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The case of the city churches

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## Heritage, civilization and oblivion in inter-war Britain: the case of the city churches

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### ABSTRACT

This essay investigates public debates over the prospective loss of Christopher Wren's City of London churches as a window onto changing public attitudes to 'heritage' and historic preservation during the inter-war years. It argues that the Great War made a profound impact on the ways in which the British public engaged with notions of heritage and historic preservation. In particular, this essay claims that inter-war debates over church demolition expose the considerable extent to which the war popularised conceptualisations of 'heritage' which had, since the 1870s, been entertained exclusively by a small cultural elite

### KEYWORDS

Heritage; conservation; great war; city churches

In late February, 1923 a large crowd assembled at St. Paul's cathedral to commemorate the life and work of Sir Christopher Wren. The congregation, which included delegations from the Guildhall, the Royal Academy, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the French *Societe Centrale*, was treated to a sermon by William Inge, the modernist Dean of St. Paul's. Inge praised Wren's polymath genius, characterised Wren's buildings as supreme embodiments of English Renaissance culture, and contrasted the 'sane and sensible' dignity of Wren's architecture to the excesses and follies of the Victorian Gothic. Yet this celebration, like so many other inter-war commemorations of the English past, was tinged with foreboding. The so-called 'gloomy dean' concluded his sermon by issuing a stark warning on the immanent dangers faced by Wren's buildings. 'It is only too probable', claimed Inge, 'that another European war will see the end of this [St. Paul's] and of many other memorials of Wren's genius'.<sup>1</sup>

The St. Paul's memorial service was the first in a series of festivities organised jointly by the R.I.B.A., the London Society, and the Public Record Office to commemorate the bicentenary of Wren's death. The succeeding fortnight played host to banquets, special exhibitions, walking tours of Wren's buildings, fancy dress parties, the establishment of the Wren Society, and the initiation of a multi-volume work dedicated to reproducing Wren's drawings and letters.<sup>2</sup> Enthusiasm for Wren's architectural legacy had been growing over the preceding two decades, as part of a broader 'Edwardian baroque' sensibility which celebrated an English neo-classical cannon extending well beyond

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Wren and encompassing the likes of Jones and Vanbrugh. The 1897 publication of Reginald Blomfield's *A history of Renaissance architecture in England*, which has often been characterised as a foundational text for this new sensibility, placed Wren at the very epicentre of the English baroque. Indeed, the Edwardian baroque, as articulated by the likes of Blomfield, Bolton and Lutyens, was so closely associated with admiration for Wren that it came to be known as the 'Wrenaisasance'.<sup>3</sup> The Wren bicentenary represented the culmination of this growing tide of admiration. For two weeks Wren was publicly remembered as a visionary and a national treasure; his architectural legacy was celebrated as the material embodiment of 'Englishness' and was said to speak to the English people in 'a language that they recognized as their own'.<sup>4</sup> Looming over each of these celebrations, commemorations, and remembrances, however, was a spectre of loss and oblivion. One finds the surveyor of St. Paul's, Mervyn Macartney, for instance, praising the architectural triumphs of Wren's City churches in a public lecture only to close his presentation by noting, with a resigned certainty, that many of these buildings would soon disappear. Sir Aston Webb's public celebrations of Wren's legacy were similarly dampened by his firm belief that, in a generation or two, London would be deprived of St. Paul's.<sup>5</sup> This foreboding was fed by a deep interwar anxiety over the precariousness of civilisation itself. As Richard Overy has emphasised, the inter-war years were plagued by an 'infectious, almost self-indulgent disillusionment with the present' and a uniquely morbid culture which fixated on and elaborated numerous scenarios of civilisational collapse.<sup>6</sup> Anxieties over the loss of 'ancient' and historically significant buildings were further encouraged by the emergence of a widespread belief that, in the event of a renewed war, London would surely be subjected to aerial assault.<sup>7</sup> However, the prospect of renewed European hostilities was not the only, and indeed perhaps not the primary, source of this pessimism. The fears voiced by Macartney, Webb and many others were also at least partly caused by concerns over the threats posed by home-grown 'vandalism' and the ongoing drive for urban development.<sup>8</sup>

This essay investigates public debates over the prospective loss, through either planned demolition or aerial assault, of Wren's City of London churches as a window onto changing public attitudes to 'heritage' and historic preservation during the inter-war years. It argues that the Great War made a profound impact on the ways in which the British public engaged with notions of heritage and historic preservation. In particular, this essay claims that inter-war debates over church demolition expose the considerable extent to which the war popularised conceptualisations of 'heritage' which had, since the 1870s, been entertained exclusively by a small cultural elite. The experience of the war was central to this attitudinal transformation. The profound destructiveness of the war encouraged the British public to cherish and take steps to protect emblems of national identity and heritage. Although much has been written about the inter-war culture of 'memorialisation', historians have been curiously silent on the impact of war in transforming public attitudes towards 'heritage' and historic building preservation.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, 'memorialisation' has generally been taken to mean the erection of new structures rather than the protection of existing ones. Astrid Swenson's excellent account of the rise of heritage in Britain, France and Germany, for instance, ends on the eve of the Great War, and Miles Glendinning's *longue duree* survey of European conservationism focuses on the scale of inter-war reconstruction rather than on the new conservationist attitudes and ideologies which such reconstruction helped bring into being.<sup>10</sup> Indeed,

much of the extant historiography of preservationism focuses either on the Victorian origins of the preservationist movement or the post-world war two emergence of a mature 'heritage industry'.<sup>11</sup>

If, as Overy, Eksteins, Lawrence and many others have argued, the inter-war years played host to heightened anxieties over the near-term collapse of 'civilization', then debates over the prospective demolition or preservation of Wren's City churches – which were repeatedly described as supreme physical embodiments of English 'civilization' – cut right to the core of the inter-war culture of 'morbidity'. These debates suggest that, unlike Overy's intellectual elite, the broader British public did not passively accept the inevitability of civilisational demise. Rather, the overwhelming public support for protecting and preserving Wren's City architectural legacy on 'heritage' principles suggests that the inter-war generation believed it could mitigate and manage, if not stave off altogether, the impact of 'civilizational decline'. These debates also suggest that the war played an important role in enabling 'cultural flow' by displacing utilitarian arguments in favour of urban development and by generating a new popular concern with cultural stewardship. The wars of the twentieth-century have long been considered important vehicles for transnational cultural diffusion. Much has been written, for instance, on the dynamics of 'Americanization' in the wake of both world wars.<sup>12</sup> However, the cultural flows occasioned by these conflicts were not entirely transnational. Some took place across social classes, and within a domestic frame. In some respects the first war balkanised society – for instance, by further alienating modernist intellectuals from the mass of the population – and inhibited the exchange of values and culture between distinct social groupings.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, as Ross McKibbin's work has shown, war was profoundly destabilising to existing matrices of domestic cultural authority. Indeed, the war delivered a knockout blow to a landed elite whose cultural, economic and political influence had been in decline for nearly half a century by the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>14</sup> However, the inter-war years also witnessed the cross-class diffusion of some important ideas, values and attitudes which had recently been marginal to the broad public. The emergence of a new *popular* discourse of national heritage was an outcome of just such diffusion. The dynamics by which such values were transmitted from a vanguard of cultural elites to the general populace during this period have received insufficient attention.

## II

Inter-war pessimism over the fate of Wren's City churches was fuelled as much by recent history as by grim visions of the world to come. Between 1860 and 1904, over one third of this 'family of buildings' had been demolished at the behest of an evangelical Anglican establishment eager to redirect the limited resources of the church away from maintaining empty buildings (however beautiful and historically significant) and towards a missionary drive to save souls in the rapidly growing, under-provisioned, and worryingly 'Godless', metropolitan suburbs. Starting with Bishop Blomfield in the 1850s, a succession of Bishops of London had argued that the City, which experienced rapid depopulation from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, was scandalously 'over-churched', and that the demolition of the City churches and the sale of their freeholds would fund church expansion where it was most needed. The Benefices Act of 1860 enabled the demolition

of no fewer than fourteen City churches, most of which had been rebuilt by Wren between the 1670s and 80s. Although prominent cultural critics, including both Morris and Ruskin, decried these demolitions as acts of vandalism and crimes against national patrimony, the late-Victorian public remained unconvinced that heritage considerations alone could ever justify the preservation of buildings which had outlived their usefulness.<sup>15</sup> This programme of demolition was completed in March, 1904 when St. George, Botolph Lane, which had been rebuilt by Wren in 1674, came down and was united with St. Mary-at-Hill. The disappearance of this church, which had been closed for a decade prior to its demolition, went un-mourned, despite its associations with William Beckford (whose remains were interred in the church) and its once 'picturesque and dignified appearance'.<sup>16</sup>

In the wake of St. George's demolition, the movement for City church demolition lay dormant for a decade and a half, until it was revived in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. The 1917 decision to call City of London rectors away from their parishes and put them into national service (under the terms of the Ecclesiastical Services Act) revived the question of whether stretched church resources would be best utilised by returning these clergymen to their empty parishes in the wake of hostilities or, alternatively, by extending the commitments of the church in the metropolitan suburbs. The Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, who had himself been a leading missionary in Bethnal Green during the 1890s, considered this question to be important enough to merit a special commission on the future of the City parishes.

The nine member commission, chaired by the eminent jurist Lord Phillimore and composed of Anglican clergymen, members of the City Common Council, lay churchmen, and architectural experts, gave its bold, and highly controversial, answer to this question in 1919. The *Report of the City of London Churches Commission*, which was published and distributed by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, betrayed the missionary principles of its initiator and publisher. In the first place, the *Report* suggested that the City be divided into four Anglican administrative districts, each with its own resident rector and four resident assistant clergy. This reduction in the number of City clergy would save the church £24,000 per year while also ensuring the existence of no less than eighteen *resident* City clergymen. It would also enable a corresponding reduction in the number of City churches. The *Report's* second recommendation, therefore, was that nineteen churches be demolished and their sites sold at market value. These sales would raise, at the very minimum, £1,695,620 which could be used to fund church extension elsewhere in the metropolis.<sup>17</sup> Such recommendations made familiar reading for those who, like the octogenarian Edwin Freshfield, had participated in the late-Victorian fight to save the City churches. Thirteen of the nineteen condemned churches had been designed by Wren [Table 1]. Many of these, including St. Mary-at-Hill and St. Alban, Wood Street, had been scheduled for demolition by the Benefice Commissioners during the 1860s and 70s, but a significant number had not. Widely admired churches such as St. Michael, Cornhill and St. Vedast, Foster Lane, for instance, faced the prospect of demolition for the first time.

The Commission's recommendations aroused a storm of protest, but found favour among a small core of Anglican evangelicals which included the suffragan Bishop of Stepney and secretary of the London Diocesan Home Mission George Forrest Browne, the missionary lecturer rev. George William Hudson Shaw, and the National Assembly of

**Table 1.** List of churches chosen by the Phillimore commission for demolition (1919). Starred churches designed by Wren.

- (1) **All Hallow's, Lombard street\***
- (2) **St. Alban, Wood street\***
- (3) **St. Anne and St. Agnes, Aldersgate\***
- (4) **St. Clement, Eastcheap\***
- (5) **St. Dunstan-in-the-East, Eastcheap\***
- (6) **St. Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge\***
- (7) **St. Mary Aldermanbury\***
- (8) **St. Mary-at-Hill, Eastcheap\***
- (9) **St. Michael, Cornhill\***
- (10) **St. Michael Royal, Queen Victoria street\***
- (11) **St. Nicholas Cole Abby\***
- (12) **St. Stephen, Coleman street\***
- (13) **St. Vedast, Foster Lane\***
- (14) **All Hallow's, London Wall**
- (15) **St. Botolph, Aldgate**
- (16) **St. Botolph, Aldersgate**
- (17) **St. Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet street**
- (18) **St. Katherine Coleman**
- (19) **St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard street**

the Church of England member Major J.D. Birchill, who, in 1922, reminded Hugh Cecil that 'the church cannot afford to maintain historical buildings at the expense of thousands of men and women who have no building at all within which to worship'.<sup>18</sup> This sentiment was echoed by many within the evangelical community. The Dean of Durham, James Welldon, for instance, confessed in 1922 that he should 'not feel able to support a movement for the preservation of the City churches at all costs in view of the great spiritual destitution which threatens certain parts of the country, especially perhaps the suburbs of London', while A.F. Buxton argued publicly that human souls 'are worth more than bricks, and if a sacrifice, even of the best bricks, helps men to the highest spiritual life, the bricks must go'.<sup>19</sup>

Sydney Holland, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Knutsford, who was perhaps the most outspoken advocate of City church demolition during the inter-war period, shared this perspective but injected it with a greater emphasis on efficiency. Although Knutsford lamented London's unsaved souls, his case for further demolition grew primarily out of an aversion to City 'waste'. During the 1890s Knutsford had improved medical provision at the Poplar and London hospitals by removing administrative inefficiencies and modernising managerial practices.<sup>20</sup> By the inter-war period, he had come to believe that the diocese of London was equally in need of reform. The condition of the City churches, claimed Knutsford, comprised 'a shameful waste of money, and . . . the public have only got to realize the facts to insist that this waste shall be ended'.<sup>21</sup> This efficiency agenda opened Knutsford to charges of utilitarianism, and in fact Knutsford acknowledged that his critics regarded him as a 'mere empty headed utilitarian who cares nothing for beauty and nothing for antiquity'.<sup>22</sup> For that matter, even some supporters of the 1919 Commission report regarded Knutsford as over-zealous in his commitment to church demolition. As the prebendary of St. Paul's put it in his correspondence with Knutsford, 'your aim is, I gather, to pull down as many churches as possible because you regard them as useless. We, though prepared to let some go, want to retain as many as possible in the belief that they are wanted'.<sup>23</sup>



Although Knutsford certainly did not advocate indiscriminate demolition, he was, as Ellison suggests, markedly unsentimental about the churches. Knutsford's views on the churches of Lombard Street provide an illustration of this attitude. In 1921, three churches occupied sites on Lombard Street. On the north side of the street, close to Gracechurch Street, stood Wren's 'lighthouse church', St. Edmund the King and Martyr. At the corner of Lombard Street and King William Street stood Hawksmoor's Baroque masterpiece St. Mary's Woolnoth. Finally, at the corner of Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street stood Wren's so-called 'hidden church' of All Hallow's. In Knutsford's view, Lombard Street, which runs a mere 250 yards in length, was indefensibly over-churched, regardless of the heritage claims and beauty of the churches which stood alongside it. Indeed, Knutsford regarded as a scandal the fact that these churches occupied 'the most valuable sites in the country' and yet stood empty. Knutsford's solution to this scandal was the immediate demolition of both the much loved St. Mary's and All Hallow's, which was widely admired for its exquisite interior and its historical associations with John Wesley.<sup>24</sup> When, as a result of this proposal, Knutsford was charged with 'vandalism' he simply suggested that those arguing for the preservation of these churches should 'avoid being hysterically sentimental about keeping a building simply because it is old'.<sup>25</sup>

Five years later, when a measure was put before Parliament with the aim of inaugurating a new round of City church removals, Knutsford spoke forcefully in support of the legislation, claiming that the waste of the City parochial system made his 'blood boil'.<sup>26</sup> The measure which Knutsford so passionately supported aimed to radically alter the process by which benefice unions (and therefore City church demolition) would be secured. According to the terms of the proposed measure, the Bishop of London would first choose a church for demolition, and 'give notice' to the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Metropolitan Benefices Board. Any objections made by these bodies would be considered, but would not be binding. Then a special five person commission would be appointed. Two members would be appointed by the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Conference of London; two would be appointed by the City Common Council; and the chairman (with deciding vote) would be appointed by the Lord Chancellor. In the event that the commission approved the particular scheme for removal, an array of public bodies (including RIBA, the Society of Antiquaries, and other 'preservationist' organisations) would be notified. Were any of these bodies to object to the scheme, the matter would be referred to the Metropolitan Benefices Board (which would be composed of nine ecclesiastical appointees, five appointees representing 'heritage organizations', seven City Corporation appointees, and fourteen independent members). The majority vote of this Board would have final authority to enact or deny the scheme. Vestry consent, which had for such a long time been considered the chief obstacle to demolition, was to be abandoned altogether.<sup>27</sup>

Within Parliament, this measure met with an extraordinary level of opposition, almost all of which was founded on the heritage claims of the churches. Sir Martin Conway summarised the opposition to the measure by claiming that 'we wish to put these churches once and for all beyond the reach of the covetousness of anyone. We wish them to be set up once and for all as national monuments'. Sir Vansittart Bowater decried the measure as 'confiscation in its worst form' of 'standing monuments in the history of the City of London' which should be regarded as inviolable national patrimony. Charles



Ammon agreed, claiming that the City churches 'belong to the community; they are part of our architectural legacy and our great spiritual heritage'.<sup>28</sup> Remarkably, some supporters of the measure were equally driven by heritage concerns. Hugh Cecil, for example, argued that the measure would actually make church demolition more difficult, and would safeguard the most beautiful and historically important churches through greater input from heritage organisations.<sup>29</sup> Crucially, heritage considerations were characterised by parliamentary opponents of the measure as equally underpinning *popular* opposition to further City church demolition. The Earl of Crawford, for one, took succour from his belief that 'public opinion is assuming a very strong and decided attitude about the destruction of older buildings. The fact is our losses have been so great and have been so little realized while they were going on, that we are only now just beginning to estimate the real measure of our loss'.<sup>30</sup> Viscount Peel, meanwhile, similarly claimed that 'growing masses of His Majesty's subjects are becoming more and more sensitive in these matters, more and more devoted to ancient buildings and more and more determined to stand up for them from whatever corner an attack may be made upon them'. Peel's advice to the Bishop was clear: 'respect a great and deep force of public opinion . . . let the churches stand'.<sup>31</sup>

Although it passed the Lords (owing to clerical support), the 1926 measure was soundly defeated in the Commons by a ratio of five votes to one. Moreover, the tenor of Parliamentary opposition to the new scheme was mirrored in the public debate. The Corporation of London petitioned Parliament as 'representatives of the general body of citizens of London' with the intention of conveying the 'great mass of public opposition' to the scheme. Revealingly, the Corporation petition ignored the spiritual claims of the churches, while giving special emphasis to heritage considerations. 'The churches in the City of London', argued the petition, 'cannot be regarded solely from the point of view of their use for purposes of church services; they are national memorials of the antiquity which renders the City a magnet of attraction to the world at large. Many of them are the product of the genius of Sir Christopher Wren, whose name alone should be their protection'.<sup>32</sup> The recent bicentennial of Wren's death, and the establishment of the Wren Society, had done a great deal to enhance public recognition of this 'genius'.<sup>33</sup>

The recommendations of the Phillimore *Report*, however, seem to have had an even more profound effect on public attitudes towards the churches. The *Report's* publication unleashed an immense wave of popular sentiment for the churches. The *Daily Mirror*, for one, pronounced itself to be 'astonished' at the scale of the 'storm of indignant protests' provoked by the *Report*.<sup>34</sup> The high-church *Church Times*, which had opposed City church demolition from its first issue in 1863, was very pleased to note the popularity of this perspective. 'For many years we stood almost alone in our defence of them [the City churches]', ran a *Church Times* editorial of 1920, 'the daily Press cared little or nothing about the matter; today we find ourselves for once on the popular side'.<sup>35</sup> Crucially, however, the popular sentiment for City church preservation was almost entirely underpinned by 'heritage', rather than spiritual, considerations.

Throughout May, 1920 newspapers were deluged by letters of outrage over the *Report's* recommendations. 'The history of London is closely interwoven with these churches', wrote one correspondent to the *Daily Chronicle*, 'to remove any one of them would be an act of vandalism, and would greatly impoverish the historical associations of this premier city'.<sup>36</sup> This was a widely shared view. Correspondents to the *Daily Mail*,

*Morning Post*, and *City Press*, for instance, suggested that further City church demolition would destroy the very 'soul of the great City' by erasing its historical identity for the sake of shallow and vulgar expediency, and that such a course of action would forever discredit a 'generation which has wiped away history this ruthlessly'.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, this concern for the condemnation of posterity and a corresponding awareness of the obligation that each generation has to safeguard historical monuments for future generations, shot through much of the debate over the *Report* recommendations. In the words of one correspondent to the *Saturday Review*, 'every generation should provide for itself, and not one has the right to rob posterity of heirlooms which any capital might be proud to possess'.<sup>38</sup> As this perspective suggests, advocates of City church preservation had by the 1920s almost completely discarded the view that these 'heirlooms' should be retained as *places of worship*. Rather, the City churches had come to be valued almost exclusively as historical texts. 'For purely religious purposes as measured by the numbers who use them, these churches have largely lost their value', conceded a correspondent to the *Observer*, but 'to admit this does not in any way lessen the incontestable value of most of those now in question as works of art representative of the most interesting aesthetic phase in our national life, and which, as such, demands their preservation'.<sup>39</sup> Similar letters appeared in provincial papers. 'Those churches may or may not have congregations, but that is not the point', claimed a reader of the *Manchester Dispatch*, 'those churches are the nation's . . . these buildings are history in stone, and at least show us the ideas and ideals of our forefathers as not lecture can'.<sup>40</sup>

Many observers of the public protest against City church demolition commented on this new centrality of heritage consideration. The *Times*, for instance, noted in late May, 1920 that public comment had been almost entirely concentrated on the 'prospective loss to the nation, to the City, to the church, to architecture, and to posterity' that further church demolition would occasion.<sup>41</sup> The *Westminster Gazette*, meanwhile, claimed that

the movement for the defence of the City churches from destruction is already formidable. It will grow. The pride of the Londoner in the architectural beauties of the City that remain from other days may not find daily expression, but it exists. There are churches, no doubt, which could be removed without loss to the appearance of the City - with some gain possibly - but about these cling associations that men will not willingly sacrifice. It is certain that none of the churches will come down without a strong protest.<sup>42</sup>

The editorial positions promoted by numerous newspapers betrayed a similarly heightened concern over heritage considerations. The *Sunday Evening Telegram* regarded the *Report* recommendations as 'clerical vandalism' and argued that the true value of City churches lay in their status as irreplaceable 'monuments of the history of London', rather than in their usefulness as places of worship.<sup>43</sup> The *Daily Mail* similarly claimed that the City churches were not 'merely shrines of devotion', but more importantly the 'living records of worthies dead and gone'. The demolition of these living records, claimed the *Mail*, would constitute 'an outrage upon history' and a dereliction of stewardship over national patrimony. This had long been an important part of the preservationist case against City church demolition. During the 1870s William Morris and others had emphasised the rootedness of the churches and their essential associations with particular parishes, and even particular plots of land. Removal and relocation of the churches would necessarily compromise their value as historical texts, and would have the effect of

erasing the City's 'living history'. Morris and other late-Victorian critics of demolition were equally horrified by the prospect that the churches would be replaced by inappropriately commercial buildings.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, although the noted architectural journalist Lawrence Weaver bemoaned the replacement of churches with commercial buildings, few 20<sup>th</sup> century observers shared this fear. The inter-war movement for church preservation was motivated by a desire to retain historic fabric rather than by an aesthetic revulsion to commerce and modernity. If the story of churches was obliterated by their removal, it would not matter what new story took its place. 'We are, in truth', claimed the *Mail*, 'trustees of the treasures of art and history which have come down to us. We shall do less than our duty if we do not hand them on to our sons as we received them from our fathers. We ought to have no more power to destroy historical monuments than to destroy human life'.<sup>45</sup> The *Inquirer* agreed, claiming that, although it was a 'pity' to see so many churches devoid of congregations, it was nonetheless 'a worse pity that men's heads and hearts should be destitute of thoughts rooted in the storied past, and leave no place for tender memories of their fathers'.<sup>46</sup> These same concerns were promoted even by development-oriented building trade journals. *The Contract Journal*, for example, regarded the demolition scheme as inimical to the City's 'historic value and associations', and claimed that the church was merely a trustee of these buildings whereas the nation was their actual owner.<sup>47</sup>

In this atmosphere, the work of conservationist organisations began to receive widespread public support and recognition. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, for instance, benefited greatly from its stout defence of the City churches. The Secretary of the SPAB, A.R. Powys, claimed in the immediate wake of the *Report's* publication that 'so great is the opposition that already individuals have applied for membership of the Society for the sole purpose of preventing the destruction of these historic churches'.<sup>48</sup> After placing a series of letters in the *Times* emphasising the heritage claims of the threatened churches, Powys received many letters of thanks from like-minded members of the public. 'I am glad that your society is taking up the question of the preservation of our historic churches', wrote one admirer, 'please fight for them all'.<sup>49</sup> The SBAP did indeed fight for them all out of a strong conviction that, as Hugh Cecil and A.R. Powys put it, 'the City churches together form a single monument, and the removal of any one of them will seriously detract from the value of the whole'.<sup>50</sup> The SPAB was not alone in this view. Nor, must it be said, did the SPAB stand alone in its fight to save Wren's churches.<sup>51</sup> In the wake of the *Report's* publication the London Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the National Trust, and RIBA, among other organisations, joined with the SPAB to advocate the preservation of the remaining City churches and to enhance public appreciation of these 'irreplaceable monuments of the past'. In March, 1921 these organisations came together at a conference hosted by the Royal Academy of Arts to comment on the Phillimore *Report* and lobby the Bishop of London against its recommendations. The conference unanimously, and in the strongest terms, denounced plans for *any* further City church demolition, and claimed that this view had broad public support. More than this, the conference suggested that only the complete preservation of the City churches would safeguard the status of other historic monuments. 'We are well aware', declared the conference chairman, Aston Webb, 'that there is already throughout the country a tendency to destroy ancient remains . . . if London were to set an example of such wholesale destruction as is now proposed, it would, in our opinion, have a fatal

effect over the kingdom at large, and lead to the disappearance of much that is precious'.<sup>52</sup> Given the popularity of this view, these organisations took care to keep their agitations open to the public. The British Archaeological Association and the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, for instance, led public visitations of the 'condemned' churches and gave lectures on their histories.<sup>53</sup> The London Society gave public lectures on the threatened churches which were illustrated with lantern slides.<sup>54</sup> The Society of Antiquaries led public protests against the 'incomparable act of vandalism' proposed by the *Report*.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, representatives of the SPAB contributed to all of these efforts at raising public awareness. Powys, for instance, assisted the British Archaeological Association church visitations by lecturing on the merits of St. Mary, Woolnoth.<sup>56</sup> 'Every public body that counts has turned to read the report of the commission upon its destructive side', noted the *Daily Telegraph* in June, 1921, 'there is being put up such a fight for the retention of the churches as never had been fought for these buildings in the past, when the demolitionists had their own way'.<sup>57</sup>

### III

The public attitude towards church demolition underwent a dramatic transformation between 1860 and 1920. Throughout the late-Victorian period, the British public was largely apathetic to the future of the City churches. Late-Victorian preservationists had been discouraged and frustrated, if not altogether surprised, by the scale of this apathy. 'If, wrote one critic of church demolition in 1884, 'public opinion was properly aroused on the subject in London, and a very moderate amount of agitation got up, there would be a cessation of these disgraceful vandalisms'.<sup>58</sup> Although A.E. Daniell claimed in 1898 to detect 'early signs' that the 'public mind is awakening to a sense of the wanton barbarism' of City church demolition, the 'public mind' nonetheless remained largely alienated, right through the Edwardian years, from the heritage agenda promoted by preservationist organisations.<sup>59</sup>

The Great War acted as a necessary catalyst for attitudinal transformation. In the first place, and most obviously, the war heightened public sensitivity to loss of any kind, but especially to the *self-inflicted* loss of 'civilization'. In a 'morbid age' dominated by anxieties over civilisational collapse, ornaments of civilisational achievement became sacred.<sup>60</sup> The intensely urgent tone of opposition to church demolition between 1920 and 1926 illustrates the scale of this anxiety. So, for that matter, does Aston Webb's fear that City church demolition would ultimately lead to the disappearance of 'much that is precious . . . in the kingdom at large'.<sup>61</sup> During the 1920s, opposition to City church demolition frequently invoked war-related loss to justify its position. 'If German air bombs had laid nineteen of the old City churches in the dust', asked Wilfred Whitten in the wake of the *Report's* publication, 'what would Londoners have felt and what would they have said? Who could have measured their grief and anger?' And yet, Whitten noted with dismay, 'to-day these spiritual sheepfolds are threatened with a more complete destruction by their own shepherds'.<sup>62</sup> One finds this line of argument almost everywhere the fate of the City churches was debated. The architect Sir Banister Fletcher, for instance, claimed at a gathering of the City Livery Club that the *Report* proposal was even more 'barbaric' than the 'Hun air raids'; a correspondent to the *Record* argued that 'if in 1914–18 seventeen bombs had

removed the seventeen churches recommended for demolition, we should have heard a good deal about the wickedness, sacrilege, etc. of the depraved Germans'; an 'astounded' City churchwarden observed that 'the Huns in all their cruel destructiveness did not destroy nineteen churches in one place'; the rector of St. Peter, Cornhill decried that 'one would have thought that four or five years of ghastly destructiveness would have exhausted its horror, without the Bolshevik microbe undermining the splendid foundations of the piety of the past'.<sup>63</sup> One also finds a plethora of editorials in *Country Life*, the *Architect* and other respectable journals, which argued that Phillimore's demolition proposals invoked the spirit of German disregard for the fruits of French and Belgian civilisation.<sup>64</sup> The war veteran Spencer Secretan was sufficiently moved by these considerations to donate a small sum to the SBAP in support of their defence of the churches. 'As one who served in the Royal Navy during the war to preserve our land from being turned into a wilderness by the Huns' Secretan wrote to Powys, 'it is a great shock to find our own vandals want to destroy what has survived the Hun's air raids'.<sup>65</sup>

The scale of human loss occasioned by the war also contributed to the success of the heritage agenda. The culture of 'memorialisation' which emerged in the wake of the Great War popularised A.H. Mackmurdo's earlier concern that City church demolition would erase from the public memory another story of national loss and rebirth.<sup>66</sup> In addition to memorialising 'the great dead', as William Morris put it, the City churches also preserved the story of London's greatest catastrophe. The churches were, in Mackmurdo's view, shrines and monuments to a greater and more confident age. During the inter-war years this view came to be widely held. The *Spectator* articulated precisely this perspective in June, 1920: 'we are at the present moment disputing over the memorials to our fallen in the war. Are we to expect that in 400 years' time the authorities will be busying themselves with throwing away their remains, because the sites of their burial places have become too valuable to be retained for their sacred purpose?'<sup>67</sup> One sees this conceptualisation of the City churches as 'memorials' in the popular resistance, during the 1920s, to suggestions that the City churches be re-built elsewhere. According to the *Building News*, the only course of action more ridiculous than destroying these 'shrines of civic history' would have been to remove them to the suburbs stone by stone.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, in Aston Webb's view, this would be nothing less than 'dishonest'.<sup>69</sup> Removal and re-erection was considered to be dishonest precisely because the City churches had come to be understood as rooted memorials which would lose all meaning if removed from their essential context.

There can be little doubt that during the inter-war years the scale of popular opposition to City church demolition was partly a result of changing tastes. By the 1920's, Gothic architecture had become decidedly unfashionable, and the British public was beginning to show a greater appreciation of late Renaissance and Georgian structures and styles.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, many Edwardians were eager to characterise their parents' generation, which had venerated the Gothic and denigrated classical modes, as myopic, uncultured, and prone to vandalism.<sup>71</sup> Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, which had been published in 1918, was just one illustration of this anti-Victorianism among many. Yet the intensity of early-20<sup>th</sup> century defences of the City churches was more directly the result of a broader change in popular attitudes towards the preservation of historically

significant structures. The late-Victorian British public had been either indifferent or indeed antagonistic towards the preservation of the City churches. In a heavily evangelised culture, the empty City churches comprised a scandal. In addition to being indicative of spiritual malaise and the worst sort of ecclesiastical waste and corruption, the churches embodied, for many Victorians, the failure to civilise the urban 'residuum'. Calls for the preservation of these buildings were taken to be symptomatic of these failings. Ironically, most advocates of City church preservation were motivated by the same spiritual concerns entertained by the advocates of demolition.

## IV

The Great War revolutionised popular attitudes towards the City churches. Prior to the war, champions of church demolition had been able to effectively present themselves as defenders of Christian civilisation against the onslaught of materialism and social irresponsibility. In the wake of the war, this mantle was taken over by those advocating preservation. Although the concerns of the demolitionists remained essentially unchanged, public support for demolition evaporated. More than this, a popular veneration for stone over souls emerged. Spiritual arguments for the retention of the churches also disappeared during the 1920s. Heritage claims replaced such spiritual considerations almost completely. If the scale of loss occasioned by the war made this possible, so did the 'spiritualization' of heritage claims which sat easily within the emerging culture of memorialisation. Indeed, the impact of war on the popularisation of heritage-based arguments for City church preservation can scarcely be overstated.

What the Great War initiated, the Second World War completed. Nineteen of Wren's City churches were either damaged or destroyed in the course of the Blitz. Thirteen were damaged or destroyed on the night of 29 December 1940 alone. This devastation revived the City churches' historical associations with trial and renewal, and enhanced their status as emblems of British resistance and totems of English national identity. This status was strengthened through their 'family relationship' to St. Paul's Cathedral, which, from the wide circulation of Herbert Mason's iconic blitz photograph, became a 'visual token of nothing short of civilization itself'.<sup>72</sup> Although open to a variety of readings and uses, the photograph's potent visual cocktail of Christian rectitude, the resilience of national institutions, and physical devastation was easily transferable to an appreciation of St. Paul's 'children'. Consequently, many of the earliest attempts at cataloguing the destruction of the blitz emphasised the damage done to the City churches. This emphasis on the churches was especially significant at a time when press coverage of blitz damage was censored and photographic evidence was difficult to come by. James Pope-Hennessy's widely admired *History under Fire*, for instance, devoted the lion's share of its pages to the plight of the City churches, and meditated at some length on parallels between the blitz and the great fire of 1666. Although Pope-Hennessy acknowledged significant differences in scale, he nonetheless found many compelling points of similarity.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, references to a 'second fire of London' were common across the newspaper and periodical press.<sup>74</sup> War had revived the City churches' place in a narrative of national catastrophe, survival and renewal. It also enhanced the memorial function of the churches. In the wake of the blitz, many, including Hugh Casson and J.M. Richards, argued that what was left of



the ruined churches should stand largely unaltered as poignant, living memorials of both loss and survival.<sup>75</sup> The *Illustrated London News* agreed, laying special emphasis on the strange beauty of Wren's gutted churches.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, many contemporaries were convinced that such destruction had enhanced the value (and, in some cases, the beauty) of the City churches.<sup>77</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, for one, recognised the role played by wartime destruction in popularising heritage appreciation of significant buildings generally, and the City churches in particular. Writing in the *Burlington Magazine* in the immediate wake of the blitz, Pevsner mourned the loss of so many fine buildings, but claimed that such loss would transform attitudes to those buildings which survived. 'If such a revival of affection', wrote Pevsner, 'for the vast English heritage of architectural beauty and dignity is to be the outcome of the annihilation which faces us . . . then we shall be able to say of the buildings that perished, that they did not die in vain'.<sup>78</sup> In 1946, given this new status and new function, the Church of England finally ended its nearly century-long push for City church removal.<sup>79</sup> Four years later, each of the remaining City churches was given Grade I listed status. The transformation was complete.

## Notes

1. *Times*, 27 February 1923.
2. R.I.B.A., *Sir Christopher Wren, A.D. 1632–1723; Bicentenary Memorial Volume Published under the Auspices of Royal Institute of British Architects* (London, 1923). Between 1924 and 1943 the Wren Society published twenty volumes of facsimile documents and drawings relating to Wren's architectural work. The second volume is devoted to Wren's 'parochial churches'. See Arthur Thomas Bolton and Harry Duncan Hendry (eds.), *The Wren Society* (20 vols.) (London, 1924–43). See also, G. Mitchell, *The Wren Society, 1923–1945: an Appreciation* (London, 1991).
3. On the Edwardian baroque and the 'Wrenaissance' see Michael Hatt and Morna O'Neill (eds.), *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design and Performance in Britain, 1901–1910* (New Haven, 2010).
4. *Guardian*, 27 February 1923; Lawrence Weaver, *Sir Christopher Wren: Scientist, Scholar, and Architect* (London, 1923), p. 96.
5. *Guardian*, 10 February 1923.
6. Richard Overy, *the twilight years: the paradox of Britain between the wars* (New York, 2009), p. 382 and *passim*. See also, Modris Eksteins, *Rites of spring: the Great War and the birth of the modern age* (London, 1989); Jon Lawrence, 'Forging a peaceable kingdom: war, violence and fear of brutalization in post-first world war Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 75, 3 (2003).
7. Susan R. Grayzel, "'A promise of terror to come": air power and the destruction of cities in the British imagination and experience, 1908–39', in Stefan Goebel and Derek Keene (eds.), *Cities in battlefields* (Burlington, VT, 2011), pp. 47–63.
8. For an example of these concerns see G.M. Trevelyan, *Must England's Beauty Perish? A Plea on Behalf of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty* (London, 1929). On urban development, see Avner Offer, *Property and Politics, 1870–1914: Landownership, Law, Ideology and Urban Development in England* (Cambridge, 1981).
9. The literature on memorialisation and the 'politics of memory' is vast. See, Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: the great war in European cultural history* (Cambridge, 1995); S. Hynes, *A war imagined: the first world war and English culture* (London, 1990); D. Cannadine, 'War and death: grief and mourning in modern Britain' in Joachim Whalley (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: studies in the social history of death* (New York, 1982);



- M. Connelly, *The great war, memory and ritual: the commemoration in the City and east London, 1916–1939* (Woodbridge, 2002); Jenny Macleod, ‘Britishness and commemoration: national memorials to the first world war in Britain and Ireland’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, 4 (2013).
10. Astrid Swenson, *the rise of heritage: preserving the past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge, 2013); Miles Glendinning, *the conservation movement: a history of architectural preservation* (London, 2013), esp. pp. 187–202. Two recently published volumes of essays similarly neglect to consider the great war as a watershed. See, Astrid Swenson and Peter Mandler (eds.), *from plunder to preservation: Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c.1800–1940* (Oxford, 2013) and Melamie Hall (ed.), *towards world heritage: international origins of the preservation movement, 1870–1930* (Farnham, 2011).
  11. See, for instance, Michale Hunter (ed.), *Preserving the Past: the rise of heritage in modern Britain* (Stroud, 1996); Robert Hewison, *The heritage industry: Britain in a climate of decline* (London, 1987).
  12. See, for instance, Dominic Strinati, ‘the taste of America: Americanisation and popular culture in Britain’, in Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg (eds.), *Come on down? Popular media culture in post-war Britain* (London, 1992); Mark Glancy, *Hollywood and the Americanisation of Britain: from the 1920s to the present* (London, 2013); Allison Abra, *Dancing in the English style: consumption, Americanisation and national identity in Britain, 1918–1950* (Manchester, 2017).
  13. John Carey, *The intellectuals and the masses: pride and prejudice among the literary intelligentsia, 1880–1939* (London, 1992). Stephan Collini’s *Absent minds: intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford, 2006) complicates, and to some degree contradicts, this analysis.
  14. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and cultures: England, 1918–1951* (Oxford, 1998), especially chapter 1. See also, David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990); Peter Mandler, *The fall and rise of the stately home* (London, 1999).
  15. Benjamin Weinstein, ‘Questioning a late-Victorian dyad: preservationism, demolitionism, and the City of London Churches, 186–1904’, *Journal of British Studies*, 53, 2 (2014).
  16. Daniell, 182.
  17. City of London Churches Commission, *Report of the City of London Churches Commission* (London, 1919).
  18. Major J.D. Birchill to Hugh Cecil, 29 May 1922 Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings Archive, folder ‘City churches, 1920–1922’.
  19. James Edward Cowell Weldon to A.R. Powys, 8 February 1922 SPAB Archive, ‘City Churches’, *Times*, 17 December 1921.
  20. On Knutsford as a hospital reformer, see Neville Langton, *the Prince of Beggars: Being Some Account of the Beggings of Sydney Holland, Viscount Knutsford, During 25 Years as the Chairman of the London Hospital* (London, 1921).
  21. *St. Martin’s Parish Magazine*, Dec., 1921, p. 53.
  22. Knutsford denied this charge of philistinism and claimed that it would be ‘perfectly lamentable if every generation were to destroy the buildings of the generation before it.’ In his correspondence with the editor of the *City Press* Knutsford felt obligated to claim ‘I am not an iconoclast’. Knutsford to George Rooke Collingdale, 7 August 1921 Royal London Hospital Archives, PP/KNU/4/3.
  23. John Ellison to Knutsford, 23 November 1921 RLHA, PP/KNU/1/10.
  24. *Evening News*, 7 May 1920. Of All Hallow’s, Lombard street the *Daily News* claimed ‘here, as in all of them, is a strange quiet beauty, a beauty of finely wrought stone, of tradition, a memory of a time when the City was not given over so completely to business.’ *Daily News*, 10 May 1920. The editorial position of the *Guardian*, meanwhile, was that ‘to demolish St. Mary, Woolnoth or All Hallow’s, Lombard Street would be to do violence to all artistic instinct.’ *Guardian*, 14 May 1920. The *Financial Times* regarded All Hallow’s as an ‘historic monument’ which ‘may literally be regarded as priceless.’ *Financial Times*, 3 August 1920. However, this

- appreciation for All Hallow's was not universal. The *Architect*, for instance, believed that All Hallow's 'very fine woodwork would be seen to better advantage elsewhere, and its removal would enable full use to be made of a very valuable corner site.' *Architect*, 14 May 1920.
25. For the debate over Knutsford's proposal see, *Times*, 8, 9, 13, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 24 December 1921. All Hallow's, Lombard Street was eventually demolished in 1938 because it had by this date become structurally unsound.
  26. *Hansard* (Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 65, 19 July 1926 cols. 13–18.
  27. *Hansard* (Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 64, 15 July 1926 cols. 1192–1194. Lord Phillimore, in support of the measure, addressed the problem of the vestries head-on, claiming that these bodies had repeatedly refused their consent out of corrupt self-interest. See, *Hansard* (Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 65, 19 July 1926 cols. 33–34.
  28. *Hansard* (Commons), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 200, 25 November 1926 cols. 689, 697, 700.
  29. *Hansard* (Commons), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 200, 25 November 1926 col. 679. Sir Henry Slesser and Major Kindersley understood the measure in similar terms. See, *ibid.*, cols. 693–4, 699.
  30. *Hansard* (Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 64, 15 July 1926 col. 1188.
  31. *Hansard* (Lords), 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 65, 19 July 1926 cols. 19, 26.
  32. *Notes and Queries*, vol. CLI, 11 Sept., 1926, p. 183.
  33. The Wren Society, established in 1923, began publishing re-prints of Wren's drawings and manuscripts in 1924. See, A.T. Bolton and H.D. Hendry (eds.), *Wren Society*, 20 vols. (Oxford, 1924–43). This effort at enhancing public appreciation of Wren's work was supplemented by the R.I.B.A., which published a volume entitled *Sir Christopher Wren, A.D. 1632–1723: the Bicentenary Volume* in 1923, and a slew of short biographical essays.
  34. *Daily Mirror*, 8 May, 1920.
  35. *Church Times*, 14 May 1920. There were also, it must be said, editorial positions which supported the general thrust of the *Report*, while also sympathising with the desire to preserve work of real worth and originality. See, for instance, *Financial Times*, 2 July, 1920; *Guardian*, 14 May 1920; *Times*; *Outlook*, 15 May, 1920; *Globe*, 4 May, 1920.
  36. *Daily Chronicle*, 11 May, 1920.
  37. *Daily Mail*, 12 May, 1920. *Morning Post*, 12 May, 1920. A later correspondent to the paper asked 'can we imagine any other city in the world parting with its historic monuments, save London, which, like England, is so strangely absent-minded?' *Morning Post*, 14 May 1920. *City Press*, 15 May, 1920.
  38. *Saturday Review*, 26 June, 1920. See also, *Builder*, 14 May 1920 for a similar argument.
  39. *Observer*, 16 May, 1920.
  40. *Manchester Dispatch*, 10 May 1920.
  41. *Times*, 21 May, 1920. See also, *Morning Post* 17 May 1920.
  42. *Westminster Gazette*, 8 May, 1920.
  43. *Sunday Evening Telegram*, 9 May, 1920.
  44. Weinstein, 'Questioning a late-Victorian dyad', pp. 400–406.
  45. *Daily Mail*, 15 May, 1920. The *Daily Telegraph* ran a similar editorial position. See, *Daily Telegraph* 6 Aug. and 30 Aug., 1920
  46. *Inquirer*, 17 May 1920.
  47. *The Contract Journal and Specification Record*, 19 May, 1920. The *Building News* likewise argued that 'if this extraordinary proposal is persisted in, and all these churches are to come down, it will rob the City of a great part of its history, and what remains of its ancient beauty will disappear altogether.' *Building News*, 14 May 1920.
  48. *Evening Standard*, 4 May, 1920.
  49. Arthur Supleby to A.R. Powys, 11 May, 1920, SPAB archive, 'City Churches, 1920–1922'. Italics in original. See also, John Darlington to Powys, 8 May, 1920; Georgiana Heatly to Powys, 11 May, 1920; [?] Wells to Powys, 11 May, 1920; and Herbert Corbett to Powys, 11 May, 1920 for similar expressions of gratitude.
  50. Hugh Cecil to the Lord Bishop of Newcastle, 2 June, 1922, SPAB archive, 'City Churches, 1920–1922'. See also, Powys to J.D. Birchill, 20 May, 1922.

51. The SPAB, RIBA, and other organisations jointly lobbied the City Corporation and Livery Companies to oppose any further demolition. See, Sec. of RIBA to A.R. Powys, 8 June, 1920, SPAB archive, 'City Churches, 1920–1922'. This seems to have had the desired effect. The Corporation and the City Livery Club both came out strongly in opposition to the Phillimore Report. See, *City Press*, 15 May, 1920; *Daily Telegraph*, 15 June, 1920; *Daily Graphic*, 15 May, 1920; *Westminster Gazette*, 15 May, 1920. The Lady Mayoress also led a public campaign against demolition. See, *Evening Standard*, 15 May, 1920. One observer claimed 'I never knew the City in such a fury as it is over this proposal.' *Daily Telegraph*, 12 May, 1920.
52. Royal Academy of Arts, *the City Churches* (London, 1921).
53. *Morning Post*, 31 May and 29 June, 1920; *Daily Telegraph*, 31 May, 1920; *Daily Mail*, 21 June, 1920.
54. *Evening News*, 1 June, 1920; *Times*, 31 May and 2 June, 1920; *Building News*, 4 June, 1920; *Architect*, 11 June, 1920. The London Society felt confident that its opposition to demolition enjoyed wide public backing, and that 'the English public would require a great deal of convincing' to support the Report recommendations. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 May 1920. See also, *City Press*, 22 May, 1920.
55. *Builder*, 25 June, 1920.
56. *Building News*, 25 June, 1920.
57. *Daily Telegraph*, 21 June, 1920.
58. *John Bull*, 23 Aug., 1884, p. 547.
59. A.E. Daniell, *the London City Churches* (London, 1898), p. 7.
60. Richard Overy, *the Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars* (London, 2009).
61. Royal Academy of Arts, op. cit., p. 3.
62. *City Press*, 15 May, 1920.
63. *Daily Telegraph*, 15 June, 1920. Fletcher, an exceptionally outspoken critic of City church demolition, won widespread admiration for his characterisation of the Report proposals as 'architectural Bolshevism.' See, *Times*, 14 May 1920; *Record*, 20 May, 1920; *Daily Telegraph*, 24 May, 1920; *Morning Post*, 10 May 1920.
64. *Architect*, 22 May, 1920; *Country Life*, 15 May, 1920.
65. Spencer D. Secretan to Powys, 7 May 1920, SPAB archive, 'City Churches, 1920–1922'.
66. For inter-war memorialisation, see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995). Mark Connelly's *the Great War, Memory, and Ritual* (Woodbridge, 2002) devotes particular attention to London.
67. *Spectator*, 26 June, 1920. Powys echoed this sentiment. 'The buildings are valuable for so many reasons,' Powys claimed. 'Like a memorial to those who died in the war, they represent the sacrifice made by our predecessors in London in honour of that part of life which is not concerned with procuring the good things of the world.' *Daily News*, 15 May, 1920. See also, *Daily Mail*, 15 May, 1920 for further evidence of this view.
68. *Building News*, 14 May 1920.
69. Royal Academy of Arts, *City Churches*, p. 3. For further evidence of this view see, *Daily Mail*, 8 May, 1920; *Observer*, 23 May, 1920; and *Daily Telegraph*, 18 June, 1920. A correspondent to the *Evening News*, meanwhile, suggested that the retention of the church towers in the absence of their churches would be even worse. 'A spire without a church,' he wrote, 'always looks most unhappy, and it can only serve as a finger of scorn; a witness to future ages of the barbarism of this age.' *Evening News*, 1 June, 1920.
70. The Georgian Group, for instance, was established in 1937.
71. For 'anti-Victorianism', see Miles Taylor's introduction to Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff (eds.), *the Victorians Since 1901: Histories, Representations, and Revisions* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 1–16.
72. Tom Allbeson, 'Visualizing wartime destruction and postwar reconstruction: Herbert Mason's photograph of St. Paul's re-evaluated', *The Journal of Modern History* 87:3 (2015), p. 542. See also, Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London, 1991).
73. James Hennessy-Pope, *History Under Fire: 52 Photographs of Air Raid Damage to London Buildings, 1940–1941* (London, 1941), pp. vi-3.

74. See, for instance, *The Listener*, 9 January, 1941, pp. 37–9, and *Daily Herald*, 31 December, 1940.
75. Hugh Casson, ‘Ruins for Remembrance’ in Casson, Colvin and Groag, *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* (London, 1945); J.M. Richards, *The Bombed Buildings of Britain: Second Edition, Recording the Architectural Casualties Suffered During the Whole Period of Air Bombardment, 1940–45* (London, 1947), esp. foreword.
76. Illustrated London News – three consecutive weeks in June 1941 – find dates.
77. Mark B. Pohlard, ‘The appreciation of ruins in blitz-era London’, *London Journal* 30:2 (2005).
78. *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 79:461 (1941), p. 101.
79. The new policy was put forward in a document entitled *the Bishop’s Commission on War Damaged Churches* (London, 1946).

## Disclosure statement

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## Notes on contributor

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