

**Writing
Alexandra
Palace:
Plurivocity as
a method of
cultural
recovery of
buildings**

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Writing Alexandra Palace: Plurivocity as a method of cultural recovery of buildings

4 This thesis examines how writing can be used to retrieve what a building has lost, the layers of its cultural significance, through creative and critical consideration of past uses and current possibilities, to aid in its cultural recovery and contribute to the future use of its architecture. It posits a new means of recovery through ‘writing the building’, and develops this method of architecture writing for use in practice, education and research, and as a tool in the processes of regeneration. Alexandra Palace is the case study (1873; rebuilt 1875, 1988), and at time of writing, extensive redevelopment works are in process by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, following a masterplan by Farrells (2012).

Research questions

Can a building exist and have its life extended in words through recapturing what it has lost or is missing there?

How can language articulate the immaterial traces (of uses, users and their memories) within a building in order to reinvigorate it or direct/redirect redevelopment?

Can connections between architectural space and the interior landscapes of its users be made manifest through writing?

Methodology

Plurivocity

Plurivocity is part of an experimental approach to writing as methodology, developed as a means of responding to these research questions. As a method of writing the building, plurivocity is designed to respond to the building’s unique significance, to capture and represent different opinions and experiences, whether of the past or present, marginal or official. It is an imaginative method based on the factual that disrupts the categories of creative and critical writing so that each contributes to the other and then creates something different. Historiographical writing generated by the architecture in turn initiates and inspires critical, thematic and character-led writing. Using diverse materials from archival sources, interviews and chance conversations, the strands of writing respond to the building in its various iterations – the feedback loop of abduction of Grounded Theory. This feedback mechanism is a crucial element in the

5 plurivocal model, its subject as well as method. Instrumentalising writing like this is in itself a form of reuse, a means of recovery, re-presenting (and representing), and demonstrates how imaginative writing might contribute to programming, and future uses in refurbishment of a building. The project also extends the temporal index of architecture writing to include the future. The building is alive with the voices of users, and the polyvocal form mirrors this, in order to revitalise the building, which has been destroyed, rebuilt or repurposed, even temporarily relocated.

Ethnography

The research follows ethnographic practice in gathering information and inspiration from site visits, observation and interviews. Constructing a series of 'characters' brings more comprehensive sources into contention. Enabling users' experience to be documented also helps to identify the unanticipated values a building provided, for greater understanding about the use that particular communities claim for public spaces or expect them to supply. Using Hans-Robert Jauss's version of Reception Theory, interviewees include those involved in the current physical project, along with volunteers and users, who are embedded into the category of makers of the building.

In these ways, this research and its outcome in writing practice establish another strand of architecture writing, one that suggests and emulates the building's multiple and particular layers, creating and occupying a new cultural and historical space.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout the thesis.

AP – Alexandra Palace

BC – Bruce Castle Museum, National Archive, Alexandra Palace Collection

APPCT – Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust

DCMS – Department of Culture, Media and Sport

EH – English Heritage

FCB – Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

FAPT – Friends of the Alexandra Palace Theatre

GLC – Greater London Council

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund

LBH – London Borough of Haringey

NT – National Trust

SPAB – Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

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Author's declaration

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature:

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Date:

Welcome to the Palace:
an introduction

Writing Alexandra Palace: Plurivocity as a method of cultural recovery of buildings develops architecture writing for use in practice, education and research as a tool in the processes of regeneration. The objective is to show how writing can express what a building has lost, through creative and critical consideration of what it was for in the past, how it was used and what may be there in the future. It seeks to demonstrate how language can articulate the immaterial traces (of uses, users and their memories) in the material of the building, and how imaginative writing might contribute to programming and future uses as refurbishment of a building. In making necessary connections between the imagination and the everyday for these uses of architecture and in acquiring a fuller understanding of how this kind of recovery might work, how it might contribute to regeneration, this research and its outcome in practice create and occupy a new space in writing and in architecture.

Plurivocal writing evolved in my work, and in this work in particular, as a way of stating: this is part of what architecture is. All these aspects of writing and voices within them are constituent parts of what this building is, what makes it, what governs whatever notions of success and failure that may be ascribed to it. This method is designed to appeal to varied audiences involved in and affected by recovery of the building. In terms of reaching new audiences, this writing, or distinct strands of it, can be published or broadcast on various platforms according to intended usage, thereby putting research into action. The process of cultural recovery is necessarily different from simple reuse, in part because of the shift from the physical to the textual, going beyond practical discussions of renovation or regeneration. Recovery is understood here in terms of retrieving something, going over it again, getting something back in similar or altered form. This includes the varied and variable cultures of social and economic groups, of individual and group experience in everyday life, as Raymond Williams put it (1976).

Speaking of the relation between writing and architecture and their respective uses, the architectural historian Adrian Forty suggested that language can 'do things' that buildings cannot, such as nuance and metaphor and storytelling. He went on to say that building is a 'truth-telling medium', from which others 'tell' or take inference. There is a series of 'truths' in a building's certainties of measurement and location, although in the realm of its concept, truth is not applicable. Language,

15 Forty observed, makes buildings come alive and '[l]anguage is by nature fictional. It is impossible to make language truthful.' Bringing these two ideas together, the singular truth of the material building and the multiple 'truths' of language – my thesis is that greater crossover may be possible and more desirable than he suggests.¹

Forty's observation serves to introduce some of the contexts of this work, and its location within architectural history and heritage. Beyond the basic categories of building type and architect in Alexandra Lange's limited classification of the historical in architecture writing (2012:10), this thesis emphasises the experiential and focuses on reception and use rather than intention. This is historical work that looks behind official sources, to include history as experienced and/or documented by users across socio-economic groups and their everyday lives, with significance accorded to personal associations and memories. Empirical evidence is supplemented with the imagined and the extrapolated, from archive material, conversation and interview, for example.

In accordance with Kenneth Frampton's assertion that architecture 'pertains to its own time and to moments, that project beyond it, both forwards and backwards' (2002:18), the past in the thesis is considered in terms of how it feeds into the present and, critically, how it may feed into future uses. The work also approaches the past differently from more conventional architectural history writing on several levels: in its use of fictional and semi-fictional voices as a tool, and in its foregrounding of that tool through plurivocity. Providing a wider spectrum of responses to the building through plurivocity ultimately contributes to making possible regeneration in more meaningful forms and the multiple 'truths' of language.

This work is positioned alongside that of writers on history such as Carolyn Steedman, with her use of fiction (see p32), and Katja Grillner, whose landscape architecture thesis includes a 'conversation' between characters from various centuries and herself (2000). My project extends the idea of history as construct by including characters derived from the imagination alongside real people, alive and dead. The invented characters are nonetheless grounded in the real – they emerge from evidence. All of these are considered 'character voices' and contribute to the historical and present-day portrait of the building. The role of the author too is highlighted in the construction of all the voices, including

interviewees'. Rather than fashioning a seamless, authoritative, single-voice narrative, this range of voices is deployed in order to bring more diverse opinions into contention. It allows subjects to be raised that otherwise might not emerge, and extends the idea that reported speech involves a level of interpretation to what might have been said. Using invented voices is also a response to ethical matters where interviewees preferred to remain anonymous about points they had raised and to AP's longevity, covering many generations.

Aside from the issue of human and architectural lifespan, the character voices and foregrounding of the user address other more political matters. A strong accent on social and economic conditions is considered crucial for an understanding of the building from inception to refurbishment. A progressive Left and feminist position is implicit throughout, underpinning the work. For example, the opinions of many women are unlikely to have been documented or even sought regarding the advent, design, governance or programme of the building, nor those of many local and working-class Londoners, 'the people' whose palace it was meant to be. This explains why it is necessary to go 'beyond evidence', but it is not an exercise in revisionism: contemporaneous writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell and Walter Besant gave a lead. Characters in these writers' fiction gave license to develop female character voices, employees and visitors no less than philanthropists and charitable supporters. Knowledge about the internees and refugees held at AP is more widespread, in part due to the Palace's educational and cultural work for the First World War centenary, but these voices still needed amplifying through invention.

The experience of the user in architectural history is acknowledged here as contributing to the architecture, more than a 'post-completion' visitor, just as Iain Borden promotes the inclusion of post-construction afterlife in architectural debate (2011:x). The user is taken as a positive participant, building on Jonathan Hill's interrogation of the unfavourable connotations of the term (1998:5). This is not to diminish the roles of the architect, commissioner, funder, client and builder, but to lengthen the roster of important figures.

Inclusion of the user also relates to the use of history to widen the ownership of heritage. This view of heritage is distinct from conventional concepts of it as unambiguous and static, simplistically embodying

shared histories and values and national pride in cultural traditions and institutions, as defined by experts and needing protection. Heritage has also become an industry, a business, (too) often used as part of a marketing 'offer' in tourism and public relations, which David Uzzell suggests in *Heritage Interpretation* (1989) have appropriated the idea and the practice of heritage. This thesis uses an alternative version of heritage, laying equal weight on input from marginal sections of the population, described as competing narratives or 'dissonance' by Laurajane Smith in *Uses of Heritage* (2006). This follows Doreen Massey's stress on the importance of refusing essentialist characterisations in relation to place (1994) and Smith's stance that no heritage narrative is uniformly shared.

The research is also experimental in that it uses writing to determine procedures that are then used in the construction and production of the text. This followed Jennifer Bloomer's assertion that 'A text is a woven thing', noting that the word comes from the Latin *texere*, to weave. She said that 'In the space of the relation between text and weaving lies the generative structure that allows the logic of the construction to unfold before your eyes', and articulates a process close to this one (1993:7). Although imagining and writing the social, political and personal narratives that are woven and worn into architecture and those that are overlaid on it, the intention is to disrupt perceptions of an analogous relationship between society and its built forms, exposing dislocations and discontinuities and creating others. The work proceeds through an exploration of the architectonics of writing: the structure and processes employed become part of the subject, form contributing to content.

A linear historical narrative of five phases works as a stave or armature to support and inspire imaginative writing. The genre is creative non-fiction, critically and analytically motivated and employing some of the tropes of fiction. Patterns discerned from research materials that are foregrounded in the historical account also feed into the imaginative writing and might feed too into programming. This feedback loop of the imaginative responding to historiographic writing extends to using interview transcripts and research materials and data from site visits. Academic writing acts as a metanarrative on why this kind of writing has been made and what its purpose is. The conventions of academic writing are confined to the thesis; the practice element departs from these, in order to signal and evidence the relationship between the two.

The physical structure of the thesis, *Writing Alexandra Palace: Plurivocality as a method of cultural recovery of buildings* and the practice, *Writing Alexandra Palace* being bound together and having (almost) shared titles evidences further the connection between them. The whole is structured to demonstrate the association of practice to thesis, with the writing practice at its heart, central to it and not separate. This structure also suggests the development of the work, and possibilities for the process of reading. To this end *Writing Alexandra Palace (Writing AP)*, the practice, is constructed of five Scenes, each using imaginative, historical and contextual writing in concert rather than as entirely separate entities. Multiple voices of users, real and fictional characters and those whose provenance lies somewhere between the two, are made present to expose their contrasting perspectives. Those of the interviewees join the voices of the author, which include the fictional and those 'ventriloquised' from diverse sources, acknowledged as inhabiting different roles in the text instead of ignored as though invisible and without agency. This method, together with the tempo and tone, lends a continuity, to both explain and demonstrate the thesis contents.

The architecture of the thesis consists then of a main core of practice writing – bookended by Chapters 1 to 3 that describe and explain how aspects of the work unfolded. The practice writing is singular and experimental, in formulating a method developed for this piece of research and this particular building; the thesis chapters largely follow a standard pattern. The Scenes are layered on the page into three sections: the character voices as treble or top notes; the mid section, the thematic authorial writing on the subject of the scene; and, at the base of the page, the historiographic writing, in chronologically ordered phases.

The thematic text is underpinned by the historiography, in terms of subject matter too. The voices at the top of the page relate largely to the historical period covered in that Scene. The thematic section, which relates to the texts above and below it on the page, cuts across the entire lifespan of the building; the use of the historic present is an indication of this. Each of the texts works as a partial form of recovery of AP, in the senses of repeatedly going over something and retrieving something through that process. The three are extensively interrelated in terms of subject, changes in tone and interruptions, yet exist as distinct from each other and this is intended to feed into the reading process.

Jeremy Melvin in 'On Words and Building' mentions John Evelyn's four types of architect, each 'vital to the project of architecture' (in Borden *et al*, 2014). The fourth, after the person with architectural knowledge, client or patron, and artisan, is the architect of words, *architectus verborum*. According to Melvin, this fourth type disappeared in the postwar period to allow space for the public body as client, and for the user. The experience and opinions of the user (often currently conflated with the consumer) are reinstated here as crucial to an understanding of this architecture. The status of the public body forms the subject of Scene 3 People/public.

The narrative of the ordinary person has, historically, been missing in architecture – judged insignificant outside perhaps oral history and cultural studies, or community-based projects. The character voices of the user (from interviewees, 'based on' interviewees or other materials such as images, and fictions) offer a series of voices embedded into the methods used to construct the polyvocal narrative and emanating from them. This is a means of offering the varied perspectives of different and alternative voices. It is not advocacy or an attempt (doomed in any case) at exhaustive representation. Interviewees and the other voices were chosen or invented to animate the key historiographic phases. Interviews with users contribute to a multiplicity of opinion that would not be received by other means: how people tell stories is equally important, as is the language they use and the reasons why they want to talk to the interviewer.

In bringing the user on to the stage as part of the creative process, meaning is attributed to spaces by virtue of the associations they arouse. The focus is on reception of the building and its use, rather than design intentions. In any case, only the intentions of Owen Jones, the architect of the unbuilt version 0.0 of AP, are recorded, in his brochure (1858). Of the three subsequent iterations of the design, intentions are expressed by the owners and management companies, and may be speculated upon and inferred from decisions about what events to schedule and how to present them.

The Palace

AP is an appropriate subject for research as a large-scale

2 Some forty per cent of the building is considered derelict and is therefore closed for reasons of safety.

3 John Reith (1889–1971), the BBC's first general manager and first director general, believed the BBC's role was to 'educate, inform and entertain' listeners and viewers, in that order.

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public building of generic and specific interest and purpose. It is open access; an icon for north London; and of international significance in terms of use. It is also prized and listed as a rare surviving example of Victorian iron-and-glass architecture at this scale (although strictly speaking, what is listed is effectively a memory rather than a building, since so little of the first two buildings remains).² In terms of programming it has been a source of delight and disappointment for users across the three iterations of construction, from the unbuilt v0.0 up to the present v2.0 and is likely to continue to inspire such feelings, the contention is here, into the future.

With its repeatedly recycled status, beyond its multiplicity of uses and versions, the Palace is a site of both technological innovation – in its use of materials, its building method, and its role in the development of broadcasting – and obsolescence. Having been held in public ownership since 1900 after being privately built and passing through many owners, AP offers scope for further repurposing in the future, with room for transformation and preservation, as it undergoes regeneration. Of interest as much as a container as for its contents, its history is equally emblematic of diminishing interest in both the precise ambitions of the 'great exhibition' and in its cultural legacy.

In considering how to present AP's life, what it has entailed and what is missing as well as what may be possible to retrieve in the future, it is necessary to go beyond a simple study of it. Writing as a practice is distinct from 'just' writing the thesis or writing 'about' the building, incorporating its life that has happened into how to represent it. The building is the source of each of the types of writing, that use it as a catalyst. Fictive or factual, writing is always about representation.

Through the process of unearthing characteristics of this building, *Writing AP* also functions as an extended discussion on ideas of the public and the popular, the relationship between education, entertainment and information (in the Reithian manner of the BBC, AP's most significant leaseholder), the use and reuse of a building, whether informal, planned, imagined and unimaginable.³ These various vantage points are needed to approach and understand AP fully. The building is employed as a device through which changes in British culture are examined, including attitudes to royalty, class and ethnicity all played out on AP's stage and projected into its forthcoming existence. These

- 21 involve 'popular' culture, 'high' culture and significant 'subcultural' activity, also crucial to an understanding of the Palace. At the same time, these cultural changes are, necessarily, the prism or prisms through which the Palace can be viewed, understood and interpreted.

Chapters in thesis

Chapter 1 Echo Chamber, the literature review, lays out the parameters of the research, critical analysis of work in the field, identifying limitations and gaps that the research addresses. The chapter is structured to show the process of development of the research, straddling the twin poles of writing and architecture, with the literature as a sounding board, a survey to discover a knowledge base. The structure foregrounds the exploration of writing in tandem with the exploration of the building. This reinforces the sense of the importance of method in informing the content of the writing, academic and imaginative. Intended as a guide to influences, and processes and paths taken, it includes too the contribution of those later identified as dead ends for the purposes of this research.

The review is so named as a description of the sensation of reading and learning about the building, full of repetition and reverberation, with its similarities to what has preceded it, and the review confronts its essential differences, not least that AP is out of time. Throughout the research, cycles of return and feedback have been evident. The literature review shows how the reading informed and modified the research, renewing old relationships (for example, with Walter Benjamin's work and Patrick Keiller's films) and making new ones (such as with Walter Besant's fiction and criticism and Klaske Havik's writing). The chapter touches on the establishment of my own research lexicon, and explorations into particular language usages and tropes.

This is a thesis by practice and so the first part of **Chapter 2 Constructions of methodology** presents the outline of plurivocity, the major platform within the methodology of this thesis and foundation of the writing-as-methodology. It explains how form and method feed into and inform each other, as a creative way of speculating on buildings and as an argument for developing textual speculation about the building. With the prior knowledge of my earlier writing

practice invoked, the polyvocal approach is consciously developed as a methodological framework.

The unfolding relationship between the method, transferable to other buildings, and the specificity of AP is made explicit, illuminating the experience of the practice writing. It aims for a sense of immersion, as though the reader has entered the building, or perhaps as though the building has entered the reader – but also to be a navigable experience. With a series of voices interwoven and interacting on the page, plurivocality responds to the idea described by Katherine Shonfield that buildings can ‘contain multiple layers of time, history and events’ (2000). The chapter outlines the taxonomy of types of writing, and the development of rules governing their use (which also feeds into their appearance on the page), for clarity about their purpose and strategic decisions about the writing.

Contexts, of the current refurbishment programme, of heritage and regeneration and of application and audience form the sections of **Chapter 3 Contextual matters**, bringing practice and thesis together on several levels. The chapter moves from the development of the current work at AP to the conceptual framework surrounding heritage and regeneration in the period of its existence. The portrait of the building extends the historical writing in *Writing AP* to the present day, with the examination of heritage and regeneration and its various interpretations and gatekeepers. Writing about audience foregrounds the value of the work in thinking about the impact the research can have outside academia and, in terms of practice-based research, what application it has as a method within regeneration as cultural recovery. In developing thinking on avenues for application of the practice, in opposition to Sarah Brouillette’s contentions about the writer and the ‘creative economy’ (2014), it outlines possible ways to bring the research into architectural practice, into education and into the wider world, as reading material and as an instrument to aid meaningful regeneration.

The chapters include diagrams that have been instrumental in the development of the work, used to assess and evaluate the process and to bring direction through representation. In the Scenes, images are used as evidence, as signposts, to pin down ideas or to contribute to the ‘speculative text’ feel. In places images are used to initiate a form of ‘writing to image’ or *ekphrasis*.

Scenes in practice

Each Scene, composed of the three types of writing: character voices, thematic and historiographic, opens with a *dramatis personae* to introduce the character voices who appear in that Scene. On the facing page is a 'conversation' between them consisting of fragments from their texts. The voices are attached to the era of the historiography of the Scene, and also respond to its themes; some appear in more than one Scene. Not all the types appear on the page at the same time: the Scenes vary in how voices are introduced. Scene 1 opens with character voices and historiography, with the thematic voice entering a few spreads further on, in part to acclimatise the reader. The gradation of colours of the character voices from black to light blue represents the provenance of the voices, from interview to fiction, differentiating them without being too intrusively multicoloured.

Writing AP employs devices of drama and scriptwriting (film, television and theatre) to capture the flavour of the building. AP has hosted and initiated such practices itself, from music hall to television and more recent forms like pop videos. The practice is formed of scenes rather than acts, since acts are more specifically indicative of drama than of television and film, and also of action. It takes account of Gustav Freytag's dramatic arc, based on classical drama but equally in evidence in contemporary work. It follows some of its stages (exposition: Scene 1 lays out the states of the building discussed in the work; rising action: Scene 2 indicates the extent of the problem; and dénouement, the structure of Scene 5 in programming for the future and its final section that draws the whole together).

Scene 1 Building is structured as a series of dated instalments emulating those of the historiography and also giving a sense of the episodic nature of the practice. It sets tone and style for all the Scenes, immersive and unfolding. It establishes from the outset that the thematic section of the writing runs across the entire life of the building, rather than relating to a single historical period. To emphasise this, it is written in the continuous historic present tense, in contrast with the past tense of the Chapters. The thematic voice comes very deliberately from the author, even while it/I may be considering ideas and opinions that are not mine

or that I agree with. The Scene introduces too the first of the ‘pauses’ (like solo spots, asides or spiels – to continue the terminology of drama) in the form of, usually, a double-page spread. In this Scene the riff is devoted to the Willis Organ whose mixed reception and mainly bad fortunes shadow those of AP. By contrast the phase of historiographic narrative here begins with v0.0, the unbuilt version of 1859 and encompasses v1.0 and v2.0, of 1873 and 1875 respectively.

Scene 2 Lost/missing introduces the polarities and tensions underpinning the consideration of the building that contribute to the writing: between un/successful, operative/derelict and the shifting relationships within the entertainment, education, information triad. It presents how the Scenes develop as a series: that a consideration of what a building lacks, an understanding of what it no longer has is an essential prior condition to making any plan or prediction or conjecture for how it might be reinvigorated. The intended ethos of the contemporaneous people’s palace at Mile End in London, and its structures of funding and governance, is used as comparison. The period of 1900 to 1919, covering the move from private to public ownership and up to the First World War is the historiographic foundation in the Scene.

Scene 3 People/public examines the other half of the phrase ‘people’s palace’ from the building aspect, bringing in themes of class, royalty and culture. It looks at the scope and composition of intended audiences and the underlying meaning of the term in relation to public space: what or who is the public and what does this mean in relation to a palace? It extends the idea of the people’s palace in a consideration of its opposite in accounting for the use of AP as an entirely exclusionary space of internment and as an exclusive space in connection to royalty. At both extremities, inhabitants are, or would be, themselves a display for the public, something to see. The historiographic phase featured in this Scene takes as its subject the BBC, the people’s broadcaster, as it moves into AP in the mid 1930s.

Scene 4 Programme concentrates on what has been served up for visitors, the sheer volume of pastimes and events that the Palace has hosted, luxuriating in or goggling at its quantity. Diversity in itself may be impressive but it does not equate with quality, with the emphasis here being on the slippage between the model and actuality of the people’s palace. Neither does an abundance

of diversions to choose from equate with the massive footfall of ticket-buying, tea-drinking public needed to make the Palace commercially viable. Underpinning this in the historiography, relating particularly to the musical events AP has always run successfully, is the perhaps unexpected 'alternative' music scene in 1967 with the programme of counter-cultural nights at AP. Scene 4 uses a comparison with another people's palace, this time in Glasgow, to put contrasts in the commerce-public service nexus in stark relief. It returns to the idea of 'publics' or masses, in connection with London's communities.

Scene 5 Found/futures provides the other side of the Lost/missing duo of Scene 2. The Scenes repeatedly ask 'what is the Palace for?'; Scene 5 responds with what it could be for, how it could be programmed. On the foundations of what has gone before, this Scene reaches forwards to the next phase of its existence with an onslaught of new and adapted suggestions for its revitalisation and reprogramming as a driver of regeneration. The practice ends with an account – a final 'aside' – of the last event to be held in the Victorian theatre before the forthcoming works. In the style of repetition to which the reader will have become accustomed, it is an event that evokes the future on many levels while emanating from the building's past.

And finally over to the reader, who plays a role in creating the text as the user does in making the building, through devising their way of reading it and their responses to it. The presentation of concurrent texts offers various ways of reading – following the non-consecutive texts on the page, with the chorus in mind as a multilayered conversation, reading each strand separately, or variants in between. Whether reading through as presented on the page, with *Writing AP* placed between Chapters 2 and 3, or reading either thesis or practice first, the one exemplifies or theorises the other.

Echo Chamber: a literature review

The literature review introduces the main areas of literature in turn: on writing, including the user and the author; and on architecture, including the case study and historical context. These areas are approached in relation to specific themes of interest in the research, covering influential texts that have significantly shaped the thesis and providing foundational material and affirmative, contrasting or oppositional approaches. This ordering of the review describes the process of the research while acknowledging the contribution of the frequent overlaps between these main areas and their importance in the work. Structuring the review in this way is intended to aid the reader in understanding the non-linear fabric of the interdisciplinary nature of this research.

The process of my research began with the intention to (re)write a building. The literature on writing includes the contemporary and historical; architecture; place; theoretical context; language use and style; text and page design; method and process; instrumentality; multiple and narrative voices; classificatory systems; fictocriticism; and speculative writing. The review then moves into architectural literature, and the selection of AP as a case study. This includes archive texts from the Great Exhibition archive at Imperial College, the BBC Written Archives at Caversham and the National Archive (Alexandra Park and Palace Collection, Bruce Castle) as well as architecture history; fiction; contemporary and historical works on individual buildings; and regeneration and heritage.

Writing the building

The literature in the section was selected in order to examine what other writers in architecture have produced; to measure my proposed research in terms of originality; to clarify my subject – the cultural recovery of the building – and to develop methods in contrast with those of others in the field; and to research possible theoretical and structural approaches, both those already familiar and forms newly encountered. It was important to look at varied ways of doing this in terms of different areas of writing – journalistic, academic, literary – in addition to the approach of individual writers.

The original contention for the thesis to contribute to architecture as well as writing about it gathered weight and momentum from the work of Walter Besant, who provided an excellent example to emulate.

1 Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* is a contemporary version of this novel-to-building process, although begun together: novel, 2010; museum, Istanbul 2012. A film, *Innocence of Memories*, directed by Grant Gee, was released in 2015.

2 Another euphemistic use of 'palace for the people' was found in Greg Stevenson's book on postwar prefab housing (2003).

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He produced work on the 'palace of the people' in criticism, fiction and built form. Besant's conceptualisation of this in fiction, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men: an Impossible Story*, appeared in 1882, which gave him time to view and satirise in it the fortunes of AP. The novel may be the dry (certainly droll) run: Besant then instrumentalised his writing by contributing to the design of such a building by architect E R Robson in Mile End.¹

Writing in *Contemporary Review* about his built version of the people's palace (both 1887), his interest was in class, ownership and prescription. Interestingly, the article shows evidence of consultation undertaken as a means of encouraging participation, mentioning support for educational uses. These subjects feature strongly in relation to AP and in any contemporary leisure facility, although in other terminology (such as audience segmentation, demographics, programme). Besant's palace was bestowed as a philanthropic project, not a community-run facility in recent understandings of participation.

The contribution of Besant's work to mine extended beyond subject matter and role model. Angela, the novel's protagonist, was his creation just as his people's palace was: she may be his alter-ego too, saying what he couldn't or had learned not to say. The quotation "'Ah!' cried Angela, with a sigh. 'The Palace of Delight: the Palace of Delight: we must have it: if it is only to make the people discontented'" (1887:vol.1:313) gestured to themes in the thesis regarding the notion of 'the people', successful failure, and AP's status as a beloved white elephant or a derided neighbourhood treasure. He provided in her an essential character whose voice I 'ventriloquised' as 'Angela' in Scene 1 (see p90).

A different case of the relationship between architecture and writing came from Jean-Francois de Bastide in *The Little House* (1996; *La Petite Maison* 1879), described as a novel of seduction in which the qualities of the building participate. It is not known whether de Bastide built said 'little house', a phrase that suggests a brothel or a toilet, after writing the novel.² Of interest was his framing of the building as protagonist (as cast in Rodolphe El-Khoury's introduction) and how, as Anthony Vidler put it in the preface: 'one genre serves to offer an alibi for the other'.

Categories and maps

To distinguish my research from preceding work and to form

a space for it adjacent to and overlapping with categories such 'site-writing', 'architecture-writing' and 'writing about place', I looked in some depth at the work of Jane Rendell and Sarah Butler. 'Site-writing' was developed by Rendell and expounded in her eponymous book (2010). There was a clear overlap in the literal understanding of the phrase, but her subtitle 'the architecture of art criticism' encapsulated a fundamental difference between the projects. Rendell's writing was a response to works of art in a gallery or other space – the production *in* space rather than the production *as* space.

With Rendell's architecture-writing, the relationship was between architecture and critic, rather than the experience of the user (or, in art writing, between the object of criticism and the critic), a two-way process. In this thesis, critical, historiographic and imaginative writing on the architecture, the practice and the thesis form a three-way model. The architecture of the case study generated these three types of writing and looked to the future in terms of use, repurposing or rebuilding. Rendell responds to artworks not yet finished, while my work took existing buildings as its subject.

While questioning the authorial position of the architect, Rendell nonetheless arrived at this as an architect. The explicit autobiographical element often foregrounded in her work was another divergence. Her interest in the porosity of boundaries between subjects and disciplines was one I shared. She repeatedly, knowingly, positioned herself outside her discipline in order to reflect on it and bring back to it these reflections. There was common ground here too in Rendell's approach to the importance of multiple voices, her use of spatialised language, and her interest in creating hybrid terms that she theorised in her work. She mentioned that while she titled her section of the Critical Architecture conference (2005) 'Architecture-writing', Katja Grillner, also participating, called her paper 'Writing Architecture', no hyphen. In a rare instance of inexactitude, she used the terms criticism and writing interchangeably and the essay ended inconclusively, having raised interesting questions of terminology and punctuation.

Sarah Butler, novelist and founder of literature consultancy UrbanWords and the now-defunct web resource *A Place For Words*, wrote on and instigated community-based writing projects as part of art regeneration, on projects either forthcoming or in process. The work

31 incorporated location, its attributes, socio-economic character and culture of place, which feed into my subject. Her projects were designed to explore and perhaps extend the role that writers can play in public realm art regeneration, generally dominated by visual artists. Butler's language and approach was appropriate to the funded arts sector, using writing as a method of consultation and participation, to explore people's relationship with place.

Klaske Havik's thesis in *Urban Literacy. Reading and Writing Architecture* (2014) appeared initially as a welcome manifesto for my research, confirming that the use of writing can be extended to 'the very practice of architecture'. It mapped out a skeleton for the use of literature as/in architecture in practice, research and education, acknowledging that literary input needs to be integral to a project from the first. She argued too that imaginative writing can be used as a method in historical research, not only for projecting future scenarios.

Havik constructed a triad of description, transcription and prescription as methodological sequence, overlapping and merging at the edges, recognising and celebrating the strength of reverberations between her categories and divisions. This was impressive at the theory/methodology level, but was less convincing when it appears that categories and authors are boxed off. An over-complicated, crowded structure was not helped by the text design with its insufficiently differentiated typography. Alexandra Lange's classifications of architecture writing in *Writing about Architecture* (2012): Formal (form, walk-through); Experiential (how does it make you feel); Historical (building type and architect); and Activist (economic and social) appeared textbook-like, unhelpful for this project. Like *Urban Literacy*, the book covered much ground but the divisions are presented as rigid and overly limiting. Havik's book embodies its/my own critique in one aspect by setting out a compelling case for the place and importance of writing in architecture and then failing to include enough of it to make that case convincing.

Havik was one of the organisers of a series of related conferences; the first in Lisbon in 2010 produced the eponymous *Once upon a place* (2013), edited by Pedro Gadanho and Susana Oliveira.³ This provided many interpretations of architecture writing and theories for its use, seeing fiction as 'a precious tool for the history and theory of architecture' offering a guided tour to real or fictional buildings and

constructed pasts. Alteration was described here as a mechanism of preservation, as a retelling or reiteration. Another doubling of worlds appeared here, reminiscent of the *unheimlich*: the existing and the possible – a speculative projection into futures that is part of any building concept. These encapsulated ideas that were developed in the practice writing.

Emma Cheatle's method involved interweaving forms of creative writing and analytic plan drawings. Her paper title at the Writing Place conference 'Over-readings: using fiction to write buildings' made clear her use of fiction rather than non-fiction but similar to the experimental approach used here, when she 'meets a gap', she created her own answer. She invented the term 'part-architecture' as the method and result of her research in her thesis *Part-architecture: the Maison de Verre through the Large Glass* (UCL, 2013). Cheatle, an architect, overlaid history and theory with design, as a sort of architectural production; she called it 'writing as design'. She noted that Katja Grillner, also explicitly building with words, called her text 'a project' in the way that an architect might.

Writings by Walter Benjamin and Georges Perec, in particular Benjamin's *One-Way Street* and *The Arcades Project* and Perec's *Espèces d'espaces* and *Life: a User's Manual*, were examined for fragmented narratives, tone and structure including montage, juxtaposition, transition and intersection, and devices for experimental writing. Book 10 of *The Arcades Project* was a prime reference for imbricated commentary and citation, and Susan Buck-Morss in *The Dialectics of Seeing* described how this made the reader into an active participant. While acknowledging the worth of constraints and (serious) humour, Perec's experimental work highlighted the importance of text not becoming secondary, and playfulness in intent and delivery not masking application.

Carolyn Steedman's highly unusual use of fiction in writing history was a useful insight into ways of writing in academia. A close reading of 'What a Rag Rug Means' in *Dust* revealed a multiplicity of voices employed to deliver different information, and powerfully presented personal opinions. Her use of 'I' asserted the validity of the everyday and the ordinary in the academy. Her method refused to look down on the ordinary: it was 'us' the user rather than 'them'. This series of essays considered the material world through the processes of history writing and through fictional representation. The dust of archaeology, that is everywhere and takes impressions, indicated presence and absence

and movement. (Noted too were Emma Cheatle's evocative collection of the dust of 'discarded pasts', here imagined as the remains of use and memory, and the generally dustless, people-free images of architecture.) A Coda reworked the same ground as the first part of the piece, in a style more recognisable as academic writing, with such unscholarly devices as italics, single-sentence paragraphs, ellipses absent. Katja Grillner's description of her thesis conclusion, *Ramble, linger, and gaze: dialogues from the landscape garden*, as restating what has already been said earlier in the writing was another example of this, and one that informed the conclusion of this thesis.

Patrick Keiller's work in book and film form was an effective demonstration of enfolded fictions and actual experience that reinforce, reiterate or undermine each other. He offered allusive yet specific historical and contemporary narratives of his character Robinson's journeys in post-industrial landscapes in the UK, past abandoned buildings of late capitalism. In *The Possibility of Life's Survival on the Planet* Keiller spun a fictive and persuasive history of concurrent narratives. The book embodied a creative working of a 'representation of space' from Henri Lefebvre's "'conceptual triad" of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space', a triad constructed in a productive, resonant way to suggest possibility, rather than limitation.

Cross-referential and intertwined, at times repetitive and indistinguishable, the narratives were inevitably read as a single text, despite the stylistic use of distinct typefaces to differentiate texts, film script, credits and other textual documentation. The reader could easily lose herself in this wealth of reference, not always unwillingly. These observations on the design of the page with multiple narratives were revisited later in the research process, along with work by other authors (Kirsty Gunn, Dirk van den Heuvel, Alice Oswald, Mark Danielewski, Katja Grillner, John Chris Jones and Jane Rendell, among others), in relation to plurivocity and page layout.

Keiller's films (particularly, *London, 1994*, *Robinson in Space, 1997*) were a further resource, inevitably evoking Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, another seminal work of memory and fiction, albeit in non-place, dystopic history. Keiller's camera lingered on dilapidated buildings left behind by technology, power generation and military defences. His essays in *The View from the Train*, a series of narratives on time and experi-

ence of buildings, were a strangely unsettling experience until the reader realised that the essays are neither presented chronologically nor dated. The disquieting, uneven effect raised questions about the juxtapositions of types of practice writing.

One method employed as part of the approach to 'writing Alexandra Palace' involved walking/writing sessions on site visits. Exploring the urban environment to establish a subjective sense of place, also known as a psychogeographical practice of wandering or the *dérive*, related to the Situationism of practitioners including Keiller and Iain Sinclair, generally undertaken without singular buildings in mind (Sinclair's *Sorry Meniscus* aside). It was also a departure from Sinclair's masculinist polemics and those of Owen Hatherley in *Militant Modernism*, and from the landscape-walking meditations such as Rebecca Solnit's in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. Anthony Vidler's characterisation of W G Sebald walking his subjects into existence before he writes them (in *Ruins of Modernity*) was noted too.

Fictocriticism was considered as a method in the practice writing since some of its principles relate to the thesis: the idea of 'written assemblage', multiple narratives and the problematising of the critical/creative binary. Authors consulted were Anna Gibbs, Stephen Muecke, Avital Ronell and Michael Taussig. Taussig's *Walter Benjamin's Grave* was particularly evocative in terms of subject and approach, exploring the monument and surrounding documentary and Taussig's position as author. On further exploration fictocriticism's reliance on fiction and the literary and its lack of application made it apparent that it would not transpose well to architecture writing in this project.

Sarah Brouillette's sharp warning in *Literature and the Creative Economy*, of the possible pitfalls for writers and artists working with developers was specific to the New Labour project and perhaps oversimplified but was a useful consideration in relation to audience and future roles. She charged such 'writer-consultants' with partaking 'of the venerable tradition ... of conceiving the aesthetic as definitely inexpedient and anti-instrumental' (2014:169). Contrary to her construction, this writing is much concerned with instrumentality – making something happen. She pinned down reasons for the neo-liberal interest in 'the creative' as work, in any medium, both productive and non-critical and therefore of potential use to developers in easing the implementation

of unsympathetic regeneration projects. Equally acute on interrogating the meaning of 'creative' was Raymond Williams' *Keywords* in his entry on its use and provenance in relation to writing, as a term that has become problematised by inaccuracy and overuse. This lent a clarity to my attempts to conceptualise avoidance of its use. His entries on 'critical' and 'culture' were also indispensable.

The uses of 'speculative' in relation to writing were investigated while considering employing the term to describe imaginative writing that is not predominantly critical or historical, as a means of moving away from 'creative'. The use of speculative focused on the temporal dimension: speculating on what may happen in the future (as can 'creative') and, as Havik asserts, on what might have happened in the past; this was the rationale behind some of the character voices.

In *Speculative Everything* Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby used the term to suggest a dynamic process in design, offering the possibility to experiment and question. Their (speculative) method was about reflection, critique, provocation, inspiration: ideas to which *Writing Alexandra Palace ...* is attached too. Speculative realism gained currency as a term in philosophy through work by Graham Harman and Ray Brassier, among others. There also exists the (sub)genre of speculative fictions, including magical realism and urban fantasy. Most problematic was the usage relating to financial markets, speculating with and on capital values, and inseparable from the word. The dominance of these usages showed that speculative was already occupied as a term, so its usefulness here remained adjectival rather than titular.

The user and the author

The focus on consideration of the user was important in this thesis to give weight to the opinions and experience of the user (both supporters and detractors), as well as the more usual 'makers' of the building. Architecture, especially in relation to development and reuse, has suffered from the idea that 'completion', the end of the work, takes place on handing over keys. In order not to repeat the same injury, a level of authorial self-consciousness was important to acknowledge the role and position of the writer, who is otherwise guilty of making uncredited pronouncements on behalf of others. Acknowledging the

researcher's influence on the research was also part of the (auto)ethnographic approach that permeated this work. The author was a user of the building too, using it for her own ends as visitor, researcher, writer, whether in her/my own words or in contacting and questioning interviewees, then selecting words from a transcript.

Beatriz Colomina's assertion that buildings can be understood equally through words as through images or the thing itself was already familiar (reiterated by Anne Hultsch in 'Pevsner vs Colomina: Word and Image on the Page' in *Forty Ways To Think About Architecture*, 2014). I was new to John Evelyn's *architectus verborum*, the architect of words, as one of the four vital types of architect in any project, in Jeremy Melvin's essay 'Words and Buildings' in the same collection.

With its focus on the user rather than on the producer, Reception Theory provides a theoretical context with primary and secondary texts to support the research. An umbrella term describing work by its exponents based at Konstanz University, including Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, Robert Holub's *Reception Theory* (1984) helped to clarify my interest in Jauss's version of the theory, outlining Iser's concern with individual text and phenomenology and Stanley Fish's 'affective stylistics'. In Jauss's *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982), Reception Theory was concerned with meaning created through dialogue between writer and reader, or architect and user.

Cultural particularity in time was significant in this research in terms of changing responses to buildings through its history. It allowed a dynamic understanding of buildings, more than passive reception, subject to change and development. Jauss's 'horizon of expectation', how a building can then be 'made new again by looking', was particularly relevant. Jauss focused too on the interrelation of poetics and hermeneutics, and the synchronic and diachronic, a dynamic that featured in the methods of practice writing and the feedback loop between different forms of writing. Paul de Man's introduction to *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception* encapsulated one of Jauss's ideas in asking 'what is the question that this text/building is the answer to?', which became a kind of touchstone in the research process.

Other helpful theoretical constructions on the user came from Grounded Theory and Ethnography. Of note was Raul Lejano, Merrill Ingram and Helen Ingram's 'Linking Narratives to Practice' in *The Power of Narra-*

tive in Environmental Networks (2013), which emphasised the importance of using different forums and structures to enable varied contributions, so where stories from the past contributed to the evolving meta-narrative, rather than being overwritten by it. This chimed with the layered accounts of the ethnographic approach favoured in this thesis. Carolyn Ellis, Tony E Adams and Arthur P Bochner presented a compelling case 'to write and represent research in evocative, aesthetic ways' in 'Autoethnography: An overview' (2011). The processual nature of Grounded Theory outlined in "'Emergence" vs. "Forcing" of Empirical Data? A Crucial Problem of "Grounded Theory" Reconsidered' by Udo Kelle (2005) provided a template for proceeding simultaneously on data collection and analysis. The emphasis placed in Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin's essay 'Grounded Theory Methodology: an Overview' (1994) on interpretation of interview material, more than simply 'giving voice' to interviewees' opinions and views supported the process of enlivening character voices chosen here. They also stressed the role of interview material generating theory, adding to the appeal of a methodology that a practitioner can adapt.

Among the literature on extending the life of the architecture project beyond so-called completion, and introducing the notion of extending the role of authorship, Iain Borden's Foreword to *Conjuring the Real* (2011) was a key piece, as was the collection *Architecture and Authorship* (2007; edited by Tim Anstey, Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes) on the role of authoring in architecture. Borden talked about how the post-construction afterlife of architecture had been largely absent from architectural debate, and as architectural intention is absent from general debate. He promoted the idea of architecture as a 'living entity' to which users can contribute prolonged existence through memory and use.

In this work, the user was a positive figure who gives as well as takes, through making use of building or text, through direct and indirect input, making a mark, leaving something of herself. It can be someone who gives their opinion and time for a conversation or an interview, who will relate their experience in terms of their retentive (information-based, factual) and projective (more ambiguous, emotional) memories to a researcher. Tony Fretton, also in *Forty Ways ...* described how in the 1960s 'user' was neither disenfranchising nor an affront to the individual, rather part of the attempt at inclusiveness in the public sphere of the postwar social democratic mood. More generally though, the user

was the unknown, disenfranchised person, the not-us, with connotations of underprivileged and marginal status. Borden mentioned the distancing effect of the use of 'inhabitants'. Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* described representational space from his triad as that 'directly lived through its associated images and symbols', so the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' accessed through the imagination, via arts and literature. He expressed the desire that, while overly abstracted as a term, users would appropriate space as their own. Marketing slogans ('Our Ally Pally') can be understood as a commodified extension of this usage, but are probably not what Lefebvre meant.

Jonathan Hill in *Occupying Architecture: between the architect and the user* (1998) discussed the negative connotation of user, as 'non-qualified', one who takes too much generally, whether emotionally or specifically relating to drug and alcohol use, an addict. His much quoted 'architecture is not just a building. It is, primarily, a particular relation between a subject and an object, in which the former occupies the latter', which was also present in Jill Stoner's questioning in *Towards a Minor Architecture* (2012) about 'who is subject to whom' in the architect/client relationship. In her conception, 'architecture' was always under construction. She wrote interestingly on how time was considered vanquished if a project was completed on schedule and how materials were praised for longevity. An earlier exposition on longevity and value was found in Stewart Band's *How Buildings Learn* (1994), bemoaning the veneration bestowed on oldness, buildings and materials, rather than the supremacy of newness.

Although the title of David Littlefield and Saskia Lewis's *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings* suggested many correspondences with this thesis, its emphasis was on the voices of owner and occupant. It usefully foregrounded aspects of memory and association in relation to the meaning of buildings but composed its basic question in terms of what the building, rather than the user, wanted. Bringing the role of the user into writing architecture, Havik questioned whether what she called the literary approach might dissipate some of the tensions between architect/ure and user, tensions evident in the variations of usage in circulation in different eras. One of the most useful of the chapters (along with those on function, memory, space, structure, transparency and type) in Adrian Forty's *Words and Buildings* was on the many mean-

ings of the term ‘user’, in an essential commentary on literary metaphor in architecture.

Language use and terminology was an aspect of this literature review that is evident within the thesis in many ways. ‘Afterlives’ was added to the lexicon, introduced as a term in Deborah Cherry’s article ‘The Afterlives of Monuments’ in *South Asian Studies*. Her situating of the meaning of monuments as both reminders of past failures and warnings not to repeat them in the future, resounded through this work, since the Palace was built and repeatedly re-erected despite falling returns on earlier versions and its serial failure to attract enough visitors to make it viable. ‘Echo’ served here as another example: as a reiteration, as terminology, as a method employed in writing (in the reverberation of themes, of patterns in history, and in subjects covered by character voices).

Architectural contexts

Large public buildings similar in terms of date, typology, programme and materials, newness, change or narrative voice provided comparative material in relation to AP. Uses, containers and contents, ownership and heritage were particularly important themes to pursue in this section of the literature because of the nature of the building and its seemingly endless proliferation of uses. The varying, symbiotic relationship between container and contents has permeated the life of the Palace. Its many owners and forms of ownership and their relation to the different understandings of the public – those for whom the owners were, and are, providing what the palace offers – were other ways of reading and presenting its narratives. Heritage was explored in view of the listed status of AP and the current refurbishment funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund: as history and future.

Readings in architecture confirmed that the Palace was not over-written about, which would have made it a less appealing subject, since if writing the building was the general description, writing AP was the specific. It featured far less often across the literature than Crystal Palace, presumably because it was not London’s first iron and glass exhibition building and, in terms of fiction, Crystal Palace gives greater authorial licence since it is no longer standing. Much of the reading therefore was on buildings that share certain characteristics: Crystal Palace,

the Dome/O2 Arena, the Festival Hall. Some writing on the millennial folly of the Dome was germane to an account of AP, which can also be seen as a kind of folly. The building as centrepiece of development figured in the thesis in terms of considering the regeneration context of AP, whether planned and deliberate such as the Dome and Greenwich Peninsula or like AP and the suburbs that developed around it.

Much of Deyan Sudjic's coverage of the zeal for gentrifying regeneration in *The Edifice Complex* was applicable to AP, though largely focused on the Dome. The book covered many relevant areas, such as attempted modernity, nostalgia, rebranding, public funding and 'vision' versus consensus. Sudjic's discussion of the Dome as an attempt to revisit the success of the government-funded Festival of Britain as postwar lift, bringing an area of London back into use, made an interesting comparison with the privately funded attempt to replicate the success of the Great Exhibition at AP. Tom Dyckhoff's suggestion in his essay 'All that Glitters' (in *Forty Ways ...*) that the draw of the Festival was less about contents than the experience of visiting was also pertinent. Asa Briggs' *Victorian People* and *Victorian Cities* provided historical background; *Victorian People* mentioned how the Great Exhibition was used to redirect public attention from awkward social and economic realities to a visible narrative of progress

Ideas about buildings as theme parks and containers were amplified in the critical journalism of *Why we Build* by Rowan Moore. He saw the 'big shed/theme park' approach as dominant in attempts at encouraging anything that passes as collective life. Moore tied this in with Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition that it was built to house: the feat of Joseph Paxton's glass and steel construction, the contradiction of sharp lines encrusted with ornament, the display of artefacts and curiosities. Moore's analysis of the 'complexity of the present' forced into the single note of the predetermined script may be read as a call for the polyvocal as part of the regeneration process. He also noted the standard overuse of 'visionary' to describe any regeneration project. Continuing the interest in language use and ownership, his use of the first-person plural voice was a starting point to unpick who this 'we' actually was in terms of making and use. The book's importance for this thesis lay too in its success in writing critically about architecture for a popular non-professional audience.

Such was the scarcity of contemporary critical pieces on Alexandra Palace, that Douglas Murphy's blog post 'The Ally Pally' would be valued for its scarcity alone. His articulation that despite the apparent embrace of innovative iron and glass construction, the design retreated into a more conventional structure was rare. His assertion that the building's 'smorgasbord' of styles and methods ranging over an 140-year period was unknown since the middle ages is far-fetched, as Ed Hollis showed in *The Secret Life of Buildings* (2010), taking the Parthenon, Aya Sofya and Hulme Crescents, among others, to prove his point.

As Murphy pointed out, AP's tight tether to the past undermined it as a demonstration of what modern technology can do. The wonders of glass as material were still seen as transformative for architecture in 1914's *Glass Architecture* by Paul Scheerbart, setting what Havik called a 'programmatic' agenda for new architecture. Scheerbart produced a series of rhyming couplets for Bruno Taut's 1914 pavilion in Cologne for the Werkbund exhibition, another container without contents. According to Dennis Sharp's introduction to the 1972 reissue, they did not translate well into English, but were quite charming and of interest as an unusual use of writing within (actually on) architecture. Sharp mentioned the 1936 fire at Crystal Palace but the 1873 AP fire had already disproved couplet no.6:

'A glass house does not catch fire
There is no need for a fire brigade'.

Exhibition

Reading on the Centre Georges Pompidou/Beaubourg as another cultural centre and exhibition space worked as a contrast to aspects of AP. In 'The Beaubourg-Effect: Implosion and Difference' in *October* Jean Baudrillard raised again the incoherence between container and contents. For him, the users, what he calls the masses, were the only contents of the building. On *grands projets* and the Beaubourg in particular, Alan Colquhoun's *Essays in Architectural Criticism* provided valuable exposure of governments' assumed 'aspirations' of the People in projects, although undermined by unexamined notions of who 'ordinary people' might be. His equation of the display of nineteenth-century international exhibition with 'information' was a reminder of the Reithian

'education, information entertainment' ethos that ran through the practice writing of this thesis.

To Have and to Hold focused on Gillespie, Kidd & Coia's revered modernist St Peters seminary near Cardross in western Scotland, a very different type of building fallen into decline and disuse, built for a highly specific use and which failed for myriad reasons. The book, an outcome of a conference and work by NVA art charity, was approached initially as comparison with my writing on AP, as a multimodal textual response to the 'problem' suggested in its subtitle: *Future of a Contested Landscape*. There was no commercial or practical solution envisaged for the seminary, nor clearly defined expectations for its future use. Possibilities in a growing terminology were preservation, restoration, demolition, repair, upgrade, intervention, to go with 'as found' or 'arrested decay', a maintenance policy to uphold structural integrity while preserving the ruined appearance. Suggestions included Henry McKeown's idea that the building needed no further physical existence since it was preserved in film; or that it could become a structure to unite local people. My contention that AP's continued existence was in part due to its location on the city fringe was affirmed here in the stress laid on the rural setting of St Peters in allowing the ruin to remain.

Wallis Miller's essay 'Cultures of Display: Exhibition Architecture in Berlin, 1880–1931' in *Architecture and Authorship*, edited by Tim Anstey, Katja Gillner and Rolf Hughes brought the development of methods and meaning of the display of contents to attention: from warehousing to selection and curation. Penelope Haralambidou's 'The Allegorical Project', in the same collection, provided another perspective on Besant's palace of the people, describing it as 'an educational and recreational facility', a work of 'architectural philanthropy', something of an oxymoronic usage in the contemporary era. This chimes with Jill Stoner's discussion in *Towards a Minor Architecture* of how the public art of architecture has come to speak with an individual rather than a collective voice.

Works by Victor Buchli (in particular *An Anthropology of Architecture*, 2013, *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past* 1999, with Gavin Lucas) introduced related topics on how material forms enable certain kinds of social life, on remembering and forgetting, the *unheimlich* and archaeology. Like Miller, Buchli wrote on the systematisation of knowledge within the architectural framework, unknown until that time,

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then used in the Science Museum and the V&A. Both were founded after, and partly in response to, the Great Exhibition, as was AP, which was intended in Owen Jones's unbuilt design to be a 'cultural follower' to them. What Buchli described as the 'challenge of the transparency and democracy of culture' was (differently) applicable to a consideration of many phases in the Palace's history.

Heritage

Texts examining how heritage and regeneration have been understood and how both the work on the building (onsite 2016) and my writing as a method of recovery sat within that included *Heritage, Memory & Identity*, edited by Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Isar, 2011; and *Heritage Interpretation*, edited by David Uzzell, 1989. These provided a grounding in academic work on shades of meaning of the term for the contextual work. Of particular interest was Laurajane Smith's shaping of 'authorised heritage discourse' and 'dissonance', the opinions from non-professional commentators (2006). The Imagined Cities conference at the Folkestone Triennale (2014), within the context of a regeneration project there, attempted to broaden debate through weekend scheduling and invited mix of academic, practitioner, developer and activist participants; its papers and references provided valuable material.⁴ Ben Campkin's paper alerted me to a helpful series of pamphlets on regeneration from the UCL Urban Laboratory, particularly *Regeneration Realities* (2013).

In relation to the specific heritage of AP, 'The Alexandra Palace: Conservation Management Plan' by Donald Insall Associates and 'Reviving Ally Pally' the Farrells masterplan (both 2012) were invaluable sources. Insall's plan was encyclopedic, documenting with archaeological thoroughness every change in the fabric of the building. Its anthology of commentary and reaction to the Palace throughout its history provided rich material for each of the types of writing in this thesis. Farrells' masterplan related closely to the process leading to the proposed works, with strong use of image and diagram, exceptionally useful for understanding recent history. The comparison of elevations of various other large buildings in London (see Chapter 3 p222) was a strikingly effective device to demonstrate the scale of the building and so of 'the problem' that the works were seeking to address.

Historical context

It was important to access era-specific responses to the building, for an understanding of historical usage and meaning of public buildings, entertainment and class to underpin an examination of what was meant by people's palace and public space and buildings. This was essential for an understanding of what has gone before and what exists now as well as a foundation for what is to come. Themes here were the people's palace, class, ownership, and programming and prescription, in relation to pronouncements on what people ought to be doing with their free time.

This material informed the historiographic writing and use of history, making obvious the need to select specific phases and rooting character voices in time. This fed into methods of writing that developed in this work such as the structure of the five Scenes. Materials from archival sources inspired character voices and highlighted the prevalence of themes that reappear at different points in the building's lifetime.

The historical texts that had greatest impact in the thesis development were tracts and small publications, often produced by the Hornsey Historical Society. Pamphlets by Ken Gay (2005; including consideration of the wider area), Ron Carrington (1975; a potted history) and Janet Harris (2005; on the use of the Palace as an internment and POW camp) helped to build up the picture of the Palace's history as seen from local vantage points and opinions. In critical writing Stevan Brown's *AA Quarterly* essay 'The People's Palace' (1970) and Peter Smith's essay 'Alexandra Palace and Park: History of the Alexandra Palace and Park to 1965' (1965) in the *Hornsey Historical Bulletin* were seminal sources for the historiographical writing.

Smith's many related roles converged in his writing: he was the LBH Planning Architect in charge of AP in the 1980s and the author of 'Palace in Wonderland', an unimplemented proposal for AP's future. He also oversaw the installation of the pavilion by Terry Farrell & Partners following the 1980 fire and contributed to the Farrells (as the practice later became known) masterplan. Brown notes that Abercrombie's Greater London Plan suggested AP become a regional sports and entertainment centre. This was also raised by Norman Engleback (Architects' Lives series, National Sound Archive, 2001) as part of a plan to establish

alternative 'magnet' sites outside the city centre, and to cast AP in 1966 as a mega structure to which various activities could be attached. A growing awareness of the extent of contradictory assertions and diverse interpretations from these sources about the state of the Palace and events within it filtered into the conceptualisation of the writing.

Archive materials

Holdings in the Great Exhibition Archive at Imperial College showed how visitor numbers and therefore profits for 'big shed' exhibitions had fallen long before AP was built. Feverish documentation of numbers, products, exhibitors and receipts fuelled interest in the 'numerical hyperbole' strand of writing; Stoner noted the prevalence of hyperbole and superlative in architecture writing. The original request for material at the BBC Written Archives at Caversham on the period of the BBC's leasehold at AP initiated the process of understanding the building's alterations for the Corporation. More evocative were reams of correspondence on such domestic matters as the reuse of linoleum from another BBC site; legal negotiations with the Bowls Club; and the 'unsuitable' acoustic and the BBC's reluctance to record concerts there. Repetitions of similar concerns in present-day sources including press cuttings, structured interview and informal conversation led to decisions about the types of writing planned.

The Alexandra Palace Collection housed at Bruce Castle, a local museum and archive as well as being part of the National Archive, offered profuse examples of printed ephemera – pamphlets, press cuttings and leaflets – of equally numerous diverting pastimes on offer at AP. This and the now-familiar cycle of the everyday interrupted by the unusual and the innovative fed into the structures and subjects of the writing. The wealth of material available led to the decision to write on AP as a single case study. It became apparent that the building overflowed with the themes and represented the ideas I wanted to approach in the thesis (a decision that was repaid with abundantly more than were initially apparent).

Ruins and railways

These areas of literature helped to crystallise the reasons for selection of the case study. Themes that appeared in much writing on ruins on reuse and reiteration, the uncanny, nostalgia and melancholy, and the temporal were sought in the literature because they have permeated the thesis throughout the process. AP is in part a ruin, and reuse and reiteration had great resonance with its three built versions, as does the temporal, both in the sense of longevity and in the intention of the thesis to look at the building in relation to its future and present, not only its past.

Although my interest lay primarily in working on London buildings, Hell and Schönle's collection *Ruins of Modernity* (2010), on postwar, Eastern bloc ruins and their representations in film, architecture and photography brought comparative material into relief against the (mainly) mid- to late-nineteenth century buildings under consideration as case studies. Among the essays were Anthony Vidler's 'Air War and Architecture' on W G Sebald 'looking and looking away at the same time', invoking that sense of 're- and again', which became a trope in the work. Todd Samuel Presner's discussion in 'Hegel's Philosophy of History via Sebald's Imaginary of Ruins: A Contrapuntal Critique of the "New Space" of Modernity"' on Sebald's use of the non-contemporaneous and non-contiguous as organising principles was also valuable as an organising technique. Svetlana Boym's essay 'Ruins of the Avant-garde: from Tatlin's Tower to Paper Architecture' stood out due to her examination of the use of ambivalent language in relation to ruins: no longer, not yet, albeit. Kerstin Barndt's 'Memory Traces of an Abandoned Set of Futures' introduced the term 'interim landscapes' to sit aside 'meanwhile uses', on abandoned steelworks at Duisberg, another (over) familiar site in the literature on ruins, as is Detroit (covered here by Tyree Guyton and George Steinmetz).

Reading the book *Ruins* (2011) led to the realisation that the ruin was a term easily understood and unhelpfully amorphous: 'uniquely ill-defined', according to Hell and Schönle. Edited by Brian Dillon, *Ruins* followed the Documents of Contemporary Art series pattern in positive and less welcome aspects: it was almost too full of definitions and echoes – of artists and well-trodden sites of interest. Two artworks that

were considered as minor case studies, Rachel Whiteread's *House* and Roger Hiorn's *Seizure*, appeared here. Revelatory and frustrating, *Ruins'* variations and discourses still offered a number of threads to follow. An overlap with the developing definition for case study selection was Dillon's plea for recognition that the ruin has radical potential – its fragmentary, unfinished nature an invitation to fulfill as-yet unexplored temporality and spatiality.

The uncanny, an aspect of AP that was already understood as part of the work, featured in excerpts from texts by Tacita Dean on outmoded technologies, 'Sound Mirrors' (1999) and 'Fernsehturm' (2001), and Jonathan Crary on estrangement in 'Vera Lutter: Spectres of Negation' (2004). Other threads that continued through the research presented in this volume are nostalgia, in Svetlana Boym's 'Obscene Homes' (an excerpt from her book *The Future of Nostalgia* in which the subject is most usefully covered); temporality (as a cause of ruin and contemporaneous responses to it); and remains, in the simplistic approaches to heritage and regeneration to which nostalgia can lead.

Seeking out contemporary literature on derelict buildings uncovered a rich online source at designobserver.com, such as Keith Eggner on Baltimore stadium, a local site of leisure and entertainment, much invested in by its users, like AP. A UK example, Cedric Price's InterAction building in Kentish Town, north London might be described as a people's palace of community arts. Price suggested that when structures lost their purpose they should be demolished and stood out for this against the building's possible listing. In relation to the Victorian marriage of philanthropy and enterprise, joint aims evident in the building of AP, Jeff Byles in his collection *Rubble* (2005) describes buildings erected as icons to capital as articulations of brief financial interests. The idea of architectural time stretched to encompass use, re-use and decay of spaces and buildings is located in the context of the value of newness, sovereign now but not sustainable permanently. The brevity of life expectancy of buildings and materials, leading to what Ada Huxtable in *Rubble* called demolition by commercialisation, emerged alongside the idea of 'completion', as when architecture is finished.

Of interest in terms of future possible uses and the cause of ruin was Tim Edensor's *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*. Defining his subject as industrial focused on the ruin's economic and

ideological basis, as an inevitable result of capitalist development. Time and the temporal were covered here in relation to the increasingly accelerated rate of change; a future of possible erasure; economic restructuring and globalisation; and the demands of newness. Edensor was interested in community-led reuse of ruins and the richness of their continuing functions, as distinct from redevelopment as public space.

Repetitions, dislocations and duration of time led to the *unheimlich*, which haunted the pages of *Ruins*, notably in its lengthy excerpt from Vidler's *The Architectural Uncanny*, illuminating on his approaches to the interpretation of contemporary buildings. The sense of almost-repetition in the notion of the uncanny relates to the reuse and recovery of buildings: the same but then also completely changed, which could be something of a slogan for AP. The uncanny is both familiar and unknowable, with its basis in the *heimlich* as well as the *unheimlich* and the drive to repeat (making the unfamiliar familiar) – the hidden familiar repressed thing that recurs. Vidler's section on visiting architecture – the temporary, shifting in location, function and design – led to a consideration of AP as a permanent pavilion that should have been temporary, to its own detriment.

Another doubling of meaning that resonated with this thesis appeared in *Hayelet Yapılar/Ghost Building* by Cem Kozar and Turgut Saner (2011). The title – *Hayelet* means 'ghost', and *Hayel-Et* translates as 'imagine it!' – shared terminology with an early thesis title, while applying it differently. The Istanbul-based project sought to address what it would mean if buildings that due to earthquake, social unrest, demographic shifts, fashion or economic decline existed only as ruins or in collective and cultural memory reappeared in the urban landscape. The relationship of this work to the developing thesis formed the basis of a conference paper 'Ghost Buildings, Public Places: Re/writing the User Narrative', delivered at Mimet Sinar University, Istanbul (2013).

AP shares with railway architecture of the time the iron and glass materials and construction methods (even the 'Barlow blue' paint used on the ironwork of St Pancras). Proximity in terms of date too meant that histories of railway architecture gave important architectural background: *Railway Architecture of Greater London*, Symes and Cole (1973) and *St Pancras Station*, Jack Simmons (1968), Gavin Stamp in *Apollo* (January 2008) 'Long Journey's End', Felix Mara in *Architects*

Journal (17 June 2010) 'Minimum and Reversible'. In terms of atmosphere and use, material from fictional accounts delivered plenty of ideas. On both AP and St Pancras, contemporaneous fiction was a rich source of reference, including novels by George Eliot (*Middlemarch*), Elizabeth Gaskell (*North and South*), Charles Dickens (*Dombey & Son*, *David Copperfield*), Anthony Trollope (*The Way we Live Now*) and Jules Verne (*Around the World in 80 Days*).

A strong impression from much of this fiction was the sense and speed of change. Since both the novel and rail travel were still relatively new phenomena when AP was first built, it is unsurprising how often trains and stations feature as indicators of change, modernity and deprivation. This was communicated in part by the changes in the landscape (and soundscape) brought about by the development of the railway network, the changes in people's jobs, mobility, even the view from their homes, and the train station as a new venue for passing through, meeting and waiting, underlined by the modernity of its architecture. The theme of measurement and counting that fed into the writing was particularly evident in writing on railway architecture, on the St Pancras redevelopment and on the Dome where scale and number might have been employed as dazzling diversions from the lack of defined purpose.

Peter Ackroyd's *London* gave a reminder of the scale of change as the entire English railway network was laid out between 1852 and 1877. Heavy with myth-making, the book recounted how railway station architecture created its own crowds, populations and atmospheres. Like Baudrillard on the Beaubourg, he described people drawn to their own spectacle, attracted by seeing others like themselves inside.

Within literature set historically, among a body of 'railway lit', the luminous description of the waiting room at Antwerp Centraal station in Sebald's *Austerlitz* was an enduring influence. It depicted the station as a cathedral-like container for exhibition and trade, like AP. Hubert Pragnell in *Britain*, his survey of British architecture (1995) also described the station in quasi-religious terms, continuing the idea of it as cathedral-like. He noted the station as a temple to consumerism, as AP straddled the poles of commerce and civic good running through the thesis.

To end are two examples of contemporary fiction in which the Palace appeared that resonated with the project. In S J Watson's *Before I Go to Sleep* (2012), the Palace was an irrelevance, a static backdrop. In

contrast with the characters, it was atmospherically dead and generic: a park, a hill, mothers and children, surrounded by identical rows of housing. Its significance for the plot was precisely because it can be perceived as unchanged and unchanging. Will Self's *Umbrella* (2012), set in Friern Barnet mental hospital (aka Colney Hatch), provided an example of building-as-character, like the palace in Besant's novel, and another neighbourhood building that occupies much space in local narratives, famously endowed with the longest corridor in the country. *Umbrella* was also an excellent example of a polyvocal narrative: of patients and staff and their families. The Palace on the hill, two miles away, was described as the limit of patients' horizons at Friern Barnet. It worked here too as a metaphor, out of time and empty, for the failures of the NHS in the 1970s, matched by those of the municipal authority, owner of AP. The novel was a characteristically rich portrait of the Palace in a particularly sparse period of its history.

Constructions of Methodology

Walls don't talk: this much is widely accepted. The equally prevalent notion that walls have ears is attributable, according to Brewer's (1997), to Catherine de Medici, on whose instruction rooms in the Louvre were constructed so that what was said in one room could be heard in another. Apocryphal or not, the slightest of imaginative leaps – and from one landmark to another and from one palace to another – lands in the plurivocal, into an understanding of how walls do talk after all.

At its most basic level, plurivocity is a method of writing, in this case, the building (here, AP), using multiple voices to represent and suggest the depth and breadth of figures in its life. It produces soundings of what it is that those walls have seen and heard. The figures comprise those who have passed through: whose experiences and voices are inscribed on walls that still exist, that were destroyed by fire, or removed as rubble or 're-sited', and those whose desires and disappointments rest within the building, indeed form part of it. In the present, the voices of the author are included, as a user of the building too, who, it may be said, is 'using' the building for her own ends, with repayment in words, as a form of exchange.

The plurivocal method offers a response to what Katherine Shonfield describes as '[W]hat happens when we accept that architecture does tangibly exist, not as a pristine impervious whole, but in the perception of the beholder', or the user (2000:160). She continues: 'The story of how a space is used, as an adjunct to character and action, reveals an unspoken history of the role of space within the city'. Developed as a means of creative documentation of the building, the plurivocal method incorporates and uses the repetitions and slippages between different versions and opinions to suggest the many figures whose presence is unlikely to have featured in more formal documentation. It provides an alternative note or tone, one that does not reproduce the obvious, always audible, always heard voices but others, perhaps marginal, undocumented, contrary or dissident voices emanating from an unknown future or a non-ratified and sanitised past.

Specifically, AP has been in public ownership since 1900, for all but twenty-seven years of its life. It is also a site redolent with the history of popular entertainment. This makes it a particularly appropriate platform for the co-presence of multiple voices, with the many phases and fads of public leisure activities in the building existing alongside

perennial favourites. As Susan Stewart says in *On Longing*, 'The printed text is cinematic before the invention of cinema. The adjustable speed of narration, the manipulatability of the visual, turns the reader into a spectator enveloped by, yet clearly separated from, the time and space of the text' (1984:9). Accordingly, conventions borrowed from film and television, including stage directions, cuts, scene structure, voice-over and flashbacks and forwards, are used either directly or as inspiration.

The Palace is alive with voices, so the writing must be too in order to evoke fully the building's narrative, to communicate the breadth of its programme and audiences. In exploring the possibilities of writing as methodology, this experimental, polyvocal approach to writing architecture disturbs the boundaries of the creative and theoretical, imaginary and academic, making its own framework through which to do this. This use of plurivocity developed out of the research process, to create a sense of the disjunctions and synchronies in AP. These include highlighting repeated and enduring uses and those curtailed or abandoned, in order to form an understanding of the intended and received meaning and purpose of the building and its effectiveness.

In part, plurivocal writing is a response to the questions of how to number the user among the significant presences of the building. The user, whether real or imaginary, past or present, is embedded into the narrative and positioned within the ranks of makers of the building, not left outside as a passive receiver of what has been made by others. As examples, mentioned here are two character voice texts, 'Philip' the organist and curate and 'Disgusted ...', one constructed as an imagined performer at the Palace and the other based on archive sources, which bring largely missing nuances of experience into the polyvocal chorus. Whether entirely fictional or instigated by an archival source or by using *ekphrasis* (writing to an image), the voices in the plurivocal writing are employed for several, sometimes multiple purposes. These include a sense of individual and collective experience, memory and aspiration; to add to the historical account and to contribute to future plans and projected uses; and to focus on the locality more broadly and very specifically on AP itself. As Klaske Havik put it: 'If writing can indeed be an operational concept in topo-analysis, through evocative description, it can be extended from analysing place to the making of place: the very practice of architecture' (2014:63). According to co-constitution as a

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model of communication, what people know is formed along with what other people know: co-constituted. This has application here, since to create a public space, a space is needed. A public (or, more realistically, several different layers of public) is also needed to form a public space, to occupy it, to form it according to their own uses rather than or as well as those that have been programmed into it. Authorities, developers, architects provide the space and the public provides the people; without these elements it is not public space.

The 'imaginative method' of the plurivocal of uncovering and recovering specifics of a building may also be applied, in an adapted form, for other buildings. The version of it produced here was developed for greater understanding of AP in particular and its recovery. This brings a practical use for the literary in the real world, beyond its use (not to be undervalued) as something to be read. Layers of public opinion and opinions from members of the public are inserted into the narrative that can feed into decisions about the place or space or building under consideration. Plurivocity recognises the role of the fictional or speculative in regeneration, and makes use of the fictional voice as a tool.

The extent of plurivocal writing

This method has been likened to a Greek chorus, but it departs from the homogenised nature of that form.¹ Plurivocity is, rather, a construct of overlaid, individualised opinion, from diverse sources linked by common subject, striking notes that reverberate through and across the building's panoply of uses. Constructing the polyvocal 'choir' involves the production of texts, inspired by interviews, observation, archive work and still and moving image. Plurivocity asserts that the single voice in isolation struggles to articulate the profuse and vibrant nature of the building's narrative over time.

In responding to the research questions the areas of writing in the PhD – critical, historiographical, practice writing – work together to cultivate and advance an imaginative method based on the factual for greater understanding of the building and its cultural recovery, retrieving and renewing what has been lost. This new approach to architecture writing is, as already stated, one that takes an individual building as subject but can be applied to others as a method. In this way, as a

method of practice, as a method of 'writing the building', polyvocality extends the notion of 'creative' writing.

In their chapter 'Linking Narratives to Practice' Raul Lejano, Mrill Ingram and Helen Ingram stress the importance of alternative methods for retrieving narratives to be used in the implementation of policy. They state: '[A] purposeful attempt to collect a more complete narrative with multiple voices allows for different dimensions of actors to emerge' (2013:194). A single-note approach, with the requisite investment in its sole narrative, is insufficient, it is the contention here, to capture and express the depth and density contained in AP. Here, the individual experience is, visibly and audibly, part of the collective voice. It demonstrates the value and specificity of self-defined responses, not limited to predetermined areas of interest in official questionnaires or surveys or consultation documents. Lejano *et al* assert how management approaches in planning environments need to be tailored to context 'rather than taking a common universalistic approach' (2013:193). The writing reaches for a multi-layered cacophony rather than an ill-fated attempt at voicing an exhaustive array of 'representative figures'.

The inclusion of invented voices in a historical narrative is justified for several reasons. AP was first opened in 1873 and so living interviewees, even those like John Thomson who can relate experiences of ancestors two generations earlier, cannot cover the necessary scope. Those voices, ignored or forgotten, are not limited to the recent and contemporary. These exclusions may be the usual discriminations of class or race or gender; in the case of this writing, they also give voice – in the way of oral history 'breaking the silence' with an over-worked epithet for welcome effects – to those who may have been made absent through the effects of war, including shame: prisoners, interned 'enemy aliens' and refugees. These users of the Palace were absent from its narrative for many years, their thoughts and feelings unlikely to be documented. It is also noted that the use of fictional or fictionalised characters is standard practice in forms such as docudrama, extending possibilities for using vignettes based in 'real-life' experience.

AP is a local building used by ordinary local residents and visitors. Its international significance as the site of the first high-definition television broadcasts cannot be overshadowed, and may be at the root of the reason why the building could not be allowed to degrade

2 This extends, taking one definition of 'retrieve', to a way of making amends for the past, which involves imagining and inventing.

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entirely into rubble and become a lucrative site for development. This may outweigh considerations about its status as an example of a people's palace or as a Victorian theatre, both of which feature in its Grade II listing. However, the BBC's occupancy and this historic use of the building occurred fifty years after it was first opened. After half a century of the Palace existing on the north London skyline, it was already embedded in multiple narratives of residents, employees and visitors.

As distinct from oral history, this is not only about real-life experience, and the main character here, or common subject, is a building rather than the interviewee. In this method of writing the purpose of interview material extends beyond the form of quoted transcription or verbatim use, to include the basis of further imagined characters. Oral history is often described as a means of taking control of one's own history and may be used in this way when history has been suppressed or misrepresented. Similarly, the polyvocal method may be used for creating new communities and foregrounding alternative and unofficial histories. Writing the building using plurivocality can instigate the inclusion of narratives in a process of recovery of what a building is missing – in order for that to be part of the building's renewed version. Oral history is not necessarily instrumental beyond representing the unrepresented. It is about pasts rather than futures; plurivocality can speculate on both.

In this practice the plurivocal method ranges beyond the excavation and inclusion of 'character voice' texts; the plurality of its name refers also to the multiple layers of authorial voice embodied in critical, historiographical, thematic or contextual writing. It is an unfolding of the unsaid, the unimagined, the unheard voices, adding to the documented and the official, contributing to repurposing and retrieval for new times and new conditions.² Creating and writing critical and academic voices as part of the polyphony is one of the ways this writing seeks to address the creative/critical binary, by suggesting that these voices are also created and constructed, addressed in Section 2 of this Chapter.

How plurivocality developed in the thesis

The research demanded a way of writing about the building that could handle the weight and multiplicity of echo and repetition and

57 layers. It demanded a way to write architecture as lived and used, to incorporate the so-called inoperative spectator (the user, the inhabitant, the dispossessed public) as a maker of the building through their contribution as user, conferring authority on to the ephemeral and the usually unheard in architecture writing – the life of the building post-‘completion’, as generally understood. The plurivocal method was conceived to this end. In this case-study approach to writing the recovery of a building, the series of methods used includes interviews, site visits, observation, informal conversation, archive work and writing *in situ*. These methods form a narrative constructed of individual and collective certainties and doubts, founded on views of the Palace as people see it, as both precarious and enduring.³

In order to write on the future use and recovery of the Palace and contribute to it, the original contribution of the research, it was necessary to have a solid understanding of how the current situation at AP has emerged. A series of ‘peaks of interest’ or key phases in the building’s history were selected as episodes for historiographic writing, constructing a narrative of the building through critical evaluation of written and visual materials relating to the building – and provide a chronological foundation. These are:

1873–5 Version 0.0 to 2.0;

1900–19 Public ownership to First World War;

1935–76 BBC and the Second World War;

1967 Counter-cultural happenings;

1980–8 GLC to LBH.

These phases are incorporated into five scenes of the imaginative plurivocal writing: Building; Lost/missing; People/public; Programme; and Found/future.

This initiated and inspired other layers of the writing, which, whether thematic or character-led, from real people or fictions, are rooted in the real, responding to the historiographical. The writing types are connected to each other by subject, inspiration and authorship; they inform and inspire each other. This established the principle of the feedback loop in the plurivocal model, developing relationships between the types of writing, as catalysts to each other. In this way the divisions between the writing types were reconfigured and new relationships demonstrate how different types of writing might deal with the same

subject, for example, television as innovation, entertainment, information and employment. These attachments, interruptions and gaps between them in turn created other possibilities within the text as a whole and as a series of parts, for altered understandings. The reader plays a role here too, responding to the contradictions and tensions that arise within in the different registers. The reader can take a decision about who or what to listen to or to believe.

A method of documentation was devised to structure the contextual and imaginative writing, incorporating the many areas of interest that had become apparent, repeatedly and repetitively across the building's historical and contemporary narratives and its uses. The series of categories drawn up through close reading of research data, also pursued in the literature review, was compiled to ensure coverage of the heritage and future of AP, to respond to the questions of whose memory and whose heritage was being represented in the current plans, and whose had been forgotten or omitted. It comprised: repetitions and patterns, the user, temporal, materials, structure, the conceptual, programme, themes, commentator opinion, questions, writing modes and language use, response to external object or source, and the building as relator of its history. For the purposes of specificity about the methodological and the imaginative elements of the writing, these categories were further divided into subjects and methods. The resultant body of work fell into two parts, classified as the thematic context and character voices outlined in Table 1.

Writing on the idea of the 'people's palace', for example, as such places were known generically and which is again used as a marketing hook for AP to engender a sense of shared ownership, is inflected by ideas about typologies, users, successes and failure, governance, access, varied notions of 'the public', the BBC ethos of inclusivity and audience fragmentation in terms of programme. These strands of writing replicate and reinforce each other – from the critical to the conversational to the historic to the critical again and so on. This can be viewed in relation to other uses of plurivocal writing, which is most often discussed in relation to translation and to texts for multilanguage societies, reaching different audiences and readerships in the process.

<i>WRITING TYPE</i>	<i>ROLE</i>	<i>TONE</i>	<i>FEATURES</i>
<i>ACADEMIC</i>	critical/ theoretical	detached	includes footnotes, display quotes, references
<i>HISTORIO- GRAPHIC</i>	factual and chronological underpinning	authoritative	'main route'
<i>IMAGINATIVE RECOVERY</i>	detours from main/official routes	varied	
<i>thematic context</i>	contextual; alternative to official history	questioning, disruptive	diachronic; use of historic present; dis- penses with conventions of academic writing
<i>character voices: 1 from interview 2 based on interview 3 suggested by archive, image, cuttings, conversation 4 imagined</i>	interruptions to main narra- tives; supplying additional perspectives	individual, conversational, personal	synchronic; links with historio- graphic phases; corroborating, contesting

Table 1: Writing type taxonomy

In addition to juxtapositions of characters from similar periods in the Palace's life or those playing similar roles at different periods in its history, there is a call-and-response effect, a kind of conversation between character voices. This occurs when, for example, Walter Besant's fictional protagonist in *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, Angela, discusses her ideas for her palace of leisure and learning alongside text on the expressed intentions of the architects of one or other built versions of AP, and the marketing literature of one of the many private companies or the public governing bodies of the Palace. Each provides commentary on the others, as from different disciplinary forms, a feature of the creative documentation that supports plurivocity. Texts are interwoven, feeding into each other. Each takes their turn as the dominant discourse. Ultimately this is designed for a reading process that privileges none of them overall, but foregrounds one or other at different points: a text of imbrication, layering over each other like scales or shingles, rather than a palimpsest.

Distinct patterns revealed through examination of archival and current documentations led to the formulation of a classificatory system of uses of AP. The categories are: regular, significant, facilities, education, exhibitions, entertainments (participatory and spectator), sport, BBC, commercial, special interest, music, wartime/military, royal, competition and animals. In compiling these, it became clear that with more than 600 types of event or pastime noted, from the mundane to the landmark, this was always going to remain incomplete. Despite this, the exercise brought an invaluable overview, inexhaustive as it must be, of AP's definition of what constitutes popular entertainment, representing the huge array of possibility: from the commemoration of the Charge of the Light Brigade to a Goat Show, Oxfam's 21st birthday and clown polo. Even though not every type of activity can be written about, or even mentioned, this enabled specificity in the writing about programme. Aside from the more idiosyncratic and bizarre offerings, this process brought an understanding of what has always delivered audiences to the Palace: exhibitions, musical events from classical to rave, and roller- and ice-skating.

Devising the structural system of the writing

The themes and voices outlined above are distinct on some levels: voices come from era-specific individual people or characters while ‘themes’ are an authorial form that covers areas relevant across the entire life of AP. Rules formulated for types of writing and subject voices as an ordered system indicate the relationship among and between them, the defining attributes for their classification, according to what needs to be said and what the writing needs to do (see Table 1). Distinctions of tense and language use are employed, to establish the role and purpose of the various voices; how they interact with each other; and the different styles and tones required by the types of writing to do specific work and produce other effects on the reader.

Thesis

The critical writing of the thesis includes the requirements of the abstract, introduction outlining the research questions, methodology, theoretical foundation and literature review. It responds to the questions of what it is, why it is being produced (its contribution and usefulness) and how. Standard tropes and conventions of academic writing are employed, in terms of narrative voice and form, including the ‘interruptions’ of references, display quotations and footnotes, mirrored in the imbrication of texts in the practice writing. The subjects of thematic writing – the Scenes – persist through the thesis, as represented in Diagram 1.

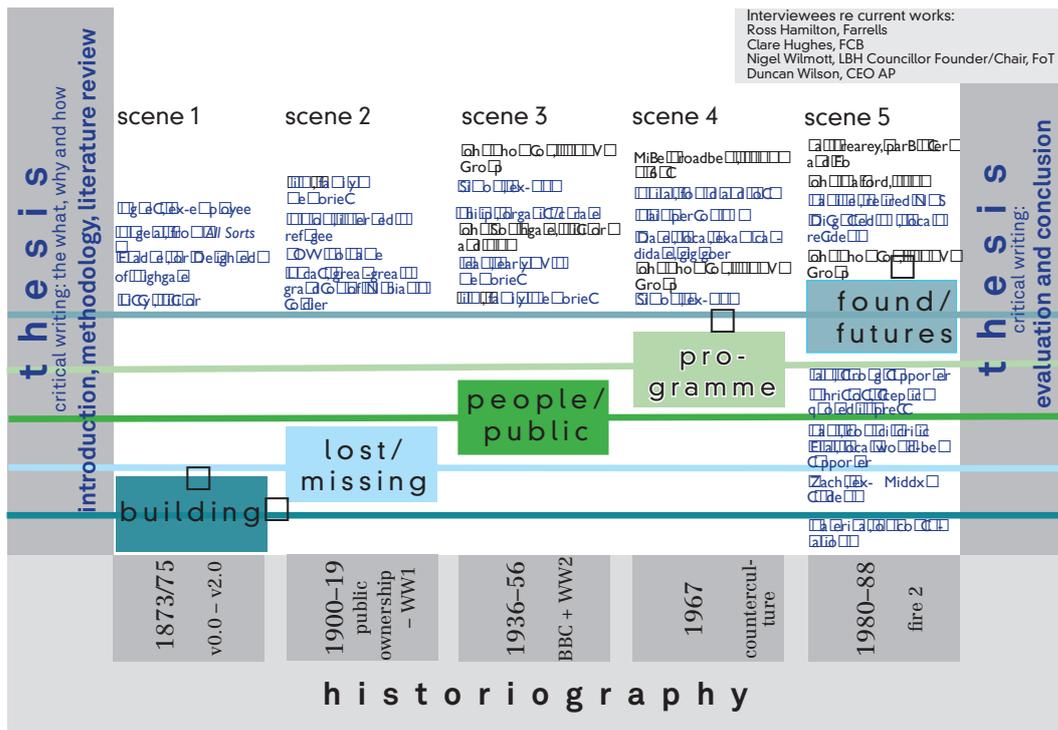
Historiography

As defined above, the historiography is a fact-based framework, responding to various material sources, a chronological narrative composed of a series of phases or events in the life of the Palace (to recap, 1873–5 Versions 0.0 to 2.0; 1900–19 Public ownership and the First World War; 1935–56 BBC and the Second World War; 1967 Counter-cultural happenings; 1980–8 GLC to LBH).

Thematic contextual

The thematic texts are composed of five Scenes on the subject headings of Building; Lost/missing; People/public; Programme;

Diagram 1 Thesis/practice structure; showing the multiple voices in the text: thesis/academic, historiography and the imaginative (thematic/ character); and represents text layout on the page (2016)



and Found/futures. Each of these includes one of the historiographic phases, the thematic authorial voice and character voices. These thematic texts consist of diachronic detours from the main route of the historiography, taking account of their relevance across the whole span of historiography and their development over time. Devised to suit the many sudden switches and changes of fortune in the Palace, these provide context and background for individual character voices, which express phenomena of a specific time, even a particular moment. The thematic writing is devoted to unpicking assumptions, to conjecture and to worry at details and to provide an alternative contextual voice to the thesis writing.

The historic present selected as the tense for the thematic writing lends a ‘liveness’ that mirrors how people remember and often relate events and experience. Its use creates an immediacy that reflects the different-era presents of the writing. Like AP, this tense has existed for a long time and comes in and out of usage, causing controversy.

Character voices

These are first-person texts, colloquial and conversational

fragments of experience as lived, largely within the timespan covered by the historiography. The texts are vignettes: impressionistic episodes or snapshots, part of something bigger than itself. Their status as excerpts is underlined on the page through the use of ellipses to suggest 'fade in' (and out) and, as in academic quotation, that words have been omitted and this is an abridged version. The character voices are synchronic interruptions to the other texts, interruptions to what Colin McCabe has called the dominant discourse of the omniscient narrator (in Murphy 2005). Multiple voices allow a spectrum of stories to be told; stories that contrast with and contradict each other; stories from different eras and points of view.

By turns supporting and undermining official or institutional views with what is said in thematic or historiographical writing, the use of these voices is part of 'a process of joint storytelling, where the past drives the narrative onward into new territory' (Lejano *et al*:2013:193), rather than the imposition of a sanitised, feel-good narrative (like 'Your People's Palace'). To reiterate, the character voices come from diverse sources that divide into four distinct types: interviews with users, volunteers and staff; based on interview material (ventriloquising); based on material from sources such as archives, press cuttings, images, conversations, 'true stories'; and fiction. The taxonomy of authorial and 'character' voices was established to aid clarity for the reader and also for ethical concerns regarding quoted material from interviewees.

This classification includes the various gradations of users, the background story and the date of the voice speaking, whether actual or implied.

Interviewees:

Pat Brearey, volunteer and committee member of FAPT, 2002+; long-term park user

Mike Broadbent (phone), ex-BBC, 1950s, journalist

John Halford (phone), ex-BBC, 1980s, engineer; among last BBC staff to work at AP

Russ Hamilton, Farrells, 2012 masterplanner

Clare Hughes (phone and in person), partner, FCB, current works

John Hulse (email), ex-BBC, 1970s, Open University Production Centre at AP, sound engineer

Helen Kearney, gig-goer, contemporary

John Thomson, lifelong user, Chairman, AP TV group and advisor on broadcasting kit for exhibit in redeveloped studios; multi-generational family attachment to AP

John Southgate (phone), ex-BBC, 1950s, Telecine operator

Nigel Willmott, from 1990s, ex-LBH councillor, founder/chair of FAPT

Duncan Wilson, CEO of AP to May 2015; managed current project with HLF application

Based on interview material or real person:

'Anton', based on Anton Wüst, conductor of internees' orchestra and composer of 'Alexandra Palace Ragtime' while interned there during First World War

'Dave', c.1970; sitting exams and reliving visits to the Palace as local schoolboy and aspirant hippy

'Jean', c.2003; volunteer; memories of AP/TV since childhood

'Jim', 1930s; based on interview material and early memories

'Paul', c.2013; a supporter of the forthcoming works, but not of the council

'Simon', c.1968; ex-BBC, experiences of working in the building and the Corporation, insider detail

Based on archive material, conversation, images, 'true stories' ...:

'Agnes', employee, c.1890; based on archive reports on catering facilities; describing inner workings of the building

'Christos', c.2015; a sceptic about new development, based on press cutting

'Disgusted of Wood Green', 1990s; based on archival news reports, self-proclaimed voice of reason and common sense; the opponent (of whatever plan it is)

'Ella', local supporter, 2015; based on conversation; not entirely convinced

'Jan', c.2014, based on conversation; very local, very much a supporter of new plans

'Katerina', 2014 exhibition visitor; unimpressed with processes of consultation and engagement

'Lucas', c.2013; great-great grandson of soldier billeted at AP, part of colonial troop contingent for coronation of Edward VII, 1902

'Pauline', c.1988, reminiscing about NHS rallies held at Palace in 1980s

'Plain person of Crouch End', c.1970; a spinner of tales, based on a story

by Fred Clarke (1995)

'Zach', c.2013, based on conversation; interest in proposed uses and ideas for new ones

Fictional:

'Angela', a character from fiction from the early era of the Palace, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, Walter Besant 1882; an adherent of self-help educational benefits rather than leisure principles

'Anita', c.1969, local resident and park user; inflecting with found and lost strand in thematic context

'Evadne' or Delighted of Highgate, philanthropic supporter and investor of time, vigour and maybe cash, local 'from the other side of the hill', c.1869; an Alter-Angela aesthete with her views on beauty and function

'Lissy', 1873, early visitor; still in awe and wonder

'Philip', local curate and organist, pre-Second World War; showing importance of the Willis organ and low visitor numbers pre-BBC

'POW no name', c.1918; anonymous prisoner of war

All the voices have a particularity of experience of the place; what they used it for, their opinions and feelings, set during in its 150-year life. They have been chosen or created to address absences in the Palace narrative and accentuate various aspects of it, to act as reminders of the scope of uses, and indicate intergenerational attachments: 'Agnes', the waitress who talks about the below-stairs layout; 'Dave', who provides a reminder of 1960s events and Palace-as-examination-hall; and Lucas, whose ancestor was housed in the grounds and who now lives locally himself.

The voices share an interest in the building's heritage, and contribute a strand to it. For most of that time, few of their experiences would have been considered worth relating, or considered much at all, except insofar as they represented cash receipts. Although their heritage is a significant element in that of AP overall in terms of memory and use, even if it were taken into account, the scale and structure of most consultative forums, as noted by Lejano *et al*, is likely to deter the expression of opinions, experiences, ideas and feelings by the non-professional contributor. The voices of those whose job entails an interest and connection with the Palace are quoted but not voiced as

characters in the same way since their experiences relate to the current works on AP, outside the scope of the historiographical framework. This material is incorporated into Chapter 3.

Textual definition on the page

The structuring of the text to emphasise its polyphony extends to its design in terms of page layout and typography. The spatial relations of the strands of writing reinforce the plurivocal effects as the voices mingle, occupy and share space on the page. Diagram 1 (see p62) operates as a model for the page design as well as for the structure of the writing and its design in terms of the various voices. Distinctions of tense, tone and language use are accentuated further by visual and spatial distinctions on the page, designed to encompass and demonstrate flow, interruptions, multiple points of access, for varied points of view. Although distinctive, they are not entirely separate or heard in isolation.

Works by authors considered as possible models included some often cited in architecture-related writing (Walter Benjamin, Mark Danielowski, Patrick Keiller, Georges Perec, Jane Rendell, Dirk van den Heuvel *et al*) and others less familiar (Stephane Mallarmé, Kirsty Gunn, John Chris Jones, Alice Oswald, Kathleen Stewart). This aspect of research covered the visual aspect of page design and also the extent of explanation and information offered to the reader about the nature of the text and how it may be read.

Returning to the idea of the chorus mentioned earlier, graphic scores for musical works, including those by Michel Plourde, John Cage and Cornelius Cardew, were also a fertile source: how scores-as-diagrams might be a model for the structure and design of the writing. As the foundation for the rest of the writing, the historiography is like a bass line in music, upon which everything else depends and sits. Voices operate as top notes or the treble (synchronic – relating to a particular moment in time – and displayed chronologically like the historiographic writing). To continue (or perhaps stretch) the metaphor, the stave – the structure on to which the writing must fit, is the thesis.

Methods for identifying the type of voice within the text and on the page combined into using some of the conventions of stage directions from plays and scriptwriting. Again, in a building with such a

history of popular entertainment and a surviving Victorian theatre, this is an appropriate usage, and both theatre and film have been useful sources throughout this work. These uses include noting the entrance of the character voice [Enter: 'Plain person'...] and appending a brief outline of their background and role, as a means of providing the reader with the necessary information to understand the role of the particular voice. On the page this has the effect of emphasising the vocal interlude as a kind of staged interruption to the main text, as another thread, highlighted typographically by font and weight and size and colour (for text and paper stock).

Typographic devices include justified text for the more formal writing, ranged left for thematic writing and voices. Font selections are based on: spare, serious Akkurat for thesis; time-specific Centennial serifed face for historiographic; originally used for signposts, and 'highly legible' in large bodies of text Neuzeit for the thematic voice and, in italic as a 'quoted' version for voices, tinted in accordance with the four types of voice as above and also to be suggestive of different tones of conversation. This allows the possibility of creating conversations among voices, but also across the spatial divisions of the page, incorporating this into the page design.

In this section other aspects of the process are documented and accounted for, along with another primary strand in the writing-as-methodology: the interrogation of the creative/critical binary.

The methods of writing the building developed from exploring ways to produce the effects and outcomes needed for the work. These methods include the case-study approach, site visits and observation, writing *in situ*, archive work, *ekphrasis* and other data collection methods such as interviews and informal conversation. Incorporating interviews with current and past users along with professional decision makers (architects, masterplanners, executives, councillors) includes the user in the category of makers of the building and extends a sense of ownership. Extending the temporal index of architecture writing beyond completion allows speculation on the future as well as reframing the present and reimagining the past.

Case study

The methodological approach necessitated selecting a case study that carried the requisite depth for the thesis – sufficient richness. The case-study approach ensures the use of a real building and real agents as inspiration for the imaginary. The principle is to supplement recorded and existing reality of a building, record its lost aspects through overlapping versions, and emphasise aspects of it, not to replace it. With the interest in developing application and instrumentality in this thesis, imagination was the tool for speculating on how something might be, but it had to emanate from a starting point in the real. Incorporating the building as lived and used was a crucial part of establishing a strand of architecture writing that takes architecture as its subject and also makes a contribution to architecture itself and in its application.

There was a process of discovering a pattern through analysis of data relating to the building, following Grounded Theory. Close examination of the object itself – in this case, the building and its particular characteristics – leads to defining the strategy with which to critique it. This is a partial reworking of Michel Serres' assertion quoted by Jennifer Bloomer: 'The strategy of criticism is located in the object of criticism' (1993:7). The study of the given, the case study, through site visits, observation and study (as per ethnographic practice), develops the knowl-

edge of the building. This knowledge is always (already) shaped by theory and other pre-existing knowledge (as per the rejection of 'naïve empiricism' of Grounded Theory). This includes theoretical and conceptual knowledge, and personal experience (as per autoethnography) as a one-time local user of AP, as well as knowledge about other similar buildings in terms of use, materials, programme or date.

Case study selection proceeded initially from a small number of givens: it should be an existing building, at least partially in use, of sufficient stature or scale on which to base a doctorate, and in London. This last arose in relation to intended forms of analysis and methods of research (interviewing, frequent site visits, writing *in situ*), taken together with a specific interest in buildings in London. The potential for reuse had to exist, as one purpose of writing a building. It had to be a public building, for access to be open or at least broad, and a permanent physical structure not paper architecture, because of my interest in the experiences and memories of the user.

To broaden out these basic requirements: the building also had to have local significance – community uses – and regional or national significance in order to ensure a diverse range of responses from constituencies of users at different points in its history. Although the term 'ghost building' as a description of the case study was abandoned early on, the usefulness of the idea of the ghost town lingered, though it too falls at the demand that the building must be in use, in order to have current users, as well as past and putative future ones. A ghost town often existed to serve a particular population in a place of work that then failed to meet the scale of expectation. It lacks its original purposes but retains traces of these. There is room for repurposing, so it has significance from the past into the future. It is familiar and strange. The presence of absence is discernable, of what enlivened the building once, yet it is alive with something still.

The Palace has had three built iterations, and a highly significant unrealised version. Its very fabric has been reused and relocated; how much is contested, but elements of the 1862 exhibition building in Cromwell Road were used to build it. It has been a site of both technological innovation and obsolescence. It echoes still with contemporary versions of its original use as a showcase for specific exhibitions. Its first owners intended it to contribute to the establishment of national

identity, but they could not have imagined how this would be fulfilled: a local landmark with London-wide significance, where it has had a role in establishing or regenerating neighbourhoods.

The processes of definition and selection worked in concert with each other, as the case study was tested against the developing definition in terms of public access, location, typology, size and extent, age, condition. The diagrams below depict some of the development of processes involved, and perceived attributes of the building.

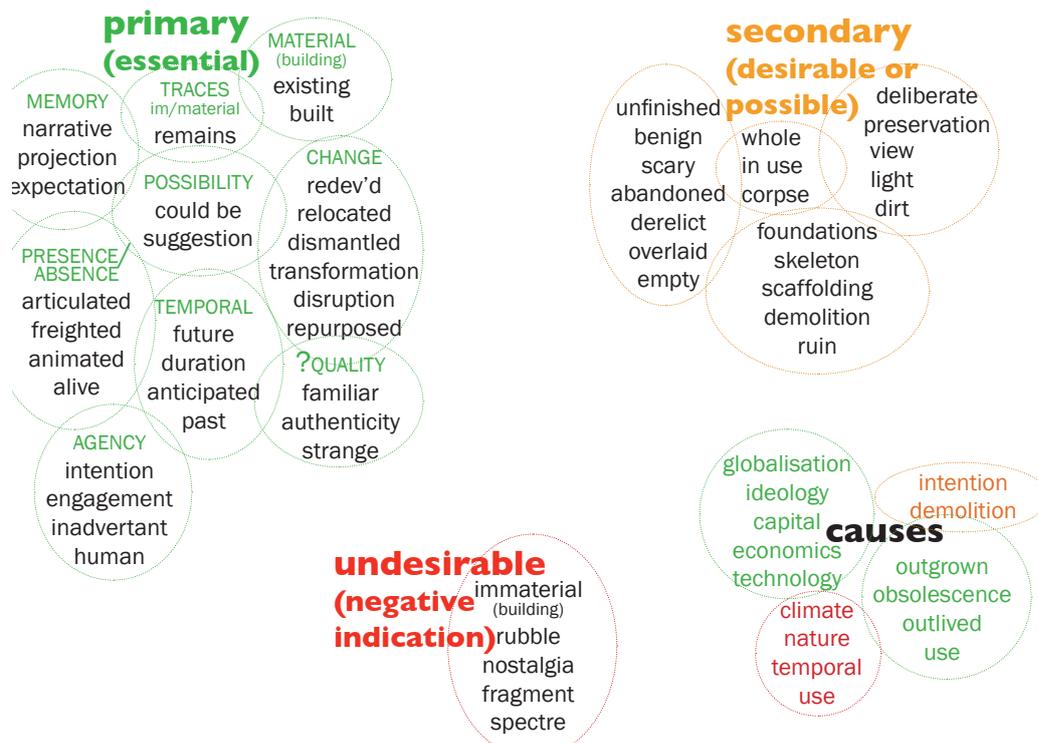


Diagram 2: Early categories of case study attributes, 2013

AP has been owned by a public authority since 1900, but its early status as a building privately owned by many different companies added to its appeal. Its delayed opening and abandonment shortly afterwards were early evidence of its lack of financial viability. All of this contributes to its suitability as a subject around which to develop the 'imaginative method' of the writing in this thesis.

Documentary approaches

Once AP was selected as case study, its relation to practice writing began to develop through documentation in text, image and



sound. In-situ site research started with author as user (researcher, writer, visitor) and interviewer, observing or participating in events, documenting impressions. This databank continued to grow throughout the project. Consolidating the basic project annotation of what is there now – typology, materials, style, programme – moved into what was there then: historical research. This led into what might have been there and what still might be: imaginative writing as well as critical commentary.

Documentation and other secondary materials provided responses to the basic questions of what a building is supposed to be for, who designed and built it and when. Given its stature in terms of significance, endurance and scale, constituencies of users have engaged with the Palace and continue to have opinions on it and responses to it. It has drawn widely differing responses and continues to elicit strong reactions throughout its lives. The open-ended, more subjective response, the contextual detail and the 'how' of how people related their stories were gleaned from interviews with users and practitioners.

This is not to suggest that this type of material was somehow more 'authentic'. It did assert its importance as part of the meaning of

architecture, as Iain Borden said, when it was 'moved into the realm of experiencing subjects and what they might think of a building' (2011:x). Through examining the response to the building at different times, through studying contemporaneous as well as contemporary literatures, the work underscores 'the process by which architecture is continually being redefined and reproduced' (2011:xi).

This part of the method included structured interviews and informal conversation with current users and volunteers, as makers of the building constructed in part through their narratives. Excerpts from these were used to address particular themes or uses (for example, the sense of occasion and place ('Anita', 'Jan'), mixed public opinion ('Plain ...'), and multiple uses ('Dave')). This was a way of highlighting their importance in the imbricated material of the narrative.

As noted earlier, approaches were engaged with that supported methods of working already in process. To some extent this has followed a process of creating a synthesis of theoretical approaches, as well as methodology, from my practice, rather than 'applying' theory to practice. With its focus on user experience rather than the producer (architect or author), Reception Theory was fruitful. In emphasising reception rather than production, it highlighted the relation between the individual and the collective, the private and public, and contributed to an understanding of the changing urban characteristics of our cities.

As expounded by Hans Robert Jauss in *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, the role of the reader/user was part of the production of meaning, playing a crucial role in mapping the changing response to a text or building (1982). In terms of revisiting and reinterpreting the culturally accepted significance of a building, Jauss' renewal of the process of question and answer was productive. What is understood by a culture as received or common knowledge, and therefore an answer, becomes again a question when expressed in a new way. As a result, individual disruptions – new opinions and responses – were foregrounded against the background of the old, the 'horizon of expectations', so the response was not fixed or single or exceptional. In relation to the instrumentality of this thesis, concerning the recovery of the building, it could then be 'made new again' according to Reception Theory, by looking or relooking, through revisiting this question and answer process.

Examining the response to the case study at different

times, through contemporaneous and contemporary literatures, and interviewing subjects, the work highlighted the ongoing process of redefining and making architecture. The possibility for change (in response to text or building) was not fixed or foreclosed; rather it was opened up to the assumption and expectation of change and reinterpretation of cultural significance. The reader/user was formative in Reception Theory in any understanding of the work, as the user was in this thesis in an understanding of the building, to order discussion of both academic and imaginative writing, and of AP in terms of its reception or assessment from the standards of its own time through to the time of the reader.

Aside from representatives of the Palace (employees and governance), architect and masterplanner, interviewees were sought through various groups of interested parties. These included Prospero (BBC pension holders; responses also came via friendship networks from unpensioned ex-employees); representatives of FAPT; AP Television Group and AP Television Society (whose members used to work at AP). Interviews were conducted in person, by telephone and email. Interviewees were asked the same basic questions, designed to elicit responses to the building and to what it contains. Questions were adjusted to accommodate particular roles, formulated broadly in order to get people talking. Informally, I initiated conversations with visitors at the Palace for exhibitions, concerts and Open House events for similar purposes; some of these fed into strands of writing or developed into character voices, such as 'Christos'.

Any building chosen as case study calls for a highly individual (though transferable) palette of methods in order to respond to it adequately: AP itself demanded these particular methods of writing it, to account for its specific nature and people's responses to it. The cast of voices and the range of responses to the Palace were designed to capture the immanent narratives attached to it and create others suggested by various sources and representations of it, not as a kneejerk or romantic response to difference or a spurious attempt at comprehensive coverage. The types of voices, as outlined earlier, and their individual characterisation were designed to suggest the layers of significance and the alternative voices within this building. They represented a constituency of multiple opinions and a sense of ownership, which took into account and broadened the platform of debate on the building's

possible future and recovery. Method and form together offer a way of speculating about future possibilities.

Archive work

In terms of architecture the user might also be one whose thoughts and feelings about the place were accessed through secondary materials or via archival holdings. Visits to the BBC Written Archives at Caversham supported the understanding of the development of the building leading up to and during the occupancy of the BBC, the Palace's main leaseholder for forty years from 1936. Materials viewed at Caversham also uncovered routes of interest to follow for later subjects of imaginative writing, such as memos displaying attitudes of BBC personnel to AP and its users. Archive visits then extended to the Great Exhibition archive at Imperial College in order to learn more about the original building that had literally supplied parts of AP in its first built iteration, and to the National Archive at Bruce Castle in Tottenham (close to the Palace). Bruce Castle houses the archive material on AP, and its users, locality and national significance are iterative of its status as a site of neighbourhood, national and international importance.

The knowledge gained from a series of visits here, in the form of text and image, included the trail of ownership of the building and leases on it, and the breadth of its uses and users over its entire history. This material, collected without a preconceived thesis for it to prove or support or be validated by (though with a set of criteria), again as per Grounded Theory, formed the foundation of the historiographic writing. It then gradually developed into the schedule of practice writing of contextual/thematic and character voices. As noted, the schedule was devised as a series of subjects and methods, in order to indicate both the areas to cover in the writing, and how, so that the writing demonstrated the substance or abundance of the building as a subject. Using categories within the data to classify and understand (such as scale, material, programme, planning) then allowed comparisons to be made both with other similar buildings and with the different iterations of the same building.

Writing

This process of learning more about the building initiated and inspired other layers of the writing. These, whether thematic or character-led, from real people or fictions, were rooted in reality, responding to the historiographical. To recap, the historiographic writing, essential for a sound understanding of the case study in order to produce the writing, was structured as a series of 'peaks' of interest in AP's history. Between these are the spaces that the imaginative writing can occupy with unheard voices or informal/marginal narratives or 'ventriloquised oral history'.

The development of a solid understanding of the building as a foundation was planned to facilitate the production of the historiographical text, and scheduled in order for it to then inspire the imaginative writing. In the methodological plan of action, writing historiography was intended to lead to the writing of imaginative practice – to instigate and support it. This feedback loop between the historical, critical and imaginative writing was both method and subject of this thesis. It followed the principle of the abduction feedback method from Grounded Theory, 'an innovative process of modifying and combining several elements of previous knowledge', as described by Udo Kelle (2005:13). This involved a rearrangement and integration of previous and new experience, rather than deduction (general rules applied to specific cases) or induction (generalising from a number of cases and inference to a general rule). In this way separations are reconfigured and new relationships suggested between them, in how different types of writing might deal with the same subject. Examples in the practice that followed this method are design and layout of specific parts of the building, and television as innovation, entertainment, information and employment.

Since this thesis already involved using writing in the production of architecture, the use of *ekphrasis* (from the Greek: the use of one form to inspire the description of another, an aspect of writing and storytelling in use since antiquity) was highly applicable. It is a procedure used in the construction of the text, with writing based on photographs, archival materials, comments in interviews, press cuttings, reports and tickets and playbills. It can be used too as an aspect of disruption, with the introduction of a different narrative voice and in some cases a literal

76 interruption on the page.⁴ There is no longer the same need for *ekphrasis* to represent the invisible, the artefact that the writer can see but the reader cannot, or to describe unseen and inaccessible objects in an age of incessant reproduction. Here it is instead a way of making the building come alive, making it vivid for the reader. There is a role for graphic design too in using text as illustration, contributing to the effect that it seeks to conjure up.

Ekphrasis can be used to describe something that is beyond sight in terms of distance or time, but also something that never existed: so not only the factual and the remembered. Bringing together visual and verbal means of description, and including elements that did and did not exist, emphasises the possibilities of the verbal or textual against the limitations of the visual. Writing about an imaginary subject/artwork (or perhaps an unrealised building) is sometimes described as 'notional *ekphrasis*'. Whether or not it is considered necessary to make this distinction, W J T Mitchell is convincing when he suggests in his essay 'Ekphrasis and the Other' (1994) that all *ekphrasis* is notional in that there is an element of displacement in replacing the original with a new text or version in another form.

Creative and critical

The connection between the critical and creative writing was articulated by the hinge of building-as-case-study, which opened up the space between them. The imaginative writing sprang from its grounding in the critical, enabling it to make flights of imagination or fiction based in the real, which reinflected the critical and led to new reflections on how the building might be reconsidered. One aim of the practice element of this thesis was to make the imaginative writing crucial in explicating the theoretical trajectory of the text as a whole. There was a reassessment of the hermetic nature of the categories of creative and critical in relation to writing a building. 'Creative' writing was considered here as another critical force itself. The imaginative (or invented, fictional) writing is introduced into the realm of the critical, as a tool, for instrumental advantage, drawing attention to the simplistic nature of the separation between the two.

Writing is itself an art form, more or less deliberately and self-

consciously, a matter of creativity, which is not restricted to arts-based texts in academic writing. The use of 'creative' to describe and define writing that is not simply academic or professional, that goes beyond the informational, that is expressive of thoughts and ideas and even emotion, that communicates through literary means or poetics is then problematic. The act of making critical writing is clearly also a creative one, unless critical writing is taken as unoriginal or uninventive, as though it involves no act of creation or art or selection in its making. Critical, academic writing is 'artful', to borrow a term from Patter, Pat Thompson's blog on research and writing (2014). The conclusive, consistent voice that articulates findings at the end of the research process is the result of refinement and negotiation of a congregation of voices. This process of conjecture and hypothesis is not unrelated to creative practice in any medium or the imaginative process of 'what if?'

In using different levels of writing and multiple voices, responding to some of the same ideas, this work questioned the idea of the 'authority' of the critical and the 'authenticity' of the creative and that one should be privileged above the other. It posited bringing the critical and the creative together and, further, that they both contribute to the other to then create something new. This is not to say that the two are the same: the codes of critical writing within an academic context are systematised and prescribed to a great extent, whereas those for the imaginative writing can be written by each author or, it might be said, suggest themselves in the process. This writing used critical and creative forms with an awareness of the accepted rules of the first and, for the second, the formulation of an individual set of constraints (described above), in order to produce writing that delivered on both creative and critical fronts. As the practice text was full of repetitions and pauses and interruptions of other voices, of other forms of writing, of tones of voice, so references, footnotes and endnotes, it is noted, 'interrupt' academic writing.

The critical writing looked outward from the research, to application, as well as inward in its relation to the imaginative. It is likely to be more declarative in tone than the imaginative, and less suggestive than this practice that allowed the meta-narrative to emerge alongside rather than displacing previous versions. The imaginative or creative as generally defined allows a more experimental approach to writing, one

5 'Solutions' to this vary among the adherents of Reception Theory, including Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser, who were sometimes referred to as the Konstanz school in reference to the university where they were based.

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less bound to preconceived ideas, while the critical is often associated only with negativity. Criticism is also a secondary practice that only exists in relation to its object, unlike the creative, which involves production of the new, itself. To describe the critical, and criticism, as solely negative belies its encompass of evaluation and appreciation.

Numbering critical and academic voices in the polyphony acknowledged their weight and role in the writing and added further depth. It also demanded a level of authorial self-consciousness, implicating myself by proximity, as distinct from absenting myself to some (also imagined) academic high ground, and an acknowledgement of the role of the researcher/author as originator and designer of the process, and maker and producer of the finished work. Even where quotation is used – verbatim from interview or from texts by other authors, these have been selected and therefore to some extent constructed. In interview the subject is identified, an approach made and the interview requested (clearly it is the subject's choice to agree or decline). The questions were formulated by me, although interviewees chose how or even whether to respond or not. It is the interviewer's choice whether to use interview material, whether it is brought out into the public realm of readership, again shaping the narrative.

Jauss's stress in Reception Theory on the interdependence of poetics and hermeneutics was interesting here: that the reader has to have examined the text in terms of poetics in order to reach any hermeneutic conclusion, but also to have read it hermeneutically to grasp and interpret its poetics. The articulation of the two together as the common aim in his exposition of the theory also described the aspiration of this thesis.

Writing Alexandra Palace

Scene 1	Building	81
Scene 2	Lost/missing	115
Scene 3	People/public	139
Scene 4	Programme	167
Scene 5	Found/futures	193

Scene 1 Building

[Enter:

‘Evadne’ or Delighted of Highgate (c.1869), a philanthropic supporter and investor of time, vigour and maybe cash; local ‘from the other side of the hill’

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‘Lissy’ (c.1873), based on press reports, an early visitor to v1.0, still in awe and wonder

‘Agnes’ (c.1890), based on archive material on catering facilities, including plan of basement layouts

‘Angela’, a fictional character from *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, Walter Besant 1882; an adherent of self-help educational benefits rather than leisure principles]

Backroom and front-of-house, all of us knew our place and how to get from one to the other was strictly controlled. There was to be no public view of the backstairs workings. This was a Palace, after all

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We never had time to walk the bounds of it

It is a show to feast the senses upon, even before any other spectacle laid on for entertainment, indoor and out. And to those who would decry all this useless beauty, why it must go hand in hand with function

It is not for idle consumption – that was the guiding principle

None of us knew the whole story about the innards of the building, so much space, so many basements

It will be so much more than a pretty distraction

I was too busy looking around, no time for reading. Trying not to stare

It was a wonder anything was ever warm enough to eat

... If I think about it for long enough, I can remember what I saw. Or so I think. I'll see again that view outside, further than I'd ever been. I can imagine that smell like blood and sweat of excitement, the queue and the crush and ... I've forgotten what else. You know how that is.

I want to recapture it just so, just as it was. The fresh paint and no smears on the glass, the iron crushed against the end of the glass. Places like ... I can't think of the names, I never even knew where they were. I was too busy with looking around, no time for reading. Trying not to stare. Those people, watching such others I never knew alive. Do you remember now? Can you recall?

Alexandra Palace opened to the public in 1873 but on several levels and in various forms it had existed for some years before then. Owen Jones, the architect responsible for the interior design at Crystal Palace, built for the Great Exhibition in 1852, had published a pamphlet for another iron and glass palace, to be sited in north London (Jones:1858). These plans were also published in *The Builder* and exhibited at the AA premises in Conduit Street, London W1 (vol.17:1858:199). Jones's vision, as detailed in Peter Smith's essay 'Alexandra Palace and Park: History of the Alexandra Palace and Park to 1965' in the *Hornsey Historical Bulletin*, was ambitious in scale, as 'a glazed structure measuring 1300 ft x 500 ft with a central dome, corner towers, and a vast apsidal lecture theatre to the rear, which he described as a "Palace of the People"' (Smith:n.d.:15). His plan for the building's use was equally grand, with a pair of naves for industrial and fine art exhibits, the Winter Garden as centrepiece flanked by an amphitheatre-shaped

I'd never been so full, even without the bun and ice. I couldn't wait. After the first hour I forgot to be scared, forgot to look up to see what might be falling. Forgot to listen for the crack of breaking glass. Forgot the shame of

... It must be for show equally as for use. Its beauty speaks the volume and value of its use, and viewing and appreciation of beauty is a use in itself and in one which all must be schooled. The two cannot be separated; to do so would be a travesty and would surely diminish both, and together each is amplified and enhanced. To call it a marvel of our times is already oft-repeated but worth saying again and again. Unbuildable only yesterday, it is a palace of utility

lecture hall for imparting knowledge on art, science, literature, music, horticulture (Smith:15). The Palace was intended to be 'an auxiliary' to the British Museum, South Kensington Museum (V+A) and Kew Gardens, in its national and architectural significance: a cathedral of commerce and culture (Jones:1858). This plan did not find financial support.

The Alexandra Park Co. Ltd was formed in 1863 and Tottenham Wood Farm was purchased as the site for a public park in which the Palace would be the pinnacle (Smith:16). How much of the structure of the 1862 International Exhibition building sited in Cromwell Road was reused in Muswell Hill is contested. Some histories cited a dome and parts of the iron frame; or, extravagantly, £80,000-worth of unspecified 'elements' (Smith:16). Ken Gay had it in *Palace on the Hill* (1992) that the portico from the Exhibition Road entrance was reused. It is unclear whether the Cromwell Road builders, Kelk & Lucas, who were appointed at AP, took these structural

who I was, that I could be there, could be one of that crowd, one of such a number. Never seen its like, never been anywhere like it in my life. There were more people in a room than I knew was possible. We had taken a train ride up into a

for all its people with a charm completely its own, in scale, in proportion, from afar and, for those lucky few, as a local neighbour. Its functions and benefits are spread across industry, arts and commerce, and simply as a palace of delight to the eye. It is for everyone to visit and enjoy.

It is a show to feast the senses upon, even before any other spectacle that might be laid on for entertainment, indoor and out. There are so many of these begging for our

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elements in part payment for unpaid wages, since the 1862 exhibition had failed to fulfil financial expectations (an unheeded portent for the future). Gay suggests they used these elements as leverage for buying into new jobs as contractors (Gay:1992:9).

Although Owen Jones is often credited as architect, AP was designed by Alfred Meeson with John Johnson.

This first Palace ... took the form of an aisled nave 894 ft. long with three transepts, of which the central one was 424 ft. in length. A dome 170 ft. in diameter, considerably larger than the Pantheon (142 ft.) or St. Peters (137 ft.) constructed from the parts bought from South Kensington (though raised even higher by the introduction of a new drum) covered the crossing point of the central transept and nave, and smaller cupolas were placed over the other crossing points. At each end of the nave and the ends of

dream of London town, like a new life.

And then, like a dream, I feared losing it when I woke again, for we had to leave. I didn't want to leave behind any of it, feared not holding all of it, together, now. I wanted somewhere I could go back there again in my memory at least. I know you can't have that. But it will always stay with me, that much I am sure of. Now, when I remember, I can say that: you couldn't make it up. ...

attention already, and so many more planned for the coming months, and I dare say, years to come. The palace will see us grow old but we will not outgrow its charms. Of that I am wholly convinced.

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each transept was a substantial pedimented frontispiece containing a large rose window with arched entrance door beneath and embellished with patterned brickwork intended to create an Italianate effect. To the north was a substantial terrace extending over the railways station and another terrace projecting in the centre over an arcaded basement as added on the south front (Smith:16).

Writing in *AA Quarterly* Stevan Brown said that Jones's design was 'more sophisticated and advanced than those which were actually built' and takes this as 'evidence of an unfortunate retrogression in the Victorian era (Brown:1970:40). The Palace as constructed with its more conventional masonry structure was described by Douglas Murphy on *Entschwindet & Vergeht* as a step back to 'mixed' construction (youyouidiot.blogspot.com/ 2012). This, he suggested, positioned buildings such as the Palace safely back into existing architectural

We have not lived so long yet to know what works this Palace will make in our midst. We shall see in the fullness of time to come. And to those who would decry all this useless beauty, why it must go hand in hand with function, for use to flourish in its midst!...

... The Palace is to be for the benefit of the people here and beyond, not for the idle consumption of shows and theatricals. They are to use it for fruitful purposes, not to show it off like a trinket. It must be so much more than a pretty distraction – it is a building for the purposes of self-improvement.

It was designed to show those frustrated in their life of lowly status, lacking in education and ideals to give

narrative, away from the more experimental confections of iron and glass, such as Bruno Taut's fourteen-sided pavilion in Cologne (1914).

Some forty years after AP v1.0 was built, Paul Scheerbart was pronouncing in *Glass Architecture* (1914) on the transformative benefits of beauty made possible by modern methods. Invited by Taut to produce a piece of writing on his glass pavilion, Scheerbart delivered fourteen phrases, one rhyming couplet for each side of the pavilion, each of twenty-eight letters. Taut's pavilion was designed and built for the Werkbund exhibition in 1914, but this pavilion of multi-coloured glass was considered to be its own exhibition.

Dennis Sharp said in his introduction to the 1972 edition that Scheerbart's couplets did not translate well into English. Certainly they were no longer twenty-eight letters but they worked as '*bon mots*', whatever the tone of the original, and provided an unusual commentary on the Palace. No.14:

them hope that they could do more for themselves. It is for those who believed themselves mired in their own hopeless circumstances. That was the guiding principle for this Palace, and it shall stand.

Men can be helped only so far and those who look for the assistance they can get from others, not to their own efforts for betterment, will indubitably remain in their own sorry predicament. This building is not for them. It cannot help. It is for those who want to do something about it, those who want to look to their future and work towards it.

91

‘Glass opens up a new age
Brick building only does harm.’

No. 8 was particularly apposite for both Alexandra and Crystal Palace, as Sharp noted:

‘Combustible materials
Are a scandal.’

The grand opening of AP is dated 1873, to recap, and this is generally taken as its completion date. In fact there was a pause from structural completion in 1866, due ‘the great monetary panic’, which meant that the cost of interior fit-out could not be covered (Smith:16). A ‘tontine’ of 500,000 shares at £1 each and a triennial Art Union were among the (unsuccessful) ideas proposed to overcome the situation; again, indicative of difficulties to come (*Standard*:1870).

This is not to suggest that every man can develop the refined palate and opinions of those born to higher stations but there is room for working men – and later on, women too, when the palace has begun to work its purpose in the area – to raise themselves above the shamefully low expectations with which they are saddled and saddle themselves.

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...

[Strike up the band, dim the lights. Positions everyone please.]

It is 1859. What's the story? People flock to see a glazed palace in north London, as they did to the Great Exhibition. It looks impossible still, even to those who saw that first crystal palace that gave the name to its resting place. The design is delicate in appearance, belying the strength of its materials, graceful in shape. Below the three storeys of the main exhibition hall are sturdy tunnels lined in robust brick for the train to run through the hill, depositing visitors there. Excavations for the railway tunnels form a valley for gardens and maypoles. Pedestrians stream up the hill, meeting the top of the tunnel on a raised walkway. Entrance back into the Palace is through the colonnades on the platform on which the glass rests, dazzling above with the stolid brickwork below. Lavishly proportioned places to walk and look and sit are unclassified by intended use or user. It is a vision of open space, for that is what it is: an idea captured on paper. And this is a story.

Owen Jones builds on past work, his own and others', to develop that of the future. His design incorporates a hall of greater span than is attempted for the Great Exhibition Hall at Hyde Park: more glass, more iron, more sparkle. This is a design entrancing enough to

Blandford Hall, a neo-Tudor banqueting hall, was built in 1864 as an interim measure until the funds to complete the Palace could be amassed, as a way of encouraging people to see the site as a visitor attraction and provider of refreshments in the park. Alexandra Park Co. Ltd went into liquidation in 1865, and a succession of equally short-lived companies took the project closer to completion (Smith:19). Evidently savings from recycling elements of the 1851 building were not enough to fund the budget.

The thrust of the programme was for entertainment rather than self-improvement. The official guide eulogised the opening exhi-

Then they will be well placed to advertise its use and instrumentality in their new-found pastimes, their reading and discussion, their shared schemes for making good. Once a world away from the penny dreadfuls and the yellow press

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stem the tide of worry about the less-than-sparkling financial returns and dwindling audiences. But Jones does learn from the disastrous effect at Hyde Park of unrelieved sunlight through glass on certain types of plants and incorporates this into his Winter Garden centrepiece, flanked by an amphitheatre-shaped lecture hall for the imparting of knowledge with 'perfect acoustic'. Some thought has gone into considering who might come here and how: 'flowing the Branch Railway laid down by Sir Charles Fox', according to Jones's 'Skeleton Map, flowing the Position of THE PALACE OF THE PEOPLE with reference to the great centres of the Population of his Metropolis'. Exterior and interior, the building is about the visibility of progress and making progress visible.

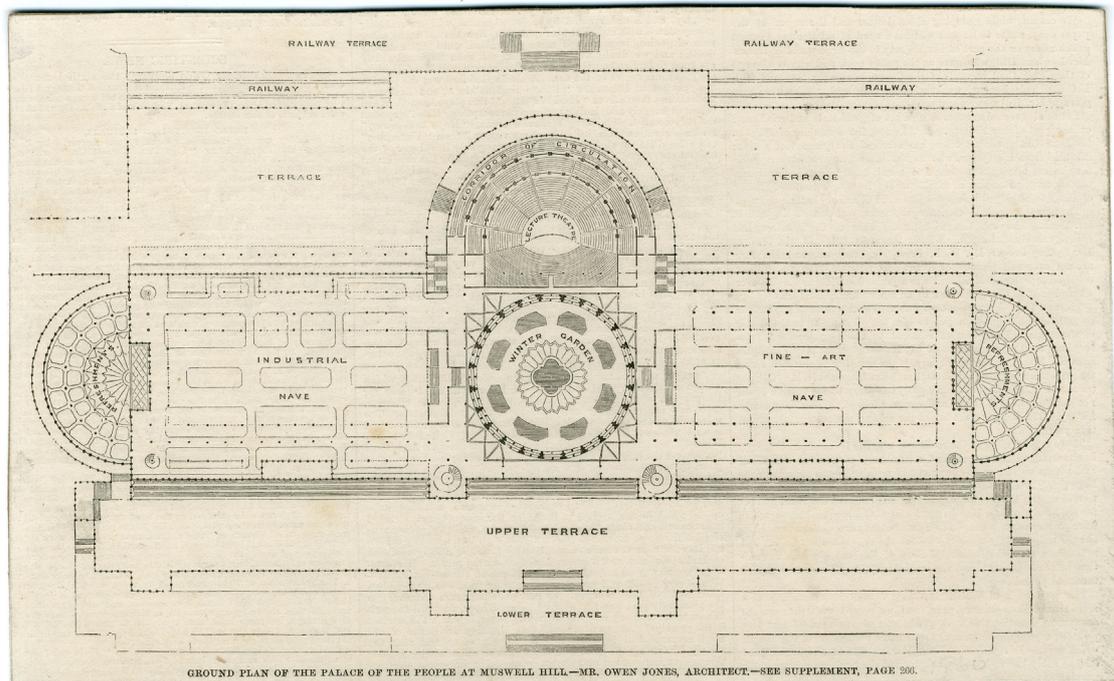


Figure 1, 'Ground plan of the palace of the people at Muswell Hill, Mr Owen Jones, architect', 1859

bition as 'overflowing with objects described as of "universal interest"' (in Smith:16). These included an Egyptian chariot, a life-size model of Laplanders with sledge and reindeer, mammoth carrots and mangelwurzels, models of a Moorish house and Egyptian villa interior, the Londesborough Collection with '1337 pieces of armour, arms and antiquities, and the Whitfield Collection of 1463 natural history exhibits' (1873:16). The exhibition boasted a grand concert and Flower Show, galleries with work by Turner and Millais, porcelain and china collections lent by their owners – 'soon to be enriched by the addition ... of Lady Carrington's three hundred pug china dogs' – and the Willis

and corner tavern, they will be able to parade it to their advantage, once they have had the use of it...

... There were complaints. The food was cold. That was a common one. If only they knew how far it had come to arrive on their plate at their table. This was no fancy produce shipped over like the exhibits from all corners of the colonies:

94 It entertains, informs and educates, indivisibly, in imbrication.

This design demonstrates Jones's objectives in a large-scale building – 'Intellectual Improvement and Physical Recreation to the masses' – while demonstrating his understanding of the importance that to succeed it has to incorporate 'such features of Design as should render the Building itself attractive'. His interior layout divides into two naves; they will look before they have a cup of tea (as 'Angela' might say). Whichever route they take, a walk through the nave of Industry or Fine Art from the main entrance at the Winter Garden arrives at a refreshment area sited at the far end, and each nave is accessible from the exterior as well as to indoor traffic. A stroll along the exterior upper terrace brings the promise of a view into the Palace and its jewels of exhibition at least, and out over London. An overabundance, whichever way they look and a vision unfulfilled.

...

It is 1873 and this is how it looks. It is a Palace of arches glazed and blank, in a plethora of scales and dimensions on each of its many levels. It is a Palace for approach, as artfully meandering paths lead to stairways and entrances, closer to the hugeness of windows, an ascent uncluttered by too many trees to interrupt sight of the steadily growing immensity that faces all points. People stop and stare as they climb:

organ, itself an attraction. Early attendance figures were good, with 120,000 visitors in the first two weeks, but sporadic (Harris:2005:18).

The programme was in the main designed to cater for those with limited disposable income, although provision of separate dining facilities for servants and first- through to third-class dining areas suggested the intention was for visitor appeal to stretch across social classes. Villages had and have fewer facilities: post and telegraph office, public transport, fire station, police office, lost property office.

The china dogs had a lucky escape. Sixteen days after opening AP burnt down. There was insufficient water on site to douse

this was the distance it travelled from basement kitchen to dining hall. I heard there were twelve eating places at one count. From cafés and tearooms to banqueting halls for the quality, but I only worked in a few of them and I never saw them all either.

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three rose windows to admire for their size alone, if nothing else. The central and largest is underpinned by two storeys of colonnades and flanked by three. There's no knowing what's inside for the seeing; how much there must be that it takes this many windows and shafts of light to illuminate and do it justice. Access to the central dome, porthole-studded, is through this arched entrance. It's topped with a flag, smaller versions marking the line of the roof's edge. (Consequences unintended: flag and iconic building designate territory for neighbourhoods to emerge around.)

Church-like (cathedral-like?), spaces known as transepts and naves join beneath the dome where the organ is housed in the Great

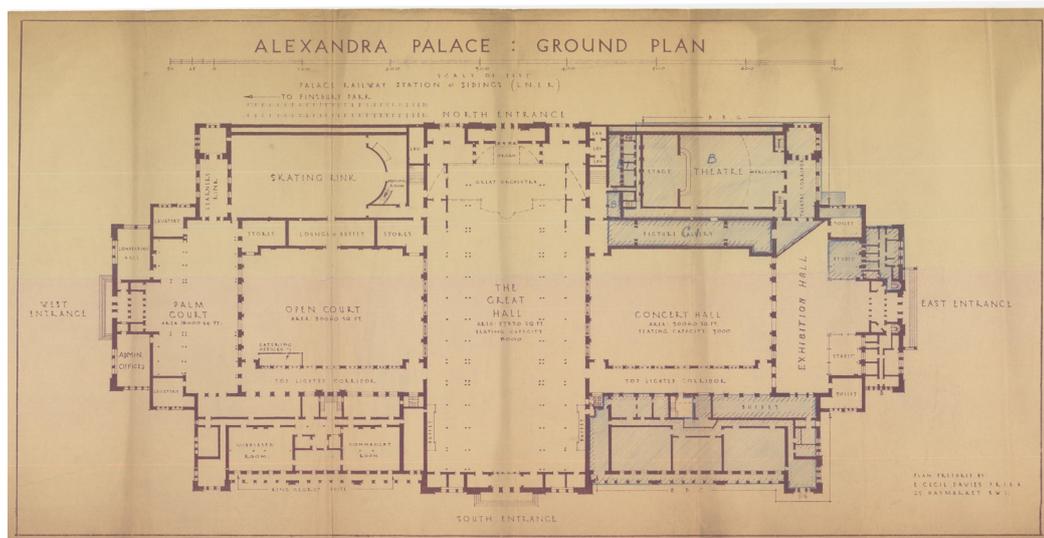


Figure 2, Plan, Meeson and Johnson, 1873

the flames; difficulties in pumping it upwards to the building once the fire brigade arrived inescapably mirror the difficulties of securing AP's financial future. The causes of the fire, in which a fireman died and the bodies of 'two ladies' were recovered long after, are laid at the door of 'reckless plumbers' (Brown:1970:42).

Despite the loss of funds, the deaths, the ineffective subsidy-by-recycling, the lack of insurance money and scepticism about its viability, the decision to rebuild without delay 'was no sentimental move; the success of the Palace during its brief life had convinced everyone of the financial soundness of the undertaking',

It was a wonder anything ever arrived in the right place, in truth. Or warm enough to eat without the battery of chaffing dishes that we used as standard at the big dinners. Any consideration for whether it was at a decent temperature came some rungs below whether was edible and the correct

96

Hall, reached by its own staircase. The grand orchestra plays here at the central transept. To its east and west, two smaller transepts lead to yet more access points and station links, to offices and other facilities. To the east are reading rooms and library, and to the west museum areas. First-class refreshment areas are found in the eastern nave; second- and third-class in the west; and all are fringed with veranda space. Smaller, hexagonal towers sit at east, west and north, with formal beds laid out on the terrace. The carriage drive sets down at the western terrace entrance and the roadway curls around the southern face of the Palace.

...

This is how it looks in 1875, cobbled back up cheaply and



in haste with the conventions of the stately home or grand manor, unfrilled. The main entrance porticoes are all that survived to be reused. The distortion of the echo

Figure 3, View of the Palace from Hornsey, n.d.

according to Brown (42). Informed doubts were voiced early on:

We know that ... none of the great Exhibitions held since that of 1851 ... have realized the expectations of their promoters; upon the whole of them, there was a heavy pecuniary loss ... The novelty of the attraction has not only worn off, but a feeling of satiety as regards such Exhibitions has very generally arisen which will be hard to overcome. It would be vain to hope to rival Crystal Palace ... (Bowring:1859)

order for the customer at that table. And then they complained that all they wanted was a hard-boiled egg!

We did our best but standards will slip. Every new owner, every regime of management must have discovered a graveyard of mouldy dishes piled up in a cranny of a back basement when time got tight, never to be retrieved.

97 is plain enough in this oversize parish hall. It has more of a rectangular solidity than its predecessor, with east and west entry halls extending at either end, and less of the H-block plan. Four square corner towers with spires are still joined by double-storey colonnaded terraces, and the main dome, its grandeur much diminished, sits at the centre of transverse glass-roofed arcades.

The great concert hall becomes more dominant, occupying the same central space as the main transept of the first-built Palace. Gallery space is clearly much vaunted in its boasted dimensions of 30 feet wide and around 100 feet in length, while naves have turned into open courts for sitting and walking and exhibiting the self as an alternative to looking at more inert objects. At the west end in the conservatory, or one of them, are the glazed domes, in miniature. This enclave of exotica looks like an extension, that is to say separate and built by another designer at another time.

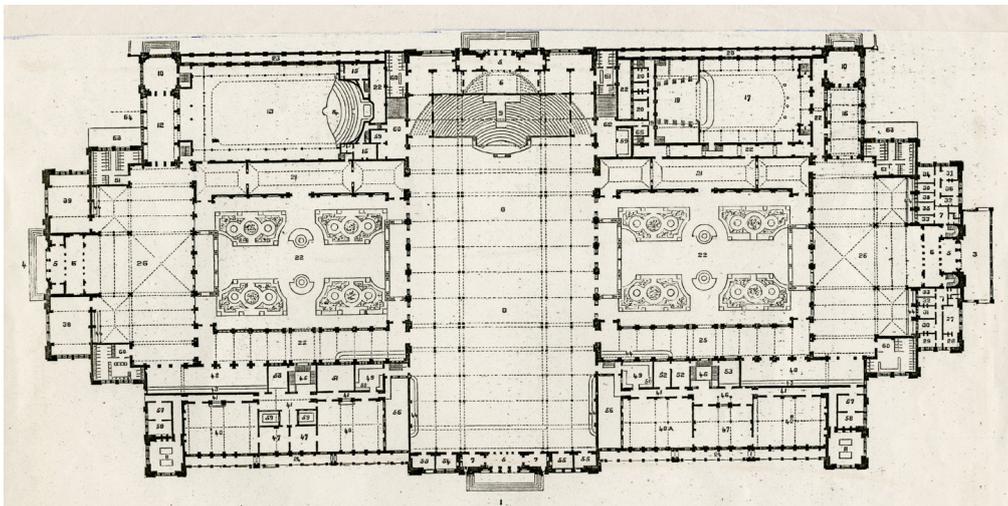


Figure 4, Plan, *The Builder*, 15 August 1874

Doubts were noted in the press too; for example, an uncredited column in *The Brucian*: 'Now I don't think it will ever pay' (May 1860). The question must be posed that, if it had been such a success, why the AP failed to be sold at auction in 1876 when two petitions for winding up the company were heard (unattributed press cutting, BC:October 25 1876). An answer was found in Asa Briggs' *Victorian People*, in which Benjamin Disraeli called the Great Exhibition 'a godsend to the government ... diverting public attention from their blunders' (1955:43).

We never stopped. But in a place that size, if dirty plates were the worst of it, that would really be something.

Some of the staff swore by their own route from any of the kitchens to customers – favouring a particular staircase, avoiding a certain corridor. Backroom and front-of-house, all of us knew our place and how to get from one to

98

Park and Palace are one – a footstep is all that separates them – as is catering provision for second- and third-class customers, served together in now declassified spaces. Carriage passengers alight in the dedicated enclosed entrance at the eastern side. Visitors can walk all the way through the building, from the terrace via entrances and lobbies, conservatories, a court laid out as an Italian garden, skirting through the Great Hall to stare at the organ and across the other side. The route runs through the exhibition gallery, taking in the theatre and the bazaar that used to be another open court and then into another agglomerate of conservatory, lobby and entrances.

...

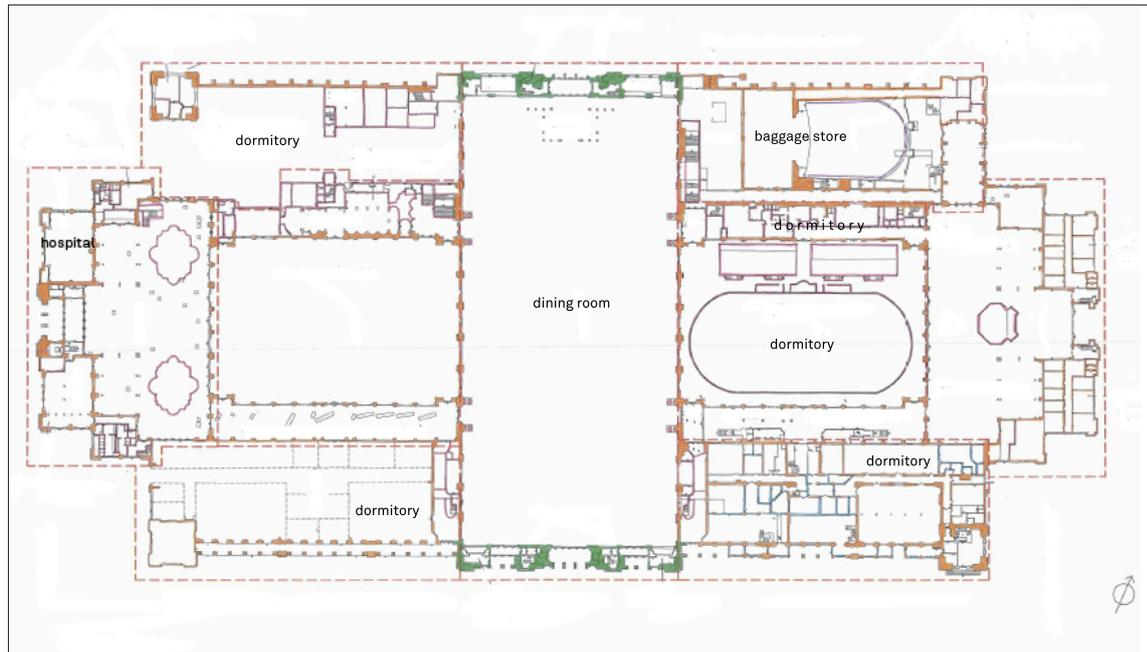
It's 1915. Forever closed or closing is how it looks: largely derelict, unused and unusable. In public ownership – the market decided it was for the best – for over a decade and users are fewer than ever. Closed for the duration, the Palace reopens for the war effort: housing refugees, then internees, then POWs. The concentration down to basic needs includes only dormitory, dining room, baggage store and a tiny hospital room in the Bijou theatre at the northern side of the Palm Court. Dormitory spaces are laid out in what was the bazaar, the glazed corridor in the south-eastern end, the gallery space in the eastern wing of the building, in the Concert Room to the north-west, and in one of the

The Palace was frequently described as being rebuilt by the same team but the status quo had changed: Johnson was now the lead rather than the associate architect (Gay:12).

The new palace is to be larger than the old building being both longer and broader. It is to have three transepts, one forming a concert hall, another a theatre and the third is, it is stated, to be devoted to bazaar purposes ... the new building will resemble the Crystal Palace, it having been decided that iron and glass shall be largely used in the con-

the other was strictly controlled. There was to be no public view of the backstairs workings. This was a palace, after all. It was only some time after the reopening, when breath was not held quite so tightly that explorations could be made

Figure 5, Ground-floor plan, First World War uses 1919, Insall, 2012



First-class Banqueting Rooms to the south-west side. The Great Hall is in use as the Dining Room and the Victorian theatre is turned over to the storage of luggage.

struction of the building (*The New Alexandra Palace*:n.d.).

The central dome was replaced with a curved roof 85 feet wide, and a Great Hall large enough to hold 14000 people. According to a report by Donald Insall Associates, '[a]part from the main north and south entrance porticos and their associated basements, none of the fabric of the first palace was re-used' (Insall:2012:6).

The fire may have been instrumental in persuading people that iron and glass buildings were not safe to be used extensively in architecture. It was certainly instrumental in the provision

Organ Failure

They call it the finest concert organ in Europe, built by Henry Willis and tended by generations of his namesakes. It is fought over from the beginning. Time and again, people get upset about how it sounds, what happens to it. It is almost as though the organ is more important than the Palace. Keeps the oxygen piped through the tubes, the blood coursing through the veins. Lifeblood and breath and all that. If the organ goes, that'll be it for the Palace. Heart-stopping, simply. Another reason why AP has to be saved, gone. Another of its special features, gone.

100

Figure 6, Promotional postcard, Rotary Photographic Company, n.d.



Special, that's not the half of it! It's another symbol like the angel and the mast and the glass domes, this one part of the interior. It survives – well, some of it does, not quite intact – fires that burn the place down, fires that warm the place up, and fires that cook meals in the First World War. It survives vandalism by bored troops stationed there, wrecking the place. Pipes are ripped out and damaged. It survives the onslaught of cold and wet after the V2 bombing in the Second that takes out the rose window, making holes in the roof that let in the weather. It survives the

perils of drying out, and of umpteen campaigns to save it, managed by windbag craven committees and self-professed lovers of music.

It's 1927 and five seconds is the measure of unacceptability of reverberations in a concert hall. A five-second reverberation in the hall from note played until it lands, settled back down, after resounding throughout the available space. It's not an echo coming back again, it's taking time before the next note can be played without risk of being overlaid, becoming a chord. Fashion dictates and steps can be taken, muffling or retuning new strings to the bow. Tone levels are adjusted to what is considered standard pitch, lowered a semitone here and there. Some of it is personal preference, and tastes change. Programming different musics can mask the problem, if time doesn't already signal to the benefits and advisability of new sounds and changing programmes for concerts. Recitals of light, tuneful popular music or programmes of more highbrow offerings, the BBC is not keen to record concerts played at AP or on the organ although some maverick makes 'The finest concert organ in Europe' for Radio 4 on 22 July 1920. Five seconds is

9601
 AP13/24

ALEXANDRA PALACE

Specification of the Grand Organ

This great instrument, built by Henry Willis & Sons and completed in 1875, was regarded by Father Willis as his finest concert organ. It was rebuilt by Henry Willis & Sons, Ltd., in 1929.

The instrument consists of four manuals, CC to C, 61 notes, and a "Willis" pedal board, CCC to G, 32 notes. There are 98 speaking stops and 39 couplers, &c., making a total of 137 registers.

GREAT ORGAN. 21 stops			
1 Dbl. Open Diapason (mid. C 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) <i>m/l</i> 16	8 Octave No. 1 (CC 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) ... <i>m/l</i> 4	15 Sesquialtera, 17 19 22	<i>m/l</i> 3 rks
2 Bourdon <i>s/d w/d</i> 16	9 Octave No. 2 (CC 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in)	16 Mixture, 24 26 29	3 rks
3 Open Diapason No. 1 (T.C. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) <i>m/l</i> 8	10 Flûte Couverte <i>s/d m/l</i> 4	17 Double Trumpet	<i>m/l</i> 16
4 Open Diapason No. 2 (T.C. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) .. 8	11 Octave Quint	18 Trumpet-harmonic	8
5 Open Diapason No. 3 (T.C. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) .. 8	12 Super Octave (CC 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in)	19 Trumpet	8
6 Clarabella <i>w/d</i> 8	13 Seventeenth	20 Posauone	8
7 Quint <i>m/l</i> 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 Fourteenth, 17 15	21 Clarion	4
<i>(Enclosed)</i>			
SWELL ORGAN. 22 stops and Tremolo			
22 Dbl. Open Diapason (mid. C 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) <i>m/l</i> 16	30 Principal (CC 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) <i>m/l</i> 4	37 Waldhorn	<i>m/l</i> 16
23 Lieblich Bordun <i>s/d w/d & m/l</i> 16	31 Flauto Traverso	38 Cornopean	8
24 Open Diapason No. 1 (T.C. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) <i>m/l</i> 8	32 Twelfth	39 Hautboy	8
25 Open Diapason No. 2 (T.C. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in) .. 8	33 Fifteenth (CC 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in)	40 Vox Humana	8
26 Flûte Ouverte <i>w/d</i> 8	34 Fourteenth, 12 15	41 Clarion	4
27 Rohr Flûte <i>s/d w/d & m/l</i> 8	35 Sesquialtera, 17 19 22	42 Contra Posauone	16
28 Salicional <i>m/l</i> 8	36 Mixture, 24 26 29	43 Trumpet	8
29 Vox Angelica (T.C.) <i>m/l</i> 8		44 Tremolo (to light wind)	
<i>(Enclosed)</i>			
CHOIR ORGAN. 17 stops and Tremolo			
45 Contra Viola <i>m/l</i> 16	51 Gemshorn <i>m/l</i> 4	57 Mixture, 17 19 22	<i>m/l</i> 3 rks
46 Viola da Gamba	52 Viola	58 Corn-di-Bassetto	<i>m/l</i> 8
47 Viola Celeste (CC)	53 Nason Flute <i>s/d m/l</i> 4	59 Cor Anglais	8
48 Claribel Flute <i>w/d</i> 8	54 Nazard	60 Trumpet	8
49 Lieblich Gedackt <i>s/d w/d & m/l</i> 8	55 Piccolo	61 Clarion	4
50 Dulciana <i>m/l</i> 8	56 Tierce	62 Tremolo (to light wind)	
<i>(Enclosed)</i>			
SOLO ORGAN. 17 stops and Tremolo			
63 Violoncello <i>m/l</i> 8	70 Solo Nazard <i>m/l</i> 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	<i>(Unenclosed)</i>	
64 Tibia <i>w/d</i> 8	71 Piccolo-harmonique	77 Contra Tromba	<i>m/l</i> 16
65 Viols d'Orchestre	72 Bassoon	78 Tromba-harmonic	8
66 Viols Celestes (BB)	73 Orchestral Oboe	79 Tuba-harmonic	8
67 Flûte-harmonique	74 Orchestral Clarinet	80 Clarion-harmonic	4
68 Octave Cello	75 Tubular bells, 20 notes		
69 Concert Flute	76 Tremolo		
PEDAL ORGAN. 23 stops			
81 Double Open Bass (ext. No. 85) <i>w/d</i> 32	86 Contra Basso (CCC 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.) <i>m/l</i> 16	95 Octave Flute (ext. No. 92)	<i>m/l</i> 4
(CCC 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)	87 Bourdon <i>s/d w/d</i> 16	96 Sesquialtera (2), 17 19 22	<i>m/l</i> 3 rks
82 Double Open Diapason <i>m/l</i> 32	88 Bass Viola	97 Mixture (2), 17 19 22	3 rks
(CCC 24in. diameter)	89 Octave (ext. No. 84) <i>w/d</i> 8	98 Bombarde (1) (CCC 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)	<i>m/l</i> 32
83 Sub Bass (ext. No. 87) <i>s/d w/d</i> 32	90 Principal (1)	89 Trombone (1) (CCC 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)	16
(CCC 14in. x 12in.)	91 Viola (ext. No. 88)	100 Ophicleide (2) (CCC 7in.)	8
84 Open Bass No. 1 <i>w/d</i> 16	92 Flute	101 Clarion (2)	8
(CCC 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)	93 Super Octave (1)	102 Octaves on Pedal Chorus (1)	
85 Open Bass No. 2 <i>m/l</i> 16	94 Octave Viola (ext. No. 91)	103 Octaves on Pedal Chorus (2)	
(CCC 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)			
WIND PRESSURES			
GREAT ORGAN.—Fluework 5in. and 6in.; Posauone 5in.-6in., Double Trumpet and Trumpet 6in.-10in., Trumpet-harmonic and Clarion 10in.-15in.	SWELL ORGAN.—Fluework 5in. and 6in.; Waldhorn and Cornopean 6in.-10in.; Clarion 6in., Contra Posauone and Trumpet 15in.-20in., other reeds 5in.	SOLO ORGAN.—Light pressure 10in., Contra Tromba and Tromba 15in., Tuba-harmonic and Clarion-harmonic 20in.-25in. Pedal.—Fluework various; Ophicleide and Clarion 15in., Contra Bombarde and Trombone 30in.	
CHOIR ORGAN.—Throughout 6in.			
COUPLERS			
i. Swell to Great	x. Swell to Choir Sub	xxviii. Choir to Pedal	
ii. Swell to Great Octave	xi. Swell Sub Octave	xxix. Choir to Pedal 4ft.	
iii. Swell to Great Sub	xii. Swell Unison off	xxx. Solo to Pedal	
iv. Choir to Great Octave	xiii. Solo to Swell	xxxi. Solo to Pedal 4ft.	
v. Choir to Great Octave	xiv. Choir Octave	xxxii. Solo Ten. Solo to Pedal	
vi. Choir to Great Sub	xv. Choir Sub Octave	xxxiii. Great to Pedal	
vii. Solo to Great Octave	xvi. Choir Unison off	xxxiv. Great and Pedal Com-	
viii. Solo to Great Octave	xvii. Swell to Choir	binations Coupled	
ix. Solo to Great Sub Octave	xviii. Swell to Choir Octave		
ACCESSORIES			
8 combination pistons to Great Organ	1 reversible piston to Solo to Choir coupler	1 "Doubles off" cut-out operated by tilting table,—in Swell key slip	
8 combination pistons to Swell Organ	*1 reversible piston to Great to Pedal coupler	1 "Pedal stops off" cut-out operated by tilting table,—in Great key slip	
8 combination pistons to Choir Organ	1 reversible piston to Swell to Pedal coupler	Balanced pedals to Swell, Choir and Solo boxes	
8 combination pistons to Solo Organ	1 reversible piston to Choir to Pedal coupler	General Crescendo with illuminated indicator graduated <i>ppp</i> to <i>ff</i>	
8 toe pistons to Pedal Organ	1 reversible piston to Solo to Pedal coupler	"Full Organ" sforzando effect by reversible toe piston,—with indicator	
*8 General pistons controlling every stop and coupler (all above immediately adjustable by the player while seated at the keyboard,—by means of special locking piston)	1 reversible piston to Great and Pedal combinations coupled	Swell pedal switchplate	
1 reversible piston to Swell to Great coupler	* duplicated by toe pistons	Electro-pneumatic action	
1 reversible piston to Choir to Great coupler	1 locking piston for the adjustment of	Electric rotary blower with push button starter	
1 reversible piston to Solo to Great coupler	1 cancel piston to each department		
1 reversible piston to Solo to Swell coupler	1 General Cancel piston duplicated by toe piston		
1 reversible piston to Swell to Swell coupler	1 "Octave couplers cancel" piston		

all it takes, a concert hall goes dark and quiet for the duration.

There are plenty of bad reports about the acoustic in the theatre too, as though it was an agreed, taken-for-granted position. Except it isn't. Dissenting views, equally sure of general agreement, hold that its acoustic is perfect. The value of the crystal-clear in sound is not universally sought or valued. For some music it is not only tolerated and workable, it is actively sought. Other producers and composers work with it in a site-specific, as-found kind of way, incorporating it into their performance. Some mirror or mimic it literally by having, say, two horn sections in different parts of the orchestra.

The state of the top balcony may have played a role in this story of performance. Pronounced unsafe it lay unused and without audience to contribute to the sound by absorption. Before it was removed entirely, leaving more emptiness to be filled, it was boarded up and the wood filled and warmed up the space. The place echoes with echo now and supporters are charmed by the effect. Even the applause is at it, delighting some in the audience to hear their own response to a performance coming back to them.

Under the mast

Before the BBC occupies the Palace, the Corporation's public information films, pre-feature cinema screenings, document the progress of their new premises. The entertainment value of 'reality' takes a turn in these early British Documentary Movement films, shot at AP and elsewhere, later fetishised and referenced by intellectuals and conceptual artists. There's no doubting who's the hero of *Television comes to London pt2*. A builder. He is as unnamed and faceless as the voice-of-god narrator. One doesn't need a name; the other doesn't merit one. The voice is telling viewers about the public; the footage is showing (and also very telling) these extra/ordinary people at work, building the mast. Cue vertiginous angles and scaling up to cinema-screen proportions set to a soundtrack of music for heroes and lingering shots of the control room fit for a space rocket launch. Here is described for the viewer exactly what the builder is doing, the processes and the purpose. They are greasing cables and mounting generators on concrete beds.

In its subject and effects, the form reproduces the hair-raising images of New York workmen eating lunch on girders in the sky above the RCA building in 1932 (photographer unknown; usually wrongly at-

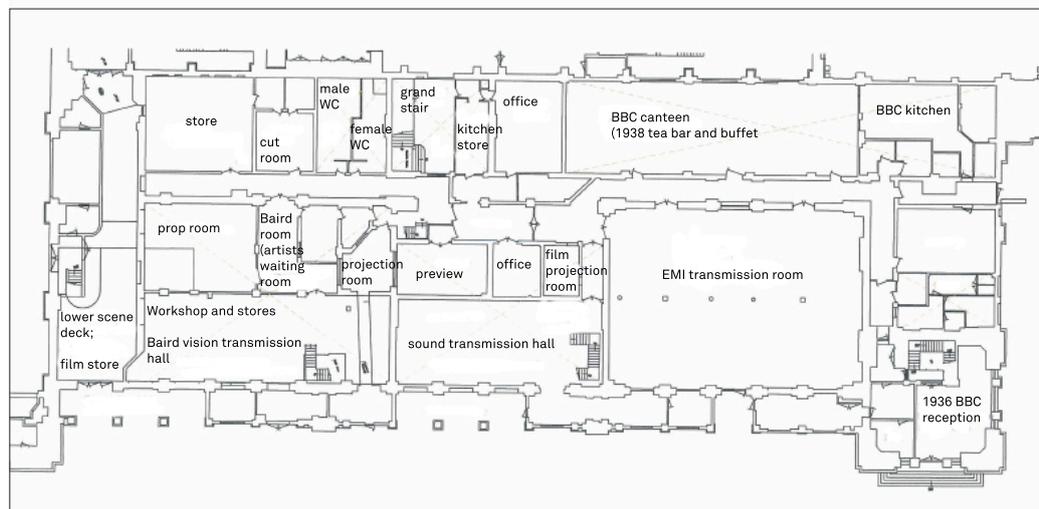
of four water tanks, reservoirs of 7000 gallons in the central hall and 16,000 gallons each in the corner towers (Insall:10. The Reverend Robert Smith of St James's Scotch [sic] Church, Wood Green preached a sermon on 15 June on 'The Burning of the Alexandra Palace' (profits from sale of the published pamphlet to be donated 'to stallholders who suffered losses caused by the fire'; BC:1873) matching the lurid descriptions of the fire: 'a molten cataract of mingled lead and zinc ... the cast-iron girders, buckling, fell ... a seething pile ... prey to the flames' (uncredited press cutting, BC:'The Alexandra Palace Destroyed by Fire':n.d.).

tributed to Lewis Hine) and the desperation of immigrant workers exploited on unsafe building sites in 1900s Toronto of Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of the Lion*. What's missing in this heroic narrative of building the mast, aside from the builder's name, is hyperbolic quantification: the numbers game. It's not an absence to lament – the magnitude of the achievement is visible and obvious so there's no need for number-shaped reminders to strike it home. The familiar litany of figures is redundant as reinforcement for strong images of people working high up on the structure, stringing cables and hanging from them.

...

All change for 1936 as the demands of the new leaseholder of the East Wing mean changes of use in most areas. This is the story.

Figure 8, Ground-floor plan 1936,
Inshall 2012



It did seem as if AP might rival the Crystal Palace: 91,000 visitors arrived on the Whit Sunday of 1875, the first bank holiday after its reopening (Harris:2005:17). It was hard to recoup the cost of rebuilding, and there were many other major expenses, from purchasing the freehold to maintenance (Harris:25). During the winter fewer visitors ventured up the hill, even with the 1/- ticket included in the train fare. The financial equation of expecting to make a profit from entertainment and leisure provision for people who spent only small amounts of time away from the workplace did not add up.

Offices become toilets, wine bars turn into offices, the Grill and Cold Meat Room is remade into the BBC's Green Room, after it's served as the EMI transmission room and before it becomes the BBC Club. On the ground floor, two coolers are inserted close to the transmitter rooms. The Tea Room, next door to the Coffee Room that is reused as the Baird transmission hall, turns into the Sound transmission hall and a stairway is built from there to the mezzanine. The glazed court is made into a film store and then the 'lower scene dock'. Prop Rooms, Artists' Waiting Room, Projection Room, Preview Room and Film Projection Room are all created out of the First-class Coffee Room; and Messrs. Bartram and Roberts' offices (whoever they are), from a wine bar and a tea and coffee bar. Studios A and B are on the first floor with their respective control rooms adjacent, with new areas partitioned off eventually for the Telecine scanner and spotlight studio, dressing room and another band room. Behind the studios – too close for auditory comfort – is the indoor bowling green for the ever-popular Bowls Club.

Look and Learn

Brass-edged porthole windows are installed in the studio doors to BBC specifications when the corporation moves in, along with the design and rebuilding of the rooms whose doors they were

Labour Acts limiting the length of the working week did not have sufficient impact on takings. Visitor numbers on opening days and Bank Holidays suggest that it was seen as a special, occasional day out, whether due to cost, lack of access or lack of interest in what was on offer (Carrington:1975:206).

Although Janet Harris referred to 'self-improving rational diversions' such as cookery and rabbit and goat breeding (Harris:19), Jerry White suggested that 'London variety, the old pleasure-ground fair bill, had asserted itself as the only sure way to secure ticket sales among a wide class of customers' (in Insall:2007:53). *The New Alex-*

set into. This deco-ish detail is included as much to make staff exiled in north London imagine they're back at the Broadcasting House mother-ship in the centre of town as for any design use. The porthole repeats as a design motif elsewhere in the Palace. Those cut into the theatre doors and in the doors to the ice skating rink are not lined in brass in nautical fashion, and to imagine that they ever were is to be transported into another era in which a previous version of the Palace stood, altogether grander yet probably still bankrupt and semi-derelict. The concentrated gaze through the limited aperture of the porthole sharpens the outline of what has been and what is yet missing.

Figure 9, Porthole window, Ainley 2014



To watch through the porthole is to look at a screen: window as lens, house as camera, aperture as eye. It is for viewing an exhibit, a specimen and that specimen may be someone with a newly minted, previously unheard-of job title in a recently expanded Corporation. These are screens for identification, inwards and out, who's knocking and who's getting on with their work. The porthole may be itself an interior extension of the transparency of the structure, a means to view the democracy of culture even as it is being made into television. Audiences are now invisible; producers, for some, can still be seen. It opens to a space planned and built for the

andra Palace leaflet saw it differently (n.d.):

In introducing so many and varied attractions, the directors have been guided by one object – namely, the exclusion from the Alexandra Palace of all entertainments which possess merely as *sensational and questionable interest*, and to encourage only those of a *legitimate character*, and which have a tendency to *refine and elevate public taste*.

Those might have been the (added emphasised) fine words

technology and the strange new working practices of this Corporation developed alongside it, here for viewing.

But a porthole window lets the viewer into a secret, gives the wrong impression for viewer and viewed. It has the same promise as a spy hole – it hints at mystery, the more illicit the better. It's for seeing something that belongs to someone else, something you're not really supposed to see. Not a window that's there for the looking, it's for hiding, depending on which way you cut it or which way you look. As the versions of the building progress, bricks get more and transparency gets less but open, closed, in flames or in process, this building is ever a performance in its own right.

...

It's the 1960s. Art school is where it's at and Hornsey is

happening. Up on the first floor, to be precise. The area extends from the western end of the Palace and its plethora of entrances, lobbies and vestibules. The Art College makes much of the space. Its generosity of proportion allows for dedicated studios, front-facing for painting



Figure 10, Hornsey College of Art, Hornsey Journal, c.1960

of intention, and describe some of the attractions of offer such as promenade concerts, fetes by the Foresters and City Police Orphanage, performances by Carl Rosa Opera Company. Other entertainments in 1875/6 included a Minstrel show, Adonis the Miniature Man and the Hairless Horse from Queensland (Smith:18). Whether 'legitimate' or 'sensational', this does not account for the constant difficulties relating to poor ticket sales and low visitor numbers. There were Rose Shows in the Great Hall, a Hound Dog Show in the park, plays such as *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Rivals*, *School for Scandal*, as well as tableaux in the theatre, popular drama like *The Piratical Pirate*, marionettes

and life drawing; separate rooms for stained glass, mosaic and mural painting; sculpture, modelling, carving; engraving, processing and litho. With less need of the wonderful natural light, storage space and tool store, lecture room and lounge, common room and games room, refectory and student dining room are located at the back of the space. Other generations line up for dinner dances in the Banqueting Suite downstairs and students of other institutions and disciplines sit exams in the Great Hall. In miniature the recreation and education functions in this part of the south-west wing capture the aims outlined in Owen Jones's prospectus.

...

What's the story? This is how it looks. It's the 1980s and the place is destroyed by fire. Again. The building is running its own auditions for another of its occasional spectacles. With an in-house production team to shoot it, the Palace has become its own disaster movie. Special fx, no problem. Art students, now the final intake to this campus, are on hand to interpret and document. The mast stands undamaged among empty trunks and spines of ironwork denuded of their glass wrapping. The East Wing survives relatively intact, so the BBC premises becomes almost the most original extant part of the building. A field of skinny iron trees is left with curved sections joining one to the next.

and performing goats. From 1881 a diverse programme included Gilbert & Sullivan, Shakespeare and Offenbach, boxing and wrestling, circus, opera (*Faust*, *Barber of Seville*) and concerts (Carrington:66). This was an array of offerings for which the phrase 'something for all tastes' might have been coined, in all its ambiguity. The *Alexandra Palace Guide for 1880* boasts of the Grand Hall containing 'a series of original statues of the Kings and Queens of England' and 'bright Cinquecento paintings of the Italian school' and an exhibition was held of sculpture 'from the gallery of Signor Brucciani', who had provided all the permanent statues in the Palace.



Empty colonnades gape in the open air, scorched brickwork stripped of plaster fallen on to the floor of debris. A deserted railway station, decommissioned, presents a ghostly platform devoid of signage or advertisement. The generosity of the double-height spaces now a yawning void, the layering collapsed and buckled litters the ground. It's not floor anymore. The blow-up imposter arrives, the pavilion, stuffed with announcements and

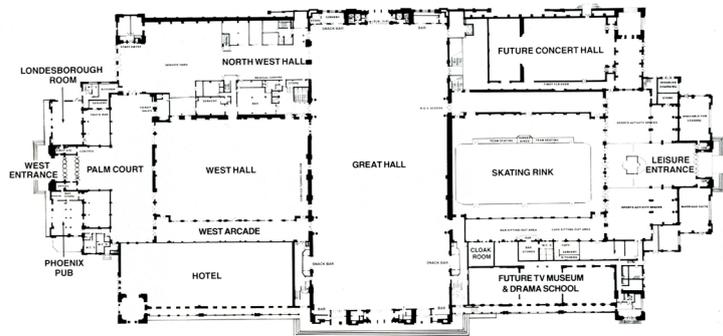
signage and demarcations. It sits busy and full of warm air outside the East Wing, soon to be a car park.

Transcription prescription inscription

Our Father of the television schedule knows the right story.

Considerable efforts were made early on to improve the transport links to the site, but arrangements broke down badly shortly after the reopening (Carrington:39). On Whit Monday 1875 'the travelling, to put it in Irish form, seemed to consist entirely of stopping', with references to a Scylla or Charybdis of dangerous choices between roads like ditches and derailment in Copenhagen Tunnel from Kings Cross (Carrington:39). It was likely to have been Irish labourers who dug the tunnels and built the infrastructure; the anti-Irish sentiment may be attributable to the ongoing Home Rule Movement. Notably only the Muswell Hill Estate Company, who built

He knows best. His voice from on high tells everyone what they should be doing, what they ought to be watching and learning and listening to. His is the patriarchal voice of Reithian prescription and Reith's reputation precedes him as a repressed, anti-progress autocrat. His endless



directions are delivered in show-and/or-tell form in audio and image. He is a relic himself from an age when men of a certain class believe it their birthright, even their duty, to decide how others ought to educate, inform and entertain themselves. And don't get any ideas about changing the order.

Almost too much information is in circulation at AP and plenty of education goes on too but entertainment is first in the running order,

and owned the final section of the Great Northern Line to the Palace, had financial success there (Carrington:74).

The Alexandra Park Company was unable to make AP a going concern and in 1877 it was bought by the London Financial Association (LFA), a finance company that 'held a half share in the enterprise' (Carrington:47). It leased Palace and park to a James Willing in 1880, and in turn to Messrs. Jones and Barker. The International Exhibition of 1885 opened at AP with 'manufactures, arts, scientific and agricultural products and mechanical processes' on display (Carrington:87). The LFA, realising that they too were unable

always. That's what it comes down to. Multiple leaps of technology are involved in watching Jack Rosenthal's television drama *The Fools on the Hill*, from the newness of television to online access for viewing on YouTube. Multiple steps of history too: set in 1936, made in 1986, uploaded on 7 February 2011 thanks to the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive, watched in 2014, lost and unavailable again in 2015, but probably not forever. The viewer is made aware (information alert) that when a programme is broadcast twice, it has to be performed twice, repeated like performances of a stage play. A repeat of the opening television show to Radiolympia in 1936, for instance, means cutting production time for the first broadcast from ten weeks to nine days.

Retro-slushiness in full flow carries truths about the rigidities and fluidities of class distinctions within the Corporation and at AP in particular, undated in many ways, arguably accurate still. The language of *Empire* and pre-1960s societal mores – with its talk of 'the engineer-wallah' – is hard to stomach. 'The camera-chappie' is left in no doubt about his place in the pecking order: 'When you are a fully fledged cameraman, then you can say "bugger"', but until then, 'if we had a union, I'd report you to the shop steward'. Satiric digs at the bureaucracy retain their currency: 'I don't think there's been a memo,' oblivious jobsworth replies, to a flirtatious question about whether male and female staff are allowed to sit together in the canteen. The Palace is por-

to make a profit, tried to lease the building to any taker and sell the grounds for development. Housebuilders bought 80 acres, and more in the 1880s (Harris:19).

The Palace, having been closed completely since 1889, passed into public ownership in 1900.

trayed simultaneously as having a more egalitarian sense of possibility, for those who work there, and those who watch.

No one knows where they're going on arrival at the Palace, and the major-domo figure directs all-comers from cleaners to executives. The dolly pusher and canteen assistant talk about their sense of ownership and pride: 'It's you and me doing it. Us!' and it helps cut the sentimentality. Having illustrated the point about who television is for and their role in this heroic achievement, this couple provides the romantic interest, briefly interrupted when said camera-chappie's head is turned by double-barrelled PA, signposted unmistakably as an unworkable proposition due to the class mix. 'Daddy', an ex-colonial type, is arranging to have his darling girl transferred back to Broadcasting House ('more my kind of person') even if it means losing at golf to bag the favour. Being sent to work out in the boondocks literally and metaphorically, is seen by some as a punishment and a step down the ladder.

John Reith is the fool though for trying to hold back the potent tide of change and technology, not those he describes as fools on the hill for their belief in the power of television. He's the fool because the output of the BBC has been the light of the world for so long, and it still informs entertains educates, if somewhat reordered. He's the fool too because he dismissed the vision of those who made it happen. He

couldn't contain it and it couldn't be done without the hill.

This layered graveyard of structures and memory and aspiration is said to be riddled with a network of tunnels built into the hill. Staff from every era and every stratum must surely turn them to account, desperate for shortcuts to deliver whatever service they are providing. Two floors of 'below stairs' amount to many staff and many services. Passageways beneath the stage that once led into the Great Hall become 'discoveries', chanced upon by the curious among the workforce with time to explore. Otherwise impenetrable borders – hierarchies of class and age and culture – between staff of the mouthpiece of the establishment and the anti-establishment followers of alternative music are lowered. A particular passageway beneath the stage that gives free entry to concerts and exhibitions generates great excitement. Some swear that the maze of passages follows ley-lines; one says he's heard there is a route back to Broadcasting House, maybe overenthusiastic about the private wires between the two taking a more physical form; and, even more improbably, later extensions are said to stretch all the way to Lime Grove.

In their day, rumours fly about weapons for the IRA and the ANC being moved through the narrow passages and stored for better times. The whole building, above and below stairs, is a burial site of secrets and lies and weaponry for changing minds. Whether technolo-

113 gies for broadcasting or freedom fighting, all of them fit for the museum, so they may already be in the right place, if the life of the Palace rests in days gone by. Some of the kit is obsolete almost as broadcasting begins at the Palace, housing relics in a relic. Layers of dust and soot, pernicious and preservative, hold these remains of descriptions and imaginations across all reaches of the building.

Alexandra Palace is more than one building, more than the three built versions and the two auxiliaries. All the plans and ideas and mistaken memories, every alteration and subsequent retelling. The big shed is itself a theme park of the individual and collective memory of popular culture, and public entertainment, for everyday ordinary aristocracy, all on top of the hill if not on top of each other, partial responses to past and future plans and iterations.

The numbers game

£1 dowry
2 storeys in the basement
2 steam organs to drive Willis organ, 8 and 12 hp
3 key building regeneration projects
3 times the length of Buckingham Palace in elevation
4 water tanks
6 masterplan objectives
14 Turkish internees
16 feet boiler length and 6 foot diameter
24 hours' notice needed to raise the steam to play Willis organ
27 internees of 'other nationalities'
40 musicians in camp orchestra
50 feet stage depth and 84 feet wide
87 per cent of consultation responses in favour
100 feet organ height
101 organ stops
400 stable spaces for visitors' horses
695 Austrian internees
764 tons of wrought iron (Messrs Handyside, Derby)
800 builders, minimum
1000 monkeys
1337 articles in Londesborough Collection
1354 tons cast iron (Stavely Works, Staffs)
1463 natural history exhibits

115 1500 seats in banqueting hall
1598 German internees
1600 consultation responses in May/ June 2012
2000 musician spaces in orchestra pit
2500 builders first employed
2500 catering facilities, minimum
3000 POWs at the Palace
3000 seats in theatre and concert hall
3000 tons of lime
3000 seats in circus ring
7000 gallons of water in each of four reservoirs in central hall
8000 pipes in the organ
9000 spectator spaces in velodrome
10,000 ice skaters use rink each year
11,419 'likes' for The Fools on the Hill
12,000 seats in Great Hall
16,000 gallons of water in each tower
21,000 visitors on opening day
31,840 square footage BBC floor space leased, plus further 24,525 square feet
35,000 visitors at 2014 fireworks display
38,000 refugees passed through in 1914/15
120,000 visitors in first two weeks
£232,000 rebuild estimate, v2.0
£417,128 rebuild actual cost, v2.0
3000,000 visitors to park each year
15,000,000 white Huntingdon and dark-coloured bricks, v2.0

Scene 2 Lost/Missing

[Enter:

'Jim'; based on interview material; early memories

'Anton', based on Anton Wüst, conductor of *Konzertverein*, the internees' orchestra and composer of Alexandra Palace Ragtime while interned in First World War

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'POW no name'; c.1918, an imagined character

'Lucas', c.2010, great-great-great grandson of 'Nubian' soldier billeted at AP for coronation of Edward VII in 1902 based on archival material]

We look only inwards, in this shed of glass

My dad says the man in this picture is the reason why the family came over to England

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We laughed a little about that – these people who would build a place up here, theatre and concert hall and dancing. Nothing against the wind, trees down the hill, no trees up at that level. Nothing

This was always a members-only club, not for public use by just anyone

We cannot look back, cannot start conversation. Like animals, the monkeys here no more. If they sold tickets, the building would be rich

And the big old tea pots with the handle on the top and one on the back and it looks like they just got up and walked out

They say you can see all the way to London town. That's not for us

You'd never have told me this was Ally Pally in this picture. Looks like some big market place, you know, shops all round the sides

It's not a waiting room anyway and it isn't a station

When I first was told this was a palace I had no idea. All the years here and only to come out this way now

... It was the smell. Nobody ever talks about that. They talk about the glass the light the domes the hill and the shape of it. That's some peculiar kind of hell, men who were driven to wax lyrical about the structure of their incarceration. Not wood or damp. The sweat of fear and anxiety and loneliness. That's what it smelled like. Yet all of us were desperate to be alone. You'd think the smell would be not so strong because of the cold and everyone talked about the cold,

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'History repeating'. Except it doesn't. And it does. That's what I'm saying! 'History repeating', like the song says, and I have to agree. From Hyde Park to Cromwell Road to Muswell Hill, cultural pavilions duplicate, repeating in paper fictions and in factual versions from Hyde Park and Crystal Palace. The people like the Palace, if only the one (or only the once). Pretending not to hear that isn't helping. They love it, but a single iron and glass temple may have been enough and that was already a reinscription in a multitude of ways from its inception. History repeats, but not success. A leap of imagination plants a Palace for the people on the hill, on land a few decades from suburban, beyond the sprawl of the city. Or is it wilful disregard? Like a *grand projet*, only wrong time, wrong place, wrong culture. With Edwardian ideas above its (Victorian) station, surrounding streets of housing that grow up around it are named fit for a Palace: avenues for princes and queens; for dukes only a road.

Whether as a distraction from recession, a desire to repeat the splash of the Great Exhibition or a hunger for an encore of lucrative enterprise, what is prescribed is the same again. The wonders of the world on display, the astounding array in a container that is itself a glittering spectacle of modern times. Even as a copy of a copy or a transcription of a copy, this container is as exotic as the contents. This Palace struggles to fill the repeat prescription, with troubles from the

there was no argument there.

Such a building. In the whole of England, there wasn't a place to put us that could be heated? Or with enough space to get warm. Those stoves, so little, never enough fuel, never enough heat and the air always thick with what they threw out, the fumes, soot. It caked everything. We all had a sickness because of this. No argument there either. When I first was told this was a palace I had no idea. Not funny, nothing much was funny, but maybe a joke.

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first: subsidence, commercial failure, financial disaster and fire. Each of three designs becomes less visionary, more mundane and earthbound. A site of awe and fear, of technologies and renewal still, it stays up, sinking like a dead body and rising like a phoenix in tides of dereliction, rebuilds, reuses and fire again. Always wonderfully disappointing and always treasured, despite itself. 'Our Palace' is also a monster, a beast, a hideous mess, a funereal monstrosity, a gigantic abortion, a disaster of unrelieved failure. And the rest.

Steady on.

[Pause]

'Get in Touch', it says. No 'please'. Then I find it, in one of few drop-down menu options on the masthead. 'Lost and Found': what everyone is looking for. It could be the title of the story, but it's the beginning of my search for lost objects of the Palace. Already there's a lost comma or two and a missing apostrophe and that 'please'. 'We all hate it when we lose something when we're out and about so if we find anything that is not ours it stays with the Ally Pally security team until its ready to be collected.' Such a promise may be a hostage to fortune and ever-expanding storerooms, as well as an attempt to be helpful, human-scale and local, but then there's no lack of space,



We were fed and sheltered like cattle. In a palace. It stinks, it all stinks. But not like the livestock. So high up there the wind is strong. We laughed a little about that – these people who would build a place up here, nothing against the wind, no trees up at that level. The food, you don't know what it is. Never enough and, no taste, but the bad smell with it.

And when it wasn't cold, we were specimens, ants under a magnifying lens. A day out in the sun to look at the animals incarcerated in their beautiful park. All that glass, no protection then from the sun. ...

Figure 13, Sheet music cover, printed by Augener, c.1915

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whether or not half the place is derelict. Who's lost what – a pair of gloves, a picnic basket, a Kindle and a camera? A sense of what's wanted and who it's for? What it is and who wants it? Or a purpose, a realisation of opportunity and ambition and a wild idea?

In the cycles of no-longer and to-come, of what's lost and waiting to be found, I see a space of empty that can never be filled up. Whatever the successes, there is always more catching up to be done, a gap of disappointment that cannot be sated because they know (or decided not to know) what will happen and still went ahead. We all know. The clues are there, but as far as the Palace goes, no one is home to read them. And after bad, can good ever follow? Two wrongs not making a right; baby, bathwater. In the dead time before the Palace opens, it becomes as clear as a pre-recession office block that the time for this is over and the money for it gone, not forthcoming, spent. Already a time of no-longer when it's still a space of to-come: something is always (going to be) missing.

If there were a clock tower, time would be of the essence, presiding over everything, instead of spaces of building and view inwards and outwards. The bell, a sound of the alive, would toll endlessly for what's missing, for the lost and the dead, the missed and the regretted. 'The more detail we get from you, the more likely it is that we will be able to find it again.' Meet me at the lost and found, I'll show

1900–19 Public
ownership to
First World War

In part a response to the Palace being closed seven times since 1875, and getting through a similar number of management companies and owners (Harris:2005:25), the Alexandra Palace and Park (Public Purposes) Act of 1900 firmly established the area as 'a place of public resort and recreation and for other public purposes, and to make all provisions necessary or proper in that behalf'. The freehold was sold for £100,000 to the council, who said: 'The hope is to make the Palace a free resort without parallel, a home of happiness, health and culture ... available for the free use and recreation of the public forever' (Harris::25). 'Free use' and 'free resort' are

... They tell me this is my great-great-granddad (two greats they said; looks to me like a good few more than that) but I'm not convinced. They say he had a copy of this photograph and kept it until after it wore away and you couldn't see any picture there at all. My dad found this in a library or something, in Tottenham. He went there to find it, not just like random, and I'd never seen him so excited when he brought it home. He was so sure this is his great-granddad. He, my dad that is, can't see a thing but still. I don't know though, why they'd say it if it isn't so. They reckon he looks like me

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you the best way – get you on the right road. It's not just a set of keys. It may be hat-shaped but it's more than a black hat. The station handles heavy traffic and all enquiries must include a full description with the unique characteristics of the item. Please describe your loss. We'd like to help, to retrieve what it is that you have lost and return it. It's so much more than 'an item'. To try to make good your loss, we need to know exactly what's missing. We want you back too, in a place of 'look what I found!', not at 'this is where I lost it'.

Sounds like we've been here before. An all-new undertaking, you say? It needs to be entirely different! This isn't Hyde Park or Sydenham. But then not so much as to be foreign or unattractive or unrecognisable. It needs to be big and special and new – but not so new as to be untried and risky. New-fangled wizardry, by the looks of it, taken to unimagined limits. Advanced technologies in material and the making, ostensibly, but really it's a frosting of modern dazzle over the old. And maybe that's all it needs to make it work. Enough to bring success with it. Maybe that's what they want. And what of the interior? Not much in the way of competition there.

In daytime it doesn't look much. Scale and location elevate it to something more than an ugly pile; without that, close up, it's an overambitious conservatory or an outsize nursery. The rows of empty colonnades look like nothing so much as stumps in a gaping mouth.

two more phrases that have haunted every company and committee since then. The body of trustees included representatives from Middlesex Council (contributing £49,000 to the purchase); Hornsey Urban District Council (UDC) and Wood Green UDC (both £35,000); Friern Barnet UDC (£3500), Tottenham UDC (£5000), Finchley UDC (£3000) and the Vestry of Islington (£14,000), reportedly at the rate of one representative for each £7000 of contribution (AP and Park (Public Purposes) Act:1900). The trustees had 'entire control and management – including to maintain and repair palace, improve and extend park, fences, and renovation' (Harris:5).

(only they'd say I look like him) but you won't see me in the army or any of that. Whatever he was in. Hat's good though, reckon that's where Pharrell Williams got it from. And he does look handsome for sure. That's not what they all go on about though. The old men in this family, you'd think they're celebs, the beautiful people, how they carry on.

It's in Ally Pally they said, and what gets me, when I look at it really properly, it's like they're leaning back to check each other out, sizing the other one up. It's like they're pretending to be talking but they're not in close, even

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At night though, illuminated, a fairy tale ghost ship sits on the hill. In dreams of the imagination it looks different, impossibly achievable and unimaginably possible like Owen Jones's original vision come true. Something so beautiful, so massive in scope and ambition, that anyone would rub their eyes. All that reflection and glare gives a false impression, plays havoc with perception. It's a mirage, right? A big top made of glass, cornered with pompadour towers, and four more flanking the central colosseum, such shapes that it's a wonder that this material can make or even suggest, at such a size that it can't be taken in all at once. For this surely can't be real. Faery grotto Christmas filigree crystal molten sight for sore eyes.

Its location is a generous advantage in the viewing, and a mixed blessing in the visiting. In silhouette, the Palace is probably not easily recognisable outside the surrounding north London boroughs. It's not tourist-attraction-shaped like the Shard or St Paul's. Alexandra's is no art deco palace, no white streamlined vessel moored on top of the hill. It makes more sense in black as a silhouette: in outline it retains a majesty and cleanness of line that dissolves in full view or close up. It may be the kindest way to see the Palace, with its shade and texture removed, the pedestrian materials obliterated in two-dimensional blackness or airbrushed with mist at that altitude. This form lends it an extra grace, it could be anything, not only in scale. Its stateliness

A stone scroll on the wall at the Palace memorialises Henry Burt JP, originator of the proposal to buy park and Palace for the people. This public acknowledgement of his role is only a very small part of the story as, inevitably, personal acrimony played a part in the mismanagement of AP, along with limited financial understanding and unfortunate accidents (Brown:1970:43). Denunciation by pamphlet must have been how business was transacted, and literature throughout the Palace's history provided another type of reiterative site on the limitations of publicly-funded centres of leisure and the failure of private enterprise in entertainment complexes.

though they're sitting right together. I've been up there, seen stuff once or twice, you'd never have told me it was Ally Pally in this picture. Looks like some big market place, you know, shops all round the sides. Not here, like Morocco or Turkey, some place like that. Souk is it? Then my dad said how it burnt down, back in the day, when he was young. So it's still Ally Pally but it's another building in the same place.

They could be sitting in a train station, with that ceiling and those arches. All the stations look like that,

125 and grandeur suggest powerhouses of religion or politics or culture. Instead, a cathedral of entertainment, and a parish hall of a Palace.

Viewing mechanism

A Palace of innovation built as an exhibition and leisure space of many uses, still new enough to excite first time around. A place for the seeing: a big shed with themes attached, an iron-frame tent for cultural showing (off) of wonders, expertise, design, materials, objects, cultural diversity and cohesiveness. Inside are treasures for looking at and spectacles for viewing, dogs and sculpture, ballet and variety, up and down, high and low. Built precisely to flaunt the spoils of empire: the graft, craft, quantity and quality, the mass of it. It's all there to be viewed. The obvious openness of the glass and ironwork phenomenon of their time, only recently attainable, suggests an unambiguous clarity of intent in democratic transparency. A sheer marvel of solidity and ephemerality for all to behold, even when closed.

The edge is made porous to allow people in, only a step from park to Palace. It is full of openings to make sure people see the way in, know they are invited inside. There is no need to take the long walk round the edge of the building to look for an entrance, or to check if it is passable. May I come in? No one needs to ask.

Burt was described by a fellow trustee Councillor Charles Townley in one of the library's-worth of pamphlets on the place *Alexandra Palace and Park: Its Past Present and Future*, as one 'who exhibited a strong tendency to personal government which sometimes ruffled his colleagues' (Townley:1903:15). He went on in forthright terms: 'I have never, in a long experience of public Boards, known a more peculiar, ill regulated and personally dominated body than the Alexandra Palace Trustees' (Townley:15). As early as 1876 Edward Lee published, with the misleading epithet of 'For private Circulation only', *Comments on the recent management of the Alexandra Palace* in which he

with the shops and offices underneath. Reminds me of St Pancras and Paddington. Soldiers are always at train stations in the old films, going off to fight, coming back, finding their girls, hopping on one leg. My great-great-granddad – or great-great-great is it? – I suppose I'll have to believe it's him, he called himself Egyptian. No one's really sure about where he's from exactly. The borders of the countries changed, they said. They called them Nubians, sounds really ancient and biblical. Not sure why I'm reluctant to believe it. Looks like someone's done a dodgy Photoshop job at the back

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In composition the open sign is always lit. Deliberately or accidentally, for there is no brief to read, there's no mistaking it in etchings, drawings, paintings and photographs. This is the way in, and here and here and here. Pleased to see you, the building says. Welcome. Rows and storeys of colonnades extend the pattern for looking outwards, and from all the apertures in the brickwork, light lands on whatever is inside to look at. The main entrance opposite the stair of Traitor's Gate with a rose window recessed into its arched towering portico forms a sheltering mass for adjacent storeys of colonnades. Repetition doesn't mean regimentation and the entrances are not all the same. Take the fine imposing full-frontal of an entrance or skip in by a side door, they are open and the choice is there for visitors to make freely.

On first launch the Palace is something of a warehouse of attractions, piled high, stuffed full, edge to edge, from all corners, far-flung colonies. So on, so forth. A site of discovery. Not just anybody can show their wares, but a taste for quantity can create a miscellany. Some might say a hotchpotch. Casting its net widely, its appeal is to all and sundry; a little bit of what you fancy, a sweetshop. A richness of offer, and a variety too plentiful for the digestion. For sixteen days before it burns down, the universe such as stretches from north London down to the West End, is interested enough to visit.

The building-container divides in its second iteration after

blamed the then Chairman of the executive Committee for his 'rash, ill judged and ill-timed interference' (Lee:1876:4). The *North Middlesex Chronicle* (20 April 1901) reported a row about the appointment of the organist, quoting an unnamed trustee: 'It is too apparent that there is an idea that the palace was not purchased with the people's money for the people, but for the use, amusement and glorification of a few local autocrats.'

The new Trust interpreted the terms of the act 'as a 'place of public resort and recreation' by opening a cinema in the Palace in 1901 and leasing space to the Indoor Bowls Club (www.

and bleached out the wall too much. It's not a waiting room anyway and it isn't a station. My dad says it's definitely in Ally Pally and he says the man in this picture is the reason why the family came over to England. So that's a thing. He says it's one of the oldest languages ever in the world. Said he wouldn't get a passport no way these days.

The beds behind him, there's no room around them, no room in them come to that. Our dog's got more space than that. Another brother sitting behind, at the edge of the picture. And another hat, like a tall pillbox but maybe

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the fire into more dedicated spaces and restructuring enables some categorisation and definition of contents. Moving beyond amassing as its organising principle, it elicits comparison and connection with ample time and space for contemplation as an alternative to counting, steering knowledge through assembly of objects, education through information. Later it becomes a storehouse of memories, a depository, in an ark of (partly) iron and steel, afloat or run aground on the hill. Periodically, the container becomes its own contents and is widely viewed as the object and its own attraction, more than the sum of all the richness, more than any single attraction inside. Contents and container, in symbiosis, never fuse but co-exist in mutual reliance.

Un/success

And still nobody came. Or not often enough. Not on the right day. If only it was somewhere else, or not on a hill, if it wasn't made of glass, if uses weren't fixed or it had a different name, or wasn't a palace, if the station was still open, if it wasn't unlucky, if it was a house (even a big house like Kenwood or Chiswick), if it was on an ordinary street and brick or wood or plastic or inflatable, or was like Glasgow. Then. If the wine stores were turned into dormitories and the concert hall was full of musicians giving free lessons, if the library was open to all and

victorianweb.org/art/architecture/johnson/2.html), which were both popular activities. Understandable concerns about fire hazards, particularly given the flammable nature of film stock, were not allayed by the fact that smoking was allowed in the cinema (leaflet, BC:AP Theatre: A Brief History:n.d.). Under its new owners the Palace reopened with a photographic exhibition and other shows of science, arts and industry exhibits, recitals, picture galleries, choir festivals as free entertainment. A performance of Handel's *Messiah* was staged every Easter. Other events, unspecified, in the Bijou Theatre and Londesborough Hall (probably military themed) and

he's rocking it different. You wouldn't think they'd allow that. I don't know the right word for it – some army-speak – but they were called to fight for the precious motherland. Seems well cheeky to me – they've taken over the country, treated the people mean and then they have to die for it. But the worst of it was that they were happy to do it. Proud, my dad said. I could see he was shaken by the whole thing. It was like they thought it was an honour or something. Like they'd been brainwashed. They were in separate groups, the black men, battalions or whatever and that's what's big

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food was served to unemployed people, if every child got milk, dinner, toy and storybook, if the future had arrived, if work placements and training were offered, if buses were funded by government and a percentage of tickets for every show were given away, if proceeds from the sale of produce and crafts grew into a fund for fees and clothes and apprenticeships, if it was the good old days, if art groups welcomed all new members and the farmers' market linked up with the food bank, if there were places to sleep for those without, if time wasn't in short supply, if wash houses and laundries were open all hours and childcare was available, reliable and safe, if nurses and doctors were on hand for checks and tips, if debating was an entertainment to listen to and a skill to be taught and all available technology was there to use and explore. If. Then.

Then they'd come all the time – for groups and clubs and



meetings and private parties and openings and launches and dinners and classes and workshops and sessions and gigs and get-togethers and soirées and tastings and playgroups and demos and tryouts. Look at the monkeys

Figure 14, View of organ in Great Hall, Ainley 2014

reserved seats at fireworks displays required the purchase of tickets. The enduringly popular roller-skating rink opened during this period, as did facilities for the new craze of ping-pong and the velodrome, a cycling track laid out amid the Great Hall columns (*North Middlesex Chronicle*:20 April 1901).

However, there was no budget for maintenance (Harris:25). The resultant dependence on visitor income remained a problem and the limited disposable income of visitors was still not addressed. The generosity of the 1900 Act passing ownership of the Palace and park to the public was mitigated by some of the

Figure 15, Colonial troops at AP for coronation celebration, 1902

about this picture. It's not the building or the uniform, it's the fact that the two of them, whoever they are and the white sergeant on the right. He looks more like a train guard if I'm honest. They're not right up close, sure, but they are sharing a seat and not looking straight ahead. They're looking at each other, instead of at the camera and ignoring each other.



I can't help wondering what they were talking

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or the marionettes. Play pitch and putt or bowls. Visit the Mechanical Engineering exhibition or the Tattoo Show. Take a *passeggiata* or watch wrestling. Eat ice cream or get spiritual. All that history. All that misfortune, and misery loves company. So wide-ranging, so very many spectacles and exhibits, it's all a little too much, even in the reading. Counting again: how many came for purposes other than purposelessness and the joy of that?

Beyond the catch-all sundry events, the Palace has an enviable record of adopting novelty attractions (then: ping-pong, cinema; now Segway, Club de Fromage on Ice) early as they emerge and offering them along with the old favourites. Surprising enough in a building whose structure lent it an undeserved reputation for innovation, that can be attributed more to hyperbole and first impressions and original intentions, to imagination rather than fact. The power of exaggeration can't hide the old forms masquerading as a new building; the new uses of materials made possible by technologies were put into service for much more standard forms than is generally allowed. In this long life to contemplate, it's not so new.

Scratch that first myth of transparency. It's the first to crack, that it's see-through and open to all to view and visit. Too many layers and too much glass for it to remain transparent. The use of these massive amounts and areas of glass is newly possible.

stipulations it contained. Rates could not be spent on Palace and park; instead, fourteen annual 'maintenance' days were allowed for fundraising for running costs. From 1913, following a loosening of the Act's demands, up to fifty acres of park could be closed for up to nine months for shows to which entrance fees might be charged. Any part of the building could be let for up to twenty-one years. 'For the free use of the public' as one of the conditions under which it passed into public ownership may be interpreted as without charge or as open to all, as in free access. In any case, from this date charging admission costs was no longer seen as a contradiction, as long as no

about. Football results, Queen (or was it King?) and country, the sound of the regimental band. The weather. Bet your lot finds it cold over here in our country, har har. Cricket? You want to sort your hat out, looks a right mess, my friend. What bus you working on, man?

My dad says they might have more pictures that he'd be in. He's going to look into it, go up to that library and sort through. It's like having a family album in a public place. I'm not bothered about any more pictures, I want to look at this one. I can keep looking at it for ages. There's enough

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Measuring and quantifying effects and experimenting with welcome and occlusion, with the opaque and the translucent, private and public, is unlikely to be a tool much in use. Counting, weighing, assessing is everything. It's all about the numbers, such eloquence: how many panes, how much does it weigh, how many people. Duly numbered they can look but they can't touch. They can look and they can learn. They can look, if they have a ticket.

This Palace of Disappointments, stricken with themes and interpretation, has one constant: always in both a state of becoming and of pastness. The future looks to be repeating. The Palace, it might be said, builds a career out of being unsuccessful. Alexandra Palace and surrounding park are conceived for public benefit though privately owned for their first quarter-century. This is public ownership as reverse nationalisation: you can't give it away! It is for free use ... and sometimes free. The Act of Parliament that later enshrines the ambition for free and open access takes this lead. That benefit grows into public broadcasting and information, even a venue for public examinations. The Palace does what John Reith says before he even says it, making



Figure 16, Glazed roof, Palm Court, Ainley 2015

his holy threesome of education and information and entertainment into an offer at a destination he derided. A

part of the park was closed to the public for more than two years in any six (AP and Park (Public Purposes) Act:1900).

Closed again at the beginning of 1914 as the First World War loomed, the Palace and grounds were briefly in use for housing soldiers and horses (Harris:48). In an evocative reuse of space the Monkey House, located in the Palm Court (an original feature from the time of the first building) became bathrooms, and the Winter Gardens established in 1896 in one of the covered domes became 'a smoking and reading room for the men' (Harris:53). The Palace provided sanctuary for around 1300 Belgian refugees escaping

here. Now I've noticed the balcony, all the way round by the looks of it. I wonder what happened up there. And where did they go anyway? Did they get to wander round Tottenham and Crouch End or into town or did they have to stay in the building or in the park? In case the sight of them scared the natives. I don't even want to know the answer to that...

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cautionary tale of Victorian failure and monument to its own success.

In the words of Boris Johnson, it is, 'an icon of Victorian enterprise' or, instead, of the limitations of both public-funded and profit-led centres of entertainment. Simply it demonstrates the triumph of hope – that commerce and philanthropy are effective and happy bedfellows – over experience. The failure of coherence between container and contents, and the Palace's limited, misleading legibility only multiply its troubles.

And what is it for again? Before attempting to answer the question about what form the building should take for a more coherent correspondence between container and contents, another response is needed. What is the question that the building is supposed to answer? It answers the question of what building can be made, with little response on what it might show to best advantage. What is lost – one thing that must be found – is a clarity of intention. Whether it should look like a community centre, a hall for bingo or variety or chamber music, for the parish or for radical community self-education in the style of Ken Loach's Jimmy's Hall; and if what it looks like is what it should be. All one of many, a much maligned and repeated typology – a hall as a spacious

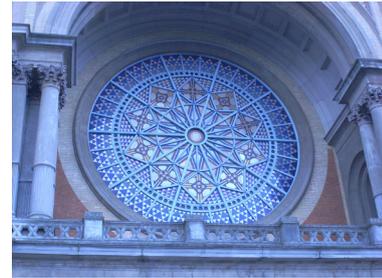


Figure 17, Rose window, south facade, Ainley 2014

from the invasion of their country (Carrington:1975:160).

Later in the War the Palace became an internment camp for resident 'aliens' (Germans and other undesirables resident in England) and finally a camp for German POWs (Harris:54). Their labour, if not their presence, was acceptable, and it led to several improvements to the park, including an education hut in the grounds, proposed by the YMCA, a rose garden and bowling green (Harris:54). Some of these were designed by a resident architect. Coverage in the local press, distorted and unreliable then too, focused on the comfortable conditions of the enemy

... Looking, they never stopped looking. People came to look at us, can you believe it, just at us? Thought we were monsters or devil creatures. We have to live like animals already, enclosed and trapped. Then we become like thieves, hidden for shame behind another fence, so we cannot be seen. And we can't see out. We are prisoners. It's thick and too high to look over. They're always looking. They don't go away. You feel it day and night.

It is hard enough to be here, being seen always. Being seen to be here hurts more. What do they want to

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covered place for shared leisure activity, rather than the liminal entry space to pass through to reach the main area. In this palace of a building the question to ask at this point may be 'what makes sense?'

Walter Besant writes a fictional construction – critical, satirical and speculative – of a palace for the people in 1882 in his novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men: An Impossible Story*, which recounts the development of this wondrous building in a poor area of London. Taking a (very unmodern) reading of the experience recounted in the novel as authorial position, it seems Besant was aware of the complexity of the project of founding a people's palace, built or written. The novel's subtitle could stand as a warning, based on earlier experiences, unheeded by the instigators of AP against building another iron-and-glass exhibition hall. In conjunction with his critical writing on the subject in *Contemporary Review*, it suggests that Besant took notice of falling visitor numbers and understood that an attempt to reiterate the Great Exhibition building and reprising its success wasn't going to work, at least without some consultation with its intended users and serious consideration of their means.

His 'impossible story' – a real fiction – moves into a physical representation in Mile End by the architect E R Robson, only a few years after publication of the novel and thirteen years after AP opens. Working on a much smaller-scale version than AP, Besant's plan involves

aliens, their sumptuous rations and easy life. According to the *Hornsey Journal* (24 December 1915), 'There are playgrounds for sports, and there are musical and theatrical entertainments ... Artist and musicians have studios, pianos are plentiful.' It is possible that pianos were plentiful; it was also recorded in material read out at the Internee Centenary concert in September 2015 that charges were levied for the use of spaces for recreations (see pp 218/9). Correspondence and reports read out also mentioned meagre rations and a protest when horsemeat was introduced as a substitute for beef and the varied diet 'herring–bacon–herring' or for some of those

see? Someone said they can be stared at too, they choose to be here, we have no choice. Now we can't see them. And why would they choose this strange place to come and stare when they can see trees and fields and pictures and sea and new and old sights.

This place was built here to look out from, from high up to gaze down. They say you can see all the way to London town. That's not for us. We look only inwards, in this shed of glass. This is what it was built for, to look out and in at what is there for looking so why complain now?

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providing the means of culture and education in an area of London whose residents had little access to it. The palace he builds, according to his writing in *Contemporary Review*, published the year his building appeared, focuses more on education than recreation (on education as recreation even), apparently on the basis that the working people he consulted wanted it that way. Yet it is offered 'to all who wish to fit themselves for its practice and enjoyment'. Library, reading rooms, concert and performance space, smoking rooms are to be provided – rather like a gentleman's club, but with the opportunity to learn a trade. But once built, then the people must learn to look on the Palace as their own. Besant is aiming it at younger men, who might yet be open to change, and to older men as spectators rather than participants; after the first generation have passed through, then provision for women would be added. Even this self-proclaimed philanthropic model aimed sincerely at ordinary, poor, working-class, lower-class people is imagined as a source of inspiration for the individual, not as raising educational or employment expectations for the many. Aside from this ethos it differs too in terms of financing, provided by the Drapers Company, a guild of the City of London; and in governance, it was to be run by a trust, of which Besant was a member.

There's no knowing whether he was aware or hopeful that his novel, the fictional construction, would operate as research, program-

with dietary problems 'nothing-bacon-nothing'.

Despite these improvements, the refugees were blamed for the Palace being left in such a state of disrepair (*Hornsey Journal*: 28 May 1915). In fact, while housing numerous men in close confinement must have had a deleterious effect on the fabric of the building, it seemed that the greatest damage was caused by the exuberant and drunken behaviour of troops and later by rain and snow penetration that the damage caused by their vandalism made possible (leaflet: *AP: The Willis Organ*: n.d.).

Why build a fence when whatever the palace shows, people come to see? Anything. Even us, so lacking in joy, so hated and derided, so lacking in energy. We cannot look back, cannot start conversation. Like animals, the monkeys here no more. If they sold tickets, the building would be rich. If they had to pay, even more of them might come, with chairs, drinks, cushions, rugs, food, shelter. That's what we need too if we can't get home. We are a strange sight for turning the stage around and bringing the people back to keep looking in....

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ming and plan for the building, or even if he saw it like that afterwards. Perhaps it is only the benefit of 150-year hindsight that makes this causal link so clear and strong. [But here's an exemplar of writing architecture worth emulating.] His efforts to put the people – the putative users – first too by asking them about what they want in their Palace were successful in the short-term, but gradually diminished. From its (strangely modern) position of building as character in a novel, novel-as-building becomes, eventually, a shrine to public education some miles to the north as Queen Mary College.

Another people's palace is established in Glasgow in 1898, built with the charitable intention to provide relief and alleviate the hardships of residents in the East End. It is a municipal project set up to improve unhealthy and overcrowded living conditions in a particularly disadvantaged area of the city, one without public open space. The building is described as constructed without unnecessary decorative distractions, to a solid utilitarian design, to initiate participant activity among the citizens of Glasgow. The 136-acres of Glasgow Green, where the building is sited becomes the city's largest public space.

The impetus comes from Glasgow Corporation, and is part of its programme to better the lives of its citizens, championed by Councillor Robert Crawford, chair of both Health, and Galleries and Museums committees. Profits from the sale of property brings an initial £2500 in

... The switch radiates 'don't touch' but, shockless, the fluorescents glow and sulk their way to on. Somehow it casts a gloomy tinge – the colour of Cellophane on a shop window to stop the stock spoiling in the daylight.

Nobody left here in a hurry: the marks of slow departure remain in scorecards and fixtures and team lists. The little tea bar with a Formica surface, half-full sugar pots, rock solid. Membership books are stacked on it, and the big old tea pots with the handle on the top and one on the back, it looks like they just got up and walked out.

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1866, and it gains interest at Clydesdale Bank until work starts in 1895. The project to create the building is delayed, like AP, but due to the Corporation being engaged in a programme of slum clearances, providing water supply, building washhouses and hospitals.

Evidently AP is not considered to be a worthy forbear since it is not mentioned in writing on either the Glasgow or Mile End palaces, each often compared with the other, both built for people of their city's East End, for their recreation and improvement, while AP is on business terms. The differences are many and in terms of ownership and scale they are huge. AP originally occupies 346,000 square feet in 17.5 acres of parkland. For an easy comparison, the Winter Gardens – a Victorian iron and glass conservatory next to the brick building of the Glasgow people's palace and four times its size – can accommodate 200 seated guests. This compares to 2000 musicians in the orchestra pit in AP's Great Hall, or 3000 seats in the theatre. AP overreached itself in terms of size, evidently, and demonstrated a lack of awareness of the audience numbers needed to make it pay. The Great Exhibition is a temporary show in a temporary location for a relatively short-term building at that site (although a life from 1851 to 1936, with a removal to Crystal Palace in 1854, is still 80 years). With AP, debts from the first build and for the rebuild after the fire, despite insurance money, and running costs added pressure to make money out of the events.

Beer pumps there, Harp or something. This was a lively club. The wall is lined with banks of metal lockers, still upright but these won't be used again. There's still shoes in there. One locker has her name on it, her writing legible on the front. Queen of the Bowls Club. I see her standing there: no ghost, a creation of my mind's eye.

She'd helped her dad here once, my mum told me, when she was a little girl, putting down old newspaper over the floorboards as underlay for new green baize. It might have replaced the very first the club put down, back

Secondary compensations

Aside from the AP's three-fold iteration, two auxiliary buildings (so far) indicate its 'no longer' and house its 'not yet' status: an inflatable pavilion and the mock-Tudor Blandford Hall. Each of these is built as a physical reminder to the public, we people of the Palace, of what is lost, materially and less tangibly, and of what has not yet arrived. Each is created as a temporary outpost in order to keep a semblance of a venue open near to the burnt-out site, to reassure audiences that there is still entertainment worth coming up the hill for, to keep that journey in their memory, together with the destination at its top. Each allows its public to ponder and practise for what is to come, for what is missing and what may return. But no more certain than that – when what's missing isn't named, it can't come back.

The two do not reverberate in material or design with each other, and Blandford Hall demonstrates no connection to the Palace either. Only in proximity. Otherwise it harks back to yet another past than that it seeks to substitute, while hailing a future when the Palace would be open. Designed by Terry Farrell & Partners after the 1980 fire, the pavilion repeats the AP's early nave- and-aisle layout. This stand-in is a clear-spanned hall bounded by side aisles of ancillary spaces, an outsize lampshade to house the continuing luminous drama on the hill.

when he'd started it up, 1908 she said. This was always a members-only club, not for just anyone. Maybe there was a proficiency test to join, or maybe it was by personal recommendation – that exclusive for you! She danced in the Great Hall too. Ladies in white dresses, big night out up on the hill. Can't imagine it now as this elegant venue, buffet suppers and afternoon tea. Our society ball, this side of town....

137 This pumped-up speech bubble with curved edges like sucked sweets speaks of the times: its own time, with its echo of the time of the Palace gone by, and a cadence of the one to come. Along with reprising old favourites it gives space and airtime for ideas of what the Palace may contain, repeating the original innovative use of materials and construction techniques with its own and nodding to the geodesic dome and the fun palace. The iron-and-glass is no longer: it's over. This air-filled balloon is both not-yet and never-to-be, or not more than short-term.

And what has AP really lost? A building that is any more than an icon, a beacon, a big shed, good for fireworks? An investment in a time of autodidacts and the value of education, a nostalgic site of stratified class division and heart-warming stories of days gone by when newscasters used to take the bus up the hill. Free parking. The illusion that there was ever a cohesive community voice that knew what it wanted and that was roughly the same thing, and was grateful. What is missing takes lots of shapes, from then to now. It's a hole in the story, a gap in a narrative, a 'blank or missing portion in a manuscript', as lacuna was defined in 1660. Lacuna suggests areas of blankness (blackness even), nothing, voids and fear. There is a missing portion here too; and a suspicious – a suspicion of – blankness, and whose is it? This is an omission of the unknown or not yet understood, of the visitor who never comes and the visitor who never comes back. Their silent absence is

overlooked and disregarded because nothing was there to be taken notice of. Filling that vacancy helps to bring a full range of the chorus: from the last years of the old century and shuffling managements, moving to the new with a shift in ownership, military uses; from interwar to postwar to love-in; to another shift of ownership in public bodies in the 1980s, the second fire and now, fuelled, rising again.

What else is missing? What else does the public want, what will tempt the people to use their Palace this time? The anxiety of confronting change, of grasping at memory may be allayed by fabricating a story of what there is to be recovered. It's a ghost that stalks or an echo that brings it back gently, a ripple that spreads after-effects. The disorientation of what's to come is attached to certainties and clarities to be laid bare and named. It's running over with 'not yet', too. That

state of deferral again. Alexandra Palace resounds with what it has lost, what it has never quite found, what keeps being found and what's already been working. If what's been lost can be identified, it may be possible to find it again.

Dig down, peel back the scales of the missing and discarded. It's going to be all there to see. It's what holds the place steady on the hill. Layers of foundations and footprints are plainly



Figures 18 and 19, Colonnades,
brickwork and blocked access,
Ainley 2014

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laid out in plan with ashy remains cluttering the gaps. Look up a little and the layers above ground follow the lines of shingles overlapping at the edge, like retold stories. An activity and an opinion here; there an event and paragraph or two. The fabric creaks, leaks even; the mesh holds, just about.

Scene 3 People/Public

[Enter:

John Thompson; interviewed
19 March 2014; life-long user,
local resident; Chairman, AP TV
group

'Jean'; based on research; user
and local resident;

'Philip', organist and local
curate, pre-Second World War

John Southgate, interviewed
19 February 2014, ex-BBC, 1950s,
Telecine operator

'Simon'; based on interview
material with ex-BBC staff:
producers, journalists, sound
engineers, engineers, techni-
cians]

*It's the other way they want to
be looking – down*

*Like a family or a secret society.
We shared this wonderful secret of
what television was, knowing that
this was the future*

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*They didn't charge us for
using the organ either. Not
another one like it in the
country*

'We're now going to AP for a newsflash'

*Nobody
home*

*They did well out of it with
the public as well, naturally,
happy as Larry to get into a
concert for nothing,*

*Everyone tries to look inside don't
they, sees what they can see be-
hind the closed doors, imagines
what might be there*

*I wouldn't need to read about it in the
papers. You could see that it was closed
down again, nothing was going on there.
You could just tell*

*it was a special treat if you
could go and watch television
at someone's house*

*always someone to point the finger and why
was the council spending all our money on it*

... From a very young age I was always interested in electronics, wires, telephones, anything to do with electricity.

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Anybody in? Nobody's home at the People's Palace. Still it is best understood as both house and monument – the markers of the breadth of its draw. It is the house of the ordinary people and a Palace of popular entertainment and spectacle, devoted to everyday pleasures regularly and frequently repeated as much as to the singular and extraordinary. As built, the fantastic newness of the vessel draws people up the hill to a warehouse full of colonial riches. It needs to work for all concerned. Figures from all corners of society rub shoulders, standing close and sharing amazement in front of the same objects. That's a wonder, right there. A public spectacle in a public park.

Doors open, AP starts as it means to go on: a business enterprise with inclusive provision of entertainment for public edification and enjoyment. What a performance going on there always already: the conjuring trick of commercial Palace-as-public-building, before bookings are made or tickets sold. Everyone sits down under the same roof in the People's Palace, walks the same corridors, views the same exhibits and offerings. Everyone rubs along. That's the ethos, that's the point. What else was it built for? Why, for the sheer quantities of space and objects and view so that there is always enough for everyone.

Everyone sits down under the same roof, not at the same table. Everyone knows their place, even when that place is sometimes in a Palace. The name presents it one way but the reality is another.

So much so that when I was a toddler, mum and dad had to have the telephone screwed on the wall because I'd keep pulling it. It was just an obsession and living locally, it soon got into television. I got pally with somebody at the same school, and on the way home we'd drag television sets out of skips and play with them and take technology-related subjects – physics, chemistry, and what have you.

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Figure 20, Opening day at the Palace, etching, 1873

What people get is what's always on offer: a microcosm of what's available outside in any era, even if they are offered a range of different venues, styled for a variety of occasions and moods. There's no rocking of the boat: that would be shocking. Everyone watches the same programme but some sit in the cheap seats. It's standard: same entertainments for all; different amenities. In the Victorian way the appeal of a programme of high and low culture extends across strata and classes, while refreshment delivery is made for separate areas. Divisions within the venue are made clearly in the provision of catering, seats, view, upholstery.

It's a building, not an egalitarian programme for social democracy. It's about amusing diversions, not about alleviating poverty or ending inequalities in society, though it has hosted many public events on that platform and alters the balance in terms of access to culture and education. It's called the People's Palace but no one's waiting for the revolution.



But alongside this deep interest in electronics was the fact that television, at that time the news, was still coming from here. Open University was coming from here until 1981. It was known as a place for television. I suppose it was when I was a little older and began to get, alongside the electronics, a deeper interest in local history and broadcast history. All of a sudden what went on up here at Ally Pally was all the strands of what I was interested in, and it came together...

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It may look spectacular but there's nothing radical going on. That would be quite a trick. It isn't that kind of People's Palace. Now's not the time.

Here people have the best of what's on offer according to taste and pocket and standing. Every delicacy is to be afforded them. And there's the catch (or one of them). The people have to be able to afford it, in any age and in every department, the time and the tea and cake. Whatever it is on offer has to be what people are willing and keen to afford, and what's the best for now. Often that doesn't add up. An afternoon at the Palace cannot mean the same for those whose leisure time is unlimited and those for whom it is in short supply. Those with disposable income and free time can browse in the bazaar, eat and drink in endless coffee and grill rooms, banqueting halls and private dining rooms. 'The people' turns out to be more of a marginal user group than the definite article and capital letter and the marketing bluster suggest.

Dangerous talk

What the phrase 'the People's Palace' conjures up is an illusion, though possibly cherished, and it's an illusion obscured and diverted by the dramatic, magical, gravity-defying events taking place for all to see. It's an illusion that is further embedded by the shift into public ownership in 1900 with another phrase 'for the free use and recreation

1935-76 BBC
and the Second
World War

'This is direct television from the studios at Alexandra Palace'.

A plaque marks AP as the site of the first regular High Definition public television transmissions in 1936, which opened with this announcement by Elizabeth Cowell (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/po1f2cks). The first television outside broadcast was also transmitted from the Park at the North London exhibition, on 6 October 1936 (Creeber in Hilmes:2003:25). The choice of AP as the site was made because it was high enough above sea level and there to be occupied (although new build might have resulted in premises more suitable in the longer

[Enter: 'Jean']

... And what I remember from my childhood, we didn't have a TV straight away but as a youngster I can remember somebody going over to my Auntie May's, opposite. She did have a TV and I used to watch Muffin the Mule and apparently I used to say it 'Mewel' [puts on Birmingham accent] and I can also remember seeing the mast. It must have been the news or something. I didn't know what AP was but I saw the mast. Whether this is really a memory or whether this is just repeating what I've seen on the TV, I like to think I remember going [puts on RP accent] 'This is Alexandra Palace'.

Figures 21 and 22, Commemorative plaques to Henry Burt JP and Edwin Willmott Sloper, Ainley 2014

of the public forever', enshrined in statute. The chorus of 'free' and 'public' strikes a clear note. Owners are us! Calling it 'the Palace' makes it ours. Our manor, if not our Palace. Where better to imagine how the world can be enjoyed and improved than in a People's Palace with the freedom of unencumbered space at the top of a hill, a viewing platform right across London? Music to the ears, ding dong.

The public may ask how it is public, even though they pay for it and own it, once or twice removed maybe. It's through ownership (usually held in trust and custody by some body or other, at local, parochial, neighbourhood, county, metropolitan, national level) or in its open access, free at point of use, even free for all. Run by public money, the Palace becomes ours in a different way: ours in terms of habituation of use, ours in suiting tastes with appropriate offerings and so presenting a different welcome. Maybe even ours in being run with imperatives other than the financial in mind. Just maybe. In this way perhaps the 'People's Palace' becomes a little more than a slogan.

Though the people's flag, red or otherwise, doesn't fly at the Palace, many feel at home in this big pile. The grounds are walked as an extension of their own back yards and no one needs grace-and-



term), and its location was judged to give access to a larger potential audience (Moran:2013:30). The BBC leasing, initially, part of the southeast of the building extended the life and use of the Palace, and is also one of the main reasons why it is considered important in the country's national heritage and why the Palace has lasted so long. The award of the HLF grant for refurbishment of the East Wing is a recognition of its history as a pleasure palace and its status as a listed building: in particular on the basis of the spaces of the Victorian theatre and the Great Hall (Insall:2012:186-89).

In the interwar period, the Palace was again run-down.

So to me it's quite strange, that all these years later I'm here under the mast that obviously stuck in my mind because you don't remember all your childhood memories at all. Although I didn't realise it, I had an association with this area right from childhood but didn't know where it was and then my next association with it was – I was teaching in the 80s and I moved into this area in 1981. So I didn't really have a lot of time to go investigating where I lived. Once I had the time, I started getting involved in the area and here I am....

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favour permission to stroll through, a local destination on a Sunday for when the Heath feels too far. They know it's not theirs, not really. But then it is, too. The lights are on but still no one is in.

The phrase 'the Palace of the People' is credited to Owen Jones and resonates from his own unrealised design through threads of stories of the built palaces, through publicity and endless pamphlets and reports to contemporary branding. It chimes repeatedly in official histories and present-day campaigns, in the current masterplan and regeneration initiative and indeed here on this page. The phrase resounds in fiction too. Walter Besant is adamant in his writing about distinguishing between 'Palace for the People' and 'People's Palace'. In favouring the latter, he puts sense of ownership before typology, prioritising whose palace it is to be over design and ambition for it. With his delicacy on the subject of naming, he mocks the novel's protagonist, Angela (who speaks in Scene 1), as she chooses between calling her enterprise 'Palace of Pleasure' or 'Palace of Delight', both of which sound more like fairgrounds and brothels to the contemporary ear. 'Pleasure seems to touch a lower note', Angela decides.

The public us

Public buildings open their doors across barrier lines, delib-

The ballroom and roller rink were still popular but not so the theatre, which had been in service as a Roman Catholic chapel during the war for use by soldiers and POWs (Harris:2005:53). Theatre had been overtaken by cinema as the nation's favourite art form. Both world wars led to changes of use and damage to AP, which was not in a state for public use afterwards (Carrington:1975:164). The trustees' complaint that 'but for the Government's compulsory occupation of the Palace it would certainly not be in its present need of financial help' demonstrates a lack of knowledge of their own history, and could be dated as following either war (AP Trustees:1933). A grant

... I haven't dragged them out for a long time, the movie films of when we were toddlers, maybe a year, not much more, in our matching little outfits, me and Peter by the lake with a feather, and me trying to put this feather back into the duck. The duck was unhappy so it ran to the water and jumped in where I chased it, and there's me heading off towards the water. All of a sudden, the cameraman, dad, realises I'm about to drop in so the camera goes up in the air. I think Dad grabbed me before I went in. It was only shallow. I don't think the duck got reunited with its feather.

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erately or hopefully setting routes across the separations of difference and inequality. They do, don't they? Still dreaming of a place and time when that might be so? It's a chimera. People imagine that's how public space is, invest it with such qualities. Planned or unplanned, appropriated or designated; taken or given, public space is for everyone to use, whoever they are, for whatever they want, when they want to, whatever their income and background. Anyone can walk through it, anyone can sit there, anyone can use it however they like. Except. Unless. Without. As long as. Provided. Not. But. Feel free to use the steps and the hallway, just don't loiter too long. Use it freely, once you've bought a ticket. Public space without limitation is an illusion, always was. The prospect of anyone doing anything anywhere is no rose-tinted spectacle: it's a (not entirely desirable) fantasy that inhabits the same dream as the visionary non-existent Palace.

Public spaces and buildings that everyone uses – the clinic and nursery, the square and gardens, the library and theatre – are where everyone goes for some benefit other than financial transaction, the buildings and spaces of official life. It's the municipal building everyone passes through, on foot and on paper, to be registered at birth and at death and between those points at marriage. People choose to go to public spaces as an alternative to the domestic, someone else's or their own, for diversion too, on visits to public galleries

of £86,625 was agreed by HM Government to contribute to the cost of wages for improvements to roads, paths, lighting, heating and building renovation (Report of Conference between trustees and LA representatives:1933). The plan, designed by architect E Cecil Davies, was rescinded due to the 1931 financial crisis. By 1933 the Palace trustees had reached 'an impasse' and 'could not carry on' (Report:1933).

By the middle of the decade only sport was successful (the new sports of motorcycle road racing and cycle road races and football), so there was little feeling by tenants or organisers of be-

The film stock's all so different, the colours, it looks so much of its time. It's always 'oh that's the time John tried to put the feather back in the duck'. Here we go again. ...

... I can't see any difference really. People watched it then and they watch it again now. What was it called, Old Tyme Music Hall? I hated it. Saturday night television was the last thing I wanted to be doing. It was for old folk and we were the business – well, we thought we were. It was never going to be that boring again. Juke Box Jury, I'd watch that.

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and museums and concert halls and libraries and zoos.

The vocabularies of such buildings, their distinctive external features and internal layouts are visible at AP too, reminding us of its special nature. There's the grand staircase of the concert hall, raked seating in the theatre, colonnades as arcades for semi-covered activities, interconnected halls and galleries, the central chamber, often domed and flanked with lesser spaces. The domes and BBC mast at AP are signs of location and local pride like a town hall tower (but without the clock, a Palace is timeless).

Ample room is offered then and occupied for confusion about the space called public and the people inhabiting it. The sources for this confusion are many too. A public house in the 1570s referred to any building open to the public; more recently, when they are for drinking alcohol, and the contraction to pub comes from the same era as AP. The public bar in that public (drinking) house is traditionally for working-class public, an environment of harder surfaces, stronger language, and almost exclusively male, contrasting with the more salubrious lounge bar or private snug. As designs are drawn for AP in 1859, in Brewer's, 'popular' is taken to mean 'low and affordable (in relation to prices) ... well-liked and admired by the (ordinary) people', and after the 1920s it is favoured by Communists and radicals. 'Public', from Old French, is used as 'open to general observation'; from Latin *publicus*

ing ousted by the new leaseholder (Carrington:191). Even in 2015, 'Sports facility' was the description that comes up under Google search, which also named Owen Jones as the architect.

The tower itself and adjoining ground- and first-floor area amounted to c.30,000 square feet, and the Corporation subsequently occupied space in the north-east tower and theatre, adding an additional 25,000 square feet (BBC:1937:17). Not all early visitors were impressed.

I found an old tyre, no roof, no doors and could see the

Even though television got a bit less fuddy-duddy. Saturday nights though, it was like the end of the world having to stay in and watch that. The Good Old Days, that was it but 'old tyme' music hall was what it was supposed to be.

I never came up for any of the big concerts, not then or since. Never quite the time. London was like another country – in colour and everywhere else was still in black and white. I don't know if I even knew about colour TV at the time. I doubt I knew that it was possible, if you get me. When they had rave nights up here in the 1990s, I knew about that.

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'common, ordinary, vulgar'. There is too the Latin *populus*, 'a multitude' or 'body of citizens'. From the late thirteenth century, in Anglo-French 'people' meant 'common people, masses', as distinct from nobility. In later usage it came to mean one's own tribe.

Language use continues to change with the times: vision–destination–offer are not in the Victorian lexicon in relation to public buildings and developments but the song remains the same, almost. The language and the signs change over time but the fundamentals remain: 'do this, not that' or the more discriminatory, 'them, not you'. The question is: how can a public building express who everyone is, welcome them with the familiar and entice them back with what isn't? Everyone expects to be with their own, doing what they do and fitting in, in preference to mixing it up. Most of the people, most of the time. Private clubs for drinking, for sports and freemasonry, for 'working men' and 'gentlemen' specialise in the stratification of space for special needs, of whatever stripe.



Figures 23 and 24, Signage in Alexandra Park, Ainley 2015

sky. The smell of cat in the old banqueting rooms nearly made me sick and the whole thing looked the most dreadful mess.

Desmond Campbell, Lighting Engineer, BBC Television, 1935 (<http://www.alexandrapalace.com/hidden-gems/bbc-studios/>)

As this quotation suggests, works were needed to make the BBC areas 'habitable and watertight' and while these were undertaken, rent from the BBC was amortised so there was no immediate improvement to Palace finances (Carrington:192). The tower was remodelled

We all did. I was much too old by then. Oh the fuss. The local papers were full of it. Never been young any of them you'd think. But then, those days, maybe they hadn't! But music hall, that was never my thing and it still isn't. I cringe if I see reruns and it's the same with that one on now.

... That was the thing – it was free. We didn't charge for playing and they didn't charge for tickets. They said at the Palace they couldn't give tickets away, for concerts or anything else at that time. But we had packed houses. It was good of them



The usual affiliations don't fall away when a person becomes a member of the public. They encourage spending time and cash as a bulwark against fear of the unknown, of the dangerous other, and proximity to it, whoever he is.

Public doesn't often mean everybody, not really – not even the idea of an us – so much as the dispossessed and the non-professional, the user, the civilian. The public is them, those others having something planned for them, the not-us. The working-class public of Besant's era was considered easily led and prone to pursuing common habits. Our father of the television schedule also felt a need in the 1930s to take the people in hand. Public is those people who aren't doing it for themselves, who can't manage it – people who

need someone to do it for them or to them. So you say. Either way, the agency doesn't belong to them, it isn't theirs. Some people don't want to be counted as the public and others would hate to be counted as anything else: the people, the hoi polloi, the populace, the great unwashed, the community, the salt of the earth, the ordinary person, Joe Bloggs, Mr (and Mrs?) Smith. (And more recently, who wants to be

in 1935 to provide office space for technical, executive and production staff, described in the *BBC Annual 1936* as 'expensive reconstruction' (BBC:149). Study of plans and commentary suggest rather that this was done to a low standard (ramshackle would be an appropriate description). This was confirmed in interview (Willmott:November 2014) and in transcripts from Alexandra Palace TV Society by ex-employees. More publicly, the *Radio Times* reported (28 August 1935): 'A tower has been reconstructed so thoroughly that two floors have budded into five. There are two large, airy asbestos-walled studios complete with control chambers, arc lamps, camera, background curtains, in

Britain's Got Talent is it? It's never off. And they pay to vote on it with their mobile phones! What a scam. Bring back the clap-o-meter (is that what it's called?), that's what I say! It's nearly sixty years that's been on the telly, in one form or another. Sometimes amateurs, sometimes professionals. They could do a local one here, in the theatre. It's had plenty of music hall and talent before, they could start that up again.

to do it, nonetheless. Even so, what they got out of it was worth much more than a half-full concert hall. We were just grateful for the chance to play that beautiful instrument.

153 The People anyway after Tony Blair's mawkish co-option of the phrase, when he dared to speak in the name of the people, and not for the last time, making assumption of consensus and speaking in one voice, which would be his ...?)

Public and people may now be used interchangeably, although to say 'public palace' would mean a toilet. Public is 'the people', generally and collectively: but twisted the wrong way, this can come to mean something dangerously subversive, a force of the unknown to be feared or a downtrodden, fearful mass. The inability to differentiate individuals in this mass renders it frightening either way. An overtone of 'the people' since its glorious, and imaginary, Soviet-infused splendour segues in another twist into the image of unthinking bully-boy trades unionist beloved of the right-wing media, sheep-like yet somehow more savage than bovine. Then there's the public school: in the US, open to all comers; on this side of the Atlantic, a private affair of limited access to those without funds or pedigrees.

Royal we

No ensign flies at half mast from the tower. It's missing, like the red flag. Someone has died and London, if not in mourning, notes the passing of a minister of the crown or the mother of a queen.

appearance something like a cross between a gramophone recording studio and a film set.' Other facilities, among them dressing rooms and makeup emerged from the conversion of the banqueting halls and tea rooms in the southeast wing. These remained in use for forty-five years (leaflet, *AP:Birthplace of Television:n.d.*).

Different setups in the two studios, using Baird and EMI-Marconi equipment allowed the BBC to explore the different technologies (leaflet, *AP:Birthplace of Television:n.d.*). The Marconi system was chosen, since the Baird was 'basically mechanical', according to Nigel Willmott, founder of Friends of AP Theatre, ex-chair of the

... It's quite hilly isn't it. It was chosen for that site because of the limitations of the broadcasting system. To get the mast up and high and to reach all of London, which it virtually did, was quite an achievement in those days, with the 405 line system on technical grounds to be able to transmit. It was the real pioneering thing. I worked on film recording and videotape all my life so

They didn't charge us for using the organ either. Not another one like it in the country. I played there several times and so did some of my other church organist colleagues from the local parishes. It was a very special experience and one I

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Outraged citizens make telephone calls to berate Palace employees for their lack of respect. There is no flag to fly and no residence, royal or otherwise, to fly it from. No despot or even minor aristocrat lives at the Palace: only prisoners and refugees slept here. It's an easy mistake to make: called a Palace, looks like a Palace, must be a Palace. Quack. A Palace is for royalty: 'An official residence of a reigning monarch, nobility, an aristocratic residence', the dictionary says. Further down the page comes more disappointment: 'it can be an imitator, a large and richly furnished building resembling a royal palace', or, as Brewer's has it, a place for dignitaries or a 'palace of amusement'. Sounds cheap enough. 'Angela' won't like it.

They can call it anything they like but 'the Palace' has a dignity about it and a definite capital P. Calling it The Palace makes it ours. It's not just any palace. That's the proper name, and that's what it has to be called. Ally Pally? They say it was Gracie Fields who coined it. She would have made a good queen of Alexandra's Palace, variety-style and due ample respect but no delusions of grandeur, with her first husband Archie Pitt, general manager of AP for a time, as consort. But it's not quite right, bit familiar, though some say a nickname is a sign of fondness and ownership. The one and only, ours, once in a lifetime, never to be repeated. Oh. Taken to the heart and clasped to the bosom, with a sense of the proprietorial. Stand firm and brook no dis-

Trust and ex-Haringey councillor (interviewed November 2014). These still exist as Studios A and B, part of the East Court area being refurbished in 2016. In the postwar period, having taken over use of the theatre as rehearsal space, the Corporation gradually occupied the whole of the East Wing (Insall:172).

The *Radio Times* report has a slightly breathless promotional quality – these were the first TV studios to be built. The enthusiastic use of 'proud parents' metaphors is an attempt to engage the public:

this was right at the very beginning of the thing. They used to do the live programme twice. They had a play on a Sunday evening and then on a Thursday they would repeat it. There was no recording so it was all done twice.

The demonstration film used to go out every morning for two hours, repeat programme.

would never have had otherwise. Physically it was quite an experience too, unimaginably taxing. It's more like it plays you, what with the size of it. I used to feel after as though I'd been playing rugby for three days straight.

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sent. Seventy years on and Londoners can still come over all Blitz spirit and make do and allotments

No liberties are being taken, calling it a Palace but someone's making a point, with that connection: people princess Palace. Whichever side they're flying the flag for, and there's been all sorts up there. Impresarios, managers, traders, visionaries, hawkers, philanthropists. And the attempt to curry favourable and, let's face it, lucrative relations with royalty doesn't stop there. So much for 'Palace for the People': they are desperate from the first for the stamp of royal approval, to attract funds and patronage and the crowds and their money too. They've got to make a living after all. The Palace is named for Princess Alexandra of Denmark, to welcome her to England, a sort of respectful bandwagon jumping. She marries Prince Edward only a few months before AP's opening day, set on Queen Victoria's birthday. But nothing ever works as a means of ensuring royal patronage, all the various ploys are unsuccessful. Even though she has no connection with the Palace an organ restoration fund is named in Alexandra's honour as a memorial after her death. Permission being granted is almost the real thing after all. Maybe they have to keep trying, press on regardless: if they called it a duck often enough, or a palace

All that effort to create a connection with the royals and eventually they get it, after a fashion and after ownership is granted,

Television is in its earliest infancy, and Alexandra Palace is its cradle. Later in the autumn ... the Director of Television will give a forecast of the future, when the infant has outgrown its cradle and we shall look back to this month's experimental broadcasts from Alexandra Palace as the earliest evidence that something new and big and unpredictable was on the way (*Radio Times*:28 August 1935).

After the fire at Crystal Palace in 1936, which was reported from AP, some events from there, 'a number of organ concerts', were

All the retailers who were lining up sets and mending them and everything received this signal and it gave them a standard they could set all the televisions to.

And of course they shut the Palace off during the war because they thought it would be a beacon for the German bombers to come and aim at. Or so they said. The other stories about using it to deflect signals, vital contribution to

Or been in one of the boxing matches with John Henry Lewis. I felt I was part of a huge machine that could control you, chew you up and spit you out but if you treat it well,

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exhaustedly, to the people. Colonial troops ('Nubians' and 'Sikhs') shipped over to England to take part in coronation celebrations for Edward VII, Alexandra's prince, are billeted at the Palace and in the park. The public comes to stand and stare – presumably at a more enticing spectacle than anything else that is on offer there.

And fifty years after it opens, the real royalty at the Palace takes up residence. Finally the quality move in. The real royalty up on the hill is the BBC, the Imperial People's Corporation. With the help of television to document and relay it, royal history is made at last at AP in 1937 for the coronation of King George VI. Alexandra Palace is making television history too – first for the public broadcast and then for the royal nature of it. It happens again in 1953 when Queen Elizabeth II's coronation is filmed, a live broadcast of a queen ascending the throne for the first time in history, despite cameras initially being banned from filming in Westminster Abbey.

It's more of an accident of topography that leads to the BBC's first public high-definition television broadcast from AP – although the ubiquitous and faintly insulting quotation 'high up, already built and available' is often interpreted as an accident of history. The frequently repeated measure of 600 feet above sea level is the height needed to position the mast. The Palace is sited high enough up the hill, and the potential viewing public living within the area of signal broadcast are

transferred to the north London Palace (Smith:19). It was still not enough to give a sustainable income: the two main halls were used on only forty-three days during 1938 (Carrington:194). Ken Gay quoted a dismal description from *The Times* (7 January 1938) of a Palace full of 'sections of stuffed lions, slot machines, a bar, poster of dance competitions and statue of Lincoln', an example surely of how AP offered 'nothing for anyone' instead of 'something for everyone'. Only the roller rink stayed open for part of the war (Carrington:197) and without the BBC lease it is unlikely that the Palace would have remained open at all, then or since.

war work and all that ... don't know if it's true or not.

Getting there wasn't so clever. If you had no transport, and we didn't, you had to go by bus and it was a bit difficult. I used to walk to Northumberland Park and then get a bus. If you go to visit a city, you don't want to be on the fringe of the action, you want to be in on it....

then you got your reward, some said, if you catch my drift. A wonderful sort of monster really, needed firm hands and a big heart. Turn you up upside down and run away with you.

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considered high enough in income and class scales and more likely to invest in television sets than the local population of Crystal Palace, so they say. Now AP and its BBC leaseholder too are making assumptions about who the people are that they both serve. Some may say too that people who lease glass houses should be careful about throwing stones. The public for the BBC is distributed, less place-bound; television communicates to an amorphous, faceless mass, technologically distant and invisible and unknowable.

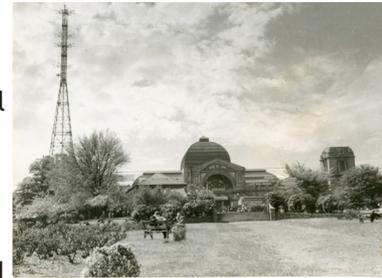


Figure 27, View from east terrace, n.d.

The building and surrounding parkland is listed for its 'special architectural or historical interest', but most of what is listed exists no longer, other than as a rough simulacrum of a footprint, overlapping another example of what once was here. The tenancy of the BBC and enormity of its work during that period lends significance to a site otherwise so rebuilt upon that its importance as an example of large-scale Victorian iron and glass pleasure palace is more about absence and offset repetition. Listed or not, the park's appeal and significance is largely local, never mind the Danish princess. It's a (north) London thing.

Between local park and uniquely significant Palace, the scale of the audience is forged, the dimension of its public is sketched out.

Some sources referred to the BBC's Second World War role at AP in jamming radio signals used by Luftwaffe and that the BBC transmitter was used as a decoy for enemy aircraft (Brown:1970:45). Correspondence at the BBC Written Archives at Caversham documents that some space was occupied by the Air Ministry in 1941/2, for use of the sound transmitter. The insistence, by then post-colonial, on endless documentation and categorising was evident in a lengthy correspondence trail of a dispute over payment of utility costs following the Ministry's departure (BBC Written Archives). A flying bomb damaged all windows on the north side, causing water penetration

... We were specifically told not to go to other parts of the building. At that time very little was there to be discovered, the rest of the place was pretty much empty, as far as we were concerned. There were jokes about the people 'on the other side'. We had enough going on at our end and, to be frank, whatever they did was never going to be half so interesting as what we were doing. We were like a family –

I always felt like I'd been half way round the world and up to the moon and back after playing that one. They did well out of it with the public as well, naturally, happy as Larry to get

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Despite the international draw of television history, the Palace is often cast as the costly disaster at the top of the park and closed at that.

Ignore it: maybe then it will go away.

What is listed is an example of a type of building – its purpose, structure and method – that is barely there, any more than the era of its first iteration is. The site and its grounds are marked by something else. The endless variations of its presence in memory and idea are worth more, signalled in the patina left by years of steps, the glaze of perspective, the weight of breath, subtractive and additive.



Figure 28, Roof and temporary pavilion, Ainley 2014

Physically, the deep wooden stage of the Victorian theatre still exists, unusually intact under the circumstances, with equally unusual mechanisms for scenery that comes from below rather than above and a fine selection of traps for actors to spring from and

disappear into. Above ground nothing is the same. Almost all that's left to list is an idea, a big one; but the faded outline on the theatre ceiling of the nineteenth-century stencil is more than an idea, and an original worth saving. Paper versions are there to be pored over, to follow the changing configuration – more open space, less spectacle, more tea bars, smaller footprint, more domes, fewer walkways, more exhibition,

that led to the organ being partly dismantled, another chapter in that instrument's epic saga, which could operate as synecdoche for the entire Palace (leaflet, *AP: The Willis Organ*:n.d.). Broadcasts resumed after the wartime suspension of six years with Jasmine Bligh on the terrace at Alexandra Palace in June 1946 saying 'Hello, remember me?', followed by with the Victory Parade in central London (*Television is here again*:1946).

In *The Television Annual of 1950/51* the Palace was under critical assessment as the headquarters of the BBC Television service as improved arrangements were soon to be in place at Lime Grove, at

you knew everyone who worked there then. We shared this wonderful secret of what television was, knowing that this was the future and, let's not forget, we were a family with our own sports and refreshment facilities.

There wasn't the time for exploring either. You might have got to recognise a few faces from the bus or the

into a concert for nothing, to hear – I hope I'm not speaking out of turn here – an exceptional organ recital in these, well, palatial surroundings. For my part, playing in the Great Hall

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less industry. Students, soldiers, strikers, skaters, singers. Disintegrating copies and the papery layers of imagination. If its status as a rare example of survival of a building type is questionable, its renown as a London landmark is more lasting, with the mast as monument rather than the imaginary glass domes of the 1870s. Its uniqueness resides in the affections of those who use it for any purpose, whoever the people are, those who looked in and out, and in the history of British popular education and entertainment.

The Palace arranges other compensations for the failure to create a royal connection and then make capital out of it. Unconfirmed reports mention visits in the 1960s by footballer Jimmy Greaves (god, never mind royal), then playing for Tottenham. An impressive roster of rock royalty turns out for the Human Be-in at the Great Hall in 1967, as performers and spectators for this off-site UFO Club night.



Figure 29, Love-in festival poster, uncredited, 1967

Shepherd's Bush on the other side of London: '[s]ince 1936 two studios, cramped into this single wing of the building, have had to suffice' (Baily:1951:28). Later that year a film-dubbing suite was added to the facilities at Muswell Hill even though problems with the lease meant that the Corporation would have to vacate after 1956 (Baily:29). The space of 5000 square feet was described as 'paltry', 'sprawling', 'a queer conglomeration added piecemeal' – for which they can only blame their own architects; 'unwieldy' and 'thoroughly inconvenient' (Baily:30). Some of this was undeniable: having to transport scenery up to the studios on the first floor and the distance between the

car park, even a nod or a smile, but that was probably about the size of it. Life may have been much slower but it didn't feel like it – the place ran on adrenaline. Well, and tea, and there was the bar of course. None of us were in any doubt though that this was only the beginning. We knew there

instead of at St James's up on Princes Avenue or St Mary's in Hornsey meant I could play something other than hymns or choral music. I did put some hymns into the programme, just to remind the audience how the Lord has the best tunes! Sometimes there would be singing too, but mostly pin-drop

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The (guest)list of royal visitors covers Jimi Hendrix, Yoko Ono, John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Pink Floyd, the club's house band, who were playing on the night. Their presence gives some weight to Joe Boyd's theory in *White Bicycles* that the 1960s peaked at this UFO event. Then there is John Lee Hooker, who may or may not have been on hand at the gig but who played an all-nighter at AP a few years earlier. These brushes with royal families of broadcast and music happen in decades when there are right royal messes too: the decade of abdication of the man who went over to the other side, marrying a commoner and divorcée and fraternising with National Socialists with more enthusiasm than usual in his family, and at the other end, hosting assaults on the social structure that seem to threaten the stability of the established order.

Some thirty years further down the line, royalty from London's Black political classes turn out, this time for the funeral in 2000 of Bernie Grant, trades union official, a local councillor in Haringey and then Labour MP for Tottenham, so involved in the post-1980 fire rebuild of AP. Among the 4000 mourners are Paul Boateng, Oona King and Keith Vaz, as well as cabinet ministers and other MPs and dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. Grant was known by his supporters for 'his tireless struggle against injustice', as one referred to his life and work in the condolence book and the spirit of the People's Palace is invoked as a fitting site to mark the passing of 'a star in their crown'. This rare multi-

'scenic design and manufacturing quarters' necessitated movement of flats and props round the outside of the Palace (Baily:30). It is clear from correspondence that accusations about the piecemeal fit-out were not unfounded: a memo from November 1936 describes a 'piece of linoleum' being moved from '35 High Street' [Marylebone] to the Palace and a requisitioned table and chair being made available (BBC Written Archives). This report suggests that only 'pioneer enthusiasm' overcame these limitations and made the production of television possible (Baily:30). These criticisms may be interpreted in part as pre-emptive shots, laying the ground for removals and

were going to be a lot more changes to come. This was only the start and we all had to stay aboard – keep up with new ideas and so forth. We couldn't afford to be left behind. We had our jobs to think of for the future.

silence, respectful. Many of them were not regular churchgoers, they said and they rarely heard organ music, so they told me round the tea urn afterwards in the refreshment room.

Not long after the BBC arrived I heard that there was bad feeling about the concerts among the musicians – the BBC not recording there on their own doorstep,

161 cultural celebration of a public life is one of the 'largest ever public tributes at a funeral of a black person in Britain', according to Grant's archive. In the same year the Great Hall at the Palace hosts the final round of the London Mayoral hustings, demonstrating its spectrum of functions as both royal and parish hall.

Open welcome

The Palace's programme encompasses human zoos, welcoming the public. Local populations temporarily include troops and liveried horses from the Commonwealth and Europe commissioned for the imminent war, providing a live, real-time exhibit for onlookers, free. After the excitement of Our Nubian Friends, royalty of the human race, the new (non-paying) public spectacle at the all-but-closed Palace becomes a human one again. Royalty may have been thin on the ground but they're people too and expected to have a place at AP. For People of the Palace to include prisoners and internees is more unusual. Had there ever been any royal inhabitants at AP, the place would have been as truly exclusive as it was for its wartime uses. Prison and palace are the epitome of non-accessible highly restricted buildings closed to the public. AP's embrace of the people extends from royalty to prisoners. The Palace hosts them all.

new fit-outs.

Val Gielgud, Head of Drama, wrote in the *Year Book* of the unfulfilled promise of the transfer from the 'cramping environment of Alexandra Palace to the more spacious fields of the Lime Grove studios' (total studio floor area, 30,000 square feet; largest of the five studios, 9600 square feet) was only a 'gleam' in 1952 (Gielgud:1952:26). It happened in 1954. The first colour signals were broadcast from AP in 1956; thereafter its function was limited to news.

The lengthy tenancy of the Alexandra Palace Indoor Bowling Club – 'the first in England to lay down an indoor carpet for

Even though it was all but abandoned, they still didn't want us going into parts of the building that were off-limits. Don't know why really. Probably because they didn't know themselves what we would see or what there was to find. Not only that, we were supposed to be working if we were on the premises. We all did of course. Wander about I mean, having a good nose around the place. Well I

so to speak, saying it wasn't good enough quality. Didn't think it was good enough for their listeners or so it was said. They didn't want them and they didn't like the tone of the organ. I

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The only time Alexandra visits her palace is in 1915 to meet Belgian refugees housed there. The refugees from plucky Belgium are followed with less pomp and ceremony with internees in a camp for enemy aliens and later German POWs. War brings these new and unforeseen uses for sanctuary and internment. From the positively inclusive to the divisively othered, the breadth of meaning of the word public in relation to uses of the Palace and users of the facilities takes this unusual, not to say shameful, turn forty years after its opening.

As 'enemy aliens', people of German birth or descent who live, marry, work and have children in the capital and beyond are no longer extended welcome, and are housed – imprisoned, in effect – in the building. Later in the war, POWs are incarcerated there for considerably longer periods. Doubtless they are having the time of their lives in the holiday camp that is the Alexandra Internment Palace, while English POWs in Germany are housed in camps ('jerry-built') not palaces. Reported catering levels, according to the *Hornsey Journal* on 24/12/1915, include half a pound of meat daily, a pound and a half of bread 'made to suit the taste of the prisoners' (for which we may read 'filthy foreign food from the continent'), not to mention a range of patisserie and 'other delicacies' on offer noted but unspecified. Overweight members of the 'motley races of Central Europe' would be bursting out of the Great Hall.

bowls' – from 1909 to 1956 almost matched that of the BBC (leaflet, *AP Indoor Bowling Club*:BBCWritten Archives:n.d). Given the noise of bowl on bowl, their location next to Studio A was unfortunate and that they sublet their space from the BBC for some of this time. Their space was commandeered for TV news in the 1950s and, despite their popularity, the club had difficulty in getting their lease extended. In a letter dated 17 January 1958 the club's president, Mr G Coles, appealed to Sir Ian Jacob of the BBC: 'The Club is well-known throughout the Bowling world and I am sure you will feel it a calamity if, after half a century, it has to close down' ((BBC Written

did and I assumed everyone else did too. You'd have to be a fool not to. And I use the word advisedly, after Reith and all that! It was such a strange set-up, how anyone could not be curious I just can't fathom. There we were, working on part of the most exciting communications innovation the world

expect they wanted everything new-fangled even the timbre. It wouldn't have hurt them to make a contribution to have it restored to all its glory. Times were hard, everybody knew that, and an organ isn't at the top of the list in difficult times, but all those years after the war and the wear and tear that

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Figure 30, Baggage
in the Great Hall,
c.1915

The rest of the country is meanwhile getting thin on wartime rations. In Germany by contrast POWs are treated only to a half pound of bread of 'a black indigestible mixture' (rye perhaps?) and given meat as the 'exception rather than the rule.' Until the locals get bored of the new exhibit, a fence is built in response to worry about how to keep the public out and the inmates safe (and contained) from anti-German sentiment stoked further by such press coverage. With 3000 POWs packed into AP, requests from inmates for incarceration in the basement 'prison' as a respite from lack of privacy and seeking peace and quiet are many and unsurprising. This is not so easily remedied as building a fence round the Palace.



The POWs, bored themselves, design a rose garden and build an education hut in the park, among other additions, and internees run a forty-strong orchestra. 'Ignorant peasants' of refugees are later blamed for the building's general dereliction, just as 'clumsy plumbers' (the more pointed version of 'man-made causes') are for the fire in 1873 and as 'Irish practices' are for the failure of the railway route to the Palace.

Archives:1958) It was left to the club's solicitor Mr R Crane to plead the case for 'the people' in a letter to the BBC Solicitors' Department: 'In fact one would have thought that the corporation would have run a similar Club for the local people, who use this public building and park, without charge' (BBC Written Archives:1958)

News programmes continued to be broadcast from AP until 1969, including those from BBC2 on its inception in 1964. A plan showed the BBC occupying more than a third of the Palace by the 1960s, when much of the rest of the building was again derelict and beyond use (Insall:172). Very little can have remained to be open

had ever known (and please don't talk to me about magic lanterns and the printing press!), stuck on a hill in deepest north London in this decrepit building of fifty years old. Must have been a wonder when it was brand new and all that – fit for the wrecking ball when we got there...

caused to the Willis, and it hadn't been attended to properly. Before we knew it, the next one came along and I remember hearing about the bomb damage at the Palace. I was miles away by then. Not playing, not until I got back from France.

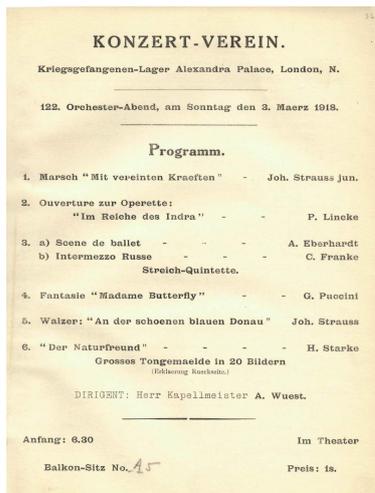
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Figure 31, Commemorative plaque, Anglo-German Family History Society, Ainley 2014; Figure 32, Concert Programme, internees' orchestra, c.1916

In a similar vein, the widely recorded story of a gypsy curse – a pre-suburban myth perhaps – is a marvel of kneejerk ethnic blaming. Gypsies are evicted from the site before the first Palace was built, and their



curse upon the area and the enterprise is said to account for all AP's fiery and economic troubles. The finger of blame points more easily in this direction than towards recognition of simple, serial ineptitude and bad planning.



Internees and POWs are ideally situated and characterised as culpable for the damage to AP's esteemed Willis organ, too. This much-maligned heart of the Palace silts up with the accumulated fumes and oil deposits from hundreds of small stoves and fluff from blankets. The difficulties of trying to keep warm in one of the highest points in London are also cause for blaming them. The absence of shield and shelter from wintry weather or for respite from hot summers, and the unanticipated

for public usage. At this point AP belonged to 'the people' only in the sense of perceived output of the apparently democratising medium of television, rather than of people being able to be users of the space.

The problems with the BBC lease were evidently resolved since the Palace remained the main transmitting centre for twenty years (and for Open University broadcasts in the 1970s before the move to Milton Keynes). When it was still the home of BBC TV News Nick Flowers worked as a Holiday Relief Sound Assistant at AP for a couple of years in the mid-1960s. These are his impressions:

... How do I count it? I can measure my days from summer to winter when I went from foothills to peaks, and by spring I was at the summit. I went from bottom path to top steps. An outdoor gym before we knew the like, my field hospital in the park. I can measure by length: from 100 yards to 10 miles. By time: from ten minutes daily to full days. By people: from solitary climbing, when there's not enough breath to spend it on talking, to outings and companionable walks.

Then there was so much to do for the Church the organ wasn't getting any attention to speak of...

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costs of heating, ventilation and maintenance for such a pile with its glass domes adds to the financial burden under which every owner buckles sooner or later.

The very idea of 'local populations' would have been an anachronism early in the Palace's existence, but over the whole century and a half, changes in local populations in London are many and the effects of the place on the people forming those populations grows too. As AP passes through its infancy, land from the park is sold in an attempt to try to stave off yet another bankruptcy. Houses are built closer to it. Centres of residence multiply and expand, growing in popularity, down and up the hill, diminishing AP's splendid isolation but embedding it in neighbourhood.

The democracy of intent of 1960s cultural blossomings or rave in the 1990s that make AP their home, however briefly, encroaches on the eyes and ears of those around the edges, of those who are the not-us, those people, other users. Them again, the public. It's always them. The Palace isn't so popular and beloved that local groups don't complain about noise and, as soon as the phrase is formed, light pollution. All lit up on several levels during the 1960s *événements*, AP glows across north London with light shows that rumours spread around are made with Second World War lamps (and some even believe that too). Overspill of light and noise is a particular problem

My first memory of Alexandra Palace is of driving up the hill from Wood Green. This imposing building with the wonderful transmitter mast still in place looked out over London with a confidence that spoke of BBC superiority in all things technical ... with due humility that I went inside (<http://www.orbem.co.uk/tv/ap.htm>).

His memories contrasted starkly with the lack of expression of any sense of the BBC's history when the OU moved to Milton Keynes in 1976/77, from Mr A Lee, Secretary of the AP BBC Club, 3 January 1977, 'While one regrets the dissolution of first-class Club

Either-which-any way, this is where it happened and the fountain is where it ended. Sometimes I'd reach too far and a snake would get me and I found myself again at the bottom of the ladder. How many years I walked this way, circling the lower reaches, getting as far as the nursery or striding right up. And you can see the fountain in the pictures. That's where we sat. (That was before the children. Once they brought the dog with them. They had a car by then.) We never saw it working. Truthfully, I never noticed it, on or not. They say 'the elephant in the room', don't they and I know some have

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as amplification levels get higher, bass lines heavier, speakers more powerful and lighting brighter. From the yellow glow of gas lamps providing inadequate lighting for reading or to lift the spirits when the



internees are confined there to the exciting limelight of the theatre or studio lights of the BBC, through to bright-white halogen and the versatility of LED, all are punctuated by the seasonal flare of fireworks.

Some oppose restoration in the 1970s

on the basis of the effects on traffic levels and car parking on the surrounding residential area, not to mention the cost, and in the 1980s too, when restoration has to give way to rebuilding. And the public owner/guardian of the people's place, the local authority, opposes an attempt in 1996 to have its listing upgraded. They'll never be rid of it.

Figure 33, View from Dukes Avenue, postcard, n.d.

arrangements at Alexandra Palace ...' (BBC Written Archives). In awe of the place as he was, Flowers devoted more space to talking about the 'lavatories'. Of interest here was his description of the toilet paper, not because it was of the glazed, non-absorbent variety of the time but that 'each separate sheet was emblazoned with the BBC coat of arms, in a delicate green, if I remember correctly' (orbem).

The BBC itself seemed to have been largely uninterested in its former home until much later. Nigel Willmott noted a lack of interest in the 60th anniversary of TV broadcasting (interview:2014), but in 2007 the BBC, with Hornsey Historical Society, supported an

called the Palace a white elephant. It was invisible to me. I'm not saying it was always closed. I knew concerts and sport and shows and what-not happened. I read the paper, I knew there were problems. Bad deals, bad feeling. Always someone to point the finger and why was the council spending all our money on that. Sometimes instead of pictures, they print a silhouette, so then it's black. I like to see that. It's instant recognition. And it's never white, not even when the sun's on the glass domes. If it is still glass.

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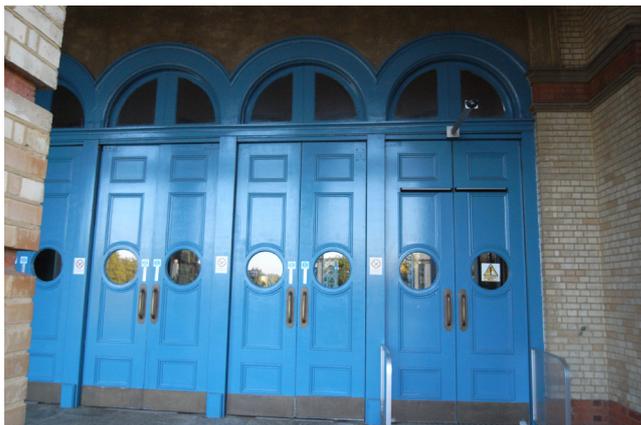
application for AP's listing to be raised to Grade 1 (opposed by the local council). A very underwhelming (and inaccurate) description from a BBC Press Service Photocall of 29 October 1976 minimises its importance: 'The Alexandra Palace studio has been the home of BBC/OU productions since 1969 and was colourised in 1975. The Alexandra Palace was previously used to produce BBC TV News' (BBC Written Archives). This might seem a surprising assessment of AP in terms of its significance in television broadcasting but AP is and was prized only intermittently either as a building, or for its display and entertainment. During and following the BBC era, the Corporation

*Everyone tries to see behind the closed doors.
Once I walked right round and peered into the windows. It's
the other way they want to be looking – into the city. This is
how I gauged my progress. This is how far I've come: up to
the top of the hill to look all the way down again.*

*... And throughout the country when the news was on, if
there was a newflash from Lime Grove or Television Centre
and they'd announce 'We're now going to Alexandra Palace
for a newflash' and people think 'oh, what's happened?'
Alexandra Palace was associated with something
important....*

[Enter: John
Thompson}

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Figure 34, Porthole
apertures in doors to
Concert Hall, Ainley 2015



took precedence: it represented impressive technological developments in a way that the Palace no longer could. What the building housed was more important at this point than the container itself. Another memo from Robert Rowland to The Secretary of H.O.U.P, 11 May 1978, titled 'AP as a broadcasting museum', reads 'I still think the BBC really should take a lead on this front. It's our history, and I feel there is a danger that others will eventually "cash in" on it' (BBC Written Archives).

...

As a kind of postscript, in 2014 the BBC chose to use the Victorian theatre at the Palace as the location for their new ident to celebrate the launch of BBC Music with a remake of The Beach Boys' song God Only Knows led by Brian Wilson, with a cast including ump-teen other pop music figures and a tiger or two (BBC Music:2014).

Scene 4 Programme

[Enter:

'Dave', c.1969, based on a true story; 'A' level student sitting exams in the Great Hall relives visits to the Palace as schoolboy and aspirant hippy

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'Simon', based on interviews with ex-BBC staff (journalists, sound engineers, producers, engineers, technicians)

'Anita', late 1960s, park user and local resident

Mike Broadbent, interviewed 11 February 2014, ex-BBC, 1950s, journalist

'Plain person of Crouch End', 1970s; based on a story by Fred Clarke. He, and it's always a he, likes to spin a tale, preferably in the saloon bar in his local]

*A simple matter of renaming, redecorating,
deinstallation of old kit, you might think. (Can't
help thinking that might be the answer – a kind of
business park. Never enough space for that)*

*I imagined it was my
house, my place and we
were just coming home*

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*They've kept the aeri-
al I think as a landmark
mainly and nowadays
its good radio links
and no doubt mobile
links because it's in a
prominent place*

*The thud of every bowling ball
sounded in the studio. Record-
ing stopped play, as they say*

*And now I'm
inside looking
out*

*At lunchtime in the summer,
we'd go out rowing on the
boating lake. Leaning out
of the newsroom window
watching evening racing on
the old racecourse. We'd get
a bird's-eye view*

*That's the joy of it –
nothing special, nothing
fancy, a mooch, a mosey
round*

*When bands like Pink Floyd
were rehearsing – and it re-
ally was them that booked
the Great Hall before those
big events – the radio stu-
dios were unusable*

*You can see out of the end windows,
for miles and miles and miles and miles*

... I told him how to get on to it. I said if he went that way we'd be on the road. You can drive right the way around it then. It's good. <I'll run out of time if I don't watch it> He wouldn't listen and it took him ages to find it. He was getting annoyed, like it was my fault. I kept my mouth shut. <Got to get on with this question> He was our guest, staying at our house and my dad wouldn't have liked it if I'd said anything.

Feels like so long ago but it's not much more than a few years. That car he had. That was what it was about,

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More! More often! Make it pay! That's the programming strategy most clearly discernable. No matter how many times it's redone, there's nothing new about it. AP provides space for what someone who set up a company thinks should happen, because a simulacrum of it worked for a few months in another similar(ish) building in another place entirely, and the numbers – exhibits, punters, pounds – added up. That time. That once. Novelty value is not appreciated for what it is, despite numbers and receipts falling as the Palace falters on both commercial and civic grounds. The prescription remains more of the same, even using elements of the building whose programme and success the developers sought to follow. Original and subsequent architectural programmes are linked to those of events, over and over, repeating, overlaying, criss-crossing, cancelling out, validating and debunking; repetitious reprisal and reformulation. The programming reflects the perceived needs of the user at the time, like the POWs' addition of a study hut.

What's it for again? Any answer depends on who wants to know. And when they're asking. What's going on here is a replication too late for the sparkly innovation of building or contents to work its lucrative magic a second time. What's on now? There is sport, music, exhibitions, school and classes and education, clubs, commercial vendors, military displays, indoor and outdoor entertainments, participant and spectator events, recitals, public meetings, closed meetings, poli-

coming to see us to show off the new car and girlfriend and yes, in that order. <They said divide the time equally between questions> Aviva or something was it? The girlfriend, that is. That was what it was about for me too: I'd never been in anything like it, that sort of car. Never even been in an automatic before. Massive and purred along, you could hardly tell you were moving. It sounded different, none of that mechanical shift noise, really smooth. And it smelt good – or maybe that was the two of them. <We did this Mayor of Casterbridge question before> It wasn't like that at ours.

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tics and trade competitions, royal shows and counter-cultural happenings, animal shows, operettas, one-off spectacles, regular occasions, groups, racing, string quartets, theatre, variety, pantomime, circus, riding school, fetes and festivals, hairdressing. The offer is landmark events and forgettable froth, both to treasure. And how many different places to sit and eat and drink, according to appetite and time, in every corner, inside and looking out from every level, intimate or cavernous.

Use or show

The ambition to augment entertainment with education ebbs and flows, according to ownership and social values. Ebbs, mostly. In fiction too: originally, in Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* '[e]verything was to be constructed for use and not for show' (volume 2:54) but by volume 3 the palace was to be, according to protagonist Angela's whimsical and changeable ideas, 'a shell which had to be filled with things beautiful and delightful' (1882, volume 3:47). When Angela says that the palace must be built even 'if it is only to make the people discontented', it is both as an impetus for change and because they would soon outgrow it and, seeing its limitation, demand more. She means well; but then she couldn't make a worse job than the many men who'd already failed. Her pomposity and limited self-awareness

Fresh and new, leather seats. Completely different from our car. They put my baby sister in the driving seat and said she was driving it. <Still got an hour or so to go. That's about right> Even she knew it wasn't that easy. She couldn't touch the pedals, couldn't stop laughing. But then I hadn't known what an automatic was for long either. <That one hasn't stopped writing since we came in>

Maybe it was the car or being with them but we went round and round at the top and it never got boring.

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light up the novel. This reader wonders if it is supposed to be taken as scorning a woman's audacity for taking on such a project. Angela lives in a world where a people's palace is conceivable and buildable, and she already knows that discontent about what it opens up for them will follow because it will reveal what has been denied them. She means that they will realise what they cannot, still, achieve – it's never enough. Ambition will almost immediately outgrow what is possible. Not all the people will come all the time and resources for the events and classes they want to run will not be available; they will be short of funds for maintenance, for wages, for refurbishment and extension. People will be discontented because they want something different, because the programme does not cater to their needs and tastes, because they feel excluded, because they ought to be paid for the time they are giving, because what they want to come to runs at a time when they can't attend, or at a price they can't afford, because they want different music, want to learn bookkeeping not history. It sounds familiar enough.

From fiction to Glasgow, where the palace's programme is significantly different from the approach at either Muswell Hill or Mile End, from its foundation on refreshingly unprescriptive principles, with an understanding of the connection between physical and cultural well-being. At the opening ceremony of this new public space in the city Lord Rosebery declares the building to be a 'palace of pleasure

There was so much to see I didn't want to stop. I imagined it was my house, my place and we were just coming home.

[Enter: 'Simon']

... Sound was always a problem. Or maybe that should be sound-proofing – the lack of it, that is. Whoever decided it was a good idea to put Studio A right next to the indoor bowls space! Every thud. Recording stopped play, as they say and the bowls people weren't happy about it. No contest though, we couldn't have that. Every time there was a strike – if that's what they call it – there's a clunk. They're quite weighty those bowls, I suppose that's the point.

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and imagination around which the people may place their affections and which may give them a home on which their memory may rest'. He states it is to be 'Open to the people for ever and ever' (and it still is). He then goes on to say, rather undermining the reported openness of that programme, and with a nod back to Angela and her way of doing things, that the building is not to supply the people with spectacle for 'inactive unthinking consumption'. Perish the thought. Rosebery's declarations prefigure one way in which Alexandra Palace can be viewed in the current climate, but not how it was understood in its original conception.

In common with the instigators of Glasgow's people's palace, Walter Besant believes there is no reason why the moneyed classes should have a monopoly on culture. He also wonders why working people should be expected to spend their leisure time on improving pursuits when nobody else does. There is no need to include in the Glasgow design a library, pool or gymnasium – the Corporation has already provided these facilities. The design, by city engineer A B MacDonald, gives space instead for a gallery, museum, music hall and the winter garden. MacDonald has no experience of this kind of building, and this may have led to problems with cross-light. Accordingly, some windows are bricked up in its first twenty years.

<'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom'. I wish it really meant that. Not that kind of palace. Excess, though>
And we were driving in our new car, people staring at us in that car as we came round again they'd wave and us too,

When the wing that the BBC was going to occupy was refurbished, no one thought about 30 years hence when these mass happenings would be sharing the space. Future-proofing they call it now. If you knew what was coming round the corner, well. Whatever the insurers and designers tell you.

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Agenda setting

At AP with theatre, concert and music spaces, entertainment at any level was the thing: just get them in. Aside from these areas the design of AP, conceived as a building for public use, reflects thinking about circulation, refreshment, welcome, navigation, access and transparency, comfort and distraction. The pre-publicity of intention gives a more high-flown image of shared cultural pursuits and leisure activities as the model, the need to balance commercial imperatives with the public good. The plan was to link spectacle through arts, commerce and industry to encourage a sizeable flow of visitors for lots of looking and some doing in the form of sport and exercise, from taking a turn round the grounds – as in any stately home – or rowing round the boating lake.

Maybe not always taking part but certainly partaking of refreshment, judging by the laughably stereotypic amounts of spaces devoted to the delivery and consumption of cups of tea, glasses of beer, wine and gin. At other points, and from the objectives of other management companies, the stated aim is to promote attractions to refine and elevate public taste, not forgetting the need to raise bank balances. The actuality is always more beer and skittles (or croquet and

1967 Counter-
cultural
happenings

Once the technology in use by the BBC there became obsolete, AP was again largely abandoned by the Corporation and was known in 1967 as 'the white elephant of Muswell Hill' (Gay:2005:30). This left the main spaces available for use by the new counter-culture and its more youth-oriented attractions – anti-establishment as against the establishment-focused Corporation (despite its self-image as eternally outside the establishment). With Middlesex Council disbanded, the new Greater London Council (GLC) had taken over trusteeship of the Palace (Gay:30). The land around it continued to be open for public use.

like we were at a fairground or the three kings. <How does it go: 'A cold coming we had of it.' Eliot? No. Yeats?>

They said they were never going to let their dog in the car. She gave me a wink then – a 'that's what he thinks' and I passed it on to my sister and she grins at everything even when she doesn't get it. <It's a bit wet, isn't it,

The ex-Navy men on the staff, or the staff of the company converting the south-east wing, liked their porthole windows, someone said, and that's why they were in the design.

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its accompaniments) and making money on the side. The creation of wealth is a requisite and seen as an entirely complementary partner for building a development with a programme for public use. More than a lucky extra, making money is the model. It's a constant in the ever-changing programme and swift turnover of owners and management companies, and a persistent failure. Repeat 'people's palace' often enough and all considerations of finance can sound secondary. But they don't evaporate.

The sharp contrast with the more educational (and untested hypothetical) programme laid out in Owen Jones's design, with more generous provision for exhibition than spectacle, and its linked naves of industry, commerce and arts in a single building grows wider with each iteration. Successive companies and owners of the Palace continually reset the agenda for the use of the building. Through the design and configuration of its spaces, AP has always done this, whatever the degree of intentionality or serendipity. Even before AP is owned by the people, it is programmed for them and available for use by them. Some of the people and some of the time. This seesawing motion between entertainment and education is a staple, between aim and actuality, about the role and type of activity deemed suitable for the Palace, and which receives greater consideration at a given time. These aims have taken a different form of merging in the more recent climate,

Nick Flowers' defining memory of BBC-crested toilet paper invoked a different world from that of some of the events that were occupying, if only briefly, an area of the Palace nearby in space and time (orbem). One event in particular was a defining moment in popular culture at AP. A private letting to the UFO club, famed as a West End venue in 1960s counter-culture, whose weekly events had become 'the hub of psychedelic London' brought a new audience to the Palace, and one that provides a useful contrast to the BBC and its mainstream entertainment offerings (Boyd:2006:1).

The 14 Hour Technicolour Dream, also known as the

lucky charms or pictures on the desks of their mums and
dads or their pets> *Not long now and she'll be sitting her
O levels.*

*The place was like a firework when I was here to
see The Who, not like now, all straight and silent and gloomy.*

*Maybe there wasn't enough light or not enough money to
put in glass doors so management could keep tabs on what
was happening in the studios.*

*When bands like Pink Floyd were rehearsing – and
it was them in the Great Hall before those big events – the*

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where edutainment or education-lite is unremarkable and standard.

Aspects of the bill of fare on offer overlay the others always emulating, always differing, since the programme of the building – each of the buildings and their auxiliaries – only articulate the particularity of its time, the financial demands and legitimacy of that era. The Palace was built for another time, for its own time, as every building cannot help but be, and for other sets of publics. It's business, with a sprinkle of social awareness, not social enterprise. But the language it uses to speak to its public grows old, changes with time, can't stay the same. They can suggest new uses for spaces, hope that new spatial configurations will lead to new styles of social intercourse but there's no certainty that the horse will drink.

To say that AP is available for 'the free use and recreation of the public forever' is as open to interpretation as the idea of the palace of the people and the palace for the people to spend money in. It takes Acts of Parliament to scramble out from under the requirement phrased as 'a free resort'. The nature of public benefit accrued in public space becomes gradually ever more linked to commercial activities such as shopping or entertainments that involve buying tickets, though the nature of these does not negate an educational component (and certainly always comes with much information), any more than commerce is considered inimical to public good. Free use is not without

Human Be-in, was held in the Great Hall at AP on 29 April 1967. It was a fundraiser for the alternative 'Newspaper of Resistance' *International Times* (aka *IT*), organised by a group that included John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, who was, with Joe Boyd, a founder of UFO and a video activist. Peter Whitehead made a film *Tonite Lets All Make Love in London* [sic], in part documenting the event, in which the unnamed French narrator describes the venue as both Victorian and rococo and Roger Daltrey of The Who can be heard trying to explain in French how some people had a need for God and some people found God in a cigarette, to give a sense of the flavour of the event

It was a gas. Worth coming up here again just to go in that car. I was so used to it, I'd stopped looking, stopped seeing it. <Only an hour to go, Great Expectations. Oh yeah! Wonder if Ally Pally was built then> In that car it was exciting being here so I was looking at it. That was how I saw it: new car gave me new eyes to see it with.

studios were unusable. No sound-proofing in the Hall you see. The idea that more than one concert involving sound would be happening at once would be an extravagance. And they struggled with audiences for one alone.

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cost then, but it does mean open access even if not all the people can be said to be welcome everywhere all the time. And the park is always open. Phrases such as 'use it freely' and 'feel free to use ...' bring a clearer picture of probable intent: come back often and spend time and money.

Spotlight

In a building where so much design thought and space is dedicated to alcohol, the National Temperance League hosts a day, shortly after the second Palace opens, to imagine how life could be when the whole world abstains from alcohol, to extol the virtues of sobriety and abstinence, to raise a glass without proof. The extensive provision for all drinking classes and space devoted to storing their satisfaction, above and below stairs, is closed for the duration. Decks are cleared and bottling up is left for another day. Cellars are locked and bar staff excused, barrels are uncoupled and the dray sent back for today. More than 40,000 sisters and brothers who share the pledge and understand the 'no' to the bottle as a 'yes' to life on a level of unaltered consciousness link arms with each other. Another fine day brings a Socialist May Day festival for children, with singing, dancing and education. No better fun is to be had in the bright new future than learning

(Whitehead:1967).

Counter-cultural happenings cannot have been unusual in London then, given that there were two in a month at the Palace at the time. Indeed, Joe Boyd suggested that the high point of the era happened 'just before dawn on 1 July 1967 during a set by Tomorrow at the UFO Club in London' (Boyd:1). Although somewhat self-aggrandising, it was the biggest indoor event of the alternative scene so far and it has become a shibboleth to say that 'the 60s' began in 1967. Graphic and photographic evidence supported that contention (<http://standinatthecrossroads-blackcatbone.blogspot.co.uk/>). Pink

It was hardly ideal. But it was high enough for the mast. I don't know why we didn't build something up there ourselves. It would have been cheaper. And it would have worked better. It was a special feeling working there, and not only about what we were doing – about the doing of it there. It was an outpost, missing in action almost, and so we bonded. There was a certain spirit that we got from our shared experience of conditions there...

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and music in this Palace fit for the people, proudly occupied and finally under a red flag. There is maypole dancing, a display with Indian clubs and quarterstaff, a chorus of The Internationale and a speech by the goddess of liberty (unnamed).

Members' clubs like cricket and dog racing are open but their attractions are limited and teams generally welcome their own. No one records whether access to the billiards room is unrestricted and bookable; whether classes mix over the cue chalk; and whether it operates a 'winner stays on' policy and if this is followed. The delights of seeing your horse come in round the Palace's 'Frying Pan' of a track are widely shared, depending on who's watching and who's riding, who's betting and who's owning. The stage is ideal for London variety – its only reliable ticket seller – but not for much else involving the live voice and the spoken word. For a theatre miles from the West End (off-off-off), it's deep, half the depth of the entire auditorium of the theatre.

Still it attracts many voices loud enough to hold events there. The Palace hosts suffragette meetings in the theatre and early public gatherings of the newly formed Liberal Party were held there too, with Lloyd George, Herbert Henry Asquith and Winston Churchill present. At the other end of the century – mid-term gains suffering erosion – NHS staff congregate at AP to celebrate and defend threatened services. The building does service too as a venue for local charity launches with

Floyd, the UFO 'house band', headlined and the Pretty Things, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Soft Machine and The Move played, among many others. Boyd says: 'I don't think much money was made but none was lost and the event got huge publicity plus royal visits from Lennon and Hendrix' (Boyd:150). John Robb's comment in *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop* establishes a connection between location and event: 'The Ally Pally happenings had had that curiously English psychedelic vibe, a psychedelia that had one foot in music hall and the other on super-stoned drug turf' (Robb:2001:281). There was a flavour of 1960s' music hall style about some of the

... The memory would be umbrella-shaped, it's where it lives. When I went in to pick it up I had a rush of memory even after all that time. It was nothing special, that umbrella – are they ever? – and it didn't have any particular meaning for me. Not until then anyway. It wasn't the one that we had our first kiss beneath or the one I bought when we went to Madrid – god those stupid rain in Spain jokes and they still made us laugh. It's like the holiday effect on wine – that doesn't work when you get home. And it wasn't the one that I got from my mum and so couldn't throw away though it was broken.

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PAs from famous friends in a neighbourhood style.

All manner of fine words and promises must line the walls of the Great Hall, along with famous renditions of forgettable lyrics. Concerts are played by internees' orchestra *Konzertverein* or Concert Society and more than one piece of music is written in the confines of AP in its heyday as internment camp. Anton Wüst, conductor of the forty-strong orchestra, had been assistant conductor at the Hippodrome Theatre in the West End before the war. The repertoire of weekly concerts in the theatre or on the terrace in fine weather ranges from popular songs from operettas to Beethoven and Haydn symphonies, and Wüst's own compositions of songs and waltzes, his Alexandra Palace Ragtime among them.

Successive waves of popular music roll out at the Palace, enjoying the space and defying the acoustic: retro-swing band dinner and dance, ballroom dancing, *Messiah* every Easter (conducted by Yehudi Menuhin in 1970), All Tomorrow's Parties in the 2010s, Diwali celebrations every autumn and carols every Christmas. Anything that needs big volumes and high volume. Before the decade-defining love-ins and with less fanfare, George Melly plays AP in January 1963, for the biggest trad jazz event 'ever' to be staged in Britain. (And you and I, what do we want from a reviving Palace in 2015? Spare tickets to the sold-out Internee Orchestra Centenary concert.)

major bands of the time, following a great tradition of music at the Palace and elsewhere. Pink Floyd, Traffic and The Kinks all display artful use of narrative songwriting, presented in the form of rousing lyrics, perhaps more wry than comic in the case of The Kinks, who were based locally in Muswell Hill at the time, and Traffic and Pink Floyd more obviously in combination with 'super-stoned psychedelia'. According to various attendees who have posted on the *standin-atthecrossroads* blog (see p179):

There were two main stages inside the hall, with a smaller

ON
Alexandra Palace.

SOUVENIR . . .
PROGRAMME

Of the **Opening Ceremony**
BY
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD
(Lord Lieutenant of the County of Middlesex)

Price 6d. **Saturday, May 18th, 1901.**

THE LAUGHTER MAKER
SWELL & FAGS
COMEDY ENSEMBLES, CLOWNS, ACROBATS, ETC.

At enormous expense, the Committee have arranged for a Grand
BALLOON
ASCENT
AND DARING AND GRACEFUL
DOUBLE
PARACHUTE DESCENT
BY MISS
DOLLY SHEPHERD
THE PARACHUTE QUEEN, AND
MONS. AUGUSTE E. GAUDRON

THE KING OF BALLOONISTS From the Alexandra Palace, London. Also from the Clouds 8,000 feet high, to the Earth: "the most thrilling and sensational feat of the kind."

The Grantham BOROUGH BRASS BAND
Will play the "March of the Balloonists" and in the Evening will play "The March of the Balloonists" and in the Evening will play "The March of the Balloonists"

Starting the Dog



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THURSDAY, Sept. 20, 1888

PAIN'S BENEFIT.

PROFESSOR BALDWIN'S
DESCENT FROM CLOUDLAND.

DAYLIGHT FIREWORKS!
GREAT CIRCUS!
Variety Entertainment!
OPERA PERFORMANCE!
MILITARY BANDS!
PAIN'S
MARVELLOUS REPRESENTATION,
The **Days of Pompeii.**
THE LAKE OF FIRE!
THE EARTHQUAKE!
AND COLOSSAL DISPLAY OF
FIREWORKS

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Night of the Year!

ONE SHILLING DAY.
SPECIAL TRAINS FROM ALL PARTS.
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Sunday, 17th April, 1902

DON PEDRO and his famous Mexican Orchestra
Conductor: DON PEDRO

NORMAN LONG
Accompanist: EMILE PHILIPPE

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OF THE GREAT
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PRICE ONE PENNY.

ALEXANDRA PALACE
DAILY PROGRAMME

LEADS, REPRESENTATION, AND MARSHAL, MISS, JOHN & ELIZABETH

Arrangements have been made with the "SOCIETE DES PARANAS ET DIORAMAS DE BRUXELLES" to erect during the present Summer a building in the East Park for the exhibition of Colossal Landscapes, formerly exhibited in the Champs Elysees, Paris.

At 2.0 & 3.0, in the Lonsborough Room (Lonsborough Room)

DR. HOLDEN
Magician Extraordinary and Wizard of the Wicked World.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1891.

GREAT EXHIBITION
CLEMATIS
IN THE ORCHARD, AT THE SIDE OF THE ITALIAN GARDEN,
BY MESSRS. GEORGE LACKMAN & SON.

PERFORMANCE ON THE GREAT ORGAN,
BY MR. ARTHUR DOBAY.

INTERVAL FOR DINNER OR TEA.

EPPS'S (GRATEFUL) COCOA.

Figures 35 to 42, see p8 for details

NORTH LONDON EXHIBITION

ALEXANDRA PALACE, N. 22
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13TH
TO
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30TH

GREAT HALL —
STAR BANDS —



JOHN WELLS (Director)
MR. BOGDAN A. POPA, A.R.C.M.
Bandmaster
OF Bands, THE QUEEN'S OWN
CAMBRIDGE REGIMENT
with PIPERS and DRUMS

COLONEL JOHN WELLS
OF THE 1ST BATTAL, THE ROYAL SCOTISH BATTALION

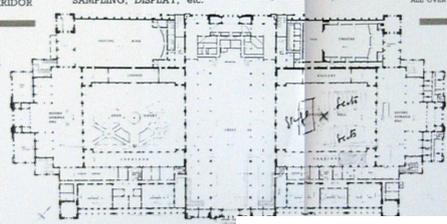
COLONEL JOHN WELLS
OF THE 1ST BATTAL, THE ROYAL SCOTISH BATTALION

SOUTH EAST CORRIDOR
MANHATTAN
MARIONETTE THEATRE

You must spare half an hour for this. It is an art that had its birthplace in antiquity, and which still carries an age-old appeal to all of us — whether 9 or 90 years old. Clad Kossen's is not an ordinary show. Heated in dancer in Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, the beautiful Puppets are treated with an artistry and precision of movement that compare with real flesh and blood actors viewed through the wrong end of a telescope.

EAST ENTRANCE HALL
GAS SECTION

A COMMENTARY ON
"COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE
ALL OVER THE HOUSE"



What's on at the Palace! **Retain this map and guide!**

W. ENTR. HALL
MODEL FARM
"NATIONAL MILK PRODUCTIONS"
"LONDON'S MILK SUPPLY"

CABARET: THE 24
GOBLIN GIRLS UNDER
THE DIRECTION OF MESS
RONA KNIGHT

GOVERNMENT AND
DOMINION EXHIBITS
OVER 100,000 sq. ft.
OF DEMONSTRATIONS
SAMPLING, DISPLAY, etc.

THE PUPPETS OF
OLAF KOSSEN

CONCERT HALL

CONCERT AND COMEDY
WITH FRANK A. BROWN

BURGESS'S TWENTY
BURGESS'S TWENTY: The Artists, Timed, when it is being held at the Exhibition. BURGESS'S TWENTY

FRANK A. BROWN and his
band, GIGGLES
OCTOBER 13th - 15th

SALEB
The Exhibition, when it is being held at the Exhibition. BURGESS'S TWENTY

OCTOBER 13th - 15th

THE SE
GORDON R
FROM RADI
IN FASHION



BRIDE CASTLE AP 1962 MUSEUM

JAZZSHOWS

PRESENT





ALL NIGHT CARNIVAL OF JAZZ



FRIDAY
25th JANUARY, 1963
10 p.m. — 7 a.m.



THE Festival OF LONDON

23rd July — 7th August 1988
 Alexandra Palace, London N22

Everyone's idea of fun!

plant and maintenance engineering



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION
Alexandra Palace London England 17-21 June 1963

JAZZSHOWS present their **SIXTH and GREATEST**

ALL NIGHT CARNIVAL OF JAZZ 1962

FRIDAY 2nd FEBRUARY
10pm until 7am
GREAT HALL ALEXANDRA PALACE

BRIDE CASTLE AP 1962 MUSEUM

Figures 43 to 47, see p8 for details

So it was nothing to do with the umbrella. And I don't think it was much to do with when I lost it either. It was a perfectly ordinary day. No not perfect, just ordinary. It wasn't much more to us than going for a walk round the garden. If we had one. More like yard really although we called it the terrace. I almost had to remind myself to get properly dressed. No I couldn't go in my dressing gown! That's the joy of it – nothing special, nothing fancy, a mooch, a mosey round. You didn't need to take your wallet because there was nothing to buy, except that would really be like

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As the mass appeal of theatre and music hall wanes, until cinema moves in as the popular perennial and money-maker, the Palace loses audiences and income. AP's public is place-specific: visible and embodied. In turn, once the first golden age of cinema is over, another saviour-enemy settles into the slack space. Television broadcasting (or photo telegraphy or electric telescope as it is briefly called) is its weapon, made there at the Palace and piped direct into people's homes. John Reith is convinced that these fools on the hill are wasting effort and squandering resources and that the naturally gregarious disposition of humans will cause them to spurn the solitary pleasures of the TV set for the shared camaraderie of viewing films at the public cinema. Yet soon enough, from 1970, concerns shift to wondering how AP will survive without its television-producing leasee. The Palace endures because the life-giving and parasitic Corporation takes up occupation, not despite it.

The diversity in the Victorian mix of high and low culture – no discrimination there – continues as standard provision with Jehovah's Witnesses, Oxfam events, union meetings, military bands and bible students. With the bizarre and the short-lived, like the Wild West show (an early franchise by Bill Cody, disparaged for featuring a European understudy) alongside the corporate trade events, it is yet a Palace for all the people, whatever their stripes. Even the mixture of populations

central stage designed for poets, performance artists, jugglers, dancers including The Tribe of the Sacred Mushroom), Philippine dancer David Medalla and The Exploding Galaxy Dance Troupe. The largest stage for the main events, constructed along the rear wall, was flanked by the large glass windows of the Palace. Light shows and strobes lit up every inch of available space from a massive light tower at the center of the hall. Underground films, (most notably the Flaming Creatures) were screened on white sheets taped to scaffolding. The center piece was a helter

going in your pyjamas. But I hadn't been back after that. Maybe he still goes all the time, no idea. It was a million times less attractive than that bottle of holiday wine. Until last week. Whatever happened that day, the umbrella heard the whole thing, kept it dry and tight in its folds. Everything came back to me and I was glad it was raining, to open it up and rinse it off....

185 local to the adjoining boroughs, in class and ethnicity and as well as age and gender, begin to be represented in the mix of users.

Mass catering

The stamp of London's ethnic minority populations becomes more evident at AP from the 1980s, with the opening up and higher visibility of cultural spaces and self-organised events. Attractions now standard cultural provision since that era's burgeoning identity politics and multiculturalism marks the terrain out differently. The response of the GLC, then the London-wide authority, chimes with this in its professed desire to be sure that the programme of activities is in tune with what people want. The Palace's Festival of London in 1988 is characteristic of this time when 'Everyone's Idea of Fun' might have included London's Fittest Cabbie (presumably in the old-fashioned sense) and a Soca Festa, doubtless replete with steel drums.

Before this, ethnicities are largely personal business and community spaces are closed off, even for safety reasons and a desire for privacy as well as lack of interest from outsiders. AP isn't the only cultural venue marked by the absence of local communities. As is happening across London, Black and Jewish people, and the Greek Cypriot and South African exile populations within AP's catchment area,

skelter which was rented for the night.

Entry cost one pound, there were a few busts, and there was also a stabbing. Reportedly 10,000 attended, which would have filled the Ally Pally quite nicely.

There were light shows of course, but also a large white sheet mid-hall onto which was projected Bunuel and Dali's *Un Chien Andalou*.

... I joined the BBC and radio first of all for a couple of years and then moved to television news in its early days because that was obviously the place to be. Moved from Broadcasting House up to Alexandra Palace in the autumn of 1961 as a scriptwriter. It was very different in those days, it came from wherever you could get hold of it, and scripted and read by a newsreader. It's an art that's pretty much disappeared now, packages come in from all over the world, already edited.

It was great fun. The building itself was fascinating.

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who arrived in north London in the 1960s, catered for their own so-called special interests elsewhere.

And Londoners, supposedly because of the sheer amount of entertainment on offer, are said to be fickle in their choices, in a city large enough to have space to host practically anything and rich enough to support it, at least temporarily. If ever there was a case (study) of *plus ça change* ... it's a smokescreen. An assumption of scepticism, knowingness, high media-literacy levels in city people may or not be justified or accurate, but these are attributes that make programming hard and expensive at the best of times. In times of austerity in particular, that expense is hard to pass on, as value for money is another essential component. With such abundance of choice, the variety of entertainments becomes overpowering even when what's on is both different and always the same.

'Vision' is still a perfect description of Owen Jones's original design and not only because it never progresses beyond a paper manifestation, the sleek perfection of a finished drawing intact. This marvel is imagined and unbuilt for the ordinary people: a confection of spun sugar and cobweb so bold, and where it can't help but be seen shining on high. It makes a statement, a string of statements. It's a destination already and always because it's not on the way to anywhere else, like the railway termini whose materials and construction methods

The stage looked awesome as the liquid lights blipped over a massive screen of sheets.' 'Mark Boyle and various others transformed the Ally Pally into an absolute wonderland with slo-mo movies, liquids, and indeed, the strobed spotlights ... The Ally Pally is a spiritual site for me now.

From a post on another subsection of the blog titled 'the people':

Like many so called 'love ins' of the time it was really sham-bolic and actually quite dangerous as you had the 'beau-

TV went back right after the war and in the 50s moved to the new premises in Television Centre. Lime Groves as we called them were more our rivals than ITN. It was empty for a year or two then because television news didn't start until 1954. I think July 4th. Anyway, July 1954. It was quiet out there. You could get away and nobody knew where you were.

It really was a bit of a rabbit warren. We operated in Studio B which was furthest from the newsroom, under the tower. That's still there. They've kept the aerial I think as a landmark mainly and nowadays its good radio links and no doubt mobile links because it's in a prominent place.

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it shares. No one finds themselves there by accident. People wonder who said they could touch and what right they have to even look. In terms of longevity too, its resonance in the imagination is uninterrupted, its clarity of intention unsmudged by actuality, surviving untroubled all representations and actualities to the contrary or any pressures of commerce. It is this iteration of the building that lingers in recollection – because it is not there to grow heavy and weary on the eye of the beholder.

The daily and weekly events bulletins that are a feature for a period in the 1870s are crammed so full they can be hard to read. Churning out a daily programme and even the weekly four-page calendar is quite an undertaking of speed and distribution (without even thinking about errata slips for cancellations and typos). This continual in-house production demonstrates an extravagance of possibility, never mind the cost and the maintenance, and still something isn't speaking to somebody. They don't come. They come for high days and holidays. They don't come enough. If they're lucky, they are at work and if they aren't in work, they can't come. Less being more never made extra weekends or bank holidays. Not everything costs entrance money but a park's a park, not the only one in town, and how much more enjoyable with tea and cake attached.

Such a building has to be in use for more than one diversion, for more than a handful. Filling a single hall, a venue, a theatre is hard

tiful people' at the front but further back Holloway and Archway jobs were looking for trouble (cripes Jeeves!!).

It was a few years before these gigs took place that the Palace suddenly became a 24-hour event, when it hosted two jazz all-nighters (see p183). While even that language ('all-nighters') seemed anachronistic in the context of the Bowls Club and dinner dance-era flavour of the place, the advertising flyers told another story. Next to the imagery for the Be-in and the Love-in (heavily influenced by Aubrey Beardsley and art nouveau), these looked to be

We were constantly running up down there as bulletin time came. You went up a steep staircase, the control rooms on the left, the one for Studio A and the right one was Studio B with the window looking into the studio.

There was a lift, thank goodness. Reception on the ground and what they call the cutting room where the film first came in, to be listed before it went for processing or whatever. So the ground floor was largely a technical area, with the film processing unit and there were two small view-

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work; here, the spaces are multiplied. Any particular building and time has its difficulties in hosting programmes, of creating entertainments and spectacles and attractions special enough to excite, general enough to soothe a general population. Diversity in programme and audience isn't enough on its own to cater to the vagaries of public tastes. Some of the people, all of the time. Something for everyone can sound like a disparate mess of a programme, and a lowering of expectation. For some, the solution is to make clearer who it's for, which means excluding others. Juxtapositions and inclusivity have to be weighed up too, in case they muddy the offer, and make the programme unclear. And yet the public should be everyone, some of the time, and the net has to be wide cast to try to entice enough people.

Every consideration of planning a programme has to take account of its era and the public for it, and special interest to cover whatever is lacking at any given time, whatever need emerges for social and community spaces for people to use. Rooms are always available to hire at AP for 'whist drives, dances, receptions, mass meetings, trade exhibitions, galas, carnivals, banquets, exhibitions, sports'. With spaces to let, even the whole space given over to a party to hold a party, a portion of the Palace reflects interests and interest groups no matter how marginal or mainstream. Welcome is extended to all quarters of the population, even unlikely constituencies (or book-

from a different, much earlier time, not just 1962 and 1963. Their bright blocky graphics, while quite lovely examples of their time, look very 1950s, completely dated and perhaps even innocent next to the psychedelia-influenced posters in which 'trad' anything would have been hopelessly uncool. The photographs showed modern teenagers but a pre-pop explosion genus, very well behaved, looking like their parents would be happy and dancing listlessly to trad jazz. Stills from Peter Whitehead's film, too grey and grainy to reproduce here, showed by contrast 'young people', decidedly not 'teens', from another planet entirely (Whitehead:1967).

ing theatres. We used to view the film before it went to the cutting rooms. On the fourth floor the office of a man called the chief assistant to the editor. Vastly overstaffed in those days! Fleet Street thinks they still are.

There was a restaurant, they probably called it, but it was a cafeteria. I don't think it stayed open very late like the BBC bar. There was a rather ramshackle building called the Dive Bar, over the other side. Long since pulled down.

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ings taken from any paying source). People can use it for their own ends, not those laid on for them; prepositionally, *for* the people, if small in proportion, rather than on their behalf.

AP repeatedly, yet always only partially and periodically, fulfills these intentions of its programme – from edification to diversion, from Owen Jones's unbuilt vision of art and industry and commerce, through the more or less education and entertainment brief to the fictional. Whatever bases are not covered, the yawning holes are in financial and management structuring rather than the programme of the serious and the ephemeral, the fun and the meaningful. And when the Palace changes hands, for the second time in a century and almost at its centennial anniversary, from London-wide to London-local authority, no one wants it. A nominal sum is paid and a dowry received by way of a 'no exchange, no refund' guarantee. Such is the poisoned chalice: one fire is unfortunate, two stokes a conspiracy theory, about as believable as the gypsy curse.

The Palace always, also from the first, remains tightly tethered to its past, at the same time fielding its reputation for innovation. Even if drawings of it look visionary, AP is an old-fashioned pleasure dome masquerading as a miracle of technological innovation; these are the axes it swings between. Allowing these poles houseroom gives space for development and implementation and testing (or in other words,

We missed the atmosphere. It had a primitive attraction, 'this is where it all began' sort of thing, which was true. We were all fond of AP – that was partly to do with creating something new. We expanded, doubled the coverage: to news, to BBC2 programmes, videotape became much more flexible and edited electronically and colour came along. When BBC2 started in 1964 they built extra editing rooms in Portakabins in that area as you drove up from Wood Green. The only videotape recorder that could

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early audience tryouts). AP is a building that has facilitated the evolution of popular entertainment, not only housed it. It is a site of invention, much more than the stale commodification of popular heritage, as it is often portrayed. More directly, the development of theatre techniques employed in early cinema, and the continuing use of both in television, variety and talent shows are two of many manifestations of its continuing influence and importance. It may be too early or out of time again to talk about any notion of democratisation of culture. Alexandra's is no precursor to any kind of fun palace: there's no question of experimental refiguring of culture or participant direction – though the idea of users, who may be volunteers, having direct input into the activities is closely related. With the people and by them remain options to be considered.

Container and contents bring crowds; contents fail to attract, container gathers in irrelevance; contents draw audiences again, mainstream or cult; container becomes outdated, uncomfortably obsolete. It's a relay race: the baton of interest and attraction passes hands over and over (and is occasionally dropped). The movement from how the building sets the agenda to the building being the agenda is a function of longevity, but there's more to it than age. Repeat. Scramble. Repeat.

What was the Palace built for, again? Why, for entirely another time and another idea of public: from a time when the building's owners set the agenda to an era where the building is the agenda.

record colour was at AP and film of anything happening outside London had to be flown in. A very expensive exercise, contracts with MacAlpines, flying down to Neasden airport, despatch riders – quite mad.

Young journalists starting now in TV, from day 1 they're under pressure. At lunchtime in the summer, we'd go out on the boating lake. We were just much more relaxed. Leaning out of the newsroom window watching evening racing on the old racecourse. We'd get a bird's-eye view. The BBC is what AP's always associated with, for people of middle age onwards....

... Settle down and listen. My father's house holds many mansions, as the saying goes, and Alexandra Palace contains many rooms. Not all of them are in use at any given time, whether through dereliction or lack of facilities, a drop in bookings, a seasonal lull. Any excuse, eh.

In its many eras of existence, some uses have lasted, others proved fads and whims, technology has been outpaced and left some dedicated spaces with their original purpose no longer needing a venue. A simple matter of renaming, redecorating, deinstallation of old kit, you might think. But the Palace's spaces – an over-endowment at the best of times – have been cut and recut, converted this way and that over and over for almost 150 years. It must have been hard to keep up, to be sure that keys fitting all the locks were handed over each time to new owners. There was that Mr Ainsley and later on Mr Gomez, staying put for years and running the place. By all accounts those two had a tight grasp on the entire operation, and a full working knowledge of every inch of the building and what went where and why and for how long. (I'll tell you about Mrs Gomez and the canary another time.) The rest of them sound like clock-watchers and cornercutters.

Gomez and Ainsley would have sniffed out irregular practices at ten paces. They might have turned a blind eye to the odd tramp, a well-known local itinerant gentleman, particularly in the winter months. As long as it's clear the arrangement is temporary and of course private. They'd still keep watch, just in case anyone thought they'd got a long-term booking, tried to make a career out of it. The flood of would-be squatters in the 70s were thrown out on their ear. And the hippy types left over from their so-called happenings, they had to be woken up and pointed in the direction of the bus stop. But a stray dog or cat or two – hardly the end of the world. Often the staff will give them a home. Wildlife in the basement is to be expected, to a certain extent. To be kept at bay with traps and smoking, poison for rats and an annual cull for rabbits and foxes (who says shooting's a

countryman's game?). There's more important matters.

So back to that closed door. It would never have happened in their time, Ainsley and Gomez. There's a tour planned of the basement, a recce to examine the state of the place for another report. You think I'm making this up!? If the time and money for those reports was spent on putting the place right, it never would have got to this. How no one noticed, I'll never know. They'd been getting away with it for years! One of the many doors that's locked or stuck or warped and won't open, nothing budes it. Eventually the right key is found.

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Open sesame and a roomful of heads swivel. And they turn like they're facing intruders, almost as if to say 'you could have knocked.' That's what I heard. An office of men running a used car business. Not your usual layabout squatter, I'll give them that. (Can't help thinking that might be the answer – charging rent obviously, but a kind of business park. Never enough space for that.) This was before the 80s, mind, so fair play to their entrepreneurial spirit and all that. The way some people carried on, you'd think it was a drug den or they'd discovered the HQ of the white slave trade. Or intruders at Buck House.

That's why they say that you should never open a locked door unless you know what's behind it, and never ask a question you don't already know the answer to. That way lies the turmoil of uncertainty. The fear of the unknown doesn't need to be invited in. No need to expose yourself to anymore of it than necessary. Those who have it that facing it is the only way to quench that fear, to keep it under your control rather than the other way about, are the same people who willingly lay themselves down on the couch, who espouse the dubious science of analysis. What they open themselves up to may not be closed away again. But that's another story....

Scene 5 Found/Futures

[Enter:

‘Jan’, based on conversation

‘Christos’, based on press cutting; a sceptic

John Thompson, interviewed
19 March 2014

‘Paul’, based on interview

‘Zach’, based on conversation

Pat Brearey, interviewed 13 March
2014, volunteer and committee
member Friends of AP Theatre

‘Disgusted of Wood Green’,
c.1990s, based on archival news
reports, a self-proclaimed voice
of reason and common sense; the
critic (of whatever plan it is)

‘Katerina’, based on conversation
with exhibition visitor

‘Ella’, based on conversation]

*It's never had this fully
connected, cohesive sort of plan
which is emerging now.*

*The park's lovely of
course. Can't have too
much green space in
London*

*I can remember thinking to
myself 'Education'.*

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*And then we'll all enjoy having a moan about it won't we because
that's what we do.*

*We could spend that money on our
future, not on some little exhibition
in the hotel lobby or on the edge of
a shopping centre, because that's
what it will be*

*It's a bit mad, but why not?
They've got the space here
and how useful can you*

*get? In a couple of years the BBC won't exist
anymore if you ask me so why can't it be
marked with a statue or a little museum
room in a new building?*

*I can only say good luck to you
and I hope I live to see it*

*It's not what we need
round here. It's not what
London needs either.*

*Actually things
are very good.
It's 'let's stop
being obstruc-
tive and let's
look forward'
sort of stuff now.
It's superb*

*I do like the idea of tying it into new technologies. Because
all that ancient stuff was bleeding edge once wasn't it?*

Betfair on Blue

Walking up the road, a man comes into view standing beneath the gilded Palm Court entrance sign with its stapled sports banners and the main arch that spans three colonnades. He's looking at the ground. It's a serious business. Is he walking away with what he's got? Don't bet on it. How many days in a year do you reckon the sea-shanty blue of the woodwork and metalwork, on window frames and doors, railings and light fittings, disappears into the London sky? On the red or the black? Only a fool (one of Reith's again?) would make book on whether this is a building that has found its future. The paint's the same colour as the ironwork at the station and you'd rather be sitting there, wouldn't you. Waiting for a train is more lively than this. This is what it's founded upon: waves of reuse tweaked for the nearly-now. Who's the public this time and what do we want (and when do we want it? Now!) *Faites vos jeux, mesdames, messieurs*. Anyone would – but how much, how far, will you go?

His breath mists white in the cold, and behind him at the top of the stairs another figure comes out to cool down, five minutes for a

fag break to take his eyes off the screens and the



Figure 48, Palm Court entrance, Ainley 2014

odds. He heads
back in again to
lose some more.
Back inside, even
subdivided
the space is vast



Figure 49, Hospitality
area, Ainley 2014

and reverently silent. You can almost hear the breath, never mind see it. People looking at screens of all sizes are still betting on the snooker, wearing hired earpieces extravagantly bulky and yellow that pump out live BBC coverage of what's on right beside them. Disembodied and tethered to place at the same time, trying to serve both covers neither.

In the indoor tent, heaters glow in the winter afternoon and the flimsiness of the 'deli, coffee bar' set is obvious. You can see it's only temporary. Such a deathly hospitality venue, happily it's a short-lived experience. It's a show and a poor one at that. All told, it's full of empty, so much so that the unreality spills over on to everything else, stuffed with nothing going on but service for a few tea and beer drinkers. A shell without its programme, this enclosure is only alive when it's full. The day-lit interior doesn't stop it from feeling like a dark theatre – it adds to the effect that it's a venue without an audience. It makes no sense without lots of people milling around and some of them intently and purposefully, with something for them to look at.

... If you ask me, it's going to be the best thing since ... oh I'll get back to you on that. I've filled in plenty of their surveys, religiously, It really matters to me what happens here and I'm a sucker for that stuff. Often they don't even need to ask my opinion, they'll get it. They have to spend the money to know how to spend the money or they won't get it to spend. Bit oversimplified I know but that's the gist of it. Anyway, what I'm interested in is what happens next. What I want is this place open and useful for good. When they ask you to say what you want, I tick every single option. Not all of

GLC reports from the 1970s revealed LBH's understanding of the difficulties of managing and programming the Palace. The council wished to retain it as 'a place of public enjoyment ... Within this broad brief, however, the GLC needs to be satisfied that its eventual programme of action is in tune with what people want' (GLC:1974:5). When the report referred to 'confusion between public events at the Palace and private lettings to clubs and organisations' (GLC:25), it seemed likely that what is meant is the ever-problematic notion of '*free* use for the people' of the 1900 and 1913 Acts governing its use [emphasis added]. Yet in spite of these well-founded misgivings about 'the pernicious spiral of poor maintenance, inadequate return, and frustrated management which has held sway for so long', the Council still stated:

Furthermore, there seem to be no insuperable problems in combining income-producing uses with the development of

it appeals to me, not much of it, I mean to me personally. But it's whatever will get people up here. There must be six boroughs' worth of people. There's a lot of us round here. It's not a minority pursuit. I want what we want. That sounds too 'local people'!

... It doesn't make any sense though does it? I mean, hello? I'm as supportive of cultural activity as the next person, but really? When services across the board are having to make such big savings, cutting all the slack (and the rest)? Don't get me wrong, I get how important the heritage is.

cultural and leisure activities specified parts of the building (unattributed pamphlet, BC:*Alexandra Palace:n.d.*).

By this time the Alexandra Park Action Group (APAG), a local activist group had been established. APAG and, later, another group Save our Space (SOS), published occasional newsletters. Its existence denoted a different sense of ownership than previously demonstrated in relation to the Palace, its members feeling they 'have a right, if not a duty, to indicate, respectfully but firmly our misgivings' (*Palace Guard* 1:1974). The editorial read: 'Here's to a short life and a merry one', having promised they will cease publication when, as they see it, Palace and Park are 'fulfilling their role as a recreation and leisure centre for London.' Notably they do not refer to north London only and there is no mention of education, despite the Great Hall having been used as an external examination centre and Art School in those years).

It's still like London, round here, mixed up dirty noisy town. I'll do the questionnaires but I don't buy into the whole 'Our Ally Pally' thing. Ours on paper maybe, but how

But hasn't it had its day? Victoriana through to the GLC and all that. I'm sorry, it's a tatty old wreck. It would make more sense to build houses up there, flats for people in the borough? That's what we need more than anything in London, not just round here. What about a new estate, housing

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At the ten-day festival to celebrate the Palace's centenary in 1973 the programme, following historical precedent in its diversity, included a Salvation Army concert, Punch and Judy, a performance by George Melly, an orchestra recital conducted by Yehudi Menuhin, a roller-skating spectacular, wheelchair games, fireworks, plays and chamber concerts (*Palace Guard* 1:1974). Against APAG's ambitious intention, they were still publishing at issue 10 in 1980, when education provision as part of AP's programme remit made a reappearance in *Palace Guard*, which states its interest in local and national needs. APAG 10 was highly critical of the GLC's 'bumbling, wasteful, spiritually impoverishing' management and seeking one 'more accessible and enthusiastic' but was pressing for a joint venture rather than one headed by the LBH only, who they believed would take a damagingly commercial path (*Palace Guard* 10:1980). To this end, they wanted the number of trade shows at AP to be limited, as well as the number of cars allowed on the site.

much say do we get? I mean, on anything?

So it's a bit of mess, so what? The council has always made a mess of it. Fun by committee – that's really going to work! I'd like to see a wing or a floor of the place being given over to be run as a community enterprise – so that we can make some of the actual decisions for ourselves for a change, see if we can do any better....

association, something like that? No! We all know what 'affordable' means. And it could be named to commemorate the Palace and the BBC personalities from when it started....

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The concerns of SOS later in the 1980s also centred on traffic levels and their effects on the surrounding districts of the Conservation Area (Fortis Green, Muswell Hill, Rookfield Estate, Wood Green Common, Hornsey High Street, Trinity Gardens and Crouch End), and on the underestimated need, as they perceived it, for parking spaces (*Palace Guard* 10:1980).

In the tide of optimism triumphing over experience, the idea surfaced again for a 'revival of "the Great Exhibition"' a large national exhibition to be staged at the Palace in August 1981 (unattributed memo:BBC Written Archives). The first mention of plans for developing a 120-bed hotel from the TV studio dated from this era; currently again under consideration, but now moved to the site of the Panorama Room. Such a suburban location for a hotel did, and still does, seem unlikely to be a successful setting. However, Norman Engleback, an architect interviewed for Architects' Lives, the British Library National Life Story Collection, in 2001, suggested that the ap-

... The BBC have always been supportive of any initiatives which have been put in place to try and protect the Palace. They're interested in being a part of it now because they can see it's actually got legs but in the past they've been cautious obviously because it's actually been a complete disaster up here really. It's always been a derelict building and it's not their derelict building.

Now television's become the thing, and the theatre is the heritage that everything else has been hooked on

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The resounding clang of failure as the first building sits complete but unused, unopened for lack of funds for fit-out, is a defining sound, swiftly overlaid with voices praising its successes. The pedal is pressed, keeping both these notes sustained throughout the life of the Palace, from opening to date. Otherwise, aside from this, everything changes and stays the same. Hear it again: 'History repeating'. The richness of the offer stretches from the bizarre to the ridiculous to the spectacular and the customary in both spectator and participatory entertainments, with the cultural breadth of high and low, the new and the popular. Even the detail returns to repeat, or never went away: the boxing, the popular music, the trade and craft shows, the exhibitions. These perennial crowd-pleasers – or at least not losers – are still paying their way along with skating and cinema and fireworks, and new enticements like tree climbing and Segway sell out regularly.

With its solid record of un/success, AP echoes earlier idealisations of the ruin, full of loss and aching with potential. Where once it may have been evident that this is a building for public use, that transparency has long been blocked. The shutters are down, colonnades empty or bricked up. New traditions, new anniversaries are sought to fill and open the gaps. Like the ruin, the building is itself now the content; loss becomes at least part of the means to fulfil and build upon that potential. What's lost and missing is found again for a future. Still

peal of Alexandra Palace and Crystal Palace as sites for development (as hotels, for example) was part of an interest in urban planning at the time in developing city-rim sites as an alternative to concentrating everything in the centre. Engleback was engaged in a similarly unlikely (and similarly unimplemented) plan to reinvent Alexandra Park as 'the Longchamps of north London'.

After many changes of management and yet more foundering attempts at financial viability, in January 1980 the trusteeship was transferred from the GLC to LBH (Gay:2005:32). At that point LBH took over *running* the building from the GLC; in 1986, on

to. And once you start and begin to change how people are thinking about it, it gets its own momentum. I think it's there...

... It's so important that this place is, like, live again. There's not much round here and we need the space. Loads of potential for the future. Size was one of its problems, historically, wasn't it? Running costs, getting enough punters in to cover it, never mind trying to run a surplus. There's always moaning letters in the local rag, going on about how it's half-derelict and it'd be less expensive to demolish it and start fresh so we'd end up with something new that we all want, blah blah.

too big to be destroyed, too important to fail? The double-destination effect has yet to take effect: journey and arrival as part of the attraction. For now, the trek out to zone 3 has to be for someone or something good enough, big enough to need spaces this size.

It has its own continuity as a venue known for music and interruptions and innovation, for sudden brief appearances, for 2d and 3d, as if responding to need or fashion. Does it speak to people, and what language does it speak? Whether they can make any sense of it, that's what makes the difference. It's no odds whether people think it's a miracle or a monster or even care, as long as they hear what it's saying. If it's legible and they come and see, the work for now, for this time, is done.

What's the story?

A building with a 150-year lifespan full of drama and mundanity is about to be given



abolition of the GLC, LBH took over its *ownership* as a freeholder. The trusteeship continues to the present day as a charitable trust (currently the Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust, APPCT), administered and partially funded by the borough. Nigel Willmott, ex-Haringey Councillor, founder and chair of FAPT, said in interview:

It was bought by Haringey in 1980 on the promise that it would never cost the ratepayers a penny. Unfortunately that was a false prospectus. They bought it for £1 with a dowry of £8 million. The best day's work he'd ever done

There's something in that I guess but then, I always think: this is already here now. Look how much is going to be spent on that bridge that you'll need your passport to get across! I'm not one of those who wants to hang on to everything because it's old. I don't know what it'll be like when we get there but this place has lasted good and ill for all this time. Listen to me: 'fun for all ages'! Someone said they could partition part of the space and make temporary accommodation for refugees. And why not? There's space and how much more useful does it get?...

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what is hoped to be a kind of rebirthing at its site and here on the page of all that it has meant and contained. The Palace itself is the story: it has become its own contents, the innards and the exterior and the depths, a kind of curatorial principle. As a free centre for a specific user group, locality or a particular use, the idea is out of time and too large an undertaking in AP or in a building of similar design and size and area and facilities. Both of these are proven, there is no case to answer. As a purely commercial enterprise, it is more likely out of place and in the wrong time too. The Palace was not built for it when other venues are and therefore fulfill their performance (indicators) better, with all the advantages (to some) of the purpose-built. And yet it attracts bookings, audiences, backers, support and funding. Refurbishment of the physical building is due on site in January 2016, for reopening in spring 2018. The byproducts of the purpose-built, the sterility of synthetic atmosphere and the deadening effect of the single note, are not to be heard up on this hill.

Come to a something-with-a-ticket or come for a nothing-in-particular! That's the plan. That must be the new prescription. On the back of buses and the walls of the underground, posters in a grid of twelve events break down into five sporting, three music, one education fair, two trade shows and a festival. Apart from the changes in technology and the graphic conventions, this is the progeny of that weekly

I think the then-head of the GLC thought. Haringey was in a difficult position really: concern about what would happen if it didn't take it over so it did and then concern from one part of the borough about cost and concern from this [Muswell Hill] part of the borough that it might disturb a rather comfortable way of life (2014).

The second fire to devastate AP happened on 10 July 1980, six months after the transfer of ownership, and the cause was never entirely clear (Gay:32). It might not have been entirely unwelcome to

... And it was just absolutely by chance in 2002 that I had in my flat a copy of – I think it must have been the Haringey Advertiser – on the settee. There was this tiny little advert as I remember it, asking people to get in touch. And you know how sometimes you do things on a whim, just in one split second ... I think it gave a phone number for details. Something about the wording must have caught my eye and I contacted Ally Pally about it.

In one of the [FAPT] meetings I remember, they asked people for ideas, what they could see happening

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printed programme. These are equally instantly recognisable but more easily legible to passing potential trade. Before Reith and after, the sentiments and intentions – more like: Entertain Inform Educate – remain the same. Before and after, the Palace paying for itself is still a hard act to promote and unrealistic without cross-fertilisation of income and audience streams. The source and direction of implementation is no longer from on high, with such naked and innocent presumption. It's no longer dismissed, except by the Plain Persons of Crouch End and the Disgusteds of Wood Green as a knowing, niche-focused market-led affair rather than any approximation of philanthropy for the self-betterment and enjoyment of others. It's no less complicated, for all that.

The strengths of the building accumulate on a mixed footing of overlaid opinion and its imbricated repetitions lead to both transformation and preservation. Retellings come from alterations: as the surface is disrupted, stories float up. A plurality of voices inhabits the Palace and, broadcasting its diverse opinion, an understanding of what happens there begins to take form, what it is built upon and what future 'building upon' may bring about. There are choruses in series with intermittent and frequent dissenting tones (different hymn sheet). Not that, this. Do it this way, not like that. All of the above, now and again, more or less. The single voice smacks of repression and a lack of imagination; and once that avenue's been exhausted, there's nowhere else to go.

some as it was noted that the council would benefit from the Palace's destruction, which put a stop to all their expensive plans, as Willmott said in interview 'There are quite a lot of residents who would like it to be a picturesque ruin' (2014). On LBC radio (available at <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandrado/lbc/index.php/segment/0017800164007>) an unidentified female reporter noted that the Palace 'seems to have spent more time burning down than providing fun for the masses'. The fire destroyed the Great Hall, Panorama Room, banqueting suite, roller rink and theatre dressing rooms. The eastern end, BBC studios and the mast were undamaged (Gay:32).

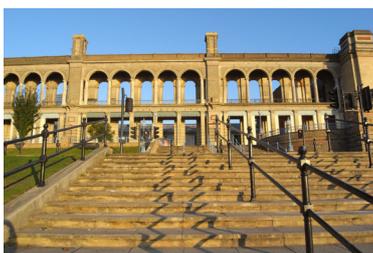
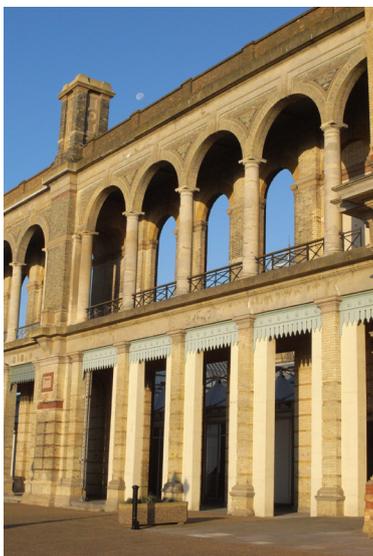
with the theatre. I can remember thinking myself 'Education'. And at the time these were just ideas, we didn't know what would happen. We didn't know any timescale really as to ... or whether these things could ever be realised. Personally I'm very glad, how it's turned out now, I think it's wonderful. My personal point of view is that it is including the people and also it highlights heritage....

... For the future? I want to see it remade into an energy-efficient organisation. That might mean knocking some of it down or maybe seeing it as a series of buildings instead of

[Enter:
'Zach,']

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That way, it's back to the old days when other destinations and possibilities are already deleted from consideration. A conflicting multitude of convictions about what is needed contributes to a fertile ambivalence and contingency without answers closing down discussion before questions opened up. What begin as outlandish suggestions can turn into highly desirable realities, hop skip. Which way will you jump?



The original social spirit and ambition of the Palace, mixed with a hearty dose of profit imperative, is powerful and persuasive and all the indications are that some version of it is still relevant. Shouldered by the local taxpayer, and even in its distressed and tawdry state, it is a landmark people feel proud to support. On this scale – in terms of size and cost and age – the business of the Palace can only be relevant if 'mixed' is the operative word in the case of its economy. Though it does get confused with its own mixed messages at times and so do its people. AP could be revitalised as a time-share or as a leasehold funded by Social Enterprise, or the Arts Council or as a retro-futuristic modular affair and its own (derivative) inflatable replacement. It can be hired

Figures 54 and 55, Opening up the facade, Ainley 2015

The jazz connection had continued: Capital Radio Jazz Festival, on at the time, lost thousands of pounds' worth of equipment in the fire. Co-promoter Andy Hudson, who 'had to run for his life', described the Great Hall in another LBC report as 'like a football pitch with a lid on' (<http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/>).

Following the fire Terry Farrell & Partners were commissioned to design a pavilion as a stand-in for the Palace. According to an LBH Report in August 1981 it was 40,000 square feet, 100 metres long, 15 metres high; 'PVC-coated Terylene woven fabric panels supported on a rigid structure of aluminium portal frames',

one at this ridiculous scale. The building has to work better otherwise we can't afford it on any level. Rebuild it so part of it can be used as sustainable housing, storage space, whatever. It took a while (now the next one's coming up already!) but if you think about what happened to the Olympic park – built for one thing, now there's all sorts going on there. The West Ham ground for a start. Yes, sure it cost way more than it was meant to. Everyone forgot about that once it started....

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out in parts as studios, offices, workshops, SME premises, light industrial for cross-subsidy and 24/7 occupancy.

New times at the People's Palace

In a public building, programming as though everything were predetermined and fixed has had its day. What's fixed is its place in the imagination, the Palace on the hill (subsidence permitting). It can be seen as a complex of spaces rather than as a single building. Some part of it can be programmed for public activities and a section whose occupancy and functions revolve with trends and seasons and initiatives in order to respond nimbly to the need for the new and for recurring favourites to disrupt territorialism and entrenchment. Self-organisation of spaces and uses can be encouraged for start-ups and early-years organisations still in infancy, such as the CUFOS community centre once was, on the site occupying the building where the station used to be. For starters, this means community interest companies, credit unions, co-ops, collectives, partnerships and joint enterprise ventures with education and business institutions and a myriad of other organisational forms in infancy and earlier. Special rates could be offered for the hire of premises for business and studio and training for parents with children at the on-site nursery or elsewhere in the borough.

Figures 53 and 54, Opening up the facade, Ainley 2015

allowing space for 3000 visitors (Farrell:2004:248). This temporary space for events was planned to maintain activities (Gay:32) and enable on-site consultation for the rebuild that, again, was confirmed very quickly after the fire (BBC:1937). Rather like AP itself, Farrell's pavilion used new technologies beneath an old shape, and it was the largest double-skinned fabric structure in Europe. The pavilion was designed as a reminder of the shape of what it was replacing, with a clear-spanned hall of the Palace's early nave-and-aisle layout (Farrell:249).

In Peter Smith's unimplemented 1981 proposal 'Palace

... Why didn't they get rid of it years ago? They could have knocked the whole thing down – well, cleared the remains away – and started fresh. Built a new centre for things that people actually want to do instead of that historical money pit. Everyone knows it's better to start from scratch.

If it was worth that much to them to get rid, you'd think the council would've thought twice. I'm not superstitious and I don't believe in that curse business, but come on, two fires! Accidents? And it's a wonder it hasn't slid down the hill. You'd say 'thanks, but no thanks'. It never did make any

This is an age for the People's Palace to be a place of propagation of ideas, activities, income and a place of provision of entertainments, in the making and in the delivery. With people, so it's for and by people too, even if not owned by them, run by them. A teeming profusion for inventive and resourceful uses of AP in parts and as a whole is precisely what it's (fit) for. New forms of cultural pursuits can be developed here to be presented on site to audiences – this is after all a prime aspect of the heritage of the Palace. Just like the good old days. Involvement from the very local and the London-wide is built into its working mechanisms, beyond (as well as) the notion of volunteering. A significant portion of its heritage and future roles already runs on voluntary donations of time, expertise, labour and money and which has kept alive the project for a revitalised future. The international aspect of its past significance may never be bested but it cannot be erased either and may yet be part of its future importance.

The partial restoration in process now may bring a better match of programme to building, in temporary and permanent provision, with greater legibility to it. It appears already to be expanding on these lines drawn before, to make the Palace generative in intent, rather than purely a site of straightforward market-driven or community-based provision. Redevelopment is a contingent and continuous process, driven by the engines of multiple interest groups, on some level

in Wonderland', the theatre, with its problematic sightlines, would become a concert hall; the Great Hall could be roofed with Teflon-coated glass fibre cloth; and the eastern part of the building might be leased to the Royal Television Society (notably not the BBC whose institutional history it is), for use as a museum of television history (AP and P Report:1981).

In 1982 a GLC *Report on Development at Alexandra Palace and Park*) details the response to a survey question offering alternatives for the building's future. Sixty-nine per cent chose option e, the damaged parts to be restored and the whole adapted to provide

money, what's why it was given over to the public in the first place. It's not going to be out of the goodness of anyone's heart, is it? If it had been worth owning, they would've kept it, stands to reason. Benefit of the people, do me a favour!

Now they're at it again, spending millions. It's not what we need. It's not what London needs either. The park's lovely of course. Can't have too much green space, that's one of the great things about London. I'm all for history but what have you got there really? A derelict conservatory and a mast where the BBC started broadcasting.

211 representing the interests of the publics in whose name, etc. etc. So if there's a hotel, there has to be a restaurant; if there's a restaurant, there's a catering course and a trainee scheme in a venue already there and practised in the culinary arts and hospitality. It is a public building. Then it involves continuous response to the questions of what the public wants and what this building has for its publics.

How audiences view material and respond is as important as the what and the where, with interpretation methods and narrative representations designed for the extra/ordinary public, the buffs, the enthusiasts, the techies and technocrats, the historians and the politely curious, and the bored, the passers-by and the disinterested unbelievers. People come still to 'look and learn' through laminated panels or interactive displays; others come to swap ideas about film making and setting up YouTube channels; others still come and absorb, for nothing in particular again. Technologies for telling stories, for showing narratives and other work here in development and in use, that people walk right into and make them in the doing.

A site of innovative uses of technology since its first iteration, the Palace will add to its distinct, dedicated uses through using immersive, narrative environments with reflection on how people might experience the space in its entirety, learning about forms of technologies and popular entertainments in the process.

modern facilities. Options b, the surviving parts retained and damaged parts demolished, and c, the surviving parts retained and the damaged parts retained as a ruin, were equally unpopular at 3 per cent. The other respondents were divided between 'don't knows', demolition, and the 'site made part of the park or a new building put in its place' (GLC:1982:14).

Not everyone was downcast about the almost perverse endurance of AP and its prospects. For Clive Aslet in *Country Life*, the building was even more palace-like as a ruin. 'Had the Emperor Diocletian chosen to make his home in Wood Green one feels this

And building a hotel around it, I don't know what the point of that is. The views are lovely, there's no getting away from that, but why would anyone would want to stay there?

... 'Make a future memory'?! That's the slogan now. It's right where we came in, on a banner. Who came up with that? You can't but wonder ... and I bet they got paid a shed-load for it. They could heat this place instead, even for one night. You have to drag yourself all the way up here and then sit in the cold – it's a pretty big ask. But here we are all the same, so something's working! I do care about what happens, I really

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A new category of visitor experience emerges, somewhere between participant and by-stander to imbue and exude. For some, what's being found is an idea of audience and fulfilment, a feeling of ownership and expansiveness. The scope of possibility and the thrill of the dare is in recovery, the old familiar process of coming together and then falling out of favour, regrouping, to repeat and repeat. As ever.

The building becomes the main event as part of the contents at the same time as the Victorian theatre is refurbished, as the East Wing, built in part and entirely refurbished to house the BBC, purveyor of public broadcasting is made into the East Court – no longer only part of the container. The Great Hall is the very venue for plurality and the polyvocal and for multiplicity, and much echoing round the edges, with vast audio space to fill. The idea of echo-as-bad-acoustic is long gone: it's a doubling up, a means of listening again and listening over, accommodating a series of answering and (call and) response waves, fading in and trailing off to be picked up again, amplified, changed in key and tone, re-orchestrated and re-scored when the timing is right. It's a site-specific attraction. (Same hymn sheet.) Palace.fm can take up some space here. Tea dances, Strictly on the boating lake or BGT on ice or some other popular monstrous hybrid. An AP Prom run by All Tomorrow's Parties, 60s happenings revisited, retro dressing up, a triennial. Unashamed copying is advisable, in flattery and hope, from

building might have been his', he enthused (Aslet:1985:54). He exhorted the reader to savour the Piranesian qualities of the ruined Palace but missed the connection to equally Piranesian incarceration of POWs and internees. Although studded with classical references and in tone more suited to the previous century, Aslet's interest was embedded in the present and in the ordinary person. AP's popularity was its 'supreme merit' (Aslet:54), whatever the mauling it received by numerous critics including John Summerson, who not inaccurately derided its 'meagre proportions and crude modelling' (Aslet::54).

If Diocletian had relocated from Split to Muswell Hill, the

We could spend that money on our future, not on some little exhibition in the hotel lobby or on the edge of a shopping centre, because that's what it will be. Keep the mast – that's recognisable right round the globe, quite a claim to fame. ...

do. I just want it to be right this time. And if I'm honest, it's a reaction to how soppy and sentimental everyone gets about it. I feel really torn about it. I come here mostly to do nothing in particular and that doesn't matter – it's great. There's the plans you can look at, and I read about it. I like to keep up so I have got some idea of what they're planning.

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Meltdown at its near relative the Southbank Centre or family member Battersea Arts Centre, and distant, youthful descendants in Bristol, Peckham, Bethnal Green and on and on. Staged (yet) informality of uses, for work and pleasure, more or less formal can be seen to work in spaces elsewhere.

Building on its record of responding to new ideas and forms of entertainment, AP can tap into new economies based on transfer and barter with models such as Freecycle and Freegle, and education through exchange – I teach you how to build shelves and you teach me to speak Cantonese. You show me knitting, I show you plastering. As cinema screenings go in and out of favour, popular forms of theatrical showings can be explored such as cinema clubs, salons, film festivals, all-nighters, tie-ins with local students and colleges. Drive-in cinema and outdoor screening are already reinstated. Supper clubs and cooking communities can make use of kitchens out of hours. New media, old building with augmented realities, local history and genealogy workshops run by AP Television Society and the Alexandra Palace and Park Collection of the National Archive. Palace as workshop for all manner of exploration can develop perennial favourites in concert with contemporary crazes such as scratch orchestras in the Great Hall, and encourage involvement of modern versions of old tenants. Knit the building. Cultivate edibles or landscapes of succulents in so much light.

majority of the building would never be seen by public eyes. A small section of it, a gallery or a courtyard perhaps, might be open to occasional visiting. The building would have largely played a residential and ceremonial role. This container would be viewed only from afar, its royal inhabitants-contents the only, mostly unviewable, spectacle. There might be other echoes of the Palace as it is now in daily life – a ritual performance to mark an anniversary, a display of fireworks to celebrate a victory.

Going to be a good few years before it's open again I guess, it's pretty major. And of course we'll come up for a look and probably there'll be a restaurant or two and a bar and we'll want to check them out. And then everyone'll enjoy having a moan about it won't we, because that's what we do. We'll have a look at whatever ends up happening in the space – it's this end isn't it, like making it into a big hall.

214 A two-storey basement needs better uses than serving food cold (film? growing mushrooms?). Pre-backlash before the reintroduction of Skol and Watney's Red (get in first and make a virtue of it?), if it's too late to cash in on the popularity of micro-breweries (Ally Pale, Palace Porter?), there's surely no better location for a gin palace.

The theatre is used as a set for music videos such as Robbie Williams' *She's The One* in 1999 and as a film set. It is a setting for another piece of history – the first televised gay wedding (*Our Gay Wedding: The Musical*), filmed on the day legalisation was enacted in 2014. Not too late after all to make television history again and never too late for fostering technological innovation again.

In programming as in writing, creative consideration of what might be possible in the future comes from what might have existed in the past: speculating on what may be possible in the building. Imagination is the tool for contemplating how something might be with a starting point in the real. A polysemous, multi-levelled approach foregrounds the layering of voices and opinions, rather than use of the speculative, includes 'what might have ...' or 'what may still happen'. The whole building can be conceived as a stage or gallery, if not all the world, for a consideration of future uses, possibilities and problems. The stage in the theatre with its uniqueness and difficulties is then only one of the stages in the building, for all its special features and original

Oh ok, a court then. We'll see. There's going to be a place in the studios where people can learn to use new tech stuff, not just look at bits of old kit. So that's good.

The rest of it sounds a bit 'Ally Pally the multimedia experience' and it's a bit 'sound and images, wow-ee, digital and interactive'. Haven't we had enough of all that? If you look at my phone from five years ago, it looks ancient.

215 stencilling. The building is its own stage, a set of itself, for performing its ever-growing repertoire of theatrics telling its stories. Financial disasters? Catastrophic mismanagement? World firsts? Everyday wonders? Triumph in adversity? High-profile takeovers? Revivals? Series? Inept government? First nights? Check check check. Give it a good ticking. Press play (again), and crank up the volume.

...

[Pause]

Old cameras and stuff, it's boring now unless you're a real collector type. You see all that stuff everywhere, vintage-theme places. But I do like the idea of tying it into new

Who decides, that's what I want to know. I mean really decides, we can stop pretending it's the likes of us. They can ask and ask – and they do. That never stops, questionnaire this, survey that. Consultation fatigue, it's called. Guilty!! It would be different if it ever meant anything but we all know it's to tick a box. 'We asked and you said ...' such nonsense, so now we're doing something completely different....

[Enter: 'Katerina']

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The royals are back, making history, marking another date to remember. New times, new anniversaries are here again. A 1930s jazz-era microphone, orchestra in the pit tuning up, shiny metal and suits, something ancient about the surrounding billows of ruched stage curtains, walls with classy washes. Then walls that just escape looking like casualties of the late twentieth-century vogue for paint effects. This is the real thing. Well maybe. Sheet music on a tablet lest anyone think they're in history rather than retroland. Lamps and chandeliers are primed and coded to twinkle in time with the intro and suddenly there is Brian Wilson on stage, tell-tale nonplussed that a tiger is leaping on to his grand piano, in CGI-land at least.

Forty years it is since *God Only Knows* was first released. Wilson, always a poignant choice in his survival, sings this new version for the anniversary on 7 October 2014, together with One Direction, Pharrell Williams, Dave Grohl, Brian May, Florence Welch and the rest to mark the launch of BBC Music. Comments on the YouTube page followed the usual wrangles about why certain singers were or weren't included; why it needed to be remade at all; why, rather parochially, the BBC chose US music, others pleased that 'superior American music' was chosen; others not interested in the music but loving the beautiful trailer – music as background. And the background to that is the Victorian theatre at AP. Wilson's surrounded by extravagant vegetation, the place

technologies. Because all that ancient kit was bleeding edge once wasn't it? And I'd come to classes in how to use it. I've always wanted to know how to make podcasts, not that I'm that clear on exactly what they are. That's why I want to know. Kind of like audio-blogging. Anyway, we'd better shut up if this is starting....

217 is a jungle suddenly. Butterflies cover Elton John, Lorde has grown a big pair of wings, Emeli Sandé sits at a table of cornucopia. A massive bubble floats by encasing Kylie and a storm of crystal hails down on Stevie Wonder. Someone's flying on a golden fairground horse, and there's Jules Holland, of course, before a choir of – shock – ordinary people. Chrissie Hynde sits astride the moon, talking of stars, and here's Baaba Maal. And as it degenerates into a firmament beyond the Palace with newly distressed window frames and feathers, back we come to Brian.

This Palace of used-to-be is the space still of what's to come. A monument to the remembered, inscribed with a barrage of sensation getting louder. Stand back, give it some room: the waft of smells, the cacophony of the unheard and the yet-to-be. Incantatory reminders and snips of memory strike poses, giving and taking away. Will they really be there again? Will they come? It's never been silent, never goes away. The voids of memory roll over, turn inside out to expose what's always already there. Listen, can you hear it now? The arrival, the waiting, the new, on its way: this is how it starts.

[And ... cut. Fade to black. Curtain. Credits. Acks. Freeze. Hit the lights.]

...

Postscript

It's 2015. This is how it looks. Lost/found revisited. Last and first together; back, and again.

The final event in the Victorian theatre before it closes for works on the East Wing marks the centenary of the first performance by the *Konzertverein*, the AP internees' orchestra group.

The internees are ordinary Germans, Austrians, Hungarians and Turks who happen to be living in London at the wrong time, not soldiers or convicts enjoying the easy life at the Hotel Alexandra. They are builders, musicians, teachers, shopkeepers, architects, accountants, a tenor opera singer and at least one composer.

It's barely autumn and cold enough to sit down for two hours that the advice is to wear warm clothes and blankets are available to rent (plus £3 deposit). How cold it would be to sleep in here, and how quickly stuffy with so many men in close quarters and all those stoves.

There's no three-minute silence for the dead, for the lost chances. Instead an auditorium full of noise, sound, life, chat, music, a performance of extraordinary dimension, delivered by a youth orchestra. Alexandra Palace Ragtime by Anton Wüst, the only work played on the night composed by an internee, is recognisable only in that it isn't a standard. Its unfamiliarity is an advantage. It's unexpected, with its liveliness and lightness of touch that isn't what might have been expected from someone incarcerated. To my ears outside their musical territory, it sounds full of discovery and possibility, less ponderous than some offerings on the programme. And it isn't syncopated.

Even in a camp run on military lines, where inmates are marched out for inspection after breakfast, the Commandant (!) under-

stands the benefits of music and is convinced of its worth as consolation and release for those playing and for those listening. Programmes have to be submitted for vetting beforehand but the power of royalty – ours, yours – reigns even in wartime, so a concert to celebrate Kaiser Wilhelm II's birthday is permitted. He is family, after all.

As Dr Rupert Ridgewell says on the night, music affects us all differently: nourishment catharsis stimulant. If it 'hath charms to soothe the savage beast', that's not wolves and bears but rage and depression. The Commandant appreciates the value of cultural and sporting activities, permitted or withheld, as weapons in maintaining discipline too. And making them pay for the privilege: hire fees are charged for the use of the theatre and the funds from ticket sales (1d for balcony, 6d for central stalls), go to the war effort and maybe sales of produce from the allotment too. This internal market economy is somehow more shocking than black markets outside the camp or inside prisons. Lucky that the orchestra members include a cashier as well as an archivist and an arranger.

In a week when refugees and migrants are dismissed as criminals and demeaned as numbers, Ridgewell, over-mindful perhaps to the charge of charity beginning at home, remembers the soldiers who died in the war. And we remember people from Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, stranded in other camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Calais.

Did he ever get the package of fruit he asked for and was it still edible? Did she heed his plea to stop sending parcels because that meant more deprivation for her? Did he ever get over being 'very disappointed not with you but with time'? I doubt it.

It's The Last Picture Show, only it isn't over. It's starting again, everything still to come. Except. This is AP. So what's coming is new, novel and ... already here. Keep failing, keep remaking better. Rest assured, it's a wonder of newness, and all seen before.

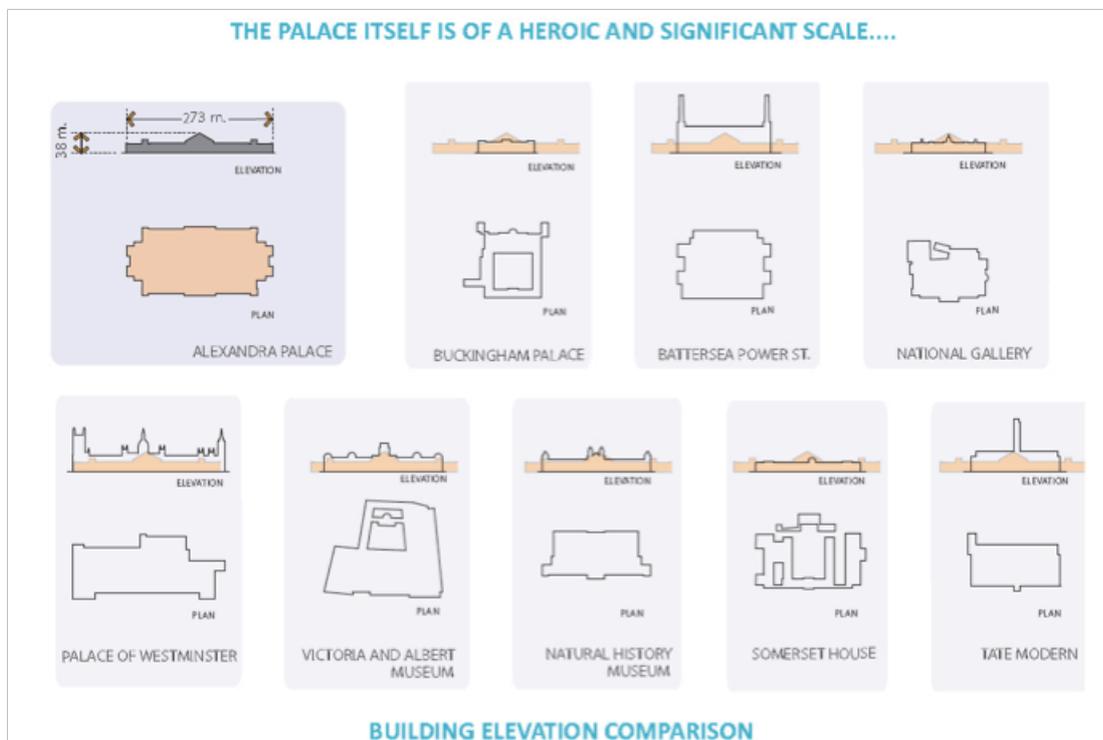
This is the story.

Chapter 3 Contextual Matters

Following on from Scene 5 Found/Futures on what *might* come next, Section 1 of this Chapter introduces what *is* coming next, with an outline of AP's recent history to show development of the current refurbishment, bringing in the voices of those working on the current AP project. Section 2 examines interpretations of heritage and regeneration to bring greater context to the project and the research, and this leads into the consideration of audience and application for it, which constitutes Section 3. The Chapter finishes by joining up the three Sections with thoughts on the possible contribution of the recovery in *Writing AP* to the works.

'A huge leisure palace on a rural hillside basically. ... The idea that some white knight was going to save it!' (Willmott, in interview)

HLF Round 1: Proposal Development



Farrells' strategic masterplan 'Reviving Ally Pally' (2012), commissioned by the Palace's governing body, the Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust (APPCT), was adopted following consultation and formalised with more detail to enable Palace and borough to go into the round of public bidding, to submit the Heritage Lottery Fund

1 Russ Hamilton, interviewed 4 December 2014; the practice then known as Terry Farrell & Partners designed the temporary pavilion for AP after the 1980 fire.

2 Duncan Wilson, interviewed 12 November 2014; in May 2015 he took up the post of CEO at Heritage England.

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(HLF) bid for Round 1 Development Funding. For Russ Hamilton, masterplanner at Farrells, 'Our big strapline was "do you realise that your elevation is three times the length of Buckingham Palace and you can't get into it?" There's the scale of it and the state of the problem.'¹The practice took the approach of 'explaining to the people who are briefing you and explaining to the user groups what they've actually got already, before you start worrying about what you want' (Hamilton, in interview).

The application, submitted in November 2012 and awarded in May 2013, was concerned specifically with 'the repair and refurbishment of the historic BBC Studios, East Court and the currently derelict Victorian Theatre'. It was based upon the 'Six Big Ideas for Transforming AP' from the Farrells masterplan (2012):

'Improving your first impressions
Upgrading the entrances to The Palace
Making it easier to move around
Upgrading the Main Halls
A Hotel in the Palace
Opening up the derelict spaces.'

Its focus on development of the detailed design and business planning was considered essential to gauge the project's 'ongoing sustainability and its assured community benefit' (Hamilton, in interview). Aside from reinstating access to the studios and theatre, the BBC's Studio A is to be restored and converted into an interactive space dedicated to broadcasting and television history and Studio B will become a multi-use, informal learning space. Externally, the arches of the Eastern Colonnade will be opened up, renewing the visual invitation and impact. Some derelict areas will be reopened but, as Duncan Wilson pointed out, the HLF work 'still only deals with a percentage of the derelict spaces and even those in use currently, the Great Hall and Palm Court, need some refurbishment.'² The AP website, in language taken directly from the Farrells masterplan, described it in January 2013 as 'like pieces of a jigsaw, [the proposals] will all fit together over time to create a picture of the Alexandra Palace of the future.' In familiar and increasingly unconvincing terms, the proposals were described as 'interconnected but standalone'.

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Farrells worked on tools for the public consultation to 'build the story ... so that the right questions were being asked. You know – why does it need to happen. And then, what does it deliver, so people can gauge very quickly what it's about' (Hamilton, in interview). Opening up the derelict spaces was the most popular suggestion from the 2012 consultation, but slipped to last place in the Six Big Ideas.³ Farrells' rationale was that 'It's about sequences ... There's also a formality of arrival and we found that was really important, that's why we put that right at the front of the public consultation so that people could engage with that experience ... You couldn't just jump to, "let's have a new hall and a hotel and a theatre please"' (Hamilton, in interview).

'Is it viable?' they keep asking, 'Will it work?'

Members of the public, building users and visitors to the AP consultation exhibition run by the Palace Regeneration team in October 2014 posed versions of these questions repeatedly, as reported by Marieke de Veer, Regeneration and Property Manager. These are 'the people', in whose name the restoration is being carried out, whose Palace is again the focus of regeneration. In possession of a level of specialist, first-hand knowledge of the Palace and their history in it, they wanted to know how these proposed works might make a substantive difference, because nothing has before. The impression delivered in conversation and surveys was that people believed the current plan was viable, and so they were coming to tell Palace staff what they thought and discuss ideas.

The exhibition, staffed by volunteers and Learning and Community Programme (LCP) members, set out for perusal the multi-layered assessment that led to the proposals and plans for refurbishment: consideration of current condition, heritage significance, business and visual impact, potential, commercial and community value. The plans focused on repair and redevelopment, reopening, improvements to access routes and 'a vision' that encompassed 'conservation, self-sufficiency and sustainability, community and learning potential', establishing AP as a 'major entertainment destination'. At nearly £30 million the proposed investment was huge, and an LCP team member said, 'People are smart enough to know there's no point in doing all this if it's not going to work. You'd think it was their own house.'

4 There is an unbillable cost of emotional and volunteer input as well as the financial cost to the borough and the taxpayer, as highlighted by Henry Sanoff (2000).

5 Current volunteering opportunities are diverse, including horticulture, surveying and research.

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Opinions expressed, subjects raised in conversation and feedback collected from the survey and exhibition sounded highly informed and diverse. Other than 'the big question' of viability, respondents in person, on paper and online discussed the importance of branding; the coherence of the offer; the impact on potential audiences; inclusivity; and, in a phrase repeated by Russ Hamilton, the 'relevance' of the place.

Exhibition staff reported that people needed convincing that the refurbishment works will make them want to come and others too, so that audiences will be big and broad enough to make AP work.⁴ 'They've waited long enough. And in the past when it hasn't been what people wanted, they've stood up and stopped coming. They come and tell you their stories, how this place is part of their story, as if they're talking about their grandchildren,' de Veer said. 'Hope I live long enough to see it happen', one long-term visitor reportedly said, possibly unconvinced about the new plans in view of the previous attempts to revitalise it. LCP team members made the point too that AP had survived many failures of reuse, yet was still inspiring interest in regular and casual visitors. The historical phases in Scenes 1 to 5 of *Writing AP* trace these familiar tropes that serve to explain why the Palace never drew the sustained audiences it needed to support itself. The significant difference in the contemporary narrative playing itself out was that the tropes were identified before the attempt at rehabilitation, rather than as post-event evaluation of what had gone wrong.

More than 1600 responses were received to the consultation survey undertaken in summer 2014, and more than 1000 visitors attended the opening day of the exhibition. If users are suffering from consultation fatigue, they are managing to get over it. The high response rates to the consultative programme were in part credited to the LCP team established in 2012 to give interested, mainly local, people opportunities to learn about the Palace and to contribute their experience, in order to form another version of heritage through volunteering, history tours and formal and informal learning. An Activity Plan was instituted as part of this process, to increase and advertise different ways for people to get involved.⁵ The consultative work was pre-emptive: what had been learned so that this can go right. In various forms and with different emphases these patterns or problems have been identified and acknowledged, by all parties,

226 the expert–enthusiast no less than the professional: Palace staff and management, masterplanners, architects, trust members, councillors.

‘What story are you going to tell?’ people ask over and over again.

Exhibition visitors and survey respondents articulated the breadth of attachment: what AP meant to different people. Would the redevelopment focus on the BBC or the glass palace or public ownership or the racing track or the park? The interviewees quoted here had their own versions of what ‘the big story’ is. For Russ Hamilton, it was about the building’s frontage, currently closed off and uninviting, in a fatal reversal from its first principles. Clare Hughes, Creative Producer and Curator leading the Interpretation and Exhibitions Team at Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios (FCB), commissioned as architects in 2013, stressed the idea of the container becoming the contents, the building as the object.⁶ Founder of Friends of Alexandra Palace Theatre (FAPT), former LBH councillor and former chair of the Alexandra Palace and Park Charitable Trust (APPCT), Nigel Willmott focused on the shared heritage of the Palace: ‘I don’t think you’ll find another building in the country that has that collective memory of the culture.’⁷

‘This is not a museum’

Towards HLF Round 2: FCB work

Farrells’ masterplan envisaged future uses as incorporating the historical more creatively, rather than making AP into a kind of monument, incorporating contemporary and innovative forms of the original: ‘If it wasn’t an isolated “piece of museum” and uses could be plugged in and around it, typically more modern media, that would then be the link for a new generation to come in’ (Hamilton, in interview). In relation to the theatre, beyond fixing peeling paint and plaster, this approach privileged reviving the space in terms of aesthetics, lighting and use. This extended to the idea of creating an illusion or projecting one on to the stage, which can be understood as using and updating earlier technologies in use at AP and sometimes pioneered there.

Part of the background sell of the Lottery bid is that you have encapsulated in that building a whole history of popular

cultures from Victorian times from theatre and those theatre techniques which became the first techniques of cinema. You can read across how they create the illusions on the stage to how they started to do it on film (Willmott, in interview).

The work on the theatre was always spoken of differently; it will be stabilised in its 'as found' state to provide a safe, functional environment for community and commercial events. According to Hamilton,

anyone who walked into that space just went "wow" ... you could be right back in the 1920s ... or the slightly derelict, musty feel – a big part of London once and it's kind of gone. So the "as found" is about keeping that [so that] whoever they are, whatever they are there for, when they come into that space, they have that experience: "oh gosh look, we've found this".

This description suggests the aim was to instil an almost archaeological sense of discovery, rather than delivering 'an experience'.

The detailed Delivery Phase, Round 2, was submitted in December 2014 following a year of development work on the bid. Taking the client's 'This is not a museum' mantra above as a lead, FCB's work designing the East Court space as the core of the bid was founded on the idea of a 'new typology of attractions' since AP itself has no 'collection' and so had become its own contents. Their approach was also to delve into the sort of techniques and technologies that AP has fostered: '[w]e're trying to use the same media to give the message' (Hughes, in interview). The aim was to make physical the answers to questions they set themselves, that the work had to resolve:

How can the building continue to tell its story and bring people in and make them want to use it and love it?

How do we talk about this project?

How are people going to understand it, so that they like it, sign up, want to give money to it in some cases, and those who've been volunteering for years don't feel disappointed and get what they want out of the project?

FCB saw AP as a palimpsest of different forms of entertainment, layered on to each other, and their proposal was designed around

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the idea of multiple narratives. They aimed to create a space where many stories are presented, wrapped into the narrative of popular entertainment through developing the East Court as a space of connectivity so that theatre, studios, ice rink and park are linked together, rather than isolated spaces. With the clarity about the idea that stories can be told without objects, another underlying principle for FCB was the importance of these narratives and how to frame them. Their aim was to design the spaces in such a way as to experience and absorb the history and stories in more interesting ways than reading a label or a timeline so that people might experience space as a narrative environment. Their insertion of a staircase into the East Court design was one way to address this layering – literally, in terms of storeys, and by extending possibilities for overlapping image and soundscapes in the space. The Southbank Centre was cited as the nearest equivalent with its discrete uses in close and accessible proximity, although with an awareness of AP's narrative particularity as venue and vehicle of the evolution of popular entertainment.⁸

Between design and implementation, changes were made that departed from these intentions, resulting in some loss of the original fluidity and dynamism of the plans. With largely static displays being relatively inexpensive, objects inevitably crept back in, even though it is not a museum. Homage to the BBC, the institution, has crowded out the space and the local angle seemed to have been dropped. The mention in project publicity of 'new toilets, seating and wifi' and a BBC-themed café suggests a paucity of ambition. However, the increased versatility of the theatre was emphasised in terms of its size and usage for 'community, cultural and commercial' events and audiences. Equally, the technology learning space in Studio B, disseminating the use of current and future technologies, was welcome but there was little sense of other participative, cross-era attractions. Regarding interpretation, timelines, described as 'anathema' by various interviewees, also re-emerged into the project.

'And you think, why is this a problem?'

Changing requirements for optimal use of the spaces had to be taken into account; in particular, whether the exhibition hall required the daylight levels previously assumed essential. This necessitated the fully glazed (and acoustically and ecologically problematic) roof. At

9 Given that, Wilson says, 'We get 10,000 people up and down the hill in an evening to see concerts and we use a shuttle bus and it happens very quickly and the licensing authorities are perfectly happy with that.'

229 similar venues like east London's ExCeL centre, natural light is limited.

[I]n the original Great Hall there was always an element of daylight from above ... So any new scheme that came was either to insulate the existing glass but [also to] maintain some elements of daylight that could be closed off or opened up so you still have that ability for the space to breathe, for the light, daylight and the view (Hamilton, in interview).

The 'acoustic problem' was much mentioned, and described by Wilson as 'reputedly not bad for concerts, it's spoken word that's difficult'. In terms of the masterplan:

What we were talking about in relation to acoustics was the existing roof and the glazed units ... the quality isn't too bad ... When they have a large volume of people in there, it gets quite warm and hot so they have to vent out to get the fresh air and often it's the noise escaping from those parts (Hamilton, in interview).

Despite these underwhelming endorsements, following acoustic research work AP was confident that using retractable banners on the walls would adequately dampen the acoustic, taking into account the effects of seating, upholstery and people.

Public transport was considered more of an obstacle to the future of AP's entertainment business. Perceived concerns emerged in interviews about inadequate access discouraging visitors, making sustainable levels of use unachievable. According to Willmott, 'It became a mental block ... despite the fact that the station was at the bottom of the hill, bus links to three tube stations and about 2000 car parking spaces onsite.' Wilson shared the opinion that the problem is 'mostly psychological' but added, 'I'm not discounting it because everybody mentions it.'⁹ Importantly, Hamilton noted: 'Traffic is positive, it brings people'. His suggestion was 'changing surface, changing priority and slowing traffic down [which] allows the pedestrian much more free-flow. Like South Kensington: if you want to cross the road, you cross the road and cars stop for you.'

10 It has to be recognised that surveys and consultation are unlikely to reach potential hotel clientele.

11 Equally important, as it appeared on maps in early 2015, the station is named 'Alexandra Palace'. It would almost certainly be of more use than the 'wild schemes for cable cars to Wood Green and all sorts of nutty things' mentioned by Willmott.

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'The whole hotel option'

The hotel plan ranked fifth in the Six Big Ideas yet featured much lower in the priorities from surveys and consultation exercises.¹⁰ The success and implementation of the HLF bid and subsequent works as a substantial foundation would make the hotel an attractive prospect because the majority of the finance for the project will have been provided by public funds, with additional financing from LBH: 'It was always clear that it was going to be public money. ... The private sector might be interested as long as the profits are there and they won't have to take any risk with the building then' (Willmott). This assumption about the symbiotic effect of the hotel on the funding bid and future business outweighed consultation outcomes. The current plan for a hotel ('probably slightly bigger than a boutique hotel, up to 180 bedrooms, 4*'), depended on positive market response. The 'market testing' process would then attract a partner and a developer for the hotel. Several interviewees expressed the view that if permission came from HLF to proceed from the development phase, it would be more than a boost to market testing, it would make the hotel part of the project feasible. Perhaps the success of the St Pancras model added to its attraction, although its location at a central London railway terminus is crucial.

Interviewees mentioned the potential for the site if the station at AP in the 2014 Crossrail2 underground line proposal went ahead.¹¹ While there was no way of knowing how likely this is,

[o]ften it's an accumulation of these types of things, lots of leverage. When they're consulting on where that station might be ... Duncan's team can go and say "look, this our vision. HLF bought into the vision, these are our numbers, this is what we do, the station should be here". Immediately that changes the whole hotel option. (Hamilton, in interview).

And the 'hotel option' is considered essential for future financial sustainability to attract the business-to-business market in exhibitions and conferences.

12 Only the Secretary of State can vary the powers of the Act.
13 http://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk/organizations/index.php?org_id=406Description & History, accessed 14 February 2014

231 'Always a big cast'

Governance

The APPCT is a statutory charity set up by the LBH to run Alexandra Palace and Park, represented at council committee level by the AP Palace and Park Board. The borough partially funds APPCT, mostly through loans and support from the Alexandra Palace Trading Limited, the Trust's trading subsidiary, which manages commercial activities. LBH is the freeholder under the 1900 Act (which originally set up the Alexandra Park and Palace Trust), as modified by the 1985 Act, which gave the Trust specific powers to enable hotel development.¹² Upholding the vision of the original Palace, the Act aims:

[to] regenerate Alexandra Palace and Park, in the pioneering spirit of our founders, creating a proud, iconic London destination with global appeal, and a successful, valued and sustainable asset for all, including the local community and stakeholders.¹³

The complexities and the number of stakeholders were clear; additionally, 'extensive public consultation' sought the user voice, and was in part a projection of it. The continued inclusivity in the proposals for the 'people's palace', driven by APPCT's terms of reference and LBH's policies, and the charity's specific aims for AP, as 'diverse and truly accessible', were borne out in the process of the HLF bidding and the designs proposed. For LBH, under the financial constraints of local councils, it was imperative to establish the case for financial sustainability in order to attract private funding from developers. It was equally crucial for the council to ensure long-term community benefit.

Setting out the APPCT's objectives gives the full measure of its breadth, and its ability to fulfil any criteria for grant applications or potential funders.

Our objectives over the next five years are:

- to achieve long-term financial sustainability to secure the future of the Palace and Park as a public amenity and visitor destination;

14 http://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk/organizations/index.php?org_id=406Description & History, accessed 14 February 2014

15 Except for in 2007 when a 125-year lease of the entire building was granted to the Firoka Group for a £55 million plan for commercial uses and authorised by the Charity Commission. After considerable public and legal opposition, Mr Justice Sullivan quashed the authorisation on 5 October 2007 on the basis that details of the lease were not given in time for public consultation.

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- to redevelop the Palace and Park as a leisure and entertainment destination, anchored by a major live entertainment venue, to match the best on offer in London whilst retaining the special nature of ‘the People’s Palace’;
- to respect the rich history and heritage potential of the Palace and Park and their continued preservation, refurbishment, interpretation and use as a resource for learning and enjoyment;
- to deliver wider community benefit, including contributions to public health and well-being, the environment and the economy;
- a commitment to quality and to high standards of design, delivery, management and operations, to meet the expectations of users and stakeholders and befitting the historic importance and iconic nature of the destination;
- maintaining free access to the Park and selected parts of the Palace and continuing to manage it as an amenity for the local community and for visitors.¹⁴

The values and intentions expressed in this list – enshrined in statute, formulated by a statutory charity run by a local authority, and administered by its various committee and institutional boards – were remarkably similar to AP’s early philanthropic–commercial objectives.¹⁵ In a private development the objectives would be more likely to mention operating for profit and paying dividends to shareholders, and probably restrict further ‘free’ access. Additionally, ‘wider community benefit’ might not be foregrounded nor the ‘learning and enjoyment’ that brought another echo of the Reithian ‘educate inform entertain’ refrain. Wilson’s comment that ‘Governance tends to be a little bit complicated’ might well be understating the situation, referring to current as well as historical arrangements.

It’s a slightly special structure in that we’re a statutory charity so the borough is the freeholder and ... we’re discharging the borough’s charitable objectives as an independent trust but all our trustees are appointed by the borough (Wilson, in interview).

The issue of the independence of such a trust was not ignored. Willmott explains:

The board of trustees is basically a council committee. Haringey Council is the trustee of the charity so I became the Chair of the board through being a councillor.... These complicated relationships between councils, trusts, charities, trading arms and so on can be effective as long as people recognise the different kinds of jurisdictions.

Willmott described another layer of committee, the statutory advisory committee, created by the 1985 Act, which 'gives the residents' associations all around some power. They have to be consulted on a range of issues, particularly planning.' Unwieldy though the structure of governance might be, the idea of the Palace as open to all is upheld: in the invocation of the (reordered) aim to 'entertain, inform and educate' their publics; in its breadth of attractions; in offering ticket discounts across the target demographic for Haringey residents and school groups; and physically, in the expressed intention of the design of the East Court as an extension of the park.

Progress of the Round 2 proposal

The Round 2 HLF application for capital construction works involved a project of close to £30 million. LBH had 'more or less' agreed £7 million and the Palace asked HLF for £18/19 million of the rest. This left a £5 million fundraising target. Given the ubiquity of fundraising for arts buildings, historic buildings, monuments and local landmarks, it seems astonishing that AP's first professional fundraiser started work only in November 2014 but then, as Wilson said, 'raising money for a local-authority owned building as a charity ... it's complicated.' Nonetheless, the prospects looked encouraging.

In February 2015 *Building Design* reported that the borough's planning committee had given consent to proceed with the £28 million scheme. In March, several months earlier than expected, HLF's provisional approval of funding of £19.4 million was announced. Delivery phase

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was to begin in April 2015; construction in January 2016; completion, 2018. The project won the Public Buildings Unbuilt category at the New London Awards 2015, organised by New London Architecture. Until the public can be seen in and around the new project, its success as a public building cannot be truly judged, but this was still a very positive boost at that stage, even as an award for good intentions.

Section 2 Heritage and Regeneration

The meaning of the terms 'heritage' and 'regeneration' has been skewed in their current usage, serving largely to uphold hegemonic or establishment values and describing static and uninspired cultural sites and events (heritage) or solely supporting gentrification in the interests of capital (regeneration), positioning them as discredited and unprogressive. Examining the conceptual framework surrounding these terms, and ways in which they have been understood and developed in different eras, provided context for the thesis, deepening the understanding of a building like AP and the positioning of the forthcoming building works within this framework.

Within the mesh of statutory protection in the UK and its preservation organisations, as outlined below, decisions have to be made about what is kept and what is not.¹⁶ Some monuments and buildings are considered 'too big' or valuable to lose; the strong inference is that anything to be preserved has to have a marketable use and therefore a monetary value. AP, for example, was long derided by some as a 'white elephant'; its local and international significance has been recognised now but it had to be considered financially sustainable to merit both private and public investment. If some aspects of heritage are no longer considered essential to retain or of innate importance, and capitalisation is understood as standard practice, the underlying meaning and importance of heritage needs to be clarified. How is heritage being presented and how is it being used as an instrument of regeneration?

Heritage involves aspects of history in the form of objects, buildings, ideas, narratives, traditions and memories that people use to create and uphold a chosen identity, relating to preservation of the past. Heritage is being presented to the public as embodying and representing: continuity, enduring narratives, shared histories and values, national meaning, and pride in perceived UK cultural traditions and institutions. These categories include the innovation and invention, communication and technology of AP specifically. 'Heritage value' can be deployed to demonstrate compliance with aims and requirements of public bodies involved in a project, such as contributing to social inclusion, broadening public access and so on. Depending on the aspect of history involved, the inclusivity may be broad-based (for example, First World War centenary events) or, for example, focused on a particular ethnicity (such as the Moses, Mods and Mr Fish exhibition on tailoring at the Jewish

17 The term gentrification was coined in 1964 by Ruth Glass in relation to the London areas of Islington and Notting Hill. Glass saw artists and bohemian incomers as agents, however unwittingly, of displacement of previous residents.
18 Panel discussion, Invisible Cities, Folkestone Triennial 11/12 October 2014; Ben Campkin also noted that 'developers have stopped using the term heritage and that's reason enough to continue.'

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Museum in London, 2016). Interest from individual members of the public may extend beyond their own experience, and visitors from other communities may take different meanings from any offering. Heritage has also become an industry, a profession, a business, a marketing process. It can be used as part of a marketing 'offer', of a story attached to validate and embed the project, and in which the user can be included.

The impact of heritage on the present can emerge as part of a regeneration programme that instrumentalises it: regeneration often purports to create a place for heritage presentation and preservation. Regeneration, in terms of urban development and planning, involves social and environmental improvements aimed at reversing decline in dilapidated areas or those no longer functioning or attractive, making more congenial places to live and work. This can mean increasing and enhancing social and cultural capital as well as physical renewal. *Writing AP* aims to demonstrate this kind of input; its multilayered narratives from past and present work as a device intended to situate the Palace in an unsanitised, non-retro future, to inscribe narratives of place and building and develop a wider, more inclusive sense of identity (and this has to sit within the context of profit-led investment).

In practice, regeneration work is currently undertaken in partnerships with private companies, whose investment of financial capital for renewal brings in another set of interests that may not be shared by or benefit the people who live and work there. Ben Campkin points out in *Forty Ways to Think About Architecture* (2014) that in many cases regeneration involves activities that lead to sanitisation and removal of the qualities of diversity and creativity it is supposed to foster, in a process of gentrification or social cleansing.¹⁷ Divergent interests might well have been evident too when regional and local government funded regeneration schemes. In that period, however, more stringent and accessible regulatory channels existed to express discontents and oppose, sometimes even overturn, development plans. Katherine Clarke of muf architecture/art commented at the 2014 Invisible Cities conference on how vested interests of developers and funders and the concomitant lack of transparency had altered the concept of regeneration beyond reclamation.¹⁸

Regeneration is tarnished as a term too through inappropriate use, over-burdened with meaning to the point of becoming

19 Alexandra Palace Action Group and Save Our Space were two of these, mentioned in Scene 5.

20 <http://www.spab.org.uk/>

21 The consumerist thrust of this conservationist rebranding is demonstrated by headings on the homepage such as 'Shopping ideas' and spending a special Victorian-style christmas at one of their properties. See <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>

237 meaningless, like 'the community', in whose name it is frequently said to be effected. Michael Edwards articulates a commonly held view in 'A call for longitudinal regeneration' (2013): 'Along with other slippery terms like "sustainable" and "diverse" it has become a fig leaf used to legitimise almost any urban property development'. The terms placemaking and revitalisation were raised at the conference among possible alternatives. Ben Campkin coined 'place imaginaries' as another possibility to add to, supplant or strengthen the lexicon among the ideas for taking heritage and regeneration forward. He claimed the term engages the specific features and material conditions of cities, using forms of representation that have agency and are affective within urban change. Ultimately, though, looking for new terminology is probably a diversion from the real issue of making regeneration a meaningful process.

Gatekeepers of preservation

In AP's lifetime, organisations evidencing the value placed on heritage as an element of national, regional and local identity, and on its retention and use in regeneration programmes, have included the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB); the National Trust (NT); English Heritage (EH); and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Numerous 'single-issue' groups exist too, whose members organise to support 'saving' buildings of national or local significance.¹⁹

SPAB was set up in 1877 by members of the PreRaphaelite Brotherhood, among them John Ruskin and William Morris. The ambition was to confront concern that architects were being over-zealous in their 'restorations'. According to Morris in the SPAB manifesto, buildings needing protection included 'anything which can be looked on as artistic, picturesque, historical, antique, or substantial ... any work, in short, over which educated, artistic people would think it worth while to argue'.²⁰ The NT was established in 1907, in response to 'the plight of the country house' or, cynically, the plight of its owner, as distinct from SPAB's 'educated, artistic' elite. In 2014 the NT's website charted efforts to revise this (un)popular image, stating: 'We're a UK conservation charity, protecting historic places and green spaces, and opening them up for ever, for everyone.'²¹ EH was the government's statutory advisor on the historic environment, established in 1983. Officially known as the

22 In 2015 much of EH's work was taken over by Historic England, according to bdonline, 5 February 2015, <http://www.bdonline.co.uk>. The English Heritage Trust, a separate charity, will manage the portfolio of historic properties and comment on planning applications and listed buildings.

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Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), it oversaw the 'Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' and administered the listing programme instigated in 1950 to deal with wartime damage.²² The value of listing individual buildings, a decision made by the Secretary of State, is often loudly debated, gathering much public interest and press coverage, whether to 'buy time' so that new owners or uses can be found or to guard buildings from what is considered inappropriate refurbishment or redevelopment. AP is an example of contested attempts at listing: in 1996 the LBH, the owner, opposed listing, and in 2007, the BBC, with Hornsey Historical Society, sought unsuccessfully to have the listing raised to Grade II*.

Like EH, HLF is a non-departmental public body accountable to the DCMS, a relationship that sounds as complicated in practice as AP's governance: 'the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport issues financial and policy instructions to us, and we report to Parliament through the department. Our decisions about individual applications and policies are entirely independent of the Government'. Set up in 1994 to distribute monies from the newly established National Lottery, the HLF website headline 'The value of heritage' was promising but the explanation fell into anodyne and largely meaningless phrases of corporate copywriting. The breakdown of HLF grant areas was more informative (arts, 20 per cent; charities, health, education, environment, 40 per cent; and sports, 20 per cent), defining the scope of their work and what heritage is in HLF terms. Case study outlines of 'regeneration through heritage' gave specifics about sites, environments and buildings where HLF work and funding was brought to bear and its subjects and beneficiaries: young people, neglected buildings, local pride. The notion that heritage is a commodity that both brings investment and requires it was clearly stated, as was the link with tourism and marketing. HLF funding can be used, as it is for AP, to 'transform heritage'; in its widest interpretation, this might be taken to mean reuse and revitalisation of what has already been there, to recover what has been lost.

'Wildly discrepant meanings'

Researchers have disagreed on definitions of heritage. The

subtitle above comes from historian Raphael Samuel, in a phrase that describes heritage as 'a nomadic term ... capacious enough to accommodate wildly discrepant meanings' (1994:205), which he then proves by calling it 'a hegemony that traffics in and commodifies the past' (1994:243). For David Harvey, heritage 'is a process concerned with legitimization of the power of national and other cultural/social identities' (2001:45). Other commentators, including Patrick Wright (1985, 1991) and Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Isar (2004), describe heritage (or its implementation) as essentially a backward-looking, nostalgic yearning for an idealised version of the past, an outlook that Laurajane Smith suggests in *Uses of Heritage* was encouraged in times of cultural decline and stagnation (2006). She coined the term 'authorised heritage discourse' or AHD for this, in which input from marginal sections of the population would be described as competing narratives or 'dissonance'. Her stance is that no heritage narrative is uniformly shared and she notes, more significantly, that those 'others' contesting AHD as misleading, partial or incorrect, may be seen as disrupting not adding to it.

For David Uzzell in *Heritage Interpretation* (1989) as well as Smith, the idea and the practice of heritage has been 'hi-jacked' by tourism, public relations and leisure, in which interpretation is used as a 'sales tool'. Roger Silverstone's interpretation (in Uzzell:1989:138) in his essay 'Heritage as Media: Some Implications for Research' also defines heritage as an industry 'in the business of mass communication'. Smith maintains that with AHD, heritage cannot be a dynamic process; rather, 'It is something visitors are led to, are instructed about but are then not invited to engage with more actively' (2006:30). As an alternative, Uzzell opens up the idea of 'professionalisation through involvement'. He sees heritage invoked in this way with 'enthusiasts' contributing to reshaping heritage narratives as representations and responses to the ephemerality of identity, with its redefinitions of class structures and shifting socio-economic patterns. For him, heritage is not static and unchanging. He also argues that interpretation and narrative drivers of projects might contribute positively to regeneration. Raul Lejano, Mirill Ingram and Helen Ingram in 'Linking Narratives to Practice' (2013:193) advocate the use of narrative as a practical tool in participation by planners and policy makers in regeneration since it 'reveals how identity is marked by both constancy and change'.

Doreen Massey's work is equally important here, stressing the importance of recognising and refusing essentialist characterisations in relation to place: 'The past is no more authentic than the present; there will be no one reading of it. And "traditions" are frequently invented' (1994:141). Pierre Nora's plea for the formulation of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), 'We must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organise celebrations ... because such activities no longer occur naturally' (1989), exposes the problematics of 'real' and 'authenticity' in relation to heritage, suggesting both the existence and the impossibility of an uncontested single position of legitimacy. Elisa Giaccardi sets out a distinction between official memory projecting forward to future generations and collective memory that looks back, which is, she says, considered of less substance, which echoes Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer's use of the term 'cultural memory' 'as an alternative to private subjectivism and uncontrollable self-indulgence' (1999:180). Pierre Nora interprets the usage of the term memory as for those whose history (or heritage) is excluded from official history (2011:x). David Harvey commented on Nora's distinction between what is deemed history, the 'elite institutionalised memory preserved in archives, and the memory of ordinary people, unrecorded and ingrained in the unspoken traditions and habits of everyday life', that these traditions can be transformed through technological and archival development (2001:329).

Changing practices

The selection and shaping of heritage narratives must not be imagined a late-twentieth-century invention. Neil Silberman and Margaret Purser point out that '[t]he acceptance of carefully designed and authoritatively presented narratives as the normative structure of public heritage communication is a tradition that extends back for centuries' (2012:14).

Whether understood as objects or buildings, collections of values or histories, it was aspects of the lives of an elite segment of society that were traditionally considered to constitute national heritage. Through open days and public collections their houses, gardens, historical narratives were shown to the rest of the population (often

the paying public), whose objects and stories were not thought sufficiently valuable or interesting to be preserved or shared. A growing understanding that heritage concerned the management of cultural and social values, meanings and associations from all sections of society took hold in the late twentieth century. The circle of people whose histories were considered as heritage in its material and more intangible senses extended gradually through activism and scholarship to include ordinary or working-class people, women and minority ethnic groups. Given the slow and slight nature of these changes, it is unsurprising that a MORI poll commissioned by EH in 2000 surveying attitudes to heritage found that many British Black and Asian people 'saw traditional definitions of heritage and its association with national narratives as irrelevant to them.'

The importance of AP in terms of cultural recovery as understood in the thesis is precisely that it is a site owned and occupied by multiple individual and shared meanings. Laurajane Smith's ambition for heritage in *Uses of Heritage* is close to the approach in this thesis in respect of cultural recovery and to that being taken in the works at AP: that it could be 'a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present' (2006:1). In her configuration, heritage has potential for using the past in the form of collective and individual memories to negotiate new ways of expressing identity in the present and future. It can only be through the lens of the present, its cultural processes and activities conferring meaning and value on to heritage, that the supposed certainties of the past are re-presented and broadcast differently. The process of recovery of AP, with ever-changing attitudes to the past continually shaping expression in and of present and future, echoes too interpretations by Smith and Bal *et al.* Although the client was adamant that it is not a museum, AP undoubtedly shares some aspects of one, with media its subject and tool. The heritage and memories of local people in Haringey and London more widely were valued as part of the substance in the process of recovery, in what might be termed a museum of memories, as a site and as a container.

Usefully in relation to *Writing AP*, Uzzell's suggestions on the uses of narrative in regeneration (and their role in underpinning the construction of identity) extend to storytelling and performance. The polyvocal treatment in the writing and the approach of the works at AP share much of Roger Silverstone's interpretation of heritage, too:

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the boundary between museums and media, and that between reality and fantasy, between myth and mimesis in both sets of institutions and practices, is becoming increasingly blurred, increasingly indistinct (in Uzzell:1989:138).

Campkin's 'place imaginaries' goes some way to describe the polyvocal process, encompassing the real and the fictional.²³ It sounds an unlikely contender though striking as a concept, and could be used to articulate ways in which contested sites are constructed, recognised or distorted with multiple, conflicted perspectives.

The reuse and re-interpretation of sites and buildings, described by Harvey as a 'crucial and enduring concept', was an underlying principle of this thesis (2001:335). Determining whether sites or objects of heritage can develop or whether they must remain untouched and be allowed to degrade can be couched in terms of authenticity, and attitudes to what constitutes authenticity vary dramatically between eras and cultures, as Doreen Massey's work suggests. It can be defined as synonymous with 'as found' or keeping something in its current state, rather than trying to recreate it in a faux version of the original, like the approach to the Victorian theatre at AP. Others extend the meaning of the term to a complete opposition to any restoration, like the stakeholders who wanted to keep the BBC Studios entirely unaltered, as 'museum pieces'.

The relationship of people to the place as well as the Palace itself and what it contains (the studios, the theatre and the Willis organ) were considered priceless assets in redeveloping the site and as incentives for further phases. Added to this was the sense of belonging through shared social memory of significant public events, such as the 2010 London Mayoral hustings that took place at AP, as an alternative to more establishment power centres. The importance of local and elective belonging, as in how visitors there described their experience of the place, brought a different kind of cultural practice to mirror these values and understandings in the construction and regulation of heritage sites by users and authorities.

Mechanisms of delivery, such as the Activity Plan of AP's Learning and Community Programme (LCP) mentioned in Section 1,

243 are crucial to understanding how interpretations of heritage relate to the Palace, as well as demonstrating attitudes about audience. Uzzell's 'professionalisation through involvement', which might be described as the development of 'enthusiasts into experts', is important here. These mechanisms foster a sense of inclusion, an understanding of shared but diverse identities, and make an impact on people's feelings of engagement. Providing less formal settings in organisation, venue and style (than, say, council planning meetings) would encourage people to tell their 'stories' or express ideas and discontents, making them comfortable enough to contribute to discussion on heritage and its uses, and to offer opinions, reasonably confident that they would be heard.²⁴

Aside from the Activity Plan, methods of work underway at AP such as the public exhibitions for consultation purposes and their organisation and staffing can be seen as additionally developing the idea of 'participatory heritage', as raised by Lejano *et al* (2013). They stressed the importance of flexibility and openness in programme design as '[a] purposeful attempt to collect a more complete narrative with multiple voices allows for a different dimension of actors to emerge ... an antidote to the sterility of the single note', and to engineer a move away from the inevitability of the note being from the official voice (2013:194). With AP, re-presenting heritage is about continuity and change for lasting impact, as the ways and means of telling the story develop, as they must in order to avoid static displays and loss of audience. It necessitated some form of evolving 'participatory culture', distinct from older concepts of heritage as unambiguous, unmediated in presentation, defined by experts/professionals and needing protection. Hank Dittmar in 'Even Modernism is History Now' (2014) validates this approach, calling for:

... an architecture which both extends the relevance of historic buildings and sees itself as producing future heritage – long life, loose fit. This implies a more plural approach, and certainly the profession now acknowledges what the public long ago accepted: that there is no clear blue water between the present and the past.

Laurajane Smith regrets the continued privileging of expert values and knowledge in the presentation of heritage through the use of

an authorised professional discourse, or AHD as she puts it, as it is inevitably exclusionary since it defines who are legitimate commentators on the past (2006). Despite this, it would probably be considered outdated now in heritage–tourism circles to view the public as passive consumers of heritage, in whatever form. The aim of the current works at AP belie Giaccardi’s claim, too, that ‘issues of heritage value and its wider social significance have not yet been placed at the core of the design management and renewal of heritage experience’ (2012:2).

Whether the stated aim of ‘increased access, participation and learning’ at AP is achieved remains to be seen. Some aspects are measurable (like footfall, ticket sales, volunteering numbers) but the most lasting and powerful is the least tangible: the sense of ownership of this diverse heritage, needing to be continuously extended to take account of new users.

Having looked at contexts of the thesis in terms of the onsite refurbishment and heritage and regeneration, the focus in this section moves to audience. The multiplicity of positions on and attitudes towards heritage, as explored in the previous section, is in itself an indication of the necessity of considering the range of possible audiences and applications. Polyvocalism provides a linking factor between heritage and audience. The reception and application for the Scenes of *Writing AP* and the thesis chapters are reflected upon here as texts for reading and for application, and specifically in relation to the works at AP. The intention is for the writing to contribute to architecture, to be part of it: to have some application of (my) practice into the practice of architecture (research as applied practice), as well as the writing method having some transferability to other buildings.

To consider audience in relation to architecture is to think of those who use, view and read it, whether the physical structure or in the form of photography, text and drawing for consumers of specialist journalism (and, later, books). The focus on the user explicit in the theoretical foundations of the research in ethnography and Reception Theory leads into a focus on the user of the writing, and the recognition in ethnography of the value of including voices usually unrepresented can itself lead to different audiences being reached. A reader is one type of 'user' of writing, which exists purely as material for reading as an end in itself; material that also has the capacity to be reshaped for a range of audiences, platforms and publications. Incorporating future, present and past lives of the building in the writing extends the scope of potential audience from past users, historians and those interested in the idea of cultural recovery to current users and those working in the field, and to 'regeneration' and 'heritage' agencies.

Andrew Saint emphasises the need for consideration of audience in architecture writing, complaining in 'How To Write About Buildings?' (2014) [sic] that most of what is written about buildings today is not well written, and suggests that:

The unfortunate answer seems to be: because the audience for such writing [in academic journals] is unclear, and so its manner of expression does not really matter. ... But for architecture-as-art the case is otherwise. An audience, a listener

beyond some picky and prosaic peer-reviewing committee, ought always to be in the author's mind.

With an approach informed by art writing and site writing, that readership would likely be interested in this work too, and those concerned with cultural responses to cultural recovery. Audience and architecture have specific connotations in the context of this case study, relating to buildings of spectacle, such as theatres, galleries, multiplexes, music halls, picture palaces. These inform notions of who might constitute audiences for the thesis too: those interested in popular entertainment and culture. Audiences for my earlier work have included those engaged with architecture writing and history, architecture fiction, London buildings and writing on place, as well as site-specific audiences (residents, ex/employees, holidaymakers, club members, students etc). The work has encompassed autonomous and collaborative working, within architecture practices, cultural institutions and independently, published and exhibited in print, online and gallery environments.

Audience necessarily develops alongside the research, as an adjunct; they share an element of surprise and serendipity. To say that no author knows what reception their work will attract, or who will read it, can be taken as an acknowledgement of the extent of possibility. It is not evidence of disengagement with the question of audience. There is the audience the writer knew she was writing for – the authority (commissioner or examiner) in whatever form that takes, and their constituency. Then there are the other audiences that she had in mind, starting with herself as first reader and stretching outwards. Although the writer cannot know where readers come from, their interests, what they know, their first language, their literacy level, their age, a knowledge of the different understandings of broader constituencies exists and some sense of what audiences want the writing to do, what they want it for. The practice element of the research is writing and the research has been undertaken in a school of architecture in an art college, already suggesting some expectations about audiences for this work. Leading on from this, it is feasible to approach practice, teaching and research as the categories from within which the writing might have application, as Klaske Havik outlined in *Urban Literacy: Reading and Writing Architecture* (2014). This then leads into how the writing might be instrumentalised.

25 The term comes from the 'ReAuthoring Project'. Their usage takes the reinterpretation for new platforms beyond rewriting for different audiences or for online use, involving 'a writer remaking work that has a valid existence on the page first of all' for a different audience, one that will largely experience it as a public, audio-visual happening rather than as a private, text-centric event.' See <http://www.reauthoring.co.uk>; Detective Stories (2011) is an audio/spoken word installation made with the ReAuthoring Project.

26 One possible route for producing this is the BBC4/Artangel Open Art collaboration strand for audio/text work.

Writing this building

Building on these earlier and projected audiences, *Writing AP*, or distinct strands of it, could be published and broadcast for print or digital platforms. Many options exist too for reworking the writing, as features, short stories and so on, tailored to specific constituencies. The structure of the practice writing, with its interviews, first-person narratives, historiography, creative non-fiction, lends itself to this type of filleting or re-presenting for groups of readers. For example, conversations constructed of excerpts from the character voices, versions of those opening each Scene, could be printed billboard-size as hoardings around the Palace when works are onsite.

Other channels to explore would be rewriting excerpts and stories for distribution via local press (digital and/or print versions) to coincide with the launch of the East Court in 2018. For example, a series of pamphlets could form part of a 'welcome pack', about an aspect of the place the visitor finds herself in. These might cover thematic aspects of the building and its history; the story of the redevelopment; residents' and users' memories; fictions; or measurement and quantification. In terms of the thesis, repackaging and reworking sections for papers, chapters and articles for journals, conferences and books at different stages in research and so for particular audiences is a common strategy in academia too.

Writing AP also lends itself to 'reauthoring' for audio transmission as 'audio-architecture', or as a series of podcasts. This could be played within the Palace itself as an installation or integrated into the East Court 'experience'. Havik (2014) uses the term 'transcription' to describe the process of transfer or reissue from one medium to another – similar to a 'reauthoring'.²⁵ Further, she claimed that this fed into participation, and the familiar role of the reader or user in production of the text/building through reading/use. Further afield, audio pieces could be broadcast on local, national or specialist radio (such as Hellenic radio, Radio London, Resonance fm) or designed as installations in local borough buildings, hospitals and other public sites.²⁶ Another ambition for the writing, post-PhD, is to rework a piece for performance in the Victorian theatre.

Writing AP is not a blueprint for writing any and every

building. It was produced demonstrably out of the research on the Palace, as the response the building elicited. The plurivocal method was developed in relation to the specifics of AP. It was designed to appeal to varied audiences involved in and affected by recovery of the building, making past and present users and uses evident on the page in order to bring them into evidence for incorporation into the future life of the Palace and considering new purposes for this particular building. This method of excavating the specificity of a building as detailed in Chapter 2 is transferable. Aspects and methods of this research can be reapplied to buildings sharing characteristics or functions, for working with buildings similar in use or type or programme or age, amended to suit whatever specifics they demonstrate.

Every specific project or building would necessarily entail some recasting of details of the method, and so the form the writing takes would reflect this. The process here foregrounds what is intrinsic to the individual building as an essential part of writing the building: its design, attributes, uses, materials, history, narratives, users, as the unique production every building must be. The practice writing may be understood as excerpts from a design or design drafts, always site-specific, with the inevitable changes that follow in further drafts and implementation to reach particular audiences. The transferability of the method has an influence on potential audiences too, effectively broadening the possible scope.

Application in: Practice Education Research

Through writing, the research aims to contribute to a method of cultural recovery that could have application at the scale of the individual, the institution, the city and the region. It could help to alleviate cultural alienation that can be experienced in the face of change, and that can impede and limit the outcomes of meaningful regeneration.

The focus on instrumentality through application of the research developed with, as part of, the research from a tentative statement, in early proposal form, about the use of the writing: that it might possibly make an addition to the literature on attachment to place and investment in buildings for the development of architecture practice.

27 Projects by Kirsten Kreider and James O'Leary include *Edge City* (2013) in Lisbon, weaving narratives with fiction, video documentary and cultural geography, and *Eight Rooms* (2005), documenting a derelict wing of Cork City gaol.

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The 'aesthetic' impact of literature and the 'expediency' of instrumentality, as Sarah Brouillette describes it in *Literature and the Creative Economy* (2014), were both, together, important in themselves and intrinsic to the success of this work; there is no mutual exclusivity between them. This again has implications for audience/s, since part of using writing to 'make something happen' is in creating new audiences.

In architectural practice, a writer in the team as part of the research process contributes to the outcome, as a deliberate application of that research and as a progression of the process. My previous writing projects working with architecture practices have included manifold activities in originating or reworking texts: writing the proposal; contributing to research and consultation; outlining projects for delivery; running workshops and sessions onsite; liaising with stakeholders, and so on. Being incorporated from the outset is clearly crucial for full involvement in and effect on a project. Working with writing to demonstrate that the 'story' of any building is told in more than one voice, that it is not and can never be captured in a single narrative or script means that 'architecture becomes a reading of space, allowing multiple interpretations, rather than [just] as finished product' (Havik:123); a single voice suggests a one-dimensional building. Her talk of 'scriptwriting' as part of programming appears positive and attractive: bringing words to the stage that the building is or will become but also raises concerns about a script that cannot be deviated from, which would be conceptually foreshortened or prescriptive.

In a time of austerity when many practices are undertaking small interventions out of necessity, the aim to be part of the practice rather than an adjunct or useful freelance colleague may not be an achievable ambition. Similar positions exist, however, in medium-size mainstream practices: Clare Hughes' position as Creative Producer and Curator at FCB entailed work closely related to mine, as became apparent during this research. Establishing a new practice is another possibility, such as writer and architect Kreider + O'Leary have done in their collaborative, interdisciplinary work about architectural sites.²⁷

In educational contexts this method of writing buildings has use for academics and students, in writing workshops and modules with architecture studios or units as ways of exploring the use of language in projects and conceptual issues relating to the design and projected

28 These categories are not hermetic – an architect working in education and in practice may also be studying for further qualifications. It is entirely possible that this exemplary person would be a user of the building too.

29 The AHRC and NESTA, major public funders for research in the UK, both foreground this. AHRC describes knowledge exchange hubs operating as consortia to develop the creative economy, and also as partnerships for developing businesses' competitiveness. The phrase in use by NESTA is 'knowledge commons', shared resources connecting research and practice.

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uses.²⁸ Through use of a photograph or plan of a building, students can engage with the expanded dimensions of the text, seeing correspondences in different disciplines. With its visual and linguistic basis, *ekphrasis* (sustained writing on an image or artefact; discussed in Chapter 2), is a useful tool for teaching and learning about writing in architecture. This use of writing in teaching will develop, Havik suggests, through students seeing this approach as part of architecture, having been introduced to it during their education, and so viewing writers as potential members of the team. New generations of architects become qualified having undertaken related writing exercises and also having applied the process, or seen it applied, within live projects.

Academic culture and regulation in some European countries demands the public defence of a PhD thesis, and the value of this is surely, besides the spectacle and communal sense of achievement and resolution for the candidate, that it makes the student consider an expanded audience for their research, albeit one within the bounds of the academy. Opening this up further, the 'public intellectual' is one who writes and speaks about their work to an audience other than their colleagues and whose work is intended to address the social, cultural and political worlds around it. The mechanisms within which the public intellectual can operate include knowledge exchange, the process of sharing ideas and expertise, collaborations, communicating research, secondments between academic and non-academic organisations, making accessible knowledge that has value and application with academia and beyond.²⁹ The 'beyond' might include policy makers, developers and industry, and the 'exchange' is ultimately about social and economic, cultural and environmental outcomes and benefits. This circulation of ideas from within the academy, initially highly specialist, can lead into wider, more mainstream, arenas. This acts as a (small) corrective to the perceived narrowness of the academy, not necessarily in its subject matter but in its terms of access, and in turn the 'audiences' of its outputs, to use the current argot.

There is already demonstrable interest in relation to architecture writing and, broadly, its application in academic publishing, and therefore assumed audience. In 2014 NAI/010 and Stanford University Press published books relating to the subject: the aforementioned works by Klaske Havik and Sarah Brouillette. It is an area being written about

30 One of many examples from patter (accessed 23.7.15): <http://patthomson.net/2014/01/13/anticipate-the-unexpected-reader/>

31 Some recent examples: 'Are you waiting?' (forthcoming, 2016) and The Chronicle (editorship; forthcoming, 2016; funded by Guy's Hospital Trust/Future City); Building 519, (Whitstable Biennale 2014; funded by Canterbury City Council/Arts Council); Leysdown Rose-tinted (2009; funded by CABA Sea Change initiative, Kent County Council, Swale District Council, Leysdown Parish Council); Gateway Sounds: Sheppey Bridge and RSPB (2007; RIBA)

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in scholarship and generating critical attention and media response. The response to the dissemination of this research, including conference papers and less formal exchanges of blog posts and discussion, showed that interest exists in this particular approach; expressions of interest in future collaborations came from practitioners and educators in architecture, arts and writing, other researchers, and from museums and arts organisations.

Funding landscapes and financing projects

Consideration of audience is intrinsic to funding applications, across proposals for research or arts projects or book publishing, both who it is and who it could be. Whatever the funding body or their status (public, private, charity, trust etc), this is standard advice in any guide to writing, academic or literary.³⁰ In the recent past, my architecture writing projects have been funded through diverse sources and organisations, among them CABA (pre-2011), RIBA, the Arts Council, local and regional authorities, a hospital trust, a museum and public arts agencies.³¹

In terms of building or regeneration projects it may be too soon after the 2015 general election to say what new arrangements will exist in the funding landscape and so which audiences will be targeted in publicly funded projects. It is plain that these will more straitened, more oversubscribed and, simply, less; probably driving architecture in regeneration contexts into an even closer embrace with private capital. Relaxations to planning law since the election will have an effect on Section 106 monies, which some agencies and practices have been able to exploit advantageously in the past to fund art-based 'community benefit' activities, that developers will not otherwise fund because such non-commercial activities are of no 'benefit' to them. Clearly regeneration will continue in some form and polyvocality can be part of it; alternatively, taking a pessimistic view, the usual limited consultation procedures may preclude this. Local and regional authorities may understand the kind of architectural intervention of *Writing AP* as useful in multiple ways. Their ability to run credible consultations on developments or arts programmes rests in part on being seen to engage with and consult the public or publics, on demonstrating the value and role of alternative

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The first phase of the works (onsite 2016, completion 2018) will lift some areas of the Palace out of dereliction and others into use. As quoted earlier, even parts of AP currently in use such as the Great Hall and the Palm Court are in need of work.³² The hope was that a symbiotic effect would lead to funding for other refurbishments and further improvements. This might lead to future related writing projects, and on the crucial basis of involvement from inception, through connections made during the research.

Critical issues

When working as a contracted individual on a scheme, input and impact are highly dependent on the brief and, perhaps more significantly since a brief can always be unpicked and reformulated, by the body supplying the contract. Equally significant is the identity and nature of the client (local or unitary authority, public arts or architecture organisations, practice, developer, charities and trusts), and their position within the hierarchical nexus of 'multiple stakeholder' relationships.

Brouillette is critical of writers' involvement in regeneration schemes on the basis that it bestows economic value to a place being gentrified (2014). There is, one would hope, value in writing, but recognition of value other than the economic is also important. Some clients may be politically unattractive but to describe all development as socially unjust and injurious, or to conflate regeneration with gentrification is inaccurate. This would suggest that writers, unlike everyone else, can only work in politically acceptable circumstances and arenas, which certainly wipes out most of the publishing industry from consideration as possible commissioners. Writers, like everyone else, have to work within the conditions that exist (however much we may wish these were different), and can also work to change those conditions, using writing and other means to do so.

As Brouillette puts it, writing can be commodified in the interests of gentrification rather than serving the interests of those being marginalised in its wake; Finn Williams, paraphrasing Studio Weave, noted that in (arts) regeneration 'often the brief is to make everything better without changing anything'.³³ At the other end of the

34 She means literary fiction, a narrower definition of the writing that can have this capacity than is in contention here.

35 Havik mentions Tschumi, Eisenman and Libeskind in this regard; more locally, the work of practices such as East, Studio Weave and Public Works is relevant here.

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scale, in her chapter titled 'Architecture and Use: Telling Places', Havik says that with its 'capacity to offer precise accounts of social processes, [literature] can provide a cure in the sense that it can offer alternatives, new directions for society' (2014:107).³⁴ The idea of a 'cure' is impossibly ambitious, and well beyond the powers of literature. Contributing to improvement through offering alternatives, though, counts as a worthwhile and achievable ambition.

Both these positions are undeniable, but this does not automatically negate the worth of the writing, which is retained to some degree in speaking to and sensitising gentrifiers. Havik too still sees value in this use. She focuses on the work of (noted novelist!) Michel De Certeau to support her assertions about the user, since he 'suggests that narrative can be of great scientific value for research on social spatial practices' (2014:112). In asking 'Can architecture be designed to give space to different temporal experiences and simultaneously generate memories and evoke imaginations?', Havik recognises that architecture is about more than fixed permanent objects (2014:116). The design of architecture can lead to this but, for her, to try to 'design in' these elements is akin to prescriptive designs for those illusory 'public spaces' that are already fixed in terms of use and users.³⁵

It is apparent that audiences for events and activities at AP were overestimated from its first opening, taking no account of the limited leisure time and income of many of its intended participants. The expected audience, counter-intuitively perhaps in a people's palace, was everyone. Writing, by contrast, is rarely for 'everyone', a heart-sinking word to any commissioner, but the audiences and possible applications for *Writing AP*, as a whole and in its parts, for enjoyment and application, stretch across public authority and private developments, in practice, education and research.

...

This Chapter ends by bringing together audience and application for *Writing AP* with the current redevelopment work at the Palace. Both the writing and FCB's work on Phase 1 can be seen as part of a process, while having value in their own right. The writing covers the whole site, so its delivery of alternatives for future programming (see Scene 5, pp 209–14)

36 One example of this was from bdonline, with a standfirst that seemed to suggest the studios are being bulldozed, 'Green light for refurbishment of north London venue despite loss of BBC's first TV studios' (Blackman 2015).

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extends the potential scope of the works. Some ways in which the writing might have been applicable, had this research been programmed to link up with sections of the contract, are outlined here; how it might be used or reformulated to contribute to the reuse and reconfiguration of the space, distributed within the space itself and available as source material for designers to work with.

Financial sustainability, viewed through perceived long-term community benefit, overshadowed all other considerations with the terms of the 1995 Act, APPCT's objectives and Council policies. The project followed current models of leisure space within these parameters. The constraints of local government funding necessitated private funding and profitability rather than a not-for-profit model or a Community Interest Company basis, in which any surplus left after paying salaries is routed back into the company in the form of equipment or cost of outputs, such as events or publishing.

It would be time-consuming and therefore expensive to bring public comments and representation into the process continuously, alongside the already noted indirect, unchargeable costs of input of users prepared to engage with this part of the research. The cost of fees for another person for longer consultation/research-related activity on the redevelopment is undeniable though proportionally minuscule, but if more lasting regeneration were the effect, that cost would be outweighed easily. The practice writing might have been incorporated as a budget-friendly means of communication of short-form pieces to 'chronicle' stages of the project, as a kind of 'quick-fire literary response' unit to inform and engage the public. A series of missives could be distributed as inserts or downloads in local press, engendering different responses to feed into the programme, shifting the bounds of the conversation beyond the parameters of consultation, to dissipate alarmist (and misleading) reporting, to avoid fuelling 'fears' about impact and future use.³⁶

The focus for the first phase of works on opening up the eastern end of the building that includes the most historically significant areas made sense, and the western end is relatively functional and busy with the pub, the Palm Court and Western Hall in use for exhibitions and sports events. Further Scenes could be written on specific spaces where refurbishment is taking place. During many visits there in the course of the

research, the face of the Palace, the south façade, has been opened up and brightened in preparatory works. It no longer radiates the message 'closed'. The idea of the Palace as welcoming or off-putting, whether completely or selectively, runs through the practice, and this could be the basis for another Scene.

FCB's view of AP as a palimpsest of different forms of entertainment has informed their design, with the sense of one covering over the next. It might have been more useful to envisage it as an imbrication, a series of pictures contributing to a varied, dynamic image, rather than one layer obliterating the next. This might have incorporated some of the less well-publicised activities and events, and resulted in a lighter emphasis on the BBC. Details of the intended form of the contemporary presentation of transmission and reception in the East Court are unknown, but the focus on the BBC and Theatre (in terms of their heritage value) means that the design may not sufficiently represent the scope of claims that communities, groups and individuals make for public spaces they view as 'theirs' or feel proprietorial about the panoply of uses they expect such spaces to provide. While acknowledging that no single approach or commentator or design can hope to represent a comprehensive array of users and their interests, incorporating the polyvocal writing as part of the physical project might have contributed to a more diverse range of user experience.

User experience rather than an architect's or developer's intention was the focus of my work, and the interests of such future user-partners of the refurbished spaces need to be represented in the writing, too, as well as the echoes of past users. In Scene 5 (see pp 211–13) I advocate instituting different models for use of space and so diversifying occupants and users. Following the precedent of the inflatable pavilion in the 1980s, temporary accommodation could facilitate user-partners taking part now, while creating connection with and between Palace and Park. This would begin that process of exchange even if the spaces that they might eventually occupy were not yet available.

Completion and perceived and measured success of this first phase will lead into consideration and public scrutiny of the next. Future plans are necessarily speculative and unpublicised, since funding only exists for the East Court project. The potential exists for the inclusion of a plurivocal writing-the-building aspect within the next phase (whichever

part of AP is next developed: Panorama Room, Great Hall or Palm Court perhaps, all of which surround the putative hotel space). Equally possible outcomes are that if successful, the impetus would be to continue along the same lines; if not, to halt any further phases, or to sell. For FCB, the project at AP could work to trigger regeneration in the wider area; as Clare Hughes of FCB says, 'We're interested in regeneration as a practice and we think that preparing new uses for historic buildings, that are viable and economically lively, often does contribute to regeneration.'

In Conclusion:

What's missing and what's more

In considering my role as researcher/practitioner and the forms of expression I chose to employ in the thesis, it had been a long-time ambition to explore deliberately making critical and creative writing work together. I wanted to write the building in part as a vehicle for the expression of users' opinions and memories, and to inhabit it as both user and writer, authoring in a particular way, so that the experience and memory of that would translate on to the page. In the PhD, I discovered that the building inhabits the researcher just as the PhD itself does. 'Writer lives subject' is hardly headline news but it transpired that my early experiences as a local resident and family connections to the Palace (some previously unknown), which fed into the writing, were less influential in its choice as case study than the story of refugees and internees housed there, the extent of which was also previously unknown to me. While acknowledging that stories connected to me as a user are contained within the writing in addition to the power of my authorial position, I am also clarifying the use of this autobiographical position.

I had also never seen the drawings of Owen Jones's design for the unbuilt v0.0 of AP before beginning this research. Somehow, at the other end of the research process, this is still what I expect to see: the fairytale construction of the child I was as a regular visitor or from one of her books, more like one of the fantasy structures in Paul Scheerbart's *Glass Architecture* from 1914. Disappointed on this level at every site visit, somehow I was also always delighted at the view, despite the rather tawdry reality that confronted the close-up viewer especially in the early stages of the research. This has begun to change already, and the opening up of the façade has had the effect desired in the Farrells' masterplan. The imbalance between how much the Palace gains from distance and diminishes in close up may be lessening on several levels.

In its movement from the textual to the physical, Walter Besant's example of writing the building was inspiring. To walk further in similar shoes, Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* existed originally as literature and building, which the author began work on together, as complementary works and process, although the novel was published two years before the museum opened in Istanbul. It has been more recently produced as a film (2015) and now also as an exhibition, as an installation of the museum (Somerset House, January 2016) incorporating aspects of all three manifestations. Pamuk studied architecture himself

but the name of the museum's designer is well hidden. Similarly, it takes some time to discover the name of the architect of 'Besant's' palace, just as Owen Jones is often wrongly credited as architect for AP.

In all cases, the writing exists as autonomous work; here, the intention to contribute to another project (of recovery) is explicit, and in this dual purpose lies another value. The writing, like the building, has worth in its own right, as an incarnation of the building accessible to readers everywhere, beyond visitors to the actual place. It is also an alternative form that could provide or furnish a partial physical reincarnation through the process of regeneration. The writing evokes the idea of culture as enacted in and around AP. In the sense of the culture of the building in the idea of the palace for the people, it examines the notion of the different publics attracted to the building at particular stages in its life, and what 'public' has meant during those times. Whatever building I was writing, even if a physical project were to be instigated through writing, as in the case of Besant and Pamuk, the aim of application makes this a two-fold project in authorship as well as intention.

...

What was the question that this writing (the building) was the answer to? This is a paraphrase of Hans Robert Jauss' question-and-answer dynamic in *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*: he asks what question is implied in the 'answer' of every complete work (1984:69). It was revisited repeatedly during the research process, such as in Scene 4: 'What was the Palace built for again?'. It is visited again here, to introduce reflections on what the thesis does and why. As a process, this follows the method of reiteration and repetition in subjects and types of writing across the research and its varied voices, noting Katja Grillner's comment in her thesis that most of the conclusion was already contained in the story itself in another form (2000).

The question addressed by the thesis is 'Can writing contribute to the cultural recovery of a building?' I have captured the flavour of being at AP, a distillation of such experiences over its existence through the writing-as-methodology. The polyvocal method developed out of the research, specifically in order to address the Palace's characteristics, so that it might have use in recovering of what AP had lost over time so that the writing might contribute to its regeneration. It is a form of

writing in which multiple voices express what is missing there in terms of the culture the building has engendered in and around itself, and what it needs, according to this work, to retrieve for its future renewal.

The array of voices in the practice writing is deployed in order to bring broader and deeper history into contention with regard to recovery. The voices are lent a legitimacy through their provenance, via press cuttings, archive materials, conversations; further, their authenticity emanates from the page and from their place within the construct of the writing. There is, to reiterate, no suggestion of an attempt at exhaustive coverage or the unachievable notion that all the voices, all the opinions would then somehow, impossibly, be represented in any eventual regeneration project.

Aside from the contribution of the practice, the development of the plurivocal method within the context of urban regeneration is an original contribution of the research. This method is demonstrated in *Writing AP*, the practice writing surrounded by the thesis chapters that bookend it, supporting, explaining and interrogating it, as a critical framework. It is a new and complex method of writing a building that might contribute to regeneration by enlivening and extending the portrait of what is being regenerated and so what the outcome might be, starting with the brief, and then the response to it in design and programming. Engaging directly with some of the planners, clients, architects and developers through the process of interview and, in this way, gaining an understanding of how they see the necessity of recovery of the building, has also been an influence on the shape and development of the writing. This is a process of involvement that feeds into the work, so that the 'imaginary' writing is underpinned by commentary from those involved in the physical project. The value of the work lies also in the transferability of its innovative structure and method for application on to other buildings while maintaining the specificity of its focus on the building in question.

With plurivocality, the writing creates a fabric in which users and their voices are part of the building and part of making it. Close examination and research into the Palace led to a deliberate process of devising systems of writing, in relation to subject and approach. Its varied methods of creating texts articulate a fabric of intertwined and shifting pictures, giving a depth to the portrait and a sense of movement. Taking recovery as repeatedly going over something (here, in different

voices and types of writing), to re-form and find it again, to contribute to it 'getting better', the writing presents a weave of dislocations and discontinuities, those identified through the research process and those created by it. This constitutes a feedback loop of texts and voices, in their interrelated nature. Each of the subsequent texts exists as a partial form of recovery; each of them feeds into the others in a kind of call-and-response effect, and in the reading process and ideas for application.

Answering a second question, 'How can language be used to express material and immaterial traces of a building to aid this recovery, to bring this building back to life?', explains further the purpose in doing this work. The intention was to propose a way that regeneration can better reflect what is being regenerated than its current commodified implementation allows. In retrieving and reviving AP's culture something genuinely relating to the revitalisation of buildings and areas for those who live/work/frequent them might result. Additionally, the objective in the practice was to use writing to this end, and to discover avenues through which to extend the purpose of my writing as a researcher. Introducing the invented into the factual for instrumental benefit to this end was a further objective. Eventually, having learned the coinage during the research, the intention was also to become a text-based architect, a writer in architecture research (in addition to a writer on architecture who researches), a twenty-first-century version of John Evelyn's *architectus verborum*, the architect of words, one of the four types of architect he defined (in Melvin, 2014).

In the literature

The thesis positions my work within architecture writing and contributes to the literature in various ways, including as an example of literature in itself. The plurivocal method leads to a portrait of a building and its use that could feed into a regeneration that might be more nuanced, through selection and creation of voices. It might be more pointed too, through a focus on subjects and interview questions and placement within the structure of the practice writing. Paradoxically, this might lead to the portrait overall being a more rounded one. This is imaginative writing that includes in its ambit concrete suggestions about what the building can be for in its future incarnation rather than

memorialising what was once there, based on research into what has and has not worked before and into changes in culture in its lifetime. It further develops writing that spans the creative and critical in architecture. It leads to some dissolution of the separation between them and the benefits of a looser non-binary relationship, introducing the imaginative into the sphere of the critical advantageously expands its scope.

A counterpoint to my methodology, Klaske Havik established creative possibilities for writing in architecture, but then did not fulfill her own undertaking, the expectation set up in the work (2014). With an understanding developed through the research process of the importance of defining systems and attributes, of locating the categories and structures in the work, the thesis demonstrates possibilities for application across Havik's triad of practice-education-research in architecture across which the agency of writing can be employed. This writing also brings together the categories Alexandra Lange set up (Formal, Experiential, Historical and Activist) into the polyvocal fabric (2012). The thesis offers an example of Jaus's exposition of the interplay between poetics and hermeneutics, in which he states the necessity of examining text in terms of poetics (structure and methods of creating meaning) in order to reach hermeneutic conclusions (of interpretation) and also the need to read it hermeneutically to interpret its poetics.

Will Self's novel *Umbrella* (2013) was mentioned in the literature review as an example of a polyvocal narrative structured around a building-as-character; in the thesis, the use of the plurivocal is represented in creative non-fiction. Equally, the introduction of the invented or fictional to the spectrum of voices included in relation to community arts writing in regeneration significantly adds to the literature by Sarah Butler. Having taken account of Grillner's use of devices for steering the reader and the level of instruction about how to approach what they were about to encounter on the page, I moved into also using devices such as stage directions (glancing at uses of the building) and elements of page design for these ends.

Further works

Readers will devise a route through the various voices and

themes, using rhythm and tone among these signposts and markers. Given what the writing demonstrably contains and the complexity of the practice writing, there was concern nonetheless about how strong these cues need to be to make the work optimally navigable for the reader, without being too directive. Part of the challenge of the practice-based PhD involved handling the demands of the dual position of researcher and writer. This was evident in the consideration of navigation and the level of necessary guidance; in other forms of publishing more can be left unstated, allowing space for the reader's assumption and imagination.

The scope for imaginative interpretation of the data on the use of materials from Insall's report (2012) was not fully inhabited as other aspects of the building took prominence. The voice of the social media user is also largely absent, in part because early research into the use of social media at AP showed that it was limited to publicising events so here the data was limited. Social media can contribute to blurring boundaries between the official and the informal and can give legitimacy to personal accounts. This might have informed the research, but it was about using the building or having used it, even though the user's current connection might be digital rather than involve physical visiting. This is a subject for another project, perhaps also involving an assessment of the virtual and audio spaces created in phase 1 of the AP works. Such an exploration into uses of social media would add to the knowledge on heritage too, the meanings and values that individuals and groups ascribe to it and how people deliver and express these.

Consideration of how the plurivocal method might be used on new-build projects was beyond the scope of the thesis. The transferability of the method could extend to informing design and planning of new buildings (with the specifics of methods reworked accordingly), on the basis of other buildings in the vicinity, or the vicinity itself, and users' previous experience of similar buildings.

To build on this work in future practice and research, the ideal would be to go on to discover what could be done if this research were attached and applied to a live project in the next phase at AP, so that the writing process was bound to the project instead of, or as well as, the research process. Not least because of the nature of the building in question, it would be important to explore the potential for the spoken polyphonous experience, extending into audio by developing writing

1 The derelict St Peter's Seminary in Cardross by Gillespie Kidd & Coia, mentioned in Chapter 1 in *To Have and To Hold*, was awarded £.4.2 million from HLF and £400,000 by Creative Scotland in March 2016 to fund its transformation into an arts venue of 5000 square metres (smaller than the Great Hall at AP).
2 Norman Engleback's thoughts relating to AP from his contribution to the archive are discussed in Chapter 1.

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for use in a performance space at AP. In this way the writing can itself inhabit the spaces – demonstrating their uses as contents and container turn inside out. Audio playing in the East Court might include pieces made with users at workshops, on the facilities in the redeveloped studios. Working up the stories of 'POW No Name', 'Anton' and 'Lucas' or his great-great-(great?)-grandfather with a contemporary strand of refugee stories is another development of the project in mind. This might be part of an initiative to convert unused buildings and empty housing to house refugees, voiced as an idea by 'Paul' in Scene 5, reworking the examples set by Besant and Pamuk.

Applying the plurivocal method to another building, perhaps even another palace (Westminster is one obvious and timely choice) is another intention.¹ Other avenues to explore include a possible broadening of the British Library Sound Archive Architects' Lives Project, bringing together the polyvocal and audio.² The research may have influence too through deploying aspects of the methodology in the context of education and in architectural practice. Havik's work emphasised the value of inserting writing into the study of architecture, beyond dissertations and theses, since changing the way architecture is studied changes its practice and implementation too. She drew attention to the limitations of the visual/built/drawn. My use of *ekphrasis* shows how the verbal and the textual can enliven what cannot be seen. Object-based writing or writing to image might be employed as part of this.

Questions remain for discussion about the most effective way to try to ensure the writing has influence, and which use or uses might be pursued to this end. Given the proposition that this work has the potential to inform regeneration projects, with a focus on the recovery of buildings, this continuing embrace of questions that the research itself generates is necessary and important. As an experimental approach, the significance and legitimacy of the writing is partly dependent on its eventual application as well as on its reception by individual readers and various audiences.

Aside from the specialist readers envisaged in application, the writing is for any reader interested in London, buildings, history, development, popular (and unpopular) culture. In order for it to have influence beyond general consumption, more thought will have to be devoted to form and availability, beyond issues of publishing and plat-

forms, cover image, price, print or e-book. The influence it can then exert and the forms this might take, as raised in the section on Audience and Application in Chapter 3, can at this stage be speculated upon.

This fuller picture of the history of AP might be distributed during the research and design phases, assuming a successful conclusion and response to the current works and no financial recession curtailing plans, as material to work from. Some of the writing that already exists could be used or further developed to augment research materials, to give inspiration on aspects of the Palace's use or distinct spaces. Particular sections – for example, on the subject of a distinct use or space – could be distributed to engage audiences or for designers to use in their work. The writing might be embedded into a consultation programme as a series of workshops in which participants could contribute more actively through their own observations or, using some of the techniques employed here, vocalise ideas and opinions encountered in archive texts or observed in images to produce a more impressionistic, less multiple-choice style, account. In some of the Scenes, fragments from the same voices are picked up repeatedly, then overridden by others. Viewing the voices as excerpts means they are accessible as 'unfinished' forms and can be adapted further, in the awareness that an unabridged version exists.

The original scope and ambition of the research was extended through its concern with social aspects of the building's use, such as class, and the development of the writing method. The text is about the Palace, as writing that demonstrates and articulates the various angles needed to approach AP in order to understand it adequately and imaginatively in relation to use and reuse of a building: informal, planned, sanctioned and unsanctioned, imagined and unimagined. These include the shifting meanings of public and the popular, of audiences, space and leisure, the relationship between education, entertainment and information and, crucially, AP's positioning as a commercial-civic entity. Examining the building and writing it crystallises narratives about local cultures and these wider social issues. The building operated as a focus through which to examine changes in UK culture over the life of AP – attitudes toward royalty, class, ethnicity, entertainment, the bathos of the ordinary and everyday in the realm of the palatial. These complementary

266 readings of the text are significant in valuing the work, and for its fullest possible application. This treatment of aspects of UK culture through the lens of the building then also stresses their importance in cultural recovery – coming back to life with a new skin or perhaps, in the case of AP, a new (Willis) organ.

[exit]

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