10 The Lost City

Just where Regent Street curves into Portland Place, the curiously named Riding House Street snakes away eastward in the direction of Bloomsbury. On a corner, about halfway along this tall narrow thoroughfare are the offices of T. J. Boulting & Sons, Sanitary and Hot Water Engineers, whose name is emblazoned high on both faces with elegant elongated Edwardian capitals in gold on big green mosaic panels.

Apart from these, the building is almost severe. Above the ground floor, plain brick walls are relieved by bays of windows (originally all with leaded lights) in very simple square-section stone frames and mullions. The bays rise to a varied series of dormers, silhouetted against a slate mansard roof with great square chimney stacks against the sky behind.

The ground floor is equally simple but more changeful with some of the bays carried down to pavement level, others corbelling out to ease pedestrian traffic round the corner and provide an entrance (now hideously disfigured). The plain brick panels terminate over large, mullioned display windows.

If you ignore the colourful mosaic panels, the building (designed in 1903 by H. Fuller Clark) is the corner of a Tudorish Arts and Crafts country house set down in the middle of London. Boulting & Sons is a fragment of the lost Arts and Crafts city.

This rich and wonderful city is lost for several reasons. First of all, the attitude of the Arts and Crafts movement to cities was ambivalent. Stemming from at least as far back as *News from Nowhere*, there was a distrust of urbanism fuelled by revulsion from the squalor of nineteenth-century cities, many of which had exploded unplanned from tiny villages during the industrial revolution. Arts and Crafts architects built mainly in the countryside, partly because their work was of a kind that attracted country clients, partly because they wanted to anyway.

It is no coincidence that the main Arts and Crafts contribution to planning—the Garden City movement—was at least partly intended to destroy cities as they then were: to create new independent communities* so that pressures on existing conurbations could be reduced and they could be remodelled on healthier lines.

But the remodelling of existing cities was never fully explored by the movement. Arts and Crafts theorists spent little time on discussing what should be done, and the ideas that were propounded were so gentle that they could (mistakenly) be interpreted as a lack of determination to reform urban life. Lethaby, for instance, lecturing to the Arts and Crafts Society in 1896, suggested that "we should begin on the humblest scale by sweeping streets better, washing and whitewashing the houses, and taking care that such railings and lamp-posts as are required are good lamp-posts and railings, the work of the best artists available."[1]

Lethaby repudiated the fashionable "idea of grandifying London at a *coup*, or to any extent formalising it" by striking great avenues between important buildings. But he was prepared to recommend one major scheme—cutting a grand pedestrian avenue between Waterloo Bridge and the British Museum—which he regarded as the apex of the triangle of central London, the other two angles of which were found at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. This one project would, he thought, allow "all future improvements . . . [to] fall into place, without any large and violent change in the direction of the streets."[2] This half mile of avenue, and a green belt round the city, were the only grand proposals Lethaby produced for planning great cities.

Again and again, he returned to his theme that

* See chapter 13.

128 *H. Fuller Clark. Boulting & Sons, Riding House Street, London (designed 1903)*

urban improvement should start humbly and gradually develop, with increasing civic consciousness, into a movement for improving every aspect of a citizen's life. "A town", he said, "is a work of art according to its quality as a dwelling-place for men. Its art is its service and stimulus to life."[3]*

Lethaby's call for gradual but deep and thorough city reform was echoed by the other Arts and Crafts theoretician, C. R. Ashbee, who urged that improvement should take place "little by little and from within . . . Let us have a wise body of ordinances, a park or lung here, the gradual development of a Zone-system first in this, then in that city; let us have green belts round all our cities."[4]

The buildings in which this programme of improvement would take form would, according to Lethaby, not be "betrayed by the mysterious word Architecture away from reality into a realm of pretence about styles and orders and proportions and periods and conception and composition."[5]

Those Arts and Crafts architects who *did* work in cities found that their buildings, country bred and free of orders, were not in great demand. Most of the major competitions of the '90s were judged by men like the great formalist Waterhouse and Shaw (then a firm classicist), so free, changeful designs were rarely chosen for public buildings. Increasingly, formal styles were preferred (see chapter 12). One result was that those urban Arts and Crafts buildings that did get built were, like Boulting & Sons, quite small, so they are literally lost amongst their surroundings and are rarely noticed.

The formal tendency was reinforced because, stemming from as far back as Pugin, one of the ideals that had inspired the movement was the notion that a new building should fit in with its surroundings. In the country and in small country towns, this idea was relatively easy to achieve, for existing vernacular forms and materials could be adapted. But in cities, the model was not vernacular Gothic but (in the South at least) vernacular Georgian. So most Arts and Crafts architects were torn between Ruskinian savageness and changefulness (which, when thoroughly followed, led to buildings of great originality) and an attempt to achieve fidelity to place, which led to neo-Georgian architecture.

Neo-Georgian emerged from the more genteel wing of the Arts and Crafts movement, and it was a style with which most Arts and Crafts architects at least toyed, apart from those completely dedicated to the Gothic spirit such as Lethaby, Prior, Voysey, Townsend and Mackintosh.

The irony is that as society threw up more and more functions, forms were adopted that were instrinsically inflexible. Although many architects used Georgian forms with some freedom, particularly initially, there was an underlying tendency to order. Many of the rules of Georgian, and hence of neo-Georgian, building are strict—for instance there must be a gradation of window size from medium windows on the entrance floor to very large ones on the first floor to smaller and smaller windows as attic is piled upon attic. The lighting and size of rooms is determined by the rules of elevation. Pugin and Ruskin had demanded the precise opposite. "Queen Anne" had shown a way of adapting classical forms to new needs—Norman Shaw's own house is a particularly good example of how this could be done (p. 40)—but such freedom was increasingly forgotten in the pursuit of Rule and propriety.

The career of a successful turn of the century architect of no fixed principle is exemplified by Herbert Baker (1862–1946). Baker was one of the most successful architects of his generation—only Lutyens outstripped him in the Establishment acclaim. His training was in the office of Ernest George where he overlapped with Dawber and Schultz. He was chief draftsman when Lutyens made his brief appearance as apprentice.

Baker emigrated to South Africa in the early '90s, and met Cecil Rhodes, under whose patronage he gained much official work. By the time he was forty, Baker had already built three cathedrals, Government House and the Union Buildings in Pretoria. He worked in many styles, notably a heavy stripped classicism enlivened by ornament executed by local craftsmen.

His other styles included, for domestic work, references to vernacular building—for instance in South Africa, he adapted colonial Dutch motifs. In 1903 Ashbee was greatly taken with "Baker's own house . . . springing like a jewel castle from out of the

* In his rejection of immense city reorganization, fashionable in the wake of the boulevards of Paris and Vienna's Ringstrasse, Lethaby was being true to the spirit of London, that vast and varied agglomeration of distinct villages. Only Nash, ninety years before, and by the turn of the century very much out of fashion, had tried to impose a great Baroque organization on Britain's capital. Lethaby's avenue was in intention a bow to Nash's grand design.

Lethaby was not always consistent; though he normally preached gentle change, on at least one occasion he urged that "except for a hundred or two of buildings, London needs to be rebuilt from end to end" (in *Architecture* (1911) p. 245).

rock . . . it is one of the most exquisite pieces of architecture I have ever seen."*

Baker's Government House, Pretoria was tinged with Boer vernacular, just as his Delhi Secretariats (which flank Lutyens's Viceregal Lodge) have reminders of Mogul ornament.

He returned to England before the War to carry on a large and varied practice. His big buildings were usually neo-classical—or nearly so—in plan but he never quite forgot the lessons of Pugin and sometimes attempted to fit the bulk of his huge commissions quietly into context; for instance his Church House (1937–1940). This Westminster Abbey complex with its squared flints and patterned brick was intended to harmonize with the disparate architecture of the area and to evoke the original building of 1758. Ruskinian savageness was remembered too. Even Baker's highly classical South Africa House (1935) in Trafalgar Square has a profusion of sculptured detail—particularly animal heads;—a last echo of the belief in free craftsmanship.

One compelling reason why designing to Rule became increasingly so popular was explained by H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, a doyen of ordered architecture between the wars: the free style was simply uneconomic. "If", he said, "we wished now to build in [an] informal and unhurried manner, we should find its cost prohibitive, not to the employer but to the architect. Just as in building itself, our methods have changed owing to the enormously increased cost of labour in relation to that of materials, so in . . . practice we now must save all we can of the principal's time and that of his draughtsmen if any profit at all is to be got out of the six per cent fee." Yet even the arch reactionary Goodhart-Rendel was prepared to admit that, "In its results, however, the old method was better than is any of the same kind achieved by other means. The man of the future may prefer that his house should be no more visibly peculiar to himself than his suit of clothes or the body of his motor-car, but at present to most men home-building still means, as it meant in Victorian times, a competition in self expression between themselves and their architects."[6]

In the '20s and '30s neo-Georgian was stretched and stretched to cover acres of offices and flats until, in the impoverished days after the Second War, the thin, taught crust was cracked off, revealing the concrete bones behind—which, in an uneasy marriage with neo-classic modernist sinews introduced from the continent, produced some of the crudest commercial architecture ever seen.

It is unfair to judge a style in its decadence and decay. Neo-Georgian started as a kindly, gentle response to the cities in which Arts and Crafts architects found themselves working. In architects' terms it had a fine pedigree, going back to "Queen Anne" and to Webb's Georgian days, and from it came some of the minor masterpieces of Arts and Craftsmen, particularly when they transplanted the style to the country.

But their greatest city successes emerged when they tried to use the full panoply of Puginian and Ruskinian theory in the urban context. From the relatively few masterpieces that were so produced, we can catch a glimpse of what the lost Arts and Crafts city would have been like if the confident British ethos had not begun to change dramatically during the economic pressures of the first decade of the twentieth century.

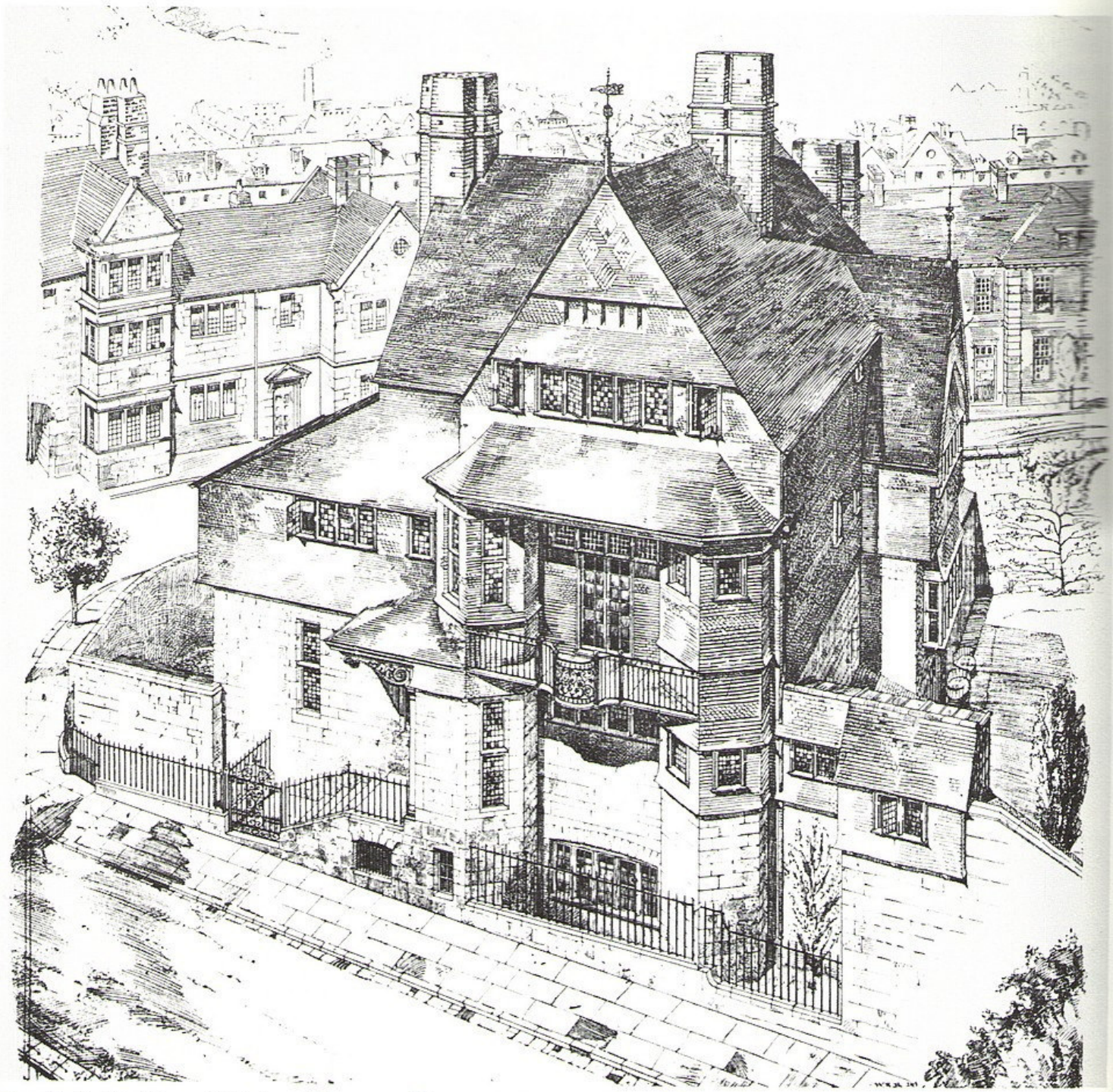
The easiest transition from the country to the city was in house design. John Dando Sedding's All Saints Vicarage, Harwell Street, Plymouth (1880) is a country vicarage brought to town. It is a Butterfield parsonage seen through Old English spectacles, with complicated gables and patterned tile hanging, but its tall polygonal bays stretching up from basement to

* Ashbee, C. R. Memoirs, Typescript in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library, Vol II, p. 195.

129 *Herbert Baker. Church House, Westminster, west front. (1937–1940)*

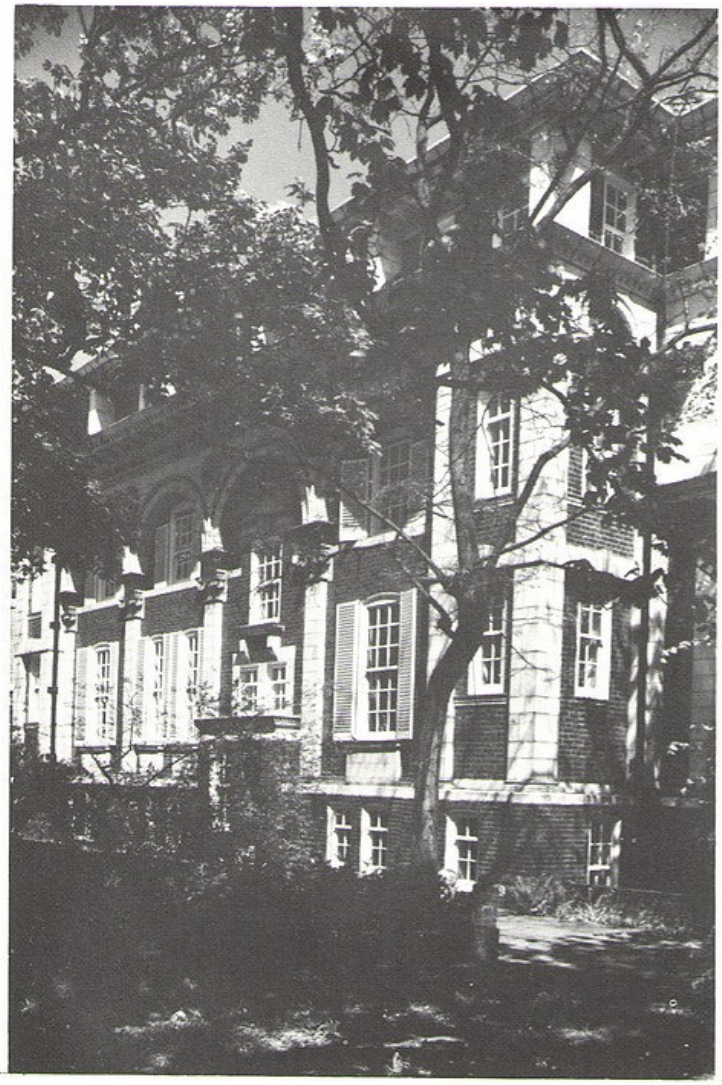
a tiled hat over the first floor foreshadows much later urban Arts and Crafts work.

Eleven years later, Voysey designed his only two really urban houses, a gentle intrusion into Hans Road, a curving little street in Knightsbridge just behind Harrods. At first sight, 14 and 16 Hans Road are symmetrical, with a pair of polygonal, close mullioned bay windows. Voysey's favourite simple square-section stone mullions and leaded lights are set in brickwork which matches the rest of the terrace. The first design was indeed perfectly symmetrical, but on closer examination of what was built, subtle asymmetries emerge: there are only three oriel windows above the doors instead of the four symmetry would have required. And the bay of number 16 terminates at the bottom with a row of little windows, revealing a complicated series of floor levels within, while the bay of number 14 shows a much more regular disposition of floors; even though the room heights were lower than most of the rest of the houses in the terrace except number 12, designed by Mackmurdo in 1894, after Voysey and his client had quar-



130 *J. D. Sedding. All Saints Vicarage, Plymouth, Devon (1880)*

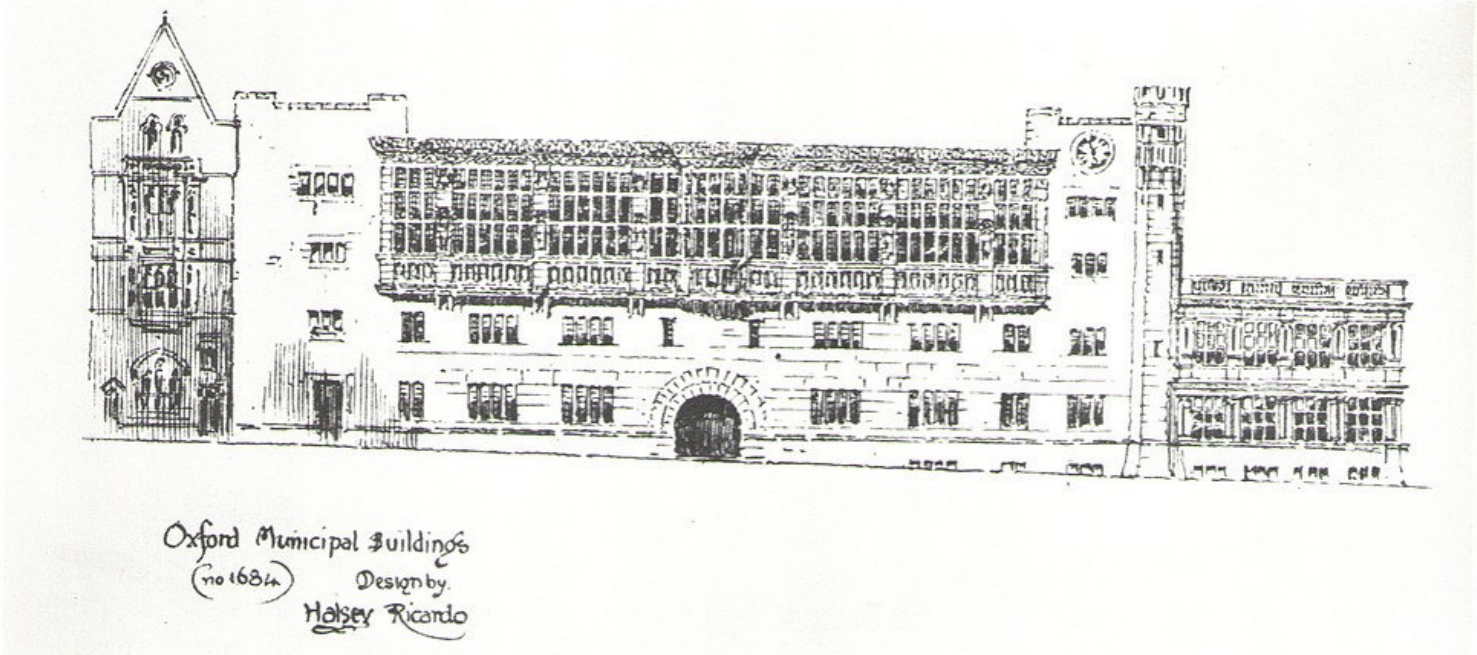
131 *C. F. A. Voysey. Houses, Hans Road, London (1891). The house under scaffolding is by Mackmurdo (1894)*



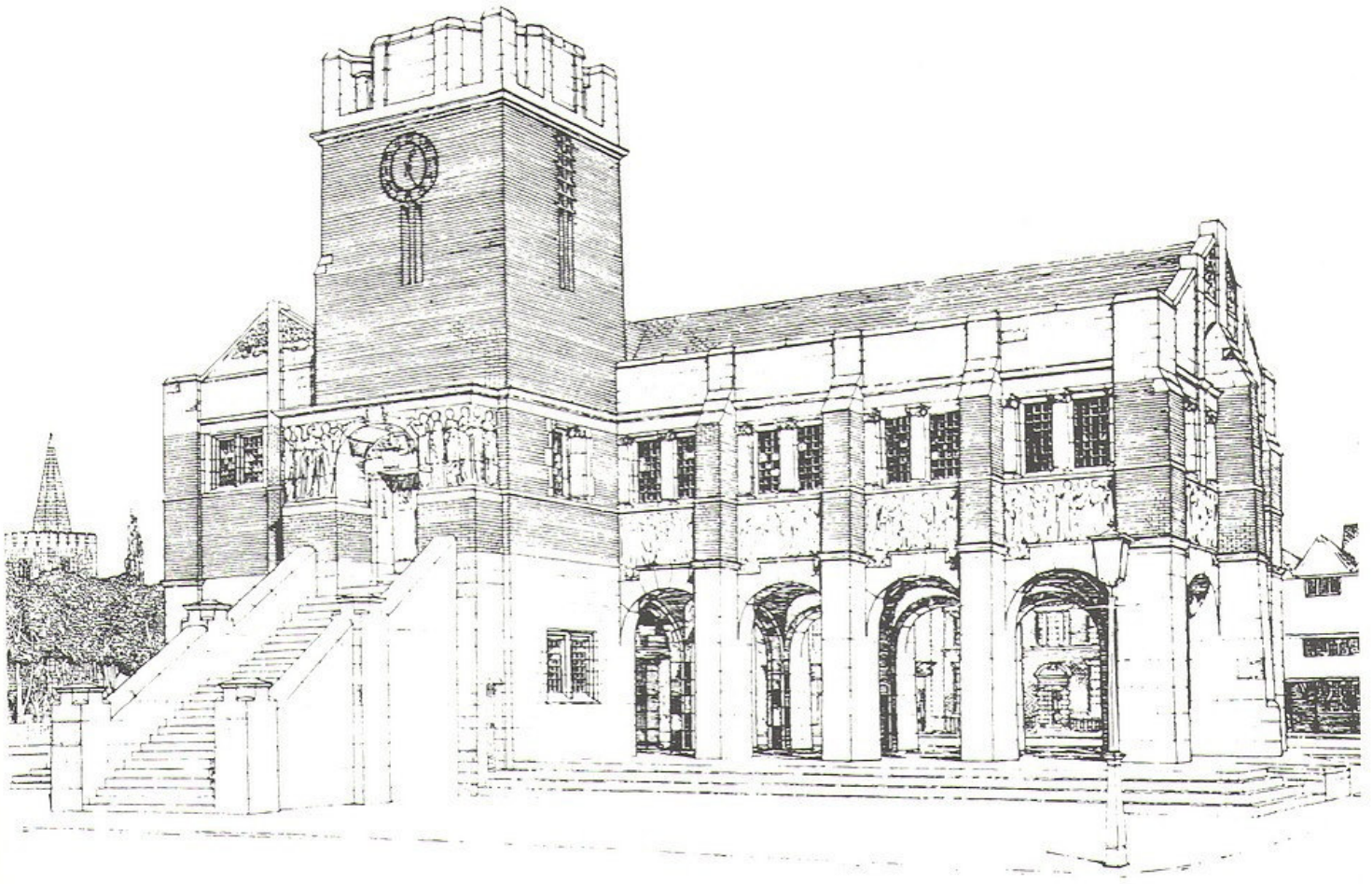
132 *Halsey Ricardo. 8 Addison Road, London (1905–1907)*

relled. This house picks up Voysey's floor heights, his oriel and his brick but in its details shows Mackmurdo's strong renaissance affections. Mackmurdo's most free London house was 25 Cadogan Gardens, Chelsea, which has three tall oriel bays, complete with leaded lights which top a complicated ground floor fenestration and are capped by a wide, carved, curving early Shavian cornice. The side elevation repeats the oriel motif but is flat. It is a design of great elegance and wit. See p. 51.

An equally elegant but much more dramatic Arts and Crafts town house was Halsey Ricardo's number 8 Addison Road, Kensington (1905–7). The building goes much further towards classicism than conventional neo-Georgian; it has pilasters and capitals, arches, roundels and elaborate cornices. Its prime attraction is the glazed turquoise and green brickwork. Ricardo was a partner of William De Morgan, the great Arts and Crafts potter, between 1888 and 1898. And, as a disciple of Butterfield, he was a great believer in glazed material and colour for city building: "In the country and those favoured cities where houses have gardens, where creepers hang in rich festoons . . . the local building materials will probably supply us with colour enough to set off and harmonize with the palette set by Nature. But in the street, where all the colour there is of man's own making, it should be full and strong."[7] Ricardo's belief that colour could enable the British architect to "dispense with much of the architectural frippery felt to be requisite to prevent the surface of ungraduated plain



133 *Ricardo. Oxford Town Hall competition entry (1892)*



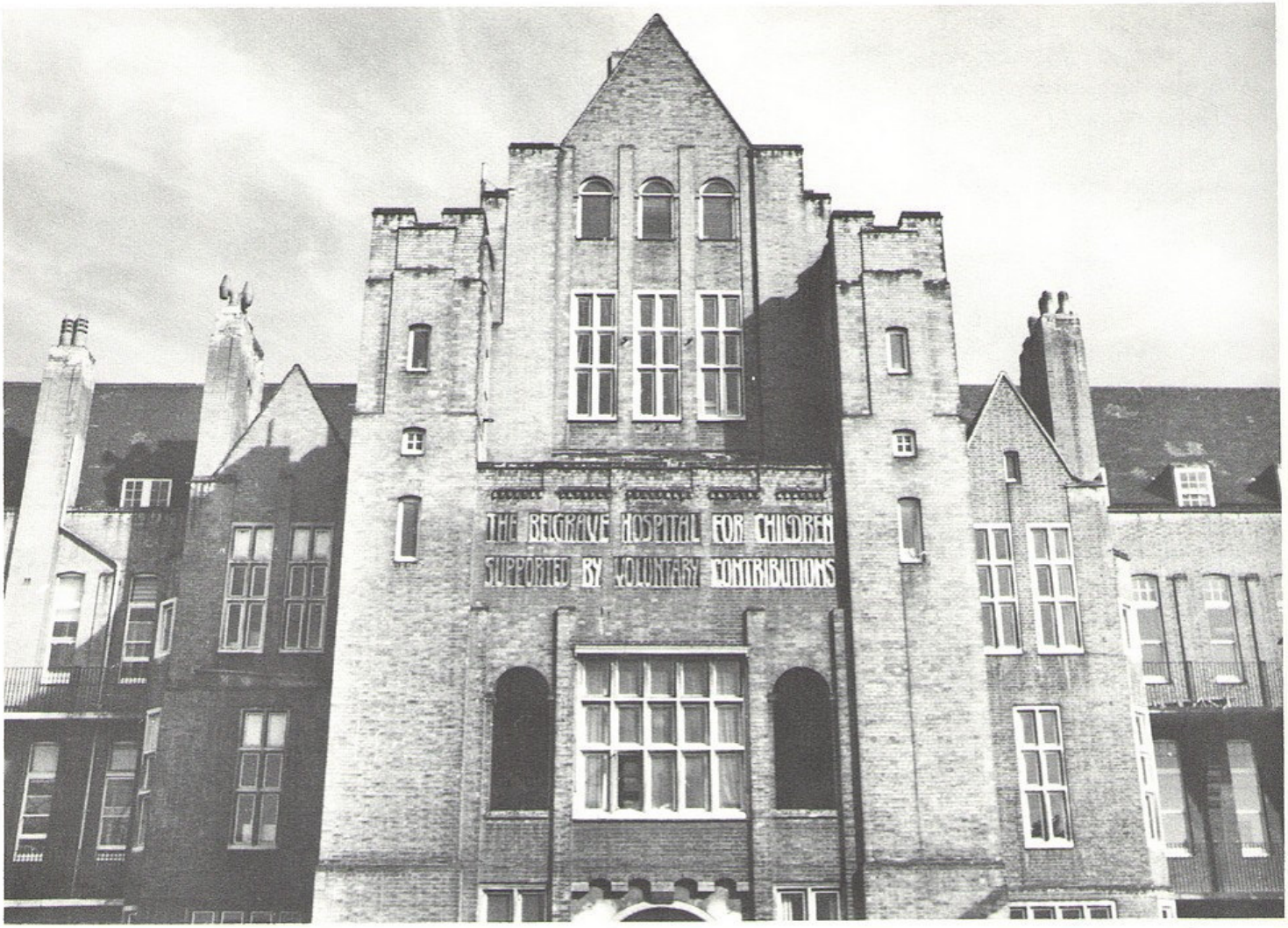
134 *Charles Holden. A market hall, Soane medallion design (1896)*

tint appearing too bald'"[6] was sadly not shared by many of his contemporaries: the streets of the lost city shine only in the imagination.

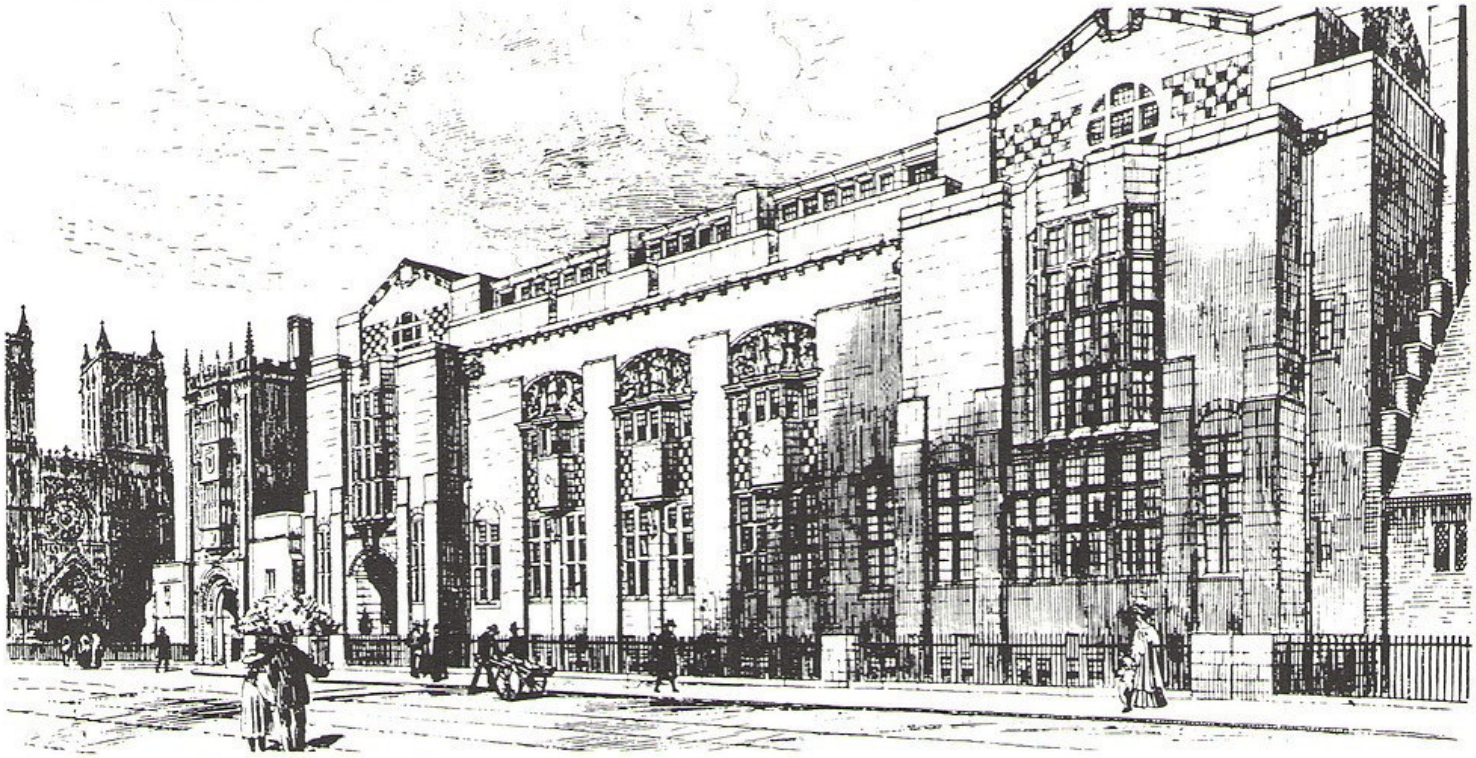
The Addison Road house is so large that, in any other town but London, it could be a great public building. When they did design for smaller cities, Arts and Craftsmen were more true to type. For instance, in 1892 Ricardo himself had produced a design for the Oxford Town Hall competition which involved a great bank of Jacobean glass in simple stone mullions between asymmetrical stone stair towers—a very early and elegant design for a glazed office block which, because of the size and mass of the stone mullions and transoms might have avoided the problems of modern glass-and-metal offices—overheating in summer and chill bite in winter.

Charles Holden's Soane medallion competition design for a provincial market hall, published in the first issue of the *Architectural Review* 1896, was a much more humble affair. It was basically a buttressed and pitched medieval market hall covering an open undercroft (with curiously classical arches) and enlivened by an asymmetrical front door and tower. The austerity of the design was set against rich bands of Arts and Crafts relief that linked the hall and tower together.

In practice, Holden (1875–1960) was rarely able to use such expensive decoration. By the time he could, in the British Medical Association building in the Strand (1907) where Epstein was commissioned to do the relief sculptures, Holden was becoming classical. But before he evolved the stripped heavily Muscovite style which balances him uneasily between Modern Movement and classicism in the '20s and '30s, Holden was a most free and inventive Arts and Crafts architect. His Belgrave Hospital for Children at the Oval (designed when he was chief assistant to Percy Adams in 1900) is a Grimm but Webbian monument of the lost city, and his Bristol Central Reference Library (1905–1906) is a most ingenious symmetrical Jacobean series of stone planes and broad mullioned, flat, polygonal bays which is said by some to have had a good deal to do with the origins of Mackintosh's



135 *Holden. Belgrave Hospital for Children, Oval, London (1900)*



136 *Holden. Bristol Central Reference Library (1905–1906)*

137 *Smith & Brewer. Passmore Edwards Settlement (now Mary Ward House) (1895)*

celebrated masterpiece, the west wing of the Glasgow School of Art.

Quieter than the Bristol library and built ten years previously was the Passmore Edwards Settlement in Tavistock Place, Bloomsbury (now Mary Ward House). Designed by Smith & Brewer in 1895, it was a new type of building, part hostel, part community centre. As the *Studio* reported, it was intended to bring together "persons of kindred tastes and interests, more especially those engaged in social and educational work in a given neighbourhood to form a home in which the conveniences of family life shall be combined with individual seclusion and liberty."[9] Morris's Hammersmith Guest House had taken real shape.

The worthy inhabitants lived in a rather spartan atmosphere enriched by Arts and Crafts elegance. The main rooms were basically undecorated except by the odd semi-classical moulding and a few fine pots; the furniture, when not designed by the architects, was modelled on simple country styles; the fireplaces were designed by Lethaby, Voysey, Newton, Troup and Dawber with grates by the architects based on the chasest eighteenth-century models. Where any special work was needed—as for instance in the dining hall fireplace designed in "Lethaby brick"—the work was "carried out by the ordinary manufacturers from instructions and sketches supplied by the architects", which was welcomed by the *Studio* because "it is only by bringing modern design to bear directly upon ordinary production that any aesthetic growth can be effected in the commercial world; and thereby upon the public taste."[10]

The public was initially wary of the outside of the building. The front elevation is extremely simple: projecting wings at each end frame the blank brick wall of the hall, which has very deep projecting eaves over a deep plain white-rendered cornice. The white rendering is picked up again in the upper storey of the towers which are themselves completely symmetrical, with the stair windows forming opposing diagon-

138 *W. R. Lethaby. Eagle Insurance Office, Colmore Row, Birmingham (1899–1902)*

als at each end of the composition. The design is saved from total symmetry by the entrance porch which grows smoothly out of the curves of the balustrading to form a massive stone block projecting forward to the pavement, penetrated by a broad welcoming arched opening. The stone eggs on top of the porch derive from Lethaby's *Cosmos*, in which eggs are identified as symbols of creation.

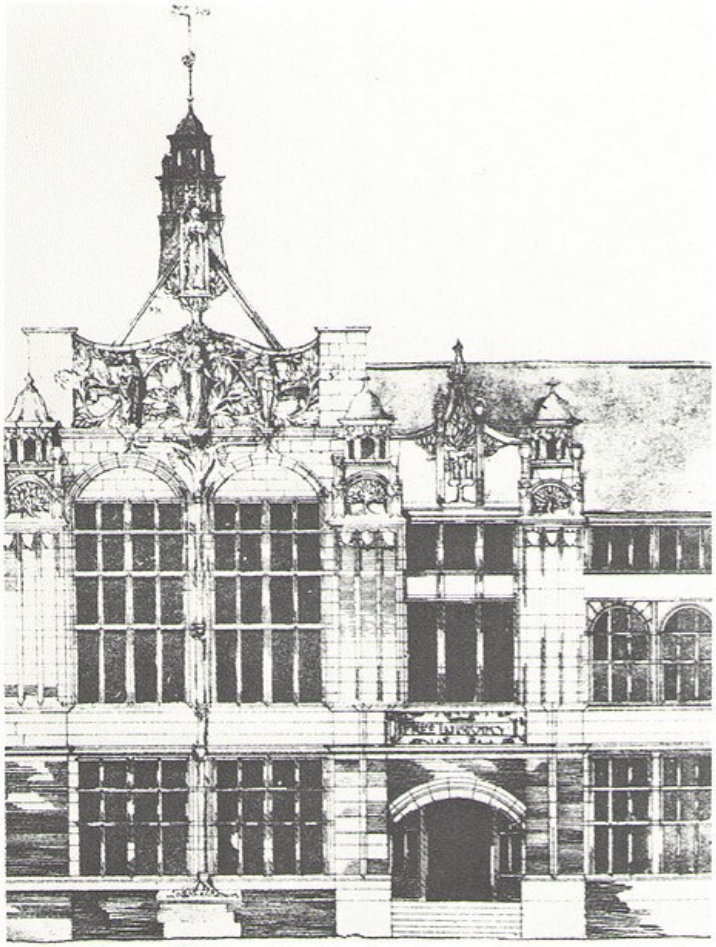
Lethaby's only urban building, the Eagle Insurance office in Colmore Row, Birmingham (1899–1900) is also topped by mystic ornament: an eagle surrounded by circles and wavy lines—symbols of the sun and clouds. But below this deep cornice, the building is extraordinarily spare. The top three storeys have five simple bays of full-height sash windows divided by a grid of mullions and transoms moulded only enough to ensure that water would be thrown off so the stone would not stain. This top hamper sits on a storey and a half which is completely different but equally simple. An ashlar wall is dominated by the big window of the main office, stone gridded in almost Tudor proportions, flanked symmetrically by doors for public and staff with ample flattish arches. Behind is a completely asymmetrical plan, which, amongst other ingenuities, gives the director's office a great glass tent of a ceiling.

It is unlikely that Lethaby would have fully approved of the overtly classical detailing of Leonard Stokes's telephone exchanges, yet stripped of their swags and their heavy bracketed cornices, the best of Stokes's many exchanges have all Lethaby's simplicity and freshness. The Southampton exchange (1900), for example, was simply five bays of simple windows between massive plain brick pilasters. In Stoke's masterpiece, Gerrard Street, London (1904), four wide bays of leaded windows sat on top of massive semi-circular arches. The basic material was brick, tied together with Stokes's favourite bands of stone. Now destroyed, the building showed how successfully, given the chance, Arts and Crafts architects could cope with the large single function buildings which have been the hallmark of this century's clients' requirements.

The classical twiddles on the Gerrard Street telephone exchange were not the only way in which Arts and Crafts architects attempted to achieve richness. Henry Wilson won the competition for the public ibrary at Ladbroke Grove, Kensington in 1890, while he was still working for Sedding. Big, stone mullioned windows and a wide, shallow arched entrance were to have been set within thin projecting brick towers, thinly reeded and increasingly elaborated by relief sculpture until their crowning cupolas were united with the walls in an intricate, sinuous, swooping band of intertwined figures and foliage, all crowned with the high pitch of a roof topped by a complicated spire. Sadly, much of the decoration had to be abandoned for lack of money, but enough survived of the original design to give a notion of what might have been, even if the result looks a bit like a well decorated Board School.

A much smaller example of decorated urban Arts

139 *Stokes. Gerrard Street Telephone Exchange, London (1904, now destroyed)*



140 *Henry Wilson. Ladbroke Grove Library, London (designed 1890)*

141 *H. Fuller Clark. The Black Friar, north of Blackfriars Bridge, London (1905)*

and Crafts work is the Black Friar pub (1905) in Queen Victoria Street, London, where H. Fuller Clark (the architect of Boulting & Sons) redesigned the ground floor of a mid-Victorian office block. Here, the architect's intentions were really carried out in full. Rarely can such a quantity of arts and crafts have been compressed into such a small space. The result is extraordinarily jolly. The design is basically very simple—only two sides of the thin wedge shaped site can be seen; they are faced in smooth granite with big windows divided into leaded squares by stone mullions and transoms topped with a deep fascia announcing the name of the pub in Clark's favourite green and gold mosaic.

Onto this monastically chaste undercoat, no opportunity of imposing friars has been missed. The composition is dominated by a three dimensional gigantic black friar beaming from the apex of the triangle towards Blackfriars Bridge; the door surrounds and the brackets which support the cornice are carved with grotesque friars in every stage of inebriation; the panels above the doors are of coloured mosaic showing sober friars preparing liquor, and at eye level

142 *C. H. Townsend. Bishopsgate Institute, London (1892)*

between the windows are delicate bronze reliefs of kindly friars pointing the way to the different bars.

The interior is more restrained with simple chunky Arts and Crafts furniture, a great coppery inglenook and some lively narrative bronze friezes (friars again) designed by Henry Poole. Anyone who believes that the Arts and Crafts movement was excessively solemn should take a drink at the Black Friar.

The man who brought decorated Arts and Crafts buildings to town in a big way was Townsend. The first of his three major London buildings was the Bishopsgate Institute designed in 1892, two years after Wilson's library scheme with which, as Alastair Service has pointed out,[11] it shares many features; it has shallow projecting towers, capped with cupolas, enclosing a large area of glass and the whole is topped with a steeply pitched roof. But (perhaps because he

143 *Townsend. Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (designed 1901)*

144 *Townsend. Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London (designed 1896)*

was required by his clients to keep the inside utterly simple) Townsend did find the money to decorate the outside in bands of relief in his favourite motif: trees with short, slender trunks and large overlapping leaves, which in this building are laced together by sinuous branches.

Townsend's next major design was for a very similar long site with a narrow street frontage—the Whitechapel Art Gallery, a proposal for which he exhibited at the Academy in 1896. It was like an expanded version of the Bishopsgate elevation with two ampler towers symmetrically flanking a great arched doorway. Over this was a row of wide windows with semi-circular heads, topped by a deep pictorial frieze.

The final design (completed in 1901) had to be squashed to fit onto a much a narrower site than was originally intended. The entrance arch was pushed out of centre to allow a less obtrusive exit doorway to be accommodated by its side. So the whole of the ground floor became asymmetrical and the original symmetry only gradually reasserts itself as the building rises through a band of plain rectangular leaded windows on the first floor to two projecting towers enriched by Townsend's leafy trees on the second. They flank a large rectangular area of dirty grey rendering (the rest of the elevation is in buff terra cotta like the Bishopsgate Institute). The rectangle was intended to hold the elevation's crowning glory, a mosaic frieze by Walter Crane depicting "the sphere and message of art". Cash ran out so it was never constructed, and the panel itself has been penetrated by mean little windows to light the caretaker's room—the inadequate lighting of which caused the *Architectural Review* to make one of its few criticisms of the ingenious planning of the building.[12]

Townsend's third major London building was the Horniman Free Museum at Forest Hill in south London, where he did manage to get a big mosaic put up. Unlike the other two buildings which were constructed for charities, the museum was built for a rich philanthropic tea merchant, F. J. Horniman, who commissioned Townsend to design a special gallery for his anthropological collections in 1896 after being driven to distraction by allowing the public to visit them in his own house.

Again the site was long and thin, but this time it sloped up hill from the road. So Townsend arranged the entrance at the top of a flight of cranked stairs which carried you up under the mosaic panel (by Robert Anning Bell). This covered the thin end of the

145 *Horniman Museum, the tower*

146 *Edgar Wood. Lindley tower, near Huddersfield, Yorkshire (1902)*

gallery and was surmounted by a row of leaf-capped pilasters under the curve which fronted the long glazed barrel vault.

At the top of the steps, you faced one of Townsend's mighty arched doorways in the side of the tower which dominates the elevation. Inside, you emerged on to the balcony of the south gallery through which you moved to the north (uphill) gallery before going downstairs to the lower part of the south gallery and out again at the front of the tower. It was (before being mauled by the present proprietors) one of Townsend's most ingenious plans.

The tower is still extraordinary. It starts off as a square plan with rounded corners and gradually tapers until the radius of each corner turns into a little circular turret surrounding a round tower. On the way up, it passes large clocks (philanthropic gesture by Horniman to the non-watch-wearing poor), a drift of leafy trees and a massive circular cornice.

When first built, the design must have seemed to many grotesquely unusual for the *Studio* felt impelled to produce a spirited defence: "the architecture, whether liked or disliked, is not in the least degree an imitation, an echo of some old master's merit. It stands there at Forest Hill as a new series of frank and fearless thoughts expressed and co-ordinated in *stone.*"[13]

147 *Wood. George and Dragon Inn, Castleton, Derbyshire (1898)*

If the citizens of Forest Hill were disturbed by Townsend's tower, those of Huddersfield must have felt just as worried when, in 1902, Edgar Wood's clock tower at nearby Lindley was unveiled from its scaffolding. Wood's tower is as strange as Townsend's but its idiom is completely different: a four-square plan has a diagonal buttress at each corner so the effect is sharp and slightly reeded and not at all rounded apart from the drum stair for the clock winder. The buttresses rise past gargoyles to provide sharp pinnacles round the octagonal metal warlock's hat which gracefully terminates the tower.

Were it not for this roof, the tower would resemble that of an Arts and Crafts church—Gothic but straightened out and simplified. Wood's earlier designs for town buildings, for instance his George and Dragon Inn, Castleton, Derbyshire of 1898, were almost excessively medievalist. But, during the first years of this century Wood became less historically inclined.

His First Church of Christ Scientist at Victoria Park, Manchester (1903–1908) is in a sort of stripped Gothic with a great Townsendish arched door under a crucifix shaped window, set into the tall, thin, white rendered gable. From this, two stone semi-Gothic wings project diagonally *à la* Prior and the composition is completed (and made more Hansel-and-Gretelish) by a squat, conically capped, round stone tower nestling against the right hand side of the gable. The building shows the freedom that Arts and Crafts architects might have achieved in ecclesiastical architecture if they had not usually worked for the Established church.

A similar kind of freedom was shown in Wood's Wesleyan School, Long Street, Middleton (1899–1902), a composition in which the white walls, leaded lights and interlocking gables owe something to Voysey; but its use of tall, thin motifs under the gables was new, as was the higgledy-piggledy arrangement of a school round a courtyard. The adjoining chapel is restrained Arts and Crafts Gothic.

Composition became more formal after Sellers (who was a devoted flat roof man) joined the practice. Under its roof planes, the Durnford Street School, Middleton (1908–10) is a curious amalgam of board school architecture with wide, high windows let into a background of brick from which stone-clad bays, many mullioned and finely detailed, Tudorishly project from a semi-industrial backdrop.

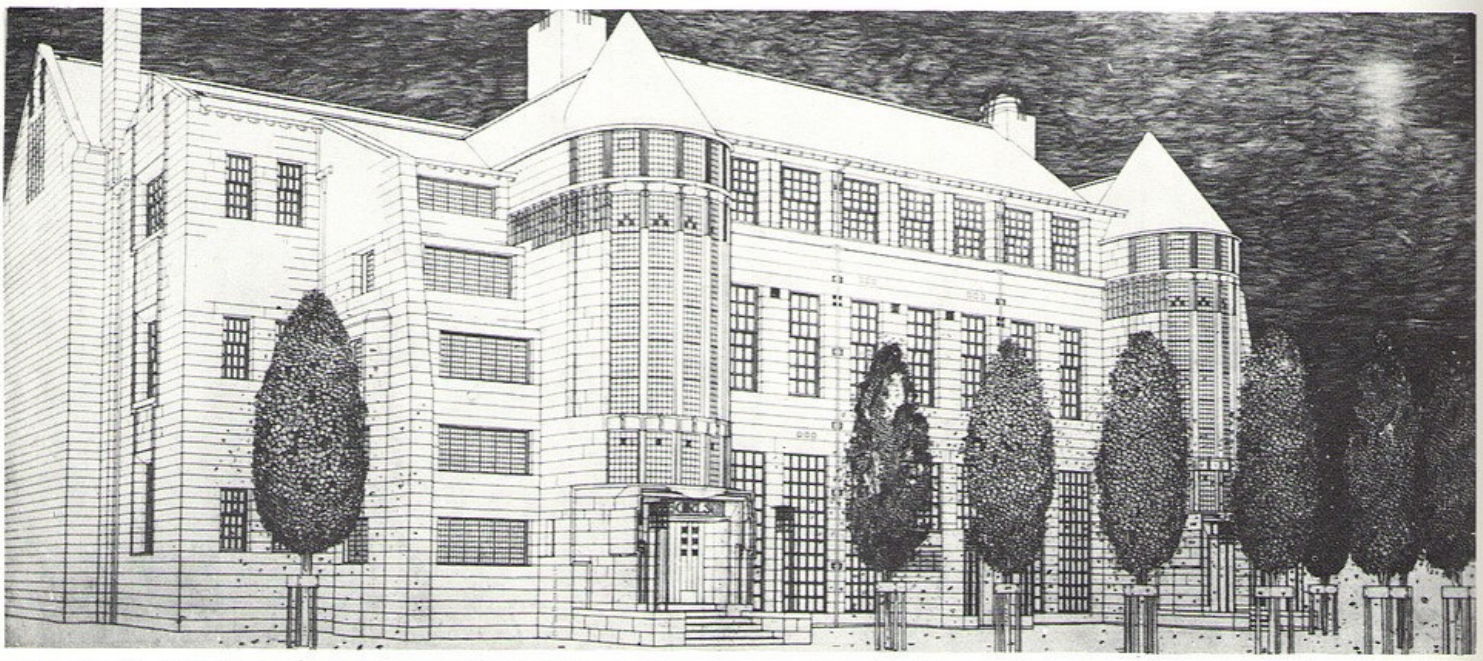
Two hundred miles further north, Mackintosh had already experienced the difficulties of trying to give

148 *Wood. First Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Park, Manchester (1903–1908)*

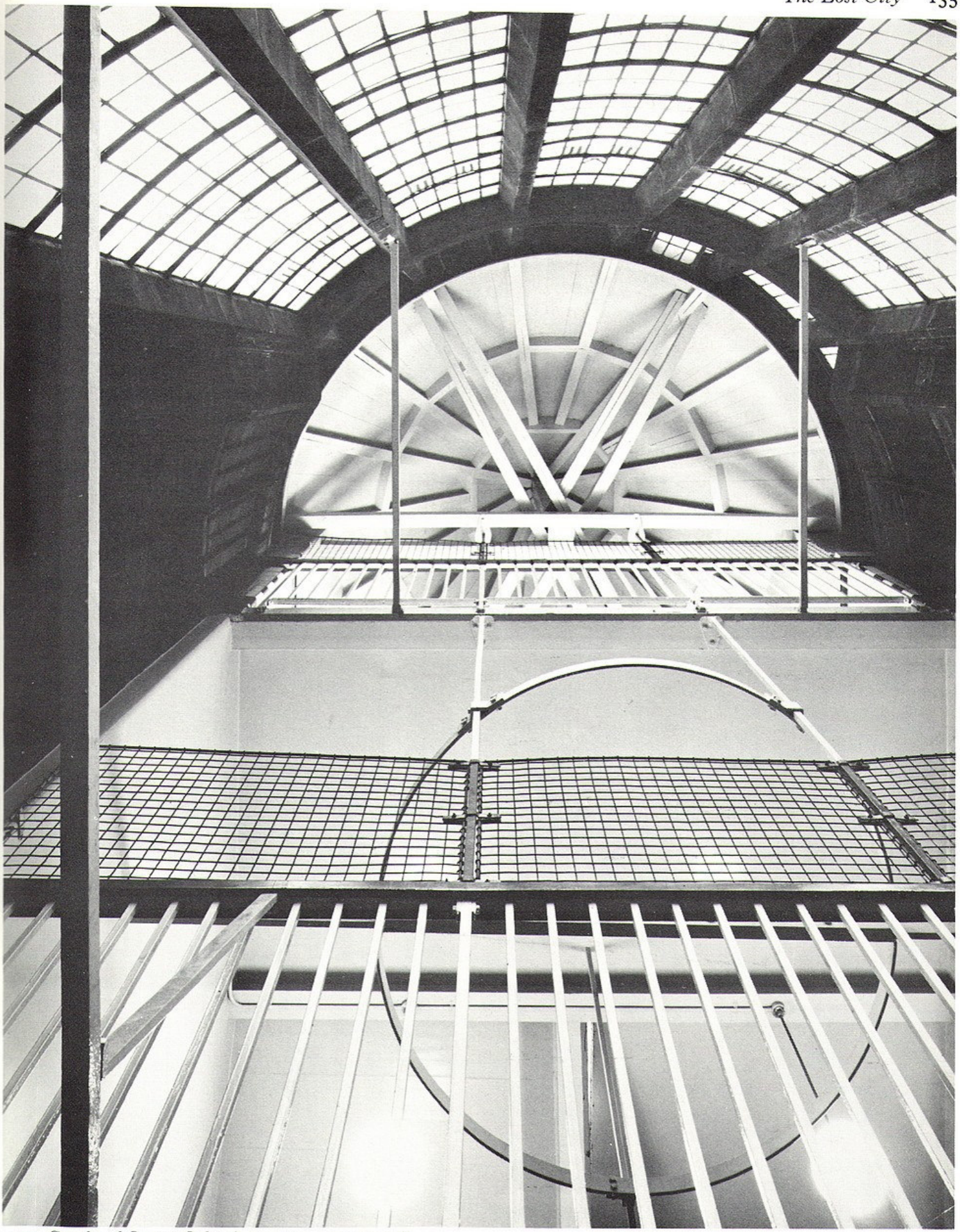
149 *Wood. Wesleyan School and Chapel, Long Street, Middleton, near Manchester (1899–1902). The school buildings are through the arch*

life to stereotyped school design. His Scotland Street school in Glasgow (1903–1906) had to be designed on a conventional board school plan, but, in elevation, it was enlivened with small paned windows (rather than the ubiquitous sheet glass). And it had two conically capped semi-circular stair towers in the Scottish tradition—but they were not really what they seemed to be, for instead of containing a winding staircase, each drum enclosed a perfectly conventional pair of straight flights terminating at landings which came out only as far as the main walls, leaving a great vertiginious semi-circular chute of space soaring from top to bottom of the building. Sadly, the local school board denied Mackinstosh his small paned windows (except on the drums) because they were more expensive than sheet glass.

150 *Wood and Sellers. Durnford Street School, Middleton (1908–1910)*



151 *C. R. Mackintosh. Scotland Street School, Glasgow (1903–1906)*



152 *Scotland Street School, interior of stairwell*

Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art is one of the great works of Arts and Crafts genius of the turn of the century. It was built in two stages, 1896–1899 and 1907–1909, and is, in effect, three or four buildings. The first, on the north side, is a big windowed, big paned row of studios, much like a board school, but relieved by Art Nouveauish wrought-iron brackets supporting the mullions. The centre of this regular and conventional elevation is penetrated by an asymmetrical ashlar entrance bay of great originality. The roofline breaks and a small tower suddenly appears over an irregular set of windows in a series of ashlar planes dominated by a Smith-and-Brewer shallow arch over the entrance.

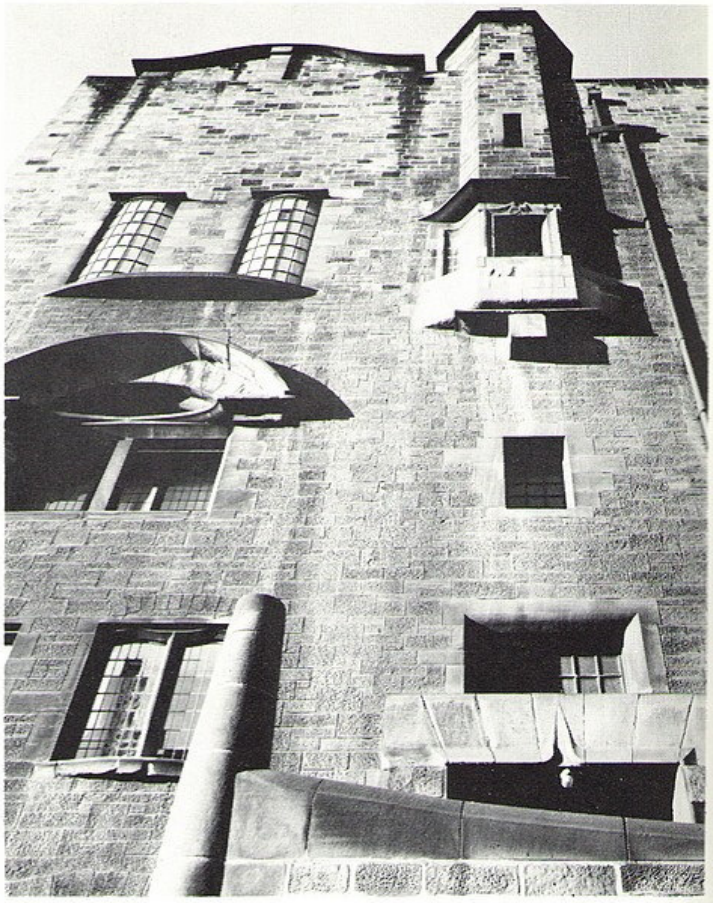
The east elevation is quite different, a great plane relieved by a tall, flat, polygonal bay and a curious curved and ornately coved hood over the windows of the lower school. The south side is an amalgam of the original studio windows and the projecting "hen-run", a long glazed gallery, added after the original building was completed.

The masterpiece of this wonderfully changeful building is the west elevation (1907–1909) which towers above one of Britain's most steeply sloping streets. The double-height library of the art college rises behind three soaring bays full of leaded lights starting stark out of the ashlar. The full-height bays are carried on in a sub-rhythm of careful leaded projections until one turns the corner and meets the relative sobriety of the north front again.

The west elevation of the Glasgow School of Art has an even more inventive but less controlled precedent in England; the Euston Road fire station by the London County Council architect's department (1901–1902).

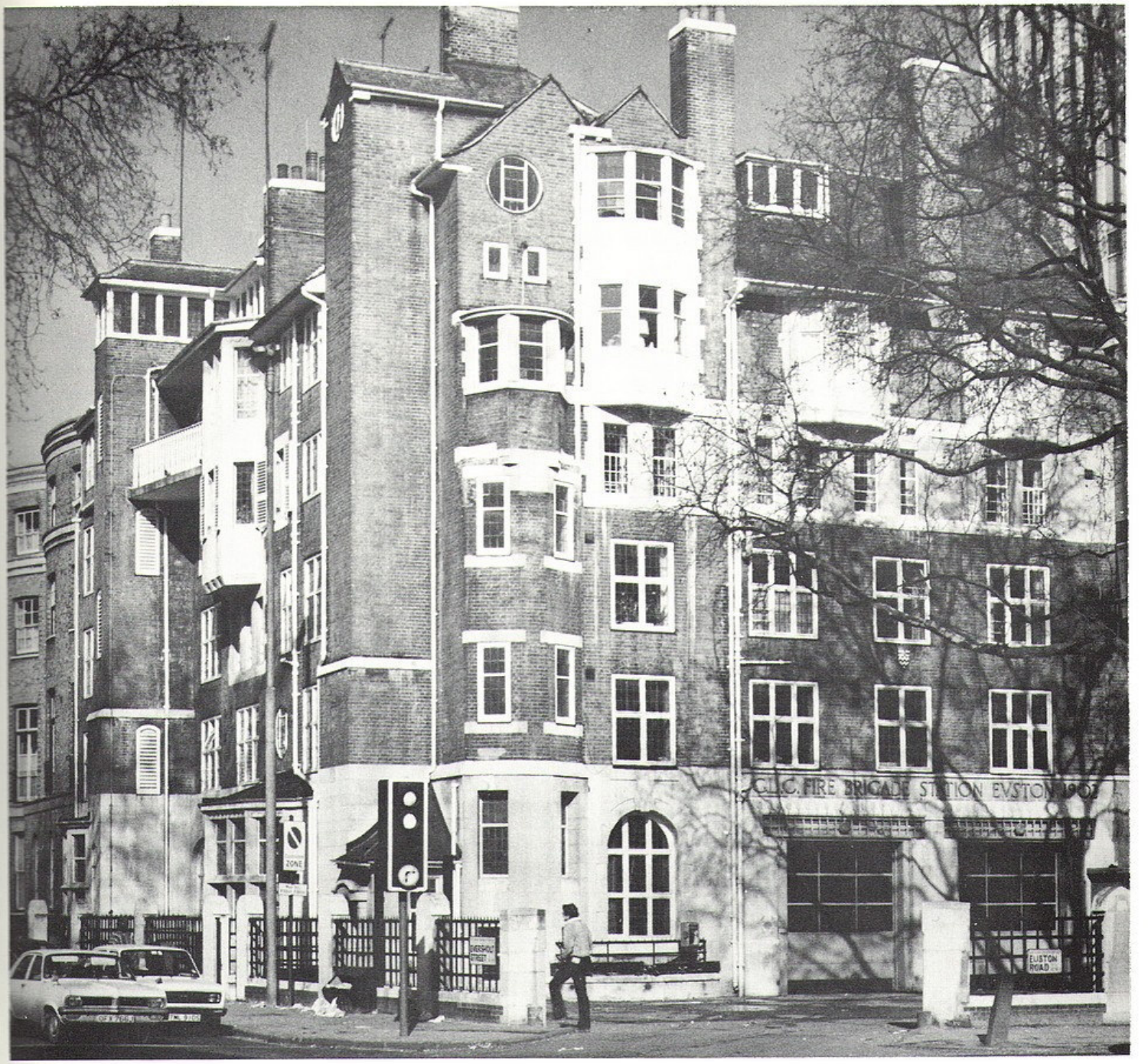
By the late '90s the LCC department was responsible for designing housing and some public buildings including fire stations. Most of its fine pre-war work was coloured by Arts and Crafts motifs—in housing schemes, for instance, it is easy to see the influence of Webb and of Smith and Brewer's Mary Ward Settlement; in the fire stations there are elements of Webb again, and of Voysey.

The influence of Arts and Crafts was not limited to copying details. Some of the younger members of the department were in direct contact with Lethaby, Webb and Morris through the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The influence of Arts and Crafts socialism must have been strong for, at the time, only pronounced idealism could have made a group of such powerful talents work virtually



153 *Mackintosh. Glasgow School of Art, east elevation (1896–1899)*

154 *Glasgow School of Art, west elevation (1907–09)*



155 *L.C.C. architect's department. Euston Road Fire Station, London (1901–1902)*

anonymously for a public office. The architects in charge, Thomas Blashill (up to 1899) and W. E. Riley (until 1920) deserve praise for setting up the system which allowed individual talent to flower but less for allowing credit for individual works to be obscured to the general public.

The chief designer of the Euston Road fire station, the department's masterpiece was Charles Canning Winmill. He was faced with a difficult problem: that of combining a complicated barrack block with offices and large halls for the fire engines—a large and varied bulk which all had to be crammed onto a small site in central London.

The solution showed how details adapted from vernacular buildings and combined under the principle of Ruskinian changefulness could produce an architecture sufficiently flexible to cope with the most complicated set of urban requirements, while retaining dignity and domestic character.

The building is of brick over a stone ground floor which is occasionally enlivened with semi-classical details. Above this level, it relies entirely on Gothic domestic precedents: the brick is relieved by bands of

stone and a regular series of leaded casement windows. Against these planes of brick is a quite irregular rhythm of bays, both square and three-sided, which gradually builds up to a collar topped by wide eaves and (to turn the corner), little gables with circular windows like the one Ashbee had used a couple of years before in Cheyne Walk (p. 145).

As at Boulting & Sons, if a few details were stripped off the Euston Road fire station, it could be the corner of a (very large) Arts and Crafts country house. It shows that, at its best, Arts and Crafts architecture knew no differentiation between public and private buildings and none between provision for the rich or the poor. The lost city of the Arts and Crafts movement would have been less grand than the Edwardian cities that really were built. But it would have been a city with a human face; gentle, witty, occasionally dramatic, kind to its surroundings and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

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3 Lethaby, W. R. "Towns to live in" first published in the *Hibbert Journal*, 1918, republished in *Form in Civilisation* 1957, p. 19
4 Ashbee, C. R. *Where the Great City Stands* Essex House Press London 1917, p. 67
5 Lethaby, W. R. "Towns to live in", *op. cit.*, p. 25
6 Goodhart-Rendel, H. S. "The work of Beresford Pite and Halsey Ricardo", *RIBA Journal*, Vol. XLIII, 1935, p. 118
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10 *Ibid.*, p. 17
11 Service, Alastair *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*, Architectural Press, London 1975, p. 169
12 "The Whitechapel Art Gallery" *Architectural Review*, Vol. IX, 1901, p. 130
13 "The Horniman Free Museum", *Studio*, Vol. XXIV, 1902, p. 198

Henry Poole. Sign at the Black Friar