

COURTAULD INSTITUTE

The Second Annual Mark Girouard Symposium

Architectural Historiography in the British Isles: National and International Perspectives

A One-Day International Symposium

Saturday 15 Nov 2025, 9.30–19.00



We are pleased to announce the second annual Mark Girouard Symposium, established last year alongside the SAHGB's Girouard Fund, which supports publications in architectural history.

The first symposium in 2024 focused on Mark Girouard's own writings and contributions to the discipline. This year, we move on to consider the historiography of British and Irish architectural history more broadly and its place in the world.

Since 1980, studies of the historiography of architectural history, as well as the institutional and cultural frameworks within which it is situated, have grown enormously. The symposium seeks to examine how the discipline has developed over the past forty years and to ask what forms architectural history takes today in Britain and Ireland. We are particularly interested in how British and Irish architectural history has been perceived from outside the British Isles, as well as how home-grown academic traditions have shaped current thinking beyond these shores.

Image: Mark Girouard's Library in Notting Hill, 2022. Photograph, Blanche Girouard

Programme

9.30–10.00	Registration
10.00–10.10	Introductions Manolo Guerci & Blanche Girouard
10.10–10.50	Keynote – Introduced by Elizabeth McKellar <i>Beyond Britain: Writing Architectural History Elsewhere Today</i> Kathleen James-Chakraborty (UCD Dublin)
10.50–11.10	Coffee Break
	Session 1: National Perspectives – Chair: Manolo Guerci
11.10–11.30	<i>Tempting ferocity: responses to Sir John Soane's lectures</i> Frances Sands, Curator of Drawings and Books, Sir John Soane's Museum
11.30–11.50	<i>Mother's Home: Marginalised Histories in Post-war Housing</i> Cathy Hawley, Royal College of Art
11.50–12.10	<i>A Shadow Canon? On the Curious Absence of Neotraditional Urban Design in Architectural Historiography</i> Janina Gosseye, TU Delft; Isabelle Doucet, University of Sheffield
12.10–12.30	Discussion/Q&A
12.30–14.00	Lunch
	Session 2: Problematising the 'Periphery' – Chair: Kyle Leyden
14.00–14.20	<i>Celtic Churches on the Continent? Iro-Scottish Architecture in Great Moravia as Evidence of Exchange (Eighth-Ninth Centuries)</i> Isabelle Chisholm, Birkbeck College, University of London
14.20–14.40	<i>The Irishness of Irish Architectural History</i> Murray Fraser, Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London
14.40–15.00	<i>Robert Hurd and Traditionalism as Typology: A Counternarrative of Scottish Vernacular Modernism</i> Samuel Fox, Columbia University
15.00–15.20	Discussion/Q&A
15.20–15.50	Tea Break

Session 3: International Perspectives – Chair: Elizabeth McKellar

15.55–16.15	<i>Chinese Architecture and the Making of Architectural History in Nineteenth-Century Britain</i> Diana Cao, Universidad Complutense de Madrid
16.15–16.35	<i>Sir John Summerson: The View from California</i> Richard W. Hayes, Independent Scholar, New York
16.35–16.55	<i>Colin St John Wilson and His ‘Call to Arms’, an Antipodean Perspective</i> Glenn Harper, University of Sydney
16.55–17.15	Dennis Sharp’s view beyond Europe Damiano Iacobone, Politecnico di Milano
17.15–17.35	Discussion/Q&A
17.35–19.00	Drinks reception

Keynote Address

Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty (University College Dublin)

Beyond Britain: Writing Architectural History Elsewhere Today

Nearly half a century after Mark Girouard published *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*, the idea that historians of architecture should analyse society as well as form, and write about space as well as style, is no longer novel. Today, the scholar of the English country house is as likely to address the source of the money that funded its creation and running, or the materials and the labour used to construct it, as the layout of its rooms and the changes in hospitality that generated them. This is readily apparent in the way in which both Dana Arnold and Stephen Brindle have recently addressed the buildings that formed the meat of Sir John Summerson's survey of architecture in Britain from 1530 to 1830.

Surveying monographs published in the last decade by scholars writing in English, but not based in Britain, demonstrates the increasingly wide variety of social issues currently capturing attention. From documenting the ways in which the creation and use of the built environment have enforced social inequality, to determining the environmental impact of their construction and energy use, we are now addressing issues of concern to the larger society. We have also broadened the parameters of what we investigate. Aesthetically ambitious structures commissioned by powerful men no longer largely dominate the subjects we choose to investigate. Girouard's continuing impact can be seen, however, in the increasing popularity of building biographies. These are more apt to chart how a building was used than detail design and construction processes, or even reception. While all disciplinary shifts can result in losses as well as gains, this responsiveness to new concerns indicates the robust intellectual health of our field, even as it faces enormous challenges.

Kathleen James-Chakraborty is professor of art history at University College Dublin. She has also been the Vincent Scully Visiting Professor of Architectural History at the Yale School of Architecture. Her most recent book, co-authored with Katherine M. Kuenzli and Bryan Clark Green is *The Belgian Friendship Building: From the New York World's Fair to a Virginia HBCU* (University of Virginia Press, 2025). She holds a European Research Council Advanced Grant for the project Expanding Agency: Women, Race, and the Dissemination of Modern Architecture. She is the recipient of the 2018 Gold Medal in the Humanities from the Royal Irish Academy.

With contributions from

Diana Cao (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Chinese Architecture and the Making of Architectural History in Nineteenth-Century Britain

In nineteenth-century Britain, architectural history increasingly aspired to disciplinary status, presenting itself as a systematic and scientific inquiry capable of tracing the evolution of architecture across time and cultures. Rooted in Enlightenment ideals, this historiography sought to move beyond antiquarian cataloging toward contextual and stylistic analysis that emphasised the social, political, and ideological dimensions of the built environment. Yet its universalising ambitions often produced a teleological framework in which non-Western architectures were cast as static, ornamental, or derivative. Within this setting, Chinese architecture gradually shifted from the fanciful allure of Chinoiserie to a more formalised place in world architectural discourse, often through largely interpreted through epistemological biases of the period.

This paper examines how leading nineteenth-century British historians, most notably James Fergusson and his contemporaries, engaged with Chinese architecture in their efforts to construct comparative narratives of civilisation and architectural development. Their accounts, while sometimes framed in terms of cultural relativism, consistently emphasised decorative features and relegated Chinese architecture to the margins of evolutionary schemes that privileged Western structural and spatial logic. At the same time, moments of curiosity and adaptation reveal the uneven process by which non-European forms were negotiated within emerging historical narratives.

In parallel, the paper considers architectural knowledge in late Qing and early Republican China, which articulated alternative taxonomies and values that destabilise dominant Western frameworks. By placing British and Chinese sources in dialogue, this study highlights the asymmetries of cross-cultural architectural historiography while also pointing to the

potential for more reciprocal exchanges across architectural worldviews. The aim is not to recover or reassert an “authentic” history of Chinese architecture, but to examine the processes through which discourses were formed and “reality” was constructed in relation to Chinese architecture in England. At the same time, the paper seeks to trace how other modes of intellectual disciplines, such as philosophy, natural science, and journalism, shaped architectural historiography, revealing the disciplinary entanglements that informed understandings of the built environment.

Diana Cao is a PhD candidate in Art History at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, specialising in global art history and cross-cultural architectural historiography. She holds an MA from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU and a BA from Tsinghua University. Her research has been published in academic journals in China and Spain, and she has presented at the CIHA Congress and the Doctoral Congress at Università di Roma Tor Vergata. She held curatorial internships at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Capital Museum of China.

Isabelle Chisholm (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Celtic Churches on the Continent? Iro-Scottish Architecture in Great Moravia as Evidence of Exchange (Eighth-Ninth Centuries)

A mere few decades ago arguing for a relationship between the British Isles and Great Moravia in the early medieval era would have been deemed fanciful. Yet evidence of this connection has been lying dormant between the lines of history, quietly punctuating the map in sleepy countryside villages, and hiding behind the fading contours of archaeological remains. The recent turbulent political history of the region now pertaining to modern-day Czechia and Slovakia is one of the main reasons the spread of early medieval Iro-Scottish style church architecture in this area has been so obscured in historiography. From the Nazi occupation to the imposed Soviet communist regime, local architectural historians and archaeologists alike were not granted much freedom to explore such a topic, as medieval cultural heritage was continuously appropriated, confiscated or altogether denigrated. Moreover, participating in an international dialogue concerning historical discourses and scholarly traditions was not permitted in Czechoslovakia for much of the twentieth century. In the scarce architectural history that is available on early medieval Bohemia and Moravia (from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), there has been a sustained tendency to oscillate between the simplistic binary distinctions of “East” and “West” to define the style of ecclesiastical buildings, encouraging a socio-political partisan “factioning” of the medieval past. To this day it is still widely assumed that Moravian ecclesiastical traditions, along with corresponding church architecture, were primarily shaped by Byzantine missionary activity (spearheaded by Cyril and Methodius) in the ninth century, neglecting the arrival of the Iro-Scottish a good hundred years earlier and their significant legacy.

In the 1980s, both the fall of the Iron Curtain and coinciding seminal advancements in the historiography of architectural history regarding its cultural and institutional frameworks in tandem allowed for British and Irish architectural history to be more effectively integrated into Central European scholarship. This paper will seek to examine how the historiographical perception of the Iro-Scoti's role in informing early medieval ecclesiastical architecture in Great Moravia has evolved over the past forty years, whilst acknowledging lingering socio-political biases from last century. Through an analysis of various examples of early medieval church architecture in the Iro-Scottish style in this area, it will furthermore aim to situate this underplayed cross-cultural exchange within ongoing discourses on the “Global Middle Ages” – not only signalling potential future research avenues, but also evaluating the challenges scholars face as we progress further into the twenty-first century in an increasingly “globalised” world. I will additionally explore how recent archaeological discoveries (some as late as the 2020s) shed new light on pre-existing studies, leading us to draw ever more compelling conclusions about the wider implications of British architectural historiography overseas.

Isabelle Chisholm is a PhD candidate in History of Art at Birkbeck, University of London. She previously completed a first-class BA and MPhil in History of Art and Architecture at the University of Cambridge. Her current research focuses on the role of Celtic visual culture in the Christianisation of early medieval Central Europe and is supervised by Dr Zoe Opacic.

Prof. Murray Fraser (Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London)

The Irishness of Irish Architectural History

This paper will explore tensions within Irish architectural historiography stemming from postcolonial critique. Starting with the author's own 1985 essay in *Architectural History* journal, which revealed the colonial dimension of Georgian Dublin, the talk will question whether things have progressed since the time when scholars including Mark Girouard were writing the building history of the Protestant Anglo-Irish Ascendancy.

A depoliticised framework for Irish historiography has been challenged in other disciplines, notably Jane Ohlmeyer in *Making Empire: Ireland, Imperialism and the Early Modern World* (2023). Yet within architectural history the impact is far less, as evidenced for example in the treatment in Steven Brindle's recent book, *Architecture in Britain and Ireland, 1530-1830*. Why, then, is Irish architectural historiography seemingly resistant to a postcolonial perspective?

Taking a different stance, this paper argues that Ireland, as Britain's proto-colony, was the original locus for ideas and strategies used across the British Empire following the establishment of the 'Pale' around Dublin from the 12th century. Architects were embroiled in these colonial activities, and this paper will focus upon two distinct periods when Ireland created a space for buildings not yet seen elsewhere in the British Isles.

The first period is Georgian Dublin, which formed a highpoint of British Neo-Palladianism. Alongside magnificent country houses for the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, Dublin as 'The Second City of Empire' was embellished with remarkable buildings. Colonial administrators in Dublin Castle were instrumental in erecting the twin jewels of civic architecture, the Customs House and Four Courts – designed by the English architect James Gandon – as well as supporting the urban clearance campaign of the Wide Street Commissioners.

Problems within Britain's dependency on the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy to govern Ireland saw the imposition of direct rule under the 1801 Act of Union, which created the 'United Kingdom'. Hardly united, and despite gestures such as Catholic Emancipation, friction and rebellion over land ownership in Ireland led to a new political strategy. Irish Land Acts from the 1870s – whereby Protestant Ascendancy landowners were bought out and land returned to indigenous Catholic farmers – represented the most extensive/expensive piece of social engineering ever in the British Isles.

Irish land reform led to another architectural experiment, namely state-subsidized workers' housing. Rather than being an innovation by Lloyd George's Coalition government in 1919, state housing actually began in the 1880s for Irish agricultural labourers. Later the policy was extended to the slums of Dublin and other cities. Britain's leading town planning exponents, Raymond Unwin and Patrick Geddes, became involved in Irish housing reform, with links continuing after independence/partition in 1922. Architectural experiments were never those of a 'laboratory' because Ireland's socio-economic and politico-cultural conditions meant it was never truly controlled by Britain – yet efforts by British architects to address Irish realities created colonial innovations that were then transferred and hybridised in Britain and further afield.

Murray Fraser is Professor of Architecture and Global Culture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, UK. He has published extensively on design research, architectural history & theory, urbanism, post-colonialism and cultural studies. His book *Architecture and the 'Special Relationship'* (2008) won the RIBA President's Research Award and Bruno Zevi Book Prize. Other publications include *Design Research in Architecture* (2013), now a standard work. He was General Editor of *Sir Banister Fletcher's Global History of Architecture* (21st Edition; 2020), awarded the Colvin Prize by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.

In 2018, he received the Annie Spink Award for Excellence in Architectural Education, the RIBA's highest teaching accolade. Previously editor of *The Journal of Architecture*, he now co-edits the *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research* (AJAR). He is a Former Chair of the SAHGB, and a visiting professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Nanjing University, and the University of the Witwatersrand.

Prof. Janina Gosseye (TU Delft) and Prof. Isabelle Doucet (University of Sheffield) *A Shadow Canon? On the Curious Absence of Neotraditional Urban Design in Architectural Historiography*

From the 1960s, neotraditionalism reared its head in urban design. A well-known herald of this 'neo traditional' turn in Britain is Gordon Cullen's *The Concise Townscape* (1961). In reaction to modernism's 'prairie planning', this book emphasized the relationship between buildings and all that surrounds them and found inspiration in the past: in the urbanity of places like Oxford, Ipswich and Westminster. As such, *Townscape* offered an operational history. It studied historical types and morphologies to chart a way forward; to inform a new (neotraditional) approach to urban design.

In the ensuing decades, neotraditional urban design has increasingly gained ground in Britain. Notable projects include Quinlan Terry's Richmond Riverside Development (1984-1987); John Simpson and Partners' masterplan for Fairford Leys in Aylesbury (1987-1990) – as well as their unrealised scheme for Paternoster Square in London of the early 1990s – and Leon Krier's masterplan for Poundbury, the urban extension of Dorchester (1988-ongoing). Furthermore, this neotraditional approach continues today in the work of practices such as ADAM Architecture. And yet, in spite of the significant impact that this neotraditional movement has had in Britain, as elsewhere, those engaged in the critical historiography of architecture and urban design have thus far tended to shy away from engaging with this history. While publications exist on the work of figures such as Terry Farrell, Léon Krier, John Simpson, Quinlan Terry, and others, many of these are vanity press projects or rather venerating in nature. At the same time, neotraditional urban design has been critically reviewed – and sometimes dismissed – by human and urban geographers, while architectural and urban design historians have remained largely silent.

The absence of neotraditionalism in architecture and urban design historiography is even more remarkable considering present-day attempts to expand the scope of this historiography. While this broadening gesture has made architecture and

urban design historians more attuned to overlooked actors and voices, those displaying a 'neotraditional consciousness' remain largely out of view. We wonder why? Is this history simply too recent, or are other factors at play? What to make, for example, of oft repeated claims that neotraditionalism in urban design is a sort of 'shadow canon'; a strand of design practice that has fallen victim to the enduring dominance of the modern movement? Our paper will examine such assertions by sketching the rise of neotraditionalism in urban design and its receptions. We put forward the hypothesis that the (relative) absence of neotraditional urban design in architectural historiography might not only have to do with it being insufficiently 'modern' (or even anti-modern), but that its sidelining might also be informed by the conservative (right-wing) ideologies with which this movement has increasingly become associated, even if it was leftist – even Marxist – in its origins.

Janina Gosseye is Professor of Building Ideologies in the Department of Architecture at the TU Delft Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, NL. Her research is situated at the nexus of 20th century architectural and urban history on the one hand, and social and political history on the other. Her most recent books are: *Urban Design in the 20th Century: A History* (2021, authored with Tom Avermaete); *Activism at Home: Architects Dwelling Between Politics, Aesthetics and Resistance* (2021, co-edited with Isabelle Doucet); *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research* (2019, co-edited with Naomi Stead and Deborah van der Plaats). Janina is series editor of the 'Bloomsbury Studies in Modern Architecture' book series (with Tom Avermaete), Councillor of the European Architectural History Network (EAHN), Honorary Senior Fellow at the University of Queensland (Australia), and Honorary Member of the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA).

Isabelle Doucet is a professor of architecture at the School of Architecture and Landscape at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her current research centers on women in architecture after 1968, the portrayal of women in architecture as role models, and environmental storytelling. Her books include *The Practice Turn in Architecture. Brussels after 1968* (2015) and *Activism at Home. Architects Dwelling between Politics, Aesthetics, and Resistance*, co-edited with Janina Gosseye (2021). With Hélène Frichot, she edited "Resist Reclaim Speculate: Situated Perspectives on Architecture and the City" for *Architectural Theory Review* (2018). Isabelle is a member of the steering committee of the Architecture Humanities Research Association (AHRA).

Dr. Glenn Harper (University of Sydney)

Colin St John Wilson and His 'Call to Arms', an Antipodean Perspective

During the late 1980s when the very English architect, Colin St John Wilson, began compiling his histories, he aimed them to be a "campaign [of] despatches to peg out and define [his] position during lulls in the fighting of [his] Thirty Years War to build the British Library at St Pancras, [London]." Internationally known as the architect of the British Library (1998), these histories were not only an apologia for the building, especially after it received Royal prejudice in 1987, but a 'call to arms' to challenge what he described as the perplexities of post-modernism.

Appearing in two publications, *Architectural Reflections* (1992) and *The Other Tradition of Modern Architecture: The Uncompleted Project* (1995), Wilson's histories comprised stand-alone polemical statements and case studies. On the whole, these histories critically analysed the recent past by focusing on the projects undertaken by a range of architects from Northern Europe and Scandinavia. Favouring an operative approach, the histories presented an alternative modern architectural tradition, one that paralleled the formalistic approach agreed at Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (CIAM), a conference held at La Sarraz in 1928. Written from the point of view of an architect, it showed that Wilson had sympathised with the struggles of these 'alternate' architects and their quest to find appropriate form.

In Australia, where advocacy for post-war architectural modernism was written by practitioners similarly as a 'call to arms', Wilson's histories, available for sale soon after their first editions, were indeed well received by both students and practitioners alike. At the invitation of Winston Barnett, an émigré architect now Associate Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Technology (UTS), Wilson, soon after the publication of the first book, travelled to Sydney to lead a Master's studio for the recently inaugurated Master's Degree of the Built Environment. Here, the cohort of students, primarily senior practising architects, responded well to Wilson's extensive knowledge of architectural precedence and his experiences in overseeing the design and construction of the British Library.

By first examining Wilson's histories in terms of his agency of the built environment, as verified by the British Library, this paper will explore how Wilson's histories were interpreted in various Australian contexts at the time. The critical intersection of his writings, where architectural practice merged with history and theory, helped guide Antipodean practices away from the excesses of architectural style and the conundrum they had faced when being overzealous in their use of scenography.

Glenn Harper is an architect, urban designer and architectural historian. He co-authored the monograph *Margo Lewis No Limits* (2022), prepared two case study entries for *Australia Modern* (2019), and edited *Concrete Melbourne Map* (2019) and *Brutalist Sydney Map* (2017), two architectural guides published by Blue Crow Media, London. In practice, he has worked with Peter Myers, Ken Woolley and Ken Maher in Sydney, and in the office of Colin St John Wilson in London. In 2015, he was awarded the NSW Board of Architects Byrea Hadley Travelling Scholarship, and in 2024, was awarded a PhD from the University of Sydney, where he is currently employed as a tutor in Australian architectural history.

Cathy Hawley (Royal College of Art)

Mother's Home: Marginalised Histories in Post-war Housing

Post-war narratives of motherhood in the United Kingdom often allude to the loneliness and isolation of women, and mothers in particular, as populations became more mobile and families moved further apart. This paper builds upon social histories and first-person descriptions to consider housing practice and design in the United Kingdom immediately following World War II through the direct experiences of mothers and families. Sources for these histories include the social research organisation Mass Observation, the archives of the Communist Party of Great Britain and contemporaneous publications such as *'Pilot Papers'* edited by Charles Madge, co-founder of Mass Observation and from 1947 the Social Development Officer for Stevenage New Town.

In the context of the emerging Welfare State and post-war reconstruction the paper reflects upon changing expectations of women and their relationship to home, work, community and family. Two histories are explored: firstly, the evolution of informal and temporary practices of making scarce space work in the 1946 squatting movement. Provoked by the widespread destruction of the war, overcrowding and barely habitable conditions, the squats were part of a nationwide mass movement, much of it spontaneous and ad-hoc. In all over 45,000 people occupied empty military camps, bases and requisitioned hotels and flats across the country. Communities formed and endured, and government policy was changed despite the brevity of some of the actions. The second history concerns the prefabricated estate, assembled at great speed to provide urgent housing. Here families were housed in close proximity without prior connections and with little thought of social space or community given the desperate need for homes.

The value of close observation and oral narrative to housing histories was glancingly explored in work from the Architectural Association in the 1930's held in the Mass Observation archive. Students' sketchbooks record precise details of individual interiors as well as lives observed in public space. Drawing on these precedents and on techniques of practice research; drawing, collage, mapping and comparative analysis of plans; this project speculates on the potential of such histories to inform housing practice now. Oral histories tell spatial histories and illuminate aspects of its social and political context. The intensity of housing need post-war arguably led to a reinforcement of the self-sufficient nuclear family unit as the basic building block of housing during reconstruction. Similarly, the growing quest for an 'ideal home' and the allied drive to consumption further consolidated the idea of the family as a necessary financial model to achieve the desirable house and interior of one's own.

Cathy Hawley is an architect and long-term collaborator with muf architecture/art. She was a founding partner at Riches Hawley Mikhail whose Goldsmith Street social housing was awarded the 2019 Stirling Prize (Mikhail Riches with Cathy Hawley). An RIBA Rome Scholar in Architecture; Cathy teaches at the Royal College of Art and is undertaking a PhD by Practice at the University for the Creative Arts.

Richard W. Hayes (Independent Scholar, New York)

Sir John Summerson: The View from California

This paper explores the influence of Sir John Summerson on American postmodern design. I focus in particular on the impact Summerson's scholarship exerted on the Berkeley-based architectural practice MLTW, comprised of Charles W. Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull and Richard Whitaker. Well-educated graduates of Princeton and Berkeley, the members of MLTW were enthusiastic students of architectural history. In the early 1960s, they discovered Summerson's essay 'Heavenly Mansions: An Interpretation of Gothic' and it quickly became a touchstone in their efforts to reintroduce humanistic values into midcentury design.

Originally read as a sessional paper before the RIBA in 1946, Summerson's essay was published in 1949 by Cresset Press in a volume entitled *Heavenly Mansions and Other Essays on Architecture*. Beginning with a discussion of miniature houses in child's play, Summerson traced the historical significance of the aedicule, a 'little building' composed of four posts or columns, usually surmounted by a canopy, often used in shrines to enframe deities or saints. Inspired by the eloquence and imaginative reach of Summerson's essay, Moore began incorporating aediculas in residential projects such as the Jobson House of 1961 in Palo Colorado Canyon, near Monterey Bay, and in his own house of 1962 in Orinda, outside of Berkeley. With MLTW, Moore used multiple aediculas in the award-winning Sea Ranch in Sonoma County of 1963-65. MLTW's version of the aedicular motif fused timber construction, spatial organization, historical allusion and symbolic resonance. The Sea Ranch heralded a shift in design culture, as architects like MLTW embraced the potential of historical studies to lead to new designs.

In the years that followed, Moore continued to explore Summerson's comments on miniatures, doll houses and imaginative play in many of his designs and in the studio assignments he gave to students at Berkeley, Yale, UCLA, and the University of Texas at Austin. Besides Moore, Robert Venturi quoted Summerson in his 1966 book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and Denise Scott Brown acknowledged the significance of Summerson's lectures during her student years in London. 'Through Summerson, I considered ranges of building types and studied buildings within the wider tissue of the town', she stated.

The conclusion to my paper evaluates the ramifications of this unexpected alliance of Summerson and avatars of postmodern design. It prompts a consideration of changes in Summerson's thinking—once described as 'enigmatically contradictory'—as the century progressed. The title of another of Summerson's essays from the 1940s— 'The Past in the Future'—thus seems prescient as historical research and architectural practice entwined in the second half of the twentieth century.

Richard W. Hayes is an architect and architectural historian educated at Columbia and Yale universities whose scholarship focuses on architectural education. In 2007, he published *The Yale Building Project: The First 40 Years*, a comprehensive history of an influential educational programme founded by Charles W. Moore. Additional research has been published in the *Journal of Architectural Education*, *Architectural Theory Review*, *Arris*, and *Scroope: Cambridge Architecture Journal*. His chapters have appeared in *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures* (Routledge, 2010), edited by Florian Kossak and colleagues at Sheffield's School of Architecture; *Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America* (MIT Press, 2012), edited by Joan Ockman; and *Penser-Faire: Quand les architectes se mêlent de construction* (Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2021), edited by Pauline Lefebvre, Julie Neuwels, and Jean-Philippe Possoz.

Hayes is also a leading scholar of the Aesthetic Movement in nineteenth-century Britain. He contributed a chapter to E.W. Godwin: *Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer* (Yale, 1999), edited by Susan Weber Soros, a volume that received numerous awards and was selected as 'one of the most notable books of the year' by the New York Times. Since then, Hayes has published seven additional articles on Godwin in peer-reviewed books and journals, including the 2017 issue of *Architectural History*, the annual review of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.

In a career combining practice and research, Hayes has received many grants, awards, and fellowships. A Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge in 2009 and 2013, he is now a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge's graduate college for advanced study. In 2025, Hayes was named a Fellow of the AIA in the category of education, research, and literature.

Prof. Damiano Iacobone (Politecnico di Milano)

Dennis Sharp's view beyond Europe

The contribution will focus on the architectural historian and architect Dennis Sharp (1933- 2010), one of the most authoritative and recognized scholars of 20th-century British architecture.

What characterized his work, starting in the 1980s, was his exploration beyond the European context, which he had focused on in his 1978 volume *The Rationalists*. This volume highlights the British contribution to the context of the modern movement with essays on Lubetkin and Wells Coates; he also involved other historians of English architecture in the analysis of the phenomenon, such as Philip Morton Shand, Reyner Banham, Nikolaus Pevsner, and James M. Richards.

From the 1980s onward, his interests, unfortunately unpublished, focused on the relationships between British architects and F.L. Wright, especially during his 1939 lectures and, above all, he devoted himself to the work of several English architects in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. The documentation on this subject is very detailed, collected with passion and denotes an activity on a "global" scale both by British architects and by Sharp himself, who intends to go beyond the Eurocentric debate, in favour of other perspectives and other evaluations. In my opinion, the two fields are also linked by the pursuit of a design approach that goes beyond the rigid principles of the Modern Movement (as conceived at the time). Starting from a reflection on FLW's May 1939 lectures in London, Sharp seeks to develop his own concept of "organic" and, in an unpublished text, expands the concept to something more complex, stating: "Every definition of organic architecture would, if pushed to its limits, also imply an affinity to the earth, to the terrain, the topography, orientation, climate, and most importantly to the established and identifiable use of indigenous building materials and sometimes building methods". Thus said, there is also in any definition of organic architecture a further dimension of thoughts, usages and values, namely concerned with social and political values, traditions and symbols.

The close connection with customs, context, population, and climate are the key that Sharp uses to analyse the work of some British architects in Africa in the 50s and 60s. Dennis Sharp shows us new paths, new horizons, at a time when the historiography of the Modern Movement was still monolithic, proposing values that will be considered decades later.

Damiano Iacobone is associate professor of history of architecture at the Politecnico di Milano (Italy). He studied architecture in Milan and got the PhD in History of architecture in 2003. He has taken part in many international conferences and national research programs. Among his numerous publications, those referring to Great Britain are worth mentioning: the monograph *Storia della prima architettura moderna inglese (1926-1942)* [History of modern English architecture (1926-1942)], from 2015, and the essays: *Storie delle città giardino* (journal "Territorio", 2020); *Ruskin e gli altri: dal Ruskinian Gothic al Medieval Modernism* [Ruskin and others: from Ruskinian Gothic to Medieval Modernism], in the journal "ANANKE", September 2019. He also edited the fifth Italian edition of Kenneth Frampton's volume *History of Modern Architecture*. He was a visiting professor for Bridgewater State College (Mass. USA) in 2009 and for the University of Kent (October 2024).

Samuel Fox (Columbia University)

Robert Hurd and Traditionalism as Typology: A Counternarrative of Scottish Vernacular Modernism

Long misfiled under the loose and analytically impoverished label of Traditionalism, this paper invites a historiographical and theoretical reappraisal of the work of Robert Hurd (1905–1963). Hurd's work, though perhaps unsung, distinguishes him as a critical figure who negotiated Scotland's unsettled twentieth-century identity within a broader landscape of British and imperial architectural modernity. Both his architectural and theoretical contributions reveal a prescient reconciliation of vernacular form, modernist ideology, and national self-fashioning during a moment of pronounced cultural dislocation. His work thus sits at a historiographical fault line—between center and ostensible periphery, empire and autonomy, modernist abstraction and autochthonous situatedness. That he remains peripheral within dominant accounts of Scottish modernism is symptomatic of architectural history's discomfort with hybrid figures who trouble the discipline's ossified aesthetic, geographic, and political binaries.

The paper begins with the 1938 Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, where sleek modernist pavilions advertising Scottish industrial futurity were staged alongside the sentimental An *Clachan* Highland village. This architectural juxtaposition exposed a nation unsure of its role as both builder of empire and its internal other. Hurd's own response to the exhibition—his essay *Design for To-Day*—diagnosed this schizophrenic self-image while also proposing its cure: a vernacular-inflected modernism, partially continental while remaining rooted in place, cultural continuity, and civic life.

Hurd's approach materialized most notably in his postwar redevelopment of Edinburgh's Canongate, as well as in his published critiques of detached, state-planned residential housing schemes. Drawing in equal parts from Patrick Geddes, Scandinavian social housing, and anti-centralist planning critiques, Hurd imagined a national modernism responsive to Scotland's cultural and climatic specificities. As a radical and underappreciated alternative to both the placelessness of the International Style and the reactionary nostalgia of revivalism, Hurd's vernacular modernism, this paper argues, is worthy of a far more dynamic description than Traditionalism.

Read through the lens of Hurd's career, the paper proposes a pivotal corrective counter-narrative to British architectural history. As such, it invites a disciplinary reorientation that resists formalist reduction and takes seriously the epistemic claims embedded in vernacular modernist work. Hurd's career recasts how modernity was metabolized at the imperial center's margins—and how historiography must adapt to trace that metabolization with conceptual fidelity. Consequently, the paper highlights some shortcomings of current disciplinary frameworks to accommodate figures who straddle aesthetic and political binaries of traditional and modern, national and imperial, progressive and particular. In so doing, it offers both a historiographical intervention and a methodological proposition: that twentieth-century Scottish architectural modernism might be read not as a deviant regional variant, but as a site of conceptual friction where national identity, imperial ambivalence, and innovative design intersected—and where historiography itself must adapt beyond mere formalism to better trace their entanglements.

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Dr. Frances Sands (Curator of Drawings and Books, Sir John Soane's Museum)

Tempting ferocity: responses to Sir John Soane's lectures

In 1996, David Watkins's magisterial publication, *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures* offered a focused examination of Soane's architectural theory and pedagogical approach as Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy in 1806 to 1837. Watkin's analysis of Soane's engagement with architects and architectural historians; artists and art historians; archaeologists; anthropologists and philosophers is unparalleled, if sometimes at variance with the opinions of Soane Museum curators, past and present, including Sir John Summerson. The text of the lectures had been published earlier in the twentieth century by Soane Museum curator Arthur Bolton, but containing errors, with none of this analysis, no index, and, importantly, none of Watkin's examination of Soane's research and note-taking made in preparation for his lectures. There is an argument to be made for Soane's Royal Academy lectures being Britain's first historiographic review of international architectural history and theory. In parallel, Soane's 1,000+ illustrative lecture drawings functioned in this context as a graphic historiographic analysis of architectural history – probably the first of its type in Britain. It is quite extraordinary that through visual matter alone, Soane's office managed to depict certain buildings in either a positive or negative light, and moreover, how those associations and connotations have often been mirrored by contemporary exhibition practice at the Soane Museum since the 1990s. I have exhibited more of Soane's Royal Academy lecture drawings than any other curator, and find myself questioning the influence of Soane's lectures over my scholarly approach and exhibition

collations. Soane's often scathing criticism of his contemporaries' use of physical and written precedents are so amusing to the modern reader [of Watkin's published transcription] as to be entirely compelling and even convincing. Soane's prose can be dull and dry, but his critiques offer a guilty pleasure with which I find myself allied, and all too often without adequate scrutiny. Are my exhibitions and publications on the subject of Soane's work and theories unduly influenced by Soane's lectures? I wonder if I am more Soane's puppet, than a truly autonomous curator of his collections

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