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BRITAIN'S HERITAGE
NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2022

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Department Stores special

Norris Castle, a masterpiece
of the English Picturesque

Casualties of war



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Front Cover: Mural in Lewis' department store, Liverpool (Credit: Rob Higgins Flickr)



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SAVE

BRITAIN'S HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022

Director's welcome

by Henrietta Billings



Our focus this issue is on one of our major campaigns – the future of Britain's department store buildings. We've had a fantastic response to our report by Hattie Lloyd which touches on many key themes of our work; from sounding the klaxon against the demolition of many of these prestigious landmarks, challenging the huge environmental cost of trashing perfectly good, adaptable buildings and championing successful re-use examples. After publishing our press release, Hattie and I took part in eight TV and radio interviews on one day – a record since I've been at SAVE!

The report also gave us a platform to highlight the plight of Marks & Spencer on Oxford Street, one of the most famous and historic shopping streets in Britain. A handsome 1929 corner building built to catch the eye, it is right next door to the world-renowned Selfridges. Working with the managing editor of the Architects' Journal, Will Hurst, and

environmental consultant Simon Sturgis, we have used this opportunity to drill down into the environmental costs of demolition, and press home the well-coined phrase, "the greenest building is the one that already exists", a message that fits hand in glove with our work to save historic buildings from unnecessary and wasteful loss.

The Marks and Spencer campaign has thrown into stark relief the need to make demolishing buildings without overwhelming evidence simply unacceptable. The buildings and construction sector is responsible for about 40% of UK carbon emissions, we lose more than 50,000 buildings a year by demolition, and construction is far more carbon-intensive than refurbishment. Our letter to Secretary of State Michael Gove in May and signed by leading figures in the worlds of architecture, property, heritage and the arts urged him to call-in the Marks and Spencer plans, already approved by Westminster City Council and the London Mayor, which would pump 40,000 tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere.

The real question is why this scheme, along with the massive demolition and tower proposals for the former ITV studios on the South Bank of the Thames, the Waterloo Docks in Liverpool, or Anglia Square in Norwich, are getting so far down the planning system. It would save everyone a lot of

time and money if developers and building owners knew from the start their plans had no legs. So far the Levelling Up Bill, published in February and now moving forward to committee stage, isn't showing signs of challenging the status quo. For example, we need to see heritage championed as a solution to climate change given the UK's laudable net zero targets, including a presumption in favour of retrofit instead of demolition. Whole-life carbon assessments must be a requirement for demolition and re-build projects, and everyone is still waiting for ministers to cut VAT on refurbishment to 5% or less. The controversial issue of permitted development rights – essentially a loophole used to demolish unlisted buildings outside conservation areas without full planning consent – must also be urgently addressed. This is particularly relevant to us as so many of the buildings we fight for fall into this category.

We need to see a tighter legislative framework, and a sufficiently resourced planning regime that halts these damaging and wasteful schemes in their tracks. The Levelling Up Bill is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change course and embed the importance of heritage and sustainability at the heart of the planning system. The M&S call in, where all these issues will be tested, is a great first step. **S**

Watch out for our new QR codes – introduced for the first time in this issue. Hover your camera over the code, and be magically transported to our website for further information on our campaigns, news and events.



SAVE welcomes public inquiry for M&S landmark Oxford Street building

SAVE Britain's Heritage welcomes communities secretary Michael Gove's decision to call in plans to bulldoze and rebuild landmark Marks and Spencer store on Oxford Street for examination at a public inquiry

The announcement issued in June by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) means that the highly contested plans, previously approved by Westminster City Council in November last year, will now be re-examined by an independent planning inspector at a public inquiry later this year.

M&S's controversial proposals to bulldoze its flagship 1929 art deco store on Oxford Street and replace it with a much larger 10-storey retail and office block have been the focus on a campaign led by SAVE and the Architects' Journal highlighting the huge environmental and net-zero costs of the proposals. Last month

we published an open letter calling on the government to call in the scheme, signed by leading architects, engineers, urbanists and historians.

Simon Sturgis, sustainability expert and managing partner of Targeting Zero, says: "I welcome a public inquiry as it will give the opportunity to not only examine in detail the most carbon efficient options for the M&S site, but also to make plain the policies of Westminster, the GLA and the Government with respect to development and what needs to be done to meet the Government's net zero carbon targets."

Will Hurst, managing editor of the Architects' Journal, says: "To combat global warming, we urgently need to halt unnecessary demolition and revitalise buildings instead, especially historic and well-liked structures like M&S Oxford Street. A public inquiry is exactly what's needed. It will be able to weigh up the carbon calculations put forward by both sides and can also examine other important matters such as the project's impact on this vital part of the West End and its mix of uses."

Henrietta Billings, director of SAVE Britain's Heritage, says: "This is great news. SAVE strongly believes there's no need to demolish this historic M&S building. Through our campaign we've shown that with a comprehensive retrofit, this building can continue to serve as a landmark on Oxford Street for the next 100 years."

The Secretary of State's notification letter announcing his decision states his intention to examine the following issues at a public inquiry:

- The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with government policies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment in national planning policy.
- The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area.
- Any other matters the inspector considers relevant.



M&S's flagship building is characterised by sophisticated classical elevations, with ornate recessed oxidised window panes and decorative stonework (Credit: SAVE Britain's Heritage)

STARS SIGN SAVE LETTER

In order to keep the pressure up SAVE joined forces with the Architects' Journal to write an open letter to Michael Gove in May urging him to hold an inquiry. This attracted strong support, with the full list of more than 25 signatories including household names such as Kevin McCloud and Griff Rhys Jones as well as engineers, academics, developers and a raft of leading architects

like London Eye designer Julia Barfield, sustainability pioneer Rab Bennetts and representatives of the Architects Climate Action Network.

The letter, which was picked up by the press, praised Gove for stepping in, adding: "We now urge you to hold a public inquiry into these proposals which would unnecessarily pump nearly 40,000 tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

"In contrast to the slow release of carbon from existing buildings, these emissions would be released immediately because of the vast

quantity of raw materials required such as steel and concrete."

The letter also made the case for retaining the building on streetscape and heritage grounds, saying: "We believe the overall strategy for this site is wrong, with a development which is environmentally wasteful, destroys an elegant and important interwar building and, many feel, negatively affects Oxford Street and its wider West End neighbourhood. We should be adapting the building, not destroying it."



Before and after image showing the proposed replacement building (Credit: Planning Documents)

In the lead up to the call in decision, we commissioned a report by Simon Sturgis which found the proposals were not compliant with the Government's legally binding Net Zero commitments or the Greater London Authority's policy to prioritise retrofit.

Sturgis concluded that M&S has not fully considered a comprehensive retrofit approach which would be a significantly lower-carbon option than demolition. Working with the Twentieth Century Society, we also launched a petition calling on M&S bosses to rethink their plans. [S](#)



SCAN TO ACCESS AND
SIGN OUR PETITION!



New ‘damaging and dominant’ plans for the historic heart of Norwich

SAVE has objected to the latest proposal for Anglia Square. We see it as a huge missed opportunity for this important site – and we’re not alone

We have written to Norwich City Council to formally oppose a planning application for a vastly out-of-scale development that would overwhelm the city’s medieval centre.

Our principal objection is to the scale and bulk of the proposed buildings, some as high as eight storeys. The scheme will contain 1,100 flats and 8,000 sqm of commercial space in 14 large blocks, plus parking for 450 cars.

We believe it will cause substantial harm to this part of the city centre which is predominantly characterised by two- and three-storey buildings, particularly around grade I-listed St Augustine’s Church and the residential streets to the north, east and west of the site.

We are also objecting to the proposed demolition of a cluster of historic buildings at the southwestern corner of Anglia Square which



View of the new proposals (in red) which would be highly visible from St Augustine’s churchyard, a historically sensitive part of the city centre conservation area (Credit: Montage by SAVE based on planning documents)

survived both Second World War bombing and the area’s redevelopment in the 1960s. Excitingly, this includes the recently identified site and probable remains of the Anglo-Saxon

church of St Olave’s [see overleaf].

The new proposals were submitted by Weston Homes on April 1 after its previous application was thrown out by the Secretary of State in 2020

The historic centre of Norwich, one of Europe’s finest medieval cities (Brian Lewis)



following a three-year fight culminating in a high-profile public inquiry at which SAVE lined up as rule 6 parties with Historic England, the Norwich Society and other objectors. We were delighted the Secretary of State found in favour of our arguments and threw out the scheme. It was a resounding success for the future of this part of the city.

Sadly we can only conclude from its latest plans that Weston Homes is wilfully blind to the huge opportunities presented by this unique site. Rather than attempting to repair the mistakes of the 1960s by stitching Anglia Square back into its historic context, it is proposing an overbearing and anonymous development that could be anywhere and will bear no relation to the character of the UK's most complete medieval city.

Our views were backed by Historic England which, in a strongly worded statement, branded the latest proposals "a missed opportunity for Norwich".

The 11.5-acre Anglia Square site currently includes a 1960s shopping centre and former government offices backed by a vast open-air car park, all slated for redevelopment. SAVE is not opposed to new buildings here but believes the location, just inside the historic city centre, means enormous care must be taken.

Henrietta Billings, director of SAVE, said: "The existing Anglia Square sits like a cuckoo in the nest within the remarkable medieval core of the city, a comprehensive development that is regarded now by the vast majority of its citizens as a mistake of the 1960s.

"The success of the new scheme will be judged in the future not on what was there before, or the previous refused scheme, but the quality of the new development that is built.

"The public inquiry has presented the owners and developer of this site



Image showing the scale of the proposals from St Crispin's Roundabout (in red), which would require the demolition of a number of existing buildings outlined in yellow (Credit: Montage by SAVE based on planning documents)

'The success of the new scheme will be judged in the future not on what was there before, or the previous refused scheme, but the quality of the new development'
Henrietta Billings,
director, SAVE Britain's Heritage

with a unique opportunity and responsibility to build a high-quality development of an appropriate scale that fits within its historic conservation area context.

"We are concerned that the plans presented to us do not achieve this aim, and do not reflect the high importance that the Secretary of State placed on heritage and design issues in his decision."

Marcus Binney, executive president of SAVE, added: "Weston Homes'

proposal is the wrong scheme for this sensitive site. We think there's a great opportunity here to repair the gaping wound of Anglia Square by stitching it back into the historic fabric of Norwich's medieval street pattern. Instead this incongruous development will overwhelm the charming and harmonious streets around it."

We believe the site is eminently suitable for a lower-rise development designed around streets that connect to the city's existing street pattern, mending the ruptured townscape.

While we acknowledge that the new application is not as devastating as the previous proposal, which would have crowbarred a 20-storey tower into the city's low-rise skyline, we believe it would undoubtedly still cause substantial harm and that Norwich deserves better.

**MORE ON ANGLIA SQUARE
OVERLEAF**

Norway's eternal king

Archaeologists are getting excited by an extraordinary discovery in a neglected corner of Norwich city centre – yet it is already under threat from plans to redevelop Anglia Square

The remains of what is strongly believed to be the Anglo Saxon parish church of St Olave's have been uncovered by local conservation experts among a complex of flint warehouses in Anglia Square.

SAVE is backing a listing application in light of the significance of the site, and leading historians and archaeologists have written to Historic England in support.

Dedicated to Norway's "eternal king", St Olave's Church was originally built on the corner of St Crispin's Way and Pitt Street shortly after the death of the canonised king in 1030, when an Anglo-Scandinavian community is known to have existed in this part of Norwich.

Despite the loss of the church which once dominated the site, unusual coursed flintwork, thought to be part of its original retaining wall, survives.

Yet just as the remains were discovered – by local conservation expert Mark Wilson, surveyor of the fabric for the Norwich Historic Churches Trust – they are in peril. Under the planning application submitted by Weston Homes (see previous page) both the remains of St Olave's and the Pitt Street buildings (see box) would be demolished.

Now leading figures – including the consultant archaeologist to Westminster Abbey, the president of the British Archaeological

'It is an unusual and fascinating case'

Dr Amanda Bevan

Association and the Dean of Norwich Cathedral – have lined up to support the listing application to Historic England for St Olave's and a number of other historic buildings at the south-western edge of the site (see box below).

Dr Amanda Bevan, head of legal records at the National Archives, who is working in a personal capacity, compiled a detailed dossier after examining historical records relating to the site. She concluded that St Olave's was still standing

REMARKABLE SURVIVORS

SAVE is also supporting listing applications for two nearby historic buildings on this part of Anglia Square, the sole survivors of wartime bombing and post-war road widening schemes.

43–45 Pitt Street

Once known as the Cherry Tree, this locally listed former public house is one of the last remaining pre-war buildings in the area. A pub can be traced back to this location to 1739. The current building dates to 1878 and was originally the end of a row of terraced housing that formed Cherry Lane, with the original street sign still in place. It survives as an impressive example of intricate Victorian architectural styles and features, with stucco surrounds and detailed moulded brick cornicing. The pub changed its name to the Golden Sovereign in 1975 to suit the newly built HM Stationery Office in Anglia Square, finally closing in 1988.

53–55 Pitt Street

This Georgian building is an important testament to Anglia Square's historic use and street pattern in the 18th century. Previously surrounded by other grand Georgian houses, it contains an impressive timber doorway and early 19th-century purlin roof trusses. It is thought to have been a shoe workshop and it may contain a medieval undercroft, but further inspection is required.

Historic England is currently considering the listing applications.



The Victorian former Cherry Tree pub at 43–45 Pitt Street in 1970, which is locally listed (Credit: Martin Hooker)



The Georgian house at 53–55 Pitt St, with its unusual opened timber vaulted ceiling (Credit: Mark Wilson)



Aerial photograph from 1946 showing the hundreds of buildings on the Anglia Square application site (red boundary) which have since been demolished and the only three surviving buildings which we are fighting to save. In blue, 53 Pitt Street; in orange, 43 Pitt Street; and in green, St Olave's church remains. (Credit: Base image Britain from Above, annotations by SAVE)

decades after its supposed demolition in the 1540s. She said: "I have 40 years of experience of working with the kinds of records discussed here – it is an unusual and fascinating case."

She added: "In researching this plot of land it has become apparent to me quite how much has been lost in this part of the city. This building and the historic churchyard plot are of

great interest and significance to the city: the site is a demonstration of the huge changes that have taken place over the last 500 years. Its adaptation and survival amid all of this is remarkable."

Dr Bevan's work was praised by Professor Warwick Rodwell OBE, the noted academic and author who is consultant archaeologist at Westminster Abbey.

He said: "In the light of the new information, I have no hesitation in urging that the stable be listed, and any proposal to demolish it should be vigorously rebutted." He said there was no doubt the remains occupy the site of St Olave's.

He added: "It would be a dereliction of duty by the Local Planning Authority to grant any form of development consent on this site without first securing firm archaeological evidence for the precise location and plan of the church, and the extent of its graveyard. In a city as historically important as Norwich, archaeology must always be embraced as a 'material consideration' in planning matters."

The acting dean of Norwich Cathedral said: "It hardly seems credible that this fabric, which survived the Second World War and the [1960s] Anglia Square development, should even now be threatened with destruction." [S](#)



The barn which is believed to include the Anglo Saxon remains of St Olave's Church (Credit: Mark Wilson)



Painting of King Olaf II of Norway, in whose honour St Olave's church at Anglia Square was originally built in 1030 (Credit: Wikipedia)

George Mayer-Marton's Crucifixion: the heart of a Modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk*

There are compelling reasons to believe the dazzling Oldham Mural can only be fully understood as part of a 'total work of art', writes Clare A.P. Willsdon, professor of the history of western art at Glasgow University and one of the speakers at a recent joint SAVE and C20 Society event held to highlight our ongoing campaign to save it

A Hungarian émigré who fled Vienna for London in 1938 with his pianist wife Grete, George Mayer Marton found work after the war as a senior lecturer at Liverpool School of Art, lecturer for the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, and, not least, creator of "dazzling beauty". This striking term was used last year by the director of the V&A Museum Tristram Hunt to describe Mayer-Marton's Crucifixion mural of 1955 in the Church of the Holy Rosary in Oldham. Though part of the Roman Catholic Church's wave of new post-war construction, intended to develop a forward-looking ministry for local communities, this Modernist-style building is now disused, with its mural accordingly at risk – despite its rare, if not unique, combination in Britain of fresco technique with "Byzantine" mosaic.

Not that one can see the fresco part today – the anguished figures of Mary



George Mayer-Marton (Credit: the Estate of George Mayer-Marton)

and John that originally flanked the mosaic of Christ on the cross before a darkening, fractured sky. For at some point in the 1980s, Mary, John and the sky were covered with white paint. Though recent conservation surveys indicate they could be reinstated, we have to turn to a period photograph to grasp something of the effect of the fresco's "richly modulated velvet blues" (as N. Martin-Bell put it) against the shimmering gold of Christ's halo and mandorla, and softer tones of his body and white loin cloth.

The palpable human frailty of Mary and John, in their medieval-style fluttering draperies, clearly served to point up Christ's redemptive power. Although Christ's bowed head corresponds with the tradition of the *Christus patiens* – the suffering Christ – his straight legs are those of *Christus triumphans*, the triumphant Christ. (I am grateful to Dr. John Richards, University of Glasgow, for pointing this out.) This is not a broken body, but one that transcends death. We can thus see the anxious hands of Mary, Christ's mother, as raised also in prayer, and John's hand as raised in blessing, not simply shock. Mary and John, of course, were enjoined by Christ's words on the cross to look after each other – to follow his message of selfless love, that Christians believe defeats death. A recently rediscovered coloured study by Mayer-Marton shows that he originally experimented with two female figures at the left (see overleaf, private collection).

'It is vital that it is preserved in situ and its fresco professionally reinstated'

But the way he pared this down to one in the mural itself intensifies the impact of Mary's and John's intriguing gestures as responses to the figure of Christ.

This in turn enhances the symbolic unity of the mural with the building, the other decoration, and the words and actions of the liturgy performed. For the light that falls on to the mural from the nearby windows catches the gold of Christ's mandorla and halo, and bounces off his body, further focusing attention on it. The body in turns seems actually to radiate light down towards the altar, and along the central aisle, to meet the light shining in at the opposite end of the plain brick building, through the stained glass of the east window (see image overleaf). This glass portrays Mary with Christ as a newly born child, and its blue and white tonality would of course have linked to the blues of the fresco. The beginning meets the end; the end meets the beginning. The mural, in other words, as originally visible, played a pivotal role within the Holy Rosary church, and its image of Mary would have complemented the sculpture of her on the exterior of the building. When the church was still in use, all this would have worked in

tandem with the ritual of the Eucharist, when the consecrated bread and wine are understood by Roman Catholics to become Christ’s body and blood, given to save humankind – and when music, word and ritual combine in the mass and incense pervades the air.

We can understand this symbolic unity, linking spatial and sensory dimensions as, in effect, a Modernist version of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or

“total work of art” – a 1950s answer to the synthesis of art, music, words and architecture that had reached a high point in early 20th-century Vienna. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* had developed from the influence of Richard Wagner’s “music dramas”, and examples included the Secession’s Beethoven exhibition. The latter brought together Gustav Klimt’s frieze illustrating the Ode to Joy by Schiller

that Beethoven had set to music in his Ninth Symphony, with sculpture by Max Klinger, music arranged by Gustav Mahler, and the radical architecture of Josef Hoffmann’s Vienna Secession Building. (The frieze, owned by the Belvedere, Vienna, is now reinstalled here.) The whole – greater than its parts – invited apprehension of universal brotherhood through joy. The idea spread: in Scotland to [▶](#)



George Mayer-Marton, *Crucifixion*, mosaic and fresco mural, 1955 in the Church of the Holy Rosary, Fitton Hill, Oldham, before the painting over of the fresco element (Credit: the Estate of George Mayer-Marton)

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's decoration of the Music Room at Hill House, and Tearooms for Miss Cranston; and in Spain, to Lluís Domènech i Montaner's Palace of Catalan Music in Barcelona, with its play of light on the colours and forms of growing plants, and harmony of music.

As a former secretary, and then vice-president of the Hagenbund in Vienna that formed a direct successor to the Secession, Mayer-Marton would have known the *Gesamtkunstwerk* tradition intimately. The Oldham church can be recognised as a fascinating realisation of a comment he made around the same time as his mural, in notes for an intended book on aesthetics: "it is wrong to consider any single art by itself", and "certain parallelisms" exist between the different art forms.

Although the totality at Oldham has been brutally torn apart by the overpainting of the fresco elements, it is clear that Mayer-Marton's choices of technique – fresco and Byzantine mosaic – would have been critical to it. His Hagenbund colleague Anton Faistauer had already in 1926 identified "spatial unity" (*Raumverbundenheit*) as a goal of modern art, that fresco achieved. Fresco, after all, involves painting on wet plaster so that the image bonds with the wall, just as mosaic involves glass pieces or *tesserae* pressed into wet plaster. Further, in the "Byzantine" mosaic technique that Mayer-Marton had learnt in Ravenna itself, each piece or *tessera* has a difference surface angle so that, together, they turn the flat wall into a dynamic, almost mobile screen of reflective colour. Both fresco and mosaic, in other words, integrate the image physically with the building – and even appear to expand the building, just as Faistauer had argued that because of its bond with the wall,

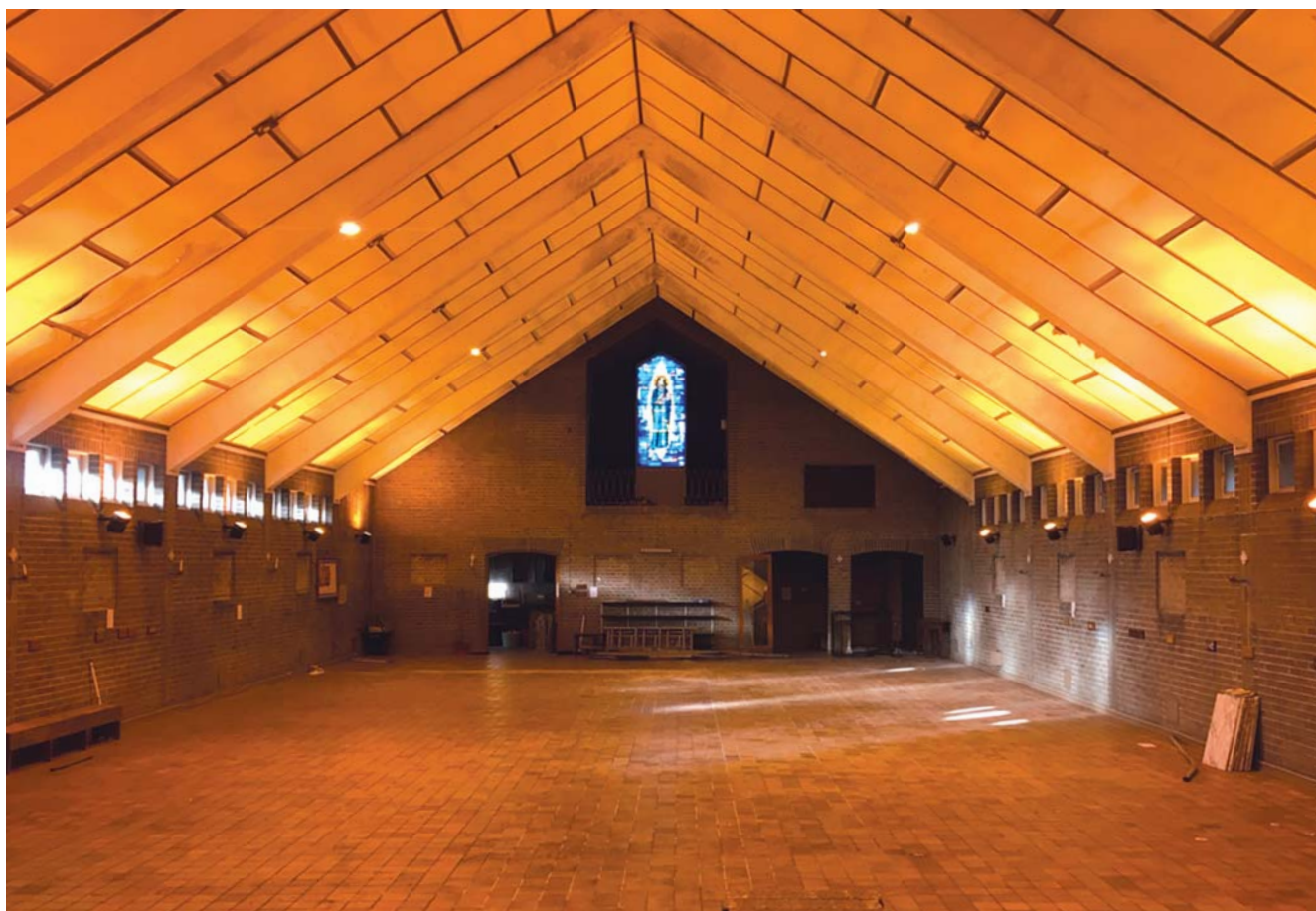


George Mayer-Marton: sketch for *The Crucifixion at Oldham*
(Credit: Private Collection)

fresco forms a "mirror" to those who view it, by "cubing" or seemingly opening up the wall; it was thus the "being and living" of the building's users. In this sense, we might see Mary and John at Oldham as made one, through fresco, with the congregation at the Holy Rosary church, to imbue them with Christ's love. Here is the unity of art and architecture ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* turbo-charged with a 1950s update on the Expressionism that the Hagenbund had espoused. An update but also,

of course, a looking back, for Mayer-Marton repurposes two *old* techniques: fresco was used in antiquity and Renaissance Italy, just as he deployed "Byzantine" mosaic. As part of a Modernist building, this underlines the message of renewal: of endings as beginnings, of new life after war.

The new Roman Catholic churches in north-west England were almost certainly a British answer to the Modernist churches in France, for which Father Marie-Alain Couturier had commissioned "sacred art"



View of interior today of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Oldham, towards the stained glass of the Virgin and Child on the west wall (Credit: Henrietta Billings, SAVE Britain's Heritage)

already from the 1930s; examples include the chapel at Vence decorated by Henri Matisse. Couturier's readiness to engage artists of all faiths and none must have encouraged the Roman Catholic church to approach Mayer-Marton, and he carried out a number of other commissions for its new buildings, including the mosaic at St Clare's at Blackley in Manchester, his only other surviving mural in situ. But the integrative, *Gesamtkunstwerk* aspect of the mural at the Holy Rosary – its dialogue with the building and its function – introduced a new, Central European dimension to the “sacred art” movement of the period. Its union of mosaic and fresco, in relation to architecture, stained glass, sculpture, words and music, is the most complete surviving expression of Mayer-Marton's

aesthetic vision. And perhaps also his most personal. Not only was he a gifted artist, after all, but also a talented violinist, and – as a teacher and lecturer – skilled in words. If he had written in his diary on arriving in London in 1938 that, under Hitler's repression, “We had become too accustomed to thinking each thought just half through, to leaving words unspoken and to stifling our gestures...” (as quoted in Robert Waterhouse's *Their Safe Haven*), then at Oldham, he freed those words and gestures. His motif of the Christ who entrusts Mary and John to each other, must have resonated with his own experience as an émigré, dependent on others. Yet, through his art, he transcended that status and its privations (including the terrible loss to incendiary bombing of all

but a few of his prior artworks). We owe it not just to his memory to preserve and conserve his mural, but also to the local community in Oldham, for whom it was created. It is vital that it is preserved in situ, and its fresco professionally reinstated, so that we can once again appreciate the remarkable symbolic and aesthetic totality – the Modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk* – of which it forms the dazzling heart. [S](#)

SCAN TO READ MORE



SAVE raises alarm over threat to Norris Castle, masterpiece of the English Picturesque

Sublime Regency estate on the Isle of Wight is threatened with damaging leisure park conversion

SAVE Britain's Heritage has joined calls to reject plans that would irreparably damage one of Britain's remarkable ensembles of listed buildings and protected parkland running down to the sea.

One of the sublime masterpieces of the English Picturesque, Norris Castle and its purpose-designed landscape on the Isle of Wight are under threat from inappropriate and oversized development.

SAVE has written urgently to Isle of Wight Council arguing that the

plans should be thrown out on grounds that the applicant has included insufficient detail so that it would be impossible to determine such a major application.

We are backing similar objections from the Gardens Trust and Historic England, the government's heritage advisors, pointing out the "alarming" lack of accurate visual representations, CGIs or scale drawings.

Our letter says: "The applications seek permission for substantial new development within one of the

nation's most historically important estates, involving major alterations to the fabric and setting of three grade I-listed heritage assets, all of which are of exceptional individual and collective importance. Given that this is a hybrid planning application for major development, it is therefore alarming that the detailed elements of the proposals are not accompanied with commensurately detailed plans and assessment of the existing buildings and landscape, and the substantial alterations proposed for them."

Grade I listed Norris Castle commands spectacular sea views and is set within a grade I listed landscaped park (Credit: Christopher Ison via Alamy)



Norris was the joint creation of the prodigiously talented architect James Wyatt and the equally renowned landscape gardener Humphry Repton – who were close friends and colleagues.

The unblemished Regency ensemble consists of Norris Castle and Norris Model Farm, both designed by Wyatt for Lord Henry Seymour in 1799 in the Gothic Revival style; and 225 acres of parkland fronting the Solent. All three are grade I listed, the highest level of protection afforded by Historic England. The landscape is the only one on the Isle of Wight to be grade I listed.

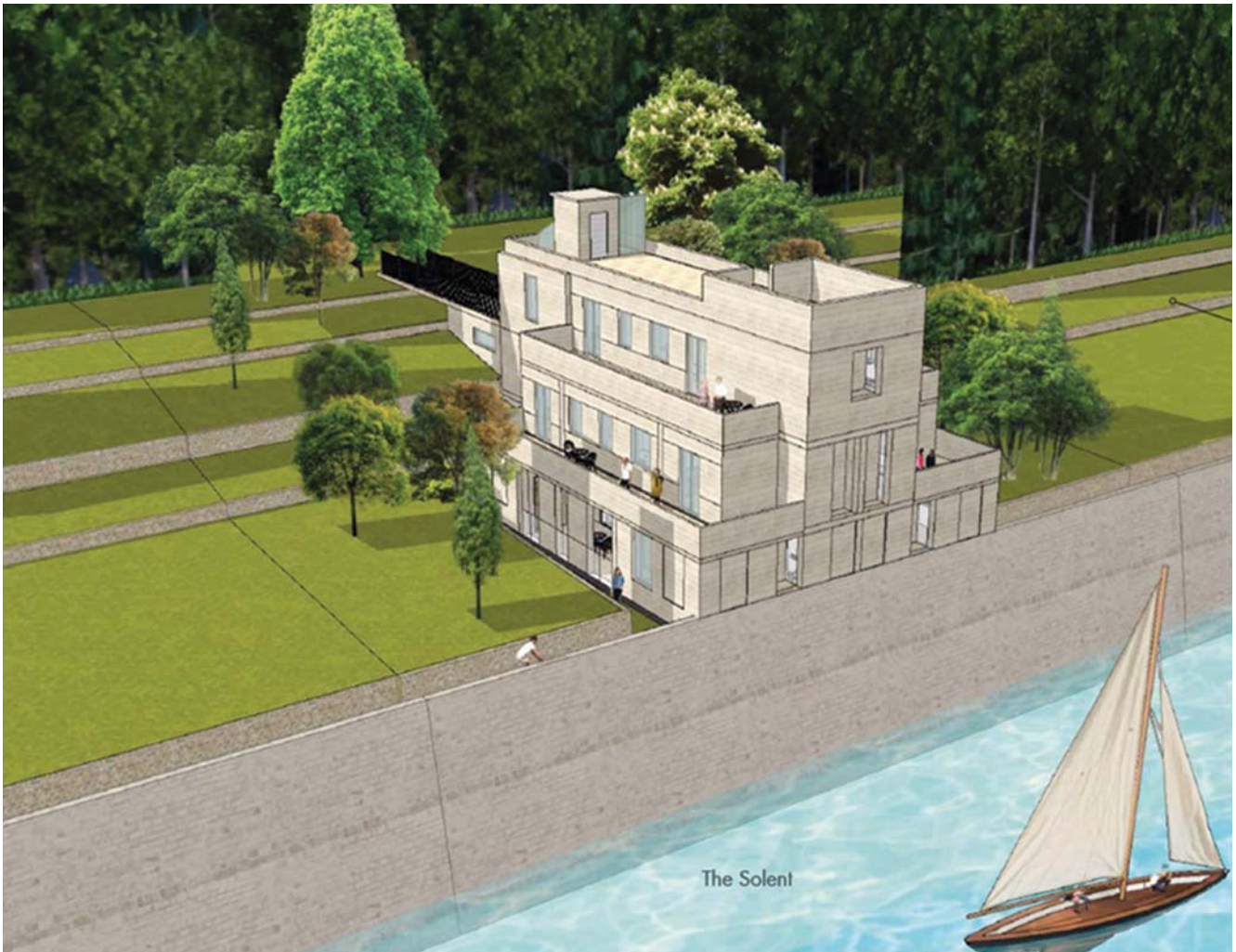
The castle’s famous guests include Queen Victoria, whose beloved Osborne House Estate adjoins to [▶](#)

Top: Watercolour by John Nixon of Norris Castle and its grounds, dated 1800 (Credit: Carisbrooke Castle Museum Trust)

Middle: Engraving of Norris Castle in 1840 by Thomas Barber from Barber’s picturesque illustrations of the Isle of Wight, published by Simpkin & Marshall, London (Credit: Antiqua via Alamy)

Bottom: Closer view of the castle with its feature turret in 2019 (Credit: County Press)





One of the four blocks of flats proposed along the historic shoreline of the estate (Credit: Planning Documents)

the east, the Prince Regent and Kaiser Wilhelm.

The site's owner, Norris Castle Estate (Group) Ltd, submitted £107m proposals to turn the estate into a 5-star leisure park, with the castle becoming a 74-room hotel and 120 holiday homes. A terrace would be built in front of the castle with four apartment buildings and a set of new cottages, all of which would be visible from the sea by the hundreds of sailing boats passing by in the Solent – for whom Norris Castle is a key landmark. Despite this, no contextual elevation drawings are provided, nor any view analysis showing the cumulative impact of the new development as a whole.

Under the plans several other historic buildings in the landscape

would be converted for leisure use, including the model farm and its walled kitchen garden which would become a spa and wellness centre.

SAVE is urging Isle of Wight councillors to reject the planning application on the grounds that it contains insufficient detail for a site of such unparalleled historic significance.

Our letter concludes: “If the council is minded to proceed with determination despite these concerns, SAVE would strongly object to the proposals, which we consider in their current form would cause irreversible and substantial harm to the Norris Estate and its constituent parts, and in clear contravention of national and local

planning policy for the protection of the Isle of Wight's historic environment.”

Historic England has also lodged a strongly worded objection to the plans and has requested that an independent viability appraisal be undertaken to assess whether the proposals would enable the full restoration of the nationally important castle and landscape. [S](#)

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Photo: Weeley Station, Essex



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SAVE Events 2022



WALKING TOUR

30th July 2022, 11.00 – 13.00

Folkestone – a historic port town

Folkestone boasts a wealth of historic buildings, reflecting its role as a major port and seaside resort. Mark Hourahane, vice chair of the New Folkestone Society, will introduce some of the best.

Tickets: £14 for Friends and Saviours
£18 for members of the public



SAVE THE DATE

17th September 2022

Oldham Mural Event

George Mayer-Marton's 'dazzling' Oldham Mural is at risk. Join us for a follow up event to hear the latest on the campaign to save it.

Tickets: Details to be confirmed



WALKING TOUR

24th September 2022, 12.00 – 14.30

Halifax – a mill and market town

Halifax's heritage is redolent of its woollen industry and Victorian wealth as well as of post-war reconstruction. Join us to explore the Yorkshire Toffee Town's many "Quality Streets".

Tickets: £12 for Friends and Saviours
£16 for members of the public



For further details or to book tickets for any of our events, please see our website events page www.savebritainsheritage.org/events or contact SAVE's Administrator Leigh Stanford on administrator@savebritainsheritage.org or 020 7253 3500.

ONLINE EVENTS NOW AVAILABLE ON CATCH UP

Missed one of our online events? Buy a ticket to watch the recording by heading to our events page using the link below. All ticket proceeds go towards SAVE's campaigning and casework.

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WALKING TOUR

1st October 2022, 12.00 – 14.00
Bradford-on-Avon

Join SAVE trustee Timothy Cantell in beautiful Bradford-on-Avon which had a conservation battle as early as the 1950s and has not been free of controversy since. A fascinating (and hilly) tour is promised.

Tickets: £14 for Friends and Saviours
£18 for members of the public



WALKING TOUR

8th October 2022, 12.00 – 14.00
Manchester's Historic Buildings:
Lost, Saved and in the Balance

Professor Michael Hebbert will reveal some of the issues facing the city's historic buildings, including two significant saves that for many years looked more like losses.

Tickets: £12 for Friends and Saviours
£16 for members of the public



SAVE THE DATE

TBC November 2022
Jubilee Line Extension Stations Tour

Join SAVE and Mike Ashworth, former head of design & heritage at Transport for London, to visit the award-winning Jubilee Line Extension stations, including SAVE's successful campaign to avert the demolition of Southwark station.

Tickets: Details to be confirmed

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T.J. HUGHES



Are you being served?

Department stores are facing an existential crisis but as Harriet Lloyd explains in this extract from our latest report *Departing Stores: Emporia at Risk*, these titans of the high street still have plenty to offer their communities

Buildings are the backdrop to the ordinary business of living. They provide an insight to the activities, needs and values of a society – and when these undergo a seismic shift, entire groups of buildings can be left suddenly without purpose. The same loss of relevance previously faced by stately homes, warehouses and many churches now threatens a new building type for the first time: the department store.

Their decline has been part of a slow, subtle and somewhat inevitable process that began as far back as the 1970s and 80s. As enormous shopping centres sprang up, retail was drawn away from traditional centres to the suburbs. Reduced accessibility caused by hikes in parking charges, poor town planning decisions and – rather ironically – pedestrianisation schemes served to further drive custom away

from the high street. But both shopping centres and high streets are struggling to compete with the meteoric ascent of online shopping, which between 2006 and 2020 rose to claim nearly 20% of all sales in the UK. In the wake of the pandemic, that has soared to 30%. Meanwhile the overall retail vacancy rate stood at a five-year high of 14.1% in the first quarter of 2021. Covid-19 has merely expedited a process that was well underway. High streets have no choice but to adapt.

Department stores make up some of the finest and most socially significant buildings on British high streets. Designed to impress and inspire, they are undoubtedly of great architectural merit, and stand as a monument to the historic prosperity of the town. They are deeply connected with personal histories; they are places where people have gathered, worked,

even celebrated their weddings. But the demise of Debenhams alone has left a hole of 13.6 million sq ft in towns across the country. In a new era when large-scale retail is no longer sustainable, these fine structures are at risk of dilapidation or even demolition. And as these hubs of daily life are erased from the map, local communities feel increasingly disenfranchised. Protecting and reviving these buildings is not only a matter of preserving precious and distinctive architecture; it is an opportunity to restore a sense of place.

Our illustrated report, *Departing Stores: Emporia at Risk*, published in April, features more than 40 examples of Britain’s finest department store buildings, most of which were identified during research carried out in 2020. The landscape is changing at an alarming rate. Revisiting these same cases just a few months later, many had stopped trading, were still struggling to attract buyers or faced demolition. But there were also stories of hope, one of which we tell overleaf, which show that with a little imagination these buildings can have a thriving future.

Whether national chain or family-run independent, modern British department stores share remarkably similar origin stories. The vast majority started out in the mid to late 19th century as draperies, selling fabrics for dress-making and upholstery. Several were founded on a shoestring budget by drapers’ apprentices striking out on their own. Those that found success were able to gradually buy up neighbouring properties, and this piecemeal expansion was typical of the early department store. ▶



Beales Bolton (Credit: Plucas58-wikimedia-commons)
Opposite: TJ Hughes Eastbourne (Credit: Philip Bird via Alamy)

Companies then faced a difficult choice. Opting to erect a new building conferred prestige and ensured a prominent presence on the street; but also meant operating out of temporary or reduced premises while construction took place. One common solution, exemplified by Griffin & Spalding in Nottingham, was to unify the storefront with a new facade and retain the original buildings behind.

Stores in larger cities and commercial centres were frequently given the impetus to rebuild by external factors such as wide-widening schemes and wartime bombing. Some early stores were burnt to the ground by rival traders.

Those surviving in their Victorian incarnations bear testament to their unfolding success in their irregular interior fabric. Decades of extensions, amalgamations and ad hoc fixes have

resulted in labyrinthine interiors of varying levels and ceiling heights, disused staircases and forgotten stockrooms. These idiosyncratic layouts may once have been charming (if occasionally bothersome) for staff and customers, but now they present a serious hurdle to sympathetic redevelopment.

Purpose-built stores, while inherently more considered and uniform in layout, come with their own challenges. Their sprawling footprints – sometimes covering a number of acres – present a major threat to those that are unlisted. Natural light – an enemy to the retailer – is a necessity for homes, hotels and offices and cannot reach the centre of the deep floor plates. This can make demolition the most attractive option for developers working with unprotected buildings. One way



The publication of our latest report on Department Stores was widely covered by the national, regional and specialist media, with big pieces in *The Guardian* and *Times* as well as in *The Independent*, *Country Life*, *Building Design*, the *Nottingham Post* and *Liverpool Echo*. SAVE director Henrietta Billings was interviewed on BBC TV's regional flagship *South Today* news programme. She and report author Hattie Lloyd were also interviewed on radio stations from Merseyside to Sussex.

The 65-metre long 1950s hand-painted mural which adorns the fifth floor former canteen at Lewis's department store in Liverpool which is to be retained and restored as part of the building's current redevelopment. The mural was created by tile makers Carter's of Poole, with the artist believed to be Alfred Read, one of the leading ceramic artists of his day (Credit: Rob Higgins Flickr)



round this is to carry out partial demolition – usually of extensions added in the 1970s or later – to introduce a central courtyard or gardens. This may have the added benefit of improving the public realm but often requires construction of additional storeys to keep the project financially viable. These new extensions can be incongruent and risk knocking street proportions out of kilter; but if denied they can consign the building to more years of disuse.

Re-use

Andy Warhol prophesied that, “In the future, all department stores will become museums”. In some places, his prediction has already come true: in 2018 and 2021, Liverpool staged art festivals in its old G. H. Lee building and the former Lewis’s store. In Seoul, South Korea, three department stores


have launched in-house galleries (starting, of course, with a Warhol retrospective). In early 2021, Westminster councillors proposed reviving Debenhams’ Oxford Street flagship as an “Art House”, with exhibitions and affordable studios.

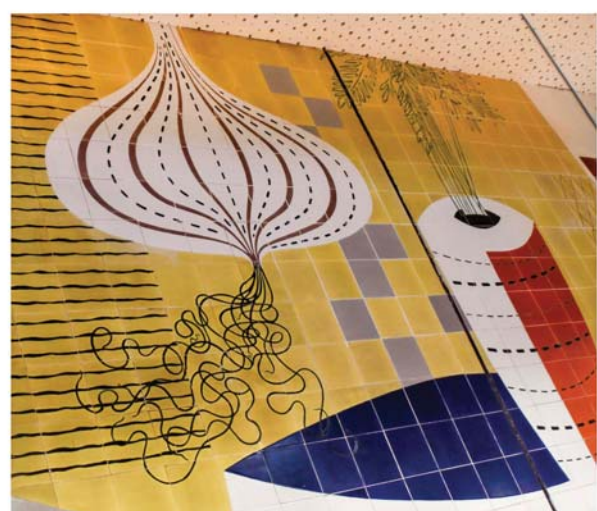
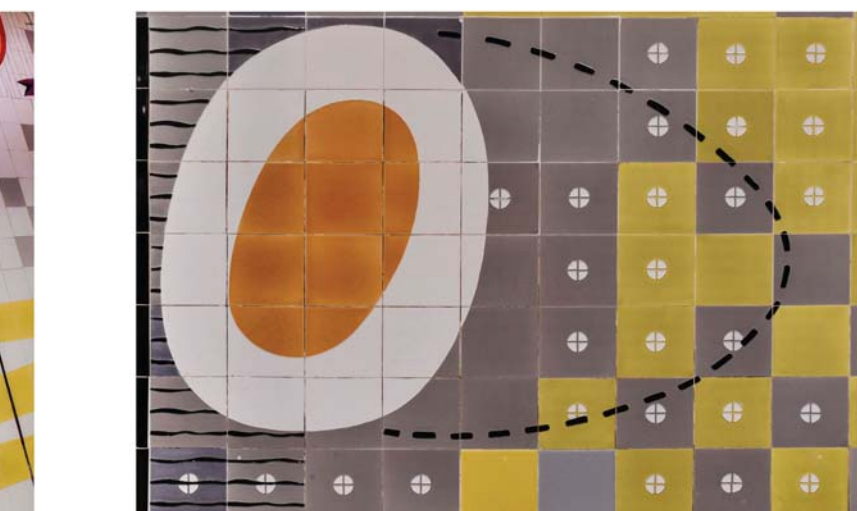
There is a clear parallel between galleries and stores, both presenting objects to be pored over and admired, and this shared functionality is echoed in the built structure. Reinvention as museums or galleries could well be one solution to the rapidly growing estate of empty stores.

More commonly, though, the most financially rewarding route is taken. Many of these colossal stores are already undergoing conversion to ‘mixed-use’ – generally a combination of office space, flats or student accommodation, and individual retail units on the ground floor. Of course, any use is better than dereliction, but

too many student flats can create transient populations that leave the area devoid of continuity, while demand for office space has not been fully tested after the widespread shift towards remote working.

The government is enthusiastically backing the conversion of shops to housing as a way to give high streets “a new lease of life”. Under controversial rules introduced in March 2021, developers may benefit from permitted development rights (PDRs) when changing a use from commercial to residential, bypassing local planning authorities. While listed buildings are exempt from PDRs, our report identifies many architecturally valuable buildings that are unprotected by national or local listing, or even conservation areas.

The success of high streets lies in their ability to be reshaped as part of an organic process. Large-scale, 



formulaic regeneration projects can alienate locals. Loss of local identity is a powerful factor that can influence the social and economic wellbeing of a town. By preserving distinctive historic buildings, particularly those as prominent as former department stores, residents can recover a sense of connection and continuity.

A positive step has been taken with the government's £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, of which £92 million has been allocated towards reviving historic high streets through grants for restoration and conversion of heritage buildings.

Studies as far back as the 1990s have identified the vital role of architecture and unique local architecture in fostering a thriving environment. As the New Economics Foundation noted in their 2005 analysis:

“Many town centres that have undergone substantial regeneration even lost the distinctive facades of their high streets, as local building materials have been swapped in favour of identical glass, steel and concrete storefronts that provide the ideal degree of sterility to house a string of big, clone town retailers.”



Griffin & Spalding – Debenhams Nottingham (Credit: Matt Buck wikimedia-commons-sa2.0-3.0)

Safeguarding these buildings is not just about preserving the past; it is also about securing the future of our high streets. To thrive once more, they need to offer something unique. That comes from both the kinds of businesses operating there – independent enterprises supporting local crafts and products – and the fabric of the street itself. By caring for and celebrating the historic buildings in town centres, we can restore a sense of place.

Recent lockdowns have reiterated

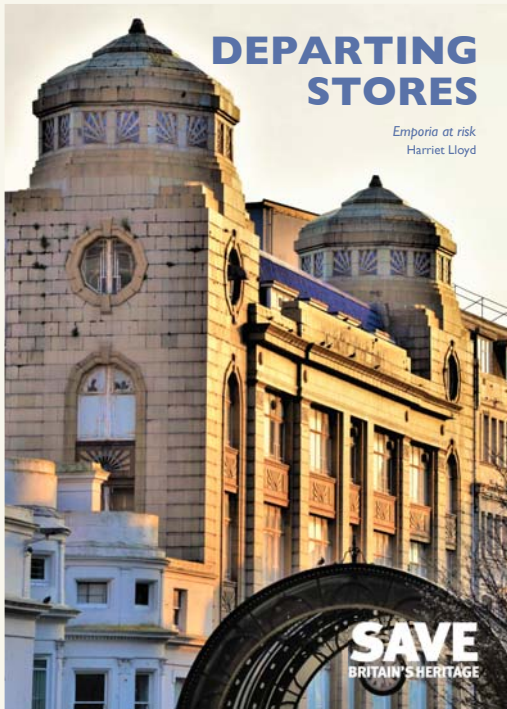
the importance of spaces away from the home and the work-place – what urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg called the ‘third place’. Historically, retail – and in particular, department stores – were one such place. Women, confined largely to their homes in the 19th century, found freedom there, as did teenagers in shopping malls many years later. For many people today, the high street provides the majority of their daily social contact.

Now that these spaces are in decline, the question arises of what will replace them. The government is hopeful that moving residents back into town centres will “cement our high streets... in their rightful place at the heart of communities”. But we need to think creatively about what they’ll do when they get there.

The loss of these buildings concerns not just their inherent architectural and historic value, but the shape of daily life. What kinds of places or experiences will draw people out of their homes? With imaginative reuse, there’s no reason why these beautiful buildings shouldn’t continue to offer ‘a third place’ for years to come. **S**



The ornate entrance to the former Boots store in Nottingham which is now a Zara (Credit: Richard Krawiec Flickr)



DEPARTING STORES

Emporia at risk

Purchase your limited print run copy of our latest report on the nation's department stores, launched in April 2022. Britain's department stores are facing an existential crisis thanks to the pandemic and rapidly changing shopping patterns.

This up-to-the-minute report documents some of the country's finest examples, the threats they face – and what can be done to rescue and reinvent them for the 21st century. SAVE's report argues these cathedrals of commerce should – and can – be rescued and new uses found.

The fully illustrated report, edited by Harriet Lloyd, showcases 46 of the UK's most significant department store buildings, from Aberdeen to Eastbourne, detailing their fascinating stories and architectural appeal.

Limited number of copies available for purchase direct from SAVE, £7.99 Friends and Saviours £9.99 general sale

savebritainsheritage.org/publications

CANTERBURY TAKE CARE!

Get your copy of SAVE's report CANTERBURY TAKE CARE! launched in September 2021.

Canterbury is one of the most important historic cities in England with an outstanding cathedral familiar to people around the world. Until the Baedeker raids of 1942, the city had remained a fine and largely untouched medieval city, enclosed by walls dating back to the Romans.

This collection of essays by several leading authors explores the architectural history of Canterbury from the Anglo-Saxon period through to the controversial post-war redevelopment of the city. With the future of our cities uncertain following the COVID-19 Pandemic, this SAVE report on Canterbury could not be more timely.



Copies available for purchase direct from SAVE, £12.99 Friends and Saviours £14.99 general sale



Bobby Dazzler

The lights are coming back on in Bournemouth's former Debenhams. Elizabeth Hopkirk bought an ice cream and asked the man behind the project what other towns could learn

Bobby's of Bournemouth is attracting headlines, shoppers, art lovers and knitters – and it's still only partly open.

This imposing former Debenhams bang in the centre of the Victorian seaside resort is the poster child of SAVE's Departing Stores report, a great example of new life being successfully pumped into a vacant department store. The man behind it is Ashley Nicholson, director of Verve

Properties and something of a SAVE legend since his pioneering 2002 conversion of a run of neglected Victorian workshops into Bristol's creative quarter, Paintworks.

Verve spent £8.5m on the Bournemouth site in 2018 when it was still trading as Debenhams and is now part-way through an ambitious reinvention project costing about the same again. When Nicholson showed

SAVE round a few weeks before the expected summer rush, there was already much to tempt people through the restored doors.

Immediately inside are traditional beauty counters, salvaged when Debenhams went bust in 2020, and retained because cosmetics are one of the few items people still want to try before they buy. These lend Bobby's a deceptively familiar department store



Bobby's restored central façade in April 2022 (Credit: James Bridle)

feel. An ice cream parlour, a sushi and champagne bar and a section selling local crafts occupy the rest of the ground floor. On the partially opened floors above are a toy shop, event spaces and a light-filled art gallery – said to be the largest artist-run gallery in the UK – which is currently showing Martin Parr's evocative portraits of the British seaside. Still to come are offices, a food hall, probably a bit more retail and – a no-brainer given the views – roof-top bars. The original staircase connects them all, with each floor able to operate independently.

Only a fraction of the 100,000 sqm


is open so far. Some empty areas are simply screened off, ready to swing into action for larger events such as a recent fashion show, but the upper floors are still a tangle of wires, lifted floor boards and smashed-up plaster board. These are slowly being prepared for use with original features restored and selective demolition. Across the rear service yards (soon to be landscaped for open-air dining) is an abandoned Edwardian bakery which is also part of the scheme, its glazed tiles and dumb waiter set to be enjoyed by a new generation of customers.

Bobby's – a revival of the store's

historic name – is an accumulation of buildings clustered along one edge of the town's commercial heart, a pedestrianised roundabout called The Square where the main arteries of shopping streets, Pleasure Gardens and Bourne Stream meet. A real civic landmark, its history can be read from left to right across its curving facade, from the 1897 chemist's where Frederick Bobby opened for business in 1915, via the grand 1920s terracotta elevations and terminating in a 1970s extension.

Bournemouth is emblematic of so many towns. All three of its surviving department stores closed in the last two years. In contrast to Bobby's success story, the 1950s Beales and more historic House of Fraser (Dingles) are shuttered. The only signs of life in their darkened windows are "50% off" posters from closing-down sales and, sadly, sleeping bags. Once fashionable destinations, these two deserted hulks have handed the resort a big problem. A lengthy run of frontages on a prime shopping street – buildings that occupy almost an acre of the town centre – are now blank, though there is talk of turning them into flats over a possible commercial use. They are far from the only empty shops.

Nicholson, who has lived just along the coast in Swanage since the 1980s as well as in London, is fond of quoting locals who tell him they haven't been into the town centre for years. A quick straw poll backs this up. It is no wonder stores are struggling – and no wonder people are staying away.

"If you come in to buy a pair of shoes and your experience is quite negative because of rough sleepers and parking – the reasons people say they don't come in – you'll get your next pair online or you'll go to Castlepoint," he says, referring to Britain's biggest retail park just three miles away which boasts acres of free parking. Its 

redevelopment in 2003 – approved at public inquiry against the council’s wishes – turned a jaded 1960s mall into a potent threat.

Even an optimist would question whether the town centre can survive all this, but Nicholson has not finished. He is confident people will come back: you just have to give them a reason. Or, to be precise, many reasons. He believes the future lies in successfully blending the right products with a programme of activities and experiences that people can’t get online. At Bobby’s this includes local makers’ fairs, craft and cookery demonstrations, live music, an informal old folks’ knit-and-natter club and events aimed at dogs, children and brides. In line with Nicholson’s self-professed obsession with public realm and “placemaking”, many of these spill into The Square and gardens. He wants this to create a sense of community, another thing online shopping can’t provide. “It’s all part of reaching out and giving positive experiences of coming into the town centre rather than just offering stuff to buy,” he explains.

Shortly before it bought the store, Verve bought The Avenue, a tired shopping arcade 100 yards away, next to a vacant M&S (it moved to



The former Beales store in Bournemouth which stands closed, with the former House of Fraser store in the distance, also closed (Credit: Elizabeth Hopkirk)

Castlepoint) for £60/sq ft. Eventually the arcade’s undistinguished rear will be replaced by 250 flats but the initial focus was on zhuzhing up the façade and filling empty shops with other uses to keep people coming to this side of town. A cycling café doubles as a music venue and a redundant escalator has been turned into an art installation. One unit has been given to Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) so shoppers can watch students at work, an initiative set to be replicated in

Bobby’s. Despite its acclaimed universities and a charming Victorian art museum, Bournemouth has long had a reputation as a cultural desert, unless you are in the market for end-of-the-pier fare. Nicholson hopes to change that, citing other seaside towns like Margate whose Turner Contemporary art gallery has made it a year-round destination. “We thought if we could kick-start art and culture it could make the town less reliant on stag and hen dos,” he says. It seems to be working: the art gallery sometimes pulls in 1,000 visitors a day.

Verve’s other priority at Bobby’s was to get the scaffolding down fast. “One of the biggest challenges is keeping people on board through two years of work,” says Nicholson. “You need some quick wins every month or two. After years of neglect it was essential that such a prominent building could be seen to be being transformed. If the lights went out here it would have killed the town centre even more than it’s already killed.”

So phase one was repairing the



Interior of the newly restored and modernised Bobby’s store (Credit: James Bridle)



Collage of historical images and postcards of Bobby's through the ages (Credit: Bobby's)

main facades. Smart awnings have replaced a clunky 1980s canopy; the second floor now has usable balconies matching the decorative ones below; windows have been unblocked; and three copper cupolas have been restored and will soon sport flagpoles. Nostalgic locals are delighted, even if some are disappointed when they discover the rails of men's and womenswear have gone. Nicholson has not ruled out clothing concessions in the future, but a traditional department store template this ain't.

Manchester-born Nicholson, who started his career at a big developer before realising the corporate life was not for him, has plenty of experience in converting industrial buildings but this is his first emporium. Verve's sole shareholder is a family trust which, he says, gives it "the firepower of an institution but the moral compass

of a family office". This patient capital takes the long view, allowing it to view discounted retail properties as a bargain even when others are pulling out.

"Everyone has been talking for years about concepts and ideas to reinvent retail, like the 15-minute city and localism," says Nicholson. "It's all been so well trailed, but the weird thing is there are very few models to copy. I couldn't find one so I had to do it myself."

It is undoubtedly good news for this handsome building, but has Nicholson hit on a model that could revive ailing town centres all over the country? One small indication of success is that The Ivy, which was planning to open a restaurant a few minutes' walk away on the edge of the town centre, has decided instead to take over an empty shop right opposite Bobby's, creating a sense

of momentum The Square hasn't seen for years.

"There is no silver bullet solution to the structural changes underway in our high streets," acknowledges Nicholson, with different towns needing different approaches. There will be further closures before the dust settles, he warns.

But his dream is that Bobby's will be "a lighthouse of hope" for Bournemouth, and perhaps beyond. It's still early days but it is beginning to look like that dream could be coming true. **S**

SCAN TO READ MORE



Casualties of war

In the last issue we looked at the emotional damage the destruction of historic buildings can cause. With whole towns currently being razed by Russian bombing in Ukraine, many will want to rebuild as soon as possible. But, as recent history shows, it is an ethically complex process, writes Robert Bevan, author of *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*

War correspondents giving their TV reports to camera from Kyiv are often seen against the backdrop of the city's golden domes. There are the genuinely historic golden domes of 11th-century St Sophia's Cathedral, a museum since Soviet times and, over recent decades, the scene of violent clashes between secularists and Orthodox activists wanting to return it to religious use. Not far away are those of gilded St Michael's monastery. The original monastery complex was once a masterpiece of the Cossack Baroque but it was demolished by Stalinists in the 1930s and only reconstructed in the nationalist 1990s. (At least one misinformed foreign correspondent described this new-build structure as ancient.)

Russia has always had an, at best, ambivalent relationship with Ukraine and, especially, Cossack culture. On the one hand the Ukraine can be mythologised as the ancient Orthodox heartland of Rus – barely even a separate state – on the other it is the expendable site of the Holodomor, the manufactured great famine of the 1930s and where the narrative legacy of wartime links between anti-Soviet Cossacks and Fascism remains potent.

These golden domes – old and new – are being endangered from Moscow once more, if from a different authoritarian ideology. It would be an irony if they were damaged given the complicity between Russian Orthodoxy and Putin's obnoxious regime. Many churches have already

been affected according to reports, including a 19th-century wooden church in the southern hamlet of Viazivka.

Ukraine is home to countless more cultural sites including seven World Heritage Sites and a number on the tentative list. As this Newsletter went to press, UNESCO said more than 140 cultural institutions including at least 28 historic buildings had been damaged, but given the devastation of so many cities the numbers of historic structures affected may run into the thousands.

Ihori Poshivailo, director of the Maidan Museum in Ukraine, has said there is a war for cultural identity going on: "The goal is our historical memory, our cultural traditions, our



Residents walk with their bicycles in front of a damaged church in Lukashivka, northern Ukraine, in April 2022 (Credit: AP)


national and individual identity, our memories and identity as a nation.” In April, President Biden argued that evidence was mounting of a genocide by Russia designed to wipe out Ukrainian identity.

At the time of writing and, despite belligerent rhetoric and some important losses, architecture that is symbolic of Ukrainian identity does not yet appear to be a deliberate target in the Russian invasion of Ukraine and we are (yet) to see a genuine, concerted campaign of cultural cleansing. Indeed, some of the urban bombardments have also damaged important Soviet-era heritage sites such as the Constructivist buildings in Kharkiv.

Instead, what we are seeing is a blatant disregard for international agreements on the conduct of war including the key 1954 Hague Convention that, however imperfect, aims to protect cultural property in conflicts. Likewise, protocols attached to the Geneva Conventions dealing with cultural property protection. The Russian army and its guiding politicians are almost certainly guilty of war crimes, including for the indiscriminate shelling of civilian centres and cultural locations, and of crimes against humanity too. Targeting with the aim of altering Ukraine’s cultural identity has, though, yet to be demonstrated except perhaps for a few

instances of the erection and razing of monuments and statues – which has occurred on both sides.

We need to be watchful as the war progresses, however, because actual cultural targeting is most likely to occur in the Donbas and other places that Russia may seek to permanently occupy and change in its image.

When the time comes we also need to be careful of calls for the instant reconstruction of damaged and destroyed cultural sites. While there are clearly emotional connections to place and a desire to rebuild what was destroyed – as was seen in the reconstruction of post-war Warsaw’s Old Town, for instance – there are 



St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv in 2021. The original cathedral was demolished by the Soviet authorities in the 1930s, but was reconstructed and opened in 1999 following Ukrainian independence in 1991 (Credit: rRbrecho)



The Monumental Arch of Triumph, a 3rd century Roman ornamental archway at Palmyra, Syria, was destroyed by ISIS in 2015 (Credit: Vyacheslav Argenberg, Wikimedia Commons)

dangers in this too, as well as a legitimate (in Poland's case) will to reverse attempts at cultural erasure.

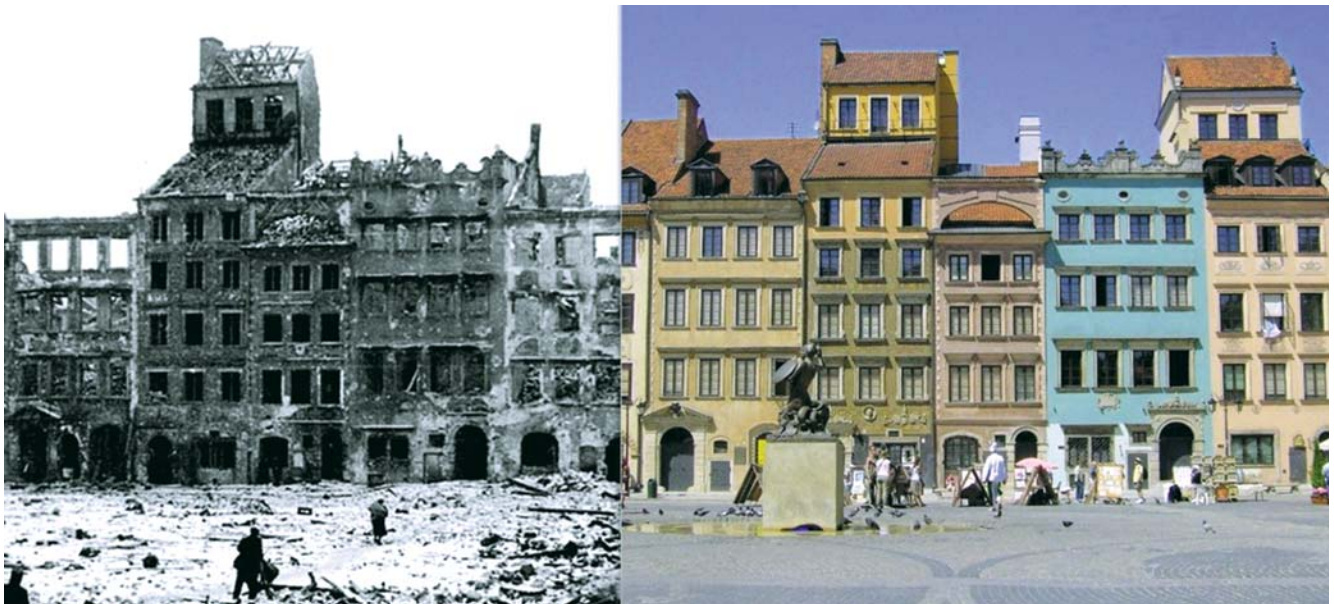
Reconstructions can have their own enormous impact and too often are not scholarly or in line with good Charter of Venice practice that has regard to authenticity. Instead they very often have strong ideological components. Warsaw's Old Town, for instance, was not always the faithful reconstruction that the narrative

claims, but was influenced by Soviet ideas of what parts of material Polish history were acceptable for resurrection. Similarly, Sarajevo's main mosque, the Ottoman Gazi Husrev-Beg Mosque, was only partially damaged during the Bosnian war, but had its decoratively painted interior whitewashed under the influence of its Saudi restoration funders (the decoration was later reinstated). Ideological reconstructions can happen long

after a conflict – including, since reunification, across Germany where formerly post-war city centres in blitzed cities such as Dresden and Frankfurt are now being reconstructed in ersatz historicist styles. These are not neutral exercises but can have links to the Far Right who wish to deny the legacy of the Hitlerian war and its consequences. The same is happening at historic sites across the former Eastern Bloc in nationalist, populist and sometimes Far-Right rejections of the Communist past.

Importantly, given the dislocations of war, often the people living in a place will have changed and, as in Sarajevo, it may not be the original community doing the rebuilding or their post-war self-identification may have significantly shifted. Hasty rebuilding can also inadvertently erase the evidence of past crimes. Facts and emotions can be in tension. Haste can also open the door to rapacious reconstruction that only adds to the damage caused by conflict, as is happening at the hands of commercial developers in Mosul.

Digital technologies only complicate authenticity. A smartphone



The Market Place in Warsaw's Old Town in January 1945 and following reconstruction. Did the Soviets exert their influence? (Credit: Connie Mazur, Wikimedia Commons)

app company called Polycam has set up Backup Ukraine with UNESCO to help record the country’s heritage in the face of the threat of destruction, but the company is justifying this, in part, with hints that Russia is, or will, target Ukrainian national identity. Limits on access for data collection and storage as well as methods of reproduction such as 3D printing can also make digital reconstructions far-from-happy copies or skew decisions on what is deemed valuable by post-war governments. While it is wise to record monuments, there still isn’t sufficient rigour about when and how such technologies are best deployed and their impact on authenticity in reconstruction.

Using cultural protection or cultural genocide as an excuse for military escalation is also a danger. Heritage professionals need to be alert that their care is not abused in this way. A direct intervention by NATO, for instance, could lead to a wider war that would be even more catastrophic for people and their heritage.

As heritage professionals develop closer ties to the military in a bid to protect culture in conflicts, there is the risk of a military-heritage complex emerging that too closely ties their work to armies and governments and where the heritage sector can become embroiled in prosecuting war aims that may not be legitimate.

Under pressure from organisations such as Blue Shield, the US and UK armies have recently set up reserve units specialising in cultural protection (although not yet operational in the US), in an echo of the Second World War’s Monuments Men. This would seem an obvious good. Yet at the same time as the British government is helping fund cultural protection initiatives in Yemen, it is also one of the main suppliers of arms to the Saudis who have caused untold damage to Yemen’s heritage. Heritage



A priest in a damaged church in the village of Yasnohorodka, near Kyiv (Credit: BBC News)

professionals might find themselves in the position of enablers.

This is particularly so with “no-strike” lists negotiated with military organisations such as NATO that are used to select and avoid targets. The policy is credited with avoiding damage to heritage sites in Libya during NATO strikes but Western intervention helped turn Libya into a failed state with all the consequences for heritage and human security that flow from that.

Going back further, was it right to drop an atom bomb on Hiroshima rather than Kyoto in the name of preserving the latter’s history – which was a factor in the final targeting choice? And while ISIS has been a nightmare for cultural sites its actions have been used by various forces to justify their own military interventions and not always on the basis of trustworthy information – the overblown claims of looting funding terrorism presented by the US to the UN Security Council are an example of this.

It is a trend that risks undermining perceptions of heritage workers as neutral agents and thus endangers their ability to safely intervene in conflicts without suspicion by the

warring parties. This has already happened in Syria where UNESCO was far too celebratory of Putin’s forces in their recapture of Palmyra. (UNESCO was also roundly condemned for its initial hasty calls for reconstruction at the site without inspections or evidence-gathering.)

We can see that what Putin learnt in places such as Syria, where Russian forces alongside those of Assad helped destroy cities, hospitals and many historic sites, is now being applied to the Ukraine to devastating effect. Praise for Russia saving Palmyra can only have emboldened Putin. **S**

SCAN BELOW TO SEE OUR OPEN LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF CULTURE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN MARCH 2022





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Salute to John Harris

By Marcus Binney

When he moved the RIBA Drawings Collection to a James Wyatt house in Portman Square, John Harris had a handsome octagonal office compete with vast desk and chaise longue. There was only one catch. Every month the alarm bells would ring in the dead of night and John was forced to rush to Portman Square. The police investigated but strangely no intruders were ever identified. Only much later did John learn that the alarms were triggered by the spooks going into the roof to replace the tapes which recorded the conversation's in Anthony Blunt's office in the Courtauld Institute next door (the celebrated art historian had not then been revealed as a Soviet spy).


I first met John in 1966 when I went to see him at the RIBA headquarters in Portland Place, seeking guidance for my undergraduate thesis on the architect Sir Robert Taylor. He had said "come at 9.30 and I will give you half an hour". I arrived at the daily ceremony of the boxes when yesterday's orders were put away and today's brought out. Between the banging and clanging of steel cupboard doors and roller shelves, he came back and gave me another building to visit telling me who to contact and where the archives were. My career as an architectural historian began there.

The next great day came when Roy Strong invited me to join John in mounting Roy's first big exhibition at

'With John a new discovery waited round every corner.'

the V&A *The Destruction of the Country House* in 1974.

On trips to the National Monuments Record I had watched John Harris and a team from the V&A Furniture Department assembling piles of hundreds of photos of lost houses for copy photography.

My first exhibition meeting was nearly my last as Desmond Fitzgerald, the Knight of Glin, started to taunt John for failing to include Irish country houses among the losses. It seemed blindingly obvious to me that the 



John pictured in 1982 whilst on an early SAVE expedition to Gibraltar to explore and catalogue unlisted British Naval heritage (Credit: Calder Loth)



Harris at the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1980 (Credit: RIBA Collections)

V&A, as a Government Museum, could not start holding the Irish Republic to account, but the bating went on and John suddenly stood up and announced, “I resign” and stormed out.

I didn’t know then that John and Desmond were close friends, and I rang John to placate him and dissuade him from resigning. John filled the final exhibition’s ‘Hall of Destruction’ with hundreds of photos of lost houses and read out the names, county by county, like the names of the Fallen on Remembrance Day. I wrote the script for the exhibition and gathered emotive quotes and as well as doing sections on lost gardens and garden buildings, including new uses and solutions. John did a mesmerising slide show of the desecration and destruction of Thomas Hope’s the Deepdene by British Rail, with text panels announcing, “worse is to come”.

The V&A press office had sent out John’s lists of lost houses to every local newspaper and an avalanche of press cuttings came back to the Museum – news reports and feature stories –

which convinced me that there was an appetite in the media for news of lost and endangered historic buildings.

I talked the idea over with John and he christened it a ‘ginger group’. We held the first meetings at his new RIBA Gallery in Portman Square leading to a party where we announced our plans to form SAVE Britain’s Heritage. At the end, the always forceful Jane Fawcett, Secretary of the Victorian Society, said to me: “You have to understand two things Marcus, 1) this nonsense must not last longer than a year and 2) you cannot have members.”

At the last moment John announced he could not be a committee member of SAVE as he was applying for a museum job and had to distance himself from the polemic we were about to engage in.

He continued to host SAVE events, including a party for the investigators who listed historic buildings. It was a fascinating occasion, but we learnt afterwards they had been forbidden from attending any such gathering in the future.

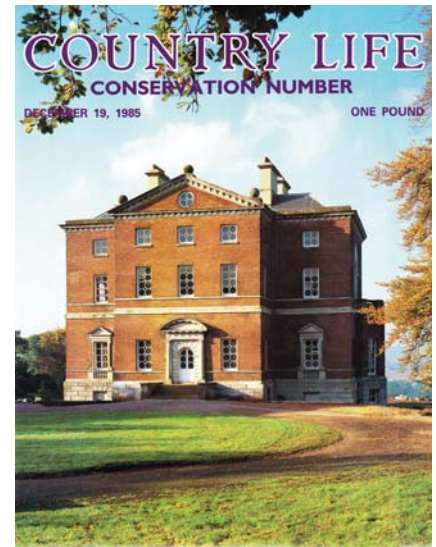
Helped by John’s deputy Margaret Richardson we mounted a series of campaigning exhibitions at the Heinz Gallery. The first was *Off the Rails: Saving Railway Architecture*. Sir Peter Parker, the new chairman of British Rail (BR), arrived in his Rolls Royce and invited us, as he put it, to spar with him. This we did at BR’s headquarters where Tony Richardson, the architect husband of Margaret, made a tremendous impression of Parker. So did Simon Jenkins who went on to become a board member of BR and set up the Railway Heritage Trust.

Next came *Satanic Mills* in 1979, the first trumpet blast proclaiming the splendour of the great Pennine textile Mills, then disappearing in large numbers. It struck a chord and the book of the exhibition sold out not to visitors but to local people who had heard reports on the radio. Then came

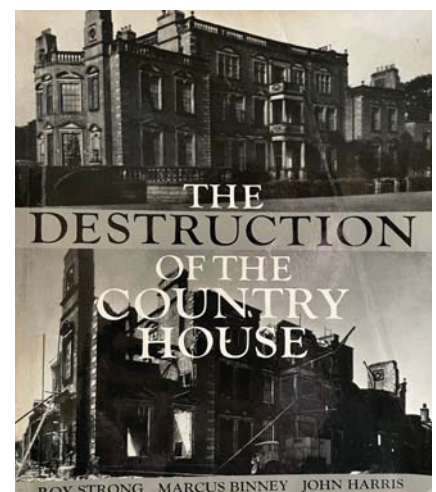
a pioneering exhibition *Taking the Plunge: the architecture of Bathing* with brilliant research by Alastair and Hana Laing.

Great things also came from *Deserted Bastions* – on naval and military enclaves – which led to the SAVE rescue of the mighty Peninsula Barracks in Winchester.

Roy had invited John to do The Garden exhibition in 1979 – my wife Anne was exhibition secretary. John



Country Life, December 1985, featuring Barlastan Hall, which SAVE purchased for £1 and rescued (Credit: Country Life)



The book which Harris co-authored to accompany the celebrated V&A exhibition *The Destruction of the Country House* in 1975 (Credit: SBH)

asked me to do a conservation section and we set off with John in my mini to look at lost gardens and parks. In Lincolnshire it was so cold our cameras froze. John had a huge collection of one inch Ordnance surveys and was a brilliant map reader, spotting every distant gate lodge and hilltop folly.

Another memorable sally was a SAVE visit to Gibraltar where Sir John Smith had commissioned us to draw up an inventory of buildings which ought to be listed. Working with Calder Loth and a local architect, John compiled, in six days, a list of 1,100 structures which were worthy of listing, complete with dates, addresses and short descriptions – surely a record. Many were military buildings from bastions to barracks, and John took a special interest in the Lines – shooting galleries hollowed in the north face of the rock as a defence against Spanish attack. These were in a terrible state of neglect – with an illicit chicken run on the way up.

Lionel Culatto, our Gibraltar host, had arranged for us to meet planners and ministers, culminating with an audience with the Lieutenant Governor.

The Governor was in full military fig, and this pricked John who launched into a stinging criticism of the neglect of military buildings. I could see H.E. was reaching boiling point. When he duly exploded, I managed to calm things but John did not relent and suddenly H.E. barked “You. Out”. I stood up to march after John when a heavy hand clasped my shoulder ordering “You. Stay”.

Another memorable tour preceded our volume on the *Lost Houses of Scotland* written with Emma Winnington. When we arrived at William Adam’s Mavisbank, we knew we were in for a sticky time. We climbed over a firmly locked gate and walked down the drive. It was John’s turn to provide an innocent

explanation for our visit. As fierce little dogs snarled at our ankles the barefoot owner came screaming at us from his caravan parked in the forecourt. John calmly explained that he was an antique dealer from Stockport and had a watercolour – he named the artist – of the house. The owner relented and we spent an eerie hour picking our way through abandoned cars and sheds to reach the house.

In 1982 John and I began a series of monographs on leading architects who deserved a book. He began with William Talman Maverick Architect (a favourite Harris word) followed by David Watkin on James ‘Athenian’ Stuart, and then Joe Mordaunt Cook on Axel Haig, and me on Sir Robert Taylor. Then recession came and the publisher lost interest, failing even to offer us the remainder copies which went into a skip.

Next, we received an enticing invitation to Jamaica where the Harrises and the Binneys accompanied Kit and Sally Martin to write a book about endangered heritage and strategies for revival.

John provided formidable help in many SAVE battles. He attended the first inquiry into Wedgwood Company’s application to demolish Barlaston Hall in Staffordshire, which SAVE later bought for a £1 and rescued. Also giving evidence for us was Christopher Buxton, another country house saviour. He offered John a lift back to London but on the way back Christopher started having a spectacular row with one of his always present girlfriends which got so bad that they stopped the car on the hard shoulder saying to John, “you’ve got to get out”.

At about this time we were in the middle of our third battle to save The Grange in Hampshire. We had secured a debate in the county council chamber and John was to speak. He said: “I’ll do it but provide you pick me up ▶

Hot passions aroused over temple of arts

By Philip Howard

What was meant to be an exclusive little government briefing on its plans for Chiswick House yesterday turned into a bear garden. Nobody was quite punched on the nose, but gatecrashers shouted angrily at the minister and her advisers. What dire offence from architecture springs; what mighty contests rise from trivial things (though it would clearly be foolhardy as well as erroneous to describe Lord Burlington’s exquisite Palladian villa as trivial).

Lady Birk, Under-Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, wanted to explain her department’s rumoured plans to build an exhibition centre to the east of Chiswick House, Lord Burlington’s exquisite Palladian villa, on the site of the loggia that connected the villa with his old Jacobean house. She said £90,000 was necessary anyway.

A clutter of sheds has to be removed and a room provided for the five custodians. It would cost another £90,000 to combine that work with a new ticket office, lavatories, tea room, and an exhibition centre to be used to show the Palladian origins of Lord Burlington’s design and his concept of the villa as a temple of the arts.

That one-storey building would be tucked away behind an extension of the nineteenth-century garden wall. The Royal Fine Art Commission has seen the plans and it hopes that barrels and crates of beer will not litter this prototype landscape of the Picturesque laid out by William Kent. It has suggested that the entry from the exhibition centre to the villa might be more classical up some stairs and into the *piano nobile* on the first floor.

Lady Birk said nothing was finally decided, and that rumours that the Government wanted to use Chiswick House

The Times, 3rd February 1978, featuring the battle to save Chiswick House
(Credit: Marcus Binney)

from a reception at Apsley House”. I waited outside St George’s Hospital – the appointed pick up – for 40 minutes. No John. Suddenly he appeared, slumped down groaning and buried his head in his hands and saying, “I can’t do this”. Was he drunk? I couldn’t make it out.

I sped off to Winchester arriving just in time to steer John into the council chamber at the time he was due to speak. Long pause. But then suddenly in stentorian tones John boomed out the rollcall of the architects of The Grange, speaking with such authority about its beauty and importance than he won the day – with a unanimous vote of support for saving The Grange.

Rather different had been a stormy ministerial meeting in the hated Marsham Street towers where the Minister, Lady Birk, had called a press conference on February 2nd 1978 to announce plans to add a new wing intended for Government entertainment in full view next to Chiswick House. Burlington’s villa was of course a sacred temple for John. I tipped him off but when we arrived and were given press passes, John was told he was not invited as he was not a journalist. A group of us rallied and said we would boycott the conference if John could not come with us. They

relented but, as the civil servants had anticipated, it did turn into what the front page report in *The Times* described as “a bear garden” the next day. The main point though was that the appalling plans were quickly shelved.

Dinners at John and Eileen’s house in Chelsea were preceded by luscious German auslese – usually a pudding wine - but so intoxicating that we were soon very merry. John would relate his latest discoveries, visits and travels, sometimes telling me of houses I would later write up for *Country Life*. These travels led to the first thoughts of Save Europe’s Heritage. With John and Eileen we had two memorable tours of lost and decaying gardens and parklands in Portugal. John was enthralled by Montserrat, the one-time residence of William Beckford in Sintra, later transformed into an exotic Turkish kiosk on a grand scale.

At one Portuguese house we arrived at the gates to be confronted with huge signs saying **Hospital Do Not Enter** but there was no one in the gate lodge so we drove on down a very long drive through woodland scattered with huge boulders. Suddenly Eileen exclaimed, “What’s that! I saw a man behind a boulder”. Then John said, “there’s another” and suddenly dozens of large men with beaming faces were

running towards us. I executed a quick about turn and began driving as fast as I could over the huge potholes pursued by a gathering throng till we reached the gate where the astonished attendant had just returned as we sped to freedom.

John was the most generous of scholars, always sharing his latest discoveries and willing to step forward to support our causes.

He had an abiding interest in the First World War and assembled an important collection of war poetry and another of country house guidebooks.

In 2014 SAVE held a reprise of the 1974 Destruction exhibition outside the new British Galleries at the V&A. He and I wrote the companion book *40 Years On*. We began another book on Czech castles and ancestral residences soon after the Velvet Revolution in Prague. John loved his creature comforts, and at Marienbad we arrived at a spa hotel grander than the Royal Crescent in Bath. Our hopes rose and then declined as we were marched down endless corridors to a modern extension with concrete bunks and water running down the walls.

There were highs too. On another trip to Bohemia, this time with the Martins, we arrived at Castolovice Castle to meet Diana Phipps who told us, “I got the house back five days ago.” The contents of the state rooms were amazingly intact. And in the library, in a cupboard below the bookshelves, she opened the door and found family photograph albums which had sat undisturbed during half a century of communist occupation.

With John a new discovery waited round every corner. **S**

John Harris OBE, architectural historian, was born on August 13, 1931. He died on May 6, 2022, aged 90.



Harris was an avid collector of architectural drawings and models (Credit: The Times)

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SAVE
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Casework overview

Debenham's, Harrogate

We are delighted to announce that plans to demolish a handsome Victorian department store building in the historic heart of Harrogate have been withdrawn by the applicant, following substantial backlash from local residents and national heritage bodies.

The building was originally constructed for the department store Bobby's and opened in 1910. It later served as a branch of Debenham's until closure in 2018.

SAVE formally objected to the

plans to demolish the corner building on Harrogate's historic High Street in February 2022, citing the lack of any assessment for converting the existing building and harm to the conservation area through its potential loss.



Debenham's, formerly Bobby's, Harrogate (Credit: Alistair Todd)

83–87 Long Street, Middleton, Lancashire

Listing success! Three 18th century weavers' cottages in the historic Lancashire textile town of Middleton have been listed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, following an emergency listing application by SAVE Britain's Heritage.

SAVE submitted the listing in

response to plans by the current owner to convert the three cottages into flats in February 2022, which would have seen much of the well-preserved interior fabric lost to subdivision, as well as an oversized two-storey extension at the rear of the building.

The listing, announced in May 2022 by Historic England, recognises the cottages as rare survivals from the early development of Middleton in the 18th century.



83–87 Long Street, Middleton (Credit: David Morris)

Malmö Quay, Newcastle upon Tyne

We have objected to controversial plans for an 18-storey tower block within the historic setting of the Ouseburn Valley, east of Newcastle city centre. The tower proposals are part of wider plans to redevelop two former industrial quays – Malmö and Spillers – at the mouth of the River Ouseburn on land owned by government housing body Homes England.

Designed by architects White Arkitekter, the tower would substantially harm key views to and from the city centre and across the historic Tyne Gorge. The plans have drawn substantial objection from

St Mary le Port, Bristol

We have written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to request plans for a large office complex in the historic heart of Bristol be called in for a public inquiry. Approved by Bristol City Council in December 2021, the plans include three office blocks of up to nine storeys and the demolition of three 1970s buildings, including the Bank of England's former Bristol branch.

The blocks would encircle the remains of St Mary le Port, a medieval church partially destroyed during the Second World War, and

local residents and heritage groups, with over 1500 letters of objection submitted to Newcastle City Council, the highest ever recorded by the planning authority.

We understand that the proposals are now set to be 're-drawn' by developers Pfp igloo.



The proposed 18-storey tower in Newcastle city centre (Credit: Pfp igloo)

diminish a range of key views of Bristol's Old City, as well as two conservation areas and the settings of multiple listed buildings.

Our call-in request follows those of Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Bristol Civic Society.



View of the proposals from Bristol Bridge (Credit: Planning Documents)

Angel Square, London

SAVE has lodged a formal objection to the proposed demolition of Angel Square, Islington, by US real estate firm Tishman Speyer. The existing 1992 office building at 1 Torrens Street would be stripped to its core structure and rebuilt to designs by architects AHMM, with an additional two storeys added to the rooftop. The existing courtyard at the heart of the building would also be infilled and the floor plate reconfigured and enlarged.

Completed in 1992 by architects Rock Townsend, the current office

building has become something of a local landmark, marking the prominent junction between City Road and Islington's historic High Street.



Angel Square, Islington, which is threatened with demolition (Credit: Derwent London)

TJ Hughes, Eastbourne

Hot on the heels of our new report highlighting the threat to the country's historic department stores, we have objected to proposals to demolish the former TJ Hughes store at 177-187 Terminus Road, Eastbourne.

The Rachel Trust, which owns the

neo-baroque corner building, has applied to bulldoze the site in order to build flats with commercial office space. Built in 1925 the TJ Hughes store has been a focal point of Eastbourne town centre for almost 100 years, and is a major landmark within the protected Seafront Conservation Area.



The former TJ Hughes store (Credit: Sussex Express)

Casework overview

Ayr Station Hotel, Scotland

Following a sustained campaign since 2017, in May 2022 we published a report outlining proposals to save and secure a sustainable reuse for Ayr's historic Station Hotel.

The report outlines five options for repairing and converting the Category B listed landmark, with architectural plans by architect Alistair Scott showing how each option might look. Also included in the report are

detailed case studies of other large historic buildings like the Station Hotel which have been successfully rescued and converted to a range of viable new uses elsewhere in Scotland, including enterprise hubs, artists' studios, destination pubs and exhibition spaces.

The future of the hotel has become a hot topic in the town, and we remain engaged with ongoing efforts to secure the sale of the building from the current owner.



Ayr Station Hotel in 2017 (Credit: Alister Firth)

Lowesmoor Wharf, Worcester

Proposals first opposed by SAVE in 2020 for six large 4–8 storey buildings at Lowesmoor Wharf in Worcester's historic City centre are expected to be determined in the coming months. We have argued from the start that the scale of buildings proposed would substantially harm the historic city's famous skyline and the Canal Conservation Area where the average building height is two to three storeys.

The plans also involve the complete demolition of Lowesmoor Terrace, a characterful street of historic but unlisted buildings, including the flat-iron shaped former Vesta Tilley

music hall built in 1869 and the locally listed 1935 Bridge Inn, with no justification offered for why demolition is necessary.



Lowesmoor Terrace with Vesta Tilley House (Credit: Worcester Archive)

Footbridge at Beverley Railway Station, Yorkshire

SAVE has added its voice to the campaign against the proposed removal of the grade II listed wooden canopied footbridge at Beverley Railway Station in Yorkshire.

Despite having stood since 1900 and being the only example of its kind in the country, Network Rail has applied for listed building consent to remove the unusual timber canopy atop the ornate cast-iron Victorian footbridge.

Old Trafford Bowling Club, Manchester

Our listing application in June 2021 to protect one of Britain's earliest bowling clubs in Old Trafford, Lancashire is finally progressing to assessment, with Historic England due to publish a report on the building following a site inspection in late June 2022.

Located just a stone's throw from Old Trafford's internationally renowned cricket and football grounds, Old Trafford Bowling Club has been largely forgotten in recent decades, despite having been the largest amateur sporting pavilion in the country when built.

Completed in 1877, the grand and unusually ornate black and white timbered clubhouse remains remarkably unaltered today, with numerous original historic and architectural features still intact

We have argued that the listed structure should be repaired and strengthened rather than dismantled. A decision on the plans by East Riding Council is expected in the coming months.



Footbridge at Beverley Railway Station (Credit: Alamy)

despite being in continuous active use for nearly 150 years.

Historic clearance of buildings in the surrounding area along Talbot Road has left the clubhouse and green standing rather isolated and now at risk from possible redevelopment, with the entire Trafford area set for large-scale regeneration. We are hopeful that the outcome of the listing process will be known by September 2022.



Old Trafford Bowling Club (Simon Inglis)

Cowbridge School, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales

We are disappointed to report that plans to demolish the historic 1896 school buildings in the town of Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan were approved by the council on 8th June 2022. The decision follows a comprehensive campaign to secure



The former school in Cowbridge (Credit: Lee McGrath)

an alternative plan for the site, which would reuse the existing Victorian buildings whilst providing more housing than is proposed in the current scheme.

SAVE is supporting the local campaigners who are considering possible options to challenge the decision.

Minley Home Farm, Hampshire

Our campaign opposing plans by the Ministry of Defence to demolish Minley Model Farm on the Minley Manor Estate in Hampshire continues, with a decision expected imminently on whether the farm will be granted listing protection.

A petition launched in support of listing by the local campaign group in February 2022 gained almost 2000 signatures and demonstrates the strength of support for the retention and restoration of the handsome model farm for the benefit of the wider community.



Minley Home Farm in 2020 (Darren Buckland)

REGENT



Buildings at Risk News

SAVE ME – I’M YOURS!

In June we added more than 60 new entries to our online Buildings at Risk register at our first in-person launch event in three years. Every year we add new buildings from around the country to the register in a bid to publicise the plight of historic treasures which, with new uses, could find new life. The register is a powerful tool in bringing buildings which could be repurposed to wider attention.

Nominated predominantly by supporters of SAVE as well as by conservation officers, these historic places are just some of the many thousands of buildings already standing on our high streets and back streets, waterways and highways,

Liz Fuller reflects on the first in-person launch event for new entries to the Buildings at Risk Register for three years and three of the best new buildings in need of urgent attention.

country lanes and fields. They are empty and in need of a new occupants if they are to survive. Each has a fascinating story to tell, a story that is part of all of our histories.

Among the new entries, there is a neglected Shropshire aqueduct, a cottage in a World Heritage Site, an unusual double-sided cricket and bowls pavilion in St Helens and a beautiful Customs Watch House standing guard on Berwick’s historic quayside. At the other end of the country in Cornwall, a quirky vintage garage is looking for a way to stay in community use, then there is the Merseyside mansion which reflects the riches of the merchant class of the 19th century. In London a house

which played a crucial role in the campaigning work of the Suffragettes is looking for a new cause which would preserve its important history. Down on the south coast, a Kent Art Deco cinema standing on the sea front at Deal has a hidden history to reveal, in the East Midlands, a handsome Derbyshire hall has had a number of past lives including an important war time role and, in Wales, a vast hospital complex outside Cardiff with a chapel and a collection of summer houses all require someone to take a stand for them. They represent our shared history and in telling their stories through the online register, we are asking you on their behalf to SAVE Me – I’m Yours!

Full details of all of these buildings are available on our online Buildings at Risk register which is available to SAVE Friends and Saviours. Find out more about joining SAVE at savebritainsheritage.org/support-us.



THREE OF THE BEST

Regent Cinema, Deal, Kent

Behind the distinctive and elegant Art Deco façade of The Regent cinema on the sea front at Deal, an earlier, less substantial seaside entertainment structure is concealed. Built in 1928,

the Pavilion, a structure of iron and glass, was designed to allow live performances by military bands and other music and theatrical entertainments under cover. When the popularity of these shows waned, the existing structure was converted to use as a cinema in 1933. In succeeding years, cinema use gave way to bingo until 2009. The building has been disused since then, with growing

concern about its vulnerability. Permission for conversion to a 2 screen cinema and restaurant was greeted with approval and enthusiasm from all sides. Dover District Council are working with the owners to find a successful solution and consider the building to be a non-designated heritage asset and have agreed to its inclusion on the Council’s register of Assets of Community Value.

The Art Deco Regent Cinema on Deal Seafront (Credit: Stephen Birch via Alamy)

Huyton Cricket and Bowling Club Pavilion, Knowsley, Liverpool

Only a handful of cricket pavilions built before 1914 survive. This one at Huyton dates from 1875 and is considered rare for this reason, as well as its possibly unique double aspect design: symmetrical long elevations with verandas line each side of the building, one looking onto the cricket pitch, the other onto the bowling green. Clearly this is a special building and this was recognised when it was listed grade II in 2020. It is described in the listing entry as: “a very rare example nationally of an early pavilion erected by a local cricket club, rather than being associated with a county club ground, educational establishment or public park”. So it is also a remarkable monument to grass roots

sport. Last used in 2012, the building is now in quite an overgrown state.

In 2020 it was an application by Aldi to demolish the pavilion and build a huge store and 24 houses over the

pitch, that led to a local campaign getting the pavilion listed. Those plans have now been shelved but the pitch area makes this a highly vulnerable site to redevelopment.



Huyton Cricket and Bowling Club Pavilion, Knowsley, Merseyside (Credit: SAVE Britain's Heritage)

Customs Watch House, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland

Standing in a prominent location at the mouth of the River Tweed Estuary surveying passing traffic is the grade II listed Customs Watch House. Despite its listed status, the building is in a poor state of repair, and most of the openings are boarded up. The building dates back to the late 18th century or early 19th and is built as a two-storey, two-bay building using squared and rubble red sandstone, with quoins on either side of the front elevation. It is present on the 1850 map of the area, at the southern section of the quayside.

Custom watch houses are very rare in England, and it is believed this is one of the last remaining examples. But the building has also been known as The Mortuary, suggesting that it has had another use and may have served

time as a holding place for the washed-up bodies from Saltburn beach. The building tells the story of the area's maritime history as well as attempts to combat smuggling and

enforce custom regulations in this border location.

Its location is quite exceptional, and it is in desperate need of proper care and attention. **S**



The Customs Watch House at Berwick-upon-Tweed (Credit: Eveleigh Photography)

Book reviews

Architectural Drawings: Hidden Masterpieces from Sir John Soane's Museum

Frances Sands,
Batsford,
August 2021

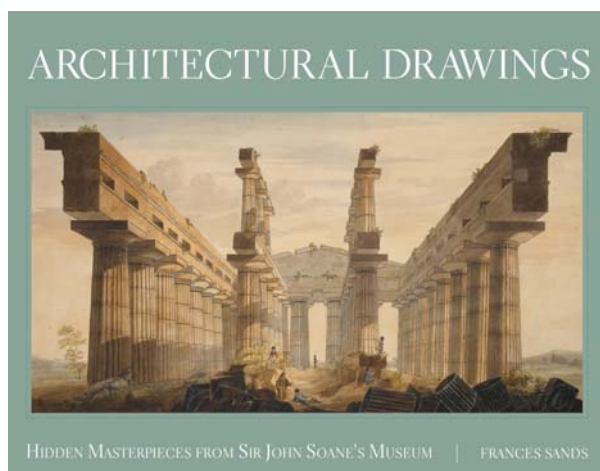
Reviewed by Owen Hopkins

Everyone knows Sir John Soane was an obsessive collector. His eponymous museum on Lincoln's Inn Fields is quite literally packed to the rafters with antiquities, paintings, sculpture, furniture, architectural models and all manner of curiosities. To step into the museum is to enter Soane's world where building and collection, space and object, are united in perfect symbiosis – a true *gesamtkunstwerk* before the term was coined.

Lesser known is the central role of architectural drawings in Soane's collection, both in sheer quantity and in the importance he ascribed to



Joseph Michael Gandy for Sir John Soane, view of the Dome area at number 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London (Credit: Jeremy Butler)



them. The drawings displayed in the museum are but a tiny fraction of the 30,000-strong archive. While several of these drawings are very well known, most notably those by Soane's master-draughtsman Joseph Michael Gandy, there are numerous other masterpieces by the likes of Nicholas Hawksmoor, Robert Adam and Giovanni Battista Piranesi, among others.

This book aims to bring these "hidden masterpieces" to light and, flipping through the book's pages, one is consistently taken aback by the drawings featured. The book's author, the museum's curator of drawings and books, Dr Frances Sands, has done the impossible in making a selection which from a scholarly perspective gives full range to the collection, while from a curatorial one ensures the real "knockout" drawings take centre stage.

Sands structures the book like the collection, with broadly equal weight given to the Adam office drawings; those from Soane's own office, which include his Royal Academy lecture drawings; and the final third being an assortment from the Renaissance to

the 18th century, but with significant holdings by John Thorpe, George Dance the Younger and William Chambers. As befitting Sands' status as one of the UK's leading drawings scholars, the text draws from meticulous research and is full of compelling insights.

Highlights are far too numerous to mention, but for haunting power it is hard to look beyond Piranesi's drawings of the temples at Paestum; for precision Chambers' and Pécheuz's elevation of the Trevi Fountain; and for instinctive immediacy, Grinling Gibbons' drawings for Hampton Court. We have become used to the convenience of online catalogues – and this book draws heavily from the Soane Museum's own impeccable example. But however useful they may be, as a way into the collection it is hard to surpass a book like this one, and the enthusiasm and rigour with which it showcases one of the UK's great architectural drawings collections.

Copies available for purchase
direct from Batsford
£35 | www.batsfordbooks.com

Quakers and Their Meeting Houses

Chris Skidmore,
Historic England,
October 2021

Reviewed by Jennifer Freeman OBE

Chris Skidmore provides a detailed history of the Quakers from their origins in the 17th century to the present day. This information provides a vital context to understanding the development of Quaker meeting houses. The architectural features of a huge number of meeting houses are discussed and key information provided for the reasons behind their founding, the personalities involved and subsequent changes over centuries. Quakers' problematic legal status is explained, together with the reasons for opposition to Quaker worship at the outset (it was the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689 that eased pressures on Nonconformity generally and greatly assisted the rise of the Quakers).

Also included is a useful gazetteer of listed meeting houses in Britain, together with a consideration of Quakers in the U.S., the

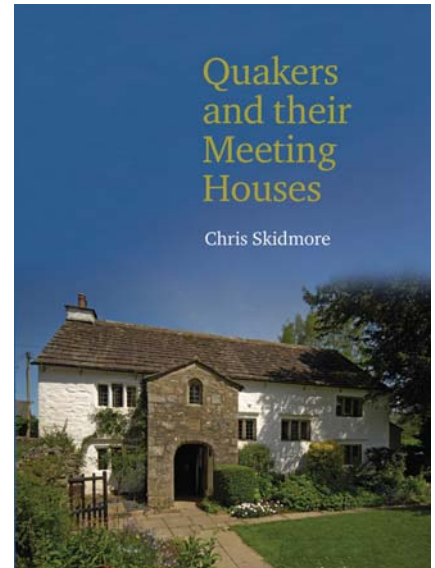
Caribbean, Holland and Germany.

Requirements for building meeting houses were simpler than for other denominations. There were no pastors to accommodate, no formal requirements for a liturgy, no special furniture needed – just simple bench seating. Grade II* Farfield Friends Meeting House in West Yorkshire is one of the earliest and most complete examples to survive from this era.

Elders began to be appointed in the 18th century, seated on raised benches, with a Minister's stand for travelling Ministers becoming a common feature of many interiors. When Ministers were later abolished, some meetings thence came to be held in silence.

During the late 18th and 19th centuries, greater elegance and appreciation of fashionable designs and styles were deployed in prosperous town meeting houses, notably in Bristol, Colchester, London, Norwich and York.

Examples from the 20th century include fascinating modernist meeting houses, while others drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement. Quaker architect Hubert Lidbetter (1885–1996) achieved widespread renown.



Chris Skidmore is to be congratulated for revealing the unique built heritage of the Quakers and setting it in context for a wider audience to appreciate. Nonconformist built heritage is receiving due attention as publications of this high quality emerge.

Copies available for purchase direct from Liverpool University Press. £40
www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/books



Claverham meeting house (Credit: Historic England Archive)



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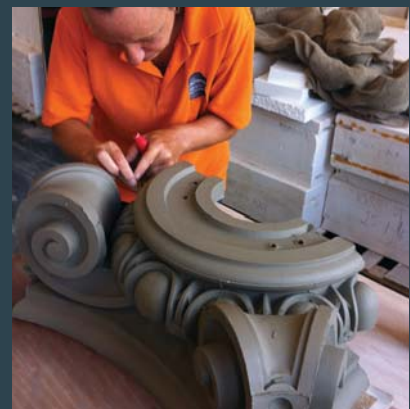
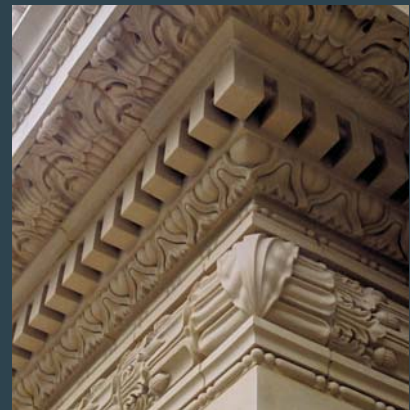
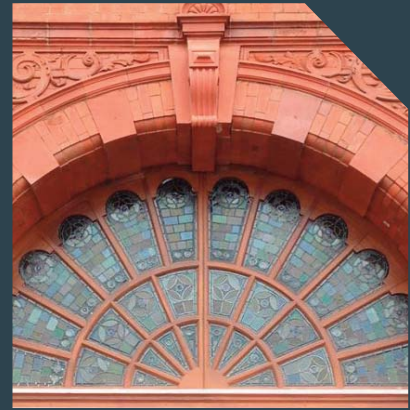
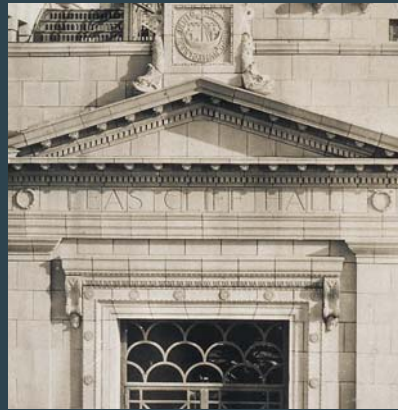


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