The Historicist Requirement for the New Houses of Parliament:

Gothic Revival as National Identity in 1830s Britain

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ABSTRACT

On October 16, 1834, a fire broke out at the Palace of Westminster in London. The reconstruction of the Houses of Parliament after this fire reveals a great deal about the cultural moment in which the rebuilding occurred, as the design competition held to identify the architect required that all designs submitted must be in either a Gothic or Elizabethan style. This decision was controversial in a time where neoclassicism dominated the London landscape, so it was an interesting choice made by the Parliamentary committees in charge of reconstruction to require it. In this thesis, the perfect storm of social, religious, political, military, and literary events that aligned in the 1830s to invite the Gothic Revival into London are explored.

A number of social, political, and religious changes were at work in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that altered how residents of the British Isles understood themselves and their country. After the Napoleonic Wars, classicism was used as a clear language of triumph in architectural development, but the mode of self-confident expression changed in the mid-nineteenth century because there were subtle changes in what was needed in an identity—namely, a need for something more uniquely "British." There was no longer a common enemy against which to unite, and the laws and sentiments against Catholicism had relaxed slightly, making reclamation of pre-Reformation architecture as a national symbol possible. It became important to find something more unique to the British Isles and to avoid relying on continental forms. The Gothic Revival was utilized at the new Parliament because it had the potential to connect to a history that was British above anything else.

This thesis is about the meaning behind architectural style. Through a deep exploration of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament in an elaborate Gothic style, it connects social and architectural history to a shifting sense of national identity. Chapter One sets up the development and disintegration of the British identity on the eve of the 1834 fire. Chapter Two covers the competition and design processes, as well as some of the debates that informed these processes. Chapter Three seeks to answer the ultimate question of "why gothic?" through a detailed discussion of the public conversation and why Gothic Revival was what was needed at this turbulent moment in the history of British identity.

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INTRODUCTION

> The architecture of a country, like its constitution, must spring up out of the exigencies of the times, and character of the people; it should be allowed to grow with their growth, and keep pace with them in their progress to moral perfection and greatness.[1]

This quotation, pulled from a letter by British antiquarian William Richard Hamilton, demonstrates the connection between architecture and national identity. Architecture comes from the spirit of the time and place in which it is built. This idea is central to understanding the decision to rebuild the British Houses of Parliament in the style of the Gothic Revival in the 1830s. Architectural style has meaning, and the choices made about it reveal some of the richest details of history. The new Palace of Westminster, designed by Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin in 1835 and 1836, was the capital city's first major public Gothic Revival building. In this thesis, I argue that the controversial "Gothic or Elizabethan" stipulation was related to an attempt by senior members of Parliament to capitalize on nationalist sentiment and recreate a unified British identity.

On the night of October 16th, 1834, a fire broke out in London. The British capital was no stranger to fires, but like the Great Fire of 1666, this one held special significance. The building in flames was the Palace of Westminster, better known as the Houses of Parliament, and as the broadside quoted above reported the next day, the event drew thousands of people, watching and listening as the seat of their national government burned (Figure 1).[2] In just one night, the majority of the historic complex came down, taking the chambers of the House of Lords and the House of Commons with it. Miraculously, the medieval Westminster Hall and part of the cloister

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[1] William Richard Hamilton, *Letter from W.R. Hamilton, to the Earl of Elgin, on the New Houses of Parliament* (London: W. Nicol, 1836), 18. [Guildhall. PAM 2742.]

[2] *Dreadful Fire, and Total Destruction of Both Houses of Parliament,* Broadside (London: Catnach, 1834). [Guildhall Library, Bside 6.50.]

of St. Stephen's Chapel survived, but most of Parliament's functional space was lost, necessitating either a reconstruction or a move.[3] The fire destroyed almost a thousand years of constructed history and tradition: the Palace was a former royal residence given over to Parliament in the sixteenth century.[4] Now, reduced to a pile of ash and stone, though with a few salvaged sections, the site and building were forever changed (Figure 2). What happened next, as the pieces were picked up, would impact London itself just as dramatically.

The precise timing of the fire at Parliament was very important, because had it occurred a few years earlier or later, the architecture of the new building might have been very different. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were a time of great economic, political, social, and religious change, in which people were forced to reformulate their ways of life and thinking out of the rubble of traditional frameworks. The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century had permanently altered Britain's economic structure and population distribution, and the expansion of the Empire had brought new resources, diversity, riches, and tensions to the homeland. In 1815, a long period of on-and-off belligerence finally ended with a triumphant victory over Napoleonic France at Waterloo, bringing new confidence to Britain. The idea of "Great Britain" itself was new, as the complete union was only established in 1800 upon the addition of Ireland, meaning that any new Parliament building would be purpose-built not only for a modern government but also as a "British" national institution, not just an "English" one.[5] Finally, with the passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in 1829, attitudes and laws regarding Catholicism and religious freedom were relaxing. This was a major change, because fear,

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[3] *The Palace of Westminster Official Guide*, (London: Houses of Parliament, n.d), 12.
[4] John Goodall, "The Medieval Palace of Westminster," in *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture,* ed. Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (London: Merrell, 2000), 62.
[5] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. Rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 147. *The Palace of Westminster Official Guide*, 12.

distrust, and even hatred of Catholicism had been a hallmark of English, Welsh, and Scottish culture since the Reformation and the establishment of the Anglican church. These cultural changes are reflected in the architecture of the new Palace of Westminster.

When Parliament caught fire in 1834, therefore, this building was a relic of a very different nation. The reconstruction of Parliament under the early Victorians in a simultaneously backward-looking and forward-thinking Gothic Revival style is expressive of a shifting sense of what it meant to be British in the early nineteenth century. The rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament in this Gothic form was an attempt to convince the public of a unique and unified national identity in a tumultuously-changing and increasingly diverse Britain.

Approach

This project comes from an interest in links between the urban development of nineteenth-century London and the concept of identity, particularly national identity. It builds from my undergraduate thesis, in which I studied John Nash's Regent's Park and Regent Street of the 1810s and 1820s. I was interested in the ways that architecture could be used to produce and present certain narratives, understanding Nash's scheme as a carefully crafted theater for the expression of a grand, confident, and victorious London. Meticulously controlling the path the new street took and its intersections with existing roads, Nash visually and functionally sealed Regent Street off from the narrow, seedy lanes of Soho by connecting ranges of neoclassical buildings (Figure 3). Neoclassicism's post-Waterloo dominance was in part, due the style's connotations of triumph and grandeur. King George IV, ruler in the post-war Regency period, is said to have claimed that his capital would rival Napoleon's Paris, a sentiment that can be seen in

many Regency works.[6] They were large, grand, and ostentatious, presenting London as the magnificent capital of a dominant empire. This thesis returns to the British capital to explore its architecture and expression at the brink of a major stylistic change through a deep study of the new Palace of Westminster, the first major public building in London to adopt the Gothic Revival. After this project, medieval revivals flooded the capital, taking over from the classicism that had dominated Georgian London. These choices are significant because they reveal some of the trends and anxieties present in early/mid-nineteenth century Britain, which are relevant to its national identity.

Architecture is expressive of the environment and culture in which it develops, so I am curious about why specific design and building choices are made. The Palace of Westminster, as the seat of the national government, is a "great National Work," theoretically representative of the country it serves.[7] Therefore, since architecture is such an expressive form of cultural production, the idea of national identity is central to understanding this building. Identity can be a difficult concept with which to work, because is impossible to truly prove. Any statement about national identity must be, to some degree, a generalization, as one can always find examples of contrary opinions and experiences. However, this does not render it useless. In the context of this thesis, it is an important lens through which the choices made about a new national building are made and viewed. Lawrence Vale, in his book *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (2008) attempts to draw connections between the three concepts in his title, and he admits to the difficulty inherent in working with national identity. His definition reads: "National identity…is

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[6] Dana Arnold, *Re-Presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience, and Social Life in London, 1800-1840* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 2000), 13.
[7] Peter Thompson, *Designs for the New Houses of Parliament, Consisting of Four Plans, Four Geometrical Elevations, One Longitudinal and Two Transverse Sections, With Two Perspective Views* (London: Peter Thompson, 1836), i. [Guildhall Library, SL 56.51]

not a natural attribute that precedes statehood but a process that must be cultivated for a long time after a regime has gained political power."[8] That explanation works well with the way this thesis interprets national identity in the context of the new Parliament: as something that is intentionally curated in the interest of developing nationhood. Unlike many of the examples Vale cites in his book, 1830s Britain was not exactly a new regime, but the litany of changes in the social, political, religious, and economic realm of this moment created enough instability in Britons' self-perception that there was a need for a reestablished identity. What was it about this moment in history that invited the Gothic Revival into London? What does the explosion of the style, especially in public architecture projects, say about the society that produced it? What message was being communicated, and how was it received? In order to answer these questions, I examine the religious, political, social, and economic forces that operated alongside architecture in the early-to-mid nineteenth century with an eye to how they impact national identity.

The choice to rebuild the Palace of Westminster in a Gothic style did not come about completely naturally, which adds a very interesting layer to the idea that it communicates a collective identity. The design was selected through a public competition process, but one of the rules of the contest, set by a Select Committee formed of Parliament members and published June 1835, dictated "that the style of the buildings be either Gothic or Elizabethan."[9] Both of these styles were historicist modes, based on fashions popular in England centuries previously. Many people were shocked and scandalized by the rule, and its propriety was debated in newspapers, pamphlets, and open letters. The controversial requirement was a very intentional

[8] Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity,* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 49.
[9] "Report from the select committee on rebuilding Houses of Parliament; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix." London: Select Committee on Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament, 1835. [RIBA: SR 725.11(42.1)//GRE(5).]

choice to turn away from neoclassicism, the most popular style at the time. It would have made perfect sense to reconstruct the seat of Parliament, in particular, as a classical "senate house," in line with the democratizing political situation after the Great Reform Act of 1832. Surprisingly, with the new Palace of Westminster, the Select Committee mandated something very different—holding fast to tradition and history with a medieval "British" style—an interesting choice for a new Britain.

Historiography

As individual topics, the Houses of Parliament, the Gothic Revival, nineteenth-century London, and British social and religious history have all been well studied. However, it is my intention to fill a gap that exists at the intersection of these issues by exploring how a historicist approach to the new Houses of Parliament might be an expression of a new understanding of national identity in a changing world. Therefore, although this is an architectural history thesis, many of the secondary sources have been drawn from an interdisciplinary field. There are two books that have impacted the development of this thesis's direction and methodology: Dana Arnold's *Re-Presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience, and Social Life in London, 1800-1840* (2000) and *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992), by Linda Colley.[10] Arnold is an architectural historian, but she incorporates a great deal of social history into her arguments. Her book deals with the complex issues of national identity in the capital city in the context of post-Waterloo classicism. In addition to explaining the nature of British classism right before the Gothic transition, it serves as a model for this thesis's interpretive

[10] I must note how crucial M.H. Port's careful and detailed studies of the Houses of Parliament have been for the project, as well as the many essays in *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture,* edited by Christine and Jacqueline Riding. Sir John Summerson's *Georgian London* has also been essential for my understanding of London at the start of the nineteenth century.

strategy. She connects national pride and victory to neoclassicism, and then neoclassicism to identity in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleon Wars. Arnold argues that even though neoclassicism was associated with enemy Paris, it was still appropriated into post-war London because the forms were so recognizable as symbols of triumph. Arnold's strategy of understanding what stylistic decisions are responses to will be applied to early Victorian Gothic architecture, the next phase in London's architectural history, in this thesis.

Linda Colley, author of *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992) is a historian. Though it does not consider architecture, this text is the most important work for this project. It provides crucial historical background for the state of British society at the moment of the Parliamentary fire, but more importantly, it is a model for understanding the cultural development and implications of national identity. Colley specifically explores how the British "nation" and identity came into existence and what factors might be responsible for it. She argues that the Napoleonic Wars, fought against a French Catholic other, gave Britons something against which they could unite. There was a common enemy, anxiety, and goal, but after the war ended, this commonality began fading with the removal of the threat. She also focuses heavily on religion, explaining how central Protestantism was to "forging the nation" of Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before introducing the relaxation of Catholic-Protestant tension as a threat to national unity. Like Arnold, however, Colley ends her investigation at the close of the 1830s, when she claims that this commonality is all but gone. I pick up where she left off and also apply her methods to architecture. I argue that the release of a common enemy, the vacuum created by the loss of something nationally binding, and the reduced suspicion of Catholicism are part of why the Gothic Revival was both needed and available for British public

architecture when it suddenly appeared on the London building scene with the new Houses of Parliament.

Primary research has focused on understanding how people perceived the Gothic-or-Elizabethan stylistic mandate for the Palace's reconstruction. In a top-down system like the Select-Committee-led competition, the messages that the organizers wanted to send are not always the same as what the public receives. This thesis is concerned with understanding both of these messages, information that is found in a few series of open letters and epistolary debates from the late 1830s. These letters were written by various members of the public in addition to a few more involved with the project, including one from co-designer A.W.N. Pugin himself. From these conversations, it is clear that the historicist style choice was far from universally supported, but the Select Committee appointed to oversee the competition and rebuilding process did not explain the decision upon its announcement. Writers therefore were left speculating why this route was being taken when classical styles were still very popular (and to many of them, infinitely better). Those defending the choice often argued that the Gothic was appropriate as it was a "national" style and would blend in with the surrounding environment, but neither side would fully convince the other. Competition documents, such as initial announcements, committee reports, and meeting minutes, are also crucial primary sources. These papers reveal what was specifically required of a new building in terms of room types, sizes, and accommodations, as well as how the decision to select the design submitted by Charles Barry was made.

This thesis is about the meaning behind architectural style. Through a deep exploration of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament in an elaborate Gothic style, it connects social and architectural history to a shifting sense of national identity. Chapter One sets up the development

and disintegration of the British identity on the eve of the 1834 fire. Chapter Two covers the competition and design processes, as well as some of the debates that informed these processes. Chapter Three seeks to answer the ultimate question of "why gothic?" through a detailed discussion of the public conversation and why Gothic Revival was what was needed at this turbulent moment in the history of British identity.

CHAPTER ONE: FORGING A NEW NATION ON DELICATE PREMISES

The precise timing of the Parliament fire in 1834 is what makes the Gothic Revival Palace of Westminster so interesting. A perfect storm of social, religious, political, military, and literary events aligned in the 1830s to invite the Gothic Revival into London. In order to understand how this complicated moment provoked the Select Committee's controversial and historicist response to the opportunity to rebuild Parliament, one must understand some of the nuances of this history. Though the fire and the reconstruction design process occurred in the 1830s, the events of the preceding few decades had an enormous impact on the beginning of the Victorian period. Industrialization, the Napoleonic Wars, and religious and political reform are the most important factors of the existing "identity" in place. At the same time, the Gothic Revival was beginning to stir, initially only in the countryside, but the publication of several important texts on medieval architecture combined with this complicated history explains how the stage was set for the Gothic Revival to enter London when Parliament caught fire in 1834.

Industrialization

The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transformed life in Britain and throughout the western world. The "modern world" we know today is rooted in its developments, and by the 1830s, its effects were felt across the British Isles.[11] Mechanization of various processes, the invention of new tools and machines, and the introduction of different sources of energy disrupted Britain's traditional domestic and agrarian economy, forcing people to adapt. Industrialization and urbanization fed each other, as factories were built in urban centers to take advantage of transport links and available workers, which drew new flocks of

[11] Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival,* Arts & Ideas (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 124.

people to cities. London, for example, experienced the greatest population boom the world had seen to date. In 1760, 740,000 lived in greater London, and in 1801, at the first complete census, that number had risen to 1,096,784. It became the world's largest city in 1815, and by 1860, 3.18 million people called London their home, showing absurdly rapid growth.[12] Its immense size was striking to Heinrich Heine, who visited in 1827, writing that "London has surpassed all my expectations in respect to its vastness; but I have lost myself."[13] Much of this population change can be attributed to the internal migration caused by industrialization, but it was not the only source of growth. It is generally believed that quality of life and personal wealth increased for most people as a result of industrialization, but the urban rush exacerbated many of the problems that cities already faced, such as overcrowding, pollution, slum formation, and poor public health.[14] Life was very different after industrialization, and these changes had both advantages and disadvantages.

In terms of architecture, the Industrial Revolution made significant changes in terms of processes and materials. Advancements in iron production and mechanization allowed for more efficient and less expensive construction, and it allowed architects, engineers, and builders to come up with new and more efficient ways to produce traditional forms. The Gothic Revival, in particular, would benefit greatly from the new possibilities provided by industrial architecture. Iron lent itself easily to the intricate tracery that characterized Gothic architecture, and sturdy metal construction allowed for forms of interior support unavailable to medieval architects. Industrialization allowed architects to dream big, tall, and thin.

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[12] Clive Emsley, Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, "London History - A Population History of London", Old Bailey Proceedings Online, accessed 16 April 2018. www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.0.
[13] Celina Fox, introduction to *London: World City 1800-1840,* ed. Celina Fox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 12.
[14] Brooks, *The Gothic Revival,* 124-5.

The Industrial Revolution sparked some design trends that celebrated industrialization, such as the glass-and-iron construction of the Crystal Palace in the mid-nineteenth century, but there were also some inverse responses. Nostalgic material culture developed throughout the nineteenth century. Resentful of the fast-paced, commercial, standardized nature of industrial production and nostalgic for a simple, idyllic past where the air was not dark with soot and families did not spend their lives in dingy factories, some turned to the past for inspiration in their artistic production. This is most obvious in the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it can also be seen in some of the early development related to the Gothic Revival: picturesque, idealized views of "Old Britain."[15] The Gothic Revival was a resurrection of medieval design, coordinated with a sense of nostalgia for pre-industrial life. The revival hearkens back to a time when master stonemasons spent their days carefully chiseling intricate designs, and people engineered ways to build towering steeples without metalwork. Though the Gothic Revival was in part made possible by new mechanics, it worked as a visual symbol of a pre-industrial civilization.

Unity in Opposition to an "Other"

Military history is also crucial to understanding Britain's identity on the eve of the Parliament fire. This requires a look back to the mid-eighteenth century, because in 1834, the country was enjoying a rare moment of peace. Starting in 1740 with the commencement of the War of the Austrian Succession and not ending until 1815, Great Britain was in an almost-constant state of belligerence.[16] Though there were a number of different opponents in this long

[15] Brooks, *The Gothic Revival,* 62.
[16] War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48); Seven Years' War (1756-1763), American Revolutionary War (1776-1783), Napoleonic Wars (disputed start date, either 1793 or 1803-1815).

period of war, the French were the most commonly set against Britain, and the most recent Napoleonic Wars were a direct confrontation between these two formidable powers. The history of conflict between France and Britain dates back several centuries to the Norman conquest of 1066. The monarchs, like so many across Europe, remained tangled in a complicated web of bloodlines and marriages that encouraged continuous jostling of power and land holdings among family members for centuries. Linda Colley identifies the constant fighting, especially with France, as central to the "forging" of a British nation and identity.

These two parties were fixed in opposition to each other in more than just battlefield conflict. The Anglo-French relationship was also strained by economic and imperial competition. Britain and France saw each other as primary rivals in the race to claim colonies across the globe, and they pushed at each other even after regions were settled. For example, France had been involved in the American Revolutionary War, siding with the rebelling colonies, which resulted in a significant loss for Britain. There were also cultural differences that grew sharper over time. According to Colley, "French clerics, intellectuals and tourists scrutinized Britain's political system, moral fibre and cultural achievements, and their British counterparts did the same with regard to France, in both cases with a manic obsessiveness that betrayed their mutual antagonism and anxiety."[17]

Though these differences and the long history of direct conflict were important, and they certainly contributed to the animosity between these major western European powers, the religious difference between the parties is crucial to understanding the shifts in British national identity that are key for this thesis. France was Catholic, and Britain was Protestant. These are both Christian faiths and they share many similarities, but the way in which they split in the

[17] Colley, *Britons*, 1.

sixteenth century was dramatic and violent. The schism was particularly ugly in England, where the country's Catholic history was forcefully rejected. In the 1530s, King Henry VIII officially broke from Rome and established the Church of England as the official state religion. The Dissolution of the Monasteries that followed from 1536 to 1539 sent a very strong message that England was no longer Catholic: monasteries and abbeys were destroyed, church lands were seized, and church wealth was commandeered.[18] Despite this forceful statement of Protestant might, it took a few centuries before Anglicanism was firmly in place as the country's main religion. By the eighteenth century, Protestantism was comfortably established in Britain, but Catholicism was still perceived as a dangerous threat. Observance was grudgingly tolerated, but British Catholics faced harsh legal and social discrimination. They could not vote or hold any governmental or Parliamentary offices, and they had to pay special taxes. They also suffered reduced access to educational opportunities and were barred from owning weapons.[19] In the seventeenth century, a great deal of energy went into distancing England from Catholicism, which resulted in a strongly Protestant Britain in the eighteenth century.

"Forging the Nation"

The idea of "Britain" itself is another piece of this complex puzzle. According to Colley, "As a would-be nation, rather than a name, Great Britain was invented in 1707 when the Parliament of Westminster passed the Act of Union linking Scotland to England and Wales."[20] These three countries share one relatively small island, but they had existed quite independently of each other for centuries. Even within each of these constituent countries, there were major

[18] Brooks, *The Gothic Revival,* 16.
[19] Colley, *Britons*, 19.
[20] Colley, *Britons*, 11.

internal differences, so the presence of some kind of national cohesion on the scale of England, Scotland, or Wales individually was minimal. Because the majority of people did not travel far beyond their hometowns before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, identity was more local and regional rather than nation, kingdom, or state based. The three countries also had different languages, which were not even descendants of the same mother tongues, reflecting some of the differences in their ethnic makeup. England and Wales had been officially united in 1536 and did share some legal and religious institutions, but there were still important cultural divides. Welsh and English people did not see themselves as sharing the same nationality, regarding those from the other country as foreigners. Language was a major factor, as even until the 1880s, seventy-five percent of Welsh people primarily spoke Welsh. Language seems to have been less of a distinction between England and Scotland, as a blended English-Gaelic dialect called "Scots" had developed in the border region. Scotland was still much more independent than Wales, even though Stuart monarchs had ruled both England/Wales and Scotland since 1603. This union, established in 1707, was more tenuous than that of England and Wales. It was created mostly as a way to prevent a Catholic ruler from assuming the throne—a top-down, almost businesslike motivation that did not do much to ideologically or emotionally bind the citizens of the new Great Britain together.[21]

However, this incentive does reveal the one commonality shared by all three parties, and, according to Colley, it was more important than all the differences among them: Wales and Scotland also dropped their Catholic associations at the time of the Reformation. Protestantism became absolutely central to identity for all three, which brought them closer to seeing themselves as a united "Britain." As Colley states:

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[21] Colley, *Britons*, 12.

> Protestantism was the dominant component of British religious life. Protestantism coloured the way that Britons approached and interpreted their material life. Protestantism determined how most Britons viewed their politics. And an uncompromising Protestantism was the foundation on which their state was explicitly and unapologetically based.[22]

The English, Welsh, and Scots were bound by their common commitment to Protestantism, which, along with anti-Catholicism, was a huge part of the glue that held them together. While it was not yet clear what it meant to be "British," it was clear that a big part of it was being Protestant, not Catholic, and this perception was strengthened by the long period of war with the hostile French Catholic other. War against France was crucial to the establishment of the "Briton," a resident of the British Isles who valued his or her Protestantism above all else. A final quotation from Colley summarizes the way that Britons saw themselves and each other:

> …men and women came to define themselves as Britons – in addition to defining themselves in many other ways – because circumstances impressed them with the belief that they were different from those beyond their shores, and in particular different from their prime enemy, the French. Not so much consensus or homogeneity or centralisation at home, as a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without proved to be the essential cement.[23]

By the 1830s, this cement was on the verge of failure, setting the stage for a newfound need for something nationalistic. The timing of the Parliament fire allowed the rebuilding to be the perfect opportunity to express this through an aggressively historic Gothic design.

Nineteenth-Century Breakdown

An internally disparate but confidently Protestant nation founded more or less as a defense against a Catholic military and ideological threat was eighteenth-century "Britain." However, as the eighteenth century became the nineteenth, the delicate identity that had been

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[22] Colley, *Britons*, 18.
[23] Colley, *Britons*, 17.

forged in response to religious and military pressure was disrupted. The constant French threat and strong opposition to Catholicism both disappeared in the early nineteenth century, leaving a vacuum in British nationalism that the Gothic Revival style of the Houses of Parliament was one attempt to fill. In 1815, Lord Wellington and his armies famously defeated Napoleon and his forces at the Battle of Waterloo, finally ending the Napoleonic Wars. This put almost a century's worth of on-and-off conflict to rest at last, a major change for a society that had used significant energy fighting its fiercest rival in trade, war, and culture for so long (even though no battles had actually occurred on the British Isles). The fire at Parliament occurred about twenty years after Waterloo, which was just enough time for the disestablishment of a wartime commonality to occur. The Gothic Revival was an architectural solution, as it was an attempt to revive something else that was unique to the island and familiar to all of its people.

Catholicism had played an important role as a foreign "other" for Protestant Britons, but in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, anti-Catholic regulations relaxed and Catholics became an accepted group in government and society. In 1800, Ireland, a predominantly Catholic nation, joined the Protestant union of England, Scotland and Wales.[24] Though this was never a particularly comfortable relationship, it was a crack in the stiff Protestant shell that bound the state together. Over the next few decades, attitudes toward Catholicism slowly relaxed, especially at the elite and aristocratic levels of society. In 1829, the Roman Catholic Relief Act, also known as the Catholic Emancipation Act, passed in Parliament. It was sparked by the 1828 Irish election victory of the Catholic Daniel O'Connell, as Robert Peel, Home Secretary at the time, pushed for this reform in an effort to avoid conflict with Ireland. [25] The act gave Catholics

[24] Colley, *Britons,* 147.
[25] Victor Simion, "The Baptism of British Government: Pugin's Catholic Hand in the New Houses of Parliament," in *True Principles: The Journal of the Pugin Society* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2010-2011), 175.

new freedoms and rights and, at least in legal terms, made the religion openly acceptable for the first time since the mid-sixteenth-century Reformation.[26] Now able to vote and hold office, Britain's Catholic population was a new player in the country's social and political scene.

Classical London

> Augustus made it one of his proudest boasts, that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble. The reign and regency of GEORGE THE FOURTH have scarcely done less, for the vast and increasing Metropolis of the British empire: by increasing its magnificence and its comforts; by forming healthy streets and elegant buildings, instead of pestilential alleys and squalid hovels; by substituting rich and varied architecture and park-like scenery, for paltry cabins and monotonous cow-lairs;…and by beginning and continuing with a truly national perseverance, a series of desirable improvements, that bid fair to render LONDON, the ROME of modern history.[27]

This quotation, taken from architect James Elmes's *Metropolitan Improvements; or London in the Nineteenth Century* (1827), reveals the attitude that many early nineteenth-century Brits held toward the ancient civilizations of the classical world. In comparing Rome under Augustus to London under George IV, Elmes connects post-Waterloo Britain with the celebrated Roman empire. This quotation also references the "Metropolitan Improvements" of Regency London—in addition to being the title of Elmes's book, this was an effort in the 1810s and 1820s to enhance the capital city. New streets and parks were created, such as the Regent's Park and Regent Street scheme by Nash, and slum cleaning and clearance also occurred, ideally to improve health and crowding. This push for city improvement indicates an awareness of London's importance as the British capital, as some projects, including Nash's, were intended to provide new spaces in which London and Britain could be shown off in the wake of its recent military and imperial successes.

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[26] Simion, "Catholic Hand," 175.
[27] James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements, Or London in the 19th Century* (London: Jones & Co, 1833), 1-2.

These improvements Elmes mentions—the "healthy streets and elegant buildings"—were neoclassical in style. As mentioned previously, the dominant architectural style in London at the moment of the burning of Parliament was neoclassicism. Popular since its introduction by Inigo Jones in the early seventeenth century, classicism had enjoyed great longevity as the capital's favored mode. Architects and builders from Early Modern through Georgian London drew inspiration from the structures of the Roman empire, as well as, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, from those of the ancient Greeks. Pattern books like Palladio and Gibbs made it easy for builders to work in this style, and it was logical and simple enough to build in multiples for Georgian London's explosion of coordinated terraced housing.[28] The style lent itself to modest row houses as well as to magnificent banks, museums, and palaces, and London today is still largely classical. Classicism was a sensible choice for the British capital in many ways, but there is more to its popularity than that, especially after Waterloo, according to Dana Arnold.

Arnold argues that London's post-war classical building frenzy was a celebration of a triumphant nation, and perhaps a competitive nod to the enemy it had just defeated. Paris was known for its classical architecture, and Napoleon had worked to enhance the French capital with magnificent classical structures. It might seem odd, then, that the British would choose to follow the French in selecting this mode for its own postwar architecture. Arnold suggests that London's post-Waterloo neoclassical construction boom, which included projects like Regent's Park and Street, the British Museum, National Gallery, and Trafalgar Square, was an expression of British confidence and triumph over the country's greatest enemy. Triumphant architecture like Nash's Marble Arch, done in this style, can be read as an attempt to tie a modern civilization

[28] "Archilochus," *What Style? The Royal or the Baronial? The Priestly or Monastic? Or the Squirely? For the New House of Parliament* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1837), 5. [RIBA: Pam. A(12), item 9.]

to the glory of the Greeks and Romans so widely celebrated in Western culture. The symbols were widely recognizable, meaning that people would understand the confident, celebratory messages provided by this commitment to architecture. This communicative potential was more important than the threat of copying the French. King George IV is also said to have stated that his capital would rival Napoleon's, suggesting that British architects may have hoped to beat their French counterparts at their own game.[29] Arnold explains how London's architecture after the war was ultimately a kind of nationalist exercise:

> The monuments and urban planning of a triumphant London helped to define British nationalism by celebrating the defeat of the French and representing a new British identity…The story told by the re-imaging of London in the period 1800-1840 had a far more wide-ranging scope than simply victory over the French and included the celebration of the intellectual achievements of Britain and the strengths of the indigenous British culture.[30]

Therefore, immediately after Waterloo, classicism remained comfortably dominant over London's building scene as this re-imaging occurred. The advent of the Greek Revival in the early nineteenth century also sparked a bit of new life in it and diversified the variants of classical architecture one would find in Georgian London.

Gothic Stirrings

However, in the countryside, a different trend was gathering steam. This was the Gothic Revival—or, initially the "Gothick Revival," an interesting distinction: "Consciously or unconsciously, to describe a building as Gothick is to assume a slightly condescending air—what a charming building, it implies, a pity the architects did not know how to design 'correct' Gothic architecture."[31] This quotation, while a bit silly, gets at some of the key issues of the Gothic(k)

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[29] Arnold, *Re-presenting,* 46.
[30] Arnold, *Re-presenting,* 47.
[31] Giles Worsley, "What's in a 'K'?" *Country Life* 188, no. 16 (April 21, 1994): 74.

Revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain. To oversimplify, "Gothick" was the primarily domestic revival of the motifs and characteristics of medieval art and architecture. In approaching the nineteenth century, it grew more serious and various in typology, with a focus on accuracy in replication of original Gothic detail, and thus turned into a more academic "Gothic Revival." These are two parts of the same movement, a movement that had some extremely important aspects in the early nineteenth century, when Britain was suddenly in need of a new Parliament building.

The origins and connotations of the Gothic Revival are important to understand for the success of this thesis. The exact beginning of the Gothic Revival is difficult to pinpoint, as scholars squabble over whether it is really a "revival" or more of a "survival," dependent on how much significance one applies to the threads of Gothic-style work and renovation that continued through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the style's medieval origins. Suffering from the negative associations the form had with the Catholic regime under which it had been built, few paid attention to the pointed style once classicism took hold. However, there is some consensus that a fresh wave of Gothic interest began to flower in the mid-eighteenth century, with the literary arm developing first.[32] This refers to the melancholy spookiness of Gothic poetry and novels from the early eighteenth century and on, but eventually, it would encapsulate a collection of Gothic pattern books, treatises, and manuals for art and architecture.

The architectural Gothic Revival first gained momentum on the country estates of the gentry. It was initially closely associated with landscape design, appearing often in intact or ruined form as garden follies, like the Temple of Liberty at Stowe by James Gibbs, completed 1748 (Figure 4). The idea that Gothic is the appropriate style for a temple of liberty is

[32] Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste,* rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 26.

interesting, and suggests a connection to some of the Whig political associations of the early Gothic Revival. Sir Robert Walpole, first Prime Minister of England, was a Whig, and his youngest son, Horace, built himself a fanciful Gothic villa outside London in 1754. Walpole's Strawberry Hill turned its back on the regulated symmetry of Palladian classicism. Its irregular, asymmetrical exterior is found in Figure 5, and the interiors reflected his play with Gothic motifs and characteristics. Horace Walpole was also known for his writing: the originator perhaps of the Gothic novel, he also wrote *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762), in which he stipulated that the Gothic is inherently English. Other homes were constructed using medieval ideas, and the movement was growing and spreading around the countryside, through still primarily an elite trend. Batty Langley attempted to categorize Gothic motifs in orders, like those found in classicism in *Gothic Architecture, improved by Rules and Proportions* (1747) and Thomas Rickman studied the history of English architecture in his *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture* (1819). In this early text, Rickman categorizes England's Gothic architecture into a developmental lineage: Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular Gothic.

A French immigrant named Auguste Charles Pugin was involved in the creation of *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (1823) and *Examples of Gothic Architecture* (1831). Pugin was a skilled draughtsman who had honed his skills and Gothic knowledge working under John Nash. In 1812, Pugin had a son, Augustus, who would grow up to bring the Gothic Revival to a new intensity.[33] On the brink of the fire in 1834, the Gothic Revival was in full swing, but still only in the countryside. It was beginning to filter into London with a few churches financed by the government under the 1818 First Church Building Act. Just a small number of these were Gothic, such as St. Luke's (Chelsea) as seen in Figure 6, with the majority classical, but

[33] Clark, *Essay,* 122-123.

nonetheless, the Gothic Revival was coming. Interestingly, the nickname for this group of churches built under the Act was the "Waterloo churches" which is an important connection to the famous battle of 1815. This government-funded spray of new churches across the city seemed to celebrate the British victory just a few years before. The scale of the Waterloo churches was nothing compared to the massive medievalist undertaking about to take place in Westminster.

London on the eve of the burning of Parliament was a rapidly expanding, industrialized, modernized metropolis decorated with both new and old buildings in classical styles. The capital city, as the center of the country, economy, and empire, communicated messages about the bodies it represented. Nash's work, the British museum, and the overall effort toward "Metropolitan Improvements" in the 1810s and 1820s are proof of this, and it would not change moving forward, as the 1834 fire forced officials to make significant choices about architecture and expression in London. However, at the same time, by the end of the 1820s, Britain was transforming, moving away from the unified nation that had come together to fight the French and to oust Catholicism from its monarchy and everyday life. The bonds that had tied this internally diverse nation were quickly disintegrating, and there was suddenly an immense void in nationalism and unity. The Gothic Revival was also developing in the countryside, while texts were slowly being published that would alert a wider population to its ideas. The choice to look back several centuries, bringing historicism into the capital for the reconstruction of the national government was an attempt to find something to bind Britons back together. Changes in laws and attitudes toward Catholicism allowed Gothic architecture, formerly associated with medieval Catholicism, to be revived as an option for public, "national" buildings like the new Houses of Parliament. The Emancipation Act had passed only five years before the 1834 fire, and there are

strong connections between these shifting laws and attitudes and this new boldly Gothic Parliament building. As restrictions against Catholics relaxed, this made room for the reclamation of Gothic architecture as positively “British” instead of negatively “Catholic.”

CHAPTER TWO: FIRE AND RECONSTRUCTION

> A more wide-spreading or imposing fire was never witnessed in the Metropolis. The associations connected with the ancient Chapel of St. Stephens and the House of Lords, every apartment of which recalls some great historical event—the vivid view of the rapid flames as they rolled round this large frontage of public buildings driven by the shifting wind—the glare of the towering flames, the volumes of smoke which mixed with the raging element—the repeated crashes of the falling roofs, all combined to impress the crowds who attended the fire with feelings never to be forgotten. In the midst of this striking scene, the Chapel of HENRY the SEVENTH and Westminster Abbey appeared enveloped in flames; and the reflection of the fire on the turrets, and delicate tracery of the architecture of the Chapel, produced a singular effect. The view of the Thames was not less remarkable. The river and bridges were covered with people, large parties contemplat[ing] the awful scene, and the water, like a mirror, reflecting the glare of the conflagration.[34]

The fire at the Houses of Parliament on October 16th, 1834 was both a tragedy and a blessing. A large, historic, and heavily-used building was lost, but it also provided an extremely well-timed opportunity to get a new structure that would better suit the function of Parliament. From the ashes of the ancient palace, a new building would soon rise, a chance to make a statement about what it meant to be "British" through the design of the most nationally-oriented building: the Houses of Parliament. The design choices that were made are surprising in some ways and predictable in others. The building that resulted delivered a conservative, nationalistic message to a modernizing country in order to reestablish a national identity in the face of the one that had been lost.

Pre-Fire History

Even before the fire made a reconsideration of Parliament's home necessary, there had been talk of massive renovation or removal. The Palace of Westminster was not built as a

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[34] *Dreadful Fire, and Total Destruction of Both Houses of Parliament,* Broadside (London: Catnach, 1834). [Guildhall Library, Bside 6.50.]

headquarters for a modern bicameral legislature, and this was quite obvious to those who used it regularly. It originated as a royal palace in the eleventh century, most likely a residence for the pre-Norman king Edward the Confessor, whose passion was rebuilding the adjacent eighth-century Saxon cathedral into what would become Westminster Abbey.[35] Successive rulers oversaw additions, alterations, and reconstructions with the result that, by 1834, the palace comprised a complex of buildings and yards clustered against the Abbey (Figure 7). The palace was not only home to the royal family from the eleventh through sixteenth centuries, but to a large court of people associated with the monarchy and government, as at this phase in English history the government did not yet have a permanent seat of its own. The court followed the monarch as he or she traveled between different homes throughout the city and country. As the government grew more structured after the Magna Carta and Bill of Rights went into effect, and the duties and offices of Parliament became more officially established, the Palace of Westminster became the permanent site of many of the country's bureaucratic operations. By 1547, it had become the official home of Parliament, and after a 1512 fire burned much of the lodging areas of the Palace, Henry VII moved out. In 1536, its Parliamentary function fully eclipsed its role as a palace. [36] In 1547 The House of Commons was officially established in the old St. Stephen's Chapel, where it stayed until the fire.[37]

Over the course of a few hundred years, the use of the Palace of Westminster transitioned from housing the royal family to holding the large bureaucratic institution of a modern two-part legislature. However, the physical environment of the building did not transition particularly well. Quarters were cramped, particularly for the House of Commons, housed in the narrow

[35] John Goodall, "The Medieval Palace of Westminster," in *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture,* ed. Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (London: Merrell, 2000), 50.
[36] Goodall, "Medieval," 62.
[37] *The Palace of Westminster Official Guide*, 6.

former chapel. Navigation and air circulation were also major issues. The complex was a complicated assembly of parts and renovations.[38] Members constantly complained of the building's inconvenience and ineffectiveness, and architects like Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Soane, and James Wyatt directed relatively limited additions, repairs, and renovations. The addition of Ireland to the Union meant that the body of the House of Commons would increase by over a hundred to more than 600 members.[39] The country's bureaucratic web was also growing, since industrialization necessitated increasing regulation efforts, which meant more office space was required to house it. The difficult situation was only growing worse, and Parliament was outgrowing its aging Palace. MP John Croker's 1833 description of the House of Commons demonstrates the poor conditions of the site on the eve of the fire:

> Notoriously imperfect, very crazy as buildings, and extremely incommodious in their local distribution. I know of no advantage whatsoever that attends the present adjacent accommodation or the accesses to the House. They are not well disposed for the transaction of business; they are not symmetrical with the House of Lords; they are not symmetrical with Westminster Hall; there is no proper access for Members…and, on several occasions, Members have been personally insulted in going into the House. A Member who does his duty in Parliament is sometimes liable to offend individuals; he must pass every day of his life up a series of narrow dark, tortuous passages, where any individual who wishes to insult him may have the certain and easy opportunity to do so.[40]

Thus in 1831 and 1833, Radical Member of Parliament Joseph Hume led the call for renovation.[41]The effort had some success, as various architects prepared designs for a new House of Commons. Most of these were in the classical styles popular at the time, updating the interiors in particular to better fit the requirements of the Commons. One example is by Sir John Soane, who had previously worked on the building. He prepared the floorplan shown in Figure 8.

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[38] M.H. Port, *The Houses of Parliament* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 5.
[39] *The Palace of Westminster Official Guide*, 55.
[40] John Wilson Croker, 1833, quoted in Port, *Parliament,* 5.
[41] Andrea Fredericksen, "Parliament's Genius Loci: The Politics of Place after the 1834 Fire," in *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture,* ed. Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (London: Merrell, 2000), 108.

Architect Francis Goodwin also drew up a classical scheme for renovation of the House of Commons in 1833 (Figure 9). These efforts were geared toward increased comfort as well as functionality in terms of acoustics, heating, and ventilation. However, these projects stalled, as Parliament was saddled with more pressing economic issues than the renovation of its headquarters.

The Fire

On the morning of October 16, 1834, a pair of Palace of Westminster workmen began burning a huge archive of wooden tally sticks (an obsolete form of accounting used by the Office of the Exchequer until 1826) in two furnaces beneath the chamber of the House of Lords. This disposal had been ordered as part of another piecemeal adjustment to the Palace complex, the creation of a temporary bankruptcy court. The workers loaded tallies into the stoves from seven in the morning until five at night, when they snuffed the fires and left. Visitors that day had noticed that the floors of the debating chamber above were getting warm, but the housekeeper's complaints were ignored, and although the clerk checked in on the workers to ensure nothing was being stolen, the fires continued to be fed. About an hour after the men left, the housekeeper found the Lords' chamber ablaze. Palace staff and firefighters rushed to salvage anything they could, but the flames spread quickly, aided by the windy night.[42] Just after seven, the collapse of the Lords' roof gave the fire new life and it jumped over to ignite the chambers of the House of Commons, as well.[43] The blaze was so enormous that not much more could be done, and it raged through the night. The dramatic scene attracted hundreds of viewers, including artists like J. M.

[42] Port, *Parliament,* 16.
[43] *Dreadful Fire, and Total Destruction of Both Houses of Parliament,* Broadside (London: Catnach, 1834). [Guildhall Library, Bside 6.50.]

W. Turner, who rushed to the scene to get a glimpse of the burning building. One of Turner's several compositions featuring the event is found in Figure 1. It shows not only the burning building in the upper left corner, but also the crowds of people gathered to watch in the foreground and on boats in the river.

The fire was effectively out by morning, but it continued smoldering over the following few days. When the smoke cleared, the chamber of the House of Lords was lost, as was that of the Commons and its library, recently renovated by Sir John Soane. Half of the sixteenth-century cloisters below St Stephen's Chapel were scorched out, but half did survive. Miraculously, so did medieval Westminster Hall with its magnificent hammerbeam roof, most likely due to an auspicious shift in the wind direction over the course of the night. Therefore, although this was a significant loss overall, a few historic gems were spared, and actually, much of the newer spaces added by Soane and Wyatt remained usable. Just like the burning building itself, the fire's aftermath was depicted by numerous artists, entranced by the dramatic ruin in the middle of the city.

Aftermath

According to the primary historian of the Houses of Parliament, M.H. Port, due to the number of rooms that had survived the fire, a whole new building was not really necessary. Enough could be repaired that Parliament could still operate in the existing Palace of Westminster, once it was cleaned up.[44] However, the opportunity to rebuild was irresistible, especially considering how close advocates for far-reaching renovations had come to success just a few years before, and planning for a new structure quickly began, which proved to be

[44] Port, *Parliament,* 20.

premature as there was not yet consensus on the best way to proceed. Debates began to rage about the future of Parliament's home.

The first debate was incredibly important for the history of the building and the argument of this thesis. Robert Smirke quickly began working on plans for the reconstruction of Parliament. Traditionally, government and crown building projects were handled by architects attached to the government through the Office of Works, and Smirke was the architect in this role in 1834. It was therefore expected that he would be in charge of handling the new Houses of Parliament. However, according to Port, "It was an age in which old restrictions were being abolished," and this apparently applied to traditional architecture processes as well.[45] London's newspapers clamored for a different approach than the conventional in-house appointment of Smirke: a public design competition. The proposal gathered support from the public and across parties of Parliament. Notably, Sir Edward Cust, a former Tory Member of Parliament (MP) wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel in 1835.[46] This could be due to his known disapproval of Smirke himself and the Office of Works in general, but in the letter, Cust argued for a competition. Joseph Hume, Radical MP and leader of the 1831 and 1833 renovation efforts, also supported an open system, and the conservative newspaper *The Morning Herald* pushed the idea. In the end, their collective efforts were successful and although Smirke had already finished a set of designs, the rebuilding committees for Lords and Commons decided to hold a public competition to be judged by a specially appointed Royal Commission. The competition was advertised in the *London Gazette* on July 21, 1835.[47]

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[45] Port, *Parliament,* 2.
[46] Sir Robert Cooke, *The Palace of Westminster: Houses of Parliament* (London: Burton Skira Ltd., 1987), 76-77.
[47] "The New Houses of Parliament: Notice to Architects," *London Gazette,* July 21, 1835. Numb. 19290, 1399.

One very important debate concerned the location of the building: should the Houses of Parliament be rebuilt on the original site, or should it relocate, starting fresh with a new site and building? When the competition rules were released, it was stated that architects must design a new building on its original site, but not everyone was in agreement about that idea. The conversation took place both in Parliament itself and in the pages of London's newspapers and publications, but the minutes of a debate in the House of Commons on February 9, 1836, provide an excellent summary of the ideas and arguments held by both sides.

Those advocating for the retention of Parliament at Westminster highlighted the fact that Parliament had operated on the same, hallowed ground for centuries. The state owned the land already, and there was a usable amount of space that had survived the fire. At the time, the Law Courts were also located at Westminster, so removal would break that connection. The Palace of Westminster was in a district of important public and royal structures, like the Abbey and Whitehall Palace, which was both convenient and empowering. However, this is where the benefits of the original site in terms of practicality and convenience end. The major draws of keeping Parliament there were based on historic attraction and connection. Mr. Thomas Attwood MP for Birmingham, emphasized the history of the site in his argument:

> The historical associations of six hundred years ought not to be disregarded in the choice of a situation for the new Houses of Parliament, nor that any unnecessary departure should be made from a spot so intimately connected with the liberties of the people of England as the present. The Houses of Parliament had stood on their present site for nearly six hundred years, and [Attwood] hoped they would stand on it for six hundred years to come.[48]

[48] *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 09 February 1836, vol. 31, 242.

Attwood was not alone in his beliefs. He was supported by Sir Robert Peel, Prime Minister at the time of the fire.[49] There was also the fact that the design competition had already commenced, and the architects had planned around the Westminster site.

Advocates for removal had focused more closely on concerns of practicality and functionality. The original site was flawed. Bordering the "slimy shore" of the Thames, it occupied low ground and was notoriously damp with unhealthy air.[50] The surrounding area was densely populated and always busy, which clogged transportation routes. This concentrated buildup and the high roofs Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall blocked a significant amount of sunlight, casting Parliament into shadow before it was actually dark outside—according to Joseph Hume, this cost Parliament up to an hour and a half of light each day.[51] Hume was the main proponent of seeking a new location for the governmental body, and he was the one to introduce the argument:

> [Hume] thought it would be better to remove the Houses of Parliament to St. James's Park, to some elevated situation…let Gentlemen contrast the present buildings on an area of about 4,000 feet in length, and some 340 in depth, with the Abbey and the Hall overlooking them. Let them contrast this with a handsome building on the site of St. James's Palace, or on the two or three acres of Marlborough House and gardens. They would be there as quiet as in the present situation; with the advantages of better air and more light. The position would also be more convenient to five-sixths of the Members as well as to the public. At present the Houses were out of every one's way.[52]

Several other MPs agreed with Hume about the inconvenient location of the existing site, such as Lord Robert Grosvenor, representing Chester, who claimed that upon consulting a list of twenty addresses of his colleagues, nineteen of them lived in places that were difficult to travel to

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[49] *Hansard* 09 February 1836, 243.
[50] "Archilochus," *What Style?*, 20.
[51] *Hansard* 09 February 1836, 236.
[52] *Hansard* 09 February 1836, 237.

Westminster from.[53] St. James's Palace, as Hume had suggested, was a more fashionable and convenient site with more room. The buildings that had survived the fire clogged the original location, limiting what could be done in a reconstruction. The preexisting conditions of the site would have made it difficult to start over in a way that would allow architects and engineers to fully resolve the space and circulation issues that had plagued the ancient building. This would not be an issue in a new, open site like St. James's or Green Park (a location suggested by *The Westminster Review*).[54] Figure 10 depicts a design by Sidney Smirke for a grand, classical Parliament House in Green Park, showing the possibilities presented by a totally different situation. Other proposals promoted the Trafalgar Square area, which would place the government in conversation with other important national institutions like the National Gallery and make it generally more central within the city.

Ultimately, the advocates for keeping Parliament at Westminster won the debate. In part, this was due to the fact that the design process had already begun, and architects had already submitted their proposals. Hume suggested a new competition, but that was futile.[55] The debates and other contemporary sources reveal the power of the historic associations at Westminster, which seems to be the most important factor in its retention of the site. Hume had argued that the fire had destroyed too much of the remaining historical association, but others disagreed. The soil manifested the great age of the country's legislature. In the words of curator Andrea Fredericksen, "[The committees] believed that by working with and reinforcing the area's ancient character, the complex would provide a necessary connection with the past that would at once trigger the spectator's ancestral ties with Old England, and underline the continuity of the

[53] *Hansard* 09 February 1836, 242.
[54] Fredericksen, "Politics of Place," 109.
[55] *Hansard* 09 February 1836, 242.

British Parliament."[56] This is important for the development of this thesis, because it relates to how the Select Committee framed using historicist styles in the architectural fabric of the building. There was a void in communal, national sentiment as people moved on from their wartime unity, and this new building was an opportunity to grab the country's attention and remind them of the age and greatness of their state. The decision to retain the historic site when practicality dictated that removal would be better demonstrates an awareness of the power of historical connection-something that would be utilized again by the Select Committees.

The Competition

The Commons' Select Committee for Rebuilding reached an agreement on the competition question in the early summer of 1835. A report from its meeting on June 3rd of that year stated: "it is expedient that the design for the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament be left open to general competition."[57] On June 15th, the Lords approved the measure.[58] It was announced to the public via *The London Gazette* on July 21st, and it was open to all. Anyone could enter as long as they were willing to purchase a copy of the "particulars," which included the site plan and design requirements from the Office of Works, for one pound. The competition had some important rules, laid out in these particulars. The rules primarily concerned the dimensions of the building and the allocation of space inside. The Select Committee's report from June 3rd includes a chart, to be given to entrants, that reveals the exact sizes, functions, and quantities of rooms required for the Lords, Commons, and the Palace operations. The

[56] Fredericksen, "Politics of Place," 111.
[57] "Report from the select committee on rebuilding Houses of Parliament; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix." London: Select Committee on Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament, 1835. [RIBA: SR 725.11(42.1)//GRE (5).]
[58] *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 15 June 1835, vol. 28, 774-9.

lithographed site plan that came with the particulars is found in Figure 11. It lays out the available space, showing the limitations enforced by the buildings that had survived the fire and the preexisting streets. It also contains two points marked with the symbol of a "V" inscribed inside a circle on what looks like an existing path along the bottom of the lithograph. These indicate two of the three vantage points from which perspective drawings of designs were allowed. The graphic regulations for the contest were quite strict. Designers had to include complete sets of elevations and plans for each floor, but no perspectives other than from these two specific points and one at the far end of Westminster Bridge would be allowed. Architects were not to use any color in their drawings, and the scale was set at twenty feet to an inch. No models of any kind would be accepted. In addition, entries were to be kept anonymous, competitors marking their drawings with a symbol or pseudonym of their choice. In order to expedite the design process, the commissioners did not require architects to include cost estimates in their schemes. Pricing would be handled after the final design was selected. The most important rule, of course, for this thesis, was that "the style of the building be either Gothic or Elizabethan."[59] This mandate seemed to shock people. As discussed earlier, at this time the city was dominated by classicism, but the Select Committee had very intentionally departed from this in favor of Gothic or Elizabethan inspiration. The significance of this requirement and how it was received is the subject of the next chapter.

The contest would be judged by a group of specially appointed "amateur" (not professional architects) commissioners: Member of Parliament and commissioner chair Charles Hanbury Tracy, the Hon. Thomas Liddell, Sir Edward Cust, and George Vivian. Hanbury Tracy

[59] "Report from the select committee on rebuilding Houses of Parliament; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix." London: Select Committee on Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament, 1835. [RIBA: SR 725.11(42.1)//GRE (5).]

and Liddell were known as Gothic enthusiasts, and Liddell was an amateur architect. Cust was the outspoken advocate for holding this competition, so his appointment made sense. Vivian had written a few pamphlets about London's architectural improvement and was an expert on the Picturesque movement that aligned with the early Gothic Revival.[60] Though this collection of men would have been quite knowledgeable about architecture and Gothic design, they were representative of a kind of "old guard," something that will be discussed as part of the politics of the Gothic mandate in the next chapter.

After all entries had been collected December 1st, the commissioners were to review them and choose five finalists. Each finalist would be awarded the attractive fee of £500, and the winner would be chosen from this five and receive £1000 if he was not then selected to manage the project.[61] The competition proved to be immensely popular, despite the controversial style decision. In the end, ninety-seven entries were submitted for consideration, and the commissioners had to extend their own review deadline because they could not get through them all in the fifteen days allotted.[62] Participant Peter Thompson, who published his entry along with some commentary about the competition experience in 1836, felt that the situation inspired a wide variety of people to take a stab at the design. He emphasized how "national" the process was in its openness:

> The work for which the designs were required was, in the fullest sense of the word, a NATIONAL one; every person who pleased might send in a design; and in a competition where many architects of distinguished reputation must necessarily be unsuccessful, a candidate who ranks himself no higher than a Carpenter or Builder would not be likely to feel either disappointed or mortified if his designs should be found among the eighty or ninety sets which are sure to be declined.[63]

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[60] Port, *Parliament,* 26.
[61] "Report from the select committee on rebuilding Houses of Parliament; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix." London: Select Committee on Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament, 1835. [RIBA: SR 725.11(42.1)//GRE (5).]
[62] Port, *Parliament,* 41.
[63] Thompson, *Designs for New Houses of Parliament*, i-ii.

In Thompson's opinion, fear of the shame in losing this contest was not something that would deter anyone from entering, because everyone who lost would be in excellent company. He did not expect that his design would be selected, but nonetheless thought that it was important for him to submit his ideas as a sort of architectural duty to his country, which connects this building to a sense of architectural nationalism. Thompson was correct that many great architects would lose the competition—only four designs ended up being selected as finalists, instead of the five that had been promised. The commissioners reportedly could not choose a fifth that was on par with the others, something they would be criticized for afterward.[64] In 1836, there was an exhibition at the National Gallery of all the entries into the competition, and the catalogue that accompanied it allowed each architect to describe his vision and explain his choices. It reveals the variety of ways that individuals interpreted the Gothic-or-Elizabethan stipulation, though it was clear that Gothic was the main choice. Only a few entrants made an attempt at an Elizabethan design, and most of the debate was focused on the Gothic. This could be because "Elizabethan architecture cannot be defined, the Examples all differing" (according to C.R. Cockerell, designer of one of just a few Elizabethan schemes).[65] Figure 12 shows Cockerell's design, reportedly based on the Royal Hospital at Greenwich.[66]

The Victors: Barry and Pugin

On February 8th, 1836 (the day before Hume sparked the new debate on changing the site of the building) First Commissioner of Woods and Works Lord Viscount Duncannon announced to the House of Lords that the Commissioners had made a decision on the competition results a

[64] Port, *Parliament,* 41.
[65] Caption for figure 29 in Port, *Parliament,* 37.
[66] Caption for figure 29 in Port, *Parliament,* 37.

week before, and it had been approved by King William IV.[67] The winner of the competition was London architect Sir Charles Barry. Born on May 23, 1795, Barry was a true local to this site—he grew up mere steps away from the Palace of Westminster at 2 Bridge Street.[68] Well-known and respected by this phase in his career, Barry was capable of working in both classical and Gothic modes—though he was more comfortable with classical, such as his Travelers' and Reform Clubs in Pall Mall. His design, submitted under the symbol of the portcullis and assigned number sixty-four, was based on the Perpendicular strain of Gothic, and it is essentially what exists on the site now, though some minor changes occurred. The building is intricate in its detailing but quite simple in its massing and logic, especially when viewed from the Thames. Enormous towers on either end provide height and drama, shown in the west front view of Figure 13. There are a few peaks in the middle, but overall the long façade is comparatively low and regular, which allows the eye to dance across the great elevation. The façade is neatly organized into bays by thin turrets between the large windows, which are tidily bound horizontally by heavy stringcourses between the two main floors and the entablature. This gives the strong horizontal form some wispy vertical dynamics. On the north side of the complex, Barry left more irregularity, as his design had to accommodate the structures that had survived the blaze, like Westminster Hall (Figure 14). The choice to follow the Perpendicular tradition, in particular, suggests that the Perpendicular design of the Chapel of Henry VII in the Abbey served as inspiration, and Barry's choice of the portcullis as his mark reinforces this, as it is a major motif in the chapel.[69]

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[67] *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 08 February 1836, vol. 31, 145.
[68] Caroline Shenton, *Mr. Barry's War: Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament After the Great Fire of 1834* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 17-18.
[69] Alexandra Wedgwood, "The New Palace of Westminster," in *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, Architecture,* ed. Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (London: Merrell, 2000), 115.

The commissioners of the competition made it clear that Barry's design was leaps and bounds ahead of any other, but this did not protect their decision from more controversy. After learning the results, several participants complained that the decision had been unfair. In an open letter to Lord Viscount Duncannon, competitor Thomas Hopper, with the support of other entrants, argued that Barry had not complied with the rules of the competition, as he had submitted extra drawings and had not allocated the space as required. The commissioners were accused of favoritism, alleging that some had known which entry was Barry's. Nevertheless, the commissioners proceeded with Barry's design after he made some minor alterations, and the concerns were never fully resolved.

Barry was not working on this design alone. In preparing his design, Barry enlisted the help of a relatively unknown young architect named Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. Born March 1st, 1812, Pugin was the son of Auguste Charles Pugin, the French immigrant who worked on illustrations for Gothic texts in the 1820s and 1830s. Growing up with a father so immersed in medieval aesthetic studies, it is no wonder that Pugin junior became the Gothic master that he did. Widely considered to be one of the originators of the Victorian Gothic Revival, the younger Pugin is also known for his influential writings, such as *Contrasts,* published in 1836. He was a capable enough architect, but his greatest talents lay in his knowledge of Gothic detail and his incredible drawing skills. A fascinating character, known for his genius, his "madness," and his tragic demise at the young age of forty, Pugin was impulsive and passionate.[70]

Pugin is also very interesting for his decision to convert to Catholicism in 1834. As this was after the Emancipation Act of 1829, he was not legally discriminated against, but some people did view him and his choices with suspicion, such as a woman who reportedly refused to

[70] Clark, *Essay,* 122-123.

remain in a train car with him after seeing him perform the sign of the cross over his chest.[71] Nonetheless, the increased official tolerance of Catholicism meant that there was a new market for building Catholic churches, a task for which Pugin was highly sought after. It is also interesting to consider why Pugin felt so strongly about Catholicism. It seems that in part, his decision to convert came out of the connection he had with studying Gothic churches, which began their lives as Catholic buildings in the Middle Ages. An anecdote about Pugin's conversion appears in Kenneth Clark's 1928 book *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste*: after taking a tour of western England in 1834 and seeing the state of the Protestant churches there, Pugin was very disappointed and disenchanted with Anglicanism. He wrote to a friend, telling him, "I assure you that after a most close and impartial investigation, I feel perfectly convinced that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one, and the only one in which the grand and sublime style can ever be restored. A very good chapel is now building in the North, and when it is complete I certainly think I shall recant."[72] Soon after, he did convert and remained a follower of Catholicism for the remainder of his life.

It is unclear how much the public knew about Pugin's involvement at the Houses of Parliament. After both men were dead, their sons, both architects as well, battled via pamphlets and books about whose father was the true architect of the Houses of Parliament. At the time of the competition and the design process, Barry got most of the glory. Pugin's role in the design was far less emphasized. It was not uncommon for a more established architect to hire a younger man at the beginning of his career to help with the drawing and design, and Pugin served this role for Barry. However, according to Clark, Barry might have been a bit embarrassed about the arrangement, because he is reported to have tried to hide the fact that Pugin was so involved,

[71] Clark, *Essay* 126.
[72] Clark, *Essay*, 125-6.

especially after Pugin began growing famous in his own right.[73] Whether or not these rumors are true, the question of how well-known Pugin's involvement in the project was is important when considering his shocking decision to convert to Catholicism. Since it seems that it was not very widely known (at least in the beginning) that Pugin was working with Barry, one cannot know whether Pugin's Catholicism would have mattered to people that he, a Catholic, was producing all the visible detail of their new national edifice.

This partnership was cleverly arranged in terms of architecture. Indeed, due to Pugin's drawing skills and knowledge of Gothic detail, he is thought to have designed the appearance of essentially all of what is visible on the interior and exterior of the new Houses of Parliament. All the paneling, every carved molding, piece of tracery, and every ceiling rosette is all Pugin, in addition to the furniture and much of the décor. An array of drawings survives in Pugin's hand that show the amount of thought and planning that went into each element of the project; some of these drawings are found in Figure 15. Barry was the overall designer, but his mastery came in planning. Though apparently comfortable enough with Gothic motifs and design, he was really a classical architect at heart. The new Houses of Parliament are essentially classically planned, but coated in a rich layer of historicist, Gothic detail. This blend represents the strengths of these two men, and probably is part of why this design won. The detail is over-the-top when one looks closely, but the overall scheme of the building is strictly regimented. The internal design is simple and geometric, and the exterior facades are Gothic, but the Perpendicular mode chosen lent itself well to an organized structure as the vertical turrets divide the long façade into neat bays (Figure 16). Barry's logical planning restrained Pugin's fanciful Gothic, and Pugin's mastery of these details helped Barry's rational floor and site plan dazzle the Commissioners.

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[73] Clark, *Essay,* 129-132.

The Houses of Parliament as designed by Barry and Pugin captured the nationalist spirit that was needed with its bold Gothic imagery, but it was a sensible choice for a government building due to its ultimately classical spatial organization.

CHAPTER THREE: WHY GOTHIC?

In this final chapter, the meaning behind the controversial choice to rebuild Parliament in a Gothic or Elizabethan style will be unraveled. Why did the Select Committee make this choice? How did people receive it? Because the Select Committee did not produce a defense of their decision, there is no official statement of intent, so one cannot know what they were thinking with certainty. Therefore, the "reasons" identified are sourced primarily from open letters and pamphlets published by both champions and opponents of using a historicist style for the new Houses of Parliament. These letters were generally directed to specific recipients, but they were published as pamphlets or newspaper articles for public consumption. The open format invited responses from people other than those to whom the letters are addressed, and these responses typically appeared in the same published format. Responses usually served as rebuttals to the original authors, and the points made in these stilted conversations reveal a great deal about how people understood and perceived architecture. Though they differ on points of view and overall purpose in writing, as a group, they show an awareness of the potential power of architecture to communicate meaning through style. The information uncovered in these letters and gleaned from the greater context of the situation indicates that the Select Committee's choice to require historic styles indicates that the choices was deeply rooted in the need to unify the country with something "national" when the basis of the preexisting British identity was disintegrating. The overwhelmingly historic building that Barry and Pugin ultimately produced is strongly nationalistic and is filled with visual cues suggesting unity and glory in Britishness.

Public Debates: Hamilton and Jackson

In 1836, William Richard Hamilton published his first of three letters addressed to Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, MP and trustee of the British Museum. Hamilton, a British antiquarian and diplomat and former private secretary to the Earl chose Elgin as his recipient not in order to convince him of the merits of classicism, but because he saw him as a champion of the classical who could lend support to his cause. This cause was that the new Houses of Parliament should not be Gothic or Elizabethan as the competition particulars had mandated. Hamilton's letters are aggressive criticisms of this decision, and in the section that follows, several important quotations are drawn from the text in order to demonstrate the types of arguments that debaters asserted in these conversations about style. He began by introducing the problem:

> I cannot resist the temptation to express to you the regret which I feel in common with many individuals with whom I have conversed upon the subject, that in inviting the competition of the architects, every other style of architecture should have been professedly excluded from the competition, except the Gothic and the Elizabethan: an exclusion which has cramped the genius of many highly gifted individuals, and which seems to have originated in narrow views of the purpose and destination of a science, which has ever been held in the highest rank of the fine arts…There are strong grounds for believing that this is the first instance in the history of the world, in which orders have been issued from the highest authorities in a realm, that a great national public work of this description, in which no religious feeling was concerned, should be executed in a style of bygone times…in which the cultivation of the fine arts had made comparatively small progress, and of which there are no existing examples in this country, (I allude particularly to the Gothic), but of places of divine worship, or erected for monastic or collegiate purposes.[74]

This passage reveals, of course, Hamilton's overall feelings on this issue, but it also points to an important premise of this thesis: that the new Palace of Westminster was "a great national public work." It is important to understand that people did see this building as a national structure. This

[74] Hamilton, William Richard. *Letter from W.R. Hamilton, to the Earl of Elgin, on the New Houses of Parliament,* London: W. Nicol, 1836, 4-5. [Guildhall. PAM 2742.]

language appears in most of the letters and contemporary sources that describe the building. Londoners and Brits in general understood the Houses of Parliament as more than an office building for their representatives. It had a greater meaning as a national, public edifice.

Hamilton followed this introduction with a discussion of why classical architecture is a better choice. For him, perhaps due to his history with Elgin, procurer of the "Elgin Marbles" from the Parthenon in Athens, Grecian architecture reigned supreme, though most of his peers preferred the slightly less severe Roman classicism. These arguments centered around the idea that classical modes are more "civilized," appropriate for the developed nation of Great Britain. He saw a return to medieval styles as a regression, not as an exercise in nostalgia. The language of a note in a contemporary pamphlet reveals the attitude many held toward Gothic design: "We have also passed by without notice of Sir R[obert] Smirke's designs in the Gothic styles; first, because we do not attach the same importance to architecture of the barbarous as to that of the polished ages."[75] The Middle Ages, (the time when Gothic architecture proliferated widely) were considered the "dark ages" and associated with the idea of barbarism. Classical styles, which had their Renaissance resurgence afterward, were viewed as the antithesis to this dark barbarism.

Hamilton also introduced a few of the arguments that he had heard in support of the Gothic, in order to refute them. One of the most commonly-cited reasons to retain the Gothic was that the new building needed to blend in with the existing fabric in the area.

> In making use of the expression 'a doubtful view of useless consistencies,' I allude to the supposed reason, for which the Gothic style was one of the two, to which the competitors were limited, namely the presumed necessity of the new building harmonizing with the three adjoining monuments, Westminster Hall, the Abbey, and St. Stephen's Chapel: but that this principle was not considered as absolutely indispensable is evident from the alternative offered, of the Elizabethan style, which, as generally understood, has little or nothing in common with the character of any one of the three buildings above named. But wherein does this

[75] George Olivier, *Prospects of Art on the Future Parliament House: With Notices on Some of the Recent Buildings of the Metropolis* (London: Roarke and Varty, 1835), 33-34. [RIBA: Early Works, e.g. 676]

> necessity exist at all? it would be difficult to prove it by any reasoning *a priori*, and there are many historical precedents against it.[76]

This is a really interesting section of the letter, because just after this statement, Hamilton went on to give examples of how past additions to this building and others (namely Inigo Jones's classical front on the then-Gothic St Paul's Cathedral before the Great Fire of 1666) did not adhere to strict stylistic continuity. The desire to have a cohesive, matching complex had not stopped earlier architects from working in whatever style felt appropriate for the time, so Hamilton wondered why it would be so important in this case. This is a good point, which suggests that there was actually something else at stake: the desire held by Parliament to facilitate the cultivation of a national identity. It was not Gothic just to match Westminster Hall and Abbey—it was Gothic because that was understood as a national style, familiar to people across the British Isles, and the country was lacking national cohesion.

To Hamilton, historic sentiment was insufficient incentive for regression to such an outdated, uncivilized form. He did acknowledge this as an argument he had heard in support of the Committee's response and complained that other building typologies had been allowed to develop despite their functions originating in historic moments, but Parliament was being held to its medieval history:

> We are sometimes told that because the projected building is for the Houses of Parliament, it ought to be in harmony with the period of time, when these were first established, or more properly confirmed, as the guardians of our constitution…We have, to be sure, a wide range and ample choice between the days of the *Wittenagemote* and the passing of the Reform Bill. But upon this principle, which would put an end to all hopes of improvement in taste, and stifle every attempt at originality, our theatres ought to be constructed as they were in the days of Shakespeare, our courts of justice should be on the model of those which were founded by Alfred…our town halls should revive to us the taste of the days, in which municipalities were first imported from Italy into England, our

[76] Hamilton, *Letter to Elgin,* 12-13.

> churches would represent the subterranean caverns of the primitive ages, and the royal palaces must ever have remained shapeless and gloomy castles.[77]

This collection of passages is intended to establish an awareness of the kinds of arguments presented by those who were outraged by the Select Committee's decision to require Gothic or Elizabethan designs for the new Palace of Westminster.

Turning to one who supported the Select Committee's mandate, a colonel named J.R. Jackson published a lengthy response to Hamilton in 1837. Jackson's connection to the architectural world is unknown, but his response was a skilled defense of the Select Committee's choice that incorporates architecture, history, and literature. He systematically addressed about a dozen of Hamilton's main points, quoting each directly and then explaining his response in arguments heavily focused on the importance of nationalism and patriotism in the context of British society. He stated that he agreed with Hamilton that classical architecture has many merits, and that he himself enjoyed it, but that in the case of the new Houses of Parliament, Gothic was the right choice. Jackson's most compelling passage is quoted below in full, because his specific language is important to note:

> The Gothic is eminently English in every respect: by its early adoption and very general use for ages, and by its having been brought to the greatest perfection in this country. It is the architecture of our history and our romance. Our kings of old held court in Gothic structures. In buildings of a similar character our British barons held their lordly revels, or, in times of feudal warfare, aided by their kinsmen and valiant vassals, withstood the assaults of rival chiefs. In Gothic halls, our ancestors met in council to frame laws, and weigh affairs of state. The seat of every great event of England's olden time is connected, in some way or other, with the pointed arch; and, as I have said, our very romance is of Gothic connexion.
>
> Murders, ghosts, midnight noises, banditti, persecuted damsels, high-born dames, and gentle pages, knights, and squires, and all the tales of wonder that charmed us in our early youth, are connected in our minds with Gothic vaults, and keeps, and watch-towers, and dungeons, and subterranean passages, and oriel windows, and latticed casements; and though certainly no reason this of itself to warrant a

[77] Hamilton, *Letter to Elgin,* 17.

> preference of Gothic architecture for a House of Parliament, it goes to prove that we are intimate with Gothic forms, and that they constitute in our minds very positively, though perhaps unconsciously, a connecting link in that great chain of associations which bind us still more closely to our country. Gothic forms are like old friends: we love them rather in consequence of our long intimacy, than for their beauty; though pure Gothic has striking beauties. Thus, then, it appears to me, that a patriotic, which is little less than a religious feeling, is intimately connected with our determinations regarding the style of architecture of the Houses of Parliament; and that the Gothic style, being, for many reasons, peculiarly familiar to us, is more national than any other; and, in consequence, the most appropriate for the building in question; and, further, that this being the style of by-gone times, so far from being any disparagement, is, on the contrary, an additional reason for its exclusive adoption. We should religiously cherish the recollections of, and nourish a warm feeling for, every thing which brings to mind the time when England had virtues to be proud of, though steam and railroads were unknown.[78]

This quotation encapsulates everything about the nationalist sentiment attached to Gothic architecture. From the first line, Jackson claimed that the Gothic is English at its core. It is a national style because it is so prevalent in the minds and memories of those who live in Britain. In the early nineteenth century, peoples' lives were saturated by references to Gothic aesthetics and moods, and even if not everyone liked it, everyone was familiar with it. The Gothic Revival was an opportunity to resurrect some of that communal memory in a fractured society—notice that Jackson only speaks of England, not "Britain" when writing this in 1837, almost four decades after Ireland's addition to the Union, and 130 years after the merger with Scotland. His word choice is in line with the divisions within Great Britain that existed for centuries, but that, according to Linda Colley, were temporarily pushed from people's minds in favor of thinking of themselves as "Britons" when faced with a fierce common enemy. Jackson's diction shows that this "British" identity had been shaken.

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[78] Jackson, J.R. *Observations on a Letter from W.R. Hamilton...to the Earl of Elgin on the New Houses of Parliament*. (London: John Weale, 1837), 16-17.

Public Debates: Hakewill and Pugin

Another conversation can be found between architect/architectural writer A. W. Hakewill and co-designer of the Houses of Parliament himself, A.W.N. Pugin. Their conversation covers many of the same topics as that of Hamilton and Jackson, so this discussion will be less detailed, but it is important because it involves a direct defense from Pugin. Hakewill published his opinion in an unaddressed pamphlet in 1835. He declared his position at the beginning of the text:

> To the want of a sufficiently defined taste in matters of art must be attributed to the extraordinary question now pending as to which of the two styles of building, the Classic or the Gothic, is most suited to the character of a Senate House, now about to be added to the architectural embellishments of this capital.[79]

This quotation is included due to Hakewill's use of the term "senate house" for the Houses of Parliament. He used this term throughout the essay, and it is a term that also appears in some of the early arguments by reformists like Joseph Hume, particularly in conversations regarding a parliamentary building in a fully new location. This phrasing is really interesting. The "Senate" was a governing body of ancient Rome, and this association suggests a connection with the classical world, but also potentially with a more democratic form of government, since many modern legislatures are dubbed senates.

One of Pugin's main points of contention with Hakewill's letter was the statement that the Gothic was growing more obsolete by the day, "unsuited as it is to prevailing sentiment of an age so enlightened."[80] As one of the key figures in the early Victorian Gothic Revival, it is unsurprising that Pugin took offense to this statement. He fired back:

> I feel confident you speak only as you wish, not as you think, when you state that Gothic Architecture is becoming daily more obsolete—an observation which I do

[79] Arthur William Hakewill. *Thoughts upon the Style of Architecture to Be Adopted in Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament*. Pamphlet. (London: John Weale, 1835), 5. [Guildhall. PAM 3324.]
[80] Hakewill, *Thoughts,* 7-8.

> not hesitate to say is decidedly false. Allow me to ask any person at all conversant with ancient architecture to look on the erections of fifty years ago, and even much less in the style then termed Gothic, and many of those in the present day, and will they not answer, that Gothic has made a prodigious stride toward its restoration?[81]

Pugin also made an important statement about climate and suitability in his response to Hakewill. Climate and suitability are some of the more "scientific" arguments behind the Gothic Revival—Renaissance classicism, brought into England by Inigo Jones, is the cultural product of a warm, dry, Mediterranean climate.[82] The British Isles have a significantly different environment-cool and damp, with far less sun. The Gothic therefore, as an early development in England, even if it did originally come from the continent, as will be discussed, is much more suited to a British environment. It is more contained, with less emphasis on porches and porticos. The steep pitched roofs shed precipitation and the tight windows managed chill.

There are many letters like Hamilton's and Hakewill's that utilize similar arguments, but there are relatively few like Jackson's and Pugin's. This goes to show how surprising and unpopular the mandate was at the time it was given. This did not stop the Select Committee and Commissioners from proceeding with the plan, as Barry and Pugin's Gothic Palace stands on the banks of the Thames today. The collection of public letters shows how people responded to the competition and alerts readers to the deeper issues that provoked the construction of a Gothic Houses of Parliament in the 1830s and 1840s. These issues are examined below.

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[81] Pugin, A.W.N. *A Letter to A.W. Hakewill, Architect, in Answer to His Reflections on the Style for Rebuilding the Houses of Parliament*. (Salisbury: W. B. Brodie and Co, 1835), n.p. [Guildhall. PAM 2738.]
[82] Pugin, *Answer to Hakewill,* n.p.

Gothic is British

The first step in understanding the Houses of Parliament's historicist mandate is understanding that this was seen as a national edifice. It seems somewhat obvious, given that it is the seat of the national government, but that does not always mean that it is how citizens perceive it. In the case of the Houses of Parliament, it was. Almost all of the contemporary voices found within the public letter campaigns make some kind of indication that this is a national building, including Hamilton, as quoted above in his first passage. Considering the new Houses of Parliament to be a national structure raises the stakes on arriving at an appropriate design, and it gives the building great power as a national symbol and an expression of national identity. In deciding that this building would ignore popular culture, which demanded a classical Parliament, and turn to an outdated historic mode, the Select Committee and Commissioners were making a statement that history was a huge part of Britain's identity.

Gothic architecture was also considered a uniquely British style, an idea asserted above by J.R. Jackson. This is not exactly true—the style was not invented in the British Isles. Like classicism, it was imported from the continent, but it happened over five hundred years earlier, and the precedents likely came from more northern parts of the continent, such as Germany and northern France, not Italy. Gothic architecture did have its own independent development process within England, which lends support to the idea that it was unique to Britain. It was true that certain strains of Gothic design did come out of this British context (categorized as Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular Gothic by Rickman in 1819). The characteristics of these specific variants of Gothic differ from that found in Italy, France, and Germany, meaning that they are English in origin. Barry and Pugin employed the Perpendicular at Westminster, which in addition to being a rare mode for the Gothic Revival, made it clear that this was an English

design. The detail on both the interior and exterior of the building incorporates symbols and motifs from all four constituent countries, such as the Tudor rose, the shamrock, the thistle and the lire. This helps ensure that the building is a "British" national structure, not just an "English" one.

Even if the hard facts of the idea that "Gothic is English" (and in this post-unification context, British) are not exactly true, the existence of this sentiment, proven by the voices of Jackson, Hamilton, and Hakewill, is important, because it allows the Gothic to be framed as a national style. Gothic architecture developed in some ways on British soil, but in addition to that, Gothic material is everywhere in Britain. Jackson highlights the presence of medieval forms and reminders in the daily lives of Britons. Remnants of the "original" Gothic Britain were not particularly rare to find since many of the churches and schools Brits attended had Gothic elements. The style was not only found at palaces and soaring city cathedrals—it was integral to the daily lives of many of the country's citizens. In addition to that, Jackson emphasized the presence of the Gothic in literature, connecting the stories Brits knew from childhood to the Gothic scenes in which many were set. These forms are entrenched in the material culture of the British Isles, which makes the Gothic a good candidate for being the "British national style." Employed on the most important public building of the state, this national style would deliver a very strong message of nationalism, unity, and history to the people of Britain in the post-Waterloo dissipation of a collective identity.

Beyond celebrating something special to their own Isles, employing the Gothic on the national Parliament building would help distance Great Britain from its continental neighbors. As mentioned previously, eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain set itself up as the antithesis to France, but this desire was relevant to continental Europe in general. Eager to

celebrate their military and imperial successes, Britons found a new confidence in the 1820s and 1830s. Classical architecture had come from Renaissance Europe. It was foreign at its core, and the proud post-Waterloo Britain did not need to borrow architectural forms from its competitors for their public symbols. Proponents of a Gothic Parliament (as well as general supporters of Gothic Revival) thus used the continental Renaissance origins of the present strain of neoclassicism as evidence that it was a poor choice for the new Parliamentary building. In the early nineteenth century, classicism had been a recognizable and acceptable symbol of confidence and triumph. However, a few decades later, these forms could no longer deliver the same sentiments. The Gothic Revival could, however, in the eyes of its supporters, because it was seen as unique to the British Isles.

Religion was another central factor in the reasoning behind the Gothic Revival's use at the new Parliament, but in an indirect role, and this also relates to the continent. Most of Britain's surviving Gothic architecture was built before the Reformation, when the country was still Catholic. Much of what survived the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the various civil conflicts that followed were the churches, cathedrals, and schools that were rebranded as Anglican and adapted for new worship and teaching. As previously discussed, the early 1830s saw relations with Catholicism move toward tolerance in Britain. This relaxation was crucial to the successful implementation of the Gothic Revival at the new Houses of Parliament. With the reduced suspicion and fear of the Catholic faith, the associations with medieval Catholicism became less of a problem. Free from dangerous Catholic suspicions, Gothic could be reframed as a national style. In terms of the continental associations, Rome, the heart of the classical world, was also the heart of the Roman Catholic world. The classicism that stemmed out of continental Europe was the new form of "Catholic architecture." Furthermore, the original classical

architecture from which Renaissance neoclassicism took its inspiration, was the architecture of a pagan society. Pugin, in his response to Hakewill, referred to classical architecture as "pagan," something he was known to do in other publications as well.[83]

In the 1830s and 1840s, Gothic architecture was revived in London as a "national style." Though not precisely originated in the British Isles, it had taken an independent trajectory resulting in certain special English strains of Gothic characteristics. The daily lives of Britons were inundated with Gothic forms through the buildings they passed each day and the stories and artworks they knew. The negative Catholic associations Gothic architecture had held were shed when being Catholic became more acceptable in 1829. In using Gothic forms for a new national building, the competition organizers turned their backs on continental influence, asserting a confident, uniquely British identity with a Gothic Revival Parliament building.

Politics

In addition to the nationalistic reasons above, it is also likely that political goals were involved in the Select Committee's historicist requirement for the Houses of Parliament. This does not figure into the contemporary letters, but modern scholars such as Sir Robert Cooke and Alexandra Wedgwood have suggested that the decision was influenced by political and social conservatism in the decision-makers. According to Cooke, the decision "was not…made by young visionaries dreaming of the Middle Ages but by hard-headed and tight-fisted Parliamentarians with an eye to catching what they imagined to be the tide of public opinion."[84]

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[83] Pugin, n.p.

[84] Cooke, *Westminster,* 81. Sir Robert Cooke, special advisor to for the Palace of Westminster under the British Department of the Environment in the 1980s, prepared a detailed book about the building's history to date at the time. Interestingly for someone so closely attached to the Palace, the text is quite critical of the political pressures that also may have influenced this decision.

The men who comprised the Select Committee and the Commissioners were not members of the young, progressive sector of the British government. They were old fashioned and generally more conservative in their beliefs. Cooke makes another connection between architectural and political styles, revealing that many of those who had supported Parliamentary reform were also supporters of a classical "senate house"—the term found in Hakewill's letter as well.[85]

The reform advocates Cooke refers to include the Radical Hume and his contemporaries, who, as discussed earlier, argued for a fresh start for Parliament in a totally new location. Hume and his followers pushed for practicality and functionality for the House of Commons especially, more important than ever after the Reform Act of 1832 had altered the representation structure of the country. The progressives wanted to modernize and democratize the government as much as possible, so a fresh start at a classical "senate house," not a history-themed "palace," would have fit well with their goals. In fact, a fascinating drawing by James Gandy entitled "Design for new Senate Houses in St James's Park, London" (1835) depicts a massive and elaborate classical edifice, located in the precise spot Hume had suggested in 1836 (Figure 15). The park setting is not really visible in the scene, as the background is taken up by an image of the old Houses of Parliament on fire. This drawing, fantasy as it may be, shows how the fire provided an opportunity for a fresh start. However, history and tradition prevailed in the approach to both a new Parliament building and a national identity. Instead of looking forward, those in power looked backward to find something that might push for unity. The location stayed the same, and many of the problems of the old palace were replicated in the new. The Whigs, early claimants of Gothic sentiment through people like Walpole, and the Conservatives both supported a Gothic (or Elizabethan) Parliament. For the Whigs, the mode emphasized the continuity and stability of

[85] Cooke, *Westminster,* 80.

British tradition, connecting the new building to the historic government body. For Tories, the Gothic fit their priorities of maintaining authority and order under traditional systems. It was primarily Radicals like Hume who called for a departure from tradition—in line with the "ancient democracies" they revered (like the Roman Senate)—who fought for a neoclassical Parliament.[86]

Architectural historian David Cannadine has also argued that the reconstruction of the Houses of Parliament was caught in the tensions between conservatism and progressivism at the time. "As conceived and created in the 1840s and 1850s, the Palace of Westminster projected a backward-looking, conservative and exclusive image of the British constitution, in which greater importance was attached to the monarchy and the House of Lords than to the Commons or the electorate."[87] Cannadine is referring to the Reform Act here as well. After 1832, the monarchy and the Lords took a back seat to the Commons in terms of legislative power.

The Completed Building

However, the new building did not reflect these adjusted priorities. The House of Commons, which before the fire was already known to be too small to fit the expanding number of Members, remained cramped even though the new building was supposed to have been constructed with real legislative functionality in mind. The fire had provided an opportunity to have a purpose-built space for a modern government, but in some ways, the new building was very similar to the old converted palace. Indeed, even the retention of the name "The Palace of Westminster" is somewhat telling of the old-guard, noble attachment promoted by the new

[86] W.J. Rorabaugh, "Politics and the Architectural Competition for the New Houses of Parliament, 1834-1837" *Victorian Studies* 17, no. 2 (December, 1973): 156-157.
[87] Cannadine, "Palace of Varieties," 11.

building. According to M.H. Port, though today it is branded as the "Houses of Parliament," in the mid-nineteenth century it was likely called the "New Palace of Westminster."[88] Both names appear in contemporary documents, but the way that the building privileged the monarch and the House of Lords lends support to the idea that this was not the senate house for which progressives like Hume yearned. It was a palace, carefully crafted down to the finest of details to emphasize the glory and age of Great Britain. For example, the monarch's throne in the Chamber of the House of Lords was designed by Pugin. Figure 17 shows the magnificent chair, nestled into an elaborate canopy. The back of the chair bears symbols referencing England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and both the chair and canopy are brilliantly gilded. Above the thrones are crests, crowns, and figures expertly incorporated into Gothic niches and panels. The level of detail from up close is truly overwhelming. From far away, it blends together into a vision of red and gold, but a visit to the Chamber in October 2017 revealed how much detail is packed into this building, and almost all of it is a historic, royal, or United Kingdom reference in some way. Even in the architraves surrounding the large stained glass windows in this same chamber—windows that depict giants of British history like Thomas More and Cardinal Wolsey—have names and words hidden inside what from afar look like geometric patterns.

The Central Lobby, which links the areas dedicated to the Lords and to the Commons, is an octagonal room with a soaring vaulted ceiling, shown in Figure 18. Each of the eight sides of the room is spanned by an enormous pointed arch. Statues of kings and queens from British history line their sides, and carved bosses at the intersections of the ribs contain crests and symbols. Four of the arches have mosaic decorations on their upper levels, which depict important stories related to the patron saint of each of the four countries: St George (England), St

[88] Port, *Parliament,* 1.

David (Wales), St Andrew (Scotland), and St Patrick (Ireland). The scheme was planned by the Fine Arts Commission, a group helmed by Prince Albert to fill in the spaces set aside for artwork in Barry and Pugin's plan. The group made a statement about this particular room sometime after its establishment in 1841: "The [Central Lobby] is the central point of the whole building…the nationality of the component parts of the United Kingdom should be the idea here illustrated."[89] This desire to express unity in the physical environment of the national building shows that its design was an exercise in nation-building. Allusions, references, and symbols of the different aspects of the United Kingdom and its storied history are wrapped in Pugin's Gothic ornament and plastered all over the interior and exterior of the new Palace of Westminster.

The chamber and anterooms of House of Commons do follow the Gothic scheme and contain historical references as well, but the level of splendor is far less than that of the Lords and the monarch's rooms. This is partially because the Commons Chamber was destroyed during the overhead bombing raids of World War II. Rebuilt by Giles Gilbert Scott just after the war ended in 1945, its construction came in a period of austerity as the court struggled to recover from the war. Even so, prior to the bombing it was far less ornate than its counterpart in the House of Lords, and it had remained small and narrow after the fire, as Barry had essentially retained the plan of the ancient St Stephen's Chapel. The space dedicated to the more aristocratic users of the building was clearly favored visually and functionally, with the Commons again stuffed into a room that was too small and still poorly ventilated.[90] This building is a shrine to the glory of British history, especially that of its monarchy. It expresses continuity, not change, and it also shows the desire of the conservative forces to hold onto traditional power structures through the visual design language and the hierarchy of spaces inside. This brand-new

[89] *The Palace of Westminster Official Guide*, 48.
[90] Cannadine, "Palace of Varieties," 15.

Parliament building constructed in a time when the monarchy and aristocracy were losing power to the general population was thickly coated in detail that celebrated the ancient noble ruling classes.

The Gothic or Elizabethan rule laid down by the Select Committee for the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament was primarily inspired by the perception that these (especially Gothic) were national styles. By selecting a historic style that was familiar to all its constituent countries and could be seen as a unique British creation, the new Houses of Parliament would remind Britons of their ancient history and bind them back together in the wake of the loss of their wartime commonality. This decision, however, was also internally motivated by politics, with those in power (the old-guard conservatives) pushing back against reformists who sought to emphasize the role of the House of Commons. The new Houses of Parliament, constructed on the Perpendicular Gothic designs of Barry and Pugin, were an attempt to provide a new nationally-focused architectural identity for the manufactured nation of Great Britain.

Conclusion

The new Palace of Westminster was the first major public Gothic Revival edifice in London, but it was far from the last. The Victorian Gothic continued to develop, and by the time construction actually finished on the new seat of the government, it had been joined by several other Revival buildings across the city. The Royal Courts of Justice, located on the Strand, are one example (Figure 19). They were constructed in the 1860s and 1870s according to a design by George Edmund Street; ironically, the separation of the law courts from Parliament made the hallowed Westminster location even less convenient for the members and lawyers whose convenient can carefully preserved at the rebuilding. James Pennethorne's Public Record Office on Chancery Lane (now King's College's Maughan Library) broke ground in the 1850s and was the home of the national archives until they moved to Kew (Figure 20). The Midland Grand Hotel and St Pancras Train Station, completed by George Gilbert Scott in 1876, are current highlights of Gothic London as well (Figure 21). Gothic in shape and decoration, this huge rail station and hotel complex makes no attempt to hide its modern function. It celebrates modernity and industry while hearkening back to this national style. However, by the time most of these major Gothic projects were finished, the Gothic Revival was already waning in popularity, and it would soon be quite unfashionable. Regardless, this historicist style has left an unmistakable impression on the British capital through the proliferation of it in these massive nineteenth-century public works projects.

The reconstruction of the Houses of Parliament was a pivotal moment in the transition between classical and Gothic modes for major public building projects in the late 1830s through 1860s. The transition was encouraged by the variety of social, political, and religious changes altering how residents of the British Isles understood themselves and their country—in other

words, there was a shift in national identity as the post-victory unity and confidence wore off in the 1830s, and the Gothic Revival, branded as a "national" style, was used to provide Britons with something both unique to them and unifying amongst them in the architecture of this most "national" of buildings, the seat of their government. The shifting national identity of Britain is expressed in the transition between neoclassicism and the Gothic Revival as the primary language for London's major public architecture projects in the mid-nineteenth century. With the new Houses of Parliament, a very intentional choice was made to rebuild in an historic, "British" style.

The language of self-confident expression changed in the mid-nineteenth century because there were subtle changes in what was needed in an "identity"—after the Napoleonic Wars, classicism was used as a clear language of triumph. But as a few more years passed, there was a need for something more uniquely "British." There was no longer a common enemy against which to unite, and the laws and sentiments against Catholicism had relaxed slightly, making reclamation of pre-Reformation architecture as a national symbol possible. It became important to find something more unique to the British Isles and diminish the use of continental forms when Britain was trying to present itself as a dominant world power standing up on its own.[91] During and immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, the classical language allowed for the expression of a triumphant, globally dominant Britain, but after the wartime threat had passed, the Gothic Revival became more popular for its ability to connect to a history that was British above anything else.

The Houses of Parliament are central to the image of London as a city, and to the United Kingdom as a country, with Big Ben as the most readily-available visual symbol of the nation.

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[91] Colley, *Britons,* 169.

Though both Britain and London have changed significantly since the construction of the new Palace of Westminster, this building continues to capture the public's attention and express a message of history, tradition, and confidence.

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ARC/ILL File: Boxes 1-4: Houses of Parliament fire and reconstruction clippings and media.

BAR/1-BAR/20: Collection of drawings for new building, but not all by Pugin or Barry. Most are unsigned. Contains mostly details.

HC/LS/1/114/24: Copy of Plan marked No. 64 in National Gallery Exhibition of Competition Entries. Red line shows the outline of Barry's amended plan superimposed on the original.

HC/LB/1/114/25: Plan showing the opposite of above. Amended interior plans with red line tracing the outline of the original plan.

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WORKS 1/11/1 (1-21): Letters about naming of the commissioners who will review the plans submitted for the competition. Answers to logistical questions from architects.

WORKS 1/11/1 (22-40): Notice to architects announcing the competition and December 1 deadline and telling them to come to the Office of Woods between July 27 and August 29 to get the particulars and site plans for the contest (Document 24). Letters and extracts from the London Times about architects needing more time due to the delay in the Office getting the particulars out to them. Also discussion of suspected favoritism towards Charles Barry.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: One of Turner's paintings of the Palace of Westminster in the midst of the fire.

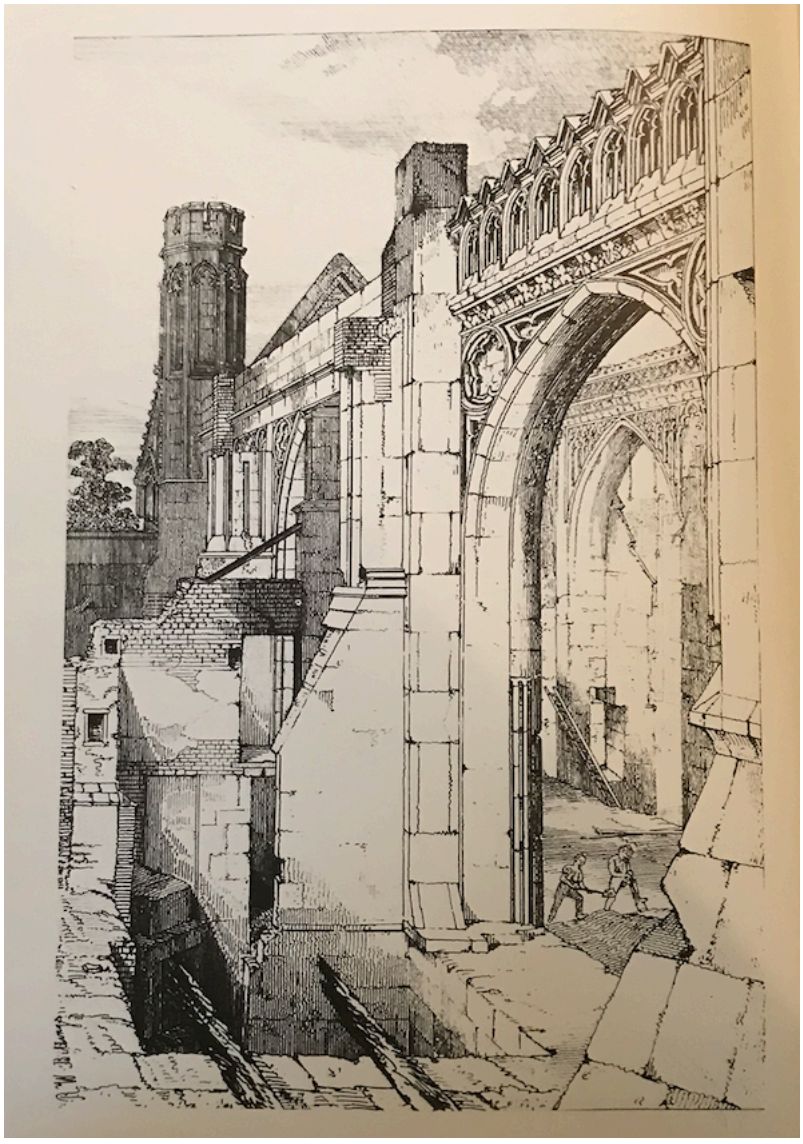

Figure 2: Ruins of St Stephen's Chapel after fire, 1834.

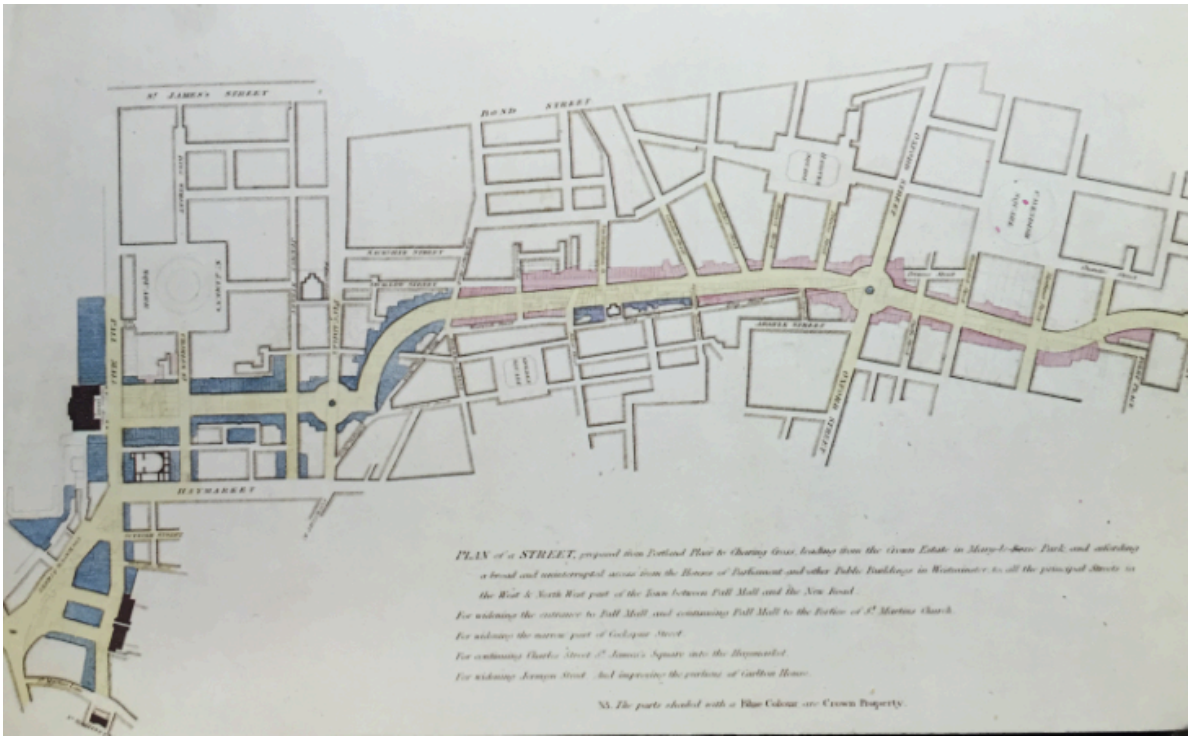

Figure 3: John Nash's Regent's Park and Regent Street Scheme. Final Street Plan, 1813.

Figure 4: Gothic Temple of Liberty, Stowe, Buckinghamshire. James Gibbs, 1740s.

Figure 5: Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, 1750s.

Figure 6: St. Luke's Church, Chelsea. James Savage, 1824. One of the Gothic "Waterloo Churches" from the 1818 First Church Building Act.

Figure 7: Old Palace of Westminster, seen from across the Thames in 1808.

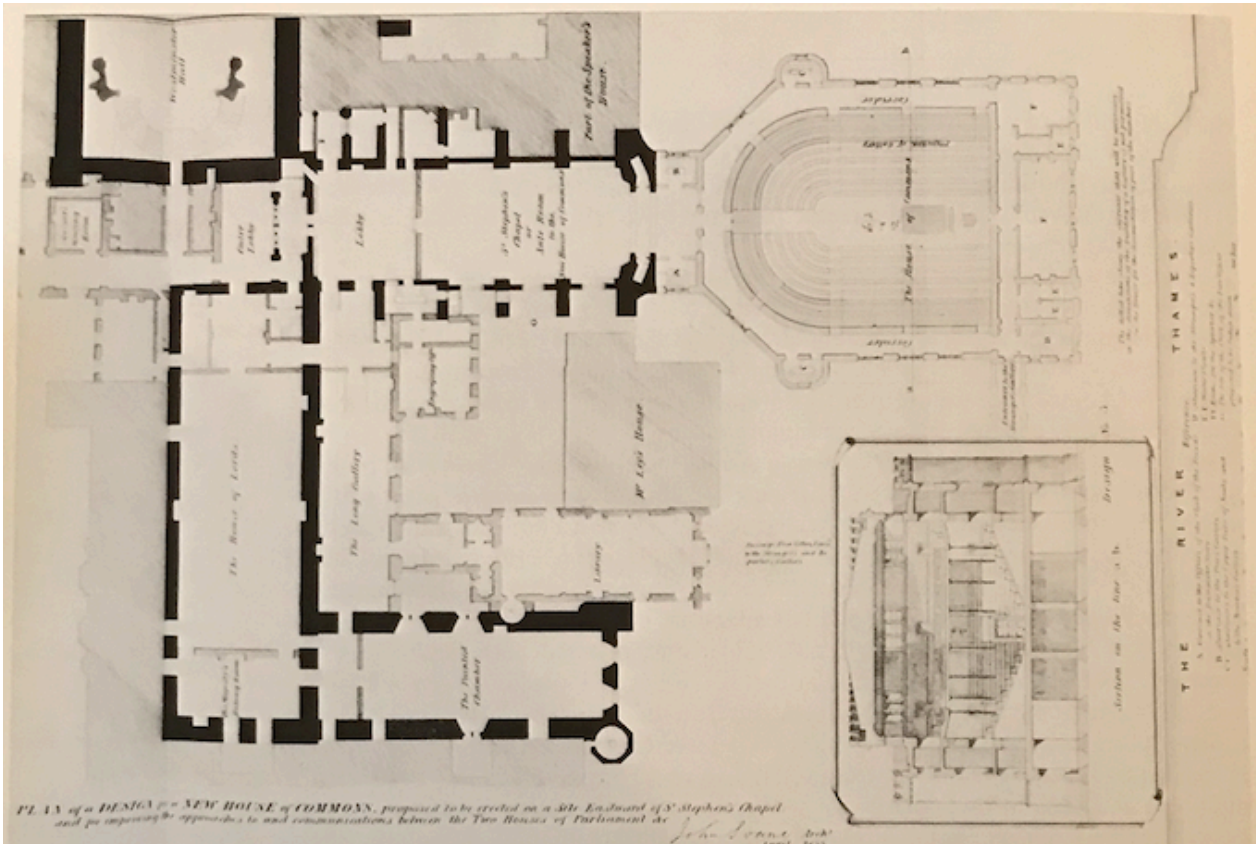

Figure 8: Sir John Soane's plans for a new House of Commons in 1833.

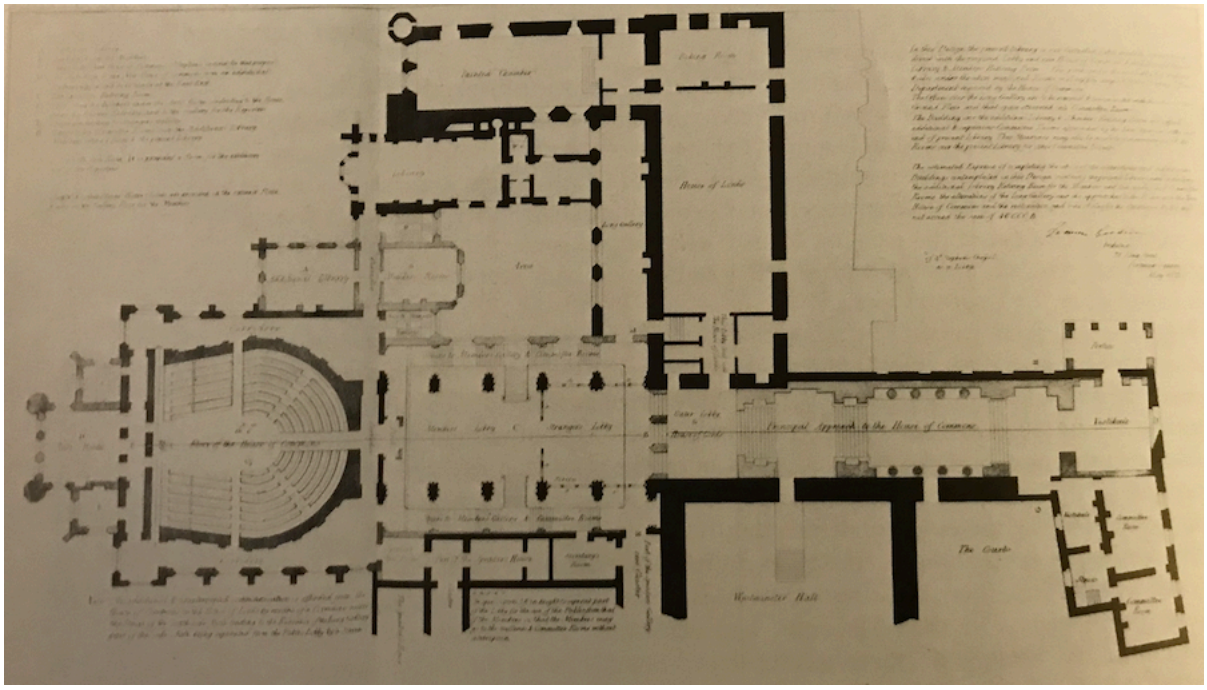

Figure 9: Francis Goodwin's plan for a new House of Commons in 1833. Note amphitheater-style hall in both Soane and Goodwin plan. Very different model from that of reusing St Stephen's Chapel.

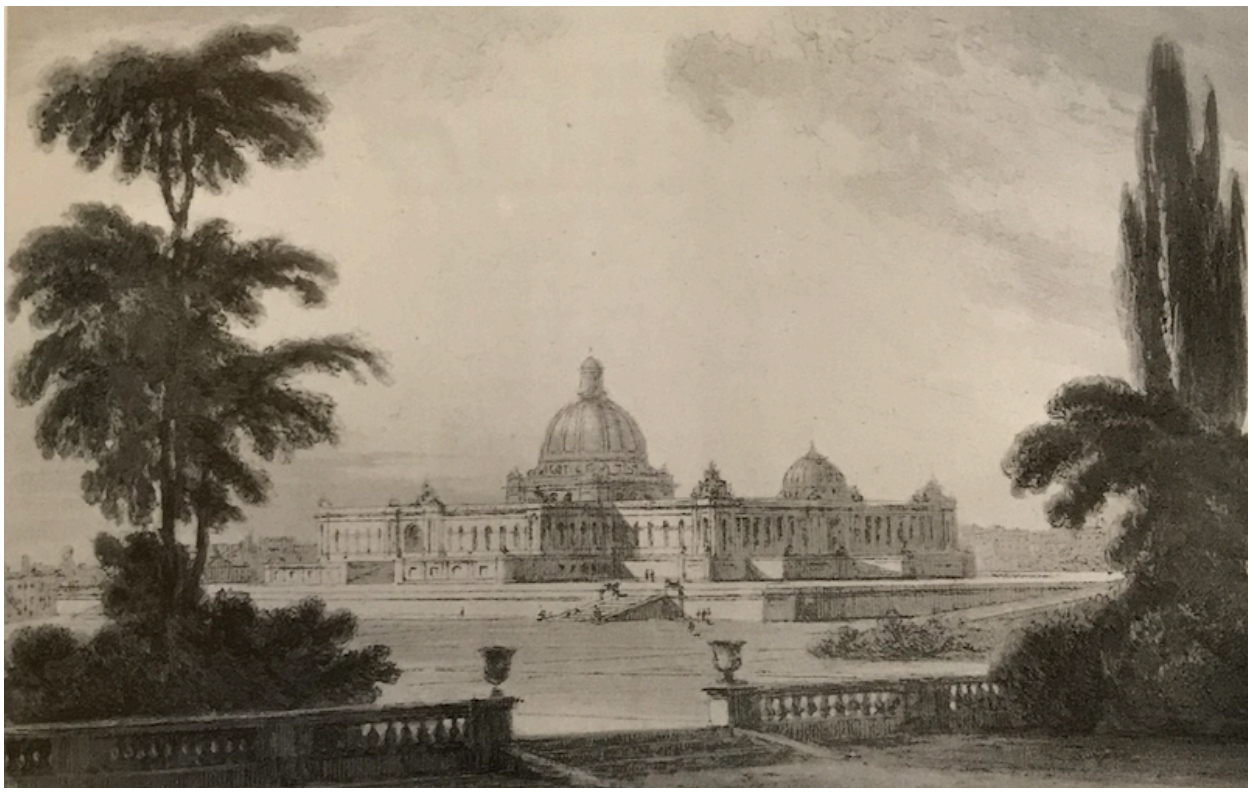

Figure 10: Sidney Smirke's vision for a classical Senate House in Green Park.

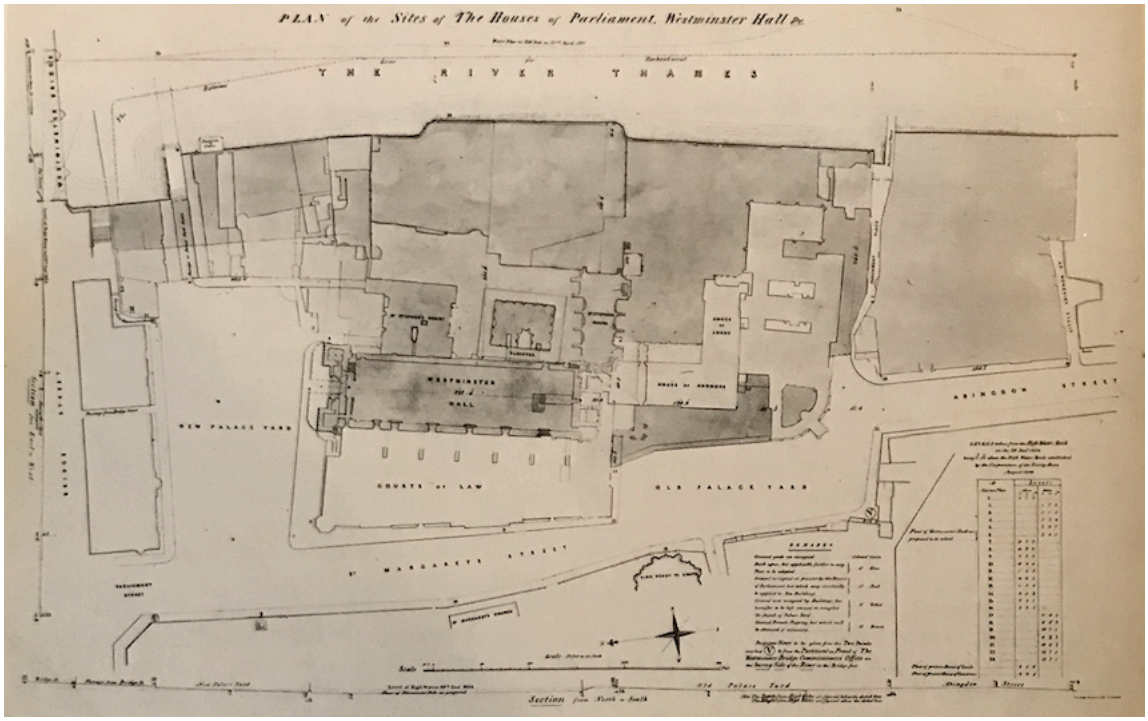

Figure 11: Site plan sold to entrants in the competition. Note “V” symbol at 2 points in path along bottom. This indicates the locations from where perspective drawings could be made for submission.

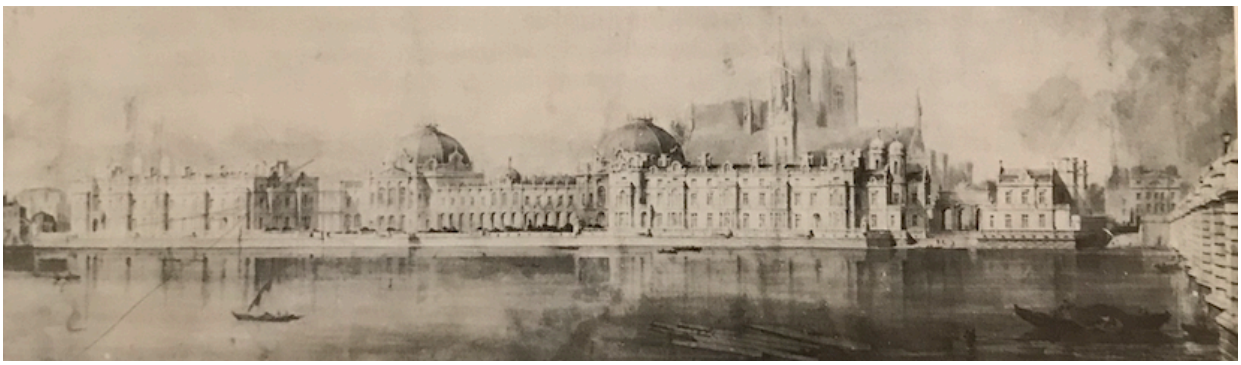

Figure 12: C.R. Cockerell's Elizabethan competition entry. According to Port, based on Greenwich Hospital, likely due to twin domes.

Figure 13: Barry's elevation of the west front. Note regularity and organization of façade. Turrets create even bays.

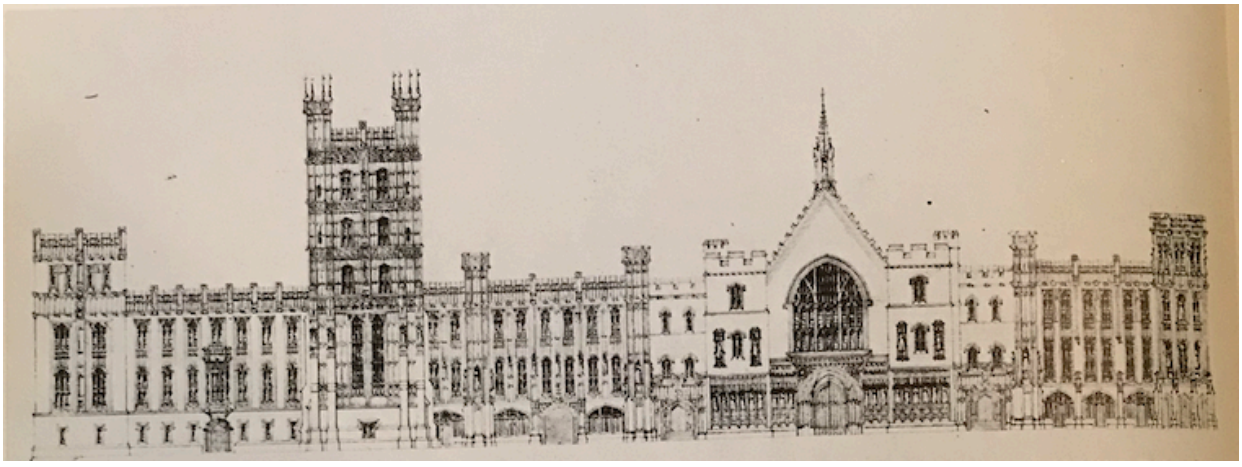

Figure 14: Barry's elevation of the north front. Note the incorporation of Westminster Hall on the right side of the image. More varied façade to allow surviving edifices to blend in.

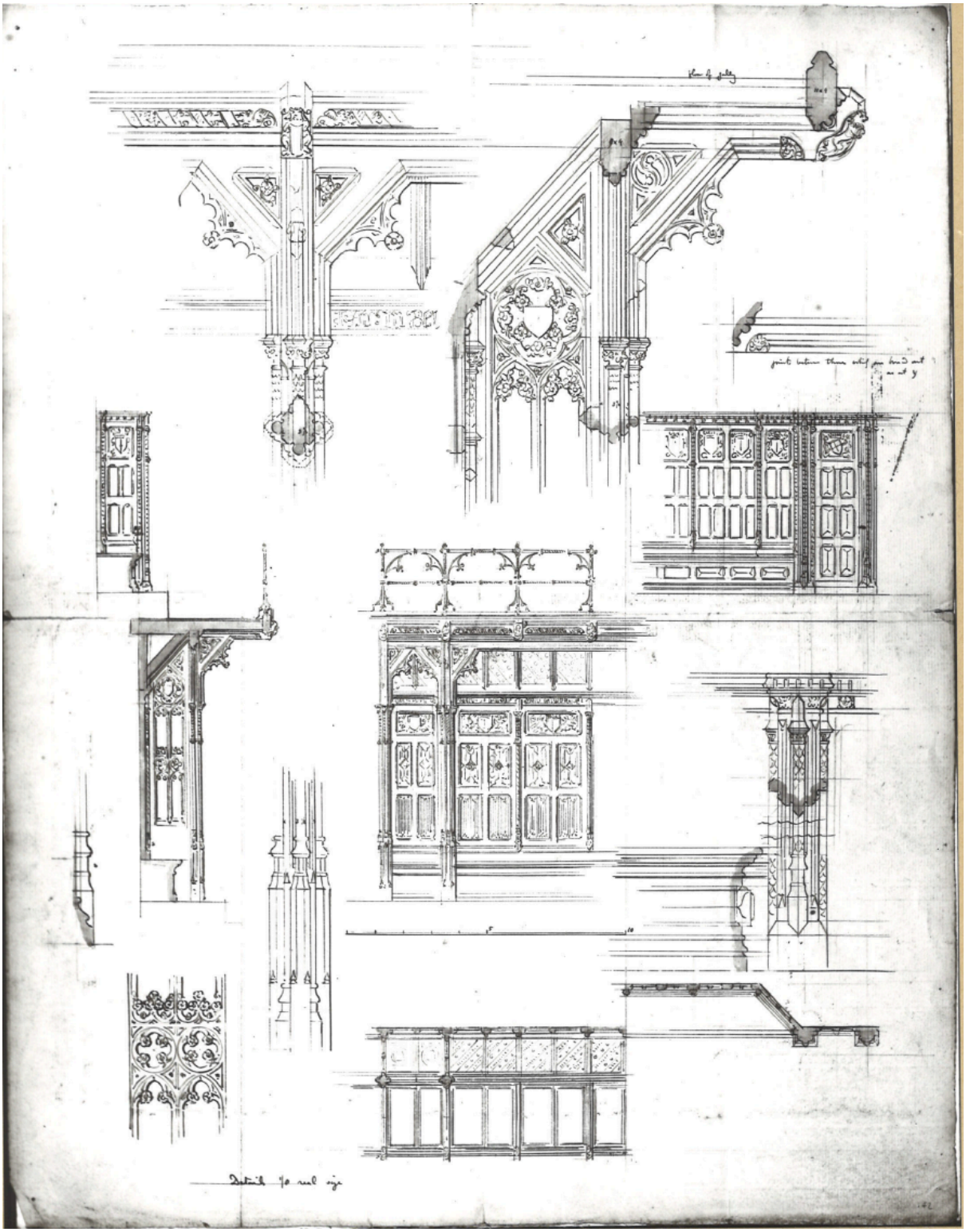

Figure 15: Pugin's drawings of details for the Palace of Westminster.

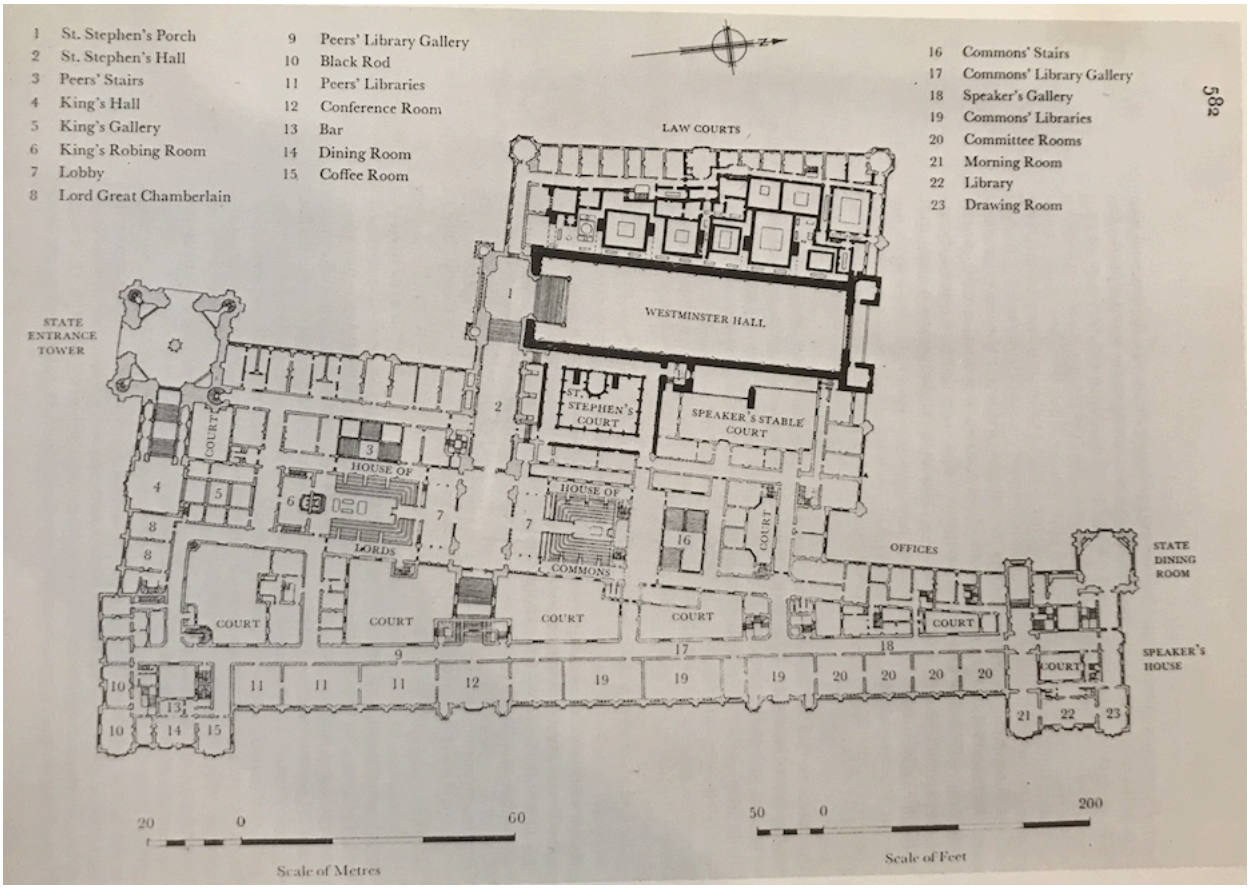

Figure 16: Redrawn copy of Barry's main floor plan. Original has been lost. Note careful organization of interior rooms. Clean axis created by varying shapes of courtyards on riverfront.

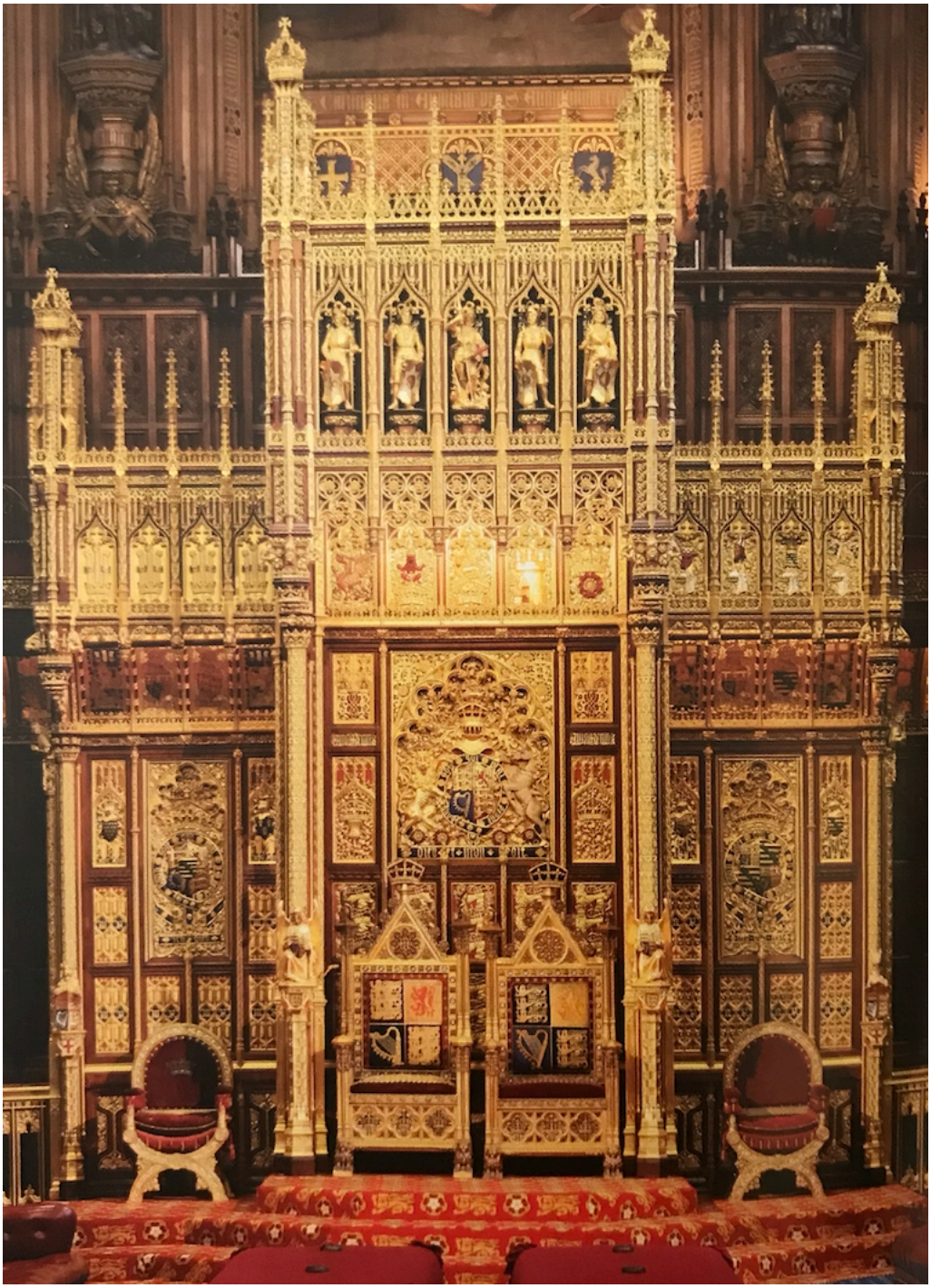

Figure 17: Monarch's throne with canopy in chamber of House of Lords. Note heavy gilding, Gothic niches, tracery, figural ornamentation on canopy. Thrones have symbols of constituent countries of the United Kingdom on backrests, referencing unity.

Figure 18: Central Lobby. Link between Lords and Commons. Note sculptures of past monarchs lining massive arches. Behind chandelier is mosaic depicting St David, patron saint of Wales. Saints associated with the other three countries appear on other faces.

Figure 19: Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London. George Edmund Street, 1860s-1807s. Gothic revival public buildings began to appear across London after the new Houses of Parliament.

Figure 20: Former Public Record Office, Chancery Lane (viewed from New Fetter Street), London. (Maughan Library). James Pennethorne, 1850s.

Figure 21: Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras, London. George Gilbert Scott, 1870s. Hotel is part of St Pancras rail station next door. A combination of medieval Gothic appearance with a modern, industrialized function.