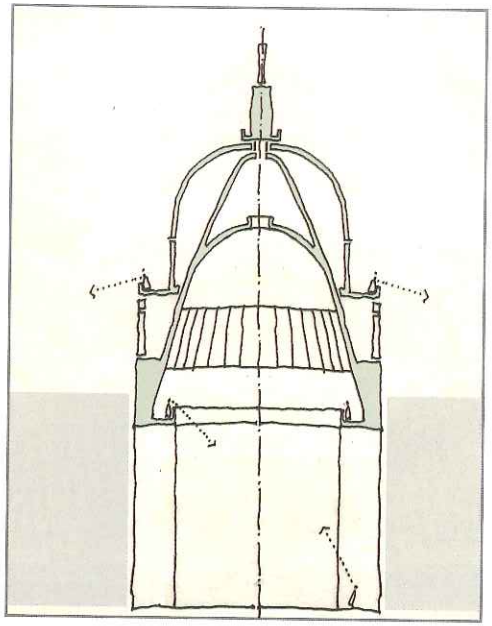
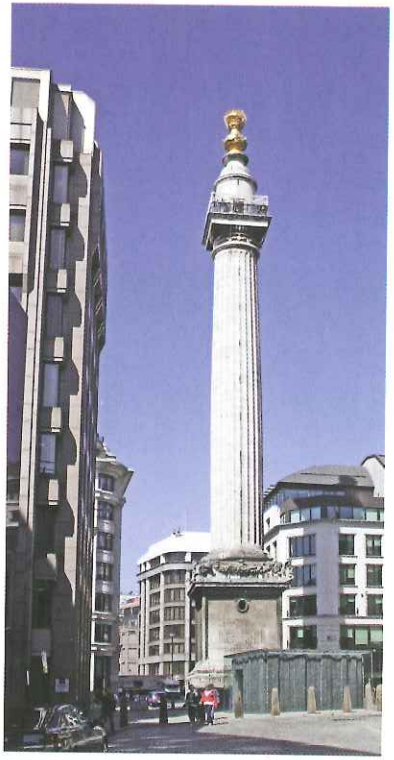


other hand, perhaps architecture can now only be that; perhaps we now find reassuring significances in other ways. Perhaps St Paul's was simultaneously the acme and swan-song of architectural endeavour? Three hundred years later we're still not quite sure.

Robert Hooke 1635–1703

In 1665, Hooke, who had met Wren at Oxford, said of the latter: Hooke wrote that, *"Since the time of Archimedes, there scarce ever met in one man, in so great a perfection, such a Mechanical Hand, and so Philosophical a Mind."* But Hooke was hardly less and has a particularly high scientific reputation. The two became great friends and worked closely together.

Hooke was born on the Isle of Wight, but came to Westminster school as a young boy and then went on to Oxford. In 1663 he was awarded an MA, after spending time, like Wren, inventively serving scientific research. At this time he became employed by the Royal Society and at Gresham College. In 1666 he became one of the surveyors for the rebuilding work. From 1670 he was Wren's close collaborator and, effectively, his office manager inside the Surveyor's Office at Scotland Yard (a role taken over by Hawksmoor in 1693). They collaborated closely on many projects, including the City churches programme and the Monument – what is, in effect, a scientific experiment in disguise, intended to investigate gravity whilst also serving a civic role. Hooke, for example, would have been crucial to calculations for the roof of St Stephen Walbrook. Together, they also designed the Bethlem Hospital, the Monument, and the Royal College of Physicians building.



***Right**: the Monument – what Hooke referred to as 'the pillar at Fish Street' – was designed by Wren and Hooke as a memory to the Fire and also as a gigantic, 200 foot high scientific instrument. At the top of the 345 steps is a hatch to a ladder that leads up to a hinged lid at the top of the golden urn. At the very bottom of the column is a room used as a laboratory. In between is the void at the centre of the rising spiral stair – used for suspending a pendulum; and there are also a variety of other strategically positioned voids. Thus the construction could be used for measuring atmospheric pressure variations, gravitational, astronomical and similar experiments. However, what has been noted as an attempt to further scientific knowledge on a broad front – the kind of work Hooke and Wren undertook – was already over by the 1720s.*

***Top:** diagram of the dome of St Paul's, indicating its complex double structure.*

***Opposite**: St Paul's nave. If there is a disturbing fault to Wren's petrified achievement it surely lies in some obscure absence of emotional charge substituted by the imposing conceptualisations of great intellect effected over some thirty years. Here is a conception of Law that, in a quasi-scientific manner, is thoroughly and awesomely rational and still. There is the occasional resolved awkwardness, but no strangeness. Perhaps we no longer possess or can exhibit such certainties that stands fast in the face of mutability.*

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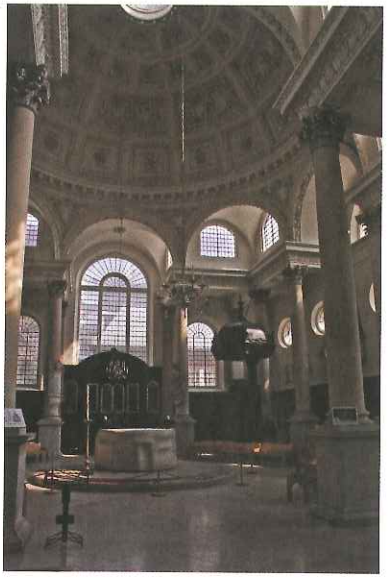
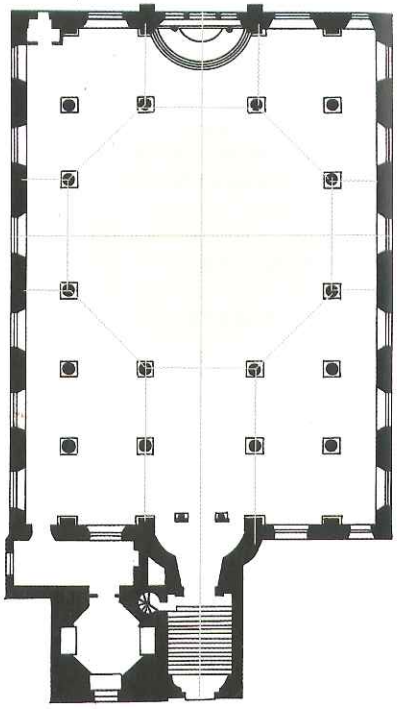
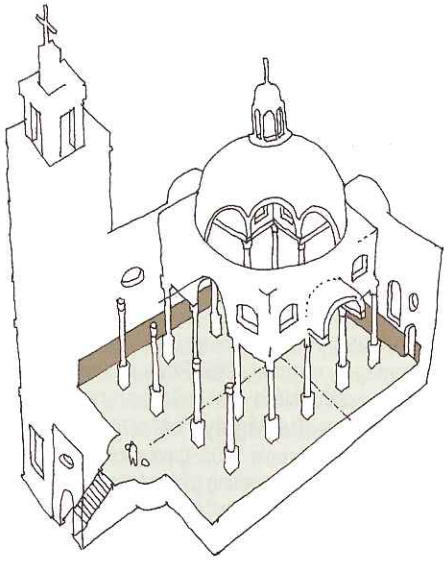
St Stephen Walbrook

Among the finest of the surviving City churches is St Stephen Walbrook, at Bank (1672-87). Externally, it is unprepossessing: the exterior is not important apart from the tower which would once have raised itself above the surrounding roof tops (as Pugin later reminded us). At the ground, it is the entrance door and entrance sequence that is important – leading up steps into that part of the whole which is all important: the interior. Here, Wren strives to produce a centralised plan that, as at St Paul's, is rooted in the primacy of the square and cube, but neatly makes a transition to being a dome (of wood and plaster, thus lessening the structural loads as well as being more economic and sensible). Chancel, aisles and transepts are accommodated, but it is the centrality of the dome and the four vaults which run off in the four cardinal directions that hold the schema together. What at first appears to be a simple matter of nave and aisles turns out to be much more complex. Overall, the contrast between interior and exterior is striking (and one that would nowadays be unacceptable in a new building, especially a church).

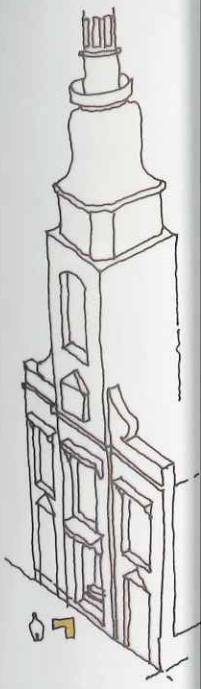
Overall, this is a masterful exercise which recent liturgical changes have enhanced as a rather 'Scandinavian-blonde' approach replacing the old arrangement of pews and employing a central stone altar designed by Henry Moore. Site circumstance, customary issues and idealism have been brought together as a resolved, three-dimensional architectonic that manifests that all too rare and misunderstood capacity of inventiveness, wit, consideration and aspiration constituting the wonder of situated architectural gamesmanship.







Despite its contemporary make-over (photo on the left), St Stephen Walbrook is one of the best of the Wren City churches. The plans given for these churches (as above) can be deceptive: the windows are usually high and a plan gives no indication of ceiling vaulting.



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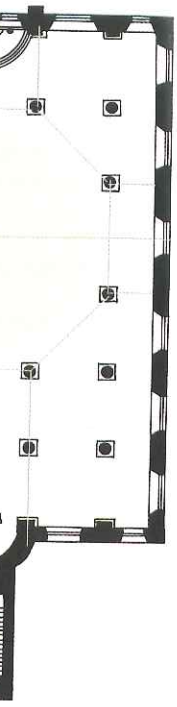

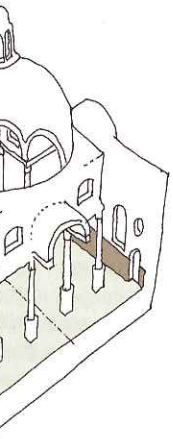

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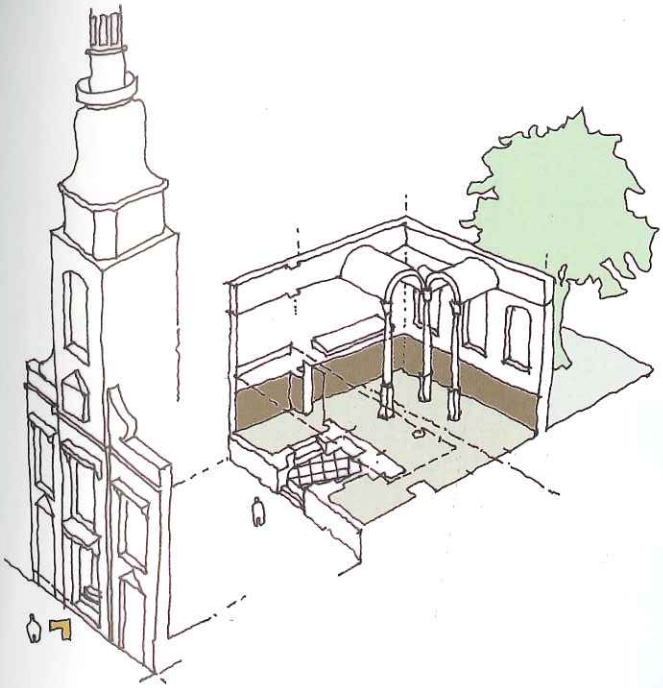

St Martin, Ludgate Hill

The richness of St Stephen Walbrook is worth comparing with St Martin, Ludgate Hill (1677-84) – the latter being more crude and significantly more neglected. Nevertheless, it has an inventive plan that handles a difficult site with adeptness. From an entry forced to be on the slope of Ludgate Hill the visitor is swung left and then right in order to enter from the west end, rising through two, short flights of steps. But in managing this exercise site space is given to a tower and vestry, and the main body of the church becomes more or less square, obtaining daylight from the only side possible (now a garden belonging to one of the City guilds). This schema also means that a gallery can be accommodated above the entry spaces. Unlike some other Wren churches, which have the tower as an adjunct to the composition, the tower at St Martin's forms a key part of the formality of the street façade. (See plan on page 61.) As this neglected church now stands its inherent gamesmanship is hardly acknowledged and somewhat countered and eroded by the indifferences of cumulative daily usage.

glory for old pensioners

Greenwich Royal Naval Hospital

The former naval hospital at Greenwich is a strange building: it doesn't look as if it could ever have served such a purpose. It was designed by Wren in 1695 as a way of completing schemes for Greenwich Palace (initiated by Charles II, to designs by John Webb; this is now the King Charles Block, 1664-9, on the north west side) and its central parts were constructed between 1696 and 1702 as a naval counterpoint to the army hospital at Chelsea. Vanbrugh, Hawksmoor and others all played a role in designing different parts, but the overall scheme is Wren's.

The French inspired layout (ref. the *Hôtel des Invalides*, in Paris) is breath takingly grand and faced the major difficulty of coping with Inigo Jones' Queen's House, allowing it a vista down to the River Thames. The latter is thus embraced, but rather incongruously since it is neo-Palladian while Wren's design is Baroque, and the two are separated by a major road (an integral part of the whole). The twinned domes on either side of the central axis are part of an attempt to cope with this conundrum, but the Queen's House remains a weak termination to an ensemble that is both wonderful and absurd, with the Observatory in the background, up the hill, in the park, and a once industrious river on the other side.

The hospital has two magnificent (and accessible) rooms: the Painted Hall and the Chapel – symmetrically located on either side of the central axis. The Chapel has an interior completed by James 'Athenian' Stuart (completed 1779-89), but it is the hall that most impresses. One enters through a high lobby under the dome which serves as a principal external feature. Ahead is a flight of steps into the main part of the hall and, at the far end, are more steps leading to a cubic space where the high table is located. The ceiling and wall paintings (celebrating British naval power and the triumph of Liberty and Peace over Tyranny, and taking nineteen years to complete; see page opposite) are by James Thornhill.

Nevertheless, no one has ever been sure what to do with the hall. It could not be used by the Pensioners when being worked on and was always too grand as a simple eating place. In 1834 it became an art gallery and remained that way until 1939, when it again became a dining room. In fact, this fundamental issue of purpose infects the whole complex and it is only recently that parts of the complex have been given a more meaningful role as Greenwich University.

Here, we have a fundamental issue, both at Greenwich and its equivalent at Chelsea: are they and were they ever fit for purpose as retirement homes? Their architectural grandeur is received as a celebration of the worthy lives and deeds, but these are singularly bizarre designs for aged pensioners on the last lap of their lives. This has always been a difficulty at Greenwich and, while less so at Chelsea, both buildings bear an undertone of using old people as grist to the mill of architectural pretensions. This may be, in part, a contemporary perspective, but was probably self-evident when these buildings were designed. Certainly, the fundamental conception and the language of the designs are assertive and domineering rather than gentle and magnanimous.

***Top**: view across the Thames from the Isle of Dogs.*
***Right**: the Hall viewed from the entrance, beneath the dome. James Thornhill's paintings were completed between 1708-27.*
***Above**: the similar dining room at Chelsea hospital. The first pensioners arrived in 1705; by 1815 there were 2,710 of them.*

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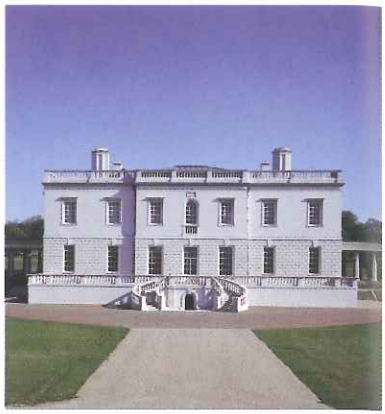
The Queen's House, 1616–35

Why would anyone build a house for the Queen of England straddling a main public road to Dover? The answer lies in the disposition of royal land: to the north was the River Thames, London's life-blood and an eminently easy way to travel, where a principal royal palace was located next to the Thames: the rambling, red-bricked, gabled and chimneyed Palace of Placentia, begun in the mid-fifteenth century and later demolished for the Wren building that now stands there (the former Royal Naval Hospital). To the south was what is now Greenwich Park: an open area of palace grounds that grandly rises up to a hill to where Wren's Observatory is now located. Perhaps moving the public road was impossible or too expensive. Perhaps there was a certain wit to the design that both royal patron and architect enjoyed: Jones' design is both house and bridge, lining the approach road with tall brick privacy screen walls. Since life took place mostly upon the *piano nobile*, the road was simply ignored on the day to day basis of inhabitation.

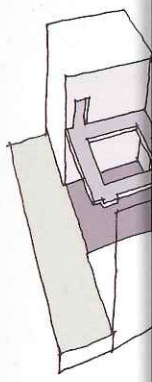
It is all rather clever, but bizarre by later and contemporary standards. (The noise of carriages, for example, must surely have been intrusive? Robert Adams' late 17th century Kenwood House, in Highgate, is similarly witness to social relations between high and low that changed in the C19th and we now find rather opaque.) In other terms the Queen's House belongs to that architectural tradition of grand garden pavilions, from Palladio's La Rotonda to Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye (all of which have a similar neo-Platonic geometry as their basis). It is a set piece which, like the later Banqueting House in Whitehall, was designed to show its cultural standing and apparently makes reference to the Villa Medici, at Poggio a Caiano, designed for Lorenzo de Medici and completed by Giulano da Sangallo in 1485. (In that instance the connection between the design's two halves – which, with Jones, is the bridge over the road – is a great hall.)



Initial work on the house was stopped when Queen Anne took ill in 1618 (she died a year later). The house was then thatched over at first floor level and work was not resumed (now for the queen of Charles I, Henrietta Maria) until 1630 – about the time that Jones was

The house now makes a fine art gallery housing a notable naval collection, but it is rather forlorn and has a problematic restoration history. Paintings once on the ceiling of the great hall were long ago stripped out, later replaced by photographs (and why not?), and then again stripped out by the purists. Between 1708-11 the windows were replaced by sashes, then returned to casements; at the same time the northern steps were remodelled. The colonnades were added in 1807. The house became a part of the naval school in 1821 and a part of the hospital in 1892. In 1933 the house was restored and became a gallery. Further restoration (further altering earlier restoration work) was in the 1980s and more recent work has been by Allies & Morrison (the new visitor entrance under the steps). One awaits further stages in this contentious work, hopefully one that strives to acknowledge and celebrate the fundamental architectonic novelty of Jones' schema rather than an obsessive concern with history as such.

*The plan (**above**) is of the house before the sides were infilled by increased accommodation. Similarly, the photo of the arches (above) shows the house as one now approaches it from the west (the original arches are the central ones). Note the side walls on the model; these once lined the approaching road and gave privacy to the gardens (not quite up to the standards of security at Buckingham Palace and elsewhere today!).*



***Above** (clockwise): the house; a model, with sc wings; the original plan what was the main road house.*

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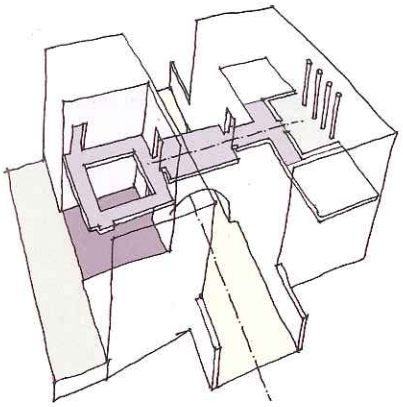
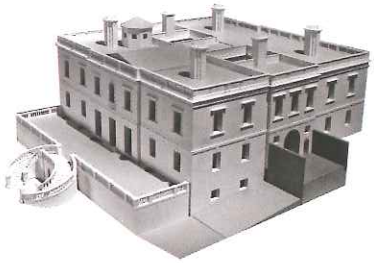
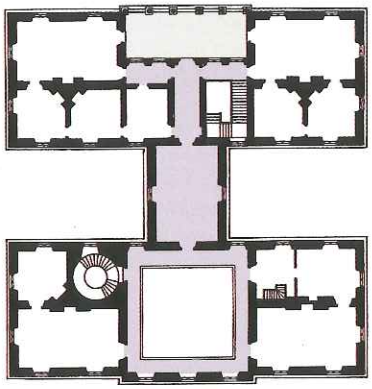






***Above** (clockwise): the architectural schema of the house; a model, with screen walls and the additional wings; the original plan; and a current view along what was the main road to Dover, passing through the house.*

designing the Covent Garden 'piazza' and church. In fact, like Le Corbusier's white villa, the pristine Queen's House had a rather short life. Completed in 1635 there was a mere seven years before its courtly joys were rudely disrupted by the Civil War, just as the bourgeois life of Le Corbusier's villa, completed in 1931, was disrupted by World War II.

Overall, the house plan is a square with a galleried and cubic great hall serving as the central feature of the northern wing. The upper parts were neatly and economically organised for circulation, ceremony and service, essentially without corridors. However, they were closed by additional wings in 1661, adding to the accommodation and forming two east and west wings (in addition to the north and south wings) but somewhat detracting from the overall drama of an architecture on a north-south axis that enjoyed a formal sweeping stair to a terrace and entrance on the north, a loggia overlooking the gardens to the south and, in between, at its heart, provided the visitor with a carriage drop-off point on the Dover Road.

Internally, the most central and formal feature of the house is the double-height cube forming the great hall. However, one should perhaps imagine the house as transitional between the medieval house, centred around life in the great hall, and new standards of privacy that were to be eventually served by discrete movement passageways and the banishment of servants to concealed back stairs. On either side of the hall was a bedroom (at that time a rather less than private place) and a drawing room (or with-drawing room, used for private meetings and meals, etc.). There was also a 'closet', set more deeply within the plan, off the drawing room and probably the most private space in the house. Perhaps this formed one 'apartment' (i.e., what in France was a sequence of antechambre/chambre/and cabinet off the hall as grand salon). The southern wing, at the level of the *piano nobile*, is dominated by the loggia (beneath which is the so-called Orangery). One presumes the room forming the bridge link over the road was a crucial common place whose view was originally east-west (along the road), and not into inner courts (now light wells). The additional wings were added for Charles II, by John Webb and the new form of house was used as Henrietta's official residence until her death in 1669 (she became, during the Restoration, the Queen Mother). After that, in 1690, the house became the residence of the Ranger of Greenwich Park and, in 1697-99, the road to Dover was moved to its present position (further north).

the problem of attribution

The City churches attributed to Wren are an example of the generality with which a sometimes titular office 'name' is attributed creative authorship despite the reality. Robert Hooke (from 1670, effectively Wren's office partner), John Oliver, Edward Woodroofe, and Nicholas Hawksmoor (and, later, William Dickinson), were particularly important assistants in his office, at times with considerable creative freedom. Also, the Coal Tax that paid for the works did not cover internal fittings, finishes, decorations, galleries and the like. These were left (with Wren's advice) to the parish and local craftsmen. Such nuances quickly complicate and cloud our need to identify design leaders and identify ostensible authoring heroes. For example, while the singularly important fact that Wren was personally responsible for the City churches is acknowledged, there is a tendency to ignore the realities of collaborative teamwork: what is not only iterative, but simultaneously and complexly interactive.

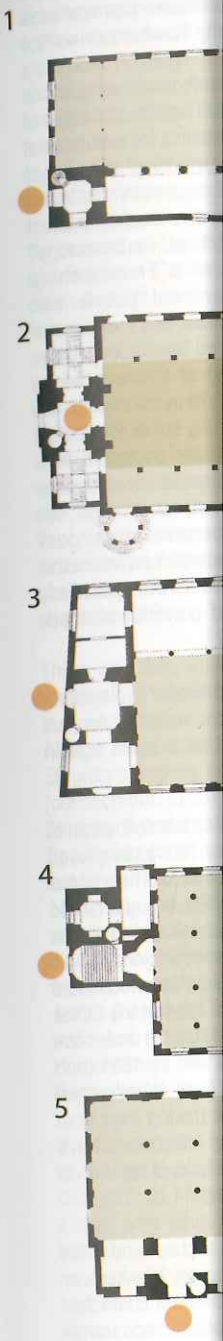
The kudos of heroic genius has always been an important underpinning of practice – particularly since the time 18th century men such as Gibbs, Adam and Chambers arrived fresh from their Grand Tour with a ready-at-hand experience of the 'real thing', able to spread out their drawings and show off drawing collections that gave evidence of their sound judgement and good taste. Such architects already enjoyed a status that not only blurred the medieval boundaries between design and execution, but consciously strove to underscore that differentiation. We have every indication that the spats between Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson reflected this issue in the early seventeenth century. However, one hundred years later, Richard Boyle (Lord Burlington) was able to stand apart from the executive dimensions of architecture in a privileged manner his cultured retinue at Burlington House could not enjoy.

While we have no reason to believe that things were ever different (i.e. conceptual architectural design, is by definition, cerebral and thus always somewhat apart from issues of execution) the rise of the 'speculative mason' in an era of 'aesthetic differentiation', as it has been termed, may have underscored the issue. That phenomenon of modernism (particularly during the eighteenth century) helped to engender the architect as a heroic person of sound taste as well as ability. The ambitious and aspiring young amateur of the early to mid-eighteenth century – making claim to experience, talent and perhaps hermeneutic knowledge – was a somewhat different creature to those architects who, some one hundred and fifty years later, belonged to a Victorian body of practitioners quite capable of tearing itself asunder on the basis of a discussion as to whether architecture was an art or a profession (in either case was thoroughly vocational).

Addressing this issue has, ever since, had subtle implications with regard to an architect's claim to legitimacy as well as taste, expertise and creative authorship. Survival and the success that aspires to significance – whether as artist or professional – has, since the time of Inigo Jones, required that the architect should pose as an especially talented individual: at once artful and expert, and always a person whose creativity is stamped upon the outputs from his studio. Clients demand such figureheads (the use of twentieth century acronyms not withstanding), clamouring for someone who can be credited with the penetrative insight, extraordinary compositional skills and a capacity to realise conceptual schema that raises architecture to an extraordinary status. Scholars, too, find diluted attribution to be inconvenient and, for historians, it complicates causal chains to the point that questions the validity of their discipline. We need and want the creative hero.

The counterpoint is a common sense understanding that it is teams and a practice culture that produces the work. There is not a contradiction that Wren may have used Hooke and Hawksmoor as collaborative creative authors and yet remained crucially important within a necessarily improvisational culture of production. This not only applied to Wren, Hooke and Hawksmoor but, more recently, has done to Yorke in his work with Rosenberg, Mardall, Alford and Henderson (see page 384), to Chamberlin in his work with Powell and Bon (page 352), to Stirling with regard to Gowan and Wilford (page 423), and to Foster in his relations with the likes of Spencer de Grey and Ken Shuttleworth (page 434). At the very least, the 'name' is a catalyst to situational potential as well as a convenient reference point within the recorded vicissitudes of endeavour and there is no simple way to disentangle such complex weaves (even when so many other factors are ignored from the equation).

Nikolaus Pevsner contentiously spent a great deal of effort in his pursuit of the 'heroes of the Modern Movement' as Hegelian individuals furthering the fulfilment of a modernist Zeitgeist. *However, most of the time, architecture is not the work of a lone warrior, but an instance of improvisational team collaboration, leaving the hero as an ambiguous figure whose denomination tells us much about ourselves, our values and needs. Beneath the surface of such exercises is the need we suffer for heroes, as well as for unambiguous causal certainties. Nevertheless, when such concerns engender analyses of line thickness in order to attribute authorship to a drawing in Wren's office – thereby implying the true identification of creativity – then something has perhaps gone perversely wrong and is witness to a misunderstanding of the design process.*



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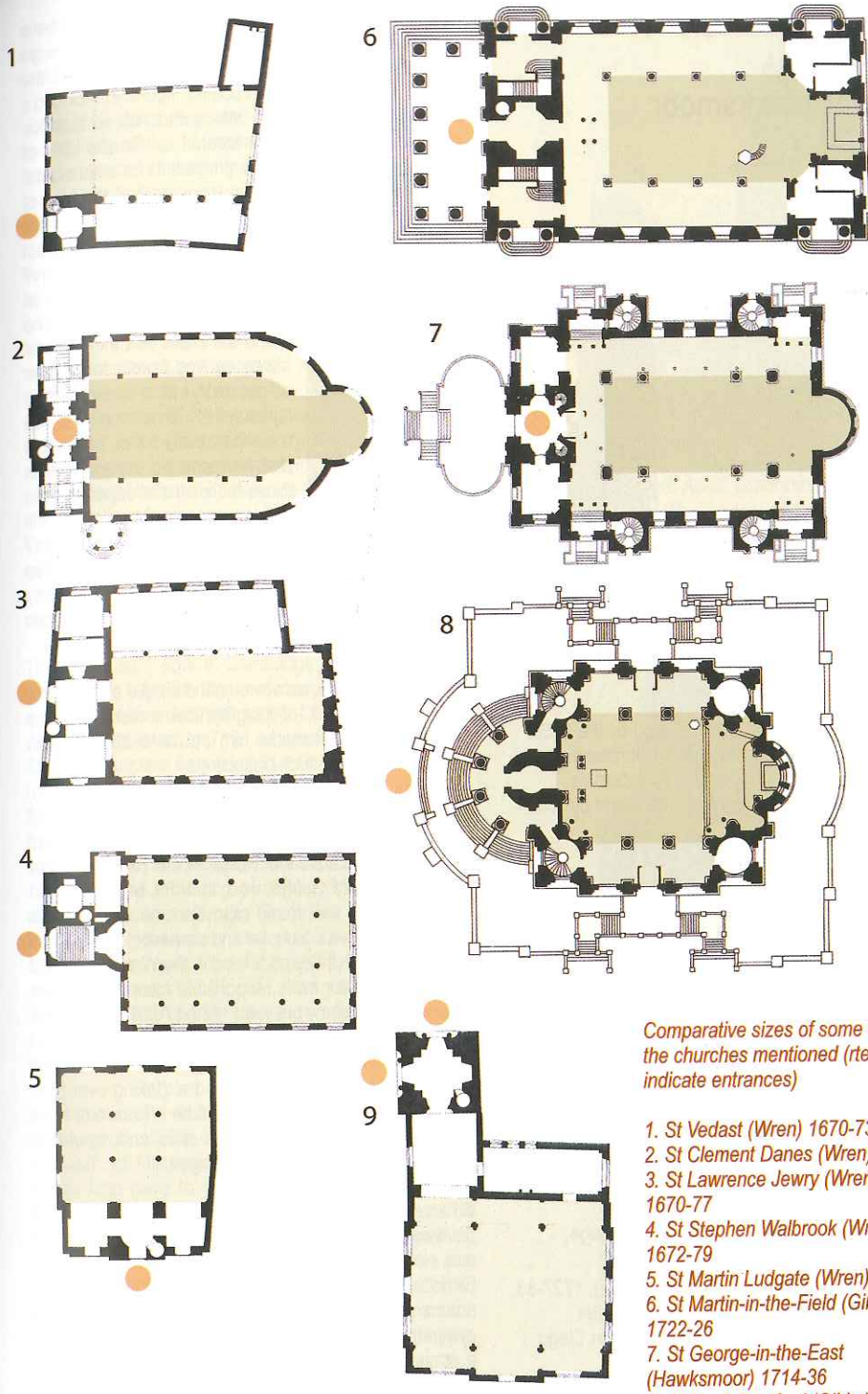

Comparative sizes of some of the churches mentioned (rte dots indicate entrances)

1. St Vedast (Wren) 1670-73
2. St Clement Danes (Wren) 1680-82
3. St Lawrence Jewry (Wren) 1670-77
4. St Stephen Walbrook (Wren) 1672-79
5. St Martin Ludgate (Wren) 1672-84
6. St Martin-in-the-Field (Gibbs) 1722-26
7. St George-in-the-East (Hawksmoor) 1714-36
8. St Paul, Deptford (Gibbs) 1713-30
9. St Mary-le-Bow (Wren) 1670-73

Nicholas Hawksmoor
1661–1736

Extant London works include:

- **Greenwich Palace**, work behind the colonnades, within the courts, and the west wing (1698-1704). Attribution is uncertain, but Hawksmoor is attributed with the (north east) Queen Anne Block and perhaps the west side of the King William Block. Now Greenwich University.
- the **Orangery**, Kensington Palace, begun 1704-5.
- **St Alfrege**, 1712-18, Church Street, Greenwich. Gutted in World War II and restored by Albert Richardson 1953. The upper parts of the tower are by John James (1730).
- **St Anne**. 1714-30, Commercial Road, Limehouse. Gutted by fire 1850; restored by Philip Hardwick, 1850-1; further restored by P.C. Hardwick, 1856-7, with A. Blomfield as assistant; by Sir Arthur Blomfield,1891; and by Julian Harrap, 1983-93.
- **St Mary Woolnoth**, Bank, 1714-27. The galleries have been removed, but character remains.
- **Christ Church**, 1714-29, Commercial Street, Spitalfields. In such a bad state that it was closed in 1957 as a dangerous structure. Recently totally restored, but now strangely devoid of character.
- **St George-in-the-East**, 1714-30, Cannon Street Road, off the Highway, Wapping. Only the shell remains, with a church of the 1960s.
- **St George's**, Bloomsbury, 1714-31. Restored.
- **Arcade Building** 1716-17, North side of the stable yard at St James' Palace, off the Mall. Jones' St Anne's sits opposite.
- **Westminster Cathedral** west frontage, 1722-45 (the Gothic towers).
- **St Luke's**, Old Street (with John James), 1727-33. Roof removed 1859. Now used by the London Symphony Orchestra; conversion by Feilden Clegg.

That Nicholas Hawksmoor should occasionally be a focus of dark, neo-Gothic fantasies perhaps says more about us than him. But why Hawksmoor as 'the Devil's architect', as a brooding figure in Ackroyd's detective novel, and as the author of six London churches rumoured to be located on Druidic sites of significance? Because his enthusiasms for architectural history were coloured by an enjoyment of the kind of alchemical and astrological leanings common to his day? That he is said to have had a 'morbid' interest in architectural archaeology? That he was a Freemason (a group of eminent people who made the claim that the masons' status derived from a knowledge of geometry) at a time when its 'speculative' dimension was still a comparatively novel, intellectual and hermeneutic departure from those more arcane aspects of the master-mason's knowledge still rooted in 'operative' challenges? Or is his reputation an instinctive derivation from the peculiarly brooding and powerful aesthetic of his works?

There is, of course, no obvious and simple explanation, but a distinct lack of biographical material on this illustrious architect marks him out as a blank screen awaiting to accept such projections.

Hawksmoor was born in Nottinghamshire, the son of a yeoman farmer. As a young man he was employed in Doncaster as a clerk of works. In this role he met the plasterer Edward Gouge, who, in 1680, brought him to London, where the young man became employed as Christopher Wren's 'scholar and domestic clerk'. It was in this role that Hawksmoor lived in the Wren household before taking over more responsible roles at the Office of Works, particularly between 1687-1701. He undertook all kinds of building accounting work and by 1691 (and for almost twenty years thereafter) was Wren's chief draughtsman on St Paul's Cathedral (taking over from Robert Hooke). However, by 1688 he is known to have been designing buildings as his skills and reputation developed while the noble Wren aged.

Between the later years of this service and a period when he was able to design in his own name, Hawksmoor was closely associated with a quite different character: Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), the latter an apparently charming, gregarious man of Whig leanings (i.e. a man sympathetic toward the political grouping that was for a strong Parliament, a limited monarchy, resistance to France, and the Protestant succession to the throne), and who appears to have had the appropriate social connections engendering the kinds of commissions apparently denied to Hawksmoor. Hawksmoor entered into this arrangement with Vanbrugh as a old, thoroughly experienced man of works continuing his role under Wren at the Board o

Vanbrugh – a well respected dramatist, ex-mi and political radical is reported to have bee time, a novice at drawing and this, perhap gives some indication of Hawksmoor's cor character, values and project role. They made quite a pair, embarking on schemes for houses such as Castle Howard, in Yorkshire (1 and Blenheim Palace (1705-24). And, after death in 1726 (and after Hawksmoor had when Wren was dismissed), Hawksmoor working on these two projects. Meanwhil worked on schemes such as the Greenwi during a period in which he achieved a powe comptroller to the Office of Works (in 1702) a approached his forced retirement (in 1718). records that, during this latter period, the effectively a triple partnership of the ag Vanbrugh and the young Hawksmoor, whilst as an unofficial academy of architecture (Ha has to be remembered never went abroad to status that a Grand Tour gave to an architec

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There was also work in Cambridge and Oxford, but it was the 1711 Act for fifty new churches that produced the celebrated works still to be found in London: St Alfrege, Greenwich (1712, consecrated 1718); three Stepney churches, begun in 1714: St Anne's, Limehouse (consecrated 1730), St George-in-the-East, Wapping, Stepney (interior destroyed 1941), and Christ Church, Spitalfields (both consecrated 1729); and two others begun in 1716: St George's, Bloomsbury (consecrated 1731), and the rebuilding of St Mary Woolnoth, a City church patched up after the Great Fire (finished 1727). In addition, Hawksmoor also produced two churches with another commissioner for these fifty churches, John James (between 1727-33): St Luke's, Old Street, whose walls and fluted obelisk steeple remain, and St John Horselydown, Bermondsey (gutted 1940 and finally dismantled in 1948).

Hawksmoor, who had suffered from 'the vile distemper of the gout' all his life, finally died of 'gout of the stomach', at Millbank, in 1736. He is remembered as a man who gave to Vanbrugh the technical skills the latter man lacked, and was able to lend a 'charge' to his own designs that Wren – from whom everything had been brilliantly but academically learned – was never able to realise. Perhaps, somewhere within this ambiguous issue of 'charge', lies both the source of those darker attributions to the work of this man and an historical status that leaves Hawksmoor as a somewhat inaccessible architect's architect whose works often require a substantial effort before they can be appreciated.

***Above**: St Anne. Limehouse*
***Below**: Westminster Abbey's west towers*

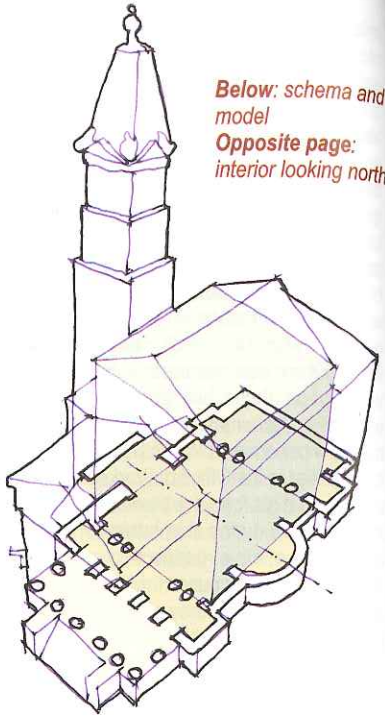
***Below**: St Luke, Old Street*

St George Bloomsbury, 1716–27

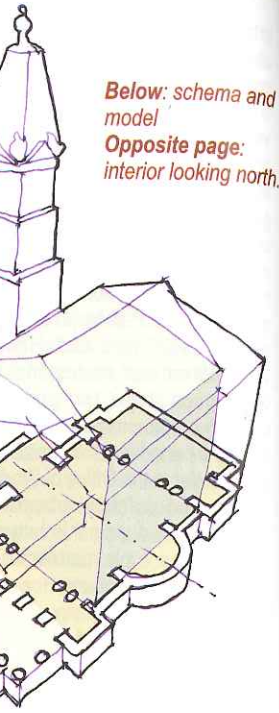
The fact that Hawksmoor has become the 'devil's architect' of novelists, historians and journalists anxious to excite their readers' fantasies gets between us and the architecture. St George's, Bloomsbury is a good example of the latter. The church exhibits the man's private concerns as well as his architectural inventiveness and idiosyncracities, but that damnable upper part to the tower overly excites interest. In fact, any architect-cum-speculative-mason of the day would place their work in the context of what the Ancients had achieved – and Hawksmoor was a keen historian of architectural precedent. In fact, Wren had similarly been fascinated by such things and many of the City church towers exhibit the peculiar role of these urban landmarks that it probably takes an old fashioned Post-Modernist like Venturi to appreciate.

The site of St George was a problematic site and numerous plans were proposed. That in itself is a rather ignored history, but the key point is our arrival at a design from Hawksmoor that obstinately strove to satisfy liturgical propriety in the face of the clergy's apparent readiness to accept a north-south axis which could accommodate more worshippers. In fact, to do so meant he could fulfil other demands of the site: stretching the plan between the two streets bounding it to north and south, each having a prominent façade, and enabling access from either side, i.e. from the old residential developments of Covent Garden and also from newer (and implicitly more prosperous) developments taking place to the north (where Bloomsbury Square had been laid out in 1661). But Hawksmoor's schema is at once brilliant, persistent, ambitious and flawed: perhaps an example of brilliant architecture and not so intelligent design.

The true façade of St George's sits on the west side and it is here that Hawksmoor provided equally balanced sets of access stairs leading under the tower and onto the central, east-west axis. Galleries were to either side. However, the Bloomsbury Way façade is clearly the presentational one of most importance and it is here that we are given a grand portico. This would only have been properly used once the parishioners – moved by the inconvenience of it all – switched to a north-south axis in 1781, removing the north gallery and adding new ones to east and west. Now that, ironically, the church has few parishioners and many more tourist visitors, all this has been changed back to the original schema in the recent restoration (which includes the reinstatement of the south gallery). But the character of the design begs one to forgive such fundamental faults – forgive, that is, if one enjoys what was once called a Gothic, irregular and heavy ('Greco-Gothic') manner – which the later neo-Palladians did not. This is not a quiet and still architecture. It is idiosyncratic, restless and robust, dramatic and assertive – until, that is, one penetrates to its heart. It is combinatory, allowing the parts considerable independent latitude before their conformance to an overall schema holds them in place. We appear to have a concern of moving from parts to the whole, rather than from the whole to parts. But the counterpoint is a still centre symbolised and effected by the cube.



Below: *schema and model*
Opposite page: *interior looking north.*



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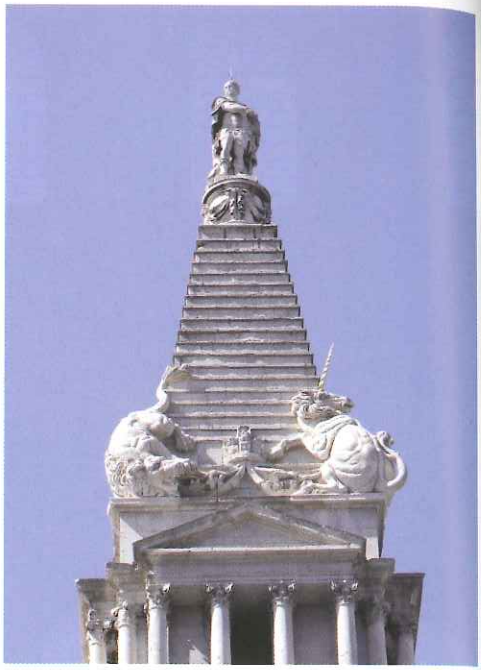
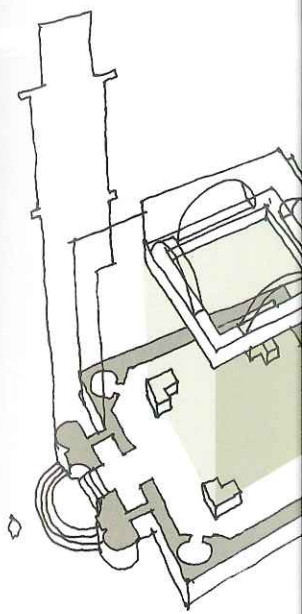


***Above**: St George, south front.*
***Top right**: The 'beasts' at the feet of George Ist were removed in 1871 by G.E. Street and only recently restored (2007).*

It has been argued this approach – of an assertive, combinatory exterior and a still centre – is an interesting reflection of Restoration England that was already out of accord with emerging tastes (as seen, for example, in Lord Shaftesbury's writing of the early years of the 1700s concerning good taste and a socially unifying 'common sense'). It is equally intriguing to find that this architectural character was deemed to be both ponderous and essentially 'Gothic'. It is an architecture of 'effect' in the sense that an impact is made upon the observer, who then must work to assemble individual effects into an architectonic whole – in the manner that Cicero had discussed the 'officium' and 'finis' of an orator, or Vitruvius had been concerned with 'intent' and the 'expression of the intent' with an implicit regard for effect on an audience. One's mind is meant to 'range' across the parts and seek out 'similitudes' and 'associations' (often historical). It is necessary to exert oneself in order to engage and grasp the architecture, rather than enjoy a comparatively passive – even inattentive – relationship.

Summerson saw Hawksmoor as a widely read man, fascinated by all things Roman: *"there is a streak of Gothic retrospection. Sometimes, it is evident, Hawksmoor is trying to work out Roman equivalents of Gothic compositions, to obtain medieval effects with components as nearly as possible antique. Naturally, it is in his turrets and steeples that this propensity is most evident."* And Kerry Downes remarks that Hawksmoor's art was *"essentially one of masses and spaces rather than of decorative detail. Architects have always worked from precedents; Hawksmoor sought them anywhere in the past or present, from the primitive to the increasingly fashionable neo-Palladianism of his maturity, extracting whatever could be used to move the beholder and eschewing the dogmatic and restrictive taste of Palladian orthodoxy which, for him, was 'but dress[ing] things in Masquerade."* In the end, Hawksmoor remains a 'difficult' architect, sometimes too difficult: one occasionally longs to touch upon that repose he clearly sought to realise but sometimes missed. His reputation has risen immensely in the last thirty or forty years, but then just about every architect one can think of has become grist to the mill of tourist content in that same period. Hawksmoor, however, will surely never be merely entertaining: his works demand a different sort of work from those who engage them.



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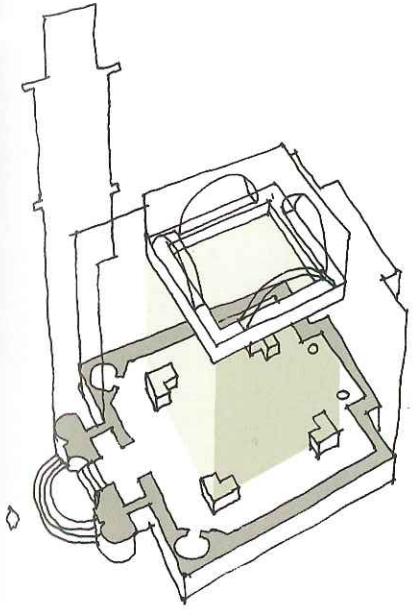


St Mary Woolnoth, 1716-27

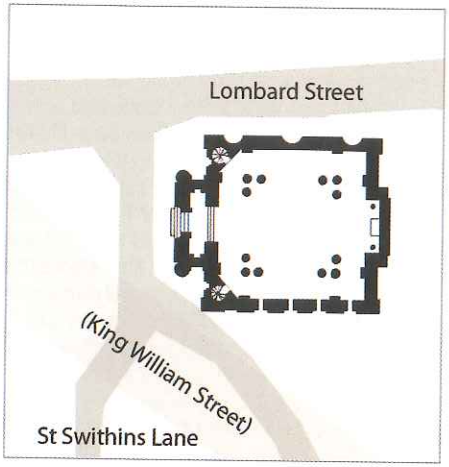
Historical change at St Mary of the Nativity began a long time ago – when William Butterfield arrived tin 1875 to remodel the interior by taking away the two galleries. However, as with many of the City churches, one is looking at a reincarnation that dates back to at least 1191. There was then a church of 1438 that burnt in the Great Fire, had Wren repair it in 1674, but was finally replaced by Hawksmoor's work. The reredos (the decorated screen behind an altar), pulpit and plasterwork are all Hawksmoor's – as are the incongruous pair of doors that float half-way up the west wall and once led onto the galleries. Butterfield stuck the fronts of the galleries to the walls, cut down the tall pews, added a platform and steps to the altar (thus requiring that the reredos be raised) and coloured tiles to Hawksmoor's black and white flooring.

In the original design, only the north and west façades were readily visible; the south side was not fully revealed until King William Street was constructed and the east side has always been relatively concealed. In other words the west front was not designed to be seen as we see it now and the tower would, of course, have been much higher than surrounding buildings. (This may be commonplace in Italy, but the nearest London parallel is perhaps Terry Farrell's Charing Cross Station contemporary façade on the narrow Villiers Street.)

However, one has to approach the historical dimension of the City churches with circumspection: it is useful, but as a *via negativa*, i.e. in an endeavour to strip away the layers of change and general entropic erosion that eat away at an original architectural schema which, only then, can achieve a proper appearance.

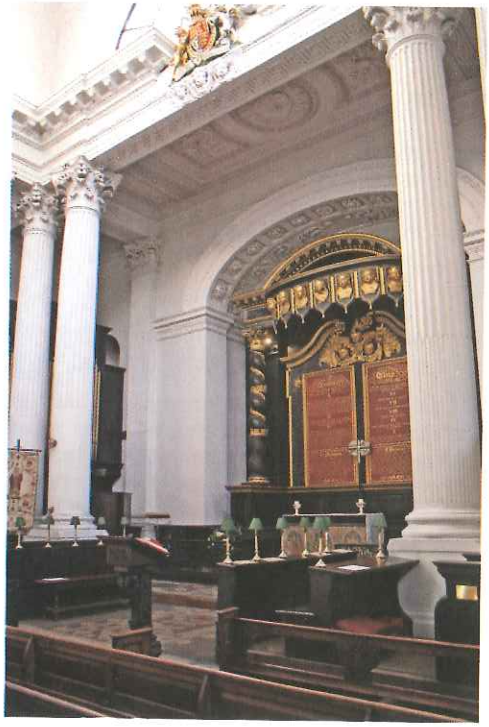
Apparently, the church was threatened with demolition five times between the 1840s and 1920 and is lucky to have survived. In fact, it is remarkable that St Mary Woolnoth has survived, even in the state it is in: complete with an Underground station and a Starbuck's housed in an 1897 'Wrenaissance' insinuation that has nestled up to Hawksmoor's edifice as witness to the skill of late-Victorian engineers. The church stands like some sad old man: alone, neglected, unnoticed – even here, at the heart of the City.

***Top**: the cruelly rusticated west front of St Mary Woolnoth – one of the marvels of London's architecture.*
***Left**: the arrangement of the church, with a stable, geometric and spatialised cube at the heart of its schema.*



***Above**: the site plan of St Mary Woolnoth, indicating the original street alignments, before King William Street was constructed. This is now difficult to appreciate; the thunderous traffic along King William Street must be utterly different to the comparatively quiet side street off Lombard, in 1727, when the church was completed. One should attempt to look at the west façade in these terms.*

***Below**: the interior of St Mary Woolnoth, looking east. The galleries were removed by William Butterfield in 1875.*

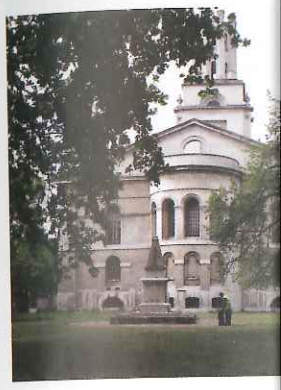


St George-in-the-East, 1714-34

There is something quite wonderful in finding that, within the dramatic shell of St George, there nestles a 1964 church. It is not just the exhibition of different circumstances and religious concerns (or lack of them), but the shallow romance associated with the inhabitation of 'as-found' ruins (one thinks of how the Roman Colosseum once was). Hawksmoor is here nearer to those Roman references he enjoyed than he could ever have imagined. That intruding inhabitant is rather lacklustre: a simple, utilitarian post-war affair, but not one without its own ordinary charms which await the financing of a degree of harmonisation with Hawksmoor's work. It even manages to incorporate the Hawksmoor apse. And yet, of course, it is the 'mannerist' outside shell that impresses and is so essentially Hawksmoor. One has to imagine it as a populous suburban edifice welcoming its parishioners into the various openings that allowed them to crowd in to the nave and the galleries. The current difficulty is a disjunction between the contemporary lives of those parishioners and the cultural import lent to what remains of the building by the intelligentsia (what T.S. Eliot differentiated as culture and Culture, a concept paralleling Wren's belief in Positive and Arbitrary causes of beauty). The church was originally passed down from above by the Rulers of Taste to the unbelieving masses and this remains the essence of the predominating cultural equation. However, everyone now indulges in nostalgia, even the inhabitants of the local estates (the gentry of Wapping, across the road, surely go no where near the place) and St George as a shell possibly has, strangely enough, as much relevance as ever.

***Above**: the new church within the old shell of St George-in-the-East.*

***Opposite page**: three views of Hawksmoor's St George-in-the-East*



a man in vogue

James Gibbs 1682–1754

The man who is born into a Scottish Roman Catholic family, who lives for many years in Rome, who dies a Catholic and yet, somehow, manages to maintain a very successful career serving a Protestant aristocracy in a power structure deeply suspicious of anything Catholic is surely an interesting architect. John Summerson described Gibbs as, *"one of the most individual of English architects. Not a profound innovator [he] possessed an ability to select and combine the characteristics of other architects and fuse them into a style of his own."* That 'style' included the design of a church typology – St Martin-in-the-Fields, at Trafalgar Square – that has been widely copied, all over the English-speaking world.

Gibbs's influence also came, in part, from two published works: the very influential *Book of Architecture*, 1728, which mainly contains his own work; and *Rules for drawing the Several Parts of Architecture*, 1732. Wittkower suggested that such works are among the publications of the early C18th that are of equal importance to what was built: *"these works seal and break with the past."*

He points out two considerations. The first is a political context of inclinations that were, relatively speaking, democratic. This was architecturally manifest in the novel significance and import given to works that, once upon a time, have been so low in a hierarchy from churches to utilitarian buildings that they had been, until the C18th, 'without art' and of no concern to architects. *"English Neo-Palladianism"*, noted Wittkower (that period within which Gibbs' career features), *"opened the road to an almost functional approach to such buildings [as farms, for example] for modern need."* Architectural publications around the middle of the century onward now referred to farm-houses, cottages, and even labourers' dwellings.

Wittkower also noted that, *"From about the middle of the century one began to see classical antiquity with new eyes: the variable rather than the static quality of ancient architecture began to attract attention."* Gibbs' second book is interesting in this context. It picks up on a radical keynote in the work of Claude Perrault, published in France in 1683 and in England in 1708 and 1722. Here, Perrault offers the somewhat scandalous argument that, although there are two causes of beauty, the Natural or Positive and the Arbitrary or Customary, that pleasure is nevertheless largely derived from custom and habituation. This, combined with the observable inconsistencies of the Ancients, suggested a need to give reference to the Customary as well as to invite the simplification and better ordering of the classical Orders. The latter is what Gibbs picked upon and took a step further, further simplifying the Orders.

Gibbs's extant London works include:

- **St Mary-le-Strand**, 1714-17; interior refitted 1871. This was not, originally to have had such a large tower. It was designed for a simple bell-turret and a nearby monumental column to Queen Anne. In the event, Gibbs was asked to enlarge the tower to what it is now.
- **St Clements Danes steeple**, 1719. Completing Wren's church and Gibbs's 1719 design for the steeple.
- **Octagon** 1720, Orleans House, Twickenham (the house itself was demolished,1927).
- **St Peter's Church**, 1721-24, Vere St., off Oxford Street.
- **St Martin-in-the-Fields**, 1722-26.Trafalgar Square. Perhaps Gibbs's most famous work. Interior altered by Sir A.W. Blomfield in 1887. Recent works to crypt etc. (2007-08) by John McAslan.
- **Sudbrook Park**, 1726-28, Petersham Road, Richmond. Now Richmond Golf Club.
- **St Bartholomew Hospital**, 1730-59. Smithfield. Now rather obscurely lost amid hospital life, but an interesting place to visit (see St Barts-the-Less and St Barts-the-Great).

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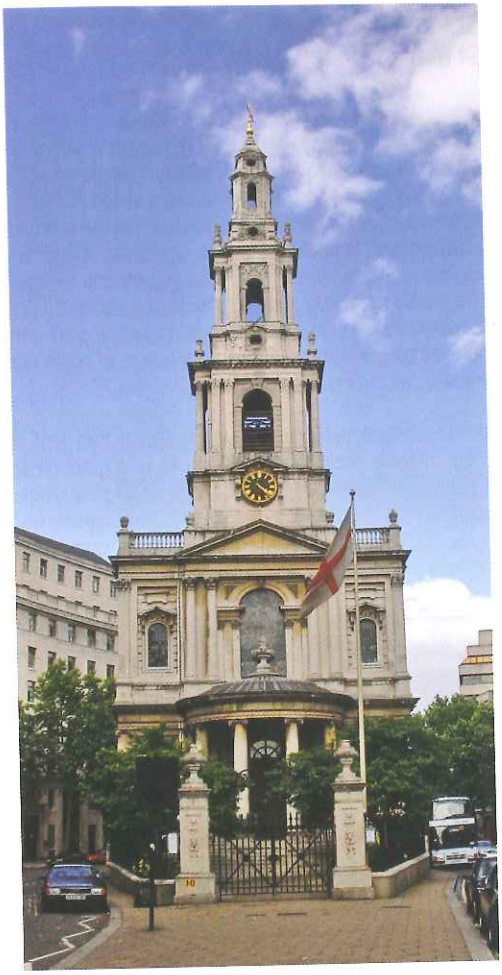
Gibbs was born in Aberdeen, son of a prosperous Catholic merchant. On his parents' deaths in 1700 he travelled to the Netherlands and then on to Rome. Less than a year later he turned to painting, for which he showed considerable talent. He remained in Rome until 1708, initially in order to train as a priest; however he was ejected from the Scots College there and later entered the architectural studio of Carlo Fontana (then the leading Roman architect), returning to London in 1709 where he immediately appears to have been well connected and have his unique training well received (for example, undertaking a courtyard with wings for Richard Boyle, at Burlington House, 1708-15).

By 1713 Gibbs had secured a co-surveyorship, together with Nicholas Hawksmoor, to the commissioners appointed for the building of fifty new churches that were to bring religion to the masses of burgeoning London. His first church, St Mary-le-Strand (1714), was a major contribution to the dominant Baroque of Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh (then effectively running Wren's office). However, it has been noted that Gibbs' Catholic faith, Tory sentiments and Baroque architecture were not entirely in tune with emerging fashions and political events: the Whigs in power, neo-Palladianism as the newly dominant taste, and a new King, George I, who, in 1714, not long after the union of England and Scotland in 1707, came to the throne midst all kinds of political complications between England, Scotland, the Protestants and Catholics, Tories and Whigs. St Mary's was deemed blatantly 'Roman' and Gibbs, suspected of being both Tory and a Catholic, lost his surveyorship in 1715 (an affair in which Colen Campbell - who had studiously omitted Gibbs from his edition of *Vitruvius Britanicus*, of that same year, appears to have played a role).

Nevertheless, Gibbs became the Tory country house architect of choice and even attracted patronage from Whigs, including that of Lord Burlington, for whom he created an entrance forecourt to Burlington House, in Piccadilly, 1715-16 (dem. 1858). By 1720 Horace Walpole could declare that Gibbs was the architect 'most in vogue'. It was in that year that he was appointed to design St Martin's, completed in 1726. In 1721-4 he completed a chapel-of-ease for the Earl of Oxford's estate around Cavendish Square – what is now St Peter's, Vere Street. However, by then the' Baroque inclinations of Gibbs were less fashionable than a more cool neo-Palladianism, which was, in any case, more of a Whig fashion, and Gibbs' style had to shift accordingly.

Perhaps it is this that prompted John Summerson to summarise the importance of Gibbs as follows: *"He belongs to no school, and although he was widely imitated his contribution to the further development of English architecture was slight. He is best described as the delayed fulfilment of Wren, as a brilliant continuator of a chapter closed about 1692, when the Vanbrugh-Hawksmoor episode began."* Nevertheless, works such as St Mary-le-Strand and St Martin-in-the-Fields remain among the more impressive of London's churches.



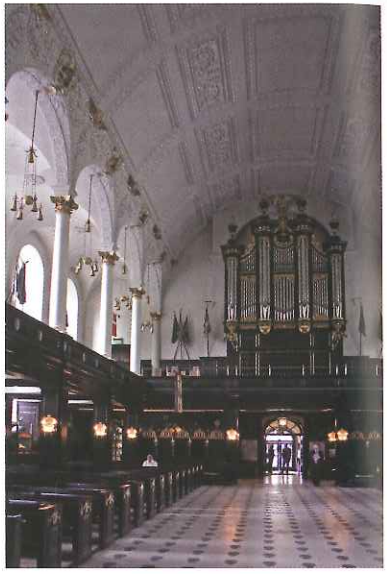
***Above**: St Mary-le-Strand, now islanded in the Strand, but still a well proportioned church with a fine interior (also a living church, where there are regular services). The two-storey schema of the west façade of St Mary-le-Strand. The interior of the church is a simple, single volume with an ornate, elliptical ceiling worth comparing with St Martins-in-the-Fields. In fact, St Martins, St Mary, and St Clements Danes make a fine trio to visit, especially in the context of seeking out the mediation of Gibbs' work between the baroque of Wren et al and the neo-Palladianism of Burlington's circle (and even of William Chambers, whose Somerset House stands opposite St Mary-le-Strand). See overleaf.*

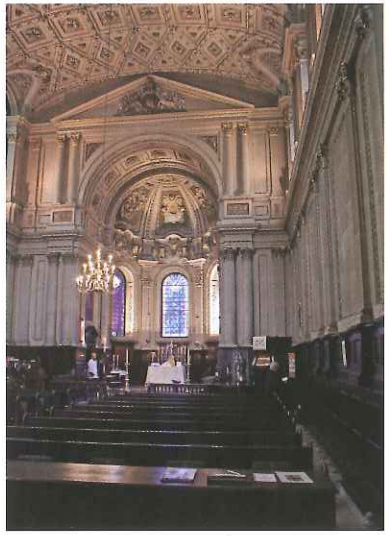
St Mary-le-Strand, 1714-17.
St Martin-in-the-Field, 1722-26.

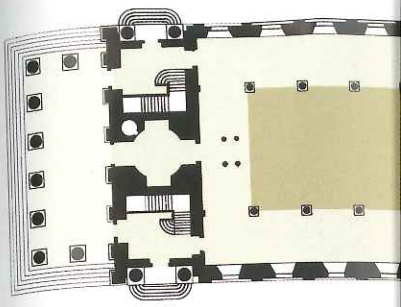
Gibbs' most famous building in London stands in contrast to most of the City churches and their compromised inventiveness. The church is prominently sited, stand-alone and large, and attempts to unify all its parts into an orderly whole that has none of the agitated assertiveness of Hawksmoor. In particular, it marries portico, vestibule, the body of the church and a tower in a manner that suggests a refined Christianisation of the Classical temple and strikes a note of accord with new tastes that Wren and Hawksmoor *et al* could not satisfy.

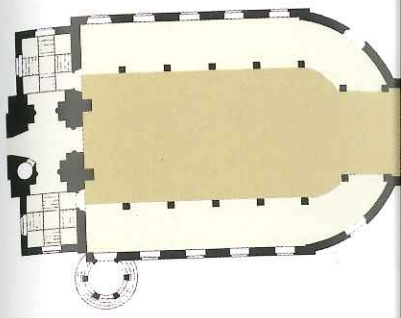
Unlike St Mary-le-Strand – which Gibbs had lent a more intimate scale, avoiding the use of a giant order by stacking storey-height orders and lending the whole what Summerson refers to as 'rhythmical complexity' – St Martin's strides forward as a more grand and pretentious statement. But the church becomes all the more interesting in the context of St Mary-le-Strand (a church which, like St Paul's, has a two-storey scheme for the west façade) and also of the Wren church with a Gibbs steeple (of 1719) that sits just further east: St Clement Danes (1680-82; gutted in World War II and restored in 1958).

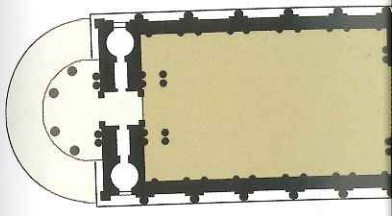
St Martin's takes elements from both these churches. For example, the roof of St Mary is an elliptical curve covered with decorative plaster work – which is what Gibbs provides at St Martin's. However, the latter church is aisled and the columnation and side galleries are taken from Wren's St Clement church (note the underside vaulting). The large portico serves as an external room and allows direct access through three doors to the nave and two galleries. Inside, there is a strong, enwrapping enclosure formed by the arched aisle columns and, importantly, by the ceiling. The overall impression is very successful, but the other two churches are possibly more rewarding. St Clement Danes is novel among the Wren parish churches, possessing fully-rounded arches sitting upon the pillars supporting the galleries. Light floods in from either side, both below and above the galleries. The restoration – absolutely accurate or not – is superb. Similarly, Gibbs' church has an exquisite combination of simplicity and well-proportioned detail. Perhaps St Martin, when restored (currently under way in 2008) will match these other two and justify its reputation.



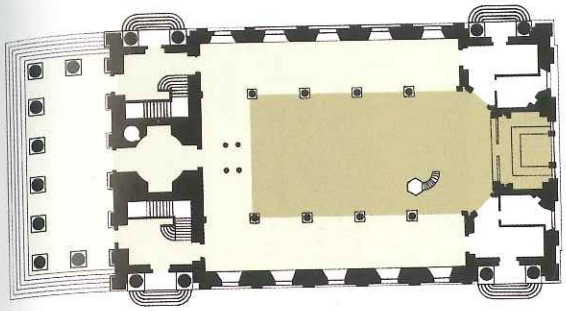


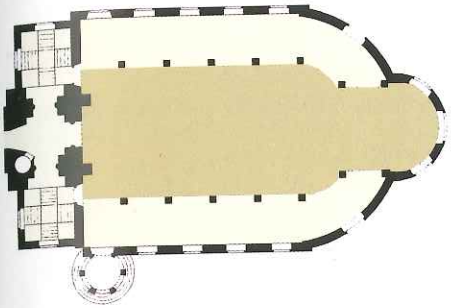


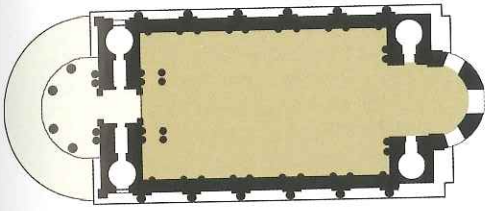




***Top**: St Martin-in-the Fields (Gibbs). The church has recently had below ground modifications by John McAslan (2008).*
***Middle**: interior of St Clement Danes (Wren)*
***Bottom**: interior of St Mary-Le-Strand (Gibbs)*







Left: *comparative plans of (from the top): St Martin-in-the-Fields, St Clement Danes and St Mary-le-Strand. Note the compactness of St Mary and the architectonic clarity of St Martin, which now has a full temple frontage.*

Below left*: interior of St Martin-in-the-Fields. Note the elliptical ceiling (which approaches the vaulting Wren gave to St Clement Danes) and the full entablature on top of the columns – a curious Gibbs device.*

Below*: interior (beneath a gallery) of St Clement Danes (Wren; just east of St Mary). Gibbs does something similar at St Martin.*

Bottom *exterior of St Mary-le-Strand.*

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Soane & Nash

After Adam and Chambers, two figures dominate the view of London's architecture during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: John Soane and John Nash. In contrast to their predecessors, these are recognisably modern figures: no longer amateurs, but quasi professional. However, they practised in a period when the vocational 'disinterest' that was supposed to characterise the twentieth century professional remained a blurred issue in which architecture, art and development were thoroughly intermixed (and to which, to some extent, we have returned). Soane, for example, died in the year the Institute of Architects (founded as a club in 1791) gained its Royal Charter and became the Royal Institute. However, winning this celebrated status at the end of a long history associated with the Rule of Taste and about the time young Queen Victoria came onto the throne was also the beginning of a problematic period in the history of Britain's architects.

In particular, the long period of Victoria's rule became witness to contentious moves building upon the Royal Charter and aspiring toward that form of market monopoly in exchange for service to the state and self-regulation that goes by the name of professionalism. Architects were still a crudely defined body during much of this transitional period. And most of them had become familiar with kinds of practice accepted as the norm by the Adam brothers but increasingly frowned upon by the likes of Chambers and Soane. The Rule if taste was, as it were, a coin whose flip side was the practice of architecture as a blatant form of self-service and conflict of interest of a kind we would, now deem to be distinctly sleazy. Professionalism (rooted in the notion of a 'professed' and disinterested vocation) was an ideal that cut right across dubious practices, applying the values inherent in an *noblesse oblige* to the world of commercial and mundane civil interactions.

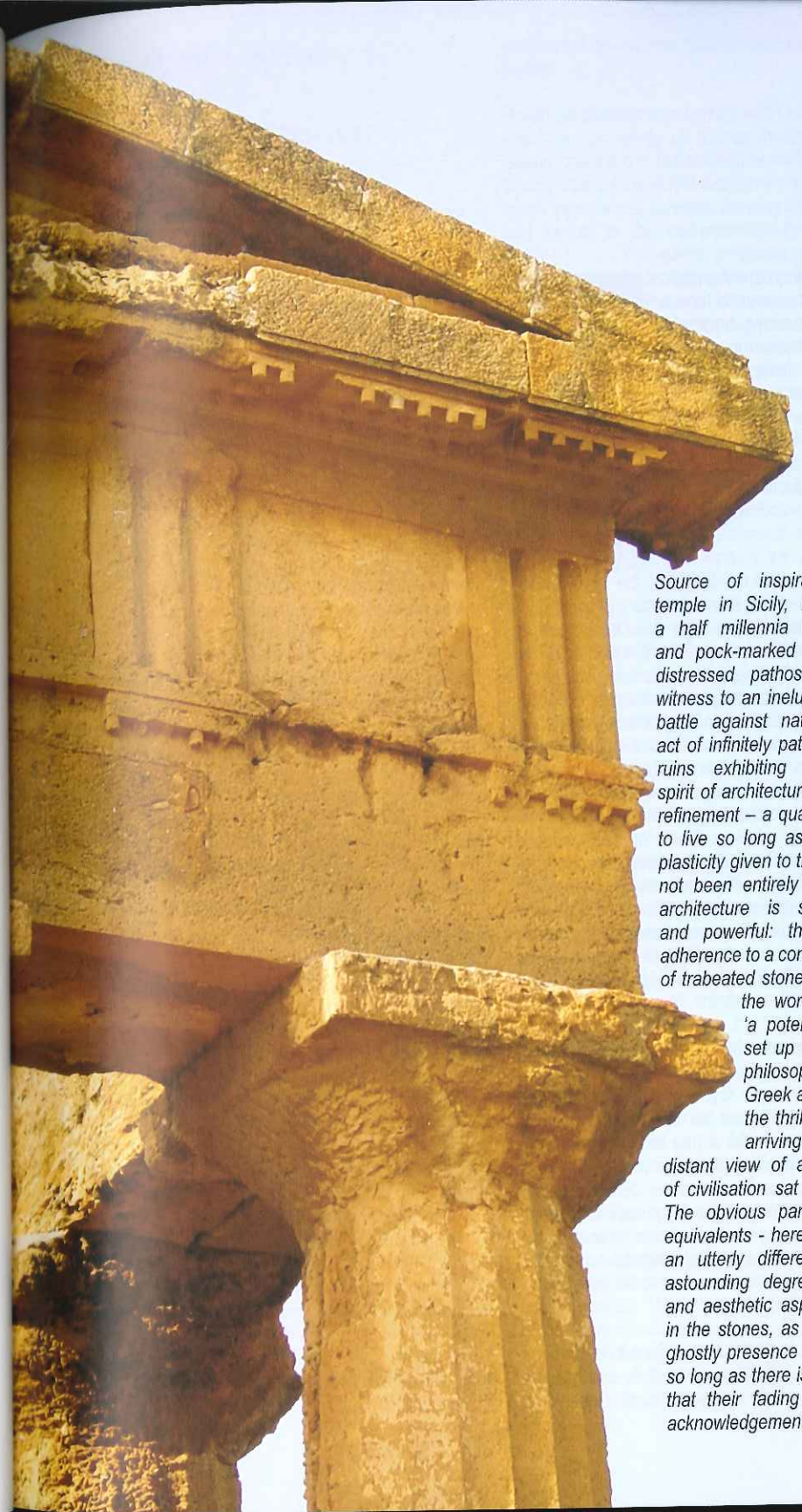
But the notion of professionalism arose more or less in parallel with forms of aesthetic differentiation elevating the artist to a peculiar status of professed and idealised vocational commitment which, ironically, gave the professional ideal within an architectural tradition all the appearances of an expert and tradesmanlike attitude of mind at odds with the more elevated stance of the artist. From the latter's perspective architectural practice was associated with society's highest cultural endeavours, i.e. art, rather than contrasting entrepreneurial activities despoiling the land and people's values. But the reality was, and still is, that the practice of architecture is not an end in itself, but bound to the purposive ends it serves. While the professional ideal sought to address the issue of expert and disinterested service to society, the artistic ideal pulled away into a realm of deeply personalised ideality.

It was to take many years to resolve this struggle of opposed mind-sets, but a registration Bill finally did go through Parliament in 1934. However, societal trust went only so far and gave registrational and disciplinary controls over to a separate body from the RIBA – a body that, to this day, remains a club or, as the Times once described it midst Victoria's reign, the architect's trades union.

Nash was an architect who speculated in the manner of the Adam brothers. But Soane, his contemporary, is associated with this history of professionalism not only because he died in the year of the Charter (and when the first register of assistants seeking work was published, together with an evening lecture on 'dry rot'), two years after having being awarded the first of the Institute's Gold Medals, but because his name is closely associated with a nascent professional ideal.

Soane's reputation in this respect is possibly best illustrated by his attitude to training his young staff in their chosen vocation. Briggs (*The Architect in History*), tells us that Soane, *"gave his pupils plenty of practical work, including surveying, measuring, costing, and superintendence [he himself ran the Bank of England job, with a general contractor], as well as the making of working drawings ... He also established a brilliant academy of fine draftsmanship ... His very beautiful drawings made to illustrate lectures were prepared in his own office, and it is not too much to say that the production of these drawings formed a valuable part of the training provided for his pupils. It is interesting to note that during the 53 years of Soane's practice no less than 357 architectural studies were admitted to the Royal Academy exhibitions from Soane's office staff under their own names ... Probably, with about three possible exceptions, no architect since his time has ever provided in his own office – and that a busy office – such a complete or refined education for pupils."*

Professionalism in its colloquial sense of properly and honestly doing one's vocational job had, of course, a long history within the building trades. But the issue of professionalism arose with reference to speculative



Source of inspiration: a Doric temple in Sicily, nearly two and a half millennia old, its eroded and pock-marked face bearing a distressed pathos lending silent witness to an ineluctable and mute battle against nature's proverbial act of infinitely patient reclamation; ruins exhibiting an indomitable spirit of architectural aspiration and refinement – a quality that appears to live so long as any hint of the plasticity given to the limestone had not been entirely eradicated.Such architecture is simple, massive and powerful: the single-minded adherence to a constraining tectonic of trabeated stonework. One reads the words in the Guide: 'a potent cultural action set up alongside poetry, philosophy and the other Greek arts' and imagines the thrill of weary sailors arriving off-shore to the distant view of a shining symbol of civilisation sat upon the hilltop. The obvious parallel is Egyptian equivalents - here, interplayed with an utterly different and veritably astounding degree of intellectual and aesthetic aspiration embodied in the stones, as if some obdurate ghostly presence refusing to depart so long as there is the least chance that their fading echo might find acknowledgement.

masons rather than mechanical ones. Jones, Wren, and Hawksmoor appear to have enjoyed a vocational commitment embracing a more or less 'professional' attitude. And Hooke, in particular, was noted for his scrupulous honesty and considered attention to commissioned responsibilities. But, from the late eighteenth century on, associations of architects and surveyors slowly began to match concerns of legitimacy and style with core issues of professionalism in a modern state: education, expertise, codes of practice, an ethic of service and a capacity for self-regulation and self-discipline.

What was to become the battle of the styles which was to adopt neo-Hegelian undertones concerning a style appropriate to the age was shadowed by this other, professional, issue. From the end of the eighteenth century onward, for example, we see a novel formalisation creeping into training: a shift from apprenticeship to being articled, and then from lectures at the Academy schools to the first full-time schools of architecture. In the background (apart from issues of instrumental values, new technologies, needs and the like) was new emphasis given to disinterest when serving clients, as well as kinds of class change that slowly drew to an end that period when joiners, masons and the like could comparatively easily (with patronage, perhaps) make a transition from 'operative' to 'speculative status. Eventually, architects were to achieve the civic status accorded to clerics, doctors and lawyers, but which engineers realised long before them.

Among the landmarks of historic transition during Victoria's reign was the Great Exhibition of 1851. Architects subscribing to Pevsner's history of Modernism take that event as a notable beginning of its slow emergence, but it has been described by one historian of engineering as a creative sunset mistaken for a sunrise. It was in the decades before the Exhibition that British engineering made its greatest achievements. And it was also in those years that we see the emergence of the general contractor: men such as Thomas Cubitt. Architecture was to be assailed by change from many directions.

Later – by the time the RIBA had achieved Registration in 1934 and the so-called George VI style was in vogue as an inter-war period counterpoint to Continental Modernism – the Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn was a quaint institution literally existing in the foggy shadows, awaiting rediscovery in latter years as grist to the mill of modern cultural tourism. In the City, what is reputed to have been Soane's masterpiece – the Bank of England – barely survived as a slightly modified but still remarkable screen wall that succeeded in backgrounding Herbert Baker's new work that towered above its parapet (see page 246).

Similarly, Nash's achievements in Regent Street – after years of neglect – had been recently demolished, prompting a fierce debate in a cultural climate still ambivalent toward long rows of Georgian terraces as well as the deplored achievements of Victoria's era. The period was conscious that something special had been lost and that the bombast of the imperialist architecture that replaced the Regent Street arcades was, on the whole, perhaps a less than satisfactory replacement. Nevertheless, his speculative artfulness in realising the 'Royal Mile' from the Mall to Regent's Park was, in itself, a monument to the architect and remains a unique example of London urbanism (and an inspiration to Terry Farrell's proposals for London). And, in the park itself, his remaining terraces were splendid (if then ignored) and rather dilapidated 'ornaments' to London's urban fabric.

If we make another historical leap forward, to the post-war period, we find Nash's terraces in Regent's Park being saved from demolition and restored to high-value status. And, in Dulwich, we find the mausoleum created there by Soane having survived ageing, war damage and indifference to enter an era of contemporary art galleries and be rediscovered by those who, merely a generation or more beforehand, would have rejected the place.

But it is Soane's comparatively small family house, museum, studio and gallery in Lincoln's Inn that sparkles with a rare quality of architectural gamesmanship and enthusiasm that is also, in another guise, evident at Chiswick House and is otherwise largely absent from publicly accessible works. Ironically, that enthusiasm has nothing to do with Royal Institutes and whether or not the practice of architecture is a profession or an art. It is simply a love of architecture itself – what is to be appreciated on its own terms.

the tall, thin tyrant

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Ironically, Soane's first commission upon his return was an essay in the rustic or primitive hut manner, based on arc-Antoine Laugier's influential *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753). At this time he was also an avid reader of Goethe and Rousseau. This interest in 'origins' as the source of sound architecture was never to leave him, leading to all kinds of studies that influenced his later lectures, e.g. studies of the origins of language, architecture, ornament, religious and sexual symbolism, primitive

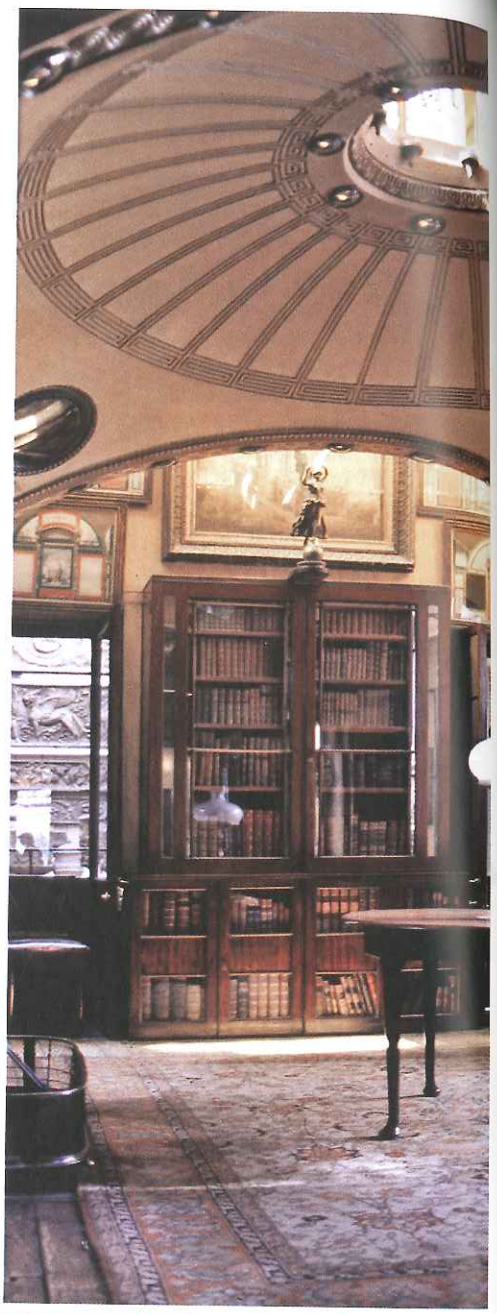
customs, laws, and religion. It was along these lines that, in 1813, he became an active Freemason.

In 1784 Soane married the niece of George Wyatt, who died in 1790 and left his daughter an inheritance that helped to purchase property in Lincoln's Inn. In 1792 Soane purchased no. 12; in 1813 he acquired the no. 13; and in 1823 he purchased no. 14. This reworked set of three Georgian town houses was bequeathed to the nation and managed to survive as a unique glimpse into the mind of Soane. But the house's failure to please even his son, George, is indicative of both the criticism Soane was occasionally suffering and relations with his children: "*The exterior*", wrote George, in 1815, "*from its exceeding heaviness and monumental gloom, seems as if it were intended to convey a satire upon himself; it looks like a record of the departed, and can only mean that considering himself as deficient in that better part of humanity – the mind and its affections – he has reared this mausoleum for the enshrinement of his body.*" This deeply personal attack was merely another aspect of criticism that first emerged in 1796 when an anonymous critic published a poem claiming that Sir Christopher Wren would have been pained to see "*pilasters scor'd like loin of pork [...] the Order in confusion move, Scroles fixed below and Pedestals above [... and] defiance hurled at Greece and Rome.*" Similarly, in 1801, he purchased Pitzhanger Manor, in Ealing – rebuilt, apparently, as a design vehicle for teaching his sons architecture (he was, so it seems, an autocratic father) – for which neither of cared much, to Soane's bitter disappointment. By 1810 this was clear, and the house was sold.

In 1788 Soane won the position of architect to the Bank of England (succeeding Sir Robert Taylor). Work soon began that lasted until 1833. However, only the perimeter screen wall now remains. In 1806 he succeeded George Dance as professor of architecture at the Royal Academy – something Soane saw as the climax of his career. There followed an exhaustively detailed set of lectures on the history of architecture culminating in criticisms of contemporary work that resulted in the lectures being suspended until 1813 – the resumption of which was handled so erratically that it led some people to consider Soane to be going mad. That speculation might, in fact, have had some basis: his sons continued to give him immense trouble and he blamed one of them for the death of his wife, in 1815.

It was around this time that Soane designed a mausoleum at Dulwich (1811-14), for his friend Sir Francis Bourgeois (now the Dulwich Picture Gallery) and a work strongly influencing Robert Venturi when working on the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery project (see page 412).

In 1831 he was knighted and later was awarded the Institute of Architecture's first Gold Medal. But all the while he continued to be an enthusiastic self-publicist (a preoccupation that remains, to this day, a constant feature of many an architect's practice). He was buried at St Pancras Parish Church, north of the St Pancras station, in a mausoleum of his own design (in which his wife is also buried).



***Above**: the Soane Museum's breakfast room.*

There is delight and regret in Soane, a man of raw ambition and probity, of humour and bitterness, and what he had to say and what he did in Lincoln's Inn are, perhaps, the content of an architectural psychologist's dream. As a self-confessed lover of architecture he surrounded himself with the subject as a fluidity of historicity and values firmly rooted in the epochal sensibilities of his day and vicissitudes of his own fate. Soane held antiquity in high esteem, but was convinced that the proper resort of such sentiments in England was in the Gothic of the Middle Ages. At a time when fashions enjoying ruins as romantic garden follies was transmogrifying into something less enchanted and more morally qualified, Soane insinuated into the strange place that was his home, office, gallery and museum elements that, possibly, were as much stabilisers of his emotional metabolism as they were expressions of his delight in all architecture and its profoundly historical contents. This is no more evident than in a basement suite constructed at no.14: the Monk's Yard, Cell and Parlour, constructed from bits and pieces salvaged from works at Westminster Palace and from Soane's own fantasies. Here was the refuge o Padre Giovanni: a hermit – a curious fellow much to comfortable teas with friends and the consumpt sufficient wine that it could provide bottle ends s the paving of the yard.

***Above**: the So Pancras old Ch*

Here is a man who played seriously, wrestlin his entangled inner reflections as much as wi complex issues of realising fantasies within the co of his residence. We witness much of this in a p document – at once irreverent, humorous and satirical – in his *Crude Hints Towards A History House*, of 1812, written some twelve years the Monk's Parlour was created. Here, he archaeologists and their speculations, looking to a future time when their spades would reveal parts of his house that would variously suggest a temple, a chapel, a place of burial and a prison.

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The Soane Museum
1808-37

We are told that the Bank of England was Sir John Soane's masterpiece, but we have no way, apart from historical hearsay, of knowing whether or not this is true. Direct experience is absent from the appraisal, although the remaining expanse of external walling gives clues to this architects capabilities: defensive, almost windowless and doorless, yet grand and urbane despite its function to exclude and defend. However, there is an easier way to reassure oneself about the capability of this architect: a visit to the home he left to the nation, now the Soane Museum. It is a marvellously vital place: at once family home, architects office, gallery, and a display cabinet of architectural bits and pieces that manifests exhibits Soane's appreciation of architecture's potent nature. However, apart from the dense mix of disparate uses, spaces, features, fittings, and objects, the Soane house is a marvellous architectonic exercise: a veritable cabinet of curiosities.

***Above**: the Soane family vault at St Pancras old Church.*

There is delight and regret in Soane, a man of raw ambition and probity, of humour and bitterness, and what he had to say and what he did in Lincoln's Inn are, perhaps, the content of an architectural psychologist's dream. As a self-confessed lover of architecture he surrounded himself with the subject as a fluidity of historicity and values firmly rooted in the epochal sensibilities of his day and vicissitudes of his own fate. Soane held antiquity in high esteem, but was convinced that the proper resort of such sentiments in England was in the Gothic of the Middle Ages. At a time when fashions enjoying ruins as romantic garden follies was transmogrifying into something less enchanted and more morally qualified, Soane insinuated into the strange place that was his home, office, gallery and museum elements that, possibly, were as much stabilisers of his emotional metabolism as they were expressions of his delight in all architecture and its profoundly historical contents. This is no more evident than in a basement suite constructed at no.14: the Monk's Yard, Cell and Parlour, constructed from bits and pieces salvaged from works at Westminster Palace and from Soane's own fantasies. Here was the refuge of one Padre Giovanni: a hermit – a curious fellow much given to comfortable teas with friends and the consumption of sufficient wine that it could provide bottle ends set into the paving of the yard.

Here is a man who played seriously, wrestling with his entangled inner reflections as much as with the complex issues of realising fantasies within the confines of his residence. We witness much of this in a peculiar document – at once irreverent, humorous and bitingly satirical – in his *Crude Hints Towards A History of My House*, of 1812, written some twelve years before the Monk's Parlour was created. Here, he mocks archaeologists and their speculations, looking forward to a future time when their spades would reveal ruined parts of his house that would variously suggest a Roman temple, a chapel, a place of burial and a prison.

Anticipating Semper's later work, and taking his cue from studies in Rome and earlier Laugier's work on the primitive hut, Soane soaked himself in ruminations upon the archaic, primitive underpinnings of architecture. Here was a subject he was in love with and celebrated on a daily basis. Architecture was alive. And Soane was in constant dialogue with it, just as it spoke to him. He related to its fragments as if they bore within themselves that strange mythic quality of the whole of which they were once an integral part. The topic of origins was, at once, crucial to an archi-tectural fabrication and the creation of a charged commodiousness, just as it was the vehicle of a school-boyish enthusiasm for collecting and showing off. Like a Wittgenstein that would go from awesomely obsessing over construction details to the front-row stimulations of a Hollywood flick, Soane went from equally serious aspects of his architectural work to the enormous fun of candle-lit parties at which his collection was displayed to friends and colleagues.

***Above**: rooms in the Soane Museum (reception room; double picture wall; first floor drawing room).*
***Opposite page**: beneath the rear dome, looking east, with a bust of Soane in the centre.*

The scene of these events is a story of three adjacent terrace houses acquired, stripped of key rear parts and partly sold off, and of an on-going cobbling together that was a lifetime's project with obscure beginnings and no particular end except that which old age and experience drew to a close.

The story begins with marriage to the daughter of a wealthy builder, inheritance and the design and construction of no. 12, in 1792. He was already collecting from this period and, in 1808, he purchased the freehold of the adjacent house, no.13, acquiring its rear yard (where the Dome is) for an office extended off from the main house. Access to the office was from the rear entrance. By 1812 he was rebuilding no. 13 but, sadly, his wife died two years later; however, he had been able to move out of no. 12. In 1823 he purchased no,14 and again used its rear yard (where the Monk's Parlour and current Picture Room are), walling off what is now the western Picture Room, later acquired by the Trustees after Soane's death. This room had been used as a part of the office ('E' and 'N' in the plan).

By now the house was famous and John Britton published a book called *The Union of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting* in 1827, with Soane himself publishing *Description of the Residence of John Soane, Architect* in 1830. In 1834 the open loggias at the front of the house on the ground, first and second floors were enclosed and incorporated into the rooms behind them. All the time, acquisitions continued until Soane's death in 1837.

The outstanding place in the domestic parts is the Breakfast Room on the ground floor, but the entire floor is interesting and one can only speculate regarding the arrival of clients and guests into the Library and Dining Room, withdrawing to the upper private spaces on the First Floor (above which were bedrooms). In the rear parts we enter into an architecture that not only delights in itself but admits to elements of pure fantasy. On occasion – as with the Monk's Parlour – such fantasy is at once playful and deeply serious, perhaps as if Soane was living out his interest in the 'archi' part of architecture as an exploration of myths of origin. Here, architecture is something at once living and profoundly historical, reaching back to the ancients but also, unlike many of his contemporaries, adopting a serious attitude to the Gothic. It was all grist to the mill, all to be embraced, engaged and enjoyed – as were the arts (sculpture and painting) which adorned architecture and used it as housing and setting.

To visit Soane's house in Lincoln's Inn is to meander among cobwebs layered upon of a man's loving courtship of Architecture itself, as if this were a tangible spirit to be embraced and brought to appearance. But the man himself, like his house, remains a cabinet of curiosities and enigmas. In particular, Soane the

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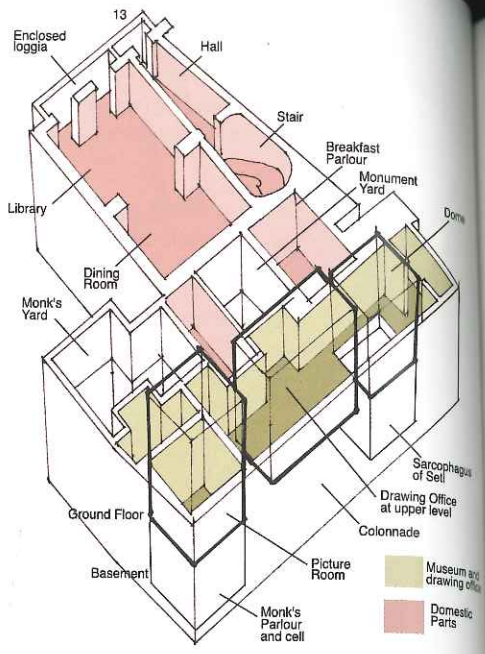
collector and maker of his own house stands as a magician weaving a spell of affect from disparate ingredient parts whose intermix and intercourse defies conventional rules of association. The implicit order is at once manifest and yet opaque, strangely affective even as it arouses rational inquiry and simple wonder. Here is that 'pataphysics' of the proto-Dadist Alfred Jarry: the impossible science of singular occurrences, of things that happen only once: eruptions into cultural space that are, in themselves, a kind of magic – almost mythical happenstances possessing an expressive fluidity of appearance and form. The informing voice is Architecture herself, as if manifesting in multiple physiognomic guises. To encounter this spirit in one of her poised stances and to be caught unawares – awakened – by her shifting potency can be especially stimulating.

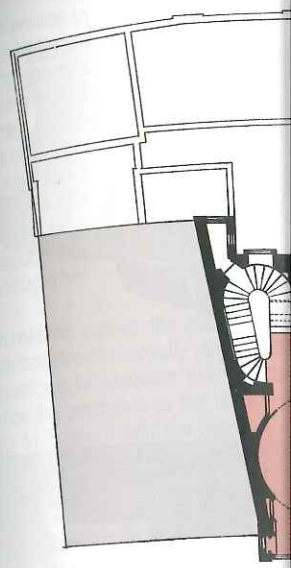
Soane has insinuated the spirit of Architecture herself into the tectonics of place as a rare and possibly dangerous compound of Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics that is as threatening as any other god who, freed by the mind that construes and conjures it, turns around to consume the author in the fulfilment of some Faustian bargain. Soane conjures up his muse and courts a devil – one whose spirit, as Mephisto declares, *"penetrates the marrow of the earth."* Indicatively, in Gandy's drawings of Mr and Mrs Soane in the loggia of their house as palace their figures are diminutive and the architecture aggrandised. The playful, situated love of the game is envisaged as an enraptured climax in which the player is implicitly without choice in the moves made and affects engendered: Architecture now vaunts herself through the vehicle of the architect's creative genius. Perhaps as a counterpoint Gandy and Soane repeatedly fantasised upon the theme of Piranesian ruination as architecture's moment of exhausted fulfilment and collapse. The ruin offers us Architecture as a benign sublimity: a prostrate somnambulant goddess, exhausted of Olympian creativity. Now, we can creep forward and safely indulge our curiosity.

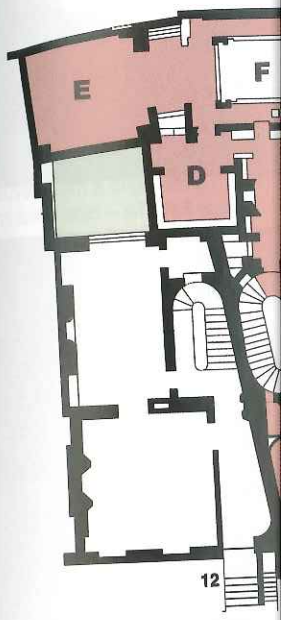
And so the Soane Museum rewards study – but only to a degree: analysis makes one exhausted, in danger of missing the point, of seeing overlaid sentences and words but not sensing meanings or poetic affects.

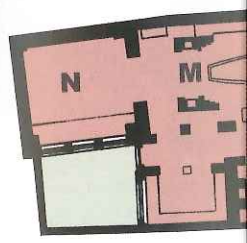


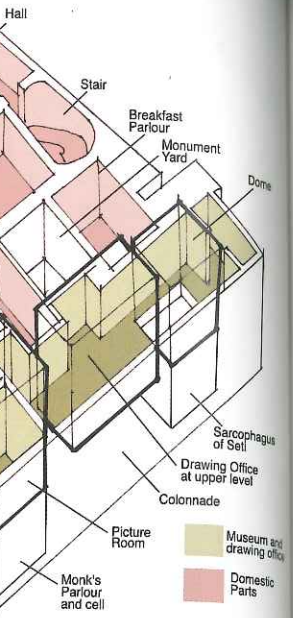
***Above**: the general schema of the Museum from the north, where a condensed architectural content is located in what was the rear yards of three houses.*

***Below**: in the Monk's Parlour, one of the more intriguing features of Soane's Museum in the manner it more directly touches upon the architect's psychology.*









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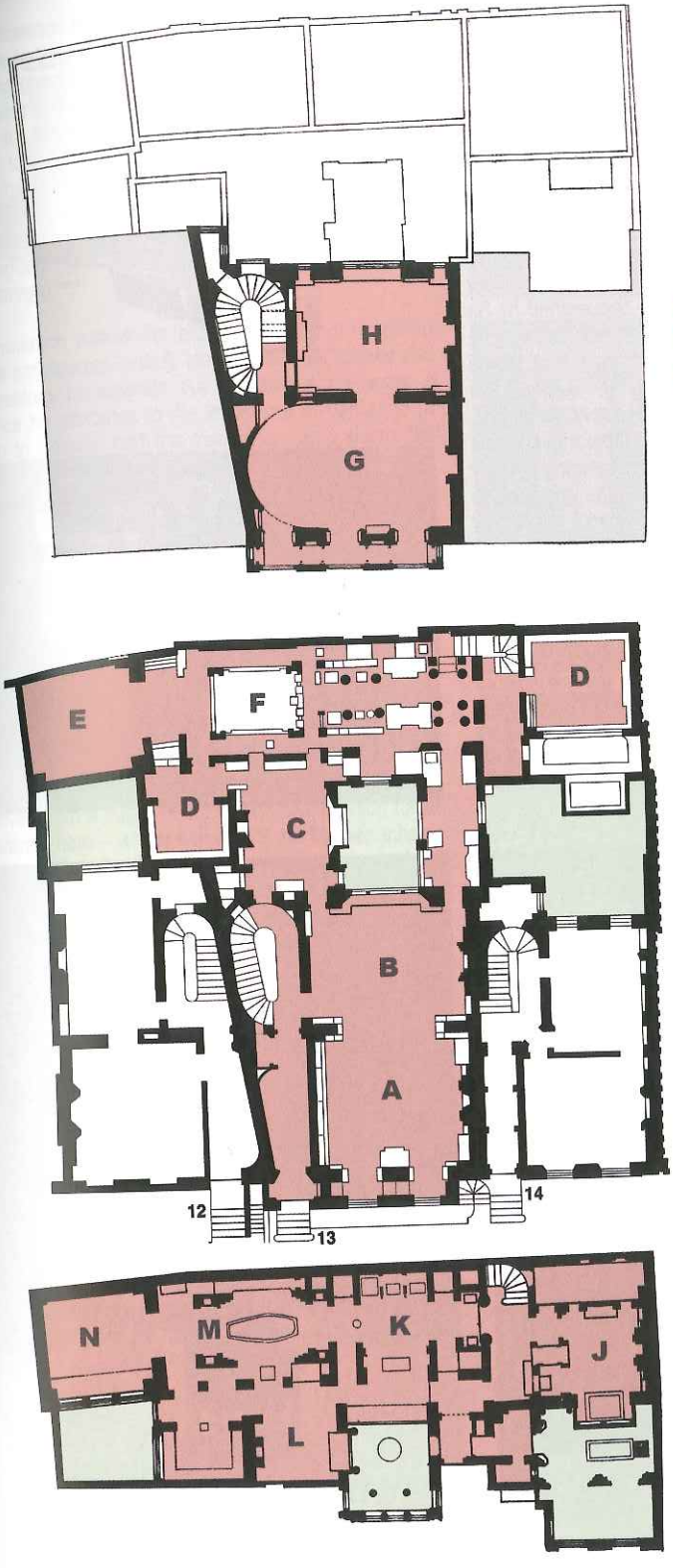


First floor, ground floor, and basement (rear parts only) plans of the Soane Museum.

A. Library
B. Dining Room
C. Breakfast Room (see page 108)
D. Ante Room (see page 110)
E. New Picture Room, added by the Trustees
F. Picture Room (see page 111)
G. South Drawing Room (see page 110)
H. North drawing Room
J. The Monk's Parlour, with the Cell to the north and the Monk's Yard to the south (see page 112)
K. The Crypt
L. Ante Room
M. Sepulchral Chamber and Dome
N. West Chamber

the 1750s, with a circular, forty foot
ule inspired by French plans with which
miliar. The entrance portico in Whitehall
Ionic columns designed on the basis of
ens and set into a rusticated screen wall
library of Hadrian in Athens (both taken
orary book recording these works: The
hens (1762)).

and remodelled William Chambers'
se (1771-4) in Piccadilly as residential
ing two ranges of apartments in the
north, named the Albany, flanking a
nown as the Ropewalk, which has a
f of narrow boarding with a distinctly
r. (Chambers, as the replaced Tory
till in practice at the time.)

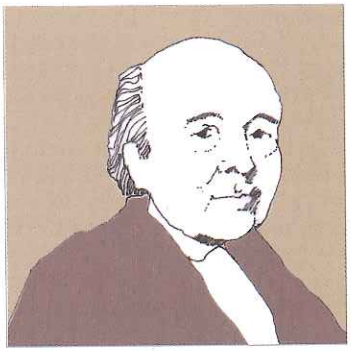
th noting that Holland followed in the
bert Adam as a considerable collector
at might exhibit his good taste, thus
ne, who was to later purchase casts and
land had collected (Holland employed
ghtsman named Charles Heathcote
ne sent to Italy to undertake this work;
olished influential books based upon his
t Soane, who started his career as an
and's office, sourly dismissed Holland
architect'. Nevertheless, Holland was
mber of the Architects' Club in 1791
nce, S.P. Cockerell, and James Wyatt)
have enjoyed keen practical interest
s and methods of construction, such
al tiles, fireproofing, Hartley's 'fire-
(a French technique of rammed earth
orick or rubble foundations). In 1793 he
s on the problems of fire prevention,
gricultural cottages and on pisé.

ouse, the Whitehall screen.

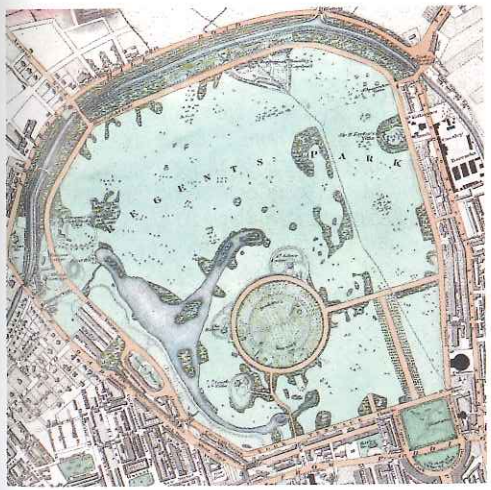
an ambitious visionary
John Nash 1752–1835

Extant London works include:

- **Sundridge Park**, off Plaistow Lane, Bromley, 1796-9. Now a hotel.
- **Southborough House**, Ashcombe Avenue, Surbiton, 1808.
- **Houses**, 66-71 Great Russell Street 1778.
- **Carlton House Terrace**, 1827-33.
- **Regent's Park and terraces**, 1812-25. Particularly Cumberland and Chester Terraces; also Park Crescent.
- **Royal Opera House Arcade**, 1816, Pall Mall
- **Haymarket Theatre**, 1820-21, Haymarket, on a formal axis to St James' Square. Only the frontage is his.
- **All Souls**, 1822-25, Regent Street / Portland Place. Part of the Regent Street development. All his work, apart from the street aligment, is now gone.
- **West Strand Improvement**, 1830.
- **United Services Club**, 1827, Pall Mall
- **Marble Arch**, 1828. This was the entry arch to Buckingham Palace, later moved to its present location.



***Below**: the Regent's Park, 1830 (until 1811 Marylebone Park).*



Although the career of John Nash – who attracts epithets such as unihibited, irrepressible, irresistible, amiable, and amusing – parallels that of Soane, the latter considered Nash to be an architectural charlatan. However, Alastair Service reports a letter from Nash to Soane in which it is suggested that Soane is architect to the Lords, Nash himself is architect to the King, and Smirke – a man both apparently disliked – was architect to the commons. That King was George IV, who had become Nash's great patron when he was Regent – a patronage that lasted until George's death in 1830, when Nash's career came to an abrupt end. He then retired, suffered a stroke and was dead five years later, just before Victoria ascended to the throne, and leaving the Regent Street and Regent's Park development as his monument. But although there was rivalry between Nash and Soane and the latter did express disdain, the two appear to have been reasonably good friends. It seems that Nash – described as by the historian Gillian Darley as a man of *"enormous personal charm, wit and a quickspark of theatrical brilliance as a designer of grand urban projects, which Soane could not fail to appreciate"* – teased Soane about his freemasonry even whilst the latter provided Nash with a sumptuous dinner. Nash even tolerated a severe Soane design midst his own, more opulent elevations in Regent Street.

If Nash's later career was a brilliant success, his earlier years were not, being marred by speculative disasters and a first wife who, bizzarely, seems to have dissipated much of his income on milliners. He was born the son of a millwright and, from the age of fifteen to twenty-three, worked in the office of Sir Robert Taylor (the sculptor-turned-architect). By 1775 he had left there and set up on his own as architect and speculative builder. But by 1783 he was a bankrupt and withdrew to Wales, where he established a new practice. And, by 1897 he was attempting to divorce his first wife.

By 1796 the irrepressible Nash had bounced back (assisted by the employment of a talented French refugee and draughtsman called Augustus Charles Pugin (1769-1832), father of Welby Pugin). He had a flourishing practice, had developed an interest in the picturesque (mixing classicism with an Italianate vernacular), had become a skilled designer of picturesque country houses and cottages and, in order to bolster this approach, enjoyed relationships with the landscape designers Thomas Johnes, Uvedale Price, Payne Knight and Humphrey Repton. A partnership with Repton lasted from about 1795 until 1802, at which time Nash was designing a conservatory for the Prince

of Wales, at Brighton, where Repton was working on the landscaping.

It was upon this basis of this success that Nash returned to London in order to try again. By 1798 he was newly married to Mary Ann Bradley, and enjoying affluence and royal patronage. Summerson once argued this to have been based upon marriage to the mistress of the Prince of Wales, but this remains disputed.

In 1806 Nash was appointed architect to the Department of Woods and Forests. It was in the latter role that he laid out the park north of the Marylebone Road as a radical scheme approved by his patron for a fashionable residential area of villas and terraces in a park setting: the Regent's Park. So as to connect the development in the new park (where the Regent was to have a new villa) with the heart of the monarchy around the Mall area, Nash designed a remarkable linkage between it these two locations that remains without precedent in the history of London.

Nash's role was consolidated when James Wyatt died in 1813 and he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Works, where he was joined by Smirke and Soane in a general reorganisation of responsibilities in that office. Each had different roles (see the reference to a letter in the first paragraph), with Nash looking after Carlton House, Kensington Palace, St James and the royal lodges at Windsor Park. Nash also attended to work at the Brighton Pavilion (1815-22) and, when the Regent became King in 1820, he was given orders to attend to a reconstruction of Buckingham House (despite the fact that Soane was supposedly responsible for that building). It was a poisoned chalice: the King (as George IV) became unpopular for his extravagances and Nash earned criticism for his services.

It was also in this context that Nash was accused of fraudulent activities in the Regent Street scheme and prompted an 1828 Select Committee to comment that, *"it was undesirable for official architects to acquire a financial interest in property for which they might be called upon to give a valuation."* Nash was, of course, declared to be honest, but a member of the Committee also noted that, *from what he had heard of Mr Nash, he should be inclined to think that he was incapable of dishonesty [...] he must say that, as a manager of public money and as an exhibitor of taste, he was sorry the public ever had anything to do with him."* It was a point that was fundamental to debate coursing its way through C19th practice: disinterest as a required aspect of professionalism. Nash was, of course, exonerated on every charge, but he and the King were outraged by this investigation and George proposed a peerage for his architect. However, he was dissuaded from doing this until Buckingham Palace should be completed – which the King, dying in 1830, never lived to see. And on that occasion Nash's patronage came to an abrupt end. He was removed from the works at Buckingham Palace and dismissed from his post at the Office of Works. Attempts to nail the architect continued, his designs were criticised and, upon his death in 1835, his reputation was at its lowest point – one from which the Victorians did not wish to rescue it.

Nash and his patron had given London a remarkable urban development that strove to unite grand frontages and landscaping in a manner to be found nowhere else in the metropolis. It remains a great source of inspiration to the contemporary architect Terry Farrell. But such admiration selectively divorces urban and architectural merits from the odour of sleaze surrounding Nash's reputation in a manner that only another architect deeply involved in the realities of property development could manage to achieve. Certainly, the development's socio-economic patterning tells a rather familiar story. For example, Soho, on the eastern side of Regent Street, is a rich mix of housing, the sex trade, low-end clubs, some high-end restaurants, theatres, offices (especially for people in the movies and the media world), specialist shops, and some remains of tailoring and similar crafts activities that once flourished here. Mayfair, on the western side, has the highest office rents in London, is the location of some of its more expensive residential properties, of the tailors of Saville Row, many art galleries and the boutiques of Bond Street, embassies and five star hotels. An indicative aspect of the divide between these two subtly divided communities is taste – the difference between Saville Row together with the Burlington Arcade, and Carnaby Street together with Berwick Street market and Old Compton Street.

Regent Street intentionally separates the two into its west and east aspects. However, its other, north-south axis, strives to unify the grand Nash terraces of the Park's perimeter with the gentlemen's clubs of Pall Mall and the royal palaces of the Mall. It all adds up to a fascinating juxtaposition of Culture and culture, together with characteristically English class underpinnings of that differentiation.

Nash designed the Regent Street Quadrant himself (see page 255), the park terrace façades, siting of the villas, etc. The quadrants were removed in 1848 and the whole was rebuilt by Norman Shaw and Sir Reginald Blomfield, 1906-23. Nos.14-16 were for Nash himself (dem.). The façades of Cornwall and Clarence Terrace were by Decimus Burton. Nash did Ulster Terrace, York Terrace, York Gate, Susses Place, Hanover Terrace, Kent Terrace, St Andrews Terrace, Chester Terrace, Cambridge Terrace, and Park Square. These were all built 1821-30. Executant architects did what was behind the façades and sometimes attempted changes. Park Crescent was rebuilt to the original design in 1963-5 (as offices). The Park Villages, to the north, were designed by James Pennethorne (1801-71) who, from 1820 was an assistant in Nash's office.

Chester Terrace, Regent's Park

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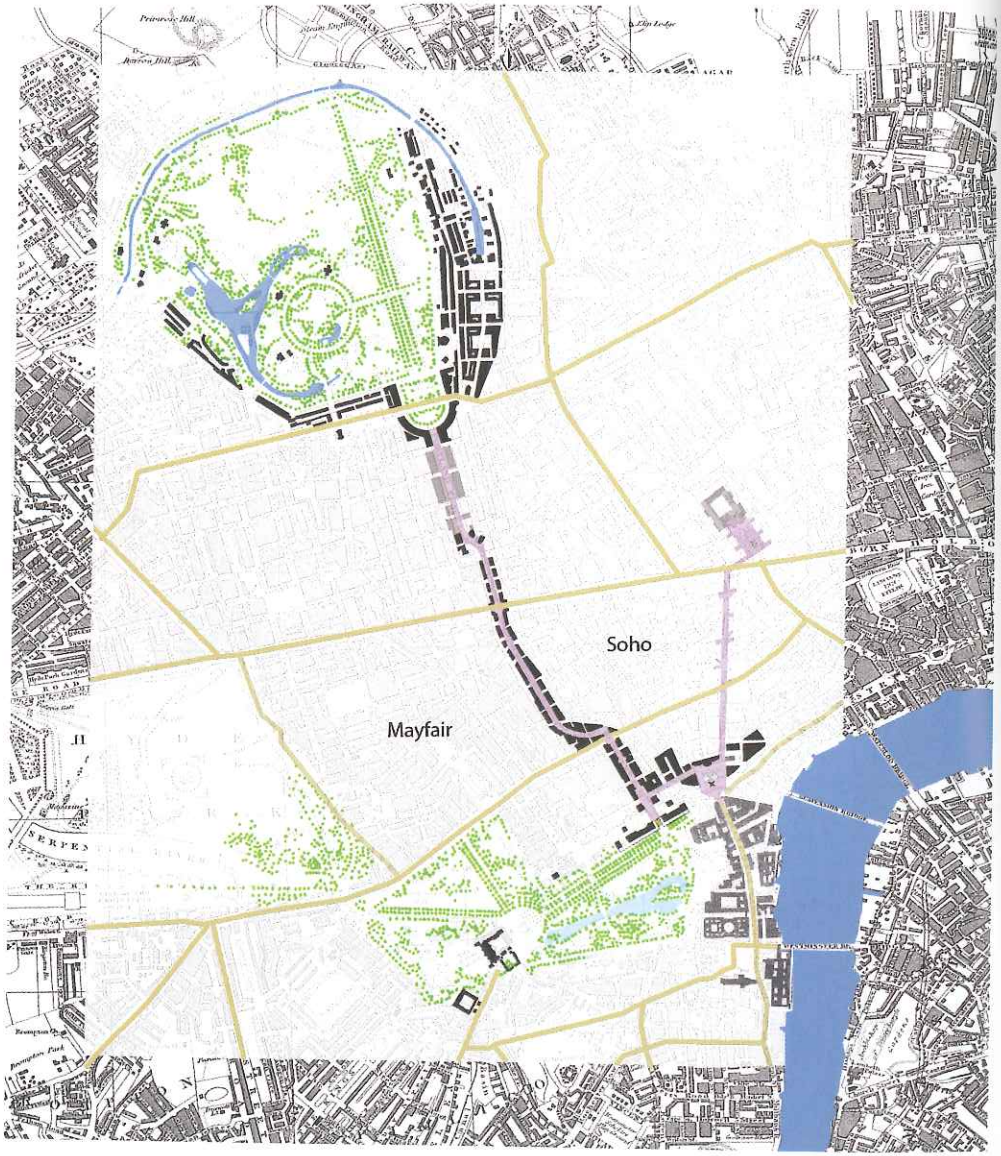
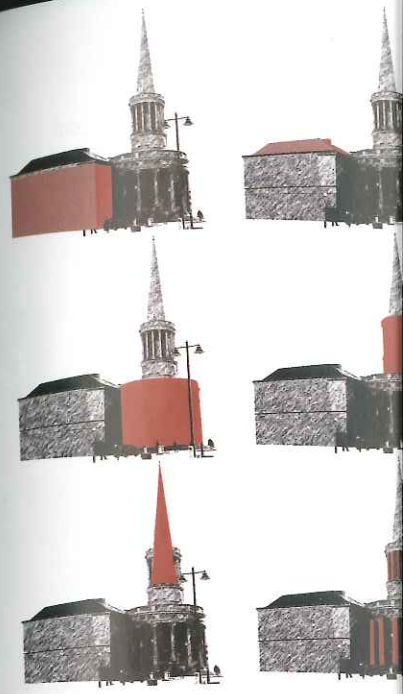
Chester Terrace, Regent's Park

an architecture of urbanity

The Regent Street scheme stretching itself between the Mall and the Regent's Park not only betrays almost many aspects of English society, but is also a fine example of the English playing at *grand projets*: it invariably goes wrong, but gets there in the end. Nash's 'Royal Mile' (to which, it must be said, there is a long history that involves two other architects, John White and James Wyatt, who drew up preceding schemes that were clearly influential upon Nash) was intended to create a linkage between the Prince Regent's opulent Carlton House in the Mall (sited where Waterloo Place now is) and the royal park to the north (which, then, lay on the suburban boundaries of a rapidly changing and expanding city, just beyond the Marylebone/Euston Road that was constructed to get cattle into London from the west). But underlying a what we might now term a 'life-style' aspiration was a raw world of property and project management.

***Below**: Nash's scheme overlaid upon an 1852 map of central London (by when New Oxford Street had been created by James Pennethorne, Nash's former assistant). Note the proposed route from Trafalgar Square to the British Museum, a proposition notionally resurrected and elaborated by Foster when working on the Great Court (see page 437).*





The interior of All Souls, Langham Place is less than special (and has been altered) manner in which Nash has dealt with a simply architectonic as an urban set-piece serving a the greater architecture of the Regent Stree is quite remarkable and has withstood the a the buildings around it to maintain its dignifi on a north-south axis terminating here before around into Portland Place and up to Park Cres offices) and the Regent's Park. His use of a G on a classical motif of a tempietto is quite unu

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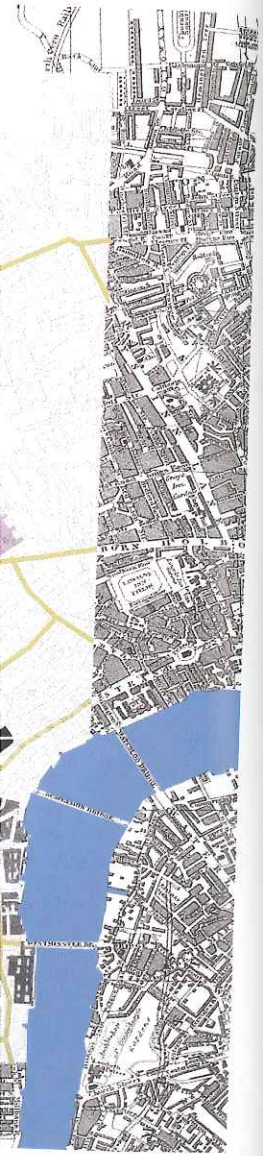
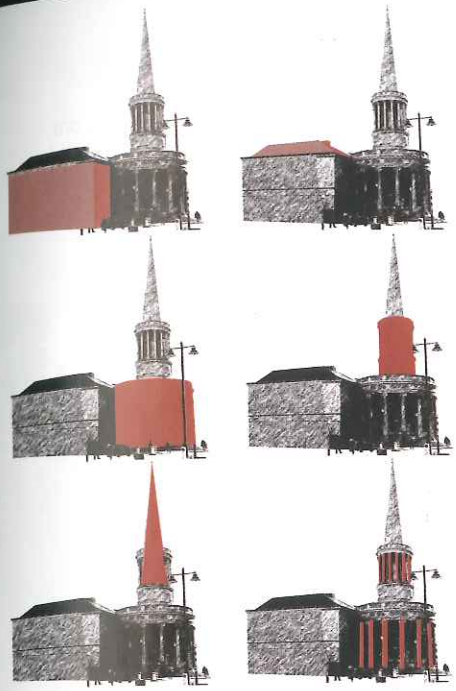
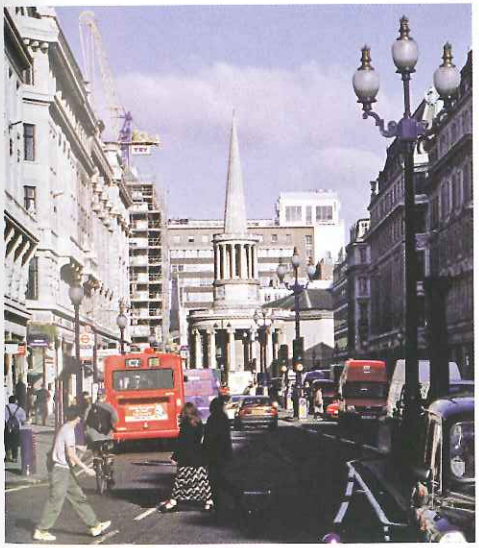




The interior of All Souls, Langham Place (1822-5) is less than special (and has been altered), but the manner in which Nash has dealt with a simply readable architectonic as an urban set-piece serving a role within the greater architecture of the Regent Street scheme is quite remarkable and has withstood the assaults of the buildings around it to maintain its dignified stature on a north-south axis terminating here before swinging around into Portland Place and up to Park Crescent (now offices) and the Regent's Park. His use of a Gothic spire on a classical motif of a tempietto is quite unusual.



The generality of the scheme given the assent of Parliament with a Bill of 1813, was realised, although not without those difficulties which included Nash's own questionable investments. As noted earlier (page 118), its success depended, in part, upon an enforced divide between the artisans of Soho and the gentry of Mayfair, consolidating the latter as an extension of gentrified and aristocratic inhabitation near to the royal palaces. But it was not to be. The Regent did not come to the Park and, ironically, he wilfully demolished Carlton House in the Mall, a house on which he had already lavished large sums of money. Instead, Nash had to accommodate the celebratory Duke of York column at Waterloo Place, terminating this part of the route with the Carlton House terraces that run east-west along the Mall. Here, the scheme ran west to what was then Buckingham House and east to (the new) Trafalgar Square. Nash proposed a new street run from here up to the new British Museum (a scheme occasionally resurrected in various guises; Lethaby, for example, had a scheme of 1891 for 'Sacred Way' between the Museum and Waterloo Bridge; Foster hoped for a route from the new British Library, through the Museum and down to the River Thames).

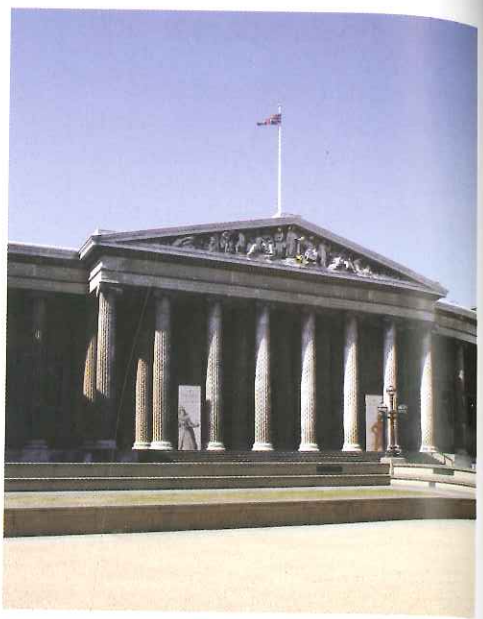
Nash's planning difficulties included the fact that significant parts of the planned route between his A-Z intention had recently been completed. For example, he had to align Regent Street further east than he wanted (to clear the rears of houses at Cavendish Square), and negotiate Langham House at the bottom of the already existing Adam Brothers developments in Portland Place. In particular, a kink at Langham was forced upon him, which he handled with the marvellously simple device of the rounded portico of All Souls church (an otherwise ordinary work). Similar ad hoc adjustments were made elsewhere – in cutting a linkage through from the Park to the Thomas Hardwick's new Marylebone church, for example (which had its frontage enlarged so as to play a role in Nash's grander scheme). Another difficulty came in designing Regent Street itself. First, Nash created something special at the junction with Oxford Street in order to slip the character of the development over this cross axis. And, at the southern end, he created an arcaded quadrant where the road swung around to the present Piccadilly Circus – a northern termination to a short axis from Carlton House.

Today, similar issues to those addressed by Nash's planning continue to prompt schemes from Terry Farrell for Buckingham Palace, the three royal parks (St James', Hyde Park and Regent's Park), and the length of the road between Paddington and Kings Cross, with particular attention to its junction with Nash's arcade at the top of Portland Place., where an entry point to the Park has never been satisfactorily resolved. The Nash scheme remains, in other words, an important aspect of London's vitality and, in some ways, a continuing project, continuing to prompt further developments in a city that, being polycentric, is averse to *grand projets*.

Sir Robert Smirke 1780–1867

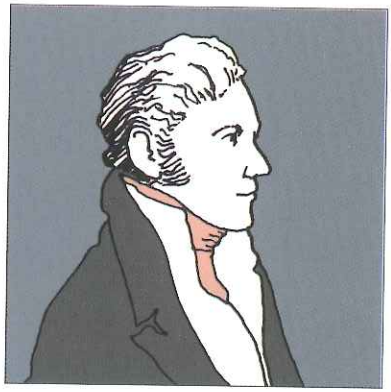
Extant London works include:

- **Royal Mint, Tower Hill** 1809-15.
- **St Ann's church**, 1820-22, St Anne's Crescent, Wandsworth.
- **St Mary's church**, 1821-24, Wyndham Place, Bryanston Square, Marylebone (the peristylar portico around a circular steeple is copied from St Ann's).
- **Kings College**, and **Somerset House**, Strand 1830-35: the east wing to Chamber's work.
- **British Museum**, 1823-46.
- **Inner Temple works**: nos 9-13 Kings Bench Walk; Paper Buildings 1838-39 (south front rebuilt by Sydney Smirke 1847-8).
- **Royal College of Physicians**, 1824-7, Trafalgar Square. Now Canada House.
- **Customs House frontage**, 1825. Lower Thames Street. Frontage to D. Laing's building of 1813-17 (after failure of the foundations).
- **Earl Brownloe's House**, 1836, No.12 Belgrave Square (Portuguese Embassy).
- **Paper Buildings**, 1838 and 1848, Kings Bench Walk, Temple, with Sydney Smirke
- **Oxford & Cambridge Club** 1838 and 1848, Pall Mall, with Sydney Smirke.



***Above**: the British Museum frontage and principal entrance.*

Robert Smirke, son of an artist (also named Robert), had a privileged upbringing in London and his architectural career began when his father influenced George Dance the Younger to help find a place for his son, then aged fifteen, in the office of Dance's former pupil, John Soane. The relationship between the young employee and employer (Smirke was not a fee-paying apprentice) lasted only a few months but Soane did give him a copy of Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture* (of 1755) and this was to influence Smirke all his life. After leaving Soane he returned to Dance and beagn to attend the lectures at the Royal Academy, where he was soon winning medals for his drawings. Clearly, Soane had lost a worthy employee.

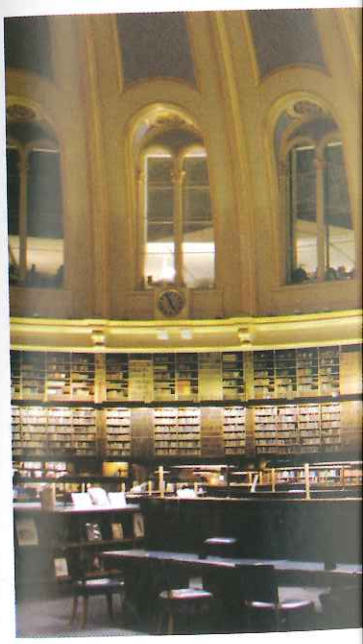


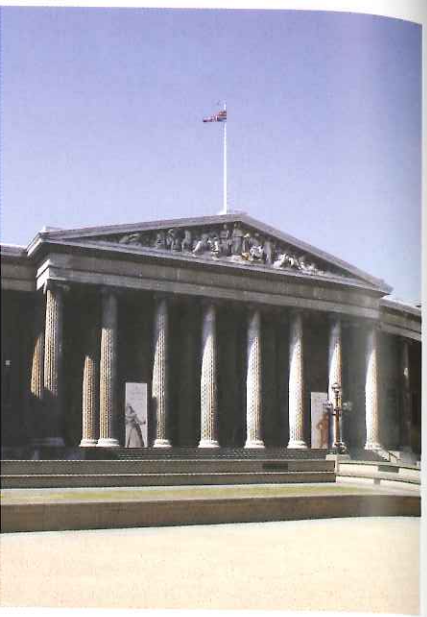
Travel at this time was sorely disrupted by the Napoleonic Wars, but Soane and his elder brother Richard managed to set off in 1802 and spend two years in France, the Southern Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sicily, and Greece (witnessing Lord Elgin take the statues from the Parthenon, something Smirke found rather disturbing). Upon his return to London in 1805 the young man started a practice that was soon (with the assistance of his father, Dance and other Royal Academicians) to become the largest in the country – to a large degree based upon his reliability and reputation for technical skill, particularly with regard to rectifying the defects of other architect's work, rather than design brilliance. One of his first and influential commissions was the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden (1809; dem. 1856), criticised by Soane and thus initiating a public controversy and a new rule at the RA forbidding the criticism of living British artists. Much of the debate revolved around the use of antique precedent and, in particular, Smirke's foregrounding of a portico against a background of simple massing – of which Soane was severely critical. Matters continued in this vein when the rising young star was appointed, in 1815, as one of three architects overseeing for royal and government works at the Board of Works: the thirty-three year old Smirke, a sixty-three year old Nash, and a sixty-two year old

Soane. Smirke was at the top of his professio
serving Tory clients who included Robert
prompting the press to refer to 'the Prime Mi
his pet'. The pet was, by now, engaging upon
significant Greek Revival projects: Kings Colle
Strand; a building for the Royal College of P
the British Museum and many miscellaneous

In 1853 Smirke received the RIBA's Gold M
having retired in 1845.

***Below**: the British Museum Reading Room i
of reconstruction work and the formation of
Court by Norman Foster. (Note the porti
background, one of four in the Court.)*
***Bottom**: the Reading Room as it is, after the
of the Great Court surrounding the buildin
upper floor, behind the windows, is a restau*





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Soane. Smirke was at the top of his profession, largely serving Tory clients who included Robert Peel and prompting the press to refer to 'the Prime Minister and his pet'. The pet was, by now, engaging upon a series of significant Greek Revival projects: Kings College, in the Strand; a building for the Royal College of Physicians, the British Museum and many miscellaneous works.

In 1853 Smirke received the RIBA's Gold Medal, after having retired in 1845.

***Below**: the British Museum Reading Room in the midst of reconstruction work and the formation of the Great Court by Norman Foster. (Note the portico in the background, one of four in the Court.)*
***Bottom**: the Reading Room as it is, after the formation of the Great Court surrounding the building. On the upper floor, behind the windows, is a restaurant.*

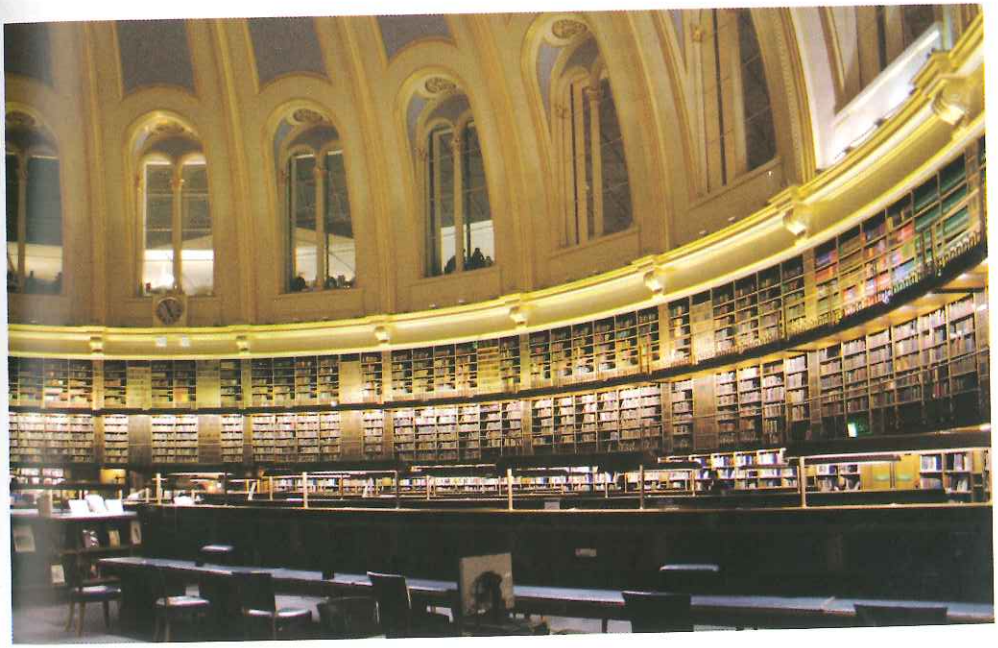
Sydney Smirke 1798–1877

Extant London works include:

- **BM Reading Room**, 1852-7.
- **Royal Academy Galleries**, 1866-70.
- **Imperial War Museum**, 1838-40, Lambeth Road, Southwark. Portico and dome. (Current interiors by Arup Associates).
- **Conservative Club**, 1843-4, No.74 St James's Street (with George Basevi).
- **Dr Johnson Buildings**, 1857-8, Inner Temple.

Sydney Smirke's most famous work is the domed Reading Room of what was the British Library, 1854-7 (and the Museum itself was completed under Sydney's direction). He was born in London, became a pupil of his brother and travelled to Italy and Sicily in 1820, remaining there for a few years before returning to become the clerk to the King's works at St James' Palace and marrying in 1828. His career blossomed and continually interacted with that of his brother, for example taking over the work at the B.M. when his brother retired in 1846. The design of the Reading Room in the Museum's central quadrangle made significant use of cast iron (as well as having a *papier mâché* ceiling some 150 mm thick) and it made Sydney's reputation.

In 1860 he was awarded the RIBA's Gold Medal. His final work was the range of galleries at the Royal Academy that sit behind Burlington's house (1866-70).



Sir Charles Barry 1795-1860

Charles Barry was born in Westminster as the son of a successful government stationer and book-binder. He apparently had little formal education and set his bedroom up as a studio, constantly drawing on the walls and re-papering them. In 1810 he was articled to Middleton and Bailey, of Paradise Row, Lambeth, surveyors to the parish. He stayed there six years, became the manager of the practice and thoroughly educated in all matters of practice and building. He was immediately exhibiting paintings at the Royal Academy.

In 1816 Barry inherited money left in trust to him by his father and set off to France and Italy, then Greece and Constantinople, then travelling on much further than most people on a Grand Tour, to Egypt and Syria (virtually unknown places to English architects), getting to Aswan and Philae, and to Jerusalem, Baalbeck and Damascus, finally travelling to Smyrna, Cyprus and Malta. He then went to Rome and Florence via Sicily, returning to England in 1820 via Venice, Milan and, once again, France. By anyone's standards it had been quite a tour, confirming in Barry that Italian architecture was superior to anything else. Barry now set up in practice and was successful in receiving both patronage (including being recommended by John Soane) and winning competitions. Much of this work was in Manchester and some in a Gothic style, with which he was never entirely comfortable. While colleagues benefited from the new church building in that idiom, Banks was happier doing Italianate country homes and the like.

From 1829 Barry's career was marked by a series of brilliant competition successes: the Travellers' Club, Pall Mall (1829), the Birmingham Grammar School (1833), the new Houses of Parliament (1836), and the Reform Club, Pall Mall (1837). In the latter, his covering of the central court by a glazed roof was particularly successful. It was at this time that the association with Pugin began and Barry used his excellent drafting capacity on the drawings submitted for the Palace of Westminster competition. But the fundamental design – mixing experience of designing schools requiring substantial circulation with what he knew of gentlemen's clubs – was distinctly Barry.

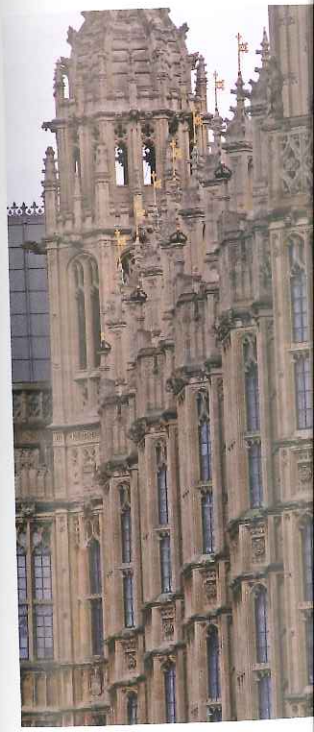
Extant London works include:

- **Palace of Westminster and Houses of Parliament**, 1840-60. Completed by E.M. Barry 1860-70
- **The Travellers' Club**, 1830-2, Pall Mall.
- **The Reform Club**, 1838-41,. Pall Mall.
- **Dulwich Grammar School** 1841-2.
- Nos **12**,**18-19** and **20 Kensington Palace Gardens** 1845-7.
- **Trafalgar Square**, 1840. Layout of the square, terracing and side walls coping with a change of level. Also the fountains (centrepieces by Lutyens), intended to prevent large gatherings in this people's square (which, as noted by Terry Farrell, compliments the royal square in front of Buckingham palace and the governmental square outside the Houses of Parliament).
- **Bridgewater House**, 1847-9, Cleveland Row, north side. Built as a *palazzo* for the first Earl of Ellesmere.

Despite the burdens of the Houses of Parliament project, Barry continued with many country house commissions (largely extensions and the like) and further public works commissions, such as laying out Trafalgar Square (1840). We are told that he "*often rose at four, before working until breakfast at eight o'clock. After the day's business he dined at six or seven, had a brief nap, conversed or read until eight, drank tea, and worked until midnight.*" He neither lectured or wrote. And he disliked publicity and public office, declining to take up an offer of RIBA Presidency in 1859 (serving as vice-President instead; Charles Cockerell became President in 1860). He was elected RA in 1844, but from that time on he suffered bouts of illness that, after 1858 were more serious.

Barry married in 1822, after returning from his Grand Tour. He had five sons and two daughters. **Alfred Barry**, a priest, (1826-1910), turned out to be his father's biographer. **Edward Middleton Barry** (1830-80) entered the office of T.H. Wyatt before joining his father, for whom he completed work at Westminster. **John Wolfe-Barry** (1836-1918) became a famous engineer. **Charles Barry**, the eldest son, was also an architect.Barry was awarded an RIBA Gold Medal in 1877.

Right: aerial view ot the Palace of Westminster. Credits: aerial photo © Parliamentary copyright 2007. Photograph by Deryc Sands.
Below: detail of the west façade.



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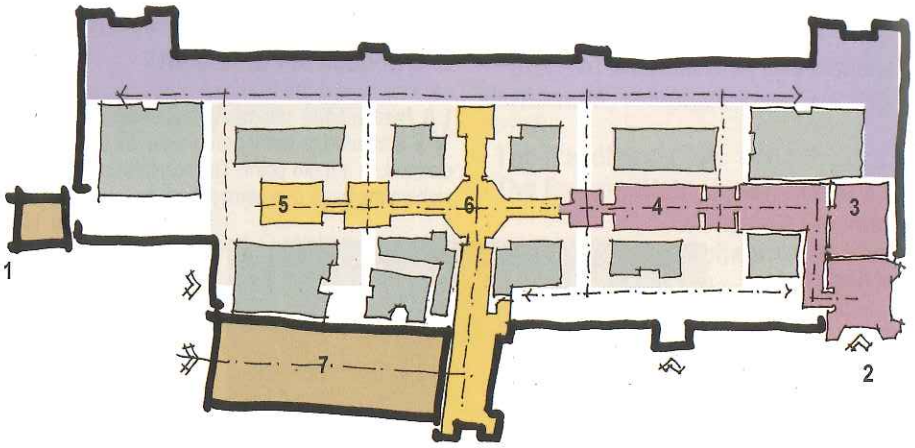
The Houses of Parliament

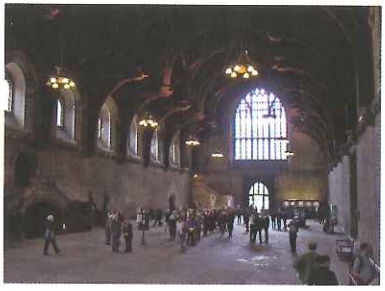
Whether the Houses of Parliament should be attributed to Barry or to Pugin, as the latter's son, claimed, is a mute point. The commission was Barry's, won on the basis of a competition; the character of what one experiences is very much Pugin – something which, perhaps, already says something about the way in which we experience architecture.

***Right**: aerial view of the Palace of Westminster. Credits: aerial photo © Parliamentary copyright 2007. Photograph by Deryc Sands.*
***Below**: detail of the west façade.*

The two came together when Barry brought in Pugin to assist with work at Dulwich College, but more of a partnership was established when Barry decided to enter the competition to replace the Houses of Parliament that were burned down in 1833. The terms of the competition called for a Gothic or Elizabethan style, and also for the drawings to be in pen and ink. Barry was a pencil man no one was better than Pugin – trained in his father's office – at a neo-Gothic style. The result was a design that Pugin was to refer to as a classical body in Tudor dress. But the two were clearly in harmony, with Barry turning to the enormous technical problems the project engendered whilst Pugin handled the detailing. (They worked together on the project from 1935-7 and 1844-52, but Pugin's son was to later claim, in 1867 and after Barry's death, that it was his father that was the true author of all the detailing.)

What was intended to be a six year undertaking was to be a much longer project. The problems of the bad ground, alone, were enormous, calling upon engineering ingenuity (which included one of the first concrete rafts to deal with the soft ground and quicksands) and novel skills for building out into the river. (a wall was started in 1837). And then it all had to be fireproofed, prompting Barry to turn to iron for the roofs. The site was also covered in working buildings and the client was a multi-headed beast that was to sap Barry's energies. But he already had very useful skills developed on previous projects: in circulation and handling the requirements of a gentleman's club, for example. The Builder magazine referred to it all as *"the greatest combination of contrivance in planning, skill in construction, business management, and true art, that the world has seen."* It was exhausting. Only half-way through the project, in 1849, Barry declared: 'No less than between 8,000 and 9,000 original drawings and models have been





***Above**: on the west side is the old Westminster Hall (C14th; walls 1097).*

prepared for it, a large portion of which have emanated from my own hand, while the whole of the remainder have been made under my own immediate direction and supervision.' The heating and ventilation system – a huge technical demand at that time – was handled separately and was merely one of numerous complications and interferences Barry had to suffer.

Controversy plagued the job. Barry's diary shoes that, even on his daughter's wedding day, he was drawing details. When he died in 1860 – worn out by the job, it is said – the interiors had still not been completed and Barry was still in bitter dispute with the Government over fees. What had been estimated to cost approximately £700,000 had, by then, already cost £2m and Barry's relationship with those who paid his fees was constantly suffering disputes over remuneration – issues finally resolved but, declared The Builder in 1860, the outcome was *"the greatest injustice that has ever been the lot of architect employed for ... a government."*

While the exterior of the building was being sculpted as the history of Britain, the interior suffered complicated heating and ventilation design problems hardly alleviated by the tall tower that acted as a chimney. There was a dispute over the clock, over paintings, and acoustics in the completed halls, all of it prompting inquiries that sapped Barry's time and energies, as well as his political wit. From 1844 to his death in 1851 Pugin was again back on the project, now collecting thousands of casts from medieval models and thereafter as salaried superintendent of wood-carving – the role that was the prompt Pugin's son to make the claims he later did (but, as it has been pointed out, Barry had already proven his ability to design in the Perpendicular manner before winning the competition).

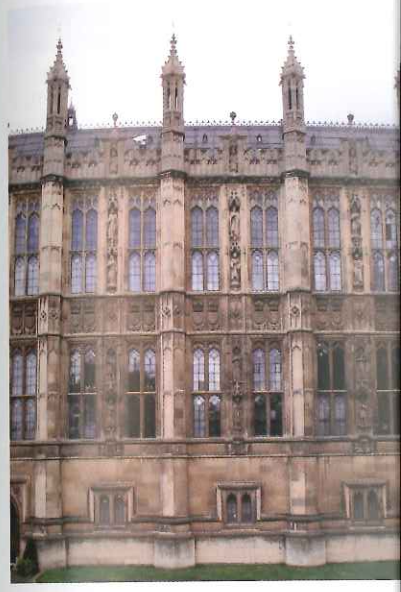
The Houses are still much as Barry and Pugin left the complex (plus a host of security additions, including tank traps), but the Commons was bombed during World War II, in 1941) and rebuilt by Giles Gilbert Scott (reopening in 1950).

The architectural schema of the complex enjoys fundamental set of considerations: the concept of a riverside palace; 'fixes', such as Westminster Bridge, the Abbey and, in particular, Westminster Hall; the elaboration of the complex as essentially a one storey building with a subsidiary upper level (the plan covers a large area and mostly comprises courts and high-ceilinged features); the deliberate punctuation of the horizontal spread of the building by taller features that emulate Gothic spires; a regular plan, closely considered plan of courts, halls, axial corridors and side-rooms, formal routes and informal places; and an overall decorative programmme exhibiting a relentless verticality to offset the horizontality of the massing.

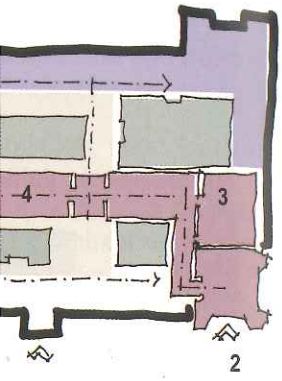
Fundamentally, the building is diagrammatically symmetrical about a central east-west axis, with the Central Hall at the heart of the arrangement and the two debating chambers to either side (the Commons organisationally related to the old Westminster Hall,

***Opposite page**: The Clock Tower (Big Ben, the far left of the diagram and the Victoria To sovereign's entry point, 2) is on the right, lead a royal suite (3) to one side of the Peer's chan The House of Commons (5) is on the other s central hall (6). The river frontage is a principal feature that unites the disparate parts bel façade. Towers punctuate the manner in whic establishes an occupation of the site as a cour private world and, overall, the plan is punctu courts (the green areas). The old Westminster is on the Parliament Square side, opposite Wes Abbey.*

***Below**: Barry's body decorated by Pugin is reg regular rather than picturesque – striving to add v to the broad, horizontal mass of the complex.*



and the Peers linked to a royal suite and the r point on the south side, at the Victoria To long corridor runs along the river side (with unifying the whole both internally and externa series of internal courts punctuate the whole. is so difficult to communicate in drawings, diag photographs is Barry's success in creating a a layered and interwoven set of rituals and co which together constitute the life of the Com the Peers, their relations to the monarch and staff, etc. This is a complex culture of priv power that Barry attuned himself to in terms o which is rather how the place functions.



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hat acted as a chimney. There was a
clock, over paintings, and acoustics
l halls, all of it prompting inquiries
y's time and energies, as well as his
1844 to his death in 1851 Pugin was
e project, now collecting thousands of
val models and thereafter as salaried
wood-carving – the role that was the
n to make the claims he later did (but,
ointed out, Barry had already proven
n in the Perpendicular manner before
etition).

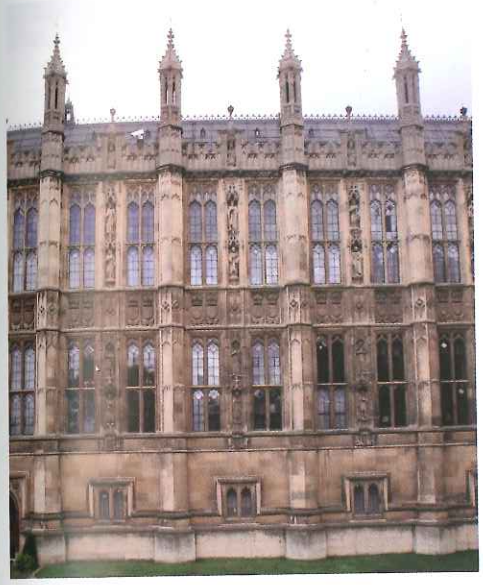
still much as Barry and Pugin left the
host of security additions, including
the Commons was bombed during
941) and rebuilt by Giles Gilbert Scott
0).

schema of the complex enjoys
of considerations: the concept of a
fixes', such as Westminster Bridge,
n particular, Westminster Hall; the
complex as essentially a one storey
osidiary upper level (the plan covers
mostly comprises courts and high-
); the deliberate punctuation of the
of the building by taller features
hic spires; a regular plan, closely
f courts, halls, axial corridors and
routes and informal places; and an
programmme exhibiting a relentless
the horizontality of the massing.

he building is diagrammatically
a central east-west axis, with the
heart of the arrangement and the
nbers to either side (the Commons
lated to the old Westminster Hall,

***Opposite page**: The Clock Tower (Big Ben, 1) is on the far left of the diagram and the Victoria Tower (the sovereign's entry point, 2) is on the right, leading into a royal suite (3) to one side of the Peer's chamber (4). The House of Commons (5) is on the other side of a central hall (6). The river frontage is a principal ordering feature that unites the disparate parts behind the façade. Towers punctuate the manner in which Barry establishes an occupation of the site as a court-yarded private world and, overall, the plan is punctuated by courts (the green areas). The old Westminster Hall (7) is on the Parliament Square side, opposite Westminster Abbey.*

***Below**: Barry's body decorated by Pugin is remarkably regular rather than picturesque – striving to add verticality to the broad, horizontal mass of the complex.*



and the Peers linked to a royal suite and the royal entry point on the south side, at the Victoria Tower). One long corridor runs along the river side (with a terrace, unifying the whole both internally and externally, and a series of internal courts punctuate the whole. But what is so difficult to communicate in drawings, diagrams and photographs is Barry's success in creating a setting for a layered and interwoven set of rituals and conventions which together constitute the life of the Commons and the Peers, their relations to the monarch and to service staff, etc. This is a complex culture of privilege and power that Barry attuned himself to in terms of a club – which is rather how the place functions.

Charles Barry Jnr. 1823–1900

Extant London works include:

- **Holy Trinity**, 1856, Tulse Hill.
- **St Stephen**, 1868–82 , College Road, Dulwich
- **St Peter**, 1873. Dulwich (and the public library)
- **Burlington House forecourt buildings**, 1869-73 (As Banks & Barry.)
- **Dulwich College**, 1866–70.
- **Great Eastern Hotel**, at Liverpool Street, 1880-4.
- roof of the **Royal Exchange** atrium, 1884.

Charles Barry Jnr. entered his father's office in 1840. He was of frail health, decided to travel and, upon his return entered into partnership with his father's chief assistant, Robert Richardson Banks (1813-72), as Banks and Barry. When Banks died in 1872, Barry took his son **Charles Edward Barry** (1855-1937) into partnership. Aston Webb was a pupil in the office. He was President of the Institute from 1876-9 and the Royal Gold Medallist of 1877.

Edward Middleton Barry 1830–1880

Extant London works include:

- **St Saviour**, 1856, Hampstead.
- **Floral Market and Opera House**, 1859, Covent Garden (see page 428).
- **Charing Cross Station hotel**, 1863-4.
- **Temple Gardens Building**, 1878, Middle Temple Lane.

The third son of Charles Barry, E.M. Barry took over his father's practice in 1860 and completed work at Westminster, 1866-8. He was Professor of Architecture at Kings College, London, 1873-80, and completed a number of works in his own name.

Sir John Wolfe-Barry 1836–1918

Mention should also be made of John Wolfe-Barry, the distinguished engineer. He was the youngest of the elder Charles Barry's sons. He worked on many railway projects, including the Circle Line, bridges over the Thames east of Westminster, Tower Bridge after Horace Jones' death, etc. He played a strong role in the Institute of Engineers (at one time their President) and was a keen advocate of standardisation in engineering practices.