

True Principles

The journal of The Pugin Society

vol iv no v Winter 2015

Influences

Margaret Belcher:
Pugin's Letters

TIMOTHY BRITTAIN-CATLIN • NICK CORBETT • EDWARD GILLIN

AYLA LEPINE • JOSHUA MARDELL • GRAHAM PARRY

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A style guide can be provided.

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*Quotations from contemporary texts are rendered as they appear in the original, avoiding the frequent use of 'sic'.
Transcriptions from A.W.N. Pugin's letters are always reproduced in the form in which they appear in
Margaret Belcher's definitive Collected letters of A.W.N.Pugin.*

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Contents

Editorial

The Impact of an Idea	367
-----------------------	-----

Articles

‘a sort of alladin’: Pugin’s Letters <i>by Margaret Belcher</i>	369
Gothic fantastic: Parliament, Pugin, and the architecture of science <i>by Edward Gillin</i>	382
Anglo-American modern Gothic: A.W.N. Pugin’s impact of Ralph Adams Cram <i>by Ayla Lepine</i>	390

News and comment

The Gothic Revival in Lancashire <i>by Graham Parry</i>	401
Leadership of place <i>by Nick Corbett</i>	411

Book Reviews

<i>Secular & Domestic: George Gilbert Scott and the Master’s Lodge of St John’s College, Cambridge</i> reviewed by Joshua Mardell	413
<i>Funerary monuments and memorials in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh</i> reviewed by Timothy Brittain-Catlin	416
<i>Sculpture victorious</i> reviewed by David Lewis	417
<i>Watts and Company study day</i> reviewed by David Lewis	420

Bibliography	422
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Contributions to this number	inside back cover
------------------------------	-------------------

THE IMPACT OF AN IDEA

The influence of A.W.N. Pugin's vision has been felt across generations and continents, and if the diverse collection of essays in this issue can be said to share a theme, it is an exploration of the nature of that influence. Margaret Belcher's examination of Pugin's letters deepens our knowledge of the man and his methods, while reminding us that Pugin's influence was not solely architectural. It is an appropriate essay with which to lead the issue, as Oxford University Press is scheduled to release her final edited volume of Pugin's letters later this year. The final volume will focus on letters from the last two years of Pugin's life, which include his work at the Crystal Palace. Edward Gillin's article examines the way that A.W.N. Pugin used scientific rhetoric to influence a science-obsessed Parliament to accept his vision for the Palace of Westminster. Ayla Lepine's article traces the influence of A.W.N. Pugin's writings in the United States, investigating the way that the American architect Ralph Adams Cram developed his own Gothic vision.

In News and comment, Graham Parry reports on the Society's study trip to Lancashire, and Nick Corbett tells us how he was inspired to use A.W.N. Pugin as a subject for historical fiction. Reviews include Richard Butler's *Secular & Domestic*, James Stevens Curl's *Funerary Monuments and Memorials in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh*, the Victoria and Albert Museum study day on Watts and Company, and the recently opened Sculpture Victorious exhibition at Tate Britain.

Interest in the Gothic Revival continues to thrive, both in the U.K. and abroad. An increasing number of buildings are being beautifully restored; an increasing number of books are being published; an increasing number of young scholars are devoting their energies to the Gothic. The Friends of St Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, has recently been re-established to facilitate the interior restoration of that great Victorian monument – a London testing-ground for laws about ritualism, with a reredos by Ernest Geldart, metalwork by Bainbridge Reynolds, and glass by C.E. Kempe. The influence of Pugin is strongly felt there. It is striking that many of their members are younger than 35 years old. I suppose this makes sense for a generation of people who count the Harry Potter novels amongst their most intensely felt aesthetic experiences. It all bodes well for the study of the Pugins.

The Pugin Society itself is getting ready to celebrate its twentieth anniversary. As a celebration of that milestone, the next issue will include a look at Pugin's place in the modern world.



Figure 224: The Earl of Winchester, sculpted by J. S. Westmacott for the House of Lords (1853),
© Palace of Westminster Collection, WOA S93, www.parliament.uk/art

True Principles vol 4 no 5

‘a sort of alladin’: Pugin’s Letters

by Margaret Belcher

*Note: What follows is the text prepared for a talk given at the conclusion of the Gothic Revival Worldwide conference at the University of Kent in July 2012. It makes no attempt to incorporate remarks made extempore or to record any departures from the script. Quotations from Pugin’s letters retain the style of my edition except for a few corrections made — for instance, changing Pugin’s ‘were’ to the ‘w[h]ere’ required by the sense — in order to avert the possibility of stumbling in delivery. For quotations from Pugin’s letters, references are given to the published sources wherever possible; most of these are to be found in *The Collected Letters of A. W. N. Pugin* (Oxford University Press, 2001); the abbreviation ‘HLRO’ refers to the microfilm of the large collection of letters to Hardman which is in private hands.*

I shall talk to you about Pugin’s letters: about his comments on those he received and the business of answering them, then a typical one he sent, and lastly something about what can be deduced from those that he wrote.

The chief source of knowledge of Pugin’s incoming correspondence is what he said about it in his letters to John Hardman, and who knows what distortion may have occurred in that refraction? One must reconstitute as best one can. Here he is, then, letting off steam to his friend.

‘4 sides of Paper at the Captain again to day’, he fumes.¹ ‘my life is frittered away with all this miserable contemptible correspondence. it is maddening, I say Maddening. all former miseries are nothing to it. I have paid pounds now & many shall I have to pay for things I have no more to do with than yourself — & he actually wanted to know why the school room roof built at the lowest figure was not moulded & panelled all for £500 for Everything & not a shilling intended to be for the architect — architect indeed.’

Captain — he had long since left the army but he liked to keep the title — Captain

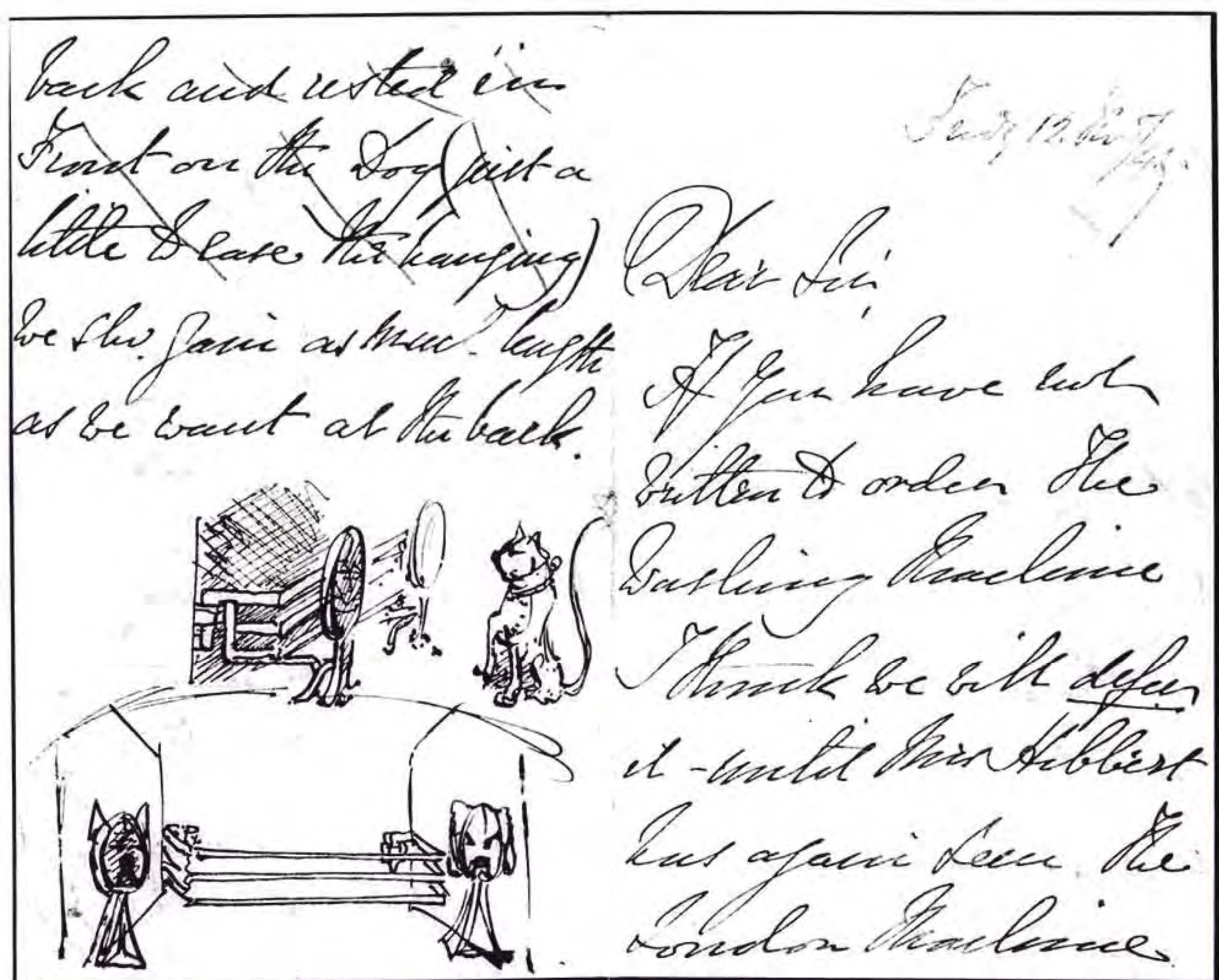


Figure 225: J. H. W. Hibbert writing to John Hardman
Birmingham City Archives

1 HLRO 611, of 10.1851

Washington Hibbert of Bilton Grange near Rugby was probably the client with whom Pugin found it most difficult to get on; ‘client’, incidentally, is a word he seems never to have used. No letters from Hibbert to Pugin are known to survive but a letter to Hardman, partly reproduced in Figure 225, may give an idea of the personality.² Hibbert appears to have been a sardonic, mocking sort of man and, if Pugin is to be believed, he found fault, in a very penny-pinching way, with a great deal, including the fireplaces, with their dogs. Reading Hibbert’s letters was, Pugin tells Hardman on another occasion, ‘like a harrow scraping over you at all times’.³

Some years after he had the Roman Catholic church of St Mary built near his home, because his well-born wife was Roman Catholic, although he was still Anglican, Hibbert, Roman Catholic himself by this time, commissioned several buildings close by for pastoral and educational purposes. In the absence of documents, architectural historians are uncertain whom to credit with the design of these buildings; there are schools, a house for teachers or a convent, and what was known as the ‘college’, which served as a presbytery. Are they Pugin’s work or that of Charles Hansom? Stylistic evidence is inconclusive. Here, though, may be part of the answer. It may also be

Be so kind as to inform me on this point -



perhaps too high. I think 4 feet or 4½ feet would be high enough. — The inscription at the bottom, which is of the names & dates of the donors of each person, & their age, with R.I.P. at the close. — In the border a text, three, or four, going all round the three sides. A label with a text over each of the heads. The coats of arms over the labels. — I have a doubt about the label at the top. If I knew where to put it, I should like the label over the male figure of the saint. I should like the label over the male figure to contain the words, “have mercy upon us” — & that over the female

figure: “grant us thy peace”. Perhaps you can suggest what will meet my wish in this respect: there is no inscription I should like better in the label, than this: — And it will express the Catholic truth, without exciting Protestant prejudices: which must be attended to, in this case. — Could it be put round the dome? I feel decided of putting the arms, in the center of the body, as is done in Sir H. Gresham’s tomb. There I should like to have the Lamb of God, which is in the base of Sir H. G. — I should not mind going to the expense of between 30 x 40 pounds: — not to exceed the latter sum. I would prefer to have it nearer the former than the latter. I shall be much obliged to you to give me news such further information & design as the above sketch will afford you to do: unless as it is drawn by me. Perhaps instead of the text in the border might be put: Lamb of God: over the top, & the end of the border to place, and narrower. I shall probably be here some time longer: I at go leisure shall be obliged to your answer. With my respects to Mr. Hardman, I remain, &c. dear Sir, your very faithfully in St. Rd. Waldo Sibthorp

I have not ornamented the border at all. — You can supply what may be wanting in this: & the 2. figures are smaller in proportion than they should be, I think.

Figure 226: R. W. Sibthorp writing to John Hardman
Birmingham City Archives

2 Hibbert to Hardman of 12.11.1847, Incoming Metal Letters, MS 175A/4/4/4, for 12.1847 in the Hardman deposit in the Birmingham City Archives (afterwards ‘Hardman, BCA’)

3 HLRO 563, of 3.9.1851

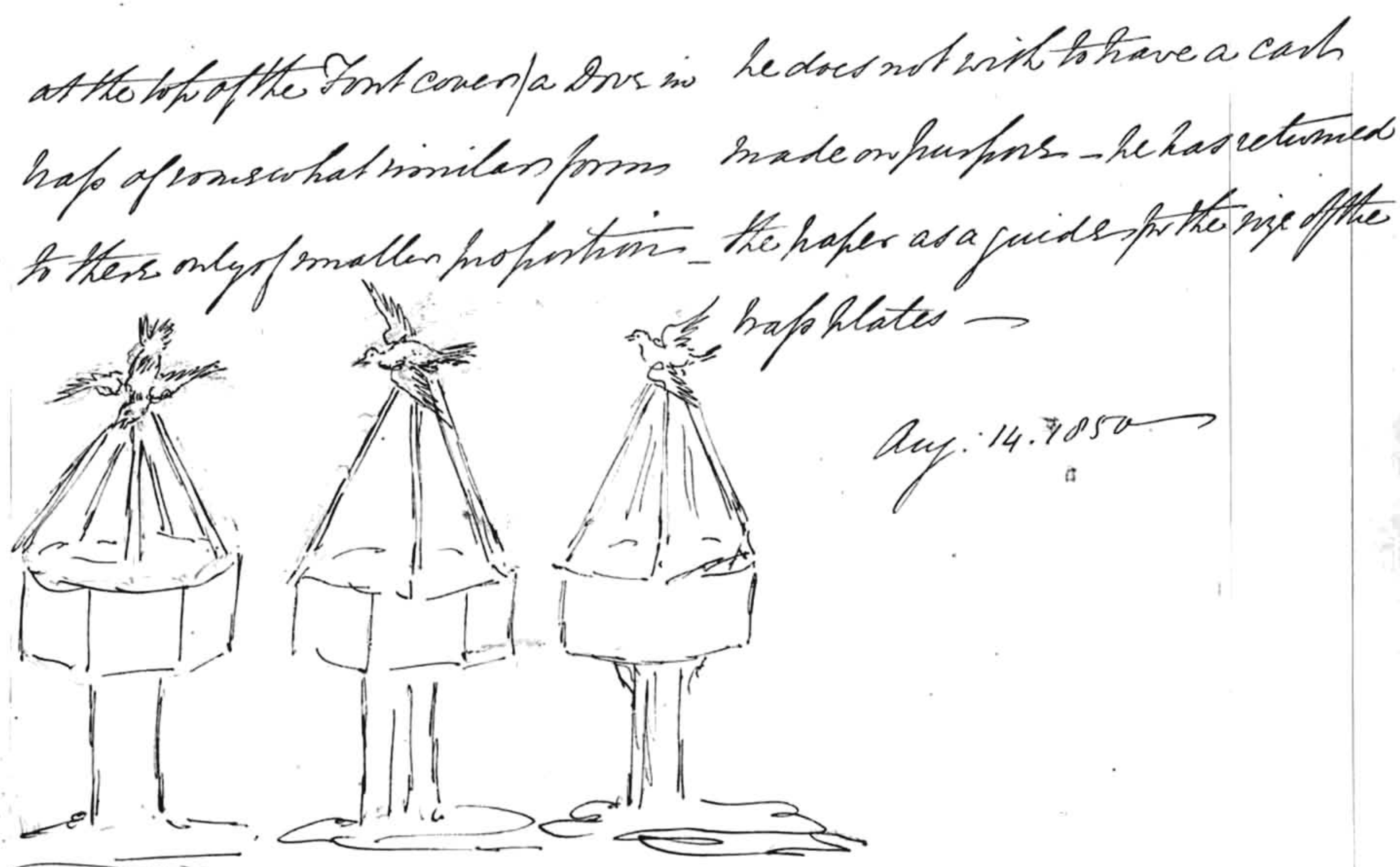


Figure 227: Mr Mills writing to John Hardman
 Birmingham City Archives

worth noticing that this quite large group of Roman Catholic buildings was erected immediately adjacent to a bastion of the Church of England in the nineteenth century, right beside Rugby School. There are so many ways one can read these letters: as social history with its revelations of stratification and snobbery, for one thing, and as a sample of sectarian religious interaction, for another. Architectural history, however prominent, however significant, is not the only strand in the story.

If those from Hibbert were perhaps the most painful, there were letters from other people too which Pugin would rather not have received. The post was often so troublesome that it left him, he declared to Hardman, 'fit to jump over the cliff'; and when yet another angry letter came from Mrs Petre demanding to know why her chantry in St George's, Southwark, was still unfinished, it 'upset' him 'for the day'.⁴ Not only the words but the drawings with which clients tried to convey their wishes must have offered quite an assault to Pugin's sensibilities. The suggestion put forward for a brass by R. W. Sibthorp, in Figure 226, will give some indication, as will the inspiration for a font cover in Figure 227, offered by a man called Mills about whom no more is known.⁵

Sometimes the ignorance and bad taste of correspondents were intolerable: 'the FitzPatrick chantry people want to introduce a queen anne sort of table for an altar in

4 Belcher 2012, p 114 and p 272

5 Sibthorp to Hardman of 28.8.1844, Incoming Metal Letters, MS 175A/4/4/4, for 1844 in Hardman, BCA, and Mills to Hardman of 14.8.1850, Incoming Metal Letters, MS 175A/4/4/4, for 1850 in Hardman, BCA

it & I have struck in consequence & I tell them I wont draw a line for the building if they do not give up this wretched peice of Hanoverian furniture.’⁶ That was in Ireland; in the south of England, ‘they Want me to build a church at Chichester — but they cant go beyond £500. I do not know if this includes the *Priests house* & the *Candlests* but that is the sum.’⁷ A prebendary of Chester Cathedral proposed scrolls for the side lights of a memorial window and the idea was scouted as ‘detestable’; a doctor in York, also wanting a memorial window, made different suggestions but they were likewise banished as ‘detestable — both the subjects he mentions are **central** subjects. you cant put the Crucifixion as pendant to anything.’⁸ High or low in the scale of social standing, education, or fortune, clients were shown the error of their ways, without fear or favour. Daniel Haigh was an educated, wealthy man, an Oxford convert ordained a priest and building a church near Birmingham, but his conception was dismissed out of hand. ‘It is quite impossible to carry out Mr. Haighs ideas — the window is 3 feet x 1.3!! & he has made enough subjects to fill a window at *chartres*. we can never produce anything effective & tell him it will spoil the *scale* of his glass. it will never do in a decorated window.’⁹ Lord Charles Thynne, member of a distinguished family, wrote asking Pugin ‘to make him a *wooden* altar — & I replied we only made *canonical things*’.¹⁰

Here and there among these outpourings of desperation, there is a direct appeal for assistance. A man called Constable Maxwell who gave a window to the convent Pugin designed in Nottingham was very disappointed when he saw the glass in place: it was ‘a complete failure —’, he insisted, because of ‘the deficiency of colour & the *transparency* of Glass, insomuch so that houses, windows, &c could be seen thro the faces & even robes of the figures — & in most lights I could hardly distinguish whether S^t Teresa had any *nose* or *eyes* at all ... No richness & indifferent drawing — for instance *S^t Teresa’s nose (when seen) about 4 times* as long as the width of her *mouth*.’¹¹ When Constable Maxwell made this complaint, Pugin forwarded it to Hardman, vowing that the communication had ‘done for my evenings work. it is a letter *I* cannot answer’, and adding that he had ‘always **hated** the job from the beginning. they selected a set of saints with no more colour than a turnip —’.¹²

If Constable Maxwell’s letter is extant, that is thanks to Hardman, who kept all the correspondence that came in to his firm and so created a most important collection of manuscripts for the study of Pugin — and of the Gothic Revival. Pugin sent that particular letter up to Birmingham but it was one of only a handful that came to be preserved in that way; almost all the letters addressed to him Pugin destroyed as soon as he had read them and memorised their contents.

6 HLRO 616, of 10.1851

7 HLRO 640, of 11.1851

8 Belcher 2012, p 315, and HLRO 578, of 6.1851

9 p 83

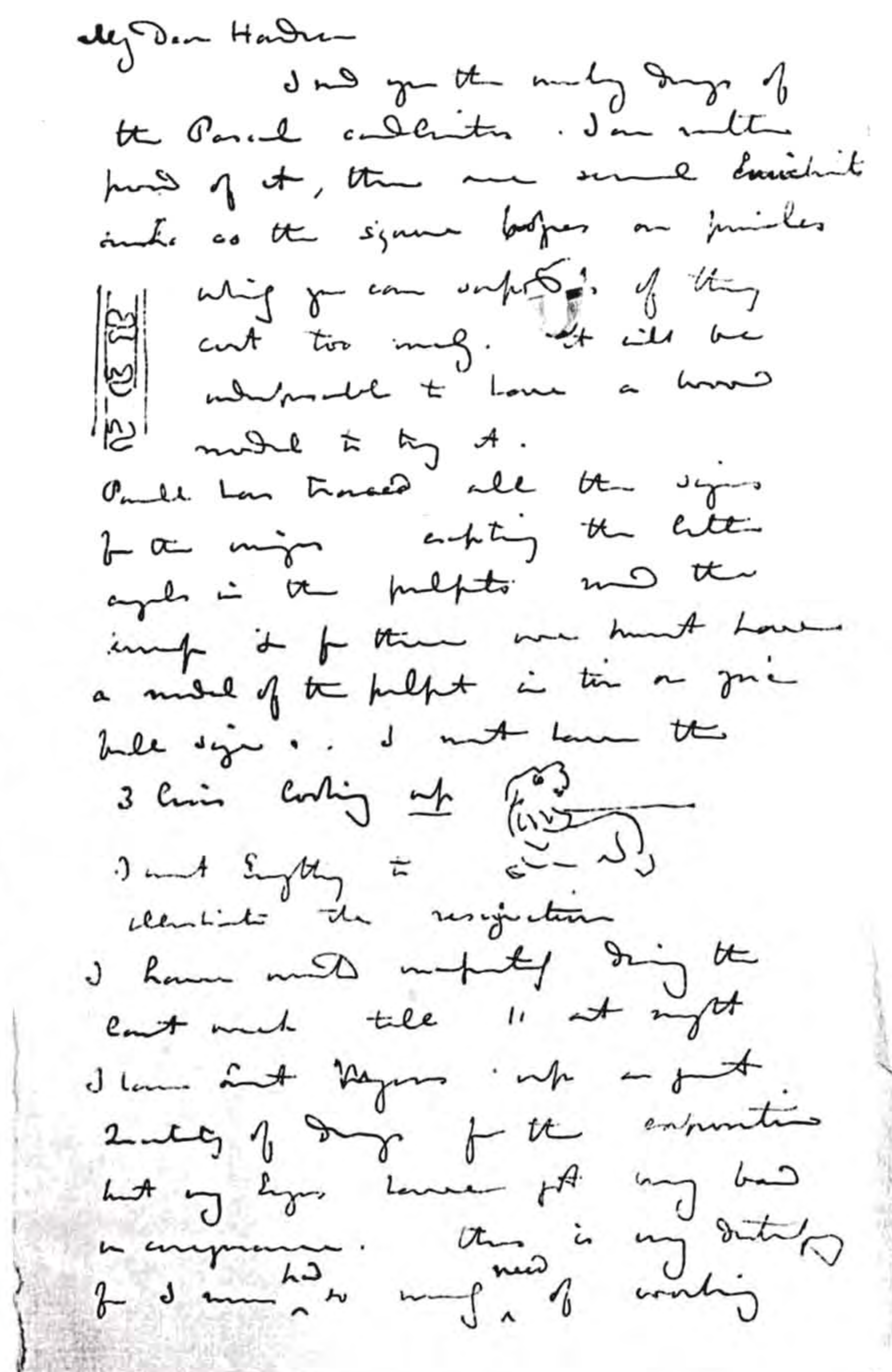
10 HLRO 636, of 16.10.1851

11 Quoted in Belcher 2012, p 289, n 3

12 Ibid, p 288

Pugin's incoming correspondence was not all torment, of course; there were plenty of letters that were neither 'miserable' nor 'contemptible'. He was hugely amused by the nuns at Nottingham who were afraid that if they dusted their stained glass the colours would rub off; and he could be confident that Hardman would share his enjoyment of a report from the convent at Taunton to which Alfred Luck, a neighbour in Ramsgate, had given a lamp, made of course by Hardman to Pugin's design: 'the Lady abbess at Taunton [has written] about the Lamp in the most extravagant praise. it is considered so *beautiful* by the community that some of the nuns will not believe that it is or can be *Gothic* — (so much for their ideas) but that if it is *gothic* that [they] will never speak against the style or **you** any more. there are 2 sheets about it.'¹³ The date is October 1850, the Great Exhibition is in sight, and Pugin spies a way of turning the nuns' reaction to account: 'do not you think,' he goes on to ask Hardman, 'it would be well to set to & make another for the exhibition — for if it strikes them [as] so good it may perchance have the same effect on some of the foreigners — it appears to have created a great sensation at Taunton.'

As you will have perceived, Hardman was much more than just the maker of Pugin's designs for metal and glass. He was his great friend and confidant. There are approximately a thousand letters to him surviving, forming about one third of the known correspondence. Pugin wrote to him every day, so he says, often twice a day. That happened when Pugin was at home; on his travels he tended not to write to Hardman very much but instead kept in touch with his wife Jane — that is from 1848 onwards — about homely matters like weather, trains, meals, beds — and scandal. At Alton Towers, where he was superintending improvements for Lord Shrewsbury, he was excited



My Dear Hardman

I send you the weekly design of
the Parish collection. I am rather
proud of it, there are some beautiful
ideas as the square bodies on pillars
which you can improve if they
cut too much. It will be
advisable to have a wood
model to try it.

Could have traced all the signs
for the signs including the little
signs in the pulpits and the
improvement for them we must have
a model of the pulpit in tin or zinc
ball sign. I must have the
3 lines looking up

I must signify to the
identical the resurrection

I have much to do during the
last week till 11 at night

I have sent Rogers with a great
quantity of designs for the exhibition
but my eyes have been so
in consequence. This is my duty
for I must have a great deal of working

A. Pugin

Figure 228: Pugin writing to John Hardman
private collection

13 Ibid, p 662

by the ‘great news’ that ‘old *M^r. Whitgreave* [member of an old Catholic family in the county] about 70 has been married the day before yesterday to a lovely girl of 19 — in Ireland. the victim tried every means of escape but the father a needy Irish gentleman forced her to take the old miser — only conceive. is not this disgraceful — I am furious. I hope somebody will give him a pair of horns.’¹⁴ To Hardman Pugin wrote about his work and about political matters, especially ecclesiastical ones, Catholic affairs, public life, as well as about the letters he received. There are flashes of merriment also, moments of hilarity. When Talbot Bury, a minor architect whom Pugin had known when he was a boy — Bury was a pupil of A. C. Pugin — brought his wife to Ramsgate on their honeymoon, it took six exclamation marks to make sure that Hardman noticed Pugin’s discovery that she looked ‘very like *D^r Wiseman*’.¹⁵

There are other correspondences in existence, smaller in size but of substance, value, and interest, but none that offers the same insight into Pugin’s character, convictions, and commissions. The letters to Hardman are a remarkable record of understanding and companionship, even though not one of Hardman’s letters to Pugin is known to survive — and they must have been nearly as frequent. They constitute the diary that Pugin never kept. His actual diaries, charming, tiny, leather-bound volumes held in the V & A, are for the most part a list of his journeys, together with some names, addresses, and sums of money, invaluable especially for the early years of his life but very lean, very spare. The letters to Hardman, on the other hand, reveal hopes, fears, misery, happiness; they are frank and outspoken, unconstrained. They amount to a running commentary on all aspects of his life, from the mid-1840s onwards. They are thus an unrivalled biographical source. They display the daily life of a working architect and designer and capture the core of Pugin’s professional enterprise.

Hardman was the greatest beneficiary of Pugin’s thought and knowledge. Here is part of one letter to him — just one out of the thousand or so — which deals with a candlestick for Ushaw College; the first page is shown in Figure 228.¹⁶

My Dear Hardman

I send you the working drawings of the Pascal candlestick. I am rather proud of it, there are several Enrichments such as the square bosses on pinnacles which you can suppress if they cost too much.... it will be indispensable to have a Wood model to try it. Powell [J. H. Powell was Pugin’s assistant and eventual son-in-law] has traced all the sizes for the images excepting the little angels in the pulpits round the knop & for these we Must have a model of the pulpit in tin or zinc full size. I must have the 3 lions looking *up*. ... I want Everything to illustrate the resurrection. I have worked incessantly during the

14 Ibid, p 240

15 Ibid, p 187

16 Ibid, p 389

last week till 11 at night. I have Sent Myers [George Myers, Pugin's preferred builder always] up a great Quantity of drawings for the exposition but my Eyes have got very bad in consequence. this is very distressing for I never had so much need of working as at present — it is very trying to keep constantly at such difficult drawings as these full of intersections & difficulties.

And so on, past an unexplained allusion to a workman in Manchester, a repeated assertion of the difficulty of the recent designs, which are now branded 'twisters', mention of a drawing for an altar, an injunction to have the foot of a chalice engraved, a note on his wife Jane and their new baby, to the customary end:

'ever dear Hardman
your devoted friend
✝ A Welby Pugin'

You may be thinking what a contrast there is between the laborious attempts at delineation of Hibbert, Sibthorp, and Mills, tentative, wooden, cluttered, and the clean, free, sure, economical lines of Pugin's lion which is alive and expressive. Hardman's Metalwork Daybook gives more detail about the candlestick: at the foot there were 'Images of Angels pointing upwards[,]... in 3 Niches on the Stem Images of the Holy Women[,] above in the knop Angels with Scrolls inscribed with "Alleluias"'; and the price was £100. You will see how the 'true principles' were in operation in the conception of the candlestick, with every part having an intrinsic connection with the function of the whole. Form, meaning, and purpose all in one.

As this letter indicates, the quantity of Pugin's commissions is staggering; at any one time he had an enormous number of jobs on the go and in his mind, whatever fears he may have entertained about a lack of business. But however busy he is, if he sees that Hardman needs guidance, he gives it. As he always did, to everyone: Frank Oliphant was an artist living in London who was engaged to draw figures for stained glass; acknowledging a batch of cartoons he recently sent down to Ramsgate, Pugin approved in general but added a qualification: perhaps the 'face' of 'the centre figure is rather too stout. *thinness* gives a great look of piety — & should be universal in Saints.'¹⁷

Most of the letters I have been quoting are later ones, from 1849, 1850, and 1851. When Pugin told Hardman in March 1851 that 'my writings much more than what I have been able to **do** have revolutionised the Taste of England', he had in mind, I suppose, his publications, his books and pamphlets; but, two hundred years after his birth, we might add, his letters.¹⁸ Some letters Pugin received doubtless were a strain to respond to, did make him feel that he was 'frittering away' his time, but on the whole the incoming correspondence stimulated him into brisk, energetic answers, because that was his nature, quick, decisive, and forthright, and because the requests coming in

17 Ibid, p 551

18 HLRO 477, of 15.3.1851

offered an opportunity, opened a prospect of doing something good in his line, and so were full of promise and hope. His replies conveyed necessary information, certainly, but they were a medium of instruction besides. Like St Marie's Grange, the revolutionary house he built for himself near Salisbury at the beginning of his career, which is seen in Figure 229, his letters provided another way for Pugin to set forth, even in tiny fragments, his vision of a Christian, Gothic England and help to establish it in a lasting form. He was an innovator; ahead of his time, he had to create the taste he defined, and his letters were an aid in that endeavour, as the quotations demonstrate. His pronouncements could be dogmatic, his judgments summary, because of his greater intelligence and knowledge and the consistency of his vision. When a bishop in Edinburgh questioned a design he put forward, Pugin silenced him by rapping out that 'There are numerous examples of the nimbus being applied as a[n] emblem of Dignity to images of Royal ecclestical & other personages who were not canonised — as in the nave of strasburg Cathedral w[h]ere all the kings have the nimbus'.¹⁹ He observed so much, he remembered so much. Pugin had formidable learning, derived from his reading and from his travels; he had what seems an inexhaustible capacity of invention; and he drew like an angel: 'All my objection to figures is dissolved by the charm of your drawing' were the words with which one Cambridge don surrendered.²⁰ It is no wonder that Pugin was the leading architect and designer of the Gothic Revival.

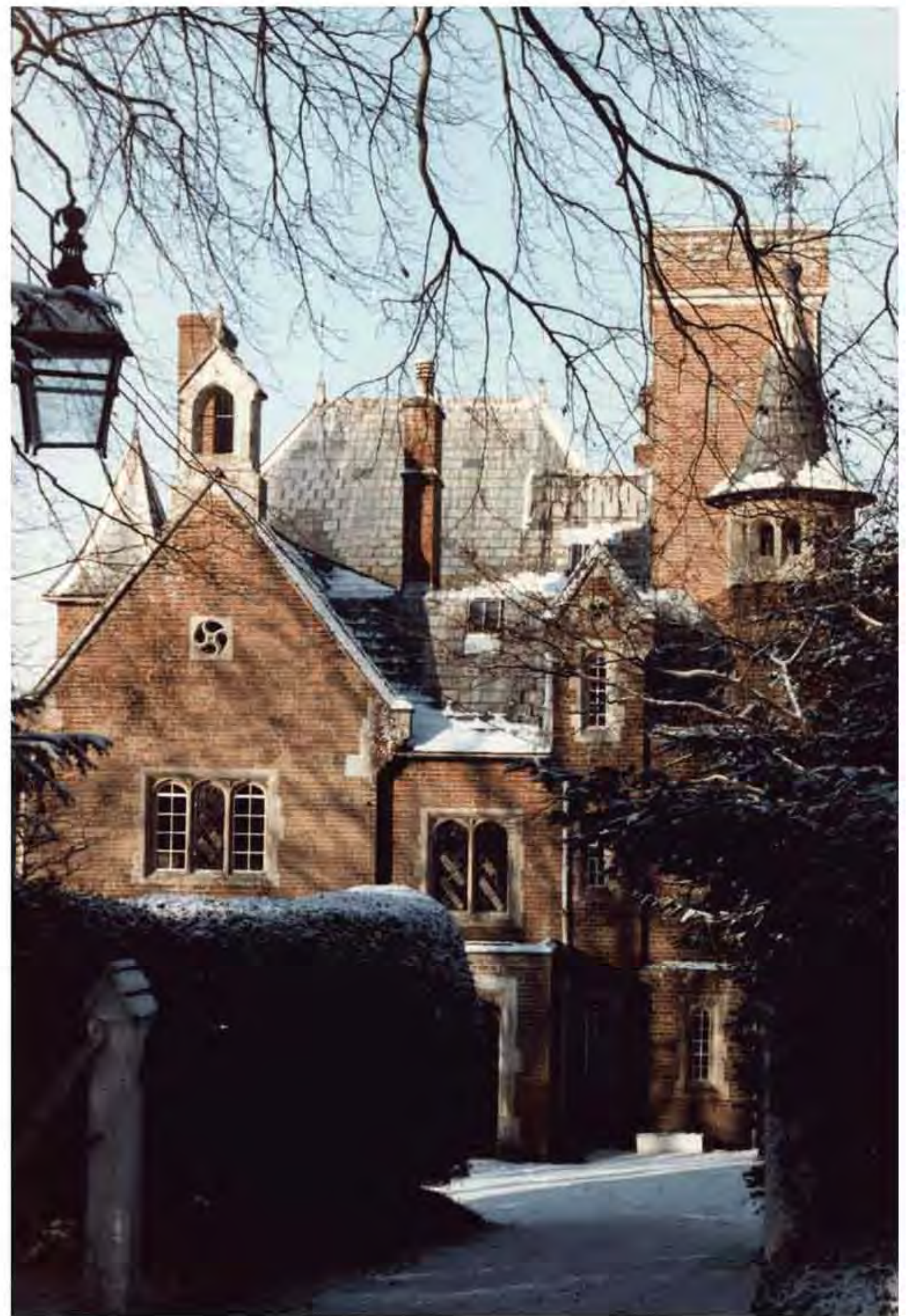


Figure 229: St Marie's Grange
private collection

Men with whom he regularly worked recognized his eminence. J. G. Crace, the interior decorator who made textiles, wallpaper, and furniture for Pugin, and who was a gentle, even timid man, betrayed a sense almost of awe when he described the display which he and Hardman arranged in the exposition of manufactures in Birmingham in 1849 as 'a sort of ovation to M^r Pugin' which would 'show the world what kind of man he is — to think that all your works of art & my stuffs &c come all from one head'.²¹ Herbert

19 Belcher 2012, p 171

20 Quoted in Ibid, p 318, n 1

21 Quoted in Ibid, p 159, n 1

Minton of Stoke, confident and successful, quite a different personality, the man who made the ceramic tiles for floors which Pugin designed like that in Leigh church in Staffordshire, illustrated in Figure 230 — if there are any like that — Minton referred when writing to Hardman in January 1851 to ‘our good friend, Pugin whom, may God preserve to the end of *our* days — and far beyond, as his fame will long outlive yours & mine’ — perhaps Hardman forgave the gracelessness because he concurred in the estimate.²² Thomas Earley, the painter employed by Hardman, described Pugin as ‘the Master Mind of the Age’. A man quite without vanity, and very quick to detect what he would condemn as ‘humbug’, Pugin did not enjoy that florid style of utterance if it came his way and brushed it swiftly aside: ‘Early makes a fool of himself’, he curtly told Hardman, ‘by poetiful effusions in his letters intended as *as compliments to myself!!!*’²³

Fellow-architects were not so fulsome but they paid Pugin the tribute of repeatedly asking him for designs. If about 1840 Charles Barry was devising Highclere which we all now know as Downton Abbey, Pugin was building St Chad’s in Birmingham and, before that, St Marie’s Grange, and there is a world of difference. Barry appreciated Pugin’s



Figure 230: Tiles in the church of All Saints, Leigh
Sarah Houle

quality already when he engaged him for the Birmingham school and for the Houses of Parliament competition in the mid-1830s and went on to retain him for the rest of his life; but that did not stop Pugin from condemning the older man’s designs when he saw a need. Wanting a decoration for Westminster, Barry sent a suggestion but, Hardman was told, ‘M^r Barrys V. R is *disgusting*. it is of *Queen annes* time. it will never do. I must write to him about it. it is really ridiculous. a watchmaker

about 80 years ago published a book of such cyphers — it is detestable.’²⁴ Forcible enough, Pugin’s objection met ready compliance for, a couple of days afterwards, he informed Hardman that ‘M^r Barry has given up that vile cypher. I am to make another.’²⁵ Metalwork proposed by Barry for the house of Canford that he refurbished in Dorset was likewise scoffed into extinction.

Other architects could be treated in the same way. Taking over a church designed by William Wardell — although in this case it was the client not the departing architect

22 MS, Incoming Metal Letters, MS 175A/4/4/4, in Hardman, BCA

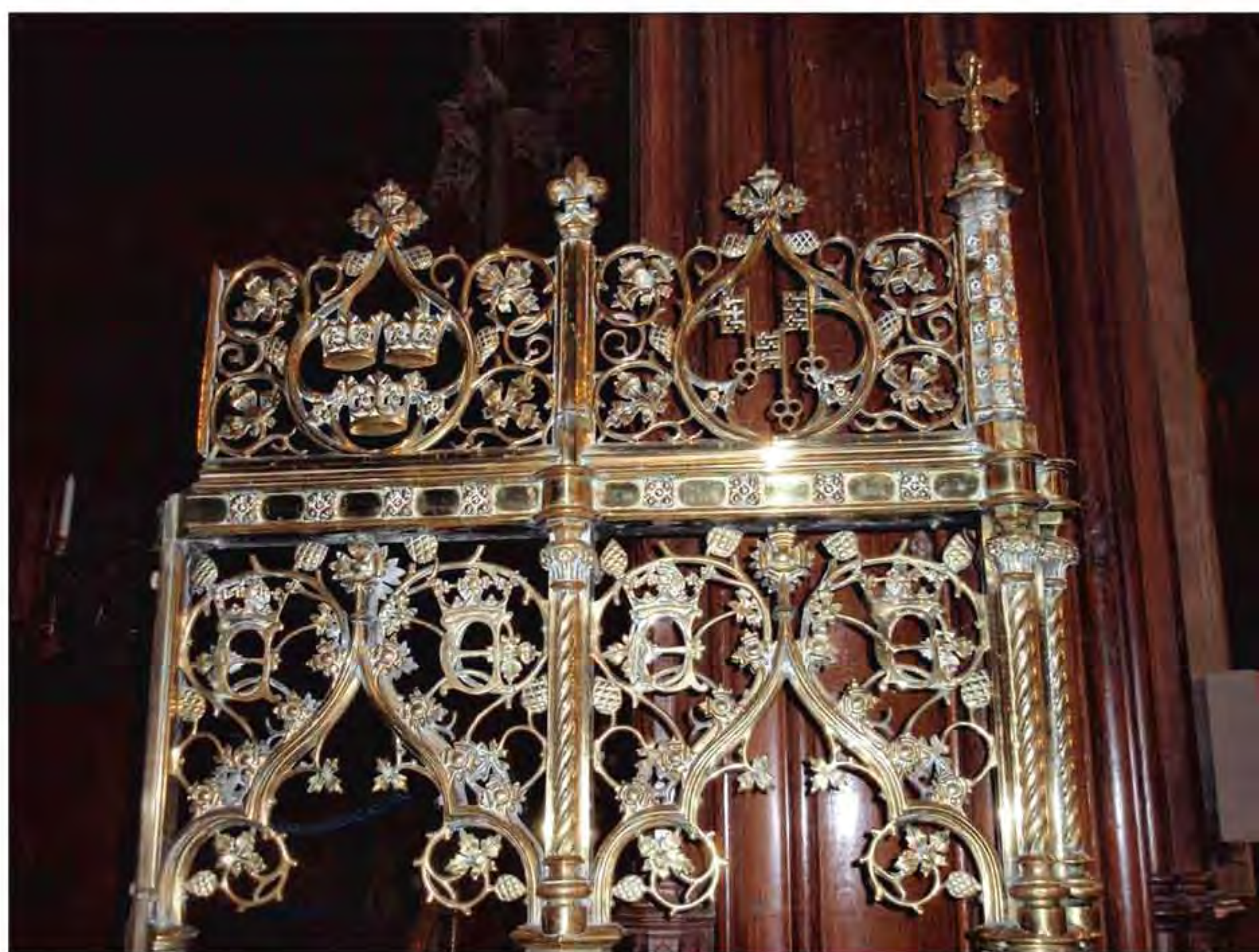
23 HLRO 638, of 19.10.1851

24 Belcher 2012, p 386

25 Ibid, p 390

who chose to employ him — Pugin discovered ‘what a vile window is that greenwich East. when we Examine the templets there is hard[l]y a space as Large as the palm of your hand. it is impossible to get any design in [at] all that is Effective. I dont think there are 10 feet of glass in the whole tracery — & every space is *different by inches*. how the window has been put together puzzles me. it is a wretched job. the tracery will bear no proportion to *the lights*.’²⁶ R. C. Carpenter fared not much better. When Hardman was inclined to go along with Carpenter’s proposal for the church he was restoring at Algarkirk, he was quickly set right: ‘I am grieved to see you are prepared to Sacrifice true Principles & pander to the ignorance or bad taste of Customers. what an idea in a decorated window to put an anunciation of *the 16 century* with *perspective interior* &c. I have written to Carpenter & shewn him the absurdity of the idea. it is the *latest treatment of the subject* in a 14 century window — I dont believe any of them know the distinction of styles in glass. I send you back the window a[lt]ered.’²⁷ After Pugin went to Brighton to inspect a window he designed for Carpenter’s St Paul’s church there, he noticed that ‘the litle brass chandeliers ... look beautiful & reflect great credit on the designer’ — who is Pugin himself, of course — but the ‘church is no great things. bad carving. vile — but a good proportion — I think it is rather dark.’²⁸

Pugin’s dominance seems to have been accepted without resentment, and it may be assumed that he moderated his tone when he wrote direct to the perpetrators of these solecisms. Wardell was undoubtedly peeved by his displacement at Greenwich — engineered, I suspect, by members of the Knill family — but Pugin and Hardman



Figures 231 and 232: Details of the screen in Ely Cathedral
Sarah Houle and *David McKee* respectively

26 Ibid, p 657

27 Ibid, p 359

28 Ibid, p 247

were still collaborating for his other church in London, the one at Clapham. Henry Woodyer was very courteous when he approached Pugin for a design for Highnam: he and the donor Gambier Parry would both, he stresses, 'be inclined to be much guided by your suggestions'.²⁹ Gilbert Scott was another to obtain designs for stained glass from Pugin, as he did for Hillingdon near London.

It seems that Pugin designed metalwork for him too. Whether Scott expressly asked Hardman to seek Pugin's help or whether Hardman suggested to Scott that he seek it or whether Hardman sought it of his own accord without Scott's knowledge (which could be a dangerous course) is not clear, but certainly some drawings which Scott sent to Hardman were dispatched from Birmingham to Ramsgate, in April

1850, and then sent back again in quick time. Pugin was unimpressed: 'I return you scotts drawings & will send you a sketch tomorrow. they are vile. what beastly things he must do. there is not the first principle of metallic construction. This application will not come to anything — it is a waster.' In fact, however, far from being a 'waster', the 'application' seems to have resulted in the metalwork for the screen between nave and chancel in Ely Cathedral, a magnificent part of Scott's restoration displayed in Figures 231 and 232.³⁰ There is no mention of Hardman, let alone Pugin, in Scott's *Recollections* in this connection but correspondence from Scott's office in London preserved in the Hardman deposit in Birmingham indicates the hypothesis, while several drawings by Pugin in the Birmingham museum tend to confirm it. They are marked by him for 'Ely' and annotated by Hardman for 'Gates', and they show details of keys, crowns, and the letter 'E', reproduced in Figure 233, exactly as they are executed in the brass. Long before the screen was in place, and it was Hardman's workman who installed the metal panels in 1852 as part of the total sum of £260 which Hardman charged, Pugin provides evidence of his acquaintance with the original design: when he travelled to the



Figure 233: Pugin's drawing of a detail for the screen in Ely Cathedral,
Sarah Houle

29 Undated MS, Incoming Glass Letters, MS 175A/4/3/22, for 1853 in Hardman, BCA

30 Belcher 2012, p 509

north of Germany in May 1850 he declared to Hardman that, having been to Lübeck, he could ‘see where Scott got his Ely screen’.³¹

Scott’s is a big name in the Gothic Revival; so is William Butterfield’s. Beginning his work on the church at Ottery St Mary in Devon, Butterfield was going about it in the wrong way, in Pugin’s view: ‘I know the church’, Pugin confirmed to Hardman; ‘his suggestions will not do. it must be something very simple for such narrow lights — it is impossible to get — subjects or anything of that kind.’³² Little escaped his notice; when Butterfield planned the church of All Saints, Margaret Street, in London, the site may have forced his hand, but Pugin spotted an inconsistency straightaway: ‘I have had such a Laugh’, he told Hardman; ‘do you remember the ecclesiologist in reviewing my pamphlet did not agree with me that *churches* should be *built detached*. the cat is out of the bag. their new church at Margaret street is *blocked up on 2 sides* so having Lost their tail they want to persuade everybody to cut theirs off & build on the same principle. ha ha ha — you & I are the only honest men going.’³³

If Pugin told him, Butterfield evidently took no offence at the stricture on his structure. After Pugin called on him in London one day to discuss some windows Butterfield wanted, Pugin ‘took him to Westminster to see the glass there with which he was delighted. he says it is far the best he has seen — & he was astonished with the detail of the work.’³⁴ At another point Pugin reported to Hardman that ‘I have 2 more Windows from Butterfield since I wrote last. he says we beat every body else hollow.’³⁵

Carpenter, another big name, far from being discouraged by Pugin’s rejection of his proposals as ‘absurd’, went to visit Pugin in Ramsgate and lodge an order for more glass. ‘Carpenter has been here to day’, Pugin reported to Hardman in the evening; ‘he was *astonished* with the church. he acknowledged there was nothing modern like it.’³⁶ Since Pugin himself knew that ‘the Labour of my whole life is vested in this church & if it goes I have done nothing’, it must have been gratifying to hear such praise from such a quarter.³⁷

Distant from the metropolitan hubbub, St Augustine’s stands yet on the cliff at Ramsgate for us too to be ‘*astonished* with’; and beside it is The Grange, in Figure 234. The two buildings are one man’s testimony to his dream of beauty and truth, as far as his short life allowed him to realise it. Seeing his achievement, there and elsewhere, other architects made applications which are a measure of his standing in their eyes: as their actions proclaim, his peers did not feel themselves his equal. That is one aspect of

31 Ibid, p 547

32 Ibid, p 227

33 Ibid, p 573

34 HLRO 120, of 2.7.1851

35 Belcher 2012, p 518

36 Ibid, p 451

37 Ibid, p 392

Pugin's career that his letters disclose, letters written mostly in that house and dealing frequently with the difficulties but also with the hope, the determination, of completing that church.

Let me offer you a last assessment of Pugin's stature. Imagine, if you will, the hall of The Grange, on a late October evening in 1851: door securely fastened, curtains drawn, candles lit, fire burning. A packing case delivered that day (charge ten shillings and sixpence for carriage, as Pugin records in the list he kept of the expenses of building his church) is being opened; people are crowding round to see, as one gleaming, polished object after another is lifted out, glinting in the flickering light; even the servants are lured to the spectacle and the excitement, and neglect their duties to stand gazing from the cavernous, shadowy background. The Great Exhibition in London has closed, and the items shown there are returning to their permanent homes. Splendid articles that helped to make the Medieval Court the most successful display in the vast, international

Crystal Palace shine and sparkle now in Pugin's hall; 'all the things have arrived quite Safe & the unpacking of such unimaginable riches appeared to have overcome the servants with the magnitude of my riches', Pugin wrote in amusement and delight to Hardman afterwards.³⁸ 'how you would have Laughed. I pass off for a sort of alladin — ...



Figure 234: The Grange and St Augustine's
private collection

I assure you we have astonished the natives.' Here are more 'astonished' people. What may make this more than a happy domestic interior, for us, is the remark uttered by one of the servants, Emma, the cook; she was standing next to a maid who presumably could not believe her dazzled eyes, and she may have thought she was just whispering quietly but her words were picked up, I imagine by Jane, who told Augustus, who told 'dear Hardman', and the letter gives us a final opinion of Pugin and his place. What 'the cook was heard to say to charlotte' was something demonstrated over and over again by Pugin's letters, just as it is shown by our presence here. What 'the cook was heard to say to charlotte' was 'oh he is one of the greatest men of England', and I hope that you too will agree.

38 HLRO 628, of 10.1851

Gothic fantastic: Parliament, Pugin, and the architecture of science

By Edward Gillin

A.W.N. Pugin's name has ever been inseparable from the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. In hindsight, architect Charles Barry's (1795-1860) choice of Pugin to assist in the design of Britain's new seat of government seems obvious. Pugin was by the 1830s a leading advocate of Gothic architecture as aesthetically and morally improving, while his own draughtsmanship and knowledge of the style appeared unparalleled. Yet British politics at this time was turbulent and public order often appeared fragile. The form of the new Parliament building aroused concerns over the values and appearance of Britain's government. Maintaining tradition, while promoting seemingly enlightened governance was a challenge which had architectural repercussions. In the newly reformed political world of the mid-1830s, calls for the employment of Gothic at Westminster were deeply controversial. By placing Pugin in this political context, I want to show how in order to secure support for the Gothic, he conformed to a political rhetoric which endeavoured to show that good government shared values considered inherent to good science.

Late Georgian politics was increasingly shaped and characterised by notions of science. Joe Bord has shown how in Whig political philosophy, the scientific values of objectivity, intellectual tolerance, empiricism, and the mastering of complex knowledge, were deemed suitable values for reputable statesmanship and governance.¹ Such values were shared in radical circles too, and were hard for more conservative elements of Parliament to refute.² The choice of style for Britain's new Parliament did not escape such ideas. Following the 1832 Reform Act, Lord Melbourne's Whig government, wanting both to secure political stability and appear administratively effective, prioritised a traditional style, yet combined this with attention to practical matters, such as ventilation. The polemic surrounding Parliament's new form has been extensively examined in several historical works.³ What has not been considered is how much of this discourse was characterized by science. Debates centred over which style best embodied progressive, enlightened government: Gothic or classical. Each style was portrayed as projecting values of science, which were suitable for modern politics. Each style was at times also denounced as unscientific and barbaric. What is clear is that the controversy of Parliament's style was often framed within intentions to be

1 Bord 2009, p 2.

2 Collini, Winch, & Burrow 1983, p 3.

3 Rorabaugh 1973, pp 155-175; Fredericksen 2000, pp 99-111.

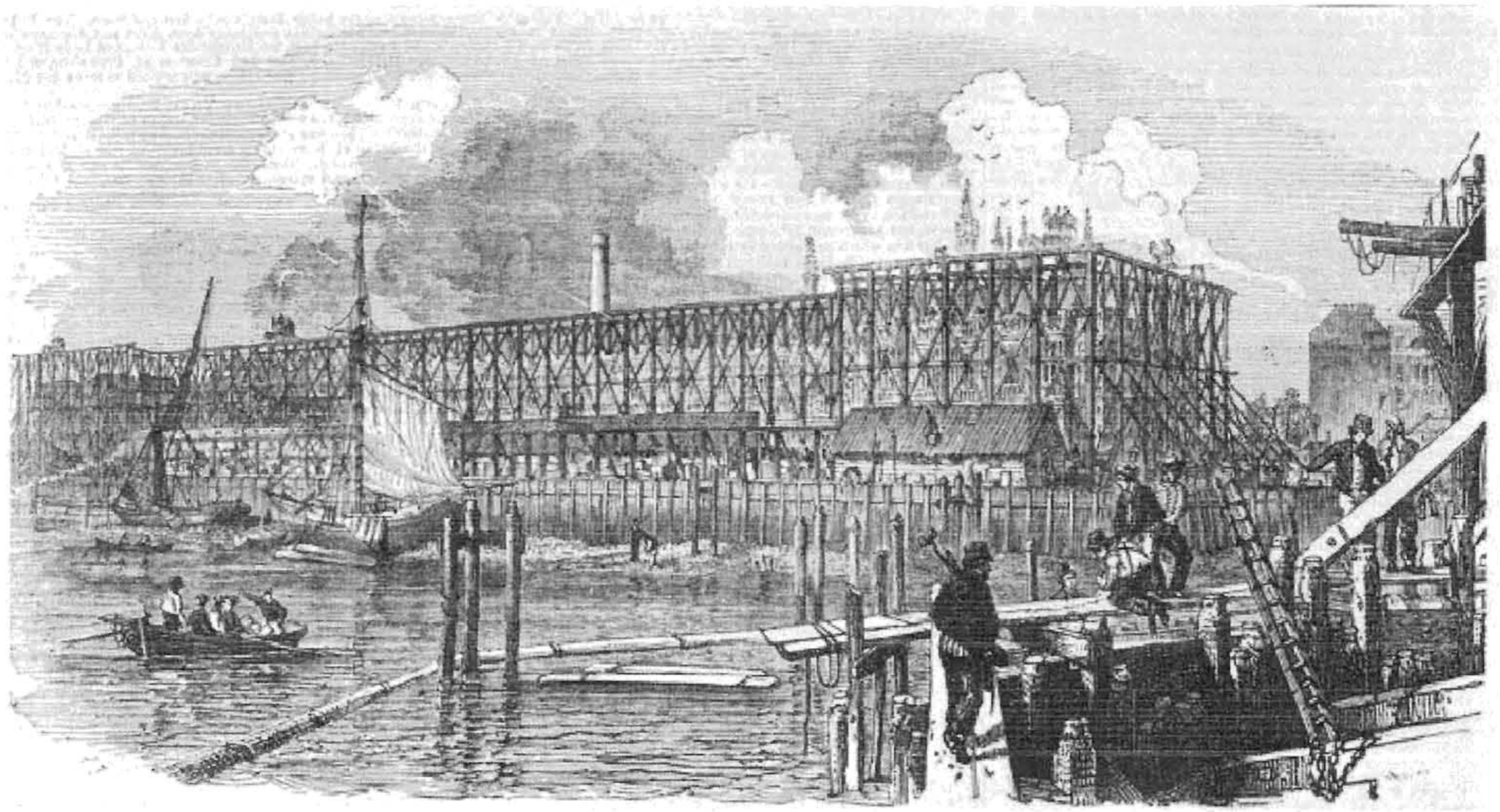


Figure 235: The New Houses of Parliament under construction
London Illustrated News 25.6.1842

scientific and rhetoric asserting the authority of empirical knowledge.

Architecture was inseparable from politics, and politics engendered questions about nature. A building that embodied scientific enlightenment was consistent with political appeals to knowledge of nature to maintain social order. As Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray put it, ‘To the politician and theologian science became a means of bolstering those of their claims which could be understood in terms of the natural or ordained place of man’.⁴ That the debate over style was characterised by science is important, and highlights the interconnectedness of politics, science, and architecture. To place Pugin in this context demonstrates how he laboured to have his Gothic principles accepted as appropriate for government. Such an understanding moves us away from descriptions of Pugin’s role at Westminster as an almost inevitable result of his artistic talent.

Mirroring the improvement of science

In October 1834 the medieval Houses of Parliament were destroyed in a dramatic fire. Just two years earlier, Britain’s political establishment was rocked by the passing of the 1832 Reform Act which increased the electorate from about 500,000 to 813,000 voters.⁵ Retrospectively the impact of this act has been contested, but in the uncertainty of the mid-1830s, the new Parliament raised serious questions over the direction of British politics.⁶ The post-1832 political world was one of social unrest, with the threat of revolution apparently ever present. The question of how government at Westminster

4 Morrell & Thackray 1981, p 33.

5 On the legislation, see Phillips & Wetherell 1995, pp 411–436.

6 Stewart 1989, p 32; Phillips & Wetherell 1995, p 414.

could legislate in a manner appropriate for a nation in the midst of social and industrial change was an urgent one. Often the answer was perceived to be one of a scientific approach to government.⁷

Radical Utilitarian MP Joseph Hume (1777-1855) argued that the new structure should

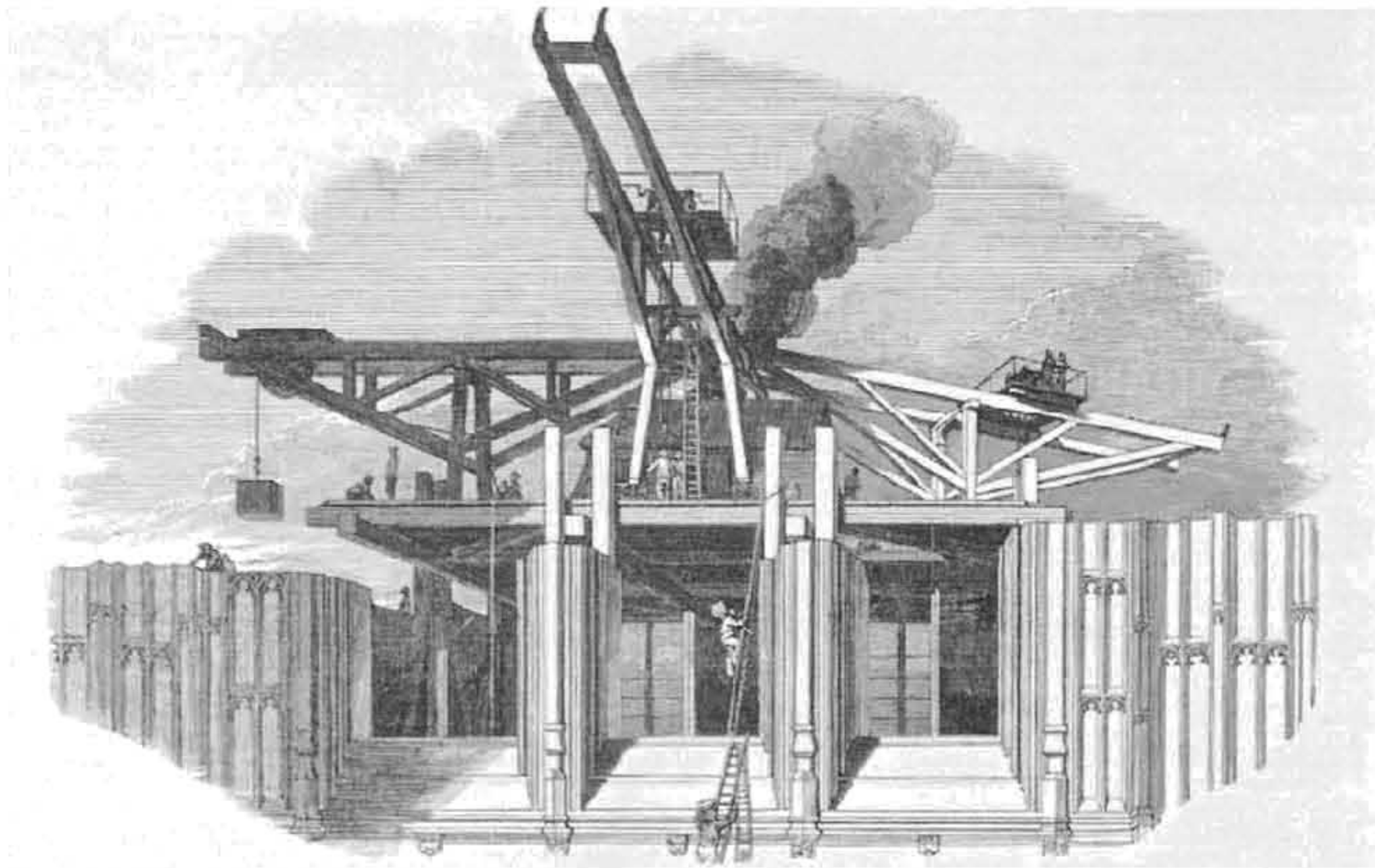


Figure 236: Crane for hoisting stones for the Victoria Tower
London Illustrated News 2.2.1850

be designed with questions of health, efficiency, and utility taken into account. Aside from the increased membership of the House of Commons resulting from the Reform Act, Hume's concerns were grounded in his readings of medical texts focusing on human blood flow and respiration.⁸ With support from fellow MP and doctor, Henry Warburton (1784-1858), Hume argued that any new

Parliament required architecture which assisted the flow of clean air, distributed light efficiently, and provided ample room for all members.⁹ Though Utilitarians demanded Parliament be built with utility in mind, they did not monopolise claims of being scientific. While definitions of what it was to build with scientific values varied, there was a united cross-party appeal for Parliament to embody, in the broadest sense, science.

Joe Bord's study of Whig politics in this period has examined the strong links between Whig political philosophy and science. He has identified a clear relationship between Whig manners and customs, and the cultivation of objective knowledge.¹⁰ Bord shows how some Whigs believed credible government could be achieved by intellectually equipped statesmen, who commanded and mastered knowledge in the exertion of their legislative duties.¹¹ Politicians were also to exude rational sociability, that is the ability to value and consider all opinions, even if conflicting, in order to work together in coalition for the national good.¹² This paralleled tolerating alternate intellectual positions in areas of natural philosophy such as geology, so as to conduct effective improving investigations, often through learned societies.¹³ Finally, the Whig manner of cultivation

7 Collini, Winch, & Burrow 1983, pp 27 & 36-42.

8 Weitzman 1961, pp 99-107.

9 *Hansard* 1833, pp 63-4.

10 Bord 2009, p 2.

11 *Ibid*, pp 31-55.

12 *Ibid*, pp 56-78.

13 *Ibid*, pp 79-101.

stemmed from a connection between Whig government and land. An appreciation of agriculture entailed agrarian chemistry and experiments on enhancing produce.¹⁴ This pursuit of improving knowledge extended beyond agriculture to industrial duties. Science shaped more than broad Whig manners, but provided an approach to government which emphasised an unbiased and objective manner of legislating. There was a consensus at Westminster that politics should be made a subject comprising of a systematic body of knowledge.¹⁵

William Richard Hamilton (1777-1859) was perhaps the most prominent projector of such sentiment with regards to architecture. Although most famous for capturing the Rosetta Stone from the French in 1801, following Napoleon Bonaparte's disastrous Egyptian campaign, the ex-diplomat and president of the Royal Geographical Society wrote three tracts calling for the new Parliament building to embody science between 1836 and 1837.¹⁶ His work secured a considerable readership within government, including Hume, and the prominent Whig statesman, Lord Henry Brougham (1778-1868). With his eminent geologist friend Roderick Murchison (1792-1871), Hamilton shared a keen interest in natural philosophy, as well as industrial machinery. Regarding Parliament, Hamilton denounced Gothic as 'barbarous', while describing Grecian architecture as the embodiment of 'improved knowledge'. He argued that 'Architecture had thus become a mirror of the improvement of science in various periods'.¹⁷ While Gothic reflected medieval superstition, the neo-classical style of Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren mirrored the natural philosophy of men like Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton. Greek architecture imitated 'the grandeur of nature'.¹⁸ He warned that though the Gothic might capture the fleeting literary fashion of Walter Scott, architecture should always embody 'the advancement of national science'.¹⁹ Furthermore, to build with Grecian pillars (tree trunks) and in the Corinthian Order (leaves of the acanthus) was to 'copy from Nature'.²⁰

Hamilton felt this mirroring of nature and scientific learning to be most important at Parliament. The home of the nation's government should, he asserted, embrace enlightened learning and an objective search for true knowledge. In a building designated for discussing 'politics, trade, justice, religion, property, laws, agriculture ... [and] all our daily wants and interests', Hamilton explained that an atmosphere of scientific inquiry would be conducive to good administration.²¹ In support of his arguments, it is interesting that Hamilton chose to cite the works of Cambridge natural philosopher William Whewell (1794-1866) and mechanical philosopher Robert Willis (1800-1875), in which

14 *Ibid*, pp 102-34.

15 Collini, Winch, & Burrow 1983, p 13.

16 Anderson 2004.

17 Hamilton 1836, p 5. A copy held at UCL includes Joseph Hume's annotations.

18 *Ibid*, p 7.

19 *Ibid*, p 9.

20 W. E. H. 1836, p 420.

21 Hamilton 1836b, p 23.

they proposed how architecture could be subjected to scientific analysis.²² Both of these men of science explained that buildings should be treated as mechanical works. In the *Westminster review*, Hamilton attacked Barry's Gothic designs for Parliament: these he felt were clearly at odds with such enlightened scientific architecture.²³

Hamilton's writings aroused much attention. One review in the *Architectural magazine* echoed his views of architecture as the 'mirror of the improvement of science'.²⁴

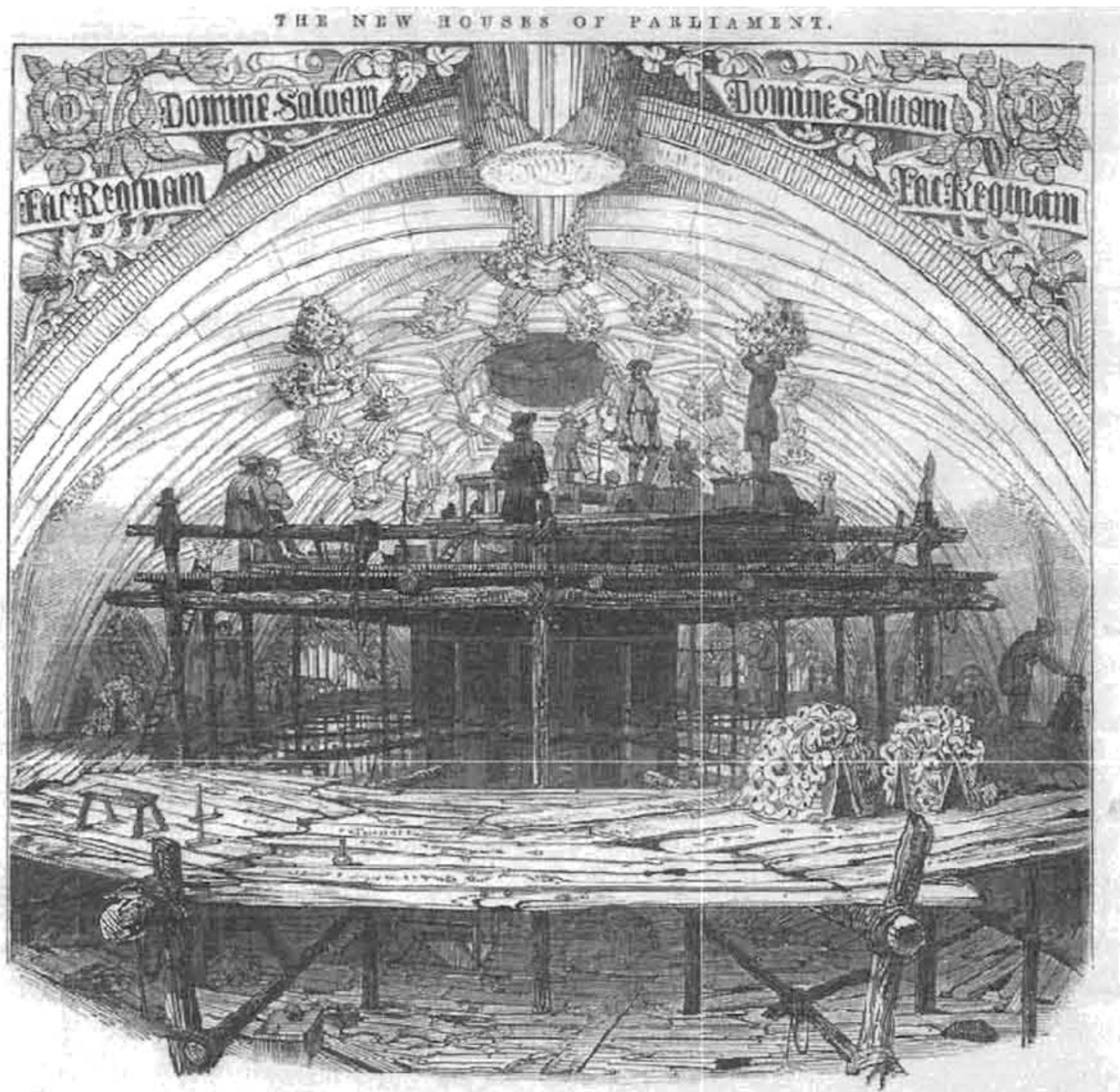


Figure 237: Carving the bosses in the Central Hall of the new Houses of Parliament.

London Illustrated News 18.3.1848

Although rejecting Hamilton's calls for the Grecian style, Colonel Julian Jackson (1790-1853) agreed that architects applied 'skill and science', and at Parliament should be told to 'show your science by a master-piece of Gothic'.²⁵ Barry's Gothic vaulting, spires, and buttresses revealed 'such a degree of science in the composition and division of forces ... as can have resulted only from much mathematical knowledge'.²⁶ In the *Edinburgh review*, Henry Brougham praised Hamilton's focus on the science of architecture as well as architecture's ability to embody

scientific learning. Brougham was convinced of the enlightenment of employing a classical style at Westminster. In Brougham, Hamilton's arguments found a prominent voice inside the House of Lords.²⁷ It is evident that Hamilton found a sympathetic audience at Westminster, especially among certain readers who shared his high estimation of science in governance.

Pugin and Barry at Westminster

It is revealing that Pugin chose to share in this emphasis of science when advocating that Parliament be Gothic. Responding to architect A. W. Hakewill's observation that

22 Willis 1835; Whewell 1837, pp 344-5. Cited in Hamilton 1836b, p 56; and Hamilton 1837, p 42.

23 W.E.H. 1836, p 409; on the initials 'W. E. H.', see the Wellesley Index, at <http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?id=LWR->

24 (Anon) 1837, p 121.

25 Jackson 1837, p 12.

26 *Ibid*, p 29.

27 Brougham 1837, p 174; *Hansard* 1844, p 1247.

Parliament should be classical, as this was the style of ‘the arts and sciences’, Pugin’s arguments anticipated much of his later work on the subject.²⁸ To those who promoted the Greek style as enlightened, Pugin declared the style to be 2,000 years out of vogue. Gothic cathedrals, churches, and chapels were in contrast, evidence of the skill and knowledge which medieval masons possessed.²⁹ These structures, he asserted, provided instruction for architects. Indeed Gothic architecture was shaped by a constantly growing body of knowledge, which had advanced the style to an intellectually advanced state.³⁰ To those who doubted that Gothic art rested on knowledge of nature, Pugin cited the paintings of the German engraver and mathematician Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). Dürer, he observed, combined art with natural knowledge.³¹

For Pugin, Gothic architecture was a systematically-produced body of knowledge with morally improving qualities.³² It carried notions of romantic nationalism and patriotism.³³ It was also inseparable from Pugin’s own faith. Having converted to Roman Catholicism between 1834 and 1835, Pugin promoted his religion alongside his passion for the Gothic. Yet despite what he perceived to be the morally improving qualities of the style, in supporting its adoption at Westminster, Pugin employed a rhetoric which emphasised the empirical and practical nature of Gothic architecture.

Pugin’s response to Hakewill provides a microcosm of arguments he developed over the following decade. He proposed that if Christian art forms were to be morally improving, then even Gothic architecture could not be exempt ‘from rule ... of philosophical and scientific principles’.³⁴ Pugin envisaged the style to be a formal set of artistic techniques, which embodied specific values. Architecture reflected the faith, customs, and climate of a nation, and Pugin believed in Britain’s eventual return to a united Catholic Church.³⁵ Neoclassical architecture was, for Pugin, ‘pagan’ and reflected the ‘philosophy and mythology’ of ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt.³⁶ In contrast Christian Gothic architecture embodied divine truth and learning. Pugin stipulated that it embodied Resurrection through great spires and vertical lines, while its recent decay accompanied a decline in faith since the English Reformation.³⁷

To build in accordance with Gothic principles was to advance the ‘self-denying, charitable, devout, and faithful habits of the ages of faith’.³⁸ Pugin’s art looked to

28 (Anon) 1835, p 506.

29 Pugin 1835, p 8.

30 *Ibid*, p 9.

31 *Ibid*, p 12.

32 On the Victorian conviction that Gothic architecture could be subject to objective laws just as any inductive science, such as geology and botany, see Miele 1998, p 103.

33 Clark 1962, p 99.

34 Pugin 1844 (*Glossary*), p iii; also see Pugin 1836 (*Ornaments*).

35 Pugin 1843 (*An Apology*) p 4; also argued in Pugin 1875 (*Church and State*).

36 Pugin 1841 (*Contrasts*) p 2.

37 *Ibid*, pp 3 and 7.

38 *Ibid*, p 19; also see Pugin 1837 (*An Apology*).

the medieval past to find direction for a religiously enlightened future. Along with this prophetic vision, Pugin offered medieval ‘mechanical skill’ and principles both aesthetic, devout, and interestingly of ‘utility’.³⁹ He argued that true Gothic architecture was ‘useful’. Pinnacles, though emblematic of Resurrection, were to defy weathering and throw off rain; a service also performed by pointed roofs.⁴⁰ Pugin saw his service as ‘*beautifying* articles of utility’, rather than ‘*disguising*’ practical objects.⁴¹ As Rosemary Hill put it, Pugin declared that ‘Gothic was best and Gothic was best learned, as Pugin had learned it, empirically’.⁴² The question of the science and utility of a style was ambiguous and contested but it was one Pugin addressed. Portraying the style as an empirical body of knowledge, and above all as enlightened, was an important part of his argument.

The relationship between politics, science, and architecture was not limited to rhetoric and discourse. During Parliament’s construction questions of structure and mechanics were addressed scientifically. Charles Barry employed more than aesthetic knowledge in his work. In 1839 he participated in a survey to select a type of stone for the building alongside geologists William Smith (1769-1839) and Henry De la Beche (1796-1855). Although commissioned specifically for Parliament, this commission laboured to produce a work of scientific authority, for future architects to reference.⁴³ It combined observations of existing structures and quarries, and experiments on the comparative strength of stone types at the new laboratory of King’s College London. Later Barry worked alongside experimentalists Goldsworthy Gurney (1793-1875) and Michael Faraday (1791-1867) to construct a system of gas lighting for Parliament’s interior.⁴⁴ Barry also engaged with the Astronomer Royal George Biddell Airy (1801-1892) and horologist Benjamin Lewis Vulliamy (1780-1854) to ensure the Westminster Clock was a work of scientific credibility.⁴⁵ Regarding the ventilation of the new Parliament, Barry worked with Faraday to construct a rival ventilation system to that of the Edinburgh chemist David Boswell Reid (1805-1863).⁴⁶ In all these endeavours, Barry partnered men of science and referenced scientific bodies of knowledge to ensure Parliament reflected the latest philosophical researches.

Barry himself identified with elements of Britain’s scientific society, being a regular attendant at British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) meetings, and lectures at the Royal Institution.⁴⁷ He felt it the duty of ‘every architect to make himself acquainted with chemistry, as well as other sciences’, and lamented that neither

39 Pugin 1841 (*True Principles*) pp 5 and 10.

40 *Ibid.*, pp 9-11.

41 *Ibid.*, p 23.

42 Hill 2008, p 148.

43 Barry 1839.

44 Porter 1998, p 169.

45 Barry 1867, p 171; Port 1976, p 169.

46 Schoenefeldt 2014, pp 173-213.

47 Barry 1867, p 76.

Christopher Wren nor Inigo Jones had, in his opinion, acquired a thorough knowledge of ‘the science of mechanics’.⁴⁸ For Barry, architecture touched ‘on one side the domain of science, and on the other the domain of art’.⁴⁹ Considering how Barry used geologists, chemists, mathematicians, and experimenters at Parliament enhances our understanding of Pugin’s place in the building’s construction. To build an appropriate national assembly, Barry referenced a broad range of authorities in alternate bodies of knowledge. Pugin’s knowledge of the Gothic was a resource which Barry drew on, as much as he did with Faraday’s chemistry, or De la Beche’s geology.⁵⁰ What each shared, was a claim to be scientific. They both saw themselves as creating a Parliament building appropriate to a modern industrial society; with a newly reformed political system.

Conclusion

In their history of the BAAS, Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray observed that in times of social unrest and the breakup of political order, appeals to nature are consistent with appeals for political stability. They thus examined the BAAS, established in 1831, in the context of the political turbulence of the 1830s and 1840s, and demonstrated how inseparable claims for natural order and social progress were from those of social and moral order.⁵¹ The controversy of Britain’s new Parliament, unfolding within this same context, provides insights into this relationship between scientific values and political authority. Above all, the new Parliament building illustrates the architectural ramifications of this relationship.⁵²

The Parliament that Barry and Pugin built emphasised history and tradition. Indeed, as Roland Quinault has shown, Barry’s Parliament was above all a Royal Palace, displaying the prominent role of monarchy in the British political system.⁵³ Nothing captured the ancient authority of Parliament quite like Pugin’s details added to Barry’s Gothic designs. Overtly the building was a statement of continuity following the 1832 Reform Act. Yet in the political and social context of the 1830s, a national assembly which exuded only a sense of history would have been inconsistent with much Whig and Utilitarian political philosophy. How could the seat of government for an increasingly enfranchised and industrialised society only embody the past? To establish political authority the new building also embodied modern scientific learning. It appeared both nostalgic and enlightened, consistent with a political system drawing stability from its history; and credibility from its increasing appreciation of science. The extent of this growing relationship between politics and science was such that even Pugin, in advocating the Gothic, chose to appeal to science.

48 House of Commons Papers 1852, p 218.

49 Barry 1867, p 165.

50 For an example of Pugin’s collection of knowledge and Barry’s referencing of it, see AWN Pugin to C Barry, 1.8.1845: Belcher 2003, pp 424-425.

51 Morrell & Thackray 1981, pp 30-31.

52 On architectural embodiments of science, see Yanni 1999, pp 1-13; Forgan 1998.

53 Quinault 1992, pp 79-104.

Anglo-American modern Gothic: A. W. N. Pugin's impact on Ralph Adams Cram

By Ayla Lepine

In midtown Manhattan, there is a church just around the corner from the Museum of Modern Art. Its bold tower anchoring it to its city block, St Thomas' Church on Fifth Avenue was initially planned with a sense of height and mass to rival its neighbours. Within a couple of decades its neighbours became towering skyscrapers, thereby rendering St Thomas' more of a jewel box than a monumental Gothic presence. Externally, its forms are evidently a mixture of flowing French, British and German Gothic elements. Its fluid tracery of the rose window is bounded above and below by hard-edged niches in which curving figural sculptures that could only be early twentieth-century are housed beneath Gothic canopies. Within, the worshipper is drawn towards the vast reredos, teeming with carved figures and covering nearly the full height of the east wall [figure 238]. Looking closely, the reredos' composition reveals a quality of concentricity as well as layered height and projecting reliefs depicting figures from Adam and Eve to Victorian Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone and practically everyone in between. At the reredos' core is a panel that appears somewhat more plain than what surrounds it.

The church, designed by Boston-based Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in 1907 and completed in 1916, replaced an earlier church on the site which had burned down in 1905.¹ The church's earlier reredos had been designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. It featured relief carvings of genuflecting angels turned towards a simple unadorned cross. When Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue worked with the sculptor Lee Lawrie to devise a new reredos for the Cram and Goodhue St Thomas', the decision was taken to revive Saint-Gaudens' design. A physical memory of the earlier sacred building was doubly housed, within the new Goodhue and Lawrie reredos, and within the new St Thomas'. Selectively taking up surviving elements of the past and reworking them into new architectural forms is a key element of Gothic revivalism both in ideology and design practice throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recalling a previous generation's patterns of worship and sensory experience as well as aesthetic taste and art patronage and production offered a pathway to significant innovation in which a return to the past provoked not merely nostalgia but new and original works of art and architecture. For the St Thomas' reredos which now stands within the sanctuary of St Thomas' Fifth Avenue, the past is glorified in multiple Gothic layers rippling

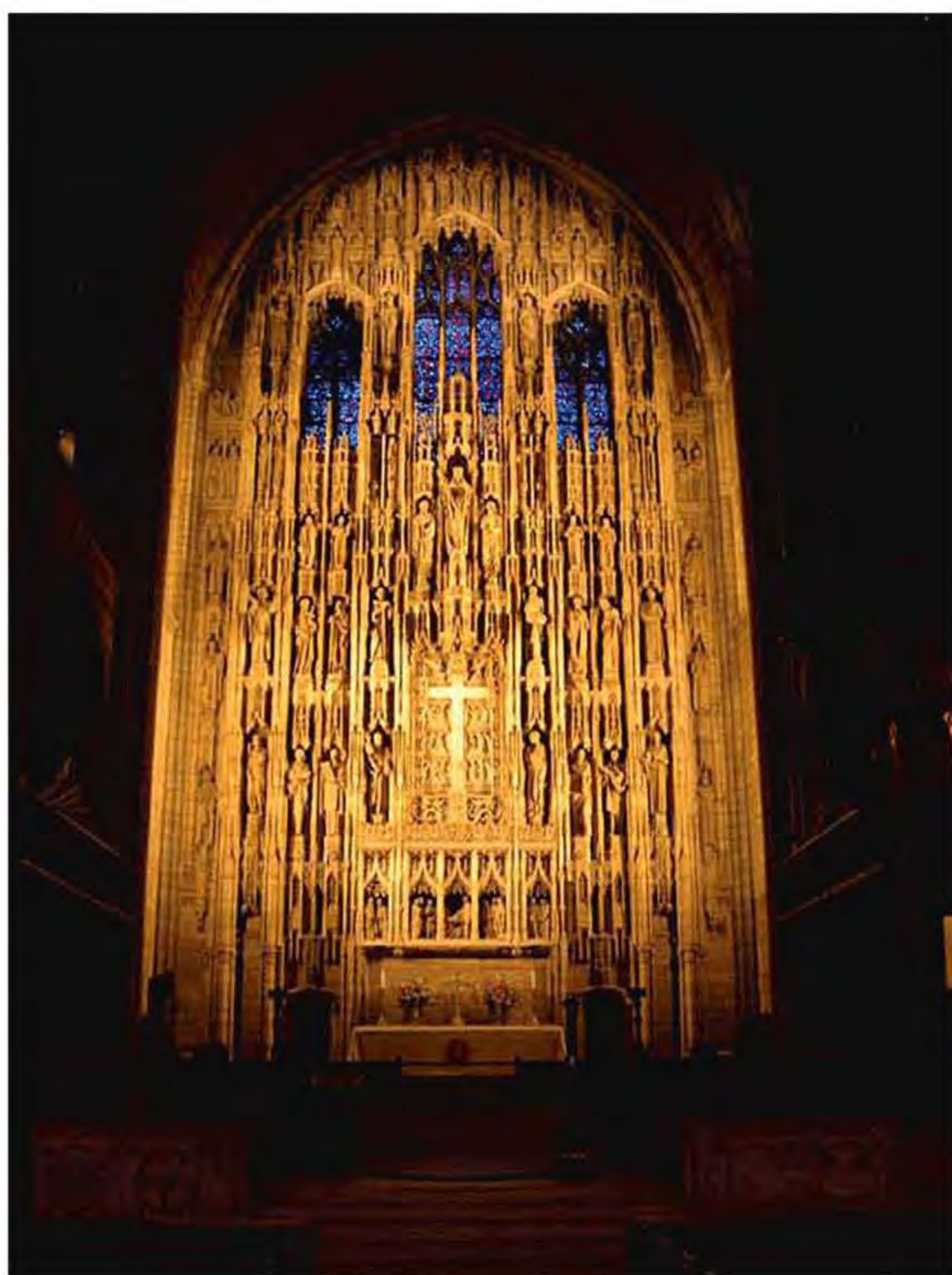
1 Wright 2001.

outwards from the cruciform core of the structure surmounting the church's altar. The relationship between Gothic Revival writing and buildings in the nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries is much like the relationship between the regenerated design of the Saint-Gaudens reredos and the new design elements surrounding it. Old ideas were placed at the heart of new ones, as productive catalysts for innovation in which style and identity were deeply connected.

In what ways did A.W.N. Pugin's buildings and publications produce a rich legacy for future Gothic Revivalists? When Pugin died in 1852, the Ecclesiological and Victorian vigour of the Gothic Revival was arriving in America and gradually but lastingly transforming its church architectural practices through architects like Richard

Upjohn and James Renwick.² Ralph Adams Cram, born in Boston in 1863, associated himself with a medievalist vision in the midst of an America gripped by the Arts and Crafts movement and its international blend of innovation and tradition. He turned to architects including Henry Vaughan, George Frederick Bodley, and A. W. N. Pugin to inform his beliefs and practices. Cram swiftly became an influential and indeed prolific writer, publishing fiction and historical accounts of architecture alongside punchy architectural criticism. In the latter, his rhetorical language and commitment to promoting modern Gothic design as a style that would be ideally suited to a new and modern America was undoubtedly inspired by a Puginian approach established in England half a century earlier.

In 1851, Pugin wrote John Hardman a letter in which he claimed that 'My writings much more than what I have been able to do have revolutionised the taste of England'.³ From *Contrasts* through to *The true principles* and even his early 1850s writing on screens and rood lofts, Pugin's textual polemic inspired generations of architects, critics, and



238: The reredos of St Thomas' Church, Fifth Avenue, New York City

Wikipedia, photograph by Eric Hunt.

2 Stanton 1968; Alexander 2000.

3 Stanton 1968, p 194; See also Roderick O'Donnell's 2003 introductory essay to Pugin 1841 (*True principles*), p vii.

historians to look to the Gothic age not merely to change architecture, but to change the world. As Margaret Henderson Floyd puts it so succinctly, Pugin's influence in America 'was profound, but indirect'.⁴ The transatlantic translation of Pugin's ideas was akin to passing them 'through a prism that changed them in curious ways'.⁵ Among the throng impacted by Pugin's strong language and powerful polemic were two architects in Boston who would go on to develop a modern Gothic ideology to call their own. Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue formed an architectural partnership in 1891. Their work – together and independently – defined a new kind of modern medievalism from educational and cultural architecture to churches and civic buildings. Throughout his long career, Cram in particular was a vocal and effective advocate for a new type of Gothic. He eschewed what he referred to as mere archaeology in favour of an evolutionary Gothic which, apparently abandoned at the turn towards the Renaissance, could be brought to life again, blended with new and different forms and selective historicist details and ideas, and grafted into American architecture.

This essay focuses on a selection of Pugin's most polemical and rhetorically characteristic publications to chart what he understood to be the relationship between the Gothic style and nationalism. By putting Pugin's key writings on the cultivation of a renewed indigenous Gothic in play alongside Ralph Adams Cram's early publications on the potential of modern Gothic to shape a new America, Pugin and Cram's intertwining priorities clearly emerge. In particular, Cram's *Church building* of 1901 and *The Gothic quest*, published in 1907, offer crucial insight into Cram's 'Puginian' theories of architecture and modernity. *The Gothic quest* is a pivotal text, produced at an important time in Cram's career. He and Goodhue had recently designed a groundbreaking building at the military academy at West Point, were hard at work on the new church of St Thomas', Fifth Avenue in New York, and they had just secured a major commission at Princeton. Margaret Henderson Floyd has gone so far as to suggest that West Point's 'high buttressed walls of stone re-create the urban vision of Pugin drawings'.⁶ The period prior to the Great War was an important time for Cram and Goodhue in which a distinct and impactful set of ideas about the value of modern medievalism for twentieth-century America took form. My close attention to architectural publications in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, spanning generations and continents, offers a fresh understanding of Pugin's influence in modern American architecture. This essay aims to show that Pugin's most significant impact upon modern Gothic architects in America – and upon Cram in particular – was his claim regarding the indigenous nature of Gothic. Gothic, whether fourteenth-century or nineteenth-century, and whether English or American, could express a culture's ambitions, values and beliefs through a coherent stylistic programme from wallpaper and mouldings to utopian civic planning on a grand scale. To build in the Gothic style was, in Pugin and in Cram's parallel view, to achieve two things: to build the future by learning from

4 Floyd 1995, p 201.

5 *Idem*.

6 *Ibid*, p 217.

the past, and to build nationalistically. Cram did not merely learn about spires from studying Pugin's buildings – he also learned about the strategy of crafting a distinctly nationalistic Gothic polemic from Pugin's writings.

Pugin and the Transatlantic Turn

A close comparison of key writings by Pugin and Cram responds to an increasing transatlantic turn in British art and architectural studies. In their co-edited volume *Anglo-American: artistic exchange between Britain and the USA*, David Peters Corbett and Sarah Monks articulate the nuanced connections that bind these two cultural centres: 'the relationship between British and American art has served as a point of both self-definition and, significantly, negation for artists working on both sides of the Atlantic. The causes of this fluidity lie in entwined histories: whether as metropolis and colony, interdependent yet often belligerent nations, or client state and superpower, Britain and America have experienced a mutual cultural interchange that has ebbed and flowed across the Atlantic without ever becoming fixed, generating distinct characters and different moments from different points of vantage.'⁷ It was within that cultural interchange that Cram turned to Pugin for inspiration. In so doing, Cram brought about a conscientiously deployed multiplicity of revivals: he and his architectural partners Goodhue and Ferguson not only looked back with informed selectivity at the Middle Ages, but also at Victorian interpretations of the Middle Ages. Thus, Cram and his network forged a modern Gothic architectural idiom which was flexible and distinctively American. Though this re-imagined medievalism was never described as neo-neo-Gothic, that is precisely what it was.

The final plate in Pugin's *Contrasts* depicts 'The Scales of Truth', where the nineteenth century is weighed against the fourteenth century and 'found wanting'. As Adrian Forty and David Watkin have pointed out in both theoretical and socio-historical terms, Pugin's focus on the concept of honesty helped to forge an alliance between ethics and design that became fundamental in architectural discourse.⁸ In Kenneth Clark's view, 'Pugin laid the two foundation stones of that strange system which dominates nineteenth-century art and criticism...the value of a building depends on the moral worth of its creator; and a building has a moral value...'⁹ Truth, morality, and the early and important connections between Pugin's philosophy of religious architecture and the growth of churches and architectural practice in America all came together in Richard Upjohn's designs for Trinity Church in New York City. Designed in the early 1840s and completed in 1846, Trinity Church was modelled closely on Pugin's 'ideal church' illustrated in *The true principles*. Phoebe Stanton explains that it was not, however, a slavish copy but Upjohn's unique interpretation of Puginian design principles: Trinity Church 'resembled the Pugin drawing, though it did not have Pugin's impressive chancel, a feature too Catholic for the Corporation [of New York], nor did Upjohn

7 Corbett & Monks 2012, p 12.

8 See Watkin 1977; Forty 2000, pp 297-99; Till 2013.

9 Clark 1962 [orig 1928].

reproduce the dramatic pitch Pugin had given his roof. The details of the tracery in the Pugin drawing were not clear, and Upjohn filled the windows to his own taste.¹⁰ Mid-nineteenth century Americans' familiarity with Pugin's architecture and writing is evident in an 1844 essay on Upjohn's New York City church in the *North American review*. This text illuminates a bit of transatlantic Gothic Revival competition, complicated by the fact that Upjohn was a British *émigré* designing in America: 'in size, in the delicacy and propriety of its decoration, and in the beauty of its general effect, we are inclined to think, that it surpasses any church erected in England since the revival of the pointed style in England.'¹¹ Praising Upjohn's effort as a near-perfect rendition of 'that enthusiastic ideal of an ecclesiastical edifice of the Middle Ages,' the reviewer Arthur D. Gilman also names Pugin as the key source of American Gothic Revival inspiration.¹² Notably, E. W. Pugin travelled to the United States in 1873 and even attempted to set up an architectural office in New York with J. W. Walter.¹³ Peter Paul Pugin also designed an ornate altarpiece for the high Altar of the Church of the Sacred Heart in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1882.¹⁴

Modern Gothic in America

For the American architect Ralph Adams Cram, Gothic was nothing less than a modern architectural and ideological crusade. A prolific writer and designer, Cram was persuasive when he wrote about what he called 'The Gothic quest' in 1907, seventy years after *Contrasts*: 'This was the Gothic quest, and if we think of it as an historical episode, dead long since with chivalry and faith and the fear of God, we think foolishly.'¹⁵ New England was where Pugin's ideas took their firmest hold. In particular, Boston's historicist built environment championed by H. H. Richardson, his circle and his students offered ample opportunity for the Gothic and Romanesque Revivals to be given a unique American twist. From the 1870s, High Anglican parishes like Church of the Advent designed by John Hubbard Sturgis between in 1874-88, and St Peter's in Dorchester designed by Patrick Keely in 1873, and All Saints, Ashmont designed by Ralph Adams Cram in 1892, championed Puginian explorations of Gothic Christianity. In 1890, Isabella Stewart Gardner gifted a reredos designed by Harold Peto of George and Peto. From the early 1890s, Ralph Adams Cram was also a key contributor to the interior furnishings of the Church of the Advent. St John the Evangelist, Bowdoin Street, designed in 1831 by Solomon Willard in a chunky crenellated Gothic, became another epicentre for High Anglican Gothic Revivalism with the arrival of the Anglican monastic fathers from the Society of St John the Evangelist in Oxford. They settled in Boston in 1872, a few years after the British Society of St Margaret, an Anglican sisterhood, set up a religious house nearby in Louisburg Square.

10 Stanton 1968, p 61.

11 Gilman 1844.

12 *Ibid*, quoted in Stanton 1968, p 64.

13 Floyd 1995, p 208.

14 *Ibid*, pp 208-9.

15 Cram 1907.

In 1889, a competition was held for the new Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City. In 1911, Cram redesigned it in a powerful Gothic style that grew to become his characteristic architectural mode. The Boston-based firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson split – largely over disagreements related to the St Thomas’ project’s design ethos and authorship – in 1913. Across the subsequent decades of the twentieth century, Cram and Goodhue developed highly distinctive but interlaced styles, like two branches of the same tree. Though Cram adhered to Gothic principles far more than Goodhue, both continued to design in relation to medievalist precedent. Both were involved in campus and cathedral competitions and commissions, and both were sought for their unique views on historicism and tradition in relation to the fresh demands of the American architectural terrain. Goodhue died relatively young; Cram lived to see the mid-century Miesian modernism that defined American architecture so uncompromisingly following the Second World War.

The historian Derek Churchill has suggested that, ‘The Gothic Revival continued well into the twentieth century, although it would achieve its final flowering not in England, but rather on the American college campus’.¹⁶ Educational architecture was an ideal field of play for the distinctive growth of American Gothic design. Though not unique in his view, Cram advocated most clearly and effectively amongst his American contemporaries for collegiate plans inspired by Oxbridge colleges; Goodhue tended to offer single buildings, such as the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and the monumental and revolutionarily modern library at Yale. A key example of Gothic experimentation on the Ivy League campus was Yale’s Sterling Memorial Library, which was completed in 1931, over a decade after the initial plan was offered. Goodhue was chosen as the library’s architect, though after his death in 1924 the architect James Gamble Rogers – responsible for a large portion of Yale’s modern Gothic structures and a host of eminent American commissions – carried the plan forward. In correspondence with Giles Gilbert Scott, Goodhue explained that his intentions for Yale’s vast new library were for it to supersede his earlier tastes for ‘straight Gothic’ so that he could “put over” something that won’t be – although it will look like – Gothic.¹⁷ Richard Oliver wrote of Goodhue’s design for the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale that it was conceived as a ‘medieval college gathered about a castle of books’.¹⁸ Writing in the *Yale library gazette* in 1928, Rogers explained how Gothic was reinvented in the new library at Yale: ‘The style of the new Sterling Memorial Library is as near to modern Gothic as we dared to make it. We kept, however, sufficiently close to the sound principles and tried traditions of old Gothic to be certain that there would be no sense of freakishness and no danger of becoming, in the passing of time, a little out of style.’¹⁹

16 Matheson & Churchill 2002, p 32.

17 Oliver 1983, p 224.

18 *Idem*.

19 Rogers 1928, p 37.

Pugin and an indigenous Victorian Gothic

When Pugin emerged as a Gothic dynamo in the 1830s, his preferred period of history and his approach to it were undoubtedly both a little out of style and a little freakish. He viewed Gothic as a style worth fighting for. Pugin's biographer Michael Trappes-Lomax interleaved his somewhat hagiographic account of the Victorian architect with excerpts from the medieval *Song of Roland*, likening Pugin to the chivalric hero. Trappes-Lomax's chapter on *The true principles* begins, 'Roland planted the flag on top of a hill, straight against the heaven.' The following chapter, *Apology*, unites Roland and Pugin together in battle with a character not unlike the self-fashioned knight Ralph Adams Cram perceived himself to be in *The Gothic quest*. Trappes-Lomax's quotation from *The song of Roland* reads, 'He could not count the battalions, they were so many... We shall have battle, such as never has been.'²⁰ As Pugin's more recent biographer Rosemary Hill points out, *The true principles* was the first book Pugin published that expanded his views on Gothic into a 'total system of design', explaining that Pugin 'showed how it could be applied on any scale, in any medium and to every artefact from a cathedral to a curtain rail.'²¹ The innovation of Pugin's ideology, moving beyond taste towards a kind of nineteenth-century *Gesamtkunstwerk*, was, in Hill's view, 'presented entirely in terms of its opposite, conformity to pre-existing and immutable laws'.²² The total system was underpinned by the ultimate totality of a Catholic God.

Hill argues compellingly that Pugin's *Apology* constituted an 'unacknowledged volte-face' in which the architect's design principles became far more flexible. Hill states, 'In a single bound, he was free from the limitations of literal revivalism... In other words, anything that was designed by someone with a thorough understanding of the principles of Gothic was Gothic even though it was not in appearance like anything made in the Middle Ages.'²³ Hill astutely notes that this idea inaugurated a radical freedom in which Pugin could design exactly how and what he pleased. In Pugin's *Treatise on chancel screens and rood lofts*, published in 1851, Pugin claims that 'We have now to contend for the great principles of Catholic antiquity – tradition and reverence against modern development and display. It is not a struggle for taste or ornament, but a contention for *vital principles*.'²⁴

As for Pugin, so for Cram. A deep understanding of the Middle Ages and commitment to medievalism underpinned a huge array of designs and ideas that had no direct correlate to an exact medieval model. With this notion and its vast implications, the productive concept of modern Gothic was born. Inventiveness was a positive quality,

20 Trappes-Lomax 1932, p 168.

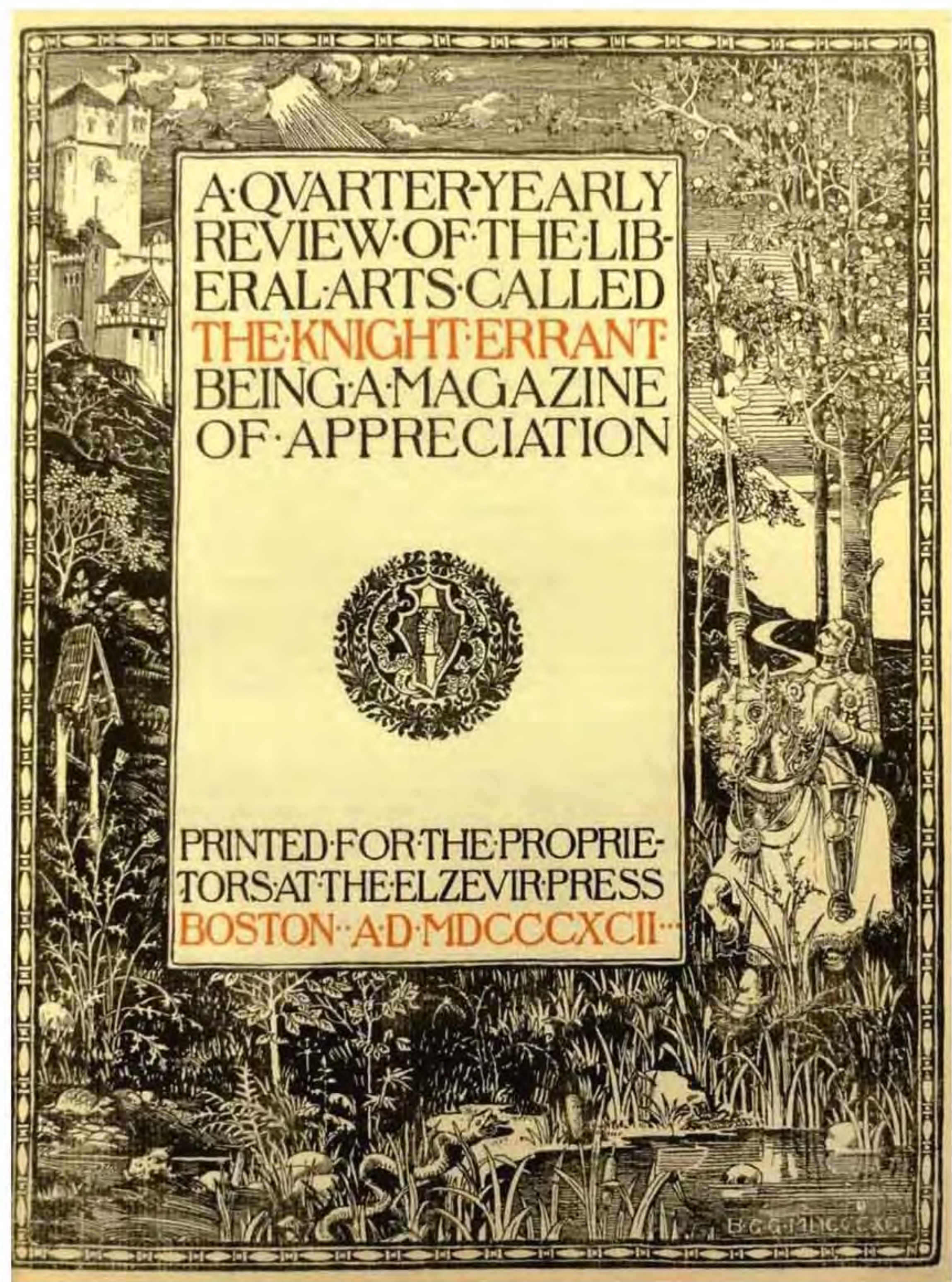
21 Hill 2007, p 243.

22 *Ibid*, p 243.

23 *Ibid*, p 280.

24 Pugin 1851 (*Rood Screens*), p 3.

and meticulous copying was unnecessary – to use Cram’s favoured terminology – ‘archaeological’. This understanding of Pugin’s shifting perspective and its application to interpreting the extent to which Cram can be seen as Puginian is helpful, as it resolves a question of influence. If one only looks at Cram’s buildings, their Puginian qualities may be present, variable, or absent. This is partly why Cram’s biographer Douglass Shand-Tucci suggests that Pugin would have been ‘startled’ by Cram’s 1892 church of All Saints, Ashmont. Was its spirit, at least, an extension of Pugin’s own practices and Gothic Revival theory? Viewing Cram’s publications in concert with his architectural designs suggests an affirmative answer. Cram’s debt to Pugin is primarily to be found in the writing that underpinned his modern American Gothic designs, particularly in his books leading up to the Great War.



239: Frontispiece of *The knight errant*
private collection

Cram and The Gothic Quest

In 1907, Ralph Adams Cram published *The Gothic quest*. In its introduction, he explains that ‘the quest is never at an end for the world is never at pause’.²⁵ Cram believed that striving for perfection in Gothic architecture was no less than a sacred vocation. The prize that Gothic Revival enthusiasts and experts seek is God-given and driven by a sense that heaven itself could be a Gothic realm. Explaining that the Gothic Quest is the ‘Quest of the Grail under another form’, Cram like Trappes-Lomax turns to *The Song of Roland* to drive his medievalist point home: “The round, squat turret, blind as the fool’s heart”, the citadel of ugliness, emptiness, and pretence, the first barrier that balks all those that course on the Gothic Quest; and yet not one draws rein, nor rides aside, but with unsheathed sword rides in his stirrups...²⁶ The ‘modern Goth’, Cram asserted, ‘is the defender of Christian civilisation against paganism. He is

25 Cram 1907, p 9.

26 *Ibid*, p 10.

not in the least ashamed to declare himself a Christian and a Catholic.²⁷

This chivalric view of the modern Gothic architect besieged by the conditions of modernity was an early feature of Cram's writing when his practice began in Boston in the 1890s. In 1892, Cram and Goodhue produced the first volume of a short-lived but richly medievalist periodical, *The knight errant*. Its first volume [figure 239] included essays by Walter Crane and Fred Holland Day, as well as texts by Cram and Goodhue themselves. Goodhue praised Aubrey Beardsley and Charles Ricketts as inheritors of a new kind of post-Pre-Raphaelitism. Cram's essay in the journal railed against what he perceived as a materialist decay in modern culture originating in the Reformation. He concluded with praise for William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and John Ruskin, stating that 'these men are called reactionists. Perhaps, like the word "Gothic", the name given in scorn may in a little time be held in honour and reverence.'²⁸

To understand just how much Cram saw his practice in relation to British Gothic Revivalism and medievalist architectural history, it is useful to cite a historical genealogy – a lineage of Gothic Revivalism – that Cram referenced regularly and first crystallised in *Church building*, published in 1906. Declaring that 'Everything stopped' after Wren and that architecture in Britain was dead for nearly two centuries, Cram weaves the histories of the Gothic Revival in Britain and America together closely:

What our ancestors did in [antebellum] America was only crude imitation...The next phase was the first flush of the great Gothic Restoration. Unfortunately, however, this was with us only an episode, though the work done by its great advocates, Upjohn and Renwick, deserved better things. But as in England, so here. There the Pugins, with their sensitive appreciation of architecture as a living thing, had been succeeded by the masters of archaeology, Scott, Street, and Pierson; and the Gothic Revival went backward. Here, Upjohn gave place to the practitioners of 'Victorian Gothic'...The deplorable chaos that followed was lightened only by the...influence of Richardson, with his enormous vitality...But his was an alien style, with no historic or ethnic propriety...with his death the fatal weakness of Romanesque became apparent...In the meantime the steady and noble work of Bodley and Garner and Sedding had born fruit in England. Victorian Gothic was suppressed, and continuity was restored with the original movement begun by Pugin...Mr. Henry Vaughan came to America as the apostle of the new dispensation.²⁹

Henry Vaughan, who was architect alongside George Frederick Bodley for the first design phase of Washington National Cathedral until Vaughan's death in 1917, resided

27 *Ibid*, p 158.

28 Cram 1892, p 14.

29 Cram 1901, pp 263-64.

in Boston, was a generation older than Cram, and was chief among Cram's transatlantic Gothic Revival heroes.

Glossing over Pugin's marginalised Roman Catholic identity somewhat, and tensions between the rise of Anglo-Catholicism and the emancipation of Roman Catholics, Cram went so far as to identify his own (American Episcopalian) position with Pugin's in Victorian England: 'We are restoring a theological, doctrinal, and administrative continuity; and we must fitly express this in structural form. This happened in England when the Oxford movement found the Pugins ready to serve the Church with perfect service. The rehabilitation of the churches went hand in hand with the rehabilitation of the Church, and it continues unimpeded to this day. The Church in America must emulate the Church in England.'³⁰ Cram's apotheosis of Gothic Revival architecture as a cultural project to be emulated in America came across even more strongly in *The Gothic quest*, published only months after *Church building*. Here, Cram claimed with rhetorical flourish for his American audience that 'The architectural revival incited by the immortal Pugin was instantly and astoundingly victorious in England. Ten years suffices to see the last shards of the classical fashion relegated to the dust heap, and for almost seventy-five years England has been steadily at work, labouring in very varied ways to make Gothic or Christian architecture a living thing again.'³¹ Cram was not only placing Pugin at the forefront of a Gothic avant-garde, he was also triumphantly engaging with Pugin's own insistent assertion regarding the interchangeability of 'Christian' and 'Gothic', identifying a religion with an idealist vision of medieval architecture in Britain.

Towards a Gothic Future

Cram hoped for a victorious Gothic future when the architect and artist no longer had to be 'prophets crying in the wilderness' and when, as he put it, it was no longer necessary for 'some men to write books on church building.' In the second edition of *Church building*, published in 1914, Cram wrote that 'the great fight for the restoration to the church of our own native and personal art' was begun by the Pugins. In Pugin's *Contrasts*, an illustration of a shop front, which is a direct dig at John Soane and his classical contemporaries, argues that piecemeal flimsy architectural details, designs, and training would damage the built environment and its producers irrevocably unless the Gothic could be salvifically deployed to sweep away this madness and tragedy [figure 240]. Ralph Adams Cram is at his most Puginian when championing the Gothic spirit over a mere eclectic selection of styles. Cram in *The Gothic quest* imagines amoral eclecticism as, notably, a vast department store: 'College buildings? You will find a complete line of Greco-Georgian articles down the alley to the right. Post offices? Certainly. Guaranteed real Renaissance. No madam, we do not carry any chateausque 5th avenue palaces just now. No need for them. An office building? Fitted while you wait, take the elevator

30 *Ibid.* p 225.

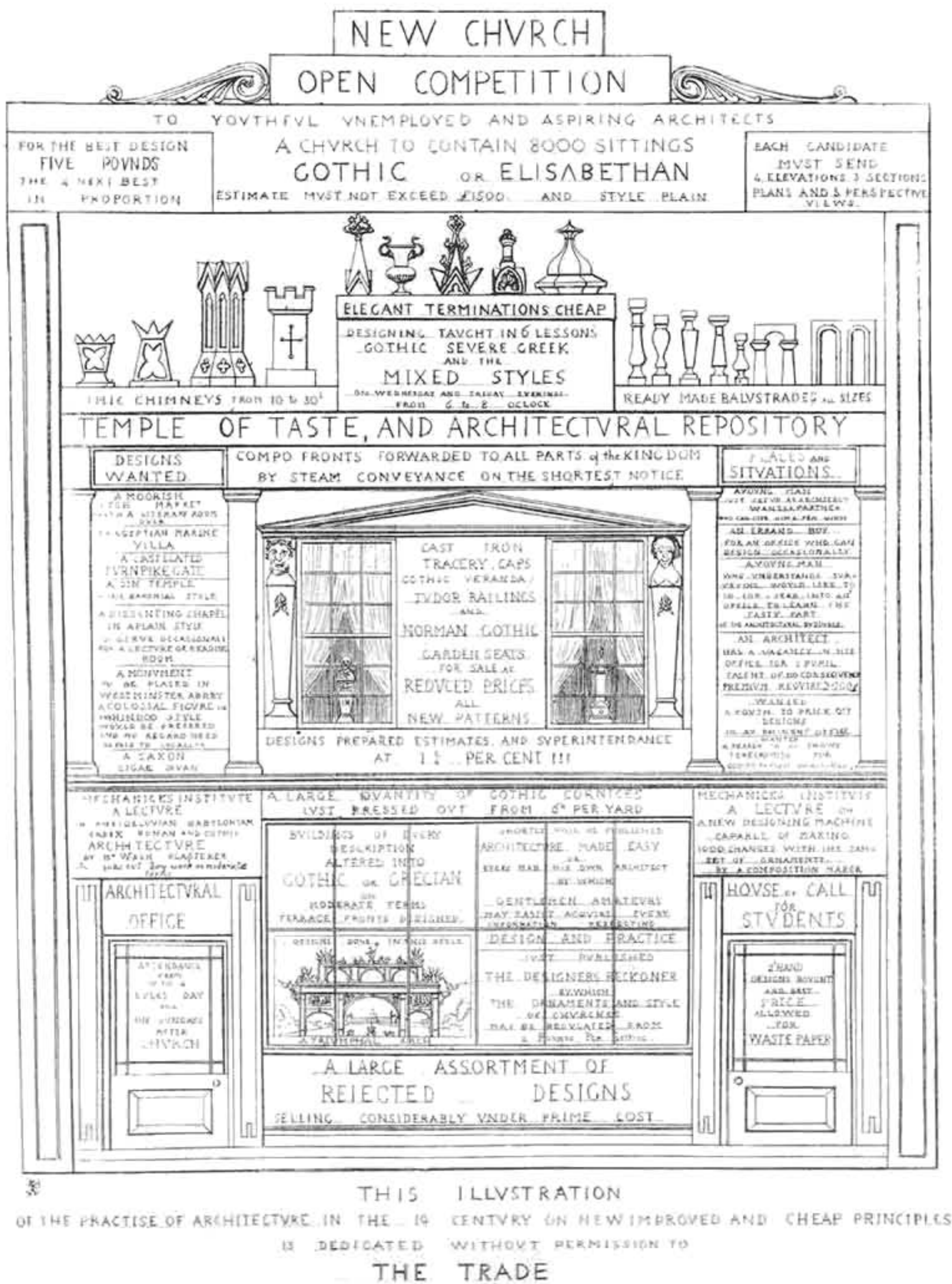
31 Cram 1907, p 119.

to the 32nd floor. Church? Yes sir, we cater especially to the Cloth, all real Gothic and twenty yards high, 13th, 14th, 15th century...take the subway to the medieval annexe.³²

This cynical wit, allying architectural stylistic choice to the vision of a department store in which the customer is always right and principles of taste overcome patterns of history, bears comparison with that caustic image from Pugin's *Contrasts*. His illustration of a farcical classical façade festooned with inscriptions advertising a ‘new church open competition’ is captioned: ‘This illustration of the practise of architecture in the 19 century on new and improved cheap principles is dedicated without permission to the trade’.³³ In this image in particular, Pugin railed against what he perceived to be the flimsy classicism and stylistically chameleon character of architecture unanchored by moral or ethical principles. Pugin cried out for change in a time in which it seemed all was in flux. Cram did too.

As numerous Pugin historians including Phoebe Stanton, Rosemary Hill and Timothy Brittain-Catlin have argued, Pugin’s position was not one forged by retreating into an idyllic medievalist fantasy. Rather, he fought back as a crusader for new architecture springing spikily and thrusting skyward from its medieval roots, combining a firm moral framework with a built environment in a symbiosis of style and belief. It was this spirit of polemical conviction that would prove to be particularly transformative and inspiring for Ralph Adams Cram in America, from his youthful efforts in *The knight errant* to the ethos underlying publications including *The Gothic quest* and *Church building* as well as his collaborative and independent work at St Thomas’ Fifth Avenue and St John the Divine in New York.

32 Ibid, p 195.
33 Pugin 1841 (*True Principles*).



240: Illustration of a shop front from *Contrasts* private collection

News and comment

The Gothic Revival in Lancashire

By Graham Parry

Southport was the base for the Society's summer visit to Lancashire. Since Southport was developed as a holiday resort by the energetic landowner Charles Scarisbrick, who gave Pugin his greatest early commission when he rebuilt his ancestral home, it seemed an appropriate place to begin an exploration of the Gothic of Southern Lancashire. This is a region which is well stocked with Old Catholic families, who maintained their religion through the centuries after the Reformation by discreet and often clandestine means. In this relatively remote part of England they were not much troubled by the authorities once the Elizabethan persecutions had died down, maintaining an unostentatious piety until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 gave them full rights of public worship. Aftsaer that date, many of the wealthier Roman Catholic families were willing to underwrite the building of churches and proclaim their faith in a society where many churches and sects jostled for attention.

Our first sortie was to Salmesbury Hall, a house which exemplified a theme of the tour: the combination of medieval and Victorian work that raises the question of what kind of relationship was imagined to exist between the two periods by architects, writers and religious figures of the later age. Salmesbury is a late-medieval manor house set in fine wooded grounds, and it looked hauntingly beautiful on a lovely summer's evening. As we approached, we could see the distinctive quatrefoil patterns of the woodwork through the trees, and when we emerged onto the lawns, the massive bulk of the house was suddenly evident, a masterpiece of fifteenth-century carpentry. The Southworth family held this manor. The two main Tudor owners, Thomas and Sir John (who was knighted for his prowess in Henry VIII's wars against the Scots) built it up to its largest extent, putting in the great carved chimney-pieces and a formidable passage screen of dark oak, similar to that at Rufford Hall. This sinister construction displays densely ornate panels topped by three monstrous pillars wreathed with barbarically carved foliage. The Southworths became a recusant family after the Reformation, one of the many in this part of England who held on defiantly to the old religion. Pugin knew this house, regarding the hall in particular as a compelling example of a timber-framed structure with an abundance of decoration that provided an ideal setting for 'Old English hospitality'. By the time he knew it, it had already been re-ordered in the early 1830s to enhance its picturesqueness, but even in its altered state, it would condition what he built at Scarisbrick and Alton Towers.

After dinner in the great hall, James Jago talked to us about some of the topics that would be illustrated in the next few days. We would become aware of the persistence

of Roman Catholicism in Lancashire. We would understand how the coming of innumerable Irish Catholics in the nineteenth century to work in the mills resulted in a need for Roman Catholic churches across the county. We would view Pugin's contribution to the architectural scene. Then there was the larger question to consider: why was the Gothic Revival so successful in Lancashire? How to explain the broad appeal of Gothic in the nineteenth century? Factors to hold in mind included its picturesque virtues and its association with faith, community and hospitality. A taste for Gothic ruins led on to a desire to modify the style for contemporary living, a desire that led architects to explore Gothic's almost infinite adaptability to new circumstances. Many of Walter Scott's novels and poems transmitted the vitality, the colour, the intensity and the romance of the Middle Ages to a vast audience who welcomed an alternative to the blocky Georgian buildings and utilitarian mills and factories. There were no smells, no dirt, no machinery and not much smoke in Scott, even though there was plenty of blood – but blood was

heroic and chivalric. Gothic was the architecture of the Age of Faith, as Pugin repeatedly reminded his readers. It could be associated with Christian morality, and with aspiration; it also provided a link to an imaginary past in which craftsmanship and piety flourished together.

One of the pleasures of a Pugin Society visit is the intense scrutiny to which buildings are subjected. This feature shone out when we looked at the church of St John the Evangelist at Kirkham on Friday morning. Designed by Pugin in 1843, it exemplified the principles he expressed in *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* of the same year. St John's has a bold, confident outline that Pugin believed should be proper to Roman Catholic churches now that they were free to proclaim their presence in the landscape. He chose a Middle Decorated style that he deemed the most spiritual phase of Gothic, and since this was a country church when it was built, he gave it a well-proportioned broach spire that he considered to be the finest feature of that



241: The tower of Huon Matear's Holy Trinity, Southport (1911 - 1913)

James Jago

class of church. At Kirkham, Pugin was provided with enough resources to create a church that would be deeply satisfying as a devotional, liturgical and even mystical space. He built a chancel screen with a rood loft to enclose the holy mysteries of the high altar and his processional aisles ended in chapels with secondary altars. He was able to employ George Myers as his builder and John Hardman to create the fittings, so all was done as Pugin wished. But a couple of generations later, changes in attitudes to worship meant that the screen was removed to open out the services to the congregation (it was rebuilt at the west end to support a gallery), and the high altar was grossly reconstructed with an aggressive reredos. Pugin's graceful original with carvings of the five joyful mysteries was relegated to a side-chapel. Nonetheless, the church looked very fine on a sunny morning. As we were leaving, I noticed a poster from the 1850s framed in the vestry, announcing that a new Roman Catholic church was to be opened at Newton-le-Willows with a sermon by the Bishop of Carlisle, and 'after the service there will be a Collation, to which ladies will be admitted'.

We moved on to Pleasington, where we were greeted by the priest, who showed us his very handsome church of Our Lady and St John. This is a church erected around 1816, with John Palmer as architect as John Butler of Pleasington Hall as patron. Palmer had already worked on Manchester Cathedral, undertaking an indifferent restoration. For John Butler, he designed a large, light, spacious church in an eclectic variety of styles, typical of the era before Rickman had classified the phases of Gothic. His aim seems to have been to relate the English Catholic Church of the early 19th century to the pre-Reformation centuries in a way that prefigured Pugin's desire to consolidate the same relationship – but without Pugin's antiquarian knowledge. As a church built before Catholic Emancipation, it conforms to the expectation that such places of worship should be unobtrusive – no towers or spires – but it is confident nonetheless. A few secular details were noticeable. Indicative of the desire to express loyalty to the crown is the bust of George III carved beneath the statue of the Good Shepherd on the façade. The image of the divine eye over a pyramid – as found on a dollar bill – that is centrally placed on the façade expresses faith in Providence and the Trinity, but the symbol has Enlightenment, even Masonic, origins. Pleasington Church deserves detailed study because it exemplifies the uncertain character of the Roman Catholic Church in England before the historians, theologians and liturgists, and Pugin, tried to redefine it in the 1830s and 1840s.

Great Harwood church, dedicated to Our Lady and St Hubert, came next. This is the work of E.W. Pugin from 1858-9. Another noble tower with spire rises above the entrance to the church, the spacious interior of which is lit by large windows of geometric tracery filled with glass by Hardman and Co. The sanctuary is visible to the whole congregation, in keeping with the Counter-Reformation principles that took hold in England after about 1850. The angularity characteristic of E.W.P's work is much in evidence in the polygonal apse, the many gables and the heavy buttresses. The unusual dedication, we discovered, is because the wealthy local benefactor, James

Trappes-Lomax, was passionate about hunting, so Hubert was the appropriate saint to invoke. Trappes-Lomax died in 1886 and is buried here; his features are preserved by a figure in one of the Stations of the Cross on the aisle wall.

The priest reflected on the fate of towns such as Great Harwood in the twentieth century. At its height, there were sixteen cotton mills working here. The work force included many Irish Catholics. But all the mills closed, leaving only an Oxo factory to provide employment in the town, and that too closed some ten years ago after trouble with the unions. Opportunities for work are few, and unemployment lies like a blight on the town. In these circumstances, the role of the church is to reinforce the community in straitened times and provide a setting that lifts the spirits above mundane concerns. The well-maintained interior, gay with white flowers and bright with polished brass, had an immediately positive effect on us.

A decent lunch was required to fortify us for the visit to Stonyhurst in the afternoon. The pub at Great Mitton was conveniently close to the medieval rural church where the monuments to the owners of Stonyhurst, the Shireburns, are packed into the family chapel. This may be the most rewarding collection of sepulchral monuments in the region. The Roman Catholic sympathies of the family and their relatives are delicately alluded to in the memorial to the Hon. Peregrine Widdrington: 'He was with his brother in the Preston affair 1715 whear he lost his fortune with his health by a long confinement in prison'. Preston was where the Old Pretender's march into England came to a decisive end. A particularly poignant tomb was that of Richard Francis Shireburn who died at the age of nine in 1702. It shows the boy gazing forlornly at a skeleton half exposed in the earth, his own fateful doppelganger.

At Mitton we were able to see how early Victorian restorers who were outside the mainstream went about their business: imitation medieval tiles that made us realise how fine Minton's tiles were, and repairs to the medieval chancel screen in cast-iron.

Stonyhurst looked splendid in the sunshine, lying long and low above the lawns. It is part Elizabethan, part Victorian, for the ancestral house of the Shireburns was given to the Jesuits in 1794 to be the home of the English College of St Omer, which had been driven from Liege by the Revolutionary Wars. The English government was willing to accept these refugees from French aggression, as long as they secluded themselves in some remote part of the country. The College became one of the leading Roman Catholic schools in England during the course of the nineteenth century. Several important figures in Pugin's life were educated here, most notably John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, Charles Scarisbrick and John Hardman. The College had an honourable history of service and sacrifice to the Church. Three martyrs had suffered under the Elizabethan persecutions, and twelve former pupils had been beatified. As the school expanded in the nineteenth century, three chapels were built here, all in the Gothic style. As James Jago remarked, it is surprising that the Jesuits chose to employ Gothic, given their Counter-Reformation origins, and their commitment to spacious open



242: Sculpture of dragons in combat on the port cohere of WH. Crossland's Rochdale Town Hall (1866 - 1871)
James Jago

auditoriums with the altar in full view of the congregation. Their usual baroque was probably felt to be incompatible with the severity of the Elizabethan house.

The oldest of the chapels, from the early 1830s, was a public Roman Catholic church, designed under the influence of King's College Chapel but exhibiting excessively spindly corner turrets. Internally it was lofty, light and airy, thanks to the large windows and the delicate use of a kind of fan-vaulting. Its lineage goes back to the collegiate chapels of the Middle Ages. It is, in fact, a fine example of architecture that evokes the unity between the Roman Catholicism of the nineteenth century and pre-Reformation Catholicism. Here at Stonyhurst this relationship is more convincingly articulated than at Pleasington. There is a sodality chapel of 1856-9, a neat architectural capsule in thirteenth-century Gothic. Many years ago, I remember being told that the original purpose of this sodality was the veneration of a saint whose body had been brought back to Stonyhurst by an enterprising sixth-former who had bought it from a church in Naples whilst on his summer holidays. I heard no mention of this story on our visit this year, and I cannot vouch for the truth of it; but it is a not entirely improbable Victorian tale.

The Boys Chapel of 1886 by Dunn and Hansom is a quite remarkable building. It is extremely wide and spacious, with one long wall covered with ornate neo-Perp

woodwork, out of which projects a series of large oriel windows that look down into the chapel. The woodwork is delicate, fanciful and uplifting, enhanced by the light coming from the line of large Perpendicular windows in the opposing wall. A great hammer-beam roof spans the hall, pleasingly if unconventionally underpinned by a coving of wooden fan-vaults. The ensemble of the altar might well be described as a religious fortification: an excessively ornate screen packed with paintings unites with a monumental alabaster reredos. Scenes of the life of St Aloysius Gonzaga fill the frames. Aloysius, I found later, was a Counter-Reformation saint of the late sixteenth-century, an Italian prince related to the Duke of Mantua, who became a member of the Society of Jesus and sought the extremes of humility, obedience and discomfort. His piety was precocious, his first words having been part of the catechism. During his novitiate, he was often subject to spiritual transports. 'Often at table, or with his companions at recreation time after dinner, he fell into ecstasies, and appeared unable to contain the excessive heavenly joy with which his soul overflowed. He frequently spoke of the happiness of dying'. He was a youth who served the sick and the poor, who died from the effects of fever and mortification in 1591. The choice of his life to edify the boys of Stonyhurst throws a peculiar light on the values of the school in the late nineteenth century. I reflected, however, that Gerard Manley Hopkins had been a priest at Stonyhurst, and he died quite young of typhoid contracted by working among the poor in Dublin.

The high point of our visit to Stonyhurst was unquestionably the tour of the library and collections when the archivist Jan Graffius showed us the treasures of the College. Who will forget holding the reliquary of the Holy Thorn, the beautiful modern glass casket inside which stands the antique rock-crystal reliquary containing a single thorn from the Crown of Thorns. The French king Henri II gave it to Mary Queen of Scots when she married the Dauphin, later Francois II, in 1558. The Crown of Thorns was the holiest treasure of France. St Louis had bought the Crown from the Venetians who in turn had acquired it after the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204. Louis then built the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris in the form of a monumental reliquary for the Crown, but it is worth remembering that the sum he paid to the Venetians for the Crown was two and a half times greater than the cost of building the chapel. This detail alone gives an idea of the supreme spiritual importance of the Crown of Thorns for the monarchy of France. A single thorn was therefore no mean gift. Mary took it with her when she mounted the scaffold at Fotheringay, and after her execution, her pearl rosary was entwined around the thorn. So this was a relic of incomparable value. Its authenticity was guaranteed to Christians of the Middle Ages by its provenance among the imperial relics of Constantinople, where it shared the supreme honours of sanctity with the remains of the True Cross that had been discovered by St Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. After Mary's death, it passed to her supporter Thomas Percy, whose daughter gave it to the Jesuit priest John Gerard, who in turn offered it to the English College at St Omer.

Stonyhurst has some 1500 surviving relics in its custody. Many of the smaller items had been sewn onto cloth and framed in Victorian times by one of the priests. The College owned a few pieces of St Chad, some of which were sent as a gift to Pugin's cathedral at Birmingham at the time of its consecration. The archivist kept her eye on a bone of Santa Zita, before it could vanish amongst her audience. Zita is the patron saint of Lucca and also the saint to whom one prays for the recovery of lost keys. Parts of the intestines of James II were reverently handled by the Jacobites in our midst. A petrified eye of some saint was handed round, a grotesque talisman if ever there was. Then out of a cardboard box the archivist produced the skull of Cardinal Morton, which was passed round and patted affectionately. Readers of *1066 and All That* will remember Morton's Fork: here was the inventor of that implement. Morton was Henry VII's Archbishop of Canterbury and also his Lord Chancellor. He wrote the Life of Richard III which was translated by Thomas More, and which was responsible for installing the image of the crookback king in the Rogues Gallery of English history. (Morton's was the second head of an archbishop of Canterbury I have held. The other was Simon of Sudbury, who was beheaded by the mob in the Peasants' Revolt. My ambition is to lay my hands on the head of William Laud, who is buried before the altar in St John's College Chapel, but who may yet come to light in college excavations).

St Thomas More figures large in the college collections. Extensive parts of his wardrobe are here, and many personal possessions. (More's head can occasionally be seen at St Dunstan's, Canterbury). We were shown quantities of *opus anglicanum*, the exceptionally fine embroidered cloth that was much valued across Europe in the Middle Ages, and also many splendid pre-Reformation copes richly decorated, liturgical costume of the kind Pugin tried to recreate. The archivist carefully produced an exquisite prayer book, printed to look like a medieval manuscript, that Mary Queen of Scots had read just before her execution. Dazed by the astonishing display of religious conservation, we left the College with just enough energy to glance at the long line of military portraits depicting Old Boys who had won the V.C.

Saturday found us in Rochdale, where we were immediately enlivened by the prospect of a Comper church, St Mary's Toad Lane. In 1909, Comper was invited to rebuild and enlarge an eighteenth-century church on this site, which he did, retaining some of the old nave and walls in an ingenious fusion of Georgian and neo-Perp. The large windows give an airy feel to the church, but the light emphasises the drabness of the interior, for the painted woodwork of vault and fittings has faded, and many of the statues are of bare wood. Comper introduced a noble rood screen and a loft guarded with angels to affirm his belief the catholicity of the Church of England, and his desire to link pre-Reformation liturgical features to the contemporary Anglican Church, in ways that parallel Pugin's similar desires for the Roman Catholic Church. The windows he designed form a delicate and calm termination to the eastward gaze of the worshipper. Pevsner's critical remarks about their 'anaemic and alien' style found no support among our group. Some of us had hoped that St Mary's Rochdale might

prove to be a companion church to St Mary's Wellingborough, but in this we were disappointed.

As we walked out into Toad Lane, we noticed the original shop where the Co-operative Movement started in 1844, now preserved as a museum. Big things came out of the little unassuming streets.

The greatest surprise in Rochdale was the Town Hall, built by W.H. Crossland in the late 1860s. Confident in its dress of civic Gothic, moderate in scale, for it avoids the bombastic grandeur of many northern town halls, and attractively sited facing a garden, it is a happy composition. Crossland had trained with G.G. Scott snr, and was clearly an architect of exceptional assurance. He went on to design the Royal Holloway College and Sanatorium in Surrey. Originally his scheme for Rochdale included a clock tower, but this burnt down in 1883, and was replaced by a new one by Waterhouse, the finest tower he ever built. The Town Hall has been recently cleaned and restored, and looks wonderful. One walks into a large lower hall with a red-striped stone vault, which was intended as a marketplace for the flannel weavers of Rochdale. The economy here was based on wool as well as cotton, the production of flannel, baize, broad-cloth and melton being the local specialities. The decoration of the walls proclaims the nobility of trade and the honour of hard work. The coats of arms of the northern manufacturing towns line the great staircase, and the heroes of the industrial revolution look down on the true men of the cloth for whom this town hall was built. James Arkwright, the Duke of Bridgewater, Robert Peel, Titus Salt, and the advocates of Free Trade, Cobden and Bright, all offer inspiration as models of endeavour and success. The magnificent great hall above looks like a set for *Die Meistersinger*. The elaborately painted walls evoke the Middle Ages, but it is not the annals of chivalry that are recorded here but the origins of constitutional government, for the largest picture shows the Barons and King John at Runnymede, signing Magna Charta. Statues of Victoria and Albert, and Oliver Cromwell in a stained glass window, add other notes. Manufacturing flourishes under a liberal constitutional monarchy, and patriotic pride is as much the right of working men as it is of the old gentry and nobility. The Gothic of Rochdale owes much to the cloth towns of Flanders and of the Hanseatic League, but here it is given a distinctively English stamp.

Before we left, our affable and informative guide took us into the Mayor's Parlour to see the portrait of Gracie Fields, the Rochdale Siren. A full-length picture, done in the manner of the society paintings of Lazlo, it shows her fashionably dressed and seated, more important than any mayor or mayoress. Indeed, her rise from being a hand in a cotton factory to the most popular singer in England is a story appropriate to this town, exemplifying the belief that hard work, skill and an eye for the market would lead to success.

We left Rochdale, where there is no longer a mill to be seen, and paid rapid visits to the Anglican church at Atherton by Austen and Paley and the Roman Catholic church at

Warrington by E.W. Pugin and Peter Paul Pugin. Our ultimate destination, for which we needed much time, was Scarisbrick Hall, A.W.N.P's early grand house built for the local grandee, Charles Scarisbrick. The family had lived in this place since the mid-thirteenth century. It had remained Roman Catholic after the Reformation, and by the 1830s the head of the family was the eccentric and reclusive Charles Scarisbrick, rich from his estates, and richer still by his role in the development of Southport as a fashionable seaside resort. He commissioned Pugin to rebuild his existing mansion by Rickman in a late Gothic style abounding in decoration and with a highly varied roof-line. The result is not perhaps a masterpiece, but the fulfilment of Pugin's vision of 'the old English Catholic mansion' that he describes towards the end of *The true principles*. Designed more for feudal hospitality than for modern social life, it is a fantasy of the high Middle Ages. The main block with its oriel windows and high-pitched hall roof resembles an Oxbridge college, but it is difficult to judge the original ensemble that Pugin built for Charles Scarisbrick, because the east wing with its bell tower was replaced by E.W. Pugin's uninhibited range in the 1860s.

On entering the great hall with its massive timbered roof and screens, one's first impression is of the darkness of the scene. Although it was a bright sunny day, the light was defeated by the inadequate aperture of the windows and by the use of so much dark oak in the woodwork. Charles Scarisbrick, a bachelor, wanted to use the house above all to display his collections of woodcarvings, arms and armour, overmantels and altars, much of which he had acquired from Northern Europe, the debris of the French invasions. When the house was full of his stuff, it must have been like the V and A's storage depot. Most of his treasures were sold after his death, but some still remain. The hall is rendered oppressive by an immense slab of black carved wood, in which one can dimly make out the scene of Christ crowned with Thorns. This apparently came from Antwerp Cathedral. Entering the Oak Room is like going into a coal mine. The walls are totally covered with black carvings of the 16th and 17th centuries, some of a religious nature, others secular. Pugin's fireplaces and panelling are over-ornate, with much crowded detail. Charles Scarisbrick evidently appreciated such work, but the effect can be exhausting.

The interior vistas were fascinating, with beams and exposed woodwork making fantastic and pleasurable patterns in unexpected places. The sinister black oak staircase, full of energetic, restless carving, could be out of *The Castle of Otranto*, though the Castle at Durham probably provided the inspiration for these stairs. Pugin's delight at experimenting with many kinds of timber structures is everywhere apparent.

Outside, we sized up the astonishing tower that Edward Pugin built for Charles Scarisbrick's widowed sister, who inherited the house in 1860. Why she wished to rebuild the east wing so rapidly and so prodigiously remains a mystery. Lady Anne Hunloke must have been driven by that demon of architectural megalomania that possesses some wealthy individuals. William Beckford at Fonthill comes to mind, as

does George Gregory at Harlaxton. A tower and spire of the kind that E.W.P. built here was usually only found in drawings submitted to Victorian architectural competitions, then dismissed on the grounds of impracticality. The maintenance of this landmark must be a nightmare for the owner (Scarbrick is a school today). We, as visitors, enjoyed all the pleasures the two Pugins provided for their patrons with none of the responsibility for upkeep.

The final day of the tour enabled us to review more varieties of Gothic. The parish church of Holy Trinity Southport by the Liverpool firm of Matear and Simon shows just how inventive Late Victorian Gothic could be. Built of white stone and red brick at the expense of generous patrons from cotton and shipping, the Arts and Crafts feel is already strong, though the tower that owes much to French Flamboyant Gothic makes it difficult to find a comprehensive term to describe the exterior. Pevsner's words well catch the impression we shared of the interior: 'thrillingly high octagonal piers of red sandstone with the arches dying into them'. The spaciousness is exhilarating, the vast stained glass windows exciting in their variety of styles. The W.W.I memorial window still has the power to move the viewer to sadness. The scale of Holy Trinity and the quality of its stonework and furnishings are indications of the prosperity of some Anglican congregations in the North at the turn of the century. Belief may have been wavering, but the importance of church-going remained unquestioned in middle-class society. One senses that Sundays in Edwardian Southport were still occasions of refinement and display.

Preston is a very different world, and worship was palpably more intense. In a town with a large Roman Catholic population, mostly composed of Irish mill-workers, the Roman Catholic churches were mostly built with the accumulated pennies of their congregations. St Walburge's by J.A. Hansom shows what these offerings could achieve. Its slender white stone spire can be seen for miles around: at over 300 feet it is one of the tallest in England, higher than Grantham and challenging Salisbury. The interior is an immense hall of Germanic character, with a hammer-beam roof spanning some 70 feet. There is a west gallery too, so a congregation of 2-3000 could be accommodated. The view towards the elevated and richly furnished altar is impressive in the extreme. How Catholicism in Preston had gained in confidence over the decades was made evident when we visited St Ignatius, a neat little Gothic church with spire by J.J. Scholes of 1833, pleasing but restrained. Before Emancipation and immediately afterwards, Roman Catholic churches were expected to be modest and scarcely visible; St Ignatius is a good example of that convention. By the 1850s, however, they could dominate the landscape, as St Walburge's shows.

So ended the Pugin Society's excursion for 2014. Our grateful thanks go to Julia Twigg for arranging the visit to Lancashire and dealing with the complexities of accommodation and the visits to so many sites, and to James Jago for leading the tour and for his wonderfully detailed and knowledgeable commentaries on everything we saw. His illustrated handbook for the tour should be made a publication of the Society.

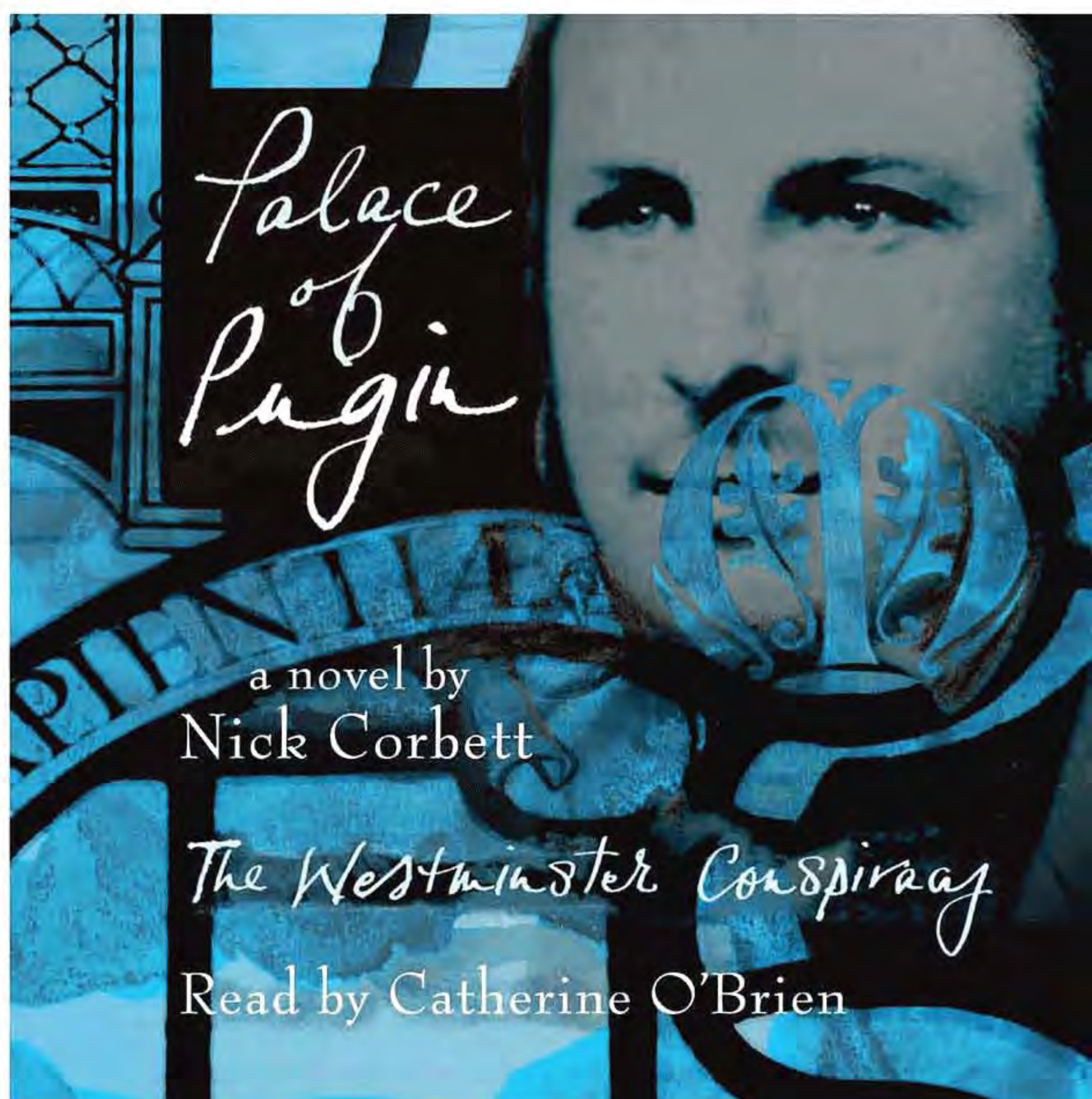
Leadership of Place

By Nick Corbett

Nick Corbett, urban designer and author, explains the inspiration behind his choice of Pugin as the subject of his recent novel, Palace of Pugin, which is available from Amazon as an audiobook and paperback

Pugin's remarkable life, intertwined with fascinating figures such as Prince Albert, Pope Pius IX, Lord and Lady Shrewsbury, and Charles Barry, inspired me to write an historical novel about him. A novel seemed the best way to bring alive the characters, the places, the tumultuous events, and the intense relationships. The result is *Palace of Pugin*.

Earlier this year, I received an unexpected call from Catherine O'Brien, an actress based in New York, offering to produce an audiobook version of *Palace of Pugin* through Audible.co.uk.



243: Courtesy of Audible

Pugin strove to disseminate his

message as widely as possible, so perhaps he would approve of his story now being available as one of this company's audiobooks.

As an urban designer I find myself asking what qualities of Pugin's Gothic Revival made it so potent for the political and religious leadership of his era, and why has it continued to inspire generations of people?

Pugin's design leadership and vision brought order to places traumatised by the industrial revolution, but I can also look closer to home to appreciate his influence.

In North Birmingham stood a deck-access 1960s council estate, opposite a gatehouse built by Pugin early in his career. I grew up on the council estate and I remember it being a happy place in the 1970s. As a child I would squeeze through the railings beside Pugin's gatehouse and follow a winding path through beech woods to the imposing Gothic seminary of Saint Mary's College, Oscott, with its chapel and interiors by Pugin, and its stunning view over a surprisingly green city dotted with tower blocks.

Housing policy changed in the 1980s and I witnessed the decline of my council estate

until it was eventually demolished. During this time my regard for Pugin grew, not least because his vision for Oscott endured when everything else around it seemed to fail. I was also intrigued by Pugin's design-led vision for society.

The juxtaposition of Pugin's gatehouse and my council estate influenced my choice of study, (an MA in urban design and degrees in town planning), and ignited my passion to write the book, *Transforming cities: revival in the square* (RIBA Enterprises, 2004), which suggests a new approach for closing the gap between designers and local communities; this in turn led me to set up the company Transforming Cities Ltd.

Through my work I have seen how a design-led vision can transform urban places. Britain's cities contain a remarkable Victorian heritage, much of which was influenced by the Gothic Revival, and I have seen how this heritage can inform the production of masterplans and help stitch back together streets and squares fragmented and severed by post-war planning.

The seven years I spent working as the principal urban designer for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea showed me how people with choice invest in places with an intelligible architectural vision and a coherent public realm, and this has implications for regeneration areas that need to attract investment.

Whilst researching *Palace of Pugin* a team of us decided to share Pugin's remarkable work and life with Birmingham school children. *The Big Story of Pugin* project involved primary school pupils showcasing Pugin's legacy to communities living in the council estates surrounding St Mary's College, Oscott. Pugin and his vision for the transformation of society captivated the children, their parents, and the local community. The results of this project were written up in the *Birmingham post* and were presented to the Parliamentary Arts and Heritage Group in the Palace of Westminster; see www.pugin.org. (The Heritage Lottery Fund provided funding).

Pugin is undergoing a popular revival with new visitor centres, plays, books, screenplays, and audiobooks, taking him to new audiences. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, is working with the Chinese billionaire Ni Zhaoxing on plans to rebuild the Crystal Palace in London, and a major architectural competition was launched in December 2013.

The competition criteria include creating inspirational architecture, a joyous environment, and innovative design thinking. Pugin's Medieval Court at the 1851 Great Exhibition, held in the original Crystal Palace, encapsulated all of these aspirations. Pugin captured the imagination of visitors from around the world by demonstrating how the Gothic Revival could be applied to the design of the built environment and manufactured goods.

Many of those architects now shortlisted to rebuild the Crystal Palace are likely to have been inspired and influenced by Pugin's work, and the winning scheme must aim to instill the same balance of imagination and design leadership for a modern day audience.

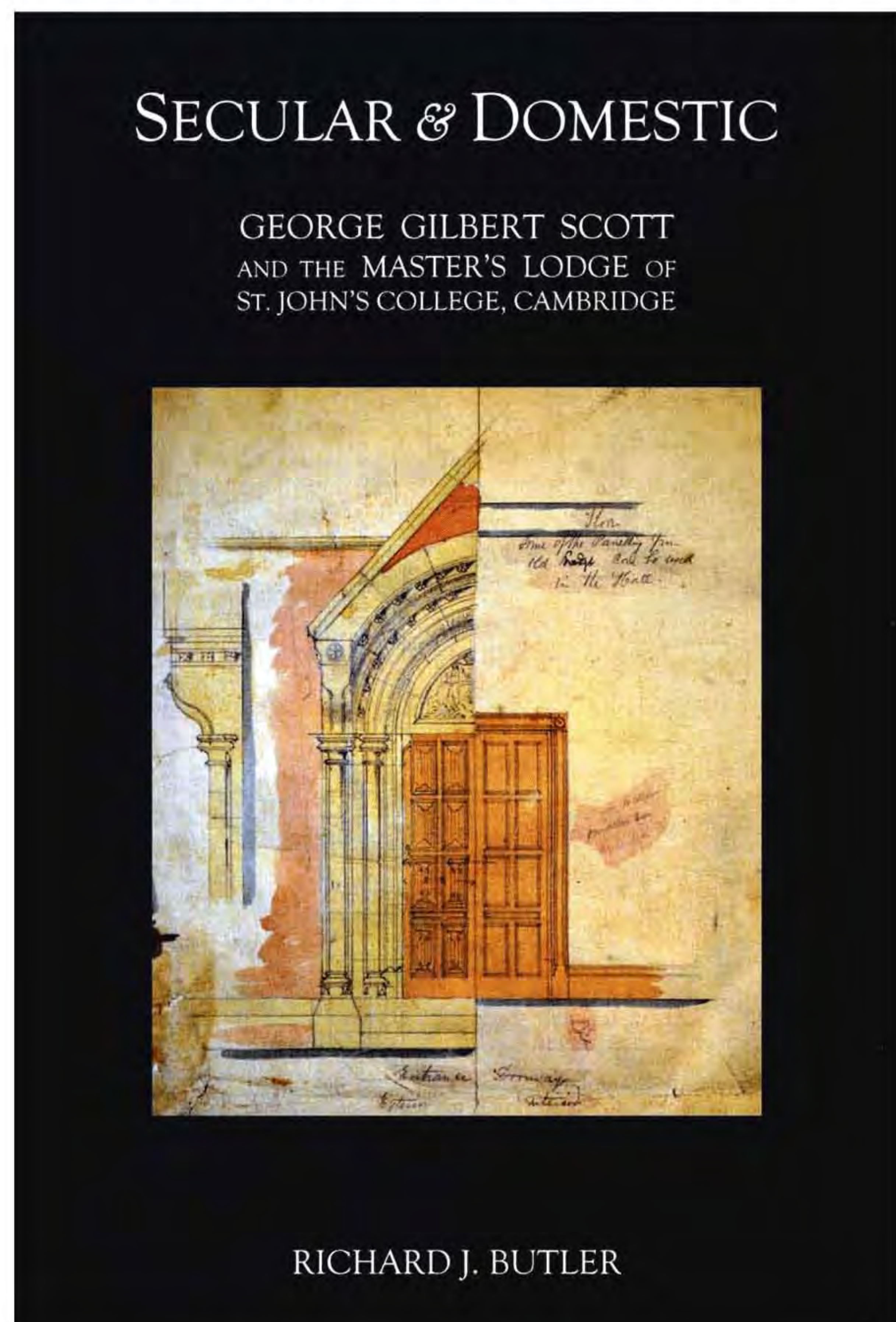
Book Reviews

Secular & Domestic George Gilbert Scott and the Master's Lodge of St John's College, Cambridge.

By Richard Butler. Cambridge: The Master and Fellows of St John's College, 2013.
ISBN 978-0-957573-90-1, RRP £15.00.

Reviewed by Joshua Mardell

The Oxbridge master's lodge is a building type that remains somewhat understudied especially in cumulative terms. The typology has received brief treatment in college histories and in the pioneering work of Willis & Clark. Corpus Christi, Oxford, published a short history of its President's Lodgings as far back as 1959. David Watkin *et al.* developed the subject both for The Caian on the Master's Lodge of Gonville and Caius, Cambridge, and in a series of articles for *Country Life*. Most recently, the Rhodes Building, the might-have-been new Provost's Lodgings at Oriel by Basil Champneys, has been given recent treatment by Brian Escott Cox. Colvin's detailed evolutionary history of the Caroline-era President's Lodgings at St John's College, Oxford, remains the most enjoyable analysis of the typology. George Gilbert Scott's Lodge at its Cambridge namesake is the subject of a welcome study by one of the college's doctoral candidates and Gates Scholarship holders, Richard Butler, considered here.



244: *Courtesy of The Master and Fellows of St John's College*

No longer can there be said to be a dearth of ‘Scott studies’; note for instance the recent *Sir George Gilbert Scott 1811-78: an architect and his influence* (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2014). The St John’s Lodge, Scott’s ‘only mansion (or villa, perhaps) in Cambridge’, built between 1863-65, nonetheless merits the monographical treatment given here. It is listed (with its stables) at Grade II and now mostly obscured to the passer-by by Edward Maufe’s work on the North Court. Some elements greatly pre-date its construction due to Scott’s incorporation of Tudor architectural *spolia*, such as linenfold panelling, moulded ceiling beams, and a chimneypiece said to be from Audley End. As its author claims, the publication is timely: firstly due to the recent (2011) bicentenary of Scott’s birth at which time the college held a Scott study day; secondly in that this coincided with the quincentenary of the college’s foundation; and thirdly in that 2013 marked 150 years since construction of the new lodge began.

The book is an extended treatment of an essay by Butler for *Scroope, the Cambridge architecture journal* (no. 21, 2012). It brings together for intelligent consideration a large mass of discursive and drawn data and in a fairly standard monographical format. Butler takes a welcome formalistic approach, perhaps a product of the ‘material turn’ or more likely of the ‘anti-theoretical’ heritage of Cantabrigian art history. Additionally it is welcome, in intent at least, that Butler’s study seeks to draw on a broader cross-analysis of the Victorian master’s lodge and its wider development. This aim is limited however, as we will see, to Butler’s subsidiary thesis concerning the degree of affinity between Scott’s lodge and the country house.

The author shows the fascinating evolution of the changing functions of the Lodge by following five different proposals by Scott across 1862-3. All five plans are superimposed graphically on a plan of the College site, and conditioned by, Butler argues, Scott’s evolving concerns for the effective spatial-functional division between ‘public’ and ‘domestic’ parts. The core strength of the book is in addressing the problem of the relationship between an architect’s theoretical treatise and his own built production. The central argument concerns the parallelism between Scott’s *Remarks on secular and domestic architecture, present and future* (1857) – in particular with reference to his chapter ‘Buildings in the country’ – and the material, functional and spatial expression as executed in the Lodge. Butler shows convincingly how the Lodge represents in miniature Scott’s guiding principles concerning domestic Gothic Revival architecture. The significance of the building, it is concluded, can be located on these grounds, as Butler argued: ‘Buildings that can be shown to be worked examples of influential architectural treatises are important in any era’. A holistic discussion of this problem might have usefully served as a methodological exegesis on which to build his analysis (prompted by his passing references to Palladio and Le Corbusier in this capacity) and thereby having provided a more clearly communicated narrative for the reader.

Butler’s corollary aim, stated at the outset, has been to analyse the importance of the Lodge ‘in the wider field of British architecture’. He argued that much importance

can be placed on Scott's freeing of the collegiate tradition from the construction of a Lodge in one of the college courts in favour of a freestanding design. Scott does so by severing the Lodge's spatial relationship with the three primary collegiate building types: the hall, chapel and library. The extent to which Scott's Lodge is 'groundbreaking' on these terms is somewhat weakened by Butler's reference to John Chessell Buckler's entirely free-standing lodge of 1835 across the road at Magdalene. (Incidentally it is excusable, though disappointing to a Buckler scholar, to see Buckler, sometime advisor to the Cambridge Camden Society no less, referred to as 'one Mr Buckler'). Butler shows concomitantly Scott's envisioning of the freestanding Lodge as a 'house in the country', arguing with confidence how this might have influenced subsequent Collegiate plans (e.g. at Pembroke and Selwyn in Cambridge, and Keble in Oxford, and onwards to examples in the twentieth century). This section prompts, when time allows for extended treatment, a fascinating discussion about the changing role of the Master conceived as a country gentleman rather than merely another scholar with a larger set of lodgings.

A final intellectual problem that the study considers is that of an architect's collaboration. Scott's lack of personal involvement in large chunks of his *oeuvre* is well recorded, especially by T. G. Jackson – 'apocryphal stories' as William Whyte has called them. Butler reminds us that the Lodge was subsidiary to Scott's Chapel project, 'the less important commission; that which Scott delegated somewhat to his pupils and his sons'. A lengthier work may allow us to revise our understanding of the plurality of creative actors within Scott's design process, or within Victorian practice *per se*. In the present work, however, Butler defends the idea of Scott as a single creative genius, and as a corollary to Roarkism is at all times in defence of Scott against any attack from previous commentators (especially Pevsner). Butler is most interesting where he gives collaboration consideration, in suggesting that it was Scott's treatises – 'the mantra of 20 Spring Gardens' [the Scott office] – that helped, in spite of Scott's lack of personal involvement, lend a distinctive Scott authorship to all of his buildings. This conclusion can only carry, however, with reference to much more of Scott's canon, which by necessity lies outside of the remit here.

The author's patron, the current Master, Professor Christopher Dobson, presumably commissioned a souvenir for a college anniversary, rather than an academic tome requiring years of work to research and perfect. It is inevitable therefore that the book, though offering references to outside works where possible, is localised to an analysis of a single object, its author but scarcely afforded the opportunity to consider broader phenomena. Butler gestures at the promise, however, that when less constrained, his future scholarship will be broad and rich.

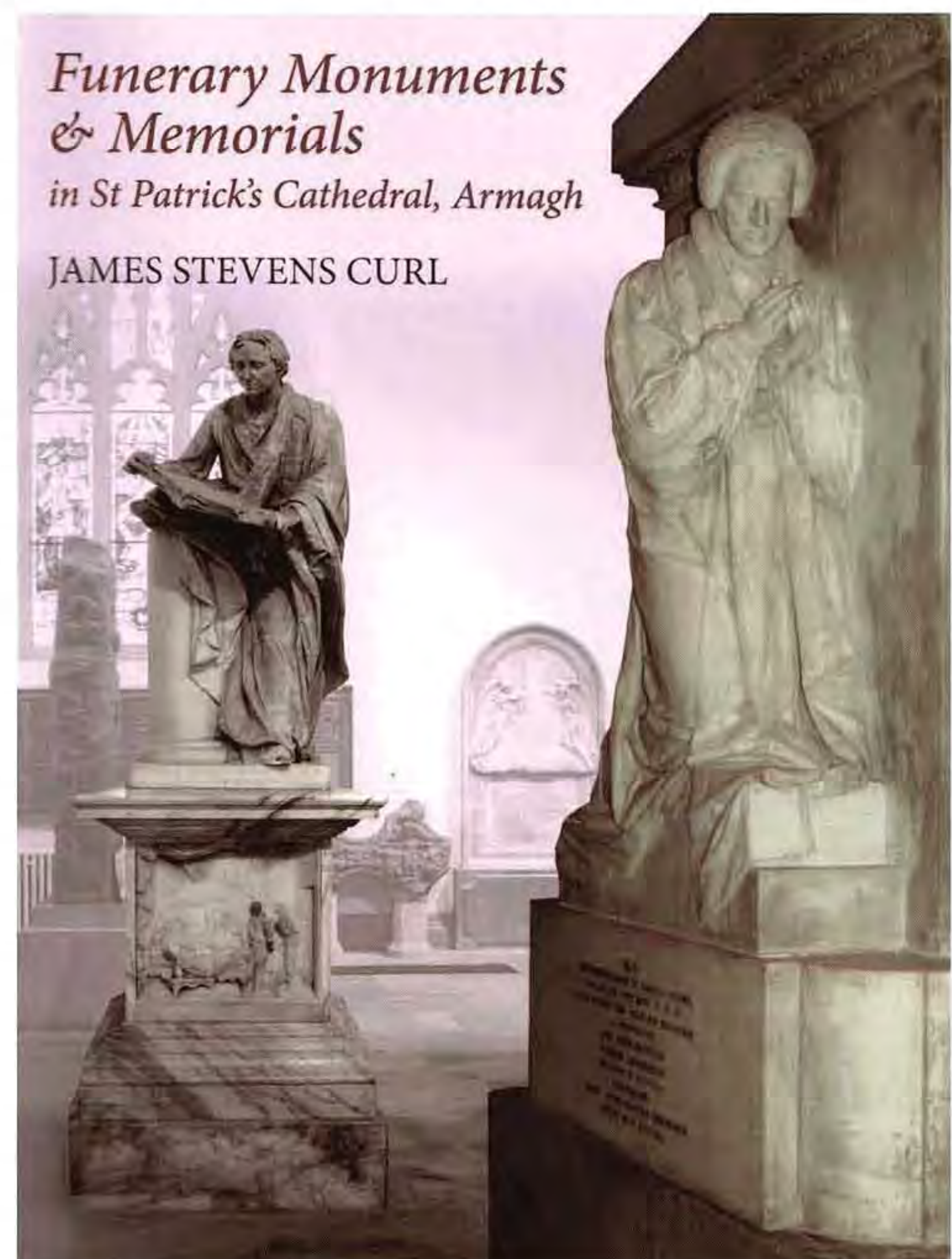
Funerary Monuments & Memorials in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

By James Stevens Curl. Whitstable: Historical Publications, 2014; available from the author (contact: jscurl@btinternet.com or go to <http://www.jamesstevenscurl.com>). Limited hardback edition, ISBN 978-1-905286-49-2, RRP £40.00; softback edition, ISBN 978-1-905286-48-5, RRP £20.00.

Reviewed by Timothy Brittain-Catlin

Those who have followed the story of the birth of the 'true' Gothic Revival in the 1830s and 1840s will recognise its debt to John Britton, the pioneering topographical writer who insisted that the texts and plates of historical buildings that he published were accurate, or 'scientific', as he put it. He knew well that the British would never understand the significance and logic, let alone the beauty, of their historical architecture unless they saw and heard the truth about it. Britton was appalled by the lackadaisical, sentimental and sometimes fantastical approach of earlier architectural historians, and set a new standard, through prodigious output as much as anything else. There is a great deal to be said for accuracy in all things.

It's possible therefore to see James Stevens Curl in the same light: he has fought a life-long battle against sloppiness and received opinions in architectural history. You can see this in his prodigious great works, such as his *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* and his volume on *Victorian Architecture*. But you can also see it when he turns his attention to a minute study. There are plenty of Society members who are interested in funerary monuments, and not just gothic ones; regarding the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century works, Pugin himself had some amusing things to say about them. The subject here is the collection of monuments in Armagh cathedral. The building itself – its architectural development is described in detail here – provides a window into the provincial development of the Gothic Revival; instead of a thorough clean-up by, say George Gilbert Scott snr, the decrepit and denuded old church was remodelled thoroughly by Lewis Cottingham (of whom Pugin, in his early days, was an admirer) and then improved first by Carpenter & Ingelow and then, into the twentieth century, by



245: Courtesy of Historical Publications

Thomas Drew. There are four top-notch crackers among the monuments: portrait sculpture by Roubiliac; Rysbrack; Nollekens and, especially, ‘Sir F. Chantrey’ (as Pugin sarcastically called the famous neo-classical sculptor); but there is also a fine effigy of Beresford, the Irish Primate, by Marochetti, probably more to the taste of most of us, and a wonderful and slightly daft elaborate Perpendicular memorial by Cottingham himself. Further illustrations depict a variety of wall plaques from different periods; the Regimental Chapel by George Pace; and some interesting work by the arts-and-crafts artist Kathleen Shaw.

Everything is minutely recorded, including the histories of the monuments and their translation across the cathedral at different periods; their artists; and the people whom they commemorate.

Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837-1901 is the first major exhibition of Victorian sculpture to be held since the Great War. It will be on display at Tate Britain from 24 February – 18 May 2015. The exhibition was organized by the Yale Center for British Art in collaboration with Tate Britain

Curated by Martina Droth (Yale Center for British Art); Jason Edwards (University of York); and Michael Hatt (University of Warwick). The organizing curator at Tate Britain is Greg Sullivan. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, edited by Martina Droth, Michael Hatt and Jason Edwards, and published by the Center in association with Yale University Press, ISBN 978-0-300-20803-0, RRP £50

Reviewed by David Frazer Lewis

Sculpture Victorious is a landmark – the largest and most comprehensive display of Victorian sculpture ever staged by a modern museum. But it is no mere encyclopedic gathering of objects. The curators have successfully linked the sculptures to broader questions of culture and commerce, and the result is an exhibition that gives new insight into Victorian society through its art.

James Westmacott’s larger-than-life electrotype sculpture of one of the Magna Carta barons [figure 1] dominates the entrance to the galleries, removed from its niche in Pugin’s House of Lords for the first time. [Note: The author viewed the exhibition at Yale and has yet to see the exhibition’s reinstallation at the Tate]. The baron is presented as an archetypal Victorian sculpture – a monumental piece commissioned by the government as part of an artistic narrative about national identity, responding to the aesthetic fashion for the Gothic Revival, and made possible in the face of budgetary constraints by the new industrial technology of electrotyping. Nearby, a series of portraits of Queen Victoria introduce the history of sculpture during her reign. Portraits of the queen were the most widely produced sculptural object in an age of vastly increased sculptural production, finding their way into public spaces across the empire and into

private homes in the form of commemorative medals and porcelain souvenirs. Francis Chantrey's serene bust of the young queen – her first official sculpted portrait and later used as the image on the Penny Black – is juxtaposed with a marble portrait of the elderly queen carved by Alfred Gilbert. The Gilbert bust is gargantuan and vaguely repellent; the puffy folds of the queen's proud and aged face give her a toad-like quality. It is a far cry from Thomas Brock's beautiful portrait busts of the queen from the same period, which look as if they have been carved in soft focus. The choice to include Gilbert instead of Brock highlights the contrast between the neoclassical idealism of the Chantrey bust and Gilbert's more frank and naturalistic concept of sculpture. It is an extraordinary feat to give a massive crystalline block of stone the appearance of soft, almost slimy flesh. Sculpture had clearly changed in the years between the production of the two busts. Yet they reveal consistency as well – subject, workmanship, and method of presentation give evidence of underlying continuity in the Victorian sculptural tradition.

A reduction of the Chantrey bust, rendered by mechanical means in ivory, stands in a case against the wall. One of the main themes of the exhibition is the close relationship between Victorian artistic and technical achievement. The necessity of both technical and artistic skill in the creation of the era's masterpieces is thus brought to the fore.

Another major theme is the role of commerce, and the section on the marketing and



Figure 246: Crozier designed by JD Sedding for St Asaph (1890).
Courtesy of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales

display of sculpture particularly focuses on the Great Exhibition of 1851. These are themes Pugin would have known well. The exhibition's definition of sculpture is broad, including a whole range of three-dimensional artwork from bookbinding to jewelry to one of Burne-Jones's relief panels for Arthur Balfour's private library, its raised figures made of gilded and textured gesso. As the purpose of the exhibition is to examine the Victorians' relationship to sculpture, it includes related two-dimensional works, such as Leighton's self-portrait with the Parthenon frieze and daguerreotypes of Hiram Powers's Greek Slave (the original sculpture is also displayed). The range of loans is dazzling: the Leighton portrait is from the Uffizi, and other lenders include the Army & Navy Club, the Royal Collection, and the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire.

Items of particular interest to the Gothic Revival are gathered into the exhibition's own equivalent of the Medieval Court – a gallery dedicated to sculpture and national history. These include the extraordinary Eglinton Trophy. A giant silver centerpiece with sculpted figures in medieval dress on a battlemented platform, it was commissioned to commemorate the Eglinton Tournament, that 1839 Walter-Scott-inspired reenactment of medieval jousting that is considered a key moment in the Gothic Revival. The event helped to make idealized medieval values mainstream. This gallery also contains the only Pugin object in the exhibition, a rubbing of a Pugin-designed memorial brass from the Hardman and Co. archives. Amongst other architect-designed works, there is also a bejeweled pastoral staff by JD Sedding [figure 2]. A model for a proposed restoration of the tomb of Philippa of Hainault in Westminster abbey, was designed by George Gilbert Scott snr and initially displayed at the original Medieval Court. It does not often emerge from deep storage at the V and A.

The tomb model and the crozier are the primary nod to the role of sculpture in the Victorian church. The exhibition unfortunately does not have scope to explore the controversial role of sculpture in Victorian religion. For it was during the Victorian Era that sculpture re-entered the church, unsettling or invigorating many members of the Church of England as it did so. Instead, the exhibition focuses on the secular and commercial context. And understandably so – the range and achievement of *Sculpture Victorious* is already impossibly broad.

The accompanying catalogue is the most important book on Victorian sculpture since Benedict Read's 1982 *Victorian Sculpture* and makes a good companion to it. The thematic treatment of the material in *Sculpture Victorious* is the perfect complement to Read's more anthological approach.

For those interested in Pugin, the arts of the Gothic Revival, and Victorian society more broadly, *Sculpture Victorious* is undoubtedly the exhibition of the year and not to be missed.

Giants of the Gothic Revival: Watts & Co from Pugin to Comper

Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 25 October 2014.

Reviewed by David Frazer Lewis

Last year marked the 140th anniversary of the ecclesiastical goods firm, Watts and Company. Watts was founded by the Gothic Revival architects G.F. Bodley, Thomas Garner, and George Gilbert Scott jnr as a way of providing suitable artist-designed textiles, wall-coverings, and furnishings for their projects. The firm was a rival to Morris and Co. (and the more commercially successful of the two). Although, as Michael Hall explained at the event, some frowned on architects directly associating themselves with trade, Bodley and Scott knew how essential good decorative furnishings were to successful architecture. Today, the artists at Watts continue to build their product-lines around an understanding of medieval design, and their textiles have become almost the aesthetic signature of the Church of England, appearing in vestments and altar hangings at coronations, state funerals, and the recent royal wedding. They are used by the whole spectrum of Christian congregations from the evangelical to the high church, and the firm also provides material for secular use (under the name ‘Watts of Westminster’). The firm is of particular interest to the Pugin Society, because they acquired the rights to a number of Pugin’s wallpaper designs in the 1970s. Pugin’s work, which they produce in a variety of colourways, now forms one of their flagship collections.



247: Wallpaper designed by Pugin for the Royal Apartments of the Palace of Westminster (1848), printed by Watts & Co (2015)
Courtesy of Watts and Company

In order to celebrate this milestone anniversary, a study day was organized at the V and A. Supported by Watts and Co., it was arranged and planned largely through the efforts of Ayla Lepine, Gothic Revival expert and lecturer at the University of Essex. The result was a sparkling celebration of Gothic Revival design from Pugin to

the present. Textiles and wallcoverings form an important part of the Gothic Revival architectural vision, but they seldom receive much scholarly attention. This day was a corrective. Speakers included Michael Hall, Gavin Stamp, Alan Powers, Gerald Adler, and Mary Schoeser, who curated the exhibition of Watts wallpapers that was displayed at the London Fashion and Textile Museum as part of the anniversary celebrations. In the afternoon, participants were split into groups in order to view materials from the V and A's collections, including original pattern designs by George Gilbert Scott jnr and Ninian Comper and architectural drawings by George Frederick Bodley and Giles Gilbert Scott. David Gazeley, the Creative Director at Watts, participated in a roundtable conversation to conclude the day, and members of the Watts staff, past and present, were in attendance to enrich the discussion.

A theme of the day was the role of ornament and richness in modern design. Above all, the day demonstrated that the Gothic Revival is hardly dead, but continues to thrive in the realm of ecclesiastical decoration.

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The Pugin Society, Registered Charity No. 1074766, was founded in 1995. It exists, to quote its Constitution, to further 'the advancement of the public in the life and work of A.W.N. Pugin and other architects and designers in his family', and to watch over, and if possible save, threatened buildings by members of the Pugin family or near colleagues. The Society also aims to give advice on the conservation and restoration of relevant buildings or decorative schemes, and, in addition, organises events and outings to raise awareness of this great architect, designer and writer. It produces an annual journal – True principles – and also a separate newsletter – Present state – and is open to anyone interested in A.W.N. Pugin, his family, those he influenced, and the Gothic Revival.

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